



# Country Women's Association of NSW

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament  
Constituent Society of the Associated Country Women of the World*

ABN 82 318 909 926

**Media Release**

**3 May 2018**

## **Urgent call for action on drought, Murray-Darling Basin and homelessness gain wide support**

This year's Country Women's Association (CWA) of New South Wales state conference in Armidale has heard some passionate debate around a raft of environmental, health and social issues, including an emergency motion on the worsening drought across much of the state.

Delegates overwhelmingly endorsed a motion calling on the NSW Government to take urgent action with respect to a broader set of drought support measures and restructuring and significantly increasing drought funding. The association will also advocate for improving the process for identifying and classifying drought areas and for a review of current drought application requirements.

Conference delegates took a similar stand on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, with the CWA of NSW to lobby governments on the implementation of compulsory water metering of all water users within the Basin, with the association to also closely monitor the current audit and assessment process of the contentious Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

"The emergency motion on the drought reflects the alarm of all members at the worsening situation across our state and the plight of our farmers and the agricultural sector," CWA of NSW president Annette Turner said.

"It's getting more desperate by the day and the NSW Government needs to act now if we're to avert a major crisis. More support measures are urgently needed and the ones that are in place need to be reviewed, particularly when it comes to an often ambiguous and complex application process.

"And we do want to emphasise that it's not only our farmers who are suffering. The communities in which they live are also feeling the pain, such as the small businesses in these areas that rely on the support of our farm families. There really is a knock-on effect."

Other motions that came before the conference included:

- To encourage the use of containers and bags made from environmentally sound alternatives to plastic – **Motion carried**
- To advocate for, as a matter of urgency, the creation and implementation of a strategic management plan to protect the health and sustainability of communities and environments affected by the feeding and roosting of the Grey Headed Flying Fox – **Motion carried**
- That wild deer be classified as a pest species to allow for the legal culling of these animals – **Motion carried**
- To advocate for improved psychological support services for those with terminal or chronic illness and their families and carers – **Motions carried**
- To advocate for protection against violence and assaults for all health employees – **Motion carried**
- To campaign for more housing options for older women faced with homelessness or housing crisis – **Motion carried**



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“The motions that have come before this year’s conference have again, at times, elicited passionate debate around a raft of issues. But while we all may have contrasting opinions, the beauty of the CWA is that we can consider all sides of the argument in a respectful way, with everyone then accepting the outcome and moving onto the next item of business,” Annette said.

“You only have to look at the attendees at this year’s conference to see the diversity of our membership in 2018, in terms of both age, race, and backgrounds. The motions at this year’s conference reflect this diversity and are representative of members who are passionate about the issues affecting their local communities and want to initiate real and positive change.”

The largest women’s organisation in Australia, since 1922 the CWA has been working to improve the living conditions and welfare of women and families.

The year’s conference in Armidale, at the New England Girls School, from April 30 to May 4, brought together members to debate and discuss the organisation’s policy via more than 20 motions proposed by branches throughout the state.

Close to 800 delegates, members, observers and visitors have descended on the Northern Tablelands city, with the event officially opened by His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret’d), Governor of NSW on Monday.

Deputy Premier of NSW, The Hon John Barilaro MP, and 2018 winner of the NSW/ACT AgriFutures Rural Women’s Award, Jillian Kilby, were among the guest speakers at the event.

**Ends**

**For media inquiries please contact Kylie Galbraith on 0411 480 208.**

**CAPTION: The CWA of NSW State Conference is being held at the New England Girls’ School in Armidale.**