

New book 'sows the seeds'

RICK KIDGIE

THE National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) has launched a book which highlights the difficulties and solutions facing farmers in rural Australia.

Titled "Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health", the book is a collaboration by 30 different authors, photographers and editors.

Two years in the making, the book "provides an opportunity to document and describe the lessons and innovative approaches developed in the field of agricultural health, wellbeing and safety."

Launched at The Hamilton Art Gallery on Thursday afternoon, more than 50 people attended the launch including Geoff Henderson MLC, Southern Crossperson Vice Council Mayor Peter Clark and Western Plains Health Service (WPHS) chief executive Robyn Fitzgerald.

NCFH and WPHS board member Hugh Macdonald was a guest speaker at the launch which also showcased Karine Rasmussen and Cathy Armstrong were also in attendance.

NCFH director and the book's chief editor, Susan Brandy said the publication "has been a mammoth effort."

"The papers that have been selected into this book were all submitted to the 2012 Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health conference," she said.

"That all went through a thorough review process and following the conference the best 30 papers were invited to consider writing a full chapter and these are the final ones



NCFH and WPHS staff, board members and book contributors celebrate the launch of "Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health". Photo: RICK KIDGIE

that made it through."

Content includes "The Impact of Climate on Farmer Health and Wellbeing", "Risks to Farmer Mental Health", "Connected Challenges in Farming Family Health and Wellbeing", "Decision Making in the Farming Context" and "The Next Decade in Farmer Health: Growing the Crop".

Self-funded by the NCFH and published by Verso Press, Ms Brandy said the book included "great stories of working in rural and regional communities."

"They're quite diverse, there's one on stress, there's one on rural financial counselling, there's one

on alcohol, addressing mental health and when to make decisions about leaving the farm," she said.

"It includes some of the previous people go through and the costs of health services and transport and all these invisible costs that farmers have that people don't even think about."

Ms Brandy said inspiration for the book came after discovering "there is very little literature about farmers."

"Most of the literature is often just rural and regional statistics and what there are a lot of similarities, there are also differences," she said.

"If you live on a farm it's where you live, work and play. It's different to any living in Hamilton. "The beauty of this is it's about farming populations and the specifics of that, I wish it had been around 10 years ago when we started, it's a great thing to be on the other side of and for some people it's their first published chapter, so it's also growing literature."

"It's actually write and then influence and change things is hopefully what this book will do."

"Sowing the Seeds of Farmer Health" is available for \$45 at Hamilton Books in Hamilton or online at www.farmerhealth.org.au.

WALKERS

Garden Tips

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DECEMBER

WEEK ONE

Preparing for the winter ahead starts in the weeks to go ahead before the first of August arrives.

Check seedlings and plants - get all seedlings in pots and seedlings in pots.

Continue working with your seedlings - follow in winter sowing tips.

WEEK TWO

Harvest vegetables regularly and make sure they are prepared for winter use.

Use all your seeds, seedlings and seedlings.

Use your garden seedlings and show your plants to show the new season - but a warning about the garden. First of all, it's a garden.

Check all your seedlings and show your seedlings to show the new season - but a warning about the garden. First of all, it's a garden.

WEEK THREE

Use the winter seeds to show your seedlings - larger plants make seedlings and in winter.

Use all your seeds to show your seedlings - larger plants make seedlings and in winter.

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WEEK FOUR

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