Community Volunteering Strategy 2019–2023
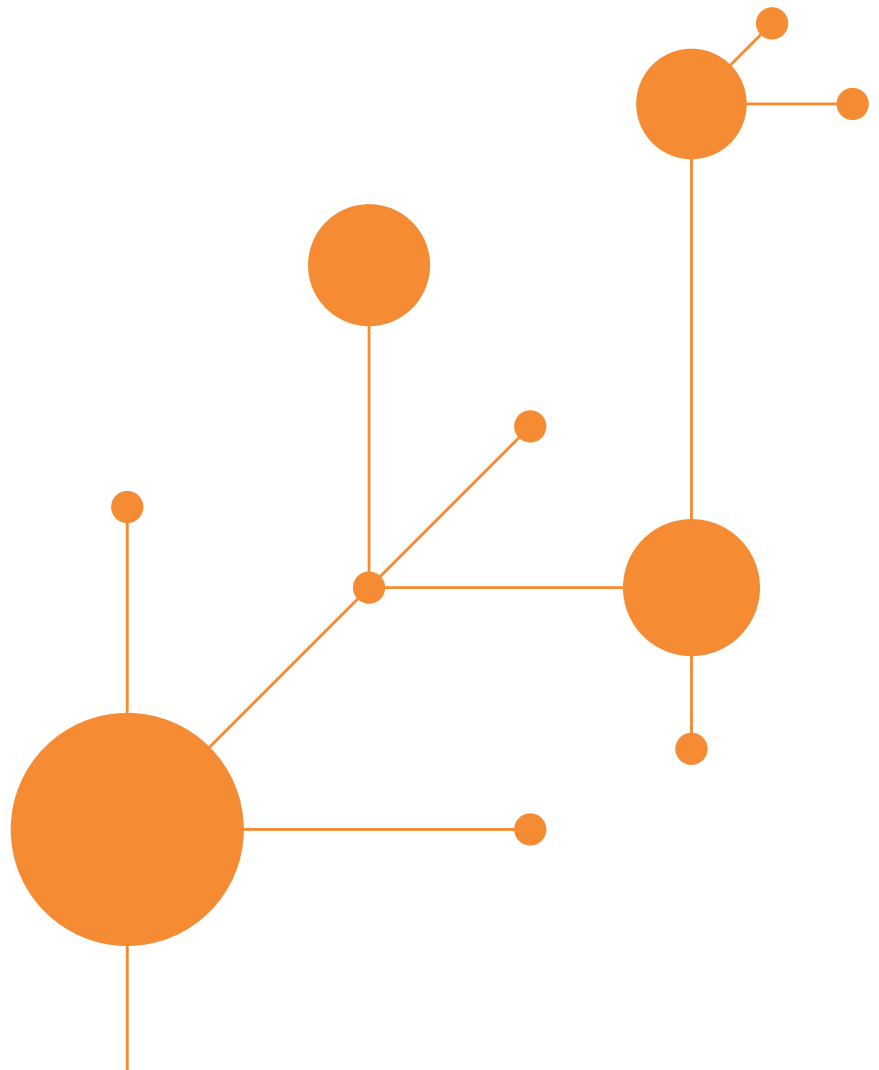
Encouraging a culture of volunteerism in Greater Bendigo

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Contents

Front cover image: Volunteer dragon carriers at the 2019 Bendigo Easter Festival

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country and acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing, and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Introduction

Background to this strategy

Volunteering is a crucial aspect of our community. It contributes to the community's social fabric through social connection, participation, and by providing much needed community services. This in turn positively impacts individuals' sense of belonging, happiness and purpose, and improves their overall health and wellbeing. Without volunteering our community's social and economic activity would be greatly reduced.

The City of Greater Bendigo's *Community Plan 2017–2021* states that the City will *"Commence the development of a Community Volunteering Strategy"* and *"Foster and support volunteerism"*. Both of these actions contribute to realising the City's vision of: *"Greater Bendigo - creating the world's most liveable community"* and to the City's Strategic Goal 2 of Wellbeing and Fairness[1]. Indeed, volunteering is also aligned to the objectives in the

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 of *"Strengthen community participation and belonging"* and *"Increase social connection and reduce loneliness"*.[2]

The City's previous 2008 volunteering strategy *Valuing our Volunteer Sector: Strategy for Volunteering across Greater Bendigo* recognised the need for a more coordinated approach to volunteering across Greater Bendigo[3]. Today in an ever changing volunteering environment the need to coordinate volunteering activities across the community is even more necessary. With changes in demographics, lifestyles, volunteer motivations, and the availability of volunteers; recruiting volunteers is becoming increasingly difficult.

