



LEGACY WIDOW, VERA BILLEN WILL CELEBRATE HER 100TH BIRTHDAY ON THURSDAY 18 AUGUST 2011

Mrs Vera Billen was born in England on 18 August 1911 and she is about to celebrate her 100th birthday. Vera enjoys good health and lives independently in South Yarra Melbourne Legacy President; Chris Spence said it is quite rare for individuals to be living independently at the age of 100 years of age. 'We currently have less than a dozen widows on our records that are still living independently at 100 years of age'. Melbourne Legacy records show that we have 49 widows out of a total 12,000 who have already reached 100 years of age.

Following the death of her husband George Charles in 1995, Vera moved to Australia to be near her son, Robin. Vera said that many of her friends in Melbourne are through her contacts with Legacy. Until recently, Vera came into the city each week and enjoyed playing cards with a group of Legacy Widows at Legacy House. Vera said that her Legatee George Mackenzie is only a phone call away and she has comfort that Legacy is there for her.

Vera has always had a very positive attitude to life and is a 'people's person' which no doubt has helped her get to bring up her century. Vera said, "Life is give and take. We all should help people along the road and that has helped me stay young". Vera said that she will talk to anyone and has made friends by chatting to people at the bus shelter on in the local shops. She lives to read the newspaper each day, enjoys sport on TV and still follows Chelsea Football in England.

Legacy was founded in 1923 by a small group of World War I veterans. They believed they had to accept a legacy of responsibility for the welfare of the wives and children of their comrades who were killed in the war or died subsequently. Legacy has met that commitment over the ensuing years and continues to deliver some of the stability, guidance and assistance that a partner would normally provide to his or her family.

Legacy services are available throughout Australia to over 110,000 widows and children and adults with disabilities. They are provided by approximately 6,000 volunteer members (called Legatees) through 49 separate Clubs. Legacy's services range from advice and counselling to practical assistance, including pension applications, financial assistance to those in need and educational, legal and general welfare advice. Most Clubs also encourage social activities for widows and sponsor activities to help children become responsible, well-motivated and educated citizens.

Information:

Contact Carmel McConnell, Public Relations Officer,
Melbourne Legacy – 9663 3564 or 0408 800 113
carmel.mcconnell@legacymelb.com.au