

# GET IN2GEAR Mentor Stephen is making a difference to the lives of our disadvantaged!



## Why do you mentor for Get In2 Gear?

The answer to that question has a historical perspective, as well as a personal desire to provide some support to people in our community who need it most. During my working life with IBM there was something of an expectation that employees in professional roles would participate in a “give back” program providing mentoring and professional guidance to more junior employees, particularly new graduates. This was something I always enjoyed doing. Guiding young people towards achieving the status of becoming a respected professional was very rewarding. I wanted to continue giving back after I finished my working life.

I get the same enjoyment from mentoring members of our community through the process of obtaining a driver’s license. Regional Tasmania can present many challenges to people without a license given the limitations and cost of public transport. Assisting learners to achieve their goals of an L2 License and then a Provisional License is extremely rewarding for both the learner and the mentor. That’s why I do it.

## How many learners do you mentor per week?

I set aside Monday afternoon each week for the Get In2 Gear program, which allows me enough time to mentor three learners.

## What are some outcomes you have seen learners achieve, other than gain their licence?

Obtaining a driver’s license is very often a first step in achieving other life goals. I have seen a variety of outcomes. I have mentored learners who joined the program because obtaining a license is a necessary first step to obtaining an apprenticeship or some other form of employment. I have mentored young mothers who needed the mobility that comes from having a license in order to get their young ones to essential services or even just to school. I have mentored older mothers who have children and grandchildren in other parts of the state and were in need of a license so that they could visit their extended families whenever they wish. I have mentored new members of our community from other cultures who were able to drive in their country of origin, but needed to start the process all over again now that they have chosen Tasmania as their new home.

The outcomes are all pretty much the same – mentoring people towards increased mobility so that they can achieve other goals.

## Is sitting next to a learner and mentoring them a daunting experience?

No it isn’t. Most new learners are understandably nervous when they start out, and of course they all make a few mistakes. By starting out in a non-hostile environment such as a sports ground, the initial nerves and mistakes are fairly easily dealt with. By the time the learner declares enough confidence to venture onto the roads, the potentially daunting aspects of the experience have been well and truly dealt with. The focus can then be on skills development and increasing confidence.

## What is the best part about being a mentor?

You very quickly get to know why a learner has joined the program and what their objectives are. The best part about being a mentor is sharing the journey towards achievement of those objectives. Also, spending an hour with a learner every week for many months very often results in some valued friendships.

## Have you any words of encouragement you could give a person who is thinking about mentoring?

If helping other people achieve their life goals is something that you like to do, then learner driver mentoring is a great way to do it. It may not seem much at first glance but when you think about the liberating aspects of obtaining a driver’s license, you realise the importance of this program. My encouragement is to give it a go. You will get to meet some truly lovely people, probably develop some valued friendships, but most importantly, help learners to move towards their next goal in life.

If you would like to be like Stephen and give back to our local community, by lending as little as an hour per week to those in need, then please email [erica.mckinnell@bodc.tas.gov.au](mailto:erica.mckinnell@bodc.tas.gov.au) or call 03 6376 7900 and ask to speak to Erica.