

Panels

Stepping Stones, Jumping Boulders

Fran Rowe ~ 7 Points to Success

Fran, a mother of four, is a farming partner in a mixed farming property and Rural Financial Counsellor at Tottenham. She is a member of the Rural Adjustment Scheme, Chair of the NSW Rural Assistance Authority and on the Rural Women's Network State Advisory Committee since its establishment over five years ago, with two years as its co-chair.



Successful Decisions

I am very aware of what this talk is supposed to focus on. For example how I carefully planned my goals, aims and objectives and structured a considered plan. As a primary producer and indeed as a Rural Financial Counsellor, I know the value of planning. As a participant in decision making bodies, I realise the need for careful preparation. The truth is I did not plan to be involved in decision making processes and I am usually just too busy to prepare as much as I prefer for policy making board meetings.

So why am I here? Why have I been granted the opportunity to contribute to rural policy? And perhaps worse, why am I here in an attempt to assist you to juggle life in the decision making role? I accepted the invitation to talk with you because I decided it was perhaps time for a spot of navel gazing. I turn 51 this year. A time of life when one realises with great pleasure that you no longer need to strive to achieve – you are. It is also a time unfortunately when you realise that the only cleavage you have left – you sit on (but that is one of life's tragedies and quite beside the point).

Thank you for the opportunity to do my spot of navel gazing. I would like quickly to share with you my individual learning path.



'S' is for the Sense of Direction ~

Know where you want to go and do not be afraid to dream big dreams. I heard recently that only 5% of the population sets goals and only 3% write those goals down. Of the 3% who write their goals down, it has been estimated that 97% achieve those goals. I did not write down my goals but I do have a passion, a strong sense of commitment to farming families and to the agricultural and rural sector.

A sense of direction is based on a commitment to something. The top performers in my experience are committed. Commitment is not just being involved. If you want an example of the difference, think of your bacon and

Participants' comments from evaluation sheets

How would you rate the panel: - Stepping Stones, Jumping Boulders?



"Fantastic group of women. Motivational, inspirational and moving stories."

"Terrific. Only problem was no time to ask questions."

"It is also a time unfortunately when you realise that the only cleavage you have left – you sit on!"

~ Fran Rowe

"...you are a unique person with specific talents and skills. What you have to contribute is worthwhile."

"Maintain faith in yourself and retain your honesty."

"Have the courage to dream big. Sometimes the greatest risk is in thinking too small."

"...men go through a difficult age from the womb to the tomb!"

~ Fran Rowe

eggs in the morning. The hen is involved but the pig is really committed.

'U' is for Understanding ~

It is important to understand yourself and be aware that you are a unique person with specific talents and skills. What you have to contribute is worthwhile. Some will try to disempower you. Maintain faith in yourself and retain your honesty. It is important to try to understand others, where they are coming from, what knowledge and skills they have and to seek what you can learn from them. I have learnt a great deal from listening and trying to understand others. I continue to remind myself that I am on a learning curve and have much to learn from others.

'C' is for Courage and Compassion ~

The courage to stand up to those who seek to disempower you. The courage and compassion to support those around you who are not strong. Listen to the needs of others with compassion and seek to empower them. Have the courage to dream big. Sometimes the greatest risk is in thinking too small.

'C' is for Communication ~

My husband often suggests that women seem to go through a difficult stage from 16 to 60 years. I thank him for sharing that with me and advise him that men go through a difficult age from the womb to the tomb! His philosophy is on the right hand side of Hitler, he accuses me of having a philosophy on the left hand side of Mother Theresa. What's the point here? The point is that we do not always agree but we communicate vigorously. The skills required today are such that you cannot aspire to be a top operator and do all the work yourself. You must develop your people skills at every opportunity.

If you seek a decision making role, then ensure you remain relevant, that you continue to listen to the needs of those you seek to represent and you remain committed to communicating those needs.

'E' is for Esteem ~

Like yourself. Concentrate on building your own self esteem and remember to build the esteem of those around you.

'S' is for Self Confidence ~

Believe in yourself and have faith in your knowledge and skills. Do not devalue your volunteer work. I began my service to agriculture by using my skills to develop a volunteer counselling service from my homestead. I am now part of a national program and am being paid for doing what I enjoy.

'S' is for Self Acceptance ~

Do not dwell on past errors. Learn from your failures and move on and always ensure you do your personal best.

Lyn Riley-Mundine ~

Lyn is now the Aboriginal Development Manager at the Western Institute of TAFE, Dubbo and is responsible for developments across the Institute area from Bathurst, to Bourke and Broken Hill. Throughout Lyn's working career she has been involved primarily in education but has many other interests including her children, and Aboriginal culture, dance and language.

I was asked to come along today and talk about my learning pathways and how you can go about achieving your goals. When I sat down to think about it, I wished I had something really profound to say. I guess I set a goal when I was about seven years old. I really wanted to be a teacher. That was what I was going to be.

I can remember going to a career adviser when I was in my first year in high school and him saying to me "Well dear, maybe you should look at some other avenues, maybe you could be a really good housewife or a secretary, maybe being a teacher is a bit beyond you". I can remember sitting there and in my head saying "well you can get ...". Well I did say it, but only to myself.

That, I think was really good because I thought how dare you tell me I can't do something when you don't even know who I am or what I'm capable of. And yet how many of us get logged into the parameters that somebody else sets for us? I guess what's really good for me is when people say to me "You can't do it" because I go out to prove them wrong. So, I guess my career has been in proving other people wrong!

I set out to become a teacher which was a little difficult because in those days there weren't very many Aboriginal people going through school. In fact I remember at the time I was the only one in my year to go through and complete the Higher School Certificate.

I actually thought that I hadn't done very well and that I got into Teachers' College under special entry. It was only years later that my husband said to me "What exactly was your score?" and I told him. He said "Well you're very stupid, you could have got into Law with that". I guess part of that was setting my own parameters and not living up to the stereotypes that Aboriginal people really aren't capable of education, but having a go and seeing what I could achieve.

I became a Primary/Infants Teacher because I always wanted to be out there – to be an educator and be involved in education for my own people. I can remember going into High School and thinking "I'm going to be the first Aboriginal teacher". I remember when I was in about third form and an Aboriginal teacher came to my High School.



I thought “there goes that goal”. It didn’t matter of course because I went ahead anyway. Because you never really know who you’re going to end up teaching (Primary or Infants), I took both streams. I thought “I’m going to be prepared. They’re not going to fool me.”

I was sent to Moree High School (you never can be prepared, can you?) because the Department had decided they would send Aboriginal teachers to schools with problems to solve them. When I first arrived at Moree High School I was told that the teachers were going on strike unless an Aboriginal teacher arrived to solve their problems. I’m still not quite sure what they thought I was going to do, other than have a nervous breakdown, a possibility except for family support.

I guess what that really showed me was how much I didn’t know, and that as an Aboriginal person involved in education or in any field, I was going to be the one expected to have all the answers. I found that really difficult because I think that one person alone can’t provide the answers. We have to do it together. To expect Aboriginal people on their own to have the answers is just ludicrous, but nevertheless I thought I really need to educate myself.

I went back to College and completed a Graduate Diploma in Aboriginal Education. From there I was called to Sydney to the Department of School Education’s head office for three years. There were three of us responsible for going across the state of New South Wales and developing policies and providing the answers for Aboriginal Education. Can you imagine what we were like at the age of 23? I had all the answers, sure!

We were seen as the pioneers, the revolutionaries, we were providing policies. We hadn’t even lived ourselves and here we were, 23 years old and providing policies on Aboriginal Education. At the time we thought we were really wonderful, really high powered and skilled. When I look back now at the policy we’d developed I think “God it’s a wonder we’re anywhere near as advanced as we are with Aboriginal Education when you look at the people involved in writing it. I can say that because I was one of them.”

After three years of working there I’d acquired a husband and two children and I do mean acquired because I married a man with two children already. That was interesting – how to balance motherhood and all of this as well. I then needed time out from the Department and worked in Tranby College, an Aboriginal College in Glebe and was involved in establishing an adult education course for Aboriginal people.

