

RRR NETWORK NEWS

Connecting rural, remote and regional women in Western Australia

summer: 11

YOURS
TO KEEP



EDITION 58 ISSN 1445-7210



Celebration

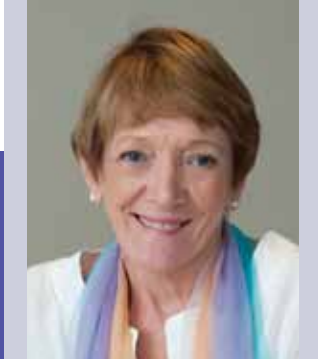
look at us now

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Department of Agriculture and Food
Department of Regional Development and Lands



Melva Stone

From the Chair

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Cover Photo:
The Midwest Tigers celebrate their 2011 State Netball League grand final.
Courtesy Geraldton Newspapers

Since our last issue I have been fortunate to attend the “Women Affecting Change” workshop in Canberra – a fantastic experience. Having been chosen to attend, this was made possible with the support of Bankwest, for which we are sincerely appreciative.

The workshop was an amazing experience, providing the participants with a clear understanding of how federal parliament works and how best to approach and work with politicians. A full overview will be given in our next edition when photographs of the event are available. A total of 30 women from remote and rural areas across Australia attended and the networking opportunities were also fantastic.

It is planned to make the workshop an annual event on the rural women’s calendar and the RRR Network applauds the initiative of Barbara Grey, from Queensland, the national runner-up in the 2011 RIDIC Rural Women’s Award. The effort Barb and her team put into the workshop was amazing and the end result a huge success.

Change is always a difficult issue and I know that change in small communities can be even more difficult. My own community of Broome is faced with the enormous challenges of change and the way in which it can divide communities. Unfortunately there are always speculation and rumours as a part of the change process. Perhaps the only way to get a “balanced view” is to do our own research, rather than rely on information from other sources. We would welcome contributions about how women have coped with change in their communities and how they collated information to enable them to come to an informed view.

Stories on the “Simple Life” always intrigue me. One such story which I read waiting in an airport lounge recently led me to look at some websites on the subject. I loved one article which suggested that, as an exercise in finding out if you are really living the life you want, you write a list of the ten activities you enjoy most and then a list of the ten activities that occupy most of your time. Needless to say, this exercise could be a real challenge and “call to action”!

As women living in rural, regional and remote Western Australia we are privileged to maybe find the time to do the test. The call to action may be more difficult. We are certainly no less busy, involved, qualified and committed than our counterparts in the city. Perhaps we are lucky enough to be a few steps closer to living a simpler life. I know that every time I drive in the city I think how much easier it is to drive around the streets of Broome, even in the tourist season.

As always, I end with a quote on the benefits of a less stressful life: “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication,” Leonard Da Vinci.

Sincerely

Melva

Melva Stone OAM
Chair

KALGOORLIE



Great Prospects in Kalgoorlie

Clair Stanton



Clair and her camera

Clair Stanton has found her place in Kalgoorlie and has recently stepped out on her own as a photographer. Clair shares her search and her passion for her craft and her community.

I used to change my mind every day about what I wanted to be when I grew up. It used to annoy my parents but I've been lucky enough to have finally found it.

Applying for a photojournalist cadetship at the local paper was a bit out of step for me considering I was working in IT at the time!

In August 2011, Clair was awarded both Home Based Business of the Year and Young Achiever of the Year at the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce awards.

Like most people up till this point I took happy snaps for my family and friends. I've never been a person to settle for anything mediocre or something that doesn't excite me. I'm glad I've found something that I think I can safely say completes me.

Since getting the job at the Kalgoorlie Miner it's been five huge years of life. I now have a beautiful four year old daughter; I recently celebrated my sixth wedding anniversary to my incredibly supportive husband and made the big decision to go out on my own with my photography business, pictures by clair.

After running the business from home with a small studio, office and all the hanging space in the

house taken up with pictures, we have opened the doors to our own commercial studio space. My dream for five years now, it is an extremely exciting time to see the plans come together.

I often find it hard to contain my excitement about all the great prospects in Kalgoorlie and throughout the vastness of our state.

Even though there are times that it feels like we are so far away from everything, the possibilities that this town presents constantly are only as short as your ideas.



Weddings, water and barbed wire fencing are a magical combination.

If I had to sum up my style of photography in one word, it would be true. All I want from my pictures is for my clients to look comfortable, not false or posed or that they can't express themselves. For me it's all about grabbing the moments when we think no one is looking and capturing the little details that mean more than the time we often spend thinking about them.



Clair's philosophy is for her clients to look comfortable and grab those special moments.

Recently I joined an exciting new project in collaboration with some talented and like minded women, such as the two crafty dames and Lisa Freeth designs, to launch a new range of community lifestyle courses at VTEC.

This is a great compliment to me and I am proud that I was asked to contribute on many levels.

Being a trainer for the ArtLife photography course is allowing me to work with some women who inspire me with their creativity and passion for creation. It is indeed an amazing opportunity and one for which I am very grateful.

Love what you do where ever you are. If it's really what you want to do you can make it happen anywhere.

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Look at Us Now

Marg Agnew

The Rural Remote and Regional Women’s Network of Western Australia has stood How has it affected you? In the following stories some of the former Chairs of

Marg Agnew, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (1996-1998)

What was my favourite experience when I was Chair?

Finally, after two and a half years of lobbying for the establishment of the RRR Network and have the then Deputy Premier Hendy Cowan officially launch the Network on August 12, 1996.

What would you consider the biggest achievement?

At the first meeting of the Reference Group we decided to publish our first edition of Network News by December 1996. We had only just met as a group at the launch of the Network. We did not know one another, we all lived across the state, and Kate Daniels, our Coordinator, had just started.

We had given ourselves four months to gather stories and photos, develop a data base of subscribers, work through decisions on the final format, get quotes from the printers and work to a budget. I knew I wanted the magazine (then called a newsletter) to be professional and I think we achieved that goal. When I reflect on the first edition and the last spring edition there is very little similarity in style/format, except the content is about RRR women for RRR women. At that time I did not use the computer and correspondence was completed by fax.

What would you say about joining the Reference Group?

The best memories of being part of RRR was the opportunity to meet the many wonderful, inspiring, passionate and interesting women from across our great state. I also found there were many enthusiastic people in government departments that offered so much support and wanted to see the Network succeed. This Reference Group helped lay the foundations for the Network that we have today.

I would encourage women, who have the same desire to see the RRR Network continue to grow, to put their name forward and join the Reference Group.

Where are you now?

Not a lot has changed over 15 years, I’m still living on the farm and behaving like a farmer.

Do you still keep in contact with RRR?

An overwhelming yes.

When I received the latest Network News edition, I tear off the plastic cover and madly flip through every page. Later I enjoy reading the magazine over a period of days with delight and appreciation of every story.

I keep in touch with many of the women I worked with during my time as Chair. I don’t think you can experience some of those challenges and not be affected by being part of a team of likeminded and really beautiful people. I would like to keep in contact more often

and I try to touch base during the year.

