

Frank and Irma Mary Close



Irma met Frank Close when he was serving at Coolangatta police station.

They married in Rockhampton in 1953.

In 1965, Irma and Frank came to the South Burnett for the first time when Frank was appointed officer-in-charge of Proston Police Station.

On many occasions Irma became the officer in charge and Volunteer cook for anyone Frank had arrested whilst Frank was away carrying out his police duties.

They left Proston in 1972, when he was transferred to Beaudesert.

In 1977, Frank retired from the force and the couple took a change in direction, buying a pub (The Trappers Inn) in Cunnamulla.

In 1980, they came back to the South Burnett. Irma worked as a cook at the Broadway Hotel in Kingaroy which was owned by her sister and brother-in-law Jim & Pat Staats. At the time, Irma and Frank also ran the Hospital Shop, which was located in Albert Street opposite the Kingaroy Hospital. When the pub was sold in 1982, Irma stayed on as cook for the new owners until 1987 while Frank managed the shop.

In 1990, Frank and Irma moved to Murgon “to retire”. And then along came CRISIS and their hard-work fundraising for the helicopter service.



In 1994 one of the first locals Veronica Sommerfeld was flown out of Murgon by helicopter after a serious motor vehicle accident and her proud father in law Neville at a local morning tea in Murgon recently told the story about how the CRISIS name and fundraising began and how it changed Veronica's life and the Sommerfeld family forever thanks to the helicopter service. Son Bruce and Veronica's husband, who was in APEX came up with the name CRISIS which stands for (Country Rescue Income Support Improvement Scheme). Neville said he was sure they wouldn't have their much adored grandchildren today only for the CRISIS helicopter. During the period 1994-2004 over \$400,000 was raised locally to help keep the service in the air.



Frank and Irma Close enjoy the night at the announcement of the South Burnett Rugby League Team of the Century



**Irma Close receiving cheques from St Josephs
Melbourne Cup Sweep**

Party Girl





Irma Close and Judy Fuller receiving cheques from the Murgon Services Club for Crisis and the Murgon Hospital



**Irma and husband Frank Close at the 100 year celebration of Policing in Murgon.
Saturday 26th February 2011**

Mrs Irma Close is an ardent Rugby League Football fan and supportive wife of Sergeant Frank Close and well known in the many towns throughout Queensland they lived in.



A very grateful Mrs Irma Close and former Armed Forces Distinguished Helicopter Pilot Major Jim Campbell receives the Helicopter Helpline \$20,000 raised from Murgon Rotary and AMP by Murgon Rotary President Bruce Bishop at the Rotary Chris Thompson Pride of Workmanship Dinner. Major Jim Campbell and others were renowned for air lifting wounded soldiers from the battle fields in Vietnam. The much needed donations will help in her continuing campaign to keep the helicopter servicing this area.

Irma loved her jokes and was a wizard at telling them

An Irishman who had a little too much to drink is driving home from the city one night and, of course, his car is weaving violently all over the road.

A cop pulls him over. "So," says the cop to the driver, "where have ya been?"

"Why, I've been to the pub of course," slurs the drunk.

"Well," says the cop, "it looks like you've had quite a few to drink this evening."

"I did all right," the drunk says with a smile.

"Did you know," says the cop, standing straight, and folding his arms across his chest, "that a few intersections back, your wife fell out of your car?"

"Oh, thank heavens," sighs the drunk. "for a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf."

Chris Thompson

Pride of Workmanship Awards



The Murgon Rotary Club Chris Thompson Pride of Workmanship Awards saw 10 recipients of distinction, receive an award and the Helicopter Helpline receive \$20,000 from Rotary and AMP. Imagination in table decoration was a credit to the women of Rotary. The Chris Thompson Pride of Workmanship Awards highlighted the dinner's themes.

Photo: Kathy Thompson presenting the award to: Mrs Irma Close

And then there's more

You could be forgiven if anyone said it was Irma Close's night on Saturday 26th February 2011. Irma was the recipient of an award for the Murgon Rotary Chris Thompson Pride of Workmanship Award, received \$20,000 worth of donations to the helicopter service she has worked so hard for, raising money for it for several years.

Then as Irma went to leave the stage she was asked to take a chair for a moment and Leo Geraghty President of the Murgon Business and Development Assoc and Councillor Kathy Duff presented Mrs Irma Close with her Murgon Australia Day Award. Kathy read out the following commendation;

Outstanding Contribution to the Murgon Community Award (by a Citizen or Group).

Mrs Irma Close :



The Crisis Support group has just been nominated for a Queensland Regional Achievement Award and for many years now we hear the rescue helicopter come in to our small community and we think I wonder who their saving now. A local resident and ardent supporter of the AGL Action Rescue helicopter always remains ardent that it is the community, supporters and her support group CRISIS (Community Rescue Income Support Initiative Scheme) that needs recognition and not just Mrs Irma Close. The Crisis Support group has just been nominated for a Queensland Regional Achievement and Community Award. It has been reported to have saved many lives over the last 16 years and the helicopter landing platform in front of the Murgon Hospital and at Cherbourg has now been fenced and has adequate lighting.

