

My Stories



By

Tony Heffernan

Contents

Introduction	4
My Own Stories	
My Life Story	5
The Accident	7
My Mystery Walking Trip to Melbourne	9
Adventure to Lightning Ridge	10
A Day Out with the Family	12
New Zealand Holiday	13
Our Train Trip to Cairns	15
Pacific Jewel Cruise	17
One of Those Days	20
Learning to Read and Write	21
A Trip Down to Mum's Place	22
Nanna Howard	23
Nanna's Dolls	24
Goulburn and Windsor	25
The Farm	26
Leaving Home	27
Riverwood	28
The Body in the Wheelie Bin	30

Hervey Bay

History of Hervey Bay	31
The Road and Railway	32
Electricity	33
Pineapples	34
Bananas	35
Fishermen	36
The Railway Picnic	37

Bushrangers

Ned Kelly	38
Michael Howe	39
Frank Gardiner	40

Mysteries

Amelia Earhart	42
Missing Ships	43
The Mystery of Flight 19	45

Nature

Tides	46
Islands	48
Halley's Comet	49

Letter to the Prime Minister	37
---	-----------

Introduction

My Life Story

My name is Tony Heffernan.

I was born on 23rd February 1953 in Sydney NSW. My mother is Marie, my father was Vince. He died of a heart attack a long time ago when I was about 20.

I went to school at Kingsgrove Primary. I had a bad accident, missed a lot of school and then went to Loftus Street Special School where I stayed until I left at aged 16.

I've got 3 brothers and 4 sisters. My brothers are John, who lives in Sydney, Warren, who lives at Burpengary in Brisbane and Rod, who lives at Yandina. My sisters are Carol, who lives in Hervey Bay, Lyn, who lives at Gales in Brisbane, Cheryl, who lives in Brisbane near Mum and Leanne, who also lives in the same area.

I have always been a loner and never felt close to my family except for Mum.

I had a job at Containers Ltd for 5 years at Hurstville.

I then decide to go to Tech and learn how to read and write. At the first class they just put me out in the hallway with a table and chair and didn't come near me all night. When I left I had to pay \$20 anyway. What a rip off!

I never got to read and write at all but I kept trying.

I was not happy living in Sydney but just put up with it because I couldn't do anything else.

One day I went to Brisbane on the train to visit Mum and my sister Carol came down and picked us up and brought us back to Hervey Bay for a holiday. I was fishing on the pier one day and they asked if

I would be happy up here in a house, unit or caravan. I said I'd like to live in a caravan.

They went to look at caravan parks for a caravan to rent. They found a caravan that would be vacant soon to rent and after a week rang me up and told me I could move in.

I left Sydney to move when my brother Warren came down with a truck to pick my furniture up.

I cleaned up my unit, left the keys and got the train that night for Brisbane and the start of a new part of my life.

That was over 3 years ago. I am still in my caravan only 2 streets from the beach. I have given up smoking and have saved money for a holiday but that's a different story.

The Accident

When I was six years old in 1959 and living in South Hurstville with my family I had a very bad accident with a lawn mower.

My father was mowing the lawn and left it running when he went inside. The mower was hard to start and he didn't want to turn it off.

I was riding my bike around the yard near the mower and I fell off and my left hand went under the mower blades.

My father wrapped my hand and severed finger in a towel and rushed me to the St. George Hospital in Kogarah by car.

I was in hospital for several months after they re-attached my finger. I had to return to hospital for check-ups and a couple of months later ended up with pneumonia. I was still in shock from the accident and they told my mother that I had had a stroke. This affected me as I could not walk or talk.

The rehabilitation took many months. I learned to walk first but it took longer to learn to speak again and I had to have many sessions of speech therapy.

Before the accident I could read and write a little but after it I could not do either. It took me a long time to learn how to write and I am still learning how to read properly.

For a long time after the accident I thought that it was my older brother Warren mowing the lawn and I blamed him. I didn't find out that it was my father until much later.

I asked my father to help me to learn to read and write and come to tech-college with me but he wouldn't do it. He told me straight out that I would never learn to read and write.

He passed away before I could prove that he was wrong.

My father was terribly upset over the accident and never stopped blaming himself. My sister told me it was the only time she had ever seen Dad cry.

In 1959 there was not much treatment available like there is today and I think the specialists did a wonderful job to re-attach my finger at all. I still have a slight speech impediment but on the whole feel very lucky to be in good health as I am.

My Mystery Walking Trip to Melbourne

Around 1970 I had an argument with my sister Lyn over the TV. She took the picture tube out and I couldn't watch it. I got the shits and walked out.

I packed a bag and sneaked out without telling anyone. I went along King Georges Road to the shops and then to the main highway. I decided to go towards Melbourne.

I walked and walked and thought "bugger it, I'll keep going". I didn't stop to sleep, just kept walking. When I saw the Dog on the Tucker Box at Gundagai I knew where I was.

When I got to Melbourne it was raining and I got very wet. I asked a cabbie if he knew a place where I could stay. He told me there was a place one street down so I walked to the desk and asked for a room and the man gave me one for \$6.

The next day I got a job at a restaurant washing dishes near Luna Park. I stayed in Melbourne for about 3 weeks and then I decided to walk back home again. I walked and walked until I got back to Sydney.

When I got home I was waiting for someone to ask me where I had been but no one had even missed me!

