

Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - April 2016

The aims and objectives of Matrix are to:

- Promote appropriate care and support for older lesbians
- Provide some accommodation that caters to the needs of ageing lesbians who experience financial disadvantage
- Support ageing lesbians' accommodation choices
- Challenge ageism and oppose discrimination against older lesbians
- Advocate on behalf of older lesbians to governments and other relevant bodies
- Promote social contact and support among older lesbians
- Research lesbians' experience of aged care

Hello Everyone,

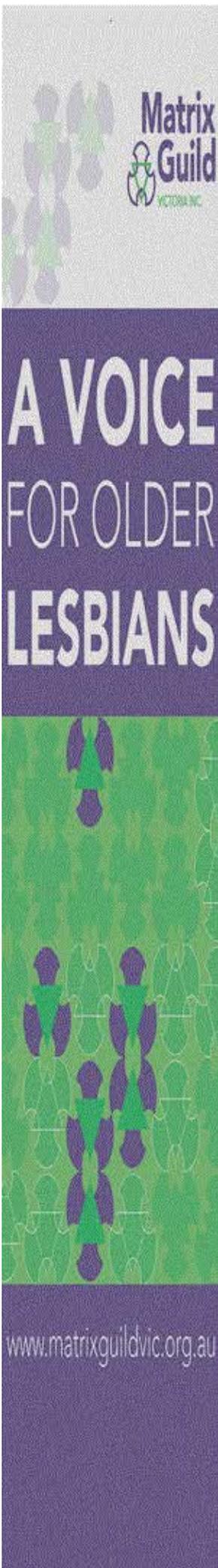
We hope you all had a most enjoyable Easter break, with not too many chocolates! In this edition you will find details of the *Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Health Conference*, a *Feminist Forum on Marriage*, *Dyke Books Inc.* next book launch, and the Matrix Inter-generational Discussion Day. Put the dates in your calendars. Read reports of the Matrix Volunteer Visitor Program's recent training day and the *Matrix Tea-Dance*, and read Bronwyn Winter's excellent article on issues of gender.

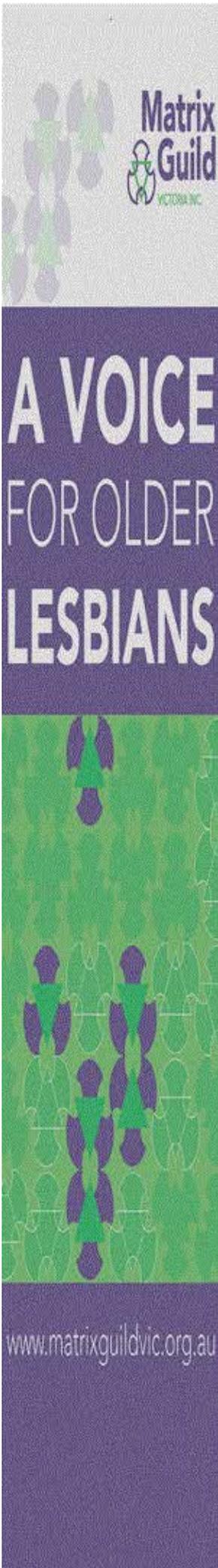
REPORTS

Matrix Volunteer Visitor Program



Know a lesbian who would like a visit?





Matrix held another very successful training day for volunteer visitors at Jika Jika Centre last Saturday, with 9 women attending.

We already have 7 visitors active in the lesbian community visiting women as far afield as Sunshine and Hallam and look forward to at least 6 new volunteer visitors joining our team. Clients and their visitors enjoy many and varied outings including visits to the pictures, lunch and coffee dates, walks in the outdoors, just sitting at home chatting, or playing board games and cards. Some of our clients and their visitor attend Matrix social events such as dances or coffee mornings.

Heather and Robyn came to talk to our training group about their experience as part of Matrix' volunteer visitor program. Robyn told us how much more confident she is now to go out and meet people and how much she looks forward to Heather's visits when they go out for a walk and a meal or coffee. Heather, for her part, is very happy that she is able to give back to the community in a meaningful way.



