



# Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

March/April 2018

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

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

According to a recent World Economic Forum study, by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans.

We hear things about plastic taking 500...600...1,000 years to biodegrade...but the thing is, we have no idea how long it takes. Because there was no plastic around 500 years ago how can we be confident about future predictions?

Imagine a world 500 years from now if we don't try to stem the use of plastic now!

### Is it possible to live without plastic?

In an article in our January newsletter, Pearlie suggested that in May we all participate in an exploration of how much we use plastic products and how we can reduce/do away with/or become more aware of alternatives.

Send in your suggestions and we will share them as widely as possible through the newsletter and through [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)

Some of us have already started exploring alternatives to plastics. Check them out on page 5.

## What's On?

### Dinner and Discussion Group for Older Lesbians

5.45 for 6pm  
Saturday 14 April 2018

**Topic: If you could take a lesbian and/or feminist (dead or alive!) to dinner, who would you choose, where would you take her, and what would you most like to ask her?**

She could be someone you know personally and admire or someone you would simply love to meet over dinner. This will be a fun discussion in small "dinner party" groups where we hope to learn more about fascinating/remarkable lesbians/feminists.

We will send out a list of well-known women on the Contact email list closer to the date.

No bookings required, and we warmly welcome any newcomers.

Mervyn Fletcher Hall, 81 Dalhousie Street (cnr Dixon St), Haberfield.

BYO food to share and your own drinks.

Gold coin donation

For more information email

[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)

## Dykes for Dinner

6.30pm Thursday 12 April

Miss Hu (Vietnamese)  
465 New Canterbury Rd., Dulwich Hill  
RSVP by Sunday 8 April

[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)



6.30pm Thursday 10 May

The Signature (Thai)  
574 Darling St., Rozelle  
RSVP by Sunday 6 May

[contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)

## Retiring Women

12pm Friday 20 April

Lunch at the Ivanhoe Hotel, The Corso, Manly  
Contact [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) for more details.

## Out & About

A monthly social group in the Sydney area.  
For details about the February event, please email [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org)



## Discussion Report

### ACON: Here for LGBTIQ Women

10 February 2018

Despite the hot night a group of regulars and two new participants turned up for our first Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians of 2018. (The changed name from Ten Forty to Dinner Discussion for Older Lesbians, clearly says what the night is about.)

Following dinner and a brief sharing of 'What's On', we introduced Clara Koeck the ACON (AIDS Council of NSW) project leader for the 'Here for LGBTIQ Women' discussion.

Clara explained the nature of ACON and its history from the 1980's when it was established as a key program to combat the AIDS epidemic. Whilst AIDS and its prevention are still a very important part of ACON's work, research has shown that the LGBTIQ community in all its diversity exhibits greater health problems in various areas than the heterosexual community. The LGBTIQ community is not one community but many different communities and the health of the older lesbian community has not been specifically addressed by ACON in the past.

ACON is funded to serve those who identify as lesbians, bisexual, queer, same sex attracted, intersex women and trans-female to male (they still have female health

issues). As with most health provision the objectives of service delivery are to care for the individual needs of the patient, not critique their chosen self-definition. Past oppression, trauma and negative experiences of the health profession have often caused resistance to seeking health care. Higher levels of tobacco smoking, low levels of cervical screening and mammograms are some of the health problems identified in the female LGBTIQ community.

The 'Talk Touch Campaign' that Clara is leading is aimed at encouraging women to have regular mammograms. Mammograms are only an initial check and women with family histories of breast cancer or symptoms they are concerned about will be referred for further testing. Our discussion indicated that discomfort from mammograms is experienced less in clinics established for that specific purpose as staff are more proficient at doing the mammogram with the least pain. 'Breastville' last year and the 'Women's Lazy Sunday Picnic' held on 11 February are community events to encourage women to have a good day and access information about mammograms.

The program to encourage women to have regular pap smears to detect early cervical cancer is another important ACON project. For those who want a supportive location to have a pap smear ACON runs a 'CheckOUT clinic', on Tuesdays from 5pm. It is best to make an appointment. Again for older lesbians those present agreed pap smears

were increasingly painful in the years after menopause. There was discussion about the new tests.

In the past cervical screening was done by pathology clinics using microscopic observation of the sample by a trained person for any evidence of abnormalities. Screening took place every two years.

The new method is done by technology which is more accurate and does not need so many staff. It only needs to be done every five years, because the human papilloma virus (HPV) which caused 99% of cervical cancer takes many years to cause cell abnormalities. The method of collection is the same, using a speculum.

So the benefits of the new method are more accurate testing and less frequent pap smears.

Women over 70 can have an exit test unless they have had previous cell abnormalities in which case their doctor may advise testing for a few more years.

There are government and cancer council websites with lots of information about the new tests. There is a special section for LGBTIQ women as well.

ACON liaises with Leichhardt Women's Health Centre, and the Australian Lesbian Medical Association (ALMA) about their list of LGBTIQ friendly Doctors (DOClister). Contact them for the names of doctors if you need one.

