

*The following was written and recited By Bob Grant at
Ken's retirement function at the NSW Cricketers Club*

Ode to Ken Saunders

*He'd run the streets of Campbelltown delivering milk with a grin,
But the run became too big and so he chucked it in,
to the city of sin he came with its bustle and its din,
and he applied for a job with dear old Alan Quinn
"Can you run a mailroom son?" asked the mighty Quinn
"Can I run a mailroom? Just you let me in"
As the staff assembled on that fateful day,
a tall man entered and said "Get out of my way"
Yes he became a legend, The mailroom runs just right
and he goes Marathon training nearly every night.
A trophy hunter he who works the fun run circuit
With strained face he ups the pace giving other vets a workout
A puffing billy looking silly proud grandfather he
Whom we'll all miss but let's reminisce on Ken Saunders retiree*

Ken Saunders Retiree

How did I ever find the time to go to work?

I would like to thank my family for the support they have given me, particularly my wife Georgie and my daughters Linda and Wendy without their continued help I would never have got this book finished.

To my extended family and friends I hope you get as much enjoyment out of this story as I have had living it.

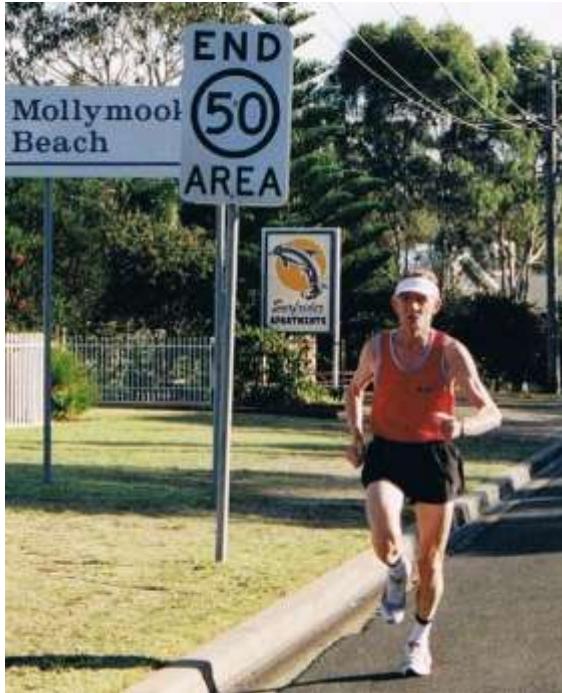
My other book published is “Homeward Bound to Oz”

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Ken Saunders Retiree

How did I ever find the time to go to work?



Those people that have read Ken's first book "Homeward Bound to Oz" would know that he got fun and satisfaction out of his adventures. This is a

story of how he continued to enjoy life to its fullest after retirement.

The Decision

The NRMA was a place where I worked enthusiastically for many years and each day I would look forward to going to work and if anyone asked where I worked I would proudly say “The NRMA and I love it”. I went to a retirement function that was held for the then General Manager Mr Lamble and at that function everyone became aware that a change was about to take place. The words restructuring and outsource became common and it was not long before I started to lose the feeling of enjoyment on going to work and I stopped boasting that I worked for the NRMA. So after talking it over with Georgie we decided it was time to retire and not wait around for a golden handshake. Everyone including my boss was amazed with this decision but it was not long before my friends lead by Michael O’Mara were organising a farewell function for me. The venue for this function was to be the Cricketers Club in Martin Place a good choice considering I was known to be a cricket tragic. Meanwhile my boss had made an offer

of a consulting job for two days a week that I accepted. Notwithstanding the farewell function took place on Friday night and that was a night that I will never forget, many great memories were relived. One of the many highlights of the night was the showing of a short video of my grandsons doing a tribute to their



Retirement dinner - going up to make my speech

Pop – it was a tissue job especially for “Pop”. There were many light-hearted speeches made and when I got to my feet I made many references to my first book “Homeward Bound to Oz”.



My Speech at the Retirement Dinner

I think that some people would have got a surprise about some of things the book revealed, especially the way that I arrived in Australia. You can imagine the surprise when people saw me in the lift going to my office on Monday morning when they had said

farewell to me on Friday night. The consulting job lasted for a few months but the days at work started to increase to almost a full time job so the decision was made to say farewell. Retiring gradually, instead of finishing on Friday night and waking up on Monday morning out of work, is a better way of going.



