

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



*'As a member of the first Gathering Committee I look back at the experience of showcasing my Orange region and providing an opportunity for rural women as both challenging and rewarding. Since that time I have worked with over 150 women who have used their amazing organisational and networking skills along with creative talents to deliver Gatherings that are diverse and unique to their area.'* SONIA MUIR, MANAGER – BUSINESS & SOCIAL RESILIENCE, NSW DPI

## About these guidelines

---

The NSW Department of Primary Industries' Rural Women's Network (RWN) developed these guidelines to provide background information, share feedback and best practice from past Gatherings.

By passing on the knowledge and skills gained by each organising committee a progressive bank of information can be passed on to future organising committees and the spirit and philosophy behind this unique and wonderful event in the rural calendar is maintained.

A Gathering support 'package' which will include templates is being developed to support Gathering committees.

## What are Women's Gatherings?

---

In Orange in 1993, NSW Agriculture's (now Department of Primary Industries) RWN, along with FarmSafe Central West and a committee of volunteers, instigated the first Gathering in NSW as a way of bringing rural women together for networking, learning, gaining inspiration and ideas and sharing information. The idea came from Victoria where Women on Farms Gatherings have been an annual event since 1990.

Four hundred women from NSW and other States came to that first Orange Gathering. From this event came enthusiasm for NSW Gatherings to be held each year. Gatherings have been held in Bega, Bourke, Cobar, Coolamon, Cooma, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Glen Innes, Gloucester, Grafton, Gunnedah, Hay, Junee, Kempsey, Moree, Orange, Parkes, Scone, Temora, Tocal, Wellington, Wentworth and Yanco.

The 2016 Gathering will be hosted by Broken Hill from 28-30 October.

Gatherings are organised by local committees who make key decisions, develop a theme and the weekend program. Each Gathering reflects the unique culture, talent, industry, tourism and environment of the host community.

Women's Gatherings are for ALL rural women including: farming women; Aboriginal women; women from Culturally & Linguistically Diverse backgrounds; mining women; women in the fishing industry; women who live in regional cities, towns and villages; and coastal women.

The RWN is available to assist with any issues or concerns that may arise during the planning of a Gathering and can provide advice, support, information and contacts from past gathering committees.

The RWN always have an information stand at gatherings and from 2015 will deliver a one-hour issues and ideas session as part of the program.

### Why Gatherings are important

Gatherings are a well-established annual state-wide community hosted event targeting rural women. They aim to:

- provide an opportunity for rural women to connect, share experiences and support each other through good and tough times. It is not a 'conference' but more a special event which brings women together;
- provide opportunities for rural women to have a direct voice to decision makers through Government, Ministers and other decision makers attending the event and through the distribution of a post event issues/ideas 'Statement';
- enable rural women to access information on existing services, resources and assistance;
- provide an opportunity for rural women to learn from listening to inspiring and informative speakers, display stands and participating in a range of workshops;
- raise the profile of rural women and highlight important issues through wide media coverage; and
- be inclusive by involving women from Aboriginal and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and younger women as participants and on organising committees wherever possible.

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



## What makes a successful Gathering?

These best practice elements have been developed from what has worked well at past Gatherings. The following suggestions are about adopting good practises without being too prescriptive.

### Opening, closing, welcome and handover

The NSW Minister for Primary Industries is usually invited to perform the official opening. This ensures a voice to government so decision makers hear what women have to say. It also gives women the opportunity to talk to those who make policy that affects their lives which is an important aim of Gatherings.

A brief official opening ceremony is held on the Saturday morning. It is important to do a Welcome to Country and acknowledge Aboriginal elders past and present as part of this. Maybe a local Aboriginal Elder could be invited to do this. The local Mayor is also a good person to do a brief welcome.

***TIP: Ensure you have a local Elder engaged and well briefed to do a Welcome to Country.***

The Sunday closing includes a short handover ceremony where the 'baton' is passed on to representatives from the following year's host committee who are invited to do a short five-minute presentation to invite and entice people to their event.

