

HUMANS OF ARMADALE

Community Volunteering

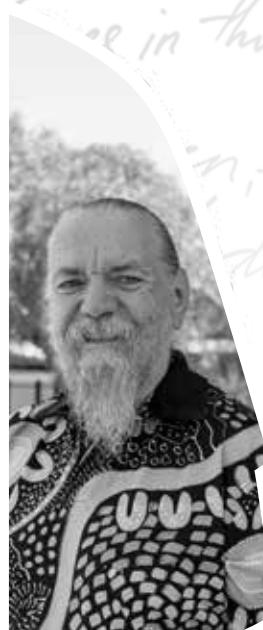




Image above: Partial mural by Matt Adnate, Rohin Kickett and Bradley Kickett.

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Armadale acknowledges the Traditional Owners and the Custodians of the land upon which we stand, work and play.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Peoples of this land and their connection to the lands and the waters, as they are part of them spiritually and culturally.

We acknowledge their ancestors, the Elders past and present, who have led the way for us to follow.

Thank you

The City of Armadale acknowledges the contribution of the individuals whose stories are included in Humans of Armadale 2025, and those who nominated them. We also thank Centre for Stories who worked with us to capture the words, voices and images of our amazing humans.

Humans of Armadale 2025 – Community Volunteering is an initiative of City of Armadale and Armadale Volunteer Services. The City acknowledges the support of the Western Australian government in funding the delivery of Armadale Volunteer Services.

Humans of Armadale 2025 – Community Volunteering is the **third** in a series of Humans of Armadale projects.

Inspired by Humans of New York, we celebrate the stories of people who live in our community. Each story is unique yet holds messages that are common to us all. As we seek to understand the perspectives and experiences of other people, we will discover common threads that unite us in our own journeys.

We hope that in reading these stories you may reflect on your own experiences of connecting with people, your history, and the natural environment, and identify for yourself how you choose to use your most precious resource, your time.



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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

DIANE SMITH

I started volunteering in the City of Armadale because there was a need. We moved to Armadale on the 31st of December 1994. I volunteered with various groups, starting with a community kindy in 1996. It's been pretty much nonstop since then. So that's what, 30 years in Armadale?

It's a great community, I have seen lots of changes here. But my greatest passion is with Girl Guides Western Australia. I was a girl guide when I was younger and came back to it as an adult in 2010. There was a cry-out for volunteers in our local area to run the units. A leader had been there 30 years and decided she wanted to retire, so I stepped up.

I started with the 7 to 10 year olds, and then over time I've added the 10 to 14's, and then the 5 to 7's. We work with adults as well. What we do is all service based - adventurous, outdoor activities, or craft, or service or whatever the girls choose to do.

We meet once a month, so that's our social side of things. And then we'll go on outings to see different things. We have a fundraising event once a year that we raise money for and then donate the raised funds to a chosen charity. We help the youth side of things as well. Sometimes

they'll need an extra adult to come and help with a youth event.

What I love most about volunteering is working with the children and their families. We call ourselves Team Armadale, because we've got the three groups in Armadale and all the leaders have to work together across the groups. We are learning to support each other as well as supporting the girls.

I find that with supporting each other, if somebody can't come to a meeting or somebody's got to go home because they're sick, then there's somebody else to step in. Or if somebody has a problem, they can talk to each other. The City of Armadale offers a lot of extra courses that we can do that are free of charge to enhance your skills. I like that City of Armadale provides that and I don't know if any other councils do, but I really like that. I always encourage people to make the most of what they offer.

Volunteering in the City of Armadale has impacted me in terms of my confidence to speak to people I don't know, and to stand in front of people to instruct them. I would never have stood in front of a group of people and instruct them in a game. And I don't think that ever leaves you. And those things, I don't think that has changed from when I was a child.





DARYL DAWES

I started volunteering in the City of Armadale to build friendships with people in like-minded areas. So, joining the Kelmscott Agricultural Society, I already had some friends within the society, but building those friendships even further with other existing members allowed me to build that sort of family culture. It gets me out of the house, doing something obviously good for the local community.

We put on an event each year, the Kelmscott Agricultural Show, which has around 15,000 people attending. There are a lot of community groups that come in to assist us, we involve community groups to volunteer their time, in lieu of a donation. The weekend before the show to the Sunday after the show, we probably have in the vicinity of 200 to 300 volunteers that come in, to help us from everything from manning the gates, monitoring the grounds, being stewards in the hall, help us set up, help us pack up.

I love volunteering at the Kelmscott Agricultural Society, because it really is a family environment so when I talk family, I'm talking a bunch of people that obviously have stuck around. I've been President for seven years, and I've got the same committee for pretty much that entire time. Some people leave, some people come in, but the vast majority has actually been a stable

committee within that environment. It's fun, it's enjoyable, it's engaging. I get to liaise with the primary schools, community groups, business owners and everything. We're just trying to, I suppose, build a better community for people in the City of Armadale, people in Kelmscott. It's something that I love and that's why I keep coming back.

Volunteering in the City of Armadale has impacted me in a number of ways. Friendship and family are quite important to me. It's something I instill within the committee that I work with, that friendship is important and that's what we need to cherish above all else.

I've done volunteering for a number of years, since before I was 18, across a number of organisations. This one is definitely the one that I have absolutely enjoyed the most. The people that come in because they know what they're getting into. They've been to the event before. They've done some stuff in that field before. They're the ones that I find last the longest. So definitely find something you enjoy, find people that are enjoyable to be around and build on that.

COLLEEN FANCOTE

I wanted to get to know the community, the people, what's the history behind the City of Armadale, what was here and what was available to people. It just started from there. About 1997 I started. I've never looked back.

I started at History House Museum as a volunteer, helping there on roster days, tidying the museum up, talking to visitors, different people. Then I got the Treasurer's job.

I volunteer with the Birtwistle Local Studies Library and the Family History Centre. Through them, I run two groups regarding family history. I've done a project with St. Mary's in the Valley Cemetery, recording over six/seven hundred graves. Photographing them, transcribing them, and doing a new mapping system for them. I do the history group, the genealogy groups. It's one of the older cemeteries around. It's 150 years old; there's over 600 graves. And we've got the history, the photographs of the headstones, it's a very, very big project. It took nearly 19 years to complete, but it's all done now.

Ninety percent of the people buried there are pioneers or were pioneers of City of Armadale, and that's where you get history. The families contact you because they want to know if their ancestor's headstone is still there. And about 80% we've done stories on every headstone. There's the history and

it's good to be able to tell people when you're out and about volunteering.

It helps you get out and meet the people in your community, see what's around. It helps you mixing with people and learn to deal with all types of people. I'm quite busy, but it keeps me active.

You just meet all types of people, you know. As I said, new people coming into the area visit and they want to know about this or what about that, well, you know, all the information. And I just tell them. I'm connected with a lot of groups, when you volunteer, you don't have to do all the groups, just do one or two. And you get out there, you meet new people, and you'll find you end up being a better person because you're out and about and meeting with people.

