



volunteering
TASMANIA
Be Connected

Safeguarding Volunteering In Tasmania

Environmental Scan Report

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Snapshot

Tasmania faces significant challenges in volunteering over the next decade for three reasons:

- We will not have enough volunteers to meet demand. Nationally, volunteering rates are declining. Our population is ageing and will be reliant on the support of fewer people in the workforce who are available for volunteering, especially in our regions.
- The way people volunteer is changing with people being increasingly time-poor, and younger people in particular wanting more flexibility and smaller commitments. Volunteer organisations risk being out of step without significant changes to the way they manage volunteers.
- People prefer to volunteer within 50 kilometres from home, but we do not currently organise volunteering in a strategic way at a community level.

Strategic interventions are urgently needed if we are to address the emerging gap between demand and supply in volunteering. By investing now in organisations within local government areas we can convert the potential for volunteering into actual volunteers and ensure that the demand for support is met into the future.

It is recognised that the global task of maintaining cohesive, liveable societies is increasingly falling within the domain of volunteers. Volunteers within communities play a significant role in the global response to challenges like climate change, inequality and growing social isolation. But there are barriers and changes to volunteering in Tasmania that need to be understood and addressed to ensure the sustainability and success of communities into the future.

In the past volunteers were drawn from reliable retirees and stay-at-home mums. Now, work patterns and relationships have shifted. The new breed of volunteers wants flexibility, short term commitments and opportunities to make a difference.

In Tasmania, the traditional structures and processes of Volunteering Involving Organisations are struggling to respond to these changes. The old ways of recruiting and managing volunteers is not working. Rather than an activity that is done 'off the side of the desk', there is a need for a strategic, targeted approach.

More and more, responses are being organised at a local level. Place-based, human-centred approaches are being implemented around the world as a way of building local capacity, connectedness and resilience. Volunteering rates are seen as an indicator of social capital as the value of participation is increasingly being recognised.

The need for community level support is vital in Tasmania where 37.2 per cent of our population lives in areas of social disadvantage¹. The opportunity exists in the number of people who volunteer - four in five people - who deliver an economic, cultural and social benefit of \$4.9 billion every year.

There are significant changes happening across Tasmania that are impacting on volunteering. It is vital that we understand these changes and plan accordingly. This information provides the basis for informed decision making within communities that can be empowered to plan for change and work collaboratively alongside all tiers of government to safeguard volunteering across Tasmania.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2071.0 – Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia Stories from the Census, 2016, Canberra, 6 November 2018

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Definition of volunteering

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as: 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'.² 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.'³

The Volunteering Australia definition varies from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition of volunteering which is: 'The provision of unpaid help willingly undertaken in the form of time, service of skills, to an organisation or group, excluding work done overseas'.⁴ It should be noted that there are variations in the percentages used due to the variation in definitions. The ABS definition under-represents volunteering participation compared to the Volunteering Tasmania data referred to in this report. This is because the ABS does not include informal volunteering. The ABS survey asks questions about volunteering within the Census which also covers other aspects of life. The Volunteering Tasmania survey is dedicated to volunteering and asks its questions around contribution in a different way to the ABS. It is important that formal and informal volunteering are understood as different activities.

In its 2015 report, Volunteering Australia explains that volunteering is part of the wider concept of civic participation. It includes formal volunteering which takes place in a structured way within organisations, and informal volunteering which takes place outside organisations.

Informal volunteering includes activities like taking care of someone else in the community (outside family), mentoring or teaching, informally helping sports clubs or teams, and providing welcoming and settlement support to new members of communities.⁵

Direct family responsibilities, including foster caring, fall outside the definition of volunteering given that these relationships vary for different people and social groups and is open to individual interpretation. Some formal, structured programs are not considered volunteering, such as compulsory educational service learning, work experience and internships, as well as mandated government programs and mandatory court orders.

While volunteers receive no financial gain, they may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses and receive an honorarium as recognition for their services. They may also be rewarded and recognised as part of good practice.

Segmenting volunteering

As well as formal and informal, volunteering can be segmented into age, location and motivation as well as type of organisation, including community group (unaffiliated, not-for-profit and for-profit).

Volunteering activities occur in all sectors of society and include:⁶

- Animal - related including animal welfare

² Volunteering Australia (2015), *Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering*, P2

³ United Nations (2011), *State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011: Universal Values for Global Wellbeing*, United Nations Volunteers, P4

⁴ ABS (2014) *General Social Survey*

⁵ Volunteering Australia (2016), *Volunteering in Australia: Help Create Happiness*, Executive Summary, Pviii

⁶ Volunteering Australia (2015), P3

- Arts/heritage/culture
- Business/professional/union
- Education and training
- Emergency services
- Environment
- Faith - based
- Health
- International aid/development
- Law/justice/political
- Parenting, children and youth
- Sport and physical recreation
- Welfare/community

Activism is also considered volunteering providing it is peaceful and does not incite violence and cause harm.

Tasmania's volunteering segments

In Tasmania volunteering takes place in a wide variety of settings, in community groups and not-for-profit organisations, and in communities.

According to the 2014 State of Volunteering Report, four in five Tasmanians volunteer with 63 per cent giving at least some of their volunteering time in a formal setting to a facilitating organisation. Another 16.7 per cent volunteer in informal settings such as looking after children, property, pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone a lift or advice.⁷

Volunteers make up a significant part of the workforce in social services in Tasmania. The paid workforce of the community services sector is 10,000. The workforce has a large component of volunteers, with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicating that 35 000 people volunteer for welfare and community work.⁸ Almost 90 per cent of organisations in the community services sector engage volunteers at some point.

