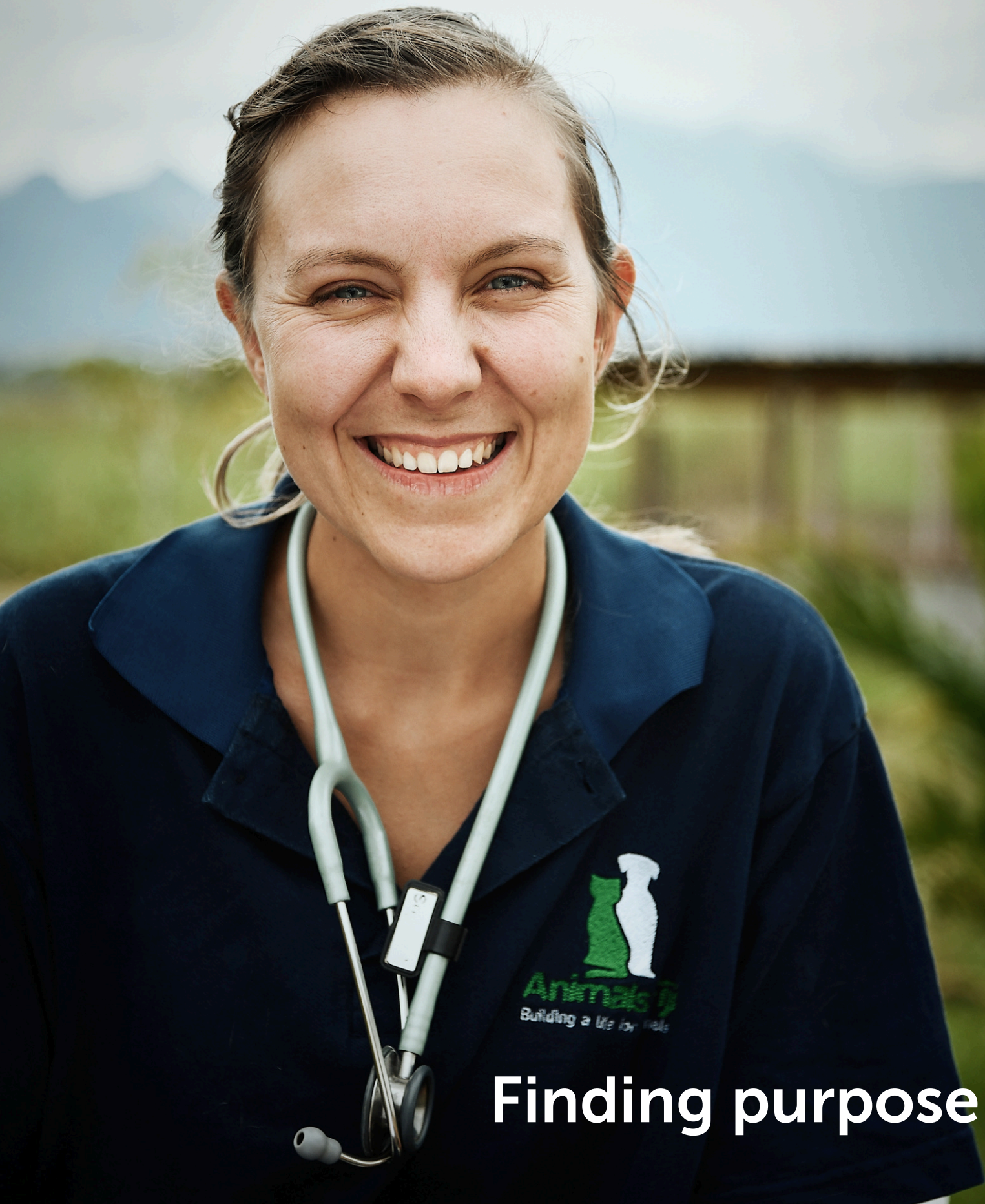


# Australian Volunteers



**Finding purpose**

# Finding purpose

Exploring opportunities for volunteers' family members to find purpose and create impact. **Complete**

Apr 2020 - June 2020

## Summary

There is an opportunity to better engage with the families and partners of volunteers who are supported to accompany the volunteer on assignment as Approved Accompanying Dependents (AADs). In using AADs spare capacity, it is possible to give them a sense of purpose and benefit the larger program.

## Our objectives

- Investigate ways to increase the sense of purpose for partners of volunteers that may also create benefit for the program.
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- Research if similar programs in other sectors for accompanying partners create a sense of purpose or opportunities for partners.
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- Discover if there are program needs or opportunities that may be met by AADs.
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- Explore what kind of opportunities may give AADs a sense of purpose.

## Our approach

In 2018-2019, the program completed research that found that a sense of purpose for volunteers' partners led to better assignment outcomes and in-country participation. In response to this finding, we established this project with a goal of identifying possible options for future design through a series of research.

Significant financial resources are invested in partners and family members who travel with volunteers, and the Hub wanted to explore if those family members could contribute to larger project outcomes for the Australian Volunteer Program.

Desk research was completed to identify innovative approaches in similar programs or similar situations of accompanying partners including programs designed by governments, corporations, and not-for-profits. Volunteers and program staff were engaged in the research to identify desirable and feasible opportunities.

Using the research, options for further design were presented.

## What we learned

- The research uncovered a number of different ways that AAD's support volunteers' and the program's objectives. Many stories were also identified that demonstrate the often unrecorded but lasting impact AAD's have on their local communities.
- Families have unique needs, particularly in relation to recruitment.
- When engaging AAD's in new opportunities, it is critical to offer flexibility and choice. Timing is also important.
- There are opportunities to use the capacity of AADs to support program teams, especially in-country teams.
- Creating new opportunities for participation, as well as recognising and rewarding AADs' contributions to their community, will lead to a heightened sense of purpose and meaning for this group.