

Local Lessons

PLACE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR STRONGER VOLUNTEERING

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

The best insights come from community itself.

Local organisations report that the following challenges consistently prevent people from engaging in volunteering:



Complex or formal application processes and written materials.



Difficulties with onboarding processes.



Limited awareness of opportunities or unclear role information.



Social isolation and lack of peer/community support.



Transport and internet access issues (*especially in regional & rural areas*).



Requirement to become a member of the organisation.



Costs related to volunteering (*e.g. checks, transport, childcare, uniforms*).



Lack of accessible or inclusive communication methods.



Inflexible schedules or roles not tailored to individual skills or availability.



Inadequate childcare (*for those caring for children*)

SOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING

View our partner document on the solutions.



INCLUSION CASE STUDIES

See how other organisations have tackled these barriers.



PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

- Physical inaccessibility and lack of quiet spaces.
- Limited role flexibility or adjustments, with predefined tasks that do not cater for diverse abilities.
- Stigma, discrimination, and stereotypes, including perceived difficulty around offering opportunities for people with disability.
- Lack of staff/volunteer training in disability inclusion.
- Communication challenges and unclear guidance.
- Financial pressures, including the cost of assistive devices.
- Energy limitations and mental load.
- Concerns about liability.
- Social exclusion and lack of confidence, particularly among young people with disability.

PEOPLE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED

- Financial constraints, including transport and clothing costs.
- Difficulty balancing volunteering with job-seeking commitments.

OTHER

- Ongoing impacts of COVID-19.
- Volunteers retiring or disengaging.
- Roles not adapted to evolving needs and capacities.

FIRST NATIONS

- Limited organisational links with First Nations communities.
- Cultural misunderstandings or lack of cultural safety.
- Formal recruitment processes that are inaccessible or unwelcoming.
- Limited availability due to other commitments.
- Perception that engagement is one-sided or tokenistic.

NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANTS

- Language barriers and inaccessible information.
- Fear of racism or authority. *“Tendency to only volunteer in own community due to fear of racism.”*
- Limited local connections
- Lack of confidence in own skills.
- Inaccessible recruitment processes
- Reduced capacity to navigate transport systems.
- Time pressures and unpaid obligations.

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Limited opportunities for those under 18.
- Lack of trust or misconceptions about young volunteers.
- Inflexible roles.
- Limited transport options.
- Low awareness of local opportunities.
- Child safety compliance requirements can feel overwhelming for some organisations.



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 **volunteering**
VICTORIA