Reinvigorating your NILS Volunteer Program:
Removing the barriers to volunteering

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Acknowledgement of Country

Wurundjeri artist:
Ash Firebrace (2021)

MANNINGHAM
VOLUNTEER
RESOURCE SERVICE

EASTERN
VOLUNTEERS

MANNINGHAM

A little bit
about me

The Volunteer Involving Organisation: YOU

The Volunteer

2 SIDES OF THE COIN

BARRIERS?
ENABLERS?

Volunteering?

No death by stats

I promise

Formal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2019 and 2020

State/Territory	Formal volunteering rate (2019)	Formal volunteering rate (2020)
New South Wales	28.9%	23.1%
Victoria	32.1%	24.4%
Queensland	26.5%	25.4%
South Australia	27.1%	26.2%
Western Australia	27.1%	25.6%
Tasmania	34.2%	30.2%
Northern Territory	28.7%	28.4%
Australian Capital Territory	29.8%	30.9%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 15: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences–By State and territory, estimate' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Customised report, ABS, 2021

1. Volunteering is declining even before COVID but around 28% of people formally volunteer
2. Decline most evident in women
3. Rate of formal volunteering is higher in regional areas
4. Gender balance

Most popular ways to informally volunteer-
- providing emotional support' (53.8%),
- providing transport and running errands' (38.2%), and
- domestic work, home maintenance or gardening (37.2%)

Informal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2019 and 2020

State/Territory	Informal volunteering rate (2019)	Informal volunteering rate (2020)
New South Wales	29.1%	33.8%
Victoria	36.0%	31.0%
Queensland	31.9%	32.6%
South Australia	36.3%	28.9%
West Australia	35.6%	30.0%
Tasmania	36.3%	32.9%
Northern Territory	42.3%	36.2%
Australian Capital Territory	40.9%	38.9%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 15: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences–By State and territory, estimate' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Customised report, ABS, 2021

Source: Volunteering Australia Key Volunteering Statistics February 2022

Victorian Volunteering Data

According to the Volunteering Victoria (2020) State of Volunteering Report:

- Volunteers contribute 224 hours a year or 4.3 hours a week

- $58 billion dollars of value to our economy per year

- Pre-COVID, 42% of people surveyed volunteered;

- Post-COVID, the figure fell to 21% *(13.7% in Manningham, ABS Census 2021)*

- 66% of volunteering occurs within the volunteers local community

- 16.9% of volunteering took place online

Is there a typical volunteer?

THE VOLUNTEER IN 2022

15-24 (19.4%),

25-39 (20.9%),

55-69 (24.9%), and

70 years and over (28.0%).

- Any gender

- Most likely to be aged between 40-54 years- 30.5% of formal volunteers

- Most likely to want to formally volunteer in sport and physical recreation (30.7% of volunteers), religious groups (23.1%) and education and training (18.8%).

- Only volunteering in one organisation -66.4%

- In 2020 96.6% of volunteers undertook some in person volunteering

THE VOLUNTEER IN 2022

- Slightly more likely to have a disability 26% compared to 24% without a disability

- Less likely to be CALD as informal volunteering more popular

- More likely to have a part time job 29.8%

- Be a couple household with children ie sport connection

- Have higher rates of educational attainment

- Income is not a huge factor yet

Who are the NILS volunteers?

How do people want to volunteer?

- Virtual Volunteering
- Skilled Volunteering
- Bite Size Volunteering
- Corporate Volunteering
- Cause Related Volunteering
- Volunteering as an Employment Pathway
- Required Volunteering
- Project Volunteering
- Trauma / Emergency Response Spontaneous Volunteering

