



Corrective Services Commissioner Marlene Morison

for Queensland Corrective Services. She's enamoured of the River City. "I love it! There are a few cultural differences but there's a bit more tolerance of quirkiness up here. I really do love it."

Victorian state director of Mission Australia Emma Casser is a good friend and colleague who has known Morison for 14 years. "Marlene's in the business of changing people's lives," says Casser. "She's very well-respected and a very astute businesswoman but away from work, [she's] very private and humble. She's always reading, learning something new and constantly challenging herself"

That may be something of an understatement. Each year Morison holidays with her 28-year-old daughter and two sons, 23 and 26. Nine years ago they went to Base Camp in Nepal, last year they climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and later this year will head off to Machu Picchu and the Amazon.

"It's important when I do get that time with my family that we really make the most of it," says Morison.

Meanwhile, she has a lot to achieve professionally and concedes Queensland has some unique issues. "In Queensland, 30 percent

of prisoners are Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders, so the solutions need to be different when approaching the issue of rehabilitation," says Morison.

"Another challenge is having the conversation with the community about how we manage the risk of our highest risk sex offenders. It's a tough part of the business; GPS is a great tool that helps us monitor these offenders. [It's] perhaps not a uniquely Queensland issue but it has a big part of my attention at the moment," explains Morison.

She is very hands-on in the role and is out of the office at least two days a week at facilities or with probation and parole officers.

Her business savvy led to her being a finalist in last year's Telstra Business Woman of the Year

awards. "Corrections is a very big business, I was so happy about that, it was really gratifying."

As women in these roles in the industry are few, she was aware of the impact and influences she has on her peers, especially her female colleagues, but being a role model wasn't something she sought out. "I am a trailblazer but only because of the role. It's not something I set out to do, it just happened but I'm very happy to support other women, I wasn't really conscious of trying to be a role model," says Morison.

Rod Wise says she sets the bar high for herself and her staff. "She has high expectations of herself and of those who work for her; she's demanding of people and demanding of herself. I don't think she feels the pressure herself but she's exacting.

The key thing for people working in the Corrections industry is that there will be issues and problems and you have to keep focus on the good work you're doing and that's where Marlene's tenacity and single-mindedness will overcome those challenges."

Morison says an honest and open dialogue with the community has already been established by her predecessor Kelvin Anderson, and she wants to continue that. "Even a television show like *Conviction Kitchen* was a positive. Millions of people watched it and got a taste of what it's like for people trying to put their lives back together and the role we (Corrections) play in that.

"We want to humanise prisoners, not demonise them, so keeping the community informed about our work and what we're trying to achieve and how we're doing that is crucial," says Morison.

While the top job will be challenging, Rod Wise says Queensland is in safe hands with Morison. "Marlene is very well-equipped to do the role. It's a big job but she'll do it very well. She won't lose sight of what she's there to do: provide a decent correctional system and stop people going back to jail."

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