

HOBART WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE NEWSLETTER



**SUMMER
05/06**

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Method of Choice

In many countries including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and France women have access to medical terminations via a combination of the drugs mifepristone and misoprostol. Mifepristone, formerly known as RU-486, was developed in France in the early 1980's and has been in use there since 1988. Over two million women in Europe and the US have chosen to undergo a medical abortion instead of a surgical one.

Currently in Australia, the most common option for a woman seeking an abortion is to undergo a surgical procedure in a clinic or a hospital, with all the associated risks of any surgery. Surgical terminations are invasive and may also be difficult to access, particularly for women who are geographically and financially disadvantaged. Australian women do not have access to the medical option because of an amendment by Senator Brian Harradine, to the Therapeutic Goods Act of 1996, prohibiting the use of mifepristone without the permission of the federal Health Minister.

Recently, mifepristone has hit headlines around the country. Following an article in the Medical Journal of Australia by Caroline de Costa, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Queensland's James Cook University, advocating the use of mifepristone, a push to have the ban lifted has begun.

Since the publication of the Professor de Costa's article, other doctors, including the President of the Australian Medical Association, the Vice President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Liberal MPs Dr Sharman Stone and Dr Mal Walsh have backed the call to lift the ban.



From the Australian Democrats website.

HERE FOR ALL WOMEN

Not surprisingly, many other politicians have weighed in to the debate. Some, such as Democrats Lyn Allison and Natasha Stott Despoja, support lifting the ban. Others including National MP Ron Boswell, are opposed. As well there are those who are non-committal or seemingly so, including the Prime Minister and, until recently, Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott.

Forgotten in all the political posturing is the fact that it is legally possible to have an abortion in this country and there is no valid reason to deny women a nonsurgical option.

In December Professor de Costa will formally lodge an application with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to use mifepristone for medical abortions. According to the TGA, the application will take several weeks to assess, and the final decision rests with Tony Abbott. Meanwhile, the Democrats plan to introduce amendments to the Therapeutic Goods Act to overturn Harradine's amendment.

Abbott recently rejected claims the federal government is denying women the right to choose to terminate a pregnancy by making it difficult to access the abortion pill. He claims the ban is in place to protect women from health risks associated with it.

Mifepristone has been used safely and effectively for seventeen years. As with any drug, it is not suited to all circumstances and can have some side effects. For more specific information on the abortion pill, you can ask your GP, contact a family planning clinic or check out the internet. This website, <http://www.feministcampus.org/act/prescribechoice/mifepristone.asp> is a great starting point.

A woman's choice in this matter should always be governed only by her informed knowledge of all the options, and never by others' decisions or determined by political bargaining.

If you wish to register your objection to the current ban on Mifepristone you can sign a petition at http://www.democrats.org.au/campaigns/reproductive_rights/ or write to Tony Abbott.

Betty Pybus, woman of significance



The organising committee with Professor Lyndall Ryan
Left to right Jane Dunsford, Emma Bridge, Prof Ryan,
Ruth Morgan and Andree Poppleton

The inaugural Betty Pybus Memorial Lecture held on October 18, 2005, was entitled "Feisty Mothers: Betty Pybus and Edna Ryan as path breaking feminists of the late 20th C". It was delivered by Professor Lyndall Ryan, daughter of Betty's contemporary activist, Edna Ryan. Professor Ryan proved an entertaining and informative speaker. Her acquaintance with Betty in the women's movement in the 70's provided both a personal touch and a professional context for her recollections. Betty would have been proud and amused to hear the account of her role in the establishment of the women's collective, the first abortion referral service and women's health clinic in Australia, all set in the dramatic context of early 70's.

Meanwhile, Lyndall's mother, Edna Ryan was championing equal pay. Both Edna and Betty came to the women's movement later in life, after life experiences and personal circumstances clearly exposed the appalling inequities faced by Australian women. Both women had daughters who were students at the time, and who were sympathetic to the newly formed women's movement. Interestingly Lyndall reported that many younger women of the time were astounded by the determination displayed by Betty and Edna. This provides an invitation to reflect on the involvement of younger women as activists today. Lyndall's address set the women's struggle of the 70's in context and opened the way for further exploration in future lectures of the issues pertinent to women today, including industrial relations issues, environmental concerns, and medical technology. For a transcript of Professor Ryan's lecture go to the news section of our website: <http://www.hwbc.com.au/News.htm>

Meanwhile, Betty has been named a Tasmanian "woman of significance", and details of her achievements both in the 70's and later in the Tasmanian context have been posted on Women Tasmania's website: http://www.women.tas.gov.au/significantwomen/search/betty_pybus.html.