The organisations with the highest proportion of volunteers are found in community development, community cultural development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services; adult, children and family services; and ageing and carer services.

Volunteers are a substantial portion of the aged care workforce delivering frontline services and ancillary support in aged care and residential settings. Volunteers also help older people engage with their local community, reducing their social isolation and improving their mental and physical health.

Volunteers also play a critical role in the delivery of NDIS programs, supports and services. In education, in schools and community settings, they help improve outcomes for young people and older Tasmanians engaged in lifelong learning. Volunteers also help new migrants to settle and integrate, bringing benefits to local communities.

Volunteers contribute significantly to our health system in hospitals and the community. Volunteering is seen as a preventative health measure for both the volunteer and the people benefiting from help, in large part

⁷ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), *State of Volunteering Report 2014: The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering* P39

⁸ ABS (2014) *General Social Survey*

because of the contribution it makes to reducing social isolation. Other less quantified areas of volunteering are education (including school associations, canteen and sports), and arts and culture and festivals.

With very few paid staff, sporting organisations rely on volunteers to give their time willingly, and for no financial gain, to support health and lifestyle activities in Tasmania. The ABS estimated in 2010 that there were 123,700 Tasmanians volunteering in sport at least once a year.⁹ Other research estimated that 38,000 Tasmanians were regularly volunteering in sport (more than once a year).¹⁰

In other areas of our society and economy volunteers play a critical role.

In Tasmania's emergency services there are approximately 7800 volunteers. These comprise 600 in SES, 1200 in ambulance services, and 6000 in fire services. As emergency volunteers they respond to natural disasters and adverse events. They contribute before, during and after emergencies as part of coordinated efforts, usually by existing organisations that provide them with training, skills and experience.

Voluntourism is a growing area of volunteering, where individuals combine volunteering with holiday or leisure activities. It is becoming a significant part of Tasmania's growing tourism industry and our economy. Voluntourists are typically engaging in activities such as arts festivals, sport, environmental conservation (eco-tourism), and at heritage attractions. Over 4,000 visitors come to Tasmania solely for the purpose of volunteering – spending more and staying longer on average than other tourists.¹¹

Some Tasmanian businesses also have volunteer programs for staff but this is not considered volunteering, rather it is part of corporate social responsibility. These programs support employees to engage in unpaid work for a community organisation during work hours for a wider societal benefit, the benefit of the employee, and for the corporation. While not as significant an activity as parts of corporate Australia, it is beginning to be seen as a way for Tasmanian businesses to make a contribution and build their reputation within local communities.

The impact of volunteering

“The volunteering sector has long been an enabler and driver of equitable growth in Australia and as such has made a significant contribution to the welfare of the community. Beyond the specific altruistic purpose of each volunteering act, volunteering as a whole has been a vibrant source of knowledge, cultural and recreation exchange, enriching the lives of Australians. The extent of this contribution cannot be fully captured in financial statements”.¹²

Around the world an estimated one billion volunteers are giving their time freely to making a difference on the issues that affect them and their communities, often in the most difficult of circumstances.¹³ This equates to a global volunteer workforce of 109 million full-time equivalent workers.

⁹ ABS (2010), *Volunteers in Sport*

¹⁰ Volunteering Tasmania (2017), *Volunteering in Sport Report*, P5

¹¹ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), *Behind the Scenery: Voluntourism in Tasmania*, P9

¹² Volunteering Western Australia and Institute of Project Management (2015), *The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering in Western Australia*, Piv

¹³ UN Volunteers (2018), Piii

The 2018 UN Report into volunteerism claims that, "If these full-time volunteer workers constituted a country, the workforce of 'Volunteeria' would be the fifth largest in the world, roughly equivalent to the number of employed people in Indonesia".¹⁴

Of this 109 million, 70 per cent of global volunteer activity occurs through informal (direct person-to-person) engagement with people outside the volunteer's household, while 30 per cent takes place formally through non-profit organisations, associations and groups.¹⁵

Globally, more volunteering is undertaken by women than by men, at 57 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Formal volunteering is relatively evenly distributed between the sexes, but women account for a larger share of informal voluntary action – nearly 60 per cent worldwide.¹⁶

Across Australia around 5.8 million people, 31 per cent of the population, engage in formal volunteering.¹⁷ Australians spend 700 million hours volunteering each year.¹⁸

The need for volunteering

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.

Volunteering 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 are acknowledging that volunteering is becoming increasingly important as a response to the growing problem of social isolation.

Analysis based on the OECD Better Life Index data shows that social connections are the single most important determinant of people's level of life satisfaction, measured by whether people have someone to count on in a time of need.¹⁹

How often people have contact with others and the quality of personal relationships are crucial determinants of wellbeing. A strong social network and community can provide access to jobs, services and other material opportunities as well as emotional support during good and bad times.²⁰

¹⁴ UN Volunteers (2018), P12

¹⁵ UN Volunteers (2018), P12

¹⁶ UN Volunteers (2018), P12

¹⁷ Volunteering Australia (2017), *The Value of Volunteering Support Services*, P8

¹⁸ University of Sydney, 3 May 2017, <https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/05/03/7-surprising-benefits-of-volunteering-.html>

¹⁹ Scrivens, K 2013, *OECD Better Life Index: Valuing Relationships*, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/blog/valuing-relationships.htm>

²⁰ OECD Better Life Index, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/community/>

Loneliness is becoming increasingly common in western societies. In the United Kingdom the Government is implementing a Loneliness Strategy and appointed a Minister responsible for loneliness to address what they call 'one of the greatest public health challenges of our time'.²¹

According to the 2018 Australian Loneliness Report, one in four Australians report feeling lonely.²² The impacts of loneliness are significant with lonely people experiencing higher social anxiety and depression, and poorer health and quality of life than those who are less lonely.

