



# Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

July 2024

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

## What's On

### Dykes for Dinner

Thursday 11th July @ 6.30pm

At The Royal Leichhardt Hotel  
156 Norton Street, Leichhardt

After the successful night we had at the Royal in June, we will return there again in July but this time with our own private room upstairs in The Botanical Bar area.

The Bistro style food has all the Pub classics plus a few extras based on recipes from Italy and Greece. Vegan and gluten free options available. See the website for more details [theroyalleichhardt.com.au](http://theroyalleichhardt.com.au)

Situated on Norton Street on the corner of Carlisle Street, buses nearby and some street parking available. Free parking is available in the Council Car Park accessible from Marion Street.

Please RSVP to Fiona  
[fionarimes@gmail.com](mailto:fionarimes@gmail.com)

### Dinner Discussion for Older Lesbians 3 August 2024 6 - 8.30pm

Location: Jimmy Little Community Centre 19  
Cecily Street, Lilyfield

Bring a plate to share and your own drinks. Coffee, tea, cups, plates and cutlery are provided. This is a free event for lesbians over 40 years.

### Lesbian Antique Show

There are lots of Lesbian and feminist items that have been produced in the past. Badges, T-shirts, tea towels, posters, jewellery, magazines and leaflets from the 70's and many more treasures that are hidden away in the back of lesbians' cupboards. Now is the time for you to bring these special 'antiques' out of the dark to put them on display at the October Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians. One item per participant, with its provenance (background story to prove its authenticity).

We will have a lot of fun hearing about our historical items and the stories behind them. Begin checking your cupboards for quality 'lesbian antiques' now. What treasures have you forgotten about? What do you think they are worth?

An expert lesbian team will appraise your treasures and try to work out their value.



**Country Lesbians Association (CLA)  
Sunday 28 July 2024  
Zoom Session**

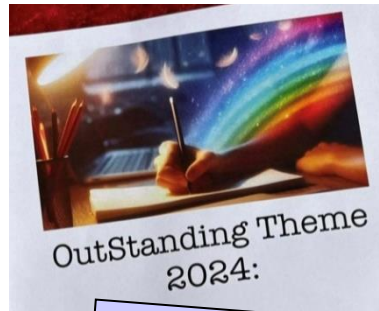
**Topic:**

***What I have done that nourished my lesbian self in the month of July 2024.***

CLA is aimed at connecting older lesbians, wherever in Australia you live. You don't have to live outside of Sydney to join us on zoom, but we welcome women who do live outside Sydney.

To join the session, contact Diann at [maude\\_au@yahoo.com](mailto:maude_au@yahoo.com)

**OutStanding Short Story Competition  
2024**



Mysterious

Entries close at 11.59pm on Saturday 31 August. Winners will be announced early October.

First Prize this year will be \$1000, other prize details to be announced.

More information on how to enter at [outstandingstories.net](http://outstandingstories.net)

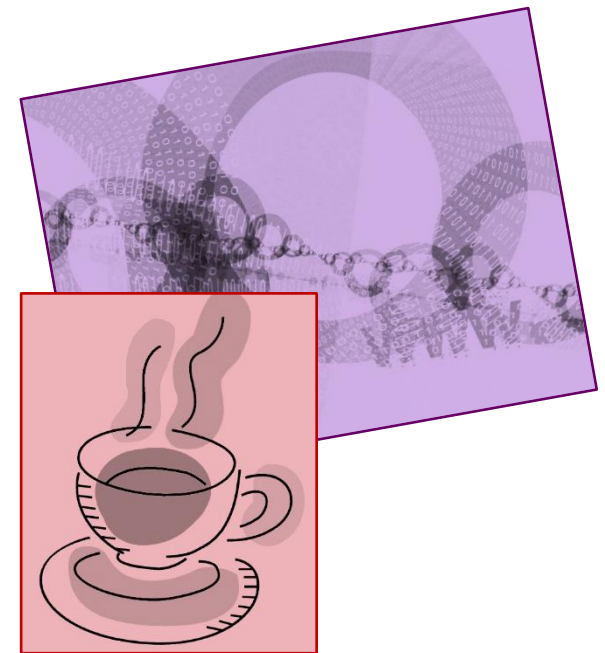
**Recruitment for Websisters**

Do you enjoy using computers? Would you like to learn how to help look after the Ten Forty website [olderdykes.org](http://olderdykes.org) and our Contact emails?

