



# Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

May 2024

## Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians

**1 June 2024 3.00pm-6.00pm**

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.

## Conservation Programs across NSW

Presented by:

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

## What's On

Possibly the biggest issue in today's society is climate change and the destruction of our natural world by this event, and human action. Luckily there are heroines out there working away to save as much of our natural world as possible. Kate McShea, Programs Director at Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) will discuss state-wide conservation programs delivered across NSW, including a joint program delivered with the NSW Rural Fire Service supporting community-led ownership of sustainable fire management on private property. She will also talk 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. Claire Allen from NPWS will join Kate to provide the Government context to public land conservation in NSW.



## Dykes for Dinner Thursday 9 May at 6.30

Cafe Jolly - Italian Restaurant  
165 Norton Street, Leichhardt

Due to popular demand, we are returning to Cafe Jolly with its generous serves and great value eating. It's a classic Italian Restaurant with homemade pasta and fresh Australian seafood. Gluten-free and Vegan options available. BYO with \$2 per head cover charge. Situated opposite The Royal Hotel near to Short Street (cross street). Near to Bar Italia.

Free Parking available in the Council Car Park on Marion Street near the Town Hall. Looking forward to seeing you there!

PS we will be sitting in the front section.

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

Message: 0412954573

## Ten Forty Goes to Canberra

### To see the Senate in Session and other places of interest.

**Dates - September: Monday 16 to Thursday 19. (But length of stay is up to you.)**

**Stay:** Alivio Tourist Park in O'Connor, a short drive to Civic Centre. This venue has cabins, van parking and camping, pools, and a large café with good quality food. Google website for details. Book early, it fills up quickly and prices go up. Discounts available if you go direct to

[www.aliviogroup.com.au](http://www.aliviogroup.com.au)

Check On Cancellation Protocol just in case.

**Address:** 20 Kunzia Street, O'Connor. **Phone:** 02 6247 5466. NB: Bookings are the personal responsibility of attendees. NB2: Cheaper to share cabins: we will offer a listing service for those who would like to share.

**Cabin And Lift Sharing:** It is cheaper and more fun to share lifts and cabins. To help expedite this we offer a matchup service. For this please email [skinder@bigpond.net.au](mailto:skinder@bigpond.net.au) *after registration*. **AND:** Canberra is very cold even in cabins: be prepared.

**BONUS FOR MEMBERS:** The cost of accommodation has gone up so we offer \$100 bonus per member plus 2 free dinners. To access the bonus you need to register with us **before Sat 15 June**, giving us bank account details in confidence for our treasurer. Bonus will be paid at the end of the visit. Meals will be paid on the spot.

#### To Register with Ten Forty:

EMAIL: [ambrosia@bigpond.com](mailto:ambrosia@bigpond.com). **LABEL in subject line: CANBERRA**

**Details needed:** Name, email address, mobile number and bank details if needed. Tell us if you would like to share accommodation. Our lists are only accessible by the Ten Forty Committee.

## Country Lesbians Association (CLA)

### ZOOM meeting Sunday 26 May, 5 PM

Topic still not decided yet. Watch out for info on Contact.

If you want to join us, email Diann at

[Maude\\_au@yahoo.com](mailto:Maude_au@yahoo.com)

## Launch of "Rainbow of Love; short stories", by Beatriz Copello 19 May, Women's Library Newtown

The launch of "Rainbow of Love; short stories". By Beatriz Copello. Hosted by The Women's Library and Ten Forty Matrix

Beatriz is a celebrated feminist writer, poet and playwright.

5.30pm – 7pm The Women's Library 8-10 Brown Street, Newtown. Light refreshments and books on sale.

Whilst this is a free event please register to help us organise for the number attending.

