



Palliative Care  
New South Wales



Palliative Care  
Volunteering

# Annual Report



2023-24

The Volunteer Support Services Programme is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health

# Another successful year of supporting palliative care volunteering across NSW

As always, the Volunteer Support Services Programme (VSSP) had a busy year supporting volunteers, volunteer managers, and volunteer services. We continue to host the **NSW Network of Managers of Palliative Care Volunteers** running quarterly meetings.

Our **VolunteerHub** website continues to be the repository for all things volunteering. We had over 15,000 page visits and the numbers of subscribers to our monthly eNews bulletins has increased by 17%. We added a new video, “VSSP Program Information” to our suite of resources. This video came out of our online information session for clinicians on 12 October.

We were excited in March when James MacDonald, student intern from Macquarie University joined us ready to engage in research. James worked with us for three months gathering data towards our **“Tracking the post-COVID recovery of palliative care volunteer services in NSW” research report**. To be released in FY25.

Other highlights in this year include:

- **Supporting 38+ services and 1,000+ volunteers across NSW**
- **2023 Volunteer Conference** ‘The Power of Perspective’, Narrabeen (23 – 24 October)
- **11 education and professional development events** delivered for volunteers and managers.
- **National Palliative Care Week 2024** (19–25 May)
- **National Volunteer Week 2024** (20 – 26 May)
- **Securing the management and delivery of the VSSP for a further three years** (2024 – 2027)

*The Volunteer Support Services Programme is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health. We thank them for their ongoing support of this important program.*

# 2023 Volunteer Conference

'The Power of  
Perspective'  
23 – 24 Oct



We were very excited to host yet another successful conference for palliative care volunteers drawing in **143 delegates from all over NSW**. Held at the RSL Lifecare ANZAC Village in Narrabeen, the conference brought delegates together giving them the opportunity to connect with their peers, hear from leaders in their field, and participate in immersive experiences.

The first day offered **four concurrent sessions** including Boundaries for Wellness, How to write a truthful and engaging biography, Understanding Dementia, and Grief & Loss – a Volunteer Perspective.

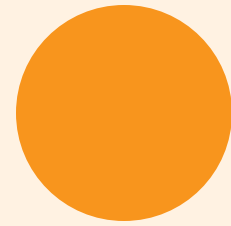
The opening plenary was delivered by **Teresa Plane, NSW Senior Australian of the Year 2023** and a pioneer of palliative care in Australia. Teresa shared insights from her decades of working with the dying in a beautiful and compassionate way. Her reflections on how those dying can be educators for how to live well was incredibly compelling. After 30 minutes, Teresa had gained celebrity status with many people queuing to meet her, express their gratitude and take a photo or two to remember the time they got to meet this extraordinary Australian.

Other sessions covered Voluntary Assisted Dying, Defeating Stress, and the popular interactive break-out experiences – the Tech Space, the Art Space, the Music Space, and Sensory Space. Delegates experienced a variety of practical ways to connect with their clients including hand massages, drawing and visualisation, the Reverie Harp, and the use of virtual reality.

PCNSW with funding support from the NSW Ministry of Health were pleased to offer scholarships to rural and regional volunteers to assist them with the costs of attending the conference. Delegates represented **27 palliative care volunteer services from across 12 LHD's, 2 statewide networks, and 1 PHN.**

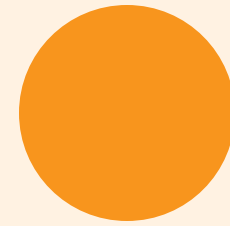
# Other Education & Professional Development

223 Volunteers and Volunteer Managers attended this program of events



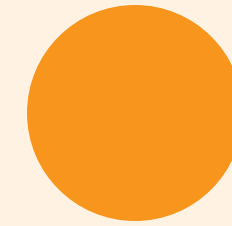
**September 2023**

Voluntary Assisted Dying  
Implementation Information,  
(online) (Vol. Mgrs)



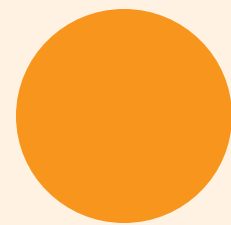
**November 2023**

Palliative Care Biography Training  
(Sydney) (Volunteers)



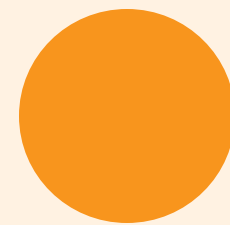
**February 2024**

Mastering De-briefing (Online)  
(Volunteers)



**March 2024**

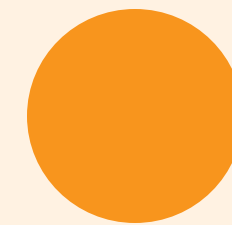
Spirituality & Cultivating and  
Authentic Presence (Maitland)  
(Volunteers)  
Accidental Counsellor (Liverpool)  
(Volunteers)  
Psychosocial Welfare of  
Volunteers (Online) (Vol. Mgrs)



**May 2024**

Reflective Writing Workshop for  
Volunteer Biographers (Sydney)  
(Volunteers)

Facilitating a Reflective Writing  
Workshop (Sydney) (Vol. Mgrs)



**June 2024**

Client Attachment & Maintaining  
Boundaries (Online & Sydney)  
(Vol. Mgrs)

# National Palliative Care Week

19 – 25 May

Palliative Care Volunteering was one of the key messages shared during National Palliative Care Week. There was a **national volunteer ambassador** for the week and a focus on one day of the week on the important role volunteers play.

