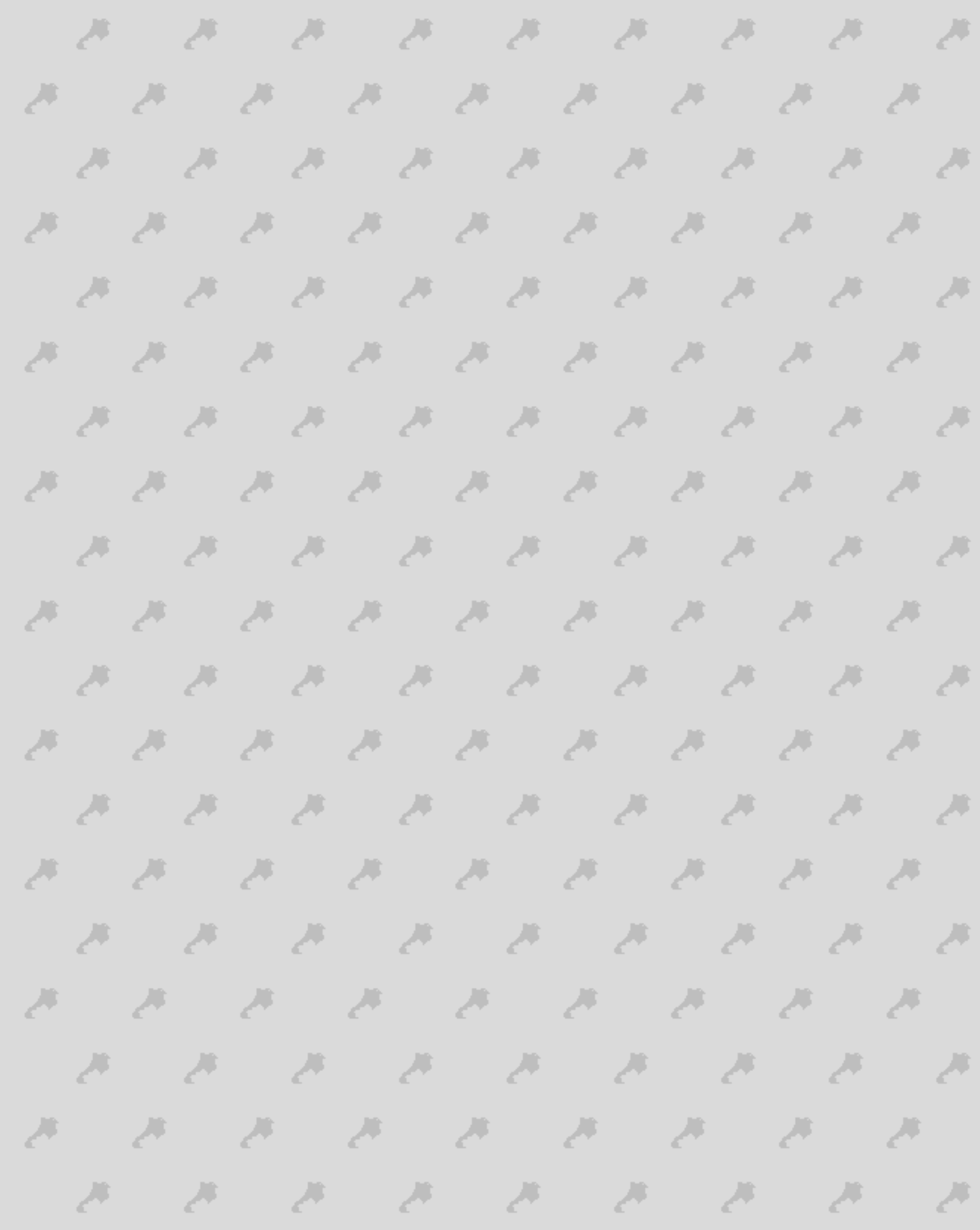
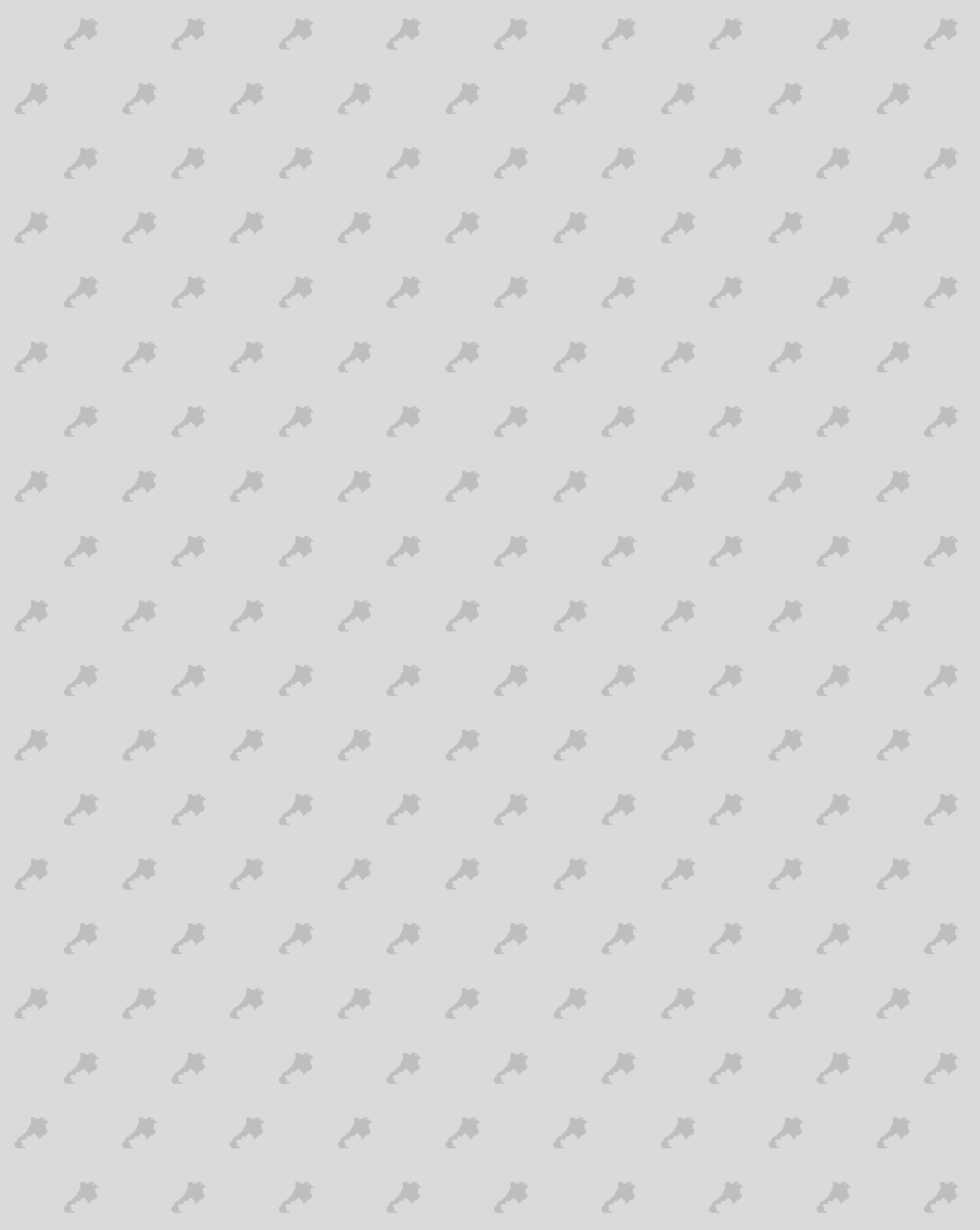


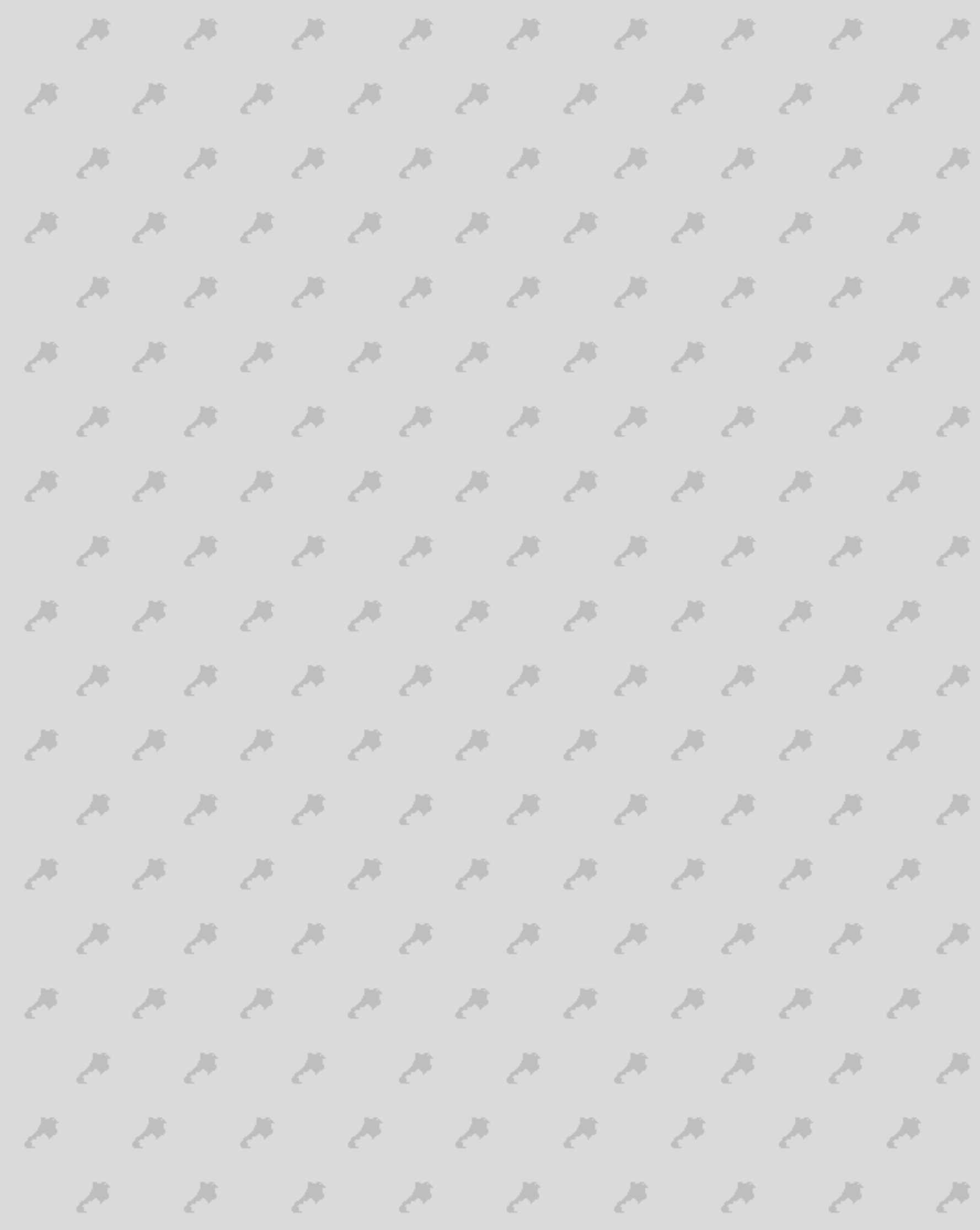
Grassroots

The secret life of sport and recreation









Grassroots

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GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of
Sport and Recreation



Grassroots

The secret life of sport and recreation



Department of
Sport and Recreation

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To all the people
who make sport and recreation happen in Western Australia
you are our heroes.

Welcome	ii
Foreword	iii

Dr Cheryl Kickett-Tucker	3	Rob Geersen	59
Nicki Bardwell	6	Andrew Liddawi	62
Mark Lane	9	Abdullah Khan	64
Ben Bowring	11	Bella Ndayikeze	66
Brant Garvey	12	Mike Wood	71
John Forrest	17	Michael Thomson	75
Linda Daniels	20	April Campbell	76
Vilai Kelemete	22	Andrew Chai	80
Rusty Hazel	26	Shirley Schneider	83
Crispin Roberts	29	Hugh Rogers	84
Bob Welch	33	Paul Delane	91
Rechelle Hawkes	34	Neil Kegie	92
Adam Laycock	37	Sharan Colliss	96
Kay Klass	38	Margaret Toohey	98
Lynette Smith	40	Don Emanuel-Smith	101
Shaun Nannup	44	Terrell James Callas	103
Brad Ness	47	Kim Mickle	107
Marg Little	48	Michael Harris	108
Geoffrey Stooke	51	Akec Makur Chuot	110
Jeff Fondacaro	52	Kim Wallis	115
Sally Boud	56	Joe Moniodis	116
		Get involved	120

WELCOME

When we talk about things which are uniquely Western Australian, sport usually comes to mind. We love our sport.

We know that many Western Australians are involved in sport and recreation of some type, but there are still many more we want to encourage to be regularly active.

A healthy sport and recreation culture has many benefits. Physical health is the most obvious and the more active people are the less pressure they place on hospitals and healthcare.

Participating in organised sport and recreation can protect against mental illness and promote positive mental health. I think it's fair to say most people just feel better when they've had a daily dose of activity.

Sport and recreation doesn't discriminate. It's a powerful force to help divert young people from crime and anti-social behaviour, welcome new people into a community and include all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Joining a club is a wonderful way to stay connected to your community and meet new people.

Coming from the country I am acutely aware of the role that sport and activity play in the health of regional communities. Sport brings people together and gives everyone a chance to catch up in a relaxed, informal environment.

As a former sportsman and coach I understand and appreciate how valuable volunteers are and the role they play in helping make sport happen. In our smaller communities and clubs everyone does double duty and I thank all the people around the State who give their time and energy to sport and recreation.

We want to encourage everybody that wants to be active, from the elite right down to the weekend walkers; whether you play netball, fence or bubble along a snorkel trail.

Volunteers are absolutely vital in making sure those opportunities in sport and recreation are available to Western Australians. Our proud sporting culture would not be the same without our volunteers – and I'm pleased to dedicate Grassroots to their hard work and service.

Mick Murray MLA
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Volunteers and Seniors & Ageing

FOREWORD

Welcome to Grassroots: The secret life of sport and recreation. I'd like to introduce you to some sport and recreation superheroes.

They might be your neighbour, the kid who stacks the supermarket shelves, your doctor or your daughter's teacher. They're also a little bit hard to recognise because they're everyday people who give huge amounts of time and energy to the activities they're passionate about.

Even more amazing is that most of these people have day jobs too. While some of them are lucky enough to be paid to work in sport and recreation, the rest of them earn their living doing work as wide and varied as the sports they love.

Paid or unpaid, what these people have in common is that they give their time and energy because they adore sport, love their club, want to coach their kids and believe in a culture of volunteering and giving back. Their reasons are as many as are their numbers.

