



# OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

Vol.4 No.6 – July 2007

## Speechless

### CONTENTS

Speechless .....	1
Thinking of the Children? .....	2
Coordinators' Report .....	3
You Can't Keep a Well Woman Down ..	4
Age .....	4
Did You Know .....	4
The Simple Life .....	5
Climate Change Conference .....	5
At and Beyond the Rocks .....	6-7
Sydney .....	6
Jubilation Celebration .....	6-7
Illawarra .....	7
Disclaimer .....	7
Envisioning Ageing .....	8
Call for Collation Volunteers .....	8
The Getting of Wisdom .....	8-9
ICE it is .....	9
Aboriginal Support Circle Issues ...	10-13
Joan Johns - You're Right! .....	10
If it Didn't Happen this Week .....	10
Burrup .....	10-11
Sandon Point .....	11
Aboriginal Art .....	11-12
Child Artists of the Australian Bush	12-13
Surprising Recipe .....	13
Belvoir Street Theatre News .....	13
Letters to the Editor .....	14-15
Inspired to Respond .....	14
Great Reading .....	14
Retirement - Some Suggestions .....	14
Dear OWN Friends .....	15
Grey Skies & Grumpy Thoughts .....	15
Forty Years Later .....	15
Political Masters .....	15
Health of Women, Promises, Promises	16
Ye Olde Shoppes .....	17
Sew Very Cool .....	17
She'll Be Jake Mate .....	17
Notices .....	18-19

Recently OWN NSW combined forces with the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL NSW) to gather women in NSW, in response to a study that was about to be carried out by WomenSpeak. The aim of the consultation was to explore the impact and benefit of women's organisations in communities in Australia and analyze the issue of leadership by these women's organisations in Australia.

The WomenSpeak Network is funded by the Australian Government's Office for Women (OSW) and was initiated in 2001, as a result of the (then) Office for Status of Women's interest in devising secretariats of national women's organisations. The WomenSpeak Network is a non government network of 37 predominantly national women's organisations.

In NSW, women's views in the above community consultation were sought from the existing NSW secretariat, of which neither OWN nor WEL are members – however none of the NSW contingent felt able to participate. So we decided to 'gather the women', and together had over 40 women battle their way through floods and tempests, because they felt that it was important to represent the various women's organisations for which they worked, volunteered, or maintained membership.

For over three hours we exchanged stories, ideas, and viewpoints about the role of women's organisations in our various communities, their importance to our lives, our wellbeing, and to the social fabric of the community. This was followed by some statistical data collection, and survey information. The participants contributed eagerly, encouraged by the genuine belief that at last they were being consulted by our federal government, and their voices were being heard.

Kathy Richards, our facilitator from WomenSpeak, had been given only a couple of months to gather these stories and data from around country. Given the timeline, one could suspect she was never intended to succeed, however Kathy delivered an insightful report that, for the first time in ages, actually reflected both the presence of the participants, the inherent problems with the research methodology, and subtly suggested a need to rethink the paradigms of this type of evaluation.

I saw this paper in several drafts, and like others, was invited to provide feedback before it reached its final 25-page form. Kathy indicated the official Office for the Status of Women would review, and perhaps alter this information a tidge, before a public report was released.

When I received the OSW official, 3-page document, summarizing the comments made by 'Peak Women's Organisations' with no explanations, no attachments, and no analysis, I was furious, and I wondered why we had all bothered.

Like many other organizations represented that day, our contribution has been erased and reduced to (and I quote):

*"Older women often live alone and require support to live independently in the community as long as possible. Eg. community car and driver services, user friendly public transport, and caring and safe environment."*

Then they had the audacity to claim that those consulted had listed as a priority under the role of government, *"stop blaming the Commonwealth"* and provide a *"stronger policy role for Office for Women"*.

To the Office for Women, my final recommendation is that you look up the word 'consultation' – and while you're at it you can research the term 'misrepresentation'! After this? I DisOWN you.

Beth Eldridge

Older Women's Network NSW 87 Lower Fort Street Millers Point, NSW 2000

Phone: 02 9247 7046 Fax: 02 9247 4202 email: info@ownnsw.org.au web: www.ownnsw.org.au

Produced with the assistance of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

with project funding from the NSW Department of Health and assistance from the City of Sydney

## Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 19 groups in NSW. OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of interest and concern to older women.

**OWN Matters** is the newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$22 and \$40 for organisations and includes GST.

Members of OWN groups in NSW are encouraged to contribute to **OWN Matters** with items of interest to older women and Letters to the Editor. They can be sent by mail or email marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

**OWN Matters** is copyright. Material can be reproduced, but only with acknowledgement of its source.

ABN 36 992 030 904

### **Editorial Team**

Beth Eldridge, Daphne Lera, June West, Helen Young, Helen Vincent, Lorraine Inglis, Judith Mustard, Judith Fulston.

### **Admin Support**

Margaret Holland and Carol Lawler.

### **Layout and Design**

Beth Eldridge and Enid Leighton.

### **Membership & Subscriptions**

Maureen King

### **Mailout Team**

Pat Rayne, Noel Carpenter, Marie Williams. More help needed!

# POINT of VIEW

## Thinking of the children?

“Indigenous child abuse ‘emergency’ prompts PM action” ABC News, 21 June 2006

What an interesting way for the liberal / national coalition parties to deal with sexual assault. It follows then that this action will ripple through other ‘sectors’ with documented sexual assault – the churches temples mosques, etc – will have their lands removed – with compensation of course – and their claim to private property will be abolished.

By the same logic parishioners’ children will be forcibly subjected by doctors to vaginal and rectal examinations and communion wine will be confiscated. The spending of donations and wages or welfare of parishioners will be controlled by government, and the suburbs that worshippers live in will be taken over by government. Police will keep surveillance on worshippers. As there is already a ban on x-rated pornography in these communities, the federal government is saved this intervention.

Likewise the military will have to surrender their property, and boundaries for entry to military land will be removed. Naturally the children of the enlisted will be forcibly subjected by doctors to vaginal and rectal examinations, and no enlisted people will be allowed to drink alcohol. Suburbs where personnel live will be taken over by government, and the spending of allowances and wages of personnel will also need to be determined by government.

X-rated porn will be banned and law enforced by police surveillance of military personnel.

It follows the same goes for footballers, their clubs and grounds. All other welfare recipients are already in this coalition’s sights – unless of course there is no uranium on their religious property, military land or their under football clubs and fields.

The “constitutional niceties” being ignored here are actually known as human rights and property rights.

Does anyone actually think that this will stop sexual assault?

*Susanne Martain*

### DISCLAIMER

*The views expressed in OWN Matters are not necessarily those of the Older Women's Network NSW, and we do not guarantee the accuracy of the facts in articles supplied by members. The Older Women's Network NSW accepts no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting, or not acting, upon any material in OWN Matters.*

# OWN NSW

## Coordinators' Report

---

Winding down is always a sad time, and now that the time has come to elect a new management team I can look back on the year with sorrow that it's gone and with happiness for what it was.

This year's team has achieved such a lot. We worked well together and found satisfaction as well as a lot of enjoyment along the way. Even getting to the meetings is such a joy, starting when I purchase my \$2.50 ticket at the railway. How good is that! And I get most of it reimbursed. A chance to read a little on the way and then stepping off the train at our own Circular Quay. As I hurry to the meeting the buskers are setting up, tourists and visitors are planning and meeting and the whole of the area lifts my spirits because I am part of the city in the morning.

Smiles always greet me as I arrive at number 87. The team is setting up, greeting each other, laughing and catching up on the office news, and then it's down to business.

