



# Info-Link Sheet Having a Voice

## Women's Information and Referral Service

1800 817 227

Older Women Out There is a wellness project for women living in rural and remote areas. It is coordinated by NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network and funded by the NSW Department of Health

### Enter the Older Woman...

*Ready or not, here she is, undefined in either academic or popular terms until now: the New Older Woman...*

She is unique in many ways. For one, she will live thirty years longer than her grandmother. Her daughters will live even longer. She was born on the cusp of the Roaring Twenties and in the years leading to the Great Depression. Her life will stretch well beyond the year 2000. No one pointed out to her that she would have this gift of time, nor was society prepared for her. But even if she wasn't announced, she certainly was not prepared to have to struggle so hard for visibility in a culture geared to ever-youthfulness.

The world doesn't fit her any more — nor do its clothes, medical knowledge, attitudes, living spaces. Indeed, society seems a little embarrassed to find her still here. Historically speaking, she should be dead.

She is not only alive, but kicking!  
(from *Picture of Wellness*, OWN)

### Blossom Where You Are Planted

"In the garden of rural NSW we have great diversity. We are all unique, different, and depending on our soil and environment we will grow and flower with different colour, perfumes and sizes... Sure, some of us may be bulbs who flower in great colour, but only once a season. Others will be known for our persistence and ability to flower for long periods even during drought.

In this garden we have some grand and well established old gum trees with roots deep into the water table. They can provide shelter and protection to many understory plants. There are some wattles flowering gloriously, briefly. While wattles are essential in capturing nitrogen and bonding it to the soil, they also have a short life span. There are many examples of companion planting as well as native wilgas and orchids, imported herb bushes, some roses and even a cactus or two

In this garden there is a place for all of us. And all of us can provide

fertiliser and sunlight to each other - offering support and friendship. We just need to bloom where we're planted."

~ Cathy McGowan

**Women are 51% of the population in NSW.** Across Australia, older women from rural and remote areas have identified major concerns about the lack of participation in decision making.

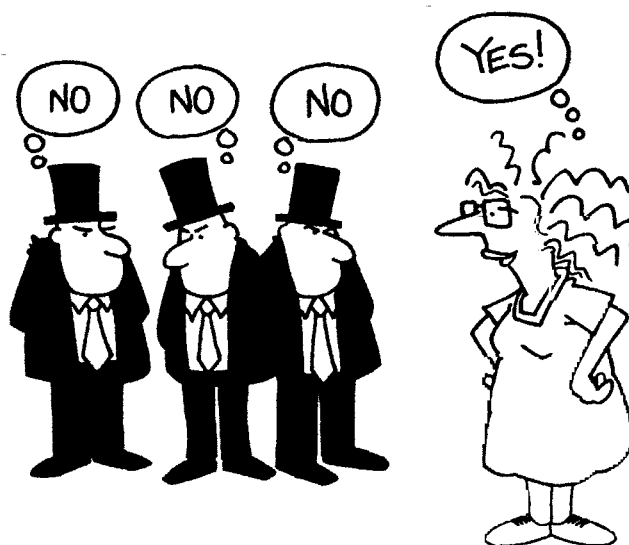
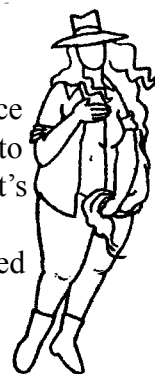
"The NSW government regards greater participation of women in decision making structures as a matter of social justice - a fair go. Apart from the fact that it is sheer madness to throw away the skills and talents of women like yourselves."

~ Hon Faye Lo Po',  
Minister for Women.

There are many ways that older women can have a say.

### Women and Decision Making Kit

This wonderful resource is for women wanting to get their voice heard. It's also a handy tool for women already involved



with committees and boards. Organisations wanting to encourage members to become active decision makers will find it useful as well.

The kit recognises that every woman approaches decision making in her own way. We learn as we go, based on our own experiences, background and conditions at the time.

#### **Topics include:**

- Legally Speaking
- Getting onto a board or committee
- Motivation - getting started
- Qualities of a good decision maker
- Useful skills for a good decision maker
- Acquiring necessary skills
- You've made it, so what's now (Part 1)
- You've made it, so what's now (Part 2)
- Networking, mentors and lobbying
- Payback: rewards and frustrations
- How women's organisations can help
- Resources and bibliography
- Attachment 1: Sample questionnaire
- Attachment 2: Sample character of best practice for women in decision making.

