



Donna Stanley

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I've been with Parks and Wildlife for about 23 years. In my current role, I'm focused on two projects. I'm managing the Freycinet Peninsula Master Plan and the Maria Island Rediscovered project. They are both projects that are being supported through state government, parks, tourism sector and key stakeholders groups including community. This is a two-year fixed-term project. My substantive role is a parks and reserves manager for the northeast coast.

There are so many different aspects to parks and wildlife – it's so diverse. Every part of our state is special and unique, and governed by different values, management plans, stakeholder interests. Wherever you go in parks, if it's regionally based, you can have a completely different work experience. Conservation is just one component of what we do. There are also so many opportunities for community engagement. You're continually learning, there's always something new. There are so many challenges, but for me a challenge is an opportunity. How can we move through that? And what can we achieve?

Every day in my job is different. On any given day, you might be dealing with a staffing issue, and at the same time you might be dealing with a sewage issue—with infrastructure failing or needing to be replaced. You're always trying to address

the needs of the community or the business sector, balancing the competing interests of many stakeholders, who may or may not have the same values as parks. So it's always a challenge, always an opportunity, and there are lots of complexities.

You need resilience and integrity in this job, especially when you're dealing with community and stakeholders. You have to make sure you're in line with the organisation's policies and strategic directives. Being able to work with difficult or challenging stakeholders without taking things personally is probably one of the biggest challenges in this job.

I would say, don't take anything personally. You do need to have good organisational skills to do this job, and an ability to prioritise. I don't get that right all the time. But you need the ability to learn from that, as well—to own up to the things you didn't get right, learn from it, and move on.

The best part of my job is the places we get to work. You get to go to the beach, and it's a work day! That's awesome. It's also really about the people we work with, within the organisation and the variation of stakeholders we get to work with outside the organisation. It's also about the positive difference we can make, not just in terms of conservation, but in the community.

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