

# DURABLE DAUNTLESS DYKES

## The Matrix Guild Vic. Inc. Newsletter

February / March 2006

Matrix Guild Vic. Inc. was founded by and for the benefit of Lesbians over forty years of age. We are committed to the support of appropriate care and accommodation choices and alternative lifestyle options for the older lesbians in Victoria. Matrix Guild is a non funded organization and relies on money raised from functions such as the Satin & Silk Ball, Denim and Leather Dance, and other events held during the year and also your generous donations, which are

***Tax Deductible.***

By supporting these events and making donations to Matrix Guild Vic. you are in effect supporting yourself in your senior years.

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**One way you can support Matrix is to buy a  
Coming Home Book.**

**You could ring Jane and ask for one to be sent in the post .**

**What is it like to come out aged over 40?**

**Six totally different stories with one unvarying conclusion**

***"I am so glad I did it!"***

**\$11 a copy.**

**And with each book you buy you will assist us to help all lesbians.**

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### **Matrix Guild's Managing Committee**

meets 6.30 pm the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Betty Day Centre - 67 Argyle street St Kilda. You are most welcome to attend and contribute. Ring to check if meeting is still on 3rd Tues. before you come - 0438 411 441.

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### **Private Lives Survey**

Please note that Gay & Lesbian Health Victoria Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society Latrobe University still need to further analyse the Private Lives data by age and location to better understand if the health and health care issues/challenges faced by GLBTI people are uniform regardless of age and/or location or whether these factors independently impact on GLBTI health and well-being.

In research undertaken by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gay and Lesbian Health the findings clearly demonstrate the range of health issues and inequalities faced by GLBTI Victorians with most of these issues and inequalities resulting in negative or poorer health and well-being outcomes compared to heterosexual Victorians (MACGLH, 2003a). According to the findings such outcomes are commonplace across the health system and arise from GLBTI people's regular experiences of homophobia and transphobia, discrimination, social isolation, and invisibility both within the health system specifically and society more generally (MACGLH, 2003a, 2003b). The following statistics evidence some of the health issues and inequalities well. Compared to their heterosexual counterparts:

**GLBTI young people are four times more likely to suicide and gay men fourteen times more times more likely to suicide.**

**Gay men are 50% more likely to smoke, lesbians 100% more likely.**

**GLBTI people are three to five times more likely to be diagnosed with depression.**

**Gay and bisexual men are 80 times more likely to be diagnosed with anal cancer.**

**Lesbians are significantly less likely to participate in regular pap and breast screening.**

In a recent Canadian study (Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition, 2005) GLBTI people were significantly more likely to have unmet health needs (21.8%) compared to heterosexual people (12.8%). The cost of these unmet health needs was estimated to translate into 3,300 premature deaths at a cost of \$8 billion per annum. Based upon the relative comparability between Canada and Australia in regards to population and health systems, it is reasonable to conclude that the level of unmet health needs would be similar locally.

More recent Australian studies shed further light on the health inequalities faced by GLBTI people and their impact with data collected by the Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (2005) showing that, in a sample of 652 GLBTI

Victorians, over 80% had felt publicly insulted due to indirect negative statements. Within a health setting 20.5% of this group reported having been discriminated due to their gender identity or sexuality. Recent Australian data (Private Lives, unpublished) found that, in a sample of over 5,500 GLBTI people, approximately 30% reported receiving a negative or neutral response to their disclosure of their gender identity or sexuality within an acute setting – as an in-patient, as an outpatient or as a patient in an accident and emergency ward.

