



volunteering
TASMANIA



Annual Report 2023–24

volunteeringtas.org.au



Volunteering Tasmania acknowledges the Palawa as traditional custodians of the lands, seas, skies, and waterways throughout Lutruwita/Tasmania. We recognise their deep history and continuing connections with Country, culture, and community and pay respect to Elders past and present.

As the peak body for volunteering in Lutruwita/Tasmania, we are committed to working towards an inclusive and accessible volunteering sector and growing our cultural competency and understanding of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community.

We express our hope that by working together and deepening our understanding, we can move to a more equitable and just society. We will create connections with Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and provide culturally safe information and opportunities that support self-determination.

Welcome message from Chair and CEO



Sarah Wilcox
Volunteering
Tasmania Chair



Mel Blake
Volunteering Tasmania
Chief Executive Officer

We are proud to present our 2023-24 Annual Report, showcasing stories and impact across the Tasmanian volunteering industry. It has been a challenging year for many of our members and our organisation. However, we have seen the strength of the industry in the collective advocacy and continued resiliency across Tasmania through ongoing adaptation and innovation, with a focus on supporting communities through volunteering.

During this period, we released the third State of Volunteering Report in Tasmania, nearly a decade after the first Report in 2014. Over time, our consistent efforts have deepened our understanding of volunteering's complex, nuanced, and vital nature. The 2023 State of Volunteering Research found that 332,100 (69.8%) Tasmanians aged 15 years and over volunteered their time in 2023. This is an increase of 35,000 more volunteers than in 2019. However, the type of volunteering activity is changing. This change has been forecasted and represents a significant risk to Tasmania.

On average, volunteers contributed 22.4 hours a month to a diverse range of causes. This equates to a staggering figure of 89.4 million hours volunteered in 2023, further enabling \$12.1 billion in economic benefit for the state. The cost to replace the labour of Tasmania's volunteers is \$3.6 billion a year.

While more Tasmanians are volunteering than ever before, formal volunteers (those volunteering through an organisation) continue to withdraw their time in response to increasing barriers to participation such as screening, induction, training, child and youth safety requirements, inflexible rostering, digital literacy and access issues, and a lack of reimbursement for volunteering expenses. Instead, volunteers are searching for less onerous ways to contribute to their communities.

Between 2019 and 2023 formal volunteer participation decreased by 11%. This is a significant decrease compared with the 1% decline in the five years prior. This serious drop in workforce numbers comes at a time when the community's need for formal volunteer services is rapidly increasing.

While social, cultural, and economic factors have contributed to the declining trend in formal volunteer

participation, the current challenges confronting Tasmania's volunteering industry are the result of a sustained lack of understanding, recognition, and resourcing of volunteering in this state.

The future of volunteering in Tasmania relies on a reformed approach to volunteer involvement. An approach that centres volunteering as a whole government issue; that accounts for the distinct needs of the volunteer workforce; and that embeds volunteer-enabling infrastructure within public policy, to deliver safe, equitable and fair working conditions for volunteers. The recent Tasmanian Government commitment and investment towards Tasmania's first Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan is a critical step towards this. Through our involvement in the development of this Strategy and Action Plan, we will continue to call on our members to share their experiences and vision for a thriving Tasmanian volunteering industry.

Our achievements during this period, could not have been possible without the incredibly dedicated and talented team of staff, volunteers and board members at Volunteering Tasmania. Thank you to every one of you. We must acknowledge Shirleyann Varney, CEO who left the organisation in June 2024. Shirleyann's leadership and vision strengthened us as a peak body organisation, embedding member voices at the core of our activities.

We also acknowledge Jo Westwood, Chair of the Board who stepped down in April 2024. Since joining the Board in 2021, Jo made a significant contribution to Volunteering Tasmania's governance and led her term with fierce determination and great empathy. Thank you to Chris Brockwell who stepped up as Interim Chair, along with his busy role as Treasurer, during an intensive period from April to June. We are extremely fortunate to have such skilled, dedicated and caring people supporting our people and organisation.

Last, but certainly not least, we deeply value the support of our members, and we continue to work with our membership to strengthen the volunteering industry in Tasmania. We also acknowledge the 332,100 volunteers who contribute to the economic and social well-being of our communities. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our island state.





Contents

About us	2
Year in summary	4
Awareness raising	6
Impact story	8
Recruitment	9
Retention	11
Sustainability	12
Our organisation	13
Our people	14

About us

Volunteering Tasmania is the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania.

