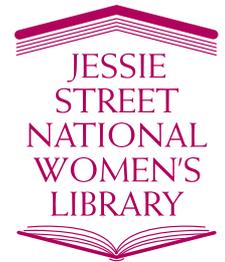


# NEWSLETTER

To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful — Ursula LeGuin



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: NOT NOW – NOT EVER

Former Governor-General Quentin Bryce was the guest speaker at the Library's 2015 Annual Luncheon. She spoke powerfully about domestic violence. Over the last 10 years, incidents of domestic violence have increased in prevalence and severity in Queensland. Every day more than 175 reports of domestic violence are made. 'It's not about punches, love, it's about knives and ropes', one man told her. Absolutely shocking abuse. Quentin reported to Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk in February 2015 on



how best to deal with it. The government adopted Quentin's report, *Not Now Not Ever Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* and has appointed her to oversee its implementation.

Before discussing ways to end domestic violence, she paid tribute to the Library. She remarked on how this valued cultural institution originated in a time-honoured female way: women, often around a kitchen table, get an idea, create a vision, and take action. The Library project began in 1989 when co-founders Shirley Jones and Lenore Coltheart had difficulty accessing material on and by women. Quentin celebrated the many feminists who created this library to preserve documents on Australian women's lives and record 'herstory'. Library Patron Elizabeth Evatt, as a UN Committee chair, had ensured violence against women and female genital mutilation went onto the international agenda. Quentin, Library Chair from 1996 to 1998, had toiled to find a Library 'home', achieved in 2005 when the City of Sydney generously opened the current Ultimo Community Centre location. She remembered 'Library pals', especially her treasurer, journalist and trade unionist Della Elliott. Della worked with Jessie Street soon after Jessie's important work at the 1945 UN founding conference in having the word 'sex' included in the UN Charter: 'without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion'.

Quentin retold Faith Bandler's powerful story about the Library's namesake: 'Jessie rang late one night in 1956 saying, "You can't get anywhere without a change in the Constitution and you can't get that without a referendum. You'll need a petition with 100,000 signatures. We'd better

start at once". And we did'. Faith would always emphasise that 'Jessie's role was absolutely vital' to success in the 1967 referendum which resulted in inclusion of Aboriginal people in the national census. Quentin stressed that, like the 'long hard slog' for the 1967 referendum, constitutional change currently being debated needs both white and Aboriginal leaders. She appealed fervently for another huge campaign to achieve success in this next referendum.

Turning to her *Not Now Not Ever* report, Quentin said she had been determined its recommendations would be based on sound research reflecting the voices of survivors. She felt a strong need to 'see things for myself'. Together with an expert taskforce she met brave women all across Queensland: women with physical disabilities or mental illness, refugees, urban and isolated Indigenous women. 'We published ... their stories – breathtaking, heartbreaking'. 'I kept asking myself, too, about the children ... never too young to be affected by domestic violence', she said.

The conclusion: 'Our only hope' is comprehensive effort in government, business, schools and service providers, and by every single person – to change the culture and attitudes shaping behaviours, integrate victim support services, and hold perpetrators to account by fixing the justice system. Key Report recommendations include:

- raising awareness to stop denigration of women
- integrating services to quickly protect victims
- overhauling justice: better magistrate, police and lawyer practice and specialised domestic violence courts
- holding perpetrators of violence to account including perpetrator intervention programs and stronger penalties
- sentencing taking account of domestic violence history
- adding a domestic violence weighting to all criminal offences (assault, grievous bodily harm, rape, murder)
- creating a new criminal offence: non-lethal strangulation (which often precedes homicide)

The *Not Now Not Ever* recommendations are mostly for government action. Already fast-tracked are: 300 body-worn cameras for police to gather evidence and the trial of four one-stop support services shops and of a specialist court. State, territory and national leaders are working to facilitate sharing information and enforcing domestic violence orders Australia-wide.

Quentin is adamant, however, that *voices* are our most important tool. 'We cannot rest', she says, 'until women

*Continued on page 2*

### Christmas Closure

The Library will close on Friday 11 Dec 2015, reopening Monday 11 Jan 2016. Our best wishes for the festive season!

## Contents

- 1 Domestic Violence: Not Now – Not Ever
- 2 Gender equality under threat again at the UN?
- 3 Jeannette McHugh campaign papers for our Archives
- 3 Lunch Hour Talks program
- 4 Lunch Hour Talk – Jocelyn Chey AM
- 5 Lunch Hour Talk – Susan Kendall AM
- 6-7 Annual Luncheon 2015
- 8 Library display on history of WEL website
- 8 A brooch by Connie Dimas
- 9 *Damned Whores and God's Police* 40 years on
- 10 Book launch: Jacqueline Dinan *Between the Dances*
- 10 General Donations
- 11 Tribute to Robin Porter
- 11 Capital Investment Fund and New Members
- 12 Annual Luncheon 2015: raffle prizes and winners

## Jessie Street National Women's Library

Australia's National Women's Library is a specialist library, its focus being the collection and preservation of the literary and cultural heritage of women from all ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

### Aims

- To heighten awareness of women's issues
- To preserve records of women's lives and activities
- To support the field of women's history
- To highlight women's contribution to this country's development

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Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO  
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## Domestic Violence: Not Now – Not Ever

*Continued from page 1*

and children feel and are safe: free from violence – physical, sexual and psychological, until children grow up not ever having experienced violence in their homes, until police are no longer called to domestic and family violence incidents'. Her inspirational address, its warmth, gentle humour and a compassion that one listener likened to a shining beam of light, evoked sustained, heartfelt applause.

*Margot Simington*

## Gender equality under threat again at the UN?

The Library is a member organisation of the Equality Rights Alliance. In turn, ERA is one of the five alliances making up the National Women's Alliances. The other four organisations are: economic Security4Women; Australian Women Against Violence Alliance; National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance; and the National Rural Women's Coalition.



