

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the mission, vision and values of Prison Network?

Prison Network's vision is for dignity, hope and purpose for women in and beyond prison. We do this by journeying with women in and beyond prison, providing the support and courage they need to navigate positive pathways and create change.

- We start with acceptance
- We engage unconditionally
- We make connections that transition from the inside to the outside
- We value family and community ties
- We fill the gaps
- We are here while you need us
- We are driven by our faith

## What Volunteer Opportunities may be available?

Below gives an overview of what opportunities may be available.

**Program Volunteer** – Craft, Fun with Mum, Discussion Groups, Game on Day, Sunday Live

**Professional Services** – IT Support, videography, photography, social media

**One-Off Volunteer** – Fun with Mum Packing Days, Christmas Hamper Packing Days, Craft Packing Days, Bunnings BBQ Fundraisers, Trivia Night, and other fundraiser events

**Lived Experience Volunteer** – Focus Groups, Speaking Engagements, Fundraiser Events

## What commitment is required?

It will depend on what team you join. For our in-prison programs:

### Dame Phyllis Frost Centre

- Mid-week craft programs (Tuesday or Thursday 2pm – 5:30pm) is a weekly commitment
- Fun with Mum program (Sunday 12:30pm – 4:30pm) is a monthly commitment
- Game on Day sports program (Saturday 9:30am – 2pm) is every 4 - 6 weeks

### Tarregower Prison

- Friday Night Craft (6:45pm – 9:30pm) is a monthly commitment

Other programs such as Christian Discussion Group, Sunday Live and Fitness are run by our staff members and senior volunteers.

Outside of the programs, all volunteers commit to attending our annual training session(s) which may be in person or online and are approximately 2 to 3 hours.

Any other additional training required by the prison or by Prison Network, for instance Child Safety Training or a Prison Induction, may be required.

Other opportunities to help, for example fundraising, are optional.

## What exactly do volunteers do?

This depends on the team they join. In a craft program, they may:

- Help with set up of the craft room
- Assist the women and/or children with their craft
- Support and encourage the women in a warm and friendly manner
- Help with clean up at the end of the program

In a sports program, they may:

- Play a variety of sports with the women like netball, soccer, basketball, volleyball, etc
- Help facilitate days like “Survivor” and “Minute to Win It”
- Demonstrate good teamwork and encourage the women as they participate

## Where are the programs held?

**Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC)** is located at 101-201 Riding Boundary Rd, Ravenhall Victoria. It is 30 minutes west of the CBD.

**Tarrengower Prison** is located at 9 Maldon-Shelbourne Rd, Nuggetty Victoria. It is 1 hour 40 minutes northwest of the CBD and close to the town of Maldon.

## Is Car Pooling available?

Car pooling is not always an option as our volunteers are from many different locations. We try our best to help coordinate carpooling options, but this is not always possible. Public Transport options are limited too. It is best if our volunteers can drive to and from the Prisons.

## Who participates in the programs?

Our programs are available to all women in prison should they wish to attend. Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) is a maximum-security prison, so our volunteers are working with women who are serving light sentences through to heavier sentences. Tarrengower Prison is a minimum-security prison so our programs there serve women who are lower risk to the community.

## Will I be safe?

Prison is a highly governed and secure environment. Our volunteers will always be accompanied by a Prison Officer or by an authorised Senior Staff Member/Volunteer. We always work in teams of two or more.

## What if I have a criminal record?

Due to the requirements of Corrections Victoria, you will not be approved to volunteer with our in-prison programs if you have a criminal record. However, there may be opportunities in volunteering with Prison Network outside the prisons.

## **Do I need to be crafty/sporty or have experience?**

We value any knowledge or experience that you may bring to volunteering with Prison Network. You do not, however, have to be crafty to be useful in any of our craft programs. Volunteers do need to have the ability to demonstrate effective active listening skills and the ability to exercise self-awareness.

In our sports program called Game on Day, you do need to be physically active and have basic knowledge of the games played. The ability to play a variety of sports is important. You do not need to be an expert, but you do need to be co-ordinated and can switch easily between various ball games.

## **Tell me more about each program and other work Prison Network does?**

### **Dame Phyllis Frost Centre**

**Craft** – these are weekly sessions providing a wide range of artistic projects and preparation of various snacks and treats and are held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Some examples of craft may be decorating diaries, creating wall hangings, making fleece scarves, decorating photo frames, cooking, and assembling rocky road, lemon slice, apple pies and decorating Christmas cakes. These are just a few of the many activities that may be offered.

**Fun with Mum** – provides interactive activities for children and their mothers when visiting with the aim of sustaining or re-developing healthy mother/child relationships. Child friendly crafts along with games for a wide variety of age groups are provided during the child only visits with their mum.

**Fitness Training** – weekly fitness and strength building activities catering for all abilities from the first timer to the more experienced. This is conducted by our trained and highly skilled Support Worker.

**Christian Discussion Group** – weekly sessions where a range of life-skills or topics are discussed based on Biblical principles. This group provides a forum for women to discuss and explore their values, priorities, and the person they wish to become in a positive, accepting environment.

**Game on Day** – every 4 to 6 weeks on a Saturday, Prison Network brings a team of volunteers to play a variety of sport and fun games with the women. Some games may be netball, volleyball, soccer, and themed days like 'Minute to Win it' or 'Survivor'.

**Remand Support & General Visits by our Support Workers** – introduces women in prison to the work and in-prison programs delivered by Prison Network and provides referrals, court support and general counselling as requested.

**Various other events/projects** – each year Prison Network helps put on a Christmas Party for the women and provides each woman in prison with a Christmas gift assembled by our volunteers at the Christmas Packing Day.

## **Tarregower Prison**

**Christian Discussion Group** – fortnightly sessions where a range of life-skills or topics are discussed based on Biblical principles. This group provides a forum for women to discuss and explore their values, priorities, and the person they wish to become in a positive, accepting environment.

**Craft** – these are fortnightly sessions providing a wide range of artistic projects & preparation of various snacks and treats and are held on Friday evenings. Some examples of craft may be decorating diaries, motivational wall hangings, making fleece scarves, decorating photo frames, cooking, and assembling rocky road, lemon slice, apple pies and decorating Christmas cakes. These are just a few of the many activities that may be offered.

## **Post Release Work**

- Court Support (by staff members)
- One-on-One and Crisis Support (by staff members and some senior volunteers)
- Outside Discussion Group (weekly small group gathering)
- Recovery Group (weekly support group over zoom)
- Sponsoring and transporting children to holiday camps
- Connecting women and families to local churches and community groups (if they request)
- Fundraising and Promotional Events
- Speaking Engagements (invite our CEO or staff members to come speak at your event)

## **Can I join on trial basis? What if I find it is not for me?**

New volunteers will have a probationary period (three months for weekly volunteers and six months for monthly volunteers) to ensure they are well suited to the work and the team. During this time, volunteers may meet with the Volunteer Manager for encouragement, training, and issue resolution if necessary. We ask volunteers to make a minimum commitment of 12 months.

***Thank you for considering volunteering with Prison Network.***