This strategy renews the City's commitment to volunteering and addresses these opportunities and challenges at a community-wide level.

Purpose of this strategy

In response to the changing volunteering landscape the purpose of this strategy is to strengthen the City's role in supporting volunteering activity across the municipality. The strategy will achieve this by strengthening public education and advocacy about volunteering, celebrating volunteering through annual volunteering events, strengthening collaboration across the volunteering sector, promoting best practice and continuous improvement in volunteering, facilitating access to contemporary resources and training, and promoting diversity in volunteering.

Process of developing this strategy

The process of developing this strategy was overseen by a steering committee consisting of City staff and an external project reference group including representatives from the health, sport and recreation, conservation, emergency services, public library, arts and culture, tertiary education, welfare, disability, positive ageing, cultural diversity, faith, and services sectors; as well as the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre.

The development of the strategy included a comprehensive community engagement process with a community survey, an organisation survey, organisation workshops, small targeted focus groups, written submissions, and an online e-forum. The outcomes of this engagement process are available in the *City of Greater Bendigo Volunteering Strategy Community Engagement Report*. This was supported by detailed desktop research on volunteering statistics, trends, services, and policies at state and national levels. This is provided in the *City of Greater Bendigo Volunteering Research Report*. These two reports provide the basis for this strategy.

Volunteering context

What is volunteering?

The Australian peak volunteering body Volunteering Australia currently defines volunteering as *"Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain"*.[4]

The term 'volunteering' includes a wide range of activities in Australian society. It includes **formal volunteering** that takes place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) that deliver services in a structured and supervised manner; and **informal volunteering** that takes place outside the context of a formal organisation, where people come together around a shared interest, usually around addressing specific social needs in their local community. Volunteers tend to join these community organisations with the goal of sharing experiences or providing assistance, and they often think of themselves as members or friends rather than volunteers.[5]

Volunteering in Australia

Nationally 19.0% of Australians (aged 15+) formally volunteer with an organisation. Females undertake more volunteering than males with 20.9% and 17.1% respectively.[6] However this does not include informal volunteering which according to the 2016 *State of Volunteering in Australia Report* is 6%[7], meaning the total rate of volunteering across Australia is likely 25% or higher.

National and state policy context

At a national level volunteering is guided by the 2015 *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*. The National Standards directly benefit volunteer involving organisations by providing guidance on best practice to help organisations attract, manage and retain volunteers. The eight national standards for volunteer involvement are:

1. **Leadership and management:** The governing body and senior employees lead and promote a positive culture towards volunteering and implement effective management systems to support volunteer involvement.

2. **Commitment to volunteer involvement:** Commitment to volunteer involvement is set out through vision, planning and resourcing, and supports the organisation's strategic direction.

3. **Volunteer roles:** Volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles which contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.

4. **Recruitment and selection:** Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies are planned, consistent and meet the needs of the organisation and volunteers.

5. **Support and development:** Volunteers understand their roles and gain the knowledge, skills and feedback needed to safely and effectively carry out their duties.

6. **Workplace safety and wellbeing:** The health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers are protected in the workplace.

7. **Volunteer recognition:** Volunteer contribution, value and impact is understood, appreciated and acknowledged.

8. **Quality management and continuous improvement:** Effective volunteer involvement results from a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement.[8]

The national peak body representing volunteering is Volunteering Australia, while at state and territory level the peak bodies are: Volunteering Victoria, Volunteer NSW/Centre for Volunteering, Volunteering Queensland, Volunteering WA, Volunteering SA-NT, Volunteering Tasmania, and Volunteering ACT.

In each state and territory there are a range of volunteer services ranging from Volunteer Resource Centres often part funded under the Department of Social Services Volunteer Management Program, to local government services such as Connect Warrnambool (online), Connect Mt Alexander (online), City of Port Phillip Volunteer Service (online using Be Collective), the City of Boroondara (full face-to-face service, online registration, training, skills-bank, and events) to national online platforms such as GoVolunteer, SEEK Volunteer, and Vollie.[9]

Every year across Australia, volunteer involving organisations and the communities they serve celebrate volunteering with numerous events. The key national and international events held in Australia each year are:

• **National Volunteer Week** (usually in May): A week-long celebration of volunteers marked by thousands of events across the nation.

• **National Student Volunteer Week** (usually in August): A week-long celebration of student volunteering in schools and higher education providers across Australia.

• **International Volunteer Managers Day** (in November): The official day of celebrating professional volunteer leadership with events across Australia.

