



The Hon Niall Blair MLC Minister for Primary Industries Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW LEADERS IN LINE FOR RURAL WOMEN'S AWARD

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair, has today announced three finalists, with a passion for rural and regional NSW, in the 2015 NSW-ACT Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation Rural Women's Award.

Mr Blair said Cindy Cassidy of Aria Park, Trudy McElroy from Deniliquin and Sophie Anderson from the Byron Bay Hinterland will each vie for the title.

"Last year Pip Job from the Central West won the NSW-ACT title, and went on to be the first NSW winner to take out the national award – I want it to happen again this year," Mr Blair said.

"The three finalists I've announced today are fantastic role models, and a reminder that regional NSW and its industries are in great hands.

"They were selected from a field of skilled, highly committed and enterprising women."

Mr Blair said the awards are an important platform to support emerging leaders who have the desire, commitment and leadership potential to pioneer regional NSW to a bright future.

"Sophie Anderson, a Barrister from the North Coast, is devoted to providing quality legal advice, especially those vulnerable members of regional and remote communities," Mr Blair said.

"Sophie wants to enhance and facilitate greater access to legal services and create an alliance of women legal practitioners providing leadership, career and mentoring opportunities for young women in regional NSW.

"Cindy Cassidy is born and bred on a sheep and grain farm in Aria Park, and is now the CEO of FarmLink Research, a not-for-profit farming systems group based at Temora, servicing farmers and agribusiness across the region.

"Cindy wants to explore national and international approaches to modern agricultural extension.

"Trudy McElroy, from Deniliquin, runs a share-farming broad acre enterprise and knows first-hand the challenges farming businesses face.

"Trudy knows women are an integral part of rural industries and it's time for rural women to play a more critical role, which would benefit farm enterprises by women making a greater contribution.

Minister for Women, Pru Goward, said the awards were an important opportunity to highlight the outstanding contributions made by women in rural areas.

"These dedicated women are inspiring other regional and rural based women to follow their passions to drive change and make a difference to their communities," Ms Goward said.

The winner will be announced on 26 May at a ceremony at NSW Parliament and will compete for the national award later this year.

The winner of the 2015 NSW-ACT award will receive a bursary of \$10,000 and participate in the RIRDC Australian Institute of Company Directors' course.