

# Ensuring the Future of Volunteering

## Volunteering in Tasmania

### Planning the future of volunteering in your local area

Volunteers are an essential contributor to much of the work of local councils in Tasmania.

As the level of government closest to the people it serves, local councils are well-positioned to create effective change that improves the health and wellbeing of residents. Councils are also the first to feel the consequences of changing community demographics and behaviour.

The projected impacts of changing rates and ways of volunteering over the next decade are known, providing local governments with a base from which to plan and prepare now to ensure future needs are met.

Finding solutions to the predicted imbalance in supply of and demand for volunteers in your community<sup>1</sup> will mean talking with a broad range of people to access their knowledge and experience to develop effective and appropriate strategies and solutions.

#### In Tasmania, local councils have three key roles<sup>1</sup>:

- Providing health, safety and welfare of the community
- Supporting and representing the interests of the community, and
- Providing for the peace, order and good government of the municipal area.

### The value of volunteering

Volunteering is a key driver of economic, social and cultural growth in our state: **It would cost Tasmania \$2.9 billion dollars to replace the current labour of volunteers with paid workers.**<sup>2</sup>

Volunteers also play a crucial role in ensuring our communities remain liveable and connected in the face of global challenges such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing inequality and social isolation.

The impact of these kinds of challenges are magnified in Tasmania where our population is older, less healthy and more likely to experience disadvantage than other states. As a result, Tasmanian communities rely heavily on the contribution of volunteers to keep them vital and healthy.



**\$2.9  
BILLION**  
replacing the labour that  
volunteers' contribute to  
tasmania would cost

<sup>1</sup> LGA Volunteer Profiles

<sup>2</sup> Volunteering Tasmania, State of Volunteering Report 2019.



## Threats to the future of volunteering

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The volunteering sector is experiencing rapid change as a result of declining volunteering rates, changing community needs, increased demand in different sectors and people looking for new and different ways to volunteer.

Tech-savvy people want to put those modern talents to use while more traditional volunteering models also remain in-demand. Working together, local councils and their communities can develop adaptable and flexible volunteering models to take advantage of these different volunteer demographics.

Improved safety regulation and volunteer management practices and procedures add to the mix, with organisations required to work within a best practice framework so volunteers are supported to deliver programs and services safely and efficiently. Best practice volunteering reduces risk and increases satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted volunteering in Australia dramatically. Based on national figures, it is estimated that in Tasmania from February to April 2020, an average of 250,000 hours of volunteering were lost weekly and recovery has been slow and challenging.<sup>4</sup>

## Community members have the solutions you need

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Local, state and federal governments are turning more and more to community members to support finding solutions to issues in their local areas.<sup>5</sup> This way of working builds local capacity, connectedness and resilience to change.

By investing in and understanding how to best support volunteer action in your area, you will be supporting your community to become more resilient.

The challenge of planning for future volunteering needs presents an opportunity for local government to collaborate with community members to build strategies to promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities long-term. Volunteering presents a great opportunity for local councils to connect with and be a support-hub for volunteering in their communities.

### Volunteering is a local activity

- 76% of Tasmanians volunteer within their community.
- The majority of volunteers prefer to stay within 50km of home.
- 14.3% of volunteers do so without leaving their homes.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Using\\_Volunteering\\_Infra\\_to\\_Build\\_Civil\\_Society.pdf](https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Using_Volunteering_Infra_to_Build_Civil_Society.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2020/6/The\\_experience\\_of\\_volunteers\\_during\\_the\\_early\\_stages\\_of\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_0.pdf](https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2020/6/The_experience_of_volunteers_during_the_early_stages_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/transitioning-regions/report/transitioning-regions-report.pdf>



## Co-design: A proven, collaborative approach

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You can support the development of a sustainable volunteering community in your local area by working with your community's current and potential volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

By involving community members in the development of a local volunteering strategy, you will benefit from their experience and expertise as well as have built-in champions and support for its successful implementation.



Image. <https://d1png.com/png/6356907>

The co-design method is a proven way of achieving these aims as it places local people at the centre and continually tests themes, assumptions and solutions with them.

Co-design is a community-led process that invites local people—those who will be impacted by its outcomes—to design, test and continuously improve the strategy they contribute to building with you.

*"[The community-led model has] been invaluable for us as a group. I've already applied it to other things I'm doing."*

*Local council staff member*

## Next steps

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To build a Volunteer Sustainability Strategy in your community, check out the following resources to assist:

- Step-by-step guide on how to run a co-design process in your community
- Council specific resources that will help you build and structure a successful strategy in your region

These resources can be found on the Safeguarding Volunteering Page

<https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/future-of-volunteering/safeguarding-volunteering-project/#/>

