

## **SHN for 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 “Local Leaders”**

### **LAND ISSUES A BIG FOCUS FOR CWA**

Environment and agricultural issues are closely entwined in rural areas, and thus are a combined portfolio within the CWA. Helen Hackett of Moss Vale branch is the Wollondilly Group officer.

The CWA of NSW has been bringing politicians and stakeholders together for drought discussions, is lobbying Government on freight subsidies and fresh food pricing, and has recently provided \$760,000 to drought-affected farmers. However, severe drought not only devastates rural families and agriculture, there are significant environmental consequences.

This drought will leave a long-term land management legacy. Pastures are being lost across vast areas of NSW, resulting in compaction of soils such that rainwater is repelled and runs off instead of being absorbed. Potential sedimentation impacts on waterways from increased flows across bare ground at such a scale is alarming. Active restoration of soils will be required for agricultural productivity AND for environmental protection.

CWA branches are fund-raising for farmers, and CWA Exeter will be hosting a community dung beetle workshop on 21<sup>st</sup> November, presented by dung beetle expert, John Feehan OAM. Dung beetles can speed restoration of drought-damaged land by cultivating compacted soils, increasing water infiltration, and burying manure to avoid run-off into waterways.

Other CWA environment activities include making of pouches for the care of orphaned and injured wildlife by Moss Vale branch on a long-term basis, talks and field trips to learn about Australian terrestrial orchids, distribution of information for local projects Quollidor, Glossies in the Mist, and Southern Highlands Platypus, and discussion of topics such as roosting of Grey-headed Flying-foxes, culling of feral cats, classification of wild deer as a pest, recycling and alternatives to plastic containers.

Pat Hughes  
Group Publicity officer