



Regional Leadership Reports

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Region 1: Lower South Island

Submitted by Raewyn van Vugt, Regional Leader

Focus:

Region One's main focus is our Members. We strive to be there to help in any way we can, to keep our Members informed and up to date, and to feel that they are not alone. The Regional Committees number one priority is the wellbeing of each and every one of our Members and their family/whānau.

Achievements:

The very successful and informative Region One Conference held in Riverton.

The many workshops, and educational and up-skilling events that were held throughout our Region.

Meeting with Members who attended the AGM, Branch meetings and Committee meetings - thank you.

Our Region One Members who attend other organisations events and meetings with their RWNZ hat on - this is very much appreciated. Our Members that put their hands up to join extra committees within RWNZ - without you, we would not be able to accomplish half of what we do.

Being able to help other Regions when needed.

Our Region One Committee is very grateful to each and every one of our Members who are of value to the Region.

Celebrations:

Region One has had many successful events and recognised achievements by our Members, which have been celebrated or acknowledged within the Branches, posted on our Facebook page, sent out to all Members by email or a personal call throughout the year.

Challenges:

As with all of New Zealand, Region One has faced challenges throughout the year and as already noted, our main focus has been to be there for each other and we will carry this on.

Promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of all those connected to our Region and RWNZ will continue to be our highest priority in our decision-making.

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Region 2: Canterbury

Submitted by Frances Beeston, Regional Leader

Focus:

Our focus this year has been on membership growth and also involving Members, especially Individual Members, to take a more active interest in events/activities around the Region.

A survey was sent to all Members to gauge their desire to be more involved, what they would like the Region to offer and how they wished to receive communication. Disappointingly, the Regional Committee did not get the number of responses they had hoped for.

A major focus in 2023 was our site at the South Island Field Days. We have had a presence at this show since 2003. The theme this year was wool and its use in houses and byline was 'Wrap Your House in Wool.' Wool businesses from around the country supported us and our site received good foot traffic and we had plenty of discussions with visitors. This was helped, no doubt, by the fact the Ministry of Education had just released their plan to use synthetic carpets in schools!

The other focus was on providing two GoodYarn mental health workshops around the Region. Both events were very well received and a further workshop is planned for South Canterbury.

Achievements:

Most of the successful events in the Region are held by the Provincials and Branches.

Winchmore Branch continues to connect, support and strengthen its community by holding both Men's and Women's dinners, a Quiz night and Community Christmas Party.

Mid-Canterbury Provincial holds an annual Cook and Eat school holiday cooking programme for primary-school aged children. This is oversubscribed each year with 28 children and 14 tutors learning and laughing together. This is a great initiative that could be replicated around the country.

Both Mid and South Canterbury Provincials celebrated 90 years of supporting and working their rural communities - a great achievement.

Darfield Branch held another Meet the Candidates meeting before the Local Body elections. Darfield has held these over many years and is recognised for being proactive in making sure people are well-informed before they vote.

Celebrations:

The Canterbury Region has an active Facebook page where most events are publicised in advance and recorded in posts with photos after the events.

We actively pursue media coverage usually to good effect.

Member newsletters which go out to all members.

Reporting and a PowerPoint presentation at our Regional Conference highlighted all the great things Canterbury RWNZ Members undertake.

Challenges:

Membership is also the challenge and getting Individual Members involved.

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Region 3: Top of the South

Submitted by Dot Dixon, Regional Leader

Focus:

The Region has mainly focused on getting back to having regular face to face meeting; helping the communities affected by the floods by raising money, donating goods; increasing our membership with new members in each area as well as a new Group, Tasman Rural Women.

Murchison Branch, which has a wide age range, has found its choice of communication is a Facebook chat group.

Achievements:

A successful Region 3 Conference held in Blenheim with the guest speaker Katie Milne who is Vice President of the World Farming Organisation, a subsidiary of United Nations, speaking on the issue of Food Security. She spoke about food problems across the world and the work the organisation undertakes to help many impoverished countries.

In October, Marlborough hosted an event called, "Your Absolutely Fabulous Day" for the rural ladies affected by the recent floods which offered pampering, delicious food and entertainment. This day was made possible by donations from people giving their time to pamper the attendees, and local businesses and sponsors from across the country which donated products. A number of ladies travelled to this by launch.

Marlborough answered a request from the children's ward of Wairau Hospital for Winter Pyjamas which resulted in a donation of 40 pairs in various sizes.

Several Branches catered for Rural Support and Federated Farmers gatherings.

