

# Country and community interests

**Thomas Michael Anthony Ryan**

Farmer

**Born:** July 23, 1906; Halbury

**Died:** November 5, 2005; Adelaide

**T**HOMAS Ryan spent much of his long life as a farmer in various areas of the state. He was born in 1906 at Halbury, near Balaklava, the third child of Michael and Margaret Ryan. His early years were spent on his father's Watchman Plains farm until 1911 when the family moved to Jaybuk in the Mallee.

In 1915 came another move to Panitya, in Victoria, just across the border from Pinnaroo. There on November 11, 1918, when he was 12, Thomas and his sister, Winnie, were returning home from school on their old horse Ginny when they had to wait at the railway crossing to let a train pass. To their surprise, the train stopped at the crossing and the engine driver told them to go home and tell their parents that the Great War had finished.

The family bought an irrigated dairy farm at Jervois in 1926 and there Thomas met Honora Catherine Kelly. They married in 1932 and had three children and shared 61 years of married life. The Ryan family



bought a scrub block at Victor Harbor in 1935 and 18 months later purchased another scrub block at Hope Forest, which was cleared and a dairy established. They lived at Hope Forest for 11 years until moving again to Aldinga Plains in 1950.

While at Hope Forest, Thomas became involved with community affairs. He was a foundation member of the Hope Forest Agricultural Bureau, a member of the school committee and a founding member of the Hope Forest Hall committee. He was also a member of the Southern Districts War Memorial Hospital Committee.

In 1948, he was elected a councillor for the Dinglebedinga ward of the District Council of Willunga, and in 1956 was appointed chairman of the district council, a position he held until 1963.

From the 1950s until the 1990s, he was a justice of the peace, and frequently presided over court cases held in Willunga.

In the 1940s, he became a member of the St Joseph's Catholic church committee and later secretary, a position he held until leaving Willunga in 1967 to retire to Somerton Park.

In retirement, Thomas, who had been a good tennis player in his youth, joined the Stanley Street Tennis Club and played two to three times a week until eventually deciding to give the game away at the age of 84.

His Catholic faith and belief in God was paramount to him throughout his life.

He is survived by son, Dennis, daughter Maureen, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Edited from a eulogy delivered by  
Dennis Ryan