Most compelling of all the recent findings are those drawn from Private Lives. Of the seven Australian National Health Priority Areas (Department of Health and Aging; 2005) five are of particular relevance to GLBTI people: asthma, cancer, cardiovascular health, diabetes, and mental health. Based on recent Australian data (Private Lives, Unpublished), found that of the 5,476 GLBTI participants,

- 24% had received a diagnosis of asthma;**
- 5% had been diagnosed with skin cancer;**
- 11% had been diagnosed with heart disease or stroke;**
- 11% had a diagnosis of high cholesterol;**
- 37% were smokers and**
- 3% had been diagnosed with diabetes;**
- 33% had been diagnosed with anxiety; and,**
- 33% a diagnosis of depression.**

Comparing a number of these conditions to population data we find GLBTI people alarmingly over-represented. For example, the AIHW (2005) puts the **national prevalence of asthma as 10% in the adult population, the national prevalence of skin cancer is 2.8% (AIHW, 2004), of high cholesterol is 8% (ABS, 2003), of anxiety is 10% (AIHW, 1998), and of depression 6% (AIHW, 1998).**

Aside from illustrating a range of health disparities and unmet health needs these figures also illustrate the relative ignorance that exists regarding the health and well-being of GLBTI people in both health care practice and population health studies. As with the earlier-mentioned Canadian figures that articulated the loss in human, financial and societal terms the above health discrepancies underline the need for good health care practice and population health data and policy.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments and/or questions. Regards to you and all the Matrix Guild members and supporters.

Nikos Thomacos

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## **Information from ALSO about a part time seniors job.**

### **Over the Rainbow**

The State Government recently announced that The ALSO Foundation will receive a grant of \$30,000 through the Department of Victorian Communities - 'Go for your life' physical activity grants program. The grant will fund a new initiative from ALSO to encourage gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender seniors to be physically active and to assist in overcoming mental health issues such as social isolation and depression. This will further ALSO's ongoing work being undertaken as part of its GLBT Seniors project.

In acknowledging receipt of the grant funds, Adam Pickvance CEO of The ALSO Foundation said; "these grant funds will really move along some critical areas within our GLBT seniors project. We want to see heaps of our seniors, their friends, family and supporters out and about, being active, healthy and having fun - these grant funds will enable ALSO to take a proactive lead in providing the opportunities for this to happen".

The Over the Rainbow project will commence in early 2006 with the employment of a GLBT Seniors Activity Officer by ALSO, Adam Pickvance said 'this position will be the first of its kind, we are really breaking new ground here'.

**Ring ALSO 9267 4999 for Information.**

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**ALSOCare & Benevolent Society Inc,  
the charitable arm of The ALSO Foundation,  
will be opening the**

### **ALL SO FABULOUS OPPORTUNITY SHOP**

**in Collingwood in December & invite volunteers to lend a hand.  
For further details call ALSO on 9827 4999 or  
email [members@also.org.au](mailto:members@also.org.au)**

