


# OUR PRICELESS PAST 2026

GLADSTONE REGIONAL art gallery &museum

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

# Our Priceless Past

Featuring stories of local Special Seniors, prepared and presented by selected students from Gladstone State High School, to celebrate Seniors Month in Queensland, October 2026.

# Acknowledgement Of Country

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang Bunda people. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

*Cover Image: Gladstone State High School, 2026*
*Mike Richards Photography*

GLADSTONE REGIONAL
art gallery
&museum

**Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum**
Monday to Friday, 10am - 4.30pm
Saturday, 10am - 2pm
Closed Public Holidays except ANZAC Day (10am-2pm)
(07) 4976 6766 | gragm@gladstone.qld.gov.au

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# Welcome from the Mayor



Inspiring stories of the Gladstone Region are in the spotlight once again as part of the *Our Priceless Past* project.

In July, 11 seniors were interviewed by students from Gladstone State High School to create the stories featured this year.

Since 1999, more than 300 seniors have been interviewed for *Our Priceless Past*, providing an important snapshot in time for our region stretching multiple generations.

The students have worked diligently to share these stories, guided by Principal Mr Garry Goltz and teachers Peta Pitt, Head of Department – The Arts and Acting Head of Junior Secondary and Simone Henderson, Humanities Teacher, Experienced Senior Teacher and Year 11 & 12 Co-Ordinator.

Once again local history researcher Paulette Flint lent her expertise to the project, conducting a writing masterclass at the school, while local photography professional Mike Richards captured the amazing portraits featured throughout the exhibition and publication.

With an ongoing commitment to *Our Priceless Past*, Gladstone Regional Council will again look to the community in 2027 for Special Senior nominations, continuing to seek out and record the character of our region.

Additionally, thanks must go out to the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum team of staff and volunteers for coordinating the project and preparing the exhibition of memorabilia.

It is with great pleasure I invite you to join with us, along with partner Gladstone State High School, in celebrating *Our Priceless Past* 2026.

Congratulations to this year's seniors and participating students!

**Mayor Matt Burnett**
Gladstone Regional Council

# Message from the School



*Our Priceless Past* is more than a student-led initiative - it is a celebration of the people, stories, and shared experiences that have shaped the Gladstone community. As the first school to involve students from Year 7 to Year 12, we are honoured to provide young people with the opportunity to walk alongside local Elders and other influential members of local community, listening, learning, and preserving the voices that form the heart of our region.

Through genuine conversations, students have been entrusted with stories of resilience, laughter, life and community. Along the way, they have collected priceless pieces of wisdom, practical life hacks, and timeless advice - lessons that cannot be found in a textbook but are passed from one generation to the next. These moments have inspired curiosity, deepened understanding of Gladstone's rich history and culture, and created meaningful connections that will stay with our students long after the conversations have ended.

It has been a privilege for our school to be part of *Our Priceless Past*. The warmth, generosity, and openness of our community members have made this project truly special, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who shared their stories. Together, we are preserving not only our local history but also the wisdom, values, and human connections that will continue to guide and inspire future generations.

**Mr Garry Goltz**
Principal
Gladstone State High School

# Message from the Curator



Oral histories have a unique ability to transport us across time and place. Through personal memories, stories and experiences, we gain glimpses into the lives of others and develop a deeper understanding of the people, places and communities that have shaped our region.

Initiated in 1999 in conjunction with the *Year of the Older Person, Our Priceless Past* is a much-loved annual community project that brings two generations together. It celebrates the lives and experiences of nominated Special Seniors from the Gladstone Region, while providing local students with the opportunity to develop their interviewing, research and creative writing skills.

Over the years, the project has created an important record of our region's social history. Students listen to the stories of our Special Seniors, ask questions, discover shared experiences and transform their conversations into written stories. These accounts become part of the social history collection of the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum, ensuring that the memories and lived experiences of our community are preserved for future generations. This year's stories are presented by students from Gladstone State High School.

The accompanying exhibition will be on display in the old Town Hall building, the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum from 11 September to 14 November 2026. It brings together these important stories and connects them with treasured items and photographs loaned by the Special Seniors, bringing the stories and artefacts to life. *Our Priceless Past* will continue to tour our region through 2027, sharing this year's extraordinary stories uncovered through this important cultural initiative.

This project is about more than recording history, it is about connection. The conversations between students and Seniors create opportunities for generations to learn from one another, revealing stories of family, work, migration, friendship, resilience, community and the everyday experiences that make a place special. Over the years, *Our Priceless Past* has demonstrated the value of recording our local stories in building a richer and more personal understanding of the history of the Gladstone Region.

I hope you enjoy reading the stories in *Our Priceless Past* 2026, and that they encourage you to reflect on your own memories, the people who have influenced your life and the stories that make our community unique.

Most importantly, I hope this year's stories inspire a sense of pride in the diverse people, experiences and connections that continue to shape the place we call home.

**Claire Robinson**
Curator
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum

# Mrs Elizabeth (Libby) Attwood



*Army Depot, 42nd Battalion, Palm Drive Gladstone, early 1990s. Image supplied by Libby Attwood.*

"Never let anybody put you down, we are all important." Is the wise advice that Elizabeth Attwood has to offer to the next generation.