Equally vast are the hours and years of service. While young adults just starting their journey are often the energy of a club or association, our venerated veterans are its heart and lifeblood. They've given decades upon decades of service, offering many new members a wise, guiding hand.

Volunteering can often just sneak up on you. A dad at a club says he'll do something for his son's team to help out. A month later he's giving his time for something else. A decade later the guy is still showing up because he loves the feeling it gives him to give back, he's made friends and he loves his club.

Western Australia has an incredibly robust sporting system and committed fraternity of participants and supporters. We're also lucky to have a natural environment which encourages us to take to the tracks, the trails, the ocean and the air in our pursuit of passions. Then there are the fields, the courts, pitches, greens, fairways and rinks, which also encourage people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to simply have a go.

Some of the people in this book have amazing and aspirational stories – and personalities as big as basketball courts – while others quietly go about their work, making sure that the business of sport is getting sorted and we can show up to training or a game and just play.

Without the dedicated people who work in sport and recreation, it just wouldn't happen.

I hope you take inspiration and enjoyment from these stories and realise the depth and breadth of what our industry contributes to the community. Furthermore, if our heroes convince you that giving your time to a local club is an honourable and worthy endeavour, then we've done our job.

Ron Alexander
Director General
Department of Sport and Recreation

42

There are thousands of people who volunteer, participate and work in the sport and recreation industry. They cut the oranges, mow the grass, wash uniforms, sort the fixtures, coach and make sure you can play. We've brought together 42 of them who exemplify the spirit, heart, pride and enthusiasm which makes our sporting culture and landscape rich, inclusive and a place to nurture dreams big and small.



DR CHERYL KICKETT-TUCKER

Kaat Koort n Hoops Project Director | Coach | Administrator

Cheryl Kickett-Tucker used to sleep with her basketball. When her mother told her she couldn't eat a basketball, her daughter had to figure out what to do with her life.

That led to umpiring, a sports science degree and becoming a State and National Women's Basketball League player.

"Sport is a pathway to freedom and opportunity," says Cheryl. "If you're fit through sport then you have a healthy body which gives you the freedom to do whatever you want. Sport also provides that platform for choices and opportunities."

"If you're not fit, your body isn't fit and your mind isn't fit, then your spirit is not free. Sport helps that and that's the message I want to give to kids. I want to show them, there's more to the world beyond their neighbourhood."

Sport eventually led to Cheryl developing and now project directing Kaat Koort n Hoops, a Tuesday night basketball program at Midvale's Swan Park Leisure Centre.

Kaat Koort n Hoops means head, heart and basketball in words from the Ballardong dialect of the Noongar people of the Wheatbelt region.

The program is designed to increase the physical activity levels of children while building self-esteem, confidence, leadership and resilience. It partners with local schools to engage 15 - 17 year-olds and 18 - 21 year-olds. Once qualified, these students become mentors and deliver basketball skills training to children aged 4 - 14 years.

While the program started with only Aboriginal students, now 15 nationalities take to the court each week.

"This is a chance for these kids to work together as a team and socialise together and that makes a big difference. Now we have quite a lot of parents who volunteer or get on the court and play."

"I've been where these kids are. I came from a poor family and I started umpiring at 14 to be able to pay my club fees."

"I'm proud that I know all these kids by name and I love being a part of their lives. I'm happy to see these kids fit and healthy and happy. I'm also happy to see them test themselves against each other in a safe way."

"When I was 10 playing at West Midland Basketball during a game a parent called me an octopus. That hurt my feelings. I knew what she was talking about because I was all over the court, but it was the first time I'd had a negative comment from the sidelines. Instead of being aggressive and answering back I decided to become a better player and became considered one of the best stealers in the game. I'm well aware of ugly parent syndrome but how to handle it well is something I'm trying to teach in the program."

Cheryl says the biggest lessons in sport are learning humanity, empathy and compassion. If you don't have that for yourself, it's hard to have it for others.

"You can't have any of those things if you don't know where you belong or have a feeling of acceptance or belonging. Once the kids understand this - and even find a home in this program - then they can be who they want to be and understand it's ok to like yourself. Basketball skills give them that and then they can give that to other kids. When kids are happy, they keep coming back - and that's our success."



NICKI BARDWELL

CEO Fair Game

Most people never give a second thought to their old sneakers or beat up sports gear. But for Western Australian not-for-profit Fair Game, that's exactly where they start thinking.

They use donated and recycled sports equipment to engage underserved Australian communities in fitness and health programs. Their vision is to allow all Australians to have access to the benefits of healthy choices because of that equipment.

"I feel extremely fortunate to have grown up having access to play any sport I wanted to – and I did," says Fair Game CEO Nicki Bardwell. "I gave all sports a go – from netball to indoor soccer, touch rugby, basketball, football and tee-ball. You name it, I tried it!

"Naively, I thought all kids had the choices I did. I know now this is far from the truth and I want to see this change. I believe all children should have access to the benefits of physical activity and sport."

A high school friend had invited Nicki to help run some Fair Game programs in the Wheatbelt town of Quairading one Saturday morning five years ago. A couple of hours later, she was hooked. Next step, becoming a volunteer.

In October 2016 Nicki left her 11-year career as a research scientist to become the group's CEO. She'd already been on the board for three years.

"I've seen firsthand the benefits of our programs – kids' faces light up as I introduce them to a sport they've never had the chance to play before or as I place a basketball in their hands that they can keep.

"I've seen their satisfaction in showing me their improved football skills when I return to an isolated community after a period away. And I have seen the joy on the faces of the whole community as they play a boys versus girls match of 'bat and ball', a hybrid version of softball and cricket."

Playing sport with kids all over Western Australia is not only a lot of fun, but Nicki's job is a daily and ongoing opportunity to share the joy and benefits she herself gets from being active. It's also that reminder that she's in a special position to be able to influence others with her skills and enthusiasm.

Little did she know that first trip to Quairading would change her life so greatly. Through Fair Game Nicki has met an amazing group of young volunteers who are equally passionate about making our world a better place.

She has also gained lifelong friends who inspire her to be a better person but she humbly says they're the icing on the cake. The kids' whose lives she is part of and shares a love of sport with teach her about resilience, community and culture. They truly give Nicki more than she thinks she could ever give them.





MARK LANE

CEO of Surfing WA | Surfer

It all began with a car licence.

When Mark Lane was finally old enough to drive he realised he was no longer reliant on his parents to drive him to a break. He could now drive himself to surf anywhere in the country.

And he did, often spending 24 hours on the road in search of the perfect or elusive wave.

Decades later, you'll still regularly find Laney out on Perth's breaks but he also pours that enduring passion into his position as CEO of Surfing WA.

A fixture on the WA scene, Laney has been a surfer since before he hit double digits and got his first fibreglass board at 13. In between playing footy and holding one of the longest-standing swim records in WA history, he used to think about surfing all the time. It was his escape.

"It's the only thing I have ever done that I have loved 40 years on, as much as when I started," says Laney. "It's about the adventure; surfing isn't just about catching the wave. It's about getting there, predicting where you should surf, the guys and girls you're with. It's about getting the right surf on the right day and the travel. Riding the wave is just a small part of it."

While Mark was avidly surfing he also did his part in volunteering for the sport including being a foundation member of the Scarborough Board Club. Of the 35 years he's been involved in surfing administration, 26 of those have been in a fulltime capacity. He's held influential local, national and international positions which have helped guide the sport, including two stints as Surfing WA's head, with his current tenure hitting seven years.

Along with his team, he's been one of the drivers behind the Margaret River Pro, getting it certified as part of the international circuit and along the way, shepherding it to become one of world surfing's most loved competitions.

"My first experience of the really organised, more elite pro side of surfing as a young sponsored surfer wasn't good," says Laney. "I didn't like the way I was treated. I wasn't one of the big guys and I was just cast aside. Probably the contribution I'm most proud of in my work with surfing and what the organisation does is that every single person – whether you're a five-year-old kid or a 50-year-old woman – is given time and welcomed into the family. We make everyone feel welcome."

"You might win everything but not be well-liked. I'd rather be well thought of than win anything. I'd rather people just get in there and have a go and do things fairly. I think that's one of the things that's at the heart of Surfing WA."

Now as a dad, that driver's licence still comes in handy as Laney and his kids cruise up and down the coast looking for waves to surf together.

"I've surfed some of the biggest waves at places like Waimea and Sunset but these days I can't go past surfing with my kids. Picking a wave together and surfing it, that's truly a big thrill."



BEN BOWRING

Skateboarding WA Director | Skateboarder

Sport doesn't need us to speak the same language, it only requires us to have the same universal passion. If you're a skateboarder like Ben Bowring, you'll know that first hand.

"Skateboarding breaks down boundaries," says the director of Skateboarding WA. "I can travel anywhere in the world and if I have my skateboard, I have an instant connection to skaters in new cities. I can go to a local core skateshop, speak to the crew and then go skating with them. It doesn't matter where you come from, your economic or racial background, if you're a skater I just say 'wassup' and we go skateboarding."

Ben has spent the last 30 years rolling through skate parks, pavements, school yards and city streets around Western Australia and the world. He discovered skateboarding before he hit double digits when a friend came over and brought his board. They spent the whole day skating on his verandah, just doing laps and mucking around.

"It was so much fun and all we were doing was rolling around - pure basics," says Ben. "Not long after that I saw some late-80's movies like Back to the Future, Police Academy 4, Gleaming the Cube and even a 60 Minutes story on skateboarding culture that blew my mind with all the crazy tricks people were doing on skateboards! It was so cool."

It's still the best way Ben knows to spend time having a good time. The perennially cheerful skateboarder loves absolutely everything about skateboarding.

For him it's way more than just an activity or a sport. It's freedom. It's creative. It's a lifestyle.

"You can do it any time, any place and with anyone. You're not held back by needing a team to go skateboarding with like traditional sports, but you get all the same support and comradeship as those sports through the friends you skate with. It's one giant family."

"In skateboarding, you also mix and skate with all ages and the older skating crew mentor the younger generations, which is really rewarding."

Through clinics held by Skateboarding WA - which Ben set up - people of all ages have experienced skateboarding for the first time.

For those who skate regularly already, Skateboarding WA gives them increased opportunities to enjoy skateboarding-focused events as well as ways to keep progressing and following development pathways that can potentially lead to sponsorship and skateboarding careers.

"I also put a lot of time and effort into lobbying for higher quality skateparks and working with councils through the design phase to help make skateparks more enjoyable and functional, which benefits everyone."

"This allows me to keep skateboarding every day and share skateboarding awesomeness with more and more people. Skateboarding really can save lives and change the direction someone's life will take and replace negative vibes with absolute positives. It's a great feeling spreading such positivity around and helping people improve their lives through skateboarding."

BRANT GARVEY

Triathlete | Paralympian

As a kid growing up, Brant Garvey just wanted to fit in. He wanted to be doing everything the other kids were doing but as a congenital above-knee amputee, it wasn't quite as simple.

Lucky Brant's personality didn't consider "no" or "different" as barriers to getting what he wanted – and it still doesn't.

"I got involved in sports with kids who had a disability," says Brant. "I got to meet a great group of people in a similar situation to myself and we got to share a similar journey. It was fantastic and gave me real confidence as a kid growing up which was huge."

As a young adult he became a swimmer and professional wheelchair basketballer but it wasn't until he turned 28 that Brant ran for the first time with a prosthetic leg.

Within four years he was a triathlete competing internationally, the first Australian above-knee amputee to complete an ironman triathlon, ambassador for a health fund and represent Australia at the 2016 Paralympics when triathlon made its debut.

It's no surprise his motto and his company are the same thing: noXcuses.

"Giving back is one of the most important things I can do and it has taught me the value of what I do, because that can help someone else. I speak to a lot of kids at schools and do a lot of mentoring.

"What I love about sport is the positive influence it can have on your life. I was going through a patch in my life where I was just comfortable and cruising. Then in 2013 I decided to challenge myself to change what I thought was possible as an above-knee amputee and I decided to try running and triathlon. It was that challenge that gave me a real zest for life. To me that is the real power in sport."







JOHN FORREST

Turf expert | Teacher | Committee member

Decades after he set foot on a golf course, John Forrest still has a passion for grass.

As the son and the grandson of professional golfers, it seemed inevitable that John Forrest would follow in the family footsteps. Instead, John's passion and life-long fascination became turf.

Yup, the green stuff. It's a growing industry. (Just a little turf humour there.)

John has been involved in the turf industry since he left school at 16 and became an apprentice golf course greenkeeper. Along the way he's taken slight steps away but has always come back to his first love, turf.

"I just love it and I enjoy my job," says John. "I like the problem solving aspect of it. I also love to see apprentices who have come through and end up running a place like a golf course or become a professional turf manager at a club or oval. That's the most satisfying part of my job."

He wears many green hats including more than 20 years as a turf lecturer at South Metro TAFE, expert in soil nutrition, advocate for planting native species, volunteer committee member, consultant and member of the Sports Turf Association (WA).

A longtime member and golfer at Forrestfield's Hartfield Golf Club, John has sat on the committee since 1999. The course has subsequently won a State Environmental Award twice, which has been a great thrill because of the work he's been involved with around the ground's horticulture. Add to that the pride in seeing Hartfield's superintendent, and former apprentice Nick Kinley win the 2015 AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award.

"I've enjoyed watching the course develop and the end product. At the end of the day, after all your work, you like to see the fruits of your labour – whether it's at a club, in your profession or the industry. When you can see people benefitting from what you do, that's really rewarding."

In all his work John is passionate about using native species and putting back local vegetation. As part of their TAFE studies, students help rehabilitate areas with native plants, many of which they have grown themselves. It's satisfying to look back in 10 years to areas that were degraded and now have bandicoots running around.

"It's rewarding but challenging to get people to think like this. Golfers would much rather pull out trees and shrubs than plant them but that has changed in the last decade and people are really seeing the benefits of putting in natural vegetation. Western Australian natives are glorious and people just don't give them enough credit."

John is also an advocate for a variety of green spaces within communities; open spaces where we can play sport and be active but also spaces where we can walk, contemplate and be close to nature.

"We need spaces which take us away from the grind. I think that's really important, regardless of whether those spaces are for sport, play or other activities. As our communities and suburbs grow we need to look after these spaces and plan for them."



LINDA DANIELS

Executive Director of the Bibbulmun Track Foundation

Linda Daniels was appointed Executive Director of the Bibbulmun Track Foundation in 2003. The Foundation has 2500 members and more than 350 volunteers who help to run the office, guide events and maintain the 1000 kilometre Bibbulmun Track, which runs from Kalmunda to Albany.

For over a decade Linda's key drive has been to improve both the marketing of Western Australia's trails and public access to up-to-date information. She manages the Trails WA website that currently features over 400 walk, cycle and other types of trails across the State.

At the 2013 WA State Trails and Outdoors Conference she proudly received the trails industry Walking Stick Award for outstanding contribution to the industry.

"I really enjoy my job with the foundation as I work with a team of staff and volunteers who are passionate about the Bibbulmun Track and really are there for the love of it," says Linda.

