



Volunteering Victoria

Submission from
Volunteering Victoria

VICTORIAN STATE BUDGET 2018-19

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ABOUT US

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering. We work to promote and build a vibrant, prosperous and strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable. We support volunteer managers, volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. As a peak body the focus of our role is on professional development, policy, advocacy, research and program innovation, all for the benefit of the volunteering sector.

Our vision is for resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

As a member-based organisation, with over 360 not-for-profit and corporate members, we bring together diverse people and organisations across many sectors with a commitment to volunteering in our State.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A thriving volunteering sector is underpinned by the principles of collaboration, support, inclusion and accessibility.

This 2019 State Budget Submission outlines a range of proposals Volunteering Victoria seeks to progress, in collaboration with government and Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs). While volunteering supports nearly every aspect of the Victorian society and economy, this submission focusses on opportunities in place-based capacity building, multicultural volunteering, volunteering and disability (particularly the NDIS transition), and volunteering opportunities for skills, jobs and growth.

A particular focus during 2018 and beyond will be to increase support, engagement and presence across regional Victoria. To enable this, Volunteering Victoria calls for recognition and support of the local infrastructure which enables volunteering

such as VSOs, Neighbourhood Houses, Men's Sheds, service clubs and so on. These kinds of organisations play a vital role in strengthening the community at the local level. Our work is bolstered by the Victorian Volunteering Support Network (VVSN) which promotes the principles of volunteering and builds on collective skills, resources and expertise to increase the capacity of volunteering in communities across Victoria.

The Ministerial Council for Volunteers, with leadership from the Parliamentary Secretary for Volunteers, Gabrielle Williams and support from the Department of Health and Human Services, has undertaken policy development to support the volunteering sector. The development of strategic priorities for volunteers, through the Ministerial Council has paved the way for much needed investment for the volunteering sector.

Volunteering Victoria will continue to advocate to government that investment in the volunteering sector should be a top priority for the government so that the sector, the workforce and beneficiaries of volunteering – all Victorians – are positively impacted.



PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

The recommendations and proposals outlined in this submission are aligned with and underpinned by the following principles:



Collaborative



Supportive

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Government Volunteering Sector Support Model

1. That the Victorian Government retains a dedicated volunteering government portfolio, with consideration following the 2018 Victorian state election for volunteering to be assigned to a Ministerial portfolio.
2. That the responsibility for the oversight of volunteering is assumed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to enable whole-of-government coordination across all volunteering related portfolios.
3. That the Ministerial Council for Volunteers and Volunteering Victoria continue to enhance formal coordination and strategic alignment.
4. That the Victorian Government invests more in peak body funding to support growth and innovation in the volunteering sector.

Department of Health and Human Services & Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Place-based Volunteering and Local Government

5. That the Victorian Government acknowledges the critical role that local Volunteer Support Organisations have in community connectedness, and resource Volunteering Victoria to support building place-based Volunteer Support Organisations' capacity.
 - a. Enhance state-wide volunteer management capacity through professional development (estimated cost: \$150,000)
 - b. Establishment of a VSO resource platform (estimated cost: \$180,000)

Department of Health and Human Services



PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

Inclusive

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

6. That the Victorian Government commit to resourcing the integration of proactive management of spontaneous volunteers into emergency management systems across all of Victoria.
 - a. A model for managing spontaneous emergency volunteering (estimated cost: \$100, 000 - \$120,000)

Emergency Management Victoria & Department of Health and Human Services

7. That the Victorian Government support effective delivery of volunteering services across the diverse range of council services by resourcing specialised professional development opportunities for identified local needs.
 - a. Supporting local councils, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, through training in aligning practice to the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (estimated cost: \$130,000).

Local Government Victoria

Multicultural Volunteering, NDIS and Disability

8. That the Victorian Government continue to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by culturally diverse individuals from a diverse group of communities, and resource Volunteering Victoria to implement the following proposals.
 - a. Proposal to create specialised multicultural volunteering materials, workshops and training opportunities (estimated cost: \$90,000)
 - b. Proposal to actively engage refugee communities through a volunteer program (estimated cost: \$150,000)
 - c. Proposal to support and strengthen multicultural communities through tailored volunteer programs that meet the needs of their community and facilitate greater inter-cultural community engagement (estimated cost: \$150,000)

Department of Health and Human Services & Department of Premier and Cabinet

PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING



Accessible

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

9. That Government fund Volunteering Victoria to build policy capacity and support for volunteer programs and volunteering organisations transitioning to the NDIS.
 - a. Proposal to deliver professional development in volunteer management opportunities tailored to the disability support workforce context (estimated cost: \$200,000)
 - b. Proposal to establish community of practice networks to facilitate state-wide transition for volunteer involving organisations (estimated cost: \$200,000)
 - c. Proposal to bridge the transition for people with disabilities into volunteering (estimated cost: \$250,000).

Department of Health and Human Services & Department of Premier and Cabinet

Volunteering Pathways to Support Career Transition

10. That the Victorian Government collaborate with Volunteering Victoria and explore a range of ways in which volunteering can support people through their working lives and strengthen the Victorian economy with skills development.
 - a. Proposal to build on existing place-based infrastructure with additional resources for volunteer managers to support young people and/or disadvantaged communities into volunteering roles (estimated cost: \$25,000).
 - b. Proposal for Volunteering Victoria to work with the Victorian Government Departments and bodies to develop a comprehensive public servant skilled employee-volunteering package (estimated cost: \$175,000).
 - c. Proposal to deliver a Latrobe Valley Volunteering Program (estimated cost: \$250,000 per annum).

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

11. That the Victorian Government recognise the enormous contribution of informal volunteering to Victorian communities and fund promotion of and research into strengthening informal volunteering.
 - a. Proposal to fund research to better understand how to participate in community through informal volunteering and to recognise the benefits and impact of informal volunteering (estimated cost: \$130,000).

Department of Health and Human Services

VOLUNTEERING SECTOR CONTEXT IN VICTORIA

Volunteering is “time willingly given without financial gain, for the common good”ⁱ. Volunteering makes a significant contribution to Victoria’s society, economy and environment. Dr. Lisel O’Dwyer estimated volunteering in 2010 was valued at \$200 billion in the Australian economyⁱⁱ, with up to 5.8 million individuals volunteering over 743 million hours in 2014ⁱⁱⁱ.