Adventure to Lightning Ridge

My father wanted to see what the opal mining was all about so he decided to take the family up there for a holiday at Christmas. I was about 13 years old.

We drove up in my father's Falcon. This was before seat belts came in. There was my father, my mother, my grandmother, her boarder, Darcy, my sisters, Leanne and Cheryl and me.

When we got there we went to a caravan park and put up our tent before it got dark. Then we started cooking tea.

Afterwards we relaxed because it was a long trip.

The next morning after breakfast we got into the car and drove to the shops. Then we went to look at a house made out of beer bottles. Nobody lives in the house. Afterwards we went back to the caravan park for lunch.

After lunch we met a man who was a retired jeweller and he showed us what he had made. He had his jewellery set up in his campervan. He made rings, necklaces, bangles and other things. He gave us one thing to look at which looked like opal, all shiny with different colours. His wife then told us what he used to make it, which were candy wrappers. We were very surprised.

Then we went to look at the opal field. The mines were fenced off but we looked at the spoil heaps away from the mines and found a few bits and pieces. Then we looked beside the road; it was very hot.

Some people from a house came out to talk to us and wanted to know what we were doing. We said we were looking for opals. The lady asked us to come inside out of the heat. She said her kids did the

same. She told her daughter to give Leanne a small jar of opals. She said her kids could collect some more anytime.

That evening we went for a swim in a hot spring. It was very relaxing and no one wanted to get out. When we got out it was a bit chilly.

On New Year's Night some teenagers mucking around cut the ropes on our neighbour's tent and it fell down on them. The teenagers drove off in a Mini Moke. The two guys from the tent took off after them in their car but didn't catch them. They were very angry. They moved out the next day.

We stayed until the end of the week and then drove home the long way around the coast. On the way we went across the border where we couldn't take any fruit and we had to eat it all before we got there.

A Day Out with the Family

One day we went to the Speedway at Windsor, west of Sydney.

My sister Carol had a 4 tonne truck and put a carpet, a lounge and chairs in the back of the truck. She drove the truck to the Speedway. She backed it into the best spot to watch the speed cars.

They announced over the speaker that there would be a ladies' race. Carol put her hand up to enter the race.

During the race the stock car motor burnt out and she did not finish the race. She was very disappointed. The owner was very upset because he would have to take the motor out to rebuild it. The car got towed off the track.

After all that she came back to watch the cars going around the track.

Some came off the track and some crashed into each other and were towed away. Lots of owners were upset about their damaged cars but that's part of stock car racing.

After that we went home. It was a good day at the Speedway.

New Zealand Holiday

We went down to the wharf in Brisbane to go on board “Sea Princess” for a two week cruise to New Zealand.

Leaving at 4pm we were at sea for three days before we got to Auckland at 7am. We had all day in Auckland and the ship sailed at 6pm for Tauranga.

My sister Carol and I went to see the city by bus. We had all day and the ship sailed at 6pm for Napier arriving at 7am the next day. We got a shuttle bus into the city to look around. The ship sailed at 6pm again for Wellington and arrived at 7am.

Mum, Carol and I got the shuttle bus into the city where we got the famous cable car up the mountain to the Botanical Gardens. What a lovely view it was of the harbour from there.

This was our last stop on the North Island and the ship left that night for the South Island. Because of the recent earthquakes in Christchurch the ship couldn't call there so we went to Akaroa, further south for the next leg of our cruise.

The ship moored in the harbour and we got the tender boat into the wharf at Akaroa. It was 13° and we were feeling a bit cold. Akaroa is a pretty little town.

The ship left in the afternoon and we got to Dunedin about 8am at the bottom of the South Island. There was a lot of fog and we didn't think we would go into the narrow fjords at all but it lifted and the ship was able to go in. What a great place to visit, with mountains, waterfalls, snow on top of some mountains and pure clean water and air. We saw seals on the rocks and flocks of birds.

I was amazed at how the ship turned around and headed back out to sea the way we came in.

We had three more days at sea with lots to do on board, movies, casino, art gallery, bingo, shows, shops and meals.

Our Train Trip to Cairns

One Saturday morning Carol, Mum and I caught the bus from Hervey Bay to Maryborough to catch the train to Cairns in Northern Queensland for a week's holiday.

We sat on the station to wait for the train which comes up from Brisbane. When it arrived we had to find our berths. I had a single berth to myself.

We met the rest of the group who were to be with us for a week in Cairns. Michelle was our group leader. When we got to Cairns the bus was waiting to take us to our hotel.

We got rooms and met up on the veranda for dinner. Then we all went for a walk to the markets next morning. We went on a bus tour of Cairns and then went to Port Douglas for lunch by the water. After some shopping the bus drove us all back to our hotel.

We went to the casino for a while then went and met the group for dinner. After dinner we went back to the casino.

About midnight we came to the hotel to find we were locked out. We got the manager to open the door for us. We finally fell into bed about 1am.

Next day our bus took us to the Skyrail for the trip up the mountain over the tree tops. When we got to Kuranda we walked around the village and went to the hotel for lunch. I cut my sausages carefully because we had rude sausages, which made the group laugh!

The bus took us back to Cairns in the afternoon so we went to the casino. The group joined us there for dinner and we all had a flutter on the pokies and the tables. Everyone enjoyed it. We came back to the hotel late again.

