

## ***Hosting A South Australian Rural Women's Gathering Background and Expression of Interest***

### **Gathering Background**

The concept of a Rural Women's Gathering was born in 1989 by a group of women in Victoria. This informal group of women called themselves a "Women on Farms Discussion Group". The general format for a "Discussion Group Day" is to meet at a farm venue, usually a member's farm. The morning started with a farm walk and a discussion on their particular enterprise, followed by a guest speaker on a farm related issue, such as finance, tree crops, fire prevention or safety. In this way the group could talk together about farming, seasonal problems, new ideas and generally gain confidence in farming.

At a Women on Farms Discussion Group day the feasibility of organising a gathering of farming women from all over Victoria for a weekend was discussed and in 1990 became a reality when 110 women attended the First Women on Farms Gathering in Warragul. Since then Victoria has held Gatherings across the State and they have continued to be an annual event which attracts between 150 and 240 women over a weekend.

The concept spread to New South Wales where the first Women of the Land Gathering was held in Orange in 1993. This is now an annual event attracting between 300 and 400 women from across the State. Tasmania held their first Women in Agriculture Gathering in 1995, and is now held every two years. Queensland and Western Australia also hold Gatherings. No matter what the title, these events are all rural women's Gatherings. They tend to have a farm and an agricultural focus because that is their origin. They are for all rural women because it takes all rural women to make rural communities work.

SA held its first Rural Women's Gathering at Murray Bridge in 1996. Since then Gatherings have attracted many women from across the State.

### **Why have a Gathering?**

Gatherings offer women involved in primary production an opportunity to meet and network with other women involved in primary production as well as other industries and businesses. Gatherings are supportive atmospheres in which women can question, learn and network. The diversity of women, industries, sectors, lifestyles, cultures, information and workshops promotes is good business and good rural business means strong rural communities.

A Gathering offers opportunities for all rural women, whether they want agricultural information, business information, personal development or a social and recreational opportunity. The strength of a Gathering is in its diversity. A Gathering can help build bridges between women on farms and women involved in other businesses, in the work force or raising families. It can offer skills and introductory information for women who for many reasons may have been denied access to the information that they need to build

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strong rural communities, to be equal partners in their businesses or to establish networks.

A Gathering also offers many experiences to those involved in the organisation of the event, which are just as important as what it offers to those that the gathering is run for. It is important to endeavour to utilise the talents of women as facilitators, guest speakers, and MC's. In doing this we create more women role models. There will be times when the best person the job may be a man and this is fine. Men will always be welcome at a Gathering, although the focus and marketing of Gatherings is to women. A Gathering is an avenue to mainstreaming so that one day we may not need gender specific functions.

The following shows the attendance at past Gatherings:

1996 Murray Bridge (180)	1997 Kimba (180)
1998 Kadina (300)	1999 Bordertown (400)
2000 Kangaroo Island (180)	2001 Riverland (210)
2002 Tanunda (230)	2003 Cummins (160)
2004 Yorketown (200)	2005 Naracoorte (350)
2006 Goolwa (160)	2007 Clare (250)
2008 Mount Barker (230)	2009 Mount Gambier (291)
2010 Melrose (220)	2011 Not held
2012 Penola (240)	2013 Port Pirie (310)
2014 Jamestown (264)	2015 Bordertown (243)
2016 Riverland (237)	2017 Cleve
2018 Minlaton	2019

Gatherings are special because they are community organised, developed, driven and run. Each year a different community group organises the Gathering. No one organisation is responsible for the Gathering it is an opportunity for different groups, organisations and individuals to work together.

The autonomy of the Gathering Committee, gives each Gathering its unique atmosphere and flavour. Each Gathering Committee works on from the previous one using the information; experience and intellectual capital built up by them. It is from this that some of the Gathering traditions stem. They are gifts from one group to the next, to be used, acknowledged and developed, depending on the Gathering Committee's wishes.

While each Gathering Committee is autonomous, the use of the name "SA Rural Women's Gathering" brings with it a responsibility to work with the SA Rural Women's Gathering Association Inc, to achieve the Aims of the Gathering. The name can only be used under agreement with the Association. Representatives of the Gathering Committee then participate in the management of the Association for a three year term.

