

Australian Volunteers



**Australian Volunteers Program
Annual Report
July 2021 – June 2022**

This annual report is dedicated to our colleague and friend Leah Aisi. Leah was a valued member of our Papua New Guinea team. She joined AVI in 2016 and, in her role as Recruitment Officer, she worked closely with our partners, volunteers and colleagues. She was passionate about Papua New Guinea, and enjoyed meeting and working with partners across the country. We remember Leah as a strong, resilient woman. We miss her smile and the joy she brought to work every day.



Cover: **Cambodia:** OIC Cambodia is working to grow and improve access to speech therapy services in Cambodia, where there are currently no qualified Cambodian Speech Therapists. Australian volunteer Early Childhood Speech Therapy Mentor, Danielle Vellucci (left), and Executive Director of OIC Cambodia, Chenda Net (right), are working together to build the capacity of local health workers and educate teachers and parents to identify children who are in need of therapy.

Inside cover: Main image: **Papua New Guinea** landscape. Insert: Leah Aisi.

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1 | Executive summary

The Australian Volunteers Program is a unique part of the Australian Government's Official Development Assistance, supporting locally-led processes of change, primarily through volunteering. The program works in ways that builds people-to-people connections across countries, promotes mutual learning and invests in long-term trusted partnerships with a diverse range of organisations. The Australian Government has supported volunteering through its development program for more than 60 years.

In 2021-22, the program provided effective and meaningful support to hundreds of organisations across 26 countries as these organisations worked towards achieving their own development goals. The program supported partner organisations working across a wide range of thematic areas, including partners: delivering vital work in health and COVID-19 response and recovery; in the education sector; directly supporting the lives of marginalised communities; and developing global partnerships to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Australian Volunteers Program made significant progress in 2021-22, despite the continuing impacts of COVID-19 affecting all countries in which the program operates, with the virus occurring for the first time in some Pacific nations. During the year, the program recruited, mobilised and supported 386 volunteers to deliver 514 assignments. These volunteer assignments supported 265 partner organisations. In addition, the program helped partners to strengthen their capacity by awarding 152 small grants and facilitating a range of networking and learning events such as the Global Webinar Series.

An independent evaluation of the program in 2021 found that the program has been very effective in supporting partner organisations to achieve their own capacity strengthening goals and is highly relevant to the needs of those organisations.¹

The modality of volunteering also contributes to the Australian Government's objective to strengthen mutual relationships with people and communities across the Pacific, Asia and Africa.

The Australian Volunteers Program has a strong and active commitment to gender equality, and disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), particularly in the priority areas of women's rights, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, disability inclusion and the inclusion of First Nations people. In September 2021, the program officially launched Indigenous Pathways, which is an Indigenous-led program that focuses on expanding and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in international volunteering, by providing culturally safe, flexible and tailored support.

The Australian Volunteers Program is a global program managed out of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Canberra. At the global level, the Australian Volunteers Program is guided by the [Global Program Strategy](#). At the country-level, the program has three-year plans developed in collaboration with DFAT.

The program spans across multiple countries, partners and sectors. An illustration of the breadth of the program can be seen in the diversity of assignments. For example, in 2021-22, the types of objectives achieved across a number of assignments ranged from: increasing the clinical and operational capacity of paramedic services in Vanuatu;

1. *Independent Evaluation of the Australian Volunteers Program*, April 2021, TetraTech.



Solomon Islands *The Central Provincial government is seeking to achieve economic growth in the tourism sector, focusing on economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability, and COVID-19 recovery. Australian volunteer Sustainable Tourism Mentor, Stuart Allardice (left), is working with the Tourism Division of Central Provincial Government on Tulagi Island. In addition to supporting the implementation of the Provincial Tourism Concept Plans, Stuart is mentoring Provincial Tourism Division staff. He is pictured here with Intern Student, Natashar Diwa (right), and Tourism Officer, Alison Tovongo (centre).*

to developing strategies to increase long-term revenue and financial sustainability of an organisation in Sri Lanka; to improving access to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) therapy for children in Vietnam.

This Annual Report captures achievements and lessons from 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022. During the year, the program also invested in activities to support an effective transition into term two of the program, which will run until June 2027. This work included refreshing the program’s logic, which will guide the program from July 2022.

The first five-year term of the Australian Volunteers Program ran from July 2017 to June 2022, with a total budget of \$134 million. The program officially commenced on 1 January 2018, replacing the Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) program, which concluded on 31 December 2017. Given this Annual Report represents the final report by the program under the initial program logic, cumulative results of the program over the first five years of implementation are included alongside annual performance data.

Since January 2018, the Australian Volunteers Program has supported 1003 partner organisations with 2336 assignments of which 1687 were delivered in-country and 649 were delivered remotely. Year on year, partner organisations and volunteers reported good or excellent progress against assignment objectives and high levels of satisfaction with the program.

During this first phase, the Australian Volunteers Program also ran a longitudinal study of Australian volunteers, following a cohort of 54 people. The study found that 83% of participants attributed some form of valued personal development to their experiences on the program. It was shown that volunteers’ careers and professional capabilities benefitted particularly from developing skills that support communication, relationships, and problem-solving. Importantly, one of the clearest and most consistent changes seen in the study was participants’ engagement with and understanding of the international development sector.

The Australian Volunteers Program has evolved over its first five years, including by successfully adapting to the challenging global environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on program operations. As a result, the program ends its fifth year of implementation, a stronger, more resilient and more innovative program than it was at commencement.

Over the next 12 months the program will continue to support hundreds of partner organisations to strengthen their capacity to achieve locally-led change and equitable development. In 2022-23, the program will also work closely with DFAT to update the Global Program Strategy, ensuring on-going, strong alignment between the program and the Australian Government’s foreign policy and development priorities.

The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by AVI, in consortium with DT Global (formerly known as Cardno International Development) and Alinea International.

July 2021 to June 2022 at a glance

514

assignments

449

remote assignments

65

in-country assignments

386

volunteers

6

approved accompanying dependents

1.6%

volunteers identify as having a disability

0.3%

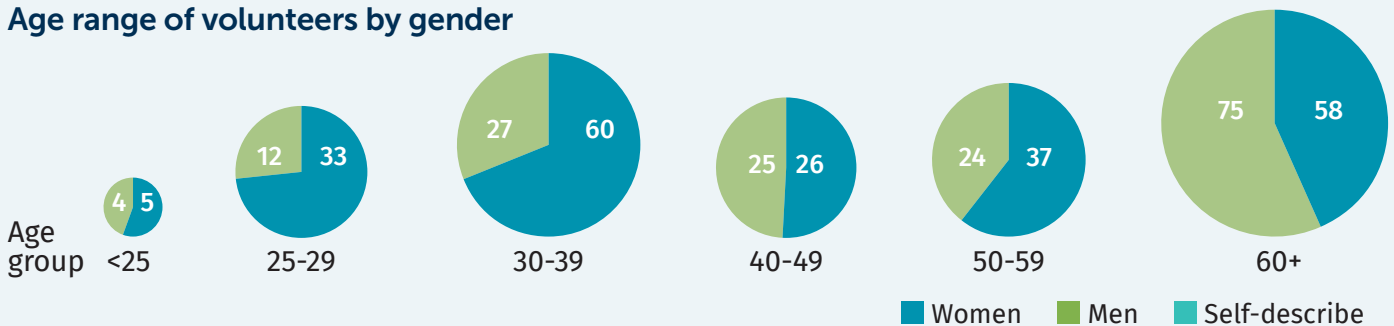
volunteers identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

57% women

43% men

0% self-describe

Age range of volunteers by gender



Number of partner organisations supported with assignments

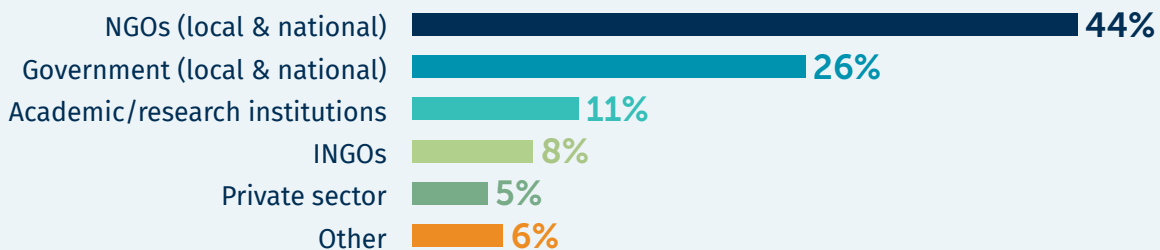
265

Number of Impact Fund grants awarded

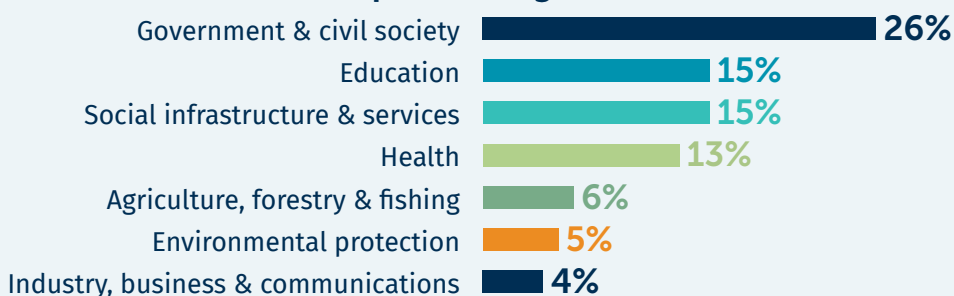
154*

* Includes two Health Security Corps Small Grants to volunteers.

Our partner organisations



Most common sectors partner organisations work in



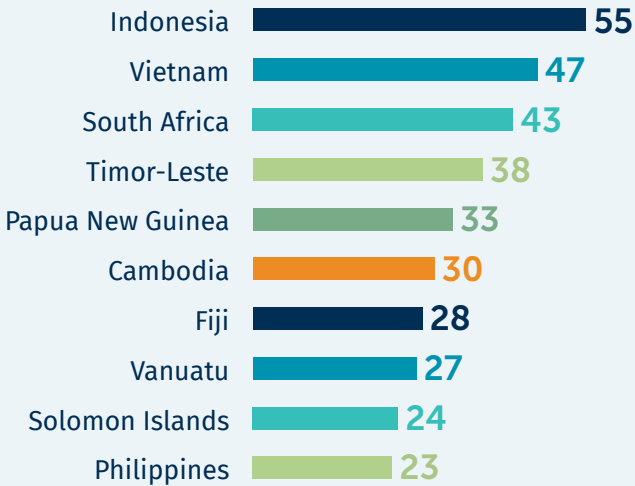
387

assignments started this year

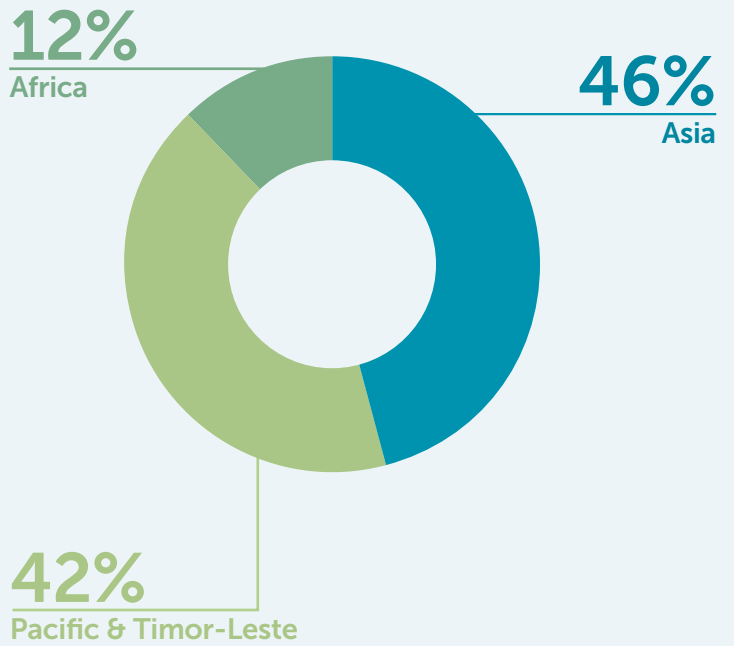
127

assignments continued from previous years

**Top ten countries by assignment
(out of 26 countries)**



Where volunteers supported partners



82% of partner organisations reported good or excellent progress against assignment objectives



79% of volunteers thought they made good or excellent progress against assignment objectives



86% of partner organisations were satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteer assignment



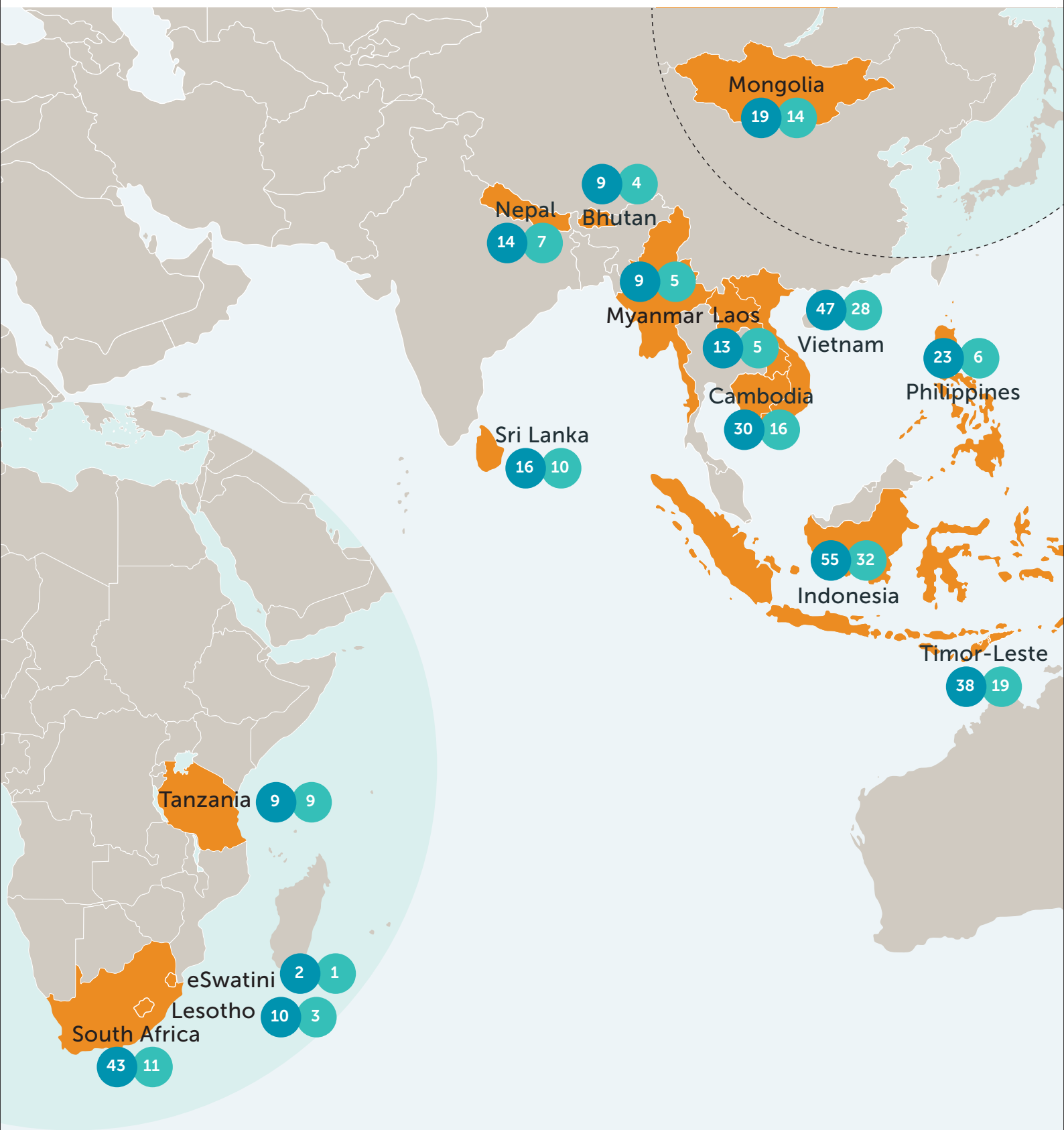
87% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with the program

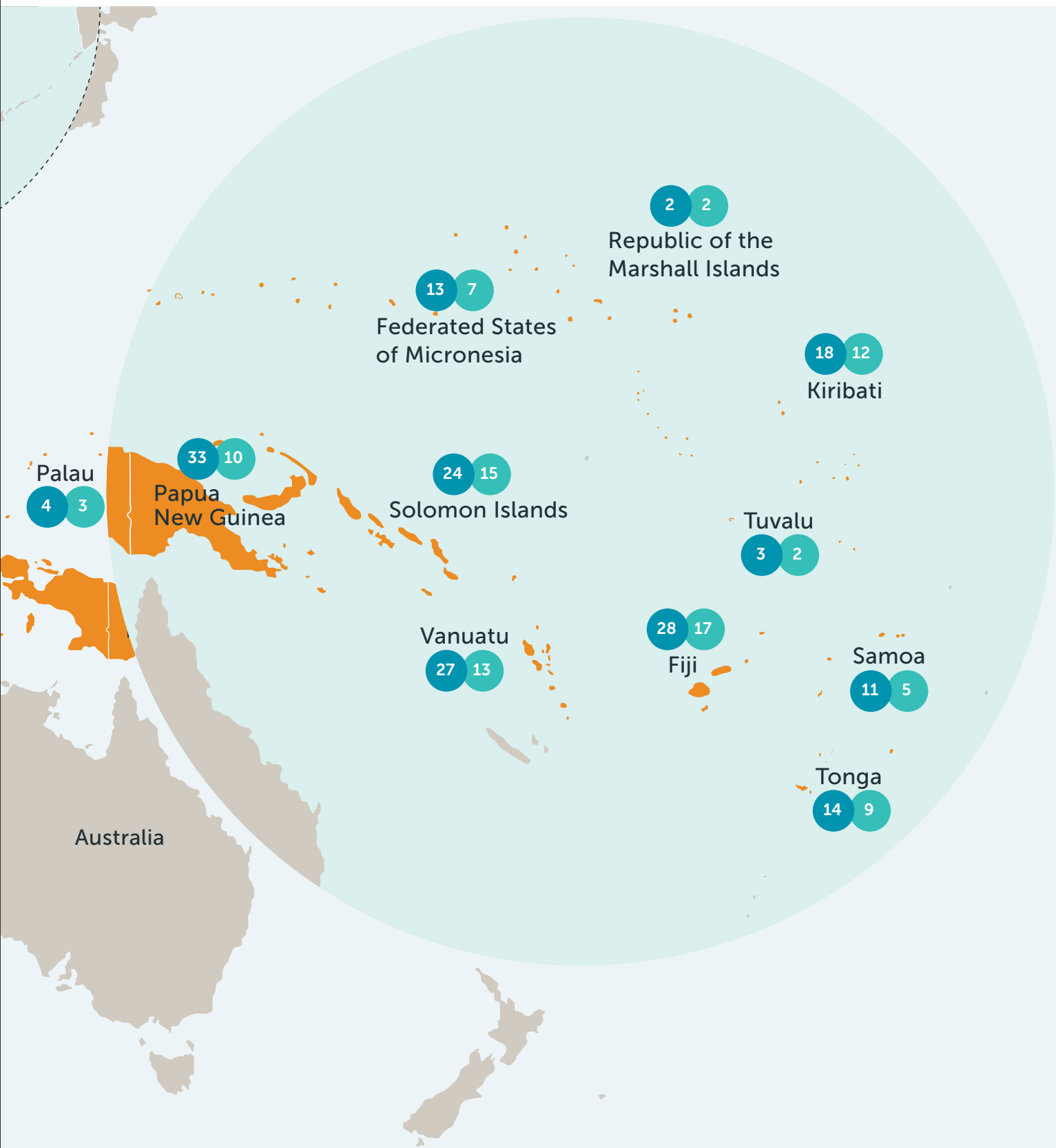


Total expenditure

\$20.28M

Where we operate (2021 - 2022)





- Number of assignments supported
- Number of partner organisations



2 | About the program

The Australian Volunteers Program uses volunteering as a people centred approach to capacity strengthening. The program is funded by the Australian Government, building on the Government's investment in international volunteering over the past 60 years. The program is part of the Government's people-to-people program portfolio, connecting Australians to Australia's development program and the region.

The Australian Volunteers Program supports partner organisations to achieve their own development objectives. Establishing long-term, mutually respectful and valued partnerships with organisations is fundamental to the program's development approach.

Over its first five years, the Australian Volunteers Program has aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Partner organisations are supported by Australia to achieve their own development objectives
- Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally
- The public in Australia better appreciate the value of international volunteering

By successfully achieving these outcomes, the program has been contributing to the following broader development and diplomacy goals:

- The Australian Government achieving its development objectives
- Australians becoming more globally literate and connected
- Australian aid perceived positively in Australia and internationally

The total budget for the first five-year term of the program was AUD \$134 million. The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by AVI, in consortium with DT Global (formerly known as Cardno International Development) and Alinea International.



