



MARIBYRNONG VOLUNTEER STRATEGY 2018-2021

Abridged version



Maribyrnong
city council

CONTENTS

02

Introduction

The value of volunteering

Purpose

Approach

04

Definition of volunteering

National Standards for volunteering

Federal Government

State Government

06

Linking with the Council Plan

07

Why we need to invest in volunteering

08

Opportunities and challenges

10

A new direction

12

A plan for the future

14

Monitoring and reporting

16

References

INTRODUCTION

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a vital part of our City's social, cultural and economic landscape.

Everyday, volunteers make significant contributions to support all levels of our community from individuals,

community groups, not-for-profits and businesses, many of whom could not function without their support.

Simply put, volunteers are invaluable. We can't do it without them.

PURPOSE

In recent years, our city has undergone significant growth, development, and demographic change; and in addition to the evolving expectations of our community, local government faces new pressures with rate capping and sector change.

Government cannot solve these challenges alone.

With this strategy, Maribyrnong City Council aims to mobilise and support communities to build their capacity to participate and contribute.

APPROACH

Based on the evidence, this strategy identifies trends, challenges and risks and

proposes a way forward that will respond to changing and future need.





DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

In 2015, after significant community consultation, the peak body, Volunteering Australia, adopted the following definition:

"Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."

Volunteering Australia has stated:

"The new definition captures newer forms of volunteering such as online, spontaneous, and corporate volunteering and social entrepreneurship."

Council has applied this definition for the purpose of this strategy.



NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering Australia developed the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement in Not-for-Profit organisations to:

- Provide good practice guidance and benchmarks to help organisations attract, manage and retain volunteers.
- Help manage risk and safety in their work with volunteers.
- Help improve the volunteer experience.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government released the National Volunteering Strategy in 2011, which identified emerging national trends and issues for the volunteer sector and established the vision for volunteering.

This vision was articulated with the 2015 release of National Standards for Volunteers.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ministerial Council for Volunteers provides independent advice to the State Government through the Minister for Families and Children.

In 2017, the Council provided the State Government with its recommendations for supporting volunteering in Victoria.

LINKING WITH THE COUNCIL PLAN



**COUNCIL'S
SUPPORT AND
COMMITMENT TO
VOLUNTEERING
IS ARTICULATED
IN THE COUNCIL
PLAN 2017-2021.**



OBJECTIVE 2

Healthy and Inclusive Communities:
Provide and advocate for services and facilities that support people's wellbeing and healthy living, connection to community, safety, cultural engagement and whole of life learning.



OBJECTIVE 2.8

Enable formal and informal volunteering, community leadership, civic participation and place-based neighbourhood development.

The strategic indicators to measure its success are:

- Increased participation in community leadership programs.
- Increased engagement in volunteerism, and;
- Increased civic and community engagement.

WHY WE NEED TO INVEST IN VOLUNTEERING



THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering offers opportunities for civic participation, empowerment, community leadership, connectedness and improved health and wellbeing.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Volunteering strengthens community by supporting civic participation and community ownership.

HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Volunteering plays a key role in building and sustaining resilient, healthy communities.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Volunteering facilitates skills development and learning. It provides pathways to community leadership, education and employment and opportunities for expertise and knowledge to be harnessed and shared.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Department of Planning and Community Development (2012) showed volunteering contributions were worth about \$23 billion to the Victorian economy in 2011, estimated to grow to up to \$42 billion by 2021.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

There are a number of opportunities and challenges facing the volunteer sector and Local Government, including:

- The demographics of our City are changing and the rate of volunteering is increasing.
- People are looking for more flexible volunteering opportunities.
- Younger people want skill-based opportunities and to volunteer for shorter periods.
- Newly arrived communities want to volunteer but are facing barriers to participation.
- Governance, compliance and risk demands on volunteering are increasing.
- Volunteers require appropriate management and support.
- Currently Council has no consistent approach to volunteer management and practices are fragmented.
- Better technology and systems are needed to streamline volunteer management and to meet the demands and needs of the community.
- Resourcing is needed if Council is to harness the growing interest in volunteering while addressing demanding compliance and management issues.





A NEW DIRECTION

To address the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities for volunteering in our City, Council in collaboration with the community, will examine how best to support resilient and active civic participation.

This will include exploring all the ways communities participate and contribute and how to facilitate and build capabilities.

Council will develop and share knowledge, resources, partnerships and opportunities, and build more active and engaged civic participation

through volunteering. The new direction will build on what works, and will establish a coordination resource to support Council's teams to build a cohesive approach to management and systems.

It will emphasise a whole of Council approach and be outward

focused to build partnerships and networks.

To achieve these aims, three key themes have been identified to drive and deliver this strategy.





PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



STRENGTHEN

ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN ROBUST SYSTEMS

Council manages and/or supports a variety of volunteer programs, strengthening these through a commitment of resources will ensure better systems management and a structure that supports compliance and risk mitigation.

Local government can lead in responding to the challenges of the sector by deepening and building networks and partnerships with the community and the volunteer sector, and increasing the capability of local agencies.

To achieve this theme, Council needs to:

1. **Invest in a volunteering resource to improve compliance, systems and structures across all of Council's volunteer programs.**
2. **Build networks and partnerships with volunteers and the volunteer sector to strengthen systems and structures to enable volunteer participation.**



CHAMPION

RECOGNISE AND ACKNOWLEDGE VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION

To best champion our community's volunteers and the value of volunteering, well-designed systems are needed to recognise, support, develop and elevate the visibility of volunteers, and to formally celebrate their efforts and achievements.

To achieve this theme, Council needs to:

1. **Create systems that value, recognise, celebrate and advocate the contribution volunteers make to our community.**
2. **Promote the benefits and achievements of volunteering and volunteers to generate recognition of contribution and value.**

SUSTAIN

COMMIT TO RIGOROUS AND RESPONSIVE VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Local government needs to sustain programs that foster community capacity and build resilience and opportunity.

To ensure the sustainability of volunteer contribution requires responsive and considered solutions to address emerging trends and challenges.

Policies and processes are needed to support good governance without excessive bureaucracy.

To achieve this theme, Council needs to:

1. **Establish effective volunteer management and governance systems and structures, engaging a whole of Council approach and including innovative technologies.**
2. **Build and develop networks and partnerships to facilitate innovative solutions and assist groups in the community to be self-sustaining.**





MONITORING AND REPORTING

Council will monitor and report on the Volunteer Strategy by:

1. Investigating the resourcing required for Council to meet its commitment to volunteering.
2. Developing a plan so Council can streamline its internal processes and explore how it can strengthen and build partnerships with the community and volunteer sector.
3. Developing meaningful measures and reporting mechanisms to report consistently on the progress and participation of volunteers.
4. Identify key staff to establish a Volunteer Reference Group, who will meet regularly and report on progress.

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