

Rural news



Author Liz Harfull with Oatlands farmer Dr Nan Bray, one of eight women to feature in Ms Harfull's book *Women on the Land*.

Oatlands sheep farmer's story told in book of strong women

A TASMANIAN farmer is among eight women featured in a new book that has hit the best-sellers' list for non-fiction in Australia just a few weeks after its national launch.

Women of the Land brings together the inspiring stories of women from across the country who have run their own farms, capturing their ways of life, their personal struggles and their remarkable achievements.

Award-winning rural journalist and Churchill Fellow Liz Harfull wrote the Allen and Unwin published book.

Among the women featured is Dr Nan Bray, of Oatlands.

Originally from the United

States, Dr Bray gave up her career as Australia's top marine scientist to become a superfine wool producer.

Dr Bray was head of the CSIRO's Hobart-based marine division when she decided to give it all up and focus on farming.

She had for many years been breeding and competing with border collies — her family were cattle ranchers in Idaho where sheep were known as "range maggots".

Ms Harfull said that she was drawn to the Oatlands farmer's story because of her unlikely background and because she was taking a very different approach to running her sheep.

"It's one that is starting cause quite a stir in farm circles," Ms Harfull said.

"It's also a lovely story of two different worlds coming together because her right-hand man is David Carnes, a third generation shepherd now in his 80s, who left school at the age 13 and set off working sheep a property at Antill Ponds.

"The combination of his long experience of running sheep in local conditions and Bray's scientific approach producing fascinating results

Ms Harfull said that the book cast a spotlight on women who were farmers in their own right in what many people perceive still a man's world.