

Volunteering Illawarra

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Contact - Janet

Visit report by Jeff Riley Tuesday 1st May 2007

I arranged this visit to raise my awareness of volunteering opportunities in the region. A team of coordinators working out of the Town Hall match volunteers with regional not-for-profit organisations.

The range of opportunities

Volunteering possibilities range from working with vulnerable groups – such as the aged, youth groups and the disabled to environmental work and outdoor work, including rural fire service and the Coast Guard.

The availability of training

Many of the positions involve training which would be a useful addition to a student resume. For example Lifeline will train volunteers who take part in its ‘referral’ service and Barnardos will train volunteers to take part in its young people mentoring programme

Resume building opportunities

Other roles may also provide excellent experience for a range of careers. For example there are currently positions for ‘grant writers’ and recently people have helped put together a ‘Relay For Life’ charity event for the Cancer Research charity.

A flexible range of positions

While some of the positions – particularly those that involve an investment in training – will really require at least six months commitment, others can offer much more short term opportunities that are sometimes more suitable for certain students. For example one group of students that are referred on block to the programme are education students who are required to contribute 8 hours community service as part of their teaching preparation. The programme can often match these students to single events that meet this requirement

Accessing the programme

Potential volunteers should arrange to visit the offices but a national web site www.govolunteer.com.au will allow browsers to target regional opportunities by doing a postcode search (use 2500). However, not every vacancy is put on the database and an office visit is recommended.