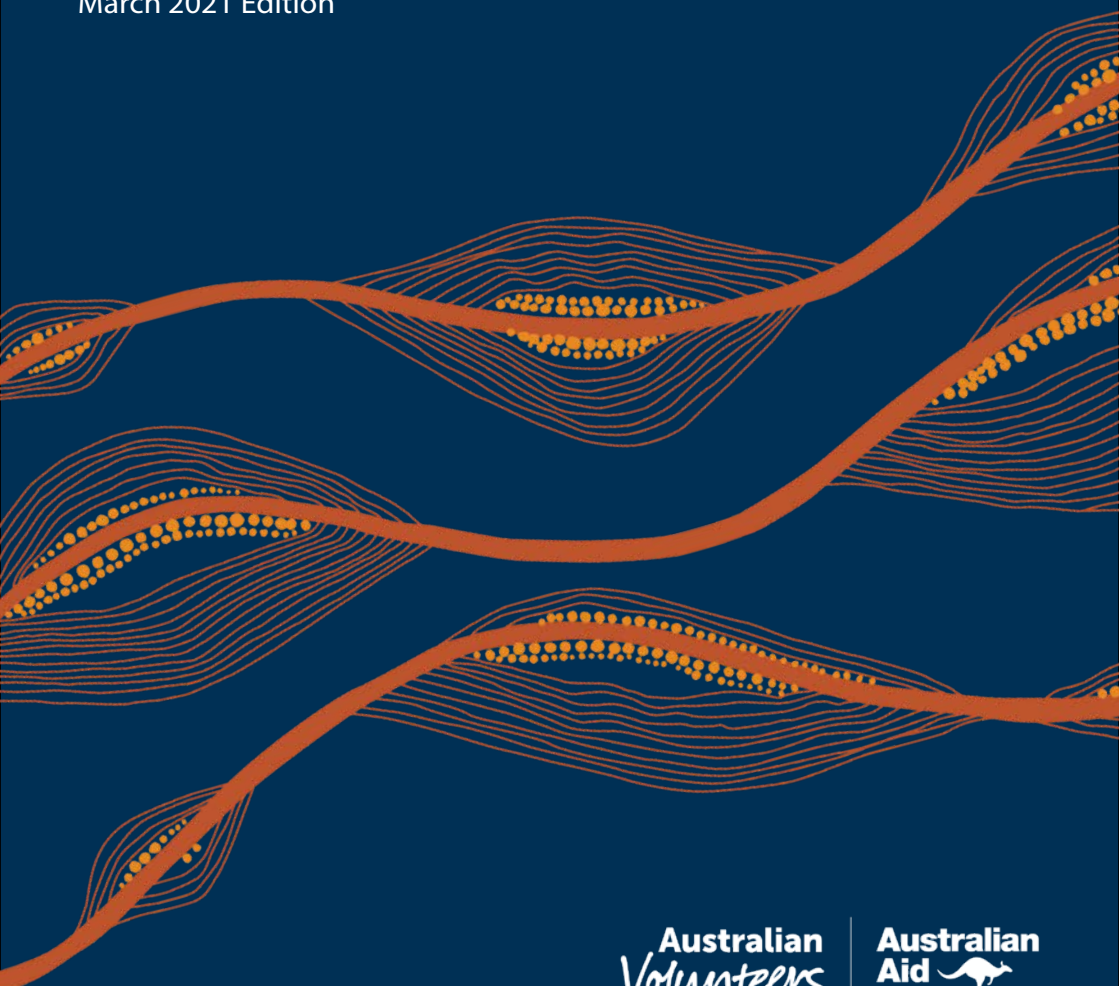


Australian Volunteers Program

# INDIGENOUS PATHWAYS

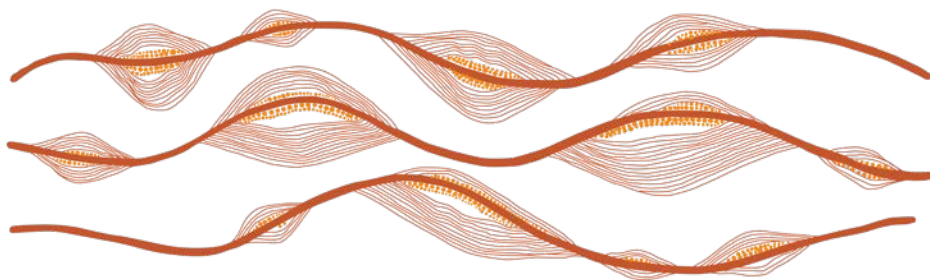
## REMOTE VOLUNTEERING GUIDE

March 2021 Edition



Australian  
Volunteers

Australian  
Aid 



## Acknowledgement

The Australian Volunteers Program acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We recognise the continuing connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People have to their lands and waters, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We would also like to specifically pay our respects to the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our head office is located.

## Key contacts for volunteers

### Australian Volunteers Portal

Access your portal at: <https://assignments.australianvolunteers.com/>

### International SOS

For general information and a suite of selected medical and security online tools, specifically for program countries:

- <https://www.internationalsos.com/login>
- Membership number: 12AYCA789741

### Response Psychological Services

24/7 counselling and psychological services for volunteers and approved accompanying dependents.

- Email: [response@responsepsychological.com](mailto:response@responsepsychological.com)
- Phone: 1300 854 053 or +613 9016 0400

### Indigenous Programs Coordinator

- Alice Tamang (Dharug)
- Phone: 0422 763 630
- Email: [atamang@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:atamang@australianvolunteers.com)

### Diversity and Inclusion team

- Email: [inclusion@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:inclusion@australianvolunteers.com)

## Australian Volunteers Program – country offices

If you have any questions about this guide or other program-related enquiries while on assignment, contact your local country office. Contact details for each country office are provided to all onboarding volunteers and can also be found in your online resources.

• Bhutan	<a href="mailto:bhutan@australianvolunteers.com">bhutan@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Cambodia	<a href="mailto:mbou@australianvolunteers.com">mbou@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• eSwatini	<a href="mailto:southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com">southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Federated States of Micronesia	<a href="mailto:northpacific@australianvolunteers.com">northpacific@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Fiji	<a href="mailto:fiji@australianvolunteers.com">fiji@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Indonesia	<a href="mailto:indonesia@australianvolunteers.com">indonesia@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Kiribati	<a href="mailto:kiribati@australianvolunteers.com">kiribati@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Laos	<a href="mailto:laos@australianvolunteers.com">laos@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Lesotho	<a href="mailto:southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com">southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Marshall Islands	<a href="mailto:northpacific@australianvolunteers.com">northpacific@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Mongolia	<a href="mailto:mongolia@australianvolunteers.com">mongolia@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Myanmar	<a href="mailto:myanmar@australianvolunteers.com">myanmar@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Nepal	<a href="mailto:nepal@australianvolunteers.com">nepal@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Palau	<a href="mailto:northpacific@australianvolunteers.com">northpacific@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Papua New Guinea	<a href="mailto:png@australianvolunteers.com">png@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Philippines	<a href="mailto:philippines@australianvolunteers.com">philippines@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Samoa	<a href="mailto:samoa@australianvolunteers.com">samoa@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Solomon Islands	<a href="mailto:solomons@australianvolunteers.com">solomons@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• South Africa	<a href="mailto:southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com">southernafrika@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Sri Lanka	<a href="mailto:srilanka_office@australianvolunteers.com">srilanka_office@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Tanzania	<a href="mailto:tanzania_office@australianvolunteers.com">tanzania_office@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Timor-Leste	<a href="mailto:timorleste@australianvolunteers.com">timorleste@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Tonga	<a href="mailto:tonga@australianvolunteers.com">tonga@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Tuvalu	<a href="mailto:tuvalu@australianvolunteers.com">tuvalu@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Vanuatu	<a href="mailto:vanuatu_office@australianvolunteers.com">vanuatu_office@australianvolunteers.com</a>
• Vietnam	<a href="mailto:vietnam@australianvolunteers.com">vietnam@australianvolunteers.com</a>



## The Australian Volunteers Program

The Australian Volunteers Program is an Australian Government initiative. The Australian Government has supported thousands of Australians to volunteer overseas as part of Australia's aid program for over 60 years, and the Australian Volunteers Program is the next chapter in this long and rich history.

