

Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - August 2015

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,

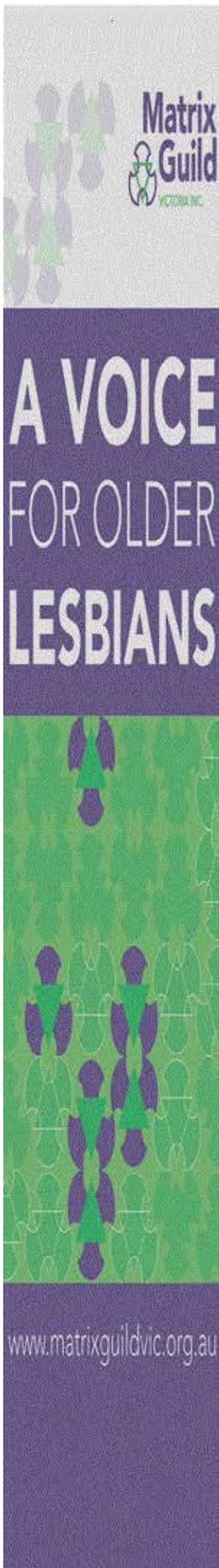
Spring into Spring and shake off those Winter Blues! Come along to the Matrix tea dance and social – details below. Read about the Babayagas' Communal Housing Project, Marriage Equality and more. Keep warm, and keep reading!

Matrix Social - A Chance to Dance!



Finally a chance to dance with lesbian friends! If you like to kick up your heels come along for a casual and friendly afternoon. It's also a chance to catch up and chat.

Details are on the next page.



Afternoon Tea Dance and Social for Matrix members and friends

- When:** Saturday 26th September 2.30 pm till 5 pm
- Where:** Clyde Street Community Hall 64 Clyde St. Thornbury (Melways Ref 30 J6) Near Bus Route 250 & 251.
- RSVP:** No bookings required but please reply to give us an idea of numbers. RSVP to chrisitka@fastmail.com.au by Friday, September 18th
- Price:** Matrix members –\$5 Not a member?
Join Matrix on the day for FREE entry!
Full price for non-members - \$10
Concession price for non-members - \$7
- Refreshments:** Matrix will provide some nibbles, but it would be much appreciated if you can bring a plate of something yummy to share.
Tea and Coffee supplied.
- Note:** Council regulations forbid alcohol on premises.

Then and Now Films

Matrix members, Vera, Barb and Dorothy have told a little of their personal stories - how they came out, what it's like to be an old lesbian now and the discrimination they faced as young women. Issues covered include: the great personal cost of being closeted as well as the immense losses of friends, family, job, home, religion and children if you did come out.

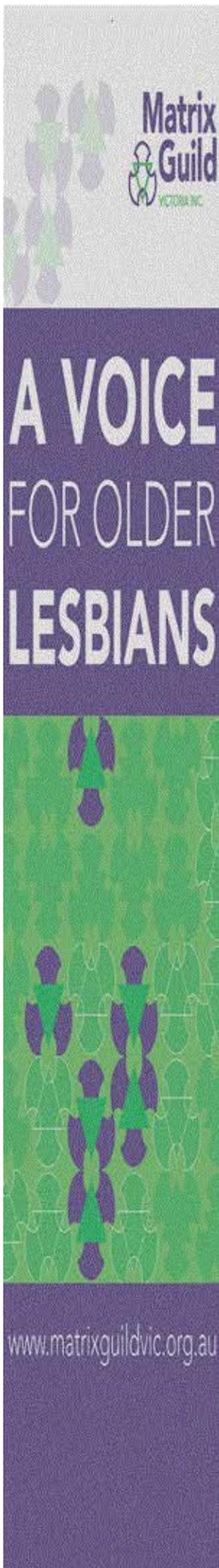
We thank these brave women for revealing their private thoughts and memories and reliving some painful aspects of their past. This short film will be freely available on our website, please watch it, show it to your friends, family and colleagues. We'll use it to educate Aged Care providers about the needs of old lesbians. The films may also be used in schools to make our herstories and histories an come alive.

You can watch this 13 minute film now on Youtube via this link. There are also companion films about gay men, trans men and trans women if these interest you. Apologies in advance for the Youtube search engine suggesting you might like to watch some 'lesbian' porn afterwards!

<http://valscafe.org.au/index.php/education/then-and-now>

Come along to the Matrix Games / Social afternoons

The Matrix Games and Social afternoons are back at Jika Jika Community Centre. Below is a list of the dates for the rest of the year. The heater will be on, so come along on **Wednesday 26th August at 2:15pm** for some lovely lesbian company, play a few games if you feel like it and have a hot cuppa. Entry: gold coin donation to help



pay for the snacks and hot drinks.