Ideas for the second memorial lecture/lecturer in this series for 2006 can be sent to the Hobart Women's Health Centre, where they will be considered by the organising committee.

Yvonne Hardefeldt

Informed Women inform Doctors

As part of our commitment to promoting the best health outcomes for women, Hobart Women's Health Centre runs the Clinical Teaching Associate (CTA) program in association with the University of Tasmania School of Medicine. This program forms part of the university curriculum and teaches medical students to take Pap smears and perform pelvic and breast examinations in a empathetic, yet thorough, manner. It also raises students' awareness of the importance of breast and cervical screening for women.

The program is unique in the medical course as it provides students with the opportunity to interact with community women who are trained to assist Medical Students and to give information and feedback. Prior to this program pelvic examinations were performed on women under general anesthetic. As well as the 'hands on' experience, this program provides students with the opportunity to practice communicating with patients, gaining informed consent, explaining procedures and patients' rights, and taking accurate and appropriate medical histories.

The CTA program has been running for almost 12 years and we have built up an excellent course (even if we say so ourselves) with an enthusiastic group of CTAs involved in the training. The program achieved great results when externally evaluated.

This year's program is currently being wrapped up. We want to take the opportunity to publicly thank our CTAs and program Coordinators for the wonderful job they have done in 2005. We look forward to working with you all again next year.

The program is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, through Cancer Screening and Control Services.

Older Women's Health News.....

Did you know soy foods can help prevent bone breakages in post-menopausal women?

For post-menopausal woman worried about the possibilities of bone fractures, here is further evidence about the benefits of eating foods derived from soya beans. *The Pulse* in *The Weekend Australian* (Sept 17-18, 2005) reported on a recent study of nearly 25,000 post-menopausal Chinese women aged under 70. The study monitored their soy intake and assessed their risk of fractures over a 4 ½ year period. It seems the more soy products consumed, the lower the risk of fractures. A similar effect was found for those consuming high levels of isoflavones, plant chemicals that have a similar structure to the human hormone oestrogen but about 1000th the potency.

Soy foods are also very beneficial for women during menopause. To find out more, come to our menopause workshops!



Chocolate Mousse Pie (Tofu)

For the recipe go to http://www.gourmetsleuth.com/recipe_moussepie.htm

"Conversations in the courtyard"

(Tuesdays 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm, January 17 - February 21)

Are you at a loose end over summer?

Are you looking for stimulating conversation over the summer holiday period?

From mid January to the end of February we are offering our lovely courtyard venue on Tuesday afternoons for older women to share a cuppa, find out what's happening at the Health Centre in the coming months, and to meet women guests who have in some way made a unique and positive contribution to our social, political or environmental well-being.

This is your chance to find out about current happenings in Tasmania, or simply to chat with another woman whose contribution you have admired!

Tuesday Jan 17 Guest Fran Bladel

Now in retirement, after working to address the needs of women in our state during her 17 years as a Member of the House of Assembly. Fran will chat about her experiences as a woman and a politician.

Tuesday Jan 24 Guest Christina Henri

Community Artist whose current project is "Roses from the Heart", which involves the making of 25,000 bonnets and their installation in 4 locations (Dublin, London, Sydney and Hobart). The bonnets represent the convict women who were sent to Australia in the first half of the

19th century. (See more information in the feature article on page 5.)

Tuesday Jan 31 Guest Dr Sheila Given

A champion of the learning throughout life philosophy, Sheila is a well known advocate for older women as well as having all the tips about U 3A and School for Seniors.

Tuesday Feb 7 Guest Tess Tilbury

Tess is Regional Manager South, Women's Development Program, Women Tasmania, and has a long involvement in women's issues. She will talk about current projects at Women Tasmania and plans for 2006.

No need to book-just drop in on Tuesday afternoons!

Yoga and Women's Health

Yoga originated in India and is an ancient Sanskrit word meaning 'union'. Yoga creates balance in the body and mind by incorporating gentle exercise, breath control and relaxation, and has been used for centuries to promote good health and enhance well-being.

Yoga practices are designed to be physically, mentally and emotionally strengthening, to increase vitality and balance, as well as providing a sense of calm.

Yoga can be particularly beneficial for women, not only by facilitating general well-being but also by providing assistance for the following, specific conditions:

⊆ alleviating cramps and lower back discomfort, and reducing physical and emotional tension, yoga assists with menstruation, PMS, endometriosis and other gynaecological conditions by opening up the abdomen;

⊆ it supports pregnant women by relieving back strain, strengthening the muscles used in childbirth and calming the body and mind. (Always check with your doctor before enrolling in a class if you are pregnant.); and

⊆ it assists in peri-menopause and menopause by enhancing feelings of calm and mood balance through the stimulation of inner organs, including the ovaries and pituitary gland, thus regulating hormone functioning.

