



NATIONAL OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK (NOWN)

JUNE 2021 EDITION

Our Treasured Treasurer
Cate Turner



Get Well



June 2021 National News

Dear Members,

What a time this has been since our last Newsletter. What with the continuing COVID restrictions which bring ongoing uncertainty and anxiety to many of us. Growing numbers of women suffering physical, financial, and psychological abuse, and growing numbers of homeless women. These certainly are some of the most distressing times for many women. Women of all ages but particularly the older women in our society.

During this time, between newsletters many of us have been terribly busy spreading the words, especially those which continue to raise the general public's awareness of these issues and together search for a better society where older women, in particular, can continue to live in a safe, secure, and supportive society. The older women of Australia, with their continuing volunteering deeds are to a great extent, the backbone of our society and they should be recognised for all their efforts in support of others whatever their nationality, race, or creed. Regard and respect for older women needs a serious boost and it is only through the National Older Women's Network, at the State and National levels, that these messages and calls for support will be delivered.

We need to be better educated on the pitfalls, which sadly exist, not only in our society but also in our own families where many older women are taken advantages of and sadly often abused. The younger of us must be educated in how to help the older of us, particularly as to many of the challenges we face. For example, elder abuse, financial exploitation, elder care, nursing homes, ongoing health, and wellbeing.

On another note, we have had the medical scare of our Treasurer and much-loved elder, Cate Turner who is currently in hospital. Her sudden serious medical difficulties came as a big shock, however, at this time I am happy to report Cate is on the mend. Fingers crossed. Her nephew, Tim Turner from Canberra has been most devoted to her and has kept us in daily updates. Rhoda Sexton together with Larissa Bergmann, both from OWN NSW have temporarily taken on some of Cate's management responsibilities and support for Sharan Tuite, our Secretary. Rhoda as acting Public Officer and Secretary and Larissa as Treasurer. The National Council is most grateful to these women both of whom have previously donated their time with the National OWN in supportive roles. We are most appreciative of them.

Let's not forget the National Conference, coming up on 7 & 8 October, hosted by OWN Queensland. We are all invited, and the program is looking excellent. I encourage you to be there, together we will make this Conference one to be remembered for all time. Contact OWN Queensland for further information.

Aging and Raging: The Theatre Group is back

Despite Covid enforced restrictions on gatherings and singing, the Theatre Group used the long isolation period to develop a big bold brand-new show for 2021 called 'Not Dead Yet'. There is so much to be positive about for this group of aging activists who strive to educate and entertain with the messages we portray.

Despite receiving offers of work in 2021, the last time the group performed was at The Adelaide Fringe Festival in March last year, where we did three performances at The Bakehouse Theatre to capacity audiences and a 5***** review in a theatrical magazine.

Our new show highlights hot topics including the experience of aging, homelessness, scammers, dementia and much more and speaks to the activism of older women in a whole range of causes that have confronted us through our lifetimes, some old – some new.

We look forward to presenting 'Not Dead Yet' for you at your annual conference in October and meeting our Queensland sisters, who we know have done some wonderful work in keeping older women front and centre.





OWN MACKAY Qld

Hello Aloma,

Here, above, is a photo taken with Norma Shuttlewood receiving her Certificate of dedication to OWN MACKAY. I hope this finds you well and in fine spirits with all that is going on, my best regards to Cate too, we hope she is improving.

Mackay O.W.N. groups are going very well, we celebrated our 25TH birthday in great style with over 60 members and friends, it was a wonderful day, a day to remember with special awards and gifts handed out. We even had channel seven to do a short story on our achievements which was presented on tv that night. Our membership has grown since the tv show.

(Below) photo with Mary Novikov and Fay Ray at the celebrations for our 25th Anniversary of OWN Mackay





Brazen Hussies: a new film captures the heady, turbulent power of Australia's women's liberation movement

Not only are mothers politically active, but their causes are diverse, from economic and political rights to childbearing and reproductive reforms, to environmental concerns.

Perhaps it's time we viewed mothers as naturally politically inclined, as philosopher Sara Ruddick argues, and inherently future-oriented.

After all, anything that threatens the present and future worlds their children will inhabit matters deeply to them.

Rethinking the presumption of advancement in contemporary Australia

Financial abuse is the most prevalent form of elder abuse after psychological abuse (Australian Law Reform Commissions Report No 131 (2017) 19).

While the law provides remedies for financial abuse, an older person is usually no better placed to avail themselves of these remedies than they were to prevent or protect themselves against the abuse the first place. This is particularly the case in transactions between an ageing parent and their adult children, where arrangements are often informal and based on trust. Ironically, it is to these transactions that the presumption of advancement applies. The presumption of advancement operates to impute an intention, where it is absent or unclear, on parties in certain relationships, such as parent and child (and between a husband and a wife), that a gratuitous transaction between them was a gift. This leaves the ageing parent, who may have since lost capacity, with the onerous burden of proving that the arrangement was not a gift and that the property or contribution towards the acquisition of the property is held for them in resulting trust. In a society where ageing parents are becoming increasingly more dependent on their children for care and assistance, it may be time to rethink the application of the presumption of advancement.

