



## NRWC Annual General Meeting

### Minutes

Notice has been given that the National Rural Women's Coalition Ltd  
 Annual General Meeting  
 will be held virtually 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 12noon AEST (NSW/VIC/ACT/QLD) 11.30am (SA/NT), 10am (NT)

### Business

Meeting opened at 12.01pm

- Welcome – Jan Clifford OAM
- Acknowledgment of Country – Jan Clifford OAM
- Attendance – Jan Clifford OAM, Wendy Hick, Karen Holder, Jacqueline Brotherton, Cressida Cains, Nicole O'Reilly (12:53pm)
- Apologies – Dr Skye Charry, Ambassador Jo Stewart Rattray, Karen Bentely (Wesnet)
- Observers – NRWC Ambassador Leonie Noble, Jane Cowan – CEO, Women in Seafood Australasia, Emma Clarke from RRR Women – Queensland Rural Regional and Remote Women's Network, Nidhi Pardeshi from Settlement Services International, Coral Ross AM Australian Local Government Women's Association (12:15pm)
- Guest – Didural Khan (auditor)
- Secretariat – Keli McDonald & Jess Davis

Minutes of last Annual General Meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 - **Appendix 1**

Motion "Minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be accepted"

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

- CEO Keli McDonald to present a reflection on the years that's been. **Appendix 2**

### 1. Reports (circulated with Board papers and as tabled in annual report, copies supplied)

The 2024-2025 President Report – presented by Jan Clifford OAM – **Appendix 3**

Treasurer Karen Holder welcomed the NRWC's Auditor Didarul Khan, Director of Auditeo Australia Pty Ltd to the meeting and handed over to the Auditor for his findings.

There were no questions from the Board to the Auditor

- Audited Financial Statements and Auditors Report – **separate attachment**

**ACTION** – Auditor mentioned best practice moving forward is to recognise the volunteer’s contribution within the annual financial report in a per hour data capture.

1.1 Receive Accounts for 2024/25

Motion “To receive the Director’s Report, Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 as required by s317 Corporations Act 2001”

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

1.2 Adoption of Financial Accounts for 2024/2025

Motion “That the Board adopt the financial accounts for the year ended 30 June 2025 and that the Directors’ Report be approved and be signed by the President on behalf of the Board”

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

1.3 Directors’ Opinion

Motion “That the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and:

a. complies with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements; and

b. gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the company as of 30 June 2025 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.

In the Director’s opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

2024-2025 Treasurer Report –presented by Karen Holder - **Appendix 2**

2024 – 2025 Company Secretary Report – presented by Wendy Hick - **Appendix 2**

Motion “The President, Treasurer’s and Company Secretary’s Reports be accepted”

Moved:

Seconded:

Please note motion approved at the meeting following the AGM, which was General Meeting of the Member Organisation’s held at 1.15pm 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025.

## 2. Appointment of Auditor 2025 – 2026

Motion: *“That Auditeo Australia Pty Ltd, Level 32, 200 George Street Sydney NSW 2000 for 2025-26 financial year.”*

Moved: Karen Holder

Second:

Please note motion approved at the meeting following the AGM, which was General Meeting of the Member Organisation’s held at 1.15pm 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025.

## 3. 2025 – 2026 NRWC Ltd Place of Business, Registered Office, and Post Office Address

Motion

*“That the NRWC Ltd Place of Business and Registered Office will be Kels Country Pty Ltd, Suite 10-11, 203 Conadilly St GUNNEDAH NSW 2380.*

*“That the NRWC mailing address is PO Box 474 GUNNEDAH NSW 2380”*

Moved: Jan Clifford OAM

Second: Karen Holder

#### 4. Appointments and Appointment of Office Bearers 2025 – 2026

President Jan Clifford asked Ambassador Leonie Noble to Chair the official election of the 2025-2026 Executive at 12.44pm

The Nominations from the member organisations:

Member Organisations	19/20 Rep	20/21 Rep	21/22 Rep	22/23 Rep	23/24 Rep	24/25 Rep	25/26 Rep
Australian Women in Agriculture (AWiA)	Sarah Parker	Sarah Parker	Sarah Parker	Natalie Sommerville	Natalie Sommerville	Natalie Sommerville Cressida Cains	Cressida Cains
Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALWGA)	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford OAM	Jan Clifford OAM
Country Women's Association of Australia (CWAA)	Tanya Cameron	Tanya Cameron	Tanya Cameron – till Dec 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
National Rural Women's Health Alliance (NRHA)	Katherine Isbister	Melanie Saba	Melanie Saba/Heather Kneighley	Nicole O'Reilly	Nicole O'Reilly	Nicole O'Reilly	Nicole O'Reilly
Transport Women Australia Ltd (TWAL)				Jacqueline Brotherton	Jacqueline Brotherton	Jacqueline Brotherton	Jacqueline Brotherton
Women in Seafood Australasia (WiSA)	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Karen Holder	Karen Holder	Karen Holder

AWiA –Natalie Sommerville retired and Cressida Cains onboarded in November 2024.

4

Member Representative Name	Years of Service to June 2025
Jan Clifford	6 of 9
Nicole O'Reilly	3 of 9
Jacqueline Brotherton	3 of 9
Karen Holder	2 of 9
Cressida Cains	1 of 9

Nominated annually with a maximum 9 years.

Election of the Executive:

Leonie declared all positions vacant; nominations have been received from:

- President – Jan Clifford OAM
- Vice President – Jacqueline Brotherton
- Company Secretary – moved to general meeting
- Treasurer – Karen Holder

Company Secretary can also be the NRWC's CEO

#### MOTION

"The following member organization representatives are elected as the new office bearers of the NRWC for the 2025-26 financial year".

President – Jan Clifford OAM (ALGWA)

Vice President – Jacqueline Brotherton (TWAL)

Treasurer – Karen Holder (WiSA)

Moved:

Second:

Please note motion approved at the meeting regarding the AGM, which was General Meeting of the Member Organisation's held at 1.15pm 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025.

#### MOTION

*'That Keli McDonald, CEO, is co- Company Secretary of the National Rural Women's Coalition'*

Moved: Jan Clifford OAM

Second: Karen Holder

## 5. Setting of Annual Director's Stipend

Stipend is paid to Directors that physically attend a meeting representing NRWC. Currently the stipend to attend face-to-face Board Meetings is \$150 in line with the Stipend Policy.

Motion *"The stipend for the 2025-2026 Financial Year is \$150 and paid in-line with the Stipend Policy"*

Moved: Cressida Cains

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

## 6. 2025-2026 President's Honorarium

President Jan Clifford OAM removed herself as a conflict of interest 12.50pm and asked Ambassador Leonie Noble 12.51pm read motion.

Presidents Honorarium is currently \$6000 paid annually and can be taken as a wage or as reimbursement.

Motion. *"The President's Honorarium for the 2025-2026 Financial Year is \$6,000 and paid in-line with the President's Honorarium Policy"*

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Cressida Cains

Ambassador Leonie Noble handed the Chair back to President Jan Clifford OAM at 12.52pm

## 7. Membership Subscriptions 2025- 2026

The membership fee is currently set at \$0.00

Motion. *"The Annual membership for 2025-2026 will be set in \$0.00 in-line with article 4 of the Constitution)"*

Moved: Karen Holder

Seconded: Jan Clifford OAM

## 8. Annual General Meeting 2026

The date/location for the 2026 Annual General Meeting will be determined at a future General Meeting of the NRWC Board.

## 9. Close

**Meeting closed at:** 12.54pm

Nicole O'Reilly joined meeting at 12.53pm

## **APPENDIX 1**



## NRWC Annual General Meeting – Member Organisations

### MINUTES

Notice has been given that the National Rural Women's Coalition Ltd  
 Annual General Meeting – Member Organisations  
 will be held virtually October, 14<sup>th</sup> 10am AEST (NSW/VIC/ACT) 9am (QLD) 9.30am (SA), 8:30 (NT)

### Business

Meeting opened at 10.11am

- Welcome – Jan Clifford (OAM)
- Acknowledgment of Country – Keli McDonald
- Attendance –Jan Clifford (OAM), Nicole O'Reilly, Karen Holder, Jacqueline Brotherton, Natalie Sommerville (AWiA) arrived at 10.18am
- Apologies – Jo Stewart- Rattray (Ambassador)
- Observers – Wendy Hick
- Guest – Auditor - Didarul Khan (left meeting at 10.22am), Leonie Noble
- Secretariat – Keli McDonald & Jess Davis

