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Transcript of an interview with

Pat Barblett

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VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

FILE ONE OF THREE

This is an interview with Pat Barblett AM, for the State Library of Western Australia. Today is 9 May 2023, we're meeting at Pat's home in Claremont and I'm Anne Yardley. Pat was the first woman appointed to the Rottnest Island Board, she was chair of the Conservation Commission and the Rottnest Island Authority, she was a founder of FACET which we'll talk about later, and in 2018 she was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. She's also done a lot of other things but let's start from the beginning. Can I learn a little about your early life, when and where you were born?

Barblett: I was born 6/1/1932, I had a fairly normal upbringing in a middle-class family. My father worked for *The Herald* newspaper, he was circulation manager there. My mother was a homemaker—in those days women didn't work.

AY: And this was in Melbourne?

Barblett: And we were in Melbourne, in East Brighton. I had two brothers, I was the eldest of the family and I went to a little local primary school called St Finbar's, which I think is still there in East Brighton and then when I went to secondary college, I went to Star of the Sea College in Gardenvale which is just up the train track from there.

AY: These are Catholic schools, so is this a Catholic upbringing?

Barblett: Yes, very much so because in Victoria in those days, it was a very sectarian society. If you were a Catholic, you were a Catholic, if you were a Presbyterian, you were Presbyterian. If you were a trade unionist, you were a trade unionist and none of these parts of the society ever mingled. And this was the part I loved about Western Australia when I came here, that everybody accepted everybody. It didn't matter whether you were Catholic or a callithumpian or whatever, they accepted you. This is what I found so refreshing when I came to live here.

AY: We'll talk about that later but staying with your childhood, growing up, what was important for you? Sports?

Barblett: Sports. I was the tomboy of the district; I played footy with the boys; I was a great netball player. I loved sport and have always done so.

AY: You did ballet as well I believe.

Barblett: Ballet, tap dancing all that sort of stuff that little girls love to do. I had a very happy childhood; a very lovely home and grew up, I hope, pretty balanced.

AY: Academically, were you good, did you—

Barblett: Yes, I was pretty good. They used to have a scholarship, a state one, and you were usually 12 when you get it, but I got mine at 11 and then I went on to secondary school. I was always—no problems with study.

AY: And in fact you went on to university too. Was that unusual for a girl at that time?

Barblett: Yes, my parents were very—I had an aunt who was a great educator and she was very firm that I should go to university and of course I went to university and I did sport—I did physical education at Melbourne University. In those days it was the only university in Australia that gave accreditation to physical education. Most of the accreditation was done in teachers' colleges but Melbourne University was the only university that gave this course and that's the course I did.

AY: Which would have been a degree course but in other places, in teachers' colleges, they were diplomas. But you came out of that university with a degree?

Barblett: No, no, they wouldn't give us a degree. It was still a diploma but I upgraded that later.

AY: You came over to WA as part of the state netball team, tell me about that.

Barblett: Well that was fun, I loved netball. It was August 1952 and we played all the states and it was great. And then I had a friend here and she told me that there was a job going at St Hilda's and I was about to graduate at the end of the year so [0:05:00] I made an appointment and met Miss Mitchell who was the headmistress there. We had a talk and she said to me, the job's yours if you want to come back in February.

AY: So you did complete your studies when you went home. At that stage, what was appealing to you about Perth?

Barblett: I just wanted to get out of Melbourne. It really was, I felt, a very repressive society. It only dawned on me when I went to university because when you've grown up as a Catholic in Melbourne, you knew nothing else. And then I go to university and the whole world opened up to me. In those days it was a very active student group who used to march down Collins Street on any occasion and it opened up a whole new world for me.

AY: Were you interested in politics, or activism, what were you marching for?

Barblett: All sorts of things, probably didn't really much matter, we just marched. They were very active, I can't remember what the actual things were, but they were a very, very active group.

AY: What did your family make of it when you came all the way over here?

Barblett: Oh, my mother thought I was coming to the end of the earth because no one ever came to Western Australia.

AY: It would have been almost like that then.

Barblett: Yes, when I came here it was like a little regional town in Victoria. It wasn't a capital city like it is now, no, it was very different. But I just loved it.

AY: What were some of those early experiences of being here on your own, a young woman.

Barblett: Very fortunately, this friend, Suzette Gawler who lived in Claremont and her mother had a flat and she let Suzette and I live in the flat which was fantastic because it wasn't far from St Hilda's. She and I, you know, had a great time.

AY: Before we move on, you've got this fabulous photo here, going back to when you were in Melbourne. I'm looking at a photo with Sir Donald Bradman, tell me what's happening here.

Barblett: Our family were cricket fanatics, my mum loved cricket and she used to drag us to the cricket. Women in those days didn't go to cricket but my mother did. And I loved it and we loved Sir Donald Bradman. I didn't meet him but the day that he was having a testimonial in his honour, this was the last time that he would walk out onto the Melbourne Cricket Ground, I had a friend at school, Diedre (unclear) and she had tickets for the Melbourne Cricket Ground and we went. I got my mother to ring the school and say I was sick. Diedre was a boarder so I don't know how she got out of school.

Anyway, we arrived at the cricket ground and set up right at the gate where the cricketers walk out. We're all there and waiting for him to come out for the last time and the press photographer who was right here said, will you two girls stand on the seat and pat him on the back as he comes out. Which we did and that's the photograph.

AY: And the photograph was in which newspaper?

Barblett: *The Herald*. There's a bit more to add on to that because we had friends up in the stand and *The Herald* newspaper first edition used to come out at two o'clock in the afternoon and here was our photo centre front on the front page. All the people up in the stand had *The Herald* and rushed down to show us. Because we'd sort of told lies to get there and would have to face the music that we were busted. Had to face the music the next day.

AY: That's a great story, and more recently, your grandson—

Barblett: Oh yes, last Christmas, my son Sandy. He's the youngest of my five children, he lives [0:10:00] in Sussex in England and he bought the family out for Christmas. His wife Lisa is a Melbourne girl and we were having a wedding

here at the end of December and she took her family over to her parents' and so I said to Sandy, do you want to take Ed, who's cricket mad, to the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, which is always a very prestigious place to go on Boxing Day. I said, while you're there, go into the MCG museum, which they've got set up there, because my photograph is in it and show Ed. Not many people can say they're museum exhibits while they're still alive [laughs]. In fact, one day, I was on the board of the Maritime Museum for about 10 or 15 years and after I'd been to Melbourne, when the meeting was over, I said, hands up anyone who's been represented in a museum? They all looked at me and I said, well I have.

AY: I'm glad we got that story in. Let's go back to Perth and you're teaching at St Hilda's.

Barblett: I loved St Hilda's, just loved it. The girl I taught with, Lyn Cornish, we got on so well. We loved the kids. Lyn was a great big woman but fun, such fun. She'd walk into the St Hilda's staff room and the little old history teacher, Miss Storman, she'd pick her up give her a whizzy [laughs]. And the kids loved her and we just had the best time. In fact, I still see—I'm in my 90s now and most of the girls I taught are in their 80s and I meet them at a shop in a queue and we give one another a hug and say, how are you?

AY: Because you were not that much older than some of the girls.

Barblett: No, no.

AY: How long were you at St Hilda's?

Barblett: Well it goes off and on for quite some time because in those days, married women were not supposed to be employed, particularly, although it wasn't government, but in government if you were a married woman you couldn't work, or in a bank. They were terribly short of teachers and so she said to me, would I be prepared to come back. I said, of course I would. So then I got pregnant and I still went back and Mrs Le Fanu who was the Archbishop's wife, she was—I don't know what her title was at school, matron or something, but she looked after Anne, my baby, while I taught. I went on for quite a few years, it would have been at least five or six years.

AY: Let's meet Alan¹, your husband, how did you meet him?

Barblett: Through tennis. We were both good tennis players—he was a very good tennis player, he was a state tennis player. The two state teams are the Lynton Cup team which is the team that men play in and the Wilson Cup which girls play in. And he was playing for Western Australia in the Lynton Cup. I played A grade tennis but I didn't ever reach the dizzy heights of state stuff. That's how we met.

AY: He was not Catholic.

Barblett: Oh no, he's Presbyterian. His father was one of the elders of the local church down there in Nedlands. Oh no and that was very frowned upon in those days, mixed marriages, and if you were a Catholic, it was dire.

AY: How did you negotiate all of that with your families and even with the wedding itself?

Barblett: No, no, what happened was, I had to make the decision, if I was going to marry him, I had to marry him in his church and I made that decision. When I told my father, that family in Melbourne, he said, never mention her name again, she's dead. Cut me straight off. Then my mother still kept in touch. We had a wonderful wedding [0:15:00] but even his parents were very wary of me. Hmm, very wary. And his brother.

AY: Where did you get married?

Barblett: In whatever that Presbyterian church is in West Perth, I don't know what it's called.

AY: And when was that?

¹ Hon Justice Alan Barblett AO (1929–2012) had an honours degree in law and a bachelor's degree in philosophy and psychology from the University of Western Australia. He was chair of the WAIT Council from 1976–85 and chief judge of the Family Court of Western Australia from 1976–1994. He represented Australia in hockey at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne.

Barblett: Fifty-five.

AY: Was there any thought Alan might have converted and become a Catholic?

Barblett: No, he was never asked but I was happy to do that.

AY: Tell me a little about Alan.

Barblett: He was an amazing man. He was a lawyer, he worked for his father, old Perc was a lawyer too and he did his law degree at UWA and his best friend there was Bob Hawke. He did law, worked in his father's practice and in those days, lawyers were not paid very much, let me tell you, no, nothing like they are now. We were on the bones of our bum financially.

