

Behind every volunteer.....

.....are countless lives touched in ways we don't always see.

In recognition of National Volunteer Week 2026, MyPulse is sharing the stories of three volunteers currently serving Ambulance Tasmania, State Emergency Service, and Tasmania Fire Service. Responding to a series of questions, their reflections provide insights into their reasons for getting involved in volunteering, what keeps them coming back, the people who support them, and the difference they make.

To every volunteer currently supporting Tasmanian communities,
thank you for the difference you make, every day.



Alan Baker

State Emergency Service (SES)

1 Why do you volunteer?

I started volunteering when I was 13, when my Scoutmaster took me along to the local fire brigade. That experience stuck with me, and since then I've been actively involved – first with the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS), and later with the State Emergency Service (SES). I volunteer because it feels like the right thing to do – a way of giving back to the community. I strongly believe that if everyone did something for someone else, the world would be a much better place. I also find reassurance knowing that when I travel, there are volunteers in other communities doing the same things I do at home. That shared commitment is something I value deeply.

2 Volunteering often sits alongside work, family and everyday life. How do you make it work?

Volunteering has to fit around work and family life. I travel a lot for work, but working from home gives me some flexibility, and my employer is very supportive. When my pager goes off, I have a few seconds to check what I have planned and decide whether I can respond, based on urgency and crew availability. My family is incredibly supportive. They enjoy the events we run each year, and while volunteering sometimes interrupts dinners and birthdays, they understand why I do it. Both of my kids help out at working bees and are keen to volunteer themselves when they turn 18.

3 How do you take care of yourself while supporting others?

Volunteering is actually an outlet for me – it's very different from my day job and family life, and in many ways it's something I do for self care. The social network through SES has been incredible, and spending time with the team is the best part. Some jobs can take a toll, but having the team to talk things through makes a huge difference. I'm also a strong supporter of the wellbeing services available to us – it's made clear that help is there if needed, and that it's okay not to be okay.

4 Have you learned anything about your own health and wellbeing through volunteering?

I've learned how important connection and mateship are to my wellbeing. During some time away from SES, I really missed the sense of connection, shared experiences and belonging. That period reinforced just how much volunteering contributes to my mental wellbeing – not just through helping others, but through being part of a supportive and connected team.

5 How has MyPulse helped support you and the work you do as a volunteer?

After the State Conference, I participated in the MyPulse screen and encouraged my team to do the same. The outcome has been ongoing wellbeing sessions focused on setting goals, building self care habits and accountability. The regular check ins have been invaluable. They've helped me become more self aware and make meaningful improvements. One goal was passing an exceptionally difficult professional exam, which I achieved by breaking it into manageable steps. The sessions also led me to seek an assessment and receive an ADHD diagnosis, helping me better understand my strengths and limitations. I also finally achieved my truck licence. Overall, these sessions have helped me become a better, more understanding person across all areas of my life.

6 What advice would you give others about balancing volunteering with self-care?

It's okay not to be okay – there are always people you can talk to. Don't bottle things up. Within SES, members regularly check in on one another. Set goals that work for you, and remember volunteering doesn't have to be all or nothing. If it's having too much impact, it's okay to step back or take a break – it should add to your life, not make it harder. I also encourage people to complete the MyPulse screen as a way to understand where you're at and track progress over time. A problem shared really is a problem halved.



Georgina Laing

Tasmania Fire Service (TFS)

1 Why do you volunteer?

Volunteering has always been part of my family life. My parents were keen yachties and I volunteered at the Sydney Hobart for many years from when I can first remember. It gives me a great feeling of being part of a team of talented individuals that share the same ideals.

2 Volunteering often sits alongside work, family and everyday life. How do you make it work?

I have a knack of sneaking off to a call just before family events - one particular one was a Christmas morning when I was hosting 12 for lunch! I'm lucky that everyone just chips in and helps out to allow me to volunteer. I have an amazing family.

3 How do you take care of yourself while supporting others?

I take time to do the things I enjoy, like walking along the beach, riding my bicycle and motor bike. I find that when I'm riding, I am not thinking and processing everything and I can just ride and enjoy the time.

4 Have you learned anything about your own health and wellbeing through volunteering?

It's really important to chat and make sure you get out with family and friends. I've learnt to listen to my fellow volunteers and to talk about things rather than just keep it bottled up. It's easy to not talk about stuff. But I have a wellbeing 'coach' (that's what I call them) who helps me process things and keep on track with exercise and looking after myself.

5 How has MyPulse helped support you and the work you do as a volunteer?

MyPulse helped me to acknowledge what was happening and why. It has given me the opportunity to open up and talk about things. Jobs, relationships and how to get fitter and like myself.

6 What advice would you give others about balancing volunteering with self-care?

I'm certainly not an expert in this area - I haven't been good at balancing this a lot of the time. But I am learning tools that help me with my day-to-day interactions and also in making decisions so that I can continue to be the best volunteer I want to be.



Dickie Power

Ambulance Tasmania

1 Why do you volunteer?

I volunteer as an Ambulance Officer and as a Bus Driver for a care home to provide the diversity of colour and life experience that I could never find while working as an Engineer or at home on my hobby farm.

2 Volunteering often sits alongside work, family and everyday life. How do you make it work?

My family occasionally express concern that I volunteer too often or that I am out too late. Also, my dog sulks when I put on the blue ambulance uniform, she will not look me in the eye on those mornings. I feel bad, no walks around the farm today! I try to make up for those days by making every other day special by doing what we all enjoy.

3 How do you take care of yourself while supporting others?

Stories you hear from residents or patients make my heart sing, make me cry and make me laugh...all at the same time. Listening while helping feeds my soul.

4 Have you learned anything about your own health and wellbeing through volunteering?

My working life was spent as an engineer in a very privileged environment full of self-interested, educated sober people. I seriously "need to get out more." My volunteering has helped but I am still naive. I remain a "glass half full" person and always will be.

5 How has MyPulse helped support you and the work you do as a volunteer?

MyPulse is a resource I can call on if I need it, when I need it, without fear or embarrassment. It helps me because I know it's there.

6 What advice would you give others about balancing volunteering with self-care?

I decided many years ago that I was not mentally strong enough to work as a full time Ambulance officer. I need to go home, process and then forget about some jobs. Having time and farm jobs to do is healthy for me. I like to support others to do their thing to stay healthy.

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