



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

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Living in a rural community – aspirations for the future

By Anna Remond, Walgett

The following is an essay submitted by Anna Remond as part of her application process for a Walgett Isolated Children & Parents Association Tertiary Grant. Her essay addressed the question: What influence has living in a rural community had on your aspirations for your future?

Our property is located 100 kms from Walgett in the north west of NSW. My father works as a farmer/ grazier, and my mother takes care of secretarial duties and four children. My closest rural community comprises my immediate family, work staff and neighbouring cousins. Yet, in such a remote and isolated location, our community extends beyond the property boundaries to include those within the whole Walgett District.

Education for me began with home schooling. 'Times tables' were sung over the radio, homework was mailed monthly and lessons were taught by my mother. Although very lonely at times, it has also been most beneficial. We four children played as best mates (most of the time), and shared the daily chores. However, our learning went beyond the classroom. Watching the evening news and joining in the adult conversations at the dinner table gave us a broad understanding of world events. Talking with staff and visitors about topics concerning the property often consisted of

wool prices and weather patterns.

Dad taught us basic farm work at a young age. We were driving trucks and motorbikes by the age of seven and mustering, yarding and lamb marking, even in the 40 degree heat. I knew it was financially beneficial if we kids helped, rather than employing more staff. Our parents provided all the opportunities available, thus we never complained. We became emotionally strong at understanding life and death through witnessing events such as reducing the working dogs litter and the culling of emus and kangaroos on the crops. In my free time, we rode pushbikes, built cubby houses with scrap from the tip and played games on the horses. Although I no longer ride competitively, it is a passion I will always have. My love for animals continues, spending all opportunities on the farm, and donating generously to the RSPCA.

Upper primary school at Walgett was another stepping stone. I was shocked by the long hours spent on the school bus, compulsory uniform, detentions for late homework, and a tuckshop full of goodies! I admired my teachers' ability to educate and discipline a class of thirty plus. This was a great contrast to my previous (one to three) student to teacher ratio! I loved the large classes, especially after my isolated junior years. I made

friendships with students... boys and girls, younger and older, and from in and out of town. I have learnt to value my friendships and 'go out of my way' at times. A sleep over in grade three could involve hours of parents organising and travelling, yet it has never been an effort to keep contact with friends.

Next week I will be attending the University of Sydney and commencing a Bachelor of Arts degree. I will study psychology, sociology, gender/cultural studies and linguistics. I hope to achieve Honours in Psychology, and graduate with recognition from the Australian Psychologists Registration Board. Eventually I wish to have my own practice, and thus need to complete two years of 'experienced' work to gain accreditation in the Australian Psychological Society. After such a wonderful experience at boarding school, I have chosen to reside on campus at the Women's College. I am looking forward to participating in the inter-college sports competitions, joining cultural and artistic clubs, attending social events and making new friends.

Looking back, I can see that my upbringing in the Walgett community has unknowingly given direction to much of my future. This career choice has been driven by factors derived from my rural childhood. I have had years of witnessing



issues within the community, such as alcohol abuse and crime, depression, doubt and exhaustion due to the drought. Also racial issues, unemployment and broken families, all of which I have long wanted to solve. I would like to work either privately or within a hospital in a rural community. I wish to create a support network for those who are suffering. I hope to generate awareness and acceptance of difference within the district.

My upbringing has taught me many valuable lessons. I have gained an understanding of the importance of family, and the support and confidence they can provide. Through first-hand experience I have had the benefit of one-to-one communication, such as with a patient and the enjoyment of group discussion. I have learnt the skills to work hard – mentally, emotionally and physically. I have learnt to be committed to friends, to be broadminded, responsible and appreciative.

