



Industry &
Investment

**HIDDEN
TREASURES**
HONOUR ROLL

2010

celebrating women who
volunteer within their
rural communities.

ISSN 1838-4099 (Print)

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Hidden Treasures is a joint project of Rural Women's Network (Industry & Investment NSW), NSW Centre for Volunteering and NSW Office for Women's Policy.

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ministers' message

It is with great pleasure that we present this inaugural Hidden Treasures Honour Roll to formally acknowledge the efforts of over forty New South Wales rural women volunteers and celebrate their achievements.

The Rural Women's Network of Industry & Investment NSW initiated the Hidden Treasures project as a way of better recognising the important and diverse roles women volunteers play as key participants within NSW rural communities. All women showcased in the Honour Roll have been nominated by their peers.

Women are so often the backbone of families and communities. These stories reveal just some of the ways women are contributing tirelessly to quality of life as unpaid workers across rural, regional and remote regions.

NSW has over 1.7 million volunteers and without their support many groups including charities, emergency services, the arts, environment, social justice, education and sporting organisations would struggle to survive.

The NSW Government is proud to support this important tribute launched at the 2010 NSW Women's Gathering, held in Wentworth, NSW. The Honour Roll is an ongoing project of the NSW Government and will form part of a growing archive highlighting the nature of rural women's remarkable contribution to NSW.

We would encourage everyone to read these short inspirational stories and start thinking of women to nominate for the next year's Honour Roll which opens each year in May during Volunteer's Week.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Whan".

Steve Whan

Minister for Primary Industries



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi McKay".

Jodi McKay

Minister for Women



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Primrose".

Peter Primrose

Minister for Volunteering



2010 hidden Treasures nominees

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Australian volunteers are essential to society, and many charities would struggle to survive without the support of their volunteers.

Australian volunteers contribute more than 700 million hours of community service to so many areas of society, including community health care, heritage and arts, environment conservation, emergency services, education, social justice and sports.

The following stories celebrate and acknowledge rural women volunteers across New South Wales and were submitted by members of their communities.

alison banks [Orange]

Alison grew up in Orange with her two sisters and brother. Her father, George Ernest White, was Mayor of Orange from 1954 to 1955. Alison trained as a nurse in Sydney and returned to work in Orange where she met her husband Alan. They have four children and nine grandchildren.

Alison currently spends 20 hours a week 'working' as a volunteer. She is a member of the Orange Tidy Towns Committee, a member of the Orange Twin Sister Cities Committee and volunteers at the Anson Cottage Cancer Respite Care service.

Alison has been giving her time freely for 33 years with Orange District Girl Guides and believes in all the Girl Guide movement stands for – giving women and girls the opportunity to gain confidence to tackle life's challenges head-on and be responsible community members.

Alison first volunteered for Orange Girl Guides Support Group in 1977 before becoming Unit Helper in 1981. She became Leader of Youth in 1986 and has been a District Leader of Adults since 1993. She has also held the position of State Guiding Partner Coordinator and State Trainer for Girl Guides NSW-ACT.

Alison was instrumental, along with fellow Orange Leaders in establishing Blayney District Guides in 2002. She spent tireless hours recruiting girls and training Leaders building up the District to 30 Girl Guides and two Leaders enabling Guiding to prosper in Blayney.

Alison has received an Achievement Award from Orange Rotary in recognition of her years of volunteering.

clarice beileiter [Tarago]

Clarice was born in Cooma and grew up in Peakview, Michelago and Cooma, where she finished school before working as the telephonist at Michelago. During visits to her aunt in Tarago, Clarice met Howard whose family ran a bakery there. They married in 1965 and raised three children.

A member of the Tarago Country Women's Association (CWA) for more than 35 years, serving as President and Treasurer, among other executive positions, Clarice was made Patron of the Branch in 2009.

She was made a Life Member of the Tarago Show Society in recognition of her many years of amazing work for her local Show.

In addition to her work as a telephonist and school bus driver, Clarice assisted voluntarily at the Preschool and the Tarago School. She and Howard have been members of the Tarago Hall Committee since its inception, and work many long hours to raise funds for the village by catering for events at the hall.

Clarice is a wonderful cook, gaining numerous prizes at the local shows, as well as being an expert at knitting, crocheting, sewing, flower arranging, cake decorating and gardening. She generously uses her skills to benefit local causes and charities, including nursing homes in Goulburn.

The small town community of Tarago (population 530), owes an enormous debt to Clarice for her 45 years of selfless voluntary work for its residents. Clarice is truly the Treasure of Tarago.

jan bof [Goulburn]

Jan was born in Manjimup Western Australia and moved to NSW in 1969 settling into the Goulburn Community in 1983. Jan has five children and five grandchildren both in Australia and Ireland.

Jan is a highly valued and respected member of the Southern Tablelands Home-Start National Voluntary Home Visiting Service. This program is a non-government organisation that supports local families with a child under five years old.

The volunteers are local community members who offer their friendship and practical support in a confidential and non-judgemental manner to families within the program.

Jan began with Home-Start in 2003 attending the original 10 week preparation course. She has continued attending workshops to build knowledge of ways to assist Home-Start families.

Jan has worked diligently to support 10 families over the past seven years. These families were from Goulburn and smaller rural communities such as Gunning and Taralga.

Jan brings great compassion, friendship and openness to all families she supports. Her willingness to support the families in areas they identify as a need is approached with a positive manner. Jan has supported up to four families at one time.

When discussing the great benefits of volunteering and visiting families, Jan replies 'it is fun.' Not only is she helping families, but Jan has enjoyed developing great friendships along the way which continues long after families have exited the Home-Start program.

prudence carpenter [Bowral]

Prue has given enormously to rural NSW over the last 35 years. She grew up in Sydney and moved to Bowral in 1975 where she worked as a physiotherapist within aged care, children with special needs and as a childbirth educator until 2002.

Prue volunteered at the Bowral Swimming Club and Bowral Primary School which her children attended. In 1989, she joined Girl Guides as a volunteer with Brownies, became a Leader and over time, a State Trainer. In 2003–2009 she was State Commissioner.

