

the COUNTRYWEB

for RURAL WOMEN & their FAMILIES

A NEW YOU

MEET OUR 2015 RURAL
WOMEN'S AWARD FINALISTS

UNCOVERED GEMS

MEN'S MATTERS:
CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH



THE COUNTRY WEB

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

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

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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.

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COMPETITION TERMS & 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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Joanne Stewart is the Gourmet Goat Lady, a farmer's wife and mother whose goat business is set to change the way goat meat is sold and consumed in Australia.



Women Leaders: Being able to encourage women to start, or continue to make a contribution through honing skills and building confidence is something that interests Rebecca Fing from Goondiwindi.

editorial A new you

Melanie Trethowan, Mudgee

When I was a child my parents' aspirations for me were that one day I would be a hairdresser (because, at that stage, I enjoyed brushing my mother's hair) or that I would be a secretary (because I was organised and bossy). Both are fine occupations but they didn't turn out to be the right ones for me.

As I got into my teens I was determined I was going to be a wool classer, a National Parks and Wildlife ranger (a girl taking on the farm wasn't an option in those days) or I would join the army. A few years later and a university degree under my belt, I was going to be the saviour of the international hotel and hospitality industry!

Isn't it interesting how our boundaries and vision change as we search, either consciously or unconsciously, for a place where we 'fit'? Maybe it's one of those many 'signs of the times' that we no longer have one 'best fit' that just as we get comfortable with our place and space, our boundaries move yet again and we strive to change how we interact with the world, or set to and completely reinvent ourselves.

If I counted it up, it could be said that I have had over nine different careers in the past 25 or so years. Yet I bet that would have nothing on the career changes of Gen X and Gen Y.

For me, I don't believe there has ever been a definitive *one* thing that I wanted to be when I grew up. I am in the fortunate position that I can keep stretching myself and challenging myself, both physically and professionally. Today we are lucky to not be bound by our family's expectations or society's limitations.

My latest passion in life is distance walking—or as I prefer to call it—going for a stroll.

In 2013 I convinced my husband that it would be a great idea to walk the Camino Frances from the south of France (climbing the Pyrenees Mountains on the first day, no less) to Santiago de Compostela in north-western Spain. Just a casual 790 km over 31 days!

In 2014 I suggested to him, 'Let's go walking again?' and he replied, 'You're on your own!' So, off I went. This time it was an even more casual 1000 km over 38 days from Seville in the south of Spain back up to Santiago de Compostela.



Many people have given me their extensive and somewhat colourful opinions about my sanity but to me these walks are a bit like life. Every day is a new day and *you* decide what you put into it and what you get out of it. It might be a tough day of 38 km with 15 kg on your back, hills and a blazing sun! Or, it might be beautiful, flat walking by rivers and under dappled shade (yes, there were a couple of days like that!).

So now what will the new, improved Melanie Trethowan look like in the future? She will walk from Lisbon in Portugal to Santiago (again). She will be a company and board director that will work for the betterment of rural and regional NSW. She will be a long distance cyclist (with plans to ride the length of the Mississippi River in the United States). She will have a successful small business in downtown Mudgee. She will one day bungee jump and she will live in France for six months, improving her schoolgirl French. And hopefully, after all this, her husband is still talking to her!

To me, life is too short to be a 'gunna', that is, 'one day I'm gunna do this or gunna do that'.

A new you is just around the corner, why not introduce yourself?

Calendar of events

May 1, Nominations open for 2015 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll

Nominate a friend, family member, colleague, community worker—any rural women who you believe makes your community a better place to live. Nominations close 31 July. See RWN website for full details.

May 26, NSW-ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award

A special Gala Celebratory Dinner to announce the 2015 RIRDC RWA Winner. Parliament House, Sydney.

August 1, Australia-wide Entries open: 2016 RIRDC Rural Women's Award

Don't miss this amazing opportunity to develop your skills, make a difference and inspire others. See back page for details on how to enter.

October 9–11, Glen Innes Annual NSW Rural Women's Gathering

A fantastic weekend of inspiring speakers, including: Georgina Dent (*Women's Agenda* editor); Mary Coustas (Logie Award-winning actor and comedian); Jean Kittson (actress, comedian and writer); Michael Crossland (inspirational speaker and cancer survivor). There will be a range of educational workshops on offer, as well as plenty of opportunity for networking and making new friends. You will come away inspired and with some great new skills and ideas. Visit www.glenrac.org.au/gather-in-the-glen.php

What's next?

The next issue of *The Country Web* will explore the theme '**Creating and Making**'. We want to hear from you about projects you have done as individuals or within your community—so get those creative juices flowing. It could be things like building a community garden, working on a commemorative quilt for a new baby or setting up a blog for your farm... or it could be creating a family tree or making a succession plan that really worked. The possibilities are endless and we welcome creative talents from inside *and* outside the square on this theme.

Contributions due 5 June 2015, for publication in August 2015. Send your contribution to: *The Country Web*, Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW 2800 or email: allison.priest@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Connected resilient rural women

The Rural Women's Network (RWN) is a small state-wide government program (within NSW Department of Primary Industries) working in innovative ways to share information and promote action on rural women's issues.

What can RWN do for you?

- » Provide information relevant to rural women and communities.
- » Support you to develop and promote activities such as women's days, workshops or gatherings.
- » Connect you with key people, groups and organisations.
- » Share your stories and concerns with decision makers.

Current activities:

- » *The Country Web* magazine.
- » RIRDC Rural Women's Award: a leadership and development opportunity.
- » NSW Rural Women's Gathering.
- » Hidden Treasures Honour Roll: recognising rural women volunteers.
- » Rural Women Connect: a platform where rural women can connect to identify issues, explore ideas to address issues and communicate priorities to decision-makers.

Connect with RWN

t: 02 6391 3620

f: 02 6391 3543

e: rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au

w: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn

b: nswruralwomensnetwork.wordpress.com

tw: @NSW_RWN

YouTube.com/nswrwn

Across my desk - Emma Regan

One of my favourite quotes by Megan Miller is, 'If you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you've always got, so if you want what you've never had, you need to do what you've never done'.

If we continue to do the same things over and over again we will get the same results. That makes sense; but change is daunting and it takes courage. But what if we decided to try something new? A new career, a new relationship, a new direction. And, what if we had to? Or, what if we want to but don't know if the path ahead is the right one? Do we start something, or stop something, or do we try something completely new?

We don't have a crystal ball or a road map and quite frankly, sometimes it's better we don't, because maybe we wouldn't take that risk to start a new business or make a lifestyle change. Maybe we would stay in that unrewarding job or unhealthy marriage. Maybe, we would err on the side of caution and just continue doing the same thing forever. Maybe, if we could look ahead we wouldn't be brave enough. But what if...?

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the women in this issue have proven they are made of strong stuff. We celebrate their ability to rise above challenges and turn tragedy into triumph. They demonstrate that if we just take a chance on a dream, if we find the courage, that maybe, just maybe we can reach our wildest dreams and succeed beyond all expectations.

As American politician Mike Huckabee says, 'It's when ordinary people rise above the expectations and seize the opportunity that milestones truly are reached'.

A lot of what we do here at the RWN is focussed on building women's capabilities so they can take on new challenges, try new things and fulfil their potential.

Shaping Our Futures Together

(SOFT) courses have been delivered across NSW over the past 12 years and were developed to meet the demands of rural women keen to build their capabilities and skills but unable to travel to a regional or city location where such courses are normally

offered. In March a group of dynamic DPI women (pictured opposite) from Education and Regional Services gathered at Tocal College in the Hunter to participate in a SOFT course. And we will be rolling out more SOFT courses across the region—so watch this space for a course in your area.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award (RWA) continues to raise the profile of women leaders and support their visions for primary industries and rural Australia. This year, three remarkable women will vie for the 2015 award, with the winner to be announced at a special Gala Celebratory Dinner on Tuesday, 26 May. You can read their inspirational stories on page six.

The Hidden Treasures Honour Roll continues to celebrate the important role of volunteers. Nominating a rural woman is a great way to celebrate women from across NSW who give so much of their time to improving our communities. Simply complete the nomination form and tell us a short 'story' about why your nominee is worthy. Nominations open 4 May and close 31 July 2015. You can nominate a friend, family member, colleague, community worker—anyone who you believe makes your community a better place to live.

Also in this issue we are asking for your input into two very important surveys. The first is a **Country Web Reader Survey**. It will only take 5–10 minutes of your time and will provide important information to us on such things as the look and feel of the magazine, the suitability and relevance of content and the method of delivery. The **Drought Survey** relates to challenges facing farming families and communities and can be found on the back of the fly sheet. It will only take three short minutes and will help build a clearer picture of how drought-affected farming communities have coped personally as well as in their farm business. We are also looking for ideas on how to improve drought preparedness. Please take a few minutes to complete both of these important surveys to help us gather important information.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *The Country Web*. May it inspire you to do something you've never done before!





Orange women find their sparkle

International Women's Day is celebrated by millions around the world each year and provides an opportunity to mark the strength, determination and courage of women and the valuable contributions they make to society.

To celebrate this important day Orange City Council and RWN, in partnership with local services and groups, hosted a free event on Sunday, 8 March.

Around 200 women from the Central West, including mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunts and friends came together to network, gain information, make new friendships and celebrate, by taking time out to enjoy an afternoon of education, inspiration and fun.

Women were encouraged to wear national costume to celebrate and recognise Australia's multicultural community or dress in the IWD theme colours of green, white, purple and gold.

The afternoon included music, fashion, inspiration and fun, with over 25 stalls showcasing jewellery, handbags, craft supplies, clothing, woven baskets and lifestyle choices for women.

A highlight of the day was Julie Cross—an entertaining and inspirational speaker who made international headlines in November last year when her bikini-clad selfie mum pics went viral on Facebook!

Julie was invited back to Orange by popular demand to encourage local women to find their passion, sparkle and look at life through a more positive lens.

Emma Regan, Orange

Fiction imitating life

I am a prolific reader—reading for pleasure and to satisfy my curiosity. It is amazing how a novel can initiate an unsolicited thought process when you least expect it.

A recent book I read dealt with a couple re-evaluating life post-children. The wife initiated the renegotiation; she had been happy with her life but now needed

something more. He had finally reached his life-long career goal, however, it hadn't given him the fulfilment he expected.

Both characters encounter a third person. To the man, she asked him what his dreams were for the second half of his life? They did not need to be the dreams of his childhood, but of the man he was now. To the woman, she asked what she was most afraid of? An intriguing question which can be applied to many situations—particularly when at a crossroad.

Having pondered these questions for a few weeks, with many possible answers, I had a life-changing epiphany—I am more afraid of success than I am of failure. I wonder how many women feel like this because of cultural norms or life's challenges? For me, I need to rethink wishes, dreams, desires, and risk-taking in this second half of my life.

Julie Freeman, Gloucester

A bouquet

A friend loaned me a copy of *The Country Web* and I think it is marvellous. I look forward to sharing the magazine with family and friends. Thank you for producing something so practical, insightful and needed—especially in such difficult times for rural families.

Clare Keady, Maroubra

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 arrangements—exceptions in emergency situations).
- » Assistance to find short-term accommodation for country people in the city.

- » A referral service for information.
- » Referrals for confidential personal counselling.
- » A friendly voice for a chat.
- » Visits (on request) for country people in hospital.

More information

Country Care Link can be accessed Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 3 pm. Telephone 1800 806 160 or 02 8382 6434.



Visionary women lead the way



2015 NSW-ACT

RIRDC Rural Women's Award Finalists

Three leading rural women are in the running to be announced the NSW-ACT state winner of the 2015 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award (RWA). Each were selected based on a project or 'vision' they want to implement that will benefit rural people or rural industries. The winner will be announced at a special Gala Celebratory Dinner to be held at Parliament House, Sydney on Tuesday, 26 May 2015. Meet the finalists:

Sophie Anderson, Byron Bay

With a strong commitment to rural and regional communities Sophie Anderson has devoted her career to the service of these communities for almost 15 years. She has a strong focus on social justice and believes quality legal advice and representation is a vital resource and should be accessible for all communities.

Now a North Coast Barrister, Sophie is active in various local organisations and businesses and believes passionately in grassroots engagement to benefit and promote stronger local communities. Having witnessed first-hand the social and economic disadvantages faced by vulnerable members of communities in western NSW, Sophie is working hard to drive change by providing better access to service as well as greater opportunities for women who pursue a legal career.

Through her project Sophie hopes to address key issues facing women in law such as the under-representation of women in leadership and senior roles; limited career pathways for women; and the high rate of attrition of women lawyers in regional and rural areas who re-locate to the city for career advancement.

The aim of her project is to establish an Alliance of regional women legal practitioners to create greater opportunities for women in regional areas. The Alliance would provide a platform for leadership, career and mentoring of rural and regional women practising law while also targeting younger women to encourage and support them to pursue a career in the industry.

The long-term vision of the Alliance is to create a Foundation to inspire young women from low socio-economic and disadvantaged regional communities into a career in the law through scholarships.

Sophie believes rural women have an invaluable role to play in primary industries and is passionate about ensuring access to social justice and providing better pathways and opportunities. She sees the Award as an opportunity to advance her leadership and to support other rural women whilst continuing to delivering vital services to rural and regional communities in New South Wales.

Cindy Cassidy, Arian Park

Cindy Cassidy grew up on a sheep and grain farm in Arian Park, NSW before moving to Melbourne to work in the agribusiness sector—developing a career spanning more than 20 years. Recently she returned to the Riverina region to settle on the family farm with her young daughter.

Her love of agricultural research and strong desire and capacity for change has been a consistent theme in the roles and the organisations she has worked for. Her focus has been to deliver outcomes that move the industry forward by adopting new approaches, creating or adding value and improving the marketability of products.

Cindy is the CEO of FarmLink Research, a not-for-profit farming systems group, based at Temora, servicing farmers and agribusiness across the region. Her ambition is to improve the relevance and effectiveness of local agricultural extension in order to support farmers in the adoption of innovation and to maximise returns from investment in agricultural research and development.

Prior to joining FarmLink Cindy worked with a number of large agribusinesses including the Australian Barley Board and AWB Limited and co-founded Wheat Quality Australia. She has been involved in stakeholder and industry committees and presented at conferences, both nationally and internationally.

Cindy believes agricultural R&D is critical to the ongoing competitiveness of Australian agriculture. She sees farming systems groups, with their committed member base, local focus and emphasis on farmer-to-farmer learning, to be integral to the successful adoption of research outcomes on a farm.

If successful, Cindy would use the RWA to explore national and international approaches to modern agricultural extension in order to improve the effectiveness of locally delivered programs. The knowledge and tools created through the project would be transferred to other farming systems groups through current collaborations and partnerships. She would also like to establish a network of contacts in national and international agricultural organisations in order to influence the policy framework and investment strategy for agricultural extension.

'I see this as an opportunity to take on a greater responsibility for the future direction of our industry and to play an active role in shaping it. The award will allow me to develop my leadership skills and knowledge. Hopefully I can be a positive role model for other women.'

Trudy McElroy, Deniliquin

Growing up on the land Trudy has witnessed first-hand the challenges farming businesses face. In 2011 Trudy, her fiancé Chris and their son Nicholas, relocated from the Northern Tablelands to Deniliquin in the Riverina, to run a share-farming broadacre enterprise. Trudy also works in the seed industry.

Through her employment Trudy has gained the respect of the industry and formed strong networks in the agronomic and farming sectors throughout Southern NSW, Victoria and parts of South Australia. She is active in local organisations and believes women are an integral part of rural industries.

Trudy is passionate about the diverse industries and communities that drive farming businesses. Her hope is that by addressing literacy skills gaps and building confidence in rural women, businesses will benefit from improved productivity and viability, enhancing their long term sustainability. A flow-on effect would be a reduction in negative health impacts.

Prior to 2011 Trudy's career was devoted to the NSW Health Service, where she became acutely aware of the negative health impacts affecting farmers and other members of rural communities. This experience gave Trudy the impetus to want to make a real difference in the lives of rural families and communities.

Trudy's project is aimed at improving the business literacy of rural women. She would use the award to facilitate courses and workshops focussed on farming business operations, giving women the skills and confidence to take up key roles in family businesses.

Trudy is also looking to build her own leadership and business skills to enable her to encourage and support women in primary industries to be more involved in decision making and more confident to take on leadership roles.

Trudy believes farming businesses will benefit immensely from women having the ability to make a greater contribution, alleviating both financial and emotional pressures for families. 'The rural sector is ever-evolving to an innovative and exciting multi-gender industry. It is time to enable rural women to confidently play a critical role in rural Australia.'

About the Award

The RIRDC Rural Women's Award is Australia's pre-eminent award for rural women. It recognises and supports their commitment and contribution to our rural industries and communities, as well as their strong leadership capabilities and potential. In particular it celebrates the unique way in which women approach leadership and affect change through connection and collaboration.

State winners receive a company directors course and a \$10 000 bursary to develop their vision into a project that will benefit primary industries and rural Australia. The award is open to all women involved in primary industries and natural resource management. No formal qualifications are required and you can nominate yourself or someone else.

The Rural Women's Award is an amazing opportunity to develop your leadership skills, make a real difference and inspire others. It's a life-changing experience that can provide you a platform to communicate your vision and connect you with a positive and powerful alumni of women who, like you, are passionate about primary industries and rural Australia.

Applications for the 2016 RIRDC Rural Women's Award open 1 August and close 31 October 2015.

More information

www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au



Pip with NSW DPI Director General Scott Hansen

Pip Job

2014 Australian RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year

Pip Job was announced the national winner of the 2014 Rural Women's Award in front of more than 250 industry leaders, politicians and past winners at a gala dinner at Parliament House, Canberra in September 2014.

Pip received a \$10 000 bursary as part of the NSW state award to allow her to undertake a study tour and develop a training program for women aimed at developing ways to manage the challenges of rural life. This program will increase the capacity of rural women to manage climate change and finance in a complex economy, as well as increase their personal resilience using a social, ecological and economic platform.

As the national winner, Pip will receive an additional \$10 000 bursary to enable her to develop her leadership skills and participate in speaking engagements where she can share her passion for upskilling, motivating and building the networks of Australia's rural women.

