



Warrnambool City Council

Volunteering Strategic Plan

2021 - 2024



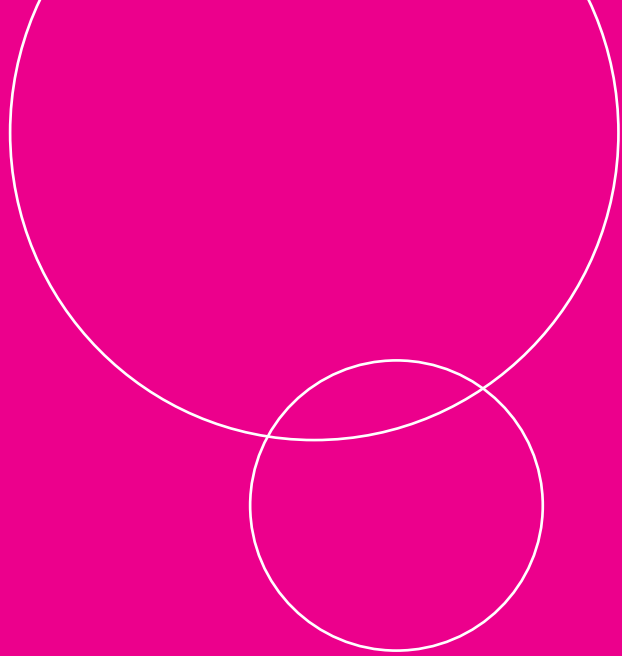


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Volunteers are everywhere.

Volunteers work in so seamlessly and professionally within organisations, teams and alongside paid staff that sometimes you may not realise they are there.

Yet they are so fundamental to everyday living that if our volunteers were not performing the roles they do it would very quickly become evident how much they were needed! Here in Warrnambool about 20,000 meals on wheels are delivered annually with the help of hard-working volunteers who use their own vehicles. This service simply could not be provided without volunteers.



Volunteers might not be paid but there are important obligations, even a quid pro quo, that exist between volunteers and the organisations they help. Volunteers might seek experience, fulfillment, social interaction and perhaps an opportunity to “give back” after a successful professional working life. In return, volunteer-involving organisations need to provide safe working environments, equipment and instruction; and a way to say thank you to those who give their time without financial reward.

At a time when so much is competing for people’s time and attention, it is no surprise to learn that in some areas volunteerism is declining. Pronounced volunteer shortages exist in the sectors - disability services, young people and health - which often struggle to attract and retain paid staff.

We’re extremely fortunate that in Warrnambool our rates of volunteerism are above the national average. As a community we love helping out, it’s a long-standing habit we have. Within Council volunteers are integral to many of our operations from conservation projects to our visitor experiences at Flagstaff Hill.

Attracting people to volunteering will not always be a happy accident. We need to create an environment and framework that makes it easier for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. That’s what makes this Volunteering Strategic Plan so important.

So if you have a connection to volunteering, whether as a volunteer or an organization, this strategy offers guidance and insight and I recommend it.

Finally, to all those who volunteer that most precious resource, time, a huge thank you. We recognise and acknowledge your efforts.

Cr Vicki Jellie AM
Mayor
Warrnambool City Council

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Warrnambool is on Peek Whurrong country and acknowledges the Gunditjmara / Marr Nation people as the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our respects to Elders & Leaders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of the Gunditjmara / Marr Nation people.

Cr Richard Ziegeler, 2021 Victorian Senior of the Year: Healthy & Acting Living winner Uncle Locky Eccles and Senior of the Year nominee Trevor Hearfield. All volunteer extensively in the Community.





Executive Summary

Volunteers have long been a crucial part of the fabric of Warrnambool City Council and our community. Volunteers play an integral role in the ability of groups, clubs and not for profit organisations to operate and serve community. Volunteering is an essential part of Warrnambool City Council (WCC) and provides a valuable contribution which grows civic pride and confidence while offering support to our community.

The Warrnambool City Council Volunteering Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024 has been developed and guided by desktop research and community consultation. It will set the direction for Volunteer Connect in the continued support and growth of volunteering. It will ensure Volunteer Connect is well placed to respond to new and emerging needs of the Council, including those wanting to volunteer, volunteer programs and to provide education, training, networking and personal development for volunteer involving organisations, clubs and groups.

The objective of Volunteer Connect is to ensure volunteering is valued, enhanced, and supported. In doing so Volunteer Connect will contribute to making Warrnambool a thriving and resilient community by providing opportunities for people to:

- participate in community life
- build a sense of inclusion, identity and belonging
- develop skills and knowledge
- use their skills and time to do something for others

Volunteer Connect enriches lives and connects communities through volunteerism so that volunteering can contribute to Warrnambool's thriving community.

Volunteer Connect 2021 Vision Statement

'Inspire people in the South West to experience volunteering, to make a difference, build a community and give back one person at a time'

Three strategic goals have been defined to enable Volunteer Connect to fulfill its vision are:

1. **Champion:**

Volunteer Connect champions a culture of volunteerism that advocates and celebrates volunteers

2. **Strengthen:**

Volunteer Connect will *Strengthen our community* by actively supporting social inclusion and diversity through volunteering.