Register with humanitix:

<https://events.humanitix.com/author-talk-rainbow-love-7fcaxkhk>

Queries contact

Sylvia [skinder@bigpond.net.au](mailto:skinder@bigpond.net.au) mobile: 0438 225 333

## Report of The Even Bigger: Big Indoor Picnic 16 March 2024



The Ten Forty Committee originally planned to arrange an event for older lesbians as part of the annual NSW Seniors Festival. So we decided to run another Big Indoor Picnic. Instead of the focus on well-being in October Mental Health Month, which had been our previous focus, we focused on *International Women's Day* and *The Seniors Festival*. Sadly our application for funding was again unsuccessful. We decided to go ahead with the plan and use money from a bequest for camps. As we are not planning a camp this year, we felt a big event would be a great way to bring older lesbians together. We applied to the Inner West Council, for a fee waiver for Leichhardt Town Hall. Again, Inner West has demonstrated its continuing support for older lesbians in the community.

77 women registered, but due to a number of factors, we had a final number of 70. One of the women wrote in her feedback that the event was, "Worth the effort 2 hours each way on train and bus."

It is wonderful that we are able to bring together older lesbians from further afield.

Anne Stevens played her cello as women came into the venue. After the socialising as women came in, many greeting old friends and some new women being helped to a friendly table by a volunteer, we were welcomed to the event by Pearlie McNeill, our chairperson.

An acknowledgement of the Gadigal, Wangal people on whose land we were meeting on was given. Then lunch was served. The tables were set with violet cloths and green runners, with a small bunch of white flowers on, in the theme of International Women's Day, **Green, White, Violet**; Give Women the Vote. We have the vote but it's still not working very well for women.

Samantha from *Elite All Courses Catering* provided delicious lunches, in individual boxes that catered for all diet needs. It is worth a mention that she is local, works alone and all the work is done by her. It is worth a mention that she is local, works alone and all the work is done by her.

Feedback from participants had nothing but positive things to say about the food.

"I loved the great food packages." "The food was so fresh and delicious." "Catering was superb." Just a few of the feedback statements made.

After lunch our feature entertainment, *The Third Voice*, were ready to entertain us. Their roadie, Mark, set up an enormous array of speakers and microphones.

This trio is unique. They sing a variety of music. Some written by members of the group, some traditional songs in language from their original country, and a few feminist songs to mark the day. One being "Don't Be Too Polite Girls", by Glen Tomasetti (1929–2003) in reference to the equal pay campaign which was won in 1969 after much struggle by feminists.



The audience was encouraged to participate in both percussion and chorus singing. The enjoyment of the performance was summed up by one participant who wrote in her feedback what she enjoyed most was, *"The marvellous, fantastic, wonderful Third Voice, and music."* Other comments *"Another event with the Third Voice"; "More Singing. Music is a winner if audience involved"*.

### **Fifteen fabulous volunteers**

One of the great things about the membership of Ten Forty Matrix is the number of fabulous volunteers we have. Without them no big event would be possible. It was a big job to set up the tables and chairs, decorate them, woman the registration entry desks, monitor the coffee and tea table, hand out the food packages, and then that awful task of cleaning up afterwards, completed in record time. A huge thanks to our volunteer team.



Pearlie called out the winner of the lucky door prize. The participants finished the afternoon with conversations and circulating to other tables.

It was clear from the feedback that this was a very successful event. We asked, what did you enjoy about this event?

*"All of it".*

*"Seeing old friends, and reconnecting from many women"*.

*"Meeting new women."*

*"Lots of lovely lesbians in a female only space."*

*"Happy atmosphere, laughter."*

*"Brilliant organisation."*

*"Accessibility, great venue and location."*

*"Feeling good and part of the community, and accepted."*

There is always room to improve events and we asked for comments in the feedback. Some comments sadly like more comfortable chairs, are outside our control. However, the suggestion to bring a cushion when we know an event has uncomfortable chairs is a good idea. It was suggested that we do more outreach to bring in older lesbians from more diverse ethnic groups. A comment re younger lesbians, whilst outside our target group, is one we might look at re intergenerational discussions. For a few women they loved the singers but would have preferred more songs they knew. Strategies to get women mingling more was suggested.

