



# Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

May 2019

[www.olderdykes.org](http://www.olderdykes.org)

## Dinner & Discussion

### What Lesbians Do in Books; from Radclyffe Hall to Sarah Waters

**Saturday 1 June 6.00-8.30pm**

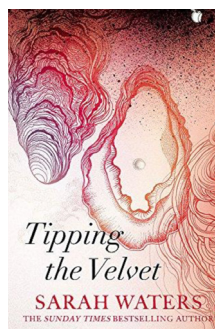
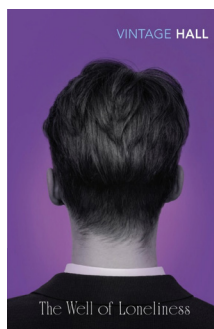
**Presenter: Jan**

Jan will lead discussion on this enticing topic.

Bring your favourite lezzo book and read us a morsel. Or just come along and hear about new authors to sample. And bring books to pass on – there will be a book table. Come prepared for a relaxed fun night!

**Venue:** Michael Maher Room, 78 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield

Buses are available: 406, 436, 438, 439 and street parking is available close by.



### Dykes for Dinner

**6:30pm Thursday 13 June 2019**

Jasmin 1

116 Marion Street

Leichhardt

RSVP [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) by Sunday 9 June.



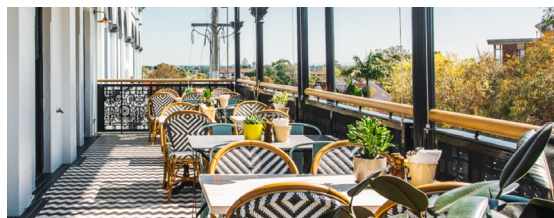
**6:30pm Thursday 11 July**

Hotel Royal

156 Norton St

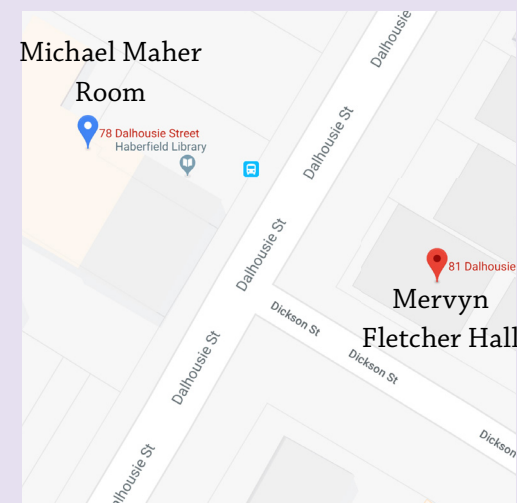
Leichhardt

RSVP [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) by Sunday 7 July.



### Please note

While Mervyn Fletcher Hall is being refurbished Dinner and Discussion events will be held in the Michael Maher Room, 78 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield. The Michael Maher Room is on the opposite side of Dalhousie Street from the Mervyn Fletcher Hall



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## The Internet, Social Media and Us: Risks and Rewards

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### Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians 16 February 2019

Dinner and Discussions for Older Lesbians got off to a flying start with the first session of our Internet and Social Media project. Twenty six women were present and enjoyed delicious Thai food making a change from our 'bring a plate' format. As always, women enjoyed meeting new participants and old friends, chatting and catching up while enjoying the feast.



Dr Justine Humphry, a Lecturer in Digital Cultures in the Department of Media and Communications at the University of Sydney, gave a very comprehensive presentation. It is impossible to give an overview of her presentation as the content was so rich and much of it new to many of us. Feedback expressed delight in the relaxed style and informative methods, including appropriate

slides, and in the depth and diversity of her knowledge.

