



VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA'S SUBMISSION TO
the Victorian State Budget
2023-2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Volunteering Victoria acknowledges the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples, the traditional custodians of the land on which our office stands, and we pay our respects to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

About Us

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering, focusing on advocacy, sector development, and the promotion of volunteering. We are a member-based organisation with over 400 individual and organisational members from all sectors and places in Victoria. Volunteering Victoria has a singular and specialised focus on volunteering. We see our role as leading the development of a collaborative, sustainable, thriving, and inclusive volunteering community and movement in Victoria

About the Submission

Volunteering Victoria's submission to the Victorian State Budget 2023-2024 ('budget') has been developed in consultation with our members, partner organisations, and the broader volunteer sector. This has included:

- » Volunteering Victoria Budget submission consultation
- » Volunteering Victoria Budget submission survey
- » Budget consultations with the Victorian Volunteer Support Network (VVSN), LGPro, and other key volunteering networks
- » Consultations to inform Volunteering Victoria's election advocacy campaign

Throughout these consultations, the volunteer sector has told us they want volunteering to be:

- » Respected and valued
- » Easier to access
- » Inclusive
- » Meaningful
- » Supported by government and political leaders
- » Led by community

Our budget recommendations are driven by these key reflections and learnings. Specific funding recommendations are based on the issues and challenges facing the sector and informed by existing or piloted initiatives and where possible, evidence-based research.

The budget submission has been provided to the Victorian State Government ('government') via the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing.

Glossary¹

Volunteering: Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

Formal volunteering: Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way.

Informal volunteering: Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place outside the context of a formal organisation or group. This includes assisting people in the community, excluding one's own family members. For example, looking after children, property, or pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone professional advice.

Community giving: Inclusive forms of community contribution that are more fluid and responsive to local area or community need. The term is often used to refer to community contribution 'undertaken by multicultural communities, as well as First Nations communities.'²

Spontaneous volunteers: People who are motivated to contribute their assistance before, during and/or after an emergency, including assisting with relief and recovery efforts. These are distinct from emergency management volunteers who are recruited, trained, and managed by emergency management organisations.^{3,4}

Youth volunteering: Young people (typically those aged 15-24 years) who give their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

Volunteer managers: The person/s who are responsible for the recruitment, induction, training, supervision, and ongoing support of volunteers. These roles may be paid or voluntary.

Volunteer-involving organisation (VIO): Any organisation/company/department that engages volunteers may be known as a volunteer-involving organisation.

Volunteer Support Service (VSS): Place-based organisations that promote, resource, and support volunteering in local communities. These organisations enable people to volunteer and help ensure their volunteering experience is positive and safe. They also help the thousands of community organisations reliant on volunteers to recruit, manage, and recognise those volunteers.

Volunteering sector: Comprising not just volunteers but volunteer-involving organisations, volunteer support services, associated service providers, and businesses that sell volunteering-related products and services to others in the sector.

Volunteer infrastructure: The enabling governance, operational, and technological structures, bodies, and platforms that provide volunteer-involving organisations with the capability to involve volunteers ethically and efficiently.

1 Unless an alternative source is referenced, all definitions are taken from the Common Languages Guide published by Volunteering Australia.

2 Victorian Volunteer Strategy. Victorian State Government. 2022.

3 [Guidelines for managing spontaneous volunteers](#). Government of South Australia. 2019.

4 [Making the most of spontaneous volunteers](#). VCOSS. 2016.

State of Volunteering research/report: Research that includes trends, demographics, challenges, and successes in volunteering. It typically involves surveys of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

Volunteer insurance: One way an organisation protects itself, its volunteers, paid staff, management committee, clients, and customers against risk. Work Health & Safety legislation requires organisations to organise personal accident and public liability insurance on behalf of their volunteer; it is not the duty of the volunteer. This is usually referred to as Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance.

Volunteering Australia: The national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community.

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE): The global peak body for volunteerism that exists to promote, strengthen, and celebrate volunteering in all the ways it happens throughout the world.

