

HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS SOUTH TAS

Annual Report 2023-24



Providing Support for Families affected by Life- limiting illness, across Southern Tasmania

President's Report

A significant development for Hospice Volunteers South Tasmania in the last 12 months has been the transfer of the oversight of our Deed of Arrangement to the Department of Health Palliative and End of Life Care Service Development team under the division of Health Planning.

The Board has welcomed this change. We are proudly aware of the value of the work our volunteers provide in the palliative care sector servicing the community of Southern Tasmania and believe the funding oversight by the Department of Health will bring enhanced community recognition of that value.

Our wonderful staff led by our manager Stephanie Kirkman Meikle continue to train volunteers for the core work of HVST, the skilled and compassionate provision of voluntary support for those with life limiting illness, their families and those who have lost family members to such illness.

Our staff continue to seek out areas of the community where HVST support can be extended and optimised, working to continue to raise awareness of HVST in the community, particularly in the regional areas of Huonville and Geeveston where they have established outreach sessions on a regular basis.

Further, our staff and volunteers have been valuable envoys for us in the Palliative care sector from participating in the Palliative Care symposium in July to attending quiz nights!

The Board extends its gratitude for the work of its staff and volunteers over the last 12 months. It acknowledges the funding it receives from the State without which it could not maintain the level and professionalism of the services it provides. Finally, I thank sincerely the members of the Board, and in particular past President Pat Flanagan who will retire from the Board in November after long service on the Board but who will continue to be a very valued volunteer of HVST. I have enjoyed and appreciated the collegiality Board members bring to our meetings and HVST benefits greatly from the diversity of experience they bring to the Board.

Christine Schokman



Manager's Report

It has been a deeply rewarding experience to nurture and support our wonderful team of staff and volunteers over the past year, and to work alongside palliative care colleagues who never fail to impress with their compassion and deep positive regard for people facing life and end-of-life challenges.

Hospice Volunteers South Tas is an important component within the framework, encompassing health and social care, community support organisations, individual carers and families.

Our Hospice Volunteers offer is unique: we have the time, skills and compassion to help people to live their best possible life, in the remaining years, months, weeks and days of life.

I'd like to thank all those we work alongside:

Angela K and Whittle Unit team for your support of the volunteers. Through your words and actions, our volunteers know that they are an important and highly regarded part of the team.

Anna N and the Specialist Palliative Care team at the RHH, for your guidance and direction to Rachel, Karen, Pep, Laura and Anne whose support of patients includes distraction and time to listen to patients and families at all stages of their palliative illness, treatment and care.

Lauren and the nursing team on Peacock 1 for welcoming Hospice Volunteers into the ward to support palliative patients, and for helping us to reestablish a bereavement support service on P1. To all of our clients, you have my highest regard. We continue to humbly offer our support.

Thank you to our dedicated team of volunteers:

On the Whittle Unit, - Catherine, Andreas, Maria, Ann, Astrid, Lynette and Anne, for your care and for the way in which you support families and patients experiencing

terrible grief and loss.

Beau -for stepping up to make bereavement support calls and for organize cards for families of patients on P1. A welcome addition to the supportive services that volunteers provide, alongside our nursing colleagues.

Rachel, Kate, Clare and Pat – for supporting the walking through grief program in their continuing bonds to past, present and future, without their loved ones.

Karen, Andreas, Ann, Catherine, Gloria, Maliha, Mary, Pat and Peter – for your generous support to clients in the community, for outings and chats, cups of tea, games of cribbage, painting, reading, driving, walking, sitting, swimming, laughter, joy and tears, for hours and hours, throughout the year.

We continue to advocate with general health care providers and through community networks, that we are here for the whole journey, not just end-of-life care.

This year we trained 18 new volunteers. Tusing a Palliative Care Victoria training manual. The intensive nature of the training is designed to allow volunteers to reflect on their own feelings and thoughts in relation to illness, care, death, grief and what it takes to be present in the life of a person with a palliative condition.

Not all who come forward are suitable for the role and as life has a way of interfering with the best of plans, we have been fortunate during the year to retain and augment our pool of active volunteers.

I am thankful for the continuing guidance of our Board members whose governance prioritizes the needs of our community and keeps us heading in the right direction. Welcome Raza, our new Treasurer and thank you for your assistance.

Thank you to our President Christine and or board members for their professional approach and support.

I am deeply grateful to Rachel, Kiyomi and Karen our support officer team for their considered approach and readiness to take on new tasks in support of our clients.

