

# Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - June 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,

Time is flying, and here we are at June! Winter Solstice is upon us. This month's newsletter has some very useful information about community resources we can access, such as legal services and accommodation. You will also read about opportunities for you to become directly involved, from giving your opinion on LGBTI issues in a survey, to volunteering to support older lesbians. So stay warm and read on.....



## POW Performing Older Women's Circus

Ever wanted to run away and join the circus? POW is an innovative, open access community circus of women aged over 40. They train on Saturday afternoons in Fitzroy. No previous experience is necessary. The class has women with a range of skill levels.

E: [powcircus@yahoo.com.au](mailto:powcircus@yahoo.com.au) T: 0417 130 983

W: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~powcirc/events.htm>

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## Understanding the Needs of Older Lesbians



Please complete this short survey on the sexual experiences, intimate relationships and issues facing older lesbian women. Let's demonstrate to show how our experiences as lesbians have forged our identities and beliefs and how these are often not taken into account in LGBTI circles.

Click here to **TAKE PART**

## Come along to the Matrix Games / Social afternoons

Matrix Games / Social afternoons have been re-established, so come and play your favourite games or just have a cuppa in lesbian company. Gold coin donations help fund refreshments.

The next Games Day will be held on Wednesday 17th June at noon. 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:** 12pm – 2:45pm

**Venue:** **Oldis Gardens Community Room.** 2 East St, Northcote (In the Oldis Gardens, off Westarth st, about 5 minutes walk from the station.) (Mel. Map 30, F11)

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

**Contacts:** Amanda: 0434 870 549 or Anneke: 0427 482 976.

## Legal Services

### Fitzroy Legal Service



**A VOICE FOR OLDER LESBIANS**



**LGBTIQ LEGAL ADVICE**  
EVERY SECOND THURSDAY EVENING AT FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE

FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE (FLS) NOW OFFERS A FREE SPECIALIST LGBTIQ LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE. THE SERVICE PROVIDES ADVICE AND REFERRALS FOCUSING PARTICULARLY ON FAMILY LAW MATTERS.

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY  
CALL FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE ON (03) 9419 3744

FLS ALSO HAS A DAY PRACTICE THAT PROVIDES LEGAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO REQUIRE ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL LAW MATTERS, DRIVING OFFENCES, FAMILY LAW, FINES AND VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE.

FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE INC.  
124 JOHNSTON ST, FITZROY VIC 3065 T 03 9419 3744  
FIND US ON FACEBOOK FITZROYLEGAL

PLEASE DON'T LITTER

Fitzroy Legal Service (FLS) is a community legal centre providing free legal help to Victorians. It is located at 124 Johnston Street, Fitzroy. It offers free services to the LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, inter-sex and queer) community. In late 2012, FLS set up an LGBTIQ Legal Advice Clinic in response to community demand for specialist legal advice for legal problems affecting LGBTIQ communities. The Clinic runs every Thursday evening and lawyers can provide advice and referral for most legal matters, with specialist lawyers available to provide assistance in discrimination and family law matters.

To make an appointment to see a lawyer at the LGBTIQ Legal Advice Clinic, please call (03) 9419 3744 during business hours. For more information, click here. Or go to [http://www.fitzroy-legal.org.au/cb\\_pages/lgbtiq\\_legal\\_advice.php](http://www.fitzroy-legal.org.au/cb_pages/lgbtiq_legal_advice.php) er of Raleigh and High streets, one block north of the Normanby Ave intersection.

### Women's Legal Service Victoria



**Free and Confidential**  
legal information, advice,  
referral and representation  
for women in Victoria

Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) is a not for profit organisation providing free and confidential legal information, advice, referrals and representation to women in Victoria. It specialises in issues arising from relationship breakdown and violence



against women. In addition to delivering services to women, staff develop and implement preventative family violence programs and influence the development of legal policy and law reform. They also provide education, training and professional development on the law and related areas. They offer:

- free legal advice by phone on their Legal Advice Line
- free advice to women in person at their **Face-to-Face Legal Advice Clinic**
- free advice and representation to women at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court through their **Legal Advice and Representation Clinic**

Women's Legal Service Victoria  
Level 10,  
277 William Street  
Melbourne  
T: 8622 0600 1800 133 302

<http://www.womenslegal.org.au>

### Seniors' Law

Seniors' Law provides free legal advice for older people who are on a low income. Staff can provide information, referrals, legal advice and legal representation on a range of issues related to ageing, including: elder abuse, housing issues, credit and debt, grand-parenting issues, making arrangements to live with family, guardianship and administration.