Sylvia April 2024



## CLA Zoom summary of session

24 March 2024

**Topic: What do lesbian women hope for in community? Have our ideas and wishes changed as we've grown older? What is achievable and what will we accept? What decisions do we make when our health and/or our friends' health changes?**

Ten lesbians (60+years through to 80+years) across four states and one territory of Australia joined in for a lively conversation loosely based around the above questions. We represented a diverse range of women and living arrangements - single women living on their own by choice or situation either renting, in private housing or retirement village through to others in long term relationships living in their own private housing and one married couple living in a retirement village.

Discussion centred around the changes and challenges we experience as we grow older in contrast to when younger and more physically active / mobile. Restrictions as we age were identified due to health and/or mobility issues, desire or need to live closer to health services and no longer able or wanting to travel long distances as we did when younger to maintain friendships.

Awareness of other lesbians in our friendship circles who are coming to similar decisions as they age was discussed. we were able to get the fee of \$2,300 waived. The need for more choices that put lesbians central to the discussion, and not off to the side or as an afterthought, is still warranted. Maintaining our political activism and striving for change for us and our sisters who follow was identified as still of importance for some of us.

Isolation was a factor for more than half of the women in terms of 'still having the desire' to socialise with lesbians and the lack of satisfaction that comes from living in communities dominated by heterosexuals and men which often equates to further lesbian invisibility.

Lack of retirement villages or ageing in place choices that cater to and reflect our lives as lesbians was evident yet again. The pull to live amongst other lesbians is for many something that doesn't change as we age. For some of us we still seek it!

Not being prepared to be closeted in our lives/ living arrangements and the old personal is political is an obvious choice many lesbians still make.

Acknowledgment of the importance and how we now use and rely on modern technologies to keep us connected across cities, rural areas, states, the world to keep many of us connected with each other.

'Settling for less' seemed a theme in terms of not only housing but also who we choose to socialise with. For many, finding acceptance and comfort in our own company, other friendship groups, pets, sport and creative pursuits is a valid choice. One we make rather than being prepared to pursue or endure friendships (even with other women & lesbians) that aren't fulfilling provided a sense of optimism.

By the end of the 90mins further questions arose for me such as...

How do we make the huge leaps that are still needed? Where do we find the space for us as lesbians? Where does it leave us knowing we have lost out when many of our friendships have been jeopardised or entirely lost when dominated by the ongoing trans/ queer issues. When many of us don't want to engage or give energy to such issues and are not prepared to compromise giving rise to further solidarity in our lives as older lesbians.

All power to us as lesbians and with thanks for CLA, Diann for ongoing technological assistance, Lavender for support and Joan for attempting to facilitate without a camera.

Joan

## Ten Forty Outings

The idea of these outings is to go to exhibitions that are time limited: the sort where you say 'I must go and see the XYZ show' and then it's gone! It also gives us a chance to have a coffee and lunch together, always pleasant. These are two of the recent ones.

### The State Library

Wednesday 17 April

Nine of us met in the café at the State Library to see the photography exhibition: The Nikon-Walkley Press Photographs. We all liked the photo of the Matildas. As it was a fairly small show, we moved off to see other things, lots of NSW history, maps, portraits and rare books.

Some of us also went to see the Shot, an exhibition of some of the library's collection of archived photos. It includes 400 captivating moments in Australia, by 200 photographers over three centuries.

Afterwards we all settled down to a pleasant lunch in the sun trying to avoid the temptations of the bookshop which had lovely cards plus a wide array of books.

You can view the collection online.