I still love encouraging women to write their story for Network News. Many women do not believe in themselves, or realise what they have to say would make a great story and appreciate that other women would enjoy reading their story. My success rate is not high but on the journey of talking to women I personally have learnt so much about these women and their life experiences. I continue to hand the magazine to new readers and encourage them to join the RRR Network. Some things do not change.

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Marg Agnew, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (1996-1998)



the test of time and 15 years later continues to connect women across the state. the RRR Reference Group reflect on their experience and the network.

Liz Guidera, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (1998 – 2001)

What was your favourite experience when you were the Chair of the Reference Group?

- The Deputy Prime Minister's Round Table in Canberra....tiny fish; enormous pond.
- Judging the Rural Women's Awards, and attending the national awards in Canberra.
- Helping to present the WARM Winter Gathering, a conference partnered with WA Women in Ag, back in the day.

They were all the big things, but essentially the real favourite was reading the stories gathered for each magazine that told of the challenges and joys, the heartaches and the inspiration of women in Western Australia.

What would you consider the biggest achievement accomplished during your time as the Chair of the RRR Reference Group?

There were a number of challenges through the 90s: negotiating the tightrope of two departments and two Ministers and staff successfully with a positive outcome for rural women and the Network.

My time on RRR saw the launch of the website and the first online forum with Hendy Cowan which was ground breaking at the time. That seems strange to say with current and continuing advances

in technology and online delivery of information.

Retrospectively, how would you sum up your experience with the Reference Group?

RRR was a logical extension of what I was already doing: participating in rural youth, local government and lots of community groups. My role on the Reference Group was community service, just on a wider scale.

Recently I helped Cathy Broad, who was appointed Chair after me, celebrate her birthday. Cathy and I ended up in Perth last year and our girls, Daisy and Maddie, are great friends. Funnily enough our husbands too enjoy catching up. Cathy and I have been fortunate to continue developing a friendship which all started with RRR.

In my work and on Facebook I often come across former Reference Group members from across the state including former chairs Marg Agnew and recently Nikki Eggington.

Where are you now? / What are you doing now?

I still live on the farm at Badgebup east of Katanning. As PA to Maggie Dent and for her business Esteem Plus as Project Manager, I work from home organising seminars, workshops and conferences all over Australia.

I am passionate about Maggie's work building resilience for kids,

families and communities all over the nation. It's a perfect job for a girl in the bush!

Women still play a key role in supporting their men and their community in adversity and it is imperative that the focus continues on women's health and well being in rural Australia.

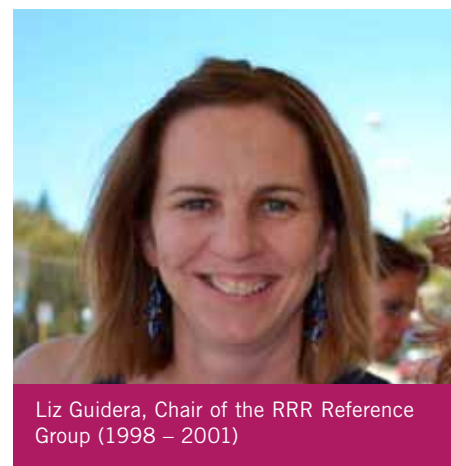
Do you still keep in contact with the RRR Network?

Receiving the magazine, I enjoy reading about the wonderful things happening in rural WA.

I 'like' RRR on Facebook and whilst it has its faults, it is an efficient way to keep up-to-date and communicate on a wider scale. I probably know more about what RRR are doing now than for most of the last 10 years!

Congratulations to all who have contributed their passion and commitment to RRR over 15 years.

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Liz Guidera, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (1998 – 2001)



BROOME



“ You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. ”

Look at Us Now

Ros Hegarty

Ros Hegarty, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (2008)

“You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.”

Steve Jobs, Apple Computers

This is one of my favorite quotes. I feel that my experiences of living in regional West Australia has always been one of “joining the dots”.

As with a lot of young mothers, I was involved with organizing the local playgroup, then on to holding positions on the P&C and sporting groups. The confidence and skills learnt were then taken into further regional positions in health and education and also as a Shire Councillor. The training, confidence and growing networks across government, business sector over the state, being open to new ideas and thinking all contributed to me becoming who I am.

When I joined the RRR Network, I had statewide networks across business, health and education and passionate about living in regional WA and felt that by being part of RRR Network I was contributing back to regional WA. Especially in raising awareness in women of what women can achieve when

empowered and being positive in their actions.

Being part of RRR Network was like coming home, I was surrounded by a group of like-minded, positive women and it was inspiring. Coming from across the state and varying backgrounds and ages but we all had a common vision: to make living in regional WA a positive experience and we could translocate that positive vibe back into our own communities.

When I was Chair, social media was taking off. We each joined Facebook, our website was developing and becoming an important tool. Web based meetings were now available. This occasionally proved difficult as we all had different internet speeds but we persevered.

So I sit here thinking of my experience as Chair of RRR Network, and I think of “joining the dots: how all the things I have done, by having the support of older women, encouraged me to extend my capabilities, a positive role model in my mother who said that you can achieve anything you want if you put your mind to it and don’t be afraid to ask for help occasionally and how I now, try to be one of those mentors, encouraging women to put their hand up, to step forward and have a go.

Become a committee member of the local playgroup or sporting group, build your confidence and skill set, be involved in your community and be part of the RRR Network.

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Ros Hegarty, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (2008)

WATHEROO



“ I loved hearing and then attempting to tell real stories of women in my community. ”

Look at Us Now

Louise House

Louise House, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (2009 – 2010)

Ordinary women doing extraordinary things. That is how I see RRR. How did I get there? Initially, I just wanted to learn to write, and working with women from all over WA really interested me. Then my whole world opened up.

I warm to the written word and photographs, so it was a natural fit to create the RRR calendar. I loved hearing and then attempting to tell real stories of women in my community.

After twelve months, I took on my first position as Chair. I would never have put myself into this role, but when suggested, I took the leap and thought why not? I had no idea what this would mean in my life.

Despite outward appearances, all I wanted to do before my first meeting was run away. I got so nervous. I felt ill. I couldn't eat and I worried about every little detail. These feelings never really changed. I felt I might fail, there was so much I didn't know.

It was no different when I boldly asked if I could MC the RIRDC Rural Women's Awards. It seemed to me that this was a women's event but fronted by men. I was given a vote of confidence and with two hours to prepare, I was on.

I didn't get it all right but I am so glad I battled with my nerves. It started a process

to get sponsorship, to bring all applicants to Perth for professional development and networking. By just talking with others, our aspirations are often given wings. I found this in our Reference Group too.

The Reference Group (RG) is a team producing accessible, interesting and relevant communication networking women across WA. We develop strong bonds although we meet only twice a year. I am really proud of the confidence facilitated in the RG, which I have seen contributing to further personal and professional growth of our members.