• **International Volunteers Day** (in December): The official day of celebrating the important role of volunteers in the community with events across Australia.[10]

Here in Victoria a Ministerial Council for Volunteers (MCV) was established from 2015 to 2018. The MCV provided high-level independent advice to government to inform a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to support and strengthen the volunteering sector. This culminated in the development of ministerial *Council's Priorities for Strengthening Volunteering in Victoria*. These priorities are: *diversity and inclusion*, *volunteering for all ages*, and *quality volunteering experiences*.[11]

The Victorian Government is about to commence the process of developing a State Volunteering Strategy to support and enhance volunteerism in Victoria. The Strategy is expected to be released in late 2021.

A snapshot of volunteering in Greater Bendigo

At the time of the 2016 Census of Population and Housing there were 110,477 residents in Greater Bendigo. The Census found 23.1% of residents (aged 15+) volunteered with an organisation (or 20,614 residents) compared to 19.2% in Victoria. This was an increase of 1.6% from 21.5% in 2011. Females volunteer more than males in Greater Bendigo with 24.5% and 21.6% respectively compared to Victoria 20.8% (Female) and 17.5% (Male).[12] The most active age group of volunteers in Greater Bendigo is the 65-74 year old age group with 30.6%; the lowest group is 85+ with 10.1%, followed by 25-34 at 19.3%. All other age groups have 20% or above levels of volunteering.[13]

These statistics however, do not include informal volunteering such as unpaid care for someone with a disability, long-term illness or old age (12.9% in Greater Bendigo); or unpaid childcare for someone else's children (8.6% in Greater Bendigo), or volunteering that is required as part of a government program linked to government welfare payments such as Work for the Dole requirements for the Newstart Allowance. Therefore the official volunteering statistics are significantly lower than the actual percentage of volunteers in Greater Bendigo.[14]

Volunteering rates vary from suburb to suburb, with suburbs of higher disadvantage having lower rates of volunteering. For example North Bendigo-California Gully has the lowest level of volunteering with 17.9% and highest disadvantage compared to Strathfieldsaye with the highest level of volunteering with 31.1% but lowest level of disadvantage.[15]

The City of Greater Bendigo has over 500 volunteers in a range of volunteer roles across the organisation. These diverse volunteer roles include: Intercultural Ambassadors, YO Events volunteers (the FreeZa Program), and YO Media volunteers (Ambedo Magazine); as well as volunteers with the Bendigo Visitors Centre, the Bendigo Animal Relief Centre, the Bendigo Writer's Festival, Capital Venues and Events, Home Support Services, the Easter Festival, Funloong Fun Day, the Heathcote Visitor Centre, and Environmental Services.

The City supports these volunteers through an online volunteer management system called *Better Impact*, which is used to promote volunteer roles, register new volunteers and manage their volunteer experience. Every year during National Volunteer Week the City recognises its volunteers with a morning tea to recognise their contribution and celebrate their achievements.

One source of support for volunteering in Greater Bendigo is the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC). The BVRC provides resources, training and support to volunteers, volunteer managers, and a diverse range of volunteer involving organisations of all sizes and sectors across Greater Bendigo and central Victoria.

GREATER BENDIGO
23.1%

VICTORIA
19.2%

In Greater Bendigo, 23.1% of residents (aged 15+) volunteered with an organisation compared to 19.2% in Victoria.

24.5% 21.6%
GREATER BENDIGO

20.8% 17.5%
VICTORIA

Females volunteer more than males in Greater Bendigo with 24.5% and 21.6% respectively compared to Victoria 20.8% (female) and 17.5% (male).

AGED 65-74
30.6%

AGED 25-34
19.3%

The most active age group of volunteers in Greater Bendigo is the 65-74 year old age group with 30.6%; the lowest group is 85+ with 10.1%, followed by 25-34 at 19.3%. All other age groups have 20% or above levels of volunteering.

STRATHFIELDSAYE
31.1%

NORTH BENDIGO - CALIFORNIA GULLY
17.9%

North Bendigo-California Gully has the lowest level of volunteering with 17.9% and highest disadvantage compared to Strathfieldsaye with the highest level of volunteering with 31.1% but lowest level of disadvantage.

The changing nature of volunteering

Research shows that people traditionally volunteered because they are often driven to feel like they belong and they want to help others and therefore were often embedded in some form of community service. Now people are often more reflective and therefore more focused on seeking new experiences or exploring new pathways in life, often motivated by passions and interests rather than collective needs, and are often time poor. As a consequence people are looking for more flexible and episodic forms of volunteering.[16] This is especially relevant to young people who often see volunteering as a pathway to employment and skill development.

