



2012 Rural Women's Gathering 12-14 October 2012, Parkes Rural Women's Network

Evaluation and Sponsorship Report

Gatherings are an important initiative that reinforces the NSW government's commitment to women, rural communities and businesses in this state.

The 2012 Rural Women's Gathering hosted by Parkes is the 20th consecutive annual event of this kind to be held in regional NSW and attracts a diverse range of women (and a few men) from across the state.

Each Gathering is organised by a volunteer group of local women from the host town with background support from NSW Department of Primary Industries' (DPI) Rural Women's Network (RWN).

As part of the 2012 DPI gathering sponsorship agreement, the RWN developed a monitoring and evaluation plan to continue to build on information gathered over the past two decades and provide benchmarks for the future.

DPI provided \$30,000 in sponsorship to the 2012 gathering and from the monitoring and evaluation results it has seen such resources well placed. The gathering provided an excellent promotional opportunity for the Department and Minister, has contributed to building the capacity of those involved (organising committee and event participants) and injected funds into the Parkes community while highlighting the town's attributes and assets to visitors and locals.

As a primary sponsor of the event, DPI's logo was included in all promotional materials and was regularly acknowledged before after and throughout the event itself. DPI's RWN also provided in-kind support to the Parkes committee and monitored the event's progress to ensure the gathering was a success.

The Minister was invited to officially open the event in front of a 380+ crowd but due to an accident had to withdraw at the last minute. Troy Grant Member of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Dubbo and Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources ably stepped in to perform her tasks which included: opening the gathering; launching the 2012 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, announcing the new Rural Women Connect Project; and announcing the \$30,000 government commitment to sponsor the 2013 Gathering being hosted by the Upper Hunter (Scone). These announcements and the launch in particular have resulted in considerable (and continual) press coverage up until December.

Attachments below outline the information collected from the monitoring and evaluation planning process. The Parkes Committee have also provided a separate comprehensive DPI sponsorship report to complement this document.

Attachment A: Committee debrief

Ten committee members attended the open invitation debriefing session held on 8 November in Parkes. From the evaluations, all 10 felt comfortable sharing their opinions, were given adequate time and felt their voice had been heard. All but one found the process provided a very good opportunity to share deeper insights on their Gathering experiences as a committee member. Comments from Committee members have also been made into a 2 minute film which can be viewed on the RWN's Youtube channel.

Attachment B: Committee survey

All committee members were invited to complete a written survey and provide anonymous personal reflections on their committee experiences. Three surveys were returned.

Attachment C: Post-event participant feedback survey

A total of 199 surveys were returned to the Rural Women's Network after the 2012 Gathering had concluded. The data reflects the responses from those who provided feedback through the survey only and does not reflect the entire Gathering cohort.

ATTACHMENT A: Committee debrief

The TOP three things that we think worked extra well

1. Event Planning

Why did Event Planning work so well?

1. Good Chair who was an outstanding, experienced leader.
2. Strong executive: Leader, Secretary, Treasurer.
3. Identified and used team strengths such as secretarial, internet, leadership, finances – great delegation.
4. Positive attitude, dedicated team, good communication.
5. Starting early with lots of forward planning.
6. Good attention to detail.
7. Respect for each other and their opinions.
8. Started with a theme and speakers/workshops/events enhanced the theme.
9. Knowing and continually linking with the local media to build a great ongoing relationship and regular stream of articles etc.
10. Made sure that sponsorship was 'married' to specific sponsor interests/needs within the event program and fitted into Gathering theme.

Recommendations

1. Having a core group of seven to make executive decisions worked VERY well.
2. A full committee of 20 then helped to spread the workload.
3. Having portfolios for committees with deadlines for reporting.
4. Documentation of actions was vital.
5. Good and regular communication was vital.
6. Planning everything well in advance.
7. One spokesperson to be in charge of main venues e.g. club, school etc (feedback from the club)
8. Contacting previous Gathering coordinators for advice on what they did as needed.
9. Having a realistic bottom line in our budget.
10. Use your council events officer wherever possible.
11. Ensure back-up plan in case critical people are away or confiscate passports/travel documents from Committee!

2. Workshops

Recommendations

1. Try and negotiate to run the most popular workshops at all three sessions (even if you have to find extra tutors).
2. Think of your local resources and try to use local people as workshop presenters before looking further afield.
3. Balance between fun/formal. Consider having a mix of craft/fun/educational to cater for all needs. Having a big diversity worked well.
4. Workshops require someone with excellent planning skills – coordinator spent HOURS on this and had wonderful skills.
5. Canvas lots of people for workshop ideas and review previous gathering workshops to see what was offered and what worked.
6. Be aware that trends change and what was popular one year may be not so popular three years later.
7. Know the skills of your presenters – get reliable and trusted recommendations.
8. Make sure the venues are appropriate venues – do inspections well before the event.
9. Secure transport if needed.
10. Stick to planned timetables and keep in touch with presenters so they always feel in touch and informed.
11. Have flexibility with maximum numbers for workshops – some may be able to cope with 30 others 10!

12. Advise people that they may not get their workshop choices.
13. Have an informal chat with potential workshop presenters prior to accepting (if felling concerned about content, etc).

3. Speakers

Recommendations

1. Have a budget for speakers.
2. Have a 'drawcard' speaker – it's worth money.
3. All other speakers apart from Jessica Rowe provided their services at no cost. (We however did offer to pay for any out of pocket expenses such as travel and accommodation and provided them with a free rego to the event).
4. Start with a theme. Look at program. Make sure it tells a story. Each speaker builds on the theme.
5. Have a diversity of speakers to appeal to a diverse audience.
6. Timing – ensure speakers know they must keep to the time allocated.
7. Speakers all written to about our expectations to content and strictness about adhering to time.
8. We knew each speaker or had positive recommendations from reliable trusted sources.
9. Speakers need to 'tick' boxes e.g. fit the theme(s), be an attraction for specific sponsors, fun/information/balance.
10. Be organised and have an efficient system in place so that there is a smooth transition between speakers. We had them lined up 'ready' to go which saved valuable time.
11. If they have any audio/visual files ask that they be sent one week in advance so you can check they will work on your systems.
12. Triangle 'ting' to announce time ending was subtle and worked well.
13. Giving each speaker a local Parkes gift worked well. 
14. Paying for a good sound/visual system and person was money well spent.
15. Having a little exercise break between speakers worked well.

'Hindsight' improvements

Friday Night Food

Main issue:

Distribution of finger food didn't work because:

1. Style of venue important. We had fixed tables and people didn't get up and mingle as we expected.

Recommendation:

1. Depending on venue layout: rather than have roving food on trays, place food on a central table and tell people to move to the food, especially if like us, you have fixed tables and chairs.

Entertainment Saturday Night: Austin Powers character

Main issue:

1. Performer used profane language and innuendo that offended some people (minority).
2. We didn't know the performer was going to use this character.

