



Benefits of Skills-based Volunteering

For the organisation:

- ✓ Increased capacity and capability
- ✓ Access to skills not already available
- ✓ Enabled us to employ more staff or take on more volunteers
- ✓ Provided ongoing benefits

HELPING HANDS

WA Fairhaven Family Mediation and Counselling (WAFH) is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to serve the community by providing services to families experiencing challenges following family separation. The organisation offers a holistic approach integrating Family Dispute Resolution (parenting and property agreements) Counselling and Groups Education.

WAFH sought a skilled individual with 'outside the box' thinking and group facilitation skills to facilitate a planning session where the organisation determined realistic goals for an updated strategic plan. WAFH reached out to Volunteering WA to connect them with volunteer through the skills-based volunteering program.

A Mechanical Engineer with a keen interest in giving back to the community, along with a desire to develop her own skills in a different environment, volunteered to assist. After an initial meeting, the volunteer surveyed WAFH staff and volunteers to determine the organisation's key priorities for the strategy day.

When COVID-19 restrictions were eased, the WAFH team met in person for the strategy session that was carefully planned and facilitated by the volunteer. The outcome was an updated five year strategic plan for an organisation now clear in its direction.





Benefits of Skills-based Volunteering

For the volunteer:

Volunteering has improved my...

- Influencing/ negotiation skills
- Leadership skills
- Decision making
- Sense of well-being and happiness
- Problem solving skills

WAFH's Inspirational Director, DinaMarie Mitchell was thrilled with this outcome, and remarked on what a positive experience it was to work with the volunteer who was professional, well-prepared and engaged with the organisation's vision and values. DinaMarie stated that the WAFH team now has "a plan in place and excitement to take the next step", and reported that the volunteer's efforts resulted in many ongoing benefits for the organisation. She added,

"The whole experience was very enriching and brought a team of volunteers together to reflect, embrace, explore and be involved in shaping the future of Fairhaven".

Likewise, the volunteer rated the volunteering experience very highly and commented that she was now "extremely likely" to recommend skills-based volunteering to a colleague. She reported that volunteering has improved her teamwork and communication, business awareness, leadership skills, along with her awareness of wider social issue.

When asked what she enjoyed most about the experience, she replied,

"The in-person day, meeting passionate people and helping them to help others [was what I enjoyed most about the skills-based volunteering project]".

A wonderful story of volunteering and helping. Well done to all involved!