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In the early years the Association was supported by the Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA) because they saw this a valuable way of getting information about primary production and natural resource management to women within the rural community who are often not involved in the more traditional agriculture extension programs. As the Association is now established PIRSA is now not actively involved.

## Gathering Aims

The aims of the Gatherings are:

- To develop communication networks knowledge and skill through participation, experience and contact with other women.
- To link women from rural backgrounds with members of formal or informal networks across South Australia.
- To provide access to opportunities for self-development, self-expression and information.
- To offer opportunities to demonstrate and encourage good business, environmental and citizenship practise

## Gathering Dates and Themes

Each Gathering Committee decides the dates of their Gathering and a theme that has special meaning to them. Deciding on a theme can also help make other decisions further down the track such as speaker, colours, committee identifiers, entertainment, food, tours and workshops.

These are the themes from other SA Rural Women's Gatherings:

- 1996 Murray Bridge – Yunnanfest (women's Meeting Place)
- 1997 Kimba – A Window of Opportunity
- 1998 Kadina – Life is for Living
- 1999 Bordertown – Women Working @ Winning
- 2000 Kangaroo Island, Kingscote – Diversity – Together as One
- 2001 Riverland, Berri – Celebrating Challenge, Change & Choice in a new Century
- 2002 Tanunda – What Women Want
- 2003 Cummins – Women on Track
- 2004 Yorketown – Juggling the Load
- 2005 Naracoorte – Your World in Harmony
- 2006 Goolwa - River of Life
- 2007 Clare – Celebrate Life
- 2008 Hills, Mt Barker – Fruits of Life
- 2009 Mt Gambier – True Blue Women Do
- 2010 Melrose – Remarkable Women – Live – Laugh – Learn
- 2011 Not Held
- 2012 Penola - Get it all Together
- 2013 Port Pirie - Indulge, Inform, Inspire
- 2014 Jamestown - Step Up; Boots and All
- 2015 Bordertown - Use It or Lose It
- 2016 Riverland - Our River, Our Environment
- 2017 Cleve - Secrets on Eyre
- 2018 Minlaton - Step Out on the Leg.

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## About the SA Rural Women's Gathering Association

The SA Rural Women's Gathering Association Inc. (the Association) was incorporated in 2008. The organisation is made up of representatives from the Gathering Committees of past SA Gatherings.

At the conclusion of the first Gathering in 1996 the Organising Committee was very keen to ensure the Gathering tradition continued and that there was seed funding available to future Gathering committees to get the event off the ground, as often deposits need to be made well before registration money is received and grant funding is not always easy to get or timely.

An initial \$5,000 donation from the Murray Bridge committee formed the basis of a Fund and each subsequent Gathering Committee donates some of their profits to the Fund to continue to build it so that if there was a loss or unforeseen circumstances that the Fund could ensure that no individual was out of pocket.

It was felt that the use of the seed Funds and the use of the SA Rural Women's Gathering name was a draw card to help make each event a success and that subsequent committees should help preserve the sentiments of the Gathering by assisting future committees through the Fund.

The SA Rural Women's Gathering name is owned by the Association and by using the name the Gathering committees are agreeing to a number of conditions.

## Why Join the Association

There are many benefits to a Gathering Committee by joining the Association. A Gathering Committee will:

1. be eligible to access the \$5,000 refundable seed grant from the SARWG Association;
2. have access to the data base of contact details from the previous Gathering;
3. receive contact information for sponsors;
4. receive e-file copies of sample programs, brochures, correspondence, media releases, agendas, minutes, budget and a planning timetable;
5. take temporary custody of the lamp and the gong, SARWG display items;
6. have the opportunity for Committee members to meet with the next Gathering committee for their committee orientation;
7. be represented for a 3 year term on the SARWG Association Inc.

## Workshops, Tours, Website, Memorabilia

The SA Rural Women's Gatherings are a statewide event that has built a successful name and reputation for the opportunities they offer. Consistent with the aims of the Association, each Gathering should endeavour to offer variety and options to cater for the range of interests among rural South Australian women. It is important that a balance of workshops and tours is offered in each of the four key areas of:

- Health & Fitness

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- Business/Technical/NRM/Primary Production
- Community/Communications
- Craft/Art/Cooking.

The Gathering Committee will decide what workshops/tours they can offer and what might appeal to the broad range of women that will come to the Gathering from across South Australia. A Gathering should offer a variety of both information topics and skill development activities. Initially a broad range of topics are offered which is narrowed once the popularity of various topics becomes clearer through the call for expressions of interest process.

### The SA Rural Women's Gathering Website

The Mount Gambier Gathering Committee developed the Website in 2009 and a member of the Committee will show the next Gathering Committee how the website can be updated.

It is really important that this website is kept up to date as it is surprising how often it is used by people to get information about your Gathering event.

The web address for the SA Rural Women's Gathering Website:  
[www.saruralwomensgathering.org.au](http://www.saruralwomensgathering.org.au)

There is also a site within the PIRSA website that is linked to the Gathering site and this will be updated by PIRSA as required. Most people will navigate to the main website via Google "SA Rural Women's Gathering".

PIRSA website: [w.pir.sa.gov.au/pirsa/communities/rural\\_womens\\_programs/rural\\_womens\\_gatherings](http://w.pir.sa.gov.au/pirsa/communities/rural_womens_programs/rural_womens_gatherings)

### Memorabilia

At each Gathering, a collection of memorabilia and posters from past Gatherings is displayed. The display is from a maximum of six events, information from only 5 past gatherings, being the first Gathering in 1996, the previous 3 Gatherings and the current gathering. A photo album of all previous gatherings to be on display.

Each Gathering Committee is responsible for coordinating the donation of memorabilia and the Gathering poster. Examples of memorabilia might include mugs, committee identification outfit i.e. a scarf, waistcoat, shirt. Each Gathering Committee is responsible for the accuracy of their poster which can include photographs from their event, the program, workshops and guest speakers as well as the names of all committee members. The poster should be on stiff board such as Korflute or Foamboard and be 61cm wide by 91cm high.

At each Gathering adequate display space needs to be made available for the memorabilia display, consisting of 2 trestles with free wall space behind for the posters. The wall space required is approximately 4m wide x 1m high for the five posters. The display should be located in or near the registration or main event area.

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Following each Gathering the next Committee will take custody of the memorabilia, gong and lantern, which is then passed to the next Committee at the end of their Gathering. Items that are no longer part of the display (more than 3 previous Gatherings) are offered in the first instance to the Gathering Committee and if not taken then are to be disposed of.

The memorabilia remains the property of the Association and includes a large banner 1.25m X 4.10m, lantern, gong, display cloth, photo album, memorabilia items and display shapes.

## Insurances

### **Broad Form and Volunteer Insurance**

All the Gathering Committee members are to become financial members of the Association so that they are covered under the Association's Broad Form Insurance Policy and the Volunteer Insurance Policy.

The Gathering Committee must take out the insurances in the name of the Association and provide the Association with a copy. The insurances are for one year, to commence from 1 July each year.

The Gathering Committee may endeavour to have the Insurance cover sponsored by an insurance company of their choice. They may negotiate to come under the insurance banner of a third party such as a Local Council or other such body, – in which case a letter of confirmation from this entity must be supplied to the Association.

The Association can arrange to take out the Insurances, with the cost to be met by the Gathering Committee.

## The Gathering Committee

In the past Gathering Committees have ranged in size from 5 to 30 people, averaging about 16 people. If the committee is very small it is important to ensure you have other people to assist with the organising the event and to help at the Gathering as there is plenty to do.

The Committee can have representatives from beyond the host community but they are usually from region.

## Location

Gatherings have been held in large and small towns in South Australia. As long as the town has a town hall or a school and catering is possible – it can host a Gathering. Accommodation should be within an easy drive or some Gatherings hosted by smaller communities have arranged billet accommodation.

## Workload

The workload for committee members will vary depending on how many people there are on the committee. It is common for committees to initially meet monthly then as the date gets closer they meet fortnightly and then

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weekly in the last six weeks but this is entirely up to the discretion and needs of the committee. Some committees may do much of their business over the internet or by telephone.

Most Committees have a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Other roles may include, catering, guest speakers, workshops, facilities, sponsorship, publicity and tours.

### Support

The past Gathering committees are always happy to help out with information from their experiences and will answer questions and offer advice if a new committee needs assistance.

