



## Volunteering Victoria Submission to the Victorian State

# DISABILITY PLAN 2021-2025 CONSULTATION

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**TO:** Office for Disability

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**STATUS:** Final

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

Volunteering Victoria commends the Victorian Government for its efforts to ensure more inclusivity for people with disability and provide extensive consultation towards the next state disability plan 2021 to 2025 (the New State Disability Plan).

For Volunteering Victoria, our members and the volunteering sector in Victoria on whose behalf we advocate, a primary concern is that the current state disability plan for 2017-2020 titled “Absolutely Everyone” (the Current State Disability Plan), apart from one point<sup>1</sup>, does not specifically reference volunteering. This is despite the significant and critical role that volunteering plays in the disability sector, in the workforce that supports disability services and indeed in the lives of people with disability across all sectors of the community.

Volunteering Victoria, as the state peak volunteering body in Victoria and others including Volunteering Australia, have over a number of years made numerous submissions detailing the value of volunteering and expressing concern at the absence of incorporation of volunteering in government disability plans, in disability legislation and in National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) legislation<sup>2</sup>. But the fact remains that this is a serious omission with significant impacts for disability inclusive volunteering and effective volunteer management.

**Primary Recommendation:** that the New State Disability Plan explicitly include and articulate volunteering, noting the scale, diversity and power it has to sustain health and wellbeing and the inclusive role it plays both in the disability sector and more broadly across the community. With proper understanding, recognition and appreciation of the disability workforce as one including volunteers, many of whom themselves are people with disability, and incorporation of volunteering in the New Disability Plan, the Victorian Government can:

- 1.** More effectively plan for, manage and support this inclusive workforce;
- 2.** encourage and promote and identify and reduce barriers to volunteering in the disability sector; and
- 3.** encourage and promote and create opportunities and reduce barriers for the involvement of people with disability in volunteering.

<sup>1</sup> State Disability Plan 2017–2020 Action 12 page 37 – Implementing strategies to improve opportunities for training, volunteering and employment for people with a disability (with regard to improving park accessibility for people with a disability) [https://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/application/files/2314/8062/9382/1610033\\_Victorian\\_state\\_disability\\_plan\\_2017-2020\\_Text\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/application/files/2314/8062/9382/1610033_Victorian_state_disability_plan_2017-2020_Text_WEB.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See Annex A for a list of relevant submissions and research, including recommendations, on volunteering in and for the disability sector —

## VOLUNTEERING AND THE DISABILITY SECTOR – RELEVANT SUBMISSIONS AND RESEARCH (ANNEX A)

It is requested that the consultation towards the New Disability Plan takes due note of the work done to advocate on behalf of volunteers in the disability sector and the significant role of volunteering in supporting disability inclusion. The value and benefit of volunteering and recommendations made to support, encourage and promote volunteering are clearly highlighted in numerous submissions and research papers which we have listed in Annex A to this submission.

### Key Points

- » Volunteers enhance and expand service support within the disability sector, often gaining a unique insight and perspective into the care of people with disability and bringing significant and unique value to the level of care and support that can be provided at a relatively small cost to support organisations and to the taxpayer<sup>3</sup>. A cohesive and effective disability workforce includes both paid staff and volunteers.
- » People with disability volunteer providing both a gateway to employment and to inclusion and participation in community<sup>4</sup>.
- » There are significant barriers to inclusive volunteering which need to be identified and actively addressed to further encourage and promote such volunteering<sup>5</sup>.

**Volunteering Victoria recommends:** that volunteering, both from an individual and service organisation perspective, be highlighted within the New State Disability Plan and:

- **Articulate: Clearly articulate and recognise volunteering:**
  - » as a means of inclusion and participation for people living with disability with volunteering being shown to be positively linked to improved life satisfaction, mental and physical wellbeing<sup>6</sup>;
  - » as critical to the care provided by disability service organisations; and
  - » as a pathway to employment.

<sup>3</sup> Value Added: Volunteer-Supported Services and the Challenge of the NDIS Research - Interchange and University of Melbourne 2019, Executive Summary, page 8 <https://www.interchange.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Value-Added-Volunteer-Supported-Services-and-the-Challenge-of-the-NDIS.pdf>

- **Scope: Include a full and detailed scoping of the disability workforce by gathering full and proper data on the number and role of volunteers, including those with disability and/or other lived experience of disability to:**
  - » enable Government to effectively manage, plan and support this workforce appropriately and ensure its sustainability;
  - » identify, promote and encourage opportunities for involvement of people with disability in volunteering, with barriers identified and reduced.
- **Implement: Across government and government organisations create opportunities for people with disability in both employment and volunteering, identifying and reducing barriers and promoting and encouraging disability inclusion.**

## ABOUT VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering, with a singular and specialised focus on volunteering. We lead the development of a collaborative, sustainable, thriving volunteering community and movement in Victoria. We see our role as promoting and building a vibrant, strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable, encouraging resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

Volunteering Victoria strives to find new and creative ways to engage organisations and individuals in meaningful volunteering, supporting volunteer managers, volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. This includes supporting our 415 individual and organisational members, key strategic partners from all sectors and places around Victoria and the broader community to encourage and enable volunteering.

## Our membership – representing volunteering in the disability sector

18 of our members are disability organisations. Our 37 local government and 17 volunteer support service members all provide support to disability volunteer-involving organisations many of whom also involve and encourage and promote volunteers with disability. Another 75 of our organisation members are involved in health and 17 in aged care – the lack of acknowledgement and recognition of volunteering in the Current State Disability Strategy and disability legislation directly impacts these organisations resulting in insufficient support for volunteer involvement.

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4. Volunteering Australia Submission to the development of the National Disability Strategy October 2020 page 3 <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Submission-to-the-National-Disability-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>

5. Victoria ALIVE Project Report, page 17 <https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Vic-ALIVE-Project-Final-Report.pdf>

6. Australian Government Productivity Commission, Mental Health Inquiry Report (2020) page 391 [www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report/mental-health.pdf](https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report/mental-health.pdf)

## Our experience, submissions and track record:

### Submissions, Position Papers and Advocacy

Volunteering Victoria has made a number of submissions over many years calling for increased recognition of the role of volunteers in the disability sector and of the benefits of volunteering for people with disability<sup>7</sup>.