Early in the year it was such a struggle, as month after month went by without there being enough members present to form a quorum. Plans were put in place to change the constitution at the next conference to reduce the numbers needed for a quorum and it is important to the smooth running of OWN that this happens. Brenda and Cate were persuaded to return and they did so with grace and dignity enabling the team to get on with the business of our organization.

I've mentioned the word "team" a few times. I guess that is the part I have enjoyed the most, being part of a

team. It was all new to me when I joined, I knew very little of what was expected of me but soon learned I was not going to have to stumble along on my own, I was part of a team, and as such had support whenever I needed it. To each and every one of the team of 06/07, I say thank you for all the help, encouragement and good times we have shared. To Betty Johnson, who is such a great advocate and representative of OWN, the ever-smiling Cate Turner, the very jolly Jan Robinson, hard-working and deep-thinking Joan Van Halen, Margaret Holland who never misses a meeting, the brave Judith Mustard who wears so many hats, Brenda my willing co-worker and backstop, Maria Camelin who put in so much energy despite serious health concerns, and, last but not least, Nicki Manousakis, I say thank you for your friendship, your help and for making my work on the management team so enjoyable and fulfilling. Each and every one of you has taught me something and each and every one has given of themselves.

To the new team to be elected on the 16th, all the very best. You're in for a happy and interesting time; you will laugh and you will cry, but most of all you will grow. And isn't that what we all strive for? Is that not what OWN is about? We are not women who want to sit back and do nothing to better our lives, we are women prepared to get up and do something.

So go, girls, go! Put your hand up. Be part of the team, join the party. And, as the girl in the Jet Star ad. says, Lets Flyyyyy.

*Barbara Malcolm*

We want **you** at the **OWN NSW Conference** and **AGM**

to play your part in

## Making Change Happen

This year our conference will take place on 16-17 July 2007, at Sancta Sophia College, Sydney University.

For full program details call or email the office : 02 9247 7046 or  
[info@ownnsw.org.au](mailto:info@ownnsw.org.au)

## You Can't Keep a Well Woman Down

Older Women's Network NSW, Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service and Willoughby Council invited all older women to attend a one day wellness forum at the OWN Wellness Centre Northside to celebrate and understand the findings of the *Kicking up Autumn Leaves* Report. Based on 43 older women's stories of Wellness, the report highlights a new focus on older women embracing the challenges of their own ageing process: taking their wellbeing into their own hands; on their own terms; and for their own benefit.

The Forum took place on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June at the Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St Chatswood. Inspired by an Acknowledgement of Country by **Clair Jackson**, our other guest speakers also included the energetic **Robyn Gaspari** of "Chatswood Rotary Club" & "Conflict Resolving Women's Network Australia", our long term champion of health, **Pete Whitecross** from Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service and the amazing **Renate Watkinson**, Group Coordinator of our OWN NSW Wellness Centres.

And of course there's nothing quite like the unique performances of the **WENCHes** from Southern Highlands OWN to make an audience laugh at the state of our health system! We were also treated to magnificent demonstrations of "Qi Gong" by **John Saw** and Feldenkrais by **Chris Heberlein**, both with members of the OWN Wellness Group.

OWN Northside is hoping to reach out to CaLD women. In particular, to support and encourage older Chinese Women in the Willoughby Area to both attend the Wellness Sessions, and perhaps establish their own specific Older Chinese Women's Wellness Group. OWN has already received some funding from the Help St Foundation to translate our leaflets & provide for interpreters to attend specific events & activities.

Over 60 women attended the forum, and feedback was extremely encouraging. Everyone enjoyed the variety of speakers, demonstrations and the performances. Some of the women who attended for the first time felt encouraged and interested enough to seek information about joining future Wellness Activities. So the day was a tremendous success!

*Uma Kali Shakti*

### Age

my litterbin brain  
holding geriatric gems  
explodes shrivels blooms

my kite old heart  
dancing partners in the sky  
free of gravity

my rascal beauty  
absconded with old man time  
good riddance, baby

*Lucy Raig*

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Did you know** that a class of 10-13 year olds in the tiny Caribbean country of Belize wrote letters to the Australian government urging an apology for the Stolen Generations? The children had watched a screening of *Rabbit Proof Fence*, many of them with tears streaming down their faces, and felt the need to do something. Neither the children nor their teacher had any knowledge of the ongoing political debate here about such an apology.

**Did you know** that the name of the official spokesman for the Exclusive Brethren is Tony McCorkell? He advertises himself on his own website as a consultant offering small businesses and associations advice to encourage big sponsorship. Fresh from a trip to New Zealand defending the NZ chapter of the sect from allegations of sexual abuse and political interference against the government, Tony himself has now been accused of accepting advance payments of around \$10,000 from groups such as the NSW Breastfeeding Association and, well, simply pocketing the funds.

**Did you know** that you can't always trust the internet for reliable information? Recently, a woman used the transport infoline.131500.com.au to find out how to get to Cockatoo Island. She was advised to catch a ferry to Drummoyne then walk across to the island. It was assumed, of course, that she could walk on water.

**Compiled by OWN UP – Unashamedly Political Discussion Group**

10.30am to 1.00pm, meetings Friday 10 August and Friday 12 October 2007.

75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.

Have an early cuppa with us and bring a sandwich for lunch.

Contact Pearlie on (02) 4285 5373 or e-mail [pearliej@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pearliej@bigpond.net.au)

# The Simple Life

Mankind has destroyed our planet and massive changes should have been on the agenda yesterday or years ago, and we need to be aware of that in order to deal with the realities of what we are facing.

Sometimes I hanker for the simpler life if there ever was one. I wish I could once again be in the Cook Islands viewing the hula hula dancers, reportedly the best in the Pacific, swaying to a warm sea breeze. Or if I am really desperate, inhaling in a haze back in the bush beyond Nimbin. One could become boring and the other is unhealthy.

My brain is a little too calcified to get a Science Degree now, so I must rely on what I read in scientific reports. It's the daily technicalities of life that defeat me now. Every piece of merchandise comes with a brochure, be it vacuum cleaners, printers, computers – even those books written for dummies which are not dumb enough for me. Mobile telephones, TVs, DVDs, all come with uninvited brochures. This is an industry. The air conditioner installer rattled on about aeons or ieons and noticing my hypnotized expression, asked, “Did you get all that ?” My answer “Do I get a certificate for that ?” surprised him – or did it? All that stuff seems easy for the kiddies though. They probably ask “where’s the book of instructions?” first.

Each piece is made so difficult to operate that a skilled fixer is necessary, costing about 100 dollars to come and just look at it, and then the quote is added. It seems much simpler to just give it a good bang to get it going, or use the bristly broom for the job. To maintain a lawn we must use a range of edgers and trimmers to make it look like a lush green bowling green. All this to impress the neighbours, who are only stimulated from their torpor by competition.

In hospital too you are expected to be your own pharmacist. It seems wise to endeavour to master the medical names and the brand names of drugs and what they are supposed to cure if you wish to survive.

All this garbage whizzes around and around in a world which has elected politicians who are skeptical about imminent climate change. What do you make of it all?

*Enid Harrison*

## Climate Change Conference

Mayors and delegates from 40 of the world's largest cities, representing around 400 million people, met this week in New York to discuss cooperation on addressing global warming. The City of Sydney unanimously agreed to join

the C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group this year and to participate in the Summit as part of our commitment to environmental leadership.

Leaders from cities across the world, including Sydney, New York, London, Copenhagen, Mexico City, Addis Ababa, Delhi, Tokyo, Johannesburg, Toronto and Seoul, met to share information, identify effective practical solutions and agree on action. Our cities committed to take a lead on tackling global warming and pursue major projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A consistent theme at the Summit was that state and national governments can't or won't take the lead, so city leaders must. The crisis is not the result of a failure of technology, but a failure of political will for action.

