

E. Selecting Not-For-Profit Partners

Two of the most important criteria for selecting suitable not-for-profit partners are:

- Their capacity to work with you and take on additional volunteers. They can offer you suitable roles and have good volunteer management practices in place, and have the resources needed to plan and manage a volunteering project well; and
- Their willingness to work with you.

Some other important things to consider include whether they:

- Are a registered not-for-profit (you can check their ABN on the Australian Business Register's website).
- Have a volunteer policy and procedures manual.
- Have personal accident insurance for volunteers and public liability insurance.
- Have a vision and mission which appeal to you.

You will want to partner with a not-for-profit that can demonstrate a professional standard of volunteer management. However, even organisations that are entirely volunteer-run can have best practice procedures in place. The following practices indicate how well an organisation looks after its volunteers:

- They have a volunteer policy.
- They have adequate insurance coverage.
- They have adequate supervision and training for volunteers.
- They adopt a non-discriminatory approach to recruiting.
- They offer a range of roles through which volunteers can contribute.

How do you find not-for-profit partners?

- Ask your staff if they support any not-for-profits or know about any they would like to support.
- Visit your local volunteer centre. Contact details of all volunteer centres in Australia are listed on Volunteering Australia's website.
- Visit the www.govolunteer.com.au website to find volunteering opportunities in your local area.
- Your local council will know what services are in your community and importantly, know what the main social issues are and who is working to address them.
- Keep abreast of local issues through local newspapers.
- Talk directly with not-for-profits in your area.

In very small organisations your first point of contact might be the CEO or the manager of volunteers. Larger organisations may work with you in a collaborative way involving their sponsorship and communications departments, as well as the volunteer manager.

Team versus individual volunteering roles

In the beginning, you might choose to allow staff to find their own opportunities but there is the risk that it may be too hard for them if they are not supported in their search. You could find a few vacancies to begin with and promote them to staff or find a team project to kick things off.

Team projects are usually associated with manual labour (packing Christmas hampers, planting trees) but teams can also contribute to projects using their professional skills. For example, an IT project whereby one person leads and staff contribute in a rotational way in giving assistance.