



MEDIA RELEASE

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Building Volunteer Capacity in the Huon Valley

By 2029 it is predicted that the number of volunteers needed in the Huon Valley will exceed the number of people willing to be volunteers. Volunteering rates in Tasmania have been declining and the nature of volunteer roles are changing.

This is why the Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania, together with the local community, have developed a strategy to address some of the challenges that lie ahead.

The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy has been endorsed by Council and is now ready for community organisations to use and engage with.

Mayor Bec Enders said the Council recognises that volunteering is a key part of the ongoing health and strength of Huon Valley communities, with many of the valley's community halls, festivals, events and clubs only existing due to the dedication of volunteers.

"In 2019 there were around 5,684 volunteers in the Huon Valley. The Huon Valley Volunteering Strategy identifies key roles that community and Council can play to safeguard the future of volunteering in the valley. This strategy examines future volunteering needs based on Tasmania's volunteering trends and future demographics of the Huon Valley to 2029," she said.

"It outlines key collaborative actions to be undertaken by the community and Council during the next ten years. I strongly encourage the community to use the strategy. By doing so we can ensure the Huon Valley will have enough volunteers to meet estimated demand across the next decade."

Huon Valley Council and Volunteering Tasmania began work on the strategy in July 2020. At that time, it was already clear volunteering rates in Tasmania were declining and the natures of volunteer roles were changing. Tasmania's COVID-19 lockdown period (April to June 2020) has also had an ongoing impact on the State's volunteer numbers.

Mayor Bec Enders said population and demographic trends show that the sectors where volunteers will be needed in the Huon Valley during the next decade are shifting significantly away from sports and physical activities to support and caring roles in aged care and disability.

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Pam Lane, who volunteers as a director on the board of the Huon Valley Financial Services with the Bendigo Bank, said, "It's nice to do something where there's no expectation to get something back, but you do get something back, you get a really nice feeling."

The strategy was developed as part of the Safeguarding Volunteering in Tasmania project, funded by the State Government.

Copies of the Strategy are available on the Huon Valley Council website. Hard copies will be available to community groups in the coming months and can be obtained by contacting the Community Services Department.

For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300