

Mentor Information

Robyn Bowler

I met my husband Peter in Katanning WA, while I was working at the Shire as an Environmental Officer/ Building Surveyor. We moved to Wiluna WA to run a Sheep Station for 11 years. In Wiluna we developed an Earthmoving Business and became involved with the Mining fraternity. We moved to Perth to educate our children and now run a large cattle property in Jundah, Western Queensland.

We have three adult children all happily partnered. Grandchildren are the new toys in our household, with one grandson and another bundle of Joy on the way

I have many interests in addition to being a guide for 10 years. I am an active Justice of Peace and have worked in a variety of charity organisations for over 25 years. My purpose has always been to find a way to “give back” to society in a meaningful way. At the present time I volunteer at the Amanda Young Foundation, Soroptimists International, We are W/M, and Thrive.

I look forward to assisting you in your quest to become a wonderful guide and a part of the pleasure and honour of being a King’s Park Guide.

Helen Clifton

Before becoming a Guide in 2013, my life had taken many turns : Growing up on a wheat farm near Wongan Hills, my life became a city one with boarding school, university where I trained as a Medical Scientist; work and marriage which gave me three children.

By the time I minded my first grandchild while my daughter trained as a Kings Park Guide, I was farming near Beverley, developing an extensive native garden and developing a love of our native vegetation. These things inspired me to apply to be a Kings Park Guide and I have loved it since - the beautiful place where we volunteer, the sense of camaraderie and common purpose amongst the Guides, the continual learning process, the sense of belonging and the joy of sharing knowledge and the Park with our visitors.



Since my training, I have spent 3-4 years organizing Further Education - speakers for meetings and specialized guided walks in the Park following meetings.

I've been involved with our Excellence in Guiding process (Guide quality control) and now front the Peer Observation panel that tries to keep us all at the top of our Guiding game. Both Further Ed and PO have given me a seat on the Guides Committee.

Botanic Garden Guides conferences held in different cities every couple of years are great for networking and seeing how other Guide groups work - Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide have been interesting and inspiring occasions.

Rachel Craven

Been a Guide for 33years [a third of a century!] and still enjoy sharing everything about KPBG with visitors - learning from them, from other Guides and Park staff etc. I also enjoy seeing others develop as Guides and can, hopefully, help set them on their way.



Started out with very little knowledge of Perth and its history and even less about Kings Park and botanic gardens in general - telling others about it all was a great way to learn.

Distant background in nursing in and running Intensive Care Units.

Two offspring - daughter in Luxembourg along with her husband and our only grandson; and a son in Norway.

Interests include classical music, ancient civilizations and travel especially in the colder, higher latitudes.

Kerry Forbes

Growing up in rural Western Australia fostered a lifelong appreciation for the bush and the natural environment. This led me to train as a Kings Park Volunteer Guide in 2018.

I enjoy meeting people and sharing the beauty of Kings Park and the unique flora of Western Australia with local, interstate and overseas visitors and I value my interactions and friendships with fellow guides.



My career included time as a schoolteacher in both country and city settings, as well as a period as a stay-at-home

mum. Later, as a mature age student, I qualified as a clinical dietitian, eventually becoming Chief Dietitian at Fremantle Hospital.

My interests include family, gardening, Australian native plants, travel, environmental and human rights issues, cooking and patchwork quilting. I previously volunteered for The Samaritans help line and currently volunteer with the Australian Migrant Education Programme (AMEP) and Cambridge Coastcare.

I am active within the Kings Park Volunteer Guides community, as a member of the KPVG Moodle and Peer Observation committees, and have previously mentored a group in the KPVG 2024 training course.

Edwina Forster

I qualified as a Geologist in Melbourne and worked for BHP Petroleum. I switched into Crisis Management and Oil Spill Response and then finally into the area I really love – Environmental Management. I've had the opportunity to work on projects in throughout Asia, Africa, the UK and the Gulf of Mexico and lived in London and Houston.



Whilst living overseas, every time we (my husband and daughter & son) came home to visit family & friends, I would insist on an outing to Kings Park which was always a highlight. On moving back to Perth, I contacted the Park regarding volunteering and there was a Guides course coming up. I trained as a Guide in 2018 and have never looked back. Guiding in Kings Park ticks all the boxes – intellectually, socially, recreationally. There is so much to learn about our natural environment and the fascinating adaptations never cease to amaze me. I feel very fortunate to be a Guide and to be able to share the beauty of and information about the Park and also WA with visitors.