***TIP: The Friday night welcome is usually informal as many women may have travelled long distances so don't want anything too heavy or late! It is usually over by 9 pm and needs to include plentiful hearty food for hungry travellers. Finger food usually works best as it allows people to move around and interact and network better – which are the main aims of the Friday night get-together.***

### Official guests

An official guest list should include the Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Women and their respective Directors General along with major sponsors. Other key decision makers might include the local Mayor, female councillors, NSW Farmers President, Aboriginal Elders and key community people.

### Gathering committees

Gathering committees are usually made up of a diversity of local people who are enthusiastic and keen to showcase their region.

Committee members don't have to have any special qualifications (but a good range of skills such as social media, communications, finance, events management or IT is certainly an asset). It is also a good idea to have representatives from key organisations, agencies and groups from across the community who have a wide range of networks and can possibly tap into resources that may be needed as planning progresses.

***TIP: It is always a bonus to have committee members who have been to a Gathering before... so try and encourage committee members to get to this year's gathering.***

### Committee structure

In addition to the broader committee, it works best if there is a smaller 'core' or 'executive' committee of 5-6 women who can meet more regularly and make key decisions. Core committee members would include a Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and perhaps a couple of others. Their role is to oversee the event at the big picture level.

A woman with leadership skills from that smaller core committee needs to be nominated by all committee members to be the Gathering Chair.

It is important that every effort is made to encourage younger women, Aboriginal women and women from Culturally & Linguistically Diverse backgrounds to be involved on the Gathering Committee to ensure they are part of the pre-planning as well as their participation in the event. Having a diversity of women involved from the beginning will ensure they will feel part of the Gathering and encourage others to participate.

Ideas to encourage participation of Aboriginal women include:

- Find out about protocols through local Aboriginal groups such as Land Councils and reconciliation groups.

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



- Ask if any local Aboriginal women's groups exist in your area and if they would like to be involved on the committee by sending a couple of representatives;
- Ask a local Aboriginal Elder to do a traditional Welcome to Country;
- Try and include Aboriginal women on the program as speakers, display stand/stall holders, panellist or workshop presenters;
- If appropriate incorporate Aboriginal artwork on the brochure;
- Send information to the *Koori Mail* for its women's section.

## Committee decision making

The Chair plays a very important role as the Committee leader, key spokesperson and liaison person with whom the RWN, Ministers, sponsors etc. engage with.

Having a Deputy Chair is also important to cover when the Chair is not available or away on leave. Sponsors need to know they can contact a key decision-maker from the Committee.

**TIP: It is important to have a Deputy Chair who can step in when the Chair is away or on leave.**

Being a leader can be difficult as they often have to make decisions that everyone may not agree with. It is a good idea to establish early a decision making process that is clear and transparent.

**TIP: Have the Chair and Deputy Chair's decision making roles minuted and agreed to by everyone on the broader committee early in the planning process.**

**TIP: What has worked well in the past is that the Chair be given the ability to have the final say if the committee can't reach consensus or if a tricky decision needs to be made in a hurry. The Chair needs to know that she has the committee's support and trust to make these decisions that may not please everyone.**

From 2016 RWN will deliver a half day training session for the committee on some important aspects of committee operations such as governance and communication. This will be delivered at a mutually agreeable time once the host community has been announced and a committee has been formed.

The RWN always requires a copy of contact details for the core committee and subcommittee leaders in case they need to be contacted.