He worked his way through the profession and became—for some reason, I think it was, we went to a Law Society meeting down in Bunbury and he gave this paper on family law. At that time, family law, divorce was only through fault and it had to be proven that you had committed adultery. So you had people hiding in wardrobes and under beds and it was very horrible. When Gough Whitlam's government came into power, he was going to change all that. A man called Lionel Murphy who was the attorney-general of the day, he set up the Family Court. Now the Family Court was set up in its initial stages for the people involved to solve their own problems. There was a lot of support—what's the word for it—to support them not in the court but to solve their problems before they got to the court.

AY: Arbitration?

Barblett: Yes. It worked really well and was the envy of the whole world. Then the Liberal government got in, John Howard didn't ever believe in divorce. I can remember Alan saying, he will destroy this court by stealth. And he did. And today it's not the court it should have been.

AY: But Alan stuck it out in that court.

Barblett: Oh yes, he loved it. The first years of that court were fantastic. He was deputy chief judge of the whole of Australia, Alastair Nicholson was the chief

judge and it was like a big family. We had so many friends all over Australia, and the world. We met Sir Stephen Brown, the second top judge of the English court and he was just the nicest, nicest man. He's still alive and he's 97. He came out as the guest speaker at a conference that Alan was running in Sydney. His wife, Pat, we all became very firm friends. The Family Court, the way it was set up, it was meant for the people themselves to solve their own problems, not for a referee to sit on a court and say, you'll do that and you'll do that. No. It was a very different set up to what is happening now. It's very stressful.

AY: Yes, yes. Now, what about you—children, you have five, how much of the time were you managing to work?

Barblett: I worked until I had Jane, my second child, and then it became quite obvious that I had to be the homemaker. All Alan wanted was a son and we had Peter James for the first child, it was Anne [0:20:00]; we had Peter James for the second child, that was Jane; and then we had Peter James for the third child and that was Lennie, who's a girl. Because we couldn't think of a name for her and I had a dear friend called Lennie McCall whom I actually taught at St Hilda's and I said to Alan, he wanted one and I wanted another [name] and I said let's call her Lennie after Lennie McCall and he agreed to that. And then Peter James arrived.

AY: But you didn't stop then.

Barblett: No, five years later, I had Alexander, called Sandy. By that time I said to the girls, I didn't know what to call him, I knew it was going to be a boy and I said you can name him and they all loved Sandy McKeller who lived up the street and they were good friends of ours, so we called him Sandy [laughs].

AY: Tell me a little about where you were living. You were in 82 Tyrell Street [Nedlands] by that stage?

Barblett: Yes, yes. Most of our friends who married at that time were living in City Beach and Floreat Park. And they had nice substantial looking homes. It didn't appeal to me at all. We bought this little wooden cottage in Tyrell Street, it was the original—it's in the Nedlands history as one of the original

houses in Nedlands. My mother nearly died when she came over when I was having—oh, I should tell you that story. When I was having Anne, she came over to help me, I had Anne and she was still there and then these priests knocked on the door. You know that lapsed Catholics get herded in when they have what they call a mission and they have these people who come out and knock on your door and sort of say, the fires of hell will get you and all this stuff.

They knocked on the door and I'm heavily pregnant and they wanted to come in and I said, no you're not coming in, sorry. And I said, you can go back and you can tell the people down at Holy Rosary Church if another priest or someone from that church puts their foot on this property, I'll get a restraining order and I'll go to the press. Well they scurried off and I've never heard from them ever since [laughs].

AY: How did they know you were there?

Barblett: Oh they know, they know. Probably from Victoria to here.

AY: They'd done a good job of tracing you. By this stage your name has changed.

Barblett: Yes, they'd have ways of finding out, the church never gives up.

AY: But did you win that battle though? Your mother had at least reconciled herself.

Barblett: Oh yes, my mother did. My father was stubborn but there's going to be an interesting story about him in a minute.

AY: Oh, when's that minute? We can tell that story now.

Barblett: Just that I had the five children. In 1956 it seemed most probable that Alan would get into the Olympic hockey team. They were having a big carnival in Melbourne and from that carnival they were going to select the hockey team to go straight into the Olympic Village. It seemed almost certain that he'd be

in it. He said that Anne and I, Anne was about nine or 10 months old and he said, you'll come with the team on the train, we'll look after you and the baby.

I had one good friend still who communicated with me, she was a school friend, Diane McKay and she was married to a doctor and lived in Ivanhoe. And I wrote to her and I said, look I'm coming to Melbourne, can I stay with you? Yes, she said, absolutely. So I wrote to my mother and I said that I was coming over with the hockey team and I was staying at Diane's house. She left the letter on a mantelpiece. My father picked it up, he said, if a daughter of mine comes here, she [0:25:00] stays with us. And he sat down and he wrote me this letter, that you must come and stay with us.

I wrote back to him and said, I will come and stay with you on these conditions: one, that if a Catholic priest walks in the door, I walk out. I go to church every Sunday with Alan—I didn't, but I put that in. And then he wrote back and said you can come and stay here under any conditions. And that was the rapprochement. We arrived and he was on the Spencer Street station to meet us, took his granddaughter and just thought she was wonderful and then became a stalwart supporter of the West Australian hockey team. He used to go to every match, he thought Alan was fantastic and it was all roses and whatever. So that was how we resolved our difference, through hockey, through the Olympics.

AY: Yes, but through all of it and how you behaved, you stood your ground.

Barblett: Absolutely.

AY: Did you go to church at all here?

Barblett: Oh yes, I went with Alan, not that he was a churchgoer but if he wanted to go, I'd go. I still have a very strong belief, my spiritual belief is that there is something, I don't know what it is, I don't know who I pray to but I do pray [laughs]. I don't know who to but it's not an old man sitting up on a white cloud playing a harp. And religion to me, I shouldn't say this probably, but it's men and power and that's my philosophy.

AY: Let's go back to your little house in Tyrell Street, how did you live there, where were the children going to school, what was your routine?

Barblett: Well, what happened was, it was '55 when we moved in there and all the neighbours were so good to us, they really were. They couldn't believe we would live in this—it was really a hovel. Alan had a client, Jim Cunningham, I'll never forget him, who owed him a lot of money and he was a carpenter. Alan said you can come and make this house liveable and that's how you pay your bill. And he did. He nailed it all up and put floors down. It was a scream of a place.

AY: It's not still there now, is it?

Barblett: No, no.

AY: Did you outgrow that house because—

Barblett: No, what happened was Alan's mother and father lived in Bruce Street, Nedlands, just around the corner. His mother was always very delicate and an invalid and she died in 1960. His father was helpless without her. He was one of these men who sat at the table and everything was put in front of him; he didn't know how to make a cup of tea; he couldn't wash a shirt; he was useless. So the family decided that they should sell that house and we'd sell ours and we'd put it together and buy something that had a self-contained flat on it. And 76 Circe Circle was such a house.

AY: That would have been unusual to have found a house with a granny flat then I would have thought?

Barblett: Yes, very. We found that and he lived in that but of course I had to cook for him and do all his washing and everything. So with the children, that's how we got to Circe Circle where we lived for over 30 years.

AY: Now let's see, you have five children and you have your husband and you have your father-in-law and you take over sport at the local primary school.

Barblett: Oh yes, yes. Well we were on one corner and the local primary school was on the other corner and all the children went there till they were 12 years old, grade seven. All the women on the staff were well into their sixties—Molly Dyer, Mrs Cameron and there was another one and they didn't want to take sport. And so I said to Bob Duncan who was the headmaster there, lovely, lovely man, look I'll come and take sport, I don't want to be paid, I'll just push whoever's in the pusher and we'll come and take the sport. So I took softball and did the swimming and netball, and I loved it. [0:30:00] He tried to get pay and they offered me a job at Hollywood High School but I didn't want to do that, I just wanted to push the pusher over the road. I made a lot of lovely friends through the school.

AY: That's not all, somewhere along the line you find time to go back to uni.

Barblett: Well, because with five children, the only thing that fitted in with that lifestyle was studying. I upgraded my diploma into a degree.

AY: Is this a Bachelor of Education?

Barblett: Yes, yes. And I did a whole lot of other things.

AY: What are some of the other things that you did? What were you finding interesting?

Barblett: Photography. While I was at uni, there was a man there, Pat—oh I forget his name—but he did a unit of photography and I did it and I loved it, loved it. One of my good friends, really through the school, was Tania Young. Now Tania was Miss Universe.

AY: As Tania Verstak, wasn't she?

Barblett: Yes, yes, she's my very close friend. We were talking one day and I said, I'm loving this photography course, and she said, oh, I'd love to do that. I said, well let's do it. We'll go to Mount Lawley and we'll do the diploma.

AY: Mount Lawley Technical College has a three year diploma course.

Barblett: Yes. And so we did. Brian Barrow was the head at that time. We said we wanted to do it part time—see, you go in and do the full years, and we talked our way into doing it part time because part time was always at night and we couldn't do that so we said, could we do part time and he said yes, so we did. So we'd start off with one group, we were much older than them, they were early twenties, teenagers. A lot of them had never had a relationship with an older person in term one, well by the end of the year we were their soulmates. It was so funny. They'd move on to second year, we'd go back to first year and the new intake would come and we'd start again. This went on all the way through and we got our diploma.

When that finished, we looked at one another and said, what do we do with this? I said, we'll open up a studio. So we look around here, go down to Cottesloe and in one of the little arcades there's shops that go up on the next floor and they were all empty and so a business friend of mine helped me put together a proposal, which the bloke that owned the thing accepted, which was free rent for a year, yes, half rent for the next year and then full rent for the third year. And he accepted it.

So we started up there and called it The Studio and we put in a darkroom and because I was a teacher, I said to Tania, we ought to teach photography and we started off with a course which was Know your Camera. Whatever your camera is, bring it and we will show you how to use it properly.

