

# Re-designing volunteer roles



**During the COVID-19 isolation period, an estimated 250,000 volunteering hours were lost weekly in Tasmania. To keep their volunteer programs operating, organisations have had to move away from traditional volunteering models and create roles that are more suitable, flexible, and supportive for volunteers. The guide provides ideas and options for councils and VIOs to consider as they redesign their volunteer roles.**



## Is there a better way to volunteer?

COVID-19 significantly disrupted the ability for Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIOs) to keep their volunteer programs operating and have access to volunteers. However, it has also presented opportunities.

During the isolation period, organisations were able to capitalise on the time, skills and networks of volunteers who were still eager to participate and remain connected with their communities during isolation.

VIOs had to undergo a rapid transformation converting to digital and online platforms to conduct their work. To achieve this, they worked with volunteers to create online opportunities, redesign roles and adopt methods more suitable, flexible and supportive for volunteers.

We're hearing that people would like to continue alternative and flexible methods of volunteering, so we have included a few options to consider when re-designing volunteer roles.

## consulting with volunteers to re-design their roles



Talk to your volunteers about their roles. What ideas do they have about how volunteering could be done more effectively, more efficiently and more proactively?

This could increase your organisational capacity, volunteer numbers and volunteer diversity. It could also mean that you're able to expand and diversify your programs (check out the Community-led Solutions resource for tips on how to do this).

By diversifying your volunteer roles, you may find that the organisation is now able to explore different programs such as fundraising or marketing.

Maybe you could design a skills-based role to build an online shop – this could lead to a broader audience, increased purchases, online campaigns and fundraising.

## re-designing volunteer roles (cont'd)



### Micro-volunteering

**Micro-volunteering involves completing small tasks that contribute to a larger project or initiative. These tasks can take minutes or a few hours, and the volunteer is not obligated to make a long-term or ongoing commitment.**

Micro-volunteering is suitable for people who don't have a lot of time to commit to a long-term task or program, who just want to get in and complete a task within a short period but still make a valuable contribution to a cause. A popular type of micro-volunteering is doing online tasks via an internet-connected device, such as a smartphone.

**Benefits to volunteers.** Typically, micro-volunteering doesn't require an application process, screening or training period. Volunteers can usually do the tasks from anywhere and in their own time.

**Benefits to organisations.** There are a lot of potential ways to use volunteers on a micro scale from research and data collection, on-line surveys and petitions, to brainstorming and social media marketing.

- **An example of micro-volunteering is the [Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#).**



### Skills-based volunteering

**Skills-based volunteering is just as it sounds – people use their professional skills, knowledge and education to support organisations and causes.**

This type of volunteering can enhance the organisation's reputation and efficiency due to the expertise, skills and knowledge of these volunteers and what they bring to the organisation.

**Benefits to volunteers.** For volunteers, skills-based volunteering is a positive and productive way to give back to the community and maintain and grow skills.

**Benefits to organisations.** For organisations, skills-based volunteers can bring valuable expertise such as mentoring and educating staff and volunteers to grow overall capacity. Small organisations where people take on specialised roles such as human resources or marketing, but may not necessarily be qualified, can especially benefit from skills-based volunteers.

- **An example of skills-based volunteering is when organisations engage skilled volunteer board members to oversee the delivery of strategic organisational plans.**

## re-designing volunteer roles (cont'd)



### Online or virtual volunteering

**Online volunteering allows people to sign up to an organisation to work on projects that are exclusively online and can be done from anywhere in the world, accommodating busy personal and professional lives.**

Online volunteering is easy, fast and effective. There are many online platforms to select from depending on the person's interests and values. Some platforms can connect a person's skillset to a not-for-profit, charity or social enterprise organisation.

**Benefits to volunteers.** Virtual volunteering means volunteers aren't limited to local, regional or state-based organisations, it also means you can have diverse volunteers contributing different ideas to your organisation.

**Benefits to organisations.** Organisations can sign up to these online volunteering platforms as recipients of volunteering activities. Just like micro-volunteering, there is less work involved with the recruitment and training of volunteers. It provides an opportunity for creativity and a different way of working to achieve organisational outcomes.

- **An example of an online volunteering platform is the [United Nations Volunteering platform](#).**

### Need more help?

Volunteering Tasmania's **Safeguarding Project** is focused on supporting councils and their volunteer communities. You can find resources to support councils, VIOs and volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic and into recovery on our website at [www.volunteeringtas.org.au/covid-19-informationandresources/](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/covid-19-informationandresources/).

### Reach out!

If you'd like to chat about additional resources, please get in touch with us. Email Amy at [amyb@volunteeringtas.org.au](mailto:amyb@volunteeringtas.org.au).