### Victoria ALIVE Project

While the Current State Disability Plan does not explicitly reference volunteering, during 2018 and 2019 Volunteering Victoria ran the Victoria ALIVE Project in partnership with and support from the Department of Health and Human Services and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria<sup>8</sup>. The project was funded in part as an internal departmental action to implement the Current State Disability Plan, with funding from the NDIS. The vision of the Victoria ALIVE project was that “Victoria’s volunteering organisations are welcoming, inclusive and accessible for people with all abilities”. The focus of the project, therefore, was on volunteer-involving organisations and improving their practices. While the Victoria ALIVE project did not include specific consultation or research on the New State Disability Plan, the project team was well-placed to explore benefits, barriers and ways to improve disability inclusive volunteering in Victoria. These findings and recommendations are critical to developing the New State Disability Plan and in supporting and explaining the recommendations in this submission. Furthermore a number of learnings from the project were identified and proposed for purposes of the development of the New State Disability Plan which can be found in Annex A to this submission<sup>10</sup>.

Specifically, the report of the Victoria ALIVE Project noted that as volunteering relates to many of the initiatives outlined in the Current State Disability Plan, disability inclusion should be incorporated and highlighted in the Victorian Volunteering Strategy which is underway<sup>11</sup>. The Project also points out that as volunteering is an important means for volunteers to participate in our communities, volunteering should be incorporated in many of the activities outlined in the new State Disability Plan noting that, should the four pillars be retained, volunteering is articulated as a high level activity of Pillar 4 “Contributing Lives”.

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<sup>7</sup> Annex A details Volunteering Victoria submissions, position papers and research including Victoria ALIVE Recommendations for the New State Disability Plan at page 2 of the Annex; State of Volunteering in Victoria: 2020 at page 7; Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System at page 9; and Worker Screening Regulations 2020 at page 10  
<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/advocacy-policy-research/>

<sup>8</sup> Victoria ALIVE (Ability-Links-Inclusive-Volunteering-Everyday) project, an activity of the 2018-19 Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Transition Grant Stream <https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/>

<sup>9</sup> Victoria ALIVE <https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/>

<sup>10</sup> Annex A Victoria ALIVE Recommendations for the New State Disability Plan detailed on page 2 of Annex A

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/victorian-volunteer-strategy>

# ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN VICTORIA

## Definition of Volunteering

In Australia, volunteering is defined as: “time willingly given, without financial gain and for the common good”<sup>12</sup>. According to this definition, 2.3 million Victorians volunteer in our communities in regular times. That is 42.1% of Victorians who contributed some 507.7 hours of volunteering efforts in 2019<sup>13</sup>.

## Value of Volunteering

In 2020 Volunteering Victoria, in partnership with the Victorian Government, produced a Victorian state of volunteering report. The report is a flagship initiative of the Victorian Volunteering Strategy<sup>14</sup>.

Across the 12 months of 2019, the value of volunteering to Victoria was \$58.1 billion dollars. This includes the \$19.4 billion it would cost to replace the labour that volunteers contribute to Victoria as well as \$8.2 billion in contributions to Victoria’s Gross State Product. This represents a net return of approximately \$3.70 on every dollar invested. To demonstrate the scale of the volunteering sector we compared the cost to replace voluntary work in Victoria with the total compensation of employees in the government and private sectors. The volunteering sector is over one and a half times larger than the Victorian government sector and nearly half the size of the private sector.

As significant as this contribution is, it is also costing Victorian volunteers on average over \$1,700 a year to volunteer. On average, volunteer-involving organisations are reimbursing only one dollar for every eight dollars a volunteer spends on volunteering. This means on top of their valuable time, volunteers are donating nearly \$6.70 per hour to volunteer after reimbursements. The State of Volunteering Report outlines the hidden costs of volunteering, for both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

It is well known that individuals, communities and governments at all levels benefit from volunteering and volunteers. The Government of Victoria has expressly recognised the extent, value, contribution and impact of volunteers by delivering on a 2018 Election commitment to develop a volunteer strategy to support and enhance volunteerism in Victoria.

Volunteers are a vital part of Victoria’s social, economic, cultural and environmental fabric, and volunteering delivers immense value to Victoria, for communities, places and individuals<sup>15</sup>.

In addition to the direct economic benefits provided by a volunteer workforce of 1,511,500 Victorians, volunteering has many direct and indirect benefits for the strength and resilience of Victorian communities.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Volunteering Australia, <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/definition-of-volunteering/#/>

<sup>13</sup> State of Volunteering Report [www.stateofvolunteering.org.au](http://www.stateofvolunteering.org.au) Report: [https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOVR\\_21\\_10\\_2020\\_WEB.pdf](https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOVR_21_10_2020_WEB.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/victorian-volunteer-strategy>

<sup>15</sup> Ministerial Council for Volunteer’s Volunteers in Victoria: *Trends, Challenges and Opportunities Report*, 2017, This Report was developed in 2017 to provide a contemporary narrative for volunteering. It also provides a summary of the known social benefits, economic value and current trends. Findings from this report highlight key trends, challenges and opportunities for volunteering, and have informed the development of strategic priorities to strengthen and support the volunteer sector in Victoria, page 5 <https://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au/ministerial-council-volunteers>

<sup>16</sup> Ministerial Council for Volunteer’s Volunteers in Victoria: *Trends, Challenges and Opportunities Report*, 2017, page 5.

