CREATING & MAKING
AUSSIE HERO QUILTS
A CRAFT REVOLUTION
2015 RURAL WOMEN’S GATHERING PROGRAM & REGISTRATION
Regular features

6 | Painting her own path

Georgia Mansur is based in Mudgee but teaches painting workshops around the world. She sold her first painting in her hometown in California, aged just 16. After moving to outback Australia in 1984 to develop a cotton property with her husband, Georgia used painting as a way to deal with the sometimes challenging and lonely life on a farm.

9 | Let the craft revolution begin

Carers Craft Studio is a initiative of Carers NSW to increase the health and wellbeing of carers by providing a craft meeting place as a positive respite experience for carers to get together, have respite, share ideas, be creative, recycle materials, build confidence and self-esteem, and participate in generational and cultural mentoring.

16 | Parenting a strong-willed child

Strong-willed children can be a challenge when they’re young, but if sensitively parented, they become terrific teens and young adults. Self-motivated and inner-directed, they go after what they want and are almost impervious to peer pressure. Strong-willed kids often become leaders. These tips will help you communicate with your child in a way that works to your advantage.

19 | NSW Rural Women’s Gathering

Registrations for Gather in the Glen are now open! This year’s program is designed to showcase rural and business enterprises from the Glen Innes district. The program includes a fantastic line-up of speakers, unique interactive tours, delicious food and fabulous entertainment.

28 | Women’s health: Sleep problems

Sleep can be our greatest friend or our worst enemy. For some, it’s a point of endless frustration, with hours and nights lost to tossing and turning and non-stop thinking. One thing is certain though when it comes to sleep—it has far-reaching effects on our health and wellbeing. These tips may help you mange your sleep problems.

Features
editorial: to be well we must create

Stephanie Dale, Byron Bay

A woman walks into a wooden hall in a small settlement 200 km from anywhere. She is not young but neither is she old. She is bent, huddled over a walking stick, leaning on her husband.

Two brief writing workshops later, the woman leaves the workshop a different person. Her eyes are shining. She is walking tall, no longer leaning on her husband. She swings her walking stick as she goes.

What happened in those few hours to change this woman’s sense of wellbeing so enormously, at least for a while?

I have a theory. And this theory goes that while all creatures on Earth need three things for their survival—air, water, food—human beings have a fourth requirement, and that is creative expression.

Of course we can and will probably survive physically without painting, taking photographs, writing or crafting but when we do not allow ourselves time to create—when we deny the inspiration that floods a human heart and mind—the longing to create will begin to devour our sense of self.

I believe our unwillingness to risk creating will haunt and hound and badge us. The longing may not kill us physically but it will smother our spirit. And when that happens we will withdraw. We may fall ill. And there’s a high probability we will take our frustration with ourselves out on others.

So my belief, this theory, is that for families and communities to be well, we must create.

Over the past 12 months I have been stalking stories. Through a creative mental health initiative, in partnership with community and government services, we have been delivering writing workshops to people in remote and regional communities.

These are no ordinary writing workshops. They are not designed for people already hard at work on their material who want to polish their skills. Rather, they are focussed on the significant percentage of Australians who long to write but, for whatever reason, do not or cannot bring themselves to begin.

Nearly 500 people west of the Great Dividing Range have attended 125 writing workshops over the past year. Heartbreakingly, most share a common thread: the belief that to take time out to write the story they long to tell is to ‘waste time’.

Much as most people long to write, the fear of appearing idle is greater than the longing. Surely, everyone is entitled to sit on their verandah while the sun goes down with a book on their lap and a pen between their fingers, clarifying thoughts, exploring ideas, telling stories.

But are they working or are they resting?

French impressionist Claude Monet was sitting in his garden, gazing languidly into an unknown distance. His neighbour put his head over the fence and said, ‘M’sieur, you are resting?’. ‘No’, replied the great artist, ‘I am working’. Three days later Monet was in his garden painting. The neighbour put his head over the fence and said, ‘M’sieur, you are working! ‘No’, said Monet, ‘I am resting’.

Sitting idle, apparently wasting time, is as essential to the creative process and the human spirit as paint and brush, pen and paper, wood and adze.

It was claiming this right that blew the lid off the contracted world of the woman 200 kilometres from anywhere, who entered the workshop leaning on her walking stick and then sent her spirits sky high with faith in the validity of her own potential.

Creative expression is as vital to our wellbeing as food, air, water.
The Rural Women’s Network (RWN) is a small state-wide government program (within Department of Primary Industries) working in innovative ways to share information and promote action on rural women’s issues.

What RWN can 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 and explore ideas to address issues and communicate priorities to decision-makers.

Across my desk

Emma Fitzsimmons
RWN Project Officer (January–June 2015)

From big things little things grow

When I was young my grandmother taught me basic knitting and crochet skills. Even though I was keen to learn, my yearning to be outside playing cricket with my brother was stronger and my skills waned.

My mother then tried to teach me how to knit when I was pregnant with my first child and I failed dismally! It wasn’t until after my third child that I became interested in crafts that I could not only do at home for relaxation, but that were portable to take to after school activities. I taught myself to crochet from a children’s book and haven’t looked back.

I have found working with yarn isn’t just about creating but is also a big de-stress activity at the end of the day for me. The rhythmic motion soothes my soul.

Earlier this year I was honored to be involved in a project (see page 14, Blanket of love). It was whilst working on this special project, and the fact that there has been a resurgence in people wanting to learn ‘old’ crafts, that the theme for this ‘Creating and Making’ edition of The Country Web was born.

In this issue we showcase rural women creating and making in communities across NSW, hoping to inspire other groups to form and come together to create together. The wonderful thing about crafting together is that you can be any age, background or skill level. And you don’t need to have anything in common other than a keen interest to learn or practice your craft.

As part of the crochet team for the blanket project I found it amusing that people walking past assumed I was knitting. This is a skill I don’t possess, and I started to reply that I was a ‘hooker’ not a knitter, which always produced a smile and funny comments.

Every Friday lunchtime, a group of women (we don’t discriminate, but our encouragement of the male species has so far fallen on deaf ears) from various sections in DPI come together to learn crochet, work on new or existing projects and to have a good laugh. It’s a brilliant way to end the working week and has brought so many people together and provided a lovely platform for new friendships.

The group has new people coming all the time and some who come for a refresher and then don’t return. The base of a common interest is making for some great team building across the organisation. The more experienced ‘hookers’ help the ‘newbies’ and we all share ideas and encourage each other on all of our different projects. The group has even started to evolve and some of the crochet-only members are embarking on learning to knit from the members who were once knitters-only in the group.

Speaking of trying new ideas, sharing, encouragement and new friendships, turn to page 19 to see this year’s NSW Rural Women’s Gathering Program. The Gathering is being held from 9–11 October at Glen Innes and is sure to motivate and inspire you. The weekend will showcase local rural and business enterprises, focus on current rural issues and will include the official launch of the 2015 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

It will feature some outstanding speakers such as Mary Coustas, Jean Kittson, Georgina Dent and Annabel Dulhunty, and include fun, innovative and educational interactive tours.

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) report recently undertaken by the RWN in conjunction with Social Ventures Australia (SVA), revealed that gatherings significantly contribute to social and economic outcomes. It found that for every $1 Invested $2.20 is returned in social and economic value. Women who participate in a gathering feel more connected, inspired, empowered, supported, resilient and able to have a voice about issues that matter to them. So what are you waiting for? Grab your mother, your daughter or your friends and get your registrations in early to secure your place!

In our last issue we invited readers to complete a survey to gather feedback on the magazine and it’s relevance to rural women and communities. We have had an amazing response and would like to thank everyone who participated for the time you took to provide us with your valuable ideas and suggestions. The survey closes 10 September.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much we have enjoyed bouncing around new ideas and researching wonderful, creative women.
Letters  Write to: Letters, The Country Web, Locked Bag 21, ORANGE NSW 2800

Paper, place, people

I love receiving The Country Web—it helps validate the role of community and why I choose to live in my small coastal village in southern NSW.

I am a paper artist who works with natural fibres and I recently took part in a creative project in our Shire. While I was stirring a pot of native plant fibres the volunteers were asking, ‘What are you cooking up today?’ I replied, ‘I’m cooking Lomandra—Tussock Grass’. This was one of many pots of native fibres I was cooking up during my artist in residency at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens in November last year. I was there to make paper, experimenting with the native grasses and plants grown in the gardens. I harvested, cut, cooked, blended and made 10 different types of paper, each with its own colour and characteristics.

This project for me was about making paper which reflects the place. What I discovered was a beautiful place, but also an extraordinary community of people. The volunteers gave generous assistance, plant knowledge and encouragement and were curious and interested in what I was doing. The project brought people together and provided a new way for people to see and learn about their environment.

Mandy Hillson, Congo

Creative repurposing

Tottenham embraced creativity this year when we chose repurposing as the theme of our annual community expo and secured a grant to have Jane Milburn of Textile Beat present upcycling workshops. We chose the theme after hearing Jane on ABC Central West talk about how she reuses and repurposes clothing and textiles as an ethical and sustainable alternative to cheap fast fashion.

It’s so easy to get caught up in the constant consumption of new stuff rather than taking time and care to reuse what we already have. Previous generations were much more conscious of the finite nature of the world and we too can be more resourceful and creative with clothing and textiles—especially those made of the natural fibres, like wool and cotton, which we grow in our region.

The Waste to Art competition run as part of the Tottenham Community Expo sparked great interest from school students and local artists, and Jane’s upcycling workshops were embraced by the youth club and others.

Elly Tom travelled from Parkes to attend the workshop bringing a suitcase of treasure she couldn’t part with yet wasn’t wearing. She enjoyed learning upcycling skills and meeting like-minded people. She said, ‘A big part of the workshops was the confidence I gained. Now I love repurposing—it is so much fun to be creative in this way’.

Since the workshop my mind is always looking at ‘stuff’ and thinking what can be done with it. The planets are aligning around creative upcycling and I love that we’re ahead of the curve by bringing Jane to Tottenham.

The Textile Beat workshops were made possible through a Regional Arts NSW Country Arts Support Program grant.

Catherine Jarvis, Tottenham

Doing things to the max

On the day I read the latest Country Web, I came across this true story in a book. A 20-year-old student suddenly became blind.

During his rehab (and depression) a friend challenged him: ‘Next time I visit I want a list of the things you can do’.

The following visit revealed a different person. The young man made a list of 1000 things he could still do and had decided ‘to do them to the max.’

Life throws curve balls to all of us. Instead of lamenting the things lost to me, I’m currently listing what I can do—to the max!

Julie Freeman, Gloucester

Words of wisdom

Special thanks for the article, 12 things you should never stop doing, in the last issue. It was full of words of wisdom that I have sent to many friends. The Web is a great magazine and continues to grow. Well done and best wishes on its continued success.

Jan Dawkins, Oatley

Correction: Call for palliative care ambassadors

If you are interested in becoming a palliative care ambassador please note the updated email address for Dr Yvonne McMaster is: yvonnemcmaster1@gmail.com

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

» 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
Phone Country Care Link Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 3 pm, on 1800 806 160 or 02 8382 6434.

Country Care Link — caring for country families
Painting her own path from outback NSW to the world

Georgia Mansur, Mudgee

Can you share a little of your interesting career journey so far.

Like many others my career journey hasn’t take a straight path. It’s more like a curly, tangled piece of string that I am slowly unraveling as I find my way forward.

My first exhibition was at the age of 16 in California. My high school principal bought my first painting for $100, which felt like a million to me at the time! That bit of encouragement from someone who knew and appreciated art, as well as the introduction to the old masters through books and my art teacher, gave me a great desire to paint and express myself.

The school careers counsellors steered me away from art and into pharmacy, which I found boring and painful. I only lasted a year before I changed my college major to communications.

Believing it wasn’t possible to make a living as an artist, I didn’t pursue my passion when I was younger, but I did take as many elective art classes as I could and funded my college tuition through part-time jobs painting signs, creating promotional materials and as a Clinique consultant.

After graduating, I married and moved to outback Australia with my husband to develop a cotton property an hour west of Moree, NSW. I was suddenly in a foreign country, very ill-prepared to handle the tough years of isolation and extremes of drought and flood and so many other issues one faces on an outback property.

Luckily, I had a sister-in-law who also loved painting and we began encouraging each other to paint whenever possible while raising our young families. It was a freedom to explore and express all the emotions and feelings I had going on inside and I appreciated getting back to my creative side—it made me feel happy, centered and strong.

Painting always brings me back to my true self. If I am traveling and teaching and I have not had enough of my own painting time I get a bit cranky, so it’s best when I plan my schedule to include this time alone creating.

How do you use creativity to drive personal transformations?

In the painting workshops I host around the world I often encounter people who have lived a successfully active work and family life and are starting to think about what they want to do with the rest of their lives. Many are at a transitional stage and open to trying something new or different. Some have never painted before and some have dabbled a bit in their free time but need some solid guidance and support to continue.

It is very important for people to trust me before I can help them achieve their personal breakthroughs and transformations. I must be honest and share my journey with them, as well as demonstrate how to take something that seems very complicated and difficult and break it down into manageable steps.

Seeing this done and learning the techniques and processes necessary to design and compose a painting gives them the confidence they need to express themselves. I help them to really see in a way they are not used to, by observing with intention, to see with artist’s eyes. This opens up so many wonderful possibilities, sparking their creative mind and providing a richer existence.

I help people gain access to a part of themselves that has been dormant for many years, often since they were children, in a way that is engaging and asks them to suspend judgment.

Why is creativity in business important?

In all areas of life you must evolve and adapt to changing environments and conditions. Painting is about problem solving and finding interesting and different ways to bring resolution to the subject you are tackling.

I tell my students that if you become too precious about one thing in your painting, the rest of it will suffer. I feel it is important to constantly be working on a painting as a whole, always keeping an eye on the big picture whilst managing the area you are working on at present.
Just like managing a business, there are a lot of balls you’re juggling and if you lose concentration you will have a big mess to clean up!

For me it boils down to problem solving and time management; always keeping a clear picture in your mind of what you are trying to achieve but allowing enough flexibility to adapt and change as you are in the flow.

What are your top tips for exploring creativity?

Don’t put limits on yourself before you have started to even explore the creative options. We are capable of much more than we think and sometimes we choose not to try because it is too scary or we are afraid of looking bad.

Focus on taking steps each day towards your goal and get help when you think you need it.

Don’t let others’ negative comments cloud your vision but do take care to problem solve and anticipate possible issues.

Have a strong curiosity level and a will to learn and grow. Don’t worry about competing with others, just try to better your own efforts.

This story originally appeared in womeninfocus.com.au—a Commbank community supporting women in business and community.

Jan-Maree Ball, Aussie Hero Quilts

Since 1 January 2012, Aussie Hero Quilts has been sending handmade quilts and laundry bags to sailors, soldiers, airman, airwomen and Defence civilians deployed overseas in the Middle East, including Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as to our peacekeepers in Egypt, South Sudan and Israel.

The bags and quilts are made by volunteers from all states and territories around Australia. These are a gift to say thank you for the service they provide to Australia and the sacrifice that service asks of them and their loved ones.

The quilts and laundry bags are not only practical gifts but are a symbol of home and a constant visual reminder that someone, other than family, cares about them. The troops are touched by the fact that someone they don’t know is prepared to spend time making a gift for them.

Defence-issued laundry bags all look the same, which can be confusing (not to mention dull) in communal laundry environments. Our colourful and quirky laundry bags are made to last and have put an end to bags of laundry being lost or picked up by the wrong person.

As well as sending quilts and laundry bags to those who request them, we are proud to honour wounded service men and women through the provision of Australian-themed Wounded Warrior Quilts given to injured soldiers as they transit through to the hospital in Germany. The Wounded Warrior Quilts are made as Australian as we can make them.

We also make Fallen Warrior Quilts—these quilts are usually made from poppy blocks sent in from all over Australia. They are passed on to families whose loved one has paid the ultimate sacrifice and lost their life in the line of duty.

Our quilts are 42 inches wide by 70 inches long, with 100 per cent cotton batting. Long and thin means that they fit well on a single bunk, a ship’s rack or can be wrapped around a soldier’s shoulders when relaxing.

The colour and warmth of the quilt is often the first thing the troops see when they return to their room at the end of a long day.