Executive Summary

Overview

Volunteering is an essential part of active, healthy, and connected communities. The contribution of volunteers is invaluable to community sectors and their positive impact stretches across all communities within Victoria. The collective wellbeing of our state is receiving increased attention following numerous recent social crises, including natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic ('pandemic'). These events have had a significant impact on our physical and mental health, and economic and social wellbeing. Consistent with the approach of the Federal government, Volunteering Victoria advocates for the development of a budget that prioritises collective wellbeing.

Volunteering has an important role to play in promoting wellbeing. The Victorian Volunteer Strategy (VVS) acknowledges the critical role of volunteering in our communities and its environmental, social, cultural, health, and wellbeing benefits. The VVS also identifies the need to strengthen the sector and address barriers to volunteering. With strong leadership, sustainable co-ordination, and equitable reinvestment, the benefits of volunteering can be maximised to achieve the vision for a thriving, healthy, and inclusive Victoria.

Key Principles

Government leadership and funding are essential to value, sustain, and grow a culture of community contribution. This can be achieved through:

- » Strengthening the volunteer sector to harness the benefits of volunteering for collective wellbeing
- » Addressing barriers to volunteering that contribute to the trend of declining volunteer rates and pose operational issues for organisations
- » Promoting inclusion and diversity in volunteering to create more equitable and accessible communities

Summary of Funding Recommendations

Strengthening the volunteer sector

1. A Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering
2. A well-resourced spontaneous volunteer strategy and coordinated response
3. Investment in Volunteer Support Services as part of Victoria's place-based volunteering infrastructure

Addressing barriers to volunteering

4. Research into volunteering trends and practices
5. Subsidised insurance coverage and training for small volunteer-involving organisations
6. Inclusion of volunteering into all government workforce strategies

Promoting inclusion & diversity in volunteering

7. Evidence-based and sustainable inclusion and diversity training for organisations
8. A fund to reduce financial barriers to volunteering for diverse communities
9. Investment in volunteering initiatives for young people

Sector Context

Strengths and contribution

Volunteers are the foundation of our communities, generously working to deliver essential community services and programs across all sectors. Volunteers give their time for free and for the good of their community, promoting inclusion, social cohesion, resilience, and recovery from emergencies and crises. The contribution of volunteers to society is invaluable through the benefits on individual and collective health and wellbeing including:

- » Improved physical and mental health
- » Greater social connections and increased social capital
- » Skill development and pathways to employment
- » Improved overall life satisfaction

These benefits exist alongside the tangible economic contribution of volunteers that is in excess of \$58 billion annually to Victoria.

While many volunteers give their time through formal volunteering, there is increasing acknowledgement of the contribution of those who give their time outside of organisations and through diverse forms of community giving. The benefits associated with this require greater understanding and acknowledgement.

Challenges and Barriers

Despite the significant contribution of volunteering and associated benefits, volunteers and VIOs face many barriers. The pandemic has amplified the decade-long downward trend in volunteering participation and volunteers are not returning to their previous roles. Many VIOs are encountering subsequent difficulties in maintaining their services and programs.

The known barriers to volunteer participation range from the impact of cost-of-living increases to poor and unstable resourcing of volunteer programs, a lack of volunteer infrastructure, and the inaccessibility of bureaucratic processes associated with volunteering. There is also an internationally identified need to promote greater equity and inclusion in volunteering and recognise diverse forms of community giving. The nature and diversity of these challenges requires innovative and sustainable leadership and resourcing. Volunteering will not recover on its own and our communities will be much worse off without the contribution of volunteers.

A Wellbeing Budget and Volunteering

At a federal level, there are plans for Australia's first wellbeing budget that prioritises the collective health and happiness of our society. Volunteering Australia and the volunteering state peak bodies are advocating for the inclusion of volunteering as a wellbeing indicator in line with that of [New Zealand's wellbeing budget](#). At a State level, Volunteering Victoria advocates for a consistent approach in the development of a budget for 2023-2024 that prioritises wellbeing.

Volunteering is a comprehensive and unique indicator for community wellbeing 'as it captures social connections, physical and mental health, sense of purpose, and connection to place.'⁵ We encourage the government to acknowledge the economic and social contribution of volunteering and its benefits for human, social, and produced capital through its inclusion in the budget.

