



# OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales  
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## *We Have a Pulse?*

Like Lazarus, the euthanasia debate has arisen with new vigour following the touch-and-go resurrection of various political agendas and careers over the last month. This has come about because Greens Leader Bob Brown identified the restoration of the right of the Northern Territory to make its own laws, on this and other issues, as his number-one priority for the new parliament.

Back in 1996 the Northern Territory passed euthanasia laws, but this legislation was overturned by the Howard-led federal Coalition government. If passed, the bill would simply restore the right of the Northern Territory to make its own laws; it would then be up to the Territory's 25-member Legislative Assembly to decide if it would pursue legislation in this area. Any vote on a euthanasia bill would then be a conscience vote for MPs.

One of the biggest problems associated with the introduction of any bill allowing the introduction of voluntary euthanasia, is coming up with effective mechanisms to ensure that there can be no abuse of the system. And what constitutes abuse? I would have thought that keeping a person alive beyond their physical capacity, if they have no means of administering their own life support, is a particularly callous form of abuse.

Apparently there has always been a dichotomy between ethics and pragmatism when it comes to taking votes of conscience on the parliamentary floor. Which may explain why some politicians maintain their moral opposition to the inclusion of ethics classes as an alternative to formal religious studies in schools. What would future leaders need with logic, ethics and a grounding in social theory?

After watching a couple of documentaries on SBS recently, I now have a greater appreciation of how this political rationale can impact on the decision-making process, and just what a delicate balance this universe is held in by the interactions of our global and moral economies.

*Greed is Not Good* explored the causes and reactions to the Great Depression of 1929. Australia's ability to recover from the Great Depression was hampered by a conservative policy which sought to achieve a balanced budget and reduction in government spending. Sound familiar? See Lorraine's article on pages 2 and 3. Unfortunately Australia's extreme dependence on agricultural and industrial exports at the time meant that this policy made us one of the hardest-hit countries in the Western world. America's recovery was aided by Roosevelt's social welfare and state-funded infrastructure projects – a revolutionary idea at the time – and prosperity returned, aided in no small measure by the inevitable military build up for WWII.

September 16 marked the second anniversary of the 2008 stock market crash and, reflecting on the very different strategies that our political leaders adopted for recovery, I give thanks that they decided to spend and invest in our future, when other countries chose to wait. It seems that we are indeed forced to relive history if we are unable to learn from our mistakes.

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## 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 email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

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# POINT of VIEW

## Kill the Customer

What is economic rationalisation? It is the big story we've been told about market forces being the best driver of economics. We were told we must trim services, privatise, cut back. But this is the system that has caused unemployment and hardship in Australia.

Companies were allowed to close factories here and open them in countries where wages were lower, thereby making the companies more profitable. The idea was that the goods would then be cheaper in Australia. Of course the unemployed people, who had worked in the factories when they were in Australia, now couldn't afford to buy the goods. 'Kill the customer!' It also used a lot of fossil fuel to transport the goods to Australia,

BHP closed much of its steelworks in Port Kembla, shifting a lot of the manufacture of steel products to China, causing high levels of unemployment in Wollongong. Cans are produced more cheaply overseas and companies which manufactured canned goods found it more expensive to do it in Australia... more unemployment. Much of our car making is done overseas.

Bonds closed the factory in Lithgow, and moved overseas, causing much hardship in a small town where many women had worked in Bonds, so less money for spending. Many goods we expect to be 'Made in Australia' are now made overseas. Arnott's Biscuits? Holden cars? Bonds undies?

The basic weakness in the system is that it 'kills the customer'. Economic rationalisation ignores this part of equation.

You might recognise economic rationalisation at work in the current debate about the ferries. Privatisation has been a mantra. The State Government wanted to sell the ferries for a big influx of cash, but public opinion was dead against this. So State Transport planned to cut some services dramatically. This would mean less services, less money (kill the customer). This could later be used to justify the sale of this expensive part of the transport system. Of course that would mean job losses. Would the service be better or cheaper if private enterprise ran it? We could answer that by looking at what the sale of our electricity, or Commonwealth Bank did not do for us. Each privatisation caused job losses and more unemployment. There are some services which definitely should be run by the government... water supply, transport, education, electricity supply, hospitals, prisons. At the moment some of these are still state run, and we need to hold onto the publicly owned services we still have.

Another result of economic rationalisation has been the cutting back of services in both public and private areas. It might mean less people working in Centrelink so it will take longer to get help. It might mean less people working in a store, so less registers will be operating, so the queues will be longer. It

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# P of V

## Kill the Customer

(continued from page 2)

might mean that fewer trains are running, so that they are more crowded, or if you live in the country the service operates only once each week. It might mean it takes longer to have something made or repaired or built. It might mean the retirement village or school is not as clean because the hours to do the cleaning have been cut. It might mean less nurses are working in a hospital. It might mean you have to wait longer to have an operation. Next time you are not satisfied with a product or service, look to see whether economic rationalisation has been the cause of your complaint.

Someone might say 'big deal'. It just means you wait longer. But don't forget that if the delay is caused because less people are working in the service or business, those 'less' are unemployed, and those unemployed don't spend money therefore causing more unemployment or the closure of more small businesses causing more unemployment. Is this really rational? Only to the companies who are cutting their costs. Only to the companies making more money. What about the unemployed or casuals with less work hours, who can't afford new glasses for their child, or whose families eat less well?

*Lorraine Inglis*

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## We Have a Pulse?

(continued from page 1)

The second doco also explored how interconnected world economies have become, even among ordinary citizens. *Manhunters* followed the apparently not so unusual travels of two British women, Barbara 67, and Joanne 54, looking for love and sex in the Dominican Republic. It was hard to watch, and deeply confronting on many levels, coming to terms with the fact that these women were engaging in sexual tourism. Somehow the trans-global exchange between the participants was an exchange that defied any simplistic conversion. Although I felt that the filmmaker, a younger woman, was (remembering the title: *Manhunters*) trying cast the two women as sexual predators in the ilk of Anglo men touring Thailand for sex. When interviewed, the candor of these women revealed lives lived in a deficit of power, respect and desire. They were older single women who wanted something more. They knew they were paying for 'love' and sex, but this time all it was going to cost them was money. Fascinating.

*Beth Eldridge*

# What a Day!

## Illawarra Celebrates

Have you ever sat in a crowded room for five hours with the occasional break to stretch your legs or have a lunch, then come away feeling you're had the greatest workout ever? If you were at the first birthday party of Illawarra OWN's Wellness Centre on 6 September, you will know what I mean. What a day!

Demonstrations of all present and some future activities were inspiring. Tai Chi, gentle, and some not so gentle exercises, Argentinean drumming, happiness therapy, international dancing, stick dancing and Thai Yoga all introduced most ably by the compere, Margaret de Vere.

The Ambassador for Ageing, Noeline Brown, she of stage, screen and radio, was guest of honour and showed by her address that she knows all the ups and downs of ageing. The story of her friend Maureen was quiet remarkable, and showed what can be achieved despite adversity. Maureen was dyslexic and all her life had very low self esteem. Later in life she volunteered at a nursing home, achieving wonderful results by bringing much happiness to the residents and bringing out some of their latent skills. She later went on to write a book. How did she do that? She learned to use a computer and put the spell check to very good use. A remarkable achievement, making her a very happy woman.

Many congratulations to Barbara Malcolm and her excellent team for working so hard to make this first year such a huge success. Barbara's long-held dream has finally come true.

*Margaret Chadwick*  
*OWN Illawarra Coordinator*

### Important Meetings

- Thursday 28 October 10.00am
- 87 Lower Fort St. Millers Point
- *Your Future in Your Hands*
- A meeting for OWN Groups and Wellness Centres. RSVP 25 October for catering purposes. Phone 9247 7046
- Thursday 18 November 10.30am
- *Quarterly Meeting* to be held at **OWN Newcastle**
- *OWNing Your History*
- Pat Carlton will take us on a journey of discovery, and help groups to begin their own adventure. All welcome.
- RSVP 4 November for catering purposes.
- Phone 4954 4903 for details.

# Book Reviews

## Women Researching Women

I would like to tell you about two books, written about 100 years apart, recording the research of two women, both of them investigating the lives of the 'working poor'.

