



# Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy

May 2021

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Country Women's Association volunteer Jill Hayes

**Meeting: 28.07.2021**  
**Item Number: 19.008/21\***  
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### Acronyms used in this document:

HVC—Huon Valley Council  
LVNG—Local Volunteer Network Group  
LGAT—Local Government Areas of Tasmania  
VT—Volunteering Tasmania



Southbridge Re-Use Shop volunteers

“Volunteering is a way of assisting people, contributing to a better community and developing new skills.”

## Executive Summary

The Huon Valley Council recognises that volunteering is a key part of the ongoing health and strength of Huon Valley communities, with many of our community halls, festivals, events and clubs only existing due to the dedication of volunteers.

The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy identifies key roles that community and Council can play to safeguard the future of volunteering in the Valley. This strategy examines future volunteering needs based on Tasmania's volunteering trends and future demographics of the Huon Valley to 2029. It outlines key collaborative actions to be undertaken by the community and Council during the next ten years.

The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy supports several Council Strategies, Policies and Plans and aligns with the *Huon Valley Council Strategic Plan 2015–2025* vision:

**‘Working together for a prosperous, vibrant, and caring Huon Valley community.’**

and supports the strategic objectives:

- A great environment
- Community wellbeing and liveability

Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania began work on this strategy in July 2020. At that time, it was already clear volunteering rates in Tasmania were declining and the natures of volunteer roles were changing. Tasmania's COVID-19 lockdown period (April to June 2020) hit the State's volunteer numbers hard with an estimated 140,000 volunteers lost to communities, many of whom have not re-engaged.

We know from population and demographic trends that the sectors where volunteers will be needed in the Huon Valley during the next decade are shifting significantly away from sports and physical activities to support and caring roles in aged care and disability.<sup>1</sup>

Projections that take these trends into account estimate the number of volunteers needed in the Huon Valley (demand) will exceed the number of people willing to be volunteers (supply) by 2029, putting the sustainability of support and services for people in our communities into question.<sup>2</sup>

It is because Huon Valley Council is aware of these trends that it has worked with Volunteering Tasmania and members of the Huon Valley community to prepare a Volunteering Strategy.

Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania used a co-design process to develop the strategy. Of most importance to the success of the strategy's implementation was involvement of community members throughout the strategy development process.

1 Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteering Profile 2029: Huon Valley LGA. 2029.

2 Ibid.

Community engagement platforms used included:

- establishing a Local Volunteer Network Group (members from several different volunteer sectors)
- community surveys, group discussions, one on one interviews, drop-in sessions and focus groups
- identification of key themes and trends
- checking back in with the community at points along the way

It is our people's local knowledge and local insights, values, vision, and care that have resulted in a strategy for the Huon Valley that is informed by local expertise and experience. And it is the passion of the people of the Huon Valley, for each other and for this place, that give the strategy its strength and clarity.

The Huon Valley volunteer vision is that in ten years...

**“All people wanting to volunteer have found their niche and all organisations needing volunteers, have them.”**

This strategy aims to:

- Create a resilient and self-reliant Huon Valley community
- Encourage, support, and engage volunteering in the Huon Valley
- Create easy pathways to volunteering and
- Create an active and high-value volunteer community

The aims for this strategy were explored resulting in the creation of seven specific focus areas each containing objectives and key actions. The seven key focus areas in this document are not in order of preference and are numbered for reference purposes only.

## How to read the strategy

The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy is presented in three sections:

Executive Summary	page 1
Focus Areas	page 4
Volunteering Action Plan	page 12
Research and Development Process	page 17

This section provides an overview of the evidence and thinking behind the strategy, the reasons why it is needed and the way it was developed.

As part of this project Volunteering Tasmania has produced the following support document:

- Appendix 1: Volunteering Profile 2029 – Huon Valley Local Government Area



Huon Valley Council's Gearing Up program

## Focus Area 1: Demand for volunteers

### Objectives

- To ensure volunteers are taking on genuine volunteer roles and not entering arrangements where an employment relationship exists even though the worker is called a 'volunteer'.<sup>3</sup>
- To support volunteers to make sure they are enjoying their experiences and roles in safe and supportive environments.
- To reduce the initial burden and barriers to becoming a volunteer.

### Why

- In Tasmania, the satisfaction level of volunteers is declining, and volunteer burnout is frequently reported as a challenge in the sector. Feedback from people in the Huon Valley indicated that many volunteer organisations and groups rely heavily on a few dedicated members.
- With volunteer demand predicted to increase in the Huon Valley it is important that we assess whether volunteers are being asked to undertake suitable roles and not replacing paid positions.
- People in the Huon Valley indicated that red tape and other burdens deter individuals from taking up volunteering

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 1.1

Develop, share, and implement volunteer check-in and feedback processes to ensure volunteers are supported, feel safe and enjoy their roles.

#### Key Action 1.2

Develop streamlined and standardised induction processes across the community in volunteering roles to suit the needs of individuals and the broader community.

#### Key Action 1.3

Encourage organisations to use a checklist to ensure volunteers are not being asked to undertake what should be paid roles.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/unpaid-work/unpaid-work#volunteering>

## Focus Area 2: Collaboration & culture

### Objectives

- To work more effectively and efficiently in the Huon Valley volunteering community through collaboration.
- To build a stronger volunteering culture across the Huon Valley community.

### Why

- In Tasmania some of the lowest rates of volunteering demographics are in the corporate volunteering category, indicating that there is an opportunity to increase these options within local businesses. In the Huon Valley a number of local businesses are highly engaged and supportive of the volunteering community, however, there remains opportunity to increase this support and build the culture of volunteering.
- Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations in the Huon Valley raised issues about duplication of activity and burden of administration and regulations in the volunteer sector. While some of these issues can be tackled through increased local collaboration, sharing of resources, knowledge and building of partnerships, it was also identified that some challenges are systemic and will require higher level of advocacy to achieve change.

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 2.1

Promote and encourage smaller volunteer organisations and new groups to partner with larger volunteering organisations in the region to share resources and costs.

#### Key Action 2.2

Promote and celebrate local businesses that support staff volunteering and volunteer programs.

#### Key Action 2.3

Offer opportunities for volunteering groups to meet and collaborate on issues, ideas, training, etc.

#### Key Action 2.4

Continue to work with Volunteering Tasmania and the community to lobby on state and federal volunteering issues.

## Focus Area 3: Access to information

“There are social benefits to volunteering, especially for people who are new to the local community and you can share skills and learn new skills.”

### Objectives

- To make it easy for people in the community to find and join volunteering opportunities.
- To increase community awareness and understanding of the Huon Valley’s volunteering community.

### Why

- Lack of knowledge or understanding of volunteering opportunities was highlighted as something preventing people from getting involved in the Huon Valley. The top suggestions for improving volunteering participation were better access to volunteering opportunities and information.
- Because the Huon Valley is a diverse community it is important to provide multiple ways to access volunteering information to reach different demographics.

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 3.1

Develop an online platform that provides the local community with relevant information on local volunteering opportunities.

#### Key Action 3.2

Encourage volunteer organisations to provide clearer information about volunteering roles—expectations, time commitments, skills required and gained, etc.

#### Key Action 3.3

Expand and explore different platforms for communicating about volunteering.

#### Key Action 3.4

Provide a drop-in location for access to information on volunteering.

## Focus Area 4: Flexible, diverse & accessible volunteering opportunities

### Objectives

- To build meaningful and flexible volunteering opportunities for people to contribute to our community.
- To create safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments for new people to get involved with volunteering.

### Why

- In Tasmania, the satisfaction level of volunteers is declining, however, local people placed high value on joining a cause or a group about which they felt passionate and believed they could make a real difference.
- Rated highly as reasons not to volunteer in the Huon Valley included availability of time, feeling nervous or unsure about approaching a group/organisation, family commitments and lack of skills and confidence.
- Ensuring that volunteers feel safe (mentally, physically and within COVID-19 requirements) when carrying out their roles were essential for volunteering in the Huon Valley.

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 4.1

Support volunteering organisations to create meaningful roles that align with people's interests and ensure individuals are matched with appropriate roles.

#### Key Action 4.2

Promote alternative ways to volunteer such as online, family friendly, short-term, and event-based opportunities.

#### Key Action 4.3

Encourage volunteer organisations to offer soft entry points for new people—'try it out' days, bring a buddy, and/or pair people with mentors.

#### Key Action 4.4

Encourage volunteer organisations to conduct inductions and training sessions for new volunteers.

## Focus Area 5: Best practice volunteer management – organisational support

### Objective

- To build the capacity, capability, safety, and support of the volunteering sector in the Huon Valley.

### Why

- Many volunteer groups and organisations in the Huon Valley are run by volunteers with no paid staff. This brings challenges and can mean volunteers are responsible for developing strong processes, structures and following best practice.
- Streamlined and organised processes were highlighted as key elements of an enjoyable and safe volunteer role and a strong organisation.

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 5.1

Reduce red tape for program delivery by offering generic/standard templates for volunteering groups/organisations such as risk assessment, COVID-19 safe plans, inductions process, etc.

#### Key Action 5.2

Share information throughout the community regarding current facilities and resources available for use by volunteering organisations and groups.

#### Key Action 5.3

Offer training/workshops for local groups and organisations (governance, succession planning, grant writing, how to recruit, how to become Centrelink approved, volunteer safety and volunteer regulation processes).

#### Key Action 5.4

Refer organisations and groups to Volunteering Tasmania membership information when looking for additional support on best practice volunteer management.

## Focus Area 6: Best practice volunteer management – volunteer recognition

“Training has provided me with the skills to operate an association including governance, financial records and meeting procedures.”

### Objective

- To celebrate and recognise the contribution volunteers make to our community in a meaningful way.

### Why

- Volunteering is the largest sector in Tasmania and a key driver of economic, social, and cultural growth. The average Tasmanian volunteer contributes 4.4 hours per week to support our state.<sup>4</sup>
- In Tasmania, less than 50% of organisations reimburse their volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2019 the Huon Valley had 5,684 volunteers providing vital support.<sup>6</sup> To increase or maintain the number of volunteers we need to ensure they feel appreciated and valued for their contributions.

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 6.1

Encourage volunteering organisations to involve volunteers in decision-making processes relating to the organisation/ group.

#### Key Action 6.2

Encourage volunteering organisations to provide compensation for out-of-pocket expenses.

#### Key Action 6.3

Promote and share volunteer stories throughout the community to celebrate and recognise their contribution.

#### Key Action 6.4

Encourage groups to nominate volunteers in the annual Tasmanian Volunteering and local awards.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of\\_Volunteering\\_Summary\\_Report-Summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of_Volunteering_Summary_Report-Summary_2019.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteering Profile 2029: Huon Valley LGA. 2029.

## Focus Area 7: Youth participation

### Objective

- To create volunteering opportunities within safe and supportive environments that interest and appeal to younger generations in the Huon Valley.

### Why

- The ageing population and older volunteering demographics in the Huon Valley create a risk that many organisations and services that provide vital community support will not be sustained without younger community members choosing to participate.
- Members of younger generations are looking for alternative ways to volunteer; traditional structures and roles are not necessarily fit for purpose.

“Younger people need to be encouraged to participate in volunteer work. It gives them great life-skills, a new network of contacts and a chance to develop new skills and experience.”

### Key actions to create the change needed

#### Key Action 7.1

Work with local schools to engage in discussions with young people about local volunteering interests.

#### Key Action 7.2

Identify programs, roles and opportunities that appeal to young people and share that knowledge with the volunteering community.

#### Key Action 7.3

Explore opportunities to partner with local schools to deliver volunteering programs with students.

#### Key Action 7.4

Explore opportunities to match young people with relevant roles that appeal to their interests and future goals including mentoring programs.



Elizabeth Burton, Southbridge Re-Use Shop volunteer

“I think it’s important that there is a conscious effort to build a culture of volunteering and that we all have a responsibility to contribute to our communities. I think volunteering should be part of the school curriculum and workplaces should support their employees to volunteer in a wide range of ways.”

## Action Plan Short Term – under 2 years

Focus Areas	Activity	Outcomes	Tasks	Responsibility
2 3 5 6	<b>Volunteer webpage on Council’s website</b>	Webpage where local volunteer groups and organisations, volunteers (prospective and current) can obtain resources/ information and knowledge of local volunteering.	Development and maintenance of website.  Promotion of website.  Promotion of volunteers and stories.  List all local volunteering groups and organisations.	HVC  HVC LVNG Community  HVC  HVC LVNG Community
3	<b>Provide a physical location where people can get information about volunteering</b>	Volunteering information hub located in the Huon Valley community.	Dedicated promotional area of resources at the Huon Valley Hub.  Dedicated space at the Huon Valley Hub for volunteers to connect with community and hand out resources.	HVC  HVC Community
2	<b>Business partnerships and promotion of businesses</b>	Volunteering opportunities and stories of success are shared in the Huon Valley community.	Share stories of local businesses supporting volunteering in the region.	Community HVC
2 3	<b>Support the formation of a Local Volunteer Network Group</b>	Local volunteer organisations are connected and supported by each other.	Develop group purpose, aim, and objectives.  Logistics—venue, invites, RSVP, refreshments, etc.  Facilitate meetings and administration i.e. agenda/ minutes/calendar invites.  Promotion on website/ newsletter.  Promotion of volunteers and stories.	Community  Community  Community  HVC  HVC

## Action Plan Medium Term – 2–3 years

Focus Areas	Activity	Outcomes	Tasks	Responsibility
2	<b>Develop a local workshop/training series for volunteering organisations and individuals interested in volunteering</b>	Framework with resources on how to deliver a workshop series facilitated by local talent and topic experts (Skills, knowledge, and expertise).	Convene working group (LVNG and other community members). Develop group purpose, aim and objectives and meeting dates. Engage community members/ organisations as required.	LVNG HVC
3			Identify/research resources and workshop/training materials already available that can be accessed/ adapted/utilised. Consult with Volunteering Tasmania on their resources.	LVNG Community
4			Develop budget, funding avenues and resource allocation lists.	LVNG
5			Identify community facilitators—develop workshop/training overview and brief of each outlining objectives and outcomes.	LVNG Community
6			Logistics Plan—identify venues, resources/ equipment required, refreshments, development of flyer, RSVPs.	LVNG
7			Develop calendar and deliver.	LVNG
			Document Management Process—central location, reviewing, changes, logo, version control etc.	HVC
			Layout, printing of documentation, framework and final approval of resources.	LVNG HVC
			Timelines for review processes and evaluation.	HVC

Focus Areas	Activity	Outcomes	Tasks	Responsibility
1 3 4	<b>Develop templates to assist organisations with governance and administration requirements.</b>	Suite of templates readily available for distribution to local volunteer groups and organisations.	Identify, research resources and templates already available that can be accessed, adapted and utilised. Consult with Volunteering Tasmania on their resources.	LVNG Community
Develop resources to address gaps.			Community	
Dissemination of templates strategy. How, who and when?			HVC	
Review and approval of layout/printing of templates.			LVNG	
Management of documents—central location, reviewing, changes, logo, version control etc.			HVC	
			Timelines for review processes and evaluation.	HVC
1 4 5 6	<b>Develop a suite of resources for management of volunteers.</b>	Suite of resources for distribution to local volunteer groups and organisations.	Identify/research resources and templates already available that can be accessed/adapted/utilised. Volunteering Tasmania has several resources that can be used/adapted.	LVNG Community
Develop resources to address gaps.			Community	
Review and approval of layout/printing of resources.			HVC	
Dissemination of resources strategy. How, who and when?			LVNG	
Management of documents—central location, reviewing, changes, logo, version control etc.			HVC	
			Timelines for review processes and evaluation.	HVC

<b>Focus Areas</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
3	<b>Volunteering website</b>	Council website that local volunteer groups and organisations, volunteers (prospective and current) can obtain resources/information and knowledge of local volunteering.	Resources/templates developed are uploaded. Management of documents and information. Promotion of volunteers and stories.	HVC HVC HVC
2	<b>Business partnerships and promotion of businesses</b>	New businesses are engaging with the volunteer sector, and existing businesses are involved in LVNG activities.	Attend local business meetings and discuss staff volunteering and support for local volunteering groups and organisations.	LVNG HVC Community
2	<b>Offer connections for small organisations/ projects or new groups to discuss joining or auspicing under larger volunteering organisations</b>	A connected community where resources and information is readily available for organisations and groups and they can work together for the Huon Valley community.	Referral and soft introductions as opportunities arise. Nominate a first point of contact for enquiries. Reference on website. (Are you looking for support?)	Community LVNG LVNG HVC
7	<b>Youth engagement in volunteering</b>	Development and delivery of a Youth Engagement Project Plan that aims to increase youth participation.	Develop project plan.	LVNG HVC School Community

“I enjoy meeting like-minded people and the potential to influence outcomes at a local level with global significance.”

## Action Plan Long Term – over 5 years

Focus Areas	Activity	Outcomes	Tasks	Responsibility
1 3 4	<b>Develop templates to assist organisations with governance and administration requirements</b>	Timelines for review processes and evaluation.	<p>Suite of templates for distribution to local volunteer groups and organisations.</p> <p>A connected community where resources and information is readily available for organisations and groups and they can work together for the Huon Valley community.</p>	HVC
5	<b>Develop a suite of resources for management of volunteers</b>	Timelines for review processes and evaluation.	<p>Suite of resources for distribution to local volunteer groups and organisations.</p> <p>A connected community where resources and information is readily available for organisations and groups and they can work together for the Huon Valley community.</p>	HVC
3	<b>Volunteering website</b>	Management of documents and information.	Council website that local volunteer groups, organisations, and volunteers (prospective and current) can obtain resources/information and knowledge of local volunteering.	HVC
2	<b>Lobby for state and federal issues</b>	As a community continue to work with Volunteering Tas, LGAT and other peak bodies on the bigger systemic issues.	Issues of importance are raised and resolutions sought.	HVC LVNG Community
7	<b>Youth engagement in volunteering</b>	Develop projects/strategies based on outcomes from engagement and youth consultations.	Development and delivery of a Youth Engagement Project Plan that aims to increase youth participation.	School Community HVC LVNG

## Research and Development Process

The nature of our communities and the ways in which the people of the Huon Valley, and Tasmania more generally, connect and support each other through volunteering activities are changing. The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy is built by local community members using a co-design method and aims to support Huon Valley Council to work to safeguard and embed a sustainable and adaptable culture of volunteering of benefit to the community into the future.

It is community sector organisations, and their many volunteers, as well as many informal and grassroots volunteers that fill the gaps between State and Commonwealth funded and delivered programs and community need.

All volunteers are a vital part of the Huon Valley community and are relied on heavily to buttress support services and program delivery and to help out in times of need. In 2019 there were around 5,684 volunteers in the Huon Valley local government area providing both civic and commercial benefits.<sup>7</sup> Local council areas depend on local people to fill demand for volunteers. Statistics show 80% of Tasmanians volunteer within 50km of their homes, and 14.3% volunteer directly from their homes.<sup>8</sup>

However, the nature of volunteering is changing with a decline in volunteer participation experienced throughout Tasmania (an 11% decline in the past five years), and there has been a decrease in volunteer satisfaction rates.<sup>9</sup> Like other Tasmanian sectors, there are rapid changes in technology, regulations and societal expectations that impact the volunteering workforce. People are looking for new ways to contribute and both our community and volunteer-involving organisations need to adapt to these changes.

With these shifts already impacting volunteer supply and demand, it is imperative that steps are taken now to ensure a robust and adaptable culture of local volunteering remains within the Huon Valley and as part of our community into the next decade and beyond.

Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations, including local councils, and our local people will benefit from a place-based approach that provides the critical infrastructure required for safe, effective and sustainable volunteering. There is an opportunity for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations to work with local government on action that promotes, resources, and supports volunteering in our communities, and to assist to recruit, retain and manage volunteers into the future.

A strategic intervention now will work to ensure the Huon Valley and Tasmania generally will have enough volunteers to meet estimated demand across the next decade.

7 Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteering Profile 2029: Huon Valley LGA. 2029.

8 [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of\\_Volunteering\\_Summary\\_Report-Summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of_Volunteering_Summary_Report-Summary_2019.pdf)

9 Ibid.

## What is meant by ‘volunteering’?

The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy uses Volunteering Australia’s definition of volunteering as: ‘time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain’.<sup>10</sup>

The definition aligns with the United Nations view that volunteering should ‘directly or indirectly benefit people outside the family or household or else benefit a cause, even though the person volunteering normally benefits as well’.<sup>11</sup>

The Volunteering Australia definition includes:

- *formal volunteering* which takes place in a structured way within organisations, and
- *informal volunteering* that includes activities that take place outside organisations, such as taking care of someone else in the community (outside of family), mentoring or teaching, informally helping sports clubs or teams, and providing welcoming and settlement support to new members of communities.<sup>12</sup>



Andrea and Tyson from Huon Valley Council’s Gearing Up driver education program.

10 Volunteering Australia (2015), Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering, P2

11 United Nations (2011), State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, 2011: Universal Values for Global Wellbeing, United Nations Volunteers, P4

12 Volunteering Australia (2016), Volunteering in Australia: Help Create Happiness, Executive Summary, Pviii

## The value of volunteering

The value of volunteering to the community, organisations and governments can be calculated in many different ways—both tangible (for example, the equivalent dollar value of volunteers' contributed time and skills) and intangible (benefits to people's mental health, social connection and overall wellbeing).

*Volunteering is vital for the success of many organisations and entire communities.*

Much of our society is dependent on volunteering activities and programs in areas such as the arts, education, emergency services, sport, environment, health, aged care, disability support, tourism, and community welfare. According to Volunteering Australia, volunteers make an estimated annual economic and social contribution of \$290 billion.<sup>13</sup>

Volunteering also contributes to social outcomes that align with the priorities of Australian governments. These include encouraging economic participation, building strong and resilient communities, mitigating isolation and loneliness, and increasing social cohesion and inclusion.

Governments increasingly acknowledge that volunteering is becoming progressively important as a response to the growing problem of social isolation.

As a state, Tasmania's population is older, less healthy and experiences more disadvantage than other jurisdictions. Tasmania relies on the contribution of volunteers to provide many key services and programs and Tasmania's volunteering sector plays a significant role as a key driver of economic, social and cultural growth in our State.

The economic value of volunteering to Tasmania equates to \$4 billion annually, including the \$2.9 billion it would cost to replace the labour contributed by volunteers and the estimated \$1 billion in commercial and civic benefits to communities resulting from roles undertaken by volunteers.<sup>14</sup> Volunteering underpins communities and volunteers provide vital support across all aspects of our community.

The Huon Valley has an estimated 5,684 volunteers involved in both formal and informal activities throughout the local government area.<sup>15</sup> If current trends continue, it is estimated that by 2029 the Huon Valley will have 5,252 people willing to volunteer but a community need for 9,135 volunteers, resulting in a shortfall of nearly 3,451 people.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to this quantifiable shortfall, decline of volunteering would also be expected to impact on the quality of life for the local community.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of\\_Volunteering\\_Summary\\_Report-Summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of_Volunteering_Summary_Report-Summary_2019.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteering Profile 2029: Huon Valley LGA. 2029.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## Why the Huon Valley needs a volunteering strategy

In Tasmania the volunteering sector is the largest 'workforce' in the state and is 2.5 times the size of the Tasmanian Government workforce.<sup>17</sup> In 2019, 297,000 (68.6%) Tasmanians undertook volunteering activities.<sup>18</sup>

There are warning signs for those who rely on Tasmania's volunteering sector.

While data projections show that demand for volunteers and reliance on volunteer contributions is likely to increase during the next eight years to 2029, during the past five years volunteer levels in Tasmania have declined by 11%.<sup>19</sup> If this decline in supply continues, and the projected increase in demand occurs, by 2029 our state will need 42% more volunteers than will be available.<sup>20</sup>

If the Huon Valley follows the current State trends, it will experience a shortfall of 3,451 volunteers by 2029.<sup>21</sup>

There are a range of reasons for the decline in volunteering in Australia and Tasmania during the past five years including changes to motivation for volunteering, decreasing willingness to make long-term commitments to volunteer roles, and barriers to volunteering including a lack of organisational, human, and financial resources, lack of organisational flexibility and the slowness of processes to recruit and train volunteers.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted volunteering dramatically during 2020. During February – April 2020 in Tasmania, an average of 250,000 hours of volunteering were lost weekly and have still not been fully recovered.<sup>22</sup>

All of this information contributes to local understanding of the need to plan ahead to ensure volunteering within the Huon Valley remains supported, relevant, and attractive to potential volunteers into the future.

Starting with this understanding of future volunteering needs compared to changes in levels of volunteering, Huon Valley Council determined a long-term strategy was needed to ensure the people of the Huon Valley continued to benefit from a vibrant and relevant volunteer population.

17 [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of\\_Volunteering\\_Summary\\_Report-Summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of_Volunteering_Summary_Report-Summary_2019.pdf)

18 Ibid.

19 [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of\\_Volunteering\\_Summary\\_Report-Summary\\_2019.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of_Volunteering_Summary_Report-Summary_2019.pdf)

20 Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteering Profile 2029: Huon Valley LGA. 2029.

21 Ibid.

22 <https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Re-engaging-volunteers.pdf>

## How the Volunteering Strategy was developed

The project is a result of Volunteering Tasmania's successful 2018–19 Budget Priority Submission '*Safeguarding Volunteering—Securing Tasmania's Future*', which outlined a collaborative, multi-phase community development project designed to safeguard volunteering across the state by leveraging local government's proximity to on-the-ground, local volunteering activities, organisations and volunteers.<sup>23</sup>

The project was funded by the Tasmanian Government and developed in partnership with Volunteering Tasmania.

To support the Huon Valley to remain a community enjoying all the benefits volunteering brings, Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania worked with community members to develop the Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy. This work was undertaken using a method called community co-design. Co-design is recommended as a successful and meaningful method for developing locally based strategies. Co-design processes are community-led and designed by the people who will be impacted by the outcomes, ensuring local experts are involved in building local change from start to finish.

The key principles of co-design are:

### **Power**

By involving community members who are not political representatives or used to being in positions of power, the power dynamics are shifted and balanced so all voices can be heard and have the same amount of influence on what is decided. By doing this, co-design shifts power from governments and organisations to community members.

### **Relationships**

Co-design necessitates building and maintaining strong, trusting relationships across the community and with governments and organisations.

### **Participatory**

The co-design process works well when community members have a variety of ways to get involved. This helps remove barriers to getting involved (such as lack of time or transport) and encourages as many people as possible to connect with the process as much or as little as they want to.

### **Builds capacity**

The co-design process supports all involved—individuals, organisations and governments—to increase their knowledge and capability.

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Volunteering-Tasmania\\_2018-19BPS\\_Safeguarding-Volunteering-Securing-Tasmanias-Future.pdf](https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Volunteering-Tasmania_2018-19BPS_Safeguarding-Volunteering-Securing-Tasmanias-Future.pdf)



Community co-design stages



Back (Left-Right):  
Paula Swatman,  
Kent Wells,  
Ingrid Gilmour,  
Julia Fassina  
(Volunteering  
Tasmania), Austin  
Greenwood, Anne  
Benjamin, Belinda  
Balmforth

Front (Left-Right):  
Lisa Plohl (Huon  
valley Council),  
Linda Hill, Amy  
Bailey (Volunteering  
Tasmania).

These key principles were at the heart of the co-design process used to develop the Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy. The co-design process ran for nine months during 2020 and 2021 and included the five co-design stages outlined below.

### Stage 1: Planning (July—September 2020)

With the problem defined through analysis of national, state, and local government area data and trends, the key stakeholders for Huon Valley were then identified through local networks, outreach and consultation by Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania. Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania then worked together to recruit members for a representative, local team, known as the Local Volunteer Network Group (LVNG). Local people involved in volunteering, including volunteers and volunteer coordinators from small, grassroots groups and larger, more formalised organisations were encouraged to join. LVNG membership was diverse and involved individuals from a cross-section of organisations:

Huon Valley Council staff  
Meals on Wheels Huon Valley/Geeveston/Cygnnet  
McMullen Abbeyfield House  
Mountain River Community Hall  
Huon Valley Arts & Culture Committee  
Geeveston Archives & History Society  
Cygnnet Living History Museum  
Huon Agricultural Society  
Seniors Digital Support Coaching

Circular Economy Huon  
Lions Club of Huon Inc  
Bicycle Tasmania  
Bendigo Bank Huonville  
CWA Huonville/Ranelagh  
Huon Valley SES  
Department of Education (DoE)  
Huon Valley Dog Walkers Association

Members of the Huon Valley Local Volunteer Network Group (LVNG) convened through this strategy's development identified the following qualitative benefits of volunteering on their local community:

- Volunteering creates a community that gets things done.
- Volunteering contributes to the common good and builds trust and cohesion in the Huon Valley.
- Volunteering strengthens connections between people, by reducing isolation and generating training opportunities.

## Stage 2: Discovery (September—October 2020)

During the Discovery phase the broader community was engaged with the project to add to what LVNG members, Volunteering Tasmania and Council staff already knew about volunteering in the Huon Valley and to collect deeper information, including current strengths and challenges, and ideas and opportunities for the future.

This consultation and discussion stage helped all involved gain a profound understanding of the diversity of volunteering in the Huon Valley and people's feelings about it. The LVNG gathered information using online and paper-based surveys, groups discussions, one-on-one interviews and focus groups.

### In Stage 2 the LVNG heard from ...

127 community members

15 not currently volunteering/112 current volunteers

4 people <25yrs/40 people aged 25–55yrs/83 people > 55yrs

**People in** Conningham **Cradoc** Cygnet **Deep Bay** Dover **Franklin** Gardners Bay **Glen Huon** Huonville **Judbury** Lonnavele **Lower Wattle Grove** Lune River **Mountain River** Pelverata **Port Huon** Randalls Bay **Ranelagh** Southport **Waterloo** Woodstock

### **Stage 3: Sensemaking (October—November 2020)**

The LVNG then analysed, reviewed and sorted the information collected in Stages 1 and 2 into themes. Themes are the core ideas that run through the many comments, data and other information collected. Sorting all of the information into themes provides a clear structure for the strategy. The LVNG members used these themes as a basis for initial brainstorming of initiatives and actions that would support them.

### **Stage 4: Prototyping (November 2020—January 2021)**

The themes collected and ideas/actions brainstormed by the LVNG were taken back out to the community to test assumptions made during Stage 3. Feedback was again gathered through surveys, group discussions, focus groups, open drop-in sessions and on-on-one interviews. Community members were asked to rate the importance of the ideas/actions and vote on what they believed were priorities that would support a strong and sustainable volunteering community in the Huon Valley. Eighty-one community members took part in this stage of consultation.

### **Stage 5: Designing & embedding (February—March 2021)**

The LVNG used the identified priorities and other feedback gained through Stage 4 to refine the draft strategy's structure and actions. This revised draft was then shared with a broad group of key stakeholders including Council staff and community representatives for final input and approval. During this stage it was important to widen awareness of the strategy across the entire local government area so people would become familiar with it and gain understanding and recognition of how it would work towards volunteering outcomes that will benefit their family, friends, and neighbours in the Huon Valley community.

## Appendix 1: Volunteer Profile 2029 Huon Valley Local Government Area



SAFEGUARDING  
VOLUNTEERING



# Volunteering Profile 2029: HUON VALLEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

[www.volunteeringtas.org.au](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au)

## About this report

Volunteering is a vibrant and economically significant part of our Tasmanian communities. All volunteers are a vital part of connecting and contributing to our communities, and across the state we rely heavily on them to strengthen support services and program delivery, as well as drive a range of community activities and help out in times of need.

The nature of our communities and the ways in which the people of Tasmania connect and support each other through volunteering is changing.

With community needs and demographic shifts already impacting volunteer supply and demand, it is imperative steps are taken now to ensure a robust and adaptable local volunteering workforce remains a vibrant part of our state into the next decade and beyond.

This report outlines estimated supply and demand of volunteers in Tasmania in 2029. Volunteering Tasmania has used Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census and labour force data, Tasmanian Treasury population projections and other publicly available information to estimate how many people will be needed and how many people will be willing to volunteer in 2029 (a detailed methodology is available on request from Volunteering Tasmania).

Understanding these data and their implications at the local government level is essential to developing effective strategies for strengthening Tasmania's volunteering culture and community resilience.

Volunteering Tasmania can work with local councils in interpretation of local government profiles and provide resources to support the development of community-built volunteering strategies.

### Supply of volunteers

The supply of volunteers for 2019 was estimated using a combination of ABS census data (2011, 2016), ABS General Social Survey data (2010, 2014), Volunteering Tasmania State of Volunteering Report data (2014, 2019) and Tasmanian Treasury population projections. All estimates are based on Tasmanians over 15 years of age.

#### Huon Valley

In 2019 the estimated number of volunteers in Huon Valley was 5,684 people.

If the decline in volunteering remains consistent with current trends the estimated number of volunteers in Huon Valley in 2029 will be 5,252 people.

#### Southern Tasmania

In 2019 the estimated number of volunteers in Southern Tasmania was 88,665 people.

If the decline in volunteering remains consistent with current trends the estimated number of volunteers in Southern Tasmania in 2029 will be 79,514 people.

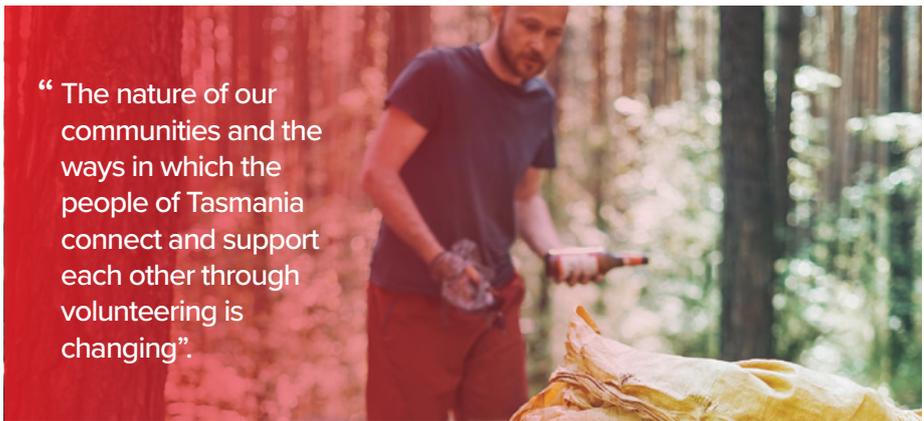
#### Tasmania

The current formal volunteering rate in Tasmania is 39.6%<sup>1</sup>, representing 172,500 people

According to the same data sources, volunteering is declining by 0.7% every year.

If this trend holds, by 2029 the formal volunteering rate in Tasmania will have fallen to an estimated 32.6%, representing 150,000 people.

1. From the modelling in this report.



“ The nature of our communities and the ways in which the people of Tasmania connect and support each other through volunteering is changing”.

### Demand for volunteers

It is difficult to predict what the level of demand for volunteers may be in the future, however, many sectors do calculate the ratio of paid staff to volunteers in their sector. (eg. there are 3.5 volunteers for every paid staff member in the community sector). The ABS also releases regular labour force data and many industries invest in predicting their own sector's future workforce needs.

Calculations of demand for volunteering have been based predominantly on the current ratio of paid staff to volunteers in each sector, and the predicted future workforce needs in these sectors.

#### Huon Valley

In 2029 it is estimated there will be demand for 9,135 volunteers in the Huon Valley LGA.

#### Southern Tasmania

In 2029 it is estimated there will be demand for 138,290 volunteers in the Southern Tasmania region.

#### Tasmania

In 2029 it is estimated there will be demand for 260,907 volunteers in Tasmania.

### Gap between demand and supply of volunteers

Based on the modelling described above it is estimated that there will be a 42.5% shortfall in volunteers in Tasmania by 2029.

#### Huon Valley

For Huon Valley LGA it is estimated there will be a shortfall of 3,451 volunteers (**Chart 1**)

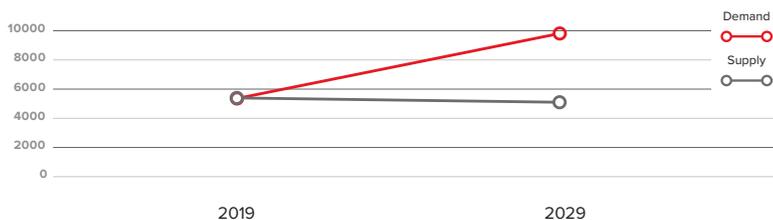
#### Southern Tasmania

For Southern Tasmania it is estimated there will be a shortfall of 58,776 volunteers.

#### Tasmania

For Tasmania it is estimated there will be a shortfall of 111,000 volunteers.

**Chart 1: Huon Valley LGA; Demand vs Supply of Volunteers 2029**



Volunteering Profile 2029: HUON VALLEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

3

### Difference in supply and demand by 10-year age cohort and gender in Huon Valley LGA, Southern Tasmania and Tasmania

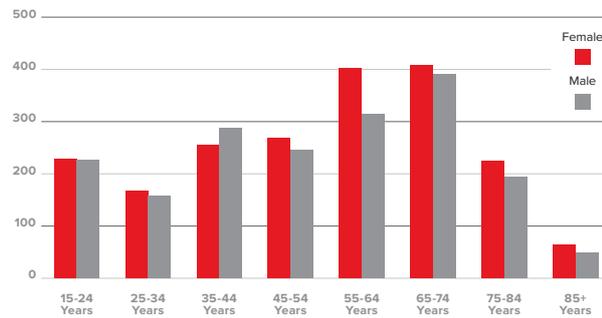
The charts below outline the projected gap between supply and demand of volunteers in 2029, as categorised by gender and age (Chart 2, 3 and 4).

Huon Valley will require broadly similar numbers of volunteers in each of the age brackets from 15-54 years old, but due to the ageing population profile of the Huon Valley LGA there will be a strong demand for older volunteers 55+ years old as well.

The Huon Valley LGA has an older age profile than Tasmania (Appendix A).

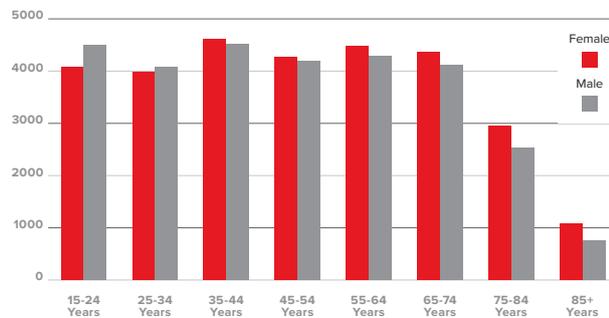
**Chart 2: Huon Valley**

Shortfall in volunteers by 2029 (by gender and age)



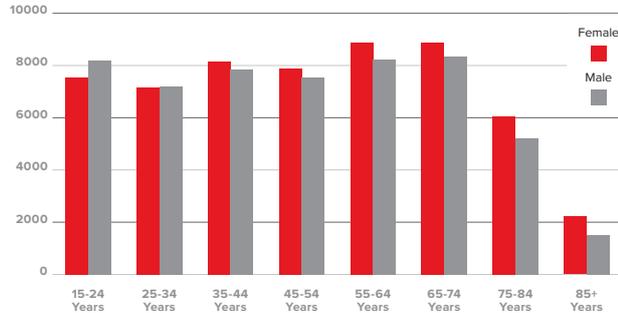
**Chart 3: Southern Tasmania**

Shortfall in volunteers by 2029 (by gender and age)



**Chart 4: Tasmania**

Shortfall in volunteers by 2029 (by gender and age)



### Current and projected trends in volunteering across Tasmania

The ABS (GSS 2014) have determined the proportion of volunteers in each sector of volunteering (Table 1).

Due to the changing profile of volunteering in Tasmania, it is predicted that the demand for volunteers by sector will change considerably by 2029 (Table 2).

For example, in 2014 the highest number of volunteers were in sport (40.9%, Table 1). But by 2029 the modelling in this report indicates that more than 40% of volunteers in Tasmania will be needed in the Welfare and Community services (predominantly aged and disability services) (Table 2).

This highlights the demographic shifts taking place in Tasmania and emphasises the need for strategies that ensure our communities can meet the changes in demand for volunteers.

Although these data are for Tasmania, the similarities between the state and Huon Valley LGA's demographic profiles allows some basic transfer of the trends, and this can be informed by local knowledge to support the development of community-based strategies and activities.

Additionally, The ABS determined the percentage of the population that volunteered by age (Table 3, GSS 2014), it may be surprising to see that more than 50% of 15-17 year olds volunteered in 2014, the highest of any age cohort. It is not possible to make age-based predictions for 2029, but the age profile provided may give some support in preparing and planning volunteering strategies.

**Table 1:** Volunteer sectors in Tasmania in 2014 (ABS: GSS, 2014)

Volunteering type	Proportion
Sport and Physical Recreation	40.9%
Welfare / Community	22.1%
Religious	13.8%
Education and Training	22.5%
Health	9.1%
Other	22.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 2:** Sectors projected to drive demand for volunteers in Tasmania in 2029

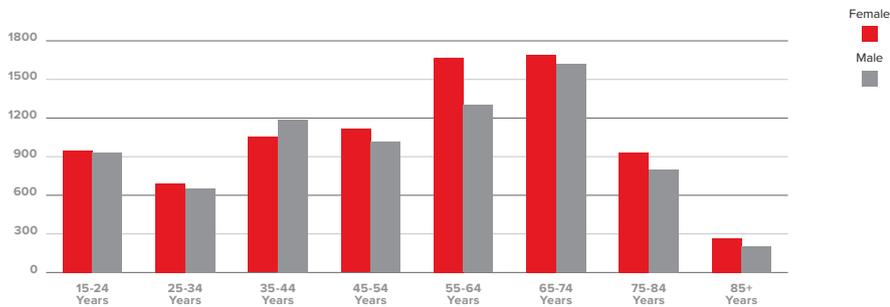
Volunteering type	Proportion
Sport and Physical Recreation	13.3%
Welfare / Community	41.2%
Religious	0.8%
Education and Training	14.3%
Health	17.3%
Other	13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3:** Age profile of Tasmanian volunteers in 2014 (ABS: GSS, 2014)

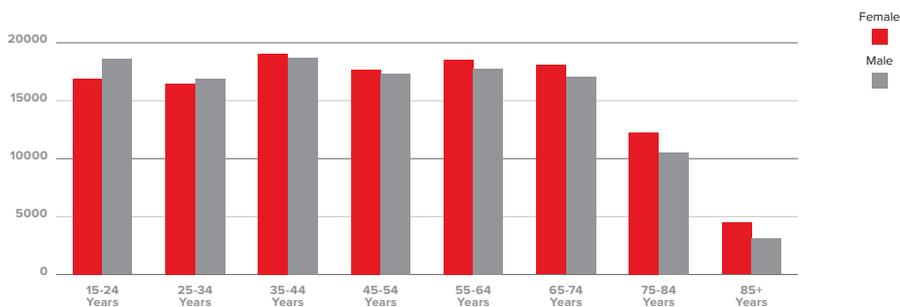
Age Group	Proportion
15-17 years	53.5%
18-24 years	29.1%
25-34 years	34.0%
35-44 years	37.5%
45-54 years	43.1%
55-64 years	33.3%
65-74 years	37.7%
75 years and over	22.5%

## Appendix A: Projected population in Huon Valley, Southern Tasmania and Tasmania in 2029

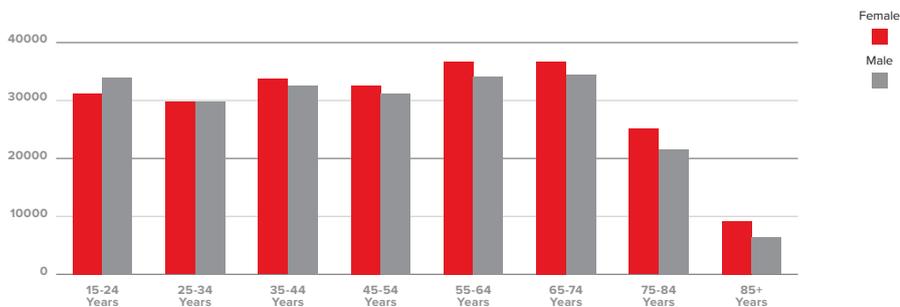
**Chart 5:** Huon Valley Population by 10-Year Age Cohort & Gender



**Chart 6:** Southern Tasmania Population by 10-Year Age Cohort & Gender



**Chart 7:** Tasmania Population by 10-Year Age Cohort & Gender





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