

Positioning Paper

for

State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010



Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEERING TASMANIA BOARD	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
<u>INTRODUCING VT: YOUR STATEWIDE PEAK BODY FOR VOLUNTEERING</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>VOLUNTEERING THE TASMANIAN WAY</u>	<u>5</u>
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN TASMANIA.....	5
WILLING VOLUNTEERS	6
MEANINGFUL ROLES	7
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	8
VOLUNTEERING, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION.....	9
<u>CREATING THE STATE OF VOLUNTEERING REPORT TASMANIA 2010</u>	<u>11</u>
WHY A STATE OF VOLUNTEERING REPORT?	11
WHAT WILL THIS REPORT TELL US?	11
CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH	13
HOW THE REPORT WILL BENEFIT OUR VOLUNTEER SECTOR.....	13
AN INVITATION: HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED.....	15
COUNTDOWN TO THE STATE OF VOLUNTEERING REPORT	15
BIBLIOGRAPHY	16

Message from the Volunteering Tasmania Board

The Board of Volunteering Tasmania (VT) is pleased to present this Positioning Paper as the first step in a larger project, the production of a biennial State of Volunteering Report. Both this Positioning Paper and the State of Volunteering Reports align with VT's vision, our role as the statewide peak body for volunteering, and the achievement of our key strategic goals. In undertaking this project VT again confirms its place as a leader in our national volunteer sector – as a peak body that provides strong and effective leadership for the Tasmanian volunteer sector today and confidently helps to shape the volunteer sector of tomorrow.

We can say one clear thing about the current volunteering environment - it is changing. We see this statistically in the data that is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Voluntary Work Surveys, and VT sees it anecdotally in our work every day with volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. The Tasmanian population is ageing, people are working differently and family profiles are changing, which are all impacting on people's availability for volunteering. There is a greater focus on professionalism of volunteering, regulatory requirements, and keeping up with rapid advances in technology which can impose a heavy burden on some voluntary organisations. And there is the perennial concern about how to engage younger people as volunteers to ensure future sustainability.

As the peak body, VT aims to support and assist the Tasmanian volunteer sector to adapt to these changing circumstances and meet the challenges that they present. One key way of providing that support is through engaging in relevant, local research that furnishes useful data and information about the sector, for the sector. Research provides a tangible, measurable, evidence-based understanding of how volunteering exists within the Tasmanian community. This information is essential for VT to plan and deliver appropriate services and support. It is equally important for VT to make the information and data which arises from our research available so that it becomes a shared resource, for use by all stakeholders in the Tasmanian volunteer sector.

In this positioning paper we want to present our plans for creating the State of Volunteering Report. We are excited by the great potential of this project to benefit the whole Tasmanian volunteer sector, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be part of creating this resource and assist us in achieving that potential.

Frances Healy
Chair, Volunteering Tasmania Board

Introduction

This Positioning Paper commences Volunteering Tasmania's new and ambitious endeavour - the production of a State of Volunteering Report for the state of Tasmania. It marks the beginning of an active and ongoing dialogue between Volunteering Tasmania and the entire Tasmanian volunteer sector. The result of this dialogue will be the *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*, the first of a biennial resource that VT presents to the Tasmanian community to provide a picture of who we are as a sector, our future pathways and opportunities.

This paper is a prelude to the State of Volunteering Report. It describes VT's aims and intentions in planning, researching and presenting the report.

The purpose of this Positioning Paper is:

- To outline VT's vision for the State of Volunteering Report;
- To begin a discussion about the current volunteering environment in Tasmania;
- To describe the consultation and research VT will undertake in preparing the State of Volunteering Report;
- To invite all stakeholders in Tasmania's volunteering community to be part of creating the State of Volunteering Report and help us present a picture of volunteering in Tasmania today and help shape the way it will look tomorrow.

