



# NATIONAL OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK-AUSTRALIA OCTOBER 2018



Remembering Betty Johnson AO

Aloma Fennell- National President

## Newsletter (4) October 2018

### President's Pen

This Newsletter is very late in the year, for which I apologise, we have had a very, very busy time:

Moving to a new house and therefore office as well as finding everything following the move (still looking).

Attending the 9<sup>th</sup> OEWG on Ageing at the U.N. in New York City, **introducing NOWN** (photo →)

Writing articles on the proposed Royal Commission into Aged Care.

Establishing a Facebook page (**Please Like and Follow**) this cannot be 'Friended' as it is an organisation not a personal Facebook (more on this below).

Being approached by a journalist from the Australian Women's Weekly magazine and asked to contribute a piece in response to several calls they had received from older women about their 'lack of self-worth in society'. My response was titled '*Where is the Fair GO?*'

Submitting a response to the proposed Aged Care Reform Royal Commission, see below.

Attending the OWN Queensland State AGM as a special guest for which we thank them for doing this each year. **Keeping the connection going Australia -wide.**

Preparing for a Forum on the Politics of Ageing ([www.northsideforum.org.au](http://www.northsideforum.org.au))

Qld's work in **advocating for the Rights and dignity of Older Women** is to be applauded. Their financial contributions to help farmers effected by the drought is to be admired.

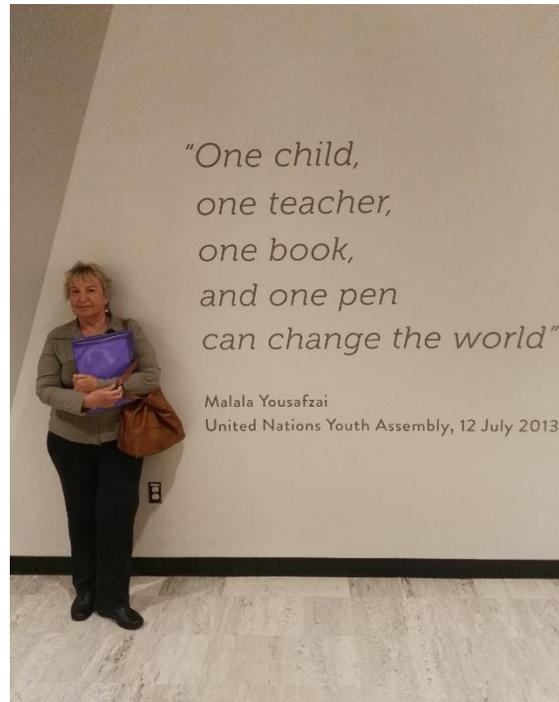
I believe most members, certainly National members, have been informed that my right hand the wonderful National Secretary, **Sharan Tuite** has been and still is as I write, in Hospital. She has been in hospital for several weeks but is looking forward to returning to her home w/c Sunday 2/10/18.

Goodness! Do I miss her, her expertise, and her support. I have been quite lost without her. We also have the wonderful **Mary Hacio**, a great supporter of NOWN and a key member of various other affiliated 'programs' we (NOWN) are involved in. Mary & I have known each other for over 30 years well before my time with NOWN. Between the two of these women and their talents I manage to stay sane and mostly on course. Both, like me, are **100% volunteers.**

I trust you find the following 'news' of interest. **Please LIKE and FOLLOW our new Facebook page** (do not try and friend you cannot friend an organisation and please, **do not** go to the Aloma Fennell Facebook this was only registered so we could have an organisation Facebook. I will not be responding to anything on this.

Best wishes to all

Aloma Fennell National President. NOWN ([nationalown@gmail.com](mailto:nationalown@gmail.com)) MOB 0420 785 335  
Facebook: National Older Women's Network - Australia



## President's Report QLD AGM 2018

Own Q had an exciting AGM in September. For this year's AGM we have provided funds for members travel to the venue across all branches as we wanted to involve as many members as possible in our state-based organisation. I am sure we all had a great time. Our first guest speaker, Aloma Fennell, President of National Older Women's Network Australia (NOWN) shared some exciting news with us, which demonstrated how OWN is gaining momentum in representing older women across Australia and nationally.

