

# Newsletter

January 2009  
www.olderdykes.org



## Ten Forty Dinner and Games

**6pm - 10 pm**

**Saturday 7 February**

**Games night - chess and  
pictionary included**

Bring along your favourite games to Summer Hill Community Centre.

BYO food to share & your own drinks.

Entry fee for the bi-monthly dinner and discussion is:

\$15 fully waged

\$10 part waged

\$5 concession.

Summer Hill Community Centre is at 131 Smith Street, Summer Hill, near Lackey Street, which leads from the station.

There is parking near the Centre and the station.

By train, the Community Centre is on the right hand side of the station, going towards the City.

By bus, from George Street, City catch the 413 bus to Junction Road, Summer Hill or the 483 to the junction of Liverpool Road and Carlton Crescent, Summer Hill.

## What's on

### Dykes for Dinner

**Thursday 12 February 2009**

**6.30pm**

**Mamma Teresa Restaurant  
(Italian)**

412 Anzac Parade Kingsford  
Parking in Anzac Pde after 6.30  
BYO (no corkage)

Main courses \$15 to \$22

RSVP to Janne by emailing  
[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) before  
Sunday 8 February.

**Thursday 12 March 2009**

**6.30pm**

**Hotel Saravana Bhavan  
Restaurant (Indian)**

15 The Strand Croydon  
Plenty of street parking  
BYO (\$1 pp)

Main courses \$7 to \$17

RSVP to Janne by emailing  
[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) before  
Sunday 8 March.

### Social event

**Sunday 8 March 2009**

**Lunch at Watson's Bay**

Bring a picnic or purchase lunch from the kiosk at the Watsons Bay Hotel.

The 11am ferry to Watsons Bay from Wharf 4 at Circular Quay arrives at 11.28. The next ferry leaves at 11.45 and arrives at 12.13.

Anne and Rob (wearing some purple!) will wait at the Watsons Bay ferry wharf until 12.15 before heading off to a shady picnic area on the grassy bank to the right, facing away from the harbour.

Ferries return to Circular Quay at 2.35, 3.20, 4.05 and 4.50.

For more information email  
[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)

### About Ten Forty Matrix

Ten Forty Matrix is an informal group of lesbians over forty, many of whom have been socially and politically active in Sydney since 1987.

We enjoy discussion and debate on the issues we face in work, life and at home, and hold regular fun events to keep us in touch with the lighter side of life.

Five years ago we established the website [www.olderdykes.org](http://www.olderdykes.org) to encourage national and international connections between older lesbians.

Ten Forty Matrix is not an organisation you have to join, but if you want to receive regular information about our activities and our bi-monthly newsletter, you need to take out a newsletter subscription.

### Newsletter subscription

The annual subscription for our bi-monthly newsletter is \$10 waged and \$5 unwaged.

Subscriptions can be paid at Ten Forty Dinner and Discussion evenings.

To receive an emailed newsletter, please email [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org).

To receive a hard copy please email [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org).



**Entertaining  
lesbians  
wanted**



## Ten Forty Dinner and Soiree

**6pm - 10 pm**

**Saturday 4 April**

Soiree in a cabaret setting.

For those interested, come dressed up in a cabaret fashion.

Maureen is coordinating the soiree.

All you lovely women out there with musical, dance, poetry or story-telling talents, who wish to share your flair for entertaining, please get in touch with Maureen via [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) as soon as possible.



**After march rally – Hyde Park north 12.30-4.00pm**

MC at Hyde Park: Meredith Burgmann

30+ stalls with information, food, products for sale

Memory Tent: Look at items from yesteryear and spark oral herstories

Check out our website: [www.iwdsydney.wordpress.com](http://www.iwdsydney.wordpress.com)

Or email us for more details on: [iwd2009@googlegroups.com](mailto:iwd2009@googlegroups.com)

**101 years on – Why aren't we there yet?**

IWD is historically significant for its origins in the struggle for women's full social, political and economic participation.

