



NRWC's Sustainable Communities Project

A recent project undertaken by the National Rural Women's Coalition, in conjunction with the ABC, is the collation of stories from communities who were able to effect change in a quest to become sustainable.

The NRWC has proudly published the first seven of these inspiring stories on our website, and have included in our Media Kit a copy of **Mum's the Word - Dover Mum's Community Market** the telling of one rural mum's successful creation of a thriving community market in Dover, Tasmania. Other stories on the NRWC website include:

**Riverland Exposed,
Tackling Challenges Head On,
Rise Above,
Cann River Community Building Initiative,
Blyth Community Cinema, and
Kimba Community Development Group**

Rural, regional and remote towns are full of hard working, community oriented people dedicated to embracing change and improving their communities to secure their own futures and those of the coming generations. The National Rural Women's Coalition believe that by sharing these accounts of resilience, hope and survival, others will be inspired and motivated to make improvements or use these ideas in their own community.

We encourage everyone to visit the website at www.nrwc.com.au and read through the stories we have published there. We want to hear from you – feel free to get in touch and submit your own inspiring tale for us to share with others.

Mum's the Word.

Dover Mum's Community Market

The picturesque village of Dover hugs Esperance Bay in southern Tasmania, looking over the islands of Faith, Hope and Charity. Situated on the Huon Highway, 81km south of Hobart, Dover claims to be the southern most town of significance in Tasmania. There is a sprinkling of villages further on from Dover, but it serves as the last stop to buy petrol and supplies.

The pristine waters of this idyllic setting provide for the main industries of salmon, abalone and cray fishing. In 1986, the Atlantic salmon company, Tassal, opened their first Australian salmon hatchery farm in Dover and became the largest employer in the area. Other industries include apple, beef, dairy and sheep production. Not dissimilar to many other rural areas, these industries have been in decline in recent years, with some residents travelling to Hobart for employment.

Community meeting place

It is market day in Dover. The air is fresh and crisp and all around the undercover area of the Southgate Shopping Centre there is busy activity. Stallholders are arriving with their wares, fresh food and home-baked delights. Friends are greeted with a friendly wave and a 'g'day'.

Lisa Holdem unpacks her produce, plucked straight out of her own garden, from the boot of her car. The freshly picked vegetables are still warm from the earth's natural incubator, and plump sun-ripened fruit awaits an eager buyer who may have come from as far away as Hobart to visit the Dover Mum's Community Market.



Just over the way, her friend and co-founder of the markets, Tina Carver, is selling homemade soap, children's clothes and bric-a-brac.

"We were bored," explained Lisa, mother of two children, who has lived in the town for the past eight years.

"Tina and I had seen markets in other places and thought, 'why not here?', so we got together, just the two of us, and started selling what we could find."

"We scoured our houses, surfed the net and sourced enough items for two stalls and it just grew from there," added Tina Carver, who has spent all of her life in Dover and is a busy full-time mum to six children.

On the second Sunday during the months of January through to May each year you will find Tina and Lisa manning their stalls, along with other local mums and community members who have also joined the two friends. The marketplace has become a popular outing for locals, as well as a tourist draw-card, and now has 20 stalls to entice all tastes.

Homemade chutneys, cakes, jams, bric-a-brac, fresh fruit and vegetables, plants, jewellery, haberdashery and a score of other local arts and craft can be found.

“I sell seasonal vegetables that I grow at home, plus I pick kiwi fruit, apples, oranges, lemons and cherries from our orchard to bring to the market,” said Lisa, referring to the five and half acre holding outside Dover, where she lives with her husband and children.



Throughout time a marketplace or market square, has held important significance in many communities; a central location to buy locally produced food and necessary items; a gathering place for social interaction.

There has been a resurgence in the popularity of markets in Europe, America and Australia, particularly farmer markets.

Consumers have become more interested in the origin of food, how it is produced and increasingly they want to build a relationship with the person who grows the food or makes the artefact. Concerns for the environment have also added to the demand for local markets, including the quest for food produced with ‘low food miles’, less product packaging and limited use of chemicals.¹

“People return time and time again, they look for certain stall holders and lovely relationships have developed,” said Lisa.

Visitors to the market in Dover soon find they become part of the welcoming community, when they are greeted with a friendly, “how are you today?”, and “please enjoy your stay!”

What started out as a way to ‘get of the house’ for a well earned break, turned into something that has fostered community spirit and provided an important meeting place for young and old. Local trade has also benefited with the nearby coffee shop now opening on the Sunday market day.

“People really look forward to the market. We all enjoying catching up, we have a laugh and a chat over coffee. It is a lovely environment and a place where the whole family can enjoy an outing,” said Lisa

The market stallholder fees are saved throughout the year and used to run a community Christmas Party. The celebration includes a vibrant street parade, lively entertainment,



jumping castle and guaranteed fun for all the family. Children are treated to a free sausage sizzle and drink, adding to the festivity.



“There is a fantastic community spirit in Dover – it is a great place to bring up children and everything we do really is for the future of our kids,” emphasized Lisa who was part of a separate fundraising venture by Dover mums who raised \$40 000 in four months to improve the local playground.

“Just last week I took our kids to nearby Hastings where we saw platypus and eels, then we came back and went fishing in the bay here at Dover and sighted dolphins and seals – what more can you ask for?” she exclaimed.

Perhaps the aptly named Islands of Faith, Hope and Charity located off the bay in Dover, have served as good omen for locals Lisa Holdem and Tina Carver. More likely is the case that they have proved, when you have the determination and courage to take chances, the most unlikely can be achieved.

Further Reading

1 Food Miles, Food Chains and Food Producers: Consumer Choices in Local Markets a study commissioned by University of Adelaide, 2008, by Randy S. Stringer and Wendy J. Umberger

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