**The following are two feature stories that Matrix was able to get printed in the gay press, MCV, in October 2005.**

## **CLASS ACT: 4 Decades of Activism.**

**Jean Taylor**

**Jean is a founding member of Matrix Guild.**

**She faithfully attends every Matrix AGM and takes a keen interest in our activities.**

I consider myself extremely fortunate that I was born when I was, in Melbourne in 1944, because I feel I have lived through and participated in and been influenced by as well as helped to affect one of the most influential and exciting periods of herstory for lesbians and womyn generally. I was raised in Mildura, left school at 16, became pregnant at 17, married at 18, moved back to Melbourne and had two children by the time I was 19. All of this has certainly had an impact on my life and the kind of lesbian I am. And because I've never had a career as such, these influences have led me to choose all manner of interesting ways to support myself. Not least that I haven't bought into the capitalist consumer-oriented way of being. After some initial nursing training and then waitressing for a number of years, I went back to school when my children did and eventually graduated from La Trobe Uni in 1976. In the meantime, I started writing and because I kept getting rejection slips from publishers (apart from the short stories that were printed in Rabelais) I decided to self-publish my work, beginning with a book of poetry in 1976, then short stories and a couple of novels in subsequent years which were printed by Sybylla Press. By this time I had joined the Brunswick Consciousness Raising Group in 1972, separated in 1973 and became a feminist activist in the Women's Liberation Movement while I raised the children more or less on my own. As any feminist from the 1970s will tell you they were exciting and full-on times. We were not only developing feminist theory we were making the changes in our lives to suit our philosophy and at the same time putting our theories into action by setting up activist collectives, the Women's Liberation Centre, rape crises centres and women's refuges amongst other political actions too numerous to mention. After I got back from 12 months travelling overseas, I got a job as a refuge coordinator and helped set up the Matilda Women's Refuge in 1978. For the first time I was paid to do activist work. I was also a founding member of Women's Liberation Switchboard and came out as a lesbian. Into the 1980s and as the children left home I was busier than ever. I worked on the trams as a connie / driver in 1982, went overseas in 1983, joined the Women's Liberation Archives in 1984, established Dykebooks as a self-publishing venture and put out another seven of my novels. I wrote plays and set up the Purple Parrots, a lesbian feminist performing group, to perform several of them at the Kingston Hotel in 1986. I was a founding member of the Aboriginal Rights Solidarity Group in 1986, attended the first National 10/40 Conference (for feminists over 40) in 1987, subsequently helped organise the Melbourne based 10/40 in 1992 and went to almost all of the annual 10/40s in every state. I supported the Women's Liberation Buildings and helped to organise the large fundraising Summer and Winter Women's Balls twice a year. Into the 1990s I was a member of the organising collective for the Lesbian Festival and Conference in Melbourne in 1990 and subsequently went to all the annual LesFests round Australia. I was a founding member of Amazon Theatre, another lesbian performing group, and the Women's Circus where I learnt to walk on stilts at age 47 and participated in the International Women's NGO Forum in Beijing in 1995. I was a founding member of the Matrix Guild Inc in 1992 which was set up to offer support to lesbians over 40 and initiated and was the Director of the Performing Older Women's Circus for womyn over 40 in 1995. I started painting and exhibiting pictures, became a grandmother for the first time in 1996 and supported my partner at the time through her battle with and subsequent death from ovarian cancer in 1998. Into the new millennium and in 2000 I had a Croning Ceremony to mark my entry into this last significant stage of my life, Spinifex Press published The C-Word (the first time I'd had a book published by a publishing house) and I met Ardy Tibby who has been my partner for these past almost five years. This is just to highlight not only some of my many lesbian feminist commitments over these past thirty plus years but to show how politically active and creatively diverse the lesbian community has been. The 10/40s, the Matrix Guild and POW Circus with their emphasis on challenging ageist assumptions and providing supportive environments for lesbians over 40 have all contributed enormously to demystifying our prejudices and fears about our older age and have enabled many of us to embrace getting older in a positive and life-affirming way that has enriched our middle-age and crone years immeasurably. At the age of 61, I'm nowhere near as active as I was and yet my passion for this radical lesbian feminist lifestyle, which includes attending most of the lesbian gatherings both here and interstate when I can and contributing to and being part of the lesbian community here in Victoria, seems not to have abated any. I now have three grandchildren, I meditate every morning and do tai chi every afternoon. Above all I'm still writing more than ever, still sexually active, still resolutely involved in the Victorian Women's Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Archives, still travelling interstate and overseas, still engaged in a number of projects and on a number of collectives. And needless to say, still enjoying my life as an older radical lesbian feminist a great deal.

Jean Taylor

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## **Margaret Taylor: My Coming Out.**

**Margaret lives in Bendigo. She is a 74 years old retired psychiatric nurse, part of Friends Alike of Bendigo, and a long standing member of Matrix Guild.**

I feel that if you are gay and sufficiently sure of yourself, you owe it to what you are to stand up and be counted. To make an impression, to express views and disagree if need be, because you believe in what you are.



# MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL PRIDE MARCH [www.pridemarch.org.au](http://www.pridemarch.org.au)

DATE: Sunday 5 February 2006  
TIME: 4pm start at Fitzroy St, St Kilda.  
Once again Love Makes A Family will march as a contingent - wear your  
brightest rainbow colours, bring your friends, and join us.  
20th Jan to 12th Feb 2006  
The Melbourne 2006 Midsumma Carnival is to be held in  
Treasury Gardens – right in the city centre – on Sunday 12th Feb 2006.

