

# Matrix Guild

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



# Newsletter

January 2008

Matrix Guild for lesbians over forty years of age.  
We are committed to support, appropriate care and alternative lifestyle options for the older lesbians.  
Matrix is non funded and relies on fundraising and financial donations, which are Tax Deductible.

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## Special Announcement

The Matrix Guild and Vintage Men have been presenting a programme on JOY 94.9 Sunday mornings from 7am to 9am for approximately 3 months. The programme is called Sunday and the presenters are Paul and Gordon from Vintage Men and Jane and Sangita from the Matrix Guild We are mainly presenting a music programme, very varied but hopefully catering for all tastes. There are also community announcements (Around the Traps) and the occasional interview.

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One way you can support Matrix is to buy a *Coming Home: Interviews with Women who Came Out After 40.*

Edited by Elisabeth Speller

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

**Coming out stories from older lesbians.**

**\$11 a copy.**

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**MATRIX AND RESEARCH:**  
*Determining Strategies to Enhance Aged Care Services  
Provided to GLBTI Seniors*

**Matrix Guild has once again applied to the Reichstein Foundation for another grant: Stage Two of the Research Program we commenced in 2007.**

**And we were successful.**

**Matrix has received a further**

**\$20,000**

*The following is an extract from the grant application showing some of the themes that have surfaced from Stage One and how both stages will dovetail together.*

The need for the Research was identified by consumers in 1997 when Matrix conducted a survey to identify the concerns and needs of older lesbians. In 2004 Matrix supervised a consultation process with surveys and focus groups to further identify the consumer's needs.

In late 2006 we received a grant from the Reichstein Foundation to conduct Stage One of this Program entitled *Exploring the Experiences of Non-Heterosexuals in Aged Care Aged Care Services*. These consultations revealed the need to develop a Program which aimed to redress the unmet needs of GLBTI seniors in receipt of aged care services. The first step towards achieving this aim was to interview GLBTI seniors about their experiences of aged care services. Interviews, which formed Stage One of the Program, revealed a number of challenges in changing the structure of aged care services to meet the needs of this group. In particular the interviews revealed that some older GLBTI people:

- 1 Have endured discrimination for many decades and now expect discrimination to continue and feel powerless to achieve the social justice that they deserve.
- 2 Are prohibited from expressing themselves in a sexual way in aged care services by families and staff
- 3 Perceive that they re-enter the 'closet' when they enter shared aged care services
- 4 Feel that they re-enter the 'closet' when they invite carers into their own home

- 5 Respond to homophobic/transphobic comments from carers or co-residents with a reinforced belief that they needed to hide their sexual identity to be safe.
- 6 Identification of the need for this Project began with public consultations facilitated by the Matrix Guild in 1997 and 2004.
- 7 Have internalised homophobia/transphobia
- 8 Use demeaning language to describe their sexual identity
- 9 Perceive it would not be fair to expose their carers to their sexual identity
- 10 Are dependent on the good will of carers and feel vulnerable in that relationship because of their sexual/gender identity.
- 11 Are isolated, lonely and vulnerable
- 12 Are concerned that disclosing their sexual identity would 'sour' relationships with carers and lead to a lower standard of care.
- 13 Feel that many health professionals could 'recite a mantra' around non-discrimination whilst maintaining homophobic/heterosexist practices.
- 14 Had little privacy in residential aged care and consequently struggled to protect their sexual/gender identity:
  - from staff who did not respect their privacy
  - from cognitively impaired residents who invaded their space
  - particularly when they were transsexual (and did not pass) or were cross dressers (and were clearly identifiable)
  - when they were cognitively impaired

These interviews in Stage One highlighted a broad base of challenges to improving aged care services for GLBTI seniors. Additionally, while interviewees provided consensus on the need to educate aged care service providers around GLBTI issues they were unsure how change could occur.

To ensure that strategies for change are strategic it will be valuable to determine the perspectives of aged care service providers in Victoria. This was verified when informal approaches made to the Project Researcher, Dr Catherine Barrett, after the Project was profiled in the media. Groups and numerous service providers including residential aged care staff, HACC workers and program directors and other community service providers expressed interest in sharing their stories and contributing towards the development of appropriate resources to support change.

It therefore became apparent that Stage Two of the Program needed to determine the perspectives of aged care services providers. This will complement Stage One data by providing a strong foundation for leverage for change in Stage Three.

#### **Project Researcher, Dr Catherine Barrett**

Catherine Barrett did an excellent job of Stage One. Matrix decided and the Steering Committee agreed, that she will continue as Project Researcher in 2008, to complete Stage One of the Program and implement and complete Stage Two as well. The Stage One Report will be will be dovetailed with the Stage Two Report and both will be available for the public in late 2008.

## Partnerships with other groups involved with the Project.

Those on the committee are at present.

