

## How do we keep our volunteers happy?

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In a state with growing numbers of volunteers, how can an organisation keep their volunteers happy and keep them coming back? Volunteering Tasmania has the answers.

In a period where community organisations are expected to get more results on less money, the onus on attracting volunteers and keeping them engaged and happy will be even greater. How do organisations ensure that they are 'filling up the volunteer's tanks' and not just depleting them? How can an organisation keep a number of unpaid workers happy, engaged and energised?

Volunteers may give time without any financial reward they still need something in return for their efforts and to feel valued in the workplace.

"We advocate really getting to know your volunteers and understanding what they would like to gain from their work. Many volunteers do what they do because they are attracted to the cause of an organisation, or alternatively, because they are interested in learning new skills," said Adrienne Picone, CEO of Volunteering Tasmania.

"Their motivation behind volunteering will guide how you can best provide them with meaningful feedback and recognition," she said.

Weeks such as National Volunteer Week provide opportunities for some high profile appreciation, but volunteers should be thanked all the time.

"Whether it is through words, actions, certificates or involvement in planning, tell volunteers the difference they make," Ms Picone said.

Volunteering Tasmania also has advice for those feeling like their volunteers aren't engaged.

"Ask them about their preferred communication style. Be prepared to be creative in the way that you both provide and receive information, and don't shy away from less traditional channels like social media, if that's what your volunteers want," Ms Picone said.

At the core of every great volunteer experience is the power of choice. The need for organisations to get quality results on limited resources can mean that they feel pressured to hold onto their volunteers. The most effective programs take a volunteer's needs into account and allow them flexibility to leave at any time.

"If you love them, you need to be prepared to let them go, knowing that the door is always open," said Ms Picone.

For more information about volunteer management, or to find out what events are planned in National Volunteer Week, head to [www.volunteeringtas.org.au](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au)

Volunteering Tasmania is also dedicated to connecting potential volunteers with organisations in need. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or if your volunteer program needs volunteers, go to [www.volunteeringtas.org.au](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au) or call 6231 5550.

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