I think the best part of the quilt is the label. It says, ‘This is an AUSSIE HERO QUILT made for an Aussie Hero serving overseas with gratitude for your service’. It includes the year, the blog name and the email address so they can easily contact us.

One quilt and a laundry bag weigh less than two kilograms, which enables them to be sent postage-free (and a few treats can usually be squeezed in too). At the end of May 2015 we had sent over 4200 quilts and nearly 6300 laundry bags since starting the project in January 2012.

For more information or to find out how you can get involved, email Jan-Maree at friendsofAHQ@gmail.com or phone 0422 227 019.

More information
www.aussieheroquilts.blogspot.com.au

Like Aussie Hero Quilts (and Laundry Bags) on Facebook
Arts NSW supported Jamie-Lea and five other artists to attend the Biennale.

‘Being in Venice was incredible. There were a few moments where I pinched myself to believe this really was happening! ’

‘Venice and the Biennale is really another world away from where I live in Coonamble—the environment is amazing—how they live and the fashions were a real eye opener. I’m sure the Italians smelt gum trees as I walked past them with my Aussie grown accent.

‘While the experience was fantastic, it wasn’t as glamorous as some might imagine. It was hard work! There were some long days installing the exhibition and we faced several challenges with the space being extremely old and weathered. It’s not so easy to just nail into brick that is from the 15th century.

‘Seeing the biennale pavilions and openings first hand was incredible and I’m extremely grateful to have had that experience, although it’s nice to know things don’t always go to plan with exhibition openings even on the world stage.’

As inspiring as the experience has been Jamie-Lea said it hadn’t changed or challenged her drive or love of her culture and home.

‘If anything the experience confirms my belief that contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art is extraordinarily powerful and I feel so lucky to be a part of that.’

Jamie-Lea said as RADO she works in a variety of positions that could be described as CEO, project coordinator, administrator, gallery director, curator, teacher, artist and sometimes cleaner, but to have worked on this project from start to finish was an amazing experience.

‘Watching the concept unfold—sourcing funding, working across communities, facilitating workshops and coordinating artists; developing partnerships that continue over a number of years and then achieve such a phenomenal result is incredible.

‘Curating a contemporary piece of Aboriginal Artwork from our region to be exhibited on an international scale is an incredible achievement, but to also have been one of the artists and then install the work myself in Venice, that’s a dream, and if there are no other benefits from this experience, that is enough.’

More information www.project-australia.blogspot.com.au
www.regionalartsnsw.com.au

Aboriginal arts Connective understanding

Robyne Young, Regional Arts NSW

Fostering creating and making in others is very much at the heart of Jamie-Lea Hodges’ job as regional arts development officer (RADO) at Outback Arts—the Regional Arts Board, based in Coonamble where she was born and raised.

After completing Year 12 at Coonamble High School, Jamie-Lea spent five years in Sydney where she graduated from the College of Fine Arts (COFA), University of NSW with a Bachelor of Art Education, majoring in sculpture/photography. It was always her intention to return to her hometown and inspire young people, just as she had been inspired by her art teacher.

Motivated by her Wiradjuri grandmother, her family history and through her work at Outback Arts, Jamie-Lea has strived to make art that is relevant to the community. With Together Dreaming and the Boorlarm Nangamai Aboriginal Arts & Culture Studio based in Gerringong on the south coast of NSW she has delivered workshops and capacity building activities to Aboriginal arts practitioners across her North West region.

In 2013 there was the highly successful String Theory exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

Through workshops with Italian artist-in-residence, Giorgia Severi, Jamie-Lea curated Connective Understanding which was part of the Country Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. The 14-metre-long handmade string was crafted from Australian grasses, seeds, native feathers and contemporary materials, and explored the ancient ways of Aboriginal Australia through an innovative approach to contemporary fibre art. It brought together 30 artists from North Western NSW and explored the connections between communities, across generations and the land.

‘The artistic concept highlights the collaborative practices of contemporary Aboriginal artists, responding and participating in conversations that carry out the connective understanding of community across physical and cultural divides, sharing their knowledge and exchanging their stories to reflect their collective voice’, Jamie-Lea said.
Let the craft revolution begin

Carers craft studio

Yve Gritschneder, Carers NSW

Carers NSW is an organisation providing informal care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness, or is frail. Carers NSW supports and advocates for carers in NSW, and is the only statewide organisation that has all carers as its primary focus.

A craft studio was developed by Carers NSW in 2013. Since its inception the Carer Craft Studio has been running in the Coffs Harbour office once a week. It aims to increase the health and wellbeing of carers by providing a weekly craft meeting as a positive respite experience for carers to get together, have respite, share ideas, be creative, recycle materials, build confidence, self-esteem and participate in generational and cultural mentoring.

According to Robert Reiner, a New York University psychologist who has studied the health benefits of crafting: ‘The act of performing a craft is incompatible with worry, anger, obsession and anxiety and is one of the ways that we believe crafts are healing. Experts tell us not to consider finding time for crafts as self-indulgence, but rather to consider it as a medical necessity like a medication that you need to take for optimal benefit.’

The idea for the Carer Craft Studio came from Ruth Weston, who works in the Carers NSW Coffs Harbour office. Having cared for two of her children in different stages of their lives, she found that having a craft project on hand helped her to de-stress and take her mind off her situation.

The Studio creates a variety of benefits for carers, including the ability to earn extra money through the sale of craft items, a place to make gifts for family and friends and work and education opportunities. Long-term friendships may be formed reducing social isolation and improving the mental and physical wellbeing of carers. Other benefits include a sense of achievement and an opportunity to share information relating to caring roles. There atmosphere is fun and full of laughter, which is great therapy in itself.

The feedback from carers who regularly attend the Studio is overwhelmingly positive, with many carers praising Ruth’s commitment.

One of the Carer Craft Studio participants said, ‘This group allows freedom, comfort and security. It keeps everyone connected, prevents isolation, allows for sharing of ideas and access to information and group networking’.

‘The Studio, and in particular Ruth, has given me confidence in myself and my caring role and given me direction in my employment for the future. I don’t have the words to express my gratitude. My personal growth and my caring role have benefited in leaps and bounds. I’ve also made some lovely friendships and many connections within the Coffs area as a direct result of participating in the studio,’ said another participant.

One carer who has a mental health issue and is caring for two children with Autism has been participating in the craft program since it began. When she first went to the Carer Craft Studio she was overwhelmed by her situation. The feedback she provided at the end of 2013, after six months attending, stated that she now had a reason to get out of bed and felt supported in all aspects of her life. By the end of 2014 and after obtaining funding from Medicare Local North Coast she had commenced a Certificate IV in training and assessment in preparation for work in the future. She would ideally love to run a craft studio herself. She has recently had a major change of circumstances whereby her husband has gained employment in another town which has meant that the family has moved to be nearer to his work. With support the carer has managed this event extremely well and is looking forward to the future.

Due to the ongoing success of the Carer Craft Studio, Carers NSW has agreed to continue to fund the materials of the craft studio as well as some of the employment costs for Ruth, who has great plans for the future.

It is envisaged that over time craft studios will be available to more carers throughout NSW.

More information
www.carersnsw.org.au
www.youngcarersnsw.org.au
Sonia Muir, Orange

I drove cautiously at dusk along a dirt road through the scrub, ever vigilant for kangaroos and following the ‘almost there’ signs to my final destination—Pilliga Pottery Barkala Artisan Farm. This magical place is the epitome of ‘creating and making’ and represents over 30 years of visionary transformation, lots of sweat and I suspect, even a few tears.

Maria Rickert travelled to Australia in 1980 with her then-husband and young 18-month-old son and ended up being drawn by the silence and majesty of the Warrumbungle Mountains. She has been a key creative force behind establishing this 10 000 acres ‘off the grid’ Germanic Hobbit-feel ‘village’, 30-odd kilometres outside Coonabarabran, just off the bustling Newell Highway.

I visited for a North West drought women’s leadership retreat and the location couldn’t have been more perfect. Despite night falling fast, the complex was a hive of activity with a small squad of young international students and travellers working on short-term contracts chopping wood, preparing food or doing whatever chores were needed.

It felt like a United Nations youth hostel and everyone seemed pleased to be there and see another side to the Australian bush.

The retreat included some learning activities from the Rural Women’s Network Shaping Our Future Together course and other active and restorative activities designed to build connections and personal resilience through skills and knowledge.

One evening after a day of stimulating conversation, walks and yoga practice we enjoyed delicious wood-fired pizzas cooked on site with homemade cheese, followed by gelato and espresso coffees. Everything was served on ceramic plates and in pottery cups—there is no deprivation to the palate or aesthetics at Barkala Farm.

Maria joined the women and generously shared some of her personal story, which is peppered with messages of love, forgiveness and resilience.

‘My husband left me with three kids. I cried for months and wore sunglasses so no one could tell. I was so sad and angry I forgot how to be happy.’

Despite being devastated, she decided to face her sadness and anger by reflecting on her core values.

‘I focused on what was most important to me and why I was here. I knew something needed to change or I would not be able to go forward. I actually decided I didn’t want to be sad anymore. If our values are central to our lives then sadness and anger can be managed—I believe this helped me to get through a tough time. We need to remember to be happy with where we are. Life is a gift to look for the positive and be thankful. I let my tears flow until I had none left.’

Once Maria reconnected with her core values she was able to rebuild her life.

‘Every day I try to do something good as this is part of my foundation and who I am. Even though I don’t attend church regularly, God is part of my life and gives me meaning. The principle of sharing is also an important value that brings happiness to my life. We need to remember that we women are the strength of our families and our communities. We need to celebrate.

‘It is beautiful to be a female and a nurturer. I was a kindergarten teacher for disabled children in Germany. When I came to Australia I offered to help a local severely disabled child. She had very few skills and couldn’t even speak when she came to live with us. She now lives independently, has a child and speaks two languages. If we can be strong and kind to each other life can change. It has for me.

‘This is my family business. My two sons and daughter-in-law are all involved in running Barkala Farm and Pilliga Pottery. I also have a beautiful grandson. I am inspired by family. It is what drives me.’

Together with their team of transient workers they continue to create and make this place special and unique.

‘Despite the isolation and distance I have never been afraid of challenges.’

Maria has a huge pottery studio on-site, runs a cafe seven days a week and offers a range of comfortable rustic terracotta ‘infused’ accommodation options for those who wish to stay and experience the tranquillity of the Pilliga and the clear star-studded night skies.

Nothing can stop Maria as she continues to build a future in this small pocket of North West NSW.

‘We recently bought a pub in Coonabarabran so this is our next challenge. My town needs energy. I don’t use big bullets for sparrows and many problems are solved with a smile and good communication.

We as women need to have our say and acknowledge the powerful force we provide to others through our love.’

An artisan oasis in the middle of the scrub
Rural Resilience Program

James Leigo, Rural Support Worker, Dubbo

I recently joined the Rural Resilience Program (RRP) as a rural support worker, based in Dubbo. I was attracted to the RRP because of its focus on working with farming people to strengthen our ability to deal with adversity and promote our ability to thrive as individuals and business owners.

As a primary producer who grew up in the Western Division, I developed a lifelong connection with the land and a passion for animal production and land management. I completed primary school by correspondence with School of the Air Broken Hill and secondary education at The Scots School Bathurst. I have a masters degree in Agricultural Commerce and Sustainable Management. My background is in animal health and natural resource management, having worked as a catchment officer.

I was raised at Dungarvan, 160 kilometres north-west of Bourke, and along with my wife we are still involved with its management and operation. Currently, Dungarvan supports two key enterprises—Dorper sheep and beef cattle, and like many producers in the Western Division we have also been able to generate income from the sale of feral goats.

In the past eight years we have undertaken significant change to our land management. In partnership with my father David, we have completed 106 kilometres of total grazing pressure fencing, built eight new trap yard facilities and installed 19 kilometres of poly pipe with five new water points. We moved from set stocking to rotational grazing and are focused on reducing our total grazing pressure and increasing our rest periods. This has been achieved by reducing movement and numbers of feral goats and kangaroos and moving livestock to other areas when ground cover levels drop below critical points. We’ve also moved from Merino wool sheep to Dorper meat sheep.

Initiating change has not been easy, especially on a large scale and during prolonged periods of low productivity. As farmers understand, fencing and water infrastructure is very expensive. At the time, we were lucky to work with the Western Catchment Management Authority and got involved in incentive funding projects that really helped initiate these changes.

We were also able to access training that linked us with people undertaking similar change—it was very motivating.

Being part of the RRP allows me to combine my passion for the land and achieve positive change. Our team have recently been working with farming communities on:

- farm office efficiency workshops
- mobile skin check clinics
- men’s and women’s mental health and wellbeing
- wellbeing workshops, including writing schools and women’s retreats
- succession planning
- disaster leadership training
- natural disaster recovery
- low stress livestock handling schools

If you’re a farmer, or you live in a farming community, and have good ideas that could support you to make the changes that you need, don’t hesitate to contact a member of the team. Sometimes all we need is a business partner to work with us to unlock new opportunities.

I believe together we can make change positive and grab opportunities to develop as individuals and reach our potential. We all have the ability to improve our footprint on the land and help the people around us. Through continued development, hard work and optimism, anything is possible!

The RRP 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 them prepare for the future.
- listening to farming needs and issues and communicating these to policy makers.

The Country Web • Spring 2015 • Creating and Making | 11
Suzy has started a blog so she can share her colouring pages and other snippets of inspiration to encourage others to get creative. On the blog she shares a fabulous project she and her daughters made, where they created a beautiful window dressing for Suzy’s art space.

’I have a great workspace and while I love being able to look out the generous sized window into the yard, the afternoon heat is a killer. So I came up with a fun solution that involved lots of colour and my two very talented daughters.

’I gathered our supplies—a roll of contact, some sharpies (which I finally found a use for) and two of the best colouring-iners (I know not a word) I could find—then the fun began!

’I measured out the contact to fit one of the window panes and then let the girls go to town with their colouring. They worked together without any fighting to create their masterpiece and when it was done it was my turn to have some fun adding the pattern and detail.

’It was tricky getting this masterpiece onto the window and there were a few bubbles but overall we were really pleased with the end result. Now we just have to do the other side which we are saving for another day.’

For pictures and details of Suzy’s amazing window transformation visit her blog, suzannehoughtondesigns.com.au/blog

Suzy’s tips for creativity

» Have a nice space free from clutter. Grab a cuppa and find somewhere relaxing—your mind will automatically relax and you’ll find it easier to create. If you don’t have space inside for a big project, go outside—you need to be able to spread out and make a mess without worrying about your surroundings.

» Don’t worry about where to start. Make a mark, splash some paint, draw a line. People ‘worry-up’ the finished product before they have even begun. Start and worry about the rest later.

» Don’t get hung up on specifics. If your project takes a turn mid-way just go with it.

» When working with children don’t tell them they are doing it the wrong way—happy accidents are sometimes the best kind.

» Creativity can be learned but like all things it takes practice. If you like to draw for example, draw for 10 minutes a day—doodle while you’re on the phone, watching TV, waiting for the kids at school—every
time you ‘make a mark’ you’re exercising your creative muscle.

» Surround yourself with creative people. Grab a friend and colour together. Have a play date with the kids and make an afternoon of it. Find a local art group. You will be amazed at the support you will get.

» Most importantly, don’t let your inner voice judge you. Just create, be happy to create and be proud of what you create. Do it for you, and don’t worry about anything else. If you get joy out of doing something, that’s all that matters.

Season of Salt & Honey
Review by Emma Fitzsimmons, Blayney

When I started the Season of Salt & Honey, by Hannah Tunnicliffe, I thought to myself, ‘here we go, another new author who uses 20 words to describe a box and the main character is a princess to boot’. How mistaken I was. Within a few pages I was taken in and was disappointed when I finished. I felt like emailing the publisher to beg Hannah to write a sequel just so I could find out what happened to Frankie!

The book tells the story of Italian-American Francesca (or Frankie as she is known to friends and family) who falls in love with her first school boyfriend and lives the life she always wanted. They leave school, move in together and get engaged. One day while her fiancé Alex is out surfing there is an accident and he never returns.

Frankie has an overbearing but loving family and a mother-in-law who has never approved of her. She escapes to a cabin in the forest owned by Alex’s family. Making friends with her new neighbours she starts to heal not only the loss of Alex, but also the relationship with her sister. Family come to visit and feast on comforting Italian fare to cheer Frankie up. The recipes are dotted throughout the book and will leave your mouth watering.