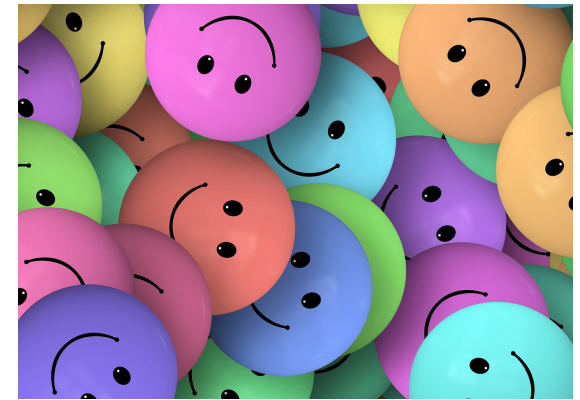
Justine gave a brief overview of the development of social media and its rapid growth since 2000. A small group discussion about the social media we do use revealed that some women used none, while others used several platforms and that Facebook, used mainly for contact with friends and family, was the most used. She raised the notion that a cost of non-participation may be increasing our own invisibility – a problem for older women in general including older lesbians.

One of the main concerns expressed by participants was how to manage Facebook and other social media applications to limit problems including security issues. This will be taken up in future “hands-on” sessions.

Justine let us know about some exciting new developments like technological applications to street furniture e.g. smart benches run by solar power so that you can plug in your device, is one idea that is already being implemented in some places. She also introduced the Meme - anonymous pictures that travel around the web being modified by multiple users.

The session went over time and could have continued such was the enthusiasm of the audience. Fortunately this was the first session of three of this project made possible by a small funding grant from LInc.

**Sylvia and Kel**



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## Happiness: The neuroscience, the social science, and what it means for us

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### Report on the dinner and discussion event on 6 April 2019

Wendy, the guest speaker for this event is a long-time member of Ten Forty and is well known to us for her comedic MC work. Following the social chat and eating, Wendy asked the 25 women present to sit in groups around tables.

She started by getting the audience to give her a one line definition of what we thought happiness was. Responses were – ‘playing with my animals’, ‘lack of stress’, physical affection’, ‘in bed with a woman’ and meaningful connections’.

Wendy gave a historical description from Aristotle, Hedonia – a feeling of pleasure and Eudomonía – a more enduring sense of wellbeing and living a meaningful life. These are still accepted terms with the addition

of Engagement – related to feelings of commitment and participation in life.

Wendy mentioned the partial genetic component and environmental factors associated with happiness in the context of the amazing resilience humans have in recovering from negative events.

The group activities were a fun aspect of the presentation. We had to put a set of cards with different countries on them in three groups according to the World Happiness Ranking Report. This report rates countries according to per capita GDP, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity of the population and lack of perceptions of corruption. Australia did well in this activity.

The next activity was to rank the countries according to the Happy Planet Index, which measures sustainable wellbeing by calculating wellbeing, life expectancy, and ecological footprint, adjusted for inequality. Sadly Australia did very badly on this list due to our appalling environmental footprint.

Wendy then moved on to the brain and the various neurotransmitters that are known to mediate good feelings. Some lively discussion followed.

Another study, The Australian Unity Study, updated for 18 years is used worldwide to measure happiness using a variety of indicators.

Some common ground for happiness emerges from all these studies. Called the Golden Triangle of Happiness it is:

- Relationships – meaningful connectivity to others
- Financial control – money up to a certain level reduces stress and creates an environment for happiness
- Sense of purpose – this can be work or an activity of meaning to the person

Ten Forty Matrix is very good for happiness judging by the laughter and conversation as well as the feedback from this discussion.

**Sylvia**

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## Report on Ten Forty Matrix Social Media workshop

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**Sunday 17 March 2019**

Despite torrential rain and train track work, 14 women attended the hands-on workshop on Social Media at the OWN Wellness

Centre, Newtown. Our expert presenter and workshop leader, Jess Jones, came all the way from Newcastle to lead us on our journey through the thickets of social media and the issues raised when using it.

Not only is Jess an expert in her field but she proved she has an excellent grasp of working with the abilities and needs of various age groups. She was patient, unflappable, able to communicate clearly and knew the answers to our many questions.

Our group was largely experienced with computer use but, as some of us explained, we had not kept up with the fast developments in technology. All but two of us use Facebook. Leaving work was often the key factor in falling behind with current technological developments. Justifiable concerns about privacy was another reason for our reticence.