Elizabeth Attwood, or Libby, was born in Townsville on 12th July 1955. Her family moved to Gladstone only two years after she was born. She virtually grew up in Gladstone and spent her whole life here. Her father's family came to Australia as convicts from England, whilst her mother's side came as free settlers from Europe.

Libby attended Star of the Sea Primary School and Stella Maris College, which is now known as Chanel College, until she became ill and had to leave school after completing year 10. At an early age, Libby learnt to help her parents by cutting up vegetables and many other chores. She distinctively disliked taking out the rubbish. Libby herself believed in the past she was not always the nicest person. She remembers fondly that she used to enjoy stealing her mothers' cigars and going off to the hills to smoke them with her friends.

Libby said that she found it hard to play games that involved teamwork as she thought it was her fault for the team's loss and therefore, she often avoided them completely, instead enjoying sports like golf.

Libby distinctly told of the time she got punished by a nun when she got hot milk and took one sip and then gave it to a random boy. When the nun saw her doing this, the nun punished her by making her drink six bottles of hot milk where she politely redecorated the nun's uniform repeatedly and then proceeded to wave the nun good day with her middle finger and ran off.

After leaving school Libby was a funeral director, shop assistant, load master, model and DJ; but most of all, she was a part of the Australian Army. She received multiple awards and was a high-ranking corporal. All armoury and supplies went through her, and she often drove them down to the platoons when required, picking up soldiers along the way. She joined the Army in 1987 at the age of 31, where she was warmly referred to as the "grandma" of the unit. Libby remained in the Armed forces for 12 years and received one medal. Now Libby spends her time aiding veterans, through Gladstone RSL Sub-Branch, by taking them to appointments, as well as taking on the role of Night Angel during the annual Walk4Warriors event.

Libby got married to Martin Attwood in 1974 at the early age of 19. Together, they had two wonderful children in the two years before they were divorced in 1977; a daughter named

Danielle or Dani, and a son named Luke. She decided to keep his last name instead of changing it back to Elizabeth Bridge as she thought that it would be unfair to her children.

Libby is incredibly proud of her children. Danielle was an athletic person that played basketball. Meanwhile, her little brother Luke is on a whole different side of the spectrum. He enjoys working on computers and often takes apart things just to put them back together. Danielle now lives in Charters Towers while Luke is residing in Brisbane. Whilst Danielle was unable to conceive children of her own due to cervical cancer, she has a stepson Max and is now a grandmother.

Throughout her life, Libby has seen the days when people were washing clothes in a cauldron to when people now use washing machines. There's no doubt that Libby's life journey is an inspiration to everyone that she meets. Her story is one that resonates with most teenagers in that it's never too late to change from a troubled teen to a respected Corporal in the Army.

**Ethan Kidd, Year 8**
**Jerome Martin, Year 7**
**John Qolikira, Year 7**



*Libby Attwood. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Ethan Kidd, Libby Attwood, Jerome Martin and John Qolikira. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mr Brad and Mrs Maryke Barker



*Tuan, Sailing Season 2022. Image supplied by Brad and Maryke Barker.*

Brad Barker was born in Gladstone four years before his wife, Maryke Van Slobbe, who was born in Newcastle in 1951 and moved to Gladstone when she was ten years old. Both were the youngest siblings in their family, and their life ahead was a story of their love of sailing. They are both proud life members and joint patrons of PCSC (Port Curtis Sailing Club) and have three children and eight grandchildren.

As a child, Maryke liked to go sailing, and Brad liked horses, though eventually Maryke roped Brad into sailing after he finished his exchange student program in America. Maryke's biggest influence on her childhood was her father, who was a sailor himself. Brad and Maryke both lived next to each other; "I married the girl next door," joked Brad.

Maryke's first job was as a travel agent. After his year as a Rotary Exchange Student, Brad went to university and received his Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. He went on a tour of Europe for 18 months. Maryke was sailing at this time. Brad and Maryke were married in 1978. Brad took over his father's pharmacy in Goondoon Street and during the following years opened three other pharmacies called 'Brad Barker Pharmacies' in Gladstone. Brad owned and operated these pharmacies with Maryke.

Maryke has been married to Brad for 48 years. They are still living in Brad's childhood home, and their table is over one hundred years old and made of Tasmanian oak. Marriage is what they say has had the biggest impact in their lives. "Take whatever comes your way" is Maryke's advice to her 13-year-old self.

Brad had two horses that he kept in his backyard on Auckland Hill. Maryke sailed around the world at the age of 16 or 17 in 1968 and arrived back in 1972 and was possibly the first Australian woman to complete a circumnavigation which means she has sailed fully around the world. Brad and Maryke both went to Gladstone State High School. They said at the time the school was at the edge of town.

Maryke and Brad have always been in Gladstone and they stay for their family roots, businesses, people, climate and salt-water. Their strongest memories growing up were sailing, the pony club and swimming in the local saltwater pool. Maryke and Brad have a strong combined history of sailing awards/achievements such as the Master's Class Five (yachts) and the Australian Yachting Ocean Master and Examiner for Brad and Yacht Master and the Queensland Yachting Association Solo Award For Services To Yachting for Maryke. Their plans for the future included sailing until they can't sail any more.

In the early days Gladstone was a small sleepy town with a harbour and a meatworks. Then in the 1960s the meatworks closed down it became a ghost town for a short time with about 5000 people in town. It wasn't long before Queensland Alumina Ltd. was built and that's when the town's population started to expand.