Recommendation:

1. Know your performer's program – maybe set guidelines.
2. Sometimes accept that not everyone will perceive things in the same way – some people took exception to language. Others loved it. And remember you can't please everyone!
3. With hindsight we would have had more Elvis and less Austin Powers!

Information provided by the Committee of the 2012 Rural Women's Gathering, Parkes, as part of the RWN monitoring and evaluation process.

ATTACHMENT B: Committee survey

- All respondents were female, one in her 40s and the other two were in their 60s.
- Each got involved on the committee in different ways: one through work as an Events Officer for the Council, one by invitation by another committee person and the third because she had heard about it, thought it was a good idea and wanted to be involved.
- All were very satisfied with the level of support provided to the committee by the RWN. Only one made a comment:
 - *The immediate responses to queries, with appropriate advice, and the very positive support and encouragement were extremely valuable and appreciated. The concept and reinforcing of 'this is your gathering' was also a huge plus.*
- Their roles varied: one had a support/advisory role; one was the Secretary and the other the Treasurer.
- All agreed that being on the committee widened their network of friends and introduced them to new valued networks such as:
 - Rural Women's Network
 - Department of Transport
 - Lachlan Catchment Management Authority staff (in-kind partnership)
 - Parkes Visitors Centre
 - Parkes Shire Library.

How being involved impacted on them and other women:

- *I enjoyed the experience, it was a lot of work for the committee, but I think they worked extremely well together and their goal from the beginning was to deliver a first class event.*
- *I found it to be a much bigger job than I initially thought it would be. However, that is probably due to my taking on other roles as well as being Secretary e.g. I took on the Media Sub-Committee leadership and towards the end became very involved in lots of administration that perhaps could have been done by others if we had had more volunteers leading our Sub-Committees.*
- *Meant a devotion to ideals and meaning of gathering for next 12 months.*

Responses to why gatherings were important:

- *They bring women from all walks of life and cultures together to share information and experiences as well as having information on a wide range of topics, help etc. i.e. mental health, breast cancer awareness.*
- *For the host town it is an opportunity to profile and promote the town.*
- *For the visitors, the getting together with like-minded people, learning (or hearing about) new and innovative industries/methods/etc, and having access to those speakers or fellow delegates are all important.*
- *Great chance for rural women to gather.*

They were asked to describe the most significant positive experience resulting from their involvement in the 2012 gathering:

- *Listening to the inspiring stories of the guest speakers. They were diverse but all shared similar stories in one part or another.*
- *Working with some great women towards a common goal.*
- *Working with a committee of like-minded women in a professional atmosphere.*

They were asked to describe the most significant positive experience resulting from their involvement in the 2012 gathering:

- *Being in the middle of some key committee members with different ideas.*
- *Having to leave the job before the event was delivered.*
- *Realising that we would not have a 'leader' for each sub-committee that was formed, so the Executive Committee members had to become more involved and take on more roles than their initial commitment.*
- *Uncertainty of income. Because we were a stand-alone incorporated body we could not overspend by \$1.*

New skills learned included:

- *None that jump to mind, but I did gain more experience working with the committee and across most aspects of the gathering.*
- *To take a camera with me to every event and meeting in case there was a possible media story. (Alas, I didn't always remember!)*
- *To be accepting of what the town had to offer (e.g. venue accommodation) and realise that one works with those bare bones to the best of one's ability and creativeness to 'dress up' what is available.*
- *Co-operation and consideration to all on the committee.*

Existing skills refreshed or revisited:

- *Events organisation and being precise when liaising with other stakeholders involved/contracted for the event.*
- *Minute writing; spreadsheet use; database use; reporting for media; are some that were revisited.*
- *Financial skills.*

The most important piece of advice they wanted to pass onto the next year's committee was:

- *Plan early.*
- *Have a structured committee.*
- *If funds permit, hire the experience of a project officer or events coordinator.*
- *Don't be afraid to think outside the square and to utilise fully the proven skills of those on your committee.*
- *Stay calm – use the special skills and expertise to committee members.*

If they could change one thing about the Parkes Gathering it would have been to:

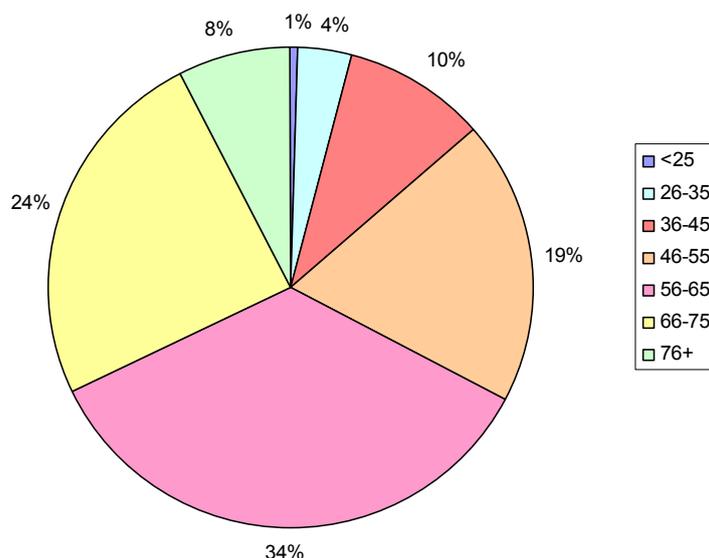
- *My only gripe was a few minor things involving the club which was probably out of our hands. I think it was a fantastic well organised event and want to congratulate everyone.*
- *Promote the skills of guest speaker Danica Leys in a way that would fill her workshops.*
- *The uncertainty of income. Considerable funds were not received until the last two weeks – still waiting for promised funding three weeks after event. You cannot spend funds which have not been cleared at the bank.*

ATTACHMENT C: Post-event participant feedback

199 surveys were returned to the Rural Women's Network after the 2012 Rural Women's Gathering event had concluded. The following data reflects the responses from those who provided feedback through the survey only and does not reflect the entire Gathering cohort.

1. Gender: 100% of survey respondents were women.

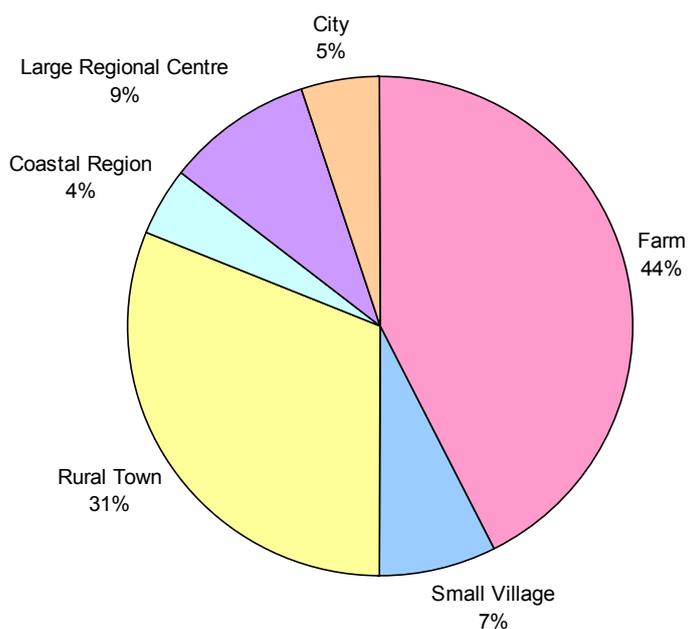
2. Age:



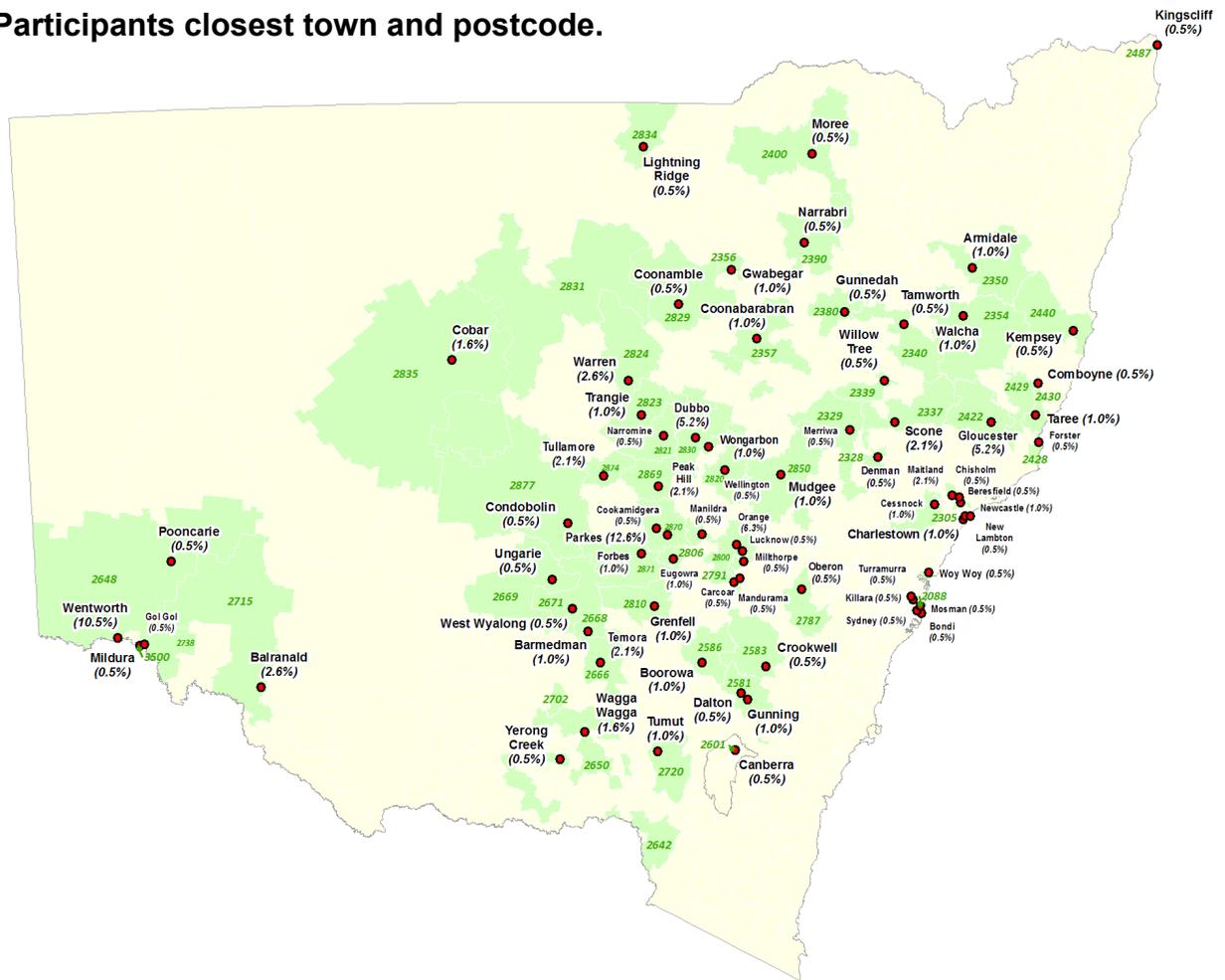
3. Is your background ATSIC or CALD?

2% of respondents were from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.
5% of respondents were from a Culturally & Linguistically Diverse background.

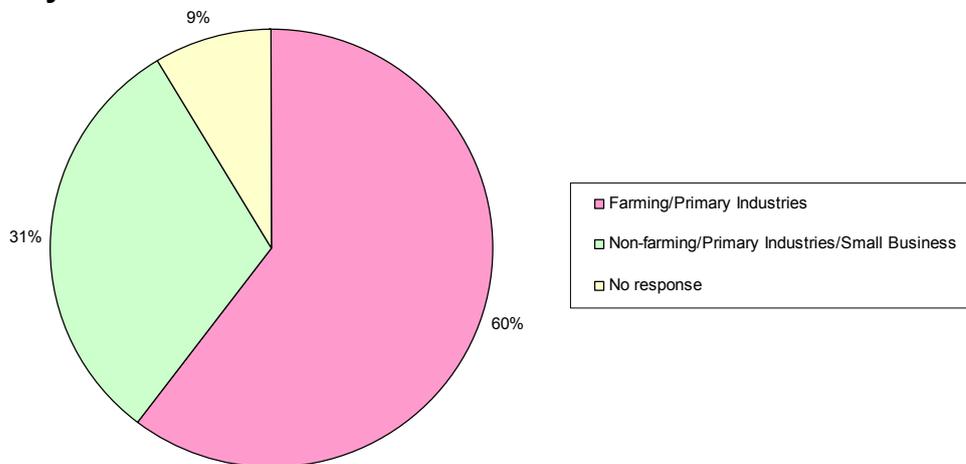
4. Where do you live?



5. Participants closest town and postcode.



6 & 7. Involvement in farming/primary industries or non-farming/primary industries small business.



Responses are grouped into general industry areas. Number indicates people involved in that particular group noting that some were involved in more than one.