## VOLUNTEERING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DISABILITY SECTOR

### Key points – benefits and barriers<sup>17</sup>

1. For people with a disability, their family members and carers, volunteers and service providers, the unique and distinct support that volunteers bring to the lives of people with disability and their families is invaluable and critical<sup>18</sup>.
2. Volunteers provide frontline support, delivering services for communities in a wide variety of contexts, not for profit organisations, private sector organisations and governments.
3. Volunteers in the disability system provide critical support to paid workers including medical professionals, trained carers and administrative staff. This, Volunteering Victoria would argue, is an essential part of the circle of care people with disability are entitled to.
4. Volunteers receive no remuneration for the support they provide but add significant value to the level of care that can be provided at a relatively small cost to volunteer involving organisations and to the tax payer.
5. As volunteers are critical to the disability sector, volunteering should be encouraged and promoted and any barriers that may serve to discourage volunteering should be carefully assessed and balanced against the value volunteers bring to the sector.
6. People with disability volunteer, bringing different skills and experience to their roles, benefiting themselves while also being role models for others<sup>19</sup>.
7. Volunteering is a common pathway to employment, providing opportunities to gain work experience and develop skills.
8. Volunteering is a key form of social interaction which helps to form friendships and develop 'natural supports'.

<sup>17</sup> Victoria ALIVE <https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/>

<sup>18</sup> Keith McVilly and Gemma A. Dodevska, Volunteers Don't Come Free (19 November 2019) University of Melbourne <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/volunteers-don-t-come-free>

<sup>19</sup> Volunteering is a recognised life goal and supported activity in the National Disability Insurance Scheme – see <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs/thinking-about-work#booklet>

9. Benefits include:

- » Greater confidence, increasing self-esteem and self-belief
- » More social connections
- » Opportunities for networking
- » Better psychological health
- » Improved physical health outcomes
- » Improved quality of life
- » Development of skills & work experience
- » Pathways to employment.

10. Barriers to volunteering include:

- » Difficulty finding volunteer roles and limited access to information about volunteering (particularly with limited internet access)
- » Volunteers “self-selecting” out of roles, due to recruitment and screening processes, non-inclusive organisation cultures
- » The transport cost and lack of transport options, particularly in regional and rural Victoria
- » Inaccessibility of the physical environment
- » Volunteering agencies and support services are under-resourced and do not have the specialised skills to match and support people with disability into volunteer roles.

## Role of volunteer workforce - service delivery role of volunteers in the disability sector

Fully understanding the nature, extent, cost and significance of the role and contribution of volunteers in the disability sector is critical to understanding the resources required to maintain and improve current supports and services. Volunteers give their time freely and willingly, often they have lived experience and may themselves have disability. But volunteering does not “just happen”.

Building the capacity and capability of the workforce, including volunteers and recognising the extent and role of volunteers as part of this workforce is critical to the disability support system. Organisations must advertise for, recruit, train, manage and provide on-going support to volunteers which needs to be appropriately funded. Formal volunteering takes place within an organisation in a structured way.



It is critical too that the people who are being supported and cared for are properly protected and volunteers need to be similarly screened, trained and managed. At the same time, the differences between volunteers and paid employees need to be appreciated and understood. Volunteers are not paid for their services, their reason for volunteering differs but often includes a desire to serve and give back<sup>20</sup>. Volunteering needs to be safeguarded and barriers to volunteer involvement should be reduced as much as possible, with processes, including screening checks, that are free and easy to navigate.

An example of the importance of recognising and planning for the workforce that includes volunteers is in the implementation of the NDIS screening provisions. As NDIS funding “does not contemplate volunteers”<sup>21</sup>, free screening checks for NDIS volunteers were only introduced in Victoria after it was made clear (by Volunteering Victoria and others) that there were indeed many volunteers in NDIS risk-assessed roles and that paid screening checks were a significant barrier to volunteering<sup>22</sup>. The process (two step manual process) for obtaining NDIS volunteer screening checks continues to create anxiety and an administrative burden for NDIS providers and volunteers. This in itself is a barrier to volunteering. It is critical that planning for the disability sector and for disability inclusive volunteering should specifically include and make provision for volunteers.

## Volunteer statistics and workforce

Volunteering Victoria is not aware of a full data collection that estimates the number of volunteers augmenting the disability workforce in Victoria<sup>23</sup>. In the absence of this data, however, there are various case studies of organisations that rely heavily on volunteer-led initiatives<sup>24</sup>. Certain reports have highlighted the fact that disability services have a high number of volunteer vacancies needing to be filled and that such roles do not always generate enough interest from prospective volunteers<sup>25</sup>.

In the Supplementary consultation paper for the New State Disability Plan it is noted that the Victorian Disability Advisory Council identified a number of proposed priority areas which include “employment of people with disability” and “engagement and social connection among people with disability”. Articulation of volunteering in the New State Disability Plan as recommended and undertaking a full and proper workforce survey would accord with this point.

<sup>20</sup> State of Volunteering in Victoria: 2020 page 26

<sup>21</sup> Regulatory Impact Statement – Worker Screening Regulations 2020 (VIC) as an example: “This is due to the NDIS check being tied directly to NDIS funding, which does not contemplate volunteers” page 24 [https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ndis-au-prod-app/vic-engage-files/7316/0464/0017/Regulatory\\_Impact\\_Statement\\_-\\_Worker\\_Screening\\_Regulations\\_2020.pdf](https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ndis-au-prod-app/vic-engage-files/7316/0464/0017/Regulatory_Impact_Statement_-_Worker_Screening_Regulations_2020.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Volunteering Victoria Submission - Worker Screening Regulations 2020 <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VV-Submission-Worker-Screening-Regulations-Dec.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> State of Volunteering in Victoria: 2020 page 71

<sup>24</sup> Victoria ALIVE <https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/>, *Volunteers in Victoria: Trends, challenges and opportunities* page 28 and 29; State of Volunteering in Australia 2016 pages 17, 28 and 29 – See Annex A

<sup>25</sup> State of Volunteering in Australia 2016 page 28

## IMPACT OF COVID ON VOLUNTEERING – NOW MORE THAN EVER

Organisations that depend on volunteers face a challenge in attracting new volunteers, and in ensuring that rates of participation are adequate to provide a stable volunteer workforce. According to the ABS (2015), Australia-wide rates of volunteering dropped from 42 per cent of the population aged over 15 years in 2006, to 32 per cent in 2014<sup>26</sup>. And this was prior to COVID.