*Participants in the National Women's Alliances Forum on 8 October*

The Alliances' mission brings together women's organisations and individuals from across Australia to share information; identify relevant issues; identify solutions; and then engage actively with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better, more informed and representative dialogue between women and government. The Alliances have held two forums this year to brief member organisations on issues in the UN having implications for women. I attended both, the most recent being on 8 October. There were representatives from a diverse range of women's organisations. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals developed this year were discussed. Gender equality is one of these goals but gender issues are included in other goals as well.

SD Goals have the potential to be transformative. However, in recent years there has been a conservative push in the UN by the G77, Arab states and the Vatican to water down women's rights in UN documents and organisations such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This was also the case in negotiations on SD Goals, such as an attempt to subsume women's rights into family rights and to limit the elimination of violence against women and girls to partnerships. Language is interesting here. The rights of the family and women's role in the family can be code for limiting women's participation in the workforce, their economic independence or their sexual and reproductive health. The universality of human rights language is also under attack via a push for women's rights to be seen as different from men's rights.

There seems to be general consensus now among the Alliances that, although not recognised at the time, the Beijing Declaration of 1995 was a high water mark, and further, that women need to be vigilant to hold that line. Nevertheless, the UN is encouraging 'civil society' involvement around SD Goals. Accordingly, Alliances organisations continue to have a role for engaging with the Australian Government on progressing SD Goals.

*Diane Hague*

# Jeannette McHugh campaign papers for our Archives



Jeannette McHugh was the first woman from NSW to be elected to federal Parliament. She won the seat of Phillip in Sydney's eastern suburbs in 1983, 80 years after non-Aboriginal women were eligible to vote and stand for the Parliament. The Library is delighted with the recent donation

of Jeannette's campaign papers by her former campaign director, Paul Tracey, who wrote this article.

While women could legally participate in federal elections from 1903, political parties were unwilling to give them any winnable positions. The first women to enter federal Parliament appeared in the 1940s – two widows who followed their husbands into politics. Occasionally a female senator was elected, albeit low down on a party list but benefiting from a 'winner take all' system.

NSW was slow to elect women federal MPs. It was not until 1980 that several women were endorsed by the ALP in seats that seemed to be winnable – as it turned out, none of them was successful. One of those women, Jeannette McHugh, stood for Phillip, a true swing seat that had been shared by Liberal and Labor since its creation in 1949. Jeannette after a vigorous campaign lost by an estimated 14 votes in each of the 20 odd polling booths.

Jeannette was a local party worker without any factional connection to ALP Head Office. She was secretary of her local Bronte ALP Branch and also of the Phillip ALP Electorate Council. An activist against Vietnam and uranium mining, Jeannette was involved in advocating for public education and demanding improved women's services and childcare. She was well known and respected within the party's Left especially among local party members. But it was not plain sailing. Jeannette had to

beat off a male challenger for preselection.

In those days, having a woman candidate was still a novelty (the Liberals did not have any in winnable seats until the 1990s). We were constantly reminded, in the Party, in pubs and clubs, that with all male-dominated RSL, surf, football and cricket clubs in the electorate a woman could not possibly win Phillip. But the Phillip rank and file ALP members would not be persuaded out of backing their favoured candidate. Come 1983, Jeannette won the preselection easily against two men and went on to become NSW's first federal woman MP. She held the seat for over ten years until it was abolished, became a federal Minister and had a final term as MP for Grayndler in inner southern Sydney from 1993 to 1996. With her community involvement, Jeannette increased her share of the vote at every election she contested.

The campaign papers I have now lodged with the Library are my own records as Campaign Director of Jeannette's Phillip campaigns. These are records of meetings, strategies, volunteers, fund raising, and printed materials. There is also material produced by opposing candidates, from the 'Keep the Left out of Phillip' Liberal advertising, through anti-Jeannette propaganda of Right to Life and on to the great victory in 1990 against the economic rationalists behind Charles Copeman's challenge. These records are about local activists campaigning in the days prior to spin doctors and massive donations.

Jessie Street herself stood for federal Parliament in the 1940s. Twice she contested Wentworth, which included what was to become a large part of Phillip. The first time she was the Labor candidate, the second an independent. She then contested the first election for Phillip in 1949, again as an independent. There is little record of her campaigns. In depositing Jeannette McHugh's campaign papers with the Library, I want to ensure that future researchers have access to the story of the election of NSW's first female federal MP.

Paul Tracey

## LUNCH HOUR TALKS – third Thursday of the month

19 Nov: Vashti Farrer

*Ellen Thomson – Beyond a reasonable doubt?*

In 1887, Ellen Thomson was hanged – the only woman ever executed in Queensland. The previous year her much older husband had been found shot in the head. Ellen paid the ultimate price, but did she have a fair trial? This is the subject of Vashti's talk and of her first non-fiction book for adults.

18 Feb: Members of WRN

*Recognising Indigenous people in the Constitution*

Members of The Women's Reconciliation Network discuss the film of a public forum held in Sydney last year and a DVD, 'Exploring Perspectives', developed for use as an education tool. There will be an opportunity to purchase copies of the DVD.

17 March: Cecile Yazbek

*Voices on the Wind*

Cecile's first book of fiction is based on her great-great-grandparents, Edmond and Lily Khalil, who left Lebanon to live in Queenstown South Africa in 1908. Granddaughter Eva, as the young Australian narrator, unfolds their story with observations of contemporary South Africa, juxtaposed with Australian ways.

21 April: Anne McLeod

*The Summit of Her Ambition: the spirited life of Marie Byles*

Anne's talk focuses on Marie Byles, the first female solicitor in NSW and legal adviser to activist Jessie Street. A passionate conservationist, Marie helped save vast tracts of land for national parks. Turning to Buddhism, she wrote books that influenced a generation in the 1960s.

