

Vicki de Wit

Commitment to others helps change lives

Vicki's commitment to helping the people of Vanuatu earned her the honour of 2011 Campbelltown Citizen of the Year. Vicki is also an enthusiastic volunteer in the City of Campbelltown area, providing hair and beauty services for more than 39 years to the residents at Resthaven, Paradise. She also teaches teddy bear making at Rostrevor Baptist Church where she has personally handmade over 700 bears.

Vicki was born in Glenelg and lived there until she moved to Athelstone 46 years ago. She attended school at Glenelg Primary School and Plympton High School. Vicki always wanted to be a hairdresser and at 14 she successfully applied for an apprenticeship, winning the position over more than 100 other applicants. She has been a hairdresser throughout her career and at one time was the registered hairdresser in her mother's salon.

Vicki was an active netball player and it was not unusual for her to umpire up to 20 matches a week.

Vicki was attracted to the open country feel of Athelstone and when she and her young family moved to the area there were only two other houses in her street. She loves gardening and her aim for her own garden was to 'make it look like Vanuatu'.

Vicki has been travelling to Vanuatu for many years initially working with the late Frank King organising tours to Vanuatu. She was often invited to visit the islands' villages and developed close relationships with the Ni-Vanuatu. In 1981 village style adoption commenced, a process that took five years. In 1986 more than 2000 villagers attended Vicki's naming day that began at 6am and followed traditional customs throughout the day. She became known as 'LynDwyer' and Aunty Vivi to the members of her new family.

When Vicki's adopted sister Lucy visited Adelaide from Vanuatu she realised that an electric sewing machine would be a benefit to the women of Vanuatu, enabling them to more easily make clothing for their families. This sparked the idea that Vicki had to collect not just sewing machines but wheelchairs and educational materials and send them to Vanuatu. The expense of sending just one sewing machine prompted Vicki to approach the Rotary Club for help and through the Donations in Kind project, in September 2021, the fourth container will arrive in Vanuatu.

Vicki has maintained a close relationship with the people of Vanuatu and in 2006 she officiated at the wedding of Lucy's son and his bride Julz in Vanuatu.

"Helping the wider community begins with maintaining extended family relationships."

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

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