The standing down of volunteers during COVID- with two out of three volunteers stopping volunteering<sup>27</sup> - placed increased stress and pressure on families and carers of people with disability many of whom had to go it alone. Significant data is not available for the impact on volunteers with disability, but wider evidence suggests that the impact is likely to be more severe than for those not living with disability<sup>28</sup>. The impact of COVID on disability service organisations and the care they provide must also be acknowledged and assessed. Recognising and incorporating this into the New State Disability Plan to actively “get volunteers back” and promote involvement of a new volunteers will support those families and institutions and organisations impacted in this way<sup>29</sup>.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The New State Disability Plan is a significant opportunity to get volunteering placed front and centre in action plans for a disability inclusive and supported community emerging from the impacts of COVID.

The New State Disability Plan seeks to reconfirm the Current State Disability Plan outcomes framework. Volunteering fits clearly within all four pillars described:

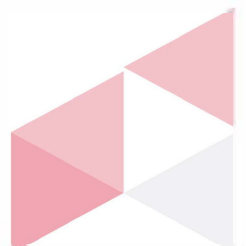
- » Inclusive communities
- » Health, housing and wellbeing
- » Fairness and safety
- » Contributing Lives.

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<sup>26</sup> Ministerial Council for Volunteer's Volunteers in Victoria: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities Report, 2017 page 12  
<sup>27</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/research-briefing-the-experience-of-volunteers-during-covid-19/#>  
<sup>28</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/research-briefing-the-experience-of-volunteers-during-covid-19/#>  
<sup>29</sup> Annex A – page 8 - State of Volunteering in Victoria: 2020 (pages 4, 30 and 37)

## Volunteering Victoria recommends that the 2021-2025 State Disability Plan:

- » Clearly articulates and incorporates volunteering within all four pillars of the outcome framework (should these be retained):
  - recognising but also differentiating the role of volunteers in the disability workforce; and
  - as a pathway to employment and to inclusion and participation for people living with disability.
- » Includes an action for a detailed scoping of the size and function of the disability workforce in Victoria by gathering full and proper data on the number and role of volunteers, including those with disability and/or other lived experience of disability to:
  - enable Government to effectively recognise, manage, plan and support this workforce appropriately and ensure its sustainability, including resourcing of volunteer training and a proportionate approach to compliance;
  - Identify, promote and encourage opportunities for involvement of people with disability in volunteering, with barriers identified and reduced, including simplifying compliance.
- » Develop action plans that create opportunities for people with disability in both employment and volunteering, identifying and reducing barriers and encouraging disability inclusion across government (at state and local level) and government organisations.
- » Review and incorporate the findings and recommendations from the Victoria ALIVE Project<sup>30</sup>.



## ANNEX A

### Summary of Recommendations and Resources regarding Volunteers

#### Interchange

#### Value Added: Volunteer-Supported Services and the Challenge of the NDIS

#### Research conducted by the University of Melbourne 2019

<https://www.interchange.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Value-Added-Volunteer-Supported-Services-and-the-Challenge-of-the-NDIS.pdf>

Priority Recommendation 1	<p>Government to use these models of volunteering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social-support and community participation</li> <li>Supported activity</li> <li>Skills development</li> <li>Out-of-Home support</li> <li>Practical support</li> <li>Organisational support</li> <li>Advocacy</li> </ul> <p>To inform policy development, develop and refine funding mechanisms, manage quality and safeguard volunteer services in the disability sector.</p>
Priority Recommendation 2	<p>Government should appropriately fund volunteering, including infrastructure needed to enable volunteers to be recruited, trained, matched and supported to work with people with disability and their families to support safe and sustainable volunteering that promotes choice, control and quality of life for people with disability.</p>
Priority Recommendation 3	<p>NDIS plans allow participants the choice to access service through both paid and volunteer programs</p>
Recommendation 4	<p>Procedures and guidelines governing the NDIS should be an individualised planning system that acknowledges how many people with disability live in the context of a family, and how the role of a volunteer might assist with a family unit more broadly to support the quality of life of the participant with disability</p>
Recommendation 5	<p>Government policy to acknowledge the social and economic benefits that volunteers provide to people with a disability and their families in a way that is unique and distinct from support received by paid services. Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased access to information</li> <li>- Increased knowledge, skills and confidence to participate in social and economic life</li> <li>- Fostering enriched relationships</li> </ul>
Recommendation 6	<p>Government support services that offer volunteer programs to develop monitoring and assessment mechanisms to monitor and evaluate their operations effectively and enhance reporting to funding bodies.</p>
Recommendation 7	<p>Government acknowledgement of volunteer support services as a critical component of servicing the disability sector and as providing highly valued support that is separate and distinct from services provided by paid staff.</p>
Recommendation 8	<p>Government include information and resources in induction and training for key roles (NDIS planners, LACs, Support Workers etc.) to outline the benefits of volunteers in the disability sector and how to source volunteers.</p>
Page 7	<p>The infrastructure required to coordinate sustainable volunteer-supported services is critical to the sustainability of volunteering in the disability sector. This infrastructure supports functions like recruitment and selection, support and</p>