We were able to send an amazing amount of items and groceries to the Cyclone affected areas. Golden Bay and Marlborough Provincials also provided a pallet of goods for Gisborne.

Branches throughout the Region distributed toilet bags to hospitals and health providers, wheat bags and pump bags, knitted singlets for newborns in Golden Bay, Wellington and Blenheim.

St Arnaud Branch did an amazing amount of fundraising: a big event is the Trash N Treasure with Devonshire tea; New Year Book sale; Garden party; Anzac Day Service morning tea; catering at numerous events at Lake Rotoiti. The main recipients this year were the Adverse Event Relief Fund and funds to help furnish a room at the new Cancer Centre in Christchurch, with donations to other charities as well.

Celebrations:

Branch birthdays: Maruia 78 years and Pelorus 85 years

Marlborough Provincial 85 years

All were celebrated with luncheons with past members in attendance.

Challenges:

Attending meetings in areas that are still challenged by road closures from flood damage.

River blockages and washed-out bridges with farmers relying on the barges instead of roads.

Ongoing issues with transport services in several areas.

Losing valuable members: As our ladies get older, it's becoming a challenge to find places suitable to hold meetings and functions that do not have too many steps or stairs and parking close by.

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Focus:

The focus for the year has been on the wellbeing and welfare of our Members and our rural communities. Branches have focused on getting together and supporting their Members, often meeting informally.

Great support for our planned activities has resulted in a very successful year for our Region.

Regular posts about events, projects we undertake and Member achievements on Facebook has allowed us to connect with both our Members and the wider community.

A concerted effort has been made to both retaining existing membership and attracting new members. As a result, we have had good growth in membership numbers across the entire Region.

Achievements:

As a Region, we have supported many communities affected by weather events including Cyclone Gabrielle. Baking, grocery items, knitting, feminine hygiene products and toiletries have been donated. A massive thank you for the support and generosity shown by everyone.

We celebrated success at the NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards with Kate Cullwick, Foxtrot Home winning the Emerging Business Category and Dianne Downey, The Limery winning the Love of the Land Category.

We held two successful weekends in remote areas of our Region, Kawhatau Valley and Raetihi, where Rural Women New Zealand has no presence. Funds from the Contestable Fund allowed us to host a luncheon to connect with "local" ladies and learn more about their areas and businesses and to share our Rural Women story.

Collaboration between Regions 6 Greater Waikato, Taranaki, 5 and 4 allowed us to host the inaugural North Island Triple F event in Taupo in April 2023. Support from the Contestable Fund allowed us to give two women a weekend away from Eskdale's cyclone devastation. It was a fabulous and very successful weekend of fun, fitness, food and new friendships.

A grant from the Ministry of Women funded a Rural Mental Health 101 session in Napier in June 2023. This was held in collaboration with people from the Hawke's Bay horticultural industry. Each participant has increased confidence and skills to have conversations with those not coping because of increases in the cost of living, dealing with the effects of weather events and other things impacting our lives that are outside our control.

Celebrations:

Funds raised from Movie Nights, Plant Sales, Breakfasts, Lemonade Sales, Catering and Raffles were donated to Prostate Cancer, Breast Cancer, Talk Peach, St Johns, Local Schools and Fire Brigades.

Education Grants have been awarded from:

Fordell/Mangamahu Branch awarded \$3,205.00 to assist students commencing their Secondary Schooling with the costs of uniforms.

Korokipo Branch awarded \$2,000.00 to a second year Bachelor of Commerce (Ag) student at Lincoln University.

The representation by Region 4 Members on the PAAG Groups is tremendous. Our voice is an important part of the work we do, as is supporting the Groups as they commence their work.

Challenges:

Many areas in the Region have been affected by weather events including Cyclone Gabrielle. The support received from within the Region and the greater Rural Women network has been very generous and greatly received by the recipients. Thank you so much - it means a lot!

As we move towards our Centennial celebration our focus will be on attracting and retaining members to continue the work we do in strengthening and supporting our local rural communities.

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Region 5: Rimaniui

Submitted by Mary McTavish, Regional Leader

Focus:

The year has been very much focused on our current membership, our local Region and our country of study - New Zealand.

We have moved our meetings to different venues and we assist with the cost of travel for some of our Members. Much collecting, collating and dispensing of Care Packs and goods has been supported by our Members for sending to other adverse event affected parts of the country. We have also supported local charities, with fundraisers through the Branches and individuals as well as supporting our local Rural Support Trust.

It has not been an easy year for us as quite a few of us have been struck down with illness and sadness amongst our membership - all getting older and we are feeling their pain.

