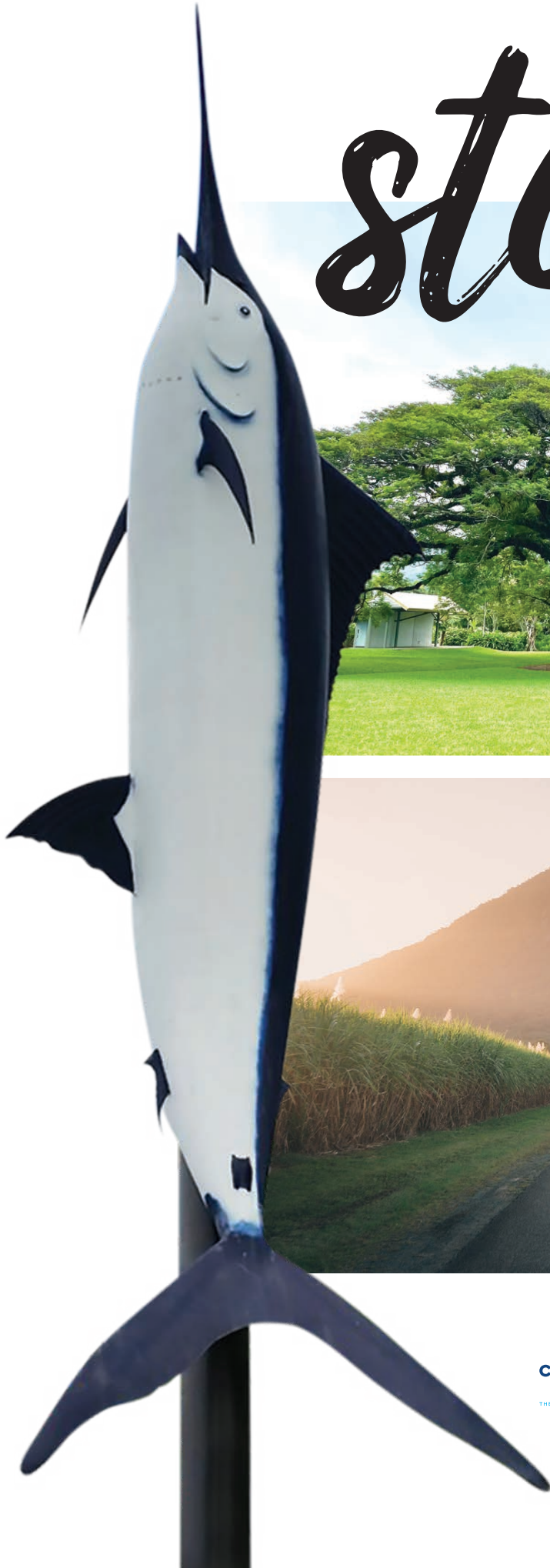


# SOUTH SIDE *stories*



# Hello

When we first embarked on this project we knew we would be able to share some great community members’ stories. Community members who are very much connected to community and absolutely love living on the south side of Cairns.

I myself have been associated with the Cairns south for the past sixteen years working on the Communities for Children project and have lived on the south side for the past 18 years.

The team who have put this booklet together also love the south side and are keen to see community connectedness continue to grow. Our emphasis has always been on people, place and connection.

McMillan & Chavis (1986) define a sense of community as

**“a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”**

We hope you enjoy reading this collection of stories as much as we did in collecting them. Join us in celebrating the south side of Cairns.

## #southsidestories

The Hambledon House Community Centre and Communities for Children Team

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# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.



“Storytellers broaden  
our minds:  
engage, provoke,  
inspire, and ultimately,  
connect us.”

Robert Redford



*Sophia  
Kawane*

older sister and I wanted to try out Tennis, so mum signed us up for 1 lesson a week at the local Edmonton Tennis Club. 6 months on, my sister and I were training full time with Tennis and had to unfortunately drop out of Little Athletics and Dance as we had no time to spare anymore.

My name is **Sophia Kawane** and I'm currently 11 years old. I was born on Thursday Island, a tiny island in the Torres Strait just north of the tip of QLD. I am an Indigenous Australian and am also a mix of Papua New Guinean and English. In 2009, my family moved from Thursday Island to the South of Cairns.

I was only 2 months old, my older sister Giselle was 3 years old. Mum and dad wanted to give us girls a good life with plenty of opportunities which unfortunately Thursday Island could not offer at the time. My mum and dad bought a house in Bentley Park as the suburb had a few schools around to choose from as well as lots of community clubs and organisations close by that we could be a part of.

My little sister Jolie was born in 2014 and our family was now complete. Because my father works as a FIFO worker, mum always kept us girls busy so we wouldn't miss him so much. We would do lots of activities to keep us happy, active and healthy. As soon as I was old enough, I signed up to Gymnastics at Southside Gymnastics club and enjoyed doing that for over a year. I then joined the local dance club, Dance Junction, at Edmonton and loved learning Jazz & Ballet for the next 5yrs. During this time, I also joined Mulgrave Little Athletics club out at Gordonvale and loved my 5yrs with them too.

By the time I was in Kindergarten, I was doing Little Athletics on the weekend and dance classes a couple times a week. My

My love for Tennis grew and my ability and techniques got better. I'm a tall, strong girl for my young age so I had to start training with the older kids. By a few years of learning the sport, I was now training 5 mornings before school and 7 afternoons a week. When you love and enjoy something, it's not hard to keep attending but I had to learn at a young age how to juggle all my responsibilities with school, sport and family. I love all the friends I get to make and meet playing sports. I have plenty of friends from lots of schools, especially from South Cairns.

Tennis has given me amazing opportunities. I have played as a representative of my club, school, Cairns, FNQ and North QLD. I have met and played with some great tennis players and in 2017, when I was 7 years old I was selected into the Evonne Goolagong Foundation.

I have been lucky to attend three E.G.F Tennis Development State Camps. 2017 in Adelaide and 2018 and 2019 in Sydney. Unfortunately, Covid upset plans of what would have been a great year of Tennis for me in 2020. I've continued to train hard in tennis and study hard at school. This year I am in grade 6, am a School leader and Sports Captain at my school.

A recent Tennis highlight for me was getting selected into the Peninsula Tennis team for 10-12 year olds. I will have to travel to Brisbane in August to compete at the QLD School Sport 10-12 Years Tennis State Championships. I know it will be very hard playing against the stronger Metro players but I'm looking forward to the experience and challenge.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Azariah Uelese



my name is **Azariah Uelese**, I am 9 years old. I am of Samoan heritage and my parents and I moved up from Sydney 7 years ago for a change of scene.



