**Volunteer Vaccination Information Guidelines**

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# **Background**

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmanian, (NRE Tas) is committed to the health and safety of all our workers. The staff of the NRE Tas are fortunate to work alongside thousands of hardworking and skilled volunteers, who partner with us every day to help achieve environmental conservation and sustainability outcomes to reserve the heritage and biodiversity of Tasmania.

With borders now open, NRE Tas has examined the impact of the spread of COVID-19 on our workers and corresponding Departmental activities. Following an extensive risk assessment process, it has been determined that all workers engaging in activities related to NRE Tas, must be vaccinated against COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of each other and to help protect the community.  Under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012, a worker is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, this includes a volunteer.

With this context, all volunteers will be required to be fully vaccinated when engaging in volunteering activities with NRE Tas. Volunteers will be required to register their vaccination status via NRE Tas's volunteering portal, the [Better Impact System](https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=aa3c186c-ebde-4f84-9091-6abaef6dc2be&ApplicationFormNumber=1), prior to undertaking their next volunteer activity. It is encouraged that all volunteers endeavour to update their status as soon as possible. Those who have not registered on the system must do so prior to their next volunteering activity. From February those who have not registered their vaccination status on Better Impact will not be authorised to undertake volunteering activities associated with NRE Tas.

Volunteers will be required to have evidence of their vaccination certification with them when participating in a volunteering activity associated with NRE Tas. These may be sighted by the supervisor of the activity or an appropriate NRE Tas staff member but will not be recorded. There will be spot checks across activities from time to time.

## Key Messages for Volunteers

* NRE Tas values the contribution of all our volunteers who add considerable value to Departmental programs.
* Ensuring the workplace health and safety of all workers is a priority for NRE Tas.
* Under the legislation, a worker includes a volunteer.
* NRE Tas has determined that vaccinations are a necessary control to help keep the workplace and community safe.
* Volunteers who wish to volunteer on activities associated with NRE Tas are required to be fully vaccinated.
* Volunteers must register via the NRE Tas’s volunteer management system, Better Impact, and indicate their vaccination status
* Volunteers who have not updated their volunteer status will not be authorised to volunteer with the Department until they have completed this task.
* Volunteer must be able to provide evidence of their vaccination status if asked, when undertaking volunteering activities associated with the Department.
* COVID-19 digital certificate (either from myGov or the Check in TAS app), Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register, or an equivalent document from another country is acceptable evidence of certification of vaccination.

# **Processes for NRE Tas employees overseeing volunteers**

NRE Tas employees who have oversight or responsibility for volunteers need to ensure they are aware of the process associated with mandatory vaccination for volunteers.

1. New volunteers need to register on the Department’s Volunteer Management System, [Better Impact,](https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=aa3c186c-ebde-4f84-9091-6abaef6dc2be&ApplicationFormNumber=1) or they are not recognised as an authorised volunteer.
2. NRE Tas volunteer contact should encourage new volunteers to register themselves, in exception circumstances where this is not possible, system administrators across the Department may register the volunteer ensuring that volunteer has completed the [Privacy and Data Form](https://wildcaretas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Privacy-and-data-collection-statement.pdf).
3. Existing volunteers should log onto the [Better Impact system](https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=aa3c186c-ebde-4f84-9091-6abaef6dc2be&ApplicationFormNumber=1) and update their status under: My Profile – Additional Information – Health Information – COVID-19 Vaccination Status.
4. Volunteers that are registered on Better Impact *and have confirmed their vaccination status* are authorised to volunteer.
5. Volunteers that are not registered on the system or *have not indicated their vaccination status* will not be authorised to volunteer Volunteers should not be accepted into volunteering activities until they have completed their registration and completed their vaccination status.
6. Volunteers with a valid medical exemption or have exceptional circumstances will need to provide this information directly to People and Culture via volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au.
7. Volunteers are required to carry evidence of their vaccination status when undertaking volunteering activities associated with the Department.
8. Supervisors of an activity or an appropriate NRE Tas staff member may ask to sight this evidence prior to a volunteer undertaking an activity.
9. COVID-19 digital certificate (either from myGov or the Check in TAS app), Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register, or an equivalent document from another country is acceptable evidence of certification of vaccination.
10. This evidence is not to be recorded; it is to be sighted only.
11. Prior to any volunteering activity, group leaders, coordinators or NRE Tas employee with oversight of activity should ensure registrations have indicated their vaccination status.
12. If on location, the group leader or appropriate NRE Tas representative should ensure all participants are registered and can provide evidence of vaccination status if required.
13. Unregistered or ‘walk ups’ must be able to provide evidence of vaccination status and must register on the Better Impact system as soon as reasonably possible.