Monica Dullard with one of our Matrix members, Judith

With our number of visitors increasing, Matrix is now able to welcome more clients into the visitor program. **If you know someone or if you would appreciate a visitor, please get in touch with Anna Cook at: inquiries@matrixguildvic.org.au or phone her on: 0448002870**

Anna Cook
Coordinator, Matrix Volunteer Visitor Program

Lesbian Grandmothers Join the Battle

The Grandmothers Against the Detention of Refugee Children are on the march. Over 200 Grandmothers travelled in buses and a convoy of cars on a Freedom Ride to Canberra. There, they held rallies and meetings with politicians, urging them to free the children and release them and their families into community detention settings on mainland Australia.

The photo below is taken at Violet Town where the lesbian Central Victorian Grandmothers met the Melbourne convoy. We met with independent MP, Cathy McGowan before heading to Canberra for their day of action on Wednesday 16th March.



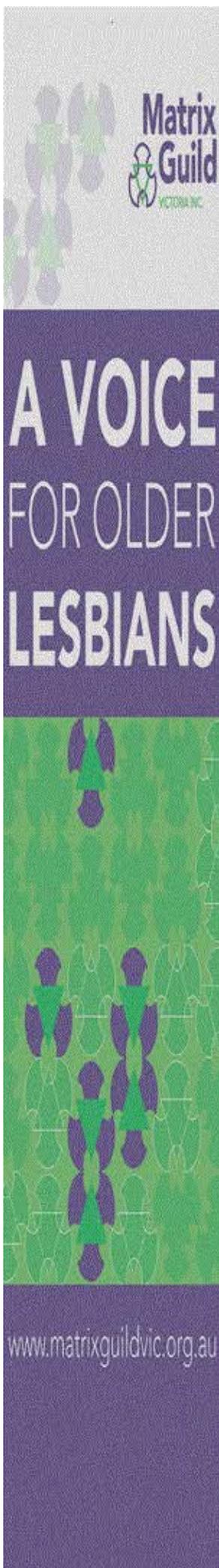
Put this message on Facebook and twitter (@grandmothersfreedomrideforrefugeechildren) and email it to others to show your support.

For those of you not on Facebook, here is just a taste of the day in Canberra. We were ejected from Parliament House for singing loudly in the foyer! A security guard was heard to say to his colleague. "Mate, they just came out of nowhere!" There ARE advantages to being an invisible old woman when it comes to being subversive! See link to video.

<https://www.facebook.com/martine.valentine.18/videos/10154692896212222/>

In case you missed the media coverage for Canberra, here are some links:

- <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/grandmothers-against-detention-of-refugee-children/7249990>
- <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/03/16/grannies-protest-kids-detention>
- <https://twitter.com/ColvinKate/status/709978848985804802/photo/1>
- <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/politics/nononsense-nannas-from-tasmania-take-detention-dissent-to-canberra/news-story/b76d27e5d32725ac6ba5c58441f8caa8>
- <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-16/wangaratta-grandmothers-protest-against-refugee-kids'-detention/7250378>
- <http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/3792525/grey-army-rallies-for-refugees/>



Matrix Guild
VICTORIA INC.

A VOICE
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LESBIANS

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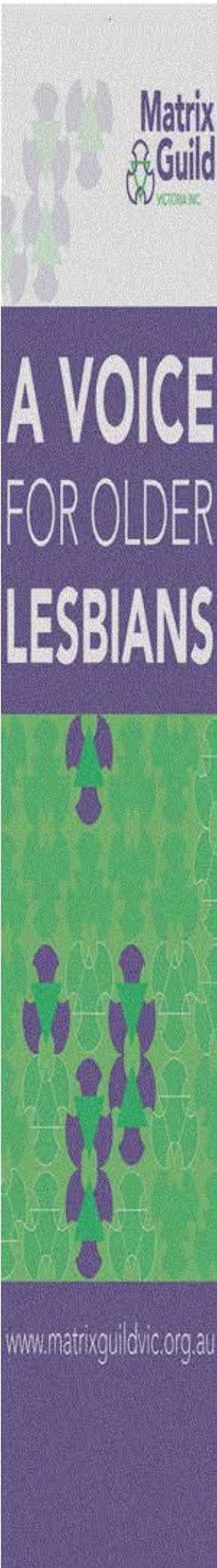


Matrix Dance

On Sunday March 6th, about 30 women came along to Clyde Community Hall to dance the afternoon away at the Matrix Tea-Dance. Sharyn taught us all two progressive dances; the Barn Dance and the Parma Waltz. There was much hilarity as we tried to follow the steps and all change partners *at the same time!* The afternoon was a lot of fun and from all accounts, everyone had a good time.



