



Giovanna (Jill) De Cianni (in Russo)

Find a solution and courageously change problems

Jill was born in San Giovanni, Ceppaloni, Benevento, Italy, where her family had lived for generations growing wheat, corn, vegetables, fruit, nuts, and animals. As a first born Jill cared for her brother Giovanni, the sheep, did sewing, chores and school. Her grandmother was a big influence with her love of walking, nature and community.

Jill's father Raffaele migrated in 1956 and fell in love with Australia. Jill with her mother Antonetta and brother Giovanni migrated in 1960 and sister Dolores was born in 1962. As she had no English, Jill was placed in Grade 4 at Wellington Road Primary School but as she was older than other kids, in Year 6 Jill approached her teacher to complete Year 6 and 7 in one year and was successful! In 1964 Jill was awarded a full singing scholarship by the Adelaide College of Music. She went on to Norwood Girls Technical High School and completed her 3rd year certificate and then found work in Myer Haberdashery and later managed the Hair Care section. At Myer, colleagues started calling her Jill and the name has stuck. She then had secretarial roles with the Cosmetics Manager and the Insurance Manager.

Jill and Igino married in 1970 and lived with her family to save for their Rostrevor home. At this time women had to leave work once pregnant, but she negotiated to stay until 8.5 months. Jill, Igino and their daughter Maria moved to their home; in 1972 and their second daughter Melinda was born there.

Jill stayed home for their first 5 years and remembers these as the best of times. Once the girls were at school, Jill sought part-time work which was rare.

Myer's photographic manager offered her a position if she could complete 8 hours work in 4! Jill stayed with Myer her whole career in a range of roles, including being offered a promotion as Store Secretary & Team leader.

Jill achieved distinctions in TAFE Paraprofessional Interpreting; a role she had filled with family, friends and at Myer as a volunteer. After retiring from Myer in 2001 Jill was asked to work for her accountant, then at Thebarton Parish then for a local builder. Jill started her own Herbal Life business and achieved World Team level with travel opportunities and mentoring others. Jill has run workshops in nutrition and wellbeing to help people with their goals through a Community Weight Loss Challenge.

Jill and Gino moved to Rostrevor as they loved the natural environment. Jill appreciates the strong community that the Campbelltown Council provides with programs to build community involvement and respond to needs while respecting the local heritage.

Jill and Igino supported their Social Committee/Prayer group for 30 years raising money to support the parish, RAH Research Fund, Cancer Research Foundation, Philippines, and Italian sister parishes.

Jill started the Heart Foundation Walking group in 2009 with 9 people; within 6 months there were 60 registered to walk twice a week at Thorndon Park. The Walking Group has contributed to Council projects and events such as the Christmas Parade. She was instrumental in the application for the Exercise Equipment at Thorndon Park and during Covid-19 lockdown took part in the Heart Foundation "My Marathon" raising \$1,770.

Jill sees success as having raised a healthy, educated, and independent family. She has always had a strong belief in her abilities to make a positive contribution to the community around her.

"I encourage young women to study hard as knowledge opens your opportunities and choices."

Celebrating International Women's Day with the 'Women of Campbelltown' project – inspiring stories of local women, their achievements and contributions to the Community.

To see the full stories visit: www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/iwd

Thank you to the women who participated and volunteer interviewers Di Booker and Katrina Spencer.

