

Custodes

The Official Journal of the Association Issue 1 2021



**Royal Victorian Association
of Honorary Justices**

*The peak membership body for Victoria's
Justice of the Peace and Bail Justice volunteers*



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New JPs are on the way

Here is the story of one journey so far....

Since I was at high school I have been volunteering in one capacity or another, from collecting for charities, tending drinks stations at running and cycling races, marshalling, campaigning for 18+ cards in New Zealand, to leading a campaign to ensure New Zealander's passports were reinstated to 10 years.

I have been in Australia on and off since 1987, and in 2009 I moved to Melbourne and loved the place so much that I decided to make it my home. In 2017,

I purchased a block of land in a growth area of Melbourne, at around the same time I noticed that they were recruiting for new JPs in my new western suburbs area. My Great Aunt who is now 91, is a retired NSW JP, having served that community for over 50 years. I also remember many years ago at my high school in NZ we had a teacher who was a JP and I thought at the time that I wouldn't mind serving the community as a JP when I'm older, and having reached my 40's I considered myself experienced enough to take on the role, and so I submitted an expression of interest.



Kyle Lockwood

Fast forward to October 2019, and I was sitting in a large conference room with dozens of potential applicants, at the time my understanding of becoming a JP was that you approached an MP and asked them to recommend you (which is the process where I grew up in New Zealand), however in the great State of Victoria, as I understand it, that hasn't been the case for many years, and although the prerequisites are you must be an Australian Citizen and you must be over 18 years old, we learnt that applicants must submit their CV, undergo a rigorous recruitment process involving video interviews, face to face interviews, police checks, classroom training, and an examination exercise.

I attended my face to face interview in late January 2020, unfortunately by late March, COVID-19 hit Melbourne hard, we were scheduled to do our face to face training in batches over autumn, but this was promptly cancelled.

We waited about 6 months before the training was moved online, and at the height of the second wave lockdowns, we had our face to face training online via Zoom, and that's where I 'met' President Paul and found out about the RVAHJ. In the end, we had to complete and pass (with 90% or higher) 6 online modules, with questions centring on the JP Handbook.

The final assessment was to complete a workbook, where we answered a series of questions, spotted errors on 'completed' documents, and completed our own Certified Copies, Statutory Declarations, and Affidavits – all endorsed by hand, because as we were working from home, no stamps were available for the final assessment, so despite having done all of our training in the high-tech digital environment of the year 2020, we reverted to a quite traditional way of endorsing our documents. All completed documents were thereafter scanned and returned back to our trainers for assessment.

With the recent holiday period, and the appointment of a new Attorney General, at this stage, it's possible appointment and swearing-in may perhaps also be done over video conferencing starting in late March or April, as Victorian public service also hasn't fully opened up due to ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions.

So there you have it, for me, this was a very productive way to spend some spare time during Melbourne's lockdowns. At the time of writing, our JP class of 2020 of approximately 200+ students hasn't yet been appointed, however new much-needed JPs are on the way, and once appointed, we all look forward to doing what we have been trained to do - serving the people of Victoria as newly-appointed Justices of the Peace.

It's been a long and winding road for these budding new JPs. We thank each and every one for their resilience and ongoing commitment to the role. We all look forward to welcoming you to our team and trust you will all take full advantage of the support available for all JPs through the awesome RVAHJ Branch network.

