

The Country Web

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

NUMBER 48 SUMMER 2008 FREE NEWSLETTER



Let's make it happen – together

Rural Women's Network

TECHNOLOGY ■ FINANCES ■ NEW DIRECTIONS

THE COUNTRY WEB

The Country Web is produced by NSW Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network (RWN) and is distributed free, three times a year.

For more about RWN see page 5.

EDITING/DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Wendy Bortolazzo

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

FREE MAILING LIST

If you live in New South Wales and would like to be on our free mailing list, contact the RWN.

ADVERTISING

11 500 Country Webs are produced each edition. We welcome advertisements and offer very competitive rates. Contact RWN for more information. Sponsorship and insert options are also available.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rural Women's Network
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800
Ph: 02 6391 3620
Fax: 02 6391 3650
TTY: 02 6391 3300
Email: rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn

COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

See pages 22 & 23 for competitions.

1. Information on how to enter and prize details form part of the Terms & Conditions. By entering the competition, entrants accept these Terms & Conditions. 2. To enter, you must provide your full name and postal details, and in 25 words or less answer the competition question. 3. Entries must be posted to the stated address by the stated date. 4. This competition is a game of skill. The best answer as judged by the RWN will win. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be transferred or redeemed for cash. The winner will be notified by mail within 14 days from the judging date.

DISCLAIMER

Recognising that some of the information in this document is provided by third parties, the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the State of New South Wales, the author and the publisher take no responsibility for the accuracy, currency, reliability and correctness of any information included in the document provided by such third parties. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up-to-date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Primary Industries, or the user's independent adviser.

contents

FEATURES

- 6 Working the 'net**
Four women explain how the internet has created new businesses, ways of working and opportunities for them
- 9 ComputerBank New England**
A volunteer run, not for profit group that is 'solving the digital divide one computer at a time'
- 10 Work experience on the internet**
Year 10 students experience careers in primary industries using new technologies
- 11 Recipe for low cost phone calls**
Grab your mirror and comb for phone calls in which you can hear and see the person on the other end
- 26 Rural revival: rent a farmhouse for \$1 week**
An innovative approach to reinvigorate a central western NSW town by renting farm houses
- 32 Education for adults**
Resources for adults wishing to further their education or retrain



12

Coonamble Women's Gathering – highlights from the 2008 event



Photo: ©iStockphoto/damircudic

16

Women's Wealth – special lift-out feature

REGULAR FEATURES

3	Editorial	23	Book reviews	30	SAC Update
3	Calendar	24	Grants/Funding	32	Web Watch
4	Letters	24	Health	33	What's on, What's new?
5	From Sonia's desk	29	Women in Decision Making	34	Resources
14	Parenting				



By Kim Deans,
Rural Financial
Counsellor, RWN
State Advisory
Committee

We are certainly living in interesting times. We are being constantly challenged to deal with climate change, financial uncertainty and ever increasing costs of living.

In rural areas the costs of living are being impacted particularly by rising fuel prices, bringing more challenges to those of us who choose to live and work in the country.

We are definitely finding it necessary to consider different ways of doing things in order to adapt to our rapidly changing world.

It is so easy for all of us to become entrenched in our old ways of doing things... doing what we have always done without even questioning it. But we always have the choice to do something differently even if that is just changing our attitude to a situation.

Doing things differently is often challenging but if what you are doing isn't working, then it is time to try something different.

It takes courage to do something differently rather than just thinking you might like to or just wishing for it. You may need to confront

your fears of change, of failure, of standing out in the crowd and of being different to those around you.

You can't always change your situation but you can always change your attitude.

– Larry Hargreaves

It is when we decide to do things differently and take those steps that we learn, we grow and we live. Once you begin on the journey of doing things differently it can be amazing to see just how many assumptions you have made and you may be surprised to realise that all is not as it seemed! Doing things differently might also bring new experiences and people into your life, opening your world to new possibilities.

I recently decided to do something different and organised a bus to the Women's Gathering in Coonamble. Never having been to a Women's Gathering or having organised a bus trip before, this was a completely new experience for me. I have to admit to feeling out of my comfort zone at times, wondering if the idea was a good one and would it be worth the effort.

