

Sunshine Coast Ex-Service and Serving Women's Association Inc.

Joining Forces



Oct—Dec 2023
Edition 15

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the latest edition of *Joining Forces*.

This edition informs members of the important dates for 2024. Not all dates for 2024 have been finalised, however, as soon as they are confirmed you will be advised.

Also included is the story of the Australian Women's Land Army. These women played a very important part in our war history and received little recognition by the Government of the day.

Included is the Flyer for our Annual Christmas Luncheon this year which is traditionally held directly after our 10.30am Ordinary General Meeting at the Kawana Surf Club on 5 December 2024.

An important reminder that the Financial Year for the Association has been altered with the permission of the Office of Fair Trading. Our Financial year will now be January to December. This means that our next AGM will be held in April 2024. You will receive further information regarding this change at a later date.

Also due to this change the Management Committee have decided to start the 2024 off with a Coffee n Catch up on the Thursday 11 January for those who have either returned home or those who remained on the Coast for their Christmas break.

Additionally, the Association now has obtained an Australian Business Number (ABN) and also a Tax File number (TFN). These additions will allow the Committee to submit requests for Grants and also look at further opportunities to enhance the Associations future focus.

Until the next edition.

With respect.

Larraine Houlihan

Inc Assn IA 59129
ABN 15 390 668 848

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST—EDITORS NOTE

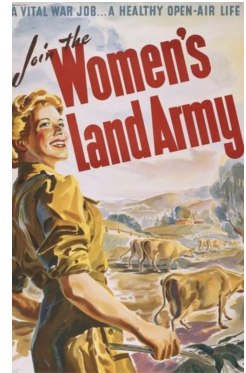
Of special note in this edition is a full article on the Australian Women's Land Army. I think it is important to learn about and recognize the enormous amount of work these wonderful young Australian women contributed to the war effort. I trust that you enjoy the read.

Larraine

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S LAND ARMY

1939 - 1945

THE SCHEME



From 1939 voluntary 'land armies' began to take shape around the country. In New South Wales, the Women's Agricultural Security Production Service (WASPS) assisted with harvesting local crops. The Women's Auxiliary Transport Service in Queensland directed some of its members to land work and in Victoria, the Country Women's Association Land Army (CWALA) was formed. Established as a national organisation on 27 July 1942, the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA) united these groups under the jurisdiction of the Director-General of Manpower.

A Superintendent of the Land Army was appointed in each state. They supervised the selection, enrolment, discipline and welfare of members. There were two divisions: full time members and auxiliary members. Full time members enrolled for continuous service for 12 months (with the option of renewal). These members received badges, a uniform, working clothes and equipment. Auxiliary members worked for short periods only, during seasonal rural operations. They received a badge, working clothes and essential equipment on loan.

The AWLA was a voluntary group, not an enlisted service. The women were paid by the farmer but earned much less than the men they replaced. They worked an average of 48 hours per week and received a minimum of 30s per week, plus keep. This was about two-thirds of the male minimum wage at the time.

AWLA headquarters provided some training in farming skills for women and then organised their employment on rural properties. Training establishments were set up in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. Recruits had to be between 18 and 50 years of age and be British subjects.

Young women from all walks of life responded to the call. Many were city girls with virtually no previous experience of life and work on the land. The response and attitude was magnificent, practically as there was no glamour being offered with the job; they were volunteering to help replace the 'sons of the land'. All that was being offered was hard work and long hours, but with this, the opportunity of making a worthwhile contribution to the war effort.

Their working uniform was Bib and Brace overalls, which they donned with pride. They were not afraid to get dirt on their hands while working side by side with the farmers whose sons were away. Chores like driving horses, milking cows, harvesting, picking grapes, hay making, repairing fences, working in the shearing sheds and lamb marking must have seemed a far cry from the life these girls had led before joining AWLA. To these uninitiated young women the work at times must have been arduous and back breaking, but cheerful attitudes never faltered.

By 1942 Australia's farmers were struggling. The countryside emptied as young men enlisted, and there was a severe drought. Australia's rural industry needed to provision both its own people and the Allied forces in the Pacific, while also sending food to Britain. Lobbying to establish a national women's land army increased, despite government scepticism. Finally, in July 1942, the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA) was formed.

LIFE ON THE LAND

The Land Army girls were engaged in all types of rural work - in the fruit, vegetable, dairy, flax, tobacco and cotton industries, in mixed farming, in poultry raising and in pastoral industries. Some members worked in associated industries, such as fruit packing and grading, and wool classing. In Victoria a number of women were qualified as certified herd testers and were assigned to this work. They were trained at Burnley Horticultural School: 24 Victorian girls and one from South Australia attended the training and all passed. These girls lived nomadically, travelling from dairy to dairy. It was important work as Australia was, at this time, losing thousands of pounds worth of valuable stock through the spread of mastitis.

