

World Rural Women's Congresses
&
International Project
&
The World Rural Women's Congress SA
Association



Background

Background to the World Rural Women's Congresses

The World Rural Women's Congress series began with the first International Conference in Melbourne in 1994. This event recognised the vital role played by rural women in rural communities, primary industries and farm families. It was an opportunity for women to learn, network and support each other. It was also a celebration of the tireless, unsung and largely unpaid work of rural women which underpins communities today.

South Australia has supported strong delegations to each of the conferences and delegates have found that the experience has given them the confidence and motivation to take leading roles within their industries and contribute to their communities.

Melbourne, Australia 1994



1994, Melbourne, South Australian Delegates

The Inaugural International Women in Agriculture Conference was held in Melbourne, Australia, 1 July to 3 July, 1994. The conference was attended by over 800 women representing 30 different countries. The inaugural conference was extremely successful in raising the profile and recognition of the multifaceted role of women in agriculture and in developing strong networks for women to use.

The Conference aimed to increase awareness of the economic, social, legal and cultural factors affecting women's status through the themes of *Women in Agriculture, Economics and Sustainable Development* and *Production and Environment*. These issues were addressed in a series of keynote speeches, forums, action groups and workshops, from which six key areas for action evolved:

- Education;
- Visibility and Recognition;
- Decision Making and Participation;
- Networking;

- Environmental Sustainability; and
- Social Justice;

The overall vision of agriculture which clearly arose from the Conference is one of recognition and inclusion; of a healthier and stronger rural community where the skills and resources of the whole agricultural sector are maximised, and where women's contribution is recognised through their active participation at all levels of the agricultural industry.

A contingent of over 50 South Australian women attended the Conference. PIRSA organised two mini busses to transport 16 South Australian rural women from across South Australia.

Outcomes

The First International Rural Women's Conference was a turning point for recognizing and acknowledging the role and contribution of rural women to rural communities and in primary production at a national and at a state level. A number of key developments occurred after this historic event. A national rural women's forum was held in Canberra where the creation of a rural women's unit in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests was announced. This Unit facilitated communication between the states and territories on at a national level and coordinated the development of the rural women's action plan.

Women in Horticulture in SA gained funding and convened a forum at Glenelg to investigate the need for a rural women's network.

In South Australia the Department of Primary Industries (PIRSA) committed resources to the SA Rural Network and the *Paper Bark* Newsletter a communication avenue primarily for rural families.

PIRSA coordinated the "Rural Legends Awards" in recognition of the achievements of older rural women, to complement the ABC Rural Woman of the Year Awards.

A greater association with rural women in other states led to rural women in South Australia attending interstate Rural Women's Gatherings in Victoria and later in New South Wales.

The National Rural Women's Forum was held in Canberra.

The Standing Committee of Agriculture and Resource Management formulated the Rural Women's Sub-Committee.

The Rural Women's Unit of the Department of Agriculture Food and Fisheries began.

Washington DC, USA 1998



1998, Washington DC, South Australian Delegates

The Second International Women in Agriculture Conference was held in Washington DC, USA, 28 June to 2 July 1998. The Conference was hosted by the US Department of Agriculture and the President's Interagency Council on Women drew over 1,000 women from more than 40 different countries.

A delegation of 150 women from Australia was the largest from any country outside the United States of America. The South Australian delegation of 12 women was led by the Hon. Caroline Schaefer MLC, co-ordinated by Lib Hylton Keele (formerly McClure) and included women representing diverse agricultural industries and geographical locations.

The Conference was divided into three main streams, *the business of agriculture, the agricultural economy and the agricultural community.*

The South Australian Delegation of 12 women who attended the Congress made the following recommendations.

That:

- the Economic Development Boards be approached to explore a region to region relationship with North East USA (outcomes potential cascade to a State/National level).
- the Ministers for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development be given details of the USA contact so that South Australia can investigate a possible relationship with NE USA, to develop export opportunities and develop a trade relationship.
- a paper be written on Agriculture Education in Schools - progress Ag Education integrated into the school curriculum - relate farming to final product as curriculum suggestions for the Minister for Education and Training.
- a letter be written to the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development regarding meeting with Industry Development Boards and the

Premier's Food and Fibre Council regarding promoting the image of agriculture, supplying good news stories, exchanging ideas and to discuss marketing issues.

