

Don, Small Town Man with Big Ideas



Catchment Champion

St. Mary's Primary School, Rutherglen



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. www.envirostories.com.au

Don, Small Town Man with Big Ideas

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School: St. Mary's Primary School, Rutherglen

Catchment Champions

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



**Catchment Management
Authority**
Murray



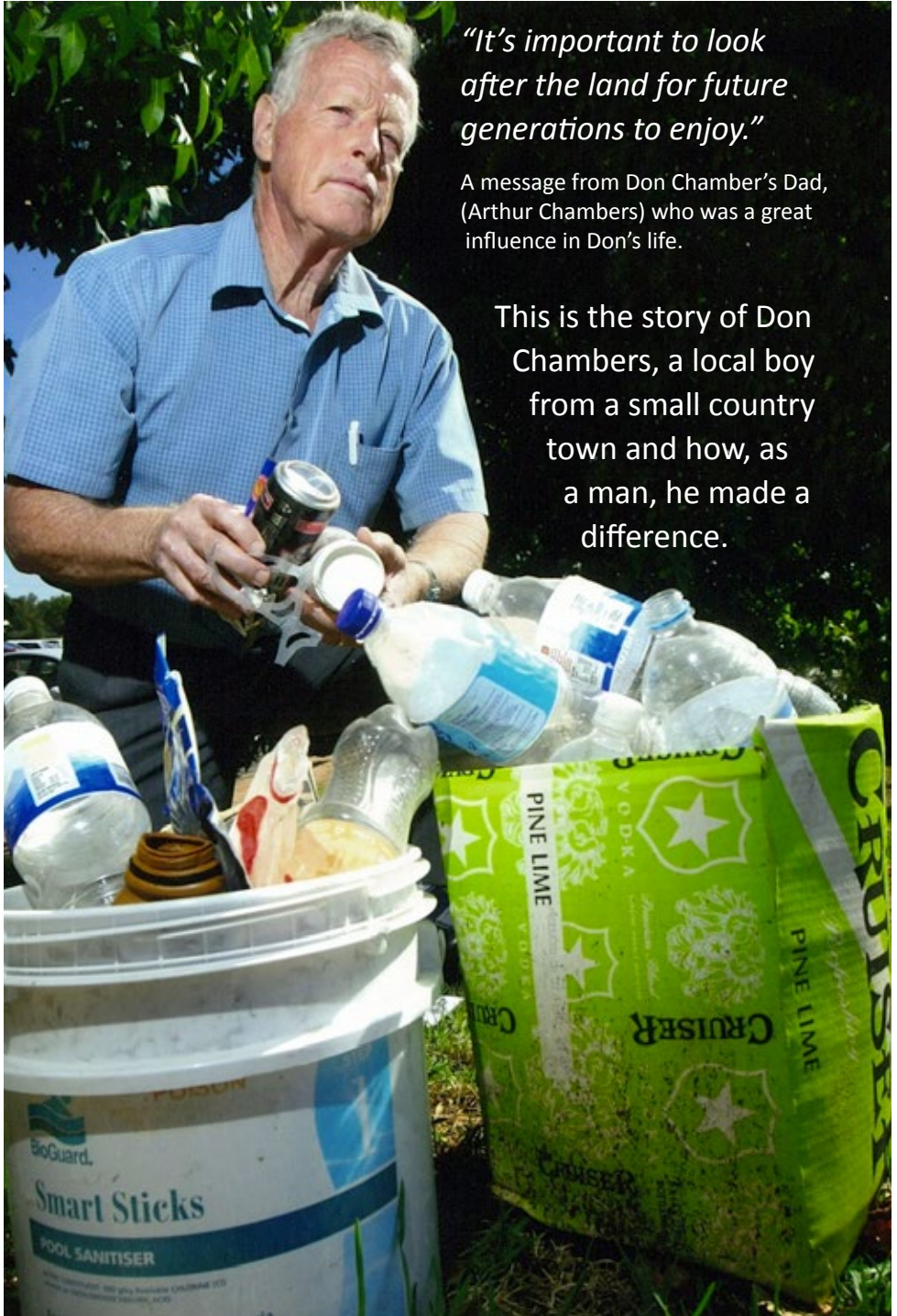
CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



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Murrumbidgee

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“It’s important to look after the land for future generations to enjoy.”

A message from Don Chamber’s Dad, (Arthur Chambers) who was a great influence in Don’s life.

This is the story of Don Chambers, a local boy from a small country town and how, as a man, he made a difference.

Early Years

Don's life and education revolved around his rural home town at Lake Moodemere, Victoria. Don was born on a farm near Lake Moodemere in 1937. He loved horse riding and rabbiting. Don had seven brothers, two of which have sadly passed away. Don is the third oldest of the five brothers.