Minutes of last Annual General Meeting held 29 November 2023 - **Appendix 1**

Motion “Minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 be accepted”

Moved: Jan Clifford

Seconded: Nicole O'Reilly

### 3. Reports (circulated with Board papers and as tabled in annual report, copies supplied)

President or Treasurer to welcome the NRWC's new Auditor Dadarul Khan, Director of Audit EO to the meeting

Auditor to report his findings

First year audit, transition from David, continue with same layout as previous year. Main improvement made was to revamp the overall financial report layout. Focus areas were Income recognition, related transactions correctly captured, testing on completion of income, testing on completion of liabilities all recorded in same period. All came

back clean. Overall engagement went smoothly and happy with reports.

Any questions from the Board?

- Audited Financial Statements and Auditors Report - **Appendix 2**

3.1 Receive Accounts for 2023/24

Motion *“To receive the Director’s Report, Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 as required by s317 Corporations Act 2001”*

Moved: Nicole O’Reilly

Seconded: Jan Clifford

3.2 Adoption of Financial Accounts for 2023/2024

Motion *“That the Board adopt the financial accounts for the year ended 30 June 2024 and that the Directors’ Report be approved and be signed by the President on behalf of the Board”*

Moved: Nicole O’Reilly

Seconded: Karen Holder

3.3 Directors’ Opinion

Motion *“That the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and:*

*c. complies with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements; and*

*d. gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the company as of 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.*

*In the Director’s opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.*

Moved: Jan Clifford

Seconded: Nicole O’Reilly

- President’s Report
- Treasurer’s Report
- Company Secretary’s Report

### **Appendix 3**

Motion *“The President, Treasurer’s and Company Secretary’s Reports be accepted”*

Moved: Jan Clifford

Seconded: Nicole O’Reilly

## **4. Appointment of Auditor 2024 – 2025**

Motion: *“That Audit EO, Level 32, 200 George Street Sydney NSW 2000*

*for 2024-25 financial year.”*

Moved: Jan Clifford

Second: Nicole O’Reilly

### 3. 2024 – 2025 NRWC Ltd Place of Business, Registered Office, and Post Office Address

#### Motion

*“That the NRWC Ltd Place of Business and Registered Office will be Kels Country Pty Ltd, Suite 10-11, 203 Conadilly St GUNNEDAH NSW 2380.*

*“That the NRWC mailing address is PO Box 474 GUNNEDAH NSW 2380”*

Moved: Nicole O’Reilly

Second: Natalie Sommerville

### 10.Appointments and Appointment of Office Bearers 2024 – 2025

President Jan Clifford passes the chair to Leonie Noble for the official election of the 2024-2025 Executive.

The Nominations from the member organisations:

Member Organisations	18/19 Rep	19/20 Rep	20/21 Rep	21/22 Rep	22/23 Rep	23/24 Rep	24/25 Rep
Australian Women in Agriculture (AWiA)	Sarah Parker	Sarah Parker	Sarah Parker	Sarah Parker	Natalie Sommerville	Natalie Sommerville	TBA
Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALWGA)	Coral Ross	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford	Jan Clifford OAM
Country Women’s Association of Australia (CWAA)	Tanya Cameron	Tanya Cameron	Tanya Cameron	Tanya Cameron – till Dec 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A
National Rural Women’s Health Alliance (NRHA)	Dorothy Coombe	Katherine Isbister	Melanie Saba	Melanie Saba/Heather Kneighley	Nicole O’Reilly	Nicole O’Reilly	Nicole O’Reilly
Transport Women Australia Ltd (TWAL)					Jacqueline Brotherton	Jacqueline Brotherton	Jacqueline Brotherton
Women in Seafood Australasia (WiSA)	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Leonie Noble	Karen Holder	Karen Holder

AWiA – one of directors within board take over from Natalie Sommerville. Just finalizing paperwork.