- a letter be written to the Minister for Primary Industries, Natural Resources and Regional Development, the Minister for Trade and Industry and the Premier asking that consideration be given to women producers being involved in trade delegations promoting food and fibre and meeting with groups of overseas women when arranged.
- a delegation from South Australia be funded to attend a National Trade Forum if it can be organised for the women that attended the 2nd International Conference to discuss trade issues.
- the US Ambassador to Australia (Genta Hawkins) be invited to the SA Rural Women's Gathering 1999 to address SA agriculture women on trade issues.

Outcomes

The Second International Rural Women's Congress helped consolidate the rural women's movement in South Australia. Following the Conference PIRSA committed resources to the SA Rural Women's Gathering's and assisted a group of women from the Murray Mallee to organise the first Rural Women's Gathering held in South Australia. Organised by independent committees of rural women these Gatherings are now in their thirteenth year and attract an average of 300 women to locations across South Australia.

The South Australian women that attended the second Conference went on to become involved in various primary industry networks and organisations and developed private businesses in rural South Australia.

Madrid, Spain 2002



2002, Madrid, South Australian Delegates

The Third World Congress of Rural Women held in Madrid, Spain, 2 October to 4 October 2002, was organised by the Institute for Women (Spain), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and co-financed by the European Social Fund.

While there were not clear broad themes the panel sessions, working sessions and workshops considered the following issues:

- Globalisation
- Social fairness – access to natural resources, specific high-risk groups - children and elderly.
- Rural women's role in rural development
- Demographics
- Access to research
- Mass media impact
- Agricultural extension, training and leadership
- Agro-food organisations
- Employment opportunities
- International Aid

A South Australian Delegation of 17 women led by the Hon. Carmel Zollo and coordinated by Lib Hylton Keele attended the Congress and the following recommendations were made. That :

- A national forum be held for Australians intending to go to the Fourth National Congress to open discussion on issues that need addressing at the global level.
- A national conference for rural women held every two years to ensure key issues are on the public agenda.
- An international online network developed to progress issues that have been raised and to continue the dialogue.

- There is Australian support for future International Forums such as these and that as many rural women as possible are encouraged attend.

Outcomes

The Third International Rural Women's Congress saw the consolidation of existing rural women's groups and networks and a greater involvement of South Australian rural women in the more formal national rural women's networks such as the Australian Women in Agriculture, Women's Industry Network for Fishing and Seafood the Foundation for Agricultural Women and more traditional primary industry associations such as the Farmers Federation and the Agricultural Bureau. A number of the delegates took on very active roles in these organisations in key leadership positions.

The delegates also gained confidence to grow their personal businesses in training and education, value adding at the farm gate and a number moved on to public and private boards as directors, members and chairs.

The network of South Australian rural women that have attended International Rural Women's Congresses has grown into a strong and diverse communication network.

Durban, South Africa 2007



2007, Durban, South Australian Delegates

South Africa, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs, hosted the 4th World Congress of Rural Women at the International Convention Centre in Durban, South Africa 23 April - 26 April 2007. Over 2,500 local and international delegates participated in the congress. Thirty five Australians attended the congress. The South Australian Delegation of 14 women was led by Lyn Breuer, MLC, Member for Giles.

The aim of the congress was to discuss universal and wide-ranging issues confronting rural women today and to share concrete experiences of successes in addressing these worldwide.

These include:

- Globalization and trade;
- sustainable development (social, economic and environment);
- gender equality;
- food security and access to land, water and finance;
- new technologies;
- transport and roads;
- rural housing;
- women's health;
- governance; and
- the impact of public policies on rural women.

Five sub-themes were identified:

- ~ Globalisation and eradicating impoverishment,
- ~ Peace and stability,
- ~ Governance for rural development at all levels,
- ~ Environmental security and access to and control of resources, and
- ~ Health and wellbeing.

The following are recommendations from the South Australian delegation.

That the Australian Government:

1. Facilitate the coordination of an Australian Delegation to the Fifth World Congress in India in 2010.
2. Approach the Fifth World Congress organisers and request a position on the organising/advisory committee.
3. Facilitate the coordination speaker/presenter/facilitator participation and papers for Australia.
4. Offer bursaries to ensure Australian rural women participate in the Fifth World Congress in 2010.