Don went to Lake Moodemere School for four years and then moved to Rutherglen Primary School. Don said it was a big shock when the numbers in his class changed drastically. He was at Rutherglen Primary School for one year before he moved to Scotch College, which was where he was taught until he was sixteen.



At school Don loved sport, especially athletics. Most of his report cards said that if he focused on his work as much as he did on sport, he would be a really good student.

While at Scotch College he excelled in hurdles after he was coached at Rutherglen Primary School.

Because of Don's love for animals he wanted to be a veterinarian but he didn't get a scholarship, so he became a junior chemist at CSR (Colonial Sugar Refinery).

He started this at a young age at the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (C.S.R). Don received a scholarship to work at CSR at the age of sixteen after he graduated from Scotch College in Melbourne. Don's greatest achievement while working at CSR was creating more hygienic ways to transport and package raw sugar.

He is now an environmentalist and is involved in committees including Keep Australia Beautiful, the Little Committee and is also trying to rid Australia of drive thru's.



Don loves and respects his family. They mean the world to him. Don was married in 1955, at the age of nineteen to Margaret Sylvia Sherman. He and Margaret were married for fifty-two years. It was a marriage filled with love and respect.

Margaret set motivational goals for Don, throughout their marriage. Margaret said to Don, in an encouraging way, “If you keep on winning in athletics I get to travel!” as Margaret loved supporting Don in his athletic adventures. Don liked to make Margaret happy, so he strived to achieve the goals that she had set for him.

Sadly, Margaret passed away at the age of seventy-two.



To this day Don's brothers have owned the Rutherglen Chambers Rosewood Winery in Rutherglen. When he can, he helps the winery.

Don has five children and their names are Jenny, Bryan, Simon, and the twins David and Mark. He also has four grandchildren Will, Tom, Eleanor and Lucy.





Don was working in Sydney at CSR as a packaging inspector, when his son asked him, “Daddy will you be home tonight or next week?” When he heard this he felt bad about not being with his family. Because he wanted to see his wife and children more, he quit his job and came back to Rutherglen.

When Don moved back to Rutherglen in 1983, he bought the local IGA and ran it with Margaret. Together they helped other supermarkets increase their profit by making operations more efficient.

Councilling

Don has been on the Rutherglen Council for eight years and has been Mayor for two of those years. After helping his brother Bill at the family winery, Don and some other citizens from around the area had the idea of creating a shire that brings together some of the north-east Victorian country towns. They joined Chiltern, Rutherglen, Beechworth and Yackandandah together to create the new Indigo Shire. Suddenly, former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett didn't like the idea of having a shire made up of small towns and thought it should have a bigger town like Wodonga to keep it progressing.

When the council disagreed, Jeff proclaimed, "this Shire will not last four years!" After nineteen years the Indigo Shire is still going strong today.

The Indigo Shire is something that everyone is proud to be a part of, thanks to all of Don's efforts.



Contribution to the environment

Don values and respects the environment and that respect has had a great impact on the community. He is involved in a lot of environmental work and uses his position as chairman of Keep Australia Beautiful to encourage other communities to work together to reduce the amount of litter in our region.

Don is slowly making a difference in our local community through promoting recycling and reusing our resources to reduce unnecessary litter and landfill. In his past contributions to the environment, Don pushed towards banning smoking in public eating areas and would like to see smoking banned from all main highways and roads.





Don was involved in improving the water from the Murray River into water that could be used for everyday use, by eliminating the sewage waste that was flowing into it. The water is now used to water sporting facilities and vineyards. Over years of hard work and lots of encouragement from his wife, Don has future goals for the environment.

He is planning to plant trees in different areas of Rutherglen to produce more vegetation, such as the Rutherglen/Springhurst Road. Every Clean Up Australia Day, Don always helps and puts in an exceptional amount of effort into cleaning up. Don's dream is to create a sustainable future for everyone as well as future generations that are still to come.



Future Plans

Don doesn't plan to stop being an environmentalist anytime soon. Don is working on reducing litter by stopping drive thrus. He believes drive thrus are the cause of littering in towns and on our country roads. Don thinks that when you get takeaway you will put the rubbish in the car, then after a couple of days it will start to smell and you will throw it out your window.

Margaret his wife, also said to him that he should continue his athletic career and he plans to honor that by participating in the world master games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Margaret loved to travel with him and see him race. We know Don will miss her love and support for all the years to come.

We would like to thank Don for sharing his life story, his pictures and photos and his passion for the environment with us. We have all thoroughly enjoyed writing about this man who was born to make a difference.





2013 St. Mary's Primary School, Rutherglen

The 2012 and 2013 Creative Catchment Kids writing program was showcased at the Seventh World Environmental Education Congress, held in Morocco during June 2013.



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