3. **Sustain:**

Volunteer Connect will deliver a sustainable service through being aligned with best-practice and contemporary trends in volunteering

Purpose

The Warrnambool City Council Volunteering Strategic Plan 2021 (WCCVS21) was developed in response to the funding changes to Volunteer Resource Centres in Victoria, Covid-19, and the Warrnambool 2040 Plan (W2040 Plan). The purpose of this plan is to set the direction for Volunteer Connect.

The WCCVS21 is aligned with Warrnambool 2040 Plan (W2040 Plan) and Council's vision of 'a thriving city at the heart of coast and country'. The plan will support Council to deliver effective volunteer programs and to increase volunteering opportunities in the community. By improving the experience and accessibility of volunteering, this plan can ensure Volunteer Connect is well positioned to foster social inclusion and wellbeing objectives.

Methodology

Research and desktop analysis

The WCCVS21 has been informed by research and desktop analysis including:

- A literature review of the volunteering context, including local, state and national trends for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations
- Learnings and impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Policies and Strategies Audit
- An analysis of volunteering trends observed by Volunteer Connect
- The Warrnambool 2040 Plan
- Warrnambool's Health and Wellbeing Plan

Consultation

The WCC Volunteering Strategic Plan 2021 has also been informed by consultation with volunteer involving organisations, volunteers, prospective volunteers, and Council staff. Consultation included the following activities:

- An online survey for volunteer involving organisations
- An online survey for Warrnambool City Council (WCC) volunteers
- An online survey for WCC Coordinators
- An online survey for WCC former volunteers
- An online survey for volunteers in the Warrnambool community
- One focus group with Senior Management and a Director from Warrnambool City Council
- Three focus groups with WCC Volunteer Coordinators, Supervisors and their Managers
- Interviews with relevant Council staff

The outcomes of the surveys, working groups and reviews are in the Volunteer Connect Strategy Engagement, and the Volunteer Connect Contextual Review reports.

The priorities identified from the consultation informed the development of the Warrnambool City Council Volunteering Strategic Plan 2021 including the strategic goals, objectives and actions.

Actions related to volunteering in other Council Plans have also been reflected in this document to ensure they are captured.



Volunteering:
time willing given for the common good & without financial gain'. The term 'Volunteering' has many faces & includes various actives for many different groups.



Context

Formal volunteering nationally

Formal volunteering can be defined as volunteering that takes place within organisations in a structured way². The 2016 Census data showed that 19% the Australian population volunteered in the community. The General Social Survey³ (GSS) reported 28.8% of Australian adults were active participants in formal volunteering.

It is important to note the conflicting results between the 2016 Census and GSS. With the 2016 Census stating an increase in volunteering and the GSS stating a decline. Variances against data collection, survey populations, survey periods are likely of most influence; also to consider is how respondents define formal volunteering. For this contextual review, a greater emphasis has been placed on the GSS data set as it is the most recent national data that focuses on defining and measuring volunteerism.



To complement the GSS and 2016 Census data, several additional data sources were reviewed including the 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia Report⁴, data from GoVolunteer and a literature review. As a critical finding, there appears to be a disconnect between the volunteer roles that people are interested in and the roles which volunteer involving organisations (VIO's) are offering⁴. The State of Volunteering in Australia Report cited that 86% of VIOs are routinely unable to fill volunteer roles. Certain sectors such as Animal Welfare and the Arts and Culture are consistently oversubscribed with potential volunteers placed on wait lists, whereas other sectors including Disability Services, Young People and Health typically are unable to fill volunteering roles⁴.

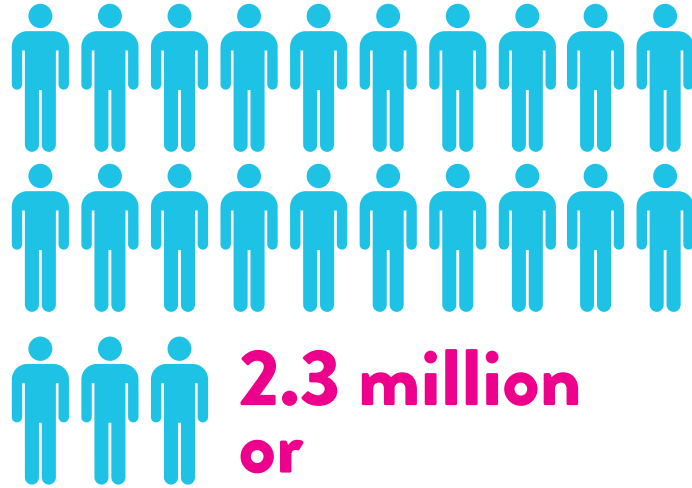
Additional insights captured in the State of Volunteering in Australia Report include:

- Barriers preventing individuals from volunteering include lack of flexibility, personal expenses incurred and burdensome administrative requirements;
- VIOs are generally under resourced, and this can inhibit their ability to engage with volunteers who may require additional support such as people living with a disability, people with language barriers and establishing Employee Supported Volunteering programs; and⁴
- VIOs typically are yet to meaningfully adapt to technology changes such as conducting volunteer recruitment online or by providing virtual volunteering opportunities.

When assessing the national context, there are a range of challenges faced by the sector including a decline in formal volunteering, limited resourcing within VIOs and a disconnect between the volunteering roles that people are interested in and the roles that VIOs are offering.



