

## Share your story

These stories are sorted alphabetically by surname.

### **Susan Anderson - My Story**

I was born and raised in Perth and have lived in Perth all my life.

I have been employed as a public servant for many years and now looking forward to a happy retirement.

I am an active outdoor person and love spending time in nature. I enjoy gardening, bush walking and open water swimming and recently swam in the Busselton Jetty Swim.

Although I do not have my own garden, I have the pleasure of working in gardens belonging to family and friends. I am particularly interested in WA native gardens and propagating endemic species. Over the last three years, I have established a "no water" garden in the South West, focusing on local plants which attract birds, insects and wildlife.

I am delighted to be joining "The Kings Park Volunteer Guides Training Course" and look forward to learning more about our remarkable flora, sharing learnt knowledge and meeting like-minded people.



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### **Lyn Atterton**

Hi Everybody,

I'm Lyn Atterton and I hail from Como, where I live with my husband Tim and two Jack Russells, Henry and Winifred.

Originally from Durham in the North East of England, but a naturalised Aussie of 30 years +

We initially came to Perth for a week on a work trip, but decided pretty quickly that this was the place for us and moved here permanently shortly thereafter.

In my previous existence in UK I worked as a Flight Attendant and subsequently as an Agent with a Ladies Fashion House in London, had two daughters, Georgia and Molly, and on moving to Perth worked as a Relocation Agent, helping to settle new arrivals to WA. Unfortunately, Covid put a stop to all that which is when I began volunteering with Ronald McDonald House and Bethany Aged Care.

I enjoy the Theatre, both attending and performing, with a special affinity for Musical Theatre— love a good show tune!! I play Pennants tennis for Hensman Park in South Perth, and have recently gone to the dark side and discovered Pickleball – different but equally challenging!! Being outdoors is good for my soul, be it walking dogs, hiking in the bush, or strolling at the beach. I enjoy a good book and a good wine and am always available for a coffee date.



Am looking forward to meeting the Class of 26 and learning to become a Kings Park Guide – I think it will be rewarding and a lot of fun!

See you all soon!

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### **Marghi Carman**

My name is Margaret Carman, but I prefer to be called Marghi (that's a hard G!).

I am 73 this year, I was married to my husband Paul for almost 28 years when he died very unexpectedly 21 years ago. We have 7 fantastic adult kids, 4 of whom live in WA, and one son a converted Tasmanian, another in Canberra, and my oldest daughter moves from the east coast to the west as her work suits.



I am a retired nurse, my ultimate work being a Palliative Care nurse which I loved, at Bethesda Hospital. On retiring I went to UWA to do an Arts degree, majoring in Italian and History.

I live very close to King's Park in Nedlands, having sold the large family home 13 years after Paul died and built a smaller place opposite Karrakatta Cemetery. Surprisingly the year of building was great fun due to being fortunate with choosing a particular building company.

I love gardening...and hope to pick up lots of tips during this course. I love the open spaces and beaches of Perth but I also like to travel, I have studied Italian in Italy multiple times, and have dear friends there as a result.

I consider myself fairly fit and active, walking, swimming, cycling and occasionally playing tennis. In 2024 I walked the Camino Frances across Spain...and would love to walk another route this year. My time is otherwise occupied volunteering at PCH, reading, seeing an occasional film, and visiting and filling in gaps babysitting my 8 gorgeous grandchildren.

I am looking forward to meeting others on the course and hopefully forging new friendships.

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### **Celia Cornwell**

Celia grew up in England and after graduating from university followed by a one-year course in English/Chinese translation, she won a British Council scholarship and in September 1982 went to China as a student. In 1984 Celia began work with an American trading and consulting company in Beijing where she stayed until August 1987 when she came to Perth to visit friends and became part of the effort for Australia to engage more effectively with countries of the Asian region. Celia worked in the WA State Government, and at two universities, always in the international partnerships area, until calling time on full-time work at the end of 2023. Celia continues her involvement with international education via two part-time roles, and remains passionate about Chinese language and culture, maintaining reasonable fluency in Mandarin Chinese. A new passion has emerged in the past 10 years – rowing. Celia is now a competent competitive rower and the current President of her “rowing home”, viz: Perth Rowing Club. Rowing on the Canning River is a perfect start to most days. Gardening (native plants, of course) and bush walking are on Celia’s list of hobbies, the current focus being to keep the young native plants on her verge alive through the summer.