AY: I should say this is back in the days of film.

Barblett: Oh yes. No, I can't do digital, I'm not interested in digital and people these days don't even know what a photograph is. They have no idea about light about anything. Anyway, we started there and people loved coming with their cameras.

AY: Is that what you were mostly doing, teaching?

Barblett: No, no we were the official photographers for the America's Cup, would you believe.

AY: How did you get that gig?

Barblett: Because someone knew somebody who knew somebody [laughs]. And they asked Tania and I if we would like to, but we did weddings and we did all sorts of occasions, you know, people would want a photographer and we'd go.

AY: How old are your children then? How are you finding the time to do this?

Barblett: Well, this is what happened. In the end, we became too successful and we just couldn't manage. We sold it, [0:35:00] it still exists I think, to a bloke called Bill Rose, we knew him.

AY: Yes, he's in Nedlands.

Barblett: That's right, well we sold the business to him. I think it's still going. I don't know. And that was the finish of my—

AY: —and that was really because you couldn't do everything.

Barblett: No we couldn't do it, we just couldn't do it. Peter, Tania's husband, was getting very edgy about the whole thing and it was full on. So we just backed off.

AY: You backed off—are your children grown up by this stage?

Barblett: No, no. I can't think where we were then.

AY: You've sold the business and you've gone from being very busy to nothing. What did you do?

Barblett: Well it wasn't nothing. The first government committee that I was put on, I was very interested in and did a lot of work in recreation and there was a government department called Youth, Sport and Recreation. They had committees for sport and John Bloomfield, who was the guru, he was head of that. Youth, I can't think of his name, I can see his face but can't think of his name, and me, I was chair of the recreation committee. That was the first government committee I ever got put on.

AY: How did it come about, though, because you don't just get put on government committees.

Barblett: No, because I knew the minister and he knew I was involved with recreation so that's how I got the job.

AY: What was that experience like?

Barblett: Oh great, I loved it. Loved it. I was learning how to chair a meeting and that's something. The best person I ever learnt from was Dallas Dempster², he was a fantastic chairman.

AY: What does it take to be a chairman? What does it take to be a board member even? It's not something you had any experience of.

Barblett: No.

AY: So what are the criteria?

Barblett: I don't know, they just ring up and ask you. I don't know [laughs]. I suppose you've got to have an interest in the subject, which I did.

AY: What did you learn from Dallas Dempster, for instance?

Barblett: Dallas was an amazing man, I have great admiration for him. He took on the board, the chairmanship, when Pam—do you want to talk about Rottnest now or later?

AY: Oh we can do that later because I'm trying to get a sense of how you progressed from being on one board to being on so many others.

Barblett: Well, once your name's in there, that's how it happens.

AY: In those early days when you were on boards, was it unusual for a woman to be on a board?

²Dallas Dempster (1941-2021) was a sometimes controversial Perth businessman and entrepreneur.

Barblett: Oh absolutely, absolutely. In fact the reason that I got on to the Rottnest board was June Craig, who was the minister, and she was in Charlie Court's government and she was made Minister for Lands, which is probably the most junior portfolio you could get. In that portfolio were three statutory authorities: the zoo, Kings Park and Rottnest. Not one woman on any of those boards, this is 1976. She set about making sure that women got on all those boards. I knew her well and she knew that I had done some study on Rottnest while I was doing my Bachelor of Education, three of us did a big study on camping on Rottnest. She knew I'd done a lot of study on Rottnest and she rang and said I'd like to put your name forward, is that alright? Yes, but those old boys won't want a woman, I tell you. [0:40:00] Some months later she rang to say that Cabinet had approved my appointment.

AY: Were there quotas for women, was there no thought to making up the numbers.

Barblett: No, oh no, no.

AY: You really are getting there on merit, aren't you?

Barblett: Oh yes, I should have told you this, but when I went back to study, my supervisor was a Peter Baker who had just done his PhD at a university in Seattle, called the University of Washington. And at the University of Washington they had a correspondence course called environmental education. I was appointed to the board in '76 so it must have been around that time and he said, this would be of tremendous value to you on the board of Rottnest. So I said, great, and he said, if you do the course, we'll credit you with that here. I did the course and my supervisor from Seattle was a man called Professor Grant Sharp and he had written the seminal book on environmental education, which I have donated to the [Rottnest] guides. And he was the leading person in the world on environmental education, no one knew what we were talking about. They thought it was translating the information into different languages. But Grant Sharp through his book and all the courses he did, put this on a really academic footing.

AY: This is a degree course?

Barblett: Well, it's not a degree. I've got a big thing written by him congratulating me on completing it and blah, blah. All my assignments were centred around Rottnest and we had the best person in the world guiding Rottnest in the early days.

AY: Through your studies?

Barblett: Yes, yes.

AY: I'm still trying to understand 'environmental education' and what it does mean.

Barblett: It's putting the environment first; it's looking after the environment. It grew out of the American Parks Service, that's where it grew out of. A very vital part of this whole thing are volunteers, volunteer guides and that's how all this happened.

AY: Is this a new understanding of the environment?

Barblett: It's putting it on a scholastic footing. He had a star pupil, whom I've met, Sam Ham, would you believe, he's been out here several times. I've never met Grant Sharp but we became very good friends, and then he died. Sam Ham was organising his funeral and he wrote to me and said would I supply a eulogy because he said, Pat, he was always fascinated by this little island in the middle of the Indian Ocean and he loved doing it for you. So I wrote this eulogy that I've got in my memoirs.

AY: Was it accepted, this idea of caring for the environment then, was it a difficult concept to get across?

Barblett: Very, very. I couldn't get the board members to get their heads around it. It was very hard.

AY: What was their conventional thinking at that time?

Barblett: No money, no money. This takes money and they do roads—you see, the Rottnest Board is set up on a flawed model. There is no other entity in Australia [0:45:00] that has to supply all its utilities. Every council doesn't have to do that; but Rottnest does and there is never any money. So that's why I formed the [Rottnest] Foundation. I was sick to death of me putting up these proposals and being told there's no money. So I thought, well, I'll found a foundation.

AY: As a statutory authority, how is it funded? Did Rottnest have to go cap in hand to the government for money?

Barblett: When they set up the authority, after the board—when the board was set up, it was a prison and the people who ran the prison still ran the island for tourism. We had our grey blankets, like all the prisoners did. The accommodation was pretty basic and they had no foresight into what this was about. None whatsoever. I had a terrible job trying to—in fact, Chris Back was the first manager of the island, CEO, who got it and it was a light bulb moment. He said, I now know what you're talking about.

AY: When would this have been? I'm trying to think about where the community in general was about the environment.

Barblett: Particularly in tourism, it was get in, develop, make money and get out. Now the result of that is in Queensland. We were always being badgered by the tourism mob in Perth; be like Daydream Island and something else island. Well you should see them now. They are absolute, unutterable wrecks because the developers, because of COVID, just went away and left everything and it's rotting and it's a disgrace. Kerry Sanderson was on the board with me and she and I used to stop developers coming in. I said to her, we've been vindicated. We've been vindicated.

AY: What I don't really understand is that as Rottnest is an A class reserve, to what extent does that protect Rottnest from development?

Barblett: It doesn't.

AY: Why not?

Barblett: Because you've got a board; the board runs it. It does now because what happened—I was first appointed to the board in '76—in '83, Brian Burke's government won the election. When he was in opposition, the tourism mob in Perth did a good job on him and said, Rottnest should be our shining star, we should have this and that and the other. So he came into government, he took Rottnest out of the lands department, put it into the tourism department and he became the minister for tourism as well as the premier. And we could see what path he was going to go down.

Then he came armed with this—I've got a copy of it upstairs—this new development for the island, a marina and a hotel and a skating park and a god-knows-what all. The community rose up as one and there was a meeting at the Hollywood High School gymnasium, and there were 600 hundred people there, not one politician, they'd all headed for the timber. Dallas [Dempster] was left holding the baby, and the Board. It was so anti this development, that Brian Burke, give him his due, he was a pretty [0:50:00] canny man and he could sense the way the wind was blowing so he said, okay, the community doesn't want it. Out of that came a new Act and Pam Beggs as new tourism minister.

One of the most important things of course was Tom Perrigo³. Once again, I had been advocating for a teacher, an environmental education teacher because the board had just approved my plan to open up the old stables as an environmental education centre. So Brian Burke came to his first meeting of the board, and he went around and he said to each person, what do you want? What do you want? All the men without exception wanted the army off Rottnest. And he came to me and he said, what do you want, Pat? And I said, I want an environmental education teacher.

So within three months, I had one and within six months the army were off Rottnest. Now, boards up to that point had tried to get the army off but couldn't because the Commonwealth wouldn't move. But the time was right because Bob Hawke, the prime minister—my husband Alan was Bob Hawke

³ Tom Perrigo OAM was executive officer of the National Trust of Australia (WA) from 1990–2015 with extensive experience in heritage conservation, interpretation and management within the community, government and private sectors.

and Hazel's best man, we used to go and see them when we were travelling around in his judge role, we'd go and have dinner with them at The Lodge or talk to them. And Bob would always say to me, how's Rottnest, Pat? Always without exception. And I said, well you can do something Bob because Brian Burke has agreed to try and get the army off Rottnest and you'll be hearing from him. He's got some land up the coast that the reason the army wouldn't give was because the SAS used to do their land sea exercises on the island, which was most inappropriate, most inappropriate for Rottnest. I said to Bob, he's got a whole heap of land further up the coast where they can do their land sea exercises. Bob said, right. And they were gone. And they were furious. I knew Russell Lorde who was the brigadier and he didn't speak to me ever again.

AY: But you got your environmental teacher.

Barblett: Yes, Tom Perrigo.