The 2016 Census rate for formal volunteering in Victoria was 19.22%^{iv}, compared to 19.4% in 2011^v and 19.0% nationally^{vi}. People aged 15-19 volunteered at a higher than average rate of 19.8% but this rate drops to 18.3%

among 20-24 year olds and down to 14.9% among 25-29 year olds^{vii}. The volunteer rate was 17.6% in Greater Melbourne compared to 24.3% for the rest of Victoria^{viii}.

Like the contemporary workforce, the nature of volunteering is changing. There is a shift underway from traditional, longer-term, role based volunteering to shorter term, episodic and virtual volunteering, particularly among younger people^{ix}. Digital technologies are changing the forms and nature of volunteering and informal volunteering is re-imagining participation through distributive leadership networks.

Some of the challenges the volunteering sector has communicated to Volunteering Victoria over the course of 2017 are included in the following list.

- Organisations want a diverse, multigenerational workforce and often seek the energy and fresh thinking that young people bring. However, this needs to align with the expectations of young people who generally are motivated by work experience, developing skills and by identifying with an organisation that makes an impact^x.
- Higher levels of volunteer workforce turnover due to shorter-term assignments and micro/episodic volunteering can be resource intensive for organisations^{xi}.
- With grant funding being a key source of resourcing for volunteering programs, there is an increasing need to support the sector to be able to demonstrate the outcomes and impact of volunteering, beyond measuring statistical outputs or traditional key performance indicators. This puts greater monitoring, reporting and evaluation pressure on volunteer-involving organisations^{xii}.
- Continued professionalisation of volunteer management with increased need for investment in professional development of staff who support volunteers and volunteering.
- Ageing demographics which puts strains on the volunteer workforce for services such as healthcare and community support, and particularly impacts rural and regional areas^{xiii}.
- Volunteer involving organisations are feeling the impact of federal policies (such as Work for the Dole and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)) which often need to be accommodated for without appropriate resources for volunteer managers and their programs^{xiv}.

Managers of volunteers often wear multiple hats; they are all at once HR managers, team leaders, supporters and active engagers. Managers of volunteers often go beyond their job description to “make it happen”, hence the importance of Volunteering Victoria as a professional development trainer, sector facilitator and advocate.

Screening and complying with government obligations, while necessary for the protection of vulnerable clients and for risk mitigation to an organisation, requires significant resources. It is common for a volunteer program manager to manage a volunteer workforce of hundreds of volunteers.

Volunteering Victoria encourages both federal and state governments to consider the implications of compliance obligations in the volunteering context. It remains important for government to assessment the impact of major initiatives and ‘red tape’ on the unpaid workforce.

The sector recognises that volunteering is not ‘free’ and it does not ‘just happen’^{xv}. The enormous contribution of volunteers significantly reduces social and economic costs in ways which benefit the community, not-for-profit organisation, businesses, the workforce and ultimately the Victorian Government.



The Power of Association: Volunteering Victoria State Conference

Melbourne 22-23 June 2017

In a major achievement for the volunteering sector, Volunteering Victoria delivered the State's first conference dedicated to volunteering. With the goal to challenge, inspire and empower, the multi-streamed conference agenda covered topics related to the theme – The Power of Association.

For the first time a diverse range of volunteer involving organisations came together as a sector. Over 300 delegates assembled as leaders to discuss local, state and global trends. Delegates contributed their information to others via 70 workshops. The conference provided a platform for organisations which do not typically meet, to network, and learn from each other. The conference delivered exceptional value for the Victorian Government by:

- Giving a voice to the sector – representing interests and developing a collective voice
- Building on the strategic priorities of the Ministerial Council for Volunteers
- Sharing resources across organisations through workshops, discussion and networking
- Identifying risks, challenges and trends impacting on volunteering
- Providing valuable thought leadership through research and international benchmarking.



HOW THIS SUBMISSION WAS DEVELOPED

In preparing this submission, Volunteering Victoria undertook targeted consultation with our members, particularly through our special interest groups and relevant members:

- The Victorian Volunteering Support Network (VVSN), with secretariat support from Volunteering Victoria – represents its members throughout Victoria, and advocates for the strengthening and expansion of effective and sustainable volunteering support services across Victoria, regionally and locally
- Leadership in Volunteering Special Interest Group – to support the interests, activities and advancement of leaders and managers of volunteers and volunteer management
- Corporate Volunteering Special Interest Group - which progresses thought leadership and strategic development of corporate volunteering programs and facilitates peer support and knowledge sharing across sectors
- Multicultural Volunteering Special Interest Group – to support the advancement, growth and interests of multicultural volunteering in Victoria
- Volunteer Managers in local governments across Victoria supporting a broad range of community services
- Individual meetings with member organisations keen to provide a perspective and commentary on the needs of volunteer involving organisations, volunteer managers, and volunteers
- NDIS Volunteering Advisory Group – to guide the development of research, policy, advocacy and professional development in relation to volunteering and the NDIS design and rollout in Victoria.

The “Volunteering as a pathway to career transition” Research Roundtable (held in Geelong on the 9 November 2017) informed this submission. We are grateful for the valuable contribution of academics Professor Philip Taylor, Federation University Australia, Dr Julie Connolly, Brotherhood of St Laurence and practitioners Marijke Fotia and Barb Hebb, along with the kind support of Volunteering Geelong.

Mindful of the difficulty in responding to consultation, Volunteering Victoria gratefully acknowledges all of the contributions that individuals and organisation made in the development of this submission.

Special thanks and recognition goes to the skilled research volunteers who significantly contributed their time, energy and skills to the development of this submission: Sarah Thompson, Brydie Shackleford and Alison Vydulinska.

We welcome feedback at any time. Please contact Volunteering Victoria for further information or opportunities for collaboration around any elements in this submission or to further develop any of this submission’s proposals. Where further consultation or clarification is necessary, Volunteering Victoria welcomes the involvement of our members, relevant organisations and the broader volunteering sector.





Collaborative

We are committed to building on and leveraging the collaboration inherent in the volunteering sector.

Government Volunteering Sector Support Model

Getting the structural fundamentals right to support the volunteering sector is the best way over the medium-long term to develop robust, well-scoped and targeted support for the sector.

