

Local Identity turns a young 101!

Local resident William Bourne turns 101 on Thursday March 25th. Bill is a client of Catholic Community Services and he is Community Worker Garry's oldest 'packaged aged care' client" said Carmel Garry's Service Coordinator.

"He may be 101 but he is far from my most needy client! Garry said. He is sharp witted, funny, wise and, above all, amazing!"

Bill lives with his wife Joan in their unit and he gets around with a 4 wheel walker frame – but that isn't surprising as he was hit by a van and somersaulted over the top of it a few years back!

Bill has macular degeneration and is legally blind, so Joan does the scribing for Bill's role as Treasurer for the Owners Corporation of his residential building. Bill would have to be the oldest treasurer (of any organisation) in Australia! Bill also mentors all in-coming office bearers.

"I timed a review visit for Bill's 100th birthday, last year, and we both got a marvellous present! We stumbled upon the fact that we had crossed paths 30 years earlier. A throw away comment by Bill, over a celebratory cuppa, landed us both back in the office of our then mutual employer, itself an organisation steeped in history. Bill was the auditor and I was the research officer. Together we recalled colourful people and events. Carmel said"

Carmel recalls that although Bill still had community responsibilities as treasurer, when she met him (as Coordinator of his aged care services) Bill was house bound for the most part. Both Joan and Bill are spirited people, so finding something Bill could do regularly, and without Joan's help, seemed to Carmel to be a good way to support Bill to get out of the 4 walls and re-engage with his community.

As part of Catholic Community Services Enabling Approach Bill and Garry revisit Bill's fascinating past and photographs his memories along the way. Garry converted the photographs into word pictures for his special client. Bill loves the garden, so word pictures also evoke colour and texture, dappled shade and bright sun.

Together they have visited Bill's old homes, including his boyhood homes, places where Bill was involved with the scouts, the site of his first workplace (Bill can name the date he started his first job and the wage he earned), his old office building which is now used for storage and where Bill's old office door still bears his name in gold leaf.

Visiting many of his old stomping grounds, Bill marvels at the changes, but he also gives Garry an insight into the area's historical past and, occasionally, a name change. The pair round out the day with a light lunch and a beer for Bill. "It was my role as Coordinator to get the approval from Bill's GP for the midi of beer, Carmel said."

Catholic Community Services

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Garry was invited to the 100th Birthday party for Bill, as was his Domestic Care Community Worker, who keeps Bill and Joan's home humming peacefully. Maxine McKew Member for Bennelong also attended. Bill is the oldest member of the ALP and was made a Life Member in 1983 by the then Premier Neville Wran.

As his 100th Birthday gift to Bill, Garry made a "This is Your Life" DVD, using the photos from their time travels. The DVD cover shows Bill at his desk and beside his oversized computer monitor needed due to Bill's poor vision.

"A part of our Enabling Approach I work with Bill, to help him reach his goals. We build on his strengths and abilities in preparing his goal plan for the months ahead. At his recent review, Joan insisted that the goals include my assistance for a visit to the tailor, for Bill to be fitted for a nice pair of trousers, before the seat of Bill's current trousers wear through completely!

I am looking forward to Bill's 101 celebrations on Thursday. The saying is true particularly with Bill that age is just a state of mind, Garry said."

About Catholic Community Services

Catholic Community Services works with a diverse range of people and communities to enable and maintain sustainable and vibrant lives. We work with the elderly, financially disadvantaged, people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, people with a disability, people with a mental illness and carers.

Catholic Community Services is a division of Catholic Healthcare
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