Venue/Time: 12.00-1.30pm. Southern Function Room, 4th Floor, Town Hall House, 456 Kent St Sydney.

Cost: \$16 (members) \$22 (non-members) including light lunch. Pay at the door. Book by noon Monday before the talk. Ph (02) 9571 5359

## NO JOKE CHINA! DEALING WITH CHINESE HUMOUR

After a long academic and diplomatic career and publishing much work on Chinese culture, Professor Jocelyn Chey is now Visiting Professor at Sydney University and consults on Chinese-Australian relations.

Jocelyn began her talk with a joke. She used American playwright James Sherman's famous skit (based on an earlier Abbott and Costello joke) – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice advising President George Bush in 2002 that Vice President Hu Jintao had just become General Secretary. The joke, a pun on the English word 'who' and the Chinese name 'Hu', illustrated the lack of understanding when one culture is unaware of common names in another culture.

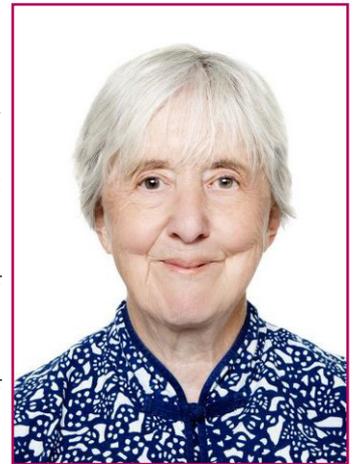
Her point was that cultural difference not understood can generate absurdity, and moreover it can contribute to risky misunderstandings. A 'diplomatic incident' occurred when former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans joked about Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's missing dog. Asked at a press conference for comment, Gareth quipped that it probably wound up on Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's dinner table. The story made headlines around the world, and was insulting to Chinese, most of whom do not eat dog meat (where it is eaten the animal is bred specially for the table). Evans had to apologise in Parliament and mend relations with both the Governor of Hong Kong and the Chinese government.

In international relations, you must, Jocelyn observed, know the ground rules: they start with understanding the language and culture. Humour is found in all cultures but there are differences in its use. On a scale measuring humour rules, Australia would be near one end and China the other. In Australia we can joke about almost anyone and anything; in China there are many more restrictions, cultural and political, many deriving from thousand year old traditions. Confucianism taught virtues of respect for authority and moderation in behaviour which still apply today. Confucian moral philosophy has underwritten most conventions about using humour: if Confucianism were the only tradition, 'then perhaps Chinese people today would be pretty humourless', she said.

Other traditions also influence Chinese humour. Zhuangzi, a sage contemporary with Confucius, used humour to teach his Daoist philosophy. This humour, 'gentle but also quite biting', enabled Daoists as a kind of opposition party under Confucian administrations to reveal the faults of society and remonstrate with emperors and rulers. Court jesters employed by kings and emperors were often Daoists and some braved death to expose corruption and inhumanity by criticising the emperor. Stories of cruel Chinese emperors and jesters' responses circulated by word of mouth were collected and published, retold in histories and staged as historical dramas. Over centuries they built resentment of dictatorial rulers, sometimes spilling over into rebellion and revolution. In any society, the oppressed

unable to defend themselves still have the weapon of humour.

The word *humour* goes back in European tradition to the idea that our bodies were filled with fluids that affected our moods. An excess of one type of fluid makes a person morose and sad, an excess of another type of fluid makes them angry. There's a similar tradition



in Chinese medicine theory too. In Chinese history the word humour does not quite exist. There are words for jokes and for wit. The word Chinese currently use to mean humour is borrowed from English.

In China today a mocking, satirising, biting Daoist kind of humour flourishes. Chinese is particularly apt for punning. New ways of creating and spreading quips, jokes and parodies abound, particularly on the internet. Although the Party has systems to censor web content, people generally have freedom of expression that they never enjoyed before. The tide of humour is very influential in helping mould public opinion. Jocelyn recounted a humorous attack on corrupt officials circulated on the Chinese web earlier this year, coinciding with a vigorous anti-corruption campaign and also reflecting the tradition amongst educated Chinese of exchanging doggerel to mock social excesses: five bureau chiefs dining in a restaurant hold a poetry competition to decide who pays for the meal, the rule being that each verse must use the following words in successive lines: 'pointed', 'round', 'thousands', 'ten thousand', 'is there?' and 'there is not'. After the chiefs depart with their six bawdy verses, the cook says: 'Bullets are pointed. Handcuffs are round. Thousands of corrupt officials have been sentenced to death. Tens of thousands of baddies have been arrested. Is there any justice? There is not.'

Concluding, Jocelyn remarked that humour is the distilled essence of culture – and jokes rely on cultural signals intelligible only to 'insiders'. So with China playing an increasingly important role in Australia's future, making more effort to understand its culture and its humour, 'we'll find we have a lot in common'.

*Transcription by Helen Ruby*

*Report by Kris Clarke*



Leah Purcell is an actor, playwright, singer and director. Her birthday post on the Library's Facebook page reached 555 people. Follow us on [www.facebook.com/nationalwomenslibrary](http://www.facebook.com/nationalwomenslibrary)

## PRADET: FROM SMALL SEEDS BIG TREES GROW

Social worker Susan Kendall was a respected Counsellor of the Northern Sydney Sexual Assault Service based in Royal North Shore Hospital from 1989, and coordinator from 1991 to 2006. Long disheartened, she resigned in 2014. She considers women's services have less support than others. NSW mental health is compartmentalised – separate services for domestic violence, sexual assault, child protection, drug/alcohol and adolescent psychiatry. Limited resources cannot respond to many people experiencing domestic violence and mental illness including adult survivors of child abuse. Police training does not challenge attitudes. 'No wonder we're failing!', she says, deploring refuge closures and reduced services.