Sydney's membership in the C40 group provides us with support, information and resources that better equip us to move rapidly on solutions to the most serious threat facing our planet.

A major new program announced at the Summit will provide \$5 billion in funding to make existing public buildings more efficient and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This work could include energy-efficient heating, cooling and lighting, with intelligent sensors to keep them on only when needed.

This Energy Efficiency Building Retrofit Program complements Sydney's Green CBD initiative (in partnership with North Sydney and Parramatta), which enables commercial office owners and tenants in Sydney to introduce energy-efficient measures during office refits to reduce their impact on the environment and save money.

Retrofitting existing buildings is vital, as they make up the majority of buildings that will still be standing in 2030. Urban areas are responsible for around 75 per cent of all energy use, while buildings account for up to 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Improving energy efficiency is an important starting point for addressing global warming as there is a quick financial payoff, with long-term environmental benefits. Building refits reduce energy use by 20 to 50 per cent in existing buildings, paying back the initial outlay in as little as three years.

I have asked the Minister to develop a plan to retrofit energy efficient and water efficient equipment and appliances to all properties. Waste recycling, and water-saving showerheads and taps could be introduced immediately, while solar hot water panels and water tanks may require a long-term approach.

*From: Clover Moore*

# At and Beyond the Rocks

## OWN Sydney Report

Winter winds and age are taking their toll on our members. It is sometimes difficult to get a quorum at our meetings. Our dear Louise Annike is in hospital again and slowly recovering from several operations. Our thoughts go out to her. Joy Ross is still not fully on deck and she is sorely missed by all of us. Lucy Porter has just had a pacemaker inserted. Hopefully this will keep her on an even keel and recovering some of her old energy. One or two others of us have succumbed to seasonal maladies.

As reported, a teacher was found for a meditation group but, unfortunately, there were not enough people interested to make it financially viable.

The forum on Elder Abuse to be held on 15 June had to be cancelled due to administrative reasons. In the meantime we hope for another date later this year, perhaps in November. The planned Winter Solstice Meeting, which was to be facilitated by Louise Annike, has also been postponed. The subject was to be the Importance of Women Friends.

A suggestion has been put forward that small groups, as in the Inner-West, may be of interest to those members who find it difficult to travel to Millers Point. Our OWN Sydney AGM will be held on Friday 24 August 2007 in Mott Hall at 11 am. We will be having a guest speaker. An election for the working group is on the Agenda and we hope to attract new members. Bring a plate for lunch.

The *Own Your Village* project is ongoing with meetings and action, but is nearing completion. Our delegates to the OWN NSW conference will be Cate Turner and Marjorie O'Loughlin; Judith Mustard is alternate delegate. On November 26-27 the OWN Australia Conference will be held at the Bergmann College, ANU Canberra. All are cordially invited, full board is \$75 per night.

That's all for now, good health until next time.

*Judith Mustard*

## Jubilation Celebration

A new sense of relaxed familiarity was in the air as a dozen or so OWN JUBILATION members gathered at Lower Fort Street on Friday 15 June to mark the group's first anniversary. The wet, chilly night seemed to draw us even closer as we put out platters of food and bottles of wine to help us celebrate the occasion.

Our main purpose was to review our first year of group life, to reflect on what had gone well during that time and how we might shape our future. Members expressed much satisfaction with opportunities to establish bonds of friendship through the monthly meetings themselves, with special-purpose meetings including those dealing with grief and loss, retirement, housing and finance, and purely social events such as jazz concerts, pub dinners and weekend walks.

Our second major item for consideration called members of OWN JUBILATION themselves, or other members or prospective members of the wider OWN organization to consider how they might assist in building and strengthening OWN's future, both for members and for the benefit of women in the wider surrounding city community. At the same time, recognition was given to the many stalwart members of OWN who have done so much to start the organization and keep it going for so many years and to see their need to step back a little and let go of some of the pressures of responsibility. Further consideration will be directed to this important issue at coming meetings. Members of OWN JUBILATION expressed the hope that some women who may not yet be retired or may be recently retired and have the skills, energy and time to assist in building for the future will come forward.

The meeting expressed thanks to Terry Tunstall, one of the initiators of OWN JUBILATION, for her work on the organising committee of the group. Terry, though intending to remain a member, will step down from the committee.

Discussion of the central issues concluded around 8.00 pm. Members who desired further socialising and informal discussion stayed on. It had been a very satisfying first birthday.

[OWN JUBILATION is open to any OWN member who may wish

# At and Beyond the Rocks

to attend. Monthly meetings are held at 87 Lower Fort Street on the third Friday of each month and are listed on the monthly list of OWN events. Time of starting is 6.00 pm to suit the needs of women who for various reasons, find day time meetings unsuitable.]

*Bev Cameron*

## Illawarra Older Women's Network

We are a group of vibrant, enthusiastic young, OLDER women, who enjoy the stimulus of being part of a group of women with diverse interests and talents. We ensure that contact is maintained with all our members in times of illness or stress, with a quiet reminder that they are not alone.

Our group has been going steadily for nine years, with members ranging in age from mid-fifties to early nineties. Our goals are to promote the social, mental and physical well-being and self-worth of older women. We also like to bring to public notice our ideas and concerns relating to older women, and wish to be seen as a vital and enriching part of modern society.

There are meetings every first and third Thursday of the month which are always well attended. The other two, sometimes three Thursdays of the month are filled with fun, with interest groups such as Writing, Sketching, Play reading, Gentle Dance, not-so-gentle Current Affairs, Board Games and we have many and varied social outings as well. We have a concert group called

the SilvertOWNs, consisting of ten or so members who have gigs in and around the Illawarra. If anyone would like to book a performance, we still have some dates to fill.

Any member in the OWN group can participate in as many or as few activities as she wishes, but we do recommend the first and third Thursdays which will give you an insight into how and why everything else works.

We have proved over the years that there are numerous talents lying dormant in many older women, who have never had the opportunity or self-confidence to do those things which would truly make them the whole person they always wanted to be.

You will receive a very warm welcome no matter from which part of the world you may have come. Being older can be a most rewarding experience with the Illawarra OWN group.

Let me add this, though. It is not enough to get women to walk through the OWN door. It has to be a moment of "Wow! They really are pleased to welcome me! I feel very special." We try to achieve this by making sure there are one or two members sitting with, talking to or offering a cuppa to each prospective member.

Each new person is given a folder with relevant information of times, dates, venues etc. all thoroughly explained to that person before she leaves the meeting. A short

history of OWN is also included in the folder.

A group can become too comfortable with just its regular members and can form a pattern which is not easily changeable.

We must all remember that life is like a kaleidoscope - ever changing. A new member can change things a little, a lot, or maybe not at all, but we must always remember what our group is trying to achieve - YES : to better the lives of ALL older women.

Just one more thought:

Stand on the outside of your OWN group and imagine what a new person, who does not know who we are, what we do or how we approach what we do, sees us. Does it make sense to join such a group? You have to appeal to the women who find it hard to make the first step into a new venture.

Those who do NOT find it hard to make the first step will have found their OWN way to OWN (excuse the pun!).

## Disclaimer

*Roma Bates*

In the June issue of *OWN Matters*, Joan Modder wrote a great piece for the Theatre Group Report which was attributed, by mistake, to me (Joan sends copy to me as a courtesy and I cast an eye over what she writes and forward it to OWN).

Now, I'd love to claim her report as my own work because I think it's so well written but, in fairness, I think my path to a glorious hereafter would be smoother if I acknowledged its true author. Which I do, with appreciation. It's Joan Modder, at present sojourning in the UK.

