

# A career that lasts: Cynthia's remarkable journey at Eastern Health Authority

At Eastern Health Authority, people come for the work and stay because they find something more. For Cynthia Vello, that “something” turned out to be a workplace where she could grow, contribute and feel deeply connected not just as a professional, but as an individual. Read on to hear from one of our most trusted admin staff about the decade-long career she's built from the ground up.

## A found purpose

Some people build a career with a plan. Others find the right place and grow into it. For Cynthia Vello, it was the latter. When she walked through the doors of Eastern Health Authority (EHA) in 2012, looking for a fresh start, she had no idea how this small decision would go on to define her career.

“At the time, I was working at reception for a construction company, and I felt stuck about my next steps. When I saw the job at EHA, I thought, ‘I probably won’t get it, but what have I got to lose?’”

Cynthia not only landed the role but stepped into a brand-new position - our first-ever dedicated receptionist, just as we were settling into a new building. Her early days were a mix of nerves and excitement, but a small moment changed everything.

“I remember hearing one of my coworkers on the phone take an immunisation booking. She was calm, clear and professional. I thought, ‘That’s how I want to sound one day.’ That moment stayed with me.”

What also resonated with Cynthia was the care she witnessed firsthand. Within a month, her new team had surprised her with a gift to celebrate her engagement - a thoughtful gesture from people who barely knew her, but who already cared enough to show up.

“I still have the salad bowl they gave me! That was the moment I knew this wasn’t just a job. These were people I could build something with.”

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## Steady progress

Cynthia's path through EHA didn't happen all at once. She spent her early years learning the ins and outs of the organisation - answering phones, helping visitors, and taking on new tasks as they came. The more she leaned in, the more trust she earned.

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"Most of what I've learned here, I've learned by doing. And every step of the way, I've felt backed.

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"I've always had that attitude of, 'Sure, I'll give it a go.' I didn't have formal training in most of the things I do now; it's all been hands-on. But I was curious. And EHA trusted me."

Slowly, Cynthia's responsibilities grew. She began supporting the immunisation team, managing appointments and logistics. Then came board papers, Freedom of Information requests and governance support. And eventually, much bigger projects, like co-leading a full rebrand and building EHA's website from the ground up.

In 2023, Cynthia completed the Local Government Professionals SA Ignite Program, earning a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management. She studied while working and parenting and stepped in to lead during a management transition.

"It was a huge year, but I could feel myself growing into the role. I was already mentoring some of our trainees and doing higher-level admin. The course was a way to back that all up. It helped me see my work in a whole new light."

## Flexibility and family

Twelve years in, Cynthia is now a senior member of the admin team, a mentor to newer staff and someone others turn to for support and advice.

But she doesn't sugarcoat things. There have been ups and downs. What's kept her anchored at EHA is the culture and the people who've shaped it.



“We’re a small team, which means we get to know each other. There’s a lot of care here. You walk into the staff room at lunch, and you feel it. People stick around, ask how you’re doing. That makes a big difference.”

Now a mum of three, Cynthia says the support she’s received through parental leave has been not just flexible, but genuinely welcoming.

“Every time I’ve come back, I’ve felt seen and appreciated, not just slotted back into a job. People ask about my kids. They give me space to do what I need to do. That kind of trust means everything.”

And it goes both ways. Cynthia gives her best because she’s had the best given to her - steady encouragement, opportunities to stretch and colleagues who feel more like extended family.

“This place has shaped who I am. I’ve grown up here, in a way. The work we do matters to the community, but it’s the everyday connections - the laughs, the trust and the people, that make it feel like home.”

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