We are looking for women to join Websisters. We are a very friendly and supportive group, learning and sharing computer skills.

We meet once a month to discuss how things are going and have lunch.

If you are interested, contact Jan [ambrosia@bigpond.com](mailto:ambrosia@bigpond.com) .



## Report on Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians 1 June 2024

### Conservation Programs across NSW

Presented by:

**Kate McShea**, Programs Director at Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)  
Together with **Claire Allen** from NPWS

It was a dark and stormy night and the rain came down like Niagara Falls, thundering on the iron roof of the Jimmy Little Community Centre.

This is not the start of a gothic novel but a genuine description of the weather as we set up for the DDfOL event, and our speakers did their best to communicate over the noise. Luckily, we had our microphone. Although we had lots of apologies, nine enthusiastic women were there to enjoy this very informative event. Pearlie was MC and all brought some delicious snacks.

**Kate McShea**, Programs Director at Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) used a very informative slide show to explain how she delivers state wide conservation programs across NSW. The Nature Conservation Council was formed in 1955 and has many years of experience working with local communities, land owners, and important groups like the NSW Rural Fire Service. She explained how identified fire hotspots are located and the landowners, together with Rural Fire, and significant community groups work with the NCC to manage the land. Well planned hazard reduction cool burns, conducted over appropriate time frames, ensure that

the flora and fauna can thrive. The slides really enabled us to see how good managed land looks. In serious fires some animals survive by fleeing, such as birds and fast movers, others survive by burrowing, however there are those like koalas who cannot escape a fire that reaches the tops of trees. While native plants have strategies to survive and even thrive in fire, very hot, too frequent fires can destroy much vegetation permanently and make it hard for other plants to regrow.

Fires and tree clearance destroy the hollows in trees used by birds. Kate also talked about a monitoring program supporting the recovery of three species of Large Forest Owls (Barking, Powerful and Masked owls) and the arboreal mammals (mainly gliders) they depend on for food. Some owls use the same nest site each year. If the tree is gone, they have no home. Special boxes have been installed in the project site and now have 96% occupation. Kate's talk generated many questions from those present and she provided answers giving us further food for thought.

**Claire Allen** has worked in the NPWS for almost 24 years, mainly in the policy and engagement functions of NPWS. She talked about the many challenges that face national parks from drought and fire, as well as human impacts. There is also the need for high conservation value lands to be preserved as National Parks, and of course all the parks need careful managing. Claire explained that the conditions needed for cool burns are difficult to obtain with increasing challenges from climate change.

Claire is also involved in developing policies, working with lawyers to ensure the protection of park values. There are threats from feral animals, human impacts and ongoing debates about the appropriate level of visitor infrastructure.

National Parks has to deal with some sensitive controversial issues like horses in the alpine area. Well-meaning but sadly ill-informed lobbyists have prevented much needed culling of the feral horses in recent years. The horses damage alpine flora and fauna by polluting pristine creeks, and trampling delicate plants. They have also posed a danger to campers. Since 2021, the horse management program in Kosciuszko has removed 8,505 horses from the most sensitive areas. There are likely still thousands in the park.

Some of the other difficulties facing National Park workers include threatening and aggressive behaviour from some members of the public. There are lost walkers and tourists and deaths in the parks and many instances of dangerous rock fishing and swimming. From personal experience I frequently come across inexperienced walkers, maybe swinging a water bottle but no map, bag, or real knowledge as to where they are going and the terrain. Many assume their phone will be enough. However, they can easily find themselves without coverage.

Claire also talked about the need to have more women as field officers and implementation of a sexual harassment policy.