The moral to this story is ‘all is not what it seems’.

Women’s stories

Lissa-Jane de Sailles, Nowra

The wind stirs with new life. The elders invite us to hear their stories and weave together. A weaving of stories begins. As the stories entwine, three generations prepare for the first steps in a new dance. Like a bird preparing for flight, they spread their wings. At their head, the Elders gaze into the far distance and back into the past, and ask, is everybody ready? Therese Quinn, 2014

In March 2014 I was invited by the Illawarra Women’s Information Service and women elders from Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation to be a contributing artist to the Steel Gardens: Wollongong Women’s Stories project.

Steel Gardens was a culmination of the Gathering Ground project conducted with women from a number of local women’s community groups. Gathering Ground began in 2013 for women from these diverse groups met at the Wollongong Botanic Garden to gain inspiration, meet and explore storytelling, memories of gardens, home and landscape.

Connections made during both projects culminated into Steel Gardens, a multidisciplinary installation held at the Wollongong Regional Art Gallery. The Gallery hosted the installation, workshops and performance as a part of their visiting curators program. Women from these diverse groups were coproducers with trained artists and community cultural development practitioners.

Members of the multi-arts team included coordinator Therese Quinn, musician and composer Denise Thomas, and printmaker and visual artist Lucia Parrella. Women’s groups included the Aboriginal Elders and Carers Group, Multicultural Women’s Café, Women’s Information and Cultural Exchange, Warrawong Italian Women’s Group, Cringila Macedonian Women’s Group and young women’s groups from local high schools.

Each group contributed by storytelling, basket weaving, shadow puppetry, dance, song, drawing, sewing, and dyeing with natural materials.

My role in the project was to facilitate a weaving circle with Aboriginal elders and their carers on a regular basis and then facilitate a weaving workshop with all of the women at the Gallery. It was an honour to meet the women and connect with the elders.

This year I have participated in and planned more workshops in natural dyeing and basketry in Wollongong as well as cooking and catering for the Illawarra Koori Women’s Group at their biannual Aboriginal women’s healing weekends in Nowra.

Some of the Aboriginal women I have worked with were students of my late teacher, master weaver Jim Walliss OAM, who was instrumental in helping local Aboriginal people establish themselves as artisan basket weavers. It was a pleasure to explore age-old weaving techniques and to interpret and create artefacts in a contemporary context. To see the works in the Gallery, which consisted of random weave pods in a huge wire coolamon at the head of the gallery (pictured below) and the grass skirts made from Lomandra on the walls, gave all who saw them a different view of women’s so called ‘crafts’.
Recipe for resilience

Ellen Day, Broken Hill

Ingredients
- A car boot full of sewing machines
- Needles and thread
- 10 enthusiastic women

Method
1. Combine well.
2. Put combined mixture into a training room with brightly coloured materials and a teacher.
3. Slow cook for two days and season with laughter, love and conversation.
4. Decorate with dinner and some shopping.

This ‘recipe for resilience’ was tested earlier this year when a group of women took part in a two-day sewing workshop and retreat. The participants travelled from Broken Hill to Cobar and over the two days supported and nurtured each other, fostering attitudes of positive thoughts and belonging.

During their time away the women sewed, learnt new skills, shared ideas and switched off from their day-to-day routine. All women acknowledged that sharing stories, thoughts and feelings was an essential element to managing stress and improving wellbeing.

Women who attend this group come from a variety of backgrounds–some are from station properties while others live in town.

Friendship, support and learning new skills are just some of the reasons this group comes together.

One woman at the recent gathering said, ‘I love this time away. I value the friendship and the time we spend together.’ Living alone, she feels a connection with a group of like-minded friends and said this connection helps in times of illness and loneliness. Having a few days to voice her concerns and talk through her doubts helped this woman become better prepared to consider her options about retirement and a move into a supported living community.

Another woman who came to this year’s group is battling cancer, and although the regular travel to Adelaide is a challenge this trip wasn’t a hardship at all. She went home strengthened and re-energised for the next phase of her battle.

Time was of the essence, so her colleagues, their family and friends, undertook the special project of knitting and crocheting her a special blanket. She was also taught to knit and her square was included in another blanket for her family.

When you know you are about to lose someone special from your work team in this way there is an overwhelming sense of helplessness. Everyone wants to show that they are thinking of the person going through illness, but struggle with how best to go about it.

This special blanket project became a project of love and a great distraction for the team at work–we finally felt we were doing something useful for our colleague.

Recognising that not everyone could knit or crochet we invited people to also contribute to the project through donations. The contributions we received more than covered the cost of the wool.

The knitting team knitted over 100 squares using different styles and techniques. The squares were then given to the crochet team who crocheted around each square and then crochet ed all the squares together.

The outcomes, however, will bring immeasurable benefits.

Colleen from the Cobar Quilt Shop said, ‘The interaction and connection works both ways. Watching the bonding and listening to the stories make me proud to know and work with these strong and vibrant women’.

There is quite a bit of evidence that spending time with friends can have a significant impact on the reduction of stress and improve wellbeing. A group provides emotional and physical support. It can also be an outlet for interaction outside your immediate family or business.

The annual trek to Cobar demonstrates these benefits beyond doubt. It is also great fun and results in some fabulously creative work.

This wholesome recipe will appeal to women of all ages who value support and connection with peers. The ingredients can vary and the choices are up to the individual. The outcomes, however, will bring immeasurable benefits.

Blanket of love

Kirsten Felstead, Orange

Have you got a bucket list?

A work colleague of mine had been fighting a long battle with cancer and created a bucket list of things she wanted to accomplish—one of which was to learn to knit so she could make a special blanket for her daughter.

‘It does my heart good to feel the love. The time away rejuvenates me and gives me strength. I can forget for a short time my battle with my illness and I can also let my guard down because I don’t have to be strong if I choose not to be.’

Colleen from the Cobar Quilt Shop said, ‘The interaction and connection works both ways. Watching the bonding and listening to the stories make me proud to know and work with these strong and vibrant women’.

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The finished blanket, that included a square knitted by her mother, was presented in a lovely basket.

Her bucket list was ticked–she had learnt to knit, and while she wasn’t able to knit the whole blanket herself, like all dreams, the process can change but the outcome is what really matters.

Crocheted flowers were made into brooches for those who contributed to the project as a way of remembering the purpose of the blanket. These were proudly worn at the farewell service for our colleague and will continue to be worn on days we need to be reminded what is important—to live every moment and care for others.

Another two blankets have since been completed and were presented to our farewell ed colleague’s family in August to coincide with her birthday–a final gift from her to her family with her knitted square sitting firmly in the middle of one of the blankets.

This project has inspired those who participated to get back into knitting or to learn to crochet. It was a project of love that will last a lifetime.
Community Arts 101

Dawn Druitt-Hollins, Cobargo

I live in a small rural village on the far south coast of NSW. A short distance away is the iconic seaside town of Bermagui, and there, right above the main beach sits the Surf Life Saving Club. It is a splendid building—an asset to the town and the focus of community activities. There is only one problem—with all the hard surfaces the acoustics are dreadful!

As course coordinator of Bermagui and District U3A, I often book the Surf Club for classes and am frustrated by the effects of echoing sound. For one large event I organised, an exhibition of local quilts hung on the walls of the club house solved the problem beautifully and it was obvious that something permanent should be done.

Crafts are not really my thing, however, I knew a primitive rag rug hooker and convinced her to teach her craft to U3A members. I then set about organising a community arts project.

The first step was to seek permission from the club and then decide on the size, location and design of a wall hanging large enough to be effective. One of our members, Rona Walker, is a respected artist in her eighties and wanted to be involved in this challenging project. From her original small painting of Bermagui Harbour across to Horseshoe Bay, complete with fishing boats, the Surf Club in the foreground and the sacred mountain Gulaga in the background, she drew the design on seven panels sized a metre wide by 1.4 metres high.

Meanwhile the idea was advertised in our U3A program. The response has been overwhelming. Previous workshops on learning a craft attracted fewer than 10 women, however, because this is a community project, we have had 29 willing women want to be involved!

Rag rug hooking is an old and cheap craft—a relic from the days of ‘make do and mend’ where worn out clothing was cut into strips and hooked into potato sacks to make warm mats for the floor. Our teacher Lindsay Potter had the tradition passed down to her from her New Zealand grandmother.

We use hessian off the roll from the local feed store and discarded tee-shirts from home or op-shops to practise our new craft. For continuity in the wall hanging we have bought some lengths of inexpensive stretch knit fabric.

Because we knew we would need to buy fabric, cutting wheels and boards, rug hooking frames and other equipment, we applied for and received a community grant from our regional Mumbulla Foundation, allowing us the financial freedom to go ahead with the project. Participants are covered by U3A insurance and are only required to buy their own hook.

Our first meeting at the end of July last year buzzed with enthusiasm. Hemmed pieces of hessian and hooks were distributed, tee-shirts were sliced and Lindsay encouraged our painfully slow and inept efforts. It has taken many months of practice but we have all completed several cushions or small wall hangings and have now started work on the real thing.

Some of the joy of this project is that we have become part of the Australian rug hooking community and have been the beneficiary of advice from the guru of rug hooking, Miriam Miller from Milton.

Our group of hookers meet every Friday afternoon at the Surf Club where our gear is stored. The atmosphere is one that would be recognised by any similar group of women working on a common goal—encouraging, sharing, inclusive, friendly, fun and focused.

It may be a few years before the seven panels are hung together and the obligatory photo and story appear in the local paper. In the meantime we are learning about a new and useful craft, about our own and each other’s abilities, and about how one person’s vision can enthuse others to create something extraordinary.

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A land called ‘country’

There is a land called ‘country’ beyond the mountain range
Where people live a way of life city folk think strange.
A life that’s full of heartbreak handed down throughout the years
For with the land came the legacy of drought and flood and tears!
A land across whose furrowed fields
the pioneer ghost still toils
Ever watchful for the rains
To quench the dry, parched soils.
For it’s then a sleeping beauty
awakens from her dream
To throw aside her dusty garb
for robes of patchwork green!
Yet those who are not born to it
so seldom understand:
When your hope is in the sky above
and your heart is in the land.
There is a land called ‘country’
of bronze and burnished plains
Of eucalypt shaded valleys
that pulses through your veins.
And I know that should I wander
as strange as it may be
My spirit shall stay
beyond that mountain range
in the land they call ‘country’!

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THE COUNTRY WEB • Spring 2015 • Creating and Making | 15
Parenting a strong-willed child

Dr Laura Markham, Aha Parenting

Have a strong-willed child? You’re lucky! Strong-willed children can be a challenge when they’re young, but if sensitively parented, they become terrific teens and young adults. Self-motivated and inner-directed, they go after what they want and are almost impervious to peer pressure. As long as parents resist the impulse to ‘break their will’ strong-willed kids often become leaders.

So what exactly is a strong-willed child? Some parents call them ‘difficult’ or ‘stubborn’ but we could also see strong-willed kids as people of integrity who aren’t easily swayed from their own viewpoints.

Strong-willed kids are spirited and courageous. They want to learn things for themselves rather than accepting what others say, so they test the limits over and over. They want desperately to be ‘in charge’ of themselves, and will sometimes put their desire to ‘be right’ above everything else. When their heart is set on something, their brains seem to have a hard time switching gears. Strong-willed kids have big, passionate feelings and live at full throttle.

Often, strong-willed kids are prone to power-struggles with their parents, however, it takes two to have a power struggle. You don’t have to attend every argument to which you’re invited! If you can take a deep breath when your buttons get pushed, and remind yourself that you can let your child save face and still get what you want, you can learn to sidestep those power struggles.

No one likes being told what to do, but strong-willed kids find it unbearable. You can avoid power struggles by helping your child feel understood even as you set limits. Looking for win-win solutions rather than just laying down the law keeps strong-willed children from becoming explosive and teaches them essential skills of negotiation and compromise.

Strong-willed kids aren’t just being difficult. They feel their integrity is compromised if they’re forced to submit to another person’s will. If they’re allowed to choose, they love to cooperate. Of course you want your child to do what you say but not because they are obedient (meaning that they always do what someone bigger tells them). You want your child to do what you say because they trust you—because they have learnt that even though you can’t always say yes to what they want, you have their best interests at heart. You want to raise a child who has self-discipline, takes responsibility, and is considerate, and most important, has the discernment to figure out who to trust and when to be influenced by someone else.

That said, strong-willed kids can be a handful—high energy, challenging, persistent. So how can you protect those fabulous qualities and encourage cooperation?

1. Avoid power struggles by using routines and rules. This way, you aren’t the ‘bad guy’ bossing them around. It’s just that, ‘The schedule is lights out at 8 pm. If you hurry, we’ll have time for two books’, or, ‘we finish homework before screen time.’

2. Remember that strong-willed kids are experiential learners. This means they have to see for themselves if the stove is hot. So unless you’re worried about serious injury, it’s more effective to let them learn through experience. And you can expect your strong-willed child to test your limits repeatedly—that’s how they learn.

3. Your strong-willed child wants mastery more than anything. Let your child take charge of as many of their own activities as possible. Don’t nag them to brush their teeth; ask, ‘What else do you need to do before we leave?’ If your child looks blank, help them tick off the short list: ‘Every morning we eat, brush teeth, use the toilet and pack the backpack. I saw you pack your backpack, that’s terrific! Now, what do you still need to do before we leave?’ Kids who feel more independent and in charge of themselves have less need to be oppositional.

4. Give your strong-willed child choices. If you give orders they will almost certainly bristle. If you offer a choice they feel like the master of their own destiny. Of course, only offer choices you can live with and don’t let yourself become resentful by handing away your power. If going to the shop is non-negotiable and your child wants to keep playing, an appropriate choice is: ‘Do you want to leave now or in 10 minutes? Okay, 10 minutes with no fuss? Let’s shake on it.’

5. Give your child authority over their body. ‘I hear that you don’t want to wear your jacket. I think it’s cold and I am definitely wearing a jacket. Of course, you are in charge of your own body, as long as you stay safe and healthy, so you get to decide whether to wear a jacket. I’m afraid you will be cold once we’re out so how about I put your jacket in the backpack and then we’ll have it if you change your mind? You child won’t get pneumonia, unless you push them into it by acting like you’ve won if they ask for the jacket. If they know they won’t lose face by wearing the jacket they’ll be begging for it once they get cold. It is just hard for them to imagine feeling cold when they are so warm right now in the house. You don’t want to undermine that self-confidence, just teach them that there’s no shame in letting new information change their mind.

6. Don’t push your child to oppose you. Force always creates ‘push-back’ with humans of all ages. If you take a hard and fast position you can easily push your child into defying you, just to prove a point. You’ll know when it’s a power struggle and you’re invested in winning. Just stop, take a breath and remind yourself that winning a battle with your child always sets you up to lose what’s most important: the relationship. When in doubt say, ‘Okay, you can decide this for yourself.’ If they can’t then say what part of it they can decide, or find another way for them to meet their need for autonomy without compromising their health or safety.

7. Side-step power struggles by letting your child save face. You don’t have to prove you’re right. You can and should set reasonable expectations and enforce them but under no circumstances should you try to break your child’s will or force them to agree with your views. They might have to do what you want but they are allowed to have their own opinions and feelings about it.

8. Listen to your child. You, as the adult, might reasonably presume you know best. But your strong-willed child has a strong will partly as a result of their integrity. They have a viewpoint that is making them hold fast to their position and they are trying to protect something that seems important to them.
By listening calmly and reflecting their words you will come to understand what’s making them oppose you. A non-judgmental, ‘I hear that you don’t want to take a bath, can you tell me why?’, might just elicit the information that they are afraid that they’ll go down the drain, like Alice in the song. It may not seem like a good reason to you, but they have a reason.

9. See it from your child’s point of view.
For instance, your child may be angry because you promised to wash their favourite jumper and then forgot. To you they are being stubborn. To them they are justifiably upset and you are being hypocritical because they aren’t allowed to break their promises to you but you broke yours to them. How do you clear this up? Apologise for breaking your promise and reassure them that you try very hard to keep your promises.

10. Discipline through the relationship, never through punishment.
Kids don’t learn when they’re in the middle of a fight. Like all of us that’s when adrenaline is pumping and learning shuts off. Kids behave because they want to please us. The more you fight with and punish your child, the more you undermine their desire to please you. If they are upset help them express their hurt, fear or disappointment, then they will be ready to listen to you when you remind them that in your house everyone speaks kindly to each other. (Of course, you have to model that too. Your child won’t always do what you say but they will always, eventually, do what you do.)