RIRDC managing director, Craig Burns said, 'Pip was chosen as the national award winner from a field of seven very strong state winners. Her ability to actively engage the community in which she lives, encourage people to get involved and to actually make change happen is nothing short of inspirational.'

'Pip's passion, drive and determination is clear, and her desire to upskill rural women, foster learning and generally make things better for rural people and the environment has been deservedly recognised.'

'All the state winners this year are of the highest calibre and I am confident we will see all of them further develop their leadership potential and continue to inspire and drive change in their communities and industries.'



Live outside the box, on your terms

Rebel Black, Armidale

You know when you meet people and they ask you what you do? I wish they would ask who I am instead, because what I do does not define me. Who I am is the choice I make in life—that's where the interesting story lies!

I believe we each build identity in our own unique way—for some their career or job is embedded in 'who they are', for others it's the role they play as a parent or a partner.

I created my identity through trying not to fit in. I don't ever want to become part of the crowd or to be known as one 'thing'. I like the mystery that surrounds what I do and who I am. I like that I cannot be 'boxed'—because if no one can box me I can be a free spirit and remain open and live with choice.

My parents named me Rebel because they liked the name but for me it has become a name I have grown into and embraced; in a life spent striving to live on my own terms and in doing so challenging the status quo.

At school I didn't quite fit in. I tried to mould myself to fit but I preferred to 'float' around and not be hemmed in by one crowd or societal definitions. I was outspoken and at times incorrigible; vehemently defending injustices as I saw them and often getting into trouble for doing so.

When I moved to Lightning Ridge in 2000 it was my first real act of rebellion—quitting university to go and work on a cattle station

in the central Australian desert. People were horrified that I was giving up the opportunity for an education and the chance to become 'someone'. None of that mattered to me though—I was hungry for adventure and impact and wanted each moment in my life to matter.

When I got the job as editor of *The Ridge News* I was asked in my interview if there was anything else I could add to our conversation. I replied, 'The one thing I can say, is if I don't like it, I will leave.' And I meant it—I have always meant it. If something doesn't feel right to me anymore I move on to the next adventure, always gathering skills as I go!

In my various business roles I have always dared to do things the way that works best for me. When I opened a restaurant in 2004 we opened only for groups of 10 or more. Everyone said it wouldn't work but we knew it would because it would work for us. When I said I would start running cooking classes people said it would be hard and that people weren't ready, but it wasn't hard and they were ready, because I was.

There is a lot of talk at the moment about thinking outside the square—coming up with solutions that aren't ordinary or doing things in ways that challenge the norm.

Distribution is a common term used by entrepreneurs. I like it to a point but I think it creates another 'box', because if you do something different you become a 'rule-breaker' or 'disruptor' and get sidelined to the box created for those terms.

What about doing things the way *you* want because they work for you? I challenge you to create a life that works for you—to define the terms for yourself and have the courage to enact them. It's a simple concept but the more people I meet, the more I realise it is genuinely hard for people to live by.

When I was 36 years old I looked at my life and came to understand that, particularly in rural communities, what's missing in a life lived on one's own terms is a tribe. And that's why my colleague and I launched Thriving Healthy Entrepreneurial (THE) Rural Women—to create a tribe of like-minded rural women from across the globe, who dare to live life on their own terms. No boxes. No definitions. Just a common desire to thrive, be healthy, and live life with purpose and passion and make a contribution.

What small but courageous act will you embrace today to live a little closer to life on your terms?

Five tips for making a lasting impression

Amanda Jesnoewski

Successful networking isn't about grabbing business cards and hoping for the best. It's about making a lasting impression and building rapport so a relationship can start to form, even in the brief time you have with potential clients. Here are five tips to ensure you leave a lasting impression at every event and meeting you go to:

Be engaging When talking to people, be present. Maintain eye contact, show an interest, ask relevant and thought-provoking questions, listen attentively and respond quickly. While you're asking questions and chatting, listen closely for points you have in common. This will help build rapport, which will make the person you are interacting with feel more at ease, as well as giving them more reasons to remember you.

Look to add value When you're speaking to people, think about how you can help them or add value to them. Is there someone at the event you could introduce them to? Do you know anyone who could help solve a challenge they have? Do you know the person they want to connect with? Could you suggest a good alliance for them? People always remember those who add value.

Be unique Use your appearance to stand out from the crowd. Be impeccably groomed, wear bright colours, nice shoes, distinctive jewellery or an interesting tie. Even a nice perfume or cologne can capture attention.

Openly participate at events A lot of networking events give you the chance to participate in a discussion or ask questions. Provided you can add value, use this as an opportunity to showcase your knowledge. Share an intelligent point, ask a good question or use a relevant analogy to show your professionalism and expertise.

Use memory joggers for key information Keep in mind that people aren't going to remember long descriptions of what you do, or likely even your 'infomercial'. People will at best remember a few key things about you: your name, business name, industry and perhaps your specialty and location. To assist people in remembering these points use them in conversation as much as possible. And always carry a business card!

Source: www.womensagenda.com.au



The gourmet goat lady

Contributed by Small Business NSW

Meet Joanne Stewart, the Gourmet Goat Lady; a farmer's wife and mother whose Central West goat business is set to change the way goat meat is sold and consumed in Australia—no kidding!

'Goat is the most widely consumed meat in the world. And with good reason—it is delicious and extremely good for you. We want to help turn farmed goat meat into a healthy staple food for all Australian families,' said Joanne.

Sounds like a big vision? Not for Joanne. Her passion for goats and her drive to change the way the Australian goat industry is regulated is turning heads, including those of top Australian chefs and representatives of the Australian meat and livestock industry. However, it hasn't always been clear cut and smooth sailing for Joanne.

Joanne's passion for goats started with a desire to find a new way of contributing to the family income. 'I was looking for something for myself. Ideally something close to home that enabled me to continue supporting our family and our farm business. I dabbled in bits and pieces but I didn't find anything that I was really passionate about.'

What Joanne didn't realise at the time was that the business venture that would change her life, and that of her family, was right under her nose.

'Our farm, Buena Vista, located west of Gilgandra is a well established beef and cropping enterprise, but like most farmers

in western NSW we struggle with the impact of drought. My aspiration to contribute another source of income came from both a desire to find something meaningful to work on, as well as a need to help ensure our future.'

It all started in 2008 when Joanne's daughter, Abbey, was given a Boer goat kid called Olivia. 'We liked her so much that we got some more high quality Boer goats. And before you knew it, we were growing a herd of fine goats, managed with the best farm practices, fully pasture-raised but with no actual on-or-off farm business purpose.

'My husband Craig turned around one day and said to me, "You are going to have to do something with those goats, you can't keep collecting them as pets."

So Joanne and Craig started researching goats. The more they researched and learned and the more they cooked and tasted goat meat, the more potential they saw in farming Boer goat meat as a business.

'As our new goat business grew, the goat component of our farm became my domain. I was managing the goats, organising the breeding program, weighing goats, inventing recipes, meeting with other goat farmers, butchers, providores, restaurants and chefs, selling at farmers' markets and winning awards for our goat meat.'

Joanne's success has come with a lot of people supporting and helping her along the way. One of these people is Peter Croft,

a Small Biz Connect advisor from the Parkes Forbes Business Enterprise Centre, who helps small business owners develop, grow and sustain their businesses.

'I met Joanne when she was considering what goat meat products she would sell, packaging options and distribution channels. With a farming background, I understood the challenges she was facing and wanted to help,' said Peter.

Peter has become an ongoing sounding board for Joanne and Craig as their business continues to develop. 'Peter has been an invaluable support for us. He has given us advice on everything from product and market development to registering a brand,' said Joanne.

With a few of Sydney's top chefs and restaurants incorporating Gourmet Goat Lady meat on their menu and a growing list of suppliers in Sydney and the Central West, the business is going from strength to strength. However, Joanne still sees a major challenge to resolve—and that is the way goat meat is graded, regulated and sold in Australia.

'We want Australians to realise there is more to goat than curry but to do this we need to address the way goat meat is sold. Most people don't realise there is a big difference between farmed goat meat and rangeland, or what was known previously as feral goats. Unfortunately, there is no difference in the way goat meat is marketed. Everything is sold as just "goat", whether it is a kid or a buck, farmed or rangeland. Farmed goats are cared for in similar ways to the husbandry practices of high quality farmed lamb or beef, which is evident in its taste and tender texture. Rangeland goats are normally wild, harvested on an annual basis and they have a much stronger taste.'

Joanne and Peter are now working on a project to address classification, standards and marketing of goat meat in Australia.

Joanne is an industry warrior. She recognises and appreciates the work done by the goat industry pioneers before her, and is building on their work to put in place robust industry standards that will change the way goat meat is sold across the country.

More information

The Gourmet Goat Lady
www.thegourmetgoatlady.com.au

Small Biz Connect Program
www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au



Farmer wants a ball: a dream that went viral

Sarah McCaig is not your average rural woman. While many mothers with newborn babies are sleepless, this farming mother of three is losing sleep for different reasons.

Sarah, who runs a property in Methul with her husband Andrew says, 'I was watching a TV program one Sunday night on Aussie farmers in drought and afterwards I couldn't sleep wondering what I could do.'

'Aussie farmers and their families are experiencing one of the worst droughts in Australian history. Farmers are doing it tough both financially and emotionally. They face the reality of no money, no income, no food or water for livestock and limited support,' Sarah explained.

Rather than kick up her cowgirl boots in despair, Sarah drew on her own experiences growing up in Cowra NSW and came up with a creative, community-minded solution to assist Aussie farmers and their families in need financially and emotionally.

'In the past, farming communities came together with country dances, family fun days and sporting events. There was fun, laughter and sometimes tears but everyone talked and supported each other. This has stopped

happening. People are so busy that they have forgotten the art of talking and listening—I want to change this!'

Over the next two years Sarah is asking rural communities all over Australia to band together and host a Bale Out Ball event. The events will be about farmers, their families and the community getting together and having a good time—sharing stories, showing support and raising money to assist in drought relief.

A Bale Out Ball event can be a BBQ, dinner party, a long lunch, family camp out, sporting event, a concert, or of course, a ball!

Sarah, a farmer's wife, pharmacy assistant and mother of three gorgeous children, Travis (6), Charlie (4) and Maisie (1), believes strongly in the power of rural communities.

Sarah is urging those wanting to get involved to use what their community already has. She understands that not everyone can contribute financially but believes that by planning some kind of get-together communities can show they care as well as provide emotional support for each other. Money raised through Bale Out Ball events will be donated to Buy a Bale and Aussie Helpers.

To kick off the Bale Out Ball initiative Sarah set up a Facebook page. The page, which already has over 15 000 likes, provides information about community events, meetings, support networks as well as beautiful stories and photographs from farmers across Australia.

Overnight, Sarah's dream went viral and the working mum was overwhelmed with offers of support.

'I am a farmer's wife and a mum who hopes that by making a small contribution to these rural communities we can make a huge difference to their lives.'

The first Bale Out event was the Christmas in July Ball on 4 July 2014 at Marrar. The night was a huge success with 160 guests packing out the Marrar Hall. Everyone enjoyed a three course meal and live entertainment, with Anne Delaney, ABC Radio Riverina, who was kind enough to MC the night and guest speaker Owen Finegan, former Wallaby star and current CEO of Snowy Hydro SouthCare.

'The support was overwhelming and everyone had a great time. Money raised from the bar on the night went back into the Marrar community—we helped purchase new trestle tables for the Marrar Hall and have started donation funds for each of our charities to donate to twice a year. Most importantly, we provided a social outlet for farmers, their families and the community.'

'Following the success of our very first ball we decided to do it all again in February at Ardlethan with the Foxy In Feb Ball. It was another great night full of fun and laughter, as well as a chance for the rural community to come together and support each other.'

'It's hard to believe that such a small idea can blossom and gain so much support.'

"Sometimes life can take you on an unexpected journey that you never imagined."

In the last eight months Sarah said she has worked harder than ever before, learnt more than she could ever have imagined and has met some really fantastic people. But, most of all, Sarah feels she has started to make a small difference to rural Australia and that's what's important.

'It hasn't always been easy. My husband and I had to fund this initiative as well as run the farm and make ends meet with three small children, but I feel like we have come through the hard part and many great things will come out of Bale Out Ball.'

More information

Bale Out Ball
www.baleoutball.org.au
facebook.com/baleoutball
0409 335 448

Making miniatures

Virginia Paton

Many people are fascinated by tiny things—some people take up creating tiny things for fun! If you're someone who loves to create, collect and display miniatures, the Australian Miniature Enthusiasts Association (AMEA) is for you.

The AMEA was formed in 1995 as a not-for-profit volunteer organisation to promote the miniatures and dolls' house hobby and to share our enjoyment with others. Members are from across Australia and overseas.

The tiny things we create usually have a domestic theme; tiny houses from one-twelfth scale down to teeny tiny ones, often populated by tiny figures all to scale.

The themes and scenes we create cover most areas of human existence—from bakehouses to boudoirs, classrooms to cake shops, libraries to outdoor loos!

The Association holds workshops four times a year with tutors on hand to guide the completion of miniatures—anything from animals, luggage, tables, flowers, trunks of lovely things, chests of drawers, or any household item you can imagine.

A convention is held every two years for miniaturists to indulge in three days of making minis. Workshops range from two days long to full or half day sessions. Delegates can sell the lovely things they make and everyone gets plenty of opportunity to add to their collections.

The charm of being able to create your own world, where everything is just as you want, is good for the soul and you can easily lose yourself in making tiny worlds!

Making minis does require miniature tools and some patience; it is usually soothing but every now and then a minor disaster can occur when something you believed you glued perfectly disintegrates as you add the last bit. You definitely learn a lot of patience as a miniaturist, as well as the ability to be very, very gentle!

www.amea.org.au

Rural resilience program

Bring together some educators, financial counsellors, a social worker, a community nurse and a journalist, throw in a couple of farmers, people with various academic qualifications and a range of practical skills, and what do you get? A skillful and resourceful team ready to work with farming communities! These are just some of the capabilities within DPI's new Rural Resilience Program (RRP) which includes a team of rural resilience officers and rural support workers.

Liane Corocher, senior rural resilience officer, says the new Rural Resilience Program will work within farming communities to achieve short and longer-term outcomes that will keep farmers connected, help them to be more viable and build on their existing levels of personal and business resilience.

'Having a team spread across the state with such diverse backgrounds and experiences, means we are able to work directly with farming communities and provide them with a wide range of services and activities,' said Liane.

The rural resilience team can help farming families by:

- » Creating opportunities to connect with others in farming communities as well as connecting with support services.
- » Providing information, tools and development opportunities that build skills, knowledge and experience.
- » Supporting families while recovering from adverse events and helping prepare for the future.
- » Listening to farming needs and issues and communicating these to policy makers.

'Building resilience means learning how to bounce forward through adversities by being prepared and able to make better decisions across *all* aspects of farming life—now and into the future,' explained Liane.

For more information about the Rural Resilience Program or to get involved, contact your nearest rural resilience officer or rural support worker.

Rural resilience officers:

- » **Total:** Liane Corocher (coordinator)
0427 188 643
liane.corocher@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- » **Bourke:** Sarah Goulden
0418 113 781
sarah.goulden@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- » **Coffs Harbour:** Jen Haberecht
0400 160 287
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- » **Goulburn:** Ted O'Kane
0427 781 514
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- » **Hay:** Danny Byrnes
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Rural support workers

- » **Walgett:** Robyn Walters
0438 082 731
robyn.walters@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- » **Broken Hill:** Ellen Day
0427 639 761
ellen.day@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- » **Dubbo:** James Leigo
0419 110 714
james.leigo@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- » **Scone:** Caroline Hayes
0407 971 675
caroline.hayes@dpi.nsw.gov.au





11 things I want my daughters to know

Nel Hunter, Young

1. Don't miss the detail When you live mindfully, everyday has a new surprise and you live in wonder of what a truly incredible journey we are all on. (I mean it, STOP and have a good look around...)

2. Notice the zone Follow the signs that are all around us and discover where there is a lovely flow in your life.

3. Know yourself Know what agrees with your body's health, know what you love to do and do what you are interested in as much as you can. Know how to get yourself to sleep, to motivate yourself and how to set and achieve the goals that make you shine. Get to know how to be a loving person and accept nothing less than high quality, respectful, glorious love from others.

4. Be thick skinned and warm-hearted Rise above any negativity, jealousy, bullying on any level or criticism. Get on with being the best version of you. And if you don't know what that is yet, visualise your highest potential and move towards that.

5. Set a daily intention This simple act of deciding at the start of the day how you want to be, is very powerful. Set a theme for the day such as, 'Today I will be thoughtful or funny or peaceful or mindful or grateful or encouraging or focused or full of energy'. We have more power over the flow of our day than we realise.

6. Be emotionally strong Know your emotions and watch your responses to the uncomfortable feelings, for example, making a different choice from everyone else can feel uncomfortable. Saying 'no' when everyone

else is saying 'yes' to something you don't really want to do takes courage. The way I look at it—others have to hear a 'no' from you at some point, otherwise you become a slave to other people's agendas by continually giving them a 'yes', just so you can feel part of the crowd and not feel uncomfortable. In the long run, people respect those strong enough to be unique individuals.

7. Be prepared to do what it takes It is common to hear, 'Do what you love.' I say it all the time. The reality though, is that every job has good parts and not so good parts. If the rubbish doesn't get taken out, the environment stinks! Take the good with the bad. Note: This doesn't apply to relationships. There should never be a bad side, just good, great and greater ways to love. Don't settle for someone whose values and standards are ordinary. Find someone who is shining like you!

8. Be grateful The happiest people I know love what they have, who they spend time with and what they do. It is gratitude that makes life abundant. It is wonderful to strive to know more, be more, have more, but until we appreciate how we have been blessed today, life is lived in a constant state of longing and discontent. Find the balance between drive and satisfaction.

