

Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - December 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,

This is the last newsletter for 2015, and the Matrix Committee would like to wish all our members a very happy and safe festive season. Have a wonderful "Midsumma" and don't forget to re-new your Matrix membership AND buy your tickets for the Matrix Comedy Gala which is on January 30th.

In this edition we have some controversial articles to get you thinking, details of up-coming social activities, and another personal story. Our feedback suggests that members enjoy these personal stories very much, so if you have a story to share, please do send it to us. See you in the New Year!

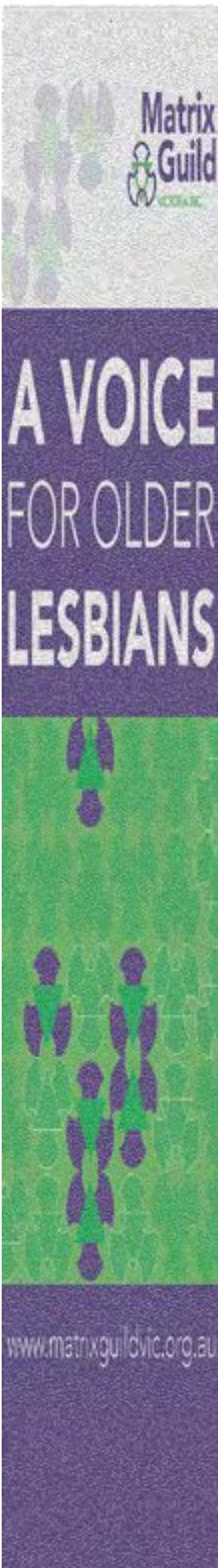


Membership fees now DUE!

Matrix is only as strong as the number of members she has. If you support the things we do – lesbian housing, support, social opportunities, the Comedy Gala, research, advocacy to government and other bodies - then make sure you maintain your membership. If you want to keep in touch with what's happening, and keep receiving our marvellous monthly newsletter make sure you pay your dues.

Full fee: \$30

Concession: \$15





You can renew on–line with our updated membership form or you can call and we’ll send you one.

Click here to renew:
<http://www.matrixguildvic.org.au/membership.htm>

Or call Anneke on 0427 482 976 or email: secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au to get a membership form mailed to you.

Please note: For those who have not yet renewed their membership, this will be your final newsletter.

Matrix meets with Law Reform Commission

The Matrix Committee and other interested members met with The Victorian Law Reform Commission recently. They are reviewing the law relating to funeral and burial instructions.

Currently the law gives the executor of a deceased person’s estate the right to decide what happens to a deceased person’s body, regardless of the deceased person’s wishes.

The Commission is considering whether the law should be amended to enable a person to leave binding instructions about the method and place of the final disposal of their body, and any associated rituals.

The law emerged in 19th-century England. At that time, cremation was thought to be illegal and the law presumed that everyone wished to have a Christian burial.

The Commission is concerned that the law may no longer accord with community values. Today’s Victorians, with their diverse cultural practices, complex family arrangements and support for individual choice, may want greater recognition of their wishes concerning their funeral, burial or cremation.

The Commission’s consultation paper has put forward a number of options for law reform, including that:

- the law stays as it is;
- the personal legal representative of the deceased be required to make appropriate arrangements after taking relevant factors (such as the wishes of the deceased and their family members) into account;
- people be allowed to leave legally binding funeral and burial instructions; and
- people be allowed to appoint a funeral and burial agent who would then have control over the person’s funeral and burial arrangements.

Do you have an opinion on any of these reform options?

If you’d like to contribute your opinions, particularly any personal experiences you’ve had where lesbian identity was denied, you might wish to complete their survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/funerals>

Four lesbians establish a mini co-housing community in Hobart

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Opportunity to Co-create Community

We are 5 women aged over 50 who have a dream to live in community. Living in community for us means connecting with and caring for each other and sharing certain resources while still living independently. We want to connect easily to nature and to health and other services as well as contribute to our local community in creative ways.

