

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Organisation

Entry ID: PR00831

The Knickers Fund

(1998 - 2006)

Born 1 July, 1998, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Died 31 December, 2006, Bendigo Victoria Australia

Occupation Philanthropic organisation

Summary

The Knickers Fund was a philanthropic fund initiated and ultimately administered by the Central Victorian Women in Agriculture Inc. from 1998 to 2006. The fund aimed to give 'women in tragedy a glimpse of humour and of caring', from farm women to farm women, to enable them to buy the small, and otherwise impossible, comforts which helped them face the demands of a particularly challenging time, such as economic crisis, or the aftermath of floods after drought.

Details

The Knickers Fund was the initiative of Joy Chambers and the Central Victorian Women in Agriculture Group. It began during a trip to Melbourne in 1998, to take part in a teleconference link to the Australian delegates at the 2nd International Women in Agriculture Conference. The women were alerted to the plight of women in Gippsland, who were experiencing floods, after drought. These women put their families' financial needs first, and were unable, in the words of one women, to even afford to request new underwear for their birthday. The women took up a collection, and went to the Victoria Market, where they purchased the new underwear, and the Knickers Fund was born. It came into formal being in August of that year, at the monthly meeting of the CVWiA.

The Bendigo Bank was chosen to support and facilitate the fund. Initially it was envisaged that it would be rotated through the committees in the various regions which hosted the annual Women on Farms Gatherings, to use according to its aims, then replenish, and pass on. The fund aimed to give 'women in tragedy a glimpse of humour and of caring'- to enable them to buy the small comforts – a dressing gown, a haircut – which helped them face the challenge. A second possibility was that it would be passed to women in an area experiencing disaster. The community in need would be the Fund Controlling Group, and would replenish the fund when they were back on their feet, passing it along to the next group in need, 'from women to women'. A logo was designed, featuring lace. In the event, the fund stayed with the Central Victorian women, and it was distributed to women on farms experiencing financial difficulty, with a personal note, and a flyer detailing the history of the fund, as they were brought to their attention through a travelling farm consultant. When the Central Victorian Women in Agriculture Group was wound up in 2006, it was decided after a number of meetings to transfer the funds to the Loddon-Murray Community Leadership Program, which had helped members achieve some of their key aims.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

Brilliant Ideas and Huge Visions: ABC Radio Australian Rural Women of the Year - 1994-1997, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2011,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/rwya/rwya-home.html>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Audrey Drechsler, 1979-2009 \[manuscript\]](#)

Melbourne Museum

[Central Victorian Women in Agriculture Papers](#)

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