

MEDIA RELEASE



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30 seniors share life experiences in new book

Peter Mackie was born on Melbourne Cup Day in 1932 so his parents named him after the winning horse, Peter Pan, beginning a lifetime love of horse racing.

It is just one of the anecdotes that Mr Mackie shares in a new book, *Wise Humans of the Downs*, that chronicles the life experiences of 30 seniors from across the Darling Downs.

The book, which was launched today during Queensland Seniors Weeks, is a special project by not-for-profit organisation YellowBridge QLD in partnership with St Mary's College to uncover, record and celebrate the lived experiences and stories of people aged over 60 years.

"Everyone has something interesting, meaningful, heart-breaking or inspiring to say," YellowBridge acting chief executive officer Adrian Bonica said. "Especially older members of our community with their intriguing tales from a time and place that is very different to now."

"It is fascinating to hear other people's experiences and how they managed life's triumphs and tragedies – we wanted to help share their wisdom and tales," Mr Bonica said.

"We believe that everyone has a story to tell. The ordinary is just as important as the extraordinary and they help us to have more compassion, empathy and appreciation for others."

Twenty-four students from the College volunteered to join the project and spend time with an older participant to listen to and record stories from their life.

St Mary's College Assistant Principal Identity Paul Grealy said the students enjoyed interviewing their senior partner and are excited to be part of a published book.

"We had students from years 9 to 12 jump at the chance to meet and interview the senior participants including a few St Mary's Old Boys," Mr Grealy said.

"It was a special opportunity for them to connect with an older person who they are not related to and have an interesting discussion about their life," he said.

"The College has a proud history of providing experiences for our students that cultivate compassion, community service, justice and courage. Experiences like being part of this project are invaluable to developing responsible and caring young men."

YellowBridge hopes the book will inspire its readers to have more profound conversations with others, especially older people.

The project is supported by the Queensland Government with funding under the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community 2018-19 grants program*.

Copies of the book are available from YellowBridge QLD at 2a Station Street.

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