



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS OF SA INC.

NUMBER 262, MAY 2026

State President's Message

Hello WAB friends

I have just attended the Mallee Regional Conference and Paringa branch's 60th anniversary celebration in Renmark. It was a day of friendship and sharing the history of the Paringa branch. I had the honour of presenting eleven awards to Paringa and Coonalpyn members, including 60year awards to four founding members of the Paringa branch. Thank you to Paringa members, led by Branch President Heather Everingham, for all the work that went into planning, catering and running this very special event.

The Annual General Meeting will be held during the State Conference being hosted by the Cunliffe branch on 22 - 23 July 2026 on the Copper Coast. As WAB continues to decrease in membership we need to consider whether it is time for us to wind up as an organisation. It has been suggested that this be done at the end of 2026/2027 to align with our 110year anniversary. This way we can finish with an event to commemorate and celebrate all that WAB has achieved. Our remaining eight branches could continue to meet if they chose to as a 'Friends of WAB' group without coming under a formal organisation structure. Could you please think about this and discuss it in your branches so that we can have feedback and discussion about it during the AGM.

Yours in WAB,

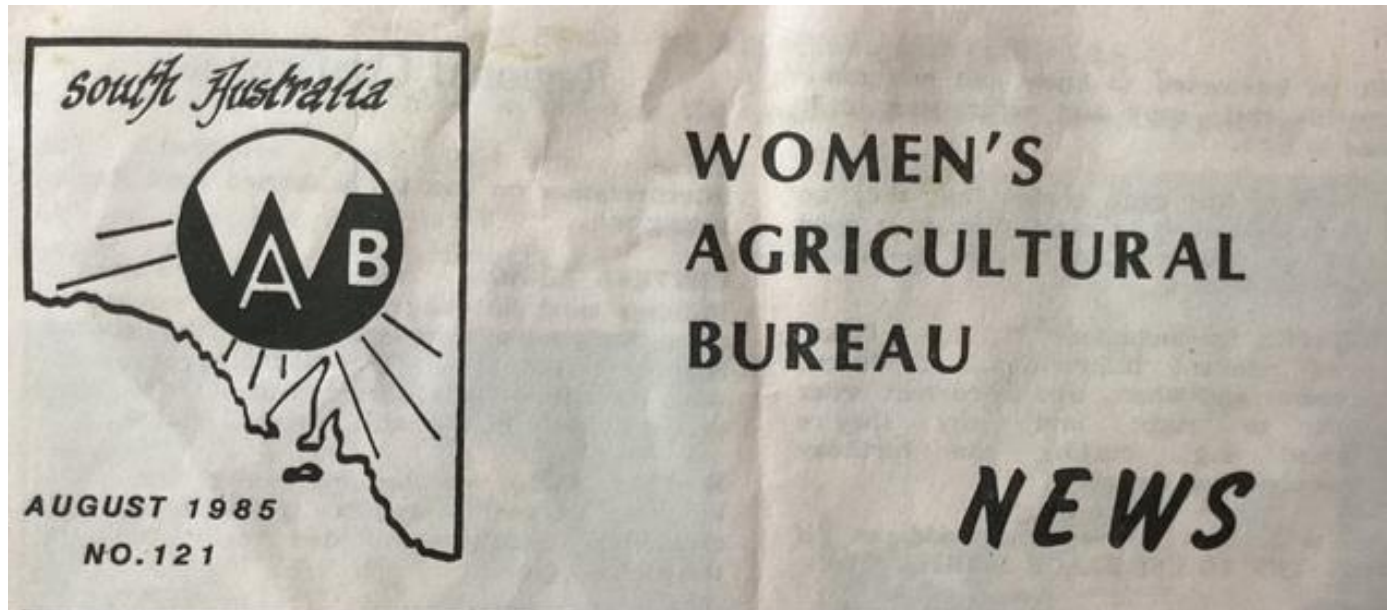
Sandra Wischki



Paringa and Coonalpyn Member Awards from left: Jenny Curtis, Jocie Cooper, Ruth Christie, Anne-maree Zanker, Valerie Lewis, Ruth Patton, Teresa ter Bogt and June Holland. Absent: Sally Black, Elaine Leedham and Valmai Goulden.