9. Be true to yourself This advice was given to me on my wedding day 23 years ago. I didn't quite understand what my aunts meant but the words stayed with me. I believe we all have a wonderful strong inner core and it is full of love, potential, joy, peace and freedom. It quietly speaks to us and

guides us forward. Ignoring our true self is exhausting. Explore what 'being true to yourself' means to you.

10. Know that the power to live a great life is in your own hands Find solutions, seek the information you need to feel confident, intelligent, beautiful, thoughtful and motivated. You have as much right as the next person to embrace these characteristics and be a fabulous version of you.

11. Make mistakes Finally, make mistakes, push your boundaries, put lots of effort in and give things a try. Be curious, hungry to learn and patient when you can't work it out. Don't expect to have it all worked out yet; push through a bad day because tomorrow could be the best day of your life. Make sure the people giving you advice in your life, including me, are trying every day to be a good person too... and if you forget all of this remember one piece of advice; be a good person, a kind-hearted person who is striving for both inner and outer harmony. The world needs as much peace as we can muster.

Nel Hunter is mother to four daughters, a farmer's wife and a Dru Meditation teacher. Visit www.nelhunter.blogspot.com.au

We are awake

No room for negativity
It never helps
No room for criticism
It doesn't encourage.
No room for complaining
It keeps you stuck.
No room for worry
It designs a hopeless future.

Gently thank the concerns
They are only trying to protect you
Turn them away
They are not needed anymore.
It is time to live for today.

Now there is space for light
And love and beauty and vision,
For goals and trying and effort and hope.
A place where failure is just an
opportunity for growth,
A place where each new day
Is a beautiful opportunity to realise

We are awake
We are alive
We are wise
We are not alone
We are capable of great things
We have arrived.

A vale for Faith: political activist and writer

The highly regarded political activist and writer Faith Bandler AC, died aged 96, on 13 February 2015, leaving a lasting legacy.

Faith was a rural woman who reinvented herself many times and this short tribute touches on some of her momentous accomplishments, acknowledging the huge contribution she made to Australian society and in particular Aboriginal people.

Faith grew up in a farm near Tumbulgum, a village on the Tweed River, near Murwillumbah in northern NSW.

Her mother had Scottish and Indian heritage and her father was kidnapped from an island in Vanuatu to work in the Queensland cane fields before escaping. Her father died when Faith was just five years old.

After finishing school, Faith moved to Sydney, where she was employed as a dressmaker's apprentice.

During World War II she served in the Women's Land Army. It was during this time that Faith realised the land girls were underpaid and the Aboriginal farm workers were even worse off.

Faith's life of activism began soon after this when she set out to help set up the Aboriginal Australian Fellowship and the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

In 1952, Faith married Hans Bandler, a Jewish refugee from Austria, who had spent time in Nazi camps. They lived in Sydney.

Faith was an accomplished public speaker and addressed hundreds of meetings at churches, schools, clubs, trade unions and local councils.

She was a key activist in the 1960s campaign to grant citizenship rights to Indigenous people, which culminated in the 'yes' vote

in the historic 1967 referendum, granting Aboriginal Australians the long awaited right to vote.

In the 1970s Faith became a published author of many books while maintaining an active political life.

She helped establish the influential Women's Electoral Lobby, the Australian South Sea Islanders National Council and the Australian Republican Movement.

In 1994, she received an honorary doctorate from Macquarie University in recognition of her achievements. Faith was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2009 and was a recipient of the Human Rights Medal.

A truly remarkable and respected rural woman, who soared above her humble beginnings to make an enduring mark on Australia's history.

Faith Bandler AC—we thank you.

REX regional woman of the year

The NSW Women of the Year Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of women and celebrate their significant achievements. The new REX Regional Woman of the Year category shines the spotlight on women who have had a significant impact on areas which are particularly important to rural communities.

Barbara Cowley, REX Regional Woman of the Year winner, helps young women in the Hunter Valley develop their own personal worth, strength and purpose through a group mentoring and personal development program called SHINE.

SHINE aims to help young women realise their potential and prevent problems such as drug and alcohol abuse.

Barbara became a volunteer with the program in 2013 and, realising its far-reaching potential, a dedicated fundraiser shortly after. In 2014, in lieu of regular birthday celebrations, Barbara created a new fundraising event called ShineWALK180.

Over seven days she walked 180 km from Cessnock to a suburb in Sydney's north. The distance represented the 180-degree turnaround she saw in the lives of women

and girls who attended the program. The \$27 000 she raised has helped expand the program throughout the Hunter region. From an initial goal of supporting 10 Hunter girls, Barbara has raised enough funding for 385 girls and women to shine. She will repeat the walk in June this year.

Barbara also volunteers her time with Father Chris Riley's Youth Off the Streets reading program and has organised women's empowerment nights in the Hunter Valley.

She recently arranged the breast cancer awareness event Unite to Fight, as well as a pop-up shop to provide care baskets to women undergoing breast care treatment in local hospitals. Barbara is also on the Maitland City Carols organising committee; the event attracts more than 5000 people annually from across the region.

Barbara is driven by her desire and her belief that the Hunter Valley can, and will be, a location that really encourages and facilitates women to SHINE.

More information

www.women.nsw.gov.au





For things to change, I must change

Sarah Goulden, Bourke

'For things to change, I must change,' is a saying my mother constantly spoke while I was growing up. My father used to say to me from a young age that I worried so much, I'd give myself an ulcer before I was 10 years old!

I had a lot to learn growing up. I was born an identical twin, which meant if I wasn't being constantly compared to my sister, I was considered exactly the same as her. I took all of this to heart and decided as a teenager to forge my own identity and to strive to be recognised on my own merits.

I went to an all-girls school and quickly realised that being popular wasn't what was really important. What was important to me was to be well respected amongst my peers. This led to my first honour of being appointed school vice-captain.

After I left school, I deferred university for a year to work in a well-regarded law firm. I went on to study interior design, before switching promptly to landscape architecture. I was drawn to the idea of designing with

living elements within the built environment for the benefit of entire communities and in shared public places.

I met my first husband at this time and left university to work in his third-generation family manufacturing business. This provided many fantastic opportunities and I learnt a great deal about financial and project management, networking and marketing.

I enjoyed the work, yet I worried incessantly about issues that women in their 20's can be prone to think about. Did I please everyone, all of the time? Did everyone like me? Did I have the material things in place which measured success? I knew deep in my core that these things weren't really important, but I felt stuck and confused—I guess I was out of balance. The issue of succession planning within the family business arose at this time so my husband and I decided to gain clarity about our future by taking time to travel overseas.

India was our first stop and we stayed for six months. Seeing real poverty first-hand, we realised how resilient people can be in the face of adversity. It was then that I became truly aware and thankful for the opportunities, family support and education I'd been able to access so readily.

Travelling changed my outlook on life. I learnt that the little issues that I'd worried about for many years really were inconsequential. I was healthy and had shelter. I was blessed to live in a country where the world was truly my oyster and opportunities are plentiful.

From India I flew to Ireland to work for 12 months, running an estate for a wealthy businessman and becoming immersed in a world of prestige and material wealth. The stark contrast was unbelievable. On one hand, I'd seen people with nothing, who were generous of spirit, harmoniously connected to each other, and extremely resourceful, compared with another, so absorbed with material wealth, disconnected from community and mean spirited. The experience helped me to rediscover my core values and realise that materialism, prestige and money were definitely not high on my list of priorities.

The overseas travel had done its job and provided me with new perspectives. However, on returning to Australia, it was difficult for my husband and I to find how and where we fitted in, or if we fitted together anymore. I felt totally lost. I was directionless and my marriage was fading fast. I became anxious, depressed and completely aimless for the first time in my life.

I have always harboured a deep affinity with the far Western NSW landscape, so it made sense for me to return and seek solace with my wise and attentive grandmother in the Outback. After a short time of good old-fashioned clarity and care I decided to get on with life and went to work in Bourke as a rural financial counsellor, a position I held for seven years.

At 32 my marriage was over, my compass broken (but somehow still pointing North), my old life stripped away and a new uncertain future was before me. There were many tears and much angst during this period of huge change, but I slowly managed to open up, seek advice and guidance, and develop some strategies which still to this day assist me when I feel life getting out of balance. Relaxation, a good internal dialogue and clear, calm, communication are key methods which enable me to live a happy life.

Now, in my late 30's, I have come into my own and I have a greater awareness of who I am. I am better skilled at using my strengths and focus on improving areas I am not naturally gifted in. I am excited to have recently been appointed to a new position with DPI as a rural resilience officer. I am passionate about continuing to assist rural communities through connectedness and capacity building and understand first-hand the importance of friendship and support, belonging, sharing stories and being heard.

I am engaged to be married to the most wonderfully creative and talented man and have four fantastic step-children. We are currently gearing up for our third winter season of Poetry on a Plate, which caters to tourists at Kidman's Camp North Bourke, three nights a week. We have purchased a 100-year-old bluestone convent in the Central West. We have plans to renovate this unique building at some stage but in the meantime we are building an extension to our lovely little cottage in Bourke.

I have learnt to accept things that I can't change. I stick to a routine where possible but have worked hard at being much more flexible when things don't go to plan. I take time out and practice mindfulness, which is immeasurably beneficial for me... and I try to incorporate daily exercise into my life (one thing I have to accept I am not that good at). Importantly, I choose to be a positive!

When I become aware that life is starting to get a little out of balance, I remember those words my mother spoke so often... 'For things to change, I must change.'

Uplift bra collection

Suzette Gaff, Newcastle

Ever thrown out an old bra? Next time think again before you bin it—your old bra could bring comfort and dignity to women in disadvantaged communities across Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

The Uplift Project collects and distributes new and second-hand bras, as well as swimmers and brand new knickers, to women in disadvantaged communities, who often forgo the comfort, support and dignity of a bra due to a lack of availability and the high cost (when bras are available they can cost 10–30 hours' wages).

This year, NSW Trade and Investment business development manager, Suzette Gaff, arranged a collection in the Lower Hunter area which resulted in over 1000 bras and knickers from friends, family and colleagues, more than doubling the 400 she collected the previous year.

'I get so much pleasure from being able to help other women get something we take for granted,' Suzette said.

'The project is easy to be a part of and is a great incentive to clean out your cupboards! The great thing about these donations is that there is no deduction for administration.'

The Uplift Project has drop off locations throughout NSW (and Australia) and from there the bras are sent to women in the South Pacific, the Philippines and Indigenous communities across Australia. Some of the Hunter collection have been sent to Nepal with a medical team.

If you would like to run a bra drive collection or wish to donate bras (or maybe make a donation to help meet the costs of freighting the bras to overseas) visit the Uplift Project website at www.upliftbras.org



A new pathway to health

Sheila Henley, West Wyalong

I am a farmer's wife and have lived for the past 34 years in Ungarie—a small farming community of 300 people in Central West NSW. I want to share with you what led me to open my business—evolving from a farmer's wife to a Clinical Hypnotherapist—and how my life has changed in the last 11 years beyond my children leaving home.

Twelve years ago, knowing the last of our three children would soon leave home to study or work, I knew I would have more time on my hands. At that time I was working with children at our local school as a teacher's aide, however the hours were dwindling. We were in our second year of a drought which continued for 10 years.

I always felt deep inside that I wanted to make a difference in some way. I also wanted to improve our own health and income. With this in mind I purchased a motivational CD program. The program required that I listen to a CD each day for the next 30 days. Within a month two major opportunities arose.

I read an advertisement seeking volunteer phone counsellors for suicide prevention. At the end of the second training weekend I rang the counsellor to say I didn't think I could do it. Much to my horror he told me the roster was in the mail and I had a month to get my head around it. I was on the roster several times a month for the next six years—an experience that was not only rewarding but life changing.

The other opportunity saw me become an independent franchisee promoting a nutritional product. At the time I was thinking of it for family members, but then my husband and I decided that although we were quite healthy we didn't want to wait for something life threatening to happen to us to make a change—we were already under stress from the drought, which I know can impact your health in many ways. I started travelling and attended markets and expos sharing the product. I attended

yearly conferences and learnt more and more about the importance of our health. One thing that will always stand out to me was when a doctor shared the information that if we have long-term stress, we have an 80 per cent chance of getting some type of disease within two years!

Flying to Sydney for conferences, staying in motels and finding my way around the city was certainly challenging for someone from a country town, but I found the city people very helpful and I enjoyed the new feeling of independence.

I soon realised the importance of working with people to enhance their health and wellbeing and decided to get a formal qualification so I could open a business, working one-on-one with people, closer to home. I attended several courses and then studied a Diploma of Clinical Hypnotherapy. I travelled to Sydney for two intensive 10-day block study programs and the rest of the course was completed online. I found I enjoyed the distance learning as I could go about it at my own pace in amongst the rest of my life.

In January 2011 I opened my business and made my dream of working with people to improve their health and wellbeing a reality—I guess you could say I reinvented myself, rising out of the ashes and overcoming adversity to achieve my dream. A few years ago I never would have thought in a million years that I would become a clinical hypnotherapist. From my experience, I can now definitely say that there is certainly life after kids.

If you want to make changes and see life through new eyes, I suggest you write down five areas you would like to change in your life. Write down what is stopping you from achieving those goals and then write down what it is you can do to make changes toward achieving them. Visualise yourself as though you have achieved your goals now and remember, one step at a time.



Turning over a new leaf

Peita Handel, Blue Mountains

At the beginning of the working week I would slip a peppermint scented gum leaf into my pocket, its honest aroma instantly bringing me home as I travelled. When I got to work my leaf would be pressed flat on my desk and by midweek, its crumpled scentless shell a beautiful, but raw reminder it didn't want to be here anymore.

I had been working in Sydney for six years, returning to my home in the Blue Mountains a couple of times a week. My work was varied and engaging, offering the swift productive pace my internal rhythm both valued and had grown accustomed to. Stepping off the train with the city residue still clinging to me, I would enter an entirely different pace when I came home; ordering coffee at the station café was stalled by chit chats at the front of the line, highlighting my need to just get my transaction done. It was this dissonance between the collective pace in the mountains and my own, that made me realise, I didn't really belong here yet.

Rolling out yoga mats is when I would truly arrive home. 'Sounds like your rock'n'roll lifestyle supports what you really want to do,' a perceptive student shared with me once. She was right, whilst a part of me valued the city world, underneath I could feel my rhythm slowing down, longing for its place in the landscape here. Teaching women yoga was what I really loved to do, along with writing—these were my first loves. The only time and energy I had to teach yoga however, culminated in just one class a week, the rest of the week I was in the city.

The women in my class were so thirsty for connection with their bodies, their babies and each other. They stretched, restored, laughed and soaked up the goodness yoga offered up each week, helping them navigate their journey through pregnancy and into motherhood. Looking back, I guess I was yearning for connection too, so yoga became the touchstone for cultivating a balanced life in the Blue Mountains.

It wasn't until the bushfires in the Blue Mountains in 2013 that I really decided to let go of my career in Sydney and completely build my life at home.

I remember catching the train to the city, the air in Katoomba was thick with smoke and unnerving community concern was spreading with it. When I got to Central Station I was one of a few who reeked of smoke, which hung in my hair and clothes all day. Whilst the smell flagged the loss of bushland and homes, it was also a thin grey thread that stitched me to home. For the first time I felt a deep connection with my community, stretching from mountains to city. Sitting on the train on the way home among perfume smells and iPod noise, I realised I didn't fit into my city life anymore. I needed to make some changes.

I let go of my job and the security it offered; the predictable income, the holiday pay, the sick pay and the super. Working for myself instead, I began really investing in teaching yoga to women in my local community and writing from home.

Over the past year Muma Yoga has blossomed, providing five growing yoga classes for women; pregnancy yoga, mums and bubs yoga, general classes for women and more recently I have started private yoga sessions from my garden studio.

Not only has the last year of change meant I've finally been able to plant roots at home by living and working here, but I've also built a business I love that is supporting local women's health.

It's interesting where your inspiration for change can come from. My new goals for 2015 were inspired by women dancing at a feisty New Year's Eve party in the Kanimbla Valley. With a small group of friends I went to the valley to start the year 'away from it all.' This place is half an hour from Katoomba (close in distance but different in lifestyle)

and has called my husband and I before, to join lovely locals in stunning farmland with a sausage sandwich and a bonfire.

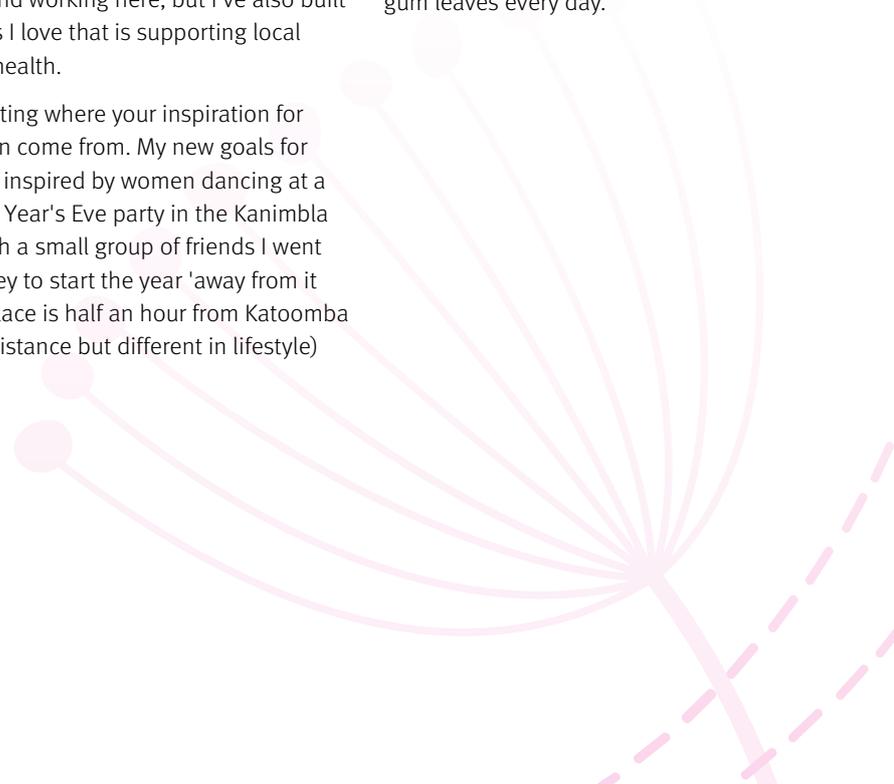
Dancing in their boots amidst the dust I wondered about these women living here, and then women further away in more remote areas of Australia. What did rural women do for fun, for work? What happens when they are pregnant—what services can they access to support their journey as they become mothers? Resilient, strong and free spirited, these women were dancing up a dust storm. I danced too, to music I hadn't heard before, with people who harboured an internal rhythm closer to the pulse of the landscape than mine.