Member Representative Name	Years of Service to June 2024
Jan Clifford	5 of 9
Nicole O'Reilly	2 of 9
Jacqueline Brotherton	2 of 9
Karen Holder	1 of 9

Nominated annually with a maximum of 9 years

Election of the Executive:

I declare all positions vacant; nominations have been received from:

- a. President – Jan Clifford
- b. Vice President –
- c. Company Secretary –
- d. Treasurer – Karen Holder

Company Secretary can also be the NRWC's CEO

#### MOTION

*'That Keli McDonald, CEO, is co- Company Secretary of the National Rural Women's Coalition'*

Moved: Natalie Sommerville

Second: Nicole O'Reilly

### **11.Setting of Annual Director's Stipend**

Stipend is paid to Directors that physically attend a meeting representing NRWC. Currently the stipend to attend the face-to-face Board Meetings is \$150 in line with the Stipend Policy.

Motion *"The stipend for the 2024-2025 Financial Year is \$150 and paid in-line with the Stipend Policy"*

Moved: Jan Clifford

Seconded: Nicole O'Reilly

## 12.2024-2025 President's Honorarium

Presidents Honorarium is currently \$6000 paid annually and can be taken as a wage or as reimbursement.

Motion. *"The President's Honorarium for the 2024-2025 Financial Year is \$6,000 and paid in-line with the President's Honorarium Policy"*

Moved: Nicole O'Reilly

Seconded: Natalie Sommerville

## 13.Membership Subscriptions 2024- 2025

The membership fee is currently set at \$0.00

Motion. *"The Annual membership for 2024-2025 will be set in \$0.00 in-line with article 4 of the Constitution)"*

Moved: Nicole O'Reilly

Seconded: Natalie Sommerville

## 14.Annual General Meeting 2025

The date/location for the 2025 Annual General Meeting will be determined at a future General Meeting of the NRWC Board.

*Motion - To be discussed once know outcome of the funding.*

Close Meeting closed at: 10.35am 7

## **APPENDIX 2**

## **CEO – Year in Review – Keli McDonald**

The National Rural Women’s Coalition (NRWC) has continued to advance the voice, visibility, and leadership of rural, regional, and remote (RRR) women across Australia. This year has been defined by growth, collaboration, and innovation in the way we engage with women and advocate for their priorities at both national and international levels. We have been recognised for our work with the success application to continue to be a part of the National Women’s Alliance funding by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office for Women, Working for Women Grant. We thank the Federal Government deeply for its support.

Our Young Rural, Regional & Remote Advisory Panel (YRRRAP) has proven to be a vital platform for emerging leaders aged 18–30. Through innovative “open mic” sessions, we welcomed 27 young women from across the country to our first meeting, creating a safe, flexible space where they could choose their level of participation. These sessions provided important peer support while also surfacing critical issues facing young women, including reproductive health, access to maternity services, contraception information, and safety in family and intimate relationships.

YRRRAP members have made a significant contribution to NRWC’s advocacy, with insights feeding directly into submissions, government consultations, and sector discussions. We were also proud to support panel member Sara Marham from Karratha, WA, to represent the voices of young women at a national roundtable on prevention approaches and women’s safety.

In March 2025, the YRRRAP presented a Parallel Event at the Commission on the Status of Women 69<sup>th</sup> Session on challenges and opportunities for young women living in rural Australia.

In 2024 we launched the Rural, Regional & Remote Older Women’s group (RRROWG), a focus group of women aged 50+ who provide input into NRWC’s advocacy and submissions. Fourteen women expressed interest in joining the group, and the inaugural meeting was held in December. This initiative ensures the diverse lived experiences of older women are included in our work and advocacy.

Our work with the RRROWG highlighted systemic barriers to older women’s workforce participation due to pension income caps and calls for rural Australia employers to embrace the value of older women employees through reducing ageism and sexism, improving job recruitment so older women are not discriminated against, by valuing older rural women’s industry knowledge community connectivity and mentor and training skills and by providing training for older women.

This energetic and passionate volunteer group meet each month at night for an hour.