A few more memorabilia snippets from our records.....

The WAB logo in 1985



EYRE PENINSULA REGION

Charlton; A visit to the Marine Science Centre

Ben Stobart, a marine biologist, explained the work done locally by around thirty five people working in the Port Lincoln Marine Science Centre. We toured the complex before congregating in the conference room to hear more. PIRSA (Primary Industry Research Institute of SA) is the overarching Department, covering SARDI, Agriculture, and Fisheries. The importance of the centre has grown along with the value of fisheries and for the care of our marine environment.

Fish health including better ways of fishing, what is happening under the surface and algae are investigated. He and others do regular dives to survey and monitor and to contribute data to other scientists nationally and internationally. Data is available to Government to assist decision making.

He reminded us that what is naturally in the oceans belongs to us all, and was finite so must be carefully managed. They assess effects of climate changes, environmental impacts of things like agricultural run off, better ways to reduce collateral damage and waste, and help with quota management of fish stocks with the aim to produce fish species efficiently and sustainably. He wishes there was an older base line of what was in our oceans: the documented records only go back to 1980s so there is still a lot not known.

He concluded his informative talk and tour with underwater photos he had taken around Lower Eyre, along with a number of samples of sponges, shells, shark eggs, and sea urchins.



Some samples from under the water around Lower Eyre Peninsula

A most enjoyable evening in April. We were unable to find a person to talk to us about Mauritius, so six, or seven members were given homework; a topic to research over the preceding month. Topics included history, geography, environment, climate, culture, economy, food ...

All enjoyed listening to the information each person presented about the islands of this small republic of South Africa. We felt we had learned lots, and were entertained by Liz Mickan who read a story 'The Dodo that wanted to fly' from the children's book borrowed from the town library.

President Chris Phillis supplied an enlarged map and photos of some aspects of the island and she also provided supper, with cold drinks of pineapple or orange all served using colours of the national flag, and food (See below).

Napolitaines (a sweet coconut biscuit) and Tartesbanane (Pastry case filled with boiled and mashed banana)



On-Line Branch; April and May 2026

After five long, hot and dry summer months of sloth, in April Mary sent out a big list of issues, disguised as Topics, for Online members to browse through and assess, discuss or completely ignore. This approach was an attempt to provoke a multitude of responses, but it proved to be too much for most members to deal with. The responses numbered but two.

I reminded us all that discussing Religion and Politics was banned by our Constitution and I suggested that we look at the suffering caused worldwide by the War in the Middle East; the rising price of Fuel and the knock-on effect on the existing Cost of Living Stress here at home which

includes Mortgages, Credit Purchases, Food and other essentials; or perhaps we could take another look at Climate Change and its effect on Electricity and Gas prices.

Adair responded by recommending a weekly newsletter called The Echidna (sharp and close to the ground!) which is a commentary on current events and situations written with wit and insight by John Hanscombe and Garry Linnell who work for the Canberra Times. Sally G did comment on a number of the options but also told us in some detail about her six-week fitness campaign which has been extraordinarily successful. Her treadmill has an inbuilt personal trainer program from which she had chosen a number of exciting work-outs including trekking to Mount Everest Base Camp, hiking in the Grand Canyon, and visiting the Egyptian Pyramids. What a great way to learn more whilst losing the kilos!!

The Topic for May was BRAIN HEALTH as Mary adopted the KISS technique and provided one option only. This proved to be more to everyone's liking and contributions flowed in from many members. So how do we all maintain and possibly even improve our Brain Health?

Carolyn dances twice a week for her exercise plus there's the farmwork and she also enjoys learning new things – this year checking out the Royal Sydney show. She prefers to socialize with positive people, feels she should get more sleep but is convinced that she's getting more now than when she was in her 20s. Roz enjoys Yoga and teaches 4-5 sessions a week. Socializing over a cuppa is the norm after two of these. Walking, getting a good night's sleep and pursuing lots of hobbies are all in Roz's regular weekly regime.