Description of involvement in farming/primary industries:

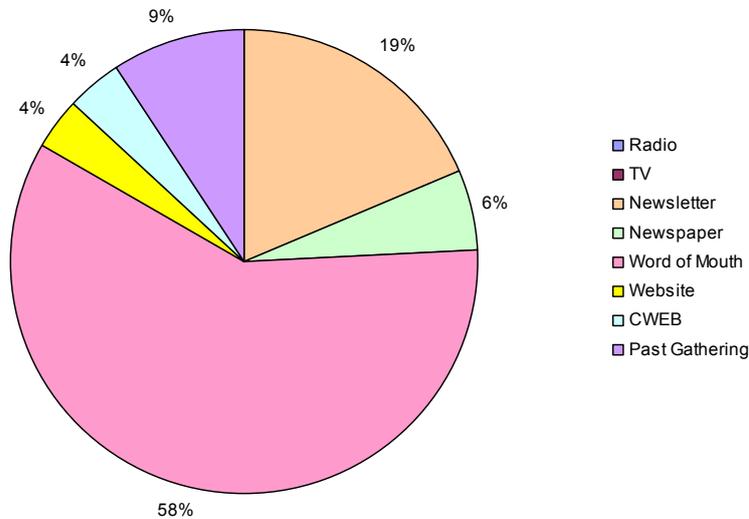
- Sheep / Lambs – wool/meat (39)
- Beef cattle (30)
- Grains / cropping (35)
- Horticulture (citrus, fruit, veg) (10)
- Farming – general (7)
- Mixed farming (6)
- Retired (6)
- Wine grapes (5)
- Retired Grazier (4)
- Finance / Business Management (4)
- Dairy farm (3)
- Government worker (3)
- Industry worker (3)
- Biodynamic/organic farming (2)
- Catchment Management Authority (2)
- Agricultural Policy Advisor (1)
- Banker (1)
- Beekeeper (1)
- Cotton industry (1)
- Farmer (1)

- Hobby farm (1)
- Horse stud (1)
- Local Government (1)
- Retired Farmer (1)
- Small business – rural (1)
- Transport services (1)
- Tourism (1)
- Training (1)

Involvement in non-farming/primary industries/small business:

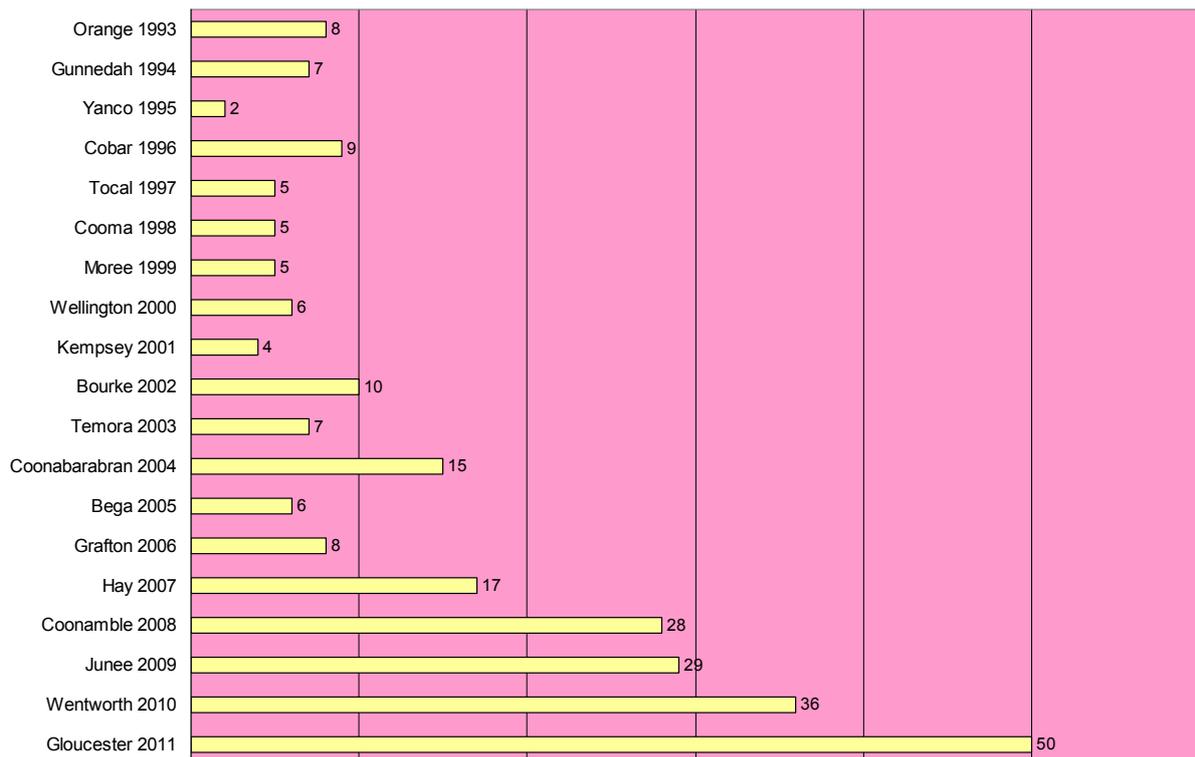
- Self-employed small business owner (11)
- Education & Training (10)
- Volunteer (9)
- Health (mental, aged care, nursing) (8)
- Government (4)
- Administration / clerical work (3)
- B&B (2)
- Accountancy & small business (1)
- Civil Engineer (1)
- Community Development (2)
- Factory worker (2)
- Non-government organisation (1)
- Non-paid worker (1)
- Pharmacy (1)
- Retail (1)
- Retired (1)
- Transport Industry (1)
- Tourism (1)
- University student (1)

8. How did you hear about the Gathering?



9. Was this your first Gathering or have you attended previous Gatherings?

43% of respondents said this was their first Gathering. 57% attended previous Gatherings.



10. What is your main reason for coming to this Gathering?

Overwhelmingly respondents valued the opportunity to network **within a friendly environment, learn new skills and knowledge**, listen to **speakers** and have time out to build personal resilience. (The number in brackets indicates the number of respondents who shared a similar view followed by some selected comments in italics.)

- **Rest/time-out, recreation, fun, camaraderie/fellowship, make new connections, meet up with old friends, network (136)**
 - *To get back into the land of the living where I would feel safe and know that I would not be judged – this is very important to me. This is the first outing I have been on in three years.*
 - *It has proved to be very much a fun, energising time, with lots of spin offs such as networking etc.*
 - *Lift my sprit.*
 - *Socialisation, farm break.*
 - *Enjoy the experience of a Women's Gathering.*
 - *Nice to meet other farming ladies.*
 - *To be involved with my friends, meet other women and enjoy a weekend away.*
 - *Meet like-minded women.*
 - *I had hoped to meet other women in my industry and to socialise and meet other women as truck driving is very limiting for friendship.*
 - *Meeting people with different cultures and extending my professional contacts.*
 - *Meeting ladies from so many other areas is so great*
 - *To meet mother*
- **Learn something (workshops) and have new experiences, gather new information and knowledge (77)**
 - *Going out of one's comfort zone in workshop sessions.*
 - *Learn new skills.*
 - *Good selection of workshops.*
 - *Interested in rural women's issues.*
 - *To gain inspiration and knowledge from the wonderful speakers and other women I met.*
- **Listen to motivating speakers and hear other people's stories (33)**
 - *Specifically Jessica Rowe (5).*
 - *Hearing from the women with such confidence going into other aspects of farming.*
 - *Good selection of speakers.*
 - *Jessica Rowe – read her biography and really admire her.*
- **Have a weekend away and focus on me and enjoy myself (30)**
 - *My annual holiday and to catch up with friends. Time out for me!*
 - *Break from the land for me.*
 - *Time away, no responsibilities and being with like-minded people.*
 - *I make it an annual event and look forward to meeting ladies each time.*
 - *Dressing up and doing activities I would not do anyway else.*
 - *It's become a tradition.*
 - *To meet and network with woman from all over state.*
 - *To continue to spend time for me and what I want to do one weekend a year.*
- **Be inspired and energised (28)**
 - *Always interesting.*
 - *To 'refuel me' after a difficult year.*
 - *To be encouraged that I will have life/work after significant changes.*
 - *Gathering helped to revitalise me to see possibilities.*
 - *Because of the enthusiasm of committee.*
 - *Networking with dynamic women.*
 - *The wonderful power, charm, warmth and passion of women.*
 - *To get courage and strength.*
 - *To be inspired by rural women and to make friends.*
 - *Mental Health discussions – depression: 'you're not alone'. This relates to me.*
 - *Promote the goodness and values of Australian rural women.*
 - *To be part of a women's event – rural based.*
- **Invited to attend by someone (12)**
 - *My mum invited me.*
 - *With two friends we decided to come on recommendation.*

