

The Story from where Bruce was born and the very short history to where he is today;

Bruce was born in Cheltenham, Adelaide, Australia on 30.06.39 to Marjorie and Jack Mitchell along with a twin brother Peter.

The family moved to Whyalla in South Australia while the 2nd World War was on and in 1946 moved back to reside at 3 Harrison road Cheltenham (photo attached,(1). The residence was a tent for some time until the home was built and it was during this period the work ethics kicked in as the twins, Bruce and Peter were allocated to make all the blocks (made in moulds with sand, stone, cement and ash) needed for the home, it was hard slog with a fiery type Father watching over. The work was difficult and at the ripe of age of about 9 years until 10, it was very hard going. The home took some years to build but was completed & occupied in about 1949.

At the age of 11, Bruce was introduced to the Theatre Royal, Civic and Mayfair Theatres in Hindley Street Adelaide, where he became a tray boy selling sweets and ice creams etc. This form of employment was carried through till he was almost 17. To get to work Bruce rode his bicycle most days at about 6.00PM after being at School and having ridden from school, had dinner then all the way to the theatre, some 12kms each way, 6 days a week. Those days there was no TV, so the Theatres were large and seated thousands of people particularly on Saturday pantomimes that were mainly for the kids. Bruce was able to earn the basic wage, averaging 4 pounds 50 shillings/week in those days that enabled him to pay his board, as the father gambled all his own earnings on the Cheltenham race track which was just across the road.

Bruce went to primary school at Pennington Primary school which was just some half Kilometre from home and did his secondary schooling for 3 years at a true Technical school, "Lefevre Boys Technical School "(photo2) down near Port Adelaide which was some 10km away from home and it was the push bike job every day.

With a very short stint working on the wharves, (2weeks), Pilkington Brothers on Port Road, glazing car windows (3months) and the carpet dept of Miller Andersons in Adelaide about 3months, all until his apprenticeship came available with Gerard Goodman Electrical Wholesalers, part of the Gerard family and the "Clipsal Brand".

Bruce started with Gerard and Goodman at the age of 16 and two months later at 17 started his Electrical mechanical apprenticeship (4 years). During this period he took up wrestling as a sport, and ended up representing South Australia for several years. He won an International bout against New Zealand. He also represented South Australia in the National competitions and Won a silver medal for the heavy weight Greco Roman style wrestling division in 1959. It was the hard work and great training that held him in good stead, and at 21 started his own Electrical contracting business. Bruce Mitchell Electrical Services at Dernancourt South Australia just 8 km North East of Adelaide.

During the early stages of his career as a contractor he elected to open a shop in a place called Boolaroo Centre in the Mid-north of South Australia (3). It was not very long, say about 3 years that he realised the profit in repetition work in house wiring in Adelaide was more rewarding and growing much faster than the mid-north work, so at around the age of 24 he gave away the bush work almost entirely to concentrate on the Adelaide market. During this period Bruce was able to capture the electrical wiring work for repetition homes, street after street, some 20-30 homes a week.

The repetition work was so successful that he started to be on the move, firstly to establish and take on Thomas & Rowe P/L, electrical wholesalers then Brian Lane Airconditioning P/L, (the largest domestic Airconditioning Company in Australia at the time) and he was able to continue doing his electrical contracting business. In his late 20's Bruce amalgamated them all under one site known as 19-23 Nelson Street Stepney, and employing over 100 Staff. It was a fantastic site, 1.25 acres right near the city with 2 street frontages! (4).

In his private life he built a magnificent home in Dernancourt (5) then after some years, and at 31 decided to take on the high end of Adelaide, so he bought No.1 Springfield Ave, Springfield, just 4 km from Adelaide, in the foothills. The home was built by Mr. McDonough in the 30s and is noted in the Adelaide Reference Library. The family lived there until he decided to sell up and move to Queensland at the age of 38.

On Arriving in Brisbane he started, "The Airconditioning Centre in St Pauls Terrace, Springhill and from there moved to Woolloongabba, (6) some two years later.

While working the Residential market he employed others to assist in developing a commercial division and so it could be seen as a growing company he ran the commercial section under the name of Airtech Mechanical Services doing mostly shopping centres and other major projects. Bruce decided to move on so he sold both airconditioning Companies in the late 80's.

In doing this, it allowed him to concentrate on his restaurant ambitions which took in being involved with the Breakfast Creek Wharf Seaford Restaurant and take away with Mr. Larry Mosses and Mr. James Penny, along with that Bruce developed a very successful chain of Vegetarian Restaurants, "Squirrels", Melbourne St. South Brisbane head office, High St. Labrador, Gold Coast, South Dowling St. Moore Park Sydney, and at Crown St. Wollongong.

During this period Bruce had completed building the restaurants while his then wife Diana was running them and the strain was showing, so Bruce backed partly out of the restaurants and was looking after the cash flow and did the financial reports as well as some input to the overall management. He decided to stay with building as he was concurrently doing some building work anyway. In mid 1991, he needed a change so he basically handed over the lot including the buildings and home to his wife and left, packed his bags and headed for Iraq in July 1991 just some 4 months after the war, he was looking for adventure and found some. He spent some 9 Months in and out of Iraq That is just another storey. He settled back as a single man after 24years of marriage basically stone broke, what a disaster after all the success he had over that past 30+years.

The job was ahead of him to rebuild and at 50+ years old the task seemed just that bit harder. He took on Rammed Earth Construction and traded under the name of Rammed Earth National along with Mitchell Builders doing other work such as homes, commercial and insurance work, and built a 6 storey building in Toowong. The upward road was not easy as most of the Rammed earth work was far and wide as the first job was at Coober Pedy doing the Rammed earth section of the Tafe College, the National Wine Centre in Adelaide, and the total building work including the rammed earth work at the Retirement village at Mornington Island. He also did the Rammed earth work at the Eco-Centre Griffiths University Queensland, the Dinosaur feet building at Winton and lots more including dozens of homes.