The key issue discussed was privacy on Facebook.

Jess was able to take us through all areas of Facebook to ensure we had control over







who had access to our information. She also enlightened us about danger areas on Facebook (phishing emails and Facebook Fakes) and clever ways to keep our passwords safe.

We needed to know much more than could be covered in one session. Jess provided us with a sheet of information to take away as well as information about online tuition specifically designed for those over 50. We were also invited to help ourselves to Jess's 'Tech Tip Tea' - short tips fixed to the paper covering of tea bags. Such a simple but clever idea.

Jess hit it off with our group as the feedback was hugely positive. Possibly the

only problem was everyone wanted more workshops and more information PLEASE.

Ten Forty Matrix is not an ongoing technology training organisation as we all know, but we can access the Australian Government "Be Connected" information and free online lessons.

For those not at the workshop follow these steps to access the free online lessons:

- Go to the website  
[www.dotjess.com/learn](http://www.dotjess.com/learn)
- Click on BeConnected Sign Up (green border, white button with green writing)
- Fill in your details and select DotJess as your support centre
- Click sign up to access the topic library.

**Sylvia**

## Focus on Friendship Camp at Berry

**29-31 March 2019**

In recent years Ten Forty Matrix has organised three greatly enjoyed camps at Berry.

This time we wanted to provide a connecting point with older lesbians from regional areas of NSW and to include women who hadn't been to one of our events before. With this in mind our committee sought funding to reduce the cost of the camp. Our application for a grant from the ANZ Gay and Lesbian

Mardi Gras Community Grants Fund was successful but we needed to add to that from Ten Forty funds to ensure that the weekend camp was well resourced.



Berry is a splendid site set a few kilometres from the town, amongst trees, with a river flowing by and a glorious view of hills. Facilities are excellent and well maintained and the staff have always been supportive of our group.



Happily 51 women took advantage of this opportunity to attend and came with a willingness to engage with others, try out new activities and have a splendid, fun time.

Lesbians aged from 40 to 80 kayaked, shot arrows like Amazons, climbed a wall,

walked a hill, swam in the pool, learnt to play backgammon, did drama improvisation, played cards, sat around a fire at night, played table tennis, laughed together, entertained each other with a concert and danced away the evening.



Two young women instructors led some of the activities and were supportive and encouraging. In the kitchen, Mary provided fabulous food the best we have had at a camp. What was extra special was the willingness of the new participants to offer workshops and participate in the concert. Here were these new women, bravely standing up to perform in front of an audience they didn't know well at all. Special mention was made



of Black Crow Walking's talk about Native American flute making and then producing exquisite flutes and playing them beautifully. It was a joy to have so many women willing to entertain us.



Thanks go not only to those who helped with the organising, workshop leaders, and on-site help, but to all who attended and made this such a joyous event. If you missed this one keep a lookout on contact for advertising about future camps.

**Sylvia**



### Some comments from women attending the Berry Camp:

*'I had such a fabulous time can we have it twice a year?'*

*'I will definitely be back.'*

*'A wonderful relaxed atmosphere and friendly women.'*

*'Great organisation, loved meeting new women.'*

*'Loved seeing women I had lost contact with and swimming.'*

*'First time and I loved it, fantastic location.'*

*'I felt great because I could walk up to any group and was welcome to join in.'*

*'So much fun – amazing.'*

*'Exceeded my expectations, I was relaxed and felt safe.'*

*'Great food.'*

*'Wonderful to have a lesbian space'*

*'Wonderful workshops.'*

*'I achieved the wall climb thanks to the activity leader.'*

*'Nourishment, all the silliness, laughter and fun.'*

*'Thank you for great organisation.'*



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## Vale Dorothy Cora

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18 July 1939 – 13 March 2019



### When Death Comes

*When it's over, I don't want to wonder  
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.  
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,  
or full of argument.  
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.*

**Mary Oliver (1935 – 2019)**

### On Her Own Terms

Dorothy was born in 1939 to Cora and Jim Colless in the small town of Mulwala, on the Murray River. She was the fourth of six children, with a brother and sister pre-deceasing her. Dorothy attended Mulwala Public School until she was 15, and then worked for two years as a dental nurse in Yarrowonga, just across the river.