When I'm not guiding I enjoy gardening, rowing, cycling, cooking, performing arts and walking my (rather naughty!) dog.

I'm excited to be a mentor to the 2026 trainees and continue the learning journey!

Liz Hall

I originate from England where I studied Physiotherapy. I moved to Australia for post graduate study at Curtin Uni and am still here!!

I've worked as a physiotherapist in hospitals, private practice and as a tutor at Curtin University. I am currently taking a break from all of this.

I am married with two adult children.

I have always enjoyed gardening and the natural environment. I now divide my time between Margaret River and Perth. I enjoy travel, particularly involving hiking and cycling, getting away as often as possible. Staying active is important to me with regular swimming, yoga, cycling, walking.

I trained as a guide at Kings Park in 2018. The opportunity to work with such a great group of guides, meet visitors to the park from far and near and constantly learn and build knowledge makes guiding very rewarding and worthwhile for me.



Jennie Hunt

I trained as a Kings Park Guide in 2004. Since then I have been involved on the Guides committee as Secretary and Newsletter Editor, on the evaluation committee, being a mentor for the training group, taking Walks by Request and various other guiding activities. These years have been satisfying, interesting, sometimes challenging and a lot of fun.

I am a KiwAus and lived most of my life in Sydney, moving to Perth in 1992 for work. I have three kids, and have worked in both the health and aged care industries.



I don't have a background in botany, but I have always been interested in the natural sciences and spending time outdoors. Thanks to being a Guide, I have been able to create and enjoy a native plant garden.

Chris Kirk

A Perth girl, I studied Economics at UWA before building a 30-year career in the WA mining industry. My work life started with four incredible years living in the Pilbara where I met a great group of people, spent weekends camping and playing every sport available. It was also where I met my husband. Our life together included years in London, working and travelling, before returning to Perth to start our family. In the

blink of an eye, our daughter and son have now grown up and are themselves studying at UWA.

I'm now enjoying a new chapter focused on volunteering and staying active with Kings Park and Bindaring Clothing Sale (Red Cross), golf, and regular exercise. I also enjoy hiking, and have had wonderful experiences exploring Australia and NZ, with the Overland Trail in Tasmania next on my list.

I graduated with the 2024 Kings Park guiding cohort, and have learnt so much and loved the experience and the people I have met. I was drawn to Guiding to expand my knowledge of native plants and pollinators to help me as a hobbyist beekeeper, but I didn't appreciate how much I would love becoming part of the fabulous guiding family

Cathy McRae

Starting my life on a grain and sheep farm in the wheat belt region of Western Australia, my journey has not been conventional. After studying primary teaching and dedicating a decade to the profession, a desire for change led me to Japan, where I lived for two years teaching English.

Living near the mountains on North East Honshu, I developed a love of skiing and bush walking. From Japan, I backpacked through Korea, China, Mongolia, Russia, and Europe, immersing myself in diverse cultures and landscapes and took the opportunity to bush walk and mountain climb when it presented itself.

After returning to Australia, I wanted to do something more creative and made a shift into marketing and graphic design, but still feeling adventurous I also moved to Sydney. To balance the busy city life, I spent a lot of time surfing, drawing and doing yoga. Living in Sydney highlighted my need for connection to nature and I took many opportunities to travel up and down the coast and into the countryside.

Wanting to do something more helpful, I completed a postgraduate degree in counselling and worked with Mission Australia, aiming to assist formerly long-term homeless clients in making their lives safer and more fulfilling.

Returning to Perth has been joyful, spending time with family and friends and enjoying the beaches and parks, countryside and relaxed lifestyle. Currently, I'm working as a lecturer at TAFE with refrigeration and air conditioning apprentices and I am really enjoying teaching this age group.

After training as a guide in 2024, I have enjoyed sharing the stories of Kings Park with the visitors, including its history, geology, and botanical highlights. It has been wonderful meeting everyone—from locals to visitors from all over the world. I love seeing how the park changes through the seasons and delight in the surprises along

the way, such as spotting a tawny frogmouth in a tree, discovering new blooms, or hearing black cockatoos calling overhead.

Barbara Pelly

I have been a guide since 2006 and it has become an important part of my life, a source of great pleasure and satisfaction through life's ups and downs. It is easy to get very involved and I have served on various committees including as president in 2015 and 2016, and program coordinator for our Botanic Guides Conference in 2019.



I was brought up in Zimbabwe and also lived in Hong Kong for 16 years before emigrating to Australia in 1991. What a good choice, I am a loyal Perth Aussie now. My career was in high school science teaching, but I found my knowledge of Australian fauna and flora woeful when I arrived here. I started going on guided walks in Star Swamp and became hooked. Volunteering in Kings Park became the obvious thing to do as I stepped back from teaching.