	development, workplace safety and wellbeing, volunteer recognition, quality management and continuous improvement.
Page 7	<p>The value volunteers bring to people with a disability, their families and carers is <b>unique and distinct from the support offered by specialists and paid staff</b>. Reported benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o genuine friendship</li> <li>o empathy</li> <li>o personalised support</li> <li>o diverse skills</li> <li>o enhances skills and knowledge</li> <li>o passion and enthusiasm</li> <li>o enriching, meaningful relationships</li> <li>o increased community connections</li> <li>o fun and innovation</li> <li>o information sharing</li> <li>o respite</li> <li>o increased confidence</li> <li>o no conflicts of interest</li> </ul>
Page 9	The development of a taxonomy of volunteer services will help to guide more informed discussion about the place and value of volunteer services in the community care sector.
Page 6	“Volunteers offer their time in a way that enhances and encourages the people with disabilities back into the community. There is no monetary gain for them by listening to their stories while the volunteer spends hours in a car getting them to and from their medical/specialist appointments in larger cities. They do it because they want to make a difference and they care.” – participant feedback
Page 6	“The NDIS funding model needs to be better adapted to funding a mix of paid staff and volunteer-based support for participants.” – participant feedback
<b>Victoria ALIVE Recommendations for the New State Disability Plan</b> <a href="https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/">https://www.victoriaalive.org.au/</a>	
Recommendation 1	Incorporate volunteering into one of the 4 pillars of the State Disability Plan for 2021-2023. It is recommended that volunteering is articulated as a high level activity of Pillar 4 “Contributing Lives”.
Recommendation 2	Incorporate disability inclusion in the Victorian Volunteering Strategy, as there are often systematic barriers that bar people with disability from volunteering.
Recommendation 3	For the DHHS to lead the way in employee volunteering and employee volunteering programs with the aim to operate these programs across the government.
Recommendation 4	Undertake Disability Action Planning - one of the most effective means for positive change but many plans do not include inclusive volunteering.
Recommendation 5	Specific recommendation for local governments: looking into initiatives to improve employment pathways that will open up internally advertised roles to volunteers.
Recommendation 6	Specific recommendation for boards and committees: initiating leadership through volunteering. Organisational leadership is a strategic area identified that can make an impact across the volunteering sector, particularly those with lived experience leading and implementing inclusive practices from the top down.
Recommendation 7 Supple- -mentary paper	<p>The Victorian Disability Advisory Council believes these are areas of priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement and social connection among people with disability</li> <li>• Embedding co-design and universal design into infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Optimizing use of new Disability Liaison Officer positions in health services</li> <li>• Inclusion of people with disability in emergency and disaster responses</li> <li>• Employment of people with disability</li> </ul>

Page 2	<p>The many benefits of volunteering for people with disability include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater confidence, increasing self-esteem and self-belief</li> <li>• More social connections</li> <li>• Opportunities for networking</li> <li>• Better psychological health</li> <li>• Improved physical health outcomes</li> <li>• Improved quality of life</li> <li>• Development of skills &amp; work experience</li> <li>• Pathways to employment.</li> </ul>
Page 2	<p>Barriers to volunteering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty finding volunteer roles and limited access to information about volunteering (particularly with limited internet access)</li> <li>• Volunteers “self-selecting” out of roles, due to recruitment processes, non-inclusive organisation cultures and so on.</li> <li>• The transport cost and lack of transport options, particularly in regional and rural Victoria.</li> <li>• Inaccessibility of the physical environment.</li> <li>• Volunteering agencies and support services are under-resourced and do not have the specialised skills to match and support people with disability into volunteer roles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Volunteering Australia – Submission to the National Disability Strategy Oct. 2020</b>  <a href="https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Submission-to-the-National-Disability-Strategy-FINAL.pdf">https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Submission-to-the-National-Disability-Strategy-FINAL.pdf</a></p>	
Recommendation1	Recognise and support the important role of volunteering in the lives of people with disability
Recommendation2	Include how the volunteering sector can support the delivery of defined outcomes in the Strategy
Recommendation3	Incorporate strategic consideration of, and investment in, the volunteer workforce engaged in disability services.
<p><b>Inclusion Melbourne</b>  <b>Volunteering and the National Disability Insurance Scheme: A discussion Paper (2016)</b>  <a href="http://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Volunteering-and-the-NDIS-Submission-Discussion-Paper-web.pdf">http://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Volunteering-and-the-NDIS-Submission-Discussion-Paper-web.pdf</a></p>	
Recommendation1	That the NDIA monitor access to volunteers, particularly within regional, rural and outer suburban areas.
Recommendation2	That the NDIA clearly articulate how volunteering is to be funded, either as ILC or Tier 3 funding for people with a disability
Recommendation3	That state & local governments consider the implications of the NDIS rollout for people with a disability, their families and the provider market without concurrent ILC sourcing in place to maintain existing social capital
Recommendation4	That the NDIA implement a communication strategy to ensure that people with a disability and their families are aware of the need to discuss funding supports for the maintenance of existing volunteer supports.
Recommendation5	That the NDIA implement a communication strategy to ensure that existing volunteer supporting organisations are aware of the pathways for funding to maintain existing volunteer supports for people with a disability.
Recommendation6	That sourcing for ILC activities should distinguish volunteering which continues to support group based activities vs those activities designed to connect individuals leading to social inclusion.

Recommendation7	That state governments conduct an audit of existing state funded volunteer supports targeted specifically towards people with a disability and their families in order to determine if the current funding envelope for ILC will reduce, maintain or expand the existing social capital.
Recommendation8	That the NDIA conduct research into models for funding establishment and maintenance of volunteering models which may include sourcing via ILC, individual funding allocations via packages or else a combination of these two approaches, with regard for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants of the scheme and other Australians with a disability who will not receive a funded support package; and</li> <li>- Support and assistance for volunteers to assist people with a disability as well as support and assistance for people with a disability to become volunteers.</li> </ul>
Recommendation9	That the ILC sourcing process clarifies NDIA expectations in relation to fostering improved connections between registered providers and volunteer resource centres
Recommendation10	That the NDIA clarify the boundaries of ILC supports where the provision of these services intersects with quality and safeguarding frameworks
Recommendation11	That the NDIA review ILC activity streams to permit the use of volunteers in ordinary life activities as a vehicle for growing connections and creating friendship, thereby achieving the objective of increasing social participation
Recommendation12	That the NDIA give consideration to existing individually targeted outcomes based funding models as to their suitability in creating and driving quality volunteer supports
Recommendation13	That the NDIA include specific mention of funding for volunteer connection and coordination within the price guide.
Recommendation14	That the NDIA price guide acknowledges funding must be ongoing in order to meet state based quality and safeguard requirements, as well as to reduce volunteer churn through the implementation of effective oversight, supervision, training and support for volunteers.
Page 8	<p><b>Advantages of volunteers for the NDIS</b></p> <p>Volunteers have potential to contribute substantially to the goal of the NDIS to increase social and economic participation of people with disabilities. Volunteers can contribute beyond what staff and family members can achieve alone. Research consistently shows that volunteers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing of vulnerable people that cannot be achieved/ in addition to, what can be achieved with paid staff or family. That is, involving volunteers in people's lives can reduce loneliness, and reduce mental health costs.</li> <li>• Extend the effectiveness of formal services: both cost and impact: that is, formal funds go further – even after costs for volunteers are taken into account.</li> <li>• Challenge the assumption that the only response to staff shortfalls is more paid staff about the need for workforce expansion and the predictions of workforce Shortfalls.</li> <li>• Strengthen the capacity of the community sector to provide informal support as/when/if volunteering relationships through a CSO translate to informal community support.</li> <li>• Provide safeguards for vulnerable people though building relationships with community members (for example, Klees 2005; Montclair 2011).</li> </ul>