11. Offer your child respect and empathy.
Most strong-willed children are fighting for respect. If you offer it to them they don’t need to fight to protect their position. It helps a lot if they feel understood. If you see their point of view and think they are wrong—for instance, they want to wear their super hero cape to church and you think that’s inappropriate—you can still offer empathy and meet them part way while you set the limit: ‘You love this cape and wish you could wear it, don’t you? But when we go to Church we dress up to show respect, so we can’t wear the cape. I know you’ll miss wearing it so why don’t we take it with us and you can wear it on our way home?’

Article reprinted with permission. Dr Laura Markham is the founder of ahaparenting.com and author of Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How To Stop Yelling & Start Connecting and Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting & Raise Friends for Life.

12 habits of highly productive people
www.pickanytwo.net

1. They have daily dedicated planning time. Usually five to 10 minutes in the morning or evening is set aside to think through the day ahead’s tasks and outline a game plan for getting them accomplished.

2. They take care of quick tasks on the spot. If a task pops into their mind and it requires less than five minutes of their time, productive people will action it right away, eliminating the need to write it down or try to remember it later.

3. They prioritise their to-do list. When the day’s list is too long to realistically complete in 24 hours, that list is then rearranged to reflect the absolute essentials.

4. They identify and utilise their productivity window. No one is at their best all day long. People who are on top of things know their most productive times—usually a two to three hour window that occurs once or twice a day—and intentionally use that time to tackle the most important tasks or the ones that require the most focus.

5. They know when (and when not to) multitask. Multitasking gets a bad rap but highly productive people understand that sometimes it does work—like when you’re listening to a career-related podcast while wiping down your kitchen counters, or when you’re brainstorming project ideas while going for your morning walk.

6. They use a planning/scheduling tool that works for their lifestyle. A diehard pen-and-paper person probably won’t be successful with an app-based system, while a true techie would likely lose that day planner within an hour. Similarly, someone whose schedule is closely tied to other family members’ responsibilities needs a system—be it a giant wall calendar for the kitchen or a family-organising app—that accommodates that lifestyle.

7. They take breaks. Working from sunrise to sunset does not a productive person make. Regular breaks for things like food, water and movement actually make people more effective and efficient.

8. They’re realistic about how much time things take. If you underestimate how long it takes to write that report or clean your house, you’re inevitably going to get behind. On the other hand, if you always overestimate how long tasks take you’ll never be as efficient as you could be. Highly productive people find that sweet spot where they can accurately estimate how much time something will take, taking into account occasional breaks and inevitable interruptions.

9. They have someone hold them accountable. Highly productive people are open about what they want to accomplish that day, week, month or year—and don’t want to disappoint when others follow up.

10. They’re perfectionists, but only when it counts. If every single task, no matter how small, has to be completed without flaw or error, you will probably never finish anything. Striving for perfection can be a help or a hindrance depending on the stakes, so save the nit-picky attitude for when they’re especially high.

11. They delegate the right way. That is, they delegate a reasonable number of tasks that are appropriate to the skill level of the delegatee, and they always say please and thank you.

12. They appreciate what got done instead of stressing over what didn’t. Being productive requires a good attitude. At the end of the day, choosing to see the accomplishments rather than the missteps means you’ll feel better, sleep better and be better prepared to be productive again tomorrow.
Grub roses lift the spirits of women in drought

Robyn Walters, DPI Rural Support Worker

It all started just before Christmas last year with a simple idea. Jean Spurge from Wagga Wagga was listening to reports of the devastating drought in Queensland and suspected that the same thing was happening somewhere in her own state. After asking her local member she found that parts of North West NSW were seriously affected as well.

Jean remembered driving through Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett years ago—she remembered the space and isolation and the women working properties on their own. She also asked local craft groups to help with the edging of some of the towels with fabric. In all, 98 packages were created, all beautifully wrapped in clear cellophane and ready to be distributed for Mother’s Day.

Jean said, ‘I wanted to do something for the community. I enjoy sewing and wanted to use it for people who needed a “lift up”. I wanted each parcel to be personal and different so women could choose the colour they like or the one that matched their bathroom.’

Jean engaged the services of DPI’s Rural Resilience Program to deliver the parcels, with Danny Byrne and Ted O’Kane picking the parcels up and passing them on to Sarah Goulden from Bourke and Robyn Walters from Walgett. The parcels were handed out at morning teas, drought meetings and hay drops in Bourke, Brewarrina, Cumborah, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Come By Chance.

The drought in the north west of NSW has been going for three and half years now and is the worst since rainfall records began. Some people have been feeding stock for almost three years and most are facing their third year without a crop. And not surprising, the women are right in the middle of it all—feeding, fixing, cooking, cleaning and keeping the family together.

Sarah and Robyn reported how popular Jean’s parcels were. They said faces lit up at the enjoyment of going through a box and finding the ‘one you want’. Husbands took gifts home for their wives and elderly women working properties on their own were given ‘something pretty’. Women were touched that someone did all this work just for them.

Jean said, ‘As I embroidered each towel and wrapped each parcel I wondered where each one would go. Making the towels gave me so much pleasure and I knew they would be appreciated.’

And they certainly were, the women of the north west were extremely thankful for Jean’s thoughtfulness, time and generosity.

Never one to let the grass grow under her feet, Jean is already planning a new project to keep the needle busy with grub roses.

Jean moved from Sydney to Wagga Wagga 12 years ago and was previously director of nursing at Calgary Hospital and then a health accreditation surveyor. She now immerses herself in community work and enjoys the activities Wagga Wagga has to offer.

Keen to get started with her idea to help those going through drought Jean set about embroidering grub roses on hand towels in late February this year. She also asked local craft groups to help with the edging of some

Volunteers needed to help students with education

Thanks to the work of dedicated volunteer tutors The Smith Family’s after school learning clubs are helping hundreds of children in need across regional NSW to succeed in their learning.

The clubs are run weekly by national children’s education charity, The Smith Family, with the help of volunteer tutors who donate their time and expertise to help provide a safe and supportive environment. The clubs provide students with access to resources and expertise to support their learning potential and increase their confidence.

Acting regional program manager with The Smith Family Olga Srbosk said, ‘We rely so much on volunteers to donate their time to these clubs and are so thankful for all their hard work and support. We’ve got such a great group at the moment and the children really love working with them.’

‘For these clubs to run to their full potential and support as many students as possible, we need to recruit more volunteers. We are hoping members of the community will consider donating their time to provide support to students needing extra help with their education.

‘Our volunteer tutors are intrinsic to the success of the learning clubs. It’s been amazing to witness the progress of the kids who attended the clubs, and the extra support is often reflected in their improved grades and engagement.’

Volunteers are asked to commit up to one and a half hours each week to work one-on-one with students in a safe, supervised environment to engage students’ interest, develop rapport and assist students with their literacy and numeracy skills.

‘Learning Club volunteers need to have very good oral and written communication skills, possess the ability to assist with tasks at a primary or secondary school level, have patience, enthusiasm and the ability to relate to children,’ said Olga.

To enquire about becoming a Learning Club volunteer in your area visit:

More information

www.thesmithfamily.com.au
2015 NSW Rural Women’s Gathering

Gather in the Glen
Women for all seasons

Program 9-11 October

Friday 9 October

3–6 pm Registration
Your chance to enjoy the boutique shopping Glen Innes has to offer, including the pop-up-shops throughout the street. Show your Gather in the Glen name tag to receive discounts at local shops. Enjoy the sounds of the bagpipes each hour from the Town Hall piper.

Glen Innes Town Hall and Town Square, Grey Street.

6 pm Opening
Gather in the Glen Chair: Mary Hollingworth.
Welcome to Country: Fred Blair.
Welcome to Glen Innes: Mayor Col Price.
Glen Innes Town Hall.

7 pm Dinner
Carnival Celebration featuring local wines, a selection of gourmet meals and entertainment. Includes a complimentary drink.

Glen Innes Town Hall and Town Square.

8 pm Guest speaker
Mary ‘Effie’ Coustas will entertain Gathering attendees with her unique take on life.
Glen Innes Town Hall.

Saturday 10 October

7–8 am Breakfast
Registrations will also be available during this time.
Tea Rooms, Glen Innes Showground, Torrington Street.

8.30 am Welcome and 2015 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll launch
MC: Mary Coustas.
Address: Department of Primary Industries.
Centenary Pavilion, Glen Innes Showground, Torrington Street.

9 am Gail and Roger Fletcher
Hear the Fletchers’ story about their grass roots beginnings and how they have worked together to build Fletcher International Exports into the largest sheep meat processor in Australia today—exporting to more than 95 countries and employing over 1300 staff.

10 am Dr Donna Quinn
Hear how Donna achieved her dream of becoming a doctor and why she returned to work in a rural town.

10.30 am Morning tea
Spend some time visiting exhibitors’ stands in the Old Pavilion. Service providers, including government, non-profit and other organisations, will have displays, resources and staff available to talk to.

11 am Michael Crossland
Hear Michael’s story about dreams and determination and be inspired to achieve ongoing positive change in your own life.

12.30 pm Lunch

1.30–5 pm Workshop tours

6 pm Gala dinner
Enjoy a delicious dinner featuring tasty local produce. Local entertainer Grant Newsome will share highlights of his international musical and dance career, featuring a performance finale, followed by local band Reload, whose music will have you dancing the night away.
Dress in Gathering colours of red, black and white for the chance to win a prize!
Glen Innes Showground, Torrington Street.
### RWN: Issue and ideas

The 2015 Rural Women’s Gathering aims to provide NSW rural women with an opportunity to voice their issues and explore ideas to address these through a special session facilitated by DPI’s Rural Women’s Network. Outcomes will be presented to key government decision-makers and used to build knowledge that improves programs and policy.

### Sunday 11 October

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.30 am</td>
<td>Ecumenical service</td>
<td>Yarraford Hall, Glen Innes Showground, Torrington Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Tea Rooms, Glen Innes Showground, Torrington Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.20 am</td>
<td>Jean Kittson</td>
<td>Jean Kittson is passionate about rural Australia and health. She will entertain and educate you with her experiences and insights as a woman in today’s society. Centenary Pavilion, Glen Innes Showground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>RWN: Issue and ideas</td>
<td>The 2015 Rural Women’s Gathering aims to provide NSW rural women with an opportunity to voice their issues and explore ideas to address these through a special session facilitated by DPI’s Rural Women’s Network. Outcomes will be presented to key government decision-makers and used to build knowledge that improves programs and policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
<td>Visit exhibitors’ stands in the Old Pavilion. Service providers, including government, non-profit, and other organisations, will have displays, resources and staff available to talk to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 am</td>
<td>Georgina Dent</td>
<td>Georgina Dent brings to the Gathering the perspective of a young professional woman working hard to make the world a better place for both her contemporaries and those who will come after her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>Annabel Dulhunty</td>
<td>Annabel Dulhunty lives between Glen Innes and the Southern Highlands and is passionate about rural and regional renewal and the potential of philanthropy. She is a former director of the Vincent Family Fairfax Foundation, having served for eight years, and is now a board member of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 pm</td>
<td>Official handover and close</td>
<td>Handover to the 2016 Broken Hill Rural Women’s Gathering Committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch will be provided as a take-away pack.</td>
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### Speakers

- **Mary ‘Effie’ Coustas**
  
  Mary Coustas is a Logie Award-winning actor, comedian and writer, better known as her alter ego Effie—the ‘trash-with-flash’ Madonna of the western suburbs. With a wonderful combination of naïvety and clarity, fuzzy logic and shrewd intelligence, Effie became a suburban superstar. Mary has starred in *Wogs 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. Get ready to laugh and be charmed!

- **Gail and Roger Fletcher**
  
  Roger Fletcher is a local Glen Innes self-made success story. He started droving sheep in 1967 and he and wife Gail now own and direct one of the most successful abattoirs in NSW—Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd at Dubbo and Fletcher International WA near Albany in Western Australia. Hear the Fletchers’ story from their grass roots beginnings to making Fletcher International Exports the largest sheep meat processor in Australia today—exporting to more than 95 countries and employing over 1300 staff.

- **Dr Donna Quinn**
  
  Donna was born and raised in Glen Innes where she worked in the local pharmacy as an assistant. Hear how Donna achieved her dream of becoming a doctor and why she returned to work in a rural town.

- **Michael Crossland**
  
  One of Australia’s most sought after inspirational speakers, Michael was diagnosed with cancer before the age of one and has spent over a quarter of his life in hospital. Defying the odds he has gone on to build a life of exceptional achievements, including a successful professional and sporting career. Using his experience to make the world a better place, Michael is a national ambassador for Camp Quality and recently featured in a humanitarian documentary about the countless lives saved through his orphanage and school in Haiti. Hear Michael’s story about dreams and determination and be inspired to achieve ongoing positive change in your own life.

- **Jean Kittson**
  
  As a performer and scriptwriter for stage, television, and radio, Jean is well known for her comedy debates on the ABC, Channel 9 and Channel Ten, along with featuring on *The Big Gig*, *Let the Blood Run Free*, *Good News Week* and *The Einstein Factor*. She is also a regular guest on *ABC 702* radio drive program’s *Thank God It’s Friday*. Jean has been a regular columnist for magazines and newspapers and is the author of *Tongue Lashing* and *You’re Still Hot to Me*. Jean was a founding director of the National Cord Blood Bank, the inaugural chair of the Australian Gynaecological Cancer Foundation and a founding ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia. She is passionate about rural Australia and health. Jean will entertain and educate you with her experiences and insights as a woman in today’s society.

- **Georgina Dent**
  
  Georgina is a journalist, editor, and a passionate advocate for gender equality. She was appointed editor of *Women’s Agenda*—Australia’s leading website for working women—in October 2014. In March 2014 Georgina was a finalist for Journalist of the Year in the inaugural Women’s Empowerment Journalism Awards in Singapore. She is a regular television commentator and public speaker on women’s advancement in the workplace and gender equality. Georgina will bring the perspective of a young, professional woman working hard to make the world a better place for both her contemporaries and those who will come after her.

- **Annabel Dulhunty**
  
  Annabel lives between Glen Innes and the Southern Highlands and is passionate about rural and regional renewal and the potential of philanthropy. She is a former director of the Vincent Family Fairfax Foundation, having served for eight years, and is now a board member of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.
INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP TOURS

Choose your first and second preferences for Saturday afternoon. All workshop materials are supplied. Afternoon tea will be served at each workshop tour.

1. Rangers Valley Cattle Station
Visit one of the world’s most respected producers of premium marbled beef. Rangers Valley Beef is produced for both Australian markets and exported to overseas markets in over 20 countries, including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, USA and China. The station has a 34,000 head capacity feedlot plus 5000 cattle currently being grazed on the 4700 hectares property. Gain an understanding of how Rangers Valley delivers beef from paddock to plate using modern technology. Afternoon tea will be served at the homestead, built in 1848.

2. Gardens of the Glen
Visit three of the New England’s most acclaimed and renowned gardens, displaying a diversity of landscaping styles and imaginative plantings. Glen Legh Station retains its Edwardian era layout, sensitive restoration and additions of an ornamental pond, wisteria walk and shrub border of colourful foliage. Neridah East builds on an established framework of mature trees with defining hedges, attractive paved outdoor areas and mass plantings of roses, all designed to frame magnificent views. Afternoon tea will be served at Brandon, a one and a half hectares contemporary landscaped garden with formal hedges and sweeping vistas. Internationally acclaimed floral artist and Glen Innes local Irene McIndoe will present a lovely hands-on floral workshop.

3. Creativity in the Glen
Visit the Glen Innes Art Gallery which will be displaying Wonderful Women—an exhibition by local artists celebrating our rural women. Tour the Chapel Theatre, home to the Glen Innes Arts Council—the oldest continuing operating arts council in Australia. Built in 1893 as a church, the Chapel Theatre now shows popular and art house films, as well as musicals and stage plays. Local residents, Max Powell—a recent winner at Frost Over Barraba Arts Festival—will demonstrate his unique style of pottery, and Trish Turner will enlighten you on how art is used as therapy in many government institutions, schools, and hospitals.