The antidote to loneliness is connection and volunteering plays a key role in fostering participation and connecting with other people. The UK Government has introduced a system of 'social prescribing'. This allows GPs to direct patients to community activities and volunteer services that provide tailored support in order to help improve health and wellbeing.²³

By fostering community participation, volunteering helps to build trust and increase social inclusion and cohesion. The OECD Better Life Index states that, "Communities where people are more socially engaged and trusting of others (including strangers), tend to be happier and healthier overall".²⁴

The need for volunteering in Tasmania

As a State that is older, less healthy and that experiences more disadvantage than other jurisdictions, Tasmania relies on the contribution of volunteers.

Tasmania's volunteering sector plays a significant role as a key driver of economic, social and cultural growth in our State. The State of Volunteering Report 2014²⁵ tells us that:

- Four in five Tasmanians volunteer, giving time unpaid to the community
- Volunteers donate 7.1 million hours
- 2000 Volunteer Involving Organisations support volunteers across not for profit, government and private sectors
- Tasmanian employers gain productivity benefits valued at \$1.2 billion as a result of their employees' volunteering
- Volunteering provides a total benefit to the community of \$4.9 billion
- The financial cost to replace our volunteers is conservatively estimated to be \$2.5 billion.

Volunteering also aligns with the Tasmanian Government's priority of strategic growth through its contribution to lifting the participation of Tasmanians in the economy. There are several examples of the need for volunteers in the Government's 'Plan for a Brighter Future' 2017. These include:

- Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy Implementation Plan;
- Ministerial Arts and Cultural Advisory Council;
- Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Development Plan;
- Active Ageing Strategy for older Tasmanians and Carers Action Plan;
- State Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy; and

²¹ UK Government media release 15 October 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>

²² Australian Psychological Society, Swinburne University (2018), *Australian Loneliness Report: A Survey Exploring the Loneliness Levels of Australians and the Impact on their Health and Wellbeing*, P5

²³ UK Government, October 2018

²⁴ Scrivens (2013)

²⁵ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), Pvi

- Australian Masters Games.

Without volunteering Tasmania would not be able to adequately respond to the challenges faced by people who experience poverty and disadvantage.

Compared with national rates, Tasmania has a higher unemployment rate, lower labour force participation rate, lower average weekly earnings and a lower proportion of people with non-school qualifications. However, many Tasmanians enjoy high levels of social capital such as participation, having a say in their community, and general trust.²⁶

In Tasmania 37.2 per cent of our population lives in areas of social disadvantage,²⁷ and 64 per cent of Tasmanian households receive government payments, compared to 49 per cent nationally. One-quarter of our population lives in poverty which means around 120,000 Tasmanians live on less than \$433 a week.

While unemployment rates are falling, the numbers of underemployed have increased by 1100 people in the past five years.²⁸ The long-term unemployment rate remains the highest in the country and youth unemployment tops the nation at 14 per cent.

In the past five years the number of Tasmanians on the housing register has increased by 1200, and the wait time for priority applicants has increased from 19 weeks to 56 weeks.²⁹ More than 40 per cent of Tasmanian adults left school at year 10 or below, which is the highest proportion in the country, and Tasmanians are more likely to die from preventable causes than people in any state or territory, besides the Northern Territory.

Many of these Tasmanians require the support services of organisations that use volunteers. They also benefit from volunteering themselves as a way of connecting with other people and participating in community life, which leads to improvements in their overall health.

The benefits of volunteering

"Informal volunteering can draw on the power of human relationships to strengthen trust and social solidarity, enhance shared meaning within groups and lead to the types of collective action that communities often rely on in times of adversity".³⁰

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Volunteering brings tangible and intangible benefits to the individual volunteers, the people they help, and society in general.

International research suggests that volunteers are happier and healthier than those who do not volunteer. One study indicated that 96 per cent of volunteers say that engaging in volunteering "makes people happier",

²⁶ ABS (2014) *General Social Survey*

²⁷ ABS 2071.0 – Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia Stories from the Census, 2016, Canberra, 6 November 2018.

²⁸ ABS Labour Force 6202.0 (monthly)

²⁹ Department of Health, Tasmania, Progress Chart

³⁰ UN Volunteers (2018), *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The thread that binds*, P27

and that just a few hours of volunteer work has an impact on a person's happiness and mood.³¹ Another study in 2007 found that people who gave their time or money were 42 per cent more likely than non-givers to say they were “very happy”.³²

Helping others not only makes us feel good about ourselves, it also contributes to better mental health, and ultimately better physical health. There are particular benefits for managing weight, lowering blood pressure, and relief from depression and chronic pain.

