

My VIEW journey

Good morning, my name is Kris Behets and I live in Melville, just outside of Perth in WA. I'm a wife, a daughter, a sister, a mother and a Mimi to my precious almost 4 year old grandson!

My VIEW journey started around 20 years ago, with my mum, who was a member of Rockingham Sound Day VIEW Club for many years and is now a member of Melville City VIEW Club since she moved to live closer to me about 8 years ago.

Initially, I attended events with mum such as friendship fetes, birthdays and other special events. My children were still at school, my husband was away for work regularly and I was still working part time. I didn't have the bandwidth then to join nor was there a club close to me, However I was excited to learn about The Smith Family and the concept of supporting Australian children with their education through the Learning for Life program. I was horrified to learn about the number of Australian children living in generational poverty.

In November 2011 I attended the inauguration of Melville City VIEW club, in my area, and joined on the day. I became the Publicity Officer after our first club meeting, and have been on the committee as President, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, or Delegate up until I became Zone Councillor in 2020 for 3 years. I have been part of the Development Team that has organised three fantastic State Conferences in WA.

After taking a two-year break from committees due to helping care for my elderly parents and my beautiful grandson, today I have the honour of joining you here as WA's first National Councillor, with the creation in 2025 of a position that I had hoped would happen since my early days as ZC. I thank you all for your support in making this position a reality.

VIEW women are incredibly welcoming and friendly. I've been lucky enough to attend conventions in Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Wollongong, Tamworth, Sunshine Coast and Adelaide. Convention is an absolute blast! I have met so many amazing VIEW women at Convention and have formed lasting ongoing friendships. Unfortunately, I missed Hobart in 2023 through being in Scandinavia, however I'm excited to be booked for Brisbane later this year!

I am lucky to live a life of privilege, with a roof over my head, enough food, enough money to pay the bills and the great advantage of having had a good, stable education, and I feel that privilege brings with it a clear responsibility to be a part of creating meaningful change in the lives of those that are not so lucky, often through no fault of their own. Creating hope and a future for children by supporting their education creates hope in families, which in turn creates hope and stability in communities. This must be a good thing!

VIEW has been in WA since 2001, when The Smith Family opened an office in Perth. In WA, we have only known The Smith Family with a sponsorship program. WA has 8 VIEW clubs, ranging in age from 1 to 24, with around 550 members and sponsorship of 101 students. The future of VIEW in WA is in good hands with a vibrant and determined Development Committee led by our current Zone Councillor Mary Deakin, and the opportunity for new clubs in several different areas. I look forward to assisting our existing clubs to grow and remain vibrant and in helping with the formation of new clubs in WA.

My particular focus this year is to assist our clubs to empower their members to step up to committee positions, and to ensure they have succession planning in place so that committees don't stagnate. Fresh eyes over a committee can bring fresh creative ideas, leading to healthier clubs and greater member engagement. My observation over the last few years is that some committees see themselves as 'in charge' of the VIEW Club, rather than being elected to support their members. This can sometimes make being on the committee look 'elitist', difficult and unattainable. The role of the committee is to serve the club and ensure the members experience is the best it can be! I absolutely know that committee members typically are passionate about their club and work hard to create excellence in the club for members, but sometimes their own agenda may get in the way. I would like to assist clubs to ensure that being on committee looks open, friendly and accessible to all members perhaps through ensuring that more regular consultation with members is undertaken and that training opportunities and mentorships are available to all who want them.

I look forward to working with you all in 2025 and am open to all your ideas and suggestions to achieve my goal!