Sally P follows the CSIRO advice re diet with protein (usually red meat) and 3 or 4 pieces of veg plus 2 of fruit. She tries for 8 to 10 hours of sleep but says the results are sporadic. Weight control is something she feels lucky to not have to worry about although she remembers a Human Biology lecturer once saying that we should aim to maintain our weight (apart from pregnancy) as we were at 25 but an old school friend reminds her that "it's gravity and it's all falling to the ground"! Working as a volunteer, doing crosswords, sudoku, and reading the newspaper are also regular activities and a canoe ride now and then is enjoyable.

Sandra has retired as Treasurer from one Board and although welcoming the newfound extra time is now finding that she is missing the mental activity. She recommends filling the void by diversifying with new activities and adventures, planning things, setting realistic goals and then, hopefully, sitting back with a sense of achievement. Great for one's psyche! For Joyce the topic of Brain Health is dear to her heart and very important as in her family there is a history of Alzheimer's and Dementia and Joyce works hard to keep fit, walks every day and loves the early mornings. Pilates is a weekly "must do" and weight exercises help with bone strength. A program called Move It or Lose It on Channel 44 provides a variety of exercise for older people.

Sally G has no trouble with exercise, diet or socializing but does have trouble with sleep. Despite trying a variety of relaxation and meditation options she wakes often during the night as her mind races around thinking about all the things she is dealing with in life. Sally remembers holding a human brain in her hands during her nursing training and was amazed not only by its weight but also by the look of this incredible organ which controls our voluntary and involuntary actions, memory, emotions, senses and vital functions such as breathing and heart rate.

Jane admits that exercise is not something she is particularly good at nor does it loom large in her life, but husband David pushes her in this area. However, Jane is still very involved with Zonta, works on all their PR material, and finds the regular monthly meetings good for social interaction. Keeping the family tree up to date could be classed as an addiction and this again

involves spending time on her computer. Reading is a pleasure as is cooking and their garden under David's skilful care produces an abundance of fruit and vegetables.

Mary shared her preferences for staying fit and mobile – playing Walking Football (5-a-side indoor Soccer for Men and Women over 50) guarantees a degree of competitiveness. Trying hard to maintain a large garden and often being outside offers neighbours the chance to stop and talk. Cooking, reading, looking after our family finances, and continuing an involvement with Strathalbyn Naturalists Club as its Treasurer, are all mentally challenging and often very interesting too. Trying to come up with Topics which could encourage more members of WAB Online to participate in our discussions is another challenging activity for Mary. Hear Ye, Hear Ye!!

LIMESTONE COAST REGION

Lochaber; All WAB members will be saddened to hear of the recent passing of Glenice Bourne, the oldest member of Lochaber WAB branch aged eighty eight years.

Glenice was a beloved member, friend and stalwart of WAB holding many positions at State, Regional and branch level for many years.

Members were inspired when she received her sixty year achievement award four years ago.

Her commitment to WAB was exemplary. She took an interest in WAB news from other members right up until the end.

Glenice will be missed by everyone and we thank her for her service.



Claire Williams and Glenice Bourne (right) celebrate receiving their 60 year award

Lochaber; March meeting Guest Speaker Nicola Bail spoke about her study of Bats in the Limestone Coast.

Nicola Bail from the Landscape Board gave a very interesting and informative power point presentation on her work with Bats in the Limestone Coast. She is studying the Southern Bent Wing Bat for a Doctor of Philosophy. Her extensive knowledge and passion are amazing.

There are fifteen hundred species of Bats in the world living in every country except Antarctica. They are the only flying mammals with twenty five percent in Australia.

Nicola described the many species in Australia and their appearance, behaviour, habitat and food preferences with each having a different call.

They can travel fifty to one hundred km per night and use echolocation to find food. Most roost in trees and the fifteen species in the Limestone Coast eat insects. Some Bats can live over thirty years.

They are so important in agriculture for controlling insect pests and fertilising crops.

Bats are successful as a species due to camouflage and safety in numbers.

