

**INTERVIEW WITH JUNE JACKSON**  
**5 June 2000**  
**Updated 04/01/10**  
**Timecode from Tape 17\_BC\_DV**  
**Topics in Bold**

**So this is Tape 17 on camera, DAT Tape 8 is on 105.25 and it's 5 June 2000, Trish FitzSimons recording, Erica Addis on camera. We're recording June Jackson and this is the third camera tape that this interview has gone onto.**

**TAPE 17\_BC\_DV**

I I'm just interested a bit more, not in how the technology has shifted but how your role and your satisfaction in running a Post Office and the experience of it, how that has shifted over that period in which the technology has changed so radically.

R **Work: Post Office**

00:01:28:18 I don't think it's shifted. I think it's a job I love. I think it's a job I'm pretty good at and I think just as changes are implemented, you go with it. I don't ... I think it's like any job. If you like it, you just keep improving and perhaps getting better and learning the new things that come along. I don't know if that's what you want but that's how I feel. Whatever they put in there, I learn to use and it's for the betterment of the customers and it's just what we have to do.

I When you were describing being the telephonist, you said 'People would want me to know that Joe Bloggs was out at the Five-Mile or Joanna had gone out to Glen Ormiston' or whatever. Do you still feel you have that kind of knowledge of comings and goings of the community?

R **Work: Communications**

00:02:24:00 No, nowhere near as much since we lost the exchange. I think that was the big thing. When it finally did close, people would say 'Well, how are we going to know what anyone's doing?' and they'd ring up and say 'Oh, June, how much rain did so-and-so have?' and I'd say 'I'm sorry, but unless they ring me I don't know', and I think it took a while for them to realise that I was no longer the PMG Department, that I was a private enterprise, that phone calls that were made other than a small subsidy, I paid for, and I think it took people a long time to realise that I was now a business person so I wasn't going to ring twenty-five properties so that they could ring me and find out what it was.

They didn't realise that it was costing them a phone call to ring me. It would cost them a phone call to ring the property, so they may as well ring the property and get it first-hand. I think it took the community to realise that things were changing and there was a lot of resentment. Why does it have to close? What are we going to do now? But, like all country people, and people everywhere, I guess, that things change so you find some other way of doing things. So they would then call someone on their two-way and say 'Have you heard what so-and-so had?' so they used the two-ways a lot for a long time.  
00:03:50:15

I I don't think that I realise. So you're saying you're a franchise. You pay for the franchise and then make profit as a percentage of what you do, rather than being on a wage? Is that what you're ...?

R 00:04:13:10 What happened was that I purchased the buildings. I'm paid a wage and I'm paid a commission. My wage, I suppose, is I'm paid so much for mail delivery, mail sorting, to be here. I'm paid for those things. On top of that, I earn commission on people paying their bills and doing banking, whatever. I have to pay for all the ... I don't purchase the equipment but I pay rent on it. There's a units threshold on things, when you are under that threshold, you then pay for. So sometimes to have this latest technology is expensive. 00:04:59:02

I So Australia Post has never been privatised exactly but the delivery of those services has been partially privatised?

R 00:05:09:20 Ummm. It's embarrassing to admit but I really don't know. They own ... I don't ... oh, what can I say? I can sell the Post Office but Australia Post has to ... they have to approve of the people that are coming in. I can't just sell it to you. I have to go through Australia Post to be able to sell the business. I can sell you the building but I have to run the business. But I can sell you the business with Australia Post's approval and that takes some doing. They just won't put anyone in here. I own the stock. I purchase the stock from Australia Post but they own the equipment, the technology.

I And so I can look outside. Clearly this business is a lot of your life, June. I can also see the ironing board in the back room, so you can do things along the way, and I can see a beautiful garden out there. Am I right that you and Ray have got a very integrated kind of

working and home life between this building and your house that's just behind it and the gardens around it?