3 | About this report

This is the fifth annual report prepared by the Australian Volunteers Program. It covers the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. This was the final year of the first five-year term of the program.

The focus of this report is on the last 12 months of program implementation. However, at the end of the initial five-year term and at the mid-way point of the 10-year program design, it is also an important moment to consider the cumulative results of the program and the extent to which the program achieved its initial end of program outcomes.

The past year has been a time of significant progress and change for the program. During this period, the program has continued to support partners adapting to the altered environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as worked to position the program so that it is well set up to enter the next five-year phase.

From July 2022, the program will be working towards a refreshed program logic and revised end of program outcomes. However, in this reporting period the initial program logic remains relevant and is used to guide the structure of this report.

Following on from a summary of program achievements (Section 4) and of the operating context for the year (Section 5), this report documents lessons learnt over the last year (Section 6) and highlights key management actions for the program to take forward in the year ahead (Section 7). Evidence of progress made towards the three end of program outcomes is covered in Section 8. Significant cross-cutting issues are addressed in more detail in 'Focus areas' throughout the report, and several case studies illustrate how the program is supporting our partners' work.



4 | Program highlights

While the global context continued to be challenging with the pandemic affecting communities, partners and staff, the Australian Volunteers Program made significant progress in 2021-22. In this period, the program supported hundreds of partner organisations across 26 countries to achieve positive locally-led change.

In addition to facilitating people-to-people connections via volunteering, the program provided support to partners to strengthen their capacity through small grants, co-learning events and networking opportunities. The program also progressed a series of recommendations from the independent evaluation, including significant work to update the program logic which will frame the next five years of implementation.

Highlights of the year include:

- Supporting **386 volunteers on 514 volunteer assignments**, with six approved accompanying dependents.
- Supporting **265 partner organisations** with volunteer assignments, with most partners (72%) having had more than one assignment during the year.
- Working with **97 Australian organisations**, an increase from 80 partners last year. This engagement included Australian organisations supporting 39 assignments (27 remote assignments and 12 in-country).
- Delivering **19 sessions under our Global Webinar Series** to more than 1000 participants. These sessions showcased partners working on water security, gender equality and the arts, climate change and disability, and included practical sessions on writing grant applications and mitigating the risks of fraud.

- Continuing to provide small grants directly to partner organisations to support their work. The program awarded **152 small grants** to partner organisations across 25 countries.
- Celebrating the formal **launch of Indigenous Pathways** in September 2021 by sharing the story of how Indigenous Pathways was developed. 183 people attended this online event.
- **Delivering successful events**, including 20 International Volunteer Day events in Australia and across the Pacific, Asia and Africa, with more than 1400 stakeholders attending virtually and in person.
- **Developing a new format of storytelling using animations** to share our partners' stories.
- Supporting 39 new partner organisations to develop **child protection policies** in line with DFAT's minimum standards.
- Delivering **training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)** in five countries and featuring in two global webinars, with 20 partner organisations attending.



Cambodia This Life Cambodia strives to address complex social justice issues through grassroots community consultation approaches, community development techniques, and strengths-based case management for direct service provision to children and families. This Life Cambodia's economic empowerment program supports individuals and families to break free from poverty. In this picture, This Life staff are visiting a family who have been supported to open a small shop selling food, soft drinks and snacks, in Siem Reap. From left to right: Program Coordinator, Sam Ven, family members, Chan Ping (father), Chanseng Leap (daughter), Seth Sareth (mother), and Case Manager, Try Somony.

- Undertaking **key pieces of research** including a longitudinal study of Australian volunteers; a review of Australian volunteers' contribution to disability inclusion; and the third of three planned deep dives into the program's thematic impact areas, looking at climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific.
- Progressing activities under the program's **Innovation Hub** that included testing ways of working with governments and peak bodies to support national approaches and infrastructure for volunteering.
- Preparing the program's first annual plan to support the **program transition into the second term** of a 10-year design.

In addition:

- 82% of partners rated assignments as making good or excellent progress against their assignment objectives.
- 86% of organisations providing feedback during the year were satisfied or very satisfied with the assignment. 90% were satisfied with their volunteer, and 97% were satisfied with the program's in-country management.
- 99% of partner organisations stated they would like to host another volunteer.
- 82% of volunteers completing an assignment in the last year felt that they had learnt new skills that would help them professionally or developed their personal competencies.
- 79% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with their assignment.
- 87% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with both their partner organisation and the program overall. The most common cause of positive satisfaction given by volunteers in their feedback related to the support provided by the program, strong and supportive relationships with partner organisation staff, and assignments being rewarding experiences where the volunteer had been able to achieve their objectives.



5 | Operating context

The external operating context during the reporting period remained challenging, due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. That said, in the second half of the year, there was an overall easing of domestic restrictions by many governments and an increase in global mobility. At the same time, the security environment in a number of countries in which the program operates deteriorated, as a result of an increase in political, social, health and economic challenges.

Partner government policies

The impacts of the global pandemic continue to dominate partner government policies. Over the course of the reporting period, there was some easing in travel restrictions including lifting of restrictions on international borders in many program countries, including Australia. During the year, quarantine requirements were either removed or scaled back, and the frequency of commercial flights steadily increased. High rates of community transmission of COVID-19 continued in many countries, and occurred for the first time in some Pacific locations. Omicron became the dominant variant in many countries. As it is characterised by higher transmissibility many countries experienced an increase in case numbers. Vaccination rollouts also continued in partner countries.

Australian Government priorities

DFAT's Partnerships for Recovery policy and its COVID-19 Development Response Plans at the country level framed the program's support during the reporting period. The program continued to support partner organisations' efforts to respond to and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, with a focus on supporting countries in the Indo-Pacific. In December 2021, DFAT removed the requirement to approve deployments, which was consistent with the easing of travel restrictions globally.

External context – other

During the reporting period there was some deterioration in the political, social, and economic contexts in some countries. This is in part due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 as well as the disruption to supply chains of many goods resulting from the war in Ukraine.

In Sri Lanka, the economic crises led to political upheaval and social unrest. A State of Emergency was declared twice, inflation was rampant, and the availability of fuel, food and medical supplies was severely constrained. Instability in Myanmar continued, resulting in a volatile and unstable security environment. National elections in Papua New Guinea led to violent tensions across the country.

Political instability was also reported in Solomon Islands, South Africa and eSwatini during the reporting period. There were a number of significant natural disasters during the year, including the volcano eruptions and subsequent devastating tsunami in Tonga; and an earthquake and resultant tsunami alert in Vanuatu. The Monkeypox virus has emerged as a potential risk and, at the time of writing this report, is being carefully monitored.

Case study: Ramakrishna Mission's Vivekananda Technical Centre, Fiji

Ramakrishna Mission is a registered charitable trust that provides health, education and relief services to disadvantaged members of the community. The Fiji branch of the Mission has established Vivekananda Technical Centre (VTC), which provides training programs in horticulture with a focus on farm competency-based training.

Having identified that a horticultural expert with the required expertise wasn't readily available locally, Ramakrishna Mission reached out to the program for a specialist in horticulture production and a pomologist (someone who studies and cultivates fruit).

Anthony Portman undertook a remote assignment with VTC as a Horticulture Trainer in 2021. Anthony trained local instructors to effectively deliver certificate levels 2, 3 and 4 of the "Production in Horticulture" program, enabling VTC staff to train students and farmers more effectively.

Ryan O'Flaherty also joined VTC remotely in 2021, in the role of Pomologist. Ryan supported VTC to secure an Impact Fund grant. The funding will enhance the practical components of the program, particularly in terms of empowering local women to learn how to propagate fruit trees to improve fruit production and reduce the risks of climate change impacts, while boosting their community economically.

VTC staff have developed their skills in capturing plant data at different stages of propagation. This data enables staff to plan for various seasonal fruits, improve farming methods and better prepare their reports and budget planning. Staff also learnt how to use new ICT equipment and technologies to adapt to the remote volunteering model. Both Anthony and Ryan developed good working relationships with staff and overcame challenges related to remote volunteering, including the time-zone difference and internet connectivity.



Fiji Vinay Lata Chand (right) and Sharvind Kumar (left) working on their farm near Nadi. Vinay and Sharvind received training from VTC that enabled them to increase farm productivity, which has helped them sustain their livelihoods during the pandemic.



6 | Lessons learned

The program has continued its journey of adapting and improving. Ensuring accountability and valuing learning are guiding principles of the Australian Volunteers Program. We put these principles into practice through our ambitious research and evaluation agenda and by creating the space within the annual program cycle to review data collected, discuss challenges and achievements, and reflect on lessons learned.

In the last 12 months, we have learned:

The need for flexibility

In a rapidly changing context, the need for flexibility has never been greater. From flexible working arrangements for staff to responding to on-going changes in travel restrictions, the program has had to continue to adapt and evolve. The needs of partners also changed, and the program has had to be understanding of the changing pressures they are under and be flexible in the support provided. The value of that flexibility has also been demonstrated, with partners appreciating the expanding range of ways in which the program is able to offer support to strengthen their organisation's capacity.

Collaboration makes us more effective

Through the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, the mutual support and collaboration between program staff in different countries has enabled us to become more resilient and more innovative. Valuing diversity, recognising individual and group capacity, and supporting each other while sharing a clear vision for what we are trying to achieve has enabled the program to continue to adapt and improve.

Our theory of change is sound

The program's understanding of how to support positive change has proved largely accurate. After five years, the program has achieved or made substantial progress towards its end of program outcomes. The program has been able to evidence its impact in key areas, and received consistently positive feedback from key stakeholders. Reviewing the program logic has shown it to be a useful guide. It was also a valuable opportunity to refine and nuance our approach to achieving objectives and strengthening our commitment to our principles.

Inclusion is best achieved through a shared understanding

The program's Indigenous Pathways and GEDSI work is most effective when we have a shared commitment and support equitable partnerships and collaborative ways of working. The refreshed program logic has recognised that inclusion needs to be more than a foundational or cross-cutting element, but also a higher-level objective. It takes investment and time, but where the program supports partners working on GEDSI it can help enable them to achieve significant, locally-led change.

Fiji Fiji Cancer Society's key areas of work include advocacy, cancer education and health promotion, and patient support services. Patient Support Officer, Katarina Wasarua (left), and Patient Support Officer and driver, Simone Moceica (right), are delivering food and other essential items to a patient at a HART Community facility (aged and disabled care home) on the outskirts of Suva.



The program has impact through the partners it works with

The nature of those partnerships, and the choice of which organisations the program partners with (both overseas and in Australia) are critical components of its ability to contribute to impact in specific thematic areas. To effectively respond to the climate crisis, for example, the program needs to more fully integrate climate change and risk informed development into all of its work and volunteer assignments. To effectively support organisations of people with disabilities, the program needs to support more disability specific assignments in specialist areas.

Volunteering can be transformational for volunteers

International volunteering, however well intentioned, can reinforce inequitable power relations. It can also provide a transformational opportunity for gaining greater cultural competencies and an understanding of disparities of power and privilege. The program places a high value on cultural awareness in recruiting and supporting volunteers but is fully aware there is more to learn about what it means to support locally-led change as an outsider, and how best to realise more equitable partnerships.

People are committed to volunteering, even remotely

Remote assignments are still a new modality for the program, and we are still learning how to make them as effective as possible. They were initially given a three-month maximum duration on the assumption that people would be less willing to work remotely for longer than that. That has not proven to be the case, and the program has clearly heard the need and desire for longer-term remote assignments. We have also learnt that communication while working remotely is crucial, that it takes time and effort but reaps rewards.



7 | Management actions and forward priorities

The Australian Volunteers Program will start the second term of its 10-year design a stronger, more resilient and more innovative program than it was at the beginning of its first term. In 2022-23, after five-years of implementation and significant adaptation in response to the challenges of COVID-19, the program is well positioned to contribute to meaningful impact through people-to-people connections as a unique part of Australia's development program.

Key management actions and priorities that will be taken forward in 2022-23 include:

Supporting partner organisations to respond to and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, and work with them to strengthen their capacity to deliver positive change

The program starts from a position of respecting our partners' existing capacity and knowledge. In 2022-23, the program will continue to work with a diverse range of partners across 26 countries, providing a range of support (including but not limited to volunteer assignments, small grants, and brokering new partnerships and networks) to strengthen their capacity to better progress their own objectives.

Steadily increasing the number of in-country volunteers, while carefully managing health, safety and security risks

Effective risk management will continue to be an important part of delivering the Australian Volunteers Program. It will be particularly important in 2022-23, as we mobilise volunteers into countries which have not hosted volunteers since COVID-19 repatriations in 2020. Routine activities (such as program-wide risk monitoring) will be undertaken, with risk and security assessments and country security plans updated to reflect changes in the risk environment. Staff will also be supported to better monitor risk and pick-up on weak signals of significant changes in the risk environment.

Introducing hybrid volunteering, while exploring additional volunteering modalities under the Innovation Hub

Hybrid volunteering will be launched as a new offering in 2022-23, to complement in-country and remote volunteering. Hybrid volunteering will offer partner organisations and volunteers the flexibility to seamlessly transition from in-country to remote (or from remote to in-country) on the same assignment. The Innovation Hub will continue to explore and test alternative models of volunteering. The upcoming year provides an opportunity to build upon and consolidate the learning and insights gained through the program's innovation activities in 2021-22.

Further strengthening and deepening partnerships, particularly in the Pacific region

The importance of trusted partnerships as ways to contribute to sustainable development outcomes will be further enhanced in 2022-23. For example, we will strengthen and broaden our partnership approach in the Pacific, including by seeking to develop deeper partnerships with Pacific regional organisations. To support this work, and to ensure that it is locally-led, we will recruit a Pacific partnerships coordinator who will be based in Fiji. Also in 2022-23, the program will explore developing bespoke partnership training for staff and stakeholders, which draws on international best practice, to further enhance our partnership approach.

Case study: ProMedical, Vanuatu

ProMedical is Vanuatu's only professional ambulance service providing paramedic services to the local communities on the islands of Efate and Santo. The organisation's operations include 24-hour access to emergency pre-hospital care and transport; domestic and international medical evacuations; mortal remains repatriation; hyperbaric treatment; and first aid training courses. To continue to grow and be more effective in their mission to improve overall health outcomes in Vanuatu, ProMedical identified a need to strengthen their training, mentoring, and progressing Ni-Vanuatu students through diploma modules.

Australian volunteers Wayne Barnes and Sophie Murdoch completed assignments as a Paramedic Clinical Instructor and a Paramedic Clinical Educator, respectively. With their support, staff were trained in safe and effective procedures and processes for delivering professional paramedical services. Additionally, six ProMedical graduates were awarded a Diploma of Paramedical Sciences in November 2021.

Trained staff are now able to provide paramedic response to medical emergencies more confidently, which in turn is helping to reduce Vanuatu's reliance on international support, and directly contributes to Vanuatu having a self-sufficient, high-quality ambulance service.

With the support of the volunteers, ProMedical has further developed partnerships with local, regional and international organisations, local and national government and peer networks. One way this has been achieved is by Wayne and Sophie assisting staff in amplifying ProMedical's social media output, highlighting the organisation's success stories and important contribution to the community.

Wayne's experience, technical expertise and positive interpersonal skills were valued by the staff at ProMedical, and he consistently demonstrated a positive attitude and commitment throughout his assignment. Sophie built strong working relationships with each staff member. Throughout her assignment she assisted in creating a supportive work environment and was committed to regular in-house training.

ProMedical's partnership with the program has enhanced staff training, capacity and confidence, and supported the development of effective procedures and processes.



Vanuatu *The Australian Volunteers program has supported ProMedical to strengthen Vanuatu's paramedic services through volunteer placements and small grants. Pictured is ProMedical paramedic, George Jack.*

Updating the Global Program Strategy

The strategic components of the program are set out in the Global Program Strategy. In 2022-23, the program will support DFAT to update this strategy in line with the refreshed program logic. An updated Global Program Strategy will articulate the Australian Government's strategic vision for the second term of the Australian Volunteers Program.

Supporting continued opportunities for staff to connect

We have learned the value of connecting staff to support staff wellbeing and cross-program collaboration, including through online events and participation in working groups. These ways of working have been particularly important when travel has been limited and many staff continue to work from home.

In 2022-23, we will continue to bring staff together (both virtually or face-to-face) to foster team cohesion; further enhance program delivery; and provide learning opportunities for professional development.

For example, we will continue to offer cross-program opportunities such as participating in working groups and invest in reflection workshops. We are also planning to hold a Global Workshop in Melbourne in November 2022. This workshop, to be held early on in this second term of the program, will strengthen relationships that underpin the program's effectiveness as we look ahead to the next five-years of program implementation.



8 | Progress towards outcomes

This section of the report summarises progress made during the year toward the three end of program outcomes. The focus of the report is on the previous 12 months. However, recognising this as the final year of the initial end of program outcomes (and the mid-way point of the program's 10-year term), a summary of progress over the last five years is also provided.

There are three sub-sections, reflecting the three end of program outcomes and their related intermediate outcomes:

- Partner organisations are supported by Australia to achieve their own development objectives
- Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally
- The public in Australia better appreciate the value of international volunteering

A fourth sub-section covers the program's foundations and the systems and activities that have supported the work of the program overall.



Indonesia Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPf) is an Indonesian NGO working at the intersection of environmental protection, community development and wildlife rehabilitation. FNPf's conservation work is holistic and sustainable and aims to benefit local communities. In this picture, FNPf staff, I Putu Peri Arta Gunawan (left) and Alhalmata Rosyidi (right), are setting up an endoscopy unit to monitor a bird's nest at the Besikalung Wildlife Sanctuary, Bali.

Five years at a glance (2018–2022)

2336

assignments

649

remote assignments

1687

in-country assignments

1707

volunteers

165

approved accompanying dependents

1.6%

volunteers identify as having a disability

61.7%

women

37.9%

men

0.4%

self-describe

1.6%

volunteers identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

81% of partner organisations reported good or excellent progress against assignment objectives



74% of volunteers thought they made good or excellent progress against assignment objectives



86% of partner organisations were satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteer assignment



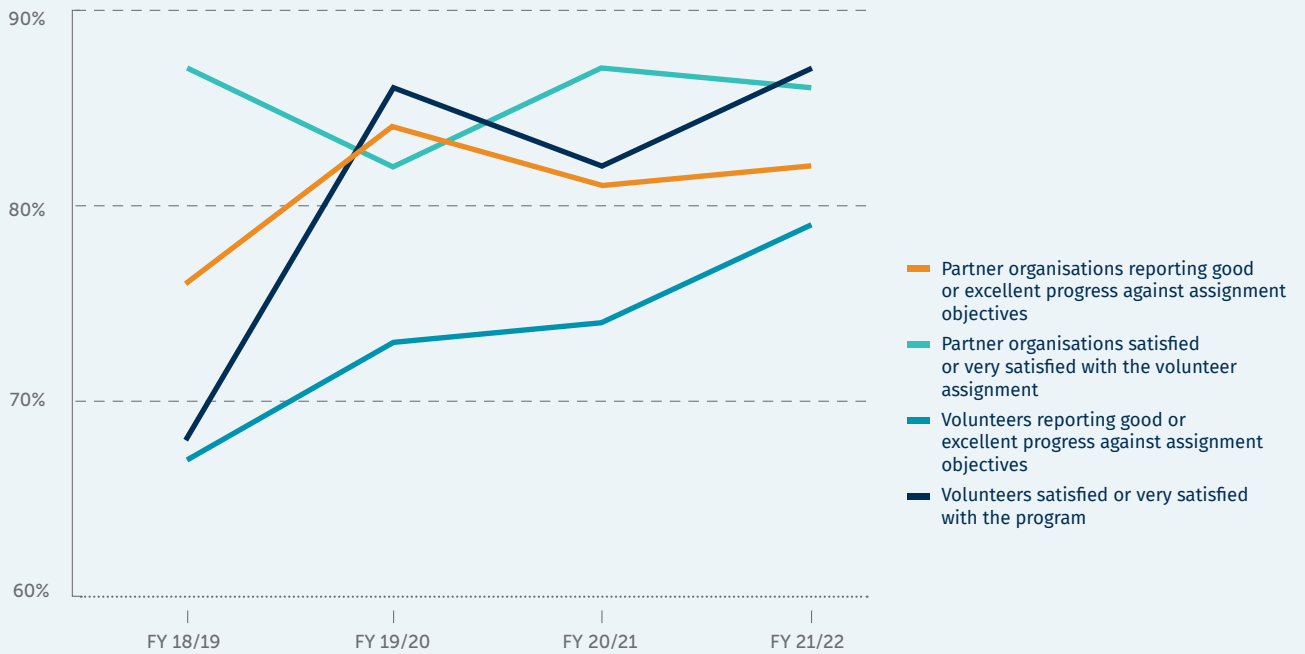
84% of volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with the program



