



Volunteer Awards 2022 Project Review Report

Internal use only

Project Name:	Volunteer Awards 2022		
Commenced:	11 Jan 2022	Delivered:	24 Sep 2022
Review Author:	Hagino Baker		
Review Date:	30 September 2022		

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of volunteering done in the community
- Provide opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge individual volunteers and volunteer programmes
- Support Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) in their funding journey
- Increase Volunteer South (VS) brand awareness
- Strengthen partnerships with VS funders
- Empower youth and youth volunteering



Project performance overview

Schedule:

The project began in January with judges debrief. Concept planning was done in May, the nomination was launched at the end of June, Judging was done in August, and ceremony was held at the end of September. The project took 9+ months, with 5 months of intense management.

Concept planning took a while this year as it was not done prior to the awards 2021, and as well as due to the categories being renewed. It is likely that the length of the preparation stage will be shorter for the future awards project, as record was kept throughout the process.

Recommendations: With the success and demands of Volunteer Awards for two consecutive years, it is clear that this project should be included in the annual strategic plan and budget of VS. Once the board's strategic plan is made, review and plan of the various events for the whole year need to be done within the operations team at the beginning of each financial year. This will set the expectations and improve engagement of the staff members.

Concept:

The concept was discussed according to the feedback from the staff and the judges. This year we reviewed the purpose of the awards and how VS could contribute to the volunteer culture.

New categories were made based on these conversations, not only to celebrate the volunteers, but also to empower VIOs to learn from each other and uplift the culture of volunteering by offering ways to be judged with the lens of best practice.

The concept was reflected well on the new categories including Diversity and Inclusion, Resilience and Adaptability, Transformative Volunteering, and Collaborative Volunteering.

Some feedback from the nomination process suggested that some people struggled to find a category that fits the people/programmes that they wanted to nominate for, and they wished there was an open category. This could have contributed to a lower number of nominations compared to 2021.

Recommendations: Include Legends of Volunteering Award for the long-term volunteers. It was recognized by the judges this year as a special award, but it should be included in the future awards as a category. Consider changing the name of the Rising Star to Emerging Volunteer.



Consider having an open nomination so that the nominations are not limited to the categories. This could work if the judging criteria is set well, so as not to put too much pressure on the judges.

Sponsors:

SBS Bank was fully supportive of the event since last year, and OCT became a major sponsor from this year as well. The SBS Bank was very engaged from the concept planning stage, and both sponsors helped the ceremony as event staff. This kind of engagement improves the quality of the partnership as they see the effort going into the project that they are funding.

Category and advertising sponsorship didn't get lined up until the beginning of August, which meant the promotional materials and website had to wait. It was crucial to have people dedicated to getting funding, so that others could focus on moving the other parts of the project forward.

Sponsor briefing is still to be held (TBD).

Recommendations:

- Ongoing partnerships with SBS should be explored, for more sustainable funding resource to continue offering the awards.
- Improve sponsor packages and structure three levels: Gold (naming rights), Silver (category sponsor), and Bronze (advertisement).
- Consider ways to create more connections for the VIOs (e.g. employee volunteering hours to the winning organisations).
- Need to have a dedicated staff for taking care of sponsor relationship. Better communication needs to be done to each sponsor about the purpose of the awards and the objectives of the awards they are sponsoring.

Budget:

Budget was well planned for resources excluding staff hours. Budget planning was done late in the project, which meant staff needed to discuss and get approval for spending each time and it could have been more efficient. What made things harder is for staff to not have company card, as there were many small (or big) expenses that could not be invoiced.

Recommendations:

- Budgeting needs to be done at the beginning of the project to give staff autonomy and eliminate discussions each time they spend.
- Company cards to be sorted, or give staff prepaid visa card to be using for project expenses.



- Staff hours need to be considered realistically, and this year's experience should help plan for next year.
- Increase the budget for advertisement and promote to wider audiences, throughout the year.

Marketing:

Promotional strategies for the award's launch during National Volunteer Week, nominations phase, and judging phase were made with the recommendations from a marketing volunteer. Having a marketing volunteer and a part-time employee who could help with promotions and admin was very helpful.

We have continued to use the existing volunteerawards.nz website. We have shut down the dedicated awards facebook page that was set up last year, so that Volunteer South brand gets recognized (NB feedback from last year made us realise people didn't know who was behind the awards).

