

# **Volunteer case study: Ben MacCormack**

There are times that professional experience can be hard to come by if you're trying to enter the professional world or just expand your career.

But Ben MacCormack discovered a way to get that experience and find enjoyment along the way: volunteering.

MacCormack's volunteering has taken him around the world – he has volunteered at sports events in Australia and construction sites in South Africa. It's the same global trek with his career, working with some of Australia's most iconic sports around the world, including AFL and cricket.

For MacCormack, volunteering has been key to his professional development but he advises others to be strategic in where they volunteer.

"I've been pretty targeted in thinking about the opportunities that would help me, like large scale events", he says. "Sports events do that really well – they rely on volunteers – they actually generally give really important roles critical to the success of the event".

Sometimes those critical roles can stretch you in unexpected ways, like when MacCormack was "thrown into the deep end" and volunteered to "set up gymnastics equipment for world class athletes who deal with very fine margins" for the first time.

He laughs, "that was a deep end experience!", but MacCormack maintains that unexpected challenges while volunteering are transferrable to your career. "It teaches you about starting a new job. At times you are thrown into the deep end – it's about learning on the go and that translates really well into the workplace."

MacCormack believes that volunteering isn't only about direct work experience, it's also about picking up skills indirectly.

"Volunteering is more about picking up a mindset", he says. "For me, a lot of my roles have been working with volunteers in the sports industry which helps me understand the mindset of a volunteer - I understand what motivates them and why they are volunteering. It's the same as when you're an employee – when you're watching managers."

“From a volunteer’s perspective, I think it helps round out a person’s skills. In a time when nothing is for free, for a person to do something for free and with no attachment to do that – a lot of their work goes unnoticed – it tells you something about them.” To MacCormack, that makes volunteers great employees.

Now responsible for hiring others to work at Cricket ACT, MacCormack eagerly looks for volunteers because he firmly believes volunteers make the best employees.

“Having been a volunteer myself and working in the sports industry, I see the value in volunteers. It tells me a bit about their nature and ability to go above and beyond,” he says.

But volunteering doesn’t have to be all about beefing up your resume. Ultimately, volunteering is good to do because it *feels* good to do.

MacCormack agrees, pointing to one volunteering experience that was completely unconnected to his career. “I had an amazing experience in South Africa and spent a week in a township painting signs and construction work.”

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