AY: What was his role?

Barblett: We put an ad in the paper and it was overwhelming, the response. George Seddon and I were the interviewers. Now George was my mentor, he was just the most gorgeous man who loved Rottnest, have you read his *Sense of Place*⁴? He is just the most gorgeous man. George helped me a lot and so I said, will you be with me on this? Yes, he would. So, one question was asked of each candidate, what is meant by environmental interpretation? There was only one person who could answer that and that was Tom Perrigo who came from Montana in the USA and who had worked in the park service so he knew exactly what it was.

So he was appointed as the environmental education officer and he and I worked together. The first thing we did was write an interpretative plan. It was a great partnership because I was at board-level getting all this stuff, all the projects, approved by the board and then he was on the ground implementing them. One of the new initiatives that the new Act had put in

⁴ Seddon, G 1972 *A Sense of Place A Response to an Environment: The Swan River Coastal Plain, Western Australia* UWA Press.

place was a management plan for the island and so that was to be written and our interpretative plan was put into that.

AY: Was this the first time there'd been a management plan for Rottneest? So before that it had been quite ad hoc?

Barblett: Oh yes, very ad hoc.

AY: And you've got your environmental—

Barblett: And we got our interpretative plan into the management plan, yes.

AY: Were you getting opposition on the board?

Barblett: No, no, they just thought I was a bit of a nutter, I think. No, I'll tell you: I was appointed to the board [0:55:00] and for the first six months Sir John Parker was the deputy chair of the board. In those days, the minister was the nominal chair but of course, being a minister, they never could do anything so the deputy chair was the one doing all the work. Sir John Parker was a very patrician man who had opened up the Pilbara with David Brand as premier. They opened up the Pilbara for mining, he was an engineer, head of the public works.

There's no place for women on boards, what would they know? He came from the very old school. And for six months I put up with his patronising. And then one day I looked up—I used to sit down the bottom of the table—and I looked up and I said, Sir John, I'm not one of your junior engineers, I'm a fully constituted member of this board. Well, they all nearly fell off their chairs. Do you know, from that day forward, he was my best friend. With bullies and people like that, you've got to call them out. To be very fair, I really don't think he thought he was being patronising. The manner he adopted—well, he didn't know how to treat a woman, that was probably the problem.

AY: It was how he had always been, and it was possibly just his background?

Barblett: Well, from then on, I was always consulted: Pat do you want this or do you want a budget for that? Because getting a budget out of them was like getting blood out of a stone.

AY: But as you pointed out, there wasn't money to spend anyway.

Barblett: There was none. None. You see, even when Pam Beggs was there and they set this up, it was still a flawed model because they say the money has to come from tourism. Well it can't, it just can't do it.

AY: Can we talk about the foundation, when did this idea come about?

Barblett: Oh, me sitting on the board and people saying—you see, because the board is a statutory authority, it's government, they can't access any federal government funds and they can't access lotteries. Up to that point, no corporate had ever given Rottnest money, ever, ever, ever. I knew a few powerful people around the place, businessmen and women and I decided to form a foundation, a Rottnest Foundation. Alan helped me with the legal stuff and we set it up and, who was the first chairman? Geoff Totterdell, I think, I can't remember but I'd select the chairman and then I'd be deputy and tell him what to do.

AY: What is the purpose of the Foundation?

Barblett: The purpose of the Foundation is to raise money for environmental and cultural reasons, for the island, for the island.

AY: And how can the foundation go about doing that?

Barblett: Well, the first big thing we got was the round-the-island walk, the Bidi track. One of the big ones, I think it was BHP, gave us a lot of money for that and that was the first time a corporate had given money for something on Rottnest. And they were so thrilled with it because we included them, we had their workers come over and plant trees, a whole involvement of the company, not just them handing out money.

AY: So the Foundation is essentially going out and marketing the island?

Barblett: Absolutely, absolutely. At the moment we're getting from HBF, they're using the quokka as their advertising logo and they're giving us \$250,000 for the next four years which will be a million. [1:00:00] And it's now in good hands. Graham Edwards is deputy chair and he loves Rottnest and a young man called Steve Carre who I have known for a long, long time, he's the new chair of the Foundation.

AY: Going back to Tom Perrigo, what was his role actually?

Barblett: His role was to run the whole volunteer and environmental education centre. The barracks became the environmental education centre.

AY: And is this the time when you were instrumental in setting up the guides association?

Barblett: Well the guides were part of our interpretative plan, when he and I wrote the interpretative plan, that's when the guides were established and it went into the main plan.

AY: What was the role of the guides?

Barblett: To lead visitors around the island—they do a fantastic job.

AY: Once again, are you getting any opposition from anyone saying why do we need these people?

Barblett: Oh no, no, Kings Park had them by then. The zoo had what they called docents; no, no it was catching on. It was from the American parks that this guiding concept came about.

AY: I'd still like to understand better about the studies you did in environmental tourism and how thinking about a place, a location, has changed so dramatically over the years hasn't it.

Barblett: Absolutely. But if we could leave that for a minute I can go and get my big folder with it all there.

AY: I think maybe we could save that for next time when we're fresh and we can really look at that. Thank you for today, Pat. [1:02:14]

END OF FILE ONE

This is a second interview with Pat Barblett AM for the State Library of WA, today is Tuesday 16 May 2023. Last time when we spoke, you said that when you were looking for an environmental education officer, there was a defining question that you asked the applicants and that was: what is meant by environmental interpretation? And we didn't really talk about that in much detail at that time so can we tease it out now. So what is the answer?

Barblett: Environmental interpretation grew out of the [National] Park Service in America, and it was to inform visitors about the place. To tell them all the things that are relevant to that place they're visiting. It has really two purposes: 1) to inform the visitors, but 2) to give the people who run the place, a foot to stand on—well, if something is about to happen that is not acceptable, they all rise up as we've seen in a couple of instances. It's really telling the story and it's telling it in a recreational setting. It's not telling the story in a classroom and they have to be very engaging in the way they use interpretation. When we first mooted this with my colleagues on the board, they all thought it meant it interpreting the information into a foreign language. But that was not correct. It took me some time to really convince them of the worth of interpretation.

I was studying at UWA, doing a Bachelor of Education because I was turning my Diploma of Phys Ed into a degree and my supervisor at that time was a man called Peter Baker and he had just done his doctorate at Washington University in Seattle. He said to me, there is a course in environmental interpretation by correspondence and if you would like to do it, we will credit you with that in your degree. So he organised it for me and I was enrolled in the environmental interpretation course at Washington University in Seattle. My professor was Professor Grant Sharpe who it turns out has written the definitive book on environmental interpretation⁵ which I must add, I have donated to the Rottneest Voluntary Guides [Association]. It was the seminal book written on environmental interpretation. He was the world authority, let me tell you, the government used to hire him out, if you like, to third world and other countries and he would go and do their interpretation for them. Here we were, I'm doing these assignments once a month, and I used the

⁵ Grant William Sharpe, 1982 *Interpreting the Environment*. Wiley Press. Cornell University USA.

assignments for projects on Rottnest. We had the leading interpreter in the world guiding me and setting up the program. This was in the 80s, so we were well ahead of anything in Australia. We won awards for the work we did and I was very proud of it actually.

AY: Some of the topics you were covering, I think you've done one on women on Rottnest, was that part of these studies?

Barblett: No, that was part of another study [laughs].

AY: You and your studies.

Barblett: That was a postgraduate history thing I did, I think at Murdoch, yes, Lenore Layman was my guide there and she said, do something on the women on Rottnest, so I did.

AY: And with the women of Rottnest, you're going back to the early colonial days and following that right through to the Second World War, [0:05:00] is that correct?

Barblett: Yes, yes.

AY: When we use the word interpretative / interpretation, history is something that's always being reimagined and reinterpreted. Is there a sense of that in these studies, that what you're talking about now, or say, the Rottnest guides are talking about now, may change in the future? Things evolve.

Barblett: Yes, we do, we do, we absolutely do. It's taken our main museum here, where are we now, the 2020s? This was in the 80s and it's taken them nearly 50 years to understand what interpretation is and the new museum in Perth [Boola Bardip] is an excellent example of interpretation. They tell the *stories*, this is the basis of it, telling the stories.

AY: Let's talk more about how you've related this to Rottnest. You've got your environmental education officer.

Barblett: The first thing that we did, I think I said previously, that Brian Burke asked what we wanted and I wanted an education officer and Tom Perrigo was the person because he understood what interpretation was because he'd worked in the American Parks Services. The first thing Tom and I did was write an interpretative plan and part of that interpretative plan was guiding. Now guiding in interpretation is the backbone of interpretation because it's in a recreational setting, it's not in a classroom setting with a teacher standing up telling you. It's in a recreational setting. People want to come and hear the stories. And that's what we set the guides up to do.

As I said before, I was at board level getting all these projects improved and he was on the ground implementing them and we were a very good team and then along came the first management plan and our interpretative plan was included in the management plan and that was how it all happened.

AY: How have you seen the guides grow and develop over the years from the 1980s?

Barblett: Absolutely magnificently. Every time I go to a guides' function I am very proud. I sit up there and think, they are wonderful people. It's the old adage of like attracts like, and they're all people of the same mind, the same passion and it's just burgeoned, the whole thing.

AY: We're staying with Rottnest, it's such an important place for West Australians, you served on the board for 16 years, three of those as chairman before you retired in 1993, can we look at some of your achievements. We've just talked then about your interpretation plan which I think has evolved over time, it's revisited every few years?

Barblett: Yes, yes, I've got copies up there [indicating upstairs] and they then get experts—they go interstate to get experts, for god's sake, excuse me. Anyway, that was another board in another past. People don't get it. And that's the problem they just don't get it.