Flexibility in the diversity of volunteering roles is also relevant to people of culturally diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who often volunteer in more informal ways and not in traditional structured ways, and like people with a disability can feel excluded and discriminated against in some formal volunteering settings that are not welcoming, flexible, or adaptive to the needs of volunteers with diverse experiences, abilities and motivations. As a consequence, volunteering organisations require strategies to be more flexible, understanding of different volunteer experiences, motivations and abilities, and to be culturally aware.[17]

Alongside this changing volunteering environment is the recognition that volunteering needs to move beyond the "three Rs" of volunteering (recruit, retain and recognise)[18] to a more sustainable form of volunteering. This is because sustainable volunteerism focuses on renewal through a healthy balance of volunteers from wider community networks and not just retaining current volunteers. It connects volunteers to an organisation's mission, shows volunteers the impact of their efforts, allows volunteers to engage with the whole organisation and have a voice, involves volunteers in defining tasks and roles, and shares volunteers between organisations. This form of volunteerism is based on organisations communicating, sharing and collaborating with each other.[19]

What the community told us about volunteering

Between September and November 2018 over 740 people participated in the strategy's community engagement process by completing the City's community survey, attending workshops, focus groups and providing written submissions. The findings from this process were presented as a report: *City of Greater Bendigo Volunteering Strategy Community Engagement Report 2018*. Key themes from the report are outlined on the next page.[20]

Please note: All references to community organisations or volunteer involving organisations refer to all organisations and groups with volunteers of all sizes in all sectors.

What Greater Bendigo residents said about volunteering

The residents volunteering survey asked a range of questions about volunteering. One of the key questions related to motivations. Respondents were asked to select from a list of categories and could select multiple options for motivations to volunteer. The most frequently selected options were: *To help others or the community* (73.4%); *To do something worthwhile* (64.7%); *For a sense of satisfaction* (45.4%); *To meet people* (43,3%); and *Out of Interest* (43.1%). Only 9.7% selected *To improve my chances of getting a job*. This suggests that residents volunteer for more than altruistic reasons. This is supported by the 2016 *State of Volunteering in Australia Report* which suggests that while most volunteers are motivated by giving something back to the community, by a belief in a cause, or to make a difference, some volunteers are also motivated by the opportunity to gain skills and experience and to learn new things.[21]

Community members were also asked why volunteering is important. The most frequently selected answers were: *It helps make our community better* (79.4%); *Gives back and helps others* (73.75%); *Connects - links people* (67.5%); *Builds a sense of community* (64.4%); *Good for mind and body wellbeing* (60.7%); *New experiences and insights* (51.45%); *A sense of accomplishment* (49.7%); *Fun and fulfilment* (48.8%); and *Helps family and friends* (45.4%).

Residents were also asked about their preferred way to volunteer. The most frequent responses were: *Regular - weekly* (59.6%); *When my family needs me* (34.8%); *When friends need me* (33.7%); *Regular - monthly* (31%); *When neighbours needs me* (28.1%); *Social-environmental cause* (27.5%); *Infrequently when needed - community event* (26%); and *Small one-off projects when required* (22.9%). These responses are also supported by the 2016 *State of Volunteering in Australia Report*.

