

### Recruiting all abilities volunteers: a VIO run by their community for their community

#### Case study focus: Leading change towards inclusive practice

Joe and Adam Hewber are a father and son team who pioneered the development of Ability Heroes. They have been assisted by web developer and support worker, Chris Dickmann, and their loyal volunteer directors.

#### Aim of the volunteering program

As a small but dedicated team they now operate the Ability Heroes organisation. Ability Heroes is a charity that provides information on accessibility and inclusion about West Australian venues. The information displayed on <https://abilityheroes.com.au/> is supplied by local volunteers.

Ability Heroes supports those living with a disability to have access and inclusion information about venues in Western Australia. The aim of the volunteering program is to support better flow of that information to their community and invite people from their community to participate as volunteers.

#### Motivation for change

The team at Ability Heroes have ambitious goals for the coverage and access of their information but were struggling to find enough volunteers to realise their vision. They were struggling to communicate the value of their organisation, understanding how to target their ideal volunteers and how to write effective position descriptions.

#### What supported you to make the change?

Through the support of the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) program Ability Heroes were hoping to address some of their recruitment challenges. Through the support and collaboration with the VMA a strategy was developed to better understand how to communicate the volunteer roles, the cause, what difference volunteers will make and the benefits for volunteers.



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*“We have been able to laser-focus our volunteer recruitment efforts”.*

*“We can build our volunteer capacity from the diverse all abilities community”.*

*Joe Hewber - Ability Heroes*

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## Approach taken/ the problem:

A needs analysis was formulated for Ability Heroes to better understand their VIO's goals and their current volunteer needs. This was underpinned by the knowledge that recruitment of volunteers was a priority to help move towards the medium-term goals of the organisation.

A workflow was identified as a way to commence writing effective volunteer position descriptions.

This included:

- Have you explained who the organisation is?
- Have you explained the cause and what you are trying to achieve?
- Have you stated what difference the volunteer will make?
- Have you included inclusion and diversity as important to the VIO?
- Have you given an indication of the required days/times/hours?
- Have you included any benefits e.g., friendships, fun, work experience?
- Have you mentioned training or support?
- Have you indicated the location?

Free VMA training options were also identified as useful to the development of a recruitment strategy for Ability Heroes. The VMA provided a volunteer engagement planning course and position description course. 1-1 support was also provided to Ability Heroes as they drafted their position descriptions.

## Impacts and outcomes

Ability Heroes received more expressions of interest than they expected and are now conducting orientation and training of volunteers.

Their inclusion and diversity outcomes have improved. Volunteers come from all abilities across their community.

They expect to expand their operation considerably. The coverage of their WA venue access information is likely to significantly improve and will benefit all abilities across WA.



*The Team at Ability Heroes*

## Feedback from participants:

*“Our collaboration with VWA and the VMA project has been important in the development of the Ability Heroes project. We have been able to laser-focus our volunteer recruitment efforts with the advice and support from staff at VWA. We have also taken advantage of the VIKTOR volunteer recruitment platform which helps us keep our recruitment activities structured and our workflow simplified.*

*VWA membership staff have also shared their expertise and advice with our organisation with a real focus on what we need, at this time, in and our unique circumstances. As a very small team, running an ambitious project, VWA’s continuing support and advice is always gratefully received”.*  
Joe Hewber Ability Heroes.

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