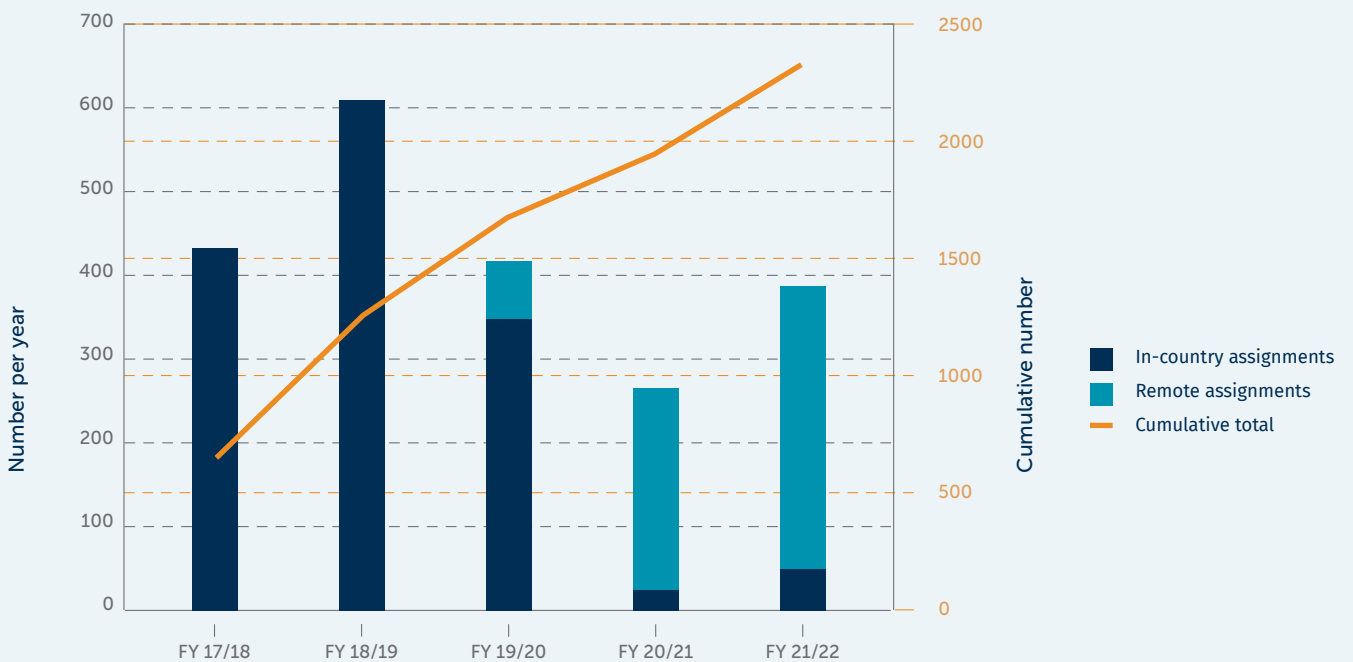
Number of partner organisations supported with assignments

1003

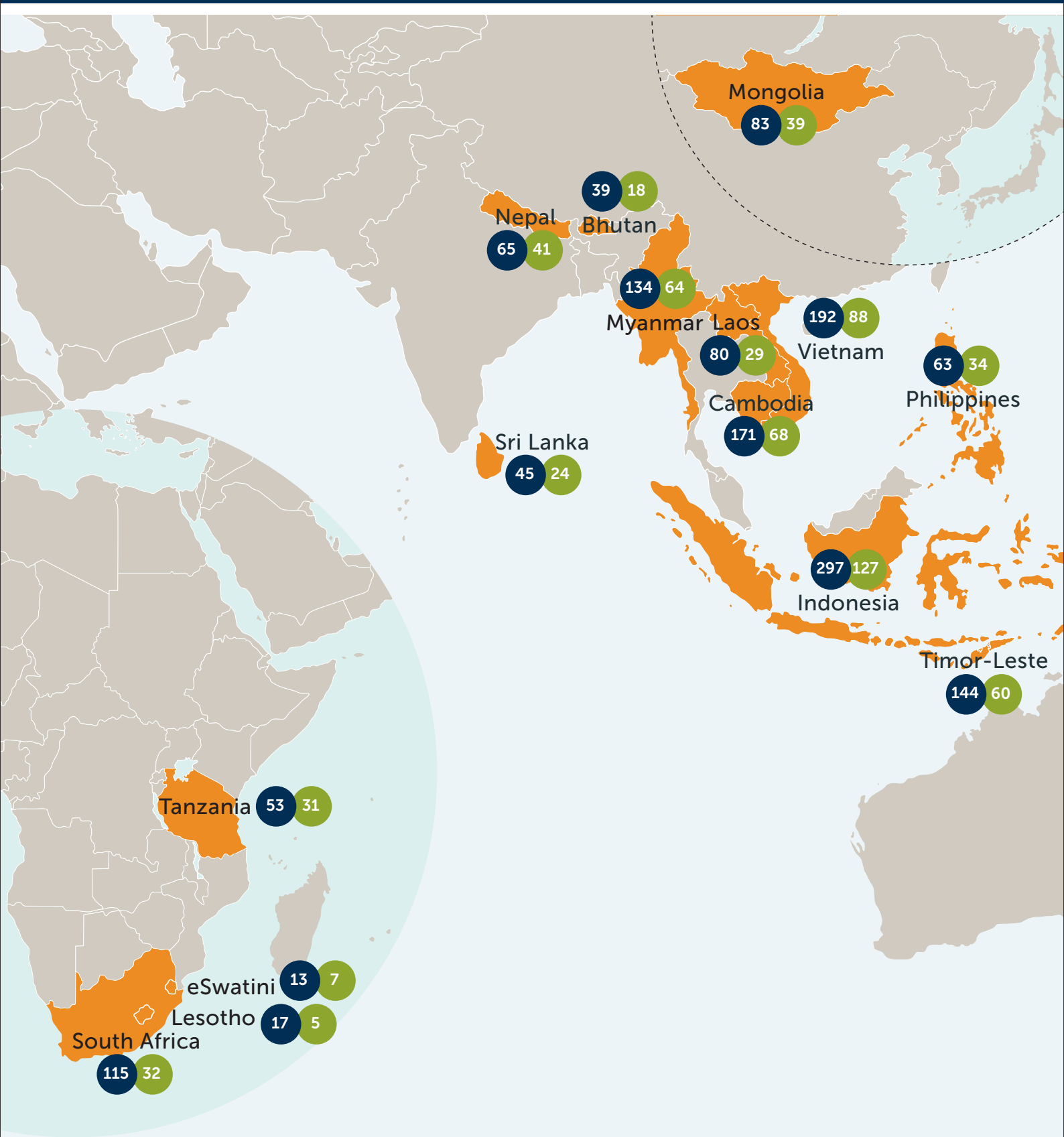
Partner organisation and volunteer assessments over time

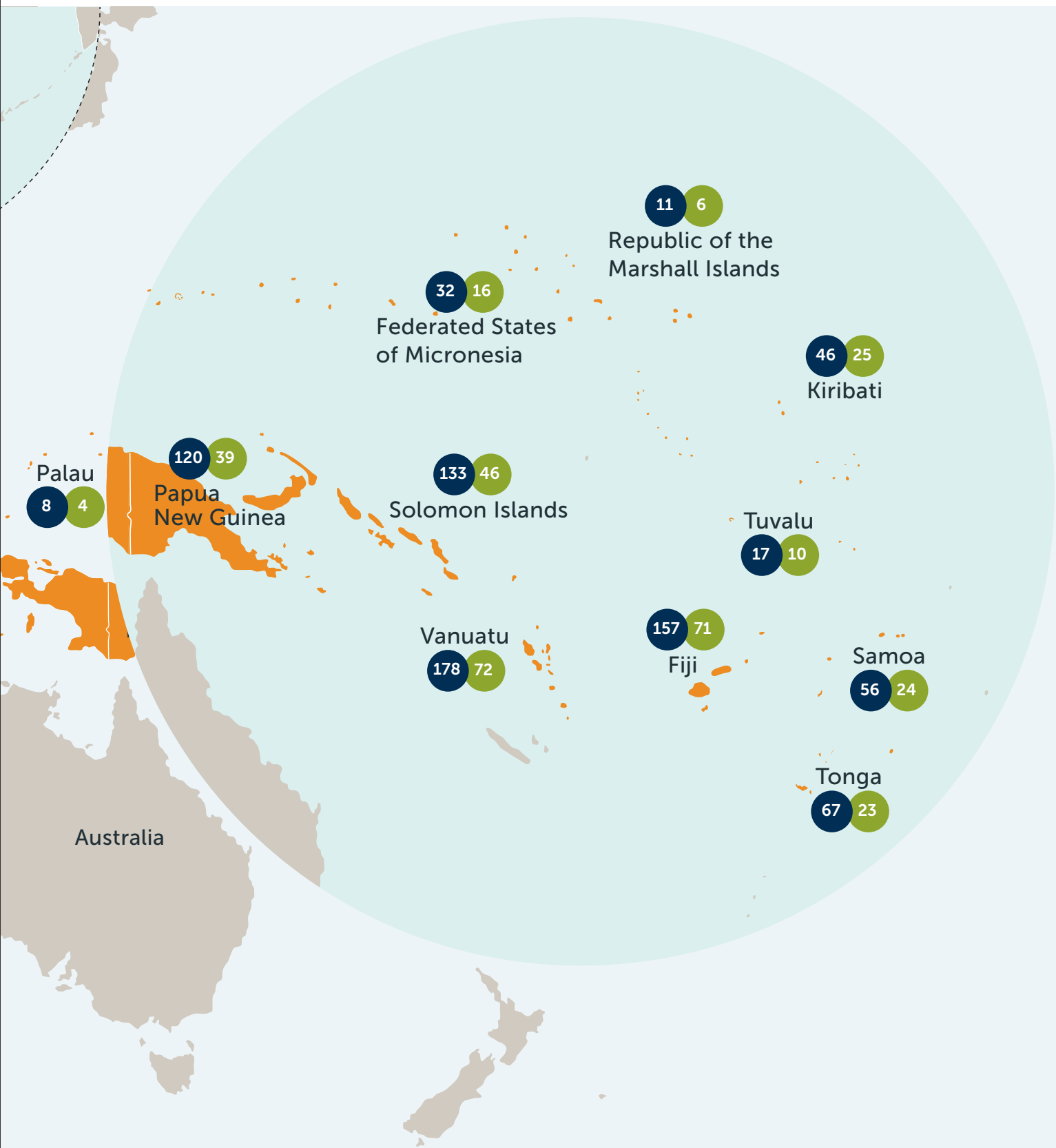




Number of new assignments starting over the first five years of the program



Where we operate (2018 - 2022)





 Total number of assignments
 Total number of partner organisations



8.1 Supporting the development outcomes of our partner organisations

Over the last five years, the program has supported over 1,000 different partner organisations. The program has seen partner organisations achieve significant outcomes that have helped their communities and countries, and is proud to have played a small part in supporting locally-led change.

End of program outcome: Partner organisations are supported by Australia to progress their development outcomes

The program supports partner organisations working across a wide range of thematic areas. Partners deliver vital work in health and COVID-19 response and recovery; in the education sector; in directly supporting the lives of marginalised communities; and in developing global partnerships to help achieve the SDGs. An independent evaluation of the program in 2021 found that the program has been very effective in supporting partner organisations to achieve their own capacity strengthening goals and is highly relevant to the needs of those organisations.²

The Global Program Strategy identifies three thematic areas, aligned with Australian Government priorities, which act as lenses through which to view program impact. These thematic areas are inclusive economic growth; human rights; and climate change, disaster resilience and food security.

Over the last three years, the program has conducted evaluations focussing on each impact area. All three evaluations have shown the program to be successfully supporting partners³. The most recent of these evaluations, conducted in 2021, focussed on climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific.

The evaluation identified impacts in these areas through the work of partner organisations and the contribution of the program.

The most common impacts achieved by partner organisations involved in the evaluation were related to water security, conservation, emergency response and disaster risk reduction. Enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change were reported, as a result of partners' work in disaster risk reduction and longer-term climate and disaster resilience. Water security was the focus of work for several organisations, both in terms of improving physical access and increased community knowledge about the impact climate change will have on access to water.

The evaluation noted that, "to a large extent, the Australian Volunteers Program has contributed to partner organisations progressing their development objectives" related to the impact area. Examples given included training and institutional capacity building; research support; building enhanced monitoring, evaluation and learning systems; and strategic development.⁴

2. *Independent Evaluation of the Australian Volunteers Program*, April 2021, TetraTech

3. *Deep Dive Evaluation of Inclusive Economic Growth in Indonesia*, 2020, Winterford, K., Gero, A., Megaw, T., Fee, A., Cunningham, R. Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS
Deep Dive Evaluation of Human Rights in Southern Africa, 2020, Winterford, K., Gero, A., Megaw, T., Cunningham, R., Fee, A., Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS
Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific, 2021, Gero, A., Megaw, T., Winterford, K. and Cunningham, R., Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS

4. *Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific*, 2021, Gero, A., Megaw, T., Winterford, K. and Cunningham, R., Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS page 18.

Indonesia CIQAL (Center for Improving Qualified Activities in the Life of People with Disabilities) aims to support persons with disabilities live independent and prosperous lives by implementing economic empowerment programs and advocating for persons with disabilities. Pictured are staff meeting at the CIQAL office in Bantul, Jogjakarta. From left to right: Finance Manager, Ida Ayu Putu Sudiartini (back to camera), Director, Ibnu Sukaca, Office Administrative Assistant, Sutrisno, Program Coordinator, Dwi Suka Sulistyaningsih, and Program Manager, Dr. Arni Surwanti.



Volunteer assignments specifically related to climate change can provide direct technical support, leading to tangible results. Other assignments are in organisational support roles, helping organisations respond to climate change through improving the way they work. The two anonymous quotes below illustrate the different ways volunteers have been supporting the development outcomes of partner organisations on climate change:

“To use [the volunteer’s] expertise and technical know-how to support our forest research and nursery workers to be able to upgrade their skills and be able to venture into new ideas and techniques of raising seedlings...With this Australian volunteer, now we have mangrove seedlings in our nurseries that are planted along coastlines as part of addressing climate change issues and coastal erosion and degradation”

~ Partner interviewee.⁵

“With human resources... if you have a confident human resources manager... it makes things a lot easier when managing staff at all levels. So, again not directly related to climate change, but certainly had a huge effect on the way we delivered... So without it we wouldn’t have been able to deliver as effectively”

~ Partner interviewee.⁶

During the year, the program also commissioned research on partner organisations working on disability inclusion, as a key cross-cutting issue for the program. The research found that partner organisations are progressing their strategic objectives including in disability inclusion.

Partner organisations have strengthened their capacity in multiple areas and, through their strengthened capacity, are transforming the lives of persons with disabilities at community, national, and policy levels.

“As a result of their strengthened capacity, partner organisations are transforming the lives of persons with disabilities. The research found that partner organisations are advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, addressing their practical needs by increasing access to quality services for persons with disabilities, some of whom are among the most marginalised, and advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities to influence more inclusive policies, systems, and changing community attitudes that discriminate against persons with disabilities.”⁷

The area partner organisations reported development outcomes on most frequently was improved health and wellbeing of persons with disabilities through the provision of and access to services, assistive devices, and supporting persons with disabilities to assert their right to health services. Improved education outcomes for persons with disabilities, specifically inclusive education for children with diverse learning abilities, was the second most common area partners reported increased capacity.

⁵ Ibid page 19

⁶ Ibid page 25

⁷ *Researching Australian volunteers’ contribution to achieving disability inclusion in programs implemented by partner organisations, 2022*, Robinson, L., Low, I., Wakaniyasi, J., Seru, L., CoLAB and Pacific Disability Forum



Indonesia The Coral Triangle Centre (CTC) works closely with local communities, private sector, governments and partners to strengthen marine resource management in the Coral Triangle. Through protecting coral reef ecosystems, ensuring sustainable livelihoods and food security, the Centre has a regional scope with global impact. Pictured are Ni Made Prasiwi Bestari from the CTC Sales and Marketing team (centre) and interns (left to right) Mia Dwi Lestari, Yesha Pelupessy, Cathy and Ayla Huisman.

Partner organisation assessment of progress against assignment objectives (n299)



Intermediate outcome: Partner organisations have strengthened their capacity and gained from the program

In 2021-22, 265 partner organisations were supported with volunteer assignments, a slight increase on the previous reporting period. Most partners (72%) have had more than one assignment during the year. At the end of each assignment, partners are asked to assess if assignment objectives agreed at the outset have been achieved or not. From 299 completed evaluations, 82% of assignments were rated by partners as making good or excellent progress against their assignment objectives. This is in line with previous years.

The types of assignment objectives achieved are hugely varied. They range from increasing the clinical and operational capacity of paramedic services in Vanuatu to developing strategies to increase long term revenue and financial sustainability of an organisation in Sri Lanka to improving access to ADHD therapy for children in Vietnam.

Where less satisfactory progress was reported, the most common issues identified by partner organisations related to time constraints or delays with the assignment, often due to COVID-19. This has particularly been an issue with remote assignments, that initially had a three-month maximum duration. Recognising this issue, the program has extended the maximum duration of remote assignments to six months.

As well as the direct benefits of assignments, volunteers also often support partners to strengthen their organisational capacity. This is observed at three levels: supporting individual staff within an organisation, supporting organisational development through improved systems or policies, or supporting at the systemic level (how an organisation connects with the wider systems and networks it operates in).

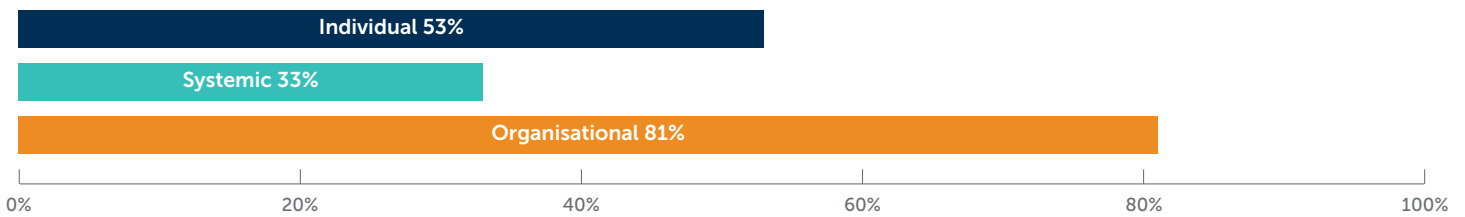
Most volunteers reported supporting partner capacity at more than one level. Volunteers most commonly reported strengthening capacity at the organisational level (81%). Due to nature of working remotely, fewer assignments reported strengthening capacity at the individual level than in previous years.



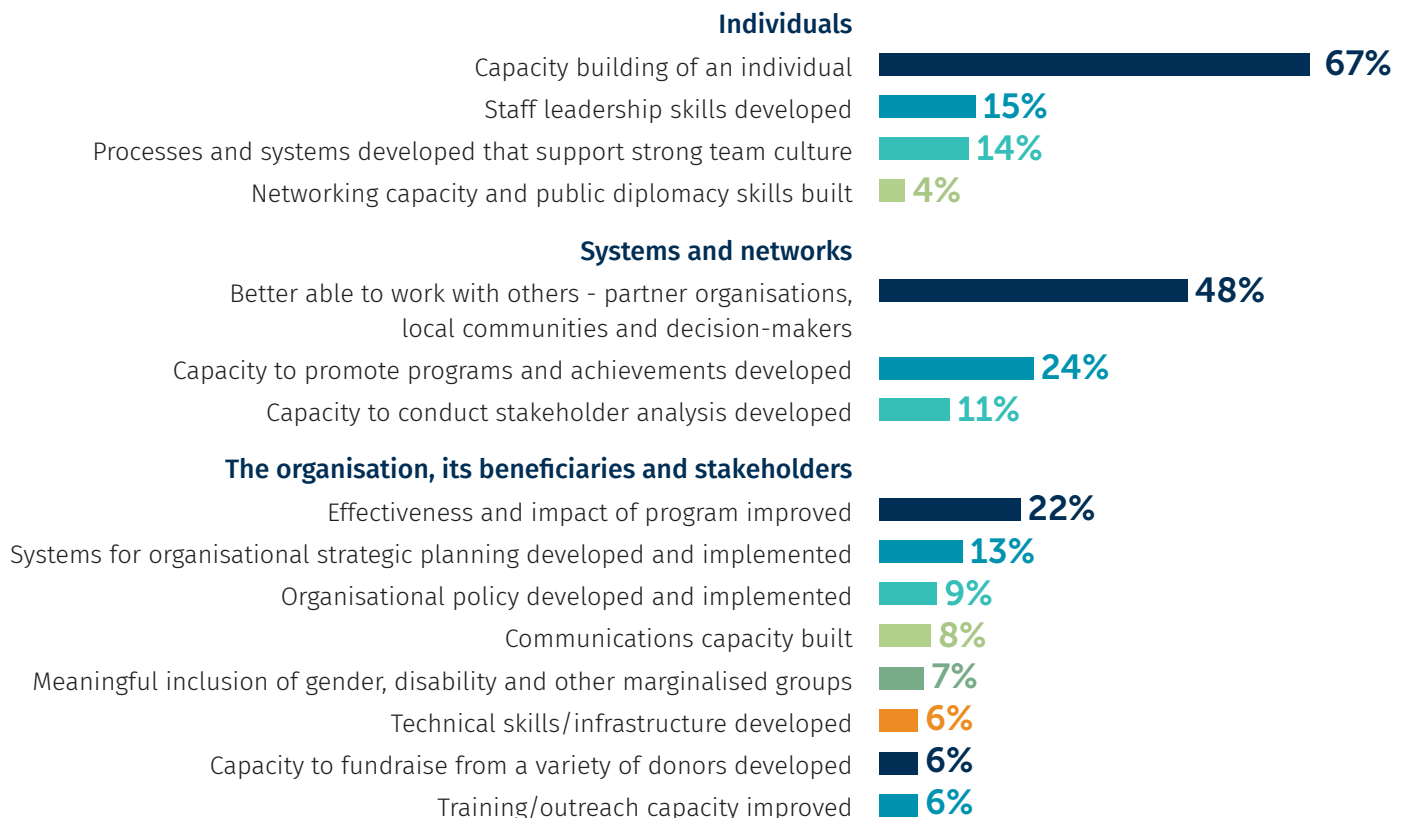
Solomon Islands The Solomon Islands National Institute of Sport (SINIS) provides high performance sports programs, services and training facilities for athletes and coaches. Several Australian volunteers are supporting SINIS as the Solomon Islands' sports system experiences significant growth in preparation for the 2023 Pacific Games.

