

Katrina Spencer

Create the community where you want to live

Katrina has worked extensively in education as a teacher, counsellor, principal and education director. She is the founding chairperson of the Athelstone Community Garden.

Katrina was one of seven children, with her mother her biggest supporter and influencer. Both her parents were active volunteers and were awarded Burnside Citizens of the Year in 1995 for their work with elderly residents.

Katrina attended Marryatville Primary and Norwood High School and while her brothers wanted her to leave school early to work, her education, career and independence were more important to her. She graduated with a Diploma of Teaching at Murray Park CAE and recalls a meeting about superannuation where the women were encouraged to go to the beach, whilst the men remained to sign on to a generous scheme. Whilst working, Katrina studied for her Bachelor of Education, Master of Education and several post-graduate certificates including courses at Harvard University.

Regularly travelling in other cultures has been important learning that enhanced her cultural understandings and valuing all that we have in Australia.

Katrina's teaching career began with ten years in the South East South Australia, an exchange teacher at a Junior High in Washington State USA, and a curriculum adviser in Mount Gambier coaching teachers and developing policy. Katrina appreciated seeing the 'big picture' in education and the differences across schools. She was one of the first primary school counsellors in SA and the first President of the SA Primary School Counsellors Association.

As a principal at three schools, Katrina focused on the question 'what makes a good school?' to build successful school cultures that create change for students. Katrina led several SA Department of Education policy teams including developing standards for school review. She was Director of Quality Improvement and the Literacy Secretariat leading state-wide and national projects in literacy and school improvement. Katrina retired in 2013 establishing herself as a successful education consultant and leadership coach.

Katrina moved to Rostrevor in 1989 and in 1996 settled in Athelstone. Katrina has been an active volunteer in a range of community activities. She has been the inaugural chairperson of the Athelstone Community Garden since 2015 where she and her committee have encouraged connections with local schools and community members, ensuring that the garden is family-friendly and accessible. Her love of gardening is evident in her own beautiful garden.

Katrina was elected to the Active Ageing Advisory Committee in 2020 and was a major interviewer in the Council's Market Garden History project and the Women of Campbelltown project.

In retiring from full-time work, Katrina spent more time with her father encouraging him to follow his creative spirit and enjoys developing her own creative work and community connections.

"Education is an important social justice strategy, opening opportunities to students of all walks of life."

Celebrating International Women's Day with the Women of Campbelltown project – inspiring stories of local women, their achievements and contributions to the Community'.

Thank you to the women who participated and the volunteer interviewers Di Booker and Katrina Spencer for their time.