My plan this year is to extend my yoga business beyond my local area and provide women in rural areas with practical online yoga guidance throughout pregnancy and into the journey of motherhood.

Women in rural and remote areas may not have access to yoga classes, especially during pregnancy. Or they may not have considered the benefits yoga can offer during this special time. I'd like to see yoga flourish in the lives of rural women.

What does 'a new you' have in store for you? If you're considering making changes this year, start by being honest with yourself; listen to when you feel most happy and notice when you are not your best. Start small and build slowly; little changes can be more achievable than big ones, and they can also form a stable foundation for further changes ahead. Use your networks—the richest source of strength and inspiration resides in the women around you.

As for the new me, I now get to pick fresh gum leaves every day.



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There are 7 days in a week: 'Someday' is not one of them

Lisa Green, Career and Life Matters, Bathurst

What do you really want in life? It seems like such a simple question. However, many of us take more time planning what we will eat for dinner than we do sitting down to plan how we would like our life to be like in 12 months' time, three years' time or five years' time. So many of us go through life not really certain of what it is we really want and instead settle for mediocre. Others remain stuck due to fear, negative beliefs or complacency. It's interesting that we are so much better at knowing and stating what we don't want. How much time have you really taken to decide and focus on what you actually want?

I recently spoke with a friend about goal setting and they told me that in their experience it was a waste of time. They had been setting goals for 10 years and achieved none of them. As we explored this further it became apparent that the issue was more about the need for a clear purpose and direction. A meaningful why?

Think of anyone you have admired in your life. Didn't they just seem to know what they stood for. Yet many people have little idea of what they truly value. If we are not clear about what is most important to us in our lives then how can we experience the satisfaction of achieving fulfillment and satisfaction?

Goals are NOT wishes. They require action. If you continue wishing, waiting and hoping for things to change then things will usually remain the same. Sometimes goals are made without the person being truly clear about what they really want. As women, we often worry about what others expect of us. Or we get caught up in self-talk about what is the 'right' thing to do. The clearer your direction in life, the more likely it is you will achieve what you want. And the

more quickly you will achieve it!

The flip side is that when we are not clear about where we are going, we either end up staying exactly where we are or making a choice out of desperation. When you know what you stand for and what is most important to you, the decision making and goal setting becomes effortless.

Right now is a great moment to list all of your 'someday I'll's'. They are the ideas and experiences that you often find yourself thinking or talking about doing 'someday'. Is it learning the piano, starting your own business, taking a sea change? I'd love for you to share them in a journal and then find the courage to share them with your friends and family.

As I enter my third year in my life and career coaching business, I am about to change another of my very own 'someday I'll' into reality. In 2016 I will be taking a ladies only group to Vietnam for an amazing life changing travel experience and my Eat Cake and Have It Too inspiring workshop for women. And I now have Paris booked in for Spring the following year. Are all the details clear and perfect? Absolutely not! Although the wheels are now in motion and my excitement will ensure momentum and action. It truly is amazing to step outside your comfort zone, feel the fear, and just do it.

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved." JEREMY KITSON

So what are you waiting for? What would you like to truly achieve?





Above left: Former Tocal students, Margo and Bruce Duncan, making hay at Boambee East, Seaham. Bottom left: Former Tocal graduate Lisa Nies, who has had a prosperous agricultural career.

Tocal celebrates 50 years

Maria Cameron, Tocal College

Tocal College will celebrate 50 years of providing education on the Tocal property at Paterson in the Hunter Valley later this year.

The College, which was first established by the Presbyterian Church as the CB Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College, has grown to become one of Australia's largest and most diverse agricultural colleges.

The College's operation was transferred to the NSW Department of Agriculture in 1970 and it continues to be operated by the NSW Government through the Department of Primary Industries.

In 2006 the original College was consolidated with the former Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture to form Tocal College and it now delivers programs throughout NSW.

Tocal has gained an enviable reputation in agricultural education, with a particular focus on farming and land management. It currently provides training, including skills recognition, in around 20 courses, turning out up to 400 graduates each year.

The College plans to celebrate its 50th anniversary through a number of activities, including a Back to Tocal weekend on 25–26 July. It will be an opportunity for past staff and students, as well as industry and community members to visit Tocal and renew friendships and acquaintances.

Principal of Tocal College, Dr Cameron Archer, said, 'The celebration of 50 years is important for the College but also for the local and wider community who have been so supportive of the College for the past 50 years. We are keen

to open the doors and gates of the College and farm for all to see during the July Back to Tocal weekend.'

Former students Margo Duncan and Lisa Nies will be joining Tocal College's 50 year celebrations in July. Here they each share their memories of their time as students at Tocal and reflect on how it has helped to shape their futures.

Margo Duncan

Margo Duncan is a Hunter Valley beef cattle producer, business woman and explosives expert who has had an unusual but successful career path.

For Margo and her husband, Bruce, their focus of the past 40 years has not wavered, 'Set realistic goals and everything is achievable, and as a result, the work we do is far more fulfilling.'

The couple's successful partnership began when the pair met at Tocal Agricultural College in the early 1970s. Hailing from Seaham on the Williams River, they married soon after college, with Margo first working on local dairy farms and then for stock and station agents.

In the 1980s while building up a small beef cattle enterprise, the Duncan's set about creating off-farm income streams. The first enterprise was a pump and irrigation equipment business in Raymond Terrace, which won a best exhibit award at the Tocal Field Days. They then established their own drilling, blasting and earthmoving business, diversifying into the manufacture of explosive

storage facilities and long-haul explosives transport, supplying coal mines, quarries and earthmovers.

The explosives business grew Australia-wide to become a national concern. Margo became a shot-firer, sitting on the Department of Mineral Resources shot-firer's examiners board and later working with Australian Standards to revise explosive storage facilities.

Following the sale of parts of their explosives business Margo and Bruce have had time to concentrate on their ultimate goal—developing their Seaham farm and cattle herd. After numerous property acquisitions, they now manage 1000 hectares on the Williams River, running 450 Angus breeders supplying the local vealer market, backgrounders and re-stockers.

Now Tocal Advisory Council chair, Margo believes the college gave her an excellent grounding for the future.

'I had no experience with farming or animals but knew this was where I wanted to work. At Tocal, my confidence soared and I found that the problems we all face are not as difficult as they appear—there are always ways to overcome them, set goals and get on with life,' Margo said.

'Now our family motto is "work hard, live life"; which translates to instilling good work ethics in our children and grandchildren, then reaping the benefits of achieving your goals.'

Lisa Nies

Graduating from Tocal in 1981, Lisa has worked all over the state in every branch of agriculture imaginable. It's not surprising with her impressive skill base and education that she is now a highly experienced agricultural researcher and analyst.



Lisa's career began with the Forestry Commission of NSW at Taree. 'Travelling to all places west and north of Buladelah, recording forest plot data, was interesting work, particularly as the only female in the team. It was character building—they were a great bunch of blokes to work with and always ready with plenty of advice!'

Upon leaving Forestry, Lisa and a college friend set off to gain a variety of agricultural experience working in piggeries, dairies, showing cattle, horses, poultry, and trying out horticulture and viticulture. Finally, they arrived in Tamworth, working for a cattle fitter attending shows and sales.

'As is bound to happen, we finally met our life partners on the show circuit.'

Lisa married Brett Nies, settling initially at Winton near Tamworth. Life certainly did not slow down from there. They raised three young jackaroos—Cam, Lach and Deacon—who assist with opportunity cropping, trading steers and running a small Santa Gertrudis stud. They have since relocated to Limbri where they now run White Dorpers. Lisa has also found time to complete a Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture and very nearly a Masters through Sydney University.

Recently, Lisa was involved in research work with NSW DPI working on salinity, farming systems and hydrology projects—work she found challenging but rewarding. Lisa is currently employed by East West, a Tamworth-based firm carrying out soil, plant, water and resource testing and analysis, and consultation for agricultural, environmental and geo-technic applications all over Australia.

'Tocal has helped me establish an interesting and varied career in ag and given me the opportunity to work with a great group of people.'

More information

For information on Tocal College's 50th Anniversary celebrations contact Robyn Papworth on 02 4939 8865.

For more on Tocal College and courses offered visit www.tocal.nsw.edu.au. You can also join TocalCollege on Facebook.

Gather in the Glen! Women for all seasons, 9-11 October 2015

Glen Innes in the Northern Tablelands is well known for its beautiful scenery, world heritage wilderness areas and rainforests, commercial and stud livestock production, Celtic heritage and four distinctive seasons.

Gather in the Glen: Women for all Seasons will be held at the picturesque grounds of the Glen Innes Showground. The committee have planned a unique event to highlight current rural issues and showcase the district's rural and business enterprises, ensuring you will experience a weekend rich in educational, cultural, and social opportunities, and leave feeling renewed and inspired.

A selection of educational and interactive workshops and tours will be offered including a bus trip to Rangers Valley Feedlot, a Historical Glen Innes tour, a visit to a local art gallery, followed by a pottery workshop, and a Gardens of the New England tour.

You will be entertained and come away inspired with a fantastic array of guest speakers including:

Jean Kittson

One of Australia's best known and most popular comedians, Jean is a multi-talented performer and writer who earned national fame through ABC TV's *The Big Gig*. She starred in *Flat Chat*, was a regular guest on *Good News Week* and *The Glasshouse* and a presenter on ABC's *Media Dimensions*. Recently Jean has become a regular guest on ABC TV's *The Einstein Factor* and Channel 7's *The Morning Show*.

Michael Crossland

Having defied the odds by beating a life-threatening cancer, Michael has gone on to build his life of exceptional achievements. In the last 12 months he has presented in front of over 250 000 people around the globe. Along with his award-winning program about his life on *Australian Story*, Michael recently featured in a humanitarian documentary about the countless lives saved through his orphanage and school in Haiti.



Georgina Dent

A journalist and passionate advocate for gender equality, Georgina is the editor of *Women's Agenda*. She began her career as a lawyer before following her passion into journalism. Georgina is a regular television commentator and public speaker regarding women's advancement in the workplace and gender equality. In March 2014 she was recognised as a Journalist of the Year finalist in the inaugural Women's Empowerment Journalism Awards in Singapore.

Mary Coustas

Logie Award-winning actor, comedian and writer, Mary is better known as her alter ego Effie. Mary is the star of *Out of Work*, *Acropolis Now*, *Wogarama*, *Hercules Returns* and *Greeks on the Roof*, to name but a few. An icon of Australian comedy, she has won two awards for Best Comedy Performer, a Logie Award as voted by the Australian public and a Variety Heart Award from her industry peers. She is one of Australia's best-loved character actors and comics. Her new show, *A Corporate Date with Effie*, is sure to lighten up any corporate event as she shares her views on selling yourself in a dog-eat-dog world, pursuing what you desire and closing the deal in her inimitable style.

More information

Program and registration information will be available from the event website in May. The full program will also be found in the next issue of *The Country Web*.

- » Visit the website at www.glenrac.org.au/gather-in-the-glen.php
- » Like Gather in the Glen on Facebook
- » Email gatherintheglen@gmail.com
- » Glen Innes Visitors Information are online at www.gleninnestourism.com or phone 02 6730 2400

Parenting: 10 things extraordinary parents say to their kids

Nathan Hulls, teen behaviour expert

These 10 things are extremely simple but so extraordinarily powerful in the setting of supporting and nurturing your children as they grow. If you want to make a huge difference in your young person's world and equip and empower them to become all that they can be—use these every day:

1. Here's what I'm thinking

You're in charge, but that doesn't mean you're more important or more powerful than everyone else. Back up your statements and decisions—give reasons and justify with logic, not with position or authority. While taking the time to explain your decisions opens these decisions up to discussion or criticism, it also opens up your decisions to improvement. Authority can make you 'right' but collaboration makes everyone right, and makes everyone pull together.

2. I was wrong

As a parent it's not your job to be 'right' all the time. If you're strong enough to admit when you're wrong, your child will learn to do the same.

Young people model the behaviours of trusted parents, so to expect them to act differently to the way you act is insanity. The old adage, 'Do as I say and not as I do' is almost like Einstein's definition of insanity: *Doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results.*

A sign of low levels or lack of resilience in young people is the inability, or lack of desire, to try something they've never done before for fear of failure. We need to teach children that it is empowering to fail, and that there is no failure, only feedback. To redefine failure as feedback empowers your child to have a go without fear of getting things wrong.

3. That was awesome

Praise is unfortunately one of the last things on our minds when it comes to young people. Growing up, one of the words a child hears more than any other is 'No!'.

A research study showed that the average one-year-old hears the word no more than 400 times a day! Toddlers, from all cultures and across all timelines, learn what to do by constantly being told what not to do. Then they grow up. So, by the time they hit the workforce, even if they are very positive, energetic and optimistically focused individuals, they are probably speaking with negative language throughout each day without even knowing it!

Make it a habit to praise your kids even for the smallest of things. Even when reprimanding or correcting them, get used to using the sandwich technique: praise, correction, praise.

4. Please and Thank-You!

It's amazing how many young people I work with don't know about manners. This again comes back to modelling. Your children are not your slaves and they're not an exception to the rule. Every time you ask your child to do something, whether part of their chores or not, say please. And when they complete the task, say thank you and then praise them.

This is not dependent upon how you feel, what kind of day you've had, how they've been acting for the past 24 hours. Manners should be a non-negotiable.

5. Can you help me?

There are two reasons for saying this to your children. The first is that by including your children in solving a problem or completing a task you cannot do on your own, you're showing them that we all require the assistance of the people around us and life goes better when you work in collaboration. The second is teaching them that it is okay to ask for help.

As the trusted parent in your child's life they look up to you and see you as the 'all-knowing, all-powerful, giver of life'. So for them to hear you say that you also need help, that you can't do everything on your own, will

give them permission to do the same. Don't get trapped in the lie that you need to pretend to have it together all the time.

6. I'm Sorry!

We all make mistakes, so we all have things we need to apologise for: words; actions; omissions; failing to step up. Say you're sorry and mean it! And never follow an apology with a disclaimer like, 'But I was really mad, because...' or 'But I did think you were...' or any statement that in any way places even the smallest amount of blame back on the other person.

Don't justify your actions—take responsibility for them and you will show your children how to do the same. Say you're sorry, say why you're sorry, and take all the blame. No less. Then you both get to make a fresh start.

7. Can you show me?

Advice is temporary; knowledge is forever. Knowing what to do helps, but knowing how or why to do something means everything.

The levels of learning are as follows:

- » 10 per cent of what we read
- » 20 per cent of what we hear
- » 30 per cent of what we see
- » 50 per cent of what we hear and see
- » 70% of what we say and write
- » 90 per cent of what we say and do

Even though you may not really need your child to teach you what they have been learning when you ask to be taught or shown something by them, several things happen as a result: you show you respect the young person giving the advice and you show you trust their knowledge, skill, and insight.

By having your child teach you, you're reinforcing their learning and the knowledge will stick much better.

8. Can I help you?

As parents we are often quick to jump in with assistance to 'help' our children, but often it's more because we feel they're not doing a good enough job, or we don't have the patience to watch them struggling with the task at hand. My belief behind including this is more as a display of support than it is anything to do with the young person doing a 'better job'.



By making yourself available to your child early on in their life they will grow up knowing you are always there for them. This however does not give you permission to hover around their every move, to fix every problem or address every situation for them. Simply make sure they know that you are there and you are available if they ever need your help.

9. I love you!

One of the strongest universal needs of human beings is love.

The Budapest Early Intervention Project (BEIP), a project that examined the health and development of children in Romanian orphanages, found startling evidence that when infants and children are starved of love and affection, their bodies do not grow as they should.

Make this number the rule, not the exception—you cannot overdose your children with love. Don't assume that because you do stuff for them (in love) that they will automatically know or understand that you love them—tell them everyday that you love them!

10. Say nothing

Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing. If you're upset, frustrated, or angry, stay quiet. You may think venting will make you feel better, but it never does. This is especially true where your children are concerned. Circumstances come and go, but words can shape our world forever.

Before you speak, spend more time considering how your words can impact on your children and how they think and feel. You are responsible for creating the way your child sees the world and that is what ultimately will set them up for success in their lifetime. Be quiet until you know exactly what to say—and exactly what effect your words will have.

More information

For more audio content, articles and tips on how to engage, inspire and empower your children visit www.nathanhulls.com

Fifty acres

Jo Scard, Bellmount Forest

When I started my creative agency just over four years ago, I promised my then six-year-old daughter that I'd be able to drop her off and pick her up from school most days and would definitely be working less. Before that I'd spent the previous three years as a senior ministerial adviser, at times working 18 hours a day—not a great work-life balance.

So I'd had enough. On announcing the big decision to start my own business and work from home on my farm to help me achieve the ultimate work-life nirvana, my daughter responded matter-of-factly, 'That's good Mummy, we didn't see very much of you in the last few years.' Not a glowing endorsement as a Mummy! You won't be surprised to know that like every other mum I haven't exactly got to my nirvana yet, but I've sure managed to get a lot closer.

Making the decision to start my own business from a remote farm hasn't been simple. I've faced my share of challenges, but at the end of the day, one of the best things about working from home in a rural community is seeing my kids after school.

I created my business out of my strong desire to work with not-for-profits that inspired me. Despite the agency being remotely based we've become a leader in our field, working alongside some of Australia's best-known not-for-profit brands and corporates.