The Australian Volunteers Program matches a broad range of skilled Australians with partner organisations overseas, to support these organisations to achieve their own development goals. The program is an important part of the Australian Government's people-to-people program portfolio, connecting Australians to Australia's aid program and the region, and uses international volunteering as a people-centred approach to capacity development.

The Australian Volunteers Program aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Partner organisations are supported by Australia to achieve their own development objectives
2. Australian volunteers gain professionally and personally
3. The public in Australia better appreciates the value of international volunteering.

By successfully achieving these three end of program outcomes, the Australian Volunteers Program will have contributed to the following broader development and diplomacy goals:

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

The Australian Volunteers Program operates in 26 countries: Bhutan, Cambodia, eSwatini, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Laos, Lesotho, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

The Australian Volunteers Program supports partner organisations to achieve their development objectives. It does not engage in or support any evangelical activities and is not linked to any political party. We partner with local faith-based organisations on the basis that the volunteer placement does not engage in evangelising, and participation in activities run by the volunteer is not conditional on conversion or adherence to a particular religious denomination. We also partner with advocacy organisations on the basis that volunteer activities are not in support of a political party or candidate.

The Australian Volunteers Program is managed by AVI, in a consortium with Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd and the Whitelum Group.

Left: Indigenous Australian volunteer, Worrin Williams (R) with a community member (L), at the completion of her assignment in Hoedspruit, South Africa 2019. Consent obtained. Photo: Sabrina Chielens.

## Message from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to assisting the development of partnering countries, strengthening Australia's international connections, and importantly, helping to change lives for the better.

We would like to offer our appreciation for the contribution Australian volunteers make as part of the Australian Volunteers Program. The commitment our volunteers show to the program, and the personal and professional expertise that they have brought to assist our partnering countries, has been valuable to Australia's international connections.

As you embark on this volunteer journey we wish you all the best. Please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteers Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with any questions you may have along the way and to share your stories with us.

**Australian  
Volunteers**

**Australian  
Aid** 

## Message from the Indigenous Pathways team

Over many years, the Australian Volunteers Program has supported Indigenous Australians to undertake volunteering assignments internationally. International volunteering is a life-changing opportunity that brings a chance to share your skills, and learn new perspectives while connecting with another culture.

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we carry a wealth of knowledge and experience that can help contribute to meaningful change in communities overseas. Our history, on the land now called Australia, has thrived for at least 65,000 years. We are descended from the longest living culture in the world, the pioneers of agriculture, medicine, sports, education and kinship.

We have survived, we are progressive and we are carrying our ancient knowledge and wisdom alongside our personal and professional expertise, across many sectors in a growing society. More so, we are a family – a vast and interconnected family whose clans, tribes, family groups and communities, whether urban, rural or remote, proceed to break down barriers to excel.

The Australian Volunteers Program is an incredible opportunity to share our dynamic expertise. Within the Australian Volunteers Program, is Indigenous Pathways - a program that focuses on expanding and strengthening Indigenous participation, by providing flexible and tailored support.

Details of the ways we can help support you during your assignment are listed in this guide, but if you have a specific matter that you would like to discuss confidentially, please get in touch.

We wish you all the best on your assignment!

**Alice Tamang**

Indigenous Programs Coordinator

## About this guidebook

The Indigenous Pathways Remote Volunteering Guide has been designed to help you succeed in your assignment. It has been developed based on real life experience supporting Australian volunteers. Adherence to the guidance will also help you meet the Australian Volunteers Program ('the program') standards.

This guide contains information specific to remote volunteering and should be used in conjunction with the [Australian Volunteers Guidebook](#). For any sections not referred to in this guide, it should be assumed that advice given in the Australian Volunteers Guidebook remains valid, unless otherwise stated.

You should read this guide before you commence your assignment. It will also be a valuable resource throughout your time on the program. Information has been structured chronologically and sequentially to help you find relevant sections quickly and easily.

If you have any questions commencing your assignment, please contact program staff in Melbourne. Once you are on assignment, you should direct any questions to your country office staff. An electronic copy of this guide is also available on our website and for current volunteers, in your online resource library.

The guide complements Australian Volunteers Program policies, guidelines and online learning. In particular, you should be cognisant of the following:

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy, Child Protection Code of Conduct and Child Protection Country Guides
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- Cultural guides, for the country of your assignment
- Program Security Guidelines
- Program insurance policies
- Volunteer Media Guide
- Privacy Disclosure and Consent Terms and Conditions.

You have access to this additional information via your online resources.

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# 1. BECOMING AN AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER

## 1.1 The volunteer journey



## 1.2 Cultural safety

The Australian Volunteers Program acknowledges the significance of cultural safety for all volunteers, staff, community members and partners, both in Australia and internationally. A culturally safe environment is free from challenge or denial of a person's identity and allows them to openly be who they want or need to be.

Feeling 'culturally safe' is the ability to engage with people or services whilst feeling that your culture, values and history are respected and acknowledged – including the impacts of colonisation and/or assimilation.

Acceptance of diversity of personal views, cultural values, norms and lived experiences is an important facet of enabling a culturally safe environment, and all volunteers are required to uphold the values of cultural safety throughout their volunteer assignment.

## 1.3 Australian volunteer Code of Conduct

### Complying with the Code of Conduct

All volunteers are expected to demonstrate the highest level of professional and personal standards while on assignment, in a manner consistent with the objectives of the program. You must comply with the Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct. As a condition of acceptance into the program, you must indicate that you have read, understood and accept all conditions of the code and other policies relevant to the program. Please see the Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct in your online resources.

## Breach of the Code of Conduct

If a perceived Code of Conduct breach occurs, your country office team will initiate a thorough investigation. This will consider the seriousness of the breach, the intent of the participant, and the attitude of the participant to the breach. In some cases, an investigation may involve the Regional Director, Melbourne office and/or an independent third party. All action will be undertaken in line with the principles of fairness, equity and transparency.

If you are found to have breached any aspect of the code, you may be issued a verbal warning, a written warning and/or placed on a management plan. In the case of serious misconduct, an assignment will be terminated.

## 1.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting people, and it informs everything we do as an organisation and as delivery partners of the Australian Volunteers Program. It is our responsibility to protect people by preventing harm from happening and by responding appropriately when people are harmed. At the heart of all our safeguarding work is a commitment to survivors of all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation or neglect. Survivors can include anyone we encounter through our work, whether beneficiaries, employees, partners, volunteers, or community members.