4. History of Glen Innes
Travel back in time with a visit to historic Glen Innes. Learn about the many iconic federation-style buildings, discover what makes the local cemetery unique and understand why Glen Innes is now the Celtic capital of Australia. Build skills in this workshop to research your own family history and discover how to understand and recognise information from headstones in the cemetery. Visit the Land of the Beardies History House Museum and Research Centre, widely acclaimed as one of the best local museums and research centres in NSW. Occupying the original Glen Innes Hospital, History House now has exhibits in over 25 rooms and outdoor areas, plus extensive grounds to wander in.

5. Small Business in the Glen
Meet people with a vision and hear how local business owners have followed their dreams from inception through to reality to find international success. Our small businesses include hospitality, commission-based selling, goat farming and bed and breakfast. Experience Grey Street and visit some businesses in person, learn about the multiple award-winning business The Super Strawberry Patch, then visit the nationally recognised Ausgoat goat farm to learn about renewable energy and organic farming.

6. Fossicking
Glen Innes is part of the most prolific sapphire region in NSW and has the world’s richest mineral diversity belt. Internationally famous for deep rich, royal blue sapphires, hundreds of visitors flock to Glen Innes every year for unique fossicking opportunities. You will be taken on a journey to the fossicking reserve at the Showground to learn the techniques and secret skills to discover your own treasures.

7. Creative Writing
Learn about the fundamentals of writing with author Nicole Alexander—a passionate writer with over 25 years’ experience. Her novels, poetry, travel writing, creative writing and genealogy articles have been published internationally and two of her books were chosen for the Australian 50 Books You Can’t Put Down campaign. Learn the craft of writing in a lively, interactive session which will introduce you to both the fundamentals of writing and the joy of storytelling. By the end of this workshop you will be familiar with the elements of plot, theme, setting, character, conflict and voice, as well as the various techniques used to stimulate the imagination.

8. Woodwork
Visit the Men’s Shed and tour the purpose built shed in this interactive workshop. The Glen Innes Men’s Shed is renowned for their wood turning and marquetry skills and some of their impressive work will be on display during the workshop. Learn about the equipment and the techniques used by hand in woodworking. Build your practical skill set and have the opportunity to create a unique wood turned article to take home with you.

9. Health and Wellbeing
This workshop will empower you to take control of your health by building your knowledge of and confidence in your own wellbeing. Held at the Showground, the workshop will include sessions on nutrition and women’s health, an introduction to mindfulness and a yoga session. Take home strategies for better nutrition and wellbeing and leave inspired to be a healthier version of yourself.

10. Free Time
You may choose to explore and experience Glen Innes at your leisure. Enjoy unique Glen Innes and explore the World Heritage rainforest areas, visit the nationally accredited Australian Standing Stones and relax in abundant beautiful parklands.

Numbers are limited for some interactive workshop tours, so register early!
Register for Gather in the Glen online at [http://tks.im/gather-in-the-glen](http://tks.im/gather-in-the-glen) and fill in this form. You will need to enter your details (as below) and pay by credit or debit card. On completion of this you will be emailed confirmation and a tax invoice.

If you are unable to access the internet please fill out the form for each person attending and follow the payment instructions below.

Please complete a registration form for every attendee. We encourage you to bring a car load of friends—bring your daughter, your friends, your mother or mother-in-law.

Registration closes 5 pm, Friday 18 September.

**YOUR DETAILS**

Name:.....................................................................................................................

Address:....................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................

Town: ......................................................................................................................

Postcode: ...............................................................................................................

Email: ......................................................................................................................

Phone: .....................................................................................................................

Mobile: ....................................................................................................................

Special needs (diet, access etc.): .............................................................................

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**WORKSHOP TOUR SELECTION**

Please select two options in order of preference, writing the workshop numbers in the boxes below.

[ ] 1st preference [ ] 2nd preference

[ ] Registration: I have enclosed a cheque/money order payable to Gather in the Glen for $250 incl GST.

[ ] Saturday only (includes meals, workshop tour and Gala Dinner): I have enclosed a cheque/money order payable to Gather in the Glen for $160 incl GST. Note: Tickets to Saturday only are limited and will not be available for purchase until 4 September.

Post this completed form to:

Gather in the Glen
PO Box 660
Glen Innes NSW 2370

[ ] Please tick this box if you would not like your contact details passed on to next year’s committee.

**ENQUIRIES**

General:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mary Hollingworth</th>
<th>Anna Watt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0429 345 255</td>
<td>0429 779 755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Mh2cook@hotmail.com">Mh2cook@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Annawatt7@hotmail.com">Annawatt7@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
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Registration:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pamela Benton</th>
<th>Maureen Matthewson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0428 487 501</td>
<td>02 6732 1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:office@glenrac.org.au">office@glenrac.org.au</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mathos@activ8.net.au">mathos@activ8.net.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PAYMENT DETAILS**

Registrations are fully inclusive of all meals and interactive workshop tours. All ticket prices are GST inclusive. If paying by credit or debit card please complete your registration online using the link provided at the top of the registration form. Refunds will be considered upon request in writing.

**TRAVEL and ACCOMMODATION**

Glen Innes is situated in the beautiful Northern Tablelands of NSW, seven and a half hours from Sydney and four and a half hours from Brisbane. It is accessible by car and bus or by daily flights and trains via Armidale.

Accommodation: [www.gleninnestourism.com/glen-innes-accommodation](http://www.gleninnestourism.com/glen-innes-accommodation)

Tourist information: [www.gleninnestourism.com](http://www.gleninnestourism.com)
That’s not to say that there aren’t dark days, but they don’t extend into dark weeks and months anymore. One of the most helpful “lenses” is practising gratitude.

‘I had been reading about gratitude and hearing talks on the topic, but I think it was listening to Ann Voskamp’s audio book One Thousand Gifts that was my tipping point. Up until then practising gratitude had seemed like such an ephemeral concept. But Voskamp described giving thanks for the tiniest things in her everyday life as well as big things. She delighted in how much giving thanks changed her mindset, how it helped her get through the hardest days, how it helped her to see the beauty and richness in her life. It seemed there was substance to what she was doing and it was making a substantial difference to her life.

‘I was listening to this book during a period when I had a 50 minute drive to work each day, surrounded by giant trucks and aggressive drivers, on one of Sydney’s busiest roads. Being stuck in traffic is not conducive to positive thinking. My thoughts would usually turn to the stresses of work, the sadness induced by a failed relationship, anxiety about the other drivers around me and immovable fatigue. I would arrive at work or get home feeling flat and unmotivated. But on the drive home one day I decided to give this gratitude practice a try.

‘When I asked myself, “What am I grateful for today?” almost instantly, a list of things started scrolling through my head. I’m grateful for my job. I’m grateful for the people I work with. I’m grateful to have a car. I’m grateful to have a home to go to. I’m grateful to that other driver who just smiled and waved at me when I let her in. I’m grateful for the colour streaked across the sky as the sun sets. I’m grateful that the lights are on when I get home. I’m grateful that my cat runs to greet me. I’m grateful that my mum is there to hug me. Without even trying, what had been a grey commute had become full of colour.

‘I was stunned by the simplicity of it. It required no special training, no money, no program. It simply required me using a different lens to refocus on the good instead of the bad, to help me see things as they really were.’

Bec started to think about how she could incorporate gratitude into her daily life and spread the magic of gratitude to others. She started a Facebook page, posting photos of things she was grateful for. She then created the website www.everydaygratitude.net. But not everybody is digital, and so she hit on the idea of a diary—a diary that isn’t just a day planner but asks you that simple question every day: ‘What am I grateful for?’

Bec designed a beautiful week-to-a-spread diary, researched how much it would cost to print a small number and then launched a crowdfunding campaign on the website Pozible. Pozible, and other sites like it, allow you to raise fund for a project by setting a financial goal, and if enough people pledge to support you and you reach the goal, you can go ahead with your project.

Bec launched the 2016 diary in June 2015 so there would be plenty of time to promote the diary, reach the financial goal she needed to print and then print and distribute the diary well before the end of 2015. You can see how the crowdfunding for Bec’s diary happened at www.pozible.com/project/193049.

I have been lucky enough to be involved in Bec’s diary project. My personal goal since the start of 2015 has been to do more drawing so I decided to post ‘What should I draw today?’ each week on Facebook and then draw and post a picture of the first suggestion. The results have been whimsical: a wombat at a tea party, a Lego man at a party realising he is the only Lego man at the party, a mother and daughter baking a cake to name a few. Bec asked me if she could include some of the illustrations in the diary. Spreading the word about the 2016 Everyday Gratitude Diary has been wonderful rewarding. I participated in a Shaping Our Futures Together course run by the Rural Women’s Network earlier this year and have taken up journaling and thinking about gratitude as a result so I can speak personally to the benefits and have recommended it to my colleagues and friends.

So many women I know have responded enthusiastically to Bec’s gratitude diary project because they too can really appreciate how important it is to ‘count your blessings’ and can’t wait to have this simple tool to prompt them. I think 2016 will be a little revolution of gratitude.
Communities in focus: Never miss an opportunity

Emma Regan, Department of Primary Industries

Elizabeth Morgan and Vicki Fermor are proud indigenous women employed in the soil, health and archive team at Yanco’s Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). Both women have achieved success in their careers and are great role models for other young indigenous women.

Elizabeth, a Wiradjuri woman, was born in Leeton and completed her Year 10 certificate in 1999. The following year she commenced a traineeship with Leeton Water Laboratory, part of Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC). She then gained permanent employment with the Department as a laboratory assistant. In 2008 she moved to OEH as part of the soil, health and archive team and is currently employed as a technical assistant.

Vicki is a Kamilaroi woman from the Red Chief country. The eldest of seven, she grew up around the Gunnedah region in various small towns before moving with her family to Gunnedah at the age of 14. Vicki completed school at Year 10 before joining the Gunnedah Gunyah Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). In 1999 she decided to finish Year 11 and 12 at TAFE, studying three days a week and working at CDEP the other two days. It was in Vicki’s second semester of year 12 that her interest in biology was sparked and she decided to focus her studies in this area. Vicki’s biology teacher encouraged her to apply for an Aboriginal traineeship with the then DLWC.

After successfully completing a Certificate III in Laboratory Skills at Yanco Agricultural College, Vicki was merit selected into a higher graded non-identified Aboriginal position, a position she has held for 15 years. In 2008 when the Gunnedah laboratory was relocated to Leeton, Vicki had to make the very difficult decision to relocate from her family to remain in her job.

Elizabeth and Vicki say they have both always recognised the importance of education in creating a secure future for themselves and their family.

‘My parents gave me a strong work ethic from an early age. I also had a number of role models through senior staff, co-workers and members of the Aboriginal Support Network within DLWC who have provided support and mentoring,’ says Elizabeth.

‘Every day is a learning process. I love to learn new things and I actively seek out opportunities for improvement because I believe there is always something new to be learned. While on maternity leave I was given the opportunity to participate in a Certificate IV in Governance to improve my career skills,—I accepted the offer and successfully completed my certificate.’

Vicki’s family have played a crucial role in moulding her career and life aspirations, especially her mother and father.

Vicki says, ‘Studying is a part of life. I believe you always need to be improving yourself both personally and professionally. I have just finished studying for my Diploma of Management through an Aboriginal program at TAFE and I am now studying a certificate IV in Business Administration.’

Family is often a main source of support when it comes to managing a successful work-life balance—something both Elizabeth and Vicki have managed to do.

Both women said the key to getting the balance right is to keep work and home life as separate as possible.

‘Work is part of my life, but when knock-off time comes my life then becomes about being a mum to my son,’ says Elizabeth.

Vicki, who has two young children aged four and 18 months says, ‘It’s just something you have to do. I have a great partner who helps at home and that definitely helps me to balance it all out. Work stays at the office when I walk out the door and then it’s all about family time.’

Both women said the support, flexibility and family friendly environment at OEH helps a lot, and that living in a regional area is a great benefit as they are close by to everything.

Elizabeth and Vicki are shining examples of what can be achieved through setting goals, grasping opportunities with both hands and working hard. They hope their story will encourage other young indigenous women to follow their lead.

Elizabeth’s advice is, ‘Set yourself a goal and don’t stop until you achieve it, and never be afraid to ask for help along the way. Always be willing to learn and accept opportunities when they arise. And never say “I can’t do it”.’

Vicki believes, ‘Anything can be achieved if you believe in yourself and what you are doing. Set goals and don’t let anything hold you back. Grasp everything that is thrown at you—you never know where it may lead. Life is not easy, it’s what you make of it and how you deal with it that really counts.’
Seven women with a commitment to rural industries and communities in which they work and who embody the typically Australian can-do attitude are now in the running to take out the 2015 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women’s Award (RWA).

State winners receive a $10,000 bursary to deliver a project that benefits rural people and primary industries as part of their award and the national winner will receive an additional $50,000. The award also provides personal and professional development opportunities, including access to a network of RWA alumni mentors and funded place in a course run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

The national winner will be announced on 9 September at Parliament House in Canberra.

2015 New South Wales winner Cindy Cassidy grew up on a sheep and grain farm in Ariah Park in NSW’s Riverina region before moving to Melbourne to work in agribusiness. After a 20 year career, she returned to the Riverina in 2013 to settle on the family farm with her young daughter and take up a role as chief executive of FarmLink Research, a non-profit farming systems group based at Temora and providing services to farmers and agribusinesses.

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

Cindy’s ambition is to improve the relevance and effectiveness of local agricultural extension to support farmers in the adoption of innovation and maximise returns from investment in agricultural research and development. She believes agricultural research and development is critical to the ongoing competitiveness of Australian agriculture and 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 farms.

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

Northern Territory winner Dr Sally Isberg aims to educate non-agriculture science students on how their skills can be translated to primary industries and lead to a lucrative career path. As part of Sally’s project, three female students from Charles Darwin University will be offered six-week scholarships to undertake research projects focused on outcomes in the crocodile industry.

Queensland winner Sherrill Stivano will bring information and knowledge about the UK-based Red Tractor program to Australia to discuss brand and country of origin labelling. This will introduce Australian farmers, industry bodies and government to the opportunities offered by gathering behind one labelling system— in particular the clarity of communication with consumers and the benefit to everyone in the supply chain, for both domestic and international markets.

South Australia winner Sarah Powell will establish and manage the pilot program Champions Academy, which aims to foster personal development through sport and mentoring and will teach aspiring leaders how to lead by example, act with integrity, think selflessly and demonstrate commitment. Sarah will also develop a community leadership succession plan to continue to build strength and resilience in her local community.

Tasmania winner Carol Bracken will study hazelnut production in Oregon in the United States, a heartland for hazelnuts and one of the world’s most competitive markets. She hopes to gain insights that will help develop and evaluate a number of business models to market hazelnut products in a competitive environment in Australia. Carol will also run a series of workshops and tutorials for women starting their own businesses to help develop their project management skills, including information on scheduling, budgeting, stakeholder and risk management.

Victoria winner Katie Finlay aims to encourage more farmers’ markets, holding them weekly and using Facebook as the tool to build strong communities around farmers and each market. Ultimately her project aims to give farmers better control of markets by fostering strong relationships between farmers and consumers.

Western Australia winner Tress Walmsley’s project Oodles of Noodles aims to increase the demand for noodle wheat by Australian consumers, which will ultimately support local growers. Tress will use her bursary to develop six Western Australian grain growers into ‘udon noodle master chefs’ and industry ambassadors. She hopes that these growers will market the product to their local communities and increase the local demand for the udon grain.

The RIRDC RWA has acknowledged the contribution of over 200 women since its establishment in 1994, with each having advanced their contribution to primary industries and rural communities across Australia. Entries for 2016 close 31 October.

Are you a rural school leaver, or the parent of one? Are you feeling uncertain about the cost of higher education and having to also pay for relocation, housing and transport costs? You aren’t alone.

There are many rural and regional school leavers each year who face the exciting but daunting task of preparing for a tertiary education and feel that the financial strain might be too much to undertake.

The good news is there are hundreds of scholarships and grants on offer, for all types of students. They range from music, gender, indigenous, disability or financial disadvantage, and many are not academically-focused.

You may be unsure of how to approach a scholarship, or even where to start looking for one. If you are seeking financial assistance the 2016 Country Education Foundation (CEF) Scholarships Guide is a great first step.

The CEF Scholarships Guide is a one-stop shop for students who are looking for financial assistance. Quite often these types of grants and scholarships aren’t well advertised and can be hard to source. Together with education partners the CEF has combined many grants and scholarships into one easy to access document on the CEF website, www.cef.org.au.

