

AHVICE volunteering opportunities for retired principals and teachers

Edith McNally

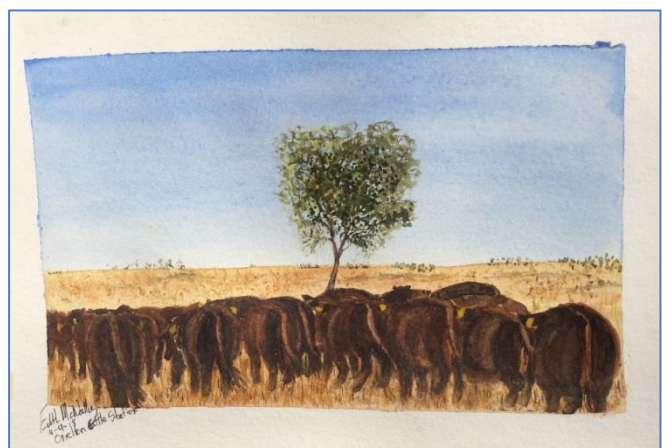
It's been three plus years since my retirement from Menai High School. Within a week of retirement, husband Ron and I hit the 'Grey Nomad' road which, apart from a few 'home pop-ins', we have been travelling ever since. On one of these home visits I got to join the retired principals group and chanced a chat with Tracy Provest about her very positive experience as an AHVICE volunteer supporting families in remote areas learning via distance education and home schooling.

We have just completed our own volunteering experience in a three week AHVICE placement at Orielson cattle station 85 km northwest of Muttaborra in Queensland. Yes, we had to look hard to find Muttaborra, and even harder to find Orielson where the dirt roads didn't register on Google. The family of three children, two of whom are at boarding school, has Livia being home schooled and serviced by Longreach Distance Ed.

The schoolhouse served as both schoolhouse and our residence and was an outstanding facility for both teaching and learning, as well as being a very comfortable home. Livia was largely schooled by her mother assisting in the delivery of a standard Queensland Year 4 curriculum via Longreach Distance Education. All required teaching resources were readily available and while the internet was slow and on occasions challenging it was perfectly serviceable and fit for purpose. Both Livia and the family were very positive about learning and went out of their way to not only make us welcome but also create a very positive and supportive learning environment.

The greater property was open to us and we thoroughly enjoyed walking and interacting with the animals and other workers throughout our stay. We were included in birthday celebrations and other team building activities and socialising events. We got to engage with the other two children when they came home for a week and were delighted and charmed by them both.

There were no problems encountered and we found this to be an amazing, wonderful and productive opportunity for ourselves, Livia and her family. It was fantastic being given the opportunity to share our passion for teaching and learning with this family and believe that they gave us even greater, never to be forgotten gifts of friendship and care through this volunteering opportunity.



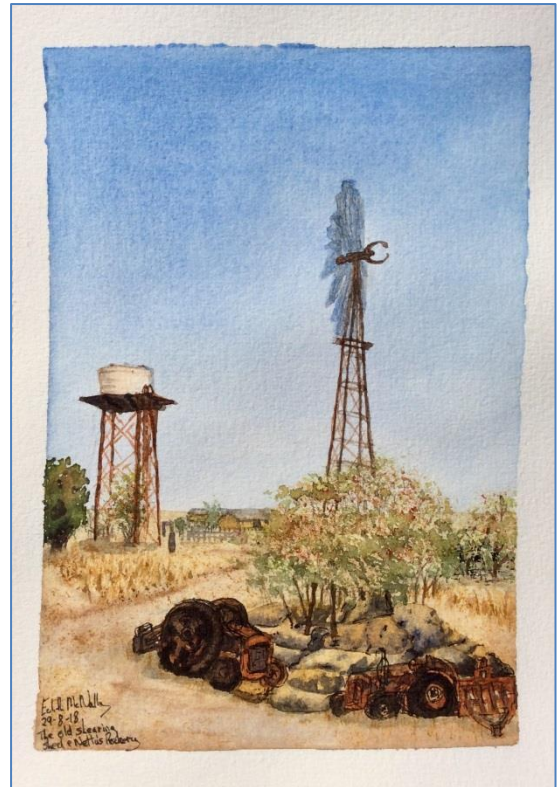
*Orielson Cattle Station, Muttaborra, Queensland
(Watercolours by Edith)*

We also discovered that our knowledge and skills as educators are held in high esteem and greatly valued by this particular family and their extended family. It wasn't only what we could give to the children but also the break we gave their Mum as well as affirming her efforts and achievements as a home tutor over many years.

I would commend this experience to all retired principals and teachers. It is so very, very worthwhile and will remind you that what you have done in the past is highly valued by others and can make a difference in the lives of others.

P.S. I have taken up watercolour travel sketching and playing a ukulele as part of my post retirement skill set. I love both despite being totally new to them until I retired. I have included some of my sketches to brighten and enlighten this report.

In addition, I ran across Ann McIntyre on my travels and like myself she camps, sketches and plays ukulele. As always running across Ann is great value and even more so when you share some unique interests and can play some Uke together.



Contributor details

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Edith was with DET from 1972-2015 and served as principal at both Cranebrook High School (1994-1997) and Menai High School (1998-2015). She is a Life Member of the NSWSPC with major interests and contributions in VET, SRE and Assets Management. Since retirement Edith has been a 'Grey Nomad' towing a caravan throughout Australia and plans to settle back home in Stanwell Park at the end of 2018.