Introducing VT: Your statewide Peak Body for volunteering

VT is a vibrant and unique organisation which provides leadership as a peak body and delivers a range of services directly to the Tasmanian volunteering sector. These two equally valuable functions are not distinct from each other. Rather, they intersect, are mutually sustaining, and amplify the capacity of VT to achieve its mission of *creating throughout Tasmania an environment which promotes and sustains effective volunteering by all people*.

As the peak body for volunteering, VT engages in research, consultation and analysis of all aspects of volunteering as it exists within our state. VT advocates for and makes representations on behalf of the volunteer sector – within the sector itself, to all levels of government, to funding bodies, and to the general community. VT actively promotes and communicates about volunteering, its value and importance in our communities. VT is a committed member of national and international volunteering networks and links the Tasmanian volunteering sector with information and resources via these networks.

Our peak body leadership activities have a reciprocal relationship with the services delivered by VT, each informing and being informed by the other. VT staff and services are deployed to effectively engage in our peak body activities, including consultation and research, in conjunction with delivering a variety of direct services and support.

✧ *Through leadership we serve and in serving we learn how best to lead.*

VT's services are based on three key areas: supporting and facilitating pathways to volunteering for all members of the community; providing information and support to existing volunteers; and providing consultancy, resources and information to volunteer-involving organisations and programs. In all our services VT seeks to build capacity – in individuals, in organisations, in communities. In 2009 VT launched two new flagship services that will be cornerstones of our support to the volunteer sector – *Volunteer Connect* is an online recruitment service which uses community access points to open pathways to volunteering for all members of our communities; and the *Volunteer Management Review* is a comprehensive and constructive process of reviewing an organisation's volunteer management practices against the national standards to provide guidance on achieving best practice. For more information on the full array of VT's services, visit www.volunteeringtas.org.au or ph 1800 677 895.

VT is now well placed to both lead and serve the volunteer sector throughout Tasmania. With new financial support from the state government and a new staffing structure VT has significantly increased its capacity and expanded its services. VT has taken its operations to a new level, with an abundance of energy, passion and commitment for optimising the contribution of volunteers in the Tasmanian community.

Volunteering Tasmania is *your* volunteering peak body:

- ***For individuals –***
VT provides information about volunteering and assistance in finding the most suitable volunteering opportunities.
- ***For volunteers -***
VT provides information, advice and support on all issues relating to volunteering. VT consults with the volunteer community about their concerns and needs to better represent their interests and deliver effective services.
- ***For volunteer-involving organisations and programs –***
VT provides volunteer recruitment services, consultancy services to enhance volunteer management, and training and professional development opportunities for staff. VT consults with a broad network of volunteer-involving organisations about issues and challenges they experience in order to effectively advocate for their interests and provide relevant support and services.
- ***For businesses/corporates –***
VT provides information and advice on how businesses/corporates can become involved in enhancing and developing volunteering in Tasmania. Through partnerships, VT seeks to create avenues for greater community involvement and investment by the business/corporate sector
- ***For government -***
VT engages with all levels of government to enhance and develop volunteering in Tasmania. Through partnerships, joint projects, and by maintaining close relationships, VT works collaboratively with government as the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania.
- ***For the general community –***
VT engages in community development in all regions of the state. Undertaking innovative projects and forming partnerships to strengthen and enhance our communities. VT promotes volunteering, informing the community about the value and benefits of participation in volunteer activities.

Volunteering the Tasmanian way

What we know about volunteering in Tasmania

The overall rate of Tasmanian participation in volunteering is one of the highest in the nation. The 36.3% or 131,000 adult Tasmanians who comprise our active volunteer resource represent a huge array of skills, experience and commitment. However this is not a resource that we can take for granted. In real terms the quantity of volunteering undertaken is decreasing. Compared to the year 2000, Tasmanian volunteers now contribute a million *fewer* hours each year. In the period 2000-2006, the median number of hours contributed by volunteers each year dropped by an alarming 30%.¹ To strengthen volunteering in Tasmania, we need to encourage, support and protect our volunteers, and to monitor and respond to changes in the patterns of Tasmanian volunteering, especially as they impact on community resilience and social inclusion.