Child protection and safeguarding and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) are included under the umbrella term of 'safeguarding'.

### 1.4.1 Safeguarding policies and Codes of Conduct

As a condition of acceptance into the program, you must indicate that you have read, understood and accept all conditions of the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy. Consequences of not complying with these policies, or the Code of Conduct may include termination of your assignment.

### 1.4.2 Child protection

The Australian Volunteers Program has a strong commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children, and the protection of children from all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we define a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

The Australian Volunteers Program promotes a rights-based approach to child protection, and encourages open discussion about children's safeguarding and protection.

Our guiding principles for child protection include the importance of shared responsibility, zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation and taking a risk management approach. You are expected to be alert to any child protection risks while on assignment and to seek guidance where necessary. See below and refer to the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct for further advice.

### 1.4.3 Reporting child protection concerns

You must immediately report allegations or concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or a suspected breach of the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct to the program.

Reportable concerns/allegations include:

- An observation or disclosure (by an adult or child) of child abuse/exploitation
- An observation or disclosure or potential risk of child abuse/exploitation
- Any situation or environment which poses a threat to children's rights.

A report must be made:

- When it is due to the actions of a staff member, Australian volunteer, approved accompanying dependent or associate of the Australian Volunteers Program or AVI; or
- When it is due to the actions of a staff member or associate of your partner organisation.
- When it is due to the actions of an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident, DFAT funded partner or DFAT funded personnel or volunteer, or Australian company (as per DFAT Child Protection Policy).

If you have already provided a report, and subsequently become aware of additional information, you must also report that information. Your responsibility to report applies irrespective of local/cultural norms or prevalence/rates of child abuse and exploitation in the country where you are volunteering.

Assessment and follow up action by the program will include respect for privacy and confidentiality, and consideration for the safety and well-being of volunteers.

You may contact your Program Manager or the Child Protection and Safeguards Adviser if you have any child protection queries or concerns. Email: [childprotection@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:childprotection@australianvolunteers.com) to raise a concern with the Child Protection and Safeguards Adviser.

### 1.4.4 Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment (SEAH) concerns

Fundamental to the operations of the Australian Volunteers Program is respect for the dignity and basic human rights of all people. Every person who represents the Australian Volunteers Program is expected to reflect these values in their professional conduct, regardless of who they are dealing with, or where they are working.

Sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment (SEAH) is a violation of basic human rights. The Australian Volunteers Program aims to provide a safe and trusted environment that safeguards everyone from SEAH including beneficiary communities, workers, program participants and partner organisations.

Right: Clinton Wilson (centre), member of the Indigenous Volunteer Support and Advisory Panel, speaking with returned volunteers during a workshop in Melbourne, 2019. Consent obtained.

Australian volunteers are expected to conform with a strict set of obligations, responsibilities and expectations which are set out in the Australian Volunteers Code of Conduct, which includes adherence to the PSEAH Policy.

Any breach of the Code of Conduct is taken extremely seriously; we want to assure colleagues and beneficiaries of our partner organisations that we will not tolerate any volunteer or member of staff taking advantage of their position to abuse, exploit or harass others.

#### 1.4.5 Reporting SEAH concerns

You must immediately report to the Australian Volunteers Program any concern, suspicion or allegation of sexual exploitation or breach of the relevant policies. The program has a zero-tolerance approach to volunteers who breach the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy.

It is important to note program participants must immediately inform their Program Manager or Regional Director if they become engaged in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where real or perceived unequal power dynamics exist. Participants and dependents who are unsure if their relationship falls into this category should discuss the situation with their Program Manager or Regional Director.





The program adopts a victim/survivor based approach to responding to incidents or threats of sexual or gender-based exploitation, abuse or harassment. If you are the victim or survivor of a sexual or gender-based incident that occurred on assignment, or you are threatened with such harm, please report the matter to your in-country team or relevant Regional Director so that we can support you and take action on your behalf as appropriate. **You can also make an anonymous report via AVI's confidential reporting tool [Stopline](#).**

#### 1.4.6 Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment (SEAH) concerns

A reported criminal offence does not necessarily rule out a candidate. The program will take under consideration the nature and currency of the offences, the role and location where the candidate will be based, and whether there are additional risks presented by the criminal history.

Some types of convictions in Australia and overseas may prevent you from participating in the program. The program will not allow a person onto the program if their criminal record check includes convictions or sentences for:

- Serious drug offences (trafficking a drug or supply of a drug of dependence to a child)
- Offences that involve crimes against the person – for example:
  - Sexual offences against a child or an adult
  - Violent offences against a child or an adult
  - Any child abuse offence
  - Stalking of a child or an adult
  - Family and domestic violence offences
- Substance abuse
- Fraud or other crimes of deception
- Any other offences deemed unacceptable for the particular assignment you have applied for.

You may be required to provide more information or written disclosure in order to proceed with your application. See 3.4 Criminal record checks.

## 1.5 Grievance

### Grievance principles

The program seeks to ensure that Australian volunteers are able to raise any issues that arise concerning their assignment or support provided to them under the program.

The program aims to respond to any issues raised in a timely, respectful, and considered manner. Should you have any concerns relating to your assignment or support provided to you under the program, please contact your in-country team as soon as possible, and they will try and resolve the matter promptly and informally.

Left: Nonngar woman, Victoria Langmead on assignment in Mongolia, 2020. Consent obtained.

The program is committed to exploring all reasonable avenues for reaching a collaborative resolution, wherever possible. However, it is recognised that there may be instances when this will not be possible and, in such instances, the formal grievance procedure outlined in this section will operate.

### **Grievance procedure**

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, as indicated above, then you must inform the Program Manager of the grievance in writing. If the grievance relates to the Program Manager, you are to inform the Regional Director of the grievance in writing. The Program Manager or Regional Director will, in turn, acknowledge the receipt of the grievance in writing within five (5) working days. The Program Manager or Regional Director will take required action to address the grievance (which could take some time depending on the nature of the grievance and any further investigative work required). Where possible, resolution of a grievance may include giving you and the subject of the grievance the opportunity to be heard, either orally or in writing, before a decision is made.

The outcome of the grievance shall be communicated to you by the person responsible for handling the grievance, within five (5) business days of the outcome being decided.

If the Australian volunteer believes that the grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily then they must inform the Program Manager/Regional Director of this in writing and request that the grievance be escalated to the Overseas Operations Team in Melbourne. Following the escalation, receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five (5) working days and a review of the matter will be undertaken. The program will seek to respond to the grievance as soon as practicable. If the grievance is still unresolved after a further 10 working days from the referral to the Program Manager, the matter shall be referred to the Deputy Program Director or their nominee.

### **Complaints**

Should your grievance remain unresolved following the above process, you can make a complaint to AVI. Please refer to the AVI Complaint Handling Policy.

In addition, AVI is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct. Program participants can make a complaint regarding any alleged breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee.

## **1.6 Privacy disclosure and consent statement**

All participants on the program are required to agree to the Privacy Disclosure and Consent terms and conditions. This facilitates the sharing of program information with stakeholders. You will be asked to agree to these terms and conditions during the recruitment process. For more information, see your online resources.

