

• FOR RURAL WOMEN & THEIR FAMILIES •

# The Country Web

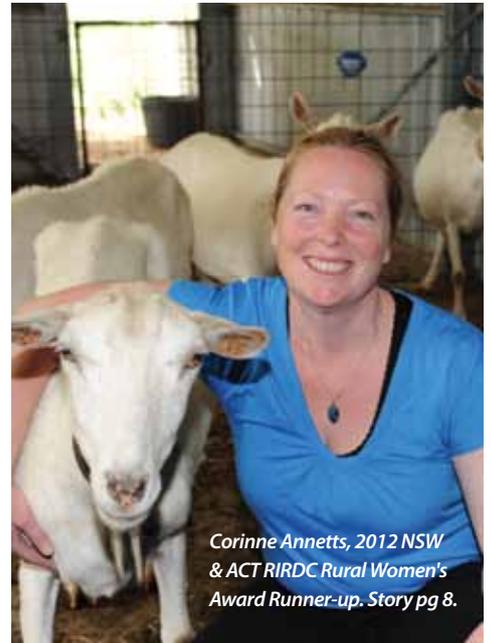
OUR FARMERS – OUR FUTURE

FREE NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 56 AUTUMN 2012



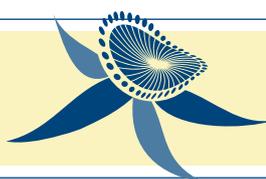
*Danica Leys, 2012 Rural Industries  
Research & Development Corporation  
Rural Women's Award Winner*



*Corinne Annetts, 2012 NSW  
& ACT RIRDC Rural Women's  
Award Runner-up. Story pg 8.*



*Winifred Oslear, Hidden  
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rural women's network  
connecting regional & remote NSW

WOMEN RISING TO THE TOP ■ Paddock to Plate ■ CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

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## THE COUNTRY WEB

The Country Web is produced by the NSW Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network (RWN) and is distributed free. For more about the RWN see page 5.

## EDITING/DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Allison Priest and Emma Regan

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Letters, stories, poems and photographs from rural women and their families are welcome.

## FREE MAILING LIST

You can download *The Country Web* from our website and receive an email alert when a new edition is available. See our website to subscribe. If you live in NSW and would like to receive a copy in the mail contact RWN.

## ADVERTISING

13 000 copies of *The Country Web* are produced each edition. We welcome advertisements and offer competitive rates. Sponsorship and insert options also available.

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## COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Information on how to enter and prize details form part of the Terms & Conditions. By entering the competition, entrants accept these Terms & Conditions. 2. To enter, you must provide your full name and postal details, and in 25 words or less answer the competition question. 3. Entries must be posted to the stated address by the stated date. 4. This competition is a game of skill. The best answer as judged by the RWN will win. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be transferred or redeemed for cash. The winner will be notified by mail within 14 days from the judging date.

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## Bring on 2012, the Australian Year of the Farmer!

With agricultural and rural life firmly embedded in me from both sides of my family, it is almost inevitable that I couldn't imagine living or working in any other field, other than agriculture, in rural and regional Australia.

I run my own beef cattle consulting and service provision business, *AJM Livestock Solutions*, where I advise cattle producers on the latest technology and innovations in the industry and provide a number of other services including ultrasound pregnancy scanning, herd management consultation and services related to our world class National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). When I'm not working in my business I am working on the family farm *Myanga* which is a stud and commercial Angus cattle operation at Crookwell in the Southern Tablelands of NSW.

As a young female farmer, I am truly excited about 2012 Australian Year of the Farmer. It

is a year dedicated to spreading the good word about Australian farmers and about what we do. It is about showcasing how we use the latest technologies and innovations and about raising awareness of where our food comes from and the challenges we have in feeding the world's growing population. The year is also a celebration of the history of Australian agriculture and the role of rural and regional Australia plays in the development and ongoing sustainability of our nation.

My hopes as an ambassador for the year are that we *farmers* strengthen the connection with our urban friends and share with them the great story of Australian agriculture and the Australian farmer. My ambition will be to change the uninformed and sometimes not so positive perception of the 'farmer' image.

I would like to break the many common stereotypes and show people that farmers can be young, female, world leaders

in science and technology and care deeply for our animals and the environment. I want young people in schools to consider a career in agriculture, knowing that it is going to be an exciting, vibrant and rewarding future. I also want young people in schools to know where their food comes from and how it is produced.

I was fortunate to be selected as a young farmer ambassador in the official launch of 2012 Australian Year of the Farmer, back in October 2011. The launch took place at the Botanical Gardens in Sydney, the site of our first Australian Farm. The year has a magnificent patron in Ms Quentin Bryce and a true farming ambassador in Glen McGrath. It's set to be a year of great activity, education and celebration in every corner of Australia.

2012 is a great time to be a farmer. It's a great time to be in agriculture, and through my business, farm and industry



**Alison McIntosh**  
Ambassador – 2012  
Australian Year of the  
Farmer and 2010 NSW  
RIRDC Rural Women's  
Award Runner-up

roles I am looking forward to contributing to the success of the special Australian Year of the Farmer activities and celebrations.

**Farmers are the  
lifeblood of our  
communities. We must  
all do what we can to  
support them.**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MAY

1: STATEWIDE

**Nominations open for 2012 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.** This Roll acknowledges the important volunteer roles women play within NSW rural communities. Simply complete a Nomination Form telling us why your nominee is worthy by downloading a form at: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn) or you can call the NSW Centre for Volunteering on 02 9261 3600.

14 – 20: STATEWIDE

**Volunteer Week.** The theme for National Volunteer Week 2012 is *Volunteers Every One Counts*. This special week is a celebration

of the work volunteers do in our community and thanks them for the contribution they make. Visit [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org) for more information regarding activities in your area.

### SEPTEMBER

5 – 7: ST. GEORGE, QLD

**The AWiA National Conference.** AWiA is a peak organisation for women across all areas of agriculture. The annual conference offers a range of presentations and workshops focussing on Australian primary production, rural industries and communities. 2007 NSW/ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award winner Lana Mitchell will be one of the three keynote speakers.

### OCTOBER

12 – 14: PARKES

**The 20th NSW Rural Women's Gathering** is being hosted by Parkes with lots of activities planned including workshops, stalls and entertainment. Keynote speaker is Jessica Rowe, TV personality and author of *Love, Wisdom & Motherhood* and *The Best of Times, The Worst of Times*. Check out the Parkes Gathering Blog to keep up-to-date: [parkesruralwomensgathering.wordpress.com](http://parkesruralwomensgathering.wordpress.com) or contact Lynn on 02 6863 4667.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

The theme for the next edition of The Country Web will be **Women in Non-traditional Roles**.

Contributions required by 16 June for publication in September 2012.

If you have stories, poems, images or other items of interest, we'd love to hear from you.

Send contributions to:  
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Fax: 02 6391 3749  
[allison.priest@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allison.priest@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## Country Care Link

### CARING FOR COUNTRY FAMILIES

A confidential family information and support service for Country NSW, *Country Care Link* provides:

- a volunteer to meet country people in Sydney (48 hours notice necessary for transport: exceptions in emergency situations)
- assistance to find short-term accommodation for country people in the city
- a referral service to find information
- referrals for confidential personal counselling
- a friendly voice for a chat
- visits (on request) for country people in hospital.

**Country Care Link**  
**Monday to Friday**  
**9.30 am – 3.00 pm**  
**Ph: 1800 806 160 or**  
**02 8382 6434**



### Our farmers. Our future

With 2012 Australian Year of the Farmer, perhaps it is time we highlight the role our farmers play in the very assurance of our future.

We hear daily that by 2020 the world's population will be 9 billion people. (By the way, we have already hit the 7 billion mark!)

Let's consider some of the issues we had to deal with in 2011 that have affected our farmers and hence our futures.

Climate unpredictability, change and global warming issues; increases in global population; competing land use issues (particularly the extractive industries of coal and coal seam gas on prime agricultural land); the encroachment of urban sprawl on farm land; worldwide catastrophes such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, nuclear contamination, terrorism and wars! All these impact heavily on our food producing regions and on our farmers' ability to produce healthy food globally for us all.

Last year the Queensland floods led to a scarcity of some perishable foods and the escalation of food prices. This placed further pressures on family budgets and on Australia's export capabilities.

Governments need to remember that their primary role is to help provide safe, fresh affordable food for all and by legislating and quarantining our rich agricultural land for food only.

Perhaps it is time to remember there ARE substitutes for energy but NO substitute for clean food and water. So, if you have eaten today, maybe it is time to thank a farmer! It's Food for Thought!

**Sue Wilmott, Blackville**

### Nicole Alexander's 'bush humour'

I always enjoy the articles and poems in *The Country Web*. In your recent Spring edition I really enjoyed Nicole Alexander's article. No doubt there is always some humour in the vagaries of living in the bush; I know 'I've been there, done that!' Congratulations Nicole. City folk will say you have a great imagination. Bushies will simply nod their head and smile.

**Lesley Fryer, Cobar**

### Consumer Credit Legal Centre

I read the article on insurance law and debt (p8) in the last edition and thought your readers may be interested to know about the Consumer Credit Legal Centre which operates across the state and provides advice over the phone on all sorts of insurance, debt, mortgage issues and more.

**Credit & Debit Hotline:** 1800 007 007

**Insurance Law Service:** 1300 663 464

[www.cclcnsw.org.au](http://www.cclcnsw.org.au)

[www.insurancelaw.org.au](http://www.insurancelaw.org.au)

**Abigail Gray, Law Foundation**

### Gratitude article by Ange Clark

I read with interest the 'Gratitude' article (p18) by Ange Clark from Bowral, concerning her Autistic son that appeared in the last edition. My heart goes out to her as my family has also had to deal with family birth defects.

I just picked up a library book by Norman Doidge MD called *The Brain that Changes Itself*. It deals with the astonishing new scientific discovery called 'neuroplasticity' where the brain is able to change its own structure and function even in old age. It has many pages devoted to Autism.

Merzenich, a professor of Otolaryngology and Physiology in San Francisco, has discovered there

are critical periods where the new brain is so 'plastic' that its structure can be changed through exposure to new stimuli.

His company, Posit Science, is developing exercises to give the brain the right stimuli in the right order, with the right timing, to bring about plastic change. He has also developed a plasticity based computer program called *Fast Forward* which has helped Autistic children.

I am sure Ange and other readers would find this most interesting. I would like to know if such a program exists in Australia and if so how do we link in with it.

**Rhonda March, Glen Innes**

### Our magic carpet ride

On our *magic carpet ride* from Wentworth to Gloucester I was transported from our ensign horizontal landscape to a lofty vertical landscape. Tall timber contrasted our stunted bonsai trees and shrubs. Salt bush in grey greens contrasted the vivid Kelly (Irish) green covering every hillside like green shag pile carpet.

Gloucester was paradise – a village nestled in a cradle of mountains. Gardens dazzled us with brilliant colour. Towering blue mountains contrasted our naked sand hills (our only mountains). Lanky saplings stood shoulder to shoulder on tip toe as they reached to the sky. Whip birds cracked their whips. Bellbirds chirped. Black cockatoos showed off and screeched at us.

We connected with the local ladies and those from afar, and re-connected with old friends. We were stimulated, entertained invigorated and challenged by a variety of speakers – all wonderful. And we laughed till we cried at the talented local poets.

Thank you Gloucester for beckoning us to paradise. You can feel proud for hosting the 2011 Women's Gathering. We had a ball. You gave us many beautiful visual delights and pleasures.

**Marg White, Wentworth**

### Competition Winners

Congratulations to the following readers for your winning entry in the No. 55 book competitions.

**The Power of 100:**  
**Gabrielle Teale-McEvoy,**  
 Coonabarabran;  
**Betty Allport,** North Star.

**Nicole Alexander Series:**  
**Rebecca Kelson,** Griffith



RWN Project Coordinators  
Allison Priest & Emma Regan.

The Rural Women's Network (RWN) is a statewide government program working in innovative ways to share information and promote action on rural women's issues.

What RWN can do for you:

- Promote activities and share information via our networks;
- Give presentations and facilitate workshops or send information for you to distribute;
- Connect you with key individuals, groups and agencies.

Current projects;

- RIRDC Rural Women's Award: a leadership and development Award
- Shaping Our Futures Together: a two-day self-development workshop
- Annual NSW Rural Women's Gathering;
- Annual Hidden Treasures Honour Roll: recognising rural women volunteers; and
- Daring to Dream books: stories of inspirational women.

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Fax: 02 6391 3749

Email: [rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

twitter: [com/nsw\\_rwn](https://twitter.com/nsw_rwn)

blog: <http://nswruralwomensnetwork.wordpress.com>

If you close your eyes and imagine a farmer ... what do you see? A bloke? A woman?

I wonder how many imagined the latter?

The archetypal male image of the Aussie farmer dominates our literature with stories of stockmen, drovers, shearers and tanned muscled blokes toiling the land.

The 2012 Australian Year of the Farmer is a national celebration of farming and this edition of *The Country Web* digs into our diverse rural communities to unearth some of the talented and passionate women who are involved in primary industries across the state.

It is important to tell their (often hidden) stories along with those of our menfolk to whom we are also immensely proud.

Our 136,000 Aussie farms are making a significant contribution to what we eat, wear and use every single day so it is fitting that we celebrate these very special heroes.

As my Mum often says we so easily admire someone who can kick a ball so why not someone who can feed the world!

A Federal Government report showed that Australian farmers contributed more than \$43 million in gross production value to the Australian economy during 2010-11.

Wow that is a lot of dollars being created to help our economy thrive. The top three sectors contributing to this wealth were grains producers, red meat farmers and horticulturalists but there are also a myriad of niche

and boutique primary producers who are just as important.

Farmers are an amazing breed of passionate men and women who often work side-by-side. They repeatedly have to deal with precarious markets along with the challenges of droughts, floods, storms and the unknown impacts of climate change.

We need our farmers to grow and produce commodities that are helping to provide for Australians as well as those beyond our shores through exports.

Farmers care immensely about the environment and the welfare of animals because they want their industries to be sustainable long into the future.

Farms come in all sizes from the very small allotments producing for local markets to the huge outback stations that are measured in square kilometers.

Farming is now a very sophisticated business and farmers are embracing technology to find out information as diverse as weather patterns and futures trading. They are also on twitter, using Facebook, blogs and carry mobile devices using 'apps' to identify weeds or select grain varieties.

We need to acknowledge that our farmers are among the most efficient producers of food and fibre in the world so it is important to continue to learn more about what they do and tell their stories.

I hope after reading this *Country Web*, the next time you imagine a farmer – a woman will feature in your picture too!

## 2011 RWN REVIEW

How effective have current RWN activities been? Where should we focus our energies in the future? How satisfied are you with RWN services? These are some of the key questions we need to consider as we move into the 20th year of the RWN program.

RWN sincerely thanks those who have participated in this review process. Your time, ideas and feedback have been valued. The findings in this report from the 177 individuals who engaged in the process is already helping with RWN planning. We hope you continue to work with us to ensure rural women in this state thrive and prosper.

You can download the report from our Publication & Resources section on our website: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)

## NEW LOGO

To celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday we thought it was fitting to give the RWN a little makeover. We hope you like the funky new RWN logo designed by our creative NSW DPI colleague and designer Belinda Gersbach from Orange.



## NEW BLOG

We have now entered the blogosphere too: <http://nswruralwomensnetwork.wordpress.com>

Visit the Rural Women's Network internet site at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)





# Tweet sensation

*Social media activist and lawyer Danica Leys has won the 2012 NSW/ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award. She encourages anyone looking for a way to broaden their network, learn more about new and interesting ideas and concepts, or those that wish to tell a story and 'advocate' on behalf of the Australian farming industry to get involved in social media.*

2012 NSW/ACT Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation Rural Women's Award Winner Danica Leys has been involved in agriculture for the past 15 years. In her early career she worked as an agronomist before studying law. She now specialises in agribusiness, social media and employment law while maintaining a strong passion for rural and regional Australia.

In 2010 Danica saw the potential for social media to be a tool for farmers to have a stronger voice in metropolitan areas and bridge the rural-urban divide. She co-founded the online community forum AgChatOz which is connecting country and city communities by providing a 'meeting place' for dialogue on important rural issues.

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson says Danica's work in social media is helping farmers to overcome the challenges of isolation by providing them with a means to connect and gain relevant information to improve productivity in their rural industries.

'For many people the frontline of rural industries is no longer about being in the paddock – it's now in front of the computer – especially when more than half of our

1.6 million jobs in farming and related industries are located in Australia's six capital cities.'

Danica has won a \$10 000 bursary which she will use to expand AgChatOz as a key instrument to further engage and educate the agricultural community in social media and raise the profile of primary industries across Australia. She will also hold a series of workshops and networking events.

In October Danica will join other state and territory winners and runners-up in Canberra for a week long leadership and development program, culminating in the announcement of the overall Australian RIRDC Rural Women's Award Winner.

Danica talks to us about using social media to connect farmers and urban communities ...

I wear many hats. I'm a solicitor, a member of the University of Sydney Alumni Committee, and have a background in agronomy. I am also a mother and wife. Unfortunately for me, I am not a farmer, although would dearly love to be in the future!

I am passionate about rural communities and as such I'm interested in the way farmers and those involved in agricultural industries can

begin to tell their story to consumers, and the world, through the use of social media.

There are many ways to get farming stories out there. I believe social media is a powerful tool to connect rural and urban communities by sharing experiences, growing understanding and building respect.

For many people there is a huge knowledge gap when it comes to one of the most important industries in this country, agriculture.

I particularly noticed this after I moved to Sydney. Some of my daughters' friends thought milk came from 'the shop'. Other people would comment that my move from Dubbo must have been 'a relief' and often, without meaning to, spoke about country areas as being second rate.

More needs to be done to counteract those negative stereotypes. I believe part of the job of getting the message and visibility of agricultural industries out, lies with people that work in it, and I began to wonder how this could be done.

