

SEEK Volunteer Report 2023

Introduction

SEEK Volunteer is one of Australia's largest free online sources of volunteer opportunities and is the preferred destination for those who want to volunteer.

The following report outlines the trends in volunteering as recorded by SEEK Volunteer for the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023.

The opportunities

1. There were 25,700 volunteer opportunities advertised on SEEK Volunteer between July 2022 and June 2023.
 2. Opportunities increased by 7% year-on-year (y/y), after a 3% increase the year prior, highlighting the rising demand for volunteers by community organisations.
 3. The most common causes requiring volunteers are Community Services, Seniors & Aged Care and Education & Training followed by Health, Young People and Disability Services.
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Applications and trends

1. Applications decreased by 3% y/y following a 25% decrease the year prior.
 2. Website visitation rose 8% y/y demonstrating an increase in interest in volunteering.
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Demand and supply

1. 75% of opportunities require a minimum six-month time commitment.
2. Volunteers are more than twice as likely to apply for one-off volunteering opportunities in lieu of longer-term commitments.
3. Only 12% of opportunities could be undertaken remotely, down 4% y/y.

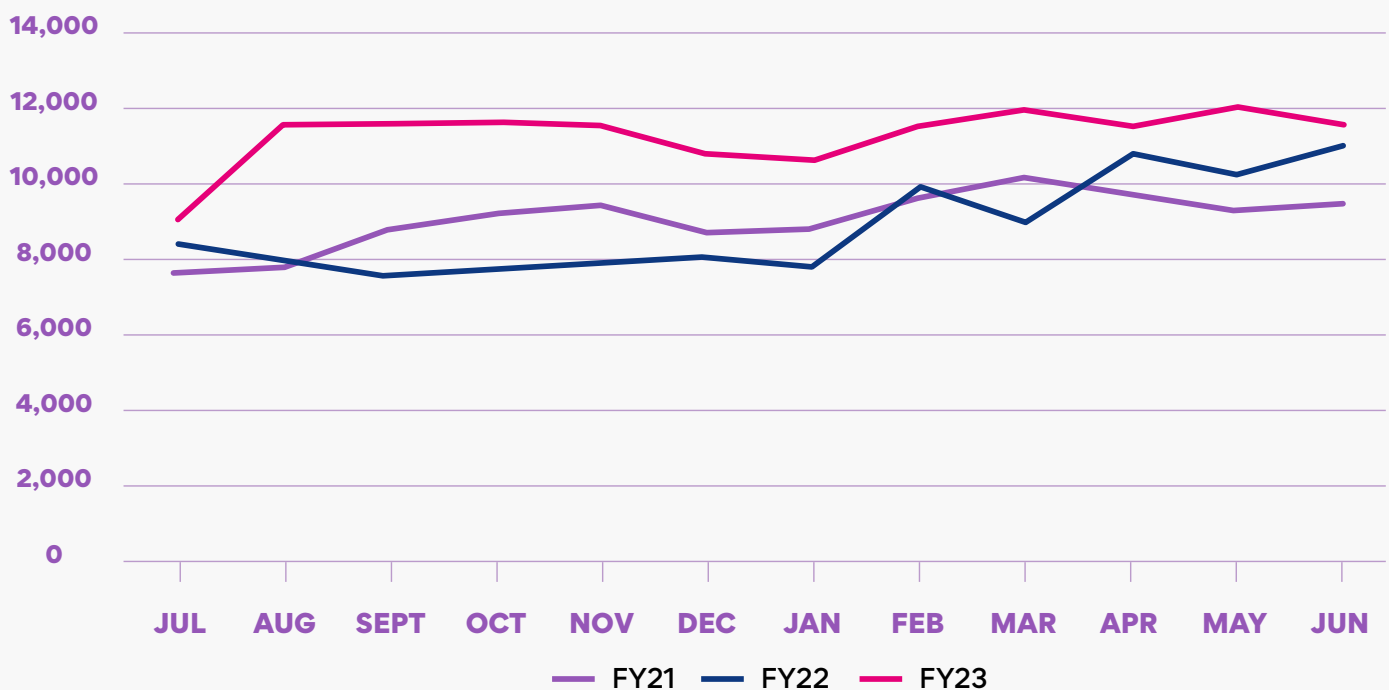
The opportunities

Australians had access to 25,700 volunteer opportunities from 4,600 organisations in the last 12 months.

