

"I was only 19 years old when he died. When I look back at that final month of my Pa's life, I recognise that the at-home, end-of-life care gave us a chance to feel some normality in a period of uncertainty and sadness."

- Angus, grandson of Karuna patient Serge



Dear Supporter,

My name is Angus. I'm a brother, a son, a grandson and a student... and sometimes, an endurance racer too. I'm currently training for my biggest race yet – an Ironman 70.3. And I'm doing it in honour of my Pa – my grandfather, Serge, a former Karuna patient.

Like many of you would know first-hand, Karuna plays an important role in providing specialist palliative and end of life care in the community.

My grandfather was the most selfless, kind, clever and gentle man I have ever met. He led by example and embodied everything to do with what it truly means to be a good person.

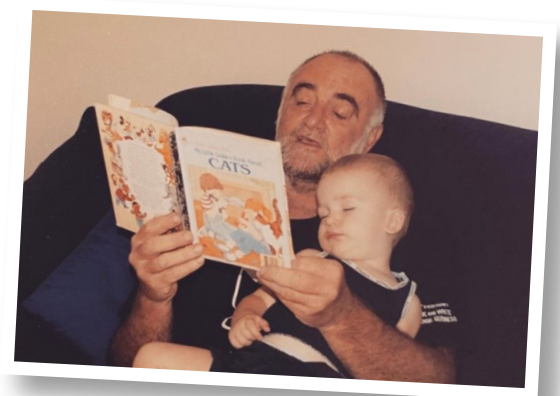
He was an advocate for those in need. Whether they were big or small, human or animal. He taught at Goodna State School for many years, where he helped to form the Woogaroo Swim Club. The Club has now been running for over 40 years, and continues to provide opportunities for people in the local community.

Later in life, he formed The Woodsman, a native bee house company, with my Aunty Libby. He sourced the material for each house and crafted them by hand too. Their goal was to foster the preservation of native bee populations, and raise awareness for their importance to our ecosystem. They sold thousands of native bee homes. I reckon they housed millions of bees in the process.

My Pa inspired me my whole life. I would say he embodied selflessness and the importance of listening rather than speaking. Although he wasn't a man for many words, he always made sure I knew he loved me, and that he was proud of me.

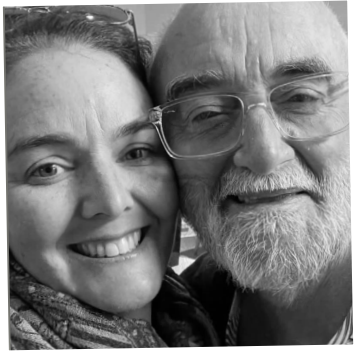
This September, when I compete in the Sunshine Coast Ironman 70.3, it will be my biggest race to date. I'm dedicating the race to my Pa. And in honour of the way he gave so generously to my family and others, **I want to honour him by using my race to give back to Karuna.**

My family hadn't heard of Karuna before my grandfather's diagnosis, but we quickly came to know them as the kind and generous nurses and support staff who cared so beautifully for my Pa and our family. Karuna were there for us during the final month of my Pa's life. Having their support gave my family the opportunity to say a gentle and personal goodbye to our Pa, on our own terms.



One of my favourite pictures of me and my Pa

My Pa was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2021, almost one year before we met Karuna. At first, he pursued treatment options, including surgeries and chemotherapy. Following these procedures, he commenced ten months of chemotherapy.



Pa and one of his daughters, my mum Mia

His chemo treatment finished on December 12th, 2021. Just a few days later, on December 21st, scans showed that his cancer had spread. The disease was now present in his liver and kidneys. **The diagnosis was terminal.**

In January 2022, we met Karuna for the first time. By March, my grandfather was admitted to their care after suffering a stroke. His condition deteriorated rapidly, and he died just one month after being admitted to Karuna care.

I was only 19 years old when he died. When I look back at that final month of my Pa's life, I recognise that the at-home, end-of-life care gave us a chance to feel some normality in a period of uncertainty and sadness.

When my grandfather died, I had never competed in an endurance race before. In fact, I had never swum more than 50 metres or cycled more than 20 kilometres. But in December 2022, after chatting with a mate about triathlons, I had the brilliant idea to run a sprint triathlon against each other the following month.

I soon discovered this was nearly impossible. Sprint triathlons are half the distance of a full Olympic triathlon. Each event was more than I had ever swum, cycled or run in one go. Fortunately for me, I sustained an injury in the weeks leading up to the race and we had to cancel the bet.

But at that point, I knew I wanted to continue training. I had seen myself improve every day. Soon I was swimming further and faster than I had ever imagined. I started looking for a new challenge. I set my sights on completing the Robina Triathlon in January 2024.

I successfully completed the triathlon, and felt overwhelmed by my progress. In just one year, I had learnt to swim three kilometres continuously, to cycle 50 kilometres, and I was running sub-47 minutes in the 10-kilometre foot race.

I knew that I wanted to continue competing. This led me to where I am now. Preparing to compete in the Sunshine Coast Ironman 70.3. But this time, I'm taking on the additional challenge of raising money for Karuna.

My grandfather taught me that giving back is not about giving millions or remortgaging your house. It's about working as a community to raise money and awareness. Giving what you can and spreading the word of Karuna's services is what will ultimately lead to the greatest outcomes.

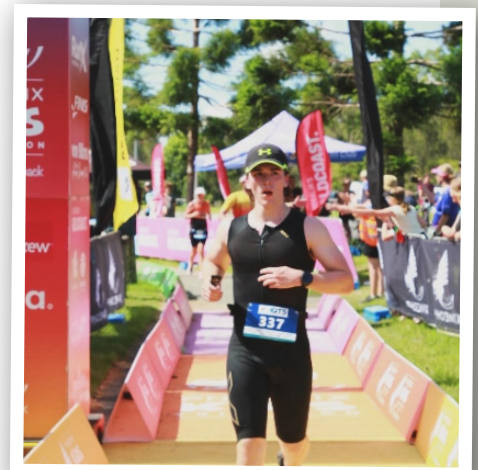
I want all families in the same situation to receive the highest standard of care. Whilst fundraising and advocating for Karuna, I have come to truly understand and appreciate the work done by every member of the Karuna team. My family received nursing care and support during my grandfather's diagnosis. But that is just one part of the services they provide.

Families also have access to spiritual care, social work, and grief and bereavement counselling. I believe that this contributes to creating the best environment for families. An environment that offers everyone in their care, the opportunity to say their goodbyes in a comfortable and personal way.

Now, I'm supporting Karuna to the best of my abilities. I want to do my part to give back to the community. Just like my grandfather did throughout his life. Plus, I want to thank Karuna for all they have done for me and my family.

If you have the ability to give today, please consider supporting Karuna. They gave my Pa the care and love he deserved at end of life. This is something that I would like to ensure continues for every family that needs their service.

Kind regards,
Angus, grandson of Karuna patient Serge



Crossing the finish line at the Robina triathlon in January