At this time adult education was a new field. Aboriginal Adult Education was something not thought of, so we were involved in getting a whole lot of resources together and establishing what needed to happen there.

By this stage I'd started to have my own children and needed to get away from Sydney. I went to the University of New England as a Research Fellow and established the Aboriginal Resource Centre. The Equal Opportunity Officer at the University thought it was wonderful because she says she "got three in one with me". First of all she heard that the University was employing an Aboriginal person. (I was the first Aboriginal person employed on their staff) then she found out I was a woman (double banger) and then she found out I was six months pregnant! Well she thought, there goes all my stats up in one go!

I was there for seven years, leaving behind an established Aboriginal Studies Program from Associate Diploma through to a BA (Bachelor of Arts) Degree and a Masters. I'd established an Aboriginal Student Support Program and there was an Aboriginal Resource Centre and the Auralla Centre. I felt that I'd achieved a lot of things, plus I'd had three children while I was there so I was very productive in more ways than one.

In fact when I see people now from my university days in Armidale, they say "What, you're not pregnant? It's the first time we've seen you without a child hanging off one hip and another one being breastfed." It was really innovative the University thought, to have this woman going along to meetings breastfeeding and talking. It just goes to show that you can do it if you're given the opportunity. You can achieve a lot in between changing nappies and breastfeeding and all those other things you'd like to do as a mother.

I think that I've been very lucky because I've been able to maintain all of those things that are really important to me. I've been in positions where I've been able to feel that I've done the right thing by my children. I feel that I've been in positions where I am able to do the right thing by my people, and I've done the right thing by my employers. I guess that's really what it's all about isn't it.

Being given the chance, being allowed to run with things that you'd like to be able to do on your own, and yet still feel that you're contributing something. I wished I could say that this is the way to do it, but for me what's happened is being thrown in at the deep end, taking opportunities as they've been given to me, but also being able to say no when I'm not really sure whether I can do something or not.

Not letting people pressure you into positions before you're really able to have a full function (and I think we all know what I mean by that), because often if you're there and willing to talk people will often say "Well good, you can go on" and they will take you to the next step.

You need to be able to say "no" until you're ready, but be balanced in what you're doing. When people say to me "What are the difficulties

"...there's nothing like a real challenge to get the adrenalin flowing and to get some new innovations happening."

~ Lyn Riley-Mundine

you've had in your positions?" I prefer to call them challenges because there's nothing like a real challenge to get the adrenaline flowing and to get some new innovations happening.

On learning pathways – I've never set out with a real learning pathway other than to become a teacher and I did that very early on. Then everything else just kept on happening like a snowball effect, and here I am still learning, still snowballing, still taking chances and still trying to tell people "No, let me stop for a moment."

There are often lots of people who say "As women we owe it to our children, to concentrate on them." Quite frankly my three children will tell that you I'm a better part-time mother than a full-time mother and they've gotten a lot more out of all the things I've been involved in, than if I'd have just stayed at home with them.

Anne Rogers ~ Taking a small stagnating club from a 1950's style into the 21st century

Anne is involved in many community organisations such as Vice-President Cobar View Club, Vice-President Cobar Weekly Newspaper and Treasurer Cobar Miner's Race Club.

Minister, Planning Committee, Ladies, I'd rather be standing in front of a microphone calling Bingo for my members or giving away \$1000 worth of prizes on a Friday night than standing up here talking about myself.

Here goes! I remember vividly at the age of ten being called to the front of the classroom by the nun that was teaching me at the time to tell me that my father had been killed in a mining accident in Broken Hill where I come from. I was ten, the eldest of five children. My youngest brother was 5 months old at the time. I remember vividly my mother coming into the school yard when I was fourteen and telling me that she had found a job for me and it was time to move out and earn some money for the family. I remember at the age of 22 the police knocking on the door and telling me that my husband had been killed in a car accident, leaving me unskilled and with two young children.

I had no prospects, but I did have determination and so I decided that I would go back to work as a cleaner. I suppose that was decided for me because that's what happened. So I used to get out of bed early in the morning and I'd clean until a certain time. I'd go off then after doing a TAFE Course as a typist and I would type for Lifeline and then in the night time when I wasn't going to TAFE I would decorate wedding cakes to supplement my income for my young children.

This continued for a few years and each year I was determined that I would do a different course at TAFE to educate myself better, which I

did. Eventually I landed a job in the Women's Refuge in Broken Hill working with battered women. A very fulfilling job. Not the fact that you see bashed women but to be able to help them.

I met my next partner during this time and we went to get married. Broken Hill being a very Union dominated town, I had to go to the local Unions to ask if it was OK for me to get married because once you got married in Broken Hill you weren't allowed to go on working. I was told "no". It was alright for me to live with the guy but I wasn't allowed to get married otherwise I would have to stop working. I found this unsatisfactory and we talked and we talked about it and eventually I got married and I still went on working.

From there my husband moved to Cobar. I didn't want to move to Cobar. So I stayed behind because I didn't want to leave my son who had just gained a cadetship with the local paper in Broken Hill or my daughter was just starting year 12. I stayed there for six months and eventually I got the children settled and moved on to Cobar.

Well, there was no work for me. You really had to be "in the know" at that time to get some work and so I decided to go back as a full time student to TAFE. I used to front up at 9.00am every morning with the teeny boppers. I was the old lady of the class but they were marvellous to me. Every afternoon I'd go home at 3.00pm and do my homework and I would do my homework and I would do my homework!

When I finished that 12 months course I was then lucky enough to strike a job at the Cobar Services Club as a casual clerical assistant. I was only there for six months and they dismissed the first Secretary Manager and I was thrown into the pot. I knew really nothing about a club I can tell you now. But, by that happening to me I knew that I had to learn quickly, so I actually ran the Club for three months. I don't know how I did it but I actually ran the Club for three months!

They then employed another Secretary Manager and I worked with him for approximately 18 months. He moved on and then I was offered the position. I turned it down. I didn't feel confident enough to take it on. Then they offered it to another young guy and I worked with him for 5 years. This was probably the biggest learning experience of my life. I saw things going on in this small stagnating Club that could have been improved on, but it was an older clientele.

I heard a quote a couple of weeks ago. The seven most expensive words in the English language are – "we have always done it like this," and that has probably cost them a lot because they have always done it like this. Rick moved on and they offered me the position. I thought "Oh well, here goes, I'll go in and try it for six months". Which I have done and we haven't "always done it like this" anymore.

*“...minds are like
parachutes,
dangerous if not kept
open.”*

~ Anne Rogers

We've changed things. The whole concept of the Club has changed. Where they used to call it the 'Dugout', it is now brightly lit. We've knocked walls out. We've renovated. We've offered personal service. We have flowers on tables. We have tablecloths. We have a terrific staff that I am very, proud of.

My staff are very dedicated. We have regular meetings. We all put our ideas forward, and I could not complain about the girls and guys that I've got up there. I've employed a lady greenkeeper, and we've just won the best commercial garden in Cobar. I have to say thanks to Viv because she is very dedicated as well. We had a Harley Davidson competition last year. It was one of the most successful promotions that we've had in the town. On that night we raffled the bike, the Club was filled to capacity.

When I took over we had a profit of \$41,000. In the first 12 months after I'd been there, we came in at \$143,000 and last year we came in at \$149,000. Every bit of extensions we have done have been paid for except for the latest one. I've spent all their money. We now have a loan that I am desperately trying to pay off because I know what my next extension is going to be. I have to be able to prove to the Board that we can do it.

Times are pretty tough because we now contend with hotels for poker machines so we have to look at different outlets. That's why we offer so much personal service. We now have weddings down there - that never happened before. Practically all the functions that go on in the town now come to the Club, and its only through personal service and the dedication of my staff that this happens. At Christmas time we're really going to go out. We're going to turn the club into a fairy-land both inside and out. We have Santa coming.