The next Matrix Tea-Dance will be held in October, so watch the newsletters and Facebook page for details of the date and venue.



Coffee Afternoons keep on going!

The coffee afternoons are going really well, so we will continue them. They are held every Thursday, from 12 noon to 3.00 pm at **Over the Road Café**, on the corner of Victoria Rd and South Crescent, Northcote.

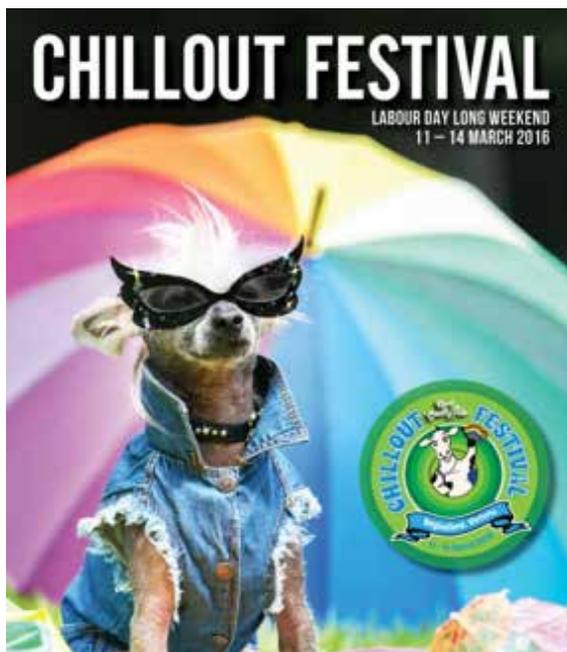
The café is opposite Northcote Nursery and only 3 minutes' walk from the Dennis railway station, on the Hurstbridge line. (*Melways Ref Map 30, H10*)

Come and meet up with new or old friends, have a bite to eat, or play a game of Scrabble or Rummio. Bring a friend along. It's a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and everyone is made welcome.



If you want more information phone **Carole 0437 891 981**

Matrix goes to Chillout

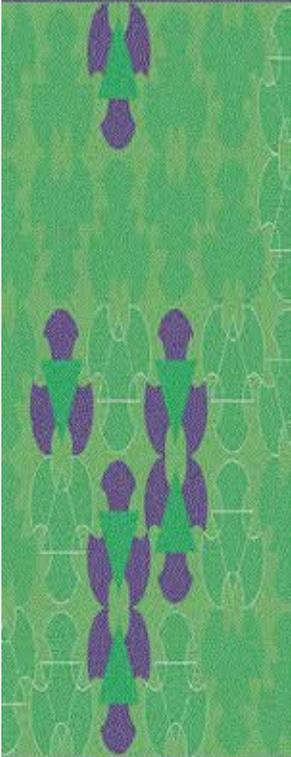


The Chillout festival was held in Daylesford over the Labour Day long weekend, and some of our Matrix members participated.

Many thanks to those who marched in the Chillout parade, proudly holding the Matrix banner. A stall was also set up to provide information and answer questions about Matrix.



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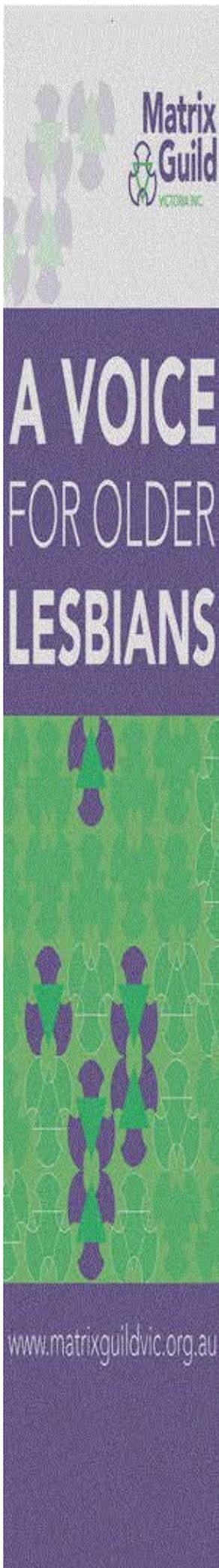


Matrix members march in the parade at Chillout



Matrix members answer questions at the Matrix stall at Chillout





Matrix Events

Younger lesbians talk with Older lesbians



Are your lesbian friends all about the same age as you? Do you want to change this?