Stephanie Kirkman Meikle

<u>Achievements:</u> Volunteers and Staff supporting families affected by life-limiting illness across Southern Tasmania



This has been a successful year for Hospice Volunteers South Tas, marked by several significant achievements that have strengthened our mission and expanded our impact.

Major support program areas:

Our skilled volunteers continue to provide daily support to palliative patients at the Royal Hobart Hospital, in the J.W. Whittle Palliative Care Unit, on Ward Peacock 1, and for individuals and their families at home.

In-Home Care Services:

We successfully expanded our volunteer base and client referrals, which will allow us to support more clients in the comfort of their own homes. This expansion included the recruitment and training of additional volunteers and the retention of our longterm volunteers, some of whom have been supporting their clients over multiple years.

Community Outreach Programs:

We have been active across Hobart and the Huon, distributing resources, attending events, providing drop in information and support services in the Huon Hub, at GeCo, Geeveston and in Kingborough Community Hub. We presented at the 2024 Compassionate Communities Symposium and launched a new website aimed at raising awareness about hospice care and providing support to families.

Reintroduced services to Ward P1 at the Repatriation Hospital:

Working together with P1 NUM Lauren, and CNC Rachel, Hospice Volunteers have returned to deliver support to palliative patients on Ward P1, after a gap of several years. The revamped service includes new protocols and high awareness across the nursing team, of the important and unique supports which hospice volunteers can provide to patients, whose illness may have progressed significantly and are often needing to talk with someone who can give them dedicate time, in their changed circumstances.

Bereavement Support Program: We continued to support bereaved family members through our bereavement support group 'Walking Through Grief' providing ongoing emotional support to families who have lost loved ones. This program includes peer support, talking space and supports social cohesion.

Volunteer Training and Development:



We enhanced our volunteer training and development this year through the development of a 'flipped learning' model, which allows self-paced learning alongside traditional face to face workshops over a period of 6 weeks to ensure our volunteers are well-equipped to provide the highest level of care.

This year we offered two training intakes and trained 18 people. The training follows a prescriptive model, developed by Victorian Community Health and commonly utilised by Hospice Volunteer organisations across Tasmania.

Collaboration across the Tasmanian Health Service:

We work in active partnership with Community Nursing, the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Repatriation Hospital. This collaboration helps as patients transition between hospital sites, from community to hospital, and from hospital to home. At the RHH, we are pleased to work under the direction of Clinical Nurse Consultants and to work alongside ward NUMs to support patients who may be either newly diagnosed, undergoing treatment, approaching end-of-life.

Our work under the direction of the NUM and Nursing team on J W Whittle Unit continues to motivate and inspire.

Hospice has been delighted to reintroduce the making of freshly baked scones, as part of our Whittle support. Thank you, Astrid for making this a great success.

Memorial Services: Hospice Volunteers have been honored this year to provide assistance to the Specialist Palliative Care Team, at the Whittle, at two memorial services held in the Hobart Town Hall, for bereaved families. Both services were well attended and many people expressed their thanks for the opportunity to come together, in grief and healing, especilly after the COVID period, in which memorial services had not been possible. Our volunteers were on hand to welcome people, to listen and to offer condolences.



Community Partnerships

To raise awareness of our service directly to people with a palliative illness, HVST has been very active in promoting the service in a number of ways. We invested in our partnerships with local authorities and community organizations to help improve awareness of important life issues around Advance Care Planning, palliative support and end-of-life. Our engagement through Awareness days, Expo's and palliative Care Week events has fostered increased community engagement with our service.

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- Launch of new consumer friendly information through website Palhelp (www.palhelp.org)
- o Awareness raising and social connection through Social Media: 'Palhelp' facebook site -
- O Membership of Palliative Care Tasmania and contributions to Pallihub
- O Membership of the Compassionate Communities Palliative Care Symposion Planning group Public information stands / public speaking at Palliative Care Symposium, Palliative Care Week, Dying to Know Day, Carer2serve Expos, Kingborough Death Cafe
- [©] Fortnightly presence in Huon Hub/ Geeveston GeCo to support referrals from these areas.
- O Interview on Huon and Kingston fm Local Focal ttps://huonfm.com/about/podcasts/
- O Articles have been printed in local free and regional newspapers
- Patient and Service leaflets distributed throughout Southern Tasmanian GP practices,
 Community Nurses, Pharmacists and Physiotherapists, to improve referral rates

Helping people to live their best lives...