*Brigid Sen*

## Envisioning Aging

“Aging is often regarded as a fixed and invariant process totally determined by the biological process of the body leading to decline and death.”

Dr Jenny Onyx, in a splendid book on the empowerment of older women, along with her co-editors Drs. Rosemary Leonard and Rosslyn Reed, totally rejects this perception of aging because ‘the problem of aging then becomes an issue of dependency and care.’ Called *Revisoning Aging* this collection of essays is by thoughtful and erudite women who have analysed the dominant ways in which older women have always been devalued and discriminated against. They express much anger at the way aging is regarded in our society and how completely unjust and cruel it is. The writers deconstruct the problems and explain how things can be changed.

The book is in three sections, the first dealing with the way in which the prevailing political and economic climate categorizes older women and how we have been objectivised by doctors and gerontologists into ‘geriatrics’.

The second section looks at specific aspects of older women’s lives. This part is called “deconstructing age’ and deals with issues such as the unpaid work done by women, the ‘docile, useful body’ of older women and the invisibility and benevolent oppression that is often suffered.

The third part is a call to action! We must re-vision aging by ourselves, by empowering ourselves. Not by telling doctors or other professionals, however caring, what to do, (though there are many potential treatments in what we say).

In the beginning of this section Dr.Margaret Sargent sums up empowerment neatly when she says, “Revisoning...means taking more control of our own individual lives and making real choices. It means acting together in the public social domain to change the parameters of our social context.” This third section goes on to deal with the many means of empowerment through older women’s housing and through organisations like OWN and peer organisations through which we can influence government policy .

Dr Onyx has the last word in a most thoughtful, positive and enjoyable essay,

“A *Celebration of Aging.*” With her co-writers she reflects on former OWN member,

Pam Benton’s death and talks about discussions with Pam before her death.

The book finishes with a poem by Noeleen O’Beirne who has written, says Jenny, “A universal yet personal statement of triumph.”

I am pleased to say it is in our office and may be borrowed.

*Muriel Hortin*

## The Getting of Wisdom

[These thoughts were inspired by psychiatrist M. Scott Peck in his book, *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED*, Simon and Schuster, 1978 and writing about them prompted by current wrestling with several personal issues at once. Scott Peck’s thoughts have guided my thinking in the past. I offer them now to *OWN Matters* readers. This article merely summarises Scott Peck’s organising principle. Reading the book is the only successful way to grasp the rich complexity behind the simple statement “Life is difficult.”]

Life is difficult. This succinct message remains as fresh for me today as it was when I first read it more than 20 years ago. Whenever my life progress runs into a brick wall – and it frequently does – these three little words anchor me to sanity and have probably saved me from running under the nearest bus several times.

Isn’t it true that we have an expectation, usually hidden, and one which is socially reinforced constantly, that our lives should be happy all the time? That we should have perfect marriages, wonderful families, unblemished bodies and perfect health, happiness and success? Does not the TV, addressing us older people, speak only of the freedom and joy of retirement living as we jet around the world, buy that boat or that house at the beach and of course, go abseiling and paragliding at the weekends? I suspect most of us senior citizens know a somewhat different reality.

Fortunately, there is a way through this contradiction, both simple and yet demanding. Once we truly understand that life IS difficult and accept that, then life is no longer difficult. We just get on with it, letting life’s rough waves bowl us over before rising to meet the next one.

It is well known among those who help others deal with psychological crises that life will present each of us with definable developmental stages as we go from birth to death. For example, the so-called “Mid-life” crisis is widely known about and discussed. Not so widely discussed are three others, more pertinent to those of us in the last third of our lives. These are roughly described as follows:

a] The crisis of relinquishing authority over one's children. For example, I've only just come to terms with giving up efforts to retain a strong bond with my 40-year-old son, who in many subtle and unsubtle ways has been trying set himself free of "mother" for years. To my great relief we were able to discuss this painful matter and I was able to say I was now formally letting go of him. (To my astonishment, within days of our conversation he made a very unusual and quite spontaneous effort to contact me and chat!)

b] The crisis of letting go of various forms of temporal power. Simply put, this means letting go of the satisfying experience of influence and/or authority that being in employment or other forms of recognised responsibility brings as we become older and less able to carry out the work involved. Failure to negotiate this crisis adequately and grow into a new and more appropriate life can lead to depression, illness and even despair. Some even die shortly after retiring, such is their inability to deal with their new reality. Their loss of meaning has been total.

c] Accepting the loss of independence that comes when physical health diminishes. I'm sure readers of *OWN Matters* will be already clearly aware of the reality of this hurdle. Confronting the external changes that have to be made can be daunting enough. Working to make changes to one's view of self and the world at the same time in order to remain optimistic can seem virtually impossible.

Fortunately, there is a way through each crisis if only we have accepted that life is difficult, and if we have stopped feeling outraged by the slings and arrows of misfortune. The rewards of spiritual growth, discovery of new meaning, are rich for those with the courage to deal with their life crises compared to a choice of continuing to complain, to flounder about in sadness or loneliness or guilt and doing nothing to move forward. Without our problems, we won't grow spiritually and mentally. So let us learn not to dread them but to welcome them and the pain they bring, because ultimately they will be the making of us.

*Bev Cameron*



## OWN Matters Collation Volunteers Needed

Our newsletter mailout volunteer team would like some regular extra hands each month to help them get OWN Matters labelled, collated and folded, ready for pick up by Australia Post.

The team starts promptly at 9.00am and finishes by around lunchtime. Collation is usually on the last Wednesday of the month. (This date is always shown on the Diary Page). If you are willing to help each month, or even help occasionally, please call:

Noel Carpenter on 9971 0021

### ICE it is

We carry our mobile phones with many names/numbers stored in its memory, yet nobody other than ourselves, knows which of these numbers belong to our near and dear ones. In an emergency the people attending won't know which number to call to inform our family members. Which one is the contact person in case of an emergency?

For this reason, the name ICE (In Case of Emergency) in our mobile phones helps. The concept of ICE is catching on quickly. It is simple, an important method of contact during emergency situations. As cell phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store as ICE (meaning In Case of Emergency) the number of a contact person or person who should be contacted during an emergency.

The idea was conceived by a paramedic who found that when they went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but paramedics didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there were a nationally recognised name for this purpose.

Following a disaster in London, the East Anglican Ambulance Service has launched a national "In Case of Emergency (ICE)" campaign. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would then be able quickly to contact a patient's next of kin, by simply dialling the number stored as ICE.

Please tell your friends about ICE. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3 etc.

*Contributed by Barbara Malcolm*

# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

## Joan Johns - you're right

In April's newsletter I wrote an article about Noel Pearson's drastic reform agenda for four Cape York communities. In June's newsletter Joan raised very important objections to the measures he proposes, and I'm in complete agreement with her. Mick Dodson and other Aboriginal leaders have also spoken out against these proposals. From our point of view they smack of dictatorship.

However, Noel Pearson, who has indeed consulted with these four communities, describes these measures as a last-ditch desperate attempt to break the vicious welfare dependency in Cape York and all the problems associated with it because, as he says, everything else that has been tried has not worked.

We have to realise that, as non-indigenous people, we have to let indigenous communities decide for themselves how they wish to operate. Even Aboriginal people whom I've spoken with here are horrified at what is being proposed but, as one of them remarked, "We're talking about Cape York, it has special needs, they need to work out what's best for them, and that's their business".

*Pat Zinn*

## If it didn't happen this week, it wasn't going to happen

I waited to hear whether Labor would take on the challenge from Tom Calma, from the Australian Medical Association (AMA), then Oxfam and finally from Getup, the challenge to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous health. Apparently 40,000 people emailed on this issue. I heard indigenous health discussed a number of times on radio. After all, the election campaign was in full swing. And now it was the 40-year anniversary of the referendum.