Australian volunteer Talent Pathways Officer, Josiah McCarthy (back, far left), is pictured with the Talent Identification team: (back, second left to right) Jeff Baura Iro, Philip Mauangai Tuhaika, Naomi Fujiyama, Chris Meqi Saru and Mike Tuhaika; (front left to right): Irine Zanita Maeohu, Graham Mani, Laimah Sifi, James Qoloni and Joan Roia.

Levels at which volunteers report strengthening capacity (n169)



Volunteers reported on specific outcomes that they feel their assignment achieved across the three broad areas:





Papua New Guinea
Matschie's tree-kangaroo (*Dendrolagus matschiei*), is native to the Huon Peninsula. Under the IUCN classification, Matschie's tree-kangaroo is an Endangered species. The Tenkile Conservation Alliance works to save critically endangered tree kangaroos.

Examples of change at different levels reported by our partners

Strengthening the skills of individuals

"The volunteer was able to demonstrate the standard expected of a specialty trainee, in both work ethic and in his pursuit of knowledge in the field of emergency medicine."

~ Ministry of Health, Vanuatu

"[The volunteer] has contributed positively to the development of lecturer capacity building, especially in logical and systematic thinking. We also appreciated his ability to coach lecturers to publish their academic writing which comply with international standard."

~ Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

Strengthening systems and networks

"[The volunteer] assisted the SVRI in developing a system to manage and monitor our social media platforms, increase following and membership by increased advocacy and use of advocacy language. [The volunteer] has successfully promoted the Forum, and her active outreach has had a positive impact on important processes regarding the Forum, ie. abstract submissions, registrations, participant-driven events, and exhibition booths."

~ Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), South Africa

"The volunteer created a channel to communicate and introduce the international environment, that can support the ILRI team to connect, work better with other partners, local communities as well as decision-makers."

~ International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Vietnam

Strengthening the organisation, its beneficiaries and stakeholders

"[The volunteer] was highly professional and has been a source of great information particularly with understanding international standards of clinical supervision and providing feedback on the standards that we are developing contextualised to Bhutan. Therefore, capacities of our field counsellors and those of the staff under our organisation that worked directly with her has been developed. The indirect but most important beneficiaries of this assignment is the community - the quality of services provided by our counsellors would be improved."

~ RENEW (Respect Educate Nurture Empower Women), Bhutan

"Land-use Plans and village data is imperative for the Tenkile Conservation Alliance (TCA) and the management of the proposed Torricelli Mountain Range Conservation Area. [The volunteer's] organisation of village data and production of Land-use Plans has meant TCA is better organised and can move forward in this area with our stakeholders."

~ Tenkile Conservation Alliance, Papua New Guinea

Partner organisation satisfaction (n310)

Satisfaction with program's in-country management



Satisfaction with volunteer



Overall satisfaction with assignment



A high proportion of partner organisations continued to report successful assignments, and a high proportion continued to report being highly satisfied. Eighty-six per cent of organisations providing feedback during the year were satisfied or very satisfied with the assignment. A slightly higher proportion (90%) were satisfied with their volunteer, and a greater proportion (97%) were satisfied with the program's in-country management.

The qualitative feedback provided by partner organisations is also highly positive, mostly relating to the successful achievement of assignment objectives. The most frequent reasons for positive feedback were:

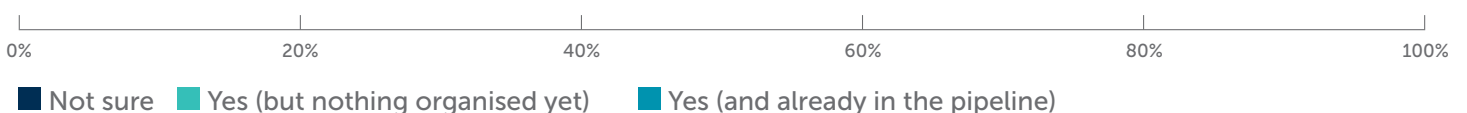
- Good assignment progress (20%)
- Good relationship with volunteer and/or program staff (20%)
- Good support from the program (19%)
- Volunteer had the right skill set for the assignment (11%)
- Good personality or attitude of the volunteer (10%)

Reasons given for not being satisfied (less than 2% of partners) were:

- Limitations of remote assignments (2%)
- Assignment did not progress as planned (1%)
- Insufficient assignment duration (1%)
- Lack of, or unclear, communication from volunteer or program (1%)
- Volunteer unsuited to the role (0.5%)

Ninety-nine percent of partner organisations stated they would like to host another volunteer. Many responses included a request for an in-country assignment (15%) or for longer assignments (9%), which the program has responded to. All but one of the 277 organisations who responded to the question would recommend the program to other organisations in their network.

Partner organisations reporting they would like another volunteer (n279)





South Africa The QuadPara Association of the Western Cape (QAWC) is an NGO representing quadriplegics and paraplegics in the Western Cape. QAWC strives to improve the lives of quadriplegics and paraplegics in the Western Cape through prevention and awareness campaigns. Pictured is QAWC's General Manager, Anthony Ghillino (left), and Australian volunteer Lowri Williams (right). Lowri has supported QAWC's work through in-country and remote volunteer assignments.

“The Australian Volunteers Program has promoted volunteerism to support capacity building and development in ProMedical Vanuatu for more than a decade. Volunteerism has and will continue to transform ProMedical’s pace and nature of development, and its benefits to both societies at large and the individuals. I would be honoured to recommend the Australian Volunteers Program to others.”

~ ProMedical, Vanuatu

“The [program] provides an opportunity for an organisation to make use of the specialised talents of a highly skilled individual in an area where assistance is required. The volunteer is well supported and the entire process is professional and well managed. Having a volunteer come into the organisation and assist is a breath of fresh air, with the volunteer bringing a totally different perspective to the organisation.”

~ QuadPara Association of the Western Cape, South Africa

The capacity strengthening benefits supported by volunteers are also seen to be sustained beyond the duration of an assignment. Eighty-four per cent of volunteers think it likely or very likely that the organisation they’ve worked with will be able to sustain the initiatives. Similarly, the recent evaluation of the program’s work on climate change found that “there is a high degree of evidence of ongoing benefits [...] attributable to partner organisations and the Australian Volunteers Program.” In a survey of partners, 57% said it was likely or very likely that the benefits from the program will continue (21% said ‘medium likelihood’ and 21% were ‘don’t know / no response’).⁸

8. Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific, 2021, Gero, A., Megaw, T., Winterford, K. and Cunningham, R., Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS

Intermediate outcome: Partners have a strategic rationale for participating in the program and provide a safe and productive work environment

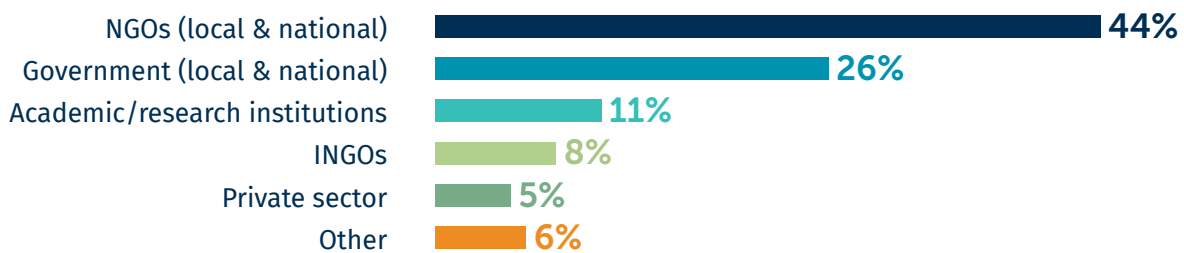
The evaluation of climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific also looked at the question of relevance of the program to partner's strategic needs. It found that, "to a large extent, the Australian Volunteers Program has been suitable for partner organisations in the Pacific". The relevance of the program was demonstrated through the recruitment of volunteers with suitable attitudes and skills, in both technical and non-technical roles, and the support provided by the program.

The importance of volunteers having the cultural sensitivity and awareness to engage with partners was noted. It was also suggested that the program could increase its relevance by providing more focused support around climate change mitigation and response. Analysis carried out as part of the evaluation found partner organisations own objectives to be consistent with civil society priorities and government policies and programs at the national, regional and international levels.

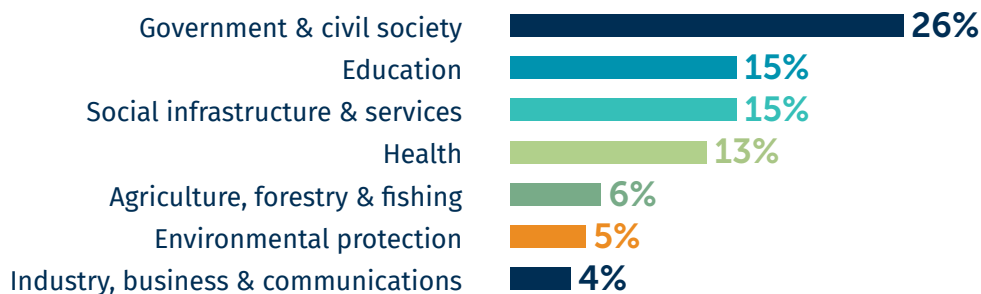
Volunteers are asked to what extent they see their assignment as a good fit for partner organisations' priorities. Eighty-nine per cent of volunteers reported their assignment to be a good fit. Seventy-five per cent of volunteers felt their partner organisation had the resources (i.e., funds, workforce etc.) to benefit from an assignment.

Of those who volunteered in-country and completed an end of assignment evaluation in the reporting period, 91% were satisfied or very satisfied with the safety and security management of their assignment. Nine per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, all of whom were women. Only one per cent of remote volunteers reported not having the equipment they needed to work from home.

Types of partner organisations supported



Sectors our partners work in



Intermediate outcome: Relevant and diverse partnerships with partner organisations are established, maintained and supported by DFAT, the program and Australian organisations.

The program continues to support a broad range of partner organisations. Of the 265 organisations supported in the last year, 116 of them (44%) were local and national NGOs.

Most organisations (26%) are classified as being in the government and civil society sector. Most of these work on human rights issues; are women’s equality organisations or work to prevent violence against women and girls; or are focussed on democratic participation or legal and judicial development.

Partner organisations are also categorised based on their alignment to one or more of the 17 SDGs. Goals relating to health, education and reduced inequalities were the areas partner organisations most often aligned with.

Relationships with partner organisations have been supported and maintained through numerous activities throughout the year. Relationships between partner organisations and 11 Australian-based organisations have involved 39 volunteer assignments, as detailed in Focus area 1: Partnerships.

The program has continued its Global Webinar Series with 19 webinars held during the year. These bring together partners, volunteers and staff to share experiences and knowledge, and help build connections. The topic each month alternates between a sector-based discussion showcasing the work of partner organisations, and a practice-based discussion.

In the last year, discussions have showcased partners working on water security, climate change and disability, and covered practical sessions on managing fraud and writing grant applications.

DFAT supported the program to operate in the complex context brought on by COVID-19 travel restrictions, health requirements and partner government priorities. The program continues to align to the Australian Government’s development policy *Partnerships for Recovery – Australia’s COVID-19 Development Response*. This policy is not only focussed on health and medical issues, however, the following examples show how volunteers and partner organisations have been engaged in these priority areas.

Partner organisations contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals



The size of each SDG logo is a visual representation of the proportion of partner organisations contributing to that goal.



Papua New Guinea

Top: Ruth Daniel, St John Ambulance dispatcher, at her desk.

Bottom: Ruth (left) and Australian volunteer Ambulance Clinical Support Officer Sarah Bornstein (right) working together at the dispatch desk.

DFAT Priority: Infectious disease outbreak response, Laos

Laos' Department of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC) was established in 2012 in response to the need to manage and monitor both endemic and emerging infectious disease threats. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the gaps within the current Communicable Disease Law that required immediate addressing.

Communicable disease law development was a new area of work for the department. The previous law was drafted by technical staff within the Ministry of Health and therefore did not contain as much legal detail as was necessary. It was important for the revision to have the assistance of persons that are trained in law. There were no lawyers in Laos trained in communicable disease or public health law, therefore there was no local pool to draw on to assist with this task.

Through a remote and then in-country assignment, an Australian volunteer has supported DCDC to review and update the Communicable Disease Law. The volunteer worked closely with WHO representatives to provide technical support to DCDC staff to review and identify areas to strengthen or develop in the existing version of the law. The volunteer supported DCDC to review existing material and interview key Ministry of Health staff involved in public health emergency preparedness and response.

DFAT Priority: Health systems and preparedness, Papua New Guinea (PNG)

St John Ambulance PNG is leading the government initiative for a nationally coordinated ambulance service in partnership with the National Department of Health (NDOH). St John provided the NDOH and the Controller's Office with technical advice, support and response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Australian Volunteers Program has supported this work through 12 volunteer assignments with St John Ambulance.

This assistance has supported the PNG Government through: opening and operating a COVID-19 Care Centre as a support to the Port Moresby General Hospital; operating a COVID-19 drive-through testing centre; providing trained personnel to the National Capital District (NCD) Public Health Authority Surveillance and Prevention team; procuring and warehousing all PPE for NCD public health facilities and services; monitoring COVID-19 contacts in quarantine in support of the NCD Public Health Authority; providing infection control and prevention training to health workers; producing COVID-19 awareness and risk communication material aligned with WHO guidance; and supporting business, industry and government offices to understand how to prevent and respond to COVID-19 in the workplace, in line with the Nuipela Pasin (National new normal guideline).

Focus Area 1: Partnerships

Partnerships continue to be at the centre of the way we work to support locally-led development. Our partnerships with Australian organisations enhance program delivery through a range of support options.

In 2021-22, COVID-19 continued to impact the number of assignments that Australian organisations supported. In response to these external challenges, we have explored innovative ways for new and existing Australian organisations to work with the program; diversified and built on in-country sector requirements; and explored other collaborative partnerships to meet the program's long-term objectives.

The number of assignments supported by Australian organisations during this reporting period was 39, with 27 remote assignments and 12 in-country.

The program has 91 collaborative partnerships with Australian organisations, an increase on the 80 partners last year. We also managed six active strategic partnerships, including with the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Global Green Growth Initiative (GGGI), Global Health Special Interest Group, the Pacific Community (SPC) and Atlassian. During the year, the program started exploring a possible partnership with the UK-based ODI. These discussions will continue in 2022-23.

Australian organisations

New Australian organisations joining the program over the last 12 months are from a diverse range of sectors including health, media, town planning, animal health, emergency services, financial development, and education. Examples of new partners include:

- **Barwon Health** provides health services ranging from hospital, rehabilitation, elderly care, community health centres and mental health services. With a staff of 7,500, Barwon Health is working with the program to support filling critical health-related assignments.
- **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)** is a global healthcare provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Working with IPPF supports the program's GEDSI agenda.
- **Cufa** is an independent development agency with a focus on financial development such as micro and social enterprises, employment placement, financial literacy education for children and adults, and livelihoods programs. Cufa has a large network of member partners to support accessing volunteers with skills in banking and finance.

- **Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)** is the peak professional body for urban planners, providing leadership on the advancement of environmental, social and economic benefits of planned use of land in the natural and built environments. Through the program, PIA is working with the Institute of Town Planners in Sri Lanka.
- **Vets Beyond Borders (VBB)** is an animal charity which deploys experienced volunteer vets and vet nurses to animal welfare projects. The first assignment with the program to support a local veterinary partner organisation in Vanuatu will begin in 2022-23.

Other Australian organisations supporting the Australian Volunteers Program include the Wilkins Foundation, Australian Academy of Media, and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council. During the year, we also identified new partnering opportunities with existing partners, such as **Engineers Without Borders** and **Land Transport Authority Samoa**.

The program's partnership with **Atlassian** saw its first volunteer assignments supported during the year, with two rounds of recruitment resulting in a total of ten new remote assignments in South Africa and Philippines. These mentoring roles focused primarily on harnessing the systems, processes and digital ability of the Atlassian volunteers to build digital capability and solve partners' existing technological problems. The partner organisations and volunteers involved have highlighted the value of these assignments in delivering much needed digital solutions for greater impact.

Strengthening partnership capability

In preparation for the coming five years, the program has partnered with the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) and embarked on an exciting process to strengthen our collective skills and capabilities in partnering. Over the next five years, this will help the program create more sustainable and equitable partnerships, and better support our partners to improve linkages and cross-network engagement.

Events and Workshops

Events continue to be an important way to engage Australian organisations and there has been an increase in numbers attending targeted events such as the Global Webinar Series, the launch of Indigenous Pathways and International Women's Day. Over the last 12 months, we have supported workshops and delivered presentations with existing partners including RAID (Researchers in Agriculture for International Development) and the Planning Institute of Australia.

In June 2022, the program participated in the International Conference of Emergency Medicine (ICEM), which was attended by international delegates from across the emergency medicine sector. The program hosted a breakfast panel, titled 'Achieving systemic change in emergency care through long-term partnership'. The panel consisted of doctors from Solomon Islands' National Referral Hospital and Vanuatu's Vila Central Hospital, a committee member from Australian partner Australian College of Emergency Medicine (ACEM), and a past volunteer (Registered Nurse Emergency Department).

The panel, facilitated by the program's Partnerships and Innovation Manager, explored how volunteer programs and emergency health providers can work in partnership to contribute to the capacity of emergency departments and support institutional and systemic change. The session was attended by 59 delegates. In addition to the panel session, the program co-sponsored an exhibition booth with ACEM, and supported four alumni to attend the conference.

Targeted events continue to be a useful way to demonstrate the value to Australian organisations of partnering with the program, and supporting volunteer recruitment in key sectors.



Vanuatu Australian volunteer Critical Care Nurse Educator, John Foley (left), training Intern Registered Nurse, George Ben (right), during a Primary Trauma Care training session with nurses from Vila Central Hospital. Primary Trauma Care is a system of training for front-line staff in trauma management, aimed at preventing death and disability in seriously injured patients

Focus Area 2: Impact Fund grants

The Impact Fund continued to be a valuable component of the Australian Volunteers Program, offering grants of up to AUD \$10,000 to existing partner organisations to support their critical work in relation to specific themes. In 2020, the initiative significantly pivoted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, from a mechanism which provided direct funding to volunteers to one which directly supports partners.

In 2021-22, as an established part of the program, the Impact Fund continued to demonstrate its value to partner organisations even as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions eased, and in-country volunteer assignments gradually increased.

During the reporting period, two Impact Fund grant rounds were conducted. The first round, completed in December 2021, focused on volunteer assignment support, with 30 grants awarded across 18 countries to a total of AUD \$285,586.

The second round, completed in June 2022, focused on supporting projects across two thematic areas: GEDSI, and organisational strengthening. In this round, 122 grants were awarded across 25 countries to a total of AUD \$1,189,309, supporting initiatives including:

- Educational and awareness campaigns for general and targeted communities to promote gender equality, women's rights and empowerment, disability inclusion, and LGBTIQ+ and indigenous rights.
- Vocational training for women and people with disability to enhance technical skills, improve their employability, start a microbusiness and augment existing business skills.
- Professional development to upskill organisations' staff, volunteer networks and professional networks, including training on leadership and management.
- Funding for equipment, systems and processes that support organisations to achieve their objectives in the areas of human resources, finance and IT in a sustainable and effective manner.
- Other innovative projects that intersected with critical areas of environmental conservation, water and waste management, climate action, aquaculture, horticulture and permaculture, nutrition and food security, youth engagement and good governance.

For the first time, grants awarded by the Returned Australian Volunteer Network, previously referred to as 'Go Back<->Give Back' grants, were integrated into the Impact Fund during the GEDSI round. Returned volunteers and their partner organisations co-designed and delivered projects that supported the partner organisation progressing their development objectives.