Anybody that comes in and wants to trace their family history, we help them. If they've started their family history and hit brick walls, we help them knock down those brick walls. We show them how to research it and what to do. And you'd be quite surprised, a lot of people have found an awful lot of history about their descendants, not only in the City of Armadale but all over the world.

People, members of the public, can come in. You don't have to live in the City of Armadale. You can just come in and we help you keep going with your family history.



My month is really busy with volunteering. I've been doing it for nearly 20 years now and I'll just stick to the same. The cemetery was the last project we finished last year because we celebrated 150 years for that. That was a very big project, but there's always another project around the corner. I'll probably get involved somewhere along the line. I don't think I would move out of my area of volunteering, but still, you're out and about and you're meeting new people and you're helping people. That's why the good old volunteering is very good.



My great-great-grandfather and my great-great-great grandfather were to do with the heritage of Armadale, I had a feeling I liked the town. I wanted to stay here. So, anything that would help Armadale, I felt was a good thing.

JEFF GREEN

The main voluntary work I started with was thanks to my architectural work. I worked in London, I worked in Canberra, and I later worked in Brunei and in New South Wales. But I had worked in Canberra as an architect for the government. I had an interest in hospitals and heritage. In '87, I heard that they were going to knock down the Congregational Church in Armadale.

My main project thesis was on the Congregational Church in Armadale and how you would add to it if you were going to keep it. My whole architectural theme has been working on old architecture and classical architecture and how you add to things [buildings]. So, out of that we started a committee called the Armadale School and Congregational Church Relocation Trust.

I got involved in all these things and on the 10th of October 1987, we lifted this school up onto a Jinker 48-wheeler and moved it down the hill. And we had permission to put it next to the museum. But we moved the whole thing, the whole project cost \$179 and involved about 500 people.

But out of that came an obligation to join the History House (which is a museum) Management committee. And eventually I became Secretary. And there was a deal where I would become Treasurer for Armadale Kelmscott Job Link and Aboriginal Job Link. And that led me to other voluntary projects.

But the main focus was the museum. And out of that came other things like the Buckingham Cottage, which is the one of two state registered properties for City of Armadale up in Roleystone. That was five years of work, restoring that building, a lot of voluntary trips backwards and forwards. The other thing that came out of it was the CHAG which is Community Heritage Advisory Group. But the original thing was the heritage listing for Armadale. We had quite a good team. We listed lots and lots and lots of things, and so that eventually became the Heritage List.

The reason I like volunteering is that it's within my family's history. My father used to go to Indonesia and Malaysia doing things for Rotary. I was a Rotary Exchange student that went to America in 1968, and that gave me a view on the world I've never seen. So, I was very happy to see the whole world, but I just saw everyone as friendly, very nice, and it's very nice to work with them in a convivial atmosphere. I've always been a volunteer in many things.

I am still on the Community Heritage Advisory Group, and I run the Armadale Districts Historians' Group, I also participate in the Kelmscott History group and the events. I think I'm so embedded now. You learn a lot of skills and you meet lots of people and, and you wouldn't not do it, it's just a perfect way to live as far as I'm concerned.



CORRINA SMART

I started volunteering in the City of Armadale because I didn't know where to begin. There was an information night, and that was the beginning of how I started volunteering at Westfield Park Primary School. I ended up emailing the school and having a meeting with them and I started the breakfast program. I really enjoyed how they're really involved and I built a connection with the school. I really struggle with trying to make new friends and doing different things. That was the reason why I started volunteering. I wanted a purpose, and volunteering is why I do what I do.

It was a big commitment. It's an early start at 7:30 in the morning to set up the breakfast program and we start at eight o'clock and finish at 8:30. We get about 10 to 30 kids. It's really fun. I enjoy seeing all the kids' faces in the morning and they love it. They love coming in every morning for it. We've created a lovely environment for the kids and that's why I keep going back.

What I love most about volunteering is that I get a purpose out of volunteering. I'm meant to be there to help the kids and I'm doing something positive, I get to meet a variety of people, and I help just in a little, small way. I get to give back to the community. I just love that feeling of being a part of something, creating a positive environment for other people and getting to really meet a variety of people. I really love the Westfield Park community, but I know I would like to try another volunteer thing as well. I'm thinking of going to The Animal Protection Society.

Volunteering in the City of Armadale has benefited me personally in leaps and bounds. I've come a long way since I started volunteering six years ago. I've taken that first step of just going to something new, trying it and actually enjoying it. That has given me the confidence to go, "okay, I can do it". And you build so many friendships. It's just really positive, I love it. It's a big commitment to get up and go, but you meet some amazing people along the way.

I just want people to know it is okay to be afraid to do something new, but all it takes is that one step. You don't know what you could end up doing. Don't let your fears get in the way of what you want to do. Just take a leap of faith and try something.

JUNE COPLEY

I first volunteered for the City of Armadale 12 years ago. They wanted a volunteer for pole walking from the Visitor Centre as they needed someone to lead the hiking group. I finished work and had time on my hands, I wanted to give something back to my community. I also do a voluntary role for Keep Australia Beautiful Council of Western Australia. I started out on my own because the littering problem just really bugged me in my local area. We live in a beautiful area in Roleystone and it's a major tourist attraction, but the litter had become a bit of an eyesore.

Now I coordinate a group of about 20 people; we are called the Wednesday Warriors. We clear the entry roads into Roleystone. So, I have two hats of volunteering, which I thoroughly enjoy and get so much satisfaction from.

I always say that the most important part is the socialisation afterwards at the coffee shop, which generously the community supports and that provides us, the whole group, with coffees after we've done our collection. And it enables me in that time to collate all the figures for Keep Australia Beautiful because you have to do reporting if there's any injuries. You have to tell them how many bags of litter you picked and how many were for recycling. Just recently I gave a summary of what we've collected. In 2020 we picked up something

like 667 bags of litter. And over the years to present-date, it's now reduced to around 300 bags of litter. So, it's dropped by half.

I think our presence on the road and seeing those orange litter bags has a deterrent effect. And maybe, you know, mums are talking to kids on the way to school telling them what we are doing.

I had a business here for over 30 years, self-employed business owner. I just felt like I wanted to give something back to the community and that's what gives me the greatest satisfaction doing something that I feel is, you know, significant for my community. And I love my pole walking groups as well. They're like family. The pole walking group has a lot of benefits apart from the physical benefits, that sense of friendship and belonging. It's still a bit of a novelty and a bit of a chuckle to people here in Australia.

But yeah, it's great for your balance because that's one of the things that does go as we age. And so, it's like having four feet on the ground instead of two. When you live in an area like ours that has honkey nuts and gravel it makes sense to have these extra feet on the ground just to give you that stability.