As a State Trainer, Prue regularly travelled to rural and regional areas to train new Leaders and update others. As State Commissioner, she managed the 1500 volunteer Leaders across the State with over half in rural communities. Prue regularly visited the rural communities to mentor and encourage the Leaders and Guides.

She is now Bowral District Girl Guide Leader inspiring another generation of women to be Leaders and encouraging girls to be their best. Prue is the Volunteer Services Manager for Girl Guides Australia, looking at different ways people can volunteer with Girl Guides in their communities.

Prue has spent countless hours every week for many years enabling young women to grow into confident, self-respecting, responsible community members.

Prue is a Hidden Treasure and most weeks she would spend up to 30 hours on volunteer Girl Guide activities improving the lives of women in rural and regional NSW.

carla cowles [Mt Hope]

Carla was born in Dokkum (a Dutch fortified town) and migrated to Australia in 1963. She left a green, wet urban town for the dry Australian bush to chase bushfires and snakes.

Carla met her American life partner Bob, a working traveller in Wee Waa in 1964. They married following a whirlwind romance. After 10 years in the United States she and Bob returned to live in an isolated homestead at Mount Hope with their four children.

Carla has engaged with community to overcome barriers of distance, isolation and lack of resources. Her hospitality, organisational skills and desire to better her community are always at the forefront.

She has been involved in many community activities such as Mother's Day picnics, the Gilgunnie Reunion, baking parties and get-togethers for children.

Carla is very compassionate with an enormous sense of social justice. Her determination to 'stick up' for the underdog saw her spend nine years on Cobar Shire Council travelling three hours to attend meetings.

Since retiring from Council, Carla has worked to restore and modernise the Mount Hope Hall pulling the community together to self-finance most of the repairs.

She has also established an electronic community forum, secured a donated laptop, installed electronic record keeping and organised workshops and working bees to bring services and resources to Mt Hope.

maria curtis [Tamworth]

Maria has great passion – helping anyone or any creature in need. Despite many health issues – including a long battle with cancers and brittle bones, she manages with a walking stick on a 'good' day. On 'bad' days she uses a wheelchair which can lead people to believe she isn't that sick – a judgement she bears with grace.

A lonely and challenging childhood in Campbelltown gave her empathy for those in need and taught her the unconditional love given freely by animals. Earlier this year Maria rescued a bat tangled in wires. She climbed a ladder to release the bat despite a risk of injuring herself.

Maria has undertaken numerous volunteer roles and fostered children for many years. She is currently involved with the Leukaemia Foundation, Cancer Council, Rural Fire Service, WIRES, Relay for Life and St Nicholas Catholic Church Committee for Homeless Children.

Maria's thoughts are always with others. Even from a hospital bed she has contacted friends to check how their family was going. She supports so many people.

Maria often arrives at your door with a meal. She will babysit for a frazzled mother or just be there to listen and encourage. She does her best to focus on the positive and always has a heart for those who are hurting.

The amazing thing about Maria is she is often busier than an able-bodied person. When her body allows, there is no stopping her.

Pauline Davidson [Milvale]

Pauline was born in Victoria where she grew up with her brothers and sisters. She married Kim and settled in the Young District raising three children, two girls and a boy. Pauline is an Occupational Therapist Assistant and worked at the Young Mercy Care Centre for 28 years.

She was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year in 2008 – being recognised for her many volunteering hours within the community.

Pauline works tirelessly for the Girl Guide Movement as well as her local Anglican Church, averaging 15 hours a week volunteering her time.

She is a Lay Minister and leads services in Hampstead Church, Milvale where she lives. Pauline also gives her time as a Parish Councillor for the Young District Anglican Ministry.

Pauline followed in her mother's footsteps and began working with Girl Guides in 1973 as a parent in the Support Group. She later went on to be a Leader of Youth in 1984 with girls aged six to 10 years and even now continues with weekly meetings.

Pauline gets great satisfaction from seeing these young women become respectful community members as they grow through Guiding.

Robyn Davis [Tamworth]

Robyn was born in 1948 and grew up in Bourke. Her family were volunteers in the community – a personal value she has continued.

She joined the Commonwealth Bank at 17 years of age in Bourke and spent 31 years working in rural NSW branches including Brewarrina, Kandos, Parkes, Tamworth, Moree, Narromine, Lithgow and Forbes. She now lives in Tamworth and works for a local business.

Robyn volunteered with Rotaract, Girl Guides, Catholic Church Youth and VIEW clubs in the various towns she has lived. She was always happy to take on administration roles and help out in any way she could.

Robyn is the Region leader for Girl Guides NSW & ACT – North West Inland region (Quirindi out to Moree and north to the Queensland border).

She was a Youth Leader with Guides for 30 years giving many girls camping experiences and allowing them to grow into confident responsible community members.

Robyn has held positions of Region Training Advisor, District Leader, Division Leader and now Region Leader. She has been a mentor to many young women and encouraged girls to be their best.

During 2010, Robyn organised a weekend reunion for girls and women who had experienced Guiding in the Tamworth area – as part of the Girl Guide Centenary Celebrations. Over 90 women came from far and wide. In the last 12 months she has revitalised Guiding in Tamworth attracting new Leaders and growing the membership.

colleen day [Goulburn]

Colleen has lived in Goulburn all her life. She has four children and 10 grandchildren living within the Goulburn and Canberra districts.

Colleen is a highly valued and respected member of the Home-Start National Voluntary Home Visiting Service in the Southern Tablelands. This program is a non-government organisation that supports local families with a child under five years old.

Volunteers are local community members who offer friendship and practical support in a confidential and non-judgemental manner to local families enrolled in the program.

Colleen began with Home-Start in 2003 attending the original 10 week preparation course. She has continued attending workshops to build knowledge of ways to support Home-Start families.

Colleen has worked tirelessly to support local families over the past seven years. She brings great compassion, friendship and openness to the families she supports. She also volunteers at a local school and works on the community 'Sally Van' at weekends.

When discussing the benefits of volunteering and visiting families, Colleen says she receives great satisfaction in knowing that she is doing something important.

