

CHAPTER 20

*Political Work instigated
and conducted by NPAN,
Jenny Birdsey.*

Political activity - and Jenny's Lobby work

From 1998 over three years, some 7,000+ postcards and Reply Paid news article features have been signed and returned to the Health Minister of Western Australia - firstly Mr Prince and then Mr Day.

In November 1999 Jenny flew to WA to meet with the Health Minister, Mr Day, to discuss the desperate situation faced by women outside Western Australia. Dr Day cancelled his appointment with Jenny at the last minute. This appointment had been booked 3 months prior, and Jenny had flown across Australia specifically to represent women in need of access to a reliable manufactured progesterone cream (Jenny's attempts to meet with Mr Day in August 1998 were repeatedly overturned).

In Mr Day's absence and Jenny's refusal to leave without being heard, a meeting was granted with two health officials and a female solicitor. The meeting turned into a cross-examination of how women were sourcing progesterone cream on the black market, and questions insinuating misconduct on the part of Michael Buckley, the manufacturer of Pro-Feme. Not to be bullied, Jenny insisted that they get back on track and discuss what she came there for - women's hormonal health. The Western Australian government was made very aware on the day that they held the key to help fast-track a manufactured progesterone cream to all Australian women. At the conclusion of their meeting, officials made light of the Grandfathering Provision and their power to help women, going on to state that the matter belonged with TGA.

Just prior to the re-election of the State Government (end of 2000), material was being drafted in preparation to align WA drug laws with Australian Federal drug laws (all states within Australia would eventually have to comply). Tragically, around the same time, the existing Grandfathering Provision Act was overturned at Federal level. This move was initiated under the influence of the WA government, or at least this is what we have been led to believe.

If it wasn't such a big deal, then why did WA government officials enlighten Federal government of the loopholes of getting the product through faster using the Grandfathering Provision Act? Why, if they were in a position to help women, did they go out of their way to do the opposite?

Jenny sensed there was some form of personal vendetta or perhaps they were a mouthpiece for someone else. Upon reflection, one would have to question whether blocking the Grandfathering Provision Act, influenced by WA government officials, was sour grapes, political interests, palms crossed with silver, or outright sabotage of women's health. Whatever the reason - cynical, imagined or unfounded - the bottom line is, women are still suffering and women's health continues to be a low priority.

What is there to be gained by crushing a one-man pharmaceutical company who has invested every dollar he has in progesterone trials, when no other person or drug company or compounding pharmacist today in this country has been prepared to do likewise (because it's a non-patentable drug).

Without access to the Grandfathering Provision Act, the submission to TGA with trials will be far more stringent, time-consuming, more financially draining, and subsequent delays may take their toll.

Interestingly, the manufacturer of Pro-Feme has been granted an export license. This means theoretically you can legally import your Australian manufactured Pro-Feme cream from overseas, but you cannot buy it legally within Australia, except in Western Australia without employing certain loopholes and you must hold a script.

Coincidentally, around the time Jenny met with the Health Minister's off-siders, a reinforcing circulation from the WA Health Ministry was issued to all WA pharmacists (chemists) that they would incur a \$40,000 fine if they were caught trading Pro-Feme interstate.

The manufacturer of Pro-Feme has realised how little regard government has for women's health and, for reasons of self-preservation, has focused trials on testosterone because clearly men hold the power.

In retrospect, had testosterone been the pilot, I believe that women would already have Pro-Feme, (already in the doctor's manual), on the pharmacists' shelves throughout Australia. A case in point, Viagra was one of the fastest tracked drug through legislation for market approval under pressure (from where?).

NPAN and the women collectively have supplied many doctors' packs and information packs on natural progesterone. Jenny and her organisation has handed out and lost hundreds of videos, books, and The Late Dr. John Lee tapes and have supplied information, doctors' lists, compounding pharmacists' lists all around the country, many of which have been sadly exploited and abused.

In providing women with a list of empathetic doctors willing to write scripts, these doctors were in turn harassed by some compounding pharmacists promoting their creams. This reflected badly on NPAN's professionalism and integrity and NPAN and Jenny were unjustifiably judged on many occasions for others' misconduct.

Update from Jenny

NPAN has seen a few publications use the organisation's resources and portray it as a free resource network. While I support most of these endeavours, I have been placed in a very embarrassing and costly position because women have simply assumed I am funded, that I provide free information packs, and that NPAN fills the gap that the publications have failed to address.

They fail to understand that NPAN is not a government-funded resource centre. Nor do I derive any kick-backs from the authors of these books, compounding pharmacists or prescribing doctors. Rather, I have given information and support out of love without thought of monetary gain, my time at the helm of NPAN as been completely voluntary in the past but due to shortage of funding I've been forced to charge for consultancy which ultimately means I can reach out and help more women.

