

People of influence: Catherine Fox & Jane Caro

with Glenda Hewitt

Two long-term locals, Catherine Fox and Jane Caro recently co-authored *The F Word: How We Learned to Swear by Feminism*, published in 2008. Both are passionate about creating a future where people are able to be themselves and contribute to society without being impeded by gender bias. Jane is an author, media personality and has recently been seen on ABC television as a panel member in the Gruen Transfer. Catherine is a journalist with the Australian Financial Review and the co-author of two books.

Both of you have demanding, visible jobs where you are judged by a 'public'. How much does this influence you in what you do?

JC: For me, not at all. I long ago realised that I could control what I do but not how others might judge the outcomes. I approach everything in the same spirit and try to be candid, real and honest regardless of whether I'm in a private meeting, answering a question on The Gruen Transfer or participating in a radio interview.

After 30 years writing ads, I also strongly believe that if others are paying the courtesy of listening, the least I can do is be relevant, engaging and entertaining. How the public judge me is up to them as I simply do the best I can do.

CF: As a journalist you are always aware that your work is entering the public domain - which is equally exciting and nerve wracking. It means you have to check and recheck and make every attempt to do the best whenever you write - given the usual constraints of deadlines and demanding editors of course!

This exposure brings extra responsibility and most journalists take that pretty seriously. But you also have to keep in mind the need to interest and engage a broad range of readers and that's why I love what I do.

You said, at the APA Christmas function, you saw Artarmon as a strong community. What does that mean?

JC: There is a sense of connection and neighbourhood in Artarmon, a warmth and friendliness among neighbours that makes it a great place to live. There is a sense of permanence and a chance to get to know your neighbours and watch their children grow. Plus a lot of interesting, vibrant and dynamic people live in Artarmon.

Second, the local public school is very well supported so there are opportunities to meet other local parents. The importance of a local school to community creation is chronically underestimated in modern Sydney. Artarmon, fortunately, has maintained that connection.

Third, unlike other suburbs further up the line, the houses are not big and widely spaced, so you tend to bump into neighbours regularly and stay linked to them in an informal and spontaneous fashion.

CF: To me a community means being

linked in some way - through occupation, religion, race or where you live. I think we are lucky to have a very eclectic bunch living in this suburb. We've also got proximity to the city and the benefits of diversity. The combination of the light industrial area, a media outlet and high density gives Artarmon both a fixed and floating population which also adds a lot of colour and interest. For all that, we have terrific local amenities and many people around here tend to use public transport which means you actually talk to your neighbours rather than wave at them from the car.

What do you see as the significance of community?

JC: Communities provide a sense of safety, permanence, belonging and an atmosphere of friendly acceptance. When my kids were little I knew there were other parents who I could call on in an emergency or who would keep an eye out for my kids as well as their own. It is also a place to meet people with whom you have nothing in common except location - so there are a wide variety of ages, backgrounds, working lives and attitudes. I particularly enjoy this richness and difference.

CF: Being part of a community provides security and support. I have many friends to whom I have, in the past, turned to for help. I think that is a wonderful feeling.

What do you like about Artarmon?

JC: It's two sets of traffic lights from the centre of Sydney yet I live in a quiet, spacious, green and leafy suburb. What's not to like? Artarmon is on the train line and 10 minutes walk from Chatswood. It's a pretty, yet undiscovered suburb and has a great sense of community.

The only thing I think we lack is public space; apart from the oval and the bike track there's not much else. Oh, and I have missed La Stazione ever since it went.

CF: Jane forgot to mention the harbour. For me, Artarmon is also north shore without being North Shore. We have a thriving strip of shops with most amenities so I hope it stays that way because it saves us from having to brave Chatswood. I think the only downside in Artarmon is the traffic, but if that's the price



Jane Caro and Catherine Fox, both long-term Artarmon residents

then I can live with it.

Has this area given anything to you?

JC: I've brought up my children here and sent them to the local school. I've made life long friends here including my fabulous, feisty and fun (and funny) co-author. I've always felt that my children and I were safe here. Artarmon has contributed to 20 years of my life and is the longest I have ever lived in one place.

CF: Yes, like Jane, plenty of terrific friends and some very happy years. My three girls all went to Artarmon school and loved it so that counts as well. We are also privileged to live in a lovely older house surrounded by mature trees, and yet feel so much a part of a big city. ■

PHYSIOTHERAPY



For seventeen years, Physiotherapist Ann Liebert has run her practice in Artarmon, specialising in:

- Back pain
- Musculo-skeletal pain
- Sports injuries
- Occupational-related pain
- Neck headaches

ANN LIEBERT
&
JACKIE WALKER
Physiotherapists

SUITE 6
110 HAMPDEN ROAD
ARTARMON
PH: 9419 3404
FAX: 9419 2880