Colleen feels that you never stop thinking of the families and she has developed great friendships along the way which continues long after the families have exited the Home Start program.

alvena ferguson [Laurieton]

After raising two children in the Western Australian Pilbara, Alvena moved east to take up a senior management position with Lend Lease. While working she engaged in several volunteer roles including Life Line, teaching English as a second language, counselling and supporting people living with AIDS.

On retirement Alvena set up a bed and breakfast on a small farm and became involved in community arts volunteer work.

She has been a member of the Camden Haven Arts Council since 1999 and President for seven years. She has been the Coordinator (since 2001) and Director (since 2008) of the Australasian Performing Right Association award winning Camden Haven Music Festival.

Alvena represented the community on the City of the Arts Planning Committee and was coordinator of the PlayRites Festival of Theatre in 2003–2004. She has served on the Arts & Cultural Development Committee and is an active member of the Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Tourism.

In 2006 while President of Camden Haven Arts Council, Alvena initiated the Clare Foster Memorial Scholarship. This provides financial assistance for students to participate in development opportunities to extend musical skills. She has a strong belief in the need to encourage young student and amateur performers in music, theatre and poetry.

Alvena has encouraged reconciliation initiatives with the local indigenous community – particularly through the Camden Haven Music Festival. Her contribution to regional arts cannot be over estimated.

lisa foley [Estella]

Lisa was widowed in 2009 and has met this challenge in a remarkable way. She continues to support her two teenage daughters and encourages their activities and interests while remaining involved in various community activities. She is a great example to young women in our community.

Lisa is dedicated to her family, church and volunteering in the community. She is a Division Leader for Girl Guides which involves promoting Guiding across a wide area, as well as supporting the Leaders and parents.

Lisa goes well beyond what is expected. She supports fund raising activities and encourages Guide Leaders to improve their skills and networks by attending key events and activities.

shareen gleeson [Queanbeyan]

Sharon is a tireless volunteer for rural Australia particularly with Girl Guides NSW and ACT and the Country Women's Association. She has a wonderful quiet way of achieving results with other volunteers.

Shareen was born in Newcastle and at 16 moved to Cootamundra. She attended Teachers College in Wagga Wagga and as a new teacher, moved to Boggabilla where she continued to volunteer with Girl Guides in nearby Goondiwindi.

Her volunteer commitment with Girl Guides has enabled girls in rural areas to grow into confident, self-respecting, responsible community members.

Over the past 40 years Shareen has held numerous volunteer Guiding roles. She currently works as a Primary School teacher in Queanbeyan and still gives countless hours each week and many weekends to assist with Guide camps and training.

Shareen has been a Girl Guide Youth Leader and Leader of Adults in Queanbeyan and Goulburn Districts supporting and managing a team of Youth leaders. She is currently Region Leader from ACT and South East NSW, a State Trainer of Leaders and a State training committee member.

Shareen regularly travels around her region to Cooma, Berridale, Merimbula, Yass and Goulburn to mentor Leaders and encourage the girls to be their best. She has opened new Districts in rural NSW, empowering girls and women. Shareen is a Hidden Treasure.

Michel Harbour [Kangaroo Creek]

Michel, better known as Shelley, was born in Sydney but spent most of her life in the bush at Bourke and Wee Waa. She married a Vietnam veteran and worked with her husband and family on their property at Wee Waa before running a service station at Moonbi. She now lives on the North Coast.

Shelley started volunteering with Vietnam veterans, wives and children with the Department of Veterans Affairs as part of a special 'Outreach' program. This involved supporting veterans and families across 40,000 square kms of North Western NSW and being on call 24 hours a day. She received an Anzac Award from RSL Australia for her work in this area.

She was one of the founding members of the Partners of Veterans Association which is still active today.

Shelley now works in aged care with the Clarence Valley Community Social Service in Grafton and is also the volunteer State Emergency Services Nymboida Deputy Controller – nearly a full-time 'job' which provides back up for the Rural Fire Service.

Shelley is involved in a special State Emergency Service Peers Support Group which can involve her being flown by helicopter to another region to help solve critical problems. She is a proud volunteer wearing many hats.

shirley johnston [Bourke]

Shirley was born and schooled in Bourke. She married Lionel and together they raised a family. She is a tireless quiet achiever who has given much to her community.

For many years Shirley and her mother fundraised for the Royal Far West and the Bourke Hospital Auxiliary by hosting garden parties and selling plants.

Shirley works each morning at Kidman Camp as a general assistant and cleaner. Over ten years ago she started a campfire fundraising barbeque – held twice a week during the tourist season. It involves feeding and entertaining between 40–100 people each evening. Her outstanding fundraising initiative has provided over \$130,000 to local health services. This fundraising is unique as all the money is raised from tourists and directly benefits Bourke.

From May to October, every Wednesday and Friday afternoon, she leads a small team of 'Busy Bees' volunteers in preparing the barbecue. This includes peeling, cooking and mashing between 10–20 kgs of potatoes and making eight litres of gravy! She also makes pikelets and billy tea. The evening is complemented by bush poetry, singalongs, raffles and information about the district.

The popularity of the evening is widespread amongst caravaners with many planning visits to coincide with these famous barbecues.

Shirley would do at least 80 hours of voluntary work each month and is humbly proud of her achievements in her own quiet unassuming way – a genuine Hidden Treasure.

kerry jolley [Lismore]

Kerry grew up in the small north coast village of Dunoon. She later moved to nearby Lismore where she worked and raised a family while her husband spent a lot of time away from home with his job.

Kerry started volunteering in 1984 with the City of Lismore RSL Women's Auxiliary as Treasurer and is now Secretary. The Women's Auxiliary patrons help out with barbecues, morning teas, selling poppies on November 11 and supporting the Lismore RSL Sub Branch.

In 1990 Kerry was involved in starting the Richmond Valley Day Club which provides isolated, disabled and 'shut in' people a day out. They are transported to venues and given the opportunity to socialise with others in the same situation. Each Wednesday Kerry helps with preparing and serving meals, selling raffle tickets and making people feel welcome.

Kerry has been a volunteer with the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter since 2003. She works in the Opportunity Shop in Lismore every Monday, sells raffle tickets at local markets on weekends and helps with events run by the Rescue Helicopter service.