I started a group in Roleystone and here I am 10 years later, still doing it in Kelmscott. I'm helping people and I'm helping my community with Wednesday Warriors. I feel that there's a purpose in my life. I know the City of Armadale help you find something that you're interested in. Just give it a go. I just think you get so much back from it.



BERNARD CAUNCE

I started volunteering in the City of Armadale and the first organization I became involved in was Street Chaplains W.A. That was going around to the homeless, doing welfare checks and trying to help them get in contact with organizations to help better their situation. I also volunteer with St. Vincent DePaul Society, the Kelmscott Conference. We go out and do emergency relief, where we go to people's homes to help them with access to clothing and food through food vouchers. I'm also a member of the Parish Council at Kelmscott with the Good Shepherd Parish, and I've been doing that for a couple of years now.

I'm from the Eastern Wheatbelt and I got involved as a volunteer bush firey. And I did that for 19 years and then I gravitated across to St. John Ambulance, and I've done that for 22 years. I feel it's quite rewarding giving back to the community. I hope when a situation arrives, there's someone out there volunteering who might be able to help me if I ever find myself in a jam.

Volunteering has always been part of my family system where we've always helped our community, and our community will help us back when we require it. I just love the part about giving back to the community and the

community's always been there to support us. Volunteering enables us to give something that's worth more than our personal time. It's something that can never be bought and is something you give freely.

Well, I've been in the City of Armadale now for 25 years. The people who live here are really nice, they give the shirt off their back and they're very family orientated. There are some still real dinky-di people in our community that will stop on the road and help you change a tyre. And it's little things like that that go a long way. You don't know what that person's been through. That tyre may have been the last straw, and just giving 10 minutes to help change the tyre might just change their whole day.

I give up my free time on top of my normal working week to do bits and pieces. So, it's an interesting life. Recently, I was notified that I'm getting recognition from His Majesty the King. I've been offered a membership entry into the order of St. John's, which is governed by His Majesty. And I'll be invested, coming up in April 2025.

LIZ REED

I originally started volunteering at the school canteen in Kelmscott Primary when my daughter was there. Then in 2015 three of us who live in Bedfordale, which is still part of the City of Armadale, felt that we didn't really know our neighbours very well. And so, we got together to create a forum for people, originally to sell their vegetables and any goods that they made, like jams and cakes and things and we started up the Bedfordale Bush Markets, which has been going ever since. It's our 10th year. As part of the Bedfordale Bush Market, we were not able to get a grant, so the Bedfordale Residents' Association auspiced us, and as a condition of that, they asked me to be president of the Residents' Association. I have been president of the Residents' Association ever since.

Another of my volunteering things also started around that time when I joined the Armadale Writers Group. I've been a member of that since about 2016. I have been doing all kinds of roles. I compile, edit and organize a launch for anthologies each year, usually for the Armadale Arts Festival. This year it is our 25th anniversary so we are hoping to do a big celebration for that. Another of my volunteering hats is that I volunteer at a soup

kitchen at Minnawarra House. Every fortnight, a group of us get together and we provide meals for Minnawarra House to distribute to people in need. Now, that organization is also intending to start a values-based education school here in Armadale which will be completely free. So, I am on the steering committee for that. We have received permission from the Department of Education to go ahead. We have our advanced determination and we're currently looking for property in the City of Armadale.

We did have a program at Minnawarra House, mainly before Covid, where we had disadvantaged kids coming in and we do a values-based education program. We'd feed them and then they'd go home happy. That's what started it, because there's a lot of kids roaming the streets that the schools are not helping in a sense, because they can't, and the schools are overburdened as it is.

I have my daughter and her fiancé living at home and we have dogs and a cat and three horses. I have a big property, which keeps me busy, but it also gives me focus, gives my life meaning. And things like the Armadale Writers Group. I have actually published a book, and I would never have done that if I hadn't been a member of a group. But, the encouragement and the support of other members is great. It's lovely.



There's lots of avenues for volunteering and I think Australia is run on volunteers. There's a huge number, not only in the City of Armadale, but in Australia of volunteers, of people who give up their time to help do something.



DARYL BEDFORD

I do the radio, and I help Graham [from the Men's Shed] with sausage sizzles. Graham just got me into it and said, "do you want to come and help?" I said, "okay, what time did you want me?" He rides out. He has all the sheets out and he says "Daryl, what time is it?" I'll give him the time.

I say things on the radio, talk and stuff. It gets me out of the house and doing things. That's it. It is good fun getting out, meeting people, chatting to them to hear what they do and tell them what I do. They have talked about accidents and I told them about my accident with the bloody leg.

I just help where I can, just help them guys clean up. They go out and do things. I think it is around 15 of us.

I like getting [something] out of life. Getting out of the house and meeting people. Try and help them (the Men's Shed) out and stuff. And I've got a couple of friends down the road that I know, I've got a guy across the road, and I have gotten to know him. I help him out and he's been helping us. We just go around, and sometimes we go and collect cans and bottles. I'd take my lot in, we'd

go and fill them, take them, get some money for them. I've already asked the guy across the road from me. And he's thinking about coming down and joining the Men's Shed with us.

He's had a chat with Graham as well. I said, "Graham, my next-door neighbor wants to join", and Graham was over at my place already. I introduced them and half the time he's busy. Sometimes he's got his kids over there at home. Bring your kids down at the Men's Shed to enjoy it. He gets a free moment. He might come down and join it. That'd be another member.



MELISSA MARSHALL

I started volunteering because of a death in the family. My beloved pet parrot passed away and I loved him very much. And so, I was looking for a way of spending my time with birds as I had grown up with birds. I had a Grandmother who was very into bird watching. I had spent a lot of time growing up identifying birds in my garden with her when I was young. And I have a real affinity for them. And so, in order to deal with that grief, I decided to look for opportunities where I could use my time to help our local birds. Particularly in Western Australia, one of our big local birds with a big personality that's under serious threat is the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo. When I moved here 15 years ago from Victoria, I was just really struck by these incredible loud, socially complex animals that lived alongside us in our urban areas.

These birds are under threat mainly because of habitat loss and fragmentation so I looked for an opportunity where I could help them. I came across the Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre and I was really struck by the strength of their volunteers and the passion that those people had for environmental conservation. We have just released our 1000th Black Cockatoo back into the wild. It's a real citizen science project where we partner with organisations such

as Murdoch University, with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, and Perth Zoo and the power of volunteers to do something and fill the gap where our government has really been quite deficient in looking after and preserving our incredible biodiverse natural resources.

My role at Kaarakin is running the Saturday team. I help with feeding and cleaning, aviary management and doing a lot of those very glamorous jobs, [and] with tour guiding and education because I'm a teacher, that's my background.

The Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre is a volunteer-run organisation. We have about 180 people. We drive around the state, picking up injured and sick Black Cockatoos. We take birds to the zoo once a year for health checkups and also when they're coming back to our clinic for specialist help. We have volunteers who do things like gardening, cleaning and running education programs. We host community groups at our Centre. We also do outreach where we go out to different community groups around the city to teach them about Black Cockatoos and their plight and encourage people to conserve them. We also have teams who grow plants and do tree planting, to re-vegetate particularly degraded areas of our council areas. We release birds back into the environment once they are ready and cleared for release.

Volunteers covered about 28,000 kilometres last year picking up injured birds. We take the birds to the zoo and the zoo provide all of their veterinary

care for free, which is incredible. Our amazing talented vet team at the zoo take in those birds, assess them, provide surgery and medication, and they'll put pins in if needed. They do all that really expensive, complex stuff. Then the birds come back to us to rehabilitate.

Volunteering in the City of Armadale has impacted me because I've gotten to know lots of different people, people who are passionate about similar things that I am, who are passionate about biodiversity, who are passionate about doing something to ensure that our ecosystems are able to still be here beyond us.

I think the benefit of being a volunteer is that it enables you to think beyond yourself and beyond your kind of immediate needs. It helps you to become more open-minded and open-hearted to other people. It allows you to spend time doing something that might be very different to what you would do normally, but you get to bring yourself into something and sort of put yourself in another person's shoes. I think it's changed my life in incredibly positive and beneficial ways, and I hope that some of the work that I've done at Kaarakin over the last 12 years has not only helped a lot of birds but has helped a lot of people as well.

KEN BROWN

When I came to Armadale, I still volunteered. I became the Shire Engineer, and I stayed there right through. During my time as the City Engineer, I did a lot of volunteering. In 1975 for the City of Armadale, I started being Father Christmas, and I continued to be Father Christmas within the City of Armadale until last Christmas. We had a function every year down at Rushton Park. I did it for the different volunteer fire brigade groups and a breast cancer group. A couple of times I did it for children in care.

When I was with the Council, I did a lot of things that weren't within the scope of my employment. There was a child in a wheelchair who wanted to be able to wheel herself to her primary school, which was down the road. A parent approached me about a footpath, we didn't have funding at the Council at the time to do it. What will you do? So I spoke to the contractors that worked with us that supplied concrete. I spoke to people that worked with us, that did excavation, that sort of thing. So, we excavated it. The supplier that used to supply the Council with concrete donated the concrete and we built a footpath for her. So, there are a number of those sorts of things that went on. There were many, many, many things like that that I did

outside of my workplace. In 2014, I got the Pride of Australia Award for Community Service.

In 2011, after the Roleystone/Kelmscott bushfires, the Council asked me if I'd come on and manage the demolition and ground decontamination of all the destroyed properties and damaged properties. And I said, "yeah, as a volunteer". Linton Reynolds was the Mayor, and he said, "we can't let you do it as a volunteer because of issues of probity and confidentiality". So, like, "well you pay me as little as possible" And I put my own team together. And we started that little team.

In 2014, up at Mundaring, when they had their fires, they contacted me and said, "would I come up and manage it like I did for Armadale?" And I said, "okay, as long as I can do it as volunteer". And I said, "what you do is you pay me mileage from home to home, you buy us all lunch, and I'll bring my little team to come up", which they did.

Volunteering brings pleasure or help to people that need it. I was brought up that way. By the time I was an 8-year-old kid, I used to have to go up to around the corner to the neighbours (they were in their eighties and nineties) every day after school to see if they needed anything from the shop or anything from the butcher's shop. Volunteering is not egotistical. It's just something I was raised with, to help people. It's brought me a lot of personal satisfaction knowing that I've been able to help people, because I was brought up to help people.



I have a saying with the kids that come in "we are where we are today because of where we were yesterday". So, it's imparting knowledge as I'm not gonna be here for all that much longer. If I can get people to understand things I know and remember, then it's important. It gives me satisfaction to do that as well. So yeah. So that's what it [volunteering] means to me.



MICHELLE ZOUMIS

Basically, I started volunteering in Armadale as I needed an outlet at home because at the time I was a full time carer and I needed to get out of the house for even an hour or two a week. I do almost seven hours a fortnight now, including trying to find a job and other things, like school activities when school goes back. My daughter goes to girl guides, so I need to work around that. So, thank God it's during the day when she's at school which means I'm not sitting at home and doing basically nothing.

I'm coming into my ninth year of doing P & C work, which is a meeting twice a month and I help with activities when I can. I used to be the uniform shop coordinator for the school. I still work in the uniform shop but I don't coordinate anymore. The last two years I have started with the Junior Football Committee, because I wanted to know what was happening and help out where I could. I like to help them with Bunnings sausage sizzles when I can. I do give it my best shot, but to stand up it's very hard as we get quite busy. All the profits go back into the football club so we can do other activities for the kids once the season starts.

"I love volunteering because I like helping people."

I also do volunteering through Halo Bespoke Volunteering Program. I go to people's houses that can't get out much or they don't have many family members that are close by that can go and visit them. So, I go and normally we just chat. I enjoy it too. But I don't want to take too much of the time away from what I need to do personally. I have to get a balance in my life. Otherwise, it is just not going to work. You've got to balance your volunteering job with your home life.

We need people, you can allocate as much time or as little time as you like, but it makes you feel good because you're helping someone else other than yourself, and you feel good by the end of the day.



MATTY HURLSTON

I started volunteering in Melbourne where I worked on steam machinery for a little bit. I was with the Melbourne Steam Traction Engine Club. In that job I learned how to operate traction engines, plowing engines, tractors, 12-inch gauge railway. Then I got into radio as well. I also did a little bit of volunteer work through work education where I worked in a factory doing trailer seals. Volunteering has been a huge part of my life. When I got to WA, I got my Cert II in Music. In 2007 I think it was, I got an award for most improved.

At the moment, I DJ for Groovetime, with Jill. In that I MC and I choose a bit of music before we start. Then we do a section where disabled people come and sing with ordinary tracks and that's a busy day that I have on a Wednesday. That's a really good job. I also did the lighting one year for the Hawkers Markets.

It wasn't until I did an event at Frye Park with Annette [City of Armadale] and I'm trying to set up the gig, we had a lovely volunteer called Anthony from Central Institute of Technology. Halfway through the gig Kelly, the photographer, came up and I ended up having a five-minute chat with her. In fact, I was doing karaoke on

Friday night with Maxim, and I've known them for 10, 20 years and caught up with a friend and I'm like, when I hear those two names on the list, I know I'm having a good shift.

"I haven't worked with all of the people that I mentioned, but meeting all these people, you get different experiences. I can't go to a shopping centre without meeting someone I know."

Having a background in volunteering, like one day I was at the Champion Lakes Tavern, and this dude was having issues with his lights, and I went, "dude, I can see this is troubling you here. Would you like me to have a look at it for you?" And I made an extra family out of that.