During my time we advocated to government, attempted to get RRR's voice heard on the ABC and researched solutions for education issues. We increased our magazine circulation, built the foundations of the Facebook presence, identified the need for an alumni of past RG members, and developed our skills in interviewing and writing.

My admiration for the courage, resilience, humour, and capability of RRR women continues unabated. My passion is to develop women's confidence to harness this valuable resource. I have wondered how many other women have felt as I did but didn't take the leap.

For me, being exposed to the networks, knowledge and experience has been invigorating. The friendships developed across the state are precious. There is

considerable effort involved but it is worth every second.

I am still on my quest of learning to write and I feel ok now as I hear even Elton John still battles with his pre-performance nerves!

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Louise House, Chair of the RRR Reference Group (2009 – 2010)

RRR NETWORK NEWS

Network News is published quarterly by the RRR Network to share stories and photographs from and about women living in rural, remote and regional Western Australia.

The RRR Network was established in 1996 to bring together women in rural, remote and regional Western Australia to recognise, promote and expand on the contribution they make to their communities. The Network is a joint project of the State Government's Department of Agriculture and Food and Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Circulation for this edition is 9826. The magazine is distributed free to regional subscribers throughout Western Australia and organisations in Australia and overseas.

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NEXT EDITION

Theme: Loving My Land

Deadline for copy for the autumn edition of RRR Network News is 15 December 2011. The next edition is due in March 2012.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

See subscription form on the back page or contact the RRR Network office.

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Across my desk

Katrina Hayes

Welcome to the Summer 2011 edition of Network News and thank you to all our readers who provided articles. The main theme is Celebration: look at us now as the RRR Network celebrates our fifteenth year. Four of our former chairs share their thoughts on what the RRR has and does mean to them.

Have you been inspired after reading a story in Network News? Or has sharing your story made a difference for you? We'd love to hear from you.

The celebration theme continues with a number of significant community and personal milestones. Thanks once again to our contributors who have shared their thoughts and experiences to narrow the gap between the rural, remote and regional experiences of women and their communities in Western Australia.

You will receive your copy of the 2012 RRR Network Family Organiser with this issue of Network News. This is the fourth year we have published the organiser, featuring images sent from around Western Australia.

I wish you and your family a relaxing Christmas break and a prosperous New Year.

Katrina Hayes

RRR Network, Executive Officer

Plan, Prepare and Prosper with Farm Planning

The Farm Planning program, delivered by the Department of Agriculture and Food, provides workshops for farm businesses to build their skills in business planning.

This program is part of the Pilot of Drought Reform, a State and Federal government initiative designed to move farm businesses from crisis management to a risk management approach. The aim is to better support farmers, farm businesses, their families and rural communities in preparing for future challenges, no matter what they are.

Farm businesses don't have to be experiencing drought to apply. The series of free workshops helps you update or develop a strategic business plan for your farm business.

Learn how to prepare your farming business to better manage challenges. Don't wait for it to happen - prepare and prosper. Register now for a free workshop near you, by logging on to <http://droughtpilot.agric.wa.gov.au/> or Freecall 1800 198 231.

GERALDTON



Coach of the Year

Dianne Westlake

The tenacious Midwest Tigers won their netball grand final and coach Mischa Westlake shared this moment with her team, after a lifetime of love for the game.

Mischa's dedication and skilful coaching philosophies during 2011 enabled the Midwest Region to show their true colours in winning the "Smarter Than Smoking" 18 and under (U) State Netball League grand final.

With a strong ability to inspire and develop player's netball skills, and mentor their mental strengths to believe in themselves and the team, Mischa created a united team that were strongly bonded throughout the season.

With her motto "Never give up until your good is better and your better is best," Mischa encouraged team members to commit to the challenge at each training session and game. She showed passion and great dedication in training the squad two nights a week, plus committing every second weekend to coach the

team through their two competition games on Saturday night and Sunday morning in Perth.

Starting her netball career at Swan Districts Netball Association in 1989, she has never looked back. Mischa considers it her great fortune to have been coached by a number of elite coaches at Club, District, Development and State level. Through the hard work of these inspirational ladies, Mischa has taken her love of the game to the next level in coaching and continues to inspire future young netballers.

Mischa's dream job was working in the sports arena and she has seen many of her dreams come true. After she completed a Bachelor of Science – Sport Science and a Bachelor of Education – Secondary Health and Physical Education (HPE) at Edith Cowan University, her first professional position was HPE Teacher at Carnarvon Senior High School in 2003. Naturally she became involved with the local

netball association and coached a team of Junior girls, who won their first grand final.

July 2005 saw a career change with a move to Geraldton working with the Australian Sports Commission, and her appointment as the Regional coordinator for the Midwest-Gascoyne Region Active AfterSchool Communities Program. This opportunity enabled her to become involved with a larger netball association where her playing and coaching skills led to playing with the local Kazuals Netball Club.

2011 has been a very successful year for Mischa. Not only did she take the 18/U State League team to a grand final win, but her Senior 1 team as a player/coach won their grand final and her Development Squad girls played a close fought grand final for runners up.

Through her hard work in achieving these goals, the players and parents nominated her for the 2011 Midwest Sport Federation "Coach of the Year" award.

Over the past two years Mischa returned to teaching and currently as a HPE teacher at Nagle Catholic Colleger. The college has offered her the position of Head Coach for the future Midwest Netball Academy, to be based at the college.

Mischa continues her involvement in developing Midwest's young aspiring netballers. Her goal is to encourage each player to reach their full potential in netball and in their future careers.

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Mischa and the Midwest Tigers bare their claws



YORKRAKINE ROCK



Caring for the local environment in the wheatbelt has grown to teaching the next generation of the special significance that Yorkkrakine Rock holds for the local Aboriginal women.



Passing on traditions.

The desire to teach young Aboriginal women about the old ways was the catalyst for a weekend getaway at Yorkkrakine Rock, in the heart of the WA Wheatbelt.

Led by Wyalkatchem Elder Rose Davis, the October camp was a culmination of two years of discovery and research.

Apart from the area being classified as a priority nature reserve, the site north of Tammin was also culturally significant because it was a birthing place for Aboriginal women.

“About 25 years ago, we realised the significance of the rock to women,” Rose Davis said.

“Our ancestors used to come from miles around to have their babies at the foot of this rock.

“It has fresh running water, bush food and the women used to burn the native sheoak trees and use



Yorkie Women

Kate Raston

Participants learned about their culture in the bush not a building.

the lukewarm ashes to cover their babies in a ceremony, similar to a white person’s baptism.

“Men were never allowed here when women were giving birth: they would camp around the perimeter.

“The only males allowed were babies and children under about five years.” Rose Davis said the weekend was about passing these cultural traditions and stories down to the next generation.

“I’m concerned some of our young women are losing touch with their culture, but with days like this we can teach them about our traditions,” Rose Davis said.

“They need to learn about their culture out in the bush, not in a building.”

Natural resource management group, Wheatbelt NRM, and the Country Arts Network WA were partners in the weekend camp.