"Follow your dreams, that is easy to do, but it is also easy not to do; the choice is yours," Brad Barker's advice for the next generation.

**Liam Loveday, Year 8**
**Gino Shannon, Year 8**



*Brad and Maryke Barker. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Liam Loveday, Brad Barker, Maryke Barker and Gino Shannon.*
*Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mr Brian Farber



*Falls Creek, 1974. Image supplied by Brian Farber.*

"It's difficult for me to give you advice on how to live your lives, because I didn't live through similar circumstances myself", is Brian Farber's thoughts for future generations.

Mr Brian Farber was born on 15th December 1943 in Capetown, South Africa. At the age of six, Brian migrated to Melbourne with his parents Hildegard and Louis and his two older siblings, Maureen and Allan. He spent his school years often as the top of the class at St Kilda Park Primary and Elwood High School, where his chatter earned him the title "pest" from his maths teacher Mr Will, and being sent out of class to talk to the headmaster.

During his childhood, Brian spent many hours reading and exploring on his bike; a 13th birthday present inherited from his uncle (often riding faster than average speeds). When he was not on his adventures or reading, he was often with friends making homemade gunpowder and explosives, experimenting with marble cannons and attaching rockets to toy cars. Brian says he was never really into sports except for wogball[1] but later discovered baseball which became the first real sport he truly enjoyed.

After finishing school, he pursued a university degree in engineering but got carried away with university life and dropped out after three years of study. To fill in his time, Brian started a job in a drawing/drafting office, while simultaneously earning his four-year Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at RMIT at night. His determination and strong work ethic helped build a successful career in engineering which took him all over Australia working for various companies.

While travelling to Sydney to visit his girlfriend and work on a house renovating project, Brian crossed paths with his future wife Marguerita who was travelling back from seeing her boyfriend in Brisbane. Marguerita sat next to Brian who had previously struggled with the overhead lights to read his newspaper. He noticed her hand rise to adjust the lights, to which he responded, "Don't bother with it. It doesn't work." They started talking and this eventually led to their marriage in 1984 after a sweet hand-written proposal letter via mail (due to him working in Papua New Guinea at the time). On their honeymoon they visited much of the world including Athens, Egypt, England and Israel. They had two children. A daughter: Melody

and a son: Jess who has recently fathered an 8-month-old child, making Brian and Marguerita grandparents.

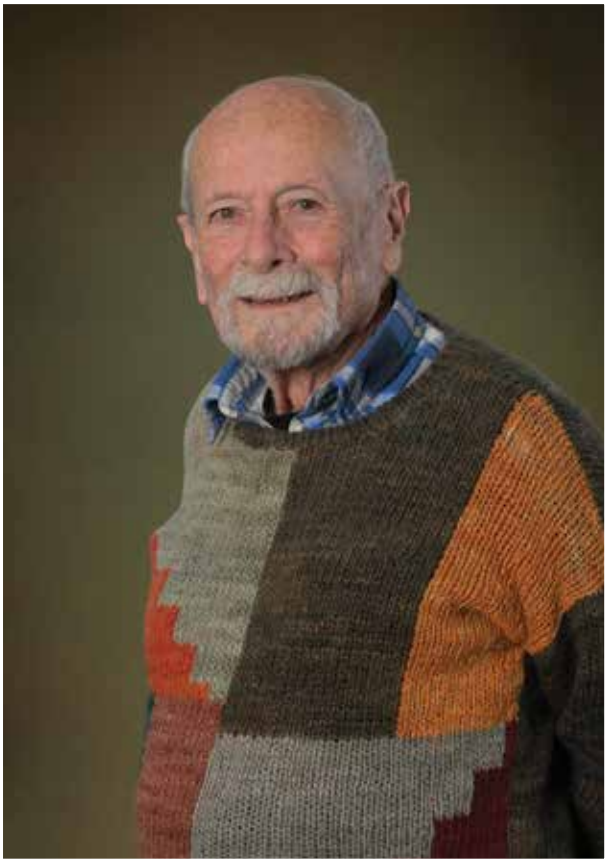
Brian shared his story of a previous trip to Israel resulting in a near-death experience with the Israeli Border Security. His heroic action in rescuing his nieces' doll were misinterpreted as an attempt to flee from a roadblock, resulting in having three guns aimed at his chest.

Brian shared multiple stories of near-death experiences which are currently being written up in a biography for his children, his hobby during retirement. Brian is no stranger to writing stories having written a historical fiction called 'Hitler's Zeitmaschine'. In his free time, Brian takes care of his property in Telina and keeps in touch with his old friends from high school and university.

When asked what advice he would give to younger generations, Brian encourages them to look beneath the surface. "Seek the moral good, investigate things carefully and think for yourselves rather than simply accepting what you see. With AI nowadays it's hard to know what's real and what's not real, what's fact and what's fiction. I never had to deal with these issues but put simply, look for the truth."

He also believes it is important to be sincere, passionate, and involved in activities whilst being actively engaged in lifelong education.

**Katelyn Kesteven, Year 11**
**Sophie McGregor, Year 11**



*Brian Farber. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Katelyn Kesteven, Brian Farber and Sophie McGregor. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

[1] Gladstone Regional Council values inclusivity, and the term wogball has been used in the interests of the authenticity of Brian's story.