The core committee will need the support and assistance of a broader committee which will include the very important sub-committee leaders who take on the responsibility of managing smaller teams to coordinate specific areas of the event such as:

1. Speakers
2. Registration
3. Workshops
4. Display stands
5. Catering
6. Sponsors
7. Administration
8. Venues/sound systems and visual aids
9. Social and mainstream media
10. Website
11. Tours
12. Transport /accommodation (speakers etc.)
13. Friday night program
14. Saturday night dinner
15. Entertainment
16. Decorations
17. Partner's program and childcare
18. Gathering weekend volunteers
19. Sunday morning ecumenical service
20. Risk assessment and health/safety management

**TIP: Subcommittee leaders should be given freedom to make decisions in their area of responsibility but need to keep the Chair and core committee in the loop to ensure they don't go off track... as this can easily happen!**

**TIP: It is worth allocating money in your budget for a good sound system and a technician for the day as being able to hear speakers is critical to a gathering's success.**

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



**TIP:** Any issue a subcommittee leader is having difficulty with needs to be discussed promptly with the Chair for clarification or advice. Final decisions around any issue always need to remain with the Chair otherwise committees can find themselves going round and round in circles.

## Venues

A large venue where everyone can come together for the opening and closing, to hear keynote speakers and the Saturday night Gathering Dinner is essential. Most of the Gatherings attract around 150-300 participants. It is also important to have appropriate spaces for workshops such as the local school, TAFE or community rooms and halls.

## Risk Management

The varying activities of gatherings can make risk management challenging. Activities often involve other groups or individuals and bring people together for a short period of time. Proper planning is essential. The RWN has a simple checklist for a Gathering based on *ourcommunity.com* resources.

**TIP:** Checklists are available at [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au). Search for 'Risk Management Checklists'.

## Engaging an Auspicing Body<sup>1</sup> or forming an incorporated body.

Understanding your Gathering Committee's legal, financial and insurance responsibilities is critical and if chosen to host the Gathering you will be asked to provide evidence that shows you have either secured a formal agreement with an Auspicing Body or established the Gathering Committee as an Incorporated Body.

The decision about incorporation is an important decision for a Gathering Committee. Incorporation has significant legal consequences, many beneficial. However, incorporation also brings with it responsibilities to report to government. Some Committees prefer to be 'auspiced' by an existing organisation.

As part of your submission to host a gathering you will therefore need to show evidence that you have support from an Auspicing Body. A formal agreement is not necessary at this early stage but if your bid is successful then formal written evidence (an Auspice Agreement which details the financial and administrative arrangements between the Auspicing Body and the Gathering Committee) will need to be provided before the DPI sponsorship agreement can be finalised and you receive any funding.

Having this process in place will also help you secure funding from other sponsors because funding bodies generally prefer to deal with an incorporated legal entity rather than a group of individuals.

It may be helpful to approach a local law firm to ask if they could provide pro bono support to your Gathering Committee in developing a simple auspice agreement that outlines the key roles and responsibilities for each party. It is important that the Auspicing Body also cover public liability insurance.

DPI funding will not be provided to the Gathering Committee without proof that the committee is a legal entity with public liability insurance or has engaged an Auspicing Body with this arrangement in place.

Examples of auspicing bodies could include: local council; Chamber of Commerce; Local Land Service, Landcare.

**TIP:** The Not-for-profit Law Information Hub has excellent information and tools about auspicing: [www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing](http://www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing)

## Timing

Lack of time continues to be a major issue and committees need to plan carefully for each element – especially free time for networking. Generous time should be given for lunch and tea breaks so that women have an opportunity to talk amongst themselves as well as allocating time to view display stands which often involves local women selling their wares. It is also a time for sponsors and service providers to talk to women and for women to access decision makers such as Ministers.

<sup>1</sup> An auspice agreement is an agreement where one organisation (the **auspicator**) agrees to enter into an agreement on behalf of a second group or an individual (the **auspicee**). This is often a funding agreement, but can also be a lease, or insurance.

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



A common pitfall of Gatherings is trying to organise activities for every minute! So remember that Gatherings are also a good opportunity for women to network and just be with other women who share some common experiences. Time must be allowed for this in the program.

***TIP: Some gatherings allocate free time as an alternative to doing a workshop so women can browse the shops or chat with others.***

## Childcare

Childcare is essential if women with young children are going to be able to attend. Local Council, Family Day Care and Occasional Care services are good places to start for information on what is available.

