



tarinimari / Mount Roland

photo by Jean Henderson

Volunteering in Kentish

Information booklet



'Volunteering in Kentish under tarinimari/Mount Roland acknowledge and pay respect to palawa/Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the original owners of lutruwita/Tasmania and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea, sky and waterways'



Table of Contents

Mayor's Welcome	1
Who we are (background)	2
Volunteering in Kentish	2
What this strategy is	3
How to use the strategy	4
Building your volunteer organisation	5
Improving communication with volunteers and the community	7
Meeting volunteer expectations	9
The design process (how we got here)	11
Resources	12

Mayor's Welcome

We cannot underestimate the value of volunteering in our communities which thrive due to the commitment and dedication of people working within their chosen community group. They are the very fabric of our society and many organisations would not have the capability to operate if it wasn't for these passionate and enthusiastic volunteers.

This wonderful group of people should be valued, respected and supported as they work tirelessly to ensure the prosperity of Kentish and Tasmania. Connecting with the community is paramount in understanding the needs of all our residents. In this regard, volunteering can be on an individual basis or as a member of a committee in the areas of sport, art, environment, Men's Shed, health or education. No matter where this commitment takes place, we are very thankful that our volunteers display generosity, compassion, a willingness to serve and a sharing of skills, expertise and experience. The impact of a volunteer to vulnerable people in our community is significant as they give of their time, a warm smile and a listening ear to improve and enrich their quality of life. Volunteers are active agents of change who use their passion, creativity and expertise to make a real difference. They can grow personally and professionally through these valuable experiences and gain new skills themselves as they work cooperatively with members of the community.

The strategy is based on the principles of co-design to ensure it is place-based and practical. It will ensure that volunteers are well supported and have the resources to fully engage in an area where their expertise can be utilised. The contributions and insights from many volunteers, community members and organisations will ensure that this strategy reflects the needs of the volunteering community and promotes wellbeing and a resilient vibrant community.

I would like to thank Volunteering Tasmania and everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy with focus areas, actions and timelines to achieve positive outcomes. I look forward to seeing volunteering grow in our municipality to bring about positive change in the ongoing sustainability of our region.



Kate Haberle

Mayor



Who we are (background)

Kentish Municipality is located in northwest Tasmania and has a population of 6,324 persons and growing. The majority of the residents live in the townships of Sheffield (the Town of Murals), Railton (the Town of Topiary) and Wilmot (the Valley of Views), with the balance spread through smaller townships such as Paradise, Nook, Erriba, Nowhere Else, Promised Land, West Kentish, Barrington, Lower Barrington, Beulah, Lorinna.

The landscape ranges from lush rural farmland to spectacular mountain scenery. One of Tasmania's key visitor attractions, Cradle Mountain, is in the municipal area, as is the beautiful Mount Roland (tarinimari) and the world-standard Lake Barrington Rowing Course.

To find out more about Kentish visit www.kentish.tas.gov.au.



Volunteering in Kentish

Volunteers are a valued resource by organisations and the community. However, the rate of volunteering through an organisation has been declining across Australia since 2010. In 2010, 36.2% of the population volunteered with an organisation, dropping to 31% in 2014 and then to 28.8% in 2019¹.

Recent research by Volunteering Tasmania shows that if the decline in volunteering remains consistent with the trend, there will be a 42.5% shortfall in volunteers by 2029 across the State. For Kentish, this means approximately 1,332 volunteer roles in the community will not be filled².

¹ [VA-Key-Statistics_2020.01.pdf \(volunteeringaustralia.org\)](#), ([General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#))

² [Kentish-LGA-Volunteer-Profile-.pdf \(volunteeringtas.org.au\)](#)

VOLUNTEER SHORTFALL IN KENTISH



Based on research using a model that estimates there will be a 42.5% shortfall in volunteers across Tasmania by 2029. Volunteering Profile 2029: Kentish Local Government Area, Volunteering Tasmania.

Volunteering is vital for our community

We depend on our volunteers in the arts, education, emergency services, sport, environment, health, aged care, disability support, tourism, and community welfare. Volunteering Australia estimates volunteers make an annual economic and social contribution of \$290 billion.

With the predicted decline in volunteer numbers, many community groups will find it difficult to continue to fulfil their purpose.

Something needs to change. This strategy looks at ways community groups can attract and retain volunteers.

We understand that there is no single, easy answer. Here is a range of practical actions that may help build long-term volunteering in your organisation.

What this strategy is

This Kentish Volunteering Strategy was developed over a six-month period by a working group of community members, supported by Kentish Council and Volunteering Tasmania. The working group developed three focus priorities, key recommendations, and examples of practical actions. For more information on the design process see page 11.

The three focus areas identified were:

- Building your volunteer organisation (page 5)
- Improving communication with volunteers and the community (page 7)
- Meeting volunteer expectations (page 9)

The aims of the Kentish Volunteering Strategy are to:

- Create a community-led approach to volunteering
- Create a resilient and self-reliant Kentish community
- Encourage, support and engage volunteers in Kentish
- Create easy pathways to volunteering
- Create an active volunteer community.