Well, I jumped on the bus with nine other women and headed off to Coonamble for the weekend.

We had such a wonderful time, camping in the tent city, listening to inspiring speakers, learning new skills at the workshops and meeting so many lovely women.

By far one of the best parts of the weekend was travelling on the bus and getting to know the other women along the way, sharing lots of laughs and making some wonderful new friends.

I am so glad that I made that decision to do something differently, it was most definitely a rewarding experience.

This edition of *The Country Web* is guaranteed to inspire you and inform you of many different ways of doing things including using the internet to work from home and connecting with others in new ways using the internet.

The Women's Wealth lift-out will provide you with some invaluable information on how to take control of your financial situation and ideas on ways you may be able to save money.

I hope that you will dare to do something differently every day, even if it is as simple as just taking a different way home – you never know who you might meet or what you might find if you do!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2009

WEEK STARTING 23 FEBRUARY, TBC

'Time out 4 Blokes' workshops

The RWN is working in Partnership with Centrelink to run a free one-day men's workshop during the week starting 23rd February 2009. The 'Time Out 4 Blokes' workshops focus on interactive activities aimed at getting men together to network and develop skills and understanding about topics such as building self worth, managing relationship challenges, identifying values and setting personal goals. We are keen to hear from any blokes (or groups) interested in attending (or hosting) this workshop in their community (we need a minimum of 12 and maximum of 20 blokes to run the workshop. If there is interest we aim to run more throughout 2009). To register

your interest or find out more contact Sonia Muir, Orange on 02 6391 3611, sonia.muir@dpi.nsw.gov.au or Stuart Rennie, Albury on 02 60514278, stuart.ennie@centrelink.gov.au

MARCH 2009

TBA, SYDNEY | 2009 RIRDC NSW Rural Women's Award winner announced

The 2009 winner and runner-up will be announced at a Gala Dinner. Check the RWN website for updates .

24-25 MARCH, GALONG (NEAR HARDEN)

Shaping our futures together (SOFT) course

A two day interactive self-development workshop run by RWN. Accommodation is available at St Clement's for \$80 dinner/bed/breakfast. More information: Sonia Muir, 02 6391 3611, sonia.muir@dpi.nsw.gov.au

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next edition of The Country Web will be 'Food for thought'. It will look at the production of food and the role of food in our communities.

We welcome your ideas, as well as other information of interest, stories, poems or pictures.

Contributions are required by 15 February 2009 for publication in April 2009.

Send your contributions to:

*The Editor, RWN,
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800*

Fax: 02 6391 3650

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

MERRIMENT AND MISCHIEF

Hello to all rural women. I'm not in that league myself – living in Kingscliff NSW.

But I am an avid reader of *The Country Web* and I see the recent theme was 'Youth'.

Well, once again, I'm not in that league, being in my 78th year.

My early youth was lost during the war in England. With bombs and blackouts, we were unable to go very far afield. But 'hello, my youth, I'm back again!'

What I would like you all to know and realise is that even at 78 one can still be 'youthful'.

In fact, I have so much going on in my life that I'm a very happy and contented person although it hasn't always been that way.

Now, with close and social friends, ones that I've met at carpet bowls and another group of happy souls at shuffleboard. I am about to compete with overseas competitors from America, Japan and Canada in shuffleboard. It's the JSA World 27th Tournament on the Gold Coast in September. I'm practicing madly!

But that's not all. I've now become a 'Regal Ruby' – a branch of the 'Red Hatters'. We number two million around the world now – a large organisation. Our theme is to 'grow old disgracefully'. To join, you have to be over 50 years old and wear purple clothes and a red hat to all outings. We also wear lots of jewellery and finery, boas etc. We have our head, a 'Queen'. Ours is called 'Queen Laugh-a-lot' and she does! My fun name is 'Mistress of Merriment and Mischief'.

Some of us have just returned from a gathering of 350 women in Townsville. Some came from as far away as New Zealand and South Australia.

We were a sight to behold when we were all together, joined in friendship and laughter. People always come and ask about us – even the men are interested.

This group gives me such a sense of wellbeing and belonging, and

that's something we all need in life especially as one grows older.

