



volunteering
TASMANIA
Be Connected



Volunteers: Critical contributors to Tasmania's economic and social future

Budget priority statement 2022-23

Photo © Erika Shankley

www.volunteeringtas.org.au



If we were to replace our 170,000 formal volunteers with paid staff it would cost the Tasmanian government, corporate and community organisations **\$2.99 billion**.

While it may seem unlikely this would ever be required, the fact is that in less than 10 years' time, we face a 42% shortfall between the volunteers needed in our communities and those who will be available (Figure 1).

A 42% shortfall of volunteers would create a \$1 billion gap to fund delivery of the essential services Tasmanian volunteers currently provide.

Volunteers are critical contributors to Tasmania's social and economic future. They are also critical contributors to the well-being of Tasmanians. Every day and everywhere volunteers impact positively on the way of life we want all Tasmanians to enjoy. Their work not only improves the well-being of those who need support and services, it also enhances the well-being of the 1000s of Tasmanians who volunteer.

But these positive outcomes are at risk and we must act now to ensure the essential contributions of volunteers continue to enhance the life, health and well-being of Tasmanians in all corners of our state.

As never before there is a critical need for peak bodies like Volunteering Tasmania to walk alongside the organisations that make volunteering happen in all parts of our communities. In this role, Volunteering Tasmania ensures consistency, quality, safety and sustainability for the Tasmanians who give their time as volunteers and for those who benefit from their generosity.

The resilience of our volunteers will be tested as our state's borders open in mid-December 2021 and COVID-19 is once again active in our community. The scale of local, state and federal government support required to deal with COVID-19 at a health, economic, social and logistical level has already proved significant, and we acknowledge the support provided by the Tasmanian government to ensure volunteering was considered a priority during the height of the pandemic in 2020.

Data¹ on volunteering suggests that unpaid work has been and will continue to be impacted by the pandemic at a greater level than for Tasmanians in paid work. There is a strong rationale for the Tasmanian government to consider the short, medium and long-term impacts of the notable decline in the unpaid workforce and allocate adequate long-term funding to ensure the sustainability of volunteering.

1. Biddle & Gray, Volunteering during the first year of the COVID-19 Pandemic (April 2021), ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods

* Projections for 2029 indicate demand for approx. 261,000 volunteers compared with 150,000 available volunteers. Please visit volunteeringtas.org.au for further data & research.

2022-23 State Budget

The 2022-23 State Budget provides the opportunity for long-term, adequate and consistent funding to support communities and community organisations to continue the important work of attracting and retaining volunteers.

An investment in the future of volunteering is minor compared to the \$3 billion cost of replacing the essential work volunteers undertake in communities throughout our state (Figure 2).

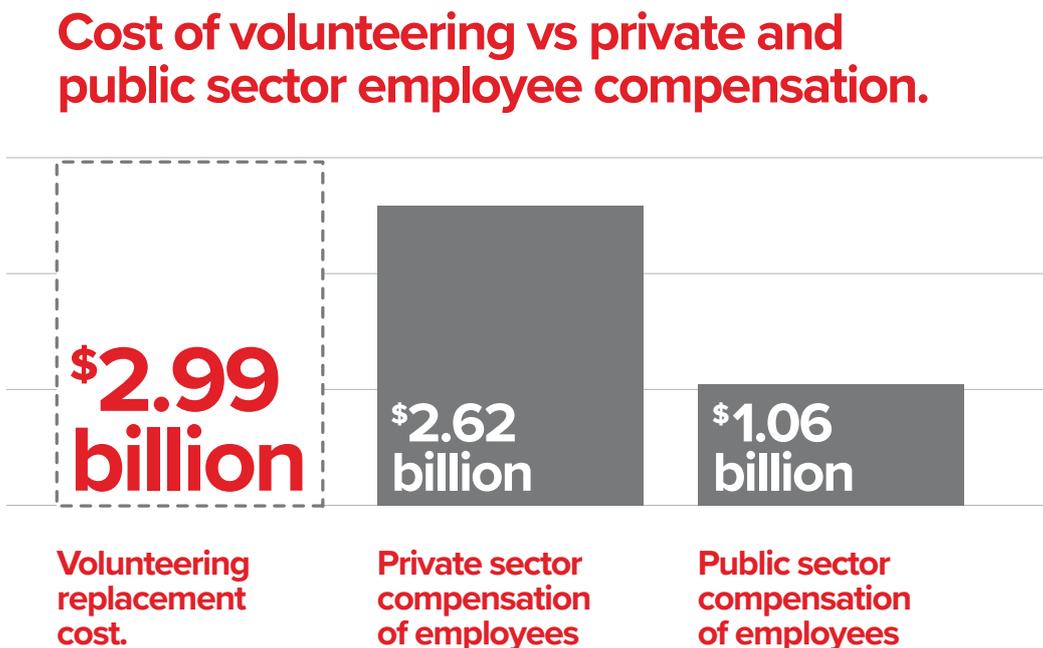
This Volunteering Tasmania submission outlines two Key Priorities to build on the successful work of the Peak Body including COVID-19 related activities funded through the PESRAC recommendation. These Key Priorities have a strategic focus on the key factors of volunteer sustainability. The Key Priorities lay the foundation for a local, place-based approach, building capability and capacity to ensure we turnaround the worrying gap between the supply and demand of volunteers (Figure 1).

We know Tasmanians are endlessly generous, always the first to reach out and look after each other in difficult times: Volunteers are at the heart of our connected and close-knit communities.

We cannot take this generosity of spirit for granted. We must invest in these volunteers, support and develop them and ensure we continue to build the sustainability, capability and capacity of the organisations and communities that rely on their good works every single day.

At the heart of this lies the need for sustainable, consistent and adequate funding for Volunteering Tasmania to continue to provide strong, evidence based leadership and strategic planning that will sustain our state's essential volunteer workforce.

Figure 2:



Key Priority 1: Protecting and Growing Volunteering

INVESTMENT

\$220,000 +CPI per annum
for five years

Local people in local communities are best placed to lead the planning and delivery of local volunteering.

Increased volunteer capacity and capability in local communities is a key factor in successful recruitment and retention of volunteers. Most people who volunteer do so in their local area and are motivated by contributing to their local community. As Tasmania grapples with the ongoing impact of the global pandemic it is now, more than ever, critical to build local capacity, resilience and empower communities to respond to local need.

Supporting local communities using place-based strategies and community-led actions builds on Volunteering Tasmania's successful Safeguarding Volunteering program and extends this model into more Tasmanian local government areas.

The first Safeguarding Volunteering Program developed nation-leading volunteer workforce modelling to predict the future supply and demand of the volunteer workforce (**Figure 1**).

The evaluation from the first Safeguarding Volunteering Program demonstrated compelling individual, organisational and systems-based changes including stronger relationships between individuals and their councils, local champions of change, and councils being agents of community change. This is the evidence for reinvestment by the Tasmanian Government into this program

This funding will enable VT to work with four Councils every year to:

- ✓ Co-design community-based and owned volunteering strategies
- ✓ Provide workshops and coaching for local communities
- ✓ Develop volunteering resources
- ✓ Explore Community Governance models
- ✓ Establish communities of practice in volunteering for Councils

"I have a sense of being able to do something for society because of this group work and I will always look for ways of helping my community now."

– Community member

"We always struggle to engage people, but everyone was talking about it"

– Council officer referencing community participation in Safeguarding program



This work drives local people to value and take action to support the sustainability of volunteering in their communities and Tasmania over the long term.

Key Priority 2: Keeping EV Crew ready for action

INVESTMENT

\$50,000 +CPI per annum
for five years

While we can't predict or control disaster and emergency events, we can plan for and control the ability to quickly mobilise and respond. Currently more than 2500 Tasmanians are registered on the EVCREW database and stand ready to act if and when needed.

The value of this significant human resource is only fully understood when there is a need to activate people quickly. And as with all emergency situations, it is the period post-emergency that provides an opportunity to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the systems and models used.

Volunteering Tasmania and the government and community partners in EVCREW have used the experiences from the activation during COVID-19 in 2020 as a period for review and through this process now have a range of new approaches to continue to strengthen and enhance the EVCREW model.

Consistency of funding for the EVCREW database is important to ensure this essential service is accurate and up-to-date so it enables confidence when activated.

The funding ensures:

- ✓ The maintenance of the EVCREW database for disaster preparedness and response
- ✓ Opportunities for training for volunteers that are registered on the database
- ✓ Building the capacity in local council and non-government organisations on management of spontaneous volunteers
- ✓ Ensuring linkages to emergency management volunteering organisations such as State Emergency Service, Tasmanian Fire Service and Ambulance Tasmania.

Five organisations accessed EVCREW during the COVID pandemic, The Salvation Army, Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, Kentish Council and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

More than 1350 additional Tasmanians responded to the call for volunteers signing up to the emergency volunteering program EV CREW, with 2590 Tasmanians now registered.

VT ran 13 campaigns for organisations deploying 251 EV CREW volunteers to support the COVID response

“EV CREW was really good, I’ve not got a single complaint. The people (they matched to us) were really dedicated volunteers. One has been offered a casual position with us because of how good they were. I can’t speak more highly of how well it worked.”

– Volunteer Manager

This is what a **42%**

gap in
volunteering
in the
Tasmanian
community
looks like.



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