We have set up a dedicated email account (awards@volunteersouth.org.nz) to take care of any awards related communications. This worked well as we had multiple people needed to access the email account.

At the ceremony, we have invited ODT and The Star. ODT did an article about the winner of SBS Spirit of Volunteering Award, however there was no mention of Volunteer South. This also shows we need stronger brand awareness.

Recommendations: Promote the awards throughout the year, with nominations opening during NVW. Involve Community Connectors so that they can reach VIOs and volunteers prior to the NVW.

As mentioned in the schedule section of this report, Volunteer Awards and its promotion need to be planned well in advance and included in the overall strategic plan of the organisation.

Better engagement with the media and sponsors. We were working closely with The Star, ODT, and SBS, but other stakeholders need to be engaged better.

Nominations:

We had

- 12 nominations for the Programmes Category
- 39 nominations for the Volunteers Category
- 30 nominations for the Acknowledgement Only Category (4 nominated from the public, rest are from VS staff)



Category descriptions and nomination questions were reviewed by staff, judges, and story writer volunteers, to get the wording right.

Nominations were made in two stages; 1) nominations using the forms, then 2) additional information was requested to the nominees. Taking the two-step approach required admin but getting the voice of nominees added so much for the judging process and creating profiles during the promotion and for the MC notes at the ceremony.

Nomination forms were accessed online on volunteerawards.nz website, as well as an option to download the word form and to pick up physical forms from the SBS bank Dunedin branch, Dunedin Community House reception, and Volunteer South Office.

Online nominations were set up with Google Forms to make the admin easier than last year's direct website nominations by enabling direct export to Google Sheets.

Nomination period was extended twice, from one month to 6.5 weeks.

Many people liked the process, however some people thought the questions were too involved and time consuming for the nominators. On the flip side, the judges were grateful that we received good amount of information and made judging process better than last year.

Nomination survey was collected right after the nomination period ended. See attached PDF for the full survey results.

Recommendations: Google Forms might not be the best software for this, so consider ways to improve it. Some people were not aware of the word forms they could download and submit by email. Better marketing to be done so people are aware they can just reach out to the operations team when they need help.

Some people thought the nomination forms were time consuming. How to achieve the balance of getting enough stories and making nomination accessible for everyone is a question for the future awards. This question ties into the categories (open or specific).

Perhaps involve the sponsors more from the nomination stage so we can promote better. This also highlights the importance of the sponsorship being sorted at an early stage of the project.

- Ask nominators to submit pictures of the nominees?



- Could the questions to nominees (second step of the process) be included in the nomination forms, to avoid the two-step process?

Judging: Two new judges were recruited in order to create more diversity in the judging panel (total 6 judges).

Judges were given access to google drive folder of nomination information, and if requested printed version. They were given a couple of weeks to look through the information, and they got together over two days (2.5hr each) to discuss each category.

The 6 judges were split into two groups, and each group were assigned to two awards from each category. After the group discussions, everyone came together as one group to discuss overall winners of each category, and overall winner of the entire awards.

Two judges could not make the judging days, so the decisions were made based on their written comments and the face-to-face discussions of the 4 judges.

Same thoughts as 2021: it would be good to involve people from other community as judges, as the judge's own knowledge and experience about particular VIOs and volunteers might contribute to biased decisions.

It was great to involve judges from the concept planning stage to the nomination stage, all the way to the ceremony.

Recommendations: Could we bring judges from other areas (e.g. sponsors from other VS region), get businesses involved, or ask our board members?

- Include question about the length of volunteering to the nomination forms
- Let the judges know who the nominator was for each nomination
- Recruit a youth representative to the judging panel – could ask the winner from the previous awards
- Get judges to write down their comments. Their comments are very useful during the ceremony stage, and we did not have the comments written down this year.

Ceremony: Ceremony was held on Saturday, 24th of September, from 9:30 – 12:30 at the Edgar Centre. There were 70 guests in total, plus 11 event staff. Catering was arranged with the Edgar Centre. No



entertainer this year, and short opening/closing speeches were done by our chair Andrew Whiley and CEO Sues Russell.

Invitations were first sent to the finalists and sponsors, and then we invited the other nominees. We did not extend the nominations to the wider public as the numbers were limited in the room, but the winners were allowed to bring people with them without a limit. Overall, 98 people were RSVP'd, plus we had 11 staff, a photographer and a videographer.

Event went smoothly and 95% of the people rated 4 stars and above.

Post ceremony survey was done right after the ceremony. See attached PDF for the full results.

Recommendations: VIPs were invited too late this year. Overall our engagement with VIPs (councilors, etc.) in the community need to be strengthened.

We kept the awards shorter than last year by not having a big speaker, which worked very well.

- Definitely organise a professional photographer again for the future event
- Include pictures from each finalist to highlight on the slides during the ceremony (we couldn't do it this year due to lack of staff resources).
- Could organise Kapa Haka at the beginning of the ceremony.
- Opportunities for VIOs to have information at the ceremony. Create a ceremony programme which includes finalists profiles for guests to take away. Include VS information.

Staff resources: The entire process took a lot of time and effort by small number of staff which was very tasking. Again, planning for the awards to be a part of the regular services under VS and getting everyone in the organisation involved is the key.

We had Acknowledgement Only category this year with certificates to be mailed out for all the nominees from all categories, which means the project work continues after this report.

Recommendations:

- Be realistic about the staff capacity when planning for the project (i.e. reduce the number of awards categories, reduce gifts, get the whole team involved)
- Increase awareness within the team that this is a team event and the reasons why it is relevant to them.
- Possibly involve SBS events team for assistance from the beginning for better marketing and resource management.



Volunteer Awards

SBS | Volunteer South



Volunteer Awards

SBS | Volunteer South



SBS Spirit of Volunteering Award Winner

Moira Parker for her mahi aroha over the last 41 years. The thousands of hours Moira has dedicated to her volunteer teams mean that they in turn become valuable feet on the ground and genuine advocates of the conservation cause.



Volunteer of the Year Award Winner

Juanita Willems for displaying huge Whanaungatanga and Manaakitanga. Juanita leads by example, never asking anyone to do something she wouldn't do. This nomination recognises the exceptional value she brings as a skilled and respected coordinator and leader.



Programme of the Year Award Winner

Okāhau Dune Project for the great collaboration and long-term vision. Their work reminds us that the community is not defined by geography. They have shown commitment to future generations, and respect to cultural importance of the coastal environment and plants.



Resilience Award Winner

Nick Chisholm for being a pure inspiration and commitment to helping people live their best lives. Despite his own physical challenges, Nick founded Iron Warriors, a group who regularly meet and train at Skyfit24 Gym. He helps others who have sustained strokes or brain injuries.



Volunteer Awards

SBS | Volunteer South



Rising Star Award

Eleanor Dunn for her strong commitment to improving the lives of others. Volunteering is in the blood of this aspiring Paediatrician for Medicines Francais. It impacts profoundly on all areas of her own life.



Leader of Volunteers Award Winner

Moira Parker for working to discover a volunteer's passion encouraging them to use their skills in a role they feel affinity for. Her volunteers are fully supported and treated with dignity and as equals.



Team of the Year Award Winner

Life Matters Suicide Prevention Trust Peer

Support Volunteers for stepping up and gone above and beyond to meet the rising demand for mental health care. They bring a strong desire to share their journey for the purpose of helping others with their struggles.



Transformative Volunteering Award Winner

The Buddy Programme for being part of the local Dunedin community for 30 years. While young people gain confidence and encounter new and exciting things through The Buddy Programme, the Adult Buddy volunteers also experience personal growth and enjoyment as they undergo training and invest in the positive development of the young people they are matched with.



Volunteer Awards

SBS | Volunteer South



Diversity and Inclusion Award Winner

Tomahawk Smalls Beachcare Trust for creating a programme where volunteers feel respected, included, valued and fulfilled is always prioritised. They are looking to ensure an enjoyable and constructive volunteer session for each individual.



Collaborative Volunteering Award Winner

Okāhau Dune Project for their collaboration with diverse array of community members as well as their work for not only in achieving positive environmental and educational outcomes, but also strides in social cohesion and heaps of fun for all involved.



Resilience and Adaptability Award Winner

Family Works Foodbank for their creativity in supporting those in the community who are grappling with the impact of hardship and food insecurity. They have adapted to the challenging situations and finding ways for volunteers to be involved and simultaneously made the foodbank more resilient.

For more information about other finalists, please visit

<https://volunteerawards.nz/>