So, friends – can I call you that? – you can see 'youth' is not just for the young. It's what you feel about yourself and the fulfilment of your life, whatever your age.

Cheers.

Joy Roberts, Kingscliff

More information about the Red Hatters in Australia:
www.aussieredhatters.com

Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude.

– Denis Waitley

COMPETITION WINNERS: THE COUNTRY WEB NO.47

Art, life, chooks

D. Harley, Merimbula
J. Magner, Tenterfield

Green velvet shoes

H. Shepherd, Woodhouselee

Living with a black dog

S. Binns, Kincumber

Notes from the shed

C. McGilvray, Fennell Bay

Red cedar–red gold

M. Douglas, Orange
J. Walker, Coramba

From Danielle

Danielle Goolagong was a Project Officer with the Rural Women's Network from January to August 2008.



Hi everyone,

From 1 September I will no longer be working with the RWN.

I have taken up a position with Lyndon Community, a drug and alcohol service, as an Indigenous outreach worker.

This new job fits perfectly with my Aboriginal Mental Health university studies and future career goals.

My time with the RWN has been an extremely rewarding experience. I have learnt so much from not only Sonia, Wendy and the RWN State Advisory Committee but also from you, the readers of *The Country Web* who share stories about your communities and personal experiences.

It has been a real 'eye opener' for me, as I try to understand the issues you face and how the RWN can help. It has also been inspirational to see and hear from women who have persevered, worked hard and achieved their goals or conquered unfortunate circumstances.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the RWN team and will keep in contact through future endeavours! (Keep an eye on *Daring to Dream* – you may see me there!)

Take care,

Danielle

Danielle's Daring to Dream story is on the RWN website
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn/activities/daring-to-dream

CHANGE

Life has changed in a myriad of ways
Resulting in somewhat confusion
Standing still is never an option
And leads us to utter delusion
Youthful minds absorb technology
While ageing ones need to change tack
Alter the ways we do things
Or discover there is no turning back
Look at the surrounding landscape
Adapt to new thoughts and ideas
Change your perception on living
Leave the past undisturbed in arrears

JEAN OPPERMAN, PASCOE VALE

from Sonia's desk



The RWN team: Sonia Muir (Coordinator) and Wendy Bortolazzo (Assistant Coordinator)

The Rural Women's Network (RWN) is a statewide government program within NSW Department of Primary Industries and is based at Orange.

RWN works in partnership with individuals and agencies to share information and promote action on rural women's issues.

The RWN:

- provides information and referrals;
- supports the development of local initiatives;
- works with rural women and families to identify and bring attention to priority issues;
- develops projects with other agencies to address needs;
- provides a medium for networking and information sharing;
- promotes the profile of rural women;
- provides a two-way link between government and rural women; and
- provides policy advice.

Contact the RWN on

Ph: 02 6391 3620

Fax: 02 6391 3650

rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au

I hope this *Country Web* will get you thinking about some of the things you do and perhaps trying a different approach.

With the financial crunch we all have to think differently about how we can save money. In October I participated in a second 'Op Shop Swap' night at my girlfriend Georgia's house and we raised \$160 for the Cancer Council.

It is very simple formula. Basically someone agrees to host the event at their home (I did the first one)... then we all clear out our wardrobes and drawers and bring in bags of clothes, shoes and jewellery to go through together over a glass of wine and a nibble supplied by the host. We have a donations bowl and everyone pops in what they think the items they 'buy' are worth. It is a lovely get together and the bonus is you clear out those clothes lurking in the back of your cupboards! Maybe it is something you could do in your own community and it is a cheap way of getting some new clothes!

I recently did a safe driving course through work. Now, it isn't because I am a really bad driver... but because I spend so much time on the road! The course was excellent and made me see many habits I'd developed over the years in a new light. I am now driving differently and more safely.

One of the most important skills for safer driving is keeping a generous distance between yourself and the vehicle in front. If everyone on the road stayed

back and looked up ahead to scan for potential risks we could save lives and bring down the accident rate.

Now I may not be able to change all you drivers out there but even one person doing things differently could make a real difference. It sounds so simple and yet how many of us have had someone run up the back of our car or arrived home and thought 'Hmmm how did I get here?' We so often go into automatic pilot and forget to focus on what we are doing.