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### **Jane Cousins**

I arrived in WA in 1958 as a child of 10 pound Poms. My first home was surrounded by bush and I spent a lot of my childhood playing there, climbing gnarled old marris and picking and pressing wildflowers in heavy (unread) European tomes. I made a ‘book’ of the pressed wildflowers (all neatly labelled with their common names) and sent it to my grandmother in London. I guess my love of the Western Australian bush dates from this time.



Study took me in the direction of more abstract worlds – philosophy, then literature, cultural and communication studies. With a PhD in literature, but no clear aim, I spent the late 1980s and 1990s variously travelling, living and working overseas including China, Africa, New York and South America, between teaching stints at Murdoch and a year editing the Fremantle Arts Review.

These experiences intensified my wanderlust, piqued my interests in art and ancient cultures, and opened my eyes to the incredible diversity of environments (some pristine), plants and animals around the world. They also nurtured a new passion for hiking in wild places. My time in Africa had left a deep impression and, with a new sense of purpose, I enrolled part-time on my return to Perth, in 2000, in an MSc in International Development.

After 3 years’ teaching in the Indigenous Community Management and Development program at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin Uni, which took me to some far flung Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, I headed to PNG on a 2-year

volunteer assignment to gain relevant work experience. I spent the next 15 or so years living and working all over PNG, and later in Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, and Fiji.

Since returning to Perth in 2018 when both parents turned 90, I have interspersed volunteer work at Fremantle Round House with some paid international development consultancy, evaluation research for the NGO Stopping Family Violence, and a semester tutoring in a sustainability course at Murdoch. Nothing like a steep learning curve to wet my whistle.

Re-engaging with my home environment after my exposure to so many different ones overseas has deepened my appreciation of its uniqueness, and for the amazingly biodiverse but fragile hotspot of an ecosystem we live in, are part of and have a responsibility to protect. I hope by becoming a KP volunteer guide I will be able to make some small contribution by inspiring (in those who don't already have it) wonder, understanding and valuing of our lovely 'bush', and in those who do, a little bit more. I also enjoy talking to and learning from people from all over the world, and working with a like-minded team.

I have diverse interests, including gardening and birdwatching. I love to see our birds come into the garden and feed, especially the red wattle birds (not my favourite nectar eater) when they perch on the stem of a kangaroo paw just a few feet away from my window.

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## **Zel Cowie**

Hi Fellow Trainees and Mentors.

I'm very much looking forward to the training course and volunteer guiding in the years to come. I've been very impressed by the Volunteer Guides who have guided the walks I've been on, and can only hope I'll be half as engaging and informative. My background is in the humanities, so I expect the training may be a steep learning curve for me.



I grew up in Bunbury, moving to Perth to attend university. After undergrad studies in psychology, sociology and politics I completed post-grad social work, working in government and voluntary agencies, as well as teaching and conducting welfare research. I've also had a few small businesses and investment properties, as well as studying law, literary journalism and languages.

I am passionate about the environment and enjoy being out in nature. Over the years I've been a keen Rogainer, bushwalker and long-distance hiker, including walking the Camino de Santiago, the Coast to Coast in the UK and our own Cape to Cape. These days my bush walks are mostly around bird watching and walking my dog.

Playing music has been a life-long passion, and I currently play sax in two community bands. I love to dance, practice yoga, swim, attend group fitness classes

and ride with The Over 55s Cycling Club...not all on the same day! In less energetic moments I enjoy reading, listening to ABC Radio National and studying languages. I'm interested in other cultures and have enjoyed travelling, including living in Canada for a bit. Needless to say, I believe in community, contributing to the common good and looking after the environment and the amazing natural world we live in.

I have one daughter who works in the City (and no grandchildren).

Last year I moved to the Kings Park side of Subi, after 30 years way down south...of the river in Ardross, and am really enjoying being so near Kings Park.

I'm really looking forward to meeting my fellow trainees and mentors and starting the journey to become a Volunteer Guide.

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### **Alison Creagh**

My background was as a GP and a doctor in women's health, but my biggest passion, workwise, is my current role as a medical educator in sexual and reproductive health. However, I plan to slowly step away from that whilst a younger colleague takes over, so that one day I can retire.



When on holidays, my favourite thing to do is to go on a wildflower walk somewhere new. Since my childhood in the wheatbelt, I've been passionate about WA wildflowers.

Music, swimming, reading and cycling are also big interests, and I'm keen to learn to surf - hopefully retirement will allow more time for all of these!

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### **Garth Ferry**

Hi,

I'm Garth, currently approaching the magic 64 mark. I have recently retired and moved back to West Perth after nearly 15 years in Melbourne.



Prior to heading to Melbourne for work, we lived locally for nearly 25 years. Kings Park has always been close to our hearts and we always bring visitors up here as a first stop visit.

