

Older Women Out There

Final Report



*A wellness project for older women
living in rural and remote NSW*



Older Women Out There Final Report

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Foreword

Older women make extensive contributions to the economic and social life of rural, regional and remote communities. It is vital that they are supported by providing access to health information relevant to their needs.

The vision of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Strategy on Healthy Ageing (2000) strives for:

A fair society where all older people can lead satisfying and productive lives which maximise their independence and wellbeing.

NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network developed the *Older Women Out There* project as a way of increasing access to health information for older women, by promoting personal responsibility for health and wellbeing, through informative radio programs and workshops on how to use the internet as well as *info-link* sheets.

Older Women Out There was very much a cooperative project with funding provided by NSW Health, and support from many individuals and groups committed to improving older women's access to relevant health information.

The Rural Women's Network will continue to work in partnership with others to ensure all women living in rural, regional and remote areas have access to relevant health information.



Sonia Muir
Coordinator
Rural Women's Network
NSW Agriculture



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Introduction

The Rural Women's Network was approached by NSW Health to develop an innovative project aimed at improving access to wellness¹ information for older women living in rural, regional and remote areas of New South Wales.

The *Older Women Out There* wellness project coordinated by NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network and targeting women living in rural and remote communities across New South Wales was the result. Funding was provided by NSW Health under the National Women's Health Program.

Aims of the project

A review of the Rural Women's Network program in 1999 identified health and access to information and services as priority issues for rural women. The *OWOT* project was developed to meet some of these needs with the aims of promoting awareness of wellness in a holistic sense, encouraging rural women to think more positively about being an older woman, presenting information and resources on wellness in a readily accessible format such as the radio and internet, improving older women's access to up-to-date information on wellness, and breaking down some of the barriers which isolate older rural women and limit their access to relevant information and resources.

Objectives of the project

- to develop a series of radio programs including talk back sessions to identify and discuss broad wellness issues for a diversity of older women living in rural, regional and remote locations;
- to produce and distribute *info-link* sheets and tapes of the radio sessions through key networks;
- to establish an internet website with published *info-link* sheets; and
- to provide training on using the internet and radio as communications tools.

Through the *OWOT* project women were provided with information on wellness through a series of radio programs, the internet, and *info-link* sheets.

The Rural Women's Network worked in partnership with ABC Local Radio² to develop a series of six radio programs focusing on various wellness issues relating to older rural women. In addition, over 100 rural women participated in free *Internet for Beginners* pilot

¹ Wellness = spiritual, physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing.

² 2WEB Outback Radio was also involved in the project but discontinued after the first week due to programming changes at the station.

workshops held in Cobar, Deniliquin, Young and Lismore.

An internet site was also developed which provides access to information on wellness and background information on the project.

In September, women from the internet workshops also had the opportunity to participate in an on-line chat forum where they were able to talk with guest speakers from *Internet to the Outback*¹ as well as ask questions on using the internet.

Who's a Rural Woman?

Women who live in rural, regional or remote locations;
agricultural women;
mining women;
women in the fishing industry;
Aboriginal women;
non-English speaking background women;
town and village women;
women who live in regional cities; and coastal women.

Steps Taken

Phase one of *OWOT* involved developing a project proposal which was submitted to NSW Health. Once funding had been secured the proposal was developed into a more detailed plan.

Phase two involved identifying possible project partners and establishing a 'Steering Committee'. The role of this Committee was to:

- a) represent key stakeholders;*
- b) provide input to the project development; and*
- c) provide valuable contacts and networking links.*

It was considered essential that the Committee include women with a knowledge of issues facing older women living in rural and remote areas as well as expertise in radio program delivery.

Older Women Out There Steering Committee

Members of the Steering Committee included:

- Sam Smart, Betty Murphy & Cara MacDougall
Older Women's Network, Sydney

¹ Internet to the Outback provides training for families in rural & remote areas of Australia to access the internet (see page 9 for contact details).