# Mrs Gloria Holmes



*Eric and Gloria on their wedding day, November 1970. Image supplied by Gloria Holmes.*

"Volunteering makes life so much better" were the wise words spoken by Mrs Gloria Holmes during her interview.

Gloria was born to Dorothy and Alexander 'Alex' Philp at the Base Hospital in Bundaberg on the 27th January 1951. She also has a younger sister, Sandra Ferris. Gloria completed her schooling at Walkervale Primary School to year 7 in 1963, then attended Bundaberg State High until Grade 10. This was the first-year grade 8 started high school.

Gloria has accumulated much experience over her lifetime, working jobs ranging from being a dry cleaner to a kindy teacher aide. Her careers began in Bundaberg, when she first got a job at a café after leaving school, before moving on to work at Keppels Seafood, where her friend Daphne introduced her to Eric Holmes. Daphne began matchmaking instantly, as she encouraged both of them about each other, but it wasn't until two years later when Gloria was working at her dry-cleaning job when the two reconnected, Eric asking her out as she drove by on her scooter. The two went out on their first date shortly after her birthday, Eric smoothly impressing Gloria's father by showing up in a dapper suit, clearing the way for him to propose to Gloria in the coming May. After marrying in the following November and having two children, Micheal and Julie, they moved to Gladstone in 1979 where Gloria continued her work as a telegram, post and courier delivery officer until 1986. Other jobs Gloria had were delivering for 'Little W' and from 1988 training managers for various service stations across Queensland, retiring from full-time work in 2018.

A highlight of Gloria's life is the amount of volunteering she has done for the wider community. She has been a part of the SES (State Emergency Services) for over 35 years, helping to train new members in abseiling as well as

other aspects, and she has helped save a variety of people over the years. She has been a part of Friends of the Theatre, taking on a range of jobs from a bartender to an usher. In the early 1980s, she was involved in establishing a BMX Club, Softball and T-Ball sessions in Gladstone.

Through her involvement in Rotary, Gloria has helped exchange students from other countries such as Italy and Denmark in pursuing their studies in Australia as well as advertising programs such as NYSF (National Science Youth Forum). She began her Rotary journey in 2010 as part of the Rotary of Gladstone - Sunrise, contributing and donating to several events and fundraisers, including, Food Banks, Ronald McDonald housing, hygiene packs and Bikes for Communities, Ride for Ovarian Cancer and Flying Doctors fundraisers.

She also helps at Soccer Canteens and attends Ladybirds Club and Ladies Long Lunch.

When Gloria is not supporting the community through volunteering, she enjoys painting and sewing, anything where she can use her hands. She specialised in creating costumes for dance students in Gladstone.

Gloria has noticed how Gladstone has significantly expanded over the years. It was necessary for Gloria to learn Gladstone's area well for her careers, from knowing every inch of Hanson Road to working at The Valley's Woolworths when it was still named 'Little W'. She has also observed a change in young people's work ethic over time, commenting about the lack of interest in volunteering from the younger generations. To remedy this, Gloria worked with Trinity College's Deputy Principal to form Trinity's first Rotary Interact Club, for which she is the Youth Service Director, helping them with a myriad of charitable activities. Occasionally, she still sews costumes when needed. She now has two grandsons, James and Dirk, and a great grandson, Luca. Her daily life now consists of still attending Sunrise Rotary meetings every Friday, helping at Gladstone events while also meeting up weekly with friends for morning tea.

Her kind actions continue to be recognised through her several awards including, the Rotary Paul Harris Community award (2017 and 2026), Mayor's Community Champion award (2026), Friends of the Theatre Life Member award (2008), and several SES awards. Gloria is a devoted member of the Gladstone community who is valued greatly by many and continues to dedicate her time to make Gladstone a better place.

**Addison West, Year 10**
**Emma Windsor, Year 10**



*Gloria Holmes. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Addison West, Gloria Holmes and Emma Windsor. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mrs Michele (Shelly) Holzheimer



*Shelly and John dating, 1969. Image supplied by Shelly Holzheimer.*

A wise woman once said, “Everybody matters, there are no exceptions! We’re all humans and we should all help each other.” This woman was Mrs Michele (Shelly) Holzheimer, a true gem in the Gladstone community.

Shelly was born on 8th March 1952 in Brisbane on her sister’s first birthday, making every birthday a double celebration. This date has now also been recognised as International Women’s Day. She is the second of five children born to her parents Richard John and Margaret Catherine Clish. Shelly has two sisters and two brothers. With her father being a schoolteacher, as a child, Shelly and her family travelled around Queensland. Schools she attended were Beeron Road outside Mundubbera, Mulgildie, Monto and Mt Larcom. Mt Larcom has always had a special place in her heart, as this is where she met her first and only boyfriend, John Holzheimer. They became engaged when Shelly as just 19 and married when she was 21. She stated that ‘John’ has always been a very special name to her as it is a family name passed down through generation and feels that it’s extra special that she so happened to fall in love with a John.

During her lifetime, she has also had several jobs, and since retirement contributes to a range of community groups in the Gladstone region. Shortly after leaving school, Shelly began her first job working at a motor dealership, before leaving to work as a telephonist at Rockhampton Telephone Exchange. John and Shelly married in Rockhampton in 1973 and settled in Gladstone where they rented a one-bedroom flat where the lower Nite-Owl centre is now. Her first job in Gladstone was working for Goodwin & Mackenzie-Forbes Solicitors.

