

## Rural women in Australia

Dear Editor:

As a member of the Dunrobin Branch of FWIO, I thought it might be of interest to the members in Ontario to get a glimpse of how their sister organization here in Australia operates.

I am here in Western Australia with my husband who is on a two year secondment from the federal government and as he is working for the state government, we are living here in Perth (the capital).

The Country Women of Western Australia (CWA) is based on the same principles as Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and is a member of Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). The CWA operates a distinctly Australian style of program compared to WI in Ontario.

Many branches are fortunate to own their own halls which provide a venue for all their activities. Their meetings are held once a month and start at 10 a.m. with business followed by lunch, then a guest speaker in the afternoon, finishing around 3 p.m.

There are weekly meetings of the choir and drama group as they prepare for annual competitions held during the state conference. There is also a handicraft group which meets once a month to work on articles for the annual handicraft exhibition and forum.

Many members serve as volunteers on committees and boards which administer such projects as holiday homes at various resorts, frail aged hostels, and the Emer-

gency Accommodation Scheme which assists people from country areas who have difficulty finding a place to live.

Members are also involved in supporting various hospitals by knitting for children's wards; fundraising for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Ronald McDonald House, Red Cross Society and many other charities.

Some divisions have radio programs informing the public of the work and activities of the CWA. There is also a training program which is provided at all levels of the CWA to help members to become more effective at the branch level.

*Flora Knight, Perth, Australia*

## It's time for us to be political

Dear Editor:

On Dec. 7, several members of Northgate WI went to Queen's Park to hear New Democratic Party environment critic Ruth Greer speak on garbage disposal in general, and particularly the dangers from toxic waste.

Mrs. Greer talked about the continued pollution of lakes and rivers from chemical

plants and pulp mills, of the air from fossil fuels and sulphur emissions, and even of our drinking water from seepage. Giving examples, she showed how little has changed in two years.

It may be time for the Women's Institute to change. In the past we have prided ourselves on being non-political. We have trusted our members to carry out their elec-

tion promises. It doesn't work.

The "dear, sweet, little, old ladies sipping tea" also have votes, and know how to use them to get clean air and water.

*Ruth Hunt, Northgate WI,  
North Wellington*

## We can make a difference

Dear Editor:

After attending the waste management conference at Kingston as the coordinator for the Simcoe Area Women's Institute, I became a dedicated worker in an attempt to make the public aware of the need to take action NOW and save our environment.

I have travelled miles to speak to dif-

ferent organizations, been on TV and assisted in displays. After writing a skit for environment week where members took part in a fashion show on the four r's. I had it made into a video which I loan to others.

I congratulate the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) for taking

action on this concern and for inspiring me to make it my priority. Together we can make a difference.

*May Brown, Washago WI*

### Handicraft contest related to wool products

Sheep Focus, held July 20 to 22 in Erin, offers competition classes in handicrafts and art related to sheep and wool. If you would like more information or entry forms, please contact

Michelle Raynor, The Wild Wood, R. R. #1, Campbellcroft, LOA 1B0, 416-797-2553 (after 10:30 a.m.).