**R Work/Gender Relations/Post Office**

00:06:30:05 Most definitely. Yeah. I work of a morning which is when most of the business is done and then he'll come over here and sit with his feet up and read the newspaper, and I will be ironing or whatever, so if he gets a problem I'm not very far away. I don't go away and I don't go to meetings and things in the afternoon. This is my job and if people have a problem, or something that he can't deal with, I feel I should be here because they're entitled to the same service as they get anywhere else, so I mean, he can yell out in the back yard and I'll come up. I don't change out of my uniform until 6 o'clock at night, so I don't actually do gardening. I water the lawns or move the hoses or something, but the gardening is just weekend. And, you know, it's just a relationship. We both work and we both do whatever needs to be done. And it's working.

I And the other parts of your life. I can see big golf clubs, I know you're involved in the Historical Society. I want to get a picture of your life in this town.

**R Leisure/Volunteer Work**

00:07:36:10 Ummm. I'm a member of the P&C and have been ever since my children started school. Mind you, they have been left school for quite some years. Ummm, I seem to be involved in a lot of things that go on. I don't like something to happen that I haven't really got much to do with. Probably the last few years I'm holding back a little, mainly the Historical Society. I'm still very involved with that. The Golf Club, I have taken on the job as, I think I'm assistant ummm what would you say? Assistant dogsbody, probably, at the moment. I used to be Captain and all of those things and just decided I'd rather play golf. I'm a member of the CWA. Very interested in whatever happens of an afternoon while I'm at work. I like to keep up with whatever committee meetings and things that are on, and that's probably it. I love my golf.

I You've won awards, haven't you, for community service? Tell us what the awards are.

R 00:08:42:02 You're a sticky beak. I have been given an Excellence in Award, presented with an Excellence in Education from the school, just for the years of commitment, I think, for being on the P&C so long and being president for a lot of years and secretary or

treasurer or whatever. As I said, you know, I've been up there since my children first started school. Ummm, and I won a Citizenship Award a few years ago, just for commitment to the community, I guess.

I In the little country community I grew up in, it was generally women that were at the heart of all those things that stuck the community together, and my Mum was very involved in that. Is that how things go here? Is it fundamentally women that keep the schools, the hospitals, the churches, the garden club, all those things, going or is there a lot of male involvement as well in that voluntary community stuff?

R **Gender Relations**

00:09:44:16 Ummm, I'd say all the things that you have mentioned, it's the women. But if you get the Golf Clubs, the men like to be president of the Golf Club. The Race Club, they like to have a man president of the Race Club. The Rodeo Committee, they like to have a man president of the Rodeo Committee. The Camel Race 2000, they like to have a man. I mean, no women have ever challenged them yet. Chairman. I think it's still a little male-dominated area that they like just to have that. Let the women have their CWA meetings and, you know, QGAP and things like that. Any of those sorts of meetings that have something to do with youth suicide and things like that, I think they like the women to do that but they like to do the manly, macho things. I think there's still a little bit of that out here.

I And is there a sense that it's the women, say, doing a lot of work for something like the camel races but it's the man that's the president? Or are the men taking over those areas and then really running with them?

R 00:10:43:02 Ummm, I'd probably have to say, with the camel race it's mainly men. It's only new so no one really knows too much about that. The secretary is the president's wife and myself. We're probably the main women in that but the Race Club, they have a lady secretary. The Rodeo Committee, they have lady secretaries. So it's just mainly, I think because they're jobs that women can't do. They can't do the actual things for the racing. You know, it's men who are the trainers mainly. The same with the rodeo, it's the men who work in the back yards and so they sort of probably have more the say, whereas with the other things that don't take brute strength, I think ... see, the goat races, there probably, he's the president because no one else wants to take the job on. But it's the women that get

the prizes and the same with the things like the Claypan Olympics, I think the women run that because that's a kids' sort of thing. But, you know, the men'll have, they'll organise the bike sports for the little fellows on their motorbikes and I think it's a pretty ... hey, it works. It's a happy community, so ...