Mega Bats are also called Flying Foxes or Fruit Bats. There are three or four colonies of Grey Headed Flying Foxes in the Limestone Coast and one in Adelaide.

The most species in the world are Micro Bats weighing less than thirty grams. They eat eighty percent of their body weight in insects every night.

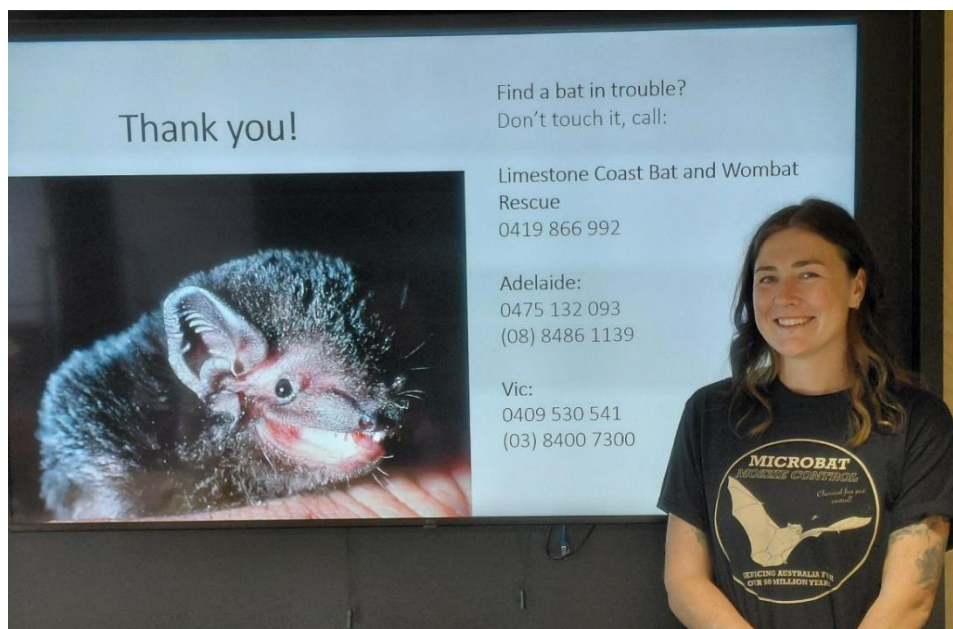
The largest colony in the world of Southern Bent Wing Micro Bats is only found in South East SA and Victoria. They weigh as much as a double A battery and are five centimetres in length. This species only roosts in three caves in the world at Naracoorte, Portland, and Warrnambool.

Every summer, about twenty thousand return to the Naracoorte Cave where they were born to give birth. The young are called Pups.

Bats are critically endangered due to a very concerning decline in numbers with records around Naracoorte showing a loss of about five thousand in the last five years. There has been less

habitat for moths to breed so less food for Bats.

We can help with their survival by providing shelter belts with hollow trees, paddocks and roadside trees, cat and fox control and wildlife friendly fencing.



Catherine Miller, Livestock Editor of the Stock Journal, gave a very interesting account of her "Unorthodox Journey through Journalism".

With the love of words and reading the Stock Journal, Catherine told us it was her destiny to be a rural journalist although growing up she wanted to be a rural veterinarian.

After studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at University, she knew she wanted to work in the Agricultural Industry but undecided on a career path. Her first position was a wool buying cadet with G H Michell testing and selling wool. From there she worked at Elders Head Office developing forward contracts for agricultural commodities.

However, the desire to live in the country after living in Adelaide for nine years was too great so she accepted a position at the Stock Journal as the South East journalist based in Keith. After a year there, Catherine moved to Naracoorte working from home and travelling all around the South East for stories

Catherine mentioned how technology has become more advanced and faster since she started but the Stock Journal team has become smaller. She is now a daily journalist with pressure to have stories online quickly.

She has had the opportunity to travel to report on events as well as winning trips overseas for work.

Catherine mentioned in her role, her position of privilege being able to interview and ask questions of those we have elected to power such as politicians and agricultural business leaders.

It was interesting to learn that today with great pressure on print media, only a third of readers are online subscribers.

