



# NOWN

## NATIONAL OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK-AUSTRALIA

Newsletter September/October 2019



## **President's Pen.**

Yes, I know it's been a while since our last Newsletter; some say far too long, some say I never think about it! And, far too many others say I've never seen one! It's the latter which constantly has me baffled as I send these Newsletters to all State offices who in turn send to their Conveners and to those individuals who do not have a State Body however, I do continue to hear and be distressed by those who say: "I've never seen one". So, somebody please help me out here. What do we need to do to ensure you all receive the newsletters?

This item was raised several times when I was in Queensland (QLD) for the State AGM a week or two ago (exact time depending on when I can send this newsletter out). The Qld members, some of whom are in the cover photo, are always so accommodating and good to be with, always interested in what is going on in other states, speaking enquiringly about the National Conference, especially those who will be travelling to NSW. Throughout the day and evening events, for the Qld AGM, there were dinners, lunches, fabulous guest speakers, great news from Groups and much to be enjoyed including dancing. Qld certainly know how to party, and I take my hat off to Lee Hodgson, (Qld President), and her team for the wonderful job they are doing in keeping Queensland women informed and involved with OWN QLD.

During my time there I was a guest at the home of Lee and her husband Andrew. June Donnelly from Qld OWN, well known to us all for the work she has done for National as a National Councilor was also a guest. June and Di Hill a Qld member met me at Brisbane airport and Di drove us both to Gympie for the Conference. June also stayed at Lee's home a large comfortable property on a 5 acre lot surrounded by beautiful bushland.

In Qld it was great to catch up with OWN friends including the women from Northern Queensland, Mackay. Ruth Sargent and Helen Stanton whom Cate Turner and I spent a great deal of time with when we were in Mackay, staying as guests of Ruth.

In this Newsletter you will find, I trust, a number of items of interest, some light, some serious and I trust all will be interesting and informative reading for you.

My very best wishes to you all

Aloma



### **THE SURPRISING JOY OF OLD AGE BY Jeffrey Kluger.**

“If life wanted to mess with you, it couldn’t have come up with a better way than death. Especially the lead-up. Your strength flags; your world narrows; much of what once gave you pleasure, and satisfaction is not gone. BUT, as it turns out, happiness is still very much with you – often even more so than before.

In some ways, our youth and middle years are really a sort of training period for the unanticipated pleasure of being an older adult. In his book, *Better with Age*, The psychology of Successful Ageing, Psychologist Alan D Castel asked a group of 30 - year- olds and 70- year- olds, which of the two cohorts was likely to be happier. Both of them chose the 30-year-olds. But when these groups were asked about their own subjective happiness, the 70-year-olds came out on top.

Psychologists, anthropologists and other investigators have long been intrigued by similar findings-that old age is often a time defines not by sorrow, dread and regret but rather by peace, gratitude and fulfillment. In another study cited in *Better with Age*, a group of successful CEOs of Fortune 500 companies – all 50 to 70 years old – scored lower on lab-based tests of reasoning and processing speed than younger people, yet all the CEOs nonetheless were running huge, stable and exceedingly profitable companies. Clearly, something more than the ability to crunch a lot of data was contributing to their success.

Earlier in life, wisdom can seem out of reach. But for those who have attained it, Castel writes, “often wisdom allows people to see the obvious, or to use common sense Yes, death is nonnegotiable – something that can only be delayed, never avoided. It’s a mercy then, that when we do reach the end, so many of us arrive there smarter, calmer and even smiling.”without second-guessing themselves or the outcomes.” Time Magazine



## **Women find friendship, understanding, & confidence in Self-help groups**

In my visit to QLD for the OWN Qld AGM I came across “Self Help Queensland” (SHQ). This groups provides support for support groups as well as helping individuals find support groups. Assisting groups across the broad spectrum of health, including genetic conditions, chronic disease, addiction, grief and loss, abuse, carer responsibilities, social isolation and mental health. SHQ provides a great range of support, everything from finding a group meeting space to writing grants; providing a directory and public referral service to connect groups to various services.

At a recent event, a support group member described how she has developed more confidence in talking about issues in public. Before she joined the group, she kept silent. “Now she is a myth-buster!”

If you know of any such group in your State, Territory or area please let us know so we can pass this new onto other women. [www.selfhelpqld.org.au](http://www.selfhelpqld.org.au)

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## **Topic: social isolation, loneliness, elderly comprehensive geriatric assessment**

An enquiry into **loneliness and social isolation** should be an integral part of comprehensive geriatric assessments, but often isn't. Loneliness can have negative effects on the psychological and physical health of an older adult. The presence of loneliness is associated with cognitive impairment, decreased mobility and increased difficulties with activities of daily living.