Strategies to increase and sustain volunteering by Tasmanians are critical to the future social and economic prosperity of the State. It is widely understood that volunteering performs a crucial role in supporting social inclusion, skills development, and economic growth. As such, volunteering is a strategic investment in Tasmania in terms of its social capital, its contribution to the economy and offsets to government expenditure.

- ★ *36.3% (131 000) of all Tasmanian adults volunteer.*²
- ★ *In Tasmania 33.1% of males and 38.9% of females volunteer.*³
- ★ *Volunteers contribute an average of 134.9 hours per year.*⁴

A useful way to understand the volunteer sector is to think of it as a three-legged stool⁵. The three legs of the volunteering stool are: **willing volunteers**, **meaningful roles**, and **effective leadership**.



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Voluntary Work, Australia, 2006*, Cat No 4441.0. ABS Canberra, 2007, pg 17

² ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 18

³ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 18

⁴ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 19

⁵ Acknowledgement for this analogy to Andy Fryar, www.ozvpm.com

Each 'leg' or element is essential for successful and sustainable volunteering to occur, and while individually they are distinct elements of volunteering, they need to be understood as inextricably linked with each other:

- no matter how many willing volunteers there are, without meaningful roles for them to undertake we cannot benefit from their contribution;
- the contributions of willing volunteers in meaningful roles will go un-tapped, under-utilised, and unrecognised without effective leadership and management in place to support them;
- and, as there is a natural lifecycle to volunteering, even with meaningful roles that are well managed and effectively led there will still be a need for a continual supply of more willing volunteers.

We cannot afford to look at any of these elements of volunteering in isolation, or mistakenly believe that the promotion and support of one element will be of benefit to the volunteering sector without the promotion and support of the other two. Just as it is important for all three legs of a stool to be equally strong for that stool to be stable and functional, it must be ensured that all three elements of volunteering are equally supported, strengthened and developed so that our volunteering sector is not just functional, but able to flourish.

Willing Volunteers

What does a volunteer look like? Thankfully there is no simple answer to that question because a volunteer can be anyone – an 8 year old helping on Clean Up Australia Day, a 17 year old participating on a youth advisory committee, a 22 year old presenting a community radio program, a 35 year old monitoring wildlife in a national park, a 46 year old on-call for the Tasmanian Ambulance Service, a 53 year old conducting tours at the local history museum, a 67 year old providing on-line business mentoring, a 71 year old leading a seniors fitness class, an 84 year old as a Board member of a community organisation...

Further, volunteers come in every colour, creed, sexual orientation, social background, and educational level – from every walk of life imaginable. This huge diversity is represented across the volunteering sector and also within individual programs. A significant challenge in leading and managing volunteers is meeting the needs and expectations of such a diverse workforce.

★ *The highest rate of volunteering is from people aged 35-44 yrs at 43% and 45-50 yrs at 39%.⁶*

Despite many pessimistic predictions, our supply of willing volunteers in Tasmania continues to grow. However, the way that people want to volunteer – what they do, where they do it, and for how long – is changing significantly. The good news is that people **do** want to be volunteers. The challenge is that, as a society, the things we want volunteers to do still tend to be those same traditional roles and services. Volunteers are changing, but volunteer opportunities aren't necessarily changing with them. We know

⁶ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, ibid, pg 17

that the Tasmanian sector is beginning to feel the effects of this divergence and that this is an area which requires more thorough investigation and understanding so that the challenge can be successfully and strategically met.