Page 15	Volunteer services also sit alongside and integrate with other disability services. Inclusion Melbourne believe that effective volunteer support must sit within disability or specialist organisations who understand the required focus of support and can train and support volunteers to effectively help people achieve outcomes. There are two aspects of volunteering that require separate detailed consideration in relation to supporting and growing volunteering in the NDIS. The first is supporting people with a disability to become volunteers, while the second is encouraging others to volunteer to support people with a disability. The NDIA should seek to determine how best to fund support for both of these activities.																																				
<b>Impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme on Volunteering in the Disability Services Sector in Western Australia</b> <a href="https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/assets/downloads/vwa-ndis-volunteering-report-2020-final.pdf">https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/assets/downloads/vwa-ndis-volunteering-report-2020-final.pdf</a>																																					
Recommendation1	Support networks, communities of practice, or special interest groups be established to foster development, collaboration and support across the disability volunteer sector.																																				
Recommendation2	Further work be done to clarify issues such as suitability of roles for volunteers, training requirements and provision, risk assessment and management.																																				
Recommendation3	Funding and other creative solutions be sought to build volunteer management expertise and skilled volunteer managers across the sector																																				
Recommendation4	Further research be considered into the experiences, needs, perceptions of volunteers, paid staff and people with disabilities.																																				
<b>VCOSS submission to the Victorian State Disability Plan 2021-2024</b> <a href="https://vcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SUB_201223_VCOSS-submission-to-Victoria-State-Disability-Plan-2021-2024_Final.pdf">https://vcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SUB_201223_VCOSS-submission-to-Victoria-State-Disability-Plan-2021-2024_Final.pdf</a>																																					
Page 43	Volunteering, which can be a gateway to future career opportunities, is also more difficult to access for people with disability.																																				
Page 48 & 49	Community Visitors are independent volunteers who are empowered by the Disability Act 2006 to visit people with disability in a range of residential settings. A range of state and national inquiries and reports have noted the critical value of Community Visitors, who work to promote and safeguard the rights of people with disability through individual support and by highlighting systemic issues...With limited funding and a team of experienced volunteers, the Community Visitor program delivers crucial support to people with disability in ‘closed’ environments <b>Further reading:</b> Office of the Public Advocate, Community Visitors Annual Report 2019-2020, December 2020 [Found at <a href="https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/opa-s-work/our-organisation/annual-reports/community-visitor-annual-reports/223-community-visitor-annual-report-2019-2020">https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/opa-s-work/our-organisation/annual-reports/community-visitor-annual-reports/223-community-visitor-annual-report-2019-2020</a> ]																																				
<b>General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2019</b> <a href="https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/latest-release">https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/latest-release</a>																																					
Table 8.3 Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of	<table><tr><th></th><th>Males</th><th>Females</th><th>Persons</th></tr><tr><th></th><th colspan="3">ESTIMATE ('000)</th></tr><tr><td>Arts/Heritage</td><td>141.2</td><td>185.6</td><td>303.6</td></tr><tr><td>Business/Professional/Union</td><td>99.7</td><td>60.1</td><td>148.7</td></tr><tr><td>Community/Ethnic groups</td><td>278.3</td><td>378.8</td><td>685.6</td></tr><tr><td>Education and Training</td><td>654.4</td><td>613.2</td><td>1,284.3</td></tr><tr><td>Parenting, children and youth</td><td>279.6</td><td>474.2</td><td>722.4</td></tr><tr><td>Emergency services</td><td>218.0</td><td>103.6</td><td>276.1</td></tr><tr><td>Environment/Animal welfare</td><td>175.9</td><td>139.2</td><td>352.6</td></tr></table>		Males	Females	Persons		ESTIMATE ('000)			Arts/Heritage	141.2	185.6	303.6	Business/Professional/Union	99.7	60.1	148.7	Community/Ethnic groups	278.3	378.8	685.6	Education and Training	654.4	613.2	1,284.3	Parenting, children and youth	279.6	474.2	722.4	Emergency services	218.0	103.6	276.1	Environment/Animal welfare	175.9	139.2	352.6
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voluntary work—By Sex	International Aid/Development	33.6	65.7	108.3
	Health/Welfare	214.6	451.4	685.0
	Law/Justice/Political	38.9	36.1	60.2
	Religious	731.0	630.2	1,373.0
	Sport and physical recreation	1,430.3	884.1	2,306.2
	Other	222.2	228.4	477.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health/Welfare sector has an estimate of 685.0 (per '000) of people aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work</li> <li>• Sports and Physical Recreation has an estimate of 2306.2 (per '000). There is a significant increase of volunteers in this sector, as well as education and training, religious and community/ethnic groups.</li> </ul>				
<b>State of Volunteering in Australia 2016</b> <a href="https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/stateofvolunteering/">https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/stateofvolunteering/</a>				
Page vii	<b>KEY FINDING 2</b> There is misalignment between the sectors volunteers are interested in and the sectors with the most positions advertised. An analysis of the sectors volunteer would like to volunteer for in the future compared with the sectors that have the greatest shortages of volunteers suggested that there is an oversubscription to some sectors of volunteering whilst others are undersubscribed. As shown in the below graphs, sectors including Animal Welfare and Arts and Culture are oversubscribed, while other areas including Disability Services, Young People and Health have a high number of volunteer vacancies needing to be filled.			
Page ix	<b>KEY FINDING 5 V</b> Volunteer involving organisations generally lack resources, both human and financial, and this can inhibit their ability to engage volunteers with barriers (e.g. people with a disability, people with language barriers). Lack of resources may also reduce an organisation's ability to recognise their existing volunteer base, and engage with corporates through Employee Volunteering Programs.			
Page 17	The figure below shows the volunteer involving organisations with major volunteer shortages by sector. Organisations needing over 151 additional volunteers were most commonly organisations working in community service, with young people, and in education. Disability Services also required significantly more volunteers, consistent with the high number of positions advertised on GoVolunteer (see GoVolunteer Analysis Snapshot on page 13). Compared to the sectors volunteers said they would be interested in the future, there is a higher interest in Environment & Conservation, Animal Welfare, and Arts and Culture relative to the sectors of organisations with the greatest need for volunteers. Note that the sectors with the highest need for volunteers are similar to the sectors with the most survey respondents; therefore, there could be biases in the data. However, demand in health services and education aligns with broader economic trends, especially in consideration of the ageing population. <b>GoVolunteer Analysis Snapshot</b> The analysis compared the volunteer profiles that were created and the positions that were advertised in the last 12 months. This included almost 200,000 profiles and over 10,000 positions. The positions listed on the GoVolunteer database most commonly fell into the Community Service category (23 per cent), Other (15 per cent) and Seniors (14 per cent).			

