

Tech for good:



A practical guide to technology, security, and AI for the for-purpose sector

How community organisations can harness technology, strengthen security, and build resilience – without the overwhelm.

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Contents

Introduction	2
The for-purpose sector: mighty, motivated, and under pressure	3
Making the most of what you already have	4
Technology that actually helps: practical tools for-purpose organisations	5
Artificial intelligence: a practical perspective for the for-purpose sector	6
Cybersecurity: protecting your organisation, your volunteers, and the people you serve	7
Building a technology roadmap for your organisation	9
Williams Technology: your partner in the for-purpose space	10
Conclusion	11

Introduction

You didn't get into this work to manage spreadsheets. You're here because you believe in something — a community, a cause, a group of people who deserve better. And yet, day after day, the tools meant to support that mission can feel like they're getting in the way of it.

This guide is for the leaders, managers, and coordinators working across the volunteering, not-for-profit, and community services sector in Australia. It's not a technical manual. It's a practical, honest conversation about where technology can genuinely help – and how to take the next step without feeling overwhelmed.

Williams Technology has spent over 15 years working alongside organisations like yours. We know the pressures you're under, and we know what's possible when the right technology is in the right hands.



The for-purpose sector:

Mighty, motivated, and under pressure

The scale of what you do

Let's start with the numbers, because they matter.

According to the 2025 State of Volunteering Report,¹ approximately one million South Australians volunteer each year — that's 63.7% of the population aged 15 and over. Together, they contribute nearly 295 million hours annually, equivalent to around 163,800 full-time positions. The sector generates an estimated \$45 billion in total social and economic value, with a return of \$4.70 for every \$1 invested.

Volunteering is not a nice-to-have. It is essential infrastructure for Australian communities.

The pressures you're navigating

That extraordinary contribution is happening against a backdrop of real and growing pressure.

Volunteer retention — rated as a critical concern by 78.1% of volunteer managers — now outranks recruitment as the sector's top operational challenge. Volunteer mental health and safety has emerged as the most critically important issue for 82.8% of volunteer managers, while administrative burden and red tape remain persistent friction points.

There's also a growing 'capacity divide'. Organisations led by paid managers tend to have greater access to tools and infrastructure, while those led by unpaid managers frequently operate with far fewer resources.

Why technology matters now more than ever

20.6% of volunteering is now conducted online or from home — digital infrastructure is no longer a luxury. And the sector is moving: 35.3% of volunteer managers are already using AI in some capacity. Technology, used thoughtfully, can reduce administrative burden, improve volunteer experiences, and free up organisations to focus on what they're actually here to do.

The goal isn't to become a technology company. It's to use the right tools to serve your community better.

Source:

¹ 2025 State of Volunteering Report: South Australia.