I have had a long and rewarding working life, starting with the Royal Australian Navy not long after I left school. Following that I had a long career in Real Estate, including Property Management, Sales, Project Sales, Developments, Licensee and proprietor. I have a Bakery and Pastry qualification, worked on the frontline of the Covid19 response team with the Victorian Government during our extended lockdown periods, and finished my working career as the

Administrator for the Kangaroo Harvesting Programme with the Game Management Authority, as a separate authority with the Victorian Government.

I'm excited to have been selected as one of the trainee guides for Kings Park. I enjoy working and interacting with people, so this along with some other volunteer activities will keep me well occupied

I enjoy baking in my spare time, my husband and I enjoy travel, wine, and good food.  
Garth.

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### **Sarah Firnberg**

I grew up in a small rural village in Buckinghamshire UK, where much of my childhood was spent roaming fields and beech woods, climbing trees, getting muddy, being scratched by brambles and being stung by stinging nettles (pretty much daily). It was there that I first developed my deep love of nature that has stayed with me ever since.



Alongside nature, my other great passions have always been classical music and art. This led me to study Paper Conservation, specialising in the conservation and restoration of works of art on paper. I spent fifteen years running a studio in London, working with galleries, museums, and the National Trust. Although conservation sounds artistic, it's surprisingly scientific — much of my training was in the biochemistry of paper, pigments, and their interactions with solvents and environmental conditions. I found the work lonely and tediously painstaking at times, but working with fabulous works of art was a huge privilege, and I loved the blend of careful observation, problem-solving, and working with fragile natural materials.

After getting married and moving away from London, servicing overseas clients became difficult, and the London art market was changing dramatically. So, I retrained in another lifelong passion: medicinal herbs. Four intense years later, I qualified as a Medical Herbalist, with training in orthodox medical sciences alongside herbal *Materia Medica* and I went on to run a clinic in Birmingham for ten years. During this time, I frequently spoke on BBC WM and enjoyed lecturing to first-year medical students at Birmingham University (there were always a few converts).

Throughout all of this, music has remained a constant. I play the violin and particularly love chamber music. I married another violinist, and ten years ago we moved to Australia when he was offered a position with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

Arriving here brought a whole new natural world to discover. I've always loved gardening, but the shift from lush, moisture-loving UK plants to the tough, resilient flora of a much drier climate was a challenge. However, rather than miss what I'd left behind, I decided to learn to love it by finding out as much as I could about it. This

growing fascination with Australian flora and fauna is what's led me to apply to become a Kings Park Guide.

I took the same approach with spiders – I was dreading encountering big spiders before coming here, but now, I find them genuinely interesting (though I don't love them). Knowledge of viticulture and wine making was also new to me – and something I've really enjoyed learning about (with a bit of practical experience along the way).

I'm very much looking forward to my training and to meeting other participants and guides.

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### **Nichola Forster**

I am a recently retired Clinical Psychologist. I arrived in Perth almost 20 years ago to do my Masters at UWA and start a new career. I first arrived in Australia 10 years earlier from the UK, and spent those 10 years in Sydney.



I now live in Mount Lawley with my partner and, usually, a dog. I've been volunteering with Guide Dogs WA for about 8 years, looking after guide dogs in training which I find very rewarding.

I love spending time in the garden and have been gradually building a native garden since moving into this house a few years ago. I'm no expert but have enjoyed learning as I go.

I swim and play golf regularly. Since retiring I have been enjoying trying new things, including joining a choir, learning to play keyboard and teaching myself Chinese.

And, of course, I am very excited to get started on the Kings Park vol guide training!

Nichola

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### **Hilary Gamble**

I was born and grew up in New Zealand before moving to Perth with my family as a teenager. I now live in Bayswater with my husband Nick and two young energetic sons. We have a small native garden and verge which is a constant source of joy and discovery! I've been working as a radio producer/presenter for the past 15 years, and am currently on long service leave. Through work I've had the opportunity to live in Broome, Karratha, and Bunbury. I absolutely love the landscape and plants we have here in Western Australia, and can't wait to learn more about them on a deeper level. I'm a keen rower, I love cooking, and I have an unfinished mosaic



bee bath which is another project for this year! I look forward to meeting you all soon.

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**D.GURUMOORTHY (Guru)**

I am a Physiotherapist by profession and still work part-time at my private practice in Subiaco. Friends and colleagues call me by the name Guru, just because my first name is too long. I was born in India and lived in Scotland for many years before migrating to Australia, 39 years ago.