Her second career had emerged in 2000. After East Timor's pro-independence referendum, Indonesia's military destroyed 80% of the country, killing and terrorising the population. Appalled, Susan viewed Australia as complicit with Indonesia and threw herself into helping establish mental health services in Timor Leste. By late 1999 she was encouraging the Australian Association of Social Workers to get involved. Early in the new year, an AusAID-supported six week introduction to mental health was given to 15 East Timorese health workers brought to Australia. By mid-2000 Susan was establishing Timor Leste's first health service – PRADET (Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor) and organising national consultation on what was needed. She also attended a Women's Congress in Dili and stayed on for two months in that poorest country in the Asia-Pacific region.

Since then, three times each year she has spent two months in Timor Leste as a PRADET International Mentor. 'It's a privilege', she says, 'helping put things right in this amazing little country, neglected and screwed over by America, Britain, Australia, and Indonesia (and also Japan in World War II)'. An AM in 2006 recognised her service to the community in social welfare, particularly through programs supporting victims of violent crime in Australia and Timor Leste.

Timor Leste's extreme need inspired her and colleagues to create a mental health service far superior to NSW 'silos'. Eager Timorese from all corners of their ravaged country wanted a national and comprehensive psychosocial western-style service for mental illness. Their highest priority was the 'crazy' people wandering the streets following the traumatic independence process. With its motto, 'start low, go slow', PRADET initially provided treatment, information and support for individuals and families. Later came programs for groups of families missing family members.

Programs gradually expanded although there were hiccups. In 2001, AusAID was funding PRADET to help resettle Timorese taken by the Indonesian military to West Timor. As oil and gas negotiations proceeded with Timor Leste, AusAID funding for PRADET and other projects stopped, 'suddenly – overnight', Susan said. 'It was the

first time I've been ashamed of being Australian. Aid work is full of politics'. UNHCR bailed PRADET out for 2001; Susan stayed nine months that year, and with others raised funds in Australia enabling PRADET to become a Timorese NGO. During 2002, a UNICEF contract, significant German NGO funding and another small NGO grant employed first two, then more staff including midwives. Domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and human trafficking programs followed.

Magical moments happened – one when a girl of 14, sexually assaulted, five months pregnant, silent since the assault, still silent during 10-week group training, joined in singing traditional resistance songs at a farewell picnic.

As always, cultural difference complicates the task. Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum, spoken by most people under 35, have no words for sexual assault, rape or child-grooming. Timorese staff find it challenging to write up case notes, given that under Indonesian occupation the written record could lead to betrayal and prison. As well, in an uncertain situation the cultural disposition leans towards keeping everything in one's head. By 2004 Susan's innovative role had embraced producing a tri-lingual Medical Forensic Protocol (Tetum/Portuguese, the official language/English) to document injuries from crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse to court-evidence standard. Females, males, adults, children, three crimes – all in the one document. Australia still lacks a comprehensive protocol.

PRADET engages with Timorese police at all levels. Community preventive health education addresses drugs (marijuana, amphetamines, betel nut) and alcohol. Susan enlisted young Timorese to debunk the dangerous myth that drinking lots of local palm wine (up to 80% pure alcohol) produces many children. A psychosocial prison program focuses on young offenders and women, with families encouraged to visit and staff follow-up after release. A village program aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour (largely male violence and patriarchy) has been 'hugely' successful. One village headman was hanging out washing when a male neighbour asked him, 'Why?' He responded, 'Helping my wife'.

With 64 staff based in Dili National Hospital and four district hospital branches, PRADET has treated more than 4000 people and provided training and education country-wide. Considered by donors a 'jewel in the crown' of NGOs, PRADET hopes Australia's now significant funding may soon increase. A big, still growing tree.

PRADET's website is: [www.pradet.org](http://www.pradet.org)

Transcription by Helen Ruby

Report by Margot Simington



# TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Anticipation was palpable at the Annual Luncheon as guests greeted like-minded friends. Former Governor-General Quentin Bryce would address the audience – on the topical issue of domestic violence (report page 1).

We were privileged to have Linda Burney, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, commence proceedings with the Welcome to Country. Jozefa welcomed guests and introduced new patron of the Library, Quentin Bryce. She acknowledged the presence of patron Elizabeth Evatt. She welcomed Board members and former Board members, especially Marie Muir who made the trip from her home in Perth; staff and students of Canterbury Girls High, Fairfield High, The Forest High, Riverside Girls High, Sydney Girls High, Wenona, Mosman High, St Vincents College, Willoughby Girls High, Cheltenham Girls High, Loreto Kirribilli; and other organisations. She thanked generous supporters – the City of Sydney, and the Teachers Federation and Teachers Mutual Bank who donated raffle prizes.

Barbara Henery, Board member, reported on Library activities. The Library has received the campaign papers of Jeannette McHugh, former federal MP and long term Library member. Planning is underway for a function to mark the handover to Library Archives of Mary Ryan's diaries: Mary was a nurse and community activist in the Portland/Bathurst region appointed to the original Commonwealth Housing Commission by Ben Chifley. The Tapestry Project preserving women's histories has recently been relaunched on the Library Facebook page. Barbara highlighted the importance of the Library's role, drawing upon US historian Christine Stansell in *The Feminist Promise 1792 to the present* (2011): 'the vote, women's education, legal contraception to name a few, may now seem prosaic and humdrum to young women. Throughout the world ... the rights of women are targets of denunciation and violence, highlighting the fact that the battles are far from over. The abuse of women can be so easily expunged by destroying the records, obliterating the evidence or defunding the research or its repositories'.