### Round About a Pound a Week

by Maud Pember Reeves

In England, in 1906, at the first National Conference on Infant Mortality, John Burns, President of the Local Government Board said, "At the bottom of infant mortality, high or low, is good or bad motherhood".

Between 1909 and 1913 Maud Pember Reeves and the Fabian Women's Group investigated the lives of working-class wives, 'how they coped with continual damp, vermin and inadequate food, how they washed, cooked, scrimped for furniture and clothes, how they saved for the frequent burials'. The families who were the subject of the research were not the poorest. The men respectable, in full employment, young, with families increasing; their wives quiet, decent women. The research project involved selecting a group of thirty-one women in Lambeth (a London suburb) who had given birth at a nearby hospital, whose husbands earned about a pound a week, and persuading them to record how they spent their 20shillings to feed and clothe their family. The researchers would visit the families to record what was happening.

In telling of these lives, 'of ill-paid work for men and unending toil for women, Maud Pember Reeves presented the realities of poverty'. The mothers had too little money to provide for their own and their families' needs. They did not have 'decent housing or household equipment, adequate food or clothing, or opportunities for recreation'.

The conclusion drawn (in 1913) was that there must be a legal minimum wage but on an adequate family basis, and that since many women maintained families, their wage must also be on the family basis.

### Dirt Cheap

by Elizabeth Wynhausen

At the age of 55, Elizabeth Wynhausen took nine months' leave from her job as a journalist with *The Australian*. She set out to see whether she 'could get by as a minimum-wage worker and live to tell the tale'. She borrowed an address, made up a cover story which left out 30 years of journalism and took ten years off her age. She planned to try half a dozen unskilled jobs, staying in each for two to four weeks, each time finding a room to live in.

She worked as waitress in a club, as egg-packer in a factory, as cleaner in an office, as food attendant in a hotel, as a checkout person in a store and in the laundry at a retirement home. "If I had started at six in the morning, I had a swim to wake up, then spent an hour or two at the computer."

"I made the transition from a permanent job to a casual one, and from permanent work to shift-work, not knowing from one week to the next if I would earn enough to live on, a common fate for casuals". She found that minimum wage employees were far better off if they were permanent employees. "It was when I entered the 'zone of intermittent employment', waiting for days on end to hear if I was to get a single shift, that I met employees desperately working two jobs a day just to make ends meet." She "failed to do what millions of Australians do every day, struggling to support themselves and their families", on the minimum wage. There may be those who will say "poverty ain't what it used to be, when the poor didn't have a pot to piss in". Perhaps they should try being "nursing home attendants doing double shifts, or teenagers trying to support themselves on junior rates of pay".

The research presented by these two women make me ask, "Has anything Changed?" Is the minimum wage, recommended 100 years ago, at an adequate family basis now? What has economic rationalisation and the casualization of the work force done to the working poor?

*Lorraine Inglis*

### Her Story in Four Centuries

by Sylvia Webber

Sylvia Webber tells of growing up in Malaya and Australia, and how she was affected by war, separation and boarding-school, in her book *Her Story in Four Centuries*, 2010. Other stories are of Margaret Rudston caught up in the Civil War in England; Maria Barstow enduring the sieges of Danzig; and the lives in Ireland of the daughters of the hymn-writer, the Reverend Thomas Kelly. The book testifies to the strength of mind of women forced to cope with wars or illness while protecting and educating their children, and shows how family members worked together.

*Ceri Ritchie*

# Two Outstanding Women

## Two Outstanding Women

Florence Mary Taylor and Annie Forsyth Wyatt are not exactly household names are they? But they should be within the family of the Older Women's Network. Nowra OWN recently learnt about these two women, who were first brought to our attention at the Museum of Sydney and subsequently by members' research.



Portrait of Florence Mary Taylor

**Florence Mary Taylor OBE CBE (1879 – 1969)** was the first qualified female architect and the first woman to train as an engineer in Australia. At the turn of the century she found work as a draftsman and attended night classes at Sydney Technical College until 1904, when she became the first woman to complete final fourth year studies in the architecture school. In 1907 she was nominated by her employer for associate membership of the Institute of Architects of NSW, but the nomination was rejected.

Along with her husband, she became influential in publishing building industry trade journals from 1907 to her retirement in 1961. They campaigned for urban planning as well as improved construction methods. The importance of these publications may have influenced the invitation to join the Institute of Architects in 1920. With her husband, she was a founding member of the Town Planning Association of NSW in 1913.

Florence made overseas visits, gaining ideas on urban and rural planning. She championed urban modernity, rapid transport systems, urban freeways, large-scale developments and apartment living.

It is felt that public acceptance of women in professions was advanced by her achievements and the publicity received. To quote Florence: "For a woman to marry, get into the confines of the home and never be articulate in public affairs is a disgrace. There is not enough mental occupation in home duties only and women never get the chance to shoulder life's full responsibilities."

**Annie Forsyth Wyatt OBE (1885 – 1961)** was instrumental in the preservation of many of the bushland reserves and historic buildings around Sydney. Annie was a conservationist at heart with a deep interest in the history of the colony and a strong humanitarian streak which ensured she became widely known and respected. She had a great love for the Australian bushland and in 1926, whilst living in Gordon with her husband and children she became dismayed at the clearing of bushland for home sites, with resulting despoiling. In 1927 she was instrumental in the establishment of the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lover Civic League, which until WW11 lobbied for the establishment of reserves around Sydney.

In peacetime, dismayed once more by the demolition of buildings with unique historic connections, and the neglect of others, she urged the setting up of an organisation to safeguard the future of such buildings and landscapes. Due to her strong commitment, in 1945 the National Trust of Australia (NSW) was established. She served on this council until her death in 1961. She was also the vice-president for a number of years of the Forestry Advisory Council of NSW.

The value of the work of the National Trust is immeasurable in preserving such buildings as Hyde Park Barracks, The Mint and Parliament House not to mention Cadman's Cottage, St James Church and further afield in Parramatta and environs is immeasurable.

As a humanitarian she was 20 years with the Prisoner Aid Association of NSW, where she visited women in gaols and obtained comforts and improved conditions for them. As a young woman attending meetings held by her grandfather, a Member of Parliament, she often asked the question "What about the women?" when public issues were being discussed. She always believed women could and should, become involved in community issues.

The A.F. Wyatt Reserve at Palm Beach (why not "Annie"?) was named in her memory, and azalea lovers may know of the azalea species named for her.

*Barbara Apperley*

*Nowra OWN*

# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

## Historic Legislation to Amend the Constitution

On Wednesday, 8 September, Aboriginal people in NSW were finally given formal recognition by Premier Kristina Keneally as the First People by means of an amendment to the Preamble to the NSW Constitution. This development follows a 2-month consultation period reflecting changing attitudes since the document was written over a hundred years ago, and it has good cross-party support. Through consultation, some small changes were made to the original proposal, but the government has retained an exclusionary provision that some of the submissions wanted dropped, namely one that insists that the amendment conferred has no legal rights for action against or liability of the State.

The following section will be introduced by the amendment: -

1) Parliament, on behalf of the People of New South Wales, acknowledges and honours the Aboriginal people as the State's first people and nations.

2) Parliament, on behalf of the People of New South Wales, recognises that Aboriginal people, as the occupants of the land in New South Wales:

(a) Have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters and

b) Have made and continue to make a unique and lasting contribution to the identity of the State.

3) Nothing in this section creates any legal right or liability, or gives rise to or affects any civil cause of action or right to review an administrative action, or affects the interpretation of any Act or law in force in New South Wales.

Bev Manton, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Chairperson, said that although health, housing and education are vitally important to Aboriginal people, this symbolic gesture of getting the relationship right between black and white Australians is equally important. Sally Fitzpatrick, ANTaR's

president, (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) said that ANTaR joins with Premier Keneally in acknowledging the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people for enduring this lack of recognition for so long, and that "this important symbolic step must now be followed by reforms in areas such as juvenile justice."

*Pat Zinn*

## Aboriginal Man Wins Seat in House of Representatives

For the first time in its history, Ken Wyatt, Noongar/Yamatji/Wonga man will take his seat in the House of Representatives. Elected as a Liberal party member in the Perth seat of Hasluck, Ken confirms that he had a tough fight. Although he has emphasised that he has had an overwhelmingly positive response, he has received about 50 racist emails and letters, including some from Aboriginal people.

Ken became involved with the Liberal party in his early 20's when he was studying at a teacher's college. At school in Corrigin in Western Australia, he excelled in most subjects, specially science and maths. After he finished year 10, the area's Rotary club and a local businessman sponsored him to attend boarding school in Perth, where he attained his HSC. He was a primary school teacher for 16 years, then worked in Western Australia as Director of Aboriginal Education and then as Director of Aboriginal Health in Western Australia and NSW. Ken received an Order of Australia in 1999 in the Queen's birthday Honours List and a Centenary of Federation medal in 2000.

Ken concedes that he would have no reservations about challenging his party colleagues on any issue he deemed necessary, including the Northern Territory Intervention, saying that "unless you



# Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

become part of an organisation, you cannot change it from the outside." He says that Income Management keeps Aboriginal people as passive recipients of government services and stresses that they need to have access to information, they need to be empowered and to have the resources to do so because the people in communities 'often have the solution in their own thinking'. He hopes to be a resource for any Parliamentarian who needs advice, indigenous contacts, or just someone with whom to discuss Indigenous issues, and pledges to work hard to represent all his constituents. We wish Ken success in his endeavours.

*Pat Zinn*

## *The Big Issue Tells It Like It Is*

How many of you read *The Big Issue* sold by street vendors as a way of earning income? I enjoy chatting to Glen, who has a pitch outside Eastgate in Bondi Junction, but he has health problems and isn't there regularly. However there were two articles in the edition of the 17-30th August which caught my attention.

The first, called *In Transit* written by Greg Foyster, tells the stories of homeless asylum seekers, who he calls the 'ultimate homeless' who don't have a country to call their own, let alone a fixed address. After their trauma of getting here and being accepted as genuine refugees, they have to find accommodation. They are not eligible for public housing and are turned away from homeless refuges because they cater for people with different needs such as substance abuse. Although technically eligible for some longer-term 'transitional' accommodation, they are often refused due to lack of income. Often when they apply for assistance that is available, because of having no fixed address they miss out on letters advising them of dates of interviews.

The writer describes their homelessness as massive, and increasing and, as asylum

seekers, they are not counted in statistics of homeless people. Most funding for their welfare comes from church groups and donations, which has led to establishing the 'House of Welcome' in Sydney and the 'Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project' in Melbourne. Most asylum seekers try to make it on their own and don't want to depend on charity, but what else can they do? and thank goodness for these charities. It's not difficult to use our imagination to put ourselves in a similar position, but as a compassionate individual, what to do? At least be informed, join the Refugee Council of Australia and spread the word.

The second article describes a cross-cultural work shop attended by the writer, Kate Rizetti, and called 'Whiteboard Country'. The facilitator, Grant Sarra, a Gurang Gurang man, transported the group of 27 back over 200 years. They were given a tribe, a totem, elders and lands and a whiteboard became their country, with initiation and burial sites, boundaries and forbidden places, and areas where trading took place. But then the whiteboard displayed ten sailing ships drawn in the harbour bordering the tribe's lands. Grant suddenly became arrogant and bossy and took away everything of importance. He drew government offices, roads, schools and farms on the whiteboard. He drew them off their countries, mixed up the tribes and created new places like jails and reserves. Some died after eating arsenic-laced flour, some were enslaved by pastoralists. They promised to educate their children the white way, as long as the children were handed over. They gave them jobs and kept the wages 'in trust' but they never saw the money.

Kate describes the huge impact this had on her. She is grateful that Indigenous people have survived, despite it all, and 'welcome my white feet on land once covered in black footprints'.

*Pat Zinn*



# ASC Issues

## Indigenous Business Forges Ahead

Indigenous people face more obstacles than most when attempting to secure loans to start up businesses. However, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed between the National Australian Bank (NAB) and the Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation (MPREC) which will greatly enhance the start-up prospects of Indigenous businesses.

Clients would have streamlined access to NAB's micro-enterprise loan program with loans of up to \$20,000 available as start-up capital. Potential applicants would still need to have a reasonable business plan and MPREC would provide support and education to enable those skills to be nurtured for as long as it takes to get the business off the ground. The scheme will take time to get going successfully but it has a long-term future.

An Indigenous-owned business, Northern Project Contracting, (NPC) has won the Social Responsibility Section award at the National Telstra Business awards held at the Sydney Opera House on 20 August. This mining and civil construction company was established in Mount Isa in 2004 and now employs 80-100 people, 80% of whom are Indigenous. Now it is a multi-million dollar, 100% Indigenous-owned company which is changing the perception of failure in Indigenous businesses and communities.

The NPC has built its Mobile Mining and Civil school to train Indigenous people in plant operation and construction roles, to meet continuing labour and skills shortages. The judges were impressed by the company's focus on commercial viability, commitment to sustainability and dedication to giving back to the community.

*Pat Zinn*

## Northside Raffle

Northside Wellness Needlecraft group has created an amazing patchwork quilt depicting Australian native fauna. This quilt and a beautiful Peacock wall hanging by one of our members are to be raffled together on Wednesday 17 November to raise funds for our centre. Please see attached.

Raffle tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00 or 7 for \$10.00

If you would like tickets, please contact Annette on 9415 2474 or Dorothy on 9419 6417

Regards,

Rhoda

[rhodasexton@gmail.com](mailto:rhodasexton@gmail.com)



# Crossing the Rubicon

*‘Crossing the Rubicon is a popular idiom meaning to pass a point of no return. It refers to Julius Caesar’s 49 BC crossing of the river, which was considered an act of war. [Wikipedia]*

Although I didn’t realise it at the time, my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday last year was a crossing of my own Rubicon into the territory of old age. I’m not concerned with the obvious and general changes of physical ageing, sources of regret though these may be. But I am reflecting on loss.

In the last 12 months, two elderly relatives have died and now five others – all until recently living independent lives – now require practical care and emotional support. For my part, I find difficulty in knowing quite how to offer support, more out of sensitivity to their need to retain self-respect than reluctance to help. These experiences make me wonder how I shall be at the end of my life.

With my peer group, I am very familiar with health issues which have slowly grown more salient in our conversations. Some of us have already battled life-threatening illness. Three have already died. Many of us already battle physical disability to greater or lesser degree.

Moving further back down the life scale, the joys and disappointments of involvement with now middle-aged children and their pre-teen children come into focus. I help where I can but must let them be, whatever I might think of their life choices. The reversal of power in these relationships has come slowly and gently. I accept the changes regretfully, while grateful that my major responsibility for their welfare is over and that they have grown into gracious adults.

Their pre-teen children, my grandchildren, regard me with tolerance, patience and simple affection, accepting that I do not understand much of the on-line world in which they live. As I ponder the challenges of the adult world they will enter, I feel sympathy for them, and am not altogether unhappy about no longer having to find answers to looming world problems which they will have to confront.

More intimately, two other issues of ageing confront me regularly. The first is my energy, once abundant and easily renewed, which now needs to be spent thoughtfully. No longer is it possible to say ‘yes’ to everything our fascinating world has to offer. Now I must prioritise and reject some options as I know I wouldn’t last the distance. The physical charge of stimulating activity is not easily replaced by going more sedately, even if the latter way of being has charms of its own.

Emotional resilience is the other issue of ageing to face.

While it’s clear that ageing brings diminished physical capacity and, for many, slowing intellectual functioning as well, emotional awareness and responsiveness seem to actually deepen.

It seems I have indeed crossed the Rubicon into the land of the aged. But, unlike Julius Caesar, I shall not wage war against its inhabitants. Instead, I shall learn from them how to deal with skirmishes with the real enemies, illness and debility, and how to make the most of my senior years until death’s final ambush. There will be little room for boredom.

*Bev Cameron*

## Reduce Our Carbon Footprint

- Elect not to receive telephone books - which I doubt many of us use these days.
- Did you know that in this current digital age, 22.5 million of these directories are printed each year in Australia and there were only 1311 requests last year not to have these delivered? Let’s increase this number by calling the number below. Also spread the word to others.
- To opt out: Call Sensis on 1800 810 211. Choose Option 1 for White Pages and then Option 4 for Book Orders. You’ll then be put onto an operator who you provide with your phone number and address.
- Please circulate to your networks.