I and my wife moved recently to Subiaco, after living in City Beach. We have two married daughters and 4 lovely grandchildren.

I am a member of Rottneet Voluntary Guides Association since 2015. I am interested in gardening and photography.

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**Ros Hegarty**

I grew up in the Wheatbelt, where my mother would take us wandering through the local bush reserves. We'd scramble up the great granite outcrops that rise from the landscape, learning to love the wildflowers, the birds, and the quiet pulse of Western Australia's bush. She taught us to walk softly, to pay attention, to sit in silence long enough for the bush to reveal itself. Late winter and spring were always the seasons of joy — especially after good rains — when the country felt alive and generous.



After schooling in Perth, I found myself drawn back to the Wheatbelt for another fifteen years. Then life shifted, as it often does, and I headed north to the Kimberley. Through work, I travelled across the whole region — from the rugged coastline to the rainforest pockets, from the heathlands to the desert country. Once again, I was learning how to see a place properly. This time, I was fortunate to have Aboriginal friends who shared their knowledge of the Kimberley's plants, animals, and stories. Those lessons shaped me deeply.

For the past fifteen years, I've worked with Aboriginal groups from Broome to Kununurra, Kalumburu to Balgo — an experience I still consider extraordinary. These days I'm at TAFE, still teaching, still sharing knowledge with a wide range of people in ways that are clear, practical, and accessible.

In 2024, I returned to the city. I realised I wanted to keep learning and keep giving back, and Kings Park felt like the natural place to do that. I'd been on several guided walks there with visiting friends, and each time I felt the same sense of belonging. Like many Western Australians, Kings Park has long been one of my happy places. For eighteen months, when my daughter needed specialist appointments in Perth,

we'd drive four hours to the city, see the doctor, then steal a moment of peace — a sandwich, a play, a breath — in different corners of the park before heading home again. Those small rituals made the place feel like part of our family story.

This green space, shared with the world yet deeply personal to so many of us, is something I want to contribute to. Volunteering as a guide feels like a way to honour the landscapes that shaped me — from the Wheatbelt to the Kimberley — and to pass on the knowledge and appreciation that others so generously passed on to me.

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## **Bryan Hughes**

**Background:** Passionate fourth generation Western Australian. Was born in Mt Hawthorn but moved to Scarborough when I was four and have lived on the coast ever since, except for a seven-year stint in my twenties when I lived in Sydney.

I have lived in the same street in Trigg for the last thirty-seven years and have three kids and three grandchildren (perhaps with more to come as my daughter gets married in March). I love spending time with them all and their growing families, and helping them with their gardens.



**Study:** I completed an Executive MBA part-time when I was in my late forties while working full-time, with three kids - thanks to a very understanding wife! I also completed a Permaculture Design Course twenty years ago with Terra Perma – this course was a fantastic introduction to permaculture and the growing understanding of the importance of soil.

**Working life & skills:** Nearly my whole working life was spent in the Finance Industry, initially with the Reserve Bank of Australia, in Perth and Sydney, and then with the Commonwealth Bank in Perth. I finished my career in the Institutional Banking division leading a specialist transaction banking team looking after the WA Government and the Bank's large corporate clients.

After retiring from full-time work, I worked two-days-a-week for five years with Hatchd, a digital product company that created web apps and digital products for Governments, corporate and start-ups.

**Current interests/hobbies:** I currently volunteer on Tuesdays and Thursdays as a Garden Carer at Kings Park and previously volunteered at Perth City Farm.

**Passions:** Swimming at the beach, cycling, gardening and French language.

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## **Beth Jasas**

My name is Beth Jasas and I was born in New Zealand. I came to live in Perth at the age of 20 where I met and married my husband and we now have two children and six wonderful grandchildren. My chosen career was originally nursing but over time I moved into working within multiple community services areas in Local Government.

I enjoyed over thirty years working within and managing a variety of services and found that it was possible to make a positive difference and loved working closely with different communities. I finally retired in December 2025 and I now look forward to the next interesting path my life will take me on.

I have studied throughout my career and have had the opportunity to complete qualifications in nursing, psychology, project management and health management. My work over many years, has given me insights into people who are sick and those who are terminally ill, homelessness, men's mental health, and disability awareness to name a few. I now strive to learn something new every day and enjoy meeting people from all walks of life and being a part of a community.

My passions include maintaining a sense of humour as I age, keeping fit and healthy and spending as much time outdoors as possible. Over the years I have developed an interest in the environment and gardening and I hope to now increase my knowledge and skills in this area. I look forward to this course and the opportunity to volunteer in such an incredible place!