	18-24 YEARS	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
% of people	30%	29	40	41	34	40	36	25
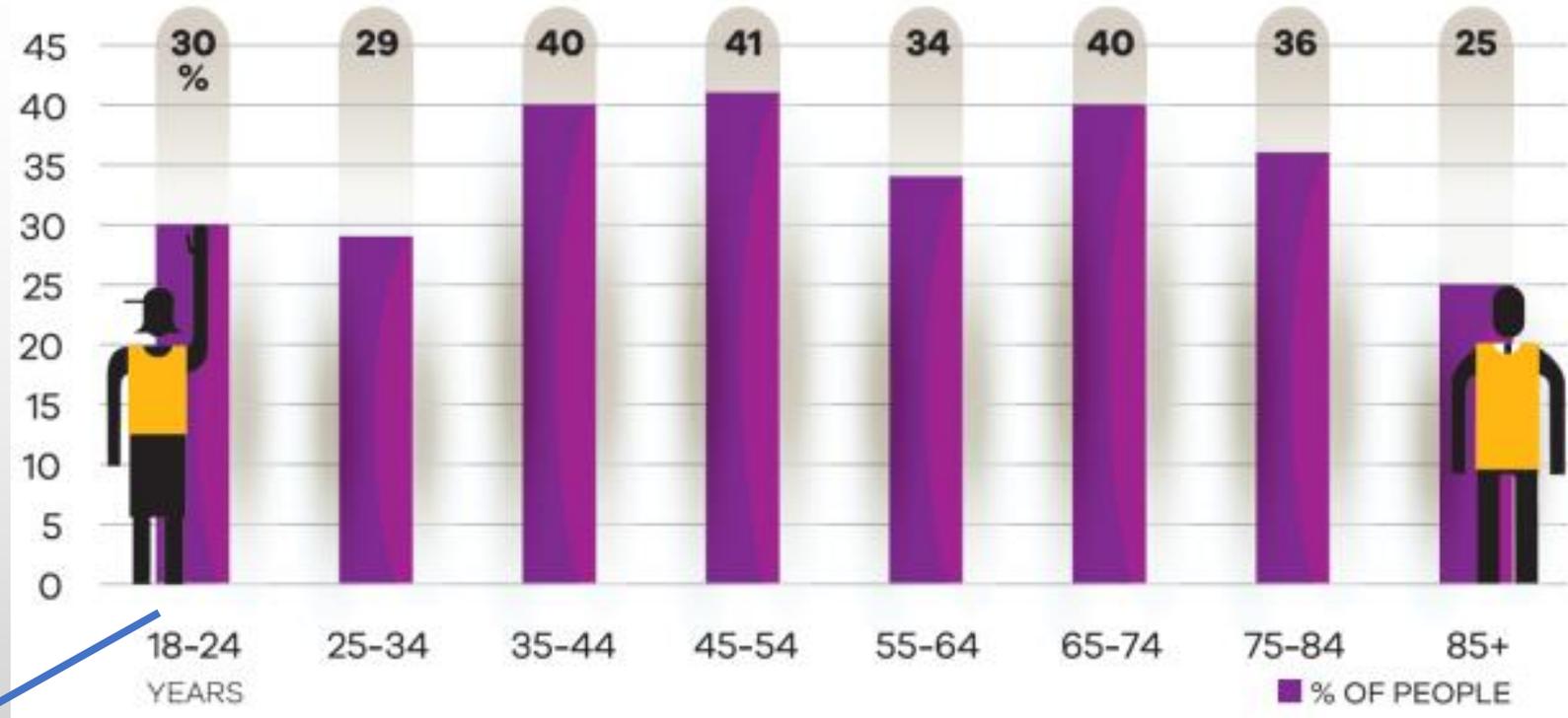
People with disabilities