"Different challenges arise each year and maintaining the track is a bit like painting the Sydney Harbour Bridge - a never-ending task."

Linda's interest in trails and tourism started in her teens when she left home to travel and spent eight years backpacking and working in the tourism industry from ski chalets and hotels to dive boats and coral islands.

"As a child I was an all-rounder at sports but spent the holidays exploring the small island of Alderney in the Channel Islands where we lived. That certainly fired my imagination and fostered a fascination in the outdoors.

"The beauty of bushwalking is that you can access remote areas inaccessible by other modes of transport and it can be enjoyed to varying degrees by all ages and fitness levels. While I love to bushwalk, I have to admit I now spend far too much time at a desk trying to inspire others to get outdoors and not enough time doing it myself!"



VILAI KELEMETE

Culture and Community Liaison with NRL WA

When Vilai Kelemete – otherwise known as V – retired as a professional rugby league player, he never dreamed that years later he would be again sharing his passion for the sport.

When he started his role as the Culture and Community Liaison with NRL WA and West Coast Pirates Player Welfare Officer, Vilai's job was to assist the NRL to engage the Polynesian rugby league community and be a link between them.

After spending 15 years concentrating on his family, the role was a new opportunity to once again be involved in the sport he loved. Once he started, he quickly realised that when you cut through everything, his role had one purpose: helping others.

"I want to provide pathways for all the youth in our game here in Perth, concentrating on the holistic side of rugby league by making better players on the field but more importantly becoming better people off the field," said Vilai. "We're doing that through mentoring by former elite players, coaching by the State's top coaches, strength and conditioning, healthy living, positive mental health and wellbeing.

"I love to see a young individual be provided the opportunities to live their dream, but they must understand that hard work will always beat talent that doesn't work hard and through this they develop the skill sets to start living their dream.

"The holy grail for me is when that individual lives out their dream and becomes a role model for the next generation of players coming through, like was done for me."

Rugby league has given Vilai a wonderful career in more ways than he imagined, many friends, awesome mentors and has contributed to the man he is today.

The question of why and what motivates him is simple: he loves the game.

"It has given me opportunities to develop and assist where I can and for as long as I can."





RUSTY HAZEL

Administrator | Coach | Netballer

At nine, Rusty Hazel played her first game of netball at Langley Park. It was flooded, muddy and you couldn't see the line markings, just the goal posts sticking out of the water. Everyone's Dunlop Volleys got wrecked as they slid about.

"I loved it from that moment and I still love it," says the effervescent Rusty. "I love teaching the kids and I love seeing their development."

Fifty-odd years later, she's still playing. And coaching. And encouraging. And inspiring. She has been around long enough her charges often call her Nana Rusty.

Blessed with a lively sense of humour Rusty often tells her netball kids she's 39 and on other days she admits to being 100.

If there ever was an award for the biggest heart in sport, then it would go to Rusty Hazel.

For the last 10 years, she has been the engine room behind the Woola Woola Koolankas (meaning proud children), a program which engages students and local Aboriginal girls in netball. It's based out of Balga Senior High School and part of the Wanneroo Districts Netball Association.

From a modest start of less than a handful of teams, now the Woola Woolas have nine teams.

These days the program is not just about the players either but all the families who get involved in helping out.

"One of the biggest jobs for me has been capacity building and I'm thrilled that women who have been a bit disengaged from the community are coming back to us and to the community through this program. I've noticed a lot of changes in our mums – getting jobs and coming to meetings. They are building their own capacity and that's great for them, their families and the community.

"This program gives the kids a sense of belonging. I can see how proud they are and I love that. I love that this sport can help people connect with their community and help them be their best."

For Rusty, being part of the Woola Woola community gives her a purpose, keeps her healthy and being a vital part of this extended family is really important to her. A former dancer, she also likes to bust out a hip hop move every so often, much to the amusement of her netballers.

"This program does so many of the great things sport should do: creates a sense of belonging, being part of a team, considering each other, respecting each other, doing the best you can and going home to your families with a smile on your face, win or lose.

"Netball is a great game for these girls and women to play for the rest of their lives or be involved in for the rest of their lives as a coach, an umpire, a manager or some other kind of volunteer."





CRISPIN ROBERTS

President of West Coast Amateur Football Club

For most people having to stop playing the sport you love because of an accident is enough to make you not want to have anything to do with it ever again.

Not Crispin Roberts.

After a rugby accident in May 2003 which left him a quadriplegic, no one would have been surprised if Crispin decided sport just wasn't for him anymore.

Instead Crispin decided he could be just as valuable off the field and threw himself into sports administration.

A football, cricket and rugby volunteer since he was 16, Crispin started coaching as an assistant with the U10s in rugby when he was school sports captain. Since 2016 he's been volunteer president of the West Coast Amateur Football Club.

"Historically, we have had a very player-driven club – 90% of our committee play every Saturday," Crispin says proudly. "My contribution takes the pressure off the players. We have a five-year strategic plan that we are following that will benefit the club – culturally, financially, in the community through our volunteering, in recruitment and retention and in adding expertise to our committee. It's my job to drive that.

"The on-going job of building a positive club culture is one of the achievements I'm most proud of. Wins and losses are week-to-week and come and go. Culture and reputation are much more difficult to achieve. We've built a community and family-centric culture, which I feel is a real drawcard for our club."

Big hearted, much loved and known by his community, in the true spirit of team work and giving back, both Crispin's rugby and footy family came to his aid in more ways than he can name after his accident. On one occasion they threw a black-tie fundraiser to raise money for his medical bills where people paid over and above for prizes up for auction. One table literally emptied their wallets to help out.

"The generosity of the sporting community was pretty overwhelming, especially in the first couple of years. I've got a lot to be thankful for in a lot of different areas, but outside of family and friends, the sporting world has been my biggest support."

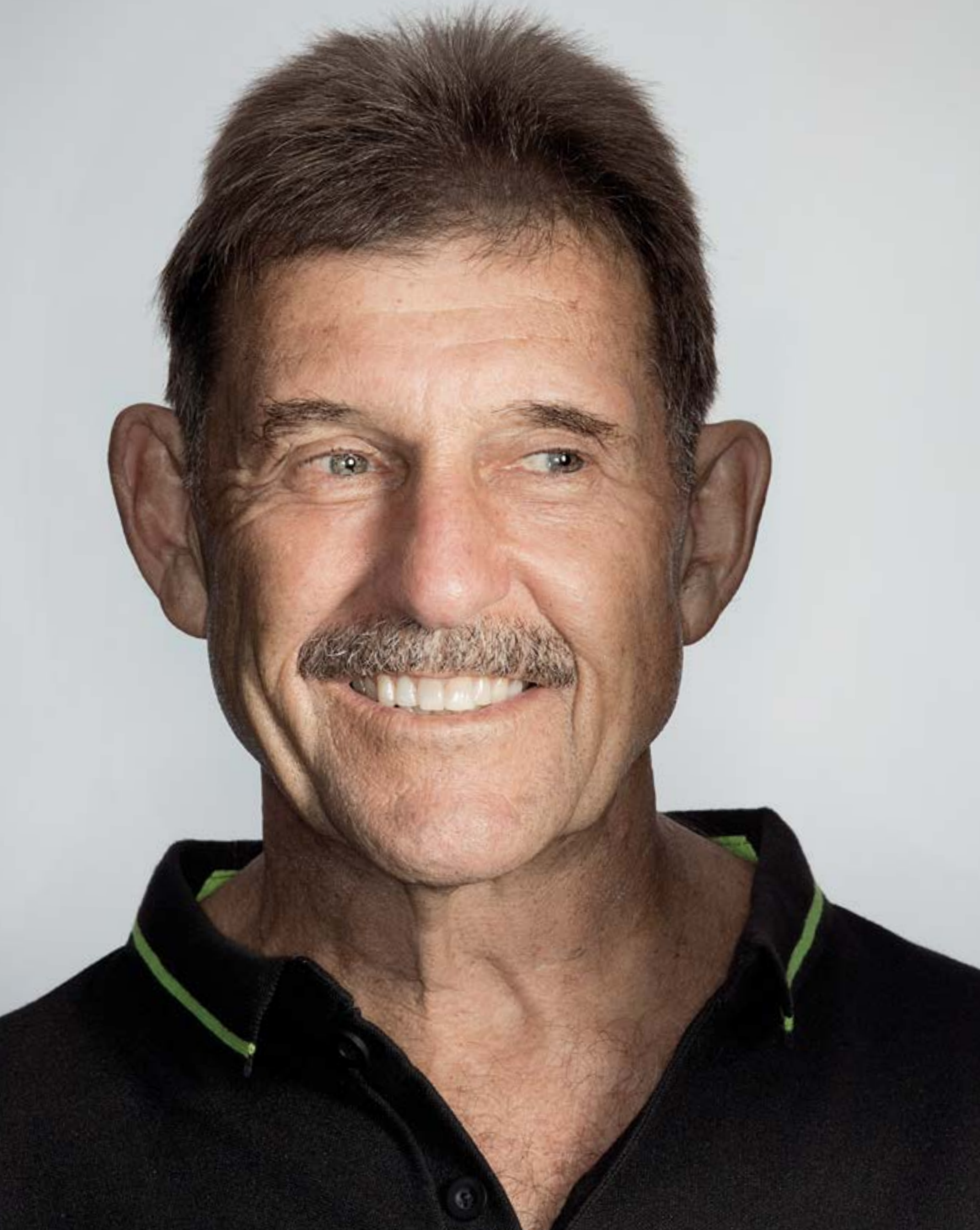
Crispin loves his club with the passion of a true supporter. He wants it to succeed, on and off the field. Seeing people fulfill their potential, seeing the club grow, seeing the community rally around people in need through sport is a source of constant amazement and satisfaction.

"My biggest thrill is easy – watching our song being sung after a win. It's the best moment in sport. Pure happiness for everyone involved. I remember watching our colts team sing it after about 10 straight losses. They needed print-outs of the lyrics and they absolutely butchered it, but they were so stoked. It was contagious. All our teams won that day!

"The satisfaction of seeing four teams running out and giving their all on a Saturday afternoon makes it all worthwhile. They're the closest thing I have to children!"



**WEST
COAST**
AMATEUR FOOTBALL CLUB



BOB WELCH OAM

Volunteer | Event Manager | Mentor | Teacher

“It’s really simple – get involved.”

If Bob Welch had a mantra, this would be it.

In 50 years of dedicated volunteering and working in sport and recreation, Bob is one of the industry’s most respected statesmen, even though you’re more likely to find him in a pair of boardies than a tie.

“Everything I have gained in my life, from personal enjoyment to professional experience, has come from getting involved,” he says.

Formerly a hockey player, Bob joined the Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club when he was 18. Five decades later, he has done just about every job the club could throw at him from being president, to sitting on committees, doing surf patrols through to his most recent and equally satisfying role, teaching kids how to paddle surf skis.

“Sport and recreation very much keeps a community together,” he says. “Some kids really need what a surf club can offer more than the club needs them, but with the right support they can become fantastic citizens. There are lots of wonderful stories of young people who have really turned their lives around because of the support and community they got from a club.”

Bob owns the honour of being part of a small and exclusive group who can say they have given 50 years of volunteering and dedication to one club.

As a young man, when Bob got his first job in the sport and recreation industry, he realised he had found his place in the world. Over the years his jobs have included state manager of Surf Life Saving WA, executive director of the WA Sports Federation for 12 years and his current position as event manager at TriEvents.

Why has he hung around in the same industry for so long? For Bob the reason is easy: it’s a fun industry to work in and contributes to the community. And surf lifesaving? It’s a lifestyle.

“It’s just what our family does on weekends and Sunday mornings, regardless of the time of the year. We’ve gotten so much enjoyment from it and I’ve made some of my closest friends through the club. My kids grew up seeing me working on the beach; there’s a bunch of pictures of me working with them making sandcastles around me.”

Bob fervently believes that giving your time as a volunteer to a club is a win for everyone. You’re motivated to do your best for the club because you want to see it thrive and grow, plus you benefit from the positive outcomes as do the other members. Then there’s the satisfaction in seeing other people gratefully reap the benefits of your hard work.

“The personal growth you get from volunteering is something you don’t get from anywhere else. When I talk to students, I tell them if they want to be involved in something like sports management, volunteering is the way to get the job. When they see you have a volunteer ethic – no matter where it is – that signals a personal commitment to something.”

RECHELLE HAWKES OAM

Coach | Olympian | Hockey Player

If it wasn't for her mum, Rechelle Hawkes may never have picked up a hockey stick.

Dorothy Hawkes has a lot of good to answer for.

"Her foresight and connection to the sport and her volunteering is what got me involved," says Rechelle. "My mum was a volunteer who trained my sister and I in Wundowie and drove us to Northam to play.

"Before that we lived in Ongerup and it was too far to drive to Katanning to play so mum formed our own competition. With help from the association in Perth, she helped each football team form a women's hockey team. The grounds were built by the farmers and we were up and running. There were six teams at the time and it's still going strong today. Mum's name is on the honour board at the Ongerup Clubrooms.

"When I made it to the under-16 state side we moved to Perth and mum kept volunteering while supporting my hockey career. She has contributed so much to the game and to my game."

Rechelle went on to captain the Hockeyroos and won Olympic gold medals in Seoul, Atlanta and Sydney and at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, multiple gold at the World Cup and the Champions Trophy. Before retiring she was inducted into the Australian Institute of Sport best of the best in 2001 and the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 2002.

When she retired from competition Rechelle started to give back to her sport by sitting on boards and being a selector before turning her coaching skills to her children's hockey teams and taking inspiration from them.

"I like to see people challenge themselves," she says about why coaching attracts her. "I like to see people reach heights they never thought they could and acquiring knowledge along the way. Enjoying the challenge and overcoming obstacles helps motivate them to be the best version of themselves they can be. Helping people reach those goals is really satisfying.

"I like to see people active because at the moment it's a really big problem for young people. Seeing people move or getting enjoyment out of sport is really one of the greatest things we can give them, which is why we should value it so highly. There's so much up-side to sport.

"In Australia volunteers are the fabric of our sport system. They bring future generations to sport and show them that in sport they have the platform and the capacity to reach for the sky, whether that's representing your country or just playing for fun."





ADAM LAYCOCK

Volunteer | Netballer

When Adam Laycock got the phone call looking for a male player for a mixed netball team he wasn't remotely keen. What kind of self-respecting bloke plays netball? That was until his mates reminded his 18-year-old self that there were more girls there than anywhere else they were hanging out.

Two decades on Adam picks basketball second and instead plays mixed and men's netball because he genuinely and passionately loves the game and finds it a challenge at any level. Indeed, he's been playing at all levels – social to super league – for those 20 years and has represented the state and Australia on numerous occasions.

“Socially it's fantastic, you can have a bit of fun, keep fit and catch up with your mates all in one hit,” says Adam. “Competitively, it's the challenge of pushing yourself, training and playing in a team environment for a collective goal of team success. Over the journey you continue to learn a lot from other people from different walks of life and forge new friendships.

