

Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - July 2014

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 have one announcement for our regular activities this month.

1. The usual Games Day (held on the second Saturday of the month) will not take place for July. Our organisers are taking some well-deserved time away from our freezing winter weather.

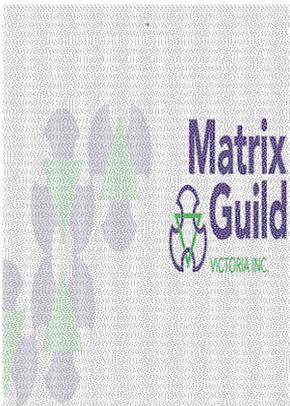
JANE PETHEBRIDGE: 6 MARCH 1950 – 17 JUNE 2014



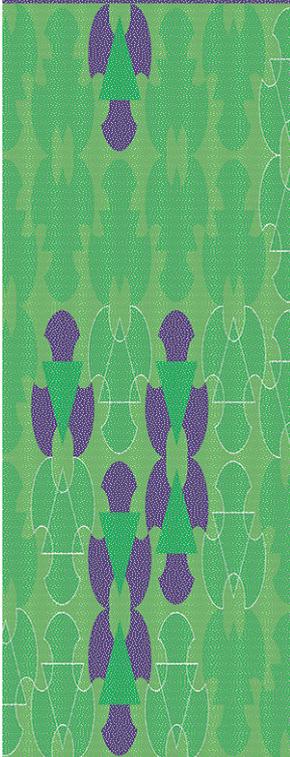
Jane died recently after being hit by a car in her home town of Bendigo. Matrix honours the memory of Jane, a small woman with a huge heart and a wicked sense of humour. Jane spent her life working with care and compassion with children in residential care. She was renowned for striking up conversations wherever she went. It was said of her that: 'Strangers were just friends she hadn't yet met.' She was a devoted partner to Di and had endless fun with their grandkids. She was an ardent Hawthorn supporter and adored her cigarettes. Jane's partner, Di O'Neil, has lost her soul mate and best friend. We hope to be there with plenty of hugs when Di needs them. Jane was farewelled on 27th June, at a memorial service, celebrating a life lived with generosity, love and without pretension.

A VOICE
FOR OLDER
LESBIANS

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Exciting Affordable Housing Project

Matrix has been invited to be involved in an affordable housing project in North Melbourne. Some philanthropic developers, Social Housing providers and Melbourne City Mission have banded together to try to reduce the Social Housing waiting lists. The 34 unit development will be comprised of 2 and 3 bedroom apartments which will be sold for 49% less than market value to people who are either:

- A. currently in social housing and have a job, allowing them to borrow a minimum of \$280,000
- B. older women who are on low incomes, but can raise \$280,000 either in the form of savings, superannuation and with or without borrowing to top up the money they have.

The proposal also includes free, independent, individual financial advice by a firm who have agreed to provide their services pro bono. Interested? Please contact Anneke at housing@matrixguildvic.org.au or call her on 0427 482 976.

Matrix Games Afternoons

Second Saturday of the Month

The next Games Day will be held on **Saturday 9th August**. Please note that there will be NO Games day on 12th July. Bring your favourite games such as scrabble, cards, mah-jong, or chess. Women are always welcome to just come for a “cuppa and company”. A gold coin donation helps fund the tea, coffee and biscuit supplies. If you don’t have transport, let us know and we might be able to put you in touch with someone coming from your area.



When: 1.30 – 3:30pm

Venue: Jika Jika Community Centre. Cnr Plant and Union Sts. Northcote. (Mel. Map 30, F11)

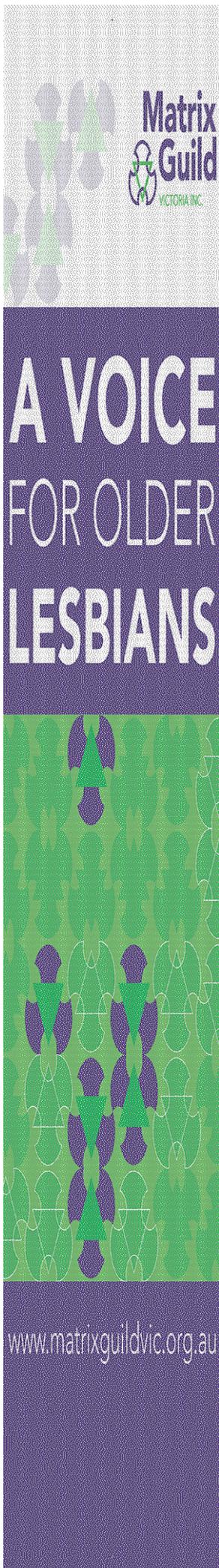
How to get there: Tram - No. 86 Stop No. 27. Bus – No. 506. Train - Westgarth Train Station.

Contacts: Ardy Tibby: 9387 6610 or Margo van der Voort: 0407 672 757

Matrix Press Person

Matrix are considering appointing a press person who focuses on contacts with the press and writes regular items/articles about events and projects. Do you have these skills that you would be willing to share with us?

For example, we have arranged with LOTL to submit several articles a year for publication on their on-line site. The intention is to present the views of our lesbian



elders. After all, young lesbians today will be the lesbian elders of the future, so by sharing our own experiences, we can inform others.

How did you get through it?

If you haven't already arranged to be interviewed for this important project, please consider sharing your wisdom. The researchers are offering a free double pass to the movies as a thank you for participating. We have currently interviewed 8 lesbians, but we need at least another 12. It's important that lesbian voices are heard, please don't let our opinions get swamped by those of gay men and trans elders. Please pass this request on to any other lesbians you know who are 65 or older.