I've overcome the challenges of working from a remote area by getting involved with some great network and media organisations, including Women's Agenda, Business Chicks, Australian Businesswomen's Network and sitting on the Board of the Australian Women Chamber of Commerce. It's been a two-way street, allowing me to connect with other like-minded business women all over the country, while contributing my expertise back to these groups. We now put on our own free webinars for the not-for-profit sector, the Fifty Acres Academy.

I now have a team of eight women working with me and I am pleased to say distance has never been a barrier for them—half of them mothers themselves, who all work flexibly from their homes.



After I co-authored *The Working Mother's Survival Guide* with Melissa Doyle a few years ago it was absolutely clear that flexible work was the single biggest barrier standing in the way of work-life balance for women. I vowed when I set up Fifty Acres that I'd be entirely flexible and virtual, even down to our bookkeeper—and I'm proud to say I've stuck to it and the business has grown as a result.

To make it all work we make use of online technologies, including online project management tools, teleconferencing and Skype to communicate with staff and clients and it also means we can keep overheads low as a result.

I'm proud too of the recognition and multiple awards gathered along the way because of our innovative work model. But running the business from a rural area has also meant that small logistical details—like mail deliveries—are slow to work their way to the office. But even out of this challenge I've developed a close community relationship with the local country post office owner, who offers me a cup of tea when I pop in to collect the mail, or who calls to let us know that an important package has arrived.

My parting thought for business women getting started in remote communities—back yourself, make the leap and just do it—you will be surprised at how successful you will be and annoyed that you didn't do it earlier!

Against all odds

Pam Kensit, Crookwell

In August 1990 a tote commenced in the local pub at Kinsalebeg, County Waterford, Ireland. Simultaneously, an unofficial tote was waged in Narrawa, NSW, Australia. I was completely oblivious to the interest my marriage and departure for Australia had generated in both locations. The Irish odds gave me six months, the Australian a year.

Twenty-five years on I know it was love (almost at first encounter) when fate brought Dave and I together on New Year's Day 1989 at a party at Narrawa Memorial Hall, near Crookwell. David was in the country with family for Christmas and I was experiencing an Australian bush New Year's Eve.

My visit 'down under' took a complete U-turn when I returned to Hall the following morning at 7 am to pick up my jumper I had left behind. Not too many people would offer one a beer at that hour, but Dave did, making him unique from anyone I'd ever met before.

Two days later Dave took me for a drive around their family property, Moorabinda. I felt like I'd come home and I knew I would spend the rest of my life with him—a stunning revelation given I had not been too interested in marriage and all that family business.

After we met, I spent time jillarooing in Narrawa before heading to the Solomon Islands. Dave returned to Brisbane. On Valentine's Day he sent me roses and chocolates in the post (being mid-February I don't need to describe the chaos that arrived). I licked the chocolate from the wilted petals and fell even more in love.

We married in Ireland in April 1990 before returning to Australia to Moorabinda, a grazing property near Crookwell. My parents visited at Christmas and were appalled at the house we lived in; this was after we had done some hasty repairs.

To suddenly become so isolated was a big change for me but I was determined to make the most of things. Simon was born in July 1991. I remember the in-laws coming to pick Dave up and take him to a wool sale. They dropped him back and didn't come in to visit. This divulged my position in the family and concreted my tenacity for us to succeed—the 'cosmopolitan' Irish woman and the man 'not cut out for the land' had a point to prove.

We had another baby—a girl called Pippa. We then split the family farm partnership and bought more land. We worked hard and loved it but I felt a constant underlying sense of unwelcome and my desire to flourish took its toll.

1999 saw a family exodus from Narrawa with the kids heading off to boarding school. Then I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer—it shook my body and my confidence. Six years of frequent visits to Crookwell Hospital followed but I survived and in 2007 the spell broke.

With so many life changes, my moods fluctuated constantly and loneliness leached my soul. I decided to enrol at Charles Sturt University and for the next four years I studied a Graduate Diploma in Psychology, followed by a Diploma in Counselling. But it wasn't quite the challenge I craved so I became a volunteer with Youth Off the Street and began to thrive again.

Each school holidays we fill the house, offering a safe haven to troubled youngsters (many coming from acquaintances overseas). Father Reilly once told me that the best way to handle disgruntled youth is to 'run them and feed them', so this is what we do—they work hard, eat healthy homegrown meals and go to bed exhausted. We may not change the world but we have changed the lives of a few young people, who now have more positive stances after their bush experience.

I have painted my way through the last 25 years, not so much a record of my doing but of my feelings. I have recorded every significant event from the beginning until now so that my next book is in the making. The garden keeps me marginally sane but I'm giving up on the horse breeding after the loss of a lovely three-year-old mare, which nearly tipped me over in February 2014.

Isolation can be a challenge but one cannot separate us from Moorabinda or Moorabinda from us. We do not own this land; it owns us and we will remain caretakers until the next generation are ready to take over to love as we do.

Because ultimately, love conquers all.



Book review

Alexis Hughes, Byron Shire

Confessions of Ethical Investing by Kassia Klinger follows Kassia's personal story as an ethical investor for 13 years and explores how the industry developed during the 1980s. This David and Goliath story tells of the women and men who took on the big banks, offering investors alternate ways of using their money to promote environmental and socially worthwhile causes.

The catchy title made me think about how I use money and how the people managing it on my behalf use it without my full awareness. Was I an informed investor? Could I learn more about how to invest in projects that make the world a better place? Does my superannuation support tobacco companies and am I supporting the production of environmentally damaging industries? Then I began wondering if I really could become an investor who uses my funds in ethical ways; benefitting society and the environment as well.

Kassia 'walks the talk' via her own ethical investment portfolio and introduces readers to industry pioneers in Australia and overseas, giving us a rare glimpse into the motivations of the women and men who started the debate on how our money is used.

Confessions of Ethical Investing
2014 Palmer Higgs
ISBN 9781 9251 1269
\$24.95 (print) or \$9.95 (ebook)
www.kassiaklinger.com

To win a copy of *Confessions of Ethical Investing*, share your top investing tip in 25 words or less. Send your entry to RWN, Locked Bag 21, Orange 2800 or email rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au. Entries close 30 June 2015. See page 2 for terms and conditions.

Hidden treasures, uncovered gems

Jennette Lees, Cootamundra Herald

The Hidden Treasures Honour Roll provides a platform to pay tribute to rural women volunteers who donate their time and energy to help others. Here in Cootamundra we were blessed to have six women on the roll—all of whom go above and beyond for the local community on a regular basis.

Listed on the most recent Honour Roll are Samantha McNally, Anne McNally, Dianne Williams and Renae Worboys all from the Cootamundra Community Soup Kitchen, Hannah Orr who works to re-home pound puppies and dogs and Yvonne Forsyth who assists with the Heritage Centre and Presbyterian Church. All of these ladies also regularly put up their hand for various other organisations in town.

In acknowledging the effort of the ladies for Cootamundra and the district, former NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson (pictured above) said their work may at times go unrecognised but there is no doubting the community cares.

In accepting their awards the recipients detailed their involvement in the local community.

Hannah described how she rescues and re-homes dogs from the Cootamundra, Gundagai and Harden pounds.

In the past two years, her efforts have resulted in some 300 dogs being saved, either given to new, loving homes or placed with specialist rescue organisations.

Yvonne described it as 'an honour' to be named on the Hidden Treasures Roll and said she was grateful to the Heritage Centre who nominated her for the award.

She recalled being part of the foundation group of the Centre which was able to get off the ground thanks to a government grant and plenty of dedication from community members.

'I always felt a town which did not respect its past did not have a future,' Yvonne said, hence her involvement in the popular museum located near the railway complex.

The Soup Kitchen ladies had a different take on what their involvement with the Soup Kitchen is all about and what it contributes to the community.



Speaking of her work as a founding member of the Soup Kitchen, Anne said she has been part of the group for four years now.

'We felt there was a need in Cootamundra for lonely people and people passing through.'

Anne, her daughter-in-law and Renae paid for the initial set-up out of their own pocket before the Baptist Church intervened, covering costs.

'We have fed up to 70 people with 40–50 coming on a regular basis. It is a wonderful community service we have, which breaks down the barriers between those who have and those who don't have,' Anne said.

Diane, born and bred in Cootamundra, has been at the helm of many community initiatives over the years.

'We do what we do because we are amongst the lucky ones, we have family and friends to help us when times are tough, not everyone has this,' Diane said.

Renae explained that whether lonely, poor, homeless or looking for companionship, the Soup Kitchen is for them.

'Only half of what we do is about the food, the other half is about the friendship,' Renae said.

She explained a scenario where a child sits down, perhaps for the first time at a dinner table with crockery and cutlery and eats a balanced meal. Next to the child is an elderly person who at home often sits down to eat on their own. The two talk and from the outside looking at it, it's hard to see who is getting more out of the situation—both the child and the elderly person leave the Soup Kitchen winners that night.

CONFESIONS OF
**ETHICAL
INVESTING**

A personal and social journey



Communities in focus: meeting the needs of rural communities in adversity

Marie Russell, Tilpa

Chair, Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health Community Advisory Committee



Marie Russell AM has lived and worked in rural communities all her life and in remote NSW for over 30 years. She owns and manages Old Budda Station near Tilpa. Marie is currently chair of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health Community Advisory Committee, director of the Mr Grenfell Historic Cultural Site and a director of the Western Local Lands Service.

In 1982 I married a farmer and went to live on Old Budda Station on the Darling River, where my husband owned and managed a merino sheep operation, spanning 27 000 hectares.

Tilpa was a far cry from the rolling green hills of Ulladulla and within two years I had experienced one of the worst droughts and one of the most spectacular floods I had ever seen. Little did I know of the challenges to come!

Looking back over the last 33 years, I regret nothing and would do it all again. I simply love the western semi-arid rangelands. I love the country and its people.

As we all know too well, Australia is a 'land of drought and flooding rain' and while I had always been involved in my community, the drought in 1992 was the beginning of a much greater involvement for me.

Rural people tend to be tough and resilient, we have strong communities and can handle a bit of adversity; but we are not unbreakable, and in 1992 people in the west were leaving the land.

For me, this was the beginning of getting active—lobbying State and Federal Governments for drought assistance for the region, and starting to have the conversations that mattered about mental health.

Drought creates terrible stress for farming families; debt mounts as they handfeed or destock, others buy more land to try and diversify. We all work harder and longer while trying to stay positive.

Women are also often the source of the only off-farm income; we hold down a 'job' and assist with managing the farm, the domestics, the kids, and the partner's wellbeing—often at the expense of our own health.

It is heartbreaking to build up your stock numbers only to have to sell them and start again. Only last year we had to destock and sell nearly all our stock on a low market—heartbreaking!

In prolonged drought some families are faced with the prospect of losing their income, lifestyle and home, and for others even their identity; most have a deep emotional connection to the land.

In small rural communities, the local economies are closely tied to the fortunes of agriculture (and in some places mining) and drought has a knock-on effect to small business and contractors.

The impact on mental health for some can be serious, while for others it can be catastrophic. This is why, over the last 20 years, I have been involved in working for

financial and mental health support for farming families, starting with lobbying for Exceptional Circumstance in 1992.

In 2003 I was appointed to the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and appointed as chair in 2013.

During this time the Advisory Committee advised the CRRMH and the then director, Professor Brian Kelly, and worked with his team on the development and implementation of the Drought Mental Health Assistance Package (DMHAP).

This program was rolled out across NSW in the form of Farm Family Gatherings, which were the first drought-targeted mental health program funded by NSW Health in 2007. The focus was to break down the stigma of depression and mental health.

The Farm Family Gatherings were initially met with scepticism from farmers, who were (and still can be) reluctant to seek help and dubious about the value of talking about how they were going. But the design and delivery of the program, through informal get-togethers, pub lunches and barbecues in community halls and golf clubs, got families coming together and starting to talk.

Some of the farmers who attended were the same farmers who experienced some or all of the droughts in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and they were all that much older now, trying to cope again. I was one of those farmers, and we shared our stories about what we and our families were experiencing and how the drought was impacting on us financially, emotional and physically.

Little did we know how important these gatherings were to support us and raise awareness about services, as the drought continued, lasting 10 years—one of the worst and longest droughts in our history. A total of 2400 farmers and small business owners attended these gatherings.

The DMHAP program was very successful, particularly in the way it was delivered. Farmers benefited from sharing their experiences of drought and could do so without shame or stigma; everyone was in the same boat and this was the beginning of a real attitudinal shift in the bush, in relation

to mental health. It was also the beginning of a broader response to drought support that brought together government, industry and community groups like DPI, NSW Farmers, the CWA and charities.

As we know the bush can have a lot of challenges—drought, flood, plagues, fire and storms, to name a few! Natural disasters have always been part of this ancient land but in my opinion, severe weather events are now more frequent and more extreme.

Today we talk more about 'adversity' and 'resilience' and the DMHAP has evolved into The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP).

RAMHP recognises the need for mental health education programs to assist communities where there may be some form of adversity or concern.

Organisations such as the NSW Local Lands Services are training their front-line staff who deal with landholders daily during adverse times. Other groups include Electoral Offices, WorkCover NSW, Lions and Rotary—any organisations keen to adopt this program are partnering with RAMHP to have the program tailored to its needs.

The RAMHP model works because it uses local people, who are well connected in their communities, delivering information and education that is relevant and valued by rural people.

Today parts of NSW, particularly the western and north western region are back in drought and have been for up to two years.

What is clear to me in relation to our future on the land is that the biggest threat to the community's mental health in western NSW is the climate and the ongoing battle with the elements; severe weather events appear to be becoming more frequent and more extreme.

Rural and remote NSW make vital contributions to the economic, social and cultural life of our state and our communities need support. Governments must continue to fund research, education and programs that support the wellbeing of rural and remote community.

More information

Mental Health Line 1800 011 511

Lifeline 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 657 467

Mensline Australia 1300 789 978

Domestic Violence Line 1800 656 463

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Avoiding entrapment in the family business

Source: www.companydirectors.com.au

With an estimated 65 per cent of all family businesses having two or more generations working in them, it is vital to ensure that the older generation avoids entrapping younger family members in the business.

Andrew Mattner of Adelaide accounting firm Hattam McCarthy Reeves warns that in any generational transfer of a family business, there are numerous factors that create barriers to success and conflict between individuals. These include:

- » The need to balance family concerns and business interests.
- » Adequate compensation of family members working in the business.
- » The ability of the business to generate adequate financial returns to support the family.
- » The level of trust in the ability of potential successors to run the business.

In his experience, the issue that causes the greatest level of conflict—and which is perhaps the greatest barrier to success—is the third issue.

'When this occurs one of the common results is a symptom that we define in our office as "entrapment".

'Entrapment in a family business occurs when the older generation employs family members in the business at lower than market rates on a promise that one day the family business will be theirs. Normally this occurs in under performing businesses that are unable to financially support multiple generations or have not generated sufficient return to enable the older generation to step away in the comfort that they have sufficient "off-business" assets to retire.

'Unfortunately, in a lot of circumstances, entrapment not only leads to the destruction of the business, but also to the destruction of the family.'

According to Andrew, this is because entrapment has the potential to:

- » Create significant conflict between generations working in the business.
- » Create conflict between siblings, particularly between those working in the business versus those that are not when an untimely death in the family occurs.
- » Create a 'lazy' business that ultimately becomes financially unsustainable.
- » Create a knowledge 'black hole', where the entrapped children are unable to financially support the educational needs of their children.
- » Lead to further generations walking away from the family business because they do not want to do what their parents did. There is significant evidence of this in the rural sector as evidenced by the diminishing number of children electing to stay on the farm.

'There are countless examples of families that have managed this situation well and just as many that have not. Unfortunately, for those that have not managed it well, so much damage is often done that it is difficult to repair,' said Andrew.

However, Andrew highlights that it is not all bad news and that good family governance can help to help resolve this problem, as it generally creates better communications. This could include having a formal board or advisory board for the family business, obviously depending on the size of the business.

Andrew also suggests introducing the following to family businesses for greater success:

- » An agreed and adhered to meeting structure.
- » A family constitution. While not legally binding, it acts as a guide and outlines how family members agree to work with each other in business.
- » Open communications. Because this does not always come easily, some external facilitation may be required.
- » Formal job descriptions and employment contracts for family members.

Andrew adds that the family needs to clearly set the rules at the outset of any arrangement and to have clear business strategies and financial plans in place. It should also ensure there is a clear transition plan in place that is agreed to by all and communicated to all.



A woman's place is everywhere

Stephanie Dale, *The Write Road*

Incredible, isn't it, the way a house can absorb significant numbers of people? On this particular weekend, the near century-old Kia Ora homestead, located 130 km down a long, red road, due west from Bourke, was host to a dozen women, most of whom had traded busy station lives for a weekend of landscape writing and photography—three days of kinship, skills development and creative exploration. Sounds indulgent, doesn't it?

This activity was part of the Her Place Community Storytelling Project; an initiative of *The Write Road*, which offers a range of creative workshops and training to people living in remote areas. I founded this project based on my belief that to be well, we must create; to be strong, we must know our story.

I believe just about everyone has a story spinning around in the back of their mind. *The Write Road* is dedicated to letting the story out.

More than 300 people have attended *The Write Road* workshops around western NSW over the past year and I have observed various common themes in people's lives.

It's heartbreaking how many people believe that to take time out to write is 'wasting time'. Much as they long to do it, they don't want to appear to be idle. Everyone should be entitled to sit on their verandah while the sun sets, with an open notebook on their lap and a pen between their fingers, clarifying thoughts, exploring ideas, telling stories.

A common theme that emerged from the workshops was the issue of succession—and it was this that inspired the Her Place event.

For the past two centuries, outback Australia has been the mythic domain of rugged men and bush poets. Women in rural Australia have tended to be defined by their relationships to men on the land—wife, mother, daughter, sister.

Most people living in the outback know women who are dealing with succession issues—in particular, a woman's right to own the land she works, independently or in partnership. The fact that women's connection to land is not 'the norm' matters.

One station owner recently told me she was constantly amazed by what women put up with to be on the land— isolation, violence and poverty. It's more than loss of financial assets or absence of resources. In many cases a woman is unwilling to tear her spirit away from the land she loves. These narratives informed women's connection to land, particularly their 'right' to be there. Her Place gives visibility and voice, in an everyday way, to this connection. The reality is women have independent, fully realised, rich and identifiable connections to the Outback and this is what Her Place celebrates.