A question about the marine parks was raised and Claire agreed this was a complex area with potential conflict between different stakeholders. Protection and expansion of the marine parks is essential for the future health of our oceans and is being pursued. The Marine Parks are a separately managed area.

There is always a need for more National Parks as well as conversion of vulnerable wild areas to National Park status. All those present are or have been bushwalkers and/or divers. The two speakers provided excellent information about the preservation of the remaining nature of New South Wales, both on public and private land. This was an important afternoon presentation by two highly experienced and active environmentalists. Their work gives one hope for the future of our wild places and nature.

Sylvia



## Report on the CLA zoom session May 2024

### Topic 'What do "lesbian politics" mean to you?'

The Country Lesbians Assoc. (CLA) zooms have continued each month. Many thanks to Diann for her invaluable work to make these happen – much appreciated. Carol Booth and Lavender assist with back-up and networking, and lesbians have been enjoying these discussions since the covid times. We've traversed many and varied lesbian-themed topics over the years and it's always good catching up with lesbians from far and wide.

In May the topic 'What do "lesbian politics" mean to you?' elicited interesting responses including personal experiences and views on coming out and being out, marriage, being in and looking for lesbian community, feminism and lesbian activism, understanding what lesbian politics means.

This last aspect presented divergent views from the purely individual to the wide sweep of "everything is political – especially if you're a lesbian".

Responses reflected more personal experiences than group activism. It was a good discussion and a reminder of the 1970s slogan "the personal is political".

Lavender



### Blak Cede Gunyah Cafe in Nowra, NSW

An Aboriginal women-led social and cultural enterprise which cultivates traditional bush foods from their community garden. An initiative of [Waminda - South Coast Women's Health & Welfare Aboriginal Corp.](#)

The staff are warm, chatty and very attentive. The menu is wonderful. Coffee is great. The carefully chosen fittings have been extremely skilfully made – including beautiful wood retrieved after the bush fires and used to craft tables and benches, stools carved from sections of tree trunks, light shades hand woven from dried grasses and bird (Emu) feathers.

## Housing for older women

We started collecting information about housing for older women a few newsletters ago. This time we have more information on WINC.

If you have information to share, send an email to [Contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:Contact@olderdykes.org).

### What is WINC?

#### By Anneke Deutsch

Have you watched your parents age and wondered what your last 10-20 years might be like? Most people stop driving at some point. Many lose their cherished partner or are single by choice. Will you still be able to live where you are if you can't drive? How will you visit your friends or get to appointments? Only about 50% of lesbians have children, others don't want to be supported by their kids or are alienated from them. Who will support you if you need it? What will you do if you can't climb steps or access your shower? What about finances – will your money last? Who will put out your bins, bring you a meal, drop in for a chat or drive you to medical appointments? Who will be there to discuss the events of your day, to witness your life?

#### Life Could Be Like This

Imagine a future where you are surrounded by women (mostly lesbians) aged between about 50 and 90, some of whom are your close friends and others who are just friendly neighbours. You might start the day with a dog walk with others who like an early start. On the way back, you see a few of your neighbours having coffee on the veranda of the Common-house, so you join them. You put a load of washing on in the shared laundry

and read the paper in the Common-house lounge while you wait. After you hang your washing out, you retire to your private house for some quiet time and to catch up on some emails. You get stuck with something on your computer so you ask one of your IT-savvy neighbours to show you what to do. Your internet connection and other utility costs are low because the service charges are shared by the 31 households.

In the afternoon, you spend some time with the garden group planting some veggie seedlings. The cooks for the evening are browsing the food garden, chatting and selecting ingredients for dinner. The happy hour crew are enjoying drinks and cuppas on the deck overlooking expansive views against a pink and mango sky. You choose the Japanese hot tub to enjoy the sunset light. You amble the 50 metres or so to your place, dress and then turn up for a shared dinner in the Common-house. You pick a meal and drop it off to a WINC friend who is feeling unwell. The common-house is warm, cosy and welcomes in the last of the day's winter sun. Just like your house, it costs almost nothing to heat due to the passive house design, double glazing and extensive insulation. Tomorrow a neighbour is driving another resident to a review appointment of her recent knee replacement in one of the community's shared electric cars, charged with energy from extensive arrays of rooftop solar. You arrange to hitch a ride to get a few things in Bendigo.....