## 2. INCLUSION AND SUPPORT



Two groups of Indigenous Australian volunteers at their pre-departure briefing, before starting assignments in South Africa. Consent obtained. Photo: Teagan Glenane.

**We are passionate about supporting all Australians to volunteer. We recognise the unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.**

## 2.1 Indigenous Pathways

The Australian Volunteers Program values the significant and unique skills, knowledge and experience that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can contribute to the communities we work with internationally.

The program is committed to actively increasing Indigenous participation in international volunteering and ensuring that the program is a culturally-safe and supportive environment for Indigenous volunteers.

Indigenous Pathways is an Indigenous-led component of the Australian Volunteers Program, offering a variety of pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to engage with the program. The remote volunteering pathway offers part-time or full-time assignments that can be undertaken online, whilst in Australia. These assignments range from two weeks, to three months in duration.

## Tailored support

We recognise that due to many factors both past and present, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may encounter additional barriers, responsibilities or concerns. There are a range of ways in which we can support you including:

### Assistance with paperwork

If you need assistance applying for identification documents, a police check or other paperwork associated with your assignment, the Indigenous Programs Coordinator can assist you.

### Talent Pool and assignment matching

If you would like to undertake an assignment but can't find the right one, the Indigenous Programs Coordinator can assist you. You can have a yarn about your skills and experience, register your interest, and be contacted when new volunteering opportunities become available.

### Indigenous Volunteer Support and Advisory Panel

The Australian Volunteers Program has established an Indigenous Volunteers Support and Advisory Panel as an additional mode of support for Indigenous volunteers. The panel is a formal structure, with the purpose of advising the Australian Volunteers Program broadly on Indigenous engagement and participation in international volunteering. The panel can also provide support, guidance and mentoring to Indigenous Australian volunteers participating in the program. To arrange a call with the panel please contact the Indigenous Programs Coordinator

### Cultural safety

Feeling that your culture, values and history are acknowledged and respected is a crucial part of a culturally safe environment. The program understands the importance of cultural safety, and we are committed to ensuring Indigenous volunteers are well supported throughout their assignments.

As part of this commitment we are ensuring that our international program staff have increased levels of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture. Staff working across all 26 countries the program operates in have commenced online training developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). The training includes stories from communities across the country, and staff have enjoyed learning more and sometimes discovering similarities with their own cultures.

If you require additional support or have a specific matter that you would like to discuss confidentially, please contact the Indigenous Programs Coordinator on [indigenouspathways@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:indigenouspathways@australianvolunteers.com) or 0422 763 630.

## 2.2 People with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)

People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, or Queer (LGBTIQ+) are supported and encouraged to bring their full selves to the Australian Volunteers Program.

The participation and contribution of LGBTIQ+ identifying volunteers throughout our history has been key to our success across all countries and regions. The Australian Volunteers Program strives to provide a safe, supportive and equitable environment for LGBTIQ+ volunteers, partners, and staff at all levels and in all locations.

For a confidential discussion about volunteering, please contact the program's Diversity and Inclusion team at [inclusion@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:inclusion@australianvolunteers.com)



LGBTIQ+ Pride Flag



Transgender Flag

## 2.3 People living with a disability

The Australian Volunteers Program actively supports persons with disabilities to participate in the program, as volunteers and staff. It aims to make the program as accessible as possible to persons with a wide range of disabilities. To support this, Access and Inclusion Plans are available for volunteers with disabilities to ensure their assignments and working arrangements are made more accessible. To ensure the support we provide is right for you, we work with volunteers with a disability on a case-by-case basis to complete an Access and Inclusion Plan.

The program also has a long history of working closely with disability organisations and having disability-focused assignments. This helps ensure that the broader program and its partners have a strong emphasis on disability-inclusion in all its work.

People who identify as living with a disability or who would like to find out more information about the program's disability-inclusion approach, can contact the program's Diversity and Inclusion team at [inclusion@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:inclusion@australianvolunteers.com)

### 3. BEFORE YOU START YOUR ASSIGNMENT

### 3.1 Confirmation of assignment

Australian Volunteers Program country offices will assess applications. Once the country office has confirmed the assignment, they will contact you and your partner organisation.

You will be provided with access to your online portal where you will be prompted to complete your required onboarding activities. These include:

- Acceptance form acknowledging:
  - Code of Conduct
  - Child Protection Policy
  - Privacy and confidentiality statement
- Completion of Preparing to Volunteer online workshop
- Country orientation online briefing held from country office of your partner organisation

Please note: it is mandatory that all activities be completed before your assignment can begin.

### 3.2 Postponed or cancelled assignment

An assignment may need to be postponed or cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These circumstances could include volunteer failure to complete all required compliance activities, changing circumstances of a partner organisation or an emergency situation in the country of your partner organisation. The situation will be discussed with you and we will advise if there is a suitable alternative. Current circumstances mean there may be limited ability for alternatives to be offered. The program cannot be held responsible for major changes in such circumstances.

### 3.3 Health preparation

Your health is primarily your responsibility. The program is committed to supporting your efforts to maintain good health and encourages you to make careful decisions and take actions appropriate to your circumstances. Remote volunteers can refer to their portal for a checklist of things to consider when volunteering from home to support working safely. You are not required to undertake first aid training.

#### **Mental health clearance**

During the recruitment process, you will be required to complete a mental health clearance, conducted by a third-party provider, Response Psychological Services. The program covers the cost of this assessment. The purpose of the mental health clearance process is to ensure that you are fit to fulfil your commitment to the program.

You must provide full disclosure to Response Psychological Services. This is a duty of disclosure to ensure adequate knowledge exists of any pre-existing conditions. This will help the program arrange appropriate clearance, support and risk management for you.

### 3.4 Criminal record checks

#### Australian police check

As part of the recruitment process for the program, you must complete and clear an Australian Federal Police check before your assignment can be confirmed. You will be required to submit a police check every two years, if you are on consecutive assignments.

The cost for completing Australian police checks is covered by the program for preferred candidates only.

#### International police check

If you have spent 12 months or more living outside of Australia in the last 10 years, you will need to arrange an appropriate police clearance, or similar certification, for these time periods from each country. Please note that in some cases you may be required to sign a statutory declaration that includes disclosing any charges or spent convictions. The cost for completing international police checks is covered by the program for preferred candidates only.

#### Working with children check

For some assignments that involve direct work with children, a Working with Children check (WWCC) will also be required. Refer to your assignment description.



A volunteer structural engineer working with his partner organisation, to inspect for correct procedure and adherence to building standards in Samoa, 2019. Photo: Darren James.

### 3.5 Pre-assignment learning

All program participants are required to complete mandatory learning prior to their assignment. This consists of:

- Online learning modules that must be completed prior to participation in a Preparing to Volunteer workshop
- A three-hour Preparing to Volunteer interactive online workshop with fellow volunteers

#### Online learning

Through your portal, you will be prompted to complete mandatory online learning modules related to your assignment. These must be completed before participating in a Preparing to Volunteer workshop. A resource library is accessible throughout your assignment term on the online portal. For any queries or assistance regarding pre-departure learning, please email [learn@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:learn@australianvolunteers.com).

