

ENGAGING BARADINE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Report on the Wonderful Women's Workshop - A day of nurturing and rejuvenating held at the Baradine CWA hall on Saturday, 26 August

The Wonderful Women's Workshop is the first in a series of 'Engaging Baradine Community' programme events to be held by the branch with the assistance of funding received from the Royal Agricultural Society Charity Brunch.

It was decided to hold this initial event specifically for women and at the same time as the local Men's Shed Association 'Men's Muster and Health Expo Day' to give the Baradine branch of CWA the opportunity to reach out to women in and beyond the community.

The focus of the free event was on the provision of mental and general health information delivered through a one day programme of fun activities.

Thirty participants, some of them partners of the men attending the Men's Muster, rolled-up for the programme organised through Ability Links NSW. Ability Links NSW is a way of connecting people with disability, their families and carers in the community. Ability Links coordinator from Coonabarabran Brenda Baker, was the prime driver in presenting the information presentations and connected activity sessions that included yoga, mindfulness exercises, painting and visualisation and drumming.

The purpose of the session was to demonstrate simple techniques that develop proper breathing and mental exercise skills, strengthen memory and improve concentration, build problem-solving and motor skills and assist with stress relief and the development of optimistic attitudes.

Participants, who all had great fun making their own sort of music in the drumming session, were shown that drumming accelerates physical healing and helps to boost the immune system. In addition specific studies conducted by professionals in the fields of music therapy and mental health show that drumming reduces tension, anxiety and stress and help to control chronic pain.

Drumming synchronize the lower areas of the brain (non-verbal) with the frontal cortex (language and reasoning). This integration produces feelings of insight and certainty.

The day concluded with a presentation from Sue Bowden from Stroke Awareness who shared the most current information regarding strokes and how to recognise the signs of a stroke and the importance of acting fast.

We were feeling our way with this first 'Engaging Baradine Community' event, but are very happy with the attendance and resulting feedback. Our next event will be a two-day Mental Health First Aid workshop, which will also include some entertainment and fun.

Once again, on behalf of Baradine CWA, I would like to thank the RAS Charity Brunch members for their greatly appreciated help in making all this happen. We feel very optimistic that this project will go some way towards improving local knowledge on the availability of mental health support for our rural families.

I look forward to providing you with a further update on our project following the next programme event in early December.

Liz Cutts – Baradine CWA Secretary

3/9/2017