

Volunteering – Retire with Purpose

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Retiring is often seen as an exciting time, the beginning of a new chapter, a chance to finish all those projects, visit family, have a massive clean-out and consolidate your life. All that free time. However, not all people feel the same way, in fact many people can find it a rather daunting prospect. After years of routine and daily contact with co-workers, the thought of endless free time can cause anxiety.

Finding a focus can ease the transition into retirement, and increasingly more people are choosing to volunteer.

“We know a lot of people start volunteering once they retire,” says Alison Lai, CEO of Volunteering Tasmania. “They often say they’ve never had the time before, between working and raising families. After retiring they have a chance to explore interests they hadn’t been able to engage in before.

“Older volunteers are highly valued by organisations for their wealth of knowledge, skills and experience. They are also seen as mentors for younger volunteers who learn a lot from them,” said Alison.

“Volunteering is also a way to meet new people who share the same interests, who care about the same things. Volunteering can introduce you to a social network and will keep your brain and body active.”

Studies in 2014¹ indicated that people between 65 and 74 years of age volunteer, on average, 22.8 hours per month – almost double other age groups who volunteer on average 12.5 hours per month. Research published on the Volunteering Tasmania website also highlights the numerous benefits that may come from volunteering; decreased feelings of isolation, better overall mental and physical health, and a lower mortality rate than non-volunteers.

A shining example of this is Joy Searle, winner of the “Anglicare Lifestyle Community Care and Health” category at the 2017 Tasmanian Volunteering Awards. Joy began volunteering after the passing of her husband, to encourage her to go out and meet new people.

Joy has been volunteering for a community organisation for 26 years; being a senior citizen herself gives her an insight into the difficulties faced by many of our aging population, allowing her to form a genuine connection with the people she meets.

Volunteering Tasmania provides a free 'Volunteer Connect' online service on their website www.volunteeringtas.org.au for those who would like to explore volunteering opportunities. They also offer a face-to-face consultation service in Hobart, Sorell or Burnie. To book into this free service call 1800 677 895.

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ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TASMANIA:

Volunteering Tasmania is the peak body for volunteering in the state, working closely with Volunteer Involving Organisations to represent the interests of all Tasmanians involved in volunteering through community engagement programs, advocacy, research and policy development.

¹ [State of Volunteering Report 2014](#), The economic Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering in Tasmania; a joint research project by the Institute of Project Management and Volunteering Tasmania.