Shelly’s service to a variety of communities is highly commendable. After their first and only child Matthew was born in 1978 (with John for his second name of course), she found an interest in education and advocacy. She became a Teacher Aide at Rosella Park School in 1984 where she worked for twenty years and became a strong supporter of the Trade Unions involved in the education sector. She has worked for Chris Trevor, former Member for Flynn, and Glenn Butcher, current State Member for Gladstone. These days she mainly advocates for patients needing to travel to seek medical care outside Gladstone and seniors over the age of 65 and

is constantly vying for positive change in the community.

Through her political and advocacy work, she has received many awards and certificates of appreciation, has been named a Paul Harris Fellow during her time as a Rotarian and holds Life Membership with two organisations that are very special to her.

Even though Shelly is an incredible person, no-one's life comes without its challenges. In February 2020, Shelly's dear husband John passed away at the age of 69. Directly after this time, when she was still grieving his loss, she was diagnosed with lung cancer. When Shelly heard about her cancer, she felt like nothing was going her way, but even after having a third of her lung removed, she has bounced back and remains cancer free.

When asked what advice she'd give to the next generation, Shelly was very quick to answer, with her main advice being "Health is Wealth". Health decides every decision moving forward in life. Her other bit of advice is "Don't Smoke", saying there is nothing worse than finding out the hard way.

She says that the main change she had seen in the region's community celebrations involves the Gladstone Harbour Festival. She smiles when she remembers a parade where kids rode in the backs of trucks and tossed lollies and water balloons into the crowd.  The parade was followed by an RSL dinner for the parents, while the kids often spent hours safely wandering around the waterfront stalls and rides Shelly touched on the fact that crime has risen, particularly youth crime.

Some fun facts about Shelly are that she loves to play Scrabble on the board and online and is a madly loyal Broncos fan. She said that after last year's win, she is sad watching their ladder placement slide this season.

Shelly has always wanted her story to inspire others to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves and wants the world to know that no matter what, we are all deserving humans until we prove otherwise. She is an incredible and inspiring person that this next generation should aspire to.

To end, here is another bit of advice from Shelly:

"Do it now, sometimes later becomes never."

**Lily Wogandt, Year 9**
**Sarah Harvey, Year 9**



*Shelly Holzheimer. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Lily Wogandt, Shelly Holzheimer and Sarah Harvey. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mr Denis Lockwood



*Denis and Jennine in their Kombi, 1972. Image supplied by Denis Lockwood.*

"Find something you like doing. There's no point being a square peg in a round hole just because it's convenient." These were the words spoken by Mr Denis Lockwood, a humble senior citizen of Gladstone. Not only did he provide us with his story, but he also gave wise words of advice on various topics. He is an insightful person who has lived a fulfilling life thus far, finding a lot of time to engage in his favourite hobbies; lawn bowls, repairing vehicles, cycling, and spending time with his family. Born on 30th January 1951, he is 75 years old and has spent the last 52 years as a Gladstone citizen.

Denis Lockwood was the youngest of four children, all considerably older than himself. His parents, Ilma and Euston Lockwood raised Beth, Ilma, Peter, and Denis in the suburbs of Brisbane. Out of his siblings, he felt the closest bond with his brother Peter, as Peter would drive him around to go on holidays in various places. His parents were not overly zealous about their religions, his father was a Methodist, and his mother was with the Church of England, however, they did not partake in religious practices. Despite attending Sunday school at primary age, his parents had not majorly influenced his decisions about religion. Because of this, Denis raised his children to have the same freedom to choose their own beliefs. Denis loves his family dearly and expressed that he has zero regrets about starting a family of his own. He also believed that a person's true legacy is the children they leave behind and the family they had.

For the first eighteen months of his life, Denis had lived in Toowoomba, his birthplace. After this, his family moved to live in the Brisbane suburb Grange. He attended two different primary schools, one of them being in Eagle Junction. Denis began high school in 8th grade and graduated at 16 years old, beginning an engineering apprenticeship. Growing up, Denis

had become accustomed to taking care of young children due to being the uncle to his older siblings' children.

Denis completed a three-year long apprenticeship, then worked as a qualified tradesman for two years, in which time he met his wife, Jennine Lockwood. The two officially married on 2nd June 1973. When Denis was 23 years of age, the couple moved to Gladstone with their first son Micheal recently born. He first heard about the place from a friend in his trade, claiming Denis could have a steady income working as a fitter. Since Gladstone was a very rural location, him and his wife took more of a liking to the idea of moving there. Since making the move to Gladstone, they have enjoyed the atmosphere and how it made living and raising their children a safe and comfortable experience. Eventually, Denis and Jennine had three more sons, named Joseph, Andrew and David. Before retirement, he worked with QAL, gaining various advancements with the company. Overtime, Denis saw many changes in the city of Gladstone, describing the growth as a shift from being a small fishing village to the more refined town we are familiar with today.

With the life he has led so far, Denis has had many experiences inspiring the stories and advice he shared for the younger generation. One of these points being that your career should relate to what you are passionate about, rather than settling with a job because of its convenience. Additionally, he tells us to consistently have a positive outlook on life and keep your honest individuality. The third and final major piece of advice he gave was that the upcoming generation should educate themselves about politics, as it has the potential to affect the way they can live their life. His advice comes from a life where he has seen how much the world has changed, and he has been fortunate enough to live his life so far without many regrets.