We have been fortunate to purchase a block of 3 units in the vibrant village of South Hobart close to the local shops, a regular bus service and only a short stroll to the city centre along the beautiful rivulet track.

Our invitation to you

We are offering an opportunity to women who share our sense of community to purchase one of the units (all of which are currently rented). Purchase price - \$297,000. We are in the initial stages of planning and

creating our community and would welcome your input and participation in realising the dream of a supportive community in the near future. If this resonates with you in your life, we welcome you to contact us and start the conversation. Contact details Joan 0407 657 850 or Jan 0488 784 257(Darwin)

Australian Journal on Ageing

Australian Journal on Ageing have launched the first ever LGBTI ageing and aged care edition. Matrix member, Helen Waite (Daintree) has written an article on old lesbians which has just been published in the latest issue of the Australasian Journal on Ageing. You can download a copy of "Old Lesbians: Gendered Histories and Persistent Challenges" from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajag.12272/full>

It's wonderful to see old Lesbians' lives represented in the LGBTI space, in an article that describes our lived experiences either as lifelong lesbians or as women who were previously married and came out after having children; our culture; our experiences of lesbophobia and how this is different from homophobia.

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What Makes You Happy?



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Researchers from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) of La Trobe University and have just launched the **What Makes You..?** survey!

What Makes You..? is the first Australian study to focus on the positive aspects of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The survey seeks to understand what makes LGBT people happy and fulfilled, and also to identify the challenges and obstacles that may prevent their happiness. The results of the survey will help governments, clinical services and community groups plan their programs and policies so they can better support LGBT Australians.

The survey will take only 20 to 30 minutes to complete and it is anonymous. **What Makes You..?** has been approved by the La Trobe University Ethics Committee (ref no. S15/205). If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (18+ years) and living in Australia, please help us understand What Makes You **HAPPY**, What Makes You **SAD**, What Makes You **RESILIENT** and What Makes You **GREAT** by filling in our online survey at www.whatmakesyou.org.au

Call (T: 03 94798743) or email e.bariola@latrobe.edu.au if you have any questions.



A Gift of Age: Old Lesbian Life Stories

A Gift of Age: Old Lesbian Life Stories by Arden Eversmeyer and Margaret Purcell
A new book of stories from older lesbians.

www.greenwomanstore.com/a-gift-of-age-old-lesbian-life-stories-arden-eversmeyer-margaret-purcell-the-old-lesbian-oral-herstory-project.html

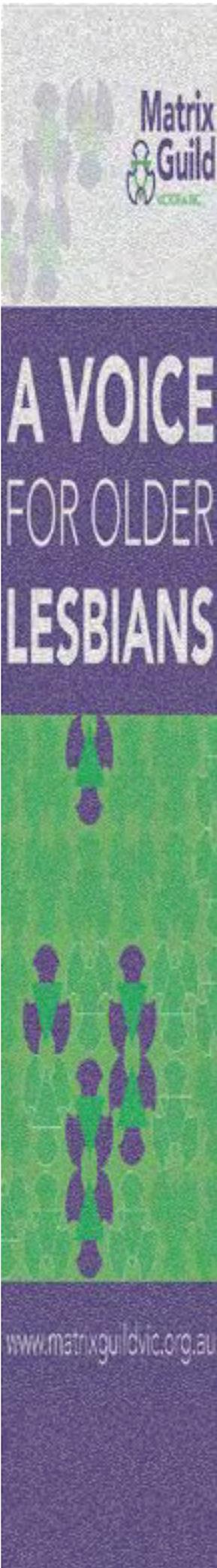


“Drop the T” Campaign – Change.org

A group of gay men and lesbians are calling on LGBT organisations to “drop the T”, in their petition at www.change.org. They want these organisations to “stop representing the transgender community, as we feel their ideology is not only completely different from that promoted by the LGB community (LGB is about sexual orientation, trans is about gender identity), but is ultimately regressive and actually hostile to the goals of women and gay men.