“Some of my best mates have been made from playing the game. It's fun, fitness and good times – everything is good playing sport.”

As a player Adam downplays his club contribution to the win / loss column, but he hopes being available to help out with other teams, be it in training, game preparation or coaching hopefully makes things a little bit easier for others. He also counts helping with kids teams at Attadale Netball Club as a fun and rewarding experience.

His biggest thrill and achievement while playing netball has been representing Australia in men's netball, State teams and being part of the mixed over 30's team that won the national championship in 2016.

KAY KLASS

Receptionist at the Department of Sport and Recreation

Visitors to the Department of Sport and Recreation offices in Leederville often comment on the endlessly sunny woman behind the reception desk.

Meet Kay Klass. Anyone who comes into the Department does. Come in more than twice and Kay will remember you've been there before and if you're a regular, she'll be greeting you by name in no time.

Kay doesn't even wait until you get up to the desk to say hello as her cheery welcome rings out across the Department's foyer.

"I love people," Kay says simply. "I've always loved doing things for friends and other people. I suppose it's just in my nature."

Yes, she's a bit like the office mum. And she doesn't mind one bit.

"I like to be helpful. I also like people to feel welcome when they come into the Department. When we remember them, it makes them feel special.

"All of that hopefully reflects well on the Department too. Especially if I am the first person someone talks to when they walk in."

As a result, Kay knows a lot of people. And a lot of people know her.

It's no wonder, given Kay and her smile have been gracing the reception desk for 29 years.

"I have great job satisfaction and work with good people in a supportive atmosphere."



LYNETTE SMITH

Volunteer | Coach | Mascot | Footballer

Meet Shredder the Shark. He's blue, rather tall, has sharp teeth and a mean fin kick. He's also a fantasy come true for Lynette Smith.

"It brings out the child in me," says Lynette, who has been the person inside the East Fremantle Football Club mascot for three years. "He's expected to be a little silly so that's fun too. I enjoy entertaining the crowd at games. Shredder can't speak but he can kick the footy with his tail and loves to taunt his rival, Basil the Bulldog."

As Shredder, Lynette attends the East Fremantle WAFL games and just before half time, dashes off to get changed so Shredder can wander around the ground mixing with big and small fans and posing for photos. It's just one of the varied roles this footy fanatic plays to support the game she loves.

An Australian champion triple jumper who had nowhere to go as a young athlete because her event wasn't open to women at an elite level at the time, Lynette started playing football.

Across the next decade, she went on to play 129 games and finally hung up her boots in 2014. Along the way, the list of her volunteering and coaching achievements is long. It has included coaching her sons' footy teams, sitting on various boards and committees, staging awards nights, coordinating competitions and being treasurer.

Such has been her influence that the Lynette Smith Volunteering Award is now handed out every year at the WA Women's Football League.

"I love helping out, being involved and making a difference. I also love being part of a club. Football is my life."

Now with the AFL Women in full swing, she's also able to actively encourage young girls and women to get involved in playing, knowing there's a pathway for them to keep playing. Over the summer, she's been the assistant coach with the WAFC Talent Academy for the Orientation Squad (12 - 13 year girls).

When the AFL Womens teams finally took to the field, it was both exciting and bittersweet for Lynette and her contemporaries. They wished they were out on the field getting to play the game they're so passionate about and have given their lives to. They're also monumentally proud to know their participation and hard work has played a pivotal role in paving the way for this next generation of footy players.





SHAUN NANNUP

Mental wellbeing and culture healer

Talent can only take you so far. Pair that with commitment and you'll probably get a little further. But add a strong mental and emotional core and there's every chance the sky is the limit.

When Shaun Nannup works with young Aboriginal people, helping them create mental and emotional lives which are robust and able to cope with what life throws at them, he's often drawing on his own experiences in sport.

"In life there are things that change and you have no control over them," says Shaun. "I was 23 when I lost my brother, he was 25. Life was more difficult to navigate after that. I tried my best to dive into any other area of life so I didn't have to face my loss. I was feeling so much and not expressing it in a healthy way. I went into a deep depression.

"At the same time, through my work I was also seeing what drugs and alcohol were doing to the community and to people who were not letting go of their grief and issues. I saw it taking over their lives.

"People who want to be basketball or footy players won't be if they are not mentally or emotionally sound and I think that eventually leads them to stepping away. I stepped away from my dreams because I wasn't in a great space to manage the things - mainly the emotional things - that were happening to me and the things I felt I couldn't control."

Like many young Aboriginal men, Shaun started playing footy, determined to follow family into the WAFL and maybe even the AFL. For a number of reasons, including an injury, at 20 Shaun left footy and took up golf. With a handicap of two he went on to win four National Aboriginal Golf Championships. He's been a member of the Mt Lawley Golf Club for more than two decades.

"I had a future in mind and when I stepped back and looked at it I could see the patterns that led me to a different place. I'm probably never going to have that chance again.

"Now I work in mental health and Aboriginal culture helping people make the emotional changes they need to succeed at being a basketballer or just a better person.

"Maybe if I could support others to be able to open up about how and why they manage things in a certain way then maybe we can help them deal with things in a more healthy way. Then, maybe I'm on the way to helping those people fulfil their dreams and wishes.

"We have some wonderful Aboriginal people with amazing talent, but if their lives are not balanced then we're taking away the opportunity for the world to benefit from them."

Shaun believes not only in the power of participating in sport and active recreation, but deeply understands the benefits of coming together to watch it.

"Sport makes the space for people to connect. I think the most important thing sport and recreation gives to a community is pride that they are part of something. Once you have a sense of connection and live for something or a group of people, it becomes a lifestyle. Once it becomes a lifestyle then dreams become accessible and possible.

"When you see a team or a club you can see how much it can become part of someone's life. That's an exciting moment and provides a safe place for people to come together.

"Whether it's 10 per cent or 100 per cent at the end of the day people around you are unified. That's what sport does - it's a unifier.

"Those players out on the field playing AFL probably don't realise that their game brings families together to chat. That game can unify family groups for that bit of banter and camaraderie. It's sometimes hard to comprehend just how great an effect that can have on a community, but it can be truly unifying for families."





BRAD NESS OAM

Wheelchair Basketballer | Paralympian

"It's like putting basketball in the middle of the bumper cars at the show and going out there and having a little fun," laughs Brad Ness at his description of his much-loved sport wheelchair basketball.

An internationally celebrated player, Brad has been playing for 25 years. While he says that's longer than he'd like to admit, those decades are a testament to his skill, determination and passion for a sport which he took up after losing a leg in a boating accident at 18.

He's a member of the Australian Rollers and has won medals at various world championships. A Paralympic veteran of five games, his proudest sporting moment was carrying the Australian flag at the Paralympic Opening Ceremony at the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games.

"That was a massive honour," says Brad. "I thought I had experienced just about every emotion the games can throw at you, but that was just incredibly special; something you won't forget."

In 2014 Brad co-founded the Red Dust Heelers. While it's a team that competes in the international wheelchair basketball league, the Heelers also give back by spending time encouraging and helping others to get involved in disability sport and helping create pathways for athletes with disability. Their main focus is on Indigenous communities.

"I can't remember not playing sport," he says. "As far back as being a little kid I always loved sport. I'm highly competitive and just love it. After my accident I started swimming but it wasn't really giving me the competitiveness and the team feel I wanted. When I found wheelchair basketball it gave me the competition I wanted that I wasn't going to be able to get because I couldn't play football anymore."

"I love it because you can take it as far as you want to go - play professionally, go to university or just play recreationally."

Brad was born in the Western Australian regional town of Wagin and says without sport, no one would have had a social life.

"Separate from the mental and physical benefits, plus how it helps your self-esteem, sport is such a great way to come together and meet people from around the community. Growing up in the country you used to play everything."

"That ability to bring people together is why I think sport is so important. When you talk about Australian culture, sport should be one of the first couple of words you use."

MARG LITTLE

Dragon Boat Coach | Paddler

When there are 20 paddlers and 20 paddles in the water, everyone has to move together harmoniously to get a dragon boat over the finish line first.

That's exactly what Marg Little loves about the sport of dragon boat racing. Everyone in the boat has to work together, in time to make it happen.

"There's a closeness you can only get in a team sport where you are all involved in the activity at exactly the same time," explains Marg. "It's different from a sport like tennis, where you play individually but together you form a team. Dragon boating gives you a closeness and you form a bond I don't believe you get anywhere else. I continue to be involved for just that reason."

Marg started paddling a dozen years ago with Amazons Perth Dragon Boat Club, a club for breast cancer survivors and supporters. Six years ago she decided to start coaching, went about getting her qualifications and has found her calling.

"I found it difficult in the beginning because I'm not that outgoing and you need a voice to coach. But I was keen to find mine because I was sick of being two to three boat lengths behind other boats and I'm rather competitive. I thought if I could bring that drive to the team we could shorten the gap.

"It has taken five years, but we've done it. We're now neck-and-neck with other boats which is exhilarating for our club. I recently did another coaching course and they were talking about having fun too because it's not all about the competition, but I struggle with that."

She says it's the dedication of the team of coaches she works with who have helped make the team and her club better. The paddlers are fitter, have more technical savvy and are more desperate to win.

"We have a happy club and it's a great place to be. Less and less members are leaving and I think that's because we have become more competitive."





GEOFF STOOKE OAM Ciriwa
PLAYER, COACH AND ADMINISTRATOR

Presented by the Rugby Community of Western Australia in sincere appreciation
for the outstanding commitment, passion and leadership provided towards
the advancement of Rugby in our State, September 2011

GEOFFREY STOOKE OAM

Board member | Coach | Rugby Player

From having been a director of the Australian Sports Commission to being a grinder on the Kookaburra during the 1987 America's Cup, Geoffrey Stooke has worn many sporting hats.

But the one he's most passionate about is rugby union. A rugby union grade player since 1965, he still loves to play and enjoys the physical contest so he gets out on the pitch to play 4th Grade on the weekends. Content to not just play either, 45 years on he's still an active coach and has been involved as an administrator since 1985, both of which are volunteer roles.

At a club level, Geoffrey has played more than 850 grade games, the majority of them with the Associates Rugby Club in Perth. He has also played at national and provincial levels, been Chairman of RugbyWA from 1988 – 2011, been a director of the Australian Sports Commission and has been a member of the Australian Rugby Union (ARU) Board since 2012.

"I got started playing rugby at school and continued playing when I became an army officer," says Geoffrey. "I have become passionate about all aspects of the game and I'm committed to helping make a difference and to seeing the game grow and prosper.

"That's why I stay involved in playing, coaching, administering and developing the game. I get huge satisfaction in being part of the growth of rugby union."

Somewhere in there, he also finds time to play tennis (and be a tennis club board member), golf and go to the gym.

"As Chairman of RugbyWA I saw enormous growth in participation and standards. In 2004 I chaired the committee that secured a Super Rugby team for WA.

"Now as a director of the ARU I bring a hands-on perspective of the community game, Member Union needs and Super Rugby team needs. I'm also the only director not based in Sydney or Brisbane and the only one of the nine directors still playing the game."

While his consistent and enduring dedication to playing and volunteering should be on the list of his greatest sporting achievements, Geoffrey names securing a Super Rugby team for WA and coaching the WA under-21 teams in the 1990s (which included six players making the Australian Under 21 teams) as the top of his personal rugby achievement list.

"Team sport is a great character builder and sport is a great leveler," says Geoffrey. "No matter where you come from, you're still just a team member and that teaches you a lot about life in general. Team sport offers something special that other sports don't!"

JEFF FONDACARO

Beatty Park Leisure Centre Coordinator of Aquatics | Board member | Surfer

Every Friday afternoon Jeff Fondacaro used to wonder what the hell he was doing digging trenches as a plumber when his friends would go on and on about what great weeks they'd had as professional lifeguards and lifesavers.

Determined to be as happy as his friends, Jeff quit and got himself a job as a pool lifeguard. Forty-five years later his love affair with water and all things aquatic hasn't dimmed – and apart from replacing the odd washer at home, he's never gone back to plumbing.

"I love the variety of the job," says the coordinator of aquatics at the Beatty Park Leisure Centre. "You have your regulars, whose life story you get to hear and those people who genuinely appreciate what you do for them."

It's that ability to help and make the difference that gets Jeff out of bed in the morning.

While pools offer plenty of opportunity to be active, Jeff believes they play a much greater role in people's wellbeing.

"Yes, people come to the pool to swim and get fit but it's also a chance for them to get together, have a coffee and even meet people from a variety of different backgrounds.

"That's the special secret about aquatics – it's about wellness. I love to hear people say that without this facility or the opportunity to be in the water they might not be alive. The chance to do this activity means something powerful to them. It's magic that these things happen in my workplace. That keeps me pretty excited."

With his other hat on as the President of the Leisure Institute of Western Australia Aquatics, Jeff says 85 per cent of their membership is rural based. In those areas, pools are often the social hubs of a town.

"Without these pools people would miss out on that interaction, let alone the physical aspect of getting in the water."

While those Friday afternoons with his mates were galvanizing in getting Jeff to change his career, he'd fallen in love with water many years before as a young surfer not yet in his teens. One of his favourite early sporting memories was catching his first real wave and riding it all the way to the beach.


Jeff was hooked from that moment and has been a wave rider ever since. As a young bloke he combined that with playing footy and winning a state title in karate.

As an adult he loves helping and supporting young people on their journeys, while remembering the people who gave him help and advice during his own journey.

"We have a lot of young staff come through and while they don't necessarily stay in the industry they've learnt work and life skills which they use as they move into their adult lives. That's a real thrill for me. You meet them fresh out of school and over the years they are studying, you see them develop. Then they come back and tell you how much of what you taught them has helped them in their lives. It's brilliant being part of that."






Royal Life Saving

LIWA
AQUATICS

SALLY BOUD

AFL Goal Umpire

Sally Boud has been umpiring for 10 years in the WAFL and is in her second year as an AFL umpire.

One of her favourite childhood sporting memories is being dragged around to all her older brother's sporting commitments. Knowing how much training and effort he put in behind the scenes to get to that level, he was Sally's inspiration then and continues to be to this day.

While she's played sport all her life, it was a high school math teacher who got Sally involved in umpiring for community sport as a weekend hobby. As a Year 10 student she figured it was a good opportunity to take on a male-dominated industry and become part of the game.

As a teenager, umpiring was a fun way to earn some money while being involved in the world of footy. Soon enough though, it became a serious passion and a significant part of Sally's life.

"I loved the physical and mental challenge of trying to meet specific fitness targets and pushing myself to be the best that I can be to see how far I could go," she says.

"I love being part of the game and contributing to the AFL at the highest level. I've established fantastic lifelong friendships, endured challenges and setbacks and continued to strive for excellence.

"When it comes to goal umpiring on game day, there are no better seats in the house than being on the stage itself."