[www.justiceconnect.org.au/seniorslaw](http://www.justiceconnect.org.au/seniorslaw) or call 1800 606 313 or 1300 606 313

### Free holiday offer for Matrix Members



A lesbian run, rural accommodation business has made a very special offer of free 3-night, midweek stays for lesbians living with cancer or other life threatening illness. If you have a partner, she can of course come too! Or bring a friend with whom you don't mind sharing the queen sized bed! Your holiday will be in a self contained, passive solar, straw bale self-contained unit. Situated on a 35 acre alpaca farm, with magnificent views over granite hills. Includes daily breakfast provisions and a noon checkout. Only 80 minutes drive from Melbourne.

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If you'd like to take advantage of this wonderful offer, please get in touch with Anneke on 0427 482 976 or at [housing@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:housing@matrixguildvic.org.au) We have a limited number of these holidays available, so if you're interested, let us know and we'll put you in touch with the owners so that you can book dates that suit you. This offer is only open to Matrix members who are living with cancer or other life threatening illness.

## Looking for Accommodation?



Do you need secure, long term, affordable housing? One option worth looking into is **Independent Living Units (ILU's)** or **Retirement Units** if you're over 55. The money required to move into one of these varies widely; some require you to pay a substantial in-going fee, to buy the lease or the right to live there, and in most cases you also pay a daily fee. Some only take people with minimal assets and only the pension as income and have set their rent/daily fees to be affordable. Some are not-for-profit, others run by corporations.

Many are church-based, but Matrix has found that Uniting Care, owned by the Uniting Church has been very pro-active in working to understand and meet the needs of older lesbians.

Perhaps you might be searching for suitable accommodation for a parent, elderly friend or relative. You might want a place where they can have some company, perhaps with the option of getting a cheap, cooked meal, a place where they can live independently as long as possible. If they require residential care, it is there, on the same grounds.

Have a look at the **Seniors' Information Victoria** database on the COTA website. It has a comprehensive list of both independent and supported accommodation. It lists the parent body that owns the facility, in-going & daily fees and lots of other detail. You can search by locality or facility name.

<http://cotavic.org.au/information/siv-database/>

## Matrix Members Meet Minister

In May the State member for Albert Park, Minister Martin Foley announced three years of funding for Val's Café and four Matrix members were present.

Val's Café is a project seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of older lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people. Central to this aim is creating safe and inclusive health and aged care services that recognise and value older LGBTI clients.

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This is achieved by working directly with service providers to foster an understanding of the unique histories and experiences of their older LGBTI clients. Val's Cafe is part of the Sexual Health and Ageing program at La Trobe University's, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS). The name Val's Café is inspired by the pioneering work of Val Eastwood, a lesbian who ran Val's coffee lounge, a meeting place for the 'camp' community in early 1950s Melbourne.

Martin Foley is the State Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Equality. Jean Taylor, Ardy Tibby, Barb and Carole Ann met Martin Foley over morning tea when he announced the on-going funding for Val's Café. They explained to him that older lesbians' housing and aged care needs were different from the needs of gay men and trans people.



We continue to advocate for Aged Care services that meet the needs of women and lesbians in particular. Our members paved the way for Matrix to meet with the minister's office to lobby for government support for our Shared Equity housing project in partnership with Women's Property Initiatives (WPI). WPI are our partners in the Heather's Flats, affordable housing development in Brunswick that currently house 3 older lesbians.

The Shared Equity project aims to provide older lesbians who have a small nest egg with the opportunity to buy a property with WPI. The woman would own it as a tenant-in-common with WPI and she would pay rent (at social housing rates) on the portion of the property that WPI owns. Many older women face retirement living in uncertain, insecure, expensive private rental accommodation. They aren't eligible for social housing because they have more than \$30,000 in assets, but nor do they have enough money to buy a property outright. On the pension, they don't have the income to service a mortgage. Anneke is arranging a meeting with Martin Foley's Office and Jeanette Large, the CEO of WPI.



## Committee Members Welcomed

At the Special General Meeting in May, the proposed changes to our Constitution were passed. We were also extremely pleased to welcome new committee members: Chris Sitka, Rosemary Wealthy and Carole Ann! Our secretary, Sarah Yeomans is heading off on an adventure to experience our wide brown land. Happy travels, Sarah! Anneke will resume the role of secretary for the time being. But if anyone has the interest in learning the job of secretary, she'd be very welcome to work alongside Anneke and eventually take it on.