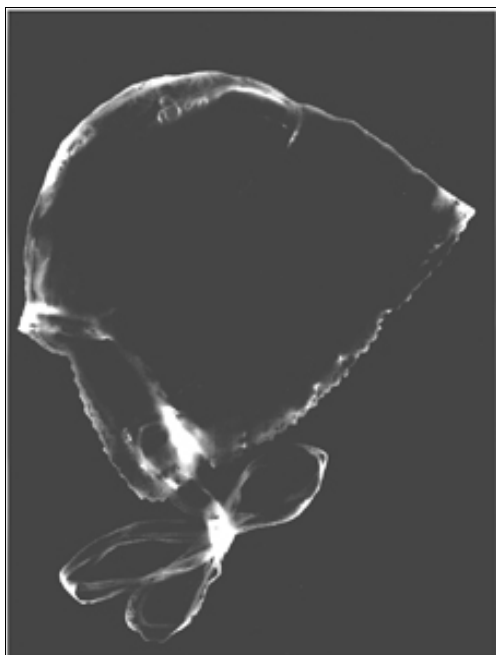


There are many different types of yoga, so ask the teacher what elements are emphasised within their class. *Hatha yoga* uses physical postures as a basis for practice and is the most common style taught in Australia. When choosing a class, it is also

important that it suits your natural pace and energy levels. To make sure a particular class is right for you it is a good idea to ask if you can attend one first before committing yourself to a course on an ongoing basis.

Adapted from article "Yoga for mind-Body Balance", The Jean Hailes National Magazine Winter 2005.

Roses from the Heart Project



Adult female bonnet, pattern taken from
1860s colonial bonnet (muslin)

On October 5th, 2004 an Ecumenical Service was held at St. James' Church, Cygnet for a 'Blessing of the Bonnets' ceremony. Many women, from throughout the Valley and surrounding districts, gathered to have bonnets they'd made for the Roses from the Heart Project blessed. A large number of the community, including local school children, participated in the service. The immense amount of feedback received indicates this event was seen as a historic moment, when diverse sections of the community came together to celebrate their female convict ancestor's lives and to gain a sense of healing. The Service incorporated a Welcome to Country and an acknowledgment of the 'Stolen Generation'.

Images of the bonnets presented on October 5th will be displayed on the Female Factory website in a couple of months. The images will be rotated to ensure all the bonnets will be seen by the viewing public.

A number of services are planned over the next year as groups of women complete their involvement in the

creation of bonnets celebrating the lives of the 25,000 women who were sent to Australia as convicts from the 'motherland'.

The completion date for the project has altered from 8th March, 2006 to the 8th March, 2007. The work will be displayed in open perspex boxes equalling the number of ships on which women were transported to Australia. Each box will carry the name of a ship, with the number of bonnets inside equalling the number of women and children aboard. Integral to the international vision of the project, the work will be exhibited simultaneously in Hobart, Tasmania; Parramatta, New South Wales; London, England and Dublin, Ireland.

The energy and unconditional love that goes into making these commemorative bonnets provides a very unique platform for healing the hurt so many have endured. 'Lifting the veil of amnesia' and giving a rightful place in history to these women who have significantly contributed to the society we enjoy today is truly significant.

The Rose Installation in Yard One of the Female Factory Site, South Hobart remains on track for March 8th, 2006 and the photographic images produced from the event will feature in the following year's exhibition.

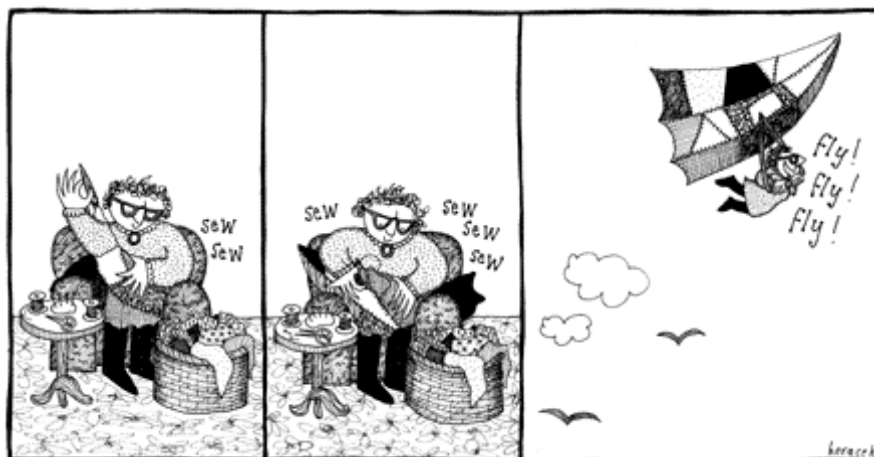
For all those taking part in the Project I would like to thank you very much for your involvement. *Christina Henri Postgraduate Student School of Art University of Tasmania*

Would you like to make a bonnet for this project?