	Only 33 per cent of positions advertised facilitated access for people with a physical disability
Page 28	<p>Other areas, including Disability Services, Young People, and Health, have a high number of volunteer vacancies needing to be filled, but do not always generate enough interest from prospective volunteers.</p> <p>To improve the balance of subscription of volunteers to different sectors of volunteering, the volunteering peak bodies, in collaboration with volunteer involving organisations, should support the development and delivery of targeted marketing and recruitment campaigns to promote volunteering in underrepresented sectors.</p>
Page 29	<p>The issue of limited resources impacts the involvement of volunteers with barriers. Of the volunteer involving organisation respondents, 46 per cent of respondents were unable to recruit or engage volunteers with barriers. The most common reason for this stems from organisations not having the requisite resources (51 per cent). This includes resources and support such as funding, staff supervision time, and the necessary skills to involve volunteers with barriers.</p> <p>As noted by one respondent: 'Our organisation is entirely managed by volunteers and we don't have sufficient in-house skills and training to handle disadvantaged people well.' Studies have identified that there are many benefits of engaging individuals with barriers in volunteering, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the level of dedication these volunteers with disability had towards the roles they took on</li> <li>• the ability of them to educate the agency and other volunteers on disability awareness</li> <li>• the particular skills they bring, such as the ability to read Braille and easily identify and relate to some of the disadvantaged people they are assisting</li> <li>• their potential to serve as role models to people who are accessing services, who might have a disability or be disadvantaged themselves</li> <li>• as a contribution to the diversity of the agency.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteers in Victoria: Trends, challenges and opportunities</b> <a href="https://iepcp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MCV-Volunteers-in-Victoria-report.pdf">https://iepcp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MCV-Volunteers-in-Victoria-report.pdf</a>	
Page 28 & 29	<p><b>Disability services</b></p> <p>Volunteers form a significant part of the disability services sector and are involved in either direct service or indirect service provision. Indirect service provision roles include administration, maintenance, information technology, finance and others. Inclusion Melbourne (2016) reports that the 47 organisations that participated in their survey on the National Disability Insurance Scheme collectively engaged 5,175 volunteers to support 11,124 people with a disability.</p> <p>The number of volunteers in disability organisations is likely to be much greater, as there are over 300 organisations in Victoria listed in the Department of Health and Human Services' Register of disability service providers that mostly engage volunteers to serve their clients. Moreover, Inclusion Melbourne states that 83 per cent of their respondents with disability observed differences between paid staff and volunteers, including increased social connections and community participation, genuine relationships and the value of lived experience.</p>
<b>State of Volunteering in Victoria: 2020</b> <a href="https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/">https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/</a>	
Page 24	Aggregated, this shows 84.4% of Victorian volunteers are active in formal volunteering and 60.1% are active in informal settings.
Page 26	<b>Motivations and barriers to volunteering</b>