Wheatbelt NRM’s Liz Kington said Yorkkrakine Rock was a biodiversity hotspot.

“The rock is home to the rare Yorkkrakine Trapdoor Spider, plus other numerous flora and fauna,” Liz Kington said.

“We are able to fund projects like this because they are increasingly fitting into our biodiversity programming, which is funded through the Australian Government and Caring for our Country.

“Aboriginals were very much a part of the country, so they traditionally have a lot of knowledge of the environment and we can learn from that. For example, there’s growing

interest in how they used fire to manage bush land.”

Wheatbelt NRM’s Sue Carter worked closely with Rose Davis to organise the camp.

“We had Aboriginal women from Kellerberrin come to this event who had never been to the rock before,” Sue Carter said.

“Even though they lived nearby, they hadn’t had the opportunity to visit and learn about this site that was so culturally significant for them.

“We spent the weekend learning about Aboriginal culture, shared a roo stew and damper and painted together.

“It was an enriching and amazing experience and something that has never been done before at Yorkkrakine.”

To mark the re-discovery of the site, a plaque was also unveiled, recognising the area as a birthing place for Aboriginal women.

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The plaque marking the significance of the area.



INNOVATION

NERIDUP



Distance is no barrier

Suzie Perrin

Suzie Perrin grew up in the small rural community of Hyden, attended boarding school in Perth and has lived all over WA and on the Gold Coast. Her love of the land and farming life always sees her drawn back to the country. On top of designing Suzie is pursuing her passion of breeding, showing pure bred poultry and has joined the local Poultry Club.

The desire to have a balanced home life and the huge benefits that go with the country life helped me make the choice of returning back to a farm in WA from the Gold Coast a simple one. A creative and inquisitive streak made me question: why is something the way it is or can it be improved?

The desire to make a product better saw a change in direction and a road less or never travelled for me taken up. Less than two years ago with four children and a supportive husband, I made the bold step to follow what was first an idea, which before long ramped up into full scale production.

The first step was a sketch of a design, and then we had CAD modelling: virtual life like images of the product produced. Then do we go into making the mould to produce the rotationally moulded product or leave it just as a simple idea?

Not one for doing things half heartedly I decided to go for it. This meant a crash course in Intellectual Property rights covering Design Registration, Innovation Patents and Trademark Protection along with websites, brochure design, business cards and the branding of

our product. Not to mention liaising with the manufacturers based in Mildura and Queensland plus attending a lot of meetings as the sales representative for our product.

In 2010 the product was entered in the Australian International Design Awards where it was shortlisted, along with being showcased in the 2010 Green Cities Conference in Melbourne. It was also listed on the ECObuy website for Local Government.

Our product was successfully installed at five shopping centres and a service station on the Gold Coast. Through this exposure and in culmination of our website launch our product grow overnight.

With enquiries coming from South Australia to Cairns, it was a bit scary. Up to this point we only had myself handling all sales enquiries and my husband delivering and installing the product.

A realisation came that we would either have to employ sales representatives in each state or look at licensing rights for the selling of our product.

With two kids under five years and the other two teenagers at the time, the thought of lots of interstate travel and employing staff did not sound that appealing. So a bold move of contacting a large national company with all the systems in place seemed a logical solution.

From this point on it all worked out like it was meant to be. In less than a two month period our product and all the Intellectual Property involved

was purchased outright.

Through the success of the last product, a monster was created. With my head full of ideas I launched into designing a range of ceiling fans.

We are now located 60 kilometres out of Esperance on a farm but with the internet and phone, I have a product being engineered and produced in China and Melbourne.

Distance has proved to be no barrier when it comes to the design world.

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Suzie Perrin's design was shortlisted in the 2010 Australian International Awards and was also showcased in the 2010 Green Cities Conference in Melbourne



With initial enquiries coming from all over Australia, her product has since gone on to be a success.



YINNETHARRA



Living the dream

Courtney Robinson

Courtney and husband George

With a love of the bush in her veins Courtney Robinson and husband George live and work on Doorawarra Station, though life can be unpredictable like the December 2010 flood.

I was born in '85 and grew up with my brother and two sisters on Mt Phillip and Yinnetharra Station in the Upper Gascoyne, where we ran sheep and cattle until 1998. That was when we sold the last of the sheep and concentrated on our cattle herd.

Growing up in the bush with my siblings really was an idyllic childhood. I often reminisce and think back to the adventures and carefree times we used to have running amuck in the bush.

I started out learning through Carnarvon School of the Air and eventually at 13 years old I was shipped off to boarding school. I graduated from Catholic Agriculture College Bindoon in 2002 and spent the next few years coming and going from home. Eventually I returned to the station with my now husband George full time in 2006 and have been working for the 'olds' ever since.

In 2009 Dad and Mum bought Doorawarra Station which is about 80km east of Carnarvon. Doorawarra was a sheep/goat station being converted to a cattle property. In the first 12 months of purchasing Doorawarra we sold over 14,000 goats. Having never dealt with goats before, it was certainly a new experience. We also have some sheep and are increasing the property's cattle herd.

I am usually involved in everything: from windmill runs, stock work, dingo eradication, fencing. Between me and George we have put in over 20km of new fence line.

There are a lot of issues to deal with living and working in the bush and it certainly isn't for everyone. There is no mobile service out here and the closest town to Yinnetharra is Carnarvon, about 340km away. Not just that but the heat, the rain, wind, droughts, the flies, the extreme isolation will usually sort out the weak from the strong pretty quickly.

Generally being out here is 'living the dream': the sunsets and sunrises are amazing, the birds, the huge open skies and even the unpredictability of the year can be alluring. When the elements are against us, then it can be really tough.

2010 was a bad year for us. On all three properties we had around 60ml of rainfall for each one. It got to a point where our daily run at Yinnetharra was feeding hay and pellets, putting down cattle that

couldn't be looked after or had been attacked by dingoes. Shooting and trapping dingoes became a very important aspect of the mill run to try and decrease the number of attacks on the cattle. I still get angry when I think about what the dingoes did to our cows.

The Gascoyne River runs past Yinnetharra and Doorawarra homesteads. When we finally got enough rain to make the river run late in 2010 at Yinnetharra, little did we know what the river was going to do to us in December.

George and I spend a lot of time between Mt Phillip and Doorawarra, depending on what work needs doing. On 18 December 2010 we were at Doorawarra goat mustering and it started raining. Finally! Until then we had only had about 60ml and now it was really coming down. The whole district was getting rain.

The river was getting so big that we started hearing that our neighbours further up the river at Weedarra, Mooloo, Bidgemia and the Junction



Courtney's sister, Kristie dePledge, waters her horse after a long day mustering.



Courtney grew up on cattle and sheep stations in the Upper Gascoyne.

were all getting water through their houses. We weren't worried about the Doorawarrah homestead because it had never had water through it.

We went up in the plane to look. It was surreal to be in the plane and see how huge the river was. Flying over the Junction Pub we saw that the water was up to the roof and rising still. All that water still had to come past Jimba Jimba and us. We flew home immediately and started lifting and shifting everything we could in the house and in the sheds. We had an evacuation plan just in case. If the two gullies on either side of the house join, they essentially isolate the house. We kept an eye on them so that, if we did have to evacuate, we could.