#### Preparing to Volunteer Workshop

It is a mandatory requirement that all volunteers attend a Preparing to Volunteer workshop. This is a three-hour interactive online workshop designed to prepare you for the program. The workshop will be conducted with a group of volunteers, and will address key information specific to the program, with particular focus on volunteering in the online space. The webinar will be recorded, and can be accessed by volunteers at any time if required.



A member of the program's Volunteer Services team, sharing information as part of a Preparing to Volunteer Workshop. Consent obtained.

## 4. BEGINNING YOUR ASSIGNMENT



Community members fising in shallow water, Kiribati. Photo: Darren James.



Daily life in Dhulikhel municipality, Nepal. Photo: Teagan Glenane.

## 4.1 Country orientation online briefing

Country orientation briefings will be held online by country offices. Remote volunteers should aim to attend a country orientation briefing as a matter of priority, ideally at the very beginning of their assignment. These sessions will cover country-specific information to support volunteers to understand the local context of their partner organisation. It also builds upon the pre-departure learning and briefing to help you become an effective Australian volunteer as soon as possible. Dates for country orientation briefings will be communicated to remote volunteers via country offices.

## 4.2 Personal security

To minimise personal security risks (e.g. cyber security, online engagement) while working remotely, please take a look at the information in your Knowledge Base, available through your portal.

## 4.3 Starting your assignment

You will have received confirmation of your assignment from the country office.

You and your partner organisation are expected to:

- Set expectations early, taking into account other commitments you have in Australia and the availability you have to give your partner organisation. Setting boundaries around availability is important as your partner organisation may be used to having a volunteer on a full-time basis and this may differ in remote volunteering particularly where time differences are present.
- As a matter of high importance, create a communication plan and define best communications tools

You are also required under the Australian Volunteers Code of Conduct to complete all compulsory program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) templates.

## 4.4 Relationship with Australian organisations

Your assignment may have the support of an Australian organisation. An Australian organisation is an extra stakeholder for you to consider and be supported by, but you report directly to your partner organisation. If your assignment does not have an Australian organisation but you become aware of a relationship (e.g. funding) between your partner organisation and an Australian organisation, please let your country office know. This organisation may wish to formally partner with the program. Australian organisations contribute to the program in various ways, including:

- Providing you with context about the assignment, the partner organisation, country or sector before you start your assignment; and
- Providing you with access to technical networks or advice during your assignment.

## 4.5 Health Security Corps

The Health Security Corps is a niche program within the Australian Volunteers Program that places certain public health professionals to work in non-clinical roles with partner organisations in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Health Security Corps works to build the capacity of organisations in the Indo-Pacific region, with a health security focus, to avoid and contain infectious disease threats with the potential to cause social and economic harm on a national, regional or global scale.

The Health Security Corps will:

- Contribute to regional health security capacity by strengthening regional preparedness to respond to emerging health threats; and
- Build people-to-people links within regional partner organisations and countries.

For more information, see the Health Security Corps section of the Australian Volunteers Program website or contact [healthsecuritycorps@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:healthsecuritycorps@australianvolunteers.com)

## 4.6 On assignment training

### **In-country meeting**

Your country office may choose to have a regular or occasional online meeting of remote volunteers. You are encouraged to join if you can, to share experiences and ideas with others.

### **Additional language training**

Language and cultural differences can be even more difficult to bridge when working remotely. Language training is a way for volunteers to build an understanding of another culture and their relationships with the colleagues.

Remote volunteers are entitled to up to AUD\$400 worth of language training or translation costs, based on the reimbursement of actual costs.

You do not need to offer any particular justification as to why you are doing language training. The training can encompass further study in the national language; or a local language; or any particular special language area (specialist vocabulary; newspaper reading; literature) you may choose relevant to the country of your assignment.

If using the allowance for translation, the program encourages you to plan for using the allowance prior to the end of your assignment. Your country office team may be able to recommend language training providers who are able to deliver language classes remotely. For translation or interpretation, your country office team or partner organisation may have recommendations.



Volunteers and in-country staff came together to talk ideas and share stories at the Indonesia in-country meeting held in Sanur, Bali 2019. Consent obtained. Photo: Teagan Glenane.

## Other training

There will be a number of opportunities for remote volunteers to participate in training and professional development sessions during their assignment, facilitated by the program. Your country office or the Melbourne team may send through details of these as they become available.

These may include:

- **Country Catch Up** – country offices may run a monthly catch up with remote volunteers. These online video calls aim to help volunteers get to know each other and learn from each other's experiences of remote volunteering, as well as understand what is happening in the country and how that might impact their assignment.
- **Professional Development Sessions** – the Australian Volunteers Program Learning and Development team will deliver webinars for remote volunteers and partner organisations that support their professional development.
- **Communities of Practice/Networks** – the Learning and Development team and Innovation team will support small groups of volunteers with similar interests to network. For example, volunteers working in the health space might be supported to connect through regular webinars.

## 5. ON ASSIGNMENT

## 5.1 The program and you

### Your in-country team

While you are on assignment, your key contact with the program will be the Program Manager or other specified country office staff. Program Managers and country office staff are responsible for managing the program in a specific country or region. Country office staff are incredibly hardworking, welcoming and knowledgeable and will be an important part of your volunteering experience. Below are a few photos of some of country office staff from around the world.

The main roles of country offices are to support volunteers and partner organisations to build relationships remotely; support volunteers to understand local context; resolve any issues; and support end of assignment interviews and remote volunteer MEL activities. The majority of your questions or queries about the program or your assignment should be directed to your in-country team. This includes any media requests, matters of concern, feedback and complaints.

Email is often used to send Australian volunteers important information about the program, updates and other news. If you are using an email system that employs bulk mail filters, please ensure that the filters enable any messages with a @australianvolunteers.com and @avi.org.au address to get through.



Country office staff - Fiji



Country office staff - Laos and Vietnam



Country office staff member, Wycliff Bakeo - Vanuatu



Country office staff - Papua New Guinea

## Program obligations and responsibilities

The program has certain obligations and responsibilities towards you as a remote volunteer. They include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting volunteers and partner organisations to develop assignment plans
- Providing online learning, support and review activities
- Mediating volunteers and partner organisation issues, when required
- Providing reimbursement for approved costs

## Work and volunteering

It is expected that many remote volunteers will be engaged in paid and/or unpaid work while undertaking their remote assignment. It's important that you discuss this with your partner organisation to clarify availability and expectations.

Remote volunteer assignments can be full time or part time. Full-time is considered to be 25 hours per week or more, part-time is anything less than 25 hours per week.

## Personal study and research

It is expected that many remote volunteers will be engaged in personal study and research unrelated to their assignment while participating in remote volunteering. It's important that you discuss this with your partner organisation to clarify availability and expectations.

You are not to conduct any type of research as part of your remote assignment unless agreed by the program and the partner organisation, and where it is agreed that the research is appropriate to the partner organisation and the program. You may not publish research, including approved research, without permission from the program and the partner organisation.

## 5.2 The partner organisation and you

Remote volunteering enables volunteers to continue supporting partner organisations while in Australia. Unlike in-country volunteer assignments, you may be juggling your volunteer assignment with other paid work in Australia, study and/or family commitments.

You are encouraged to discuss your commitments openly with your partner organisation, as it is your partner organisation to who you are primarily responsible in regards to your assignment. Please contact your country office if you need support to establish your commitments to your partner organisation.