Overall, Mr Denis Lockwood has lived a contented life, free from major tragedy. He now spends his days spending time with friends and family, and engaging in his hobbies such as cycling, playing lawn bowls and refurbishing vehicles, focusing on a 1972 Volkswagen Kombi van for his granddaughter Ava's prom next year. He has nine loving grandchildren and remains in touch with his family and is travelling to a variety of unique places.

**Khloe Bird, Year 10**
**Sofie Eva, Year 10**



*Denis Lockwood. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Khloe Bird and Denis Lockwood.*
*Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mr Gregory (Greg) Realf




*Greg, French travellers and Australian friend, Guatemala, 1981. Image supplied by Greg Realf.*

"You have more fun in life by saying yes than you do saying no," were the inspiring words said by Gregory Realf, a man born in Ayr, in 1955 and moved to Proserpine. He was the second eldest of nine siblings, two brothers and six sisters. In his youth, he made fond memories of helping his friends on a cattle property, building a boat and building a shack at Dingo Beach with his family. Sixty years later he is building a new shack with his brother on an island paradise.

Later, Greg moved to Gladstone at 11 years old in 1966 because of his father's new job opportunity in the aluminium industry. Growing up, his friend's property in Beecher was one of his favourite memories where they would go fishing, ride horses, helping out on the dairy farm, and enjoying the Calliope River that ran through it, resonating with his hometown.

During his life, he explored over a dozen different work opportunities, ranging from a fitter and turner to a bar manager. His first taste of travel in a new state was when he went on a surfing holiday to Western Australia. After coming back to Gladstone, through his passion for footy in the Brothers footy club, he formed another Club, QASC 'Red Devils', to gain more involvement around rugby league in the community. After saving up enough money, he went to Canada for six months where he hitchhiked to Mexico and found himself in the midst of a civil war in the Central American country of Guatemala. After seeing an article in the paper, he decided to sail the passage from Hawaii to Canada on a yacht, which sparked his love for the ocean. Through his connections, he met an Alaskan man and spent the winter travelling with him, before coming back to Gladstone and saving up the money to go back to Alaska to work in a friend's gold mine in the summertime. To this day, it feels like a second home to him, and Greg has been back seven times.

As a direct result of his extensive travels and his deep love for the ocean, this led him to explore the Gladstone waterways, stating that, "After all the travel I have done, I realised that all the things I liked doing; crabbing, fishing, camping, beaches, reefs are here." He expresses that the Gladstone Region has some of the best stuff on the planet; Baffle Creek, Agnes Water, 1770, Facing and Curtis Islands up to the Keppel Bay area and many surrounding islands, rivers and lakes. These waterways are right in our backyard. He continues to venture through the Gladstone Region to experience what it has to offer.

Greg met his wife, Phillipa, at a birthday party in Agnes Water in 1978 and has been happily

married for 48 years. In the 1990s, both Greg and Phillipa moved down to Miriam Vale with their daughter Kelsie. For a few years, he was a stay-at-home dad and an owner-builder on a rural bush block.

Despite the social norms at the time, where he quotes, “It took a lot of courage to be different, but I always prided myself on not living by other peoples’ rules, just living my life as honestly as I knew it to be.” To this day, Greg is close with his community, doing anything to help out. Greg is heavily involved with The Gary Larson Oval Committee, Touch Football, the school’s P&C and over 25 years with the Miriam Vale Lions Club (many of those as president). He also ran the Miriam Vale visitor centre for 15 years while Phillipa worked as a special education teacher and athletics coach in her free time. Greg speaks passionately of Miriam Vale and his wider community, stating, “I love Miriam Vale because I can walk to everything, it’s a lovely community and the local people have built almost everything in the town.”

Mr Greg Realf is a kind, lively man filled with passion to find beauty in everything he does and is grateful for the little things in life. His journey is filled with travel, camping, building a thriving community and his family and friends.

A quote that he lives by, is to, “Take any opportunity you can to travel because it makes you appreciate the life you have here. There is so much negativity about how hard done by we are, but the freedoms we have in our country are second to none.”

**Tia Wirihana, Year 12**
**Ashtyn Brookes, Year 12**
**Ella Wright, Year 12**



*Greg Realf. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Tia Wirihana, Greg Realf, Ashtyn Brookes and Ella Wright. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Aunty Neola Savage



*Aunty Neola and her friend from Papua New Guinea in India, 1992. Image supplied by Aunty Neola Savage.*

“Respect everyone including yourself all the time,” these words are the advice Aunty Neola Savage, a proud Gooreng Gooreng woman, gives to the younger generation.

Aunty Neola was born in Gladstone (Yallarm) at the local hospital. Her first home was on Dawson Road, where the Gladstone State High School baseball courts are now situated. When construction of the high school commenced the Johnson family moved to Barney Point where the family still reside.

Neola’s family consisted of seven siblings, with her being the third youngest. Her siblings are named Merle, Jacquline, Valda, Lindsay, Juliri, Richard and Marilyn, unfortunately three of her siblings have passed. Her paternal grandmother, and other family members lived also lived with them. Neola attended Gladstone Central Primary School until 1961 then went to high school at Gladstone State High School until 1963 when she moved to Brisbane. She has, a Bachelor of Arts in Education through Deakin University, and a Bachelor of Education through UTS in Sydney.

