Dear [CANDIDATE / MP NAME],

I am writing to ask you to commit to supporting the many volunteers in our electorate who make an invaluable contribution to our community.

[Personal paragraph here e.g. *I volunteer 15 hours per week at the local Migrant Resource Centre in St Albans. I answer phone enquiries from newly arrived migrants providing advice and guidance on where they can access essential services. I also support the food relief section collecting and packaging food parcels for families in need. These two parts of the organisation are run by volunteers and many, many families in the community would miss out on food, healthcare, and social support without my contribution and that of the other volunteers in my teams*.]

I am not alone. There are [2.3 million volunteers in Victoria](https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/victoria/) who give their time for the greater good of the community. Volunteers contribute to everything from grassroots community programs  addressing local  needs to enabling large not-for-profit organisations  deliver essential community services. Without the contribution of these millions of volunteers, our communities would be far worse off.

**Volunteering promotes social connection, which is essential to a healthy, thriving community. This is increasingly important as we collectively face and recover from multiple social, health, and environmental crises. Volunteering also has positive benefits on wellbeing and mental health by reducing isolation, supporting the development of workplace experience and skills, and promoting inclusion.**

I ask you to consider the many ways that you benefit from volunteering – through visiting parks and recreation facilities, reading local newspapers, participating in community sportor attending arts and cultural events. None of this would be possible without the contribution of volunteers.

Unfortunately, volunteers are often the forgotten workforce driving community life. Volunteers and volunteer programs face many barriers to volunteering including a lack of resources for volunteer recruitment and training, inadequate support for volunteer managers, onerous bureaucratic processes, and limited funding to run their programs**.** The consequence of these barriers is seen in the downward trend in volunteering over the last 10 years.

I urgently call on you to support the volunteers in our electorate by committing to the following five priorities that will strengthen and grow the volunteer sector:

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| 1. **Create a dedicated Ministerial Portfolio for volunteering (WA has one, so should we!)**
2. **Ensure the volunteering workforce is accounted for and recognised in all Victorian Government workforce strategies**
3. **Allocate appropriate and sustainable investment for the Victorian Volunteer Strategy to implement priority actions**
4. **Develop a well-resourced and coordinated spontaneous volunteer engagement strategy**
5. **Secure the future of Victoria’s place-based volunteering infrastructure**
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You can read more about these five priorities here: <https://bit.ly/vv-election-priorities>

Volunteering is essential to building **thriving, inclusive, and sustainable communities**. This November, I ask you to commit to the five priorities of the volunteer sector. After all, Volunteers Vote!

Yours Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]