Working from a position of honesty and integrity.

Our values inform all of our work

We always seek to improve.

COMPASSION We work from a position of empathy and humility. We care authentically for our clients and for each other.

DIGNITY We respect the autonomy of every person. We honour our clients and seek to support them meaningfully.

INTEGRITY We work from a position of honesty and integrity. Our values inform our decision-making and our relationships.

DIVERSITY We regard every person as of equal value. We find strength and wisdom in learning from each other. We seek to help build an inclusive and resilient community. **DEDICATION** We work with a shared vision to do the very best we can. We are reliable, adaptable and self-aware. We regard professional development as integral to our practice.

ENCOURAGEMENT We work as a team to achieve our goals. We help each other to learn and grow. We take time to self-nurture and to support each other's needs. **ACCOUNTABILITY** We are open, transparent and accountable. We conduct ourselves ethically in all aspects of our practice. We take responsibility for our mistakes and learn from them.

EXCELLENCE In partnership with others we strive to offer the highest possible standard of compassionate care. We listen to our clients, to each other and to our community.

Working in Partnership to scale our impact

Hospice Volunteers operates as part of Palliative Care, with a dedicated focus on the journey people take from diagnosis to end-of-life. We work closely with the Specialist Palliative Care Service and a range of community stakeholders to deliver voluntary support in hospital and in the community.

Hospice Volunteers are working beside the Specialist Palliative Care services in hospital and community supporting palliative patients and their families across the continuum of care. Volunteer opportunities are promoted through Volunteering Tasmania and Go Volunteer. Ou services for clients are promoted through THS service directories online, through Find Help Tas, on our websites and by referral through a health professional.

We produce hard copy information resources which are stocked by Specialist Palliative Care teams, including community nurses and the social care workers. They can be found in all GP settings, pharmacies and residential aged care communities, on community noticeboards and community venues in the Huon, where we have been actively promoting our services to people living in rurally isolated situations.

Impact of Our Programs

Hospice Volunteers South Tas Inc. has made a profound impact on the lives of individuals and families affected by life-limiting illnesses across Southern Tasmania.

Our programs are designed to provide compassionate support, practical assistance, and emotional care, ensuring that our clients can live their best lives despite their conditions.

Overall Community Impact:

Awareness of our offering has much improved across the Southern region such that referrals for assistance have been steadily increasing.

• Enhanced Quality of Life: Through our comprehensive support services, we have helped clients maintain their independence and dignity, improving their overall quality of life.

Strengthened Community Ties: Our programs have not only supported individuals but also strengthened community ties by fostering a culture of care and mutual support.

Bereavement Support:

Volunteers on our bereavement program, Walking Through Grief, foster peer-to-peer grief and loss support for those bereaved as result of terminal illness.

- Walking Through Grief Program: This
 program offers ongoing emotional support
 to families who have lost loved ones. It
 includes one-on-one counseling, support
 groups, and memorial events.
- Positive Feedback: Families have shared that the bereavement support has been invaluable in helping them navigate their grief and find a sense of community and understanding.

Community Outreach Programs:

Working in partnership with Care2serve, Palliative Care Tasmania, Kingborough Council, Geeveston fm and U3A, we have helped to raise awareness through community Expo's and events and guest speaker appearances.

In-Home Care Services:

- Personalized Support: Our trained volunteers provide personalized in-home support, visiting clients once a week for up to three hours. People can find out about this through FindHelp Tas, through our new website www.palhelp.org and through our existing Hospice Volunteers website, as well as by referral from their healthcare professional.
- This service includes companionship, assistance with medical appointments, and social activities.
- Client Testimonials: Many clients have expressed their gratitude for the companionship and practical help they receive, which significantly improves their quality of life and emotional well-being. Out of respect for our clients and their families we do not feature individual client photos, instead, we have produced two sets of case study examples, anonymised for reasons of privacy and confidentiality

- Educational Workshops: We conducted several workshops aimed at raising awareness about hospice care and providing essential information to the community. These sessions have been well-received, with participants reporting a better understanding of hospice services and how to access them.
- Support Groups: Our Walking Through
 Grief program has provided a safe space
 for sharing experiences and receiving
 mutual support, fostering a sense of
 belonging and resilience.

Volunteer Involvement:

• **Dedicated Volunteers:** Our volunteers have contributed thousands of hours of service, demonstrating their commitment and compassion. Their involvement has been crucial in extending our reach and enhancing the quality of care we provide.