AY: The Rottnest Museum, you were instrumental in establishing that too, now why does the island need a static museum?

Barblett: It doesn't, it doesn't. The museum information centre that I set up was when I was doing the course with Grant Sharpe and that was more or less an interpretative centre. It's been dismantled now, totally dismantled.

AY: Where was that situated?

Barblett: In the museum.

AY: Oh, in the existing museum.

Barblett: We had this huge relief map, as you walked in the front door, you didn't have to scramble round the back to get into the place, you walked through the front door and there in front of you was this huge relief map [0:10:00] which was carved by a razor blade out of polystyrene. It was a masterpiece, I don't know what they've done with it, but it's not on view anymore. So the idea was that people would walk in, straight in, see the map of Rottnest and [say], oh, there's Parker Point, now how do we get to Parker Point from here, we're in Thomson's Bay, we can get there. There's West End, how do we get—it was just straight there in your face—and then on a great big board, straight in front of you was the reason why this was set up. And that's disappeared too.

AY: The reason why the museum was set up?

Barblett: Why the interpretative centre, if you like to call it that. It was called a museum but it wasn't a museum, not in the true sense of the word. There were bits and pieces, Mrs Somebody's seaweed hat was there and a few bits and pieces around but it was really to tell people the stories of Rottnest.

AY: That would then link with the stories the guides might have been telling, so there's continuity?

Barblett: Yes, absolutely, absolutely. It all came out—it's all in here [indicating a large folder].

AY: We're looking at a huge—a big folder [both laughing]. We'll see if some of the contents could find their way into the State Library as well.

Barblett: Hmm.

AY: So the museum now on Rottnest has changed from your vision.

Barblett: Oh it has totally.

AY: So how do you see it now? [pause] Oh, she doesn't want to say. And that's fair enough. Let's move on. Converting the Kingston Army Barracks into the Rottnest Environmental Education Centre and a youth hostel, that was in the early days?

Barblett: Tom Perrigo was instrumental in keeping all that together. He did a fantastic job and he ran—teachers would come in first and do courses and then they'd bring their pupils. It worked marvellously but then as successive boards come, they don't see the value in these things. And then it all changes.

AY: Is there someone in Tom Perrigo's role now?

Barblett: I don't know, I don't know to be quite honest, I have no idea.

AY: I'm thinking of someone advocating.

Barblett: They have so many people on that board, I don't know what they do. There's a little section of little departments sort of that runs that but—

AY: Alright—chairman of Rottnest Hospital Board, how did that come about?

Barblett: Well the hospital was in a little building under the Moreton Bay Figs, you know those Moreton Bay Figs, it was just in there. They had a nurse then the health department ran it and at some stage, and I can't remember, when, they decided to pull out and said the board had to run it. Then they looked at me and said, would you be Chair of the Hospital Board [laughing]. I said, alright. May Mabelson who was Des's secretary, lovely lady, still with us, she came in as the Hospital Secretary and I was the board. We had to write reports and give them to the health department and make sure everything was run correctly.

AY: Was there in fact a full-blown hospital?

Barblett: Well, it was just like it is now.

AY: The nurses' post.

Barblett: Yes, the nurses' post.

AY: So essentially this is a rather grand name for what is really the nurse and the ambulance?

Barblett: Yes, and a resident nurse, there's always been a resident nurse and that's what it was.

AY: Alright, the Hospital Board is similar to what exists now.

Barblett: I don't think they have a board.

AY: Oh, I see. I'm thinking of the premises, so if visitors fall off their bike—

Barblett: Oh if they fall off their bike, they get attention but I think the government now runs it properly, as they should.

AY: And linked to Fiona Stanley Hospital?

Barblett: Yes. This is the trouble with Rottnest and I think I've said this to you before, there is no other [0:15:00] authority that has to supply its own energy, its own water, its own hospital. It's just not fair, it's not fair at all. I don't know whether it's federal or state government, no one is really game enough to stand up and say this is not right.

AY: Pat, how should Rottnest be run, who should be responsible?

Barblett: I think our government, our state government, but I think its finances should be put on a solid footing. It's not.

AY: And what would that solid footing look like?

Barblett: Probably what they give to councils. Each council gets a remuneration fee each year to cover this, that and the other, and the same with Rottnest.

AY: A bit like a local government authority.

Barblett: Yes, yes, absolutely.

AY: And how can things be improved on Rottnest do you believe?

Barblett: Oh, look, money [laughs]. As I've said all along—money, money, money. You see it was a flawed way it was set up. When they set it up, they said it has to engender its own money from tourism and it can't. It just can't do it. It's not possible.

AY: In other words, to be self-supporting?

Barblett: Absolutely.

AY: And you're saying that's not feasible.

Barblett: I don't think so, I really don't think so.

AY: How do you view the new developments that are happening on Rottnest?

Barblett: Well I think there's some—well, it had to improve. Of course, we haven't talked about this but in about the early 2000s, the auditor-general did an audit of Rottnest and he said to the government, spend \$50 million or close it down. It was riddled with asbestos, as he said, all the accommodation, if it was on the mainland, it would be condemned. That was a wake-up call. So what did the government do? Like all governments, they formed a committee. Bob Kucera was the minister and he rang me and said, would I go on the committee. This is well after I left Rottnest, I left in '93 this was in the early 2000s I think.

The first thing I said to him was, who is chairing it, because I refuse to sit on a board if the chair isn't competent. And he said, a man called Alex Allan,

you won't know him. And I said, no I've never heard of him. He was the principal private secretary to John Major, he came from the exchequer in England and was John Major's principal private secretary and when John Major lost the election, he resigned—Alex Allan, resigned. He was a great yachtsman and used to come out here and sail ships and boats and things with John Longley. They didn't have a family, he and his wife, so they decided to come to Western Australia and he settled in Fremantle. He and John used to do lots of sailing but he must have given his credentials to the government and here was an opportunity to use this man's expertise. I must say, he was an excellent chairman. We had six months to present the government with a report. It was a really interesting exercise.

AY: What were the main features of the report, can you recall?

Barblett: I can't recall it now, but I've got it upstairs and I can look it up and we can discuss that another time. But the money was the thing again and they had to get the asbestos out. Practically every building on the island had asbestos in it. That was the first thing, getting rid of the asbestos and the next thing was upgrading the accommodation which was very substandard.

AY: Is the accommodation, at least some of it, heritage listed?

Barblett: Yes, yep.

AY: So the exteriors can't be altered?

Barblett: No, but they can be maintained, and nothing was being maintained.

AY: [0:20:00] The report you did with Alex Allan—

Barblett: It was called Open for Business.⁶

AY: How was it received by the government?

Barblett: Well, like all reports, put on a shelf [laughing].

⁶ Annual Report [https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/taledpapers.nsf/displaypaper/3622961ab95084ff5cdf45f48256f3b001c4123/\\$file/rotnest+island+auth+ar+2003004.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/taledpapers.nsf/displaypaper/3622961ab95084ff5cdf45f48256f3b001c4123/$file/rotnest+island+auth+ar+2003004.pdf)

AY: Did anything come out of it?

Barblett: Yes, I'm being harsh here, I'm being a bit cynical. Yes, there were. They got rid of the asbestos.

AY: That's a big job.

Barblett: It's a huge job; they spent hundreds of thousands of dollars getting rid of it, that was the first thing, then they did begin to upgrade some of the accommodation, no doubt about that. They were the two big ticket items in the report.

AY: How did you feel about the report, were you reasonably satisfied?

Barblett: Yes, yes. We had some really interesting people on it, I'll get the book and show you.

AY: In the meantime, let's have a look at Rottnest for you personally. How have you used Rottnest over the years?

Barblett: Well our family has. As I said, we had five children and Alan was always a great lover of Rottnest, he went there as a little boy, mainly in those YMCA camps. The YMCA used to go there every year and he was part of that and he loved Rottnest. The first time I went to Rottnest, the first weekend I was here, I was on a yacht and I hate sailing I get so seasick and I just heaved my way there in a bucket, didn't move from the bunk—they all went ashore, I stayed there and heaved my way all the way home.

So I wasn't very impressed but when I became attached to Alan, he loved it and we used to go and then all the children adored it. One of the reasons I think that I got put on the board, or June Craig who was the minister who put me on the board is, I can remember her saying, "And Mrs Barblett is a user of Rottnest".

AY: And that's significant because it's that personal experience.

Barblett: Absolutely, absolutely.

AY: How did your children use the island, what did they enjoy doing, what did you enjoy doing?

Barblett: Oh, riding bikes, the freedom of it. They could go where they liked, fishing—the little boys loved fishing. There was a place they called ‘poo point’ where the old sewerage used to come out near the lighthouse—

AY: Bathurst.

Barblett: Bathurst, near there and they’d go to poo point and fish for herring and all that sort of thing. They loved it. And my eldest son, Peter, still goes to Rottnest once a year. We now have a house at Margaret River, he won’t come down there, he goes to Rottnest every year without fail and many times during it.

AY: You and Alan, what did you enjoy doing on Rottnest?

Barblett: Being with family, being with friends. You know, you have three generations of family there and we’d sit and the same friends went every year so we have very close friends, Libby and Jeff Craig who had a big station up north. They’d do their shearing every year and they’d come down to Rottnest for a family holiday and bring their children, Mandy and Kenny and Tracey. They’re lifelong friends, they’ve all gone now.

AY: The picture you paint is a common one for a lot of West Australian families, isn’t it?

Barblett: Oh yes. And this is the picture—when I first came here I could not understand how Western Australians, coming from Victoria, what is it that attracts them to this place. It’s more like a desert island than a tropical island. Then I read George Seddon’s seminal essay on Rottnest⁷ and I understood it. He’s written this beautiful essay on Rottnest. Because he came from Victoria and he couldn’t understand it. He lived in a place called Fern Tree

⁷ Seddon, George, *The Rottnest Experience*, Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia, Vol. 66, Parts 1 and 2, 1983.