My childhood, on an isolated, remote rural property, and the community in which I interacted, has been the absolute driver for my future goals. This includes my choice of career and place of residence. It has also given me lessons and values essential for life, and has shaped the person I am today. ■

2008 Women's Gathering

By Sonia Muir, Rural Women's Network Coordinator



I packed my bag with extra enthusiasm for this year's NSW Women's Gathering hosted by Women About Hay. The Saturday evening had a 60s and 70s theme and I do fancy a good dress up. Obviously so do rural women across NSW as most of the 250+ guests came dressed in an array of downright outrageous to positively radiant outfits found in back wardrobes or local 'op' shops. Rural women certainly know how to kick up their heels and danced until midnight outside under the clouds in between showers of rain.

The Saturday evening fashion parade featured an array of crimplene suits, short and long 'frocks' and the once ubiquitous jumpsuit. The cast of local models led by the incredibly funny compere Jan Audlist, provided many belly laughs and gasps of horror as past 'statements' were brought vividly back to life on the catwalk.

Friday evening was a chance to recuperate from our journeys, meet new friends and reconnect with others. A marquee had to be erected at the Waradgery Club as the main venue had been damaged a few months earlier.

The marquee became the focus of many Gathering activities and helped to create a festive atmosphere. The drumming rain on the canvas featured throughout the weekend and was extra music to our ears!

The Hay Gaol, now a museum had been a girl's reform institution up until 1974. Christina Green a past 'resident' of the Hay Institute for Girls showed incredible courage as she revealed horror stories of injustice and abuse.

Christina was taken away from her family at the age of three and spent the next decade and a half on a rollercoaster ride of foster care and institutions. Her tale was both enthralling and very sad but showed how healing is possible with strong determination and support from others.

It certainly made us forget the drought. I was also grateful to reflect on my own fortunate childhood and remember to always find the good in situations and focus on the positives in life.

I remember when Hay announced the dates for the 2007 Gathering many people thought it would be hot and dusty... well the drought may not have broken but the wet

weather brought a returned sense of hope and no-one really cared about getting a little bit drenched now and again although the Sunday ecumenical service tested our resilience!

The service was held in a private garden at a stunning river bend location. The singing, inspirational words spoken and spirit of camaraderie helped to cope with the arctic winds sweeping across the plains. Who would have thought we'd need to pack ski gear for a November weekend in the outback.

The array of workshops included visits to Hay landmarks such as the historic Bishop's Lodge and the more quirky Westhaven property. Others provided opportunities to explore creative potential by making mosaics, arranging flowers or painting landscapes. Heritage walkers returned from their stroll around town with a greater understanding of the past and much Hay mud caked on their shoes. Women experienced kinesiology, learned to belly dance, how to use a digital camera and do simple car mechanics. There was something for everybody.

I particularly enjoyed listening to Gubba Woods a local

Waradgery man enhance our understanding of local Aboriginal culture and customs.

Gubba's daughter Lara performed the welcome to country as her brother Kurt played a didgeridoo.

There were trade stalls and the local shops provided discounts for anyone needing a little retail therapy.

The Minister for Women, Verity Firth, was engaging and enthusiastic as she experienced a Gathering for the first time.

She reconfirmed The Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald's, commitment to future Gatherings by pledging \$30,000 for the next Gathering being hosted by Coonamble from 17-19 October 2008. Ms Firth spent the entire day and half the night mixing with women and learning first hand about their issues.

As women drove home in every direction I know they go back to their families and communities with new stories, more energy and secure in the knowledge that they are not alone and have developed

Flat out in Hay ~ Contrib



some extra skills and inspiration to face challenges that lie ahead. Congratulations to Tertia Butcher and the Women About Hay team who have been working for months to design this year's successful event and made everyone feel so warmly welcomed.

Gatherings are events where you go home with a multitude of new friends and contacts. For me personally, being able to spend time with my Mum (an avid Gathering junkie) as well as put faces to names and catch up with women from across the State make these annual pilgrimages a most rewarding and enjoyable experience I would not want to miss.

If you have never experienced the magic of a NSW Women's Gathering then don't miss your chance next year by marking 17-19 October 2008 on your calendar now.