And they did. Kevin Rudd committed Labor to closing the gap within one generation. This is what we have been asking for, a commitment with a time frame. They committed \$260 million.

Now the head of AMA has said it is not enough, that twice as much will be needed, that AMA is hoping for a bidding war from the two major parties. Kevin Rudd challenged John Howard on "Sorry" and said that he hoped that both parties

would work together on this issue, no matter which party is elected. John Howard has not risen to the challenge.

It is time for all women, good or not, to come to challenge the parties. Write to them. Email them. Ask them whether they will commit enough money to close the gap. Ask them whether they will work with the Indigenous communities.

This is the best chance we have to make a difference, to make our opinion counted on this one. So please write or email someone if it matters to you.

I have every toe and finger crossed that this election will get Janette out of Kirribilli House, and her old man out of the Bennelong electorate.

But I plan to give one day to writing and emailing all of them, to ask what they will commit to on Indigenous health.

*Lorraine Inglis*

## Burrup

The Burrup, on the Pilbara coast of Western Australia is thought to contain the largest collection of petroglyphs (rock carvings) in the world. It is estimated to contain between 500,000 and one million motifs beginning from at least 30,000 years ago. Over 4000 engravings have already been lost due to industrialisation of the region over the last few decades.

Since the 1970s the Western Australian government has given the green light to industry to use the Peninsula as a northern hub. Some companies in more recent times have responsibly relocated. But Woodside Energy are pushing ahead with plans for a project called Pluto that will further disrupt the integrity of the Burrup.

*The Telegraph* in the UK likened the impact of industry in the Burrup to the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan. The World Monument Fund in New York has recently placed the Burrup on its list of the 100 most endangered sites of the world.

Shakthi Sivananthan is the co-ordinator of GetUp!'s "Choose a Different Future" campaign to preserve and protect the Burrup.

"There are places like Uluru and it's amazing but the Burrup is a place that probably explains how the first people got to Australia. It's the world of the first Australians and it features in the song lines of mobs from South Australia and the



# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Northern Territory. It was definitely a meeting place and it could be the key Indigenous site in the country. Considering its location, it's probably the area that was joined to Indonesia and thus the link to South-East Asia."

In 2006 GetUp! joined the ranks of groups protesting against industry in the Burrup, by lodging a formal submission boasting over 17 thousand signatures. The submission called on the Government to preserve the site with a federal heritage listing and to protect the remaining carvings with Commonwealth funding. It argued for moving industry to suitable locations down the coast. A world class site could be built on a scale that isn't possible in the Burrup, making the move not only ethically necessary but economically sensible. Supporters of such a proposal say the move would constitute a win/win outcome.

"It's not expected that this should happen here. It's like drilling under Stonehenge or moving half of it for a bit of oil. They wouldn't do that even if that was the only place they could get the oil. The problem is that all these carvings relate to and are based on the exact position they sit in, so when you move them or bulldoze them it ruins it." says Shakthi.

Malcolm Turnbull, Minister for Environment and Water Resources, has made a commitment to heritage listing the site and a final decision is expected soon. Groups such as GetUp! are now focussing their campaigns on influencing the nature of the listing.

"Our final step is to make sure Minister Turnbull comes through on his promise by drawing up a meaningful heritage listing that puts Commonwealth funds towards effectively protecting all of the remaining carvings. The accompanying management plan must ensure safe, respectful visitation and allow for world-class scientific study over the long term: all in close consultation with local Indigenous groups and the broader local community, so we can properly come to terms with the significance of this site."

Go to [www.getup.org.au](http://www.getup.org.au)

## Sandon Point

Sandon Point is a picturesque coastal strip of land north of Wollongong from McCauley's Beach in Thirroul to the Sandon Point Surf Club. Known

as Ngarrabaan by its inhabitants, it was a meeting place for ceremonies, camping, fishing and also a burial site. The New South Wales government has formally declared the area as a "Place of State Significance to Aboriginal people". A tent embassy and ongoing protests led by Ray (Dootch) Kennedy for more than six years has finally been acknowledged, although there was no way of stopping a recent housing development by Stockland on part of the land.

Sandon Point is the 55th site to be formally declared an Aboriginal Place under NSW legislation, the fifth to be declared this year.

*Pat Zinn*

## Aboriginal Art

I have at home a didgeridoo, a nice old one, wood smooth as silk, just wood colour. While I travelled in the Northern Territory I saw them everywhere. Very dodgy didges. Heavily decorated, reputedly by backpackers needing money. I doubt this is true of all of them because some are for sale in Aboriginal centres.

I looked at Aboriginal art, not knowing how, where or what to buy if I bought some. I could not get to many of the Aboriginal Centres, where I know the money goes to the artist, or at least to the community. I did look at a few galleries,

But there was no way of knowing which galleries give the artists a fair share of the proceeds. A couple horrified me by their patronizing attitude...we look after our artists, they don't understand money, we make sure they have health care, and materials... almost Victorian, and definitely with the aim of making lots of money from the artists.

I was looking at a painting in a gallery in Darwin, and the price was \$12,000, double what I had seen on a painting by the same artist in Alice. When I told the gallery owner so, he said the one in Alice was probably painted by her sister. So what that said for the provenance of the one he had, we did not discuss. He said a big auction was coming up in Sydney in which they expected to get \$20,000 for a painting by the same artist. I was talking to someone who said they knew an Aboriginal artist who sold a painting for \$150 and lived to see it sold for \$150,000.

So when I got back to Sydney last week, still jet-lagged, I went to the big auction of Aboriginal



# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Art in Kensington.

I could not believe the prices. Many went to prices over \$20,000, where the item was passed in because the bid was not high enough, but everything was way beyond what the artist would have dreamed of. Many of the items came from overseas owners.

The painting that made the news, the Emily Kngwarreye, went for \$880,000 and the winning bidder would have paid twenty percent on top, taking it over a million. The winning bidder has a gallery in Alice Springs, and is taking it back there to sell.

This price made the news next day. But nothing was said about what the artist got for the work originally. Nothing was said about what the gallery owner has made from the selling of Aboriginal art if he can afford to pay that kind of money. Nothing was said about what he hopes to sell it for. This buying and selling is so far removed from the artist, or even the art, it puts my teeth on edge.

*Lorraine Inglis*

## Child Artists of the Australian Bush

The government of Western Australia established a settlement at Carrolup – south-west of Perth – before the second world war, as a “dumping place for human refuse” – in other words a place with little water and no funds for upkeep. Indigenous children were badly housed, badly fed, received three to four years’ schooling, and had to leave at age 14. It was an isolated place with little discipline and hygiene and the non-indigenous staff had defeatist attitudes.

However, in 1945, an enlightened teaching couple, Mr and Mrs Noel White arrived. They won the children’s confidence by introducing song, dance and dramatisation and, instead of the children being locked in dormitories at 5pm, which was the practice then, they were allowed outdoors playtime and were taken on bush walks, where they developed a love of the bush creatures they encountered. Every morning water was heated up in paraffin tins on top of a fire so the children were able to wash, which they had not been able to do previously on a regular

basis. At that time there were approximately 50 children living there.

Eventually the children asked to be able to do drawing and painting in the evenings in their schoolroom and, there under the light of a hurricane lamp, they produced the most amazing artwork using charcoal, watercolours and ink. Having had absolutely no instruction, their work was quite unique and not an adaptation of any known art-form. It did not look like “child art”. The girls enjoyed working out imaginative and subtle designs for fabrics, but it was the boys who turned out precise drawings and worked out perspective for themselves, painting landscapes, animals, hunting scenes and corroborees using bold colours. The whites encouraged full-blood Aboriginal people who sometimes drifted into the settlement to instill into the children a deep feeling for country and a sense of mysticism and ancient magic, which influenced some of their pictures, while some of the elderly inhabitants of the settlement taught the children about corroborees, hunting and totemic decorations.