In addition to grants being awarded to partner organisations, the Health Security Corps Small Grants Program awarded two grants to Australian health professionals in non-clinical roles in-country to build capacity and valuable people-to-people and institutional links.

In total, during 2021-22, 152 small grants were awarded to 129 partner organisations across 25 countries, with a total value of AUD \$1,492,375 and two small grants were awarded to volunteers.

Grants awarded by country

Bhutan	5
Cambodia	12
eSwatini	4
Federated States of Micronesia	2
Fiji	4
Indonesia	25
Kiribati	7
Laos	3
Lesotho	4
Mongolia	6
Myanmar	7
Nepal	1
Palau	3*
Papua New Guinea	3
Philippines	6
Republic of the Marshall Islands	1
Samoa	4
Solomon Islands	4
South Africa	13
Sri Lanka	3
Tanzania	9
Timor-Leste	7
Tonga	4
Vanuatu	5*
Vietnam	12
Total	154

* Includes one Health Security Corps Small Grant awarded to an Australian volunteer



Two reviews were conducted in the reporting period to support continuous improvement of the Impact Fund. In February 2022, external consultants were engaged to review the management of the Impact Fund, with the aim of clearly outlining the Impact Fund's strategic approach and promoting more efficient and effective administration and useability by partner organisations.

Various recommendations highlighted by the review were endorsed and implemented almost immediately, resulting in increased engagement with in-country teams, streamlined documentation and longer lead times for applicants, greater utilisation of insightful data, and a focused strategy framed by an articulated statement of intent.

A review of an individual round of the Impact Fund's outcomes was also conducted by the MEL team. Data and information collected in the final acquittal reports was analysed to determine whether the grants were able to successfully advance partner organisations' objectives.

The review found that Impact Fund projects supported vulnerable communities, children, youth, people with a disability, female sex workers and transgender community with emergency support, capacity building and mentoring services to overcome challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

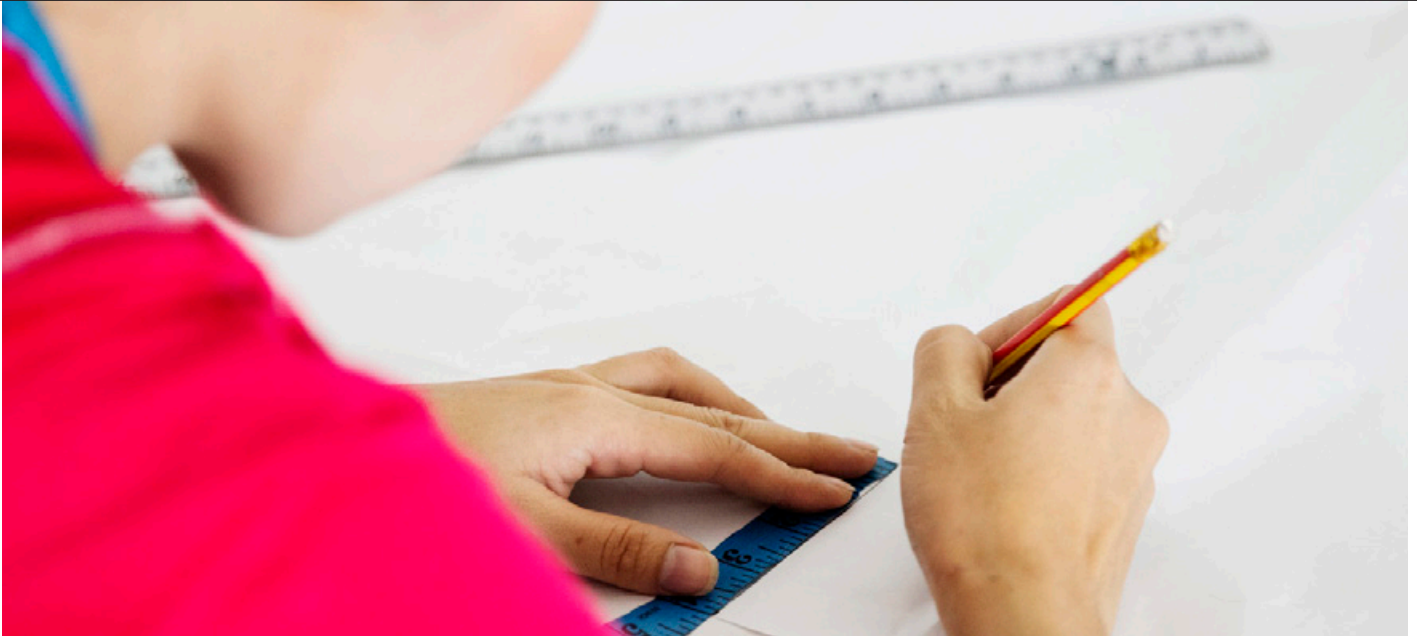
Overall, more than 166,000 people benefited from these projects. Media content on the Impact Fund grants shared through social media, print media, television, radio and YouTube reached more than 2.3 million people in different countries.

In 2021-22, we also increased grant-writing guidance for partner organisations. The program produced a series of animations to illustrate best practices around writing strong grant applications and clear budgets. The program also hosted a Global Webinar Series discussion on grant writing, featuring two partner organisation recipients: the Fiji Cancer Society and OIC Cambodia.



Fiji Lautoka School for Special Education delivers education to students with all types of physical and intellectual disabilities. The school aspires to support the students to be independent and lead fulfilled lives, and one of their main goals is to advocate for children with disabilities. The school provides quality inclusive education based on improving fine and gross motor skills, functional skills, daily life activities, academic improvement and sporting achievements.

The school is delivering vocational training in cooking, sewing, handicrafts and office work with the support of a small grant from the program. Pictured are students receiving training in meal preparation, and other skills including catering, cleaning, healthy diet and teamwork.



8.2 Promoting the value of international volunteering

A wide range of public diplomacy activities were delivered in 2021-22 including: providing opportunities for connection with and between program stakeholders; informing and engaging stakeholders; and increasing awareness of and participation in remote volunteering.

During this period, the program delivered a successful International Volunteer Day campaign and International Women's Day event. The contribution of volunteering was also shared through conference participation, events, increased social media and targeted newsletters. Volunteers and partners were supported to share their stories through rich storytelling, videos and animation. See section 8.3 for information on how the program's alumni program (the Returned Australian Volunteers Network) supports past volunteers to remain connected and promote global volunteering.

Many of these activities also contributed to the program's recruitment marketing objectives, including the resumption of advertising in-country assignments and continuing to promote remote volunteering to existing and new audiences.



Australia A participant asking the panellists questions at the International Women's Day 2022 event.



Cambodia Peng Vann is a Physiotherapist at the National Paediatric Hospital in Phnom Penh. OIC Cambodia works with the hospital to build the capacity of local health workers to identify children who are in need of speech therapy.

End of program outcome: The public in Australia better appreciate the value of volunteering

The program's efforts to increase the Australian public's appreciation of the value of volunteering has been guided by the Global Program Strategy and the Public Diplomacy and Communications Strategy, and implemented in close consultation with DFAT. Specific activities that support this outcome have been outlined in each annual plan and adjusted as appropriate.

From 2017 to 2019, the program successfully delivered stakeholder events and information sessions in Australia, increased media coverage, implemented the Stories for Home project (supporting volunteers to share their stories with their networks), established an approach to parliamentary engagement, increased promotion and advertising, and developed a broad awareness campaign.

Since December 2019, awareness raising activities have been cancelled or severely limited due to the Australian bushfires and then the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities impacted included: a broad advertising campaign; proactive media; a major program conference; and in-person events such as information sessions; and RAVN activities. Additionally, external factors (COVID-19, natural disasters, and social issues like Black Lives Matters and women's rights) have dominated information sources throughout the last two years.

In 2021, the program commissioned research to update our understanding of Australians' perceptions of international aid and volunteering.⁹ The research findings show that there has been a positive shift in interest and support for international volunteering.

The proportion of Australians responding that it's important for the Australian Government to support international volunteering increased from 66% in 2018 to 71% in 2021. There was also increased interest in international volunteering, including receiving information, and supporting or participating in volunteering: in 2021, 41% of respondents were interested in international volunteering, compared to 28% in 2018.

While these trends are positive, it is difficult to attribute increased support for international volunteering among the Australian public to the program. The research did not draw any conclusions on attribution, and the complex external context of the past two years has likely impacted the public's views on a wide range of political and social issues including how to support international development.

It should be noted that this end of program outcome has been revised as part of the refreshed program logic. The new end of program outcome is: *Key stakeholders in Australia and partner countries appreciate the value of volunteering.*

The program's 'key stakeholders' include our partners (overseas and Australian), current, past and potential volunteers, DFAT (in Australia and overseas), participants of other DFAT people-to-people programs, the development sector, and other international volunteering agencies. By focusing on our key stakeholders instead of the general public, our efforts can be more intentional and targeted. By expanding the outcome to include partner countries, the program intends to increase its public diplomacy and communications efforts in program countries over the next five-year term.

9. *Australian Volunteers Program Mid-Term Research (Australian public's perception of international volunteering)*, June 2021, Roy Morgan. The research compared the 2021 results to 2018 baseline indicators data.

Intermediate outcome: Volunteers, partner organisations, Australian organisations and DFAT promote the benefits of volunteering

The program continued to take a storytelling approach to sharing and promoting the value of volunteering. We supported volunteers and partners to share their stories and experiences, and we created a range of content to demonstrate the impact of skilled international volunteering.

Volunteers – current and past – continued to play a significant role in promoting the value of volunteering. The program supports volunteers to engage in a range of public diplomacy activities throughout their volunteer journey. The pre-departure training includes a session on public diplomacy and communications, and online resources are available throughout their assignment. This training explores the opportunities and considerations associated with sharing their story.

The Public Diplomacy team supported volunteers' engagement with media, including liaising with DFAT for clearances. Volunteers were also supported to participate in a range of conferences, as speakers and delegates. The program also encourages volunteers to engage with its social media channels.

Partners, both overseas and in Australia, contribute to promoting the program and the value of volunteering to their networks through a range of activities including workshops, events, conference participation and social media.

Partners were supported to present at the International Volunteer Cooperation Organisation's conference (IVCO) and the International Conference of Emergency Medicine (ICEM). The Coordinator of the Working Women's Centre Timor-Leste (WWCTL) presented in the Voices from the Field session at IVCO, sharing WWCTL's work to improve employment rights for women workers, particularly vulnerable domestic workers. Doctors from Solomon Islands' National Referral Hospital and Vanuatu's Vila Central Hospital participated in ICEM, in Melbourne, including joining a panel discussion on achieving systemic change in emergency care through long-term partnership.

On International Women's Day (IWD), the program engaged with the theme #BreaktheBias. Partners presented on their work to strengthen gender equality and women's rights at events delivered by the program in Australia and countries where the program operates (see Focus area 4: Diversity and Inclusion). The program also ran an IWD social media campaign, inviting our partners to strike the 'break the bias' pose, and share what their organisation is doing to break the gender bias in their communities.

The program continued to support DFAT to leverage the program to achieve public diplomacy outcomes through events and content production. DFAT officials participated in a range of events, including International Volunteers Day (IVD) and IWD, in Australia and in many program countries. In Australia, DFAT's First Assistant Secretary (Humanitarian, NGOs and Partnerships Division) spoke at the launch of the Indigenous Pathways program and the global IVD event. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls addressed the program's hybrid IWD event.

DFAT Posts engaged in IVD and IWD events and activities across the countries in which the program operates. For example, in Tonga, the program and the Australian High Commission co-hosted an IVD event. The High Commissioner welcomed more than 30 guests, including representatives from partner organisations and other international volunteering programs. In Kiribati, the Acting Deputy Australian High Commissioner opened the IVD event. In Samoa, the program co-hosted an IWD event with the Australian High Commission.

The program continued to provide high quality social media content to DFAT Canberra and Posts. Social media content was produced for, and shared by, DFAT central communications, the Minister for the Pacific and International Development, the First Assistant Secretary (Humanitarian, NGOs and Partnerships Division), the Health Security Corps and the Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls. The program also generated more than 180 pieces of unique content for Posts.

Each Post received unique social media content for IVD, including the program's IVD video. Eighteen Posts shared IVD-related content, and DFAT Canberra shared the IVD video. By sharing the program's IVD content, DFAT amplified our IVD campaign resulting in more than 8,200 video views across DFAT and program social media.

During the year, the Australian Volunteers Program section of DFAT's website was also updated with a range of new stories, videos and animation. Two of the videos include Auslan interpretation to increase accessibility.



Animation Animations are a new way for the program to share stories of impact. Stills from four animations (left to right): GALA Queer archive, South Africa; Emas Hitam, Indonesia; remote volunteering, Cambodia; volunteering, Samoa.

Intermediate outcome: Innovations, learnings and program achievements are promoted and shared

The program continued to share knowledge and showcase achievements through a range of activities and communications. Digital communications, including social media, videos, newsletters and the program’s website, and traditional media were utilised to raise awareness of the program. The Innovation Hub website was launched and the Hub’s work was promoted through a range of channels.

The program continued to develop rich storytelling content in a range of formats. Photo and videos shoots were completed in Cambodia, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Indonesia, with an emphasis on capturing our partners’ stories and voices. Videos were produced about Indigenous Pathways, to promote remote volunteering and to celebrate IVD. The program also improved accessibility by adding Auslan interpretation to key program videos, and Auslan interpretation and audio description to the Indigenous Pathways video.

In 2021-22, the program trialed a new format of storytelling, using animations to tell our partners’ stories and how they have been supported by the program. This was in part a practical response to the limitations in filming due to COVID-19, and also a great opportunity to engage our different audiences with something new. The animations shared perspectives and experiences of partner organisations in Indonesia and South Africa, a remote engineering volunteer, and staff in Samoa.

The animations engaged our partners, staff and other stakeholders. The highest response was on Instagram, where one-minute versions of each animation were shared. The program is continuing to explore and expand this format of storytelling and have more animations planned for the coming year.

New stories and content were developed for the program’s website. Web stories included: how partner organisations are collaborating in Vietnam to improve the lives of women, children, people living with disability, and ethnic minorities; coral reef conservation in Fiji; enhancing inclusive education in Bhutan; and strengthening tourism in Fiji.

To support the resumption of advertising in-country assignments, the Volunteering section of the website

was restructured and updated to provide comprehensive information for volunteers undertaking in-country or remote assignments.

The program continued to produce a range of targeted newsletters that aim to keep stakeholders informed and engaged with program activities and opportunities. The average open rate continued to be high, indicating program stakeholders value these regular updates.

Average open rate for newsletters

Program Newsletter	43%
RAVN Newsletter	38%
Assignment Alert	30%

Social media analytics provide useful insights into program recognition, and sentiment towards the program. The program maintained strong engagement levels across all social media channels, which is a strong result given engagement is typically dropping in the broader social media landscape. The program also continued to have higher or comparable engagement to similar organisations, with much higher engagement on Facebook and Twitter.¹⁰ The program increased followers/fans on all platforms, with an average increase of 22%.

‘AusVols’ continues to be an important element of the program’s brand identity. In this reporting period, there were 1,116 social mentions of ‘AusVols’. While this is a small decline from the previous period, it is still a positive result as many organisations have experienced significant drops in brand mentions. ‘AusVols’ share of voice continues to be higher, both in reach and mentions, than other people-to-people programs in Australia.¹¹

The program closely monitored and managed media, working with DFAT to respond to each media request.

Media activity

Articles published	69 (in 89 media outlets)
Proactive media	7 pitches
Media engagement	25 activities managed

10. Engagement on Australian Volunteers Program social channels compared with PeaceCorps (US) and VSA (NZ).

11. Share of voice data compares the Australian Volunteers Program (including ausvols and AVP) with New Colombo Plan and Australia Awards in Australia only.



International Volunteer Day The program celebrated IVD with the theme of *Together, we make a difference*. The social media campaign featured images of volunteers and their partner organisation colleagues.

Intermediate outcome: The program is recognised and respected by key stakeholders

The program’s stakeholders are diverse and engage with the program in different ways, so we deliver a range of activities to foster recognition and respect. Events and campaigns provide opportunities for stakeholders to connect with each other and the program.

International Volunteer Day

Each year, the program delivers an IVD campaign to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution volunteers make to locally-led development. In 2021, the program delivered 20 IVD events in Australia and across the Indo-Pacific region, with more than 1400 stakeholders attending virtual and in-person events. In recognition of the many challenges faced by the international community, and the continued efforts of volunteers and partners to work together in the face of adversity, the theme for this IVD was *Together, we make a difference*.

Reflecting the theme, the program delivered a global online event bringing partners, volunteers, other stakeholders and staff from across our regions together to acknowledge what we have collectively achieved. Hosted by Country Program Managers from Southern Africa and Indonesia, it was an engaging and inspiring journey around the program. Five volunteer and partner teams presented on their work, including paramedics (Papua New Guinea), biodiversity experts (Bhutan), local planners (Philippines), a vaccine roll-out logistics team (Tonga), and eye care specialists (Cambodia). The event concluded with a dance and music performance by our Indonesian partner organisation, Bali Jaladara.

IVD events were delivered in 12 program countries.

These events were a mix of face-to-face and virtual events, with some events run in collaboration with DFAT Posts or other volunteer sending agencies, while others engaged specifically with partner organisations and/or volunteers.

In Mongolia, the program supported the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organisations (NMVO) “Voice of Volunteers” forum to celebrate IVD 2021. The forum attracted more than 270 representatives from local and international volunteering organisations who have engaged more than 20,000 local volunteers during the pandemic. The program’s support for the forum is part of its ongoing partnership with NMVO, which includes training for NMVO member organisations and support for a Mongolian volunteering website that was launched in December 2021.

In Timor-Leste, the program collaborated with other international volunteering agencies to deliver a range of events and activities. A roadshow promoting the value of volunteering visited six universities, engaging students in volunteerism. Dr José Ramos Horta spoke at the IVD 2021 awards ceremony, which was attended by 300 guests. Three of the program’s partners received awards from UN Volunteers Timor-Leste. The program also joined forces with KOICA to distribute school materials to 100 pre-school students. These events were all covered by local online media.



Kiribati IVD was celebrated in Kiribati at an event attended by partner organisations, DFAT Post and a remote volunteer who joined online. Pictured from left to right: Kamwea Rubi, DFAT Post, Raweita Beniata, Director of Office of People Legal Service, Karea Bairati, Kiribati Rugby, Petero Manufofau, Director of Tourism Authority Kiribati, Casey Moon, Acting Deputy Australian High Commissioner, Ueretan Bauro, Radio Kiribati Program Manager, Tiroia Teikake, Ministry of Health, Reetaake Takabwere, Police Deputy Commissioner, Tebwata Ross, VSA, Australian volunteer Warren Humphreys (Joining the event on Zoom), Pastor Iote Tebaio, KUC Church, and Abitara Tekeke, Kiribati Program Manager for the Australian Volunteers Program.

Conferences

After a period of cancelled, postponed or online conferences during 2020 and early 2021, conference activity has increased, including the resumption of in-person conferences and improved online and hybrid conference experiences. The program participated in conferences to increase understanding of the value of volunteering, to promote opportunities to participate in the program, and to support partners' and volunteers' professional development.

The program attended and presented at the online IVCO 2021 conference, with the theme 'Inclusive Volunteering for Global Equality, focusing on decolonisation, digitalisation and directionality'. The program's Indigenous Program Coordinator presented on Indigenous Pathways, and the program's partner Working Women's Centre Timor-Leste presented in a 'Voices from the Field' session. The program supported four partner representatives, two past volunteers and staff to attend the conference, which was also attended by DFAT's Director, Humanitarian and Development Deployments Section.

The program sponsored and hosted a breakfast panel at the International Conference for Emergency Medicine (see Focus area 1: Partnerships for details). The program also participated in six conferences to promote the program to diverse audiences and sectors, including occupational therapy, allied health, disability and inclusion, speech pathology, educational leadership and agriculture (Crawford Fund conference). Participation included sponsorship, exhibition booths and supporting past volunteers to attend conferences.

Connections events

The program introduced a new stakeholder event format, called Connections events. These events aim to foster connections between stakeholders, particularly past, current and potential volunteers. Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty, our first hybrid Connections event was delivered in Brisbane in June, with 45 people attending in person and 30 online.

The event had two main elements – hearing from a keynote speaker and networking. The networking was organised around countries and regions, providing a common point of interest to spark conversation. Facilitators reported a range of connections were made and the feedback survey indicated attendees were, overall, satisfied with the event. While the event was successful, the program will continue to refine the format and respond to feedback, such as including presenters directly connected with the program and more opportunities for organic networking. Connections events are planned for the next period.

Focus Area 3: Innovation

During the year, the Innovation Hub progressed a range of initiatives and invested in reflective exercises to prepare for the next term of the program. The Innovation Hub was also rebranded (from the Innovation Fund), which included the launch of the new name, branding and a microsite featuring an animated video on the program’s approach to innovation.