Catherine looks forward to uncovering more stories and convincing a few farmers to share their story.

Padthaway; A visit to the home of Muster Dogs was a highlight of a recent Padthaway visit to Keith.

The group enjoyed meeting Helen McDonald at the farm she runs with her husband Neil, in the Sherwood district and watched a mustering demonstration using five kelpies. The couple were the instigators of the very popular ABC television program featuring the working dogs.

To show off their skills, the dogs herded a small mob of goats, both milking breeds and feral goats. To control the dogs, Helen used only a pool noodle and a plastic garden rake.

The Out and About clothing store and manufacturing hub was the next stop in Keith. Christine Rosenzweig told the group she had been making the colourful rugby jumpers for 25 years.

Initially Christine sold the popular jumpers which come with bright, trendy trims, through the Keith cooperative, Purple Paddock. Ten years ago she shifted her whole business to a building on the corner of Dugan Street and Tolmer Terrace where she has a shop and the jumpers are made on site.

She specializes in custom made jumpers and keeps measurement records of her customers. She travels with her merchandise to field days and sets up pop up shops for a week at a time.

After lunch at the Keith Hotel and a cake for the branch 61st birthday, Adair Dunsford gave a short talk on the history of the AMP Land Development Scheme at Keith in the 1950s.



WAB members then visited Purple Paddock, a shop stocking locally made products. Heather Graetz from Willalooka has been a member of the cooperative since it began in 1998. It has had a shift from the initial small shop front to its current location in Hender Street to accommodate more products.

Mrs Graetz said the business has a small gallery room for visiting makers. The business is supported by a large contingent of local shoppers plus those who travel regularly and stop for their favourites, particularly the homemade baked items.

Earlier the WAB members enjoyed a cuppa at the Don Moseley Playground and admired the new, recently redeveloped facilities.

Jill Williams takes us Bush

The Padthaway members shared Jill Williams's love of being part of the iconic motoring charity event, "The Variety Bash". The variety bash features a colourful convoy of themed cars and a route that takes entrants through Australia's remote landscape, having as many different off-road tracks as they can get. Organisers decide the route and include towns, schools and communities along the way. Grants and donations are collected for SA kids in need and are distributed along the way so participants can see firsthand where their money goes.

This will be the 10th year that Jill will be involved, she co-owns the car, a yellow 1985 Statesman, car number is 888. She says this will be her last year of involvement and she will hang up the keys after this year's event on the 8th to 15th August. This year they are all starting at Gawler, going up through Maree, Birdsville and then coming down through Tibooburra to Mildura. What a fun and beautiful trip after the recent rains up in that area it will be. They have their themed outfits and team of four ready to go. The team consists of Jill Williams, Sharon Tink, Cathy Laurie and Ang Browne this year and we wish them all the best as they go on their journey bringing their flare and fanfare to the towns they go through. It's always a site to behold when the variety bash comes to town. If you would like to support them, go online to savarietybash.com.au, down the bottom and look for car 888.

The cars have lots of support with volunteer mobile mechanics, doctors and nurses who help them along the way when needed. They all need support carriers for luggage and swags they can't carry, it's a big operation to organise by a great team. This year's bash will have about 100 cars registered for this journey for the SA Variety Bash, each car has to raise \$9500 per car as a minimal entry fee and anything else raised is a bonus.



The Teletubbies come to town – l to r Cheryl Merritt, Cathy Laurie, Jill Williams, Sharon Tink