Gully which was up in the Dandenongs, beautiful gullies with ferns and everything and he comes over to this place and it's sort of sandy, very odd looking plants because he was a botanist. His essay taught me and he was my mentor. [0:25:00]

AY: You just mentioned 'poo point' which reminds me how much some things have changed on Rottnest, the fact that the waste from toilets is sent back to the mainland. How do you see some of these changes—solar panels and wind turbine?

Barblett: It's going to be fantastic. And when we finish this, I'll tell you about something that happened at the weekend because something very exciting happened. I think this board is on top of it, I think he, Hamish Beck, has got a good grasp of that side of things and that's good. That's really good.

AY: How do you see Rottnest's future? You've talked about what it's meant to your family, that's something that will continue—

Barblett: Oh, absolutely.

AY: —for WA families and that's what they want. There's perhaps a tension between that and more development. How can this work?

Barblett: Well, when we were on the board, we drew a line from Parker Point across to Geordie Bay, an imaginary line, and I think it's in one of the reports. No development beyond that line and they've kept to it, most boards. But one day I think there'll be an effort to go outside that line. That's the beauty, we've kept this pristine environment for people to enjoy and once you let you go, look what happens here.

AY: You're at the mercy of the board in a way. A different board could choose to do something totally different.

Barblett: Absolutely, absolutely.

AY: Is there a way to guard against that?

Barblett: Yes, with environmental interpretation, telling the stories, keeping that well to the fore and then when any management people want to do something different, as has happened with Brian Burke, they rose up as one and said no. As a community, we don't want that. That's the really core product of environmental interpretation and it's what's happened in America, they've kept their most beautiful parks—Yosemite, all these parks are not touched, not touched in any way, shape, or form. And that's what we've got to do with Rottnest.

AY: So are you saying that in part at least, it relies on the people of WA knowing what plans there are—

Barblett: Absolutely, absolutely.

AY: And the community ensuring that the island stays the way WA people want it.

Barblett: Hmm. There is a management plan in progress at the minute and I know for a fact—I've been involved in it, which is very kind, I'm way past—they are involving the community in it. This is something amazing, really amazing. Most boards don't want interference [laughs].

AY: There is public consultation?

Barblett: Yes, very much so, very much so.

AY: Moving away a little from Rottnest, but there's still a link, there's an organisation called FACET—

Barblett: Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism.

AY: You were the driving force behind this in 1991, why, is it a good idea?

Barblett: I went to a museum, an Australian museums conference in Canberra, the board sent me there which was great, and I met this man, Professor David Lowenthal who was the cultural history professor at University of London and he was the guest speaker or a whole week, he and I became really good friends. He'd never been to Western Australia, never been. He often went to

Canberra and Sydney and I said, well, next time you come, give us a hoy and come home to London via Perth. I'll get a plane fare for you.

Not six months had passed and I get this message to say he was coming and could he come to Perth [0:30:00] and so the board was his sponsor for a whole week here in Perth. He stayed with Alan and I and we had four public meetings, one in Fremantle, one in the library, one over at Murdoch, I can't remember the last one. But out of the woodwork came all these people who were interested in environmental and cultural tourism. They were all working in total isolation and I came back to Chris Back, who was our CEO at that time, and I said, look Chris, we've got to do something about this. We've got to get them together, give them a voice because 'in there' is not listening, as usual. He said, well there's a young woman in the office, Pauline Sinclair.

AY: Whose office is this?

Barblett: Rottnest, he's CEO of Rottnest and she's one of the workers in the office. He said, take Pauline and do what you want to do. So Pauline came along and she and I used to have these very informal meetings with all these people. We'd go to a coffee shop that would host us. We would have our meeting and tell them what was happening and blah, blah, blah. This went on for about a year. Then they all said, we want something more formal than this so I had met this women, Jill Lambert, and she was in South Australia and she was their guru in cultural and environmental interpretation and history. She'd formed a sort of a group. So over she came and we had a big workshop on Rottnest. Out of that workshop came the fact that they wanted to be formalised; they wanted to have a board and meetings. So that was the start of FACET and it grew out of Rottnest.

AY: Who are they, apart from Rottnest. These are tourism operators, are they?

Barblett: No, there are, but no, they're people who are interested; historians, academics, a lot of people that tourism wouldn't normally touch and this is our big strength really, that we go outside that tourism group and touch all these other people and that's FACET's strength and it's grown from that little start to now it is one of the major tourism voices.

AY: And this includes Indigenous groups as well?

Barblett: Yes. The first ever workshop we ran was an Indigenous one, the first ever, and Noel Nannup, who is my mentor, and I brought this woman—Alan and I had recently been up to Kakadu and we met, I'll think of her name in a minute. We met this amazing lady who had set up all the Aboriginal stuff in Kakadu and that really is something and I invited her down and she came. She and Noel Nannup, we were up in the hills and it was his country up there. That was the first workshop we ever ran, long before anyone was doing Aboriginal tourism. But we've been way ahead of the push.

AY: This is 1991, 20-something years later, what is FACET doing?

Barblett: We run a conference every year. One year it is in Perth and the other year we go out into regions and we have made some remarkable improvements in regions one of them being Mount Magnet. Now, the reason that we had the link with Mount Magnet was that my husband Alan and a couple of his mates used to go every June long weekend to a station called Kirkalocka which is on the main highway going north. And they used to make goat, kangaroo and whatever else they could mince up, sausages. It was a sausage weekend. Now sausages had no interest for me [0:35:00] but every weekend we went, Sid Hopkinson, the station owner, used to organise a picnic and this is remarkable country, absolutely remarkable country. I don't think in the 30 years we'd been going up and down, that we went to the same place twice. Remarkable.

I got to know the people and the area, the country, very, very well. One year we went up there and they were all down, nothing was right, they were all fighting. I said, you don't understand what you've got here. It's just fantastic, oh what've we got, they said. You've got the country. A very prominent member of FACET, Ross Dowling, Professor Ross Dowling, he is the guru in what they call geoparks. Geoparks around the world are really something and we haven't got one in Australia yet.

AY: Can you explain what a geopark is?

Barblett: A geopark has to have—well, the first thing is some notable geological attraction and then you go from there and then you go from there. It's like environmental tourism and you pull all these people together, it's very community based. You can't do anything without the community. And Ross has done a huge amount of work in this space, geoparks.

AY: Where does Indigenous knowledge come into this because geo space is fundamental to Indigenous people?

Barblett: Yes, yes. I'll show you another picture [pause to fetch photo].

AY: Alright, so what I'm looking at is a photograph of Mount Magnet which amazing stars of course and an Indigenous person standing on a hill. Tell me how that came about? And the significance of it.

Barblett: Well, as you know Aboriginal people have always related to the heavens, the stars and one of the major things that I know Ross is doing with geoparks is getting the Aboriginal people involved in the whole thing from grassroots right through. And that's an example of it. When we went to Mount Magnet, we ran a week's conference in the outback. It was an amazing experience.

AY: This was a FACET conference?

Barblett: Yes. We had all the local regions around came, and out of that conference we recommended an Aboriginal art gallery, which is still there. They've got a big visitors centre there now which is wonderful that was another recommendation. When we went into that town, it was divisive, they were all fighting and we were able to pull them together with these things. Karen Morrissey [shire councillor] is still one of my best friends up there.

AY: You've done all this work in Mount Magnet, what about in other regions?

Barblett: Yes, Albany, we've been down to Albany and we've tarted them up a bit, [laughs] particularly with the fresh food stuff down there. The most disappointing conference I ever ran was in—I shouldn't say this should I—but it was in Manjimup where they don't like to be told by women. That's the whole basis of that place. Anyway, but out of that came this fresh food thing

that they're now beating a drum about. No, we've done a lot of work in regions.

AY: So the kinds of things you did in Mount Magnet, you've done in other regions. What more work needs to be done? I'm sure there is still more.

Barblett: Well, I've been at arm's length from FACET. Tracy Shea now does amazing work.

AY: They hold all sorts of—because I've been out of it, I don't know—but three or four workshops a year and a conference a year. [0:40:00] It's just growing and growing and growing.

AY: I notice with Indigenous organisations it seems to support Indigenous tourism organisations into say, establishing their social media, so there seems to be that kind of support for operators. Is that correct?

Barblett: Oh yes, there is. We instigated the FACET Golden Guide Award which went into the Tourism Awards and still is in the Tourism Awards and I think for the first time it's going on to the national stage.

AY: And what is that acknowledging?

Barblett: Guiding. It's been a very, very great success.

AY: It has an educational role for tourism operators?

Barblett: Not really, no, just what they get out of our conferences.

AY: What about financial help?

Barblett: Oh, we're being inundated with money [laughs]. Success breeds success.

AY: So where's your funding coming from with FACET?

Barblett: Perth City Council, Heritage Council. For their money, we run them a heritage conference every year.

AY: Government departments?

Barblett: Yes, and Tracy in particular has done so well at eliciting money. They're very, very financially grounded.

AY: What's the future for something like FACET?

Barblett: Once again, as I said to you before, it's like people attracting like people and for as long as the passion is there, it will flourish. It will die if people aren't interested and then it's done its bit.

AY: You were there from 1991, but you're not actively involved now, is that correct?

Barblett: No. I was patron for many years and then I was getting older and older and my very dear friend Kerry Sanderson, I said to Kerry, I want to step down as patron; would you be willing to take it on. And she said, yes, so she's now the patron. I'm a life member and I still go to guiding things and enjoy that.

AY: I believe WA Parks Foundation is something you worked with Kerry Sanderson on, tell me a little about that?