- **Sense of community and opportunity to experience something different (7)**
 - Helped with CWA catering at Gloucester Gathering.
 - Enjoy the diversity of regions.
 - So enjoyable and every one is different.
 - Love gatherings. Brought my sister to her first this year. Next year we'll go.
 - Having read the 'web' for years, then word of mouth, I couldn't wait to come.
- **Sponsor, had a stall/display, make contacts for work purposes (7)**
 - As coordinator of Country Care Link, attending these gatherings are not only an inspiration, but I have the opportunity to spread the word about our service
 - I have been involved in a wellbeing group in Gunning funded by DPI in the drought years for a women's support group.
- **Parkes is home town or easy to get to (5)**
 - It was in my home town.
 - Meet people that live in the same area as me as I had just recently moved there.
- **Catch up/be with family: sisters, mothers, daughters (5)**
 - My three sisters were attending from other districts.
- **Was on the Parkes Committee (4)**
 - Gloucester was so uplifting wanted to be part of it again.
- **Running a workshop/session (4)**
 - I was also asked to conduct the ecumenical service.
- **Opportunity to visit Parkes (3)**
- **Program (2)**
 - Was nominated in Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.
 - Heard it on the radio.
- **On the committee for 2013 Gathering – Scone is host town (2)**
- **Entertainment (2)**

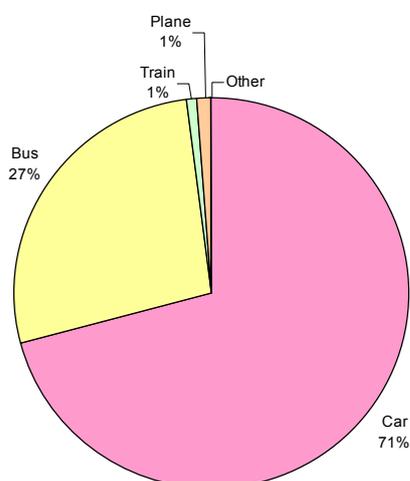
11. I would consider attending another Gathering:

97% of respondents said they would consider attending another Gathering.

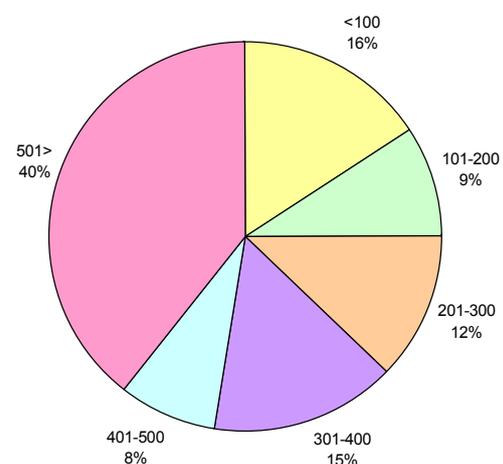
12. I would recommend Gatherings to others:

95% of respondents said they would recommend the Gathering to others.

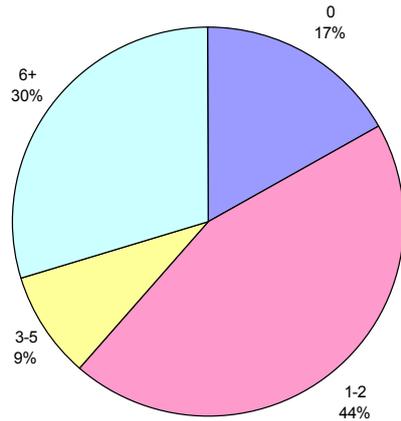
13. How did you travel to the event?



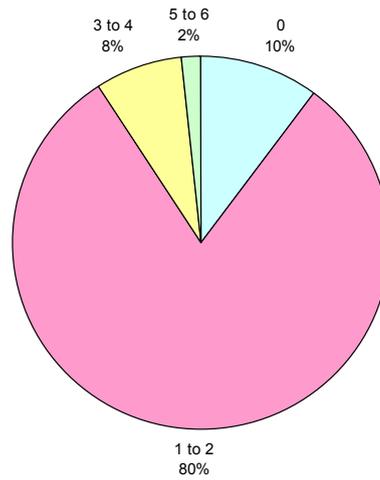
14. Return trip in kms:



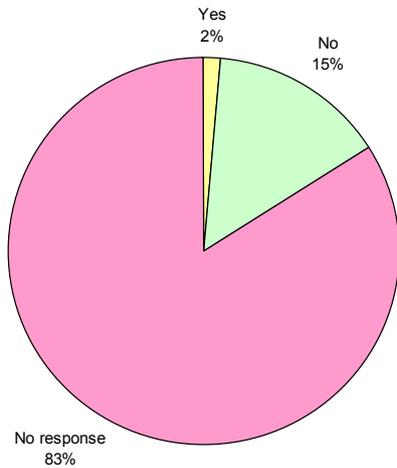
15. How many people came with you?



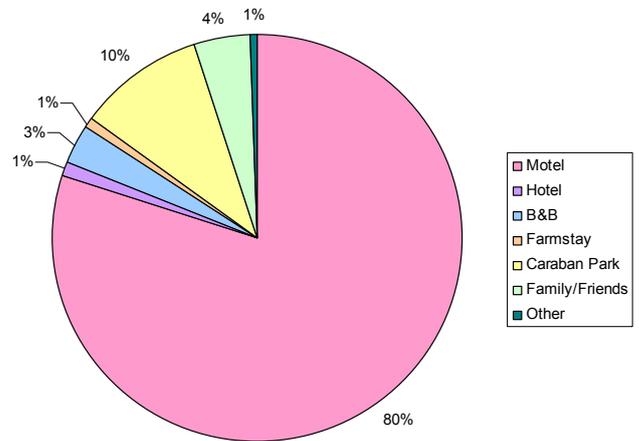
16. How many nights did you stay in Parkes?