Being one of only a select few women currently umpiring at AFL level has given Sally the opportunity and privilege to show young girls that with determination and hard work anything is possible.

"My message to all young females is work and train hard, break the stereotypes and follow your dreams and ambitions."

Her biggest thrill and achievement so far? Being selected to umpire for Matthew Pavlich's final game with Fremantle.

"I was lucky enough to be umpiring at the end of the ground when he kicked his 700th goal. It was just an amazing moment to see him running in to an open goal and kicking it through."





ROB GEERSEN

Volunteer | Coach | Board Member | Coach Coordinator | Starkick All Abilities Football Founder

It's a perfect advertisement for the power of sport. Forty years on Rob Geerson still keeps in touch with his junior footy coach.

"His name is Vic Salis and I'm really proud of that," explain Rob. "Those are the type of lifelong friendships that football and sporting clubs create. I've been lucky enough to have met most of my best friends through football clubs in one way or another and in my current role as a volunteer I hope some of the kids in our group and our club will remember me in 40 years!"

That coach-player relationship was cemented when Rob was about nine. Members of his junior footy team were, from time to time, rewarded with a trip to Fremantle Oval to watch the WAFL. They packed into the coach's VW Beetle to watch South Fremantle play.

"I remember sitting on the boundary fence, banging the signage and commentating the games with my mates when the likes of Stephen Michael, Maurice Rioli, Ray Bauskis and Benny Vigona were playing for Souths. From those experiences my love of the sport grew and if I couldn't go to a game I remember sitting in my room on Saturday afternoons listening on the radio."

Needless to say, those experiences were galvanising. Rob has been a sport and recreation volunteer on and off for the last 30 years and like so many parents, he's now helping out at a local club because his son has started playing junior footy.

"When I first came to the club the then coach needed some help, so I just jumped in and gave a hand," Rob says. "My involvement in the team and the wider club has grown from there. It has been much the same at other clubs, if you see something needing doing you just jump in and get it done."

"I do it because I have a love of the game, community and my kids. I get immense personal satisfaction helping others. I want to create an environment so that both the kids and their families will look back on this fondly as a great period in their lives."

For Rob it's a chance to give back and the reward is seeing other people smiling and enjoying themselves. He hopes his contribution makes the club, the association and the game just that little bit better.

"I love being involved alongside my sons and their friends, and having the chance to guide them for at least a small part of their sporting journey and to an extent their life journey, is really rewarding."

"Hopefully I can give others some of the great experiences I have had through playing football over the years. I want my kids to have the chance to grow up enjoying those same things, as the game gave so much to me and helped shape me as a person. So this is my chance to give back."



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ANDREW LIDDAWI

Break the Boundary Founder | Hand Cyclist | Wheelchair basketballer

An accident became Andrew Liddawi's mother of invention and his way to give back.

In 2008 the avid mountain biker came off his bike and the accident rendered him without the use of his lower body.

On his rehab road Andrew started looking for something which would get him back into some form of activity and found wheelchair basketball. He started playing and progressed from the state league to the international stage.

While satisfying on many levels, Andrew wanted to find a way to get back into nature again, something he desperately missed and was understandably difficult to do in a wheelchair. So he got creative and started looking around the world for equipment which might help him.

Handcycling became the answer to his quest to get out into the bush again. Along the way, Andrew founded Break the Boundary an unpaid volunteer group of bike and adventure enthusiasts who help people with physical disabilities go beyond flat surfaces. The team who work with him give their time in various ways including helping handcyclists with heavy lifting, transportation, assisting in extreme terrain and competition support.

"To me there's this unspoken connection with nature and that's very hard to do in a wheelchair," says Andrew. "Something like handcycling brings people together, including volunteers, and everyone is out there together and with a common purpose."

"While I love a lot of things about handcycling, the thing I like the most about it is the people. We have some great laughs and when someone has a spill that makes it easier to joke and laugh about it. It creates great memories you can hold with you for years."

Through Break the Boundary and sharing his own experiences Andrew hopes he has made a contribution that helps people with disability re-engage in the outdoors and find a community which supports them.

"A lot of people in my situation have had similar accidents, whether on the roads or the trails, and they really want to find a way to get back into the sport they used to love. This is one way of doing that."

The handcyclist isn't immune to the health benefits of being active and says being out in the bush and experiencing the rush of riding is not only great for getting the blood and adrenaline coursing through his body but helps keep his mental health in check.

"I still have days where I just can't get out of bed, but knowing I can get my bike out and hit the trails always makes my day."

"When you add volunteering into the equation, you often get a lot more out of it. Because you make a personal contribution to other people, you've brightened their lives and that puts a smile on their face and yours."



ABDULLAH KHAN

Executive Principal Australian Islamic College

For the last six years Perth's Australian Islamic College has been part of a program to introduce their students to sport and help them engage with their local community.

Through Communicare's Active Schools Project, the schools in Kewdale, Thornlie and Dianella introduced a multi-sports program. During that time, the students have learnt to swim and played soccer, netball, basketball, football, badminton, gymnastics and volleyball.

"The outcome of these activities is that it has facilitated the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities to successfully integrate into mainstream society and the wider community through sport," says Abdullah Khan.

For the Executive Principal there's great self-satisfaction and contentment seeing his students using the program as a springboard to join a local club and thrive. He also considers it a great achievement that the students – both male and female – are embracing it.

Abdullah believes the program offers a safe, fun and religiously appropriate way to take part in sport. The students get a chance to try a variety of different sports to discover the ones they like and will hopefully further their skills in.

Initially the school had to do a little bit of work to win over some teachers and parents who believed that excelling academically could never live side-by-side with sport. But the program has vindicated itself as the students are able to continue to work hard in their studies and gain valuable benefits from being active, which according to research includes being able to learn better.

Not only have the students gained sporting skills and other benefits from sport like teamwork, many of them have gone on to join local sporting clubs, play in local carnivals and one group even formed their own team to compete in the local league.

"It has been very satisfying to see our CaLD communities integrating into the mainstream community through sport."



BELLA NDAYIKEZE

Leader | Mentor | Coach

As a young girl living in the dust of a refugee camp, one of Bella Ndayikeze's best memories is playing run and chase with her friends. They were all barefoot, it started to rain and the water hitting the earth sent up that tropical smell. Bella got caught and everyone laughed. She kept playing, despite being injured just to keep experiencing the joy she felt when all those things came together.

Later as an African refugee who moved to Perth, Bella found a way to reconnect with that joy and sharing it with others. She had experienced firsthand the difficulties young people and their parents face when confronted with a new culture. And what better way to find her own path in a new home than to take up playing the local game of Australian Rules Football?

Bella was eventually asked to join the Edmund Rice Youth Leadership Program and the chance to coach the Edmund Rice Lions football team. She hit a steep learning curve faced with a team full of boys who didn't make it easy but she eventually won them over thanks to a bucket of self-belief, a big personality and a shoot-straight attitude.

Eight years later, Bella is not only a footy coach and player, she's also a mentor, community leader, volunteer and inspiration showing young migrants and their families the importance and benefits of sport; that regardless of whether they aspire to the AFL or AFLW, playing sport and being part of a team gives them so many more benefits.

More recently Bella has worked for Mirrabooka's Edmund Rice Centre running their Leadership/Arts and AFL Program. Anyone who knows Bella knows she gives countless more hours to those who seek her skills and her counsel.

"I do all of this because it makes me happy, plus somehow I get closer to knowing who I am," explains Bella. "I do it to do better things, which enables me to influence the people I meet and teach in a positive way so they can be good people on the planet."

What keeps Bella involved are all the little things; the small changes which happen slowly to her charges, sometimes almost under the radar.

"Watching those people change makes me think about life and makes me always want to do the things that others wouldn't put their hands up to do. It's those things that make a massive difference in a child or young person's life, despite their background.

"I love the enjoyment and the energy it all brings in my life. I make connections and form relationships with people who are like me yet so different. My happiness levels go up every time I coach or play.

"The next generation of players I coach have so much potential and I make sure they know they have, so they never give up."





Bella's contribution has helped change the way people look at the abilities and capabilities of young people from diverse backgrounds.

While her charges get plenty from their coach, it's a two-way street as Bella gets her own encouragement that she's on the right path from them. She lists her own takeaways as: greater self-esteem, improved leadership capabilities, a freedom to be creative in different environments, learning about people, love, peace, friendships, transferable skills, her place on the planet and always taking away something new to use next time.

"Seeing the kids and their excitement to learn something new at training always gets me. I sometimes ask them 'why are you here?' and they always say 'to become football players'. I ask them 'what does it take to be a football player?' and they say 'have fun and come to training'. That just always makes me happy."

Her greatest achievement so far? "Mentoring an eight-year-old who wants to play professional footy when he's older, who kicked almost 30 goals in a season for Auskick. That's an unbelievable achievement. It took a lot to get him into a club because of personal and cultural barriers, but believing in him and him believing in me is an achievement I won't forget easily. The trust between me, the kids I work with and their parents is another great achievement which is important to me."



MIKE WOOD

Adventurer | Guide | Bibbulmun Track Foundation | Outdoors Crusader

Way out there in the wilderness. Out where landscape is wild and the elements can be a fickle mistress, these are the places Mike Wood likes to explore. They are the places where those who are lost inside, can often be found. It's that deep wild inside us all which this adventurer has spent a lifetime helping people discover.

From the time the young hiker figured out that a heavy pack could sit in his kayak rather than having the straps digging into his back, Mike has been a paddling fanatic. He's ridden churning waters around the world and led other people down watery canyons while falling in love with the outdoors. He's also an avid trekker, international guide, volunteer and vocal trails advocate.

When it comes to the outdoors, Mike wears many hats, from respected businessman, volunteer and founding chairman of the Bibbulmun Track Foundation to adventurer. He's a pioneer and was part of the first wave which took adventure tourism to Nepal, was a member of an Everest expedition in 1993 and did the first descent of Nepal's Sun Kosi River.

"I think it's important that we remain connected to the wild places in the wilderness," says Mike. "The more we put up barriers that let us be comfortable, that make us soft and a bit more superficial, the less cognisant we become about what's really important and what matters.

"We tend to make up problems, when in reality there's not that many problems when you are trying to sort out the simple things like how to keep dry, how to get your meal cooked or go in the right direction. It's the simple stuff that's actually the pretty important stuff. I've seen how that puts things in perspective for people."

When he takes groups on outdoors adventures Mike's greatest satisfaction is seeing them achieve things they never thought possible, especially when taken out of their comfort zone.

"People take what they need from a situation. If you give them the opportunity to get out so they're safe and reasonably comfortable, then they can get what they need. I enjoy giving people the opportunity to discover that - to see a sunset, climb to the top of a peak or walk 20 kilometres."





MICHAEL (THOMMO) THOMSON

Sports Journalist

Whether it's uncovering a hidden gem of a story or covering events of the day, Michael Thomson has always loved that every day of his working life is unpredictable.

Better known as Thommo, he's been a fixture on the Western Australian sports reporting scene for close on four decades. As one of Australia's most respected and awarded sports reporters and commentators, he's covered more sports than he can count, been right in the action at the Olympics through to discovering a 65-year-old still umpiring AFL in the country.

"I always wanted to be a lawyer but when I started my degree my sister asked me if I had ever thought about being a sports journalist because I just loved sport – and I love to talk. I thought that would be a great job," explains Thommo.

He got a cadetship at the now defunct Daily News newspaper and eventually found his way to Channel 9. Apart from a few years, he's been there ever since, sharing the best sports stories of the day as their Head of Sports.

"I like that everyday is different. The story isn't always happy or sad but it's different and I never know what I'm covering."

Ultimately for Thommo it's about telling a great story and taking it to families at home.

"I think by telling stories we can give inspiration to people. Maybe we can also bring sports that don't get an enormous amount of publicity to people's attention and pull the curtains back and have a look at that sport. Are you aware of this sport or this young guy or one of our heroic athletes who you've never heard of but is doing amazing things somewhere in the world?"

"Maybe the story will encourage someone to get involved, or follow that sport or draw inspiration from it for their own life. They are the things you hope you can help the community with."

There's also no denying the thrill which comes with being on the spot at pivotal sporting moments – standing right on the boundary when the West Coast Eagles won their first flag or being right on the finish line at the London Olympics when Usain Bolt won the 200m.

While he's in awe of elite athletes doing their best, Thommo loves to see anyone have a go.

"It takes a lot of guts to give everything, especially as you get older. I admire that, no matter what sport it is. It takes a lot of courage to put yourself out there and have a go. As I get older I really respect that."

APRIL CAMPBELL

Community Liaison Coordinator | Coach | Volunteer | Roller Derby Girl

When you ask April Campbell why she got involved with roller derby and why she stays, the answer is the same. Community.

Dig a little around community and her thoughts widen to include words like inclusive, welcoming, friendly and without politics.

“I just love how supportive it is,” says the skater known as Whip. “It’s ok to mess up, because everyone recognises that they do it too. In roller derby if you fall over, that’s ok, but when you get up? That’s awesome.”

April is a member and competitor with WA Roller Derby, the largest membership group of derby girls in Perth. Formed in 2009, it’s an accredited member of the Women’s Flat Track Derby Association.

April is the group’s Community Liaison Coordinator, a go-between for charity involvement, appearances at events like the Pride Parade, being part of the Perth International Arts Festival or dealing with the media.

In keeping with their ethos of by skaters, for skaters, if you’re a top 30 skater, it’s also your duty to give some of your time coaching to lower level and newer skaters, known as fresh meat. The minimum requirement is one session every 12 week cycle but like others, April gives much more.

“I just love coaching. I can see how far I’ve come – I remember being a freshie, being timid and falling over all the time and now I’m not. I also get to watch how those girls gain confidence as they get better. I love when something clicks in their brain after you’ve shown or explained something and they have a go and can do the skill.”

The other part of the attraction? Hard to deny it’s kinda cool to be able to hit something which totally isn’t ok off the track or in the rest of your day.

“There’s a lot of stuff which happens in roller derby that’s totally not ok in everyday life. You get really close to each other, you sweat all over each other and you do a lot of scary stuff. There are moments when there’s a jammer coming at you and all you can think is ‘I’m going to die’ but you stop them and you hit the floor hard. But you get back up and keep skating.”

Roller derby’s inclusiveness is part of its attraction for derby girls and the blokes who referee (known as Team Zebra) or the non-skating officials (called Team Flamingo). April knows it has empowered many people to stand proudly in their sexuality or their body, whether they are part of the team or the wider roller derby support community.

“Whether people struggle with something like their sexuality or their body image, being part of roller derby seems to have a really positive and empowering effect.

“Skating has given me so much confidence and I take that into the rest of my life. It has made me a lot stronger in many ways. Being involved in a sport where I face scary things, get hit and get back up again has given me many new life skills, like resilience.”





ANDREW CHAI

Administrator | Coach | Volunteer | Badminton Player

A passion for playing and the desire to spread the good word about a sport he loves has motivated Andrew Chai to give decades of service to badminton.