He got married again at the age of 53 to Sierra-Sue who was an old acquaintance, after spending some time as a bachelor in trying to find himself to where he wanted to be at retirement.

With all this knowledge of most trades and particularly in electrical and mechanical along with the Rammed earth work and restaurants he was ready for any task. The opportunity presented itself when he purchased the 42,000 sqm property at Stapylton in May 2003. Bruce just let it sit there for some 2 years and in June 2005 started the task of building the first Eco Self-Sustainable Industrial Estate in Queensland.

He firstly started some earth works and then benched out the site for shed 3, it was amazing that on that pad alone he struck Quartz and that material was used to build all the creeks, some 300 tonnes in all. The creeks were built with Bruce laying every stone with two boys from the family that rented the cottage on the site that is now known as Building 8. The two boys assisted and worked alongside Bruce for 15 months, working every Saturday and Sunday. They made the concrete used to back up the stone work and helped with rolling and moving the stones next to the work area.

It was hard work summer and winter, rain or shine the stone laying was taken on like there was no tomorrow, and after the creeks were finished then onto the Storm water and all the Electrical and

telephone conduits to be laid in the ground and then the serious work of getting on with the construction of the whole site.

While building the site he was frantically doing other outside work so as to have the cash flow to build his dream of owning the first ever 5-Star UDIA approved site. This was accomplished in 2009. The estate has been recognised by the following organisations,

- (1) The Coomera Chamber of Commerce, for the Environment Award 2006.
- (2) The Gold Coast Bulletin in various news articles.
- (3) The local Sun News papers.
- (4) The Beenleigh Alive magazine.
- (5) Gecko Environment Council Awards 2007 (6) The Master Builders Queensland Awards:
 - A. In health facilities up to \$2m. 2005
 - B. Residential buildings, (high rise over 3 storeys) up to \$2m, 2005
 - C. Housing and construction, innovation in environmental management 2007
 - D. MacLeay Island Retail facilities up \$2m, 2007
 - E. State winner, innovation environmental management, 2007.
- (7) The AIB, (Australian Institute of Building Excellence) Awards Qld and Australian National awards 2009 and 2010.
- (8) The EPA Queensland Sustainable Industry awards category, Industrial Eco Efficiency Award 2009.
- (9) The South Australian Advertiser 2010
- (10) Bond University in excellent references for the work in Environmental Education.
- (11) Griffith University for work in Environmental Education.
- (12) UDIA/Boral Queensland State excellence environmentally sustainable development/build form awards for 2010 and the following year won the UDIA National "Environmental Excellence Award".
- (13) The Queensland Premiers Climate Smart Built Environment Award 2010.
- (14) The big win of all against, 192 Participants in 9 categories and won the; QUEENSLAND PREMIERS INAGURAL CLIMATESMART SUSTAINABILITY AWARD 2010.

Besides all this, Bruce became the finalist in the Queensland Senior Australian of the year awards for his Environmental and educational work he does for the Environment.

The estate is now complete. He has had help from various Companies and individuals that have been alongside and assisted, they are:

- (1) Peter Phillips who has worked alongside Bruce in all facets of the construction.
- (2) Robert Wichgers, who took on the Solar Company, "Solargreen" when it needed nursing back to health and that is what Robert has done.
- (3) Sierra-Sue his wife who has allowed Bruce the elbow room to work around the clock for some five and half years, 7 days a week.
- (4) Richard Norris the area Business manager for St. George Bank who gave the flexibility to get on with the job even with short term issues that were plaguing the site.
- (5) To MECU LIMITED who stepped in to finance the completion of the project and it's without question without their support the project would have slowed until the tenants were all signed up. Bruce reapplied to stay with St. George bank for his long term finance.
- (6) Among the various trades, there were some really good contractors to name a few, they were: Mulherin's cranes service, Grattan Mulherin. Geoff Mitchell and associates Town planners and certifiers. George Frame Engineers. Bernie Walton Electrical, who

has been an absolute gem with his overall knowledge electrically, and with the commonsense approach to all out of the ordinary problems that he solved with ease. Earth-prep, Ricky was there all the time moving the soil from here to there and did 90% of all the major site works. Earthfleet another operator is without question up there as a very reliable contractor. Paul McKenzie Demolitions operates as demolition solutions, he dismantled all the sheds that was sourced from within Queensland, fantastic Demolition Contractor. Reg Dunn, Coomera Waters plumbing took on the responsibility of fixing up the stage 1 disaster caused by dishonest plumbers and did stage 2. Joe Phoenix did all the boulder walls, what a fantastic job, he deserves a medal. It is his work that has helped to make this site. Michael Heffernan the Town planner who assisted in getting the site through Council Town Planning. The Simpson Boys and their concrete work, was always willing to produce a good job. Robert, Ashmore form work was always there ready and willing to get the job complete, great organiser. Gavin the Gyprocker who always wants to produce a fantastic job. Chris, Gold Coast pumps and filters, very supportive to produce a good product. Ray, Wattle Painting Industries he took on painting the shed frames a task he did with vigour, great effort. And finally at the near end of the project a good roofer was found, Mark, Gold Coast roofing. There were a lot of suppliers and some other contractors that need mentioning but that will come later in a form of a small book to be used as a reference to Sustainability. So I say a BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS SITE.

Bruce's theme and aim is to spread the message "CLEANING UP YOUR OWN BACK YARD".