Eventually news of this extraordinary work spread. A Mrs Florence Rutter, who was visiting Australia to establish soroptimist clubs. After visiting the settlement she organised exhibitions, firstly in Perth, and then in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and Wellington, New Zealand, followed by exhibitions in England and Europe. Money from the sale of paintings was used to buy the best new art materials and a trust fund was started. Many publications wrote up the story and the government started to improve Carrolup but were quite unprepared to meet the challenge of helping the boys use their talents after they had to leave at age 14. Some were given jobs in Perth as “office boys” and one of the most promising artists was given an apprenticeship at the department of public works. However, none of them could cope with living in a city after the isolation at Carrolup and most drifted back to their families or found work in timber mills or on farms.

The Department of Education running Carrolup carried out improvements but eventually closed the school and reorganised the place as an agricultural centre – the Murrumbidgee Farm School. Some of the Carrolup boys remained there and were encouraged to do



# ASC Issues

artwork after hours but, by that time, Mr and Mrs White had left. A few boys continued as artists after the settlement was closed down, but none of them attained prominence.

Meanwhile, the exhibition continued on to the USA and in the late 60s was gifted to Colgate University's Picker Art Gallery in New York. They were discovered in wooden crates in 2003 by Ezzard Flowers, a Nyoongar artist. He secured some of the works for a special exhibition at the Perth International Arts Festival last year and this has led to an ongoing cultural exchange with the university and the first stage of having the works returned permanently. He has won a major honour at the 2007 Multicultural Community Services Awards for his part in returning these important artworks.

I thank Margaret Walker for the loan of a book now out of print, published in 1952 by M.D. Miller and F. Rutter titled "Child Artists of the Australian Bush" without which I could not have written this article. The *Koori Mail*, published an article about Ezzard Flowers earlier this year. John Stanton, director of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia has declared the collection of national significance to Australia as well as of "vital cultural significance to contemporary Aboriginal people".

*Pat Zinn*



## Surprising Recipe!

When visiting Tasmania quite a few years ago, I had the opportunity to visit

Macquarie House, circa 1830, one of the few remaining early brick and stone buildings.

This fascinating former warehouse is now a museum, specializing in the history of bricks and their method of manufacture. Here is one of the recipes I noticed.

18<sup>th</sup> Century recipe for brick cement:-

- ½ lb. old Cheshire cheese
- 1 pt cow's milk
- 12 to 14 egg whites
- ½ lb. quick lime

## BELVOIR STREET THEATRE NEWS

The carriage still awaits for Eastern Suburbs dwellers who would like transport to the free matinees at Belvoir Street Theatre.

Randwick Waverley Transport took 14 happy theatregoers recently to see *Paul*, who had a very bumpy journey on the road to Damascus and beyond. The play was controversial and intense, with brilliant acting.

Since late last year, the Eastern 'burbs group has grown. We are collected at our doors by a helpful driver from Randwick Waverley Transport Group, driven to the theatre and delivered back home. All this for an amazing \$5 bus fee.

If you would like this service, phone Randwick Waverley Transport Group on 9369 5366. The next two plays are *Exit The King* on 5 July (starring Geoffrey Rush) and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* on 23 August (starring Catherine McClements).

You need an Aged Pension card or Pension Health Care Card to attend the free matinee. Belvoir staff members take our group upstairs in the lift about 15 minutes before the performance to ensure we get good seats at the back, with few steps to negotiate. A glass of vino at the bar beforehand will cost you \$6.

*Helen McMaugh*



Grate cheese finely, add milk and let stand all night.  
Stir lime into mixture, stir well and add whites of egg.  
Add brick dust if colour is required.

*Peggy Hewett*

# Letters to the Editor

## Inspired to Respond

Three items in the June edition have sent me to my computer.

Enid Harrison's Point of View on aging and respect reminded me of one of the reasons I am a member of The Greens. I have been an active member since 1992 and am now respected as an elder and a keeper of the history and wisdom of the group. It is so heartening when younger members seek me out to ask my opinion on issues. One 23-year-old male member makes a habit of ringing to seek my advice. When we meet he treats me like a much-loved grandmother.

The second item was Louise Anike's 'Demon Drink'. The Greens are often criticised for their drugs policy whereby all drug abuse (both legal and illegal) would be treated as a health and social justice issue. The reality is that the two drugs which cost Australian society the most dislocation, money, and lives are nicotine and alcohol.

The weekend that Anna Woods died from ingesting Ice at a rave party, three young people died from the direct result of alcohol. Not a word in the media or from the police or government. The reason is simple: governments of both persuasions receive large donations from the liquor and tobacco industries and their pressure groups, not to mention the taxes their products engender. It is so hypocritical to condemn illegal drug use while condoning and promoting the use of dangerous legal drugs.

The third was Russ Aroney's letter about abortion. When I was a child, a cousin of mine died as the result of an illegal abortion. Although we now have access to safe legal abortions, this right is indeed precarious, with male, religious politicians keen to take

it from us. There is no 'right' outcome when an unwanted pregnancy occurs. The woman has to choose between a range of less than perfect options, but one of these must be a safe legal termination. Not only must it be available, but the woman must know it is available and how to access it.

Thank you for a newsletter full of stimulating articles, information and letters.

*Joan Lambert, Newcastle OWN*

## Great Reading

I have just spent the last two hours reading June *OWN Matters* and wanted to say, before I jump into bed, what a fantastic read it is. Funny, entertaining, inspiring, educating. I have just worked a 13-hour day, and still I managed to invest the last of my day's energy in absorbing what it had to say. I often refer to things I have read in the magazine in my classes at TAFE.

Congratulations on all the things you do, it always motivates me and reminds me that maybe some of that much-needed change is just around the corner – so we had best keep working.

Also congratulations to the fantastic women at Wellness Northside, who with the wonderful support of Uma, had a great local launch of *Kicking up Autumn Leaves*.

*Cara MacDougall*



## Retirement - some suggestions

In the May edition of *OWN Matters* there was a plea for help from a newly retired OWN member and, in this month's edition, Elizabeth Sclater asks for helpful hints. I can certainly sympathise with being turned off by bowls, bridge and crafts, but a sure-fire way of meeting new people and finding new interests can be found in going to lectures given by the University of the Third Age, and becoming a volunteer. Last year I met Alison Keene, of the Centre for Volunteering (phone 92614033) at a function I attended and I'm sure if you contact her you will both find something that suits your interests.

If I weren't so involved already in multiple interests and being the matriarch of my family, who are now all in Sydney, I'd love to be a volunteer at the Botanic Gardens or Centennial Park. Visiting a friend at Concord hospital recently, I was shown to the ward I was looking for by a cheerful volunteer, and of course all the museums and the Art Gallery rely on their volunteers. Finally, there's OWN with all it has to offer!

Good luck to you both. You'll probably find that soon you'll be even busier in retirement than when you were working.

*Pat Zinn*

# Letters to the Editor

---

## Dear OWN Friends,

Thank you very much for the beautiful greeting card. I'm sorry I haven't been able to visit for such a long time. After treatment for a weird medical condition called GCA, which involved vast doses of steroids, I am cured but left with muscle weakness that prevents me from travelling very far on foot. I keep in touch by phone with Merle, and by reading the Newsletter.

