

VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT

JULY – DECEMBER 2020

Prepared by the Volunteer Engagement Team – March, 2021



Melbourne, Australia. Straight Talk Database Support Volunteers Amelia (right) and Phoebe (second from left), CareerTrackers intern Sophie (second from right), and Oxfam Australia's Straight Talk Program Coordinator Worrin Williams (left) outside Oxfam Australia's Melbourne office. Photo: Megan Cassar/Oxfam Australia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Key findings.....	3
Volunteer Impact at Oxfam Australia	4
Volunteer hours.....	5
Volunteer feedback.....	5
Feedback by Unit/Team	6
Positions held by Volunteers	6
Intern Profile: Sophie Gardner CareerTrackers Intern – First Peoples Program.....	7
Non-financial impacts	8
Financial impacts.....	8
Impact of Volunteerism.....	8
Recommendations	8
Final Notes	10

Introduction

This report measures the impact of volunteer, intern and secondee contributions. For the purpose of this report, all people who have made a time contribution to Oxfam Australia will be referred to collectively as volunteers.

This report specifically analyses on the contributions made by Oxfam Australia's volunteer community in the period of 1 July to 31 December 2020. This is the first Volunteer Impact Report to measure contributions over a half-year period as opposed to a quarterly period.

This report will determine and demonstrate the continual and substantial impact that volunteers contribute to Oxfam Australia, despite the continuation of COVID-19 and its associated consequences. This report will:



Analyse the achievements of the VET and the volunteer program generally;



Provide a profile of an intern within the First Peoples Program;



Provide a literature review on volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic and volunteering during organisational change;



Demonstrate the financial and non-financial impacts of volunteerism; and



List a set of recommendations which have been developed to ensure volunteer engagement within Oxfam Australia remains impactful and substantial.

Key findings



99.1% of volunteers rated their experience as either 'very good' or 'good' which remains a consistent and positive result, with the majority of 'very good' ratings being from the Fair Trade Shop WA and the Chief Executive Office.



Between July and December 2020, the number of volunteers contributing hours increased from 17 on 1 July to 29 on 31 December (excluding Adelaide Bookshop Volunteers).



The dollar-value of volunteering for this reporting period increased significantly, (even when accounting for an extended reporting period) from \$71,024 to \$405,626.



The average percentage of volunteers contributing hours remotely between July and December 2020 was 54 percent.



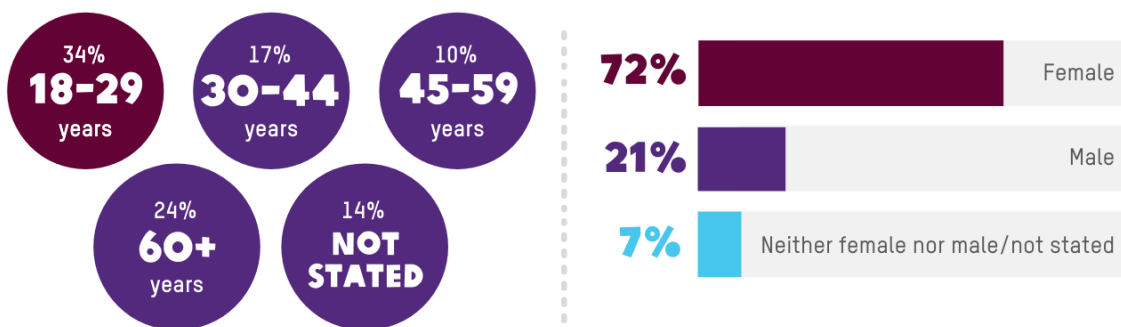
An eight-fold increase in hours recorded by volunteers at the Adelaide Bookshop and the Fair Trade Shop WA, with both shops returning to in-person volunteering shortly before the commencement of the reporting period.



The full-time equivalent (FTE) value of volunteering programs at Oxfam Australia for this period was 5.9 FTE.

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

July – December 2020



Most volunteers are 18-29 years old

Most volunteers identify as female



17
volunteer roles



140
volunteers



9,846
volunteer hours



54% of volunteers, on average, volunteered remotely between July and December

1
volunteer hour

Can enable Oxfam to paint a village mural with messages about ending violence for women and girls in Bangladesh.

10
volunteer hours

Can enable Oxfam to pay to train a local person for three days in a village in Kenya to be a water technician who will maintain and manage the solar-powered water system.