5 [Volunteering, Wellbeing and Wellbeing budgets](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022

Funding Recommendations

Strengthening the volunteer sector

1. A Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering

Fund: A Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering.

To strengthen: The volunteer sector through a coordinated response to complex sector issues and to maximise the benefits of volunteering for collective wellbeing.

Victoria's 2.3 million volunteers contribute an average of 223.9 hours each per year or over half a billion hours collectively (the equivalent of 250,000 full time EFT). Volunteers are one of the state's largest workforces and contribute \$58.1 billion in value to the Victorian economy.⁶ Volunteers deliver essential services across all community sectors and make an invaluable contribution to collective wellbeing, social connection, and community resilience. During the pandemic, volunteer participation rates plummeted, limiting the capacity and delivery of community services.⁷ ⁸ Strengthening the volunteer sector and providing support and protections to volunteers requires the leadership and governance of a Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering.

Volunteers encounter - and will continue to face – many barriers that prevent them from performing their roles and deter many other community members from volunteering in the first place. VIOs consistently report significant barriers to recruiting and retaining volunteers that place the viability of their services at risk. At the back of a decade-long downward trend in volunteering participation, the pandemic has further heightened these barriers. Based on current volunteer rates, many essential services such as emergency and recovery responses in natural disasters, will not be delivered. Volunteering will not recover on its own and our communities will be far worse off without the skills, time, and care that volunteers contribute.

The current government structure around volunteering needs to be strengthened to address:

- » The trend of declining volunteer rates
- » The multiple and ongoing complex challenges facing the sector
- » The implementation of measures to protect volunteers and VIOs

The VVS is a promising start and commendable commitment by the government to strengthen the volunteering sector. However, a strategy is only effective with strong leadership, governance, and dedicated resources to implement and operationalise programs to achieve its goals.⁹ There are also gaps in the strategy in addressing longstanding systemic barriers that will require co-ordination across multiple departments, and in developing innovative partnerships across government, the not-for-profit sector, and private enterprise.

A Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering will enable the required leadership, governance, and advice to address the complexity of issues that impact the sector. This includes issues related to resourcing and sustainability, legal protections, inclusion and diversity, digital inclusion, and the pandemic recovery. A Minister for Volunteering will support improved consideration and resourcing of volunteering in other government departments and portfolios. It will also acknowledge the enormous contribution of Victoria's volunteers and enable government to strategically highlight its commitment to promoting connected communities and the wellbeing of Victoria.

6 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020.

7 [The COVID-19 Community Sector Impact Survey](#). Our Community & Salesforce. 2021

8 [Submission to the Independent Panel Review on COVID-19](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

9 [Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure](#). United Nations. 2018.

Western Australia's Minister for Volunteering

Western Australia introduced a Minister for Volunteering over 10 years ago, reflecting the invaluable contribution of volunteers to the state and their commitment to supporting the volunteer sector. The implementation of a dedicated portfolio has meant that government now has the structure, resources, and dedicated staff to support volunteering and address key issues. The Minister has established a 'Volunteering Community of Reference' group enabling continued consultation and increased government oversight on issues impacting the sector.

Key benefits of the Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering in Western Australia include:

- » Improved visibility over complex issues impacting volunteering
- » Timely, effective, and collaborative solutions to key issues
- » Improved relationships with the volunteering peak body and key organisations in the sector
- » Reduction in time and funding associated with ad hoc consultation and initiatives
- » Inherent acknowledgement of volunteers and their contribution to the state
- » Unique insights into the variety of issues impacting communities through increased contact with volunteers from within those communities
- » Increased opportunities to connect with communities

"The creation of a Volunteering Ministerial Portfolio has had a significant impact as it has allowed for a much greater synergy between the Minister, Government, Volunteering WA, and key organisations in the sector. Volunteers and the communities they serve across Western Australia are the true beneficiaries of this enhanced collaboration."