Samples of lobby work efforts – the following articles highlight NPAN’s activity for public awareness..

POLITICIANS MAKE WOMEN SICK

Advertisement published in Conscious Living Issue 50 and a local Western Australian Newspaper 98/99
Placed by Jenny Birdsey, NPAN for political lobbying.

Women fight for the right to choose healthcare

Australian women are suffering unnecessary pain, anguish, invasive medical operations and depression because politicians are too busy to change a simple law.

They agreed to pass new legislation ten years ago, but say they have more pressing matters. Obviously women’s health is not important to them!

During this time women outside Western Australia have had no access to reliable quantities of natural progesterone therapies to treat debilitating hormone problems including premenstrual tension and menopause.

The lives of our sisters, daughters and mothers have been made a misery because our male politicians are ‘too busy’ to care.

Australian women are being treated as second class citizens by uncaring politicians. Please, help us to get them to do something NOW.

A natural progesterone cream called Pro-Feme is made in WA under pharmaceutical conditions and supplied on prescription by WA doctors.

Pro-Feme is the only pharmaceutically manufactured progesterone made in Australia. Applied as a cream, its progesterone replaces the missing progesterone in a woman’s body. A deficiency in progesterone causes the debilitating symptoms of menopause, Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), Osteoporosis (brittle bones), Endometriosis, Uterine Fibroids, Ovarian Cysts and depression.

The drug progesterone has liberated tens of thousands of women around the world from their pain and anguish and returned their wellbeing. It is a safe drug which is available over the counter in the US.

Desperate Australian women, fed up with being unable to treat hormonal symptoms properly, are resorting to buying progesterone on the black market from overseas and are administering it without medical supervision.

When doctors were worried that men would buy the sex drug Viagra on the black market, politicians worked in record time to pass the drug so that men could obtain it under medical supervision.

Are men’s sex lives more important than a woman’s quality of life?

Why should women be treated as second class citizens? Our pleas for change have fallen on politicians’ deaf ears for two years. We need your help!

The WA Government is finally considering passing the long-delayed legislation that will allow progesterone cream to be available. Australia-wide.

Let WA's Minister for Health know that we want the legislative changes to happen NOW.

Please cut out this coupon, fill it in and post it in an envelope (no stamp required) addressed to:

Reply Paid 82510 (N/A)

Natural Progesterone Advisory Network

8 Normanby Street

East Geelong, Victoria, 3219.

It will be forwarded to the Western Australian Minister for Health.

Help women have more choice in determining their own health.

Dear Mr Day,

Your government holds the key to the health of tens of thousands of women. Western Australia is the only state in Australia where the hormone progesterone is available to women as a pharmaceutically manufactured cream.

A Western Australian company, Lawley Pharmaceuticals, makes a product called Pro-Feme which we cannot obtain.

Inaccessibility to this product is frustrating doctors and patients in the eastern states.

Please, please pass legislation to allow your Western Australian cream to be available to the rest of Australia. Most states passed legislation years ago to fall in line with Federal legislation. We need your state to do the same to allow us to obtain this vital product.

Let Western Australia know that you support progesterone being available Australia-wide by posting this coupon.

Signed:

Name:

Address:

Authorised by: Natural Progesterone Advisory Network

These political activities were examples of extensive lobbying and campaign work instigated and conducted by Jenny Birdsey involving thousands of women in 1998, 1999 and 2000. Some 7000 plus reply paid postcards were distributed and sent back to Mr Day by myself on behalf of NPAN. A handful were officially returned.

Grievance of inaccessibility to WA's manufactured cream

This is an example of a letter written by an angry and concerned woman. Placed in the paper along with others.

Supply: Why Can't I Get It Here?

Extract from a letter published in newsprint complaining about the drug law discrepancies between states within Australia.

Because of a state/federal discrepancy in the Therapeutic Goods Act, I no longer can buy natural progesterone (a hormone cream) from Western Australia.

Doctors put women on hormone replacement therapy – the fashion in medicine today – but it is wrong to overload us with estrogen and create more health problems when it is natural progesterone in which menopausal women are deficient.

Which politician (probably male) doesn't want me to practice preventative medicine so that I will not lose bone density and fracture my hip, get Breast Cancer or cervical cancer or have to take days off with migraines?

I was paying for my own continued health. Heroin addicts who have robbed, abused, violated society to support their illegal habits are given methadone and now heroin. Why? For their good health?

I can't get natural progesterone made from yams. Is it because it's secret women's business? Is it because pharmaceutical companies have vested interests?

Has WA seceded? Are WA women worth more than women in the eastern states? –
Ann, (Eastern States Aus.) August 9 '98.