

Australian Volunteers Program in Solomon Islands

In 2020-21 the Australian Volunteers Program in Solomon Islands supported 18 volunteers and 10 partner organisations with a focus on mitigating the economic impacts of COVID-19, and supporting the health sector's COVID-19 preparedness.

'With support from the volunteers we now have a strategic plan and key documents, including those vital to the process of pitching for more funding.'

- Partner organisation spokesperson

In 2020-21 in Solomon Islands , the program supported:

10
partner organisations

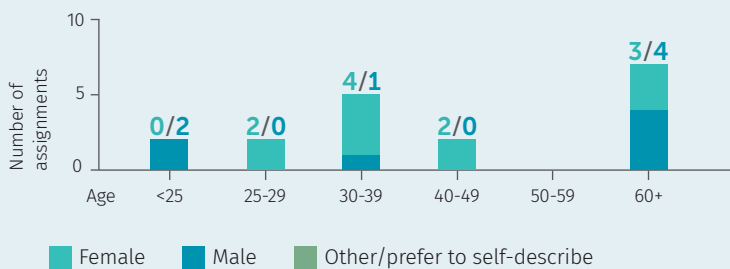
1
partner organisation with an Impact Grant

18
volunteers

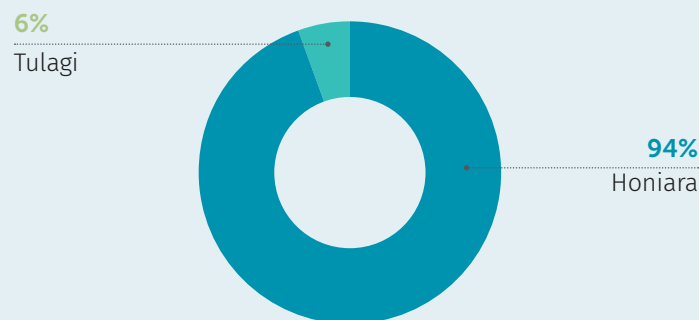
18 remote assignments
3 in-country assignments

Gender and age of volunteers

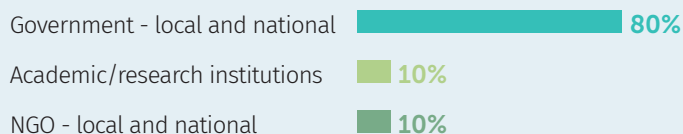
Women 61% Men 39%



Location of assignments



Most common types of partner organisations



Most common professions of volunteers



83% of partner organisations were satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteer assignment



80% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with the program



* The above data is drawn from reports completed by volunteers and partner organisations. Responses were not received from all volunteers and partner organisations, and not all respondents provided a response to every question.

In 2020-21, in accordance with Australia's COVID-19 Development Response Plan, the Australian Volunteers Program supported partner organisations to implement their response and recovery efforts, aligned with Solomon Island's local and national priorities.

The program in Solomon Islands successfully adapted to the challenges of COVID-19 by supporting partner organisations' changing needs and priorities. It also participated in the DFAT-commissioned independent evaluation of the program as one of five country case studies.

The introduction of remote volunteering was welcomed by partner organisations but was challenging to implement due to poor internet and lack of access to technology. The program also managed three in-country volunteer assignments through collaboration with DFAT and the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

The majority of partner organisations supported were government or civil society organisations. In 2020-21, one partner organisation, the Solomon Islands Sport and Leadership Institute, was awarded an Australian Volunteers Program impact grant. The Institute will develop a sports medicine manual that will include sections on infection control in sport, specifically dealing with COVID-19.

The program marked International Volunteer Day and International Women's Day by attending organised online events with volunteers and partner organisations, and volunteer stories and partner organisation activities were shared on DFAT and program social media.



Frances Kennedy, Australian volunteer Emergency nurse Advisor with the Solomon Islands National Referral Hospital, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Frances is part of the SIGISIP / SIMPLER program and is a COVID-19 response volunteer. In this photo she is with her Microbiologist colleague Hilda Zoloveke. Photo: Derol Konofilia Sanga.

Spotlight on The National Referral Hospital

The Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services has improved the National Referral Hospital's public health preparation and emergency response capabilities with support from Australian volunteers Frances Kennedy, Jane Barker, and Suzanne Pohlner.

The volunteers supported the establishment of a hospital emergency operations centre, commencement of in-country COVID-19 testing, and the distribution of personal protective equipment. Drawing on their technical expertise, volunteers assisted in the improvement of the medical internship training program and the development of protocols and guidelines for interns and other staff.

Dedicated areas for emergency department respiratory treatment and COVID-19 triage were established, and networks with the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine were fostered, improving the medical services available to patients and training opportunities available for interns.

As a result, the Ministry has significantly improved its pandemic and emergency response preparedness and workforce capacity. Staff have practiced detailed responses to a major public health event and expanded the treatment services available to patients. Improvements in the internship program have created a pathway for medical staff to progress their career goals and supported the Ministry's long-term goal of ensuring the program is locally run and provides opportunities for placements, scholarships, and additional qualifications.

The Australian Volunteers Program also provided funding to the National Referral Hospital and to rural and provincial hospitals to assist with strengthening isolation centres.

australianvolunteers.com

#AusVols

@ausvols

solomons@australianvolunteers.com

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 