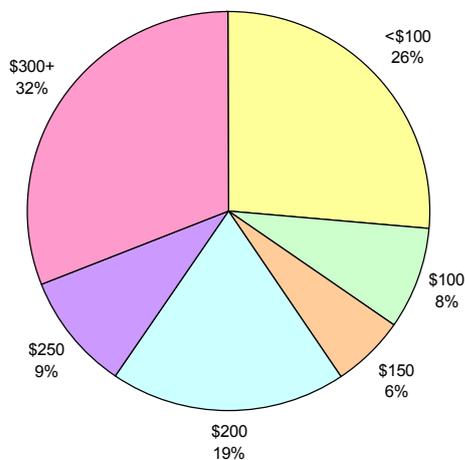
17. Do you plan to stay longer in Parkes and if so for how many nights?



18. What type of accommodation did you book?



19. Approximately how much money did you spend in Parkes on things like food, accommodation, fuel, gifts etc. (outside of Gathering registration)?



20. Who most inspired/motivated you at this Gathering and how?

- The Saturday **speakers** received lots of accolades for being motivational and inspirational with comments such as:
 - *All the guest speakers were motivated and would inspire any woman to reach for and aspire to fulfil their dreams.*
 - *I have found all speakers gave me a wonderful variety of inspiration.*
 - *All speakers were fantastic.*
 - *Guest speakers – very best I've listened to.*
 - *All their stories – proud to be female!*
 - *Give anything a go – speakers.*
 - *Speaker's local talent.*
 - *Inspirational speakers – showing what can be achieved with determination and persistence.*

Some specific speakers were identified as a highlight:

Jessica Rowe – author and TV personality (35 times)

- *Encouraging us to seek help, talk to others including partners.*
- *Inspirational talk.*
- *Jessica said things that most of us think about but are unable to say.*
- *True and genuine speaker who held nothing back.*
- *Jessica for her honesty.*
- *Could associate with all that she spoke about and what she has been through. Very inspiring.*

Lana Mitchell – RWA winner and flannel flower grower (21 times)

- *Her way at looking at life, work balance, and you can do it.*
- *Learned how to balance her family life with her career.*

Stephanie Loader – Manager, North Parkes Mines (17 times)

- *The young speakers give me hope for the future. Ms Loader was impressive.*

Corinne Annetts – 2012 RWA runner-up and goat farmer (11 times)

- *Spoke wonderfully about her business and her path travelled.*
- *Her passion for her goats*
- *Not up herself or put on airs.*
- *Raising goats, skin care and cheese making practical and profitable.*
- *Down to earth, very approachable*

Danica Leys – 2012 RWA winner and co-founder of AgChatOz (13 times)

- *Danica has done so much in so little time with such confidence! She has her whole life ahead of her.*

Fran Rowe – NSW Woman of the Year from Tottenham (12 times)

- *Fran Rowe for her wit.*

Other inspiring and motivating people mentioned were the Parkes Committee (10), workshop presenters in general (4), the Parkes Mayor (2) and tour hosts:

- *Judi and Ray Unger with their organic garden and farm (2).*
- *Yoga workshop. I need this practice in my life and she was a great teacher!*
- *Elsie and Helen – Dragon Fly Workshop (8).*
- *I will do more craft and make more time for 'me'!*
- *Just the women themselves in the workshops and general discussions.*
- *Mental Health workshop.*
- *Karen Creith (3). How you can grow a business with imagination and hard work.*
- *Robyn Morrissey*
- *The great speakers - the good company the great workshops.*
- *Can't pick one over the other.*
- *The wonderful young speakers.*
- *The inspiring speakers. The great people I met. The fun I had at classes – making patty cakes, dressing up for the Elvis night.*
- *Saturday night – less Austen Powers.*
- *Anna Ungar (3). I am so glad we have such a wonderful young role mode moving to our district.*
- *Elvis/Mark Andrews (4)*

- *Volunteer school children, careful planning of chairs in park, great outdoors, bus drivers.*
- *Metal art workshop and the fluffing workshop.*
- *Enjoyed all the guest speakers, loved the stalls on Friday night. Would have bought more local produce if available. Great entertainment and meal on Saturday night.*
- *Austin Powers! No not really. Stefanie Loader.*
- *The meeting of more people and hearing their stories.*
- *Friends I met last year.*
- *Learning what other women do/achieve.*
- *All the speakers were inspiring and you are never too old to learn.*
- *Wonderful speakers, workshops, friendships with women from different towns and backgrounds.*
- *Sophie Hansen.*
- *Can't make that decision - they were all wonderful.*
- *Wow – impossible to say – speakers were all inspiring but I the camaraderie of all the attendees was fabulous.*

21. What would you consider was the best thing about this Gathering?

- Respondents most enjoyed the **speakers, workshops**, terrific organisational skills of the **committee, entertainment**, friendly **atmosphere, networking** opportunities to meet new friends and link with past ones. Some of the comments included:
 - *Through a telescope I saw the Sun!*
 - *The smooth running was the best I have experienced e.g. buses, workshops, the teas, and the lot.*
 - *The keynote speakers, drums, fun evening – show was great.*
 - *The wonderful gathering dinner and excellent organisation – time keeping = fantastic!*
 - *The excellent organisation – reaching, engaging, achieving and dreaming.*
 - *Saturday night function was excellent!*
 - *Meeting new people. Great workshops. Spending time with my sisters.*
 - *The friendships and camaraderie for all ages and all areas.*
 - *Friendliness, encouraging women to live to their potential.*
 - *Old friends. Camaraderie, laughing, casualness – yet well organised.*
 - *Just being together experiencing the stories, the laughter, the friendship making. All of it!*
 - *Loved, loved, loved Elvis!*
 - *Relaxed atmosphere and good organisation e.g. buses to and from workshops, designated tea/coffee/lunch spots, plenty of seats/toilets.*
 - *Talking to lots of people and hearing their stories.*
 - *Friendship, inspiration and new ideas.*
 - *Meeting people I have met at previous gatherings again.*
 - *The number of volunteers.*
 - *Being inspired by other women's stories.*
 - *Women getting together, taking time out of their lives to do something for themselves.*
 - *Drumming!*
 - *The Gala Dinner and Elvis. Everyone was friendly and plenty of people willing to help in necessary.*
 - *Hard to choose – speakers, workshops and Gala Dinner were all excellent.*
 - *Positive sharing and acceptance of each other!*
 - *All previous gatherings were most enjoyable - Parkes rates the best.*
 - *Enjoyed workshops doing things I wouldn't experience normally.*
 - *The inspiring speakers. The great people I met. The fun I had at classes - patty cakes, dressing up for Elvis night. Also a well organised gathering with loads of great activities.*
 - *Wonderful guest speakers and entertainment, and new friendships – great to have a laugh and a chat.*
 - *The speakers. Meeting other lovely rural women. Especially listening too and meeting Jessica Rowe.*
 - *The camaraderie on the bus on the ride home on Saturday night and the wonderful bus driver Jack.*
 - *Self empowerment.*
 - *Motivational speakers.*
 - *Very well run – great content.*

- Meeting new people, chatting, making contacts.
- Hearing more about rural women's issues and meeting friendly people.
- Ecumenical Service.
- Friendship, gardens visited, Elvis party – great!
- Interior decorating skills.
- Good having leagues club as focal point and being looked after re transport.
- A chance to catch up with other ladies and for our men together as well.
- Parkes itself.
- It is very difficult to choose as everything was informative, motivating and enjoyable.
- My workshop on Saturday – Tin and dragon fly.
- Workshop - Floral Art.
- Workshops top quality. Haven't heard anyone say they weren't happy.
- Gail – the singing teacher was great.
- Fluffing the home workshop.
- Workshops – really good, enthusiastic tutors, lots of different workshops – something for everyone.
- Water colour painting.