There are several areas in which the ideology of the trans community is at odds with or actively hostile to that of women and gay men; among the most important are:

- The vilification and harassment of women and gay/lesbian individuals who openly express disagreement with the trans ideology; a simple disagreement over an issue can result in responses that range from insults (“transphobic bigot”) to threats of physical harm (often, in the case of women, rape) and even death; the harassment by the transgender community of prominent individuals ranging from iconic gay rights activist/drag queen RuPaul and legendary feminist Germaine Greer have been particularly loathsome.
- The infringement of the rights of individuals, particularly women, to perform normal everyday activities in traditional safe spaces based on sex; this is most pernicious in the case of men claiming to be transgender demanding access to bathrooms, locker rooms, women’s shelters and other such spaces reserved for women.
- The appropriation and re-writing of gay and lesbian history and culture, most notably attempting to re-cast the majority gay white men who participated in the Stonewall riots as transgender, specifically casting as “transgender” men who adopted feminine attire but still identified as men (they called themselves transvestites, which is not the same as the modern transgender identity); particularly frustrating was the fact that media outlets such as The Advocate, Out and Huff Post Gay Voices, who should have been the first to point out the fallacy of this notion, actually went along with the lie.
- Most troubling, by persuading parents and health professionals to diagnose children as young as four as transgender, despite considerable research that shows that more than 90 percent of children who express “gender dysphoria” at a young age grow out of it by adolescence and, in most cases, grow up to be well-adjusted gay men and women; ideologically, it runs counter to traditional LGB and feminist philosophy – whereas feminists and gay men/women advocate for expanding and re-defining gender concepts, the trans movement is regressive, insisting upon re-



asserting and codifying classic gender concepts of what is masculine and what is feminine.

Please note that we are not advocating intolerance or prejudice against the transgender community: we recognize and respect the right of adults to determine their own path in life, including transitioning to the opposite gender if they so wish. However, that cannot occur by infringing upon the rights of women, gay men and children.

At the very least, a discussion must be opened up to these issues, which for too long have been suppressed and censored – they are genuine concerns that need to be aired. In the end, we feel that the transgender ideology is not compatible with the rights of women, gay men and children and ask that the organizations and media outlets mentioned above disassociate themselves from the transgender movement and return to representing their base support of gay men and lesbians.”

If you'd like to sign their petition go to: <https://www.change.org/organizations/drop-the-t>

Matrix Social Events



Midsumma 2016!

The next Midsumma Festival begins on 17 January 2016 with the usual Carnival at the Alexandra Gardens. Matrix will have a stall there, so drop in and say hello. Better still, give an hour or two of your time and volunteer on the stall.

The Pride March will be on Sunday 31 January, and the Midsumma website states that registrations to march are now open. Matrix will be there, so come along and march with us, and make sure older lesbians are well represented.





The Café Crowd go “Over the Road”.....again!

Coffee afternoons have been very successful with anywhere from 9- 15 women attending. We chat, and eat, and some play games, and generally have a good time catching up! It is a very friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

These coffee afternoons will continue through December with the final one on Thursday 17th December being a Christmas break-up for Matrix members and friends. Coffee and cake will be supplied on that day so come along and celebrate.

If you want more information phone Carole 0437 891 981 or Vera 0434 728 309.

Thursdays, between 12 and 3.00 pm
“Over the Road” Café
Victoria Road,
Northcote.

Melways Map Ref 30 H10.
Nearest train station is Dennis, on Hurstbridge line

Lesbian Comedy Gala 2016 Get Your Tickets Now!

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Monica Dullard, Comedienne

After an another uproariously hilarious evening of women's (mostly lesbian) comedy at last year's Midsumma, Monica and Anneke are beavering away planning a bigger and better event for 2016. So make sure you're in Melbourne on Saturday 30th January for the Lesbian Comedy Gala 2016. It's THE hottest lesbian event of the year. We're once again hiring the Preston City Hall AND the hall next door for the (air conditioned) After Party with great dance music.

