



OWN Australia Inc.

OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK (AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED

Keeping in Touch

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National Newsletter

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Happy 80th Birthday Ruth

Ruth Kershaw, President and backbone of OWN WA, will be celebrating 80 years of living on the 11th of February this year. Ruth has been a member of OWN WA for 23 years and has been instrumental in developing the group as well as the Theatre Group. Ruth has been a tireless worker all these years and has represented OWN WA on the Council of OWN A. She attendee the first National Conference in 1993.

Her abilities are obvious and I have enjoyed her bubbly personality over the many years I have known her. She has been nominated for West Australian Senior Award. So make the most of your special day Ruth – we will be thinking of you.

In addition we must welcome Karen Martin, the new Chair of OWN NSW. We trust you will enjoy your work with us in NSW and OWN A will enjoy cooperating with you.

I am waiting for members to come forward and say they would like to publish the newsletter. Nor have I received any letters for publication. The next KIT will be in three months time and so I look forward to hearing from members for that edition.

Happy, healthy and safe 2015 to all

Cate Turner
Editor

NATIONAL CONVENOR'S REPORT

Very best wishes to all of our members and friends, I trust 2015 will bring you great joy, happiness, success, laughter and love.

I look forward to sharing our stories of a good year (2015) when we meet in Perth for our next National AGM, combined with our host's AGM, OWN Western Australia. I for one, being originally from Western Australia, born in Fremantle a long time ago, will be delighted to attend.

Staying with W.A. I'd like to dedicate this first edition of our new Newsletter to Ruth Kershaw who will be 80 years of age on 11th February 2015. Ruth may well be one of, if not the longest serving member of OWN. She has worked tirelessly for OWN and continues to do so.

OWN Australia (OWNA) intends to develop a solid itinerary for the WA Conference and AGM, beginning with good travel deals, such as lower air fares to Perth, from Qld & NSW, and a 5 day Perth, Fremantle and Margaret River offering following the conference. Get in early and let us know of your intention to attend the AGMs and conference and join in with these travel offerings.

2014 has certainly been a busy year. On a personal level my husband and I sold up our Neutral Bay, Sydney, home and moved to the Central Coast of NSW. It's been a very big adjustment for us and a busy time in my life with increased pressures on our own NFP business with the move. Nonetheless we are delighted to be living on the Coast.

In 2014, we have been most fortunate in attracting a grant, thanks to our own Cate Turner, maintaining Quentin Bryce as our Patron, being invited to join a number of key National Women's alliances, increasing membership numbers, promoting the Rights, Dignity and Wellbeing of Older women through our representation in a number of forums and through guest speaker invitations. Also we have been connecting with some wonderful younger people who have volunteered to help us achieve our objectives; for example, with a 'new look' National Newsletter, our new website and in project identification and development. The outcome of many of the items mentioned here will be elaborated on further within this newsletter.

Getting to know my new environment I came across the local CWA and discovered, like OWN, and many other organizations, their numbers have been waning as the office bearers become older, having difficulty attracting new members and doing their best to continue serving with limited funds.

One of the positive aspects of meeting this group was introducing OWN as they had not heard of us, and as a result they proposed a more formal introduction to their regional organisation. Thus, I was happy to deliver a presentation about OWN Australia to the Northumberland groups of CWA. At this event, which included approximately 140 women I made sure they also knew what was happening with OWN in their local districts. In doing this I invited Carole Davidson from the Brisbane Waters group to accompany me and also make a presentation about the Brisbane Waters group and a little about other groups in the Central Coast area. During my presentation I was most proud to mention that on that particular day we had National Councillors attending an important participatory event in Brisbane, in Canberra, and another in Perth.

On other items, for example the Universal Performance Reviews (UPR), forums being held around Australia. We have attended several in Sydney, one in Canberra, Brisbane and as we go to press one in WA. The UPR is a measure of whether or not the Government of a particular country, in this instance Australia, is performing up to its' obligations as expressed at the United Nations. This will be the first time, since our OWINA election in late 2013 that an Australia wide coordinated effort has been made to attend such forums. Clearly this has been a great show of solidarity and strength from OWIN Australia to participate with other National organisations in these important forums.

We are looking forward to 2015 being a year of ongoing strength for our membership, working in our best interests for Older Women in Australia, promoting the importance of Rights, Dignity and Wellbeing for us all. During this year and beyond we look forward to your contributions to this newsletter, we care.

Warm regards and again, very best wishes for a wonderful 2015.

Aloma Fennell
National Convenor

OWN QLD REPORT

New Year greetings from Queensland. At the Queensland AGM in September the newly elected Management Committee included members from Mackay and Gympie, this is a different concept for Queensland, having a management committee that meets in a combination of, Skype, teleconference and face to face.

To help with the communications between us, we have purchased I-pads for members of the committee and also some of the convenors. These were programmed for them by David our office admin. officer with instructions on how to use them. We will be testing the system out at our first meeting in January.

Queensland is progressing with the new web site and hope to have this completed very soon, staff and volunteers have been involved in finding all the information to put into it. Getting a professional to design it is helpful but as they are unaware of what the Older Women's Network is all about it also needs a lot of input by members.