Barblett: Oh yes, that was interesting, now where is it? [pause to fetch trophy]

AY: What I'm looking at here is a very pretty award, this is a trophy? The Edmund Hillary Parks Award. Tell me about this.

Barblett: Well, when I was on the Conservation Foundation, I did a lot of work in parks of course. Jim Sharp was 2IC to Kieran McNamara [Department of Environment and Conservation]. They were the two top people. Now Jim always wanted to have a parks foundation because all the other states have one and they raise millions of dollars through their parks foundation so Jim came to me and he said, will you join me and we'll see if we can set it up and I said, yes, okay.

So we tried and got the head of the parks foundation from New South Wales to come over and it was looking good but then it just fell on its face. It just didn't happen. Kerry has always been a good friend and one weekend she was down at Margaret River and she walked into my kitchen and said, can you keep a secret? I hate it when people say that [laughs]. So she said, on Monday the government will announce that I'll be the first woman governor. Yes, fantastic. I'm not telling you because of that, I'm telling you because I've been thinking seriously about the things that I can support [0:45:00] and she said, I know you and Jim Sharp tried to set up a parks foundation and she said, I want to do that. And she did and she's done it very successfully. Jim and I did help her but she really didn't need much help.

AY: The role of the WA Parks Foundation is partly to attract funding, what else does it do?

Barblett: It brings people into parks. Within the government organisations there are those that say people are terrorists. They don't want them in the parks and there was always this tension between people in parks and parks for parks' sake. Jim and I were always people in parks and this is what the Parks Foundation really encourages. They have yearly things that bring people into parks. She's done a fantastic job.

AY: I suppose those who don't want people in parks are saying that they will ruin the environment so how do you guard against that?

Barblett: Yes. You manage them. Management is the big thing. Also give them information. If you tell them—environmental interpretation—we come back to that the whole time.

AY: Just before we finish today, one thing I didn't ask you about, going back to Rottnest, is about the Indigenous history of Rottnest, or the more recent history and the Quod which was the prison. Where do you stand on that, what do you believe should be our approach?

Barblett: Well, let me say, Pam Beggs who was the minister in 1976, she and I started this ball rolling. I was appalled when I found out because up to this point, I knew about the story but I had never spoken to an Aboriginal person. It didn't

sort of enter my consciousness. Then when I got on the board and heard the story I was appalled. And then when I got told there were 400 bodies buried in the camping ground, I was even more appalled so I got to her and I said, look, this has to stop. We've got to put the camping people somewhere else and make sure this is a respected site.

Well, we put it to the board and they agreed and we put a big notice on the front and then all hell broke loose. All hell broke loose. Led by Robert Bropho. He was the leader of the Noongar putsch in those days, not a nice man, and it didn't suit his political agenda to have this solved anyway. It suited his political agenda that it was ongoing. Brian Burke took up the cudgels and he said, okay. The complexity of Rottnest is that from the top part of Western Australia right down the coast around to Esperance, every clan or tribe has someone buried in that prison because it was government policy to take out the lore men and put them in prison. That was the policy and it just shattered the whole thing.

One has to understand that each clan or tribe has its own language, its own set of rules and its own lore, yes. And there are over 300 of them in Australia so try and put that into perspective. So Brian Burke said okay. He hired a ferry and he brought every lore man from Kununurra right down the coast to Esperance. There were about 120 of them, I think. I went on the boat, [0:50:00] we met them at the boat, onto the boat, over to Rottnest and we all went down to where the golf club is now. There is a set of tea trees and we had a smoking ceremony there and they all said their piece. Pam Beggs as the minister had come on behalf of the government and she had a whole list of things that the government was prepared to do—move this building, put that there. Bropho had his say and so then it went from there. That was the beginning of it. Since then, we have a very good friend of mine, Marilyn Morgan, who is an Aboriginal woman, she's spent three years of her life, because the complexity of it is that no one will agree what is the right thing to do.

So the Rottnest Foundation applied to Lotteries to get money to solve the problem. We got money and we now have a plan which is in three stages. Part one of the plan is to tidy up the whole of the area, to cordon it off and demarcate it with paths around it, clean all the mess out. That was given to

Karen Jacobs who is a Whadjuk woman, also Karen was the first Aboriginal person to be appointed to the board. She and young Whadjuk men did the clearing and all that was done culturally appropriately.

Stage two then is to ask each peoples what they want. Some want bodies moved back to their country, well how do you do that? I mean, it is just a minefield trying to do it. Then she gave up, three years of her life she spent doing that. Then the foundation employed a young man from Fremantle, Greg Grabasch. Greg, I think he's a landscape designer, lovely young man, three years of his life going all over the place getting this and that.

AY: Is he Indigenous?

Barblett: No. He had the trust of all of them. He wrote this amazing report [pause].

AY: Which has been filed away somewhere?

Barblett: Can't find it [long pause].

AY: So this report that has gone missing, do we know if it was one the Indigenous communities quite liked the look of or didn't get a chance to—

Barblett: Oh yes, they did Greg Grabasch spent three years of his life just consulting them all and he got the confidence of them all. Not only that, you see, it was the foundation's report, it wasn't the board's report. And that was the rub, I think. He was so upset and disappointed that he left Western Australia and he's gone to South Australia.

AY: So where are we at now with that burial ground.

Barblett: Well, I can't say.

AY: We'll leave the burial ground as is at the moment. But I'd like to know about the Quod which is also difficult territory.

Barblett: Very difficult territory but it can tell a wonderful story for them. This was my take on the whole thing is that when it all died down, we turn into an

interpretative centre for the Aboriginal people. They have wonderful stories to tell. Did you know there was a songline from Uluru to Rottneest and there is. And did you know there are three stories that go along with that songline: a man and a dog, a woman and little children and the dog star which is a reflection of the dog star [0:55:00] in the heavens. They're the songs that one has to sing to placate the spirits as you go through other people's country. And Rottneest holds a very special place in their spiritual belief that the spirits of the dead people come to Rottneest go out into the whales further out. There are wonderful stories to be told. The stories of misery, of course. But associated with that there's all sorts of wonderful stories and that's my idea of what we should be doing with the Quod.

AY: How can that be achieved when you need some consensus from Indigenous groups and as you've pointed out, they've come from nations right round WA.

Barblett: Well the problem now is that the Noongars think that they're the boss, so jump over that hurdle and you've solved the problem.

AY: What do you believe is likely to happen next to the Quod?

Barblett: I don't know. I have no idea, no idea whatsoever. I know what I'd like for the Quod but what they'll do with it, I have no idea.

AY: You would like to see it as an interpretative centre for people to visit.

Barblett: Yes, yep. Apparently the Holocaust museum in Germany is fantastic. Things like that can tell the stories so they won't happen again.

AY: I believe a lot of Indigenous people don't like to go to Rottneest.

Barblett: No, they don't. But it's getting better, it's getting better.

AY: How can Rottneest become a place that Indigenous people are comfortable to visit?

Barblett: [pause] I don't know. It depends on the person.

AY: I think we might leave it there for today because there are lots of other things to talk about. We're leaving it on a difficult note, a difficult one to achieve consensus on.

Barlett: Very difficult, very difficult. [0:57:20]

END OF FILE TWO

This is another interview Pat Barblett AM, today is Thursday 9 November 2023 and we're at home in Claremont and there's a gardener working outside if end up hearing any noises. Pat, we were talking last time about Rottnest and I'd like to move onto to the Conservation Commission, as it was then, you were chair of it for 17 years.

Barblett: No, I wasn't chair for 17 years.

AY: Oh, you were on it for 17 years, thanks for correcting me.

Barblett: I was on it for 17 years, but I chaired it for the last three or four years — I can't remember now.

AY: How did your involvement with it begin?

Barblett: It was at the turn of the century, the year 2000, there was a very acrimonious debate about old growth forests. If you remember, the whole community was up in arms, there were the doctors for the old growth forests, there were all these people and CALM—Conservation And Land Management, was at the middle of it. The minister of the day, Cheryl Edwardes, was not happy with the advice she was getting from her department and she then decided to form another committee of community people who had the interest and the expertise in this area so she formed the Conservation Commission. I'm not quite sure what year it was, but it was around the beginning of 2000.

Then she rang me and asked me to be on it. So I said, yes, I would. That's when I started, I was on it for 17 years and the last three or four I chaired it, I can't remember now. It was an amazing experience. I have seen every park in Western Australia through the eyes of the people who know it and love it. I just can't explain to you the experience and the people I met through this committee.

AY: What was its brief then?

Barblett: Its brief is to give advice to the minister. And sometimes the advice was different from the department's advice. Keiran McNamara who was head of

the department, I got on extremely well with. He's gone to God now, like most of my contemporaries [laughs]. Public servants have a tight rope to walk and they do. I've watched them, I've watched how they work. Having been involved with Rottnest, I've watched all that; having been involved in this other committee, I've watched how they work. And you get blockers, you get people who do not want the information to be passed on to anybody. Anyway, that's beside the point. I just loved every minute of the time I had on that committee. It was so fulfilling.

AY: What were you able to achieve, you've just said it was fulfilling.

Barblett: Well, the big part of that committee was management planning. Every park has to have a management plan and there was a certain section of CALM that was to do the management plan and sometimes the management plans weren't as one would like. So one of the major tasks of this committee was overseeing management plans as well. That sometimes caused a bit of friction as you can imagine.

AY: Who was on the commission with you in those early years?

Barblett: Oh, [pause] I can see their faces. I can get a photo and show you.

AY: We can come back to that. How many of you were there and how much clout did you have?

Barblett: There were about six, seven or eight of us, something like that. And they came from all parts, a lot of country people were on it. [0:05:00] It's a long time ago now [both laugh]. Jim Sharp was the government person on it. They had a government person on it and Jim Sharp was that one, I became very close to Jim and still am. I see a bit of he and Leanne.

