



Three generations: Anais, Daphne and Janine Schokman

THREE GENERATIONS:

FAMILY DESTINY IN CHILDCARE

Story Robyn Baker

Photo supplied by Janine Schokman

When Daphne Schokman married at 21 and migrated to Australia, she never thought she was setting the scene for generations to come.

Born in Ceylon in 1937, Daphne's dream growing up was to work with the poor in a medical career. After marrying, she and her husband applied under the white European heritage policy to migrate to Australia. As full-fare passengers, they embarked on the

boat trip to Australia, which Daphne said was the most horrific time of her life. "Arriving in Melbourne we had no idea of Australia's culture or climate, and encountered racism and a cold climate for the first time," she said.

After teaching herself shorthand on the boat, she very soon started work as a stenographer, even though she found the Australian accent very hard to understand.

Daphne's first child was born in 1959 and she loved being a mother, but found it lonely as she was used to a house full of children.

They purchased a corner shop – it was a steep learning curve and times were tough living at the back of the shop and working 5am to 10pm, seven days a week.

In the 60s, and for the first time ever, jobs were easy to find and they had money to buy what they wanted. After sponsoring Daphne's family to migrate, they sold the shop and moved to Queensland.

They loved Queensland with its warm weather. For a time they owned shops, but later settled on farming as Daphne wanted to spend as much time as possible with her second child, who was born in 1969.

In the 1990s, Daphne and her daughter, Janine, a qualified kindergarten teacher, decided to build and run a quality early childhood centre. Times were still difficult, especially for women to obtain a bank loan with no experience. Luckily, they found a bank with a female manager who believed in them.

Today, Daphne and her daughter Janine, and granddaughter Anais proudly run two child education centres – Bright Beginnings at Chermide West and Taigum Child Educare.

The Taigum centre is Daphne's second home, and she loves hearing the children and watching them grow, instilling her family values and her cultural values of respect for children and the importance of education.

"For all those starting their journey, I encourage you to work hard and achieve your goals," Daphne said. "In Australia, you have every opportunity at your fingertips, and I truly hope your life adventure is as wonderful as mine."



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