

COVER STORY

Make passion pay

Kath Lockett meets workers who have turned their interests into jobs.

If the highlight of your working week is taking home the stale sandwiches from the conference room on Friday night, it's time to regain your enthusiasm.

Finding a renewed passion for work can sometimes involve backpedalling. This does not automatically mean moving out of the city; it can occur by voluntarily reducing your working hours or taking on a different job that provides more time for family and interests. However, it may also mean living more modestly.

Rod Irons did just that when he resigned from his stressful job in industrial logistics.

"My quality of family life was terrible; the good salary just wasn't worth it."

Starting as a casual cleaner of street drains 10 years ago, Rod is still with Moonee Valley Council but is now the waste management and street cleansing co-ordinator.

"The council is very family-oriented and encourages us to actively look at new ways of dealing with waste management. These days, I'm working on things as wide-ranging as collecting unwanted household goods, school programs, funding art installations and providing on-the-job training for long-term unemployed locals."

Joe Malloy, from the Social Roasting Company, is also someone who is happy getting his hands dirty. He has worked in the coffee industry for almost 12 years and



Full of beans ... the Social Roasting Company's Joe Malloy says his is a "fun job that makes a real difference". Photo: Luis Enrique ASC

has set up three coffee shops that provide work and training for the long-term unemployed.

As operations manager, his daily activities include making coffee, interviewing and training staff, testing new blends, making deliveries and paperwork.

"Thankfully," he says, "the administration only takes about two hours because I couldn't handle being stuck in an office all day. This is a fun job that makes a real difference."

Matt Gorman worked for various local governments as a town planner before starting Big Picture Urban Rural, a consultancy that provides specialist advice and

documentation on urban and rural planning permit applications for developers, residents, businesses and councils. He says: "I have been lucky enough to have a business that matches my key skills and interests. Rather than going to meetings or worrying about office politics, I'm free to concentrate on my core function."

"In terms of 'passion', maybe my job is not quite up there with a professional wine taster, mountain climber or tour guide in Rome but it does achieve a good balance between providing an income for my family, having a professional occupation that keeps me mentally stimulated and doing something

that has a community benefit."

Finding work that you are passionate about does not necessarily mean quitting your current job. Since graduating, the artistic director for Express Media, Bel Schenk, has always worked in her chosen field of arts and writing.

Today, she is involved in supporting and developing young writers by offering them a variety of opportunities, including workshops, competitions and publication opportunities.

"I enjoy delivering projects to a wide range of young people and seeing young writers benefiting from Express Media," she says. "Getting published for the first time