Volunteers also gain valuable skills and develop personally and professionally from their involvement in volunteering activities. It is seen as a genuine pathway to employment by encouraging economic participation and building work skills. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognises that the intangible benefits to volunteers include, “...skills development, social connections, job contacts, social standing and a feeling of self-worth”.³³

The OECD Better Life Index says volunteers tend to be more satisfied with their lives because they’re interacting with other people, setting and achieving goals, and learning new things.³⁴

Volunteering also has benefits for particular population groups that are at risk of being marginalised. It can be an effective way for older people to engage in society, acting as a pathway back to employment, and a way to keep them healthy and active.

Volunteers help people in aged care and disability settings by developing meaningful relationships and reducing isolation. Volunteering also provides particular opportunities for people with disability and people who experience mental illness, who may be excluded and isolated, helping them to become more engaged with the community. The benefits of participating in volunteering for people with disability include confidence building, feeling empowered, role and routine, inclusion and work experience, training and education³⁵.

For new arrivals to Australia, volunteering contributes toward their inclusion in their new country by promoting community connections and a self of positive self-worth³⁶. It has direct positive benefits for the physical and mental health of new arrivals through improved access to healthcare and cultural and social integration. Volunteering can also help people from diverse backgrounds to engage with the workforce, build job-ready skills, and overcome barriers to finding paid employment such as discrimination³⁷.

Tasmanians identify a range of benefits that motivate them to volunteer. These include supporting a personal passion or cause; to develop their skills and improve their chances of employment; increase happiness and reduce loneliness; and to give back to their community.³⁸

Participants in a study of volunteering in Tasmania ranked the benefits of volunteering in the following order:

³⁹

³¹ Post, S. G. (2011) ‘It’s good to be good: 2011 5th annual scientific report on health, happiness and helping others’, The International Journal of Person Centred Medicine, vol. 1, no. 4, P814

³² University of Sydney (2017)

³³ International Labour Organisation (2011), *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*

³⁴ OECD Better Life Index, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org>

³⁵ Volunteering Tasmania (2010), *Inclusive Practice Volunteering*, P14

³⁶ Volunteering Australia and Settlement Council of Australia (2019), *Volunteering and Settlement in Australia*, P12

³⁷ Volunteering Australia and Settlement Council of Australia (2019), P12

³⁸ Volunteering Tasmania (2018), *Budget Priorities Statement: Safeguarding Volunteering, Securing Tasmanians*, P3

³⁹ Shannon, E, Pearson, S, Girkin, F, University of Tasmania 2017, *Volunteering in Tasmania: Community Volunteering - understanding motivation, sustaining participating, capturing benefits*, P2

- Altruistically express personal values
- Providing learning opportunities
- Expressing environmental concerns
- Growing and developing psychologically
- Fulfilling the expectations of significant people in their lives
- Building resilience in the face of negative experiences
- Furthering their careers

The study found that different groups of volunteers experienced different benefits. The younger people are, the more they are likely to benefit from volunteering. People who were not employed, or who were casually employed, believed that volunteering helped them gain the experience and expertise that would help them get work in the future.

FOR SOCIETY

While volunteering has been a consistent feature of most societies, there is now a growing recognition of the contribution it can make to individual development, social cohesion and addressing social need.⁴⁰

Governments, businesses and individuals use their time and money to enable volunteering and this investment improves the physical, human, social, and symbolic capital. This is then converted by users into a set of economically valuable outputs that impact upon the welfare of society.⁴¹ While volunteering has a broad value across the capitals spectrum, the rates of volunteering are specifically being used as indicators of the social capital in a community.

Social capital refers to the networks of relationships among people, and the shared values and norms that allow them to cooperate. It is now recognised that social networks, and the trust they generate, have a productive value in our society and economy.

The OECD identifies four main ways that social capital can be conceptualised and measured:⁴²

- Personal relationships - the structure of people's networks and the social behaviours that contribute to establishing and maintaining those networks.
- Social network support - the resources that are available to each individual, such as emotional, material, practical, financial, intellectual or professional resources.
- Civic engagement - the activities and networks through which people contribute to civic and community life, such as volunteering, political participation, group membership and different forms of community action.
- Trust and cooperative norms - social norms and shared values that underpin societal functioning and enable mutually beneficial cooperation.
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Volunteering plays a role in each of these areas. It is considered a powerful way of encouraging more people to engage in civic and development activities. It enhances people's capacity and builds community participation and social cohesion.

⁴⁰ Rochester, C., Paine, A.E., Howlett, S, Zimmeck, M, Ellis Paine, A, 2010, *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*, P1

⁴¹ Volunteering Western Australia and Institute of Project Management (2015), Piv

⁴² OECD Measurement of social capital project and question databank, <https://www.oecd.org/sdd/social-capital-project-and-question-databank.htm>

“Volunteerism strengthens civic engagement, safeguards social inclusion, deepens solidarity and solidifies ownership of development results.”⁴³

Globally, volunteers are seen as key to delivering the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Volunteers facilitate all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by raising awareness and engaging in grassroots efforts to advance the transformation that is required for the SDGs to take root in communities.⁴⁴

At a national level volunteering rates are used as a measure of trust and civic engagement and are linked to higher levels of economic growth and government performance.⁴⁵

Volunteering now has a prominent place on the agenda of public policy. By offering skills, commitment, local knowledge and expertise, volunteers assist governments in delivering better public programs and policies.