Some differences emerge between all respondents (ie: all age groups) and the 15-34 year old age group, especially with regards to the preferred mode of volunteering. This is most obvious with the categories of *online or virtual volunteering*; *small one-off projects*; and *volunteering through work/corporate volunteering*. For the category of *online or virtual volunteering* the response for all age groups was 4.5% compared with 11.4% for the 15-34 year old age group, or more than double the response. For the category of volunteering on *small one-off projects* the response for all age groups was 22.9% compared with 32.9% for the 15-34 year old age group. For the category of *volunteering through work/corporate volunteering* the response for all age groups was only 7.4% compared with 16.5% for the 15-35 year old age group, or over double the rate. This suggests that people in younger age groups are more interested in flexible, online or work-related forms of volunteering than more traditional regular forms of volunteering.
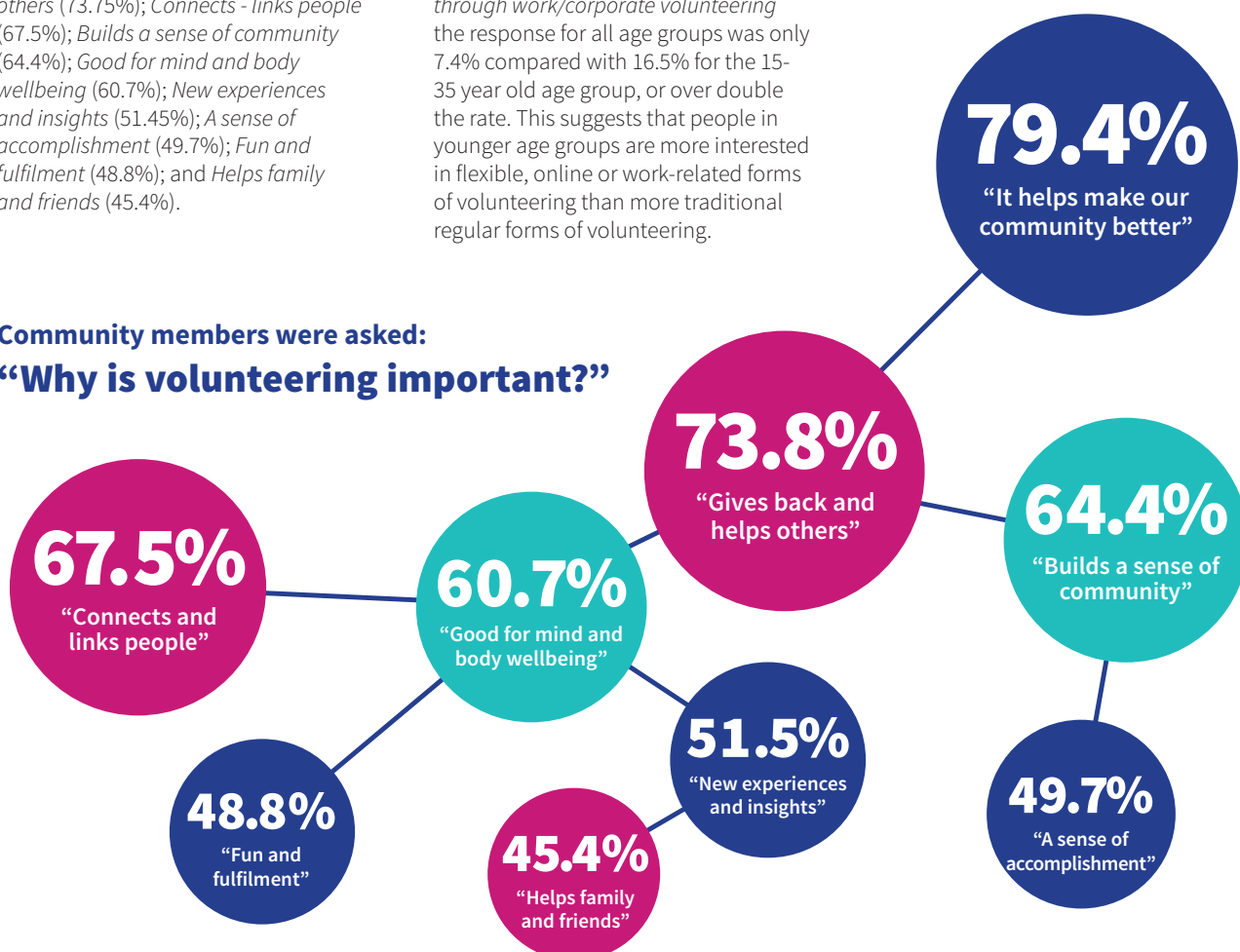
Respondents who had previously volunteered said the main factor for not volunteering was lack of time with 59.3% of respondents stating they were *too busy because of work or family*, 27.9% *not able to commit to regular activity and preferred spontaneous activities*, and 14% stating they were *new to the region and didn't know how to get involved*. This response increased to 37.5% for respondents who had never volunteered, suggesting a need for a centralised online volunteer register.

Finally, residents were asked how the City can help volunteers. The top suggestions were:

- Coordinate the publicity about volunteering and advocate the value of volunteering
- Streamline recruitment processes so they are more accessible and simplify registration
- Provide training for volunteers
- Provide resources for community organisations such as grants, events, and venues etc.

Community members were asked:
"Why is volunteering important?"

79.4% "It helps make our community better"

73.8% "Gives back and helps others"

64.4% "Builds a sense of community"

67.5% "Connects and links people"

60.7% "Good for mind and body wellbeing"

51.5% "New experiences and insights"

49.7% "A sense of accomplishment"

48.8% "Fun and fulfilment"

45.4% "Helps family and friends"

What community organisations said about volunteering

Between September and November 2018 over 70 community sector organisations of all sizes and from a diverse range of sectors participated in the volunteering strategy community engagement process through both an online organisation survey and workshops. They provided feedback on a range of volunteering related issues, from the changing nature of volunteering, what makes volunteering sustainable, training needs for both volunteers and volunteer managers, and the role of the City in volunteering.

The community organisations involved provided significant feedback about the changing nature of volunteering including that as their volunteers were getting older it was increasingly becoming harder to replace them with younger volunteers who were willing to commit to the same regular hours and roles due to fluid work and study commitments.

