

# SHANTELL ANDERTON

She believes she can, so she will!

Jane Hare meets Merrifield's Senior Sales Administrator Shantell Anderton and discovers a proudly independent woman, striving towards her own goals. Always willing to learn something new, Shantell has added sales admin support to Jeremy Stewart, and managing the office admin team to her role – and is handling this challenge with a smile!

I am running slightly late to my appointment with Shantell, realising that finding parking during Christmas shopping is a challenge that I should have factored in time for. When I do arrive, I am told that she has left for our meeting, and would be waiting for me at the interview room. Later, as I review my notes from our interview, I realise this was a typical Shantell Anderton approach. She decided not to wait for me, or worry that something wasn't right – she simply went about her side of the deal in a very pragmatic way. And this is a trait that continues to reveal as we chat: I am with a very capable, very practical and independent woman. I can see why she is an important member of the Merrifield team!

Shantell was raised on a farm 10 minutes west of Ravensthorpe. Her grandparents started farming

there in the 1950s when her Dad was born, but the family link to the town stretches back to the 1920s post-war era. Shantell's mum was born and bred in Albany, a member of the Casey family well-known to the local fishing and whaling communities. She tells me that her parents met while they were both in their early thirties, introduced by a mutual friend who thought they would be a good match. They were married a year later, and baby Shantell joined their family nine months after this. "They were older first-time parents by the standards of the time," she explains "I guess they knew they didn't have many years to waste." Three years later, Shantell's sister Janelle was born and the family was complete.

Shantell's parents both worked separate jobs, as well as manage the small family farm. Dad was a mechanic, originally with a workshop on the farm and then later in the town centre. Mum worked at the local roadhouse, mostly in the takeaway kitchen serving travellers on the drive east. "It was Mum that managed the farm operations though. She ran all the day to day stuff. Dad came in to help out for seeding, and harvest and stuff – sometimes our grandparents were there – but they had no staff! Mum just got it done. As well as her roadhouse job, and that made sure the bills were paid." As a result, from early school years Shantell and her sister were independent. They would catch the bus

*Shantell Anderton*

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Shantell at Millers Point

to school and back, and help with tasks around the house each afternoon. She now knows that this self-sufficiency is a strength of hers, and Shantell credits her childhood and especially the example of her Mum in creating who she is today.

On finishing school at Ravensthorpe District High School in Year 10, Shantell moved in to Albany and lived for one year at the residential college while she completed her first year of senior school at ASHS. She recalls this was a shock, being away from her home town and suddenly at a much larger school than she was used to. Thankfully, her parents decided it was time to sell the farm and mechanics business and move to Albany themselves, and for her final year of school she was back living with her family. She tells me she completed TEE subjects, and had always thought she would go on to study primary teaching at university, but realised that she wasn't suited to this before it came to sit the exams. With a laugh, Shantell claims it was the fact that she doesn't actually love children that pushed her away from

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teaching. I counter that it could be the patience required, perhaps she is needing more of that? "No, it's the kids. They can't do things for themselves, it just wasn't for me!" she replies.

Instead, after graduating school Shantell took a seasonal summer job with CBH at the Borden receival bin, and then moved to Perth with her boyfriend and enrolled at TAFE. Interestingly, she had chosen a certificate in Human Resources Management, and again she laughs as she remembers soon finding out that this was not suited to her either! "Plus, I hated Perth. The city is most definitely not for me! So we moved back to Albany and I started looking for work." Her first fulltime position was as a medical receptionist at one of Albany's GP practices, at the age of 17 - and Shantell stayed in this industry for the next twelve years.

During this time she married and had two daughters, Hayley (12) and Maddie (9). Shantell tells me she was a young mum, only 21 when she had Hayley, adding that their financial situation led her to return to part-time work each time after six months at home with her babies. In 2016, her marriage ended and Shantell faced starting out as a working solo parent with a child in kindy, and a toddler. "That was tough.

I had to rely on daycare and family to make it all work. But I am here now, and I'm proud that I did it." I suggest she could consider herself a 'supermum', and she smiles. "I guess I'm just independent...people tell me I'm a very determined person!"

Whilst juggling her young daughters with school and daycare, Shantell continued to progress as a medical receptionist. She became a reception team leader, and often filled the role of Practice Manager during periods of holiday cover. The centre that she worked at was undergoing a restructure and keen to progress her career, in 2020 Shantell applied for a permanent role as Practice Manager. "But, I was overlooked," she smiles "in favour of someone with more experience, which was odd to me as I had been doing the role." Shrugging, she explains that it



was this experience that led her to look for another job...and that is where Merrifield Real Estate come in. Jeremy was advertising for a part-time Sales Administration member. A good friend working at Moss Conveyancing spoke highly of the team and Shantell decided to apply.