That the South Australian Government:

5. Facilitate the coordination of a South Australian Delegation to the Fifth World Congress in India in 2010.
6. Offer bursaries to ensure South Australian rural women participate in the Fifth World Congress in India in 2010.

That Primary Industries and Resources South Australia through Sustainable Systems:

7. Provide support to the South Australian Delegation group to enable them to foster the liaison with South African Communities and the Eshowe Medicinal Plants Project in particular.
8. Coordinate a committee to develop guidelines for the establishment of a community trust fund to help support self funded South Australian delegates to the Fifth World Congress in India in 2010.
9. Facilitate the briefing of the South Australian Delegation to the Fifth World Congress in India and coordinate a session by the Australia India Association prior to leaving Australia.
10. Coordinate a briefing of the South Australian Delegation on their arrival in India two to three days prior to the Fifth World Congress and ensure they all undertake an Oxfam orientation in India.

That the South Australian Delegates to the Congress:

11. Commit to increasing the capacity of their industry and their community.
12. Investigate the avenues for ensuring Australian legislative frameworks have a commitment to equality for women and that the statutes and structured programs achieve equality as normal part of their business.
13. Investigate Opportunities:
 - ~ for micro finance in rural communities
 - ~ the role of local government in rural women's development
 - ~ to value traditional ways (indigenous and NESB), and
 - ~ to reduce poverty and increase health in rural Australia.
14. Increase their participation in their industry or community groups.
15. Communicate with their contacts in South Africa to increase the quality of life for all rural women.
16. Take opportunities to mentor rural women in their community.

Outcomes

The Fourth International Rural Women's Congress has led to the development of the World Rural Women's Congress SA Association and the International Project Fund. The delegates have undertaken to raise awareness of the plight of rural women across the world and to raise money to support their projects.

A number of women actively participate in organising groups to raise rural women's issues with key government agencies and at a political level nationally and in SA. SA took a leading role in organising a delegation of rural women from across Australia to meet with federal politicians in Canberra in February 2008 to raise key rural issues with them.

International Congress SA Women Participants

No.	Name	Congress
	<i>Lib Hylton Keele (McClure)</i>	<i>1994, 1998, 2002, 2007</i>
	<i>Caroline Schaefer (Hon)</i>	<i>1994, 1998, 2002</i>
	<i>Heather I'Anson</i>	<i>1994, 1998, 2002, 2007</i>
	<i>Carol Schofield</i>	<i>2002, 2007</i>
	<i>Barbara Wilson</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Anne Westley</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Ruth Robinson</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Jane Greenslade</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Lyn Thornton</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Jeanette Gellard</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Tess Parker</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Cicely Bungey</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Rae Plush</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Kerri Cliff</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Dianne Hamlyn</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Helen Anderson (O'Dea)</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Margaret Blumson</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Yvonne Curtis (Turner)</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Jill Kerby</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Mary Newland</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Trudy Huzcko</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Judy Ingerson</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Barb Schaefer</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Tracey Browning</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Anne McMahon</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Chris Cliff</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Deb Thiele</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Meredith Schulz</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Rhoda Heinrich</i>	<i>1994</i>
	<i>Jill McKenzie</i>	<i>1994, 1998</i>
	<i>Jeanette Long</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Jeanie Ferris (Senator)</i>	<i>1998, 2002</i>
	<i>Kay Hocking</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Gloria Jones</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Mary Krichauff</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Di Harvey</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Maureen Andrews</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Charmaine Dayman</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Sandra McCallum</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Laura Fell</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>Lorraine Rosenberg</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>June Gill</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>Caroline Brown</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>Diane Brownlee</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>Mona Barnes</i>	<i>2002</i>
	<i>Marie Lally</i>	<i>2002</i>

	Liz Penfold (MP)	2002
	Karen Burrows	2002
	Carmel Zollo (Hon)	2002
	Kris Roberts	2002
	Margaret Mead	2002
	Elizabeth Ballinger	2002, 2007
	Jill Williams	2002
	Linda Eldredge	2002, 2007
	Charmain Wait	2002
	Toni Robertson	2002
	Judy Wilkinson	2002
	Robyn Muster	2002, 2007
	Cheryl Pope	2002
	Faerlie Pearse	2002
	Sharon Honner	2002
	Lyn Breuer (MP)	2007
	Kate Breuer	2007
	Kelly Muster	2007
	Denise Johns	2007
	Judy Schroeder	2007
	Jane Moore	2007
	Sarah Jared	2007
	Joan Hall (MP)	2002
	Anne Dunn	2007

N.B. This list is incomplete – there were in excess of 50 South Australian participants that attended the First International Conference, Melbourne in 1994.

