

# Founders and Lifetime Members



**Shirley Haas**

If it wasn't for the early vision of many people who dedicated their hearts and minds to Volunteering Tasmania in the 90s, the organisation wouldn't be what it is today.

Shirley played an instrumental role in the development of a representative body for volunteers in Tasmania in the early 1990s when she worked alongside her contemporaries Robert Walden, Jill Lohrey, June Hazzlewood, Helene Bourke and Sylvia Godman and many others to prepare the early government submissions to gain funding for a volunteering body in Tasmania. Shirley's early career pathway in recruiting, training and supporting volunteer adult literacy and basic education tutors throughout the 80s meant she developed a very good understanding of the needs of volunteers and the important contribution they make to communities. In 1993 funding was eventually awarded to Tasmania for a volunteering body that had its sole purpose to promote and support volunteerism in Tasmania just like the other Australian states. The centre was set up in Hobart.

Over the years Shirley has volunteered in many roles where she has shared her specific skills in management and administration. When she retired from formal work she joined the VT board and was an active member until 2011.

Shirley made a significant contribution to refining VT's governance when she coordinated the rewriting of the Board's policies, ensuring they were updated and aligned to reflect contemporary Board practices. After leaving the Board she assisted with the editing and proofreading of a number of VT publications including State of Volunteering Reports. She also wrote a potted history of VT for the 20th year anniversary in 2014. Her most memorable and rewarding volunteering experience was with her family when they sponsored an international student from Japan for 12 months in 1985. Despite the cultural and language differences, a wonderful relationship emerged that is still very strong today with regular communication and visits to and from Japan for significant life events. Shirley believes the greatest benefits of volunteering are that it keeps you busy and active and in touch with people and communities. "We would all be a lot poorer in many ways if we didn't have volunteering. Volunteers keep communities going economically and provide vital channels for connectedness."