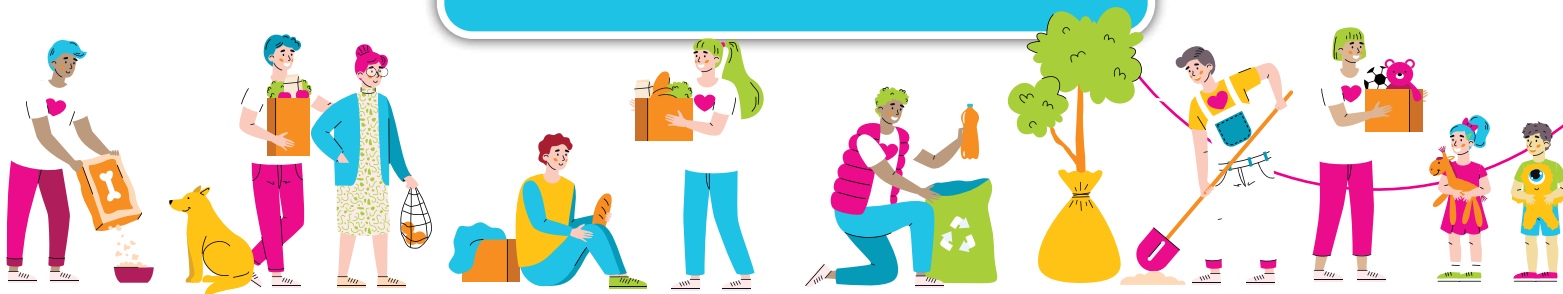
Volunteering in Victoria



Victorians donated at least
507.7 million
volunteer hours
to the community in 2019

The value of
volunteering to
Victoria was \$58.1
billion in 2019.

*Volunteering adds immense
value to the Victorian economy
while strengthening our
community and the health and
wellbeing of its people.*





Warrnambool

Council Plan

The Warrnambool City Council Plan includes the vision of 'A thriving city at the heart of coast and country'. The volunteer strategy finds support within the following goals:-

A healthy community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a welcoming and inclusive city Engage with the Aboriginal community • Health and wellbeing • An accessible city • Recreation, arts, culture and heritage
A strong economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on competitive strengths
A connected, inclusive place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger neighbourhoods
An effective Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and governance • Engaged and informed community • Customer-focused services • High-performance culture



Warrnambool 2040 Plan

Warrnambool's 2040 plan, defines a 20-year community vision for Warrnambool and was created by the community. W2040 represents the objective goals for Warrnambool's environment, economy, place, and people and is the result of an extensive consultation process that will ensure the Council is well positioned to meet the future needs of its residents.

The four priority Visions of the W2040 plan are:

- Our People: Warrnambool will be a city where all people thrive;
- Our Place: Warrnambool will be Australia's most livable regional city;
- Our Economy: Warrnambool will be Australia's most resilient and thriving regional economy;
- Our Environment: Warrnambool will be Australia's most sustainable city.

Warrnambool 2040	Volunteer Connect Alignment
Warrnambool is a welcoming and inclusive city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering provides opportunities for new residents to connect with community and build relationships • Volunteer groups, clubs and organisations can provide support and connection to new and existing residents.
Warrnambool is a safe and connected community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering offers support to people as an avenue to remain connected to their community and maintain their independence • Volunteering offers vulnerable and disadvantaged people the opportunity to connect with their community and develop relationships.
Warrnambool's people are healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research shows that volunteering is good for your health, wellbeing and social connection. • Volunteering can provide an avenue for people to stay active
Warrnambool is a learning community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering can provide pathways to learning, upskilling and may provide pathways to employment • Encourage staff to volunteer and share their skills with the community • Provide opportunities for volunteers to share knowledge and skills developed through their career or life experience.
Warrnambool will embrace digital innovation and technological change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer programs designed to help community embrace digital innovation and technological change. Bridging the gap of the digital divide especially in disadvantaged groups.
Natural Warrnambool: Enjoy, love, respect. and care for the natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers programs including Land Care, Sea Shepherd etc. support and foster love, respect and education about our Natural Environment • Encouraging people to get back to nature with volunteering • Encourage integration of environmental sustainability into all volunteers roles where possible/feasible

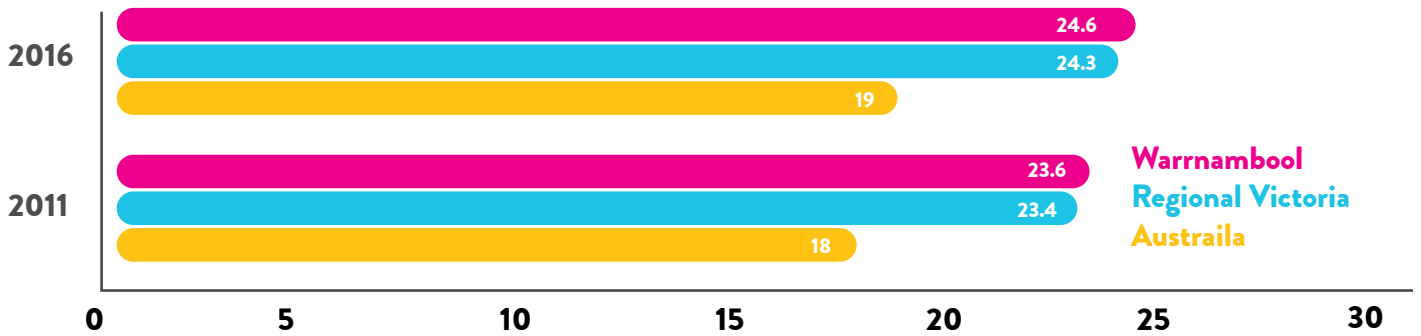
The importance of volunteering to the City of Warrnambool is clear. To support the community the Council will continue to invest in Volunteer Connect to enable a strong volunteering culture.