Next morning our bus took us to the wharf for the boat trip over to Green Island. It was a bit rough but no one got sick. We had a nice glass bottomed boat to see coral and feed the fish. Then the group went on a walk or to swim after lunch. My sister Carol fell in the water, clothes and all and didn't have a towel. Everyone laughed. I wish I had my camera to get a picture.

We came back to Cairns and the group walked to the casino to stay until it was time for dinner at the restaurant near the hotel. Then we all went to the veranda of the hotel for a drinkie session before bed.

On Tuesday around 10am we went to a tourist shop near a lake and had coffee and scones. Some of the people on the tour bought souvenirs. After that we got into the bus and went to a farm where they make cheese and cream.

Then we had our dinner and afterwards went back to our rooms at the hotel. Some ate their tea on the veranda and some went for a walk to the shops. Carol, Mum and I went to the casino and got back late and had to ask the manager to let us in again. When he opened the door he said don't make a habit of doing this all the time.

The next day we went to a winery to taste some mango wine. There were about twelve different wines. Mum and I poured our glasses into Carol's. After that people bought wine but we didn't because it was too expensive, about \$40 a bottle. Some people bought one or two bottles. After that we went back to get packed ready to go home on the train.

We had been kept busy in Cairns sightseeing in the bus and before we knew it, it was time to catch the train back to Brisbane. We got off at Maryborough and were soon in Hervey Bay.

We have kept in touch with some of the group and plan another train trip one day.

Pacific Jewel Cruise

Parts of this story have already been told by my sister Carol but I will add some more in my own words.

We drove from Hervey Bay to Brisbane and then flew to Sydney on Qantas. When we got to the airport at Brisbane they had a wheelchair waiting for my mother, who is 91 next birthday. They put the wheelchair onto a special trailer and drove her to the departure lounge and then pushed her down the ramp to the plane. She walked from the door to her seat.

When we got to Sydney they had another wheelchair waiting for her. When we picked up our luggage the bus driver was walking around asking people if they were going to the ship. The bus was up the road a bit and my mother walked to it with her walker.

I was the offside passenger next to the driver who was like a Kamikaze pilot. My mother was sitting at the back with her hands over her face. When we got to the ship she was very happy.

There was a wheel chair waiting for her and we took our bags to check-in. We went through security after we got our identification key card and went aboard the ship. Our luggage was waiting outside our cabin.

The cabin was wider than before with a fridge and four bunks. Mum and Carol had the bottom bunks and I had a top bunk. We were very happy with the cabin.

The ship was moving away from the wharf and we went upstairs to take photographs of the harbour bridge and the opera house. Afterwards we went downstairs into the bar to do the lifesaving drill. Once that was over we started our holiday.

There were coffee and other drinks available all over the ship and meals whenever we wanted them. There were lots of activities like dancing, singing, games, casino, bingo, gym, movies, and play school for the kids and a library.

Mum went to see the ship doctor because she wasn't feeling well and the doctor said she had flu and was one stage off pneumonia. The doctor gave her some medicine and a vaporiser. All up it cost \$500.

After two days we arrived at Champagne Bay on Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu. The beach is one of the best in the world. We didn't go ashore because Mum was sick and we didn't want to leave her. We stayed on the ship and watched everyone else go ashore in the tender boats.

The ship left at 5 o'clock for Santo and arrived there the next morning. We stayed on board again.

The next stop was Wala. The ship arrived early and when we woke up we were already at the wharf. We didn't go ashore, Mum and Carol read books and I walked around the ship.

We left about 4 o'clock for Mystery Island. There is a big airstrip on the island built by the Americans during WW2 but no one lives there. The village people from a nearby island come across to meet the ship.

Some of the passengers came back late and we had to wait for them. Once they were back the ship left for Noumea on New Caledonia.

Mum stayed on board and Carol and I went ashore. We bought some fish magnets to give to friends and then we went for a tour on a train called the Yellow Tchou Tchou which goes on the road all around the beaches.

The train stopped at a park where we saw two big guns from the war facing out to sea and then we came back around to the ship. We went back on board to meet Mum for dinner. Afterwards I went back ashore to buy some more fish magnets. It was a good day.

We went upstairs to see what was on at the movies but there was not much on so we went to dinner. After dinner we went to the casino. Mum and I played the poker machines until 10 o'clock. We went back to the cabin and had an early night.

We woke up early the next morning and we were at the wharf in Sydney. Before we got off the ship we had breakfast. Mum got off first in a wheelchair and then we went to the cab rank and went to the airport for 10 o'clock. We went to Hungry Jacks and bought a hamburger while we waited for the plane.

We arrived in Brisbane by 2 o'clock. We went back to Mum's place and took all the bags inside and relaxed. We were talking about our next trip already. We were thinking about going to Cairns.

We stayed at Mum's place until she was better and then we came back to Hervey Bay.

One of Those Days

I had an appointment at Centrelink at 11 o'clock in Hurstville.

I caught the train at Riverwood where I lived. I had to go to Tempe first to catch another train to Hurstville on another line.

I jumped on the train from Tempe to Hurstville but it didn't stop at any of the stations until it got to Waterfall Station.

There was no train back to Hurstville because they had gone on strike. I asked the Station Master how I could get to Hurstville and he said I could catch a cab or walk.

There were no cabs so I asked him whether I could walk on the railway line. He said I had to walk on the road. I asked him how many stops there were to Hurstville and he said ten.

By the time I got to Centrelink in Hurstville it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I explained what happened with the train and the man at Centrelink laughed and saw me anyway.

