

# Back to Work Liberal Party Platform

## VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS





BACK TO WORK PLAN

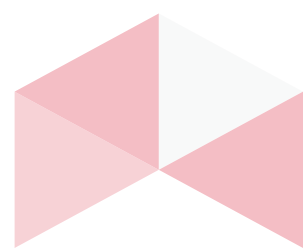
# Overview

The Victorian Liberal Party released the *Back to Work Plan* in November 2020.

[www.michaelobrien.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/back-to-work-plan.pdf](http://www.michaelobrien.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/back-to-work-plan.pdf)

The key focus of the Back to Work Plan is on business and the economy, with the aim of recovering from COVID. Volunteering is important for the health and recovery of many of the industries highlighted in the plan.

This document identifies the initiatives in the *Back to Work Plan* which would benefit from a stronger focus on volunteering.



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## Back to Work Plan Initiatives

## Volunteering Victoria Recommendations

## Data and Examples

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1

### KICK-START VICTORIAN TOURISM:

Establish a dedicated \$300 million Victorian Tourism Fund to support tourism operators to recover and promote local tourism.

Many tourism activities and attractions are driven by volunteer groups and supported by volunteers.

Volunteers boost Victorian tourism through tour guides, visitor services, heritage groups, cultural, sports and recreation, and environment stewardship.

If this initiative was implemented, the Fund guidelines should allow for grants to strengthen volunteer programs in tourism.

### Volunteering Victoria members include:

Bushwalking Victoria; Conservation Volunteers Australia; Keep Victoria Beautiful; Parks Victoria; Museums Victoria; Visit Ballarat; Seaworks Foundation; Geelong Gallery; Zoos Victoria; National Vietnam Veterans Museum; State Library of Victoria; Shrine of Remembrance; TarraWarra Museum of Art.

Our local council members also support tourism in Metropolitan Melbourne (e.g. the Melbourne City Council City Ambassadors) and in regional Victoria (e.g. Yarra Ranges Shire).

### Spotlight on volunteers in tourism (City of Melbourne):

“Volunteers play a vital role in the City of Melbourne’s tourism services. Our volunteers provide information on Melbourne to around two million visitors each year. Their love and knowledge of the city and regional Victoria adds to Melbourne’s reputation as a friendly, welcoming and culturally vibrant city.”<sup>1</sup>

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2

### REBUILDING OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL BUSINESS:

Support the events industry by developing a proactive plan to get small and large events up and running again as soon as possible with supported COVID safe plans and infrastructure.

Volunteers are essential for running a wide range of events. Major cultural, music, arts and sporting events and are all made possible because of volunteerism.

If this initiative was implemented, the guidelines should be developed to allow for COVID safe plans and infrastructure to support volunteers. The volunteering sector would benefit from promotions to reengage volunteers too.

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3

### CREATIVE INDUSTRIES:

Facilitate the recovery of the creative industries sector, which has lost tens of thousands of jobs, to pre-COVID-19 employment levels by 1 January 2022.

Establish a \$100 million Creative Industries Restoration Fund to help our world-class music and arts thrive in a COVID-normal world.

Volunteers help to make the creative industries thrive.

If this initiative was implemented, the guidelines should be developed to allow for investments to support volunteers in the creative industries.

16% of Victorians engage in volunteer work in the arts. On average Victorian creative and cultural organisations rely on volunteer and pro bono services for 45% of income support.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Volunteering Victoria members include:**

Heide Museum of Modern Art, TarraWarra Museum of Art

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4

### COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE VICTORIANS:

Community services for vulnerable Victorians Probus, multicultural seniors' groups and U3As to defeat isolation.

Volunteering is a powerful means of developing social connections and resilient communities.

The groups identified in the Back to Work, and many other critical organisations that help vulnerable Victorians, could not be run without volunteers.

#### **Our Volunteering Victoria members include:**

Australian Multicultural Community Services  
U3A Network Victoria  
Council on the Ageing Victoria (COTA)

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5

### NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND COMMUNITY SECTOR:

Increase funding to the not-for-profit and community sector to support their work in family violence, homelessness and other home programs.

Much of the work undertaken by the not-for-profit and community sector organisations requires and is augmented by volunteers.

Volunteers are able to offer qualitatively distinct forms of support to clients in ways that can have higher impact than private service provision.

The community sector is experiencing pressures due to COVID. Recently a Volunteering Australia survey in January 2021 found:

- » 60% of organisations reported that their volunteer programs are only partially operational, with 12% still not operational.
- » A third of organisations are not confident that they will achieve pre-COVID levels of volunteering activity in the next six months.
- » At the same time, over 40% of organisations reported experiencing an increase in demand for services and over half (53%) saying they need more volunteers.<sup>3</sup>

6

### SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES:

Grants of up to \$50,000 to grassroots clubs to assist recovery following the losses caused by lockdowns.

Matched funding of up to \$1 million to any grassroots club to commence capital works projects prior to 31 December 2021.

This is greatly needed in the volunteering community.

Small grants with minimal administration which allow for investments in the very basic necessities of an organisation (such as laptops, software licenses, basic amenities) are a powerful means of activating the community through volunteerism.

Medium to large grants to upgrade the facilities of volunteering organisations would also likely unlock a great deal of activity for communities across Victoria.

In 2020, Volunteering Victoria supported the administration of the Australian Government Department of Social Services Supplementary Volunteer Grants Program to support volunteering in grassroots clubs.

A total of 1,754 Victorian grant applications were received – seeking a total funding of \$6,523,648.

This was one over ten times the available funding pool of \$620,500.

The top three successfully funded grants were in, community service, sport and recreation.<sup>4</sup>

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8

### SPORTS AND RECREATION:

\$100 Sports and Recreation Participation vouchers for all Victorian primary and secondary school students to claim as a discount on local sport and recreation membership fees when registering with a sporting club, dance school, learn to swim or other recreation providers before 1 January 2022.

This initiative would support a range of activities that are often delivered and supported through volunteers.

#### **According to the Clearing House for Sport:**

“Approximately 3 million Australians donate their time and energy to community sport and recreation clubs.

Providing ongoing education and training opportunities, positive recognition and other forms of support for volunteers, has been shown to dramatically improve volunteer recruitment and retention rates and make Australian sport more sustainable.”<sup>5</sup>

#### **In Victoria:**

It is estimated that over 580 000 people volunteer in the sport and recreation sector in Victoria each year.<sup>6</sup>

As with community grants (see above) there is enormous potential to support communities through very small grants.



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