At a time of significant and swift demographic, technological, economic and social change, the appropriate model for government and peak body support for the volunteering sector is essential. Volunteering Victoria recommends that following to the Victorian Government, particularly for consideration following the 2018 State Government election.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the Victorian Government retains a dedicated volunteering government portfolio, with consideration following the 2018 Victorian state election for volunteering to be assigned to a Ministerial portfolio.

Dedicated volunteering portfolio representation is essential to support the sector and ensure that the impact of major decisions are minimised.

In South Australia, volunteering is a Ministerial responsibility. This ensures that volunteering is considered in major policy and budget decisions and facilitates greater coordination across departments^{xvi}.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the responsibility for the oversight of volunteering is assumed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to enable whole-of-government coordination across all volunteering related portfolios.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) supports the community sector primarily through a health and wellbeing perspective^{xviii}. While there are many synergies between volunteering and welfare issues, the volunteering sector is also much broader and intersects with almost all government portfolios.

As illustrated in the Victorian Government's Volunteers in Victoria 2017 report, volunteering intersects with many sectors such as emergency services, arts, culture and heritage, environment and conservation, tourism, major events, higher education, sport and recreation and so on^{xvii}.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) has the function and the existing infrastructure to coordinate across departments and provide a whole-of-government approach to volunteering issues.

For example, finding solutions for managing spontaneous volunteers (such as the HelpOUT program) involves building resilient communities (DHHS), aligning to emergency management systems and frameworks (Emergency Management Victoria) and working closely



Collaborative

with local governments (Local Government Victoria). A centralised support could coordinate these portfolios more efficiently for better outcomes, rather than coordination between portfolios in departments and agencies.

Volunteering-dedicated responsibility in DPC would provide support for the existing volunteering capacity in DHHS, thereby leveraging that capacity and the policy work within government for greater impact for our communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the Ministerial Council for Volunteers and Volunteering Victoria continue to enhance formal coordination and strategic alignment.

The Victorian Government established the Ministerial Council for Volunteers in 2015 to provide strategic policy advice to government on matters related to the volunteering sector in Victoria.

Chaired by Ms Gabrielle Williams MP, the Parliamentary Secretary for Volunteers, the Ministerial Council for Volunteers has developed four strategic priorities:

1. The repositioning and valuing of volunteering
2. Supporting leaders and managers of volunteers
3. Enhanced collaboration across the sector and government
4. The use of social media and technology^{xx}.

Volunteering Victoria supports the strategic priorities of the Ministerial Council and is committed to working collaboratively with the Council to further strengthen the volunteering sector. We are encouraged by the revised advisory role Volunteering Victoria now plays for the Ministerial Council as a strong basis for future collaboration. As the state peak body, Volunteering Victoria is well positioned to inform policy development, consult with members and broadly across the sector, and facilitate pilot initiatives and programs.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Victorian Government invests more in peak body funding to support growth and innovation in the volunteering sector.

Volunteering Victoria enjoys a collaborative and constructive relationship with the DHHS. We welcome the support from the Department to improve our funding agreement, including a modest increase and move towards a four year funding agreement. This will facilitate Volunteering Victoria's ability to plan strategically in consultation with our members and in alignment with the Victorian Government's priorities.

As the Victorian Government understands, investment in the management and leadership of volunteering has significant benefits to volunteering in Victoria, to a broad range of portfolios across government and to the Victorian community as a whole. It is a cost effective and efficient way of supporting the development of a sustainable and resilient volunteer workforce for the state^{xxi}.

Volunteering Victoria is uniquely positioned to provide government with a singular focus on volunteering, in all forms and across all sectors.

The current peak body funding for Volunteering Victoria contributes to supporting some of the core programs and services we provide for the leaders and managers of volunteers. However, more investment would allow Volunteering Victoria to better support the Ministerial Council and the volunteering sector to grow and innovate. In addition, increased peak body funding would assist Volunteering Victoria to pursue initiatives that the Victorian Government support, such as greater geographic and sectoral representation and a bigger presence across regional Victoria.



Supportive

The volunteer sector is properly supported, professionalised and resourced particularly managers of volunteers.

Place-based Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the Victorian Government acknowledges the critical role that local Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs) have in community connectedness, and resource Volunteering Victoria to support building place-based Volunteer Support Organisations' capacity.

Local VSOs are critical to delivery of services that address the needs of diverse geographic and demographic communities across Australia, through support for good practice engagement and management of volunteers. These place-based support organisations work collaboratively with bodies at a state and national level, connecting wider policy and research through to their local communities.

In Victoria, the Victorian Volunteer Support Network (VVSN) and Volunteering Victoria support many VSOs. Volunteering Victoria is a member of the VVSN, and provides secretariat and executive support for the network. The VVSN encourages sharing of peer knowledge across the network and represents its members by advocating for the strengthening and expansion of effective and sustainable VSOs across the whole of Victoria^{xxii}.

As the state peak body, Volunteering Victoria believes that VSOs have a critical role in ensuring a strong volunteering infrastructure across Victoria, with a local focus that is supported and enhanced through ongoing partnerships and collaboration.

Volunteering Victoria is seeking to leverage the valuable contribution of the VVSN and VSOs across Victoria through seeking funding support to deliver the following two proposals.



Supportive

RECOMMENDATION 5

Proposal 5a:

Enhance state-wide volunteer management capacity through professional development.

Estimated cost: \$150,000

OUTCOMES

- A continuously improving volunteering sector
- Greater consistency and alignment regionally, across Victoria and across Australia
- Improved management of volunteer programs and the volunteering workforce

HOW WE WILL DO IT

To support VSOs build their capacity we propose the delivery of a tailored, professional development-training package that supports and recognises VSOs as leaders in their communities.

This proposal would require the support of a full-time Professional Development – Regional Coordinator based at Volunteering Victoria. The role of the coordinator would be to develop partnership approaches and project management of the design, coordination, delivery, and evaluation of the professional development-training package. Training will be delivered through a blended approach (face-to-face, locally and online) to maximise reach and impact, and consist of the following three elements:

1. Delivery of Training in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
2. Delivery of Training in priority areas of need and interest
3. Development and delivery of a Train the Trainer workshop to build the capacity of VSOs in their delivery of training in operational good practice volunteer management (e.g. inclusive volunteering).

Proposal 5b:

Establishment of a VSO resource platform

Estimated Cost: \$180,000

OUTCOMES

- A platform for growth and innovation
- Broader support for volunteer management in Victoria in a way which is in line with the government's priorities

HOW WE WILL DO IT

With funding from the Victorian Government, Volunteering Victoria will develop an online platform to collect and make available common resources for the use of VSOs. To leverage the value and strength of each region, a platform would not only host key development materials, but also provide an opportunity for greater collaboration and shared learning.

VSOs support volunteer involving organisations to recruit and manage volunteers. The development of resources is required to enhance and expand capacity and capability of local volunteer management ecosystems.

Skilled volunteers would also support this proposal. The Resource Coordinator would work with VSOs to source, adapt, and develop materials that support them in building their capacity to address local community need around a broad range of topics that could include: youth employment; disability; senior Victorians, diversity and inclusiveness, sport and active recreation; and legal obligations in the volunteering sector.



Supportive

Spontaneous Emergency Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the Victorian Government commit to resourcing the integration of proactive management of spontaneous volunteers into emergency management systems across all of Victoria.

Initially funded by the Natural Disaster Resilience Grants, HelpOUT is a service provided by Volunteering Victoria in the G21^{xxiii}, Eastern Metropolitan and Hume regions, and incorporates the recruitment, deployment and management of spontaneous emergency volunteers to support community preparedness, relief and recovery - at the request of the community^{xxiv}.

The HelpOUT service combines:

- the Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers (MSEV) program which develops and deploys a workforce of skilled MSEVs to assist with managing spontaneous volunteers in the short term^{xxv}; and
- the spontaneous volunteer call centre which matches people who want to volunteer, with the needs of affected communities – before, during and after emergencies^{xxvi}.

Early work on HelpOUT came as a result of issues relating to management of spontaneous emergency volunteering during the 2009 bushfires, where 22,000 ‘spontaneous volunteers’ offered their help online or by phone^{xxvii}, but only a small number were used. Since 2012 Volunteering Victoria has been able to design and develop the service using government grant funding^{xxviii}.

HelpOUT facilitates empowered and resilient communities through better management of spontaneous volunteers before, during and after emergencies. HelpOUT provides local governments with greater capacity to respond to emergencies, utilising volunteers from a wider area as required.

Without a source of recurrent funding to continue the HelpOUT service, Volunteering Victoria will work with the Victorian Government, our partners and relevant organisations to develop alternative arrangements to identify and implement a solution for this important need.

Proposal 6a:

A model for managing spontaneous emergency volunteering

Estimated Cost: \$100,000 - \$120,000

OUTCOMES

- Greater capacity for local governments to respond to emergencies by utilising the skills of spontaneous volunteers
- Cost effective means to manage community expectations during an emergency
- Empowered and resilient communities through better management of spontaneous volunteers before, during and after emergencies

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Development and implementation of an ongoing, sustainable model which meets the needs of volunteers, emergency response organisations, communities, local governments and the Victorian Government.



Supportive

Local Government

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the Victorian Government support effective delivery of volunteering services across the diverse range of council services by resourcing specialised professional development opportunities for identified local needs.

Volunteers represent a significant proportion of the local government workforce. In some Councils the volunteering workforce is larger than the paid workforce.

Local government volunteers and volunteering programs enhance the service delivery of local governments that enable empowered communities to respond to their own needs. Volunteers are engaged in a diverse range of activities, including:

- Provision of youth, family and senior services and services to people who are otherwise disconnected or isolated people (meals on wheels, medical transport)
- Support for arts, heritage and libraries
- Development and maintenance of local assets and community spaces
- Emergency services before, during and after a disaster
- Environmental development and stewardship^{xxix xxx xxxi xxxii}.

Local governments communicate a number of challenges to Volunteering Victoria which can be addressed, but which require considered approaches and professional development to improve. The kinds of challenges local governments face in the following list is only a small sample.

- Rural and regional population and demographic changes. Volunteers are often 'born and bred' in their community. Engaging new members of the community and attracting skilled volunteers requires strategy and resources.

- Adapting to and meeting new forms of volunteering that meet the needs of changing demographics with flexible opportunities for example short term, project/skilled based roles^{xxxiii}.
- Volunteer managers are generally enthusiastic about engaging younger volunteers, however engaging this group requires more sophisticated online engagement and marketing techniques and tools^{xxxiv}.

The Victorian Government and 79 local governments, as stated in the Victorian State Local Government Agreement, are committed to progressing social, economic and environmental outcomes for Victoria's communities by:

- Strengthening the capacity of local government to provide services and functions
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement to enhance the performance of both levels of government
- Improving the local coordination and strategic planning of government services and functions^{xxxv}.

Volunteering Victoria currently delivers professional development training on the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and is well placed to build on this platform. With investment, the Victorian Government could strengthen the volunteer capacity of local government through continued improvement and enhanced skills of volunteer managers.



Supportive

RECOMMENDATION 7

Proposal 7a

Supporting local councils, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, through training in aligning practice to the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

Estimated Cost: \$130,000

OUTCOMES

- Bigger, safer and more effective workforce
- Resilient and self-empowered communities which reduce social and economic costs to government
- Strengthened local government capacity to deliver services using a volunteer workforce
- Excellent and professionalised volunteer management and volunteer programs which enable strategic planning of government services

HOW WE WILL DO IT

To support local governments in meeting these challenges, Volunteering Victoria seeks to provide dedicated specialised support to local government, through the implementation of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. This would require onboarding a Local Government Professional Development Facilitator to Volunteering Victoria to adapt and develop resources and travel more widely across the State to rural and regional areas.

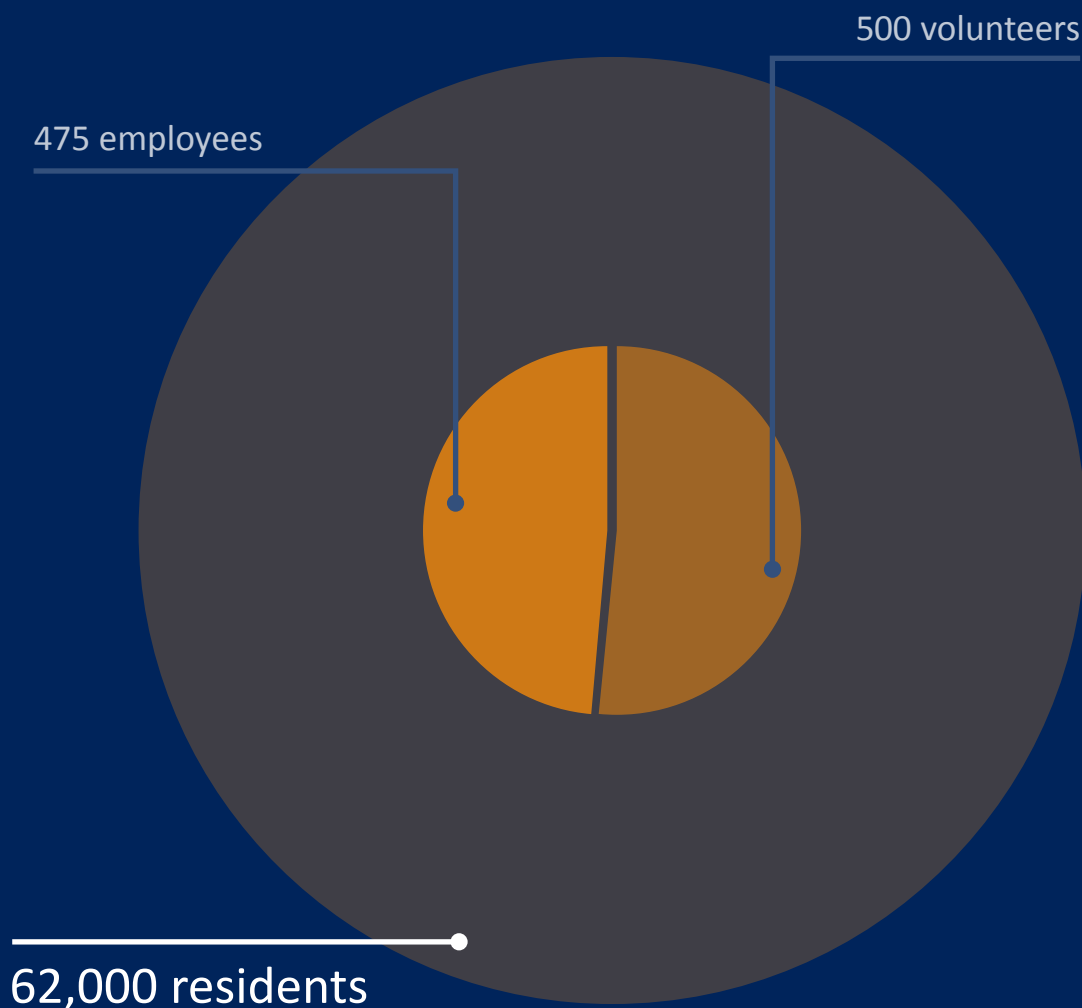


Nillumbik Shire Council - supporting communities through volunteering

The contribution of some 500 volunteers^{xxxvi} (with a paid workforce of 475 employees)^{xxxvii} is essential to delivering excellent services and connecting communities in the Shire of Nillumbik, home to 62,000 residents.

Volunteering programs are instrumental in working towards Nillumbik vision of becoming Australia's most liveable shire. They improve the quality of life not only of recipients, but also of volunteers who are proud to give back to their community. The 2009 bushfires disaster was devastating for the community, however it energised a proactive volunteer network that remains animated and committed in the Shire of Nillumbik today.

Currently, volunteers underpin a variety of programs ranging from in home parental support services to community transport. Volunteers provide social connection for seniors and people living with a disability, assist families with non-judgemental support and prevent isolation for those most at risk.



Inclusive

Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

Multicultural Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the Victorian Government continue to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by culturally diverse individuals from a diverse group of communities, and resource Volunteering Victoria to implement the following proposals.

Victoria is home to one of Australia's most diverse populations – and as the country's fastest growing state – diversity will continue to be a defining characteristic of the Victorian identity, which comprises over 260 languages and dialects, and 135 religious faiths. 26.2% of all Victorians born overseas and almost 50% have at least one parent born overseas^{xxxviii}.

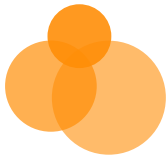
Despite its numerous benefits for migrants, volunteer organisations and the broader community, the participation rate of multicultural communities in formal volunteering is lower than other segments of the community^{xxxix}. This under representation may be due to low rates of self-reporting, which highlights the need for more research funding and targeted programs to engage these communities.

Volunteering can play a role in connecting and engaging individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. It is our vision to build a vibrant, diverse, satisfied and growing multicultural membership and network of stakeholders that is truly representative of the entire Victorian multicultural community.

The theme of Volunteering Victoria's 2017 Annual General Meeting forum was diversity and inclusion. "If you don't have a seat at the table, bring your own chair." The forum included speakers from a range of organisation contributing their insights. Volunteering by definition supports the "common good". In modern Australian society, inclusion and diversity are imperatives in pursuit of the common good. Inclusion and diversity are not "soft concepts" – it is essential for the survival of many organisations to respond to a diverse market, and therefore there is a strong business case for an organisation to diversify its workforce.

Just as multiculturalism enriches the lives of Victorians, it also presents a number of challenges for communities, organisations and government as they prepare to welcome new CALD families and individuals, and to strengthen already diverse communities. Research shows that CALD individuals, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, are at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems than other Australians, and are more likely to feel alienated or isolated^{xl}.

In August 2016 Volunteering Victoria collaborated with the Multicultural Volunteering Special Interest Group, to host Victoria's first Multicultural Volunteering conference. The conference was a sell-out success, attracting over 100 attendees and speakers from government, private and not-for-profit sectors, volunteer involving organisations and volunteer support services to tackle the many challenges that surround the multicultural and CALD volunteering space, and to highlight a range of possible solutions.



Inclusive Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 8

Feedback from multicultural organisations and volunteer involving organisations to Volunteering Victoria has highlighted the need for more:

- Government recognition and respect of CALD volunteers
- ‘Cultural competency’ training for organisations hoping to engage CALD volunteers
- Research to understand cultural barriers and pilot programs to test solutions.

The Victorian Government’s commitment to multiculturalism and inclusiveness is outlined in “Victorian. And proud of it.” The Multicultural Policy Statement outlines inclusivity strategies “whether at home, at work, while volunteering or in the community.”^{xli}

Volunteering Victoria currently supports the LIVE initiative (Lead, Intern, Volunteer and Experience) of the Multicultural Policy Statement through our delivery of the Study Melbourne Live Volunteer project (see <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/international-students/>). The pilot project is a part of creating a new platform for international students to develop skills and build social connectedness.

Volunteering Victoria has identified a number of opportunities in which the peak body could support multicultural inclusiveness through volunteering.

Proposal 8a:

Specialised inclusive multicultural volunteering materials, workshops and training opportunities

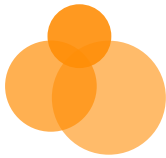
Estimated cost: \$90,000

OUTCOMES

- More diverse volunteer workforce with better utilisation of skills and experience
- Greater diversity awareness and inclusion
- Increasingly inclusive and harmonious communities

HOW WE WILL DO IT

While there are numerous volunteer involving organisations that want to engage diverse volunteers, there are many cultural and organisational barriers to inclusivity for a range of communities. With appropriate resources, Volunteering Victoria could develop a series of training opportunities, online materials and workshops aimed at equipping organisations with the necessary tools to create inclusive environments.



Inclusive Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 8

Proposal 8b:

Actively engage refugee communities through a volunteer program

Estimated cost: \$150,000

OUTCOMES

- Greater volunteering participation rates and mental, social and physical health benefits for refugees
- Research and by extension, capability building across Victoria

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Volunteering Victoria understands that many refugees resettled in Victoria are looking for volunteer opportunities to 'give back' to the wider community^{xlii}. It is also beneficial to create support networks for these individuals who are often victims of trauma, and are at risk of becoming marginalised. Despite being mutually beneficial, culturally appropriate volunteer opportunities scarcely exist for refugees. With the right resources and partnerships, Volunteering Victoria could facilitate volunteer opportunities for refugees resettled in Victoria.

An important component of the program would be public messaging promoting volunteering to refugees; promoting the benefits of engaging refugees to volunteer involving organisations and recognising the volunteering contribution of refugees to the broader community.

Proposal 8c:

Support and strengthen multicultural communities through tailored volunteer programs that meet the needs of their community and facilitate greater inter-cultural community engagement.

Estimated Cost: \$150,000

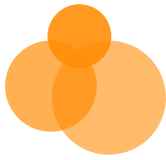
OUTCOMES

- Greater participation two way engagement between communities
- Strengthening positive relationships with the local community

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Victoria's CALD identity requires volunteer roles which are also diverse. However, organisations need to develop, promote and manage roles which are open and appropriate for CALD groups.

With the right resources, Volunteering Victoria could develop a series of volunteer projects/opportunities which are specifically tailored to suit the values and customs of CALD groups. Such a program might focus on a particular ethnic and/or religious community in Victoria.



Inclusive Volunteering

NDIS and Disability

RECOMMENDATION 9

That the Victorian Government build capacity and support for volunteer programs and volunteering organisations transitioning to the NDIS, and for people with a disabilities pursuing volunteering opportunities.

The disability sector and the success of the NDIS are heavily reliant on the volunteer workforce to deliver key programs and services. The NDIS interacts with volunteers in two key ways:

1. Volunteers are engaged to work within disability support service organisations with NDIS clients; and
2. The NDIS engages people with barriers more inclusively into society, either through volunteering as an end unto itself, or through using volunteering as a pathway to paid employment.

Volunteer involvement supports the NDIS objective to give people with disability more choice and control over their own lives through participation in society and economy, while increasing the sustainability and alleviating the costs of the scheme.

At least 5,175 volunteers, and likely a far greater amount, support 11,124 people with a disability in Victoria^{xliii}. There are over 300 organisations listed in the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' register of disability service providers^{xliv}.

The survival and future of numerous volunteer programs in Victoria are in jeopardy, due to the lack of dedicated volunteering funding in the design of the NDIS. It is critical that the NDIA acts on the recommendation from the Productivity Commission to fund the cost of connecting participants with volunteers and the ongoing costs of volunteer management^{xlv}.

The Victorian Government should remain aware of opportunity costs of resourcing required for volunteering screening and compliance to regulations and legislation (See Volunteering Victoria's submission to the Victorian Government regarding the proposed registration and accreditation scheme^{xlvi}). Solutions to assist organisations

to streamline compliance obligations would free up limited resources to better manage and empower volunteers.

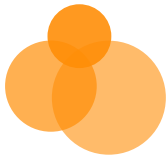
Volunteers contribute substantially to the goal of the NDIS to increase social and economic participation of people with disabilities. Even after costs for volunteers are taken into account, limited funds go further when volunteers are involving in the disability support workforce, thereby providing more effective service delivery in terms of both cost and impact. The role of a volunteer is unique, with volunteers providing an extra social connection and community participation, genuine relationships, and the value of lived experiences. Volunteers can also provide safeguards for vulnerable people, ease loneliness, and reduce mental health costs^{xlvii}.

Through the NDIS there are more opportunities for people with disability to become volunteers themselves, using their lived experience and knowledge to support others and contributing to our communities. The 2016 census measured a volunteering rate in Victoria of only 9.3% of people with a profound or severe disability who have need for assistance with core activities^{xlviii}. Many volunteer involving organisations need support and training to be prepared to offer inclusive volunteering opportunities and experiences for people with disabilities. This is particularly important as referrals through the NDIS are increasing enquiries and volunteering rates will increase. Organisations need preparation and support to understand responsibilities and best practice in relation to disabilities.

The Victorian Government aims to ensure that disability services in Victoria are of the highest quality, supported by workers with the best experience.

"The roll-out of the NDIS across Victoria is expected to generate significant demand for disability services, and the workforce will need to grow quickly to meet this demand. The Victorian Government wants to ensure the workforce becomes more skilled, diverse and dynamic as it grows, and that the important work disability workers do is valued and recognised. The registration and accreditation scheme is expected to help drive this continuous improvement."^{xlix}

More support for the disability and volunteering is essential to support the sector to adjust to disability reforms, and to ensure the success of the NDIS and Victorian Government's objectives. In consultation with



Inclusive Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 9

the sector, the Victorian Government is well positioned to support the disability support volunteer workforce. Below are just some of the ways in which the volunteering involving organisations, managers of volunteers and people with disabilities should be supported for the Victorian Government to meet its objectives.

Proposal 9a:

Professional development in volunteer management opportunities tailored to the disability support workforce context.

Estimated cost: \$200,000

OUTCOMES

- Volunteering organisations are linked together to share, learn and support one another
- More efficient, safe, empowered volunteer workforce
- Increasing self-determination and choice for people with disability with high quality volunteer supported programs to choose from

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Volunteering Victoria seeks to develop training to build capability of volunteer managers and maximise the potential of the volunteer workforce. The training will be industry specific, aligned to the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and seek to address issues we already hear from members.

With appropriate resourcing, Volunteering Victoria would employ staff member/s and partner with other

organisations to co-design and support roll out of specialist training programs specific to the disability support workforce for volunteers, managers of volunteers and volunteers involving organisations.

Proposal 9b:

Establish community of practice networks to facilitate state-wide continuous improvement for manager of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

Estimated cost: \$200,000

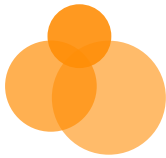
OUTCOMES

- Volunteer disability workforce is empowered and well managed to support people with disabilities
- Volunteer managers are connected and continuously improving
- More informed policy development regarding the NDIS, specifically within the Victorian and regional context

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Peer to peer learning and problem solving is an efficient and effective way of addressing common issues and enabling continuous improvement.

With the right resources, Volunteering Victoria would employ staff member/s to support roll out of community of practice network events across the state. The staff member would facilitate collation of network data and information to contribute to policy and research, and the development and sharing of practical tools and resources.



RECOMMENDATION 9

Proposal 9c:

Bridging the transition for people with disabilities into volunteering.

Estimated cost: \$250,000

OUTCOMES

- People with disabilities are empowered to participate in economy and society through volunteering
- Volunteers and staff are informed and guided into the best matched opportunities
- Stronger communities that support individuals and organisations

for people with a disability to become mentors for other service users and facilitate carer and/or family respite.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

With government funding, Volunteering Victoria would develop training and resources to inform NDIS participants, and other people with disabilities, about the volunteering experience, including rights, challenges, and expectations and guidance on matching volunteers with organisations. The training and resources, using the latest research, would in turn generate greater understanding and inform future policies related to the NDIS.

As part of this initiative, other elements could be developed, including:

- An awareness campaign with a particular audience of Occupational Therapists and NDIS
- Client Manager
- Evaluation of completed pilot programs (such as mentor and buddy programs) with a view to expansion or service integration through the NDIS. This could open up opportunities



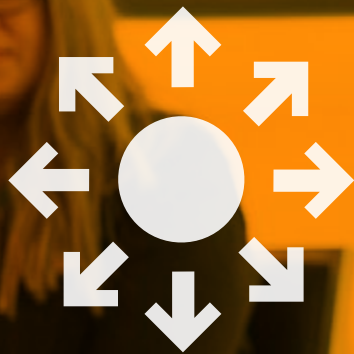
People Outdoors – supporting people with disabilities through volunteering

Adventure for all is the motto adopted by People Outdoors – a division of the Australian Camps Association who deliver outdoor recreation opportunities to hundreds of individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities. Regular programs run state wide, involving participants aged 6-65 and include anything from day activities through to weeklong camps.

Providing people with physical and intellectual disabilities with the opportunity to experience the social and developmental benefits of outdoor adventure would not be possible without the 185 participating volunteers who underpin just 10 paid employees at People Outdoors.

Camps and activities provided with Victorian Government funding are 100% volunteer run, and operate at a one on one capacity. Coupling participants with a volunteer means that individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities receive extra support, and have the chance to interact extensively with an individual outside their usual social circle.





Accessible

Volunteering is a way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community and in the economy.

Supported Career Transition – Pathways to Skills, Jobs and Growth

RECOMMENDATION 10

That the Victorian Government collaborate with Volunteering Victoria and provide funding to explore a range of ways in which volunteering can deliver on government strategies to support people through their working lives and strengthen the Victorian economy with skills development.

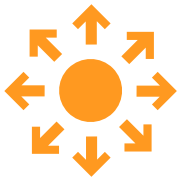
The role that volunteering does, and has greater potential to, play over a person's working life and in the development of the workforce is not widely appreciated. While employment is not always the final destination for volunteers, volunteering is often a pathway to employment. Volunteering can also support upskilling and reskilling for career transition, and facilitate the move into retirement through healthy aging and retaining connectedness to community and society.

Creating jobs, lowering unemployment, ensuring a highly skilled workforce with relevant skills to changing industries, and staying ahead of changing workforce demographics (particularly in rural and regional Victoria) are all areas of focus for the Victorian Government.

Pathways to employment

There is a strong evidence base which demonstrates opportunities for volunteering to support young people and job seekers.

- Research for SEEK.com.au found that 95% of hirers agree that volunteering can be a credible way of getting real-work experience (especially for first time job seekers) and that volunteering can be a great way to gain experience and skills that can be used in an individual's paid work^l.
- Unemployed individuals who volunteered over a year in the United States are 27 per cent more likely to be employed at the end of that year than non-volunteers^{liii}.
- There are community and social benefits to encourage young people to actively participate in the economy and society through volunteering. Social alienation and depression is high amongst disadvantaged young people and volunteering has been shown to help many young people connect positively with people, causes and communities. Volunteering is vital in developing social participation and civic values that are the foundation for adult citizenship^{liii}.



Accessible Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 10

Proposal 10a:

Victorian Government to build on existing infrastructure (see place-based section) with additional resources for volunteer managers to support young people and/or disadvantaged communities into volunteering roles.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000

OUTCOMES

- Greater awareness of additional benefits of volunteering for young and/or disadvantaged communities
- More pathways into employment and careers / breaking cycles of disadvantage
- Greater alignment of skills and industry needs

HOW WE WILL DO IT

This proposal would build on Proposal 5a (page 11) to build on place-based support for volunteering support organisations.

With funding, Volunteering Victoria could develop resources specifically designed to facilitate organisations to offer targeted and well-scoped volunteering opportunities to young and/or disadvantaged people.

Volunteering and career skills

Volunteering Victoria supports a number of corporate bodies to develop skilled employee volunteering opportunities through the Corporate Volunteering Program.

The Victorian Public Sector employs over 285,000 people, nearly 40,000 of whom are directly employed in the public service while the further 245,000 are employed in public entities, mainly in healthcare and education^{liv}.

Individual departments and bodies have individual policies and approaches to volunteering. The Victorian Government has an opportunity to develop a comprehensive approach to employee volunteering across all departments and bodies. The Victorian Government can lead by example:

- to raise the prominence of volunteering, beyond recognition and towards an embedded part of everyday lives; and
- to support the community sector, contributing skills to NFPs leading to improved economic, social and environmental outcomes.

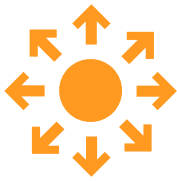
Proposal 10b:

Volunteering Victoria to work with the Victorian Government Departments and bodies to develop a comprehensive public servant skilled employee-volunteering package.

Estimated Cost: \$150,000 - \$200,000

OUTCOMES

- Skilled government workforce connected to the community
- Added contribution to the community/not-for-profit sector
- Promotion of corporate culture and wellbeing benefits



Accessible Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 10

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Volunteering Victoria is well placed to scope and deliver a package with the Victorian Government. The package would include:

- consulting to prepare government departments to develop volunteering programs;
- strategic alignment and integration of volunteering across public service departments (and/or particular public entities) including communications strategies, good practice and impact evaluation;
- workshops to foster a culture of volunteering in the workplace; and
- practical steps to accessing volunteering opportunities.

Volunteering to support career transition

As industries change, particularly in regional Victoria, volunteering can play a role in transitioning an economy. Workers may need to reskill and maintain active participation with communities and the workforce. For people seeking to upskill or reskill, volunteering positions develop transferable skills and are likely to aid in future employment.

For example, exacerbating entrenched disadvantage in the Latrobe Valley, the closure of the Hazelwood mine and power plant in March 2017 is anticipated to result in a loss of \$340 million from the Latrobe City area and a total loss of 1862 jobs^{lv}. Some employees will participate in the Latrobe Valley Worker Transfer Scheme, being redeployed in roles in local industries vacated by employees taking up an offer of early retirement; however a significant proportion of the workforce will be unable to find new opportunities in the short term. The May 2017 closure of Carter Holt Harvey's Morwell softwood timber saw mill resulted in the loss of a further 160 local jobs^{lvi}.

Proposal 10c:

Latrobe Valley Volunteering Program.

Estimated cost: \$250,000 per year

OUTCOMES

- Stronger and more resilient community in the Latrobe Valley
- More pathways to social and economic participation, including paid employment
- Improved work skills for people transitioning to a new career
- Increase community participation for people at risk of social isolation

HOW WE WILL DO IT

This program would support managers of volunteers and volunteers through face-to-face local and regional training and/or information sessions. Resources would be developed to build capacity of volunteer managers to adapt their volunteer engagement to the changing needs and expectations of volunteers in the Latrobe Valley. Such a project involves options to scale up, scale down and, if effective, the ability to implement similar projects in other regions facing economic transition challenges.



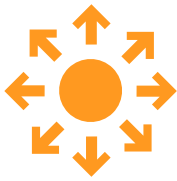
Study Melbourne and Volunteering Victoria - enriching the international student experience through volunteering



International education has been Victoria's largest services export industry for over a decade – in 2016, Victoria hosted over 175,000 international students from 160 different countries.

To enhance the experience of these students, Study Melbourne and Volunteering Victoria have developed a year-long pilot project to match international students to opportunities in volunteer-involving organisations across Victoria. This project operationalises the Victorian Government's LIVE initiative (Lead, Intern, Volunteer and Experience) of the Multicultural Policy Statement and supports a priority industry sector of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Through this project, we explore how volunteering can enhance the employability skills of international students by developing soft skills, building social connectedness and confidence, through experiencing local workplace culture, and expanding support networks and contacts.



Accessible Volunteering

Informal Volunteering

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the Victorian Government recognise the enormous contribution of informal volunteering to Victorian communities and fund promotion of and research into the impact of informal volunteering.

In 2015, Volunteering Australia endorsed informal volunteering, acts that take place outside the context of a formal organisation, to be included in the definition of volunteering^{lvii}. This decision provided greater support and recognition for informal community participation, which was not covered under the previous definition of volunteering. Informal volunteering might include taking care of someone, mentoring or teaching and assisting sports and service clubs. Informal volunteering is a substantial component of all volunteering but particularly for youth volunteering, multicultural and spontaneous emergency volunteering^{lviii}.

Informal volunteering has the potential to influence how volunteers are lead, how volunteering is measured, and how the Victorian Government supports innovation in volunteering. New platforms have arisen in response to peer-to-peer volunteering effort, distributive community leadership through informal volunteering, and through informal volunteering civic participation and on-line activism and advocacy for the common good^{lix}.

Although many Victorians informally volunteer, more support is necessary to highlight the available opportunities and rewards. To encourage more informal volunteering opportunities, technological platforms are now assisting people to connect to each other for opportunities^{lx}. This phenomenon may also be developing new forms of distributive leadership, outside of a more hierarchal, organisational structure and volunteer management control.

Proposal 11a

Research to better understand how to participate in community through informal volunteering and to recognise the benefits and impact of informal volunteering.

Estimated cost: \$130,000

OUTCOMES

- Improved recognition of the value of informal volunteering
- Improved understanding of how to engage in community civic participation through informal volunteering
- Increased access to volunteering rewards and benefits by informal volunteers
- Stronger and more resilient volunteering

HOW WE WILL DO IT

This proposal would fund a researcher to undertake quantitative and qualitative research to explore the mechanisms, impact, and the benefits of informal volunteering. Research would include the investigation of 'start-ups,' peer-to-peer networks, and disruption as a theme in contemporary informal volunteering opportunities. A communications plan will be proposed to disseminate the findings broadly to a diverse range of community audiences.



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Volunteering Victoria

STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2018 - 2019

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