A transplant from Malaysia, Andrew has been running badminton clubs for 26 years, volunteering at tournament events, restringing racquets, doing repairs, coaching beginners and younger junior players, sponsoring tournaments and generally just about anything needing doing. For the last 10 years, he's been actively helping out at the Badminton Association of Western Australia.

"I feel my contribution builds awareness of the sport and allows members of my club to enjoy the sport," says Andrew. "I also hope it strengthens the presence of the association in providing assistance to anyone who wants to be involved.

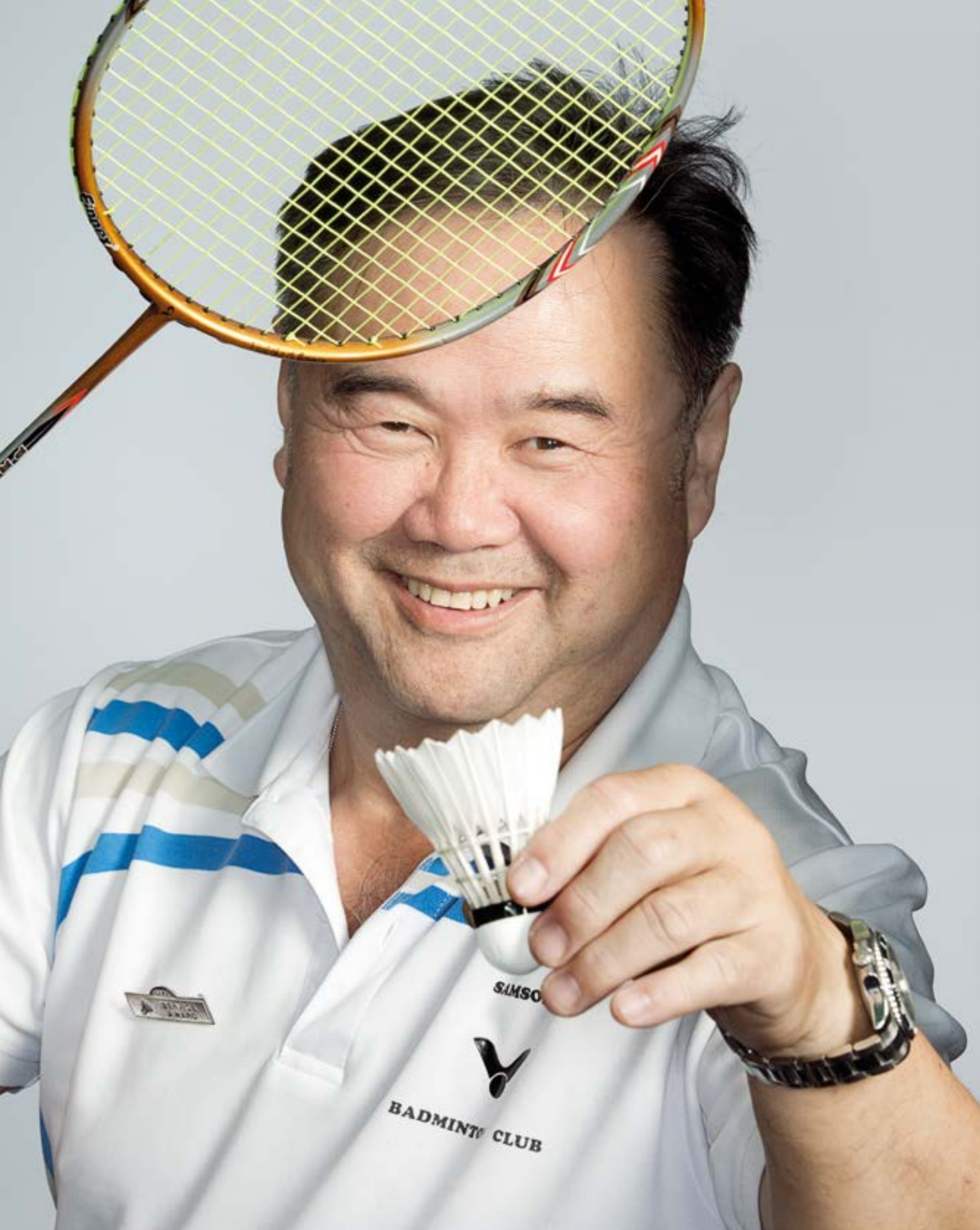
"Badminton also allows the community to have another option in indoor sport that is fun and satisfying regardless of race, culture or ability. I get tremendous satisfaction seeing people having a great time playing the sport, especially young people playing it for the first time."

Andrew has been playing badminton since he was 12 and represented the Malaysian state of Negri Sembilan as a young teenager.

"Getting selected to play in the national under-16 championships in my country of birth, Malaysia, was a great achievement for a lad that came from the outskirts of the city where there was very little help given to train and progress."

After migrating to Australia, he captained a university team in Melbourne and ran local clubs for four years. He moved to Perth in 1990 and started running badminton clubs on Friday nights and Sunday mornings, which are still going.

"Badminton is a very enjoyable physical game that entails agility and wit," says Andrew on why he loves the sport. "It's a thinking person's game that requires skill and quick-thinking reactions on the spot. It keeps the brain sharp and the body fit, promoting a sense of satisfaction for both the mind and body."





SHIRLEY SCHNEIDER

Softball Life Member

People say Shirley Schneider has an encyclopaedic knowledge of softball in all its facets.

Across five decades she's simultaneously been involved in playing and administrating, often at more than one level.

Shirley has been involved in softball since 1953, first as a local player, then a state player, a coach, an administrator and an Australian selector. She retired from playing in 1981 but has continued to leave an indelible mark on the game in Western Australia.

To say her list of accomplishments is long is a complete understatement and her mission has always been in service of the game and to guide softball through its development, most of it as a tireless volunteer.

Some of that list includes holding board positions with WA Women's Softball Association and WA Softball Association (now Softball Western Australia), driving clinics in regional WA, devising a card system which recorded players and their service before computers, raising money to buy a pitching machine and writing grant applications. A coach and selector, she was also a driver behind advancing coaching accreditation nationally.

Her awards and accolades include the Australian Sports Medal, being made a life member of two local teams, Softball WA and the Australian Softball Federation (now Softball Australia), being given the WA Sports Federation Skilled Service to Sport Award and the National Senior Award for Volunteer in Sport.

Ever mindful of making sure that WASA records should be preserved, in the early 1970s she made it her personal mission to preserve the photos of all WA teams. These now sit on the walls at the State Softball Centre in Mirrabooka. She also oversaw the collection, cataloging and display of memorabilia.

Once again, it would be understatement to say Shirley loves softball. When you ask her why and what's kept her here, she says simply that softball is a game the whole family can get involved in, from the youngest kids through to someone in their 80s.

"They don't necessarily need to play, but they can help out as a statistician, coach or manager or just make sure they are cheering at the games," she says.

"Really it's about friendship. You forge lifelong friends and I have friends from the eastern states, in the US and in the rest of the world because of my involvement in softball."

HUGH ROGERS

Seniors Recreation Council President

If you've had dealings with the Seniors Recreation Council, chances are you've met Hugh Rogers.

He's the quietly dignified President of the peak body which supports and encourages the involvement of seniors in sport and recreation. He has a head for figures, a knack for administration and prides himself on sticking to a budget.

A former member of the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom, a cricket and rugby union player and community thespian, Hugh arrived in Perth 1969.

Years later, while running an indoor bowls games on a Friday night he was approached to run an indoor bowls competition, which he agreed to do. He also founded the WA Carpet Bowls Association.

In 1995 Hugh became treasurer of the Seniors Recreation Council and then the President, a voluntary post he has held for the last 16 years. Ever diligent, you'll find him at his desk in the SRC office most mornings, usually bending a spreadsheet to his will.

"Volunteering helps keep you happy and keeps your brain active," he says. "For me I get satisfaction in doing a good job. In the area of finance that's keeping the records well and working to budget."

As part of SRC's remit to keep seniors active and engaged they run a series of programs to encourage participation, including pole walking and getting seniors tech savvy with classes to teach them how to use their phones and other devices.

Hugh says when he finds an idea he likes, he figures out a way to make it happen and then finds the people to help bring the dream to life.

That's what happened with the Seniors Exergaming project. Someone brought them the idea, convinced them it would be a good community project and now seniors all over WA have benefitted from being able to Exergame to keep fit, meet new people, engage their brains and even find common ground with their grandchildren.

"I'm really proud of programs like this but the Aged Care Games are my favourite. They are games for people in aged care facilities and I love them because they get people who don't normally get to have competitions having a good time, enjoying life, being active and meeting new people.

"I sometimes wonder what influence we do have on the community but then at Have A Go Day in November each year I realise that 15,000 visitors is a big influence on the lives of older Western Australians. Plus there are all the groups we are affiliated with who make life for seniors better."











PAUL DELANE

Head of Outdoor Education and teacher at Sacred Heart College | Sorrento Duke of Edinburgh's Award Coordinator

"I'm passionate about the positive effect nature has on our wellbeing as well as the life skills that students can develop from engaging in challenging activities with a group," explains Paul Delane.

"I love that adventure activities and engaging with nature has real consequences. If they forget to pack something, don't drink or eat properly on camp or take reading the map a bit too casually then the consequences are real and have an impact they learn from. They can't just ask mum to do it, restart the game or Google it.

"I also love that you are not only contributing to what students learn about a topic, but you also affect how they feel about themselves, how they interact with others and that they might care more for the world around them. Most other subjects don't do that."

These are just some of the reasons that Paul has spent 22 years as a guide and instructor in the outdoor industry and 12 years as an outdoor education teacher. A well-travelled adventurer, his skills include theory lessons and practical activities in pursuits like snorkeling, hiking, camping, white water kayaking and canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling, caving and mountain biking.

"At Sacred Heart, we find that our Duke of Edinburgh program is like a nursery for aspiring and developing leaders that go on to occupy many of the student leadership positions in the coming years, particularly in Year 12.

"Being outdoors and helping other students find a connection with nature, a skill or some confidence they did not know they had is very rewarding. I get a sense of satisfaction that you helped them find their way. They may have already been destined to be a leader or a role model anyway, but just giving them support and new experiences that consolidates their aspirations is rewarding too. It's also great to be around aspiring and inspiring young people, it helps keep me young.

"I have vivid memories of going camping with my closest brother and friends. We'd ride several kilometres out of town on our bikes with an old bag on our back. In it would be a jumper, a sleeping bag, a pocket knife and probably some food. We'd make a fire and cook baked beans in the tin and make toast using a BBQ fork we made from an old piece of fencing wire. Good times, lying under the stars and falling asleep to the sounds of the bush. I still love it 40-odd years later. It's what keeps me sane in a pretty crazy world."

NEIL KEGIE

Executive Manager Community Services at City of Armadale

Sport is a no brainer. For Neil Kegie it's one of the most obvious and classic ways to engage disadvantaged youth in the City of Armadale. The positive impact it can have on young people is also what he loves most about sport.

"As a parent, I know what it means to have a strong loving family. Some kids just don't have that level of support. Add that to other risk factors and the future for some young people can look pretty bleak," says Neil. "Home life might not be great and you'll see kids hanging around and sometimes getting into trouble. It's often because home isn't a safe place and they want to be a part of something. Unfortunately, a lot of the time it's the negative influences they are subject to which takes them on a downwards spiral.

"While you can't condone the behaviour, there's a responsibility to try and do something about it which is where sport comes in. We've had some tremendous results with sports programs and these kids."

One of the successful diversionary programs in the City is Ignite Basketball where many of the coaches and mentors went through the program themselves. Involving past participants is essential in sustaining the program but it also means that new participants are looking up to and learning from others who used to be wearing their sneakers.

"Part of the idea behind Ignite is that we empower the participants to train and run the program themselves. That makes it all the more powerful."

Ignite is the brainchild of Jamie Barr whose developed the program five years ago and whose drive and passion is an inspiration for participants and staff. Supporting Jamie's vision and seeing the program succeed is one of the most satisfying parts of Neil's job.

As an outer growth area with a population expected to double to 180,000 over the next 20 years it's vital the City of Armadale develops ways to support young people.

"We're a rapidly growing area with pockets of disadvantage. We look to find ways to assist families in these areas. Providing community and sporting facilities and undertaking social initiatives like Ignite are important ways to do that. We use many programs - including sport programs - as an engagement tool. When we reach the kids it has a cascading effect on the families and that draws the rest of the community in."

A double bass player and administrator formerly with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Neil got his first taste of community work when he established a smaller group of WASO musicians who took their instruments to places like Halls Creek and Laverton to share the beauty of music and the orchestra.

"We met a lot of disadvantaged kids but music was a real way we could connect with them, even though classical music wasn't a traditional way to engage with these communities. That gave me a taste of community development work and then I moved to local government. I wanted to be able to make a difference and try to break down some of the barriers that get in the way of people participating fully in community life. Sport has been a strong part of doing that because it's a great engagement tool."

During his 16 years with local government Neil has observed two noticeable changes in the landscape around sport. Firstly, clubs much more keenly feel the pull to be socially responsible and inclusive in their membership and programs, as well as being more family friendly.

"They are also developing programs which assist the kids who need that extra bit of help and encouragement to become part of a sporting family.

"I've also noticed that sport and social work are becoming much more collaborative because of the synergies involving young people. Clubs, agencies and community groups are working together a lot more and that's a really exciting development that underpins the value of sport in the community."





SHARAN COLLISS (NEE WHEELLOCK)

Coach | Water Polo Player

It takes a special kind of dedication and enthusiasm to stay playing A-grade water polo for 35 consecutive years.

Sharan Collis is the only Australian female to play more than 1000 first class games of water polo, whether it's A-grade, state, national league or for Australia.

After spending countless hours by the pool at her dad's club, Shaz started playing water polo when she hit her teens.

"My first memory of water polo is being at Claremont Pool wearing my dad's water polo cap after his games," says Sharan. "My favourite memory is when I played my first game and wore the number 5 cap – the same number as my dad. My youngest son now wears the number 5 cap when he plays."

Her list of achievements includes nine years on the Australian women's team (three years of that as vice captain), competing in two world championships and three world cups and winning gold at the FINA Women's Water Polo World Cup in Sydney in 1995. She spent 13 years on the WA team and played eight years in the women's national league, winning four national championships and retiring at the age of 43 as the women's games record holder.

Shaz first volunteered as a water polo coach almost 20 years ago and has since worked with players ranging from an under-14 boys team to specialist sessions with various grade teams and the high performance team program. Currently coaching the Phantoms men's Division 4 team, she says despite being older they're still very keen to learn.

"I really enjoy the game," she says. "It keeps me fit and gives me a reason to keep training. I also like the social interaction – I enjoy being around people of different ages. The youngest person in my A-grade team is 16!"

"I like helping the young players coming through and also like being a good role model for my kids. I think I keep doing it because I've done it for so long it's a part of my life.

"I do love the competitive side of it. I love the challenge and testing myself on a weekly basis. I also love what it has given me – I've travelled the world, represented my country and made lots of great friends along the way."