But I mean in terms of meeting people, like I had the best time with Australian Idol winners. I met Sabrina Dee one day at the Gosnells Hotel, I fell over on someone's spilled beer, the sound guy goes to pick me up and he goes, "I'll let Sabrina do it." Working with Annette at Fun at Frye, that was really great. Not only did I work for Annette, but I spent four or five weeks talking to people.

VERONICA HANSEN

My late partner lost his battle with cancer about six years ago, and I had left work to care for him. I really felt after that I wanted to give back to the community. I started volunteering at an Op Shop called Second Chance, in Kelmscott. I then moved on to Carers WA and I became a volunteer coordinator for them.

I do live in the City of Armadale. The City supports a group called Weekend Warriors, which does a lot of work collecting all the rubbish off the side of our roads. There's a wildflower society that does a lot of work up in the back of Bedfordale because there's some protected species through that area. Roleybushcare is a group that actually tries to prevent Jarrah Dieback. There's the Minnawarra [Precinct] which has a history museum, and they provide a lot of support to homeless people as well. So just those few alone was enough to make me want to come and volunteer in the City of Armadale.

Volunteering does make you feel much better about your connection with the world and yourself. And I'd encourage anyone who was sort of at a lost end to go out and volunteer somewhere. It doesn't matter where it is. But certainly, to be able to work with people and give something back to

the community is a very good thing. In my case, I feel it brings people together and you meet a lot of people you wouldn't normally meet in your everyday life.

Armadale, it's growing so rapidly as a city; the population now is very diverse, and I really enjoy that. I'm a traveler at heart and it's lovely to meet people from other countries and get to hear a little bit about their story. We also have the need for a lot of volunteers in so many different places. So, I hope that this program might encourage more people to come out and volunteer.

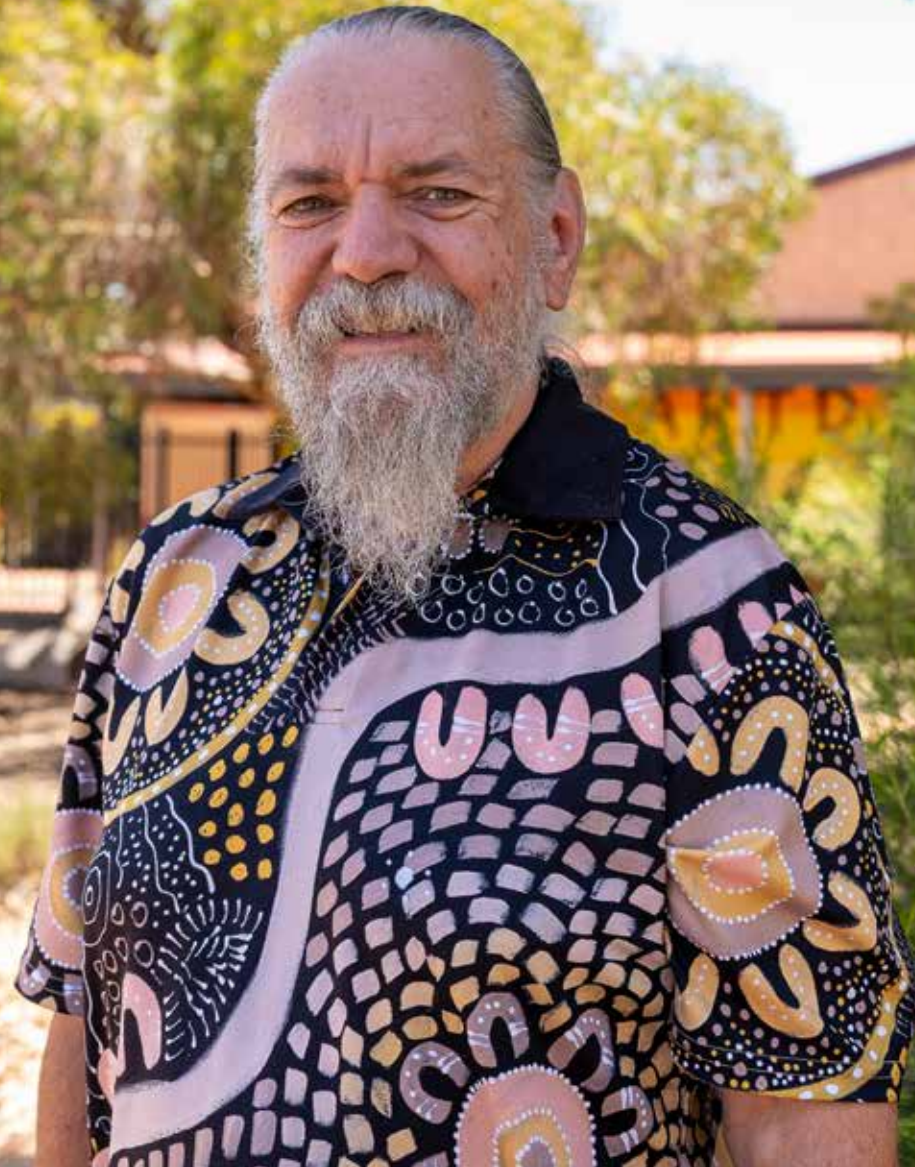
I'm now a member of the Bedfordale CWA, and they're an amazing group of people. They do so much for the community, they have a lot of fun while they're doing it. They also donate to Minnawarra House, which is an organization where they do a lot of meals for kids that go to school but don't have any breakfast.

It's opened my eyes as to how much work volunteers are really doing within the City of Armadale and how much they give to the community of their time and their services. So, for me, the opportunity to join in and make a difference is immeasurable. I'm also involved in the Roleystone Markets committee; we run a quarterly market.

I did become a serial volunteer, so I have a lot of volunteer commitments, it does take a lot of my time. I do a lot of paperwork in the evenings. But I enjoy that, I'd much rather be busy and involved than stuck in front of the TV. So, to me it's a good thing.



UNCLE ROD CATON



I started volunteering when I retired from work altogether. I was aware that the Champion Centre here was available, but I just didn't have the time while I was working. When I came here after I'd retired and checked it out, the leather work really interested me and it was something that I've been wanting to do for ages. So, I wanted to get into that and learn a bit more about it. I learned about the sewing group as well.

But getting to know the Elders that were here and sort of learning more of their stories and everything else, it became the whole thing. Both leather work and the sewing became a lot more interesting. The friendships that built from that have been really brilliant and they're maintained.

I'm also a member of St. John Ambulance. So, they're driving around and volunteering just to take passengers from their home to doctors' appointments or medical appointments at hospitals or something else and then taking them home again.

It has been fantastic just learning where people have come from and their histories. It's amazing to actually work through. Also, I love being able to give back to the community. With the leather work - we were building stuff for NAIDOC Week, and everything else, and that's been really good. In the day-to-day sort of things, it's about celebrating where we're at, and what we can do to go ahead, and how we can interact to make that happen more easily. I've changed focus quite a bit from where I

was previously. I really volunteered and got more involved in what they were doing for it, rather than going back to something I was doing previously.