Ever wondered how much richer your life might be if you had someone in it who was your grandmother's age and a proud lesbian?

Or if you had a lesbian activist friend who was young enough to be your granddaughter?

On **Saturday 14th May** lesbians of all ages are invited to come together and discuss our commonalities. We want to examine the ways that lesbians have been, and continue to be, at the forefront of feminist activism.

For Matrix members ONLY (both full & associates). You can join Matrix on the day.

- Associates - lesbians under 40 - \$10
- Lesbians 40 & over: Full fee is \$30; concession rate is \$15
- Join online at: <http://www.matrixguildvic.org.au/membership.htm>

Time: 10-4pm

Venue: In Northcote.

Lunch, morning and afternoon tea included.

RSVP: secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au or 0427 482 976 for venue details & to tell us if you have any dietary requirements

What is DocLIST?

DocLIST is an online list of doctors and mental health professionals who have been recommended by lesbian and bisexual women in Australia. Lesbian and bisexual women can search for a doctor or mental health professional by going to the list (<http://www.doclist.com.au/thelist>). Lesbian and bisexual women can recommend a doctor or mental health professional by going to the contribute page (<http://www.doclist.com.au/contribute>).

In September 2014 DocLIST launched a new section of their website DocLIST Links (<http://www.doclist.com.au/links>). Links features a searchable table of over 600 organisations and resources which may be of interest to lesbian and bisexual women.

Other Events.....

Dyke Books Inc. and Jean Taylor
invite everyone to the book launch of

Lesbians Ignite!
In Victoria in the 1990s



on Saturday 30 April 2016
2pm - 4pm

the book will be launched by
LOU BENNETT

entertainment will be provided by the
PERFORMING OLDER WOMEN'S CIRCUS

at the Brunswick Neighbourhood House
Warr Park, 43a De Carle Street, Brunswick
(off Albion Street, between Lygon Street and Sydney Road, tram 19, stop 26)

afternoon tea will be provided

there will be singing, readings, speeches, and much celebration

- photos of bees by Meg Irwin -

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Feminist Forum

Feminist critiques of Marriage – Panel Discussion

When: Tuesday, 12th April 2016 5.30 pm to 7.00 pm

Where: Storey Hall @ RMIT – 336 Swanston Street

Seminar rooms 3&4

Despite rising divorce rates, and changing understandings of intimate relationships and family types, marriage has retained a significant cultural hold. Much public discussion about marriage tends to simply focus on celebrating the individual choice or right of participants to enter into matrimony rather than seeing marriage as a dominant social institution. In this climate, challenges to marriage - including those from feminists - have largely faded from view. So what are these feminist critiques of marriage, and are they still relevant today?

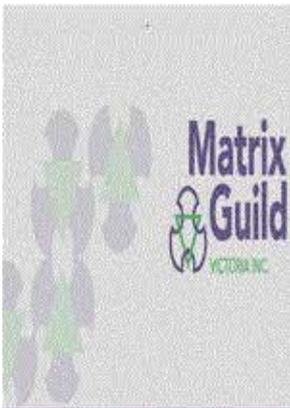
Come and hear Julie Bindel, Meagan Tyler, Kaye Quek, and Kate Farhall analyse these issues from different perspectives, including: women's magazines and heteronormativity, same-sex marriage, equality, and trafficking.



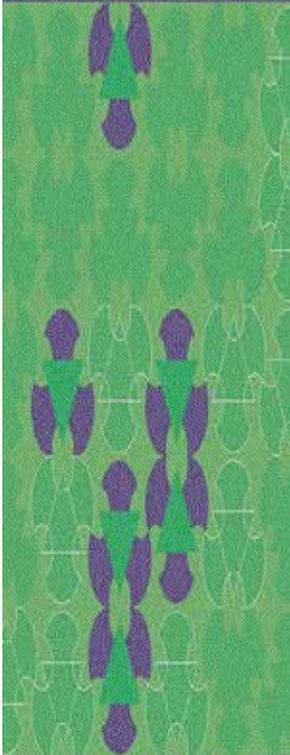
Julie Bindel is a journalist, writer, broadcaster and researcher. She has been active in the global campaign to end violence towards women and children since 1979 and has written extensively on rape, domestic violence, sexually motivated murder, prostitution and trafficking, child sexual exploitation, stalking, and the rise of religious fundamentalism and its harm to women and girls.