In this last financial year our previous office staff moved on to other roles, however we were pleased to welcome Leonie Swainston as our Coordinator and Marianne Wright our Administration Officer. Both Leonie and Marianne worked with us organising a great National Conference held in October 2017, they have good understanding of OWNQ and what we wish to achieve as a lead organisation for older women. David Cameron continues as our bookkeeper, photographer, website, and Facebook guru, his contribution is much appreciated.

We are now keen to move forward making OWNQ an organisation to be reckoned with, able to assist older women to realise their potential and be strong in the face of many adversities.

Our Convenors and their helpers continue to impress me with their high levels of commitment and all the work they do in their Branches with so many wonderful women. It is an absolute delight to visit the Branches and experience the palpable friendship, warm welcomes, and high spirits of the women who attend the meetings.

Late in this financial year, efforts to restart a Branch on the Gold Coast were commenced and we are expecting to report a good outcome on this in next year's report. There have also been other enquiries from members of the public about joining and perhaps commencing Branches, and this is a healthy sign for our future.

All of our Branches continue to initiate and conduct vital networking, collaboration and partnering opportunities with other organisations in their local areas.

All our Branches are functioning extremely well and gaining new members.

Mackay branch is also one of our larger branches, and a thriving vibrant branch reaching out to their community via their networks.

Thank you to all those who have renewed memberships, including several who are not aligned with a particular Branch. Team means working together for a common cause as long as we remember to work as one cohesive unit we will succeed.

As Winston Churchill quoted "We write our own history".

**June Donnelly**  
**Vice president**



Lee

Aloma

June

**Congratulations to Queensland OWN** for the inspiring and motivational AGM held on 21 September.

Our Qld President of 3 years, June Donnelly from Woody Point, who has done a wonderful job of supporting the Older Women of Qld, through her many programs and activities, building upon the numbers of members and working effectively with affiliates from other supporting organisations. June has been highly supportive of NOWN and has put in a tremendous effort participating on the NOWN National Board, she will be sadly missed. Her sense of humour, at times, was critical in keeping us all going with a smile on our faces. June has stepped down from the State President role, but she will continue contributing to the National Board.

**Queensland's new State (Qld) President: Lee Hodgson,** (above). Lee was born in Casino NSW 1939 and attended St Mary's school till ninth year. She married in 1960 and went to live in Sydney, where her son was born in 1962. In 1980 she moved to Brisbane and worked for Toyota for 20 years. In 2001 Lee retired and moved to live in Gympie there she joined OWNQ and has since become very passionate about the Older Women's Network Qld, holding, over time, the positions of the Gympie Branch Convener and Vice President of the State organisation. Her hobbies are tennis, lead lighting and gardening. Lee is also the grandmother of four grandchildren.



OWN Qld Members attending the OWN Qld AGM one of many photos taken. Please let us know your names.

# Global Campaign to Combat Ageism

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) turns 70 this year and the International Day for Older Persons celebrates the importance of this Declaration and reaffirms the commitment to promoting the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by older persons.

Older human rights champions today were born around the time of the adoption of the UDHR in 1948. They are as diverse as the society in which they live: from older people advocating for human rights at the grass root and community level to high profile figures on the international stage. Each and every one demands equal respect and acknowledgement for their dedication and commitment to contributing to a world free from fear and free from want.

This year the International Federation of Ageing (IFA) calls on members to support the 2018 theme, which aims to:

- **Promote** the rights enshrined in the Declaration and what it means in the daily lives of older persons;
- **Raise the visibility** of older people as participating members of society committed to improving the enjoyment of human rights in many areas of life and not just those that affect them immediately;
- **Reflect** on progress and challenges in ensuring full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by older persons; and
- **Engage** broad audiences across the world and mobilize people for human rights at all stages of life.

