



## **SEPWA Ladies Day a winner with the ladies**

More than 90 women from throughout the Esperance Port Zone attended the recent South East Premium Wheat Growers Association Ladies Day in Esperance, making it the most successful ladies event in the region.

SEPWA Group Development Officer, Julia Ashby said we were overwhelmed with the response but it just goes to show that while women are involved in the farm business they are spending their time mainly in the office.

And while there are a lot of agronomic events, there aren't many around that cater for the needs of women and focus on working on the business as well as providing personal development and networking opportunities", said Mrs Ashby.

The SEPWA Ladies day included presentations on farm business issues including office management, computer accounting packages, succession planning, farm business meetings and boards, fitness on the farm and life after farming.

Kim Lee from Rabobank provided an excellent presentation on succession planning and the importance of formulating a plan and communication amongst family members, the challenges associated with it and the implications of not addressing succession issues.

AWB's Tracey Guest, with a background in accounting, ran a session on "order in the office" which covered controlling the paper overflow, different filing methods, ways to deal with the mail, use of computer packages and managing employees with tax obligations, superannuation and calculating annual and sick leave.

Adopting a board structure in the farm business was covered by local farmer Glen Williams, who completed a thesis on introducing an 'advisory board" to a family business and Natalie Bowman presented their experiences on farm in having family meetings and setting up a board to assist with decision making.

Life after farming also created some interest with a presentation by consultant, Andrew Kikeros who highlighted the major considerations in the transition from full time farming to the next life phase. This was backed up by a emotional local case study from Kirsten Biven who shared their highs and lows in the decision to sell the farm and move into Esperance.

Jan Biven from Beaumont attended the day and she said there were some great speakers and it was fantastic to have local women talking, as we can often learn the most from our peers.

She said it was a friendly and fun atmosphere and consequently most women felt really relaxed about interacting and having a laugh about our shared dilemmas.

The sharp increase in numbers over past few years shows the demand for the day - it was a wonderful cross section, from the pregnant to the retired, all learning from one another", said Mrs Biven.

The event was organised by the SEPWA Women's Committee, a committee formed late last year to organise the day and to have input into SEPWA's events and activities.

Mrs Ashby said given that the event was organised by women for women and the committee followed up on recommendations from last years evaluation results, it assisted in catering for the needs of women and making the event more attractive for women to attend.

The SEPWA Ladies Day was made possible with funding from Partners in Grain and support from SEPWA sponsors.

Mrs Ashby said the SEPWA Women's Committee will take on board feedback from this year's event and they are looking forward to organising another successful event next year.