I remember when I was a kid, every year we used to go and watch Santa coming out of the roof for the kids. That's a dream I'd like to bring back to the kids of Cobar. So at Christmas time we're having a chimney built on the Club, and at 9.00pm Santa's going to come out and wave to all the children. My staff's children are going to be dressed up as fairies and elves and they'll be giving lollies to all the children in the back outdoor area.

We now have 2 outdoor BBQ areas which are very very well patronised. I'd like to conclude with just a little quotation that I heard a little while back and it was "Minds are like parachutes, dangerous if not kept open."

Diba Samimi ~ The women's roles in home and society and their contribution to the next generation & the equality of women and men.

Diba arrived in Australia from Iran as a refugee, settling in Orange. she is married with two children. She is a second year student at Charles Sturt University in Industrial Maths and Computing.

Education and Equality

I came to Australia with my sister in 1986 as a refugee. There is a difference between a refugee and an immigrant. An immigrant leaves their country of their own choice but a refugee has been forced to leave. The main reasons for becoming refugees are wars, ethnic conflicts and violation of human rights.

For me it was my steadfast belief in the Baha'i faith. Baha'i faith is an independent, non political religion that is based on unity and love. Now I would like to share with you the pain that I had and the pain that thousands of Baha'is of Iran still have.

Throughout the past century the Baha'is of Iran have been persecuted. With the triumph of the Islamic revolution in 1979 more than 200 Baha'is have been executed and killed, hundreds more have been imprisoned and tens of thousands have been deprived of jobs, pensions, businesses and educational opportunities.

The National Baha'i administrative structure has been banned by the government and the holy places, cemeteries and people's houses have been confiscated, vandalised or destroyed. International protests against the persecution have been widespread. Thousands of newspaper articles about the situation of the Baha'is in Iran have appeared around the world. Prominent International organisations including the European and Australian parliaments and the United Nations have passed resolutions condemning or expressing concerns about the Baha'is in Iran.

When I came to Australia I felt and saw the unity in diversity and the freedom. For me it was like finding a new home and a new life. So, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those in Australia who play a part in assisting and providing support for the settlement and integration of refugees in their new country.

After living in Adelaide for one year I came to Orange in 1987. During this time I have seen a lot of changes and improvements in Orange. Today multiculturalism has increased a lot compared to when I came. As I remember Orange has always been beautiful.



"...think of Orange as a big garden and people are like different coloured flowers in this garden. A garden looks much more attractive and beautiful when the flowers are of different colours."

"The world of humanity is possessed of two wings. The male and female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, humanity cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment. When the two wings... become equivalent in strength, the bird will fly high."

~ Diba Samimi

If you think of Orange as a big garden and people are like different coloured flowers in this garden. A garden looks much more attractive and beautiful when the flowers are of different colours.

Now I am a mother of two. Some of you are mothers or becoming a mother one day. You and I as mothers have responsibilities for educating our children who are making the next generation. Especially our girls, because it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively diffused through society.

Great honour and nobility are rightly conferred on the station of motherhood and importance of training children is about equality between men and women.

The equality between sexes is essential to human progress and transformation of society, but without fundamental changes in the attitudes and values of individuals full equality between sexes cannot be achieved."

The world of humanity is possessed of two wings. The male and female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, humanity cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment. When the two wings... become equivalent in strength, the bird will fly high.


Lucy Broad ~

Lucy has worked in television as a reporter and presenter for ABC TV's rural affairs program Countrywide and A Question of Survival, as a presenter in ABC regional radio, as a reporter on the weekly national commercial television program Cross Country and in 1993, was appointed as National Editor, ABC Rural Radio where she is responsible for the ABC's specialist rural programs on local radio and Radio National.

Lucy is a former board member of the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women, and over the last four years has developed and overseen the running of the ABC Radio Rural Women of the Year Award incorporating the ABC Radio Leadership Seminar for the regional winners of the Award.

I actually find it very difficult to stand up after Diba, what an amazing story. I feel very humbled by the other women on the panel.

I have taken a slightly different approach. Rather than talking about me so much and how I've come through the pathway, over which time I have learnt an enormous amount, I will talk about some of the key things I have learnt and share those with you in case they might be practical things that you can take on board as well.



Last night I was telling my husband about the program today and this session and giving him a bit of a feel for the sorts of things that I was wanting to talk about and he said to me “Oh, that will be easy, just tell them the seven P’s”. You know that feeling when you’re actually really sorry you said anything at all and you’re waiting for this gem of wisdom. I said “OK, what are the seven P’s?” He said “Oh, this is something I learnt in the army” and I thought “Oh boy” this is even more of a concern.

The seven P’s, here they are: “Prior preparation and planning prevents piss poor performance”. I think before the second glass of wine it might have been the six P’s. It is actually quite appropriate because one of the things I wanted to talk about was preparation. What I’ve learnt in everything that I now do is to try and be mentally and practically prepared. Often it’s not possible to do that and you get caught out. That happens to all of us. But where you can if you’re going to meetings, if you’re addressing groups, if you’re sitting on boards or committees – know who is going to be there. Do the reading, do the preparation and do some homework. Have your agendas ready. If you’re contributing to the meeting be prepared with notes. However, you may like to work in your head as a lot of people do. I can’t do that. I need to be pathologically prepared, and so whatever degree you need to be prepared, try and do that.

Communication. We hear about it all the time. I guess I’m in the business of it so I hear it more than most. But I think there’s a good reason for that. Both ways, whether it’s to the people that you’re working for or the people who are working with you, I just can’t stress enough the importance of communication. In an organisation like the one I’m with which is national, you have reporters around the country and often in quite remote locations from Canungra to Broom to Albany to Cairns to Launceston and Burney. They need to know what’s happening. And although often for us meetings might be a bit dry and boring and tedious, for many people it’s the only way that they can actually get to know what’s going on.

Don’t just let people know of good things that are happening, particularly with managers and people you’re working with. Warn them of something they need to be aware of that might be coming unstuck or might be a problem. I think it’s a very true saying that “forewarned is forearmed”. No-one really likes surprises, particularly when they’re bad surprises.

I think also what I’ve tried to do is understand a bit more the way I actually like to work. Often I find that when you look at that you’ll find that you like to work possibly in a way that’s quite different to how the people around you like to work. I mean – do you like to brainstorm very openly and publicly and in a group, or do you actually like to go away and process things, read the info and come up with your own solution? I think that you’ll find in any one group you’ve got a real diversity of ways people work.

"Recognise that to be good at whatever you're doing, you need to be a balanced person, you need to be able to relax, you need to eat well, you need to exercise. The only person who is ever going to appreciate your being a superwoman is probably you."

"...keep learning and always keep your mind open to new ideas, and always be listening to what others are saying around you."

~ Lucy Broad

I like to process things in my head and for quite a long time. I couldn't work out why no one could ever quite see that the solution I'd come up with was the way to go until I started realising that in fact I hadn't explained how I had got to that point. And I hadn't actually brought anyone along with me, along that decision making chain. I think that once you're aware of how you work, you can both assist other people in helping them work the way they work and bring them along with you in the decision making.

Work out along your learning route or your development route, people that can assist you and who you can trust. I think one of the best things that my former manager did for me when I first started my work was, every time he'd introduce me to someone he'd choose a number of people who he went out of his way to introduce me to. And he'd say "this is the person that can tell you all you need to know" whatever it was – report writing, finances, personnel. You can't be an expert in everything. No one can. I think all of us need to have around us a really good team and they don't have to be people that you're working with, but also people that you know. Have a team of really key people who you know you can go to for information when you need it in a particular area.

The other thing that is useful at whatever level you're working (and it's something that I don't think I'm very good at) is knowing how to lobby. I don't mean that in a political sense but in every group you're going to have an antagonist. You're going to have people who don't necessarily see things the way you see them, but rather than having confrontation in a group, know how to access that person to take them aside, find out where their concerns are, what their problems are and try and talk them through. In that way come back to the table with a far more conciliatory atmosphere and something that's going to lead to a very positive outcome rather than having that confrontation.