Sitting outside we watched the water creeping up the river's measuring gauges. At 9pm we made the last phone calls to advise the family we were evacuating the house. Loading the dogs and some food and beer, we went up to the shearing shed,

which we thought was on higher ground, to sleep on the skirting boards with about 80 sheep to keep us company.

At 5:30 on Sunday morning we had to get the sheep out of the shed because the water was coming over the boards. Sheep are stubborn at the best of times but we had to individually manhandle every one of those sheep out of the shed. I wouldn't want to jump into an unknown depth of water either as they were literally swimming once out of the shed.

Once the sheep and our stuff was out, we set up our next camping spot. At about lunch time Richard, the chopper pilot, flew in from Bidgemia to check on us. Richard flew us over the homestead at the peak of the flood and there was at least three foot of water through the house. It turns out the house is on higher ground than the sheds and there must have been about five foot of water through the hanger and sheds.

Spending Sunday night camped out, by Monday lunch the water had receded enough for us to drive back to the house. Three bedrooms of five were completely destroyed, the cottage was a complete write off, not to mention everything that floats away during the flood, and nearly every car and bike went under water. Windmills, tanks, troughs, solar systems that were too close to the river had been washed away. The list goes on. You can never anticipate how high the water will actually go and how much damage it can actually do.

We are still doing flood recovery and it will continue to be an ongoing process over the next couple of years.

On the flip side, we now have feed for our cattle which as long as we continue to get some follow up rain will carry our livestock through the rest of the year.

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EDUCATION

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Eight women in country WA, 112 schools and many more to go. The Healthy School Coordinators are working with school communities to improve the health of WA's students.

Healthy School Coordinators across the state are working together to reduce sedentary behaviour and improve healthy eating choices amongst targeted children.

Findings from a recent study showed that less than half of children meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Results also show that only two in five primary and one in four secondary students consume the recommended amount of vegetables for their age

NARROGIN



Horses made their return to the Narrogin Show thanks to the hard work and organisation of three local students.

Chloe Palmer (Dudinin), Evie Lovett (Bunbury) and Ashley Carmichael-Hillan (Kwinana) are Year 12 students from the WA College of Agriculture, Narrogin.

These students organised the Narrogin Breed Spectacular in October 2011.

The proactive girls approached the Narrogin Agricultural Society requesting to organise a breed show as part of the Narrogin Show.



Collaboration for healthy kids

Sarah D'Andrea

From front left: Va Bola (Inland Zone), Rebecca Wilson (South Coastal Zone), Kath Penton (Great Southern), Fiona McDougall (Midwest/Gascoyne), Michelle Howrie (Goldfields), Corrine Zadow (South West), Nicole Samulkiewicz (Wheatbelt), Chrissy Halton (South Coastal Zone) From back left: Irene Cullen (Inland Zone), Lindsey Hilton (North Coastal Zone), Shannon Wright (North Coastal Zone), Sarah Amiradaki- Pilbrara, Trish Pepper (Kimberley)

(2008 Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey; Updated June 2010).

Eight women are Healthy School Coordinators in country WA promoting and facilitating the implementation of healthy eating and physical activity initiatives in targeted primary, district and secondary schools. They are part of the WA Healthy Schools Project, a state wide initiative that aims to improve physical activity and healthy eating behaviours amongst students.

In 2011, 112 schools across country WA were supported by the WA Healthy Schools Project to implement physical activity and nutrition projects ranging

from cooking lessons and kitchen gardens to sports carnivals and health expos.

The Healthy School Coordinators also assist schools to build relationships with organisations, people and programs in their community such as Foodbank, the Waste Wise Schools Program and the Department of Sport and Recreation.

The work that the Healthy School Coordinators are doing throughout country WA is helping schools to engage students in fun, interactive healthy eating and physical activity initiatives.

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Spectacular Students

Gayelle Reynolds

Evie, Ashley and Chloe

The show had not held this event in the past, and the girls were keen to organise it as part of their Equine studies.

The girls approached local businesses for sponsorship, organised judges, organised ribbons and trophies, designed the program and entry form and advertised locally and online through Cavaletti. They also approached breed societies for the show to be placed on their websites.

The event was for everyone with a wide range of classes for all ages including 24 breed classes

and 22 ridden classes. They had more competitors than expected (approximately 40 competitors plus horses).

These high achieving girls all have their slow work license, and hope to graduate with a Certificate III in Racing at the end of this year. The girls are also sitting their ATAR exams with aspirations of university next year.

The future of agriculture is bright with students like this.

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The cover of Seaweed, Sand and Secrets



One book, one day

Kathy Hill

MANJIMUP



8000 words, twelve hours, one book. The Manji Muchado writers took on the writing and fund raising challenge for Princess Margaret Hospital.

Around late July I stumbled on the web site for Katharine Susannah Prichard (KSP) Writers' Centre and an item caught my eye: write a book in a day fund raiser for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH).

The book challenge is for a group of five or ten people to write an 8000 word children's book in 12 hours, from 8am to 8pm on a nominated day between April and August.

An interesting and fun challenge, I was delighted that my writing group ladies took it on board immediately and we had nine enthusiastic participants and settled on 27 August. Our Manjimup based group is called the Muchado Writers and for this project we named our team the Manji Muchado. Writing a story as a group would be difficult with our inexperience and our different writing styles. Writing in a language for 10 to 14 year olds was definitely not expected to be easy but we were going to give it a go!

The original idea for taking part was to support PMH and to have fun. Some of the group took to fund raising and we raised \$1157. All the funds went to PMH as we had no expenses

Pumped with excitement and looking forward to the day, the Muchado writers gathered early. First on the agenda, but not before 8am, was opening the email with the story parameters. Another story

condition was an Australian location, and with our hearts set on Windy Harbour, 80km south of Manjimup, the parameters fitted our dream very well.

The long twelve hour day stretched before us, working mostly on laptops or by hand. One talented drawer sketched appropriate characters for our chapters.

We worked feverishly, tossing about ideas and working fantastically as a team. Around 1pm we felt a little stressed, having only produced about 4,500 words.

The guidelines indicated we should be editing the completed story by then. We feared we might let our sponsors down and not manage the 8000 words. Undeterred we kept at it and by 5 pm we were ecstatic to reach our target and feature all the set parameters. The story was emailed to our overseer

at KSP by 8pm, with time to spare. After the story was sent, we relaxed and checked our story to find some glaring grammatical and spelling errors but overall the story made sense. As much sense as a combination of beef stroganoff, park rangers, werewolves, secret horses, could be produced by we amateur writers. Another challenge condition was to print the story before 8pm ready to post on the next business day to KSP. A copy of the book goes into the PMH Library and we are donating a copy to our local library.

While sipping wine at the celebratory party, we decided that although we were very weary it had been worth every minute. Though at times we were sorry we had ever heard of the idea, we Manji Muchado thoroughly recommend it and are very proud of our contribution to PMH.