Charitable campaigns, such as the U.K. Campaign to End Loneliness, are raising the awareness of this important issue. The perception of loneliness can be altered, with social and psychological interventions holding an important role in improving an individuals' perception of loneliness. Voluntary sector initiatives need to be providing promising solutions to combat loneliness but closer collaboration between voluntary organisations and community services is required. In order to influence the existing strategy and public policy, further studies are required to assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the harms that arise from loneliness. Issue



## Women & Accommodation:

The Alice Springs Women's Shelter (ASWS) is a 30 bed refuge in the Northern Territory providing support to local women, particularly indigenous women, and remote communities such as Yeundumu, Papunya, Ti Tree and Hermannsburg, through their outreach program. Women often arrive with very little in terms of clothing and belongings. Along with accommodation and front-line services, ASWS provides women and children with clothing, shoes, toiletries - items that help women feel at home. You'll be helping women in crisis by providing basic items for those in need.

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## Next of Kin – emergency contact program (from CPSA - voice)

### A most important service:

The NSW Police runs the Next of Kin program for people living alone who want to make sure emergency services can contact a person of their choice in case of an emergency.

You can register the details of your nominated person through the NSW's Next of Kin Program. You can also register your doctor, dentist or any other medical alert contacts that could help you in an emergency.

The information can assist ambulance and police in contacting a relative or other person close to you and inform them of your situation. The NSW Police will give you a registered number along with a sticker and keyring.

To register for this free service, contact your local police station and speak to the Crime Prevention Officer about the Next of Kin Program and the application process.

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## Advanced Care Directive

NSW Health has produced a 'Making an Advanced Care Directive' package. The package includes

- An Advanced Care Directive form to complete
- An Information Booklet to help you complete your Advanced Care Directive

The form and booklet can be downloaded from [www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/acp/Pages/acd-form-info-book.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/acp/Pages/acd-form-info-book.aspx).

If you do not have access to the internet and wish to have a copy of the booklet and form contact CPSA on 1800 451 488 and a member of the Policy Team will send out a copy to you.

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## Hearing Dogs just gets bigger

Australian Lions Hearing Dogs (ALHD) has become so successful in training and providing dogs for the hearing impaired in Australia, it's having to expand to meet new demand. Having run out of room to train more dogs and support more trainers at it's Verdun, South Australia headquarters, it has launched into an exciting project to greatly increase facilities at the Adelaide Hills complex.

With demand growing exponentially and a current waiting list nearing two years, expansion was seen as the only option. New facilities and infrastructure will give ALHD the capacity to train 100 dogs per year. ALHD is the only accredited hearing assistance dog organisation in Australia accredited by Assistance Dogs International.

Hearing loss is on the rise with one in every 6 Australians affected by hearing loss and with an ageing population it is expected to grow to one in four by 2050. Hearing loss for many people also brings with it depression, anxiety, isolation and loneliness.

The most common causes of hearing loss are ageing and exposure to loud sounds. ALHD train dogs to recognise a range of 10 common household sounds such as phone alerts, someone at the door, baby crying and alarms including smoke alarms.

In addition to helping make day-to-day life more navigable a dog helps alleviate the associated conditions as it serves as a companion, allowing the owner to re-connect with friends, family and community. These are important considerations as research shows depression and anxiety contribute to cognitive decline which is associated with dementia.

The very first dog, Amber, sponsored by the Lions Club of Edwardstown, was delivered on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1982.

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## **Drum Rolls**

### **Grandma in the Traffic**

Dear family,

The other day I went to a local Christian Bookstore where I saw a “Honk if you love Jesus” sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car. I stopped at the lights of a busy intersection, lost in the thought about the Lord and didn’t notice that the light had changed. The bumper sticker really works! I found lots of folk that loved Jesus. Why, the guy behind me started honking like crazy! He must really love the Lord because pretty soon he leaned out the window and yelled “Jesus Christ” as loud as he could! Everyone else was soon honking so I leaned out of my window and waved and smiled to all those loving people.

There was a guy from Florida because I could hear him yelling something about “sunny beaches” and saw him wave at me in a peculiar way, sticking his middle finger in the air. Luckily, I had just asked my two grandsons what such a gesture means, and they looked at each other and giggled and told me it was a Hawaiian good luck sign – so I leaned out of my window and returned the gesture. A couple of people were so caught up in the moment they actually got out of their cars and started to walk towards me. I assumed they wanted to pray but just then I noticed the light had gone green, so I stepped on the gas. It’s a good thing I did, because I was the only one to make it through the intersection because the lights turned back to red.

No wanting the experience to end I looked back and seeing all those good folk standing around I leaned out of my window with a wide smile, held up the Hawaiian good luck sign and sped away.

Praise the Lord for such wonderful people.

Love you all!! Grandma.



**Lee Hodgson, President, Queensland OWN & Aloma Fennell National OWN (NOWN)**

**Best wishes to all.**

**We look forward to seeing you at the National Conference hosted by NSW OWN**

**17 & 18 October 2019.**

Aloma & the National team

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