Volunteering in Warrnambool

Warrnambool City Council (WCC) recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers make in the municipality. Warrnambool and the south-west has one of the highest rates of volunteering in regional Victoria, where more than a quarter of residents (24.6%) volunteer.

Rates of Volunteering of Warrnambool Residents versus Regional Victoria & Australia



Warrnambool as a community relies heavily on the generosity of volunteers to run programs that provide connection, health and wellbeing to its people. People, in turn, use volunteering to connect, give back, for personal growth and for health and wellbeing. Investing in Volunteering will continue Warrnambool's reputation as a great place to live.

The community told us volunteering is important to them because it is rewarding, improves mental health and provides opportunities to connect with others, give back and meet new people.

Quotes from local VIO's

Volunteers bring unique life experience and skill sets. Residents love the engagement with "non uniformed" team members We offer volunteering to diverse cohort incl. adults with learning difficulties, people living with disability, younger generations, which we believe supports the community as a whole.

Our organisation is reliant on volunteers to exist. No volunteers = No Ongoing organisation.

We run a non for profit community event every 12 months to benefit Warrnambool. Without volunteers we would be unable to do that.

'Volunteering is essential to community growth and wellbeing, as well as personal growth and health'

'It is what makes the community a great place to live'

Quotes from local volunteers

When asked where residents would like to find information about volunteering, they replied::

- Newspaper, Media, advertisements on radio or Facebook.
- Volunteer expo
- Go volunteer



Volunteering at Warrnambool City Council

The Warrnambool City Council has been running Volunteer programs for over 30 years and currently has 308 Volunteers that work across twelve different programs. The current cost savings to Council provided through volunteering is over \$1.3 million dollars.

Council relies on volunteers to service

- Meals on Wheels, made up of 20% of WCC volunteers, deliver 15900+ meals per month to vulnerable people, contributing **20,000+ hours** annually
- Lighthouse Theatre ushers support & enhance the patrons experience, **3750 hours**
- Flagstaff Hill, made up of 31% of WCC volunteers, volunteers activate the village through dressing to the period and demostarting period exhibits, **9000+ hours**
- Visitor Centre, volunteers encourage visitors to the area to explore Warrnambool, **400 + hours**
- Archie Graham Community Centre, made up of 21% of WCC , volunteers create meaningful social connection opportunities through their involvement in physical activities, technology support, indoor activities, trips & outings to total **3000+ hours**
- Archie Café, provides a place for people to connect, **2210 hours**
- Library, delivering books to the vulnerable through the mobile library and activating community activities within the Library
- Gardens for Wildlife, help residents enhance their garden to encourage native wildlife to better support a healthy environment.
- Art Gallery, volunteers contribute **720 hours** annually, enhancing the customer experience by providing a meet and greet service.
- West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House – Volunteers help create safe and supportive neighbourhoods by assisting with operations and connection to people through programs
- Child services and Kindergarten, provide support to young children to learn
- Aquazone, Volunteers support fitness programs provided to the community
- Archie Social Groups, volunteers support people who are isolated, living with disability, or facing challenges by helping as an extra resource activating and running social programs and events.



Why volunteering is important to Council

Volunteer Connect is the central hub for all things volunteering at the Warrnambool City Council. The Volunteer Connect team plays an integral role in providing support to all volunteer programs across Council including advertising, interviewing and on boarding new volunteers. Additionally, Volunteer Connect provides advice on current best practice standards and maintains the volunteer data base.

They bring joy and are our best advocates for what we do in the Community.

Volunteers help create a community hub that ticks along in a spirit of generosity because people interact by giving & receiving. Volunteering enables people to have meaningful community experience.

We wouldn't survive without them. They engage people and bring the place to life.

Volunteers have the opportunity to continue to use their knowledge and skills developed during their career. Great use of them as community resources.





COVID – 19 Impact on Volunteering

Throughout 2020-21, the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted all aspects of society in ways that we could not have predicted. Volunteering is one of these areas. With forced or partial lockdowns and restrictions making on-site volunteering impossible, many volunteer programs were suspended. Further to this, concerns about health and transmission resulted in individuals limiting their exposure to public places impacting volunteering.

Additional Insights captured in the Australian National University’s Centre for Social Research & Methods Report offer a valuable reflection of the impact that COVID has had on volunteering:

- Volunteers had a higher level of life satisfaction prior to COVID than non-volunteers;
- There was a substantially smaller decline in life satisfaction as well as lower levels of psychological distress for those volunteers who were able to continue volunteering compared to those who ceased volunteering; and
- Volunteers who were able to continue volunteering during COVID coped better

While the linkage between volunteering and positive mental

health outcomes is well established, this data provides immensely valuable reinforcement of just how important volunteering is.

COVID -19 Effects on Volunteering in Warrnambool.

Pre Covid both Warrnambool City Council (WCC) and Volunteering Involving Organisation (VIO’s) were experiencing an increase in Volunteers coming into their programs.

During Covid, 87% of VIO’s surveyed had experienced a considerable decrease in volunteer numbers.

