

# A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE ROCKINGHAM UNITING CHURCH OPPORTUNITY SHOP



The Uniting Church Opportunity Shop 2012

## THE HISTORY OF THE UNITING CHURCH OPPORTUNITY SHOP

From its inception in August 1970 until December 2012.

In 1970 the Rockingham/Safety Bay Methodist Circuit was in financial difficulties so earlier in the year of 1970 Mrs E Waddell suggested that an Opportunity shop might be a way of raising funds. The Rev. Ron Limb was the minister at the time and, with his wife, worked tirelessly to put the church on a viable financial footing. He therefore asked both the Rockingham and Safety Bay Guilds to hold a meeting with regards to this suggestion.

The inaugural meeting, chaired by the Rev. Limb, was held in the church hall in Parkin Street, Rockingham. A committee was formed with three Office Bearers and four other members:

President: Mrs E Stone, Secretary: Mrs G Reynolds, Treasurer: Mrs P McKinnon

Committee members: Mrs E Waddell, Mrs A Lee, Mrs B Weigold and Mrs D Earnshaw.

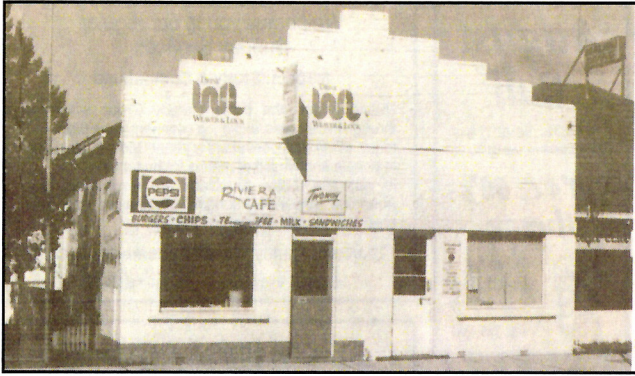
29<sup>th</sup> August 1970: The shop opened in a cottage in Rockingham Road, in the grounds of the Rockingham Hotel. The shop used two rooms in this cottage when it opened on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1970. It was open for business two days per week and the rent was \$4.00 per week, which cost was donated by the President and Secretary.

Three ladies worked every day that the shop was open. Goods to be sold were second hand household goods, clothing and magazines. Mrs Reynolds made pillow slips from sheets and aprons from dresses not suitable for sale. Prices of items for sale were kept to a minimum. Mr Stone and Mr Reynolds made clothes racks from timber and water pipes. They also picked up goods for sale.

Within six weeks it was necessary to move to larger premises and the shop moved to a house on Railway Terrace, where three rooms were rented. These premises now belong to Barbagellos.

June 1971: In June 1971 it was necessary to move again, this time to premises almost behind what is now the Bendigo Bank in Kent Street and shortly after it moved again to a shop directly behind the bank. The shop remained here for nine years. The rent started at \$25.00 per week and over time this rose to \$47.00 per week.

March 1981: Focus reported that on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 1981, about thirty ladies of the Opportunity Shop met in Safety Bay for a Bring and Share lunch, marking a slightly belated tenth anniversary of the start of the Op Shop. Past members also attended and this was an acknowledgement of all their hard work and support as well as being a social occasion. The 1981 executive committee were: President: Mrs Brenda Pulley, Secretary: Mrs May Small and Treasurer: Mrs Peg Thomas



The shop was where the door and window are on the right hand side of this building are. (This was the hairdresser's.)

**1983:** the shop moved to larger rooms at the back of the art gallery, which became the Malibu Dive Shop. From there it moved to larger premises, which were a hairdresser's, in Rockingham Road. This was an excellent location as it had a waterfront outlook.

**1991:** The final move was to a cottage at 169 Parkin Street, which was purchased with a loan of \$110,000 from the Uniting Church Investment fund, to be repaid over thirteen years.



It was repaid in seven years. The cottage, which originally was built to house railway employees when the railway was used to deliver timber from Jarrahdale to be exported from Rockingham, was probably built in the late 1800's or early 1900's.

Most old homes in the area had water tanks, although scheme water had been laid on by the time the property was purchased. Later, plants were sold and, as more and more came in for sale, a shade house was built to accommodate them, the tank was demolished and a bore was sunk.



**The Rev. Ian McPherson dedicating the Op Shop 1<sup>st</sup> September 1991**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1991, the shop was dedicated by the Rev. Ian MacPherson. A Thank You afternoon tea was held annually in the home of Mrs Mary Deeming to show appreciation for all the helpers. In 1991 a dinner to celebrate the Rockingham Uniting Church Opportunity Shop's twenty first birthday was also held in Mrs Mary Deeming's home. In later years the Thank You Afternoon tea would take place in the Church Hall.



**Rev Ian MacPherson in the  
Uniting Church Op shop on  
1<sup>st</sup> September 1991**

**1995:** The 1995 committee were: President: Mrs Shirley Hammond, Vice President: Mrs Betty Thompson, Secretary: Mrs L Stewart, Treasurer: Mrs D Earnshaw, and the committee members were Mrs K Dunn, Mrs M Heynes, Mrs P Lumbus, Mrs J MacPherson, and Mrs Peggy Wright.

