

# Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

## Newsletter - July 2017

### 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 year seems to be galloping past – I can't believe we have arrived at the beginning of July. In this edition, we provide details of several events that may interest you: the Asylum Seekers Comedy Benefit, NAIDOC week Flag-raising ceremony, the Flappers Women's Spring Ball at Daylesford and the Dyke Divas Term 3 rehearsals. Read Anneke's report on the Matrix Co-Housing Forum, and Anna's report on the Matrix Volunteer Visitors' Program. We also introduce you to Sandra Broman's comic strip "Esther's Nine Lives", which is based on the life of Esther Olivares. Stay warm, and read on.....

## Matrix News and Events

### Matrix AGM – get involved and have your say



All Matrix members are warmly invited to the 2017 AGM. It's a fantastic opportunity to exercise your vote and express your views. It's also a chance to socialise with other members. Come and join us.



A VOICE  
FOR OLDER  
LESBIANS



[www.matrixguildvic.org.au](http://www.matrixguildvic.org.au)



**When:** Saturday, September 16th

**Where:** East Reservoir Senior Citizens' Centre, 7A Strathmerton St. Reservoir

1:30 Cuppa & chat

2:00 AGM

3:00 Afternoon Tea

**MATRIX annual membership fees are due on 16th September.**

## **Matrix Coffee Afternoons**



**Mamma Says Café are continuing every Thursday all through Winter .....join us !**

The Coffee Afternoons are held at *Mamma Says café*, 120 Station Street, Fairfield. The café is on the left side of Station Street heading north, between Wingrove St and Duncan St. The nearest railway station is Fairfield, on the Hurstbridge line, accessible from Wingrove Street. (*Melways Ref Map 30, K10*)

When you arrive at the café, go through to the outdoor covered area (pictured) at the rear of the café, and you will find us there. There is street parking along Station Street, but you can also park in the carpark behind the shops, which you enter from Gillies Street.

The Coffee afternoons are held every Thursday from 12 – 3 pm. Come along for some good company, good conversation and good food. Have lunch, or just a cuppa. Have a game of Rummio or just have a chat. Bring a friend along. It's a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and everyone is made welcome.

Check out the menu here: [www.mammasays.com.au](http://www.mammasays.com.au)

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

[www.matrixguildvic.org.au](http://www.matrixguildvic.org.au)

## Other People's News and Events

Have a laugh at the Asylum Seekers' Comedy Benefit!



The poster features a vibrant background image of the St Kilda Town Hall, a large, ornate building with a prominent facade featuring a large, stylized face with a wide, open mouth. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top, 'Asylum Seekers' is written in a yellow, cursive font, followed by 'COMEDY BENEFIT' in large, bold, red block letters. Below this, a list of comedians is presented in black text on a white background, flanked by stars. The event details are in yellow text on a blue background, and the ticket information is in white text on a red background.

**Asylum Seekers'**  
**COMEDY**  
**BENEFIT**

★ DAVE O'NEIL, BOB FRANKLIN, ★  
SAMI SHAH, MR BARRY MORGAN,  
MONICA DULLARD MC,  
FRED ROWAN, BRAD OAKES,  
DENISE MCGUINNESS, & MORE!\*

DOORS OPEN 6 PM

ST KILDA TOWN HALL

FRIDAY JULY 28 2017

TICKETS & DETAILS: TRYBOOKING.COM

**basp**  
Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

\*LINE-UP SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Priority supported by the City of Port Phillip

### *A message from Monica Dullard....*

The Asylum Seekers' Comedy Benefit is going to be huge community event! Held in the iconic St Kilda Town Hall with a dazzling line-up of comedians, we want to raise money & awareness for the plight of asylum seekers in our community. We need your love, and we definitely need your help, so get your friends and come and join us! We can all make a difference and laugh ourselves silly as well!

Money raised going to: BASP & Refugee Legal

Doors open: 6.00 pm. Show starts at 7.00 pm.

Plenty of hot food from Angela's Kitchen.

