



Jack Waters: A Life of Engineering, Independence and Adventure

Jack Waters, who recently reached the remarkable age of 100, lived a full and adventurous life shaped by engineering, migration, independence and a deep connection to the outdoors.

Born in England in December 1925, Jack grew up in Brighton, East Sussex. After completing two years of compulsory Army service, he studied engineering at London University, graduating with a BSc in 1950.

In 1957, after being interviewed in London by Gerry Masterton, Jack arrived in Melbourne as a “ten-pound Pom” to begin work with the Country Roads Board. He was one of a number of engineers recruited from the United Kingdom during that period.

Jack spent his entire 29-year CRB/RCA career in the Metropolitan Division, largely as a senior construction engineer, before retiring in 1986. His work placed him within an important era of Victorian road building, including major engineering efforts that opened access to timber and farming regions across difficult terrain.

Those who worked with Jack remembered not only his engineering ability but also his independent spirit. Graham, a friend and former colleague, recalled that Jack was something of a renegade and among the first to stop wearing a tie in the office. This greatly displeased the Chief Engineer of the day, Harry George, but over time the custom faded and working without a tie became accepted.

Graham also remembered Jack as his boss when he first worked in Metropolitan Division in 1968 — a detail that speaks to Jack’s long influence on colleagues across the organisation.

After retirement, Jack and his wife migrated for a second time. With no family in Australia and their only son living in New Zealand after marrying a New Zealander, they settled at Lake Taupo on the North Island.

Jack remained active well into later life. He had been a committee member of the Bicycle Institute of Victoria and continued cycling in New Zealand into his 90s, reflecting the energy and determination that marked much of his life.

Graham Gilpin was later advised by Jack’s grandson, Chris, that Jack died peacefully on the morning of 30 July in Taupo, New Zealand. Jack had outlived his only child and reached the age of 100.

Jack Waters is remembered as a dedicated engineer, an independent character, a cyclist, a colleague and a migrant whose life connected England, Australia and New Zealand across a century of change.