

VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA

Strategic Plan 2022–25



Volunteering Victoria

Strategic Plan

2022-25

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Context of the 2022 Strategic Plan

This Plan has been developed at a time of environmental, health and social crises, along with strategic changes to state and federal government funding that have significantly changed Volunteering Victoria. Accordingly, sector expectations of their State Peak have also changed, requiring the development and implementation of a range of strategies at short notice, and with significant impact.

The strength of the organisation's values of collaboration, innovation and accountability, captured in the 2019-21 Strategic Plan, were a strong foundation on which the Board and staff developed both responsive and proactive strategies during times of significant change.

The Volunteering Victoria Board undertook a self-assessment review in 2020/21 and identified a number of priorities for action including risk management, Board and CEO succession and diversity.

As a result, in the lead up to this Strategic Plan, the Board has endorsed:

- » [Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- » [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#)
- » ISO Quality Management Accreditation
- » Establishment of a Risk Sub-committee

The implementation of Volunteering Victoria's 2019-21 Strategic Plan has been thorough, with the Board closely monitoring its successes and challenges through comprehensive reporting at our bi-monthly meetings.

Implementation of the 2019-21 Strategic Plan

Some of the headline achievements from the 2019-21 Plan's strategic objectives include:

A Strong Volunteering Sector

- » Creation of the successful Continuing Professional Development program
- » Joining of two separate volunteering awards programs to create a more meaningful, State Government-backed recognition of volunteers, volunteer managers and volunteer-involving organisations
- » Implementation of weVolunteer program to support communities through the pandemic by connecting with those who were vulnerable or isolated or helping re-engage vital services in the local community

Promotion of Meaningful volunteering

- » Extensive consultation and co-design of the process for distribution of Federal Government VMA funding to achieve a regional model allowing for enhanced volunteering in under-represented communities across the state
- » The State of Volunteering Report, a ground-breaking piece of research was a key resource in the development of the inaugural Victorian Volunteering Strategy
- » Creation of a new website and improved user access to resources, guides and self-help services

Advocacy for and by the sector

- » Establishment of a dedicated advocacy team within Volunteering Victoria, with significant funding wins for the sector and significant influence of the Volunteering Strategy development
- » Taking a leadership role amongst other state peak bodies in the development of transparent and consultative mechanisms for the implementation of Government-funded programs

Organisational capacity and capability

- » Achieving ISO9001 Quality Accreditation to ensure effective and efficient use of resources to deliver value for members and stakeholders
- » Implementation of a Reserves Policy and strengthened financial management systems
- » Implementation of a new customer relationship management platform and portal for our members
- » Navigating COVID challenges with little to no impact on staffing and service delivery
- » Establishment of a staffing structure that makes best use of limited resources, is both reliably strong and flexible, with dispersed responsibilities allowing for retention of highly skilled professionals.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Volunteering Victoria believes that equity, diversity and inclusion are the overarching principles under which we must operate. A clear articulation of these principles was endorsed by the Board in 2021 and has guided the creation of this new Strategic Plan.

Volunteering is universal, because all people seek to be part of a community and make a contribution to that community. All communities have unique cultures of community giving and practice social wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

First Nations people have a long history of community giving, reciprocity, family and community obligation and the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways. Volunteering Victoria is committed to working alongside First Nations people on the journey reconciliation and ensuring First Nations history, voices and experiences are included in volunteering.

We support, celebrate, and promote volunteering for all communities, and in all its forms and different meanings. We value personal experiences of people of every faith, ethnicity, culture, language, age, ability, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We believe everyone should be able to access the health, social and connective value that being a volunteer gives to individuals.

In Practice

We commit to actively seeking to hear from and understand a diversity of experiences and perspectives on volunteering and community giving. We aim to strengthen and create an equitable and accessible volunteering sector that ensures everyone has equal opportunity to participate in volunteering, in all its forms and definitions.

Through our advocacy and policy work we will do all we can to ensure that all forms and definitions of volunteering are recognised and valued, and that any person who wants to volunteer, can do so.

Vision

Victorians are happier and healthier because they volunteer, to support each other and care for the future of their communities.

Background

Using the ‘5 Ways to Wellbeing’¹ model, we can access more inclusive ways to express the act of volunteering – ‘Help Others’. Helping others can be informal (doing a good deed for neighbours, animals or the environment for example) or formal (participating in an organised activity as a volunteer) and as such also aids in achieving the four other ways to wellbeing – connect, be active, keep learning and be aware.