Last year the Library was alerted to the uncertain future of a significant historical site for Australian women in Parramatta NSW. Bonney Djuric, former Parramatta Girls' Home inmate, artist and founder of Parragirls, has invited the Library to join with other interested parties lobbying for the Parramatta Female Factory site to be listed on the World Heritage Register and preserved as a memorial to inmates. The first stage of assessment, listing of buildings on the site in the Register of the National Estate, was announced earlier this year. The full site assessment is due for completion in June 2017. This precinct may be a possible venue for future collaborative exhibitions using source material from the Library's collections.

The Library's website now features a short promotional DVD and our website and Facebook page promote and publicise Library events. Barbara referred to the Library's unique collection of over 1600 posters, which volunteer cataloguers are gradually digitising so they can be accessed and reproduced. Thanking past donors, Barbara encouraged donations to the Library of books, posters, unpublished manuscripts, personal papers, university theses and minutes of meetings. She also thanked volunteers, appealing to those in the audience with time and expertise to share to join our volunteers in advancing the Library into the future.

Kris Clarke



Picture 8: Suzanne Marks (l) and Connie Dimas (r)

Picture 9: Guests having a good time at the Luncheon!

Picture 10: Han Joo Ahn addressing the guests

Picture 11: Quentin Bryce and students from Fairfield High

Picture 12: Quentin Bryce with teacher and student from Fairfield

Picture 13: Quentin Bryce, Marie de Lepervanche; teacher and student from Wenona



# CHEON 2015



Picture 1: Quentin Bryce, Elizabeth Evatt, Jozefa Sobski  
Picture 2: Teacher and students from Canterbury Girls High



Picture 3: Jozefa Sobski and student drawing a raffle ticket

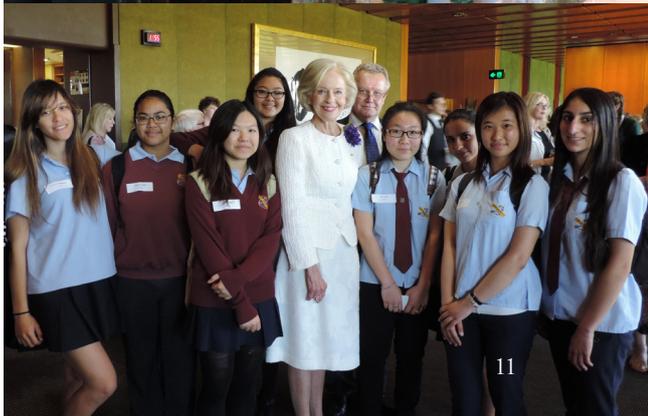
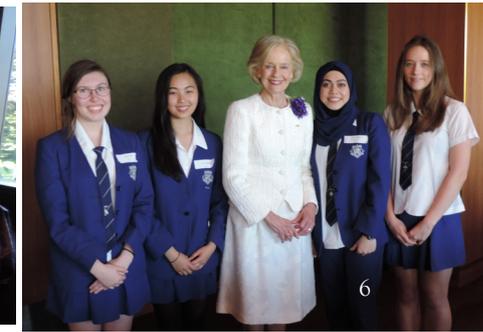


Picture 4: Barbara Henery

Picture 5: The Strangers Dining Room filled to capacity

Picture 6: Quentin Bryce and students from Canterbury Girls High

Picture 7: A raffle prize selector



High  
dents

Han Joo Ahn, Willoughby Girls High, moved a vote of thanks to Quentin for her address. Passionately committed to social justice, youth participation in politics and women's issues, Han Joo had been in the YMCA's Youth Parliament program. The Parliament of Youth opened her eyes to how domestic violence can strike anyone – man, woman or child, and to the urgent action needed. It was 'hideous', she said, that on current figures one in three of her friends will face physical or sexual violence.

She was proud her Youth Parliament 'Domestic Violence Comprehensive Prevention and Protection' Bill (unanimously accepted) was now a Youth Act – proof, she said, that young people have solutions for problems in Australia. The Act provides for improving awareness, and prevention, of violence through education from early years and establishing separate domestic violence agencies. She called on everyone to accept responsibility using love and power to achieve the necessary cultural change.

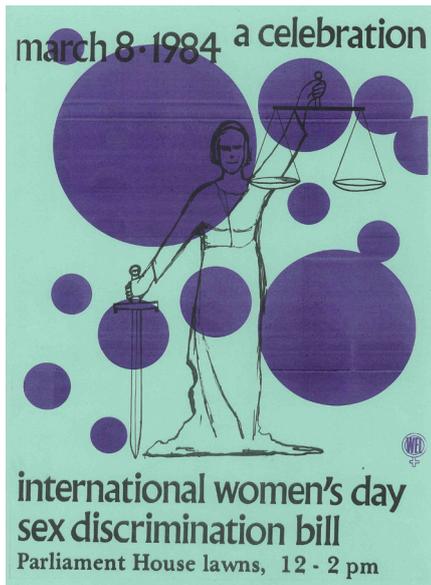
Jozefa thanked Han Joo for her talk and forewarned the many students present that 'We will be passing on the baton to you'.

Margot Simington

# Library display on history of WEL website

The website, 'A History of the Women's Electoral Lobby', of the Australian National University Canberra has been upgraded and its information brought up to date and expanded. The website now has five photo galleries – Women's Liberation (WEL's predecessor), WEL in the 1970s, WEL in the 1980s, WEL in the 1990s and WEL in the 2000s.

WEL's history project team is very grateful to the Jessie Street National Women's Library for making available images of posters and photographs of WEL activities for the new photo galleries.



Images of posters held by the Library that are displayed in our photo galleries are from the 1970s and 1980s. One that the WEL history project team was particularly pleased about was from March 1984 and advertises a party to be held to celebrate the passage of the federal Sex

Discrimination Bill. WEL had had photos of this party, complete with champagne and a purple, green and white cake, but we had not previously been aware of this poster. Does anyone know who designed it?