Volunteers now have less time, require more flexibility and prefer short-term project based roles that are not regular. With this requirement of flexibility there is an increased use of technology in volunteering, changing motivations for volunteers, fewer resources and funding for volunteer organisations, and greater compliance for volunteers.

Community organisations suggested that volunteering could be made

more sustainable in Greater Bendigo by implementing several strategies. These include:

- Developing a more coordinated approach to volunteering that includes a centralised online register for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, as well as a skills-bank for skilled volunteers to promote themselves to organisations
- The promotion of volunteering opportunities
- Public education and advocacy about volunteering
- Developing a reference group to help guide the coordination of community events
- Providing and/or facilitating training for volunteers, volunteer managers, and volunteer committees of management

With regards to training for volunteer managers, community organisations suggested that the key areas of training required are: recruitment, managing volunteers, marketing and communications, OHS, leadership development, frontline management, customer service, business analysis and evaluation, accounting and budgeting, mental health first aid, digital technologies, and rostering.

With regards to training for volunteers, community organisations suggested that the key areas of

training required are: OHS, first aid, information technology skills, food handling, mental health first aid, and cultural awareness and diversity training.

Other themes to emerge from the community organisation feedback were: the need for information on compliance issues like volunteer insurance and information on affordable insurance; the importance of recognising and celebrating volunteers; and the need for funding for volunteer involving organisations.

Finally, community organisations were asked how the City can help the volunteering sector. The top suggestions were:

- Facilitate training and skill development for volunteers and volunteer leaders including governance training for volunteer committees of management, fund raising, OHS, and digital technology
- Promote volunteering in the community, including the social and economic benefits of volunteering, information on how to get involved in volunteering, and value of volunteers
- Recognise volunteers by celebrating and acknowledging the contribution of volunteers
- Support the community sector with information on competitive grants and resources

Themes from the research and community consultation

The background research and community engagement identified several common themes that demonstrate the need to adapt to an ever changing volunteering environment. These themes highlight key focus areas and provide the priorities for this strategy. These priorities are:

- **Flexible volunteering options:** The importance of providing flexible volunteering opportunities and options to meet the changing needs and motivations of volunteers, including virtual/online, skilled, micro volunteering or once off projects

- **Technology in volunteering:** The use of technology to facilitate flexible volunteering options

- **Online volunteering register:** The need for a centralised online register for volunteers and community organisations

- **Communication and promotion:** The need to promote and communicate volunteering opportunities through multiple platforms

- **Public education and advocacy:** The importance of public education and advocacy about volunteering

- **Access and inclusion:** The need for improved access and inclusion to volunteering opportunities that link people to volunteering from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability, people from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background and people of all ages, genders, sexualities, and localities

- **Accessible and affordable training:** The need for accessible and affordable training for volunteers, volunteers leaders, and community organisations and groups

- **Celebrating and recognising volunteering:** The importance of celebrating and recognising volunteering including informal volunteering

- **Collaboration and coordination:** The need to establish a small cross sector Volunteering Reference Group to improve collaboration and coordination of activities between volunteer involving organisations (e.g. National Volunteers Week events) and guide the professional development opportunities of volunteer leaders

- **Sustainable volunteerism:** The importance of moving beyond retaining the current volunteer workforce to sustaining and renewing the volunteer workforce by connecting to wider community networks and groups and promoting a culture of volunteerism.

Goals and objectives

The identified volunteering priority areas can be grouped into four broad goals. These goals are:

GOAL 1: Develop a culture of volunteerism in the community

1.1 Establish a coordinated approach to public education and advocacy about volunteering.

1.2 Establish a coordinated approach to key annual volunteering events in the community.

GOAL 2: Improved coordination of volunteering through collaboration and partnerships

2.1 Establish a Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group.

2.2 Explore options to widen the scope of the City's current internal volunteer management system (*Better Impact*) to provide volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in Greater Bendigo with a central online register.

2.3 Establish a coordinated approach to volunteering communications, promotion and marketing.

GOAL 3: Improved and increased volunteer support

3.1 Improve access to a diverse range of training for volunteers.

3.2 Improve access to diverse and flexible volunteering options for all volunteers of all backgrounds.

3.3 Improve access to support information and resources for volunteers.

GOAL 4: Improved and increased capability of volunteer leaders, community organisations and groups

4.1 Improve access to a diverse range of training, professional development and networking opportunities for volunteer leaders and community organisations and groups.

4.2 Improve access to information and resources on governance and operational requirements for not-for-profit community organisations and groups.

Please note: All references to community organisations or volunteer involving organisations refer to all organisations and groups with volunteers of all sizes in all sectors.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Implementation of this strategy

The implementation of the strategy will be led by the City's Community Partnerships Unit in collaboration with other City business units as required. The City will lead the establishment and delivery of the Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group. Through this Volunteer Reference Group, the City 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 volunteers, volunteer leaders, and community organisations; and diversifying volunteering.