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## **Bernadette Jones**

### Introduction

Picture a carpet of everlastings for as far as the eye could see in which a four-year-old girl and her twin three year old brothers walked and played as their nature loving father fossicked for gold in his leisure time. My early years were spent in remote towns of Menzies and Laverton in the Goldfields..... and then the Wheatbelt – all as a free range kid. Occasionally on my head was a much-loved paper crown from the back of a Weeties packet. Long drives in an EH Holden Station Wagon introduced me to the magnificent Sturt Desert Pea when my parents drove to remote desert places as Census officials with their three youngsters in tow. No four wheel drives in those days. That station wagon took on some tough terrain. As a 10-year-old I went bike riding for hours through woodland in the Wheatbelt only needing to be home for dinner. On my mother's family farm I spent every school holiday for most of my childhood. There I listened to tales of the many hours my mother, as a child, spent walking through biodiversity hotspots and the sadness felt when her older brothers cleared those to increase their wheat and sheep production. The farm, from where the source of the Swan River emerges, was still a place of outdoor adventure no city child could imagine. More adventures were to be had as a teenager in the Pilbara where I reconnected with my favourite Sturt Desert Pea and fell in love with red dirt and swimming in magnificent gorges. In later



years, horse riding on the outskirts of Bunbury through remnant bushland and on beautiful beaches helped fill my leisure hours in my first two years of teaching. Desperate to repeat those rural and regional childhood experiences, I purchased a 2.7 hectare property in the Swan Valley with two boundaries on the Ellen's Brook. On that brook, at that time, was a suffocating carpet of kikuyu grazed by a large herd of a local farmer's cattle. Today there are hundreds of native trees and shrubs and not a sign of kikuyu or cattle – only white faced herons, and so many other bird species. On my property, Cygnet Creek, named due to its close proximity to the upper reaches of the Swan River, there are now many trees and shrubs – all planted by me and my soul mate, Andrew, who I met in Dampier as a 15 year old (and lost to cancer when I was 62). Horses, donkeys and dogs enjoyed the property and today it is home to two badly behaved golden retrievers and two troublesome sulphur crested cockatoos. From a bare paddock with only lupins and weeds it is now a place loved by a wide variety of birds, kangaroos and the occasional quenda. The work of building habitat continues due to my desire to assist the black cockatoos who visit the birdbaths placed especially for them. The "before" pictures show bare paddocks. The contrast of the "after" pictures is a source of pride and disbelief that the years have gone by so quickly. World travel reinforced my interest in natural history. Examples include oak trees at Runnymede (UK) where the Magna Carta was signed in 1215 and rose bushes planted by Captain Meares overseeing Ticket-of-Leave men here in Guildford, WA in the 1830s. My devotion to my professional career in education, training and human resources was always sustained by a love of gardening and the Australian outdoors. Never a day goes by when I don't interact with my garden in some way. As a recent retiree I must pinch myself that I don't have to fit gardening around my workday. What a treat! B Jones February, 2026

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**Michele Keogh** Hello everyone, As a retired Archivist, previously Youth worker and Music programmer I am looking forward to joining the Kings Park Guiding team. My special loves are exploring W.A. History, Landscape, Botany, and nature walks in the Perth environs. I have a fine art degree specialising in metalwork and jewellery design drawing inspiration from local flora, fauna, and photography. Spending time in my workshop making all things metal, cataloguing the record collection, and renovating my home are things I really enjoy. Seeing films, concerts and exhibitions with friends gives me immense pleasure. Looking forward to sharing this adventure with you.

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### **Maree Longman**

I was born in Perth and am a child of the fifties attending local primary and high schools. We were fortunate enough to have lived near the beach where we spent many hours swimming and watching my father fish from the shore. Our neighbourhood had many families who shared experiences and supported each other. I continue to live in the same neighbourhood as I did as a child and am close to my extended family of siblings, nieces, nephews as well as great nieces and great nephews.



After leaving school I attended Churchlands Teachers College and graduated in 1977. Throughout the next forty-five years I worked in schools throughout Western Australia including Kununurra, Bunbury, Wagin, Carnarvon School of the Air and many metropolitan primary schools. I have always appreciated the experiences of working in different and varied communities during my teaching career.

One of my favourite pastimes is walking and I have completed sections of the Bibbulmun track, The Wicklow Way and the Portuguese Camino from Porto to Santiago Compostella. I enjoy several daily walks around Lake Gwelup which is close to my home. Spending time walking in other suburban and country locations is also high on my list of good things to do.