We exist to ensure community-based volunteering is sustainable, valued, and integral to community resilience and wellbeing.

We are purposeful and passionate about building a thriving and resilient Tasmania through volunteering.

We provide a range of specialised services and support to volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

We specialise in contemporary and innovative approaches to support and strengthen the Tasmanian volunteering sector.

We hold leaders accountable for making systemic changes that strengthen the volunteer ecosystem.



Our vision

An inclusive, thriving and celebrated culture of community participation.



Our purpose

To strengthen and enhance volunteering through leadership, education, and connection.

Creating positive change through our values:

- › **Inclusion:** We foster a culture of belonging.
- › **Integrity:** We act with purpose, accountability, and transparency.
- › **Connection:** We engage and collaborate with curiosity and intent.

The four strategic priorities which form our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan are:



Membership



Impact



Advocacy



Sustainability

We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders:

The Australian Government

- › Department of Health and Aged Care
- › Department of Social Services

The Tasmanian Government

- › Department of Premier and Cabinet
- › Department of Health

Volunteering ACT

Alex had always been a keen volunteer at the local footy club. Every weekend, they were there early, helping set up the field, organising equipment, and making sure the games ran smoothly. It had always been a community effort, with plenty of people pitching in. But over time, things began to change.*

Fewer volunteers were turning up, and the workload increased for those who remained. Alex found it harder to balance their own commitments with the increasing demands at the club. With rising costs of living and busier lives, many people just couldn't spare the time they once did. Though still passionate about helping out, Alex started feeling the weight of burnout.

Despite the challenges, small moments of community support kept Alex going. Parents would occasionally stay behind to help clear up after games, and some would offer to bring snacks for the team. These informal contributions weren't as organised as before, but they made a difference.

Alex realised that the footy club needed to adjust to the new reality. People were still willing to help, but they wanted more flexible and less formal ways to volunteer. The club needed to reduce time commitments, make roles easier to manage, and offer more support to volunteers like Alex, who were dedicated but stretched.

This story reflects many of the benefits and challenges shared by our members across the state, highlighting the core culture and value of volunteering in Tasmania, while also revealing the significant barriers volunteers face in supporting their communities.

**Any reference to a real-life person is by coincidence only.*



Year in summary – highlights

Through place-based, community-led programs, we continue to support tangible solutions at the community level while ensuring the voices and experiences of the volunteering community are heard by decision-makers. In 2023-24, Volunteering Tasmania worked with the volunteering sector to reduce barriers to community participation through targeted engagement across the volunteer experience.

Awareness raising



41 Introduction to Volunteering, expos, school, organisation and community presentations.



2,198 Potential volunteers reached.



2,784 eNews subscribers.



7,400 Facebook followers.



2,162 LinkedIn followers.

Recruitment

Smoothing the pathway between wanting to volunteer and becoming a volunteer



Provided support, information and advice to **61 individuals** through the Volunteer Connect Service.



Supported **83 participants** and **149 organisations** through the Inclusive Volunteering Program.

Retention

Supporting Volunteer Managers and Coordinators to develop and maintain best practice volunteer management



Sector Development Workshops/ Network Meetings: **21**; Participants: **522**



Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Program: **7 Graduates**



Supported **29 members** to recognise **3,829 volunteers** through Recognition Certificates.



Recognised a total of **16,718 hours** contributed by **647 young people** to their communities through the Youth Volunteer Army program.



Worked with **Volunteering Australia** and other State/Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies to refresh the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.



Provided **opportunity** for Tasmanian stakeholders to contribute to the National Strategy for Volunteering Action Plan.

Sustainability

Working with the volunteering sector to reduce systemic barriers to volunteering



21 submissions to the State and Federal Government.



4 additional Safeguarding Volunteering community strategies in Kentish, Meander Valley, West Coast Council and Brighton.



Government commitment to a State Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Tasmania.

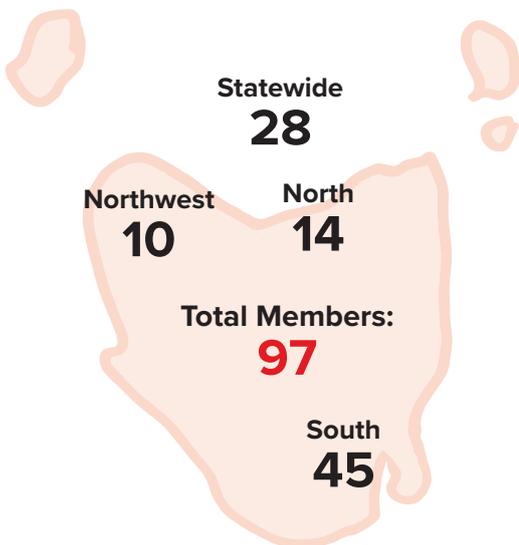


State of Volunteering Report 2023.

While Volunteering Tasmania has transformed significantly throughout 2023-24 our focus and alignment to our Strategic Plan remains. We continue to remain focused on delivering the support the volunteering community needs, while strongly advocating to the government to improve volunteering pathways and policy.

We continue to support our membership through targeted, adaptive volunteer engagement and member offerings, addressing the evolving needs of the sector. We have made great strides towards sustainability by embedding best practice processes and procedures so that we remain evidence-informed and industry-led. Our commitment to creating impact is evident through workshops, resource development, and ongoing policy and strategy contributions. Finally, our advocacy efforts have secured bipartisan support for a Tasmanian Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan, reinforcing our leadership in the sector.

Membership



Volunteering Tasmania's membership represents the following industries:





Awareness raising

– highlighting what volunteering is

Volunteering Tasmania appeared across the state in schools, libraries, conferences, and organisations to highlight what volunteering is, how you can get involved and why it is important to the community.

We continue to hear from the community about the desire to contribute through volunteering without understanding how to get started. Through our Volunteer Management Activity and Youth Volunteer Army programs, we have directly engaged with communities on the best way to get involved and how volunteering can benefit both the individual as well as the broader community.

Youth Volunteer Army

Working with schools and regional jobs hubs to recognise and support youth volunteering.

In the final year of the Youth Volunteer Army pilot, there are 18 schools and 6 Regional Jobs Hubs registered statewide. This has resulted in 647 students engaging with the program and recording 16,718 volunteering hours.

This project deepens our understanding and enhances youth engagement with flexible and adaptable volunteer opportunities.

“Volunteering with the Tasmanian Fire Service is important to me because it helps protect my community from bushfires.”

– STUDENT, YOUTH VOLUNTEER ARMY

“We are also noticing an improvement in the résumés that students are putting together and have heard some speak about using their technology knowledge to help others. The program supports them to highlight the time they have given, the skills they have used and why it matters. It’s great to know that we are setting them up for a pathway beyond school.”

– SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE



Students at the 2024 UTAS National Student Volunteer Week expo



Volunteering Tasmania at the 2024 UTAS National Student Volunteer Week expo

“I was surprised how the hours add up and the volunteering has helped with improving customer service with my part-time job.”

– STUDENT, YOUTH VOLUNTEER ARMY

"... working with Volunteering Tasmania, my participants have changed their view of volunteering and the benefits that it not only gives the community, but them as well."

— ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVE

Volunteer Management Activity

Focused on diversity and inclusion and best practice volunteer management.

We work with a broad range of stakeholders to champion and design accessible and inclusive volunteering practices. Over the past year, we released several resources as part of the 'Celebrating Volunteers with Disability' campaign. This campaign came from a co-design project involving a team comprising volunteers with disability, volunteer-involving organisations and specialist disability agencies.

Resources can be found on the 'For Organisations' page of our website.

"..... As a member of the Volunteer Disability Co-design Group, I observed that participation of people with disability in co-design allowed valuable contributions to be made toward inclusive design and fostered opportunity to build individual capacity for participants, and that the awareness campaign and associated resources produced as part of the project have already begun influencing attitudinal change and will generate positive community outcomes. It is also worth noting that the co-design process also provided an opportunity to empower a group of people who have historically faced oppression and discrimination from inaccessible environments – an outcome with potential to stimulate valuable social change."

— ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVE



Finn, volunteer involved in Celebrating Volunteers with Disability campaign

National Volunteer Week

Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering

Volunteering Tasmania had the pleasure of working alongside MediaCast as part of the National Volunteer Week 2024 campaign.

Overall, we secured 56 items of coverage with more than 1.4 million impressions across Tasmania.

Between the Volunteering Tasmania CEO and Deputy CEO, we completed seven interviews with Ultra 106five, Channel 7 – Tasmania, ABC Radio Hobart, The Examiner, ABC Northern Tasmania, 7DBS Coast FM, and 7XS.