## Hours and days at the partner organisation

Remote volunteer assignments can be full time or part time, and volunteers may choose when the work is conducted. Volunteers should communicate openly with their partner organisation about commitment expectations and time availability. If any changes occur during the assignment, volunteers and partner organisations should continue communicating and managing expectations.

## Rights-based approach

While developing your activities, please keep in view that the program is committed to addressing the effects of gender inequalities and inequities as being fundamental to the attainment of human rights for all and the effectiveness of aid and development activity.

The program is also committed to including and addressing the rights of children, people with disabilities, and other marginalised or vulnerable peoples.

## Use of information and communications technology (ICT)

You must abide by the ICT policy (or equivalent) of your partner organisation, in addition to any other policies. Please see the resources on risk and cybersecurity in your online learning.

Some general guidelines are:

- Do not access, store or transmit any materials that are in violation of Australian law and/or laws of the country of your partner organisation
- Do not use resources in a manner that may be deemed by others as harassment, discrimination, abuse
- Do not use resources in a manner that may be deemed by others as obscene, threatening or otherwise inappropriate

## Terms and conditions within the workplace

It is your responsibility to communicate and re-confirm the working arrangements of your remote assignment with your partner organisation, including:

- Hours and days working on your assignment
- Leave - you are not required to request leave from your partner organisation, however it is important that you communicate with your partner organisation when/if you choose to take leave
- Reporting requirements your partner organisation may have; and
- Available resources.

If there are serious issues concerning the terms and conditions of your assignment, please contact your country office staff immediately.

## Restriction on donations and fundraising

It is against the Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct to make a personal donation to your partner organisation while on assignment, as it can have unanticipated negative consequences. There is no restriction on post-assignment donations.

## Conflict resolution

Conflicts in the workplace should initially be dealt with at a local level within your partner organisation. If resolution proves especially difficult, your Program Manager may be able to help with advice and, if required, can act as a mediator with the partner organisation.

You can also access Response Psychological Services for counselling or debriefing.

## Work performance

It is your responsibility to work towards achieving your assignment objectives. Part of this includes maintaining regular communication with your partner organisation about your work performance. Dissatisfaction with the progress of the assignment, including work performance or the support of the partner organisation, needs to be discussed between you and your partner organisation as early as possible.

When such issues arise and cannot be resolved at a local level, the Program Manager must be consulted and will seek to mediate an equitable solution. However, the partner organisation is entitled to terminate the assignment and request the withdrawal of the Australian volunteer.

## Grants opportunities

Many Australian volunteers obtain funding to support their partner organisation through fundraising and proposal writing. All Australian volunteers are asked to ensure that their in-country team are notified of any donations or grants awarded to the partner organisation as a direct result of their assignment. You may be asked to support your partner organisation with grants applications while you are on assignment. It is at your discretion, whether to support your partner organisation with grants and funding endeavours. However, your primary focus must be your assignment objectives.



Returned Indigenous Australian volunteers and the Indigenous Programs Coordinator at a returned volunteer workshop in Melbourne. Consent obtained.

### 5.3 The local context

The program operates under the terms of formal agreements between the Australian Government and the governments of the countries in which the program operates. These agreements vary by jurisdiction - as Subsidiary Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, or similar. Please refer to your in-country team if you require further information.

#### Laws of your host country

Australian volunteers are subject to all local laws and regulations. You should familiarise yourself with local laws as a part of the research you undertake prior to commencing your assignment. Offences and penalties can differ markedly from those in Australia (e.g. for pornographic material). You should also be aware of local laws relating to same-sex relationships.

The program is unable to provide legal advice. It is your responsibility to deal with any civil or criminal proceedings arising from breaches of local laws and any consequent judgments, such as fines. If legal issues arise during an assignment, either internationally or in Australia, the in-country team or the consular section of the local Australian diplomatic mission may be able to assist with advice about legal representation, but you are responsible for obtaining and funding such representation. See the Consular Services Charter.

#### Politics and religion

Do not become involved in local politics, attend public demonstrations, or make any public comment (written, broadcast or your own social media) on political or religious matters. Even the signing of a petition in some countries can result in action against you. Symbols of nationalism in particular should be respected.

Any comments you make may also have a negative impact on others in your assignment community, including your partner organisation, colleagues and fellow Australian volunteers in your country of assignment. It is acceptable to practise your own faith, provided respect is shown for the local religion/s. Australian volunteers are not to proselytise; that is preach or attempt to recruit an individual or group to a religion. This includes volunteers who are assigned with a faith-based organisation.

### 5.4 Allowances

#### Remote volunteer allowance

The Australian Volunteers Program has calculated an allowance for remote volunteering assignments based on anticipated weekly expenses. This allowance does not take into account any of the day-to-day living expenses of the volunteer that are not related to the Remote Volunteering assignment.

There are many factors that were considered when calculating the remote volunteering allowance:

- The Australian Volunteers Program is committed to the philosophy of volunteering and the provision of allowances should not undermine the value we place on the act of giving through volunteering that is at the core of the program.
- Volunteering overseas comes with a specific set of financial challenges that are not consistent with a remote model, particularly where there is an opportunity to volunteer part time and live in existing accommodation.
- Any payments made to Australians living in Australia must be made in consideration of the Australian taxation and social security systems.

### **Partner organisation contribution**

There is no expectation that partner organisations make any contribution to allowances for remote volunteers. In exceptional cases where partner organisations choose to do so, this is viewed as a private arrangement between the partner organisation and the volunteer.

### **Payments and reimbursements**

Remote volunteers are eligible for a modest remote volunteer allowance to cover the anticipated costs associated with remote volunteering.

The program has calculated this allowance as a pre-estimate of weekly expenses, taking into account costs such as internet, technology equipment, international phone calls and/or online conferencing facilities.

- The full-time weekly allowance is AUD\$30.
- The part-time weekly allowance is AUD\$18.

The allowance will be paid on completion of the assignment.

## **5.5 Leave**

### **Public holidays**

Remote volunteers are able to arrange their schedules in consultation with their partner organisation. Volunteers may elect whether they wish to undertake volunteering or not on public holidays, whether Australian public holidays or those observed by their partner organisation.

### **Annual leave, sick leave and special leave**

Annual leave from remote volunteering is not accrued. You are not required to request leave from your partner organisation, however it is important that you communicate with your partner organisation when/if you choose to take leave or otherwise be unavailable for your assignment as per your agreement with your partner organisation. For breaks of more than a week, please also notify your country office.

## 5.6 Travel

### Work travel

In the current climate, remote volunteers are expected to closely monitor and observe local travel restrictions. As an additional precaution, the program discourages remote volunteers from travelling for assignment purposes, including face-to-face meetings with Australian organisations.

## 5.7 Assignment outcomes

### Your expectations

You have detailed assignment objectives and activities as outlined in your position description. If you find that the expectations of your partner organisation differ somewhat from your own, take some time to listen and understand their context and be patient, especially when using new technology. The program will hold regular review sessions with both you and your partner organisation to get feedback on the progress of your assignment and how the benefits from your work can be sustained.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

You are required under the Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct to complete all compulsory program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) templates. As a volunteer, your primary relationship is with your partner organisation who will monitor your day-to-day work. Both you and the partner organisation are expected to participate in the planning and review of your assignments.