Australia is one of the around 70 countries that have policies, legislation or other measures relevant to volunteering, and these have in general had positive impacts. However, there is growing concern that certain applications of policies and laws related to volunteering, in particular overregulation, can narrow access and shrink diversity.⁴⁶

In the Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe voluntary action is seen as "an important component of the strategic objective of the European Union becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world".⁴⁷

FOR RESILIENCE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*“Volunteerism enables individuals to work together, shaping collective opportunities for dealing with risk and connecting individuals and communities with wider systems of support. Volunteerism as a universal social behaviour is therefore a critical resource for community resilience”.*⁴⁸

By fostering social connections, volunteering helps create communities that are more adaptive and resilient through change.

The benefits of a strategic, local approach have been established internationally. The UN State of the World's Volunteerism Report found that⁴⁹:

- Local volunteerism is a fundamental resilience strategy and a property of resilient communities.
- Local volunteerism enables collective strategies for managing risk.
- The characteristics of local volunteerism most valued by communities are the ability to self-organize and to form connections with others.
- Volunteerism is particularly significant for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

⁴³ UN Volunteers, Volunteerism and the Global Goals, <https://www.unv.org/volunteerism/volunteerism-and-global-goals>

⁴⁴ Volunteering Australia, Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>

⁴⁵ Scrivens (2013)

⁴⁶ UN Volunteers (2018), P27

⁴⁷ Rochester et al (2010)

⁴⁸ UN Volunteers (2018), Pviii

⁴⁹ UN Volunteers (2018), Pix

- Effective collaboration with volunteers can transform volunteering from a coping mechanism to a strategic resource for community resilience.
- An enabling environment for volunteerism strengthens community resilience.

In Australia, the Productivity Commission's 2017 Report, *Transitioning Regional Economies*, identifies local leadership and volunteering as important social factors affecting the adaptive capacity of regions.⁵⁰ It states that the agricultural regions identified as having higher adaptive capacity typically have higher rates of volunteering. In these communities it is noted that, "a significant part of the response to human stresses and challenges is met by the aggregated support and effort of volunteers, providing a positive effect in supporting families".⁵¹

We also know that local community members supporting each other in disaster recovery is essential for the successful recovery of the whole community. Research also tells us that building community resilience before disasters assists in recovery.

The challenges for volunteering

The context for volunteering in Australia is changing and this has implications for the future. Our population is ageing and at the same time older people are less able to volunteer they will be in more need of volunteer support. The impact of technology, the type of people who volunteer and the way people volunteer is changing. Many volunteer organisations operate in traditional ways and risk being out of step if they do not make significant changes to the way they manage volunteers. Research shows that people prefer to volunteer within 50 kilometres from home, but we do not currently organise volunteering at a community level. Underlying demographic, societal and organisational changes is the evidence that volunteering rates in Australia are declining. Strategic interventions are needed if we are to address the emerging gap between demand and supply in volunteering.

According to the ABS the volunteering rate for Australia has declined. It should be noted that ABS data, being drawn from the Census data, captures only formal volunteering through an organisation or institution, and does not capture the full range of informal volunteering. In 2014 the proportion of people aged over 18 years who were volunteering fell to 31 per cent from 36 per cent in 2010.⁵² The survey also noted a decline in people 'helping those in other households, such as their neighbours, with activities including home maintenance jobs, gardening, running errands and unpaid child care (from 49 per cent in 2010 to 46 per cent in 2014).⁵³

Volunteering in Australia is being impacted by our ageing population. People are living longer and there is a greater proportion of the population that is older, particularly beyond retirement age. These changes will result in a declining workforce ratio and an increasing dependency ratio. Older, retired Australians are less able to volunteer at a point in their lives when they are more in need of volunteer services, and there will be fewer people to provide those services.

⁵⁰ Australian Government Productivity Commission Study Report 2017, *Transitioning Regional Economies*, P56

⁵¹ Australian Government Productivity Commission (2017), P139

⁵² ABS (2014) *General Social Survey*

⁵³ ABS (2014) *General Social Survey*

Older people make up a considerable proportion of Australia's population. In 2017 over 1 in 7 people were aged 65 and over which is 3.8 million people.⁵⁴ The number and proportion of older Australians is expected to continue to grow so that by 2057 there will be 8.8 million people aged 65 and over.⁵⁵

The profile of the older population is also expected to change. In 2017 more than half of older people were aged 65-74 (2.2 million), one-third were 75-84 (1.2 million) and 13 per cent were 85 and over.⁵⁶ By 2047 it is projected that there will be 3.4 million aged 65-74 (45 per cent), 2.6 million aged 75-84 (35 per cent), and 1.5 million aged 85 and over (20 per cent).⁵⁷

The size of the workforce available to support older Australians is shrinking. In 1975 there were 7.5 people to support each person aged 65 and over.⁵⁸ In 2015 the workforce ratio was 4.5 and in 2055 it is projected to be 2.5.⁵⁹

Australia's population is growing overall with projections that by 2030 there will be 30 million people compared to 25.4 million today. This growth is expected to occur predominantly in our cities with an increase of 10.5 per cent, compared to regional areas seeing an increase of 5.7 per cent.⁶⁰

The population growth is coming largely from immigration with 62 per cent attributed to net overseas migration.⁶¹ The majority of this growth is occurring in cities (86 per cent) and one in five households speak a non-English language.⁶²

The other significant change for volunteering is among young people. Millennials, those reaching adulthood in the early 21st century, are spending a lot more time online than other cohorts. For Generation Z (reaching adulthood in the second decade of the 21st century), the average percentage of time spent online outside of school or work is 74 per cent.⁶³

In order to attract younger volunteers, it is important that organisations understand their motivations and needs. Research shows that Millennials and Generation Z have less trust in institutions, including not-for-profits, than other generations.⁶⁴ They are most attracted to supporting organisations that offer high levels of engagement, a healthy culture, strong purpose and high impact.