How to use the strategy

Changing how you manage and communicate with your volunteers can seem like a lot. We are all busy and have limited time to make changes or develop new procedures. In using this strategy we recommend:

1. Pick a focus area to work on which is important to your group.

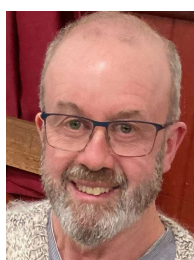
Example | Your volunteers have been asked to give positive and negative feedback on programs and events. The committee develop a suggestion box, feedback sheet or complaints policy and then discuss volunteers' ideas and take action.

2. Find something easy to start with.

Example | Volunteers asked for more opportunities to socialise. The committee discussed how to do this and acted on it.

3. Reach out to other volunteer organisations and services in the community for support.

Example | X organisation had challenges keeping volunteers, so they reached out to Y organisation for advice.



***“I feel enthusiastic about our volunteering strategy.
We’ve discussed a lot of things and have been heard.”***

Building your volunteer organisation

What we heard:

There is a lack of support to volunteers especially new people wanting to join. Volunteers need to know the purpose, structure and processes of your organisation and how they can contribute.

Recommendations	Ideas
Develop a “How To” volunteer management manual Kentish Community - Volunteering Tasmania	Include welcome pack, purpose statement, committee structure, media/communications plan, conflict resolution, grant writing, role description templates, etc.
Promotion of volunteer opportunities	Include clear job roles/descriptions for volunteers, advertise what your organisation/group does, support diversity and inclusion and learning new skills.
Support team building in your organisation	Include team building activities, rotate roles/share roles, make formal meetings informal and encourage people to share their individual experiences.

Practical actions your group could consider...

“How To” manual examples:

- Induction checklist
- Clear descriptions for committee roles
- A list of appropriate policies, e.g. harassment and conflict resolution, insurance, code of conduct, compliance checks.
- Hold mini-workshops/sessions on specific themes (including online).

Promote opportunities examples:

- Easy to read job descriptions
- Advertise and promote volunteer roles: What can you offer your volunteers? How does their volunteering support community, what impact can they make?
- Contact Council’s Community Development Officer to help promote your volunteering needs
- Connect with community organisations to share ideas and resources.

Team building examples:

- Share a morning tea together
- Invite everyone to a free training or professional development opportunity
- Promote a positive culture/vibe, share a laugh, have fun!

Case study

Alicia had been volunteering with a group for a few weeks and didn't really know who the other volunteers were or what was expected of her in her new role. She mentioned this to the volunteer manager. The manager and Alicia worked together to develop an easy-to-read job description and an induction checklist which included a monthly morning tea where all volunteers could meet up. This is now used with every new volunteer.



Improving communication with volunteers and the community

What we heard:

Many community organisations struggle with communicating their volunteer opportunities, attracting new volunteers, and celebrating success.

Recommendations	Ideas
Provide opportunities for feedback from volunteers	Include different ways volunteers can give feedback, including new ideas, what works and doesn't work, complaints, procedures etc. Respond and take action.
Explore ways to promote opportunities and engage and acknowledge new and existing volunteers	<p>Inform your community on what you do and what opportunities are available to volunteers e.g. social media, print, design platforms (e.g. Canva), radio, community noticeboards.</p> <p>Find out how (and if) your volunteers want to be acknowledged and recognised (as an individual and as a group).</p>
Use simple and plain English so all members of the community can participate	<p>Short messages that are clear and easy to understand.</p> <p>Make short videos to welcome volunteers and show the benefits of volunteering, with links to volunteer opportunities.</p>

Practical actions your group could consider...

Feedback opportunities examples:

- Have a suggestion box (which can be anonymous)
- Hold a get-together hour or half day where people openly share ideas to improve their volunteering experience and the work the organisation does
- Be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.

Promotion examples:

- Advertise for someone to oversee your organisation's social media
- Include regular opportunities to show the community the benefits of volunteering
- Short posts on Facebook/Instagram or website welcoming new volunteers, celebrating number of months/years of service, or a one-off contribution to an event
- Reimburse some costs associated with volunteering, or providing tea, coffee, snacks
- Volunteer awards e.g. certificates, volunteer profiles, free sports/movie tickets
- Contact Council's Community Development Officer to help promote your volunteering needs

Plain English examples

- Limit jargon and explain acronyms
- Consider using pictures, emojis, graphics or photos.

Case study

The number of volunteers in the group was decreasing and without new people involved, it would mean more work for those already volunteering or that the group would have to stop its work. All the group volunteers came together and shared ideas on what they could do. A flyer was designed with pictures and clear wording about their organisation, different types of roles and flexible hours. A date was also given for a morning tea and a "come and try day and bring a friend". The flyers were shared with local businesses and hubs to give to people and one was placed in The Kentish Voice and to local radio as a community announcement.