- Kate Lohse, Southern Area Health Service, NSW Health, Queanbeyan
- Helga Jolley, Women's Health Matters, Lismore
- Yin Hor, Women's Information and Referral Service, Department for Women, Sydney
- Marie Russell, RWN State Advisory Committee, Cobar
- Madeleine Randall and Tony Rasmussen, ABC Local Radio
- Dianne Tyson, 2WEB Outback Radio, Bourke
- Sonia Muir & Allison Windus, Rural Women's Network, Orange



Aims of the first Steering Committee meeting

The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place in Sydney in December 1999.

The aims for the first meeting were to:

- *identify issues relevant to older rural women and highlight six priority focus areas; (see page 5)*
- *discuss ideas on how the project would be implemented and what format it would take;*
- *come up with a name that would inspire older women and reflect the project's aims; and*
- *develop an action plan/time frame.*

Outcomes of the Steering Committee

After some discussion the Steering Committee decided to call the project ***Older Women Out There***.

It was agreed at this meeting that:

- ABC Local Radio would develop a series of six one hour radio segments incorporating interviews, panels and talkback. RWN was to liaise with Outback Radio re their program for the Western Division as their representative was not able to attend the December meeting.
- RWN would research and develop a set of *info-link* sheets to complement the radio programs.

- The Department for Women, Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS) would allow the use of their freecall 1800 service to obtain further information and the *info-link* sheets.
- Rural Women's Network would develop an internet site which would include information about the project as well as the *info-link* sheets. At the end of the project the Older Women's Network would take over the website and update it as required. This would complement other older women's wellness initiatives.
- Free *Internet for Beginners* workshops would be offered at various locations around the state depending on interest received.
- The project would be launched during the first week of May 2000.

6 Priority Focus Areas

Body Image

Every woman is beautiful in her own special way. Body image is about valuing being an older woman and feeling good about who you are - not about how you look. True beauty comes from within.



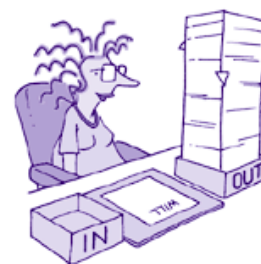
Older Women & Violence

There are many forms of violence and controlling behaviours which can intimidate and degrade others - women DON'T have to put up with it. There are many services and resources out there which can help women through the tough times.



Taking Charge

Taking charge is about women being in control of their life. Whether it be to do with lifestyle, health or financial matters - basically anything that affects their life and the way they live it.



Managing Change: Grief & Loss

There are many kinds of loss often associated with changes in people's lives - grief is the normal response. And like any other process, grief takes time to work through.



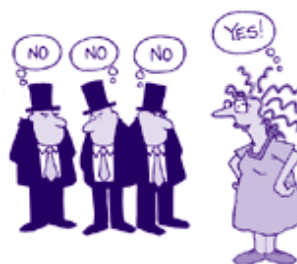
Transport & Technology

Coping with isolation is a major issue for rural women. Isolation can include limited access to services, or friends and family. It is sometimes hard to overcome, but by developing networks women can start to overcome the barriers.



Having a voice

Everyone is unique. Having a voice is about standing up and being counted. It's about women being valued for their experiences and opinions and getting involved in issues that concern them.



Women's Information & Referral Service (WIRS)

Phone 1800 817 227

The Department for Women (WIRS) is a free, confidential telephone service for all women in NSW. It provides up-to-date and accurate referral information about organisations and services for women on a range of issues. Some of these include: violence against women and children; legal questions such as divorce, separation, custody; child care; housing; health; and work, education and training.

WIRS can help find information that you, your family or friends may need.

The Service employs an Aboriginal Information Officer as well as a

Mandarin, Cantonese and Malay speaking Information Officer. There is also a Translating and Interpreting Service available to women who speak a language other than English.

WIRS is available Monday - Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Outside these hours you can leave a message and someone will return your call.

*If you are speech or hearing impaired please call freecall **1800 673 304**.*

And... don't forget to ask for your free set of OWOT Info-link sheets!!

About the Project

The project had three phases: 1) Older Women Tune in to Wellness, 2) Older Women Wired, and 3) Older Women Surfing the Net.

1) Older Women Tune in to Wellness

The Sunday Show - ABC Local Radio

ABC Local Radio was responsible for developing the series of six wellness radio programs based on the 6 priority focus areas, targeted at older women living in rural and remote areas of NSW.