22. What is one new skill you learned from participating in this Gathering?

- African Drumming (17)
- Fluffing my home (10)
- Goat cheese making (8)
- Proggy technique (8)
- Traditional Indian cooking (6)
- Oral and family history and doing oral history interview. Navigating the internet to explore 'your family tree'. I enjoyed the workshop very much. (6)
- Computer skills to research family history (2)
- New yoga moves/poses/principle (6)
- Improved gardening knowledge and what to put where (5)
- Social networking/media: Twitter, Pintrest, Blogging. Able to use my mobile to Facebook, Twitter and Blog (4)
- Jewellery Making (4)
- Photography/camera (4)
- How to garden organically and compost (4)
- To sing better!(4)
- Bias pin tape/cushion (4)
- Floral Art (3)
- Impromptu public speaking... Be brave when presenting (3)
- How to make a fascinator (3)
- Making wire dragonflies (3)
- Candle Making (3) - loved having something to take home
- Packing lightly (3)
- Looking at the stars in the sky! How to view the sun through a you beaut telescope safely (3)
- Sewing, to make a chook stuffed with kitchen aromas. (3) Great fun... lovely reminder what I also made in Parkes.
- Scarf painting (3) Hands on – Fantastic
- Dancing and movement for fun (2)
- Confidence, feel comfortable being with women and being able to talk to women who don't know me (2)
- Painting with water colours (2)
- Metal skills (2)
- Communication and listening. Be prepared to change my way of thinking (2)
- Better listening - stepping out to greet others. Always keep an open mind and listen more (2)
- Paper piecing (Patchwork) (2)
- Enchanted interviewing (oral)
- Researching family tree, Learnt about RAS funding.
- Excited about recording some oral history of my family sooner rather than later.
- Communicating with youth
- Reaching out to others being involved.
- Tips from a number of women about how I might go about changing to a new career. Sources of potential finding fun projects. Again more networking I have made new friends who I will contact.
- Women's Health
- To empower and believe in oneself. Anything is possible, follow the dream and work at it!
- Impersonating Elvis.
- More knowledge for succession planning.
- In presenting my workshop a participant said when interviewing people with dementia to allow a minute after each question for them

- *to 'think about' the question. Don't just jump in with another question.*
- *Media skills.*
- *The opportunity to network and its power/strength.*
- *To breathe and be happy. Women can talk.*
- *Talking to people – ongoing lesson.*
- *Will try to learn to accord myself more credit for my achievements.*
- *The knowledge that we don't have to conform or please others. We can follow our dreams.*
- *Be more open with myself.*
- *To continue to chat with other women more!*
- *After circle of life – look after myself.*
- *Following my passion = # 1*
- *More 'me' time.*
- *Accept and try to enhance your life and the life of those in your circle of influence.*
- *Lots of ideas – Jessica Rowe conversation.*
- *Regaining joy.*
- *A new way of painting - layering and transparent paint.*
- *Cake decorating.*
- *Silk Scarf painting.*
- *Craft - has motivated me to go and do a course with Elsie.*
- *Furniture Restoration.*
- *Art Expression in garden.*
- *Traditional basketry.*
- *Handicraft, learning about the needy.*
- *Crocheting beading.*
- *Minimising possessions at home.*

23 What is one change you would consider making as a result of the Gathering?

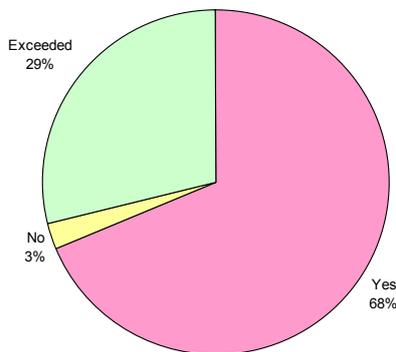
Personal

- *More time for me - yoga/relax.*
- *Declutter.*
- *Drumming .*
- *Pursue some of my interests.*
- *Do more craft.*
- *Do yoga at least three times a week.*
- *Hopefully work-life balance.*
- *Organic mulch for the garden.*
- *Try to network more!*
- *To be more outgoing.*
- *Follow my dream and my passion, perseverance, be brave, it can happen!*
- *Get fitter! Relax more - more time for ME!*
- *Follow dreams.*
- *Declutter my house, co-ordinate my colours.*
- *Walking to work to increase exercise.*
- *Would like to apply for RIRDC grant one day within next couple of years.*
- *Step out of my comfort zone and challenge myself.*
- *More time for me (2).*
- *Use Rural Women's Network.*
- *Stay connected to others anyway I can and pass that message onto my daughter.*
- *Talk more. Book for next year.*
- *Will certainly be more selective in what I pack when going travelling.*
- *Be more inclusive.*
- *Greater use of my mobile.*
- *Make more curry.*
- *Fluffing.*
- *Ability to help and listen to our fellow women and children.*
- *A messy system of dressing the scones!*
- *Making more time for myself.*
- *I am going to follow my desire to write and have articles published. (Fortunately I sat near Karen Creith on Friday night and Tursa at the Elvis night and she is a newspaper editor at Hay.*
- *Make time for enjoying activities I like to do.*
- *My website needs updating – found inspiration to get me inspired.*
- *Have your say workshop has prompted me to get involved in things in the community.*
- *My beliefs in myself to dream and achieve.*
- *We really need more time like an extra day for another activity and shopping and sightseeing.*

Gathering organisation and program

- Have 'show and tell' tables for all craft/art other creations, as well as the 'final' entertainment.
- Longer registration area perhaps if possible - seemed a bit hectic there at times.
- Encourage participation of the 2013 event.
- Option of more workshops or longer ones.
- Provide a DVD of some of main activities e.g. African Drumming, Jessica Rowe, speakers.
- Name tags would be very helpful.
- A meal on Friday night – maybe a prepared salad.
- No finger food on Friday night! A proper meal would be preferable after 10 hours on the bus (4).
- Friday night – platters on tables (2), not roaming finger food (2).
- Food –catering for all gluten free does not mean fruit.
- Friday night meal. Not enough water around in areas.
- Less time on special interests i.e. drumming.
- Lighting was bad in the auditorium.