Two tips from the course.

1. Did you know failure to apply a handbrake to a parked car is a \$65 fine and two demerit points?
2. The air tyre pressure usually noted on the door of your car is the *lowest* recommended level because the lower the tyre pressure the softer the ride. It is better to give up some comfort and pump in a bit more air. This increases tyre life, gives improved fuel economy and achieves more grip with the road especially in wet conditions. (You should check with your tyre dealer for the best level).

I am having lots of practice at doing things differently at work as well with staffing changes. Danielle Goolagong left the RWN in August to take up a more hands-on Aboriginal mental health role with a community based service provider. While at the RWN, Danielle was a key member of our team and an enthusiastic participant in a broad range of activities. She also expanded our profile through her Aboriginal networks. We were sad to see

her go but wish her luck in her new career (see her letter on the facing page).

Wendy Bortolazzo will be with us as the Assistant Coordinator until December 2008 and together we are adapting to having one less person. Allison Priest returns from maternity leave 4 February 2009.

It was wonderful meeting so many women at the fabulous Women's Gathering held in October in Coonamble. Congratulations to Amanda Colwell and her team, especially for making the Gathering tent village concept a very different experience for us all!

RWN COORDINATOR



Coonamble Gathering tent village

Visit the Rural Women's Network internet site at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn



Working the net

Four women share the different ways they are using the internet – one woman puts businesses on the internet, one uses the internet to work from home, another to market her business and the other to sell products.



Kate Schwager shares her experience running a business that puts companies and organisations on the internet.

LOCAL PRESENCE, GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Webteam Australia is a company based in rural NSW that is owned by Ruth Quigley (2003 RIRDC NSW Rural Women's Award runner-up)

who has teamed up with Kate Schwager (2006 RIRDC NSW Rural Women's Award winner). Kate works from her farm and using mobile technology she can work when she is on the road as well. The other team members are located in Norway, UK, Ireland and India.

The company offers a range of internet-related services including registering domain names and designing websites that range from simple websites to ones that offer e-commerce, member's areas, chat rooms and more.

There are many benefits of a website for businesses, networks and communities.

A website is available 24 hours a day, seven days per week and it is easily found on the internet through search engines.

E-commerce broadens a business' potential market place. Also a website can be updated anytime and from almost anywhere to offer new products, services and information.

Kate and her team use the internet to manage the websites of their customers. In the office, Windows Messenger is used to instantly communicate with each other and their customers around the world.

Mobile office

In and out of the office Kate uses the Next G network via a mobile phone that synchronises with her laptop. This way, she keeps track of appointments, receives emails, searches the internet and manages her customer's websites while she is on the road. This means Kate's laptop is a mobile office that can be used anywhere.

According to Kate, the only drawback to this type of business and working from home is when the technology doesn't work properly – such as no reception or computer trouble such as viruses (however the latter can be avoided by good antivirus software).

Kate Schwager, 02 6796 7243, ks@webteamaustralia.com, www.webteamaustralia.com

A website is available 24 hours a day, seven days per week

– Kate Schwager



Skye Dixon reflects on her situation since the internet has made it possible for her to work from home.

ON AND OFF-FARM WORK

As I sit down at my desk and glance at the clock, it is 7.30 am and I have already taken the dog for a walk, cleaned the bathroom and responded to emails.

Having donned my favourite pair of jeans, I contemplate how lucky I am to work from home. It is a far cry from my life two years ago, when I would spend this time in the morning sitting on a tram, frantically reading the business pages and preparing myself for another day in the office forecasting agricultural commodity prices for a major Australian bank.

Having grown up on the land, it was always my dream to spend a few years in the city and then take those skills back to the country and pursue a career from home.

I had always looked up to my mother who demonstrated that you could pursue a successful career in the country. We often laugh now about how she started out, typing her articles on the typewriter and then speeding into town to send her article to Sydney on an aeroplane. It was beyond her wildest dream that one day she could press a button and her story would be instantaneously sent to its recipient.

Technology is now at a point where we can efficiently work from anywhere and businesses are becoming increasingly flexible in allowing staff to work from home.

