

Karen's Story

My role with RTSSV as the Regional Coordinator for the North West Metro Region commenced in May 2014.



A big thank you to Chris Harrison, the education manager, for having the faith in me to take on this role.

Previously I was a road trauma awareness volunteer speaker with RTSSV. For more than four years I told my family's road trauma story about the loss of my son in a single vehicle crash on the 5 November 2009. I still undertake this role at Broadmeadows as I consider this to be the most important action I can do to make a difference - to help RTSSV educate road traffic offenders sent by the Magistrates' Courts or by solicitors to rethink their risky driver behaviour.

My new role as a Regional Coordinator links me with all our RTAS facilitators and volunteer speakers within the region. Distance can be isolating and actively keeping RTAS facilitators and volunteer speakers connected can be a challenge - my major role is to bridge communications between all within my region and with head office at RTSSV, helping to ensure all are kept up to date with our latest news. Another part of my role is to communicate with our referees such as the Magistrates' Courts and solicitors to ensure they are aware of our important services such as RTAS.

Throughout July, August and September I will be part of a team that will offer a training program for new volunteer speakers. Part of the job is about being part of any new road safety initiatives that may develop within the region.

There are a number of highlights that I have experienced since taking on this new role. My first highlight was seeing each of the facilitators in action at their designated RTAS location. It was inspiring how dedicated these facilitators are. Their job at times can be very challenging in the sense that they never know what volunteer speakers or participants are going to be like on the night - these facilitators are professional, diligent and passionate about road safety education.

Another highlight was having the opportunity to hear other volunteer speakers tell their road trauma stories, which allows me to better understand them as people and to appreciate just how difficult it can be to tell their stories each month to RTAS participants. I hold an enormous amount of respect for these volunteer speakers.

Hearing what each RTAS participant will take away with them at the end of their

seminar - what will make them rethink their risky driver behaviour - is the most rewarding part of what we do at RTSSV.

Myself and Puspa O'Donnell, a seasoned facilitator, and Anthony Lieu, a relatively new facilitator, organised a regional meeting. It was a great opportunity to share with each other ideas, thoughts, experiences and positive revelations in relation to the role of facilitators. This meeting showed me how important it is to share the knowledge we all have - it was a great outcome.

As Regional Coordinator, I know I need to build on my relationships on behalf of RTSSV with our volunteer speakers/facilitators. My greatest challenge is finding ways we can do this knowing that both facilitators and volunteers are very busy people with very busy lives.

I am driven by the belief that supporting our facilitators and volunteer speakers to do the work they do is the best way I can help to save lives and reduce serious injury.