This is a 7% increase in the volume of opportunities y/y on top of a 3% increase the year prior, and the number of organisations in need has also grown 5% y/y.

Other than the expected decline over the Christmas period, the volume of opportunities continued to grow nationally, reaching three-year highs in August, March and May.

Figure 1. Volunteer opportunities over time including i) 2021 ii) 2022 and iii) 2023



Source: SEEK Volunteer.

Only two states recorded a decrease in opportunities y/y, namely South Australia which experienced a 2% decline after growth of 34% the previous year, followed by the Northern Territory where opportunities declined by 19%.

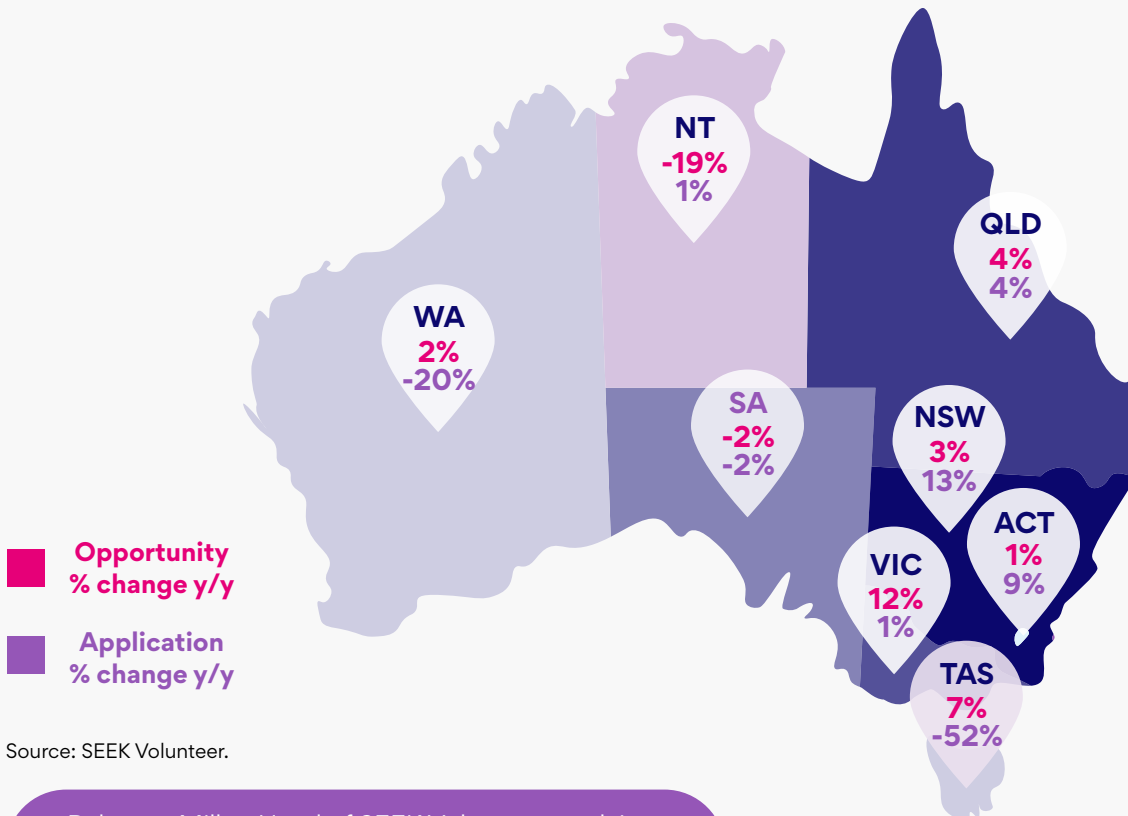
Applications and trends

Nationally, volunteer applications declined 3% y/y on top of a 25% y/y decline in the 12 months prior.

Following a year when application volumes fell in every state and territory, five states and territories saw an increase in applications y/y. Although Western Australia and Tasmania saw an increase in the volume of opportunities, applications decreased y/y.

Visits to **volunteer.com.au** increased by 8% indicating that there is still interest in volunteering but this interest is not being converted into applications.