Since returning to the country, I have joined my mother in her niche tour business, where we take tours to privately owned homes and gardens throughout country Australia. I complement that work by working for the YWCA NSW, delivering wellbeing and healthy lifestyle programs to drought affected communities in the Goulburn region. With both roles being extremely flexible, working from home allows me to juggle the two.

As I look down my 'to do list' for today my first two tasks are to confirm catering requirements for a tour to Mudgee and organise a day for rural women in Crookwell and Marulan.

While the benefits from working from home are endless, the only drawback is the difficulty of switching off and leaving work. It becomes a habit to check my email before bed, although I am lucky that my weekends are spent drenching sheep or fencing with my fiancé, far away from the computer and the phone!

Skye Dixon, 02 4822 4795, skyed@ywcansw.com.au, www.ywcansw.com.au

Technology is now at a point where we can efficiently work from anywhere

– Skye Dixon

Telecommuting, e-commuting, e-work, telework, working at home or working from home is a work arrangement in which employees enjoy flexibility in working location and hours. In other words, the daily commute to a central place of work is replaced by telecommunication links.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telework



Tarsh Rodda manages a website and email database which play an important role in a sheep enterprise.

MARKETING TOOL

Tarsh and her partner Andrew Dowling operate a stud sheep enterprise, as well a commercial wool and meat venture in the Southern Riverina region.

The stud was founded in 1962 and is well known for its large framed, highly fertile four-teated sheep that thrive in extreme conditions.

The website

The Keri-Keri website enables Tarsh to keep their clients (who are spread across most states of Australia) informed at all times of new developments through updated photos, statistics and sale details.

Some clients drive from as far as central Queensland to their sales so they need information to plan in advance.

Any new developments are published on their website which past experience tells them is checked regularly by their clients.

One of the most effective parts of the website has been the 'archive' section where all the previous updates and sale results are stored, allowing their clients to follow developments in their business over the past five years.

When something significant happens Tarsh often sends out an email to their client database with a photo and a direct link to the information on the website.

Tarsh explains, 'we can go

through a group of sale sheep in the morning and by that evening someone in Western Australia can be viewing pictures and statistics for those animals.'

The website is a great marketing tool for their business. Any new client can get a general overview of the sheep they produce, the terrain and flock history from the website. Since the property is in a relatively remote area, potential customers can view the livestock in advance to make an informed decision before travelling to a sale.

Recently a new client attended a ram sale at Keri-Keri. By viewing the website in advance, he was familiar with their business and their sheep. He even knew who they were from their photos on the website!

Whilst the website is primarily a marketing tool, Tarsh tries to give it a personal feel. Tarsh and Andrew also make an effort to maintain the personal relationships they enjoy with their clients. 'Since we are from such varied regions and districts, there is never a shortage of news and laughter to still be shared face-to-face or on the phone.'

Tarsh says, 'the benefit of the website to our business has been exceptional' and she looks forward to developing it even further, for example by introducing a section where their clients can share their news, photos and sale results with others via the Keri-Keri website.

Tarsh Rodda, 03 5034 0591, keri@kerimerino.com.au, www.kerimerino.com.au

We can go through a group of sale sheep in the morning and by that evening someone in Western Australia can be viewing pictures and statistics for those animals.

– Tarsh Rodda



Tracey Knowland (2008 RIRDC NSW Rural Women's Award winner) runs a business on eBay, selling antique etchings, lithographs and engraved prints. Here she shares some tips from her own experience.

EBAY STORES

An eBay store is an affordable way to dabble in owning a small business.

Like all new small business in Australia, the usual government regulations apply such as having an ABN and registering a business name. These issues should be checked with your local office of Fair Trading.

The advantage of running an online store for people living in isolated areas is all you require is a computer connected to the internet and access to a post office.

Before opening an eBay store it is important to do some research on the item(s) you are intending to sell. Given that an online store is a mail order business, the ease and cost of packaging and posting items is an important consideration.

A basic eBay store starts from a monthly fee of less than \$20. Additional fees apply for each item for sale and depend on the sale price and the method of sale.

Items can be sold by auction or at a fixed price. Fixed price items under \$100 generally cost less than 50c per month to list on eBay.

