

❖ LIZ ABEL ❖

BACKGROUND

Liz was born in Sydney in 1943, the second of three children, while her family were awaiting the end of WWII fighting in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. They returned to PNG in 1945, to the Kwato Mission, which was founded by Liz's grandfather Charles Abel in 1890. A primary education at the local mission school was followed by attendance at Firkbank Girls' Boarding School in Melbourne, where she was accompanied by other Papuan girls from Kwato. Liz then returned to work in Port Moresby and travelled extensively overseas.



LIFE ON BUDERIM

When her mother retired from teaching in 1981 and moved to Buderim, Liz accompanied her and helped her buy a house in Bronzewing Avenue. Shortly afterwards, two of Liz's nephews who were due for secondary school, came to live and attended the fledgling Immanuel College. A talented artist, Liz obtained her diploma from the Billy Blue School of Graphic design during this period, and she used the knowledge gained from this course throughout the rest of her volunteer life.

In the early 1990s her mother returned to PNG and Liz again followed, spending various periods in the ensuing years moving back and forth between Buderim and her childhood island home, until she eventually retired to Buderim.

Liz became a member and volunteer for the Buderim War Memorial Community Association (BWMCA) in 1995 and for 25 years she beavered away behind the scenes, shying away from the limelight and any form of recognition. While she had a short term as BWMCA secretary when no one else would fill this important role, her particular areas of expertise were the newsletter, Membership and Affiliation Officer, and the Old Post Office Community Information. Community newsletters normally involve many people in various roles however Liz would write, take photos, do the graphics, print the labels and hand deliver much of the end product, which was an easy fit for her as she loved walking and exploring the backstreets of Buderim.

Her involvement with the Buderim Library was just as dedicated. Liz was a quiet and independent lady, very strong and active. She worked mainly on the 'repairing books' table and was fastidious and exact with her remaking and repairing of books. She was a valuable support for the President, helping with minutes, moving and lifting books, promotional displays, cleaning and occasionally on the front desk and 'books on wheels'. She gave so much behind the scenes but expected no big fuss or thanks.

Liz never married, although she did not lack suitors. She valued service to family and community highly and continued to be actively involved in the lives of her nieces and nephews for the rest of her life. She was much loved by their children as well, partly due to her willingness to play their games and give 100% of her attention to their stories. Liz volunteered to create business logos and reports for her elder brother's business and various Kwato Church organisations. She co-wrote an English/Suau dictionary with her brother, and a book about Buderim gardens with friends. Liz loved hiking and endeavoured to do this regularly. With long term companion Warwick Smith, she travelled extensively throughout Queensland, New Zealand, PNG and India.

Liz was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer in May 2019 and passed away in the following October. A decision had been made in early 2019 that Liz Abel be awarded the rare honour of Honorary Life Membership of the BWMCA, and while constitutionally this award could not be presented until the December AGM, fortunately Liz knew of this before she died.

Donor: Simon and Sandy Whittle