MARGARET TOOHEY

Guide | Bushwalker | Paddler

It's a two way street. Margaret Toohey is thrilled her seven children are closely connected to the outdoors and so incredibly competent at it. They in turn encourage her to try new things.

"I'm now also proud to be able to encourage that growing awareness for the outdoors and our native flowers in my grandchildren," she says.

In her seventh decade, Margaret is a poster girl for keeping active in your older years and being just that little bit fearless. One of her family has taken to calling her Ninja Nanna Bear thanks to a recent tandem paraglide. Then there have been other adventures such as parachuting, walking Spain's Camino de Santiago, sailing on tall ships and swimming with dolphins to name a few. Don't forget Tuesday's paddling group and Sunday's bushwalking group, where she often leads walks.

A passion for Western Australia's native plants and flowers and a love for bushwalking has led Margaret to become a guide at King's Park and Bold Park. This allows her to share both passions with visiting locals and those from around the world.

"You never know who is going to come on your walk. They always bring something with them - their interests, their stories, their past and where they come from. It's never just a one-way street and I love that."

Growing up as a late child to her siblings, Margaret spent a lot of time playing alone outdoors in country Victoria, which cemented her love for the natural environment. A decade of being a professional ballerina in her youth gave her an enduring strength and poise which has carried through, allowing her to continue to be active.

"It's ironic that I ended up being involved in sport and recreation because as a child I was the most non-sporty person because of my asthma. I couldn't run or anything but I knew I wanted to be a ballerina. Now my granddaughters are learning ballet and I think it's something that stays with you for life. I believe I have benefitted from it all of my life and especially now as an older person."

One of Margaret's favourite walks is the Bibbulmun Track and given all the other places in the world she has walked, it's hard to go past this local trek. She says the diversity of the landscape is largely what has captured her heart.

"I believe we should walk lightly on the earth, give back, be aware not to damage what you walk over and conserve for the future."





DON EMANUEL-SMITH

Inspector, WA Police Community Engagement Division

It's easy for Don Emanuel-Smith to rattle off a list of young people who have gone on to do laudable things in the community and in particular in the sporting community. The list speaks for itself as to the power of sport and recreation to change lives and create futures.

"Sport and recreation does amazing things for family and community," says the 2011 Police Officer of the Year.

Don is a police inspector who manages the WAPOL Community Engagement Division Multicultural Unit that works closely with the huge mix of new and emerging communities now settling in Western Australia. He believes that sport and music are two of the best ways to keep a community in harmony and connected.

He's one of the pivotal pieces of a project called Common Goal, a joint partnership project between WAPOL, Edmund Rice Centre, Football West, City of Stirling and the Department of Sport and Recreation. It's a soccer program which brings together African and Middle Eastern youth in an academy-style program which not only fosters a love for the game, but offers leadership, mentoring and future opportunities.

"This program creates healthy pathways through sport and allows kids from all religious and cultural backgrounds to come together to get to know each other, understand rights and wrongs and realise that we are all the same as human beings no matter where we come from. In turn their families get involved and that spreads the word creating community harmony.

"In working with young people over the years who have come from war torn communities and seen horrors we couldn't imagine, I've witnessed some amazing success stories from kids who were given a chance and took to sport and music programs like ducks to water.

"Having completed these programs and now in their 20s, many of them are now coaches and mentors. They're putting something back into the community and working with the little ones who were, not so long ago, in their position."



TERRELL JAMES (TJ) CALLAS

Trainer | Coach | Volunteer | Youth Ambassador | Sprinter

Terrell James Callas – TJ to his friends – is passionate about sport and athletics for very personal reasons. He's used sport as a way to overcome traumas, breakdowns and failures in his life. Striving and competing at an elite level gives him the power and the opportunity to make positive choices for himself.

"Another reason for my participation in sport is to help ease and prevent the number of suicidal situations in my generation," TJ says. "To help teenagers focus, get them off the streets and to minimise self-harm and staying on track with what they wish to accomplish in life by the use of sports."

A sprinter and long jumper, TJ relishes competition and loves being part of an atmosphere filled with positive young adults who are both rivals and striving for excellence in athletics.

"This encourages me and motivates me to keep wanting to achieve more by hoping to qualify one day to compete at the Commonwealth Games or Olympics."

Hailing from Guinea in West Africa, TJ arrived in Perth in 2008 and joined Maddington Little Athletics in 2010. Today he's an elite athlete for both Murdoch University as well as a State and national representative.

Active on social media, TJ is a youth ambassador for sports with Communicare. He was named Youth Ambassador of the Year in 2013 and nominated for 2014 Youth Award in the Commissioner for Children and Young People Participate Award. He sees himself as a role model for what hard work and a desire to do well can do.

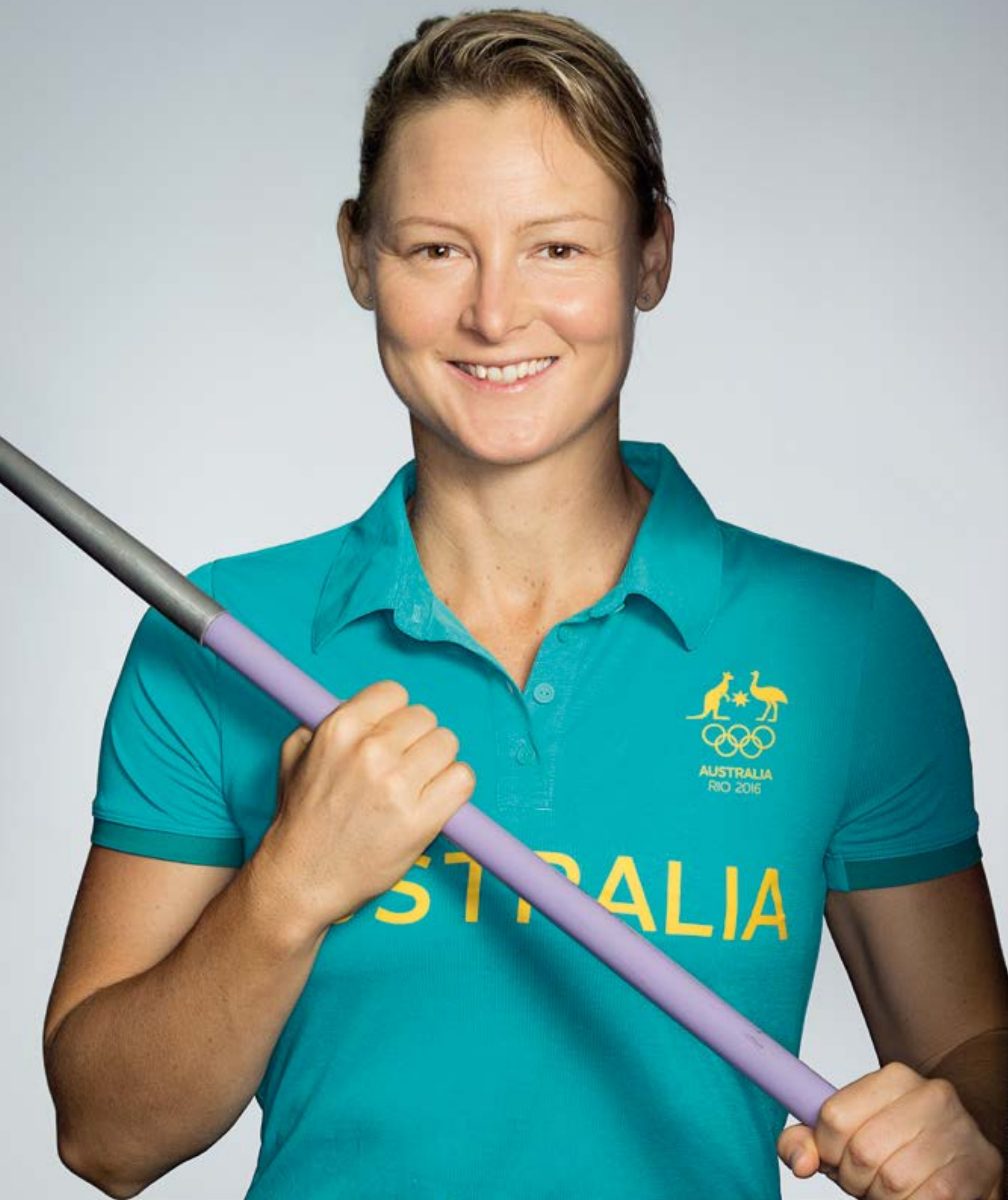
"The people who know me can relate to me as resilient and ambitious, which is a positive path for most people to be on."

Personal bests and wins aside, TJ says one of the best things about sport is that it speaks a universal language. When he first arrived in Perth he barely spoke any English, but he knew how to play football (soccer). Being part of a team helped him grow his confidence and make friends who in turn helped him improve his English.

"I love that you can show up, just play the game and not need to speak the same language. Sport brings people together and anyone can be part of it."

"Sport allows you to surround yourself with positive people. With the help of sport I was able to push myself further. Training is a great stress release and my medicine. I feel with sport in your life you can overcome anything."





KIM MICKLE

Javelin Thrower | Olympian | AFLW Player

If Kim Mickle has a favourite saying, it would probably be “have a crack”. In the greatest of Aussie traditions, this athlete is all about taking sport and life by the horns and giving it a bloody good shake.

Best of all, she keeps doing it and keeps amazing us as a poster girl for resilience. Even more impressive, she’s been thwarted at so many turns by injury – blowing her shoulder out at the Rio Olympics and doing her knee in her first AFL Women’s game. It’s enough to make most people pack their bags, go home and take up knitting.

Not Kim. She exhibits terminal sunniness and an unwavering desire to keep heading in the direction she has set for herself.

“I love the fact that sport is about pushing yourself in an individual sport,” says Kim. “If I let myself down, it’s because of something I didn’t do in preparation, so I make sure I do everything I can in the lead up. Then you know you’ve done everything to get there and you feel like you have achieved something before you have achieved anything.

“I like to challenge myself and battle my own demons. I secretly like those demons. A lot of people shy away from them but I love it when someone says I can’t do this or that. I love to prove people wrong and seeing how far I can go.”

How far Kim has come has included fulfilling her very first sporting dream, which was being an Olympian for the first time in 2012. Then she set her sights on breaking the Australian javelin record, which she did in 2014.

In between her training, she still finds time to give back by going to schools and helping young athletes on the track by talking to them about their own dreams and aspirations, offering tips and telling her story.

No matter what happens next – whether it’s the Commonwealth Games or the footy field – you know Kim will give it a red hot go.

MICHAEL HARRIS

Administrator | Volunteer | Tennis Player

Michael Harris has been playing tennis since 1953 and started playing competition tennis when he was 12.

He first became a volunteer in New South Wales in 1960. He was 17 years old when the local parish asked him to join the club and take over the presidency. He proudly and ably held the position for 17 years and was made honorary life member.

After a move to Perth in 1998 he found himself a local club and ended up on the committee at the Leederville Tennis Club. He became President in 2006 and still holds that position. During that time he was also a member of the committee at Tennis Seniors and spent three years as President. He's an honorary life member of Tennis Seniors and Leederville Tennis Club.

"I enjoy the challenge of playing and to see the benefits the club provides to the members and the community," explains Michael about why he continues to be involved in tennis.

"My most satisfying contribution is watching young people on the courts, playing competition and enjoying the sport."

During his time he has assisted in the running of four World Championships, three Australian Championships, Telethon Kids day for five years and various other on-court events.

"One of my early and favourite sporting memories takes me back to when I was first playing competition tennis. We were raising funds for Fred Stolle to go on his first overseas tour and I saw him play an exhibition match with Frank Sedgman on the local courts. As a junior this was amazing to see and be part of."



AKEC MAKUR CHUOT

WAFC Community Engagement Coordinator | AFLW Player

When Akec Chuot takes to the footy field for the Fremantle Dockers Women with number 14 on her jumper, she's offering a nod to both her adopted sport of Australian Rules and her first sporting love of the other football – soccer.

As a girl growing up in a refugee camp in Kenya (though she was born in South Sudan), Akec watched her brother play soccer, because girls weren't allowed to play. He was her idol and locals nicked-named him Thierry Henry because he moved like the French world game hero. Henry wore 14 for Barcelona and Arsenal, the latter the first sports team Akec and her brother barracked for.

Now the young woman pays homage to that special moment in her own history by wearing the number 14.

Akec's inclusion in the State's first female AFL team, the Fremantle Dockers Women, is testament to just how deeply she has fallen in love with her adoptive country and it's unique brand of football. She has also been named an AFL Multicultural Ambassador.

Like many other African migrants arriving in Australia, Akec started playing soccer but after a knee injury, wanted to do something different and turned her eye to footy.

She played her first game in 2011 during a lightning carnival and was named best on ground. By 2012 she was at the Edmund Rice Centre playing for their Lions multicultural team – which was actually the boys' team she went on to captain. She then played for a number of other local teams before making the debut line-up of the Fremantle Dockers Women in 2017.

Off-field, in her job with the WA Football Commission as a Community Engagement Coordinator, Akec loves to share her experiences and break down stereotypes about women playing footy.

"This job allows me to share my experiences with other people," she says. "I came to Australia when I was 12 and living in a refugee camp I never thought I would have the opportunities I have here. For me being able to share that with other kids is special, especially when I get to go to intensive English schools.

"I remember what it was like to be young and shy and what I do now inspires me to tell these kids they can do what they dream of too. A role like this is really close to my heart because I can share my journey and show people how welcoming the football family is to people who don't know the game."

Akec says there's just something amazing about sport and recreation that brings families and communities together. That spirit of community extends into her own achievements when asked what her biggest sporting thrill has been so far. While hands down it's being picked for the Dockers Women, she is quick to explain that while she pulls the jumper on, this is not simply a personal achievement.

"This is about all the people who have helped me on the journey. Like sharing stories with young girls who come from the same background as me and being able to tell them that they can make it in the sport they want to play, whether it's netball, basketball or soccer. If you work hard and you believe in yourself, you can get there."







KIM WALLIS

Surf Life Saver | Volunteer | Board Member

In a single moment Kim Wallis clearly understood how all the training he'd been doing was going to be put to the test. Like all good training, what he needed to do to help a distressed swimmer just kicked in.

"There was no one else around and if I wasn't there then that person would have drowned," says Kim, who was patrolling on a jet ski at the time. "The thrill was performing the rescue just like the many times we practiced the drill in training. Getting the person to safety and saving their life - that was pretty rewarding."

For the last decade Kim has been a surf life saver and saving the life of a beachgoer in trouble has been one of the proudest moments of his life.

Driven and fast moving, Kim grew his sea legs on the family boat and was off into the water in his first few months. Ten years ago he moved to the beach, needed something productive to do with his spare time and wanted to give back to the community. Surf life saving seemed like the perfect choice. He's now a member of the Wesfarmers Emergency Response Team and Chair of Life Saving at North Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club.