Her parents were devout members of the local Church of Christ. Not surprisingly, Dorothy rejected the Church's fundamentalism from a very early age and, stifled by the narrow mindedness of her hometown, made her escape to Melbourne at 17.

She moved to Sydney in 1959 where she met her future husband, John White, at a Catholic College fundraiser in an illegal casino. They married in 1962 and, after living in Melbourne and Adelaide for three years, returned to Sydney and built a house at St Ives. They had their first child, Desleigh, in 1969 and then Jason in 1971. At Dorothy's insistence they moved to Manly in 1971 to escape the cramped culture and flashy wealth of St Ives.

In the early seventies, two significant events propelled Dorothy from conservative housewife to social justice advocate and passionate supporter of women's rights. The first was an abortion in early 1972 and the second was attending a Sydney Women's Liberation March a couple of years later.

Dorothy realized she was privileged to have had her illegal operation in a private hospital, paid for by her private health fund. Why should a well-off woman exercising her right to control her fertility be able to do so in comfort and safety, while a poor woman risked infection and death doing the same thing in someone's kitchen?

Dorothy then made a decision that would change her life forever. She went to the Sydney Women's Liberation march in 1973 – alone – and she subscribed to the Sydney Women's Liberation Newsletter. Shortly afterwards, she and John separated and Dorothy discovered another world.

For the next forty-odd years Dorothy was a prime mover in organisations that supported women's empowerment and/or worked for social change. They included Elsie Women's Refuge, Preterm, the Bessie Smyth Foundation, Lennox House, Dymyna House, the Older Women's Network and Exit International. She also obtained a University degree and became a lesbian during those years.

Her contribution to the abortion struggle cannot be overestimated. In addition to the hundreds of women she counselled individually, and her key role in holding Bessie together through hard times, she marched in nearly every demo and spoke in the media including a 2006 Compass television program. Dorothy's community activism was recognised with an Edna Ryan Award in 2005.

As well as being a most effective community development worker, Dorothy was a very active activist. She marched Sydney streets many times – International Women’s Day, peace and environment rallies to name a few. Dorothy was among 300 brave women all dressed in black, who marched on Anzac Day in Sydney in 1983 “in memory of all women in all countries raped in all wars” as their banner expressed. The idea of rape being a weapon of war was not on the agenda at that time, so these actions made headlines in Australia.

In 1996 Dorothy met her present partner, Judi Cameron, on a walk organised by Women in the Bush. From the beginning they decided not to live together. They loved being spoilt in each other’s homes, shared similar interests, ideals and values, and loved travelling together. Neither had the slightest interest in gay marriage or a commitment ceremony. They were both involved with Ten Forty Matrix. Dorothy’s passion for giving older dykes opportunities to meet, mix, have fun, discuss thorny issues, form new friendships and relationships never wavered.

Dorothy retired in 2005 and had an opportunity to look after Nina, the first of her grandchildren, on a weekly basis but after six months realized she needed to be more politically active. When an Exit International newsletter asked members to volunteer to train as ‘Nancy’s Friends’ Dorothy immediately saw the possibilities for political activism around voluntary euthanasia. One

of Dorothy’s friends told her that she was surely ‘the Right to Life’s and Fred Nile’s worst nightmare’: advocating for abortion AND for voluntary euthanasia.

In early 2009 Dorothy had her own ‘brush with death’ following serious lung surgery – compounded by asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. She decided not to continue with her Nancy’s Friends work.

