

I am a Geographer ...

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Sustainability Victoria (SV) is a government organisation that works with the Victorian community and stakeholders to ensure sustainability is embedded in business, at home and in our schools. SV provides guidance, state-wide plans, incentives, recognition and promotion, and develops evidence to inform policy and build the case for change in realising a more sustainable world. Since 2014, we have also had a major role in inspiring and driving action on climate change. My role as Director of Engagement is broad in bringing together a variety of functions including communications and marketing, people and culture, statewide engagement and programs for the community and schools to assist with delivering on our organisation's objectives and purpose.

My Year 12 teacher and my father both inspired me to study Geography. They both had inquiring minds, were always looking for answers to a range of questions, a love of the natural environment and were never bored at trying to understand the variety of patterns and spatial distributions.

I studied Geography as a major whilst undertaking a Degree in Education (Environmental Science). This was at Melbourne State College which has now become part of Melbourne University. I've had a long career in the public sector and, before I joined Sustainability Victoria in 2006, I'd worked in a variety of roles including being a secondary Geography teacher, working for a major state-based water organisation, working in the Conservation and Environment departments in natural resource management, catchment planning, water quality monitoring, major water infrastructure projects and managing community education programs and facilities.

At Sustainability Victoria my work involves leading a team of around 35 staff across a diversity of disciplines to deliver effective and accessible sustainability programs, campaigns and grants. As an environmental delivery agency we also contribute input into policy and work closely with the Department of Land, Water and Planning and the EPA. Essentially, my teams develop and deliver sustainability programs and services and I oversee this to ensure that we are delivering something practical and engaging that provides the opportunity for Victorians to act more sustainably. On any given day, I can be involved in working with a multitude of work tasks and opportunities. For example, our Education team works with many partners across the state to deliver the ResourceSmart Schools program – which embeds sustainability into the schools everyday operations, its culture, curriculum and the community. ResourceSmart schools has



touched nearly half of Victoria's 2200 schools. SV also runs a number of community campaigns and programs such as "Love Food Hate Waste" and "TAKE2".

So, my work can include liaising with local government partners, large businesses or not for profit community groups. I also review social research, manage the budget for my division and, given we're funded by government, I report back to state government on what we're delivering and achieving. I use a myriad of skills that you could attribute to having studied Geography. I'm always asking questions like "Where is something occurring?" "Why is it there?" "What's the significance of this?" "With what is it associated and why?" – and of course I'm always looking for patterns.

The work that I'm involved with is very diverse and I'm passionate about what we achieve as an organisation. I feel that I can make a positive difference in my role. In terms of geographic skills that I employ on a daily basis, it's the ability to critically analyse, interpret data and evidence and apply this to a particular context, organising information and then being in a position to communicate this well. Having had a particular passion for physical Geography during secondary school and needing to use this content knowledge and geographic skills for a large portion of my working life it's now quite a shift to be looking for ways to change people's behaviours and to use our resources more sustainably.

I work with a number of geographers in our organisation and although differing in our roles and responsibilities, the one common thing that connects us is the love of maps, spatial patterns and being in a position to apply our skills to the work that we do. There are always good prospects for geographers in the sustainability and environment fields as they have a unique set of skills that can be used for a multitude of applications.