A few weeks later this question turned into an idea and with Thomas Whitty (Australian Year Of the Farmer Roadshow star!) and Sam

Livingstone (web designer), we began to build the foundation of AgChatOz.

AgChatOz is a social media advocacy group for farmers, those involved or interested in agriculture in some way, those living in rural areas or really anyone that has an opinion on the topics that we talk about and wishes to participate. The concept centres around a weekly discussion on twitter using the hashtag #agchatoz.

Every week, we have a topic to focus on, and a set of questions designed to elicit robust debate and moderate the chat. Journalists, politicians, government employees, private industry, farmers, service providers, public relations professionals and many others join in the conversations. People also use the #agchatoz tag during the week to tag tweets of interest, and there are many other conversations that take place outside the Tuesday night chat.

Social media is helping farmers tell their stories, 'straight from the horse's mouth' so to speak. I have often heard the comment that 'If I don't take the time to tell my story, then someone else will' and that is very true. This is one of the reasons why social media in agriculture is important.

Social media is a very important tool to help connect rural and urban communities. Consumers and the interested public can

get the real stories about how their food is produced, and also feel more connected to their rural counterparts, which helps to build empathy and understanding amongst those who have very little to do with agriculture. The other reason is to vastly broaden your outlook and networks.

I have now witnessed countless examples of people that have 'met' on Twitter and been able to exchange information and ideas on farming practices that they never would have had the opportunity to do otherwise. The learning aspect of being involved in social media is also invaluable, and a big reason why I devote so much time to it.

Other forums on social media are tackling the huge issue of mental health. Those forums provide a way for people who are geographically widespread, and often isolated, to connect with others over common problems, for example, the #ruralmh tag is becoming very popular and has widespread press attention.

I'd encourage anyone looking for a way to broaden their networks, learn more about new and interesting ideas and concepts, or wish to tell a story and 'advocate' on behalf of the Australian farming industry to get involved in social media during the 2012 Australian Year of the Farmer. It's simple, easy to do, and the rewards can be enormous.



The 2012 NSW/ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award Gala Dinner was held at Parliament House Sydney on Tuesday 21 February. Pictured are Michael Bullen (Deputy Director General – Agriculture NSW), The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP (Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for Small Business), Danica Leys (2012 Winner), Corinne Annetts (2012 Runner-up and goat farmer from Uralla – read her story on page 8) and Dr Richard Sheldrake (Director General, NSW Department of Primary Industries).

## 2013 RIRDC Rural Women's Award

This Award bursary could help you take your management, business and leadership skills to a higher level, so you can shape the future of primary industries and rural Australia.

So what are you waiting for?

Step out of your comfort zone and have a go!

The Award provides a \$10 000 bursary for the NSW/ACT Winner and the opportunity for the winner and runner-up to participate in further leadership and development activities.

The Award is open to women involved in primary industries or natural resource management, whether you work in broadacre farming, intensive livestock, cropping, horticulture, fish, forestry or related service industries.

For more information and how to apply contact the Rural Women's Network on 02 6391 3620, email [rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or see: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn) or visit your local Westpac branch.

2013 applications open 1 August and close 15 October 2012.





# Daring to dream

*Corinne Annetts, 2012 NSW/ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award Runner-up, moved to the New England area in 2004 and started a boutique dairy goat stud enterprise. Sunhill Skin Essential makes and sells quality skin care products and moisturisers made from goat milk to clients in Australia and overseas. Corinne plans to expand the operation to make and supply speciality goat cheese products.*

Corinne Annetts is 'daring to dream' and has been named runner-up of the 2012 NSW/ACT Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award.

What started out as a home-based personal interest using milk from her small herd, is now rapidly expanding into a commercial venture with quality skin care products and moisturisers as well as speciality goats cheese products marketed in Australia and overseas.

The Rural Women's Network sat down with Corinne to find out some of the keys to her success.

**Tell me about your current business/role/greatest achievement. What is your passion?**

I started my own business manufacturing and developing my fresh goat's milk skin care range for all skin types. The products have great benefits for

those who suffer sensitive skin, eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis, scarring, itchy and dry skin. My business has now developed and expanded and I am currently in the process of opening a Cheese Factory on-site at our Dairy Goat Stud in Uralla, in the New England Region of NSW. My passion is for the dairy goat industry and emerging boutique businesses that are appearing throughout Australia. I would like to represent these emerging businesses and share knowledge and experience to help others achieve success similar to my own.

**What gave you the motivation/inspiration to follow your dream?**

The motivation and inspiration has come from knowing that what I am doing has benefited many people. I am producing quality products of a consistently high standard. It is a wonderful

feeling to have success and recognition of your dreams. My family has always been the main reason behind me developing this venture as a way of maintaining lifestyle and achieving goals. I want our children to grow up with a healthy attitude and a passion to enjoy a positive sustainable life.

**At what point did you realise that your dream was possible and what was it that made you think you could really do it?**

I guess it was when I talked to my local Business Enterprise Centre. They listened to my dreams and told me to go for it. I think I just needed that extra push to start the journey. They guided me through a Women in Business Mentoring Program and this was exactly what I needed to build my confidence and skills.

**When you were a child, what did you want to 'be' when you grew up?**

I wanted to be a vet as animals have always been an important part of my life. Now with the dairy goat stud I am able to do all my own animal health checks as I have enough knowledge and experience to maintain the health of my herd which is extremely important.

**How did your childhood influence you in later life?**

My parents divorced when I was very young. Living mostly with my mum, she has been a huge influence in the development of my values and goals. We moved from Sydney to 20 km outside Taree when I was 13. This was a huge step for two city girls. Mum was extremely strong mentally and wanted a more sustainable lifestyle. This was where our dabbling in running a small sustainable hobby farm began.

We had chickens, horses, dogs and cats with a veggie patch and orchard. It was a real change to city life and extremely satisfying. Mum used to have a little store with a honesty box set up at our front gate to sell our fresh produce. I was always surprised to come home on the school bus and find everything gone and the honesty box filled with change.

#### Who are your role models?

My mum is high on that list but so too is my dad. He has great business sense and really instilled those important skills in me and how to be strong when barriers are put in your way.

Dad moved to the United States in the early 90s and runs a very successful business. His business knowledge and expertise has been invaluable. My other role model is my partner and husband, Richard, who has been a huge support. He also keeps me grounded and is someone to bounce ideas off knowing that he won't laugh in my face no matter how silly I sound. Richard is extremely strong emotionally and helps me keep things together when I start to 'stress out'.

#### What does success mean to you?

Happiness for myself and my family is number one. Being a role model for others by using my knowledge and expertise to inspire others is a measure of success.

#### What has been one of the biggest barriers you have had to face, what happened, and how did you overcome it?

My biggest barrier was living in Tasmania on our 40 acre property overlooking the spectacular Bruny Island and Déncastraus Channel. We loved living there in

our temporary dwelling until we got the house built. We had our dream lifestyle with solar power, goats, vegetables and chickens. Unfortunately our block was on the side of a hill and after substantial rain over a 24 hour period a landslide took our home and power down the hill. This was extremely devastating and I could not bear being there anymore as the pain was too much.

We returned to NSW, I took a teaching position in Kempsey for a term and decided to start again but this time on flat ground! The family relocated to Uralla because it reminded us so much of Tasmania and we knew we could continue our dream here.

#### Where do you see yourself in 10 years time? What is your vision for the future?

In 10 years time I would like to think that we could be completely self-sufficient and sustainable. This would be a great achievement. I hope my vision to have a successful cheese factory is realised. I would like to see our skin care products available in many retail outlets and benefiting more people. I hope to continue my volunteer work on community groups and live a well balanced lifestyle. I also hope that my husband is working on our property full time and we are managing the business together.

#### What would you like to say to other women who may be just starting out on a daring to dream journey?

Do it! Be confident in yourself and follow that dream. Talk to people. Get feedback about what you want to do and use all opportunities that you come across. It is possible, you just need to keep the focus and it will all unfold in front of

you. Flexibility is important to. Remember sometimes things go in a different direction but this can also be a good thing. Draw up a plan with your goals for the next five years and you will be surprised how your passion will become more focussed.

For more great Daring to Dream stories see the RWN website: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/activities/daring-to-dream](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/activities/daring-to-dream)

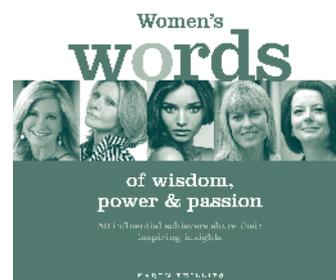
#### DO YOU KNOW

Women farmers represent more than a quarter of the world's population.

Women comprise, on an average, 43% of the agricultural work force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet women have less access than men to agriculture related assets, inputs and services.

Had they enjoyed the same access to productive resources as men, women could boost yield by 20–30%; raising the overall agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4%. This gain in production could lessen the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17%, besides increasing women's income.

Source: United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation 2011.



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Written by Karen Phillips, *Women's Words* features thought-provoking and honest interviews with 50 of Australia's finest women.

The women showcased in the book share their very different stories and motivation behind their success – from high achievers, industry leaders, sporting heroes, celebrities, fashion icons, unsung heroes, and inspiring women of the land including Sue Middleton and Alana Johnson (2011 RIRDC Rural Women's Award recipients).

Their profiles include personal interviews, anecdotes and beautiful imagery. It's a great 'how-to handbook' and a perfect keepsake for women of all ages and lifestyles.

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ISBN 9780646537177  
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# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson, MP

By Lyndall Hilder, NSW Department of Primary Industries



A year has flown by since the first female Minister for Primary Industries was sworn in but Katrina Hodgkinson says she is relishing the opportunity to be a driving force behind the NSW agricultural sector.

As the Minister for Primary Industries and Small Business, Katrina often finds herself in the hustle and bustle of Sydney but lives in Yass and travels regularly around regional NSW meeting with and talking to country people about the rural issues that are affecting them.

'I was born in the country – it's where I grew up, where I was educated, where I have spent most of my working life and where I still live.

'I feel fortunate to enjoy all the benefits of country living but it's far from the relaxed existence city-slickers imagine – men and women from country areas are some of the hardest working people I know.'

Katrina has represented the seat of Burrinjuck in the NSW Legislative Assembly since 1999 and her rural electorate, located in the Southern Tablelands, covers an area of more than 28 000 square km.

'My rural electorate is as diverse as it is beautiful – it has a rich

history and some of the most scenic and productive agricultural land in the State,' Katrina said.

Growing up on a merino stud, Katrina has experienced the highs and lows of life on the land from an early age.

'Both sides of my family have lived in this area for five generations.

'I am working hard to be a strong advocate for rural NSW and I'm not afraid to tackle some of the biggest challenges we face on the land including increased international competition, water scarcity and food security.

'As Minister for Primary Industries, I enjoy working with our State's farmers and it's my aim to increase opportunities for our State's thriving \$9 billion agricultural sector which provides more than 73 000 jobs across NSW,' Katrina said.

The old saying 'Australia was built on the sheep's back' still rings true in NSW, especially in Katrina's backyard.

'In NSW we produce more wool than any other State in Australia and wool production remains one of our major industries.

The wool industry is worth more than \$850 million, while our lamb and sheep industry is worth around \$613 million a year,' Katrina said.

Prior to entering Parliament, Katrina was the owner and operator of a wool and fine arts business at Yass and Bowral.

'From first-hand experience I know that small business forms the backbone of all country towns and is a critical component of regional economies.

'Now, as Minister for Small Business I am grateful for the

many years I spent running my all-Australian wool product business. I know what it's like to be putting every cent and bit of energy you have to make sure you meet your bottom line.'

As the State's first female Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson is a strong advocate for rural women.

'In 2012 there are simply no limits to what women can do. They are successfully running everything from huge livestock and cropping businesses, nursery operations, boutique food businesses or specialist ventures, while juggling family commitments at the same time.

'Women play a crucial role in our regional towns, especially in times of crises, which we witnessed recently during recent floods across NSW.

'Women are often the backbone of country communities and they help keep our country towns going by volunteering with community, sporting and charity organisations – this is something I want to see thrive well into the future.'

Katrina is speaking from experience. She has been actively involved in many community groups and associations, including various Agricultural Show Societies and charities – she is patron of several community organisations including the South West Chapter of the National Serviceman's Association.

While working the land may have once been historically dominated by men, Katrina believes there is a genuine need for women to play an increasing role in agriculture, particularly

due to the ageing population of farmers and labour shortages across the State.

'Changes in technology have provided new opportunities for all farmers and it's also made it easier for women to play a leading role in agriculture,' she said.

'Women are great at working in agriculture. We have the business skills, the education and experience needed to be competitive in farming.

'It's also great to see some of our younger women embrace our valued primary industries and I'm proud to see an increased number of female graduates from agricultural courses across the State.'

This year there is renewed focus on our rural industries as celebrations continue throughout 2012 to mark the Australian Year of the Farmer.

'Australian Year of the Farmer is a fantastic opportunity to throw the national spotlight on farming and provide more support for our regional communities.

'There is a real need out there for new ideas and clever thinking to sustain and grow our rural communities.

'I encourage all women to get involved in their community – whether you live at Wagga Wagga or Windsor; whether you have just arrived with your family to a country town or lived there for decades; whether you have extensive qualifications or just want to contribute ...

'Everyone can make a difference and 2012 is the time to make it happen.'

# Women rising to the top

## Challenges and triumphs

By Trudy Glasgow, NSW Department of Primary Industries



NSW Farmers President Fiona Simson's leadership journey began with an experience close to home. As a Director of 'Plantation Trading', a 5500 ha family mixed farming enterprise she manages with husband Ed and children Jemima and Tom near Premer on the Liverpool Plains, the issue of coal mining became very personal in 2006.

It was about this time that farmers in the district were concerned about its threat to their rich agricultural country. Fiona was invited to become the inaugural secretary of the Caroon Coal Action Group – a group set up to give a more public voice to potential threats of coal mining to farms and to the rights of landowners.

As she described the experience in a recent speech, 'it didn't take very long at all before I was hooked'.

Realising that the challenge of winning the community action group battle involved changing the process so communities felt they had a voice, Fiona's lobbying journey began in earnest as she sought and

secured representative roles with Liverpool Plains Shire Council and the NSW Farmers Executive Council.

Her efforts as Chair of the Association's Mining Taskforce enabled her to meet farmers across NSW, eventually leading to her being encouraged to stand for the top job.

'There was no doubt I thought I could make a contribution, but the question for me was whether the time was right,' she told a recent *Farmwriters* audience.

Seeing a chance to give Association members the opportunity to do things differently, and to achieve change, Fiona successfully stood for and was elected the first female President of NSW Farmers in July 2011.

She sees her election, working alongside other female leaders such as NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson, as indicative of an exciting new chapter of increased profile of women in agriculture.

'It's a role we've always played ... in the paddock, around the kitchen table ... but its now we are seeing women coming into the public face of agriculture,' she said.

'I think it's due to a number of reasons: labour shortages as we don't employ as many people on farms and as a result are trying to do more ourselves and secondly, we have a generation of young women coming back to the farms, bringing with them professional skills which make them well equipped to speak

publicly about rural issues, with strong IT and writing skills ... they are women well qualified to represent their business and their industry.'

While welcoming the increased recognition of the contribution and leadership women are providing within agriculture today, Fiona doesn't want to exclude men from the equation.

'It's a balance thing,' she explains.

'It's about attracting young people to the industry including women, while making sure we have balanced input and representation.

'It's part of the changing face of farming generally ... we recognise farming as a business, and that includes the part women play in that business. They don't have to be driving the tractor and working in the paddock to be part of the team – they are contributing in a whole range of other ways to the management of the business.'

Originally from a farm near Armidale, Fiona spent time in Canberra and Sydney before relocating back to the bush with husband Ed to *Plain Station* at Bundella. She has a BA in Arts/Business and tertiary qualifications in workplace training and adult education ... all proving important skills in helping manage the farm, her various professional roles and community work.

While meeting substantial travel and work commitments with NSW Farmers, she remains responsible for administration, marketing and risk management of the farming business, which

includes broadacre farming and commercial and stud poll Hereford cattle productions.

Fiona admits it is a busy schedule, which includes spending time with her family, but is excited about the challenges ahead, in particular using the Australian Year of the Farmer to raise agriculture's profile.

'It is a real chance for us to take pride in what we do as farmers ... and an opportunity to assess where we are now as an industry and our plans for the future.

'Unfortunately, we are a diminishing population, so we want to be well placed as a business, and look at how we can attract more young people to join that business.

'There is a disconnect between those who eat and those who produce ... this is our opportunity to reconnect with the city consumers, encourage them to recognise our role as producers, and to make those connections.'

Having been elected to the Presidency on a platform of renewal, excellence and inclusiveness, Fiona's view on leadership is based on facilitating participation.

'My role is to facilitate others to achieve their ideals, their ambitions, and their ideas, through whatever group they form a part of.

'It is critical to encourage young people to be involved in our industry and to ensure there are leadership opportunities for them, so they can drive change.

'I have always put my hand up because I believed I could do it. I want to see other women feel confident to do the same ... rather than having a set quota.'



# From paddock to plate

## Gourmet macadamia's ... and Pam's 3 'P' principles

**In need of a tree change, Pam Brook (a former dentist) and her husband Martin (a former film company executive) swapped life in Melbourne for a farm on the NSW North Coast. Their story is one of passion, innovation, sustainability and success.**

Pam and Martin Brook bought their 40 ha rundown dairy farm in Bangalow in 1989. The farm was seriously degraded and largely overrun with weeds, with a tiny pocket of remnant rainforest. They spent the next 10 years planting and nurturing 4500 macadamia nuts creating what is now *Brookfarm* — a leading producer of premium quality macadamia products such as muesli, macadamia oil, walkabout mixes and *Brookfarm* bars. Their success Pam believes is a result of their 3 P's: Passion for quality, Passion for a better environment and Passion for great tasting healthy food.