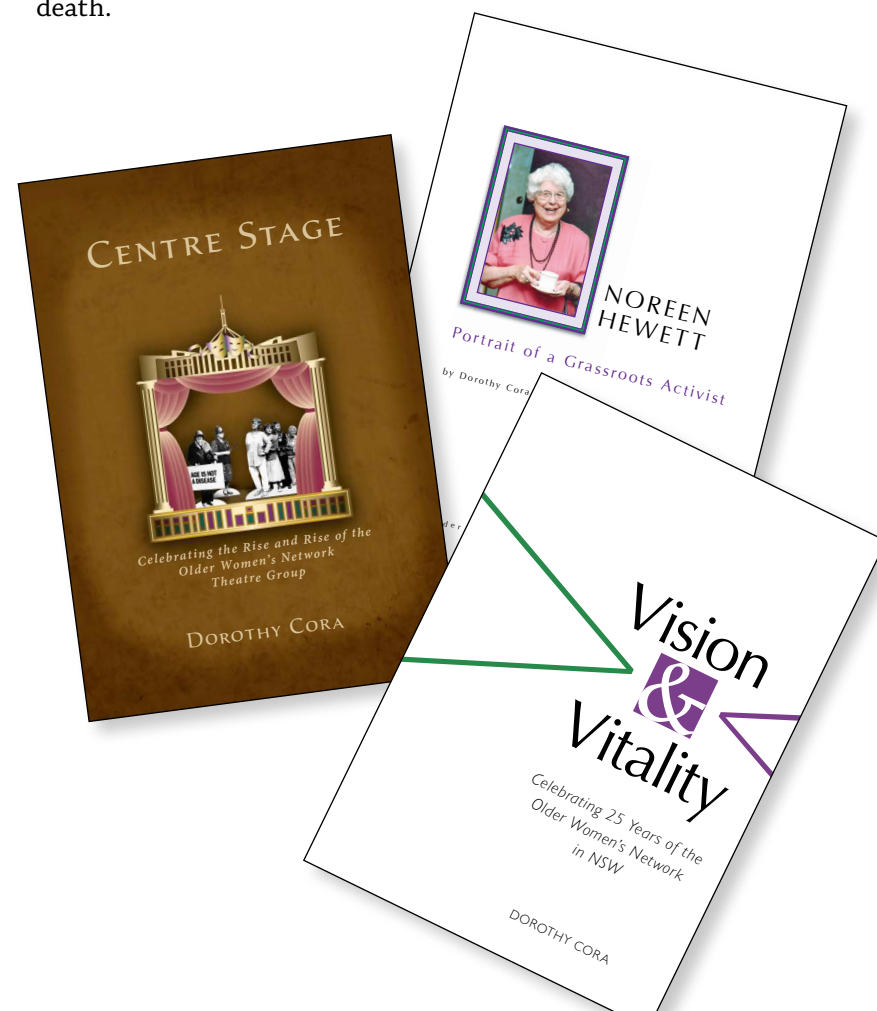
Once again, there was an absence of a ‘cause’ in her life. Then Dorothy was asked to write the history of the Older Women’s Network Theatre Group. Under its trademark banner – Vigour, Vision and Vitality. It offered scope for an interesting social history. Centre Stage: The Rise and Rise of the Older Women’s Network Theatre Group was published a year later by OWN.

A further social history – Noreen Hewett, Portrait of a Grassroots Activist – was published the following year. Noreen was the founding ‘mother’ of OWN and a dear friend of Dorothy’s who died in 2012 aged 92. During 2013 Dorothy also wrote Vision & Vitality: Twenty Five Years of the Older Women’s Network in NSW, which was published by OWN in mid-2014.

In between writing, Dorothy sold her house in Nelson Street and bought a townhouse on the other side of Annandale. She kept busy with Strong Seniors classes under Judi’s expert instruction, went travelling overseas and interstate, read voraciously, played Mah-Jong weekly, enjoyed the theatre and

art-house movies and expanded her culinary skills. She was also a member of Websisters, a small team working on the [olderdykes.org](http://olderdykes.org) website.

Dorothy brought her considerable writing and editing skills to the regular Ten Forty Newsletter first produced on paper and later digitally. She became secretary of the newly constituted Ten Forty Matrix in 2014 helping to keep Ten Forty Matrix functioning and flourishing and continued to be the Secretary and Public Officer until shortly before her death.