12
volunteer shifts

Can enable Oxfam to provide training for 20 women to learn about disaster risk-reduction strategies that will help them adapt their lives to cope with the dramatically changing climate in Pakistan.

Volunteer hours

9,846 hours were contributed by volunteers between 1 July – 31 December 2020. This includes 2,306 hours recorded in Better Impact together with an estimated 7,540 hours contributed by volunteers in the Adelaide Bookshop.

Taking into consideration the difference of the reporting period from the last report (quarterly) to this report (half-yearly), the key changes to note were:

- A significant increase, of approximately 76%, in the number of hours being worked per quarter in the Fair Trade Shop (WA). Again, this was due to the closure as a result of COVID-19;
- Some increases in the hours worked per quarter in the Chief Executive Office, Fundraising & Resource Growth and Programs Development & Effectiveness, likely primarily related to internships and secondments from other organisations; and
- A notable decrease in hours worked in Supporter Services (from 197 hours in the prior quarter to only 83 hours in the entire six months of this report).

Unit/Team	Hours	Volunteers
Capability & Impact	172	2
Chief Executive Office	687	5
Fair Trade Shop WA	1,049	17
Fundraising & Resource Growth	239	2
Programs Development & Effectiveness	57	1
QLD – Brisbane Office	19	1
Supporter Services Team	83	3
Sub Total	2,306	29
Oxfam Bookshop – Adelaide (SA)	7,540	111
Grand Total	9,846	140

Table 1: Volunteer hours by Unit/Team 1 July 2020 – 31 December 2020

- Some volunteers were engaged by more than one unit/team
- Hours recorded by the Adelaide Oxfam bookshop are an estimate only

Volunteer feedback

Volunteers are afforded an opportunity to provide feedback each time they record hours through Better Impact. A rating is recorded on a five-point scale from 'Very Good' to 'Very Poor'. Volunteers can also provide more detailed written feedback if they choose. This feedback is critical to understanding volunteers' satisfaction and experience with each shift.

Feedback rating	Number	Percentage
Very Good	126	36%
Good	221	63%
Average	3	1%
Poor	0	0%
Very Poor	0	0%
TOTAL	350	100%

Figure 2: Feedback received for all volunteer shifts between 1 July – 31 December 2020. Source: Oxfam Australia

- Ratings are not provided by volunteers in the Oxfam Bookshop in Adelaide

Feedback by Unit/Team

Feedback results are completely satisfactory across Oxfam as a whole. It is a similarly good performance across all individual units and teams. It is notable, in particular, that approximately half of all volunteer shifts in the Chief Executive Office and in the Fair Trade Shop (WA) received ratings of 'Very Good'.