The motivations and barriers to volunteering

The demographic, societal and organisational changes taking place have an impact on the motivations and barriers to volunteering. These need to be understood and addressed in order to ensure that volunteering is a part of thriving communities in Tasmania into the future.

⁵⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 10 Sep 2018: Web Report - Australia at a glance.

⁵⁵ AIHW 10 Sep 2018

⁵⁶ AIHW 10 Sep 2018

⁵⁷ AIHW 10 Sep 2018

⁵⁸ McCrindle (June 2019), *Changing Times, Emerging Trends: A snapshot of Australian communities now and towards 2030* (presentation)

⁵⁹ McCrindle (June 2019)

⁶⁰ McCrindle (June 2019)

⁶¹ McCrindle (June 2019)

⁶² McCrindle (June 2019)

⁶³ McCrindle (June 2019)

⁶⁴ McCrindle (June 2019)

The motivations for volunteering vary. In Australia 56 per cent of people say their motivation is to give back to the community; 50 per cent say they want to make the world a better place and 47 percent are motivated by the feeling they get when they volunteer.⁶⁵

Tasmanian tourism research shows that people who engage in voluntourism activities are motivated by a desire to find interesting, unique and unusual holiday experiences.⁶⁶ They want an authentic, 'alternative' experience that isn't mass produced or mass marketed, and to integrate learning and cultural experiences with bonding as a group or family.⁶⁷ Another motivation is the desire to 'travel with purpose' and to 'give back' in areas of less privilege.⁶⁸

DEMOGRAPHIC

Volunteering Australia research states that 36 per cent of the country's adult population engages in volunteering.⁶⁹ Around one-third of 18 - 24 year olds and 25 - 34 year olds volunteer, while over 40 per cent of 35 - 44 year olds, 45 - 54 year olds and 55 - 64 year olds volunteer. Of those aged over 65, 31 per cent engage in volunteering. In the past 12 months Generation Z is the most likely generation to have volunteered for a charity (44 per cent).⁷⁰

There is a geographic difference in volunteering in Australia with 34 per cent in capital cities (3.7 million people) and 41 per cent outside capital cities (2.4 million people).

Research also shows that more Australians are volunteering but for less time than in the past. The number of adult volunteers almost doubled from 3.2 million in 1995 to 6.1 million in 2010. However, the median number of hours per volunteer has reduced by almost a quarter from 74 hours per year in 1995 to 56 hours per year in 2010.⁷¹

Australian trends in volunteering include:⁷²

- Growth in volunteering is uneven. Rates of volunteering have grown in sport, religion and education but have declined in community services and emergency management.
- More volunteers want roles that are flexible or require shorter hours or a shorter term commitment.
- People are increasingly time poor and volunteering competes with greater work and caring responsibilities.
- People are more mobile than in the past so volunteers are less likely to stay for many years in a single role.
- The frequency of natural disasters requires a ready supply of skilled emergency volunteers.

Tasmania's demographic profile shows an ageing population, a growing generation of digital natives, and an increasingly transient regional population. These changes are having a fundamental impact on who is volunteering and how they want to volunteer.

⁶⁵ McCrindle (February 2019), *Australian Community Trends Report: National Research Study* P10

⁶⁶ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), *Behind the Scenery*, P8

⁶⁷ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), *Behind the Scenery*, P8

⁶⁸ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), *Behind the Scenery*, P8

⁶⁹ Volunteering Australia (2015), *Key facts and statistics about volunteering in Australia*, P4

⁷⁰ McCrindle (February 2019), P10

⁷¹ Volunteering Australia (2015), P4

⁷² Volunteering Australia (2015), P11

The majority of Tasmanians who currently volunteer are in the 65 to 74-year age group. People in this group volunteer on average 22.8 hours per month, while the rest participate at the average rate of 12.5 hours per month.⁷³ Beyond this older group, age is not seen as a key factor in volunteering, with research contradicting the assumption that young people are volunteering less than their elders.⁷⁴

Forecasts show that the retirement cohort is projected to dominate our volunteering over the next decade, making up around 30 percent of our volunteers.⁷⁵ The percentage of volunteers aged 45 to 54 is projected to decline over the next ten years.⁷⁶ As our population ages it is expected that the number of available, able-bodied volunteers will decline.

Volunteering Tasmania consultation results suggest that Tasmanian communities no longer have a pool of individuals from which to draw their volunteers. Many volunteers are performing more than one role and communities are at saturation point. The ageing population of some regions is believed to be exacerbating this issue as long-term volunteers slow down and go from being the one providing support, to requiring it.

The potential loss of any organisation that delivers services to our community not only puts at risk the liveability of towns in Tasmania's regional communities but it also puts at risk any regional development planning strategies that are being implemented to build community capacity, stimulate economic activity or create jobs.

SOCIETAL

There are significant changes taking place in society to both the expectations of volunteering and the way people volunteer. This poses challenges and creates opportunities for organisations to manage into the future.