Dr Meagan Tyler is a Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellow at RMIT University. She is an internationally recognised scholar in the field of gender and sexuality studies. Her work has appeared in a variety of journals and edited collections. She also recently co-edited a collection (with Miranda Kiraly) on feminism and 'choice', titled *Freedom Fallacy: The limits of liberal feminism* (2015).



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Dr Kaye Quek is a lecturer in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University. Her work examines harmful marriage practices, and the extent to which these meet the criteria for trafficking in persons established in international law. Her research has been published in the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* and the LSE Politics and Policy blog.



Kate Farhall is a PhD candidate in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Her current PhD research investigates compulsory heterosexuality and the treatment of sexual minorities in the Australian women's lifestyle magazines Cleo and Cosmopolitan, as well as analysing the construction of hetero-sex within the magazines with a focus on pornification.

All those interested in feminist ideas are welcome.
Enquiries & RSVPs: catwaustralia@gmail.com

Announcing Dyke Divas Choir

Dyke Divas Choir is a private group for lesbians who want to sing together. We will meet most Wednesday evenings 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm during school terms. This is intended as a relaxed, fun opportunity to gain confidence singing in a group. No previous experience or musical knowledge needed. Just a willingness to give it a go.



Venue: Clyde Street Community Hall, Thornbury

Term two dates and prices:

13/4/2016 to 22/6/2016 (no rehearsal 4 May)

Concession/part time \$100, Fully Waged \$150 (10 weeks).

Visitors: concession/part time: \$15, fully waged \$20



A VOICE FOR OLDER LESBIANS

I have had eight years' experience running community choirs and singing groups in South Australia, NZ, and Melbourne. I really believe we can all sing provided there is a trusting environment created with support and no criticism. So I hope some of you will join us in this exciting new venture. We will go ahead if there are at least ten interested.

For more information and to book for term two, or to visit us for one session, please contact:

Rachel Morgan
Mobile: 040 288 0178
Email: rachel@rachelmorgan.net

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Rachel

LBQ Women's Conference 2016

Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women's Health Conference

connections – creativity – care

27th of May, 2016
The Jasper Hotel,
489 Elizabeth St, Melbourne.



Conference registrations are now open!

You can now book your ticket to the LBQ Women's Conference, being held in Melbourne on Friday, 27 May at the Jasper Hotel.

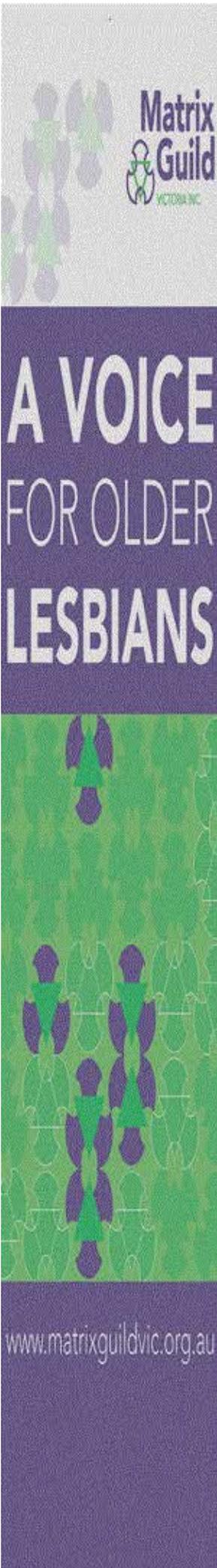
VAC and ACON aim to make this conference as accessible as possible and nobody will be turned away for lack of funds.

There are 2 types of registration fees:

- Waged/employed/organisations — \$50 per person
- Unwaged/unemployed/concession card holder/student — FREE (limited numbers available)

If the allocation is exhausted, please email lbqwomenscon@vac.org.au

www.matrixguildvic.org.au



On a personal note.....an article by Bronwyn Winter.