Bar and food available from 6.00 pm



# A VOICE FOR OLDER LESBIANS

Book now! [Trybooking.com](http://www.trybooking.com) or buy tickets at the door.  
Theatre style seating. General Admission. Intermission.  
**Booking link:** <https://www.trybooking.com/289886>

**Venue:** St Kilda Town Hall, 99A Carlisle Street, St. Kilda, VIC. 3182

**Date:** Friday, 28th July, 2017. 7.00 pm

**Contact details:**

Producer, Monica Dullard. Mobile: 0438 868 217

E-mail: [monicadullard@gmail.com](mailto:monicadullard@gmail.com)

Website: [www.monicadullard.com.au](http://www.monicadullard.com.au)



**Monica Dullard**

Comedian | Corporate Entertainer/MC |  
Independent Producer

## The Flappers Women's Spring Ball



Shake out your finest this spring and celebrate music and dance from the 20s through to the mad 80s. ChillOut's Spring Women's Ball!

*plural noun: flappers*

*(1920s) women intent on enjoying themselves and flouting conventional standards of behaviour*

A women-only event.



**Tickets:** Full Price \$35 online (\$40 at door)  
Concession \$25 online (\$30 at door)  
Table of 10 \$320

**Daylesford Town Hall, 74 Vincent Street Daylesford, VIC.**  
8pm - 1am  
Cabaret Style Seating.  
Licenced Bar (please no BYO alcohol)  
BYO supper encouraged.

**Buy Tickets**  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/438626523167028>

### **The Dyke Divas – Term 3 information**



#### ***Greetings, Matrix Sisters!***

Dyke Divas, our very own Melbourne lesbian choir, is welcoming new singers from the lesbian community ... and that includes you! This is a choir of non-singers who have decided they want to give it a go. We are a supportive, fun group and we create a safe space for lesbians to try out their voices in a group setting, and always as part of the group. No auditions, and no solo singing.

Dates, times and venue for Term 3 singing series are as follows:

Wednesdays 6.30 to 8.30pm

19/7/2017 until 9/8/2017, and 23/8/2017 until 20/9/2017

**Venue:** 64 Clyde Street, Thornbury

**Costs:** Unwaged and part waged \$ 90 Fully Waged: \$ 135



You are welcome to visit the choir and sing with us for a night free of charge.

Casual singers: unwaged and part waged \$15 per session, waged \$20 per session

Please note that we are a private group of lesbians who enjoy singing together. We do not advertise the choir publicly, simply by word of mouth. If you would like to join us, or have lesbian friends who are interested, please ask them to contact **Rachel**: Mobile: 040 288 0178 **Email**: [rachel@rachelmorgan.net](mailto:rachel@rachelmorgan.net)

*Rachel*

Mobile 040 288 0178

Email: [rachel@rachelmorgan.net](mailto:rachel@rachelmorgan.net)

### Celebrate NAIDOC Week



All Matrix members are invited to the NAIDOC Week Flag Raising.

**When:** Monday 3rd July 2017

**Where:** Mantra Bell City (215 Bell Street, Preston)

**Time:** 10 - 11:30am

**Cost:** Free (morning tea provided)

**RSVP** Phone: 8470 8366 or Email: [smcfarla@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:smcfarla@darebin.vic.gov.au)

### Other News

#### Looking for Older Women Tenants

The Equality Rights Alliance (Women's Voices for Gender Equality) want to gather information about older women in private rental. (i.e. Those not public or social housing tenants)



A group of researchers at Curtin University's BankWest Curtin Economics Centre are doing a survey on private renters. Their interest is in how best to reform private rental markets to meet the needs of older renters and they need a good response rate to get usable data. If you are renting in the private market, or you have friends who are, you might want to send them the link for the survey: **Older Australian Private Renter Survey**

### **Esther's Nine Lives ....as a Comic Strip!**

Daylesford lesbian Sandra Broman is prolific artist, illustrator, tailor, hat-maker and creator. She and her partner, Coby, are the proprietors of Sister George Productions in Duke St, where you can buy some of her original pieces at very affordable prices.