The website's WEL in the 1990s gallery has numbers of photos of the January 1992 WEL National Conference from the Library's Helen Leonard collection. This was a particularly important conference. Not only was it celebrating 20 years since WEL's formation but representatives of older and new women's organisations attended it to discuss whether or not they should form a coalition. The photos show that it was a particularly lively conference, with exhibitions of memorabilia and many items, such as T-shirts, for sale.

After serious discussion of pros and cons, it was decided to form a coalition. The 1992 National Conference



Helen Leonard and Eva Cox from WEL-NSW with T-shirts they had brought to the 1992 WEL National Conference. The back of the T-shirts said 'Feminist'

concluded with singing a new 'Women's Coalition Anthem'. The purpose of the coalition, CAPOW! (Coalition of Participating Organisations of Women), is to facilitate closer cooperation in lobbying government and preparing submissions. The Library's photos of the first meeting of CAPOW held in November 1993 are shown in the WEL in the 1990s gallery.



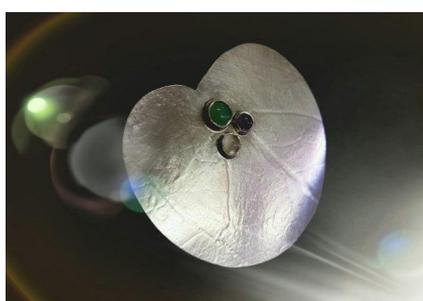
WEL members at the first meeting of CAPOW! L to R, Wendy Fatin (WA), Julie McCarron-Benson (ACT), Mary Owen (Victoria) (behind table) and Jo Healy-North (ACT)

The brief photo captions in the WEL history galleries often do not adequately identify the many WEL activities and WEL members.

For more information you would need to consult research reports, papers and publications listed on the website. An important reference is the book of the project, Marian Sawer with Gail Radford *Making women count: a history of the Women's Electoral Lobby in Australia* (2008).

The short address of the new website is <http://wel.anu.edu.au/>. The site has links to various research projects of WEL.

Dr Gail Radford  
WEL history project team  
Email: [gail.radford@anu.edu.au](mailto:gail.radford@anu.edu.au)



## A brooch by Connie Dimas

This elegant brooch was created by Connie Dimas, an inner west Sydney jeweller. She was commissioned to create an individual piece of jewellery for the Library's 2015 Annual Luncheon raffle. It was offered as second prize, and won by longstanding Library member, Jude Conway (see p12 for full list of winners).

A silver leaf with texture, it is a hand-made piece achieved by running a real leaf with silver through a jeweller's roller. The stones clustered on the leaf are in suffragette colours – the purple amethyst representing awareness, the green chalcedony representing hope, and the moonstone new beginnings.

# Damned Whores and God's Police 40 years on



In 1975 Anne Summers' ambitious book *Damned Whores and God's Police* reframed Australian history by placing women at its centre. The colonisation of Australia, she argued, had created a patriarchal gender order that reduced 19th century women to one of two narrow roles: virtuous wives

and mothers, dubbed 'God's police'; and the transgressive 'damned whores'.

Anne Summers convened a three day conference. 'Damned Whores and God's Police 40 Years On, the Colonization of Women in Australia', in September to celebrate 40 years since this seminal work was published and to shed light on the progress of feminism since 1975. Anne requested our Library provide some graphic display materials for the conference registration area at University of Technology Sydney. This was a perfect opportunity to showcase a selection of the Library's colourful archival posters and of some early editions of the first Australian Women's Liberation newspaper, *Mejane*. It was felt these would highlight the breadth of women's activism over the last 40 years and provide visual stimulus for conference participants during program breaks. Barbara Henery and Sherri Hilario curated the display, then joined the conference audience to hear speakers and panel discussions covering many diverse issues affecting women in Australia today.

The sell-out conference was attended mainly by women, including some from interstate and overseas. It featured an excellent panel of speakers over three days including Dennis Altman, Julia Baird, Larissa Behrendt, Quentin Bryce, Elizabeth Broderick, Meredith Burgmann, Annabel Crabb, Khadija Gbla, Ged Kearney, Emily Maguire, Sally McManus, David Morrison, Jill Tomlinson, Mariam Veiszadeh, Penny Wong and Clare Wright. Keynote

addresses were: Anne Summers on 'Damned Whores and God's Police 40 years on'; Nimco Ali on 'Female genital mutilation: my personal story'; Dennis Altman on 'What became of liberation?'; Larissa Behrendt on 'Intersect:



race meets gender'; Ged Kearney on 'Women and work'; Lieutenant General David Morrison (rtd) on 'A man's journey to better understanding the challenges for women'. Sessions included questions from the audience, and a forum at the end of each day entitled Daily Shout Out for anyone to speak for three minutes about a subject of concern.

Salient points emerging from the conference include:

- current social policies formulated predominantly by men are moving more women into poverty and homelessness
- the gendered pay gap persists
- continuing gender inequality is the strongest correlative factor in the gravest issue facing women in Australia today: domestic violence

During the progress of the conference, reports came through about the Australia-wide tally of women's deaths from domestic violence. This was conducted by Destroy the Joint, a social media lobbying group founded in 2012. Sadly, the tally increased during the conference: three more women killed by an intimate partner or former partner brought the total to 63. This is unacceptable – a national disgrace.

Barbara Henery

## Thanks for badges

The appeal in our July *Newsletter* for donations of feminist badges produced some welcome additions to our collection. Thanks to

Erika Addis  
Margaret Bailey  
Pam Carter  
Diane Hague  
Deborah Jordan  
Frances Lemmes  
Anna Logan  
Helen Tuckey

for badges already received. We look forward to receiving other collections which have been promised.



# BOOK LAUNCH: Jacqueline Dinan *Between the dances*

Jacqueline Dinan's book, *Between the Dances: World War 2 Women Tell Their Stories* was launched in August by Radio National broadcaster Fran Kelly. The book, to quote Tamie Fraser AO, is 'a poignant revelation of a generation of women who gave inimitable commitment to their country'. It reveals moving personal conversations, photographs and letters from over 300 remarkable women, a testament to women's real lives during World War II.