## Central Coast Outing

The Kings Cross Community and Information Centre has organised an all day trip on Wednesday 6 October to Long Jetty and The Entrance. Feed the Pelicans and then purchase lunch at the Mingarra Club. The bus departs 10am from the Centre (50-58 Maclay St. Potts Point), the cost for transport \$7. Phone 9357 2164 or email [kxcc@bigpond.com](mailto:kxcc@bigpond.com)

## OWN Matters Direct Contact!



We love to hear from you and publish what you have to say in our newsletter.

The best way, for you and us, is for you to email your letter or article.

We have an email address, especially for your contributions.

The email address is [newsletter@ownnsw.org.au](mailto:newsletter@ownnsw.org.au)

# Retaining Older Workers

## Retaining older workers is vital for future workforce

The Minister for Ageing, Peter Primrose, today said that more could be done to keep older workers in the workforce and alleviate the skills shortage facing Australia in the future.

The number of people in NSW aged 65 and over is predicted to increase by 111% by 2036 and would represent 21.5% of the State's population.

"Although our workforce participation rates for older workers have improved, we need to do better if we are to have a sustainable workforce in the future," Mr Primrose said.

"Skills shortages will naturally lead to business leaders finding strategies to not only keep, but actively recruit older workers.

"But this is going to require businesses to think laterally and older workers, many of whom will want to continue working, will be in the driver's seat.

"We also have to remember that the ageing population is essentially good news – the fact is that we are now living longer and healthier lives – and that should be celebrated."

Mr Primrose said that a large number of older people were predicted to leave the workforce through retirement over the next 10 years.

"The government wants people to remain in the workforce for as long as they want to and we are encouraging employers to be flexible to the needs of older workers," he said.

"Employers are being presented with significant challenges from the combination of the ageing workforce, large numbers of 'baby boomers' leaving the workforce and the projected decrease in the younger workforce."

He said that the NSW Government was assisting business operators to meet the current and future needs of older workers which would keep valuable, loyal workers with years of experience behind them in the workforce.

"We are already helping businesses to look at ways they can provide a more flexible workplace which suits both their needs and their workers' needs and have introduced a range of programs that help both them and older workers who may be considering retirement.

"However, it is absolutely vital that we continue to develop incentives and opportunities for lifelong learning and professional development."

Mr Primrose said it was heartening that employer attitudes to older workers were changing and that ageism in the private and public sector was waning, but to meet the need for older workers to stay in the workforce longer, government and industry needed to work together even more closely.

"Government and employers must make sure the structure of their workforces caters for the needs of individuals as they either move into different careers or jobs as part of their retirement plan or reduce the amount of hours they work."

"It is critical that information is provided to people who today are in their 40s and 50s so they can better consider how and when they would like to leave the workforce."

## How Could They?

Older women play a critical role in supporting their families and communities. Many do not recognise that the situations that they are entering into have the potential for abuse. In an environment of increasing social and financial pressure, older women must also ensure that they do not jeopardise their own security when asked to help those they love. Some of the worst cases of financial elder abuse are perpetrated by those closest to them, and begin with seemingly small transgressions, often culminating in the inadvertent surrendering of power, authority and financial security. Unfortunately unless they recognise this potential and initiate steps to protect themselves early, communication can break down, with the situation and the relationship deteriorating.

**How Could They?** Begins with a series of 5 brochures exploring the legal and financial issues:

- for older women considering 'Granny Flats' - [A Room of One's Own](#)
- for older women negotiating new relationships - [Love at Last!](#)
- for older lesbians negotiating new relationships - [Over the Rainbow](#) (pictured right)
- for older women considering gifts and loans - [One Good Deed...](#)
- for older women considering going Guarantor- [Safe as Houses?](#)

These brochures have been developed by and for older women, based on real situations.

The questions, strategies and resources contained in each brochure have been designed to empower older women with tools to resolve problems and strengthen their position, without jeopardizing their personal relationships.

**Beth Eldridge**

- **How** do you wish to communicate any changes to your family and friends?

The information contained in this publication is intended for use in NSW, and relates to the law as at 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010.

Contact OWN NSW:  
phone: (02) 9247 7046  
info@ownsw.org.au or  
www.ownsw.org.au to obtain  
further copies of this publication.

*This publication has been developed by The University of Western Sydney and The Older Women's Network NSW, produced with the financial assistance of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW.*

*The Foundation seeks to advance the fairness and equity of the justice system and to improve access to justice, especially for socially and economically disadvantaged people.*

<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au>

*This publication is intended as a guide to the law and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.*

*Disclaimer: any opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Law and Justice Foundation's Board of Governors.*

**A list of some of the agencies that Fay could contact for help and advice:**

- ① **The Older Persons' Legal Service**  
(A service of The Aged-care Rights Service). Tel: (02) 9281 3600 or 1800 424 079 (toll-free)
- ① **Lesbian and Gay Legal Advice Service.** Wednesday evenings Tel: (02) 9332 1966
- ① **Financial Information Service (FIS).** Tel:131 021
- ① **LawAccess NSW**  
Tel:1300 888 529. TTY:1300 889 529
- ① **Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC)** (02) 9273 1558 or  
Tel:1300 888 529. TTY:1300 889 529
- ① **Welfare Rights Centre -**  
Tel:(02) 9211 5300  
or 1800 226 028 (Toll free)
- ① **Centrelink Same-Sex Reform**  
Enquiry Line Tel: 136 280
- ① **Her solicitor.** If Fay does not have a solicitor, she could contact the Law Society of NSW Solicitor Referral Service on (02) 9926 0300 for a list of solicitors in her area who have experience in these matters.

# Over the Rainbow

**Legal and financial considerations for older lesbians negotiating new relationships**



**Fay and Judy had been dating for three months and it was magic...**

Fay's relationship with Judy felt like the most exciting thing that had happened to her in years.

The introduction of the new Same Sex legislation had been the cause of increasing anxiety for them both, with Judy dependent on a Carer's Pension, and Fay self employed as a Naturopath.

Ten years ago, when Judy was 47, she had agreed to take on the role of live-in carer for her friend Clair. Clair suffered from Parkinson's and subsequently dementia, and had reached the point where she needed specialist care. Judy was in the process of organizing all of this when she and Fay first met.

Shortly after Clair had been moved to a care facility, Judy was notified that she would no longer be receiving the Carer's Pension, and that Clair's house was to be sold in order to pay for her medical expenses.

That day Judy, aged 57, was in tears as she told Fay she was now unemployed and would soon be homeless.

Fay knew what Judy was afraid to ask, and it terrified her too...

*If* Judy moved in, would she have to support her financially?

*What* would this do to their new relationship? Fay could barely support herself.

*Where* would Judy go if Fay didn't make the offer?

*How* would Fay's next move define their future, and how could she now put herself in a situation where she felt free to make a sensible choice?

### Questions Fay might need to ask

**Q.** How can I show support for Judy without making a commitment before seeking professional advice?

**A.** Perhaps the first thing would be to have a serious talk with Judy along the following lines:

*Things have become serious between us very quickly and I'm sure that neither of us wants it to stop, but we are old enough to know that if we want it to develop we need to plan carefully for our future.*

*I made a promise to myself that when it came to my financial security I would never make a decision based purely on emotions.*

*I feel very strongly about you, but I know that the only way I can make a rational decision is for us to get some professional advice.*

*I'm sure you can see the sense in this. I know that between us we have friends who'll be able to help out with somewhere for you to stay, and maybe even some casual work until we can work out a solution.*

**Q.** What are the issues Judy and I need to consider prior to our seeking professional advice?

**A.** You will need to discuss the following:

- **How** you see your relationship unfolding into the future.

- **Will** Fay's income affect Judy's ability to receive any future Centrelink benefits, if they are a legally defined as a 'de facto couple'?

- **If** one or the other of you is in financial need, what financial support, if any, would each provide to the other?

- **How** will you structure your finances, including your bank accounts and credit cards, to ensure that both of you each has security and protection?

- **If** you purchase joint items, i.e. furniture or vehicles, who owns them in the event of the relationship ending?

- **How** will you be financing holidays and recreational activities?

- **What** financial contribution will each of you provide for day-to-day living expenses?

