

# 2022 Mental Health Month ACT Supporters



## Kelli-Ann Jackson

Kelli has lived a fascinating life. A former accountant, she once spent nine months living and working in Afghanistan and Kuwait with the Australian Defence Force. She has unicycled the length of Taiwan and South Korea and was the first non-citizen to ever unicycle in North Korea.

With a love of being out in the wild, Kelli joined Women's Adventure ACT, which was then a small meetup group. Five years ago, she started leading the group to 'give something back' on her path to adventure.

Since then, Kelli has significantly expanded Women's Adventure ACT. She established a set of values to help promote and increase diversity, women's leadership and skills in the outdoors, and has helped over 5,000 Canberra women to have their own adventures.

With the help of grants, Kelli established a modern, lightweight gear library to help women overcome the cost barrier to participating in the outdoors. She also started running Accessibility Hikes for people who can't do longer-distance activities, including people living with disability.

"The activities we organise in Women's Adventure ACT genuinely contribute to people's wellbeing and positive mental health outcomes. We're proud to do that at a community level, and all through volunteer effort."

Kelli feels strongly about identifying our individual personal values and using them to guide "what we do in our community and society, how we see other people's actions, and how we act towards others." She wants to bring back a focus on kindness, respect and support in our social interactions, particularly online.

"I've personally been on the receiving end of some not-so-nice bullying over the last six months. This has impacted my mental health and what I've been able to deliver to the community."

"As a society, we need to reach out and support and help each, especially the most vulnerable people in our communities."

To maintain her mental wellbeing, Kelli takes breaks from being online and, of course, spends lots of time outdoors. "Just walking every day is a fantastic way to get context back in your life, to diffuse any challenging situations, and to have healthy habits. Experiencing the simple beauty in nature is something easy we can all do every day."

And of course, it's always better when you've got company! "It's incredible how good you will feel after getting outdoors with others."

Kelli is the 2022 ACT Woman of the Year and was the ACT finalist in the Local Hero category for 2022 Australian of the Year.

