

Country Women's Association of New South Wales

1922 –

Other Names: • CWA

URL: <https://cwaofnsw.org.au/>

Details

The Country Women's Association of New South Wales (CWA) is a not-for-profit women's organisation that works for the welfare of women and their families by raising funds, lobbying governments and teaching life skills. From the 1940s until the 1980s various branches of the CWA ran hostels for rural girls so they could live in town and attend high school. These were at Dubbo, Inverell, Narrandera, Moree, Murwillumbah, Mudgee, Narrabri and Tumut. CWA members also ran programmes at Lynwood Hall.

Helen Townsend wrote in her history of the CWA, *Serving the Country* (1998), that the first hostel supported by the CWA was Inverell, which was opened between 1925 and 1928. The Inverell Branch did not run the hostel, but advertised, supported and promoted it. In 1943, after the Inverell High School headmaster expressed concerns about the living conditions of some of the children boarding in town to attend high school, the Branch rented a weatherboard house. It was cleaned and refurbished by members and opened as a hostel in 1945. Parents paid 25/- a week for their children. The Education Department paid the rent for the building, but as the hostel was popular, by 1950 the Branch felt they could afford to buy the building and renovate it properly. This building burned down in 1966, but was rebuilt and reopened within 12 months. Inverell closed in 1981.

The Mudgee Branch opened a hostel for high school girls in 1945, with assistance from local service clubs. The Education Department took over the building, but the CWA continued to administer it.

The Dubbo Hostel was opened after a CWA member, Mrs Matthew Robinson, donated a house in memory of her husband. The hostel in Narrabri, which opened in 1946, increased the numbers at the local high school and enabled the school to be reclassified as a full high school. However, by 1958 transport in the area had improved to the extent that students felt they could live at home and travel and the hostel was closed.

The Land reported in 1996 that the Moree Hostel was established in 1928, initially as a hostel for country mothers who were waiting to give birth in town. It then became a hostel for girls working in the town, before being opened to high school boarders in 1956. The Moree hostel closed around 1970.

The Country Women's Association Hostels are mentioned in a 1979 Australian Council of Social Services report called 'Why are they in children's homes'. The last hostels, Inverell and Mudgee, closed in 1981.

Gallery

Moree CWA looks back