Figure 2. Growth/decline in opportunities and applications by state y/y



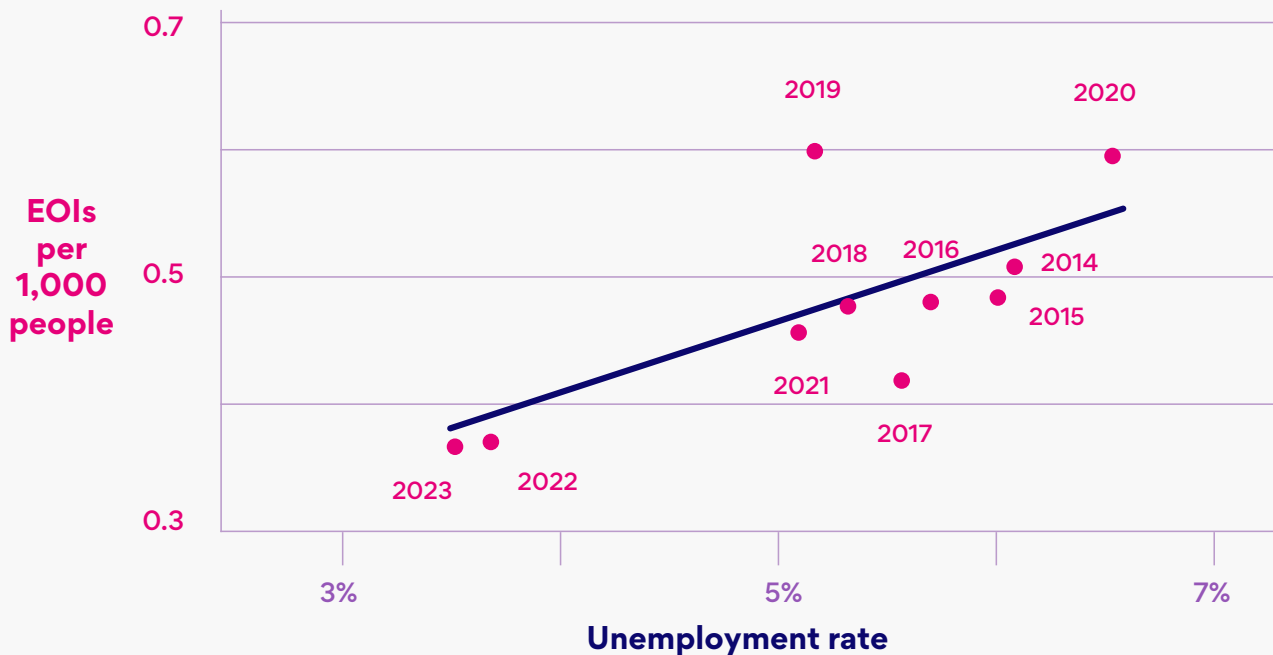
Rebecca Miller, Head of SEEK Volunteer, explains:

“Over the past year, opportunities and applications have grown in most states and territories, which is a pleasing trend given how tough the past few years have been.”

“Applications in New South Wales, which has one of the largest proportions of opportunities, saw a significant rise over the past year, whereas application volumes halved in Tasmania year-on-year.”

“While the level and type of opportunities can vary depending on location and population demographics, there is a collective and increasing need for people to lend a hand.”

Figure 3. SEEK Volunteer applications per 1,000 people vs unemployment rate



Note: Population figures are civilian adults aged 15+. Source ABS Labour Force & SEEK Volunteer.

The external environment naturally impacts the ability and willingness of Australians to volunteer. Over the past year, with unemployment sinking to record-low levels, more Australians have been in work than ever before. With work and family commitments the biggest barrier to volunteering¹, low application volumes can therefore be directly correlated to low unemployment rates.

1. Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022 research pg. 36.

Rebecca Miller explains:

“Australians are inherently charitable by nature, but our rates of volunteering continued to drop last year, after a drastic decrease the year before, and are now 22% lower compared to 2019.

“As one of the largest resources for volunteering opportunities in Australia, SEEK Volunteer web traffic and data shows that Australians are still interested in supporting community organisations and not-for-profits, with visitation 13% higher than in 2019, but the interest stalls at the window-shopping phase.

“While time to volunteer can often be overtaken by more pressing practical needs of work and home commitments, the benefits of volunteering shouldn’t be forgotten.

“Volunteering is an easy and accessible way to try your hand at a new skill. There are obvious learning benefits and evidenced by our ‘Putting volunteering to work’ research volunteering also looks great on any resume as it demonstrates commitment as well as personal achievement.