Volunteering in the City of Armadale has impacted me in terms of commitment. People are actually looking at what you've done or what you are doing, how you are actually being responsible as you're going. To me and my feelings, I feel as if it's made me a better person than what I was before. You weren't really being part of you, you were being part of the working machine I suppose. It's been absolutely amazing. I love every minute of it, and I would never, ever change it.

Come along, have a chat. There's certainly people around you can get involved with and you are giving something back to the community as you're going. It really is worth it. Seriously get involved.



TRISH MERRETT

Originally when my children were younger I started in playgroups and taught scripture. But since I've retired, I've actually been helping a company called Forget-me-not Dementia Support Memory Cafes, and that's through a family member who started it. We have a few cafes in Armadale, and we have people who are living with dementia and their partners or carers, and they just come for a couple of hours.

We have coffee and cake, and they start talking to other people in the cafe who have been going through or have already gone through the same experience. It's like, "oh, I'm not on my own." It's just amazing. You don't book, you just come along. We just chat. What I do is we have activities on the table. So, they can come along and not feel pressured or they can sit and relax for a couple of hours with other people around them. They all know these other people. We do puzzles with them; we laugh; we joke. One of the cafes in Toodyay, they actually have singalongs every month. We started off with the first cafe in Araluen (Roleystone), and we now have over 30.

What I love most about volunteering, it's a case of we just love to give back. Volunteering in the City of Armadale, it's giving me a sense of purpose. I've been retired for a few years now and it's just, I have to say, when I do the cafes, nine times out of ten I come away feeling like I've had the better day. It just does my heart good. So yes, Armadale is great.

When I started, when my children were little, doing playgroups and things like that it was just once a week. And it was an excuse to take the girls out, you know, they'd get to meet other people. I did work in the kiosk at the Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital for about, nearly two years. And that was just amazing. I loved that. You just make time for it because I come away from helping someone and I've got more out of it than what they have.

TED WATTS

I started volunteering when I was actually in Hamersley some 45 years ago, and went from there down to Augusta and I joined the local Alliance Club there. And that was 34 years ago, and I've been volunteering all the time on that. I was in Boyup Brook, then I moved back to Perth because of my wife's illness. And I've been volunteering in the City of Armadale since then. It's been a very pleasurable time to actually sit there and watch people achieve or do things that you've actually taught them how to do.

I was with the Lions Hearing Foundation doing PR and also training people up on how to use the hearing equipment. I like the way that people listen to me and then they actually learn something from me. And it gives me some self-esteem as well. The fact that I've passed on some of my knowledge, it's been really, really good.

I was asked to become a community member on the Grovelands Primary School P&C. And I've been there for something like seven or eight years now. And this year I'm the Chairperson for it and I enjoy helping the children. While I was there, I was also doing mentoring. I was in a thing called Trailblazers, which helped mentor the children. I also went to the

Men's Shed, and it was good talking to other men about problems that they've had and relating them to the problem I had at the time.

As I said, I belong to the Lions. And I got surprised when I checked up how many hours I spent selling Christmas cakes, and it was 130 hours - selling Christmas cakes. It was only on the weekends, and we only did from the last week in November, so every weekend prior to Christmas Day. And if anyone wants some more, I can get some.

It's given me a really good feeling in myself that I'm passing on knowledge to everybody else, and the fact that I can see that someone else is benefiting from it. And it's good to see that the benefits go back to the community and making the community better and making sometimes someone's life better. I remember a few years ago we actually helped a young lady that was trying to get a job, but she had to know about iPads so the club brought her an iPad and then a few weeks later she had a job. We were beneficial for her, but it was beneficial for us because we actually got another person back into the workforce.



[The] Fathering Project works with primary school children, and we arrange meetings with the father and their child, because a lot of guys are actually out there that are working fly in - fly out, and so they don't have much time to spend with their child.

The Lion's Club is actually recycling computers. Working or not, doesn't matter. If they don't work at all, we strip them down and there's only

some glass elements and some plastics that we can't recycle. The rest of it, we separate it all and send it off to a salvage yard who give us money for it to go back to the community. If we get computers there that are suitable for children, [we donate to] parents that can't afford a computer so the kids can learn.

Look for an organization that you are happy with. Volunteering is the thing.



NICOLE CAMPBELL

I currently volunteer with the Armadale History House and Seaforth Gardens between Kelmscott and Gosnells. Yeah, it's really enjoyable, both of them.

What I normally do is, we've got three big storage rooms and, so I take photos of the objects, all the history, all the stuff that we've got in them. Some boxes take forever, but it's good. I take them out of the box like they could be a small 1930s tea cup and saucer.

There's a lot of fragile objects like paper and stuff. You've got to be very careful with it all. One thing that we get asked to do is wear gloves so it doesn't damage the object, because you've got oils on your skin and if you just pick it up and take it out of the box with your bare hands, you're gonna wear the copper, the silver or brass off. And with paper because it's so fragile. We've got a lot of clothes, like we've got an old wedding dress, I think it's dating back to about the 1920s and that's really cool.

Some objects might have two parts or three parts. So, say if you've got a knife, fork, and spoon, that would be A, B, and C of that year. You have to take the photo with the object

itself, and then you've have to get the maker's mark on the object. So it could say it was made in England, or some of the Army stuff have different things on it.

I love who I work with. I just love everything about it. I have been volunteering for a long time. I would probably say about 20 years, if not more. When I left school I volunteered at the Armadale Home Help, played games with the people that we picked up in the bus, we went for bus rides. I've done it for a long time.

I think it's impacted me in a very good way because I'm a very outgoing sort of person. I'm a people-person. I like to think that I help people, especially at the History House. If people come in and I'm out in my little area doing my photos, I hope that I've made someone's day. Like if they might come in and go, "oh, do you know the history about this?" And so, say we've got a Coolgardie safe in the History House and that's really interesting because I didn't know anything about it, and I wasn't sure what to say to the person. So, I actually asked for some help and I did my own research and it's really interesting.

I've come across a lot of good stuff. Yeah, my mum remembers this old shop called Harrison and Co. Stores and we've got a big display on that in the History House. We've got the old cell door from the Kelmscott Police Station. It's really funny because at

Seaforth Gardens, one of the residents, he used to live in Roleystone and he remembers that Harrison and Co. shop.

I take my dog Xena in [to Seaforth Gardens] on a Wednesday afternoon and she's becoming a very social butterfly now. I enjoy doing that because I know I'm giving. If someone doesn't have any family or the family don't come in and visit the person, I know I've brightened their day up, and Zena takes the highlight every day we get there. On a Thursday I go and help them. I sit and play table games with them. So, I enjoy that.