**Seriously disgraceful - both the figures, and the Govt's obvious attempts to obscure them.** Data showing the number of older Australians waiting for home care packages has now grown to more than 121,000. [#auspol](#)

Table 7: Number of people on the national prioritisation queue, by state and territory of residence and level of approval as at 30 June 2018

State/territory	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total	Share by state/territory
NSW	219	8,217	13,631	18,364	40,431	33.3%
VIC	76	8,322	8,420	11,757	28,575	23.5%
QLD	90	4,648	7,370	10,696	22,804	18.8%
WA	22	1,845	3,022	6,703	11,592	9.5%
SA	19	1,693	3,978	6,972	12,662	10.4%
TAS	≤10	495	965	1,293	2,757	2.3%
ACT	≤10	265	394	935	1,595	1.3%
NT	≤10	99	118	254	471	0.4%
Unknown	≤10	116	159	253	531	0.4%
National	434	25,700	38,057	57,227	121,418	100.0%
Share by level	0.4%	21.2%	31.3%	47.1%	100.0%	

Notes: A person with an approval at multiple levels is only counted once - at their highest active approved level.

## **National (NOWN) response to the call for submissions to the proposed Royal Commission into Aged Care:**

**KEY POINTS only** from our submission.

- This commission has been, unfortunately, called not out of necessity and dire need which has been ignored for far too long, but out of political expedience to deflect issues unrelated to the topic, e.g. from coming under further scrutiny. We are not political footballs, we demand respect and we have a strong voice with our vote.
- The fact that women live far longer than men and this is not addressed in gender terms.
- Not all older people have the same care needs, adaptability and multiple services regarding age and gender differences need to be considered.
- We strongly oppose Aged and Disability being used as if all aged people have disabilities or are, in some way disabled. Thus these 2 terms should not be used together except for where they genuinely apply.
- The lack of registered nurses and staff, in many cases, with limited English language.
- A legislated ratio of staff to patient that is appropriate for providing a high quality of care for those most vulnerable.
- The need for continuous monitoring of government monies being spent by the homes and the lack of any financial monitoring and returns on investment.
- The need for ongoing unannounced assessment of compliance to agreed and legislated guidelines to all the above.
- The need for Older independent women to be on monitoring boards.
- The need for adequate funding to be sustained by the Federal Government and not susceptible to party political change.

**Mark the date: Our National President, Aloma Fennell will be speaking at the State Library of NSW 16 November 2018 we look forward to a great supporting group of OWN women.**

**5 July 2018: Australian government admits lack of gender analysis on impact of policy measures including tax and social security cuts**

Last night in Geneva, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) questioned recent government attempts which threaten free speech in Australia and its **poor track record on women's rights**.

The Committee's Rapporteur for Australia, Ms Patricia Schulz, suggested to representatives from the Australian Government there was a contradiction between Australia's claim of being at the forefront of protection of human rights internationally, while being the only western democracy without a bill of rights.

The Human Rights Law Centre, present in Geneva, said the Committee questioned how two Australian bills on foreign funding of charities and whistleblowers could be reconciled with the government's pledge to uphold civil society voices and human rights defenders during its 3 year membership on the UN Human Rights Council.

"UN's top women's rights experts are rightly calling out the Australian Government for claiming that it respects free speech while at home moving to stifle critical voices and silence whistleblowers," said Lee Carnie, Senior Lawyer at the Human Rights Law Centre who is in Geneva."

"We should be thanking people who speak out against injustice, not deterring them or punishing them. We should be supporting the vital role charities play in developing effective social policy. And when it comes to women's rights, we should be supporting advocacy by those NGOs who work with the most vulnerable women and girls in our society."

Also in Geneva, CEO of ACOSS Dr Cassandra Goldie says the Committee's review of Australia's compliance with its obligations under the CEDAW Convention highlighted the gendered nature of recent government cuts.

"The Australian government admitted to the Committee last night they had not completed a gender analysis prior to implementing billions in cuts to social services and social security, nor in implementing billions through cuts to taxation which will flow predominantly to high income earners, most of whom are men."

"The gendered effects of these cuts on low income women and their families is very concerning."

"Last night the government also confirmed they have no plan to progressively realise implementation of key gender equality rights. Instead, they have implemented regressive policy measures which will further impoverish and disadvantage women and their children in Australia.

Terese Edwards, CEO of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children says the UN should hold the Australian government accountable.

**"Australia has violated its international human rights obligations by denying women who are sole parents access to a parenting payment once their youngest child turns eight years.**

"We hope the UN will investigate and make recommendations re the harm this policy is doing to single parents, and for antipoverty strategies to be developed to ensure future Governments do not use vulnerable single mother families as their 'cost saving measure'," says Ms Edwards.