Another thing I think is quite useful, when you're busy (and I think all of us are) or we've probably got families, partners, committees that we're on – make lots of notes, keep a diary. Keep notes of things that either you're about to do or that you've done, or conversations that you've had – particularly where it involves someone making a commitment to you or you making a commitment to them. If a decision had been made write it down. This is particularly important obviously if it's a controversial area. You want to be able to refer back to it later and say "Well no, I recall that's not quite correct, in fact I remember it was this" – then you've got something to go back to. It's quite a handy thing to do.

Finally one thing that I think is difficult for us all is to make time for yourself. Recognise that to be good at whatever you're doing, you need to be a balanced person, you need to be able to relax, you need to eat well, you need to exercise. The only person who is ever going to appreciate your being a superwoman is probably you. No one else will either know or care that you're just doing too much. You're the one that gets run down and suffers, and then everybody else around you suffers because

you're not performing in any of your roles to the level that you'd really like to be. So if you're not on top of things, cut back. Learn to say no. Employ a cleaner, buy a crockpot. Take shortcuts. And as all the speakers before have said - keep learning and always keep your mind open to new ideas, and always be listening to what others are saying around you.

Marj Bollinger ~ Goat Farmer to Lobbyist

Marj has served on the NRMA Community Advisory Committee, Roads and Traffic Association (RTA) Alternative Compliance Consultative Committee and RTA Safety Campaign Consultative Committee. In 1992 she received the Molong Australia Day Achievement Award and 1993 Australia Day Citizen Award.

Goat farmer to lobbyist

In preparing this address I looked at the subject for this session, Stepping stones, jumping boulders. I related quite well to the dark nights I spent as a goat farmer walking around a rocky paddock in search of new born kids. I regularly stepped the stones and literally tripped head over kettle on the boulders, usually with a slimy wet new kid under each arm! As a lobbyist it is done very differently, there the title would be Digging Deep Holes, Short Ladders.

During the last five years there have been many nights when I have wakened around three in the morning and thought, boy I've done it this time. This hole I've dug is deeper than ever before and three more rungs have dropped off the ladder! In the light of a new day the answer is always clear.

I consider myself to be a fairly average person, I usually introduce myself as the wife of a farmer, a mum who cares, a grandmother of three. I graduated from the school of hard knocks, been there done that, my only skills being common sense, logic and honesty. The only certificate I have is a marriage certificate! Frank is now serving his third life sentence. He says criminals only get 15 years for a life, and he has done 32 already with no signs of release or parole!

Thus it came as a surprise when approached to participate in this forum called Women in Decision Making. I had never thought myself to be in a position of decision making. Then I got to thinking and quickly came to realise all fairly average women with children, married to farmers or not, are constantly making decisions, even if it is only as to what the family will eat three times a day.

To illustrate how average I am, I am the third child of a store keeper, left school at 14 when my grandmother died because I was needed to help run my father's shop whilst mum and dad went off to Broken Hill to finalise grandma's affairs.



"...boy I've done it this time, this hole I've dug is deeper than ever before and three more rungs have dropped off the ladder!"

~ Marg Bollinger

"Mum, it's not good enough. We have to do something."

"My greatest asset was not knowing how it is usually done and doing it my way."

~ Marj Bollinger

To survive our 32 years on the land I have reared chickens and turkeys to supplement our income, milked up to 50 goats twice a day by hand for 18 years until a combined dose of Ross River and Glandular Fever rolled me over.

I have always been an outdoor person, happier to be out with dad fixing cars and inventing things than indoors. Fortunately I inherited many of my dad's skills which have come in very handy during my 32 years on the land and my last five as a lobbyist.

After two bush fires in 1985, I was able to pick up the welder and rebuild sheep and cattle yards and perform most of the running repairs on the farm. I think we all underestimate our abilities, not recognising our hidden skills, going along doing what we have to do on a daily basis without recognising the degree of skill it takes to perform tasks we come to take for granted.

If any one of you had suggested five years ago that one day I would be on television almost every other night or sitting in a Minister's office at Parliament House or speaking at a Government Inquiry into transport, or sitting around a mahogany table on an advisory panel with NRMA for 3 years, or being asked by the Federal Government where best to start fixing the Mt Lambie Road or indeed speaking at this forum today, I would have been looking to find someone to take you away! How circumstances can change our lives.

In March 1992 I became the most fortunate mother in the world. Our youngest son was a front seat passenger in a car which followed a semi trailer for five kilometres to an overtaking lane, pulled out to pass and another semi coming the opposite direction crossed double lines hitting them head on. Neil survived from a space less than a foot wide with a broken big toe. Two of his friends were killed instantly whilst the back seat passenger behind Neil sustained serious injuries.

Neil was adamant from the beginning that his friends shouldn't die and simply be written off as statistics. He wanted to see some of the heavy trucks off the road and back onto rail. He wrote 16 letters to politicians, got 10 patronising replies telling him trucks were a fact of life and to get on with his. He said, "Mum, it's not good enough. We have to do something."

Thus, just as the truck ran into Dave's car, quite by accident I became a lobbyist, telling Neil I had a bit of spare time and would help him in his quest. That bit of spare time turned into 18 hours a day, 7 days a week for almost 3 years. My accidental lobbying skills were derived from doing what I have done all my life. Doing everything back to front to the way everyone else does it. My greatest asset was not knowing how it is usually done and doing it my way.

I have always been an inquisitive person, always wanting to know why, believing everything in life happens for a reason and there is good in all bad and if you look for the positive in all negatives you will find them. I believe nothing is impossible if you want to do it badly enough. That's why I rebuilt the kitchen myself when I was told it couldn't be done!

From a small child I used to argue as to why people had to do things because it was the way it is done, if that is not the way you want to do it. We have all sat back and said, "what can I do about it, I am only one person, what difference can one person make?" If you believe what you are doing is right, you have a right to stand up and be counted, you can make a difference and bring about change. Motivation is all that is missing. My motivation was my thankful recognition that our son is alive. I am so much more fortunate than so many other mothers who have lost their children in road accidents. What stronger motivation could I have?

Everything for a reason. Had Dave and Beck not been killed, Neil would never have been motivated. Had Sonia Reece not been killed six weeks after Neil's accident, no one would have listened to us either. We were placed in the right place at the right time to fulfil the needs of many needy people. Always remember – never underestimate your own ability. Nothing is impossible if you want to do it badly enough (computers could be an exception!)

Set achievable goals. Something they say I do well as a lobbyist however, my body keeps telling me it is something I've yet to learn when it comes to building a garage in a day. I'm not as young as I used to be!)

Don't go asking for the moon hoping only to reach the stars. If you only need a star, that's what you ask for. Prove why you need it and how it can be achieved. Do your homework thoroughly and know the subject before you start. Never be afraid to admit you don't know, but be sure you learn. Everything in life happens for a reason. There IS good in all bad. Always be nice to people, you catch far more ants with honey than you do with vinegar. Dad always said "whatever you have to say, say it with a smile and keep moving, it's far harder for someone to hit a smiling moving object!" Believe me, the philosophy works.

Jane Slack-Smith ~ How to recognise opportunities so that a decision can be made

Jane is an Engineer. She worked in the NSW coal mining industry until September 1997 as a Coal Quality Engineer, Drill & Blasting Engineer, and underground labourer on nightshift for a year. She is the first female to gain her Open Cut Examiners ticket allowing her to run a shift on an open cut coal mine. Jane has recently taken a position as Explosives Engineer for Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia with ICI.

"...nothing is impossible if you want to do it badly enough."

"Don't go asking for the moon hoping only to reach the stars. If you only need a star, then that's what you ask for!"

"...whatever you have to say, say it with a smile and keep moving, it's far harder for someone to hit a smiling moving object!"

~ Marj Bollinger



“...Blocks of granite in the way of the weak are obstacles, in the way of the strong they are stepping stones.”

