

Matrix Guild of Victoria Inc.

Newsletter - May 2016

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

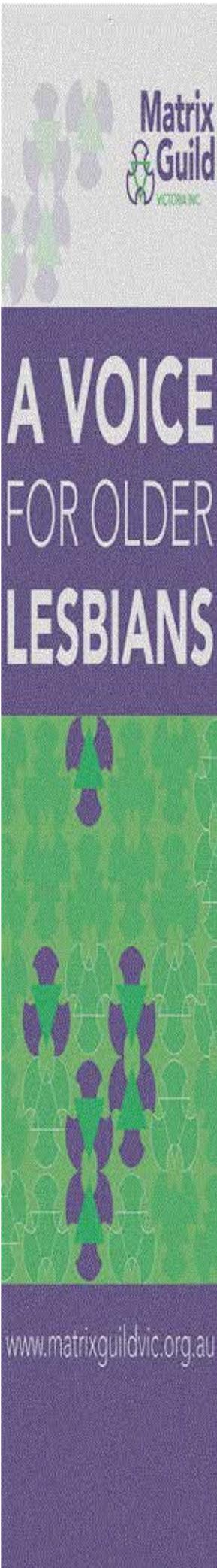
Hello Everyone,

Several important events for your diaries this month; Matrix's Forum *"It's on for Young and Old"*, the *Lesbian, Bi-sexual & Queer Women's Health Conference* and the Darebin Council's *GoWomenLG2016* forum. Read about the independent lesbian feminist publishing house *Spinifex Press*, in an interview with founders Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein, and learn about an opportunity to participate in some research on the experiences of lesbians living in aged care facilities. Just a reminder – Matrix members are able to place free personal advertisements in the newsletter, so if you have something to advertise, contact us.

Matrix Events



It's On for Young and Old:



Lesbians talk Feminist Activism

Do you tend to mix with lesbians who are all around the same age as you? Do you want to change this? Ever wondered how much richer your life might be if you had the opportunity to interact with lesbians across the generations? On **Saturday 14th May 2016**, lesbians of all ages are invited to come together for this inter-generational forum to discuss our commonalities. We want to examine the ways that lesbians have been, and continue to be, at the forefront of feminist activism.

For Matrix members ONLY. (Associates - lesbians under 40: \$10; lesbians 40 & over: full \$30, concession \$15). Please join online at:
<http://www.matrixguildvic.org.au/membership.htm>

Matrix Guild is a registered charity, set up to support and advocate for older lesbians. We aim to address the specific mix of ageism, lifelong sexism and lesbophobia with which we live, whilst celebrating our love of women and having a lot of fun along the way! We're putting this Intergenerational discussion day on as part of a membership drive. We'll supply a free scrumptious vegetarian and vegan lunch with morning and afternoon tea also included, so it's a great deal. You can join on the day, if you don't have internet access.

Time: 10-4pm

Venue: in Northcote

Lunch, morning and afternoon tea included.

Free.

RSVP by Thursday 12th May: secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au or 0427 482 976 for venue details & tell us if you have any dietary requirements. Numbers limited.

Coffee Afternoons keep on going!

The coffee afternoons are going really well, so we will continue them. They are held every Thursday, from 12 noon to 3.00 pm at **Over the Road Café**, on the corner of Victoria Rd and South Crescent, Northcote.

The café is opposite Northcote Nursery and only 3 minutes' walk from the Dennis railway station, on the Hurstbridge line. (*Melways Ref Map 30, H10*)

Come and meet up with new or old friends, have a bite to eat, or play a game of Scrabble or Rummio. Bring a friend along. It's a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and everyone is made welcome.



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

Other Events.....

LBQ Women's Conference 2016

Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women's Health Conference

connections – creativity – care

27th of May, 2016
The Jasper Hotel,
489 Elizabeth St, Melbourne.



Conference registrations are now open!

You can now book your ticket to the LBQ Women's Conference, being held in Melbourne on Friday, 27 May at the Jasper Hotel.

VAC and ACON aim to make this conference as accessible as possible and nobody will be turned away for lack of funds.

There are 2 types of registration fees:

- Waged/employed/organisations — \$50 per person
- Unwaged/unemployed/concession card holder/student — FREE (limited numbers available)

If the allocation is exhausted, please email lbqwomenscon@vac.org.au

Want to make a difference in your local community?

Wonder how you can have an influence on the issues you care about?

Why not stand for Council?