24. Did the Gathering meet your expectations?



25. Extra recommendations / comments:

Committee and general comments

Apart from the food issues with the **Friday night meal** which did not go as planned by the Committee, most respondents were very happy with the event and **extremely appreciative** and **complimentary** about all the work done by the Parkes women. Some great suggestions were made for future Gathering committees to consider.

- *Congratulations and thank you for a wonderful gathering. It was very well organised and orchestrated (49)*
- *The weekend was relaxing and entertaining at the same time. I never felt lost or under pressure. The directions and helpers were wonderful. Thank you. I know what it takes to put on a good show. See you in Scone.*
- *Well done, this was a wonderful weekend and the little touches were really appreciated e.g. the sayings on the wall in the toilets, the chocolates, the Parkes high school pupils welcoming us to their school, the generous tutors (Karen Creith and the cup cake lady). Each gathering is special and different and the organisers have to work with what is available in their area.*
- *A wonderful experience – we all need to encourage others to attend gatherings – reach out and engage others to achieve and dream.*
- *Yay for Parkes... the best ever.*
- *Didn't surprise me Parkes' Ladies could 'do it' – great job!*
- *All wonderful. Thank you to Carolyn and the committee and all the wonderful helpers!*
- *Very impressed with the organisation of everything. Congratulations for all the hard work that went into a really great effort.*
- *Well done team. Great choice of workshops and inspiring women speaking.*
- *I was very impressed with the organisation of speakers/buses/workshops. Also in the amount and variation of workshops offered. It would have been nice to do more than two. The friendliness and helpfulness of everyone was fantastic.*
- *Very friendly. Organised well. Ran smoothly. Transport to workshops great. Everything ran on time. A great weekend. Thanks to all.*

- *Congratulations to Carolyn and committee for the lovely courtesy flexibility and thoughtful planning of small details. A great gathering*
- *Well done. Fantastic weekend spent in Parkes!*
- *Executive committee not so approachable – need to share job around to more local support.*
- *Organise a bus trip for the Scone gathering. Circulate a letter of invitation to*

Program

- *Excellent time management (3).*
- *A wonderfully organised event that moved seamlessly from session to session. Loved the women's stories and good mix of ages. Excellent sound and time keeping.*
- *Some shopping time when the shops are open would have been nice.*
- *Shopping, bus tour for those arriving Friday - great for local business!*

Food

- *Early food on Friday night. A substantial meal on first night is needed as some have travelled a long distance and need a good feed (38).*
- *Lunch organisation and concept excellent (6), quality not so good e.g. only white bread (5)*
- *Saturday night dinner excellent (4).*
- *Please cater for dietary needs with a little more imagination (i.e. Gluten free etc) fruit gets a little boring when everyone else is having cake and cream (3).*

Entertainment

- *Terrific show Saturday night (2).*
- *At the dinner on the Saturday night the entertainer went too far in his rude sexual jokes.*
- *A little too long on Saturday night.*
- *Too long on drums. Some of us wanted to leave and eat.*

Stalls

- *I would have liked for the market stalls to be there for the whole weekend and more stalls/info stands (5).*

Volunteers

- *Parkes High School SRC students are to be congratulated on their happy manner and helpfulness (3).*

Speakers

- *I'm sure the speakers would have liked to see the audience.*
- *More workshops and less speakers (4).*
- *The drumming was great but perhaps question time with Jessica may have been appreciated and LESS drum time!*

register interest to Parkes locals and local towns in central west immediately to capture interested women!(2)

- *During the main dinner have say four 'minders' circulating about the room all the time to check with guests on how things are going. Nip any problems in the bud.*
- *With so many people to organise – they did a top job.*
- *May there be many more – just keep on doing it.*

- *More 'me' time.*
- *A lot of sitting Saturday.*
- *Wonderfully organised – ran better than any clock!*
- *Open garden over whole weekend.*
- *Venue program information was ambiguous i.e. venue being club for all but workshops*

- *As gluten free, the afternoon tea on Saturday was the very best – meringue and slices – WOW.*
- *Friday night not worth \$45 (2).*
- *Morning tea and lunch stations and packs worked really well – a credit to committee (2)*
- *Have bottles of water on tables.*
- *A meal voucher could be included in cost.*
- *No skim milk.*

- *The Drumming – WOW!*
- *Entertainment at the dinner was too long – need to finish earlier – we had travelled a long way on Friday, had a full day Saturday and will have a VERY long day travelling home today so needed to return to motel earlier on Saturday night.*

- *Encourage more locals to display produce/goods – including fruit/veg/free range eggs etc.*

- *Record speeches and offer them for sale – could be included in registration forms to be posted after – how wonderful it would be to listen to them again.*
- *Saturday am dragged a little – very good speakers but a lot not used to enforced inactivity for that period.*

Registration

- *Keep costs low to enable more women to attend (2). For those that register early have tables assigned.*
- *Place full name and address on letters for presentation at registration desk to streamline registrations*
- *May have been an idea to find out prior to event the industry or professions of attendees to help people navigate towards like-minded. To make the connection in any easier.*

Name Tags

- *Name tags need to be BIGGER/clearer and pinned to lapel (6). Perhaps women could bring their own name tag e.g. from a group they belong to or make one.*
- *Put the town where people come from on the front of pouches handy to network with women re workshops/field days/etc (3).*

Workshops

- *An intro computer/iPhone course e.g. using Google.*
- *Reduce slightly, number of workshops offered – more participants in each one.*
- *Longer for fascinator workshop e.g. maybe three hours.*
- *Computers for beginners.*
- *More time for workshops – Friday afternoon workshop?*
- *If another mental Health Session use the full three hours e.g. I'm OK how about you?? We needed more time – a great session.*
- *I would have preferred less craft based workshops.*
- *Disappointed that the small motor maintenance course was cancelled but enjoyed the 'Fluffing the home course'.*
- *I would LOVE to do a three hour workshop at Scone.*
- *A show and tell of craft achieved would be great.*

Participants

- *Increase the age group mix. This is worthy of all girls 15-95 (2).*
- *One little idea - Women who arrive alone should have a little star on their name tag – or because they are stars and we could have a special welcome person to host them into the first function and introduce them.*
- *An opportunity for 1st timers to meet and mingle and/or network or have a mentor who has been to other events to introduce you to others.*
- *Very white – middle class! And most people are over 50. It would be good if there were subsidised tickets for people who might otherwise not be able to attend.*
- *Why do men come to a women's gathering? (2). Other cultures have separate men's and women's business – can this not be a place solely for women?*
- *More publicity to include women from all over including towns and cities. I'm sure city women would be truly inspired as well as rural women.*

Transport

- *Transport around to workshops and shuttles great (2).*
- *Travelling arrangements and directions to all things were excellent.*
- *Numbers ON busses in window near door!*

Venue

- *Great venue (2).*
- *Lighting stage not very good.*
- *Too many steps at High School*