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11 September 2018

As she prepared for her turn as Queen's Commonwealth Games relay baton bearer, Lynne Foreman contemplated the Geelong city block she was about to conquer and took a moment to ponder just how far she has actually come.

As she thought of her late parents, Gwen and Len, and the undeniable will they instilled in her, it moved her to the brink of tears.

"Mum and dad were my rock," Lynne said. "I look back and think if only mum was still alive, she'd be so proud. I am sure she is looking down.

"From when I was knee-high to a grasshopper my parents drummed into me, 'there's no such word as can't.' That's how I've lived my life," Lynne said.

Her commitment to making things better for all people with disability is why Lynne was part of Geelong's big day, and why so many friends, family, and NDIS co-workers lined the streets to cheer as she went by.

From her motorised chair, Lynne held the baton aloft in one hand and took turns waving and driving with the other. "They were going to get a holder for the baton but typical me, I said, 'No, I'm going to carry it!'"

The honour was a small but a just reward for someone who, as a child, didn't consider herself as a person with a disability. Then as an adult, she was denied the Disability Pension until 1997. Her disability didn't meet the criteria. For a born advocate, it was like adding fuel to a fire.

Lynne was born with Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenital, a muscle and joint deficiency. When she was delivered, her feet were crossed against her chest and they only grew to the size of a three-year-old's.

As a newborn, Lynne's first days were so fraught she was baptised at the Royal Children's Hospital amid fears she wouldn't survive. Her mother's health suffered in the face of her challenge. They recovered, and Lynne was soon at home on the family's Benalla farm, treated no different to her five sisters and baby brother.

"I was dragged around like everyone else – I wasn't molly-coddled," she said. "I had to do everything like everyone else.

"My sister Rhonda used to wash the dishes, I'd dry, and Louise would put them away. We all had our little chores. I might have done things differently to my siblings but they didn't leave me out."

Her mother fought to have her accepted into mainstream school. From there, Lynne picked her own battles and went hard. She remembers no nerves when she had to read or answer questions in front of her class, or speak out and act when she witnessed injustice.

"When you find things aren't working well, you start pushing the barriers," she said. "I joined committees and suddenly I was in a team, pushing against the same barriers."

Becoming an Every Australian Counts campaigner formalised Lynne's mission, and in 2011, she hit the advocacy trail hard. She was a face and voice, pushing for a national disability scheme, knocking on doors and she didn't stop until she was heard. She met Prime Ministers, Julia Gillard, Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott, and others who yearned for better lives.

When the NDIS Act was announced in 2013 and its headquarters were to be based in Geelong, her hometown, Lynne's first thought was, "Wow! That was quick!"

As a participant, the scheme helps her in myriad ways, yet her greatest satisfaction is plans are structured around partners too. Lynne needs a low-high bed, and before the NDIS, she and Alex slept in separate single beds.

She recalls an occupational therapist visiting, taking her into the bedroom and nervously saying, 'I've got to ask you something. Why do you want to sleep with your husband?' I could have said a few things but I refrained," Lynne said with a grin. "I just said, 'We're a couple, aren't we supposed to?'"

The day of the baton relay was an incomparable thrill. "I was tickled pink. I'm still on cloud nine," Lynne said, after her leg of the relay. "It was just a wonderful, once-in-a-lifetime experience I'll treasure for the rest of my life. This wasn't for me, it was for the whole disability community out there!"

Lynne did have time for a cuppa, a quick chat, and before sundown, she was off to Ballarat for the next day's work. "Hey, you've got to soldier on, don't you?" she said.

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