Westgarth train station is almost across the road from the centre or there's plenty of parking in the surrounding streets.



- **Wednesday 26th August, 2:15 –5pm, Jika Jika Community Centre, Small Hall, cnr Plant and Union Streets, Northcote**
- Wednesday 23rd September, 2-5pm, Jika Jika Community Centre, Small Hall, cnr Plant and Union Streets, Northcote
- Wednesday 21st October, 2-5pm, Jika Jika Community Centre, Small Hall, cnr Plant and Union Streets, Northcote
- Wednesday 18th November, 2-5pm, Jika Jika Community Centre, Small Hall, cnr Plant and Union Streets, Northcote
- Wednesday 16th December, 2-5pm, Jika Jika Community Centre, Small Hall, cnr Plant and Union Streets, Northcote

Questions? Call Amanda (facilitator) on 0434 870 549 or Anneke on 0427 482 976

The Babayagas' housea feminist alternative to old people's homes in Paris



Monique, Thérèse (Babayagas founding member) and Suzanne © Babayagas

It's been 15 years in the making but the Babayagas' House, a name taken from Slavic mythology meaning "witch", now house 25 old women.

By Alison Hird

It's a self-managed social housing project devised and run by a community of dynamic female senior citizens who want to keep their independence, but live communally. "To live long is a good thing but to age well is better," says 85 year old Thérèse Clerc who dreamt up the project back in 1999. "Growing old is not an illness," says the elegant, feisty Clerc. "We want to change the way people see old age," and that means "learning to live differently."

The building houses 25 self-contained flats. 21 are adapted for the elderly and four are reserved for students. The five-storey building is in the heart of Montreuil, just a stone's throw from metro, shops and cinema.

Being central was important. "The message is 'you will go out, you have a right to be active,'" says Jean-Paul Blery from the town's housing department.



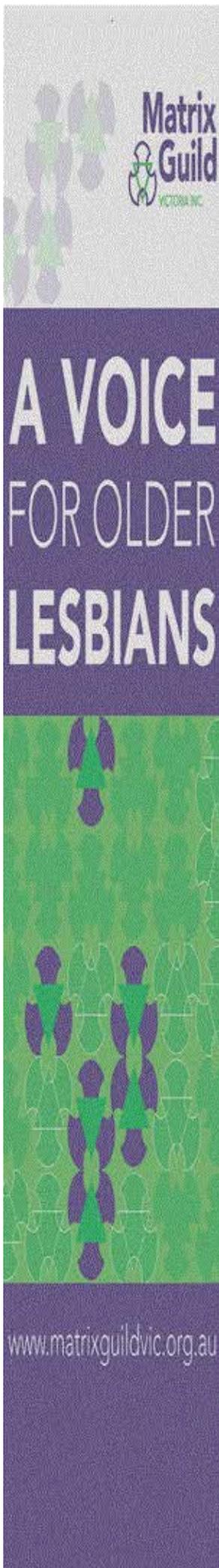
Janine Popot moved into her 29m2 studio a few weeks ago and still hasn't opened all the boxes. As one of ten children, she says she wanted to live alongside others but not in a conventional home. "I wanted to avoid ending up in a retirement home at all costs. When you don't have much money, a retirement home becomes a prison," she explains.

Growing old well means keeping the grey matter going. So the house isn't just a place to live. The ground floor is reserved for activities and will house a university for senior citizens.

Residents were selected partly in relation to what they could contribute to the "community" and the extent to which they shared the Babayaga philosophy. Many, like Jannine, are active in the voluntary sector.

The project cost nearly 4 million euros and funding came from no less than eight different public sources, including Montreuil city council which is accustomed to investing in innovative projects.

It was a difficult, long road, "a forceps delivery," says Clerc. Not least because getting funding for a project run by an association was genuinely innovative. "Local authorities aren't used to working with associations," says 62 year old resident Dominique Doré. "Associations in France can't buy land. Cecile Duflot (the French housing minister) is trying to change this."



The Babayagas have generated a lot of interest, both here in France and in Canada, but Doré denies they want to launch a franchise and prefers to be compared with the slow food movement.

“Slow ageing? Why not!” “We want to exchange ideas, take what’s best out there.” And while some Babayagas say their house must remain women-only, Doré says the structure is bound to evolve.

“We have the recipe, we have the saucepan, now it’s up to us to make the soup,” she says.

Two similar projects are underway in Palaiseau and Bagneux, and other local authorities are interested in following Montreuil’s example.

After all, a quarter of France’s population (17 million) are currently over the age of 60. By 2050 it’ll be a third.