Jill Cartwright will be available at the HWHC each Thursday afternoon 1.00-3.00 from Feb 23 to help you get started. Patterns and instructions are available at the centre or can be downloaded from the following website: www.femalefactory.com.au/exhibit.htm#Roses.

(See page 4 - Conversations in the Courtyard, January 24, with Christina Henri)

Phone Yvonne on 6231 3212 for further information.



Cartoon copyright Judy Horacek, reprinted with permission, www.horacek.com.au

WHAT'S ON



HWHC

The following **group sessions and activities** are held at the Centre on a regular basis and are free unless otherwise stated. We welcome referrals to any of these programs.

- Birth and Beyond** Monday fortnightly 9:30 for 10 am start until 1 pm.
Last session for 2005 is December 12, recommences on February 13.
Women considering pregnancy, who are already pregnant, those with babies and young children, and midwives are invited and encouraged to attend this group session to share and learn more about birthing and mothering experiences. Ph Rashelle 6267 4740
- Breast Cancer Support** 3rd Tuesday monthly 11:30 am to 1 pm.
Last session for 2005 November 15, recommences February 21.
For any woman diagnosed with breast cancer who would like information and support.
- Encore** 8 week gentle exercise program for women after breast cancer. The next Encore program will be held at the Hazelwood Pool from Wednesday, February 22nd to April 12th.
Contact Yvonne at HWHC for more information.
- Fitball Beginners' Class** Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 am – 11:30 am.
Last session for 2005 December 15, recommences January 3.
\$5 per class with physiotherapist Pat Sandercock. Numbers are limited, so phone Pat for information and to book on 6229 7488.
- GP services** Tues, Wed & Thurs 9:30 am -1 pm ½ hour bulk-billed consultations by appointment.
- Massage** Wednesday by appointment only \$30 p.h.
Last session for 2005 is December 14, when Jackie will be going on extended leave.
For information and to make an appointment phone Jackie 0423 482 125.
We do have a new masseuse starting next year, please ring the Centre in 2006 for details.
- Meditation** Guided and safe relaxation meditation Tuesday 10 - 11 am (beginners welcome) Last session for 2005 is December 13.
- Older Women's Friendship Group** Every 2nd Tuesday of the month 1:30 to 3:30 pm.
Last session for 2005 November 15, recommences February 14.
Interesting speakers, great conversation and lots of laughter. \$2 per sessions. Phone Barbara on 6244 3993 or Yvonne at the Centre for information.
- Reiki** Tuesday afternoons by appointment only.
Last session for 2005 December 13, recommences January 24.
Take care of yourself and your welfare in pleasant and peaceful surroundings. \$25 per session, phone Cynthia 0419 337 544.
- Tai Chi** Monday 10 to 11 am & 2 to 3 pm.
Last session for 2005 December 12, recommences January 23.
This is a low impact form of Tai Chi which focuses on increasing mobility and flexibility while developing inner strength and tranquility.
- The Lounge** Friendly and informal meeting space for same-sex attracted women.
Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month from 6 pm Last meeting for 2005 November 22.
There will be no meetings in December or early January, back in action on January 24, 2006.
- Older Women Get Walking** Commences Monday mornings at 10 am to 12 noon from February 6 to April 3.
Phone Yvonne if you are interested in walking for health and companionship
See article on page 8.
- Writers' Support Group** Second Wednesday of the month 2 pm - 4 pm.
Last session for 2005 November 3, recommences February 8. Contact Yvonne at the Centre.
- Yoga** Wednesdays 10 - 11:30 am with Zoe \$5 per session.
Last session for 2005 December 14, recommences February 1.

Come in for a cuppa and browse in our library, or use the photocopier.

Senior Momentum

This year's project was linked to **Beyond Blue**, the national depression initiative. Members made a series of quilts for **Quilt the Blues** and a large community quilt, **re-TIE-ing the blues**. This is made from 576 hexagons from men's ties, sewn by many women in groups throughout the state. It was assembled by the Senior Momentum members at Hobart Women's Health Centre. After being exhibited at the Schoolhouse Gallery in Rosny, the quilts have started touring, at the Waterside Pavilion for Mental Health Week and with the Rotary Safari touring the state including the Deloraine Craft Show. Many thanks to all who worked so hard on this project and gave generously of their ties and time. re-TIE-ing the blues will have a permanent home in the Backspace of HWHC.

