

Quick SMART

Brian Horan's career has twisted and turned, landing him exactly where he wants to be. The former high school teacher spoke to MICHELLE WEBSTER about careers counselling and inspiring others.

I began my working life in education, teaching high school geography and commerce but I had the opportunity to retrain four times at the school which opened a lot of doors for me to head into areas that I was interested in, such as travel, studying French and physical fitness.

One of my roles at the school, and an area I'm passionate about, was careers advising and for a time I worked with unemployed youth at Mission Australia, which I loved.

I now have my own careers counselling business – eCareers Academy, and I just love what I'm doing, it's ... my passion. A presenter at a conference once asked us to choose one word to describe who we are, what we do and why we do it, for me that word was "potential".

My goal is to fulfil my potential and help others do the same; I feel I can do that through the careers counselling and through corporate training.

I volunteer to do a lot of work with University of Wollongong students and have been involved with the ENACTUS group, Junior Chamber International (JCI), and Max Potential programs.

At present I'm also working in business, I'm the chairperson of the Illawarra Network Group, where I just want to use my skills and abilities in a team to help small business in the Illawarra prosper.

I have an inner belief, which I think is innate and part of me, and that's a belief in the potential other people have; I get a buzz out of helping other people discover that.

Picture: ROBERT PEET



Mother and daughter Robyn and Sandra Huer both enjoy the comradeship of community service. Picture: SYLVIA LIBER

Take TWO

Robyn Huer has been volunteering with the State Emergency Service (SES) for 40 years. Her daughter Sandra also believes in the importance of community and helping others. They spoke to LOUISE TURK.

SANDRA HUER, 39, Albion Park

"I volunteer with the Oak Flats Rural Fire Service (RFS) Brigade locally and on a state-wide level, I am involved in the RFS Critical Incident Support Team, providing peer support to other volunteers who are facing difficult challenges.

I have been volunteering for more than 20 years. I joined when I was about 16. Mum and Dad were both in emergency services and my dad Chris was a member of bushfire brigades since I was very little, and I had listened to all his really cool stories, so I thought I should get amongst it.

I started off doing a lot of radio work in the control centre as Dad was the fire control officer and Mum was involved in that as well. Mum was volunteering with the RFS and the SES at that time, and in the later years she has started to focus more on the SES.

I really enjoy the friendship and the camaraderie with the people that you have in emergency services.

You get to train with them and go to social events with them, but then when the work is on and things are a bit tougher, you all pull together as a close-knit team. And that's what keeps me there. It's those personalities and those friendships.

I work for the Sheriff's office in jury services and I'm based in Sydney. The only crossover we have is training with our peer support teams so we had some training down at Nowra in the past 12 months – both training with RFS and SES peer support teams and that was the event in which I was the only person who got to say 'I'm the only one who got to take their mum to the training'. It's possible in large-scale events that we would both be deployed but that hasn't happened at this stage.

Mum is a dynamo, she is a can-do person and she's no-nonsense.

She has taught me the value of being true to your word and the importance of integrity and loyalty.

Emergency services are about caring for people and we both feel that is a very important value."

ROBYN HUER, 69, Albion Park Rail

"Sandra is the eldest of my two daughters (the other is Allison) and both of them are very extraordinary young women. Sandra is one of those people that you look at and you think to yourself: 'Wow, she's really nice to know'. She's got to be one of the most fair-minded people I have ever met. There have been situations in which I have been angry with someone, and she's been angry too, but she can always level it down and be fair-

minded. I think that's one of the most remarkable things about her.

Sandra comes from an emergency services family. Her father is very heavily involved with the fire brigade and to a lesser extent with the SES. She grew up with it and it was really a natural progression for her but she has certainly devoted herself to it. She has gone down the pathway in which she can contribute best and she's done an excellent job with the contributions that she has made to the RFS.

Mum is a dynamo, she is a can-do person and she's no-nonsense.

Our family is attracted to volunteering in emergency services because we want to help the community and we feel that we are really doing something practical to help. In the first place we were motivated by that desire to help.

We were living in a small rural community and it was a case of looking after property in your own community. You give your time and effort but you also get so much out of it. The comradeship with other volunteers is so important. The friendships you form are quite often life friendships.

Sandra and I have a lovely open relationship. We are a close family and I think that's a wonderful thing. We know we are there for each other.

I've been volunteering for 40 years and it's great. I love it and I wouldn't do it if I didn't love it. I love being able to help people and the friendships I make with others."

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