



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

November 2024

www.olderdykes.org

What's On

Dykes for Dinner

Thursday 12 December @ 6.30pm

Please contact Fiona for details

fionarimes@gmail.com

Message: 0412954573

DDforOL Dinner and Discussion – Next year

We will have only four sessions, including the AGM. Dates to be announced soon.

The Women's Library 30-year celebration Saturday 14 December 3-7 pm.

The Women's Library first opened for lending in 1994. You are cordially invited to come and celebrate this 30th Anniversary milestone.

**The Women's Library, 8-10 Brown St,
Newtown**

Women in the Bush

End-of-year picnic

Saturday 7 December, from 10.30 AM

Cabarita Park, end of Cabarita Road, Cabarita. Bring your own picnic and utensils, chair or rug and possibly something to share with others.

Cabarita park has toilets, a kiosk for coffee and some food, also not too far away a swimming pool if the weather turns out warm enough.

Country Lesbians Association

A Zoom event

Surviving Christmas from a lesbian perspective.

Sunday 24 November at 5.30 pm

Come and join us and share your ideas. The Country Lesbians Association (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.

RSVP Email Diann at
maude_au@yahoo.com

Recruitment for Websisters

Do you enjoy using computers? Would you like to learn how to help look after the Ten Forty website 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.

Researchers from the Australian Institute of Family Studies

(AIFS) are inviting older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and/or asexual (LGBTIQA+) people to participate in focus groups, interviews, and surveys. It aims to explore the experiences of abuse and mistreatment among older LGBTIQA+ people in Australia. You can register to participate in a focus group. For more information and to do the survey, click the link below.

https://aifs.gov.au/research_programs/elder-abuse-research/LGBTIQA/PIS-focus-groups

TENFORTY WENT TO CANBERRA

16-20 SEPTEMBER 2024.

Our winter trip to Canberra was good fun with just under 20 of us joining in and one late starter who just came for the night because she missed us so much. Such is the attraction of sisterhood.

The original focus of this trip was to see Parliament in session and, on day one, having spent the morning at Old Parliament House looking at political cartoons, we went to lunch at the New Parliament and saw the Senate at Question Time. And did we score! There was Penny Wong at her best and then came the motion on Housing Funding. For this a division was called for and we watched the Greens and Independents line up with the Opposition to defeat the motion and effectively the Bill, for the moment... Our women were so incensed by this that they became vocal (shame, shame) to the point that an attendant appeared threatening to evict them. Democracy in action but we did feel that the acoustics in our gallery were not good enough.

On day two we did culture: the National Art Gallery with the Paul Gauguin exhibition, not popular with everyone but the aboriginal galleries with everything from bark paintings to modern caricatures were splendid as usual. The new giant metal sculpture by Lindy Lee was

there but under wraps while they build its home. We started off with coffee at the Portrait Gallery which had lots of interest and finally some of us made it to the National Library which has a splendid bookshop and a good history display.

Day three was nature day so we went to Floriade which, despite being bedevilled by early hot weather and some very fierce winds, managed to put on a very appealing and indeed interesting display. After this we made it up to the Arboretum for lunch, great views and large bonsai display which is always amazing.

Our team marches on its morning coffee and its lunches and dinners and we did quite well, managing to rearrange the seating in various venues to suit ourselves. The food at our homebase Alivio was OK and offered just enough to feed those of us with special dietary needs but really it was a bit pub like. But it does offer us a space to be together. Even in the icy cold spa where a few hardy souls got together. Our main meal outing was in our private room at The Scholar, a Chinese seafood place in Dickson. We all ate well after solving a few communication problems with the staff.

The thing which is clear every time we manage a get together is just how much we all enjoy being with OUR MOB, good friendships and good fun.

Thanks to all who came and made it such a rewarding experience.
JA.



DAME DOROTHY TANGNEY

Dame Dorothy Tangney (1907-1985), Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, was the first woman elected to the Senate and first female member of the Australian Labor Party to be elected to the Federal Parliament.

Born in North Perth, Western Australia, the third of seven surviving children to working-class parents of Irish descent, Dorothy Margaret Tangney directly experienced the hardship and challenges of everyday Australians.