Her Place, Kia Ora attracted nine busy women from a 250 km radius. Over three days they immersed themselves in their own creativity—

stretching unused creative muscles; naming and claiming their story. It was a weekend of comradery, rest and renewal.

The following extract was written by Chris Ferguson at Her Place, Kia Ora, March 2015.

My Lived-Land, Chris Ferguson

I come from the mountains. Born of them, into a succession of generations of the unthinkable: farming carried through the female gene. The women before me were the farmers behind the farmers. They were the real stockmen.

I am the first woman of my line to claim the title for herself. I have wrestled it from my father and grandfather. From my brothers. From my husband.

My homeland was my father's and grandfather's birthplace. My great-great-grandfather was the first of my line to settle there. He made a claim among the goldfields. His son followed him but I know nothing of his daughters.

The steep hills were covered with yellow and red box trees, stringy bark and wattle. They fell under my great-grandfather's axe, fashioned into yards to hold livestock and a home for a family.

That my home was my birthright never occurred to the child in me as a conscious thought, it was simply 'home'. As I grew to maturity, I struggled to conform to the place that my gender dictated I fill; to accept that I was born lacking. I was told to marry well but didn't. I was dismissed.

Sneak peak: free women's financial literacy roadshow

I have wandered across my Earth like a river when I longed to be a tree. Originating in the high country, winding my way through my lived-lands, I have shifted the resources of knowledge and heart to the dry plains. The reflections of others have shimmered upon me. Both willingly and unwittingly at times, I have been a life force. I am often muddy and at times forceful. I can shrink upon myself and wait for relief; I travel with purpose.

My country has always been my refuge. I am a refugee. When I was hunted by a madman I sought shelter in my adopted country, hid in my lived-land and called on it for sanctuary.

My mother calls me determined, but in truth my actions have all been to fulfil my longing for place, my need to give my children somewhere to belong, to grow roots strengthened by my endeavours. Despite my efforts, I have only been able to provide them with somewhere to float, someone to float upon.

My comfort has always been my horse—a succession of horses. I associate riding with leaning back as my horse slides down steep hills in the shale, the back of the saddle pressing into my lower back. My grandfather would say our place was so steep he had to empty the horse shit out of the crown of his hat when he got to the bottom of the hill.

I don't know how to ride through these endless Mulga plains, through the scrub and heat, through the space. These days I am content to call my horse my friend, to feel his warmth on my skin, to breathe his gentle strength into me. He is a constant. I come and go and he hangs on my heart.

If I were to return to my homeland, I would recognise every stone; I would breathe gulps of mountain air into my lungs and know its every scent. I would swim in a river that recognises me, that would move aside and let me back in, that would welcome me home.

I have lived my life like a river flowing through this country. Collecting fragments of my lived-land and redistributing them downstream. Longing to be a tree, fertilised by the richness of my forebears, my roots deep in the compost of their bones, their labour, their intent.

Willingly, I continue to wind my way through my lived-land until I empty into the sea of universal home.

Zoe Lamont, 10thousandgirl

10thousandgirl is a not-for-profit, social enterprise improving the financial wellbeing of young women aged 18–45 in Australia and globally. Our goal was to support 10 000 women around the world to become financially empowered. We've reached that, so now it's 10 million! By 'financially empowered', we mean she has documented goals, no personal debt, sufficient insurance, is actively investing, knows where to go for further information and support and is inspired to support others. We do this by providing simple content in engaging delivery styles, including interactive webinars, workshops, book club-like groups, a six-week online program, facilitating relationship building between women and leaders in the financial services industry and partnering to provide micro loans.

In March this year we launched our latest project—a two-year financial literacy roadshow providing free regional financial and education workshops and webinars! Do you know women who would benefit from a boost of financial confidence? Are you interested in having our roadshow come to your community? Do you have ideas for how we can work through your network to promote this amazing opportunity? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

What's on offer

- » Women As Investors half-day workshop (including facilitator, program materials, venue, refreshments, evaluation).
- » Women As Investors 60-minute webinar (including facilitator, industry experts, online program materials, evaluation).
- » Online Women As Investors downloadable toolkit, sharing partner resources and showcasing inspiring regional women and networks.

Contact us if you would like us to come to your community

We're also needing social partners such as women's networks and regional ambassadors to provide:

- » Local knowledge to identify communities that would benefit most from the free program.
- » Local hosts to assist with event logistics and promotion.
- » Regional networks to promote and communicate opportunities so no rural woman misses out!

3 steps to getting involved

- » Complete the form at www.10thousandgirl.com/become-a-social-partner-2
- » 10thousandgirl will call for a chat.
- » If there are opportunities to work together, we will ask for your logo and any links you would like included in promotional/educational material—and we'll start organising your event or webinar series.

For more details call Zoe on 0419 622 968 or visit www.10thousandgirl.com/working-in-partnerships



Women's health: fifty shades of midlife

Jean Hailes for Women's Health, www.jeanhailes.org.au

What is menopause?

The word 'menopause' comes from the Greek words 'menos' meaning month and 'pause' meaning to cease. Menopause means the monthly period stops. Menopause is the final menstrual period. Usually you only know you have had a final menstrual period if you have had no period for 12 months.

What happens at menopause?

Women are born with about one million eggs in each ovary. At puberty approximately 300 000 eggs remain—by menopause there are no active eggs left. On average women in Australia have 400–500 periods in their lifetime. From about 35–40 years, the eggs left in your ovaries decrease quickly and you ovulate (release an egg from the ovary) less regularly until your period stops.

When does menopause occur?

Most women reach menopause between 45–55 years—the average age of menopause for women in Australia is 51–52 years. Menopause sometimes occurs earlier than expected as a result of cancer treatment, surgery or unknown causes.

The stages of menopause are:

perimenopause: in transition to menopause; menopause: 12 months after your last menstrual period; and postmenopause: from 12 months after the final menstrual period.

Hormones and menopause

Hormones are chemicals made in your body, which send out messages through the blood stream. They help control many body functions such as repair of cells, reproduction, sexual function, digestion and temperature. They alert the body to eat, stop eating, to sleep, wake up, to grow, or when hormone levels decrease, to stop growing. The hormones of particular relevance at menopause are oestrogen and progesterone. The symptoms are created by changes in the levels of these hormones. The changes in oestrogen and progesterone usually happen over months or years as you approach menopause. If menopause is induced by surgery or cancer treatment, there can be a sudden drop in all of these hormones, causing symptoms to be more severe.

Menopause symptoms

Symptoms of menopause generally include hot flushes, vaginal changes and mood swings. There are other physical and emotional symptoms such as aches and pains, crawling or itchy skin, sore breasts, irritability, but no one woman will experience menopause in the same way. Culture, health, previous experience of mood problems, lifestyle and whether you have had a natural, surgical or chemotherapy induced menopause will all impact on menopausal symptoms.

What can you do to help with menopause?

- » Seek information and increase your understanding of what changes are happening and what you can do to help yourself.
- » It is possible to reduce symptoms of menopause with lifestyle. A healthy diet helps with fatigue and moodiness. Being physically active helps with hot flushes, stress and mood swings.
- » Practical strategies to stay cooler, such as carrying a hand fan, water facial spray and wearing layers of clothing to peel off when you are hot.
- » Complementary therapies, including: herbal and natural remedies: the herb black cohosh and eating phytoestrogens (for

example, soy and lentils) may help with hot flushes while St John's Wort may help with mood changes at menopause (the safety and effectiveness of other herbal remedies is not proven); relaxation: practising relaxation and controlled breathing may help hot flushes.

- » Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is used mostly for up to five-years to ease menopausal symptoms in healthy women. Risks and benefits should be considered when deciding with your doctor whether to use HRT.
- » If you cannot take HRT, other medications such as antidepressants, serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) and anti-epileptic medicine can reduce hot flushes.
- » Keep a record of the physical and emotional symptoms troubling you and list their frequency and effect on your daily life. This information can help to see what changes you can make to reduce their impact.
- » Look after your emotional health along with your physical health.
- » Depending on your symptoms, you may like to see a registered naturopath, psychologist, dietitian, exercise physiologist, general practitioner, gynaecologist, and or endocrinologist (hormone specialist).

See your doctor if:

- » You are troubled by less regular periods.
- » You are worried about heavy bleeding.
- » You have symptoms of menopause that interfere with daily life.
- » You have symptoms of depression and anxiety, including changes to your thinking, eating, sleeping and enjoyment of activities.

Jean Hailes
FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Call for palliative care ambassadors

Dr Yvonne McMaster, Palliative Care Consultant

Living longer is a fact of modern life. Where our grandparents could expect to live to the ripe old age of 60, many of us today will live well past 80. This fact has its advantages—it means we have more time to live active, fulfilling and meaningful lives—but it has also shed light on several weak spots across our public health care system and forced us to ask some difficult questions.

How do we deal with complex and advanced cases of chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's, heart failure, cancer and emphysema? How costly is a cure when quality of life is ignored? Do we think about care holistically enough? Answers to these questions may lie in palliative care.

Palliative care is focused on relieving patient suffering and achieving the best possible quality of life for patients and their families. Around the clock pain and symptom management, emotional support, counselling on both disease progression and navigating the health care system are just part of the broad spectrum of services which fall under this medical specialty.

Palliative care isn't just about the end of life—it can be helpful at any stage and any age. In truth, many people these days who need palliative care are not dying; they are living with one or more chronic diseases and may be doing so for many years.

Palliative care is a wonderful service and it should be there to provide support and maintain quality of life throughout the entire lifetime of a life-limiting illness—from first diagnosis to final breath.

Currently, there are only five specialist palliative care doctors across rural and regional NSW—all part-timers except for two. The fortunate towns are Coffs Harbour, Orange, Broken Hill and Lismore. Each of these communities has benefited enormously from having these physicians on hand to lead their teams, manage patients' symptoms, and support people. However, five specialists spread scantily across the state simply cannot provide the quantity of care needed.

Palliative care is a relatively new specialty and this may be one reason it has been so hard to get it to rural and regional areas. Most work is done by nurses, some of whom are specialist palliative care nurses, who work hard to cushion the gaps in the palliative care network, but sadly, they too are thin on the ground.

We are looking for people passionate about this issue to become palliative care ambassadors and ensure rural families have access to the help and support they need when facing a life-limiting illness. If this sounds like you please join our **Push for Palliative** group on **Facebook** or email yvonnemcaster1@gmail.com

The simple myths that could cost you your life

Samantha Raheb, Cancer Institute NSW

One in eight women in our community will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. A cancer diagnosis is one of the worst things a person can experience but in the case of breast cancer, finding cancer early significantly increases the chance of survival.

If caught at the earliest stages, survival of breast cancer is as high as 98 per cent. For women aged 50–74, the best way to detect breast cancer early is to have a screening mammogram every two years. A mammogram can pick up a cancer as small as a grain of rice, long before it can be felt or seen, leading to better and more varied treatment options.

Despite all the evidence, only half of all eligible women in NSW are having their regular mammograms. Sarah McGill, director of Cancer Screening and Prevention at the Cancer Institute NSW, says that in many cases it is myths that are putting women off. Here, she busts some of these common myths in the hopes that many more lives can be saved:

Myth I do not have a family history and I lead a healthy lifestyle; therefore I don't need to be screened.

Fact Nine out of 10 women who develop breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease. As for a woman's health, whilst maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important, on its own it cannot prevent breast cancer.

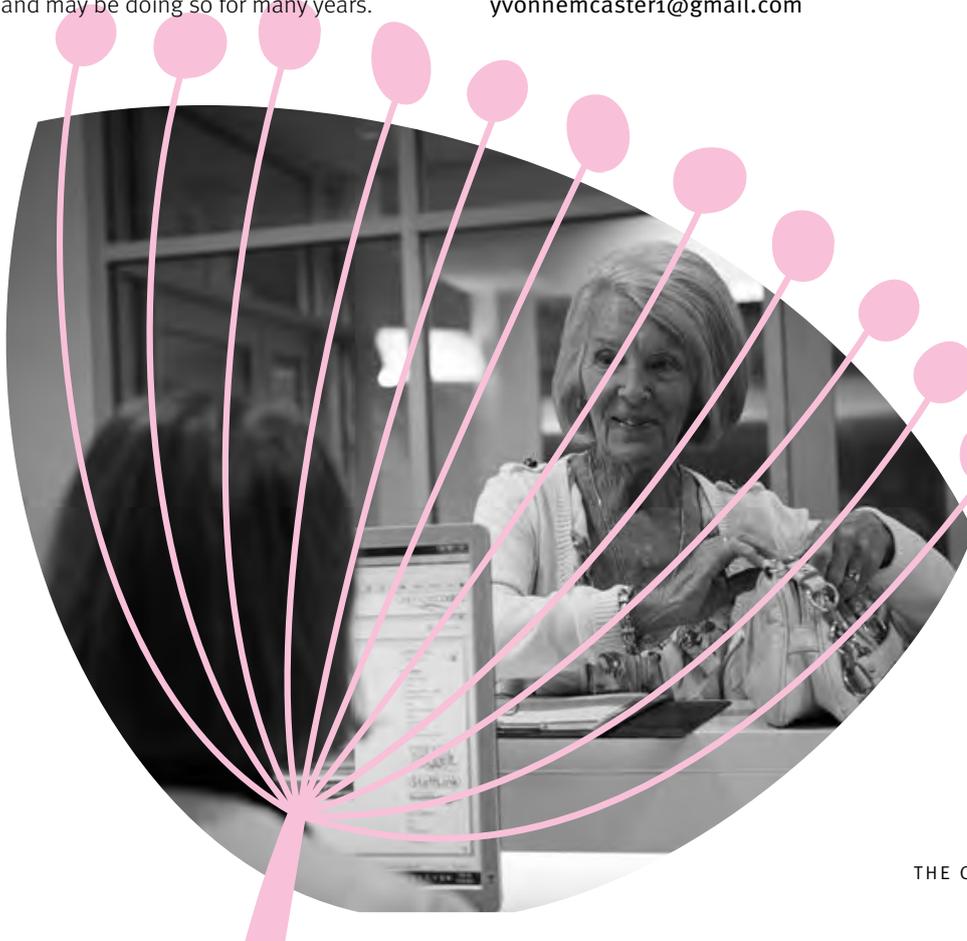
Myth I don't have enough time.

Fact The appointment usually only takes 20–30 minutes. A mammogram takes a little amount of time for a lot of peace of mind.

Women aged 50–74 are encouraged to participate in regular two-yearly breast screening. By detecting cancer early, you give yourself the best chance of a positive outcome and less invasive treatment.

More information

For more information or to book your free mammogram contact BreastScreen NSW on 13 20 50 or visit www.bsns.org.au





Paving a new career path in the bush

Alice Mabin, Roma QLD

Growing up on a station, I always knew I wanted a career on the land.

For many years I pursued this. With my team of border collies and huntaways, I traipsed around high country stations in New Zealand mustering sheep, cattle and deer.

From the snow capped mountains of Mount Cook and the crystal clear snow fed lakes of Central Otago, I packed my bags and dogs and moved to the vast, flat, drought stricken planes of Hay NSW to experience farming the Australian way.

Working at Boonoke and Uardry Stations, I developed a passion for Australian agriculture. With the immeasurable expansive land, the red dirt, extreme heat and comradery of the people that farm our beautiful soil, I established a love for this 'sister' country Australia that I now call home.

While jillarooing at Uardry I broke my leg and my farming career came to a grinding halt. Still wanting to stay involved in agriculture I applied for many jobs but time after time I got the same response: 'We have taken on someone with experience'. I wondered what will people do when that generation of experienced people runs out and there are no young people trained up?

In the midst of a recession and with no experience in the field of sales, I moved back to New Zealand to work for an Animal Health company. Five years with Pfizer in both New Zealand and Australia saw my business skills develop. I won two Sapphire awards in New Zealand and Rep of the Year in Australia, but I grew hungry for a new challenge. I felt stuck in a rut with a very specific set of skills and so I decided to change direction.

With a little help I identified a gap in the market for photography and marketing in the stud industry and set about studying photography and journalism.

Resigning from a secure job with a good salary, car, fuel card, phone, computer, travel, on farm activity and the ability to be creative in the way you run your territory was hard, but I was where I wanted to be.

On my first day of unemployment I decided to catch up with one of the mobs of Brinkworth cattle, that were on the road heading south on a 2000 km journey to Hay, and take some photos. I thought I would be there for a day, drive along taking some photos, maybe have a cup of tea with them and go home again, however I quickly found myself 'thrown' on a horse and following a mob of 2000 cattle down a dusty road.

Moving 18 000 head of cattle across two states during a severe drought was an epic journey and one that had not been undertaken in Australian in more than 100 years. I was able to live the journey, riding with the droving teams on horseback and motorbike as they tended to the nine mobs, camping under the stars with them for five months—creating a photographic record that I would later turn into a book.

The challenges on the drove were huge—lack of water, scarce feed and extreme temperatures. Bill, the boss drover, warned me that dealing with the other mobs would not be a walk in the park. I recall him saying that just because I slotted into his camp with ease, it wouldn't necessarily mean the other camps would be as welcoming.

Some of the drovers were tough, as they are so used to working on their own and are not keen on strangers. I had to explain that I just wanted them to go about their day job as normal and that I wasn't going to ask anything of them over and above their normal routine.

I was always happy to pitch in and get my hands dirty, so it wasn't long before the drovers warmed to me and the camera. It also helped that I was off the land and could easily yarn away about most things, and I would offer to bring out fresh supplies for them or cook a meal here and there. Swag, saddle, fresh bread, milk, ice and beer were the standard stuff I packed in my car each time I left to join a mob.

When I wasn't taking photos I was droving—an extra unpaid pair of hands. I developed a great rapport with the drovers and they would often call me to let me know they were going to be at a bridge crossing or something of significance—we became like a family.