In 1908, 15,000 female textile workers went on strike in New York City. These women agitated for voting rights, better working conditions and shorter working hours. Many of them were migrants. This strike eventually led to socialist women organising the first IWD.

Some 20 years later on March the 25th 1928, the Militant Women's Movement initiated the first IWD march in Sydney.

The women's demands included gender pay equity, reduced hours in retail work and the abolition of piece work.

*'I will feel equality has arrived when we can elect to office women who are as incompetent as some of the men who are already there.'*

Maureen Reagan

## International Women's Day 2009

**Gather at Town Hall Saturday 7 March at 11-11.30, to march at 12 noon through the city to Hyde Park.**

Get involved...

- Involve your group/school/college/community/workplace/union
- Come on your own, or bring a group of women
- Contribute to the 2009 IWD Memory Tent of Feminist Herstory
- Hire a stall for the rally in Hyde Park
- Volunteer with the IWD Collective
- March with a banner, blow your whistle, horn etc.

## Gay and Lesbian Bush Dance

**Friday 27 February 2009**

**8pm-12 midnight**

**Marrickville Town Hall**

Join us at the Women in the Bush table

Live band.

Soft drinks, wine and beer available at the bar or BYO

Some nibbles on tables or BYO

Pay at the door.

Contact Sylvia via [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) by Sunday 22 February to reserve a spot on the table.



# We Should 'Grandfather' Age Pension Same Sex Changes

The Federal government has passed legislation that counters many of the legal discriminations against same sex couples who see themselves in a marriage-like relationship. The new arrangements will be implemented from 1 July 2009 and people claiming pensions or benefits will have two weeks from that date (at the latest) to declare to Centrelink if they are in a same sex relationship.

The legislation brings a lot of good news to couples who have long sought recognition, but also some bad news and perhaps some unintended consequences in the short term. Particular benefits for older same sex couples include access to reversionary superannuation (super reverts to the partner upon the death of the initial recipient) and the exclusion of the couple's home in assets assessments for aged care.

However, the changes also bring problems. The legislation

is based on the assumption that living together involves supporting the other, rather than just sharing costs. This means Centrelink can now deem a same sex couple living together to be in a de facto relationship and assess their eligibility for pensions and benefits as such. So, instead of each individual receiving the single pension of \$567 per fortnight (a total for two of \$1134) the couple will receive \$944 per fortnight – a reduction of \$190 per fortnight.

The changes are particularly unjust for older lesbian couples whose histories often include sex discrimination such as lower pay, fragmented employment records, little or no superannuation and overt job discrimination.

Also affected are couples where one is on the pension or a benefit and the other is a self-funded retiree, or still in paid employment. In these cases, the partner's income and assets will now be assessed as joint

income and possibly reduce the amount of the single pension or benefits a person receives.

**Recommendation: The government must implement a 'Grandfather' clause**

- Existing Age pensioners and older recipients of the Disability Support Benefit, should retain their current payments.
- In addition there should be a transitional period before same sex couples over 55 are subject to the new legislation. (Remember the intent of the grandfathering clause when the pension age for women went from 60 to 65?) Grandfathering would allow recipients a transitional period to adjust their finances.

This same sex reform legislation is incredibly wide ranging. Get more information from the Attorney General's site [www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Humanrightsandanti-discrimination\\_SameSexReform](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Humanrightsandanti-discrimination_SameSexReform)

## Lobbying for 'grandfathering' of changes to Centrelink entitlements

**Contact** your local member and Senators for your state. Ask them to take the issues up with the Attorney-General and the relevant ministers.