[https://photogallery.sl.nsw.gov.au/?\\_gl=1\\*11b0lq4\\*ga\\*NDU1NzQxMTc3LjE2NTk3NDM5ODY.\\*\\_ga\\_CYHFM1592Q\\*MTcxNDk4ODI5OC41LjEuMTcxNDk4ODQ2NC43LjAuMA..](https://photogallery.sl.nsw.gov.au/?_gl=1*11b0lq4*ga*NDU1NzQxMTc3LjE2NTk3NDM5ODY.*_ga_CYHFM1592Q*MTcxNDk4ODI5OC41LjEuMTcxNDk4ODQ2NC43LjAuMA..)

## The Biennale at the old Balmain Power Station

Tues 30 April

Despite a very showery day and difficult parking, fourteen of us met up to begin with a coffee at the rather sparse and spartan café on site.

Everyone was in good spirits nonetheless and the art works are truly amazing: huge and varied and spread over three floors. Though the real showstopper is the huge old machinery left over from the coal fired days. One of our group remembers when locals did not put their washing out on certain days because it would get covered in coal dust. Literally a blast from the past.

We managed a good look around but the place is quite chilly. There were many stairs, but fortunately for us, a lift as well.

After that eight of us made it to lunch at the Contessa in Darling Street to refuel. It was a pleasure to have sisters from Melbourne, Anneke and Linda, to share the outing with us.

Jan



There was some Australian cyber-feminist media art.

## Book Chat.

You may already know a lot about these two Australian writers but with a new book by each of them just out, it seems a good idea to tell you a bit more about them.

**Louise Milligan** is a well-known investigative journalist, working for ABC TV's Four Corners. She is the author of two best-selling nonfiction books and now she has written a crime fiction novel, *Pheasants Nest*. (Note that there would usually be an apostrophe in Pheasant's but not in this title though the absence is explained in the opening pages).



The book tells the story of journalist Kate Delaney who has been kidnapped and sexually attacked by a bloke she was rude to on a night when she was out with a group of women friends. He grabbed her before she could get home. Now, bound and gagged in the back of his car, she begins to tell us about what's happening.

It's a compelling read, especially for a first novel. Perhaps she spends too much time in what editors call exposition; passages that explain in fulsome detail about this and that which takes something away from where she is and what that

would really be like. But that's a small quibble in a book that is pacy and gripping.

The book is published by Allen and Unwin.

**Charmian Clift** was born in Kiama in 1923. She is known to have described her family as "liars and embroiders" and it would seem, Charmian grew up already thinking about writing and developing ideas about turning fact into fiction.

She spent time in the army during WWII, came back to Australia in 1946 and got a job on a newspaper in Melbourne and there met George Johnston. They lived in Greece a long time, writing, rearing three children, hosting other writers, poets, musicians and between them wrote thirty books. George's name was on most of these titles but reading between the lines it is obvious Charmian was very involved in the writing but got little credit. Does this sound familiar?

Growing up I thought of this writing couple as charmed characters, they were literary stars and, beginning in the late 1970s, via a close friend, I was loosely connected to aspects of their story.

I knew the younger son, I'll just call him J, and I met and talked at length with the first daughter, Suzanne Chick, who had been born to the couple before they were ready to be parents, and so was adopted out at birth. Suzanne wrote a book about her quest to find her birth mother and was shocked when she discovered how famous and talented that biological mother was.

Of course, both parents were dead by then, so too, two of her younger siblings. It is a sad story. Suzanne desperately wanted to meet up with J but he felt he'd lost too much already; he didn't want to know about another sister.

Charmian's suicide was rumoured to have been a decision she made because she had no wish to nurse an ailing George Johnston. The second daughter also committed suicide and so the tragedies continued.