Confirmations from the comedians are coming in and it looks like we're going to have another absolutely amazing line up for you – we're just waiting to hear from a couple of the biggest names in lesbian comedy! So far, the confirmed Lesbian Comedy Gala performers include: **Cal Wilson** (you know her, you love her!); **Monica Dullard -MC** (makes you laugh till it hurts); **Geraldine Hickey** (brilliantly funny); **The All New Old Joelenes**, (fantastic band); **Lori Bell** (winner, Adelaide Comedian of the Year); **Bobby Macumber** (sensational mimic with the voice of a songbird); **Kirsty Webeck** (up and coming juggernaut); **Denise McGuinness** (Deadly Award Winner 2014).

Angela and Karen, of Angela's Kitchen will be selling scrumptious Spanish and Greek food. We'll also have a bar, selling cold and hot drinks. Doors open for dinner and drinks at 6pm, so plan to come early, meet up with your mates and secure a good seat.

Tickets have just gone on sale, get yours at midsumma.org.au or call 9415 9819. Current Matrix members will get a big discount off the ticket price: Matrix members \$32, Concession \$37, full \$47.

Don't delay or you will miss out, as many did last year. We're a Premier Event this year, so Midsumma will be putting a lot more resources into promoting our event. We're likely to be sold out by Christmas.

See you there!

New lesbian film

- "All About e"



This Aussie Independent feature was a smash hit at this year's Mardi Gras Film Festival, San Francisco's Frameline festival and Outfest in LA. The San Francisco Chronicle said it was "the most feel-good movie of the festival...featuring laughs, suspense, a deliriously good sex scene, and a rousing finale.

"All About E" has something for everyone" It's a comedy caper with a romantic twist (and a dog!) You can watch the trailer [here](#)

Screenings in Williamstown, Bendigo and Geelong.

1. Bendigo

Organised by Bendigo Queer Film Festival
Saturday, November 7th, 6.00 pm
Star Cinema, Bendigo
Followed by Q & A session with the director, Louise Wadley
Book tickets at <https://www.tugg.com/events/56100>

2. Yarraville

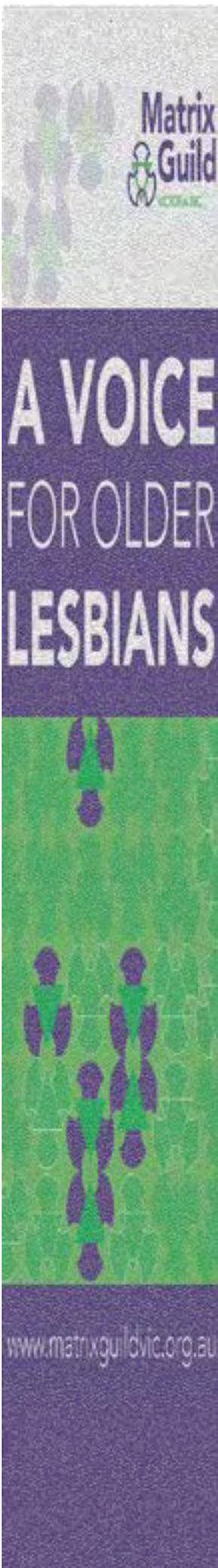
Organised by Meet Up / Women who Love Women
Monday, December 7th, 7.00 pm. Tickets \$20
Sun Theatre, 8 Ballarat St., Yarraville
Book tickets at <https://www.tugg.com/events/72952>

3. Geelong

Organised by Prue Dawson
Wednesday, December 2nd, 6.30 pm
Village Cinemas, Geelong
Book tickets at <https://www.tugg.com/events/72962>

From all accounts and the reviews, this is a film well worth seeing.

Prue Dawson says: *There's a lot to love about the movie...beautiful cinematography of the Australian bush, fabulous sound track, great acting and a story that deals with many of the current issues we face in society today - migration/culture/identity/sexuality/place.*



Other matters.....

Disability Aids Register to the rescue!

Many women in our community require disability aids from time to time and these can be quite expensive to hire or purchase. Consequently, Carole Ann & Rosemary Wealthy have set up a register of disability aids which can be borrowed free of charge from members of our women's community. The intention of the scheme is simply to put women needing equipment in touch with those who are willing to lend it.