Exploring alternative models and support for volunteerism

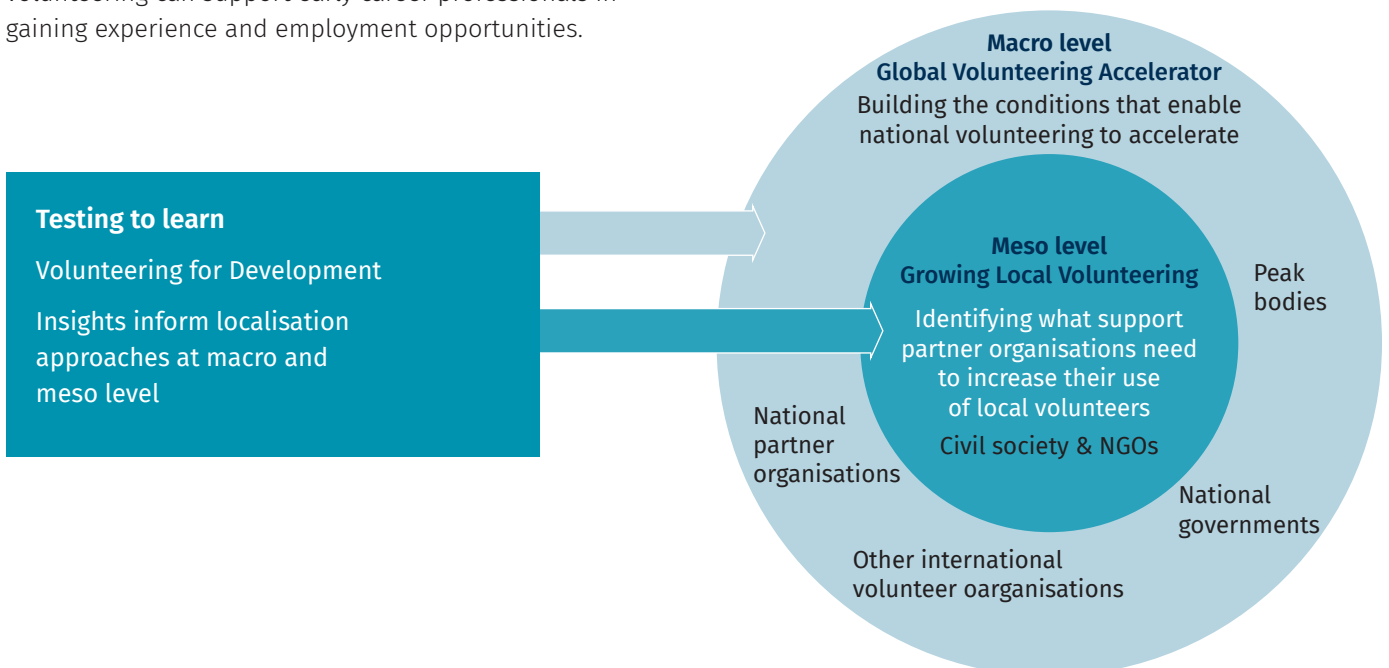
In 2021-22, the major focus for the Innovation Hub portfolio was three streams of work exploring ways the program might support locally-led volunteering and the use of volunteering in the Pacific, Asia and Africa as a strategic tool for development.

The discovery phase for the new stream of work, **Growing Volunteering in the Community**, explored what role the program might have to support partner organisations, particularly in the civil society or non-government sectors, to increase or commence use of local volunteers. Eleven country teams were trained to conduct design research interviews and journey mapping exercises with partners to understand their use of local volunteers, and the strengths, weaknesses and needs in their approaches to volunteering. Broadly, partner organisations are interested in managing local volunteers directly (if not already doing so), but some need support in organisational structures, partnerships and peer networks and attracting volunteers. In 2022-23, the program will explore ways in which it might support these identified needs.

Volunteering for Development continued to explore and test ideas proposed by in-country teams to develop insights to inform future localisation approaches. Emerging themes include the potential for a co-volunteering model (local and international volunteers working together) and ways volunteering can support early career professionals in gaining experience and employment opportunities.

While COVID-19, natural disasters and political unrest slowed innovation activities in several countries, many activities made significant progress, digging deep into learning and live prototyping. Examples of activities and achievements include:

- Teams in South Africa, Myanmar and Nepal progressed their ideas to live prototyping. South Africa tested national youth volunteers and a peer support network. Nepal and Myanmar tested co-volunteering, matching local volunteers with remote Australian volunteers.
- In Kiribati, the program ran collaborative consultation workshops with young people and community elders to explore perceptions of youth and the opportunities and barriers for young people to contribute through volunteering, especially in peer education for sexual and reproductive health.
- The Laos team explored ways of working and partnering with a local volunteering organisation with a view to increasing volunteer opportunities for young people.
- Innovation funding support also enabled the launch of the NMVO’s web portal and an English-language version of the portal; improved volunteer management for parent-led services for children living with cerebral palsy and their families in resource-constrained settings in South Africa; and increased quality of volunteering support and management for 30 parent facilitator volunteers at South African partner Malamulele Onwards.





The **Global Volunteering Accelerator** explores how the program could effectively partner with governments and peak bodies to support national approaches and infrastructure for volunteering, recognising its potential as a tool for national development. The Asia Archipelago region was selected for discovery work due to existing interest and relationships with governments in the region. Discovery work focused on understanding the state of volunteering in these countries and strengthening relationships through support for strategic activities, culminating in key workshop events:

- The program worked with the Philippines National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) to hold a hybrid multi-sectoral stakeholder workshop on creating a national volunteering research agenda. More than one hundred participants worked together to identify the national landscape of volunteering and how national research could help mainstream volunteerism in Philippines. The Director of PNVSCA subsequently attended the Timor-Leste workshop (below), strengthening volunteering connections in the region.
- A two-day National Consultation Workshop on Volunteerism was held in Timor-Leste, bringing government stakeholders and international and local volunteer agencies together. The workshop focused on a national volunteer strategy and the potential to create a government body to coordinate national volunteering efforts in Timor-Leste. Seventy participants attended, including the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, government officials, university representatives and youth organisations. This followed on from a touring university showcase to engage students in discussions about national volunteering.

These early activities are building credibility and engagement, with potential to make national or regional-level contributions to volunteerism. The program will continue to explore how to be collaborative and a genuine partner in national and regional volunteering, and how this approach can be replicated in different countries and contexts.

Preparing for the next phase of the program

The Innovation Hub delivered a series of reflection activities, to capture successes, challenges and lessons from the Hub's first four years (noting that the Hub commenced in mid-2018).

This series included: an internal reflection with the Hub team and The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI); a facilitated reflection process with the Innovation Pathway Group; an external review of the innovation

partnership between the program and TACSI; and an Engagement Journey Report summarising the Hub's engagement with stakeholders. These reflections generated solid knowledge and learning on the strengths and opportunities that can be built on in a new five-year Innovation Strategy to be delivered in 2022-23.

In brief, while there was considerable triangulation of findings across the activities, some notable points from each are as follows:

- The Innovation Hub has made significant achievements, including its role in enabling volunteering to continue through the COVID-19 pandemic and establishing clear avenues for progressing innovation work. Storytelling was identified as a key opportunity to address further in future.
~ Innovation Pathway Group
- The program's partnership with TACSI has started a cultural shift towards understanding of the role and value of innovation and has generated growing confidence and capability for innovation in the program. Key enablers included: strong mutual trust; nurturing and respectful relationships; focus on learning and creative fun; and co-design principles for collaboration. An acknowledged challenge was clarity of roles between partners as the Innovation Hub evolved over time.
~ Partnership Review, April 2022
- The Innovation Hub and its activities have engaged with at least 127 partner organisation representatives, 44 government or ministry representatives, 164 volunteers, 510 community members and 89 staff.¹²
~ Engagement Journey Report

Innovation capability

The Hub continued to invest in stakeholders' innovation capability. This is important for the delivery of the program's innovation goals, and also contributes to building experience in social innovation for international development and volunteering. The Hub's Social Innovation and Development course was delivered to partner representatives, volunteers and staff. A "Mission Possible" design challenge engaged 18 staff from eight countries to design and pitch ways to enhance remote volunteering.

12. There may be some overlap in counts. Engagement strategies for different stakeholders will be considered in the new Innovation Strategy.



8.3 Supporting Australian volunteers to gain personally and professionally

Since 2018, 1707 volunteers have been supported on 2336 assignments, accompanied by 165 dependents. During that time, research has shown that being a part of a respected, skilled international volunteering program has had a positive benefit for those involved.

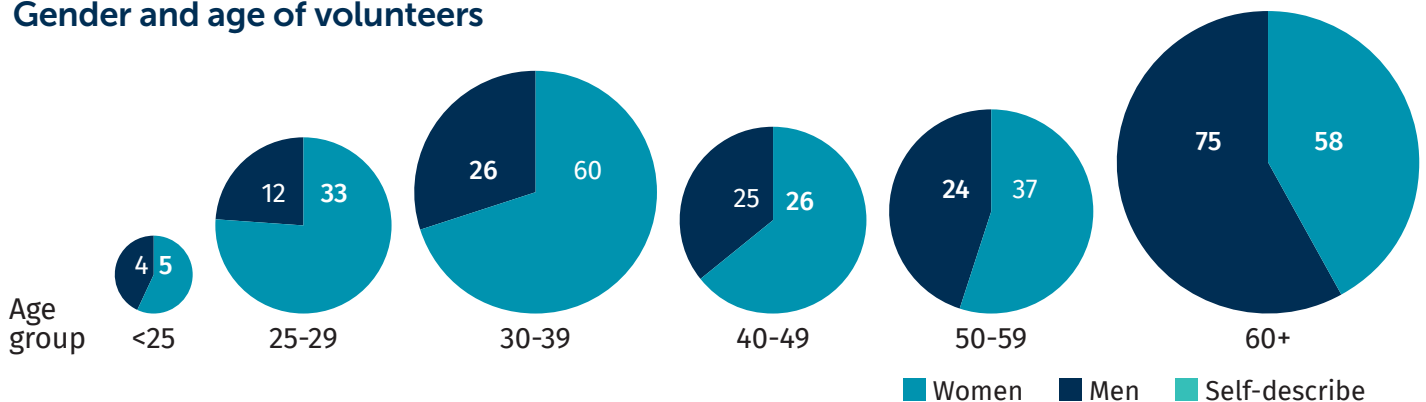
Over 90% of former volunteers have reported that their assignment helped them develop their personal and/or professional skills, and 93% have reported that their assignment helped them to develop a stronger interest and sense of connection to the people and country where their partner organisation was based.¹³

In the past year, 386 volunteers have been on 514 assignments, with six approved accompanying dependents. While not back to pre-pandemic levels of assignments, this is an increase on the previous year and signifies the growth of remote volunteering and increasing numbers of in-country volunteer assignments.

Fifty-seven per cent of volunteers were female, and 43% male, with none choosing to self-describe. The youngest volunteer was 22 and the oldest 82. 1.6% identified as having a disability. As discussed in Focus area 4: Diversity and Inclusion, a smaller proportion of volunteers (0.3%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander this year compared to previous years.

The demographics of volunteers are broadly similar to previous years. The proportion of assignments by volunteer profession shows an increase in the number of business, finance and HR roles compared to previous years.

Gender and age of volunteers

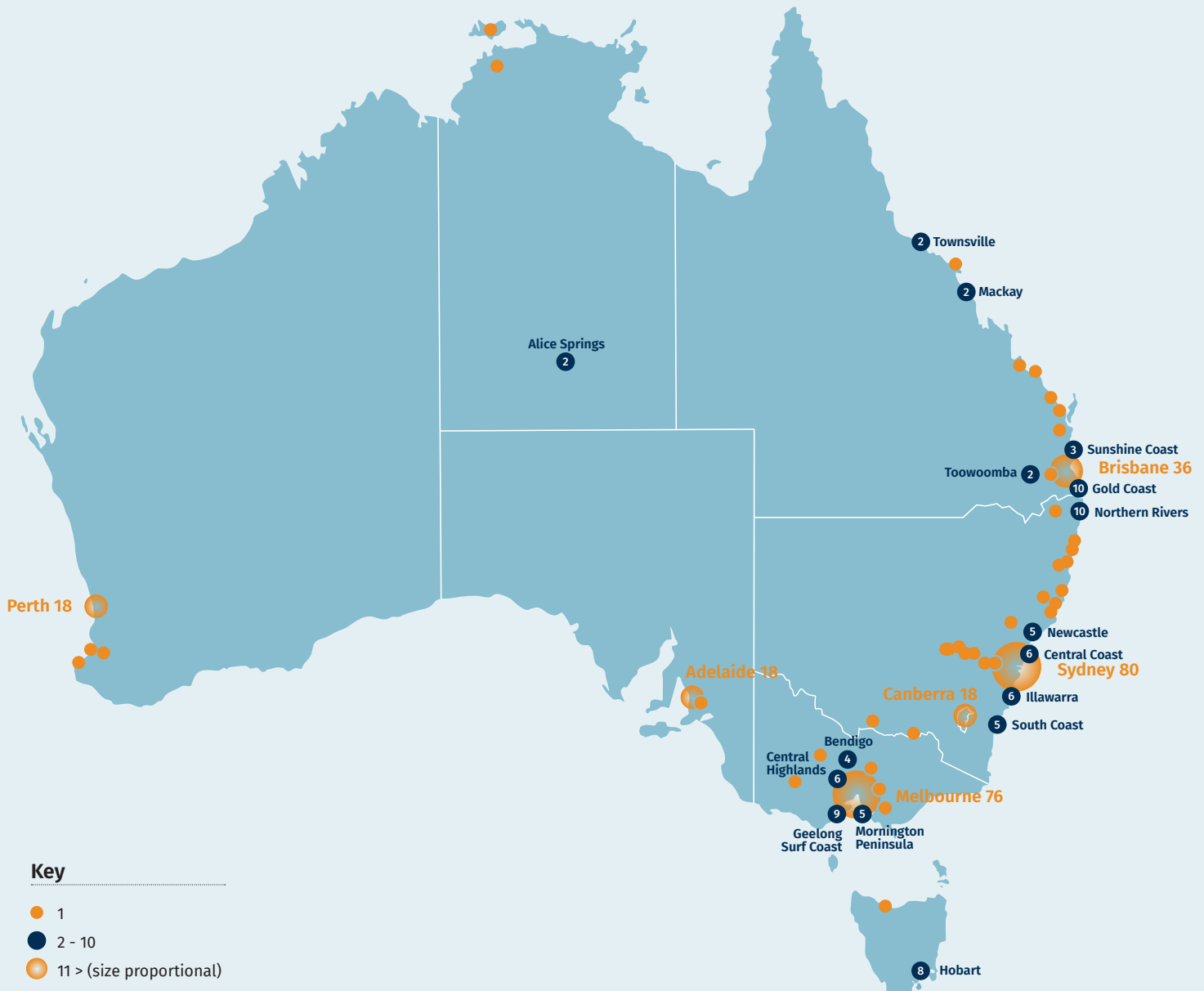


13. Survey of the Returned Australian Volunteers Network, 2021. The most recent survey was completed by 532 people (62% female and 36% male) and found that 91% had benefited professionally and 98% had benefited personally.

Volunteers around Australia

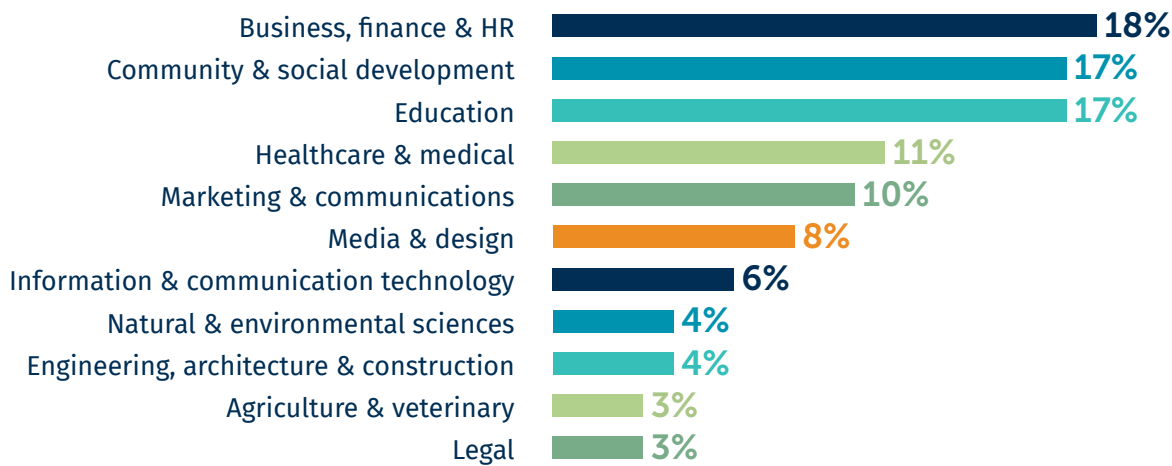


For the first time, the program welcomed volunteers who were not Australians.¹⁴ As part of our partnership with Atlassian (see Focus area 1: Partnerships), five volunteers were from the Netherlands and four from Philippines. Most volunteers were still from Australia. Thirty-six per cent of volunteers were from New South Wales, 29% from Victoria, 17% from Queensland, 6% from Western Australia, 5% from both South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, and 1% from the Northern Territory.



14. This includes Australian citizens or holders of a Permanent Residency Visa of Australia, or New Zealand residents in Australia with a Special Category Visa.

Most common professions of volunteer assignments



End of program outcome: Australian volunteers gain personally and professionally

The program has been running a longitudinal study of Australian volunteers since 2019. The latest follow-up with the cohort of 54 people occurred following the completion of their assignment and provides a valuable insight into if and how volunteers have gained from their experience. The 2022 report presents key findings related to different aspects of how volunteering has impacted individuals.¹⁵

Eighty-three per cent of participants attributed some form of valued personal development to their experiences on the program. One of the clearest and most consistent changes seen in the study was participants' engagement with and understanding of the international aid and development sector. An important finding was the breadth of professional development outcomes that participants associated with a variety of experiences on assignment. Volunteers' careers and professional capabilities benefitted particularly from developing "soft skills" that support communication, relationships and problem-solving.

Almost half (44%) of the participants reported that their careers were impacted by their participation in the program; for three quarters of these the impact was positive. For others, the impact of COVID-19 and being repatriated to Australia in the middle of lockdowns, job-cuts and international travel restrictions was harmful to their careers, at least in the short-term. Almost all participants who found post-assignment employment identified ways that they had made use of some new professional knowledge or capabilities within the first year of completing their assignment.

Beyond the cohort of volunteers in the longitudinal study, 82% of volunteers completing an assignment in the last year felt that they had learnt new skills that would help them professionally or they had developed their personal competencies.

The program's alumni program, RAVN, continues to provide volunteers with opportunities for professional and personal development beyond the end of their assignments. Conference support is offered to past volunteers to support their professional development and provide opportunities for them to raise awareness of the program. Past volunteers were supported to attend the International Volunteer Co-Operation Organisations (IVCO) conference in October 2021, and other sector conferences. In total, 11 past volunteers were supported to attend conferences in 2021-22.

RAVN continued to deliver engaging events online and in person across Australia. Thirty-one alumni events were successfully delivered, with six IVD events held for RAVN members across Australia. RAVN Representatives also supported the program's hybrid Connection event in Brisbane by facilitating networking discussions in person and online. This collaboration helped to strengthen the connections between past and prospective volunteers, and the program.

15. *Longitudinal Study of Australian Volunteers (2019-21): Final Report, 2022*, Fee, A., Devereux, P., Everingham, P., Allum, C. & Perold, H. University Technology Sydney Business School. The final report complements earlier reports outlining participants' pre-assignment motives and expectations (Phase One, 2019) and in-country experiences (Phase Two, 2020).

Main professional changes and their influences

Influences

Volunteer Role

- “Stretch” roles (more challenging and higher responsibilities)
- New functions and different activities
- Capacity development activities
- Collaborating opportunities

Organisational Context

- Unfamiliar management styles and organisational practices
- Cultural and language differences with managers, peers and other stakeholders
- Unfamiliar context (organisation size and sector, resource availability)

Operating Environment

- Unfamiliar and diverse external stakeholders
- General immersion in a foreign culture



Professional changes

Domain-specific knowledge and capabilities

Capabilities specific to individuals' professional field and technical knowledge.

Role performance and management capabilities

Capabilities required to manage people and projects and to perform work that are not specific to the professional domain.

Communication capabilities

Interpersonal communication capabilities.

Cultural capabilities

Capabilities that improve the individual's cultural awareness enhance intercultural competence and facilitate adjustment to culturally different work environments or situations.

Career direction or priorities

Changed outlook on one's professional career direction or priorities with managers, peers and other stakeholders.

In early 2022 the program undertook a review of the RAVN strategy. The strategy refresh was in preparation for the program's second five-year term, and to align with the refreshed program logic.

Between January and March 2022, consultations were held with a broad range of key program stakeholders to inform the strategy refresh. Consultations were held with past volunteers, remote volunteers, RAVN Representatives, program staff, partners, New Colombo Plan and Australia Award staff, DFAT and international volunteer sending agencies.