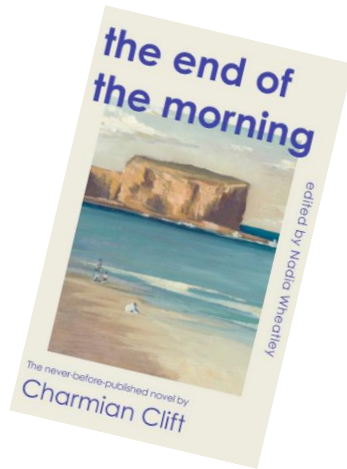
**Nadia Wheatley** knew the older son Martin very well and became over time Charmian's biographer. She has just edited a book entitled *The End of The Morning* which includes Charmian Clift's never before published novel, though it's more of a novella. The rest of the book features selected essays written by Charmian that are taken from her very successful column writing, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Melbourne Herald* between November, 1964 and July, 1969. There are many newspaper readers who cherished Clift's column writings and became staunch followers and fans.

As Nadia Wheatley writes in her Editor's Note "How to cut this *oeuvre* down to about a third, while retaining the scope of the essayist's material, and the range of her voice?"

I think she's done a good job.

Charmian writes as fiction but the story is based on her life as Wheatley explains. Cressida Morley is the main character and the location is around

Kiama on the NSW south coast. The writing flows so beautifully, as a reader you instinctively know you are in safe hands. I loved this book. I hope you will too.



The book is published by New South Publishing. Charmian Clift is shown as the author, Nadia Wheatley as the editor.

Pearlie

## A Crabbit Old Woman

**A poem by a 90-year-old woman. It was found in her hospital room after she died.**

*What do you see, what do you see?  
Are you thinking, when you look at me,  
A crabbit old woman, not very wise,  
Uncertain of habit, with far-away eyes,  
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply  
When you say in a loud voice,  
I do wish you'd try.*

*Who seems not to notice the things that you do  
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.  
Who, unresisting or not; lets you do as you will  
With bating and feeding the long day is fill.  
Is that what you're thinking,  
Is that what you see?*

*Then open your eyes,  
Nurse, you looking at me.  
I'll tell you who I am I sit here so still!  
As I rise at your bidding, as I eat at your will.  
I'm a small child of 10 with a father and mother,  
Brothers and sisters, who loved one another,  
A young girl of 16 with wings on her feet,  
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet,  
A bride soon at 20 – my heart gives a leap,  
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.*

*At 25 now I have young of my own  
Who need me to build a secure happy home;  
A woman of 30, my young now grow fast,  
Bound to each other with ties that should last;*

*At 40, my young sons are grown and are gone.  
By my man's beside me to see I don't mourn;  
At 50 once more babies play around my knee,  
Again we know children, my loved one and me.*

*Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead,  
I look to the future, I shudder with dread,  
For my young are all rearing young of their own.  
And I think of the years and the love that I've  
known;  
I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel-  
Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool.*

*The body is crumbled, grace and vigour depart,  
There is now a stone where I once had a heart,  
But inside this old carcass, a young girl still dwells,  
And now and again my battered heart swells,  
I remember the joy, I remember the pain,  
And I'm loving and living life over again.*

*I think of the years all too few – gone too fast.  
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last-  
So open your eyes, nurse, open and see,*

*Not a crabbit old woman, look closer-*

*See Me.*



## Some April News

Violence against women hit the news media in Australia, and big demonstrations were held on the last weekend of April following another murder, this time in Forbes NSW. In the first four months of this year, 27 women have suffered violent deaths across the country, with three in the city of Ballarat.

Rights to “women only” public spaces were challenged in courts on grounds of discrimination – Lau vs MONA in Tasmania and Tickle vs Giggle in Sydney.

And there was an important though symbolic win in Europe for women who took legal action in defence of human rights in the face of climate change.

In Sydney, Roxanne Tickle, a transgender female, asked the Federal Court to find that excluding her from the social networking app, Giggle for Girls, breached the Sex Discrimination Act.

Following transition from male to female, Tickle requested amendments to his birth certificate. The Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages issued a new certificate, designating Tickle as female. Giggle’s AI facial recognition first determined that Tickle was a woman, but Giggle people intelligence later disagreed with that and removed Tickle’s access to the app. The lawsuit was filed in December 2022 and heard in April this year. The Judge’s decision is still pending.