### What inspired their involvement in a new rural industry?

New to farming and on a steep learning curve Pam says when they bought the farm the macadamia *nut in shell* price was strong and the industry

future looked rosy. Macadamia nuts take 10 years to mature and yield a commercial crop so the couple continued to work in Melbourne until the trees were mature enough to yield a crop and they could move up permanently. Their overall mission for *Brookfarm* was to incorporate macadamias into foods that people eat every day. To create products of the highest quality that showcased the health benefits and delicious taste of the macadamia.

'We really wanted to create a different range of macadamia based products other than the usual chocolate coated, roasted and salted nuts. It took over two years in intensive research and development to launch our first two mueslis.'

In November 2000 after 18 months of testing, baking and tasting, Pam and Martin sold their first Macadamia Mueslis at the local Bangalow markets. Pam created the products and for the first two years baking and packaging in the local bakery. Martin would then load the muesli into the back of his car and sell to local shops and cafes. The product range grew by popular demand and today

all products are made in their own purpose built factory. They make 17 tonne of Macadamia Muesli per week, supplying the independent sector throughout Australia and export to over 12 countries.

In 2007 *Brookfarm* won the Telstra and MYOB Australian Business of the Year – the first food manufacturing company to win this prestigious award. They also have a host of other national and international awards for their products and business management success. In 2011 Pam and Martin were a finalist in the 2011 Farmer of the Year Awards coordinated by NSW Department of Primary Industries and NSW Farmers.

So what does Pam attribute to the farms success?

'One of the key's to our success is the connection with our consumers through our story of sustainable farming. We tell the story of our farm on the back of every product we sell. It connects consumers to our farm and our paddock to plate story.'

### A passion for great tasting healthy food

Pam says her passion for good food and the frustration of

seeing Australia's macadamia nuts being shipped offshore was the catalyst to do something different with their product.

'The inspiration for our Muesli and Walkabout blends comes from my late father, Mick Hull (one Victoria's skiing legends). I remember our kitchen used to be filled with jars of oats, bran, nuts, grains, seeds, dried fruits and secret ingredients my father would specially request. He would then blend a new mix each week until the ideal combination was achieved. Dad never went into the bush without a packet of home made trail mix, or *Scroggins* as he called it, in his pocket.'

### Passion for quality

Pam says all their products are based on the highest quality nuts, grains and fruits.

### FAST FACTS

The Macadamia is a native rainforest tree known to the Aboriginals as *Kindal Kindal*. The trees grow to a height of 12 – 15 metres. When in flower each tree has a multitude of long, delicate, sweet-smelling white blossoms. Each spray of flowers produces from 4 – 15 'nutlets' which ripen into nuts. The nuts grow encased in a hard, woody shell, protected by a green-brown fibrous husk. Nuts are harvested between April and September and are picked up by a combination of mechanical harvesting and hand-picking after they fall to the ground. It takes 100 kg of the highest quality nuts to make 40 kg of premium-grade macadamia oil.

'We constantly search out the best suppliers of raw materials. Depending on the season our oats and barley come from central NSW, SA or WA, dried fruits from Riverina, native honey from QLD and bush ingredients such as lemon myrtle and bush pepper from local growers.

'We work directly with the farmers as we're passionate about supporting and giving people real jobs and real futures within the farming community and every one of our products is produced and manufactured in our own factories!'

By creating these job opportunities Pam and Martin are helping to build a viable, local food manufacturing industry in regional Australia.

### **Passion for a better environment**

Environmental sustainability is also at the core of the farm's business plan. Having completed a massive land restoration program that involved planting 30,000 subtropical rainforest and eucalypt trees on areas too steep for macadamias and around the streams that run through the property, they are currently two years into a three year transition to organic status.

'The rainforest regeneration goes hand in hand with making the farm function better. Six years

ago we would lose 7–8% of our macadamia crops to rats and we used bait to control the problem. By planting the rainforest, the floor is now clear and there's nowhere for the rats to hide. We also have several pairs of breeding owls who have made their homes in our rainforest and its estimated that a pair will consume up to 1500 rats and mice a year. We've now stopped all baiting and the wastage to rats is now down to 0.3% per annum.

'Our integrated pest management program also includes the introduction of thousands of indigenous wasp eggs to neuter the eggs of the damaging nut borer and similar programs to take care of other pests such as the spotted bug. Beneficial insects important for pollination are also part of the big picture and the farm is currently monitoring the introduction of native beehives.

'Recently we have joined with over 200 other NSW companies working with the State Government's Sustainability Advantage Program. Every aspect of our business is critically examined and measured for its carbon footprint, and through the changes we are making we are working towards becoming

carbon negative!'

Today, the farm is a haven for wildlife including echidna, wallaby, paddy melons, koalas, water dragons, turtles, duckbill platypus, carpet pythons, red-bellied black snakes, eastern brown snakes, bandicoots, goanna's and a rich variety of birdlife including the yellow tail black cockatoo. Pam says in the early morning the rainforest is a virtual symphony of bird-song.

### **Community and giving back**

Giving back to the community is important to the Brook's. They support breakfast programs in regional NSW, soup kitchens and food banks to help provide balanced and healthy nutrition to those most in need. Pam is also involved in a local schools program on product design and development. Other initiatives include support for the Friends of the Koala Rescue Centre, local Landcare groups and Coeliac Awareness. In November 2008 they joined with Rainforest Rescue in assisting their work in buying back and preserving the Daintree Rainforest in North Queensland.

### **Leadership and women**

Pam is passionate about inspiring others value-add to their farm businesses and encouraging the growth, diversification and innovation of the macadamia industry. As a mentor, she hopes to inspire others to do the same.

As Convener of the Northern Rivers Food Group, created to support and develop local food producers, Pam plays an active role by mentoring other businesses. She is a member of the Australian Macadamia Society, Board Member of the Australian Landcare Council and an active member of three Landcare groups.

## **YOUR YEAR OF THE FARMER BUCKET LIST**

**Celebrate the vital role farmers play in feeding, clothing and housing us all with our Year of the Farmer Bucket List.**

1. Register for **Farm Day** on 26 & 27 May and get hands-on experience of what it's like down on the farm.
2. Talk to a farmer at your local **Farmers' Markets** and experience fresh, seasonal produce at its best.
3. Get along to your **local agricultural show, rural rodeo or country race meet**.
4. Visit Parkes for the **NSW Rural Women's Gathering** 12–14 October.
5. View the **Yarning Our Country exhibit**, an entirely knitted rural landscape at Gloucester Gallery.
6. Book a **Farmstay** for your next weekend getaway.
7. Experience **Opera under the Stars** at Casino, or **Opera in the Paddock** at Delungra, held each year.
8. **Visit your local winery** during harvest and learn about the wine making process.
9. Explore the **Hawkesbury Farm Gate Trail**. Sample local produce, learn how it's grown, harvested and even how to cook or prepare it!
10. **Camp out under the stars** and appreciate the simple beauty of rural Australia.

### **INVOLVED IN A NEW RURAL INDUSTRY – OR ASPIRE TO BE?**

Are you a primary producer looking to diversify or better manage risk by taking on new niche products? Do you value add to existing new products bringing them to market in a form that can be purchased? Are you involved at industry, state or federal levels and trying to stay in touch with what's happening? New Rural Industries Australia (NRIA) provides information, networking, news, events and more. Become a subscriber for free and you will automatically receive NRIA's *Passion to Profit* magazine and newsletters to keep you abreast of the latest news and information.

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Find out whether you are a 'City Slicker' or an 'Australian country legend' by answering True (T) or False (F) at the end of each statement (answers can be found at the bottom of the sheet). See if you can outdo your friends with your knowledge about Aussie farms!

Answers can be found at the bottom of the page.

**T or F**

- 1. Wool is a natural fibre produced by sheep. ....
- 2. Heifers are young male cattle. ....
- 3. Australian farmers use modern technology to grow our food and fibre. ....
- 4. Sheep are ruminants, which means they have three stomachs. ....
- 5. Beef is a nutritious type of red meat produced by cattle. ....
- 6. Australian farmers are some of the best and most efficient farmers in the world. ....
- 7. Roosters are a type of chicken that lays eggs. ....
- 8. There are more than 60 varieties of potatoes commercially grown in Australia. ....
- 9. The Australian seafood market is worth about \$2 billion a year making it the fourth highest agricultural earner after beef, wheat and milk. ....
- 10. Some farmers use global positioning systems (GPS) to plant their wheat crops. ....
- 11. Agriculture plays an important role in Australia's economy. ....
- 12. Chickens are herbivores, they only eat plants. ....
- 13. Classic, cherry and cocktail, plum and baby plum, beef and vine or truss are all types of tomatoes. ....
- 14. Australians drink milk produced by cows, sheep and goats. ....
- 15. Researchers, farmers, truck drivers, journalists, veterinarians, fashion designers, chefs, marketing managers, consultants and engineers are all jobs involved with Australian agriculture. ....
- 16. Do we all come into contact with the products of primary industries every single day? ....
- 17. The Australian Year of the Farmer (2012) is a year-long celebration of the vital role farmers play in feeding, clothing and housing us all. ....

Name. ....



ANSWERS: 1. True 2. False, a heifer is a young female cow. 3. True 4. False, sheep are ruminants, which means they have four stomachs. 5. True 6. True 7. False, roosters are male chickens and don't produce eggs. 8. True 9. True according to Ocean Watch Australia. 10. True 11. True 12. False, chickens are omnivores, they eat both plants and animals as part of their diet. 13. True 14. True 15. True 16. True, in the food we eat and the clothes we wear. 17. True.

# NASAA has nothing to do with the moon

By Sonia Muir, Rural Women's Network, Orange

Jan Denham is an organic farmer and has been involved with the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA\*) since moving to their NSW/VIC border property on the banks of the Darling River in 1989. She and husband Robert Ridgwell, along with Robert's brother and staff grow certified organic citrus, plums and vegetables on their 22 ha 'block' about 40 km north of Wentworth on the Darling River.

Jan grew up in the Wimmera region. She trained as a preschool teacher and in the 70s and 80s taught in a number of rural towns as well as Darwin post cyclone Tracey and a mobile pre-school in the Kimberleys.

The busiest time on their farm is during the main citrus season which begins around the end of May and continues through until October. Different varieties of oranges and mandarins come on line as the season progresses and during a good season they can be working seven days a week 12 hours a day.

Being 'certified' organic means that Jan and Rob work with the

land using integrated systems such as managing pests using natural predators and building soil fertility. Jan says there is a misconception that organic farmers don't spray.

'This isn't true. We work with nature and are able to use some inputs as required e.g. oil sprays, trace elements, natural fungicides such as copper and sulphur but it is on a demonstrated needs basis. Soil fertility is based on compost as well as green manure crops and crop rotations, as organic farmers don't use water soluble fertilisers.'

Jan and Rob have always been involved in environmental issues and are members of the Australian Conservation Foundation and other groups. As farmers they are committed to the long term viability of the environment in which they operate.

Along with the main farm, Jan and Rob have a block down on the river and with all the rain she says the billabongs are full again and after 10 years of drought the landscape is magnificent with flora and wildlife.

Jan and Rob mainly supply Australian organic markets and as domestic demand for organic produce has grown their export markets have been scaled back. In the early days of their organic business their main markets were exports to the EU and US.

Jan's primary role in the business is with marketing and packaging.

'My greatest challenge is keeping abreast of what consumers want. As there is more competition coming along all the time you have to be looking for that next edge that is going to keep your markets there for you.'

Despite the challenges Jan sees farming as a wonderful life because you are in control of your own decisions, plus you are on site most of the time so you can be there for your family.

Even though their kids aren't interested in farming, Jan and Rob like living in a small quiet community and will probably stay but downsize the business in time.

Jan is Chair of the Murray Valley Citrus Board – a statutory authority funded through levies

from citrus growers to address regional industry issues. She recognises that agriculture provides 'interesting' challenges but loves the diversity of different things happening all the time and sees plenty of opportunities, especially for women, to have a greater impact on setting future directions by becoming involved in decision-making and boards and committees like she's done.

Her message for Australian Year of the Farmer is, 'We want all levels of government to listen more. There is a growing interest in buying and supporting Australian farmers. We need to continually reinforce that by buying Australian produce consumers will know they are getting quality and are playing a role supporting rural communities. Rural communities are really important to this country – it gives diversity and different opportunities.'

\*NASAA is a national and international label which guarantees certified organic produce to consumers. All NASAA certified farms are inspected annually to ensure compliance.

## Warm heart

Project Warm Heart is a new initiative founded by Chick and Hayley Olsson from Sydney to provide wool blankets to homeless people.

Hayley, A 21-year-old media studies student and daughter of former Australian Wool Innovation director Chick Olsson, says the project was born through her interest in homelessness.

'Just under 1000 people are homeless in Sydney, 10 of whom die each month on the street. I hope to generate enough funding to produce and supply 10,000 wool blankets to keep them warm.'

Hayley and Chick will create a documentary as part of the project which will follow the blankets from the sheep to the streets. The 'thread' of the story will look at how a group of woolgrowers help their city cousins by donating bales of wool that will be turned into blankets. They are encouraging people, particularly young people, to jump on board and support the cause.

Already, 150 wool blankets have been given to St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney as a result of donations received. And, while Hayley understands that a blanket will not remedy the homeless situation in Australia, she hopes the project will increase awareness of the issue.

Woolgrowers or businesses interested in supporting the project can find more information at [www.warmheart.com.au](http://www.warmheart.com.au)



## Musing... of a brand new farmer

By Lis Arundell, Spring Terrace near Orange

Surrounded by paddocks and green hills, trees that change with the seasons, golden afternoon sun shimmering on the dam, cows mooing across the fence, snow falls in winter. Life is wonderful and we feel so blessed!

People in the shops know you by name, a lost book at the library is not a fine but an 'oh dear, make sure you return them next time'; passers-by smile at you in the street and some even say 'Good day'.

I hang out the washing and see a kangaroo hopping along with its joey; a kookaburra sitting on a fence post; flocks of cockatoos flying across the sky their distinctive screech filling the air; the crisp mornings followed by warm sunny days, the cool night air and bright starry sky; chopping wood and a blazing night fire.

Children jumping across hay bales, helping a neighbour round up sheep, playing with the farmer's dogs and sitting on the farmhouse verandah watching their ice blocks drip into the grass below.

A duck, two guinea pigs, three roosters, ten chickens, a kitten and most exciting of all a new puppy have all joined our family. We've had the joy of seeing new chicks hatch and we've had sadness when a fox got into the hen house. Our puppy is a fluffy golden retriever the girls have named 'Nutsy' from the Blinky Bill stories. She's gorgeous – bouncy, excitable, bounding with energy, affectionate.

We have bought a farm! Yes us, the wanna-be farmers who know nothing except a suburban backyard. We searched for an old farmhouse on five acres and have bought one on 115 acres (that's nearly a km from one boundary to the other).

The house is a small bluestone cottage with walls 50 cm thick built over a century ago. Pull string lights, pressed metal ceiling, hearth in the kitchen, polished timber floors, deep verandahs all around; we love it!

The cottage overlooks a picturesque valley and Mt Canobolas, a stand of old gum trees on a stony rise, lots of old sheds, one large enough to host a good ol' bush dance, another an old workman's hut with pot belly stove, earthen floor and hessian door; all waiting to be explored.

Lucy's school bus to Orange (10 km away) stops at the gate; only two minutes from Spring Terrace School for Hannah and Ellen, perfect.

This has been our first year in Orange and our dream is complete...well maybe a few cows for Christmas!



I grew up on a sheep and cropping farm near Girilambone in central west NSW. After completing Kindergarten to Year Four at Girilambone Public School, I completed the rest of my education through Dubbo School of Distance Education.

As a child I loved animals and had a wide array of pets, which fed my desire to become a vet.

I loved all aspects of farm life, but shearing was without a doubt my favourite time of the year so it was not surprising that I wanted to learn how to shear.

At 14, I began to learn the art of crutching and was delighted when given the opportunity to attend a two week shearing course at Dubbo TAFE just before my 16th birthday.

I left the course with the affirmation that shearing was the most satisfying and rewarding thing anybody could do. I wanted to leave school at the end of that year to begin a fulltime shearing career. Thankfully, my parents intervened.

I stayed at school, completed my HSC and achieved pleasing results. Despite being accepted into a number of universities, I declined all offers and two weeks after the final HSC exam moved 650 km from home to work as

a rouseabout and began work as a shearer within a couple of months, with a fantastic contractor based in Dubbo.

For the next three and a half years, I shored for a number of different shearing contractors and individual farmers around the Dubbo, Narromine and Gilgandra areas.

While shearing fulltime, I also completed a Diploma of Agriculture, Diploma of Rural Business Management, and Certificate IV in Woolclassing through TAFE Western, for personal interest.

I absolutely loved shearing, and regardless of its physically demanding nature, I found it highly rewarding and intensely satisfying.

When an injury forced me to seek a less physically demanding career, I was devastated. I had planned on shearing for at least a few more years as it was my dream job. It took considerable time for me to accept my new limitations and refocus on an alternative future to the one I had always imagined.

In May 2011, I gained a 12 month Wool Trainee position at Landmark in Dubbo. Over that time I was exposed to all aspects of wool marketing and within five months was offered the position of Wool Area Manager for central-western NSW.

My employment with Landmark has given me some fantastic opportunities and I'm extending my knowledge of wool marketing and the Australian wool industry. I look forward to an exciting future within such a progressive company, and within an industry I am most passionate about.

# Men's Health Week

## June 11–17, 2012

Men's Health Week is an international celebration of the positive roles men and boys play in our society and the causes and factors behind the state of men's and boys' health in Australia.

The aims of Men's Health Week are to:

- Encourage men and their families and colleagues to think about men's health issues in a positive, inclusive and celebratory manner.
- Engage men, boys, women and children in being part of advocating for better male health, for the benefit of both males and females across Australia.
- Promote the role of life contexts in all their forms as the main factors that impact on men's health.
- Highlight and celebrate the positive contributions that men and boys make to our society.