**"We call on the Australian government to ensure the impact of their policy measures on women is systematically considered, and that this gender analysis be made public when Parliament is asked to pass budget cuts and changes to taxation," says Dr Goldie. NOWN agrees!**

**Sad times:**

### **Vale Betty Johnson AO (1926 – 2018)**

Betty was an extraordinary woman! She demonstrated great interest and energy for the causes she committed to especially the Older Women's Network and Health Consumers NSW. Betty passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018. She will be greatly missed.



I first met Betty in the early 80's when we were both members of a committee consisting of feminists **concerned with rights** for women workers. Much later, in 2006, and after I had returned to Sydney following a considerable absence, I meet up with Betty on the Management Committee of the NSW Older Women's Network (OWN NSW). The passing of almost 30 years had not diminished Betty's **quest for fairness and equality** across a broad spectrum from the workplace to health consumers and always with a particular concern for women.

Betty was a member of the NSW Older Women's Network Management Committee for at least 2 terms, with only short breaks. As Chair I came to appreciate Betty's understanding of the many health issues experienced by older women and the value of her work in Health Consumers NSW, where she held key positions including Chair of the Board from May 2012 to October 2016.

Betty was awarded the Office of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2000 for 'service to the community as a consumer advocate in the areas of aged care and related health issues.'

Betty Johnson, a life well lived.

(Dr Sonia Laverty)

### **Vale Emeritus Professor Hal Kendig**



It is with great sadness that I share with you the passing of Emeritus Professor Hal Kendig, with whom I have attended many meetings, and from his writings I often challenged the construct of Elder Abuse.

(Excerpts from ANU recognition.) Prof Kendig is known internationally for his life-long contribution to the sociology of ageing and has led national and international research collaborations into the social determinants of healthy ageing, and in reforms related to health service and aged care policy. Such was his impact in this area that the first Hansard reference to 'population ageing' in the House of Representatives is attributed to a citation by the

Member for Scullin, the Hon. Henry (Harry) Jenkins of Prof Kendig's work "Greying Australia: Future Impacts of Population Ageing" with his colleague John McCallum, over 3 decades ago.

Although Prof Kendig rejoined our University with an established reputation 6 years ago as a Professor of Aging and Public Policy at the Centre for Ageing, Health and Wellbeing, and as Emeritus Professor in his retirement, his association with ANU goes back a long way. Indeed, Prof Kendig relocated to ANU and Canberra with his young family from the US more than 40 years ago.

Throughout his academic career, Prof Kendig led and was involved with several well-recognised research projects which continue to inform our knowledge and policy related to healthy ageing and aged care, most notably with the 22-year Melbourne Longitudinal Study of Healthy Ageing, the Australian Attitudes on Ageing Survey, and the Life Histories and Health Survey to mention just a few, but culminating most recently with an ARC grant on "Ageing in China and Australia: Promoting health, productivity and wellbeing" with long-time collaborators.

In recognition of his contribution, Prof Kendig's work attracted multiple accolades including Fellowship of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Honorary Life Member and Distinguished Member for Outstanding Service from the Australian Association of Gerontology, Foundation Fellow of the Australasian Epidemiological Association, and so much more.

Through his contribution to academia at ANU, and in Australia more broadly, Prof Kendig has provided leadership and mentorship to many of this nation's best and brightest medical and health researchers such that his influence in the education, research and policy of health and aged care, will continue through the work of his colleagues and students.

### **Vale Aretha Franklin**

A woman who has given so many of us simply so much joy: Aretha Franklin American singer and songwriter died aged 76 from Pancreatic Cancer in August. Many of us will remember one of her best-known songs: 'Natural Woman'.

**NOWN needs your support.** We receive no funding whatsoever from State or Federal Government. We survive on small capitation fees from all State members and primarily from the pockets of our dedicated volunteers. **Donations of any amount are most welcome** and/or a yearly membership of \$50 for NOWN keeps you in touch. Payment can be made by PAYPAL or postal with cheque or money order to PO Box 511 Neutral Bay NSW 2089 or by bank transfer to Commonwealth Bank 062-021 Acc No 10150806

This edition of The National News - editorial team: Aloma Fennell, Mary Hacio, Garf Stoneberg Dr Sonia Laverty. **All Contributions are welcomed.**