Dale Farrell, Helen Court, Kathy Hill, Dorothy Dunstan and Liz Coley were part of the Manji Muchado writers' project, winning the Most Sponsorship Award in the Open Section throughout Australia.



Fostering: my personal journey

Anonymous

A foster carer tells her journey in deciding to offer their family home and more.

I don't know that becoming a foster carer was really a decision I made. Like the rest of my life it is just something I did because it felt right at the time.

The eldest of four, the eldest grandchild and eldest cousin, I was always surrounded by younger kids and always ended up baby sitting.

As now, I loved the little ones: their innocence and delight in the simple things of life.

After leaving a not very successful school career at 15 to become a woolhandler with a local shearing contractor I think I found my niche in life, working hard and playing even harder.

Twenty plus years ago shearing was a tough industry but I found mostly love and acceptance, with a team of people much older than I.

Aged 19 my "fly by the seat of your pants" attitude took me across the Nullarbor. With a best friend, a young shearer, little money and an old bag of clothes, we set off to hopefully work for a shearing contractor in South Australia.

At one of our first jobs, standing at the end of a small shearing shed, was the biggest shearer I'd ever laid eyes on.

Little did I know then this man mountain was my husband to be, now of 17 and a half years. Although I liked him immediately it took several months for romance to come about.

He quickly became my rock in life. He has a very kind and generous soul and without him my life would probably be vastly different.

We worked and travelled for several years until we were married and needing a place of our own, we moved to South West. I can still remember how blown away by the beautiful beaches we were.

In 17 years of marriage we have bought, sold, renovated and built homes, been in business (yes, shearing) and had two beautiful children, who are the most important things in our life. We would have loved more but, due to my struggle to carry babies to term and the heartache if we lost a baby, we decided to be grateful for the two we had.

This leads me to the reason we decided to foster. With our own home and so much to offer we considered the idea when our children were babies but never quite got there. Life goes by so fast. You turn around and my baby was starting high school.

This is when fate took a hand.

After years of working and building our current house I had a series of injuries and went from super active to not being able walk, let alone work. While convalescing, a TV government promotion by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) encouraged potential foster carers. I knew that somebody is trying to tell me something, so I made a phone call.

After initial contact with DCP, and a lot discussion with my husband and our kids, I said we were keen to

become a foster family.

DCP followed up quickly as it became apparent there is a real shortage of carers.

The application, assessment and registration process took about 12 months for us to become registered foster carers.

The process is drawn out as DPC has to be sure that when placing children they are safe from further harm.

I don't say this to scare people because I found the evaluation process quite liberating. You do a lot of personal reflection of your life, marriage, childhood, your parents and your own parenting skills.

Through this I found closure on aspects of my own childhood and discovered that, although I had been a good parent, I hadn't been a perfect one. Admitting what you could have done better is a great way to grow.

We have had 14 foster children for varying lengths of time, ranging in age from six to 16, boys and girls, all having experienced varying degrees of trauma. DCP takes children into care where they have significant concerns for a child's wellbeing and places them with the most appropriate registered care.

We have dealt with a range of issues including behaviour, health or psychological problems and the sometimes tenuous balance between our home grown and foster children.

Like any home, things don't always run smoothly, and we are only



human. There is a breaking point where hard decisions must be made and request a child is placed elsewhere for the wellbeing of the whole family. This has to be one of the most gut wrenching things I've had to do.

I hope that, with even a short stay, the kids can see that a family has a mum and dad that love and provide for each other, where kids are safe, loved, respected and nourished will give them a taste and memory that life can be something different to hopeful translate to their own adult life.

With seemingly all the teens placed in our home, it is not unusual to have six teenagers plugged into technology, singing and lounging around.

My favourite time is after school while I'm preparing dinner. Everyone is talking, yelling and joking; discussing the days excitement

about who's hot and who's not, which teacher did what and all the gossip about other teens.

I encourage this and always tell my kids if something happens it's best to tell me before someone else does, as I will find out.

Encouraging honesty is sometimes hard when you hear thing perhaps you would rather not. Staying calm and understanding turns it into a learning opportunity for next time.

Without discipline and hard nose responses, the kids are very honest and through natural consequence and reflection teens come to good decisions on their own.

As with my own kids I don't reward with money or material items. Rewards are smiles, love and hugs, teaching kids by example and the gift of giving to others.

As a parent to any child it is important to be wired into your kids so you know when things are not right. Always encourage them to talk and especially with boys you can't

tell them enough that you are there and you are listening.

Always believe them, which builds their courage as knowing someone believes in them is so important.

I love what we are doing and have never done anything that is so rewarding. These little people, who amaze me with their resilience and their own life story that would make the average person wince, makes me want to catch them up, love and protect them from all the bad memories. No matter how short time they are in my home they have a little place in my heart.

For anyone who is interested in fostering for the right reasons, you want to provide a loving home for a child who has been desperately deprived of some or all of their basic human rights at the hands of their family.

Don't over think it. No need to be rich or perfect, just emotionally stable and willing to make an effort for someone who needs you.



COMMUNITY

BROOME



In a crowded back room at St Vincent Pallotti Op Shop in Broome there is a hive of activity. Many hands make light work and every week a small band of dedicated people give their time to help others.

There are about ten workers and volunteers each day at ‘Vinnies’ and four special women are celebrating their 21st. Maisey Tiddums, Ellen Puertollano, Bernadette Bin Sali and Juanita Gower are volunteers who



HEALTH

PORT HEADLAND



In September 2011 the annual Newcastle University Alumni Awards in New South Wales saw over 300 ex graduates congregate to celebrate the achievements of graduates from across all disciplines in their post graduation successes.

Dr Sarah McEwan, who currently works as a district medical officer at Hedland Health Campus in the emergency department and also in the maternity unit, was nominated in not one but two categories: the Young Alumni award for graduates less than 35 years, and the Indigenous Alumni award.



Helping Hands

Lola Jones

Maisey & Ellen

have been helping for 21 years.

Maisey and Ellen said, “We love coming here, we are amongst friends. It’s like a family and you are helping other people. We started as volunteers for the church in the old shed (in the industrial area), cleaning, washing, sorting clothes and preparing food parcels for families in need. We didn’t even have fans back then. We worked there for about nine years before

we moved to this building. We come here a couple of times a week to sort clothes for sale and cut up old clothes for rags. We still have time for our families but we like to help others as well.”

These are the unseen workers: the helping hands, volunteers who continue to give generously to the community, often without recognition or thanks.

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Rural health champion

Sarah McEwan



Aged 29 Sarah has achieved many outstanding accolades in her short career. In 2009, Sarah was named the National Rural Faculty Rural Registrar of the year by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and in 2010 was named the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine Registrar of the year.

With a zest for continued learning and skill acquisition, Sarah has been busy earning the numerous post-graduate qualifications she holds and her current enrollment in

a Masters of Clinical Education with her desire to undertake PhD studies.