- ✧ *Almost two thirds of those who became involved in volunteering in the last 10 years were asked by someone (35%) or did so because they knew someone involved in volunteering (29%).⁷*
- ✧ *More than half of volunteers (52%) reported that at least one of their parents had done voluntary work, and a similar number (53%) had participated in volunteering as a child.⁸*

We know that the most common pathway to volunteering is word of mouth – people become involved when they know someone who already volunteers in that area or they were asked directly to participate. However, in our ever-changing world, even ‘word of mouth’ begins to evolve and change. For many members of our community ‘word of mouth’ now encompasses technology – social networking, mobile phones, blogging, websites, online communities, etc. In reaching potential volunteers, particularly younger volunteers, organisations now need to attend to their virtual presence as much as their physical presence. People expect information to be available instantaneously, to be able to act immediately on their decision to volunteer, to be communicated with in a variety of ways. Now, more than ever before, our volunteering sector has to keep up with the world’s fast pace of change to ensure that we can continue to forge effective pathways to volunteering.

Meaningful Roles

Just as volunteers themselves are diverse, volunteering happens in Tasmania across an incredibly diverse range of roles, organisations and sectors.

In an attempt to define volunteering we can group it into broad categories: sport and recreation; community and welfare; arts and culture; justice; conservation and animal welfare; religious and charities; education and training; emergency services; advocacy and political. But

But categorisation doesn’t remotely do justice to the myriad of ever-expanding volunteer roles and activities that are available to the Tasmanian community. There would be many volunteer roles and organisations that do not fit neatly into any one of these categories but are just as valid in their contribution as part of our sector. Volunteering can also vary according to frequency or duration – short or long term, one-off events, episodic, etc. There is quite literally something for everyone when it comes to volunteering. And with the advent of virtual volunteering you don’t even have to leave your house if that is the volunteering preference which best suits your lifestyle.

The four most common types of organisations in which people volunteer in Tasmania were:

1. Sport and physical recreation 24%
2. Community/welfare 22%
3. Education and training 15%
4. Religious groups 12%⁹

⁷ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 31

⁸ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 32

⁹ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 44

The top reasons volunteers gave for choosing to volunteer were:

1. Helping others or the community 56%
2. Personal satisfaction 43%
3. Personal/family involvement 34%
4. To do something worthwhile 34% ¹⁰

The key to a successful volunteer role is the word 'meaningful'. Often volunteers are attracted to a role not so much for activity itself, but rather for the meaning it holds for them, the impact they see it will have, the goals they will help to achieve, the value they see it possesses. Volunteering is a supreme gift in our super-fast world – the gift of time. And people do not give it lightly.

Potential volunteers need to be presented with volunteering options that will resonate not just with their skills and interests, but also with their passions and values.

It is our challenge, as the Tasmanian volunteering sector, to demonstrate the value, impact and passion in our volunteer roles; to provide all those potential volunteers in the community with meaningful opportunities to volunteer. The sector will need to be increasingly innovative and adaptable to evolve **with** the community and retain a place for volunteering as an integral part of that community.

Effective Leadership

Leadership and management of volunteers and volunteering activity is often the area which goes unrecorded, unmeasured, and unseen. Currently there is minimal data about how volunteering is led and facilitated in Tasmania. Based on VT's extensive work with volunteer-involving organisations, we can anecdotally report some realities and challenges faced in this aspect of our sector: those who manage volunteers are invariably under-resourced and time-poor; there is very little understanding of the scope and complexity involved in managing a volunteer workforce; there are limited opportunities for professional development in this area; there is no local access to accredited training and qualifications in volunteer management; managers of volunteers commonly experience isolation in their role and a lack of support.

From our work with volunteer-involving organisations, VT understands that there are some common areas of concern when it comes to managing volunteers and volunteer programs. These include: recruiting suitable volunteers; providing appropriate training and development; OH&S requirements and risk management; having appropriate policies and procedures; balancing the need for accountable management with minimising 'red tape'; the time spent on compliance and reporting requirements for funding bodies.