–Tina Williams, CEO, Volunteering WA

A Ministerial Portfolio for Volunteering will allow for a significant shift in the way that government and decision makers think about volunteering. While the contribution of volunteering clearly calls for equitable reinvestment, a purely economic reading represents a risky approach in an era facing unprecedented social crises. Investing in the future wellbeing of our communities is critical. Supporting volunteering, with its established culture, infrastructure, benefits, and universally held values, is a key means of building strong and thriving communities and fostering the wellbeing of Victoria.

Cost: Discretionary

This Victorian State Budget request is endorsed by Volunteering WA.



2. A well-resourced spontaneous volunteer strategy and coordinated response

Fund: The development and implementation of a well-resourced and coordinated spontaneous volunteering strategy, responses, and best practice models.

To strengthen: Community-led volunteer responses in times of social crises.

The pandemic and recent natural disasters have greatly tested the capacity of communities to come together for the collective good and wellbeing of its members. Emergency Management Victoria's (EMV's) [Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management](#) describes community resilience as “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.”¹⁰ This includes the multiple crises facing society, including climate change, poverty, mental health, unemployment, extreme acts, and disease. Communities face a long path to recovery following the pandemic, and climate change modelling predicts continued and increased extreme heat and natural disasters, such as the recent flooding emergency in Victoria.

Volunteers make an enormous contribution in preparation for, during, and after crises. They are at the forefront of delivering essential community responses and services, reflected in volunteer-led responses to bushfire recovery and the pandemic. However, this contribution requires extensive planning and co-ordination to ensure the safety and support of volunteers, the public they seek to assist, and the emergency management workforce.¹¹ The VVS acknowledges the role of volunteers in environmental and emergency management and preparedness activities, however there is an absence of planning in the strategy for how to recruit, retain, and support these volunteers.

Spontaneous volunteers have been key in COVID-19 community responses, providing urgent services and community aid. Volunteers in this setting make an enormous contribution but they are often unsupported despite being exposed to difficult situations and potential trauma. There is a need for increased support, coordination, and mental health first aid for these volunteers.”

– Volunteering Victoria member.

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management's [Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian fire season](#) found that there is “no system in place or defined lead agency to plan for and coordinate spontaneous volunteers.”¹² Published in October 2021, the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) [Roles and Responsibilities document](#) nominated EMV and Bushfire Recovery Victoria as recovery lead agencies for the coordination of spontaneous volunteers, with the Australian Red Cross and Volunteering Victoria as recovery support agencies. However, there is currently no resourcing attached to the plan to enable Volunteering Victoria to fulfill this key role. It is also important to note that while volunteers offer critical support in preparedness and relief, the SEMP Roles and Responsibilities document currently fails to account for this core function.

Volunteering Victoria acknowledges the extensive program of work being undertaken by the government to build community resilience and improve responses to natural disasters and other community shocks. However, with the discontinuation of [weVolunteer](#), the community recovery volunteering program funded

10 [Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management](#). Emergency Management Victoria. 2017.

11 The growing interest in spontaneous volunteering is well documented through Emergency Management literature and volunteering statistics. Organisations can also get ISO 22319 accreditation in Community resilience for planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers.

12 [Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian fire season: Phase 2](#). Inspector-General for Emergency Management. 2021.

initially through pandemic rapid response funding, there is currently no alternative to support spontaneous volunteer coordination. Without coordination and resourcing for spontaneous volunteering, community responses to natural disasters will be hindered, place increased pressure on paid staff, and reduce capacity for the delivery of essential community recovery programs.

“During a crisis everyone wants a quick and well-coordinated volunteer response yet funding only comes in the aftermath of disasters. There needs to be strategic thinking and funding in ‘blue skies’ to plan for volunteer involvement and to ensure readiness when a crisis hits.”

– Mark Pearce, CEO, Volunteering Australia.

