

# theCOUNTRYWEB

for RURAL WOMEN & their FAMILIES

*Celebrating*



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**Creating connected,  
resilient rural women  
since 1992**

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rural  
women's  
network

## THE COUNTRY WEB

The *Country Web* annual is produced by Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network (RWN) and is distributed free. For more about the RWN see page 4.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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

## FREE MAILING LIST

You can download *The Country Web* from our website and receive an email alert when a new edition is available. See our website to subscribe. If you live in NSW and would like to receive a copy in the mail contact RWN.

## ADVERTISING

12 000 copies of *The Country Web* are produced each edition. We welcome advertisements and offer competitive rates. Sponsorship and insert options also available.

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

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## Features

### 8 | Active Farmers

Active Farmers (AF) founder, Ginny Stevens, wants to have a positive impact on as many farmers and farming communities as possible. She has big ambitions with AF to be servicing 70 small farming communities nationally by June 2020.

### 10 | Fire, hope and recovery

Jill Goodman and her husband Graham live in the small village of Uarby. Before the Sir Ivan Fire in 2017, the farm was going well and they had begun to make plans to take things easier, however the Sir Ivan Fire would forever change that.

### 12 | Sober in the country

As a recovered alcoholic who nearly lost her life five years ago, Shanna Whan knows all-too-well the reality of lack of support, awareness, and education for the hugely complex issue of addiction. She has set about to change this with the inception of Sober in the Country (#SITC)—a unique platform which she hopes will start a serious and overdue discussions around the toxic booze culture in rural communities.

### 16 | Depression proof your kids

Almost every family will come into contact with depression. Clinical Psychologist, Andrew Fuller says while he can't guarantee that we can protect everyone from depression, there are things that we can do to make it less likely. In this article Andrew's shares his top tips for depression proofing your kids.

### 32 | Men's matters

Dr John Ashfield talks about what makes men tick and how women can better help the men in their life when they are in distress.

### 36 | Bright, strong and fearless

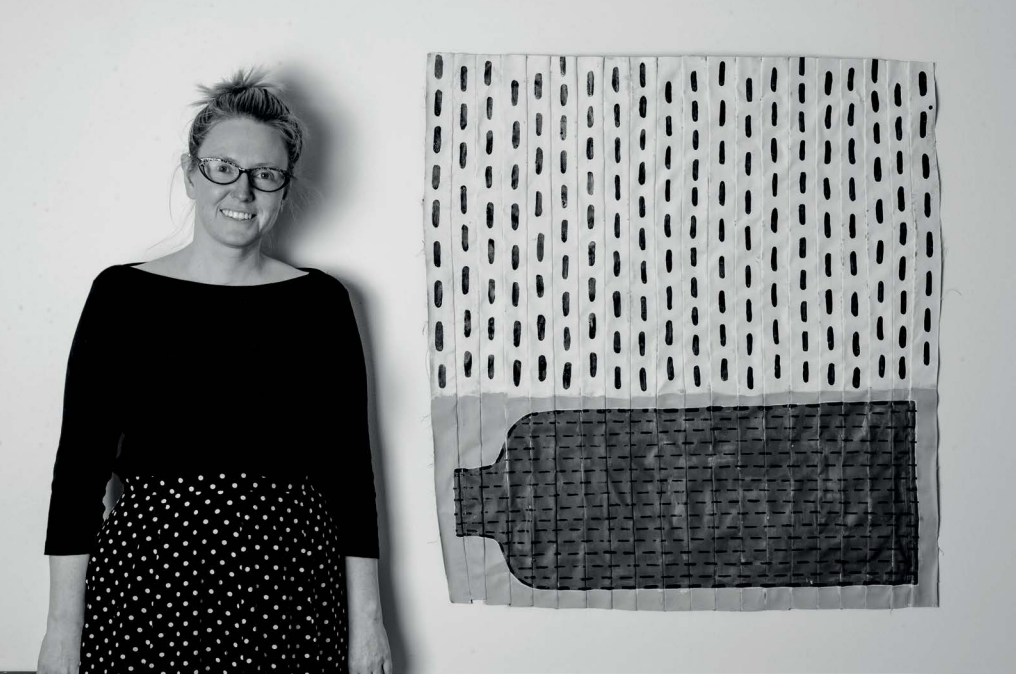
Agriculture is ingrained in the hearts and minds of three female students awarded at 2018 Horizon Scholarship. In this article they each share their vision for the future of women in Australian agriculture.