AY: Can you cast your mind back to any achievements you were proud of, where you were listened to and your advice taken?

Barblett: I can't remember but there was a huge management plan up north that we had a lot of input to do with.

AY: The Conservation Commission is now the Conservation and Parks Commission, is that correct?

Barblett: Yes, that's correct. You see, the other conundrum was the department had to pay for them and that really, when we all went on a trip up north, that was paid for by the department and they got very snarly about it. Now I don't think they travel very much. I don't know but this is what I guess.

AY: Is it possible to be an advisory group to the government without travelling to these places do you think?

Barblett: No, it's not. How can you make a decision on a park up north if you haven't—no, absolutely not. And that was the big thing that we all decided that this had to be is that we travelled and we went to these parks. And we did and we got to know the people and that was as it should be. That's how she wanted it.

AY: How do you see it now, do you know how it functions?

Barblett: Don't know, don't know. I have nothing to do with it.

AY: How have you seen environmental awareness in general terms with the public and government change over time.

Barblett: It's huge. Not only that, climate change is something that's part of all of this and people now understand that the environment is a very sensitive balance and I think the whole awareness of the community has certainly risen since I've had something to do with it, that's what, 25 years ago.

AY: So 25 years ago, was the general public concerned about climate change, in your opinion?

Barblett: Not climate change. No they weren't. They were cutting down old growth forest, they were concerned about it, but no, climate change hadn't arisen by then.

AY: But they were concerned about conservation issues, so you've seen that change over the years?

Barblett: Yes, oh yes.

AY: Do you think we're on the right track with both conservation and climate change these days?

Barblett: Well, I hope we are. How do you know? I hope we are, but how do you know. I don't know.

AY: Do you have a concern that it might be too little, too late, what's being done?

Barblett: Probably, but that's the way it is.

AY: Can you see where the major challenges are for both the government and the community now?

Barblett: Well, that's a huge question.

AY: It's all a challenge?

Barblett: Yes.

AY: Let's go back to talking about you: you're acknowledged as a leader in the field of environmental conservation and the management of eco-tourism. In 2003 you got the Sir David Brand Medal, 2004 you became a Member of the Order of Australia for your services to environmental conservation and in the same year you won the Prime Minister's Medal as well. How important is that recognition; how did you feel about getting those accolades? [Pat makes a face, of embarrassment perhaps?]

AY: That's not an answer Pat.

Barblett: I felt very honoured, but I don't hang my hat on all of them.

AY: Is it important to be recognised though? [0:10:00]

Barblett: Oh definitely, most definitely. I've just got on with it and done what I have to do and done it. That's the way it is [laughs].

AY: You've done so many things in your life—

Barblett: Have we talked about FACET?

AY: Yes, we have.

Barblett: Because that's a very important part of my life.

AY: And ongoing of course. Where do you see FACET going into the future?

Barblett: Oh FACET's gone from strength to strength. I sit on the outside now of FACET, as an elder. I have my say every now and again. FACET's been going nearly 30 years and for the first time—Tracey Shea is now in charge of FACET and she's doing a fantastic job—the Tourism Commission which is the government appointed tourism expert body, they have all been development people, if you can understand what development is. And I put that in inverted commas. They didn't get us and it's only just, last year, that they finally asked us to do things.

AY: What sorts of things?

Barblett: Run a conference for them; run a meeting for them. Really, I was staggered when Tracey told me this. They didn't get us. They just did not understand. In that book, I have shown what development at all cost shows: the islands, resorts in Queensland, since COVID, all the people have withdrawn their money and they're just rotting in the hot sun. That is what tourism development per se does. You put the environment at the bottom of it and you build from that.

AY: Why is Rottneest different, say, from those islands?

Barblett: Because we chose to go down through the course I did with Grant Sharp with America, which was environmental interpretation, we built that whole

island. Chris Back, who was the manager, he didn't get it. One day he came to me and he said, Pat, I've had a light bulb moment, I now know what you're talking about and we built that whole island on environmental interpretation, telling people how precious it was, all these sorts of things. And that's why it's different.

AY: You were just referring to a book which you're writing at the moment, called *Remembering Rottnest* which will be published in 2024, is that right?

Barblett: We hope so.

AY: What's the basis of the book?

Barblett: It's my remembering Rottnest. Remembering it as we used it as a family; it's remembering the contribution that I've made to Rottnest because so many people now, even in government, have no idea how the guides were formed. They have no idea about the foundation which now has raised millions of dollars. I sat on that committee with all those men and all my interests, as I've said before, fell off the bottom of the page and I thought, well, I'm sick of you lot. I've got a whole heap of leaders in the business community and we formed the Rottnest Foundation which was a separate body from everything else. Of course we had to have the approval of the board, but we were separate; the board couldn't get Lotteries Commission, couldn't go the federal government and get money.

AY: This is because it's an authority.

Barblett: Yes, because it's government. Government pay for it. And it wasn't until we did the big Wadjemup Bidi walk right round the island [0:15:00] that we got money from BHP, that was the first corporate that ever put money into Rottnest. They'd all say, it's a government island, which it was, let the government pay.

AY: Even though it is, and that was the perception, the foundation has the ability to accept—

Barblett: —oh yes, the foundation was separate and apart. It took us quite a while but we got tax deductibility which is a big thing. When people give money they want it to have it tax deductible. Once again, like the guides, other people have taken it to another level and that's what I'm so proud of.

AY: Let's have a look at some of the things you are rightly proud of because you've done a lot haven't you.

Barblett: I don't know, [laughs] it just happens.

AY: You've done a lot with Rottnest, what are you most proud of there?

Barblett: Oh the guides, I'm very proud of the guides. Once again, the board didn't get them. When Tom Perrigo and I started the guides—[pause] anyway, eventually things have sorted themselves out and we have board members now who really appreciate the guides. But they didn't, they didn't see it. FACET I'm very, very proud of.

AY: FACET has an educational component to it, is this where its future lies?

Barblett: Oh absolutely, absolutely. Also it attracts academics, it attracts people who would not be considered tourism operators to make money. Academics, all sort of fringe people FACET brings into the mix and that's really, really important.

AY: Still looking at you and your life, it strikes me that you are a woman, in a way, ahead of your time because you stood up and spoke out.

Barblett: [laughs] Oh I did. My husband used to call me the shrew, *The Taming of the Shrew*. I always said my piece.

AY: What gave you that ability at a time when women were mostly at home in the kitchen, you were out challenging—

Barblett: I was independent, and I saw the injustice of it all. Women should be to the fore and contributing to the community, which they weren't in my day.

AY: No, you fought for it and you achieved a lot. I know we talked a bit about as a stay at home mother, you needed to be a stay at home mother because that's what the community expected of you.

Barblett: Absolutely.

AY: How have you seen that change for young women now?

Barblett: I don't think they've got everything. I wonder, with putting children very young into care, I think there is a place in the bringing up of young children, that the mother is central to that. I wouldn't like to be a young woman now in this age.

AY: Is that right? Tell me why.

Barblett: Probably it's my hang ups from my experience, which is that I think you should bring up your own children. I really think that. I know there are families that depend on two wages, I understand that, but I think that governments should make it more possible for women of lower socio-economic groups to attain that, if they can.

AY: To be able to stay at home if they chose, whereas it seems the opposite, it seems there's a push [0:20:00] to get women back into the workforce?

Barblett: Yes, yes.

AY: You think that's not necessarily a good thing?

Barblett: I think it depends on the person. You can't make an overall thing of this really, it's a personal view.

AY: What advice would you give a young woman these days, wanting, or expecting to have it all?

Barblett: I think it's a very delicate balance. I think you have to work from your own heart. Work from what your feelings are, and if your feelings are that you want to see your child grow up and be with them for, say, the first couple of years anyway, well do it. Whatever comes from here [indicating the heart].

AY: What advice would you give your younger self?

Barblett: I wouldn't change anything. I've had an amazing life. There have been ups and downs but I have had an amazing life. I've got five amazing children and 12 even more amazing grandchildren. We've just had a family wedding last December and the couple was my eldest daughter's second son and he's a television presenter on Channel Nine and—[interruption with someone arriving].

AY: We were talking about advice to your younger self—

Barblett: Well, I think education is the main thing. That to me is very important and all my girls, and sons, have that. And then a career. They all have a good career.

AY: When you look back on your life, what are you most proud of—and you can name more than one thing because you have done a lot with your life.

Barblett: No I haven't really. I'm proud of what I've done. I'm proud of the guides, I'm proud of FACET, I'm proud of the Foundation. I'm proud of all those things but not one above the other.

AY: And you're still busy: you have a book you're hoping to have published. We're sitting in a room surrounded by knitted cardigans. Tell me about those.

Barblett: [laughing] Well I started to knit for my family. I love knitting and I love this wool, I got it from the local Crossways. Then I thought, most of the ones up the top [indicating shelf] weren't earning any money, so the contract for the jumper is \$50 and a photo. That's the contract.

AY: It looks as though you've reached industrial levels [both laughing].

Barblett: Well, I knit them for friends that I like and with love and I've given the foundation already \$7000 from my knitting project we call it.

AY: From the sale of these cardigans.

Barblett: At the annual general meetings at the end of this month, in about another week, I'll have another \$2000 to give them.

AY: Is there anything else you'd like to say before we finish.

Barblett: Not really. Just to say thank you Anne for doing this.

AY: Thank you for your time, it's been wonderful. And for all the work that you do.

Barblett: Well, I don't do much now—well, I sit and I put my bib in here and there.

AY: Well, keep doing that. Thank you, Pat.

[both laughing] [0:24:55]

END OF FILE THREE

END OF INTERVIEW