The Rural Women's Network's role, with input from the Steering Committee, was to assist the ABC source possible 'talent', and information and resources for the development of the programs. The programs were promoted through *The Country Web* newsletter, the Rural Women's Network website, press releases, and the distribution of stickers and magnets.

A series of *info-link* sheets based on the programs were made available through the Rural Women's Network and the Women's Information and Referral Service - see box above.

The radio programs promoted thinking beyond the mainstream image of health and illness.

"I thought the program format worked well - Madeleine is a very good interviewer. I liked the fact that it ran for six weeks - it gave a sense of continuity and commitment."

*~ Maryanne Kelly,
Inverell*

"The radio shows were very positive. The programs gave value to older women's issues and challenged the status quo. The medium of radio certainly gave women a voice not often heard. The content was very good."

*~ Helga Jolley,
Lismore*

*"The program on **Body Image** was fantastic! So many great women phoned in and with a sense of humour."*

*"I hadn't really stopped to think about **incontinence** before and what causes it, but now I know I can do something about it. I've already been to my Doctor to get treatment."*

*~ Listeners from
Cobar*

"Wellness doesn't simply imply the absence of sickness - it includes social, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of living life in a more positive way."

The programs encouraged women to think more positively about being an older woman by using guest speakers, interviews and discussions to raise women's awareness on a range of topical issues. Listeners also had the opportunity to participate in a talkback segment by phoning a freecall number.

The programs kicked off on Sunday May 14 (Mother's Day) and went for approximately an hour. The first program focused on an Introduction to Wellness, followed by Body Image, Older Women and Violence, Taking Charge, Managing Change, Transport & Technology and ended with Having a Voice.

The *OWOT* radio programs could not have been delivered without the support of ABC Radio Presenter, Madeleine Randall. Her commitment to the project was a crucial success factor.

2WEB Outback Radio

2WEB Outback Radio also agreed to run a series of 5 minute interviews over the 6 weeks. The programs were to be broadcast each Monday, Wednesday and Friday with similar topics as the ABC - Older Women's Wellness, The Internet, Plumbing, Verbal Abuse and Violence, Grief and Loss and Older Women's Wisdom.

Unfortunately the involvement of 2WEB ended after the first week due to illness and reprogramming. Despite this, the programs which did go to air received favourable feedback.

Additional Focus Areas - 2WEB

Older Women's Wellness

Wellness is about spiritual, physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing. The feeling of wellness gives back to the older woman a sense that she can live with fullness and richness in life.



The Internet

The internet provides women with a quick and effective way to research and seek out information. It is also an excellent medium for connecting older rural women who are isolated.



'Plumbing'

Incontinence can be embarrassing and cause emotional, physical and social problems because of the current stigma that surrounds the issue. But there is help at hand and in most cases the problems can be managed.



Promotions

- 1,000 promotional stickers and 500 fridge magnets were developed and distributed to rural women through various organisations and networks. These were great promotional tools and very cost effective.
- Promotional pieces were published in *The Country Web* newsletter reaching over 14,000 individuals on the mailing list and a further 6,000 by alternative means of distribution such as women's days.
- Information was published on the Rural Women's Network website which had over 29,000 hits and 6,000 user sessions from May to June 2000 and a case study was included on the NSW Government Community Builders website.
- Press releases were written about the radio programs and the internet workshops which attracted wide media coverage. During May and June the Rural Women's Network participated in a number of radio and media interviews.

Outcomes

- 'Older women out there' have been presented with information and resources on wellness in a readily accessible format and have had the opportunity to listen to other women's stories, and share their own.
- Copies of the *OWOT* radio broadcasts and accompanying *info-link* sheets are available from the RWN on CD and cassette tape for loan to individuals and groups.
- The *OWOT* radio broadcasts proved so popular that ABC Local Radio developed a men's series which was aired during August 2000.
- Sets of the *info-link* sheets and posters have been distributed through various networks, including *The Women's Gathering* and Rural Doctors Networks, broadening the reach to older women. Copies are available from the Department for Women, Women's Information and Referral Service on freecall 1800 817 227.

2) Older Women Wired

The second stage of the *OWOT* project was to develop a website which was fun and provided women with information on wellness.