Farmers daughter and engineer, Jillian Kilby is encouraging women to step outside their comfort zone and pursue their personal and professional goals as part of her 2018 AgriFutures™ Rural Women's Award initiative.



During her eight years living regionally, Sarah McEwan says she has witnessed the drive of rural women to actively change the practical, social and emotional experience of regional life—for themselves, their families, their friends and for their communities.



Sarah McEwan with her artwork, *I want a new subjectivity*, that was recently on display at Western Plains Cultural Centre from 30 June to 2 September.

# The art of celebrating regional women

Sarah McEwan, Sandigo

On Sunday 10 August 2010, my husband Vic and I closed the roller door of our Marrickville home for the very last time. We can still remember that feeling as we drove off into the early morning light—one of total terror thinking, 'what have we done!'

We had spent our adult lives living in the inner-west of Sydney where we had a concrete block warehouse with a cement floor where we held gigs and exhibitions in our 'illegal' underground warehouse/home called the Cad Factory. We were part of a vibrant, warm and generous community of musicians and artists. Together, we all shaped a rich and energetic underground culture.

Our new home we were driving towards was six hours from Sydney down the Hume Highway, 30 km from Narrandera, in a place called Birrego, surrounded by dry inland cropping and thousands of sheep and cattle. Our falling down one-room school house built in 1886 had no running water, a bathroom with a hessian sack for a wall and possums living openly in the main school room. Being five months pregnant at the time of moving meant we had a lot of work to do before we could comfortably live with a baby.

In hindsight, our naivety served us well. If we had knowingly known what was in store for us in repairing and renovating the school

house, plus building a beautiful world-class recording studio, there's no way we would have willingly taken such a risk!

We stumbled, scrounged, questioned and finally, eight years later, we have spent the last few years enjoying our dream set up. I often think to myself it really is amazing what two people can do together when they share a similar vision.

Our move rurally was because we wanted a new adventure and to have more space for creating artworks and supporting creative practices. We wanted a house and studio space to live and work in, and a place where visiting artists and musicians could work too. This third Cad Factory space we live in now is much more 'grown up' than our earlier years. When we started in 2004, above a pizza supply shop in Marrickville, we held all night gigs. Now, we are a not-for-profit artist led organisation creating an international program of new, immersive and experimental work guided by authentic exchanges, ethical principles, people and place.

Our rural move has changed us deeply—I would say for the better. The vast open skies of the Riverina has given us opportunities beyond what we thought was ever possible. Our arts practice has become more rigorous, engaged and ambitious.

For the last year, I have been fortunate enough to have received a Create NSW Regional Fellowship that allowed me to travel to Duke University in North Carolina and the Women's Centre for Creative Work in Los Angeles to research for new exhibitions.

Part of this research culminated in an exhibition at Western Plains Cultural Centre in Dubbo called *Unbind Me*, that opened on 30 June and closed on 2 September, with more than 10 000 people viewing it.

The exhibition was creating feminist time travel beginning with Hesiod (c700BCE) in the Iron Age and running through to contemporary artist 'Truth Tellers' who face complex and competing ideologies. In making artworks about key philosophers, poets, authors, historians, economists, activists and artists who have contributed to the world over the past 2700 years, you can see a clear narrative of the historical limitations placed on women from all aspects of life including; philosophy, science, religion and education. You can also see how much has changed and been achieved since the Iron Age.

I still find it unfathomable to believe that 2500 years ago Plato started his Academy to foster philosophical education, but it wasn't until 1881 that the first woman, Bella Geurin, completed a Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University! The education gap widens for Indigenous women with Margaret Valadian being the first Indigenous woman to complete a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Queensland in 1967.

During my eight years of living regionally, I have witnessed the drive of rural women to actively change the practical, social and emotional experience of regional life—for themselves, for their families, for their friends and for their communities. I see this in events like the NSW Rural Women's Gatherings that Narrandera was lucky enough to host in 2017, publications like *The Country Web* and *Graziher*, along with the Hidden Treasure Honour Roll and so many other groups and committees. I see this with my friends and the way they care, with such love, for other people.

These kinds of activities inspire me in my creative practice. I hope that in my very own small way, I can build on the work of these trailblazing rural Australian women who have come before me and who work alongside me.