The French will have to find solutions for the care of this growing elderly population. Helping senior citizens to help each other, as the Babayagas are doing, looks like a good one.

Another voice for older Lesbians...



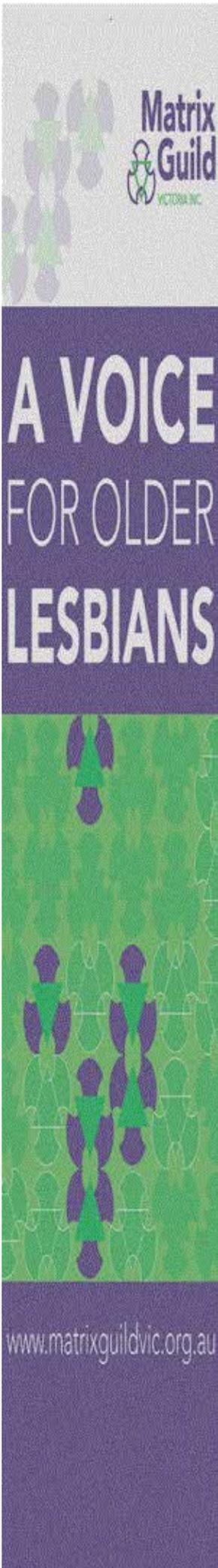
If you’re interested in what our lesbian sisters in the USA are up to, check out the OLOC website <http://www.oloc.org> **Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (USA)**

Permission request for student text book

Oxford University Press is currently preparing a student text book entitled Inclusive Practice by Davies, Birks and Chapman. We have given them permission to quote from our publication, (written by Catherine Barrett) *‘My People: A project exploring the experiences of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex seniors in aged care’*.

South Australian Councils are flying The Rainbow Flag

Annalese Davis writes in the latest LOTL magazine that a number of councils in South Australia have decided to fly the rainbow Pride flag at their premises. The latest



Council to make the decision was Alexandrina, which will fly the flag during the Adelaide Feast festival (November 14 – 29th)

Alexandrina Councillor Grant Gartrell (pictured) said that she believes the decision is supported by the local community.



The Marion Council decided in June to fly the flag permanently at their offices, in order to show support for the local LGBTIQ population. (Source: LOTL e-newsletter, July 2015)

Slowly, slowly we are making progress.....

Marriage Equality – follow the debate

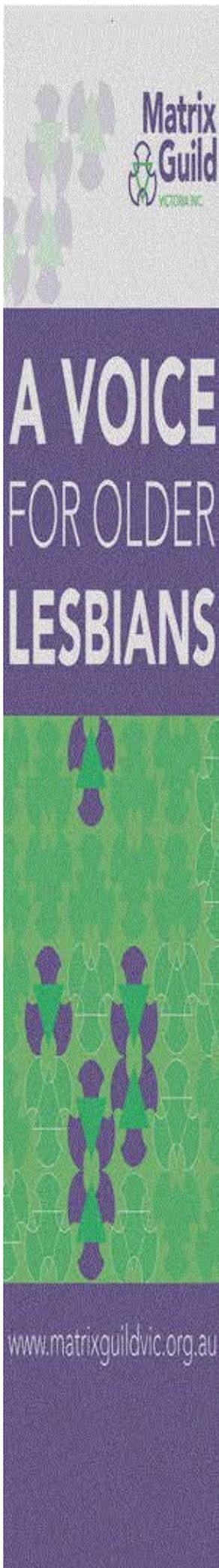
Marriage Equality has been in the news a great deal of late. Last weekend it was debated at the ALP National Conference where delegates voted for politicians to retain a free “conscience” vote on the issue until 2019, when it becomes mandatory for all Labour parliamentarians to support marriage equality.

Australian Marriage Equality is a national not-for-profit organisation working for marriage equality. Check out their website at <http://www.australianmarriageequality.org/> for information about their campaign, survey results, media reports and levels of support from organisations and businesses across Australia.

Enjoy travel, but dread travelling solo?



As older women, many of us really enjoy the chance to travel in Australia or overseas. However, if we are single, there are additional challenges. If we choose to join an organised tour group, we may feel like the odd one out among a group mainly composed of retired heterosexual couples.



We may also be saddled with the dreaded singles supplement if we choose to have a room of our own. Well, here are a couple of resources that may be helpful.

Disclaimer: Matrix takes no responsibility for the information or service provided by these organisations.

Gay & Lesbian Tourism Australia (www.galta.com.au)

- Is a national network of tourism professionals dedicated to the welfare and satisfaction of all gay and lesbian travellers within and to Australia.
- Is a non-profit organisation which works with federal, state and regional tourism bodies, corporations, businesses and individuals

“Happy, Retired and Single”, a book compiled and edited by Paul McKeon, lists several travel companies that cater for the over 50’s and the single traveller. Here are a few of them you might like to check out.