The first step in doing this was to decide what information would be useful on the website, how it would look, and to find a Web Designer to complete the task.

Ian Dalkin from 'Stop Laughing this is Serious', a local Orange cartoonist and web designer was commissioned to design the website and cartoons.



Internet to the Outback

Internet to the Outback provides training for families in rural and remote areas of Australia to access the internet. For more information call 02 6259 3030 or write to VISE at 25 Gollan St, Evatt ACT 2615.

"I thought the workshops were a huge success. The format worked well and everyone who participated was absolutely delighted. The trainer was lots of fun and stimulated interest."

*~ Silvia Baker,
Local Coordinator
Deniliquin*

"The workshops have made a difference to at least 4 women I know. And some of the women have even contacted me via the email that was set up for them."

*~ Helga Jolley,
Local Coordinator,
Lismore*

Cartoons were used because they allowed the issues to be dealt with in a less threatening and more approachable manner.

The website was promoted through magnets which were distributed to women through various organisations and networks, and was also advertised in *The Country Web* newsletter.

The website contains information about the *OWOT* project and a full set of the *info-link* sheets. This will be updated in the future by the Older Women's Network (OWN) to include other relevant resources and information relating to older women and wellness.

You can check out The *Older Women Out There* website at www.zipworld.com.au/~ownnsw/.

3) Older Women Surfing the Net

The final phase of the *OWOT* project was to pilot FREE *Internet for Beginners* workshops around NSW with the aim of improving women's access to up-to-date information on wellness as well as helping them overcome some of the barriers limiting their access to information and resources.



To assist RWN in deciding where the workshops would be held, an article was published in *The Country Web* newsletter asking for expressions of interest. As a result 8 initial workshops were run at Cobar, Young, Deniliquin and Lismore. Coordinators living in each location were paid a small fee to assist RWN to organise the workshops at a local level.

The next step was to find a suitable trainer. We were very fortunate to be recommended to Gloria Robbins. Gloria, in her early 70's, is a volunteer with *Internet to the Outback* (see box) and has extensive experience in training older people. Gloria was available in June so three weeks were blocked off and workshops timetabled with each local coordinator. The role of the local coordinator was to secure a venue, organise catering, take enrolments, promote the program locally, and be a general contact point.

The workshops were held over a three week period with Gloria and Allison Windus, RWN Project Coordinator, travelling around NSW to deliver the training. The size and structure of the groups differed according to the venues.

The format of the workshops started with 'getting to know each other' then looked at the hardware and software needed for connecting to the internet. This was followed by a series of activities covering basic internet concepts, email, search engines, and links. During morning tea and lunch enough time was given for women to network, ask questions and share information.

Participants were each given a resource folder which included: a list of useful websites for future reference; a booklet on 'How to find and

buy your first computer'; another on 'How to Use the Internet'; and a 'Site Bytes web and email address book' (See resources section on page 12).

As a follow on from the workshops, on the 7th of September, participants from the workshops were invited to participate in a chat forum with volunteers from *Internet to the Outback* where they could ask questions and get advice on issues relevant to the internet and computers.

Because of strong demand, further workshops are being developed for the North Coast, Central and South West of the state.



Cobar - The Cobar workshops were held at the local internet cafe which had 4 computers. The women who attended worked together in pairs at each computer. Over the two days 16 women participated in the training. The format and size of the group worked well as there was more time to pay individual attention to each student.

Deniliquin & Young - The Deniliquin and Young workshops were held at the local TAFE. These two groups were the largest of the four, with 14 participants in each workshop. This made it very difficult to spend quality time with each person on a one-on-one basis. The fact that there were two people to assist women meant that the workshops ran quite smoothly despite a shorter time frame. Had there been only one trainer the participants wouldn't have received the same level of personal attention.

Lismore - The Lismore workshops were held in the local hospital training room with 10 computers. The format and size (20 women over the two days) of the group worked well.