Out of both of my volunteering and especially with the History House, I've noticed my photography work has gone from being "I don't know what I'm doing" to "I know exactly what I'm doing", and I'm really pleased in the work that I'm presenting.

My photos are getting better and better and better. I actually won Third for one of my photos at the Canning Show last year so that's given me a big satisfaction that I'm doing the right thing. I know what I'm doing, whereas I'm not double-doubting myself anymore.

I think it's great to give back to the community and that's one thing I'm very big on - giving back to the community. The City of Armadale has put me through a lot of courses. I'm currently redoing my first aid refresher next month. I'm really excited to do that. So, I think you get what you put out in the world.

BIKRAM SINGH

I began volunteering with the City of Armadale because I wanted to get more involved into my local community. I moved to City of Armadale about three and a half years ago but I've been involved in City of Armadale for a long time because the majority of my friends live in this area. I was inspired by some of the events we used to do with one of my friendS; which is called Harmony Day Festival. This was the first year we couldn't do it because we didn't have enough manpower. We used to do that every year for the last six, seven years. Even when I was not living in this area, I was still involved in setting it up and organising our day-to-day operations.

I'm enjoying it. I'm loving it. We had a lot of festivals back home. Every month there's some festival. You don't feel homesick when you're in this area. There are people from India, there are people from Pakistan. I've got a few neighbours from there. And some of the New Zealand guys share their problems and I bring that to the Multicultural [Advisory Group] and then we discuss over there what sort of issues they're facing.

I'm a part of WA Sikh Sports Club as well. I'm a Justice of the Peace, doing more volunteer services in the area as well. So, I get knowledge of a variety

of people that come. They need some document certification. Sometimes the cops knock on the door. They need some urgent warrant and hard files. And so, I do that part. And on the other hand, I am a committee member in a Sikh sports club where we organise hockey clinics, Mother's Day Festival, Father's Day Festival, Diwali Dinner. I organise, I do the background work. We organize the coach, we pay for the coach, we pay for the turf and just organise games. I was very impressed from last year where we had to accommodate food for 200 people just in eight hours, started at six o'clock and we finished around 2:30, 3 o'clock.

I love it. I want to do it. This community has given us lots and lots. I want to give whatever I can back to the community. We call it Dasvandh. Donate 10% of what your income is to someone who needs it. Volunteering at City of Armadale has been incredibly enriching. It helped me develop a deeper understanding of community issues. When I was not a part of it, we were not talking about these things. Now we talk about things, we raise the issues, we approach the Council.

When I say donate your 10%, that's not just the money, it's your time. It could be anything. Just give



something back, what you can to the community. When you volunteer, you learn a lot of things. When you do volunteering, there's a lot of takeaways from there which you can implement in your personal or professional life. You build up relationships, you know each other and then – success. It's just a connection building micro relationships and the more you

know, the more you learn. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

INDRANI GUNARATHNA

I started volunteering with the City of Armadale because of many reasons from my childhood, I'm a community person. I migrated to Australia in 2004. From that time, I was thinking that "what are the ways that I can engage with the community?" Once I moved to the City of Armadale in 2009, I found that City of Armadale have lots of interesting activities which help cultural and linguistically diverse communities to come together and share their values and experiences and make the community more inclusive. So, looking after all these opportunities and seeing these interesting activities, I decided to join the City of Armadale as a volunteer. And I have been a member of the City of Armadale Multicultural Advisory Group for three to four years now.

There are many other activities that I have done in the past with the City of Armadale running major projects, community projects like Harmony Day Festival. I have done more than 30 – 40 major projects focusing on the community. And as a result of that, I was awarded the Activist Community Citizen Award for 2018.

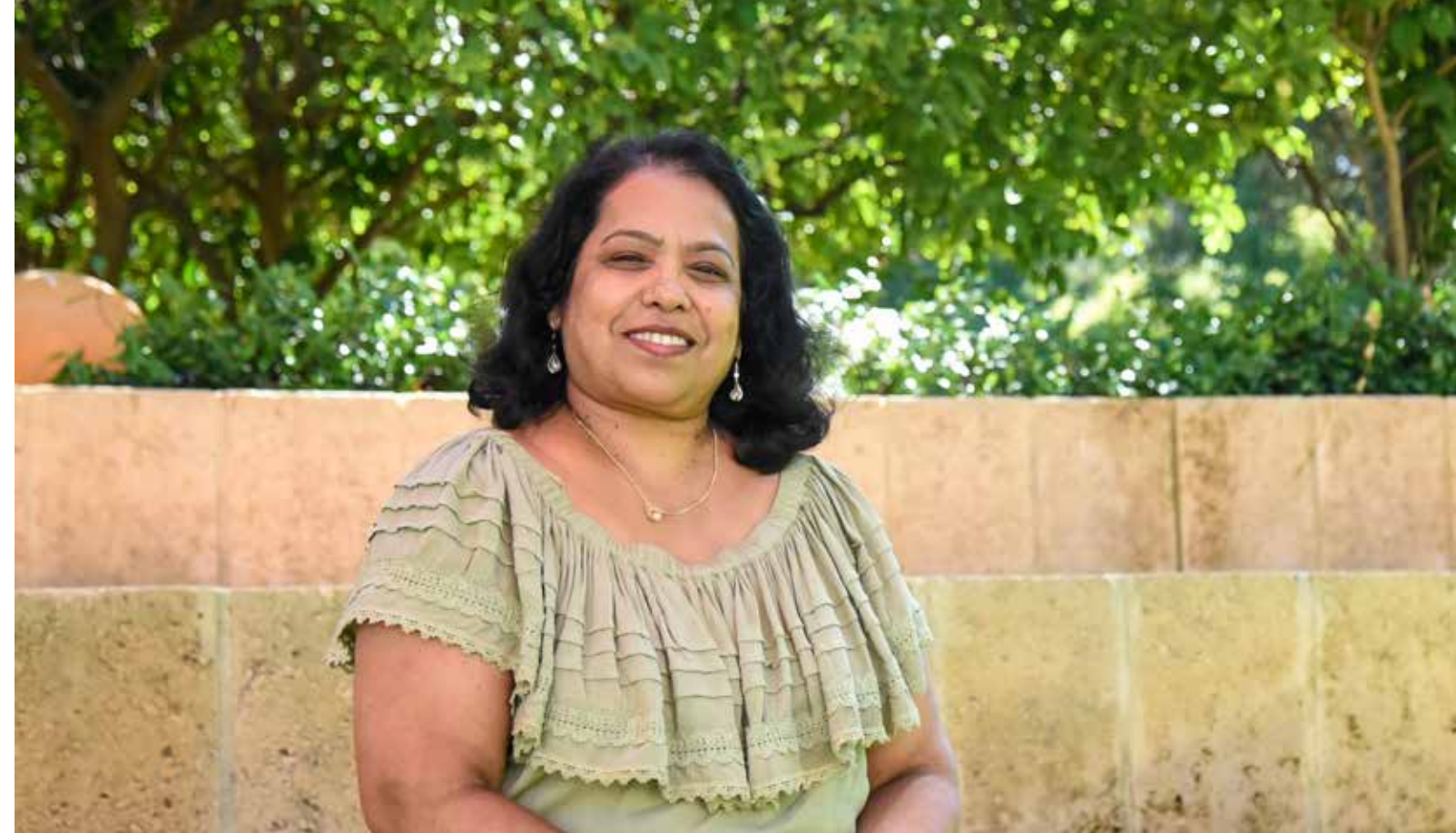
My main focus when I started volunteering in Armadale with all these activities just to bring people to create connections, networks and

platforms for the Armadale communities to come together, especially in the areas they are not aware of, such as employability skills training, and then mental health and domestic violence. These kinds of activity areas are very useful for new migrants to know as well as access to available services.