Bronwyn Winter is an Associate Professor in the European Studies and International Studies Programs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney.

I dream of a genderless society where we can escape from the male-female gender divide. I would like to live in a world where 'male' and 'female' cease to be categories of social distinction, to the considerable advantage of those labelled 'male' and the considerable disadvantage of those labelled 'female'.

I would like 'gender' to disappear as a mark of social categorisation and prescribed behaviours, even if 'sex' – the number of 'Xes' in our chromosomes – inevitably remains one mark of biological diversity, and differing needs, among us.



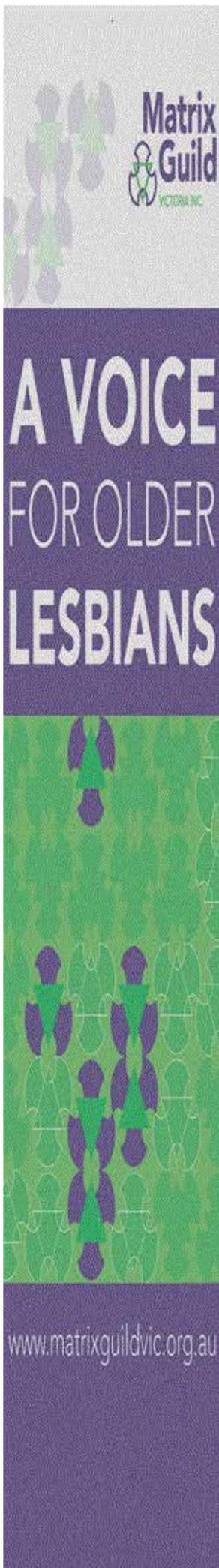
But we do not live in such a world, and gender continues to separate humanity into two classes. As such, it is a deeply political question. It shapes our collective social experience as sexed beings from the day we are born, and we cannot disappear that experience and acquire another, simply through an act of will. Biology is not everything, but it is not nothing either – as any intersex person surely knows, and as all women know.

Throughout history, any specificity of women's embodiment or needs has been ideologically constructed as justification for considering us weak, incompetent and unclean. We know, deeply, viscerally, that embodiment is a political issue.

There are many things that Peter Hyndal, director of Transformative Solutions, and I agree about. We agree that no human being should be treated with disrespect and that it is unhelpful to express our disagreements through such personalising tactics as pejorative labelling, harassment and bullying, and attempts to shut down events organised by others.

Unfortunately, I am aware of several instances of bullying, by some (mainly male-to-female) transgender people of some feminists and lesbians who disagree with male-to-female transgender claims that they are women just like us and therefore should have unrestricted access to women-only events and spaces.

I certainly know that not every member of the transgender community engages in such bullying, but those who do engage in it are vocal enough, and powerful enough, to do serious damage to women. Some women are now either too angry or too intimidated to even attend the upcoming IQ2 Debate hosted by The Ethics Centre in



Sydney on Thursday March 3, where the proposition 'Society Must Recognise Trans People's Gender Identities' will be debated.

That sort of polarisation, fear and anger are not helpful. We have to be able to have an intelligent and respectful conversation on the politics of gendering, where no one fears bullying or reprisals.

'Butch women', 'effeminate men' and many other variants on the spectrum of gender-deviant behaviour were once claimed as forms of political resistance to traditional gender roles, rather than evidence that we should be gender-reassigned. Now, even little 'tomboys' and 'sissies' are being told they are transgender, from ages as young as six, and some adults are lobbying for complete freedom to proceed to chemical intervention on these children's bodies to delay their puberty until they are old enough to 'transition.'

A pre-pubescent child hardly has the full intellectual and emotional maturity to make an informed decision about this complex issue, and much more discussion is needed concerning the potential impacts of puberty-blocking on their process of maturation and long term physical and psychological well-being.

What consenting adults do is their business. I may not agree, but they have the right to make their own choices if those choices are not harming others. Now, however, we are teaching children to be ashamed of their sexed bodies and to fear the natural processes involved in growing up. This is just plain wrong.