I have 2 sons, only one in Perth so I have to travel to the US to see my grandchildren. I love the beach, the bush, reading, and showing people the best of Kings Park. The professionalism, camaraderie and friendship in the Guides is a bonus as well as the pleasure of welcoming new guides.

Judy Rees

I joined the Guides in 2013 as I was looking for a new interest that involved learning. I was born in England so I was familiar with English gardens but not much about our Australian native plants and flowers. When a friend suggested I apply to become a guide it was the perfect opportunity as I was keen to learn a new skill.



I emigrated to Perth in 1971, I have two adult children and four grandchildren. During my working life I was a personal assistant in private enterprises, later running the office of our own small business. I have a few hobbies, I'm a member of a craft group, a book club, a walking group, looking after my own garden, and travel.

Being a guide is a wonderful experience. Taking guided walks gives you the opportunity to talk with your visitors, to show them our beautiful park and recently

one of my visitors said Kings Park was the best botanic garden in Australia! I also enjoy working in the Visitors Information Centre, most visitors are on holiday and it's a pleasure to be of assistance to them.

Liz Stirling

Hi! I trained as a guide in 2017 in the lead up to retirement. Through guiding, I've made many friends, and learned so much about WA flora and fauna, and really enjoy taking visitors on walks and also manning the VIC.

I was born in the UK, and came to Perth in 1989. I worked as a doctor in many different areas of medicine during my career, but ended up as a psychiatrist for older adults. A challenging job, but one I enjoyed and found rewarding.

On arrival in Perth in October 1989, one of the first things I did was drive to the Stirling Ranges. I'd enjoyed wild flowers in the UK, and had heard about WA's biodiversity, but I was blown away by the wonderful array of plants I saw in the Ranges. My interest persisted and probably led to me applying to become a guide.

An aspect of being part of the Kings Park Volunteer Guides that I love is the ongoing learning. At our last meeting we had a talk on peacock spiders. I knew little about them before, but now know there are at least 3 species to be found in the park!!!

I look forward to being a mentor, and sharing the joy of being in the park and learning with the 2026 trainees.



Rhonda Wallman

I grew up on a farm in the Wheatbelt before going to boarding school and then University in Perth. Spending time outside with animals, birds and the occasional reptile provides a different perspective on life and those experiences stay with you forever. Drought, bushfires, and unexpected torrential rain demonstrated the impact of nature on our lives.

My professional life was rewarding, albeit at times frustrating as well, working in the Education sector as an Educational and Developmental Psychologist. I developed a program for secondary students who had been expelled from regular schools, organized parenting programs for parents/carers of primary school age students and worked with migrant



and refugee families who came to Australia knowing no English – all these provided the variety and challenges of the last 30 years of my working life.

I've travelled extensively both around Australia and overseas, and plan to continue travelling whenever I can. In my late 20s, I was fortunate to meet up with a very knowledgeable botanist which sparked my interest in learning about all kinds of plants, and led to visits to gardens and botanical gardens all over the world. At the same time my (late) husband and I established an 'orchard' at a property in the hills – we grew forty different kinds of fruit trees which provided us with an endless supply of fruit for over 35 years.

I have two adult children and five grandchildren who live in Brisbane and Melbourne. We visit each other whenever there is an opportunity ! In my spare time I listen to classical music, go out for coffee with friends, investigate my family history and do puzzles !

I became a Kings Park Guide in 2015 and I have been involved in many aspects of the guiding community since. I am part of the Rosters Team and the Peer Observation Group and I co-ordinate Walks by Request. Having been part of the Training Team in 2024, I am looking forward to meeting up with the 2026 group.

Peter Winter

I trained as a Kings Park Volunteer Guide in 2018.

Since then, I have served on the Guides' Committee as Vice President, President and Immediate Past President as well as being a Mentor for the 2024 training group and many other duties including driving the bus for our Guides' wildflower tours.

I am a West Australian and completed my formal education as a Pharmacist in Perth before traveling around our state, country and internationally. My wife and I have three kids and three grandkids.

I joined the Guides on the suggestion of my wife, also a guide, and have found it to be a wonderful way to meet like-minded people as visitors to Kings Park and amongst the guiding group.

At home we have many native plants in our garden, and I work restoring the vegetation in a nearby council reserve.

Relief Mentors



Helen McCormack



Jenny Mills



Colin Campbell