Mr Lamble CEO NRMA making presentation to me

It didn't take me long to get used to leaving my car in the car-port and not joining the thousands of other people in the queue of traffic trying to get to work in Sydney. So I then concentrated on getting all the odd jobs around the house done, they had been put off for some time. We decided we were in need of a retirement trip so in July we made our usual pilgrimage to the Gold Coast running events then continued on up to Brisbane where we caught the train (Spirit of the Outback) to Longreach. From there we went by bus to Cloncurry with the intention of hiring a car to go out to Eulolo, the sheep station I worked at in 1950. On the way we called in at the McKinley pub where I got chatting to the lady who was managing "Strathfield", a cattle station next to Eulolo. She told me that the people who owned Eulolo had walked out because of the slump in wool prices. The whole place was derelict and the roads impassable. Disappointed we continued to Cloncurry only to return to Longreach the next day. There was more than enough in that area to keep us busy.



Two stockmen outside the Stockman's Hall of Fame

The Stockman's Hall of fame is a wonderful experience and we spent a whole day there, I was particularly interested in the history of the sheep stations in Queensland. The Blackall Pub was an

interesting place and the fact it was Melbourne Cup day made it even more so. The ladies were done up in their finest attire, hats of all sizes and design, dresses and high-heel shoes while the blokes were in their shorts, black singlets and thongs. The beer and wine flowed as it does on Melbourne Cup day and you had to be quick eating your meat pies or the flies would descend on your food in the thousands – all good outback fun. Who won the Cup? Who cares?



A Ride on Mad Mick's Ute in Barcaldine

We visited Barcaldine where the 150 year old Ghost Gum tree was located; it is the symbol of an important time in Australia's political development. History tells us that it was a meeting place for shearers during their unsuccessful strike in the 1800's. It was also the birthplace of the long standing affiliation of the trade unions and the Labour Party. Another interesting place on our agenda was Lark Quarry that was once prehistoric lakes. You can still see the footprints made by the Dinosaurs that inhabited that area millions of years ago. We also visited Winton where Banjo Patterson wrote Waltzing Matilda and last but not least two working cattle stations and the faraway look in my eyes showed my love of the outback continues. So much so that it wasn't long before we were heading to Broken Hill in the New South Wales outback.

Broken Hill

We travelled to Broken Hill on the Indian Pacific courtesy of the New South Wales government on our free pensioners travel passes. Broken Hill is located near the border of NSW and South Australia and mining is the main industry. Many of the houses are almost completely made of corrugated iron. They must be very hot in the summer. I found the Royal Flying Doctor Service base and the school of the air

very interesting. The kids in the outback doing their lessons over the radio are a great innovation. We visited Pro Hart's art gallery and took a trip out to Silverton to see the famous Pub there, the sketches and stories that are pasted around the walls make for some humorous reading - they are typical bush yarns that can be a little risqué – good fun.

The film *Wake in Fright* was filmed on the premises in 1970. It was the start of something big. Since then about twenty-four films have been made there including *Dirty Deeds*, *Mission Impossible II*, *The Missing* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. A highlight was a trip to the opal mining town of Whitecliffs where most of the town's people live underground. Georgie and I stayed at the White Cliffs underground motel and we both agreed it is the best night's sleep we have ever had, it was so quiet and cool and not a bit claustrophobic. We slept so well we almost missed breakfast – that would have been a first.

Another interesting day was our trip out to Menindee Lakes and I had a beer at the Pub that Burke and Wills used as a staging point for their disastrous 1860 expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Before we left Broken Hill our Motel served us a meal of Kangaroo. It was delicious but we felt more than a little guilty to

be eating Skippy. So we haven't eaten our national symbol since then.

Westies

Back home Saturday mornings were as busy as ever, Georgie, Linda and I would hop in the car and make our way to Lake Gillawarna, Georges Hall. Westies are a very vibrant club with the emphasis on families and fun and I was kept very busy as President, a Job that gave me a great deal of satisfaction. I am very proud and honoured that the club made me a life member and one of the handicap races held each month is named the "Saunders Cup". Each week my voice could be heard over the loud speakers "Go Runners to the line please". That would be the trigger for Paul (Spider) Webb to race off and try to establish a lead over the other fast runners.



On the mike Past Presidents Day



Georgie and me at the Lake

The club also has an annual presentation and dinner and in the 90's it would include a red faces style concert after the serious part of the evening had been completed. It is amazing how men who you think are

perfectly normal love to get dressed up in women's clothing and get up on the stage to do their stuff. One year three of our members including the President (me) had a couple of rehearsals doing a skit to the tune of Simply Irresistible.



The Simply Irresistibles in their little black dresses



Mama Mia!! It's Abba!

On the night it was a hilarious “stuff up” because we had about nine other men who hadn’t rehearsed but got dressed up and assisted by Joan Eisenhuth who used blown up condoms as false breasts to at least try and make them look a little more female, took to the stage and because I had done all the rehearsals everyone attempted to follow my lead, unfortunately I got stage fright and forgot the whole routine, what followed brought the house down!

Every year the club arranges for buses to take the “Westies” into Sydney to compete in the world

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