Background to the International Project

The Australian delegation was hosted by the South African government after the Congress and undertook a field trip, to a medical farm out of Eshowe. This was an opportunity to talk to a group of South African women about their lives, families, finances, farming and their hopes and aspirations for the future.

A collection was taken up from among the Australian Delegates visiting the project and \$400 was raised and donated to the group. Ms Mary Salce from Victoria donated \$3,000 to the project.

As a result of the visit the South Australian delegation made a commitment to stay in touch with the Eshowe group at least until July 2009 and raise funds to help them move to the next stage of their commercial development.

The involvement in this project inspired the South Australian Delegates to commit to financially supporting this group and initiating contact with a women's enterprise in India prior to the Fifth Congress.

After June 2009, a new international project will be supported in India, where the next congress is scheduled to be held. Association members will raise money to support the next International project and endeavour to visit the project after the Congress and continue to raise money for a three year cycle.



Background to the World Rural Women's Congress SA Association

An action from the Fourth Congress was to establish the World Rural Women's Congress SA Association. The 12 South Australian Congress delegates who came from various regions and rural industries were the inaugural members of the Association. A number of these women had attended all four World Congresses, others just one or two. Most of the women have been self funded.

The Congress provided opportunities for the delegates to share experiences, discuss key issues and develop a global perspective on issues relating to primary production, agri-business, natural resource management, capacity building and rural community development. The women have utilized the networks and information to grow their industries, communities and businesses.

The Delegates believed that the benefits of attending a World Rural Women's Congress were so great that women should be supported financially and the networks fostered. A way of formalizing the network and supporting more women to attend was to develop an Association and raise funds to ensure other women are supported to attend future Congresses and the World Rural Women's Congress SA Association was incorporated in January 2008.

Objectives

The World Rural Women's Congress SA Association Inc. is an important mechanism:

- (i) to raise awareness of World Rural Women's Congresses;
- (ii) to encourage the participation of indigenous Australians in World Rural Women's Congresses; and
- (iii) to help ensure South Australian women are financially supported to attend the World Rural Women's Congresses.

Membership

Membership is open to any person with an interest in World Rural Women's Congresses. Membership of the Association is for one year (renewable) on receipt of the membership fee, which is determined at each AGM.

Annual membership Fee (2007- 2008)

The membership is \$10.00 per year.

The Executive

The Executive consists of the Chairperson, Treasurer and the Manager, Rural Affairs, PIRSA.

Funds

Funds are raised through annual membership levies, fund raising activities, sponsorship, and interest on funds. Some funds, as determined by the Executive Committee will be retained for the administration of the Association. An equal dispersal of remaining funds will be made on application to financial members who have registered for the pending World Rural Women's

Congress. If a funding recipient does not go to the Congress or subsequently receives government funding, the grant must be reimbursed to the Association Trust Fund.

Grant Eligibility

South Australian women who are financial members of the Association will be eligible to apply for a Congress grant. Applications for grants will be available as soon as Congress details are confirmed and applications will close two months prior to the Congress date. Actual grant amounts will be determined once all applications are received.

International Projects

The current International project is the Eshowe medicinal Plants Project in South Africa, A new project to be announced in 2009 will be a rural women's micro finance business project in the country that hosts the Congress. The Association will support the project through funds raised for this purpose in the twelve month period before the Congress, the year of the Congress and for twelve months following the Congress.

World Congress of Rural Women India 2010

The 2010 World Congress of Rural Women will be hosted by India. The host city and dates have yet to be finalized.

The South Australian delegation will travel to India prior to the Congress and undertake a country orientation for two to three days and visit an Indian women's project which will be chosen twelve months prior to the Congress. The South Australian delegation will visit this project after the Congress, where they will commit to continuing to support the project until December 2011 by raising funds in Australia and sending them to the project coordinator.

The Congress Association's support will building an international relationship among rural women, be an opportunity to share ideas and create a better future for families, primary production and the global communities.