



Media Release

4 June 2021

Winnie Fatovich receives 2021 WA Day Award after 83 years living and volunteering in Cockburn

A woman who has lived in Cockburn for 83 years and hails from one of our original market gardening families has received the 2021 City of Cockburn WA Day Award at the City's 49th Annual Pioneers Luncheon.

Winnie Fatovich (nee Prizmic) is now in her mid 90's and arrived from Croatia in 1938 with her family to live on Rockingham Road, Munster where they established a market garden.

She stayed there until 1950 when she moved to the Coogee house she still lives in today, where she and husband Marijan (dec) continued to market garden until the 70s.

Winnie's decades of selfless service to Cockburn's Croatian community began as a primary school student. Her early grasp of the English language enabled her to help others overcome language barriers, first by translating newspaper articles with developments from the European front during WWII.

The grandmother of 11 and great grandmother of three was one of about 200 to attend the much anticipated luncheon at Spearwood Dalmatinac Sport & Community Club on Friday, 4 June.

A second event will be held on 11 June to enable the COVID safe attendance of all Cockburn's invited pioneers, after last year's event was cancelled due to the pandemic, the first time since the inaugural luncheon in 1971.

The luncheon honours residents who have lived in the City for more than 60 years and significantly contributed to its growth and development, with one special person receiving the annual WA Day Award for outstanding service to the community.

On presenting the award, Mayor Logan Howlett said Winnie's early and sustained role in the social and cultural development of Cockburn was typical of local tight knit market gardening families.



Media Release

“These families worked hard to establish a viable economy and future for their children and subsequent generations, many of whom proudly still call Cockburn home today,” Mayor Howlett said.

Over the years, Winnie’s volunteer interpreting service helped family, friends, neighbours and even strangers understand documents, telephone calls, parent teacher interviews and advice at medical appointments.

In 1968 she was one of the first women of Croatian heritage to get a driver’s licence and she then began helping others with their transport needs.

Only able to complete primary school, the avid reader began Tafe studies in 1975 using the qualification to step up from her job as a cleaner at Fremantle Hospital to Kitchen Supervisor, with unofficial translating duties, until her retirement in 1988.

Winnie was fulltime carer to her husband from early in their marriage until he passed away in 1991 after he was seriously injured in a car accident. She raised four children and managed the market gardening business, later caring for her elderly parents and other members of the community, all while continuing her translation service.

When she retired from the hospital she joined its ladies auxiliary volunteering 2-3 days a week for 28 years, while continuing to drive and interpret for her community, until ‘retiring’ at the age of 92.

She then joined Cockburn Senior Citizens Centre where she has many firm friendships and dedicates time to knitting and crocheting countless poppies, rugs and blankets for charity.

Throughout her life, Winnie has knitted 50 knee rugs for Wheelchairs For Kids, 30 jackets and blankets for premature babies in Africa and the Philippines and 20 beanies for the Catholic Seaman’s Mission.

She also instilled the importance of education in her four children who have all excelled in the fields of medicine and education.

For more information about the City’s historic ties, visit the Cockburn History [website](#).



cockburn.wa.gov.au

Media Release

ENDS

For more information contact:
Media and Communications Officer
City of Cockburn
T: 08 9411 3551
E: media@cockburn.wa.gov.au