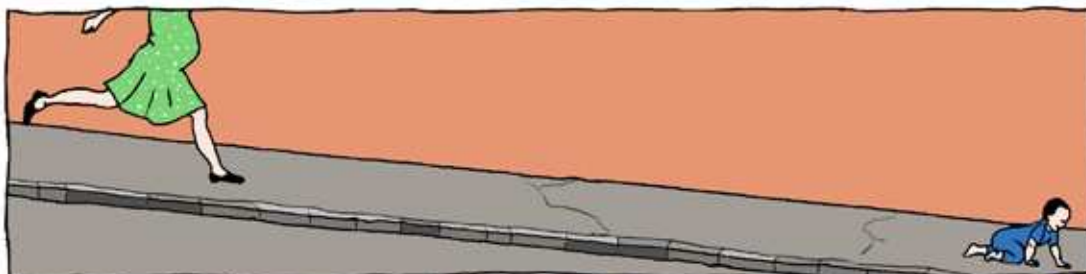
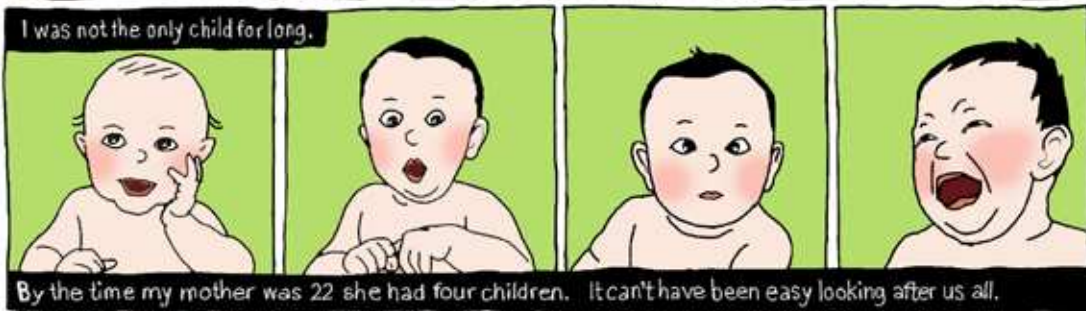
A couple of years ago, Sandra agreed to sell Esther Olivares's recently released autobiography from her shop. Then she read it and got inspired to create a comic-strip interpretation of Esther's life. We're very excited because she's just agreed to let us publish these in serial form – two each month in the Matrix newsletter.

Sandra expects to finish this funny, heart-rending and beautifully drawn pictorial version of Esther's life next year. Enjoy!

The first two appear on the next pages.







## Reports

### Women's Cohousing Forum -Anneke Deutsch

About 60 women gathered early in May to do something proactive and positive to create secure, affordable housing with lots of social connectedness. The Women's Housing Forum, organised jointly by Anneke on behalf of Matrix Guild of Victoria, the Women's Property Initiatives and sponsored by the City of Darebin, was an inspiring day. The Asylum Seekers Resource Centre's Catering social enterprise supplied us with a delicious lunch and afternoon tea.

**Cohousing** is a way of living in a more affordable way, with a lighter footprint on the earth and with like-minded neighbours; begun in Denmark and exported to the English speaking world by people like **Charles Durrett** and **Kathryn McCamant**. Co-housing has the following characteristics according to <http://www.cohousingco.com/blog>

- **Participatory Process:** Residents participate in the design of their community
- **Neighbourhood Design:** The physical layout of buildings encourages a sense of community
- **Common Facilities:** Includes a Common House, designed for daily use, eating some meals together, may have guest suites, a laundry and/or a workshop
- **Resident Management:** residents manage and maintain the community themselves via working bees
- **Non-hierarchical structure and decision making:** Consensus is the primary means of decision making; responsibilities are distributed according to skills, interests and abilities
- **No shared Community Economy:** the community is not a source of income for its members and finances are not shared, although the group may for example buy one lawn mower or one set of tools to share.



We heard from Matrix member, Kaz Phillips about living at **Murundaka Cohousing Community**, an all-rental co-operative model in suburban Melbourne. They have monthly tours of their 20-unit development if you want to see more of what living in Cohousing is like.

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If you'd like to learn more about the benefits of Co-housing, have a look at this short doco about **Christie Walk** in central Adelaide.

