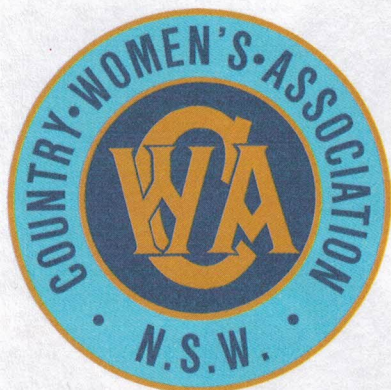


PROFILE

Annette Turner



State President, Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW

Tell us a bit about the history of the CWA

The CWA was formed in 1922 when country women were fighting isolation and a lack of health facilities. Members worked tirelessly to set up baby health care centres, fund bush nurses, build and staff maternity wards, hospitals, schools, rest homes, holiday cottages - and much more. The women of the CWA have been initiators, fighters and lobbyists. They have made localities into communities by providing social activities and educational, recreational and medical facilities.

And how has the CWA changed today - what's your focus and why?

The CWA is the largest women's organisation in Australia. We aim to improve conditions for country women and children in various ways, including lobbying for change, helping the local community, creating a network of support and meeting together in towns and cities.

Our members have lots of different interests and these combined with our aims help to shape what we do now. At the moment we're actively and fiercely lobbying for better connectivity, for example. We support lots of different causes, from funding medical research and education grants, to providing nursing and school packs to the islands, to fundraising events like selling our famous scones at the Royal Easter Show.

When did you get involved and how has your CWA story developed?

It all started for me 42 years ago, when I moved with my husband and 2-month-old baby to my husband's family farm in the outback. I was isolated and missing my family. There was no phone and no electricity. I didn't go anywhere.

Then a neighbour suggested going to the CWA with her. I got to meet other young women with young babies, I looked forward to dressing up, I cooked cakes to take along. It was a replacement for the community I'd come from, for what I'd lost from moving out there.

It was probably in the 1980s that I then started being proactive and got more involved - to help keep the legacy going for future generations. I worked my way up from branch and I'm now State President, CWA of NSW.



Friendships thrive at CWA

"The women of the CWA have made localities into communities by providing social activities and educational, recreational and medical facilities."

Why is food so important for the CWA and its members?

Originally we were there to service a need at social events, disasters and emergencies. Where we live we don't have catering companies or shops.

Now we're the 'go to' people for catering. We're experienced in cooking for large groups, we have the equipment, we know how to source and make good food.

We're known for our tea and scones, of course, but that's just one part of what we do now. It starts a dialogue. I think our younger members talk about wine and bikkies now too!

What advice would you give our readers if they're wanting to be in the kitchen and cook for their families more?

Cooking from scratch isn't daunting but people just don't have the time today. So it's all about planning. You can use an app, for example, to prepare a meal plan and shop for the week.

Find your own shortcuts too. I make scones all the time, so I have my ingredients measured out and ready to go in pre-prepared packs. If someone comes over I can grab them and have fresh scones out of the oven in no time.

A steamer can be your best friend – you can have a glass of wine or a smoothie while the veggies are cooking!

How can they get involved with the CWA themselves?

What's great about the CWA today is that you can make it what you want it to be. If you have time and you're keen you can go along to a branch and join up. If you're interested but busy, or a long way from a town, you can join online as a sleeping member. That only takes three minutes. All of our members receive the journal every quarter and our e-news. We're also on Facebook and Twitter.

What's your favourite muffin and why?

Always chocolate. Anything chocolate. I can't see past it. I'm shocking!

We're talking about local community classes in this edition – what do you like to do in your spare time?

These days I'm so busy with my role that I don't have time. I'd love to do more. Hopefully in the next few years I'll have more time for personal development.

What is your favourite autumn recipe to make at home?

I make a killer meat pie! I always cook the beef mince with stock and thicken it up.

That's my favourite meal for autumn. I love making it for the shearers when they're here.



Our famous scones



We love to make and bake