

This second edition of **Volunteering Victoria Quotes...** features not one, but several interesting individuals. These people are interesting in their own right, both for their personalities and their work within the volunteering domain, but also because they are part of the first batch of Volunteering Victoria's **MentorMates**.

MentorMate is a process of training and developing a team of skilled and experienced managers and co-ordinators of volunteers to support others in similar roles. Initiated by our Training and Development Manager, Glenn Sutherland, and launched during this year's National Volunteering Week, MentorMate is a professional development opportunity for managers and co-ordinators of volunteers through the one-on-one support of their more experienced peers. More information on MentorMate is available from the Volunteering Victoria [website](#).

We asked our Mentors to speak a little about themselves; why they chose to be a Mentor; their current work in their organisations; their background and experiences; particular areas of interest and also personal tidbits that they are willing to share.

Read on and meet these amazing individuals who will be working with our future Mentees or Mentorees.



Debra Barton
National Volunteer Program Manager, Vision Australia

I applied to be a mentor because I have always valued having mentors myself. I would have very much liked to have the availability of a mentor when first starting in the Volunteer Sector to discuss different situations and work out the best methods for achieving positive outcomes – and for not having to re-invent the wheel!

Another driver for me to do this is the desire to give back to the sector in any way possible, and believe this is a fantastic opportunity. I also see this as a win-win, as this is an ideal way of building networks within the sector.

I have worked for Vision Australia for the past 10 years, the past almost 3 years my role has been as National Volunteer Program Manager. This means that I am responsible to set the scene for Volunteering for Vision Australia, including working with all levels of staff to provide mentoring, guidance, advice and support in working with Volunteers, setting policy and procedures for Volunteer Services to operate within (as well as much more!).

I started my working career in an apprenticeship doing hairdressing, I continued on with this for around 5 years leaving this to start our family.

When our children were in secondary school I went back to study Disability which led me into managing residential units for young people with Autism and behaviour issues – for seven years.

I then went to work for Vision Australia, to manage a disability day program and also to co-ordinate Volunteers. After 3 years, I was appointed Team Leader of the centre, still coordinating volunteers as a part of the role with the added responsibility of managing the day to day running of the centre, as well as all client and staff issues.

In 2006, I successfully gained the position of National Volunteer Program Manager for Vision Australia.

This position is able to be based in Warrnambool (Victoria) however I travel to Melbourne at least once a fortnight, and interstate as required (usually this works out to be monthly to different states).

Researching Volunteer trends and Volunteer training is a very specific interest I have. I spend some of my free time researching this and other related volunteering issues, including taking every opportunity to learn first-hand how other organisations are working with volunteers (for example when on holidays, I take the chance to meet with other professionals that manage volunteers).

Recently I successfully completed the Advanced Diploma Community Services (Volunteer Management), and am currently looking at what study is next! I am based in a country centre, and regularly visit the Melbourne office (and other states etc), which provides me the opportunity of having a sound understanding of issues faced in the rural and metro areas.

I am married with 6 adult children, and 4 grandchildren. My grandchildren, family and friends, camping, dancing form part of my hobbies and interests.



**Barbara Crljen
Manager of Volunteers, LINK Community Transport Inc.**

I have put myself forward to mentor because I hold that when one contributes to others, one gains even more. Also, I am keenly aware of how far I have come because others in this field were committed to developing me as a way of developing the sector; collaboration and contribution is the key to a world that works for everybody.

I have two professional roles in this sector: I am Manager of Volunteers for LINK Community Transport. The Out and About program provides transport to people who experience transport disadvantage in the North Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. Mainly frail elderly but also people with disabilities of any age. The transport is delivered by a volunteer team of drivers and assistants with full support from a committed staff team. This is a social program seeking to support people who live independently in their own home to participate in their community, retain independence and maintain quality of life.

I am also coordinator for Be the Change Australia, I support a team of 170 trained facilitators (volunteers) around Australia to deliver an educational, experiential workshop called Changing the Dream Symposium to communities, organisations and business. The aim of the symposium is to bring about an environmentally sustainable, socially just and fulfilling human presence on the planet. The symposium brings participants to the understanding that they can make a difference and inspires them to take action in areas which they are committed to, in bringing about the future we all wish to see for ourselves, our children and our planet.

Social and environmental justice are key to who I am in the world, the key to those is personal and civic responsibility; this is expressed through working with volunteers and being a volunteer myself. I am an activist and always a student of life. I love to hear new ideas and inspire people to do what they love and love what they do; and most of all, to be responsible for and love the impact they have on others and the planet.

I am committed to a world that works for all living things as the only one that works at all. Everything makes a difference, the key is what type of difference you want to be responsible for making.

I am a mother, and I want to be a permaculture exponent, I love to walk in the bush, make things and make plans and dream dreams for my patch of land. I keep animals, I garden and watch things grow. Not as often or for as long as I would like, because the bills need to be paid and the world needs change as well as to be loved, observed and enjoyed.



Jane Goninon
Volunteer Support, RSL Victorian Branch

As Volunteer Support, Returned & Services League (Vic) I provide professional support to RSL volunteers across Victoria who provide welfare support to members of the ex-service community. The RSL is a welfare organization whose mission is to support the wellbeing and the betterment of our members, former and serving of the Australian Defence Forces, and their dependants, with the provision of welfare and commemorative services and, where appropriate, contribute to worthy needs within the community.

I joined the MentorMate program to support other volunteer program managers develop skills that will enable them to successfully operate their volunteer programs at the level they wish to. I believe that education and peer support are important parts of the development of both the people working in the industry and within the third sector as a whole. I look forward to working with other volunteer program managers in support of this aim.

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