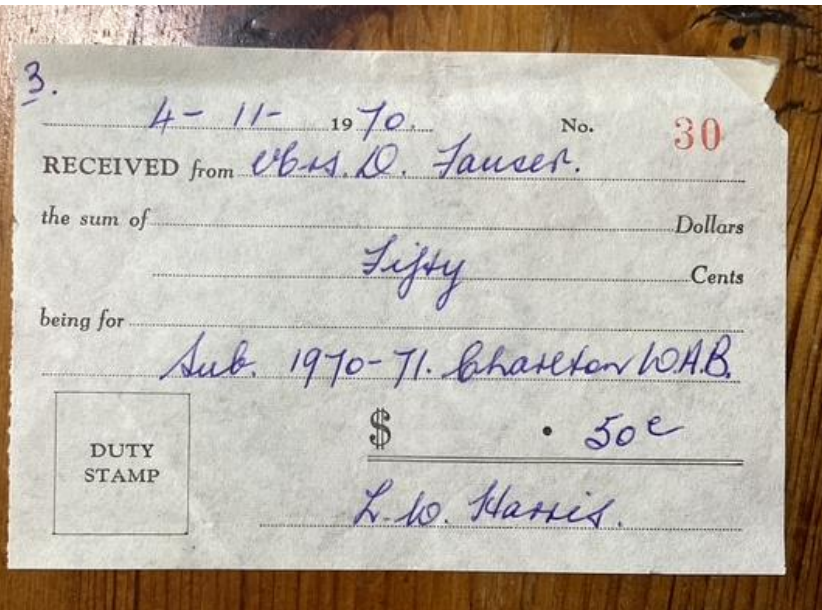


Jenny Hinze presenting Jill Williams with a thank you gift

Wirrega; A young business owner Bec Weckert of "Clementine and Ginger" who sells flowers, coffee and gifts spoke at our April meeting. She is a very enterprising young woman, who employs local women to help with the preparation of flowers and the cooking for light snacks. Bec is operating out of her second shop front, as the business outgrew the first. A great flourishing business in a community town which suffers bank closures and other vital shopping experiences.

The Wirrega Branch was planned to hold the WAB Limestone Coast Regional Gathering in early May, but due to the lack of attendees and the fuel crisis, it had to be postponed. We were sad as a wonderful programme had been offered. We hope to reconvene in September when things may be sunnier. The annual wood raffle was held over two days last week. This is our yearly Fundraiser. We thank Rex Staude who cut and supplied the trailer load of wood yet again to the Branch for this eve. We were saddened to hear of the passing of Glenice Bourne of the WAB Lochaber Branch. Glenice was a kind lady and a great WAB member. Glenice was the Merchandising Officer for many, many years, taking cases of WAB merchandise to the Regional and State Conferences.

And in 1970 subs for Charlton WAB were.....



MALLEE REGION

Coonalpyn; Being an outing, we had a good attendance, 8 out of 12 members, 5 visitors. It was a beautiful day on April 21 for our tour of Pangarinda. Although this a local site, [70 km] very few of our members had been there. Pangarinda Botanic Garden is a place conserving Australia's threatened flora. It prioritises species from the drier regions of Australia and covers 25 ha of Crown Lands on Pangarinda Drive, Wellington East, South Australia.



We spent about an hour wandering slowly around the area, often pausing to take photos of plants we found interesting. Being a large variety of plants, mainly trees, there were often flowers to be seen.

Our May meeting was the 91st Anniversary for the Coonalpyn Branch of WAB in SA and we had a pleasant evening enjoying a meal which we all contributed to. 4 members cooked Mauritian food, Mauritius Chicken Curry, (Cari Poulet) Mauritius Potato and Cabbage Bake,(Touffle Lissou) Banana fritters ,(Gateau Banane) and Sweet Rice balls with coconut (Ounde). One member also made a Birthday Cake.

Nadene Jericho showed a video about Mauritius.

Paringa; A successful Riverland/Mallee Conference combined with Paringa's 60th Anniversary was held on 28 May at Renmark Paringa Council chambers. President Heather welcomed visitors from Charlton, Cunliffe, Padthaway, Paringa and Coonalpyn branches and guest speakers from Loxton and Quorn. Renmark Paringa Mayor Peter Hunter gave a short address on artificial intelligence before we viewed a film about Paringa's industries made in 1972. This included Rowe's timber mill, dryland farming at Murtho Park, Angove's vineyards, Flint's citrus nursery, and passionfruit, citrus and stone fruit orchards. Foundation member Jocie Cooper gave an overview of the earliest days of the branch.