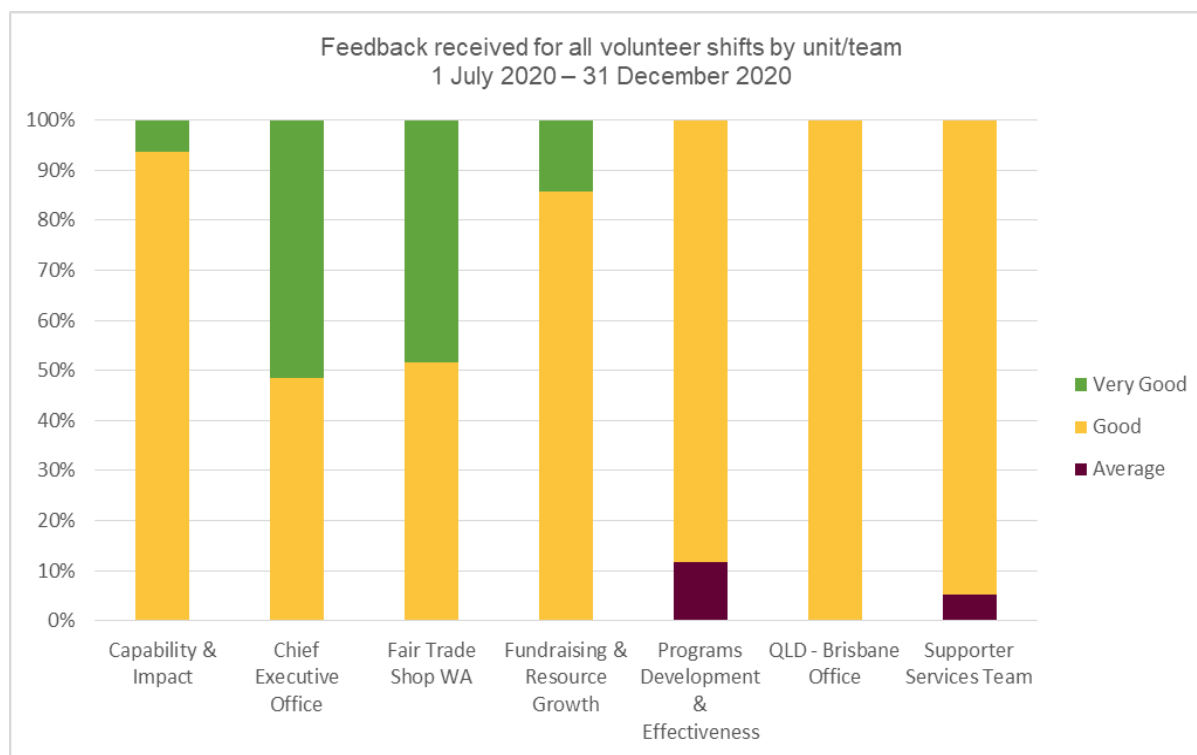


Figure 3: Feedback received for all volunteer shifts by unit/team between 1 July – 31 December 2020.

- Ratings are not provided by volunteers in the Oxfam Bookshop in Adelaide

Positions held by Volunteers

Volunteers at Oxfam Australia for the reporting period completed 17 roles throughout the agency and in Oxfam Australia groups.

Key Supporter Research Assistant (QLD)	Melbourne Law School Internship (VIC)
Internship: Content Opportunities and Channel Strategy (VIC)	Corrs Chambers Westgarth Paralegal & Project Secondment (VIC)
Volunteer Content Coordinator (VIC)	Content Producer Volunteer (VIC)
Social Engagement Volunteer (VIC)	VET Administration Volunteer (VIC)
Supporter Services Volunteer (VIC)	Fair Trade Shop Volunteer (WA)
Community Liaison Volunteer Coordinator (WA)	Internship: Review of Disability Inclusion Quality across the ANCP portfolio
Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide Volunteer: Shop Volunteer, Committee, Workroom, Collection & Recycling and Social Media (SA)	

Intern Profile: Sophie Gardner CareerTrackers Intern – First Peoples Program



Melbourne, Australia: CareerTrackers intern Sophie Gardner (right) pictured with Straight Talk volunteers Phoebe (left) and Amelia (centre) at the Oxfam Australia Melbourne office. Photo: Megan Cassar/Oxfam Australia.

Sophie Gardner is completing an internship through the CareerTrackers program in the First Peoples Program at Oxfam Australia. Sophie spoke of her background and why she chose to complete an internship at Oxfam Australia; 'I am from country Victoria, I'm a Yorta Yorta woman and grew up along the Murray River. I'm studying a Bachelor of International Studies at RMIT. I chose this degree because it covers all my interests, such as languages, international relations and intercultural communication. I chose to complete an internship at Oxfam Australia because I'm very interested in all the work Oxfam does. A job interest of mine is helping people overcome inequalities and an internship at Oxfam allowed me to experience what a job in this field would be like. The work I've done at Oxfam also compliments my degree really well and I feel what I have learned during my internship will help me throughout the rest of my degree'.

Sophie commenced her internship in November 2020 which involves working on two projects. The first involves a scoping paper for taking the Straight Talk program international. Sophie conducted research into other programs which focus on gender justice and encourage women's political participation. Sophie also works alongside volunteers in the First Peoples Program, entering past Straight Talk alumni records in Oxfam's customer relationship management database. When not tackling poverty with Oxfam, Sophie likes to go hiking with her dog or to read a good book, 'I'm a very creative and active person, so I love to be out and about doing fun activities with friends and family'. Sophie describes her best experience as an intern as 'meeting and working with many influential, inspiring people. It has been great working alongside and learning from these people. I also have been able to put some of what I have learnt so far in my degree to use and start to develop my professional skills. It has been great to see the work Oxfam does and discover many great work and programs, such as the Straight Talk program'. Sophie concludes by reflecting on her experience at Oxfam, 'My time at Oxfam has been amazing and everything I hoped for. It has long been a goal of mine to work for an organisation like Oxfam, a goal I was never sure I would achieve. Now I have achieved this goal and I loved every bit of it, I hope to do more work like this in the future. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work at Oxfam'.

