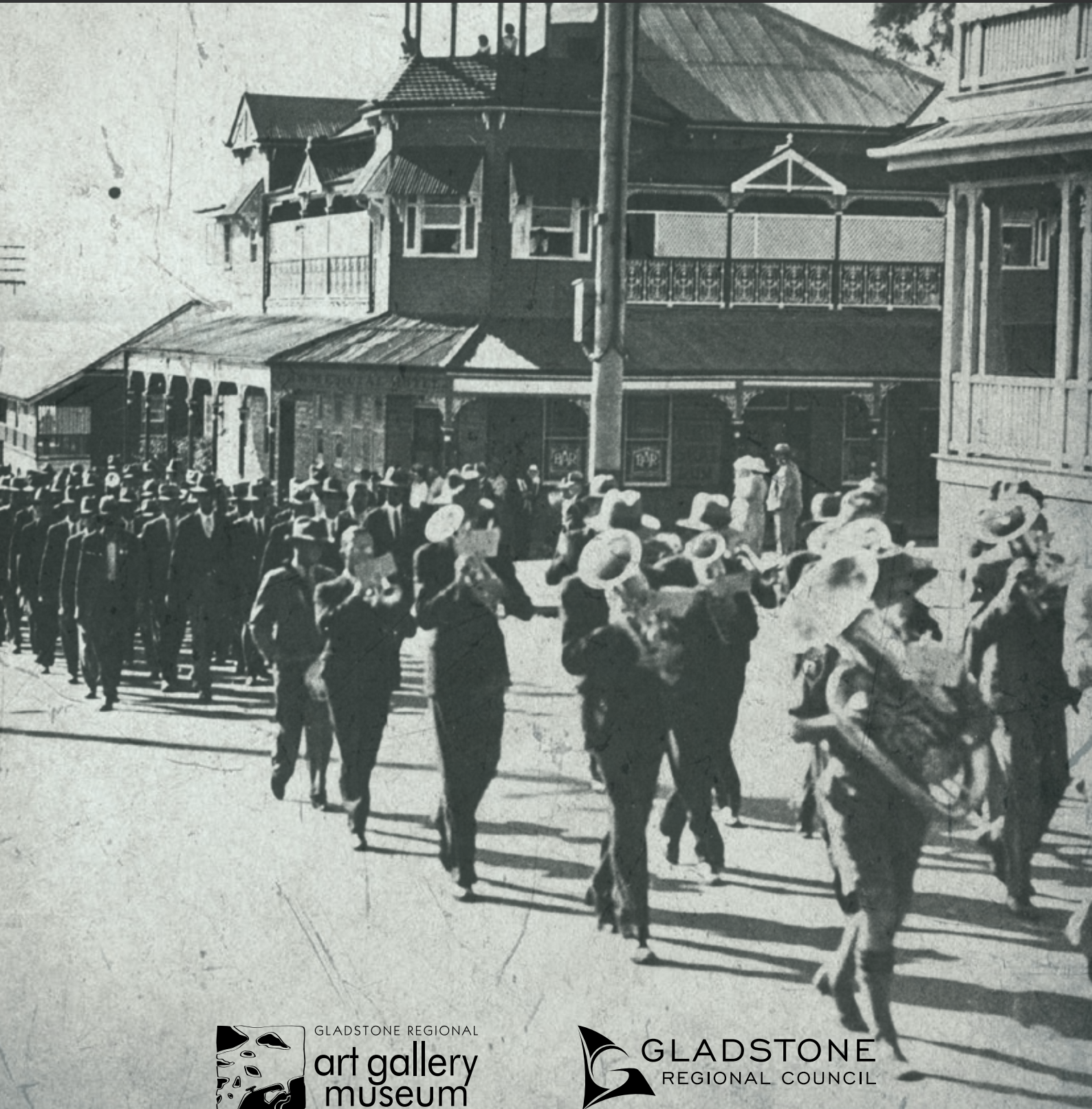


# OUR PRICELESS PAST

**16 October - 27 November 2021**  
**Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum**



GLADSTONE REGIONAL  
**art gallery  
museum**



**GLADSTONE**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



# Our Priceless Past

Featuring the stories of local Special Seniors, prepared and presented by selected Year 8 students of Toolooa State High School, to celebrate Seniors Month in Queensland, October 2021.

*Cover Image: ANZAC Day March, late 1940's to early 1950's  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum Collection*



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](mailto:gragm@gladstone.qld.gov.au)



# Acknowledgement Of Country

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Byellee (Bailai), the Gooreng Gooreng, the Gurang and the Taribelang Bunda people.

We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We would also like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our region.



Artwork by Patricia Coleman, Byellee  
*Hand in Hand Walking Together*



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1954 Labour Day procession, Tank Street, Gladstone  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum Collection



1951 Brisbane to Gladstone  
Yacht Race, Auckland Creek  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery  
& Museum Collection



# Welcome from the Mayor



Inspiring stories of the Gladstone Region are in the spotlight once again during 2021 Queensland Seniors Month, as part of the *Our Priceless Past* project. Fourteen Special Seniors met virtually with 27 selected Year 8 Toolooa State High School students

during September, to create the 10 stories featured this year.

Partnering school, Toolooa State High School, excitedly accepted the invitation to bring together these two very different local generations and were enthusiastic to innovate with video conferencing technology.

This is a rare opportunity to compare life experiences, with students gaining valuable first-hand knowledge of the past and seniors connecting with our precious future.

As you explore the stories, you'll discover teachers, artists and talented sportspersons, farmers, veterans and enduring volunteers. Having often arrived here for a period to work, they have contributed to the shape of this dynamic region, building resilient friendships and have been enticed to make the unique Gladstone Region their permanent home.

The students have worked diligently to share these stories, guided by their teacher, Head of

Department – Year 7 English/Humanities, Paula McDonald and were supported by Head of Department - Junior Secondary, Dave Capill.

It is wonderful, once again, to see local history researcher, Paulette Flint, lending her expertise to the project, conducting a writing masterclass at the school. Also, thank you to local photography professional Mike Richards, who presented an introduction to portrait photography to the students and 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 2022 for Special Senior nominations, continuing to seek out and record the character of our region.

Additionally, thanks go out to the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & 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 project partners Toolooa State High School, in celebrating *Our Priceless Past 2021*. Congratulations, to this year's Special Seniors and Toolooa State High School's participating students!

**Mayor Matt Burnett**  
Gladstone Regional Council

1962 Looking South, Goondoon Street, Gladstone  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum Collection



1945 end World War II, Gladstone Town Hall  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum Collection



# Message from the School



Gladstone is a place of rich history, intriguing people and fascinating stories; as such, students of Toolooa State High School were honoured to participate in *Our Priceless Past 2021*. The project enabled selected Year 8 students from Toolooa to gather and share

precious memories from some of Gladstone's favourite senior residents.