***Tip: The Registration Form should include 'participants needs' e.g. number of children and ages, as well as the Gatherings' child care provision (how long each day, cost, a phone contact, etc.)***

***TIP: Find a local provider to provide childcare on the weekend and give contact details to participants needing childcare so they can deal directly.***

## The Program

### Gathering themes

Gathering themes can help to create a focus for speakers and presenters. Past themes included: Be All That You Can Be; Reach for the Stars: Looking Back... Moving Forw@rd; Flat Out in Hay; Big River Dreaming; Holistic Health, Wealth & Wellbeing; Golden Beginnings: Harvesting our Future; Fortitude and Far Horizons; Unity in Diversity; Information + Inspiration = Innovation; Participation, Persistence, Partnership; High Country, High Hopes, High Achievers; Inspiring and Achieving; Making Tracks, Resourceful and Resilient; Today's Knowledge, Tomorrows Success; Sharing and Caring; Surviving and Thriving; Wander West to Wentworth; Friendship & Dreaming Beneath the Bucket's; and Reach, Engage, Achieve & Dream; Horsin' Around in Scone; Heritage with Heart and Gather in the Glen: Women for all seasons.

### MC

A strong MC is important to ensure the program runs smoothly and to time.

### Rural Women's Network

As the primary sponsor and provider of ongoing links between gatherings, the RWN requires a 60-minute time slot to deliver the issues/ideas session where rural women can have a voice about what is concerning them and provide ideas to make a difference.

### Keynote speakers

The best keynote speakers are linked to your theme, are motivational, entertaining and inspiring. Many rural women do not get the opportunity to hear dynamic and inspiring speakers. This is usually one of the more expensive budget items so you may need good negotiation skills. But it is also attractive for sponsorship!

***TIP: Provide speakers with a pre-event letter outlining their time limits and how you will adhere to these by sounding a bell etc.***

***TIP: A celebrity or well known personality as your keynote speaker can be a powerful attractor for women to attend. Having them speak on Sunday morning just before the close will keep your crowd together and stop them sneaking off early!***

### Panel sessions

Panel sessions are a great way of getting a range of speakers around a topic of interest. These need to be well thought through to ensure they do not dominate the agenda as many women come to *gather* NOT conference.

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



## Women's stories

Local women telling stories of their life experiences are an integral and important part of the Gathering program and have proved to be a highlight. These story presentations in the early part of the program (Friday night) play a major role in helping to set a friendly/sharing tone for the whole weekend as well as to complement the higher profile keynote speakers by celebrating the lives of 'everyday' women.

***TIP: As well as high profile speakers, everyday women also love to hear stories from other everyday women. Scan your community... there are always extraordinary women with amazing life stories to tell that can inspire and delight.***

## Workshops

Workshops need to be diverse and can be organised into themes such as: art and crafts, community development, leadership, education, business and finance, health, personal development, sustainable agriculture, technology, social media, climate adaptation, leadership, etc.

***TIP: Doing a short survey to find out what workshops local women would like can be useful to figure out what might be 'trending' or contact past gathering committees to see what has been popular.***

Workshops should aim to:

- Be of good quality (using quality local presenters where possible with backups just in case!);
- Be relevant and focus on a wide range of choice to cater for the varied participants' needs and skill levels;
- Be given adequate time (a minimum of 1.5 hours gives enough time for participation and questions);
- Have committee members or 'hostesses' responsible for helping workshop presenters – introducing and thanking them, making sure equipment is working, rooms can be found, etc;
- Having good signs, simple maps and some extra volunteers for the weekend to 'escort' and direct participants can ensure everyone is able to find their workshops quickly; and
- It is also a good idea to repeat popular workshops if possible.

## Partner's (Men's) Program

The Partner's Program (for men) was a great idea introduced by the Cobar Gathering and has been a feature ever since. (Based on past Gatherings there are usually about 6-12 partners who need to be catered for.)

