



Media Release

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Wheatbelt women discover how families survive drought

Five women from the WA Wheatbelt have returned home after spending a week investigating how Victorian farming families survived drought.

While the Birchip cropping region in Western Victoria is experiencing a bumper season, it's come after ten years of dry seasons.

Five WA women were chosen to tour the region through a program run by Wheatbelt NRM.

The idea was to celebrate women in decision-making roles and learn climate change adaptation strategies.

Wheatbelt NRM's Natarsha Woods said the Birchip tour highlighted the need for good mental health services to help people deal with drought.

"What was also heartening was natural resource management remained a priority as people began to see the impact drought was having on the environment."

The five women were Cunderdin's Jo Fulwood, Erin Turner from East Pingelly, Quairading's Shauna Stone, Hyden's Jane Mouritz and Beverley's Sarah Miller.

Jo Fulwood said the trip highlighted how resilient people had become because of the dry years.

"Despite the financial hardship, the drought seemed to strengthen the fabric of communities," she said.

"Dry seasons seem to happen over extended periods of time, and we need to be prepared for that.

"This means local and state governments may need to step in and provide better support services to farmers, who through no fault of their own, are struggling to deal with drought."

To read some of the stories from the Birchip tour you can head to <http://birchiptour.blogspot.com>

Each of the women will share what they learnt at local community events.

These include;

25th October 2010, Girls Night Out in Hyden

27th October 2010, Corrigin Farm Improvement Day

9th November 2010, Cunderdin morning tea

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