

## Special Ks

WRITTEN BY ANDREW BLYTHE | 28 MARCH 2011

Two trans women have been recognised in this year's International Women's Day celebrations. And as Andrew Blythe discovers, it's a recognition that's been a long time coming.



Kathy Noble (left) and Krissy Johnson are "stoked" to be included in the Queensland Government's *Everyday Women, Extraordinary Lives* tribute gallery established to celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

While these two are no strangers to certificates and accolades - Johnson jokes that "it saves on wallpaper!" - this commendation from the Minister for Women Karen Struthers included a lapel pin which they were told to "wear with pride".

Pride plays a big part in their lives because this is the first time, among any of the international celebrations, that a trans woman has been honoured in what is arguably the most well-known recognition of women's achievements. And it's happened in Queensland, the state that until recently offered more rights for guide dogs than transgender people!

Noble grins about the changing attitude. "For me, it's the fact that someone has recognised us as women. It's a huge fillip for the trans community," Noble said.

She uses her influence as a Member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), while Johnson is "part of the furniture" as Secretary of the Australian Transgender Support Association of Queensland (ATSAQ).

Johnson argues that it is her attitude that has allowed her to keep advocating for so long.

"I give it straight from the hip; I can't stand political correctness," adding that she is not afraid to tell dawdling government committees to "get some balls!"

She remains passionate about getting the word out to children and young people that support is available to help nurture their developing gender identities.

"Most kids do not get access to help until they come to the attention of the mental health services - and sometimes it is too late."

Noble's passion is most evident in her dedication of thanks to all trans women: "To those who are repeatedly abused physically, sexually and mentally . . . who are denied their rights to change their documentation, or are incarcerated in prison . . . and those who suffer from all forms of frustration, depression and legal abuse".

It's hard to measure the legacy these women are still creating, let alone try and define them. I could joke about them being 'elders', or in Noble's case, a 'senior citizen', but I want to leave the interview in one piece!

I opt for the easy way out and ask: how do they define themselves?

Johnson's infectious laugh crackles with obvious glee. "I'm a woman and a transgender activist. I like a beer in the afternoon and the chance to sit down with *The Bold and the Beautiful*."

"I'm quite comfortable in my shoes. However, I'm still tickled pink to be nominated, let alone recognised!"

Noble agrees.

"I hope this recognition flows on and benefits the rest of our community. I'm happy as a woman who likes gardening and classical music", adding mischievously, "my Dad always wanted a daughter, he'd be so proud!"


And what do they want to do now they have their awards?

Johnson wants to get more doctors involved in transgender health - acknowledging the vast contribution already made by people like Dr Gail Bearman - as well as publicising the current anti-discrimination legislation so its lives up to what it was designed to do.

Noble wants to keep working with the wider community to raise awareness of transgender issues. To do this, she'll shortly launch her memoir *Two Lives: A Transsexual's story and fight for recognition*. Keep a look out at all good bookstores!

To get in touch with either of these women for further information about their work, contact Krissy Johnson at [trans.atsa@bigpond.com](mailto:trans.atsa@bigpond.com) and Kathy Noble at [www.changelingaspects.com](http://www.changelingaspects.com).

## Comments (1)

 [Subscribe to this comment's feed](#)

 [Show/Hide comments](#)

Lisa Griffin said:

### **Thank you**

I know Krissy very well. It is through her and ATSAQ's hard work that Transgender women are able to have better lives. I am a Transwoman and I am very lucky and blessed that I have a great job and acceptance. There are still some ways to go but we are here. Thank you Krissy for you dedication and hard work. Love and hugs, Lisa

March 29, 2011

Votes: +0