## **Sapphisticated Soiree 2010 International Lesbian Day Event for Older Lesbians**

Marlene Dietrich would be clamoring to appear at Redfern Town Hall for International Lesbian Day! As Older Lesbians from Sydney, regional NSW, and beyond gather for a celebratory community event entirely focused on the specific cultural achievements of older lesbians. Sapphisticated Soiree will be an afternoon of live music, performance, and entertainment. We will also be displaying Lesbian art as part of the celebration.

Older Women's Network NSW Coordinator, Beth Eldridge says "Older Lesbians will be gathering to explore the year that was and to draw strength from each other's experience. We want to create a place of solidarity and reconnection. The arts have enormous potential to heal and liberate, to express fears and anger, and find common ground and common good."

Sapphisticated Soiree is a collaborative project, which has been made possible by generous sponsorship from the City of Sydney, Lesbian Artworks, and LInc, and the incredible network of lesbian community activists and artists.

Lesbian Artworks has produced a number of performance events in Victoria. For the first time we are producing an event in Sydney. As this event is specifically for Older Lesbians it is being produced in conjunction with Older Women's Network (NSW) as part of their strategic plan to reach out to older women from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Convener of Lesbian Artworks, Wendy Suiter feels it is time to pay respect to the generation of lesbians who came out, loud, and visible, during the 60's, 70's and 80's, in the wake of the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements and who now risk becoming more socially and culturally isolated because of illness, ageing, and the death of long time friends.

Wendy is concerned that although we have some things in common with the wider queer community, older lesbians still have our own specific gender issues which continuously impact in diverse and unexpected ways. "While the legal recognition of same sex relationships is to be welcomed, the implementation has driven many older lesbians back into the closet. Sapphisticated Soiree is about breaking down this isolation and rebuilding a positive sense of identity."

The organisers have chosen Redfern Town Hall because of its accessibility including lifts and hearing loop, accessible toilets, suitable seating, and good public transport, as well as providing the most appropriate ambience for the event. Tickets include afternoon tea and can be prebooked for \$20 or \$10. Prices at the door are \$10 more.

*Wendy Suiter, Lesbian Artworks*

**Lesbian Artworks VI  
and Older Women's Network NSW  
Present**

## **Sapphisticated Soirée**

**a cultural celebration for older lesbians  
presenting the work of  
lesbian performers and artists  
recognising the second anniversary of  
the legal recognition of  
same sex relationships  
and its specific impact on lesbians**

Come and be entertained by older lesbians  
making the most of

**International Lesbian Day**

**An afternoon of Performance:**

Music, Dance, Readings, Drama  
&

**Visual Art:**

Photography, Painting, Textiles, Sculpture

**2-6pm Saturday October 9<sup>th</sup> 2010**

You are welcome to linger and socialise until 8pm!

**Redfern Town Hall**

Wheelchair accessible, Hearing Loop  
73 Pitt Street, Redfern

**Ticket includes refreshments:**

**\$20 or \$10 conc (prebooked only)**

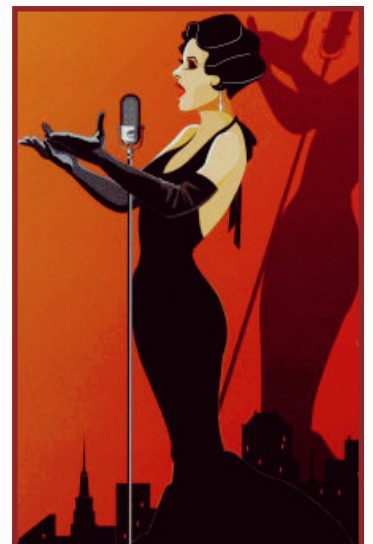
email: [janegreen.5654@yahoo.com.au](mailto:janegreen.5654@yahoo.com.au)

sms or ring: 0407099291

for more information

**\$30 or \$20 at  
door!**

Public Transport: frequent  
309, 310 buses stop 50  
metres from venue,  
or a vigorous walk from  
Central or Redfern  
Stations.



**CITY OF SYDNEY** 

# OWN NSW Theatre Group



There are reasons for the Theatre Group to celebrate this month. HOORAY!

First, welcome to a vigorous One Year Old! The OWN Theatre Group enjoyed celebrating the first birthday of Illawarra OWN Wellness at Coniston Community Hall on Monday 6 September. We were part of a well planned and presented program of activities for a happy birthday gathering of members and friends. By request of the group's indomitable Barbara Malcolm, we performed 'Don't Knock Your Granny' a significant program on the various forms of abuse that can affect isolated older people. Our audience listened intently and gave us very encouraging applause. We think they were also impressed with our great new banners, both the big meter-high one and the smaller one....at last!

A marvelous lunch of hot and cold food was laid out in the soon-to-be-renovated theatre next door to the hall and it was thoroughly appreciated by the members of the Theatre Group, who had had an early start from Sydney. There was a beautiful birthday cake to cut and share. Thank you and congratulations to Illawarra OWN Wellness.

The second reason the Theatre Group members are smiling is thanks to the Sydney City Council grants program and to help from OWN NSW's Beth Eldridge and our own Rita Tratt, we have the sum of \$4399 and value in kind for community venue hire waiver of up to \$2000. Our project name is 'Theatre Group- Village People' because we will be doing a '7-Village' tour of performances for inner Sydney City communities. The grant includes money for services of a director and musician, transport and publicity. We have started planning and hope to give and gain much from this tour.

Last month's report mentioned Denise Miel, our new TG member, who is already doing good work in one of our programs. Now we are very pleased to announce our TWO newest members who actually made their debut in two songs at Coniston. They are Glenys Buselli of Haberfield, and Ilona Lee from Wentworthville, who seem to have enjoyed their first performance with us, though we know they are not completely new to the performing arts. Welcome Glenys and Ilona.

*Joan Modder*

## *Centre Stage*

by Dorothy Cora

**\$15.00 plus \$7**

Available from Older Women's Network NSW

Ph (02) 9247 7046

admin@ownnsw.org.au

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City of Sydney

## *OWN Office*

The phone hours at our OWN office are from 10:00 to 3:00.

If you call outside these hours you may get a recorded message. Please don't think that what you have to say is unimportant to us. Leave a message, with your contact number, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Between 10:00 and 3:00 the phone will be answered by one of our friendly volunteers.



# Letters to the Editor



## Wow!

The September issue is wonderful. I like the mix of colour and B&W. Congratulations to Beth and the team.

*Joan Modder*

## Enjoying OWN,

Thank you Beth, to you and your team, for a very informative newsletter.

I am a new member and am really enjoying Liz Ireland's Wednesday drumming sessions.

Kind regards,

*Kate Maclurcan*

## Cover to Cover

The latest issue of *OWN Matters* was a happy one. From Beth's editorial conclusion that 'economic growth' doesn't help the greater part of the population to the report from Wyong advising us how best to deal with extension cords, there was something to at least bring a grin. I remember those sheets, celebrated by Shirley Murphy in 'Recycling/Reminiscing'. It reminded me of some verses of another long forgotten poet, read to our science class by a pious female teacher. It was 'The song of the Shirt' and it went like this: with fingers weary and worn/ and eyelids heavy and red/ a woman sat in unwomanly rags/ plying her needle and thread/ stitch, stitch, in poverty hunger and dirt/ and all the while in dolorous voice/ she sang 'the song of the shirt'. There

was more of it, but it only produced giggling from her bunch of impious twelve year olds, who by now are lost to science, remembering our first science lesson when she intoned "Matter is indestructible, it cannot be created nor can it be destroyed, it can only change its form".

I expect all our members who attended Dr Norman Swan's talk to give us a full account of it. I hang on his words at 8.30am each Monday. And here I must plug for our wonderful ABC. May someone restore their funding. Radio National and Classic FM are lifelines for me and for many another old person whose days of concert going and lecture attending are over.

*Helen Monaghan*

## Missing you

My dear, darling, beautiful friends, I am so sad to hear of the poorliness (not to be confused with holiness!) some of you have been experiencing. So long since we were enjoying each other's company. Telstra hasn't connected me yet – actually, disconnected is just how I feel lately. But Spring is catching up with us and my little nun's cell is awash with over-the-fence pickings, especially my deep red clivea. Love to you all.

*Dorothy Cox*

## Name Dropping

Re my article on the Dinosaur Trail in the Sept issue, I must apologise to the Royal Society for crocodile fossils. The specimen found at Isisford has the scientific name of *Isisfordia duncani*. How else could the town justify its existence?