MOUNT PETER

We had not been up here in Far North Queensland before but with some encouragement from our relatives that live in Cairns we took a leap of faith and decided to move up to the paradise we heard much about every time our Cairns family visited us down in Sydney

My mum had always wanted to homeschool me and so she had resigned from full time work and became my home tutor. I was homeschooled for 2 years. It wasn't complete homeschooling where mum had to come up with what she was going to teach me. I was enrolled into a School of Distance Education. A school that still taught all that was taught in regular schools, except I would be learning at home. Some of my classes were to be attended online and some were taught by my mum. It had children from all over Australia. It even had kids attending from overseas. One of my class mates attended from Bali. Another attended while their family travelled around Australia in a caravan. It was always pretty cool talking to my class mates about some of the amazing things they got up to.

I really enjoyed attending classes online. This meant that I could be super comfortable on the couch and still be in my pyjamas at times, and then other times we might be out by the beach or at the Esplanade and still be in class. If for some reason I couldn't attend a class, I could always listen in later. This meant I could always catch up if I felt I was falling behind. I definitely had more free time to do things that I enjoyed. As long as I had attended my classes and got my class work in, mum let me do the other things I was interested in. For this reason I always tried to get my work done fast. In my free time I would compose

musical beats on my laptop then I would write raps to the beats I created. I love to make music, this is a big hobby of mine. I also started training in power lifting as both my parents are passionate powerlifters.

Learning online I found that many of the assessments were multi-modal. This meant that I needed to know how to use technology to create videos and presentations to complete the assessment tasks. This was a great challenge for me as it wasn't something I was very good at. Each term there would be days where a lot of the students would come together for a "Connect day". We would get to meet each other face to face and do some fun activities. I love making friends and meeting others so I did look forward to these days.

Homeschooling many times was a new adventure. We visited for walks and hikes some beautiful places.

With the blessing of the birth of a new family member last year. My mother returned back to work which also meant that I needed to return back to school. I felt a little nervous and super excited at the same time to make new friends. I returned back to school last term and now attend School. I am in year 4 and am enjoying being back.

If there is something I have learnt from being homeschooled it is that learning is in everything we do not just what we learn in classrooms. Every day and every place is a place of learning.

*Thanks for reading my story*

# Joel Prior

Growing up in Far North Queensland, the Southside of Cairns was not such a foreign place to settle for my family and I.

The hot summers, the milder (slightly) winters and the sound of raindrops on the roof makes FNQ the place to be. Playing footy, cricket or soccer in the backyard allowed me to have a clear mind. I loved my childhood and wouldn't have liked to have grown up anywhere else.

After finishing my schooling years in Tully and Innisfail, I moved to Smithfield to attend James Cook Uni and my first experience of living away from home. New friends and new adventures were to come. I moved 5 times in 4 years - from Smithfield to Trinity Beach to Yorkey's Knob to Gordonvale to Manunda. Life was hectic feeling as though I couldn't call 4 walls my own. I was fortunate to land a teaching job at White Rock SS and my southside connection began. It wasn't just a school but a community. You didn't just work here. You are embraced as one of their own.

I met my wife and she moved up north to work at Bentley Park College. After a couple of years of apartment living, we looked for a place to 'ours'. We looked around and found a great house in Edmonton we could call home - a house with a backyard where we could start a family. I was lured away to a small school called Bellenden Ker SS for a while and even though I had a great time, the lure of the southside of Cairns called me back. I returned to White Rock SS as a Deputy Principal and have remained ever since. In 2020, during the midst of the COVID outbreak we welcomed our son Dominic into the world. He attends a fantastic day care on the southside of Cairns at Cairns South Early Learning. I am grateful to be a part of this wonderful community. We are settled here and look forward to being here for many more years.

*Thanks for reading my story*



EDMONTON





MOUNT SHERIDAN

# Anna Wairimu Jones

I am from Kenya, Eastern part of Africa. I left Kenya in 2008 for South Africa for work and school for our oldest Child.

We have 3 children, 2 boys and 1 girl.

I also have extended family in Nairobi, the Kenya capital, as well as in Brisbane. My family networks are large as they are deep.

My husband, has been working with the United Nations and has enjoyed many stations including Johannesburg office. The move to Johannesburg was strategic in that, we would move to Australia after the posting, to give our children a permanent base. While in South Africa, I continued to work in Public health specialising in healthy relationships with a diverse cohort.

We have often visited my husband family in Australia since 2004 and were drawn to the thought of bringing our family one day. We have never been disappointed.

We finally settled in Australia in 2011, coming from South Africa. Between visiting my sister-in-law in Gordonvale and mother-in-law in Edge Hill, choosing Mount Sheridan as our family home seemed a logical decision – equal distant from both. The location, area and the schools has continued to lead us into finding our routes in the communities of Mount Sheridan.

Leading on from work at Woree Primary School, where I was employed as a speech therapist, and gave me an excellent opportunity to engage with the rich ethnic communities of

far north Queensland, I found work in the public health sector with the Queensland Health at the Tropical Public Health Unit working with an excellent team. I have since moved careers into Vocational Education Training after completing a Cert IV in Training and Assessment.

**Community Involvement:**

With the help of two friends I launched the Skills Appreciation Program – Maisha Bora.

The program was a stepping stone for Migrant and Refugees now settled in the Cairns area to showcase their skills as they navigate local services and job market. Importantly, it provided a platform for overcoming challenges as a newcomer in a new environment. The local authorities, community activists, Multicultural services and many more have been instrumental in making Maisha Bora a big success.

The program paved way for me to be elected as the Chair/ President of the African Association here in Cairns and FNQ, where I am currently enjoying my second term in office.

**What I Like about the south side**

I am so glad we settled on the South Side, it is a central location for us with friends and family. We find it convenient for schools and we enjoy all the available parks and nature walking trails. We have come to enjoy the community togetherness that is evident in all the corners of Mount Sheridan. We feel safe and embraced in our neighbourhood.

*Thanks for reading my story*

# Genevieve Meldrum

I was born on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. I had 13 other brothers and sisters. I have 2 sons who have blessed me with 13 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. I had no daughter but was also blessed by my eldest son giving me twin granddaughters and my second son with twin granddaughters as well.

My two grandmothers were both born in the Torres Strait. One of my grandfathers came from the Philippines and the other from the West Indies. They both came to the Torres Strait for work in the pearling industry.

Dad also worked in the pearling industry on the luggers. This meant he could be at sea, away from home, for lengthy periods of time. Before he left on his trips he would make sure we had a good supply of fish. These were salted and frozen so that we had sufficient supply of food while he was away.

Mum spent most of her time at home with her 14 children, getting them ready for school, cooking meals etc. We also learnt how to look after each other from mum, and dad thought the boys how to hunt if whenever we needed or ran out of seafood or meat while he was away.

I left school quite early in Year 9. It always bothered me about my education level.