Both interviewers and interviewees eagerly embraced the opportunity to meet and share their stories in a way never experienced by the *Our Priceless Past* project. COVID restrictions saw traditional face to face meetings replaced with video conferences. Both seniors and students alike mastered the challenge of communicating online, often under tricky circumstances. Initial nerves in both generations of participants were

quickly replaced with earnest enthusiasm, and the spirited conversations that flowed easily between the two generations showed that true connections can still be forged despite physical distance.

By participating in *Our Priceless Past*, students gained unique insights into our region's history and its residents. For the teenagers involved, the project has provoked an increased interest in local history, honed their skills in the art of storytelling and encouraged curiosity about the genealogy and history of their own families. Toolooa State High School and its student participants offer our heartfelt thanks to Gladstone Regional Council and the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum for providing us with the opportunity to be involved in such a wonderful project.

## **Paula McDonald**

Head of Department - Year 7 English/Humanities  
Toolooa State High School



Local history researcher and author Paulette Flint, with students Ava Hetherington, Ava Aylmer and Samantha Rigley, during writing masterclass, Toolooa State High School.  
Image: MGR Photography



# Message from the Manager



Once again, we welcome this fantastic opportunity to build material in the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum social history collection, during *Our Priceless Past*. This chance to capture stories of the Gladstone Region, is one of our most anticipated

annual cultural projects.

Initiated in 1999, in conjunction with the Year of the Older Person, *Our Priceless Past* has now reached its 22nd year. The project provides a glimpse into the lives of those residents who have helped shaped the place in which we live, as told through the words of those young people preparing to shape our future.

This year's collection of stories describes an incredibly dynamic generation of local people. Retirement has not slowed this group down. They continue to contribute to the community, providing support for extended families, generously volunteering with local services and engaging in many social activities.

Partnering this year, Toolooa State High School has been tremendous. From an enthusiastic

invitation acceptance and eager willingness to pivot with these times, to presenting a most exceptional group of young people to work with us, the school has made a grand impression.

The selected Year 8 students embraced the chance to gain new skills, joyfully participating in an oral history introduction, preparing their questions and expertly interviewing their nominated seniors confidently. It has been wonderful to watch the exchange of anecdotes, busy note taking and walks in investigative shoes.

The Gallery & Museum's Front Gallery and Museum Room evolved to new-media studios, with the seniors meeting the students in their classroom, via video conferencing. New friendships have been forged and there is a great sense of shared achievement.

Please enjoy the wonderful stories and images featured here in celebration of 2021 Queensland Seniors Month. The exhibition of stories, memorabilia and photographs will continue at the Gallery & Museum until Saturday, November 27. We look forward to welcoming you all!

**Kim Marxsen**

Manager Arts and Entertainment  
Gladstone Regional Council

*Late 1940s early 1950s  
ANZAC Day Parade,  
Goondoon Street, Gladstone  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery  
& Museum Collection*



*1949 Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race,  
Auckland Point Wharf  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery  
& Museum Collection*



# Mr and Mrs Peter and Lyn Brady



*Wedding Day, St Patrick's Catholic Church, Bundaberg, 20 December 1975*

"Grandparents are like ancient little children," are the wise words spoken by Peter and Lyn's grandchildren, in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Peter Brady was born in Rockhampton on 25 March 1949 to parents Angela Marion and Thomas Bernard. Lyn Brady, Peter's wife, was born in Wondai, on 3 August 1951, to parents Erich and Olga Rosenblatt. Both Brady's had siblings; Kathryn is Peter's, and Heather, Jan and Des are Lyn's siblings.

In 1954, Peter Brady attended Cedar Vale Primary School for nine years. He later changed schools after Year 8 and attended St. Brendan's College, Yeppoon for the rest of his schooling years. Lyn Brady attended Kalkie State School and Kepnock State High School, in Bundaberg. Growing up, they both experienced near freedom, spending the days riding bicycles and horses, as well as discovering and exploring creeks. During his youth, Peter experienced what he refers to as a four-year lockdown, when he attended boarding school. This year, Peter and 16 classmates, and their partners, celebrated their 55th Graduation

of their Year 12 Class at his Mt Larcom farm. The celebration, for some, lasted eight days. This was their fifth reunion since 2016, with the 2020 reunion cancelled because of COVID-19.

Peter worked as a dairy and pig farmer for five years, becoming a school teacher in 1972, for the next 32 years. After retiring in 2004, he returned to cattle farming. Lyn worked for a real estate office for 14 years, and later worked in school admin at Bracewell State School, Kin Kora State School and Mount Larcom Primary School as a teacher's aide, for 18 years. Lyn retired from this work in 2008.

On 20 December 1975, this lovely couple got married at Bundaberg. They initially met because of Peter's fruit and vegetable picking trip with three other Uni mates who also became teachers. The couple have been happily married, without a single argument, for 46 years.

Thomas and Megan are the beloved children of the Brady's. They also have grandchildren Charlie and Kate, as well as Shari, Tanika, Kayce, Wilson and Jack.



Throughout their time in Gladstone, both have seen many changes. Many of the farms around the area where they grew up slowly whittled down. A prime example is that 220 dairies that supplied the Bracewell Cheese Factory have become one chilled milk supplier. As well as that, dairy farms changed to cattle, and primary industries changed to heavy industries. These changes were observed during their time travelling through Gladstone, as the couple have lived most of their lives in Mount Larcom. Their knowledge of the Gladstone Region is incredible and they carry with them stories about places such as the Gladstone limestone mines and stories about agricultural life.

COVID-19 has barely affected Mr and Mrs Brady. The biggest impact it has had on them was the fact that it prevented them from seeing their precious grandchildren for a short time, during 2020.

Peter and Lyn have had an amazing life. Looking back, their life has been nothing but good experiences. They both have a multitude of advice for the younger generation, such as "Care for your families, mates, friends and communities and they in turn will care for you! Do not be influenced by poor influences," and "Be truthful, kind and considerate, and be willing to compromise and help others."



Mr & Mrs Peter and Lyn Brady  
Image: MGR Photography



By Ryan Goltz, Xavier Lambert  
and Tristan Warry, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

Xavier Lambert, Tristan Warry and Ryan Goltz, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



# Mrs Yvonne Cooper

Mr and Mrs John and Yvonne Cooper, Wedding Day,  
St Philip's Memorial Church of England,  
Auburn, Sydney, NSW 15 May 1965



*Mrs Yvonne Cooper (nee Jackson) as a teenager, at home, Sydney NSW*

The core of a community begins with the people. Yvonne Cooper is a survivor, a family woman, a go-getter... She's accomplished plenty, inspiring future generations to "aim for the stars and not settle for anything less".

