



groovy grandfolk

Bronwyn and Kevin Godfrey are a fun-loving couple who met when they were 16, in a day where there was no television, no iPads and no mobile phones.

What was your childhood like? Kevin: I had a wonderful childhood growing up in northern New South Wales. I'm one of eight siblings and I went to a small school. We spent our days in the Namoi river, swimming and running free. I left for Sydney when I was 14 and it was the first time I ever saw the sea!

Bronwyn: I grew up in Pennant Hills, an outer suburb of Sydney which overlooks the city. I could see the Sydney Harbour Bridge from my bedroom window. When I was 11, my mum passed away, and my grandparents built a house next door to us. Five years later my dad remarried and moved away, so I went to live with my grandparents. I had a lovely upbringing with them, and the house was almost in front of where Kev lived!

How did you meet? Bron: I met Kevin's mother before I met Kev. I used to ride my horse around to their place and Kev and

I became friends. We started going out later that year and we've been together ever since. We got married when I was almost 19. I had always wanted to be a mother, I was definitely not a career girl. Even when I was 15 I was knitting things for my glory box for when I would get married and have children.

Kev: Bron went to school with my sisters and when she visited our home, I got to know her. We started dating and after being engaged for six months, we got married. Bron's grandfather even built a house for us.

What difficulties have you shared?

Bron: One of the biggest experiences and challenges we've had, is that we lost seven babies (in utero; before birth). Kevin and I have different blood types, so when I fell pregnant, if the embryo shared Kevin's blood type, my body reacted defensively. After our first son was born, we lost one

baby after another. The last one poisoned my blood and I almost died. Kevin was really supportive throughout the whole time and walked me through it all.

Kev: That period of time was the saddest in my life so far. To see Bron go through what she did and to share her grief was tough, but it bonded us.

Bron: Finally I had my second son, without any trouble whatsoever. These days a person can have injections to counteract their body's defensive response.

Where did you live? Bron: We moved to outback Queensland and started to manage properties. At first it was a bit of a shock because the land was so barren and dry and unfortunately the women on the properties were cliquey. They just saw me as the manager's wife, so they didn't interact with me much. Eventually we moved to another more established property, with lovely gardens and lawns.



Kev: We've lived in outback Queensland for 35 years now, managing cattle properties. Life is an adventure and we've spent many holidays travelling around in our caravan. We've raised two beautiful boys and it's lovely to watch them thrive. I still have a good feeling for Sydney because that's where I met Bron but my heart will always be in the country.

Bron: It was lonely for me though. The boys would do their school work and then help their father on the property. I couldn't talk directly to anyone because back then all we had was a phone where I had to go through the operator, who would relay the messages to my friends! I would keep myself busy reading the Bible and gardening.

What's it like being a grandparent?

Bron: I love it. We've got seven grandchildren and they visit us all the time, mostly all coming together! They love the farm and they've told us never to sell it. We've also got three great grandchildren and we're all very close.

Kev: I just love them being around and sharing their lives.

What fills your days now? **Kev:** I am renovating an older home in the town of Chinchilla, while still running the farm in Bogandilla – fencing, bulldozing, doing general farm activities and taking care of my wife. Waking up every day knowing I have something to achieve keeps me young in spirit.

Bron: Kev's doing a great job with the renovations and both our boys are helping. I don't often go out into the paddocks and work like I used to. I'm taking care of the house and gardening.

What have been some big influences on your life? **Bron:** One of the biggest has been growing up without a mother.

Thankfully I still had my grandparents and I've had many women come into my life who have impacted me greatly.

Kev: My father has been a huge influence and has always stuck by me. There are lots of men who have helped me in life also, such as Bronwyn's uncle who helped me get an apprenticeship when I moved to Sydney and Bronwyn's grandfather who taught me plumbing and how to build. The greatest influence in my life, though, has been Bronwyn, the mother of my children and my soulmate!

What do you see in the younger generation? **Kev:** I would encourage

the youth of today to be honest with one another, be reliable, respectful and work hard. Think of the good you can do for somebody, then do it.

Bron: I think some of the young ones are amazing – they can have a marriage, children and still go to work. Most of us didn't do that; we just had our children and didn't have to work. They're pretty wonderful in the way they cope. When I look back at my generation, most of my friends and my mother's friends were solely stay-at-home mothers. There is a lot of pressure for this generation to achieve and have careers. I think there's another noticeable difference in the way children grow up today. My mother was nurturing and I always felt loved, even when I was with my grandparents. By contrast, I think many children today get put into a kindergarten early on and they're looked after by someone else. It's never quite the same as a mother who is there to nurture and read stories and just hug them.