Being on a horse or a motorbike with them all day long, day in, day out, got me to the places where I could really capture the reality of the lifestyle and what it means. From my horse I could manoeuvre myself into positions and take photos without disturbing the cattle, as can often happen when you are on foot or in a vehicle—cattle are used to seeing people on horses and so don't worry about it.

With over 10 000 photos to choose from, I sought help from another photographer and refined the selection to 250. I set about to create my very first book but I had no idea what was involved in producing it. With no idea how to design a book and after doing lots of research in shops and libraries, I realised I wanted something fresh and unique and to bring as much of the atmosphere

of droving into the book. I wanted to use textures and tones that complemented what droving was about and to conjure up the feeling of being there for the reader.

I printed 1000 books in my first print run, which sold out in a week! I thought it would take me months to sell them via my website so decided to travel the stock route again and went to see if I could sell the book into newsagents, bookshops and cafes along the way, as they had a direct affiliation with the story. I didn't even make it the length of the drove. I used all of my savings to print and publish the book. It has been an amazing ride and I have learned so much!

On the drove taking photos was tough—the heat, the dust and the long days. I almost destroyed some of my camera gear due to the fine red dirt getting into it. Designing, distributing and selling the book makes the droving part seem like a walk in the park!

I love that I have been able to capture the essence of the outback and the rural industry and way of life—to evoke feelings and emotions in people that view my pictures which encourage them to feel a sense of being there, smelling the smells, or hearing the noises associated with a particular image.

Ed: Since sharing her story Alice has been awarded the Business Excellence Forum Awards 2015 Asia Pacific Female Entrepreneur of The Year and has also been recognised as the number one Australian rural lifestyle photographer and her book is a three-times certified Australian best seller.

Men's matters: cardiovascular health

Stephen Carroll, Men's Health Practitioner

What do most men think of when they think of 'men's health'? Well, after working in this area for close to 40 years and asking men this question, I think I can give you a pretty good answer. And that answer is, 'not much!'

Men tend to think in terms of other people. 'Men's health' means the other bloke. 'Men's health' means it might be serious or an emergency, which then gets dealt with or the bloke gets patched up and everybody moves on and just gets on with life.

Well, 'men's health' is a bit different to that. I'm not saying men aren't getting better at looking after ourselves. What I'm saying is we can be smarter in being healthier.

Remaining healthy and being actively involved in your health need not take a lot of time or constant visits to a doctor or health worker. There are things we can do for ourselves that pay dividends.

But, first of all, what do I mean by 'men's health'? Over the years that has changed and will no doubt continue to change. It started with being about physical health and staying safe at work and not losing too many fingers. Now it is much broader in its definition and incorporates physical health, psychological health and emotional health. In each article I will consider different aspects of men's health and what we can do to optimise it.

Let's start today with cardiovascular health. This means our heart and blood vessel health, so I mean heart attacks, narrowing of the blood vessels and other conditions. Basically, our cardiovascular health is based upon a few factors. Firstly our genetics—did any of our relatives have or suffer from cardiovascular problems? If they did, then it gives us forewarning that we need to pay attention to our own cardiovascular system a little more. Secondly, how do we take care of ourselves in our day-to-day life? Some of the questions I would ask are, do you smoke? Do you have a bit too much fat in your diet? Are you overweight? How much alcohol do you drink? Do you have a bit of a sweet tooth? And, how much do you 'move'?

All these factors will have a direct impact on the health of our heart and blood vessels. I would ask all men to make small changes in all these areas as the first step in being smarter about their health.

A good place to start is with the 10 per cent rule—10 per cent less fat at meals times, 10 per cent less alcohol, 10 per cent less sugar and sweet things and 10 per cent more 'movement' or exercise. And if needed to help with weight management, then 10 per cent less food overall. It doesn't seem to be a lot but your body will appreciate it and the important part is that it is pretty easy to do and achieve. Ten per cent of anything is hardly noticeable but it works and works well and is a great beginning. The one exception to this is smoking—cut it out by 100 per cent.

Also, remember to make changes that you can achieve. If you haven't been doing any movement or exercise, start with a gentle walk. If you haven't seen your doctor in a while or feel something may not be quite right, go and see them and tell them you are starting on a program to get healthier. They will support you all the way.

It is a good idea to get into the habit of yearly checks with your GP, as things that might become serious can be headed off and dealt with much more easily when the issue is small and treatment very simple.

We look after our families, our work places, farms, mates, cars and machinery but we need to look after ourselves a little better... and, just like all those people and things we look after, we might just get a few more laughs, seasons, years or kilometres out of ourselves if we do.

Till next time... keep healthy and well.

If you are looking to take the next step Get Healthy offers free and confidential telephone-based expert advice and motivation. Call 1300 806 258 or visit www.gethealthynsw.com.au

12 things you should never stop doing

Source: www.marcandangel.com

1. Think only of the best, work only for the best and expect only the best

Be a defender of honesty and truth so that nothing can disturb your peace of mind. Forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the achievements and lessons of today. Give so much time to your own improvement that you have no time to criticise others. Look at the sunny side of everything and make optimism part of your 'religion'. Live in the faith that the whole world is on your side, so long as you are true to the best that is you.

2. Walk comfortably in your own shoes

If you don't follow the path others want you to follow they might become irritated. Don't worry about it. Let them be. It's their problem, not yours. So many people seem to have a clear idea of how other people should lead their lives, but have no clue how to lead their own. Focus on your inner callings and keep paving your own path. Remember that it is more useful to be aware of a single strength or weakness in yourself than to be aware of a thousand strengths and weaknesses in others.

3. Embrace your difficulties

After each difficulty you faced in the past was overcome, you became stronger and more able to meet the ones you face today. Likewise, the difficulties you face today are preparing you for the challenges of tomorrow. As this process of growth takes place remember that there are no mistakes. The events you bring upon yourself as you journey forward, no matter how unpleasant, are necessary steps in order to learn what you need to know to reach the places you've chosen to go.

4. Focus on the controllable

If you're feeling miserable and highly stressed, there's a good chance you have developed an unhealthy attachment to things you have no control over. The first step is to let go of these things—release the stress. You were never really in control of these things anyway. Positive change will happen in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over, instead of craving control over the uncontrollable.

5. Maintain full accountability for every aspect of your life

When you think problems that you have are someone else's fault, you will solve none of them. Don't allow yourself to be limited by your beliefs. In the end you will achieve what your mind believes. Start realising that this is not a dress rehearsal. If you're not learning and improving yourself by taking responsibility for everything you have in your life, then your dreams and desires will stay fantasies.

6. Give it all you've got

You get out what you put in. The amount of effort you give determines the amount of joy you receive. If your life doesn't please you, do something about it. Take action, change things. Everything you want is out there just waiting for you to ask for it. Everything you want also wants you. But you have to take action to get it. If you can, fly. But if you can't fly, start by running. If you can't run, start walking. If you can't walk, crawl. No matter how you do it, move forward.

7. Prune non-essential commitments

The mark of a successful person is the ability to set aside the 'somewhat important' things in order to accomplish the vital ones first. When you're crystal clear about your priorities, you can painlessly arrange them in the right order and discard the activities and commitments that do not support the ones at the top of your list.

8. Keep taking deep breaths

Don't allow yourself to be crippled by stress and anger. Everything is only as it is. There's no reason to let it destroy you. Breathe in, breathe out. Relax. Let every moment be what it's going to be. What's meant to be will come your way and what's not will fall away. And remember that a wonderful gift may not always be wrapped as you expect.

9. Hold on to your humility

All self-misery has its roots in self-pity, and all self-pity is rooted in taking life too seriously. If you take everything too seriously, especially yourself, you'll wind up fearing every new step you take. Loosen up and laugh it off if you can—especially when things don't go as planned. People with a good sense of humor have a better sense of life. You only really grow up the day you have your first real laugh at yourself and your circumstances.

10. Cherish those who have proven their love to you

It's a lot easier for someone to be nice to you on a beautiful day when the sun is shining, but in a heavy storm is where you learn who truly cares. That's why you need to pay close attention to who was there for you when no one else was. Because the people who stood beside you through your darkest nights, are the ones worth spending your brightest days with.

11. Exercise your talents to give back

Everyone has talents that are special to them. Do them whenever you can, because you can. And when you get tired, remember all those people who can't do what you can do. Think about what they would be willing to give to have the abilities you have right now—a simple gift you take for granted. Then strive harder just for them. And know that there are others out there with different gifts who are doing the same for you.

12. Evolve

Just because you liked something at one point in time, doesn't mean you are required to always like it. You can change your mind. You don't have to pretend to like something as an act of loyalty to who you are as a person, based solely on who you once were as a person. To be sincerely loyal to yourself is to allow yourself the freedom to grow, change and challenge who you are and what you think at any given moment in time. The only thing you ever are for sure is unsure. When you can recognise this it means you're growing and not stagnant or imprisoned by old ways of thinking.

Women leaders: Rebecca Fing, Goondiwindi

Rebecca grew up in Dirranbandi QLD and studied a Bachelor of Rural Science at University of New England, Armidale. She started her career as an extension officer in the cotton industry before starting her own business, House Paddock Training and Consulting, in 2005. Rebecca currently chairs the Women's Industry Network—Cotton (WINCOTT), is a board member of St Mary's Primary School and is a member of various cotton industry and grower groups.

What motivated you to become involved?

I am passionate about engaging women in every aspect of the cotton industry and saw WINCOTT as an opportunity to contribute in this space. I have my own training and consulting business that has interest in professional development of regional people so I was also excited to bring that to the table.

Women in regional communities have amazingly diverse skills and it is often a lack of confidence holding them back. Being able to encourage women to start, or continue to make a contribution to a business, community or industry through honing skills and building confidence is something that interested me.

I am also passionate about our children's education so being a part of our small school board seemed a sensible fit!

What do you get out of your participation in these roles?

I enjoy connecting with like-minded women, networking with women from different parts of the industry and facilitating professional development, networking and social activities for women interested in the cotton industry and regional communities.

Have you experienced any obstacles?

Juggling work, life and family is a constant obstacle. I am very blessed to have the opportunity to work while having a small family. Being self-employed, I was able to scale back projects or seek extra assistance at critical times.

I realised the importance of good time management (or more appropriately self management!) and to prioritise what was important. This at times, meant saying 'no', or 'not now' to things that I both enjoyed and was passionate about—it's about working out which balls are rubber and which are glass and dropping the rubber balls (which will bounce!) and letting someone else catch them.

Staying on task and working towards priorities is an almost daily battle that does improve with practise!

Where do you get your support?

Juggling the many aspects of professional, family and community life has confirmed for me the importance of having good networks and support—of which my husband and family play a major part. It has also taught me to decide where my energy is best invested and to outsource the rest! This includes anything from graphic design to ironing!

As our children have grown and my business has grown, so has the realisation that 'you can have it all, but not all at the same time' (words made famous by the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce) and also that I can't be everything to everyone. This has been a huge personal challenge for me but the realisation has enabled me to have a much better balance!

My sister is now an important part of my business—as well as having a complementary skill set to mine, she has taken the pressure off my workload. I am blessed to have

an amazing network of supportive professional colleagues and friends who continue to inspire me and come along for the crazy ride!

What is your final message to other women wanting to be more involved in decision-making?

Don't be afraid to put your hand up! We all have something to offer or can learn new skills to fill the gaps! On the flip side—don't overfill your cup! Be happy to take a breath and celebrate mediocrity in a society that values taking the high road!

More information

WINCOTT supports rural women across the Australian cotton industry, through facilitating opportunities to connect with other rural women and develop both personal and professional knowledge and skills.

WINCOTT (Women in Cotton)
www.wincott.com.au





Director of the CRRMH David Perkins said, 'While people with a mental health problem may see a clinician once a week or once a month, they see their carer every day. Carers have unique knowledge, personal commitment and are close to the patient. We ignore their contributions at our peril'.

During the three year term of the scholarship, Victoria will review the current literature and data and also conduct interviews with carers and a wider survey of mental health service providers to start piecing together a picture of the contribution carers are making.

'By acknowledging their unpaid role, access to training needs and advocacy of the gaps in mental health services will become apparent.

'Current thinking around future workforce in mental health is moving away from institutionalised care for those living with mental health issues and in the next 10–15 years, that change to community-based care will require more carer involvement than ever before,' she added.

Victoria has a long career in policy research for mental health services, having worked for non-government organisations, state and federal health service agencies and the National Mental Health Commission giving workforce advice on what changes are needed in current mental health services.

CRRMH's Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be regularly updated on the project in order to help guide the research towards some clear priorities for service providers.

A conversation with Dr Kevin Sheridan AO

Dr Kevin Sheridan AO has been involved with University of Newcastle's Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health since 2002, when he was asked to chair the CAC. In 2013 he resigned as chairperson but has remained an active member.

The CRRMH is fortunate to have such a passionate, highly regarded, experienced and knowledgeable person on the CAC. In 1999 Kevin had the honour of being appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia, in recognition of his services to agricultural industries, policy development and promoting research and education in primary production.

Since retiring as director general of the Department of Agriculture (1988–2002), Kevin Sheridan has continued to make enormous contributions to rural and remote communities across NSW, especially in the area of mental health.

It is a great privilege to find out a little bit more about Kevin Sheridan and discover why he has dedicated so much of his time post-retirement to the important area of mental health.

Tell us about your childhood and how this helped shape your career path?

I attended Waverley College in Sydney, growing up in Randwick, and became friendly with a number of boarders from country NSW. My father's family was from a farm in Ireland and my mother was very focused on my brother and I receiving the best education possible. With these influences my interests were country (and outside activities), whereas my brother followed medicine. So an education in agriculture was a given.

As someone who has made a significant contribution towards building a sustainable and prosperous agriculture community in rural Australia, what words of advice can you provide on following your passions?

When you have a passion always plan your life to achieve your dreams. The main thing is to have a plan and to follow it.

Has there been anyone who has inspired you to follow your dreams in life?

My parents always insisted that we follow our dreams but to be sure it was realistic and achievable. My wife was a grazier from near Oberon and she certainly refined my plan and strongly supported me in following it throughout my life.

What compelled you to volunteer your time to be involved on the CRRMH Community Advisory Committee?

I spent most of my career in agriculture and was rewarded significantly in many ways. However from the late 1970s it became increasingly apparent that many farmers were encountering stresses, with the increasing frequency of drought, that left them very vulnerable to problems with their own and their families' mental health. When I retired in 2002 I was asked to chair the Community Advisory Committee. I saw this as a great opportunity to give back to agriculture, in particular in return for all the benefits, pleasure and satisfaction I had received over 43 years.

Through a carer's eyes

Leonie Knight, Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health

The role of carers within the mental health sector in regional and rural communities will be examined in a new research project led by Victoria Pilbeam, the 2015 Kevin Sheridan Scholarship winner.

Victoria Pilbeam is a researcher and senior consultant. The inaugural Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) PHD Scholarship will enable her to evaluate how many carers are working in the community, the range of work they do and the proportion that is unpaid.

'There is a big difference between caring for the disabled or aged and caring for someone with a mental health illness.

'Anecdotally, these carers are playing a big role in medication compliance, monitoring mood, transportation to appointments and support activities, but without any official data we can't advocate for more funding for community-based mental health services, especially in regional and rural areas,' Victoria said.

Have you got any advice on how to handle the adverse events which life sometimes throws at you?

The most important advice I can give to those facing significant stress, is to not keep it to yourself. Particularly in the family situation, talk your problems through with your family and seek help early. If not in a family situation, talk to your friends and seek advice and help. It is important to recognise that mental health problems are like any other disease; they are treatable and should not be regarded as some type of stigma to be hidden and ashamed of in your life.

What other projects are you currently involved with which keep you actively connected to people and to the community in general?

After 15 years' involvement in many different endeavours, I now restrict my interest to mental health and to my four children and 11 grandchildren, who are scattered throughout Australia and Canada. I am a voracious reader and enjoy sport, especially golf.

What advice would you impart to a younger person about staying positive and true to yourself and maintaining a sense of wellbeing?

A younger person needs to focus on their life and the plan they wish to follow. Be part of your community and also communicate freely with your family and friends. If you have a problem, don't be afraid to talk it through with someone you feel comfortable with and if necessary seek help.

What do you appreciate most about your life and what are some of your favourite activities which you do to keep mentally healthy?

I have been extremely fortunate throughout my life, with loving parents, a wonderful and supportive wife and a terrific family. I was able to follow my dreams in many, many ways. With four children of our own and their partners and 11 grandchildren it is very easy to be challenged and mentally stimulated on a daily basis. I also have a very intellectually rewarding group of friends here in Australia and overseas.

Marg Carroll recognised for life achievements

Marg Carroll grew up in the Murga Valley in central NSW. A community developer, farmer and graduate of the Australian Leadership Program, Marg was also the inaugural coordinator of the NSW Rural Women's Network from 1992–1998.

Deeply committed to rural Australia, Margaret lives on the family farm, Redbank, at Molong where the Carroll's have run a mixed farming operation for over a century.

It is Marg's life-long commitment and dedication to rural Australia that saw her recognised in this year's Australia Day honours. She was recognised for her work as a rural women's advocate and youth mentor, establishing a housing complex for low income older people, writing three books on inspirational Australians and helping with conservation counts of elephants in Kenya.

Marg says it was her curiosity about people and places that took her to Sydney University, where she studied geography and post-graduate degrees in town and country planning and social ecology. When she fell in love with Molong farmer Bill they later married and she moved to the family farm.

Marg worked off-farm in local government and community development, establishing innovative projects, such as the first Abbeyfield family-style house for older people in NSW and the ORANGESEARCH Healthy Cities project.

Having experienced first-hand the hardships caused by the 1980s drought, when Marg was asked in 1990 by her health promotions manager to 'do something about drought', she invited financial counsellor Fran Rowe from Tottenham to a forum. From that, she and a keen group set up the Central West Rural Financial Counselling Service.

During her time as RWN coordinator, Marg worked hard to better the lives of women. 'The RWN, set up in 1992 as a three-year pilot program based in NSW Agriculture, was launched with great fanfare but only half a staff position to work with me across a big state with thousands of women! My priority was to go and listen to women over kitchen tables, in sheds and halls, then act on their concerns. Far western women talked about

lack of communications and isolation and the need for better access to information and services—issues which still exist today.