A 1995 report stated that the Op shop “provided contributions for the ongoing work of the Parish”, as well as to Flood appeals, the High School Chaplaincy Fund, the Bali orphans and numerous charities summarised later in this document. It also mentions that the Op Shop is a place that meets the needs of the wider community and “is also a place where companionship is sought and found.”

In 1995 the committee arranged an afternoon celebration in the church hall to mark the shop’s 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. The then president, Mrs Shirley Hammond, welcomed past and present helpers and church members. Past helpers were presented with posies. Scenes over the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s were displayed and entertainment was provided. Mrs Doris Earnshaw, being the only original committee member, cut the cake, which was decorated with icing clothes.



The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary birthday cake showing the clothing decorations



**Mrs Doris Earnshaw cutting  
the celebratory birthday  
cake**

**1997:** Prior to Christmas 1997 a Craft Corner was established and proved to be so successful that in 1998 it was decided to also sell jams and pickles. As a service to the people of Rockingham books were initially exchanged at the shop, but later this ceased and books were sold. This facility was situated on the front verandah, where there were places to sit and tea and coffee making facilities were available. A budget of was allocated for the purchase of tables, chairs, bookshelves, kettle and incidentals needed to establish this facility. The shop aimed to meet the needs of the people in the wider community and where companionship could be found. For health and safety reasons this service had to be discontinued.



**The front verandah, where a  
cuppa could be enjoyed with  
friends**

**Mrs Doris Earnshaw and Mrs Shirley Hammond enjoying a 'cuppa' at the Op Shop**



**November 1998:** A report in the Sound Telegraph printed an article pleading for clothing for the various Op Shops as stocks were low. More and more people were out of work and short of money, so were not updating their wardrobes as often as in previous years.

**2000:** Mrs Doris Earnshaw resigned after thirty years of service. During this time she served in all positions on the committee and ended up as Treasurer. John Watts replaced her.

**2005:** The need to extend the Op Shop premises became more pressing than ever, as the business had developed considerably. After a great deal of consideration had been given to the problem, the extension was added to the back of the existing shop. At that time the committee did the cleaning, but now cleaners are employed.

Once a month, stock was culled. What was needed for future sales were stored in a smaller shed next to the large shed, named "Bill's Shed" in honour of the late Bill Kirkham. What wasn't needed was given to the Good Samaritans and to the Kwinana Op Shop (until it closed in 2012). Although the Kwinana Op shop is unfortunately closed, the donations to the Good Samaritans continue to this day.

Originally a sub committee was formed to attend to matters arising between the bi-monthly meetings. However, it became necessary to hold monthly meetings as the business grew. Unfortunately there was seldom a person willing and able to collect furniture, although furniture was gratefully accepted if folk delivered it.

**February 2009:** The annual report showed that \$2000 was donated to Youth Care, Red Cross Victoria Fire Appeal \$1000, Royal Flying Doctor \$1000, Malibu Special School \$500, Frontier Services \$1000 and the Christian Blind School \$1000.

**2010:** We were fortunate to have the furniture pick up service in operation once again thanks to John Montgomery.

One financial report showed that The Op Shop's opening balance for the period was \$10362.76 and the total Income earned was \$59407.55, which made the total \$69770.31. The total expenditure to meet the needs of the local and the wider community was \$64106.56 which left a closing balance of \$5663.75.

From time to time the Op Shop has been the target of theft and minor vandalism. No money is kept on the premises, so our losses have been minimal. Over the years the Opportunity Shop has bought equipment for the shop and sheds to store larger items. It supported the church with quarterly payments. In addition, money was invested in the church investment fund. The shop also donated a deposit of \$10,000 for the purchase of land for the church and manse in Erindoon Way. It paid for curtains for the manse, carpet for the church, as well as cushions for the pews. Donations were (and still are) being made to the High School Chaplaincy fund, Frontier Services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Christian Blind Mission International, the Christmas Bowl Appeal and many community groups, as well as local and worldwide emergency appeals, for example drought, fire and flood appeals. This proves that "from little seeds big trees grow".

Clothing vouchers of \$10 used to be issued by Emergency Relief, which the Op Shop honoured. However, the Op Shop now donates money to Emergency Relief, which assists them to buy additional food for their clients in need.

A debt of gratitude is owed to many men in the Church who, over the years helped by collecting goods and furniture, taking rubbish to the tip, repairing and renewing shelves and racks, renovating and painting the shop and looking after the grounds. However, the development and success of the shop is due to the dedication and commitment of the ladies, who had worked in the shop and on the committees, who had kept the minutes of meetings and financial records. These were handed into the church office and asked that they be kept. Unfortunately many of these records seem to have disappeared.

This history of the Uniting Church Opportunity Shop was compiled by Elizabeth Targett from information gleaned from the Focus magazine, some Meeting Minutes, some Annual Reports, the Impact paper and, with sincere appreciation, for the input by Mrs Doris Earnshaw, one of the original committee.