

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Tuesday, 12 May 2020

ONLINE CUPPA AND CHAT MAKING A CONNECTION

An online support network is encouraging rural women to put the kettle on or have a splash of wine whilst having a virtual chat to share ideas and experiences in staying connected during the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today launched the Virtual Country Cuppas to support rural women in combatting feelings of isolation and stress whilst physical distancing.

Coordinated by the Victorian Rural Women's Network (VRWN), the event is based on the VRWN's successful face-to-face Country Cuppas that attracted 600 rural women to 32 events across Victoria in October.

This year participants are invited to host a virtual morning or afternoon tea, after-work drinks or another form of an online catch-up with their favourite community members or group.

While staying at home and limiting physical interaction has been vital to slowing the spread of the virus, it can be difficult for people's mental health and wellbeing – particularly for those already experiencing mental health conditions or who live in isolated areas.

The Country Cuppas are a relaxed and comforting environment for participants to reconnect and share their experiences whilst meeting other rural women.

Anyone wanting to host a Virtual Country Cuppa will receive a hosting pack from the VRWN, which includes a free Zoom training webinar and personal development resources.

Virtual Country Cuppas will be held from 23 May to 31 May and is just one of several virtual initiatives that are being developed by the VRWN to upskill and support rural women.

For additional information or to register, visit the Victorian Rural Women's Network website at extensionaus.com.au/VRWNetwork.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Drought, bushfires and coronavirus have all created an even greater need for more communication and connections to support rural Victorian women."

"The Virtual Country Cuppas initiative is a great way for women to be able to stay in touch and talk about the things that really matter to them and their families in these challenging times."