Her work as a teacher in the higher education sector and as a mentor in the John Flynn Scholarship Mentoring Program has done much to encourage medical students to consider a career path in rural health.

Sarah’s interest and passion in Indigenous health, rural and remote medicine and medical journalism has seen her publish extensively on the topic. Her desire to play her part in the promotion of medical journalism also led to a guest judge appearance on The New Inventors program.

Among worthy finalists as Newcastle University has the largest intake of Indigenous students across all disciplines, Sarah was awarded the 2011 Newcastle University Indigenous Alumni award.

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NAREMBEEN



Inspirational speakers, delicious food and a strong network of local ladies made the recent Narembeen Long Ladies Lunch a success.

Narembeen is a small rural agricultural community, located in the Central Eastern Wheatbelt, 286km from Perth. A group of ladies has come together to identify the aspirations and needs of the district's ladies. They believe women in the country often face isolation, pressures from farm and family life, and often being underappreciated. It was their decision to give the ladies in their town the opportunity to reconnect with the community, find their place within it, create a strong network of women and to take time out from their busy lives. This day is known as the Narembeen Ladies Long Lunch.

This year's Narembeen Ladies Long Lunch was held on 24 September 2011 at the Narembeen Recreation Centre. Major sponsors for the event included Bankwest, CBH Group, Shire of Narembeen, Ferngrove Wine Group and the Narembeen Community Resource Centre.

The day attracted speakers from various backgrounds who all contributed to a day full of fun, inspiration, motivation and laughter. Our first speaker was local entrepreneur Caroline Robinson who was awarded the Australian winner of 2011 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award. Caroline is an extremely passionate woman who puts 100% into everything she does and believes she wouldn't be where she is today without the community. Caroline



Sheree Rhodes

Kelly Butler, Noela Cole and Sue Butler in the frame

inspired us with her story on life beyond the farm gate.

A leading expert in image in Australia, Sandra Barnsley, who trained in colour and image at the Fashion Academy in California and then with world renowned make-up artist Jean Pierre Fleurimon, gave the local ladies a few points on colour and style.

Janette Philp understands that life is too short to sit around waiting for something to happen. This is why she was inspired to travel from Capetown to Casablanca and from Las Vegas to Lisbon while exploring all the niches of the globe. An achiever and an adventurer, Janette has done white water rafting, bungy jumping, hot air ballooning, sky diving, achieved her Private Pilot's Licence at 40, climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Mt Kinabalu in Borneo, trekked the Kokoda Track twice, back packed around the world, written four books and had three babies. Janette's

wonderful uplifting 'go get it' attitude motivated and inspired.

Event co-ordinator, Sheree Rhodes, said the 2011 committee worked hard throughout the year to make this a successful event for Narembeen. The recreation centre was transformed with a garden theme which was a sight to behold. Sheree said this year's committee included a good mix from across the community whose wonderful effort made the day special for the ladies of Narembeen and surrounding communities.

Guests relished the scrumptious food prepared by Succulent Foods in Kellerberrin. Committee member Gina DeLuis mentioned the effort of the students at Narembeen District High School who waited tables and worked in the kitchen.

The committee has done a fantastic job in bringing together the ladies of our community and giving them a day to relax and enjoy a day organised just for them.

narem@narembeen.com



Holding up the laughs: Jane Gould, Chris Padfield and Susie Padfield



COMMUNITY

ESPERANCE



Up with CWA, down with diabetes

Maggie Donaldson

With over 150 branches across Western Australia the Country Women's Association (CWA) is an important part of rural, remote and regional life. Their work, including raising awareness and funds for important health and community projects, is legendary.

With banners waving and collection tins shaking the parade of witches, cancan girls, belly dancers, women in wild wigs and assorted costumes stopped the traffic at a school crosswalk in Esperance. Somewhat stunned drivers were accosted by a lady in pyjamas. Or was it the Lady in Red, or maybe it was the lady behind the venetian mask?

"Would you like to make a donation," she asked. "It's for a good cause - the CWA and the Diabetes Research Foundation."

"Sure," said the driver, tipping loose change into the tin. "I've heard of the CWA and I know they do a lot of good."

After the procession had wound its way through the streets of Esperance, with the lady with the walking stick bringing up the rear, most locals know that the CWA girls were raising money for a good cause and contributed generously.

From the hotel patrons to the young men collecting for the Surf Club, from business people to honking car drivers, everyone helped this final event of our state fundraiser to boost the total money raised to over \$30,000.

Early this year Wendy Bourne, who came up with the idea, and Sara Kenny, of the State Management Committee, enthused

CWA branches across the state to participate in a Walkathon to raise money for CWA Projects Fund and for the Diabetes Research Foundation of WA.

CWA relies on member contributions to support a Rural Medical Scholarship, a Community Projects Grant, Educational Scholarships and Bursaries, a Youth Leadership Camp, Bushfire and Emergency Relief, our Magazine and many other initiatives during the year.

The Diabetes Research Foundation (DRF) aims to raise awareness of diabetes, as early intervention and management help prevent complications. They also seek improved methods of treatment and control of the disease and dream of a cure or vaccine to prevent its appearance.



Margaret Johnson, Karyn Collins, Joan Bathgate, Annette Howard, Koorunga Branch



Carla Della Bosca, Southern Cross Branch



Maggie Donaldson, State President with Wendy Bourne, Boyanup Branch.



Barbara Groves, Betty Hull, Ann-Marie Lockyer, Tambellup Branch

With an increasingly ageing and obese population numbers of diabetes sufferers worldwide have skyrocketed to over 300 million worldwide and every ten seconds someone dies of a complication of diabetes. This means we all probably know someone with diabetes, if we haven't got it ourselves. The CWA thought research a most worthy cause to link with our 2011 fundraiser and settled on promoting health with a Walkathon.

To inspire participation all CWA branches were encouraged to invite Sheri Westlund from the DRF to speak on what is being done in WA to prevent, control and cure diabetes.

Badgingarra branch also invited Diane West, a popular local with diabetes, to speak on her experiences. Diane, with a family history of diabetes, really touched the hearts of the crowd as she shared her struggle with weight, love of food and diabetes management. Five days later she died from a rare reaction to a diabetes medication.

Diane's death really spurred our community to raise money for diabetes research.

Our walk, dedicated to Diane, on bush tracks around our little town and golf course was an amazing community occasion. One young lady pushed her baby in his pram up and down the hills along the sand and gravel tracks.

Another walker, not so young, took a shortcut with her walking stick but she was there at the start and the finish. Walkers dressed in an outlandish array of costumes and everyone enjoyed the sausage sizzle at the end. We raised the highest amount of money from one branch, \$3153 - a great tribute to Diane.

Many walks organised by other branches really captured community enthusiasm and everyone who took part has their own special story. Wannamel girls, dressed in style for Prince William and Catherine's wedding, paraded through the town. Bunbury walkers trod the boardwalks twice around their swamp, entertaining the ducks,

swans and other wildlife. Kings Park Branch organised a walking tour of their many historic landmarks.