MEL is designed to allow you to establish and monitor shared expectations throughout the assignment, any challenges, and the future capacity development needs of the partner organisation. The information provided by you and your partner organisation allows the program to target assistance where needed, and contributes to the continuous improvement of the program as a whole. There are less requirements for remote volunteering due to the short-term nature of the assignments. Further information regarding MEL documentation will be covered in the briefing, and in the MEL guide.

### Assignment Plan

There is no separate Assignment Plan for Remote Volunteering assignments. Assignment objectives and activities as described in the Remote Volunteering Application Form are fed into your End of Assignment Evaluation. Assignment objectives cannot be amended due to the short-term nature of the assignment.

### End of Assignment Evaluation

The End of Assignment Evaluation is due within two weeks of you finishing your assignment. The End of Assignment Evaluation form will be available online through your portal. The End of Assignment Evaluation is similar to the form used for in-country volunteer assignments, but has been greatly simplified in recognition of the shorter assignment duration. Your partner organisation will complete a separate, independent End of Assignment Evaluation.

## Exit interviews

The program will arrange an exit interview with you within two weeks of the end of your assignment. This interview is an opportunity for you to reflect on your broader program experience, identify any issues that need to be resolved and make recommendations for future assignments with your partner organisation.

The program is keen to hear and learn from your experiences of remote volunteering to improve it for other volunteers and partner organisations in the future.

## 5.8 Extensions

Your remote volunteer assignment can be extended by agreement of the partner organisation and the country office. Changing circumstances for the program may mean that an extension or second remote assignment may not be possible. You and your partner organisation are expected to develop an assignment together, with the aim of completing the set objectives within a specified timeframe.

## 5.9 Early returns

### Volunteer early return

You can end your assignment early. Please speak with your partner organisation and/or country office to arrange an early end to your assignment.

### Partner organisation termination

Partner organisations have the right to terminate assignments where necessary. This may include issues such as work performance, personal behaviours, breach of the Volunteer Code of Conduct, failure to follow directives issued by program and/or partner organisation staff, deterioration in security, or social and workplace adjustment.

Although the primary relationship in your assignment is between you and the partner organisation, the program must be made aware of, and be included in, any discussion concerning the ongoing viability of your assignment.

## 5.10 Transfers

Transfers are not applicable for remote volunteering.



## 6. HEALTH, SAFETY AND INSURANCE

## 6.1 Health and medical

### Managing your own health

Your health is primarily your responsibility. The program is committed to supporting your efforts to maintain good health, and encourages you to make careful decisions and take actions appropriate to your circumstances. The impact of COVID-19 has forced many of us to shift our daily routines and office environments into our homes. Please access your online resource library for various resources to support you in staying healthy while working from home. It is your responsibility to notify your country office staff of any changes to your emergency contacts.

## 6.2 24-hour routine and emergency support

As a remote volunteer, you do not have access to 24/7 case management support from International SOS. However, you do have full access to several online resources available through the program's International SOS membership. Membership number: 12AYCA789741.

### 1. General member login

For general information about upcoming events, news releases and insights from a global network of specialists, visit: <https://www.internationalsos.com/login>

### 2. Australian Volunteers Program – Tailored membership service

Browse through a suite of selected medical and security online tools, specifically for program countries, and sign up for alerts:

[https://www.internationalsos.com/members\\_home/login/login.cfm](https://www.internationalsos.com/members_home/login/login.cfm)

### 3. Assistance app

Go to the Apple or Android app store and search for 'International SOS' or visit:

<https://www.internationalsos.com/assistance-app>

## 6.3 Mental health

Access to Response Psychological Services will be offered where a volunteer is involved in an incident regarding their remote volunteering assignment, and in this instance will remain available for up to one month after the end date of your assignment. Please access your online resource library for various resources to support you in staying healthy while working from home.

You may also want to have a look at the [WellMob website](#). WellMob brings together online resources made by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Here you will find websites, apps, podcasts, videos, helplines, social media and online programs with a focus on social and emotional wellbeing.



Indigenous Australian volunteers at the completion of their assignment, with local community members and partner organisation staff in Hoedspruit, South Africa. Consent obtained. Photo: Sabrina Chielens.



Phillip Kampai and George Jacks are paramedics with ProMedical in Port Vila, Vanuatu - one of the many partner organisations the Australian Volunteers Program works with. Consent obtained. Photo: Darren James.

## 6.4 General safety

Your safety is primarily your responsibility. It is expected that you always exercise caution in regard to all aspects of your personal safety and security.

While undertaking a remote volunteer assignment, you are to take reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions or omissions. You agree to comply, so far as you are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction given by AVI to allow AVI to comply with WHS laws, and cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of AVI relating to health and safety.

A work from home checklist can be found in your online course library. Use this checklist as a guide to ensure you have in place all reasonable measures to ensuring a suitable workplace health and safety environment.

### Incident reporting

All incidents related to safety or security, even if the incident seems minor or is only a threat, must be reported to the country office as soon as possible, within 24 hours. Such incidents may have implications of which you might not be aware, and which may become apparent at a later date. Non-reporting of such incidents may have negative implications for you, the program, other volunteers, and any related insurance claims.

This includes:

- Near misses
- Medical emergencies
- Hospitalisation
- Crime
- Fraud
- Harassment

Please refer to the Security Guidelines and your Country Security Plan. As Australian volunteers under the program, you are required to complete documentation as outlined. Your country office may require you to complete additional country-specific documents.

The program has a zero-tolerance approach to volunteers who breach AVI's Policy on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The program adopts a victim/survivor based approach to responding to incidents or threats of sexual or gender based exploitation, abuse or harassment.

If you are the victim or survivor of a sexual or gender based incident that occurred on assignment, or you are threatened with such harm, please report the matter to your country office or relevant Regional Director so that we can support you and take action on your behalf as appropriate.

## 6.5 Country Security Plan

The Country Security Plan for your country of assignment is found in your online resources on the Australian Volunteers Portal. The Country Security Plan seeks to outline the main risks to your safety and security while on assignment, to assist you to minimise the impact of incidents and to respond appropriately should an incident occur.

## 6.6 Insurance

### Insurance coverage provided by the program

Not applicable for remote volunteering.

### Professional indemnity insurance

Professional indemnity insurance is required for all volunteers who are acting as a medical, allied health or legal professional whilst on assignment. On these assignments, professional indemnity insurance must be provided by the partner organisation, Australian organisation (if applicable) or self-arranged by the volunteer as part of ongoing professional obligations.

For all other assignments, professional indemnity insurance is not automatically provided for Australian volunteers. You should consult your partner organisation about the need for professional indemnity insurance for your role prior to your departure. Where required and/or if you consider it essential for you to hold this insurance, you are advised to please discuss this with the Volunteer Services Manager in Melbourne prior to your departure.



Indigenous Australian volunteers on assignment in South Africa, 2018. Consent obtained.

## 7. MEDIA AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

## 7.1 Sharing your story

Sharing your experiences, the work of your partner organisation and the contribution international volunteering makes to sustainable development is an important part of your volunteer assignment. It helps increase awareness of and broader participation in the Australian Volunteers Program.

Please refer to the Volunteer Media Guide in your online resources for further information about media activity, social media and approvals. Contact your local country office staff or the Public Diplomacy Team on [media@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:media@australianvolunteers.com)

If you are asked to participate in a public diplomacy activity that makes you uncomfortable, or you feel is culturally inappropriate, please speak to either the Public Diplomacy Team, your country office staff or the Indigenous Programs Coordinator.