"Surf Life Saving is a great sport to get in to. You get fit, learn valuable life skills and as a member of a surf life saving club you get the chance to represent your club, state and country in various life saving events. I think you also gain a sense of belonging from being part of a group like this.

"Personal development is a big one as well. Learning to deal with people to get the best out of them requires a lot of effort. Many different techniques are needed to deal with the strong characters who are involved in surf life saving. We are always challenged by the different personalities of the community members who visit the beaches we patrol.

"If I can also help build my local volunteer organisation through the skills I have because of helping run the family business, then we're all better off."

Like so many volunteers, he's also learnt to dig in and contributes to his club, doing a bit of everything and sharing his skills across strategy, management and leadership as well as hands-on work.

Volunteering has helped Kim meet like-minded people from all walks of life and he thrives on training and working in a team to achieve a common goal.

"I enjoy helping coordinate events that raise money for non-profit organisations. The more money we raise, the better equipment we can buy and the better we can serve the community. The better equipment we have the more people we can potentially help."

JOE MONIODIS

Youth Sports and Leadership Program Coordinator | Special Projects Team Leader

For Joe Moniodis, it was a spiritual decision. He'd decided to give his life in service to others.

A martial artist with a triple major in physics, chemistry and mathematics, a PhD and work in studying how to destroy chemical weapons with non-toxic compounds, Joe somehow knew that this wasn't where he was stopping.

All this work, including a lot of spiritual and self-growth and conquering social awkwardness, made Joe realise his next life step needed to reflect his heart rather than his intellect.

His answer: service to others. Thus he started volunteering with a refugee and migrant sports program in 2006. Founded by Steve Bowman, the Edmund Rice Centre was where Joe slowly began his transition from science to community service, becoming almost fulltime in 2010.

In that time, Joe has become a critical part of the expansion of Edmund Rice's youth programs, not only as a coach, but as a friend, mentor and leader. He's been a pivotal part of a number of firsts, including the first Multicultural AFL team in Australia (ERC Lions), the first all-female African AFL Team (Butler Falcons), developing the youngest AFL coach in Australia and the Common Goal initiative where young Islamic students meet police and other community leaders on the soccer pitch.

"I really believe that every human being is capable of the most extraordinary achievements and seeing this play out in practice is the height of the human experience. I couldn't have imagined anything like this in the life I used to live," considers Joe. "Sport, leadership and everything else are just mediums for this experience.

"Finding the best in people and seeing that in my everyday and building programs that change the lives of participants in ways they would have never imagined, I marvel at how an often chance encounter can change a person's life forever. I'm blessed to have been part of many of these experiences. The success behind this lies in the building of the programs and helping others realize their inner passion for community service and the happiness that comes from it.

"The work we do not only helps disadvantaged young people achieve beyond their own expectations but that of society too.

"This instills a tremendous sense of pride in them and in turn makes them strong. This strength and achievement then allows for the mutual respect that we as a society so crave at the moment. What better way to earn the respect of all than by succeeding at what they love most and contributing so positively, whether it be success on the field, coaching or community service.

"I enjoy working hard to grow programs and would love to see them operating in every area in Perth and beyond, so they can change lives, hearts and minds into the future. Fulfillment and happiness are the most important things in life. I am more at peace than I ever have and this grows by the day."







Dear The Best Coach
Joe

Happy Easter U
Treat people like
a mother and U
organize fun things and
trips for us all and that's
why I'm giving you this card
because your a great
when there's problems you always
sort them out
that's why I'm giving you a card

From Joice / Scovia.
Scovia a little bit with ideas :)



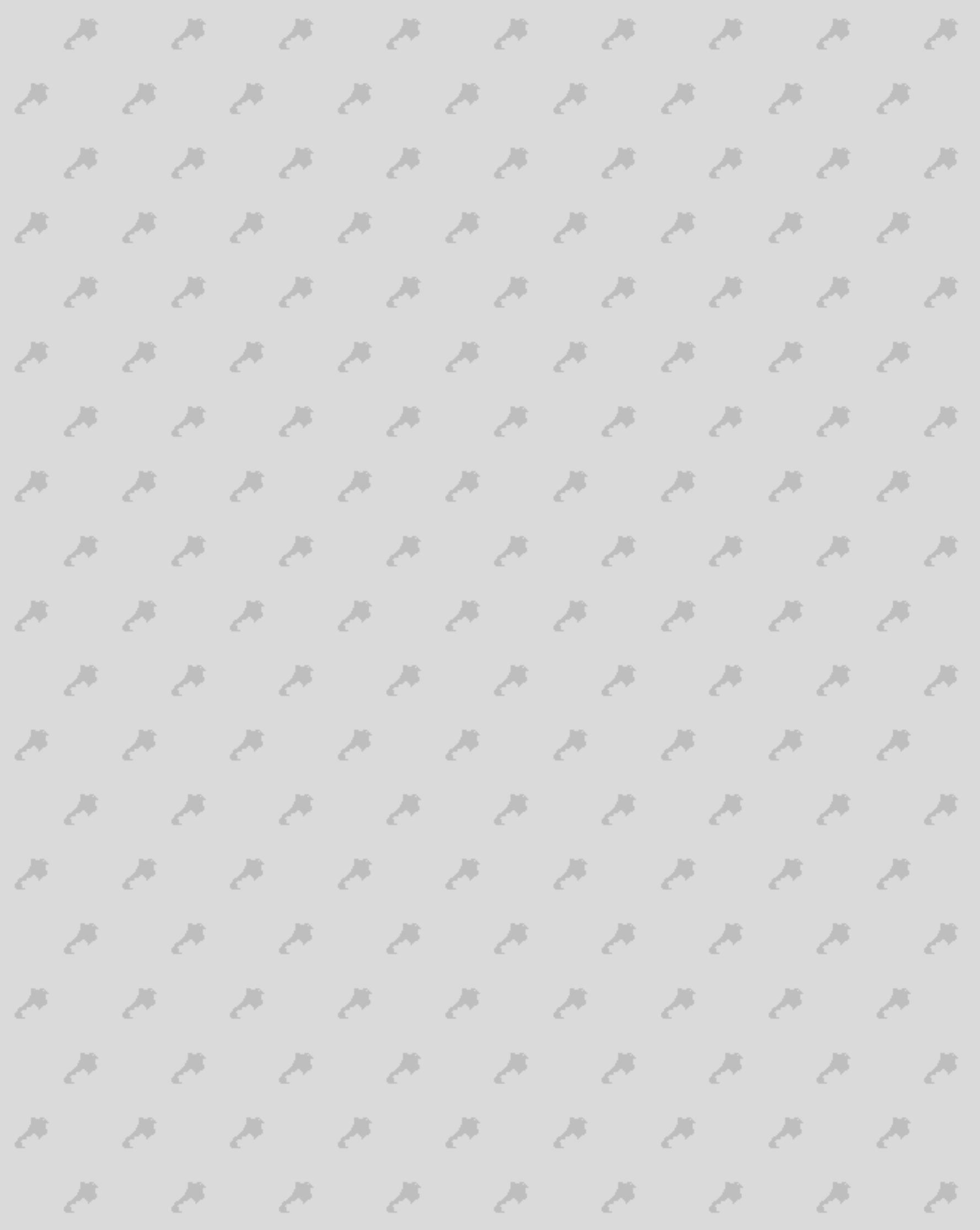
WRITER Ara Jansen

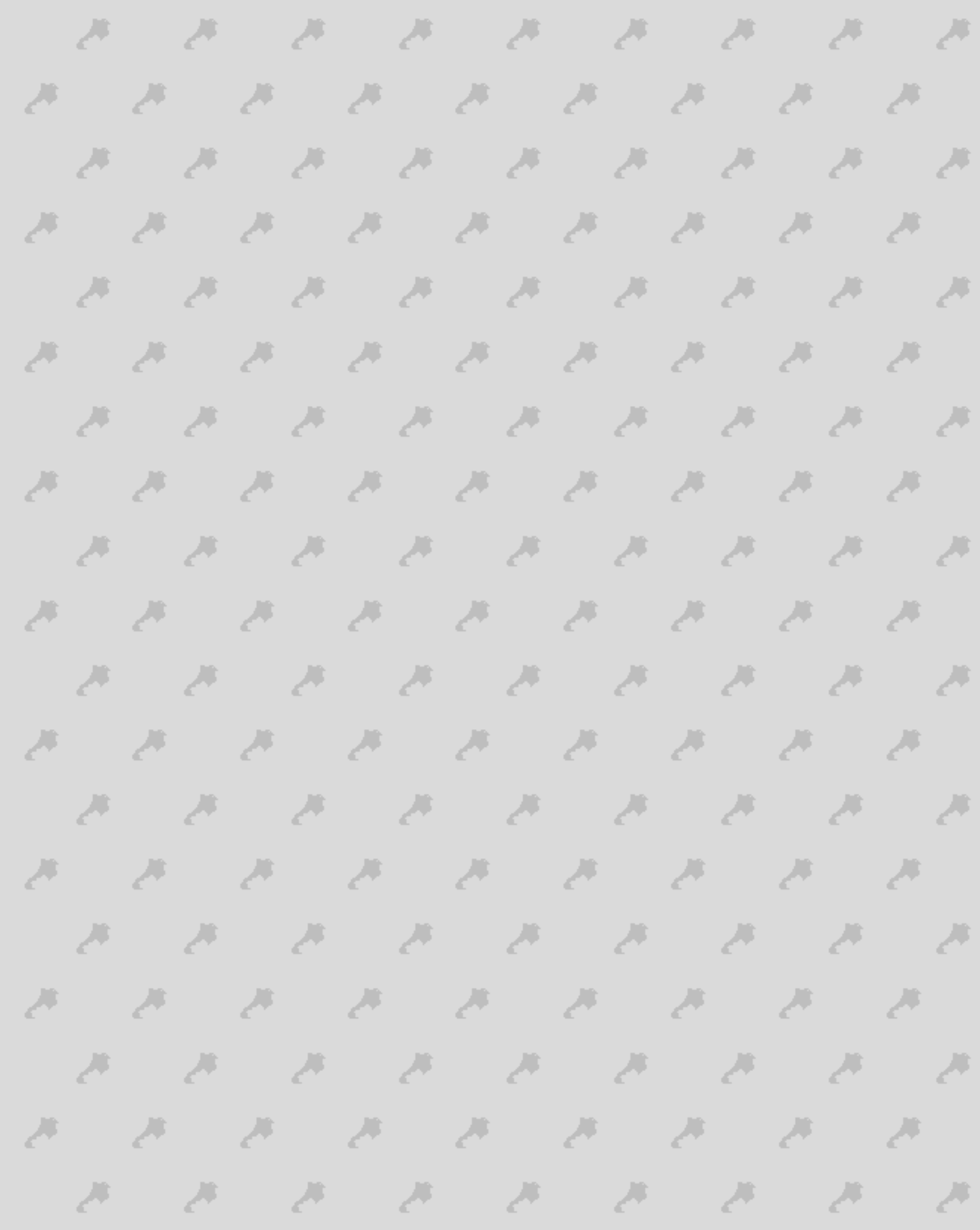
PHOTOGRAPHER | BOOK LAYOUT AND DESIGN Gareth Andersen

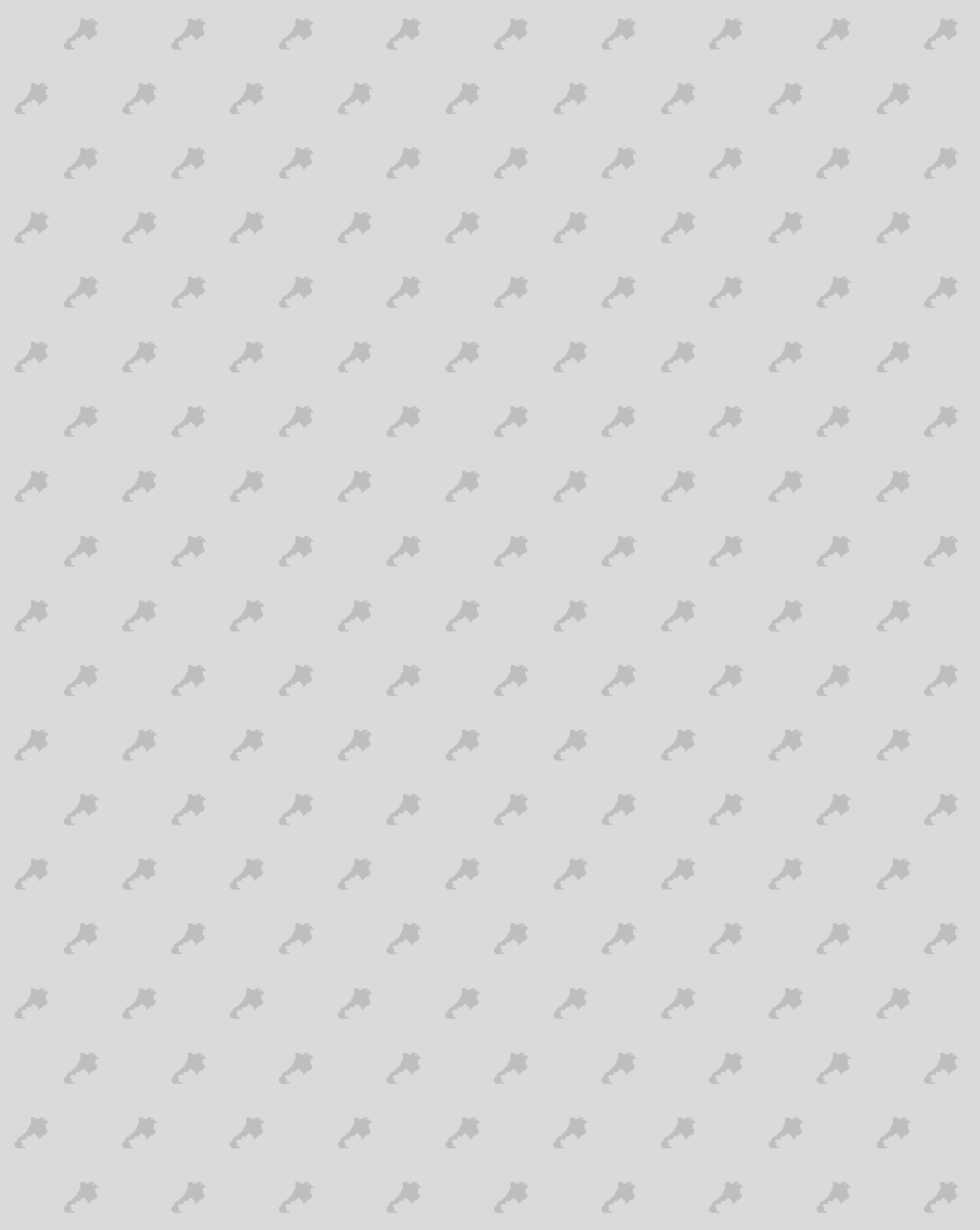
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