Single Travel Connections (www.singlestravel.com.au)

- runs small group tours with no singles supplement
- especially suitable for older females

Intrepid Travel (www.intrepidtravel.com)

- Small group tours with shared accommodation for those preferring not to be completely alone
- Tours cater for specific interests such as music, cooking, walking
- Some tours are exclusively for women

Adventure World (www.adventureworld.co.au)

- Small group tours
- Shared accommodation for singles

Encounter Travel (www.encountertravel.com.au)

- Specialises in travel for single people
- Caters well for 45+ age group
- Australian and overseas holidays

Sage Travel (www.sagetravel.com.au)

- Specialises in senior over 50’s travel
- Some tours offer single rooms with en-suite at no extra cost
- Longer stays at each destination
- Relaxed stress free all-inclusive holidays

Seniors Holiday Travel (www.seniorstravel.com.au)

- On-line agency offering special deals & discounts to seniors

M.A.D. *Women making a difference*



Most of us enjoy chatting with old friends and meeting new ones, especially when accompanied by good food and wine!

MAD (women Making a Difference) is hosting a Sunday lunch for lesbians, so bring your friends and enjoy a leisurely lunch in delightful lesbian company.

Women attending the lunch will be invited to make a small donation to support the education of girls in developing countries. More information about this will be given at the lunch.

When: Sunday, August 30th 2015 at 12.00 noon

Where: The Dining Room in the North Fitzroy Arms Hotel,
296 Rae Street, Fitzroy North (Melways Map 30, A12)

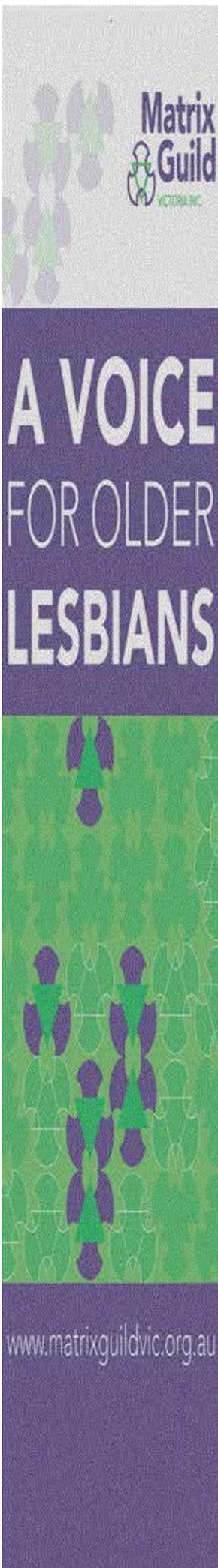


Quietly hidden in the back streets of North Fitzroy, the North Fitzroy Arms is a lesbian-friendly, old-fashioned pub with friendly service, an open fire and a cosy atmosphere. Check out the website and menu here (www.northfitzroyarms.com.au)

RSVP: Rosemary Wealthy, r.wealthy@bigpond.com or 0416 268 108 by Monday, August 24th

The *Melbourne Gay & Lesbian Chorus* turns 25 this year and they would like you to celebrate with them! They are putting on a fabulous show, "Celebrate", which looks back at some of their favourite songs from over the years. Added to that are some new pieces arranged by some very talented musicians including their Musical Director, Mr Drew Downing.

A VOICE
FOR OLDER
LESBIANS



The format will be 'cabaret style' where you can sit back, eat, drink, and enjoy the show.

Where: St Kilda Town Hall

When: Saturday 15 August 2015 2 shows only! Save the date now!

Book through the MGLC website at <http://mglc.org.au>

What Price Hearing?

Those who know me and who have seen me at our lesbian gatherings over the past couple of years, will know that I am profoundly deaf, have a cochlear implant and am passionate about informing everyone about the hidden consequences of neglecting our ongoing hearing loss. I recently completed an article I have been contemplating for several months, ever since my counsellor asked me a very simple question.

IN THE BEGINNING

During my last visit with my counsellor, she asked me a very astute question. 'What price do you pay to be in the hearing world?' This was something I had never considered before and it required considerable thought over the following weeks. The conclusion that I eventually came to was that I pay a very heavy price to communicate in the hearing world.

The rest of this story is attached to this newsletter, or you can look it up on the Cicada Australia Inc. web site: www.cicada.org.au

Pat. Mitchell - Matrix Treasurer



The deadline for the next Newsletter is 27th September, 2015.

Please send news items and short articles to Rosemary at r.wealthy@bigpond.com

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