



SUNDALE
60
 YEARS
 OF CARE

This year Sundale celebrates its 60th birthday. To commemorate six decades of caring for the community, we will be sharing the stories of 12 remarkable individuals and revealing their amazing contribution to Sundale.

Graham Chapman

President (1986 – 2006), Vice President (1983 – 1986), Secretary (1977 – 1983), Board member (1977 – 2010).

It's impossible to tell the story of Sundale without mentioning the remarkable contribution of Graham Chapman, aka 'Mr Sundale', one of Sundale's most important figures and the organisation's longest serving Board President.

Born and raised on a cattle farm at Eumundi, Graham relocated to Nambour with his mother in 1953 following a three-month National Service stint and soon found work as a carpenter with local builder Geoff Rigby.

Graham joined the Sundale Committee in 1977 as an Apexian nominee and would play a crucial role in the growth of Sundale in Nambour, including the second and third stages of James Grimes Care Centre, the construction of Sunvilla Court, Bowder Lodge and the development of Rotary Garden Village.

Under Graham's leadership, Sundale also expanded beyond the 4560 postcode, including the construction of the Palmwoods Garden Village and Coolum Waters' Retirement Communities and Care Centres and the purchase of Aloaka Care Centre at Kilcoy.

Graham's wife of 62 years, Joan said Graham was passionate about helping others and giving back to the local community, but knew nothing about being a secretary when appointed to the role on the Sundale Board.

"As a builder, Graham had a great eye for detail, but knew nothing about taking minutes or the Board's processes and lingo," Joan laughed.

Joan believes Graham's greatest Sundale achievement was the construction of Palmwoods Garden Village, which opened in 1993.

"Palmwoods was his great love," Joan said.

"Graham's building background allowed him to oversee every aspect of the build from the purchase of land to construction.

"Graham would regularly travel to Brisbane for a working breakfast with the architects, and then come back to the Sunshine Coast to go to work.

"Sundale kept Graham very busy. He would often say 'I'm just popping down to Sundale', which was code for I won't be back for at least two hours.

"To this day our kids say, 'I just have to pop into Sundale' if they are running late."

An aged care visionary, Graham's* plan for Palmwoods Garden Village, and aged care more broadly in the 1990s is remarkably similar to the recommendations handed down recently by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

"Gone are the days of building large facilities where residents are living in a family of 30 to 60 people... this new concept will house groups of 12 to 14 with a lounge, dining room and small kitchen to service that number of people. Residents will be able to prepare and eat breakfast at a time to suit themselves and participate in the usual house-keeping activities as if they were in the family home. Staff will still provide services for those who prefer to have all meals prepared. Within the complex, we will still have a large commercial kitchen, main dining room and large activities room for special occasions and gatherings. Each of these smaller satellite families is connected to the other and to the central community area by enclosed walkways as well as shaded external paths for the enjoyment of our sunny days."

Graham also played a key role in the construction of the bowling green at Rotary Garden Village, the Rehabilitation Centre and hydrotherapy pool at James Grimes Care Centre, the purchase of Cooroy Hospital and the construction of Transition House.

Graham's vision, particularly the decision to build Palmwoods Garden Village inspired countless others to support Sundale. Simply put, without Graham, there would be no Sundale.

Graham passed away in 2021. He is survived by his wife Joan, their children, Russell, Jill, Brett, Bruce and their families.

*Sundale Creating Communities 1963 – 2013 (Elaine and Inga Green)