Special thanks to the many generous sponsors and especially to NSW Department of Primary Industries Drought Program, The Uniting Church, The Salvation Army, The Country Women's Association of NSW, TAFE NSW, Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority and the Department of Family & Community Services who provided special assistance which enabled over 70 women to attend the Hay Gathering.



Bee Koh, Premier's Council for Women with the Minister for Women, The Hon Verity Firth (second from left) with Gathering participants.



Hay Women's Gathering Committee handing over the symbolic Gathering soil and candle to Coonamble - Hosts of the 2008 Women's Gathering. L to R: Marg Tighe (Hay), Susan Ainge McLeish (Coonamble), Robyn O'Brien (Hay), Tertia Butcher (Hay) & Amanda Colwell (Coonamble)



Elaine Armstrong, Chair of the RWN State Advisory Committee officially opened the Gathering.

'There are things that we can control. We can control our attitude and we can choose to believe in ourselves and the world and other people. Most people don't know what lies within them until they're forced to find out. If we did everything that we're capable of doing we would literally astound ourselves. I want women to be brave, be bold, speak up. If other people can make a difference with their ideas and actions why can't you?'

**BELINDA EMMETT
QUOTE FROM THE
HAY GATHERING
ECUMENICAL
SERVICE**

Contribute · Create · Collect · Curate



'In the bush, where we may feel isolated, poetry is the hand of all humanity that reaches out to reassure us, and to remind us who we are.' TIM METCALF

Poetry has been a fundamental tool for healing from the beginning: think of a mother soothing her ailing infant with a lullaby. Beginning with the imitative sounds that we term onomatopoeia, language soon developed a sympathy between the sound of words and the object or feeling being described. Poetic language is a necessary tool in human communication. For example, in order to describe what is happening under their skin (the point at which their knowledge of the body often stops), patients must revert

to the devices of simile and metaphor: 'It felt like a brick pressing on my chest'.

Like the other arts, poetry forms bridges between our intellectual and emotional worlds; between rational and irrational, planned and instinctual; between science and suffering, doctor and patient. A vast depth of human experience can be accessed in a simple, quickly read but long-savoured language.

Dr David Caplan has given a concise history of the therapeutic use of poetry between the two world wars. 'The Poetry Cure' of 1925 was prescribed for general health, as well as for common disorders like tuberculosis and shell shock, to 'quiet the nerves' and 'create a hopeful outlook'.

Poetry allows verbal complexity and ambiguity, and tolerates lack of resolution in ways that ordinary language, and certainly clinico-medico-legal discourse, dares not. Reading or writing may be a practical part of the treatment of prolonged illness, especially in palliative care.

So long as we live, so long as we struggle against the inevitable, we will have ill health to confront. Today we are facing epidemics of chronic disease and the urge to write about this is strong, as reflected in a growing market of illness narrative. Some of these books are international bestsellers. To write a fine book about surviving breast cancer can bring healing to the writer as well as giving enormous support

and courage to others who also suffer. The National Association of Poetry Therapy has published a book called *Giving Sorrows Words* consisting of poems that have been found most helpful for patients who are grieving.

As the science of the body advances, we need to take care not to lose the art of the mind. They have essential interconnectedness for us as human beings.

Information taken from a paper presented by Tim Metcalf (rural doctor & poet) at the 9th National Rural Health Conference held in March 2007. The full text of Tim's paper can be found at: www.ruralhealth.org.au

Source: Partyline, No. 30, June 2007 – A newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance Inc (www.nrha.ruralhealth.org.au) ■

Melanie's Garden

By Beryl Smith, Mudgee

Melanie stood looking out of her window, she was a lovely woman, but there were lines of sadness on her face now as she gazed at the remnants of the garden that had once been her pride and joy. She recalled how hard both she and David had worked to create a garden out of the jungle that had greeted them when they purchased the house just four years ago. They had spent many happy hours planning and then buying all the plants to place in the ground with such care. But David was no longer here to help her; a dreadful accident had taken him away from her. She knew it was now up to her alone to restore the garden to its former glory. So, gathering

up her tools from the garage, she went towards the path that led to the patch of garden she had seen from the window.