Grants and scholarships on offer range from small $500 textbook grants to up to $50 000 per year scholarships for education and living away from home costs.

The CEF Guide also provides helpful tips such as to apply for more than one scholarship to improve your chances of being successful.

The CEF has helped many rural and regional students pursue their study and career goals. They have over 40 local foundations scattered all over rural and regional Australia to raise funds to help students wanting to enter tertiary education, achieve their dreams and create a better future.

More information
www.cef.org.au
Freecall 1300 652 144
5 ways to get thrifty and save

www.10thousandgirl.com

Thrifty. It’s not the most glamorous of words, is it? It conjures up images of re-using your teabag and eating baked beans five days a week. So let’s rebrand and own thrifty. Let’s call it ‘wine money’. Or ‘shoe money’. Or ‘pay-my-mortgage-off-a-year-early money’. Or, ‘whatever-it-is-that-motivates-you-to-save money’.

Here’s our top tips to live a thriftier life and save for the things you really want:

1. Review your insurance annually

There is high competition between insurance providers so use this to your advantage. Contact at least three insurers when getting a quote for car, house or travel insurance. And then each year take half an hour to go through it again—why pay an extra several hundred dollars a year unnecessarily? Don’t be put off if it’s not a ‘big name’ insurer—many of the smaller, lesser known insurers are backed by bigger insurance companies.

Don’t rely on the comparison sites to do your legwork—they charge insurers to be listed so they aren’t always comparing every insurer on the market.

2. Use your own bank’s ATM

If you don’t do this, then start, today. Most bank accounts offer a certain amount of free withdrawals each month, so use them. Walk an extra block to your bank’s ATM rather than using another bank’s ATM that’s right in front of you but that will probably incur charges. You’ll not only save money, you’ll burn some calories too!

3. Fashion: swap, sell, second-hand

Yes, retail can provide a thrill but a shopping spree can leave you several hundred dollars poorer. Instead, try to swap, sell or buy second-hand. Get a group of girls together for a clothes swap, buy clothes online at Gumtree, eBay or your local Buy, Swap and Sell Facebook page, or keep an eye out for local markets.

4. Shop smart and save

Being a thrifty shopper doesn’t mean a pantry of no name, second rate products—it means shopping smarter.

Buy non-perishables when they are on special (toilet paper, tissues, shampoo, cleaning and sanitary products). When you food shop buy seasonal produce—it’s good for the environment as well as your budget. Better yet, buy in bulk and do a big cook up and freeze some meals. Meat is one area you can really save a lot buying in bulk or direct from the supplier.

And after you’ve gone through the checkout, don’t throw your receipt out! Get into the habit of ripping petrol vouchers off and putting them straight into your wallet. That four-cents-off-a-litre fuel voucher might not seem much at the time, but over the course of a year it can be considerable.

5. Back to nature

You might think you don’t have the space or the time to grow herbs, but you do! One pot, some soil and one herb to start (try parsley, it’s hardy and goes in everything). The buzz of a successful crop will motivate you and in no time you’ll be branching out. Think about it, regularly spending $3 on herbs, only to use a few stems and then throw the rotting mess out a few weeks later, versus going to your garden to collect your own fresh herbs in the quantity that you need them—no comparison!
Women’s health: How to get a good night’s sleep

Sleep can be our greatest friend or our worst enemy. For some, it’s a point of endless frustration, with hours and nights lost to tossing and turning and non-stop thinking. One thing is certain though, sleep has far-reaching effects on our health and wellbeing. In addition to being a crucial time for restoration of both body and mind, research suggests that sleep helps to strengthen memory and learning. On the other hand, lack of sleep over the long-term negatively affects the immune system and can place the body under undue stress.

Insomnia and sleep disorders

Insomnia is the inability to go to sleep or to stay asleep. It is more common in older people and twice as many women experience insomnia than men. Types of insomnia include:

- Primary insomnia. About two per cent of the population need less than five-hours a night and can still be highly productive, manage to function and are generally not tired when awake. This type of insomnia may be resistant to non-drug strategies.

- Insomnia stimulated by an incident. Sometimes people can begin to experience insomnia because something has triggered a change in sleep patterns, including emotional trauma, shift work, a newborn baby. Habits persist beyond the trigger period because the body learns that this is the norm. A range of psychological techniques aimed at ‘unlearning’ the conditioned sleep pattern may be useful. Strategies to overcome anxiety or frustration and changing lifestyle habits can help.

- Disorders of the body clock. When your body clock is disrupted, you have difficulty timing when to go to sleep so you generally feel sleepy during the day and crave recovery sleep on the weekend. It is common in adolescents and young adults. The body clock can be manipulated with carefully timed exposure to bright light. The timing of light exposure and the form of light used are best managed by a sleep specialist or sleep psychologist.

If any of the following are causing sleep disturbance, speak to your doctor, who may refer you to a specialist if necessary:

- **Sleep apnoea.** The airways block, causing airflow and breathing to stop for a short time during sleep. These periods when you stop breathing can last for 10 seconds and may happen up to several hundred times a night. This leads to repeated arousals from sleep (which you may not remember) but you may feel tired the following day.

- **Depression and anxiety.** Depression and anxiety can affect sleep or be caused by lack of sleep. Counselling may be helpful.

- **Pain.** Pre-existing and chronic conditions can impair sleep. Treating the pain may help.

- **Snoring.** Snoring without sleep apnoea may waken you but is not proven to be associated with increased health risk.

**Tips to manage sleep problems**

- **Reduce your caffeine intake.** Have only two caffeinated drinks per day, preferably before lunch. This includes cola, tea, coffee and chocolate. Try caffeine-free herbal teas such as chamomile.

- **Avoid heavy meals late at night.** Allow two hours after dinner before going to bed. Sip a glass of warm milk if you need something after dinner.

- **Limit your alcohol consumption.** Have no more than one or two standard drinks a day (and at least two alcohol free days per week), as too much alcohol reduces sleep quality.

- **Be physically active.** A falling body temperature helps to encourage falling asleep and remaining asleep, so if you exercise you increase your temperature but you need to allow time to cool down. Don’t exercise in the four hours before going to bed as exercise is also stimulating.

- **Maintain a regular time to go to bed and wake up.** Try to go to bed and to get up at the same time each day as this helps settle your sleep pattern.

- **Restrict time in bed.** Leave bed for sex and sleep, not eating, reading or watching TV, so as to train yourself to sleep when you get there.

- **If you are not able to fall asleep, get out of bed.** Do a quiet, relaxing task in another room, as frustration at your inability to sleep can make the problem worse.

- **Hide the clock.** Turn clocks away from view so you don’t clock-gaze during the night, as this accentuates the sense of frustration.

- **Try relaxation.** Relaxation exercises or meditation can help some people relax and get off to sleep.

**Foods to aid rest and relaxation**

- Ensure you have regular meals throughout the day—this helps your blood sugar levels and energy remain stable and steady and helps to avoid the ‘wired and tired’ feeling at night.

- After dinner, wind down with a herbal tea. Try chamomile, lemon balm, lavender or valerian to help you relax.

- Magnesium is an essential mineral for rest and relaxation. It can relieve the muscle tension and nervous tension that often comes with insomnia. Magnesium is essential in the making of serotonin—a ‘feel-good’ neurotransmitter that is involved in sleep regulation. Good sources of magnesium include leafy green vegetables such as spinach, silver beet and kale, almonds, avocado, beans and nuts.

- B vitamins are important for energy production and sleep regulation. Vitamin B3 and B6 are needed to make serotonin and tryptophan—another neurotransmitter involved in relaxation, restfulness and sleep. Vitamin B6 is found in meat, fish, soybeans and walnuts. Sources of B3 include avocado, figs, prunes, tuna, chicken, red meats and mushrooms.

- Omega-3 fats are healthy fats that are essential to brain health and help regulate sleep. Omega-3s are found in fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines and mackerel, and seeds such as chia and flax. These fats help to make the compounds (prostaglandins) that promote and suppress sleep, so having a good intake of these fats is very important for people with sleep disorders and insomnia.

**More information**

www.jeanhailes.org.au
1800 JEAN HAILES (532 642)
Bravery and boldness are a work of art.

It has been just over two weeks since I saw a picture in a shop window with the words ‘bravery and boldness are a work of art’ written on it. It spoke to my heart and what I had been up to for the day. Putting things off and procrastination are a habit of mine that’s yet to be fully kicked.

In the choices I have been making lately and the things that I want to achieve in my life, I am constantly asking myself to be braver and bolder and to not shy away from what needs to be done to allow myself, my family and my business to grow. I had never before considered these things a work of art.

For most of my life I thought I have never been any good at art. In fact, I have believed that there is no creativity at all in my bones—I’m a scientist. It is all about procedure and getting things right—not much room for creativity there.

I still remember in art in Year 7 that I had so little faith in my abilities I would always ask my friend to ‘help’ me (she would basically do it for me). She was an art teacher’s daughter so it was much safer to get ‘professional’ help than to go it alone.

It’s a bit of an understatement that I have been doing a lot of growing lately, perhaps even exponentially— at least from the outside.

But it wasn’t until I had a conversation with my sister that I realised just how far I have come emotionally too.

It’s not very often I take the time to stop and reflect and celebrate the challenges I have faced and overcome—the things I’ve been bold enough to stand up and take responsibility for and been brave enough to have conversations about that have been tough. Things that in the past I would have ignored and hoped would go away.

So my big brave art moment happened just over two weeks ago. I decided since this is my final pregnancy (I know famous last words, but truly it is) I wanted to indulge in having some pictures taken of my growing body.

It has only just occurred to me how amazing the female body is—to be able to create and grow another human being—to nurture, incubate and develop all the intricate parts that make up who we are. And my body has had the ability to do it four times!

There are many parts of this pregnancy that have seemed easier for my body than my previous pregnancies. I have been tired on and off but from memory it still hasn’t overwhelmed me like it has in the past. I spent most of the three previous pregnancies analysing my body, critiquing how big it was or what the scales said. Comparing it to others and wishing I was more compact and not so large. Complaining about my back aching, and so on.

When a few of the pictures were sent to me to preview, my first impression was how beautiful they were and what an amazing thing it is to grow a human life. I wanted to share the pictures with someone so I sent them to my safe place—one of my sisters. Her comment was, ‘Wow, a bit different to last time.’ I had to ask her what she meant because I didn’t quite get it. She reminded me that when I was pregnant with my third child she had asked me to send her a picture of my belly and I told her no way. Then I decided I would send her a picture, however, I told her she had to delete it as soon as she had looked at it and not to show anyone else, especially her husband.

I had totally forgotten about that moment but now it reminds me just how far I have come. That the old self-conscious insecure Renee is slowly falling away and becoming a thing of the past. I am so much more comfortable in my own skin. I am growing as a person and it is a work of art—and it is beautiful when you get to share these experiences with others.

I am really glad for what I have learnt on this journey called life so far (and it hasn’t always been easy). It is now time for me to start helping others to grow too. I want to help other keep working towards their full potential and for them to open and blossom and be the person they want to be. So here is my artwork, my work in progress. If anyone out there is interested in learning and growing with me feel free to send me a message and we can have a chat.

You can follow Renee’s blog, Life—lessons it wants me to learn for more or send her a message at: bradley.sinclair78@bigpond.com

More information
www.reneesinclair.wordpress.com
New silos: A winner at Condobolin

Condobolin farming couple Roger and Fabien Todd know only too well the benefits of storing barley on farm to wait for a price premium.

They picked up an extra $100 per tonne, or about 50 per cent more, by selling stored barley in August last year, rather than at harvest in November the previous year.

Two new 285 tonne grain silos meant they were able to take advantage of the predictable price improvement.

‘The thing with barley is it’s tricky to store—due to the bugs especially,’ said Roger.

‘These silos are elevated, fully sealed and aerated, so there is less likelihood of anything going wrong.

‘We’ve had deliveries rejected in the past because we were using older, less reliable silos to store our grain—so we know the benefits of the new, modern silos.’

The Todds are so convinced by the benefits that they have utilised a $220 000 loan from the Farm Innovation Fund to increase their farm grain storage further with another two 285 tonne grain silos to add to the two they put in last year with bank finance.

Roger and Fabien’s property, Wirrinun, includes 2500 hectares of controlled traffic system cropping and 7500 hectares of pastures for agistment livestock.

‘We’re finishing off a project with the grain storage. We’re also storing chickpeas and wheat at harvest time, as well as the barley. With chickpeas there are no local delivery points so it’s best for us to store it on farm and deliver it to Dubbo afterwards.

‘The four silos will further improve harvest efficiency because they are placed strategically in the farm’s controlled traffic area so the headers can keep going at harvest.’

The Todds have also used part of the funds to vastly improve their stock and domestic water system with tanks and troughs fed from a reticulated supply.

‘In 2003 we built a large 12 megalitre dam in a good catchment area—but it is in a 300 acre paddock and we wanted to distribute the water to other paddocks. Last year we put in a large solar pump at the dam, lifting water up to a 20 000 litre tank at a high point. We then reticulate the water to eight cup and saucer troughs around the farm—four 25 000 litre troughs and four 5000 litre troughs. We now have two watering points in most of our paddocks, which is great for good, even grazing.

‘With large mobs of 300-head running together, it helps having water at both ends of the paddock to distribute grazing pressure.

‘Also, I think stock do better with fresh running water—especially sheep—rather than muddy dam water. The new system has definitely given us more options with our livestock.’

Roger said he hadn’t put a price benefit on the increased efficiency but it would be significantly more over time than the upfront cost.

‘Like many investments on farm, the cost benefit of adopting something new is clearly beneficial but the upfront money is what is hard to find. This loan has helped with that upfront money.’

Drought strategy supports farmers

As part of the NSW Drought Strategy, a wide range of support measures are available to assist NSW producers to better prepare for and manage future drought, including:

» $250 million over five years for the popular Farm Innovation Fund. Concessional loans of up to $250 000 are available to eligible farmers to support the installation and upgrade of on farm infrastructure to prepare for future droughts.

» $45 million over five years for a vocational training and farm business planning package for primary producers in NSW.

» $2.5 million to develop, with the Bureau of Meteorology, an enhanced network of weather stations to improve access to weather information and forecasting products. This initiative will see NSW as one of the best served jurisdictions in Australia.

» Continue to provide monthly Seasonal Conditions Reports and finalise the development of the Regional Seasonal Conditions Reporting Framework through Local Land Services and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), as an important management tool for producers.

» $5 million over five years, for transport assistance for animal welfare and donated fodder. Under this initiative transport subsidies for animal welfare will continue to be provided. In addition the package will introduce transport subsidies for donated fodder from within NSW, supporting community based fodder campaigns.

» Work with the Commonwealth Government and farming community to support the ongoing development of a commercial multi-peril insurance product for our cropping sector. Having a viable commercial multi-peril insurance industry will lead to greater risk management in the farming sector.

» Ongoing commitment to support research and development, with a focus on drought resilience. DPI has a reputation for the provision of research and development initiatives and will continue to improve drought preparedness and management by identifying and filling information gaps through research and development.

» £5 million over five years to reinstate the Rural Support Worker Program to improve resilience of primary producers and regional communities on an as-needed basis.

For more information call 1800 678 593 or visit www.raa.nsw.gov.au
Maddie and Will’s 6NIL campaign for suicide prevention

Six mountains, five countries, four continents, three months, two people, one goal, zero suicides—this is Maddie and Will Gay’s campaign for suicide prevention, called 6NIL.

On World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September) in memory of their father, Maddie and Will will begin the challenge of a lifetime when they set out to climb six mountains (Mt Kinabalu, the Inca Trail, Mt Meru, Mt Kilimanjaro, Mt Cook and Mt Kosciuszko) across the world in three months. While honouring their father they will also be aiming to raise the profile of suicide prevention and $250,000 for Lifeline Australia. (The 6NIL campaign has already raised over $100,000 for Lifeline and was Lifeline’s highest contributing community fundraiser in 2014.)

Maddie and Will hope to challenge the way society reacts to suicide and mental illness, particularly in rural and regional communities.

‘We believe suicide is preventable and people should be empowered and supported to seek help when they need, instead of feeling stigmatised or isolated.’

Since losing their dad to suicide in 2009 Maddie and Will have been determined to prevent this indescribable tragedy happening to other families.