Evaluation of Pilot Workshops

Over 100 women ranging in age from early 50's to late 70's took part in the initial training. When asked if they would like to participate in further training, 83% of the women said they would. Many of the women also said the personal attention and hands-on experience were the highlights of the workshop. (See Appendix 1 for further details of the evaluation)

Learnings

- The workshop format worked really well. The smaller the group the more personal attention there was for the participants.
- Gloria is in her early 70's and spends much of her time as a volunteer teaching rural families computers and the internet. This was a bonus for the project as it meant the women who attended the workshops felt very comfortable and related well to Gloria as apposed to someone a lot younger.
- Many of the women felt they needed more time and that there was too much information to 'sink in' in the short time.

Other Outcomes

- By providing free internet training, over 100 older rural women (who participated in the initial workshops) have had the opportunity to learn how to access information and resources over the internet which they otherwise may not have had. These women will hopefully stimulate friends and family to learn more about the internet.
- Isolation and barriers faced by many older rural women have been broken down and they now have the necessary skills to help meet their individual needs. The mystique of using computers and the internet was broken down.
- With local media and good promotions in some areas the demand far exceeded the limited places. There is a definite demand among older rural women to learn about technology. In order to address this links were made with TAFE Outreach Officers for additional courses as well as Libraries in an effort to provide opportunities for follow-up. Further workshops using OWOT resources are being developed for the North Coast, Central and South West of the State.
- A number of women who participated in the initial round of workshops have subsequently purchased a computer.
- Many of the women who participated in the initial round of workshops have already enrolled in further internet and computer courses.



Free Resources

'How to find and buy your first computer' & 'Site Bytes: web and email address book'.

*Available from the Tasmanian Community Network, GPO Box 1441,
Hobart TAS 7001, Ph 03 6233 3336, Email: info@tcn.asn.au,
Website www.tcn.asn.au.*

'How to use the internet booklets'.

Includes information on what is the internet, what equipment and hardware you need, how to choose a service provider, what is the www, searching for information, email, discussion/email groups, chat, netiquette, downloading files and an index of internet terms.

*Available from: The Office of Women's Policy, Queensland, PO Box 390,
Brisbane QLD 4002, Ph 07 3224 4062, Email: infolink@deft.qld.gov.au.*

*The Women's Advisory Council, Western Australia, 1st Floor Hartley
Poynton Building, 141 George's Terrace, Perth WA 6000,
Ph 08 9264 1920, Email: wac@fcs.wa.gov.au,
Website: www.wa.gov.au/wac.*

*Women Tasmania, 1st Floor Public Buildings, Franklin Square,
Macquarie Street, Hobart TAS 7000, Ph 03 6233 2208,
Email: osw.admin@dpac.tas.gov.au, Website: www.women.tas.gov.au.*

Thank You to:

NSW Department of Health for providing funding for this very worthwhile project.

The women involved in the *Older Women Out There* Steering Committee for their valuable assistance and enthusiasm in the planning and implementation of the project.

ABC Local Radio for their enormous contribution to making the *Older Women Out There* radio programs such a success, and very special thanks to Madeleine Randall, Natasha Schaad and Tony Rasmussen.

All panellists and guest speakers for taking the time to participate in the radio programs.

All the older women out there who listened to the programs and called in to share their stories.

Dianne Tyson from 2WEB Outback Radio.

Internet to the Outback volunteers and especially Gloria Robbins who gave her time so freely. Gloria's input was invaluable as she inspired and motivated the women involved in the *Internet for Beginners* workshops.

The four local workshop coordinators: Marie Russell - Cobar, Silvia Baker - Deniliquin, Jill Pearce - Young, and Helga Jolley - Lismore and other women coordinating the second round of workshops.

Cobar Community Development Station, Riverina Institute of TAFE - Young and Deniliquin campuses, and Lismore Hospital for the workshop venues.

The participants who bravely tackled the workshops and chat session.

Ian Dalkin for the fabulous cartoons and website design.

Racheal Gully (Trainee with the Department for Women) for her assistance in developing the *info-link* sheets and helping with the Cobar workshop.

