

Kate Butler  
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of The Long Table Creative Development project by The House That Dan Built.

The project resonates with me as I live with my three daughters on a farm on the edge of outback NSW. The farm has been handed down from my husband's grandfather, to his father and now to him and he has lived here all his life. Although I was not born here, I connect with the matrilineal line through his mother and the stories she has of her early life and those of other women who lived quiet lives in this isolated place.

The dominant voice in rural areas has always been, and still is, male; the mythologies and monuments, street names and historical narratives. I worked on a project by our very rural Shire to document an oral history of people significant to the settlement and prosperity of the area. Nearly all of those chosen were men, telling their stories of hardship on the land with the experiences of the women who walked beside them forgotten.

For my daughters, I am always looking for opportunities that allow them agency and a voice within their community. This is not easy in a country town where the lack of equity is invisible to those whose space and voice has never been limited. Opportunities are few, though, and often we must travel to larger centres to look for this diversity of experience.

My eldest daughter Tallulah is 16. She says, "I am really interested in this project and the chance to listen to stories from my mother and grandmother. I think it's important to show the stories of the home, not great adventures and heroic conquests but nevertheless essential. They are the stories created around the kitchen table, the ordinary moments that allow wisdom to be passed down through generations."

The Long Table Creative Development will celebrate women's stories and show their importance in the building of our community resources and values. It will support young women to develop interviewing skills and promote and strengthen cross-generational connections and understanding. As it is responsive to the individual, this model could be implemented in any rural community; building threads of lost narratives that connect our experiences.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Butler', written over a horizontal line.

Kate Butler