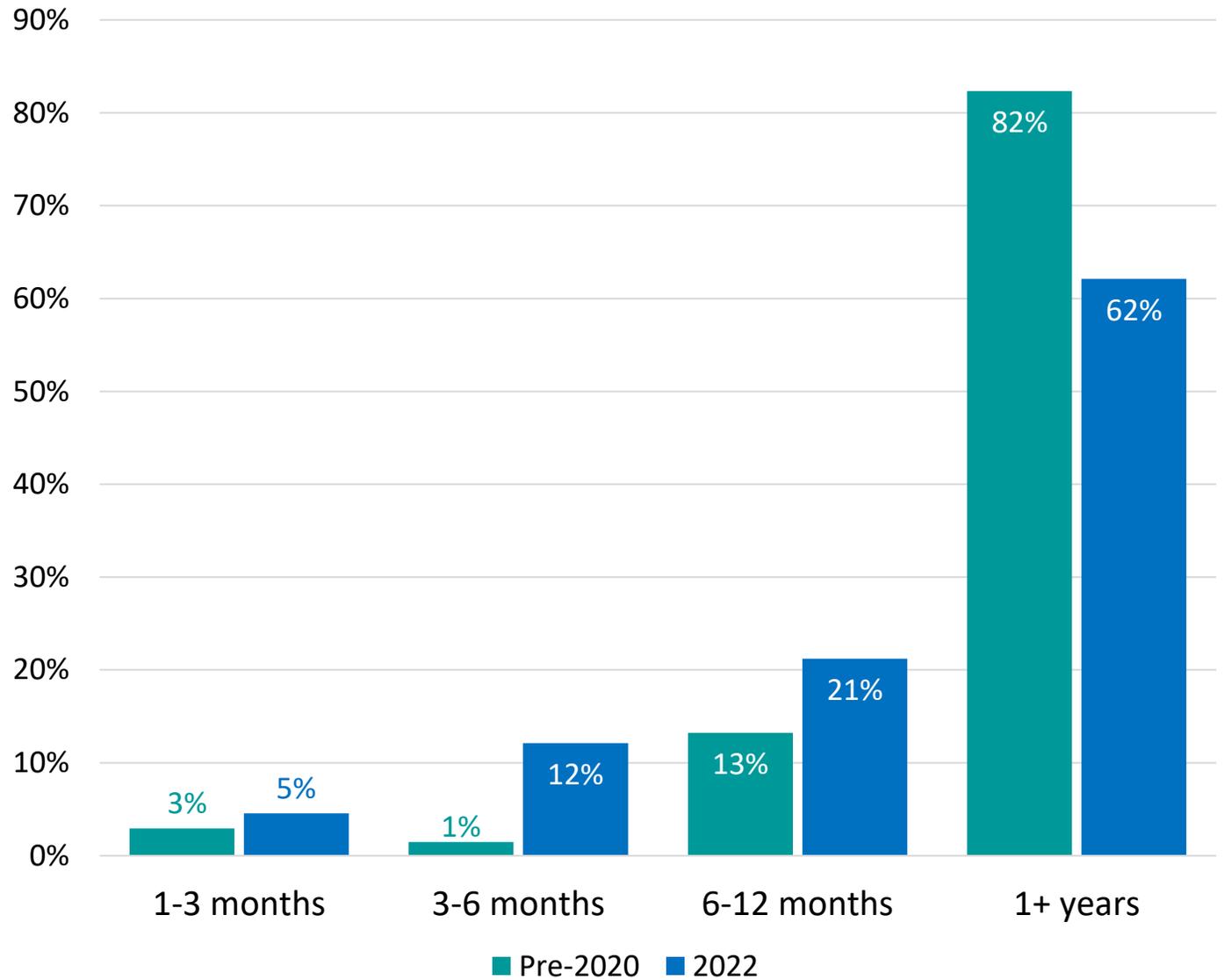Employment Pathway

Cause related

Virtual

Return to Work
Part Time Workers
Employment related
Family Related

Skilled, Mutual
Obligation

More traditional
Pre COVID

Volunteer Retention- EV Surveys

	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	1+ years
Pre-2020	3%	1%	13%	82%
2022	5%	12%	21%	62%

Why do they volunteer?

ABS data 2019

- an altruistic desire of help others (73%)

- personal satisfaction and to do something worthwhile (66.9%)

- wanting to learn a new skill or gain work experience (20.8%)

- personal/ family engagement (41.2%)

- Social contact (35.7%)

- Religious beliefs (17.3%).

Victorian data 2020-state of volunteering report

- to give back to the community

- to support a cause

- to contribute to an activity that aligns with their values

- for enjoyment

- to socially connect.

What about your NILS Volunteers?

The main reason people first became involved in volunteering is that they knew someone who was involved or that they were asked. VA 2022

So what are the motivations and requirements of NILS volunteers?

COVID

Obvious Impacts

- The key findings are:

- **Volunteering has not fully recovered** from the impact of COVID-19 with nearly three quarters (72%) of survey respondents reporting that their volunteer programs were either only partially operational (60%) or not operational (12%).

- **Formal volunteering participation rates have declined** - from one in four (26%) of people volunteering through an organisation pre-COVID (before March 2020) to one in five (21%) in the last 12 months (prior to March 2021).

- Nearly one in ten (9%) Australians **have stopped volunteering through an organisation** or group in the last 12 months.

- However, **nearly one in 25 Australians (4%) have started volunteering** through an organisation or group in the last 12 months.

- **Online volunteering was available to about one in five (21%) volunteers**. Of those with access, three in four (76%) participated in online volunteering.

