

Vale
Kelvin Matthews

Dr Kelvin Matthews PhD died on Friday, 17 January 2025, after months of suffering the terrible effects of mesothelioma, the very worst and most painful disease caused by the inhalation of asbestos. During his childhood Kelvin lived in the town of Wittenoom, Western Australia, the site of the infamous blue asbestos mine. So many of the workers of Wittenoom lost their lives to this incurable disease that the asbestos mining ceased and the WA government was forced to close the town of Wittenoom. Endless campaigning by unions, the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia and the many individual legal cases forced the government's hand in this regard. Tragically now it is the time for the children of the Wittenoom workers, the innocents, to suffer that same terrible and painful and inevitable death that mesothelioma delivers so swiftly.

Last October I met Kelvin, his wife Neung and son Justin at our favourite catch-up joint – Tilleys Pie Shop in Fremantle. He delivered the bad news. He had been delivered the confirming diagnosis of his breathless condition – mesothelioma. He walked with the aid of a stick, supported by Neung and son Justin. Justin is a nurse and he knows and understands how this disease works. He will be there for Kelvin's final journey. Justin is now organising his father's funeral Friday 31 January in Mandurah. Justin will forward the details of time and place in coming days.

Kelvin Matthews came to the Shire of Christmas Island in 2010 with great depth of knowledge and experience in local government, just what we needed. His career in local government extended from NSW to his home State of WA. He served as CEO of the Broken Hill Council at the time of "colourful" characters like the famous and progressive Mayor Black who entertained the world of local government with his memorable speeches at the annual National Assembly of Local Government in Canberra. Some of Kelvin's favourite stories about Mayor Black, are lessons in humanity, the mentoring of Kelvin Matthews in the art and craft of the political life. On his return to WA, Kelvin did a brief stint in the office of Mark McGowan MLA during one of McGowan's early terms as a member of the WA parliament. Kelvin took no credit or responsibility for McGowan's later elevation to the office of Premier of WA. Kelvin returned to the work of local government at the Shires of Shark Bay, Christmas Island, Mt Magnet and most recently Meekatharra.

During his time serving our Christmas Island Council 2010 to 2016 his contribution to the quality of life of Christmas Islanders was a sincere pursuit, including the building of the seniors centre at Poon Saan. He worked closely with Helene Bartleson, author of Golden Leaves, an Introduction to the Chinese Cemeteries of Christmas Island, delivering many important strategic and practical stages of the Shire's Cemeteries Management Plan. An enthusiastic scholar and historian Kelvin's work with Helene has taken them to historic finds through their spirited pursuit of inquiry into burial practices and customs of our Christmas Islanders and then in the Shire of Mount Magnet and latterly the Shire of Meekatharra. Helene Bartleson is shattered by Kelvin's passing, her despair at the loss of friend and colleague speaks for her affection for the man, but also the fact that the fruits of their inquiry and labour continue to emerge, with so much more to be done, particularly in the first nations communities of Western Australia where despite the fragmentation and disparagement of their culture and traditions, cultural leaders in those regions have been working with Helene and Kelvin to reveal burial grounds and culture that was never lost but historically traduced.

With the encouragement of the Shire Council, Kelvin embarked on his major project and hopefully his most significant legacy to Christmas Islanders – his application for entry into the University of Notre Dame's doctoral research programme. Kelvin's experience and understanding of the system of government in Australia was challenged by the very unusual system of government in the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Our discussions about the lack of implementation of the recommendations of the Reports of the Parliamentary Inquiries, Islands in the Sun, 1991, and the Joint Standing Committee of the National Capital and External Territories' Governance Inquiry of 2005, suggested to Kelvin that his PhD deal with the history of exploitation of the mine workers and the enabling ideology, political and governance regimes that persist today. The PhD he earned from this inquiry is one of the proudest achievements of Kelvin's working life. Its value to Christmas Islanders is that it provides a framework of analysis that should inform the ambitions of Christmas Islanders to overcome the "democratic deficit" that pertains to this day.

(continued overleaf)



RECYCLED PRODUCTS
Compost \$110/m3*
Crushed glass sand \$250/t
*available from Customer Care

NOVEMBER
Was our greatest month for
recycling to date! Achieving a rate
of 78%, with the help of the whole
community!

