

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

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**VOLUNTEER SOUTH ENSURES READINESS FOR SPONTANEOUS EMERGENCY  
VOLUNTEERING**

**Volunteer South, formerly Volunteering Otago and Volunteering Central, has released their new Emergency Volunteering database as a part of their continued efforts to support the wider Southern region deal with spontaneous volunteers in the event of an emergency.**

**This emergency volunteering capability has been developed as a part of the organisations wider strategy of community resilience and has been initiated in direct response to Volunteer South's welfare response collaboration during the March/April 2020 lockdown.**

Volunteer South is keenly aware of the volunteer needs of the wider Southern region, particularly those that occur during an emergency. The capability and the eagerness of the community to volunteer in an emergency has seen incredibly strong community led initiatives and support that has transcended the usual call of duty. The increase in awareness around health and safety for those staff involved in emergency response has meant that spontaneous volunteers need specific direction and a centralised support system within the response to be the most effective.

The development of Emergency Volunteering within Volunteer South flows on as a part of their work done in recent years supporting emergency response: from the Wānaka and Gore floods, to this years Covid-19 welfare response – the organisation has led the way in advocating, supporting and coordinating volunteers during emergencies. The position of volunteer centres are ideal for this centralised support as it leaves emergency responders with the task at hand and the coordinators at Volunteer South with the ability to support any welfare or emergency response needed.

"This is a great addition to our website whereby people from the public are able to register as an Emergency Volunteer (EV) whenever they want and can update and withdraw their details at any point of time."

"At the time of registration, EVs will be able to tick checkboxes with their skills and provide any relevant information to ensure that in an emergency. We will then send the correctly skilled people to the area where those skills are needed. In an emergency, those skills may change, and EVs already registered will be able to update and communicate with our team to ensure an up to date and consistent support system. All EVs must give their permission that their details be passed on to registered emergency operators or community groups only." says Leisa de Klerk from Volunteer South.

Volunteer South has led the way in the Southern region with a number of initiatives and activities that build on their key values of empowerment and community support. Their activities for 2020 have been predominately Covid-19 related, with teams in both Central Lakes and Dunedin/Waitaki/Clutha supporting the welfare response with the local councils. This work has continued well past the welfare response with their

everyday support of volunteers now including unemployed and those looking to upskill themselves. Resources were provided and improved upon during the welfare response: the development of key volunteering guidelines in the Queenstown Lakes district set the standard of volunteering during a pandemic that was eventually replicated throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Emergency Volunteering link is now live on the Volunteer South website with more information about this initiative provided. To check out the information, go to

[www.volunteersouth.org.nz/volunteers/emergency-volunteering](http://www.volunteersouth.org.nz/volunteers/emergency-volunteering)

*Volunteer South promotes, supports and strengthens volunteering creating stronger more connected communities. For more information, visit [www.volunteersouth.org.nz](http://www.volunteersouth.org.nz)*