I've managed to keep on teaching my Short Story Writing Class at U3A in Woollahra because one member picks me up and another brings me home again. It's a fortnightly meeting and now in its fourth year, from a 'beginners only' it has now turned into an 'advanced course'.

So if there's any OWN member who drives, lives in the Eastern suburbs, is willing and able to give me a lift, either weekly or fortnightly, I'd be delighted to join the merry band once again! If anyone's interested in joining a **SHORT STORY WRITING FOR BEGINNERS** class I could do that too!

Greetings to everyone, and thanks for the good wishes. Long may you prosper.

*Mary McCusker*

## Grey Skies and Grumpy Thoughts

I have been sitting here thinking about the things that I would like to do if I could guarantee that there would be no comeback.

Firstly I would make every doctor have the tests that they so quickly send you for, first.

I would open my car door as I drew level with a bicycle courier.

I would dip my finger in the jar to see if I liked it before buying.

Have a bumper guard fitted so that I could ram taxis.

Smack children on the backside for screaming in shops.

When unwanted people knock at my door tell them to bugger off.

Push past people who wait until boarding the bus to get out their fare money.

Sit on a young mans lap if he did not offer me his seat.

Cut my hairdressers hair, and not listen to what she asks for.

Put gaffer tape on the mouth of the next person who says, have a nice day.

Put speakers under the window of my neighbour and play William Tells Overture SO loud.

If this makes me sound like a grumpy old fed up woman, well I am today.

*Josie the Grouch*

## Forty Years Later

In the first two weeks of this month I went to a number of meetings, discussions and rallies. They were all about two different anniversaries, fortieth anniversaries. These were both anniversaries of events and I remember the original events, although I did not remember that they had happened so closely together in time.

The first week was the fortieth anniversary of the Aboriginal referendum. I cannot say we celebrated it because it did not bring for the Aboriginal people what they had expected from it, nor what many non Indigenous people hoped it would bring for them.

I mourn for the Indigenous people that the referendum did not bring freedom from racial discrimination, nor hunger, nor violence. It did not bring them equal rights in the law, in health care, in education, in employment, in their own country.

Then came the fortieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I can remember that people thought Israel would pull back to their boundary line, and that part of the world would become more peaceful. Neither of those things eventuated.

I mourn for the people of Palestine that the Israeli occupation of their country did not bring them freedom from racial discrimination, nor hunger, nor violence. It did not bring equal rights in law, in health care, in education, in employment, in their own country.

On these anniversaries, I mourn both for the Indigenous people of Australia and for the people of Palestine.

*Lorraine Inglis*

## Political Masters

How much some of our political masters cost us for their creature comforts is almost unbelievable, for it's now been revealed that it's over \$20 million for the Howard's use of two residences, Kirribilli House and the Lodge in Canberra, not to mention the tremendous cost of daily VIP plane flights between the two.

How many unemployed, drought-stricken farmers, or homeless, would that feed?

*Ken O'Hara*  
*Networking for Real*  
*Democracy*



## The Health of Women PROMISES, PROMISES

Seven years ago leaders from every United Nations country agreed on a vision for the future - a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, greater survival prospects for mothers and their infants, better educated children, equal opportunities for women, a healthier environment, and a development framework for countries around the world. This vision took the shape of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG), with 2015 as the target date.

The eight goals are to:  
\*eradicate extreme poverty and hunger  
\*achieve universal primary education  
\*promote gender equality and empower women  
\*reduce child mortality  
\*improve maternal health  
\*combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases  
\*ensure environmental sustainability  
\*develop a global partnership for development.

So how are things progressing in these aims, now that we are half way through this visionary project to make the world a better place?

There can be little progress in achieving any of the MDG targets, without considering gender equality, yet in no country in the world can women claim to have the same rights and opportunities as men. Globally, more than one in five girls of primary school age are

not in school, compared with about one in six boys. Women account for three-quarters of the 960 million people in the world who cannot read; on average, they receive up to 40% less pay than men for the same work.

Hmm, still haven't scratched the surface of gender equality really.

In the area of women's health, the global outlook isn't very cheering either. Women are, as they always were and always will be, the primary providers of child welfare and play a crucial part in the management of household resources, yet in Third World countries they put their lives at risk every time they become pregnant. MDG aims to improve maternal health, yet over 500,000 women continue to die every year from often preventable complications of pregnancy. In Third World countries women are increasingly susceptible to HIV/AIDS and other major diseases.

And what of other important health and safety issues for women which were not even included in the MDG goals? Sexual and reproductive ill health doesn't get a mention, yet it accounts for nearly a third of lost disability-adjusted life-years in women of reproductive age.

An estimated 90% of deaths from unsafe abortions and 20% of obstetric mortality could be avoided with improved access to contraception, but in many countries only a handful of women have access to contraceptive methods. There is a competitive global market for generic contraceptive drugs but in Africa, for example, 97% of the population cannot afford even generic contraceptives without the help of subsidies.

A recent report in *The Lancet* showed that women's health rapidly improves when abortion is made legal, safe, and easily accessible, but this is not an option for many women - in Nicaragua and El-Salvador, for instance, terminations are not permitted even when the woman's life is at risk from severe complications of pregnancy.

Overall, it seems that the international community is showing little interest in tackling these resistant challenges, yet sustainable solutions to the world's economic, health, political, and social problems will not be found until the rights and full potential of women are achieved.

We still have a long way to go if we are to keep our promises to current and future generations.

*Helen Young*

## Ye Olde Shoppes

In Vienna, Leipzig and now Berlin, the elderly have their own supermarkets. In Kaiser's there are magnifying glasses in every aisle, so if 'Gerda' somewhat absentmindedly forgets her reading glasses, all is not lost. Another advantage is more emphasis on smaller portions. What good is a family pack of Persil if you haven't the strength to lug it home? Plus the floor is slip-resistant and the overhead lighting is extra bright. The typeface on all food labels is large, therefore legible. The shelves are lower than average so nothing is out of reach and there are emergency buzzers.

From the outside Kaiser's is indistinguishable from its traditional counterparts – unless you turn up your hearing aid. The talking fruits and vegetable scales are so loud that you can just about hear them in the car park.

## 'Sew' Very Cool

'Stitch 2n Bitch' is a Berlin city-centre "sewing café," as sewing is no longer just for grandmothers. Based on the idea of Internet Cafes, it costs five euros to rent one of 15 sewing machines, drink coffee and rustle up from scratch the season's key looks. Girls, mostly in their twenties and thirties, come in to learn a craft with which their mothers would have grown up.

Coming to a café such as this means that you are not always at home alone and you can bond with other like-minded people about things such as dress patterns. The founder, Linda Eilers, says that while not all of her customers need to be women, she has not yet seen a man bent over a sewing machine. (Courtesy The Times 14.11.06)

*Contributed by Ruth Phillips – Bellingan OWN*

## She'll Be Jake Mate

The sandy, rutted, corrugated road in far North West Queensland was renowned for its difficulty, but Doug was determined to tackle the challenge.

So we set off in our campervan from Normanton with the warning words of the garage owner, 'That's a wicked road mate. You haven't got four-wheel drive. I bet you'll be back.'

'She'll be jake mate,' Doug replied, but a few kilometres out of town a STOP ROAD CLOSED sign brought us to a halt.

I was relieved, but not my crazy old husband. We turned back and found the Police Station. The policeman took his feet off his desk and pushed his cap on the back of his head. 'What can I do for you mate?'

'Is the Burketown road closed?' asked Doug.

'Closed? That was last week. We must have forgotten to take the sign down. Sorry mate.'

We had a good old laugh and he waved us on our way.

'It's a rotten road you know. You really need four-wheel drive'

'We'll take it slowly', Doug reassured him.

We were 20 kilometres along the road and my elderly bones were already protesting.