All the OWOT panellists and speakers:

Program 1 ~ Body Image, 14 May 2000

Cyndi Tebbel, Author of *'The Body Snatchers'*

Maggie Mellar, Australian Actress

Lorraine Dunn, Gentle Exercise Teacher

Gwenda Fulford, Newcastle Older Women's Network

Program 2 ~ Older Women and Violence, 21 May 2000

Margaret Sargent, *'Older Women Speak up About Violence'*

William Findlay, Family and Relationships Counsellor and Coordinator of the *'Hey Dad'* program

Kate Lohse, Women's Health Coordinator, Southern Area Health Service

Glenda Brown, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Liaison Officer
Tashe Long, Regional Violence Specialist

Program 3 ~ Taking Charge, 28 May 2000

Beverlee Adams, Teacher, Farmer, Local Council Member and former ABC
Rural Woman of the Year, Former member of Rural Women's Network State
Advisory Committee
Fran Rowe, Rural Financial Counsellor, Former Community Chair of Rural
Women's Network State Advisory Committee
Cyndi Kaplan-Frieman, Author of '*Sexy, Sane and Solvent -A Woman's Guide to
Femininity and Self-Esteem*'
Helen McGowan, Lawyer, Legal Options for Rural Women

Program 4 ~ Managing Change, 4 June 2000

Lyn Sykes, Public Speaker, Communications Counsellor
Fran Spora, Author and Grief Counsellor
Claudia Glasson, Volunteer Counsellor for women with breast cancer, Graduate
of Stepping Stones program
Susan Feldman, Alma Unit for Women's Health at University of Victoria

Program 5 ~ Transport and Technology, 11 June 2000

Nan Bosler, Australian Seniors Computer Club
Mavis Appleyard, Poet
Ros Fosky, Rural Development Centre, University of New England
Helen Dempsey, community lobbyist
Gloria Robbins, Internet to the Outback, Computer Skills for Older People
Kaiya Fraser, Women on Walkabout

Program 6 ~ Having a Voice, 18 June 2000

Sonia Muir, Coordinator, Rural Women's Network
Marge Bollinger, Highway Safety Action Group
Robyn Henderson, Director-General, Department for Women
April Fran, NSW Immigrant Women's Speakout Association
Glenda Brown, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Liaison Officer
Sr Carmel Hanson, St Vincent de Paul, Psychologist and justice advocate
involved in East Timor refugee effort

Key Contact List

- The **Older Women's Network (OWN)** is a community based network managed and run by its members. Its aim is to promote the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women. There are 15 OWN Groups throughout NSW. *OWN can be contacted at 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point 2000, Ph 02 9247 7046, Fax 02 9247 4202, Email ownnsw@zip.com.au, Website www.zip.com.au/~ownnsw.*
- **Women's Health Matters** is a part-time service located in Lismore which promotes a positive holistic approach to ageing and wellbeing for mid-life and older women. Clinical services specialise in menopause, osteoporosis, continence and general counselling. They offer health promotion activities throughout the area including group activities, seminars and community development. They have a free quarterly publication called Krone-icle. *Women's Health Matters can be contacted at PO Box 419, Lismore NSW 2480, Ph 02 6620 2999, Fax 02 6620 2993.*
- **Southern Area Women's Health Service (SAHS).** The recently released "*Strategic Framework to Advance the Health of Women*" is the first women's health policy for NSW Health. It will guide the implementation of strategies to improve and maintain the health of women in NSW.

Women's Health Coordinators located in each Area Health Service work in partnerships with others to improve the health status of women by addressing the social inequalities in health. Their role includes advocacy, policy, planning, project and research development. *Kate Lohse, Women's Health Coordinator, SAHS can be contacted on Ph 02 6299 6199, Fax 02 6299 6363 for more information.*

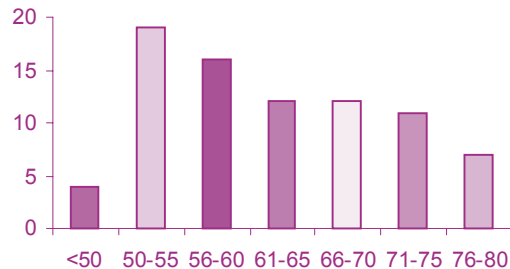
- **The Department for Women (DFW)** acts as a key agent in improving the economic and social wellbeing of women. Its focus is on women with limited access to social and economic resources. The Department provides information on issues of significance to women through its Women's Information and Referral Service, and operates the Women's Grants Program, which provides \$1 million funding to non-government organisations to undertake projects that relate to the NSW Government Action Plan for Women. *The Department can be contacted at Level 11, 100 William Street, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011, Ph 02 9334 1160, Fax 02 9334 1023, Email dfw@women.nsw.gov.au, Website www.women.nsw.gov.au. You can call WIRS on freecall 1800 817 227.*
- **Rural Women's Network (RWN), NSW Agriculture.** The RWN is a government program which supports *all* women living in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW. RWN works with individuals and groups across the community, as well as non-government and government agencies to provide information and stimulate action on issues.