Research promoted by Volunteering Queensland suggests there are four categories of expectations on volunteering:

- The welfare perspective expects greater civic involvement in the area of service delivery;
- The democratic perspective expects citizens to provide more input into the political system, to raise their voices;
- The economic perspective aims for an inclusive society, in which each citizen can participate and contribute, whether through paid or unpaid work; and
- The community perspective focuses on strong communities, in which citizens trust each other and feel safe, help each other according to the principle of reciprocity and develop social capital.⁷⁷

The expectations of volunteering have a significant impact on volunteer involving organisations. Governments can expect organisations to manage volunteers in different ways depending on the perspective. There is a trend towards the 'professionalisation' of volunteering. Governments and organisations may require their volunteers to behave in a more business-like manner. Volunteers may be expected to comply

⁷³ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), Pvi

⁷⁴ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), P41

⁷⁵ Volunteering Tasmania (2012), *State of Volunteering Report*, P4

⁷⁶ Volunteering Tasmania (2012), P4

⁷⁷ van den Bos, C (2014), *Using Volunteering Infrastructure to Build Civil Society*, P201

with strict job descriptions and minimum time expectations, undergo selection procedures and participate in training.⁷⁸

In Australia the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement are an important guide for organisations that engage and manage volunteers. The Standards provide a framework for organisations to consider the role of volunteers within the organisation and the impact effective volunteer involvement can have on achieving the strategic goals and aims of the organisation.⁷⁹

Emphasising this professionalisation of volunteering, however, can run counter to the trend towards more flexible forms of volunteer involvement, and this needs to be managed. The way people are volunteering, and how they will into the future, is very different to the past.

In Tasmania the traditional volunteer was most likely to be retired and aged over 60. They would be available to do regular hours and are content with low skilled work. The other reliable cohort of volunteers was the 'stay-at-home-mum' who did unpaid work for their children's school and sporting activities.

Now, like many people around the world, Tasmanians are busy at work and at home, and they have less time to volunteer. Changing demographics and work patterns are generating a new breed of volunteer. They are very busy, with many obligations, including multiple volunteering roles. They are tech savvy, working online and seeking flexibility. They want to make a difference and help organisations to accomplish their missions. Today's volunteers are no longer comfortable with traditional management styles, instead they want to be empowered and led.

Australian research on charities and giving shows that while younger generations are purpose-driven and socially conscious, they are also less likely than other generations to commit long-term to a specific organisation. Almost four in five Australians (79%) agree that charities will struggle in the future as younger Australians are less actively involved than previous generations.⁸⁰ Engaging this post-loyal generation will be key for Tasmanian organisations, as Generations Y and Z now comprise the majority of the workforce — outnumbering Generations X and the Baby Boomers for the first time.⁸¹

In their book *The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer*, Jonathan and Thomas McKee set out ten key shifts in volunteering:⁸²

1. Family Dynamics: From *Father Knows Best* to *Two and a Half Men*
2. Isolation: From community to individualism
3. Flexibility: From rigid scheduling to volunteer availability
4. Generations: From experienced veterans to novice Gen Y
5. Technology: From face-to-face to cyberspace
6. Professionalism: From skilled workers to knowledge workers
7. Episodic Volunteering: From long-term commitments to short-term projects
8. Slacktivism: From hard work to easy, “feel-good” tasks
9. Micro-Volunteering: From big-time commitments to bite-sized projects
10. Speed: From slow movements to fast responses to change

⁷⁸ van den Bos, C (2014), P131

⁷⁹ Volunteering Australia (2015), *The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*, P3

⁸⁰ McCrindle (February 2019)

⁸¹ McCrindle (February 2019)

⁸² McKee, J, McKee, T (2007), *The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer*, P3

These shifts are consistent with Australian research and pose a challenge to the way organisations currently recruit and manage volunteers.

ORGANISATIONAL

Those Tasmanians who can volunteer now have more choice about who they want to volunteer with. When they decide where to volunteer, they need to navigate increasing levels of 'red-tape' and paperwork. These changes are forcing Volunteering Involving Organisations to rethink volunteer recruitment and retention to ensure their sustainability.

Organisations across the spectrum in Tasmania, in sport, emergency services, tourism, arts and heritage, are reporting difficulty in recruiting volunteers to meet demand. There are significant factors at play that may contribute to a decline in available volunteers in Tasmania.

By far the biggest issue for organisations is that potential volunteers are increasingly time poor. There is an increasing reluctance to join boards and committees because people are wary of the liability that is attached. The cost of volunteering has become prohibitive due to compliance, accreditation and out-of-pocket expenses. An internal organisational issue is that the expectations of new volunteers don't always match the volunteering culture of the organisation.

Community services organisations in particular have identified ongoing reform and change as a barrier to recruitment and challenge in managing volunteers. These take the form of 'red tape', such as changes to police checks, safe-food-handling and traffic management procedures. Policy reforms, such as the Australian Government's mutual obligation framework for jobactive employment services, also significantly impact volunteerism. The Government requires job seekers to meet strict compliance requirements by undertaking Work for the Dole activities and completing an allocated number of hours of approved volunteer work. The Australian National Audit Office reported that "as at February 2017 there were 10,557 volunteer job-seekers (1.4 per cent) ^[1]_[SEP] in jobactive".⁸³ The politicisation of volunteering puts increasing pressure on organisations and volunteers, especially around regulation.