She worked as a telephonist at the Postmaster General’s Office in Brisbane, then after getting her degrees was a teacher aide from 1971 until 1972 before returning to Gladstone. She then worked for the Gladstone Aboriginal and Islander Cooperative as secretary manager, and the Gladstone State High School in 1983 as a Community Education Counsellor until retiring. Even after retiring, Neola worked for many years with the Education Department at Woorabinda, which she loved very much.

She was married for forty years to Peter Savage who sadly passed almost twenty years ago. Neola has seven children, two are unfortunately deceased and she has 19 grandchildren and has lost count of her great grandchildren. Her family has eight teachers in it!

She has seen many changes in the Gladstone region; she told us how she saw so much change specifically towards Gladstone State High School and how much Gladstone has grown, she also noticed how much of her own family is unfortunately passing. She loves sharing and participating in her culture, she loves dancing

with her family and plays a lot of instruments including guitar, ukulele, keyboard, piano and piano accordion.

She mentioned recently discovering a medallion she was presented with in 1970 for winning the Premiership in a women's basketball team made up of Aboriginal/Islander players.

Neola told us of how when she was growing up her people couldn't vote for things affecting them and so has always been supportive of her people; it was only in 1967 when Aboriginal people were given the right to vote. She enjoys politics, specifically black politics, she believes Burabhi is the creator of life.

She has been overseas a total of ten times, and she shared many stories of her travels. She told of going to Hollywood in Los Angeles and mentioned travelling to New Zealand and New York.

Aunty Neola grew up in both the black and the white world and told us how "at home it was always talking about who they are and what happened to them" but then she would go to a mainly white school and be picked on. She said that even now as a respected Elder she's had to deal with racism and how she hopes the younger generation will respect each other and treat everyone equally with respect.

**Lizzie Sergeant, Year 8**
**Ella Hodges, Year 12**



*Aunty Neola Savage. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Lizzie Sergeant, Aunty Neola Savage and Ella Hodges. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mr Harold (Harry) Tattersall



*Shirley and Harry at Mogo Zoo, c. 2000. Image supplied by Harry Tattersall.*

Harold (Harry) Tattersall was born in Bulli, NSW to Harold (Harry) Tattersall and Annie McDonald nee Braid. His father was a fitter by trade. His mother was born in Scotland and moved to Australia when she was three years old. When Harry was asked about his childhood, Harry mentioned how he felt that his parents didn't like to be overly strict as they experienced their own restrictions during the second world war and possibly wanted their children to live with more freedom. Harry lived a bustling childhood with six siblings comprised of five boys, and two girls, with Harry born fifth.

During his childhood, Harry moved numerous times around Australia. He moved to Maryborough at the age of three and started his primary school there, 18 months later, he moved to Townsville and began his high school journey. Harry finished his high schooling in Tully at the end of grade 10. He stayed in Tully for two more years before moving to Gladstone. Some early memories as a child during these times includes the round Australia rally going through Maryborough.

During his schooling years, maths was his favourite subject. Peter Moore, his high school maths teacher, was also his favourite teacher due to his firmness and having equality in his classroom. Harry enjoyed athletics, although he didn't believe he was very good at it! He played rugby league at school and participated in long-distance running. When Harry was asked if he enjoyed school, he was quick to state that school was a memorable experience for him. Harry was quiet as a child, and didn't rebel as a teen, and mentioned being too shy to chase girls! But Harry wasn't all that quiet, as he made many friends. Harry's advice to young people regarding friendships/relationships is that "true friends will always stick with you".

Harry wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do after high school. Harry's career path started off as an electrician fresh out of high school. He joined the Army Reserve in 1967, serving for 18 months before moving to Gladstone. He re-enlisted in Gladstone, where he spent about 14 years in the local unit and was then posted for about 7 years to 11 Training Group in Townsville as an instructor.

After moving to Gladstone, he got a job at QAL, which at the time was the only large industry in Gladstone. When asked what his dream job was, he replied being in the Fire Service. He was encouraged by a mate and a brother to join the fire service and eventually found his way to the Fire Brigade (his dream job!) in 1975, where he

worked for 40 years. Harry loved the idea of going to work with no two days being the same. Harry stated that it was a job where one day you could go into a house fire where the fire is in a bedroom, another day you could go into another house fire which is also in a bedroom. The places are the same, but the fire behaviour is always different. When asked what the hardest part of his career was, Harry says it is the PTSD and trauma gained from his experiences. Harry's career advice to young workers is "to listen to your older peers and they guide you through, as you don't know everything when you first start". Harry has made many memories associated with his work over the years.

On 24th January 1970, Harry married his wife, Shirley Anne Tattersall. Harry first met Shirley at the movie theatre; he still remembers the movie, which was 'The Graduate'. Eight months later, on 24th July (1970), they married at the Church of England in Gladstone. A year later, Shirley gave birth to a baby boy, 11 months later, she gave birth to another baby boy, making them Irish twins! They were named James (Jamie) Harold Tattersall, and Robert (Rob) William Tattersall. Harry was a bit concerned, as he wasn't sure what to expect when having had a child at 20 (and Shirley, 19). Harry and Shirley have now been happily married for 56 years.

