

Australian Volunteers Program Solomon Islands

Australian volunteers have supported partner organisations in Solomon Islands to achieve their development goals since the 1960s. The Australian Volunteers Program continues this rich history.

The Australian Volunteers Program develops long-term, mutually respectful partnerships with organisations across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa to contribute to locally-led change and the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The program aims to:

- Support partner organisations to progress their development objectives
- Increase program participants' cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries
- Increase key stakeholders' appreciation of the value of volunteering

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Australian volunteer Prosecutions Mentor Mark Brennan with Senior Legal Officer Elma Veenah Rizzu at Honiara Magistrate Court. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

Our work in Solomon Islands

Our team in Solomon Islands works closely with our partners to understand their priorities and objectives. Together with our partners, we identify how the program can support them and how that support might change over time.

The program supports partners through volunteer assignments undertaken in-country or remotely. While the majority of partners are based in Honiara, the program also supports partner organisations in the provinces of Solomon Islands.

1

Australian volunteer Erica Tolcva with Solomon Islands National Statistics Office staff, Patricia Wasiloki and Betsy Uruhiaro, collecting data at the Honiara Market to determine the Consumer Price Index. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

The program provides support across a range of development priorities in Solomon Islands, including health, economic growth, education, governance, law and justice, and gender.

The program facilitates opportunities for partners to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. For example, partners participate in online and face-to-face workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

2

Tobias Sandakabatu, Solomon Islands Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and Australian volunteer Bjorn Svensson with Bernard Garo and Bridgit Garo, owners of Ginger Beach Retreat, North West Guadalcanal. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono

In Solomon Islands, we partner with a range of organisations, including government agencies and institutions, statutory bodies, civil society organisations and professional associations, working in a broad range of sectors.

“

With our Australian volunteer’s help, we have strengthened policy implementation and multi-stakeholder coordination at a national level to better address violence against women and children in Solomon Islands.”

Vaela Devesi, Director – Ministry of Women, Youth, Children & Family Affairs

1



2



Since 2018 the program in Solomon Islands has supported

50+
partner organisations

120+
Australian volunteers

111+
in-country volunteer assignments

40+
remote volunteer assignments

5
small grants

Small grants

Through the Impact Fund, we provide small grants of up to AUD\$10,000 to our partners to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

The Impact Fund has supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action, organisational strengthening, and COVID-19 response and recovery.

Australian organisations

We also partner with Australian organisations who share our commitment to locally-led change. We support existing partnerships between overseas partners and Australian organisations and identify opportunities for new partnerships. Australian partners contribute to skills and knowledge exchange and support volunteer recruitment.

3

Volunteer Occupational Therapist Joanna Cairney showing hand exercises to Edwin Same at the National Referral Hospital, Honiara. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono



4

"I have always enjoyed being part of the journeys with our volunteers and partner organisations. The country teams play an integral role in helping to guide and nurture relationships being established, which is crucial to achieving positive outcomes of the assignments, both in the short and long term after the end of each assignment."

Eve Aihunu, Country Program Manager - Australian Volunteers Program, Solomon Islands

About our volunteers

Our program is all about people – volunteers, partners and the communities in which they live and work.

We value volunteers who are open to mutual learning and skills exchange, and who are committed to contributing to partners' priorities in support of locally-led change.

We are committed to ensuring that international volunteering is inclusive and accessible to Australians from a range of backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, identities and abilities. We recognise the

unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.

Each volunteer assignment requires specific skills and experience. Australian volunteers work in a broad range of sectors including community and social development, health, science, engineering and architecture, skilled trades, education, disaster and emergency management, gender equality and child protection.

4

Sustainable Tourism Mentor volunteer Stuart Allardice with Tourism Officer Alison Tovongo at the Tourism Division, Central Provincial Government, Tulagi Island. Photo: Ivan Utakenua

5

Volunteer David Symmons with interns Gerald Ladota Akofia and Devlyn Kamo Advent at the National Referral Hospital, Honiara. Photo: Harjono Djoyobisono



In-country

International volunteering is an incredible experience. It's an opportunity for volunteers and partners to share their skills and culture, while making a tangible difference to communities.



Remote

Through remote volunteering Australians are supporting organisations overseas to achieve their development goals anywhere, anytime.



Hybrid

By combining remote and in-country phases, hybrid volunteering offers our partners and volunteers flexibility while still allowing for genuine connections and meaningful skill sharing.

Spotlight on Guadalcanal Provincial Government

The Guadalcanal Provincial Health Services – a part of the Guadalcanal Provincial Government, which is a partner of the Australian Volunteers Program – is the division that is responsible for the health and medical services for Guadalcanal Province in Solomon Islands.

The Guadalcanal Provincial Government has hosted six assignments since the beginning of the program in various sectors including health, tourism and women's development. To date, the Guadalcanal Provincial Government has been awarded one Impact Fund grant by the program.

Australian Volunteer Anthony Partridge completed a remote volunteering assignment as a Strategic Planning Mentor with the Guadalcanal Provincial Health Division. With Anthony's support, the organisation developed an effective draft corporate strategic plan for 2021-25. The plan addresses key policies, including Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly rolling three-year plan objectives and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

With Anthony's support, the plan was drafted in collaboration and consultation with the Ministry of Health Planning Division and followed a new simplified format aimed at providing health service managers clear and precise directions to complete their annual operational plan activities. The draft plan also directs all division managers to identify activities that promote meaningful participation by women, youth, people living with disability and other socially excluded groups in accordance with MHMS' objectives.

The partner organisation reported that Anthony demonstrated high levels of professionalism, passion and commitment throughout his assignment, and staff at Guadalcanal Provincial Health Services were impressed with his expertise and the 'exceptional support' he consistently provided his colleagues.

Guadalcanal Provincial Health Services greatly benefitted from their involvement with the Australian Volunteers Program, with staff saying they felt the assignment worked 'really well and provided great input and outcomes for the future of the organisation'.



The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by principles that ensure we



Support locally-led change



Grow strong relationships and partnerships



Value volunteering



Evolve good practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning

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