Meeting volunteer expectations

What we heard:

Many people in the community want to volunteer but feel they may not be welcome or volunteer organisations may not value their skills and experience. For some, previous volunteer roles have not been a positive experience.

Recommendations	Ideas
Make volunteering opportunities inclusive and easy to access	Find out what interests, skills and experience volunteers have and match with roles.
Organise events to promote your organisation or group and different volunteer opportunities	Include short and longer events and ways to connect to a range of community members, including families, young people, and people new in the community.

Practical actions your group could consider...

Inclusive and access examples:

- Develop a register of skills and experience your volunteers have, their availability and ways they can volunteer
- Consider short-term volunteering or one-off volunteering for events
- Consider interviewing your volunteers to explore all of the skills they have to offer.

Volunteer opportunities and event examples:

- Host a Volunteer Week event
- Work with Council to organise a Volunteer “pit stop” day
- “Try before you buy” options e.g. have a come and try day for new volunteers.
- Organise a local forum where people talk about their volunteering experiences
- Collaborate with school(s) to talk about volunteering or showcase volunteer opportunities



Case study

Jill and Graham want to volunteer, but they have two small children, and they both work. Jill and Graham can volunteer with their children for three hours on a Sunday afternoon. The volunteer group have agreed to host regular social activities for volunteers and their families. They ask Jill and Graham to organise the activity on one Sunday per month.



The design process (how we got here)

Developing our strategy

A working group of local community members and volunteers came together to better understand the strengths, challenges and opportunities for volunteering in the community. With conversations across the wider community and survey opportunities, the working group developed three focus priorities, key recommendations, ideas and examples of practical actions. The strategy development was a community-based process designed by locals with hands-on experience, and supported by Kentish Council and Volunteering Tasmania.

Stage 1 and 2: Planning and Discovery (February – March 2023)

The working group sought input from the wider community through one-on-one discussions, small group meetings, online and paper-based surveys. This helped everyone gain a greater understanding of the diversity of volunteering and the needs in Kentish. It allowed an understanding of how people felt, their challenges, ideas and suggestions.

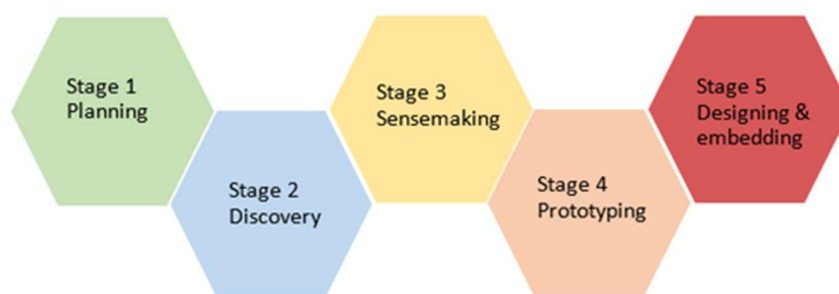
Stage 3 and 4: Sensemaking and Testing (May – June 2023)

The working group then reviewed, analysed and sorted all the information collected into three core themes to provide a clear structure for the strategy. These themes formed the basis for initial brainstorming priorities, ideas and actions.

Stage 5: Designing and Embedding (July – August 2023)

After further consultation with the wider community, the working group gathered feedback, additional thoughts and ideas to refine the structure of the draft strategy. Along the way, they also gathered some ideas and practical examples of realistic actions. The final revised draft was then shared with key stakeholders and community representatives for final input and approval.

Community co-design stages



“We’ve had a chance to voice our opinions and ideas and to consult with the wider community to really make a change here in Kentish. We need new people and new ways of thinking.”

Resources

Visit the **Kentish Council website** for information on volunteering: www.kentish.tas.gov.au and check out the Kentish Community Service Directory for local sporting clubs, community groups, services and history groups to join.

Volunteering Tasmania

Volunteering Tasmania is the state peak body for volunteering with a focus on strengthening and enhancing volunteering through leadership, education and connection

[Home - Volunteering Tasmania](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/#/) or <http://volunteeringtas.org.au/#/>

Kentish Volunteering Profile

Volunteering Profile 2029 for the Kentish Local Government Area

[Kentish-LGA-Volunteer-Profile-.pdf \(volunteeringtas.org.au\)](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/Kentish-LGA-Volunteer-Profile-.pdf)

Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community

<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/>

Volunteering Resource Hub

Brings together useful, evidence-based and current best practice resources, tools, research and information to support effective volunteer management.

<https://volunteeringhub.org.au/>

Justice Connect

A national legal service, offering free and affordable legal support and resources for not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises

<https://www.nfplaw.org.au/>

It could be a really great opportunity to connect and talk with other community organisations about how they have dealt with certain situations or topics, and a great opportunity for resource and knowledge sharing.

Thanks:

Kentish Council and Volunteering Tasmania would like to thank the community members who gave up their time to be part of the working group and to make a real difference to volunteering.

The working group consisted of community members representing Sheffield, Wilmot, Railton and the local media.