New local government elections are coming up! The **GoWomenLG2016 northern metro region information session** is an opportunity for all women in northern metro Melbourne to hear from women candidates, councillors and mayors as they share information on what it means to be a candidate, what it means to be a councillor and tips for women candidates.

A VOICE
FOR OLDER
LESBIANS

www.matrixguildvic.org.au

Matrix
& Guild
VICTORIA INC

A VOICE FOR OLDER LESBIANS



**Women
making a
difference:**

**stand for
local
government**

Join us for this informative, inspiring event and discover how you can be a voice for your community; what's involved in running a campaign; how to be an effective councillor and how to make a difference!

When: Thursday 26 May 2016, 7:00pm - 9:00pm (Light supper provided)

Where: Darebin City Council, Council Chambers, 1st Floor 350 High Street Preston

RSVP: www.gowomenlg2016forum.eventbrite.com.au

For information about the program, contact Linda Bennett, Women's Policy Officer at the Victorian Local Governance Association on 03 9349 7904

Or check the GoWomenLG website www.gowomenlg.org.au

Or **facebook** More women for local government

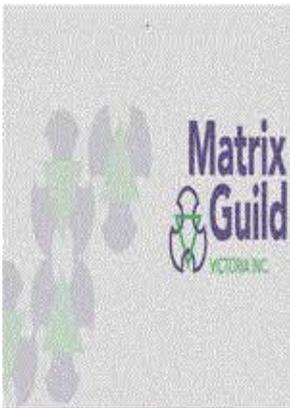
Or **twitter** @GoWomenLG

This event is proudly supported by Darebin City Council.

Celebrating LGBTI Carers in the West



Carers Australia (Vic) are hosting a free community event on Wednesday, May 18th from 6.00 – 8.00 pm at the Williamstown Town Hall to celebrate LGBTI carers, and those caring for LGBTI partners, family & friends.



Keynote Speakers will be Rowena Allen (Victorian Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality) and Dr Philomena Horsley (Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria) There will be a panel of LGBTI Carers.

For full details, see the separate flyer attached with this newsletter.
Register by Monday 16 May on Eventbrite or call 1800 242 636. Bookings essential.

Matrix Spring Dance Save the Date!

A VOICE
FOR OLDER
LESBIANS



The next Matrix Lesbian Tea Dance will be held in the afternoon on **Saturday 15th October** at the Preston Shire Hall.

An afternoon of uplifting dance tracks by DJ Kerry including all your old favourites. Plus, live music by **Kerryn Fields & Rosie Burgess** as well as afternoon tea.

Fields' warm personality and striking voice (reminiscent of Toni Childs) meld perfectly with her alt-country and roots stylings. Her songs are laced with rockabilly and soul. Rosie Burgess' folk and blues sensibilities and energetic bass rounds out the sound.

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Reports

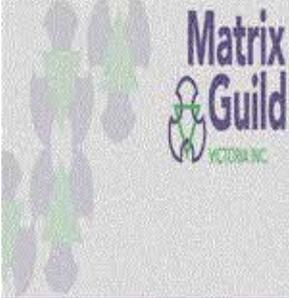
Launch of "Lesbians Ignite! In Victoria in the 1990s" - a report from Jean Taylor

The launch of *Lesbians Ignite! In Victoria In the 1990s* surpassed all my expectations and then some. For me, Lou Bennett was the undoubted highlight of the event as she opened the proceedings by acknowledging we were on the land of the Wurundjeri-willam people. And later, launched the book from both a personal, (Lou and I met at the first Lesbian Festival in Melbourne in 1990 and have been friends ever since), as well as a political point of view because Lou, like many other young lesbians, benefited from the burgeoning of lesbian culture during the 1990s.

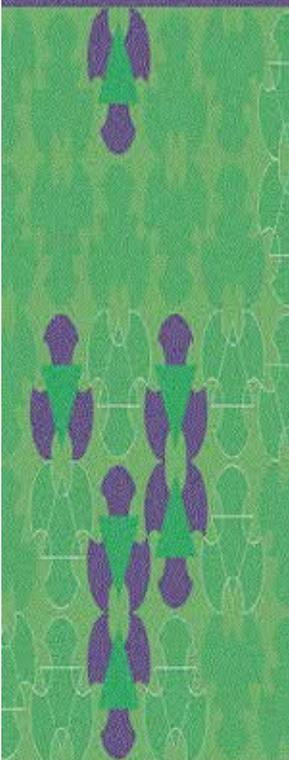
The other highlight was the performance by nine members of the Performing Older Women's Circus who gave us a colourful and energetic display of their acrobatic and balancing skills to the delight of the audience of approximately sixty people. They then invited all of the ex-POW members up on stage for the traditional Age Line, a particular favourite of mine, where we, in order of age, called out our ages from the youngest to the oldest, Pat Rooney at 81.