I had many jobs. These included being an Assistant in Nursing, at the Torres Strait Hospital, a barmaid and a waitress on Thursday Island and an Administration Assistant at Townsville Aboriginal & Islander Housing, a Teaching Aide, I even went to Canberra and studied shorthand at the Pittman Shorthand Training Centre .

When I worked at Townsville, I met Eddie Koiki Mabo who was on the Board of the service. It was here that I started to learn about Native Title issues through being a Secretary for him.

I returned to Thursday Island in 1990's and got a job in the bank. Here I met my current husband. We've been married now for 30 years. In the bank we travelled around being moved from town to town. When my husband resigned from the bank we moved to Townsville, I got a job with the Townsville Aboriginal Health Service. I worked in the Social and Emotional Wellbeing area. In this job I connected with the Stolen Generation programs and after over twenty years am still involved in them.



BENTLEY PARK

After about 8 years in Townsville, we moved to Cairns to be close to my sister who had taken ill. I applied for a job at Wuchopperen Health Service in the Mental Health Program.

I had been studying Counselling and was ready to graduate when I had a heart attack. The doctors wanted to do a triple bypass operation, but I wanted to graduate first. The doctors gave me medication to make sure I stayed well enough to graduate. A few weeks later I had a triple bypass operation in Townsville. I am now just about to finish my next qualification in Leadership and Management. I believe it doesn't matter what your age is but if you've got a goal go for it. Education gives you so much.

We have a big family. Our last family reunion, on my mum's side was over 500 people, this took place in 2011.

I have lived in Bentley Park and Edmonton over the past 5 years.

My job as a Social & Emotional Wellbeing Worker with Wuchopperen Health Service gives me the opportunity to support and engage with all of the Service Providers that I frequently meet up with at Brekky Net to establish a better relationship with my clients and meeting with all of their needs, if limited support available, I then seek support from other alternative provider services, I am always recommending to new service provider to engage with Brekky Net for support and service.

MY CLOSING OF STORY IS THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY JOURNEY

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Paula Castle



GORDONVALE

I feel blessed to say that I live in Gordonvale with my amazing family.

I emigrated from England back in 1992 where I rented a unit in Manunda Cairns. An opportunity presented itself to get into the housing market where I built a house in the Cairns South area for a ridiculous low amount. Looking back now you could not build a garden shed for that amount of money.

In saying that, during that period the interest rates were incredibly high, all my wage would go on the mortgage repayments. Thank goodness for some very kind people in my life, as they kept me afloat by bringing me food hampers.

That period of my life has influenced me greatly to become the person that I am today. I think because of the support of those people, I feel so passionate about passing it forward. My role working at Playgroup Queensland has enabled me to help others with young children and make a difference in their lives whether that be connecting them with others who are at a similar stage in their lives. Helping them link into other services where I cannot help or just being an ear to listen. I love being able to connect families together and support others that need a helping hand. Hence being so determined about supporting playgroup, creating the food pantry service, and creating the Start Healthy Program for parents with children.

My husband and two teenage boys are all the family I have here. I understand what it is like to like in a country with no extended family. My friends and the people in my community have filled that void and become my family.

We choose to live in Gordonvale now after ten years or so moving for my husband's work. We moved around Queensland when the boys were small and lived in places where I knew not a soul. Playgroups were the place that other parents wrapped their welcoming arms around us and made us feel part of that community.

My time living on Thursday Island opened my eyes to new possibilities. I joined the Auxiliary Fire Service to give back to the community that had given so much to me. I expanded my horizons gaining my boat and truck licenses. My connections to the island are still very strong and it is a place we visit at any opportunity.

The community feel in Gordonvale is one that makes us stay. It took a while to get used to the smell of the mill, but one I rarely notice now. We chose Gordonvale to be away from the hustle and bustle of Cairns. Even though the Southern corridor is growing, I feel the strong community connections are strong enough in this magical little town for it to keep its village feel. I love to hike the Pyramid, cycle through the cane fields towards Aloomba, brave the cane crossings, praying one doesn't take me down on my road bike. A life so vastly different to growing up but one I feel blessed living today.

Thanks for reading my story



# Cassy Bishop

WHITE ROCK



I am Cairns born and bred but I grew up in mainly Manoora for the first 13 years of my life.

My first experience of going out to the southside was to visit my grandparents who lived across from the school at White Rock. I don't remember too much of the suburb then, as I was quite young, but I do remember driving past the basketball court at Bak Park. Other than that, the only other time we usually visited the southside was to go to the drive-in, which I loved. Those were the days that people would pile in the boot of the car to get in and they never really checked how many people! My parents would take as many kids as they could fit from our previous address to go to watch some of the movies. I remember going for the Dusk 'til Dawn screenings.

My family moved to White Rock in 1995. It was hard to leave all the friends that I had made at our previous address, where we had been living for 7 years. Funnily enough, our house at White Rock ended up being right across the road from the grandparents of one of our neighbours at our previous address, so we were able to stay in contact for a few years. I had started attending Trinity Bay High by then, and I continued to attend that school rather than move to Woree High. When I left home in my early 20s, it was to move to Ipswich. I had a bit of a career crisis and decided to start a second degree, having previously completed my degree at JCU. Fortunately, I realised that was a mistake after 6 months and I moved back to Cairns (I did get to meet one of my best friends while in Ipswich though, so that was a positive experience!).

I lived with my parents again for a few months before moving out with a friend to Cairns North where I stayed for 2 years, and then we both moved to the house I am still in now at White Rock. My friend moved on to a different place, but I have been lucky enough to be able to remain in the same rental for the past 14 years! I love my little corner of White Rock and it is great that it is still so close to mum and dad!

White Rock in some ways reminds me of Manoora when I was a kid. There are always kids out playing and people out walking and doing things in the parks. There is a lot of nature at White Rock, and I really like looking out over the trees when coming into it from the highway off the overpass. There is also just an eclectic mix of people that live there, and it is nice to be out and about. I also love that it is close to Ivan Evans track and Behana Gorge. These are two of my favourite trails to walk in Cairns, so I am glad they are so close to home. I also got up to do the White Rock Peak walk last year, which is now my favourite lookout point for Cairns.

I know that White Rock doesn't always get a good rap, but I love living there and I probably will continue to live there for a few more years to come.

Thanks for reading my story



# Maria Holt

I'm a born & bred South Cairns local having grown up in Bayview Heights and I have fond memories of playing at Turner Park & in Clarkes Creek.

I met my husband Ben when we were both students at Woree SHS in 2003. 18 years since we first met, we live together with our 4 year old son Leonardo and our dog in our home in Bentley Park. Now that we are raising our own son here and I have become involved in community groups and especially as President of Edmonton Community Kindergarten's parent committee, I can't imagine living anywhere else. The relationships & strong community connections will keep us here for a very long time yet.