Partners' activities have included things such as golf, tours of local sights, men's sheds and fishing expeditions. Partners can also be invited to listen to guest speakers and join in other gathering activities where appropriate.

## Tours

Tours of local/regional interests can be incorporated as an additional option to doing workshops. Many women attending past gatherings have expressed a strong interest in seeing more of the host town and surrounding area including tourist spots, industries and agricultural enterprises. These can be run parallel to workshops.

## Display/information stands

Display stands work best when they are interactive and relevant to rural women. Time needs to be set aside so participants can view display stands, talk to service providers and collect information. They also need to be set up in areas where lunch, morning and afternoon teas are held so women can wander through in these breaks.

It is up to the committee whether they charge a fee for display stands. You need to remember that people manning display stands may need to eat so you might consider a small fee to cover catering costs.

***TIP: It is a good idea to make the most of the whole weekend by having display stands and stalls open the entire weekend.***

***TIP: Inviting local women to sell their wares is a great way to showcase local talent***

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



**TIP: Charging a small fee for a display stand in return for catering can be a good way of ensuring your costs are covered.**

## Registration Form and Program

The Gathering Registration Form needs to be simple and provide information on the program, workshops, tours, guest speakers, childcare, accommodation, costs, etc.

**TIP: Your committee may like to consider using an online event program such as 'Eventbrite' to manage registrations.**

If the Registration Form and program is to be printed in *The Country Web* newsletter it is critical that time lines be discussed with the RWN **well in advance** and you get a copy of the Gathering program template.

Costs should be kept to a minimum. Registrations for the weekend vary depending on the location, but are usually around \$200 (+ accommodation).

**TIP: Early bird discounts have been popular in the past.**

Offering a 10% discount for bringing a relative (daughter/Mum/Aunty) or friend; ensuring there is a Friday night, Sunday morning or one-day options and corporate fees are also an option are important to think about.

**TIP: Perhaps include a car pool option on the registration form if women are happy to connect with women from the same area and travel together thus sharing costs and driving.**

**TIP: To encourage younger women perhaps have an under 30s special registration fee**

**TIP: Offering credit card facilities can make payment easy for participants. If there is a cost for this just add the surcharge on the registration form.**

**TIP: Perhaps have a tick box on the registration for anyone travelling alone so you can make sure solo gatherers are linked to other solo gatherers or taken under the wing of others.**

## Gathering Dinner

The dinner on the Saturday evening is another excellent networking time. Sometimes participants are 'spoken' out and just want to relax and talk to other women, so only short/light entertainment may be needed rather than lengthy 'entertainment' sessions.

## Role of key players outside the Gathering Committee

Each Gathering committee is responsible for all aspects of their event – promoting the event, finding sponsors (although you may not need as much as you think so doing a budget is essential), selecting speakers, organising workshops, partner's program, catering, childcare, venues, volunteers etc.

**TIP: Glen Innes had a gathering taster the year before their event so locals could become informed and learn what gatherings are about. The 'taster could be a one-day event from say 10 am to 2 pm that included a guest speaker, a few workshops and provides an opportunity to 'sell' your bigger event to local women.**

## Department of Primary Industries' Rural Women's Network

The RWN does not run the Gathering but plays a key role ensuring the Gathering protocols, philosophy and spirit continues to bring NSW rural women together to connect, share experiences and knowledge, and access decision makers.

The RWN has been involved from the beginning of the Gathering movement in NSW and acts as a central coordinating agency, ensuring Gatherings have continuity, have the support of the host community and moves around the state. A member of the RWN team may help by attending some meetings and/or through regular phone/email contact. You can call RWN if you need to discuss any issues or concerns as we are here to help wherever we can!

**TIP: Ensure the RWN is on the email list to get minutes from meetings so any issues can be acted upon early.**

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



RWN is a resource which can support and guide local organising committees on protocol and issues as they arise. The RWN can also assist with speaker contacts and information from previous committees.