Ardy surpassed herself as emcee, introducing the acts with amusing anecdotes and laugh out loud story-telling and in between she read extracts from Sarah Yeomans centre piece in the book, *Melbourne: A Cornucopia of Lesbian Delights*. I also read some of the Introduction and thanked everyone who'd contributed to the book, Sarah, Meg Irwin for her front cover photo of bees, as well as Lou and POW for making the launch such a significant occasion, and Pat Mitchell for taking the photos. It's especially pleasing for me, after many years of writing, that the third book of the Archives Trilogy about the Women's Liberation Movement and radical lesbian feminist activism has been successfully launched and is available for sale.

Jean Taylor
Wurundjeri country



A VOICE
FOR OLDER
LESBIANS



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News

What's it like being a lesbian and accessing and living in an aged care facility? (By Joy Phillips)

A couple of years ago, I collected advertising brochures from some 30 residential aged care facilities in Geelong (Victoria). I asked each Director of Nursing whether they had any lesbians or gay men in their facility, and each response was “no” except for one who indicated “none, that I am aware of”. This made me reflect on what are the experiences, hopes, fears, expectations and challenges of lesbians accessing and residing in aged care facilities.

There are stories suggesting that lesbians choose to not disclose their sexuality and gender but go back into the closet upon entering an aged care facility. There is little research on lesbians’ experiences and perspectives accessing and living in an aged care facility or what kind of facility they would prefer. These are important issues that need to be explored.



This new research project will be carried out by me, Joy Phillips, as part of my PhD at Deakin University, Waterfront Campus, Geelong. My Principal Supervisor is Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli.

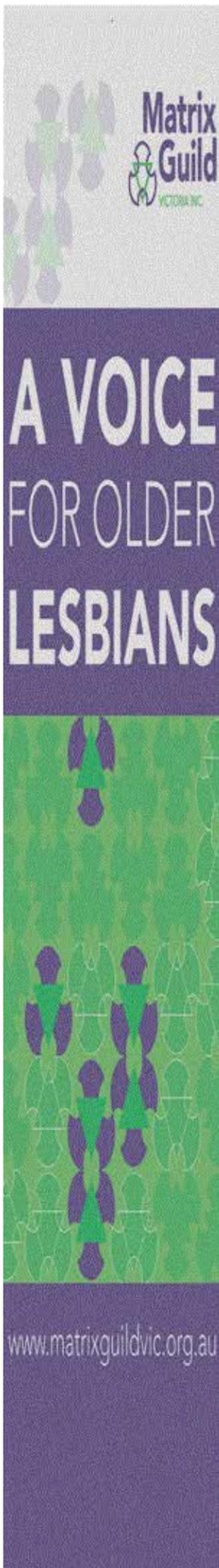
The research project will explore the experiences and perspectives of ageing same-sex attracted women and lesbians accessing and living in residential aged care facilities in the state of Victoria. The research involves interviews with ageing same-sex attracted women and lesbians accessing and living in residential aged care facilities, as well as CEO and managers of residential aged care facilities.

For interviews and any further queries, please contact me on T: 0425 819 674, E: joy_phillips21@hotmail.com or my Principal Supervisor Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, T: 03 9251 7198, E: mariapc@deakin.edu.au

Joy Phillips

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*Spinifex Press Celebrates 25 Years in Business
Interview by Ta Trammell, reprinted from LOTL, 21st January, 2016*



Renate Klein and Susan Hawthorne

Photo by Lariane Fonseca, 2015

Spinifex Press is an award-winning independent feminist press that publishes innovative and controversial feminist books with an optimistic edge. The brainchild of Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein, it offers over 200 titles in print, with more than half available as eBooks.