Born in Sydney, 1946, to Elgin and Leonard Jackson, Yvonne is the eldest to brothers, Richard and Neville. Her mother was 21, and her father, who had served in World War II for four years, was 28 when she was born. Their close-knit family helped her passion for family history and genealogy bloom. Yvonne's grandfather, David Crombie, encouraged her love of books and learning, giving her a tiny dictionary, published in 1841, passed down from his grandfather, bookseller James Glen.

Attending Auburn North Public School, Sydney, Yvonne was fond of social studies and was awarded the 1958 Gold Medal for Dux of the school. This allowed her to attend Strathfield Girls High, as opposed to one for sewing and cooking. She was grateful to learn English, French and Latin there, attending from 1959 until 1961, completing the Intermediate Certificate, aged 15. A guidance

officer gave her a book about work in chemistry laboratories and explained that Yvonne could leave school to work in a chemical laboratory, while also enrolled in a Technical College Chemistry Certificate course at night, which she did. Her father died when she was 17; he'd been chronically ill, since she was 10.

Yvonne completed university gaining an Associate Diploma in Applied Chemistry in 1990. She joined the Central Queensland Chemists Association while studying and worked at the Gladstone Power Station, as well as I.C.I (now Orica) Chlorine and Cyanide Plant.

Marrying John is one of Yvonne's favourite memories. Meeting when she was 13, and he was 14, John had pushed her into a pool on a Sunday. They were engaged when Yvonne was 16 and married when she was 18. Before they married, John worked in Sydney and Yvonne would meet him at noon after he finished work, on Saturdays. Together, they'd explore Sydney visiting museums, playing chess on a primitive computer and experiencing the Egyptian mummies at the Australian Museum.



In 1965, the Army sent John to Malaysia, with Yvonne, for two years. They were only back in Australia for six months when John was sent to Vietnam, while Yvonne worked in a chemical laboratory. They travelled a lot in Australia; however, Yvonne wishes she'd travelled more, mainly to Europe. They had two children, Joanne and David, who also help people.

John and Yvonne arrived in Gladstone in 1982 when the traffic lights were being turned on. Mount Larcom was the first thing she saw and she remembers her ambition to climb it. Yvonne eventually did, however said she wouldn't do it again. John retired in 2001 with ill health and Yvonne retired to care for him.

Yvonne doesn't prefer past or present, she enjoys the diversity in Gladstone. One of her greatest struggles was the last five years of her husband's life. He very sadly passed away after 52 years of their marriage.

Nowadays, Yvonne likes watching ballet and cricket, stargazing, Sudoku, reading, gardening and time with her grandson. She lunches with different groups and is the secretary of the Genealogical Society Gladstone District. Family history has been a hobby since 1978; she's managed to trace her own back to 1760, as well as help others find theirs.

A long-term blood donor, Yvonne's made 70 donations, stopping after she got breast cancer in 2014. Her lasting advice for future generations is "be kind, be a blood donor, aim for the stars and don't settle for anything less."



Mrs Yvonne Cooper  
Image: MGR Photography



By Hayley Norgard,  
Rhiarn Moore and  
Belle Rowlinson, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

Belle Rowlinson, Rhiarn Moore and Hayley Norgard, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



## Mr Pat Fraser



*Fraser Family, 154 Off St, Gladstone, from the left Rae, Pat, Ann, Bub, Nancy and baby Michael*

"If you know you are right and if it's the right thing to do, just do it, don't worry about the consequences." These are the words of wisdom of Pat Fraser. Born on 1 April 1952, in Gladstone, Patrick was brought up in a hard working family of nine. His Dad, Percy Arnold, and Mum, Rose Jenny, were the parents of Nancy, Maurice, Michael, Patrick, Ann, Rae and Doreen (better known as Bub or Bubby). He grew up on the south side of Gladstone in a neighbourhood of his mates.

He attended primary school at Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School and participated in some school sports, including rugby league. This carried into secondary school, playing for Gladstone State High School where he attended. He also played for Brothers Football Club in the local competition. As a young adolescent, Mr Fraser was a member of Cadets. One of his favourite memories as a part of the program was a little game of 'hide and seek'. "They would come and find us with guns and shoot us with blanks," Patrick chuckled. This is just a small portion of the fun he would

experience, as a kid. Along with this fond memory, Pat and his mates also liked to go fishing and ride their 'pushies' to the butter factory where they would blow their weekly allowance on all the sugary treats they could get their hands on. Patrick was fortunate enough to have not broken a bone in his life. The most damaging injury to date has been tonsillitis, when he was forced into a hospital for a bit.

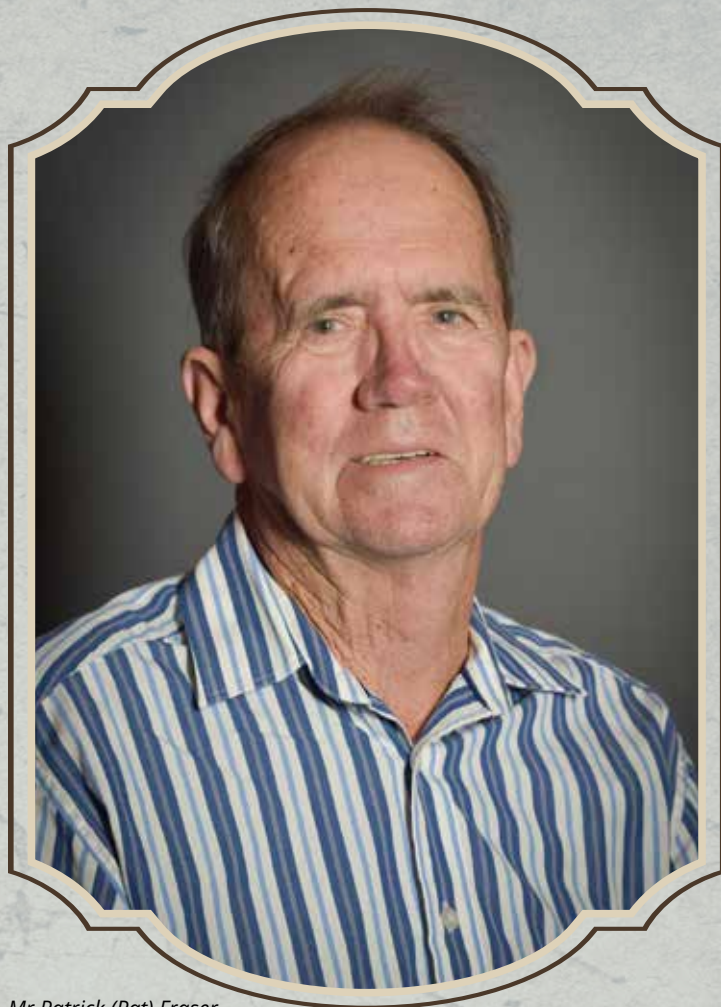
At the age of 15, Patrick got his very first job at the railway, carrying people's luggage as a porter. However, this didn't last for long as he was soon sent to Brisbane to live with his uncle and aunt, where he completed a five year motor-mechanic apprenticeship and gained a passion for cars. His first enthusiast car was a SV1 Valiant which he greatly adored, and later in his life he completely restored a Holden FB. Not long after completing his apprenticeship, Pat moved back to Gladstone where he married Robyn. They soon settled down to have their first of three children, Benjamin. Not long after came Luke and Jake.



