

Archive No. 150

Lesbian Network (1984 – 2006)

The idea for a national lesbian quarterly magazine was first suggested at the lesbian workshop during the Women and Labour Conference in Brisbane on 14 July 1984. The response was immediate and enthusiastic and a hat was passed round for contributions to help finance it. The first issue of the Lesbian Network was produced from Sydney and came out in Spring 1984.

LN which quickly established itself as an essential means of communication between lesbians on a national basis and was, produced, printed, sold and distributed on a strictly lesbian and womyn only basis, mainly by subscription, four times a year at the Summer and Winter Solstice and the Autumn and Spring Equinox. Each edition included articles on every issue of interest to lesbians as well as poetry, short stories, report backs from conferences and festivals, reviews, letters, interviews, photos of events, ads from lesbian businesses, community listings, interstate news, favourite recipes and a comprehensive list of Contact Lesbians from every state.

LN was a lesbian community-based magazine, affordable, accessible, easy to read and full of information. The reports from state representatives about what was happening elsewhere in the country certainly helped break down the 'tyranny of distance' between lesbians, especially those isolated in country areas.

The Sydney lesbians published the LN till issue 40 Winter Solstice June 1994, the 10th anniversary edition. A collective in Adelaide took over production with issue 41, Summer Solstice December 1994. And just when it seemed as if the Lesbian Network was about to fold due to lack of energy, LN no 60 Autumn 2000 announced that the responsibility for publication was moving to a collective based in Melbourne.

LN no 61 Spring 2000, came out in a completely different format with a glossy cover, printed on A3 paper folded in half and stapled in the middle. The community listings and contact lesbians had been brought up to date but the state news, a round-up from round Australia, was missing. The editorial emphasis was on good quality articles that had been solicited rather than just sent in, as had been the policy in the past.

The Melbourne-based LN continued with this format and editorial policy for seven issues altogether till LN no 67 Spring 2002 when the collective decided they'd had enough and retired. A new collective of five lesbians based in Victoria announced they were prepared to take over. Unfortunately, they took so long to sort themselves out that it took over twelve months before LN no 68 December 2003 was finally posted to subscribers. This late issue was followed by LN no 69 Autumn 2004 and LN no 70 Winter 2004. Again there was a hiatus till three lesbians in different states took over for LN no 71 Autumn 2005, which belatedly celebrated 20 years of the Lesbian Network. This was followed by LN no 72 Winter 2005, LN no 73 Spring 2005, LN no 74 Summer 2005, LN no 75 Autumn / IWD 2006 and LN no 76 Winter 2006.

During 2011, all 76 issues of Lesbian Network were bound into six volumes with purple covers to preserve them for posterity