We are born in the bodies we are born in: they are neither 'wrong' nor 'right', they just are. Biologically speaking, men cannot be women and women cannot be men. But we can be men and women differently to how society prescribes we should be. I applaud, for example, the recent decision of Newtown High School of the Performing Arts to remove gendered prescriptions concerning school uniforms. Why shouldn't boys go to school in dresses if they want to, for example?

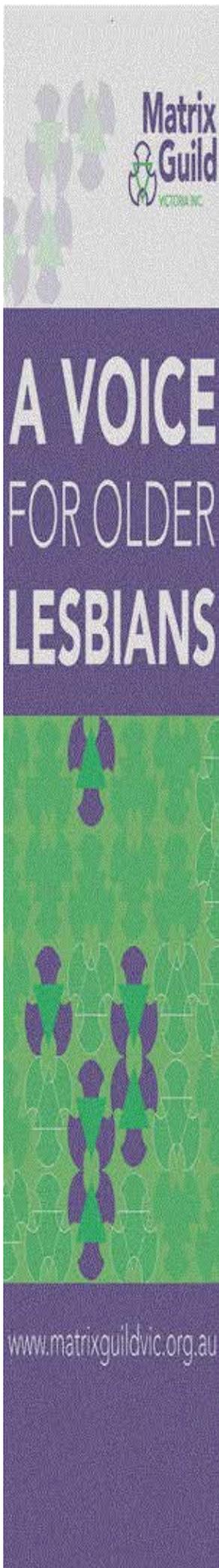
We are a long, long way off from the genderless society I dream of. But in the meantime, why can we not have a multiplicity of gender identifications: transgender M2F or F2M, genderqueer, woman, man, intersex? The current reassertion of the male/female binary is horribly regressive, and has involved considerable surgical and chemical intervention on people's bodies whose main purpose is surely to enrich pharmaco-medical industries that now have a whole new client base.

There is room for everybody in our society, there is room for all our needs, spaces and desires. That room needs to be made by moving away from male/female binary to support diversity among us and reciprocal respect for each other. That process has to start with respect for women, that is, women-embodied-female: for women's spaces, for women-only refuges, for lesbian lives and voices. Self-definition by transgender people must not be at women's expense.

Reprinted from "The Age", March 1st 2016

Follow these links to read this article in other Fairfax papers: -

- Sydney Morning Herald: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/bullying-out-of-place-in-gender-debate-20160228-gn6058.html>



- The Age: <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/bullying-out-of-place-in-gender-debate-20160228-gn6058.html>
- Canberra Times: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/bullying-out-of-place-in-gender-debate-20160228-gn6058.html>
- Brisbane Times: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/comment/bullying-out-of-place-in-gender-debate-20160228-gn6058.html>
- WA Today: <http://www.watoday.com.au/comment/bullying-out-of-place-in-gender-debate-20160228-gn6058.html>

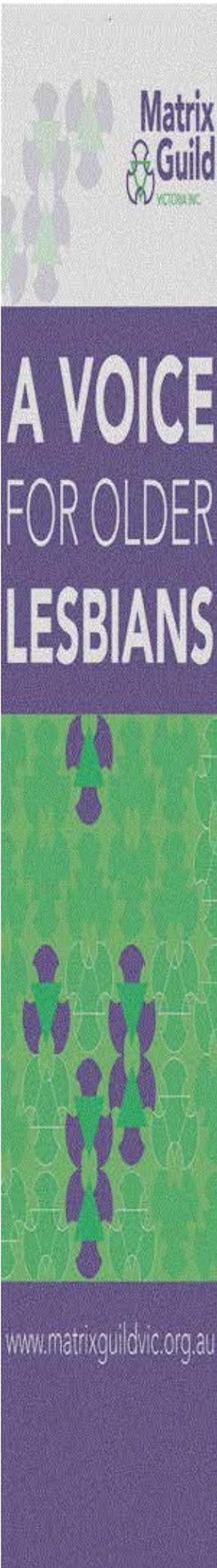
I AM WOMAN – author unknown

Dear trans folk, especially trans activists:

I have agonized for several months and years over my feelings about what I feel is the desire of many of you to erase “womanity”, in the course of your seeking some semblance of civil rights. This is what I have arrived at. I no longer want to say “female woman”. I don’t want to say “woman-born woman”. I don’t want to say “cis woman”, nor “AFAB woman”. I am a woman, and that is final. You have created all manner of language to ensure your inclusiveness, but in doing so you have started the process of erasing my existence.