OPENING HOURS

• Monday	• 7-2
• Tuesday	• 7-2
• Wednesday	• 7-2
• Thursday	• Closed
• Friday	• 7-2
• Saturday	• 7-3
• Sunday	• Closed

78% RECYCLING RATE



Kelvin Matthews - continued

Christmas Islanders can't vote for the members of the WA Parliament, which is the Parliament that makes the laws that we must live by on Christmas Island. This is the "democratic deficit". In every mainland State and Territory the people DO VOTE for their representatives in their State and Territory parliaments and assemblies. Why not Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands or Norfolk Island?

True to form Kelvin advocated the interests of Christmas Islanders that he defined in his PhD Thesis - Christmas Island A question of self-determination.

We combined with the Shires of Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Torres Strait Council and the Council of Norfolk Island to create a governance forum on the sidelines of the annual National Assembly in Canberra in 2015. In 2019 Kelvin and his PhD supervisor Professor Martin Drum came to Christmas Island to lead a governance forum at the Poon Saan Hall. It was well attended. There is an interest in the question of democracy in our community. Thanks to Dr Kelvin Matthews we have a thoroughly researched and rigorously reviewed academic work that provides a framework of analysis to which current and future generations of Islanders may turn when the time comes to act to end the longstanding remnant of colonialism that is the governance regime of our non-self-governing Territory of Christmas Island.

Kelvin's devotion to Neung, the love of his life, was oft expressed in Mayor Black's terms: "Happy wife. Happy life" There was no mistaking his deepest affection for Neung in his tone in that oft spoken flippant phrase – a reasonable philosophy of life. Devoted as they were to each other, Kelvin and Neung generously and lovingly supported the development of the children in their lives. Poppy came to school on Christmas Island and is now happily working in her chosen profession. Justin is a nurse with other commitments to community service of which Dr Kelvin Matthews is so proud.

We salute you Kelvin. Your service to our Christmas Island community was extraordinary by any measure. Your long public service to many communities is an example that future generations of public servants may follow to give us all hope for the advancement of humanity – an altruistic humanity of compassion and generosity.

May you rest in eternal peace

*Gordon Thomson
President Shire of Christmas Island
General Secretary Union of Christmas Island
Workers*

23 January 2025



TRIAL OF THE FIFTEEN

Norfolk's turbulent history is brought to life for one enthralling hour as 15 different characters step on stage at The Ferry Lane Theatre

Book of WORLD TRADERS, of the VISITORS INFORMATION CENTRE or at the Door

Wednesdays at 4.45pm
Enquiries: 50518

1st February

1st February is the 32nd day of the year.

1884 – The first volume (A to Ant) of the Oxford English Dictionary is published

1893 – Thomas A. Edison finishes construction of the first motion picture studio, the Black Maria in West Orange, New Jersey.

1942 – World War II: U.S. Navy conducts Marshalls–Gilberts raids, the first offensive action by the United States against Japanese forces in the Pacific Theater.

1942 – Voice of America, the official external radio and television service of the United States government, begins broadcasting with programs aimed at areas controlled by the Axis powers.

1946 – Trygve Lie of Norway is picked to be the first United Nations Secretary-General

1950 – The first prototype of the MiG-17 makes its maiden flight.

1964 – The Beatles have their first number one hit in the United States with "I Want to Hold Your Hand"

1981 – The Underarm bowling incident of 1981 occurred when Trevor Chappell bowls underarm on the final delivery of a game between Australia and New Zealand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

2002 – Daniel Pearl, American journalist and South Asia Bureau Chief of The Wall Street Journal, kidnapped on January 23, is beheaded and mutilated by his captors.

2003 – Space Shuttle Columbiadisintegrated during the reentry of mission STS-107 into the Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven astronauts aboard.

MEETINGS AND AGMS

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL NORFOLK ISLAND AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY will be held on Monday 3 February in the society hall behind Rawson Hall commencing at 5 PM. Any new members most welcome.

THE NORFOLK ISLAND CATTLE ASSOCIATION AGM will be held on Saturday, 22 February 2024.

Where: The Golden Orb Cafe

Time: 6.00Pm.

Any apologies please email norfolkcattle@gmail.com or ring Aaron (50230) - See you all there.

NORFOLK ISLAND PONY CLUB AND EQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION AGM will be held on Thursday 13th February, 5:30pm at the Centre for Knowledge and Learning on Taylors Road.

NORFOLK ISLAND ARCHERY AGM Date: Thursday 20th February 2025

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: To be advised

Contact: Rachel 52281 or Dave 51098