Following the federal election of August 1943, Tangney became a Senator for Western Australia. She actively represented the concerns of her electorate, including making the needs and interests of women a high priority.

A supporter of the 'underdog', Tangney's warm humanity and deep feelings towards the well-being of the individual led her to denounce inequality, disadvantage and racial discrimination. She lobbied hard for increased social services funding, seeing this as a 'sacred duty' of the Parliament.

The role of education in improving opportunities for the poor was a lifelong passion for Tangney. In 1946, she wholeheartedly supported the establishment of the Australian National University (ANU), becoming a founding member of the ANU Council in 1951.

At a time when very few women were given the opportunity to pursue parliamentary careers, Tangney served from 1943 to 1968. A canny political operator, she demonstrated a rare determination, resilience and facility for helping others to rise above adversity.



DAME ENID LYONS

Dame Enid Lyons (1897-1981), Dame of the Order of Australia and Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire, was the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives and the first female member to be appointed to Federal Cabinet (Liberal Party).

Enid Muriel Burnell was born at Duck River, north-west Tasmania. In 1915, whilst a school teacher, she married Joseph Lyons who, after becoming Premier of Tasmania in 1923, went on to become Prime Minister of Australia in 1932. They formed a strong personal and political partnership, raising 11 children, a 12th having died in infancy.

In 1943, aged 46, Dame Enid Lyons was elected to the Tasmanian seat of Darwin (now Braddon) and continued until ill-health forced her retirement from Cabinet in 1951. Between 1951 and 1962 she was appointed as a Commissioner of the then Australian Broadcasting Commission.

When Dame Enid died in 1981, she was the most highly-decorated woman in Australia. She was an outstanding public speaker and prolific writer. She wrote regular columns for the *Women's Weekly* and the *Melbourne Sun* and was the author of three books: *'So We Take Comfort'*, *'The Old Haggis'* and *'Among the Carrion Crows'*.

Always guided by her strong Christian faith, Dame Enid believed that the foundation of a nation's greatness is in the homes of its people.

When in front of the nearby figurative sculpture, Dame Enid Lyons is positioned on the right.
Sculptor: Lis Johnson
Pavement Design: Rob Tindal





Mental Health Month Lunch

A lunch for members was held at the Sydney Rowing Club, Wharfside Room on 12 October to mark Mental Health Week. This event was more expensive than our usual events. The main argument for an upmarket event was that for many older lesbians, their finances prevented them from having this kind of special lunch. It was also intended to show our participants they were valued, and intended to lift their spirits. This meant we had to do some fund raising. We were fortunate to apply for and obtain grants which supplemented our regular funds

The two-course lunch menu was selected to cater for all diets for 50 members who attended. Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) was approached for a speaker on mental health issues for older lesbians. Kate Hollingsworth, a counsellor at Leichhardt Women's Health Centre, agreed to be our speaker during the lunch.

The responses to our speaker were mostly positive but with some clear expressions around wanting more information and discussion about mental health, in particular some of the more difficult issues around suicide, dementia and trauma. The speaker did an excellent job of drawing the participants out and commenting on aspects she raised.



In addition to information provided by LWCHC, information on resources and support with mental health concerns was obtained from Way Ahead who promote October Mental Health Month.

Some comments from our members:

Great to have better food. An excellent idea! Magnificent location and view. Lunch, company excellent! A great effort, thank you so much.

The luxury!! Amazing venue and good conversation. Very good, happy to be part of it. Nice to have food served. I now have a more jovial feeling.

My first event! Well organised and lovely to see friends

The food was very good and good choice of wine. I haven't had anything like this for a long time, very special. Lovely opportunity to meet with women

from outside the city. Catching up with old friends and reconnecting. Enjoyed the venue, food and being more upmarket and serious topic. Best events this year for me were all Ten Forty, thank you.

Sylvia



Dropping off Perch

As usual, at 5.30 on the last Sunday in October, The Country Lesbian Association met by zoom.

Eight lesbians met to discuss the topic 'Dropping off the Perch'. A rather serious topic, you might think, but one that concerns many of us.

Our culture doesn't deal very directly with dying so we call it 'Kicking the bucket', 'biting the dust', 'pushing up daisies', 'going to a better place', 'passing away'.