### How to speak about your volunteer role

When talking about your participation in the program, please refer to yourself as 'an Australian volunteer on an Australian Volunteers Program assignment'. Always acknowledge that the Australian Volunteers Program is an Australian Government initiative.



Indigenous Australian volunteer Naomi Fei, maintaining a kale farm in Johannesburg, South Africa. Consent obtained. Photo: Alice Tamang

## 7.2 Public comments

Volunteers are actively encouraged to share their stories by participating in media, publicity, social media and community engagement activities. Public comments should focus on your volunteer activities and experience. These activities may be generated by DFAT, the program, requests from media outlets, or volunteers may identify opportunities themselves. The program will provide advice to volunteers participating in publicity activities to help them share their experiences and promote the work of their partner organisations.

While you do not officially represent the program or the Australian Government, your comments or behaviour will reflect on these entities, and on Australia more broadly. Do not comment on sensitive local or global issues, local or Australian politics, Australia's aid program, emergency situations or other sensitive issues, even if asked. You must not speak on behalf of the Australian Government or comment on Australian Government policy.

You must inform your partner organisation and your country office before engaging in media activities, including submitting articles for publication or participating in interviews, so the necessary approvals can be gained. Allow a minimum of three working days for approval to participate in a media interview and five working days for approval of an article. Program staff will liaise with DFAT for approval and will inform you of the outcome as soon as received from DFAT. Media engagement might be prohibited in the case of politically sensitive issues or context, security risks or other extenuating factors.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteer, Shirika Toby, building sustainable vegetable gardens as part of her assignment. Consent obtained. Photo: Sabrina Chielens.

## 7.3 Personal websites and blogs

You may maintain personal websites, social media and blogs to share your experiences while on assignment; however, the content of these sites should in no way bring the program, your partner organisation, the governments of Australia or your host country, the Australian Volunteers Program or AVI into disrepute.

## 7.4 Images of children

There are strict guidelines around the use of children's images. The Australian Volunteers Program bases image gathering and publishing processes on ethical standards: assessment of risk to the child (with extra care taken for especially vulnerable children); child safety; respect of the child's rights, integrity and dignity; obtaining and documenting informed consent from the child's parent/caregiver and, if possible, the child themselves.

The program prioritises the best interests and protection of children over the opportunity for advocacy and promotion.

When photographing or filming a child, or using children's images, you must:

- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and/or parent or guardian of the child before photographing, recording or filming any image of a child
- Provide an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used to the child and their parent or guardian
- Not offer or give remuneration or in-kind gifts for taking a photograph or film
- Ensure photographs and videos present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner
- Ensure that children are adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- Ensure file labels, metadata or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form. This includes not providing any information that could be used to locate the child, not including any geocoding or other GPS references, and never using children's names as captions.

For more information, refer to the Australian Volunteer Code of Conduct, Child Protection Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

## 8. COMPLETING YOUR ASSIGNMENT

## 8.1 End of assignment

### Completing your end of assignment evaluation

Your End of Assignment evaluation is made available at 75% of assignment completion, and can be accessed via your portal. You are encouraged to complete this after your final submission of work. Guidance on how to complete your MEL requirements will be available in the Knowledge Base of your portal.

### Exit interviews

Your exit interview will be arranged and conducted by your Country Office. This will be over telephone or online.

## 8.2 Applying for another assignment

Remote volunteering assignments are short-term in nature: from four to 12 weeks. As such, partner organisations and volunteers should aim to develop remote volunteer assignments with achievable objectives within the timeframe specified.

Breaches of Code of Conduct in previous assignments are recorded and taken into consideration when returned volunteers apply for another assignment.

## 8.3 Returned volunteer resources

End of assignment resources will be available through your portal's Knowledge Base. These are designed to help you nurture your relationship with your partner organisation, as well as identify ways to utilise your volunteer experience for future career and development opportunities.

### Access to counselling services after assignment ends

The program can offer access to Response Psychological Services on request for support regarding incidents occurring in relation to your remote volunteering assignment.

### Statement of service

The program will provide you with an electronic Statement of Service after you complete your assignment and associated MEL activities. This will be made available through your portal.

The Statement of Service confirms details of the partner organisation, position held and assignment length. We cannot provide personal references or act as a referee over the phone. You may wish to ask a colleague at your partner organisation for assistance with being a referee, but this is at the discretion of the partner organisation.

## Contact details and staying connected

Upon completing your assignment, it is important that you provide up-to-date contact details to ensure you stay connected. There are several returned volunteer events each year across Australia which are an excellent way to share your experience.

Please email your post assignment contact details to your country office or to the Returned Volunteer team in Melbourne at [rvsupport@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:rvsupport@australianvolunteers.com)

## 8.4 Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN)

The Returned Australian Volunteer Network (RAVN) enables returned volunteers from all Australian Government-funded overseas volunteer programs to connect with each other and continue to tell stories and share ideas and resources, long after completing an assignment. This network is applicable for remote volunteers as well as volunteers who volunteered in-country.

The RAVN e-newsletter and RAVN networking events, held in every capital city and some regional centres each year, enable returned volunteers to stay engaged with the program and each other.

The RAVN LinkedIn group and state Facebook groups are great ways to stay connected and find out about returned volunteer events and opportunities. The LinkedIn group is for returned Australian volunteers to post interesting articles, job vacancies, and stay informed about local, state and national RAVN events coming up. Returned volunteers are also welcome to post their own returned volunteer events.

The program also has an Indigenous RAVN group, a place for our mob who have volunteered to connect, learn, share and support each other. Whether you volunteered through CWIE, the broader program, or remote volunteering this is a space for you. Join in, say hello, tell us what you have been up to, share some news or ask a question.

Find RAVN at: [www.australianvolunteers.com/ravn](http://www.australianvolunteers.com/ravn)

Right: Adnyamathanha man, Cinton Wilson - returned volunteer and member of the Indigenous Volunteer Support and Advisory Panel. Consent obtained. Photo: Eco Children.



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Updates: The information in this guide is correct at the time of printing and is subject to change without prior notice.

For more information visit [www.australianvolunteers.com/indigenous-pathways](http://www.australianvolunteers.com/indigenous-pathways)

## Indigenous Pathways Vision and Values

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture are celebrated as an integral part of the Australian Volunteers Program through inclusive, equitable, flexible and strength-based approaches.



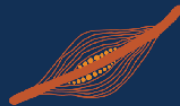
### INCLUSIVE

Ensuring that the program is culturally aware, recognises the importance of community and family and appreciates the intersectionality that shapes contemporary Indigenous identities.



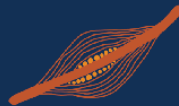
### EQUITABLE

Engaging the Indigenous community in a meaningful way and encouraging and supporting Indigenous volunteers with adequate support appropriate to their individual, social and cultural needs.



### FLEXIBLE

Providing adaptable and reflexive approaches that meet the aspirations of Indigenous volunteers, builds skills and experience in a variety of fields and meets the needs of communities in Australia and overseas.



### STRENGTH-BASED

Enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to draw on their unique skills, expertise and experience and benefit from the people-to-people exchange of these skills with the global community.