Our NETWORK of stakeholder organisations continues to grow strongly, expanding from 12 to 19 members between June and July 2025. We welcomed new members including the National Older Women’s Network, COTA, WIRE, and Settlement Services International, Raise our Voice Australia, Women’s Environmental Leadership Australia and Women in Emergencies Network. This network deepens our capacity to share information, collaborate, and strengthen advocacy efforts on issues affecting RRR women.

Though out the year we have had the privilege to work more closely with these amazing organisations. In March we were invited to join Settlement Service International to celebrate International Women’s Day at events held in Tamworth, Armidale and Coffs Harbour with their members, volunteers, service providers and guests. Even the uninvited Cyclone Alfred did not dampen the enthusiasm of rural women gathering to celebrate their heritage and their future. We deeply appreciate this opportunity provided to us by Dr Astrid Perry OAM and her team at SSI.

We also provided collective advocacy with THE ParentHood on the issues of childcare access in rural regional and remote Australia, join our voice to media releases and lodging submissions at the inquiry

The NRWC joined NETWORK Organisations Raise our Voice Australia, Women's Environmental Leadership Australia and National Older Women's Network at the Women's Climate Congress in Castlemaine Victoria to hear from and speak to women and the impacts of Climate Change and the importance of grassroots advocacy and action.

Joining NETWORK member CWA NSW at their annual conference in Coffs Harbour was also an important way to reinforce the strength of our aligned policy positions.

Australian Gender Equality Council held a workshop and new branding launch in Melbourne that the NRWC attended. This two-day workshop helps keep the NRWC informed on the activities of AGEC and an opportunity to hear from Dr Terry Fitzsimmons on the latest Gender Equality statistics.

The National Rural Women's Coalition sits on the Women for Election Design Council this supports the innovative work of Women for Election and their partner, and NRWC member Organisation Australian Women in Local Government Association as the together they work to get more women in politics, locally, at a state level and at a federal level.

The National Rural Women's Coalition also holds positions on:

The Rural Health Commissioner's Advisory Board and The National Women's Health Council

NRWC throughout the year has maintained strong working relationships with the other National Women's Alliances. Together we finalised the CEDAW Shadow Report, reflecting comprehensive consultation and advocacy on gender equality in Australia, and co-developed under the new Working for Women Grant in 2025 an Election Platform and new Terms of Reference for working collaboratively, embedding intersectional approaches into collective advocacy

In partnership with NATSIWA, we co-designed and implemented a national survey on contraception access. Early results indicate gaps in knowledge and accessibility, strong support for free hygiene products in public toilets, and the need for life-stage-appropriate education. The survey has engaged over 250 women and girls, including Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and gender-diverse participants.

The NRWC worked with the Women's Rights Gender Equality Caucus in producing NGO Beijing+30 Shadow Report and participated in the Asia-Pacific B+30 Review in Bangkok with both Ambassador Leonie Noble and my self-attending the 5 day event in Bangkok in November 2024. This International regional event was in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women 69th session held in New York in March 2025 which was attended by NRWC Director Wendy Hick and Ambassador Jo Stewart Rattray. Attendance can no longer be covered by the Working for Women's Grant so without these two volunteers self-funding to attend, the NRWC would have been the only National Women's Alliance not in attendance at this International event.

The National Rural Women's Coalition also participated in virtual Parallel Events at CSW 69 to ensure RRR women's perspectives are represented in international forums, one was specifically for young women and was facilitated and delivered by the NRWC's YRRRAP and the second event was on rural women's safety and the role of Government, this was watched by more than 600 women from across the world.

This year, our communications reach has grown across multiple platforms. Facebook followers increased to 18,271, Instagram to 882, and LinkedIn impressions reached over 2,800. Through consistent posting, data-driven content, and impactful campaigns such as our International Day of Rural Women video, we have amplified the message that rural women can do anything.

We actively engaged with over 45 organisations and government departments, attending conferences, advisory committees, and forums. Highlights include:

- Australia Women in Agriculture Conference
- NSW CWA Annual Conference
- Regional Investment Corporation – access to finance for rural women

- Climate Change Congress – presenting on women’s leadership in climate adaptation.
- Digital Id System – embedding inclusion and safety into new systems
- Digital Health for the Bush Forum – addressing telehealth access for remote communities.
- Jobs and Skills Australia Gender Economic Equality Study – contributing lived experience to national policy research.
- Rapid Review into Women’s Safety
- Elder Abuse in Rural Australia
- Leaving the Violence Program
- National Safety Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

We also undertook consultations with members and partners, including contributions to national breastfeeding support service evaluations and engagement with researchers on innovative contraception tools. Each consultation ensured that rural women’s experiences informed service delivery and policy conversations.