While actual numbers are not known, it is a fact that in Tasmania there are many people who are responsible for managing volunteers. Some are paid employees while others are volunteers themselves. Having mentioned some of the realities, challenges and concerns that this group of people face, it is also important to note that they demonstrate a level of commitment, passion, and capability that is truly dazzling. And this is a major factor in volunteering happening so successfully and contributing so significantly to our community.

¹⁰ ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 33

- ★ *The value of volunteering to Australia's economy is estimated to be \$42 billion per annum.¹¹*
- ★ *Volunteering counts – not just personally and socially but also economically.*

Volunteering is a significant contributor to the Tasmanian economy. Therefore, the way in which volunteering is managed and resourced is important in order to protect, sustain and grow that contribution into the future.

To ensure that our sector is robust and sustainable we clearly need to know more about this third leg of our volunteering sector. In the State of Volunteering Report, VT is looking forward to examining the leadership and management of volunteers in Tasmania so that we may better understand how to effectively support and advocate for this area.

Volunteering, Community and Social Inclusion

- ★ *Volunteers donate 18 million hours of service to the Tasmanian community each year.¹²*

VT recognises that one of the primary ways in which Tasmanians connect with each other and with their communities, is through volunteering. Volunteering contributes to every aspect of our civil society from small everyday informal acts of service to more formalised volunteering that is managed through an organisation. Volunteering occurs across all sectors and regions of our community, all aspects of life, all hours of the day, and every day of the year. Without exception, every member of our community will experience the benefit of volunteering.

“People will not only help others but will also enrich their own lives, fulfilling personal passions and goals, and enabling others to do likewise. And at any point in our lives we might be givers or beneficiaries of this volunteering effort - or both.”¹³

Volunteering plays a pivotal role in strengthening communities. It is a channel through which communities work together for collective quality of life.¹⁴ In every individual instance of volunteering and in the collective total of all volunteering, healthy communities are created, strengthened and maintained.

- ★ *86% of volunteers surveyed in the National Survey of Volunteering Issues 2008 felt that volunteering increased their sense of community belonging.¹⁵*

Social inclusion is defined as the extent to which individuals, families and communities are connected to and able to fully participate in the economic and social activities of the broader community.¹⁶ As highlighted in Tasmania's recently released social inclusion strategy, there is an important relationship between volunteering and social inclusion. “Volunteering performs a crucial role in supporting social inclusion, skills and economic

¹¹ Ironmonger, D, *Volunteers and Volunteering*. Federation Press, Melbourne, 2000

¹² ABS Voluntary Work, 2007, *ibid*, pg 75

¹³ Extract from The Commission on the Future of Volunteering, *Manifesto for Change* Volunteering England, London, 2008, pg 2

¹⁴ The Commission on the Future of Volunteering, *Manifesto for Change*, 2008, *ibid*, pg 2

¹⁵ Volunteering Australia, National Survey of Volunteering Issues 08, Volunteering Australia, Melbourne, 2008, pg 5

¹⁶ Volunteering Queensland, *Volunteering As Social Inclusion*, Volunteering Queensland Position Paper, 5 February 2008, <http://www.volqld.org.au/resources/articles/volunteering%20as%20social%20inclusion.pdf> (Accessed 16 September 2009), pg 1

prosperity. At an individual level, volunteering is about social networks and relationships that help provide links to employment, cultural and community activities, as well as a helping hand between neighbours. At a community level, volunteering provides people with strong social and community networks that build the capacity and resilience of communities to respond to issues and crises.”¹⁷

Volunteering is a key pathway to social inclusion through:

- Providing social networks;
- Creating a sense of belonging and purpose;
- Enhancing confidence and self esteem;
- Creating opportunities for learning, development and skills acquisition;
- Providing opportunities for individuals and communities to identify and address local issues.

¹⁷ Adams, Professor David, Social Inclusion Commissioner, *A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania*, Government of Tasmania, Hobart, September 2009 pg 54

Creating the State of Volunteering Report Tasmania 2010

Why a State of Volunteering Report?

