

## **Nancy celebrates 41 years of volunteering**



*From left: Mawarra Op Shop Volunteer Manager Kerry Elliott sorts items with long serving volunteer Nancy Smith.*

Warragul's Nancy Smith can't believe that it's been 41 years since she first began volunteering at Mawarra's Opportunity Shop but one thing's for certain - she still loves it.

Nancy is one of 60 volunteers who assist Mawarra in the Op Shop in Palmerston Street and in the new expanded Sorting Centre located in June Court next to Bunnings.

Both centres are thriving hubs providing a treasure trove for local people to explore and discover an array of unwanted items including clothes, toys, furniture, sporting gear, music equipment, electricals, linen, bric and brac, tools, and more.

The Opportunity Shop is a major business for Mawarra with income generated returned to assist people with a disability to participate in support service activities at Mawarra and in the community.

Volunteer Manager, Kerry Elliott, coordinates her army of quiet achievers to sort, grade, price and display the constant flow of donations.

“Some people come in and work half a day a week while others may do more. It is up to the individual and their effort is always appreciated.”

Nancy, who is one of Mawarra’s longest current serving volunteers, said it was a fascinating place.

“We’ve had some surprises along the way like the time we opened a bag to discover a pair of false teeth. We also get many new or rarely used items as well as memorabilia and antiques. You never know what’s going to come in next and that’s the allure of opportunity shops.”

Nancy said she gained immense satisfaction from being part of Mawarra’s volunteer team.

“My sister was one of the first people to use Mawarra’s Disability Services when it first opened in Warragul 57 years ago so I know first-hand the value the organisation brings to people with disabilities and their families.

“The camaraderie of the place and the friendships that I have gained from being a volunteer has been personally enriching as well as the satisfaction that the work I do is helping the lives of others,” she said.

Mawarra’s Opportunity Shop at 40 Palmerston Street Warragul is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4.30pm and on Saturdays from 9am to 12.30pm.

Donations of clean, saleable goods should be left at the Sorting Centre at 14 June Court, Warragul.

If you would like to become a volunteer at Mawarra or for more information phone 5622 3400 or visit: [www.mawarra.org.au/OpShop](http://www.mawarra.org.au/OpShop)