~ Jane Slack-Smith

Today's seminar has two themes. The first is decision making and the second Stepping Stones, Jumping Boulders. I thought that I should probably think of who my audience was going to be. So I listed the following points: 100 rural women, average age of 35, average amount of years of decision making, 30. So the total amount of decision making in the audience was over 3000 years. At that point I thought I had better concentrate on the latter theme as I could only offer a mere 22 years of decision making experience!

Stepping Stones, Jumping Boulders - This theme I can relate to very easily as it is very similar to one of my favourite quotes... “Blocks of granite in the way of the weak are obstacles, in the way of the strong they are stepping stones.”

My first major decision was to undertake the study of mining engineering at the University of NSW. First day, 20 guys and 3 girls. We were told that women could not exist in the mining industry, it really just could not be done. First block of granite. First Stepping Stone. It amazes me how those blocks of granite suddenly become stepping stones as soon as someone tells you that you cannot do it.

My first underground industrial experience, a coal mine in NSW. Legislation had only just been changed so that women could legally work underground. So unknowingly, myself and another student turned up to work as the first females to legally work underground in NSW. Well, it may have been a little easier if we were at the same mine, but we were not. I would hate to think of the commotion if two women turned up at one mine!

A week before I arrived at the mine a newspaper did a story of my arrival. The undermanagement's comment was that “A woman can work here but it is no place for a lady.” My crew underground told me of the article, my response was that after all the sacrifices my parents had made to send me to a good school they would be disappointed that I could not be a lady just because of my place of work. Ever since that day they called me Lady Jane as they thought I had proven that a woman could work underground and be a lady. Once again that block of granite became a stepping stone.

My first graduate position was in the Hunter Valley NSW. The General Manager pulled me aside on my first day and said “Jane you have been to uni but that only tells me that you have learnt how to learn. Now it is my job to teach you.” This false sense of security was shattered when I found out that my new title Coal Quality Engineer actually referred to the fact that I had to coordinate a fleet of bulldozers and their operations. Another block of granite but it soon became a stepping stone as soon as somebody told me I couldn't do it. The interesting thing was that it was very rare that it was an operator who told me I could not do it. It was usually a manager or peer.

After the bulldozers had been conquered I started wondering. Well, if I could look after the bulldozers why couldn't I manage the shovels, scrapers, trucks and water carts? Why in fact could I not manage the mine? It was not until I was told a girl has never done that before therefore it could not be done, that I decided to do it.

So I began the process of studying for my Open Cut Examiners ticket (OCE). This meant that I could run a shift at an Open Cut Mine. So I became the first female in NSW and possible Australia to have these qualifications. Another block of granite another stepping stone. The government department has had a little difficulty getting their mind around the fact that a girl was an OCE. The certificate that they sent me said "this certificate indicates that Jane has shown that he has the necessary knowledge and skills for him to run an open cut mine."

I moved to Mudgee where I spent three years at Ulan Coal Mines. Here I spent two years working in the open cut mine and last year I moved to the underground mine. I spent all of last year labouring underground on night shift – shovelling, driving machinery and cutting coal. Once again I was told it could not be done and once again I did it. In February of this year the underground coal face collapsed on the longwall. I was asked to complete my time underground and assist two others in putting together a plan to recover the machinery. No one was hurt in the incident.

After this was completed, I fell back into my allotted place as an underground engineer. After a while I realised that there were not any more blocks of granite on the horizon. So came the difficult decision, on one hand I could comfortably earn \$100K per annum with little pain, or cut my salary in half and go and seek my next block of granite. After two weeks I was out the door.

I am now the Technical Services Engineer for ICI (soon to be Orica) Quarry Services for Vic, Tas, and SA. This is an exciting and very challenging career. Now I can blast my way through the blocks of granite, and it's a lot of fun. I no longer need someone to say that I can't do something to make me want to do it. Now I greet new challenges myself.

Blasting is one of the few careers where you go to blow something up at the end of every day. A huge stress release. Although it sounds flippant it is not. It is by far the greatest challenge I have faced. The environmental constraints are stringent and approached seriously. As is the commitment to blast safely and efficiently.

Another favourite saying from Mark Twain, he said "Make your vocation your vacation." Life is way too short not to be enjoying what you do.

I was at the dentist the other day and this is usually the only opportunity I have to read the Reader's Digest. It is not a really cool thing for a 27

"This certificate indicates that Jane has shown that he has the necessary knowledge and skills for him to run an open cut mine."

"... You can do anything but fly and with God's help you can even fly!"

"Everyone needs a block of granite and everyone needs to buy a ticket in their own futures because without that, the block of granite will never become a stepping stone."

~ Jane Slack-Smith

A man was in church praying "God, God please let me win lotto, I have been praying to you every day for ten years for this, please." All of a sudden there was a boom crash, lightening, thunder and the man said "God is that you" and a voice replied "Yes my son." The man said "God, am I going to win lotto?" God replied "at least meet me half way, buy a ticket!"

~ Jane Slack-Smith



year old to be throwing in the trolley at the supermarket. Anyhow there was a short story I would like to share with you.

A man was in church praying "God, God please let me win lotto, I have been praying to you every day for ten years for this, please." All of a sudden there was a boom, crash, lightening, thunder and the man said "God is that you?" and a voice replied "Yes my son." The man said "God, am I going to win lotto?" God replied "at least meet me half way, buy a ticket!"

How many of us want something so badly but do not make the step to buy a ticket? It is easy to draw up a list of wants but until you make the commitment you have not got a chance. My sister and myself were very lucky to have a very nurturing childhood. We did not have to buy the ticket. It was given to us by our parents. And this was done in the following way. My Mother used to tell us as her Mother used to tell her and so forth. "You are Jane Slack-Smith. You can do anything but fly and with God's help you can even fly!"

Very simple but powerful. We were given the self confidence and the belief in ourselves that we could do anything we put our minds to. This was not done in an arrogant way but rather very simple and understated. We were given our ticket.

I believe that it is our responsibility to assist the youth in our community. To help them identify the challenges and give them confidence to do something about it. Everyone needs a block of granite and everyone needs to buy a ticket in their own futures because without that, the block of granite will never become a stepping stone.

Lindy Hyam ~ Life as a navigator - looking at career paths, key aspects of roles in decision making, and innovation

Lindy is the Executive Director Horticultural Research & Development Corporation (HRDC) Board, which is responsible for directing and coordinating research and development for all Australian horticultural industries. Lindy's experience covers all facets of corporate management from local government, leading organisation wide reform at Warringah Council to State Government in the NSW Premier's Department, NSW Police Service and heading up Communications for the Board of Secondary Education.

Lindy has a Masters in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Education majoring in Economics and Geography. She was a NSW finalist in the 1996 Telstra Business Women's Awards.

It is indeed a privilege to share this panel with such an experienced, diverse and exciting group of women.

When I was first approached to be part of this panel, I felt quite challenged in having to speak about personal experiences and making it of interest and value to such an important audience.

My background, until recently, has not been in the rural sector but across a range of state, local and commonwealth agencies. So moving across organisations and professions, what have been some of my experiences of decision making as a woman in teaching, policy advice, communications, owning a newsagency, the Police service, in Premier's, studying part time, in local government and more recently in my present role at the HRDC.

I believe one of the most valuable lessons I learnt was that you have got to get actively engaged in whatever you do, from the most simple tasks through to the most strategic and complex activity. The active engagement enables you to learn, to build your skills and to demonstrate your capabilities. Such engagement rarely goes unnoticed.

Through engagement you get the opportunity to solve problems, developing a range of skills that I believe women are usually very good at – being innovative, bringing parties together to find a solution, being able to look at all sides of a situation, thinking outside the square and not being afraid to try alternative approaches.

In R&D we know that women are key drivers of change, seeking out new information from both traditional and modern forms of communication. They will form the centre stone of technology transfer particularly as industry development moves from product to value added and export priorities.

