



HERBERT RIVER EXPRESS COLUMN OCTOBER 2010

COUNTRY WOMEN STILL LEADING THE WAY

Each year I have the privilege to be invited to attend the annual meetings of a number of the Queensland Country Women's Association branches in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. I marvel with admiration every year as these dedicated ladies report on their activities during the previous 12 months, including the fundraising, the donations, the charity work and the advocacy.

There is an undeserving public misconception that the QCWA is just an organisation for women who get together to chat, drink tea and eat scones. Nothing could be further from the truth. While QCWA ladies certainly do enjoy the company of their fellow members and there is no doubt their hospitality skills are legendary, when you have the opportunity to listen to their discussions about the work they do and the worthy causes they support, you can not help but be impressed.

Established in 1922, the QCWA is one of the largest women's organisations in Queensland. QCWA is non-party political and non-sectarian. The QCWA is a strong and active organisation, currently with a membership of approximately 4500 women over the age of 16, in branches and younger set groups across the state. Members of the CWA in Queensland have proudly given more than 88 years of voluntary service to the community at local, state, national and international levels.

The QCWA does a lot of work advocating for improved education, health and community services for women and children in regional and rural areas of Queensland. Across the state, the QCWA is involved in the provision of aged care facilities, affordable holiday accommodation, emergency and respite accommodation and vital patient accommodation close to hospitals in urban areas for regional and rural patients away from home, who are forced to travel long distances for treatment.

One of the most important and valuable contributions made by the QCWA, is its role providing direct support to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. As a Member of Parliament, I can vouch for the fact that the QCWA is an active, respected and influential advocate for important issues that are of concern to women and children in regional and rural areas of Queensland.

The QCWA offers opportunities for its members to participate in a number of leadership, personal development and other training programs and prides itself on promoting and teaching practical and social skills such as handcrafts, music, drama, public speaking, dressmaking, cookery, knitting and crochet, which are valuable skills for families, particularly in difficult economic times.

The Herbert River district is served by the Abergowrie-Long Pocket, Upper Stone, Halifax, Forrest Beach and Cardwell branches of the Queensland CWA. I encourage local women who might be interested in joining to obtain more information, which can be found on the QCWA website (www.qcwa.or.au) or by contacting the Northern Divisional President, Mrs Kay O'Rourke on 4777 9139. I urge the whole community to support the work of the QCWA in our local community.

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