Mrs Irma Close and Dr Joe Gangemi, a very dear friend of the Close family started the fundraising way back in 1994 and whilst talking to one of the directors recently he told me Irma Close was responsible for raising \$100,000 herself which she will probably deny. Hospital Fetes, Fun Days including Melbourne Cup Day parties were the main source of fund raising years ago but Service Clubs such as Rotary, APEX, Lions, Quota and others are now canvassed to continue on the huge work of fundraising. Today AGL, Australian Gas Light Company is the major sponsor.

It costs more than half a million dollars a year just to service more than 100 flights to the South Burnett area alone. The time taken by a helicopter from Murgon to Brisbane is 45 minutes travelling from hospital to hospital. Recently Col Brown of AGL Action Rescue emphasized that the helicopter service has never charged a cent for any mission in 31 years. Money raised in the South Burnett pays for equipment in the three helicopters. Donations to help CRISIS can be sent to Mrs Irma Close, 22 Coronation Drive, Murgon. 4605

Congratulations were acknowledged by the large crowd with a standing ovation, but in true Irma style she humbly replied and thanked her many helpers.

Photo : Mrs Irma Close and Councillor Kathy Duff.

**RACQ CareFlight
RESCUE**



2014/2015 has been another demanding year for CareFlight as we approach the end of another financial year. From humble beginnings in 1979, we started the very first community rescue helicopter service and it has since influenced the imminent aero-medical and rescue retrieval services in Queensland. We have conducted over 40,000 lifesaving missions in this time, including over 1329 missions last year.

CareFlight continues to provide this service to the many residents and visitors across southern and central Queensland. We don't charge the community a single cent for the service we provide and while we receive 65% of our funding from State Government, the most important third comes from the community and is where we experience our greatest challenge and funding pressure especially with the cost of every mission averaging \$12,500 dollars. Please continue to support us with what you can afford or by partnering with us by way of a tax deductible donation of \$1,000 to enable us to allocate the funds towards the following lifesaving medical equipment. The Cardiac Kit consisting of 7 pieces total cost \$1,445, The Trauma Kit consisting of 21 pieces costing \$902.78, The Blood Transfusion Kit inherent cost of \$561.00. Donations can be left with our area correspondent Mrs Raelene Dennis at Dennis Electrical Service in Gore Street Murgon (area replacement for Irma Close) or posting to Angela Miles, RACQ CareFlight, PO Box 9475, Pacific Paradise, Qld.

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Irma loved her jokes

Husband Down on Aisle 5, we have a husband down, clean up on aisle 5!

A husband and wife are shopping in their local Wal-Mart.

The husband picks up a case of Budweiser and puts it in their cart.

'What do you think you're doing?' asks the wife.

'They're on sale, only \$10 for 24 cans he replies.

'Put them back, we can't afford them demands the wife, and so they carry on shopping.

A few aisles further on along the woman picks up a \$20 jar of face cream and puts it in the basket.

'What do you think you're doing?' asks the husband.

'It's my face cream. It makes me look beautiful,' replies the wife.

Her husband retorts: 'So does 24 cans of Budweiser and it's half the price.'

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At the end of the send off to Frank & Irma Close a close friend Leo Geraghty invited Irma to sit with him facing the audience. Leo recapped on the many good times they had shared raising money and he revisited the many jokes she had told him over a number of years. Irma had everyone in laughter and you didn't know whether they were true or not but in later years I happened to meet Irma's Granddaughter Jayne and she said do you know Irma Close and when I told her about the night of jokes at their send off she told me she used to lay on the bed when she was little with Irma and Frank and Irma would tell her jokes and she would ask Grandpa Frank was that true?

Irma and Frank Close many thanks for your many years of volunteering here in the South Burnett and we wish you all the best in your move to the Gold Coast to be closer to family.

You will be leaving behind many fond memories and volunteering ethics for others to follow

We can't believe we will ever find another Frank and Irma and the Titans and the Gold Coast will be the benefactors of our loss.

Update: 1st September 2018

Sadly: Frank Close passed away in March 2015

Some four months ago Irma came back to live in Murgon and to be with the people she loved with her two daughters. They have assured me that these last four months of her life have been fantastic and they were very fortunate to have had such a mother as Irma. You could just imagine the pride this family enjoyed.

I had dealings again with Irma some three weeks ago and she was still telling me jokes and making me laugh.

Special thanks to all the medical staff and doctors especially close friend Doctor Joe Gangemi who have helped Irma during her life and to the crew of Life Flight who transported her to Toowoomba Hospital in a helicopter.

Sadly: Irma Maree Close passed away Friday 31st August 2018

Produced by Leo Geraghty, a close friend. Irma you will be sadly missed, rest in peace.