We sat down and updated my paperwork. If I had missed this appointment it would have taken a long time to get another one so I was lucky.

When we finished I had to walk back to Riverwood because there were no trains. It took me three hours to walk home. What a wasted day!

One day the same Centrelink office sent me to a job at Rockdale where I had to measure guttering but I couldn't do it and I had to go back to Centrelink to tell them.

I couldn't do the job because I couldn't read or write. The people with the job were very annoyed for wasting their time.

Learning to Read and Write

Before I came to Hervey Bay Carol's husband Neil passed away.

When I moved up here I told her I wanted to go back to learning how to read and write.

Carol made some enquiries and made an appointment at the Maisie Kaufman Learning Centre in Maryborough. We had an interview with Sylvia and Kimberley. They wrote down all my details and I started that day.

When Carol saw the school she decided to help out as a volunteer and did a special course.

My first teacher was Robert but that did not work out and I transferred to Hervey Bay.

My second teacher was Cindy but she left to get married. After that it was Rosemary and then Sue.

I started off one day a week on Friday but changed to two days, Tuesday and Thursday.

Carol works with me on Tuesday and goes to Maryborough on Friday.

On Thursday I work with Phil.

A Trip Down to Mum's Place

My mother lives in Brisbane. One Friday my brother Rodney and his wife Wendy came up to Hervey Bay for the weekend and brought Mum with them. She stayed with Carol for a week but Rodney and Wendy went back on Sunday morning.

Carol looked after Mum and she had a good rest. On Thursday, however, Carol twisted her back getting out of the car. She was in a lot of pain for three days and Mum looked after her. When she did it I told her she wasn't a teenager. She said she already knew that.

She was feeling better by Tuesday and drove Mum home. I went with them. Carol and I came back on Sunday because a pest man was coming on Monday.

He rang up on Monday morning and cancelled so we could have spent more time at Mum's place.

Nanna Howard

Nanna Howard was my mother's Mum. She used to live at Gosford



in a Housing Commission house. She liked it so much that she bought it.

It was a two bedroom fibro place but she bought a garage and turned it into a two bedroom cabin.

We used to go up there for holidays. We left on Friday evening and came back on Sunday afternoon.

When we were there we sometimes went fishing at The Entrance where the ocean comes into Tuggerah Lake. We used to fish off the old wooden bridge.

The bridge had small bays where you could fish away from the traffic but you had to be careful casting. There were always fish to catch there.

Sometimes we went fishing off the beach. We also went swimming at the beach.

In those days you didn't need a fishing licence. Nowadays you need a licence and there is a big four lane bridge there.

Nanna's Dolls

My Nanna used to make bride dolls. She used to buy dolls and make dresses for them. She also made golliwogs and tea cosies.

She had to hunt around for the materials. She got a lot of stuff from second hand shops and warehouses.

Some of the bride dolls were a metre tall. I can remember seeing the bed and floor in her spare room covered in dolls.



She used to sell them sometimes. Sometimes she got special orders. I used to deliver some of them.

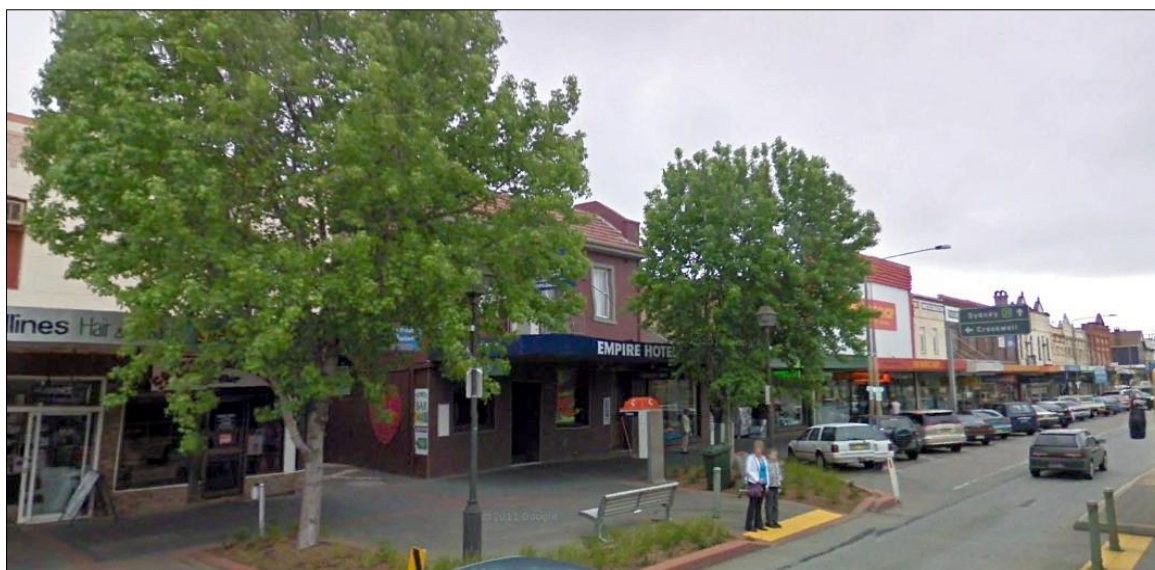


Nanna showed Mum how to make the dolls, golliwogs and tea cosies and she used to help her.