“One major benefit of volunteering is that in allowing you to step away from your day-to-day, and evidence insights from Volunteering Australia highlight the numerous ways volunteering can improve your mental health, while having the added benefit of helping others.”

Demand and supply

Volunteer retention is important to many organisations in the same way that staff retention is in business.

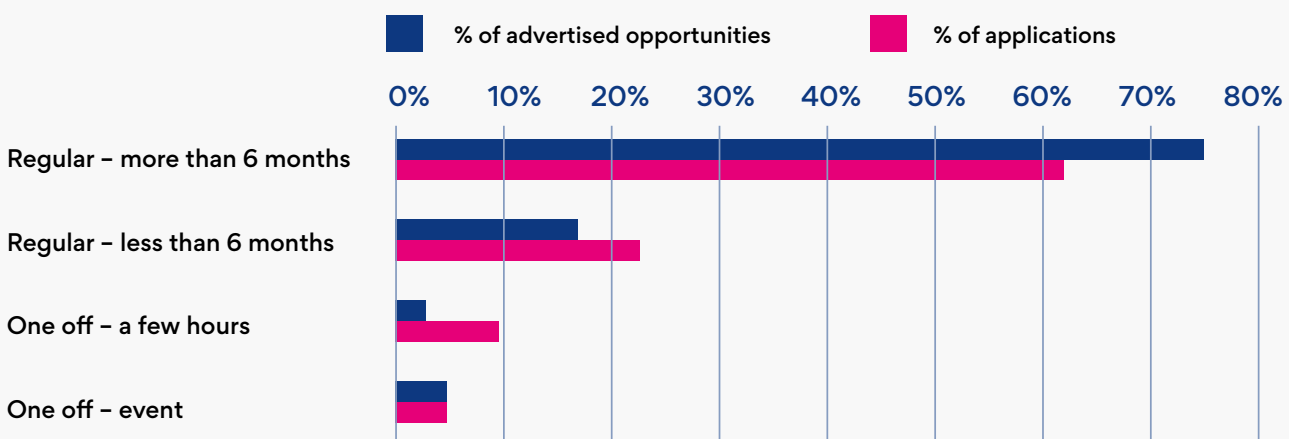
Over the past year 74% of opportunities required volunteers to sign up for a minimum commitment of six months.

Although this has decreased from 78% the previous year, this supply of long-term commitment opportunities is still incompatible with the short term, more flexible commitment people are looking to make. Volunteers are more than twice as likely to apply for one-off volunteering opportunities in lieu of longer-term commitments.

Organisations asking for a minimum six-month commitment attract less than one application per opportunity. Opportunities requiring just a few hours commitment from a volunteer receive an average of over three applications per opportunity.

12% of opportunities posted within the past 12 months could be undertaken virtually or remotely, which is down from 16% last year.

Figure 4. Applications by volunteer time commitment



Source: SEEK Volunteer.

Rebecca Miller continues:

“Just like in business, the time and monetary cost to train new volunteers can be significant, but it is more stark for not-for-profits and community organisations who need to be extremely cost-conscious to remain viable.

“But in the current climate, with Australians suffering under increasing financial stress, and more people in work than ever before, time is at a premium, and volunteering work is naturally being deprioritised for paid work.

“For organisations looking to attract new volunteers, now is the time to consider changing your model. Open up opportunities for one-off sessions and encourage new people to test their volunteering legs with you before asking them to commit.

“We are seeing it with organisations that offer easy to navigate, one-off, short shift opportunities. They are thriving, and are having volunteers come back time and time again.

“It comes down to providing the opportunities in a manageable and accessible format for new and returning volunteers alike.”

About SEEK Volunteer and the FY23 Report

For 23 years, SEEK has invested in SEEK Volunteer leveraging the deep expertise and technology solutions to develop an online marketplace for volunteering in Australia. SEEK Volunteer is free for not-for-profits and social enterprises certified by Social Traders.

Volunteer opportunities are sourced from organisations who register with SEEK Volunteer directly or from Volunteer Resources Centre's who use the VIKTOR system own by Volunteer WA to post their opportunities.

With significant market share comes the ability to provide insights into volunteer trends.

Notes to editors

- The term 'opportunities' refers to advertisements for volunteers as published on the SEEK Volunteer website.
- The term 'applications' refers to the total number of applications received in any given period.
- The term 'organisations' refers to the groups who utilise volunteers. This may mean charities, not-for-profits or other community groups.