



Media Release

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Grampians Region in need of more volunteers

The Grampians Region is in need of more Community Visitor volunteers to help protect the rights of people with a disability.

The Community Visitors Program, which is run by the Office of the Public Advocate, monitors community residential units for people with intellectual and/or physical disabilities, supported residential services and mental health facilities with 24-hour nursing care.

Public Advocate Colleen Pearce said the Community Visitors Program is now looking to increase its volunteer numbers in the Grampians Region to ensure that the rights of people with a disability continue to be monitored by trained volunteers on a regular basis.

"The Community Visitors Program provides the community with a valuable opportunity to get involved with our most vulnerable citizens," Ms Pearce said.

"Community Visitors take on a challenging and rewarding role, and make a significant contribution to the promotion and protection of the rights of people with a disability".

Local Horsham woman Sheila Winter has been volunteering with the program since 2001 and says being a Community Visitor has provided her with an important and rewarding role within the community.

"Our work is to ensure residents' and consumers are treated with dignity and respect," Sheila said.

"The work has taught me to think outside the square. To never be surprised by what people with disabilities can achieve and the quality of life they can expect if they are assisted by dedicated, caring staff; and to try to influence positive changes where this is not in evidence.

"I believe that the Community Visitors program allows you to give as much as you feel comfortable with and no more than that."

Sheila's husband Ross is also a Community Visitor and Sheila believes this helps her perform the role.

"I am lucky because my husband Ross became a Community Visitor shortly after me. We quite often visit together and so can freely discuss situations," Sheila said.

Anyone interested in becoming a Community Visitor volunteer can contact Volunteer Coordinator Di Cahill on (03) 9603 8339 or email di.cahill@justice.vic.gov.au.

For more information visit www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au.

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