Implementation of the strategy will be staged over four years with most actions commencing in either the first or second 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. Impact evaluation with a focus on the immediate change in the volunteering sector; what is working or not working, unintended consequences, and the appropriateness of the strategy.

4. Outcome evaluation for each goal with a focus on the long term change in:

• The culture of volunteerism in the community

• Community wide coordination of volunteering through collaboration and partnerships

• 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.

Monitoring implementation → **Process evaluation** → **Impact (short term) evaluation** → **Outcome (long term) evaluation**
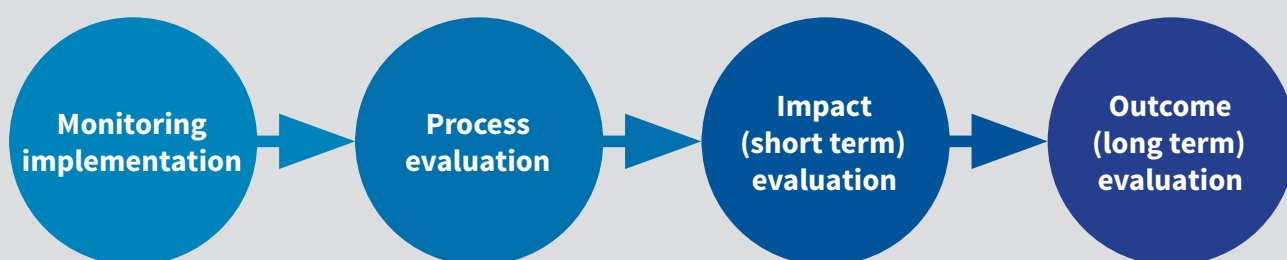
Community Volunteering Strategy Action Plan

This Action Plan provides a clear list of actions for each objective under the strategy's four goals. The Action Plan also provides measures for what success looks like and a timeframe for the implementation of each action.

GOAL 1: Develop a culture of volunteerism in the community

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Timeframe
1.1: Establish a coordinated approach to public education and advocacy about volunteering.	1.1.1: Research, develop and implement a public education campaign on volunteering.	Easy to access and understand information in digital and print form is available to the community. Increase in the awareness of the benefits of volunteering.	Commencing in year 1
	1.1.2: Advocate to all levels of government, peak bodies, key stakeholder groups, and the corporate sector about the social and economic benefits of volunteering, and the importance of funding support for volunteering services.	Volunteering services and activities are adequately funded and supported by a diverse range of organisations.	Commencing in year 1
1.2: Establish a coordinated approach to key annual volunteering events in the community.	1.2.1: Plan, deliver and evaluate public events that promote and celebrate volunteering including: volunteering expos, conferences and forums; as well as events to celebrate National Volunteer Week, National Student Volunteer Week, International Volunteer Day and International Volunteer Managers Day.	A major public volunteering event is held in Greater Bendigo annually. Attendance at events increases and diversifies each year. Increase in media coverage of events.	Commencing in year 2

GOAL 2: Improved coordination of volunteering through collaboration and partnerships

| Objective	Action	What success looks like	Timeframe
2.1: Establish a Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group.	2.1.1: Establish a cross-sector Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group that meets quarterly and guides the coordination of community events, informs community education and advocacy, informs training offerings for volunteers and volunteer leaders, and utilises the evaluation findings of this strategy to inform best practice in volunteering across the sector.	The Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group has four meetings per annum. The Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group has representatives from key volunteer involving organisations across Greater Bendigo. The Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group utilises this strategy's evaluation findings to help improve volunteering practice across the sector.	Commencing in year 1
2.2: Explore options to widen the scope of the City's current internal volunteer management system (*Better Impact*) to provide volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in Greater Bendigo with a central online register.	2.2.1: Explore options to widen the scope of the City's current internal volunteer management system (*Better Impact*) to provide volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across Greater Bendigo with a central online register that includes the possibility of a skills-bank for skilled volunteers to promote their particular skillsets and capabilities to organisations.	All possible options for a central online register are investigated and considered and the most appropriate option is adopted and implemented.	Commencing in year 4
2.3: Establish a coordinated approach to volunteering communications, promotion and marketing.	2.3.1: Coordinate promotion and marketing of volunteering events, activities, training, and resources through the Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group and City communications platforms.	Volunteers and volunteer involving organisations are aware of volunteering activities, opportunities, training, events, and resources.	Commencing in year 2