Catholic Sisters of the Good Samaritan hosted the launch at their Glebe Centre, Toxteth House in inner Sydney. Sister Clare Condon, Superior, welcomed us – the Deputy Lord Mayor Cr Robyn Kemmis, representatives of ex-servicewomen's associations including War Widows and the Australian War Brides Association, the Red Cross, Girl Guides, History Teachers Association and the Jessie Street National Women's Library. Several remarkable women featured in the book were also present with family members.

Sister Clare related the experiences of one Good Samaritan included in the book, Sister McDonald. After Australia declared war on Japan in December 1941, Sister McDonald lived through the Japanese air raids in Townsville, North Queensland. In 1948 she went to Japan after Cardinal Gilroy requested the Good Samaritan order send six sisters to Nagasaki to care for atom bomb victims. They are still there today with Japanese sisters.

Jacqueline Dinan's address and slide show included stories of women she interviewed between 2011 and 2013. She described her book as 'a living history told at the eleventh hour by a generation that were there and no history textbook will tell it as well'. She spoke of the women's generosity in contributing personal photographs and newspaper clippings depicting themselves at work in the Women's Land Army producing food, in workshops maintaining aircraft and road vehicles, and in research laboratories and hospitals. She spoke of Sister Jean Marie who stayed to serve at the Townsville school during the air raids; of Joan who spent her days drying, repairing and folding parachutes; of Sheila who fled Malaya for Singapore with David, and was interned; and of the quilt made by women POWs which now hangs in the Australian War Memorial. She spoke of Erin, one of 15,000 war brides who went to the United States. And of wonderful, feisty Joan, a driver for officers: she had an affair with a married one and when asked by Jacqueline should this be included said, 'I'm 91 and couldn't give a stuff.' Such was life 'between the dances'. And then there were the dances. Women who served in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force told of night dances with men outnumbering women by 10:1 – 'you were always grabbed'.

Launching the book, Fran Kelly picked up on the

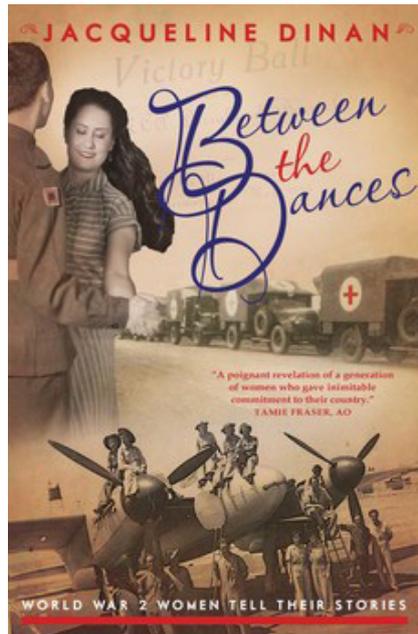
book's title, sharing what she learned reading her father's five war diaries. He had also talked about 'doing quite a lot of dancing, of the girls he met and his gratitude to them for their friendship and support'. He talked of the fun servicemen had, of various dance partners and how mindful the girls were of the men away fighting. She spoke too about her mother's experiences in wartime Adelaide dancing the night away with US GIs, going on dates and generally having fun while also doing her bit for the war effort.

Fran described how Australian women flocked in thousands to the Women's Land Army; of how the war changed women's lives forever by opening up occupations and responsibilities never before allowed to them; and how despite backbreaking work they still 'managed to have the time of their lives'. She shared the delightful story of her mother, who despite social disapproval travelled alone from Adelaide to Melbourne, tripped when getting off the train and fell into the arms of her dad – and the rest is family history.

Then Imogen Clark, who sang in World War I Centenary celebrations at Gallipoli, performed her own composition, 'While Women Wait'. Her great-great-grandmother had been one: every day she checked fatality lists for her husband's name. Imogen sang of women's hardship and pain, of women waiting at home and of 'their children's cry for the human race'.

Students from St Scholastica's College (the Good Samaritan high school within the Glebe Centre) participated with a Welcome to Country at the start of proceedings, and a concluding vote of thanks. Jacqueline Dinan has kindly donated a signed copy of her book to the Library.

*Suzanne Marks*



## General donations since July 2015

### Donations of money help meet day-to-day running costs:

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Chris Burvill   | Sheila Byard       |
| Leone Ebert     | Cate Gow           |
| Nola Harris     | Kathleen Lamoureux |
| Noel Mills      | Eva Molnar         |
| Angela Morgan   | Rachel Peterson    |
| Fiona Ratcliffe | Pip Rath           |
| Sarah Taylor    | Barbara Wall       |

### Donations of material expand our collection:

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Joan Bielski Estate | Jacqueline Dinan |
| Anne Gorman         | Barbara Henery   |
| Bev Kingston        | Karen Lamb       |
| Jane Pollard        | Pat Richardson   |
| Cecile Yazbek       |                  |

Eacham Historical Society | Manning Valley Historical Society | Spinifex | The Women's Library | University of Queensland Press | University of Technology Sydney

## Tribute to Robin Porter

The Library lost a dedicated supporter when Robin Porter died in April. She joined in 1991 and as a volunteer, including as an elected Board member in 1992, she gave valuable service to the Library.

Robin devoted her professional life to early childhood education. Gaining a Teachers Certificate in 1955, she went overseas and gained experience teaching in London. Back in Australia in 1961 she taught at various infants schools. She graduated BA from the University of New England in 1968, in 1971 joined Macquarie University's Teacher Education Program, and gained a PhD in 1981 having begun a lifetime partnership with Gregory Sachs.