Meriam Salama, a Perth-based architect and proponent of Cohousing and Co-ownership models talked about the **Henry Project** which she initiated. It connects individuals interested in finding affordable residential properties - with the benefit of social connectedness - with other likeminded people. It then helps them find properties to suit their needs as shared owners and occupiers.

Jo Towler talked about a mixed, urban, owned-occupied cohousing group called **Urban Coup** who have been developing their plans, decision making process and community for several years. They are in the process of dividing into two groups, the **Near and Tall** group who value proximity to the inner city and realise that land prices mean that they'll need to live in multi-storey apartments. They are partnering with the **Nightingale Housing** to build this in Brunswick. Nightingale is the architect-driven group who built **The Commons**, "an ecologically, socially and financially sustainable" apartment building in Brunswick. The **Far and Wide** group are prepared to buy land further from the CBD to realise their dreams of low-rise living with shared veggie patch, chooks, orchards and workshop spaces.

Caroline Larcher of WPI talked about their **Older Women's Housing Project** which began life as a Co-ownership idea, but has shifted in emphasis due to constraints imposed by banks' lending restrictions and by Centrelink's Rent Assistance rules. They still hope to house 55+ year-old, low income women who fall through the gaps. Those who have too much money to be eligible for social housing, but not enough to house themselves.

Three break-out groups provided for differing interests. There was the Rural Cohousing Group, the Urban Cohousing Group and one for those wanting to hear more about WPI's Older Women's Housing Project.

### **Rural Cohousing Group**

We looked at creating a Co-housing development in central Victoria – possibly Castlemaine, that will provide social connectedness as well as sustainability and affordability. In our project, Women's Property Initiatives (WPI) may act as the developer, building a very green, 8-star, sustainable 15-25 unit development. As payment, WPI would retain 15% of the total number of units (2 or 4) to rent to tenants eligible for social housing who share the values of the other residents.

To become one of the tenants, you would need to have assets of less than \$30,000 and live on a low income. Purchasing one of the apartments would be similar buying a strata title unit off-the-plan in any other development. This group has since met again, we've narrowed down our site selection criteria and goals and we are progressing towards making our supportive, rural, older women's community a reality.

### **Urban Cohousing Group**

The Urban group had more of a bigger picture discussion. Workshop participants explored ideas and what it means to live in Murundaka Co-housing Community and Coop Housing. A key difference is that people

buy into Co-op Housing as opposed to Murundaka where tenants pay 30% of income. Murundaka have initiated interviews with prospective tenants to ensure getting a stronger values alignment that will enable stronger community focus. Each tenant is expected to contribute 2-4 hours a week by either participating in a sub-committee or being involved in a project. All projects are developed and agreed upon by tenants and add value to the lives of the tenants and their sense of community. Key discussion centred around what happens when tenants took holidays or overseas trips. The understanding is that you need to organise another tenant to undertake your responsibilities during that time, with the expectation that you will return the favour to that tenant or another tenant down the track. Murundaka provide tours, usually on a Friday, for potential tenants and those interested to find out more.

Co-op housing focused more on how to develop more affordable housing especially for older women and how to get stronger government funding. Idea of talking with super funds to see if they would get involved as a possible funding source. Feedback from past experience is that they are looking for national organisations as they want larger investment opportunities. A super fund has partnered with a Queensland Housing Organisation to fund affordable housing and the learnings from that will assist us with future planning.

At the conclusion of the workshop, all participants indicated they would like to stay in contact with outcomes from the workshop and Forum. There was general agreement that we needed to support WPI with pressing government for a plan and stronger commitment for older women and housing. There was support for approaching government with a proposal for shared equity commitment similar to that designed for young and first home buyers, tailored for older women struggling to pay off mortgages and pressured to stay in workforce longer, often with health conditions that make this difficult. Though we didn't discuss who or how to get proposal developed.