The NRWC made targeted submissions to government inquiries and policy consultations, including:

- Early Childhood Education and Care (Three Day Guarantee) Bill 2025.
- Joint advocacy through the NWA 2025 Election Platform.
- Safe & Responsible AI in Australia – AI Guardrails for RRR Women
- Inquiry into Better and Fairer Schools (Funding Reform) Bill 2024
- Enhancing Civil Protections and Remedies for Forced Marriage in Australia
- Letters supporting regional reproductive health and climate equity initiatives.

**To read the full submissions:** <https://www.nrwc.com.au/resources/position-papers/submissions>

Through our eSkilling programs, we continue to invest in the confidence, knowledge, and leadership of RRR women. In October 2024, in partnership with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, we hosted a Women’s Financial Wellbeing webinar, providing practical skills and tools on safeguarding financial health, recognising financial abuse, and planning across the life course.

The year has been rich with achievements but also highlighted ongoing challenges: limited access to health services, persistent safety concerns, and the need for better recognition of RRR women’s contributions in national policy. NRWC will continue to address these issues, ensuring that the voices of rural, regional, and remote women—young, older, and from all diverse backgrounds—are heard in decision-making processes.

I extend my deep gratitude to the NRWC Directors, NRWC Ambassadors, Member Organisations, the NRWC NETWORK, and our many partners and supporters. A special thank you to Jessica Davis for supporting the Secretariat from within. Thank you also to the rural regional and remote women of Australia in all their diversity that are making a positive difference where they live and for supporting our advocacy through responding to surveys, gatherings and callouts for input. Together, the NRWC, NETWORK Supporters and rural women of Australia are creating opportunities for women to connect, lead, and thrive—strengthening not only rural women but their communities across Australia.

Thank you.

Keli McDonald

## **APPENDIX 3**

## **President Report – Jan Clifford OAM**

Jan to read President Report –

As we reflect on another incredible year for the National Rural Women’s Coalition, I want to begin by offering heartfelt thanks to our dedicated Board of Directors. Your leadership, insight, and passion for creating a better, fairer future for rural, regional, and remote (RRR) women has been unwavering. Your commitment ensures that our voice continues to be strong and relevant in the national conversation.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to champion the invaluable contribution of women and gender-diverse people in the bush. From running small businesses, leading farms, volunteering in their communities, raising families, mentoring the next generation, and driving innovation across industries—RRR women are the heartbeat of our rural towns. Their contribution goes far beyond economics. They strengthen the social, cultural, and emotional fabric of the communities they call home.

Yet we must acknowledge the tough realities many face. Climatic challenges—including drought, floods, and extreme weather events—continue to shape the daily lives and futures of rural women and girls. These conditions don’t just impact crops or livestock; they affect mental health, income stability, community cohesion, and access to essential services. And yet, time and time again, rural women show resilience, determination, and care for one another that is nothing short of inspiring.

Safety remains a fundamental priority for us. Every woman and girl—regardless of where she lives—deserves to feel safe in her workplace, in her home, and in public spaces. For rural women and gender-diverse people, barriers to accessing support and safety services can be even greater due to distance, isolation, stigma, or lack of resources. That’s why our work advocating for accessible, culturally appropriate, and community-led safety initiatives is more important than ever.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on empowering RRR women and gender-diverse people to thrive—by amplifying their voices, building leadership opportunities, and ensuring their unique needs are recognised in policy and decision-making at every level.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, partners, and every woman who has shared her story or supported our work this year. We are proud to stand with you and for you. Together, we are building stronger, safer, and more connected rural communities.

## **Treasurer Report – Karen Holder**

Finalization of The NRWC current round of core funding from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, administered by the Office for Women occurred in 2024/25 following a short grant extension ending in November. The funding was used for engagement, advocacy and consultation to inform policy positions. Additional project funds associated with the CEDAW (Shadow Committee on the elimination of discrimination against Women) have been acquitted following completion of the report.