Known as 'land girls', no job was too hard: post holes were dug, drains cleared, and dead animals and night soil were buried, in the heat of summer and icy winter. Victorian land girl Merle 'Mickey' Slattery (nee Goode) remembers the many different tasks she was assigned: Many of the women came from the cities, with little knowledge of the land. Insects and vermin were there all the time. March flies, sand flies, mosquitoes, stinging wasps and flies. Spiders and centipedes were simply squashed once the girls overcame their fright, while goannas, lizards and snakes had to be dispatched with a hoe or a spade. Nesting magpies dive-bombed the girls from nearby trees and fruit bats blundered into them at night as they made their way to the latrines.

Conceived in haste, the program's organisation was poor. One farmer wrote to the Director General of Manpower in 1943: 'some girls are so short of footwear that they are working in their slippers'. Beryl Price, who joined up at the age of seventeen, remembered the lack of preparation.

Toiletries and other basic needs were purchased by the women. Some women claimed their wage did not cover expenses and they finished with less money than when they joined.

The land girls on dairy farms worked hard, starting at 4am with milking. They fed calves, cleaned yards, lugged cans of milk and often transported the milk by dray to the depot. Hand milking was slow and often painful with recalcitrant cows. Despite the isolation and physical rigours, most women relished the fellowship of the AWLA and their contribution to the war effort.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Hotels, boarding houses, showground buildings and public halls were occupied as camps, and hostels were established across the state. Some of the land girls were billeted on private farms. The lucky ones were welcomed, but a few encountered suspicion and sometimes harassment. They encountered some suspicion and jealousy from a few farmer's wives. Rank dislike from some of the local girls because the young fellows of the district showed a lively interest to them. They suffered opposition and certain distain, which persists to this day, from some members of the other women's services.

A painting titled *Smoko time*



A *papier-mache* cow, used for milking demonstrations AWLA



Living Arrangements—continued

Iron cots, communal hanging space, wooden packing cases for personal belongings, one bath for thirty girls, no laundry and two outdoor toilets. The first night was the unhappiest, as we were cold, lonely and homesick.

'Comfort' items, mats, curtains or straw for palliasses, were sometimes donated by the local CWA. Some camps held dances or concerts inviting the local people, using the money they made for the comforts and amenities they were missing.

A matron was assigned to the camps. She took on the role of housekeeper, nurse, 'part-time mother'. And she faced the mammoth task of preparing meals for her hungry 'family' each day.

WINNING OVER THE DOUBTERS

Farmers were sceptical at first, doubting that a 'city girl' could handle the hard physical labour. The media did little to encourage intending recruits:

But respect for the AWLA came quickly. In 1943 the *Sun* reported: 'The Land Army used to beg the farmers to employ their girls. Now the farmers are the ones to beg its members to help them. One grower had written to say how pleased he was with his lady pickers and hoped he would not have to revert to male labour after the war'.

Mr Broadfoot, Senior Inspector of the Department of Agriculture, offered high praise: 'These girls are the greatest boon... both on the land and in the packing house. They have proved so capable and popular that the farmers' wives have taken them to their hearts.'

At its peak about 3,000 women were members of the AWLA, while thousands of other women worked unpaid on family farms. In all perhaps 60,000 women contributed to rural industries. But after the war, the contribution of the AWLA was largely forgotten. There were no post-war benefits, schemes or honours available to the land girls, and they did not march in Anzac Day parades until 1985.

Some recognition was given when, in 1995, AWLA members became eligible for the Civilian Service Medal, recognising the service of eligible civilians in Australia during World War II. And in 2012 women from the AWLA were invited to attend a dinner at Parliament House in Canberra. In her speech, Prime Minister Julia Gillard paid tribute to their service.

Info obtained from AWM Canberra.



Civilian Service Medal 1939-1945



**SUNSHINE COAST
EX-SERVICE AND SERVING WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION INC**

Come and join us



Our Christmas Lunch
is on

**Thursday 7th December
2023**

**The event will be held at
KAWANA SURF CLUB,
99 PACIFIC BLVD, BUDDINA.**

The lunch follows the OGM that commences at 10.30am sharp

TIMINGS for Luncheon: 11.30am for 12.00 midday

**COST \$30.00 For All. (Financial Members of the
Association will receive a subsidy, if they had paid prior to
the RSVP date and attend on the day.)**

RSVP 22 NOV 2023

PAYMENT: Internet Banking

Auswide Account, BSB 645646, Acct No 102736405.