We are home after 11 weeks roaming and 8000 km. Not bad for 87 and 91 year olds.

*Joan Johns*

## I love Lucy

If OWN had a Heroine Award it would surely go to Lucy Porter, who we've recently seen on TV and in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as the official carer of her four young grandchildren.

Lucy, you are magnificent, and it's not only your grandchildren you're propping up. You keep me going, too. I think of you every time I want to stop doing something because I feel tired or just lazy, and remind myself that Guardian Angels like you don't have that option. You are a glowing example of Love with its sleeves rolled up.

*Helen Young*

## Marrickville Coffee and Conversation Group

OWN (Older Womens Network) invites women to join the Metro Coffee and Conversation Mornings at the Mirage Coffee, Marrickville Metro, every second Tuesday, from 10:00 am starting on **28 September**.

For enquiries and information ring **Alita on 9564 2082**

For those who live further afield there are buses (422, 423, 426 and 428) which leave from Circular Quay and set down at Enmore Park. It is about a nine-minute walk diagonally across the park, continue up Victoria St. then turn left after Bourne St, on the left is the entrance to the Metro and the Mirage Café.

The 355 and 352 buses stop at the Murray St. entrance — for further information ring the Transport Info Line on 131500 or visit [131500.com.au](http://131500.com.au)

All welcome.



## Women and heart attacks (Myocardial Infarction)

*Women rarely have the same dramatic symptoms that men have when experiencing heart attack ... you know, the sudden stabbing pain in the chest, the cold sweat, grabbing the chest and dropping to the floor that we see in the movies. Here is the story of one woman's experience with a heart attack.*

I was sitting snug and warm on a cold evening with my purring cat in my lap, when I felt an awful sensation of severe indigestion, although I hadn't eaten for five hours. It was beginning to subside when a new sensation began, like little squeezing motions that seemed to be racing up my spine (hindsight, it was probably my aorta spasming), gaining speed as they continued racing up and under my breast bone. When this process continued on into my throat and branched out into both jaws, I realized what was happening - we all have read and/or heard about pain in the jaws being one of the signals of an MI happening. I said aloud to myself and the cat, 'Dear God, I think I'm having a heart attack!'

I stood up, started to take a step and fell on the floor instead. I pulled myself up with the arms of the chair, walked slowly into the next room and dialed 999. When I told the operator I thought I was having a heart attack due to the pressure building under the breastbone and radiating into my jaws, she said she was sending an ambulance



immediately, and that I should unbolt the front door and then lie down on the floor where the paramedics could see me when they came in. I did all that ... and lost consciousness. I don't remember the medics coming in, their examination, lifting me onto a gurney or getting me into their ambulance. I did briefly awaken when we arrived; the Cardiologist was bending over me asking questions but I couldn't make my mind interpret what he was saying, or form an answer, and nodded off again. When I woke up the Cardiologist and his partner had re-started my heart, which had stopped somewhere between my arrival and the operating theatre, and had already threaded a tiny angiogram balloon up my femoral artery into the aorta and into my heart, where they installed two side-by-side stents to hold open my right coronary artery.

My female friends, your symptoms might not be exactly like mine, but I advise you to call an ambulance if ANYTHING is unpleasantly happening that you've not felt before. It is better to have a 'false alarm' visitation than to risk your life guessing what it might be! And remember, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!

Note that I said **"Call an ambulance"**. And if you can, take an aspirin.

Now here are some DON'Ts:

**Don't** try to drive yourself to hospital or have your panicked husband drive, as he will be speeding and looking anxiously at what's happening with you instead of at the road.



**Don't** call your doctor. He doesn't carry the equipment in his car that could save your life. Ambulances do have this equipment, principally OXYGEN that you need ASAP. Your doctor will be notified later.

**Don't** assume it couldn't be a heart attack because you have a normal cholesterol count. Research has discovered that a cholesterol elevated reading is rarely the cause of an MI (unless it's unbelievably high and/or accompanied by high blood pressure). MI's are usually caused by long-term stress and inflammation in the body, which dumps all sorts of deadly hormones into your system to sludge things up in there.

Let's be careful and be aware. The more we know, the better chance we have of surviving.

*Contributed by Morgana Oliver-Ayers from the net*

## Tips for a good night's sleep

- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day.
- Be as active as possible during the day and spend some time outdoors.
- Reduce the amount of caffeine you have each day and avoid caffeinated drinks after lunchtime.
- Avoid naps during the day. If you do nap, keep it to 20 minutes and before 3pm.
- Avoid heavy meals, exercise or working on the computer late in the evening.
- Relax for 30 minutes before going to bed (e.g. have a warm shower or bath).



- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol in the evening.
- Make sure your bedroom is not too hot or cold.
- Don't eat, work, watch television, read or discuss problems in bed.
- Ensure you are comfortable and your bedroom is quiet and dark.
- Don't stay in bed if you are awake for more than 20 minutes, go to another room and do something relaxing.

Good sleep habits may take some time to develop. Don't give up.

Visit [www.nps.org.au/sleep](http://www.nps.org.au/sleep) for more practical advice or talk to your doctor.

### After Hours Doctor

Sydney Medical Service offers home visits for treatment of illness requiring attention when your doctor is not available. They encourage patients to see their own doctor for routine consultations. The service provides backup if you are unable to see your doctor within normal surgery hours, or if you have a medical condition which cannot wait until the next day. Additionally the service will communicate with your doctor to facilitate continuity of your treatment and on-going care.

The hours of operations are weeknights between 6pm to 8 am and on weekends from noon Saturday to 8am Monday. The service operates for 24 hours on Public Holidays. A medical report of each visit made to you is forwarded to your doctor. Where appropriate, however, e.g. hospital admission, death or special circumstances, a telephone call is made next morning to your doctor advising the details.

Patients holding a valid Medicare card, Pensioner/Seniors card or Veterans Affairs card are bulk billed, unless your doctor requests otherwise. All other patients are charged a fee of \$150 before 11pm and \$200 after 11pm, payable by cash or cheque at the time of consultation.

For more information:

[www.sydney.com.au](http://www.sydney.com.au)

[syd\\_med\\_service@bigpond.com.au](mailto:syd_med_service@bigpond.com.au)

or phone: 02 8724 6300

### Enjoying Ill Health

'Oh, no! Surely not!' Resignation crept over me as I woke that Friday morning and realised I was in for a heavy cold, just when I had several weekend social engagements planned. Somehow I stumbled through the usual Friday routine, but all in a cloud of dizzy preliminary ill-health.

Next morning, the germ storm had arrived. Fatigue sat heavily upon me, but I could still think, even if slowly. "I've had lots of experience of being a patient," I thought. "I should know how to make the most of being unwell. After all, it's a legitimate reason to forget that old Protestant work ethic for a few days, relax and please myself."

The thought lifted my spirits. I phoned those I had planned to see and gave apologies, I put out a frozen meal for an easy lunch and reached for *David Copperfield*. This was my chance to absorb Dickens' complex and delicate prose and get to the end of 750 pages of fine print which had already taken me several weeks.

Morning passed into afternoon. The grey, chilly weather only added to my satisfaction with a day of coddling myself. By now the head cold had turned me into a streaming mess and scrunched up tissues spilled over my waste paper basket but I was not unhappy. Seeking a break from reading, I moved to my desk where a pile of unfinished paperwork stared at me hopefully.

"Alright, alright, your moment has come," I said cheerfully. For the next few hours my fingers burnt up the computer keyboard with memos, letters and emails. As my usual late afternoon walk was out of the question and anyway, I was now having difficulty breathing, what could be better than an hour or three grazing in front of mindless TV before tumbling back into my comfortable bed?

Sunday morning for me meant aching sinuses, shadows under my eyes and a vague headache, but recalling the satisfaction of the previous day's indulgence inspired me afresh. Untidy cupboards and bookshelves beckoned and in a couple of hours, to the accompaniment of much sneezing, three boxes of clutter were ready for disposal and order prevailed once more. I was on an ill-health roll!

Another easy lunch, then back to finish *David Copperfield*, answer a few more emails, make a call or two and watch TV again, only to wake up to enjoy one more day of being unwell before resuming my usual frenetic routine. "After all, it would be foolish to undo all my recuperation work too soon," I reasoned.