## Do you have a car and a driver's licence?



Would you be available to pick up an older lesbian who can no longer drive and take her to and from one of the Matrix Games/Social afternoons, or to other events? We have a couple of members who'd love to attend and find public transport difficult. One lives in Sunshine and the other in Coburg. We'd like to start up a register of volunteer drivers, so

that we can do a little bit more to combat social isolation in our community. We can reimburse fuel costs. Can you help?

Please contact Anneke on 0427 482 976 or [housing@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:housing@matrixguildvic.org.au)

## Know A Good Family Law Solicitor?

**Seeking:** A highly experienced Family Law Specialist, with particular expertise in Relocation Applications (children's matters, within the state only) as a matter of urgency. I live on a very low income and am eligible for Legal Aid, but due to severe funding cutbacks to this service I am without legal representation. Therefore, I am trying to find a Law Firm that is not only LGBTI supportive, but can also provide fair and flexible payment arrangements. Thank you for passing this on through relevant networks.

Please contact Amanda: 0434870549 or [serephim1@hotmail.com](mailto:serephim1@hotmail.com)

# Olivia Alaska Inside Passage & Glaciers Cruise – by Sara Elkas



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When my partner Shoshi and I were on an Olivia cruise from Sydney to NZ in Feb neither of us imagined that 3 months later we would be on another cruise to a much more distant destination.

However an offer of a 2-for-1 was too good not to take up. We also liked the idea of visiting San Francisco where Shoshi's cousin (who is also a lesbian) and her partner live. So we quickly made plans to travel to SF and from there to Vancouver where the ship the Volendam was awaiting us and 1400 other lesbians.

We set sail in the evening and by morning we were in the Inside Passage. On both sides in the distance we could see land and to my astonishment it was not barren but green covered with a pine forest. We also had our first view of snow-capped mountains that were to follow us from now on.

Our first stop was Juneau the capital of Alaska where we saw our first glacier and were told that it was receding every year and covers less than half the original area.







As you can imagine we were expecting the weather to be very cold and brought lots of winter stuff along including a coat with an Alaskan fur type hood that we nicknamed “the bear”. However we left “the bear” behind as the temperature that day was 21 degrees!

The next stop was Skagway a small place surrounded by mountains where the two of us enjoyed a tour of the town followed by a show narrating the life of the town’s “outlaw”. All these towns are very much geared to tourists coming in their thousands on cruise ships and the main streets are full with souvenir shops and local native art and craft.

The following day was spent at sea cruising Glacier Bay and all of us were on board eager to see Margerie Glacier from close up and hear the thunderous sound accompanying the ice breaking off and falling into the sea.

The next day we arrived at Ketchikan “the Salmon Capital of the World” and the ship practically docked in the centre of this town. One of the highlights of our trip was a fast boat trip from Ketchikan to the Misty Fjords – sheer cliffs going up 3000 feet with lots of waterfalls. I felt like a child in a magical world.

Several people asked whether we had seen whales and bears in Alaska. In fact we didn’t see any whales or any other big animals except sea lions on an island at a distance. We did see lots of sea birds and also several eagles on land. Other women posted photos of whales and dolphins so we must have been in the wrong place when these animals were spotted. We were told at one place (Juneau Glacier National Park) not to bring food with us because of the bears but they didn’t make an appearance!

As you would expect from an Olivia cruise it was not just about seeing the sights but life on board the ship. Like before we were entertained nightly by comedians and singers including the one and only Cris Williamson. There were lectures and talks, cooking demos, fitness classes, ballroom dancing and much more. The food was to die for and even a health conscious person like me was tempted to try a dessert or two! This time neither of us managed to get sick. It was great to be with so many lesbians and celebrate the Sabbath with the other Jewish lesbians on board.

For more information on Olivia cruises see: [www.olivia.com](http://www.olivia.com)



This year the Winter Solstice is on June 22nd .  
This lovely Winter Solstice mandala incorporates  
traditional pagan symbols--the Druidic Oak as the  
Tree of Life festooned with ever green holly.



The deadline for the April Newsletter is 28th June, 2015.

Please send news items and short articles to Rosemary at [r.wealthy@bigpond.com](mailto:r.wealthy@bigpond.com)

Anneke Deutsch Matrix Guild of Vic Inc. at [housing@matrixguildvic.org.au](mailto:housing@matrixguildvic.org.au)