Feedback from WCC and VIO’s indicated volunteers did not express concern over COVID-19. Most wanted to get back to volunteering as soon as possible, with some volunteers opting to find new volunteering roles with essential services to stay connected during COVID-19.

Volunteering is essential to Australia’s COVID recovery as both an avenue to improve the mental health and life satisfaction of the volunteers themselves and supplement and expand upon the services that volunteer involving and community organisations can offer.

The initial COVID-19 impact in April-May 2020 saw a 50.2% decline in the volunteering participation rate from

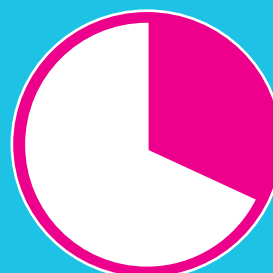
2.3M

TO

1.1M

(42.1%)

(21%)



There was a net decline in volunteering hours of almost two thirds (64.1%)

Strategic Direction

What we learnt for our Research & Review

Policies and Training Audit

WCC has a range of internal employee related policies, strategies and training to ensure that staff are protected and managed to reduce the incidence of risk and negate negative behaviors. Volunteers are entitled to be protected and managed by these same mechanisms.

A policy audit identified that not all WCC Council policies are specific to volunteers. A gap analysis is an opportunity for us to compare our policies with industry peers and national standards to create solid volunteer policies that will support a new management framework.

Of particular importance is the update of the Volunteer Policy which was due for review in 2014. In addition, the

following procedures and processes require review and tools to be developed.

- Volunteer screening
- Volunteers role in supporting the child safe policy
- Volunteer handbook
- Volunteer management handbook

Training Required

- Human Resources Volunteer Induction
- Child safety
- OH & S
- Volunteer management induction

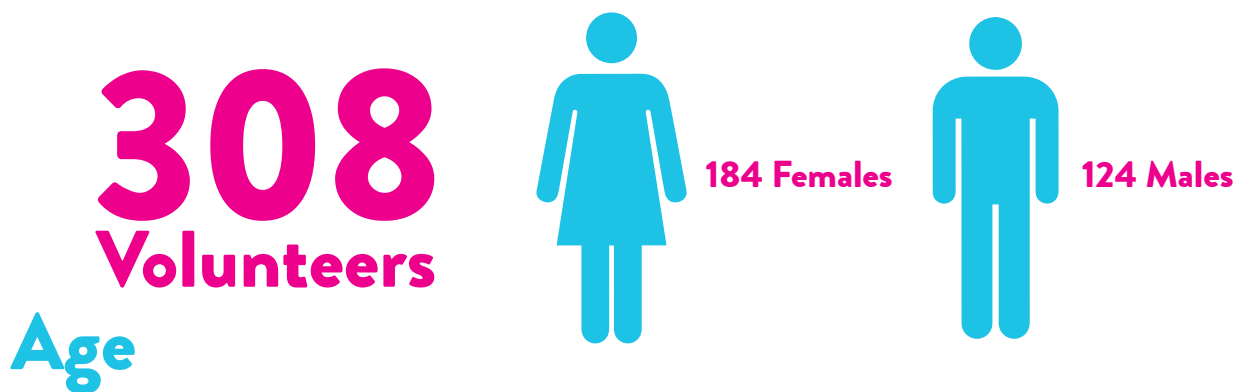
Database Update

The Volunteer on-boarding processes and database has historically captured limited demographic or diversity information beyond age and gender.

Moving forward we will collecting data on

- Culture/Race
- Gender preference/identification
- First Nations
- Disability

Demographic data on WCC Volunteers Age and Gender



Under 40 = 24

Under 60 = 44

Aged 60+ = 120

Aged 70+ = 120

24

Culturally & Linguistically Diverse

21

Living with Disability

22

Volunteer for Centrelink reasons

Warrnambool City Council in Volunteer Survey 2021 Results

83 survey respondents of a possible 294

- 47% of survey respondents have been at WCC for less than 3 years
- 32% volunteered up to 10 years
- 11% of volunteers have been volunteering with Council anywhere from 15 years to 30 years.

Volunteers who have been volunteering for long periods generally come from the Arts and Visitor Services/Flagstaff Hill who had 20% of responses in the 10 year to 30+ year range.

A vast majority of survey respondents volunteer on a regular and frequent basis volunteering more than twice a week, with a high proportion volunteering 1 to 2 times per week.

83%

of Volunteers found volunteering with WCC rewarding.

70%

had a positive experience being recruited by Council,

89%

felt confident about their volunteer roles and responsibility,

83%

felt they had received the appropriate training and support to perform duties.

44%

of people surveyed would recommend volunteering at WCC



Opportunities for Improvement

1. Recruitment and Communication

A common thread amongst respondents was that they felt unhappy with the recruitment process and that their volunteer role suffered from a lack of communication, excessive paperwork, and a lack of clear and concise policies and procedures. In addition they felt they were not being recognised as valued members of the Council team.

2. Volunteer Connect role supporting WCC Volunteers

When asked how Volunteer Connect (VC) has supported their journey to volunteering at WCC,

- 40% responded they took my initial enquiry,
- 26% replied they sent me information about how to apply and
- 38% were interviewed for the volunteer role by VC.
- 13% reporting regular contact with VC
- 22% are unsure of who VC is
- 19% skipped VC to signed up directly with area they volunteer in.