The garden, close up, looked even worse than she thought it would. The drought and the local Council's water restrictions had taken a dreadful toll. With a sigh she knelt and started to clear the debris of the dead and dying plants. When David had died she had cut herself off from her friends, becoming a virtual recluse. She had thought they did not understand that time had not healed the loss of him. Even after two years she still missed him dreadfully.

As she weeded she found, to her surprise, that amidst the chaos a lot of green shoots had appeared. These, she remembered, were the bulbs that David had planted many

months ago to give her a pleasant surprise. She wondered how they had managed to survive, they had been forgotten for so long, yet here they were, with buds already beginning to form on them. They seemed to bring a message from David, that one could survive almost anything, if one tried hard enough. She realised that for too long she had cocooned herself in her misery. This was not what David would have wanted her to do. He had always believed in living life to the full. Why hadn't she thought of this before, how could she have let David and herself down so badly. These small bulbs had reminded her that she could still miss David, but at the same time she could get on with her life. She felt a quiet determination grow within herself. She could now, at long last, face the future with a degree of hope.

Putting down her gardening tools, with a faint smile, she entered the house. As she passed the hall mirror she glanced at herself and noticed of late she had been lax about her appearance. She could not remember when she had last visited the hairdresser, or the gym. Tomorrow she would make appointments for both. Right now, however, she was going to phone her dear friends, hoping they would forgive her. They had been right all along. Life goes on, and time does heal. With her new-found courage, she could manage her life again. From now on she would think of Spring as a time of renewal, and of better days to come. All she had to do was seize the opportunity, and with her friends' help she could come to terms with David's death and pick up her life. It seemed that from now on it was going to be a lot easier. ■

WEST

West was the chance for adventure, romance
And a life that was not 'handed down'
Where the idealistic and unrealistic
Escaped from both rank and renown
The future unplanned save for hope of a land
That was borderless, open and blessed
So men without fear gave up kin and career
To re-build themselves in the west.

West was the break for women to take
And to trade circumspection for chance
But hearts became broken when words left unspoken
Were lost in a new circumstance
Some would return with the power to learn
From a land without leisure or rest
But the country was made by the women who stayed
For their strength was the heart of the west

West was the seed of a pioneer breed
Who pushed beyond river and range
To enter a scene both harsh and serene
And a future both savage and strange
Soft summer rains covered wide open plains
Where visions of wealth were impressed
And people despised for land which they prized
Saw men take a stand in the west

Battle drums beat when different worlds meet
And deeds that few could condone
West saw the blindness, the fear and unkindness
And secrets untold and unshown
Bent to submission and herded to missions
The children were born to unrest
And a culture was lost at a terrible cost
That is still being borne by the west

West was the space where respect earned a place
And men stuck to men as a creed
And those with the drive could prosper and thrive
And take over title and deed

Here was a land where an empire was planned
And fortunes that few could have guessed
So bridges were burnt and lessons unlearned
As industry came to the west

West was the story of hope and of glory
That poets and writers relayed
And men took the track with their life on their back
To go where the future was made
And when came a war the west was the core
Of the spirit considered the best
So in far foreign fields a concept was steered
And a nation defined by the west

West was the scene for seasons extreme
With heat and with plague and with flood
And paddocks so dry that they blew to the sky
And fell again elsewhere as mud
With banks un-decided and stations divided
Fighting men claimed their bequest
But most would lose out to the vermin and drought
And the rest blew away in the west

West ran the courses of far market forces
As dreams were still finding their way
The schemes that were tried were often denied
And some were unable to stay
So many small towns of respect and renown
Were lost, save a few dispossessed
Who laugh as suns set over doubts and regret
That's how people laugh in the west

West now is a trial of will and denial
And hopes that are beaten and battered
Forgotten dreams that split at the seams
In hearts that are shaken and shattered
It lives in a song for the sacred and strong
Who cling to the will in their breast
And wait for the chance of adventure, romance
That is still to be found in the west

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Bourke writer, Andrew Hull, recently released a compilation of poems about the people and places of Western NSW. *WEST* contains poetry from Coonamble to the corner country, touching all points in between. Written over about five years, the poems relate to Western NSW – some are of specific people, places or events, but there are others which try to capture a broader understanding of life in the region.