"I was interviewed by Carly, and this was my first job interview since I was 17 and returning to Albany from Perth. Carly had clearly interviewed lots of times. Not me, I was so nervous!" Regardless of nerves, Shantell must have impressed as she was offered the role and for the first time in twelve years, she prepared to leave one career and embark on a totally different path. She remembers her first few weeks being 'absolutely terrifying' as she had to quickly learn her way around a whole new industry. Shantell says she had administrative experience, was used to working under pressure and had great organisational skills, but admits she knew nothing about Real Estate. "It's funny though," she tells me "because Doctors and Real Estate Sales Agents aren't that different to work for personality-wise, it's just the industry and the legal side that was all new and confusing!" I ask if she considered returning to medical work and she shakes her head. "Oh, no. I knew I could learn the job, once I set my mind to it I was determined to get it right. I like to be challenged, I just saw it as a challenge."

Within a few months, Shantell had increased her hours to five days a week, and was taking on more sales administration tasks. It was late 2020, and the office was incredibly busy as property sales boomed due to Covid-19, as the economy emerged from the first lockdown. In early 2021, Shantell enrolled in an online Real Estate Licence course. She tells me she has no intention of entering sales, but her motivation to complete the course came from a desire to understand her role more, and to then be more effective at her job. "Plus I like learning, I enjoy the challenge!" This course took her four months to complete, and she is happy to know that she now



Shantell & her girls

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contributes more to her role at Merrifield as a result – even writing up sales contracts for buyers while agents are enjoying leave. The understanding of the legal and contractual side of sales that Shantell now holds is a strength, and recently the office has restructured again to make the most of this. She is now the Senior Sales Administrator, and offering additional support to Jeremy Stewart.

Part of this restructure saw Sales Marketing be separated from the job description, but Shantell is happy with this. I am not surprised when she explains to me that she is far more at ease with the legal side of the sale, and the ability to work off a list. She is clearly a process-based thinker and very systematic in her approach. "The marketing, and the creative side? That's not where my strengths are," she tells me "Give me a list of tasks, and keep me busy. I hate when we hit quiet weeks!" She tells me some of this work approach has definitely come from her time in a busy medical practice, and some comes from her farm upbringing with the example her parent's set. Shantell admits there is still much to learn and as she tells me she is enjoying the challenge, she smiles genuinely and I believe that she is.

Outside of work Shantell spends time with her girls,

coaching and umpiring junior sport and encouraging their love of learning the viola. They have recently moved into her partner Paul's house, creating a blended family that now has three daughters. Her face lights up as she tells me about Paul. They met on Tinder early last year, and she laughs at this memory because it soon became apparent that he was a Dad at her daughter's school. "He looked familiar. Our daughters have been classmates, so I had clearly seen him around at school events...I probably didn't need Tinder to find him!! But I'm not often at the school pick-up with my work hours, so who knows how long it would have taken without online dating!" Paul is also keen on sports (although they are both not playing due to matching knee injuries) and enjoys camping and beaching like Shantell.

When I call him to ask about Shantell, he also laughs at the fact that their nine-year-olds could have matched them without Tinder. He recalls the first meeting, and being in awe at how independent Shantell was. "Independent, and strong. But not intimidating – she's still so very friendly and social – I don't mean to make it sound like it was a bad thing!" He tells me his daughter and he have adjusted to the new shared house, and the extra fun and noise that Shantell and her girls bring. "I'm on my own here a week at a time while my daughter is with her Mum. I do sometimes miss my quiet week of solo life, the home is certainly noisier now! But the happiness definitely outweighs my wishing for peace, we couldn't be happier!"

They have plans to expand the house, to make room for extra girls – with Paul stressing the need to do this before the teenage years hit. Together they have upgraded Shantell's camper trailer to a bigger van, and are looking forward to camping trips all together over the upcoming summer holidays. I'm told that Shantell will do the organising, and Paul will 'go with her plans'. He agrees completely that she is always happy for a challenge but is quick to add that he plans to never be the one challenging her!

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Shantell, Paul, Hayley & Maddie have recently all moved in together

In our discussion on life outside of work, Shantell adds that apart from coaching sport, she sits on the committee for Sonics Basketball & Sporting Club, chairs the Board for Flinders Park Primary School, and shares a spot on Albany Community Foundation Board on behalf of Merrifield. She recalls the great example of her parents working hard to look after her and her sister and she hopes she is passing this example on to her kids, adding that her volunteer roles have helped her build a supportive community for her family.

"And life is good," Shantell tells me "I am in a great workplace, setting and working towards new goals. Then outside of work, my girls and I are happy. There is so much still to learn, and so much to look forward to." I find myself thinking on Paul's comments, that Shantell's independence could be seen as intimidating. To me, to her family and friends, and I'm sure to the team at Merrifield Real Estate it is not that. She is someone who knows what she wants, is prepared to work hard herself to achieve it, and is deserving of every success that she earns.