The RWN is also responsible for the issues/ideas session on Day 1 and developing the annual Rural Women's Gathering Statement.

## Budget

It is important to remember the purpose of the Rural Women's Gathering is to provide an opportunity for women to grow, learn, develop and enjoy the company of other women at an affordable price.

Keeping the registration cost to a minimum enables participants to cover other costs such as travel and accommodation.

The Registration fee could be costed to cover items like: catering, lanyard/rego bag, thank you gifts and decorations.

The DPI sponsorship can be used for bigger items like: insurance, guest speakers (including travel and accommodation), entertainment, promotions and marketing, venue, equipment hire, transport (such as buses for workshops/tours) and admin/printing.

You will need to ensure the registration costs and sponsorship covers all budgeted expenses with a margin for contingencies (say \$5000-\$6000).

You also need to set aside \$5000 as seed funding to pass on to the next year's Gathering Committee as per the DPI Sponsorship Agreement.

***TIP: It is important that Gatherings do not become a tool for fundraising as this could jeopardise future government funding because the message will be that 'communities are very capable of raising the money without government support'.***

## Sponsors and (in-kind) supporters

Sponsorship and in-kind support are critical to any event and gatherings are no different. Engaging support from smaller local businesses as well as the larger businesses is important. Supporters and sponsors can be both major and minor. Government and non-government agencies such as Local Land Services, DPI offices, local government and TAFE can sometimes be approached to play key roles as in-kind providers of essential resources such as personnel, phone, postage, photocopying and stationery.

Schools have been major 'supporters' of past Gatherings by donating the use of buildings for workshops. A local business may be a minor 'sponsor' by donating \$250 or goods such as speaker gifts.

***TIP: A useful way of distinguishing different levels of sponsorship is to set amount funding benchmarks and think of 'sponsors' as giving you funds and 'supporters' as providing goods or services in-kind.***

It is important that Gatherings remain community-based events, and are not seen as exclusive 'branded' events such as 'The Blogs and Blogs Gathering'. In the past this has required tactful negotiations with sponsors and supporters so both their needs and the Gathering Committee's needs are clearly outlined. If you need advice then contact the RWN. Sponsorship needs vary and will depend on your budget.

***TIP: Have one or two key contact people for sponsors and supporters (it doesn't always have to be the Chair). Always follow up any sponsorship or in kind support offers promptly and in writing.***

It is a good idea to have a sponsorship/in-kind support sub-committee and establish a key liaison person who can deal with each sponsor and supporter. Sponsors and supporters need to be approached professionally usually by phone and a follow-up letter. When talking to sponsors and supporters you need to tell them about the Gathering aims, what you have to offer and what you would like from them (it doesn't always have to be money!)

It is important that 'agreements' are promptly followed up in writing stating what they will be giving you e.g. money, in-kind goods and services and what you will be giving them in return e.g. acknowledgment on the

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



program and in advertising, access to 200-300 women, allowing them to put their material in registration bags, have them introduce a speaker, give them 5 minutes (tops!) on the program to speak, etc.

**TIP: A sponsor can often be 'attracted' to a specific speaker by you matching what they do with their business.**

All sponsors and supporters should be thanked after the event and perhaps you could send any media coverage of interest and a copy of some of the gathering outcomes and demographics which may be of interest.

## Media and promotion

The Media is an important aspect of Gathering planning. Contacts with radio, TV and print journalists should be made a few months prior to the Gathering and continue as the weekend approaches. Inviting a local media person to participate on the Committee or be an MC can be a great strategy.

It is also important that a committee person is designated as the media contact person – someone who has good liaison skills, can organise press releases, is easily contactable, can organise women for interviews and is not afraid to do interviews themselves.

The RWN is available to help with promotions using social media broadcasts (Twitter, Blog, YouTube), *The Country Web* newsletter, Rural Email List (REL) or by linking committees with Department of Primary Industries Media Officers where possible.