**Once payment is made, please notify Deirdre Elliott to add your name to the
attendance list.**

OR

Payment may also be made to the Treasurer on 2 November
2023 at the C and C, Picnic in the Park at Cotton Tree

Please notify if there is a special dietary requirement

SCESWA Members - Coffee and Chat at Stonebridge Gardens



Standing; Gloria Hollingworth, Lorelle Horan, Liz Grimes, Judi Taylor, Denise Halley, Lorraine Houlihan, Maggie Winduss, Judy Prewett, Dot Kunde, Judy Friend, Lorrae Johnson, Jan Thorne.

Kneeling; Bev Milner, Jennie Promnitz, Val Machin and Deirdre Elliott

SCESWA Members at the Caloundra RSL Veteran's Gala Ball



Back Row; Chris Birch, Zelda Gunn, Trudi Avery & Maggie Winduss

Front Row; Jennie Promnitz, Heather Christie, Jan Thorne, Christine Brunton, Lorraine Houlihan

Round Up of Events Attended by SCESWA Members

Glasshouse Country Women United by Defence Monthly luncheon.

Held on 2nd Wednesday each month at 11.30am. Next date is 11th October 2023. Contact Fran Sinclair on 0416 013 987 for further info. All welcome.

Bribie Island Ex-Service Women's Monthly Luncheon

Below is the Luncheon for the Bribie Island Ex-Service Women. It is held the 4th Monday of the month at the Bribie Island RSL, 99 Toorbul Street, Bribie Island. Contact Anita Cooper on 0402 246 408 or any further info. All welcome.



Bribie Luncheon

Geebung High Tea

Narelle Gourlay, Anita Cooper & Fran Sinclair

Pine Rivers Council of Ex Service Women's Wreath Laying

Liz Grimes, Chris Clancy & Jill Buckland



**An Australian Prisoner Of War
Duncan Butler
2/12th Field Ambulance wrote these lines.**

Mates

I've travelled down some lonely roads
Both crooked tracks and straight
An' I've learned life's noblest creed
Summed up in one word "Mate".
I'm thinking back across the years,
(A thing I do of late)
An' this word sticks between my ears
You've got to have a mate.
Someone who'll take you as you are.
Regardless of your state
An' stand as firm as Ayers Rock
Because "e" is your mate.
Me mind goes back to 43,
To slavery an' ate,
When man's one chance to stay alive
Depended on 'is mate.
With bamboo for a billie-can
An' bamboo for a plate,
A bamboo paradise for bugs,
Was bed for me and me mate.
You'd slip and slither through the mud
An' curse your rotten fate:
But then you'd hear a quiet word:
"Don't drop your bundle mate.
An' though it's all so long ago
This truth I 'ave to state:
A man don't know what lonely means,
'Til 'e as lost 'is mate.
If there's a life that follers this,
If there's a "Golden Gate"
The welcome that I want to hear
Is just: "Good on ya mate".
An so to all who ask us why
We keep these special dates
Like Anzac Day, I answer: "Why!
We're thinking of our mates".
An when I've left the drivers seat
An handed in my plates,
I'll tell old Peter at the door:
"I've come to join me MATES".

SCESWA Important Dates for 2024



18 January 2024 — SCESWA Committee Meeting



8 February 2024—Ordinary General Meeting—Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch



22 February 2024—Committee Meeting



21 March 2024—Committee Meeting



4 April 2024—OGM and AGM—Kawana Surf Club



18 April 2024 - Committee Meeting



6 June 2024—Annual Luncheon—Maroochydore Events Centre



18 July 2024—Committee Meeting



1 August 2024—OGM Maroochydore—RSL Sub Branch



29 August 2024—Committee Meeting



3 October 2024—OGM—Caloundra RSL Sub Branch



21 November 2024—Committee Meeting



5 December 2024—OGM and Christmas Lunch—Kawana Surf Club



COFFEE and CHAT & Other Association Dates—2024



Thursday 11 January 2024—Maroochy RSL Café



Thursday 7 March 2024—Caloundra RSL Sub Branch



Thursday May 2024—Kawana Surf Club



Thursday 4 July 2024—TBA



Thursday 5 September 2024—Spring TBA



Thursday 7 November 2024—Maroochy RSL Café

The dates below may change, if so, you will be updated in advance.