Volunteering Victoria makes the following budget recommendations to support spontaneous volunteering and community recovery in Victoria:

1. The development of a Spontaneous Volunteering Strategy in partnership with Volunteering Victoria and other relevant agencies, providing planning and coordination for all volunteering roles involved in community recovery, with the exception of first responder volunteers
2. Government investment in scoping and research on best practice approaches to spontaneous volunteering and volunteer coordination
3. Sustainable investment in the capacity building of place-based organisations (local government and VSSs) to enable them to engage and activate volunteers in response to community need
4. Funding for Volunteering Victoria to engage in the work and responsibilities associated with being a recovery support agency as part of the SEMP

Place-based approaches driven by local community needs are essential to promoting resilient, thriving communities, and empowering communities during times of crisis. Resourcing the coordination and support of spontaneous volunteers is critical to enabling our communities to respond and recover from the unprecedented social crises they are and will continue to increasingly face.

Costs

Spontaneous Volunteering strategy:	Discretionary
Best practice scoping & research:	Discretionary
Organisational capacity building:	Discretionary
Recovery support agency funding:	\$200k p.a. for 4 years

3. Investment in Volunteer Support Services as part of Victoria's place-based volunteering infrastructure

Fund: Victoria's existing network of place-based Volunteer Support Services (VSSs).

To strengthen: Local volunteering communities and community-informed responses to place-based volunteering needs.

VSSs are a primary component of Victoria's volunteer infrastructure and have invaluable knowledge of and partnerships with their local communities. They are uniquely positioned to provide place-based volunteering support to local volunteers and VIOs. The VVS articulates place-based approaches as a critical enabler to achieving the goals of the strategy. Indeed, VSSs are explicitly listed as key players in achieving the aims of the strategy and are intrinsically connected to all five goals through their history of delivering services and programs that directly address the priority outcomes. The VVS clearly articulates their role in achieving several of these outcomes. However, VSSs are not currently funded to deliver on these outcomes and are currently at risk of closure due to limited funding arrangements that have narrowed the scope of their service delivery.

Local, placed-based, and community-led approaches are universally recognised as the critical means to meet the myriad of social, economic, and health challenges being faced by local communities.^{13 14 15} This is particularly important for regional and rural communities, which face unique challenges related to distance and limited infrastructure. Place-based approaches are endorsed by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet in their 'Framework for Place-Based Approaches'¹⁶ and explicitly articulated as a priority in the VVS.

Internationally, investment in local volunteer infrastructure (namely VSSs) has consistently contributed to the growth of thriving volunteer cultures and establishing volunteering as an activity of social and political importance.¹⁷ This is supported by the United Nations, which identifies that "prioritising a functional, appropriate, and inclusive volunteering infrastructure is needed to offer opportunities to all citizens to become agents of change and drivers of their own development."¹⁸ Under the model of [Volunteering Infrastructure for Empowered Volunteerism](#),¹⁹ government strategies and policies create an enabling environment. Yet, this is insufficient without organisational structures and implementation capacities that allow for such strategies to be operationalised. Investment in volunteering infrastructure is also identified as crucial to achieving greater inclusion and diversity within volunteering.

"A strong volunteering infrastructure is needed to ensure that volunteerism contributes to the inclusion of all, and particularly of marginalized people."²⁰

– Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure, United Nations.

13 [Do place based approaches hold the key to unlocking potential in Australian communities?](#) Centre for Public Impact. 2019.

14 Baker, S. [A scoping review of place-based approaches to community engagement and support](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government. 2022.

15 Muir, L. [Whose plan is it? The importance of place](#). 2021. Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 4, 54.

16 [A Framework for Place Based Approaches](#). Victorian State Government. 2020.

17 Van den Bos, Cees, [Using volunteer infrastructure to build civil society](#). 2014.

18 [Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure](#). United Nations. 2018.

19 [Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure](#). United Nations. 2018.

20 [Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure](#). United Nations. 2018.

The benefits of place-based Volunteer Support Services

- » Improved community resilience through the ability to better coordinate local responses to disruptions and emergencies (such as bushfires and COVID-19)
- » Promotion of volunteering that is inclusive of local, diverse communities including LGBTIQ+ communities, established and emerging CALD communities, senior Victorians, young people, low socio-economic communities, rural and regional communities, and First Nations peoples
- » Timely investment in existing infrastructure to support community recovery and promote collective wellbeing
- » Equitable geographical service delivery coverage and increased support for disadvantaged communities
- » Improved alignment of place-based service delivery infrastructure to government priorities and the priority outcomes of the VVS
- » Excellent return on economic investment²¹