As the kids grew older, they started boxing at the PCYC gym. However, Pat found that it just wasn't suitable. So, with the help of his friends and family, he started his own boxing gym which was quite successful and gave him a great reputation around town.

As fortunate enough as Patrick was to have never gone to war, his father Percy was not so lucky. During World War II, Percy was a 'Rat of Tobruk' in the desert of North Africa. While chasing the German General Rommel, they came out successful. While sailing home after the campaign, the Australian Government diverted their ship to Rabaul, New Guinea, where they engaged the Japanese in some of the most fierce battles in the war. Pat's mother, on the other hand, was born in Australia, however her parents had migrated from Ireland.

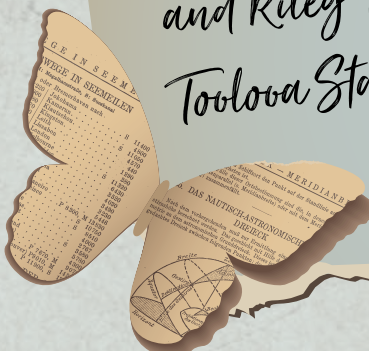
Nowadays, Patrick Fraser is a retired member of the Gladstone Region community, grandfather of seven and joyous husband.



Mr Patrick (Pat) Fraser  
Image: MGR Photography



*By Casey Fraser  
and Riley Thomas, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021*



Riley Thomas and Casey Fraser, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



## Mrs Marilyn Haertel



*Marilyn Haertel preparing Primitive to Porcelain travelling exhibition, 1979*

Marilyn Haertel is a strong, independent woman. A survivor.

Born on 14 August 1939, in Bendigo, Victoria, Marilyn has one younger sister, Rosemary. Their parents Anne (nee Rassmussen) and Eric Stanmore owned a cosy, homely property in a small country town, Broadford, Victoria. A prominent memory Marilyn clearly reminisces about is how her father would grow the crunchiest, crispest and sweetest apples ever. She was a well behaved child but often could not resist the temptation to sneak out and steal one of those apples, like small rubies glistening on the tree. She got along well with her mother, who owned a shoe shop where she sold and mended shoes, but hardly got to see her father. He was a busy man, a well known and much loved fireman, always happy to assist his community. He was so valued that when he passed, a memorial was organised where "they placed his coffin on his fire truck and marched down the street to the cemetery; people following close behind."

In her spare time as a child, Marilyn would often run up and down the street and go visit the

creek that split the town in two. She describes how there was "not much technology, but there was electricity." The most exciting technologies available were their scratchy sounding radio and telephone. She briefly compared the different technologies from now and then, while marvelling about how it and entertainment has evolved.

Marilyn attended Broadford Primary School and Seymour State High School. During her student life, everything was quite formal and her peers were well behaved (most likely scared of 'the cane'). She always had a flare for art and anything creative; this influenced her to select her career path as an art teacher. "I didn't want to be anything else, so I got a scholarship as an art teacher." Graduating Teachers College in 1959, even though she applied for Geelong and had not had physical education training, she was sent to Colac to be the Phys. Ed. Teacher. Umpiring a hockey match between area schools, she fell and severely injured her third and fourth vertebrae. She was sent home to Broadford for nine months and had to catch a train to Melbourne every week to visit a medical professional, for a few months.



Then, a secondary school opened in Broadford and she was appointed the Head Teacher there, until the end of 1963.

On a cruise trip to Germany in 1964, Marilyn met the love of her life, Herbert, who was travelling the globe for work. They fell in love and married in Zons am Rhein, West Germany, 28 August 1964. The couple had two children, Elizabeth Sonja and Christopher Paul.

In 1966, Marilyn and Herbert moved to Gladstone. She taught at Gladstone State High School for two years and he worked at QAL. She then resigned from teaching and focused more on pottery. At TAFE, she taught painting and pottery adult education for 15 years. In 1985, she proudly became the director of 'The Potters Place Fine Art Gallery and Gift Shop'. Marilyn enjoys time in her garden where her favourite plants are ferns. Her passion and long dedication to art contributed to the biggest achievement in her career – winning two 'Martin Hanson Awards' prizes, one in 1983 and the other in 1990. Marilyn is content with her career and doesn't wish to retire.



Mrs Marilyn Haertel  
Image: MGR Photography



*By Amalia Kalantary, Emily Hill  
and Isabelle Pearce, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021*



Emily Hill, Amalia Kalantary and Isabelle Pearce, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



# Mr and Mrs Keith and Heather Jensen

Keith Jensen,  
1969



Heather Jensen (nee Ballantyne), Grade One, Gladstone Central State School (front row, fourth from right, feet crossed)

"Work hard, enjoy school and embrace life" is the advice that Heather and Keith Jensen have for the next generation. Having lived in the Gladstone Region for their entire lives, they have an immense sense of community and what change can mean for a town such as Gladstone.

Heather was born on 18 January 1949, to parents Joseph and Frances Ballantyne. One of eight children, Heather learned values such as love and communication, and what it is to raise a family. Her father was from Scotland, so Heather has roots across the globe, but chose to settle in Gladstone. "Gladstone's home, we've never been anywhere better" is what Heather said when asked if they'd considered moving away.

Keith was born on 16 July 1944. His parents, Norm and Eileen Jensen, had 10 children on a farm. Keith holds those memories dear to his heart, helping to run the farm and do other chores from a young age. He learnt resilience and, being one of a large family, to communicate and care for others. His grandfather was from Denmark.

As children, there wasn't much to do, they made their own fun, playing with the other children in the neighbourhood. Heather and Keith recall

playing ball games on the streets. "We lost a lot of balls," Heather laughed, while Keith nodded in agreement.

Heather attended school at Central State School until the Eighth Grade. The school has not changed much since her youth, simply grown to fit new students. Although she did not get a full education, she still holds the importance of school close to her heart and strongly believes in the power of knowledge.

Keith went to Riverston State School, a one teacher school on George Clarke's property, now under the Awoonga Dam. He worked for years at the Boyne Smelter and for Andy Ferguson. He thoroughly enjoyed work, especially driving trucks. He reminisced on how during the long hours at work, it was best to take a break and watch the cows grazing the farmlands.

The couple met while Heather had a job at Andersons Fruit Shop on Auckland Street, and Keith came in with his family. Heather helped him find what he was looking for, and they never looked back. They were married at St Saviours Anglican Church, Auckland Street, Gladstone, on 24 January, 1970.



They had their first child in 1971, a daughter named Jo-Anne, and then a son, Ian, several years after.