I You're describing, actually, an incredibly active community, those things you've just spilled off – the Claypan Olympics, and certainly coming into this town, there's a sense of activity going on here. I'm thinking of things like Min Min and the new council housing and so on. Yeah, is tourism a big new influence on Boulia? Is that what's driving it? This doesn't look like a town of wealthy people but there's money going into the town, if that makes sense. That's how it appears from the outside.

R **CC Economy**

00:12:37:22 A lot of the money coming into this town is through the council. The housing, a lot of the housing is council. Tourism, I think, is just taking off. Being a tourist myself, you have a limited amount of money. You budget, so you can't go to museum in A, B, C and D. You go in A and F perhaps. So we've got to have something special that makes the people want to see our museum or our Min Min Centre. I think it's just such a clean, nice oasis sort of town. People think 'Oh, this is beautiful after driving through what is normally a very dusty dry countryside'. There's a lot of town pride. People take pride in their gardens and things. And the council is excellent. You know, they are doing whatever they can, any time. They're responsible for all the gardening we've got here. They get grants for ... I don't know where they get money from. It's a money tree somewhere. But they're doing an excellent job.

00:13:41:10 Ummm, and a lot of things ... I think most of the community do things because that's all there is to do, and you're always looking for something to take your children to. So the goat races go off beautifully. I mean, they get, on Saturday morning they run round the countryside and find a few sheep and some wild goats on my brother-in-law's place. They bring them in here, in a truck, chuck them in a pen, you buy a goat and you race it all day. Next day it's chucked in the truck and let go back out on the property again. They auction the sheep off, so you buy a sheep and your kid rides the sheep or gets bucked off the sheep or something. It's just an absolutely hilarious day. No one has trained goats because money just becomes too big a thing. If someone trains their goat, you know, for six months, and wins every race, that's not the idea of it. It's the day out.

00:14:33:04 The Claypan Olympics is mainly for the children, not just the children but the adults, but it's another thing to get the country people and the townspeople all together and give the children companionship and competitiveness, and it's just a great day. They get prizes from different places and then usually they'll have the goat races in town one day, and then they go out to the rodeo grounds, racecourse complex out there, and they'll have bike sports – motorbike sports – which is a great day. They ride from this side up to the ... you know, the ringers and things, they bring their bikes in. So that's a great day. Always food, of course, and a bar, which is a great attraction.

00:15:22:21 Ummm, we have a Golf Club championship here every year which brings people from out of town, mainly Mt Isa, from Winton, some from Longreach, Hughenden perhaps. That's always a good weekend for the town. Mainly for the Golf Club but then they do use accommodation so that's booked out.

00:15:43:00 Ummm, the Camel Race weekend is a very big weekend, meaning three days. The races and rodeo, which is held every April if it doesn't rain. They race on ... they have a barbeque, entertainment evening on Friday. They race on Saturday and they have rodeos Saturday night and Sunday, which is always our big weekend.

I And race relations? Somebody said that they thought that the town was about thirty per cent Aboriginal now. Would that have been the case all the time that you've lived here and how do you think relations between the races have shifted or stayed the same? How would you define that?

R **Race Relations**

00:16:29:06 Ummm, what can I say? I think relationships have changed in the way that once upon a time, I think it was just that it was 'them and us'. Now I think it doesn't really matter too much and I think it's because the Aboriginals are now living more like the whites, if I can say that without being racist. They've got to live in homes. They can't live in humpies or in compounds, they've got to live in town, so the younger girls that are now twenty-five, etc. are saying 'This is my house. This is my family'. It's not all the uncles and aunts and things coming in from the properties and just dumping themselves in a house like they used to do years ago. And I think it's what the government wanted. They wanted everyone to live like our ancestors. All be whites. You know, they keep their homes tidy. I mean, some of them trash them. Hey, that'll happen with white, blacks, it doesn't matter

what they are. And, to me, there's no racism in the town. I mean, to be honest, I won't have a barbeque and go and ask four or five Aboriginal families but then they really wouldn't come and ask me either. Not because I'm white, it's just because I'm not in their circle of friends, I think. I mean, Joe Blow across the road can have a barbeque and not ask me and I don't think there's a great deal of racism in this town that I know of. Talk to other people and perhaps they may say so but I think it's more the Aboriginals with the Aboriginals that are having the problem, rather than the blacks and the whites. 00:17:53:10