‘Growing up on a farm, seeing our parents battle through huge drought and economic hardship, taught us the importance of determination and resilience. We know that completing 6NIL will be one of the hardest things we’ve ever done, but as Dad would say, “Bite off more than you can chew, and chew like crazy”.

‘We’ve given talks about 6NIL in small rural towns and we always have people coming up afterward and talking about their own experiences with mental illness or suicide. 6NIL really is getting people talking and that’s all we could have hoped for.’

More information

www.6nil.com
www.facebook.com/6nilclimbs

Men’s matters: Water works

Stephen Carroll, Men’s Health Practitioner

As we get older many things change in us and in our lives. From the time we are youngsters we men tend to think we can manage and on more than one occasion might think we are bullet proof! As we get older this idea takes a few knocks and sometimes we need to get some assistance.

As our lives change we need to make some accommodations for this. Sometimes it is taking a bit more time to do things, sometimes it is getting things done a bit quicker as we need to get things sorted out. Either way we cannot be static. We cannot dig our heels in and say, ‘It won’t happen to me’, because it already is!

In this issue I thought I would talk about something that is unique to all men. All men are born with it but some end up without one. Most of our lives we don’t even know that we have one but it is vital for us to live our lives as younger men. Often as we get older it causes us trouble. What is it? It is our prostate.

The prostate is a walnut-shaped organ that sits just below the bladder and the urine pipe runs through the middle of it. Men ask me what it does. Its main job is connected with reproduction so as younger men this may be important but as we age it is perhaps not so important to us.

The trouble with prostates is that they start to grow when we are young men and don’t stop growing until the day we die. For some fellows this growth is slow and for others it is fast. When it is fast growth, the urine tube that runs through the middle might get squeezed until, just like a hose pipe, nothing will flow through. This condition is call enlarged prostate and it may need treatment.

Enlarged prostate symptoms

Some common symptoms of an enlarged prostate may be one, all or a few of these:

» Getting up in the night to have a wee.
» Difficulty weeing.
» Feeling like you might wet yourself.
» Takes a while to start weeing.
» Needing to ‘push’ to start.

» Diminished flow (remember back to what it used to be like when you were 18).
» Dribbling after you have finished.
» Needing to have a wee less than every two hours.

If you cannot wee at all this is a medical emergency. Don’t wait to see if it gets better, it probably won’t, you need to get to a hospital or clinic where they can treat this. Failure to do so may have dire consequences.

Be quite clear though, an enlarged prostate is not prostate cancer. These conditions are two separate things.

As I recommended in the last edition, yearly checks with your doctor will pick this up. If you have any trouble with your water works get to the doc and discuss it with them. There are a few treatments available, so talk to them about what might suit you.

An enlarged prostate does not only affect your life for the worse, but those around you too.

Get it fixed!

See you next time.

Men’s health information

Healthdirect Australia provides easy access to trusted, quality health information and advice online and over the phone. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to help you make informed choices any time.

The Healthdirect website lets you quickly search for a topic or look into specific areas in more detail, such as:

» managing conditions and diseases
» coping with life stages
» personal stories
» general advice on health and wellbeing

For men’s health click on the Life Stages tab and select Men’s Health.

Freecall 1800 022 222
www.healthdirect.gov.au
As they say, there’s no sick pay in the bush. On million hectare properties hours from the nearest town, Australia’s farming families face fires and floods, droughts and dramas as they plant, harvest, graze and muster—battling the bush to eke out a living from the toughest climate of them all.

In this enjoyable portrait of bush battlers, Deb explores the spirit of the outback through its hard-worn inhabitants. From ringers, gardeners and cooks to jackeroos, jillaroos and stockmen, all are like family and everyone has a story.

Featured in the book are Ian and Merry Jackson from Tirlta Station.

Tirlta sits on a patch of sweet country near Mutawintji National Park, about a 1.5 hr drive from Broken Hill. Drive out of town in any direction, to Cobar, Menindee, Adelaide or Tibooburra, and it is hard to believe there are station properties hidden behind the low-lying scrub that stretches as far as the eye can see. The only indication might be a battered mailbox, a faded sign or an old fridge where a sandy track veers off the bitumen and disappears into the distance, with no indication of how far you might have to travel before you reach your destination. The track that led to Tirlta ended at an oasis of beauty in an otherwise arid landscape.

Ian had a pocketful of stories to tell about his family’s history, and, in that great Aussie tradition of bush balladeers spinning a yarn, most of them played up the larrikin side of human nature.

The visit to Tirlta turned out to be one of the most entertaining I undertook in researching this book.

While I was staying with them, Ian and Merry drove me out to their ephemeral lake at sunset, where we met up with one of their sons, Matt, his wife Sarah and their two children, Sam and Archie. As the sun disappeared on that hot spring day we took part in a game that even now I struggle to explain. It involved four of us lifting a seated adult high into the air using only our fingertips. It was a mind-over-matter game that took place against the backdrop of the swollen lake, ink-black under the night sky. I don’t recall much apart from Ian’s eyes, sparkling in the darkness. ‘Now you know my secret’, he whispered.

Ian and Merry shared many stories with me during that visit, but none were quite so astonishing as that mystical show of force on the banks of an ephemeral lake near Broken Hill.

We had been talking all day. It was a warm spring night and a faint glow from the distant town of Broken Hill lightened the dark horizon; the Barrier Ranges were out there somewhere. Unseen from our vantage point on the upstairs balcony, hidden in the dark shadows, lay the remains of a humpy Ian’s grandfather had lived in, the shearing shed he’d built, the shed his father had built, and the gleaming new woolshed Ian had built.

There were wells and bores hundreds of feet deep that his forebears had sunk through silt by hand, a tennis court and swimming pool his father had put in, and a museum housing the most remarkable collection of Australian memorabilia I’d ever seen.

Within hours of meeting Ian I had gathered enough stories to fill a book. He’d shaken hands with a movie star, an Olympic athlete and the most notorious American president of recent times—all before age 18. He’d risen from dunce to dux at school, survived a near-fatal car crash only to die briefly on the operating table, and he’d gone from borrowing money to feed his first child to owning not one but two thriving sheep and cattle stations.

Ian played by no rules but his own and he could be charming, bullish, forthright, modest and supremely self-confident in the space of a single sentence. Like an old-fashioned showman, his stories were sprinkled with a touch of magic, and his eagerness and enthusiasm to share them was infectious enough to suspend disbelief at some of the more outlandish claims. He made most people’s lives (mine included) seem tame by comparison.

You can read the Jackon’s full story and other inspiring true stories of Australian farming families living and working our great brown land in Deb’s book. Enter our reader give away to win a free copy.
Sarah Roche lives near Adelong with her husband (a cattle and sheep farmer) and their three children Polly (8), Sidney (5) and Billy (3). She joined GrainCorp as the Regional Manager--Supply Chain for Southern NSW and is responsible for managing a team of 150 staff across southern NSW (which increases to a team of 600 during harvest). She is a member of GrainCorp’s Leadership Group made up of the top 100 leaders across the world. Prior to joining GrainCorp Sarah was Co-Director of proAgitive, providing succession planning services to family farm businesses. While not currently on an external board Sarah is keen to pursue opportunities to ensure there is balanced representation when talking about agribusiness challenges and ways to attract more women into operational and leadership positions. She believes that having a diversified team to tackle challenges and ways forwards will ultimately result in more robust outcomes.

**What motivated you to become involved?**

Agribusiness is my passion. Originally a city girl from Melbourne I would spend every holiday at my families cattle and sheep farm near Braidwood and it was here that my love of the land began.

Knowing from an early age that agribusiness was what I wanted to pursue I went on to completed a double degree at the University of New England, Armidale. I was one of the first female Presidents of Robb College and had to live in North Court with the boys because that’s where the presidents room was. I learnt to put up with their random jokes and I developed real courage and resilience to pursue positions that had traditionally been held by males.

Today my core motivation is to be able to use my education, qualifications and drive to make a difference. Being a role model for my children is important and I am working to provide for their education and wellbeing. I also hope to inspire other girls who marry into farming families to have a career and to use their strengths beyond what they think is possible.

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

Inspiring our team to deliver a high standard of excellence to achieve our corporate goals and seeing the results be achieved is very powerful. As a leader I strive to keep it simple, be clear on the strategy, provide the appropriate resources, communicate clear expectations and celebrate success with the team. I love interacting with passionate people who love agriculture and are making a difference for future generations.

**Have you experienced any obstacles?**

Like most leaders, I face obstacles across all aspects of my life as I juggle family, work and farm responsibilities. I don’t believe there is one single answer but rather it is how we organise ourself and our lives and how we react to challenges that is the key.

I focus on being organised and having a plan, I ask for help when needed and I try to be flexible. When the plan goes out the window I deal with the issue in the moment—it could be as major as a train derailment, an injured employee, a tragic community event that hits our rural towns or as simple as Polly has missed the school bus, I am 300 km away or the tooth fairy forgot to come and Sid is going to call ooo. It’s all real stuff! It is how we react to these situations that matters most and makes the difference between a great leader and an average leader.

Being a female leader of 150 with only five females in the team could be seen as an obstacle; however I treat it as an opportunity. I’m fortunate at GrainCorp that I am treated with respect and have a fantastic team of people. Rather than focus on gender we focus on getting the job done—safely and at a high standard. We work together as one team and value everyone and their diverse strengths.

In terms of the juggling act, I’m not sure you ever get 100 per cent work-life balance. I try to focus on quality time with our children, bonfires in the paddock, walks to the creek, and driving hours to sport on weekends. We talk at dinner at night about what we are grateful for—it’s amazing the conversations you have with little people.

**Where do you get your support?**

My husband John is my number one mentor. He works with cattle, sheep and kelpies everyday—I work with people, computers and grain. John’s outlook on life and the corporate world is refreshing to come home to. When relaying challenges I’ve faced at work he will often say to me, ’Sarah, when you get tackled, get up and keep going!’

I also have a great boss who values collaboration and family. He is a wonderful support to me, and thirdly, I have a corporate mentor who I can bounce ideas off, discuss challenging experiences with or talk to about how to strive to the next level. He pushes me out of my comfort zone. Lastly, my kids remind me daily of the art of negotiation!

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

Be great and dream Big. Have expectations of yourself and then double them!
AgVision instils agricultural passion in city school students

James Riordan
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

For the first time the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) of NSW has successfully partnered with the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and Junee High School to bring AgVision—an event designed to encourage and inspire young people to become the future of agriculture in Australia—to Sydney Showground.

AgVision Sydney was held at the end of July and was an agri-careers exhibition, providing city and country based secondary school pupils from years 9–11 with a unique chance to learn about the industry, while gaining a greater understanding of the wide-ranging careers available in agriculture, science and agri-business.

The initiative formed part of a national response to Australia’s agri-skills crisis, outlined by recent Government studies and reviews of the industry.

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The initiative formed part of a national response to Australia’s agri-skills crisis, outlined by recent Government studies and reviews of the industry.

Murray Wilton, General Manager of Agriculture at the RAS, said AgVision Sydney provided a platform for developing a greater connection between students and the agribusiness sector, where they experienced first-hand what it’s like to work in an industry trade or service.

‘We saw approximately 600 students gain a hands-on learning experience through a selection of 50 workshops, which were run by industry specialists and professionals from all over the state, who have established careers within the agricultural sector,’ Mr Wilton said.

‘Our mission at the RAS is to deliver coordinated and engaging agricultural education programs and events, highlighting the importance of food and fibre and the farmers who produce it.

‘AgVision Sydney has helped to achieve this and encourage the students to become future leaders of agriculture. The RAS was proud to be part of this excellent initiative with DEC and Junee High School,’ said Mr Wilton.

During the event, the workshops profiled a range of careers, including technology, research, development and extension, primary production, secondary production, processing, logistics, transport, handling, marketing of products, commodities as well as services.

Students chose five sessions to attend, which ran for 35 minutes each. Presenters were supported by teachers from attending schools in each workshop, to ensure all students received the information they needed to make informed decisions about study pathways.

Steph Ferguson and Hamish Andrews
Biosecurity planning in schools competition underway

Jen Anderson
Department of Primary Industries

A biosecurity planning pilot program for secondary schools is being run in conjunction with the 2015 Archibull Prize competition.

Developed with existing Western Australian resources and Department of Primary Industries (DPI) expertise, the program’s theme is, ‘Safe food starts in the paddock and ends on your plate’.

Project coordinator Michelle Fifield said future plans include an expansion of the pilot program to all NSW schools in 2016 and the development of the accredited professional development course for teachers, delivered through Tocal Online, to ensure that the planning program is implemented in schools using up-to-date information.

‘The program was developed to increase the science investigation skills of students and teachers,’ Michelle said.

‘It involves an audit of the participating schools’ current biosecurity measures, development of a biosecurity plan and submission of an infographic to represent the key message of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013–2021, which is, “Biosecurity is a shared responsibility”.’

Prizes will be awarded to the best individual and the best group infographic.

The Archibull Prize is a Picture You in Agriculture ArtAgriculture initiative, which is supported by DPI, Local Land Services, GPT Group, Grains Research and Development Corporation, Cotton Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, NSW Farmers, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Australian Wool Innovation and Meat and Livestock Australia.

Further agricultural science schools resources are being developed by DPI. In addition to the agricultural science in schools initiatives, the historic Creamery at Belgenny Farm, Camden, will be transformed into a state-of-the-art agricultural learning centre. The centre will be home to a range of new school initiatives to enable students and teachers to learn about food and fibre production.

$100 000 grants earmarked for regional NSW community projects

Six young leaders from regional NSW are on track to turn their dream into a reality after being awarded a Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) of NSW Foundation 2015 Community Futures Grant.

Megan Callow of Junee, Helen De Costa of Braidwood, Chris Duley of Wanaaring, Paris Norton of Coonabarabran, Katie Rowe of Gulargambone and David Ryan of Uralla will each receive a grant, up to the value of $25,000, from the RAS Foundation to activate a project which will benefit their local communities.

The Community Futures Grant is open to NSW residents under the age of 35 and encourages young people living in rural areas to take a leadership role in improving their community by addressing local issues and needs.

RAS Foundation executive officer, Kate Ross, said this year the judging panel was very impressed with the standard and range of projects.

‘What really stood out with these grants was the passion and desire of young people to strengthen and make a real difference in their local communities—they are committed to having a positive impact,’ Ms Ross said.

2015 Community Futures Grant recipient Chris Duley of Wanaaring will partner with Far West NSW Medicare Local to develop a local community garden. As Wanaaring’s nearest grocery store is 200 kilometres away, the project aims to provide local families with a sustainable local supply of fruit and vegetables. The community garden will include an outdoor work bench with a sink, a pizza oven and seating, so that families can cook meals on site and the space can be used as an alternative learning centre for school children.

Paris Norton, 23, is an arts administration officer and will partner with Centacare Coonabarabran to run a weekly workshop called Creation Point, where local women can come together to learn and practise traditional Indigenous weaving. As weaving is a highly regarded skill within the arts and retail market, the project aims to provide participants with the opportunity to use their new skill to produce quality pieces for sale, as well as encourage future workshops where weaving can be taught in schools, community organisations and at cultural events such as NAIDOC week.

The RAS Foundation is a charitable foundation that encourages educational opportunities and helps build strong and sustainable rural and regional communities through a range of targeted grants and scholarships.

More information
T: 02 9704 1234
E: foundation@rasf.org.au
www.rasf.org.au

Women in Global Business accessing finance

Women in Global Business (WIGB) supports Australian businesswomen in taking their products and services to the world. It is a national whole of government program that offers women a central source of information and resources, along with support and connection.

WIGB is running Access to finance/capital for international expansion workshops that will provide businesswomen operating successful Australian businesses with the knowledge, skills and strategies to scale up internationally. It will cover a range of topics, including strategies to help women obtain finance and how to prepare their business to seek funding.

The second report from WIGB, Women, global trade and what it takes to succeed, identified that over half of the women surveyed rated accessing finance as difficult. The study also found that most internationalised women-owned organisations rely primarily on personal savings and only 21 per cent have attempted to borrow to fund internationalisation.

The program covers topics that will address each of these issues, teaching women practical skills that will enable them to take the necessary steps to successfully finance the internationalisation of their business.

www.wigb.gov.au
**Navigating family law**

Marie Sullivan, Bathurst

In June 2014 I suffered a major health event—a stroke. After a fortunate recovery I concluded that it was time to re-evaluate and do what I had been hoping to do for over a decade. I relocated to my home near Bathurst and set about making a new life and career for myself—one that was more aligned with my lifelong passion for helping other women, girls and people in general.