Saturday 16 March 2024

Tri Service Luncheon—Geebung RSL



Saturday 27 July 2024

Council of Ex Service Women Church Service



Wednesday 11 September 2024

Council of Ex Service Women—Pine Rivers Wreath Laying Ceremony

BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER: LIZ GRIMES, TRUDY THOMAS

DECEMBER: HELEN GILMORE-WALSH, HANA HAMPTON,
GLORIA HOLLINGWORTH, BEV MILNER, LIBBY PENNY



POPPY SERVICE



Remember to notify your local RSL Sub Branch if you would like to have a Poppy Service or alternatively ensure you advise your family of your wishes.

Facebook – Combined Ex Service and Serving Women Australia

The *Combined Ex Service and Serving Women Australia* is a very informative site on Facebook for ex servicewomen and is independently administered by ex service women. Ex service women from all over Australia have registered and make frequent posts providing interesting information, military photos and fun ditties. To join, simply answer two questions relating to your service, and once the Administrator approves your request you will have unlimited access to other Combined Ex Service Women Australia's members posts, photos and importantly all events that are coming up for numerous Associations throughout Australia. Whilst this Facebook site is not part of our Association, the committee ensures that all events relating to the SCESWA are recorded on this site.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR 2023-24

Executive

President: Lorraine Houlihan, Phone: 0408 126 710, Email: president.sceswa@gmail.com

Vice President: Deirdre Elliott, Phone: 0408 222 592, Email: deirdre_colin@bigpond.com

Secretary: Jan Thorne, Phone: 0410 448 433, Email: thornejl@hotmail.com

Asst Secretary: Chris Birch, Phone 0403 905 023, Email: christinebirch52@gmail.com

Treasurer: Judi Taylor, Phone: 0430 597 836, Email: judimtaylor@gmail.com

Committee members

Health & Well-Being: Jan Thorne

Events Co-ordinator: Deirdre Elliott, Phone: 0408 222 592, Email: deirdre_colin@bigpond.com

Membership Officer: Chris Birch, Phone 0403 905 023, Email: christinebirch52@gmail.com

Grants & Merchandise: Fran Sinclair, Phone: 0416 013 987, Email: fran@kandfspace.com

General Committee Members

Maggie Winduss

Dot Kunde

Newsletter

Editor: Lorraine Houlihan, Phone: 0408 126 710, Email: l.houlihan1@bigpond.com

Postal Address: Sunshine Coast Ex-Service and Serving Women's Assn Inc., PO Box 654, BUDDINA, Q 4575

Email: thornejl@hotmail.com

Members: Please note the change of email address for our Association.



BANKING DETAILS:

Name of the Account:

Sunshine Coast Ex-Service and
Serving
Women’s Association Inc.

Institution:

Auswide Bank

BSB: 645 646

Account Number: 102736405

Cheque made payable to:

Sunshine Coast Ex-Service and Serving
Women’s Association Inc.

Forward to:

The Treasurer
PO Box 654, BUDDINA Q 4575

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBS: \$15.00 per year

*Membership payments Due **31 December** each year*

If you wish to pay by Internet Banking,
Remember to include payee reference: Please quote
your initial and Surname/Subs: e.g. JSmith/subs

Payments will be accepted at the Meeting or Coffee n
Catchup

CHANGE OF ADDRESS DETAILS

If you have moved address or changed your email or
phone number, please notify our Membership Officer,

Chris Birch on 0403 905 023. This will allow your

Association to continue to provide you with updated
information throughout the year.

SCESWA BADGES & CAR STICKERS

SCESWA has three different types of Badges available to our members. We have Magnetic or Pin name badges.
Please see Jan Thorne to arrange. Cost: Pin \$14.50, Magnetic \$16.00

Cloth Badges for the Grey Shirts are available to be sewn on by HIP Pocket at the members cost and are held at
Hip Pocket. However the payment for the cloth badge itself is a separate charge and is to be paid to Treasurer,
Judi Taylor. Cost is \$6.50. If any member is wanting a cloth badge separate from the shirt arrangement please
contact Jan Thorne to arrange purchase. We also now have SCESWA Car Stickers, Note Books, Bags and Coffee
Mugs for sale. These stickers are available for \$5.00 each. Note Books, Mugs and Bags \$10.00 each. They may
be purchased at all meetings and C n C and luncheon events.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for the next newsletter is 1 December 2023

Every effort will be made to use all contributions, but it may not be in the next issue.

Please send all articles, clear photos and letters to the Editor at the association address or email Lorraine at l.houlihan1@bigpond.com. We
look forward to members’ input.

Disclaimer: All contributions are welcome. All care will be taken with material but no responsibility is assumed or accepted by the publisher
or the SCESWA Inc.