Although their family lives six to eight hours away, they keep in close touch with loved ones. Keith and Heather have four grandchildren who they love dearly. Kieren, Amy, Jordan and Drew all live in big cities on the Sunshine Coast and in Brisbane, but their doting grandparents are never afraid to ask for their help figuring out newer technology.

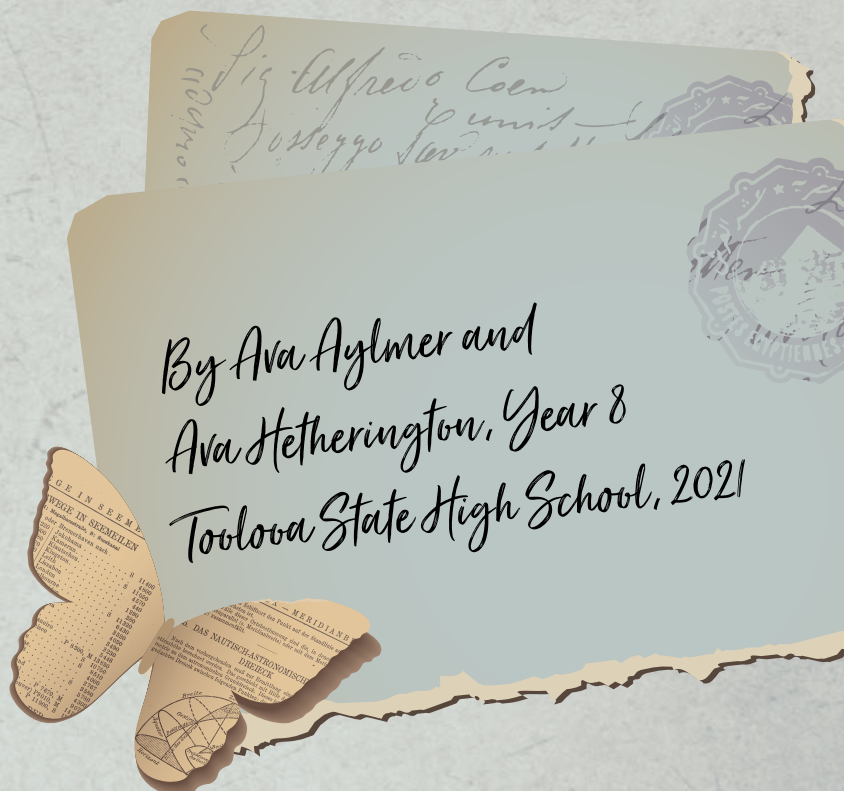
Heather enjoys handcrafts such as crochet, making jewellery boxes and volunteering at QCWA. She has a handcraft teachers' badge, as she educates on how to do crafts. Whilst Heather is not the best at drawing, she still likes to give it her best shot.

Keith, on the other hand, loves horse sports. He used to participate in them a lot but does not as often anymore. He didn't play any sports when he was young but loved to play games with friends to stay active.

Mr and Mrs Jensen live unforgettable lives flooded with memories, love and honesty. They both value the virtue of connection and heavily hold their family near their hearts. Having lived here their whole lives, they have seen how the area has grown and changed, but what hasn't changed is the way they hold each other close and love deeply.



Mr & Mrs Keith and Heather Jensen  
Image: MGR Photography



Ava Aylmer and Ava Hetherington, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



# Mr Allan Lester



*Kaye and Darrel Lester riding 'Cockrobin' and Allan Lester on 'Trixie'*

"Respect all people," are the words Allan Lester gives as advice for the next generation.

Allan Lester was born on 8 May 1945, at the Bayview Hospital Gladstone, to parents Marcus and Jean (nee Handley). He has three siblings: Valerie, Darrel and Kaye. He lived his early years at his family's property in Bororen.

During his childhood, Allan attended Bororen State Primary School, where he would walk to school. Although he was well behaved and performed well, Allan didn't particularly like his time at primary school. Allan kept himself entertained by participating in many pastimes like athletics, tennis and rugby league. His family earned their keep running their Australian Illawarra Short Horn dairy and beef farm, where they lived. His whole family chipped in including his mother, father and his siblings.

Upon completing primary school, Allan attended Gladstone State High School, starting in 1959. He continued to attend high school finding himself interested in industry work. In Year 10,

Allan decided to leave school after earning an apprenticeship. His parents supported him all the way.

Studying at night in Rockhampton, Allan gained an apprenticeship as a fitter and this would be his first working job. He worked on steam engines at railway workshops in Rockhampton for five years, then Barney Point Engineering for one year. Allan then worked until 60 years of age at Gilbarco Australia as a fitter. He then spent five years working for Central State Fuels, replacing underground tanks throughout Central Queensland.

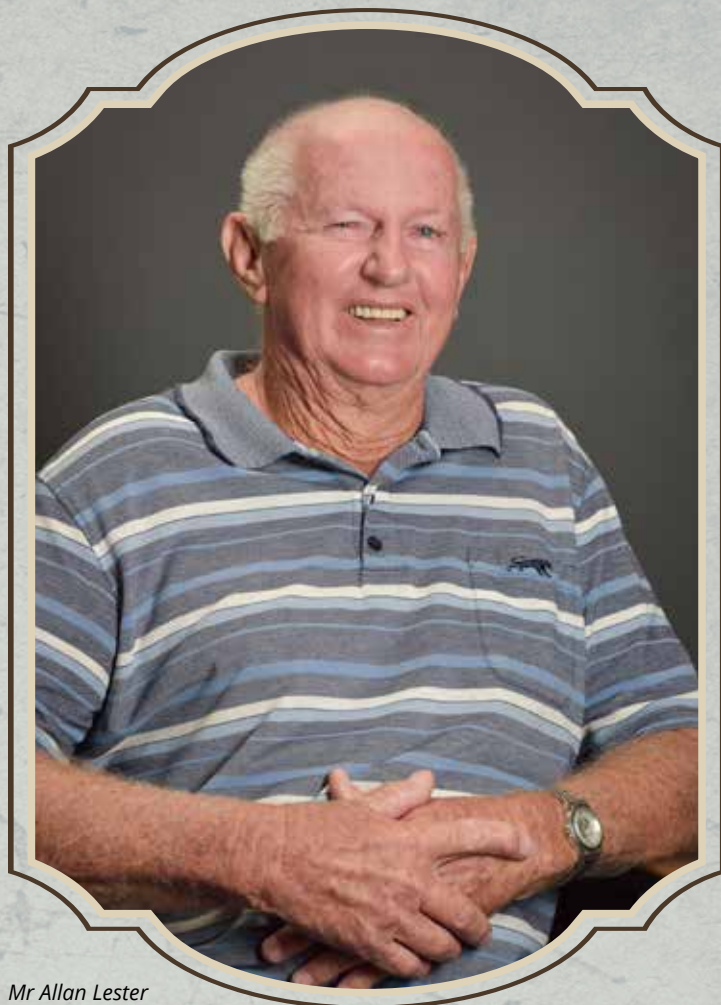
During his adult life, Allan Lester pursued many of his interests including fishing (in fishing spots he will carry to the grave), watching rodeos and travelling across the country with his wife Claire, in their caravan, during any time they have to spare. Allan was even a board member of Rugby League Gladstone. He and Claire were married at Bororen, in 1995. Allan has a son Len and he is a stepdad to Claire's children Tom and Tara. Together, they have six grandchildren.