Matrix Guild will BE THERE.

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## EMPLOYMENT for Qualified Lesbians

We now have 7 women interested in working in our Services and One client  
(and we haven't even advertised as yet)

The Matrix Home Based Services will start off as a small initiative but will expand as it attracts financial assistance and clients. It will provide relief for eligible aged, disabled or chronically ill lesbians.

The Services will incorporate health, therapy, home care and maintenance related services and involve qualified practitioners. If you are qualified in an area that you consider fits these services and would like to be considered for the services send us your expression of interest and your resume, clearly detailing your experience and qualifications. If selected the committee will advise you of when you will be required to attend an interview.

Now is your chance to work with our community and become involved in a unique service for older Victorian lesbians.  
Further information Jane Kent 03: 9347 2532 [jkent1@vtown.com.au](mailto:jkent1@vtown.com.au)

**The following is a heavily edited version of**

## **Take Control: A Guide to Powers of Attorney and Guardianship**

NB. Edited material is alluded to by 3 dots (...).

The publication is produced by the Office of the Public Advocate and Victoria Legal Aid.  
Office of the Public Advocate, 5th Floor, 436 Lonsdale Street, Melb. 3000. 9603 9500 or 1800 136 829.  
[publicadvocate@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:publicadvocate@justice.vic.gov.au) - [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)

Victoria Legal Aid, 350 Queen Street, Melb. 3000. 9269 0234 Country: 1800 677 402

Disclaimer: The information in this book was current at the time of printing, (...) Get legal advice before acting on the information that follows.

### **Chapter 1: Eight Steps to follow to make a power of attorney or guardianship:**

#### **The requirements**

In order to appoint someone your power of attorney (either general or enduring) or guardian, you must: be 18 years of age or over and have sufficient capacity to make the appointment. (...) If you are unsure if you have capacity, see your lawyer, who may recommend that some expert opinions are obtained as to your capacity. (...)

#### **Step 2: What happens without an enduring power of attorney or guardianship?**

Not everybody bothers about making appointments of enduring powers of attorney or guardianship. There is certainly nothing to say that you have to. But it is important that you understand the consequences of not appointing someone with these decision-making powers.

Not appointing a decision-maker could lead to considerable conflict over who should take charge of the decision-making process if you become unable to do this yourself.

The way in which that conflict will be resolved will depend on the type of decisions involved.

## Financial and lifestyle decisions

If you do not appoint an enduring power of attorney (financial) or guardian, and you lose legal capacity to make your own decisions, then only the Guardianship List can appoint someone with the legal authority to make decisions on your behalf.

This involves a formal hearing before the Guardianship List, where evidence would be heard about whether or not you have lost legal capacity and whether or not you need to have someone appointed to make decisions for you.

If the Guardianship List decides that you need someone to make decisions about your finances or legal affairs, they will appoint an administrator. If they decide that you need someone to make decisions for you about other aspects of your life, they will appoint a guardian.

The Guardianship List has an obligation to take your views into account when appointing an administrator or guardian. But ultimately the decision is theirs rather than yours.

Guardianship hearings, while not as formal as a court hearing, can still be very stressful for everyone involved. There can be considerable conflict amongst family and friends about who is best placed to make decisions for you.

Appointing someone with enduring power of attorney or guardianship ahead of time avoids this conflict.

## Medical treatment decisions

If you do not appoint an enduring power of attorney (medical treatment) (or enduring guardian with power to make medical treatment decisions), and you develop a disability that leaves you unable to make your own decisions about medical treatment, then whoever is first on the following list will be able to make medical treatment decisions for you:

- someone already appointed by the Guardianship List to make medical decisions for you
- someone you have appointed in some other way in writing to make medical treatment decisions for you
- your spouse
- your primary carer (cannot be a paid professional carer), or
- your nearest relative. (...)

## Step 3: Choosing the right power for you

The four different powers of attorney and guardianship explained in Take Control have their own purpose and value. Depending on your circumstances you may want to put all the arrangements in place. However, it is also possible that your circumstances will be such that not all four arrangements will be relevant to what you need. (...)