The consultations and the 2021 RAVN survey results informed the refreshed strategy's thematic areas, which are: value volunteering; connections and cultural awareness; and personal and professional development. The network's name was also reviewed because the introduction of remote volunteering means some volunteers don't 'return' from an assignment. The new network name is the Australian Volunteers Program Alumni (commonly referred to as 'Alumni'). These changes will be communicated to Alumni members and other stakeholders in 2022-23.

Intermediate outcome: Volunteers (current and former) promote greater cultural awareness and build stronger connections between partner countries and Australia

Almost all participants of the longitudinal study felt that their involvement with the program contributed to them being more globally connected. All 54 participants felt that their assignment had contributed directly to noticeably better understanding the country in which they volunteered and its culture.

Although most participants had limited interest in the partner country before the recruitment process began, a year after the completion of their assignment all but four reported some form of ongoing engagement with their partner country, and over one third were highly engaged. Connections and knowledge exchanges between other countries and Australia have been strengthened, contributing to awareness and knowledge about the partner country (and Australia).

The longitudinal study also highlighted how, for some volunteers, their assignment *“provided a platform for participants to engage in different and potentially more transformational ways with global events and social movements. Global social movements highlighting disparities of power, privilege and justice, like Black Lives Matter (BLM) and #MeToo, intersected with some participants’ experiences in ways that led to ‘deep questions’ about power in international aid/development.”*¹⁶

The impact of these social movements has been felt across the sector, with growing attention amongst international volunteer-sending agencies to questions of power, ‘decolonisation’, and what it means to support locally-led change as an outsider.¹⁷

The climate change deep dive evaluation, for example, recognised the work the program does to support and prepare volunteers, and recommended that the program *“continue to value volunteer cross-cultural competence, and ensure cultural awareness is a key selection criterion when recruiting volunteers.”*¹⁸

The program has always given an emphasis to supporting locally-led change, and good development practice is a core part of volunteer’s pre-assignment learning. Over the last year, the program has been reflecting on what else it can do (with volunteers, partner organisations, staff and in relation to internal systems and cultures) to support locally-led change through equitable partnerships.

The RAVN Go Back<>Give Back (GBGB) initiative was designed to foster ongoing connection between past volunteers and their former partner organisation and community. In 2022, the Go Back<>Give Back grants were integrated into the program’s broader small grants program. In Round 5 of the Impact Fund, former and current volunteers were invited to work alongside their partner organisation to apply for a grant of up to AUD \$10,000 and provide remote support to complete the project. Thirteen Round 5 projects will be supported by past volunteers.

Connecting with other DFAT people-to-people programs also helps to strengthen cross cultural connections. Australian Awards Solomon Islands and RAVN collaborated in 2021 to deliver IUMI Connect. This initiative connected Solomon Islands Australian Awards scholars studying in Australia with Australians who had previously volunteered in Solomon Islands. Nine informal pairs were established. RAVN will continue to collaborate with Australian Awards in 2022-23.

16. *Longitudinal Study of Australian Volunteers (2019-21): Final Report*, 2022, Fee, A., Devereux, P., Everingham, P., Allum, C. & Perold, H. University Technology Sydney Business School, page 21.

The researchers have gone on to highlight both the paradoxes and possibilities of international volunteering. Noting that international development and volunteering can reinforce ‘colonial’ power relations, they also highlight how volunteering “can generate powerful forms of solidarity and informal longstanding connections and learning between volunteers and host communities.” *“The paradoxes and possibilities of decolonising (capacity) development of Australian international volunteers”*, ISTR 2022 Conference Presentation, Everingham P., Devereux P., Allum C., Fee A., and Perold H.

17. *Inclusive Volunteering for Global Equality – Linking Decolonisation and Diversity* (2021), Haas B. and Moinina V., IVCO

18. *Deep Dive Evaluation of Climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific*, 2021, Gero, A., Megaw, T., Winterford, K. and Cunningham, R., Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS

Progress on achieving assignment objectives – reported by volunteers (n161)

All volunteers



Female



Male



Intermediate outcome: Volunteers complete their assignment well and have a positive volunteering experience

When volunteers complete their assignment, they are asked to assess the extent to which they have achieved their assignment objectives. Over the year, 79% of volunteers rated their progress as good or excellent, compared to 74% the previous year. The scoring from female volunteers was two points higher (81%), and for males two points lower (77%), than the overall rating.

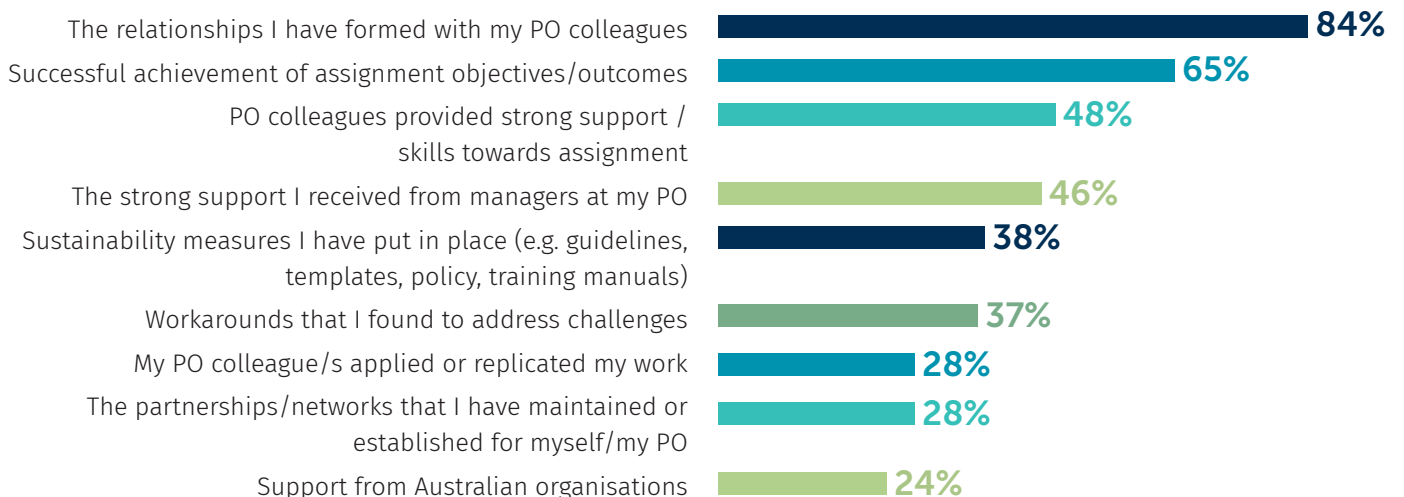
The sample size is too small to draw clear conclusions from for other characteristics of volunteers. Volunteers identifying as having a disability had a lower score overall, at 75%, with one volunteer reporting only 'partial' progress against their objectives.

Only one volunteer identifying as Aboriginal provided a response, which is insufficient to report on. Volunteers in the 40 to 49 age group had below average scores at 71%, with other age groups at or above the overall average.

Volunteers provide valuable feedback on the most successful or beneficial elements of their assignment. Alongside the satisfaction of achieving assignment objectives, it is the benefits and pleasure of the relationships formed, and support provided by colleagues within partner organisations that stand out.

Not all assignments are completed successfully, for a variety of reasons. Six per cent of assignments finished early. In most cases this was due to the personal circumstances of the volunteer changing (due to health or family circumstances). In some cases, for in-country volunteers, rapidly changing travel restrictions forced an early departure. Around 22% of early returns (or 1% of all assignments) were due to an assignment not working as expected.

Most successful or beneficial aspects of assignments – reported by volunteers





Indonesia *Emas Hitam Indonesia (EHI) is an NGO that aims to promote, support and develop regenerative solutions to poverty and development. Focusing on permaculture and agroecology, EHI is driven by positive integration of human and environmental needs, and equal access to the sustainable provision of basic needs for all Indonesians. Pictured are EHI's Composting Manager, Apel (left), and Development Strategist, Silvina Miguel (right), in the organisation's organic garden in Bali.*

Nineteen per cent of assignments were extended beyond their planned duration. With relatively short remote assignments (typically three months), more time was required to achieve objectives in many assignments. With remote assignments making up the majority of all assignments during the year, most assignments (87%) were less than six-months, with 13% being more than six-months.

Satisfaction rates reported by volunteers remain high. Overall, 79% were satisfied or very satisfied with their assignment, compared with 74% the previous year. A higher proportion (87%) were satisfied or very satisfied with both their partner organisation and the program overall.

There were no differences in satisfaction ratings by gender, with 79% of women and men both reporting satisfaction with their assignment overall.

From a small sample of volunteers reporting having a disability, 88% were satisfied with their assignment. The sample for those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is too small to draw any conclusions from, though all were either neutral or satisfied.

There is a small degree of variation in assignment satisfaction scores by the age of the volunteer, with lower scores for those in the 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 age groups (of 74% and 76% respectively), and higher scores for older and younger volunteers. This is a similar trend to the previous year.

Volunteer satisfaction on different elements of program support	Proportion of volunteers satisfied or very satisfied
Recruitment and selection	86%
Training and preparation	88%
Supervision from partner organisation	73%
Safety and security (in-country assignments)	91%

Overall, 91% of 22 volunteers on in-country assignments were satisfied or very satisfied with the program's safety and security management. While 100% for men, that was 83% for women, with 17% neutral.

The most common cause of positive satisfaction given by volunteers in their feedback related to the support provided by the program, strong and supportive relationships with partner organisation staff, and assignments being rewarding experiences where the volunteer had been able to achieve their objectives.

Reasons given for being less satisfied had to do with a lack of support from the program or a challenge with some element of the assignment administration, the limitations experienced with a remote assignment, or insufficient time to complete the assignment. Challenges to achieving assignment objectives were mostly related to communication difficulties.

Volunteer satisfaction (n299)

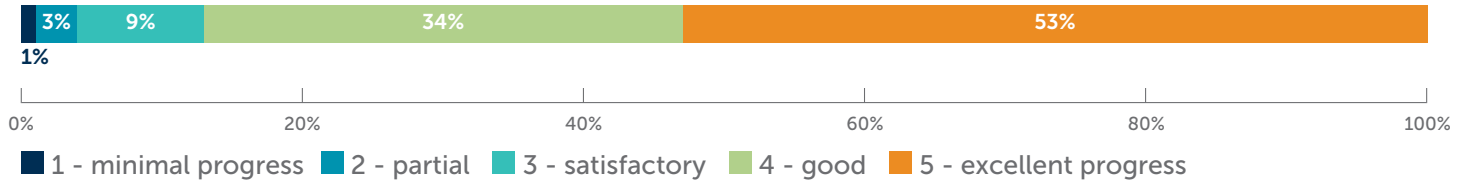
Overall satisfaction with assignment



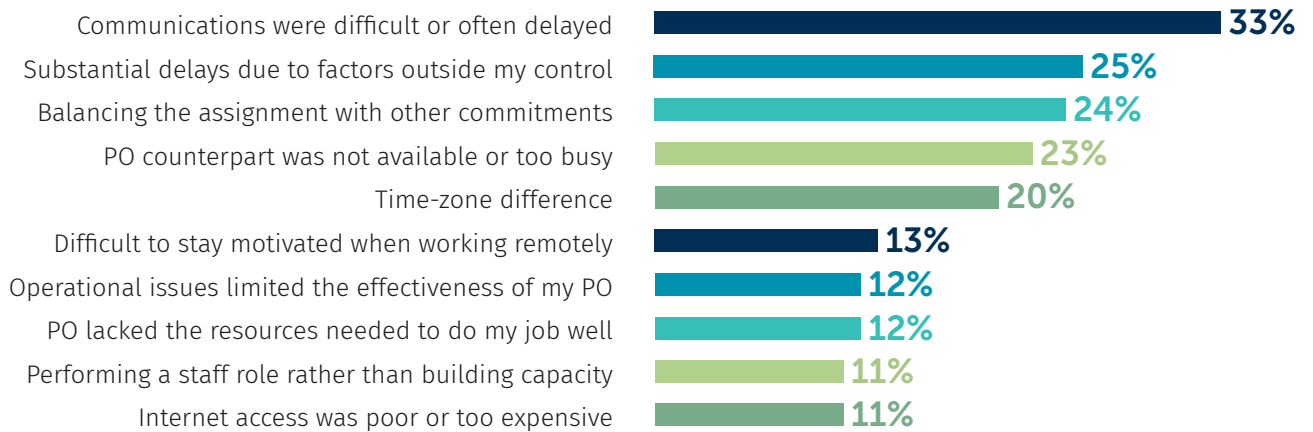
Satisfaction with working relationship with partner organisation



Overall satisfaction



Challenges to achieving their assignment objectives – reported by volunteers

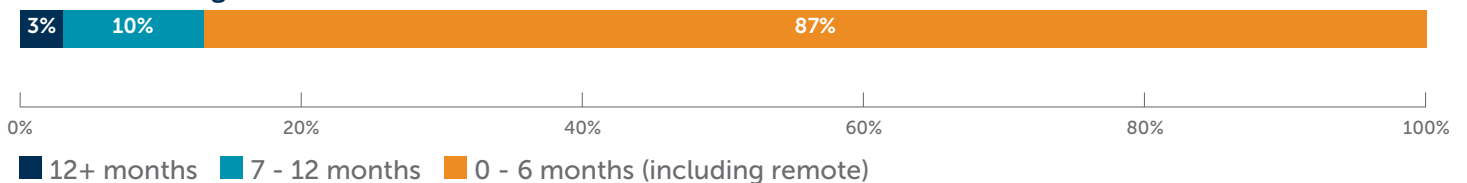


Volunteers are asked if they have suggestions for improving the program. In responding, many reiterated their appreciation of their partner organisation and the opportunity afforded to them by the program.

Suggestions around extending the duration of remote assignments were given, and the program has already been able to respond to these.

Feedback on specific aspects of the program included communication with volunteers, challenges with the online volunteer portal, and suggestions for simplifying the recruitment process, particularly for remote assignments or those carrying out a follow-up assignment. Many volunteers expressed their hope of being able to complete an in-country assignment in the future.

Duration of assignments



Focus Area 4: Diversity and inclusion

Indigenous Pathways

The formal launch of Indigenous Pathways was celebrated in September 2021, with members of the Indigenous Support and Advisory Panel, the National Indigenous RAVN Representative and the Indigenous Programs Coordinator, coming together online, to share the story of how Indigenous Pathways was developed. Initial plans for an in-person event in Mparntwe/Alice Springs were unfortunately not possible due to COVID-19 lockdowns across Australia. A total of 183 people attended the online event, including 93 external attendees, 63 staff and 27 DFAT representatives. Attendees came from across 12 countries, including representatives from five overseas partners and 26 Australian organisations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Following the launch event, there was a strong focus on targeted partnership development, including with the Indigenous Women Ranger's Environmental Network, a national network for female Indigenous Rangers, coordinated through WWF Australia. Partnership engagement with the Torres Strait Regional Authority also commenced during the reporting period, with an engagement workshop and field trip to the Torres Strait Islands scheduled for August 2022.

The pandemic presented some challenges for Indigenous Pathways, as anecdotally we found that Indigenous Australians expressing interest in the program have not been overly interested in remote volunteering, instead communicating a desire for in-country assignments. It was also found that a number of Indigenous Australians expressed interest in the program, but communicated a desire to remain focused on the challenges their own Indigenous communities were facing during the complex context of a global pandemic. Interestingly, partner organisations expressing interest in developing assignments specifically for Indigenous volunteers, also expressed stronger interest in developing in-country assignments, as opposed to remote assignments.

As a result of these combined factors, Indigenous volunteer participation was lower than previous years, with Indigenous volunteers representing 0.3% of total volunteers, however Indigenous participation in in-country assignments was higher at 1.5%. A remote knowledge exchange group assignment for rangers was developed with a group of partners in the Pacific, however based on our learnings, this was paused and will now be transitioned to in-country group assignments. With in-person assignments scaling up in 2022-23, it is expected that Indigenous volunteer numbers will also increase.

In 2021-22, we saw growing awareness of the value of First Nations people within Australia's broader foreign policy. This presents significant opportunities for Indigenous Pathways to facilitate mutually beneficial connections between in-country partner organisations and Australian based Indigenous organisations and networks.



Indigenous Pathways worked with Gamilaraay/Gomeroi ceramicist Penny Evans, to license her artwork for use. *Flooding Rivers* was chosen to represent Indigenous Pathways as a river reminds us that the actions taken at one end of a river have a flow on effect at the other end. This illustrates the importance of providing appropriate and flexible support to Indigenous volunteers at all stages, as throughout their journey, they will flow on to work with and support partner organisations and local communities overseas.

GEDSI

The Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) areas benefited this year from increased human resources, with a new Inclusion Manager to support the Gender Equality Coordinator and the Indigenous Pathways Coordinator. A review of the original Diversity and Inclusion Strategy showed the program needed to focus on a smaller number of areas to have greater impact. While there is ongoing consideration of the broader diversity and inclusion areas, particularly through data collection and analysis, the Inclusion team efforts during the year were focused on Indigenous Pathways, gender equality and disability inclusion.

The Inclusion team supported in-country teams to increase efforts in these areas through the annual planning process. In-country teams now take ownership over the full cycle of design, budgeting and delivery of GEDSI activities. The Melbourne-based team provides advice, support and coordination to support country programs objectives. Clarifying roles and responsibilities between teams has empowered in-country teams to lead increased efforts. Activities during the year have included GEDSI partner mapping to boost the number of assignments, collaborating with gender organisations and Organisations of People with Disability (OPDs) for partner and volunteer awareness raising workshops and delivering events.



The program further invested in building a shared understanding amongst staff of the importance of diversity and inclusive approaches through the rollout of the SBS online inclusion training. This training included seven modules covering cultural diversity, Indigenous culture, gender, LGBTIQ+ and disability.

Gender equality

Drawing on the program's 2021 Gender Equality Research, the focus of the program's approach to supporting gender equality and women's rights is to *"build on partnerships with existing women's rights and gender equality focused partner organisations, with a long-term view of partnering"* and to *"be intentional and strategic by partnering with partner organisations that have an explicit gender equality mandate."*¹⁹

In response, gender organisation mapping was commissioned in Fiji to better understand the gender and women's rights 'landscape' and to consider where there is alignment and demand for volunteer support. In Papua New Guinea, a group of partners joined with Papua New Guinean gender experts at CARE to raise awareness of gender equality issues, discuss challenges and ways to support positive change.

In Australia, partnership work with International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) commenced to support partners in-country. The program, IWDA and IPPF have several partners in common, providing a strong basis, with opportunities to expand support and increase volunteer assignments by onboarding new partners from these networks.

In this reporting period, there were 46 assignments with 23 gender equality and women's rights partner organisations.

Impact Fund grants remain an important and highly valued approach to supporting partners. Round 5 focused on GEDSI areas, in particular gender equality and women's rights, with 46 grants provided to gender equality projects. The GEDSI round provided in-country teams an opportunity to activate relationships with these partners, further enabling discussion around assignment development.

LGBTIQ+ inclusion activities included sharing of the SOGIESC Country Profiles to support volunteers, staff and partners better understand each country context. During the year the program also piloted the diverse SOGIESC community of practice, which comprised of staff, partners and volunteers joining together in a safe space to learn and share experiences, opportunities, challenges, and inclusive approaches.

Gender equality featured in the Global Webinar Series, with 16 partners joining in February 2022 to discuss 'Gender and the Arts' led by the Arts Council of Mongolia and Gone Rural, a partner from eSwatini. In March, PSEAH was the focus with presenters from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) from Indonesia, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) from South Africa and World Hope International.

In recognition of International Women's Day (IWD), the program engaged with the theme #BreaktheBias. This theme challenged us to imagine a gender equal world; a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination; a world that is diverse, equitable and inclusive; and a world where difference is valued and celebrated. The program delivered a hybrid event, where three women leaders from partner organisations shared how they are working to break the bias. Representatives from GLAMI in Tanzania, the Independent Water Scheme Association in Samoa and Hopebox in Vietnam shared their experiences and insights. Eighty people attended the event in-person in Melbourne, and 140 people joined online from almost every country the program operates in.

IWD events were also held in program countries, with partners sharing their insights and work towards gender equality. In Solomon Islands, the program joined with Solomon Islands National Institute of Sport to discuss the ways that women are breaking the bias through their participation and leadership in the sporting arena. Speakers from Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Philippines came together for an online regional event to share their insights on supporting an inclusive economy for women entrepreneurs. In Kiribati, the program partnered with the Ministry of Women to support the delivery of a workshop targeting the Kiribati Men's Behaviour Change group. In Vanuatu, the volunteers attended a gathering at Life Changer School, a TVET school for high school students.

Disability inclusion

Disability inclusion continued to be a strong feature of the program, with an ongoing commitment to support both volunteers with disability and OPDs to engage with the program. In 2021-2022, six volunteers identified as a person with disability and the program funded two Access and Inclusion Plans. There were 59 assignments with 27 partner organisations focused on disability inclusion.

19. *Gender Equality Research: Documenting Australian volunteers' contribution to advancing gender equality: case studies from Africa, Asia, and the Pacific*, 2021, Leaine Robinson and Iris Low



Recognising the importance of lived experience, the program’s disability working group leads and informs activities that drive disability inclusive development. The working group consists of staff from across the program and three past volunteers with extensive professional experience in disability inclusion (two of whom identify as a person with disability). A key activity of the working group was to celebrate International Day of People with Disability in 2021 by hosting a networking and discussion event attended by 18 program supported OPDs from seven countries.