Allan has always lived in the Gladstone Region but has worked all around Central Queensland. He is still pursuing his interests as much as possible, whilst trying to work around COVID-19.

One question we asked Allan was what would he like to be remembered for in the community? He had a simple but meaningful response, "A hard working citizen". This really encapsulates Allan's personality. He still loves his fishing, and his travels with Claire as much as they can (although limited to the vast expanses of Queensland). In fact, they'd recently attended a rodeo in Cloncurry.

When we asked Allan about what he thinks has changed in the Gladstone Region, he says it's the airport being expanded, new wharves being constructed, and the large shopping centres found around town. Allan plans to continue to live out his life for as long as he can, as a true champion.



Mr Allan Lester  
Image: MGR Photography



By Riley Townsend and  
Liam Keeping, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

Riley Townsend and Liam Keeping, from their classroom.  
Image: courtesy Toolooa State High School



## Mr and Mrs Neil and Inge McEachran



*Wedding Day, Gladstone Presbyterian Church, 5 November 1960*

Mr and Mrs McEachran have some advice for future generations: "Slow down and enjoy the little things in life, because they aren't like anything else."

Neil's parents, Ray and Ruby McEachran farmed at Spring Valley, Yarwun. In 1938, Neil was born at Gladstone Hospital, the second child of eight, with siblings Jean, Malcolm, Gloria, Carole, Donald, Alan and Rachel.

Born in Denmark, in 1939, Inge is the third of four children with siblings Arne, Kaj and Annie, to parents Helge and Gudrun Lundqvist. In 1957, the family migrated to Australia. After a short stay at Wacol, the family found work at 'Eulogie Park' Dululu, then to Targinnie, where they share farmed papaws.

Neil says he enjoyed schooling, his favourite class being Physical Education. To this day, he is grateful for his teachers. Both Neil and Inge were constantly involved in sports in their youth. In Denmark, Inge played handball, badminton and gymnastics. In Australia, she played tennis, indoor cricket and golf. She's still playing golf, today. Neil played a lot of cricket when he was younger, and even kept playing up until a few

years ago. A significant event that occurred in Neil's childhood was a massive cyclone that lasted three days. He was 11 years old at the time and vividly remembers it blowing down papaw trees and even the Spring Valley homestead.

Luckily, neither Neil nor Inge had any war experiences, and were both able to focus solely on their schooling. Mr McEachran mentioned that homework and farm work took up most of his after-school time. Neil finished school in 1953, but for most of his education he had to ride three miles on horseback to reach his school – yet another testament to his athleticism. He just missed out on gaining a place in Gatton College in 1954, so decided to focus on the farm. In Denmark, Inge finished school in 1954 and started a hairdressing apprenticeship, before moving to Australia.

Neil's life changed when he met a young Danish girl named Inge. They dated for six months before getting engaged in November 1959. A year later, they tied the knot and have been happily married ever since. The first five years of their marriage were full of excitement: they bought a papaw farm in 1963 and had two of their four children.



Carryn was born in 1962, followed by Steven in 1964. Then, Tracy in 1967 and Kelly in 1971. Both Mr and Mrs McEachran say they're very proud of their family and what they have achieved.

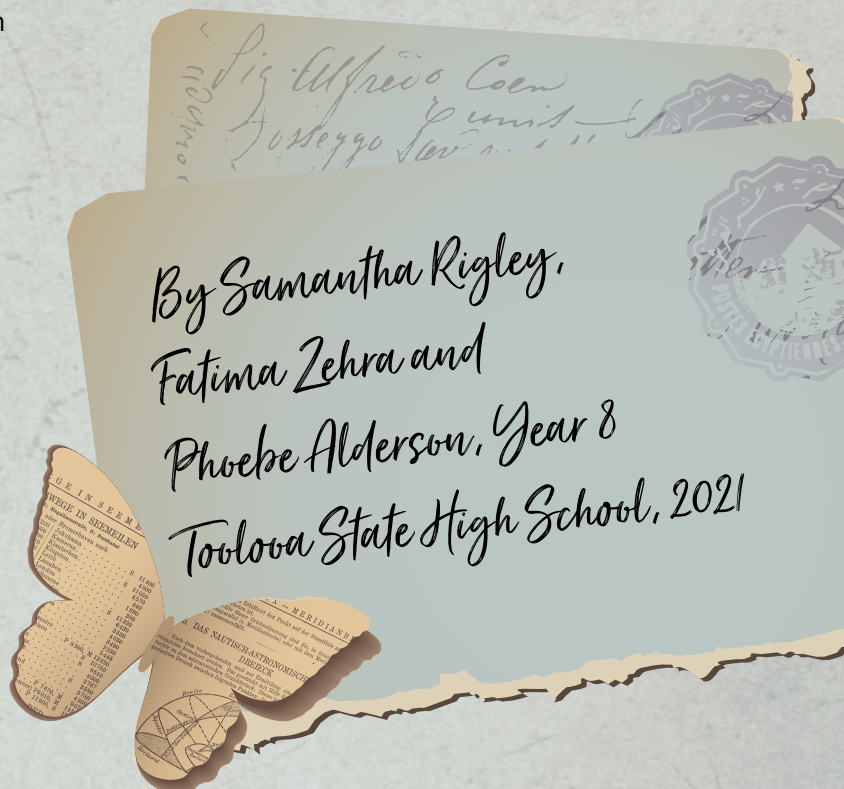
In Neil's words "Sport has always been a big part of the McEachran lifestyle". He started playing cricket in 1950, and even travelled the world with the 'Golden Oldies' cricket team from 1988 to 2010, with Inge by his side. These days, to keep social, they play a lot of golf. They're very competitive, even with each other. Neil usually wins, but Inge swears she'll win, one of these days. An achievement they have made when playing golf is that Inge has achieved two hole-in-ones, but Neil has only had one. Sport isn't the only thing this couple enjoy doing together, as they have had the same Scrabble set for 60 years. A few arguments have come out of the competitive game, but in reality, they're inseparable.

The couple worked on their papaw farm for most of their lives. They overcame struggles that other families couldn't dream of. Farming is the McEachran way, as both Neil and Inge worked most of their lives as farmers. Neil has learnt a little bit of Danish from Inge; he even knows how to say "I love you."

