



Heather Thewlis

Born August 8, 1957, in Melbourne

Enthusiastic visionary

The middle of three girls, Heather attended Presbyterian Ladies College, before completing a Bachelor of education.

Whilst teaching in Macedon, Heather met John Thewlis, a farmer from Willaura. John and Heather married and had three children, John, Katherine and Scott.

One of Heather's major contributions to her community has been through the Girl Guides. A Queens Guide, who has volunteered for over 25 years as a leader, served on various Australian Committees and as a national and international trainer.

Heather taught in rural communities working also as a preschool field officer and project officer.

In 1999, Heather was seconded to manage Pinarc's new specialist early childhood services. This service was awarded the inaugural 'Services Initiative' at the Ballarat Health Awards. After working as the senior service manager at Pinarc for many years, Heather left in 2008 to establish her own motivational speaking and training business.

In 2006, Heather's family experienced severe fire damage to their farm and buildings during the Grampians bushfires, Heather was diagnosed with breast cancer and the family also faced severe drought.

Heather has used these experiences, through public speaking, to nurture and educate people within rural communities. Heather's aim is to better prepare people for fire, ensuring awareness for their health and wellbeing through natural disasters, such as fire and drought. Heather is very successful in this field with an ability to communicate with many people.

In her nominators words, "*Heather's warmth, compassion, vision and enthusiasm is exceptional — a truly wonderful woman*".