

### **The Victorian Government Launches the Let's Stay Connected Fund**

Volunteering Victoria welcomes the announcement of the Let's Stay Connected Fund and encourages volunteer-involving organisations to apply for these grants.

The Victorian Government recently announced its Let's Stay Connected Fund to help communities stay connected during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and beyond. The fund provides grants between \$5,000 and \$200,000 to support community-led initiatives.

A wide variety of organisations are eligible to apply for grants that “help community groups continue to operate by adapting the way they deliver programs or events, including through online forums” and projects that find “new ways for people to continue volunteering within their communities while maintaining physical distancing requirements.”

This is funding is very good news for the Victorian volunteering sector. Through the pandemic leaders of volunteers have worked diligently and shown considerable innovativeness to stay connected to their volunteer workforces. One of the few silver linings of the pandemic for the volunteering sector has been its ability to transition to more effective digital ways of recruiting, inducting, and training volunteers.

Volunteer-involving organisations have also adapted to online and remote means of supporting communities through volunteer-led service delivery models.

Volunteering has well established mental and physical health benefits for volunteers. Volunteering is also a key ingredient of creating and maintaining resilient communities.

But for some small organisations with limited funds, digital adaption has been a barrier to engaging volunteers. Leaders of volunteers have voiced concerned about whether their volunteers will reengage with their organisations following the pandemic. The mental wellbeing of volunteers is also a high priority of leaders of volunteers.

“The pertinent issue of connectivity is something Volunteering Victoria highlighted in our recent submission to the Victorian Government on its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and we are thrilled to see the government take concrete steps to support communities and volunteers.” Said Scott Miller, Chief Executive of Volunteering Victoria.

“Let's make the most of this challenging situation,” Scott said. “I highly encourage our members and all organisations in the volunteering sector to consider applying for these grants.”

Further details and about the grants can be found [here](#).

#### **MEDIA INQUIRIES:**

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