RWN can provide information and referrals, connections to key individuals, groups and agencies, or provide contacts for guest speakers and workshop presenters, give presentations or facilitate workshops, and work jointly with individuals and groups on projects and issues. *RWN can be contacted at NSW Agriculture, Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800, Ph 02 6391 3620, Fax 02 6391 3650, Email allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au, Website www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn*

Appendix I

Pilot Workshop Evaluation

The following comments were received as part of the initial pilot workshops.



Age of initial workshop participants

Q.1 What were your expectations for this workshop?
Responses generally fell in to the following areas:

- to overcome my fear of new technology
- to learn the basics of using the internet and computers
- to learn how to access the internet and send emails

Q.2 Did the workshop meet your expectations? And, if the workshop didn't meet your expectations why?

All participants said the workshop either met or exceeded their expectations. However, some also commented that more hands-on time and less information would have enhanced their learning.

Q.3 What previous experience with computers and/or the internet have you had?

Over 35% of women did not have any previous experience with computers or the internet. 31% had basic computer experience and the remainder of the women had experience in areas such as spreadsheets, wordprocessing, bookkeeping and business records.

Q.4 Where did you find out about the workshop?

48% of women said they found out about the workshops through a service provider/organisation, 23% said by word of mouth, 17% said through the media eg. newspaper/radio, and 12% said through the RWN or *The Country Web* newsletter.

Q.5 Was the information presented in the course useful?

74% of women said the information presented was very useful. The other 26% said it was somewhat useful.

Q.6 Did you learn anything new?

70% of women said they learnt a lot with the other 30% learning a few things to a lot of things.

Q.7 What was the most useful part of the workshop?

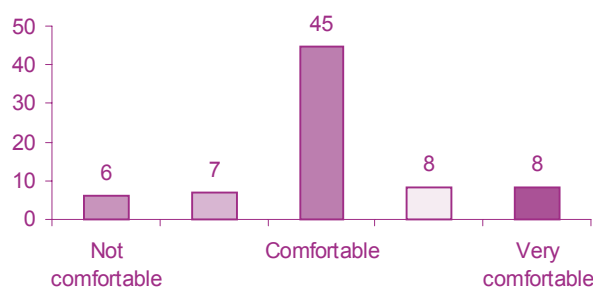
32% said the email section was the most useful and 30% said the hands-on approach was the most useful part. The remainder said the use of search engines, personal attention, and freetime were useful.

Q.8 What was the least useful part of the workshop?

Very few responses were received for this question. The main feedback was that there wasn't enough time.

Q.9 How comfortable do you feel using the internet now?

83% said they now feel comfortable to very comfortable using the internet.



Q.10 How well did the trainer present the course?

All participants said the courses were well presented.

Q.11 Would you like to participate in further training in the areas of computers, internet etc. If you answered no, why not?

83% of the women said they would like to participate in further training, 13% weren't sure and 4% said no. For those that said 'yes' areas where they would like to have further training included: more internet training (48%), general computer course, desktop publishing, business records/accounts, word processing, designing web pages, email, chat forums, windows training and downloading files.

For those that answered 'no' reasons included: no equipment, cost of access, no access, not enough time, no need and too old.

Q.12 How would you rate the overall workshop?

95% of women rated the workshop very good to excellent.

Q.13 Do you have any further comments, ideas, or suggestions to improve the workshops? (this is only a summary of responses)

- If time permitted, perhaps learning how to add graphics or photos to emails.
- For the workshops to be run over two days with an opportunity to practise more at home in between the sessions.
- A set of basic instructions on how to get around the internet and general computer commands eg. opening and closing programs.



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