

Wonderful women welding wonderfully

Central Tablelands Landcare Inc



Landcare: empowering women to develop welding skills.

The issue

Many women are finding themselves working on-farm as the third hand or the fifth wheel supporting their other (usually male) half. Heck, sisters are even doing it for themselves.

When in this situation there is an assumption of prior knowledge, that we will instantly understand what the 'dohickey' is, where to find it and what it is used for.

Welding is no different. Plus, a lot of the blokes on-farm are not particularly skilled welders which means the potential for shoddy work or worse farm accidents. Trying to learn from someone who is not adept at welding can lead to increased stress on the relationship plus they may not be able or willing to share their knowledge.

Let's face it, welding is dangerous-the combination of flames, gas and electricity plus sparks and heat can be disastrous if not handled correctly. What can possibly go wrong?



The solution

The solution was simple...

...run women's welding classes.

After discussing this idea for a couple of years we found that TAFE were keen to participate in offering these classes to women. In fact, due to Covid, TAFE had training money available and we were able to offer Certificate of Attainment level classes free of charge. We advertised through our network, the Orange Women's Shed and local radio.

The response was phenomenal.

I thought we would have enough to fill a course of 12 but in fact we had enough for 2 courses of 15 women.

The impact

The impact was overwhelmingly **POSITIVE** with most women completing the course. (A couple had to withdraw due to ill-health).

For those of us who had felt wary of welding we had learned to handle the power of the welding machine in a safe manner. We learned Tig and Mig welding. We learnt to plasma cut and use oxyacetylene gear. We managed to weld, cut and angle grind a number of different projects. We made dice, camp ovens and even a rose for mothers' day.

Across both groups we produced some impressive items.

The 4 hour classes were held once a week for 9 weeks. Monday evenings were something to look forward to. A group of women from a range of coming together to develop new skills and we all walked away with a sense of pride and new confidence.

Key facts

- Landcare is people care.
- The social networking aspect of these sessions was as important as the technical skills we acquired.
- Technical skills acquired were also adapted to artistic projects.

Learnings



This initiative made possible by the NSW Landcare Program. A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc. need for short, intensive courses covering many top supported by the NSW Government.



related be it farming skills, horticultural or animal welfare, to name a few.