We are also progressing with the start of two new branches (hopefully) starting up in February. June Donnelly is working on the beginning of the new branch in the Redcliffe area, which is a Northern beach suburb of Brisbane. The other branch is at Capalaba in the Redlands area, (coastal South of Brisbane, but still North of the Gold Coast) and is being started by a friend of Lee Hodgson, the Convenor of Gympie and also a Qld Management member.

Branch Convenors are being encouraged to start new projects this year, with proposals for creating packages for women who are homeless with portable personal care products, or previously homeless women, newly housed, with home basics. Other projects are being worked on for IWD.

Premier Newman has called an election which will disrupt the State for a few weeks and by the time this edition of KIT comes out Queensland may have a new Premier, or not as the case may be. With less than 4 weeks to present submissions to our local prospective members he has caught many organisations on the hop. Many areas do not even have alternative candidates. There are many comments that I could make here, but due to our a-political policy, they would be censored.

After many dry weeks leading up to Christmas, Queensland has been getting a big drenching. It started just minutes after the fireworks finished at New Year, with huge storms on the coastal areas. Inland Queensland is also now getting wet with rain falling in some places that have not seen it for more than two years, pleasing the growing areas and the cattle men/women.

*Sally Jones
President Queensland*



HUGS

It's wondrous what a hug can do,
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, 'I love you so.
Or, 'Gee! I hate to see you go.'

A hug is, 'Welcome back again!
And, 'Great to see you!' or where've you been?'
A hug can sooth a small child's pain
And bring a rainbow after rain.

The hug! There's just no doubt about it,
We scarcely could survive without it.
A hug delights and warms and charms,
It must be why God gave us arms.

Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers,
And chances are some favourite aunts
Love them more than potted plants.

Kittens crave them. Puppies love them
Heads of state are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier,
And make the dullest day seem merrier.

No need to fret about the store of 'em,
The more you give, the more there are of 'em
So stretch those arms without delay
And give someone a hug today

Anon

OWN NSW REPORT

Like so many community based and advocacy organisations in NSW we have sought to have our voices heard in a very noisy and ever changing political environment. The current NSW Government is in the process of reviewing and re-engineering their ageing strategy which is creating both uncertainty as well as opportunity for OWN NSW.

It was pleasing to be asked to meet with the Hon Minister Ajaka (Minister for Ageing, Disability and the Illawarra), prior Christmas as stakeholders in the review process and even more pleasing to receive his positive feedback on our work and in particular the work of the OWN Theatre Group. We trust that opportunities for dialogues such as this will build into a stronger future recognition by government of the need to continue to support OWN as the voice of older women in NSW. The past year has brought to us many changes with the most significant being the retirement of Dr Sonia Lavery as Chair of OWN NSW. Sonia has worked 'above and beyond' for many years to ensure the issues of importance to older women were firmly included on the political agenda. She is a highly regarded member of the OWN community and we wish her well as she relocates to the Mid North Coast of NSW to take up new challenges.

It was my honour to be asked to take on the role of Chair of OWN NSW following Sonia's departure. Almost 2 months into my new role I can say that I am thoroughly enjoying every minute of it. This is an exciting time to be involved in the organisation as we prepare and position ourselves for the road ahead. Having worked in the areas of disability advocacy and aged care for over 12 years now, some of our work is a familiar landscape but I cannot help being reminded of a line from the movie Yentil "the more I learn, the more I realise the less I know"! I am astounded by the both the breadth and the depth of the work that is undertaken by the leadership and members of OWN NSW and do still have a lot to learn from my colleagues.

I'd also like to welcome Elizabeth Stamatelos who joined me on the management committee of OWN NSW. Elizabeth's commercial background in marketing and communications will prove an invaluable support to OWN NSW and to our individual groups and Wellness Centres.

I would like to thank all at OWN NSW for making both Elizabeth and myself feel so welcome and especially thank the management team for their on-going commitment to the organisation. I'd also like to thank Aloma Fennell has been very generous in the time she has provided me in orienting me to my new role.

We also said farewell to another very important person in our organisation late last year, Diane Brooks. Diane has been the amazing Coordinator of our Bankstown OWN Wellness Centre. Diane very kindly assisted us to find Sharan McCarthy who will continue her legacy and we extend her our warmest welcome.

It was disappointing news when we learned that our Sydney based offices in Miller's Point were no longer to be available to us mid-way through the year. Thanks to one of our very quick thinking members we were alerted to an opportunity for offices and a large community space in Newtown (about 10 mins from the Sydney CBD). After much lobbying by Sonia Lavery and Beth Eldridge (OWN NSW Coordinator), we secured a City of Sydney Accommodation Grant for the space in Newtown in early December. Never one to let the grass grow under her feet, Beth, had us packed up and moved to the new premises before we closed the offices for Christmas. The new space is located in the middle of a community garden which is attended to by a wonderful group of locals with whom we are fast forming a great relationship. Best yet there is off street parking – not much but it's a start!

We also welcomed to our new home members of the Women's Electoral Lobby of NSW who will share some office space with us. We are excited to be working alongside them and are sure there will be some opportunities for some joint ventures with them.