### **WPI's Older Women's Housing Project**

This began when Anneke and a couple of interested Matrix members had initial meetings with WPI about co-ownership options for older lesbians with insufficient assets and income to purchase property in their own right, but too much in assets to be eligible for social housing. (i.e.: more than \$30,000). WPI has since secured funding and completed Stage 1 of this project, investigating the need in the community, interviewing 8 women and researching similar programs around the world. They now have funding for Stage 2 which will involve them building a set of three or four units. Interested women who are at least 55 and are living on a low income will be able to use their nest egg to assist in the purchase of one of these units by loaning their money to WPI. They would pay rent at social housing rates. They would have secure housing, their 'nest egg' would be preserved instead of being spent on private rental. If the woman needed her lump sum to buy something else in the future or convert it into a bond for Aged Care, she would get it back with interest. This project might suit you if you have a lump sum of at least \$100,000, (but not enough to buy property outright); and you are on a pension or low income and therefore can't get a loan. Or you might have your money in equity in a low value rural property that you want to sell because the location is too isolated.

If you'd like to discuss any of these housing ideas in depth, please contact Anneke on 0427 482 976 or at [secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au)

## Gender Troubles: The Butches

On Saturday 17th June, about 70 women arrived at the Northcote Senior Citizens' Centre ready to enjoy Lisa Plourdes' film, "Gender Troubles: The Butches".

*"The women portrayed in this film examine and challenge society's assumptions about what it means to be female. Their struggles reveal how everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, is pressured to conform and measure up to restrictive gender standards. But they also show the rewards that come when we learn to accept ourselves as we are. This is a film to celebrate butch women."* (Lisa Plourdes)



The film stimulated some lively small group discussion about gender stereotyping and a number of women present shared that they had experienced some form of discrimination because they were not perceived to conform to society's view of female dress and appearance.

## Matrix Volunteer Visitors' Program

The Matrix Committee would like to acknowledge the excellent work of our volunteer visitors who continue to visit a number of clients throughout the metropolitan and country areas in Victoria. Together, visitor and client go walking, see films, go out for coffee or a meal and attend Matrix coffee mornings or dances. Sometimes, both visitor and client are happy to stay home and share some time together.

Matrix is looking to expand our visiting program. We have clients in the outer Eastern/South Eastern region who would like a visitor. If you would like to become a Matrix visitor, and could visit someone in this area, or know someone who may like a visitor please contact Matrix at:

[inquiries@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:inquiries@matrixguildvic.org.au)

Matrix is also looking for volunteer drivers to drive some of our clients to Matrix events such as dances and coffee mornings. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver please contact Matrix at the above address.

Thank you again to all our volunteer visitors who make such a great difference to the lives of their clients.





***An MVVP client tells how she values her visits from an MVVP volunteer***

*I'd like to thank Matrix for their outstanding Volunteer Visitors Program. When I moved into a Retirement Village out of my familiar area, in many respects I was at risk of experiencing social isolation. My dear friend Sara suggested this program for me, and I cannot thank her enough.*

*The benefits have been amazing. My visits with Heather are relaxed, friendly and social in nature. Since I don't drive, we chat, go out, walk around, have a meal and a coffee together, visiting places I could never get to on my own.*

*We share so many common interests - a love of animals and nature, an interest in the sciences, and ways of maintaining a healthy lifestyle while living with chronic illnesses. We share really good times together. This has a ripple effect, making a big improvement to my health and well-being.*

*As we age, many of us can find ourselves alone and without family support. We're not going to be 35 forever! Losing body strength and confidence can be incapacitating. All of this can add to our vulnerability. This program has expanded my world. I feel so grateful to Sara, who has worked so closely with the lesbian feminist community - and particularly with Matrix - for making this suggestion. An especial note of thanks is also due to my visitor Heather. Her visits really brighten my life!*

*Robyn*



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(Financial and Medical)

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*20% off for Matrix Members  
Home Visits may be possible*

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Email: [marilyn@oceanlegal.com.au](mailto:marilyn@oceanlegal.com.au)

[www.oceanlegal.com.au](http://www.oceanlegal.com.au)

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 27th July, 2017.

Please send news items and short articles to:

Rosemary Wealthy at [r.wealthy@bigpond.com](mailto:r.wealthy@bigpond.com)

Anneke Deutsch - Matrix Guild of Vic Inc. at  
[secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au)  
or 0427 482 976