We have been working with Women for Election who are funded to support more women to election at Local, State and Federal government levels. As member of their Design Council, we support their advocacy through advice and engagement using NRWC platforms.

It was very pleasing to have a new round of core funding for NRWC alongside the National Women’s Alliances - Working for Women program. A total of \$1,813,969 until 2028/29. This is a small increase annually on the previous grant and provides security for the operation of NRWC for the next 4 years.

The grant comes with new opportunities including expansion of NRWC grassroots volunteer engagement and increased focus on policy positions for submission to Government. This enables NRWC to canvas member organisations for the issues that are important and provide reporting of overall reach.

The finances of NRWC are subject to monthly finance committee meetings and budget oversight with deliberate design to avoid both over and underspend. Keli has been working closely with the new auditor Auditeo, some small, suggested changes have been made to provide clarity around the changeover to the new grant.

There has been work undertaken by both our office staff member Jess and Board members to update and streamline the process for changing bank signatories each year associated with position changes. The challenges around a National Board for this to happen is lengthy and we are now confident that the process can be managed effectively.

CEO Keli McDonald has been with NRWC for over 10 years, and this experience is evident in the knowledge and care that goes into management and reporting of the NRWC Finances and activities.

I would like to thank Keli for her continued work at NRWC and thank the other Directors on the Finance Committee, Jan Clifford OAM and Wendy Hick for the expertise and support.

### **Company Secretary Report - Wendy Hick**

It is with pleasure that I present my first report as National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC) Company Secretary, having taken on the role at the 2024 AGM held on 14 October 2024 and following in the footsteps of previous Secretary Natalie Sommerville.

Throughout the year, National Rural Women's Coalition has delivered against its established work plan, provided development and networking opportunities for Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) women and supported member organisations in various ways.

NRWC's registration with Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) remains current and meets all ongoing reporting obligations.

Our yearly in person Board meeting was held in January 2025 in Adelaide, with all Board members attending as well as the two newly appointed NRWC Ambassadors, Leonie Noble and Jo Stewart-Ratray. This meeting provided the opportunity to consolidate strategic planning, review policies and discuss aims and direction for the organisation moving forward.

Further Board meetings have been conducted online on a quarterly basis, with extraordinary meetings called when necessary. The past year the NRWC has held 4 online meetings and one extraordinary meeting. The Finance and Governance Committees have met regularly, usually once a month, or more frequently if required. All directors have fulfilled their obligations to the NRWC in a professional manner and without exception.

The NRWC Board continues to work on reviewing and updating current NRWC policies as well as formulating new policies to ensure we remain relevant, compliant, and effective.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Office for Women) granted NRWC an extension of funding through the Women's Leadership and Development Program from July 1 to November 30, 2024, and an acquittal for the extension amount was submitted prior to the 31 March 2025 deadline.

NRWC has been successful in receiving funding from the Office For Women through the Working for Women Grant which will run from 1 December 2024 to June 2027. We are extremely appreciative to receive this grant which supports NRWC to work towards improved outcomes for women and gender equality in Australia, through specific focus on 5 priority areas of the Strategy:

- Gender-based violence
- Unpaid and paid care
- Economic equality and security
- Health
- Leadership, representation, and decision-making.

As part of the grant process, NRWC will regularly collaborate with the National Women's Alliances to enable the provision of expert gender advice to Government and ensure women's voices inform implementation of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (the Strategy).

Although the National Rural Women's Coalition does not work directly with persons under 18 years, the NRWC does complete A Child Safe Compliance Statement which is updated each year as part of our OFW grant requirements. All contractors and directors working directly with RRR women through the NRWC must have a police check from the state in which they reside.

We look forward to continuing our work in advocating for the needs of RRR women, their families and communities. Thank you to CEO, Keli McDonald, Admin, Jess Davis and contract staff for your dedication and effort in assisting with governance and ensuring NRWC is ever present in the RRR women's advocacy space.

My appreciation also to NRWC President, Jan Clifford, for her leadership of the organisation and providing her expertise and support throughout the governance and policy review process.