Most of us, at some time in our lives, have been depressed or anxious. It's difficult not to, given the lesbophobia and discrimination we have all lived through. Many of us tried to avoid this by being closeting all or some of the time, but living in hiding has its own stresses. Lesbian researchers, Catherine Barrett and Caz Whyte are currently seeking older LGBTI Australians to participate in confidential interviews. The interviews are part of a project to educate service providers about the issues associated with depression and anxiety for older LGBTI people. The project is a collaboration between The National Ageing Research Institute, Val's Café (at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University) and RMIT and has been funded by *beyondblue*. The project has been approved by La Trobe University's ethics committee. Anneke from Matrix is part of this project's advisory board.

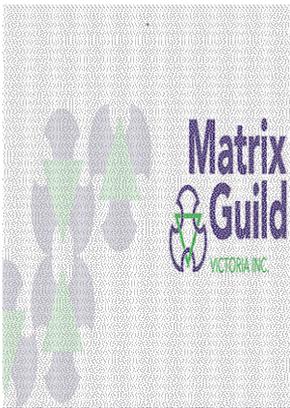
We would like to speak with **lesbians aged 65 years or more**, from any state/territory who have experienced depression and/or anxiety – about their strategies for managing. Hearing about the ways in which you got through could be invaluable for others. Interviews will be conducted over the next couple of months. For more information or to book an interview contact:

Dr Catherine Barrett, Val's Café
P: 03 9479 8702 5297 or
E: c.barrett@latrobe.edu.au

Carolyn Whyte, Val's Café
P: 03 94798739 or
E: c.whyte@latrobe.edu.au

Carer's Focus Group

Some Matrix Guild members, in consultation with Carers Victoria, will be having a focus group meeting where we plan to share our experiences as lesbian carers. Whether we cared for family members, partners or others, we hope that our specific lesbian experiences will help to inform carer bodies so that our needs can be recognised and accommodated.



The group will be meeting as follows:

Date: 24th July 2014

Time: 11 am to 1 pm

Venue: Carers Victoria, Level 1, 37 Albert Street, Footscray.

Tea, coffee and munchies will be provided.

If any other members would like to participate and add your voice, please contact Pat. Mitchell on **0409 901 043** or treasurer@matrixguildvic.org.au

A VOICE FOR OLDER LESBIANS

Could you be a volunteer visitor?

Growing older brings its joys and challenges. It can bring feelings of loneliness and isolation. It might bring more interaction with services and family and they may or may not be lesbian friendly. Even being lesbian friendly isn't really enough. Some older lesbians miss lesbian company. Matrix is planning a visiting service where lesbian volunteers will meet with isolated older lesbians in their homes or residences for a minimum of two hours per month. The visitors will be supported by a coordinator and receive induction training. They will be covered by insurance and will receive a small travel allowance for visits.

Would you consider volunteering?

Do you know someone who would like a visitor?

An information and training day will be held on **Saturday 20th September from 10am tip 4pm in Northcote**. To register your interest in attending either of these sessions or for more information contact Anna Cook on inquiries@matrixguildvic.org.au or on **0448 002 870**

Filming Begins

Matrix, in conjunction with Caz Whyte from Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria are about to start filming a short documentary about the lives of four lesbian elders. Many thanks to the four women who have agreed to share their life stories, so that younger people can understand how life was for us when discrimination was actively sanctioned by society and all of its institutions. The film will be used in our presentations to staff at Aged Care facilities to encourage them to provide lesbian inclusive care. Along with similar films about gay men and trans people, it may also form part of the curriculum in high schools when students study gay and lesbian herstory/history. The films will be formally launched on 29th October 2014.

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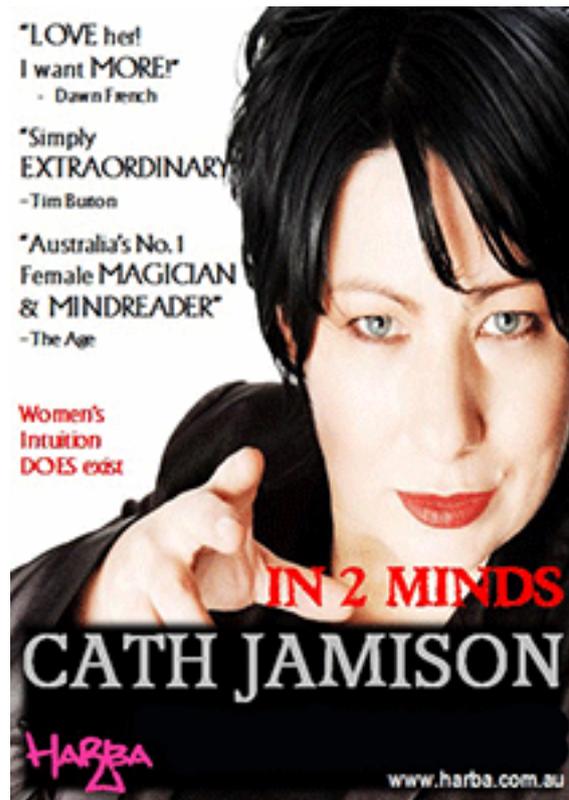
Cath Jamison – Renowned Lesbian Magician

Cath supported the Matrix Lesbian Comedy Gala by donating her time. Please show your support for her and enjoy a fantastic night out.

Cath Jamison -In 2 Minds will also be appearing at the *Melbourne Magic Festival* at Northcote Town Hall.
4th & 5th of July

http://melbournemagicfestival.com/ai1ec_event/cath-jamison-in-2-minds/?instance_id=

A VOICE
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The deadline for the next Newsletter is 28th July. Please send news items and short articles to Rosemary at r.wealthy@bigpond.com

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

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