Neil and Inge McEachran have lived a fulfilling life, with four children and seven grandchildren. They're close to their family and are prouder than ever. They love playing golf and Scrabble together and will continue to do so long into the future. Sports and farming have occupied them, and it's as clear as daylight that this couple love each other.



Mr and Mrs Neil and Inge McEachran  
Image: MGR Photography



By Samantha Rigley,  
Fatima Zehra and  
Phoebe Alderson, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

Samantha Rigley, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



# Aunty Dell Parter



*Dell Parter (nee Yasso) with her vigoro team, front row second from the right*

Whether it was sneaking out to the movie theatre or busting a move to Elvis Presley's smash hit 'Blue Suede Shoes', Aunty Dell has been living a selfless, loving and meaningful life.

Born in Bowen on 11 October 1940, Dell was one of nine children to parents, Alfred and Caroline Yasso. Her siblings consisted of four brothers Arthur, Alfie, Lenny and Noel, and four sisters Miriam, Shirley, Ursula and Gertie. Alfred was a meat worker and Caroline specialised in home care.

With seven children, 23 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren, Aunty Dell is surrounded by love. She loves spending time with all of them. She says that the grandkids are what keeps her so young and busy. Aunty Dell says she finds it difficult to keep up with technology. Her grandchildren always offer to teach her, but she often refuses.

During her school days, Aunty Dell attended Queens Beach State School. When thinking back, she says it was much stricter, with punishments

like the cane still being legal. Aunty Dell preferred being outside instead of stuck inside a classroom. She especially enjoyed sports days due to the fact it wasn't in a classroom. One of the sports she listed as her all-time favourite was vigoro; a sport which consists of elements from both cricket and tennis.

Growing up, Aunty Dell lived on her father's farm for five years. During that time, she learned to pick tomatoes, and wash mangoes and chillies. Aunty Dell also vividly remembers fishing and camping with her family at the nearby riverbank. She continues to love camping and fishing. Aunty Dell says her role model growing up was her mother. Her biggest struggle was finding her own jobs as she is/was introverted, getting her first job at the age of 15 years as a cleaner.

Sneaking out with her brother into the Summer Garden Theatre, Queens Beach, to watch the movie through the cracks, was one of her favourite childhood highlights to share. Another great memory of Aunty Dell's was after church going to eat together with her family. When asked



what her happiest memory was, she reminisced about the big family Christmas events that they used to have. With such a big family tree, over 50 people would show up. They were huge events for Aunty Dell.

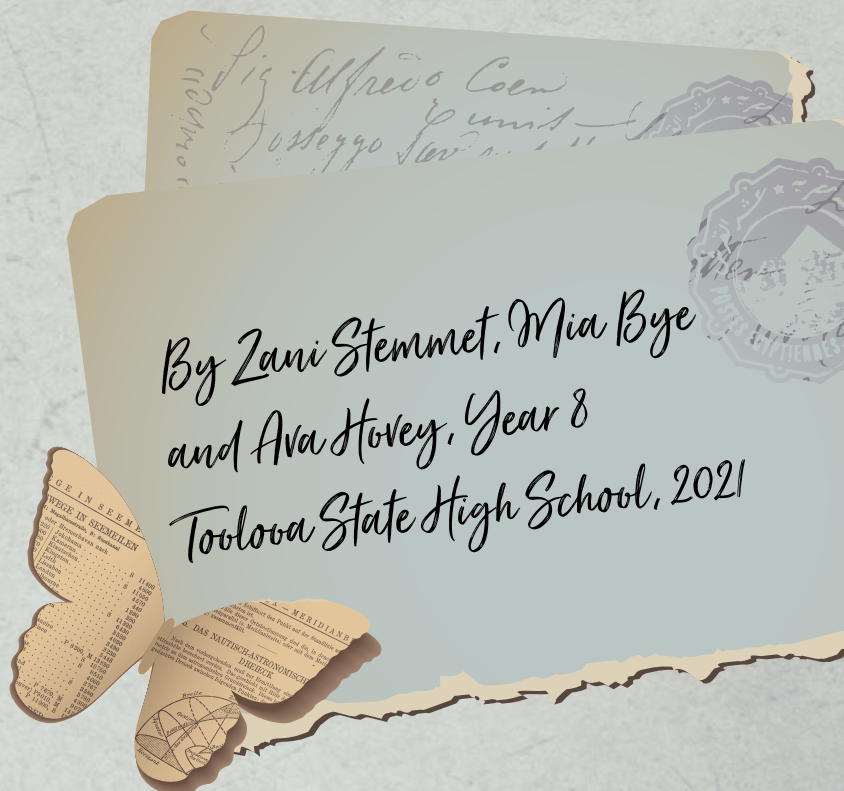
Dell married Keith in Bowen, in 1960. They first moved to Gladstone in 1971, after Keith got a job as a boilermaker with John Thompson, at Toolooa. When asking for her hand in marriage Keith asked Dell's father for permission. This is how she retells the event: "Alfie (her father), can I have Dell?" asked Keith. Her father replied by saying how she'll always be his Dell. Keith sadly passed away, in 2012.

She now works at The Billabong Op Shop in Calliope. Her main role is sorting out all the donations, but she sometimes works at the counter whenever the shop is short staffed. When she's not working at the shop, Aunty Dell enjoys spending time with her grandchildren doing art with them. Aunty Dell wants to be remembered as a great mother and grandmother.

Her advice for the future generations is to "love and be kind to one another, caring and sharing."



Aunty Dell Parter  
Image: MGR Photography



By Zani Stemmet, Mia Bye  
and Ava Hovey, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

Mia Bye and Zani Stemmet, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



# Mrs Gladys Pitt



*Gladys Pitt (nee Slape) during fancy dress event*

"Do to others what you want them to do to you." These are the wise words of Gladstone icon, Gladys Pitt.

Gladys was born in the town of Babinda in Northern Queensland in the year 1941. Born to Leonard and Fanny Slape, she was one of five children, with two brothers and two sisters.

Growing up, her father owned the town movie theatre, with her mother selling drinks and lollies in a small shop attached to the side of the building. From the age of nine, Gladys helped out in the shop using only mental arithmetic, as they didn't have any cash registers. As a child, Gladys was not a sporty person; however, she did play hockey for a period of time. Gladys has always been an ardent reader, even as a child, which ultimately played a vital role in her successful school career.

Gladys started school in Babinda before moving to a school in Kureen. She and her family moved onto a dairy farm on the Atherton Tablelands. The Kureen school was a one teacher school, where Gladys was promoted from Grade 6 to Grade 8.

On the farm, Gladys would milk cows by hand every day before riding to school and would do her homework by the light of a kerosene lamp, with a nib pen and a bottle of ink. When she was 15, Gladys caught her right index finger in a cream separator. This impacted her attendance in Year 11, as her finger was almost cut off.

