

## The challenges of retirement

**Ann Kershaw**

When I retired 11 years ago I was totally unprepared. My husband and I travelled through Victoria at the end of January and we returned home mid-February when he returned to work. I was hoping to pick up some consultancy work or something educational to do. I found I was bored and lacked any interest in doing anything. I found it hard to crack into the Wollongong area as I had been a principal in Newcastle.

Soon after that a friend asked me to do a day at Wollongong High and talk to students about their expectations and how the school was meeting their needs. I wrote a report on my findings and that was it. I was then contacted by another friend in Newcastle, concerning a lecturing position at the Australian College of Physical Education; she had wanted me to lecture at Newcastle but as I was living back in Wollongong that was not possible. I did accept this position as I was lecturing in the PDHPE syllabus and I had been on the committee for the syllabus. This turned out to be 2-3 days each semester. I did this for eight years and enjoyed it very much.

To keep myself active I played tennis several times a week as well, but felt my educational experiences were wasted and I missed that buzz of making decisions to improve student learning, in which I had a strong interest. While I did contact my friends and colleagues in Newcastle it was difficult to really keep in touch. I did wish there was some process that could be accessed when you retire to keep you involved.

I did the interviews for graduates at Sydney University and also supervised preservice teachers doing practical experience in schools and that enabled me to observe many different school settings and procedures. I also had a call from Staffing and I did several terms of work for them – 2-3 days in term 1 and term 4 – which I found very interesting. Unfortunately, that work ceased after two years and newer retirees were given this same opportunity.

Unfortunately I was then diagnosed with breast cancer and spent two years coping with that. I was fortunate that a lot of my treatment was in college holidays and the staff at ACPE helped me greatly when I was ill. I still believe that I have a lot to offer to education and I constantly read new research findings etc just to keep myself up to date.

### Contributor details

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Ann was a Principal of Hunter Sports High School from 1999-2015. A life member of the SPC, I have a keen interest in teaching and learning. I have travelled extensively as my hockey club participates in the Golden Oldies World Hockey festivals every two years. I am also involved with the Illawarra Cancer Carers in a voluntary role.