



Liz Ely

General manager
disability services, Villa Maria

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO WORKING AT VILLA MARIA?

The values of the organisation. Having worked in a values-based organisation some years ago, I recognised the need for me to seek employment with such an organisation.

It not only reflected my values base in supporting people and helping them to reach their dream and goals, but enriched the nature of the work I did and fulfilled an aspect of myself.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS TO LOOK AT WHEN CREATING A FEMALE-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE?

Flexibility in hours and days of work and the ability to work at home with the equipment and infrastructure needed to do so.

Also, salaries comparative with those of males, a no-guilt environment, equity in roles and support from your manager.

HOW DO YOU RETAIN A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE?

This is a real challenge. Sometimes I am not sure I do this very well.

I leave work by 4.30pm to collect my daughter so I can have concentrated and quality time with her at the start and end of each day. I work late at nights when she is asleep.

And I have each Wednesday off so we have time together in the middle of the week. This is time when we try to have minimal planned activities so we can just be together.

I also engage in my hobbies as much as I can.



Aimee Haywood

Fire policy officer,
Legislation and Planning, DSE

IS FIREFIGHTING A MALE-DOMINATED OCCUPATION?

Yes, though it's becoming more balanced. The Department of Sustainability and Environment has more than 15 per cent female firefighters this season.

HOW ARE YOU RECEIVED BY FELLOW FIREFIGHTERS?

I have a good relationship with my crew and enjoy working with them.

I've been a CFA volunteer for 10 years. My dad and sister are also volunteers.

I grew up on a bush block near Gisborne where we burnt out our extra vegetation, so I have lots of knowledge and experience with fire, which I share with my crew to help mentor them. I am also currently being mentored as a crew leader.

HOW CHALLENGING ARE DAYS LIKE BLACK SATURDAY?

Luckily, days like that don't come along very often.

February 7 was very challenging in terms of fire weather and behaviour. We had not experienced anything like it before.

You need to balance what you are dealing with in the field with family time and make sure you use the support available to you to get through those tough times.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO WANT A CAREER IN FIREFIGHTING?

Don't be intimidated! Women bring a different set of skills to firefighting, and quite often they can teach the men a thing or two. A degree of fitness is needed, but the level of fitness required depends on the role you're applying for.



Sarah Barton

finance manager,
Lauriston Girls College

DO YOU ENJOY WORKING AT A GIRLS' SCHOOL?

Yes, I thoroughly enjoy it because there is always a variety of challenges to deal with, a lot of activity, and the environment is very positive.

I find it very rewarding to be involved in educating young women and to see the development of our students into confident, mature young women ready to face the world.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO GET INTO THE EDUCATION SECTOR?

My previous roles had also been in non-profit sectors involving community service and I was keen to develop around this.

I was interested in the private education sector because it was a non-profit entity but also within a very competitive business environment.

The fact the school was an all-girls' school had extra appeal and interest for me.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHERS WANTING A FINANCE ROLE WITHIN THE EDUCATION SECTOR?

They should remain aware of the ever-changing environment in the education sector and constantly update their knowledge and skills.

It is also important to realise and prepare for the fact that schools are about educating children, therefore working in a finance role for a school creates many varied and unique challenges that would not be faced in any other sector.



Michelle Collier

prison officer,
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre

DPFC is one of two women's prisons managed by Corrections Victoria. It houses sentenced prisoners and women on remand.

Women working as prison officers are given opportunities to progress through a range of mentoring and on-the-job training.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A PRISON OFFICER?

I was looking for a change of career, a change of lifestyle and something that offered a different life experience.

WAS YOUR FIRST SHIFT CHALLENGING?

Yes, absolutely. I was very nervous because of the unknown.

DO YOU ENJOY BEING A PRISON OFFICER?

Absolutely. Every day is different. You just don't know what will happen or what to expect.

DOES THE TRAINING PREPARE YOU FOR REALITY?

The training I received offered me the initial side of the role, such as rules and regulations.

However, the hands-on training was and still is invaluable to me because the more I do the more I know and understand.



Laura Carson

senior science teacher
Casuarina Senior College

IS TEACHING IN THE NT REWARDING?

Teaching is, in itself, a rewarding career. It is great to work with students, particularly less-advantaged students, to help them achieve their goals.

The NT is more culturally diverse than anywhere else I have ever taught, so being exposed to a range of cultures has been an interesting experience.

WHY SHOULD TEACHERS CONSIDER TEACHING IN THE NT?

Teaching in the Territory is challenging but rewarding and fun. The lifestyle is unlike that anywhere else in Australia and the students are very diverse in their abilities and backgrounds. Some exciting and innovative programs are being implemented up here.

For example, Clontarf Academies looks at improving attendance and educational outcomes for indigenous boys through football.