Despite this setback, winning a scholarship to become a teacher enabled Gladys to attend Kelvin Grove Teachers College, in Brisbane. As a child, being a teacher was her aspiration and she finally achieved her goal. In 1959, Gladys moved to Gladstone and started teaching at Gladstone Central State School, at the age of 18. Gladys remembers Gladstone as a basic town when she first moved here - the local meatworks were the main source of income. Outdoor toilets were the norm, along with often brown water coming from the taps. Gladys admits the town has significantly changed with new schools and bigger schools in general.

When Gladys first started teaching, female teachers received 90 per cent of a male teacher's



wage and were compelled to resign at marriage. After having her two children, Gladys returned to teaching as the principal of The Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association Gladstone School, to help intellectually challenged students. However, when this school was relocated to Rockhampton, she returned to primary school teaching. Gladys taught at most public and private schools in the Gladstone District in various positions, such as special education, learning difficulties, reading recovery and relief teaching. Her final year of teaching was 2019, as she retired at 78 years of age.

Aside from her teaching career, Gladys' biggest achievement was her two children, Brian and Jennifer. She has travelled to places like Europe and South East Asia. She is an active member of the Gladstone Hospital Auxiliary, where she helps to raise money to buy important items, and volunteers time to help staff with labour intensive tasks.

Gladys would like to be remembered for the effect that she had on the lives of each and every student that she ever taught.



Mrs Gladys Pitt  
Image: MGR Photography



*By Cara Corke, Sophie Slack  
and Fynn Sawtell, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021*

Sophie Slack, Fynn Sawtell and Cara Corke, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography



## Mr and Mrs Alf and Narelle Russell



*Gladstone Harbour Festival Ball event, 1980's*

Alf and Narelle Russell are a very happy couple, with interesting stories to tell. It was a pleasure to interview them about themselves and Gladstone's past.

Born in 1948 in Cairns, Alf lived in Kuranda until he moved to Gladstone when he was 12 years old with his parents, Mervyn and Agnes Russell. He is the oldest sibling to his two sisters Lynette and Thelma, and three brothers Gregory, Kevin and Peter, who he keeps in contact with. As a kid, Alf was very sporty – playing tennis, cricket, football and golf. Cricket and golf are sports he still plays.

Alf first worked in carpentry and joinery for Grayson Bros, and had his own building business for 35 years. He is now happily working for Gladstone Port Services on the Gladstone Harbour, tying up ships. Alf's wife Narelle says that he is still very good at building and fixing things.

Narelle was born in 1950 in Gladstone, to Richard and Constance Thomas, and has three older siblings Yvonne, Kelvin and Raymond. When she was in high school there were around 660 students, as the town was one quarter of the

size it is now. Her first job was when she was still in high school, working at a fruit and veg shop across from her house in Auckland Street. After graduating from Kelvin Grove Teachers College, she taught at Gladstone Central State School and would also admin for Alf's building business. Narelle enjoys gardening, music, animal rescue, reading and handcraft.

Alf and Narelle were married Friday, 18 December 1970, at the Star of the Sea, Gladstone. Narelle was 20 and Alf was 23. On their wedding day the fuse in the organ broke, and so they had to use a fuse from the outside light until the organ was no longer needed. Their reception was held at the CWA Hall. Their honeymoon was nice, they "had to learn to live together", they said. It was only them and their dog on an island. Alf and Narelle have two children, Michaela who is 46 years old, and Kelly Anne who is 43.

Narelle grows many things in her garden, some of which are blueberries, oranges, lemons, mandarins and roses. She also saves animals from the pound as Secretary/Treasurer of Gladstone

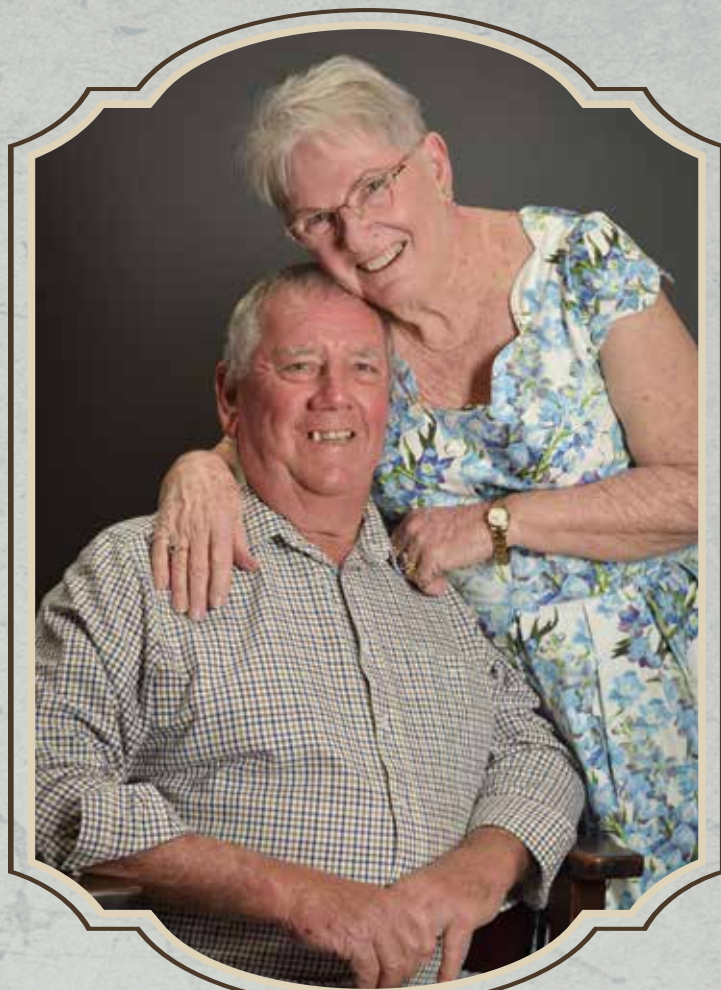


Animal Rescue Group. All the animals rescued find new homes in Gladstone, Sydney, Brisbane and Tasmania, among other places. The group rescued 700 animals last year. She is also the President of the Gladstone Musical Society, singing with the choir for 25 years.

They recall that in the past, to phone someone you had to call an operator and tell them the number you wanted to call. Alf and Narelle also said that the first colour TV program was, 'Sportsman of the Year 1975' on the ABC.

Alf and Narelle Russell are a very happily married couple and both like gardening. Narelle also enjoys music, animal rescue and being the President of the Gladstone Musical Society. Alf enjoys boating and fishing, saying he eats almost all fish he catches.

To conclude with the words of Narelle - "Learn something new each day, if you don't you've wasted a day."



Mr and Mrs Alfred (Alf) and Narelle Russell  
Image: MGR Photography



By Xander Bruhn, Bailey Scott  
and James Hanna, Year 8  
Toolooa State High School, 2021

James Hanna, Bailey Scott and Xander Bruhn, Toolooa State High School  
Image: MGR Photography





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