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MOTHERS DAY

(A little late but a great May Mothers' Day read from *The Conversation*)

Mothers have often been associated with conservatism: linked to cloyingly sentimental cultural ideals or depicted as victims of patriarchal oppression.

In the 19th century, the middle-class mother was idealised as the “[angel in the house](#)”, while during the boom years after the second world war she was depicted as a devoted homemaker in her suburban castle.

During the 1970s, [second-wave feminists](#) thoroughly critiqued the relegation of women to childrearing. This left some with a lingering sense that becoming a mother was an old-fashioned or politically regressive choice.



Louisa Lawson used her status as a mother for political clout in the ‘woman movement’. National Library of Australia

But in fact, there is a long tradition of maternal radicalism in Australia. Mothers have been out on the streets, fighting for change, as frequently as they have kept the home fires burning. This tradition still thrives in the present day – as we saw recently when thousands of women joined the [March4Justice](#) to protest against gendered violence, often accompanied by their daughters and sons.

Mothers of the “[first wave](#)” of [feminism](#) in Australia were staunch advocates for social change.

The “woman movement” emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, led by feminists such as [Louisa Lawson](#) and [Rose Scott](#). Activists drew on their status as mothers as the basis for

their progressive political demands to grant married women rights over property, custody and inheritance, as well as voting rights.

Lawson argued:

If we are responsible for our children, give us the power and sacredness of the ballot, and we will lift ourselves and our brothers to a higher civilisation.

The effectiveness of these maternal activists was proven in 1894 when South Australia became the first electorate in the world to give women the vote.

Further evidence of the political power of first-wave feminists came in 1912, when the Commonwealth government approved the Maternity Allowance. This was radical in using government funds to provide state support to mothers as citizens, undercutting the authority of their husbands.

Read more: Mothers explain how they navigated work and childcare, from the 1970s to today

In the 1960s and 1970s, while women's liberation movement activists such as Merle Thornton, Marcia Langton and Zelda D'Aprano were demanding equal rights for women, middle-class mothers around Australia were quietly rebelling against the medicalization of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

The Nursing Mothers Association of Australia (later the Australian Breastfeeding Association) adopted guerrilla-like tactics, spreading through local cells in suburban kitchens around the country. Led by women like Mary Paton, the NMAA formed volunteer-based groups in local areas where veteran mums would offer cake, comfort and counsel to new mothers. Almost single-handedly, the NMAA reversed declining breastfeeding rates.

Meanwhile, the so-called natural childbirth movement sought to counteract the medicalization of birth. Through groups like the Childbirth Education Association, reformers fought to grant women more information and choice about childbirth. They also worked to make the experience less frightening by creating more welcoming birthing spaces and allowing support people to attend labour. These are all changes we now take for granted.

Their legacy continues today through groups like Birth for Humankind, which provides childbirth support for disadvantaged women and supports Birthing on Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Maternal protest continues in the 21st century. Amid the swelling ranks of environmental groups like Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Australian Parents for Climate Action (AP4CA), mothers and grandmothers (as well as fathers and grandfathers) are particularly prominent.

Like the maternal activists who came before them, these women base their political claims in their care relationships with children.



Conquering loneliness

Loneliness affects more than a third of older Australians. Another third of older adults feel isolated: they may be living alone, lack transportation, or live far from loved ones. Or they may have outlived a spouse or friends.

Loneliness and isolation can have serious health consequences. Research has shown that people who feel lonely or isolated are at increased risk for developing coronary artery disease, stroke, depression, high blood pressure, declining thinking skills, an inability to perform daily living tasks, or an early death.

Steps you can take to conquer loneliness:

- **Connect meaningfully** with family and friends in a way that works best for you: whether by phone, via video chat, or even by talking with your neighbors across the fence or in a park.
- **Be thankful.** Loneliness can lead people to focus on themselves and their hardships. Aim to express appreciation toward friends, family, and strangers.

- **Focus on what you can change.** Spending time dwelling on your current situation can perpetuate loneliness; rather, focus your attention on something within your control and work at it.
- **Enjoy being busy.** Complete a chore, spend time writing, find a new hobby, or just allow yourself to delve into a new activity.
- **Remove negativity and smile.** Surround yourself with people and activities that bring you joy. Consider taking a break from the news, or at least limiting your consumption. Just the act of smiling can make you feel better.
- **Be kind, understanding, and patient.** Work on treating yourself and others with compassion. Engaging in pleasurable interactions can also help those around you and may result in deeper connections.
- **Develop a routine that provides balance and familiarity.** Create a daily plan that includes physical activity, time for connecting with loved ones, a project or hobby, and a relaxing pleasure.

For more on how to protect your health, independence and security as you age, Special Health Reports from Harvard Medical School can be accessed via the following link.

[Special Health Reports - Harvard Health](#)

“Everybody is a genius.

But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

Albert Einstein

Best wishes to all from the NOWN National councillors.

Aloma Fennell, National President.