Kerry volunteers about 80–90 hours a month. She has found new skills and long-term friendships along the way but her motivation has always been to help others and give back to the community.

robin kensit [Crookwell]

Robin was born in Cootamundra and moved to the Crookwell District in 1971, where she has lived and worked ever since.

She is a highly valued and respected member of the Home-Start National Voluntary Home Visiting Service in the Southern Tablelands.

Robin began with Home-Start in 2003 attending the original 10 week preparation course. She has continued attending workshops to build knowledge and skills to assist in supporting Home-Start families.

Robyn has worked tirelessly over the past seven years to support families within the Crookwell, Laggan, Wheeo and Graben Gullen rural communities.

She brings compassion, friendship and openness to all the families she supports and can support up to four families at any one time.

Along with Home-Start, Robin also volunteers at Crookwell's St Vincent de Paul Centre and the Upper Lachlan Tourist Centre.

When discussing the benefits of volunteering and visiting the families Robin quickly shares that it gives her a tremendous amount of pleasure to help families. She has made great friendships along the way which have continued long after families have exited the Home-Start program.

sylvia kilroy [Woodburn]

Sylvia was born in England and moved to Australia when she was seven. She received citizenship in 2000.

Sylvia is an avid volunteer, involved in many organisations. She volunteers to help others and brings joy into lives through her great sense of humour and lovely smile. With many health problems looming Sylvia believes if you don't beat them they will beat you.

She started volunteering with the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter in 2006 and has jumped head first into anything she is asked.

Sylvia does raffle ticket selling, money tin collecting, helping with events such as the 4wd Caravan, Camping & Marine Show and barbecues. She is also on the emergency list for the Helicopter Op Shops.

She has volunteered for the Lions Club of Mid-Richmond for the past nine years organising street stalls, barbecues and raffles and helping at Driver Reviver rest stops since 1999.

Every Tuesday and Thursday she calls bingo at the Evans Head Bowling Club for five hours a day and has been doing so for over 10 years. She regularly visits the local Retirement Village entertaining and talking to residents.

Over a month Sylvia would clock up around 80–90 hours of volunteer time. At Christmas she is the local 'Mrs Clause' dressing up and looking the part wherever she is needed – often travelling many kilometres from one location to another.

Tina Kipp [Albury]

Tina is the sixth of seven children and grew up in Cooma. She is District Leader for North Albury Girl Guides, a Venturer Scout Leader and a member of Community Drug & Alcohol Awareness Team.

Tina has mentored students in local high schools for Planet Youth and completed a Certificate III in Youth Work while raising her three-year-old grandson as a single parent.

On average she gives over 15 hours a week to Scouting and Guiding but more when special events such as a Gang Show is on or there are interstate training weekends.

Yvonne MacRae [Orange]

Yvonne grew up in North Sydney. She left in 1978 with her husband and moved to Orange. Yvonne later lived in Forbes and Dubbo before settling back in Orange.

Yvonne has worked as a hairdresser, retail manager, ran a kitchen in a coffee shop and now works in childcare. She brought up four daughters and started her 20 years volunteering career with Girl Guides in 1990 in Orange.

She initially got involved to help her daughters' Guide Leader in the parent support group. Two years later she became a volunteer Leader of Youth and subsequently a Leader of Adults.

Yvonne volunteers more than 25 hours a week. She has also worked with the Orange Tidy Town Committee and organised a fundraising Daffodil Ball for the Cancer Council.

Yvonne has a strong belief in empowering girls and women to become Guide Leaders where they can gain skills and confidence to improve their employment opportunities in rural areas.

She opened two new Guide Districts in Warren and Blayney and for the last two years has been the Region Leader for Girl Guides Central West Region supporting Leaders from Lithgow to Nyngan, Coonabarabran to Young and many communities in between.

kay martin [Mt Lambie]

Kay was born in Camden, the eldest of five children. Her family moved to Orange where she spent her early childhood before moving to Lord Howe Island where her father was the Island Administrator. The family later moved to Coonabarabran.

Kay studied Physical Education and began her teaching career at Kinross School in Orange before spending time teaching in the United Kingdom. On return to Australia, Kay married John. They lived in Terrigal for a while before moving to 'Canobie' in 1965 where they raised their five children.

She has been a valued member of various school associations including the Pied Piper Pre-school, Wallerawang; Coerwull Public School, Lithgow; Wallerawang Public School; The Scots School (School Council), Bathurst.

Kay has been active in environmental issues and represented land holders on the Cox's River Catchment Management Committee for many years. She is involved in the Red Shield Appeal, Rydal Bush Fire Brigade, Rydal Village Association and Rydal Union Church.

Kay is a member of the Wallerawang Country Women's Association and was the Miss Rydal Showgirl Chaperone for many years. She has been awarded Life Memberships of both organisations.

A keen interest in politics has seen Kay serve as a voluntary councillor at both State and Federal levels of the Country/National Party.

Kay's energy is amazing and her ability to organise people and things is a gift. She is a most worthy rural Hidden Treasure.

leah masters [East Maitland]

Leah grew up in a European family with Greek parents and is an inspirational hearing impaired single mother of three children.

She has been volunteering part-time for the Benevolent Society for over 12 months. Leah is an integral part of the team – constantly showing enthusiasm and a willingness to learn new skills. Her dream is to gain enough skills to get paid work.

Leah truly is a Hidden Treasure. She joined The Benevolent Society – Brighter Futures Program over two years ago while going through a tough time dealing with domestic violence.

She started using drugs as it 'felt better to numb the pain rather than deal with it.' These experiences left her emotional and mental wellbeing shattered.

With The Benevolent Society's help, Leah turned her life around. 'It was awful, I couldn't leave my home'. Leah started seeing a psychologist and slowly gained an understanding of the impact her actions were having on her children, family and herself. She began to see the light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Leah learnt through all the pain and anguish the most important thing to remember is it takes baby steps to get closer to your goal. It is very important to remember that you don't lose sight of yourself and I always remind myself that I am worth it.'

betty mcCabe [Barmedman]

Betty grew up in Quandialla and became the postal assistant and telephonist at Quandialla Post Office. She married Athol in 1962 and moved to Barmedman. They have four children and 11 grandchildren.