Meanwhile, the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal found that the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) discriminated when it refused a man entry to its women-only Ladies Lounge. This Lounge was an artwork referring back to days that ended only in 1965, when women were not permitted into Australian public bars. Women could use the ladies’ lounges, but not with children. Indeed, many of us might remember sitting in cars outside a pub with our mothers or aunties being handed a lemon squash or a shandy...

The Ladies Lounge at MONA was an installation by American artist and curator Kirsha Kaechele, accessible to “any and all ladies”. Like other men, Jason Lau was not allowed to enter the installation when he visited the museum in April 2023. Lau lodged a complaint with Tasmania’s Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, saying he was discriminated against because of his gender.

Kaechele said that Lau’s experience of discrimination was central to the work. Her lawyer, Catherine Scott, argued that denying men access to it still allowed them to experience it, albeit in another way. But no, said the Judge, it was discrimination.

And an interesting case from Europe: a group of older Swiss women have won the first ever climate case victory in the European Court of Human Rights. The court said Switzerland’s efforts to meet its emission reduction targets had been woefully inadequate.

The women, mostly in their 70s, said that their age and gender made them particularly vulnerable to the effects of heatwaves linked to climate change. One of the Senior Women for Climate Protection told the press:

"We are not made to sit in a rocking chair and knit. Whatever we do now, we are not doing for ourselves, but for the sake of our children and our children's children."

Sources used for this news roundup include: The NSW Law Society Journal, BBC news, Art Daily.

<https://lsj.com.au/articles/tickle-v-giggle-what-is-the-difference-between-gender-and-gender-identity/>

<https://artdaily.com/news/167672/A-museum-s-feminist-artwork-excluded-men--So-one-man-took-it-to-court->

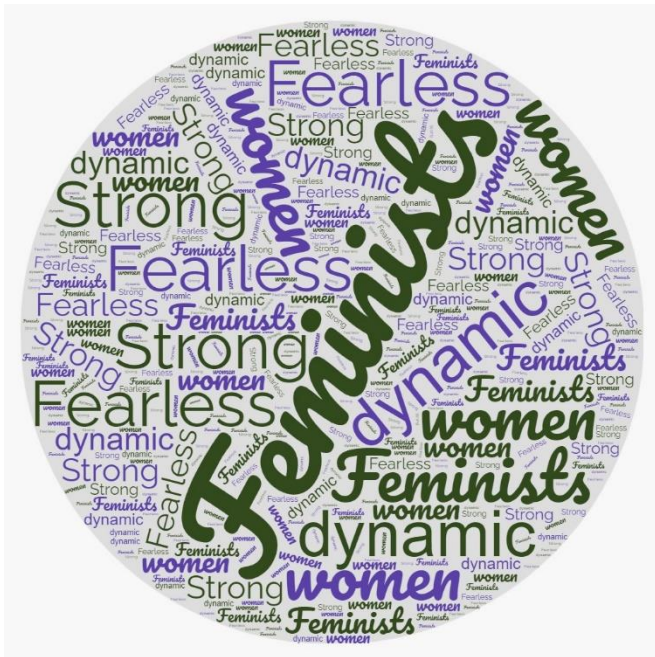
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/mona-loses-ladies-lounge-court-case-2466221>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-68768598>

## The Newsletter

We, Diann, Pearlie, and Jacqueline, 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.



## 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 are available for download from our website.

### Who currently does what?

**Events planning:** Sylvia, Diann

**Contact email list:** Diann, Julie

**Archives:** Sylvia and Jan

**Money Management:** Fiona

**Websters:** Jan, Ruth, Diann, Julie

**Newsletter:** editing and layout Diann, Jacqui

**Management committee** Jan, Sylvia, Pearlie, Diann, Fiona, Dori, Jacqui