One day Carol put one of Mum's tea cosies in the craft competition at Ekka without telling her and it won first prize. When Mum saw it she thought someone had bought it and put it in the show in their name but when she looked closer it was her name on the prize.

She rang Carol up to tell her and Carol said she was the one who had done it. Mum was pleased but called Carol a bum anyway.

Goulburn and Windsor



When I was about 7 or 8 we moved to Goulburn.

My father and uncle went halves in a pub. My father was driving trucks and my mother and uncle ran the pub. It was called the Empire Hotel. We were there for about 2 – 3 years.

My grandmother was the cook and my mother was in the lounge bar and my uncle was in the front bar. The pub was open 6 days a week and closed at 6 pm.

When the lease ran out we moved to Windsor.

Carol and Neil lived on a dairy farm and delivered milk to customers. They brought a truck to pick us up. We put our stuff in storage and moved in with them.

My grandmother moved to Gosford.

One time my brother John came up for a christening and went for a walk around the dairy with Leanne and got covered in cow manure. Mum had to hose him down.

The Farm

The farm was called Nepean Stud. The cows were Friesians. The farm was owned by a lawyer from Sydney but he had a manager running it.

Carol and Neil leased the milk run. They sold milk, cheese, cream and icecream. They worked 7 days a week.

The milk run was 160 kms around and went up to Bilpin where there were apple orchards. They got lots of free apples.

The house was a very old one built by convicts out of stone. There was a cellar under the house with bars on the windows where the convicts were kept.

Cheryl and I went to a small one-room school at North Richmond and Rodney went to Richmond High School.

We used to go to the speedway in Richmond on Saturdays.

We lived on the farm for about a year and then moved to Hurstville where my father had bought a house.

Leaving Home

When Leanne got married I was the last one at home so I decided to leave as well.

I went looking around caravan parks in a taxi one evening but I did not have any luck so I asked the cab driver if he knew of any boarding houses in the area.

We went around different streets looking for one. He got on the radio to his base and asked them to look up boarding houses and we went around seeing if they had any vacancies.

I looked at about four places before I found a nice clean room. I told the owners I would move in the next day.

The room was a bit small but it was okay and the rent was \$103.70 per fortnight.

The house was very old and run down. We did our own cooking and laundry. The tenants were all men. Some of them were okay but some drank too much.

I had my name down with the Housing Commission and after six weeks they found me a unit in Liverpool in Oxenpark Road.

I had been buying furniture and storing it at a friend's place and I moved in that weekend.

Liverpool was a long way out and there were only a few shops where I lived. There was a speedway and a small airport nearby.

It was a two or three hour walk to visit my parents in Hurstville.

There was not much to do and I spent my time walking around the streets exploring and talking to people. I met a lot of back packers and other interesting people.

Riverwood

When I moved in I put my name down for a unit closer to Hurstville. I used to pester the Housing Commission all the time.

After about three years I got a unit in Riverwood. My brother Rodney came down from Queensland to help me move.

My unit was on the fourth floor in an eight storey high rise called 'Lincoln'. The other high rise was called 'Jefferson'. They were named after US presidents because they had a wartime base there.

I got a job cleaning both buildings. There was a building manager for the area. His office was in Lincoln. The cleaning and maintenance was done by a contractor.

He employed Eric Robertson to look after the two buildings and I worked for him. He looked after Jefferson and I looked after Lincoln. We had to put the rubbish out, clean the floors and windows and pick up rubbish from the lawns.

Sometimes people passed away in the units. When I found them I got the police and ambulance to come.

One body was stuck to the floor and the tiles had to go with the body to the morgue. Special cleaners had to come if someone died in a unit.

Once, an older Chinese woman committed suicide by jumping off the top floor.

She lived with her son but was very lonely and wanted to go home to China but he could not afford to send her back.

When the police came they thought he had pushed her off the balcony but he was in the bathroom when she jumped.

We had a lot of trouble with junkies. They came into the buildings looking for things to steal. Sometimes they broke into the units. They also left needles lying around.

The security guards were useless and I had to chase the junkies away. They were always hanging around watching what you were doing. If I was mowing the lawns and left the mower unguarded they would steal it. I lost four mowers that way.

The drug dealers also ran brothels. They had flash cars and carried guns. I never had any problems with them.

One day a man in the units across the road had a big fight with his wife and was threatening to sheet her.

The police came first and then the SWAT team turned up. They brought a negotiator to talk to the man.

When he gave up they discovered his gun was a broom stick. All the trouble with the police and SWAT team was a waste of time.

The Body in the Wheelie Bin

One day a man in a house behind the high rise killed the man next door.

He put him in the bin and drove a long way up Georges River. He put holes in the bin and bricks so it would sink.

He cut the house number off and it fell into the bin.

He then threw the bin into the river.

He then went home and set fire to his neighbour's house. When the fire brigade and police came he just watched.

The bin did not sink like he thought and someone looked inside and found the body.

The police found the house number in the bin and worked out where it came from.

They took the man to the police station and charged him with murder.

When they asked him why he did it he said he did not like neighbours.

History of Hervey Bay

The first white people to come to the Hervey Bay area were William McPhail and Michael Sheehan in 1854.

They settled at Toogoom and brought cattle in from Gayndah.

The next person was E.T. Aldridge at Booral. Next was George Martin, who was a timber cutter. He came by boat from Maryborough with his family in 1866.