The language we use is important so that everyone can identify with the act of volunteering and importantly be counted at census time! Volunteering Victoria’s 2020 ‘State of Volunteering’ Report² found that 42.1% of all Victorians over 15 years of age volunteer in either formal or informal activities. This is a higher figure than census data, a discrepancy explained by the Census using more formal language that many people would not identify with.

1 5 Ways to Wellbeing, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Northwestern Mental Health and North West Area Mental Health Service, accessed at <https://5waystowellbeing.org.au/> on 8 February, 2022

2 Volunteering Victoria, State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020, accessed at https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOVR_21.10.2020_WEB.pdf on 8 February, 2020

Purpose

VV's purpose aligns its Constitutional Objects, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement, the changed environment in which we operate and the changed expectations of the sector after feeling the impact of the pandemic, natural disasters and funding changes.

VV is an advocate, advisor and facilitator of and for all forms of volunteering and helping in the community. We do this with and for all people, communities and organisations who volunteer.

Our three key roles are:

- » **Advocate** – for individuals, communities and organisations, to government policy makers and funders
- » **Advisor** – based on sound research, shared expertise, transparency and accessibility
- » **Facilitator** – through distribution of training and professional development funding

and three sets of volunteer participants:

- » **Individuals** – a volunteer, a helper (a more relatable word for many people in society), someone working with volunteers, someone receiving volunteer services
- » **Communities** – geographic, interest, social, cultural
- » **Organisations** – of all sizes that are volunteer-led or involve volunteers in their work.

Values

The implementation of this Strategic Plan will be guided by the following values:

- » **Collaboration** – Volunteering is a whole of community effort and we value and will demonstrate working collaboratively with key strategic partners, members and stakeholders to promote, value and support effective volunteering.
- » **Innovation** – The world is in a period of rapid social and community change. Volunteering has always thrived when communities respond to the needs around them and we commit to helping find new and creative ways to engage organisations and individuals in responding to those needs through volunteering.
- » **Integrity** – We will be honest, truthful, transparent and trustworthy in all our work.
- » **Inclusion** – Volunteering needs to be more inclusive and we choose to intentionally move to including all volunteers and forms of volunteering in our work.

Strategic Goals

The 2022-25 Strategic Plan responds to the widespread changes that have occurred in the volunteering sector including:

- » the drastic reduction in formal volunteers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- » the increasing regularity of natural disasters impacting communities, landscapes and animals in Victoria
- » the continuing economic downturn and rising cost of living which is placing more Victorians in need of assistance from volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

In addition, Volunteering Victoria will enter this new Strategic Plan with a strengthened commitment to:

- » being a more diverse and inclusive organisation reflective of the people and organisations we represent
- » collaborating with our stakeholders to place Victoria at the forefront of national and international volunteer management practice and thought leadership.

Our ambition is for Victoria to surpass pre-pandemic levels of volunteering, community giving and helping out.

- 1. Help people in our communities and organisations who play a leadership role in volunteering to have the greatest impact they can**
 - 1.1. Professional development
 - 1.2. Community leader development
 - 1.3. Training, resources accessible to all Victorians
- 2. Strive to secure a better policy and funding environment for volunteering**
 - 2.1. Research and policy development
 - 2.2. Advocacy to government and stakeholders
 - 2.3. Listen to and collaborate with our members and community leaders to ensure we take the best policy forward
- 3. Work to make volunteering and helping appealing and accessible to all Victorians**
 - 3.1. Connect and work with people and communities (of geography, interest, practice) who are under-represented in our membership
 - 3.2. Help organisations and communities embrace new ways of volunteering
 - 3.3. Help organisations and communities find the best responses to emerging areas of need
- 4. Strive to be the model for integrity, trustworthiness, sustainability and diversity in all our operations and endeavours**
 - 4.1. Maintain focus on the highest quality systems and processes
 - 4.2. Use our resources responsibly with a focus on long-term viability
 - 4.3. Commit to changing our practices where they may create barriers to participation

Implementing and Monitoring

This Strategic Plan will be the basis of Volunteering Victoria's annual operational plan, developed by the CEO and monitored at each meeting of the Board.