Confidence

People who are very keen to succeed usually surround themselves with winners and look for people who can provide good role models or good mentors. In many of my previous roles, I have been fortunate to have had excellent mentors, although informally, who have challenged me in some way.

Setting Goals

In the 80's the Director of the Board of Studies, asked me over lunch one day "what were my goals for the next five years?" I was stumped. I had never really thought about where I was heading or what I was going to do in the long term. To this day, I am very thankful to Sam for prompting me to focus a little more clearly. Without that, I possibly would not have done my MBA or been here today. For women who are keen to have an active role in decision making, it is important to set goals which are attainable, relevant to your lifestyle and have manageable timeframes.

"In R&D we know that women are key drivers of change, seeking out new information from both traditional and modern forms of communication."

~ Lindy Hyam

*"Good lesson in life –
know where you need
to start, where you are
heading to and read the
fine print."*

*"Off went the start gun
and away we went with
perfect timing only to
realise that we had
started in the wrong
race."*

*"So my message to you
is to be observant and
watch for clues."*

*"...in order to progress,
the necessary
preparations must be
made."*

~ Lindy Hyam

Speaking in Public

In years to follow, being able to speak in public became a very important aspect of my job and gave me more opportunity to be involved in many different types of forums, state and national advisory committees, national and international conferences and working with like and unlike organisations. But once again, to carry that off well, required a lot of preparation and a lot of learning.

New Challenges

In my new role as Executive Director of the HRDC, I have had to come to grips with an entirely new industry but one that I feel very passionate about. To become familiar with it, I have had to reach out to all types of people and share ideas, but most of all, to listen and hear what was being said and being able to translate that information into appropriate strategy and practice.

Getting your point across

Once again, I am in a minority in terms of gender in the collective of CEO's of larger R&D corporations. At the end of the day I believe that I can contribute in a positive way but have to be prepared to be a lone voice at times or challenge previously held beliefs. Providing that the argument has been well thought through or the idea has been reasonably well researched, there is generally a chance of gaining support for that issue.

Self Esteem

Like all new situations, if you have a high self esteem, you feel confident, you have a respect for others, you are prepared to take risks and have a go. You maintain a sense of humour, and have the ability to cope in most situations then you will generally succeed in most things that you try.

To illustrate just some of the points I have just talked about, I would like to share some of my experiences in an entirely new sport for me, sailing. Part of having a well balanced quality of life is being able to enjoy what free time you have. This year, we entered a spring sailing competition. I had sailed just six months since March. We gathered a crew of family and friends and set off for our first race. As I had demonstrated over many years the capacity to read a map, it was agreed that I should be navigator.

Well, during the first race, it was absolutely pouring and we proceeded to what we thought was the start line only to find that there was not a single boat in our division within sight.

After we cruised around the harbour for fifteen minutes in the rain, drenched, we eventually found that the chart that John had so carefully drawn up failed to have either the beginning identified or the end clearly

marked as those were listed separately to the course in the racing rules. Good lesson in life. Know where you need to start, where you are heading to and read the fine print. That first day tested everybody. The conditions were hard and our inexperience was evident. But nobody quit. Similarly, the path to our active participation in the decision making arena can be tough and requires staying power.

The next week, we decided we were going to be a little more prepared. So we set off early to get some practice in getting a really good start. Off went the start gun and away we went with perfect timing only to realise that we had started in the wrong race. What we had not realised was that there were signal flags used to indicate the start of each division and our race in fact had started ten minutes earlier. So my message to you is to be observant and watch for clues.

The third race was culturally very interesting because as navigator, I had to indicate which marker buoys we were to go around. This could be confusing because there were often several close together. With two buoys up ahead, I directed us to the furthest one.

Because the boats ahead of us were all proceeding around the nearest buoy, the rest of the crew (all males) decided that was the right buoy. Meanwhile, as navigator, I was saying to them that we simply should not do what everyone else was doing but to stick to what we believed was the right buoy. I lost that one.

Over the course of the next few races, our goal was to at least come third or better so we did the necessary preparation. We put the boat in slips and had the bottom scrubbed and coated with racing antifoil. Come last Saturday, we passed all of the boats that had week after week gone past us. We came in second and improved our performance significantly. The lesson being that, in order to progress, the necessary preparations must be made.

Our overall goal for the season is to get the award for the most improved boat in the division. So if you are serious about having a greater role in decision making, set a major goal and some stepping stones along the way. Reward yourself when you get there but if at first you don't make it - have another go.



.....
• **Stepping Stones,**
• **Jumping Boulders**
.....
• **Audio Tape**
.....
• **If you are interested**
• **in obtaining a copy**
• **of the Stepping**
• **Stones Audio Tape,**
• **please contact the**
• **Rural Women's**
• **Network on**
.....
• **☎(02) 6391 3620**
.....

Stepping Stones Panel

From left to right: Lyn Riley-Mundine, Anne Rogers (back), Diba Samimi, Marg Bollinger (back), Minister Faye Lo Po', Fran Rowe, Lucy Broad (back), Lindy Hyam & Jane Slack-Smith



Grasping the Nettle ~ A Panel with a Difference

Introduction:

How do you present vital information in an innovative and intriguing way? The forum Planning Team devised a panel with a difference, 'Grasping the Nettle' with facilitator 'actress extraordinaire' Sue Butler, as a way of drawing out the relevant information from each speaker with impact.

Sue has unique skills in acting, and teaching speech and drama. Armed with a bag of hats, wigs and props, Sue played different roles with great style and humour, asking the panel the hard questions to elicit what their agencies or groups could offer women.

The session ended with a riddle: There was a father and a son driving in outback Australia when they had a terrible accident. The father died and the son was rushed to intensive care. The surgeon came out to operate on the boy and said "I can't operate on the boy. He's my son."

Who was the surgeon? The mother!

Susan Butler ~ Panel Facilitator with a difference.

Sue is an actress, writer and speech and drama teacher.



Carolyn Page ~ National Rural Women's Unit

Carolyn is managing the development of a National Action Plan for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management. She has a background in secondary and tertiary education, with a special interest in girls and work education.

From 1994-95 Carolyn was Project Officer for the Gender Equity Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education and Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, leading to the development of the national policy document Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools.

From 1995-96 she worked as Senior Research and Policy Officer for the Women's Advisory Group of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training.



Maryanne Pidcock ~ Business and Professional Women

Maryanne was Manager of the Cobar Business Centre and established a Business & Professional Women (BPW) club in Cobar. BPW is an international organisation which offers an extensive network, personal and professional training and a voice for working women. BPW is keen to expand into rural areas.

Stephen Cleary ~ Elders

Elders is leading the way in developing an inclusive approach to customer service through recognition of the role of women in agriculture. It has developed a good working relationship with Australian Women in Agriculture so that its training, marketing and interaction with women works well.

Angela Martin ~ Affirmative Action Agency

Angela has responsibility for linking up with employer organisations to train members on affirmative action matters, and is an associate member of diverse industries and companies assisting them in developing and implementing their AA programs. The Affirmative Action (AA) Agency is a federal agency administering the AA Act (Equal Employment Opportunity for women). It advises and assists employers to develop programs, and raises public awareness on the issues of AA.

Helen Scott-Orr ~ NSW Agriculture

Helen is the most senior woman executive in NSW Agriculture. She chairs and participates in numerous national and state committees, sits on various boards and promotes women's representation where she can.

The Department is taking on a role of working with women through establishing the Rural Women's Network program for the state, educating through its Colleges, taking on mentoring young graduate recruits (50% of whom are women).

It is also developing a NSW Action Plan for Rural Women involving industry, other government agencies and rural women themselves to increase women's participation in decision making, and improve work with women as clients.



Participants' comments from evaluation sheets

"What a buzz! Have seen panels done along these lines before but never as well. Congratulations!"

"Good fun. More question time would have been valuable."

Resources

Workshop Resources

Available from the RWN (see below)

Working with the Media ~ Lucy Broad

❖ Info Sheet

Women on Boards - getting there & surviving!