In 1972, Harry joined Gladstone RSL and is an advocate for it. He has been secretary for the past five years. Harry has received a number of awards, such as an appreciation plaque from the Queensland Police and an old brass firefighters' helmet from the United Firefighters Union both on retirement, and 30-year certificate for services delivered from RSL.

Reflecting on his life, Harry has travelled around Australia and multiple locations overseas, including Thailand, Singapore, France, Belgium, Turkey, Central Europe, and Hawaii. Harry mentioned loving international cuisine, with Thai and Japanese being his favourites. Harry also enjoys reading history books, specifically military history. He didn't have many hobbies growing up but wishes he learnt music and a musical instrument.

Harry believes all young people should take an interest in politics, so they don't risk poor leadership. Although Harry also believes that politics were much simpler when he was younger!

Harry states that the biggest lessons life has taught him is self-discipline and tolerance of others. The most unforgettable moments Harry had during his life was when he became a grandfather, and 9/11, which hit close to home as Harry was a firefighter and there were 343 firefighters killed when the towers came down. When Harry was asked what advice he would give his younger self, He replied "be more cautious with your money". His plans for the future are to stay alive and stay active. Harry has had a very interesting life, full of experiences and memories associated with his work life and social life. He is extremely grateful for the fire service's support system, his wife, and crew camaraderie.

Throughout the years, Harry built his own legacy and has settled into a happy and healthy life.

**London Baynham, Year 9**
**Ishlyn Kaur, Year 9**




*Harry Tattersall. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*London Baynham, Harry Tattersall and Ishlyn Kaur. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Mrs Vera Walker




*Spinifex Country Music Club Awards, Mt. Isa, 1980s. Image supplied by Vera Walker.*

"Good, clean fun," is a quote embodying the way Vera Walker makes the most out of life. Through music, family, and her great achievements in sports, she lives her life in harmony. Vera is a woman with many ambitions and has left a strong legacy to be carried on for years to come.

Vera was born in the tiny outback settlement of Kajabbi to Fred and Dora Mayo. She is the youngest of seven children: Evaline, Alfred, Fredrick (who passed on as an infant), Gordon, Violet, Leslie and lastly Vera. Kajabbi, is an Aboriginal word for a brown bird, Kite Hawk, it had a population of roughly 100 people through Vera's childhood. It is 118 kilometres northeast of Mount Isa where her family later relocated to.

The Mayo family did not have much, but Vera thoroughly enjoyed her childhood. She recalls fond memories along the Leichhardt River which ran along her lengthy journey to school. Her voice would echo through the area as she sang every single morning. Whether it was playing or fishing in the river or singing so loud she could hear her voice echo back, she had great fun.

Vera was an athlete and competed in her favourite sports, which included Basketball, Netball and Softball. She was well-known for her athleticism and won many competitions on the Mt. Isa 'A' Team, and as a goal shooter in her Netball team. People described her and the teams she played for as "promising," highlighting her achievements in sports.

After graduating year seven, Vera started her working life at a hardware store next to the local post office in Mt. Isa. She then met her late husband William George Walker who also worked at the post office. They married on 31st January 1958 and were married for 47 years. They knew each other for three years before they married and would go out old-time dancing with their group of friends. Vera described her husband as a blue-eyed blonde. William later joined the Airforce in Townsville and was deployed to Thailand for six months.

The couple had three children, Graeme, Corinne and Tracey. Unfortunately, Graeme passed away on his motorbike on the way to the old prawn farm on Gladstone-Benaraby Road. There is now a memorial at the site, looked after by his friends to help keep him in the community's memory.

Music has always been a significant part of Vera's life. At the ripe age of four, she picked up her father's accordion and played a beautiful

rendition of the song, “Home Sweet Home.” From this point on, Vera’s connection with country music deepened, and she often played alongside her brother, a guitar player, and his best friend at the ages of 9, 10 and 11. In 1985, Vera was in Tamworth busking in the street. In 1992 George and Vera retired to Gladstone and met Roy Rains, an impressive soloist, at the CWA Hall.  Vera was invited by Roy to join him and sing at the age care centres around Gladstone. Roy and Vera became the duo ‘Just Us’.

Vera has won over 50 trophies relating to music in total, such as a memorial trophy in 1999 in recognition of her contribution to country music. William received the same trophy posthumously.

Nowadays, Vera plays guitar by ear and sings at fundraisers for the Catholic Church the second Wednesday of each month in Rockhampton. She also takes part in other non-competitive events such as those held at Cawarral the last Sunday of each month, enjoying and immersing herself in the community.

Vera Walker is an accomplished, free-spirited woman who has made an outstanding impact on the world through her love for country music. She continues to perform and travel out of the joy in her heart and appreciation for community. In the words of Vera, “always have respect for others and yourself”.

**Jillian Gumabay, Year 9**
**Eunice Pagkaliwangan, Year 10**
**Nate Wright, Year 10**



*Vera Walker. Image: Mike Richards Photography*



*Jillian Gumabay, Eunice Pagkaliwangan, Vera Walker and Nate Wright. Image: Mike Richards Photography*

# Nominations for Our Priceless Past

**Do you know a Special Senior who is over 70 years of age and has lived in the area for more than 30 years?**

**Nominate them for *Our Priceless Past*!**

Nominations can be sent to the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum by phoning 4976 6766 or emailing gragm@gladstone.qld.gov.au















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