

# yin&yang

## Roger Cripps & Holly-ann Martin

Roger, 47, left a high-powered job as sponsorship manager with the Fremantle Dockers to help partner Holly-ann Martin, 48, achieve her dreams.

### Holly-ann

I was a teacher assistant in special schools and had been teaching child abuse prevention education for 25 years. Then, in 2007, I went up to Kalumburu in my long-service leave and started working in abuse prevention education in that community. One day a friend came to me and said "You've been up there, you've seen the need, you have to get off your a... and back yourself." So I did, and started up what eventually became Safe4Kids, an organisation which specialises in child protection education.

We deal not just with sexual abuse; we deal with bullying, the whole trauma thing. And it's not only Aboriginal communities. Last year I did a run down south, as far as Albany; I also do a lot of work in daycare centres here in Perth. But we've got the most amazing testimonials from Aboriginal elders.

I was also fortunate enough to be granted the Rowan Nicks Russell Drysdale Fellowship (from the University of Sydney) twice in a row, which has helped us to carry on our work in communities in the Fitzroy Valley area.

Roger and I met four and a half years ago and we've been married for about a year and a half. He was a sponsorship manager with the Fremantle Dockers but one day he came home after work and I was in tears. I'd been contacted by a remote community in the Northern Territory because they'd had a horrendous abuse case involving children on children. He said "That's it!" He quit his job, and he's been working with me ever since.

Roger handles the business management side of things. He's very meticulous. I'm more like "She'll be right, things will just happen." He sits down and thinks about things and really plans. So we complement each other really well.

I really believe that this is what I'm supposed to be doing, too, and — apart from the money! — the universe provides. Roger would think that's all just hocus-pocus. He's much more logical.

Before Roger and I met, I got into rock'n'roll dancing. And because I was away so much in remote communities, Roger knew how much I loved it and he took himself off and found his own dance teacher. Again, because he's so meticulous — most men take about three months just to pick up the footwork and things like that — he learned much quicker.

'She's an amazing woman, just her resilience and her passion.'

**Consuming passion**  
Holly-ann and Roger are determined to make a difference. PICTURE  
ROBERT DUNCAN

Roger's meticulous side also came out with our wedding. We were going to America for a conference and he thought it would be great to get married in Vegas. But I was working in a remote Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory at the time, so he organised every single thing: the photographer, the dress, the hair, everything. I just got to rock up and be a princess for a day. I remember when we went to the dress shop, the owner said "You've got a good one there."

### Roger

I'm a country boy, born and bred, originally from Northampton. I've had quite an eclectic working life: I've been in mines, I was a rigger and crane driver, I've worked for Telecom, I've managed two travel agencies. Then an opportunity came up to take over as the membership manager at WACA. That was around 2003.

After a break for a few months I started work again, eventually becoming sponsorship manager at the Dockers, which I did for four years. It was fantastic, though people look at working in sport as a glamour job when, like anything, it has its challenges and its politics.

One day I got home from work and Holly was in tears about this horrible abuse case. I thought "Why am I doing this? Why am I sitting, looking after millions of dollars and raising those funds for a football club?" Which was my job — don't get me wrong. But I really wanted to help Holly make a difference. She's an amazing woman, just her resilience and her passion. So I quit and started working with her.

The business side is definitely my strength. To look at things in-depth, what works, what doesn't work. I do a lot of the grant writing, too, and talking with government and non-government organisations to see how we can help them. Holly's strength is on the ground, delivering the program and making that real difference; my real strength is behind the scenes, getting the foundations of the business to where it should be.

But Holly is also training me up to do workshops with the men. Particularly in remote Aboriginal communities, you generally have separate men and women's workshops. Holly has been out there delivering the workshops and speaking to the men as well, and they have never had an issue with it. But there have been times when it would probably have been more appropriate for a male to deliver the workshop, certainly from a cultural point of view. There have also been times when Holly's gone into some extremely remote communities alone and I just think it would be safer if I was there with her.

If there were two of my personalities or two of Holly's, things wouldn't work, they would explode. Sometimes we're away for weeks and you're together 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You've got to have a special relationship to be able to do that. Otherwise you're going to be fighting tooth and nail. But we've got very clear, common goals about what we're trying to achieve, and we'll just keep going till we get there. **WW**

[safe4kids.com.au](http://safe4kids.com.au)

Interviews: William Yeoman