Yearly highlights

- Southern Highlands OWN hosted the Quarterly meeting in Mittagong in October. As part of the meeting Dr Jane Mears led a discussion on the rights of older women and the wonderful *SHOWN WENCHES* performed.
- Illawarra Wellness Centre celebrated its 5th Birthday with a celebration at The Phoenix Theatre. There were over eighty women present to mark the occasion which included a presentation by the OWN Connie Girls Ukulele group.

Cont'd

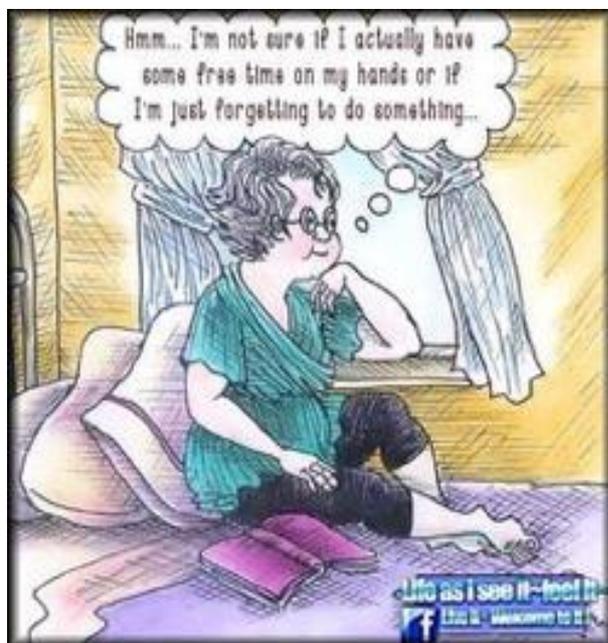
- Bankstown OWN started a yoga class for Chinese speakers, said farewell to Diane and welcomed Sharan.
- The OWN Theatre Group were much in demand and delivered 14 performances through the year. This included their very popular shows Don't knock your Granny, Cabaret and Staying Alive.
- We completed the OWN Members Health Services Survey report as well as undertook research into the use and limitations of public transport services in NSW with this report due for publication in early 2015.

All in all it's been a big year but we are looking forward to another exciting one ahead.

Kind regards

Karen Martin

Chair Own NSW



Hmm - I'm not sure if I actually have some free time on my hands or if I'm just forgetting to do something!

OWN WA REPORT

Things got off to a slow start this year, we have had record hot summer again

The senate election is out of the way. What a showing up that was.

Things are looking up in the Perth district with all the development going on.

The budget in May will show us all how to tighten our belts once again to pay for the new Elizabeth Quay and new sport stadium I guess! That's without any Federal changes to pensions and retirement age alone. We wait in trepidation!!

The Gosnells group is going along well and the new City group has a new leader, Nella Glover and a few more new members.

The Theatre Group is in the middle of an interesting project funded by the Department of the Arts Community Arts fund. We are collaborating with the Age Link theatre group who are all professionals. Their workshop skills will ensure the result will be a fantastic new show We can work it out in September to Celebrate 20 years since the Don Russell theatre opened, 20 years since the OWN performance group started and also the Age Link theatre group..

With Mother's day round the corner there will be another party at Gosnells for us all to enjoy.

Ruth Kershaw

President OWN WA



Inside Every Older person is a young person wondering what the hell happened!

Government still planning to cut your pension

Monday, 01 December 2014

DESPITE the hold up in the Senate, the Australian Government still has its sights set on reducing the pension.

Recently Australia's Age Pensioners received a letter from Prime Minister Tony Abbott. "In recent weeks", he said, "you will have noticed an increase in your pension."

This referred to the pension indexation of 20 September 2014, when the pension went up as it usually does.

So can you now expect a letter from the PM every six months to let you know that your payment has gone up by a few dollars?

Probably not, because the real purpose of the PM's letter is to tell you something that is strictly and unequivocally a falsehood. The PM tells you that the Government will not cut your pension.

But the Government will if it can get it through the Senate.

"There have been claims," the PM writes, "that the Government is cutting pensions. **This is not true.**"

The PM really wanted you to notice that. That's why he wrote it in bold and underlined it for good measure.

Yes, it is true! (This is CPISA's bolding.)

The Australian Government wants to remove indexation of the pension on the basis of increases to the average weekly wage.

They want to index pensions on the basis of inflation, and not the inflation rate which applies to you, a pensioner, which is usually higher than the CPI, which the Government wants to use!

This not only means that your pension won't go up by as much as it has over the past decades, but that it will lose real value.

How much?

In September 2009 the single pension was \$671.90 a fortnight. By September 2014 it had increased by \$182.40 to \$854.30.

If the Prime Minister's method of indexation had been used, the single pension would have been \$92.14 less. It would only have been \$716.16: 11 per cent less than it is today.

Similarly, the couple pension (which was \$1,013 a fortnight in 2009 and is now \$1,277.40) would have been \$128.33 less. That's 10 per cent less!

Now, does that look like a pension cut or what?

So, where the Prime Minister says that there have been claims the Government is cutting pensions, let CPISA do some more bolding: **The Government is cutting pensions.**

The Voice CPISA



Older people better off in Albania than Australia

Thursday, 30 October 2014

A [HelpAge](#) International study released in October found that one third of older Australians live in poverty.