### Budgets

Each committee should prepare a budget – aimed at making a small profit as the Committee must return the seed funding plus 10% and, also make a donation back to the Association to ensure funds are available to assist future Gathering Committees.

Most committees apply for grants to help fund the weekend but sponsorship is also very important and donations of food, services or raffle goods can also help the budget.

Some Local Councils will support Gatherings by allowing the Committee by allowing them to use their banking or EFTPOS facilities, or other Council facilities.

### Learnings from your gathering

Part of being involved in a Gathering Committee and hosting a Gathering is to learn from this experience to invest in the future. Each Gathering Committee is to conduct a Participant Feedback Survey. This can be based on the proforma in the Guide and can be amended as the Gathering Committee sees as more beneficial. However it must provide the information as required by the report to the Association.

### Use of name 'SA Rural Women's Gathering'.

#### Conditions for the Use of 'SA Rural Women's Gathering' name by a Gathering Committee.

- a) The SA Rural Women's Gathering name may or may not include the region or the town/city or a derivative of it.
- b) The sentiments of the Gathering tradition are maintained by adherence to the aims.
- c) The traditions of the Gathering are upheld i.e. lighting and extinguishing of the lamp.
- d) The Gathering committee is open to any interested women from the community and that the Gathering committee is not an official existing incorporated organisation.
- e) All the members of the Gathering Committee will be financial members of the Association by completing an application for membership and paying the

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nominated membership fee. *(Financial membership will give each member the personal protection of the Associations Act.)*

- f) The Gathering Committee nominate two representatives to be members of the Association management for a three year term.
- g) The Gathering should offer opportunities (workshops, tours, speakers etc.) with a balanced cover of all four key areas of (1) Health and Fitness: (2) Business, technical/NRM, Primary production: (3) Community, Communications: (4) Craft/Art/Cooking.
- h) A percentage of the profit from the Gathering is donated to the Association: this is to be a minimum of 10% of the maximum seed funding that is allowable which is \$5,000 if a profit is made (i.e. repay \$5,000 plus \$500 + \$5,500 and when possible a donation above this amount).
- i) The Gathering Committee will take out and supply the Association Executive Officer with written evidence that the Committee has arranged the annual policies of Broad Form (event) and Volunteer Insurance to commence from 1 July. *(The Committee may endeavour to have the Insurance cover sponsored by an insurance company of their choice, they may negotiate to come under the insurance banner of a third party such as a Local Council or other such body, – in which case a letter of confirmation from this entity must be supplied to the Association, or the Association can arrange at a cost to the Gathering Committee to take out the Volunteer Insurance on their behalf – the Gathering Committee must notify the Association of the action they will be taking in regard to Insurance by the end of April each year.*
- j) All Caterers that are used for the Gathering function have Public Liability Insurance and that their insurance will cover pre-cooked food supplies by the Caterer.
- k) All market sellers have their own Product Liability insurance.
- l) All venues used have Public Liability Insurance.
- m) A Gathering Participant Feedback Survey will be conducted.
- n) The Association will be provided with a final report using the report Proforma in the Guide and a copy of the Gathering final financial statement within six months of the date of the Gathering.
- o) The Association will be provided with a copy of all files and contacts, for use by the next Gathering Committee; and;
- p) Ensure that Gathering Committee members are prepared to make themselves available to offer advice and information as required by the next Gathering Committee.
- q) Allow the next Gathering Committee to promote their event on the final day of the Gathering.

### WHERE TO FROM HERE

If you think your community would be interested in hosting a Gathering or you have five or six women from your community that are interested in being on a Local Gathering Committee you need to talk with the Chair of the Association or the Executive Officer and lodge a “Registration of Interest to Host a SA Rural Women’s Gathering”. Further information is available from the website. An email is fine.

The contact person will be contacted by the Association Chairperson to discuss the details and confirm a hosting year.



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## **REGISTRATION OF INTEREST TO HOST A SA RURAL WOMEN'S GATHERING**

### **Primary Contact Person**

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone Number: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

Community interested in Hosting: .....

Year of Interest: .....

Important Considerations: .....

Signature: .....

### **Second Contact Person**

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone Number: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

Signature: .....

Forward to:  
hosting@saruralwomensgathering.org.au