During the reporting period, the program held two Global Webinar Series on the theme of disability inclusion. In August 2021 the Lautoka Special School in Fiji and National Biodiversity Center in Bhutan presented to 25 partner organisations and 39 volunteers on their disability inclusion work, supported by Impact Fund grants provided in the 2021 GEDSI round.

In May 2022, CIQAL – the Center for Improving Qualified Activities in Lives of People with Disabilities, Yogyakarta – presented on accessibility and inclusion and how they support economic empowerment for people with disability in Indonesia, through advocacy and outreach. This webinar provided an example of exemplary practice in accessibility and language justice, with the use of four interpreters in Bahasa Indonesia, English, Indonesian sign language and Auslan.

The program continued to maintain efforts to ensure all resources and events were as accessible as possible. A full accessibility review and audit was undertaken of the volunteer portal, onboarding, and e-learning modules, with significant updates to be implemented in late 2022. The program maintained funds to engage Auslan interpreters and closed captioners for online and in-person events in multiple languages, spending AUD \$10,839 in 2021-22.

Of the Impact Fund 79 small grants provided to partner organisations working in the areas of GEDSI, 25 grants were provided to partner organisations to implement disability inclusion projects or improve their accessibility.

Australia The International Women’s Day 2022 event was a truly hybrid event with women leaders from partner organisations joining the online panel. Panellists on screen are Devotha Mlay, Director, Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative (GLAMI), Tanzania (bottom right); Huong Dang, Founder, HopeBox, Vietnam (bottom left); and Clarissa Laulala, Program Manager, Independent Water Schemes Association in Samoa (top right). The MC was Beth Eggleston, Director, Humanitarian Advisory Group (on stage and top left of screen).



Case study: Inclusive Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Samoa

In Samoa, inclusive education is under the remit of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Since the inclusive education initiative was launched, Samoa has made positive strides to making Samoan schools more inclusive. An Inclusive Education Unit was established within the Curriculum Design and Materials Division of the Ministry, reflecting Samoa's commitment to inclusive education across all levels.

For the past two years the Australian Volunteers Program has supported five volunteers who have worked collaboratively with the Inclusive Education Unit to progress their disability inclusion objectives, namely ensuring Samoan schools and preschools become increasingly inclusive in the provision of quality education for all children in Samoa.

For the partner organisation, the support has been instrumental in helping to drive the objectives of the Unit. This has included developing key resources on inclusive education; conducting training for teachers; and assisting with awareness and outreach programs including the first national hearing screening program in 2019.

The Inclusive Education Unit described key successes that demonstrate how they have been able to progress disability inclusion.

“One of our success stories was that the champion school Moata’a Primary School, that the volunteer helped establish, had children with disabilities transition from the special school to this mainstream school. This was because of the change in the environment, change in the approach in the school that attracted parents to place their children in the school. In Samoa, not many of our mainstream schools are equipped to support children with disabilities. So this was a real highlight because the school provided a pathway for the children with disabilities.”

Key resources such as supplementary teacher training materials; a teacher aide; and services such as hearing testing were provided to enable the school to implement an inclusive education agenda. This activity helped open doors at the partnership level:

“We are able to sign an MOU with the Ministry of Women through the Samoa Disability Partnership Program. We were awarded a grant from that program to develop a National Awareness Plan on disability.”

This partnership will enable the Unit to raise awareness among communities and parents about the availability of special schools and mainstream schools that are inclusive, helping to ensure all children have access to education regardless of their learning ability.

“This national awareness program is so important as we want to let parents who have children with disabilities know, and to encourage them that there are options for their children to get an education and not to just leave them at home.”

A second key area of success has been the development of the Samoa inclusive education handbook: *“I am very proud to have this toolkit that we will roll out with all schools. The toolkit has the different abilities and supports teachers on how to identify these, referral forms, from schools to community and health stakeholders. The guide has all the steps on how to become an inclusive school and strategies on how to teach students with difficult behaviour; how to support teaching a large number of students; how to support teachers where there are 50+ students. This was a real highlight for us in the inclusive education group.*

“[The volunteers] have helped plant the seed for us. And we have really gained from it especially as we now have started something big with partners in health and women, and hopefully when COVID-19 is all over we can pick up on it again and really push for inclusivity not just in education but in health and in the community.”

Case study: Friends-International, Cambodia

Friends-International's (FI) mission is to support marginalised children, youth and their families to build a future where all children are safe from all forms of abuse, and are provided opportunities for employment and becoming active members of their community. FI works in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar. FI's services include child protection and social reintegration programs, improved employability and empowerment of youth through vocational training, as well as the ChildSafe Movement and income-generating initiatives such as social enterprises and production centres.

Australian volunteer Samantha Schofield completed an in-country assignment as a Youth Project Mentor with FI in Cambodia. She supported staff to initiate new activities to help vulnerable children and youth in Siem Reap and the neighbouring provinces. Her support also extended to other locations in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Indonesia.

Due to the pandemic and the significant impact it had on communities across Cambodia, FI shifted its focus away from building futures to saving lives.

Samantha demonstrated a high degree of adaptability, coordinating the report on FI's COVID-19 response in Cambodia and other countries. She also assisted the organisation with delivering fundraising activities to compensate for lost income due to the pandemic and helped develop new policies and procedures for online child protection for both beneficiaries and staff.

With Samantha's support, staff were able to meet FI's organisational and donor requirements while providing urgent support during the ongoing crisis caused by the pandemic. Samantha worked with staff to deliver key projects and helped increase their capacity to be adaptable and responsive in a fast-changing environment. Staff also learnt how to adapt materials and methodologies for online training and delivery, as well as monitoring and evaluation tools to measure and improve training delivery.

Samantha was directly involved in the proposal writing, implementation and reporting for two Impact Fund grants FI received from the program in 2021. The grants supported projects aimed to increase community resilience against COVID-19 impacts in Siem Reap by training ChildSafe Agents, providing emergency assistance, and supporting marginalised communities back into employment.

Cambodia Australian volunteer Youth Project Mentor, Samantha Schofield (left) and Friends-International Self Employment Officer, Samoth Mavina (right).





8.4 Program foundations

Program governance

The program's governance framework is well established and effective. The Program Management Group (PMG) is responsible for strategic oversight of the program and is the primary forum for coordination, discussion and recommendations on program operational matters. The PMG met twice during the year, in July 2021 and in February 2022. The program supported the quarterly Contract Management Group meetings, which are chaired by DFAT, and the Risk Management Group meetings, which are chaired by program staff. These meetings were held in July and October 2021 and January and April 2022.

Ongoing dialogue on a range of program related issues was conducted through regular progress meetings between DFAT Canberra and the Program Director and Deputy Program Director. These meetings contribute to the ongoing effective and positive working relationship between DFAT and the program.

In addition to these governance arrangements, the Consortium Group continued to play an advisory role. This group is made up of senior representatives from the three consortium group partners: AVI, DT Global (formerly known as Cardno International Development) and Alinea International. The Group is chaired by an AVI board member and ensures strong and collaborative partnerships between consortium members to support high quality implementation of the program. The Consortium Group met four times during 2021-22.

The program continued to enhance its quality assurance program as part of an ongoing commitment to effective program management. This involved a series of internal audits and reviews to ensure that AVI is managing the program as per its contractual obligations.

In 2021-22, internal audits were conducted of four country offices remotely due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. A number of reviews were also conducted relating to security, staff training, insurance, and partner organisation due diligence.

Annual planning and ongoing implementation

The annual plan provides details of proposed activities to be implemented across all key aspects of the program. It articulates the program's strategic approach to implementation, and includes details such as planned activities, timelines, staff management, proposed deployments and a fully costed budget.

As the key operational document for the program, the annual plan is developed by the program's leadership team. This involved extensive consultation across the program and with DFAT Canberra. The process commenced in March 2022, and concluded with the submission of a draft annual plan for DFAT's consideration on 31 May 2022. DFAT approved the annual plan in July 2022.

The program procured goods and services as per Commonwealth Procurement Rules and as outlined in the program's Operations Manual. Of particular note, in 2021-22 the program procured goods and services through nine Indigenous suppliers with a total value of AUD \$41,202,19.

The program continued to support activities relating to public diplomacy; monitoring, evaluation and learning; and partnerships and innovation through the effective delivery of targeted activities. These program activity costs accounted for AUD \$4.165 million in 2021-22.



Timor-Leste *The vision of Juventude ba Dezensvolvimentu Nasional (JDN) is that all young people in Timor-Leste can live with dignity and equality. JDN's priorities include: reducing sexual harassment through advocacy and education; education on COVID-19 prevention and vaccinations; leadership development of JDN members so they can respond to major issues affecting young people; and training youth nutrition educators to provide community-based education to young people, particularly young mothers. Pictured is Australian volunteer Program Development Mentor, Bernie McEvoy (left), with her colleagues Jescia Nelinha Da Silva Ximenes (centre) and Anzenita Monteiro (right) who volunteer as Nutrition Educators while studying Nutrition at university.*

Volunteer Services

In 2021-22, the Volunteer Services team continued to support efficient and effective recruitment, mobilisation and briefing of in-country and remote volunteers. This is reflected in the large number of volunteers who started an assignment this financial year. Hybrid (online and in person) volunteer briefings were launched in April, with a refreshed content suitable for the current operating context impacted by COVID-19. A new Volunteer Support Lead role was created and recruited to review and enhance the program's post-assignment support and activities for all volunteers.

Key achievements this year included:

- Under the FLEX initiative, 19 Global Webinar Series sessions were delivered to more than 1,000 participants. Communities of Practice were launched with three pilot communities (MEL, Education and Learning, Circle Guides). A review was also conducted, and further circles are being explored.
- Systems and processes were developed to cater for future modes of volunteering, particularly hybrid volunteering.
- System enhancements were implemented (e.g., a new Learning Management System, online police checks, and a portal for partner organisations) to improve program processes and offerings.
- Complex border restrictions (locally and internationally) were navigated to brief and mobilise volunteers to their assignment.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

This year the program consolidated its commitment to child safeguarding through strong partner engagement, resource development, and support to volunteers and staff.

The program's in-country Child Protection Focal Points played a key role in supporting partner organisation compliance and risk mitigation. Online and in-person workshops were delivered in Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, Solomon Islands, Vietnam, Samoa, and Federated States of Micronesia, providing support in development and implementation of program compliant policies. Two workshops were delivered in Indonesia, one in collaboration with UNICEF focussing on Child Friendly Policy, and one focusing on online protection which explored the increased risk to children during the pandemic and risk prevention strategies.

This year, 39 new partner organisations' child protection policies were approved as meeting DFAT minimum standards. Through partner engagement, Correctional Services of Solomon Islands committed to developing its first Child Protection Policy, and requested an Australian volunteer to support this process, demonstrating the program's impact on child safeguarding strengthening at government level.

To support the program's commitment to including children as accompanying dependents, country child suitability assessment templates were updated. Assessments include updated questions on availability of emergency response in the context of COVID-19 and other risks. An animated video was produced, exploring the challenges and opportunities of living overseas, and also introduces protective behaviours to assist children in managing risk.

All children have rights



The right to be safe

The right to play

The right to eat nutritious food

The right to drink safe water

The right to go to school **

The Australian Volunteers Program upholds the rights of children and shares this responsibility with all partners.

*Image based on a drawing by a child beneficiary of the 'Three2Six Refugee Children's Education Project,' which is hosted by Sacred Heart College in South Africa.

**These are only some of the rights of a child, read the United Convention on the Rights of the Child to learn more.

Contact: childprotection@australianvolunteers.com
Learn more about the UN Convention on the Rights of Child at:
unicef.org/child-rights-convention



Child protection Resources, including posters and brochures, were produced to communicate the program's commitment to child rights. The resources have been translated into eight languages.

A brochure and poster were developed highlighting the program's commitment to child rights. They feature drawings and words of child beneficiaries of a partner organisation, and have been shared with partners. These resources were translated into Khmer, Kiribati, Sinhala, Tamil, Vietnamese, Tetum, Nepali, and Bislama. These resources and incident reporting options are also available on the program's website.

Mandatory training and workshops addressed issues such as diversity and inclusion, child protection and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH). PSEAH training has been presented in five countries and two global webinars, with 20 partner organisations attending. To support this series, the ACFID PSEAH course workbook and Our Watch materials were translated into three languages. A brochure on the program's PSEAH policy and the methods available for complaints and reporting was also translated into eight languages.

During the year, the program recruited two PSEAH Coordinators (located in Indonesia and Philippines). The coordinators supported with PSEAH mapping document development, facilitating PSEAH training and local engagement in an in-country context for PSEAH related enquires from in-country teams. A new Compliance and Assurance Manager with PSEAH expertise was also recruited in May 2022 to further enhance our capabilities in this area.

Experts in six countries in the South Asia and Africa region developed documents that will equip in-country teams with a summary of key information when in discussions with partner organisations. These join our desktop mapping legislative study which has now been completed for 17 countries, with a further five being finalised.



Vanuatu Life Changer Christian College is supporting Vanuatu's recovery from COVID-19 by enhancing technical and vocational education and training (TVET), particularly in the hospitality and building and construction sectors. With the support of a local training provider, Gateway Institute, Life Changer Christian College is helping young people take up trade work and apprenticeships. Marco Virelala (left) is undertaking a Certificate 1 in Joinery and Furniture Making course. He is working on a timber project with Australian volunteer TVET in School and Educational Mentor, Marty Wilson (right).

Risk

The program's adaptive approach to risk management supported operations during a period marked by continued uncertainty and instability.

The program's Global Risk and Security team continued to provide advice to in-country teams to support decision-making, security management, safety equipment management and incident management. The team worked with the global team and external service providers International SOS, Response Psychological Services and Marsh to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and in-country participants.

As part of the program's commitment to continuously improving its risk management approach, the following activities were undertaken:

- Development of the program's Risk Assurance Framework, which articulates the program's integrated approach to risk governance, reporting, monitoring and adjusting of risk controls.
- Adaptation of the program's Deployment Decision Framework, which supports decision-making process around deployments and sets out key risk indicators that impact on programming and operations.
- Introduction of a program staff travel procedure (that supplements the AVI Staff Travel Policy) to support adequate risk management for travelling staff. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in many locations, staff travel has occurred where there has been justification.
- Development of COVID-19 protocols, which are intended to provide guidance and direction to staff and volunteers when dealing with events and risks such as COVID-19 outbreaks, confirmed COVID-19 cases on the program, and guidance around self-isolation and return to work following an infection.

- Program planning and assignment development in Niue, where in-country assignments are planned to begin in 2022-23.
- Reassessment of the psychosocial screening requirements for participants, in consultation with Response Psychological Services. The program now requires that all in-country volunteers have a screening call with Response Psychological. Response Psychological has also increased focus on the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing.
- Two webinars conducted as part of the program's Global Webinar Series, attended by approximately 80 participants from partner organisations, current and past volunteers and staff.

Routine risk and security activities were undertaken, including:

- Regular reviews of the program's Risk Register. Cyber fraud risk was added in consultation with the DFAT Cyber Security team, to reflect the potential for higher risk associated with the higher volume and quantity of the program's grant making activities.
- Pre-departure 'Staying Safe and Well' briefings delivered for all in-country participants.
- Periodic reviews of country risk and security assessments, country security plans and other related documentation.
- Regular regional-level risk and security meetings with in-country teams.
- Renegotiation of AVI's insurance policy with its insurer Chubb. The new policy, which took effect on 1 January 2022, provides coverage for costs related to COVID-19 infection, as well as covering costs related to changes in travel plans on account of COVID-19.
- Quarterly Risk Management Committee meetings to discuss the program's risk management approach, including key risks and incidents that quarter, emerging risks and strategies for mitigation of these risks.

Staff across the program closely monitor strategic, operational and programmatic risks – this is led by the Global Risk and Security team and undertaken by Regional Directors, in-country teams and supplemented with information from International SOS, DFAT and other sources. High-level monitoring was required in the heightened security environments of Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka, with responsive support provided to staff and participants.

There were 74 reported safety, security and safeguarding incidents for the reporting period, statistics of which are included in the annexes of this report.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

As part of the program's annual learning cycle, reflection events were held in August 2021. This is the fourth year that reflection events have been held by the program and the second year that, due to COVID-19, they have been held online. The events brought together all program staff to collectively analyse and reflect on the feedback received over the previous year and consider program improvements.

Following the independent evaluation of the program and DFAT's management response, the MEL unit supported DFAT and the program to refresh the program logic. This has resulted in an updated program logic that captures the adaptations the program has made over the years and a stronger focus on a principled approach to partnerships and achieving inclusive development outcomes. This program logic will help guide the program in its next five-year phase.

With an updated program logic, it was also opportune to review and update the program's MEL Framework. An external stakeholder consultation was conducted as part of this, to listen to feedback from partners, volunteers, and external MEL advisers. The updated MEL Framework was finalised at the end of the financial year.

During the year the MEL unit has also reviewed and updated all assignment monitoring and evaluation forms used by volunteers and partner organisations. Changes were made based on feedback received in recent years, a review of what data is and isn't used by the program, and an intent to make the forms easier to use for volunteers and partners.

The MEL unit has also been working to create new ways of supporting volunteers and partners with the development of a community of practice focussed on MEL. This is a space for those with an interest in MEL to share experiences and learning, and provide mutual support.

Over the year, the MEL unit has supported the program with three key pieces of research:

- The Longitudinal Study of Australian Volunteers follows a cohort of volunteers over time, and is now in its third year, providing detailed analysis of the volunteers' experiences on the program and how they gain personally and professionally.

- The third of three planned 'deep dives' into the program's thematic impact areas looked at climate change, disaster resilience and food security in the Pacific, and how the program is supporting partner organisations working on this crucial issue.
- Looking at another thematic area, research was also conducted into organisations of people with disabilities and the development outcomes they are achieving with the program's support.

Many of the findings of these studies have been used in this report, as well as informing ongoing learning and adaptation within the program.

Carbon offsets

The Australian Volunteers Program's carbon offset initiative contributes to environmental sustainability by offsetting program participants' flights. Data was collated on miles flown and carbon emissions generated by flights for volunteers and program participants from July 2021 – June 2022. This information was used to calculate the program's annual carbon footprint and carbon credits, to the value of AUD \$4,024, were purchased from a project in Vietnam, supporting the Bac Lieu Wind Farm.

Finance

Program expenditure for 2021-22 was AUD \$20.280 million, against the approved annual plan budget of AUD \$21.310 million. This represents a 4.8% variance. In February and June 2022, the program provided to DFAT a re-forecast of AUD \$20.280 million. Expenditure at 30 June 2022 against the re-forecast was achieved. The key variances to the annual plan budget were largely driven by the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, such as travel restrictions and border closures, which presented operational challenges for the program.

Human Resources

At 30 June 2022, the program was supported by 126 staff, 78 based overseas and 46 based in Australia. Our overseas cohort includes five expatriates. Our Regional Directors continue to lead our in-country teams from their regional bases in Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vietnam and Indonesia.

There were 14 resignations in this reporting period, six overseas based staff and eight in Australia. Pleasingly the program's leadership team remained stable.

A focus on staff health and wellbeing was maintained throughout the year, in light of the ongoing disruptions due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Case study: Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste

Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) (Red Cross Timor-Leste) works to alleviate the suffering of socially excluded and economically marginalised members of the community. It does this by promoting health and socio-economic development, as well as enhancing individuals' capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters.

To strengthen its capacity and output, CVTL wants to build relations with potential donors, beneficiaries and the general public in Timor-Leste. The organisation aims to do this by improving its organisational systems, monitoring and evaluation approach, and communications and fundraising.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic increased the organisation's workload significantly as CVTL works closely with Timor-Leste's Ministry of Health. In addition to responding to the pandemic, CVTL assisted communities impacted by floods and an outbreak of dengue fever. During this time, the organisation identified a strong need for volunteers to support in planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Australian volunteer Matthew Jones completed a remote volunteering assignment as an Organisational Development Mentor with CVTL in 2021. Matthew supported CVTL to establish and maintain relationships with external partners, donors and stakeholders, and to apply for large and small grants. Matthew also assisted with the development of a strategic plan for the External Relations Department, including stakeholder engagement.

Rita O'Sullivan also completed a remote volunteering assignment with CVTL, as a Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Mentor. Rita mentored the External Relations Department team to improve PMER systems, tools, and processes, including analysis and reporting, and strengthening staff capabilities in developing and maintaining donor and stakeholder relationships.

Timor-Leste Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste staff Estanislau Guterres (left) and Martina Mendonca (right).



List of abbreviations

GEDSI	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
IVD	International Volunteer Day (December 5)
IWD	International Women's Day (March 8)
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex, queer and other gender, sexually diverse or body diverse characteristics
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
NMVO	Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organisations
OPDs	Organisations of People with Disability
PO	Partner organisation
PSEAH	Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
RAVN	Returned Australian Volunteer Network (the Australian Volunteers Program's alumni program)
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, and sex characteristics

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