Australia is ranked 61 out of 95 countries on income security of older people, placing us behind Albania (44) Malta (52) and Romania (26) according to the Global Age Watch Index 2014.

The Index shows that 35.5 per cent of older Australians live in poverty. This statistic will only worsen if the Australian Government's pension cuts come into effect, which will reduce the pension by \$80 per week over ten years.

Australia fared better in the categories of health status where we ranked 5th, in the enabling environment category (26th), and under capability (covering employment and educational status of older people) Australia ranked 2nd, behind Norway.

Another [report](#), *Falling through the Cracks*, put out by Curtin University as part of Anti-Poverty week, found that more than one million Australians (approximately 5 per cent of the population) are in severe income poverty, defined as having access to less than 30 per cent of the national median income.

Single person households are at increased risk of being in poverty, the study found, with someone in severe income poverty typically having no more than \$133 to live on each week after deducting housing costs, with many surviving on less.

Compared to the national averages, Queensland and NSW are over-represented in the proportion of households in severe poverty.

The Voice- CPISA

The role of the media in supporting Ageism

Mass media, particularly television and movies, define social roles in contemporary culture by presenting a steady and repetitive portrayal of images and a system of messages. Studies reveal the common perception in the media that youth sells and youth buy. This view causes television shows, movies, and advertisements to feature young characters to bring in large audiences and revenues. The media emphasize youth and beauty, fast-paced action and lives, and overly simplistic portrayals of individuals. This emphasis exacerbates the negative image of aging and the elderly in American culture, because the stereotypes of aging are the antithesis of the attributes upon which television and movies thrive.

The image of ageing depicted in the media has generally been one of negative stereotyping, a portrayal that seems to be more negative than any other social group. In American culture, the aged are not depicted as experienced "elders." Rather, older people are tolerated and respected to the extent they can act like younger people and work, exercise, and have healthy relationships.

Research from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, shows a continuing negative portrayal of older persons and the elderly by the media, manifested mostly through comments referring to decline and deterioration in old age. The media also tend to exclude or severely under represent the elderly in the images presented on television compared to the proportion of elderly in the U.S. population. While the population age sixty-five and older represents almost 13 percent of the U.S. population, only about 8 percent of the roles in television commercials in the 1990s were of older persons (Tupper). **Older women are almost invisible in prime-time television shows and movies.**

Similarly, television advertising, which has a profound effect on influencing and shaping attitudes, repeatedly conveys negative stereotypes by representing older persons as feeble, forgetful, stubborn, and helpless. Repeated exposure to negative stereotypes about ageing and the elderly in commercial advertising can lead to a devaluing of the elderly.

Advertisers clearly focus their marketing on younger women who are primarily responsible for household purchases. The common perception among advertising agencies is that

younger age groups spend more than older age groups. Recent studies show that while sixty-five to seventy-four-year-old consumers outspend their counterparts in the thirty-five to forty-four-year-old category, ad agency staff ignored older audiences and under-appreciated their potential and power as consumers.

Newspapers and magazines generally present neutral images of aging and do not create or support negative images of the elderly in their coverage of stories or in advertisements.



NOTICE OF RESEARCH

Dr Ann Moyal, a recent Canberra member of OWN (whose book 'A Woman of Influence' was reported in the .last issue of KIT) is currently undertaking a study (as an essay or opinion piece) on Older Women in Australia and their continuing stereotyping and presence, as 'the second sex'.

She notes that OWN has been linked with important research on Older Women's Health, and on Violence against Older Women well over a decade ago but she is keen to learn about more contemporary research that may be ongoing or published recently by members of the Network. OWN's own goals lie at the very heart of this matter.

.Essentially she is interested in the cultural question of Older Women's standing and status in Australian society which, despite their diverse and active roles and their striking contribution to community and national life, remains equivocal and under recognized.

Dr Moyal's email is - moyal.ann@gmail.com

Women Dominate Australian Of The Year Awards

Women have dominated the finalists for the Australian of the Year Awards 2015 including senior women in the Not for Profit and philanthropic sectors.

Six of the eight finalists for the 2015 Australian of the Year Award are women - the highest number of female finalists in the category since the State and Territory award process was introduced in 2003. Of the 32 finalists across all four award categories, 17 are women.

State and Territory Award recipients in the four Award categories - Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia's Local Hero - are now national finalists for the Awards which will be announced in Canberra on 25 January 2015.

Australian of the Year finalists include domestic violence campaigner and a member of Pro Bono Australia's Impact 25, Rosie Batty from Victoria.

The award selectors said when Rosie Batty spoke out calmly just hours after her son's murder, she gave voice to many thousands of victims of domestic violence who had until then remained unheard. "Batty has risen above her personal tragedy and the great loss of her 11 year old son, Luke, who was the victim of domestic violence at the hands of his father in a very public assault. Rosie's story jolted Australia into recognising that family violence can happen to anyone."

Child advocate and adoption campaigner Deborra-lee Furness from NSW.