I've worked in the education industry, mostly on the southside, for almost all of my adult life and as a result, I feel like I've met just about every family down here at some point. Since I grew up around here, I often encounter the children, nieces & nephews of my own schoolmates and it seems there's almost always a link between me and other families around here, giving it a friendly vibe that I love. I now work as the teacher-director at Babinda Community Kindergarten in addition to relief teaching in the primary schools around the southern suburbs. I also review playgrounds and advocate for Cairns, especially South Cairns, to be a more child and family friendly place on my Instagram: *ateachermummy*. Last year I was nominated as a South Cairns Community Champion alongside several other young (and young at heart!) leaders on the southside and I'm really excited about the possibilities for the future of this region.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Tanya Johnson

I have been living in Edmonton now for 20 years. I moved into my house in 2001. When I moved into my house, which is not far from Sugarworld, there were only about 3 streets with cane farms all around.

I came to buy in Edmonton as there were a few subdivisions around the area and as a single young lady, it was where I could afford to buy. While I loved the area, I grew up on the north side of Cairns so was looking to buy north of the city.

At this time, little did I know how much I would come to love living in Edmonton.

I now have 2 children who are 13 and 16 years of age. My children attended Isabella State School for Primary and are now in High School at Bentley Park College. These School's both offer an exceptional education.

The Walker Road Sporting Facility is also Fantastic. With fields for Baseball, Softball, Cricket and Football. They are the best sporting fields Cairns!! My son is involved with Southside Comets FC. We are very lucky to have such a wonderful Club that is now one of the biggest in Cairns.

Great people, atmosphere and Coaches who are teaching our young Southside Football players the skills to play and most importantly, how to show good sportsmanship.

We also have a wonderful PCYC where there is a Gym, Futsal and Basketball Courts.

My family have a history of Cane Farming in Edmonton and my Auntie lived by the Mill (where Sugarworld is now). Her brother planted many of the Mango Trees.

We even have a street and park named after our family.

There are many different people of different nationalities in Edmonton which make it a vibrant and friendly community.

All in all, I would say that the Community of Edmonton is a great one to live in and I am proud that my family can call it home.

*Thanks for reading my story*





# Rebecca D'Ath-Weston



I am so grateful I found my journey from Sydney to Cairns Southside. In 2016 I travelled to Cairns as a tourist, chaperoning a group of teenage students from America. The entire week I was in Cairns, I felt at home. The sites, the fresh air, the people and the mountains! Phenomenal.

I stepped off the plane into Sydney airport, took one sniff of the air there, and turned to my co-chaperone "I think I want to move to Cairns". We both laughed, but then three weeks later, my bags and car were packed and I headed on a road-trip back to the tropics to start a new life.

I arrived in Cairns and moved into a share-house in Mount Sheridan with housemates that ended up becoming family to myself and dog. Throughout the six years I have lived in Cairns I have stayed in Mount Sheridan, White Rock and now Edmonton. I initially planned to move to the Northern beaches but realised how much I had available on the southside of Cairns in terms of services, employment opportunities and even just the convenience of being less than 20 minutes away from town. I ended up working at

the local pub on southside for three and a half years to get through studies and built upon my community family even further with the locals... I couldn't have asked for a more cheeky and rowdy bunch of amazing people to work alongside. Once again, my family expanded.

I then transitioned into the community services space after becoming a social worker and cannot wait to explore opportunities we have here. On top of the community services, diverse community members and all the existing infrastructure on southside, the most significant reason for me to stay, was the lifestyle. I never fathomed living only minutes away from Australia's most gorgeous tropical creeks and waterfalls! We have the most phenomenal landscapes here and regardless of which scenery you desire, it can be found only a short drive from my southside home.

The life I have created for myself here has become more than I had ever imagined and I have now settled in Edmonton for two and a half years. When my world expands and I start a family, I know that everything I need is close by, accessible and affordable.

I found my home.

Thanks for reading my story

# Sarah Leavers

I'm Sarah, I'm originally from New Zealand and my husband Dylan is from Victoria.

In 2007 a friend of mine from Christchurch was house sitting for her Aunty in Australia. I had completed my University Degree, the contract at my work had finished and the lease on my rental was up so I decided to go on a working holiday to Townsville to visit her. I hadn't planned on permanently moving but then I met my husband and he had two children so I decided to stay.

We stayed in Townsville for 8 years and then decided to do some travelling to follow Dylan's work. He works in the mining industry doing sales and operations and they have branches all over Australia. In 2014 I had my first child and was on maternity leave so we headed to Kununurra for 3 months. In 2016, 5 months pregnant we moved to Mount Isa and then in 2017, with 2 children in tow, we moved to Cairns.

We had been to Cairns on holiday before and usually stayed in the city, but when we started looking for rentals from Mount Isa they all seemed to be in the south side: Gordonvale, Edmonton, Bentley Park and Mount Sheridan. After being accepted for a property we started our south side adventure. 6 months later bought a place in Bentley Park.

We didn't know anyone so I started looking for local playgroups and sporting clubs to get involved in. I thought I would have to travel further but I found lots of activities close by and in the last 4 years we have become involved in playgroups, the Edmonton Community Kindy, school, swimming lessons, gymnastics, dance and more.

It's 2021 now and I still love the South Side. I joke that I don't like to leave my bubble but it really has everything I need. It's so pretty and green, I love the rainforest hills, the sugar cane paddocks and there are lots of good parks in the South side. We love Sugarworld, Fuller Park and the Duck Pond. There are lots of lovely hidden pathway walks to take the dog out and ride scooters and bikes on and heaps of playgrounds, skateparks and creeks along the way. And Kmart. Did I mention Kmart? lol.

Now that the kids are in school we are not planning to move anytime soon. We still love to travel but either keep it local or head to New Zealand to see family and friends.

So yeah that's my story of how I ended up living in Cairns South and the reasons that I love it and why I'm still here.

Thanks for reading my story





# Kumi

Hi.



We used to live in the Parramatta Park area. When we were looking at purchasing a house we checked the Council flood map and Police crime map to find the best place to settle. We also looked for a house where we could have more than one route from home.

On the Southside of Cairns, there is less possibility of flood, carparks are free, and traffic conditions are better than the Northside even in case of incident happened on the roads.

I was traumatised by the Japanese Tsunami in 2011 one week before my due day for my first child. We had to move to the mountainside and avoid the coastlines so we could feel safe from any threat of a Tsunami.

We can never get enough of what we have around us. We enjoy the sky, mountains, beautiful neighbourhoods and birds. The contrast of the blue sky and the mountains; the moonlit night sky with so many stars to see plus beautiful Australian native birds.

Even dynamic pouring rain, thunder and smoke from the sugarcane stimulate my 5 senses and make me feel alive.

