



**Gwen Jarvis**

Gwen Jarvis was the second daughter of Charles and Doris McPhee and was born at home in Close Avenue, Dandenong in 1922. She attended Dandenong West Primary School, followed by Dandenong High School, where she was a prefect in her final year. Church was an important part of her family's life and it was here that Gwen met her husband, Maurie. They were married in the Methodist Church in 1944, when Maurie was home on wartime leave from the Torres Strait Islands. Since then, Gwen and Maurie have supported each other in the numerous ways they have contributed to the welfare of this community, including throughout Maurie's long service in local politics.

As a committee member, Gwen worked to provide or improve many community facilities such as the Truby King Infant Welfare Centre, Dandenong West Kindergarten and Primary School and the Girl Guides Association. For forty years she was a volunteer with Dandenong's Festival of Music and Art for Youth. She also helped establish the YWCA in Dandenong and her work was recognised when their facility in Hammond Road was named in her honour.

In all her voluntary capacities, Gwen has been motivated by a genuine love and compassion for all people. She is happiest in the role of making others feel comfortable and welcome. This was a feature of the way she fulfilled the role of Lady Mayoress of Dandenong on three separate occasions and continues in her work as an Elder in Dandenong Trinity Uniting Church. In her private life, this generosity of spirit has led Gwen to open her home to others in need.

There are many other organisations that have benefited from Gwen's input, but it is perhaps her association with 'Wallara' that has been of greatest significance to Gwen. She has gained enormous satisfaction from contributing to the growth in the facilities that 'Wallara' provides for those with intellectual handicaps.