Dorothy's health began to deteriorate significantly in 2014. With the onset of peripheral neuropathy, and the emphysema she'd had for over 30 years, she could no longer walk in comfort, which was a terrible loss as walking had been a significant part of her life. When Dorothy was diagnosed with a heart condition in early 2018, on the eve of a dream trip to the Antarctic with Judi and Desleigh, life, as she knew it, fell apart. But with her trademark determination she did make it to Antarctica.



*Dorothy and Judi at the Ten Forty tea dance 2014*

Gradually, she became less mobile and in mid-2018, with great sadness, she cancelled her gym membership. Other activity choices were gradually reduced and finally, in early 2019, Dorothy made the painful decision that it was time to say her final farewell.

Dorothy really hated hurting those she loved, and offered comfort to those of us devastated

by her decision. But we knew, because she had often told us, that the thing she feared more than death was suffering a stroke or other medical event that could lead to prolonged dependence, an inability to communicate, and the gross indignity of being confined to a nursing home.

Following a life lived with courage and conviction she had no interest in living a diminished existence. In accordance with her commitment to women having control over their bodies and the right to choose, Dorothy embraced death without regret or resistance.

### **Kel and Judi**

### **Dorothy Cora and her Book Group**

For the first time in thirteen years, Dorothy's Book Discussion Group met in April knowing that Dorothy would not attend again.

Previously, at 5 pm precisely, on the first Sunday of each month, seven strong women would turn up at one of the group's homes to discuss the chosen book for that month and share aspects of their lives together. It was a support group, a social group, a book discussion group.

Dorothy started the ball rolling in April 2006, inviting several book-loving lesbians to her house to discuss whether they wanted to join. Typical of Dorothy's style, she involved the women in deciding how the group would operate, how to choose a book each month, and at whose place the gathering would be. A

few decided not to join, but most of those still in the group have been meeting since May 2006.

Dorothy's organisation skills were impeccable. She emailed us a list of the books we had individually selected each month for the year, including the book title, the month, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the woman hosting that month. She updated details regularly. Recently she sent us the full list of books read since 2006!

One of Dorothy's stipulations was that the book chosen be available in libraries, to avoid the cost of buying books.

We have eclectic tastes, varying from memoir, fiction, forensic fiction, history and so on. The more fiercely debated the pros and cons of the more controversial books, the better the discussion. Rarely, but sometimes, we all loved the book equally. It was such a book that we discussed in March for the last gathering with Dorothy: *The Tin Man*, by Sarah Winman.

Those of us who are left – Jude, Cheryl, Cate, Diann, Janne and myself – raised a glass to Dorothy on Sunday, 14th April and reminisced. It will be a long time before we are ready to think about new women joining us.

We needed to remember, to honour Dorothy's presence.

### **Chris and the Bookgroup**



## Dorothy and Ten Forty

I met Dorothy 30 years ago at third national Ten Forty Easter camp at Minto. In 1989. Dorothy had the ability to make you feel incredibly welcome in a new space and this was reflected at all our meetings.

Dorothy was integral to the organisation and ongoing meetings and functions of Ten Forty NSW. She was always ready with new ideas to keep Ten Forty interesting and relevant and had a good ability in co-opting new women to help organise events, write articles for the Ten Forty Newsletter, and help out on olderdykes.org website. She was always forthright in stating her views and how to progress the group as well as how to support new women joining the group.

Up until the end she edited the Ten Forty Newsletter, with Ruth. She had a really good turn of phrase and either wrote or found articles of great interest to older lesbians.

More recently she was the secretary of Ten Forty Matrix Inc. and ensured the smooth running of the AGM, that the minutes were written up and she ran meetings in her own home to progress ideas for the future events that the group would sponsor.

Dorothy in the 1990s was also a member of Matrix NSW which we set up to look at alternate housing for older lesbians. She was the one that initiated a survey of Ten Forty members to look at the needs of older lesbians and help set up a support system for older lesbians requiring help in the

home such as shopping, being taken to an appointment etc if they had no other support person.

Later she was in the initiating group called Websisters which set up a website for Ten Forty (olderdykes.org) which continues today. She was a founding member and was involved and only resigned a short time ago.