To find out about events near you visit: [www.menshealthweek.org.au](http://www.menshealthweek.org.au)

***Recognising and preventing men's health problems is not just a man's issue. Because of its impact on wives, mothers, daughters and sisters, men's health is truly a family issue.***

***Congressman Bill Richardson***

## New app for men

A new online mental health app designed specifically for young men was launched in November 2011. The *Work Out* app was developed independently by the Inspire Foundation and the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Research Institute to encourage young men to seek help for their mental health.

About one in four young people aged between 16 and 24 experience a mental disorder, yet most do not seek the help they need, often because of stigma or they feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Overwhelmingly, the evidence shows that intervening early can help reduce the incidence and severity of mental health problems later in life.

*Work Out* is designed to help young men take the first step to assess their mental health in an anonymous and comfortable way. The app allows young men to take part in a 'man-friendly' survey that assesses their mental fitness and then guides them through a process of setting themselves mental fitness goals.

The app will also share tips and advice from appropriate and diverse role models who have achieved their goals by improving their mental fitness.

## Matters for men

*By John Ashfield, author and educator*

### GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Having trouble getting a good night's sleep is one of the most common complaints presenting to doctors in general practice. Around 25% of Australians report suffering from a significant bout of sleep disturbance (insomnia) during their lives, with up to 12% experiencing long-term (chronic) difficulty with either getting off to sleep or staying asleep. It's certainly no fun trying to get through the day if you feel tired, emotionally flat, irritable, and unable to function well mentally.

Lack of sleep and poor quality sleep also account for a lot of accidents, deaths and injuries. 10% of people with chronic insomnia experience a serious accident or injury. Fatigue and tiredness are involved in approximately 1 in 6 fatal road accidents, 52% of work-related accidents and almost 29% of accidents around the home. Staying awake for 17 hours has been shown to cause a decrease in performance comparable to a blood alcohol reading of .05%.

Sleep is vital for allowing the body and brain time to recover from daily demands. It's during sleep that the body makes chemicals which help it grow and repair, and the immune system becomes more active to fight infection and illness. How much sleep is enough sleep? Simply, as much as is needed for you to feel and function well throughout the day (an indication of the quality of your sleep as well).

Insomnia commonly begins during times of increased stress. Most people have had the experience of lying awake at night thinking about personal, family, work or financial problems. If a stressful issue and sleeplessness persists, a person may also become preoccupied with not being able to get to sleep – setting up a vicious cycle of anxiety and increased sleeplessness, resulting in longer term insomnia.

**If you are sleeping poorly, these strategies might help:**

- Actively manage your daytime stress.
- Avoid napping during the day and stick to regular getting up and going to bed times. Put the day to rest; if you've anything on your mind, write it down to be dealt with tomorrow.
- Exercise regularly, but not late in the evening.
- Develop a calming bedroom routine by listening to music or reading; avoid too much conversation.
- Avoid caffeine after 4pm, smoking, or a heavy meal before bed and keep alcohol intake moderate – these can interfere with sleep.
- Make sure your bedroom remains dark.
- If you are likely to be distracted by noise, learn to use earplugs. If you awaken too early, don't fret about it; occupy yourself with something relaxing until you feel sleepy, then try again.

# Wide open spaces and a future full of opportunity

By Sonia Hickey, Guyra

Having grown up in rural NSW, Jacqui Mitchell knows a thing or two about living on the land. Despite a few years studying Agricultural Economics and working in the banking sector, it's where she has spent her life and chose to bring up her children.

'I'm passionate about giving my children an upbringing on the land. There's nothing quite like the wide open spaces, watching the land change with the seasons, and having a few animals around', says Jacqui.

And while there have been some stressful moments, such as when her son, as a toddler, had a temperature so high it caused a febrile convulsion, and the ambulance seemingly took forever to arrive, she says she wouldn't change it for a moment.

Like any working mother, Jacqui often feels stretched, but she says she is grateful for the flexibility that she has working with husband Bill on their property. It means that when the kids have commitments she can work around their needs.

'Living on a farm offers a lot of opportunity for young families to spend quality time together. It's a shame so many younger people have moved away from rural areas. If I have one hope for the future of farming it's that more young people and young families will come back to the land. Young families in particular tend to bring a real sense of community and some of our rural towns could really benefit from that.'

Jacqui and Bill run cattle and Merino sheep on a property near Guyra. They are renowned for their superfine wool production,

having won the New England Wool Ultimate Clip competition in 2010, which resulted in a trip to Italy last year to see first hand the spinning and weaving mills that turn their raw materials into fine fabric.

'This was an amazing opportunity and a proud moment to see NSW wool being made into material for some of the finest suits and corporate wear in the world.'

The trip to Italy was a rare break from daily demands of the farm.

'When there's work to be done we all pitch in. But we do get a lot of opportunities to relax together as a family at the end of the day too, and you can't underestimate the benefit of that, especially when you are raising children.'

Jacqui's day on the farm depends greatly on whatever project is running at the time. If Bill is mending fences, then Jacqui works with him. If there's shearing to be done, Jacqui has often found herself supporting the team in the sheds, but she feels her greatest contribution is at the business end of the farm.

Her degree in Agricultural Economics she says has equipped her well, particularly in these current times of economic uncertainty when you need to be constantly assessing business risks and opportunities.

'I believe strongly in formal education for farmers, so if my children show any interest in taking over the farm I will encourage them to study first.'

Despite unpredictable global economic conditions and their potential impact here in Australia, Jacqui says that when

she thinks about the future she feels positive.

'As the nation celebrates the Australian Year of the Farmer, I hope the real needs and issues facing Australian rural families are acknowledged and addressed. I know that a lot of people are doing it tough in Australia but I believe that we're a nation always willing to learn from experience, innovate and keep moving forward.'

These are sentiments strongly echoed by Andrew Blanch, Managing Director of *New England Wool*.

*New England Wool* is an Australian-based export company, which exports only the highest quality superfine merino wool directly to Italy for two high-end fabric makers which produce predominantly men's suiting fabric.

'It will be Australian wool growers' ability to innovate that will go a long way towards ensuring a positive global future for the industry,' says Andrew.

'Superfine wool growers have endured some tough years and the Global markets are still extremely volatile. There's no question that we need to sustain wool prices for the long term because growers need solid financial returns that will give them the confidence to re-invest in their properties and their livestock.'

'While we can't rely on the markets to stabilise quickly or to start delivering consistently good returns, I believe that by focusing on innovation, a commitment to quality and diversification, growers can work towards a more stable future.'



Jacqui Mitchell, Guyra

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***'If I have one hope for the future of farming in this country it's that more young people and young families come back to the land. Young families tend to bring a real sense of community and some of our rural towns could really benefit from that.'***

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Dr Paul Swan, Manager of Market Intelligence & Trade Reporting for Australian Wool Innovation also sees a positive outlook for superfine wool growers.

'In order to obtain more certainty around wool prices the market needs to diversify. While we have always relied on adult wear in the apparel market, we need to look at new possibilities like maternity and infants wear which research shows has a great deal of promise,' says Dr Swan.

'I see a bright future, but it is conditional on accepting the fact that the game is changing and we need to adapt.'

# Local is Lovely! Mandagery Creek Venison

By Sophie Hansen, Orange

I've been living on our farm for six years now but imagine it might take about 60 more before I'd classify as a true country woman. For starters I'm a terrible shopper and am always running out of groceries. Both my thumbs are black and I'm capable of killing the sturdiest of plants. Plus I'm always getting bogged or almost running out of petrol.

None of that matters (much) though. I love this country life.

My husband and I have a farm about 20 minutes from Orange, we raise deer using a rotational grazing system and then sell our venison under our own brand *Mandagery Creek Venison*, through a wholesaler and farmers markets across NSW. Tim works incredibly hard and I help as much as possible. We have two children Alice (4) and

Thomas (2) and I also write a blog, *Local is Lovely*.

My background is in writing about food and the people who grow and cook it and for years I wrote glowing stories about people living 'the dream'. From experience, I can now say that it's not all milk and honey. Running an agribusiness is hard. Sometimes I can't believe how hard it is! from managing cash flow to managing the farm, worrying about the weather and so on and so on. And while the farmers markets are a wonderful income source and marketing tool, the travel, and time commitments can sometimes seem heavy.

None of those challenges are insurmountable though. And the lifestyle our farm and business allow us make up for (most) of them!

Because it's our business and ours alone, we can shape our work commitments around family; we can pick the kids up from pre-school but then work late at night. We can eat most meals as a family and now the kids are getting older we can involve them in some jobs on the farm.

Since starting my blog, I have met many more producers in our region and had the chance to sit down and chat with them about the challenges they face. And the same one keeps on coming up! Cash flow cash flow cash flow! Not that I'd ever wish difficulty on anyone, but is nice to have a community of friends who deal with the same problems and don't mind sharing thoughts on and solutions to them.

Having grown up in Sydney I experienced community through my family and our neighbours but here it's an entirely different concept. I see people happy to drop everything to help us if the tractor is bogged, or just to have a whinge about the strong dollar or check fences for us if we are away for farmers markets and a storm has whipped through the place.

Maybe it's this sense of community duty and spirit that makes a true country woman (or man) – not just how well stocked the chest freezer is!

Visit the *Local is Lovely* website: [mandagerycreek.com.au](http://mandagerycreek.com.au) or blogspot: [locallovely.blogspot.com](http://locallovely.blogspot.com) for some wonderful and inspiring recipes like the one below (and some amazing photography too!!!)

## SEARED VENISON CARPACCIO WITH PICKLED CHERRIES, HORSERADISH CREAM & THYME

This is an ideal recipe for an easy summer dinner at home or a picnic. It looks and tastes beautiful and comes together very quickly. Please do try it one day, this is the kind of recipe that lets venison really shine and makes the most of the meat's beautiful tender texture and subtle flavour. If making for a picnic, have everything ready to then sear the meat and assemble just before heading out. We are going to pack a couple of baguettes too and make up carpaccio 'sandwiches' with a little rocket salad on the side. Fancy!

### INGREDIENTS

400g *Mandagery Creek Venison* leg piece\*  
1 tbsp juniper berries  
1 tbsp black peppercorns  
1 tbsp sea salt  
2 tbsp horseradish cream  
½ cup creme fraiche  
½ cup pickled cherries (you could also use thinly sliced fresh figs or even fresh cherries)  
½ cup shaved pecorino or parmesan cheese  
Thyme (to serve)

Crush the juniper, black peppercorns and sea salt together in a mortar and pestle. Rub the spices over the meat and set aside for a moment. Heat a tablespoon or two of olive oil in a frying pan over high heat. Add meat and brown on each side for a minute on each side. Let rest under a tent of foil. Mix the horseradish cream and creme fraiche together with a squeeze of lemon to taste. Slice the meat thinly and place on a serving plate. Top with the cherries, shaved pecorino, creme fraiche mix and thyme. Beautiful. Serves 4.

*\*I cut one of our 1 kg leg pieces in half across the grain for this. The other half I sliced into steaks, wrapped each one in plastic and stashed them in the freezer for a dinner next week.*

# Blueprint for Australian agriculture

By Alison Osborne, Sefton & Associates

**All Australians with an interest in or involvement with Australian agriculture are invited to have their say on the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the farm sector.**

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) have started collecting the views of Australia's 140,000 farmers and the wider supply chain in order to develop the *Blueprint* for Australian agriculture.

'The *Blueprint* is designed to set the future direction for the farming sector by hearing from the farmers, transporters, processors, retailers, agriculture teachers, agronomists, small business owners – in short, anyone with a stake in Australian agriculture,' NFF President Jock Laurie said.

'You've heard us talk about the *Blueprint* – and now is your opportunity to get involved.

'Participating in the *Blueprint* is easy: simply visit our website and fill in the online survey, talk to one of the 24 NFF Member organisations, or run your own *Blueprint* session within your community and tell us what you want to see for the future of Australian agriculture. Or you can come along to a *Blueprint* forum.

'Ultimately, the *Blueprint* is about coming together as an industry to identify the issues, challenges and opportunities for the future of our industry. We want you to tell us what you believe the key issues are for your farms and businesses, and suggest potential solutions for the industry to tackle these issues head on.

'We will be spending the next four months hearing your thoughts and views. At the end of the process, we'll be putting together a document that captures the collective view of all who took part. This draft will then undergo a period of public consultation before it is presented to Government in December 2012.

'Importantly, the creation of this document won't be the end of *Blueprint*, but rather the next step in creating a road map for a better future.

'So in this, the Australian Year of the Farmer, we are asking for your help in shaping the future of our industry.'

**For more information see: [www.nff.org.au/blueprint](http://www.nff.org.au/blueprint) or call 02 6269 5666.**

**Australia's 22 million people are fed by 136,000 farmers, who also export \$32 billion worth of agricultural produce each year.**

# Up close & personal experience FarmDay

By Sally Rafferty, Sefton & Associates

Rebecca and Donald Barwick of *Midlands* Loomberah have been long time supporters of FarmDay believing it is the best way to improve understanding of agriculture.

Donald and Rebecca together with their children Gabrielle (aged 10) and Hilary (aged 7) have taken part in FarmDay in previous years and are encouraging all farmers to get on board.

They delight in sharing their lifestyle and daily farm duties with new city friends.

'As farmers, FarmDay is a great chance to form new friendships and appreciate how other people live,' Rebecca said.

A major highlight for the Barwick family is having the opportunity to share their knowledge and home with people who haven't had the chance to gain an insight into farming.

'I really enjoy seeing people getting involved and experiencing a different way of living.'

FarmDay 2012 will take place on May 26 and 27 providing city families the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of what is in their supermarket and also see how a farm is run from day-to-day.

'One of our city families walked through wheat growing in a paddock with the understanding that it may well one day make bread.'

A typical FarmDay visit to the *Midlands* property is action packed. The Barwick's last city



**Participating in Farm Day is a great way to show your support for our farmers and to learn a little more about how your food and fibre comes to life. Register now for some real hands-on experiences.**

family had the opportunity to hand feed poddy calves and get up close and personal with new born lambs. They also had a few rides on tractors and buggies.

After a big day on the farm, things started winding down at night with the two families sharing a cuppa around the camp fire and enjoying their beautiful surroundings.

'I remember them saying I can't believe how clear and bright the stars are!'

Rebecca and Donald said it is crucial that people from all backgrounds understand the importance of agriculture and FarmDay certainly does that.

For more information or to register contact 1300 367 036 or go to [www.farmday.com.au](http://www.farmday.com.au)

# First flying breast care nurse to help rural women

Michelle Lauder, Royal Flying Doctor Service



Jo Beven is the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) first breast care nurse – the fruit of a new partnership between the RFDS and the McGrath Foundation. Jo will bring vital specialist care and support to women (and their families) living in rural and remote Australia who are experiencing breast cancer.

Jo is stationed at the RFDS Broken Hill Base, as part of the RFDS Primary Health Care team. She performs a community service making home visits to patients and also holds clinics on the regular RFDS clinic runs that fly to 18 remote locations across three states (New South Wales, Northern South Australia and South Western Queensland).

Jo first moved to the outback in 1986 when she started working as a Registered Nurse at Broken Hill Hospital. 'I moved to Broken Hill in 1986 when I completed my nursing training at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. My boyfriend lived there and I wanted to live closer to him. We have subsequently married and live on the family grazing property, which he now runs with two of our sons. It was always my

intention to live in a rural area, but I didn't think I would stay in the first place I moved to!

As a resident of Broken Hill Jo has had first-hand experience of the RFDS professional healthcare. 'When I was expecting my first son, I developed some complications and was taken into Broken Hill. I required some specialist's treatment and the RFDS kindly flew me to Adelaide for that.'

Jo moved into oncology in 2000 and has spent the last 12 years caring for women fighting cancer. When she saw the RFDS advertisement for a McGrath Breast Care Nurse, Jo decided to apply, 'I had studied breast care and it was an area I was interested in doing more work in, and as the RFDS are a big part of the healthcare scene in Broken Hill I was very familiar with their work.'

'My mother-in-law is a member of the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary who makes the legendary Christmas puddings to support the RFDS – so I guess I'm just following family tradition by going to work for the Flying Doctor.'

Jo had a very unusual start to her RFDS role in November when, on her first day, she was presented to Crown Princess Mary of Denmark during the Princess's visit to Broken Hill.

'It was an unusual way to start a new job; but I was very excited about meeting the Crown Princess and being part of what was a great day for Broken Hill. It's something I'll remember forever.'

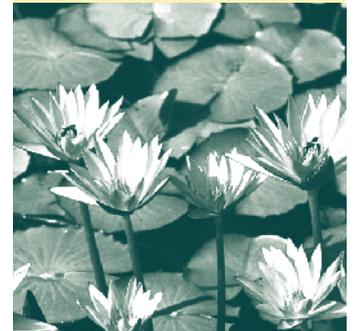
Jo is looking forward to getting on with her new position, 'I know from my experience in oncology that I can make a big difference to the lives of many women. Only a third of healthcare professionals in remote areas are female, meaning women in these areas have limited access to female healthcare professionals.'

'Also those with cancer often have to travel huge distances away from home. With chemotherapy treatments happening once a fortnight in some cases a long drive is the last thing you need. The treatment and being away from home takes a huge physical and emotional toll. Having someone to talk to does help and because of the tyranny of distance many women living in the Outback

have had to be content to talk to their oncologist on the phone. Now I will be there to support them through their treatment and give them the advice and information they need.'

For more information on the Royal Flying Doctors partnership with the McGrath Foundation please visit [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/McGrath-Foundation](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/McGrath-Foundation)

**BE KIND, FOR EVERYONE YOU MEET IS FIGHTING A HARD BATTLE**



## Vitamin F

Friends are the Vitamin F so essential to our well being. We all have a variety of friends who are so different in character yet each one has a role to play.

With some friends you can talk about serious matters and others where you end up joking and laughing.

You probably have a few extra special listening friends where you workshop each other's problems over a drink or two.

Friends are pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and they all fit together to make your life complete and support you through good and bad days.