Some highlights have been a fashion evening which will be run again due to popular demand and a very successful auction which raised a good amount of money for Talk Peach.

A big focus has been on knitting in our Branches which, when finished, have been donated to Plunket.

Achievements:

Holding a Joint Regional Conference between ourselves, Region 5, and Region 6 Greater Waikato was a great achievement and enabled us to invite good speakers, have some great fellowship and a very enjoyable day together. We hope to do this again sometime in the future.

Our three Rural Skills Days have been a good learning curve and have attracted some new interest and have spread the message of RWNZ throughout our Region. We had hoped that with social media and publicity, we would have managed to spread the word and that more people would attend but every moment of these younger women's lives are filled with family, activities and work and they do not appear to have the time or inclination to come and learn new skills.

Celebrations:

The successes we have had have been small - we haven't changed the world although one of our Members travelled to Kuala Lumpur to assist with that change. Our local Norma Evans Fund has gone some way to assisting the change of a few young women's learning pathways by some financial help from RWNZ for which they are very grateful. We follow up on these women and enjoy hearing of their successes.

Challenges:

Our Region has faced some challenges this year, as we continue to get smaller and smaller with no new members coming in from any direction. All the local primary industry groups in this area have female support networks that we cannot compete with and our local meetings do not seem to have the interest mainly as they are during the day.

Our loss of Alex has been felt keenly as her influence was much relied upon to assist with local media, both print and social.

Our Branches continue to meet regularly as does our Provincial and Region 5. Both the latter meeting quarterly and the Branches meet monthly.

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Region 6 Greater Waikato

Submitted by Bronwyn Main, Regional Leader

Focus:

No one could have predicted this year. We have had to dig deep, puff hard, and keep going.

Our focus has been:

- To advocate for our Members
- To support our Members, families, communities, our Region, and the organisation

We have addressed the effects of adverse events on our Region, our communities and our Members.

We have engaged everywhere possible throughout the year to increase our profile and involvements. Branches and Provincials have retained good community presence and achieved excellent giveback.

Achievements:

- Christmas lunch
- Regional Conference and Election – Regional Conference jointly held with Region 5
- Activator Programme
- Fundraising (as part of Soil Sisters Charity Auction)
- Joint venture events with DFS, DWNZ, RST
- Community events and involvement including soup in park and community lunches
- Triple FFF
- Lead in AERF fundraising

Celebrations:

We celebrate success humbly.

We use success to grow, to reset our goal posts and continue to strive and develop, and to be the best we can.

We search for ways to engage and better support in our Region and for our Members, our Communities and our Organisation.

Challenges:

The passing of Karen Attwood (Provincial Chair and AC Member) – providing support and allowing the Region and Members to grieve; refocussing Area Committee, Branches and Provincial

Significant “personal” issues throughout the year requiring a layered approach to cover roles and support those in need as a result of death, illness, family concerns, health issues.

Maintaining good communication and connectivity throughout the Region by using social media platforms, newsletters, face to face, Zoom.

Reimagining our offering to appeal to both existing and new membership demographics.

The impact of adverse weather events (and COVID-19) on morale and Members.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the following people:

- *The Area Committee - your work, your sacrifices and input is gold*
- *The three Provincials - thank you for allowing me to come to your meetings, and for your honest open communications and ideas – your work within the Region is so appreciated and recognised*
- *To the Members (both Branch and Individual) thank you. As foot soldiers you are gold and, as an organisation as we head towards 100 years, your contributions are so important as you are our voice.*

Last, but not least, to my husband, thank you for your support in all respects.

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Region 6 Taranaki

Submitted by Shirley Read, Regional Leader

Focus, Achievements, Celebrations and Challenges:

Our year began with our AGM and Conference held at the Memorial Hall Stratford, on Friday 29 July 2022. The election process was carried out under the National RWNZ guidelines, with the results read out by National Finance Chair, Jenny McDonald. We were pleased to have completed the AGM business within 35 minutes. The Conference included speakers on social issues, education and RWNZ.

Nelson Polutu from Tutaki Youth Inc. spoke about working with vulnerable youth in the community. He shared some examples relating to social issues such as education, health and wellbeing, fitness, mentoring, truancy, housing and employment.

Juliet Vickers spoke about changes in her 28 years as a teacher using the theme Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. It was clear that teaching the curriculum was only part of what is expected of teachers now and in the future.

Both Jenny McDonald and Angela McLeod were in attendance. They talked us through the RWNZ Strategic Plan, the Contestable Fund, the RWNZ podcast “Black Heels and Tractor Wheels”, and the two new Connectors. Angela stressed the importance of the ‘real’ stories from Members to help with RWNZ Policy.