I What problems do you see in the Aboriginal community? What are you referring to, particularly, there?

R **Race Relations: Intersex**

00:18:27:12 As problems? I think one family, one clan family, might resent what the other family does. I think, for some reason or other, the tall poppy syndrome is really rife in Aboriginal families. They don't like to see someone, or they don't like to think that someone's getting a bit above themselves. I have the situation where my son's partner is an Aboriginal girl, not a black Aboriginal, but her parents are, you know, coloured, and she's an Aboriginal. And I just see how different they are to how the Aboriginals are here. I mean, they live in Birdsville and down in Birdsville the whites and the blacks have been integrating for a lot longer than here. I think it's only sort of two generations, even if it's that long, that the Aboriginals and the whites have integrated here. Probably when I first came here, there were no white people and Aboriginals living together, but that has happened over the years and, you know, it's just a common thing now. Nobody makes any comment about it. 00:19:38:22

I Was that confronting for you, when your son had an Aboriginal partner?

R 00:19:43:12 Not for me. I mean, he could have gone with a Martian and I would have been happy. If he was happy, you know, that doesn't worry me. To be honest, my husband is still having a big problem with it. I mean, she comes up here and he's polite to her but he is polite, he's not over-friendly, but that's just him. He has this thing and, I mean, if he'd have come home with a Japanese girl it probably would have been a little bit the same, but most definitely because of an Aboriginal. But he's happy and she's a nice girl and I've got two beautiful grandchildren, so I'm not going to cut my nose off to spite my face, no way. And, as I said, you know, he is polite to her and she comes home and she

doesn't have any problem with that. I think if he was downright rude, which I would be very surprised after all these years, my son wouldn't bring her here for her peace of mind, but you know he brings her home and we're just one big happy family when they're here.

I And does Native Title, has that been a source of great discussion amidst either white or black? I can remember the day I heard the Mabo judgement. I could tell you where I was and thinking 'Wow, something big has shifted in this country'. But is that your view of it? Where does Native Title fit in?

R **Native Title**

00:21:07:18 Ahhh. I suppose because we only have a little block of land out there and when someone did look like wanting to say 'My grandfather is buried on that', I fought tooth and nail to find out where he was buried and obviously he's buried in about six different places, wherever this lady wants to be able to say she wants to own. But we sorted that out and there was no Native Claim on that, nothing, but there's a Native Claim, evidently, on a lot of the properties along this river here and I know a lot of the owners there are most unhappy. I really don't know. I really can't comment too much on it because you hear so many things and someone once said to me 'If the Aboriginals would realise that there is going to be no dollar gain out of it, all the land claims would go away. It's because they think they'll end up millionaires'. But I don't know. That was just one person's comment and, to me, I really don't know. I mean, I talk to Jos's Mum and Dad about it and her father was one of the Stolen People.

I Jos is your daughter-in-law?