1. Jane Kent, Community Development Worker, Matrix Guild.
  2. Paul Busey, President Vintage Men Inc., a social and support group for mature gay and bisexual men and their friends;
  3. Dr Ruth McNair, General Practitioner, The Carlton Clinic and Senior Lecturer, The Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne, Member Australian Lesbian Medical Association Committee and Member Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gay and Lesbian Health;
  4. Lola McHarg Admissions Officer Brotherhood of St Laurence;
  5. Barbary Clarke, Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby;
  6. Anne Mitchell, Director Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria;
  7. Lyn Morgain, CEO The ALSO Foundation;
  8. Lesley Walsh, CEO Women's Health East;
  9. Sam Seamer, Women's Social Health Advocate (with a focus on lesbian and same sex attracted women) Women's Health in the South East;
  10. Joy Free, Researcher, Women's Health West (lesbian interest in a program focus not specific role);
  11. Dr Rosie Crone, Consultant Geriatrician and Australian Lesbian Medical Association ;
  12. Dr Jo Harrison, School of Health Sciences (OT Program) University of South Australia, and Expert Advisor to the Steering Committee
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# Matrix Guild HOME BASED SERVICES



## SERVICES FOR SENIOR LESBIANS

★ *Matrix is for and by lesbians over forty years of age.*

*We are committed to appropriate care and alternative options for older lesbians.*

★ Matrix Guild's **Home Based Services** incorporate

★ **health, counselling, home care maintenance, qualified practitioners.**

★ If you are a senior lesbian and/or a disabled lesbian and want a qualified lesbian to assist you in the above areas for affordable rates (means tested) give us a call.

★ If you are looking for contracted work, qualified in one of these areas and would like to be considered for the service send your resume.

★ **Now is your chance to become involved in a unique service.**

0438 411 441 - [jkent6@bigpond](mailto:jkent6@bigpond)



# Matrix HOME BASED SERVICES

## Service Provider - Trish Ayers

Balanced Health: Mind & Body

**Counsellor & Psychotherapist**

BSW (Accred.); B. App. Sc. (Physio)., Grad. Dip. Physio.

Cert. Couns'. & Psychotherapy.

Applied Cert. Marriage & Relationship Coun'.

NALAG Accredited Grief & Bereavement Counsellor.

AASW Certified Mental Health Worker.

**Trish works in the areas of:-**

- 1 Grief & Bereavement, including pet loss**
- 2 Lesbian & Gay issues**
- 3 Mental health**
- 4 Managing depression & anxiety**
- 5 Managing chronic pain**
- 6 Coping with disability or health problems**
- 7 Sexual abuse**
- 8 Couple counselling - same sex relationship**
- 9 Relationship issues**
- 10 Personal Development**
- 11 Life stage transition**
- 12 Weight related issues**

Trish is a Counsellor and Psychotherapist and has been practising in Melbourne for over 8 years.

Formerly a Physiotherapist, Trish is very experienced in assisting people maximise their health. As a Counsellor, Trish's therapeutic approach focuses on developing awareness, enhancing emotional well-being and increasing individual empowerment. Trish creates a safe and respectful environment where individuals can work to resolve difficulties and increase capacity for physical and emotional wellness and fulfilling relationships.

Trish is an AASW accredited Mental Health Worker and a registered provider with Medicare. This enables clients to receive Medicare rebate if they are referred under the G.P Mental Health Care Plan (Item 2710).

**Member of:**

Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

Australian Counselling Association (ACA)

Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA)

National Association of Loss & Grief (NALAG)

**TO REFER OR TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT RING: 0402 131 353**

**LOCATIONS: CAMBERWELL & HAWTHORN.**

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

meets 6.30 pm the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at

Betty Day Centre

67 Argyle Street, St Kilda (Melways 58, C9).

Parking in streets nearby or Stop 33 St Kilda Road, tram

routes 3 and 67 or Stop 27 Chapel Street on tram routes 78 and 79. .

**You are most welcome to attend and contribute. Ring to check if meeting is still  
on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues. before you come - 0438 411 441.**

**Come and meet more lesbians.**

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## ***Gay Seniors Rely on Close Friendship Networks When Ill***

*Article supplied by Dr Ruth McNair.*

*It is new research from USA- recently reported in the New York Times.*

Older adults who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) have "a history of care giving" that creates networks of people who support each other during their senior years, according to a questionnaire study of 199 LGB seniors. The study found that more than two-thirds of the participants had provided care to one or more people during the previous five years.

"These findings contradict old myths about elderly gay people leading lonely lives of quiet desperation," said Dr. Robert-Jay Green, executive director of the Rockway Institute, a national centre for LGBT research and public policy. "LGB seniors create vibrant communities of care that overcome the difficulties posed by discrimination or by greater levels of rejection from their biological families."

The study was conducted by Arnold H. Grossman and Eliza Dragowski of New York University, and Anthony D'Augelli of Pennsylvania State University and was published in the Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, Vol. 18, No. 3/4, 2007, pp. 15-38. The sample of LGB adults was aged 40 to 85 and was recruited from agencies providing services to LGB elders in New York City and Los Angeles. About one-quarter of participants were age 40 to 59; the remaining three-quarters were 60 years or older. The group was highly educated, with 63 percent having completed a bachelor's or master's degree.

Participants were asked about their history of giving and receiving care. Other questions dealt with their physical and mental health; their feelings about homosexuality, stress, social support, coping skills; and their perceptions of the burdens and benefits of care giving. Thirty-eight percent of participants reported they had received care from others (who were not health-care professionals) during the previous five years. Sixty-seven percent had provided care to others.

The illnesses for which participants provided care were HIV/AIDS - 30 percent; cancer – 29 percent; muscular/skeletal illnesses - 21 percent; cardiovascular disease – 19 percent and other chronic illnesses associated with aging - 26 percent.

Having received help was strongly related to providing help. Of those who had received help, 76 percent had taken care of others. Of those who had not received help, 60 percent had taken care of others. More than three-quarters stated that they were willing to provide care to LGB people in the future. The researchers observed that networks of support are especially significant for LGB seniors, who may be physically or emotionally distant from their biological family, may be closeted, or may fear or suffer discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

Many of these LGB seniors may not know for certain who will provide care in a crisis, or they face financial issues because they are not covered under partner health plans as would be true for married heterosexual couples.

"These results provide a glimpse of the social networks urban LGB seniors have established to cope with homophobia in their communities, rejection from their families, exclusion from the financial benefits of marriage, and in most cases, absence of children to take care of them in old age," said Green. "Some social theorists have even referred to these peer networks as 'families of choice' because of the closeness and interconnected reciprocity of care involved.

Thus, the results of the current study refute the old stereotype that LGB people are destined for empty lives and lonely deaths as they age. Indeed, these findings reveal the opposite – a remarkable 'culture of care' among LGB seniors."

To contact the researchers: [Arnold.grossman@nyu.edu](mailto:Arnold.grossman@nyu.edu) or 212-998-5615. To contact Dr. Green: [rjgreen@alliant.edu](mailto:rjgreen@alliant.edu) or 415-955-2121. To Contact Experts at the Rockway Institute for commentary on senior issues visit [www.RockwayInstitute.org](http://www.RockwayInstitute.org), click on the For the Media link at the top of the page, then click on the Experts link. To obtain a copy of the original article as published: Rick Moore, [rmoore.rockway@alliant.edu](mailto:rmoore.rockway@alliant.edu) or 415-314-8952

About Rockway Institute: The nonpartisan Rockway Institute promotes scientific and professional expertise to counter antigay prejudice and improve public policies affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

The Institute's view is that public opinion, policies, and programs should be shaped by the facts about LGBT lives, not by political ideology. A primary goal is to organize the most knowledgeable social scientists, mental health professionals, and physicians in the United States to provide accurate information about LGBT issues to the media, legislatures, and the Institute also conducts targeted research projects to address the nation's most pressing LGBT public policy concerns.

Website: [www.rockwayinstitute.org](http://www.rockwayinstitute.org)

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# Other ACTIVITIES Around Town

CHECK OUT THIS PAGE Covers every state in Australia

<http://www.SameSame.com.au>

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>

THE NEW MATRIX WEB PAGE

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

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## Matrix Guild Victoria Inc A voice for older lesbians

Matrix Guild was founded by and for the benefit of lesbians over forty years of age. We are committed to the support of appropriate care and alternative lifestyle options for older lesbians in Victoria.

Matrix Guild was founded by a group of lesbians and it was incorporated in September 1992. The visions and aims of these women were to raise money to assist older/ disabled lesbians.

### Matrix Guild Statement of Purposes

The Guild is established for the public charitable purposes of the relief of poverty, helplessness and suffering of women, and in particular lesbians, by without limitation providing home based services and accommodation to aged, disadvantaged and disabled women.

As an incidental and ancillary purpose, the Guild may provide training and education to home care providers on issues relevant to caring for lesbians to increase the sensitivities of the carers and the standard of home care to lesbians.

### Do you want to support Matrix? Here's what you can do.

- Attend Matrix Guild fundraisers.
- Include Matrix Guild Victoria Inc as a beneficiary in your will. Phone Jane Kent on 03 9309 5896 or 0438 411 441 for information on how to go about it.
- Become a financial member.

### If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to Matrix Guild

You will receive a receipt from Matrix, with our ABN number on it that states the receipt is for a tax deductible gift for Matrix Guild benevolent services.



## **Application/Renewal Matrix Guild Membership**

Yearly fee period from Annual General Meeting  
(Aug/Sept)

Full membership: \$20 waged / \$15 concession

Organisation membership: \$50 (or donation)

Send to: The Secretary, PO Box 99 Fairfield, Vic 3078

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

This is a renewal / new membership.

I agree / do not agree to my name and details as listed above being  
made available to Matrix Guild members.

Signature:

Date: