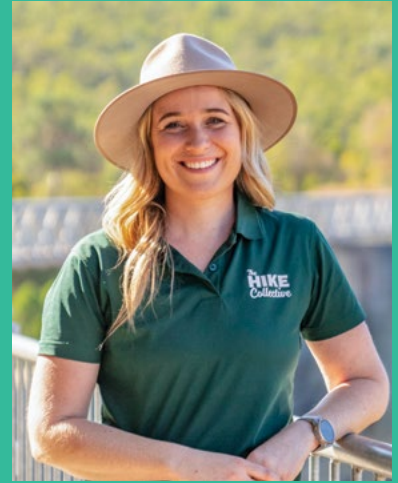


# KATE GIBSON

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,  
THE HIKE COLLECTIVE

“Tourism is the perfect industry to create your own career - there are no walls and boxes to fit in, and it’s such a diverse industry that you can make it suit your lifestyle.”



KATE STARTED LEADING GROUPS ALONG TRAILS IN THE PERTH HILLS TO HELP PEOPLE CONNECT WITH THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER. WHERE BETTER TO DO THAT THAN IN NATURE? AS DEMAND FOR THE MICRO-ADVENTURES ROSE, THE PERSONAL TRAINER BECAME A TOURISM OPERATOR, TAKING VISITORS ON JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY THROUGH PERTH (BOORLOO) AND ROTTO (WADJEMUP).

## HOW DID YOU GET INTO YOUR JOB?

I never thought I was going to be in tourism. I travelled abroad, lived in Europe for four years, and studied a diploma in event management and then ran a personal training business.

I started the Hike Collective in 2016 as a mental health awareness initiative. Our main purpose was, and always will be, to create a safe space for movement and connection in nature. We did one hike a month as just a group bringing a friend and a gold coin, and we would raise money for mental health charities.

In 2019 I started doing more research; I thought I was in health and fitness and everyone’s like, “no, you’re in tourism”. I reached out to the Tourism Council of WA to start the accreditation process. I’d done a business management diploma but finding my feet in tourism was very much self-led. I now have a team of about 15 volunteers and six tour guides, and about 30 different tours.

## WHAT’S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

My career is how I want to live my life first and foremost. I love being able to create something that can influence somebody else’s life in a positive way, whether that’s my team, by giving them employment and a purpose, or our guests by giving them an experience that they didn’t know they needed. And if I need a mental health day, I will lead a tour to give me that reset.

I’m not interested in the monotony of a nine-to five role; my days are whatever is needed to run the business. I love the flexibility to have connections with industry, as well as guests.

## WHAT’S YOUR ADVICE FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN TOURISM OR HOSPITALITY?

Reach out to businesses that you are curious about - the tourism and hospitality industry has the friendliest bunch of people. They’re people like you and I who are following a dream. If you have a purpose and a passion everyone around you will see it and feel it, and that is a key to success.

Everybody’s got their own story and if somebody’s in our volunteer team and really wants to make that transition into a tour guide, then we work with them to build self-confidence on the trail skillset. The youngest volunteer we have is 18 and our oldest would probably be around 65. There’s always space for guides. It is a role that can be shaped into whatever you want it to look like, so there’s no one size fits all.

## STEPPING STONES