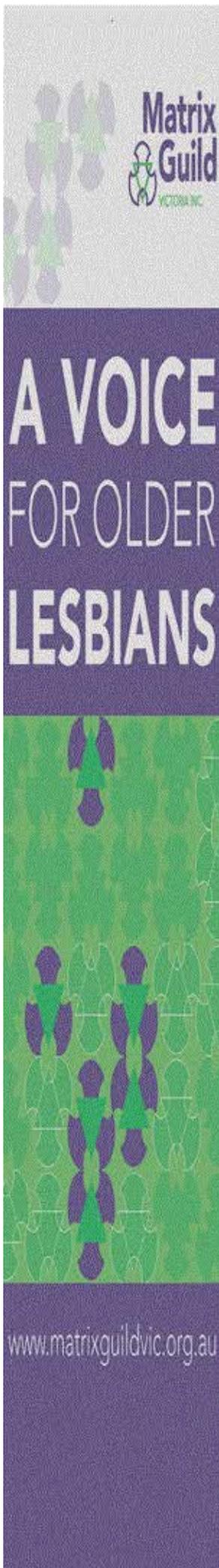
With an impressive list of lesbian writers from Japan, India, Turkey, New Zealand, USA, Switzerland, Britain, Ireland, Australia and a number of other countries, many of Spinifex's books have been finalists or winners in the Lambda Literary Awards and the Publishing Triangle Awards in the US, as well as winning a range of other prizes in Australia and overseas.

Please share with us the mission/vision of Spinifex and why you and Renate decided to create the lesbian publishing company.

When we started, we wrote this mission statement: 'Spinifex Press publishes innovative and controversial radical feminist books with an optimistic edge.' We are also decidedly international in outlook, publishing work by Indigenous writers, lesbians from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as books that focus on disability and class issues. We only publish books that we feel passionate about.

Once you decided to launch Spinifex, what happened next?

We published our first book in May 1991. It was inspired by lesbian playwright Sandra Shotlander's play, *Angels of Power*. It was an anthology of play and film scripts, short stories and poetry on the theme of reproductive technologies. Renate had been a critic of reproductive technologies for many years and I was a writer of short fiction



and poetry. By 1991, the book was on sale in the USA, just a month after its Australian launch. We each brought our special knowledge to this collection. In the first year, we published four books and they were remarkably successful. Three were shortlisted for awards, three were translated, and two were reprinted within a year.

What was your expectation for Spinifex in terms of scope and longevity? Has it changed since 1991?

When we started, we had no idea we would still be here in 25 years. The first year was an experiment and we didn't know if we would last beyond that year. The early 1990s were exciting times in feminist publishing and bookselling. There was also a vibrant industry for lesbian publishing and from 1984 to 1994, International Feminist Book Fairs were held every two years, the last organised in Melbourne. With the advent of Borders, Amazon.com and the computerisation of inventory, the energy changed in the mid to late 1990s. I write about this in my book *Bibliodiversity: A manifesto for independent publishing* (2014).

What does achieving a milestone like 25 years in business mean for Spinifex and the LGBT community?

It's hard to know what it means for the LGBT community. We know that it has an important effect on the lesbian community who are otherwise neglected in the mainstream media. Publishing lesbian writing is important for us and we have published lesbian poetry, novels and non-fiction.

The publishing industry is constantly changing, especially with e-books and self-publication becoming so popular. What motivates you to keep doing what you do and what steps are you taking to remain relevant?

Spinifex has been an early adopter of digital technologies. For example, we were one of the first publishers in Australia to have a complete list of our catalogue online in 1995. In 1996, we were the first publisher to have an interactive website connected to Indian lesbian writer Suniti Namjoshi's novel *Building Babel*. In 2006, Spinifex was the first independent publisher in Australia to produce eBooks in multiple formats. Our North American distributors told us that we were well ahead of many presses in their territory. We remain relevant through sticking to our mission statement of being both innovative and controversial and publishing risky books with passion.

If one of our readers has a book they would like to get published, what's the best method for submission?

If the writer is a poet or short fiction writer, they should already have work published in a significant number of literary magazines. To find out where these are, there are writers' centres in every state and there are a number of online resources such as the Australian Society of Authors and Poetry Australia who list upcoming opportunities for writers. This is the starting point. A sportswoman or musician practices her craft daily and gets her first exposure in small arenas. The same applies to writing. A novelist needs to have a complete manuscript before approaching a publisher. Publishers advertise times when a writer can pitch to them or times during which unsolicited manuscripts can be sent. To know these, it's best to join a writers' organisation such as those mentioned above.



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 with double spa, wood fire and split system heating. 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.

We now have two 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. If you'd like to take advantage of this wonderful offer, please get in touch with Anneke on 0427 482 976 or at secretary@matrixguildvic.org.au

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 26th May, 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