GOAL 3: Improved and increased volunteer support

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Timeframe
3.1: Improve access to a diverse range of training for volunteers.	3.1.1: Facilitate access to a range of training that includes volunteer rights and responsibilities, privacy and confidentiality requirements, occupational health and safety, background check requirements, communications, social media and website content management, customer service, first aid, and mental health first aid.	Volunteers in Greater Bendigo are provided with appropriate training opportunities and options on a regular basis.	Commencing in year 2
3.2: Improve access to diverse and flexible volunteering options for all volunteers of all backgrounds.	3.2.1: Develop and provide information, resources and training to volunteer involving organisations that support the creation of more flexible and diverse volunteering options which meet the needs, skills, and motivations of volunteers; including micro volunteering, virtual/online volunteering, event volunteering, spontaneous/emergency volunteering, corporate volunteering, and student volunteering.	Volunteer involving organisations are providing diverse and flexible volunteering options to volunteers from all backgrounds. Rates of volunteering are increasing amongst all groups in the community. Employees of corporate organisations, students, and skilled volunteers are volunteering in the community sector providing key professional skills.	Commencing in year 2
	3.2.2: Develop and deliver programs and training that encourage volunteering amongst all the diverse groups in the Greater Bendigo community.	Increased participation in volunteering amongst residents of all genders and sexualities, of all ages, all abilities, all cultures and backgrounds, and all localities in the municipality. Volunteer involving organisations promote diversity and inclusion in volunteering through improved practices.	Commencing in year 2
3.3: Improve access to support information and resources for volunteers.	3.3.1: Develop and provide resources to volunteers that support their experience including: flexible volunteering opportunities, information on volunteer rights and responsibilities, and other requirements.	Volunteers are aware of volunteering opportunities and their rights and responsibilities.	Commencing in year 1

GOAL 4: Improved and increased capability of volunteer leaders, community organisations and groups

Objective	Action	What success looks like	Timeframe
4.1: Improve access to a diverse range of training, professional development and networking opportunities for volunteer leaders and community organisations and groups.	4.1.1: Provide and/or facilitate training for volunteer leaders on the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* via Volunteering Victoria or Volunteering Australia.	Volunteer leaders are using the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* to guide their work. Best practice volunteering is the norm within Greater Bendigo volunteer involving organisations.	Commencing in year 2
	4.1.2: Provide and/or facilitate access to affordable skills training for volunteer leaders and community organisations including: people management, change management, marketing and communications, human resources, occupational health and safety, risk assessment, budgeting, governance, and monitoring and evaluation.	Volunteer leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their role professionally and lead their volunteers.	Commencing in year 3
4.2: Improve access to information and resources on governance and operational requirements for not-for-profit community organisations and groups.	4.2.1: Provide access to resources and information on governance and operational requirements including: strategic planning, financial reporting, compliance, policies and procedures, volunteering insurance and information on grants and acquittals.	Community sector organisations are aware of their governance and operational requirements and obligations, and have appropriate policies and procedures.	Commencing in year 2
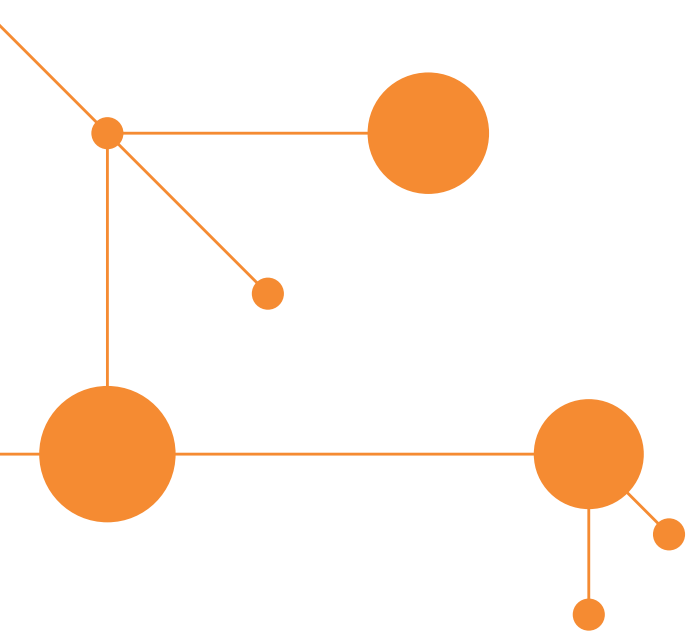
Acknowledgements

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- Mark Hands, Goldfields Libraries Corporation
- Jill McArthur, University of the Third Age
- Greg Ralton, Maiden Gully / Marong Lions Club and Red Cross
- Dan Douglass, Heathcote Health
- Rose Jamieson, Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre
- Meredith Dixon, Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre

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