Kate Bowman, VSSP Manager was invited to be a guest speaker at the **Parkes Palliative Care Expo** where representatives of the local community, legal, health, and social sectors came together to talk about death and dying. Other guest speakers included Dr Louis Christie, Palliative Care Physician, Bernadette Orange, Transitional Nurse Practitioner Lachlan Palliative Care, and Tony Fisher, Coordinator, Parkes Palliative Care Volunteers.

As part of this event the **Parkes Palliative Care Volunteers** were presented a **Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Achievement** as a volunteer team.



# National Volunteer Week

20 – 26 May

Volunteers from four palliative care volunteer services were **recognised for their outstanding achievements during National Volunteer Week**. Kate Bowman, Program Manager and Megan Asbury, Deputy CEO, presented the volunteers with certificates at a brief ceremony held at the Art Gallery of NSW.

Following the ceremony, we attended the Premier's Volunteer Reception held in the Art Gallery's new building. The four volunteers recognised were:

**Karen Jaques, Sydney Local Health District – Concord Hospital**

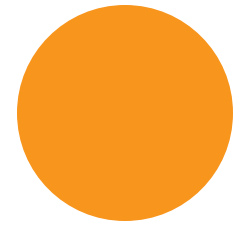
**Karen van der Schaar, HammondCare Health Volunteer Services – Neringah Hospital**

**Joanne Clarke, Sacred Heart Biography Service – St Vincent's Hospital Sydney**

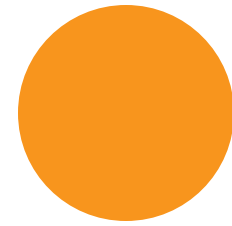
**Paul Hayes, SWSLHD Palliative Care Volunteer Service – Bankstown and Liverpool Hospitals**



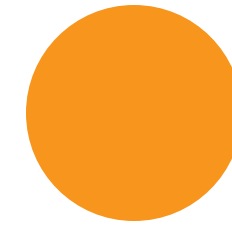
# Sharing Information



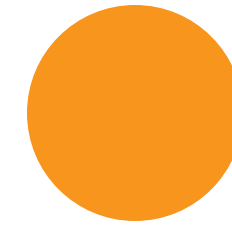
**100 News Stories**  
created and shared



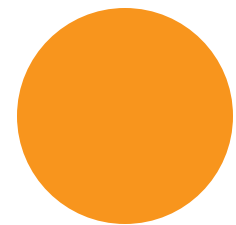
**12 e-Newsletters** sent  
to **900+** recipients (17%  
increase in  
subscribers)



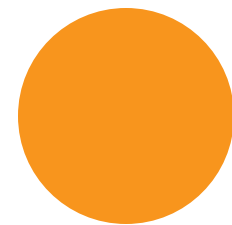
Average Open Rate of  
**49.25%**  
(7.25% higher than the  
average open rate for  
charities and non-  
profits)



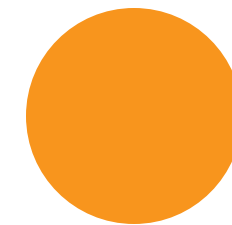
Average Click Rate of  
**20.09%**  
(17.48% higher than the  
average click rate for  
charities and non-profits)



**15,436 page views**  
Volunteerhub.com.au



International **Volunteer  
Managers & Volunteer  
Day** Social Media  
Campaign Reach &  
Impressions  
**2,741**



**National Palliative  
Care Week & Volunteer  
Week** Social Media  
Campaign Reach &  
Impressions  
**3,159**



# Our People

## NSW Network of Managers of Palliative Care Services

- **Carolyn Wilkinson**, Nepean/Hawkesbury Supportive and Palliative Care Volunteer Service, Co-Convener (until December 2023)
- **Janet Pearce**, Broken Hill Specialist Palliative Care Volunteer Service, Co-Convener (until December 2023)
- **Fiona Sivyer**, Southern NSW LHD Project Manager, Co-Convener (Current)
- **Janeen Norris**, Buronga HealthOne Palliative Care Volunteers, Co-Convener (Current)
- All current and active Volunteer Managers who participate in this network.

## PCNSW Staff

- **Kirsty Blades**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Megan Asbury**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- **Kate Bowman**, Volunteer Services Support Program Manager
- **Maria Lopez**, Communications Officer
- **Emma Scott-Stevenson**, Project and Research Coordinator
- **Dr Peta McVey**, Palliative Care Guidance Manager
- **James MacDonald**, VSSP Research Intern





We know that the comfort and companionship volunteers provide is such an important part of supporting a person facing a life-limiting illness. It's a challenging space to work in but volunteers face it with incredible strength and kindness. Thank you to all Volunteers and Volunteer Managers across NSW for being an important part of quality palliative care provision.



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