*Dorothy with the websisters group 2008*

I will always be grateful to Dorothy for persuading me (when I retired) to join a Strong Seniors Exercise group locally. This group started with 20 of us and now has over 200 members. Many lesbians have joined. One of our instructors is Judi, Dorothy's partner for 25 years and who now has a large following.

Out of the Strong Seniors has grown a few different groups, Mah-jong being one of them and I was privileged to have been in a Mahjong group for the last 10 years with Dorothy and 6 others. We would meet every Tuesday afternoon and after playing we would mull over the politics of the day, discuss the latest play or film with a glass or

two of wine. These discussions were often lead by Dorothy.

I want to acknowledge Judi and her fantastic support for Dorothy especially in the last couple of years as Dorothy's health worsened. I admire Judi's steadfast support and honour her constant caring of Dorothy.

We will all miss her greatly.

## Robyn

### Remembering Dorothy

Older women often feel they are invisible. But no-one could ever describe Dorothy that way.

I first met her when I joined the Older Women's Network in 1994, soon after I retired from paid employment.

Dorothy was employed by OWN as Coordinator in that same year. Right from the start I felt a warm kinship with Dorothy and not only because her surname was my Mother's first name.

Dorothy worked hard and because of her competence and skills OWN grew and grew and by the time she retired there were twenty OWN Groups flourishing in NSW.

She had great regard for all the older women and made many good friendships. She treated each and every one of us with great respect, and was well respected in return. Her contribution to OWN encompassed many aspects, and she had great help from Kris Ferguson.

As a good friend Dorothy's passing leaves a great hole in my life. As Thomas Mann said : "A man's passing is the affair of his survivors rather than his own!"

Cate

## Letter for Dorothy

Dear Dorothy

We met many years ago over feminist business and have always been friends in a quiet way. Our friendship developed working on Ten Forty Matrix and the olderdykes website in the continued effort to maintain a growing organisation.

What has impressed me these many years has been your considerable ability to manage a pile of paperwork with utmost efficiency, cut through the nonsense at meetings and keep our energy focussed on the things that mattered.

In another world you could have been a captain of industry but for us in the women's movement you have been a captain of feminism, managing a number of women focussed organisations.

And in the background those close to you were aware that you had been battling considerable pain and ill health for a long time and we were always delighted when your doctors came up with new and successful remedies. Because this spared you for longer.

When you resigned from your several committees we knew that your health problems were becoming severe. The one

bright light just before you left was the fact that we had found a new Secretary to take over your Ten Forty Matrix job and inherit the immaculate set of papers which you set up.

In fact we did wonder if you refused to leave until a new woman was found for the job!



*Opera in the Park 2010*

Personally I already feel the need to ring you up to get your opinion on something or other, to be able to draw on your wisdom, and to have a laugh over whatever bit of craziness was going down in the world.

I, along with many others, will very much miss having you at the other end of the phone.

Dorothy, you have left an important legacy of work and activism to the women's movement. We would like your nearest and dearest to know how much you were respected and admired.

Jan

## About Ten Forty

The first national conference of Ten Forty in the mid-eighties attracted politically active feminists of all hues and sexualities. However, over time it became obvious that a huge majority of women attending follow-up meetings and activities in Sydney were lesbian feminists.

Today Ten Forty Matrix and Older Dykes refer to the same group of women. We enjoy discussion 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.

Our website [www.olderdykes.org](http://www.olderdykes.org) encourages national and international connections between older lesbians.

You can pay an annual fee to join Ten Forty Matrix, or you can participate as a casual member. If you want to receive regular information about our activities and the free bi-monthly newsletter join our mailing list [www.olderdykes.org/mailList/?p=subscribe](http://www.olderdykes.org/mailList/?p=subscribe)

## Newsletter

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

The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website [olderdykes.org/newsletters/](http://olderdykes.org/newsletters/)

## Who currently does what?

Events planning: Members of the Ten Forty Matrix committee

Telephone contact: Jan 9810 1862

Utilities box: Sylvia and Gillian

Money Management: Kel

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Diann, Pearl, Barbara

Newsletter: editing and layout Ruth and Pearl