Another pastime I enjoy is reading and I belong to two book clubs. I am happy to read most types of fiction and nonfiction but am not a great fan of the fantasy genre. I also enjoy attending the opera and live theatre. I like to cook for family and friends as well as share interesting recipes.

I am looking forward to learning more about the fauna of Kings Park and sharing all the great things this valuable place has to offer with others.

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### **Colleen Mallet**

I was reared by an avid gardener, my dad, whilst my mum took care of the day to day household chores. As I too always prefer to be in the garden at the crack of dawn listening to the birds, killing the weeds and tending to our garden, my family usually "lie in" until I come in 2 hours later humming away preparing the coffee getting ready for whatever the rest of the day holds. Be it going to work as a nurse, cooking, knitting, looking after grandchildren or catching up with friends. Apart from these "hobbies", I volunteer as a reader at Vision Australia, a Perth Radio Station broadcast live on 990AM. It is a member of the Radio Print Handicapped Network (one of eight in Australia). Broadcasting a range of programs generally consisting of readings of newspapers and magazines for people unable to read print media. As the years go by I wish to share the experiences as a volunteer at Kings Park with my grandchildren. As part of a community of the global footprint, and appreciate what Kings Park contributes.



**Niki MacLennan.**

### **Background**

I was born and grew up in Southern England. I came to Australia in 1973 with my husband who I married in the same year. We spent the next year in Perth where I completed a teacher's certificate then spent the following 26 years in Wagin, I left after my husband died in 2001.



### **Study**

I have a degree in psychology and teaching qualifications in primary and special education. I have taken some courses in Spanish and have basic fluency.

### **Working life and skills**

I have worked as a primary and special education teacher but most of my professional life has been in School Psychology. I have worked in State schools in Perth, Narrogin, Katanning and the Pilbara. I have worked in non-government schools in Albany and Perth.

I have raised 3 children, 2 girls and a boy and have 7 grandchildren.

### **Current interests/hobbies**

I have been a member of Perth Bushwalkers Club for nearly 20 years, I edited the club magazine for 7 years. I am familiar with most of the day walks in the Perth region and have done multi-day walks in the UK, Spain, France and Guatemala.

I have explored most of WA from the Kimberley coast to inland Kimberley, Pilbara, North west to the southern regions. This year I joined my grandchildren camping in Denmark and Esperance, I thought my camping days were over but clearly not! So, I have put the tent back in storage.

### **Passions**

Outdoors, the Australian landscape, horses and other animals. Being in the natural world. Children and grandchildren. Saving the environment. Contributing to a more compassionate, fairer and peaceful world.

### **Isabella Orifici**

Hello everyone! My name is Isabella. I am 18 years old and graduated from high school last year. Now I am studying a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Environmental Biology and Chemistry at Curtin. When I graduate I hope to get a job in this field doing anything that will allow me to be out in nature and use my passion for a good cause.



I am here because I have a strong passion for conservation and all things biology, and I love to learn and share that passion with others.

I am a social butterfly and take part in lots of hobbies. Currently I play guitar and piano, and I play netball in the winter. Last year I was also in my schools musical *School of Rock*, and I was very privileged to be cast to play the lead, Dewy Finn. I was also in my schools sustainability club which we called “Sustainable Servites”, where I contributed as much as I could to developing new ideas and implementing sustainable methods we had come up with.

I love a fun fact and a pun, so if you know any please come and have a chat and maybe I can even give you one in return. Otherwise I am always happy to have a chat and get to know others so feel free to come up to me whenever the time is right!!

I also love to cook and bake, and love learning new recipes, so you’re always welcome to give me some recommendations or even ask what some of my favourites are! If you’re lucky I might even give you some of my famous hedgehog slice!

I look forward to learning with you all over this course and then getting to put the knowledge into action after graduation!

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Hello Fellow Guides-to-Be

My name is **Maggie Reisenberger**.

What an exciting mission we have ahead of us!

Born and bred in Perth, I have always been passionate about our Native Flora and Fauna. My planned trip to see the world in three years, turned out to be 25 years abroad, living in Vienna Austria. When one is overseas, you naturally become an ambassador for your country.



An avid “plantaholic”, I require plants + Nature around me – that is my happy place. From conveyancing, teaching English, organizing events and conferences, running a small niche nursery to legal work in Child Protection, and of course, gardening, life has been varied and (still) exciting.

I am an active member of the Gardeners’ Circle, as well as the Orchid Society of WA. I would like to ignite the passion I have for our Native Plants in others with my enthusiasm and educate them about our unique and unusual Flora and Fauna.

I look forward to our collaboration over the coming months and getting to know and working with you all.