**TIP: Approach a volunteer community amateur photographer to be at the gathering for the weekend and record diverse aspects of the event.**

**TIP: The [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) website has a comprehensive list of media contacts across regional and urban NSW that may be useful. Search for 'media contacts'**

## Other things to consider

### GST

Unless Gathering Committees are auspiced by another organisation (such as their local Council, an agency or group) there is little benefit in registering for GST, because although the Committee would be able to claim back any GST paid on goods and services, they would also be responsible for collecting GST on income such as registrations, sponsorship, fundraising and remitting that to the ATO with the quarterly BAS. If not being auspiced, it is important that the Committee seek advice on this from a qualified accountant.

Unless Gathering Committees are auspiced by another organisation as mentioned above, they should apply for an ABN. Forms are available at [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au)

If the Committee does register for an ABN, then once the Gathering is over the Committee must cancel their number. Forms are available at [www.ato.gov.au/business/registration/work-out-which-registrations-you-need](http://www.ato.gov.au/business/registration/work-out-which-registrations-you-need) or by calling 13 28 66.

### To incorporate or not to incorporate

If not being auspiced by another organisation, the Committee will need to become an incorporated body and register with the Registry of Cooperatives & Associations. Call Freecall 1800 502 042 or see [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations.page) for more information.

An incorporated association has its own legal identity separate from its members, providing protection to members in legal transactions.

## Monitoring and evaluation

As part of the DPI *Sponsorship Agreement* the Committee is obligated to gather information that is outlined in the gathering *Monitoring & Evaluation Plan* (sent out with the Sponsorship Agreement and copies also available from RWN). As part of this Plan, a Feedback Survey (provided by the RWN) is distributed to participants at the gathering and results compiled by RWN. The RWN also surveys the Gathering Committee.

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



## **Celebrations**

It is important to plan a celebration with all committee members as you achieve key milestones along the way and then when your Gathering is over – you will have earned it!

## **Gathering Report**

A Gathering report is required by DPI showing how their sponsorship has been used. Other sponsors may also require reports so it is important that a Committee person is allocated this task. Good planning about what information needs to be collected can save lots of effort after the event when everyone is exhausted!

# Guidelines for hosting the NSW Rural Women's Gathering



## Hosting a Gathering

---

Gatherings are held in different locations around the State to encourage and enable local women the opportunity to attend when it is held closer to their home. The RWN is responsible for ensuring the gathering moves around the State and reviews submissions to host a gathering annually.

Submissions close each year at the end of March for the following year's event (e.g. submissions for the 2017 gathering close 31 March 2016). The criteria below are used to decide on the host town for the coming year.

***TIP: If you are interested in hosting a NSW Rural Women's Gathering contact the RWN first!***

Proposals **MUST** show:

- A 'bid' committee has been formed.
- Evidence of strong community support i.e. letters of support from Council, businesses, community groups, TAFE, schools, etc.
- Evidence that you have negotiated a potential auspicing body or that you intend to form an incorporated body
- Estimated budget for the event
- You have some proposed dates (identifying the month is good even if not exact dates).
- A theme has been suggested.
- Ideas for a wide range of workshops
- Possible guest speaker(s)
- A suitable venue for the Gathering dinner has been identified.
- There is appropriate space for workshops.
- Evidence of adequate facilities which can hold up to 300 women. Smaller centres need to think creatively about meeting the needs of 150-300 women (it can be done!).
- Potential sponsors have been identified.
- Adequate and affordable accommodation is available (this may include home stays and billeting).
- There is good transport access (road, bus, train, and plane).
- A potential childcare provider has been sourced.
- You have thought about a few activities for partners as a handful of rural men come along with their wives.

**If you are interested in submitting a proposal to host a NSW Rural Women's Gathering please forward your proposal to:**

Rural Women's Network | NSW DPI  
Locked Bag 21  
Orange NSW 2800

**Proposals must be received by the 31 March each year for the following year's bid**

For more information or if you would like to discuss your proposal please contact the RWN:

Phone: 02 6391 3620  
Email: [rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn)