



volunteering
TASMANIA
Be Connected



Who we are

As the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania, **Volunteering Tasmania** aims to better support the volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, and the Tasmanian Government as we work together to ensure a vibrant and active volunteer sector for all of us.

Through our 220 members we represent over 50,000 Tasmanians who give their time to volunteering.

vision

The contribution of volunteering is understood, respected and valued as powerful driver of community prosperity and inclusion in Tasmania.

our purpose

We connect and build an inclusive community to make a difference through the impact of volunteering

our values

**be informed
be inspired
be connected
make a difference**



Executive summary

Volunteering is a way of life in Tasmania with nearly 300,000 people undertaking volunteering each year. Our experience during the COVID-19 outbreak has shown us that people do come together to do what needs to be done for their community. The experience has also taught us not to be complacent and take our volunteer workforce for granted.

Tasmania's volunteering rates are declining to the point that if we do not act, by 2029 there will be a 40% gap between the demand for volunteer services and supply of volunteers. Volunteering makes an economic, social and cultural contribution to Tasmania to the value of \$4 billion dollars per year. Around \$3 billion of this amount is the cost to replace the labour that volunteers contribute to our state. **A 40% gap represents \$1.2 billion worth of services that would need to be paid for by government or lost from our community.**

Over the next five years volunteering in Tasmania will be impacted by complex shifts in our operating environment that are likely to increase the demand and reduce the supply. These include:

- **Impact of COVID-19 and climate change.** The increased need for volunteer services and supports due to the financial, relationship and mental health impacts of COVID-19 and climate change.
- **Changing demographics.** Our ageing population creates more demand for the services of volunteers at the same time that older people have less capacity to volunteer. Volunteer organisations need to adapt their business models to attract and retain younger volunteers who are seeking smaller commitments and more flexible engagement.
- **Community-led change.** The emergence of self-organising, community-led, place-based models as proposed in the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Group (PESRAC) Final Report, creates opportunities for different ways of engaging volunteers.

- **Professionalisation of support.** Through a series of systems reforms, volunteer organisations are increasingly required to professionalise their support of volunteers. These include impacts of the Royal Commissions into: Aged Care Quality and Safety; the Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability; Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and the forthcoming Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry into child sexual abuse.

Volunteering Tasmania (VT) acknowledges and appreciates the Tasmanian Government's 2020 investment in volunteering to support the COVID-19 response and short-term recovery efforts. The funding is enabling us to support volunteer organisations to re-engage, recruit and manage volunteers as they respond to the social and economic implications of the pandemic. **We also welcome the Premier's commitment that this budget funding is of course in addition to VT's annual core funding as our peak for volunteers, and their ongoing project funding.**

In 2021 VT is seeking to address the projected gap between demand and supply of volunteers and put volunteering on a sustainable footing in Tasmania. We can't do that without sustainability in our own funding. The current level of VT's funding is inadequate to support volunteer organisations and the 297,000 people who volunteer in this increasingly complex environment.

We are seeking funding certainty and to that end we support recommendation 43 in the PESRAC Final Report for a review of funding models for community service organisations to be long term, with co-designed outcomes. We also welcome PESRAC's recommendation 35 on place-based recovery for models which promote new and innovative strategies to engage volunteers.

In this budget submission VT is requesting an increase and extension of both our peak and project funding to five years. This investment will enable us to continue our core functions, and to also deliver:

- ✓ **Systems advocacy** that ensures the voices of volunteers and volunteer organisations are heard in the policy and services reforms that impact them;
- ✓ **A strategic statewide approach** to volunteering that maps gaps in supply across communities and sectors, and identifies actions to be taken to ensure that volunteering is sustainable;

- ✓ **Ongoing support** for small and volunteer-led organisations that enable them to set up sustainable processes and systems for recruiting and managing volunteers;
- ✓ **An extension of the Safeguarding Volunteering** project statewide to build capacity in communities to develop community-led strategies for volunteering; and
- ✓ **Continued management of the EV CREW** database for the recruitment and support of spontaneous volunteers in times of disaster and emergency

Funding certainty will enable VT to maintain and sustain our peak body service delivery responsibilities. It will also allow us to expand our advocacy and elevate the voices of volunteers in the community-led recovery and government decision-making.

Volunteering is vital to Tasmania's economy, society and cultural wellbeing. Through sustainable investment in volunteering we can help Tasmania's communities continue to be healthy, safe, connected and economically vibrant places to live.

Dr Lisa Schimanski
CEO, Volunteering Tasmania

Investment

ACTIVITY

Sustainable Funding for Volunteering

Increased peak organisation funding for Volunteering Tasmania - from based \$110,000 per year to \$200,000 per year*, and from three-year to a five-year contract.

Key deliverables:

- ✓ Systems advocacy for reforms that impact volunteers
- ✓ Statewide strategic approach with actions that lead to volunteering sustainability in communities and sectors
- ✓ Ongoing support for small and volunteer-led organisations that enable them to set up sustainable processes and systems for recruiting and managing volunteers

INVESTMENT

\$200,000* (+CPI) pa over five years

Employment of a Policy and Advocacy Officer and support roles in Communications (1.5FTE).

ACTIVITY

Safeguarding Volunteering Statewide

Action on local volunteering delivered through an extension of the Safeguarding Volunteering project to support more local communities over the next five years.

Key deliverables:

- ✓ Increased volunteer capacity and capability in local communities to maintain the volunteer workforce
- ✓ Resources and tools to support community-led volunteering
- ✓ Support to local communities to develop and implement volunteering strategies
- ✓ Implementation of community-led actions from the first phase of the Safeguarding Volunteering project, including replicating and scaling up successful initiatives

INVESTMENT

\$170,000* (+CPI) pa over five years

Employment of a Project Manager and additional Project support (1.25 FTE).

ACTIVITY

EV Crew

Continuation of funding for EV CREW to enable the recruitment and support of spontaneous volunteers in times of disaster and emergency.

Key deliverables:

- ✓ Training of volunteers that have registered on the EVCREW database
- ✓ Capacity building of staff in local councils and non-government organisations
- ✓ Maintenance of the EV CREW database
- ✓ Disaster preparedness and response
- ✓ Advocacy for spontaneous volunteers

INVESTMENT

\$50,000* (+CPI) pa over five years

Employment of a Project Officer (0.4 FTE).

Total investment \$2.1 million over 5 years

* this request is additional to the Government's commitment to roll the ERO supplementation into the Peak and Project Funding

The challenges

The rate of volunteering is declining as the demand for volunteering services and supports is likely to grow, leaving a projected gap in demand and supply of 40% by 2029.

The volunteer workforce continues to be left out of major systems reforms and it is vital that the volunteer voice is heard. The State Government lacks a strategic focus on volunteering and a Minister with responsibility for volunteering.

The rate of volunteering in Tasmania is declining as our population ages, especially in our regions. The 2019 State of Volunteering Report (SOVR) showed an 11% drop in volunteering participation over the past five years, from 80% in 2014 to 69% in 2019.¹ This trend has been exacerbated by COVID-19 with a December 2020 report from Volunteering Australia showing that volunteering has not fully recovered. In the national survey nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents reported that their volunteer programs were either only partially operational (60%) or not operational (12%). The report also notes that the demand for services has increased with 43% of respondents experiencing an increase in demand, and over half reporting that they need more volunteers.²

VT acknowledges and commends the Tasmanian Government's investment in short-term recovery funding for the volunteer sector. This investment will focus on re-engagement, understanding volunteer motivation, and supporting the innovation of volunteer organisations. However, along with nearly every other sector in society, the impact of COVID-19 has only exacerbated issues in volunteering that already existed. The recovery and rebuilding process will be long and the opportunity to reshape our landscape and build in sustainability requires a long-term investment.

The demand for volunteer services and supports is likely to continue to rise as the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 and climate change are felt across communities. Organisations are facing growing pressures in this increasingly complex operating

¹ Volunteering Tasmania, *State of Volunteering Report 2019*

² Volunteering Australia, *Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19 (February 2019)*

environment. They are having to change their business models and workplace practices to attract and retain a younger generation of volunteers that is seeking more flexibility, smaller commitments and technological solutions. They will also be required to further professionalise their management of volunteers as a result of systems reforms emerging from inquiries like the Royal Commissions into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and the forthcoming Tasmanian inquiry into child sexual abuse.

If these trends continue, and as our population ages, Tasmanians will be reliant on the support of fewer people who are available to volunteer, especially in our regions. The projected gap between the demand for volunteer services and supply is 40% by 2029. Volunteering contributes \$4 billion dollars per year to the Tasmanian economy, \$3 billion of which is the cost to replace the labour that volunteers contribute to our state. **A 40% gap represents \$1.2 billion worth of services that will need to be paid for by government or lost from our community.**

Community sport is at risk. In Tasmania 40% of volunteering activity takes place in and around sport. A 2020 Australian Sports Foundation Report³ estimated that one-quarter of community sporting organisations across the country were at risk of closing down due to COVID-19, with 10-15% of volunteers indicating they will not return. Community sport is a fundamental part of the lives of thousands of Tasmanians who spend their Saturdays as players, coaches, umpires and supporters. These sporting clubs are the life-blood of many rural and regional communities. They are also almost entirely volunteer run with a ratio of ten volunteers to one paid staff member. Community sport is likely to be heavily impacted by reforms around child safety. Community sporting organisations need support and resources for recruiting and retaining volunteers, and to implement training and practices as Child Safe Organisations.

Despite the size of the volunteer workforce in Tasmania, there is no strategic focus on volunteering by the Tasmanian Government. Recent strategic policy papers like Our Healthcare Future and The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy fail to mention the contribution volunteers make to the systems that support Tasmanians. Tasmania is one of only two states in Australia that does not have a volunteering strategy and one of three that does not have a Minister with direct responsibility for volunteering. These challenges can be addressed with sustainable funding and a strategic approach to volunteering in Tasmania.

³ Australian Sports Foundation, <https://covid.sportsfoundation.org.au>

The solutions

- ✓ Sustainable peak organisation and project funding for Volunteering Tasmania that will also deliver advocacy on systems reforms, a statewide strategic approach to volunteering, and support for small and volunteer-led organisations.
- ✓ Action on local volunteering delivered through an extension of the Safeguarding Volunteering project to support more local communities over the next five years.
- ✓ Continuation of funding for EV CREW to enable the recruitment and support of spontaneous volunteers in times of disaster and emergency.

Volunteering not only gets things done in our communities, it makes a significant contribution to the wellbeing of people who volunteer and those who benefit from volunteering. By taking a sustainable, strategic approach to volunteering we can ensure that our communities are healthy, safe, connected and economically vibrant into the future.

Sustainable Funding for Volunteering

Volunteering Tasmania's peak funding is \$110,000 per year over three years (2018-2021). With that funding we deliver policy and advocacy, as well as consultation and partnership with the volunteering sector and volunteers to represent the interests of volunteering in Tasmania. The operating environment for volunteering is becoming increasingly complex and we need to urgently address the decline in volunteering if we are to avoid a 40% shortfall by 2029.

Supporting and advocating for Tasmania’s volunteer sector requires a commitment to sustainable resources for the peak organisation, and that is why we are seeking an increase to our base Peak funding to \$200,000 per year over five years.

With sustainable funding VT will deliver results in three important areas:

1. Systems advocacy

Reforms to the systems that involve volunteers require the input of the volunteer sector. In order to achieve the best designed systems for the State it is vital that the voices of volunteers and volunteer organisations are heard in decision-making. Current Tasmanian Government initiatives that impact on volunteers include Our Healthcare Future and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, as well as the Commission of Inquiry into the Response of Tasmanian Institutions in relation to the management of allegations of child sexual abuse, and the Inquiry into the Systems of the Department of Education in relation to the risk of child sex abuse. Volunteer organisations are also being required to implement policy and service changes from national inquiries such as the three Royal Commissions into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety acknowledged that volunteers are an integral part of the aged care system. The final report recommends that: “Aged care providers should increase their support for volunteering and volunteers. For providers who operate a volunteer program, it should be a condition of their approval that a staff member is assigned to the role of volunteer coordination. Providers should provide training to volunteers and supervise their activities. Providers should also give induction and ongoing training to volunteers in caring for and supporting older people, diversity and inclusion, complaints management, and reporting abuse or neglect.”⁴

VT is not seeking funding from the Tasmanian Government to support recommendations from national inquiries and Royal Commissions, but it is important to acknowledge that there are implications in all these changes for volunteer organisations.

⁴ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, *Final Report – Executive Summary* (March 2021)

2. Statewide strategic approach to volunteering

The traditional response to a decline in volunteering has been to focus on the supply side and seek to increase the number of volunteers. A more strategic approach maps the current and future demand for volunteers, and considers what roles are more appropriate for a volunteer workforce than a paid workforce.

VT's aim is to achieve sustainability in volunteering across communities and sectors.

Our statewide strategic approach would identify the gaps, challenges and opportunities for volunteering. Through a community-led approach we would develop place-based actions that address the barriers to volunteering, allowing for solutions that are tailored to the unique needs, assets and resources of communities. We would align our approach with the Jobs Tasmania recommendations (21-24) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (recommendation 41) outlined in the PESRAC Final Report.

Achieving sustainability in volunteering across the State requires leadership at the highest level. VT seeks to work in partnership with the Tasmanian Government on developing and implementing the strategic approach. We would seek to ensure that the strategic approach aligns with the Government's commitments to implementing the PESRAC recommendations, including recommendation 35, 'place-based recovery for models which promote new and innovative strategies to engage volunteers'.

To that end we seek the appointment of a Minister with direct responsibility for volunteering. The Minister would provide a focus for the thousands of Tasmanians who volunteer and would ensure accountability within government for implementing the statewide strategic approach. By appointing a Minister responsible for volunteering Tasmania will join Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia that also have Ministers.

3. Volunteer support for small organisations

The VT membership is primarily comprised of larger organisations that provide service-based functions. We are not currently funded to support the half of Tasmania's formal volunteers (around 100,000 people) who are in organisations that are either completely run by volunteers or have less than five staff. These organisations are diverse, dispersed and difficult to engage, and are highly vulnerable to the decline in volunteering numbers.

In an increasingly complex environment many of these organisations do not have the funding or staff time to dedicate to their volunteer workforce. In addition, many of them operate with the support of older volunteers in rural and regional communities in Tasmania, and their viability is at risk as our population ages. With targeted support these groups and organisations will be able to continue to deliver local services, programs and activities in their small communities across the state. Examples of the groups and organisations likely to benefit from support include Landcare, Bushcare, Rotary, Lions Club, Legacy, community sporting clubs and regional museums.

VT will work with these small volunteer organisations to develop practical, accessible resources that help Tasmanians feel motivated and safe to volunteer in their local communities, especially younger volunteers. These resources may include specific on-the-ground, professional development training and support for volunteers and staff, as well as podcasts, webinars, digital assets and equipment. We will also help organisations set up sustainable processes and systems, including common contact details and record keeping systems.

Safeguarding Volunteering Statewide

A key part of a statewide, strategic approach to volunteering is an investment in local communities. Through the Safeguarding Volunteering project VT has successfully supported three local councils to elevate the importance of volunteering in their organisations and communities. The councils are now putting in place targeted actions and strategies to engage community members in volunteering.

Safeguarding summary of initiatives: The three Councils involved in the Safeguarding Volunteering Project are Clarence City Council, Huon Valley Council, and Devonport City Council. They have been supported through a co-design process to develop 5-10 year volunteering strategies and action plans for their local communities. The key themes across the strategies have been, accessibility, demand for volunteers, collaboration, best-practice volunteer management, youth participation, recognition and accessibility to information. These are community led strategies ready to be implemented locally.

We know that people tend to volunteer where they live. The top motivation for volunteering in Tasmania is 'community contribution', with nearly 50% of people saying they are motivated by helping in an emergency.⁵ Seventy-six per cent of Tasmania's volunteers volunteer in their own community.⁶ Volunteering has a crucial role to play over the next five years as Tasmanians deal with COVID-related challenges like financial and relationship stress and mental health issues. Volunteering is key to the community-led, place-based approach being proposed in the PESRAC Final Report.

Local volunteering strategies help to build resilience and ensure that supply will meet demand for volunteers into the future. The strategies will deliver activities, services and supports across the volunteering spectrum from formal organisations to informal groups, depending on need. In a place-based model local councils will play the role of enablers, while community members develop and lead the strategies within new community governance approaches.

The aim of the project is to create a sustainable ecosystem of support within and between communities across the state so they can share information and resources that allow them to better build sustainability into volunteering in their communities.

VT seeks an extension of project funding to implement the Safeguarding Volunteering project statewide over the next five years. The project will foster a sustainable, community-led approach with locally designed initiatives that meet the unique needs of Tasmania's communities. Safeguarding Volunteering would support communities to develop local volunteering strategies through:

- Supporting local communities to develop and implement volunteering strategies across Tasmania
- Provide workshops and coaching for local communities;
- Develop and share volunteering resources; and
- Establish communities of practice and community governance models.

In the extended project we will support the implementation of initiatives from the first phase. We will share the results and integrate the learnings into the next phase, as well as replicate and scale up the successful elements and initiatives.

⁵ SOVR 2019

⁶ SOVR 2019

Emergency Volunteering through EV CREW

EVCREW is a database and mass-communication strategy designed to support the community in times of natural disaster (extreme weather) through the mobilisation of spontaneous volunteers required to support the surge capacity needs of communities and organisations in times of emergency. In Tasmania there are currently over 2500 registered volunteers on this database who are available to be mobilised in the event of an emergency or disaster.

COVID-19 Response

The activation of the EVCREW database through the COVID19 pandemic demonstrated how valuable this surge capacity volunteer platform is. Over 250 volunteers were deployed to support Councils and NGOS that had an increased demand for services and/or had lost the services of older and more vulnerable volunteers that needed to stand-down over the pandemic. The activation of EVCREW over the COVID pandemic allowed for testing of the mechanisms used to deploy volunteers and provided opportunities to learn more about how the Tasmanian Government, Communities and organisations can best utilise spontaneous volunteers and how Volunteering Tasmania could best support these efforts. The proposed new approaches below reflect these learnings.

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

The final report of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was tabled in Parliament and published on 30 October 2020. The final report includes 80 recommendations which concern action by the Commonwealth government and the state and territory governments. It also contains what are termed 'observations' which the Royal Commission state offer 'key insights'. Overall, there is extensive recognition in the report of the vital role of emergency and recovery volunteers.

Volunteering Australia, in partnership with the State and Territory Volunteering peak bodies made a submission to the Royal Commission in relation to Emergency Service and Recovery Volunteers, including spontaneous volunteering. We were pleased to see that

many of our recommendations were reflected in the final report. Volunteering Tasmania is in a position to support the Tasmanian Government respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations including but not limited to:

- ❑ Recommendation 21.3 called on the Australian Government to convene regular and ongoing national forums for charities, non-government organisations and volunteer groups, with a role in natural disaster recovery, with a view to continuous improvement of coordination of recovery support. The Commonwealth Government has supported this recommendation (and announced the establishment of a new Agency – National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency (NRRRA): Volunteering Australia is already supporting the implementation of this recommendation at a national level).
- ❑ Recommendation 21.4 National recovery resource sharing arrangements: Australian, state and territory governments
- ❑ should establish a national mechanism for sharing of trained and qualified recovery personnel and best practice during and following natural disasters.
- ❑ Recommendation 21.83 Australian, state and territory governments should refresh the Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy and develop specific action plans and guidelines.
- ❑ Recommendation 21.88 Greater consistency in the processes used to register and refer volunteers would support greater interoperability between state and territory governments.
- ❑ Recommendation 21.92 State and territory governments should incorporate a volunteer coordination mechanism within their disaster recovery arrangements.

The EVCREW database is an essential service in times of Natural Disasters and Emergency to support spontaneous volunteer mobilisation.

VT seeks a continuation of the EV CREW funding for five years. This sustainable investment will enable VT to:

- ✓ Maintain the EV CREW database for disaster preparedness and response;
- ✓ Train volunteers that have registered on the database;
- ✓ Build capacity in local councils and non-government organisations;

- ✓ Connect volunteers on the database to other emergency services and other volunteering opportunities;
- ✓ Forge stronger connections to emergency management volunteering organisations such as the State Emergency Service, Tasmanian Fire Service, and Ambulance Tasmania; and
- ✓ Provide advocacy for spontaneous volunteering.
- ✓ Support the Tasmanian Government in its response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