Non-financial impacts

Dollar handles

The VET analyse and measure volunteer impact utilising non-financial impacts such as dollar handles. Dollar handles are commonly utilised by non-profit organisations and provide stakeholders, supporters and the wider public with a greater understanding of how monetary contributions are utilised in the programs and work of an organisation. The VET matches dollar handles to the value of volunteer hours to illustrate how contributions made by volunteers can contribute to making a long-lasting and tangible impact on Oxfam's work around the world.

Financial impacts

The financial impact of volunteering is measured through a calculation of volunteer hours against an hourly remunerated rate. This figure is also used to produce a value which outlines the full-time equivalent of all volunteer contributions.

Number of volunteer roles	FTE (full-time equivalent)	Estimated dollar value (AUD)
140	11.8 (bi-annually) / 5.9 (annually)	\$405,626

- Based on Salary Category 5A (April 2020).
- Data is not inclusive of data where hours have not been logged/lodged by volunteers and so the true figure may be higher

Impact of Volunteerism

COVID-19 (trends and consequences) impact on volunteering

We have seen significant effects to volunteers due to COVID-19 and conducted a literature review to understand the broader impact to volunteering and associated trends and consequences in volunteerism during a pandemic and post-lockdown.

This literature review has helped to inform the VET's future directions and improving the volunteer program at Oxfam Australia. You can read the [literature review here](#).

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been put forward in order to foster further levels of engagement, fulfilment and retention of volunteers.

Evaluating progress in relation to previous recommendations is a key way the VET remains accountable and enables the continuing advancement of volunteerism within the agency. Detailed information on the VET's progress to date can be [found here](#).

Recommendation:	Timeline:
<p>1. Greater emphasis should be placed on internal advocacy within the agency in relation to volunteer and intern engagement with the aim to increase volunteer numbers and awareness of volunteerism at Oxfam.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer and intern numbers have remained low across Oxfam Australia's offices. • There is evidence that many staff across the agency have limited understanding of the benefits of volunteer engagement. <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VET will present at a 'Lunch & Learn' session which will promote volunteerism within the agency. • Development of a range of visual communications which promote volunteerism within the agency to be distributed on Workplace and via communications, 'e.g. a poster with the theme 'just one shift can make a difference'. • The team to work with volunteer managers to gather and identify shareable testimonies from volunteer managers to address any perceived barriers to engaging a volunteer with prospective managers. 	<p>Initiatives and deliverables should be implemented three – six months following the publishing of this report.</p>
<p>2. Review current reporting mechanisms to ensure accurate and relevant data is being analysed in a timely manner.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <p>Current mechanisms do not always accurately capture all relevant data. A review will assist in ensuring the VET's reporting mechanisms are precise.</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET to review current reporting mechanisms and amend as required. • Research to be conducted on effective reporting mechanisms at other organisations. • The VET to brainstorm ways to encourage more timely logging of hours and feedback by volunteers. 	<p>A review should be conducted within two – three months of the publishing of this report with implementation of deliverables by June, 2021.</p>
<p>3. Review methods of communication to active volunteers, including a review to how and where information is disseminated.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <p>New ways to communicate with volunteers was introduced in April 2020. This review will look at how effective current communication methods are and consider how to include information relating to team function, e-learning and other opportunities.</p> <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with the Social Engagement Volunteer, document the effectiveness of current communication methods. • Develop materials and communications which disseminate information relating to team function, and e-learning opportunities • Actions relating to communications should be included in the Volunteer Strategic Plan. 	<p>Review to be commenced in June 2021.</p>
<p>4. Work should be done to enable and foster a greater sense of connection, camaraderie and social connection for volunteers and interns.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p>	<p>Initial reviews and discussions to be held by May in the lead up to National Volunteer Week.</p>

Due to COVID-19, organisational restructure and geographical constraints, creating a sense of community in the national program has proven difficult. Work should be done to foster a greater sense of connection between volunteers, VET and the organisation.

Deliverables

- The VET should review effective processes to encourage the establishing of a community of volunteers based on initiatives of other similar organisations, including research on effective social engagement.
- The VET team to discuss possibility of establishing a quarterly virtual event to allow the opportunity for volunteers and interns to meet, learn and network. These meetings will ideally consist of part information, part social component.

Final Notes

More information about volunteer engagement at Oxfam Australia including how to engage a volunteer or intern can be found on the Volunteer Engagement Team's Compass page.

<https://compass.oxfam.org/communities/oxfam-australia/groups/people-and-culture/wiki/volunteers-and-interns/resources-managers>

Or email volunteerengagement@oxfam.org.au.