By now, I was 'drying out' though my voice made me sound worse than I felt. At this point I had enough strength to water the garden and wash down the kitchen, though I had to stop for a coffee break or risk keeling over. The evening would bring one last evening of slothful TV and another early night. Tomorrow it would be business as usual and I looked forward to that, but I couldn't escape knowing that a little ill health had done me a lot of good.

*Bev Cameron*

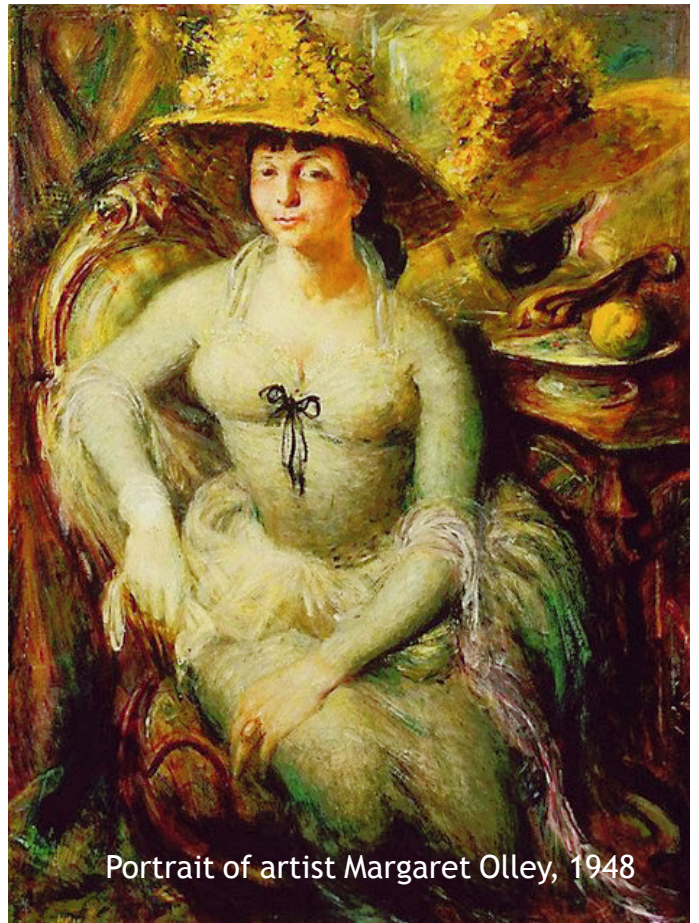
## Remembering Dobell

Artist William Dobell's paintings have long been among my favourites. Prints of both his 1948 Archibald prizewinning portrait of fellow artist Margaret Olley and the Wynne prizewinning landscape 'Storm approaching Wangi' of the same year, adorned my family home from that year on and now reside in my own home, where they hold both family memories and aesthetic pleasure for me. When my local library sponsored a talk by the author of a new book on Dobell ['William Dobell: An Artist's Life' by Elizabeth Donaldson, Exisle Publishing 2010] I wasted no time in getting there.

Donaldson, a retired teacher, now lives close to what was once Dobell's home at Wangi on Lake Macquarie. Dobell himself had designed 'Allawah' for his father and later moved into it himself, using it first as a retreat from city life, and later as his permanent home and studio. In his later years there, he kept two pet cocker spaniels as close companions and it was no surprise to him that others began to notice dog hairs in the paint of his pictures. As the story goes, if a painting has dog hairs in it, it is a genuine Dobell! Donaldson, learning something of Dobell, soon became involved as a volunteer in showing visitors over the now heritage listed 'Allawah' and, was inspired to research his life and work, to produce her beautiful coffee table book of both his paintings and his personal story.

Dobell was a shy, introverted man, shunning publicity, though he softened his resistance in later years. He was 44 at the time of his greatest personal struggle when his portrait of his artist colleague and friend, Joshua Smith won the 1943 Archibald Prize. It caused great controversy in the art world at the time as two artists, claiming the painting was in fact a caricature, took the matter to court. Though the award was upheld, Dobell was badly scarred emotionally by the matter. Joshua Smith, though happy at first with the portrait, later rejected both the painting and the artist, adding to Dobell's distress. Fame did not suit Dobell, almost destroying him. He spent time at Wangi to recover his inner peace. Ironically, Joshua Smith eventually regretted the loss of Dobell's friendship.

Dobell's portraits convey more than any photograph. He used his incisive powers of character observation to great effect with techniques which immediately conveyed subjects' personality traits. After the Joshua Smith portrait, he was commissioned for many other portraits, and the US magazine *Time* commissioned him to paint significant figures of the period to use on *Time's* front page because they were more impressive and interesting than photographs. In one of those commissioned portraits, Dobell depicted former Prime Minister, Robert Menzies,



Portrait of artist Margaret Olley, 1948

with his characteristically arrogant expression. It was not surprising that Menzies rejected the painting, but it remains popular with Australians.

Dobell's talents were more than just in portrait painting, as his many landscapes convey. He particularly loved Lake Macquarie and the surrounding environment. He also travelled widely, and loved Hong Kong and the East in general. He not only enjoyed a short time near Mt Hagan in New Guinea, doing a series of striking small landscapes while there, but became very friendly with the locals who subsequently named a local area 'Dobell' in his honour.

Dobell's career stretched from 1929 to 1964. Though always shy and uncomfortable in public life, he nevertheless accepted an OBE and a knighthood in 1966. He always preferred the company of family, friends and neighbours to that of high society and found humour in receiving a knighthood because he felt it let him 'call it quits with the nobs.'

William Dobell was gay and never married. He died at Wangi in 1970. Examples of his work are exhibited in the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of NSW and the National Gallery of Art in Canberra.

*Bev Cameron*

# Ageing with Attitude

## Call me madam: Blonde Bombshells (BB) at bus stops.

Last week I encountered two Blond Bombshells. They were look-a-likes in different places of — brassy, elderly with almost the same strident performance, twice. Each began by trying to chat up the old women waiting. Sentence by sentence, patronage proceeded to poison. The first wanted information, the second, a taxi. Both ended with shouting.

The first BB wanted information about our accommodation, where we lived and why there. My companion, a dear old woman but not street wise, began by answering that we lived in retirement flats. I was less polite. She, the BB, with voice rising, began on the medical profession. When she got down to GPs and their ‘wealth’ I put her right about the practice where I go (one of the few in the outer Inner West where house calls are done). The bus came, and so halted things becoming nasty. She pushed the unfortunate toddler with her onto the bus in front of the two old nuisances with their walking aids. She mumbled the word ‘darling’. Mistaking the endearment for me, I called after her, “I’d rather be called ‘missus’ or ‘hey you,’ thank you”. Her snarled reply “I meant the driver, not you”. The bus was half full of people returning from Rookwood Cemetery so the little altercation was unnoticed. My friend and I had been taken aback and were by now quite embarrassed.

Two days later much the same thing happened. I was alone at a taxi rank, my walking frame laden. I’d had trouble with Coles web site — password altered and the care worker had not turned up, it was 3pm and a line up of people was already waiting. About ten minutes into the wait a BB, a clone on the former, arrived. She wanted a taxi and she wanted it now. She trawled the line without success; I was last of about eight. There was a few minutes to wait, she tried to cajole me, offering the ‘old dear’ a ride with a bonus of half the fare, “if I can share your taxi, darling?” A taxi came, and darling wouldn’t share. She yelled her abusive response. While the driver handled darling’s baggage she cajoled him without success.

I was embarrassed for my own reaction. Henceforth it shall be “Please, call me madam”.



## Bra Shopping

Recently I noticed that all my well worn bras from Best and Less were no longer comfortable to wear because, no matter what I did with the straps, they continually slipped off my shoulder. I then went to in search of a bra that was flimsy but had an underwire. Bra shopping in the past has been easy for me as I have ‘some’ tits. My eldest sister has huge tits like Dolly Parton, I was so amazed to watch a program many years ago about breast implants — women putting items the size of soccer balls into their chest to become size DDHH (I think that was the size mentioned). My other sister has less tits and decided to wear padded bras; however I prefer a lighter garment.