Another challenge is limited or unpredictable funding support for volunteering. This is placing pressure on community organisations to increase the involvement of volunteers to maintain or increase services because they can't afford to employ staff. This pressure is also requiring organisations to work smarter with their funding to find ways to hire staff in the face of volunteer shortages.

As organisations struggle to find volunteers they are increasingly turning to funding bodies, including the State Government, to fund positions. This is happening in 'traditional' emergency or community service roles such as ambulance officers. There is an increase in requests from community sporting clubs for government funding for paid administrators. Tasmania is also seeing a growing need for volunteers to support festivals, events and the regional museums that support our flagship tourism industry.

There are challenges within Volunteer Involving Organisations as well. Traditionally, volunteers are managed 'off the side of the desk' without strategic frameworks. This is proving to be more difficult as the nature of volunteering changes. Changing business environments, in the community services sector in particular, is also impacting on the way in which volunteers need to be recruited, retained, managed and trained.

⁸³ Per Capita and Australian Unemployed Workers Union (2018), *Working it Out: Employment Services in Australia*, P44

The findings of the State of Volunteering in Australia 2016⁸⁴ show some of the organisational barriers that are faced by volunteers. It found that:

- There is a disconnect between the volunteering roles that people are interested in and the roles that organisations are offering.
- There is misalignment between the sectors volunteers are interested in and the sectors with the most positions advertised.
- Volunteers are deterred from volunteering because of lack of flexibility, personal expenses incurred, lack of reimbursement for out of pocket expenses, and burdensome administrative requirements.
- Volunteer Involving Organisations generally lack resources, both human and financial, and this can inhibit their ability to engage volunteers with barriers (e.g. people with a disability, people with language barriers). Lack of resources may also reduce an organisation's ability to recognise their existing volunteer base and engage with corporates through Employee Volunteering Programs.
- Volunteers are not getting responses from Volunteer Involving Organisations about opportunities fast enough.
- Online methods of recruitment and volunteering could complement the needs of future volunteers.

These challenges have a particular impact on regional communities where the need is high and the pool of available volunteers is smaller. Tasmania's Volunteer Involving Organisations would benefit from a strategic, place-based approach that safeguards volunteering in communities.

Safeguarding volunteering on a place basis

Trends in motivation and barriers to volunteering show that if action is not taken to change the trajectory there will be a significant gap between the demand for volunteer services and supply in Tasmania.

Across the world over the next decade the impacts of challenges like climate change and inequality will place increasing pressure on local communities. In this fast changing and complex environment there is a need for strong local governance and leadership. There is also an increasing need to mobilise support for marginalised individuals, and to organise at a local level to respond to emergencies. One response is to build resilience from the ground up through fostering local volunteerism.

Formal and informal volunteering has a critical role to play in the sustainability of local communities and the success of regional economies. Investing and organising on a place basis in local volunteerism will bring strategic benefits to Tasmania.

There is a global shift in public policy and service design from centralised to place-based local responses, and the engagement of citizens in the design of local solutions. Globally, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes a people-centred approach to development.

In Australia, place-based approaches are being touted as the way to solve our complex challenges. The Productivity Commission's 2017 Report on Transitioning Regional Economies states that contemporary views on regional policy favours place-based approaches that encourage regions to make greater use of their potential in order to achieve economic and employment growth.⁸⁵

The recent Employment Services Review Report also proposes a place-based response to the complex problem of unemployment. It suggests a way forward that includes a better understanding of the local labour

⁸⁴ Volunteering Australia (2016) *State of Volunteering in Australia: Help Create Happiness*, Pvii

⁸⁵ Productivity Commission (2017), P70

market, the establishment of local partnerships and governance, including local government, and allocating funding on a place basis.⁸⁶

In Tasmania, TasCOSS has recently led the Community Innovation and Investment Project, engaging community members and local councils in four communities in the design and delivery of local solutions to unemployment.

Unlike other states, local government in Tasmania does not deliver a broad range of human services, health or aged services. It is community sector organisations, and their many volunteers that fill the gaps between State and Commonwealth funded and delivered programs and community need. The powers and functions of Tasmania's councils that are set out in the *Local Government Act 1993* include: Providing for the health, safety and welfare of the community; representing and promoting the interests of the community; and providing for the peace, order and good government of the municipal area.⁸⁷

There is an opportunity to engage local government in safeguarding volunteering by helping them to understand how to best support volunteer action as a way to build resilient communities. A strategic response can harness existing patterns of behaviour with 80 percent of Tasmanians volunteering within 50 kilometres of their home, and 14.3 percent volunteering directly from their home.⁸⁸

Tasmanians will benefit from a place-based approach that provides the critical infrastructure required for safe, effective and sustainable volunteering. There is an opportunity, in partnership with local government, to collaborate on action that promotes, resources and supports volunteering in local communities, and to assist Tasmanian organisations to recruit, retain and manage their volunteers into the future. Local councils can connect and act as a hub for supporting volunteering in their communities.

Without a strategic intervention now, Tasmania will not have enough volunteers to meet demand. Nationally, volunteering rates are declining. Our population is ageing and will be reliant on the support of fewer people in the workforce who are available for volunteering, especially in our regions. Volunteering is vital for the creation of strong, vibrant communities that can deliver the services and activities that are needed by their people.

⁸⁶ Employment Services 2020 Report (2018), I Want to Work, P34

⁸⁷ Department of Premier and Cabinet:

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⁸⁸ Volunteering Tasmania (2014), P41

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