Furness is fighting for the rights of children in Australia and around the world. The mother of two adopted children Furness established National Adoption Awareness Week in 2008, building the campaign from a volunteer-led, grassroots organisation to an active advocacy group. In 2014, Deborra-lee launched Adopt Change and is leading the campaign to overhaul Australia's anti-adoption culture and lobby for national adoption law reform.

Child protection activist Hetty Johnston AM from Queensland.

Founder of child protection charity, Bravehearts, Hetty Johnston established Bravehearts in 1997 after learning her daughter had been sexually assaulted. Since then, Johnston has dedicated her life to creating awareness that child sexual assault is largely preventable and encouraging the nation to prioritise the safety of children.

Today, Hetty leads a team of more than 70 employees who provide therapeutic, educational and advocacy services nationally.

Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley AO from Western Australia.

Professor Beazley has dedicated over 30 years to neuroscience, researching recovery from brain injury and changing clinical practice in the treatment of premature infants. As Western Australia's Chief Scientist from 2006 to 2013, Prof Beazley advised Governments on science and innovation, worked closely with industry and was a science ambassador in Australia and internationally. She helped establish a nationwide 'hotline' for school laboratory technicians, worked for healthier waterways by establishing Dolphin Watch, spearheaded a program supplying microscopes to over 450 primary schools and introduced the international science communication competition Famelab to Australia.

Peace campaigner Dr Gill Hicks MBE from South Australia.

Dr Gill Hicks survived the London bombing of King's Cross and Russell Square tube stations in July 2005. Her injuries were so severe that paramedics couldn't even identify her gender. Trapped in the chaos, her legs destroyed, she was the last person to be rescued alive from the train. In the nine years since Dr Hicks has dedicated her life to working for world peace. The founder of M.A.D. For Peace, her work concentrates on ending violent extremism and building sustainable peace.

Equality activist Rodney Croome AM from Tasmania.

A champion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) rights in Tasmania and throughout Australia, Croome has spent the past 26 years campaigning for decriminalisation, anti-discrimination protections, and the recognition of same-sex relationships and families, including marriage equality. He has also worked tirelessly to end discrimination and improve educational and health outcomes for LGBTI people, particularly those in rural and remote communities.

Business and philanthropic leader Glenn Keys from the Australian Capital Territory.

A leader in both business and philanthropy, Glenn Keys is a former Australian Defence Force test flight engineer, as managing director

of global healthcare provider, Aspen Medical, Glenn puts corporate social responsibility at the heart of his business. The parent of a child with an intellectual disability, Glenn is passionate about helping people with disability reach their potential. As the Chairman of Special Olympics ACT, he has worked to provide opportunities for athletes with a disability to develop physical fitness, gain skills and forge friendships. He is an inaugural board member of the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Humanitarian Rosalie Kunoth-Monks OAM from the Northern Territory.

Growing up on the remote Utopia Station in the Northern Territory, Rosalie Kunoth- Monks learnt the laws of her tribe, the Anmatjere people. After moving to Alice Springs to attend school, Rosalie was cast in the lead role in the classic Australian film Jedda in 1953. Later, she spent a decade as a nun in a Melbourne convent before leaving to establish the first Aboriginal hostel in Victoria. Passionate about law, justice, education, children and youth affairs, Kunoth- Monks cares for other children besides her own and has an enduring commitment to her country and her community.

"All the Australian of the Year Award national finalists are remarkable people making a real difference to our nation," Jeremy Lasek, CEO of the National Australia Day Council said.

"It's wonderful to see so many women among the finalists in all four Award categories and across the board it's great to recognise Australians whose strength of character, courage, achievements and vision are making Australia a better place.

"The national finalists represent the diversity of Australian society, with five finalists of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island background and six finalists who were born overseas and emigrated to Australia.

"Their contributions and achievements are also widely varied - ranging across science, human and equal rights advocacy, community leadership, medicine, volunteering, breaking down barriers and setting new benchmarks - but they are all inspirational Australians.

"From this impressive group of 32 Australians will come our next Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia's Local Hero."

Those now in consideration for the remaining national Awards are:

SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2015 - FINALISTS

New South Wales - Jackie French

Victoria - Professor Sam Berkovic AC

Queensland - Fred Hyde AM

Western Australia - Graham Mabury OAM

South Australia - John Swan

Tasmania - Professor Henry Reynolds

Australian Capital Territory - Sandra Mahlberg

Northern Territory - Eddie Robertson

Pro Bono Email News



Lexophilia

“Lexophile” is a word used to describe those that have a love for words, such as “you can tune a piano, but you can’t tuna fish”, or “to write with a broken pencil is pointless.”

A competition to see who can come up with the best lexophiles is held every year in an undisclosed location. This year’s winning submission is posted at the end.

- .. When fish are in schools, they sometimes take de bait.
- .. A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- .. When the smog lifts in Los Angeles U.C.L.A.
- .. The batteries were given out free of charge.
- .. A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- .. A will is a dead giveaway.
- .. With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
- .. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
- .. When you’ve seen one shopping center you’ve seen a mall.
- .. Police were summoned to a daycare center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- .. Did you hear about the fellow whose entire left side was cut off? He’s all right now.
- .. A bicycle can’t stand alone; its just two tired.
- .. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
- .. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine is now fully recovered.
- .. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
- .. When she saw her first strands of grey hair she thought she’d dye.
- .. Acupuncture is a jab well done. That’s the point of it.