Our street is a cul-de-sac, our neighbourhood is very close and we talk all the time. We have a street party a few times a year, we care for each other especially when one family is away ( look after their letterbox and feed pets) or something happens (someone left the house with their garage door open, someone's laundry machine had broken, and needed extra garage space...)

We believe that a good neighbourhood is the most effective security for your family, and we are happy that what we have.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Aquilar Luki

I was born on a small Polynesian island in the Pacific close to the Cook Islands, Tonga and Samoa.

The people living on my island carry new Zealand passports. Many of us migrate to New Zealand for a better lifestyle. That's what my father did in the 1960s. Once he was established he brought the family over. Mum filled out all the paperwork for the family. I don't know how she did it as she couldn't speak English and the documents were in English.

There is no wharf on my tiny island so we went out on dinghies to the freight ship which took us to Fiji. After two weeks at sea we landed in Fiji. We flew from Nandi Airport to Auckland. That was quite an experience. The highest we'd ever been before was a coconut tree.

We went from a small island to a big city. There were so many changes. We had to wear shoes. We'd never seen traffic lights before or big shopping centres. We had no TV. When we first went to school we couldn't speak English. I don't know how we managed to survive.

I met my wife in New Zealand. I saw her in a temple and fell in love with her straight away. A friend I was with arranged a date with her for me and that night we went out. 6 months later we were married.

In 1986 or 87 we left New Zealand to find a better life in Australia. We had five children. We first arrived in Brisbane and then work took me to Cairns. My job was selling two pack polyurethane paint system. It was seen to be the Rolls Royce of the paint world. The paint was applied on aircraft and luxury yachts. I sold and delivered paint systems to distributors between Rockhampton and Cairns.

We lived around Bayview Heights and Forest Gardens. Our children attended Woree State School. We just fell in love with Cairns and stayed in the southern corridor.



My father taught me the value of hard work. He worked 40-60 hours a week to provide for the family. His job was in a factory. He saw his role to be in providing money to pay the rent and buy food so that the family had enough to survive.

Mum and Dad also showed us the value of family and how important the family is and how important education is. I grew up with these values and have tried to pass them onto my children. We have 6 children and 26 grandchildren. All my children have been to university.

When I was in my 50s I decided to continue my education and went to James Cook University graduating with a Bachelor of Community Welfare. I spent the next ten years working as a Community Liaison Officer at Bentley Park College and Woree State School.

Education and gaining a qualification is important. Education empowers a person. It certainly empowered me. It changed my outlook. I want to see all the people Pacifica, Indigenous, Low Socio Economic background in the southern corridor of Cairns have qualifications. Education inspires people to a better lifestyle. It will change the south side.

I have passed these values of hardwork and education onto my children and grandchildren. I was very proud to see my grandson, Heilum Luki, gain an apprenticeship and even prouder to see all his hard work at football payoff when he was selected to play for the North Queensland Cowboys in the 2021 season. Education, hard work and family are important. They are the key to success.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Niyasz R Ibrahim

After many a long winter down in Melbourne where I had settled into the Aussie way of life I was beginning to stagnate and felt the need to move on to something fresher and brighter.

Perth was the answer and I spent even more years in the West enjoying a freer and more relaxed lifestyle. Enjoyable as it was, I realised that sooner or later once retirement beckoned I would be caught out, floundering in Perth's cooler months.

Meanwhile my partner Anne and Self had come over to Cairns for a holiday and I recall being quite taken by with the general ambience of the place. Anne had boasted to me about how lovely it was here as she had previously spent sometime in the Tablelands. So, the seeds were planted on that early trip and quite a few years later we repeated the dose but this time with more intent: we actually checked out a few of the suburbs, made a few enquiries with Estate Agents and discovered that a move across could be financially viable. The work I was engaged in saw me based in the West at our Head Office but we were a National Company and I was aware of the possibilities of working from a remote location. This was the notion that I proposed to my Superiors who embraced the idea as they felt there was a distinct advantage of having staff on the Eastern seaboard, but as time went on the realisation set in that they probably wanted me off the premises anyway! And so it was that our property was on the market after a spruce up and JOY, we sold fairly quickly in a flat market. The obligatory packing followed, transport organised and after a final clean-up we set off on a six day trip to get to our new home; that is to say temporary accommodation in a Caravan Park in Edmonton.

Initially we did not restrict ourselves to the South side. We were quite open to settling anywhere in Cairns and set out to achieve straight away from day one but after being shown a number of possibilities all around the Metro area we stumbled upon a place right here in

Edmonton. They were anxious to sell and so it happened that we were unpacking, arranging and rearranging just a month later. On reflection Anne and I are quite pleased living on the South Side without being able to pinpoint any particular reason and we have seen a few changes and slight growth in our four plus years here. For me, just living in Cairns is a joy as it harks back to my childhood growing up in the tropics, free from having to rely on heating for comfort.

My regular employment continued for three more years as I worked from home (pre COVID) and eventually retired from working life after fulfilling arrangements with my former employer. These days are spent in part trying to give back to the community and partially soaking up what is all around me in my new home.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Cathy Zeiger

I came to Cairns from Sydney with a boyfriend when I was 18, we were on a trip around Australia.

Sadly alcohol got the better of him and after some distressing times, I chose to leave and stay in Cairns.

Cairns was my new home, the people were friendly and there was space to enjoy. I thought I'd found heaven.

I worked for Mike Spaulding Builders for a while, as when I left school in grade 10 my parents insisted I complete an Administration Skills course. This was very valuable in finding work. My work career was quite varied, as later on I worked at Wild World as a Cockatoo Trainer. I then found work at the Earlville Vet Surgery as a vet nurse, where I stayed for ten years.

While working at the Vet Surgery I had three children. I also learnt karate, a handy skill in defending oneself as I was determined never to be a victim again.

I've always enjoyed community and working with people. When my daughters started school I wanted to play a bigger part in their lives, so was fortunate to be able to work as a Principals PA at Cairns Christian College. In this role I organised not only the Principals and teachers, but the camps, fetes, events and other things. While at the school I discovered the rewards of assisting students in their journey through school, but more on a personal level.

From there I started work with Rock Impact who contracted to Mission Australia. These contracts were for programs focusing on Early Intervention with young people.

Prior to when I became Councillor, I was working three jobs. I worked part time as a Personal Assistant, conducted the Early Intervention sessions and was driving a School bus morning and afternoon. It was a crazy time.

During all these times I learnt so much in working with the community. I learnt about the difficulties people were having, the needs they had and how services were trying to connect with people.

I used my experience as a Vet Nurse & event organiser to run "Pets in the Park" each year. At this event people would bring



their pets to the park. The service providers were also there. It worked as an ice breaker and an opportunity to connect.