Your eBay store records your sales, purchases and store visits for up to 60 days. You can close your Ebay store at any time, that is, you are not locked into an ongoing contract.

eBay sellers and buyers are rated by 'feedback' from those who do business with them. Successful online sellers gain the trust of their customers by:

- offering refunds on returned items.
- timely communication about payments and dispatches.
- posting items by trackable means such as registered mail.
- stating all fees and charges for postage, handling, packaging and insurance up front.
- describing items accurately.

Sellers with low feedback ratings soon close shop.

Advantages of selling on eBay

- Affordability. eBay advertising fees are usually lower than other advertising methods.
- The size of your potential market. Your goods and services can be advertised world-wide

Advantages of eBay shopping

- Save money. Sellers aren't paying overheads such as rent and can pass on this saving to their customers.
- Save time. Quickly search items from many sellers and have them delivered to your door.
- Conveniently source rare, obscure or collectable items that are often difficult to find.
- Access a variety of items, from a variety of sellers. You'd be amazed at what you can buy!

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

- Shop 24 hours a day, seven days per week!

Limitations of eBay shopping

- Buying online will never match the tactile pleasure of visiting a beautiful store.
- It is impossible to appreciate the true desirability of some items from a digital photograph.
- There can be problems receiving items via the post.
- There is always a delay from the date of purchase to when the item is received.
- The item received may not meet your expectations.
- There is a risk of impulse buying. For many, bidding at eBay auction makes shopping exciting. Like gamblers, there are those that have become addicted to the thrill of winning an Ebay auction.

My two golden rules are: if you really can't afford it – don't bid and if in doubt – don't bid!

To avoid pitfalls

- Always check the seller's feedback rating and read the feedback comments.
- Always check the location of the seller. Is the seller in Australia? Some bargain-priced items may have high postage or import costs when you read the fine print.
- Never assume important information about the size, age and condition of items.
- Always request a postage and handling quote if it is not specified before purchasing.
- Always check payment methods to make sure they are secure and suited to your needs.

Tracey Knowland, 02 6687 8626, bangalownursery@linknet.com.au, stores.ebay.com.au/Treasures-Ink

*My two golden rules are:
if you really can't
afford it – don't bid
and if in doubt – don't bid!*

– Tracey Knowland

ComputerBank New England

ComputerBank New England (CBNE) is a fully incorporated volunteer-based, not-for-profit organisation assisting disadvantaged groups and individuals to access computers at low or even no cost.

Opened in June 2002 the organisation's motto is 'solving the digital divide, one computer at a time'.

CBNE donates computers to adults who are studying at university or TAFE and can't afford a computer and to school children of any age, who do not have access to a computer at home. CBNE also gives computers to poorly funded community volunteer groups and is currently supplying computers to pre-schools in their area. They also assist pensioners with their own computer.

Over 800 computers have been given by CBNE to groups and individuals to date.

HOW IT WORKS

Donations of computers and associated equipment are received by CBNE from commercial and other sectors and from individuals. These

items, once assessed and inventoried, are cleaned up including being 'kill disked' to totally remove any information left on the computer, repaired if necessary and stored in readiness for rebuilding and distribution to recipients.

When an application for a computer is approved, the recipient's needs are assessed and this determines the type of computer they are provided. Under an agreement with Microsoft, basic software such as Windows 2000 or Windows XP is installed.

Computers are either delivered to the recipient's home in the Armidale and Uralla area, where they are installed and basic training is provided, or collected from the CBNE workshop.

Additional services and ongoing support is offered to recipients through CBNE facilities.

APPLYING FOR A COMPUTER

CBNE, located in Uralla NSW, assists groups and individuals north of Tamworth to the Queensland border and west to Coonabarabran.

An application can be made at any time. Prospective recipients are required to complete and lodge an application form.

Applications are assessed by a reference panel and when approved, contact is made to discuss the person's needs in more detail, assess their capabilities and arrange delivery.

Unsuccessful applicants are also contacted and the matter further discussed.

WHO RUNS CBNE?

