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Lifestyle

Where are they now?

- 1945: Only child Kathleen Bower (Kath) was born in the small English town of Belper.
- 1966: She graduated from the University of Nottingham then proceeded to complete her PhD.
- 1969: Kath and her mother left England.
- 1970: Kath started her career in January with CSIRO at the Division of Irrigation Research at Griffith.
- 1975: Kathleen Bower married Frank Skinner.
- 1977: Frank and Kath's first child was born but has since passed away.
- 1981: Frank and Kath's second child was born.
- 1986: She became the assistant chief then deputy chief of the CSIRO Division of Water Resources.
- 1994: She was awarded the Eureka Award for environmental research.
- 1995: After spending a year in Canberra with the CSIRO Kath moved to Wagga to take up the roles of CSU deputy vice chancellor and head of campus.
- 1998 to 2003: Kath chaired the Murrumbidgee River Management Committee.
- 2001: She returned to CSIRO Division of Land and Water as deputy chief and business director for three years.
- 2004: She entered semi-retirement and returned to a teaching position at CSU.
- 2010: Kathleen currently lives at San Isidore, teaches part-time at CSU, is an adjunct professor for Griffith University in Brisbane, is an honorary researcher at CSIRO, a non-executive director at State Water Company and an independent consultant.



Kath Bower (centre) pictured after winning the Eureka Award for environmental science in 1994.

Bowmer's lifetime of inspiring leadership

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 about women in leadership positions that she realised the importance of that aspect of her role.
 "I had to think of my own role models and I couldn't think of any women," she said. "It hadn't occurred to me until then how important that was. Although you shouldn't generalise, I think that women do see things differently and so make a positive contribution in leadership."
 Kath remained in these roles for five years (until 2001) and said it was the

range of talent in Wagga that has prompted her to stay in the city.
 "My CSU time was fascinating because it's such a broad brush of disciplines," she said. "It's been an eye-opener to see the range of talent across the faculties, schools and research centres of the university."
 As deputy vice chancellor, Kath was responsible for developing research staff and students and also for overseeing undergraduate teaching and learning. As head of campus, her priority was to make

connections between the university and the region and to develop partnerships.
 The public lecture series was started during Kath's time at the university.

Water has been a hot topic throughout Australia's history, from times of flash floods to penetrating drought, so Kath said people with her type of experience were in high demand.

Salinity was brought to people's attention in the 1980s and water for the environment became an issue when there was algal bloom in the Darling in the 1990s.

The drought has been critical since 1997. "These problems made the areas I work in very topical," Kath said. In 1998 to 2003, Kath chaired the Murrumbidgee River Management Committee, which spent 50 meetings discussing the best ways to share water.
 The plan was meant to be implemented by 2004 but then the drought occurred and all water sharing plans were

abandoned.
 In 2001, Kath returned to CSIRO as the deputy chief and business director of the CSIRO Land and Water.

She was based in Wagga but constantly travelling as part of her role, which was to look after the welfare and manage the people in her department.
 Kath entered semi-retirement in 2004 but it was not long before she was drawn back to CSU.

Her goal was to develop a partnership between CSU and CSIRO.
 "What's happening in regions is critical and having an agency with a headquarters in Canberra was not helpful," she said. "This was a way of bringing the science into the region."

Kath became an honorary fellow with CSIRO, which she used to enrich her teaching of water policy and management at CSU, a third year and post-graduate subject.
 Kath is currently the professor of water policy at CSU.

True fact questions

What is one thing not even your best friend knows about you?

"What you see is what you get with me," Kathleen said. "I don't think I have any hidden depth." "My mum used to say I was incapable of lying my way out of anything."

What is your greatest childhood memory?

A school trip to the Lakes District in England was, Kathleen believes, possibly the start of her career. She describes the experience of exploring the area as absolutely fantastic.

What is the best piece of advice you have been given?

"Take time to be with the people you love," she said.

What is the best advice you have given others?

Those wonderful words of advice have rung true for Kathleen and now she passes them on to anyone who will listen.
 "I have been quite busy and ... with the help of my spouse, been taking care of that balance of life," she said. "My achievements have only been possible with the support of my husband and many friends and colleagues in CSIRO, CSU and the Wagga community."



Kath Bowmer started her career with CSIRO in the early 1970s and is pictured here in 1971 in Griffith.

Kath Bowmer, pictured in 1971, used to take TAFE classes for art. She currently makes time every Tuesday for water colour painting.