The volunteer hours that Betty has given to so many organisations are enormous. Red Cross is one organisation where she has delivered outstanding service. Over the past 50 years she has been Secretary, Publicity Officer, President, Vice President and Zone Representative on NSW Divisional Council.

She has received a Distinguished Service Award, Long Service Award and has been a Life Member of Red Cross since 1980.

Betty has been a blood donor since 1972 and made 77 donations. She is also a Life Member of Epilepsy Australia and the Royal Far West.

She was Secretary and Publicity Officer of the Barmedman Centenary Committee and the Refugee Resettlement Committee; member of Barmedman Show Society; Publicity Officer for Barmedman Mineral Pool for 30 years and is a Justice of the Peace.

Betty was also active in Barmedman Public School P&C, Little Athletics, Cubs and Scouts and helped organise six Quandialla School reunions and four Barmedman Post Office reunions.

Betty has held roles within the Temora and Barmedman Catholic Women's League and was involved in the inaugural Barmedman Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon in 1972 – still going in 2009.

She was the Barmedman correspondent for West Wyalong Advocate and Temora Independent Newspapers from 1988 to 2006.

Thalia mcPherson [MacLean]

Thalia is an asset to the Maclean Meals on Wheels. She works for a minimum of three hours every week and is also available at the 'drop of a hat' coming to the rescue many times when needed. Clients love Thalia delivering their meals.

Thalia also volunteers for other organisations such as the Maclean Hospital. She is a true pocket rocket!

kerry palmer [Dubbo]

Kerry grew up in the inner western suburbs of Sydney. She trained as a nurse but worked in fashion and travel before moving to the country in 1990.

Kerry operated the Geurie Garden Centre and achieved qualifications in permaculture and horticulture. She was chair of Geurie Landcare Group, Geurie Family Fair and President of Geurie School P&C.

A strong advocate of environmental rehabilitation and conservation she coordinates civic and rural tree plants and was instrumental in the preservation of the Eulomogo Hill wattle community in 2002.

As a long standing member and current President of the Dubbo Field Naturalist & Conservation Society, Kerry continues her environmental advocacy and edits the Society's newsletter which takes about 50 hours per month.

Her most outstanding public achievement is the Macquarie River Wattle Grove. The Grove features wattle species native to the region gathered in one publicly accessible site adjacent to the central business district of Dubbo.

Kerry also does volunteer work as an ambassador and gallery guide at Western Plains Cultural Centre and is a volunteer consultant for River Care, Bush Care and Dubbo City Council.

Kerry has always been a passionate community participant. Her volunteering work is underpinned by a strong family who are also enthusiastic volunteers.

veronica pansaru [Kingscliff]

Veronica has a long history of helping others. She spent her early life living with an extended Eastern European family on a mixed farm in northern NSW before her immediate family moved to Papua New Guinea (PNG).

After finishing school, Veronica worked as a Secretary in PNG and Sydney before marrying a Romanian migrant. She and Mihai built a happy family life on a banana farm at Hopkins Creek raising three children.

Throughout her children's schooling, Veronica was very involved in supporting local community and sporting activities including holding positions on the Chillingham Primary School P&C.

She was widowed at 44, remarried and now lives alone in Kingscliff.

Once retired, Veronica spent two years as a full-time carer for her elderly father. She is currently active in her local Red Cross branch and manages their Care Bear program.

Each week she cycles or walks to lend a hand at the Tweed Respite Kitchen and also assists coordinating a local pick-up bus for elderly people who aren't able to get to town to do their shopping.

Veronica also knits beautiful bright and colourful jumpers for the Christina Noble Children's Foundation in Mongolia. In 2006 she got to fulfil a long-term dream to deliver these garments in person. Veronica has since inspired others to get 'clicking' and her overseas parcels often bulge with garments knitted by others as well.

Veronica is a selfless rural woman – always available for her friends, family and community when they need her.

sonia (aunty sony) piper [Brungle]

Sonia (Aunty Sony) is a Wiradjuri elder who grew up on the former Aboriginal Mission at Brungle where her culture was not valued and she was not allowed to speak of it outside her community.

Today Aunty Sony is an advocate for her people, volunteering time to share Aboriginal culture and traditions. She attended Brungle School and now spends time in their Aboriginal Learning Centre's 'Dreaming Room' telling stories to visiting children.

She has responded to requests to speak at schools in Tumut and Gundagai, making Aboriginal history come alive for children.

Aunty Sony performs 'Welcome to Country' for ceremonial occasions and is a member of a group of local women who established and train a performance group. 'Wandjibynds' is keeping culture alive for Aboriginal children through traditional dances.

Aunty Sony is a sought after member of several organisations. These include Brungle – Tumut Local Area Land Council, Community Working Party (provides a forum for organisations to consult, advocates and support the local Aboriginal people) and the Tumut Local Health Network.

The role Aunty Sony played in the establishment of Brungle Health & Aboriginal Community Care Centre in 2005 is one of her most valued achievements. She has been its Chair since inception and is the driving force behind the Centre's success.

The Brungle community (population 100) would not be the vibrant community that it is without the tireless hours of voluntary work that Aunty Sony devotes to it.

carol purnell [Kingscliff]

Carol was born the night Japan attacked Darwin (February 20 1942). She attended many primary schools, from Sydney to Northern NSW – wherever her father could find work.

After three years at Mullumbimby High School Carol left to start working life. Her first job was a maid in a convent in Brisbane. Many jobs later as a young mother, she worked on the family farm and contributed to Chillingham village activities.

On retirement from paid work, Carol has thrown herself into volunteering. She is volunteer Coordinator of Tweed Community Transport where every fortnight seniors are picked up by bus from their homes and taken shopping.

In addition, every month they are also taken on an 'outing'. Carol goes to great lengths to make these 'day drives' around the countryside extra special. When the sun shines, picnics with her home baked treats are very popular.

Carol helps Meals on Wheels, is involved in ballroom dancing clubs and is a member of a senior's computer club where she tutors others.

In her 'spare' time she visits sick people in hospital or in their homes and plays tennis.

When national tennis tournaments are held at her club, she can always be found working around the clock to help provide catering.