~ Ros Lambert

❖ Questions & Answers to Action Workshop

❖ How to Get a Board Appointment Info Sheet

❖ Some Tips for Staying on Boards Info Sheet

❖ 10 Strategies for Women when dealing with men in business Info Sheet

I don't know if you can help me, but I need some information

~ Ellen Lintjens

❖ Info Sheet

Working the System ~ Cathy Sharp

❖ Three Branches of Government Info Sheet

❖ Public Participation in Government Decision Making

Speaking Effectively ~ Lyn Champion

❖ Reducing Stage Fright Info Sheet

❖ The Characteristics of good communicators

Working with the Media ~ Kellie Penfold

❖ Top Tips for working with the media

❖ Working with the Media

❖ Press Release (press releases are for use as examples only)



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Fax: (02) 6391 3650



Publications

❖ **Missed Opportunities ~** harnessing the potential of women in Australian agriculture ~ Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) ☎(02) 6272 4539

❖ **Affirmative Action Kit and publications list ~** The Affirmative Action Agency ☎(02) 9334 9800

❖ **National Forum on Women in Agriculture & Resource Management** (the proceedings) ~ The National Rural Women's Unit ☎(02) 6271 6362

❖ **The Rural Friendly Key Phone List & Directory of organisations for women in NSW ~** NSW Department for Women ☎1800 817 227

❖ **Country Web newsletter and Stepping Stones Leadership Kit ~** available free from Rural Women's Network

❖ **I need a Mentor Don't I? ~** available through BPW ☎(02) 9879 6379 (Head Office)

❖ **Our Wildest Dreams ~** by Joline Godfrey, \$20.95

❖ **The Balancing Act ~** by Patterson, Genny, McMillan & Switzler, \$42.95

❖ **She Who Dares Wins ~** by E Gillibrand & J Mosley, \$17.95

❖ **You Just Don't Understand ~** by Deborah Tannen, \$16.95

❖ **Finding your Purpose ~** by B J Braham, \$15.95

❖ **Reinventing Success ~** by Ruth Cotton, \$17.95

❖ **The Power of Purpose ~** by Dick Leader, \$39.95

❖ **Outback Wisdom, Strength to Strength & Some of my friends have tails ~** by Sara Henderson

Program

5th Wednesday

6.30pm - 7.30 **Registration & light supper**

8.00- 8.30pm **Guest speaker ~ Barbara Scott.**

Barbara was the 1996 ABC Radio Australian Rural Woman of the Year. She is a farmer & wool manufacturer with extensive experience in adult education.

6th Thursday

8.00- 8.45am **Registration**

8.45 - 9.00 **Introductions** by Pat Le Lievre, Forum Planning Team Chair

9.00 - 9.15 **Welcomes ~ Mayor of Orange, Mr Dick Niven, & Josie Ingram, Wiradjuri Elder from Cowra**

9.15 - 9.30 **Opening Address ~ The Hon Faye Lo Po', then Minister for Women & Minister for Fair Trading**

9.30 - 10.15 **Out of the fat & into the fire! ~ Michelle Nugan, followed by questions**

Michelle is Managing Director of The Nugan Group – a Griffith based multi million dollar fruit, vegetable & juicing processing enterprise with the accent on exporting.

10.15 - 10.45 **Morning tea**

10.45 - 11.30 **Recognising & celebrating rural women. ~ Helen Lynch AM, followed by questions**

Helen is a recently appointed delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention.

She is a Director of a number of large corporations & sits on many other Boards which include the arts, community, schools & charitable organisations. Helen started at Westpac in outback Qld at the age of 15 & progressed to become a member of Westpac's executive team.

She was Bulletin/Qantas Business Woman of Year 1990 & awarded the Order of Australia in 1994.

11.30 - 1.00 **Action learning workshop session 1.**

1. Recognition of Prior Learning ~ Karen Heller
2. Working the System ~ Cathie Sharp
3. Small Business ~ Jan Hudson
4. Speaking Effectively ~ Lyn Champion
5. Managing People & Relationships ~ Lyn Sykes
6. Getting Results from Meetings ~ Marlene Farrell
7. Women on Boards ~ Ros Lambert
8. Working with the Media ~ Lucy Broad

1.00- 2.00 **Lunch**

2.00 - 3.30 **Stepping stones, jumping boulders.**

This session will highlight a diversity of women who will share their individual learning pathways.

Panel chair ~ The Hon Faye Lo Po'

Fran Rowe, Chair, NSW Rural Assistance Authority & Rural Financial Counsellor, Tottenham

Lyn Riley Mundine, Aboriginal Development Manager, Western Institute of TAFE, Dubbo

Anne Rogers, Chief Executive Officer, Memorial Services & Bowling Club, Cobar

Diba Samimi, Iranian professional woman of the Bahai faith who fled from Iran over 10 years ago, Orange

Lucy Broad, National Manager, ABC Rural Radio, Sydney

Marge Bollinger, Founding Chair, Highway Safety Action Group, Molong

Jane Slack-Smith, Explosives engineer originally from Dubbo

Lindy Hyam, Executive Director, Horticultural Research & Development Corporation, Sydney

3.30 - 4.15 **Afternoon tea**

4.15 - 4.45 **"I don't know if you can help me, but I need some information..." ~ Ellen Lintjens followed by questions.** *Ellen is Coordinator of NSW Women's Information Referral Service.*

4.45 - 5.00 **Reflections on the day ~ Cathy McGowan**

What stood out for you today? What did you learn from today? What could you put into practice?

Program

6.30pm Thursday evening Dinner at the Orange Ex-Services Club. Poet: Corrine Staats

7th Friday

8.30 - 8.40am Team up for Day 2

8.40 - 9.20 “How can I get somewhere if I don’t know where I’m going...” ~ Ros Lambert, followed by questions

Ros will bring a lifetime of personal highs & lows, successes & great learnings to look positively at change.

9.20 -10.20 Grasping the nettle ~ A panel with a difference.

Representatives from business, government, industry & community tell you everything you always wanted to know & were afraid to ask about working well with women!

Carolyn Page is a Senior Research and Policy Officer with the Department of Primary Industries and Energy’s new Rural Women’s Unit, and is managing the development of a National Action Plan for Women in Agriculture and Resource Management.

Maryanne Pidcock was Manager of the Cobar Business Centre and established a BPW club in Cobar. BPW is an international organisation which offers an extensive network, personal and professional training and a voice for working women. BPW is keen to expand into rural areas.

Stephen Cleary is the Commercial Manager, NSW Elders Ltd. Elders is leading the way in developing an inclusive approach to customer service through recognition of the role of women in agriculture. It has developed a good working relationship with Australian Women in Agriculture so that its training, marketing and interaction with women works well.

Angela Martin is the Affirmative Action Agency (AAA) Training and Information Officer with responsibility for linking up with employer organisations to train members on affirmative action matters, and is an Associate member of diverse industries and companies assisting them in developing and implementing their aa programs. The Affirmative Action (AA) Agency is a federal agency administering the AAAct (Equal Employment Opportunity for women). It advises and assists employers to develop programs, and raises public awareness on the issues of AA.

Helen Scott-Orr is NSW Agriculture’s Chief, Division of Animal Industries. Helen is the most senior woman executive in the Department (and has been for a long time). She chairs and participates in numerous national and state committees, sits on various boards and promotes women’s representation where she can. NSW Agriculture is taking the lead in working with women through establishing the Rural Women’s Network program for the state, educating through its Colleges, taking on mentoring young graduate recruits (50% of whom are women). It is also developing a NSW Action Plan for Rural Women involving industry, other government agencies and rural women themselves to increase women’s participation in decision making, and improve work with women as clients.

10.20 - 10.40 Morning tea

10.40 - 12.20 Action learning workshop session 2

12.20 - 1.30 Lunch

1.30 - 3.00 Map your own pathways & develop a mentor portfolio ~ Marian Tye

Marian is the author of the booklet ‘I need a mentor don’t I?’. She has a background in sport & the performing arts & now works in the area of enterprise development & multimedia.