WEST is available for \$24.95 from retail outlets across the Western region or online at: www.hullyjoe.com

The Country Web has several copies of *WEST* to give-away. To be in the running, write to us and tell us in 25 words or less who your favourite poet is and why? Entries must be received by 22 January 2008. Send your entry to: *The Country Web*, Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800. See page 2 for competition terms & conditions.



A new chapter for Country Care Link

FAREWELL TO SR ENID



Since the establishment of Country Care Link (CCL) in 1992, Sr Enid Doherty has given more than 15 years of her life volunteering as the Coordinator of CCL, before her retirement earlier this year. In her time as CCL Coordinator, ensuring rural people had access to a confidential family support and information service, Sr Enid has touched the lives of so many of us – whether providing a friendly voice at the other end of

the phone, visiting families in drought-ravaged areas, attending Women's Gatherings and helping with key services such as Angel Flight, to those she personally met at the train, bus or plane to transport them to their appointments. We wish her well in her retirement and sincerely thank her for providing such a vital service.

WELCOME SR COLLEEN



My name is Colleen Noonan and I was born in Paddington NSW. While personally I have

not had much experience on the land I have always had a deep sense of appreciation of country people and the difficulties they face. Of course replacing Sr Enid will always be an impossible task, however, as the new coordinator of CCL, I will certainly endeavour to continue the wonderful work that Sr Enid commenced those many years ago.

I first gained an awareness and appreciation of the difficulties and joys of living in the outback during my final years of schooling at St Vincent's College Potts Point, where I shared lessons with classmates from Brewarrina, Bourke, Dubbo and numerous other areas.

After school I entered the Sisters of Charity and completed teacher training, working mainly as an infants teacher, but later in primary sections and as a Principal, taking me to schools in NSW and VIC. Around this time I became interested in Special Education and took on teacher advisory roles in the area of religious development, working in the Catholic Education Office in Sydney and Brisbane. My most recent position has been as Education Officer in the Diocese of Toowoomba, where I visited parents throughout the Diocese who had children with special needs. I also ran an agency for adults with intellectual disabilities.

At one point, I felt I needed a break from schools and worked for a time in the Broken Bay Diocesan Office, looking at needs as the new

diocese was established. This was followed by pastoral care training and work at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney and parish work at Hurstville and Bonnyrigg.

I then worked for a year at the drug and alcohol rehab established by Fr Chris Riley, and later at the farm set up for young homeless people. This was not one of my success stories. The first day, the pipes froze and we had no water; the second there was a storm which brought down the power lines so we had no electricity and no pumps to pump the water; the third day the washing machine blew up. The farm was only about 30 kms from the next house but the experience gave me some awareness, be it in a minute way, of the problems of living in isolated areas! There were some joys however, including the birth of a new miniature foal, rounding up the sheep who had escaped through a hole in the fence and the rapid growth of the chickens who survived the frost.

I also helped establish a refuge for women and children in domestic violence situations and have done some work in counselling, and studied and travelled overseas. And, although not a sports fanatic, I was privileged to be one of the two female Chaplains at the Olympic Village during the 2000 Games.

I have now begun a new chapter in my life with Country Care Link and would like to extend a hand of friendship to those in need. ■

Country Care Link

A confidential family information and support service for Country NSW

- Assistance to find short-term accommodation for country people in the city
- A volunteer to give transport where appropriate
- Legal referral
- Confidential personal counselling
- A referral service to find information
- A volunteer to meet country people in Sydney (48 hours notice necessary for transport)
- A friendly voice for a chat
- Visits for country people in hospital (on request)

FREECALL 1800 806 160

or 02 8382 6432

Monday to Friday – 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

Do you have a background or interest in Australian agriculture, fishing, forestry or food processing sectors? Would you like to contribute to the future prosperity of these industries? Why not use your skills and experience to become a part-time board member or director of one of the sector's many statutory or non-statutory bodies?