After an eye opening visit to Kenya, I started a registered Australian Charity called BIG. Boldly I Go Inc.. We now have 40 children in Kenya sponsored by people in Cairns to that they can gain education – a luxury to many of them.

After discussions with Principals I became involved in running Breakfast Clubs at schools. First at Bentley Park College, then White Rock State School amongst others, with 13 other schools involved at that time. Myself and a great team of volunteers continue to serve breakfast at White Rock State School

In 2015 I was presented with an opportunity to enter Local Government. Rob Pyne; the incumbent had resigned to go to State Parliament. There wasn't a By-election as there was only a year left before the next Council election. It was more like an intensive job interview. It was a blessing as I had a year to learn the ropes, but great as I had the basic skills to apply. I was successful at the next election and then again in 2020. It's pretty special to get paid to do all the community work I love to do, whilst improving the area that we live in. Very rewarding.

We live in the most beautiful part of the world. I've travelled a fair bit and there's nothing that beats Cairns. The beauty of the area and the amazing diverse community. I don't think I could live anywhere else.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Rob Pyne



Hi.

MOUNT SHERIDAN

I was born in Gordonvale and grew up in Edmonton.

Edmonton was just a small country town. It was like so many other sugar towns up and down the Queensland coast. It's main landmarks were the Hambledon Hotel and The Grafton Hotel. Most people worked for CSR at the Hambledon Sugar Mill, The Queerah Meatworks or maybe the Mulgrave Shire Council.

When I was about 12 years of age my family leased the service station on the main road. We had this business for around 4 years. Around this time my dad became interested in local politics. He became the councillor for the area. This was in the 1970s. This was a good time for Edmonton. The local pool and library were built.

When the Shire Chairman stood down my Dad took on this role. This is a similar role to Mayor. I reacted rebelliously to my Dad being the local mayor. As young person I started acting up and getting into a bit of trouble. This same rebellious nature developed in my political thought as well. In particular, I became outraged at injustice. I saw Aboriginal people living in poor conditions and observed other injustices and inequality. These informed my politics which moved to the left.

On 21 December 1991 I was 21 years of age I was out on a boat with Jenny, my fiancé, and her parents. It was a hot day and I decided to dive into the water. I hit my head on a sandbar and fractured my neck at the C5 vertebrae. This left me paralysed from my chest down. I have 50% use of my arms. I can use my biceps, not my triceps. I have feeling on top of my shoulders. I am a C5 quadriplegic.

I spent months in hospital in Brisbane. I told my fiancé to go away but she wouldn't. We got married in the hospital. When I was discharged from hospital we moved back to Cairns. We built a house in Bentley Park. I started to think about what sort of work I could now do. Many jobs were not available due to my disability. I enrolled in BA in history and politics at James Cook University. I completed the degree with honours and then I completed a Law degree.

My first job was working as a Regional Disability Coordinator for James Cook University. This job was about talking to young people and breaking down the barriers for people with disabilities. It also involved taking young people with disabilities to the campus showing them the facilities, allow them to attend a lecture to show them university could be an option for them. It can provide them with opportunities for work. People with disabilities need all the advantages available to them.

After 7 years my employment contract came to an end. I stood for local government in 2008. I took my long service pay from James Cook University and stood for election for Division 3 of Cairns Regional Council. I was successful and remained a Councillor for 5 years. I then was successful in winning the seat of Cairns in State Parliament where I stayed for 1 term. During that term I found I couldn't follow the party line. I felt I needed to vote to support the people I represented. This led to me leaving the Australian Labor Party and I wasn't re elected at the end of 2017. Following this I had a couple of years unemployed and once again stood for Council in 2020, winning Division 2 of Cairns Regional Council.

One of the reasons I like the south side is the people. On the south side you get a lot more people who are keeping it real. There is no hidden agenda. I just feel at home here.

*Thanks for reading my story*

# Fran Lindsay

Hi.



EDMONTON

The Ellacott family arrived in Edmonton from Gordonvale in 1952. Ernie and Jean and their four children Sylvia, Mark, Frances and Elaine.

I attended Hambledon State School from Grade two until I transferred to Balaclava School in Grade 7 and then to Cairns State High School.

Edmonton in my youth was very safe and friendly. We were fortunate to have a family vehicle so our Dad could take us camping during school holidays and beach visits.

I would ride my bicycle or walk to School each day. Most times when walking we would take a "short cut" through one of the properties that linked through from Sawmill Pocket Road (Now Mt Peter Road) to Stokes Street. No locks needed for our bicycles - You just left them outside the railway station or beside a local shop if travelling by bus.

I didn't play a lot of structured sport until I played hockey with other Edmonton girls and we would practice in Down Park and travelled as a team into Cairns in the open back of a utility. I was a member of the Edmonton Brownies and we shared many friendly and fun meetings with some of my school friends.

No swimming pools locally in those days and all the youth would swim regularly at a local creek. Many swimming holes along the length of the creek from the base of the mountain down toward the inlet. The area near the railway bridge was the most popular with my age group. We did learn to swim because the Hambledon school children would travel by bus to the Cairns saltwater baths as the pool was known.

I rode my bicycle up to a swimming hole popular with the locals area a few times in the company of my elder brother.

We had a picture theatre in Edmonton too - the Regent - and when I was about 14 I was allowed to walk down in the evening every so often. Anzac Day was also commemorated at the Theatre each year with a concert of local residents.

Although I did move away for work at different times I did return to Edmonton with my husband Fred and we built our home next door to my parents on Cattle Street. This was great for our children Rachel and Mark who had the love and support of grandparent's right at their doorstep. I began volunteering with Meals on Wheels and my friend and I would take our youngest

children with us in delivering the meals. Quiet roads even then and the children could ride their bicycles to Hambledon School when old enough.

I entered Mulgrave Shire Local Council as an elected Councillor when Tom Pyne was the Mayor in 1991 and enjoyed 17 years working with the Edmonton and wider community. Prior to the Amalgamation with Cairns City, Mulgrave was a very hands on Council with monthly inspections by all Councillors and Staff to see problems identified by residents.

One of my favourite places to visit is the Sugarworld Gardens - A group of supporters helped to establish and form the Friends of Sugarworld Botanical Gardens Inc. in 2007. We continue to meet as a Committee and with the support of Council staff and volunteers with Green Space Our Place, we meet for gardening duties such as weeding, replanting new varieties of fruit trees, mulching, fertilizing etc. The sealed pathways make this a wonderful visit with all members of the family. The Peacocks and Curlews roam freely in the area - No dogs allowed.

Edmonton area has many kilometres of sealed pathways in beside the creeks and they are perfect for recreational cycling or walking. Some people feel they are not safe but the more people that use them, the safer they will become. The Council has a small booklet showing these pathways. I use them for recreational cycling.