As we have seen, throughout our state, everyday, people's lives are touched by volunteers and the services and support they provide. Tasmanians of all ages, in all regions, in all of life's circumstances, are involved in and benefit from our volunteering sector. Perhaps it is because volunteering is part of the very fabric of our days, that its presence can often go uncelebrated, unrecognized, and, at times, unnoticed. In presenting the State of Volunteering Report from 2010 onwards, VT wishes to very clearly and publicly celebrate and recognise the outstanding, yet very commonplace presence and contribution of volunteers and volunteering in our Tasmanian community.

The State of Volunteering Report is intended to be a source of information and data for the Tasmanian volunteer sector. It will supplement and contextualise the limited statistical information that is already available and, in doing so, provide a stimulus for strategic, research-based action to support our volunteer sector. The Report is also intended to be an inspiration - to those already involved in volunteering and those yet to be involved. It will present the human face of volunteering in Tasmania: tell the stories of

the people and places involved with volunteering in our state.

Objectives for the State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010

- To understand Tasmania's state of health in terms of volunteering.
- To provide valid, specific data to do with volunteering in Tasmania that is available as a resource to all stakeholders in the volunteer sector.
- To obtain data from which VT can formulate recommendations for public policy and action around volunteering in Tasmania.

The main target audience for the State of Volunteering Report is the volunteer sector itself, which includes volunteers, those who manage and lead volunteers, and volunteer-involving organisations. Other stakeholders associated with the volunteer sector, such as government, funding bodies, and the general community, are also important audiences for this report.

What will this Report tell us?

Volunteering is multifaceted; it is many things to many people. The State of Volunteering Report aims to investigate what volunteering looks like in Tasmania 2010 - in our community, in our lives. To do this we will gather and analyse relevant data in order to: understand and learn from local experiences and successes; capture local issues and challenges; and note the features that are changing and evolving in Tasmania's volunteering environment.

Essentially, the State of Volunteering Report will tell us about the three-legged stool of Tasmania's volunteering - who is volunteering, what they are doing, and what leadership and management is in place around them. We will have the opportunity to see how strong the legs of our stool are – whether they are able, individually and collectively, to sustain a functional and flourishing volunteering sector.

Willing volunteers:

The Report will tell us about who is volunteering in Tasmania – their motivations, pathways to volunteering, and what it means in their lives. We will seek a better understanding of how to strengthen and support people's pathways to volunteering, including newly emerging pathways, so the sector can be supported to continue evolving and developing into the future.

Meaningful roles:

Because of the huge diversity of volunteering in our community it will be impossible to identify and represent every instance of volunteering in the State of Volunteering Report. However, this will be our goal. We will reach out across the spectrum of volunteering to find out what roles people undertake as volunteers, who they volunteer with, and how much volunteering they do.

Effective Leadership:

In the State of Volunteering Report we will 'shine a light' on the leadership, facilitation and resourcing of volunteering to find out what is in place, how volunteering is sustained and supported, and what challenges are faced.

The Tasmania 2010: State of Volunteering Report will:

- Collect quantitative data about volunteers and volunteering in Tasmania;
- Present individual volunteer stories to illustrate the experience of volunteering;
- Explore the pathways that bring individuals to volunteering and investigate the motivations of volunteers;
- Describe the types of volunteering that occur - the roles, sectors, and regions in which they are located;
- Examine the leadership, management and resources that are devoted to volunteering;
- Present case studies of volunteer programs to illustrate both the successes and challenges of our current volunteer environment.
- Furnish ideas, inspiration and recommendations for action to move forward and confidently create the Tasmanian volunteer sector of tomorrow.

Consultation and Research

VT's ambitious project, the creation of the State of Volunteering Report, will only be achieved with the significant involvement and contribution of the volunteering sector throughout the state. The success of this Report will rest on extensive consultation with that sector – surveying, listening, discussing, capturing stories, documenting experiences - building a true snapshot of the state of volunteering in Tasmania in 2010.