George's son Boyle brought a team of bullocks to help with the work. They set up camp at Pialba and were the first white people to live in Hervey Bay.

They used the bullocks to drag logs to the beach where they made them up into rafts. They then floated them up to Urangan Point with the bullocks pulling from the beach and men steering the rafts with poles. From there they used the tide to get upriver to the saw mill at Dundathu.

After work they took the bullocks to Nikenbah where there was good grass and water and they could rest. The camp there was set up by a bullock driver called Reuben Denman. The track from the beach to the camp is now called Denman Camp Road.

The Road and Railway

When all the pine trees had been cut down and taken to the saw mill businessmen from Maryborough bought the cleared land along the beach.

The road between Maryborough and Hervey Bay was very rough and windy to travel on. In 1880 a new road was built with bridges over all the creeks.

The new road was better but it still took a long time for the farmers to get their pineapples and sugarcane to Maryborough so it was decided to build a railway line.

The line was opened on 18th December 1896. The line went from Maryborough to Pialba.

When coal mines started at Torbanlea it was loaded at Maryborough but when bigger ships came in they built a port at Urangan.

The railway line was extended to Urangan in 1913. A pier was built for the ships and was opened on 3rd March 1917.

In the 1920s the railway was the main way that people travelled between Hervey Bay and Maryborough. The train left Hervey Bay at 7 a.m. and came back at 11 a.m. in the morning and at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the afternoon.

Electricity

There was no electricity in Hervey Bay until the 1930s.

The first power station was built in Main Street by Mr Anderson.

Power lines were built along The Esplanade as far as Point Vernon and Urangan to supply houses and shops.

The generators had to be looked after 7 days a week in case they broke down.

When the electricity came an ice works was built in Hervey Bay.

Some people could not afford to connect to the electricity line. The government later bought the electricity business and more people were connected.

Pineapples

The first pineapples grown in the Hervey Bay area were planted by Mr Tidcombe at River Heads in 1900.

He sent the pineapples to the wharf in Maryborough where they were sent by ship to Melbourne for sale.

By 1905 there was a market for pineapples established in Brisbane so more farmers started to plant them.

Mr Tooth at Dundowran and Mr Montgomery and Mr Jacobsen at Takura were some of the farmers who planted pineapples in that year.

The farmers made crates from wood and packed the pineapples in bladey grass, which was sharp and full of ticks. It was hard work picking the pineapples and carrying them to the packing sheds.

They also had to pick the pineapples in summer when it was hot and humid. The men got lots of prickles. They kept picking after it got dark using kerosene lamps.

These days they use machinery and the work is a lot easier.

Bananas

One of the early crops in Hervey Bay was bananas. It takes about 12 – 18 months to grow a bunch of bananas.

In 1920 Norman Whitaker was growing bananas at Dundowran and had lots of trouble with wallabies eating the new shoots. He tried shooting them but there were too many.

He sent bananas to market in Brisbane by railway. He sent 800 – 900 dozen each week and was paid 4½ pence (about 9 cents) a dozen. This added up to £40 (\$81) which with costs left little profit.

A lot of farmers gave up and went into cattle and sugarcane instead.

Fishermen

Anders Larsen was a fisherman. He came from Denmark in the late 1800s. He married and settled down in Hervey Bay. He had eleven children. Three of his sons joined the business.

The youngest son, Bill, who was born in 1913 got married in 1936 and lived in a house in Pulgul Street near the petrol station. His wife worked in the kiosk near the Urangan Pier and their children went to the one-room school at Urangan.

The fishermen used a big boat to tow the dories back when they had netted a load of fish. They sold their catch on the beach or around town.

Some of the fishermen built their own boats. Bill built several boats. His last one was called *Dawn* and was 30 feet long. Bill retired when he was 62.

In 1964 a jetty was built for the fishing boats. In 1969 work was begun on the rock wall and boat harbour. When it was finished a fish market was set up.

In 1987 the fishermen built their own wharves in the boat harbour and Urangan Fisheries Limited was started.

The Railway Picnic

In 1937 the railway workers at Maryborough organised a family picnic day for one Sunday in October at Torquay.

They raised the money from business people and shops. They also sold raffle tickets, lunch boxes and fruit.

A special train ran that day. Adults paid but children were free.

On the day before the picnic volunteers put up stands and made bags of goodies for the children. The children were given green or red flags to wave from the train windows.

The trains came from Maryborough, Gympie, Gayndah, Monto, Childers and Bundaberg. People also came by car, truck, bus and motorbike. All the trains were parked at the pier at Urangan.

There was a band with bagpipes and kilts. All the children were given a ticket for a bag of lollies, peanuts and fruit. The adults were given hot water to make tea or coffee. The children were given cordial to drink.

There were races and competitions, with cash prizes, for everyone.

The picnics came to an end in the 1960s when the railway closed down.

Ned Kelly

Ned was born in June 1855 at Beveridge north of Melbourne. He left school when he was 11 years old after his father died. He had to work to support his family.

He went to jail when he was 16 for 3 years for horse stealing. In 1878 his mother was arrested and sent to jail for wounding a police officer. Ned and his brother escaped and went into hiding.

In a later gun fight Ned and his gang killed three policemen. A bounty of £2000 was put on their heads.

Later on the gang robbed several banks. Over 200 police were hunting for the gang.

In 1880 there was a shootout at Glenrowan. All the gang were killed except for Ned.

He was hanged in the old Melbourne jail on 11 November, 1880.