I have begun to speak out about it, because I’m not going to remain silent any longer. I have been silent in the past, because I was afraid of being perceived or labelled as a bigot. But I am now convinced that your struggle is pushing mine as a woman aside, and that of all of my card- and vagina-carrying sisters. I have proudly claimed the label of lesbian for over 30 years now, but never once did I insist that non-lesbian women change their terminology to fit my worldview - I embraced my specialness with pride, as you do now. But I’m sorry. In many of the things you are demanding there is danger, not the least of which is allowing any male to claim the gender of woman and then gain instant access to traditionally safe female spaces. This is bullshit, it is misogyny (y’ know, the *actual* one), it is patriarchy, and it is wrong - the emperor (assigned whatever-the-fuck at birth) has no clothes, and I’m calling you on it.

Many articles and reports I have read leave me with the conclusion that surgically altering your body or changing your pronouns is a band-aid solution to what is perhaps going on in your mind. My feminist sisters have fought for years against stereotypical gender behaviour or societal expectations thereof. I’m wondering what was so difficult about the kind of man you were that you felt the need to claim the label of woman? I weep for my Amazon sisters who felt so uncomfortable being the type of women they were, that they decided they must actually be men. And now you have convinced children and their well-meaning parents and doctors that, if their behaviour or feelings don’t fit what is stereotypically male or female, then they must be in the wrong body. I grant that this is probably true in some cases, but not in the sheer volume we are now seeing. Additionally, I’m not hearing about a whole lot of trans men (F to Ms) who are insisting that biological-at-birth males change their labels and how they describe their body parts and functions. That tendency appears to come primarily from males who choose to now identify as women... Which translates, for me, as a practice borne of patriarchy whereby males are once again trying to exert power over females. And we have had just about enough of that for our lifetime and



multiple generations.

So, as I've been saying for a while now, on my lonely little Facebook page: be who you want to be, have surgery or not, get therapy or not... but stop this insidious erasure of me and my sisters. Yes, Virginia (or whatever name you've chosen to adopt), we get to gather together when we want, how we want, and with whom we want. It is our choice, our power, our safety, to claim our sovereign space and how we call ourselves and our bodies - it is not yours. You had a lot of us going for a while (and still do), believing in our shared oppression. And you were able to shame a lot of us - including myself - into silence about it. But I have found my voice, shaking and all... I and many of my sisters are going to fight back, as we have for many decades now. I do truly empathize with your struggle, but you will have to fight it not at my expense.

A Celebration of Lesbian Families – a word from Anneke Deutsch

Anneke and Linda are going along with kids and grandkids to get their picture taken and contribute to Edith Arc-Dekker's photographic project. Perhaps you'd like to too? Read on to learn about **"Project Family 365."**

Edith Arc-Dekker: "Welcome to my Year 12 Studio Arts project where I aim to celebrate & document lesbian parented families by photographing 365 families. It is also a celebration of my family."

Project Family 365 is an exploration of family love and life. Why 365 families? Because family life is every-day; beautifully rich and complex and yet, simple and drenched in domestic monotony, just like all families. Families are with us 365."

I'm really excited to be able to announce that with great support from Darebin council I have confirmed session dates at Reservoir Community and Learning Centre. Can't wait to start photographing families!

Please see the dates below; session times run every 20 minutes from 10:20am till 4:20pm. Please comment below or message me with the session date and time that you're interested in, and I'll book it in!

Session dates:

Jan 10th

March 5th & 6th, 19th & 20th

May 7th & 8th

July 9th & 10th

September 3rd & 4th

February 6th & 7th, 20th & 21st

April 9th & 10th

June 18th & 19th

August 6th & 7th

Reminder: all families receive digital copies of their portraits and I have consent forms that allow you to choose what information is attached to your photos (if any) and where and how your images are used in this project (ranging from very limited to broad).

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/919178214831906/>



The deadline for the next Newsletter is 26th April, 2016.

Please send news items and short articles to:

Rosemary Wealthy at r.wealthy@bigpond.com

0416 268 108

Anneke Deutsch Matrix Guild of Vic Inc. at secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au

0427 482 976

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