

## Honouring the Past – Securing the Future

**Bob and Mave Griffiths made a donation to The Mackay Foundation to build a secure future for the community, in honour of the contribution of**

### **RICHARD WILLIAM GRIFFITHS**

**Richard William (Bill) Griffiths** was born in Springsure in 1911, the first son of Thomas and Annie Griffiths. He left school at 13 and was apprenticed to his two uncles, both carpenters. While working as an apprentice he was involved in his father's carrying business and during the Great Depression and due to a lack of building work, Bill had a stint at 'possuming'. He supplemented his income by selling the possum skins.

Bill was a keen sportsman playing football for Springsure in a five-team competition. He was also a member of various highland cricket and tennis teams.

Bill moved to Mackay in 1933 and built a large Queenslander farm house at Mt Jukes which still stands proudly today. On completion he stayed in the Mirani district where he cut cane on Charles Rowe's farm. Following a brief period in partnership with Bill McKinley in a Sarina cane farm, Bill returned to his trade as a carpenter working on the Mackay Outer Harbour project.

At the outbreak of World War II, Bill enlisted in the RAAF and was posted to Lae at the commencement of the Pacific campaign. He served as a carpenter rigger until the end of the war. During leave in 1941, he married Grace Rowe in Brisbane and returned to active service in Lae.

Upon discharge and with soldier settlement assistance, Bill purchased a cane farm at Homebush. He farmed there until the malaria he contracted during his war service worsened and forced him to sell.

His love of the sea gave him a new direction. He acquired a fully-rigged boat, Sunray, and commenced professional fishing. He employed a certified mariner, Smacker Paskins. He then purchased a larger boat, a 72-foot motor yacht called Stradbroke. He used the boat for fishing charters and as a back up vessel for Lindeman Island for his good friend Tom Evetts, who operated Shangrila and later Elizabeth E.

Illness forced Bill to retire as a TPI ex-serviceman. He died as a result of his war-related illness at the age of 55, leaving behind his wife Grace and children Jennifer and Ian.

The finest tribute paid to Bill is that he left the world a better place. Nothing was too difficult for Bill. His will to work and his fair and level judgment in all situations leaves many with wonderful memories. He served his nation in both times of war and peace.