WINC - Older Women in Cohousing (WINC) - is very close to getting this off the ground. WINC is an incorporated association of members working together to create an interconnected, secure and peaceful life for ourselves. We have submitted the

town planning application for our homes on our beautiful 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of residential zoned land in Castlemaine.

### Profile of WINC Buildings & Ownership

As a group of individuals and couples with varying asset levels, we are planning to make sure our community accommodates and reflects this. Our mixed tenure plans:

- 21 fully owned homes (2-3 may be mortgaged, the remainder have funds to buy outright)
- 5 shared ownership - 'middle women' [MW]
- 5 social housing eligible tenants nominated by WINC

The extensive community facilities include productive, Permaculture-inspired gardens and landscaping, a creek area revegetated with indigenous riparian species, common guest rooms with a bathroom each as well as shared spaces for a gym, quiet meditation/yoga/reading area, art space, workshop and greenhouse. These will be managed by us via an owners' corporation. We currently have buyers and residents for almost all the homes, except one 2-bedroom, one large 1-bedroom and three of the homes reserved for social housing residents. [Women's Property Initiatives \(WPI\)](#) is our feminist partner Community Housing Provider. WPI is currently negotiating with Homes Victoria to have \$2.1 million of approved funding reallocated to WINC from another regional project that's not going ahead. This will fund most of its purchase of 5 social housing homes. WINC has a \$200,000 donation pledged to assist WPI with any shortfall.

We are now managing a waiting list since we have had significant interest after [recent media coverage](#). WINC also featured in the film [The Great Separation](#) about how the built environment can affect loneliness.

### Shared Equity Considerations for Middle Women

Unfortunately, it is very common for older women to find themselves unable to access a new mortgage due to their age and/or low income. While middle women [MW] have more in assets than social housing eligible people, they do not have sufficient assets to buy a home. The inequities of women's incomes, relationship breakdown, domestic violence, periods of unpaid caring work and/or lack of superannuation or other structural reasons result in many women retiring into poverty. Some live in unsuitable rental accommodation that costs 50-120% of their income and many are forced to dip into their savings to eat and pay bills. This erodes their nest eggs until they reach the level of assets to qualify for social housing, only to find that there is a multi-year wait for a place to live.

Others may be trapped in a 'mortgage prison' - living in a home that has become unsuitable as they age, with no likelihood of getting another mortgage to move if they sell. They may be continuing to work into their 70s to finance an existing mortgage, with no prospect of meeting repayments on the aged pension.

Funding the gap between their assets and the price of a home in WINC's development, this form of affordable housing will give these women the dignity of a secure home and a community to support them as they age. In addition, they will not add to the numbers on the social housing

waiting list in the future. It also utilises the assets that these women have towards housing themselves.

***A recent \$500,000 donation will allow WINC to buy a share in each of 3 of our 'middle women' homes. We continue to fundraise so we can support another 3 MW in the same way. We urge all older lesbians to consider [WINC in their Will](#) to help fund the gap for the remaining 3 MW.***

WINC, as an incorporated not-for-profit, will reinvest all funds it receives each time a MW decides to sell her property so these funds would be perpetually available for future MW. In this way, all philanthropic funds would keep pace with the property market and be recycled to support each future group of MW.

The registered charity Matrix Guild of Victoria auspices WINC for the purpose of raising funds to help women (particularly lesbians) who can't afford to buy a home in the WINC cohousing community. This allows for tax deductible donations.

We have a Re-sale Deed drafted that will form part of all contracts of sale. This Deed ties the purchaser to re-selling only to WINC members. This is part of our succession plan to ensure the ongoing nature of our development as a mixed tenure, older women's community.