Michael Howe

Michael Howe was born in 1787 in England. He was a soldier in the navy but later became a highway robber.

He was caught in 1811 and sent to jail in Tasmania for 7 years but escaped and joined a gang of bushrangers in 1812.

They robbed a lot of farmers and burnt their crops. In 1815 the farmers tried to catch them but the gang ambushed them and killed two of them and wounded three of them.

A big reward was offered for their capture dead or alive. Two months later the police killed the gang leader and Howe took his place. He ran the gang like the navy and was very strict.

In 1817 he tried to make arrangements for the capture of the other gang members in exchange for a pardon but the deal fell through.

The reward was increased to over £500 and the gang members started to do each other in to get the money. Some of them were killed and others went to jail and Howe was the only one left. He could not trust anyone.

He got food and ammunition from a kangaroo hunter. The hunter set him up and he was killed on 21 October 1818. The police cut off his head and buried his body where he died.

Frank Gardiner

Frank Gardiner was born in 1829 in Scotland. When he came to Australia he lived in Goulburn.

When he was about 20 years old he turned to crime, rustling horses and cattle and holding up travellers coming for the goldfields at Bathurst after the gold discoveries in 1851.

He almost got arrested in 1861 but escaped.

After that he and his gang robbed three travellers of £1000 worth of gold.

On June 15 in 1862 they held up an armed stagecoach carrying £14000 worth of gold to Sydney by blocking the road with bullock wagons and chasing the four policemen and driver away with heavy gunfire.

They had to leave some bags of gold behind when they escaped because it was too heavy to carry. They did not think about burying it so they could come back later to get it.

A party of 11 police and 2 black trackers and volunteers started chasing after them at 2 a.m. the next morning but couldn't catch them.

The police captured 2 of the gang 3 weeks later but they were rescued by the other gang members.

After that the police put a £1000 reward on the gang.

A local butcher dobbed them in and 3 of them were convicted but Frank Gardiner took off for Queensland with his girlfriend, Kate Brown and set up a hotel in June 1863.

Nine months later he was recognised and arrested. On 3 March 1864 he was sentenced to 30 years in jail.

While he was in prison Kate committed suicide.

He was released early on 20 July 1874 and deported to America where he ran a saloon in San Francisco.

He died a natural death in the early 1900s.

Amelia Earhart

Amelia was born in Kansas, America, in 1897. She was famous for flying aeroplanes and set many records.

In 1932 she was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1935 she flew across the Pacific Ocean.

She wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world.

She set out in June 1937. She had a navigator called Fred Noonan with her.

They flew to South America, across Africa and Asia to Darwin in Australia and then New Guinea.

Their next stop was to be an island in the Pacific Ocean on July 2 but they never arrived.

The aeroplane and Amelia and Fred have never been found. There are lots of ideas about what happened but they probably got lost in bad weather and ran out of petrol and crashed into the sea.

Missing Ships

Between 1866 and 1945 many ships disappeared between Cuba and Bermuda. This is the area that later became known as the Bermuda Triangle.

In 1866 the Swedish ship, *Lotta* disappeared in the triangle. Two years later the Spanish ship, *Viego* vanished in the same area.

In 1880 the British training ship, *Atalanta*, was lost with 290 cadets on board. In 1884 the Italian ship, *Miramón* disappeared.

In 1909 the famous sailor, Joshua Slocum disappeared somewhere near the Bermuda Triangle.

In 1918 the U.S. navy ship, *Cyclops* disappeared with 293 men on board. A huge search began but nothing was found. The navy thought that it was sunk by a German submarine.

Many people believe that there is a mysterious power in the triangle. Other people say it is just an area where sudden bad storms appear.

Cyclops had two sister ships called *Proteus* and *Nereus* which were also lost over 23 years later in 1941 during WW2.

They were carrying aluminium ore from the West Indies to build planes for the war. They both disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle within a month of each other. They were probably sunk by German submarines.

In 1944 the *Rubicon* broke its moorings during a storm in Havana. When it was found there was only a dog on board. The crew and the lifeboats were missing and were never found.

In 1948 a famous American jockey and his two friends disappeared while fishing in a dinghy from their yacht. After a long search only the dinghy was found.

In 1951 the *Southern Isles* sunk off North Carolina. It broke in half and went down quickly. Six crew members were rescued.

In 1954 its sister ship, *Southern Districts* sank in the same area during a storm. Only a life ring was ever found. At the enquiry a sailor who had left the ship before it sailed said it was a rust bucket.

Other ships have been lost in the triangle but nowadays it does not happen very often.

The Mystery of Flight 19

The Bermuda Triangle is between Florida, the Bahamas and Cuba. In the last 100 years over 20 aeroplanes and 50 ships have been lost there and never found. About 1000 people disappeared with the ships and planes.

On 5 December 1945 five bombers left a naval air station in Florida on a training flight. There were 13 students and 1 instructor.

They had trouble with their compasses and didn't know where they were.

The weather got worse and they could not see and got lost. They were running out of fuel and night was coming. The last radio call was at 7.04 p.m.

A search began that night. During the search another plane with 13 men on board also went missing.

None of the 6 planes or 27 men has been found.

What seems to have happened is that the instructor thought they were over Florida when they were actually over the Bahamas and he took them away from where they needed to go back to base. The search plane probably blew up because of a fuel leak.