The skills and experience needed to be a board member varies depending on the role of the particular organisation.

To help these organisations access people with the right background and abilities, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) maintains a register of interested candidates called the Balance Database.

Balance contains the details of people interested in being considered for appointment to part-time positions within DAFF's portfolio bodies and is used by the portfolio's Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary, and by specialised selection committees.

An information package containing a registration form, information on the organisations and upcoming vacancies is available from Wendy Griffin. Ph: 02 6272 4540 or Email: balance@daff.gov.au



Women in decision making: interview with Felicity Barr

Felicity Barr doesn't use the 'R' word to describe her current lifestyle. Somehow 'retired' doesn't seem to convey the right image for a woman who manages to fit research towards a PhD into the 'spare' hours between many other roles.

Felicity joined the Commonwealth Public Service in the 70s and took early retirement in 2003. She and her husband moved from Canberra to Port Stephens where they both work part-time and contribute to their local community through Rotary and other organisations.

Felicity's interest in the issues of ageing developed during her service with the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs, including five years as Deputy Commissioner (NSW). During that time, she joined the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) and is now serving her third year as President of the NSW Division. She has also become an active member of the Hunter Chapter of AAG.

In preparing for 'retirement', Felicity decided that her interest in gerontology offered many opportunities for continuing intellectual, social and community engagement. As a qualified company director, she now chairs the Boards of the Anzac Health & Medical Research Foundation and the War Widows' Guild (NSW), and is an Honorary Governor of the Ageing & Alzheimer's Research

Foundation. In early 2004, she was appointed to the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing and has chaired that committee since May 2005.

Having completed Master's studies in gerontology, Felicity is now working towards her doctorate. Her thesis will explore the social capital of older Australians and will attempt to fill in some of the gaps in the literature on social capital with respect to older people.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED?

It's really a combination of 'push' and 'pull' factors. I have a lot of knowledge and connections in government and not-for-profit sectors and it would be wasteful not to continue to contribute where I can. But it was also a wish to build a new and meaningful life where I could still be involved in the areas of interest to me.

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF BEING INVOLVED?

I keep my skills, knowledge and connections up-to-date and enjoy remaining part of these circles of colleagues. I also get a lot of satisfaction from contributing my expertise to not-for-profit organisations involved in research or support services for older people.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OBSTACLES?

The main obstacle is that most activities are Sydney-based and many occur at short

notice. It is not a long drive from Port Stephens but it is not always easy to make myself available for all the meetings or events I should or would like to attend. Being out of Sydney, I rely on the internet to keep in touch. I can do all my paperwork for the various committees and boards by email so that's not a problem.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR SUPPORT?

My colleagues offer wonderful support; for example, they are always willing to group meetings around times when I can be in Sydney, so I might combine activities for three or more organisations in any one trip. My husband is also very supportive and recognises that these roles are important to me.

WHAT'S YOUR FINAL MESSAGE TO OTHER WOMEN WANTING TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING?

What you know is important, but so is **who** you know. Get to know key people in your area of interest and let them get to know you and learn about your skills and talents. Attend conferences and other events in your field and listen closely to the latest ideas, trends and opinions. If you want to be involved in decision-making, it's important to know what other decision-makers are thinking, what decisions they are making and why. ■

Drought update

By Dick Kearins, NSW DPI,
Drought Support Worker

With farming communities and rural businesses facing an unprecedented climatic challenge, the drought continues to stress farm family budgets, increase farm debt and create stressful situations for people struggling to make ends meet. However, it is the characteristic resilience of Australian farm families and farming businesses that gives rural communities the ability to bounce back from adverse events such as the current drought or other natural disasters like floods and fire.

