

## LIVES LIVED

## Community man focused on relationships

DONALD "Don" Robert Eather OBE was a man of the community, for the community and, most importantly, part of his communities.

Don made our pastures greener and our communities stronger.

Right up until he left this world on June 4, 2010, Don treasured making a difference with relationships and partnerships in his family, farm and communities — small and large.

He worked hard over his 80 years of life.

Regardless of drought, flood or tragedy — of which there were plenty — Don maintained a spectacularly positive outlook on life.

He was a good old-fashioned gentleman who did everything and anything for his family, his community or the many groups like Queensland Grain Growers Association (QGGA) of which he was an instrumental part.

He was blessed with great friendships and family.

Don's greatness was achieved through his great kindness and tenacity.

His humility and passion through it all made Don, our Don.

His tenacity and responsiveness was eventually formally recognised when he was presented with his Order of British Empire (OBE) at Government House in Brisbane, in the midst of QGGA's turmoil in 1983. Still, despite all the goings-on, Don had his own interpretation of what the OBE for Service to the Rural Industry was actually for.

Don would say to all those that asked, and he always had an audience to hear, this OBE was awarded to him for "Other Blokes' Efforts" and he was just privileged to have been part of outstanding teams.

That's the wonderful and welcoming gentleman Don really was.

Another characteristic of this very special man was that he simply never forgot his friends through thick and thin.

Despite the most difficult of circumstances, and even during his last days with us, Don recalled how "in life, relationships are everything".

He was a character who was proud of achieving while working with his colleagues.

Don had a huge network of friends in every facet of his rainbow-coloured life from Baan

## OBITUARY

## Donald "Don" Robert Eather OBE

Late of Toowoomba, formerly of Baan Baa, Kokotungo and Taroom  
Devoted family man  
Respected community worker  
Friend to many

Baan to Kokotungo and from Taroom to Toowoomba.

There were so many community groups that Don actively joined over his lifetime.

He stepped up to the mark when a need arose and took the lead by invitation although he didn't seek those positions.

He was a valuable member and leader of QGGA, Australian Wheat growers Federation (AWF), Kokotungo's bush fire brigade, Glennon House in Toowoomba, Toowoomba Range Probus Group, Friends of the Bush Connection, Association of Independent Retirees and umpire others including sporting groups, especially in tennis and cricket.

He was a life member of the Holy Name Tennis Club and actively participated in many other clubs.

This list just typifies the man of action and man of people who Don was and how he helped the lives of so many.

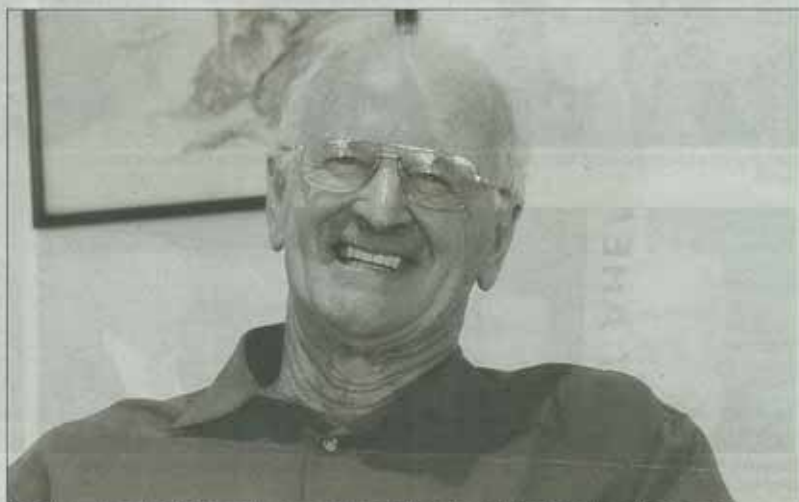
Just as each of those groups and clubs inspired Don, so too did Don inspire and touch the lives of each of these communities.

He was a spirited man of the land who captivated everyone he came in contact with — personally and professionally — and never participated for his own personal gains.

Early on in his life, Don formed the Eather Bros partnership together with his brother Dick. He was later joined outside of Rockhampton by siblings Peter and Harry.

In 1964, Don and Peter ventured north and purchased a property 80 miles west of Rockhampton at Kokotungo.

It was here that Don pioneered a way for his young family with lots of land clearing and plain hard work to create a home and



Don Eather was an old-fashioned gentleman who did everything and anything for his family and his community.

Picture: SUPPLIED

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profitable farm.

The sibling rivalry at harvest time, sheer hard work and competitive determination throughout these early years grew some bountiful wheat crops.

Don's wife and sweetheart (of 65 years), Dorothy, made the long journey from south of the border to reunite their young family — Bob as a toddler and Gwen at just six-weeks-old — and begin their days as proud Queenslanders.

Dot, as she was known to friends, was comfortably reassured by Don's determination and his devotion as a family-man.

Initially the locals took bets on how long it would take for these 'southern Eathers' to go broke because of their revolutionary ventures without dairying on their farm.

But as usual, Don rose to the challenge and responded with a bumper harvest with 1964's favourable wheat season, and there was a consequential changing of tune from the locals.

In Kokotungo, Don and Dot quickly got involved in the local community and joined various groups to become valued members.

Soon after settling, a field officer of the QGGA approached Don and Peter and signed them up as members of the association.

Don was elected as president of the local branch shortly afterwards — signifying a turning point that led to much more as time went on.

After only five years, Don's wisdom and tenacity was clearly evident to members and he was elected junior vice president of QGGA.

His natural leadership qualities were sought.

Don grasped the challenges quickly, was decisive and enthusiastic, and most of all, he was keen for people to work together to make positive change.

That was Don's way — making positive change.

His avid support and leadership of QGGA was not enough.

He also became a representative

of the AWF and was elected to serve two terms as AWF president.

Over the years, the former farm boy from Baan Baa was recognised as a fearless advocate for growers. He was an active member of the Trade Development Council, joined Government trade missions and visited many countries in that capacity.

In the end, it was Don who contributed to the grain industry with his negotiations for equitable rail freight for farmers and it was his help that opened up some international markets for Australian grain.

Over the years, he developed his early and enduring interest to protect agricultural land through positive soil conservation practices.

His huge network of friends and family in all aspects of his life was evident in how he enjoyed life.

His funeral celebrated his life and more than 600 people travelled from near and far to farewell Don in Toowoomba.

Don was just that sort of bloke — simply a good old-fashioned gentleman who enjoyed making positive change with his friends and for his friends.

He is survived by his wife Dot, children Bob, Gwen and Margie, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

— Contributed