

CWA of NSW Awareness Week 6 - 13 September 2014



CWA Media Background Information: Lyme Disease

Lyme disease

At the CWA of NSW annual conference in May, several motions were accepted as areas of focus over the next 12 months and Lyme disease was one of these. The CWA of NSW is calling for continued investigation into the existence of Lyme disease in Australia and the acknowledgement that this disease can be contracted in Australia.

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by bacteria (spirochete) that infects humans from the bite of ticks which are infected with the bacteria. Some Doctors believe that Lyme disease does not exist in Australia and believe that anyone who has contracted Lyme disease must have travelled overseas to contract the disease in more endemic areas (such as the USA & Europe).¹

The CWA of NSW has written to the federal Minister for Health about this issue and we will be encouraging each Branch to write to their local MP.

Sharon Whiteman, President of the Lyme Disease Association of Australia, has provided the following quote to CWA:

"Raising awareness of Lyme disease is critical because Australians are getting sick after tick bites and the majority of the Australian medical profession continues to deny the possibility of locally acquired Lyme disease.

People presenting to a GP with obvious symptoms post tick bite are denied early intervention treatment and provided alternate diagnoses when their symptoms progress into the later, more serious stages of the disease. People are becoming seriously ill while being denied proper medical treatment because a cause for our Lyme-like illness has not yet been discovered in Australia.

The tragedy of our situation is that Lyme disease is treatable. If treated early the chances of full recovery are good, but left untreated Lyme disease can totally destroy lives. Australian patients report to us that they are getting better with treatment, but their counterparts who possibly can't afford or are refused treatment continue to needlessly and tragically suffer and decline in health.

¹ Lyme Disease Association of Australia, <http://www.lymedisease.org.au>

Lyme awareness saves lives, we strongly encourage you to ensure those you love and care about get access to education about tick borne infections and what action to take."

Country Women's Association

The CWA was formed out of desperate need. Country women were fighting isolation and an appalling lack of health facilities and the constraints of a male dominated society. These women realised they had nowhere else to turn but themselves – and the result was staggering. Within a year the Association was a unified, resourceful group that was going from strength to strength.

Formed in 1922 in the town of Crookwell, today the Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW has approximately 10,000 members state-wide.

CWA members come from all walks of life. They live in the city and the country. They were born in Australia or have chosen Australia to be their home. And they share a commitment to improving the lives of women and their families by lobbying government on key agenda issues, fundraising and teaching life skills.

As part of the largest women's organisation in Australia, the aims of the not-for-profit Association are to:

- Bring women and families together to form a network of friendship and support;
- Provide a forum for the voice of women in NSW;
- Improve the conditions and welfare of all women and families, especially in regional and rural areas;
- Support initiatives that enhance the value of 'country living' – especially in the areas of health and education;
- Encourage development in regional areas and increase the viability of rural communities;
- Consult different levels of Government on a variety of issues affecting agriculture and the environment, education, health, transport and telecommunications.

Each member belongs to one of 397 CWA local Branches around NSW – located in both city and regional areas. While working for the overall aims of the Association, Branches are empowered to run their own agenda and are focused on addressing the issues affecting their local community.

The CWA of NSW is a member of CWA Australia – which has more than 25,000 members and 1,500 branches around the country.

The CWA of NSW is also a member of the Association of Country Women of the World (ACWW). The ACWW is the largest international organisation for rural women. It has a uniquely down-to-earth approach, offering mutual support, friendship and practical help to its members. Through its 365 Member Societies, the ACWW has a membership of nine million across 70 countries.