*What do you want to achieve?*

### **Do you want to deal with practical problems that are arising now or in the immediate future?**

For example, needing someone to:

- manage your financial affairs while you are away on holiday or in hospital
- carry out financial transactions for you because you are physically unable to do so yourself (such as through frailty, disability or physical remoteness).

If YES, then you might need to appoint someone with a general power of attorney.

If you give someone a general power of attorney, that power will come to an immediate end if you lose legal capacity to make decisions. This could be very awkward if your attorney is in the process of conducting business for you.

### **Do you want to prepare yourself for problems that might arise in the future?**

For example, needing someone to:

- manage your finances if, at some stage in the future, you are unable to do so yourself. For example, if you were involved in a car accident, you might acquire a brain injury that affects your ability to make decisions
- make medical treatment decisions for you because you experience episodes of mental illness during which you are unable to make those decisions for yourself
- make decisions about where you will live if, at some time in the future, you cannot do so yourself because you have dementia.

If YES, then you might need to appoint someone with an enduring power of attorney or guardianship.(...)

## Common questions about choosing the right power for you

*Can someone appointed with enduring power of attorney (financial) also make decisions about my medical treatment and accommodation?*

No. If you want someone who will have the authority to make decisions about your medical treatment and accommodation, then you must appoint an enduring power of attorney (medical treatment) and enduring power of

guardianship.

*Can someone appointed with enduring power of guardianship also make decisions about my finances?*

No. If you want someone who will have the authority to make decisions about your financial or legal affairs, then you must appoint an enduring power of attorney (financial).

*Can someone appointed with enduring power of guardianship make decisions about my medical treatment?*

Yes, but if you have also appointed someone with enduring power of attorney (medical treatment), they will take precedence over your guardian for all medical treatment decisions. An enduring guardian cannot refuse medical treatment on your behalf. Only somebody with enduring power of attorney (medical treatment) can do this.

## Step 4: Choosing whom to appoint(...)

Here are some things to think about when deciding whom to appoint.

*You can appoint more than one decision-maker*

You can appoint one or more persons as your decision-makers. You can choose to appoint them:

**jointly** (which means that they can only act with the agreement of them all and any documents must be signed by all of them together),or

**jointly and severally** (which means that any of them can act and sign documents together or alone).

Appointing more than one decision-maker can help to ensure you get a balance of perspectives. For example, you might choose to appoint one person who knows you well (such as a friend or relative) and another person who has a good knowledge of financial management issues (such as an accountant).(...)

## Step 5: The Four Powers

In this chapter you will find basic information about all of the arrangements discussed in Take Control. (...) For this information, application forms & Steps 6,7 & 8 go to [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)

Edited by Jane Kent.

### The Victorian Seniors Festival 2006

**Matrix presents two events in the Festival:**

#### ***The Matrix Lesbian Picnic in the Botanical Gardens***

**and the other event we present in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, Vintage Men and the ALSO Foundation is the**

#### ***Rainbow Tea Dance.***

**Victorian Seniors Festival has been postponed due to the Commonwealth Games.**

**The new dates are 1 - 8 October,  
which aligns it with the**

**United Nations International Day of the Older Person on 1 October.**

**Watch this space for updates next year.**

## Other ACTIVITIES Around Town

GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

For a comprehensive list of upcoming events visit the Gay & Lesbian Community Events Calendar at <http://www.glcec.20m.com>

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### Melbourne Queer Film Festival,

ACMI, Federation Square 2nd - 12 March.

[www.melbournequeerfilm.com.au](http://www.melbournequeerfilm.com.au) or [info@melbournequeerfilm.com.au](mailto:info@melbournequeerfilm.com.au)

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### CHILL OUT FESTIVAL Daylesford

10th - 13th March, [www.chilloutfestival.com](http://www.chilloutfestival.com) or [info@chilloutfestival.com.au](mailto:info@chilloutfestival.com.au)

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