

Volunteering Tasmania's Board of Directors - 2018



Rachel Johnson (Chair)

Rachel is currently employed by Hydro Tasmania as the Government Relations Manager. She has worked with Hydro Tasmania for over 14 years. Her interest in volunteering was reinvigorated by the 'skills in action' program which is Hydro Tasmania's way of providing pro-bono professional expertise to community groups.

Rachel has a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Tasmania and has a Masters of Regulatory economics from the ANU. She is a Company Directors graduate, graduating with an order of merit.

Rachel is passionate in developing young people and actively mentors new graduates and promotes the exiting opportunities available to them through volunteering. She is an active volunteer who derives great pleasure in sharing her skills and finds that she gains as much rewards as the people she is working with.

Donald Coventry (Deputy Chair)

Donald Coventry has 27 years senior executive level experience in both the arts and the environment/natural resource management (NRM) in Australia.

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He has twice been a public art gallery director (Latrobe and Cairns), a radio station manager (3MBS-FM), CEO of the national scientific research and conservation organisation Birds Australia (now Birdlife Australia), CEO of Southern Gulf Catchments in Queensland, a Regional Director for the Department of Primary Industries in Victoria, and is currently CEO of NRM South in southern Tasmania.

He has extensive knowledge of catchment based NRM planning, project development and management, environmental management and sustainable agriculture. He recently graduated from Monash University with a Masters of Environmental Science, via a research thesis focussing on Oil Vulnerability and Agriculture.

Sonia Shimeld (Treasurer)

Dr Sonia Shimeld is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer with the University of Tasmania, actively researching in governance and accountability. Sonia's PhD focused on governance in the not-for-profit volunteer sector.

Prior to and during her extensive academic career, Sonia worked extensively assisting volunteers and small business in understanding accounting, taxation, financial management and governance. Pursuing her passion of working with volunteers, Sonia is a volunteer board member of three other boards: Chair of Women's Legal Services Tasmania and Treasurer of Mature Artists Dance Experience and the Franklin Working Waterfront.

Michelle Ewington (Volunteering Australia representative)

Michelle has experience within the corporate and community sectors in Learning & Development, Project Management and Organisational Culture.

Michelle is employed by Red Cross and in her role as Manager – Youth, Families and Communities oversees a number of staff and community related programs, with a key interest in community engagement, strengths based approaches to community development, volunteer participation and youth engagement.

Michelle has strong facilitation skills. She has a passion for people, leadership development, individual growth and the development of organisational culture. Michelle joined the VT Board in 2007.

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Claire Ellis

Dr Claire Ellis currently runs her own company, Claire Ellis Consulting, focusing on tourism and regional development opportunities across Australia. She grew up in Tasmania, but also spent 14 years living and working overseas, mostly in Asia, working across both tourism and conservation. Her varied career includes operating a small tourism company, being an employee for tourism operators and NFP conservation agencies, working in Federal and State Government, and being an academic and researcher as well as working as a consultant. Her volunteering background is mostly within conservation and sport and recreation.

Claire is also a Board member of NRM South, Deputy Chair of Ecotourism Australia and a Board Member of the Australian Wildlife Collection. She is a graduate of the AICD's Company Director course, holds a PhD from the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at UTAS (volunteer tourism) and is an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Tasmania.

Helen Geard

Helen works part time as a Natural Resource Management Facilitator / Project Officer with the Southern Midlands Council working with landholders and the wider community to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

She enjoys volunteering for a number of organisations including Girl Guides Australia, the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania, the Uniting Church of Australia and Midlands Tree Committee. Her interest in volunteering started while she was a member of the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania and Agfest field days organising committee.

Helen holds a Graduate Diploma of Environmental Studies and is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program. She is a strong advocate for the role volunteers play within our community.

Liz Lester

Liz joined the VT Board in September 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Law and Business and was admitted to practice as a lawyer in Tasmania in 2012. Liz works for the Department of Justice as an investigation officer having previously worked as a solicitor in private practice in employment law.

Liz has held a previous board position with Girl Guides Tasmania and is passionate about volunteering. Liz has held volunteer roles with Red Cross, the Smith Family and other organisations.

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Stephen Porter

Stephen Porter is a HR professional with a strong business background and Board experience. A founding Director of Searson Buck, he has worked at CEO level and currently provides help to organisations and people through consulting, coaching, mentoring and mediation services. His focus is on assisting people with their personal development, career and business success.

Stephen has a B.Comm, Grad Dip Mgt, and a MBA. He appreciates the value of volunteering and sits on five not for profit Boards and councils where he enjoys an active contribution.

Georgie Ibbott

Georgie Ibbott is a highly qualified executive operating a niche consulting business in Tasmania called Marketing Solutions. Prior to this Georgie successfully led a not-for-profit organisation in the health sector, orchestrated the state-wide merger project for Lifeline Tasmania, plus has extensive experience in the utilities and fast moving consumer goods sectors. She has held various high level executive and Board roles and is motivated to apply her skills to Volunteering Tasmania to ensure the organisation continues to be relevant and sustainable.

Georgie is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and an Associate Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute. Her qualifications include Master of Business Administration, Bachelor of Commerce and the AICD Company Directors Course.