Despite illness, by 1987 she had become a Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Primary Teacher Education Program at Macquarie, had published academic papers and a ground-breaking book – *Computers and learning in the First Years of School* (1988).

After retiring in 1991 from full-time work Robin continued part-time at Macquarie and with her consultancy work. She also contributed her skills and feminist commitment to the Library, to the Women's Action and Information Group at Lane Cove and to the original Lane Cove Amnesty Group.

Robin's friends and colleagues testify to her quiet strength, embrace of new ideas, innovative research, support for girls' education particularly in maths and science, and her capacity to share and encourage others. Library supporters have been fortunate to know her.

Robin has left a very generous legacy to the Library.

*Marie de Lepervanche*

### Capital Investment Fund

Since its launch in September 2009, the Capital Investment Fund has reached \$236,946. Our target is \$500,000, the interest from which will provide essential support for Library operations. If you would like to contribute, please indicate on the membership/donation form on this page.

#### CIF donations since July 2015:

Julie James Bailey  
Chris Burvill  
Diane Deane

## A warm welcome to our new members

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Rita Boyle        | Sarah Burns       |
| Andrea Connell    | Judith Doyle      |
| Trish Doyle       | Vivien Dunkerley  |
| Susan Hilliker    | Christine Kibble  |
| Stephanie Lyle    | Eva Molnar        |
| Angela Morgan     | Pip Rath          |
| Elizabeth Renshaw | Janet Sutherland  |
| Anna O'Brien      | Paula McLean      |
| Martha Mollison   | Rachel Peterson   |
| Sarah Taylor      | Patricia Turnbull |

Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia

## MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

I wish to:  join the library  renew my membership  
 make a donation

Date: ...../...../.....

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr/other

Name:.....

Address:.....

Tel: (h)..... (w)..... (m).....

Email: (Please print BLOCKLETTERS)

Please send newsletters by email instead of hardcopy.

### Membership Category

- Full Member \$60  Life member \$1,000  
 Organisation \$120  Student \$20 (conditions apply)  
 Concession \$30 (Pensioner/Centrelink Concession Cardholders)

A membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Members joining after 1 October are financial until 31 December of the following year.

### Donations (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

- I wish to make a donation of \$.....  
 to the Library for general purposes  
 to the Library's Capital Investment Fund  
 I am willing to have my name published in the Newsletter  
 I wish to remain anonymous

### Payment Details

- Enclosed is my cheque/money order for \$.....  
(payable to Jessie Street National Women's Library)  
 Please charge my MasterCard/Visa with \$.....  
Name of cardholder:.....  
Card no.....  
Expiry date ...../.....  
Signature:.....

### Auto Debit Authorisation

- I authorise JSNWL to charge this, and all future membership renewals as they fall due, to the credit card number above on this form.  
 I authorise JSNWL to charge \$.....annually to the above credit card as a donation to  
 the Library for general purposes or to  
 the Library's Capital Investment Fund.

Signature:.....

### Become a volunteer

- I would like to help the Library by becoming a volunteer. (You will be contacted for an interview.)

Please forward the completed form to:

**Jessie Street National Women's Library**  
**GPO Box 2656, Sydney NSW 2001**

Jessie Street National Women's Library  
GPO Box 2656 Sydney NSW 2001

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AUSTRALIA**

**Note: Please advise the Library if your contact details have changed.**

**Visit us:**

523–525 Harris Street (cnr William Henry Street), Ultimo

Please use the intercom for admittance

For level access, enter via the Ultimo Community Centre in Bulwara Rd

**Opening times:**

The Library is open to the public Monday to Friday 10 am to 3 pm

**Borrowing policy:**

The public can access items using the interlibrary loan system. The public cannot borrow items but may use them in their library of choice. A loan collection is available to financial members

**How to reach the Library:**

There are several ways to travel to the Library:

- ▶ The Library is a 20 minute walk from Town Hall Station (through Darling Harbour) or from Central Station (via Harris Street)
- ▶ Bus 501 (Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre stop) from Sydney Town Hall or Railway Square
- ▶ Bus 389 (Harris and Allan Streets stop) from Bondi Junction or Town Hall/Park Street
- ▶ Light rail from Central Station to Exhibition stop
- ▶ If you drive, there is limited two hour street metre parking available

**Postal Address:**

GPO Box 2656  
Sydney, NSW 2001

**Telephone:**

(02) 9571 5359

**Email:**

[info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au](mailto:info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au)

**Visit our website:**

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



**Annual Luncheon 2015: raffle prizes and winners**

The Library thanks all individuals and organisations who donated prizes. Raffle tickets were drawn by students from each school attending (see page 6).

- 1<sup>st</sup> Cathy Brigden - Accommodation for two for two nights at The Langham, Sydney, including breakfast for two on both days, value \$1200, donated by the Teachers Mutual Bank, supported by The Langham
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jude Conway - Sterling silver handmade brooch, value \$550, designed by Connie Dimas Jewellery
- 3<sup>rd</sup> A. E. Clarke - David Jones gift voucher, value \$350, donated by Marie Muir
- 4<sup>th</sup> Jenny Forster - ABC gift voucher, value \$100, donated by Gail Hewison
- 5<sup>th</sup> Rita Boyle - Middle Harbour Coffee Cruise, value \$98, donated by Captain Cook Cruises

- 6<sup>th</sup> Bettina Pidcock - Signed copy of *The Country Wife* by Anne Gorman plus a bottle of wine, donated by Anne Gorman
- 7<sup>th</sup> Michelle Cavanagh - Signed copy of *Thea Astley: Inventing Her Own Weather* by Karen Lamb plus a bottle of wine, donated by Karen Lamb
- 8<sup>th</sup>- Barbara Smoothy, Fay Crampton and Julie
- 10<sup>th</sup> Gerrison - Two bottles of wine each

All wine was produced by Mount View High School Cessnock and donated by the NSW Teachers Federation.