Our consultation and research will take a number of forms:

- **General surveys** to broadly capture quantitative information.
- **Focus groups** and targeted discussions to examine our findings in more depth and ensure that all aspects of the volunteering spectrum are represented.
- **Case studies** to use personal stories as illustrations of particular issues and experiences, and to present the real, human face of Tasmanian volunteering.

VT recognises that there will be challenges and limitations in collecting quantitative data from the whole volunteering sector in a comprehensive and balanced way. In designing the research methodology for the State of Volunteering Report, VT will make every attempt to overcome the challenges and mitigate the limitations to ensure that the data collected is a source of genuine, representative information.

All consultation and research for our first State of Volunteering Report will be conducted from January to June 2010. Both face-to-face and electronic mediums will be employed to undertake the consultation. VT will draw on its existing networks amongst the volunteering community and forge new relationships to ensure that our reach is as wide as possible.

The information gathered through our consultations and research will then be analysed and presented as the *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*, the launch of which is planned for October 2010. This is the inaugural Report of what will be a biennial project for Volunteering Tasmania.

How the Report will benefit our volunteer sector

The State of Volunteering Report will be an historical document – it will capture a picture of who we are as a volunteer sector in Tasmania in 2010. In creating this document we are orienting ourselves in the present so as to look forward and create our future. As the first in a series of State of Volunteering Reports, the 2010 publication will establish a baseline of data on volunteers and volunteering in Tasmania from which we can gauge progress and changes in subsequent State of Volunteering Reports.

It may sometimes feel that volunteering occurs in isolation and seems to go unnoticed. The State Of Volunteering Report is an attempt to thread together all the individual instances of volunteering and show it to be a rich, intricate tapestry of our community life. The State of Volunteering Report places everyone involved in volunteering - volunteers,

organisations, leaders of volunteers – into a context, a connected network, a community. We want the Report to inspire pride and self-value in those Tasmanians who volunteer and those who facilitate their volunteering. And we want people in the community who do not yet volunteer to hear the stories and say to themselves “I could do that, I want to be involved!”

Using the current, local quantitative and qualitative data presented in the State of Volunteering Report, VT will be equipped to advocate on behalf of the whole sector. In actively building this store of information and data, VT will have a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the Tasmanian volunteer sector. This understanding will furnish VT with the capacity to more meaningfully lobby for public policy outcomes that genuinely support volunteering and to mobilise support for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations – from all levels of government, with funding bodies, and amongst the general community.

As well as providing VT with a better understanding of the sector, the information and data in the State of Volunteering Report becomes a common resource for the entire sector to draw from. Whether it be ideas and strategies to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers, information available to incorporate into funding submissions, or as a springboard for further research, this Report is specifically intended to be of material benefit for all stakeholders in the Tasmanian volunteer sector. It is a gift, offered by VT, to the sector that it both leads and serves as peak body.

VT will also use the information collected through the consultation processes for the State of Volunteering Report to better inform the services it delivers. The insight gained will allow VT to provide more effective and focused support to both individuals and organisations in order to stimulate and nurture volunteering in Tasmania.

Summary of the benefits from the State of Volunteering Report:

- An historical document – a picture of volunteering in Tasmania in 2010;
- Relevant, current, local data and information on the Tasmanian volunteer sector available to all stakeholders in that sector;
- A detailed evidence-base from which VT can identify needs, plan services, and direct representation;
- A sense of connection and identity for the broad and diverse activity that is volunteering;
- The inspiration of pride in, and recognition of, the importance and value of volunteering in our community.