Meanwhile, Tasmanian volunteers completed five interviews with The Mercury, Channel 7 – Tasmania, ABC Radio Hobart, ABC Northern Tasmania and The Examiner.

The Examiner article during National Volunteer Week 2024

'It's part of being Australian': Celebrating our volunteers



AMERICAN BROTHERS

1988 are today's heroes of the Valley. It's not just the name that's special, it's the mission. The Valley is a place where people come to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out.

the brigade and we'll always be there to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out.



TFL Disaster Brigade chief Daniel Humeau has volunteered for more than 20 years. (14 April 2024) Picture by Philip Humeau

It's a place where people come to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out. It's a place where people come to help each other out.



Volunteer Connect session at Kingston Library

Impact story



Newly Arrived Migrants and volunteering

Through the support of the VMA program, Volunteering Tasmania embraced an exciting initiative to enhance volunteering pathways for newly arrived migrants. We investigated how we could collaborate to improve the pathways and experience of volunteering for newly arrived migrants. The foundational principles supporting this work were to centralise and amplify the voices of lived experience alongside volunteering knowledge in a co-design model.

A diverse group of individuals connected to the migrant community in Tasmania came together to share their insights and experiences. Their collective wisdom inspired the creation of two powerful tools.

The first tool is a series of engaging short videos featuring personal stories from migrant volunteers in Tasmania. These videos highlight the importance of volunteering, cultural safety, and diversity. They have been widely shared and are now integral to the onboarding process for several Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs).

The second tool is a Best-Practice Volunteer Information Session designed to inform the migrant community about volunteering opportunities in Tasmania and Australia. These sessions, held in

accessible locations, provided tailored support and educational information. Feedback shows they were well-received and highly attended.

The impact of these initiatives has been profound. Tevas, a participant, shared, *"I felt honoured and excited to share my volunteering story... It was a unique and meaningful opportunity to raise awareness about cultural diversity... The experience was both empowering and deeply fulfilling."*

Organisations now have the resources to better understand the benefits of volunteering for newly arrived migrants. Kate from Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania (MRC Tas) said, *"We have used the information developed in this project to inform potential volunteers about the benefits of volunteering. This practical guidance encourages people to explore available options, helping to build an informed and active volunteer community."*

This story is a shining example of the power of collaboration, the value of lived experience, and the positive impact of embracing diversity.

By addressing statewide needs with localised input, we are creating a vibrant and inclusive volunteer community in Tasmania.

Recruitment – Smoothing the pathway between wanting to volunteer and becoming a volunteer

Connecting volunteers with organisations that need them continues to be a challenge. There are significant barriers related to cost, time, access and inclusion that continue to contribute to the decline in formal volunteering. During 2023-24, we worked with the volunteering community to make connections, reduce barriers and encourage more individuals to support volunteering involving organisations.



Our Volunteer Connector, Tevas with Tiki and Melody

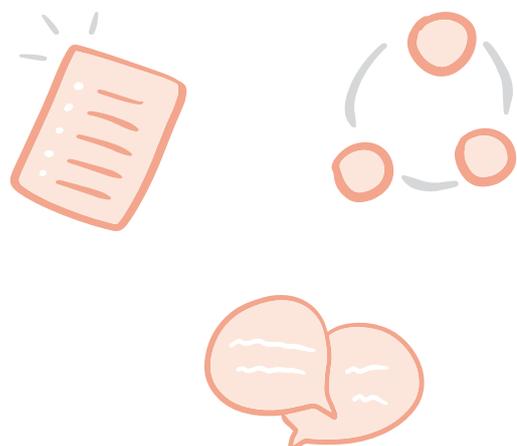
"It's funny how the universe works sometimes...I had been in touch with (an organisation) earlier this week and have been trying to build up the courage to go visit to check out their services...now you've presented an opportunity for me go without being on my own lol."

– VOLUNTEER

Volunteer Connect Service

Connects individuals wanting to volunteer, with available volunteer roles.

Through our volunteer connect service we support potential volunteers to find and apply for roles that suit their interests, skills and availability. We continue to hear how volunteering is changing, and how individuals want to participate. For example, one-off events are attractive to participants who are unsure of how long they may be staying in Tasmania and would still like an opportunity to engage with the local community and practice English further. We also hear from potential volunteers that they want more flexibility in volunteering opportunities. Some people are not able to commit to a set number of hours per week. We continue to encourage volunteer-involving organisations to balance the needs of their organisation with the needs of the volunteer and their motivations to volunteer.





From left to right: Carol-Ann, IVP participant with our Coordinator, Nicole

Inclusive Volunteering Program (IVP)

Directly supports people with disability or on a mental health recovery journey into volunteering, as a pathway to employment.

Participant Story

Fifteen years ago, Carolann moved from Chicago to Australia, bringing her passion for advocating for domestic violence survivors and those living with complex mental health issues. As someone with Autism and ADHD, she initially struggled to find work, despite her qualifications. *"It was application after application... it got to the point that I thought I would never be able to get hired in the field I wanted to work in... For someone with Autism, I worked really hard to make everything the best it could be, but it takes up so much emotional mental energy, just to be rejected again and again,"* Carolann reflected.

On finding the IVP program, Carolann said *"Through the program, I got regular check-ins and support, and I could ask for help if I needed it. Because of that, I was able to find a volunteering role, which led to paid work. It was so good when it finally worked out. It was priceless, and I never had that kind of support before."*

Carolann was paired with Playgroup Tasmania, working in her chosen field with children. After several months of volunteering, she was offered a paid position with the same organisation. *"Volunteering Tasmania and Playgroup Tasmania have advocated for me and helped me to advocate for myself as well. They have accepted me just the way I am, with my disabilities. I feel like I've found home."*



Emergency volunteers

Emergency Volunteering

Community Response to Extreme Weather (EV CREW)

A database of willing and available volunteers to support response and recovery efforts following an extreme weather event.

This year, we revamped EV CREW to enable it to be more locally responsive and adaptable to the changing needs of our state and emergency services network.

The database has moved into the preparatory phase of emergency response allowing councils to register and engage with willing volunteers pre-emptively.

EV CREW currently has 133 registered volunteers to support emergency response in Tasmania.

"I'm so glad you mentioned this role to me because it sounds rewarding and a role with meaning is important to me!"

– VOLUNTEER CONNECT SERVICE USER



Retention – Supporting Volunteer Managers and Coordinators to develop and maintain best practice volunteer management

Volunteer managers and coordinators provide the key engagement pathway for new, and existing volunteers. During 2023-24, we promoted best practice volunteer management and emphasised its importance and relevance within the changing compliance environment.

In 2023-24, leaders of volunteers attended workshops covering topics such as National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, volunteer insurance and risk, volunteer management platforms, the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, volunteering research, youth volunteering, and inclusive volunteering pathways.

Sector representatives actively engaged in the National Strategy for Volunteering action plan development, and the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement refresh project, strengthening our strong culture of volunteering in Tasmania.

Collaborative partnerships assisted us in creating place-based, community-led resource development supporting meaningful and sustainable volunteer programs. Through shared project outcomes and in collaboration with Kentish Council, the Volunteer Management Toolkit was developed and made available to the Kentish community. Additionally, we released a series of resources to support organisations in becoming more inclusive and diverse through the Celebrating Volunteers with Disability campaign and increased our advocacy engagement through LinkedIn thought leadership pieces on modern volunteering.

Supporting professional development for those who lead volunteers ensures volunteer experience remains a priority and increases retention rates.

Our Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Program is endorsed by Volunteering Australia and is designed to enhance the knowledge of leaders of volunteers and uphold the highest standards of professional practice in volunteer management.

The CPD program formally recognises the work volunteer leaders are doing to raise the standards of volunteer leadership in their organisation and

across our state. On successful completion of the program, participants gain the Professional Leaders of Volunteers (PLV) status for 12 months.

By participating in CPD, leaders of volunteers gain access to resources, events, and a learning and sharing environment with a supportive community of like-minded practitioners.

This program is exclusive to members of Volunteering Tasmania.

“VT is a great tool and resource for us (council) and our community groups. VT has a connection with community (volunteer) groups that council can’t have. As an ‘external’, VT can offer ideas and suggestions to groups and this is not seen as coming from council nor a ‘council take-over’ of their work.”

– COUNCIL PARTICIPANT IN SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERING

“My key takeaway is reflecting on the program and how we can build the foundations to best support our passionate and dedicated volunteer workforce.”

– CPD GRADUATE

Sustainability – working with the volunteering sector to reduce systemic barriers to volunteering



The State of Volunteering Report 2023 provided continued momentum and relevance to our advocacy work surrounding the Tasmanian volunteering industry. The data showed a strong culture of volunteering in Tasmania but also highlighted the challenges our members have faced, including increased costs, training, and compliance.

We worked alongside four councils, West Coast, Kentish, Meander Valley and Brighton to build Safeguarding Volunteering community strategies and were informed by the lived experience of rural and remote communities to create impactful advocacy narratives.

This work informed the 21 contributions we made to state and federal government submissions and consultations, incorporating the voice of lived experience. These contributions spanned topics such as aged care, sport, multiculturalism, youth, disability, employment, and more.

We continue to build our relationships across communities, governments, and parliament, achieving bipartisan support for the first Tasmanian Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan.

We remain committed to promoting the voices of the Tasmanian volunteering industry.

“Without our volunteers we wouldn’t survive in this town. Volunteers run all our emergency services in the community. Volunteers also run all our tourist events. We rely on them to make it all happen.”

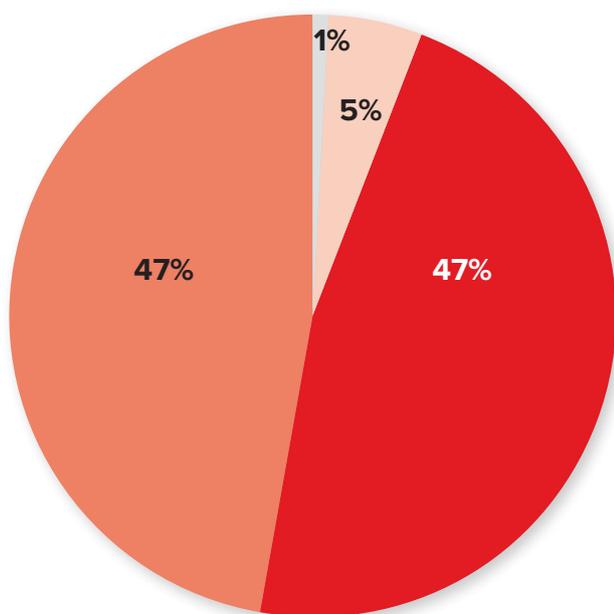
– COUNCIL PARTICIPANT, SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERING.



Bridget and Sappho from the Volunteering Tasmania team at the 2023 TasCOSS Conference

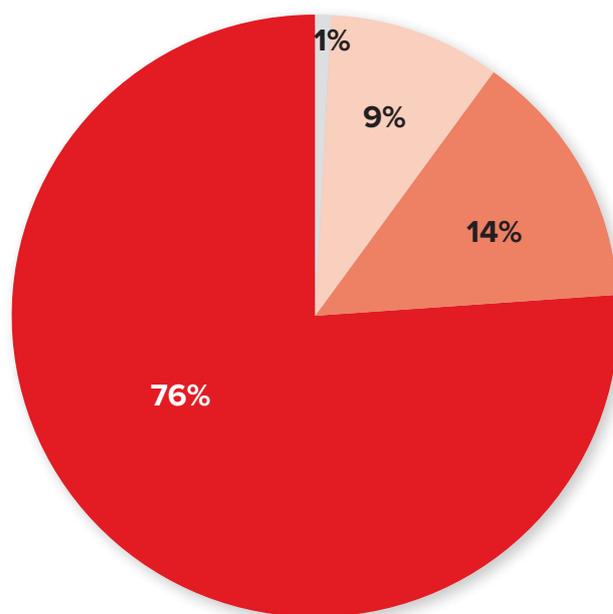
Our organisation

Financial Report



Income for the year ended 30 June 2024

- Grants – State Funding
- Grants – Federal Funding
- Other income including Sponsorship & Memberships
- Fee Income – Consulting



Operating expenses for the year ended 30 June 2024

- Staffing
- Statewide Administration & Governance
- Consultants
- Travel & Accommodation

Our full financials for 2023-24 are available in a separate Audited Financial Report on our website.

Our people

We have a statewide team who are highly committed to supporting a thriving volunteering industry across Tasmania. Visit our website to learn more about our team.





940
volunteer hours
undertaken by our
Board Directors



154
volunteer hours
undertaken by our
Volunteer Connector





volunteering
TASMANIA

volunteeringtas.org.au