We know we are all going to do it. But it can get hard when our friends and loved ones keep doing it.

The discussion addressed the issues: How do we cope when it happens frequently? What does it mean about our own mortality? And when we turn to thoughts of our own death, is it a big deal? An opportunity for growth? Are you preparing for your own death? Do you want to experience it fully or with drugs? What is important to you? Is there a light-hearted side to death (do you have any anecdotes?) What do you think about voluntary assisted dying?

Several of those attending had experienced the death of their life partners. One said 'Losing your partner is the worst loss... I felt like I was on a boat without a rudder in the middle of the ocean...'

A couple of us were aware of a lesbian cemetery at Fryerstown outside of Melbourne and shared the information. One woman said '*Melbourne lesbians do death differently.*'

There was discussion of the preparations we'd made: Wills, powers of attorney, guardianship documents and advance care directives.

We spoke of the ceremonies honouring life that we'd been part of, and what we want at our own send-offs. Would we want an open coffin? Or not? Burial or cremation ... women shared their views.

We shared what we'd like to happen at our funerals, or celebrations of our lives.

Some shared what it was like to be with someone who has died and comments included: '*it's so strong... the sense that the body is a shell... but I have a strong sense that somebody leaves... now whether it's our consciousness that goes back into the river of life energy...*'

'There is someone in that body and then that body becomes a shell... like a cicada...'

'There's nobody home...'

A question was asked 'How many of you have danced at a funeral?' Two women said that they had. One said '*...it was a bodily response.*'

A couple of women suggested resources, these included

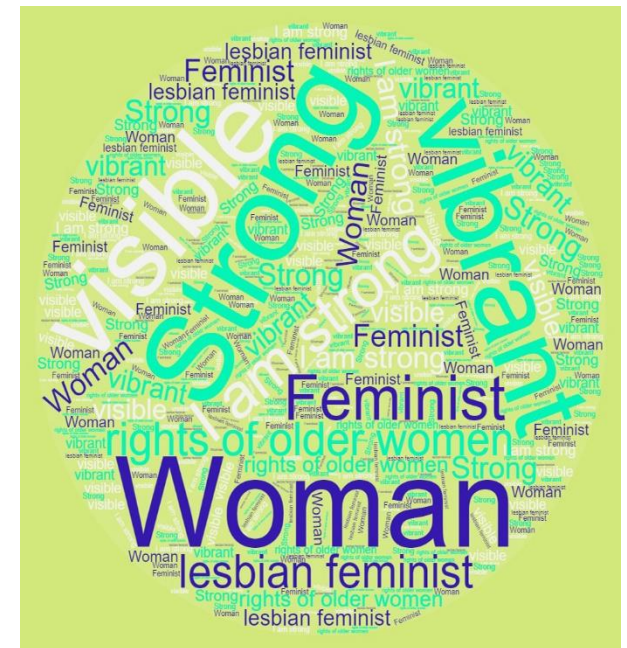
Saying Goodbye by Zoe Clark-Coates

Final Exit by Derek Humphry

The Denial of Death by Ernest Becker

Who dies, Healings into Life & Death and *Meetings on the Edge*, all by Steven Levine, and the books by Elizabeth Kubler Ross

Carol



Falling in love again... this time with balance

Not for the faint hearted... every day above ground is a good one... We've all heard, and repeat, these adages in efforts to cease complaints about age-related aches and pains. It's all very well to grow older, better than the alternative... but as our wisdom increases, so do our vulnerabilities. One of these vulnerabilities is the risk of falls.

NSW Health runs many programmes on falls prevention, as injuries from falls cost a lot of money, in fact, of the 15 main causes of hospitalisations across Australia, falls topped the list in 2019-20. Treatment of injuries from falls cost \$2.3 billion in 2020 in Australia.

True to our times of positive spin, NSW Health prefers to talk about *healthy ageing* rather than *falls prevention*. Talk is of exercise: this needs to build balance and strength, and be constant and ongoing. The brain controls balance, so it stands to reason that as cognition declines with age, so does our ability to maintain good balance.