Other ACON projects of interest to older lesbians are the volunteer visiting program for isolated LGBTIQ people and The Love Project for those over 55. Volunteers are trained by The Mental Health Team for the visiting project, and The Love Project runs a series of activities, which are mixed. There are also counsellors, for a maximum of twelve sessions. The service focuses on a range of issues including substance withdrawal support.

Clara is keen to get any ideas for community activities like 'Breastiville' and 'Women's Lazy Sunday Picnic'. If you have any ideas send them to: [ckoeck@acon.org.au](mailto:ckoeck@acon.org.au). The contact phone number for ACON is 9206 2000

We ended the night completing the 2018 SWASH Survey on Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's health. Gay Egg, a Ten Forty member, presented this as she has done the volunteer training to administer the survey. We discussed the fact that many of the questions were not suitable for older lesbians and some information that should be collected is not in the survey. Gay noted some of our concerns. Despite its limitations we felt it was important to complete it since it is the only survey providing specific data on our sexual and general health. Information from this survey informs future programs in ACON.

Feedback on the evening was positive with some great suggestions for improvement and future ideas.

*Sylvia*

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## Membership of Ten Forty Matrix

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At our AGM in November 2017 it was agreed that membership of Ten Forty Matrix will now be comprised of Financial Members and Casual Members.

Financial members pay an annual fee of \$10 unwaged and \$20 waged. The advantages of being a financial member include receiving subsidies for activities with a price tag, for example, excursions/activities and restaurant lunches, usually outside Sydney. Financial members have voting rights at the AGM.

Casual Members are welcome to attend subsidised events and activities but will be asked to pay the full cost. Casual members have no voting rights at the AGM.

Activities and events previously offered to lesbians over 40 remain free or at own cost, for example, Dinner and Discussion (gold coin donation) and Dykes for Dinner.

Existing members have received a notice to renew their membership and women who are not yet members have been sent a notice through [contact@olderdykes.org](mailto:contact@olderdykes.org) inviting them to join.

Fees are the same as last year: \$10 unwaged, \$20 waged.

See next column for some of the subsidised activities planned for 2018.

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## Subsidised activities for 2018

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### Thursday 10 May

By train from Sydney and lunch at the recently rebuilt Fisherman's Wharf restaurant at Woy Woy. Jan is organising this event and will email Contact with details closer to the date. A subsidy of \$20pp will apply.

### Wednesday 26 September

By train from Sydney to Wollongong with lunch at Windjammers Restaurant, overlooking the ocean. Pearlie will provide further details closer to the date. Subsidy of \$20 pp.

### Sunday 11 November

By train to Brooklyn followed by a three-hour ferry trip down the Hawkesbury. Enjoy a delicious local fish'n'chip lunch on board. Sylvia will provide further details closer to the date. Subsidy of \$20 pp.

## Other dates for your diary:

### Dinner and Discussion Group for Older Lesbians in 2018

Saturday 2 June 6-9pm at Haberfield

Saturday 4 August 6-9pm at Haberfield

Saturday 6 October 6-9pm at Haberfield

Solstice Party in December - date and venue to be confirmed

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## Ten Forty Matrix at Mardi Gras events

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### Feel the Love

The Inner West Council held its sixth annual “Feel the Love” Reception at Petersham Town Hall on Thursday 15 February 2018.

This year’s event theme was “Mardi Gras – 40 Years of Evolution”. Various speakers were invited with the idea of looking at the events experienced by the LGBTIQ community and seeing how far we’ve come:

Peter de Waal – recalled that kiss on ABC TV’s Chequerboard in 1972 and later activism

Gail Hewison – a 78er recalled her arrest at the first Mardi Gras

Amanda Dunstan –Vice President of Dykes on Bikes talked about the history of DOB, their Safe Watch initiative, and their ongoing participation in Mardi Gras

Daf Hewson – recounted the journey of two lesbians who didn’t both agree with marriage to recently tying the knot after 22 years together

A number of community groups were also present with information about their services, eg ACON and Rainbow Families. Sylvia and Kel were there with our new pull-up banner to talk to women and hand out our leaflets. It was good to be able to show that Ten Forty Matrix is an active community

group in the inner west as well as being for older lesbians across NSW.

There was music from the Homotones and the Police band and a display of ballroom dancing as well as food, drinks and chatting.

One of our members who attended noted that the attendance was disappointing and that the event was a bit muddled – perhaps trying to do too much in one evening. Those present and registered for the event can supply feedback via the emailed surveys.

### Fair Day

On a very hot Sunday on 18 February, Sylvia with some assistance from Kel, talked with and handed out Ten Forty leaflets to likely lesbians.

It was great to see so many stalls promoting and supporting diverse aspects of the LGBTIQ community. And, as far as we could see, we were the only ones barracking for older lesbians.

We suggest that Ten Forty Matrix think about having a stall in 2019 e.g. with some tables and chairs and maybe an umbrella or two for older lesbians to relax and chat. We



could even have books for sale.

An idea for later discussion?

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## International Women’s Day

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The first Women’s Day held in many countries and initiated by Theresa Serber Malkiel in USA in 1909 was the forerunner for International Women’s Day which was proposed at an international conference in 1910 to be held on March 8.