The register of names and contact details of women willing to lend equipment will be confidential, and will be kept with Carole and Rosemary. A woman needing a disability aid will contact Carole or Rosemary who will then contact the owner of the aid and check that it is still available, and that she is happy for her contact details to be provided to the borrower. The list of the equipment available for loan is just now being updated and you are most welcome to ring and ask about availability of specific items.

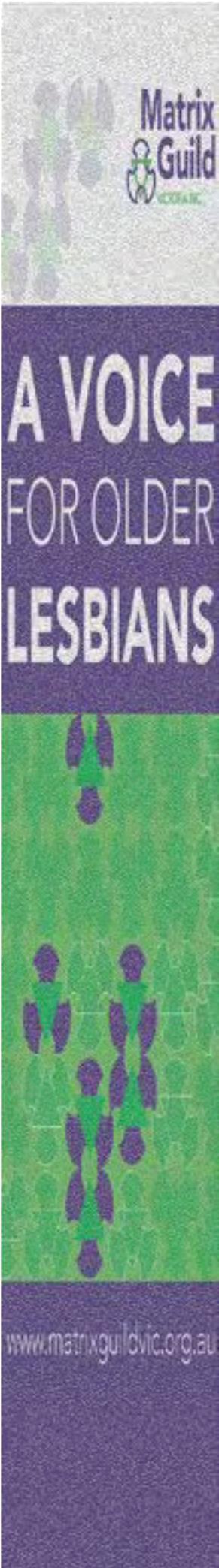
Recently, a member of our community had injured her knee. She made a call to us and we were able to get some crutches to her the same day!



No responsibility can be accepted by Carole or Rosemary for the maintenance of the equipment. Lenders and borrowers need to negotiate between themselves the suitability of the equipment, and the conditions of the loan in each case. Equipment included in the register will be of a general nature not requiring individual fitting or assessment by a health professional.

If you have a disability aid that you are not currently using and would be willing to lend to others, please contact Carole (E-mail: caroleann@vic.chariot.net.au Phone: 0437891981) or Rosemary (E-mail: r.wealthy@bigpond.com Phone: 0416268108).

Some items have been donated to the scheme by women who no longer need them but do not have the room to store them. If you have storage space in your house or garage that you would be prepared to make available for housing these items, please contact Carole or Rosemary.



On a personal note.....



Remember Matrix in your Will.

A few members have decided to bequeath some or all of their Estate to Matrix. Heather Chapple was the first to do this. It was Heather's money that enabled Matrix to partner with a feminist housing provider, Women's Property Initiatives, to create the first secure, long term, affordable housing for older lesbians in Australia. We'll always remember Heather for her far-sighted commitment to her lesbian sisters. The housing is named in honour of her: we call them Heather's Flats.

Just as Heather has done, you too could make a difference to some of your lesbian sisters who are elderly, perhaps living with a disability and are in a poor financial position. Lesbians who aren't homeowners, find it almost impossible to afford market rent on the aged or disability pension.

Please remember Matrix and her work in providing affordable, secure housing; a free Volunteer Visitor Program; education about lesbian issues to government bodies and Aged Care providers and so much more, when you make your Will. You can stipulate exactly how you'd like the money spent.

For bequests, please identify Matrix as: **Matrix Guild of Victoria Incorporated; ABN: 13 869 266 126; Association registration number: A00 260 57B.**

If lesbians don't bequest and donate money to Matrix, who will? Heather led the way, encouraging more of us to rewrite our Wills to include Matrix. We'd like to acknowledge a few who have listed Matrix as a beneficiary of their Estates. Many thanks to:

- Sara Elkas,
- Anneke Deutsch
- Sara Yeomans
- Robyn Peck

There are others who don't wish to be named. If you'd like to be publicly thanked, please let us know and we'll acknowledge your contribution in a subsequent newsletter.