### Next steps:

- The land will be transferred to a development entity that will finance, construct and sell off-the-plan to WINC members and to WPI [Community Housing Provider]. We have a Heads of Agreement

with a developer/builder outlining the program timelines.

- Deposits and off-the-plan [OTP] contracts will probably be signed in February 2025, with completion expected in June 2026
- The legal structure will be small freehold titles, with the remaining common land and facilities owned and managed by an owners' corporation.

WINC is already inspiring other cohousing communities and we are committed to freely sharing our intellectual property and experience of delivering the project. Ours is a replicable model which, if supported, could provide a valuable piece of the solution to the housing crisis as it impacts older women.

If you would like to invest some social or financial capital into securing a connected and vibrant middle and old age, put your money towards preventing older women's homelessness or just want to find out more, contact:

**Anneke Deutsch** [anneke@wincohousing.org.au](mailto:anneke@wincohousing.org.au)  
**0427 482 976**

**Mary-Faeth Chenery**  
[mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au](mailto:mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au)  
**0428 481 754**



## Dancing makes me happy...

At the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century I started ballroom dance classes. Late but not too late, given the fun that's followed. At the dance classes they said that dance was good for the body, for the mind (remembering steps, sequences) and for your social skills (negotiating close-up and personal with dance partners and the group). It was quite a package.

These were classes for lesbians at JJs. At the time I joined there were maybe two dozen women on the floor, the teacher was Jan, her assistants over the years were Vinya, Maree and Margo. We learned Latin and ballroom dances – waltz, foxtrot, jive, cha, rhumba, salsa, ballroom tango. And something with music that reminded me of Spanish bull fighting and which I never enjoyed. Warm up exercise was sometimes a co-ordinated group sequence they called “bus stop”.

JJs had a herstory of course, and I heard mention of leading names from the first women-only dance classes in Sydney dating from the 1980s – Jeanette, Virginia, Jan, Jive with Jeanette. Classes in the city, then in Regent Street, growing numbers of students. Participation in gay and lesbian balls and competitions. Some world-first gay dance Championships. All this is story for someone else to tell.

After some years of classes held in an Annandale Public School, I saw the group face a big change: Jan's health was not good and she was retiring. Scouts looked for a new teacher and found Brendan who was brave enough to take on a group of lesbians. He was excellent, with great sensibility and concern for technique. We continued with Brendan until Covid, and during Covid, online (dancing in my kitchen was a highlight during those lockdowns!) and

resumed, masked, after Covid. But some women never came back, numbers dwindled and suddenly it was over. JJs ceased to exist, I couldn't believe it.

I had started to go to Argentine “queer tango” classes with Uma at the end of 2019, loved it. This was at a pub in Oxford Street, Brendan also gave dance classes nearby to the gay community. I danced in my kitchen with Uma online too. The kitchen dancing was good for the mind and body, it certainly got the blood moving and cheered me up, but I missed the partnered dancing.

All the teachers in the queer environment use the words leader and follower to describe the pair of dancers. Lately I've started exploring classes outside in the general world, and teachers use the terms man/woman, man/lady, boy/girl. Women leaders in these places are generally welcomed and treated well, but the teachers seem to find it hard to change their vocabulary. Some try, some don't. The women leaders gently try to educate them. I found it hard to stop laughing out loud the other evening when a teacher assumed the follower's hold with a woman leader and said to her: You're the man. The teachers are able to dance both lead and follower steps, and most appear to dance easily with both men and women. Then of course there was Federico, the tango teacher who said that music is the leader in dance!

I was lucky to meet a woman who has become my partner in crime, it was she who suggested the tango classes. Sometimes I've joined her at Brendan's classes in the Blue Mountains. Later she suggested classes with Neal and Nicole at Lidcombe. Lidcombe!! sez I. But soon I discovered that travel to Lidcombe was easy, the teachers excellent, the speed of learning a steep curve, and the people very welcoming. Nobody cared about two women dancing together.

Often in dance I feel out of my depth. Moments of challenge, confusion, WTF. Probably good for the brain. I'm aware that falling too far out of your depth can be devastating and I saw a dance partner give up dancing when it happened to her. Suddenly, she said, I lost my mojo. And she walked away.