**Write to:**

Prime Minister: The Hon Kevin Michael Rudd, Email: [www.pm.gov.au](http://www.pm.gov.au)

Attorney-General: The Hon Robert Bruce McClelland, [R.McClelland.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:R.McClelland.MP@aph.gov.au)

Deputy Prime Minister: The Hon Julia Eileen Gillard, [Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au)

Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: The Hon Jennifer Louise (Jenny) Macklin, [JMacklin.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:JMacklin.MP@aph.gov.au)

Minister for Human Services  
Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, [minister@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:minister@humanservices.gov.au)

Minister for Health and Ageing: The Hon Nicola Louise Roxon, [Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Nicola.Roxon.MP@aph.gov.au)

Minister for the Status of Women & Minister for Housing: The Hon Tanya Joan Plibersek, E-mail: [Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au)

Leader of Opposition: The Hon Malcolm Bligh Turnbull, [Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Malcolm.Turnbull.MP@aph.gov.au)

MPs: [www.aph.gov.au/house/members/memlist.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/memlist.pdf)

Senators: [www.aph.gov.au/senate/senators/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/senators/index.htm)

Write ASAP as parliament sits again 3rd February.

Write your letter in the usual letter style, include your postal address plus email. Email it as an attachment. If possible also send a hard copy by mail.

Say what the problem is and what you want.

COAL [www.coal.org.au](http://www.coal.org.au) is co-ordinating a lobbying campaign. Email a copy of your letter to COAL [coal@aapt.net.au](mailto:coal@aapt.net.au)

## Australia comes in from the cold on Women's rights

Australia has formally moved to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was opposed by the former Government.

Australia has been a party to CEDAW since 1983. The previous Government refused to sign the Optional Protocol when it was adopted in 2000, despite countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and a number of our Asia-Pacific neighbours doing so. Even today, the Coalition, under Malcolm Turnbull, still opposes this important international human rights instrument.

The announcement comes on the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Minister for the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek said that by becoming a party to the Optional Protocol, the Government is making a powerful statement that discrimination against women in any form is unacceptable.

"The Rudd Government is committed to overcoming the stereotypes and prejudices that can stifle women's rights and

weaken equality," Mr McClelland said. "Becoming party to the Optional Protocol demonstrates our commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, both at home and abroad."

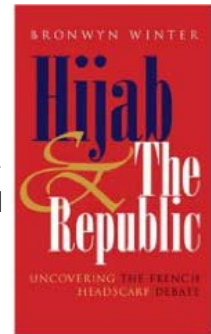
Under the Optional Protocol, women in Australia will be able to make a complaint to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women about alleged violation of Australia's obligations under CEDAW. This can only occur after domestic legal options have been exhausted. The protocol also permits a UN investigation process.

"Acceding to the Optional Protocol will send a strong message that Australia is serious about promoting gender equality and that we are prepared to be judged by international human rights standards," said Minister Plibersek. "It will also add credibility to our offers of support to women across our region."

Australia's instrument of accession to the Optional Protocol will be lodged shortly in New York, meaning it will enter into force for Australia before International Women's Day on 8 March 2009.

## Hijab and the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate

Bronwyn Winter has written a riveting account of the controversial 2003 French law to ban Islamic headscarves and other religious signs from public schools. Bronwyn argues convincingly that the issue must be understood within the specific historical and cultural context of France and through a feminist lens, since gender is fundamental to the debate about veiling Muslim women.



Copies are available from The Feminist Bookshop, phone 9810 2666 or email [feministbookshop@iprimus.com.au](mailto:feministbookshop@iprimus.com.au)

## Thanks, Margot

We enjoyed another enormously successful summer solstice party at Margot's, who has generously opened her wonderful home to older dykes for the past few years.

It's a wonderfully welcoming, relaxed and friendly environment for us to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

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## Ten Forty Matrix

### Who currently does what?

Bookings, liaison, and general contact: Jan

Utilities box: Jan and Robyn

Money Management: Esther

Website and contact email list management: Jan, Ruth, Dorothy, Diana, Kate, Robyn, Spiderlily, Diann and Rosemary

Newsletter: editing and layout  
Ruth and Dorothy

Photocopying (rotates)

Mail-out: Esther

If you would like to become involved in any of the above, please contact Jan via email [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)