Some 20 years ago our family moved home - But not away from Edmonton. Just up the road to a quiet Close with a creek at the rear of the property. A great place to live with a garden that seems to continually change (If it grows in the wrong place I just replant!) Close to the local shops, friends that live close by and Cairns by motor vehicle at the quiet time of the day is only 20 minutes. Our hillsides are beautiful and I do hope they are not built on as heavily as some areas are.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Nicky Millen

MURAL  
ARTIST



I was born in England and emigrated here in 1954.

We lived and worked in the bush on a sheep station out back of Parkes, NSW. My family worked hard to improve their lot, and we ended up moving to Victoria during my high school years. I worked and raised my Anglo-Indian children in the Dandenong Ranges above Melbourne.

I came to Cairns in 2004 and lived in several suburbs before moving to the township of Gordonvale in 2006. It felt like coming home. I'm a country girl who always had herbs, a vegetable garden, orchard and animals. I worked in nurseries, then schools as my boys grew. I think the skills that I gained as a mother and Educational Integration Aide (as well as my Diploma of Community Development) helped me learn how to coordinate and run projects and events.

I offered to finish a mural on a fence for one of my partner's workmates, and suddenly was in full demand as a mural artist! I ran kids art and craft groups and volunteered at the library as an art and crafts person. I believe children are our nations' future treasure and our greatest resource.

By default I became well-known in Gordonvale. Lots of people used to stop and chat while I painted the town, telling me their dreams and worries. I joined the Chamber of Commerce to try and make a better deal for our little country town, and ran events for the townspeople.

In 2014 I set up a community Art Gallery "Creative Space" for Gordonvale artists to come together and display their works. We had about 60 artists registered with us, and became known as the most successful new art gallery in the Cairns region for that year. I learned lots of new skills, amongst which were how to run a small business, curating skills, exhibition and groupwork skills.

In 2015 I joined the Gordonvale Chamber of Commerce to assist with the Carols' Committee. I had become very concerned at the lack of volunteers for community support organisations which is often the slow death of small townships. Over the next two years I gained grant-writing and event management skills



and set up Animal Education Day, a celebration of all the animal medical, feed supply, local government, police and service dogs, animal rescue and volunteer organisations in the Cairns regional area. We ended up attracting entrants from surrounding council regions as well, and became a loved tourist attraction for Gordonvale. I ran it for four years by myself but sadly had to close it because no volunteers would run it. Again I learned how to think "on the run" and now have no fear of public speaking to crowds of 2000 or more. I heartily recommend volunteering to gain confidence, life skills and experience....free knowledge without a HECS debt!

In 2018 I was pleasantly surprised to be presented with a "Community Service Award" by the Honourable Curtis Pitt MP, our State Member for Mulgrave. I wished that I could present an award right back to Curtis, as he steps in to support his community unstintingly, and had been the Patron for Animal Education Day.

The community mural, adjacent to the Edmonton Library, is a dream come true for me. I was very proud to be asked to use my variety of skills to coordinate this project! It was a chance to "heal country" by showing how human we all are with our different cultures fitting within the DNA strand, and how multiculturalism has made us one strong country and community.

*Thanks for reading my story*

# Mike Friganiotis

In 2003, I returned to Australia, after having spent 10 years working in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. I had worked out that I was a 'sun bunny' preferring to live in a warmer climate than my hometown of Adelaide, so Cairns was my new 'home'.

I needed a place to live and decided that building my own house (for the first time) was the way to go, and what better suburb to choose than Forest Gardens. I spent many happy days walking my cocker spaniel, Pablo, all around the walking tracks, and made new friends in the process.

With that problem solved, my next challenge was to find a job. That was not as easy, but with a background in education and multi-media, I found work at a real estate agency as their Media Manager. When the GFC hit 2009, housing construction, and buying and selling, took a dive, so I found alternative employment as a Community Educator at Relationships Australia, where I am to this day.

Part of my media experience was volunteering in Community Radio, and I had extensive experience in radio in both Darwin & Dubai, so I went looking for a community radio station in Cairns, to find Cairns FM89.1, located then at Raintrees Shopping Centre (now moved to better facilities at TAFE). I not only began a talk program, At Your Service (Fridays, 9 - 10am), but also hosted some music programs, including my favourite type of music - country. I also joined the Management Committee, and since then have held positions of Secretary, Vice-President and President.

Why live on the south side? I'm glad you asked. Well, it's not far from the CBD where I work, and its ever-increasing quality road network make travel a breeze. The houses are cheaper too. There are plenty of scenic attractions to visit - not the beach as such, but there's lots of fresh water - minus the crocodiles and jellyfish! And last but not least, there seems to be sense of community friendship and lots of family activities to keep everyone busy. The shops, schools and facilities are close by, and there are some great dining spots too.

Yes, I down-sized from Mount Sheridan to White Rock, moving into a gated community, but since then have upsized again, still in White Rock. The latest bonus - a Domino's a block away from my home.

What's on my bucket list? To climb The Pyramid! An ever-increasing challenge, but just viewing it and all the green surrounding mountains every day, and watching some fabulous sunsets make me realize that we truly live 'In Paradise' - why would you want to be anywhere else?

*Thanks for reading my story*





# Sandra Charlton



Gordonvale is my hometown, it's where I was born and educated.

My father was the local dentist and my mother assisted him with his practice. Dad was also a grazier with a property on the Mulgrave River for his cattle and horses. My leisure time as a child was often spent on horseback or in a canoe. I was delighted to be able to return to North Queensland on completion of university to commence my teaching career.

Having taught in many schools in Cairns, particularly the southside of Cairns, I became aware of the uniqueness of the communities.

I am a lover of the outdoors and the outdoors was and continues to be one of the main things that attracts me to Gordonvale and surrounds. It boasts the natural beauty of the mighty Mulgrave and the Little Mulgrave Rivers; the pristine Behana Creek and Gorge, the majestic Walsh's Pyramid or Djarragun and much more.

Gordonvale also hosts the Great Pyramid Race and more recently the Sugar Solstice. These community events bring together people from all walks of life and help in establishing a strong town identity. The friendliness and

comradery at these events and in the local shops and organisations is amazing as people enjoy the company of those they know and talking to those they don't know. I love being part of all this.

My children, Steve and Kate were fortunate to experience some of the lifestyle I had as a child and I am sure they are appreciative of that.

To satisfy my yearning to connect to community, in 2017 I started a Gordonvale community newspaper called Pyramid Views. I am heartened by the spirit of goodwill I feel from our readers and contributors. Pyramid Views continues to grow, reaching more people and sparking positive conversations in and out of the community.

Something I did not count on was the reconnecting of people once residents of Gordonvale, and now living elsewhere, back to the community through the Pyramid Views by invoking feelings of nostalgia and belonging, fostering family and friendship networks.

