

Compassion and understanding

By [Allison Jess](#)

As we approach our 80th anniversary former ABC employee Jean Whitla reflects on years spent working for 2CO

Eighty-five year old Jean Whitla began working at ABC Goulburn Murray (formerly known as 2CO) in the late 1960s. Wodonga-based Whitla started her career at the ABC as a typist in the newsroom in the then Albury studios and later contributed stories as a local news correspondent. Today Whitla remains an important member



of the Goulburn Murray family regularly calling staff with topical information and story ideas.

To coincide with ABC Goulburn Murray celebrating 80 years of broadcasting on December 16th we asked Whitla to reflect on her career with the ABC.

Whitla says a curious mind led to a career in news reporting. She says time spent at the ABC taught her

compassion and understanding (though we suspect she already possessed those traits!). "We came to Wodonga in 1968... The ABC wanted a news typist I chose to apply for a news typist job because it was not shiftwork and I had two school-aged children and wanted to be home when they were home.

"Out of hours for the next 20 years I was also an ABC correspondent and I worked from home, filing stories to the ABC newsroom here or to Melbourne at night as a journalist.

"It's always still when, why, where and what. I still tell to my children if you don't learn something every day you have died a little."

Whitla says she learnt much from former newsroom colleague, the late Geoff Myers.

"I say that Geoff was brilliant because he was able to cut to the absolute essentials. I have often said he could sub the Bible down to one page and not miss one important point. I learnt so much from him.

"My (typist) job was to accept the stories over the phone and type them straight from the headphones onto the typewriter from all our correspondents who were scattered throughout a huge area which included the whole of the Riverina and north eastern Victoria.

"Most of our news correspondents were editors or senior journalists from newspapers and I think that was a great system because you got stories which you would never have been able to get.