Most importantly, the State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010 is not a destination. Rather it is the beginning of a journey – a journey that we will embark on together as a sector. VT plans to produce a State of Volunteering Report on a biennial basis. This will permit each report to have a life-span which allows the opportunity to track the impact that the report has, to measure the degree to which it achieves the benefits outlined above, and the chance to pursue the recommendations for action contained within it. In this way we will progress naturally towards the themes and focus for the next State of Volunteering Report. VT sees this as the beginning of a cycle of positive growth and reinforcement in our interaction with and support for the volunteering sector and the Tasmanian community.

An Invitation: how YOU can be involved

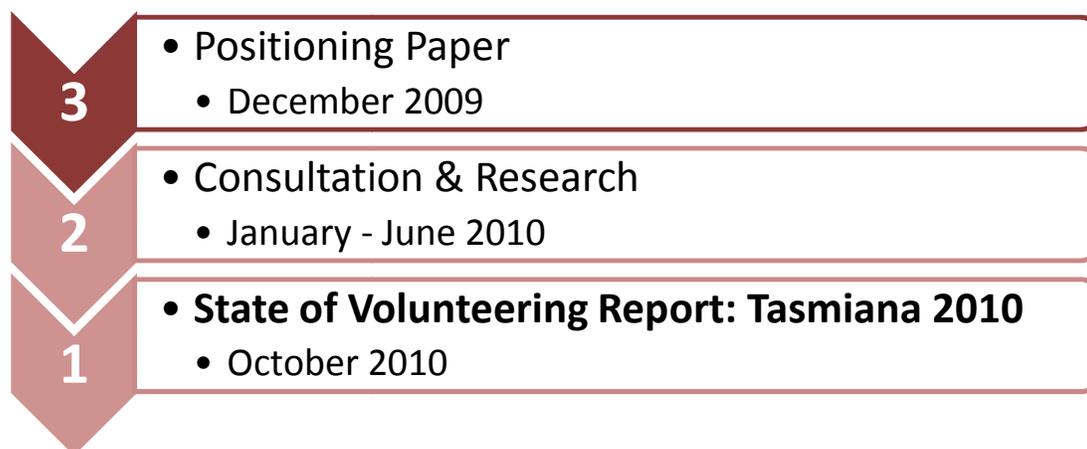
VT warmly invites you to partner with us as we begin this exciting undertaking! Your assistance will ensure the inaugural State of Volunteering Report will be a success story for the whole Tasmanian volunteer sector.

As described above, VT will be conducting extensive consultation and research amongst the sector to produce the State of Volunteering Report. A page has been created on our website to provide information and updates on the progress of the Report and to facilitate some of our consultation - www.volunteeringtasmania.org.au

What you can do RIGHT NOW:

- **Register** your interest in participating in VT's consultations for the State of Volunteering Report
Visit www.volunteeringtas.org.au
Email megw@volunteeringtas.org.au
Phone 1800 677 895
- **Share** this Positioning Paper
Within your organisation, amongst your stakeholders and networks;
With your family, friends and community members involved in volunteering.
- **Stay tuned** in early 2010 for more information as we kick off our program of consultation!

Countdown to the State of Volunteering Report



Bibliography

Adams, Professor David, Social Inclusion Commissioner, *A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania*, Government of Tasmania, Hobart, September 2009

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Voluntary Work*, Australia, 2006, Cat No 4441.0. ABS Canberra, 2007

Fryar, Andy, <http://www.ozvpm.com/hottopics.php> (accessed 30 November 2009)

Ironmonger, D, *Volunteers and Volunteering*, Federation Press, Melbourne, 2000

The Commission on the Future of Volunteering, *Manifesto for Change*, Volunteering England, London, 2008

Volunteering Australia, *National Survey of Volunteering Issues 08*, Volunteering Australia, Melbourne, 2008

Volunteering Queensland, *Volunteering As Social Inclusion*, Volunteering Queensland Position Paper, 5 February 2008

<http://www.volqld.org.au/resources/articles/volunteering%20as%20social%20inclusion.pdf> (Accessed 16 September 2009)