Rusty Woodward was an active member of many community organisations.

Community stalwart dies

By Emma Kelly

PROMINENT community leader Rusty Woodward has died aged 75.

Ms Woodward died at the Canberra Hospital on Friday, April 11.

The Tuggeranong resident battled a serious lung condition for many years, but the illness did not stop her from dedicating her time to bettering the community.

Ms Woodward was central to the establishment of Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club and served as the group's president while advocating for a new centre.

She was an active member of Tuggeranong Community Council, ACT Lung Life Support Group and the Council on the Ageing ACT.

Ms Woodward migrated to Cobar, NSW from England in 1964 and lived in Shoalhaven Heads and Melbourne before moving to Canberra in 2007 to be closer to family.

She was a loving mother to daughters Terri O'Leary and Debbie Zimmer and grandmother to five grandchildren.

Son-in-law Mark O'Leary said Ms Woodward had celebrated her 75th birthday with family on April 6 before she suddenly fell ill.

He said she would be remembered as a kind and selfless person.

"She was very generous and loving and devoted to her family," he said.

Mr O'Leary said his mother-in-law was a confident businesswoman and had previously worked as a sales executive, a role that put her in good stead for her community work in Canberra.

"She would give to other people and was a very determined lady," he said.

"It is incredible when you think about the impact she had in the years she was here."

Ms Woodward's commitment to Tuggeranong was honoured through the Footsteps to Follow project in December, in which her legacy was immortalised on a bronze plaque at the entrance to Tuggeranong Town Park.

Former Tuggeranong Community Council president Darryl Johnston and Council on the Ageing peer educator Jan Petrie nominated Ms Woodward for the honour.

Mr Johnston said Ms Woodward was passionate about helping people with serious lung conditions and had addressed a federal parliamentary committee on pollution and its impact on public health.

"She was an inspiration for everyone in the Tuggeranong Community Council and the community generally because she did so much work despite her own failing health," he said.

Mrs Petrie worked closely with Ms Woodward through the Council on the Ageing and said her colleague and friend's immense work was remarkable.

"The day I met her she said, 'I need something to stimulate my mind as I can't do much physically'," Mrs Petrie said.

"She was always working to do something that kept her mind active and would help the community – that was her main goal."