Call WIRS on freecall 1800 817 227 or online <http://203.26.24.146/test/wdm/wdm.html>

#### **Rural Women's Network Key Contact Database**

NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network (RWN) has a key contact database which will

provide RWN with a comprehensive listing of women - their skills, experience and interests. If you're interested in having a voice on issues and concerns important to you and would like to participate, contact RWN Ph 02 6391 3620, Fax 02 6391 3650, [allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au) [www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/rwn)

#### **Stepping Stones Kit**

NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network has produced a free grassroots leadership kit for women to use within their communities. It has all the information you need to organise your own workshop including background sheets and contacts to help you on your way. For a copy contact RWN Ph 02 6391 3620, Fax 02 6391 3650, [allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au)

#### **For a list of the current NSW Ministers**

[www.premiers.nsw.gov.au/ministers/ministers.htm](http://www.premiers.nsw.gov.au/ministers/ministers.htm)

#### **The Women's Register**

Women who are interested in being appointed to boards and committees are encouraged to place their name on the register, as Ministers and chief executives draw on the register when filling vacancies on government controlled boards. There is a vast range of boards, from government corporations to small, local committees. Often boards and committees operate in specific areas of rural NSW and nominees are sought with local knowledge and experience. Women can register their skills and experience on the NSW Government Register. Ph 02 9228 5292

#### **Australian Women's Intra Network**

(a database of Australian women's organisations) [www.isis.aust.com/win](http://www.isis.aust.com/win)

#### **Older Women's Network**

OWN is an association of older women supporting the rights and interests of all older women. Branches throughout Australia. OWN 87 Lower Fort St, Sydney, NSW Millers Point, Sydney, NSW 2000 Ph 02 9247 7046 Fax 02 9247 4202. [ownnsw@zip.com.au](mailto:ownnsw@zip.com.au) [www.zip.com.au/~ownnsw](http://www.zip.com.au/~ownnsw)

#### **National Women's Justice Coalition**

The NWJC <[www.nwjc.org.au](http://www.nwjc.org.au)> was established in February 1995 and aims to promote women's equality before the law by:

- raising awareness of issues relating to women's legal equality
- coordinating and lobbying on women's justice issues
- building networks and facilitating the work of individuals and groups

#### **More Information:**

Women's Information and Referral Service (WIRS) freecall 1800 817 227. WIRS is a free & confidential telephone service for all women in New South Wales and is part of the Department for Women. WIRS can help you find information that you, your family or friends may need from anywhere in NSW from Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm. If you ring after hours or on the weekend you can leave a message and someone will phone you back.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired you can contact WIRS on their TTY number 1800 673 304. For their translating and interpreting service call 131 450.

*This information sheet has been compiled by NSW Agriculture's Rural Women's Network as part of the Older Women Out There project. For more information contact the Rural Women's Network on Ph (02) 6391 3620, Fax (02) 6391 3650, Email<[allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allison.windus@agric.nsw.gov.au)>*

*'In my life ageing means to me,  
a time to celebrate,  
to laugh and enjoy life.'*

~ The Body Shop

## Assistance and Resources

### **Older Women's Network (OWN)**

The OWN is run for and by older women. It provides a means through which older women can meet others with similar interests and challenges the stereotyped images of older women.

For more information about OWN or to find out about a branch near you, contact their Sydney office on 02 9247 7046, Email:

[ownnsw@zip.world.com.au](mailto:ownnsw@zip.world.com.au)

~ownnsw.

### **Websites on Body Image:**

<http://womenshealth.miningco.com/health/womenshealth>

[www.thriveonline.com/weight/bodyimage/index.html](http://www.thriveonline.com/weight/bodyimage/index.html)

[www.thebodyshop.com.au/body/index.html](http://www.thebodyshop.com.au/body/index.html)

<http://health.med.monash.edu.au/health/body-image/female.htm> - for a fun Female Body Shape Questionnaire.

### **Other Useful and Interesting Websites:**

*Eat Well Live Well*

[www.healthyeating.org/index.htm](http://www.healthyeating.org/index.htm)

*Health Promotions*

[www.monash.edu.au/health/index.html](http://www.monash.edu.au/health/index.html)

*Rural Women's Network (NSW)*

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

*Department for Women*

[www.women.nsw.gov.au/home](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/home)

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