All this is about giving to the community and a genuine love of people. She is one of the kindest and most generous of women and if needed by her friends, is 'available' 24 hours a day.

marsha reilly [Wagga Wagga]

Marsha was born in Canada and joined Girl Guides as a child. At 17 she became a Guide Leader and joined units wherever her family lived. She became a Leader at Turvey Park when her daughter joined aged 11 and has been a Leader there for the last 20 years.

Marsha is currently Region Leader for Twin Rivers region – a large area stretching from Batlow to Deniliquin along the Murray River and from Hay to Wagga Wagga – with many rural communities in between.

She manages and assists Guide Leaders with maintaining their properties and ensuring they are trained and up-to-date with the latest information.

Marsha feels strongly that Girl Guides is a really important force for peace in the world and one of the best movements for girls and young women.

She volunteers up to 20 hours a week helping out in different ways as required in her Region. Marsha is a real Hidden Treasure in the Wagga Wagga community.

jan roberts [Wagga Wagga]

Jan grew up in Leeton and has lived in Wagga Wagga for more than three decades. She has volunteered her time, knowledge and expertise to advocate for the vulnerable and marginalised members of the community.

Jan was one of the founding volunteer 'mothers' of the Wagga Wagga Women's Health Centre who actively advocated for the rights of women to gain funding for the ongoing operation of the Centre.

Due to these efforts, the Women's Health Centre has been able to provide support, counselling, health education, pregnancy testing and social action for over 30 years.

Jan has continued her volunteer involvement with the Centre and is currently President of the Management Committee.

She has been committed to promoting the needs of the marginalised in a rural setting, as both an individual and as a professional. Jan has been a fearless, politically articulate spokesperson for social justice, advocating for human rights at all levels of government and the community.

She has been involved in fighting for the new regional Wagga Wagga hospital and been a part of the Community Drug Action Team supporting rights of those experiencing mental health issues.

She is a long time member of the Women's Electoral Lobby and has participated in numerous environmental/climate change groups.

audrey robinson [Yamba]

Audrey began volunteering for NSW Meals on Wheels in Sydney in 1953. She moved to the Clarence Valley and started volunteering with Maclean Lower Clarence Meals on Wheels in 1972.

Audrey has served in many roles over the years including President. She is always happy to volunteer when she can and gives her time every a month. She is loved by everyone involved with the service.

lynne robinson [Botobolar]

Lynne grew up in Sydney, moving to the Mudgee area when she married Jack. They had five children, one of whom was born with a mental disability. Although Jeanette's disability was slight, it still presented Lynne with challenges.

Life on the farm was busy but Lynne found time to be involved in school activities whilst her children attended. She became involved with the church and when the local parish increased in size and the priest was no longer able to regularly conduct services in the Wollar Church, Lynne took many services.

When daughter Jeanette gave birth to a boy and it was found that she could not care for him adequately, Lynne took over his care and has successfully raised a well rounded young man.

The museum in Mudgee is another recipient of Lynne's volunteering hours. She regularly does a day helping out and is passionate about preserving history.

Her biggest contribution to volunteering activities has to be her time given to the Country Women's Association. Lynne has held the positions in her local Branch of President, Secretary, Treasurer, International Officer and Cultural Officer. She has also held many Group roles including being representative to the State Executive.

During her time as State Executive representative Lynne was involved in sub-committees and put herself forward as a nominee for a State Vice President.

When Mudgee hosted a Country Women's Association State Conference, Lynne gave many hours of her time to ensure things ran smoothly.

She also made a huge contribution to the update of her Group history – spending many hours typing pages and collated information to produce a small book, sold to raise funds.

Fiona rossiter [Orange]

Fiona was born in Swindon, England and came to Australia aged 18 months. She grew up in the Blue Mountains. Fiona worked for many years in the retail industry with Coles/Myer in their Fosseys Division.

Fiona is a mother to six children, a stepmother to two, a foster carer, a registered nurse, an author, business partner and a Councillor with Orange City Council. She serves the community in a myriad of ways. Three achievements stand out.

In July 2001 Fiona contacted 'Fairy Sparkle' and discussed the possibility of building a 'Fairy Sparkle Garden' off the children's ward at Orange Base Hospital. A committee was formed and within six months \$70,000 was raised and lots of materials donated. The project was completed in November 2002 and a fund exists to maintain the garden.

With no relatives nearby, Fiona found it hard to locate the necessary services associated with raising a family. She researched and designed a valuable website for others called 'Australian Family Matters' that is full of information, ideas and resources.

'Star Search' talent competition was also Fiona's initiative. Local artists sang, were judged and given feedback about their performance. The finals were held at a gala dinner and all funds raised through the competition went to Premi-Babies, Community Radio and Orange Base Hospital. This project ran for two years.

beryl sewars [Cooma]

Beryl grew up on a farm at Numbla Vale, near Dalgety and attended the local Primary School before boarding in Canberra. She married in 1945 and moved to a farm at Bungarby near Cooma, had five sons and a daughter.

Beryl was widowed in 1960 when her youngest was only four months old. She continued to run the farm with the help of a manager and was active in the local school P&C and fire brigade.

Beryl later achieved a lifelong ambition to train as a nurse and midwife — passing her course with honours. She worked at Cooma Hospital for many years.

She is active on the Cooma Hospital Auxiliary, visits patients and nursing home/hostel residents and does Meals on Wheels.

Beryl joined Red Cross in 1945 and is still a member. She is a Foundation Member of Ladies Probus and joined the Dalgety Country Women's Association in 1965. She is a past Monaro Group Land Cookery Officer and current delegate.

Beryl has been the Dalgety Show Head Flower Steward for 22 years and is also a Cooma Show Steward. After moving to Cooma she helped at St Vincent de Paul several days a week and is a reader at St Patricks Church.

Beryl is a District Bowls office bearer and umpire, has made Christmas cakes for underprivileged children and cared for an elderly neighbour — taking her to appointments and helping move her to care. She is still volunteering at 84!

colleen smith [Deepwater]

Colleen is a Registered Nurse and now volunteers her services to the Deepwater State Emergency Service helping with rural fires and road accidents. A volunteer role she has had for 27 years.

