

Mparntwe Alice Springs Community Foundation Community Builder of the Week



End of an era for photo shop

PHIL WILLIAMS

THE end of an era has been reached with the recent closure of the last specialised camera and photo store in Alice Springs.

The family run Alice Springs Camera Shop has been a part of the fabric of the town since it was first opened in the late 1960s by friends John F Ryan and John Cumming in Turner's Arcade where the Alice Plaza car park now sits.

It was managed for many years by former mayor Damian Ryan before his brother Jerome took the helm assisted by his wife Sandra.

In the early '90s, the shop moved to the then brand new Yeperenye Shopping Centre.

The business flourished as the town grew, and on the back of increasing tourism through the '70s and '80s.

By the early 2000s, the family had grown the number of shops to four in Alice Springs.

The arrival of the digital age saw that number gradually decrease to just one stand alone store and in 2020 the business relocated from Yeppies to the Milner Road site.

Sandra Ryan said of closing the business: "It's one of the hardest decisions we've ever had to make."

"It's been hard just thinking about it but it's time to take a break. I've barely been away from the shop for 30 years"

Jerome added that it's the people he will miss the most.

"It's generational. We've been a part of the community for so long," he said.

"It's got to the point where we have done work for the grandchildren of some of our first customers - and some of them still come in."

"I'm going to miss the relationship with customers. People just drop in to say 'G'day'."

Sandra said they plan to visit family interstate and "then do a bit of travel around Australia to see where we end up".



RETIREMENT: After more than 50 years, Sandra and Jerome Ryan pack up the last remaining items in their photo shop. 384514

Picture: PHIL WILLIAMS

Faces of Australia Ted Egan



She's Australian

I composed my song *She's Australian* after I read of a series of insults, specifically aimed at Muslim women in western Sydney. I recorded the song with a talented Melbourne band, Zydeco Jump led by George Butrumlis. My Musical Director was a wonderful woman named Robyn Payne, one of several brilliant people who are able to cope with my lack of 'musical knowledge'. In fact, there have been three such geniuses in my career - fifty years, recording 31 albums of songs: (1) Herbie Marks, a joyful Jewish man who had started his own musical career at the age of eight, in Paris. Herbie was a top level player of 57 instruments. He once said, cordially of me: "Ted Egan, nice bloke, but you need a bloody blacktracker to follow him musically". (2) Erik Kowarski of Perth, a dear friend for life, after guiding me through about twenty albums and (3) Robyn Payne, a brilliant pianist, with an enthusiasm to match her talent. Robyn has accommodated some crazy musical notions of mine.

In later years I have added to that list three local Alice Springs musos/recording artists: Ross Muir, Darcy Davis and Glenny Rae who are helping me with four musical projects I have been developing over the last fifteen years and hope to take to production. In all of this seeming turmoil I have my beloved Nerys to provide the overview of a Welsh-born woman who was born to sing. Lucky me!

All of the above eminences are aware that I know nothing of chords, keys and timing. They all delight in working with me though, because I nonetheless compose different songs and often seek bizarre musical accompaniment. In turn I don't ever seek to be recognised as a 'folk singer' or as a 'country music singer'. I am simply an old bushy who delights in composing songs about the deeds of heroic people.

So back to *She's Australian*. I am delighted that my dear mate Margret RoadKnight has done a cover version of the song in her inimitable style. Both Margret's and my version of the song are available on iTunes. Here we go:

SHE'S AUSTRALIAN

Words and Music: Ted Egan (1990)

She comes from Macedonia, Lebanon, Cambodia

Afghanistan or Chile, perhaps she's Vietnamese?

She's come here to Australia, bringing up her family

She's all, she's all, she's all or any one of these.

Her clothes are somewhat different

She doesn't speak much English

She worships at a different church

She's never tasted beer

But she's working in the factory

Bringing up her family

In every sense this woman's an Australian pioneer

CHORUS

She's here, she's here, she's living over here

She's not an alien, she's Australian

And she's a pioneer.

She's out there on the factory floor

Legs are aching, feet are sore

Mindless repetition, but she hopes it's for the best

Wondering? Am I pregnant?

Can we afford another child?

Longing, longing for elusive hours of rest.

The factory whistle blows, she hurries for the bus,

Ignores the jibes and insults,

Pretends she doesn't hear

Run and do the shopping

Cook the family's dinner

No rest for her, this woman, this Australian pioneer.

CHORUS

She's here etc.

She doesn't drive a bullock wagon

Crack a stockwhip, ride a horse,

But I guess, if she had to,

She'd quickly find a way

She's nonetheless a sister

To the women of another time
Who did those things, they surely did
And are revered today.

The kids are home from school

The city's just so stifling

Remember all those dreams about

The beaches, bush and sun

Late at night she sits awhile

Thinking of her childhood

Reflecting, reflecting

On the new life she's begun.

She came out to Australia

From a homeland wracked with poverty

Hunger, oppression, a life of constant fear

Nonetheless it's difficult

The new life's so bewildering

And the woman's never heard

Of crazy words like 'pioneer'.

But her son will play for Collingwood

Her daughter's Jana Wendt

And Australia should be grateful

That she came over here

Working away relentlessly

Good for the economy

This woman is a treasure

An Australian pioneer.

CHORUS

She's here etc.,