First guest speaker was Dorothy Crosby who is Rural Aid's SA representative and is a trained mental health and wellbeing counsellor. This organisation not only provides hay and water tanks in times of drought, fire and flood, but practical help (Farm Recovery) for farmers and programs to assist whole communities to recover. "Mustering Growth" is one such program to teach emotional resilience to Levels 5 and 6 in regional schools. There are 18,000 registered farmers with Rural Aid over 60 small towns in Australia. Dorothy's territory is a 300km radius of her home in Quorn extending to Whyalla, Peterborough and Clare. She emphasised that aid is not a handout but a help up with the aim to walk alongside the farmer.

Next speaker was Lorraine Fielke who is well known in the Riverland. She was a former journalist with the Loxton News, author of 2 books, marriage and funeral celebrant, Justice of the Peace, business owner, breast prosthesis consultant, Loxton Citizen of the Year 2019 and former president of Loxton Women's Probus. Lori was a farmer's daughter and spoke of her ancestors' (Thiele) pioneering days and her own early farming days with husband Trevor.

Final Speaker was Kevin Schubert nurseryman of Renmark who spoke on his health journey through the power of plants after suffering severe debilitation from poisoning by pesticides and chemicals used in his greenhouses. He began by explaining the term "cide" which means killing by person or substance eg. pesticide, herbicide, insecticide. He studied toxins for 4 years and attributed his gradual recovery to antioxidants and phyto-nutrients found in plants. He warned of the detrimental effects of chemicals that promote quick growth and bigger produce because they undermine or cancel out the nutrients in our food.

State President Sandra presented Honour Awards to 9 members of Paringa and Coonalpyn with 2 others absent. A cake was cut by 3 of the 4 foundation members. There were many raffle prizes with 3 craftwork items donated by Betty Heading's family. Betty passed away in November 2025 and was a former Paringa branch president and regional coordinator. On display were toys of yesterday and Paringa branch's memorabilia. Proceeds of the day will go to Rural Aid.



State Pres Sandra Wischki, with Paringa foundation members Jenny Curtis, Jocie Cooper and Ruth Christie. Absent Valmai Goulden

CENTRAL REGION

Cunliffe; President Helen Colliver extended a warm welcome to our April Guest Speaker Margie Ferret who would be sharing her and husband Gary's story as Foster Parents. Before Margie's story began our Branch members were each invited to introduce themselves so that she could be more familiar with "who we are, our personal background as WAB members and a little about WAB as an organisation"

Margie and her husband Gary were recognized on Australia Day this year with the Copper Coast Council's "Citizen of the Year Award" for their dedication and quiet leadership as foster parents over many years. Both were very honoured to have received the Copper Coast Award. They were also awarded recognition as "South Australian Foster Parents of the Year" in 2024. Originally they had over 300 children in their care over a period of time but over the years this number has increased significantly and continues to do so.

Both Margie and Garry are members of the Lions Club of Kadina, who along with other community groups/members, provide various donations, e.g. knitted toys, comfort care bags, and other items given to the children they foster. Uniting Country Care, Kadina are also extremely helpful in this regard. Margie's young Granddaughter, Lucy, accompanied her at the meeting and quietly assisted by setting out small displays of the type of items for our immediate interest. Margie and Gary also voluntarily provide other essential items for the babies and children. Friends & other community also donate good clothing and other items to assist.

Originally living, and married in Kadina, Margie and Gary moved to Darwin in 1976 where they established a Furniture shop (after Cyclone Tracy). They lived in a caravan for 6 months as there was no available accommodation but in time purchased their own home.

Unfortunately, they found they were unable to have children in an era when IVF was not possible; however ten years later they were able to adopt a daughter and then a son. Both are now grown adults and have

children of their own. In 1994 they relocated back to Kadina where Margie worked in a Child Care Centre and ultimately they decided to start fostering again. In 2014 Margie unexpectedly suffered a Stroke and spent time in a rehabilitation centre and unfortunately in 2023 she suffered a cardiac arrest and they retired from Foster Care.

