



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tribute to George Stott Bilbie: Australia's oldest practising solicitor

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today paid tribute to George Stott Bilbie, Australia's oldest practising lawyer – who died this week at the age of 100.

Mr Bilbie's funeral will take place on Thursday, October 23 in Newcastle.

On behalf of the Australian Government, Mrs Elliot conveyed her official condolences – in a letter – to Mr Bilbie's wife, Eileen May Bilbie. (They were married in 1944.)

(Mr Bilbie was born May 31, 1908 and in 1938 was admitted as a solicitor. He is survived by his wife, two daughters and a grandson.)

"Mr Bilbie was proud of his origins as the son of a coal miner and thought of himself as a 'working man's solicitor'," Mrs Elliot said.

"Our nation is made richer by contributions by people like Mr Bilbie. He was committed to his family, the law and Newcastle.

"He was practising at Bilbie Dan Solicitors doing conveyancing work until last Wednesday morning," Mrs Elliot said.

The Newcastle Law Society provided a formal memorial to Mr Bilbie providing an insight into his long and successful life. On his 100th Birthday, they said:

"George Bilbie is a shining example of honourable professional practice as a solicitor. He is held in the highest esteem not only by his fellow practitioners but by the judiciary."

Australians are now living longer because of advances in medicine and active lifestyles.

Australians now have the world's second longest life expectancy. There are currently more than 2,800 people living in Australia over the age of 100. It is expected to grow to 78,000 by 2055.

Centenarians are the fastest growing demographic group in Australia. They have grown by 8.5 per cent a year for the last 25 years.

"An ageing population creates so many opportunities; we can learn so much from the wisdom, knowledge and experience of older Australians like Mr Bilbie," Mrs Elliot said.

For more information, contact Minister Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280