

MY PLACE

Ros Stevens has long been a keen participant in the Malmesbury community. The 77-year-old grandmother is particularly passionate about the area's history. She speaks with Serena Seyfort.

Tell us about your involvement in Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges.

I've always cared about people and the local issues. I'm president of Malmesbury Historical Society, I'm chairperson of Kyneton Aged Care, and I'm involved in the Malmesbury Friends of the Gardens and Malmesbury Advance Association. I had two sons and when they went to school, we were heavily involved with the schools. And I worked for many years as the CEO of Sunbury Community Health Centre.

How did you come to be involved with the Malmesbury Historical Society?

I love Malmesbury – it's got such a rich history. I've always been interested in saving some of the old buildings and keeping alive some of the historical things. I think it's a gorgeous town. It changes constantly, but it's retained its village atmosphere. It's really important to hang on to the things from the past.

What do you like about the area?

The people are friendly. It's just a really lovely place to live. Malmesbury Botanic Gardens are fantastic. I walk nearly every morning and it always finishes up with a walk around the lake in the gardens and a coffee at the bakery.

If you could change anything about the area, what would it be?

The one thing I'd love to happen in Malmesbury is to do with our town hall. It was a gorgeous historical building, and then, in about the '50s,

we didn't have a picture theatre so they took the front of the town hall and put a brick facade on it. One day I want to find enough money to restore the town hall to what it used to be. In the photos from before it's a beautiful old building and I remember it from when I was a kid.

Development is a hot topic in the Macedon Ranges – what do you think about the changes in Malmesbury?

Malmesbury's changed a great deal, but it still stays the same. We've got lots more people and lots more houses than we had. But then if we go back 100 years, we had 20 pubs, and we've only got one now. So things change. Malmesbury was a bustling town in the 1800s and then it gradually declined and now it's building up again.

But it's the people that make a town. We don't want a lot of development. We want to retain our village life and the way it was laid out by the people 100 years ago.

Do you feel strongly about any other local issues?

I live with a female partner of 18 years. In the same-sex marriage survey, of course, I am voting "yes". But I don't ever want to force my opinion on anyone else, nor do I wish to argue with people about the issue. I just think that equality in Australia is really important ... it's equality right across the board, whether it's race, sexuality or gender. Everybody, whether you're wealthy, whether you're poor, we're all equal. And we've all got to learn to live together and enjoy each other's company.



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