

Media release – Roper Gulf Shire Council

A Beswick local man is celebrating his 102 Birthday. “Major” James Taylor has lived through many of the great and catastrophic events of the 20th century. He has also seen the impact of European settlement in the Northern Territory from the early part of the 20th century. He has seen so many changes, good and bad.

Major Taylor was born on the 1st January 1911, near Elliott in the Northern Territory, then part of South Australia. In January 2013 he turned 102, a rare age for an Australian and even rarer for an indigenous Australian. Major Taylor a retired stockman, has lived in and around Beswick most of his adult life and currently lives with his grand daughter and family in the community with the help of the caring staff at the Wugularr Aged Care for three years.

He knew he was old but not quite how old as at the time of his birth records were poorly kept or non existent especially for indigenous births. In 2012 with the help of the staff at the Wugularr/Beswick Aged Care Centre he finally received his birth certificate. He was 101 years old.

To celebrate his 102nd birthday the Mayor of the Roper Gulf Shire, Mr Tony Jack has arranged for a birthday celebration on the 14th February at 11:00 at the Aged Care Centre.

At the celebration Mayor Jack will present Mr Taylor with letters of congratulations from the Queen, the Governor General and the Prime Minister.

These formal congratulations on his significant life, normally a straight forward event for many Australian who reach 100 years of age, took a lot more effort and application to achieve in Major Taylors case and involved the support and lobbying of many people including Territory and Commonwealth politicians. The Wugularr/Beswick community see this event as very important celebration and recognition of one of their elders and an elder Australian.

Mr. Taylor who is blind and has reduced hearing still has a strong and vital mind and is happy to talk about his life.

Beswick is located 100km south east of Katherine on the Central Arnhem Highway. The road to Beswick is fully sealed and accessible all year round.

Members of the Media are invited to attend the celebrations. For further information on the celebrations or “Major” James Taylor please contact:

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