



INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE VOLUNTEERING

Creating new pathways for people with disability to
connect with their communities through volunteering

Project Report: 2026



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Summary

Volunteers with disability want access to a wide range of roles. Organisations want to welcome them, but need practical ways to make that welcome more visible and turn it into everyday practice.

Through the JFM Fund grant for FreddyMatch's Inclusive and Accessible Volunteering Project, FreddyMatch built tools that help organisations describe opportunities clearly, show the support and flexibility available, and open conversations about individual needs. These changes help people recognise opportunities that could work for them and feel confident taking the next step.

The figures presented below are from FreddyMatch records at 16 July 2026, about seven weeks after the new tags and opportunity creation tools went live. The *tag* and *tool* figures show early interest and uptake.

What we found

1	Inclusion guidance for organisations when they create volunteer opportunities on FreddyMatch	59%	of new opportunities include accessibility information
2	Making inclusion visible helps people recognise opportunities that could work for them	10.1%	of volunteers identify as having a disability, up from 7%
3	People are actively seeking a broad choice of volunteering opportunities	93.5%	of volunteers with disability have applied for an opportunity
4	Volunteers with disability are contributing in visible community roles	61%	of referral or matching events were in public-facing roles
5	Organisations are willing to signal inclusion and need help turning that into useful detail	156	opportunities include accessibility information (of 854)
6	Organisations can build inclusion into the programs they already run	67	organisations have matched volunteers with disability
7	A supported start helps people become comfortable and capable in their role	12	volunteers shared their experiences

Who this report is for

This report is for you if:

- 1 You involve volunteers and want to welcome more people with disability.
- 2 You support organisations that involve volunteers, such as a volunteer resource centre or peak body.
- 3 You fund or work on inclusion and want to see what this grant achieved.

About the project

The FreddyMatch platform is a website that connects individuals with volunteering opportunities that match their interests and skills, while also supporting organisations to find and engage volunteers.

This project set out to enhance the FreddyMatch website, making it easier for people with disability to find and choose roles that work for them. In particular, it aimed to:

- Upgrade accessibility across the website.
- Activate and expand the use of the website's Inclusive and Accessible Tag for volunteering opportunities.
- Support organisations to create and promote more flexible, meaningful roles.

The funding helps turn good intentions into practical action by giving organisations simple tools to make their roles inclusive, quickly and confidently.

FreddyMatch in 2026



29,690

registered volunteers



854

volunteering opportunities



785

organisations

Project goals and expected outcomes

The key goals were to:

Make the FreddyMatch website fully accessible so people with disability can easily search, navigate and find roles that suit them.

Encourage and support organisations to use the Inclusive & Accessible Tag to clearly indicate roles that are accessible and inclusive.

Grow the number and variety of meaningful volunteering opportunities which fit different interests, skills and support needs.

The expected outcomes were:

People with disability can decide how they want to contribute, choosing roles that reflect their goals and preferences.

Volunteers with disability are visible, valued and included as active contributors in their communities.

Organisations have the tools, resources and know-how to confidently design and offer inclusive roles.

What we built



Accessibility toolkit

Prompts and the role generator, to support opportunity creation.



Accessibility tags

Organisation and opportunity level accessibility information.



Opportunity listings

Accessibility icons, better filtering and badges.



Website accessibility

Upgrades checked against WCAG 2.2.



How we built it: co-design with people with disability

Four co-design sessions were held from October 2025. 35 people took part including people with disability and their carers. An AUSLAN interpreter supported participation, five skilled volunteers helped with facilitation and plain English materials, and participants received an honorarium.

Sessions covered how opportunities are written, the volunteer journey from first contact to ongoing involvement, and the practical information volunteers with disability need to feel safe and prepared, including detailed accessibility information across a range of categories, information on what a first day looks like, contact options and onboarding.

At the final session we showed participants how their input shaped the finished features and received feedback from the group.

4



co-design sessions

35



people took part

5



skilled volunteers
helped facilitate

12



volunteers shared
their experiences

You Said, We Did

A “You Said, We Did” tracker was used to record how participants’ input guided platform and program development. All new accessibility features developed were the result of focus group discussions.



July 2025

Grant begins



October 2025

Co-design
begins



May 2026

Tags and tools
go live



June 2026

National launch
of the tags



16 July 2026

Data reported



FINDING 1

Inclusion guidance for organisations when they create volunteer opportunities on FreddyMatch

Organisations are guided on how to make an opportunity inclusive while they create it on FreddyMatch.

The accessibility toolkit is built into the opportunity creation tools. Organisations do not need to go away and find out what to include, or be trained on a separate resource. The prompts cover accessibility details, flexibility, a safe environment and what volunteers will gain.

59%

of opportunities created since the tools went live include accessibility information (19 of 32)



15

organisations added accessibility information to an opportunity



7

partner organisations helped to distribute and promote the toolkit



How it works

- 1 Start a new opportunity.
- 2 Use the role generator prompts to add the recommended information and write in plain English.
- 3 Use the detailed accessibility fields to create searchable tags.
- 4 Publish with accessibility information.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Explore the opportunity creation process on FreddyMatch to understand what information people with disability are looking for when applying for volunteer opportunities.

Use the accessibility filters on the FreddyMatch website to find examples of organisations and opportunities that include accessibility information.



FINDING 2

Making inclusion visible helps people recognise opportunities that could work for them

Tags and clear information show which organisations are committed to a safe, inclusive environment and prepared to be flexible.

The tags, clearer icons, filters and opportunity information help people assess suitability and recognise an organisation that welcomes a conversation about their needs.

One food charity uses the tags to give upfront information about the opportunity and worksite. A heritage organisation uses Sensory Considerate Environment for opportunities where volunteers can work alone, away from large teams and public-facing settings, and Flexible Participation Options because volunteers choose their own hours.

The percentage of active volunteers identifying as having a disability rose from 7% to 10.1%

Before the project



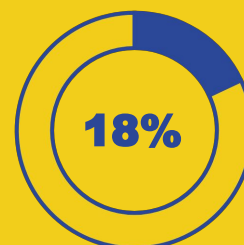
7%

After the project



10.1%

184 of 1,827 active volunteers. The rise happened during the project. Our data does not show which changes caused it.



of all opportunities on FreddyMatch, including older ones, include accessibility information

New for volunteers: accessibility icons, improved filtering, badges on listings, richer information and a new way to search.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Open an opportunity and fill in the detailed accessibility fields. They create the tags people can search and filter by.

Choose the organisation tags on your profile that fit what you offer.

People are actively seeking a broad range of volunteering opportunities

Volunteers with disability are using FreddyMatch as an active pathway into volunteering.

FreddyMatch’s search filters and richer opportunity information help people choose opportunities that reflect their own interests. Organisations can make more of their general program available to them.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Pick two or three of your current opportunities and use the flexibility prompts to describe how tasks and hours can be adjusted.

Use the role generator to rewrite each description in plain English.

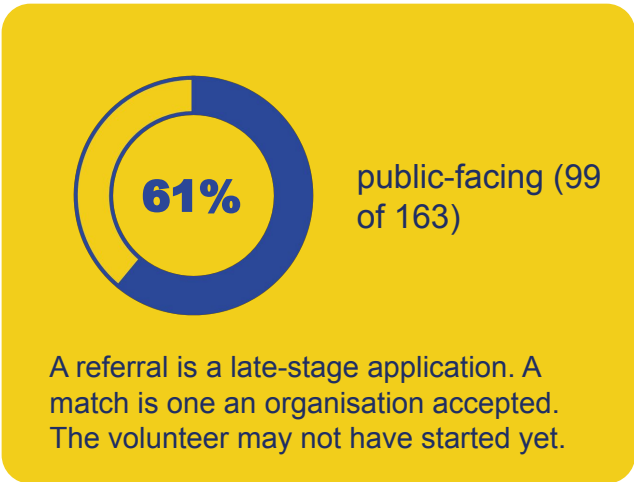


FINDING 4

Volunteers with disability are contributing in visible community roles

Most referral or matching events for volunteers with disability were in public-facing, community-visible roles.

The organisations range from large national charities to small community groups, sporting clubs, schools and government agencies. Roles include event volunteers, photographers, cruise ambassadors, concierge, retail and community support, student support and governance.



“...seeing people smile and enjoy themselves made me realise how important volunteering can be.”

A volunteer, on helping at a community activity where everyone felt included

“...it might have seemed small, but hearing that made me realise that volunteering can make people feel supported and included.”

A volunteer, on someone thanking the volunteers for creating a welcoming environment



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Find your public-facing opportunities, such as events, front-of-house or community roles.

Use the prompts to say what each involves, what the environment is like and what support is available.

Organisations are willing to signal inclusion and need help turning that into useful detail

Organisations are willing to show they are open to volunteers with disability, and need more guidance on what to include.

Most organisations using the accessibility field have not yet added specific detail. The tags give an initial signal, and the prompts and role generator help organisations explain what that means in practice.

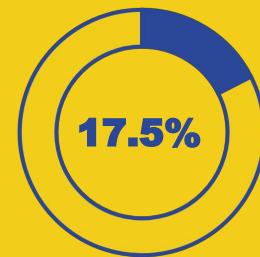
6

organisations adopted the new organisation-level tags in the first seven weeks

Communication Support Available: 6 of 6



Workplace Adjustments Supported: 3 of 6



137 of 785 organisations already say on their profile that they support volunteers with disability



156

opportunities include accessibility information (of 854)



15

further organisations added accessibility information to an opportunity

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Add what support is available and who to contact to an opportunity, using the accessibility fields.

To get help, email roxane@freddymatch.org to register for a train-the-trainer session.

Organisations can build inclusion into the programs they already run

67 organisations have matched volunteers with disability. Four shared their specific use of tags and the benefits: they are a useful way to signal openness, and the physical environment is the barrier mentioned most.

A health service

Physical access

Uses the tags to show that opportunities are accessible in terms of physical provisions. The focus is on finding a good match for each volunteer. The tags have not changed how they recruit, but they call them “handy”. They recently engaged a volunteer with a physical disability in a concierge role. For many roles, the physical environment is the main limitation.

A heritage organisation

Sensory environment and flexible hours

Uses the tags on research and library assistant roles, with Sensory Considerate Environment for opportunities where volunteers can work alone and Flexible Participation Options because volunteers choose their own hours. They want to welcome anyone who is interested. It would help to know what an individual volunteer needs.

A food charity

Upfront information

Uses the tags to give people upfront information, so they can see whether an opportunity and worksite will suit them before expressing interest. It fits a broader project on inclusive volunteering. They are considering training for site leaders and reviewing how roles and duties could be structured.

An emergency services charity

Individual needs

A staff member adopted the tags on their own initiative. Inclusive volunteering is in the strategic plan, and they interview everyone who applies to understand what each person needs. Their current roles are physically demanding, so they are adding new roles that are more accessible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Ask each applicant what they need, then add the accessibility fields and tags that match.

If your current roles are physically demanding, use the role generator to create a new opportunity for a role more people can do.

7

FINDING 7

A supported start helps people become comfortable and capable in their role

Twelve volunteers shared their experiences, all responses are anonymised. Everyone who answered our four questions felt more confident, capable, comfortable or open to new things.



WHAT YOU CAN DO



When you write the opportunity, describe what the first day looks like and who will welcome the volunteer.

Plan the first two weeks: pair a new volunteer with an experienced one, run an induction and use a simple checklist for each shift.

What we learned



A visible marker is quick to adopt. Detail needs support.

Organisations adopt a simple marker of inclusion quickly. Meaningful accessibility detail needs prompting, examples and support. The prompts and the role generator were built for this.



The physical environment is the barrier organisations mention most.

Better information exchange between volunteers and organisations about individual needs would help both sides.



Tools work better at opportunity creation than as a review.

Uptake of the opportunity review was slower than expected in early 2026. Putting the tools into opportunity creation worked better, and so did working through Volunteer Resource Centres.



Uptake takes time.

Time-poor organisations can be slow to take up new tools. With a steady, consistent approach and partner support, uptake has continued to increase.

Thank you

Thank you first and foremost to the JFM Fund and Jane Arnott. This grant took a project our team had been passionate about for over five years and brought it to life. It has been a delight to work on, and we are grateful for the support you have given us, which goes beyond the funding to advice, introductions, encouragement and more.

The grant paid for the whole project. It let us work with around 35 people, including people with disability and their carers, to design what they said would help, and then build it. Every organisation that creates an opportunity on FreddyMatch now gets inclusion guidance as part of the process, and these features are permanent. We share the Fund's commitment to people with disability being included in all communities as valued contributors. Thank you for backing this project, and for confirming Phase 2.

Thank you to our co-design participants, and to the skilled volunteers from Westpac and Blend Creative who helped with facilitation and plain English materials. Thank you also to our partners. Purple Orange helped recruit co-design participants. Volunteering SA&NT hosted our presentation at the Inclusive Volunteering Community of Practice. Volunteering NT asked for NT participants to be included in the co-design, uses the toolkit, and has placed the most volunteers with disability on the platform (23). Sector Connect uses the toolkit through its Volunteer Resource Centre. Volunteering Gold Coast has placed volunteers with disability and supported the creation of accessible opportunities. Southern Volunteering SA and Northern Volunteering SA were involved from the start and continue to show their support for this work through advice and advocacy. The National Volunteering Conference hosted the launch of the tags, in a session on place-based volunteering attended by more than 120 people.

What happens next

- 1** Phase 2 with the JFM Fund is confirmed. It builds on this work with further platform accessibility improvements, continued co-design with returning participants, and sector influence through reporting and advocacy.
- 2** Every new organisation that joins FreddyMatch will be encouraged to list accessibility information on its opportunities, and given support to do so.
- 3** Train-the-trainer sessions are coming. To register your interest, email Roxane at roxane@freddymatch.org.

Project funded by



Project delivered by