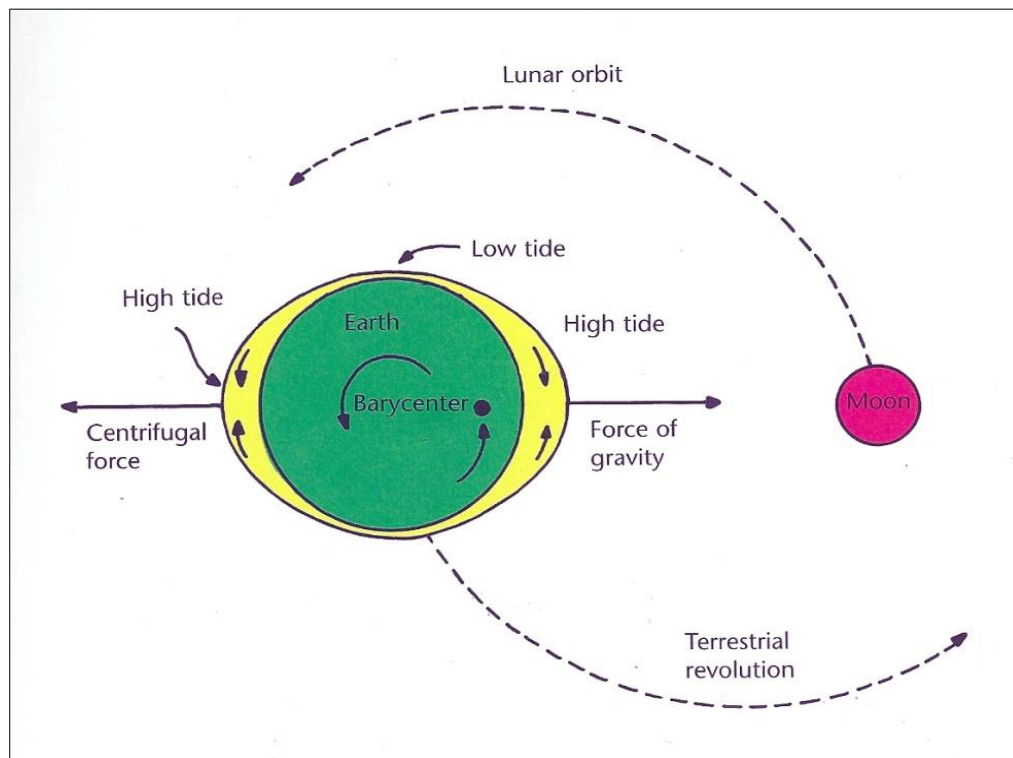
Tides

When I go to the beach sometimes the tide is in and sometimes it is out. When the tide goes out the boats are left sitting on the sand and people have to wait for the tide to come back before they can take their boats out. I wonder where the water goes.

Every day the sea level goes up and down. When the sea is up it is called high tide and when it is down it is called low tide.

This happens all around the world. Tides go up and down at different times in different places around the world. Waves breaking on the beach are caused by wind not the tide.

Tides are mainly caused by the pull of the moon's gravity, which acts like a magnet on the sea. When there is a full moon the pull is strongest and the tides are highest. When there is no moon the tides are lowest.



As the earth moves around the sun the water in the sea is thrown outwards like clothes in a spin dryer. At the same time the earth is turning on its axis.

When Australia is on the outside away from the sun it has a high tide but as it moves round the tide gets lower. When it gets round to where there is a bulge in the sea caused by the moon's gravity there is another high tide.

The sun's gravity also pulls on the sea but it is much weaker because it is further away.

However, when the sun and moon line up their gravity combines and the tides are very high, this is called a spring tide.

When the sun and moon are at right angles the tides are very low, this is called a neap tide.

Islands

The surface of the earth is made up of six major plates as well as a large number of smaller fragments. Each is moving in a different direction.

The smaller isolated fragments are called continental islands. Australia is the largest continental island; others include Greenland, Madagascar, New Guinea and New Zealand.

Other islands are formed when the sea rises after ice ages and isolate high land like mountains.

Oceanic islands are formed by volcanoes. Coral reefs form around these islands.

When the island eventually sinks the reef becomes an atoll.

Halley's Comet



Nobody knows how many times the comet has been around. The Chinese saw it in 239 BC, over 2,250 years ago.

It goes past the earth about once every 75 years. Its orbit changes and it is hard to tell exactly when it will come back. It is made of ice and snow and its tail is gas and dust.

The comet was named after Edmond Halley who saw it in 1682 and wrote a book about it.

I saw it in February 1986. My sister, Cheryl and I went to a nearby hill to watch it. It was only small and hard to see. Afterwards we watched it on TV and it was better and we could see the tail.

We won't be around when it comes back.

Letter to the Prime Minister

Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

26 March 2013

Re: Disadvantages and lack of dignity for adults with learning disabilities.

Dear Prime Minister,

My name is Tony Heffernan and I am in my 60s.

I feel like I don't fit into society due to my learning disability.

I am currently enrolled in a literacy program but limited assistance is available. Without ongoing literacy classes I feel I do not fit in or am accepted. I feel that a little pride and dignity in my life is not too much to ask.

There are a lot more people in my position and all we ask for is equal rights and more opportunities.

What would you do if you were in my shoes?

1. Learn and fit in with dignity?
2. Would you walk away and give up?
3. Being accepted would be most ideal

I will look forward to your response in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Tony