Government funding should specifically enable VSSs to:

- » Deliver local, place-based volunteering support to volunteers and local VIOs
- » Provide volunteer placement and matching for local communities
- » Facilitate pathways from volunteering to employment
- » Provide volunteering resources, advice, and support
- » Meet the priority outcomes of the VVS

The United Nations explicitly state that volunteer infrastructure, the critical means by which to maximise the impact of volunteering, does not receive the attention or investment it needs.²² Without government funding, the current network of VSSs cannot continue to operate, much less participate in their expected role within the VVS. Allowing these services to disband is a lost opportunity to harness the existing knowledge of, and connections with, the local community. It would also represent a false economy, as the costs to the government would be far greater to re-establish new models of service delivery.

The government has an opportunity to commit to state-wide, place-based support for volunteers and VIOs via the established infrastructure of VSSs. Innovative investment in these services will support Victoria to become a world-leader in developing an inclusive, empowered, and resilient local volunteering culture that promotes the wellbeing of the community.

Cost: \$1m p.a. for 4 years.

21 In 2019, the value of volunteering to Victoria was \$58.1 billion including \$19.4 billion it would cost to replace the labour contribution of volunteers. Volunteering provides a net return of \$3.70 for every dollar invested.

22 [Global Trends in Volunteering Infrastructure](#). United Nations. 2018.

Addressing barriers to volunteering

4. Research into volunteering trends and practices

Fund: Research into volunteering trends and practices.

To address: The downward trend in volunteering rates and barriers to participation.

Volunteer rates have been in decline over the last 10 years,²³ a trend that has been amplified by the impact of the pandemic. During the pandemic, 58% of VIOs experienced a decline in volunteer rates.²⁴ Similarly Volunteering Australia found that 41% of organisations are having difficulty recruiting volunteers and previous volunteers are not returning to their roles.²⁵ Throughout Volunteering Victoria's consultations, VIOs across all sectors in Victoria reported difficulties with recruiting and retaining volunteers. This is a significant contributing factor threatening the viability of organisations in the aftermath of the pandemic as identified in the [COVID-19 Community Sector Impact Survey](#).²⁶ VIOs are confronting difficult decisions on their service offerings and capacity to continue operating.

These findings are supported by the recent 2021 Census data that has shown a 19% decline in volunteering within organisations since 2016.²⁷ While formal volunteering is only one aspect of volunteering, its benefits on social capital and collective wellbeing are critical and reflect the broader impact of community giving. Despite the steady decline in volunteering rates, there is an absence of in-depth research on the reasons and specific barriers encountered by volunteers or the ways these barriers differ across communities. Developing an evidence base on barriers, facilitators, and practices of volunteering will enable informed decision making to achieve increased community participation through volunteering.

Funded by the government, the [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#)²⁸ report provided key insights on the characteristics and contribution of volunteering, and initial data on issues impacting VIOs. However, prior small scale research projects in Australia and internationally have identified the importance of longitudinal, mixed-method research that provides evidence on volunteer motivations and the influence of volunteer recruitment practices across sectors and diverse demographic groups over time.^{29 30 31}

³² Research areas as diverse as neurobiology and behavioural economics have offered insights into improving volunteer recruitment and retention.³³ The importance of further research is acknowledged in the VVS, which identifies evidence and data as a key enabler to achieving the aims of the strategy.

23 [2021 Census Date Release](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

24 [The COVID-19 Community Sector Impact Survey](#). Our Community & Salesforce. 2021.

25 [Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19](#). Volunteering Australia. 2021.

26 [The COVID-19 Community Sector Impact Survey](#). Our Community & Salesforce. 2021.

27 [2021 Census Date Release](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

28 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020.

29 Cho, M., Bonn, M., & Han, S.J. Generation Z's Sustainable Volunteering: Motivations, attitudes and job performance. 2018. *Sustainability*, 10, 1400.

30 Kappelides, P., Cuskelly, G., & Hoye, R. *The influence of volunteer recruitment practices and expectations on the development of volunteers' psychological contracts*. 2019. *Voluntas*, 30, 259.