3.00 - 3.30 Reflections on the Forum & looking forward ~ Cathy McGowan

3.30pm Close ~ Helen Scott Orr, Chief, Division of Animal Industries, NSW Agriculture

Thank you to the following agencies for their support in making this first rural women in decision making forum possible



NSW Agriculture



NSW Farmers



Dept for Women Women

Coopers & Lybrand Consultants

Westpac

HAZELTON
THE BIG COUNTRY AIRLINE

Media Coverage

Rural Women in Decision Making Forum



Cathy McGowan (just can't hang around the edges)

10.15 - morning tea
10.45 - Recognising Celebrating Rural
Helen Lynch AM
11.30am - Training Workshop
Lunch
2pm - Stepping Stones - Chair of panel
3pm - Po. Panel member
Fran Rowe, Lyn Riley Mundine, Anne Rogers, Diba Samimi, Lucie

delegate

LEEN Gronowicz, a clerk from NSW Agriculture, attended the Women in Decision Making Forum and was impressed by the calibre of the speakers.

In the Action Learning Workshop Session yesterday afternoon Aileen chose the 'Speak Effectively' session with Champion.

"I was particularly interested in the session as she is such a motivated speaker."

"I really think she is quite a few years ahead of the public speaking."

She noted that the session was a great deal to do with and drive to succeed.

of 'Stepping Stones, Jumping Boulders', Diba Samimi, focused her address on equality and education.

Diba, who has two children and is in her second year of a degree course at Charles Sturt University, spoke after having been a member of the Bank of NSW (now Westpac), and was promoted to senior positions, in 1993 becoming chief general manager, corporate affairs.

Today she is a director of Coles Myer Ltd, Southcorp Holdings Ltd and most recently, the Westpac Bank. She chairs the Superannuation Funds Management Corporation of South Australia and is a director of the Darling Harbour Authority, Norwich Union Financial Services Group and OPSM Protector Ltd.

"Opportunities are not opening up for women as fast as they would like them to be," she said.

Boards, particularly those in agriculture, still preclude women with piles of paperwork, long meetings and meetings which are often interstate and mean being away for a couple of days.

"We need to think about strategies for the government which give women in rural areas the opportunity to

faith. "Coming to Australia has been like finding a new home and a new life and I take this opportunity to thank all those who play a particular part in helping refugees," she said.

"As a mother I want to ensure that you have the educational opportunities that I had."

Michelle, who completed her Higher School Certificate in 1973. In 1984, after studying part-time, she gained her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of New England.

Michelle's husband died last year, Michelle, a business training experience, took over as director of the dollar fruit packing company the group.

taking over, Michelle's natural sense of business acumen, her energy and determination has seen her become highly respected among her colleagues in what is largely a male-dominated industry.

Under her guidance turnover has trebled and profitability has increased on the export side of the business developing enormously.

Grasping the net with a different representation, government and community.

rolyn Page - chair and policy the department of Agriculture's new Rural Development Board.

Pidgeon - former of Cohar Centre who business and women's club

leary - commercial manager of Elders NSW.

ela Martin - training information officer for Affirmative Action which is a Federal government initiative administering the Native Action Act.

Employment Opportunity for Women, advises and assists to develop projects and raise public awareness of the issues of affirmative action.

en Scott-Orr - chief of all industries at NSW Agriculture. Helen is the senior woman executive in the department. She participates in various national and international committees and sits on boards.

um - Action Learning Workshop session with Sharp, Lyn Champi, Sykes, Ros Lam, Kellie Penfold, and Iret Helman.

hms - Map Your Own Way and Develop a Portfolio - Marian

han is the author of "I need a mentor". She has a round in sport and performing arts and works in enterprise development and multimedia.

Reflections on the forum and looking forward - Cathy McGowan.

Close by Helen

Scott Orr

High time for change

tor of the Nugan was propelled into of business who band died.

After school, Diba Samimi, Ravenswood in Sydney and training in nursing Prince Alfred North Shore married.

Under her guidance turnover has trebled and profitability has increased on the export side of the business developing enormously.

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Close by Helen

Scott Orr

Majority group takes its rightful place

participate at decision making levels.

"One of the valuable attributes for board members is common sense and getting outcomes. Let's match to the 'gra ceiling. It is time women at every level in equal numbers be making decisions."

Ms Lynch encouraged rural women to make a lifelong commitment to learning and to commit themselves to one new education project each year.

"It's important to be able to speak public and to read a balance sheet profit and loss statement," she said.

"It has only been in comparative recent times that self fulfilment has been seen a legitimate goal for women. Leadership can be tough for women. There are tough attitudes and women are often the worst critics, but once you have practised your skills, you be an unstoppable force."

Reflections on the forum and looking forward - Cathy McGowan.

Close by Helen

Scott Orr

Media Coverage

Reports by
KELLIE PENFOLD
COORDINATOR of the NSW
Rural Women's Network, Mar-
aret Carroll, described it as
a stepping stone; the
director of the Centre for
Social Research,
Murn fern
list.

Cowra farm partnership reflects changing roles

By KELLIE PENFOLD

Groves represents the new
of women entering agriculture,
son — who runs "Glenwyck", a
grain and livestock farm business
with husband, Chris — left her part
time bank (she had spent nine
months to work full time on the farm,
but she would do all day at



**Rural Women
in Decision
Making Forum**

"And while we save a lot on
casual labour, it is great to have
two people discussing a decision
rather than having to stew on it
yourself all day."

And while Sharon is fully aware
of all happenings on the farm, she
gets the occasional patronising
inquest or telephone calls for
"boss".

not all farm
that I do. Some
others need to
earn an income,
it. It is a
we know
something

'Having a go' brings Griffith success

Scott-Orr, the highest ranked
woman in NSW Agriculture
women bring a different
especially to high pro-
"There is a
between

Rural women's forum opens in city

LINE

f that
g the t... and half
il Women in Deci-
sion Forum in
this week walked
with more confi-
dence and know-

a facilitator and
insultant, Cath-
n, said the forum
was a success for par-
ticipants and the orga-
nisation.
an innovative step
in Agriculture and
terrible dividends,"
McGowan said.
appreciated enorm-
ously the diversity of

a formal business
or skills, she became
director of her family's
the Nugan Group, a
million dollar fruit and
vegetable packaging and processing
based at Griffith.

only I had a 'family' of 150
and it was a lot more
work and nerve-racking. I
faced by the challenge, but
often yearning to have a



"It comes by hard
work and a good team backing you
up, and you cannot afford to be
over-sensitive, because the only
way will be yourself."

In 10 years she has turned a
business into a worldwide ex-

Dynamic speakers at women's forum

Group profit has
considerably in the
last 10 years and turnover has
trebled. As well, the business has
developed a substantial export
division and has become vertically
integrated through the development
of horticultural interests.

"In business
you have to take a hard look at
what is commercially viable and
steel yourself for change."

Comment

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1987

Strength in numbers

THE diversity of experiences of
rural women was never more evi-
dent than during the panel dis-
cussion of the Rural Women in
Decision Making Forum in
Orange yesterday.

From journalists to lobbyists to
corporate businesswomen to
housewives, the participants
demonstrated that success is not
measured by university education
or earning capacity, but by per-
formance and achievement.

The definition of 'rural' was
debated from its usual nar-
row base to include
urban areas, includ-
ing working in
the city as Orange.
The more useful (and
relevant) definition, given that
the forum was outside metropoli-
tan areas, was more in common
with rural life.

Samimi hit the nail on
the head when she urged women
at the conference to promote
equality between their sons and
daughters.

It is important that men
are encouraged to reach their
potential, whatever that may be.

There are many challenges to
be faced by regional Australia. It
will take the combined efforts of
rural women and men to win.

BY JANICE HARRIS

Networking list of participants

Every effort has been made to make this list as current as possible. All addresses are in New South Wales unless otherwise stated.

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