Colleen not only responds to call-outs but also caters for the group by cooking beautiful soups, delicious cakes and tarts.

Colleen helps with State Emergency Service training sessions and regional events. She also helps with other activities such as bookwork, banking and fundraising in the local hotels.

Colleen is loved by all the crew — local and abroad — and is immensely respected.

peggy smith [Quirindi]

Peggy was born in Moree in 1933. Her family moved to Caroonna where she met and married John in 1952. They had six children. The family moved around following shearing shed work in both NSW and Queensland.

Finally Peggy and her family settled in Newcastle in 1964 where she first started as a volunteer with St Vincent de Paul. She freely provided her time for 17 years.

Peggy's family moved back to Quirindi in 1993, where she started as a volunteer in Quirindi St Vincent de Paul.

She volunteers three days a week at the Ingall Centre at Quirindi Hospital and also does a shopping bus run with Oxley Community Transport.

Throughout her life Peggy has helped and supported her extended family through hardships. Just recently she stayed and nursed her nephew through a terminal illness.

Peggy is a real treasure who needs to be recognised for her commitment to helping others, not only Aboriginal people but people from all cultures.

sharon snelson [Cobar]

Sharon is a born and bred country woman who has strived to make a difference in her community. She was born in Cobar, married David and together they run a sheep property 'Yarrowonga' near Cobar.

In addition to co-running the property and being the mother of three sons, Sharon has found time to work part-time to support the family and actively support her husband in a number of volunteer community organisations that have needed a hand over the years.

These have included the Cobar State Emergency Service, Cobar Show Society Committee, Cobar Rotary Club, Blue Light Disco Committee and numerous other community organisations.

It has been in regard to the Cobar State Emergency Service Unit that Sharon has really excelled. She has been a very active member since 1983. During that time she has tirelessly given many hours of her time to respond to all types of emergency incidents.

She is also actively involved as a State Emergency Service trainer encouraging new members, particularly young women, to join the organisation. Her role is about ensuring all recruits are adequately trained and their interests looked after.

Sharon has been recognised for her service with a National State Emergency Service Medal and Long Service acknowledgement for her contribution to the Cobar Unit.

Lynne Strong [Jamberoo]

Lynne is passionate about bridging the urban-rural divide. Everyday she spends volunteer time driving programs which engage youth into thinking about who and how food is produced.

Lynne and her family milk 450 cows three times daily on two farms at Jamberoo. 'Clover Hill' is one of Australia's most water efficient dairies. They produce 125,000 litres of milk per mega litre of captured water compared to the 3500 industry average.

Their enterprise holds many production records and is the 2010 NSW Landcare Primary Producer of the Year. Fifty percent of the farm is fenced to protect remnant rainforest.

Lynne initiated the 'Picasso Cows' project where schools were given a life sized fibreglass cow to decorate. The artworks were instant hits on the internet and at the 2009 Royal Easter Show. The project is now run by Dairy Australia and being rolled out nationally.

Lynne formed Dairy Youth Australia to deliver education programs using art and technology to convey messages about fresh food, agriculture production and natural resource management.

The group's Archibull Prize is engaging students across western Sydney to create artworks about food production. Lynne put in many hours attracting sponsorship and setting up a website.

Lynne was named Kiama Woman of the Year in 2005 and was entered onto the NSW Honour Roll for Women for contributions to agriculture and the community. She was featured on the cover of the 2008 Yellow Pages as the Illawarra Regional Food and Beverage Hero.

Lorraine Thomas [Wagga Wagga]

Lorraine was born in Wagga Wagga in 1944 and worked at the Telephone Exchange until she got married. She is a person who is busy all the time and deeply involved in her community.

Lorraine was a volunteer coordinator at the Wesley Uniting Church in their Drop In Centre and is a volunteer Tai Chi teacher for Greater Southern Area Health Service.

Lorraine also volunteers for Arthritis NSW Wagga Wagga Branch as a warm water exercise Leader and is on their committee.

Lorraine has been a volunteer Girl Guide Leader for many years and is part of the Twin Rivers Regional Team as Program Advisor assisting other Leaders.

Part of Lorraine's Guiding role is to maintain the standards of the Peak Achievement Awards such as the Queens Guide, providing advice and support to Leaders and girls across the region.

Lorraine is also very involved in her church and a range of other community organisations.

cheryl vines [Curlwaa]

Cheryl was born in Mildura and has lived in Curlwaa all her life. She lost her Mum at the age of two and had to learn to be self-reliant at a young age.

Cheryl attended Curlwaa Primary School and Wentworth Central High School. She worked in a solicitor's office full-time for 10 years then part-time after her three children started school.

Cheryl is very community minded. She started volunteering in her mid teens as a Sunday School Teacher. After about 20 years when the Sunday School closed, she became a Religious Instructor at Wentworth Primary School and is still in this role today.

While raising her children, Cheryl was always on committees at school – including Treasurer and Catering Manager at Wentworth Preschool and Primary School along with being Coomealla High School P&C Treasurer.

Cheryl was President, Secretary or Treasurer of the Curlwaa Scouts and Wentworth Girl Guides while her children attended.

In 1983 she began helping at the Wentworth Tennis Club and took over as Junior Organiser in 1993 – she is still in this role today. This involves two afternoons a week for practice and Saturday morning matches.

Cheryl was also the Tennis Club Treasurer, Catering Manager and Captain for many years. She is the current Club Vice-President and Treasurer of the Sunraysia District Tennis Association.

Cheryl is a Justice of the Peace and is always available to the community to witness documents. She is Treasurer of the Darling Junction Country Women's Association and Treasurer of the 2010 Wentworth rural Women's Gathering Committee.

vivien ware [Junction Hill]

Vivien was born in Coffs Harbour and moved to Grafton as a child. She later worked at the Grafton CBC Bank, married and brought up her family there.

Vivien volunteered at her children's schools, Scouts and the Hockey Club (10 Years) – serving in the canteen and helping with reading and sports days.

When her daughter joined Girl Guides, Vivien volunteered in a variety of capacities, initially just helping out whenever a parent helper was needed to assist at camp or a weekly meeting.