Don’t forget – a day without laughter is a day wasted.

Thank you.

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## Rose Richards

Hi, my name is Rose.

**Background:** I was born in Melbourne, but my family moved to Gippsland in country Victoria when I was 2 years old. There I grew up on a 70-acre property with my parents and two older brothers. The property was originally a large cattle farm, but my parents, both of whom worked as professionals and were keen conservationists, gradually regenerated it back to native bushland over many years. They are both now retired and still live on the property and continue to devote a large part of their lives to Landcare.



When I was 14 years old, my family decided to drive from Gippsland to Perth for our annual family Christmas holiday. When we finally arrived in Esperance, I instantly fell in love with Western Australia.

**Study:** I moved to Perth when I was 19 years old to study commerce at UWA and graduated in 2011.

**Working life:** After graduating, I worked at accounting firm KPMG for several years. Since then, I've also worked at Deakin University, UWA and in the mining industry. I currently work part-time as an accountant at a small mining company in West Perth. I am also completing my CA (Chartered Accountants) qualification.

**Interest hobbies:** In my spare time, I love long distance running, swimming, hiking and gardening. I have always loved being outdoors and staying fit. I am a member of WAMC (WA Marathon Club) and love catching up with friends for a jog (often around Kings Park)

**Passions:** I am passionate about conservation and minimising our footprint on the planet. I am dismayed to watch as so many of our business leaders and politicians continue to deny climate change. I truly hope that, in time, we as humans can all achieve a sustainable future.

## Karen Righton

### *Background and Working Life*

My professional background is in Education, Social Work, Disabilities and Management.

This includes as a Teacher and School-based Coordinator with the WA Education Department for 13 years working in city and rural primary and secondary schools. As a Social Worker, case managing adolescents with disabilities securing, training and evaluating employment in supported work environments. As a Manager in public and private sectors, including retail, hospitality, psychological practice and community services. Managing teams for many years for the A.E.C. and W.A.E.C. Federal and State Elections (Polling



Place Manager, Liaison Officer, Team Leader) and ABS Census Field Manager. I have also managed and operated my own commercial office cleaning for the past 30 years in Perth's western suburbs until 2024.

#### *Qualifications/Study*

My qualifications are in Education, Social Work and Teaching with a Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Social Work and a Diploma of Teaching.

#### *Skills*

My skills comprise management, organizational, administrative, sales, marketing and events management. This entail acquiring computing and data base, investigative, evaluation, training, monitoring, procurement skills and abilities and ensuring compliance I am both an independent and team player, with a strong work ethic, am thorough, flexible, a keen learner and committed to following procedures, streamlining processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness, maintaining high standards and being outcome focussed.

In 2025 my retirement project was to co-host, plan, devise and promote two prominent Film and Q and A events with a Social Justice stance in Perth and Canberra incorporating professionals, academics and politicians. Its promotion involved marketing ie radio and print interviews, securing Q & A MC and interstate guest speakers, raffle prize donors, catering and classical entertainment. My personal story featured on a webcast podcast series. I was an invited, Perth event panellist guest speaker (the only one in Australia to receive a standing ovation at a film screening) and my contributions were acknowledged and quoted by the Federal Commissioner of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, Micaela Cronin's in her key note Canberra address.

#### *Current Interests/Hobbies*

These include bushwalking, bird watching (WA Birdlife), kayaking (Swan Canoe Club), volunteering and being active/keeping fit (Loftus Gym). My emerging hobby and one in progress is photography.

#### *Passions*

*Nature and the outdoors, equity and social justice projects*

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**Maria Rutter**

Hi My Name is Maria Rutter,

My passions are the environment being outside in nature, parks the ocean, nature walks. I particularly love birds (wrens) are my favourite.

My hobbies are Gardening, walking my dogs, healthy living, attending Zumba gold, pickle ball and family.

My background is nursing though I have done many roles in my career. All interacting with people in service for people.



My nursing has taught me; observing people lifestyle choices they would benefit being out in nature.

Nature is great for relieving stress, mental health, physical fitness a natural benefit for your health.

It's The reason I want to do this role as guide to help people enjoy nature. Also for own enjoyment.

I'm looking forward to meeting everyone on the course.

Thanks

Maria Rutter.

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**Robert Seggie (Rob)**

Work status: retired.