What I love most about volunteering is meeting the variety of people and engaging with them and also learning new skills and knowing about the areas I am not aware of, also being able to get support for the community. I'm passionate about community and I'm supporting community since my childhood. I love what I'm doing, and it feels very satisfying. I feel very happy when I engage with the community.

It's very challenging as a mother and a wife and a full-time employer, an employee too. It is very difficult to manage time and then make the whole commitment / sacrifice to the family time and then personal time. So, the satisfaction and the impact that I see out of all the volunteering activities is massive. And then you will never be able to find that satisfaction and happiness and, in whatever the task that you do.

And also these opportunities have given me lots of other courage and open further opportunities to engage and find myself be very successful as well. And especially knowing about my cultures that has helped me manage my Armadale workplace relations and then the opportunities for me to attend different workshops.



I'm very thankful to the City of Armadale for the opportunity to join the Multicultural Advisory Group which is a great platform for us, to Armadale, now - the laws, the regulations and the general practices and what our key responsibilities (as a community member) and also in how we support community and services.

So, my professional and personal development, I consider volunteering is one of the major impacts on my side, to have my knowledge being improved and my network has tremendously expanded. So, I find under all what I do as a volunteer has provided me the great benefit and satisfaction and happiness in my life.

AUNTY IRENE MCNAMARA

I was offered to work at the Armadale and Bentley Hospital. I wasn't applying for the job, they asked me, "can I come in and do the job?" Because I'd already just been working with the Education Department, working with people until the job was advertised. And then the person who got the job, then she retired. It was too much for her. So, I kept going and going. I stopped working because I had retired. I got that medallion for being there, you know, for 30 years and I'm in the Hall of Fame as well, at the Education Department.

I worked in Bentley. Little kindy for three-year-olds. And Bentley also took in migrants that couldn't speak English. And they teach English lessons for the women there and the men. I also worked mainly in kindies. But working with little ones was good. I worked with my husband. I did softball. I coached. I did all the scoring for baseball. I learned how to do all the scoring with all the colours. We were active with doing things, fundraising, you know, working with the kids, go bottle collecting, take them on camp.

It's meeting people. You've already got those skills, it's just meeting different people, and you know, learning about where they come from.

We did have the Neighborhood Watch and we would have a sausage sizzle and pass out information, asking people to join or be part of it. And we would write, they would write things like their contact number and all of that. And any crimes that's happening in the area.

I wasn't any different. I'm already the person who likes people. Once you get involved with other things, then you already, you've taken it in. But it's the people.

If you're interested in being a volunteer, then you know, there's people who would teach you things. You know, if you're wanting to be a Neighborhood Watch, then they'll teach you what it's all about.



UNCLE ALBERT MCNAMARA

I like meeting people and also, I like to do things in the community to help people. I always wanted the Advisory Group to the City of Armadale. It's good to be involved because people find if you are out there, people recognize you straight away.

Well, I'm on the Advisory Group to the City of Armadale. I'm also involved with the Champion Centre, and with the building of the new lake at Champion Lakes. Armadale Redevelopment (Authority) asked me to find people to sit down there in case they found some artifacts.

Also, we've got a Men's Shed at Armadale, which the City of Armadale has given us at Settler's Common to use, where we get all the men from around the local area to be involved, because a lot of men just stay at home with nothing to do. It's called Maaman Mia-Mia. Maaman means man, and Mia-Mia means house in Aboriginal. If you've got a bit of a problem at home, men come up there and they sit around and yarn with each other, tell each other about different things because sometimes it's hard for a man to explain if he's got a problem at

home. Just to get people communicating with each other and try to help each other.

At the Champion Centre, I get involved on the Tuesdays and Thursdays because there's a lot of people coming in and they want advice about different sorts of things. What's happening in the community, especially when we have a funeral or one of the Elders pass on, we let everybody know that there's a service coming up or if there's problems with the children at school they can come along to the Champion Centre and have a talk to some of the older men and young men. It's for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, we've got to learn to work together, walk together and make the change together.

You have to have something in life. You're coming to the Centre, you're walking around, you're talking to different people, and you're supporting people. Being a volunteer is about communication. You've got to have good communication skills; it's about talking to people. Don't start telling them what to do. Let them tell you how you can help them. But don't try and do everything yourself. Put up a contract for them – So much for you and so much for them. You got to have that balance.

I've got a lot of work at home to do, but I seem to be out there helping other people if I can. You can only do so much, but then you've got to have a break. You've got to get out, exercise and talk to



people, communicate with people. That's what I like about it. It's about getting out and supporting each other. You've got to have a good ear for listening. Don't try and tell them what to do. Listen to what they want.

Would you also like to volunteer in your community?

ARMADALE
VOLUNTEER
SERVICES

We are grateful to our Humans of Armadale volunteers for their valuable time spent helping our community, and thank them for their time sharing their stories, experiences and journeys.

If reading the stories of our local volunteers has inspired you to volunteer in your community, you can find out more about how to volunteer through Armadale Volunteer Services.

Armadale Volunteer Services (AVS) is an initiative of the City of Armadale supported by funding supplied by the Western Australian Government Department of Communities. We provide a free referral service for people wanting to volunteer, a free support service for community groups wishing to engage volunteers, and a range of activities that promote the many benefits of volunteering.

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'. However, as you have read here, the reward for volunteering can be of great value. People volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of these may include:

- Wishing to help others
- Wanting to learn new skills
- To meet new people
- Being new to the community
- To share their skills and knowledge
- To give something back to the community

If you want to explore your volunteering options, please contact **Armadale Volunteer Services at City of Armadale**.

Telephone: 9394 5000

Email: volunteering@armadale.wa.gov.au

Otherwise you can explore www.govolunteer.com.au or www.volunteer.com.au and start searching for a volunteer position today.



Sharing stories that change us.



This collection was produced and developed by the **Centre for Stories** and the **City of Armadale**. Together, we are sharing stories that reflect our state's rich heritage, diversity and history.

If you would like to listen to the original podcasts of the stories in this book, scan the QR code



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