



## John Elcoate remembered

The West End community is currently remembering John Elcoate who passed away on June 15. A heavy smoker, John lived with Emphysema and Lung Cancer in the final years of his life. Lotus Place, home of Micah Projects Forgotten Australians Support Service, held a local remembrance on June 24 after a private family funeral on The Darling Downs.

Many in the West End community will remember John from his time as a vendor of *The Big Issue* Magazine. John was a permanent fixture selling the magazine in peak hours on the Victoria Bridge. Through his friendly nature he built up a steady customer base that became part of his extended community in West End. Manager of The Big Issue, Brian Stephenson, said, "John was heartened by the support and generosity of his customers. I'll always remember him carrying his chair over his shoulder on the way to his patch. He was always a gentleman and never caused others any grief."

Fellow vendor Jackie said John used to help some of the younger street kids, giving them somewhere to stay for the night or looking after their bags for them. "He loved the bush, loved his hat", she remembers.

John was part of the Lotus Place community because he was put into institutional care as a child, one of many who lost their childhood and experienced suffering because of that loss. The staff and members of Lotus place remember John as kind, peaceful and non-judgemental. His friend Marlene said, "He had a smile that would lighten people around him and bring a smile to their faces. He would never be negative. He didn't waste his life complaining and always lit up when he saw me. When my pain was getting me down we used to go for a walk and he'd always make me laugh. It was wonderful to share time with him and he really made a difference."

John loved West End. He lived on Thomas Street, worked on the bridge and spent time in the TAB in between. He followed the horse business closely and had family members involved. He loved the vibrancy of Boundary Street including the buskers, performances and festivals.

John volunteered every Friday morning without fail at the West End Community House art group. He helped set up, clean, cook and was a very supportive presence to the people experiencing disadvantage who access the group. Joe Hurley, team leader at West End Community House sums up John's contribution to the West End community saying, "The overwhelming thing with John was that he had a lot of compassion for people. He'd acknowledge and recognize when someone was unwell and be supportive and loving of others. He valued people and was happy to support those who were struggling. He had hard times but could see beyond himself and help those less fortunate than him. He'll be greatly missed."