However, their experience and outstanding concern and care for babies and children saw them once again in demand to provide their valuable foster care for many more. It is not unusual to receive a phone call late at night to ask for their assistance in providing instant care – can be newborn baby, or a child in crisis. Margie told of some babies they have had for 12 months or more, some may only be for a short time, some may have been born with drug dependency or drug withdrawal and need considerable care and nurturing. There are many circumstances that cause a child/children to be removed from their family. If it's very sudden it can be quite hard for children to settle in after their removal from home. It is essential that they are treated with compassion and respect which is a high priority for both Margie and Gary. Being Foster Parents is very challenging and emotional but rewarding and they do keep in touch with many of the children for whom they have been Foster Parents and essentially a lifeline.

Margie and Gary have been Foster Parents to numerous children over many years – they do so as volunteers committed to making a difference with love and genuine care, their reward is knowing that they have helped a newborn baby, a small child, or an older child to feel loved and cared for unconditionally.

Margie also commented that Community just doesn't happen without support of many people and, as an example she spoke of their involvement with Lions Club of Kadina and the many projects they support. In closing Margie commented that *"Helping others doesn't always seem big"* but it is more often than not the small things that can change someone's life or circumstances.



*Pamela Woodward, Guest Speaker
Margie Ferret, President Helen Colliver
Front – Granddaughter Lucy*

**** WAB STATE CONFERENCE ****

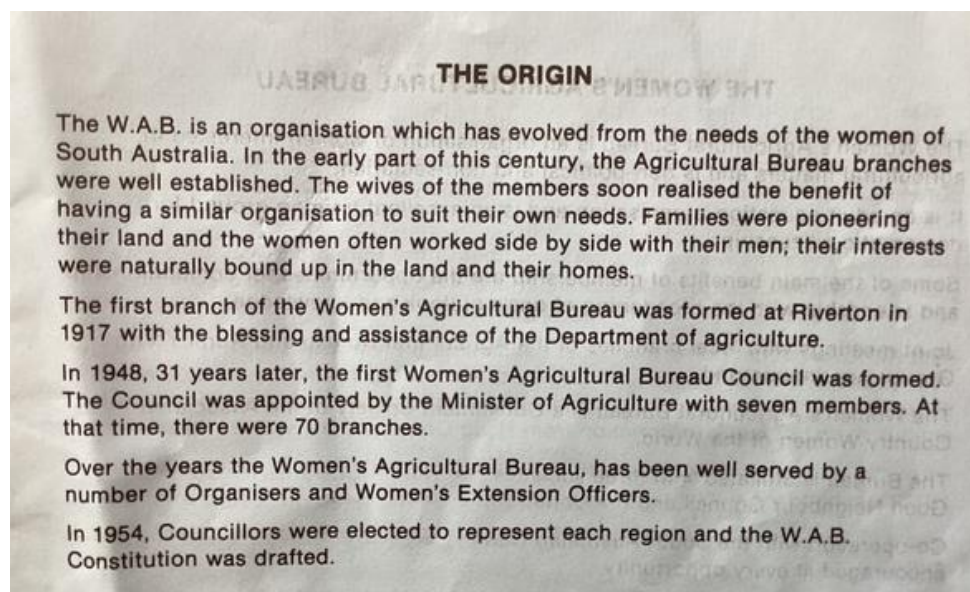
Hosted by Cunliffe Branch

22nd - 23 July 23rd 2026

We look forward to welcoming other Branch members to our region for the Conference

Our planning is now in its' final stages and all information will be sent to Branches in the coming weeks.

The beginnings of WAB in 1917 from the August Handbook 1984



WAB Administration:

Sandra Wischki

State President and Eyre Peninsula Regional Co-ordinator.

wabstatepres@gmail.com

PO Box 2615,

Port Lincoln SA 5606

Editor: Lee Russell

Email: ndhrrussell@bigpond.com

A REMINDER ALL REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT WAB NEWS ARE TO BE SENT DIRECTLY TO **YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR** and the **Newsletter Editor** by simply including the Newsletter Editor by cc to LEE at ndhrrussell@bigpond.com when emailing to your Coordinator.

NEXT EDITION OF THE WAB NEWS WILL BE DUE OUT IN JULY 2026 – Deadline for articles is 20th JULY 2026