

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Wagga woman inspired at 2013 National Rural Women's Conference

As part of an ongoing commitment to youth leadership across the Riverina, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Riverina recently sponsored local Wagga Wagga woman Ms. Frankie Freeman to attend the 2013 National Rural Women's Conference (NRWC), held in Canberra 18 – 20 February.

Ms. Freeman was sponsored to attend the NRWC along with two other young women from Lockhart and Griffith, and joined 380 participants from across the country, including more than 35 from the Riverina. The aim of the RDA-Riverina sponsorship offering was to provide a unique opportunity for young women to be inspired and build networks with other rural women who are doing wonderful things to build vibrant rural communities.

A social entrepreneur and change maker with a strong sense of community, Ms. Freeman has been involved in groups such as the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition and has established local events, including World AIDS Day in Wagga Wagga.

Employed as a Community Health and Wellbeing Project Officer focusing on issues related to alcohol, other drugs and mental health at Red Cross, Wagga Wagga, Ms. Freeman wants to inspire youth to become involved in leadership opportunities within their local communities. Attending the NRWC was a chance for Ms. Freeman to gain valuable insight into the experience and skills needed to be a successful change agent in the rural context and learn from some of the most inspiring women from across the country.

"One stand out theme for me was the willingness of all women involved in the conference, both presenting and attending, to share their stories and use their experiences to drive a movement of rural female leaders," said Ms. Freeman.

"Miriam Silva's story was particularly endearing, her experience of leadership in male-dominated areas was told in a way which really cut to the crux of the issues, rather than being caught up in the gender debate which could have easily coloured her story.

"Her ideas of thinking about leadership as a 'what you have to give', rather than just 'what you have to do' issue really resonated with me and complemented the overarching theme of the conference of women sharing their time, talent and thoughts in creating a positive and strong community of rural women."

With a strong vision for increasing the presence of young rural women leaders, Ms. Freeman has made a conscious decision post-conference to make sure that the voices of rural and regional women are heard.

"What I have learnt from the conference will definitely shape how I contribute to the Riverina community; I will be sharing my story and knowledge to contribute to the progression of Riverina women. Not only that, I will also be promoting the goals and objectives of RDA-Riverina – it is one of the strongest vehicles for positive change in regional Australia that anyone can, and should, tap into."



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More information regarding the key-note speakers at the NRWC can be found at:

<http://www.cvent.com/events/national-rural-women-s-conference-2013/custom-17-d9ae31a0c5f048eca10cf8ed829840ef.aspx>