This project sparked the idea for a series of small textiles with health-related themes, designed to tour as suitcase exhibitions to health centres throughout the state. The first exhibition is planned for International Women's Day, March 8 2006, and will be held at the Hobart Women's Health Centre. Senior Momentum invites any textile artist to exhibit in this show, an alternative to Material Girl, the Women Tasmania Art Competition which does not include a category for textiles this year.

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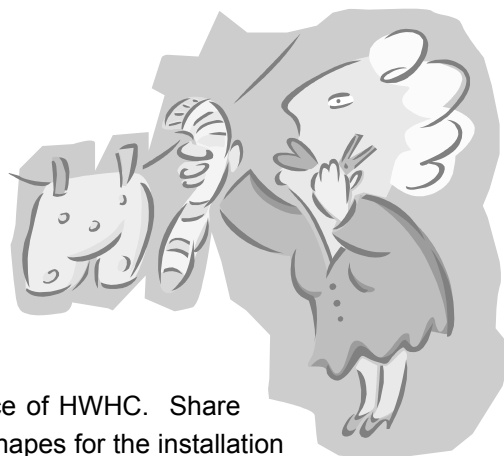
Celebrate the Resilience of Tasmanian Women

Hang your story on the washing line as part of the installation

Wash Day Blues

on International Women's Day

March 8 2006 at The Female Factory



Join Senior Momentum on Thursday afternoons at 2pm in the Backspace of HWHC. Share stories, write and laugh as we remember how we coped. Make garment shapes for the installation Wash Day Blues to symbolise events in the life of Tasmanian women.

For more information on any of these projects, contact Jennifer Line, Senior Momentum Coordinator on 6272 1128 or jenline@iprimus.com.au

Young person aged 12 – 25?

Hobart City Council's Youth ARC provides options for all young people

The Youth Centre is located at 44 Collins Street, the back of the City Hall, and has youth workers available to listen to or assist you with your needs.

Youth ARC provides activities like break dancing, jewellery making, song writing workshops and graffiti. At the Centre you can access services such as Centrelink, Sexual Health, Mental Health and legal advice. Youth ARC supports young people with internet access, computers, and use of photocopier, fax and phone for job seekers.

The Centre is open from 1 - 5.30pm weekdays with access to basketball, table hockey, 8-ball, table tennis and playstation.

Youth ARC is the base for the Full Service Schools' alternative education program; ALTed.

The ARC also runs a Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) Programme to assist and support disadvantaged young people aged 15-21 address barriers to accommodation, education, training and participation. For more information please contact:

JPET Coordinator on 0438 581 176

Or Contact Youth ARC on 6231 5150.

Menopause and beyond... and are you exercising?

Regular exercise has multiple health benefits and can play a positive role in our physical health and quality of life, particularly during the menopause years and beyond. As our middle years are the time when bone mass begins to diminish and we start to lose muscle bulk and strength, exercise is also good for bone health and can help prevent osteoporosis, so prevalent in older women.

Regular exercise can also assist in maintaining good mental health. Research shows that regular exercise can reduce feelings of depression, anxiety, stress and social isolation.

What sort of exercise helps?

General exercise routines that include walking, swimming and aerobic activities are great for heart health and aerobic fitness, but for bone health we need to incorporate some 'dynamic' exercises. This means combining weight training and moderate impact, weight-bearing exercise in a well-planned resistance-training program. Such programs should progress slowly, gradually increasing the intensity and duration of exercises to avoid injury and give our bodies time to adjust to the new exercise patterns. Good examples of such exercises are offered through the Living Longer Stronger programs or *Pilates* exercise classes.

Remember, it can take up to 10 weeks for a healthy adult to adapt to a new exercise routine and it is important to consult your doctor before you begin, just to be on the safe side, especially if you are over 60 and/or have any existing medical conditions.

How often to exercise?

For health purposes, post-menopausal women should exercise in some way most days. Aim to accumulate 30 minutes of exercise per day (*accumulate* means a total by the end of the day!) Please note that the Hobart Women's Health Centre will be starting a walking group for older women (50+) this summer which will provide motivation and support for those wishing to get active. For more information see the article on this page.

Yvonne Hardefeldt

(Adapted from an article in *Osteoblast* The osteoporosis Australia magazine Autumn 2005)

Start your week by getting active!

Older Women Get Walking



Yvonne and some of the women from the get active program.

The first program begins on Monday Feb 6 and finishes April 3. Each session is from 10 am to 12 noon.

Next year the walking group will provide motivation and support for

older women wanting to get active. This program will assist women to set themselves goals to get active, improve their health and fitness and enjoyment of life.

The program involves group discussion followed by a walk, and a cuppa, either at the Centre or a café after the walk.

All you need is a water bottle, sun hat, comfortable shoes and clothing, and the motivation to get to the Health Centre by 10.00 am on Mondays!

Phone Yvonne for further information on 6231 3212.

Women Writers' Support Group

Recommences Feb 8, 2006 2.00 - 4.00 pm

(Second Wednesday in the month from Feb 8)

During 2005 we held several workshops for women interested in writing. From these workshops a small group of women interested in



supporting each other as writers has emerged. This group is currently examining different ways that the Writers Support Group could function to best meet the varying needs of the women who attend. If you are interested in writing and would like the support of like-minded women, you are welcome to come along to these monthly gatherings. We aim to provide an opportunity for participants to share their current writing, and receive feedback in a supportive environment, as well as encouragement and support for those who have not quite started!

For more information Phone Yvonne at the HWHC.

Managing Midlife Moments

For women, the journey through midlife can be one of self discovery, a smooth transition for some and a little rocky for others. You can't avoid it – changes will happen physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. So why not come along to an information session which can assist in managing these changes and know that you are not alone?

You can choose one session of particular interest, or attend all four

Week 1: Menopause

Tuesday February 28 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

- ⊗ What is menopause
- ⊗ Understanding menopause – Why it happens & when
- ⊗ Signs and Symptoms
- ⊗ Hormone Therapy & Natural Alternatives
- ⊗ Managing Menopause - lifestyle, body image, sexuality

Facilitator: Rachael Atkins

Week 2: Osteoporosis

Tuesday March 7 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

- ⊗ What is Osteoporosis
- ⊗ Am I at risk ?
- ⊗ Osteoporosis during/after menopause
- ⊗ Nutrition and Exercise Strategies

Facilitator: Rachael Atkins

Week 3: Pap Tests and Breast Checks

Tuesday March 14 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

- ⊗ Pap Tests - Why, How, When, Where
- ⊗ Breast Awareness – What changes should I look for ?

Facilitators: Karen Price & Rachael Atkins

Week 4: The Triple S of Midlife

Tuesday March 21 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

- ⊗ Self Care, Self Esteem and Stress
- ⊗ Getting your needs met - Changing the words
- ⊗ Saying 'No' without feeling guilty
- ⊗ Assertive not Aggressive
- ⊗ Celebrating Midlife: A Journey of Transition & Beginnings

Facilitator: Rachael Atkins

Rachael Atkins is a Women's Health Officer, Department of Health and Human Services providing midlife and Women's Health services to the community.

More information from Rachael Atkins (Midlife Health Worker Ph 6222 7242), or Yvonne at the Hobart Women's Health Centre Ph 6231 3212.

Bookings essential Ph 6231 3212

Birth and Beyond

Birth & Beyond nurtures a wholistic approach to the needs of women as we journey through the childbearing years; support to explore and choose what is right for you and your family.

December 12: **Me, my midwife & obstetrician.** Giving birth with carers I know. Andrea Sharpe, Mother and Naturopath, with Terry Stockdale, professional Midwife.

February 13: **Gentle Discipline**, achieving co-operation and encouraging altruism with our children from an early age.

February 27: **Creating 'The List', what, where & how to find information** on topics specific to pregnancy, birth and parenting. Bring details of your favourite books, websites, magazines and organised groups relating to the above.

March 13: **Birthing your placenta, physiological third stage of labour** with Rashelle Szoke, Mother and Midwife.

March 27: **Community Vision & Maternity Services.** Achieving what Mothers and Families need/want. Please come and share your views.

Ph Rashelle 6267 4740 for more information.



Join the

Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCoT)


Angels Knitting Group

Help MCoT knit children's garments, caps, scarves, squares to make blankets for donation to new refugee families next winter.

MCoT Angels is happy to receive any donations of money, wool, knitting needles or buttons.

Anyone interested in joining or donating please call MCoT on 6231 5067 or Vikki Miteff on 6228 7273.

WOMEN'S WISDOM LIBRARY

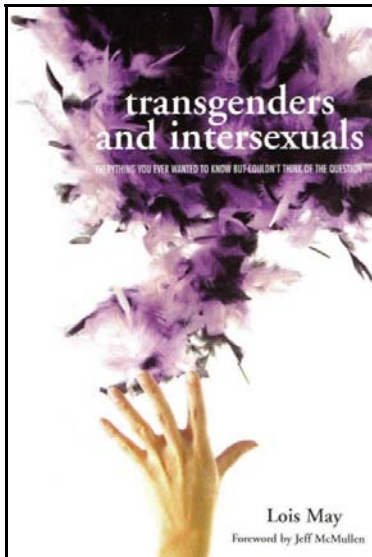


transgenders and intersexuals

Everything you ever wanted to know but couldn't think of the question

by **Lois May**

I have to admit to approaching this book with a whole lot of trepidation. Transpeople are usually diagnosed by the non-trans, treated by the non-trans medical profession and spend much of their lives facing discrimination and harassment from the non-trans world; and being misunderstood by that world – told who, what and how we are as people, by those who've never known the experience on a personal level. So, I was very worried by the idea of a book on the subject, written by a non-trans woman. Additionally, bringing transgender and intersex issues together - inside the same book jacket – is likely to cause consternation among sections of both the transgender and intersex communities. A risky venture.



But author Lois May has managed to do the job very well. "Transgenders and Intersexuals" is a collection of pieces from quite a mixed bag of contributors; all connected by her own insights into the trans and intersex conditions. There are very honest stories from transmen and women, a cross-dresser and Queensland Police officers - along

with some strong opinions from scientists and doctors. It takes a big swing at the continuing medical practice of assigning a gender to infants born with "ambiguous genitalia" and tells the truly tragic story of David Reimer, whose life was made hell by doctors who held dear the nurture argument in child development.

Generally, explanations of trans and intersex conditions are provided for us by "experts" who use language few of us understand. In this book, Ms. May and Dr. Milton Diamond put it all in English – and for that alone Lois May deserves congratulations. With the glossary and "useful contacts" section, "transgenders and intersexuals" becomes a handy read for those who want to learn.

If you're trans or intersex, some of the ideas put forward are going to upset you. Since these communities – like the rest of our world – are already split over issues such as terminology and who really belongs, you can't blame Lois May for that. On the other hand, the book is a great library addition for anyone who's been puzzled and not known the question.

"transgenders and intersexuals", can be ordered through booksellers or direct from the publisher (East Street Publications). There are also quite a few bookstores now carrying it online which you can find by doing a google search of the title.

Transgender, intersex people, their families, friends, support groups and anti-discrimination organisations are entitled to a 30% discount on the recommended retail price of the book. If you would like to take advantage of this special offer please contact Jen at the centre for an order form and further information.

Martine Delaney

You're Not Alone

Family Support Folder

by **Down Syndrome Association of Tasmania Inc.**

I recently attended the re-launch of the updated resource named above. Many parents, and their children with Down Syndrome, came along to the event. All parents present expressed just how important it was for them and to their child's development to receive early on the supportive and informative material contained in the folder .

The folder contains information compiled by other parents of children with Down Syndrome, who understand what it is to search for information. The personal accounts from parents and grandparents on how they felt after discovering their child had Down Syndrome ensures a new parent is reassured they are not alone.

All sorts of myths and misinformation are dispelled in this easy to read publication. Other sources of information, books and support services are listed.

One of the best features of this resource is that it has a positive focus and on the top of the first page it states "Congratulations on the birth of your baby. We wish you all the best."

Jen Van-Achteren

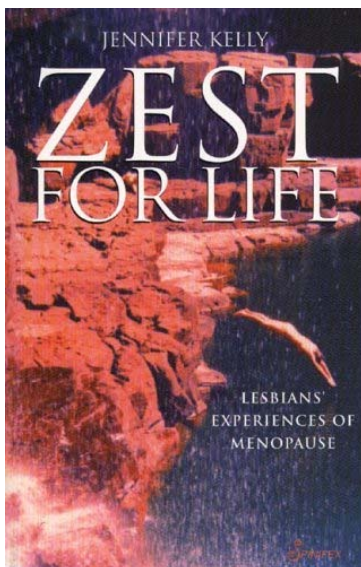
Zest for Life

Lesbians' experience of menopause

by Jennifer Kelly

Jennifer Kelly says,

"my reasons for writing this book are two fold. Firstly, I wanted to give something back to the many lesbians who freely shared their experiences with me, a total stranger. Secondly, I believe it is important that books and other information exists that speak to lesbians as well as heterosexual women. This is the first study to examine the topic of lesbians and menopause in Australia."



I remember when Jenny was distributing her questionnaires in 2001 while I was working at the HWHC and it is great to see Tasmanian women represented in the study. This is a really interesting book, a good read, with insightful observations based on statistical data and many anecdotal stories from the lesbians involved. Zest for Life is an exploration into the experience of menopause

from a lesbian perspective, which shares much with the experience of heterosexual women, but which also presents aspects which are unique to lesbians.

Jenny states that

"much of the existing information for midlife women focuses on the negative issues commonly associated with menopause, such as dry vaginas, painful sexual intercourse, mood swings and low libido. For many of the lesbians in my study these issues are of little relevance and are not major concerns or problems."

Jenny frames this result up in terms of societal patriarchal constructions of the body, notions of femininity and the negative view many women have internalised about the end of their fertile years.

Menopause can be a very difficult emotional and physical time for many women, both lesbian and heterosexual. Zest for Life shows us ways we can all challenge the accepted knowledge about menopause and argues that a unique lesbian experience represents a different way of thinking and experiencing this stage of life.

Julianne Campbell



Lesbian and Bi Women

There are a few new and established groups and events happening around town, read on to find out if there is something that interests you...

The Lounge

Lesbian and Bi women's meeting space.

The Lounge is continuing at the Health Centre, we meet every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, at 6pm.

November 22nd, is the date for the end of year BBQ.

There will be no meetings in December or early January, back in action on January 24, 2006.

Video/DVD and games nights, a cuppa or drink, and general chat and socialise. Informal and friendly, come by yourself or with a friend.

Gayz 'R' Us

Social group for LGBT Hobartians

Meets every 2nd Thursday at 1pm

Kaos Café, 227 Elizabeth St, Hobart

Next meeting dates: December 1st & 15th
and January 10th & 24th

Borderlines – Queer Radio

Hobart's new sexuality and gender issues radio show

Every Wednesday 2 – 3pm

Edge Radio 99.3 FM

Lesbian Parents

In November there was a Lesbian parents & kids day at 5 Mile Beach. Some parents are interested in starting a social support group, if you missed out on the day at the beach, but are interested in the group, call Tracey at HWHC, 6231 3212

Tasmanian Gay & Lesbian Rights Group Community Forum

As a result of the Making Change workshop held in August this year another workshop will be held early next year. The goal will be to develop a plan to implement the ideas we had in August.

12 - 2pm on Sunday February 26th 2006

HWHC, 25 Lefroy St, North Hobart

Light lunch provided for information call (03) 6224 3556

Women's Dance

WHEN: 9pm on 3rd December

WHERE: Upstairs at Republic Bar

THEME: Come as a star

COST: \$8 waged, \$5 unwaged

There will also be a drag king competition, so come and give it a go!



INTRODUCING . . .

Hi, my name is Jen Van-Achteren and I'm the Information and Resource worker here at the Centre.

I commenced at the Centre at the beginning of October and am enjoying it immensely. It's fantastic to be part of such a dynamic and supportive organisation, doing such amazing work.



My employment background covers all aspects of office administration and desktop publishing. Since arriving in Tassie from the mainland eight years ago, I have been working in the community sector, both in paid and voluntary capacities, with an emphasis on the promotion of young people's and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community's rights and activism.

As Information and Resource worker, I edit and produce the newsletter and other publications; oversee the Women's Wisdom Library; and provide assistance with computer use to my colleagues. Like all health workers at the Centre, I also provide direct and referential support in health matters. I can be contacted at the Centre Monday to Wednesday.

COMING SOON . . .

At the end of November we will be welcoming our new Health Promotion worker, Ankarah Grace. So look forward to an introduction from her in the next Newsletter.

LOOK OUT . . .

For information in the next Newsletter about the Centre's relaunch in autumn 2006. The event will be accompanied by lots of exciting activities.

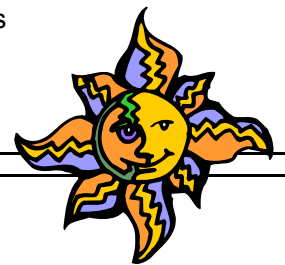
HOLIDAY CLOSING DATES

HWHC will close from 4pm Thursday 15th December 2005

and reopen at 9:15am on Tuesday 3rd January 2006.

Thank you to all our clients, sister service organisations and funding bodies for your generous support throughout 2005 and we look forward to your company again in the new year.

We wish you a safe, happy and peaceful time, whatever you do and wherever you are.



CONTRIBUTIONS . . .

Contributions from readers are very welcome, so if you have an article, review, comment or notice that would be of interest to our readers, please send it to the Newsletter Editor by post or email, or drop it in to reception when you visit the Centre. To be considered for inclusion, all contributions must be received by the following deadline:

Autumn Edition: 26th January 2006 (newsletter distributed at the end of February)



. . .GETTING IN TOUCH

Open: **Mon, Tues, Wed & Thurs 9:15am to 4pm**

Visit: **25 Lefroy Street North Hobart** Post: **PO Box 248 North Hobart Tas 7002**

Tel: **03 6231 3212** Outside the 62 area, freecall **1800 353 212** Fax: **03 6236 9449**

Email: **info@hwbc.com.au** Website: **www.hwbc.com.au**

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