Often your friends may understand you better than you do yourself.

Research shows that people in strong social circles have less risk of depression so value and nurture your friends for a regular dose of vitamin F!

Source Unknown

# Women outnumber men studying Agriculture

By Lyndall Hilder, NSW Department of Primary Industries



One of Australia's largest and most respected agricultural colleges has a record number of female students which account for 72% of the student population this year, NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson said today.

Tocal Agricultural College offers courses in agriculture and horse husbandry and has experienced a growing increase in female students in recent years studying at the CB Alexander Campus at Paterson near Maitland.

'This is a new and exciting era for agriculture in NSW with more women taking up the call to study agriculture, which brings new opportunities, new skills and revitalises one of the world's oldest industries,' Katrina Hodgkinson said.

'Almost three quarters of our students studying at Tocal College in 2012 are female.

'In total there are 106 students and 77 of those students are female.'

Katrina Hodgkinson said women need to play an increasing role in agriculture, particularly due to the ageing population of farmers and the labour shortage across the sector.

'The median age of farmers across Australia is 52 and the actual number of farmers is decreasing, which means there will be more jobs to do as farmers reach retirement age – so women have an important role to fulfil,' she said.

'Women have the business skills, the education and experience needed to be competitive in farming, they can operate heavy machinery at the click of a button and they are great at working with animals.'

Principal of Tocal College, Dr Cameron Archer, said the College was established in 1965 with a group of 15 young male students.

'In 1972 we had our first intake of female students which made up just 6% of the student population,' Dr Archer said.

'Exactly 40 years after the first female students arrived, they now make up the vast majority of the student population.'

'Tocal College attracts students from across NSW and interstate and has high retention and graduation rates.'

'The completion rate for students enrolled in the full-time agriculture and traineeship programs at Tocal College is currently 91%, which is more than three times the national benchmark average for the Australian Vocational Education and Training sector.'

'After two years of study our graduates go on to enjoy successful long-term careers in agriculture including running agribusiness ventures across the world and Australia or eventually returning to their family farm and running a profitable and sustainable business.'

Tocal College also offers short courses for farmers and the community through the PROfarm range of courses, delivered by staff from NSW Department of Primary Industries. The college also produces publications for farmers which are available as books or online.

## 10 ACTS OF KINDNESS

1. Let a fellow driver merge into your lane.
2. Listen with all your senses.
3. Before a friend moves away give her your favourite recipe or quote and a photo of the two of you together.
4. Pass along a great book you've just finished reading.
5. Write a letter to a child who could use some extra attention. Kids love getting mail.
6. Out of the blue, send flowers to a friend.
7. Offer to pick up groceries for an elderly neighbour, especially in extreme weather.
8. Say 'I love you' to someone you love.
9. Encourage someone who seems despondent.
10. Simply say 'I'm sorry' when you're wrong.



# What's mine is yours!

By Lauren Anderson, Innovation Director, Collaborative Lab

**...the 21st Century will be about community, reputation and shared access... we are moving away from a culture of 'me' to a culture of 'we'.**

Over the last few years we have seen the growth of bartering, trading, exchanging, renting and sharing, as opposed to traditional consumption. While this appears to be a new way to think about what and how we consume, it's in fact a return to the behaviours we used for the first 45,000 years of our human history.

*Collaborative Consumption* describes the resurgence in old market behaviours that have been reinvented through technology and online social networks, allowing us to connect and exchange in ways never previously possible. If the 20th century was about the growth of individual wealth, credit, and mass advertising, the 21st century will be about community, reputation and shared access. In short, we are moving away from a culture of 'me' to a culture of 'we'.

*Collaborative Consumption* marketplaces span many different industries, from transport to accommodation to skills to finance to clothing to 'stuff'. All around us we have things that we rarely use. What if we could rent those things out or give them away to people who need them? Or better yet, borrow them instead of buy them?

From car-sharing, to product rental, to skill-sharing, to clothes swapping, *Collaborative Consumption* not only helps us to consume less, but also helps us reconnect to each other over shared interests and values ...and perhaps someone's unused drill!

## **Start sharing! 3 tips for rural communities**

*Swap meets:* Host a regular event where people swap and exchange unwanted items for new bargains – from books to games to toys to clothes to electronics, someone's trash is another's treasure!

*Sharing communities:* Establish a Facebook community group or web page where local people can list things they have to lend or share, and where people can request things they are looking to borrow. Save money and get the most use out of your things.

*Share space, time or skills:* Rent out your spare room to visitors through a site like [Airbnb.com](http://Airbnb.com), tap into the skills of people in the community by offering regular classes and workshops in the area, or use a Facebook group to share your time or expertise to people looking for help.

For more information and lots more great ideas check out [www.collaborativeconsumption.com](http://www.collaborativeconsumption.com)

# Cultural cringe

## School children can't see the yoghurt for the trees

By Saffron Howden, Rural Reporter – Sydney Morning Herald

Three-quarters of Australian children in their final year of primary school believe cotton socks come from animals and 27% are convinced yoghurt grows on trees.

A national survey of year 6 and 10 students by the Australian Council for Educational Research found yawning gaps in young people's knowledge of basic food origins. In a hypothetical lunch box of bread, cheese and a banana, only 45% in year 6 could identify all three as from farms.

More than 40% in year 10 thought cotton came from an animal and more than a quarter of their younger peers believed yoghurt came from plants. In year 10, 13% identified yoghurt as a plant product.

The Primary Industries Education Foundation, which commissioned the research to be released today, said the findings were a 'wake-up' call.

'We're a very urbanised nation,' said the foundation's chairman, Cameron Archer. 'Food is relatively cheap. Everyone takes it for granted and we're quite complacent about our well-being.'

Dr Archer, who is the principal of Tocal Agricultural College, near Maitland, said he was surprised at the ignorance of some pupils.

'I was surprised that some of these very, very basic relationships weren't understood,' he said. 'It's fascinating you can have a big bale of hay one day and then milk to produce a few thousand lattes the next day.'

Dr Archer said it was incumbent on the agricultural industry to improve young Australians' knowledge of farming and its products, and a national curriculum provided a good opportunity to increase awareness.

In total, 900 rural and urban students were surveyed from 61 schools across the states over almost four months to last October. There were no participants from the ACT or the Northern Territory but 22 primary teachers and 31 secondary teachers took part.

The survey found most children believed timber was mostly harvested from native forests and about a third thought wildlife could not survive on farmed land. But more than half of the year 6 students had been involved in a school vegetable garden and 16% had visited or stayed at a farm through their school.

The Sydney Food Fairness Alliance, a coalition of producers, food security experts, gardeners, health workers and nutritionists, said children should understand how far their food travelled, how it was produced, and the value of farmers and farmland in society.

'The end result of being so separated from our food is that we really devalue our farmers,' the president of the alliance, Liz Millen, said.

'We tend to think that we've got an endless supply (of food),' she said.

# Winnie's a real treasure

By Gillian Lett, Article and photo courtesy of 'South Coast Register'

Many people will know Winifred (Winnie) Oslear as a kind, hard-working woman from Cedar Vale Jersey Stud who has a passion for volunteering around the Shoalhaven area.

Or maybe you have met her or her son Shane as they frequent the show circuit with their prize-winning Jersey cows.

In a celebration of rural volunteers, Winnie was placed on the 2011 NSW Hidden Treasure's Honour Roll along with 13 other Shoalhaven women. The honour roll is an initiative developed by NSW Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network to recognise the important and diverse roles women volunteers play in rural communities. Winnie sure does fit the bill, having dedicated her life to farming and educating other people about farming.

Every year, she takes part in a volunteer program called \*Cows Create Careers, which involves her donating calves to local high schools to educate students about the dairy industry.

Winnie, who has a passion for teaching young people about life on the farm, often has members of the community, including people with disabilities, visit her farm for experience and culture.

'It's a terrific thing. So many kids otherwise would not be able to handle, touch, or see anything like that. I'll let anyone come and do work experience if they want to', she says.

Winnie said if she had enough money, she would start up a program where young people would be taken in for regular farm training.

'I like to see the young ones get involved. If no one is there to teach them, how do they get involved? It's got to be kept local, we need more farmers to keep the industry going.'

Winnie was born and bred in Neryla, a small rural community near Moss Vale. As a young girl she worked on farms and later with intellectually disabled people before returning to dairy farming at Willow Vale on the South Coast, where she took out the Australian title for the fastest hand milker. Winnie originally worked with Illawarra cattle before making the move to Jerseys. She says she loves Jerseys because of their beautiful temperament and the high fat ratio in their milk, which earns her a higher price for her milk.

The milk produced from her Jerseys goes straight back into the Australian economy through Bega Cheese.

Winnie has achieved past show success with her Jersey cows with her winning senior champion at the Sydney Royal Easter Show two years ago.

One of the first things she says to me, besides the usual greetings and comments about the weather, is, 'I live outside, that's my life.'

A woman who almost single-handedly manages and milks 65 cows twice a day, as well as handling 60 calves, clearly loves what she does, and it doesn't look like she will be stopping anytime soon.

Winnie says she has no immediate plans for the future besides continuing to work on the Jersey farm and to volunteer her time and efforts to help



## Nominate a treasure

The 2012 Honour Roll will be launched at the Women's Gathering being held at Parkes from 12–14 October. Nominations open May and close 3 September 2012. To nominate a 'Hidden Treasure' simply complete the Nomination Form and tell us a short 'story' about why your nominee is worthy. All rural women nominated will be included in the Roll. For more information contact:

Rural Women's Network

Ph: 02 6391 3620

[rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)

NSW Centre for Volunteering

Ph: 02 9261 3600

[info@volunteering.com.au](mailto:info@volunteering.com.au)

[www.volunteering.com.au](http://www.volunteering.com.au)

others and the community and says, 'I volunteer because I want to do it.'

*Winnie was one of 140 rural women volunteers in NSW honoured in the 2011 Honour Roll. Read about more treasures at:*  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)

\*Cows Create Careers is a Dairy Australia project that promotes

career opportunities in the dairy industry. Students from years 7–11 learn about the industry while caring for dairy calves on loan from local farmers.

Farmers and industry professionals such as vets, field officers or cheesemakers teach students about different aspects of the industry.

# DOCTORS4theBUSH

*Audrey Hardman OAM, Medical Education Community Consultative Committee*

The Federal Government has to listen to rural communities and back Charles Sturt University's (CSUs) proposal for a new medical school. Rural and remote communities have had doctor shortages for as long as many people in rural Australia can remember. I talk to rural people every day and they don't understand why the Government has not rushed to embrace CSUs proposal to establish a new rurally based medical school located in inland NSW.

It has been acknowledged that training rural students to be doctors and health professionals in rural areas is a successful approach to increasing the number of doctors and health professionals in rural areas.

CSU is Australia's largest regional university offering the most comprehensive range of primary health programs in the country. It has shown that providing opportunities for rural students to study these programs in a regional setting has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students retained in rural health practice. More than 70% of CSUs health students are from rural and remote areas and more than 80% of these commence employment in rural areas.

Rural people trust and respect CSU as they have a proven track record of responding to the needs of people in rural communities. Examples of this include the recent establishment of the successful schools of Dentistry, Pharmacy and Vet Science.

Minister for Regional Australia, The Hon Simon Crean expressed his personal support for CSUs medical school, alongside Members of State and Federal Parliament for inland NSW and local councils and peak representative bodies such as Regional Local Government Development Australia, the Country Women's Association of NSW and NSW Farmers.

We **need** you to show your support by registering as a supporter on the *DOCTORS4theBUSH* Facebook page or by signing the online petition: [www.doctors4thebush.org.au](http://www.doctors4thebush.org.au). If you do not have internet access but still want to register your support call 02 6338 4200 to request a printed petition.

We also ask you to contact your local State or Federal Members of Parliament to tell them you want more doctors and health professionals for the bush and that you support CSUs proposed health and medical education precinct.

CSU has come up with a solution that regional communities agree will work. It's now time for government to honor their commitment to regional Australia, so CSU can get on with the job of training more doctors and health professionals for rural Australia.

If you would like copies of the *DOCTORS4theBUSH* 'pocket facts' mini leaflet contact CSU on 02 6338 4200 or email [doctors4bush@csu.edu.au](mailto:doctors4bush@csu.edu.au)

## Farming champions bridge the divide

*Victoria Taylor, Flourish Communication*

***Telling agriculture's story has never been so important and it's our young people who are best placed to reconnect with urban communities.*** LYNNE

STRONG, JAMBEROO DAIRY FARMER & NATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR – ART4AGRICULTURE.

This year has been a critical year for agriculture with issues such as the live export ban, milk price wars, climate change legislation, an expansion of Coal Seam Gas mining and consultations around the Murray Darling Basin Plan having a huge impact on farmers' images as ethical food and fibre producers.

Lynne Strong believes we need to start a dialogue between urban and rural Australians about what is important to all of us in balancing affordable and ethical food and fibre production.

'Never before have we been further apart from our consumer base. 86% of Australians now live in cities or within 80 km of the coast and modern supply chains have isolated farmers from their customers,' says Lynne.

In a bid to bridge this gap Art4Agriculture added a new component to its Archibull Prize competition with 10 Young Farming Champions providing the fresh, female face of farming to around 3000 urban students participating in the competition. The Archibull Prize invites students in suburban primary and high schools to use art and multimedia to

explore agricultural themes. This year schools researched the theme 'What does it take to feed and clothe Sydney for a day sustainably?' Each school was provided with a life size fibreglass cow or calf on which the students created an artwork about their allocated food or fibre industry, the farmers who produce it and how it is being produced sustainably.

Supported by the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation and Woolworths Ltd, 10 Young Farming Champions not only provided information to students about the industry they were allocated to study, they also shared their farming journey with the students. These Champions are breaking down stereotypes of farmers and agricultural careers while helping to bridge the rural-urban divide.

The impact of these young women on students is immense and immediate. Past surveys have shown figures as low as 0.2% of children thought women were farmers. After meeting the Champions the students understand that not only are women farmers but perhaps just as importantly, farmers can be young, vibrant and have exciting careers.

For some students meeting a Young Farming Champion was life-changing. Many had never met a farmer and the realisation that they were real people with similar interests and dreams galvanised them to take action to support farmers. The student feedback demonstrated how direct engagement between farmer and consumer can build confidence in agriculture.

**For more information about becoming a farming champion or the Archibull Prize see: [www.art4agriculture.com.au](http://www.art4agriculture.com.au) or call Lynne Strong on 0412 428 334.**

# My gate, to your plate

By Kim Currie, Mudgee



One of the joys of being a country cook is that we are so close to our food source. It keeps us grounded, relevant and if you're lucky – eating the best, fresh, local, seasonal food. In my case living where I lived taught me to cook. I opened my first restaurant; a good cook but very young and with no industry experience.

Local farmers would regularly knock on the door asking if I would buy produce they had grown and wineries started visiting and sending samples. Initially I thought this was an interruption – not the gift and education that it became. At first I had no idea of the differences in quality or an understanding of regional characteristics. I just felt guilty into supporting them because of the efforts they made.

One local winery asked if I would cater their new Vintage Celebration Dinner using local food to match the wine. I remember tracking down a local farmer who supplied venison and picking wild Kentish cherries from trees up the paddock to make jelly to serve with it. I visited the trout farm at Lithgow which I had driven past for years and harvested watercress from the spring below the lucerne flats. I delivered a pretty special meal, met some great people and learnt a lot of new stuff about food. It was the beginning of my path as a regional food and wine specialist.

What I picked up during those early years was honed much later at the Rylstone Food Store – uncovered communal tables, no menu, a low fixed price and the requirement to completely trust the cook. What was left of the produce brought in that day by local growers was displayed in large bowls and jugs on the benches of the open kitchen. The produce entirely dictated what was cooked. It meant honing in on another instinctive level, combining good basic food sense and knowing what works with what.

My grandfather, a market gardener, used to say about harvesting sweet corn, 'You can walk to the garden — but you must run back to the kitchen.' Today, more and more people are discovering the freshness of food that hasn't had to travel. Food gardens are becoming the next big wave. More people want to put a face to the farmers who feed us. More people want to ensure that we maximise the dollars going into farmers pockets. And the more we garden

for ourselves the more pleased we are that someone else does this for a living.

I recently organised another Vintage Celebration event. The 140 guests ate from the farm, the winery garden and neighbouring specialty producers. The special 10 course menu included the following two dishes, written here as the old country cooks would, ensuring you engage common sense and variability.

## Slow cooked Ormiston pork with Tinja yellow plum sauce and crab apples

1. I used a range of cuts to feed a crowd, the shoulder was the best. The pork is covered with a combination of red wine and plum sauce\*. Slow cook for at least three hours.
2. At the front of the winery is a pair of crab apples. I poached the crab apples gently and briefly in a little water and syrup from the cooked pork and then piled them on top of the pork to serve.

*\*Plum sauce: I made savoury plum sauce from the ancient tree outside the house, trying to conjure up what my mother had done when she made blood plum sauce every year. I cooked a boiler full of plums with lots of brown sugar, vinegar, white wine, black pepper, star anise and cinnamon quills. I might have added a couple of oranges but can't remember, and passed it through a sieve at the end to remove seeds and residue.*

## Garden tart

1. Pick a quantity of whatever is in season and currently flourishing in the garden – on this occasion tomatoes, zucchini, onions, coloured spinach and all sorts of herbs. Chop them roughly and sauté briefly in a little butter and oil.
2. Line a tray of some sort with good quality pastry, creating an edge that will hold liquid.
3. Mix together some free range eggs and cream (1 egg per 100 ml cream), season with a good pinch of salt and pepper.
4. Cover the pastry base with the vegetables. Scatter some fresh curd goat's cheese over this and finish by pouring the liquid over.
5. Bake in a good hot oven until the pastry is well browned, including the underside.

## Kids in the kitchen

Having a veggie garden will help your child to connect with nature, understand the seasons, and the food they eat. They'll find growing and eating their own food to be fun and interesting. Their faces will light up with excitement and pride as they check on the progress of their garden and eventually they will be able to pick something they have grown themselves.