As we get older, even going to the toilet at night can be risky. This is not only about keeping our balance; we are advised to clear away any trip hazards and make sure of adequate lighting. The nightly bathroom visit is also high risk because when we get up at night, blood pressure might not be the best.

NSW Health program Stepping On is for adults who have had a fall and consists of a series of six or seven

sessions spread out over a few months. First session is a "tell it all" event: share the story of your fall or falls. Even the experienced physiotherapist teacher has a dramatic fall story to tell!

Stepping On is not just about exercise and balance, it offers talks about our senses, for instance sight, perception of depth, lighting, trip hazards. About eyesight, and the pros and cons of multi-focal lenses.

About building muscle force, strength, power and endurance. About reaction time, how slowly or quickly we respond to stimuli.

About the vestibular function (I had to consult the dictionary: *vestibular: adjective, mainly Anatomy: relating to a vestibule, particularly that of the inner ear, or more generally to the sense of balance*).

About psychology – our fear of falling might affect our daily activities, restrict movement, lead to depression. About eating well, including calcium and protein in the diet. About shoes – wear good footwear.

A webinar from University of NSW academic Daina Sturnieks on Falls in Older People provided many tips about falls prevention.

Lots of detailed research and nuances informed her presentation, for instance, while lighting, grab rails and hazard elimination are all good, aids and restraints are not good for training. This means, for example, when you practise standing on one leg, stand on one leg, don't rely on the nearby wall or pillar!

Jacqueline

News of interest

Migrant women suffer huge discrimination and trauma at work: a new national study of more than 3,000 migrant women revealed high rates of sexual harassment in the workplace.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-14/national-study-shows-high-rates-of-sexual/104599400>

We know women have had to fight for our rights on many fronts, and we probably know the battle for women's swimming in Australia fought by Fanny Durack, Mina Wylie and Annette Kellerman in the early 20th century. Here's a story from 1920s Melbourne about women daring to go bushwalking. (Sometimes I wonder whether it's about what we do / want to do, or whether it's about what we wear!!)

(Thanks to Wendy of Bundanoon for the link):

<https://bushwalking-women-blazing-a-trail.netlify.app/>

Vigils – People gathered across the country in mid-November to honour the scores of women who have died in acts of violence. This year, 56 women in Australia have allegedly been murdered by a man in instances of gendered violence.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-16/national-domestic-violence-vigils-honour-women-who-have-died-/104609848>

A plaque has been installed at what was perhaps Melbourne's first gay venue: Val Eastwood is memorialised at the site of Val's Coffee Lounge: <https://qnews.com.au/val-eastwood-memorialised-at-the-site-of-vals-coffee-lounge/>

The Newsletter

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

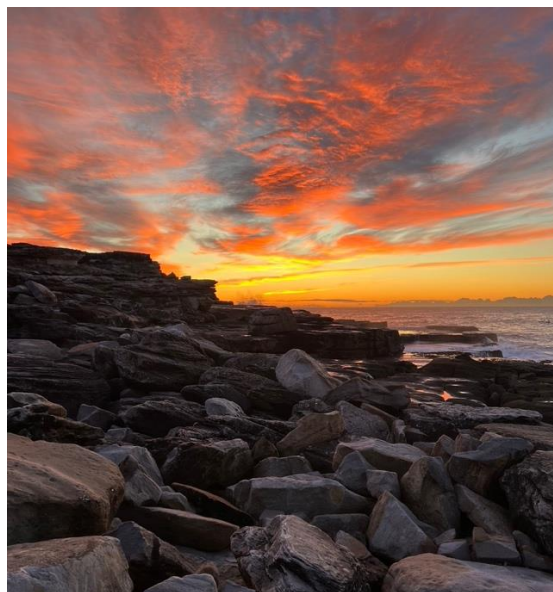
Please keep giving us your feedback and let us know topics of interest you feel need to be shared in the newsletter.

Follow us on FaceBook
[Ten Forty Matrix NSW](#)

Browse our Website
www.olderdykes.org



*Happy new year
and the very best
to you all for 2025!*



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. The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website.

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Sylvia, Diann

Contact email list: Diann, Ruth, Julie

Archives: Sylvia and Jan

Money Management: Fiona

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Diann, Julie

Newsletter: Jacqueline and Diann

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