Vivien was very impressed and inspired by the volunteer Guide Leaders and how they were helping the girls grow in confidence, learn life skills and develop leadership in her community.

She became a Leader of Adults, managing and supporting the Youth Leaders and looking after the halls and training requirements.

Vivien has been an active volunteer with Girl Guides for 27 years. Over that time she has taken on more senior volunteer roles in the greater North Coast community to support women and girls grow in confidence and social responsibility.

Two years ago Vivien took on the role of Region Leader for Girl Guides NSW and ACT, covering an area from Foster-Tuncurry in the south to the Queensland border. She mentors 56 Leaders and 500 girls. Vivien spends more than 20 hours a week volunteering. She regularly travels to meet with her Leaders and has helped open new Guide Districts.

Vivien is a committed volunteer and true Hidden Treasure of rural NSW.

amanda woodhouse [Berridale]

Amanda (Mandy) was born and bred a country girl from Deniliquin. Leaving her close knit farming family, she moved to the Snowy Mountains in the early 1980s bringing with her a host of wonderful strengths and values.

For over 25 years Mandy's successful hair dressing salon 'Shear Delight', in the village of Berridale, has been the lynch pin for the local community and surrounding district – a place where many locals are ably assisted.

Much needed fundraising activities have grown to fruition, with Mandy often the first to donate her time and goods as prizes.

'If you want something done, ask a busy person' – this is true of Mandy. As if life isn't busy enough running a successful business and being married to a local farmer and mother to a gorgeous teenage son, add being an active member of the local Berridale Public School P&C and being President for a number of years.

Mandy was the driving force behind instigating local Junior Soccer, with Berridale teams outnumbering some of the more populated surrounding townships.

Junior Cricket teams have flourished under her watchful eye and she is a member of Snowy River Shire Council's 355 Committee, ensuring successful grant funding to upgrade local sporting facilities and Community Halls.

brenda writer [Goulburn]

Brenda was born in Crookwell and moved to Goulburn in 1975 where she has lived and worked. Brenda has three children and five grandchildren living both in Goulburn and other parts of Australia.

Brenda is a highly valued and respected member of the Home-Start National Voluntary Home Visiting Service in the Southern Tablelands.

The volunteers are local community members who offer friendship and practical support in a confidential and non-judgemental manner to families within the program.

She began with Home-Start in 2003 attending the original 10 week preparation course and has continued attending workshops to build knowledge and skills to support families.

Brenda has worked tirelessly supporting 10 families over the past seven years within the Goulburn community.

She is always willing to provide support in areas of need identified by the family themselves and approaches her role in a positive manner. She brings compassion, friendship and openness to all the families she supports.

When discussing the great benefits of volunteering and visiting the families, Brenda says she enjoys supporting people and has developed great friendships which have continued long after the families have left the Home-Start program.

Acknowledgement

Volunteers from the NSW Centre for Volunteering assisted greatly with typing these stories.

volunteer agencies

The following contacts are for key agencies represented in the nominees profiles.

Arthritis NSW 1800 011 041
info@arthritisnsw.org.au
www.arthritisnsw.org.au

Benevolent Society 02 9339 8000
mailben@bensoc.org.au
www.bensoc.org.au

Cancer Council NSW
02 9334 1773
volunteervacancies@nswcc.org.au
www.cancerCouncil.com.au

Country Women's Association of NSW 02 9358 2923
info@cwaofnsw.org.au
www.cwaofnsw.org.au

Epilepsy Australia 1300 374 537
epilepsy@epilepsy.org.au
www.epilepsy.org.au

Girl Guides Australia
02 9319 7206
guides@girlguides.org.au
www.guidesaus.org.au

Home Start 02 4952 9488
marilyn@home-startnat-aust.org
www.home-startnat-aust.org

Lifeline 1800 880 681
volunteer@lifeline.org.au
www.lifeline.org.au

Lions Clubs 02 4940 8033
info@lions.org.au
www.lionsclubs.org.au

Leukaemia Foundation
1800 620 420
info@leukaemia.org.au
www.leukaemia.org.au

Meals on Wheels – NSW
08 8271 8700
amowa@mealsonwheelssa.org.au
www.mealsonwheels.org.au

Partners of Veterans Association of NSW 1300 553 835
presidentnswpva@aussiebroadband.com.au
www.pva.org.au

Probus 1800 630 488
probus@probus.com.au
www.probus.com.au

Red Cross – NSW 1800 812 028
nswinfo@redcross.org.au
www.redcross.org.au/nsw

Relay for Life 1300 65 65 85
relayforlife@nswcc.org.au
www.relayforlife.org.au

Rotary – Rotaract Club NSW
australia@rotaract.org.au
www.rotaractaustralia.com

Royal Far West 1800 500 061
admin@royalfarwest.org.au
www.royalfarwest.org.au

Rural Fire Service 1800 679 737
volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

St Vincent de Paul Society
02 9560 8666
volunteer@vinnies.org.au
www.vinnies.org.au

Scouts Australia – NSW
02 9735 9000
info@nsw.scouts.com.au
www.nsw.scouts.com.au

State Emergency Services
1800 201 000
www.ses.nsw.gov.au

View Club of Australia
1800 805 366
www.view.org.au

WIRES 1300 094 737
info@wires.org.au
www.wires.org.au

GENERAL CONTACT

The Centre for Volunteering
02 9261 3600
info@volunteering.com.au
www.volunteering.com.au

2011 honour roll: nominate a rural woman

The 2011 Honour Roll will be launched at the Gloucester rural Women's Gathering to be held from 14–16 October.

Nominations will open 1 May and close 25 August 2011.

For more information or to nominate a hidden treasure contact:

Rural Women's Network
Industry & Investment NSW
02 6391 3620
rural.women@industry.nsw.gov.au
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn

NSW Centre for Volunteering
02 9261 3600
info@volunteering.com.au

If history were taught in the
form of stories, it would
never be forgotten.

Rudyard Kipling, 1865–1936



Hidden Treasures is a joint project of
Rural Women's Network (I&I NSW), NSW Centre for Volunteering &
NSW Office for Women's Policy



Premier
& Cabinet
Office for Women's Policy