For ideas on planning your first veggie garden see: [www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/vegetables/planning-your-first-vegetable-garden](http://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/vegetables/planning-your-first-vegetable-garden)

Starting a vegetable garden at home is an easy way to save money. That \$2 tomato plant can easily provide 5 kg of fruit over the course of a season.

It also gives you the pleasure of savouring a delicious, sun-warmed tomato fresh from the garden. In almost every case, the flavour and texture of varieties you can grow far exceed the best supermarket produce.

Plus, growing vegetables can be fun. It's a great way to spend time with children or have a place to get away. and spend time outdoors in the sun.

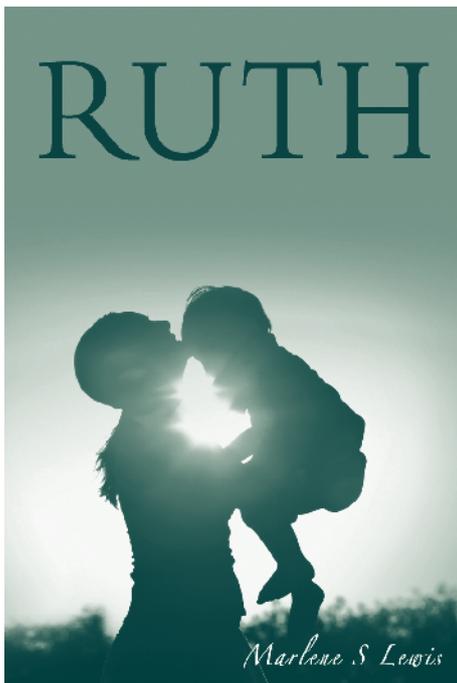
## Autumn: In season

*Vegetables:* beans, beetroot, cabbage, capsicum, carrots, cauliflower, chillies, corn, cucumbers, lettuce, olives, potatoes, pumpkin, parsnips, peas, potatoes, snow peas, tomatoes, zucchini, mushrooms.

*Fruit:* apples, figs, grapes, pears, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, watermelons, rockmelons, nectarines, peaches, plums, rhubarb, nashi pears.

*Nuts:* hazelnuts, chestnuts, walnuts.

# book reviews



Having disgraced her family, Ruth, the only daughter of coffee plantation owners John and Alice Madison, must forsake the lush Owen Stanley Ranges of Papua New Guinea for the streets of working-class Sydney.

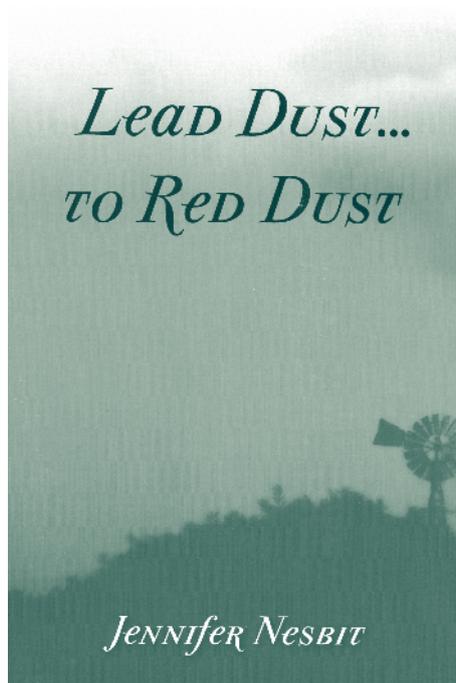
Poor and alone she is determined to find a better life for her son Stewart and takes up work in the vast, rugged plains of outback NSW. Here she meets and marries Lachlan McGrath, owner of Bryliambone Station.

Life on the land is good to Ruth, until fate turns her world upside down and she faces the loss of everything she has achieved. Driven to provide for her family she sets about rebuilding her husband's debt-ridden business into a thriving cotton farm.

As her life is coming back together, news arrives of her father's suspicious death. She returns to Papua New Guinea to sort out his affairs, only to face the shocking secrets that had fractured her family years before.

*In 'Ruth', Marlene S. Lewis tells a fictional story that feels absolutely real. The author has mastered the craft of creating characters with the particular idiosyncrasies that make them believable individuals, each and every one.* SANDRA SHWAYDER SANCHEZ, BOOKPLEASURES

**Published by Troubador Publishing Limited**  
**ISBN 1848766238**  
**\$19.75 with free post**  
**www.thenile.com.au**



**Review by Shelley Holmden, Broken Hill**

*Lead Dust to Red Dust* begins in the lead dust of the mining town of Broken Hill and finishes in the red dust of outback far Western NSW.

Jennifer Nesbit's autobiographical story written as a series of short 'smoko' stories of 324 pages will captivate you as she shares her life journey.

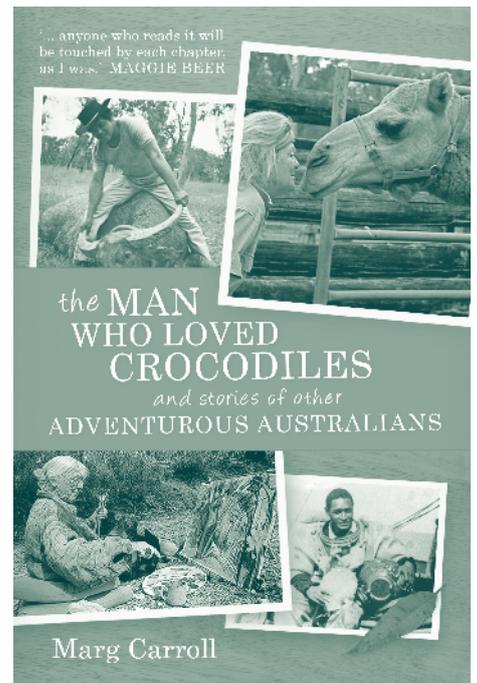
In 1965, at the tender age of 18, Jennifer left the lead dust city of Broken Hill as a new bride to start a new and very different lifestyle on an outback sheep and cattle station – leaving the city for the country.

Spanning over 60 years and filled with stories of droughts, floods, bushfires, life's tragedies and triumphs, you will gain a wonderful insight into both a time long past and life in the outback today.

This story is so down to earth anyone can identify. You will laugh and cry and you won't want it to end.

This book has a growing legion of fans ranging from nine to 92. It is one book that you will keep in your bookcase.

**Published November 2011**  
**ISBN: 9780987207708**  
**\$35.00 including post**  
**To purchase call 08 8091 3512 or**  
**Email: nesbitpastoral@bigpond.com**



From the author of *Ordinary People*, *Extraordinary Lives* and *Reinventing the Bush* comes a collection devoted entirely to the over 60s. Fifteen exuberantly lived rural lives that are brave, resourceful and determined, but often entirely unknown. They each provide insights into hardships and adventures that will delight the city and bush-dweller alike: hunting, wild buffalo on horseback, avoiding the bends while being circled by bronze shark whalers or raising fourteen children in a one-room house. And all of them inspire with their wit and wisdom.

**Published by Allen & Unwin**  
**ISBN 9781742370330**  
**RRP \$32.99**



## Enter to win!

To win a free copy of any of our featured books (*Ruth*, *Lead Dust*, *The Man Who Loved Crocodiles* or *Women's Words*), write to us and tell us in 25 words or less which book you would like and why.

**Entries close 20 June 2012.**

Send your entry to: The Country Web, NSW DPI Rural Women's Network, Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800.

See page 2 for Terms & Conditions.

Ovarian cancer is the ninth most common cancer in women in NSW. In 2003, 363 women were diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Most cases, 86%, occur in women over the age of 45.

## What causes ovarian cancer?

We don't know what causes most ovarian cancers, but we do know that some factors increase the risk. These include:

*Age:* Ovarian cancer is most common in women aged 45+.

*Family history:* Around 5–10% of cases are caused by inheriting a damaged gene. If you have a close relative who has had cancer of the breast or ovary, you may be at increased risk. However, most women who develop ovarian cancer do not have a family history of the disease.

*Not having children:* Ovarian cancer is more common in women who have not had children.

However, many women who have these risk factors do not develop ovarian cancer.

## What are the symptoms?

Ovarian cancer is often a silent disease in the early stages, which means many women have no symptoms. If symptoms appear, they are vague and include:

- Swelling and pain in the abdomen;
- Changes in your usual menstrual pattern or postmenopausal bleeding;
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms such as heartburn, nausea and bloating;
- Changes in bowel habits, such as constipation and diarrhoea;
- Tiredness and appetite loss;
- Unexplained weight loss or weight gain.

If you experience symptoms for more than 3–4 weeks and they are unusual for you see your doctor. But remember, these symptoms are common to many illnesses and most women with these symptoms will not have ovarian cancer.

## Can it be detected early?

At the moment there is no screening test to check healthy women for early signs of ovarian cancer, and many ovarian cancers are not found until they have spread and are more difficult to treat. Research is being done around the world on ways to find ovarian cancer early.

There is a blood test that measures the level of a particular protein in the blood, called CA-125. The level may be higher in women with ovarian cancer, however it may also be higher in women who have common gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis or fibroids. A CA-125 test on its own does not diagnose ovarian cancer.

## How is it diagnosed?

If you have persistent symptoms or you are concerned about ovarian cancer, ask your doctor about a transvaginal ultrasound,

which is the best way to diagnose ovarian cancer. In this test, the ultrasound probe is inserted into the vagina to provide a clear view of your ovaries. If the ultrasound shows an abnormality in your ovaries, your doctor may then do a CA-125 test to further investigate the possibility of ovarian cancer. If there is a reasonable suspicion of ovarian cancer, your doctor may recommend that part or all of the ovary is surgically removed for definitive diagnosis.

## Can I reduce my risk?

There is limited information on what you can do to reduce the likelihood of developing ovarian cancer. However we do know that:

- Using the oral contraceptive pill for five years reduces the risk of ovarian cancer by 50%.
- Tubal ligation (having your Fallopian tubes tied) and hysterectomy reduces the risk of ovarian cancer by 30–40%.

**For information and counselling call the Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20 for the cost of a local call.**

*Source: [www.cancercouncil.com.au/19046/get-informed/about/about-cancer/ovarian-cancer-fact-sheet](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/19046/get-informed/about/about-cancer/ovarian-cancer-fact-sheet).*



**Register4** is Australia's first online community for volunteer breast cancer research participants. It was set up in response to the growing need for volunteer research participants and aims to register 1 million members willing to participate in peer-reviewed, science-based research projects. With Breast Cancer still the most common cancer affecting Australian women there could be something unique about any one of us that might hold the answer to one or more of the big questions researchers are asking. By joining you have the potential to make an impact on the path of Australian research and the health of women around the world. Your participation could be anything from answering a few questions to something more involved.

Register for free at: [register4.org.au](http://register4.org.au)

### RURAL SCHOLARSHIP

Supports individuals with a demonstrated passion for rural issues and whose studies will add value to rural communities. \$5000 for full-time study or up to \$1500 for part-time study is available. Applications accepted July to September annually.

Ph: 02 9704 1234  
[foundation@rasf.org.au](mailto:foundation@rasf.org.au)  
[www.rasns.com.au](http://www.rasns.com.au)



### RIRDC RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD – NSW/ACT

Provides a \$10 000 bursary for women involved in primary industries or resource development to take your management, business or leadership skills to a higher level. Applications open 1 August and close 15 October annually.

Ph: 02 6391 3620  
[rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)



### NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIP

Provides funding to farmers to travel overseas to conduct agricultural research with the aim of increasing practical farming knowledge and management skills and techniques. Includes a six week global study tour. Applications for 2013 open 1 April 2012.

Ph: 03 5480 0755  
[enquiries@nuffield.com.au](mailto:enquiries@nuffield.com.au)  
[www.nuffield.com.au](http://www.nuffield.com.au)

# Paving the way to a career in Ag

By Anna Phelps, Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

Harvesting a wheat crop, sheep and cattle mustering, lamb and calf marking, selecting livestock for market, sowing winter crops, making hay, stud groom and livestock husbandry is an extensive list of rural skills in itself. Add to it preparing and parading cattle for the NSW show circuit, breeding Limousin cattle and Arabian horses, stewarding and judging at rural shows and a State Championship for endurance riding and you have an individual who is a true standout in the agricultural world.

It might seem like a mean feat for some, but the above list of skills and achievements is just the beginning of a lifelong journey for 24-year-old Kylie Jonkers. Born and bred on the Central Tablelands of NSW, Kylie is a young woman paving her way to a successful career in agriculture.

Adding to her existing swag of accomplishments, Kylie has recently been selected as one of eight Rural Achievers for the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) – an honour she says she never dreamed of receiving.

'I've always had a passion for rural NSW, in particular for my local community. Being named a Rural Achiever will help me demonstrate to local youth that anything is possible when you put your mind to it,' Kylie said.

The honour will open many more doors as she continues her journey of making a difference in rural areas. She is passionate, committed and genuinely interested in the future of rural Australia, in particular opening doors for young women with similar dreams.

'I'd like to show young women in our district that they can have the same opportunities in agriculture as men. My advice to them is to get in and have a go – learn as much as you can. Women are just as capable of doing a job as men – and once you get it done, there's a great sense of achievement.'

Regarding the regional show circuit as the heart and soul of rural NSW, Kylie says local show societies are one of the most important aspects of rural life and that without them rural Australia would not be what it is today. The shows, which

ultimately feed into the Sydney Royal Easter Show, play a vital role in making sure everyone understands the importance of agriculture.

RAS Senior Manager for Agricultural Development & Youth Initiatives Jodie Dean said receiving the title of Rural Achiever can be an important step in helping young rural Australians achieve their ambitions and kick-start their careers.

'These individuals represent the future of agriculture and the RAS is proud to support the growth



of such wonderful ambassadors who help put regional NSW on the map,' Ms Dean said.

*Kylie is now working as a Stud Assistant at Longreach Limousins, Marulan on the Southern Tablelands of NSW.*

## eHealth is coming and it could benefit YOU!

Technology is a part of daily life for most Australians. We use it for banking, shopping, and connecting socially with family and friends. It also has the potential to transform Australia's health system and to make it work better, safer and more efficiently. This is why the Australian Government is developing a national eHealth records system.

From 1 July 2012, every Australian can choose to register for an eHealth record. If you register for eHealth, your record will be controlled by you and will allow you and the healthcare professionals of your choice, access to a summary of your important health information in one secure online location.

This could include potentially life-saving information such as any adverse drug reactions, or medications you are taking. Having this information in one place will help your preferred healthcare professionals make the best decisions about your care. It will also mean you won't have to remember and keep unnecessarily repeating your medical history.

Healthcare organisations such as a GP practice or local hospital will be able to quickly view a summary of your information, helping them to make the best possible decisions about your care.

Through eHealth parents will be able to track their children's immunisation history and you won't have to remember every medication, test or health-related incident.

**For more information or to sign up to receive regular updates visit [www.yourhealth.gov.au](http://www.yourhealth.gov.au) or call the Helpline 1300 901 001.**

## RIVERS: THE LANDS DESTINY

Rivers run wide, rivers run free...

From shifting sand to shining sea;

Through mulga plains and mountains grand...

Cradle of life: soul of the land.

For what other spirit grants so much?

What other energy nurtures by touch?

Than this vein of vigour: land's perfect foil...

Anointing the soil for man's earthly toil!

Revealing shallows, beneath the sun...

Concealing shadows as day is done;

Despair in drought, as moisture dries...

Rejoice in flood, as waters rise!

Spirit of life... soul of the land!

Gift to Earth by Heavenly Hand!

Forever run wide, forever run free....

For within you lies; the land's destiny!

MAGGIE GORDON, TRANGIE

# Turning aspirations into realities

By Annabel Gay, Country Education Foundation of Australia

Access to affordable education and training can be a challenge for people living in the country with rural students paying up to \$15 000 more a year than city students. The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEFA) is working with local Foundations to provide financial support to rural students to help with costs. Adam, Naomi and Jessica share their stories ...



**JESSICA WEEKES, YASS**

Jessica has completed a six year undergraduate Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery at James Cook University. Growing up she always wanted to be a vet but by Year 12 decided to become a doctor and hasn't looked back.

She received a grant from the Yass District Education Foundation's Glenlothian Trust. One of the aims of the Trust is to support students undertaking studies that will lead them to a career in rural Australia.

'Text books cost over \$1000 each year so the grant paid for that and a diagnostic set which includes my otoscope, for looking into people's eyes, ears and mouth. It's something you are just expected to get but it is expensive.

'A big part of getting a local grant is having someone saying you are doing a good job, keep going, we're proud of you and you are making a difference.

'I am keen to give back to my community, so if anyone in Yass wants to do Medicine I will go and have a chat to them and I intend to reinvest money back into the Foundation once I'm able.



**NAOMI HOBSON, GUNNEDAH**

Naomi recently completed her fourth year of a Bachelor of Animal Science degree with honours at Charles Sturt University.

To assist Naomi with her studies, she applied to the Gunnedah & District Education Fund for support and financial assistance.

'It was a great help. The funding assisted me through my course, without which it would have been difficult to finish the year.'

In 2011 Naomi competed in the 21st Intercollegiate Meat Judging three-day competition in Armidale. Over 100 students and coaches from nine Australian Universities took part as well as international teams.

Naomi was selected for further training with Meat Standards Australia and won a place in the Australian team, travelling to the US on a three-week meat judging tour visiting abattoirs, feedlots and universities and receiving US-based meat judging training.



**ADAM DAWES, YASS**

While in Year 12, Adam noticed the Yass District Education Foundation were calling for grant applications. He wanted to complete a Bachelor of Applied Science in Agriculture at Charles Sturt University so he applied for help with books and accommodation costs.

'Without the grant I would have had to work part-time to help cover costs. The scholarship allowed me to focus on studying and kept me focused knowing my community was putting money towards my education.'