The challenge during this extended drought is to keep the spirit alive, to continue to plan and manage farm businesses and to investigate assistance options available to farming communities. It is also important to keep your social networks going and to support one another in bad times as well as the good times. That friendly discussion, whether over a cup of tea or the telephone, can be all that is needed to reassure a friend or neighbour that someone cares.

NSW Department of Primary Industries Drought Support Workers (DSW) can assist individuals and groups to maintain social networks through activities such as Farm Family Gatherings and workshops. They can also be a contact point to assist you with eligibility criteria for the many assistance and support programs available. Some of these include: Exceptional Circumstances payments;

interest rate subsidies; income support payments; emergency drought grants; transport subsidies; household assistance and more.

If you need some support why not contact your local DSW to discuss your situation. And remember – **don't self-assess!** If you don't believe you fit any of the criteria for assistance and you're experiencing difficulties, please contact one of the DSW as they may still be able to help.

NSW DPI DROUGHT SUPPORT WORKER CONTACTS

Bourke: Lyn Leigo
Mobile: 0427 265 810

Corowa: Don Burrowes
Mobile: 0427 324 033

Dubbo: Pip Brown
Mobile: 0429 396 697

Goulburn: Dick Kearins
Mobile: 0427 781 514

Gunnedah: Jenny Croft
Mobile: 0429 446 417

Hay: Danny Byrnes
Mobile: 0428 973 141

Parkes: Jan Bruce
Mobile: 0427 257 191

Score: Tania Chesworth /
Caroline Long – Mobiles:
0428 249 092 / 0428 296 332

Wagga: Wendy Jennings
Mobile: 0427 957 535

NSW DPI DROUGHT HOTLINE – 1800 814 647

Available Monday to Friday
from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm

DROUGHT RELIEF CAMP

Some lovely things happen down here on the coast,
but one thing I think was the best:
a busload of families came for a break,
with 32 kids, from out west.

Out Ivanhoe way, well, they had some rain once; but not enough now for the stock
They need some more water to fill up their tanks. The ground gets as hard as a rock.

With Peter and Tony, they came to the coast – all night, all the way on the bus.
At nine in the morning they reached Bonny Hills; they were just as excited as us!

The kids saw the water and ran to the beach; it seemed like they just couldn't wait.
With Nathan and John looking after the camp, the food and the meals have been great!
And Megan and Danny have planned for the week, a program with all kinds of fun:
on Sunday, the Sea Acres rainforest walk – and that's how the week has begun.

The Maritime Museum is one thing they saw; then Lions Club put on a treat –
a barbeque out in the park – what a feast! With so many good things to eat.

The kids have been featured on NBN News, and newspaper stories as well;
and everyone's happy these people have come, down here to the coast, for a spell.

They'll go to The Billabong, where there are birds and animals, like in a zoo.
They've tried out the surfing: the water was great! There'll be some deep-sea fishing, too –
on Canopuss, the boat in Rod's capable hands – or abseiling, down from a cliff.

The ladies are having some pampering care. (Cosmetics? Just give us a whiff!)

The Bonny Hills Surf Club have been good to meet – like surf coaches, Peter and Wayne –
and Timbertown will be a memory to keep, (like riding the Timbertown train.)
Things here are so green, we just wish we could send, some rain and some grass to the west,
to fatten the cows and the sheep and the goats (and shopkeepers too, and the rest).

But all we can do is just give you a hand, extending a welcome as friends.
We hope the refreshment of holiday time is something that never quite ends.
We hoped we could have **all** the Ivanhoe folk; and others from Hillston, as well;
but leaving your farm in the midst of a drought is pretty darn hard, we can tell.

So take our good wishes to people you know, like the Highnams (we hoped they could make it)
and pass on our blessings to those gripped by drought; and prayers for good rain, to break it.
Take back with you laughter; take back with you hope, and share it with neighbours and others;
and please, don't forget us. We'll think of you all as our new lot of sisters and brothers.

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