I did the rounds of Big W, Kmart etc and saw only huge foam-padded moulded bras. I had no idea that tits enhancing had become the total fashion. Finally I went to Myers in Warringah Mall. I went into the lingerie department and again saw only these padded bras. I approached the assistant, a woman of about 50 and asked her if she had any flimsy bras not padded tits bras. She turned on me and told me not to use offensive language, how disgusting my language was. I was startled by her response so I then asked her how she felt about the word nipples. She turned her back and walked away from me.

The Spring Flower Show is currently on at the David Jones Elizabeth Street shop. So last week, after working on the mailout for *OWN Matters* I went to visit their lingerie department. Once again there was a huge selection of big padded bras. At last I found two lightweight bras and went into the fitting room. To my great delight, they fitted. I then approached an assistant, again about 50 and asked if there were any more bras that perhaps I had missed. Unfortunately the answer was no. I then asked her how she felt about the word tits, she told me that the staff, were instructed not to use the word but it would never occur to her to correct the customer. She laughed at my Myers story.

*Noel Carpenter*



## Enjoy Your Age

1. Throw out non-essential numbers — this includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.
2. Keep only cheerful friends — the grouches pull you down.
3. Keep Learning: — Learn more about computer, craft, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. ‘An idle mind is the devil’s workshop’ and the devil’s name is Alzheimer’s
4. Enjoy the simple things
5. Laugh— often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. When tears happen — endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love — whether it’s family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, and hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health — if it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don’t take guilt trips — Take a trip into town or to a favorite place. Plan an outing with friends or a holiday. Don’t go to where the guilt is!
10. Tell the people you love that you love them at every opportunity.

And always remember that Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. We all need to live life to its fullest each day!!

*Farida Bhaloo: AGLOW Newsletter*



## Top Tucker for Tough Times

### THAI CHICKEN

*When you see chicken thigh fillets on special, grab them and make this really tasty dish. It’s also good with chicken wings. Freezes well.*

#### Marinade

- 2 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 fresh red chillies, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp coriander stalks
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp vinegar

Combine marinade ingredients well and mix with:

#### 1kg chicken thigh fillets, cut into cubes

Marinate chicken for 3 hours or overnight. Cook at 200 deg. for 20 mins. in shallow container so that chicken can be spread out, stirring once or twice during cooking. Add a little water if it doesn’t seem moist enough. Sprinkle with torn coriander leaves and serve with rice.

If you’re celebrating, this marinade is also great for prawns.

*Helen Young*

## Flu season lingers in Australia

The flu season has lingered in Australia, prompting experts from the Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) to warn Australians that they should take the necessary precautions. The timing of the flu season can vary each year — which explains the “later than expected” season this year — but data now shows that rates are rising in Australia and are at significant levels in New Zealand, which usually shortly precedes Australia.

It is estimated that influenza and its related complications kill at least 3,500 Australians annually. Despite this, less than 50 per cent of Australians most vulnerable to influenza-related complications protect themselves by getting vaccinated annually.

The ISG is reinforcing that vaccination remains the single most effective way of protecting yourself against infection, especially among the elderly. However, Australians under 65 that are categorized in an “at risk” group should also be careful and look to protect themselves e.g. those with an underlying medical condition: pregnant women and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over. All of whom are also eligible, although they might not know it, for a free influenza vaccine.

If you are unfortunate enough to have contracted influenza, then the ISG is also advising that antiviral medications can help reduce the severity and symptoms of influenza. Antivirals are available on prescription for adults and older children.

The timing of the influenza outbreak in Australia this month has also led to a warning for travelers that are looking to make the trip over to the Commonwealth Games in India this October. Data indicates that influenza is currently a problem in a number of Asian countries, particularly India. This is prompting the ISG to suggest that travellers should seek vaccination before making the trip.

*Influenza Specialist Group*

## Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM)

Most of the medicines in our medical cabinet we need, but what about the yellow pills in a jar that’s lost its label, and the eye drops with the crystals growing around it’s seal? Old medicines lying around the home are dangerous; the RUM project provides the safest and easiest way to dispose of unwanted medicines. It makes possible the return of all household medicines to ant pharmacy at anytime - for free and safe collection and disposal.

Think before you throw, unwanted medicines are often dumped into the toilet, tipped down the sink or put out with the garbage, which starts a journey that can seriously harm the environment. More than 300 tonnes of medicine find their way into waterways and landfill every year. Don’t flush medicines down the toilet, sewerage plants can’t treat all chemicals in waste water, resulting in contamination of waterways. Additionally don’t put medicines down the sink or in the garbage bin as highly soluble chemicals can harm aquatic life or remain present in landfill.

RUM provides a better alternative, so sort out your medicine cabinet and drawers for our-of-date and unwanted medications, take them to your pharmacy for proper disposal.

This program is supported by pharmacists across Australia. For further information relating to the RUM Project, phone 1300 650 835 or [www.returnmed.com.au](http://www.returnmed.com.au)

## What are Home Medicines Reviews?

A Home Medicines Review is a way for your pharmacist and GP to help you manage your medicines at home. Your GP gives you a referral to the community pharmacy of your choice. The pharmacist then talks with you, preferably in your home, and makes a written report back to the GP who discuss the recommendations with you.

More than 140,000 Australians have to go to hospital each year with problems caused by their medications. It has been shown that, in up to 60% of these cases the problems could have been avoided. Older people, because they often take a number of different medicines, are particularly at risk.

If any of the following questions relates to your medical care then it would be advisable to ask your pharmacist or GP about a Home Medicines Review.

*Do you take more than five medicines a day?*

*Are you confused or worried about your medicines?*

*Do you sometimes forget to take your medicines?*

*Do you see more than on GP or specialist?*

*Have you recently spent time in hospital?*

The Home Medicines Review is not a way of “checking up on you” or talking to the GP behind your back. A Home Medical Review cannot be done without your consent and you choose the pharmacy. It’s a good way to improve your relationship with your GP because they can get the full picture on the medicines you’re using both prescriptions and non-prescription.

The pharmacist’s fee is paid by the Government and if you GP bulk Bills (and for Home Medicines Reviews, most do) it won’t cost you a cent. If you do need to pay you GP, you can claim most of the money back through Medicare, so you’ll be out of pocket by less than \$20.

Talk to you pharmacist or to your GP for more information about this scheme.

*An initiative of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia*

# OWN Sydney Notices

## WOW! Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, 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

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## 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.

**Drumming** 12.15 - 1.30pm Wednesdays, Mott Hall, Argyle St. Millers Point. \$8 per session. Drums and gourds are provided. If you would like to drum please contact Lorraine: 9569 0051

### Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday during school terms, exploring various locations or topics of interest. Starting term 4 on **20 October**. Annette Butterfield: 9665 5369 email (**changed**) below: [abutterfield\\_852@hotmail.com](mailto:abutterfield_852@hotmail.com)

### Film Discussion group

You are invited to join us on **Tuesday 12 October**, to see *Eat, Pray, Love*. Recommended for viewing are: *WallStreet: Money Never Sleeps* and *Please Give*.

Please ring Yetty on **9665 2050** to check details.

### Coffee and Gossip at Bondi Junction

You are invited to join us at The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club at 11.00am on the last Friday of every month for an informal get together. Enter from 9 Bronte Road, Bondi Junction. Contact Yetty on **9665 2050** to check March details.

**Book Club** on **18 October** 12.30-2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street. This month's book is: *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Bring a sandwich for lunch at midday. Any questions, phone Anne Marie on 9622 0717.

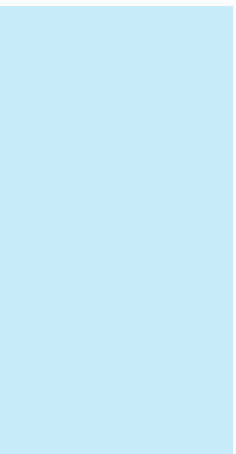
**Aboriginal Support Circle** on **11 October** 10.30 am Monday. 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point. Special Guest speaker - Christine Blakeley. Please contact Pat Zinn: 9389 1090

### Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

We meet at 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 noon on alternate Saturdays for coffee and conversation at the Birkenhead Café, on the first floor level of the Birkenhead Point Shopping Complex overlooking Parramatta River. The next meetings will be Saturday **9** and **23 October**. Contact Nora Huppert on 9181 3918 or Bev Cameron on 9957 5367 for details.

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

***OWN Matters***



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