And the cream of the twisted crop:

.. Those who get too big for their pants will be totally exposed in the end.

Eye Health and Diabetes

The Diabetic Retinopathy Barometer Project is a new multi-country study – and the first of its kind in the world – focused on diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular edema.

Diabetic retinopathy is one of the most common complications of diabetes and one of the major causes of adult blindness.

Results from the study will be used to inform policy and decision-making locally and globally. The project will culminate in a comprehensive report and a set of resources.

To undertake the study, surveys need to be conducted to gather new and much needed information.

Surveys generally take about 20-30 minutes to complete and can currently be completed in English but will be available in additional languages in the coming weeks. Taking part in this project is voluntary and responses will be anonymous. The Ethical Review Boards of partner organizations have reviewed and approved the study protocol.

It would be greatly appreciated if the enclosed survey link could be shared with colleagues and people with diabetes. The link can be emailed or posted on websites of appropriate organizations. For your information, in each of the 42 countries, participation from 30 providers is sought in various specialties (e.g., primary care, eye specialist, diabetes specialist) and 70 people with diabetes in various stages of disease progression (i.e., diabetes only, diabetic retinopathy or diabetic macular edema).

Patient survey:

https://nyam.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3CTWkyeZAdYXhGd

If you have questions about the study or the survey please contact Linda Weiss PhD (lweiss@nyam.org), Study Director, or Ebele Benjamin-Gardner (ebenjamin@nyam.org), Study Manager



We can't afford to water down gender reporting

When Michelle Dixon delivered a significant pay cut to a colleague's annual salary - by more than most of us earn in a year - she thought he would quit.

How'd he take it?

"It wasn't pretty but we didn't lose him."

Dixon, the chief executive officer of legal firm Maddocks, conducted a forensic review of pay last year. Then she took responsibility for the decision to bring all the partners' salaries into line. What she discovered was a significant gender pay gap.

Of course it wasn't just one outlier: "We had some very disappointed people and some very happy people."

It's one of the reasons she supports the work of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

"I'm a believer in reporting because it's clear we have a structural issue."

Just to remind you, the gender pay gap in Australia is the biggest it's ever been – now over 18 per cent and widening.

The agency charged with trying to narrow the gap [is currently under review](#) and under the control of a government which has no commitment to gender equity. It doesn't take the deliberate insult of a male Minister for Women to figure that out.

It is nearly a year since the Federal government caved in on hasty changes to the WGEA, which oversees equity reporting in Australia. By stealth, it tried to wind back reporting for all but the biggest companies.

The outcry was enormous. While the Business Council of Australia applauded the proposed changes, its members were not so thrilled with the idea – the ANZ's Mike Smith, then Treasury Secretary Martin Parkinson and Macquarie Bank Chairman Kevin McCann all came out in support of the WGEA. The BCA had to get back in its box and the government was forced into proper process.

Of course, the Minister for Women was nowhere to be seen at the announcement of the review last year – instead, the news was delivered by the current Minister for Employment Eric Abetz and the Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Women.

Now the government has completed the public consultation on the reporting requirements (which are legislated under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012) and [published a summary](#). If there are any changes, they will have to be announced by the government before the start of the 2015-16 reporting period, beginning 1 April 2015.

Helen Conway, director of the WGEA, says the process was fair, transparent and collaborative.

But not huge numbers participated – only 42 submissions were received, of which 28 are public (including three anonymous submissions). The survey had 523 valid responses and the Department of Employment met with 18 employers to seek their views.

And there is predictable whingeing. Around a quarter of respondents said the experience of reporting was time-consuming. One-fifth said they had trouble consolidating their data into one report across multiple business sites. And still others reported they had trouble with the technology.

More broadly, the consultation summary reports that most employers “state broad support for the principle of workplace gender equality”. At least in public. Seriously, this kind of fatherhood statement must be a relief to the thousands of women who work for these companies where equal pay for equal work is still a fantasy.

Conway says she believes the government is committed to gender reporting and says that she is happy for any feedback which will lead to streamlining reporting processes. Last year, some changes to the reporting were delayed and she says that perhaps some of those changes needn't be implemented.

But Conway also says some of those who contributed to the consultation were peak bodies who were either misinformed or underinformed about how reporting actually works.

“Everybody is going to whinge and that should be ignored.” But Conway also recognises that no-one embraces compliance burdens.

“It's about trying to get some measure of proportionality,” she says. And the diversity manager of one of Australia's largest legal firms King & Wood Malleson, Kellie Wade, says the endgame is more critical than ever. Compliance is the key to making sure that women will get a fair deal.

“The gain is worth the pain because the fact is progress has stalled, progress in this space is glacial.”

Dixon from Maddocks is embedding revolutionary practices at her firm. Employees will be paid on their outputs and not their inputs – read ‘what they achieve’ instead of ‘how many days they are in the office’. And women returning from maternity leave will regain their clients the day they come back to work.

It’s only been a year. And there’s more revolution to come. As she puts it: “The structures aren’t supporting women.

Let’s make sure the government doesn’t destroy the one organisation in this country that’s determined to change those structures and make sure women – eventually – get equal pay.



