

VOLUNTEERING IS WIN-WIN

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What do battling bushfires, growing seedlings, running community radio programs, handing out drinks at the City to Bay, being on the Board of a not-for-profit, saving someone from drowning and cooking sausages at a BBQ have in common? They're all done by volunteers.

Volunteering is win-win. It's easy to see the benefits a volunteer brings and nationally it's worth \$40 billion, but volunteers receive a lot in return too.

Ruth has volunteered in many roles over the years. She's grown seedlings for Trees for Life for 25 years and she's a proud parent of many trees across the state. Being involved in growing native plants lets her be involved in her passion for improving the environment.

A few years ago she moved into a small town and volunteered with the local community association. At the first meeting she was elected president! "I got involved to make community connections," Ruth explains.

Kathy volunteers with the CFS but no, she doesn't pull on the yellow jacket and pants. Instead she supports her local brigade providing meals to crews returning to base station while fighting fires. She's also involved in fundraising so the crews have the equipment they need.

"I want to give back to my community. You need to prioritise it, to make it important. And the CFS is always looking for new volunteers!" says Kathy.

Janine volunteered as a Cub Scout leader originally only to get her children involved but she's received a lot of benefits too.

"I've made friends, built connections in the community and it's helped me immensely with my confidence in public speaking," she says.

"When young people volunteer in the Scouts they often experience a great sense of achievement. Their confidence and self-esteem improves and this helps when looking for work," explains Janine.

Andrew, host of the Live Cricket Chirp community radio show, enjoys preparing and broadcasting his weekly show. He also believes that "everyone should volunteer as soon as they're old enough. It keeps them out of nonsense."

And for those who are close to retirement and are used to working every day, volunteering provides a structure to the week and a social network.



Above right: Ruth on the Larapinta Trail in Western MacDonnell Ranges, Central Australia.
Inset, from top: Andrew; Janine with her daughter at Cub Scouts; Kathy.

So if you're interested in:

- ➔ Joining almost one third of adult South Australians who volunteer
- ➔ Building community networks
- ➔ Developing skills, preparing for the workplace or a change in careers, or assisting in the transition to retirement

there's a volunteering opportunity out there for you.

Check out the Volunteering SA and NT website at www.volunteering-sa-nt.org.au, or contact your local council or organisation that you're interested in volunteering for.



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