Working life:

- Petroleum geologist exploring for and developing oil and gas fields in Australia and internationally. Published many papers and conference presentations on sedimentary geology.
- This has moved me around so originally from Sydney but lived in Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Austin Texas and now Perth.
- Did a Dip. Ed during a downturn but never used it in the class room



Interests:

- Married for many years, two kids and four grandkids
- Adjunct Prof in geology at Curtin University so minor lecturing, presenting, publishing and supervising students. My research:

- Geology of the Swan Plain including Kings Park,
- Geology of the dinosaur footprints of greater Broome area,
- Lots of other stuff
- President of Nedlands Tree Canopy Advocates
- Physical pursuits: cycling, hiking, snorkelling, body surfing
- Other intellectual pursuits: travelling, archaeology, architecture,
- Gardening, landscape design, Australian native plants, general botany, plant evolution
- Good food, cooking and wine.

Why I want to be a King's Park Guide:

- I live nearby and have always spent personal and family time here and have a love for the place. Few cities in the world have a large park of native vegetation adjacent to the CBD. It even has quendas plus the Carnabys.
- I come for the wildflower displays, music, concerts, walking the dog along the various trails and cycling through on most days since retiring. Also used to come for Shakespeare in the park (shame this has stopped).
- Enjoy teaching people (you also learn through teaching) and the social camaraderie

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### **Karen Shirley**

My parents called me Karen when the nurse told them we had to be named. That was fourteen days after the unexpected delivery of twins.

Our large garden was a place for discovery, curiosity and play.

Naturally, I immersed myself in drawing the plants, insects and large trees that surrounded me.

The movement of clouds inspired me to dance.

Art, biology and gardening became my lifelong passion and continue to be hobbies.

I squeezed two fine art degrees and the study of landscape architecture, horticulture and botanical gardens management into the years of raising two delightful children across continents.

Travel and study exposed me to Botanical Gardens in America, South Africa, England and Japan, none of which excel in supporting the natural environment as well as Kings Park and Botanic Garden.



Training to become a volunteer at King’s Park will expand my limited knowledge of the continuous adaptations the plant and animal worlds must make to survive in this changing climate and environment.

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### **Roswitha Stegmann**

My name is Roswitha, and I was born and raised in Germany. I moved to Australia in 2001 with the intention of eventually settling in Sydney. Instead, I began my journey in Perth and have lived here ever since, drawn in by the people I have met, the sense of space, and the unique nature of Western Australia. My professional life has been dedicated to nursing, a career I have pursued for nearly 37 years. I am a Registered Nurse with a strong passion for oncology, a field that has shaped much of my practice and personal growth. Over the years, I have supported patients and families through some of their most challenging moments. This work has given me deep insight into resilience, compassion, and the importance of human connection. Outside of nursing, I am happiest when I am immersed in nature and can focus on a healthy lifestyle. I love swimming, cycling, and hiking, and enjoy spending some of my free time exploring Western Australia. Simple life during camping trips, long walks among the trees, and quiet moments in the outdoors recharge me and keep me grounded. Protecting the natural environment and its wildlife is something I deeply value. I also enjoy travelling and meeting people from all over the world, learning from their stories and perspectives. Nature, movement, and meaningful human connection are the threads that run through my life and continue to inspire me.

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### **Pete Vogel**

I am married to Pennie and we have 3 children and five grandchildren. We live in Wembley and help out with the grandchildren regularly - especially during school holidays.



I studied Commerce at UWA a long time ago and worked for many years for Rio Tinto Iron Ore in various roles (in Perth and the North West) and in Marketing for the last 14 of my 31 years there.

Since retiring from Rio I have done volunteer work for Solaris Cancer Care for 6 years, and I am currently a volunteer guide with the Rottneest Voluntary Guides Association and spend 2 days a month on the island.

My current interests include cycling, swimming, reading, wildflowers, and birds - and I also enjoy AFL footy, cars, wine, photography and learning more about finance. We also enjoy our beach house in Busselton.

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**Adelle Wilkes**

My story -

My work background spans many years in multimedia within the corporate world before moving into education, where I worked across primary and secondary schools integrating technology into learning. Over time — especially after Covid — I felt a strong pull back to nature and to a quieter, more grounded way of living.



I have been meditating for many years and, living locally, I spend a lot of time outdoors. Through this, I rediscovered how deeply nourishing nature and stillness can be. More recently, I have studied Buddhist philosophy and mindfulness, which has deepened my appreciation for ancient knowledge and the wisdom traditions that help us live with awareness and respect.

This has naturally led to a growing curiosity about Indigenous Australian culture, Dreamtime stories, and connection to Country. I am looking forward to learning more and deepening my understanding.

I enjoy connecting with people of all ages and hope to help create meaningful experiences in nature. I look forward to meeting you all next week.

Adelle

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