1 million
Volunteers each year



295 million
Hours contributed annually



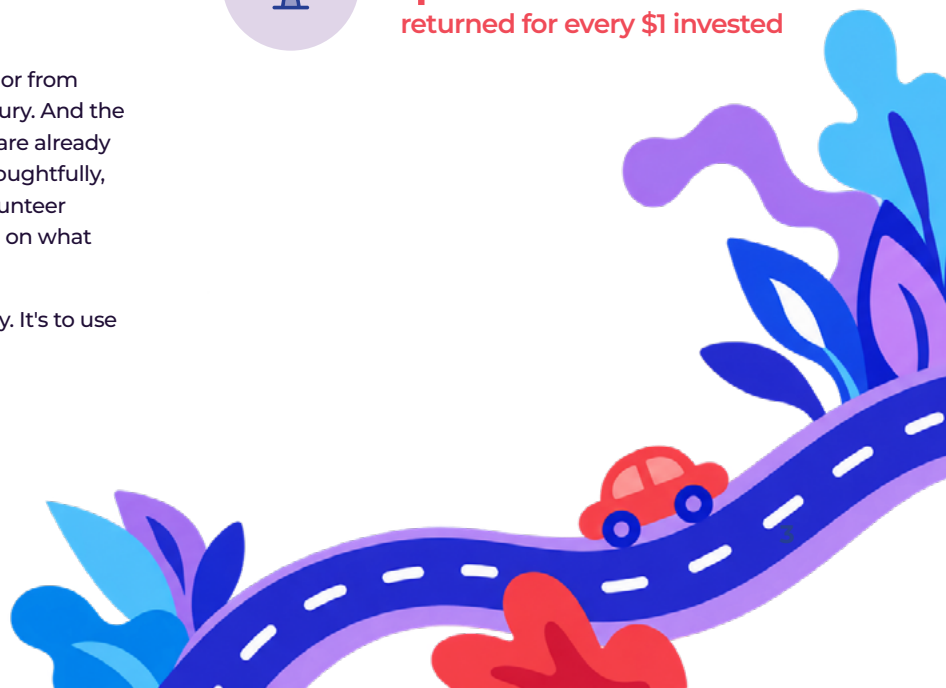
163,800
Full-time equivalent positions



\$45 billion
In social and economic value



\$3.70
returned for every \$1 invested





Making the most of what you already have

The tool duplication problem

Many for-purpose organisations pay for standalone scheduling, project management, or file-sharing tools without realising equivalent features are already included in their existing Microsoft 365 licensing.

This fragmentation creates operational complexity, introduces security gaps, and wastes budget. Don't fall into the trap of tool-sprawl – always using the 'best tool' for every task doesn't guarantee better outcomes. Efficient, effective outcomes trump the 'best tool' every time.

Consolidating within a single, trusted ecosystem reduces complexity, tightens security, simplifies data governance, and saves money.

Microsoft 365: Your most underutilised asset

Before purchasing another third-party tool, check what is already included in your Microsoft 365 licence:

- 2 Teams:** Real-time communication for staff and volunteers, featuring live translation.
- 2 Shifts:** A free volunteer rostering and scheduling tool embedded directly in Teams.
- 2 Bookings:** Manage public appointments and volunteer slots via an Outlook-connected portal.
- 2 SharePoint & OneDrive:** Secure, centralised document management with role-based access.
- 2 Forms:** Built-in tool for volunteer registration, intake forms, and surveys.

Getting your data house in order

When volunteer records, client details, and operational reports are scattered across different, unconnected systems, it creates a massive administrative burden and makes tracking impact difficult.

To build a more efficient system, you first need to understand what you currently have. A simple data audit is the best starting point: take stock of the digital tools you use, map out where all your data is stored, and identify any duplicated or redundant information.

Centralising your data within a single secure ecosystem improves both efficiency and cybersecurity. Whether you use dedicated software or are just starting out, streamlining your data is a logical and highly achievable goal.

Technology that actually helps:

Practical technology examples for for-purpose organisations

Streamlining volunteer management

Volunteer platforms automate rostering, onboarding, and tracking, reducing admin loads. While digital recruitment is popular, personal referrals remain the main pathway into volunteering (45.9%) — technology should support relationships, not replace them. Furthermore, with many volunteers requiring digital assistance, investing in accessible, inclusive platforms is essential.

Chatbots and after-hours support

Wombat Housing's chatbot, WomBot, helps users navigate homelessness services. Since over 60% of inquiries occur after hours, the AI-powered chatbot captures these requests and connects people with support when staff are offline. This technology doesn't replace your team — it extends your capacity when they go home.

Reducing administrative burden with automation

JusticeNet SA integrated AI into their internal case management to automate client onboarding, freeing up staff for complex cases. AI tools can also draft grant templates and identify corporate sponsors in hours rather than weeks. Additionally, standard tools like Microsoft can easily automate routine reminders and reporting. Less paperwork means more time for people.

Assistive technology for inclusion

The Make it easy app helps people with intellectual or visual disabilities by translating complex information — like signs or documents - into simple, digestible formats. Designing with accessibility in mind shows how technology can deepen your organisation's impact, not just improve its efficiency.

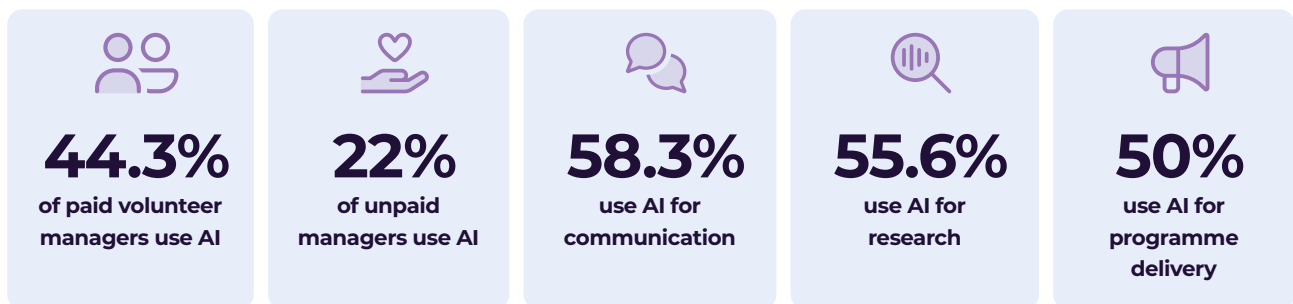


Artificial intelligence:

A practical perspective for the for-purpose sector

Where the sector stands on AI

The for-purpose sector is embracing AI, but adoption varies: 44.3% of paid volunteer managers use AI compared to 22.0% of unpaid managers. It is primarily used for communications (58.3%), research (55.6%), and program delivery (50.0%). For non-users, the main barriers are safety concerns, perceived unreliability, and a lack of training. These legitimate concerns deserve practical answers.



AI as a force multiplier – not a magic fix

AI amplifies what already exists. It can accelerate clear, well-managed workflows, but it will also amplify existing disorganisation. Avoid the trap of 'inflated expectations' — AI won't solve everything. Organisations don't need to be fully 'AI-ready' on day one — steady, incremental adoption is the wisest path forward.

Getting started: A step-by-step approach to AI adoption

Before adopting AI, consider these key questions:

1. How does this tool align with our mission?
2. What are the risks, and how will we manage them?
2. Who is responsible for overseeing its use?

Practical first steps:

1. Start with built-in tools (like Microsoft Copilot in Microsoft 365).
2. Automate one high-friction, low-risk administrative task first.
3. Keep a human in the loop for review and to make sensitive decisions.
4. Train your team.

The human-in-the-loop principle

Public AI models often lack the local cultural and social context of your community. For decisions involving vulnerable individuals, human oversight is essential. AI should amplify human capacity, not replace judgment. Transparency about AI use builds vital trust with volunteers, clients, and donors.



Cybersecurity:

Protecting your organisation, your volunteers, and the people you serve

Why cybersecurity matters for the for-purpose sector

For-purpose organisations hold sensitive data: volunteer records, client information, donor details, and financial data. A cyber incident can result in financial loss, data breaches, reputational damage — and harm to the people you exist to serve.

Common incidents include phishing, business email compromise, and website compromise. But the most common vulnerabilities aren't technical — they're cultural.

Assuming cybersecurity is someone else's responsibility, or not knowing where sensitive data lives, puts your organisation at risk.

Cybersecurity awareness is an act of care for your volunteers, your clients, and your community.

The risk of public AI tools

Free, public AI tools do not provide the same data privacy protections as paid, enterprise-grade equivalents. Uploading sensitive client or volunteer data into these tools is an increasingly common risk.

Upgrading to tools like Microsoft Copilot or paid ChatGPT tiers, and keeping operations within a single secure ecosystem, reduces your digital footprint and simplifies data governance.

Your cybersecurity starter kit

Start here:

1. **Turn on multi-factor authentication (MFA):** this single step dramatically reduces unauthorised access.
2. **Enable automatic updates:** outdated software is a common entry point for attackers.
3. **Back up your data regularly:** and test those backups.
4. Use a password manager for strong, unique passwords across all accounts.
5. Train staff and volunteers to recognise phishing and social engineering, and run regular simulated phishing tests to keep awareness high.
6. Regularly review access controls so people only see data relevant to their role, and update or revoke permissions immediately when roles change, or staff leave.
7. Document and test your incident response plan before you need it.



Building a culture of shared responsibility

Organisations most at risk treat cybersecurity as solely an IT concern. When volunteers and staff understand that good digital habits protect the people they serve, security becomes part of the mission — not an overhead.

Compliance and governance basics

Two essentials for every for-purpose organisation:

2 Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB): Know your obligations. Serious breaches may require notifying affected individuals and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

2 The ACSC Essential 8: A practical, staged maturity model from the Australian Cyber Security Centre suited to any level of digital maturity.

Maintaining an annual register of your information assets is a foundational governance practice that costs little and protects a great deal.



Building a technology roadmap for your organisation

Start where you are

You don't need to implement everything at once. The most effective technology strategies start with a clear picture of where you currently stand: what tools do you have, what are you actually using, what's duplicated, and what's missing?

A technology audit is the logical first step — and it doesn't need to be complex. Even a simple conversation with the right partner can surface opportunities you hadn't considered.

Align technology to mission

The right questions to ask before any technology decision:

- 1 What are the biggest operational friction points that technology could reduce?
- 2 Where is volunteer or staff time being spent on tasks that could be automated?
- 3 What would better data visibility allow us to do differently?
- 4 How can technology improve the experience of the people we serve?

Prioritise, plan, and pace

A suggested phased approach:

Phase 1:

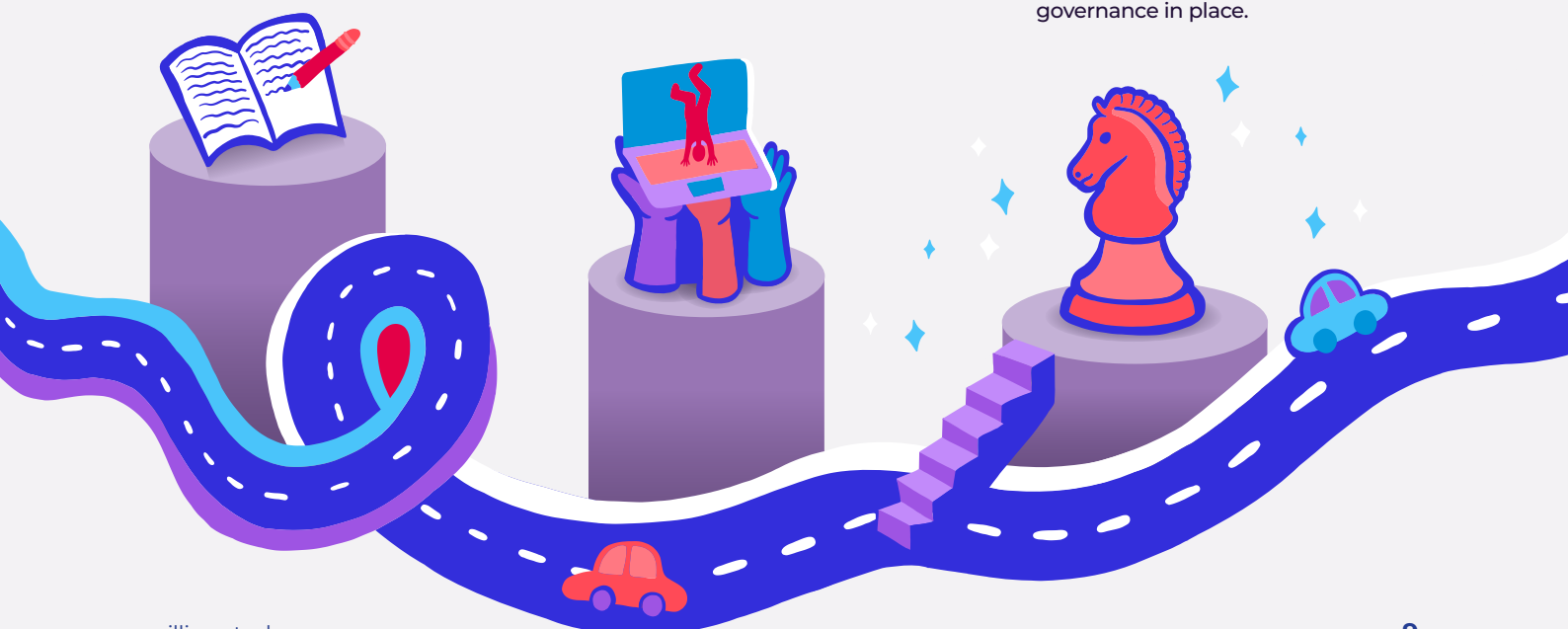
Get the basics right. Consolidate tools, secure your data, turn on MFA, and ensure your team is trained.

Phase 2:

Identify and automate high-friction, low-risk administrative tasks. Maximise the value of tools already in your licence.

Phase 3:

Once the foundation is solid, explore more advanced capabilities — AI-assisted tools, predictive analytics, chatbots - with confidence and clear governance in place.



Williams Technology:

Your partner in the for-purpose space

Who we are

Williams Technology was founded in South Australia in 2011. For over 15 years, we've supported SMEs, professional services firms, allied health providers, and for-purpose organisations with tailored ICT solutions that meet real-world needs.

Our mission is simple: to make people feel successful with technology – through reliable, secure solutions and honest, long-term strategic guidance.

Our founder, Tim Williams, volunteers personally in the for-purpose sector, supporting Motor Events Racing, a motorsport series that has raised over \$400,000 for Rare Cancers Australia. This sector isn't just a market segment for us – it's a community we're genuinely part of.

What makes Williams Technology different

- 1 Tailored solutions, every time. No cookie-cutter approaches. Every engagement starts with listening.
- 2 Transparent client portal. A single-pane-of-glass view of your support tickets, assets, Microsoft 365 licensing, and strategic roadmap.
- 2 ACSC partnership. Access to classified, non-public cyber threat intelligence shared on behalf of our clients.
- 2 Full-service capability. From strategic reviews and planning through to infrastructure management, Microsoft 365 security hardening, MDR, and cyber awareness training.



How we work with for-purpose organisations

We bring technical expertise and genuine sector empathy to every engagement. We help organisations get more value from tools they already have - particularly Microsoft 365 - with accessible, jargon-free guidance that empowers rather than overwhelms. Every recommendation we make is designed with the sector's resource constraints in mind.

Conclusion:

Technology isn't the destination – it's the vehicle

The for-purpose sector's contribution to Australian communities is extraordinary — \$45 billion in social and economic value, 295 million hours of care, and a workforce that would be the largest industry in South Australia if counted as one. That contribution deserves infrastructure that's fit for purpose.

Technology, used well, is one of the most powerful levers available to for-purpose organisations. It can expand reach, reduce burden, and deepen impact. But it doesn't need to happen all at once, and it doesn't need to be complicated.

You just need to take the next right step.

Williams Technology is here to walk that path alongside you — as a partner who understands your sector, respects your constraints, and genuinely wants to see your organisation thrive.

Ready to explore what technology can do for your organisation?

We'd love to have a no-obligation conversation about where you are now, where you want to go, and how we can help you get there. Reach out to the Williams Technology team at williamstech.com.au to book your complimentary technology review.

Ready to take the next step?

Book your complimentary technology review

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