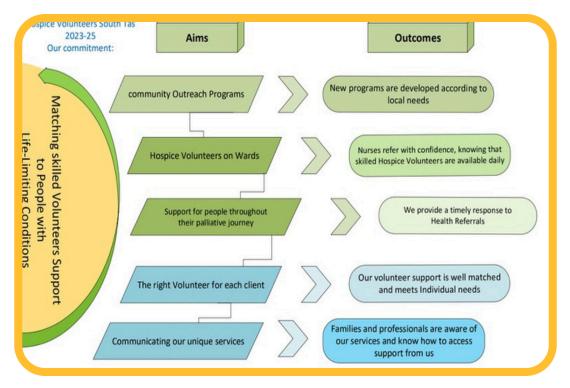
Volunteer Growth: We have seen a significant increase in volunteer numbers, reflecting the community's growing recognition of the importance of our work and their willingness to contribute.

Walking Through Grief groups meet across Hobart region with up to 10 participants in a group

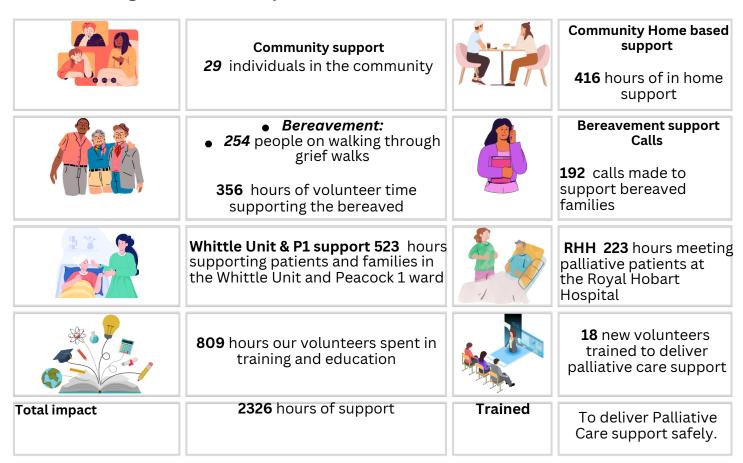


Our strategic objectives

Hospice Volunteers Strategic Plan 2022-25 aims to match skilled volunteers support to people with life-limiting conditions and their families, in Hospital, at home and in the community.



Reviewing Our overall Impact:



These achievements have not only enhanced our ability to provide compassionate care but have also strengthened our presence in the community. We are proud of the progress we have made and are committed to continuing our mission of providing exceptional support to our clients and their families.

Recognition and Award

Tasmanian **Palliative Care**



Celebrating Excellence in Palliative and end of life care

















Hospice Volunteers South Volunteer Peter Stolp took out the 2024 Palliative Care Tasmania Award for Outstanding Achievement in Volunteering and Carer Support. Peter has been with Hospice Volunteers South for 15 years, having first encountered the service as a client in Walking Through Grief, following the death of his beloved wife.

I cannot think of anyone who I would more like to have at my side through a palliative illness, than Peter.

The Awards were presented by Her Excellency the Honorable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, at Government House.



The runner up and finalists were: Lois Berry - former manager, Hospice Care Association of North West Tasmania Inc. Ann Thompson Smith - Volunteer, Hospice Volunteers South Tas Inc. In the photo Peter's daughter is with Ann and Lois.

The picture is quite clear: our volunteers have exceeded expectations in providing hours of direct support in hospital and to our bereaved community clients. The walking through grief program, in particular, has delivered a huge amount of support, by doubling services, to provide weekly support, for part of the year, in response to community needs.

It's clear also, that we continue to strive to meet demanding targets for the provision of direct 1:1 support, for clients living with a palliative illness, in the community. Here, we see a clear pathway for improvement in the way that people can learn about and access our support, much earlier in their illness journey. Sadly, many of the people referred to us for support this year have had only a short time to benefit from volunteer companionship, before end-of-life.

Ideally, we would like to have contact with people much earlier in their palliative journey, to better support them and their families as their support needs increase.

Early referrals make a huge difference as we can help people to live their best lives and to prepare better for the tough times ahead. We will continue to raise awareness of our service online and through professional and community engagement.

This year we are pleased to be celebrating our 40th year of Hospice Volunteers South Tas with a series of volunteer reunion events



It has been a great pleasure this year to welcome back volunteers from former years. Two reunion events were held, to reconnect with volunteers who had been on an expended break following the COVID epidemic. Returnees enjoyed lunching with friends and sharing stories. It's an enormous benefit to hear from experienced past volunteers and fortunately several have returned to volunteering with Hospice. We look forward to meeting many more of them at our 40th Anniversary celebrations in November, later this year.



Left to right, Pat Flanagan, Margaret Driessen, Leigh Connelly and Rachel Foster enjoying a reunion.

Pat is a current volunteer and Board member;

Leigh trained in 2016 and Margaret is a valued former staff member



Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC,
Governor of Tasmania, and Emeritus Professor Don Chalmers AO
request the pleasure of your company

at an Afternoon Tea to mark the 40th Anniversary of Hospice Volunteers South Tas Inc.

Wednesday, 27 November 2024 from 3.00pm to 4.00pm
(Please arrive by 2.45pm)

Dress: Lounge Suit / Day Wear

Bookings for this event close at 9.00pm on Wednesday 20 November 2024
(Late bookings/RSVPs are not able to be accepted)

Raising Awareness



Compassionate Communities Symposium

Hospice Volunteers was a proud GOLD sponsor of the Compassionate Communities Symposium this year. Sponsorship gave us prominent advertising in the program, a chance to speak directly to attendees at the event and provided the platform for the launch of our new Palhelp website. Manager Stephanie helped as a member of the organising committee and was delighted to speak to the assembled audience on the theme: 'It takes a village to Care for the Dying'.



We've heard so much positive feedback about the look of our new Palhelp resources. Most people tell us it is a huge improvement on the 'Hospice' brnding, in that it is welcoming and not at all confronting. We've had much more engagement with the public, at expos and events, as a result of the new style. We'd love to her your thoughts on it and how we might improve our service: the survey is still open at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W7KPQ8K

Volunteer Kate Calwell gave us her summation of the symposium:

'It was a full day of presentations, some in person, others via zoom, each bringing a different perspective to the topic of death as an integral part of life, and the need to bring this conversation out of the shadows and into full light within our communities.

Early speakers introduced us to the concept of Compassionate Communities, that is, communities which actively cultivate compassionate care at all levels - in workplaces, schools and local government, but also at the individual level such as neighbours keeping a lookout for one another, offering support when needed; communities in which caring for one another, particularly around death, dying and bereavement, is seen as a collective responsibility, not only the responsibility of designated health services.

We learned about the idea of Death Literacy, which refers to the practical knowledge and skills related to death and dying, and how such literacy empowers people and communities to engage with end-of-life issues in meaningful ways, nurturing the capacity of the community to offer compassionate care.

Other speakers discussed: supporting young people through grief; Advance Care Planning; Healthy End of Life Planning (and the HELP app); the role of Health Literacy in compassionate care....and more.'

Extract from Hospice Volunteers Manager's presentation:

Why do people volunteer in Palliative Care????

Many volunteers are driven by a strong sense of compassion and empathy.

They want to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals and families facing serious illnesses Many volunteers may have had personal experiences with palliative care, such as the loss a loved one.

Most people know, if they are diagnosed with an incurable condition, they will want to make the most of every remaining day.

Early referral to Hospice Volunteers, from the GP, clinical team or Specialist Palliative Care professional, can help people to do just that.

They may then choose to use that referral to allow someone into their life, who can be there, with them, for as long as they are needed, the to spend quality time with them and develop rapport and a relationship before they become too unwell.

Referrals can be made whenever someone is diagnosed with a terminal illness: there is no need to wait until they are under palliative care services. If you know someone, who knows someone who might need our help, talk to them about Hospice Volunteers.

We need to think 'Palliative Help' in the same moment that we think 'palliative diagnosis, palliative illness, palliative progression' and we need everyone in the village to think this way. That's why Hospice Volunteers is tailoring its support to meet emerging client needs and launching a new social media campaign and service offering through its more accessible offering of 'palhelp.org'.

Palliative Care Week and Volunteers Week

In a very moving collaboration with palliative Care Tasmania, Hospice Volunteers was pleased to provide a community information stall at the launch of Palliative Care Week in Howrah.



Hospice Staff member Karen providing information and resources at the Dying to Know Expo, Kingborough



Longstanding Volunteer Maria Pate, spoke with great insight and emotional integrity to a rapt audience at the launch of Palliative Care Week, in Howrah, about her experiences being a volunteer with the Whittle Unit.



National 20-26 MAY 2024
Volunteer
Something for Everyone Week

Volunteer Morning Tea

Hospice Volunteers were delighted to attend Morning Tea at the RHH and to meet Royal Hobart Hospital's new Chief Executive Officer Joe McDonald, when he presented certificates of thanks and a rose to each of the volunteers who work in the RHH. Thank you for the recognition.

Launch of Palhelp / www.palhelp.org



This year marked a significant milestone for Hospice Volunteers South Tas Inc. with the launch of a new brand and website www.palhelp.org

Goals and Strategy: Our primary goals for launching the new website were to:

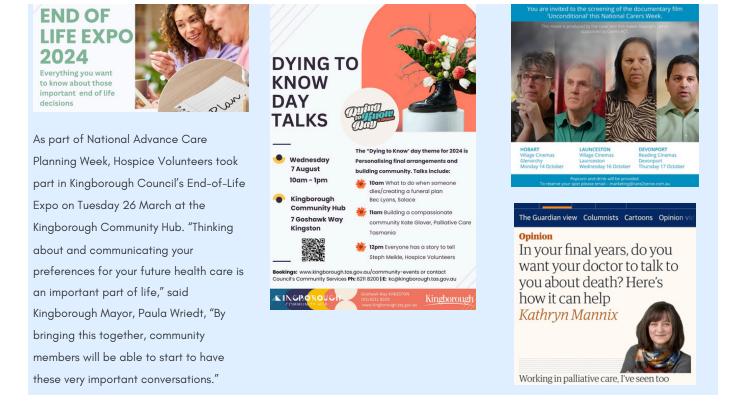
- Increase awareness of our services and mission
- Engage with a broader audience enables us to actively engaging with our community.
- Provide timely updates and information
- Foster a sense of community and support among our followers

Initial Results: Since the website launch of www.palhelp.org, we have seen encouraging engagement.

Social Media Launch Palhelp Palhelp The launch of our social media channels has not only increased our visibility but also strengthened our connection with the community. We have received positive feedback from followers who appreciate the welcoming vibe and the sense of connection our posts provide.

Enhanced Outreach: Social media has allowed us to:

Raise Awareness of our services in a consumer friendly manner Promote upcoming events and volunteer opportunities Provide educational content about hospice care and support services



New Program Development

This year we have invested resources into the development of two new key client support areas to help us meet our objective of supporting people throughout their palliative journey. The Introduction of a new life story biography service delivered by dedicated volunteer biographers is likely to have high appeal.

The Introduction this year of the campaign, by Palliative Care Tasmania, to increase awareness around Advance Care Planning led us to a realisation that there is very little practical support on the ground for people to understand how to plan for the end of their life. We are taking into consideration, the very poor literacy rates in parts of our communities and responding by introducing a new support component, to be delivered by our amazing, skilled and qualified staff: Advance Care Planning Support.



Advance Care Planning:

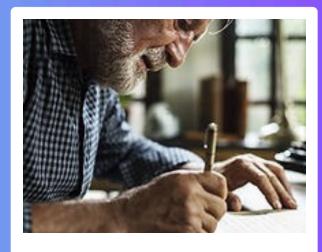
Staff will provide 1-4 home visits to help people to understand the importance of ACP and to encourage them to complete and lodge their ACP.

A New Staff-led Advance Care Planning Support service is in the planning stages.

At Palhelp, we understand the importance of making informed decisions about future healthcare, social and emotional welfare preferences. Our Advance Care planning help is aimed at assisting individuals in documenting their wishes and preferences regarding medical care, ensuring that their values and choices are honored.

Life Story Biography

Every individual has a unique story to tell, and at Palhelp, we are dedicated to capturing and preserving these narratives. Our life story biography service allows individuals to reflect on their life experiences and create a personalized biography that can be cherished by their loved ones.



All in all it has been a year of growth, raised awareness and agile responses to some of the challenging issues surrounding people who have a palliative illness.

We hope you enjoyed reading about Hospice Volunteers South Tas year 2023-24.

If you would like to contribute to support the Hospice Volunteers in the work we do, for our communities, donations can be made here:

GiveNow - Hospice Volunteers South Tas



We rely on additional voluntary contributions and grants to enable the continued support of our community.

We rely on the Grant deed support of The Tasmanian Government in making possible all our hospital based and health referral-based services.





Hospice Volunteers is committed to upholding the ten Child Safe Principles



Hospice Volunteers South Tas has incidental contact with children and young people. We take seriously our duty to safeguard the wellbeing of all vulnerable people, including children and young people. Our staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and report situations where the welfare of a vulnerable person may be compromised.