Suddenly the campervan lurched to a halt and we heard a heavy thud. The water tank which was riveted to the chassis under the van had shaken from its rivets and was lying in the sand on the road – 60 litres of precious water soaking into the red dust.

Now, here we had a challenge.

'I'll have a look underneath and see what's wrong.'

Doug took off his shirt and slid beneath the campervan to have a look at the damage. It was a mechanic's job to secure that tank back onto the van but Doug was not to be outdone. Mobile out of range, a lonely road, but we had to return to Normanton.

Firstly we found a log to lever up the water tank... The barbed wire fence alongside was a good resource for such an emergency. There were a few strands here and there which could be cut off to wire the tank back on.

I kept my foot firmly on the log. 'You're too old for this,' I said as Doug lay on his back and pushed himself under the campervan. What if my foot slipped, I thought. An anxious half hour passed when at last he emerged, a broad smile on his face.

'I've done it', his voice was triumphant. 'We can limp back to Normanton.'

Just then a car pulled up in a cloud of dust and the driver called 'Need any help mate?'

'No thanks, she's jake!'

He came and had a look. 'Good job you've done there. I won't charge for the fencing wire.'

We made our way cautiously to the garage and the mechanic smiled. 'Told you I'd see you back...'

He used stronger rivets to secure our tank firmly to the chassis.

'That should hold it'.

Doug turned to me, 'I think I'll have another go at that road, eh?'

'You're mad... I won't go!'

The mechanic nodded. 'Bit of a risk mate. That bloody road gets worse. Don't push your luck.'

So we took the long way round and arrived safely at Burketown.

*Joan Johns*

# Notices

## OWN (Australia) Conference 26-27 November 2007

The Conference will be held at Burgmann College at the Australian National University in Canberra, where OWN (Action) hosted the Conference four or five years ago. Accommodation is basic, but comfortable and very reasonable. We have been quoted \$75 for a full day's board. Additional meals will cost \$10.00. There will be a registration fee of \$20.00 per person to help cover the hire of the conference rooms. We will ask that you send your registration fees to OWN (Australia) and pay the accommodation money direct to Burgmann College after you arrive. Burgmann has credit card facilities.

The Conference Dinner will be held on the Monday. We will just have the normal buffet dinner menu, but will have designated tables with wine on the table. The wine will initially be supplied by OWN (Australia), but women will have to pay for any additional bottles. The dinner will be followed by an after dinner speaker and musical entertainment. Most local women attend on a daily basis, but some of us stay overnight after the dinner, so we can let our hair down without having to run the gauntlet of the boys in blue on the way home. Some parking is available at the College.

The Conference will start with registrations on the Monday morning and finish on the Tuesday afternoon in time for NSW women to catch the 5.00 pm train to Sydney.

The Conference Committee is working on contacting possible speakers. The main issues for discussion are ageism, public dentistry and grandparenting. We thought we would run the latter topics as forums. Could each state nominate one of their women to collect information about the situation in your states (including first hand experiences) and present them at the Conference? We don't need names yet, but it might help if you start work early!

Elections will be held for OWN (A) Council, so please consider nominating for a position. We will need a new Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer, plus state Councillors for those states not represented in those positions.

*Barbara Silverstone*

## POLITICS in the PUB

Every Friday Night

6.00 to 7.45 pm

Gaelic Club

64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills

**13 July** : Words Can Be Bullets

(a celebration of New Theatre over 75 Years

ASIO Surveillance Censorship).

**20 July** : Punishing Refugees

(Nauru, Guantanamo Bay & Other Horrors)

**27 July** : Climate Change

(What will/should Rudd Do?)

### Bequests to the Older Women's Network

If you would like to include a bequest to OWN in your Will, the following options will guide you in its wording.

Please specify which Older Women's Network you wish to be the recipient of your gift: Older Women's Network NSW or the *Older Women's Network, Sydney.*

#### Option No. 1

I devise the sum of \$

..... to the Older Women's Network

for the general purpose of the Older Women's Network OR the specific purpose of

.....  
.....  
.....

such purpose being consistent with the aims and objectives of the Older Women's Network, to be administered by the Older Women's Network.

#### Option No 2

(for a proportional bequest)

I give .....% of my estate to the Older Women's Network for its general purpose or the specific purpose of

.....  
.....  
.....

**The gift you make to OWN will be an enduring record of your generosity.**



### Looking for a Friendly Hearth?

I'm looking for a woman to share a house in a very leafy part of Lane Cove. Large room, own phone, own bathroom. Rent negotiable.

All enquiries direct to Janice Gentle 8901 5353

# OWN Sydney Notices

## Subscribe NOW!

- Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, these are due every JULY 1.
- Want to join **OWN Sydney** at the same time? We can fix this up in the same way, if you tick this box and include just another \$5
- Would you like to donate? \$.....

### Payment method

- I enclose a chq/money order for \$22/\$27 - to Jun30, 2008 made payable to OWNNSW OR
- Please debit the following credit card for \$22/\$27 (plus any donation)

Visa

Mastercard

Bankcard

Total amount:

Card no. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Name on card (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State & Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

### I need the audio version

- I'd love it on email
- Email only - don't post
- Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## What are friends for?

Please send the above subscription to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State & PC \_\_\_\_\_

## Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities

### Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesday  
Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point.

### Film Discussion group

You are invited to join **Tuesday July 10**, to see *The Dead Girl*, other films recommended for viewing are *The U.S. vs John Lennon*, *Cumberland* and *La Vie en Rose*.  
Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check details.

### Creative Movement

Join us in Mott Hall on Thursday mornings at 10.15 to discover your inner rhythms! Check with office for term dates: 9247 7046

### OWN UP – Unashamedly Political Discussion Group

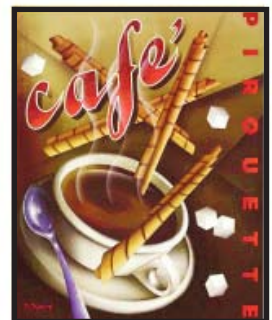
10.30am to 1.00pm, next meetings Friday 10 August and Friday 12 October 2007.  
75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.  
Have an early cuppa with us and bring a sandwich for lunch.  
Contact Pearlle on (02) 4285 5373 or e-mail [pearliej@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pearliej@bigpond.net.au)

### Inner-West Networking Group - IWNG

- Every 2nd Saturday from 2-4pm **IWNG Meeting** - Leichhardt Market Place, Cnr Marion & Flood Streets, (Community Room ground floor behind Tandy).  
Networking, mutual support, sharing interests, social activities.

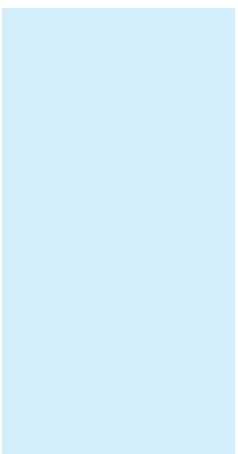
Buses serving the area are: 470, 435, 436, 437, and 438  
All OWN members are welcome. Just turn up, or contact the OWN office on 9247 7046 or Jan on 9692 9400  
OWN Members from other areas are welcome!

**Jubilation** - reaching out to retirees, all OWN members welcome 6pm-8.30pm, the 3rd Friday of each month, at 87 Lower Fort St. Bring food & drink to share, a gold coin donation is appreciated. Book a place! Stay in touch or you may miss out on fabulous adventures!  
Contact OWN NSW on 9247 7046.



IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:  
Older Women's Network NSW Inc.  
87 Lower Fort Street  
Millers Point NSW 2000

***OWN Matters***



**PRINT  
POST**  
PP239337/00007

**POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA**