

**CWA of NSW**  
**Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch**

# Seasonal Newsletter



## Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the MMEB CWA Newsletter

As the days grow cooler and the colours begin to shift across our mountain, we welcome you to our Autumn edition of the Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch CWA Newsletter.

This season invites us to pause, reflect, and appreciate the strength and generosity that define our community. Just like the rich autumn harvest, our branch continues to flourish because of the dedication of our members, volunteers, and supporters. Your time, your skills, and your willingness to show up — they make everything we do possible.

Inside this edition, you'll find a wonderful celebration of the season:  
news, events, and highlights from across the branch

We're also pleased to share a heartfelt seasonal message from our President, reflecting on the achievements of recent months and the opportunities ahead as we embrace this new season together.

Whether you're pruning gardens, preserving produce, or preparing for cooler days, we hope this newsletter brings inspiration, warmth, and a sense of connection to the community we are so proud to be part of.

Thank you to every member and neighbour who continues to support our work, attend our events, and lift our branch through your kindness and commitment.

Happy reading,  
The Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch

## Mangrove Mountain Poets Breakfast — A Beautiful Morning of Words, Food & Community

On Sunday, 16 March, locals and visitors came together at the Mangrove Mountain Union Church Hall for the much-loved annual Poets Breakfast — a joint fundraising event hosted by the Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch CWA and the Mangrove Mountain Union Church.

The hall was filled with poetry, conversation, and the comforting aroma of a hearty country breakfast, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere enjoyed by all.



## A Breakfast Made With Care

The morning began with a generous spread prepared and served by volunteers from both the CWA Evening Branch and the Union Church.

Guests enjoyed a full hot breakfast including:

- sausages
- bacon
- tomatoes
- mushrooms
- eggs
- toast
- tea and coffee

The community once again showed its generosity by donating food and raffle prizes. The raffle helped raise funds for the Mangrove Mountain Union Church, and several lucky winners went home with wonderful prizes.

In total, around 60 people attended — a fantastic turnout on a beautifully sunny Mangrove Mountain day. The church hall was thoughtfully set up for the occasion, adding to the welcoming atmosphere.



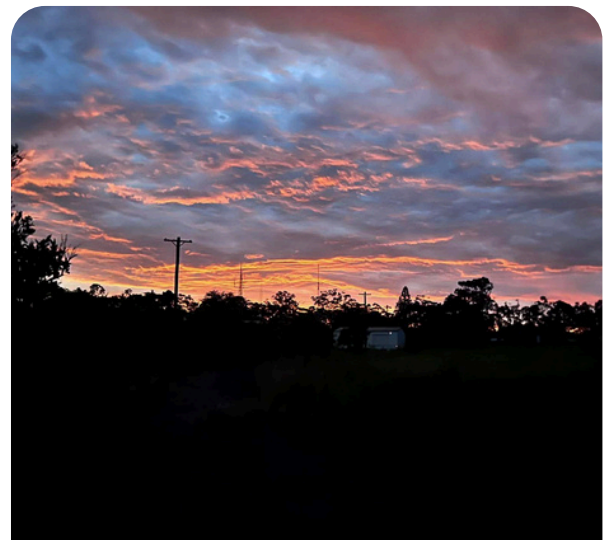
## Poetry Shared and Celebrated

With breakfast plates cleared and spirits high, guests settled in for the poetry readings. Participants took turns sharing original pieces and selected favourites, offering a delightful mix of thoughtful reflections, humour, and heartfelt moments. The audience was warm and appreciative — a true celebration of community creativity.

After the readings, guests were treated to homemade sweets and traditional scones with jam and cream, along with another cuppa, continuing the relaxed and friendly feel of the morning.

## A Special Moment: The Return of a Treasured Bible

One of the standout moments of the event was the meaningful return of a historic Bible to the Union Church. Originally donated by the Fitsimmons family in 1992, the Bible had been away during a period of uncertainty about the church's future. Its presentation back to the church during the Poets Breakfast was a touching reminder of the area's heritage and the community's enduring connection to the Union Church.



### Poetry Shared and Celebrated: Autumn on Mangrove Mountain By Bec Bartlett

Autumn settles on the Mountain,  
soft with mist in early light.  
Cool air drifts across the orchards,  
as rolling hills glow warm and bright.

Citrus hangs from glossy branches,  
lanterns in the gentle sun,  
while leaves fall slow along the roadside  
where winding country lanes run.

Morning fog fills quiet valleys,  
lifting as the day grows warm.  
Birdsong carries through the bushland,  
riding on the breeze so calm.

Kitchens brim with autumn comfort—  
cakes, warm bread, and marmalade,  
citrus picked straight from the orchard,  
simple country meals homemade.

Evening comes a little sooner,  
painting skies with amber light.  
And Mangrove Mountain settles gently  
into cool and quiet night.

*Poem by: Bec Bartlett*

*Photo by: Karen B.*

### A Morning to Remember

The event concluded with more conversation, laughter, and the shared enjoyment of poetry among friends and neighbours. The many comments and smiles throughout the hall reflected just how much the morning was appreciated.

A heartfelt thank you to all volunteers and contributors whose hard work made the Poets Breakfast another wonderful success.

The Mangrove Mountain community once again showed the strength of its spirit — and its love of good food, good company, and good poetry.

# PRESIDENT UPDATE

## Why the CWA Began: A Century of Women Supporting Women

Life in rural Australia has never been easy, but a hundred years ago it was especially demanding for women. Most farmhouses had no electricity or running water, and the daily work required to keep a family afloat was immense. Women managed the home, cared for children, and also carried out essential outdoor tasks—milking cows, tending poultry and pigs, growing vegetables, maintaining fruit trees, and gathering firewood to cook every meal.

On top of this unrelenting labour, rural women lived with constant uncertainty: dust storms, drought, bushfires, floods, mouse plagues, and swarms of flies could wipe out food, income, or shelter overnight. With few hospitals, almost no maternity care, limited schooling, poor transport, and unreliable communication, many women felt deeply isolated. Even a trip to town offered little comfort—public facilities were scarce, and many public spaces, like hotel toilets, were for men only.

The need for change became undeniable during the First World War. The loss of soldiers was devastating, but the toll at home was also heartbreaking: around 58,000 babies died in Australia during the war years, and between the late 1800s and 1924 more than 9,000 women in NSW alone died in or shortly after childbirth. Improving healthcare and support for rural families had become a matter of urgency.

### A Movement Begins

By the early 1920s, the struggles of country women were gaining recognition. In 1922, a conference for rural women was organised during the Sydney Easter Show—one time of year when many country families visited the city. On 18 April 1922, women gathered at The Country Club in Castlereagh Street and committed to improving life on the land. At that first meeting, Grace Munro was elected the inaugural State President of the Country Women's Association.

From the start, the vision was clear: a grassroots, decentralised organisation made up of small, local branches so that support could reach even the most remote districts. News of the new association spread quickly through Agricultural Bureaus, local councils, newspapers, and the Red Cross, inspiring women across NSW to form their own branches.

### Early Achievements

The CWA immediately began championing vital services, supporting the NSW Bush Nursing Association and helping establish baby health centres, hospitals, and much-needed rest rooms for women travelling into town. One of their earliest dreams—providing affordable seaside holidays for outback women—was realised when Keera House at Dee Why was purchased in 1923.



# PRESIDENT UPDATE CONT.

## The CWA on the Central Coast

The Central Coast was first served by country branches. Terrigal opened the region's first branch in 1930 and soon established a Baby Health Centre. Gosford followed, creating rest rooms near the station, and by 1932 its members were assisting neighbouring communities to start new branches. That same year, the Mangrove Mountain branch formed—when cars were rare, buggies common, and a trip into Gosford could take half a day.

In 2018, the Mangrove Mountain & Districts (MME) branch began with the goal of helping save the local church—an ongoing, community-driven effort that continues to unite members today.

Nearly a century on, the Central Coast now has 14 active CWA branches, each contributing to community life in meaningful, practical ways. The region proudly counts ten Life Members among its ranks, and across NSW more than 8,000 members continue to advocate for issues affecting women, families, and regional communities.



## Looking Ahead

While the nature of rural challenges has changed, the CWA's purpose remains the same. Isolation now comes in the form of poor telecommunications. Housing insecurity has become a major concern. And across a vast country like Australia, there will always be new hurdles for communities to overcome.

What hasn't changed is the CWA's commitment: to stand up for women, support families, strengthen communities, and ensure every voice—no matter how remote—is heard.



Bec our handicraft officer being celebrated for her group handicraft report



Judy and Catherine accepting their volunteer award

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# PRESIDENT UPDATE CONT.



## Upcoming Events and Activities



You'll find us at six of the Mangrove Monthly Markets in February, May, June, August, October, and December in 2026. The Peat's Ridge Country Women's Association will also be participating in these markets on the months we are not attending, allowing each group to coordinate their calendars effectively.

In addition, we will be holding a jam-making session in Kariong with the Kariong Eco Gardens. More details to follow soon.

We will be organising a bus trip into the mountains for the fourteen branches of the Country Women's Association Northumberland Group in June. This trip will focus on agricultural and environmental topics of interest to our members.



Our branch is a welcoming and active group of ladies, and we warmly encourage anyone with a spare Tuesday night to come along and join us.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if there is any way we can assist you.

[judybetteridge@gmail.com](mailto:judybetteridge@gmail.com)

**Judy B**  
**Branch President**

# MMEB Branch Group Judging Day Wrap-Up

We had a wonderful day at Group Judging and are excited to share our branch's results! We placed around 7th overall for the eight branch items (final confirmation to come).

## A standout achievement:

Bec's beautiful Waffle Stitch crocheted blanket earned the highest points for our branch and is now all packed and ready to be judged at State Conference in May.

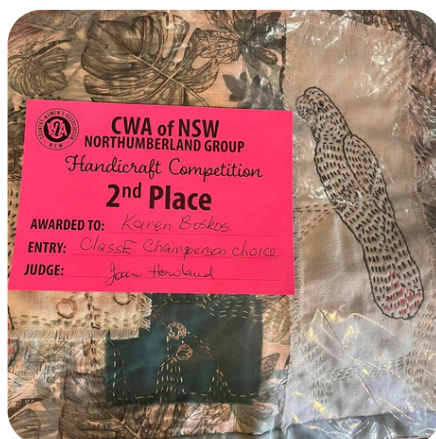
Huge congratulations, Bec, on an exceptional piece of work!

## Kitchen Craft Success:

- Catherine received 1st place for her delicious Strawberry Jam.
- Judy earned a Highly Commended for her delightful Surprise Cake.
- Well done, ladies—fantastic results!

## Handicraft Highlight:

Karen B's Kantha Stitching, chosen as the Chairman's Choice item, achieved a wonderful 2nd place.



# Grant-Funded Pie Warmer Boosts CWA Fundraising Efforts

Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch of the CWA is delighted to share some heart-warming news—quite literally!

Thanks to the generous grant from the Mangrove Mountain Districts Country Fair Committee, our branch has been able to purchase a brand-new pie warmer to support our ongoing fundraising efforts at the Mangrove Mountain Farmers and Artisans Market.

This wonderful addition means our much-loved sausage rolls and baked goods will be served perfectly warmed, helping us continue to deliver quality (and comfort!) to our local community and market visitors.

The pie warmer will have a permanent home in the Hall Kitchen, where it will be available not only for CWA use but also to support broader community activities, events, and future fundraising initiatives. It's an asset that will keep giving back for years to come.

A heartfelt thank you to the Mangrove Mountain Districts Country Fair Committee for their support—thank you, thank you, thank you!

Your generosity helps us continue the work we love, supporting our community one warm sausage roll at a time.





# MMEB seasonal relish



## 10 Ways I Use Tomato Relish in Autumn

Written by Tracey Ann – Ag & Environment Officer

Every autumn I'm reminded why making tomato relish is worth the effort. It's not just for sandwiches. It's the jar that quietly rescues dinner when the weather cools, when the slow cooker is bubbling away, or when something simply needs "a bit more".

Tomato relish isn't flashy – it's dependable. It deepens flavour, adds a gentle sweet-savory note, and somehow makes simple food taste better.

Here are ten of my favourite ways to use it once the mornings start to get crisp.

- In steak and onion pie gravy – Stir a spoonful into the filling before baking to add richness and depth.
- In grilled cheese sandwiches – A thin smear with sharp cheddar and caramelised onion turns a simple toastie into comfort food.
- On homemade burgers – Perfect with beef, lamb, or even pumpkin patties. It beats bottled sauce every time.
- In slow-cooked beef casserole – One or two tablespoons in the braising liquid deepens the flavour beautifully.
- On a ploughman's lunch – Ham, cheese, crusty bread and pickles all come together with a good spoon of relish.
- Brushed over roast chicken thighs – Add during the last 15 minutes so it becomes sticky and caramelised.
- Swirled through pumpkin soup – Just a teaspoon adds a lovely sweet contrast to roasted pumpkin.
- On loaded baked potatoes – Sour cream, bacon, chives and a spoonful of relish make an easy autumn dinner.
- Mixed into sausage roll filling – It keeps the mince moist and adds a subtle depth of flavour.
- As a meatloaf glaze – Spread over the top before baking for a glossy, sticky finish.

Tomato relish may not be the hero of the plate, but it's often the quiet backbone. It brings warmth to autumn cooking, lifts leftovers, and turns everyday meals into something special.

And if you've bottled it yourself, every spoonful is a reminder that you planned ahead for the cooler months.

Feel free to share your yummiest tomato relish snacks on our Facebook group during the Autumn season.



Autumn, 2026

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# **Autumn Season at CWA - What's Coming Up At CWA of NSW Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch**

As we settle into the autumn season, we have a great lineup of activities and meetings to keep our community connected and thriving.

## **Upcoming Activity Nights**

24 March

28 April – featuring our Fijian-themed Potluck Dinner!

26 May

Bring a dish, bring a friend, and join us on **28 April** as we celebrate the flavours and spirit of Fiji. It's a wonderful chance to enjoy good food, good company, and a relaxed evening together.

## **Meeting Nights**

14 April

12 May

We'd love to see as many members as possible—your ideas and involvement help shape everything we do.

And when we are not meeting in person we are meeting online via Zoom every Tuesday evening.

## **Congratulations to Our Cover Photo Competition Winner!**

We're delighted to announce that **Karen Boskos** is the winner of our Autumn Facebook Cover Photo Competition!

Karen's beautiful photograph of a freshly picked, sun-lit fig captured the rich colours and warmth of the season perfectly. The image celebrates the simple joys of autumn produce and the abundance of our local area.

Her winning photo will now feature as our Facebook group cover image throughout the autumn months, bringing a vibrant and seasonal touch to our online space.



## **Missed out?**

**Never fear.....**

**Our next issue will be out in June 2026.**

**Please submit your stories, yarns, recipes,  
chuckles and notes of interest to:**

**[publishmmeb@gmail.com](mailto:publishmmeb@gmail.com)**

**Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch aims to  
publish four seasonal newsletters.**

**Our release dates will be:**

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2026**

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

**21<sup>st</sup> December 2026**

**And so on and so on.....**