Esther's Story - by Esther Olivares

Self-respect In the Spotlight, 1968

These events take place in Santiago, Chile in the winter of 1968.

This is the story of a 29-year-old woman who almost lost her life in a road accident. While she was still lying on a hospital bed, unconscious, with life threatening injuries, multiple fractures and an unknown prognosis, the fact that she was a lesbian became more important and in urgent need of addressing and fixing, than her broken bones and head injuries. She is a manager in charge of two large supermarkets with a large number of staff. Her girlfriend Luciana is the head cashier. It's lunch time. This day she was taking extra time to deal with a personal matter.

She was moving out of her mother's place into a rented room for the first time. She took only a few things: her bed, a wardrobe and clothing with the help of an old friend and workmate. When all was done she was left on one side of a divided avenue, the bus stop was on the other side. She was intending to go back to work.

The Impact

I remember checking the traffic and when I thought it was safe I crossed the road, a wide double-lane avenue. When I was just about to step on the middle footpath I was hit on the right hip with such force that I became airborne and landed on the other side on my knees and head. While I was lying on a stretcher at the hospital Emergency, I gave my work number to a young nurse, and asked her to ring that number to tell them that I would not be back to work, and to tell Luciana that I loved her. I thought I was dying. She did ring my workplace and passed on the message.

A week or so later while lying on a hospital bed, I drifted into consciousness and I heard two women talking. I recognised my mother's voice and that of the wife of Jose, another manager of the supermarkets. The two women were discussing the fact that I might have to have brain surgery, as suggested by a team of doctors; they were waiting for the swelling to go down to go ahead with the operation. It was then that I heard my mother saying that she would approach Dr. Orellana to suggest to him that he might take the opportunity to perform a lobotomy to correct my lesbianism and



make me a proper woman!

I was horrified, shocked, very sad and so hurt that my own mother would suggest such a procedure. The time passed, my cerebral swelling subsided, I recovered and did not need an operation.

Some Months Later

Doctor Orellana summoned me into his rooms and congratulated me on my recovery. Firstly, he told me that shortly after my admission into his clinic my boss Emilio who had just arrived back to the country, had called around to talk to him, my doctor. He wanted to know if the rumours about the consequences of my head injuries were true. Would I no longer be capable of performing my work duties? He also wanted to reassure the doctor that the company would cover all the costs of my care, regardless of that possibility. Dr. Orellana assured him that I would be fine.

He also told me that my mother also went to the doctor's rooms and did actually request a lobotomy to correct my gayness. At that time in Chile, and in other parts of the world, gay and lesbian people were sometimes lobotomised to 'cure' them.

Before those visits to the doctor, he had already put me through a test of my mental function, which I had passed. He then asked me about my sexuality, to which I replied that I loved a woman. He smiled at me and that's when he told me about my mother's request. And he said: 'Esther you are a normal human being; you love women and that is the way you are, there is nothing wrong with that, don't let anyone tell you otherwise, and if you ever need to talk to someone, ring me, I'll be there for you.' He also told me that my mother wanted me to be discharged back to her place. I did not want to do that, so he wrote a note stating that I needed to be alone. Mother was not happy!

Mother had also gone to my workplace and requested that Luciana be fired, because she was corrupting me. My boss, Don Emilio said: Esther is my right hand and Luciana is a great worker: that is not going to happen. He told that story later.

On coming back to work I had to deal with the verbal abuse of some workers, because I had been 'outed'. I took strong measures to deal with it and it stopped for good.

Months later I found out through the press that Dr. Orellana had performed gender reassignment surgery. I believe a first for Chile. He was an unusually broad-minded surgeon for that time and a good human being.

I had support from my doctor and the management of the company, but from the larger community not so much. My mother never liked the fact that I was a lesbian, but she got used to it. She also moved to Sydney and in her old age, I cared for her in my home. She died a couple of years ago. She never apologised for trying to lobotomise me.

If you'd like to hear more about my life story, read my autobiography – "Esther's Nine Lives"

Esther Olivares October 2015



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The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th January, 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