Gender goggles strip away men's sense of entitlement towards women

December 11, 2014 (from THE AGE)

Kathleen Brasher

A growing number of men view social issues through "gender goggles" that illuminate how a person's gender influences attitudes and behaviours towards them.

Something remarkable is afoot. The Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police, Ken Lay, and the Chief of the Australian Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison, are talking publicly about male attitudes towards women. On the Victoria Police website, Lay suggests that "our culture is filled with men who hold an indecent sense of entitlement towards women".

Lay and Morrison are both middle-aged men in charge of organisations with masculine cultures. They are not your typical feminists. Although many men treat women respectfully, these men go one step further by viewing social issues through "gender goggles". It is a giant step.

Gender goggles are illuminating. They bring into clear focus the fact that a person's gender influences attitudes and behaviours towards them. Gender goggles highlight issues for women such as discrimination, human rights abuses, domestic violence, rape, glass ceilings, inadequate childcare, political under-representation, , bullying and financial disadvantage such as unfair pay and unequal superannuation.

Unlike rose-coloured glasses and beer goggles that provide optimistic perceptions, gender goggles are not a frivolous fashion accessory. Lay's gender goggles enable him to see that some people perceive women as "less valuable than men". This perception applies to women of all ages, including older women.

When gender goggles are applied to older women, particularly women who have not been the family's breadwinner, they may show the humiliation of financial elder abuse. Studies confirm that financial abuse is the most common, and fastest-growing, type of abuse of older women.

Research shows that women over the age of 80 are most at risk of financial elder abuse. This research found that adult sons are the most common perpetrators. Some adult sons assume that money that was once "mum and dad's money" is now their money, even though their mothers are alive and well. They make assumptions that devalue the rights of their mothers.

There have been several high-profile trust fund disputes in which sons have sued their mothers. A former pupil of a private boys school in Sydney sued his mother after the family estate was left to his mother rather than to him. This "old boy" was castigated by the judge for having a "highly developed and unhealthy sense of entitlement".

According to the Office of the Public Advocate, older women are more likely to be declared legally incapable than older men. This may be due to the fact that women live longer than men. It may also suggest that older men are revered while older women are infantilised. This was certainly the case in Julie's family.

Julie is a middle-aged woman with five older brothers. With unseemly haste, a few days after her father's death, a GP was asked to declare Julie's elderly mother legally incapable. That she was bewildered, grieving and in the first weeks of widowhood after 50 years of marriage did not seem to have been taken into account.

After Julie's mother was declared legally incapable, the youngest son was assigned her financial power of attorney. Tony's job was to manage his mother's estate in her best interest. Determining what was in his mother's best interest was contested. Was it in their mother's best interest to keep money in the bank and continue to pay tax? Or should the children receive an early inheritance? Questions such as these divided Julie's siblings.

The eldest son, Christopher, organised frequent financial family planning meetings. Christopher

was planning his own retirement and unashamedly cast his eyes towards the Bank of Mum rather than towards his own financial planning. Julie questioned why these meetings were not convened before her father's death, particularly when their father's cognitive status was diminishing. Her question fell on deaf ears.

Tony prepared a financial spreadsheet describing "mum's assets", sharing this spreadsheet among his siblings. Would a financial spreadsheet with "dad's assets" have been shared in the same way if their mother had died first? Of course not.

Then came the zinger. Julie was told that her mother's monthly expenses were excessive. Julie's sister-in-law explained to her: "Your brothers are worried about their inheritance. What's wrong with that?" Gobsmaacking stuff.

Julie went into full feminist flight to show her brothers, their wives and anyone else who would listen exactly what was wrong. She defended her mother's right to spend her own money. Julie argued that their father would have wanted his wife to have as much lemon squash, cheddar cheese, milk chocolate and shortbread biscuits as she wants.

Two brothers supported her; the other three bunkered down, ensconced in their men's club with others who share their views. These brothers refused to engage with Julie. They simply dismissed Julie's views as offensive, describing her as mad and bad, as powerful men often do.

Julie's gender goggles gave her clarity. On every issue, she asked her brothers a simple question: "Would you have treated our father like this?" However, her three older brothers had stopped listening years ago.

Perhaps Julie's brothers will listen to the Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police and the chief of the Australian Army talking about men's sense of entitlement. Men with gender goggles may be easier on their ears.

Dr Kathleen Brasher is a manager at COTA Victoria.



Our crisis

You let them cry with no sympathy
You let them die with no dignity
You trade their lives for popularity
You trade their rights like they're property

You paint them as animals
They've bled as humans
You lock them in jail cells
Silencing innocence

You treat them as criminals
They're your wars' victims
They re-live their hell
When they need protection

You condemn their persecutors,
you persecute them too
They're not our crisis –
Our crisis is you.

Sarah George

Sarah George is a human rights campaigner. Her work has focused particularly on asylum seekers, modern slavery and homelessness.

Health Insurers may control your GP

Monday, 01 December 2014
THE AUSTRALIAN Government is allowing for-profit private insurance companies to tender to run its new 'Primary Health Networks' which will oversee GP care across Australia.