CBNE is run solely by volunteers who come from a range of backgrounds, including the IT sector, business and community services. Volunteers range in age from youth to the more mature. All volunteers have a desire to share their knowledge of computers with others less fortunate than themselves.

SUCCESS FACTORS

CBNE depends on cooperative partnerships. Little would be achieved without:

- the many donors located around the New England area
- the many and varied volunteers

■ *pro bono* business services, support from lawyers, accountants and other locals

■ local organisations that facilitate access to computers by the disadvantaged

■ generous commercial suppliers who subsidise or otherwise provide practical and financial support.

*Solving the digital divide,
one computer at a time*

– CBNE motto

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The current volunteers work up to three days per week for several hours each day. More volunteers are needed to handle the volume of work to be done – there may be more than 40 computers to work on at any one time.

Additional volunteers are always welcome. Prior computer knowledge is not needed.

The CBNE workshop is open 9.30 am – 4.30 pm Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

More information

CBNE office, 02 6778 4918, users.tpg.com.au/cbne

Getting connected

There are many ways to connect to the internet.

In the past, connecting to the internet from home meant using a 'dial-up' connection over your telephone line.

Today, broadband (from the term 'broad bandwidth' which is a faster, high capacity link to the internet) is more widely available. Below is an explanation of some of the new ways to connect to the Internet.

ADSL

Asymmetric Digital Subscribers Line (ADSL) connections work by splitting a phone line into two separate channels, one for data (internet) and one for voice (phone calls) which means you can talk on the phone and be connected to the internet at the same time. ADSL connections are faster than dial-up, and are available at different speeds.

WIRELESS

While the specific technology used to provide wireless broadband services varies, each service provider uses radio frequencies to transmit and receive data between their customers and a local transmission point. Normally, this requires a number of base stations, similar to mobile phone towers, which transmit a signal to customers who have a small transmitter/receiver connected to their computer.

SATELLITE

There are two types of satellite internet connections.

One-way satellite connections use a satellite link to download data to the computer and a standard telephone connection to upload data back to the internet.

Two-way satellite connections use the satellite link to both upload and download information to the internet.

AVAILABILITY

To check if broadband is available in your area, the Broadband Service Locator (bcoms.dbcde.gov.au/BSL) is a free on-line tool that provides contact details of commercial internet service providers (ISPs) that may offer service in your area.

COST

There are a number of websites on the internet that allow you to compare prices and packages from different Internet service providers (ISPs). Broadband Choice (bc.whirlpool.net.au) provides details on more than 250 ISPs in Australia.

Remember to look at all costs involved in getting a connection (e.g. installation and set up fees). The cost will also depend on the duration of a contract. A long term contract may offer lower monthly payments but may prevent you from accessing cheaper and faster services that may come along in the future.

This information has been compiled from the website of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, www.dbcde.gov.au/communications_for_consumers/internet/broadband_for_consumers



Make your mark

The internet is evolving to make it possible to do things more easily. You no longer need strong computing skills to be on the internet.

Here are some new, simple ways to have a presence on the internet.

BLOGS

The term 'blog' is a contraction of 'web log'. It is a website 'diary' that displays entries of text and images that are date-stamped. The entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order.

Blogs can be set up so that they can be viewed by anyone, or access can be restricted to nominated individuals.

Blogs can be set up free on many websites, such as www.blogger.com. You simply create an account by selecting a username and password and providing some personal details. You can usually customise the appearance of your blog (choose colours etc.) and start adding your entries immediately.

Blogs are often used by individuals as a public journal. They are also used by corporations as internal and external communication tools.

[By visiting internet cafes and updating her blog, one of our colleagues kept her friends and family up-to-date with her travels in Turkey and Greece on a recent holiday.]

FACEBOOK

Facebook is a social networking website. People create a free web page (in a similar way to setting up a blog) that others can view and leave messages on.

Users can join networks organised by city, workplace, school and interests to connect and interact with other people.

Users can invite other users to be 'friends' who are then listed on their Facebook page.

There are other social networking websites, however Facebook has the most users. Website: www.facebook.com

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload their videos and watch other people's videos. When you upload a video, you can specify whether other people can leave comments about your video on the YouTube website. Website: www.YouTube.com

FICKR

Similar to YouTube, this is an image and video sharing website. It is popular for sharing personal photographs. Website: www.flickr.com

FREE INTERNET RESOURCES

Free websites

There are many places on the internet where you can publish your own web page (in addition to a Blog or Facebook page).