Adam attended university for three years and was offered an agronomy position in Yass before he'd even finished. He worked for three years before securing his current job as a Policy & Technical Officer with the Department of Quarantine & Inspection Services in Canberra. He works with foreign stock feed producers, travelling to Brazil, Malaysia and Singapore to make sure the stock feed they supply to Australian producers meets quarantine standards.

He has purchased a house in Yass and is giving back to the local community.

The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEFA) is a national not-for-profit organisation which assists rural and remote communities across the country establish local Education Foundations. There are currently 42 local CEFA Foundations across NSW, QLD, SA and the NT.

According to CEFA Chief Executive Officer, Annabel Gay, 'CEFA's program is truly unique: no other program in Australia focuses solely on helping rural youth achieve their goals as they transition from high school into further study, training and careers'.

CEFA's grants are not awarded on an academic success basis. The local Foundations select recipients based on the applicant having a realistic goal; demonstrated commitment to working towards their goals; and need of financial assistance in order to pursue their aspiration. And a diverse range of pursuits including university degrees, cadetships, diplomas and certificates, trades, apprenticeships and entry-level careers are supported.

Nick Burton Taylor, Chairman of CEFA said, 'the benefits flow on to the community. Investment in education is investment in social capital'.

Communities can boost a young person's confidence, right when they need it the most. As Jessica explains, 'it is a great feeling knowing your community believes in you.'

**To support CEFA or learn about how you can set up a local Education Foundation in your community call 1300 652 144, email: [ceo@cef.org.au](mailto:ceo@cef.org.au) or go to [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)**

# 2012 Speech Spectacular

By Emma Regan, Rural Women's Network, Orange



The LandLearn NSW Speech Spectacular is a speaking competition open to all school children and run in conjunction with the NSW Beef Spectacular. Selected finalists go on to compete at the grand final, presenting a three minute speech to address a question in an effort to win cash prizes.

Isobel Moore from Coolah Central School was named the overall winner for 2012. Following is her winning speech.



## Australian produce vs foreign produce – how can Australia win?

Have you been to the supermarket lately? Have you seen all the foreign produce in the fruit and veg section? ...I'm

playing my part in REDUCING imports by growing tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and pumpkins – they taste better, last longer and are chemical free.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

Australian vs. foreign produce. How can Australia win? It's as simple as apples and oranges – Homegrown that is.

So, why import from other countries when we already grow that product? The imported produce is cheaper, BUT, this does not mean healthier. U.S. oranges are being imported by the supermarkets, while Aussie orange farmers are ploughing their orchards in as they go broke. Our oranges cost more to grow but are FAR better quality.

If every household had their own veggie patch, we would not only save money but it would be keeping foreign produce away. Even my small school has a kitchen / garden, and students are seeing the benefits of 'fresh



2012 winners: Lachlan Hoyle (Parkes High School, Junior High); Katrina Hodgkinson, MP Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Small Business; Alana Galasso (Meriden High School, Middle High); Isobel Moore (Coolah Central School, Primary and Overall Champion)

is best'. Another way Australia can win is for consumers to buy their produce from farmer's markets which supports the industry.

At the supermarket I found a range of imported produce from Turkey, Spain, Mexico and Italy. This is appalling. We CAN source these ALL from Australia. Educating people is the key. It's time to say NO to imports and start buying Aussie products.

Now, I'd like to ask the audience a question. Hands up if you look for our label 'Product of Australia'? ... Well done, but I know there's room for improvement !

We CAN ALL support Australia's farming future. We MUST begin to buy Australian produce and put pressure on the supermarkets to stock it and sell it to us.

*Australian vs foreign produce. It's as simple, as apples and oranges.*

## A LAND CALLED 'COUNTRY'

There is a land called 'Country'  
Beyond the mountain range,  
Where people live a way of life  
City folk think strange.

A life that's full of heartbreak  
Handed down throughout the years,  
For with the land came the legacy  
Of droughts and floods and tears!

A land across whose furrowed fields  
The pioneer ghost still toils,  
Ever watchful for the rains  
To quench the dry, parched soils.

For it's then a sleeping beauty  
Awakens from her dream,  
To throw aside her dusty garb

For robes of patchwork green!  
Yet those who are not born to it  
So seldom understand,  
When your hope is in the sky above  
And your heart is in the land.

There is a land called 'Country'  
Of bronze and burnished plains,  
Of eucalypt-shaded valleys  
That pulses through your veins!  
And I know that should I wander  
As strange as it may seem,  
My spirit will stay beyond the mountain range  
In the land they call 'Country'!

MAGGIE MAY GORDON, TRANGIE

***Life is too short to wake up with regrets... so love the people who treat you right... forget the ones who don't. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands. If it changes your life, let it. Nobody said life would be easy, they just promised it would be worth it.***

# The leading edge... leadership and innovation

By Dorothy Jakab, Women on Boards



**LUCINDA CORRIGAN** is co-principal of Rennylea Pastoral Company in the NSW Murray Valley. The Company produces performance angus genetics for high quality markets in Australia and the Asia Pacific rim. Lucinda has been at the leading edge of linking science and production for over 30 years, in areas of livestock production, supply chain research and development, productivity, and natural resource management. She is a talented communicator and regularly speaks to groups about change, business management, and innovation. An experienced director in rural research and development, Lucinda is Deputy Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Future Farm Industries, Director of Meat & Livestock Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia Donor Company, Chair of EH Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation Advisory Committee, National Beef Genetics Advisory Committee, Beef CRCII Advisory Committee, CRC Plant Based Management of Dryland Salinity, Upper Murray Landcare Group and Sustainable Grazing Systems SW Slopes Committee. Lucinda shares her experience and insight for existing and aspiring directors...

## How did you get involved with Women on Boards?

I first joined Women on Boards (WOB) about three years ago after reading some articles in the press about women who had found the network useful in reaching their goals.

## How did WOB assist you in your director's journey?

I find that the guidance and suggestions in the regular WOB communications are really useful and assist me to look at what I do from a more global perspective.

Being based in the country I have to make a determined effort to attend events held in Sydney or Canberra. My networks are very much based around the work I have done for many years at the interface of science and innovation in farming, particularly the livestock industries.

## What made you aspire to board positions?

It has been a progression from work I did in my 20s, running a national breed organisation with 1500 members, and working in the fibre industry as a cashmere buyer.

On farm we have built a successful livestock business which markets genetics to all Australian states and recently, internationally. I am particularly interested in innovation and how successful businesses change, bringing the successful components of large businesses to small ones.

The principles of running a SME with a half a dozen employees benefits from the systems and structures of larger businesses, especially in the areas of finance, succession, and human

resources. Applying these skills and learning the board skills of committee work, audit and risk, membership and general board work is fulfilling.

## What are the benefits of directorship?

It takes you into a world of thinking about how companies add value to their shareholders and stakeholders. Your strategic skills are honed, you learn to work outside your comfort zone. The team environment where different views are appreciated can be challenging and fulfilling.

## What are the motivations and skills women should cultivate if they'd like to join a board?

Firstly cover the basics: finance, governance and strategy. Learn from others. Don't be afraid to ask questions about people's background and how they progressed to where they are today. Recognise what it is you really want to do, rather than be beguiled by the idea of board work being prestigious.

## How did your directorship opportunities present themselves and what do you recommend for aspiring women directors?

It is usually about putting yourself into new situations where someone may approach you to take part in a project initially which may then lead onto board work.

## What value do you place in mentoring and do you recommend it?

There can be no doubt about the value of networks to learn and create new connections. Don't be afraid to ring someone you

know to ask their advice.

## In your opinion what can rural women bring to boards?

Women bring a diversity of opinion and a considered way of working to board work. It is often the intuitive skills of bringing people into the tent, assessing proposals and putting teams together that can be deal breakers.

## What tips would you give to women considering a director role at some point in their career?

The basis of doing this work is workplace experience and training. I have completed courses along the way such as The Australian Rural Leadership Program and the Australian Institute of Company Directors course. These are useful when the time is right, adding to experience and judgement.

Financial experience is very useful and I encourage aspirants to gain financial literacy for future board work. Being a competent assessor of financial reports is a very useful skill. Read annual reports and test your interpretation with others.

## Have you had a support network along the way and how did this help?

I've been lucky to work with many great networks and people. The Australian Rural Leadership Foundation and Alumni has been a foundation for much of my thinking and I made some very special friends along the way. In every board you usually find kindred souls who you can discuss the process or the content with.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

**Is there a successful business person or director you look up to? Why?**

I admire many of the Directors with whom I work and who have taught me a lot.

**Do you actively build your networks? How and why?**

I participate in Australian Institute of Company Directors functions held in Albury Wodonga and WOB functions at least once per year in Sydney. I also attend meetings associated with my board positions and often speak at functions.

**What are your short and medium term board goals?**

Short term I will continue to work in the innovation space. My medium term goal is to work in an agribusiness company board.

**Do you have any interesting extracurricular activities to balance the work?**

I assist young people who are the next generation of food and fibre producers in Australia. This includes students looking for placements and career advice and assisting them to make choices about future directions. I was recently asked to join a body that encourages the study of science in primary industry in the school sector.

I play tennis regularly and swim for exercise and I love to garden and grow my own food. I stay in regular touch with my three children who are commencing their careers, one in animal science, one in engineering and the youngest still to make up his mind.

*\*Women on Boards started as an informal network in 2001 and was founded as a company in 2006 to improve the gender balance on Australian boards. WOB partners with the corporate, government and non-profit sectors to hold*



**Rosemary Doherty from Mudgee was the first woman appointed to the Board of Capilano Honey Limited – a position she held for eight years. Prior to this she served as a member of RIRDC's Honeybee Research & Development Board for seven years and was involved at branch level of the state Industry Associations. She is currently Chair of her local recreation club board.**

**What motivated you to become involved?**

Women in the beekeeping industry have always played a working role out in the field however very few have participated at the decision making level. As a woman working in an historically male dominated industry I thought it was time women had input in the decision making.

I was inspired to strive for the directorship position at Capilano Honey Limited after I attended the *Team Up & Prosper Rural Women in Decision Making* forum run by the Rural Women's

*events, host programs, create opportunities for women and coach and mentor them into career and director roles. More than 12,000 women are registered with Women on Boards from all sectors and industries. The*

Network many years ago. As a consequence of the forum I became involved in a committee formed to lobby for an affordable women's leadership course. This resulted in RIRDC funding my participation in the first Company Directors Course for rural people run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. After I received my Company Directors Diploma I then went on to complete a Business Studies course to gain a better understanding of business operations. In 2000 I nominated for and was elected to the Capilano Honey Limited Board and was the first woman to hold that position.

**What do you get out of being involved in these roles?**

I got a lot of personal satisfaction and a sense of self-esteem. It's a good feeling to be contributing within your industry at the decision making level. Achieving success in a traditionally male dominated industry also had a lot of appeal.

**Have you experienced any obstacles? What's one obstacle you have overcome?**

I think one of the main challenges women face beyond the role itself is that there still exists an 'old boys' network that women are by nature excluded from. Until the number of women in leadership roles increases I believe this gap will always exist. I was always respected by the men I worked

*network has a large percentage of experienced and highly qualified female executives many of who are already professional non-executive directors or combining board work with their career roles. Women on Boards has helped*

with but I was also always conscious of the gap that existed. This was my main challenge.

I believe that men in leadership positions are accepted by their peers as being able to do the job until they prove otherwise, whereas women have to prove first that they can do the job. I found this the most challenging.

**Where do you get your support?**

I found support mainly from my husband as he encouraged my every move. Also there were a few other women in significant positions within our Industry Association who provided support and encouragement.

**What is your message to other women wanting to become involved in decision making?**

Go for it! Do your homework and learn all you can about your industry and its 'political' structure. Get extra learning from sources such as TAFE.

I gained a lot of encouragement from attending the Rural Women's Network forum. There had been other workshops but this one, being specifically orientated towards Women in Leadership, particularly appealed to me and inspired me to become more involved.

*nearly 1000 women gain board positions.*

To join WOB or find more information go to [www.womenonboards.org.au](http://www.womenonboards.org.au)

# The Gloucester Women's Gathering

## Dreaming beneath the Bucketts

By Emma Regan, Rural Women's Network, Orange

This was to be my first Women's Gathering, and I was looking forward to it with much anticipation.

As I drove into the beautiful Gloucester Valley at the base of the World Heritage Barrington Tops Rainforest, you could tell *something was in the air*. The town was buzzing with excitement as over 300 ladies had travelled to Gloucester to experience the wonderful community spirit. They were looking forward to having some *down time* and to exchange knowledge and information with other like-minded women, increasing their confidence, and learning new skills.

The wonderful community spirit was evident from the moment of registration where each person was welcomed personally by one of the Committee members and presented with a unique hand printed scarf to commemorate the Gathering.

Friday we were free to wander and explore Gloucester Shire to our hearts content before we gathered under the marquee for *Tastes of Gloucester* to savour locally produced finger food and wines. Julie Lyford, Chair of the Gloucester Rural Women's Gathering Committee, welcomed everyone to the gathering. This was followed by the *Welcome to Country* Smoking Ceremony, led by Auntie Norma.



Guests sampling locally produced wines

Friday night's entertainment showcased some of Gloucester's entertaining and very talented local poets, including Claire Reynolds, Gabby Colquhoun and Wyatt Hall – Gloucester's very own up and coming young poet. We thoroughly enjoyed both Wyatt and Claire's poetry and were left in stitches of laughter from Gabby's hilarious and clever comedic poetry!



Gabby Colquhoun

After a restful sleep there was opportunity the following morning for some early morning healthy lifestyle activities including: the *Birds of Gloucester walk: a walk up the Bucketts* or tai chi in the park.

Saturday got off to a great start with free time to enjoy the many trade exhibitions. We then convened to the main hall for the Welcome to Country and Official Opening Address from the Rural Women's Network.



Nerida Cullen, Co-Chair, NSW Rural Women's Council

Nerida Cullen, the Co-Chair of the NSW Rural Women's Council gave a comprehensive and passionate overview into the role of the Council and the Rural Women's Network.

A highlight of the weekend was the official opening of the Gathering and the announcement of \$30,000 funding for this year's gathering at Parkes 12–14 October 2012, by Mr Troy Grant, Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources. He also launched the 2012 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, acknowledging the efforts of NSW rural women volunteers.



Launch of 2012 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll

Keynote Speaker, Lauren Anderson, then spoke to us on the *Collaborative Consumption* movement she is pioneering. *Collaborative Consumption* is the rapid explosion in swapping, sharing, bartering, trading and renting being reinvented through the latest technologies and peer-to-peer marketplaces in ways and on a scale never possible before.

A lovely morning tea of yummy, fresh home made cooking fuelled our bellies for the day ahead! The marquee was busy with new and old networks connecting.

After morning tea we were given an inspiring presentation by special guest Father Chris Riley – *Youth Off the Streets – We Can Make a Difference* which allowed everyone the opportunity to provide input, ideas and inspiration for his important youth work.



Father Chris Riley

Lunch and trade exhibition in the marquee was followed by the afternoon workshops. This was a chance for everyone to enjoy themselves learning a new skill and having a bit of fun. The workshops on offer ranged from art for beginners and bee-keeping, to cheese making and lead lighting, from photo editing and mind mapping! With over 30 trade exhibits and 39 workshops operating over the weekend there was plenty for everyone to see and do. Even the men had workshops to keep them engaged!

A magnificent dinner was on the agenda for Saturday Night. The evening started with pre-dinner drinks and some enjoyable singing by the local choir. This was followed by the Gondwana Rainforest Dinner. The sumptuous, locally grown food and wine was magnificent. The atmosphere was set with white tablecloths adorned with centrepieces of wooden candle holders crafted by local men from the Men's Shed. The Gathering decorator and artist in charge again displayed her creative talents and imagination.

During the evening we were privileged to enjoy the amazing inspirational life story of Guest Speaker Lorna Tomkinson. She gave us an insight into her life growing up in different parts of the world, often in difficult circumstances and the challenges her family faced.

Many of the ladies got into the spirit of Saturday night's theme and dressed in their favourite *House of Vinnies* frock. Prizes were awarded for the best dressed ... this provided all with a step back in time of the wonderful array of fashion over the years!



House of Vinnies competition

Sunday morning provided another opportunity for some early morning healthy lifestyle activities. The Ecumenical Service was held at the Gloucester Primary School – *Reflecting and Connecting Under the Buckets*.

This was followed by keynote speaker Elizabeth Rogers, CEO Regional Arts NSW Arts & Culture, who provided an overview of her *Vital Communities* work. This was followed by another lovely morning tea and trade exhibition in the marquee.

On returning to the hall we were then inspired and motivated by the final Keynote Speaker of the Gathering – Mahboba Rawi. *Mahboba's Promise* was born from one woman's suffering to free herself from depression by working to relieve the desperate circumstances of others.



The Gloucester Gathering Committee

The weekend wound to a close with Julie Lyford's closing address in which she thanked her very dedicated and hard-working committee volunteers for a wonderful community effort to ensure everyone had time out from the trials and tribulations of life with their excellent program of diverse workshops, tours and guest speakers.

She then handed over the gathering candle to President of the 2012 Parkes Rural Women's Gathering Committee, Caroline Rice. Caroline introduced her committee members and invited us to the Parkes Gathering on 14–16 October 2012.

I left with a renewed energy and inspiration from the wonderful speakers. All in all it was a fantastic weekend and I am looking forward to repeating the adventure at Parkes this year! I will finish by quoting a lovely thank you letter received from one of the ladies who attended the Gloucester Gathering.

