

Volunteering in Tasmania: The Facts Factsheet



The information gathered here is largely drawn from Volunteering Tasmania's State of Volunteering Report 2014. This provides the most accurate reflection of volunteering in Tasmania, particularly in capturing the many and varied ways Tasmanian's give their time.

How many people Volunteer in Tasmania?

In 2014, 4 in 5 Tasmanians were engaged in volunteering in the last twelve months. This statistic includes formal volunteering, corporate volunteering and informal volunteering. This translates to approximately 7.1 million hours donated in Tasmania over a twelve month period.

How do people volunteer?

Volunteering can happen both formally through an organisation or group or informally through providing assistance and care to others in our communities. Volunteering Tasmania recognises the importance of both ways of contributing and acknowledges both forms of contributions in a foundational policy statement setting out how volunteering is defined in Tasmania in our modern day.

This policy is reflected in our 2014 State of Volunteering Report which surveyed volunteering in Tasmania by asking whether individuals 'gave time' to those outside their family – rather than focusing on unpaid work. As a result our 2014 State of Volunteering Report showed that:

- 16.7% of Tasmanians volunteer informally
- 63.1% volunteer through an organisation

Volunteering by age

In 2014, Tasmanians aged 65-74 years of age volunteered the most, donating on average 22.8 hours per month. However our research shows that all other age groups (aged 15 years and over) donated 12.5 hours per month.

What do volunteers do?

Volunteering in Tasmania occurs in many different types of organisations and groups. In 2010, the most common types of organisations and groups in which Tasmanians volunteered were in the areas of sport and physical recreation; religious; welfare and community; and parenting, children and youth.

We have also found that our volunteering landscape is constantly evolving. In 2014, we found that 14.3 per cent of Tasmanians were volunteering online.

Tasmania also has a growing volunteer-tourism industry, with over 4,000 people visiting Tasmania solely to volunteer in 2014.

Why do people volunteer?

There are many and varied reasons as to why people volunteer and their motivations. Overall life satisfaction has been found to be one of the benefits to volunteering. There is a strong relationship between volunteering and health and well being. Other common reasons why people volunteering include:

- Develop and grow self esteem and self worth
- Contribute to communities in emergencies and crisis; building community resilience
- Gain work experience and gather new work skills
- A pathway to employment
- Opportunities to develop friends and social networks
- An opportunity to 'give back' to the community

Research also shows that organisations gain benefits from employees volunteering including:

- Reduced workplace absenteeism
- Reduced employee turnover
- Reduced occupational injuries
- Better productivity and job satisfaction
- Tasmanian employers also see a \$1.2 billion in productivity benefits as a result of their employees volunteering

What does volunteering contribute to Tasmania?

Volunteering brings about numerous personal benefits to individuals who volunteer, and the recipients of volunteer services. We also know businesses and organisations receive great productivity and workplace dividends through their employees volunteering.

However volunteering significantly contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of Tasmania. Our State of Volunteering Report 2014 revealed:

- Volunteers donate on average 7.1 million hours per year. Without this work, the cost to replace the services undertaken by these volunteers would be at least \$2.5 billion.
- Volunteering brings a total benefit to the community to the value of \$4. 9 billion. To put this in context, its contribution on outweighs all our other major industries including forestry, tourism and agriculture.

Tasmanians want to volunteer even more

Our State of Volunteering Report 2014 showed high levels of volunteering already present in the Tasmanian community. However our research shows that Tasmanians want to contribute more! If we supported volunteering like other major Tasmanian industries, we would see significant social and economic growth. Increasing funding into volunteering by as little as 1% per year would bring on average \$70.6 million into the Tasmanian economy. There is a 4 :1 return on investment in the volunteering industry - for every dollar invested, at least \$4 in benefits are received by the community.