1918 marks 110 years since the first Women’s Day March.

“For the working woman of today finds herself between two fires—on the one hand, she faces the capitalist class, her bitterest enemy; it foresees a far-reaching danger in her emancipation and with all the ability of its money power tries to resist her eventual advent into the civilized world.

In her anguish the working woman turns towards her brothers in the hope to find a strong support in their midst, but she is doomed to be disillusioned, for they discourage her activity and are utterly listless towards the outcome of her struggle.”

*Theresa Serber Malkiel (1874-1949)*

**Russian migrant to New York USA, factory worker, feminist activist and founder of the first Women’s Day March.**

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## A few tips on how to reduce plastic

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### Fruit and vegetable bags

I recently saw a woman in Aldi's using see-through mesh bags to hold her fruit and veges. I asked where she had bought them. Apparently they are available from a number of sources, both online and from a variety of cafes and stores. I bought ten online from Onya – <https://www.onyalife.com> – and I love them.

The bags measure 30cm wide x 25cm high, weigh 10g, and have a draw string tie. Called rPET bags, they are made from recycled plastic drink bottles, are washable, and 100% recyclable after their long life.

Wendy Freeman also uses a similar product available online through [www.fruitysacks.com](http://www.fruitysacks.com) and also distributed through health food stores and cafes including Cornersmith Cafe in Annandale and Emile's Fruit and Vegetables in Balmain.

### Milk in glass bottles

Some of us thought glass milk bottles ceased being produced decades ago, but it's not true.

Harris Farm sells Ivyhome organic milk in 170ml bottles at Broadway, Leichhardt and Drummoyne.

Does anyone know if other stores are selling bottled milk?

### Toothbrushes

Wendy also uses a toothbrush with a bamboo handle and recyclable bristles, available from local health food stores and online. Bamboo is an eco friendly alternative to plastic and the bristles are biodegradable.

### Alternative to plastic film

After years of unthinkingly using Glad Wrap to keep food fresh, I recently discovered Beeswax Food Wraps. (Actually my daughter gave me a packet as a gift. I'm using them to wrap cheese, fruit, avocado halves, carrot sticks, and more. Unfortunately they can't be used to wrap meat, so I put the meat in a glass container and cover it with a Beeswax Wrap, making sure it doesn't touch the meat. I'm not sure about fish...

The wraps come in various sizes and are made using 100% natural Australian beeswax, dammar resin, Australian jojoba oil and virgin coconut oil. They are washable and after a year or so can be disposed of in the compost because they are 100% biodegradable.

They can be purchased online and from Farmers' markets. The downside is they are fairly expensive to buy, but the upside is you can make your own quite cheaply.

Wendy provided information about buying a kit and making the beeswax wraps yourself. Check it out at <https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/563290585/diy-kit-beeswax-food-wraps>

Or phone Alfalfa House Community Food Co-op in Newtown 9519 3374 to check if they have any kits in stock.

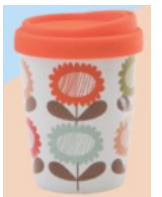
### Plastic drinking straws

Single-use straws are a particularly nasty form of plastic: as they end up in our oceans by the thousands.

An alternative is bamboo straws that come in a drawstring calico pouch containing two natural bamboo straws and one stainless steel bamboo straw cleaner. Stainless steel drinking straws are also available.

### Investing in reusable BYO coffee cups

It's estimated that as many as three billion coffee cups are sold each year in Australia, with a majority going to landfill or polluting waterways. A number of Ten Forty Matrix members sing the praises of using reusable coffee cups, which come in porcelain, glass or stainless steel.



### Plastic drinking bottles

CHOICE says bottled water is not only bad for the environment, it costs almost 2000 times the price of tap water.

Many of our friends have thrown away their plastic drink bottles and now use a lightweight stainless steel reusable bottle and fill it with tap water. You can also buy glass and ceramic bottles.

*Dorothy*



## And another thing...

It was recently reported that more than 90 per cent of bottled water products tested by US scientists were found to contain microplastics – minuscule pieces of plastic.

This has sparked an investigation by the World Health Organisation into the potential health risks to consumers.

Those drinking a bottle of water every day, could be consuming about 56,875 pieces of microplastic in a year from bottled water, according to the study by the State University of New York in Fredonia.

## Recycling soft plastics

While we can try to limit our use of plastics, what can we do with unavoidable packaging around, for example, bread, biscuits, frozen food, toilet paper, rice, cereals and so on?

We can get in the habit of putting them straight into a reusable shopping bag and dropping it off to a designated drop-off point organised by the REDcycle Program. Drop off points in the inner west are at Coles Leichhardt Norton Plaza and Woolworths Leichhardt Marketplace.

For information about what is included in this initiative and to find your local drop-off point go <http://www.redcycle.net.au>.

## 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 [www.olderdykes.org/about\\_us/newsletters.html](http://www.olderdykes.org/about_us/newsletters.html)

## 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, Dorothy, Diann, Sandy

Newsletter: editing and layout Ruth and Dorothy