Free images

There are many websites offering free (or inexpensive), professional quality photographs that you can use for your brochures or other projects.

Be sure to check any *Conditions of Use* to avoid problems with copyright.

A search for 'free website' and 'free photos' will list some of the many that are available.

Work experience on the internet

Wendy Bortolazzo, Assistant Coordinator, Rural Women's Network, NSW Department of Primary Industries

In August, the Rural Women's Network (RWN) ran a school-based pilot project called *Virtually farming*.

The project aimed to show how technologies can address some of the time and cost barriers involved in bringing people together who live great distances apart.

The virtual 'work experience' model linked Year 10 agriculture students with women working in primary industries. During the week-long project students accessed the women's diaries on the Internet and interacted by making comments and asking questions directly to the women about their work. Primary industries was chosen because research shows there is a shortage of graduates despite a growing demand. The *Virtually farming* concept was seen as a cost-effective way of exposing students to potential careers in primary industries.

PARTICIPANTS

Seven women participated in the pilot project representing a wide range of industries including: a self employed horse breeder/agri-tourism operator, an agribusiness analyst with a major bank, an aquatic conservation manager, a meat science technical officer, a weeds extension officer, a horticulturalist and a stock and station agent.

The students were from a Year 10 agriculture class at James Sheahan Catholic High School in Orange. Year 10 students were

involved because this is the year students consider career options if they plan to leave school or select subjects for the HSC. Their teacher was Sarah Eyb.

TECHNOLOGY

A blog (or online diary) was set up for each woman where they kept a daily record of their activities, and interacted with the students. A web page was also set up on the RWN website to provide some background information about the project.

EVALUATION

The project was evaluated with a pre-project questionnaire for the students and post-project questionnaires for the women, students and teacher. A final questionnaire will be completed by the students at the end of the school year.

FEEDBACK

There was an overwhelmingly positive response from the women who participated in the project. All said they would participate again, even though their participation was in addition to their regular workload. The women found it a convenient way to share their work with many students with minimal disruption. The ease of use of the blogs and the ability to make a diary entry whenever it suited them appears to have reduced the negative impact of the time required to participate in the project.

In many women's opinions, the limitations for students of doing work experience this way

Tracy Lamb

31 July 2008
Thursday

About Me

TRACY LAMB
I am a Technical Officer in Meat Science with the DPI at Cowra. I have worked here at Cowra for the past two and half years. My job varies from working with the research sheep, carrying out research projects at abattoirs or processing meat samples in the lab.

[View my complete profile](#)

Example of a blog

(such as not gaining hands-on experience) were offset somewhat by the students being able to experience more than one job in a week and learning about the full range of activities involved in a job (not just those that occurred during one week).

The women who participated were very generous with their time and had a genuine interest in providing a positive experience for the students. This was evident their detailed diaries and the feedback from the students.

Here are some of the women's comments:

It doesn't take up that much time and it was interesting to see what kind of questions the kids asked. I found it to be a positive experience for me and the students.

I could add a [diary entry] at any time of the day when it suited me.

The questions were a good communication tool – no need to guess the information [the students] may want.

It all seemed pretty straightforward even for me – who had never used a blog before.

The teacher commented that the students with a genuine interest in careers learned a lot from the project. She attributed the lack of motivation of some students to their level of maturity and perhaps to the choice of technology, which is often used by youth for informal or social purposes. She is interested in participating in the project again and would recommend this project to other teachers but only with dedicated students. She commented 'the thing that worked best about the project was very easy format of blogs'.

Eleven of the 17 students who completed the evaluation after the work experience rewrote their definition of 'primary industries' and most students could list additional careers and employers which suggests that participating in the project had increased their *understanding of the term* and their knowledge of *career options* in this sector. Most students could think of new advantages and disadvantages associated with working in primary industries suggesting



Melanie Bloom



Jess Davis



Charlotte Jenkins



Tracy Lamb



Annette McCaffery



Anne Mooney



Anne Starr