

Media Release – Book launch *Inanna Inc. The journey of community*

Inanna Inc.

10 November 2014

Inanna Inc. and its diverse 30 year history of providing services to the ACT community is now presented in a book as colourful as the people that have made the organisation what it is today. Made possible through a Community Heritage Grant from the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Inanna community has worked closely with local author Patricia Mackey to ensure the stories of resilience, success and Feminist spirit are captured as they continue to inform the work, values, philosophies and the spirit of the organisation.

Focusing on the narratives provided by past and current community members and staff, *Inanna Inc. The Journey of Community* is a personal and real account of the challenges and successes of ordinary people facing extraordinary challenges through life circumstance, mental or physical health issues or social inequity.

Background

Inanna began as a collective of six women in 1984, then known as Medea Inc. At a time when support for women experiencing psychiatric illnesses was limited to inpatient hospital care, advocating for an alternative care option involved submission writing, press releases, research and lobbying activities. Following two years of constant petitioning the ACT Health Authority provided funding for a halfway house for women with mental health needs. Accompanied by their children, the Medicare Grants for Community Health enabled the provision of accommodation and support services with a focus on transitional care, rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

To engage decision makers and to ensure the lived experience of women with mental health issues remained on the political agenda the organisation adopted a creative approach in 1987. Street Theatre performances and a Mad Hatter's tea party in the Commonwealth Government Offices responsible for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program enabled Medea to gather support and additional funding to widen its services.

The auspices of Medea transferred to Inanna Inc. in 1993, a transformation which bought about its challenges but also enabled room to grow to provide a wider range of services, workshops and group activities to Canberra women. Partnerships in 2004 saw the Raja service developed to offer services to ACT families, with Raja eventually merging with Inanna in 2009.

30 years is a long period to witness much change in the Australian community but it's the stories of the individuals that make our history worthwhile. It is the stories of the people who have been a part of the Inanna community that make Inanna into more than a place of business – it is a place of belonging, acceptance, care and kindness.

How a group of six women with a social conscience and a few ideas can become a multi-million dollar funded organisation employing 40 staff, managing nearly 100 properties throughout the ACT and providing a community of support and care to over 400 vulnerable people at any time is a source of inspiration for us all.

Excerpts

“In assisting Inanna tell its story, I have come to realise that Inanna is so much more. Words on paper can only go so far in capturing the uniqueness, the community and the sense of belonging that Inanna represents. The connections existing within the community of Inanna run deep and have become the fabric and soul of the organisation – enduring, despite the years and the decades that form the history of the organisation.

Inanna is a special place, which has been and continues to be significant to many people.

Inanna's journey of community has something to teach us, a story of women who set out to make a difference, a source of inspiration for us all.”

- *Patricia Mackey, author*

“People coming to Inanna experience a sense of welcome the moment they walk in the front door. Inanna provides a friendly, warm and inviting space for those seeking support and assistance. It is like coming to someone's home where you feel invited.”

“Through this rich tapestry of experience, diversity and community of concern, Inanna continues to make a difference in people's lives. The community of Inanna is a vibrant place of stories and experiences, a 'multiplicity of workers, many relationships'. This is what makes Inanna unique.”

“Inanna's history however shows its determination, courage and commitment to values and philosophies, which over 30 years have sustained Inanna in meeting the needs of clients, despite presenting challenges and obstacles.”

Launch Details

The Inanna Inc. Board and Community invite you to attend the book launch celebrating their 30 year history.

Date: Friday 5, December 2014, 10.30am

Address: ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre
245 Lady Denman Drive, Yarramundi Reach

RSVP: by Monday 1 December 2014 to Martina 6173 3433 or info@inanna.org.au

Contact **Martina Taliano** for more information about this publication, the launch or **Inanna Inc.**

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