In my early days I went to university and majored in English literature and drama before completing a masters and then going on to study graduate law.

My early career was spent as an educator advocating for girls’ rights and advancement. I went on to practise at a top-tier Sydney law firm in family law, estate law and commercial litigation. However, when my own marriage sadly fell apart, it left me feeling devastated and family law just seemed too close to the bone.

I moved into a less emotionally charged area of law practising in Sydney and Melbourne for almost two decades. During this time I continued to follow my passion for family law and for women’s and girls’ rights, working with the Federal Government towards legal reforms that included superannuation as the property of the parties upon divorce (prior to this women were not guaranteed to get a share of their husband’s super).

As part of reconfiguring my life, and after observing first-hand people’s frustrations with the family law system and indeed their lawyers (of which I was one), I concluded that many people caught up in family law disputes feel totally bamboozled and bogged down in the Family Court process. Recognising that these people needed guidance and a clear path forward I believed I could help them and so I resolved to use my project management, legal, consulting, and life coaching skills to launch a business that helps people navigate the family law system.

In creating a new life for myself I have been able to continue to follow my passion for helping people. Navigating the family law process isn’t easy and for most people it is a new territory with its own foreign language. My aim is to empower women by helping them to:

- define exactly what they want to achieve in the family law resolution environment
- formulate the right strategy to quickly and realistically resolve their family law matter
- choose a family lawyer and monitor their work and charges
- understand what is needed to prepare for their first and subsequent appointments with their family lawyer
- formulate the exact ongoing instructions to give their family lawyer
- prepare their case, thus saving time and costs when they consult their family lawyer
- cut through the irrelevancies presented to them by their former partner and lawyers
- plan their exit strategy when considering separation and divorce from their partner
- engage with their partner to facilitate a speedy resolution
- obtain other professional advice from accountants, financial planners, counsellors, family therapists, mediators.

**ClearPath**

**Navigating Family Law**

Marie Sullivan is an experienced family law project manager with over two decades of legal consulting and life coaching experience. She can clearly explain the language of the law, the Family Court process, options available and what is required to best navigate the family law system.

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**Beyond the blue cloud: Pushing through depression and anxiety**

‘A problem shared is a problem halved’, is what a group of supportive women living in the western Riverina area of Hay declared when they gathered recently at the Hay Services Club.

The gathering, aptly titled Beyond the Blue Cloud: Pushing through depression and anxiety, provided a supportive and confidential place for women who have experienced or are currently experiencing depression and anxiety, to release their burdens in a safe environment.

Two inspiring women gave their time to speak at the gathering. Liz Matthews, a local leader in the Hay community who works for Intereach, spoke about support for people affected by depression and anxiety. Lou Campbell, a life coach trainer, spoke about how life coaching can provide a platform for people to set goals for themselves, which can form strategies to help manage depression and anxiety.

In the fast-paced and high-pressure world we live in there can be a predisposition for anyone to experience depression and anxiety. For many people who have been under those dark clouds at some stage in their life, they often keep it to themselves for fear of the stigma that may arise from admitting feeling depressed or anxious.

The key messages that came out of the gathering were:

- depression and anxiety can effect anyone
- experiencing depression and anxiety does not mean you are weak, it shows strength to seek help
- with seeking help and support, depression and anxiety can be managed and quality of life can be restored.

The gathering was an initiative of Women of Western Riverina Networking Group, which was founded in January 2015. Women who attended the gathering have suggested gathering trimonthly at Hay.

Group founder Tammy Galvin from Narrandera encourages all women to join the group to increase connection, support and inspiration throughout the community of western Riverina women.

Join Women of Western Riverina Networking-WOW on Facebook or call Tammy Galvin on 0427 848 163.
Chill your Winter power bill

Cold weather and higher power consumption often go hand-in-hand, and after months of running heaters, clothes dryers and electric blankets, high energy bills can come as a shock when they arrive in spring.

Quarterly billing means that households won’t see how charges add up for several months, so it’s important to act and think now.

With a little bit of planning and a few simple steps, your household can make informed decisions about energy use that will help you avoid bill shock, debt and disconnection.

There are four key ways you can reduce your power consumption and chill your power bill:

» **Be aware of energy use.** A simple audit of your household can help you measure how much energy you are consuming at what times of the day. An audit is an effective way to understand your energy usage, make informed choices about when and how you use appliances, identify easy power savings you can make that will help you save money and know what to expect when the bill arrives.

» **Take steps to reduce energy use.** Energy reductions around the home don’t have to cost you your convenience and comfort. By making a few small changes you can start saving power and money today.

» **Know what rebates and assistance are available.** If you’re having difficulty paying your power bills, make sure you are accessing the rebates and financial assistance available to you. The NSW Government offers several rebates to help households pay their utility bills. Rebates are available to eligible families, low income households and households running life support and certain other medical equipment.

» **Plan for the bill.** If you are having difficulty managing payments on your bills, seek help early to avoid the extra stress of mounting debt and disconnection. Careful planning, financial counselling and payment arrangements can all help you avoid bill shock, debt and disconnection.

Find more tips to reduce your energy use in the Chill Your Power Bill factsheet produced by EWON or call to request a copy.

www.ewon.com.au
1800 246 545

The popularity of medical romance

Fiona McArthur, Author

In the TV Series *Offspring*, I loved Nina’s family and the emphasis on the fact that medical and paramedical staff have to manage high emotion at work as well as at home and try to keep the two balanced. Medical people save lives. That’s what they do in fiction and real life. It’s heroic but it takes a toll. For me, that’s the secret. It’s all about the characters and their world in a part-time setting of medical drama and how they manage to be people as well. And sometimes, like ordinary people, they even find love.

My version of medical romance is usually midwifery-based and in a small hospital or even smaller town. It is based on reality because I’m a midwife in a country town but the characters in my books tell me what to write.

Our town has just under 300 babies born with us every year. If Mum or baby are sick, we transfer them an hour down the road to the base hospital, or by helicopter to Sydney or Newcastle. But before that, we need to have the skills to manage the unexpected. I am proud of the people I work with and have a genuine, unshakable faith and awe in the strength of birthing women. Of course, I want to write about it. It’s what I know and love and can share with passion.

I want people to know that hospital and paramedical workers do care—that they are men and women who want people to be well, have beautiful births, be healed by operations, medications or be transferred safely. But I also pull on the fact that the carers need caring for themselves, that drawing on strength in crisis has a cost in private and that medical staff are human. They cry when people die.

Despite the higher visual exposure evil attracts I don’t believe it has the numbers the common good holds. So I write about those amazing people—more lately based in the outback—and what a bunch of heroes to draw from. I choose happy endings because that’s where my characters have taken me. I see people hanging on when others might have let go and I want to give a glimpse into the world of medicine you don’t see behind that hand that’s holding out to you in your hour of need. And there is romance in there as well. Fiona has dedicated her latest novel, The *Homestead Girls*, to the Royal Flying Doctor Service—their incredible flight nurses, doctors, outreach clinic care providers, control room coordinators, mechanics and the pilots who get them there safely.

The *Homestead Girls* focuses on a sheep station in drought, medical emergencies in the outback and a beautiful but desolate landscape where five ordinary women become a family and do extraordinary things.

Book give-away

RWN has four copies of The *Homestead Girls* to give away. To win a copy, tell us in 25 words or less who is an ordinary woman doing extraordinary things in your community. Send your entry to: RWN, Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800 or email: rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au

THE COUNTRY WEB • Spring 2015 • Creating and Making | 37
Country Web Reader Survey
In the previous issue of The Country Web we asked you to provide us with feedback on your experience of the magazine. We have received a great response so far, but there is still time if you haven’t yet completed the online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/52KXPcX.

The survey only takes five to 10 minutes and will provide us with important information on things like the look and feel of the magazine, suitability and relevance of content and the method of delivery. By completing the survey you can win a complimentary registration to attend the NSW Rural Women’s Gathering, valued at $250. To enter simply include your name and contact number in the ‘Other’ field at question four of the survey. The survey will close on 10 September.

Applications are open for the 2016 RIRDC Rural Women’s Award
Do you have a vision, project or initiative for your industry or community but need a helping hand to get it started? Rural Women’s Award state and territory winners receive a $10,000 bursary to help them achieve their vision or implement their idea. State winners also have the opportunity to participate in an Australian Institute of Company Directors Course. Find out how to apply at www.rirdc.gov.au. To express interest email rwa@rirdc.gov.au. Applications close 31 October.

NSW Farmer of the Year Award
Entries are now open for this year’s NSW Farmer of the Year Award. The annual award is designed to recognise excellence in farming within NSW. A joint initiative between NSW Farmers and DPI, and supported by The Land newspaper and WorkCover NSW, the award has a particular focus on acknowledging farmers who combine safe, environmentally sustainable practices with profitable production. To further develop and improve their farming enterprise all finalists will be invited to form part of the NSW Farmers professional network. Farmer of the Year winner will be awarded $10,000 and other finalists will each receive $2,000. For more information and an application form see www.nswfarmers.org.au. Entries close 11 September 2015.

New Investor Tool
Entering the world of investment for the first time can be daunting. It can be really helpful to gain personal insight into what kind of investor you are; do you prefer low risk and an easy night of sleep? or are you a high risk taker and live for the thrill of it all? Check out our new investor profiling tool to help you ascertain what kind of investor you are. Find it at www.10thousandgirl.com.

Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc Central West Branch Cowra/Canowindra $2000 HSC Scholarship
This annual scholarship assists highly-motivated female students who live and attend school in the Cowra and Canowindra areas and who have been accepted for university. Students need to submit a CV and letter of application to the AFGW HSC Coordinator at: afgwcwhsc@gmail.com. Applications close 30 January 2016. See the website for more details: www.afgwnsw.org.au.

Free Better Money Management workshop at Young NSW
This free workshop is presented by 10thousandgirl and is being held at Young on 29 August. The workshop is for any woman who wants to improve her money management skills. Learn the principles behind personal finance and investing, in an engaging, supportive and light-hearted environment. You’ll also hear from a panel of local finance experts, who will give you some guidance and an understanding of their role and how they can help you, as well as be on hand to answer any questions you might have. Check the Event Calendar at www.10thousandgirl.com for event and registration details.

NewAccess: Free coaching service
New Access is a Beyond Blue program providing free and confidential support to help you tackle day-to-day pressures.

A specially trained and experienced coach will support you in setting practical goals that will get you back on track. The program includes six free coaching sessions. At your first appointment, your coach will complete an initial assessment with you and develop a program tailored to your needs. Sessions occur over the phone or face-to-face, whichever works best for you.

On average, one in five women and one in eight men will experience some level of depression, and one in three women and one in five men will experience anxiety during their lifetime. If any of the following are causing you to feel unhappy, moody, angry or unable to concentrate or sleep this service could be right for you: work stress or uncertainty; change in living arrangements; new parent worries; family problems; health concerns or uncertainty; long-term isolation or loneliness; financial worries.

Resources

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

Runkeeper
Download the Runkeeper running app to track your runs and other fitness activities, track your progress and stay motivated by setting fitness goals. You can also connect with friends online to make your workouts social. There is a paid version of the app, which gives you access to lots of extras but the free version has some great features to get you started.

Superior Seed
The Superior Seed Co app helps agronomists and farmers stay up-to-date on new seed varieties that are being released and what areas they are suited to.

Blogs

BushBelles blog
BushBelles is a blog for rural and regional women who want to be informed, inspired and in style.

www.bushbelles.blogspot.com.au

Art4Agriculture Chat
The Art4Agriculture initiative aims to reconnect consumers with the people who produce their food and fibre by celebrating the pivotal role Australian farmers play in feeding and clothing the world. It is a network of young people who love working in agriculture and are passionate about sharing their stories.

www.art4agriculturechat.wordpress.com

herBusiness blog
Whether you have an idea for a business, have your own start-up or emerging business or are already well established this blog will inspire you to learn, grow and connect with other business women.

www.abn.org.au/blog

Local is Lovely
Sophie Hanson started the Local is Lovely blog three years ago to celebrate nice farmers (just like Sophie and her husband) and share recipes and stories from their own farm other farms and kitchens and markets across the country. Sophie’s recipes are simple, seasonal and fresh and will inspire you to source your food as locally as possible—because it’s lovely!

www.local-lovely.com

Facebook communities

Friend a Farmer
Amy Gunn, a passionate livestock officer has generated a huge Facebook following with her Friend a Farmer Initiative, gaining over 5000 followers since January. She set up the community to help bridge the city-country divide. She believes Australians care and want to help those in need but are limited because they don’t know how. By providing a platform to connect people, she hopes to raise money for events to increase awareness about rural issues.

www.facebook.com/friendafarmer

Wiradjuri Mob
Yuwin Ngadhi (Mark Saddler) is a proud Wiradjuri man from Euabalong and Wagga Wagga who started the Wiradjuri Mob Facebook community to engage people with Wiradjuri culture. It provides an interactive place where people can ask questions and share their knowledge. You’ll find posts about Aboriginal land, culture and language and be exposed to some wonderful images celebrating Aboriginal culture and heritage.

www.facebook.com/WiradjuriMob

Magazines and podcasts

Gloss magazine
Gloss is a fabulous online magazine published by the Little Black Dress Group (a community of business leaders and entrepreneurs). You can subscribe to Gloss for free to receive a monthly dose of smart, seriously great information from business leaders and entrepreneurs who walk the talk. We guarantee you will be inspired.

www.littleblackdressgroup.com.au

The Rural Woman, connections and conversations monthly podcasts
Delicious conversations with inspiring rural women delivered to your inbox free each month. With eight amazing conversations already uploaded there’s plenty of inspiration and opportunities for leaning.

www.therw.biz

Websites

A Mighty Girl
A Mighty Girl claims to be the world’s largest collection of books, toys and movies for smart, confident and courageous girls. A mighty girl was created as a resource site to help others equally interested in supporting and celebrating girls. For daily inspiration you can join A Mighty Girl on Facebook or subscribe to their blog.

www.amightygirl.com

ABC Open
Australians are creating unique, inspiring and engaging videos, photos and written stories to share on ABC Open. Tell your story or be inspired by others’ stories.

www.open.abc.net.au

Etsy
Etsy is a marketplace where people around the world connect, both online and offline, to make, sell and buy unique goods. Etsy’s global community is made up of creative entrepreneurs who use Etsy to sell what they make or curate and shoppers who are looking for things they can’t find anywhere else. You can’t help but be inspired browsing the many beautiful items.

www.etsy.com

Farm Diversity
This could be the first step in exploring something new for your farm. Search crop and animal production enterprise alternatives by type or location to discover which may be best suited to your farm.

www.farmdiversity.com.au

Pinterest
Pinterest is a visual discovery tool that you can use to find ideas for all your projects and interests. Join Pinterest for free to find all the things that inspire you. It’s like your own personal pinboard where you can place all your favourite ideas, inspiration and creative projects you want to complete!

www.pinterest.com

Ravelry
An online community for knitters and crocheters with patterns for everything.

www.ravelry.com
NSW- ACT RIRDC Rural Women’s Award 2016
a life-changing experience!

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (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; membership to the Rural Women’s Award Alumni. NSW Award Finalists will receive a $1000 DPI Leadership Bursary.

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

Trudy McElroy,
Deniliquin,
2015 NSW- ACT
RIRDC Rural Women’s Award Finalist.

The Country Web is produced by NSW Department of Primary Industries. If you live in NSW and would like The Country Web sent free to your home please PRINT your details and return to: RWN, Locked Bag 21 Orange NSW 2800. The Country Web is available on the RWN website. If you have internet access please help lower our production costs by cancelling your hardcopy subscription. To receive an email alert notifying you when the latest edition is available go to: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/country-web

NAME: ____________________________  ADDRESS: ____________________________  PCODE: ___________

PHONE: ____________________________  EMAIL: ____________________________

☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background  ☐ Culturally and linguistically diverse background

Age group: ☐ 12- 20s  ☐ 20s  ☐ 30s  ☐ 40s  ☐ 50s  ☐ 60s  ☐ 70s  ☐ 80s+

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


The Rural Women’s Network connecting regional & remote NSW

If unclaimed please return to RWN, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Locked Bag 21, ORANGE NSW 2800  Job Number 13613 September 2015