Barriers to volunteering expressed prior to and during COVID

Top 5 reasons volunteers stated that prevented them from volunteering more

1. Limited time
2. Work commitments
3. Family commitments
4. General health
5. Preference for paid work

1. Concerns about health risk
2. Family commitments
3. Limited time
4. Work commitments
5. Travel

Health concerns and the need to travel for volunteering were raised as barriers during COVID-19

Top 5 reasons non-volunteers stated that prevented them from volunteering more

1. Limited time
2. Work commitments
3. Never been asked
4. Family commitments
5. Lack of interest / don't want to

1. Concerns about health risk
2. Limited time
3. General health
4. Work commitments
5. Never been asked

Direct and indirect health concerns were raised as barriers during COVID-19

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

The volunteer side of the coin- who is your volunteer?

- Out of the 28% of people likely to volunteer from your community which ones are going to be interested in NILS?

- What motivations will you message to?

- What age groups will you message to?

- How might you be the cause they want to volunteer for?

- How might they gain employment skills?

- What values does NILS align with?

- How can you address their concerns about volunteering?

THE OTHER SIDE

YOU

CONSIDERATIONS

How are you offering your volunteer opportunities?

What are those opportunities?

Are you an inclusive workplace?

Who will see themselves in your opportunities and promotion?

How are you using word of mouth?

How are you using other means to promote your opportunities?

What's your reputation among volunteers?

Do your roles offer flexibility for the volunteer

Do they allow for volunteer outcomes – skill building, work experience etc

HOW PEOPLE WANT TO VOLUNTEER

Volunteering trends are changing with more people volunteering but for less hours and shorter lengths of time.- Project Based Volunteering

Micro-volunteering is a new and increasingly sought after type of volunteering which involves small groups working together to form part of a bigger project

Virtual volunteering with an internet connected device eg home or work computer or mobile phone, is an emerging type of volunteering which is becoming more popular.

The term 'new volunteerism' has been used to portray how volunteering is becoming more episodic, more self-oriented in volunteer motivations and taking place with weaker organisational attachments. VA 2022

The population is ageing, the workforce is contracting, and people are more discerning about how they want to volunteer their time. VA 2022

Chorus Volunteering Trends Study Curtin University 2019

Profile of volunteers being utilised by VIO's

Volunteer Employment and Life Context

People who don't work or work part-time	74.4
Skilled professionals	48.4
People who work full-time	42.9
Centrelink clients/jobactive placements	31.2
Families with children	23.4
Parents of program participants	12.0
People who are travelling	4.9
Other (such as university students or club members)	13.3

Targeting the right volunteer for the right role

Professionals and skilled workers

Pre-retirement workers

Retired individuals

Individuals returning to work

Students and youth

New migrants

Volunteers with a disability

Remote volunteers

The sector

Volunteer management challenges, 2016 - 2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	Recruitment	Recruitment	Recruitment	Recruitment	Recruitment
2	Support and buy-in	Respect & reliability	Respect and buy-in	Respect and buy-in	Respect and buy-in
3	Time	Roles & matching	Retention	Retention	Time
4	Financial investment	Retention	Roles and matching	Roles and matching	Roles and matching
5	Retention	Time	Time	Time	Retention

Source: Volunteer Management Progress Report, Johnson T, 2020[32]

- There is growing demand for services that traditionally rely heavily on volunteers to supplement government funding (such as community, aged care, and disability support services).

- Over half of all community organisations in regional, remote, and rural Australia employ no paid staff and are run primarily by volunteers

MANTRA'S

- Volunteers are FREE
- Volunteers are GAP FILLERS
- Volunteering means you can't cut it for real work
- Volunteers are not workforce to be taken seriously
- Manager role is tacked on with few resources

Volunteer Workforce ← → Professionals Workforce

Not a lot of Research on the VIO side

Episodic Volunteering

- issues with episodic volunteering

- uncertainty about episodic volunteers availability,

- difficulty recruiting episodic volunteers available during the work week and with the right skills or expertise,

- lack of paid staff with time to train and supervise episodic volunteers,

- lack of funds to support the administration,

- coordination and management of volunteers, and

- difficulty recruiting enough episodic volunteers

Dunn, J., Scuffham, P., Hyde, M. K., Stein, K., Zajdlewicz, L., Savage, A., Heneka, N., Ng, S., & Chambers, S. K. (2022). Designing Organisational Management Frameworks to Empower Episodic Volunteering. International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations, 33, 217–228.

