



Don & The Big Issue interviewed Don Cohne by Liz Janney

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The Big Issue magazine is a fortnightly, independent magazine that is sold on the streets by homeless, marginalised and disadvantage people. We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and creating job opportunities for these people. Simply put, we help people help themselves (from the Big Issue website)

"My late partner was from Broome and I decided to come up here to be a bit closer to her, visit her grave. Down in Perth was too far away; at least now if I want to I can go up to the cemetery I can, especially for things like birthdays. Losing your partner hurts a lot and being so far away from where my partner was buried really bugged me. So I moved up to Broome in 2012 and started selling the Big Issue

In 2002 I was in a community facility – resource type centre in Sydney getting some help when I saw copies of the Big Issue on the wall. So I rang up their office in Sydney. I began selling in Sydney, the city area was a bit saturated so I moved out into the suburbs, and then got another couple people selling. After a while I went to Perth and was selling there for a while.

When I thought of moving up to Broome I talked to the people in the Big Issue office. I went to the Courthouse Markets with 10 magazines, to give it a go and see what happens – sold them in no time flat – so I thought this looks like a good thing. The people in the office were not sure how it would go up here. I am at the markets Saturday all year round and Sundays during the "terrorist season" I call it that – sometimes you have to have a sense of humour – lose your sense of humour and you are in trouble. During the week you can find me near Johnny Chi Lane or out the front a Coles and sometimes at the Boulevard.

Every fortnight I send money down via Internet and tell them how many mags I want and they send

them up on a Thursday and I get them Friday morning. They come up with the newspapers and get dropped off at BP Central and it is only a few yards from where I live. I live in Foundation Housing, which is a great concept. From the Big Issue side of it I am the only one selling between Perth and Darwin, so that is pretty special.

It has given me more self-confidence and it is good because I get out and meet people. If it weren't for that I would sit home playing on the computer. This way I get out and mingle and interact with people and that is very important. Once you get older it is good to have people to talk to otherwise you vegetate and I know a lot of people who retired went home sat down and 6 months later they have died, they are not doing anything.

So come and visit me at the markets and get your copy of the Big Issue, you know you can also subscribe to the mag on line, as I know a lot of people are travelling around and like to get there copy but can't always find a vendor selling it. There website is www.thebigissue.org.au and you can subscribe online – just quote my vendor number 952".