*Thank you for a truly amazing and inspiring weekend! That really doesn't do it justice. It was just SO WONDERFUL! The management of this wonderful event was superb. Every detail was covered ... I couldn't get over how the meals were so perfect – nothing cold and nothing over-cooked. And everything was yummy! The speakers were of impeccable standard. I have started spreading the word about the Gathering and the speakers – Social Media is a wonderful thing! I purchased this week's Gloucester Advocate and saw myself on page 6! I was so inspired I couldn't sleep when I returned home on Sunday. Without your generosity this wouldn't have been possible.*



# information technology ■ get organised with apps

By Kate Needham, Internal Communications Manager, NSW Trade & Investment

Since Apple launched the iTunes application (app) store in 2008, there's been more than 400 000 apps added to the store and 10 billion downloads. Google Play has thousands of applications for Android phones as well. With new apps being released all the time, there's an app for just about anything you can imagine. Among them are literally hundreds of tools that can help you get organised, offering task management, note taking, file storage and sharing, receipt filing, and more.

The following apps are available for a range of mobile devices including smart phones (e.g. iPhone, Android, and Windows), and tablets (e.g. iPad), and also have services that can be accessed via the web.

**Evernote:** Capture, organise and find information. Take notes, snap photos, create to-do lists, and record voice reminders. It can even read scanned handwriting! Everything you capture can be organised in a multitude of ways, such as tagging, and is searchable.

Free and premium  
[www.evernote.com](http://www.evernote.com)

**Remember the milk:** Create to-do lists, prioritise tasks, and set due dates and reminders. You can add tasks and access your lists via the web, your smart phone or email.

Free and premium  
[www.rememberthemilk.com](http://www.rememberthemilk.com)

**Shoexboxed:** Take a picture of a receipt with your smart phone, add a note, and Shoexboxed will extract the data for future reference. You can categorise your receipts, and recall them later for warranties, expense reports or taxes.

Free and premium  
[www.shoexboxed.com](http://www.shoexboxed.com)

**Springpad:** When there's something you want to remember, you can add it to Springpad via the web, phone or email. Take notes, create tasks, set reminders and scan product barcodes. Springpad then automatically organises your stuff, gives you powerful ways to organise it yourself, and enhances it with useful links. You can also share your stuff with other Springpad users.

Free and premium  
[www.springpadit.com](http://www.springpadit.com)

**Dropbox:** Store files in 'the cloud', by simply moving them to the folder that Dropbox installs on your computer, and access them instantly from other computers you use or your mobile device. You can also share your files with other Dropbox users.

Free and premium  
[www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)

**Grocery gadget:** Manage shopping lists through your smart phone or via the web. You can set up group lists, so friends and family can add and view items too. Specify brands, categorise items, attach photos of products to your list, and take notes. Some major Australian supermarkets have similar applications.

\$3.99  
[www.grocerygadgets.com](http://www.grocerygadgets.com)

*Pinterest* is one of the fastest growing websites in history, and with more than 12 million users, it has taken the internet by storm! It's an online service that lets users create collections of items on the web, like a virtual scrapbook, by 'pinning' images to topic-based pin boards. It's a great way to collect and organise ideas, such as recipes, home decorating, gardening and DIY projects. If you're planning a wedding or a kitchen renovation, for example, you can pin and organise images of things that you like on the web as you come across them. Things you pin are then visible to other *Pinterest* users, who can re-pin them or comment on your pin. You can subscribe to pin boards created by other users and share your pins on Facebook and Twitter. *Pinterest* will also show you things that have been pinned by other users who are pinning similar things to you, making it a great way to discover new things, and get inspiration from people who share your interests.

Free | [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)



## WEB WATCH: Compiled by Allison Priest, RWN Project Coordinator

**[www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)**  
Google Alerts allows you to stay on top of the latest Google results (search, news etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.



**[www.thekidsareallright.com.au](http://www.thekidsareallright.com.au)**  
'The kids are all right' is a new NSW-based website which aims to keep parents up to date with what's going on in the sometimes mysterious world of

their teenage children. The site has a wide range of information for parents and there is also a weekly news round-up and opportunity for readers to comment on posted articles.



**[www.cutyourbills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cutyourbills.nsw.gov.au)**  
Visit this website to tap into information on how you can save money on your energy bills with rebates, financial assistance

and free programs to help save energy and help you get the best deal for your electricity and gas.



**[www.grazebook.com](http://www.grazebook.com)**  
Grazebook.com is a new forum for anyone interested in sharing their farming knowledge. It is a great resource with each topic set up in its own area. It's free to register and very user friendly.



**[www.farmersfeedus.org](http://www.farmersfeedus.org)**  
You can learn more about what farmers do each and every day in order to produce and deliver the food you and your family enjoy. You can tour farms, meet families and see for yourself how the farmers grow our food.



# 2012 Women's Gathering

## 12–14 October, Parkes

2012 is a special year for NSW Rural Women's Gatherings as it marks the 20th anniversary since its inauguration at Parkes in 1992.

To celebrate this special year Parkes will be hosting the 2012 Women's Gathering from 12–14 October. The theme of the event will be centred around both farming and reading, to celebrate both the National Year of the Farmer and the National Year of Reading.

Farming is highly significant to the Parkes area. The heritage of Parkes is well known as a major sheep and wheat producer with many other types of farming now conducted across the shire.

Reading is also significant as it is part and parcel of the Parkes profile, with annual re-appearances of the popular and famous initiative *Reading Bug*.

The Gathering Committee is very active in planning and pursuing some fabulous ideas for women – local and visiting.

**Journalist, writer and advocate Jessica Rowe** is a confirmed speaker. Jessica is passionate about news and current affairs as well as her advocacy work for mental health organisations. She is patron of the Mental Health Council of Australia, Ambassador for beyondblue and patron of its work on postnatal depression. She has co-authored a book with her mother, *The Best of Times, The Worst of Times* – an account of their family's experience of living with bi-polar disorder.

**Danica Leys, the 2012 RIRDC** (Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation) Rural Women's Award Winner and Corinne Annetts 2012 runner-up will speak and present workshops at the Gathering.

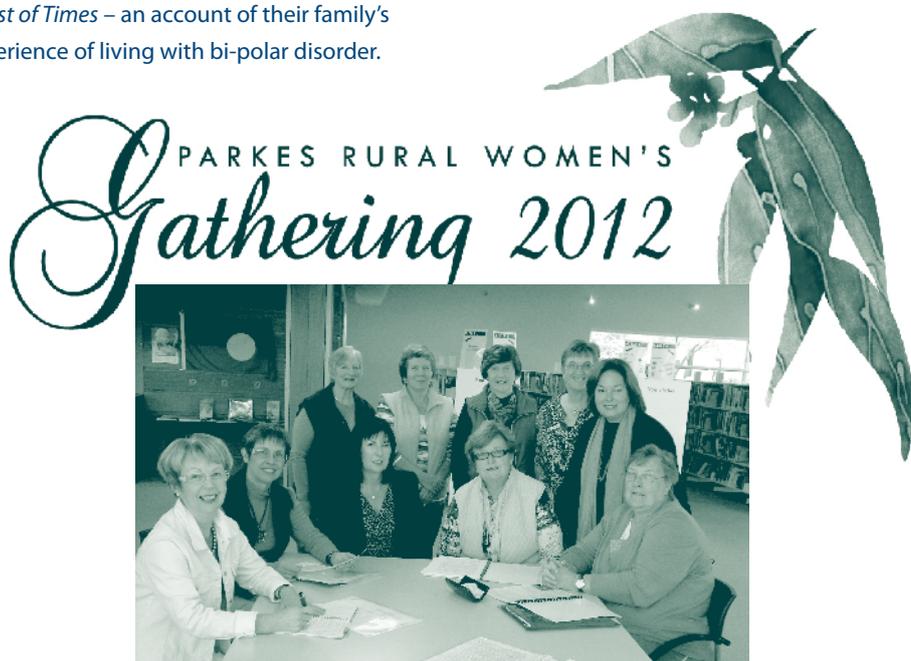
Danica, a former agronomist and now lawyer, won the award in March for her online forum *AgChatOz* which runs a weekly interactive Twitter dialogue each Tuesday evening to discuss rural issues across Australia.

**Runner-up Corinne Annetts** has established a boutique goat stud enterprise at Uralla which produces skin care products and is moving into commercial cheese-making with established markets locally and internationally.

The Committee sees Danica and Corinne as women who challenge the age-old perceptions of what can be achieved by rural women. They have used their amazing talents and skills to create their roles in rural industries and their contributions to the Gathering will be a feature not to be missed.

There's more development and negotiation in the pipeline, so stay tuned as more news is revealed over the coming months. In the meantime you can keep up to date on the 2012 Gathering by subscribing to the blog:

[www.parkesruralwomensgathering.wordpress.com](http://www.parkesruralwomensgathering.wordpress.com)



### MEMORIES OF JACK

Of life's many values he taught to me  
I always remember his honesty;  
Fond memories, I have of this man so real,  
His love and spirit I can deeply feel.  
Now looking back on his life I recall,  
Through hardships and good times, he  
gave his all.

While he farmed every season of the year,  
Shorts with shirt were his regular work  
gear;  
In winter he would add an old greatcoat,  
Tied around the waist with a piece of  
rope;  
A battered old hat on his head askew,  
Without any socks he wore his  
sandshoes.

From daylight to dusk he ploughed in  
the field,  
While praying for rain so the crops would  
yield;  
Trudging behind that Howard rotary hoe,  
He would be listening for the call  
'smoko!'  
With Dr. Pat tobacco in his pipe,  
He puffed away and contemplated life.

While he worked hard at the railway  
siding,  
Produce loading, he was supervising;  
Counting each item as farmers unload,  
Then in his journal he entered the code;  
A final check that the boxes were  
stacked  
For the train trip to market down the  
track.

For a weekend fishing then we would go  
In the Willies truck, heading for Beebo;  
Fishing lines, tackle and tucker we'd take,  
A bucket of dirt with some worms for bait;  
We'd put up the tent, and soon light the  
fire,  
Eat our meal, then for the night we'd  
retire.

He left us in April some years ago,  
With a heavy heart I still miss him so.  
Of his love and respect he gave so much  
To the many people whose lives he  
touched.  
While reflecting on life, and looking  
back,  
I cherish fond memories of my Dad, Jack.

© Lynette Mantell, Wilberforce

# what's on, what's new?

## MUDGEEReaders' FESTIVAL

The **Mudgee Readers' Festival** is being held on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 August 2012. The Festival provides an opportunity to sit back and let the authors' stories wash over you, as well as a chance to put your own questions to the authors.

There is something for everyone, with a wide range of authors and literature styles, including children's authors, a bit of history, as well as simply great stories. The Festival includes presentations in an 'in conversation' format, panel discussions as well as literary lunches and dinners.

Come and enjoy the relaxed and friendly atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable.

The programme will be released in late June 2012.

For more information contact: m: 0427 406 905

[info@mudgeereadersfestival.com.au](mailto:info@mudgeereadersfestival.com.au)

[www.mudgeereadersfestival.com.au](http://www.mudgeereadersfestival.com.au)

## SUSTAINING RURAL COMMUNITIES

The National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia (NIRRA) is partnering with the Cotton Catchment Communities CRC to present the **3rd Sustaining Rural Communities Conference**.

The conference will focus on building the skills of delegates to enable them to go back to their communities and harness the skills and resources of other community members to address issues of priority to them.

Many of these issues such as mining, water, carbon and new technologies including the National Broadband Network have the potential to create great opportunities for regional people, businesses and communities.

The conference presents an ideal opportunity for researchers and those engaged in rural and regional policy to gain on the ground insights from rural and regional stakeholders in an informal atmosphere.

NIRRA will be seeking the views of delegates to inform both its ongoing program, as well as facilitate discussion about what sustainable regional development involves; develop a constructive analysis of the policy challenges for achieving this vision; and look at how existing regional networks serve to facilitate policy delivery.

For more information on the conference go to

[www.sustainingruralcommunities.org.au/2012\\_Conference](http://www.sustainingruralcommunities.org.au/2012_Conference)

## 2012 FARMDAY: 26 & 27 MAY

**FarmDay** is when a farm family hosts a city family for a day of real hands-on experiences and a greater understanding of the day-to-day life of the farming family. If you are a city family you will have a wonderful opportunity to share a day in the life of a farming family – you will be able to assist in some of the daily work of producing food and fibre, have conversations about what it means to live on the land and gain a real insight into the similarities and differences of a rural and urban lifestyle and business. Of course, there will be great food to be shared and wide open spaces to be enjoyed, all of which will come together to make **FarmDay 2012** one of the most memorable events of your year! **FarmDay** offers a great opportunity to take a short break away – so why not make a long weekend of it, and take your time discovering your new part of rural Australia!

If you are a farming family, **FarmDay** is a wonderful chance to share your lifestyle and business with a city family who are keen to understand how you go about producing the food and fibre for which Australian farmers are renowned.

2012 is the Australian Year of the Farmer – **FarmDay** offers a brilliant opportunity to share in the spirit of the year – so mark it off on your calendar and sign up to register for **FarmDay 2012!**

## WOOL AND CRAFT MUSTER: JUNE, 26 MAY

The annual **Wool and Craft Muster** will be hosted by the Junee wool and craft group. There will be exhibitions of craft with displays, demonstrations workshops, craft competitions and challenges, craft supplies, retail outlets and refreshments. For more details you can contact Barbara Curtis on 02 69240924 or [babs1945@bigpond.com](mailto:babs1945@bigpond.com)

## CLIMAG

**Climag** is a free newsletter, published twice a year.

It keeps you up-to-date with research, and how our research findings are being applied in agriculture and natural resource management.

You can view **Climag** at [www.managingclimate.gov.au](http://www.managingclimate.gov.au)

## MORTGAGE STRESS HANDBOOK

The **Mortgage Stress Handbook** from Legal Aid is a practical guide for people having trouble with their mortgage. This handbook will help guide you to get a repayment arrangement in place with your lender. It covers such things as: what the lender has to do to take possession of your home; what you can do to stop the lender taking possession of your home; how to negotiate a repayment arrangement; what to do if the lender won't agree to a repayment arrangement; accessing your superannuation and mortgage assistance (if available); getting a stay if the lender has a court order to evict you from your home; and getting help.

For more information you can contact Legal Aid (Law Access NSW) on 1300 888 529 [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

## TAX FRAUD

Scams are designed to trick you into providing either money or personal information that can be used to commit fraud or other illegal activities in your name, through a range of tricks which seem authentic like letters, SMS messages, emails, bogus websites and even fake job advertisements.

As the end of the tax year approaches it is timely to be vigilant in the area of tax fraud. The Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce has launched a new fraud reporting initiative to combat this type of behaviour.

Occasionally the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will send you emails and SMS messages or post messages on their official social media channels promoting new services, however you will never be asked to provide your personal details like your name, date of birth, address, passwords or credit card details in an email. Do not provide personal details to anyone unless you know the request is coming from a trusted source. Always independently verify what you are being promised before taking any action.

If you think you have been scammed, contact the ATO immediately between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday on 1800 060 062 or you can email: [reportemailfraud@ato.gov.au](mailto:reportemailfraud@ato.gov.au)

## SCHOOL ATOZ

Handy information for parents with school-aged kids. It has useful information such as social media, technology, homework, relationships and heaps more. There is a range of resources to point you in the right direction.

For more information go to [www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/home](http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/home)

## eHEADSPACE: 24 HOUR SUPPORT

**eheadspace** is a new service from headspace. It is a confidential, free, anonymous, secure space where young people aged between 12 and 25 can web chat, email or speak with qualified youth mental health professionals.

**eheadspace** complements the existing youth mental health services offered by headspace at its 30 centres around Australia. The service will help overcome barriers that young people often face in accessing care and support, such as geography and cost.

The service has been operating as a pilot in Western Australia since July 2010, and traffic has grown from 177 messages in the first month to over 20,000 in August 2011.

It is not, however, a crisis support line. Existing services such as Lifeline and Kids Helpline will continue to be the primary telephone contact point for young people in crisis.

The contact details for eheadspace are [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au) or call 1800 650 890.

## PRECAUTIONS WHEN BUYING RURAL LAND

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) has available a Factsheet which covers some of the issues that buyers should consider when buying rural land, with particular reference to legislation administered by the NSW DPI and the Livestock Health and Pest Authority (formerly the Rural Lands Protection Board).

The Factsheet also outlines a wide range of information about rural land use and obligations. The factsheet can be downloaded from the NSW DPI website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/environment/landuse-planning/agriculture/precautions](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/environment/landuse-planning/agriculture/precautions)



Diana Parsons is a passionate woman in agriculture. As CEO of Central West Farming Systems she is at the forefront of agricultural research in the central west region of NSW. Diana believes women are an untapped resource in the agricultural sector and actively develops their skills and confidence through capacity building so that they may overcome many of the economic and social challenges they face.

Diana became a semi finalist in the 2012 NSW/ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award through her 'Hear the Bush Beat' project which aims 'to put the heart back into the bush.' In her spare time she is also a wife, mother, bookkeeper, farmer and works tirelessly as Corinella Public School's P&C Grant's Officer. Diana is a wonderful team leader and generous mentor and always has time to help others. *Diana Fear, Condobolin*

We'd love to hear from you, so why not send us a postcard or photo from where you live, and share your news and views!  
Post to: The Country Web,  
Locked Bag 21, Orange 2800.

Visit the Rural Women's Network internet site at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)



**Daring to Dream 2**

*DTD2* features 25 incredibly diverse women from NSW and includes high profile leaders alongside many remarkable 'unsung' heroines. Their stories display creativity, perseverance and resilience. Each freely shares their knowledge and experience to provide inspiration and ideas for others wanting to start their own daring to dream journey.

*'Daring to Dream 2'* costs \$11 incl. GST plus post & packaging. Cat No. B930. To order contact Department of Primary Industries Bookshop on 1800 028 374 or go to: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/aboutus/resources/bookshop/daring-to-dream-2](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/aboutus/resources/bookshop/daring-to-dream-2)



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

P/CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background  Culturally & Linguistically diverse background

Age Group:  <20  20s  30s  40s  50s  60s  70s  80s+

The Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998 obliges the Rural Women's Network to make you aware of the purposes for which we might use the contact details you have supplied us with. This information will be used by RWN for the purposes of disseminating information (including mailouts). Any information supplied by you to RWN will not be disclosed to any other person unless prior consent has been given.