'What I am most proud of are the enduring programs we instigated (with much support) such as: Country Care Link 1800 line with St Vincent Sisters of Charity (1992); *The Country Web* newsletter named by Marion Palmer from Jerilderie (1993); and the Women of the Land Gatherings (now known as NSW Rural Women's Gatherings). I co-chaired the first Gathering in Orange in 1993 with Ronnie Hazelton from Farmsafe Central West.

'Best of all I loved connecting to women around the traps and hopefully helped in some way. I had a great State Advisory Committee and staff, and constant support of [then director general] Dr Kevin Sheridan.'

Taking time off to care for a daughter seriously ill with anorexia, a sick husband and following the death of her father, Marg made the decision to work from home and change direction to write life stories.

'I've written three books now: *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: Inspiring stories from rural Australia*; *Reinventing the Bush* about young people, and *The Man Who Loved Crocodiles* about wise elders, so that's 57 men and women from all walks of life who inspire me greatly.'

Marg is now heading down another road, working as an oral historian for the National Library of Australia, on projects such as recording the growth of resilience in victims of terrorism.



Photo by Melanie Pearce, ABC Central West



Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary: the next chapter

Nick Bleszynski, Royal Flying Doctor Service, South Eastern Section

It has been a year of honours for the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary—richly deserved honours for an organisation that has given 63 years of loyal service to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

During 2014 the Auxiliary were named Regional and NSW winners of the 2014 Volunteer Team of the Year award by the Centre for Volunteering. They were also included in the 2014 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll—an annual publication published by the Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network, recognising the dedicated and inspiring efforts of women who volunteer in their communities across rural, regional and remote NSW.

If all that wasn't enough, the Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, recently named an RFDS aircraft after the Auxiliary in a ceremony at the Broken Hill Base.

'It's been exhausting, exhilarating and humbling all at the same time,' said Auxiliary president, Margaret Symes.

'We don't do it for the recognition, but it was extremely nice to have our efforts recognised and appreciated. We accepted these awards not just for our current members, but all those who went before us.'

'The RFDS South Eastern Section opened its Base at Broken Hill in 1937 and the Auxiliary formed in 1951. It's an incredible fact that they

have been in operation almost as long as we have,' remarked Greg Sam, chief executive officer of RFDS South Eastern Section.

'They thoroughly deserve the honours they have received this year, due recognition for a lifetime of service.'

'The naming of an aircraft is a rare honour bestowed on patrons, supporters and staff who have served the RFDS with distinction and is a token of our deep appreciation for their long-standing support and service.'

The Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary are an extremely active force in their local community, organising an annual ball attended by around 1000 people, holding raffles, street stalls and selling hampers. They raised over \$85 000 in the previous year alone and have raised over \$1.5 million for the Broken Hill Base since 1989—a truly remarkable effort.

The Auxiliary are best-known for their famous handmade Christmas puddings, which have become a great Broken Hill Christmas tradition. For the past 48 years, the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary has assembled for two weeks during October to produce handmade Christmas puddings to raise money for the RFDS. They started with 75 and now produce over 2000. Last year the puddings alone raised \$25 000. What makes it all the more remarkable is that many of these ladies are in their 70s and 80s.

The money raised by the Auxiliary goes to supporting the not-for-profit RFDS, one of the largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisations in the world. Using the latest in aviation, medical and communications technology, it delivers extensive primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency services to those in rural and remote Australia.

Nationally, these services are delivered by a fleet of 63 aircraft, operating from 21 bases and healthcare facilities across Australia, flying over 26 million km to provide medical assistance to over 280 000 people every year, or one person every two minutes.

RFDS Broken Hill base manager Steve Martin has regular contact with the Auxiliary and summed up their extraordinary contribution.

'Their efforts help us save lives. Seeing that kind of loyalty passed down from one generation to the next is a rare thing and it just shows what an amazing sense of community we have in Broken Hill', said Steve.

Margaret Symes is now looking to write the next chapter of the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary story.

'We are always on the lookout for new members who would like to give back to their community. The spirit of volunteering has played an important part in Australian life, especially in outback areas where we rely on each other a lot more and the resources and amenities we need are often not available.'

More information

To volunteer with the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary contact Margaret Symes on 0408 858 524.



Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Network

Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Network (QRRRW) launched Humans of the Bush at the annual conference in Charters Towers in September 2014, with the aim to connect, network and inspire. To support this aim, we have now launched Humans of the Bush on a stand-alone website, on Facebook, and on Twitter.

We have received some great contributions but we are always looking for more photos and stories to add to them. So, how can you help? Do you meet interesting people? Are you a budding photographer, or do you know someone who is? We are looking for a variety of people who give different and challenging perspectives which help to demonstrate the diversity of human roles needed to sustain and brighten the rural, regional and remote communities of Queensland.

What can you do?

- » Approach someone who looks like they have an interesting viewpoint.
- » Tell them about the Humans of the Bush Facebook Page (maybe even show them the page on your phone).
- » Ask their permission to take their photo.
- » Have a conversation with them and capture a quote or short story from them.
- » Send their quote and photo (with their permission) to humansofthebush@qrrrn.org.au

Questions to help start a conversation:

- » What dreams do you have for your children growing up in Australia?
- » How do people around you inspire you or help you to realise your dreams or to overcome your struggles?
- » What inspires/connects you about/to this place, community or people?
- » If you could give one piece of advice to everyone, what would it be?
- » What strengths do you see in the people from here that can give hope to others?
- » What advice would you give your 10-year-old self?
- » What is your fondest memory?

Like and follow Humans of the Bush on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or visit the website at www.humansofthebush.com.au

The blinding reality of diabetic retinopathy

Macular Disease Foundation Australia

People living with diabetes are at significant risk of going blind—even if they have their diabetes under control and have been given the 'all clear' in the past by their optometrist.

Professor Paul Mitchell is a professor of ophthalmology at the University of Sydney and an internationally respected expert on diabetic eye disease. Professor Mitchell warns everyone living with diabetes (that's over 1.1 million Australians) is at risk of losing their sight.

'Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication of diabetes and the leading cause of blindness among working age adults in Australia,' said Professor Mitchell.

'Many people with diabetes have their eyes tested by an eye health professional once, maybe twice and get the all clear. Psychologically they move into "safe mode"—they don't think they are at risk of diabetic retinopathy any more. But in fact, their eyes are in "unsafe mode" because for every year a person has diabetes, the greater their risk of developing this blinding eye disease.

'Almost everyone with type 1 diabetes will develop some form of diabetic eye disease within 20 years of diagnosis. Of particular concern however is that many people with the more common type 2 diabetes will have already had the disease for many years by the time they are diagnosed. A large proportion of these people will develop potentially blinding diabetic retinopathy within 5–10 years of their diabetes diagnosis. Since everyone with diabetes is at risk of retinopathy, it is essential to have regular eye tests—initially every two years, or more often if recommended by their eye health professional.'

Blindness can be prevented

Julie Heraghty, CEO of Macular Disease Foundation Australia, said almost all cases of sight-threatening diabetic eye disease can be avoided.

'Careful management of diabetes risk factors (especially blood glucose, weight, blood pressure, lipids and cessation

of smoking), as well as a healthy diet and lifestyle; supported by regular eye examinations and specific treatment when required, are essential to preventing vision loss from diabetic eye disease,' she said.

Don't wait for symptoms

Diabetic eye disease can progress to advanced stages without any effects on vision and so it can easily go unnoticed. Detecting early evidence of diabetic retinopathy with regular eye tests is essential. Some people need treatment which is highly effective if delivered early.

Once symptoms develop, vision loss can occur rapidly and can be permanent.

'If any changes in vision occur, such as dark areas, blurred, distorted, dim, double vision or difficulty seeing at night, people should make an appointment with an eye specialist immediately, through a GP or optometrist referral,' said Julie.

For a free information publication on diabetic eye disease contact the Macular Disease Foundation Australia on 1800 111 709 or visit www.mdfoundation.com.au

Eye test check list

- » If you have diabetes, visit an ophthalmologist or optometrist at least every two years for a comprehensive dilated eye exam.
- » For people with existing diabetic retinopathy, a test is needed at least every 12 months, even if vision appears to be perfect.
- » People with serious diabetic retinopathy or at high risk will need even more frequent eye tests.
- » Be guided by the optometrist or ophthalmologist and do not cancel or delay appointments.
- » Never ignore any changes in vision, report them to a health professional.

What's on, what's new

Alive and well

WorkCover NSW has teamed up with partners across the industry to help farmers stay alive and well. Through the Alive and Well website you'll be able to hear, see and share stories about staying alive and well on the farm—Stories by farmers, for farmers. See www.aliveandwell.net.au or call 13 10 50.

Board links

BoardLinks is a network established to form better connections between the Australian Government and women seeking board positions, in particular board-ready women seeking their first board appointment.

A significant hurdle to female representation is that many boards require prior board experience as a prerequisite for appointment. With women holding so few board positions, this situation is self-perpetuating. BoardLinks will focus on strategies to ensure women, who are appropriately skilled and experienced, gain their first board appointment.

BoardLinks will expand the pool of women available for board positions in the corporate sector by providing women with their first board appointment, to give them the start and experience required for a successful board career and will give women the appropriate skills and experience to be considered for their first appointment as vacancies occur on Australian Government Boards. Find out more at www.boardlinks.gov.au or email info@boardlinks.gov.au

Support a mate

Support a Mate Rural Outreach is about helping connect farmers, their families and rural communities to support services and a regular outreach phone service, to assist in managing mental health stress. The service provides support to individuals experiencing hardships such as drought and seasonal income losses by linking them with the Telephone Referral and Information Support Service (TRISS) and regular outreach phone service that maintains connection with members in the community.

Call 1800 985 944, Monday to Friday from 9 am–5 pm, for information and support about mental health information and services.

Join **Support a Mate** on **Facebook** or visit the website for more information, www.supportamate.org.au

Grazi(her)

Grazi(her) is a new bimonthly magazine bringing you stories from near and far of inspiring women and men working and living in regional, rural and remote Australia. Visit the Grazi(her) blog at www.graziher.wordpress.com or join Graziher on **Facebook**.

Henty Fashion Awards, September 2015

Rural and urban fashion designers and milliners are invited to showcase their talent in the 12th annual Henty Natural Fibre Fashion Awards. The fashion awards have grown into a prestigious event attracting high profile designers, with the 2015 entries to be paraded in the Country Lifestyle marquee at the Henty Machinery Field Days, 22–24 September, at 1 pm each day. The competition is free and open to all designers. Fabric used in the garment must be at least 70 per cent natural fibre, which can be wool, cotton, alpaca, silk, linen or combinations. The winner of the best garment will receive \$2000. Winners of the best knitted or crocheted garment, millinery and accessory will receive \$500 each. To enter contact Lyn Jacobsen on 0428 690 222 or email naturalfibre@hmfed.com.au

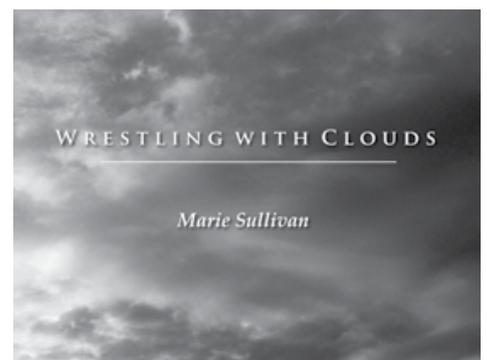
Planet to Plate: an Earth Hour cookbook

Planet to Plate is a collection of 52 recipes by Australia's top celebrity chefs, including Margaret Fulton, Matt Preston, Neil Perry and Kylie Kwong. But what makes this book particularly special is that the recipes are combined with first-hand stories from Australian farmers, highlighting the impact global warming is having on their farms and the availability of our favourite foods grown in Australia. Among those featured in the book is 2014 NSW-ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award winner Pip Job and Lynne Strong, founder and national program director of Art4Agriculture. Find out more at www.earthhour.org.au

Wrestling with Clouds Review by Allirra Honner

Sparked by the death of her partner, this beautifully written, poetic reflection and memoir about 1950s outback Australia and modern day village life in the Central West is a truly fantastic book! Part memoir, part fiction, part fact; the author magnificently transports the reader back in time and brings to life several key characters while painting a vivid picture of the isolated world that is the Western Division of NSW. It shows glimpses into the lives of resilient individuals within a remote rural community north west of Condobolin—the farmhands, the shearers, Indigenous stockmen and families living in challenging conditions. The scenic descriptions of the harsh and unforgiving environment, and the hardships ensured by adults and children alike, broken only by the occasional tennis party, picnic race meeting or rodeo, melt beautifully into a historical recount of the NSW village of Rockley. A perfect read!

Kindle edition format only, \$7.68, available from www.amazon.com.au



ADVERTISEMENT

Resources

Virtual Advisor Program free online business training

Thinking about starting a business or need more information about managing your existing business? Register to participate in the free Virtual Advisor Program (VAP), available to individuals, small to medium businesses and not-for-profit organisations in rural and regional Australia. Training sessions are for one-hour and you can choose from six topic areas: Getting started: creating an online presence; Planning your online business; Marketing online: tips and tools; Online selling: bringing in the dollars; Online storage ("the Cloud"), privacy and security; and Communicating online and working remotely. You can also register for up to four hours of free one-on-one mentoring to discuss issues specific to your business' requirements. Register online at www.wit.tafensw.edu.au/studying-at-tafe/virtual-advisor-program or call TAFE Western Course Information on 1300 823 393.

ImproveIT—making IT work for your community organisation

ImproveIT was developed as a free resource to help community and health organisations, particularly smaller organisations with little internal technical support, come to grips with information and communication technology. The website provides guides and templates tailored for the not-for-profit sector, a bulletin board where you can discuss technology with others, events and other activities, and a blog with all the latest news and information. Find out more at www.improveit.org

Energy Made Easy—Helping you make an informed choice about electricity and gas offers

Want to know how your electricity plan stacks up? EnergyMadeEasy provides a free comparison tool operated by the Australian Energy Regulator that allows you to compare energy offers in the market. When you get there you'll have to answer a few simple questions about your energy usage, so it's useful to have a recent bill handy. The whole process should only take a few minutes. After that you'll have a list of options to easily compare energy deals and find the one that's right for you. Visit www.energymadeeasy.gov.au

Indigenous Women's Health Portal

The Women's Health portal has been developed to provide health workers with access to reliable, evidence based information about a range of common women's health conditions and life stages. This information will assist in helping women understand and manage important aspects of their health and may contribute to improved health outcomes and quality of life. Health professionals and others working in women's health in the community may also find this portal useful. www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/womens-health-portal

CanTeen's online community supports young people affected by cancer

The CanTeen online community is a place for young people where they have 24/7 access to young people with a similar cancer experience (via forums). Once you join, you get your own unique homepage that is customised to your situation, as well as access to CanTeen's Online Counselling team. To join, you need to be aged 12–24, living in Australia, and either you or someone in your immediate family has undergone treatment for cancer. <https://nowwhat.org.au>

Yarn Safe

A new website providing mental health wellbeing information and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as well as a special section for parents and carers where you can find out how to help your child through difficult times. Visit www.yarnsafe.org.au

Let's Talk

Let's Talk provides a regular telephone call to farmers in drought affected areas of NSW, offering friendship and support. Let's Talk volunteers providing this service have an understanding of farming life and have knowledge of the local support services. Volunteers (retired farmers or those with knowledge of the farming life/industry) call participants at an agreed time, generally once a week, to share a conversation and catch up. Rec Cross is currently looking to expand the program throughout NSW and is seeking volunteers who are willing to be matched for a period of up to 12-months. To access the service or to volunteer your time call 1800 088 586 or send an email to jhorton@redcross.org.au

Free Apps

The following Apps can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.

If you have a great free App you would like to recommend to our readers let us know at rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au. [Make sure you use "CWEB App Suggestion" as the subject.]

Farmsafe Australia Safety Induction App

The Farmsafe Australia Safety Induction App seeks to improve the safety induction of new workers. Workers complete the App in discussion with the farm owner/manager and then a record of the induction and issues it has covered are emailed directly to the worker and the farm owner/manager—helping to simplify the record keeping process.

George the Farmer App

George the Farmer is everyone's friend. With his trusty dog Jessie by his side he tackles the day-to-day activities of Australian farming life in his tractor with enthusiasm, a can-do attitude and most importantly a big smile. The free App was developed to address future food security issues by educating children on farming practices and food and fibre production. The App has received national press coverage, been listed in the iTunes top 10 Australian and New Zealand educational apps for primary school students, and been written in to the Australian Schools Curriculum. www.georgethefarmer.com.au

iMatter App

A new free App to help young women understand the warning signs of abusive and controlling behaviour in relationships as well as promote healthy self-esteem. The App includes quizzes and questions that help young women identify warning signs in relationships and information on how to get help.

Legal Aid NSW App

The Legal Aid NSW App gives you easy access to information about Legal Aid NSW services and the law. You can search for a Legal Aid NSW service closest to you, watch videos about the law, book into a workshop about the law and directly access factsheets and resources. You will also be able to find out about how to get a grant of legal aid and what to do if you are not eligible for a grant.

NSW-ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award 2016

a life-changing experience!

The RIRDC Rural Women's Award encourages women's contribution to primary industries and rural Australia by providing skills and resources to build leadership and decision-making capacity.

What's in it for you?

\$10 000 to implement your idea or project; skills and resources to build your leadership; enrolment in the Australian Institute of Company Directors Course; implementation of a 12-month leadership plan; networking; media and PR opportunities; and membership to the Rural Women's Award Alumni.

Applications open 1 August and close 31 October 2015. Contact RWN for an application package and access to mentors.



Edwina Beveridge, runner-up in the 2014 NSW-ACT RIRDC Rural Women's Award.

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www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/country-web

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.

NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
	PCODE:
PHONE:	
EMAIL:	

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background Culturally and linguistically diverse background

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



Rural Women's Network website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn

connecting regional
& remote NSW