Issues with virtual volunteering

- difficulty with recruiting and advertising for virtual and remote volunteer roles,

- difficulty communicating and engaging with virtual and remote volunteers on a regular basis, and

- difficulty retaining volunteers and creating meaningful virtual and remote volunteer roles (Lachance, 2021).

- Governance issues with online onboarding

These challenges include difficulty with recruiting and advertising for virtual and remote volunteer roles, difficulty communicating and engaging with virtual and remote volunteers on a regular basis, and difficulty retaining volunteers and creating meaningful virtual and remote volunteer roles (Lachance, 2021).

Barriers to inclusive recruitment

Advertising Inaccessible To Potential Applicants (Kennedy, 2019)

Limited Knowledge About Disability Or How To Work With Someone With A Disability (Victoria Alive, 2019)

Organisations Aren't Sure How To Design Or Write Opportunities

Physical Access Issues And Limited Budget For Adapting (Kennedy, 2019)

Perceived Power Differential (Buckingham And Perry, 2019)

Enablers to inclusive recruitment

Accessible advertising with explicit messaging about inclusion of organisation and role

Appropriate policies and procedures, inclusive workplace culture in place before even starting to recruit (Balandin, 2006)

Allowing the volunteer to bring a support person with them

Trialling before committing (Volunteering Geelong, 2009)

Clear expectations on both sides (Balandin, 2006)

All volunteers should be asked what is required to make this a safe and respectful workplace for you?

Barriers to inclusive retention

Exclusionary workplace culture (Kennedy,2019)

Negative attitudes/rigid thinking (Novak and Rogan, 2010)

Poor health of volunteer, susceptibility to seizures etc.

Role requires skill impacted by disability, such as communicating with the public or driving

Ongoing cost to volunteer to get to the opportunity (McVilley et al, 2019).

Enablers to inclusive retention

Diverse workforce helps an org stay relevant to the community it serves (Balandin, 2006)

Volunteer feels they are getting something out of it (Holmes, 2009) and they are making a difference to the org Direct service roles allow volunteers to feel the clients get something out of their volunteering

Development pathways and position descriptions comparable to paid employees (Balandin, 2006)

Expectation of turnover built into role – Sustainability not tied to one person

Working/socializing in teams with able bodied/employed staff, not in isolation - contact theory: Marginalized groups are so as dominant groups don't have the opportunity to interact and break down prejudice (Craig and Bigby, 2014)

Lateral/creative thinking

# Converting non-volunteers into volunteers

When non-volunteers were asked what would convert them to volunteers, they listed:

- they could do roles that appeal to them (which is related to their willingness to volunteer)
- they could stop any time without consequences (related to their availability)
- it was closer to where they live (also about availability) and
- training was provided (related to their capability)
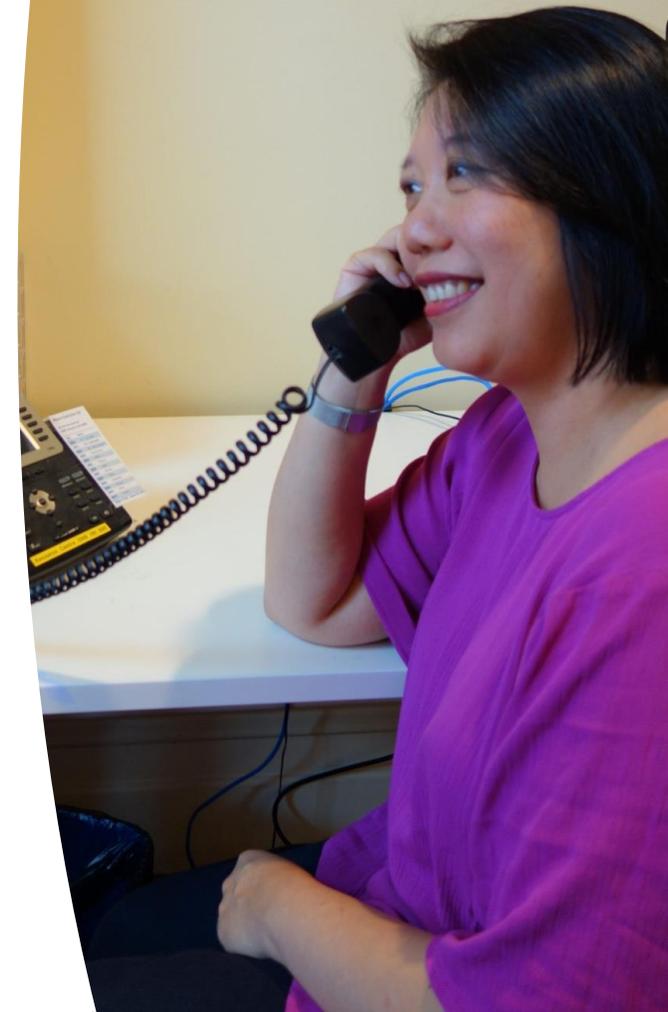
How are NILS organisations doing?
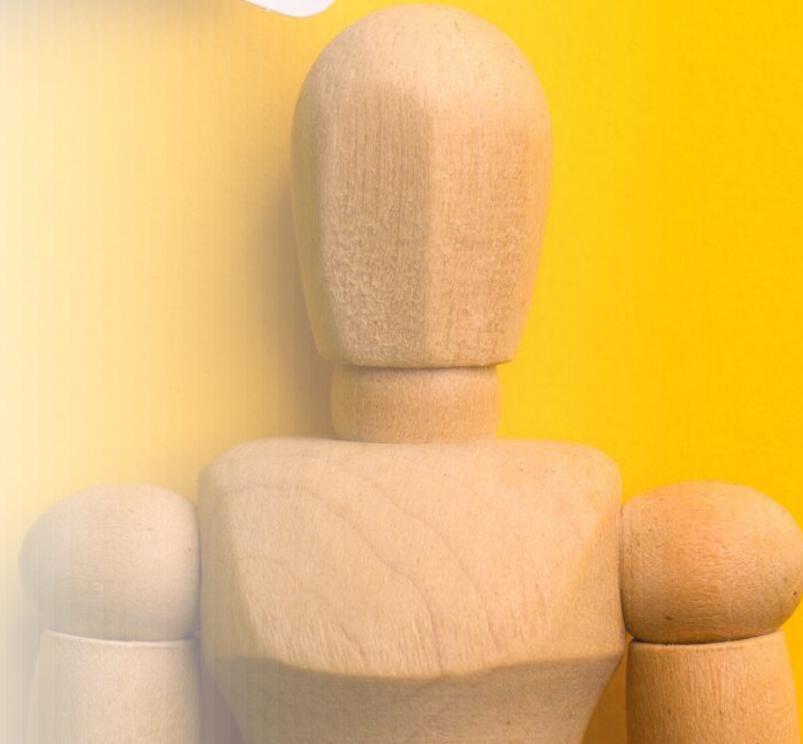
Some of the answers are in your program design and workplace culture.

Work out how volunteers should fit into your workforce and what roles they need to fill. Approach it as an integrated workforce but with different rules.

Are you offering different opportunities to meet how people want to volunteer? Have you worked out how the roles could be offered?

Have you targeted your messaging to the right profile of volunteer who wants to formally volunteer for NILS?

Some of the answers are in your program design and workplace culture.

Do they see themselves in your organisation and marketing?

Have you given yourself time to work through this or are you now gap filling?

Do you have staffing to manage and support volunteers

TOP TIPS For Short-Term Volunteering

- ➤ Review onboarding – probity only as needed
- ➤ Review training – only train for the specific role
- ➤ Create short term project delivery templates
- ➤ Have handover notes ready
- ➤ Recruit specific experience to role
- ➤ Create a culture where short term is celebrated

**Remember –
A successful short term arrangement often leads to a long term volunteer!**

Some Quick Wins

- Advertise positions under 6 months - be surprised at who stays

- Create new linkages for student employment pathways – NILS is great experience for the budding community worker or accountant.

- Target your local disability services for volunteers and develop partnerships

- ? Refugee placements as there is an array of skilled migrants looking to volunteer- partner with your CALD organisations

- Ensure you are signed up for mutual obligation volunteering

- See if you can offer flexible service hours for clients and volunteers eg. virtual evening consultations

- Can you automate some aspects of your work to enable virtual volunteering –if you haven't already done so.

Things I wish I had been told as a Volunteer Leader. . .

- Interview as if you are interviewing for a paid role and let the process do its job
- Be prepared to say NO to applicants
- Test skills as required
- Push back on accepted probity requirements
- "Just anyone will do" culture is a slippery slope
- The Recruitment and Engagement responsibility is shared
- Be creative

One thing you will take away from today