I still live in Gordonvale and can't see myself leaving anytime soon!

*Thanks for reading my story*

# Myra Jensen



We had holidayed in the Cairns area previously and enjoyed very much the relaxed atmosphere. Stan was looking for a promotion in the Ambulance and so it was the opportunity to become the O.I.C. of Edmonton Station in August, 1976.

We arrived with three of our children as the eldest son was left with friends to finish his high school exams.

This being only a 2 man station, Stan worked 6 days and had 8am to 5pm on a Sunday off. We always got in the car and visited the rainforest, waterfalls and the tropical locations (which were awesome for us as we had come from a Central Queensland dairy farming area).

The Edmonton Centre had sugar cane growing right up to our doors, with the sugar mill further up the road and railway lines past the centre for the locos carrying the cut cane to the Mill. When the Edmonton Mill closed down we had this beautiful land made into fruit and tropical trees, then came Sugar World and water slides.

Further up Mill Road was the Hambledon School that 3 of our children attended. Our eldest son went on a bus (caught each morning outside our door) to Gordonvale High School. Eventually, all four children attended this school. Many friendships were made through these years. Sports available were swimming, cricket, softball as well as Air Force Cadets.

The smell each morning of freshly baked bread from the bakery down the street was "heavenly". Milk and bread were delivered throughout the early morning to any household who left a bucket out at their front door.

Stan's work soon had us in the community raising money for ambulances. We ran a Bingo session at the centre every Friday night for 12 years. A "Fun Run", of 5 miles, was held for a few years. It finished up at the Sugar Mill and the rest of the afternoon with stalls and fun events.

Stan enjoyed his work and did some relief work in Cairns and Gordonvale. Stan retired in the late 1990's and we bought our forever home in the Edmonton area.

In 2010 Stan received the Citizen of the Year Award from Council.

Stan's memory lives on in the Edmonton district as there is a plaque dedicated to him at the mound in Ravizza Park, a garden bench named after him at Hambledon House Community Centre and a memorial in the grounds of the Edmonton Ambulance Station.

In 1977 Hambledon School advertised for their first lot of Teacher-Aides and as I had been employed for 3 years previously, I became one of the first to work in the position. Thirty two years later I retired.

We very much kept ourselves involved with community helping (Hospital, Ambulance, Hambledon House Community Centre, Lions Club, Scope Club and Lifeline). This year will be 24 years I've been volunteering at Lifeline. The site of the current Lifeline store was once a Catholic School.

This area has grown so much with the canefields turned into housing. It remains as friendly today as it was all those years ago.

*Thanks for reading my story*



# Men's Sheds



The Edmonton Men's Shed operates from an old shed that was once a farm shed. When the shed started the building was really run down and needed a lot of work. Over the years the men in the shed have worked to expand and upgrade the building. There is now a great work space, an office area, storage space with room for the men to work together on a number of projects.

The shed is just off the road with space for plenty of parking.

The Gordonvale Men's Shed has been in operation since 2015. A permanent location was found for the shed in 2016 with construction commenced on a new large shed at the property in Highleigh Road, Gordonvale in 2017. Since then the shed has continued to be a place for men to meet and work together in a friendly environment.

The shed operates a nursery as part of the operation of the shed. Plants and items made at the shed are sold through the monthly Gordonvale Markets.

Men's Sheds work on a whole range of projects. There could be someone working on repairing a lawn mower or bike, building Myna bird traps, making a bench for a local school or wooden toys for young children.

They are an important part of our community and help to make the south side a better place to be.

For further information:

**Edmonton Men's Shed** is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 12 noon to 5pm. They can be contacted by phone: 0447 014 942.

**Gordonvale Men's Shed** is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 8am to 12pm. They can be contacted by phone: 07 4056 1525.

There are over 1000 Men's Sheds in Australia. We are fortunate enough to have two of them on the South Side of Cairns at Thompson Road Edmonton and Highleigh Road Gordonvale.

So what is a Men's Shed? This is not an easy question to answer as each one is different. Most sheds start off as a place for men to get together and work on making things. A bit like the backyard but bigger. It is a place where men who may have retired can connect with other men. It helps men maintain social connections, something many can struggle with once they retire and don't have the social connections they had when they were working. It can be a place where men can feel free to talk to others about what's on their minds, make new friends, work on projects together or just come for a cuppa and a chat.

Men's Sheds welcome all men to come. They are inclusive spaces. They prevent men from becoming socially isolated. They help to keep men active, engaged with others and ensure they don't lose their skills. As well as a place to create and repair objects they offer a fantastic health and wellbeing resource to the community. And it isn't just for retirees men sheds are open to all men. The older men can help the younger men learn new skills. They are a great asset to the community.

# Community Garden

The Edmonton Community Garden inside the grounds of Sugarworld Botanic Gardens is the result of a collaboration between former Division 2 Councillor Nancy Lansky and local resident Peter Firth.

Peter had previously worked in the UK and was impressed with the allotment systems administered by local councils which allowed residents a plot of land on which to grow vegetables or graze small numbers of stock. The system originated from a centuries old practice, dating back to the 1500's.

When Peter came back to Australia, the seeds of an idea had been planted.

Some years later, it was during a chance discussion between Nancy and Peter at an Australia Day celebration that the establishment of a local community-based garden was first raised. Public meetings were held, local residents were consulted, a community group was formed and a management committee elected.

Several potential sites were then investigated and in 2008, Nancy took her support for the garden project to Council. A motion was passed allowing the garden to be built on an unused site within the Sugarworld Gardens precinct.

Fences were built, water access was provided and a Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant supported the construction of a shed.

And so a community garden was born.

Since then, there has been a wonderful cross section of people growing food in their own particular way. There are organic gardeners, permaculture gardeners, gardeners growing New Guinea, Pacific and Asian produce for their family and friends. There are gardeners growing vegetables new to the tropics. All under the gaze of a century old Lychee tree planted by the original Chinese gardeners in the area.

For many people, the community garden has become an important part of their everyday routine. Some find solace and comfort in tending their plots and others have the enjoyment of just being outdoors. A local primary school has even used the site to

educate their students about food growing.

The garden has brought together families, empty-nesters and single people alike, all of diverse ages and cultural backgrounds. It provides a place where there is common ground for sharing and learning.

Peter says that with the population growth in the southern suburbs, projects like this can be a crucial part of developing a sense of community and supporting well-being.

He is very proud that in a little over a decade the garden has turned a previously unused piece of land into a vibrant and productive block that is a real asset to the local community.

**New members are always welcome.**  
**Membership fees start at \$20 per year.**





# Thank you

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## HAMBLEDON HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

177 Bruce Highway, Edmonton 4869

[www.hambledonhouse.com.au](http://www.hambledonhouse.com.au)

T 07 40372874