# **Process for unvaccinated volunteers**

Volunteers who decline to disclose their vaccination status will not be authorised to undertake volunteering activities associated with the Department and must not attend volunteering activities.

Prior to any volunteering activity:

* Group leaders, volunteer coordinators or relevant NRE Tas representative reviews registrations and ensures all sign ups have indicated their vaccination status (directions on running reports in Better Impact [available here](https://wildcaretas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Running-report-of-vaccination-status-for-Volunteers.docx)).
* If unsure, contact volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au or NRE Tas representative for clarity
* If a volunteer has not indicated their vaccination status, there can be an informal conversation as they may not be aware of the requirement.
* If a volunteer registers for a volunteer activity and they decline to disclose their vaccination status, group leaders, coordinators or an appropriate NRE Tas employee are to decline their registration and notify (via email template) the volunteer they are not authorised to attend the activity.
* Any volunteers who decline to declare their vaccination status are also to be referred to volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au
* Volunteers who attend activities without declaring their vaccination status or cannot provide evidence of vaccination status are to be asked to leave that activity
* There is no expectation that volunteers be physically removed from an activity.
* Should a volunteer not leave, they will be reminded that they are not an authorised volunteer and cannot engage with the volunteering activity. They must maintain social distancing and should not engage with other volunteers or NRE Tas staff.

## Email template

Dear …

Thank you for registering for the <volunteering activity>

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmanian, ((NRE Tas) previously known as DPIPWE) is committed to the health and safety of all our workers.

With borders now open, NRE Tas has examined the impact of the spread of COVID-19 on our workers and corresponding Departmental activities. Following an extensive risk assessment process, it has been determined that all workers engaging in activities related to NRE Tas, must be vaccinated against COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of each other and to help protect the community. Under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012*, a worker is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, this includes a volunteer.

With this context, all volunteers will be required to be fully vaccinated to continue to take part in volunteering activities with NRE Tas. Volunteers will be required to register their vaccination status via NRE Tas’s volunteering portal, the [Better Impact System](https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=aa3c186c-ebde-4f84-9091-6abaef6dc2be&ApplicationFormNumber=1), prior to undertaking their next volunteer activity.

You are required to update your vaccination status prior to undertaking the <Volunteering activity> being run on XXX at XXX.

If you do not wish to disclose your vaccination status, or are currently not vaccinated then unfortunately under our work health and safety obligations the Department cannot authorise you to undertake any volunteering activities associated with NRE Tas.

Please let me know if I can help you register or update your details on the Better Impact system. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au.

## Scenario

A volunteering activity has been established to assist a Department program. The program/group leader has created the activity and volunteers have been notified and registered. Upon checking the registrations, the designated leader (group, program, coordinator or NRE Tas representative) notes that one volunteer has not indicated their vaccination status.

The appropriate person (which could be the group/program leader, volunteer coordinator or NRE Tas representative) contacts the volunteer.

* **Outcome 1**
The volunteer did not realise they had to do this step and logs onto Better Impact and completes the step.
* **Outcome 2**

The volunteer does not wish to disclose their vaccination status to the Group Leader/ NRE Tas representative. That volunteer is advised that they cannot attend the activity until they have updated their status and reminded that the Department can only accept fully vaccinated volunteers into activities. The volunteer is referred to P&C for further conversations.

* **Outcome 3**

The volunteer turns up to the activity regardless of advice. The Group Leader or NRE Tas representative asks the volunteer to leave as per below:

*Group Leader*: This volunteer activity is associated with NRE Tas, therefore we must comply with the workplace health and safety requirements of the Department. One of these requirements, is that you must be fully vaccinated to undertake volunteering activities associated with the Department. If you do not wish to disclose your vaccination status, or you cannot provide evidence of your status, then I will have to ask you to leave as you are not authorised to volunteer

*Individual: I don’t want to leave; I don’t believe the Department can/should impose that obligation on me*

*Group Leader:* In accordance with the Department’s directions, I need to reiterate you are not an authorised volunteer on this activity. If you won’t leave then I ask that you please maintain social distancing, follow public health guidelines and refrain from engaging with volunteers on this activity.

# **Contacts and information**

All questions and queries can be directed to: volunteering@nre.tas.gov.au

Copies of documents link in these guidelines are available via

[Volunteering with Us | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (nre.tas.gov.au)](https://nre.tas.gov.au/about-the-department/volunteering)

Copies are also available on the internal volunteer coordinators Teams site.