After so much classroom, I wondered, well, when do I get to go and dance? We asked at Lidcombe one day, where did the group go to dance, because it was evident that they did practise during the week. The answer was surprising: tomorrow, Monday morning, at Ashfield Town Hall. We went, we had huge fun and couldn't stop smiling and laughing at finding this joy on a plain old Monday morning.

Jacqueline

-----  
10/40 is planning an event for mental health week in October this year and we'll be talking about what brings us joy. You are invited to think about this and, if you feel so inclined, write something for this newsletter, or tell us about what makes you happy at a dinner or at the event in October.



## Vale Lynne Spender

1.07.46 - 31.05.24

I first met Lynne in the mid-1980s, in London, at a book fair. Her more famous sister Dale was there too. I'd met Dale previously; we'd worked on a committee together. I had never considered Dale a friend but Lynne by comparison, was such an easy person to talk to. We talked about living in the UK as Australians and I learned that Lynne had already moved back to Sydney and was then on a flying visit to be with Dale.

I moved back to Australia in 1994 and around the year 2000 I met up with Lynne again. She was a key staff member at the Australian Society of Authors then, advocating on issues of concern to Australian writers.

This was the period when GST was first introduced into our tax system under the Howard government but, unlike other countries, like the UK, GST was added to the price of books. This caused a great uproar among writers and I had a few intense conversations with Lynne at that time. She was heavily involved in getting some concessions for Australian writers.

In case you don't know much about Lynne, let me tell you a bit about her. She was a teacher, writer, lawyer, editor and always a feminist, and, living in Coogee, she became a regular at the Coogee Women's Pool. You could say the pool was both a place to unwind for Lynne, but also a space to protect.

She was a volunteer, a committee member, and passionate about keeping this women's space as a place of enjoyment and safety for women.

She went on to edit the book 'The Women's Pool' an impressive collection of stories and photographs that documented the importance of this space to women. The book was launched in 2021. It was a great success.

Everyone knew that Lynne loved her days at the pool, reading, chatting, taking a dip, usually in something red, her favourite colour.

About a year ago she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, a terminal disease, and under new legislation in NSW, was able to take advantage of VAD (Voluntary Assisted Dying).

On the Saturday after Lynne's death a group of twenty women, all of them known to Lynne, met at the Coogee Women's pool early that morning. The water was cold. They didn't mind. They were there to honour Lynne in a way they knew she would have loved. They took to the water, cheerful because Lynne had talked about having a good life and died by choice in the way that she wished to go. Among the group were three of our 10/40 women: Wendy, Daniela and Cheryl.

They were sad to lose such a valued friend but they were all happy that Lynne felt positive about her life and her death. Lynne Spender is a woman who will be sorely missed.

Pearlie





## The Newsletter

We, Diann and Pearlie, hope you have enjoyed reading the newsletter.

Please keep giving us your feedback and let us know topics of interest you feel need to be shared in the newsletter.

Follow us on FaceBook  
Ten Forty Matrix NSW

Browse our Website  
[www.olderdykes.org](http://www.olderdykes.org)



## About Ten Forty and Older Dykes

The first national conference of Ten Forty in the mid-eighties attracted politically active feminists of all hues and sexualities. 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 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 <http://www.olderdykes.org> encourages national and international connections between older lesbians. Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join, though members do get some discounts. If you want to receive regular information about our activities and our bi-monthly newsletter, visit our website and put yourself on our email list.

## Newsletter

The newsletter comes out on our email list. If you do not receive it, email us [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org). The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website.

## Who currently does what?

**Events planning:** Sylvia, Diann, Wendy

**Contact email list:** Diann, Julie

**Archives:** Sylvia and Jan

**Money Management:** Fiona

**Websisters:** Jan, Ruth, Diann, Julie

**Newsletter:** editing and layout Jacqueline and Diann

**Management committee:** Jan, Sylvia, Pearlie, Diann, Fiona, Jacqueline, Dori