Wilma Craggs from Kelmscott Branch took her dog Bailey for a walk or perhaps it was the other round. Wendy Folvig, the only willing walker from City of Perth, walked one kilometre and collected all her branch sponsorship. A bonus was that her favourite coffee shop was at the end of the walk. Some branches didn't manage to get walking, but made generous contributions, and helped make a total of seventy eight branches participating.

The walk at Esperance was held during our 87th State Conference and was certainly one of the highlights. It certainly showed that once CWA members really get behind a project, we can make a difference to the world!

maggiedon@bigpond.com



COMMUNITY

NORTHAM



175 years and things around Northam

Karen Dore

Northam presented a virtual Avon River tour to highlight their 175 community projects in honour of 175 years of the town's gazettal at the recent Tidy Towns competition.

To honour Northam's 175th Anniversary of Gazettal, over 50 community groups from around the Shire of Northam came together to create a list of 175 community projects that have taken place over the past 12 months. It was a wonderful capacity building and networking experience which culminated in a Shire funded breakfast promoting the opportunity for everyone to meet, chat and receive a thank you certificate.

Judging, which took place in August 2011, was a little different to the 'norm'. As the projects were spread over such a large area and it was time consuming to visit each site in the allocated time, the Bridgeley Community Centre was transformed

into a virtual Avon River with each of the main Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities projects featured along the way.

The judges, Jo and Wendy, watched a PowerPoint presentation detailing the seven major projects (one for each category). They then walked along the virtual Avon River talking to a representative from each featured community organisations.

After the virtual walk 'n' talk, the judges were taken for a quick (within the speed limit) spin around the townsite, pointing out the Old Post Office (conservation plan and new roof), Recycling Point (waste management), new Recreation Centre, Killara (proposed expansion), new Sound Shell, Aerators / Floating Islands (natural heritage conservation), the Avon Descent Start and a number of the beautiful 'old' buildings around town.

The visit was completed with a walk around the Bridgeley Community Garden.

The positive comments from the judges were that we appeared to be the first submission that was themed and most certainly the first one with 175 projects. We were confident that our innovativeness, along with all the wonderful things that are happening around Northam would stand us in good stead against the other 41 entries. We headed to Nungarin to learn about all the other entries and see who got to be first past the winning post.

And some wonderful late breaking news! The Shire of Northam was successful in two categories taking out the regional Community Action and the regional Cultural Identity awards.

cdo@northam.wa.gov.au



Northam's community members are ready to guide Tidy Towns judges through their virtual Avon River.



NAREMBEEN



Reach for the world from home

Sophie Harrington

Sophie and her family live in the rural community of Walpole.

Like other mothers of young children, Sophie Harrington was keen to flex her creative writing skills from the convenience of her Walpole home. She describes her journey and an opportunity to other rural, remote and regional writers.

After emigrating from the UK and living in Perth for four years, Sophie and her family moved to the beautiful rural community of Walpole for her husband's work.

With Sophie's youngest child turning one, she felt a real need to get back into the workforce. With young children, she still wanted the flexibility of working from home.

Based in the wonderful town of Walpole with a population of approximately 500 people, there weren't too many job opportunities

in Sophie's area of expertise careers guidance.

Sophie realised however, if she was to utilise the worldwide web as the vehicle for her business, her rural location need not be a barrier to her career aims.

After months of research, revision, soul searching and planning, setting S.M.A.R.T. goals and writing her business plan, Sophie launched Resumes WA in February 2010, a résumé writing and career coaching business.

The solo business has continued to grow steadily and Sophie's next step is to recruit more creative writers to support the two contractors she has in Perth and Broome. Needing help to keep up with demand she wants to grow the geographical area of her business.

Now based on Denmark less than an hour away from Walpole, she would love to empower other women who live in remote and rural towns with an opportunity to work from home.

By seeking women (and men) with a creative writing ability, she offers free training.

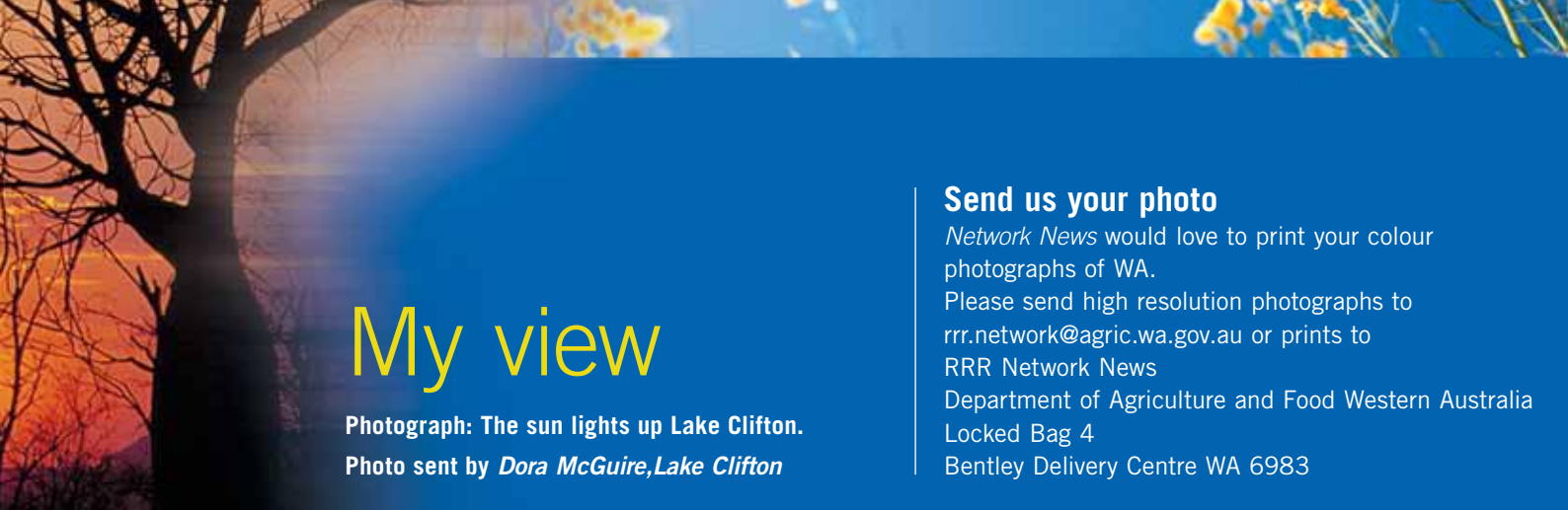
Sophie encourages like minded women to become self employed, register for an ABN, complete training and then start writing resumes with her too.

She welcomes the opportunity to work with fellow writers and achieve a more realistic work/life balance for herself and her family.

Sophie is excited about the opportunity to extend and grow the business and take the opportunity to reach the world from the computer in their home.

If you want to know more about the opportunity for creative writing from your rural, remote and regional location, contact sophie@resumeswa.net





My view

Photograph: The sun lights up Lake Clifton.
Photo sent by *Dora McGuire, Lake Clifton*

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