	<p>People stated that they predominantly volunteered to contribute back to the community, support a cause, contribute to an activity that aligned with their values, and for enjoyment and social connection.</p> <p>The top two barriers were the same across volunteers and non-volunteers, namely, having limited time and work commitments. Interestingly, 23.1% of non-volunteers stated they had never been asked to volunteer, and 15.1% of non-volunteers noted they don't know where to go / lack of information.</p>
Page 4, 30 & 37	<p><b>The impact of COVID-19 during the reporting period</b></p> <p>The initial COVID-19 impact in April-May 2020 saw a 50.2% decline in the volunteering participation rate from 2.3m to 1.1m.</p> <p>Across the initial COVID-19 reporting period, 57.1% of VIOs reported an alteration in the composition of their volunteers. Comments included a drop in older people who preferred to self-isolate, a rise in online volunteering and volunteering from home, a drop in families and children volunteering, a rise in younger professionals volunteering and a closure of worksites, suspending the capacity to volunteer. The amount of volunteering reported also substantially altered. During 2019, VIOs averaged having 384.1 volunteers undertaking on average 17.9 hours per month. Across the initial COVID-19 reporting period, these figures dropped to 112.0 volunteers undertaking on average 8.2 hours per month. The number of volunteers dropped 70.9% and the average hours volunteered per month dropped 54%.</p>
Page 35	<p><b>Groups of volunteers typically represented in VIOs' volunteer profile – volunteer diversity</b></p> <p>People with a disability – 31.5%</p>
Page 34 & 35	<p><b>Victorian Government Support of volunteer-involving organisations:</b></p> <p>During 2019, nearly a quarter (24.7%) of all responding VIOs noted they engaged volunteers in delivering services funded by the Victorian Government. The complete impact and value of volunteering is not fully measured and captured by governments and VIOs as part of service provision and funding arrangements. Hence, there is unlikely to be complete awareness across governments of the degree to which its funding is augmented by volunteering contributions. VIOs are funded for service provision from various sources, including from all three levels of government. VIOs have various means of financial and impact reporting (including through internal grant reporting, and annual and financial reports). This is an area where improved data capture and accounting techniques may lead to improved understanding of volunteer impact and therefore better investment decisions</p>
Page 36	<p><b>Volunteer Diversity:</b></p> <p>There are strong indications through this research that volunteering is an inclusive activity. A substantial number of organisations provided volunteering opportunities for people on income support, culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people living with a disability.</p> <p>As people in diverse groups are often at greater risk of social isolation and disadvantage, volunteering is a meaningful and enjoyable activity to increase social and community connections. Engaging diverse groups often requires resourcing and the development of the right skills by leaders of volunteers to do so effectively. Another respondent noted that, "Many people self-identify as having mental health issues. This can mean an extra layer of support is required for healthy and happy outcomes."<sup>8</sup></p>
Page 42	<p><b>Social Inclusion</b></p>

	<p>The standout finding of this topic is that personal connections and relationship building are a key feature of volunteer engagement for at least three quarters of organisations (76.3%). Actively encouraging personal connections and relationship building is both a way for organisations to engage volunteers and also the natural outcome of people coming together with others for the ‘common good’.</p> <p>Cumulatively, these direct relationships contribute to community building and ultimately to improved social capital. These relationships also in part account for the firmly established mental health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering.</p>
Page 54	<p><b>The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering to Victoria</b></p> <p>The total social and economic cost of volunteering in Victoria and its related enterprises in 2019 is estimated to be \$15.9 billion. This comprises direct costs of \$8.7 billion and opportunities ‘lost’ to individuals, investors and the community of \$7.2 billion</p>
Page 68	<p><b>Volunteer patterns among diverse groups</b></p> <p>The survey design of this report included questions to Victorian residents to self-identify as part of specific cohorts (CALD, LGBTIQI, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders and people with disability). These questions helped ensure the goal of adequate representation of these cohorts in the data was met. However, the sample size for this report did not allow us to derive statistically significant findings about these cohorts. It is vitally important that the volunteering sector is able to understand volunteering patterns for these groups in more detail, including motivations, barriers to participation, the costs of volunteering, volunteering trends and so on</p>
Page 71	<p><b>Australian Bureau of Statistic collections</b></p> <p>The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the most common and reliable source of data on volunteering. It collects data on volunteering through the Census and the General Social Survey. Work has been done to improve and expand data collection methods for the 2019 General Social Survey. Further areas of research could be expanded to complement data on volunteering patterns, such as the costs of volunteering and pathways to employment. The ABS has collected a lot of additional data on the paid workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, far less data has been collected on the volunteer workforce. Given the large number of volunteers, the wide range of volunteering activities and the economic and social value of volunteering, this information would be valuable to document and understand.</p>
<p><b>Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Mental-Health-System-VV-response.pdf">https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Mental-Health-System-VV-response.pdf</a></p>	
Page 4	<p><b>Section One: The Service Delivery Role of Volunteers in the Mental Health System</b></p> <p>Recommendation 1: The Victorian Government’s response and design of the new mental health system should clearly articulate, differentiate and recognise the role of volunteers in the mental health workforce (through workforce planning)</p>
Page 6	<p><b>Section Two: The Role of Volunteering in Prevention and Recovery</b></p> <p>Recommendation 1: The Victorian Government’s response and design of the new mental health system should clearly articulate, differentiate and recognise the role of volunteering as a means of prevention and recovery for mental health issues.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Include volunteering metrics in the Victorian Mental Health Outcomes Framework.</p>

	<p>Recommendation 3: Incorporate volunteering in the design of community collectives.</p> <p>Recommendation 3a: Develop a framework for the whole of Victoria that ensures volunteering is incorporated in the Community Collective model.</p> <p>Recommendation 3b: Include Volunteer Support Organisations in each Community Collective</p>
Page 8	<p><b>Section Three: The Decline of Volunteering and Reduction of Social Connections</b></p> <p>Recommendation 4: Strengthen social connections in our communities by investing in volunteering.</p> <p>Recommendation 4a: Invest significantly in the implementation of the forthcoming Victorian Volunteering Strategy.</p> <p>Recommendation 4b: Bolster the volunteering elements of Victorian Government grant guidelines, major government packages and ensure there are small grants that support volunteering in grassroots and community organisations</p>
Page 10	<p><b>Section Four: Improving the Mental Health of Victoria's Workforce</b></p> <p>Recommendation 5: Provide both training and mental health support services to workplaces, including for volunteers, for better preventative outcomes and management practices.</p>
<p><b>Volunteering Victoria Submission to Worker Screening Regulations 2020</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VV-Submission-Worker-Screening-Regulations-Dec.pdf">https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VV-Submission-Worker-Screening-Regulations-Dec.pdf</a></p>	
Page 11	<p>Volunteering Victoria is strongly of the view that the proposed NDIS volunteer screening check fee will discourage and acts as a disincentive for volunteers from participating in the disability sector.</p> <p>It is recommended that, as with the WWC check, fees for volunteers should be similarly free, with the volunteer NDIS check applications and renewals being subsidised through the fees charged for employee WWC and NDIS checks</p>