3. Former WCC Volunteer Survey (Volunteers who are no longer active with Council as of 2021) 55 former volunteers responded

- 37% of those former Volunteers are currently volunteering elsewhere.
- 77% were at council less than five years.
- Main reasons for leaving was: 1. employment, 2. health reasons, 3. Lack of Communication 4. Covid-19. 5. Travel or moving out of the area 6. Lack of support and/or appreciation.

Opportunities for improvement include: improving communication to create an inclusive culture, more variety in roles, and exit interviews and feedback mechanisms



Volunteer Connect's role in building capacity of Volunteer programs

What we do well?

- Advertising or Referrals
- Initial intake paperwork
- Co-ordination & Facilitation of South West Volunteer Network

How will Department of Social Services funding changes impact your Volunteer program?

Until June 30, 2021 Volunteer Connect had been funded by the Department of Social Services through the Volunteer Management activity (VMA), and part funded by WCC. All current funding agreements under the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) have now ceased.

VIOs have been reliant on Volunteers Connect to advertise and refer volunteers. They have expressed concern that taking these tasks on will leave them with less time to deliver or coordinate their programs, which may impact the Volunteers experiences, whereas WCC will benefit from more internal support.

The VIOs told us the main challenges they will face when delivering their volunteer program over the next five years.

Top three challenges for VIOs

- Volunteer Recruitment
- Sourcing funding, grants and sponsorship to support your volunteer program
- Resources (people and time) to effectively deliver volunteer engagement

Top four challenges for WCC

- Resources (people and time) to effectively deliver volunteer engagement
- Red tape / and or regulatory requirements
- Influencing within my organisation, so volunteers and my role are valued
- Engaging diverse volunteers (younger, older, CALD communities, people with disabilities)

Importance of South West Volunteer Network (SWVN)

- 100% of WCC Coordinators, Managers or Supervisors are members of SWVN.
- 88% attended meetings in the last 6 months.
- 53% of VIO's attended South West Volunteer Network meetings recently and in the past.

Reasons for not attending included: time poor, distance, other work conflicts, interest level, technology deficiencies, meeting haven't been beneficial in the past and three VIO's were unaware of meetings.

Participation in Volunteer Connect Training Opportunities

63% of WCC and 73% of VIO's responded that they had not attending this training in the last six months.

Main reasons for not attending: time poor, not aware of training, training offered was not relatable or of benefit.

The role of Volunteer Connect in supporting volunteer programs at WCC

WCC Volunteer Coordinators described their role in supporting volunteer programs and managing volunteers as not being recognised in their position description. Instead, it is an expected unacknowledged addition to someone's position. This results in time-poor supervisors that don't have enough time to dedicate the effective management of Volunteers, hindering their ability to suitably engage with Volunteers, use the volunteer database platform and start new volunteer programs/roles.

The support WCC Volunteer Coordinators receive from Volunteer Connect varies greatly across programs areas. There is a large gap between Coordinators feeling supported and others feeling unsupported. Employees are seeking clarity about Volunteer Connects role and responsibilities. Coordinators also want to see streamline process and policies to make things flow better.

Use of Internal Volunteer Database: Better Impact

Only 3 of the 12 Volunteer Coordinators are using Better Impact.

Reasons for use; the occasional visit to update a Volunteers contact details, keep track of birthdays and emergency contacts.

Better Impact is a seen as a barrier for most.



Recurring Themes

1. Improve Volunteer Management: creation of a volunteer management framework and implementation of a volunteer data base to stream line processes and procedures. Improved management practices will reduce duplication and create a supportive approach to managing volunteers at Warrnambool City Council.

2. Increase Social Inclusion and Diversity: provide opportunities for young people, people from diverse backgrounds, LBGQTA+ communities, First Nations and people living with disabilities to engage with volunteering to create sustainable volunteerism in the community.

3. Strengthen Recruitment and Retention: empower, support and educate volunteer programs to use best practice recruitment and retention strategies. Provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers to volunteer.

4. Advocate Volunteerism: Promote the benefits of volunteering and encourage the community to volunteer. Post-Covid, there will be a need to reengage the community in opportunities that are open in volunteering. Promote the benefits of volunteering and encourage the community to volunteer.

5. Develop a Reward and Recognition program: celebrate and recognise volunteers to inspire wider community appreciation of volunteer's contribution to the community.

6. Improve Communication: develop strong communication mechanisms to ensures key stakeholders receive information that is relevant to their needs, builds on their feedback and creates positive working relationships.

7. Engage Online Platforms: Embrace online platforms to deliver volunteer training, support and resources.

8. Value Feedback and Consultation: Provide opportunities for regular feedback to ensure that Volunteer Connect meets the needs of its volunteers and volunteer programs.



Strategic Goal 1 Champion:

Volunteer Connect champions a culture of volunteerism that advocates and celebrates volunteers

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Year commencing
1.1 Provide education and advocacy to develop a positive culture of volunteerism in the community.	1.1.1 Profile internal and external volunteers, use this information in public publications to raise awareness of Volunteering.	The Warrnambool community is aware of all Volunteer agencies & volunteer opportunities, increasing the number of people volunteering	2022
	1.1.2 Develop a marketing campaign using the motivations of interviewed volunteers to engage and educate the community about volunteerism in Warrnambool.	Barriers/stigma around what motivates people to volunteer are broken down, community shows signs of engaging with & enjoying volunteering more diversely.	2022
	1.1.3 Advocate all levels of government, peak bodies, stakeholders, and businesses about the benefits of volunteering and the need to fund and support this sector to thrive.	Volunteering is funded in a sustainable way that allows for organisations to grow and flourish into the future.	2022
1.2 Endorse a central platform unique to the Warrnambool community that will help people engage with & offer to volunteer.	1.2.1 Explore web based platforms to support volunteerism in Warrnambool	The Web platform has become known as a one-stop-shop for all things volunteering. With access to resources and volunteer opportunities.	2022
1.3 Support the growth of strong neighbourhoods through volunteering	1.3.1 Research how Volunteer Connect supports neighbourhood advocates to recruit volunteers to expand opportunities & engagement.	Advocates in the community can grow their neighbourhoods social opportunities. People can come together to connect.	2024
	1.3.2 Use education, marketing, and promotion to let people know how they can get involved in their local neighbourhoods.	Neighbourhoods are busy hubs that offer people opportunities to engage and socialise.	2024
	1.3.3 Promote the use of knowledge & skills learned over a lifetime to volunteer in order to share.	People have an opportunity to share their skills and knowledge with the Community	2024
1.4 Collaborate with the community, offering a diverse range of training, networking & professional development for leaders of volunteers, community groups and not for profit organisations	1.4.1 Facilitate, promote and grow the South West Volunteer Network. Offer opportunities for VIOs, clubs & groups to attend training/workshops which empower them to create sustainable volunteer programs	The network is known to all VIOs, Clubs and Groups and is used as a platform to network, learn and keep up to date with the volunteering sector	2022

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Year commencing
	1.4.3 Create a library of resources made up of both written and spoken information relating to volunteering for use by the community.	The community has access to tools to support volunteer programs	2023
1.5 Provide education & resources to encourage best practices for volunteering, volunteers, and volunteer organisations	1.5.1 Review current resources and update in line with best practice.	Have a library of resources that are up to date and current.	2022
1.6 Explore options to celebrate and recognise Volunteers in our Community	1.6.1 Explore ways that we can expand how we recognise volunteers in the community on a regular bases.	A calendar of events is created that recognises volunteers	2022
1.7 Encourage Staff to volunteer	1.7.1 Create transparent processes and policy for on boarding Corporate Volunteers	Local businesses commence volunteering with WCC expanding our volunteer base & creating new relationships to work together.	2022
	1.7.2 Educate and encourage staff to volunteer by collaborating with local VIOs to create pledges for WCC staff to volunteer their time.	Staff are aware of their ability to Volunteer inside work hours to give back to the community.	2023



Strategic Goal 2 Strengthen:

Volunteer Connect will *Strengthen our community* by actively supporting social inclusion and diversity through volunteering.

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Year commencing
2. Foster, encourage & collaborate genuine relationships people living with Migrants, Disability, LBGQTA+ & First Nations communities through education and introductions.	2.0.1 Create strategies to encourage younger volunteers to engage, along with education on retaining them into the future.	The demographics of Volunteering in Warrnambool is more diverse, in turn building a sustainable future.	2023
	2.0.2 Develop strategies to increase social inclusion & diversity for volunteering with Council, particularly for those living with disability, residents from CALD backgrounds & First nations.	Council has a diverse range of volunteers through its programs	2022
	2.0.3 Create training & resources to encourage VIOs and community groups to increase social inclusion & diversity in their volunteering	The community has a diverse range of people engaging with and supporting volunteering	2022
	2.0.4 Develop clear guidelines around accessible communication and language used in written material to ensure we are inclusive to a diverse range of people.	People have access to communication from Volunteer Connect in a format related to their situation, i.e. a different language, speaking rather than written, etc.	2022



Strategic Goal 3 Sustain:

Volunteer Connect will deliver a sustainable service through being aligned with best-practice and contemporary trends in volunteering

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Year commencing
3.1 Use education and best practices to provide meaningful opportunities for Volunteers to Volunteer.	3.1.2 Conduct a review of WCC volunteer positions to identify if volunteers have valuable & meaningful roles. And that these positions are in line with best practices.	Volunteers have meaningful experiences while volunteering that aligns with their aspirations/ reasons for volunteering.	2022
	3.1.2 Research opportunities to change some volunteer positions to encourage more organic roles to help expand volunteering in specific spaces	Volunteers can use their specific skills and knowledge to volunteer, in turn opening up and expanding programs that may be offered.	2023
	3.1.3 Create new roles and different volunteer opportunities that are not tied to physical space, i.e. virtual volunteering	Expand the offering that Council has for volunteers and increase the opportunity for people to engage	2024
3.2 Create a cohesive Reward & Recognition plan for Volunteers at Warrnambool City Council	3.2.1 Review current WCC reward and recognition practices to create a structured reward and recognition practice	Volunteers feel valued in their role at Council. They have a consistent experience throughout all programs at Council.	2022
3.3 Establish a coordinated approach to communication with volunteers, including marketing, promotion & communication plans	3.3.1 Create a Communication Plan to strengthen WCC communication with its volunteers.	WCC volunteers receive regular communication that builds their relationship and sense of belonging to the Council.	2023
	3.3.2 Create a yearly marketing plan & budget for Volunteer Connect to recognise/promote volunteering at WCC & the South West.	Volunteer Connect regularly acknowledges volunteer events, markets itself, volunteerism & the programs it supports to increase awareness in the community.	2023
3.4 Create cohesive & coordinated approaches to recruitment & retention, making the most of online platforms to engage with volunteers.	3.4.1 Evaluate each volunteer program, use this information along with national standards to seek support from Council to resource volunteer programs correctly.	Volunteer program within WCC are resourced in line with best practice.	2022
	3.4.2 Create volunteer management guidelines around minimum resources to consider when delivering volunteer programs.	Staff at WCC are aware of what is required to successfully deliver a volunteer program.	2022

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Year commencing
	3.4.3 Create training for WCC leaders of volunteers, supervisors, and coordinators on how to manage volunteers successfully.	Leaders of volunteer, Supervisor and Coordinators feel confident managing volunteers.	2023
	3.4.4 Communicate the role of Volunteer Connect with WCC volunteers and employees.	WCC Volunteers & employees know/understand how Volunteer Connect can support their volunteer journey.	2022
3.5 Create a volunteer management framework to streamline the processes & procedures of volunteering and managing volunteers at Warrnambool City Council. Embed Better Impact in practices as the internal Volunteer management system.	3.5.1 Review all current WCC policies and procedures	Gaps have been identified, and new best practice policies and procedures have been created	2022
	3.5.2 Initiate a WCC induction and create a Volunteer Handbook that helps educate volunteers about WCC expectations, processes and procedures.	WCC Volunteers are inducted to Council via Volunteers Connect	2022
	3.5.3 Create an innovative way to engage people in understanding the WCC code of conduct and other policies.	All volunteers are comfortable and understand their role as a volunteer at WCC	2024
	3.5.4 Use WCC Better Impact platform to create training opportunities for Volunteers	Volunteers are using Better Impact to upskill, learn new things and expand their knowledge.	2023
	3.5.5 Create program-specific training in WCC Better Impact to help Volunteer managers, supervisors or coordinators at WCC improve their induction process and reduce the time required to do this.	As part of their WCC induction, volunteers have access to training to help them commence their new roles.	2024
	3.5.6 Develop a WCC volunteer management guide/handbook for Volunteer managers, supervisors or coordinators	Volunteer managers, supervisors or coordinators are working in a consistent framework and understand how WCC engages and manages volunteers	2022



Implementation and monitoring

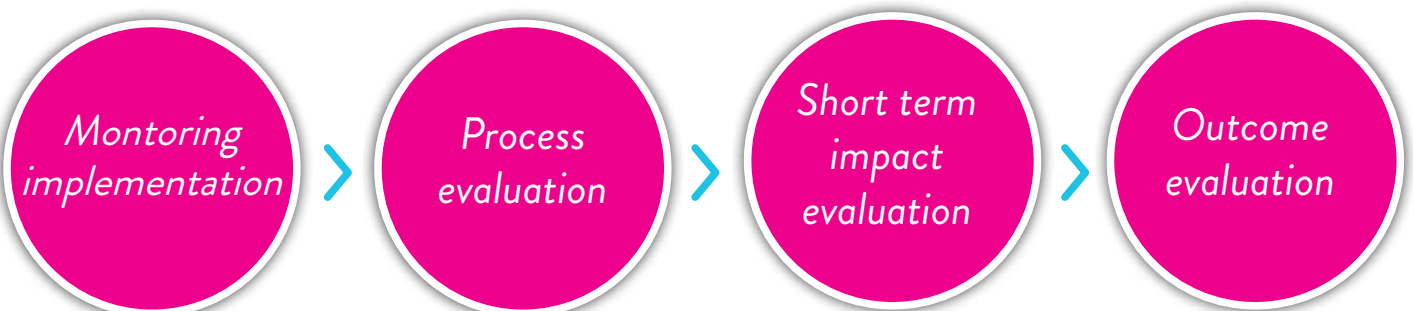
The implementation of the strategy will be led by Volunteer Connect, we will guide collaborative efforts that support volunteering activities across the community, with a focus on the facilitation of community volunteering events and activities that promote and celebrate volunteering; facilitating access to training for volunteer leaders, and community organisations; and diversifying volunteering. Implementation of the strategy will be staged over three years with most actions commencing in the first year of the strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation of this strategy

The monitoring and evaluation of the strategy will consist of four key elements:

1. Regular monitoring and recording of the implementation of the Action Plan.
2. Process evaluation of the Action Plan's implementation with a focus on whether implementation is reaching the intended stakeholders, the quality of implementation, and if all actions are being implemented.
3. Outcome evaluation for each goal with a focus on the long term change in:
 - Culture of volunteerism in the community
 - Warrnambool City Council Volunteering experiences and rates of volunteering
 - The capability of volunteer leaders and volunteer involving organisations

This monitoring and evaluation process will provide the mechanism to prompt when a review of this strategy is required



Resources

Warrnambool 2040 Plan

Healthy Warrnambool 2021-25 Plan

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019. General Social Survey

Volunteering Australia, 2015. Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering

2016 State of Volunteering in Australia Report

2020 State of Volunteering in Victoria Report

Australian National University's Centre for Social Research & Methods Report

Volunteering Australia & PWC, 2016. State of Volunteering in Australia

Department of Social Services, 2021, Volunteer Management Activity Summary

Volunteering Australia, 2015: The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

This Strategy was prepared with the assistance of Flutterbye Sustainable Volunteering.





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