

## Creating safety and comfort



Organisation:

**Volunteer South West**

Website: [volunteersouthwest.org.au](http://volunteersouthwest.org.au)

Focus: New Migrants



Linda\* is a young woman from Vanuatu who arrived in Bunbury in 2021. Highly educated and wanting to learn new skills, she was motivated to meet new people and build a network in her new community. Linda found Volunteer South West on social media and quickly made contact to join their ENGAGE program. She already worked full time, but was also interested in volunteering as a fire fighter, administrator or in an aged care facility. Linda was nervous but looking forward to finding a meaningful position.

### APPROACH

Volunteer South West referred Linda to the Bunbury Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. Through the support of the ENGAGE program, the volunteer manager was given training on supporting volunteers from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. The training helped both Linda and the organisation to adapt.

### OUTCOME

Placing Linda with the Bunbury Volunteer Bushfire Brigade was a win-win decision. The workplace culture improved from increasing their diversity, and Linda feels less isolated in her new home. The volunteer role has helped her to meet new people, connect with the local community and develop an understanding of the Australian workplace. At the end of the ENGAGE program, Linda decided to keep volunteering with Bunbury Volunteer Bushfire Brigade.

*“Linda is a great team worker, good at solving problems, learning new skills and is improving her communication skills. She is still very shy but it has been wonderful to see her growth.”*  
– Volunteer manager

### LEARNINGS

It is helpful to provide transition support for new migrant volunteers and complete cultural training for the volunteer involving organisation. Some ideas include:

- Buddy or mentor systems, ideally with someone who has similar lived experience.
- Suggest bringing a friend or family member to support them at initial meetings.
- Consider including cultural, linguistic or religion specific content in your onboarding, but ensure that the wording is respectful and appropriate.
- Reduce the amount of onboarding paperwork with a clear and simple process.