This means that insurance companies, and not your GP, could end up making important decisions about if you get treated and what treatment you receive. It sounds like just the sort of system that has made health care so unaffordable in the USA.

Such a move (along with the GP co-payment) threatens Australia's universal Medicare system.

It was announced in the 2014 Federal Budget that Primary Health Networks will replace Medicare Locals as the bodies responsible for preventative health and planning.

Whoever is successful at winning the tender will be responsible for co-ordinating the care that all patients (not just health fund members) receive from their GP and provide links to hospitals.

The prohibition on private health involvement in primary care has contained costs and ensured equal access to GP care.

Allowing for-profits to run these creates a blatant conflict of interest. Private health

insurers are focused on their own members and shareholders.

This change could well lead to a two-tiered system where low income people who cannot afford health insurance receive inferior treatment.

This will be particularly stark in areas where insurers aren't likely to make money i.e. expect more cherry picking between patients with complex health needs and the "easy" (and therefore more profitable) patients.

It will exacerbate the rural-city divide because regional and remote areas, along with areas with people living on lower incomes, aren't profitable for health insurers.

The Australian Government is currently accepting expressions of interest for operating these Primary Health Networks.

Unsurprisingly, Bupa has expressed an interest (they are also keen on taking over NSW's Home Care Service).

If you're against private health insurers being able to run the Primary Health Networks, let the Australian Minister for Health know about it.

You can contact him by writing to
The Hon Peter Dutton, MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

You should also contact your local Federal Member of Parliament and your state Senators and let them know how you feel



The gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is narrowing. The Productivity Commission reported this week that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living longer, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are living healthier lives.** Supporters have played a big part in this improvement - by getting behind our work on the Close the Gap Campaign. There is of course much to do to finally Close the Gap, but the small improvements we saw this week tell us **we can close the health equality gap, but it must remain a priority of government.**

While this small improvement was positive news for health equality, the report confirmed what we've been saying for some time - **there is now a serious national crisis of over-**

incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased by 57% between 2000 and 2013, and Aboriginal young people are being locked up between 24 and 28 times the rate of non-Indigenous youth.

We urgently need a serious national effort and focus on incarceration. The Federal Government must lead the charge, working with States and Territories to set justice targets so we turn this around.

Write to the governments of Australia now and call for Justice Targets.



Superannuation & Gender pay Gap by Age group

By Laura Sprules

It will come as no surprise that women in Australia are still being paid less than men. However what's alarming is that that gender pay gap has actually been steadily increasing over the last 20 years and as of July 2014 the average women in Australia was paid 18.1% or \$14,500 less than her male counterpart. In other words that's an extra 66 days last year we need to work to break even.

And as we look forward to retirement the gender pay gap becomes even greater, furthermore the effect this compounded over the working life of women has a huge effect on the balance in our superannuation. If you look at the factsheet produced by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WEGA) which is broken down the by age group, you will see women aged 55-59 are suffering from a superannuation balances that will on average be 55.3% less than a male equivalent of the same age. So at retirement women, who have worked all there life, been the primary carer for children and sick relatives, have half as much money to live on then men. That doesn't really seem fair does it?

So, like me you're probably asking how this is possible.

The gender pay gap at retirement is not the result of a single event or experience. It is the cumulative product of decisions, events and experiences over the working lives of women.

From the stereotypes of the work women and men “should do” and the way women and men “should engage” in the workforce. To the different industries that men and women tend to work in. For example in WA, the main industries are mining, construction and manufacturing it’s therefore no wonder that the gender gap is even greater at 24.8%

Women are also more likely to work part time or flexible hours to look after children and or elderly relatives and still undertake the majority of unpaid care work in the home.

In reality, by the time women reach retirement the gender pay gap significantly limits the ability of women to participate equally across economic, social and cultural life. It’s far more common for women to experience financial insecurity and poverty in retirement; this directly impacts the standard of living, access to shelter, food and clothing, as well as access to affordable health care.

It means asking a son or daughter to agree to pay aged care fees (which can be tens of thousands of dollars per year) if you are no longer able to.

And if the older person cannot find someone who agrees to go guarantor, they could be forced to hand over control of their affairs to the NSW Guardian & Public Trustee in order to access aged care services.

The *Living Longer Living Better* reforms were marketed as ensuring older people got choice when it comes to their aged care.

Older people should not be forced to choose between going cap in hand to family members or rescinding their financial autonomy just to secure an aged care bed.

Assistant Minister Fifield said that the new fee structure for nursing homes will be closely monitored by the Aged Care Financing Authority.

The Voice CPISA



Can the nursing home demand you have a guarantor

The short answer is ‘yes’.

CPISA wrote to the Assistant Social Services Minister seeking clarification as to whether a nursing home can insist that, as a condition of entry, a potential resident must have a guarantor.

If they have no family or friends willing to go guarantor, then the nursing home can ask the government to take over their affairs.

Assistant Minister Mitch Fifield responded by saying “I appreciate your concerns that providers requiring a guarantor may restrict access to aged care for prospective residents, but confirm that this is not prevented by the Act.”

In other words, even if it means that some people won’t be able to get aged care, it’s not illegal for nursing homes to require a guarantor.

This can place families in a hugely difficult position.