R **Native Title/Women/Land**

00:22:24:20 Yeah. To me he says it's not a big deal but I don't know. Perhaps to his family he says it is a big deal. I don't know. He says he probably wouldn't be where he is today if he had been left with his family but, you know, people can say whatever they want to to somebody and then mean something else. I really don't know. I mean, I get on well with them, so I have never sat down and said to them 'You tell me about the fact that you're a Stolen Generation'. I didn't know that until his wife told me and I don't think it's my business unless he wants to bring it up. I mean, I go and stay in their home and she's one of my best friends, so it's like me having a problem with my mother and father. It's none of her business so I think horses for courses, I think. I think it is causing a lot of



resentment where it needn't necessarily be and myself, I feel that if the people who are standing up saying 'I'm Aboriginal. I own this' really sat down and thought about it, and thought 'Well, this was a swampy ground. We lived off it. It gave us food, it gave us shelter in those days. It fed my parents and things. It doesn't happen now'. You know, the world just keeps going on. You tell me how many races still live as their forefathers did, other than the African continent. You know, the world has just got to keep moving.  
00:24:04:12

I Does the government come out here or is there a lot of process put into kind of education or getting white and black in these towns to sit and talk to each other about what Native Title might mean?

R 00:24:18:20 There have been a few meetings, yeah. I went to two, I think. Ummm, I think the government does its best. I think it's the do-gooders who probably do more harm. The people that live in the city, they may see the drunks on the corners, they may see houses destroyed. People will say, you know 'Look at all these homeless Aboriginals'. Then you can come out here and see them living in these homes. You can walk into a home and find it's been trashed by someone that's lived here, whether it's black or white. I don't know. I just feel if it would go away, but it's not going to go away. It's just shuffled from one thing to another and it will probably be still around in fifty years' time. I don't know what the answer is, I don't think anyone does.

I Talking of fifty years. The future? What do you see in the future for yourself, June? This will be the last question and then we'll stop.

R 00:25:16:22 Ummm, at some stage we will retire. We have some homes in Toowoomba. Ummm, I don't want to give up work yet. I mean, I'm 56. I've just turned 56. I'd like to see myself still working in ten years' time. Ray wants to retire now but he knows that I'm not prepared to do that so he's prepared to stick it out, I think, probably for about five or six years, probably another five years. Each time another grandchild comes along, I'll say 'When it's five, we'll go'. And then he's a little unhappy that he can't play golf as much as he'd like but I think he's prepared ... he's got his children here and, you know, his sister's here, and we have a good life, have a good lifestyle. He goes away to play golf every now and then. He's got a sister who lives in Toowoomba so if he really needs to play golf on grass greens, I say 'Pack up and go for a month'. He's gone for three weeks and then he's back home again. So I think it's when you get to our age that

companionship, you've had someone for so long that, you know, if you're gone for three weeks, you think 'Oh, God, I'd better get home in case she's not missing me' or something. I mean, I'll have a trip. I'll go down to Birdsville for five days and see the grandkids there. Well, I'm pleased to come home after five days and get back into work.  
00:26:32:16

I That tradition of retiring away from the Channel Country seems to be really embedded. Why is that, do you reckon? Why will you retire to Toowoomba and not Boulia?

R **Women/Land:Inheritance**

00:26:44:16 Oh, I'd love to retire in Boulia. I'm going to be buried here, with my relations at Maxland there. I think it's just something that, okay, you think you've done your time perhaps, so let's go and live where there's grass and things, and a lot of it is because the sons take over the properties so you don't need Mum and Dad there telling you how they did it fifty years ago. I think it's in self-defence that they move away, rather than have arguments with the children about how it should be run and, besides, you know, they've probably done their time. They've done it harder than people of my age and I think there's a little bit of money so let Mum and Dad go and do the things that they want to do. As I said, I will probably stay here forever. If anything happened to Ray, I would most certainly be here, but we would probably go and spend three months of the year travelling around. Probably come back here and spend a month here and go back to Toowoomba or wherever we decide to retire. And it's not that we want to get out of the place. It's just that we feel, well, you know, we've spent such a lot of time here, let's go and see something new. But I think we will always come back here. 00:28:02:18

I Okay, that's terrific. Thank you.

R I didn't tell you much about my mother-in-law. Do you want to talk to Ray about her? About the pub, or ...?

**END OF TAPE**