Our “International Day” country of study – Aotearoa New Zealand was held at Stratford on 30 September. The theme for the day was “Looking back over 100 years of WDFP and Rural Women NZ”. Members could dress for the occasion in furs and hats, bring memorabilia/history from Branches and

Provincial to be displayed and share knowledge about the items. We had an embroidered version of our creed and a wooden shield of the Oakura Branch with 1925 on it. This shield normally hangs in the Oakura Hall.

In November I attended the AGM in Wellington and was able to report on the event at our Taranaki meeting the following week.

As I was on the Committee for the Triple F Taupo which took place from 28-30 April, I was able to keep Members informed, although only three attended from Taranaki. The RWNZ Centennial Celebrations always featured in our agenda, with Margaret Vickers keeping us up to date with the planning.

We have in the past held a meeting at the end of January, but this year the Executive met and dined out. The Regional meeting was held in February and again in March, with plenty to discuss:

1. RWNZ Centennial Book Writing Competition.
2. "Let's Take Time" using funding from RWNZ and Ministry of Women and partnering with Taranaki Rural Support Trust. Five events planned, four executed, focusing on wellbeing and self-care.
3. Triple F Taupo.
4. Women Walk the World.
5. Knitting for prem babies delivered to Base Hospital and occasional wool purchases to support the knitters.

The four "Let's Take Time" events were successful and informative. Marcia Paurini, from the Rural Support Trust delivered a condensed 90-minute version of the "Good Yarn" program. Approximately 120 Women attended over the four events.

Speakers at our meetings have included Taranaki Rural Support Trust, Stratford Community House and in June we had Dr Shahista and Abbie Uy from Massey University speaking about the latest Leptospirosis project titled, "Estimating the Burden of Leptospirosis in Taranaki."

I attended the ACWW World Conference in Malaysia in May, and in June was able to share details of the experience plus keep members up to date with changes in the organisation.

Between Regional meetings, executive planning meetings, Regional Committee zoom meetings and Triple F Taupo zoom meetings, I have found this year a little challenging. This is the end of my first year as official Regional Leader. In the past, as Committee Chair, and without someone in the role, I have by default been given the responsibilities. I would like to remind you that these are two roles, and I would like to share them.

Thank you to the Regional Committee for all your efforts during the year. We can achieve so much together!

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Region 7

Submitted by Heather Sorenson, Regional Leader

Focus:

Our focus this year has been to get back to what was previously 'normal' after the disruptions of COVID-19 over the last couple of years.

We encourage our Branches to continue their regular meetings and their charitable works that they do in their own areas. It is good to see that these groups are continuing to do well in their local communities, reaching out and supporting others as needed.

Achievements:

Our Spring Fling event held in September at Arapohue, near Dargaville, was a very successful day. We invited rural women in the area to join our Members to participate in an action filled day. Our presenters, Maureen Buchan from Bring Balance, Sadie and her team from Time had their electric

bikes for us to ride, Alana from Providence teaching us about edible weeds in our garden and Tatiana from Decadenz Chocolates provided us with a wide range of activities to participate in throughout the day. It was great to welcome a couple of new Members following that day too.

Maureen Buchan offered to facilitate a Bring Balance group for us in Term 2 which was a very successful programme. This provides a chance for ladies to participate via Zoom and learn some meditations as well as Qi Gong exercises over an 8 week period. Those who participated all found it a great group and so we are planning to repeat again in the coming year.

Celebrations:

Success for us has been seeing some new Members. These are predominantly Individual Members and so now we have the challenge of considering how we best connect with them and support them to be active members of our Region.

Challenges:

This year our interruptions have come from adverse weather events rather than COVID of the previous couple of years. We have had great support from others around the country as we have supported our own Members and neighbours in various areas throughout the Region who have suffered a range of disruptions due to floods and storms.

Our challenge going forward is that we have a very small Committee and we would really like to encourage Members to become involved at a regional level and support us with our events and activities in the coming times. It is beneficial for everyone to have a good team of enthusiastic Members prepared to do a little extra to enable us to experience a few special times together. We really appreciate, and thank, those who continue to give service to us as Committee Members.

“Thank you so much. Hard day today going through silt trying to find an heirloom piece of jewellery. You’ve made my day a bit brighter.”

“Kia ora and thank you. I am incredibly grateful for your kind support and the approval of my application. Your generosity during this challenging time means the world to me and my boys. Thank you for being a ray of sunshine in our lives.”