31 Fedeli, G., & Cigurova, L. *Volunteer recruitment and section: Evidence from the visitor attraction sector. 2021*. In *Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism*.

32 [Pathways to culturally diverse volunteering towards COVID-recovery](#). Volunteer West. 2021.

33 [How to use brain research for volunteer recruitment](#). VolunteerPro, 2019.

The current volunteering crisis and the government's vision to support volunteers and strengthen the sector warrants the commissioning of regular State of Volunteering reports to establish longitudinal data and credible trends. The scope of the report should also be broadened to further explore the complex issues and barriers impacting volunteers and VIOs. Investment is also required in research projects aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the practices, motivations, and barriers to volunteering across diverse communities. These projects could be undertaken in partnership with organisations and academics with interests in volunteering and community participation across diverse communities. A strong evidence base will improve the effectiveness of future volunteer promotion, recruitment, and retention initiatives, and enable the VVS to achieve its vision for volunteering to build strong, resilient, and inclusive communities and better the lives of all Victorians.

"The State of Volunteering research presents a unique opportunity to triangulate Government policy with sector practice. It collects qualitative and quantitative evidence from the lived experience of volunteers and volunteer managers to benchmark the impact of volunteering, the challenges stakeholders face and the value that society enjoys. As an important, sector-wide resource, State of Volunteering reports go beyond ABS and other niche studies to give a comprehensive and ideally longitudinal view of volunteering that aligns to an emerging national standard."

– Paul Muller, CPD, Institute of Project Management.

Costs

State of Volunteering Report:	\$150k per report
Academic research grants:	\$100k p.a. in research grants

This Victorian State Budget request is endorsed by the Institute of Project Management.



5. Subsidised insurance coverage and training for small VIOs

Fund: Subsidised insurance coverage and volunteer safety and risk training for small VIOs.

To address: The barrier posed by expensive and inaccessible volunteer insurance policies.

VIOs have a legal obligation to protect the safety of their volunteers and the members of the public who interact with them.³⁴ However, finding insurance policies that adequately cover the needs of volunteers is a complicated and expensive process. VIOs often need to purchase several insurance policies to obtain appropriate insurance coverage. Throughout Volunteering Victoria's sector engagement and consultations, VIOs consistently raise insurance as a barrier to volunteer engagement, particularly the prohibitive cost that limits their financial and operational viability. Small VIOs may therefore forgo insurance, risking potentially crippling liability and inadequate protections for volunteers and the public in the event of an accident.

"So many groups don't have volunteer accident insurance due to a lack of understanding and the cost involved. It opens them up for all sorts of issues down the track, not to mention the poor volunteers who don't have adequate cover. It would be helpful for groups to have education on this and for specific funds/grants to purchase volunteer insurance."

– Participant, Local Government, Volunteering Victoria Budget Consultation.

Insurance barriers are particularly pronounced for VIOs led by communities who are under-represented in formal volunteering, posing barriers to inclusion and diversity within the sector.

"Volunteers have always led the push to create more inclusive and diverse communities, and volunteers need safe and supportive workplaces just like the paid workforce. We had to really look hard to find an insurance option we could actually afford. Volunteer-based organisations should not be priced out of creating a safe workplace or forced to operate without those protections."

– Feminista Vinyl, Volunteering Victoria member.

Initial data from the [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#) report indicates that risk and insurance was a barrier for 12.9% of organisations surveyed, rising to 18.3% in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁵ This is supported by Justice Connect and Volunteering Australia who identified the [inadequacies of current volunteer insurance policies](#) during the pandemic and the need for a long-term solution to ensure volunteers are appropriately covered during times of illness and crisis.³⁶ It is important to note that the existing data is not a representative sample of the volunteer sector and does not reflect the full extent of the issue.

Organisations surveyed in the State of Volunteering report were those in existing volunteering support networks³⁷ and therefore more likely to have access to information and funding. [The Australian Charities Report 2021](#) provides some indication of the likely extent of the issue:

- » 31% of all charities are considered 'extra small' with less than \$50,000 annual revenue; 21% of all charities are considered 'small' with between \$50,000 - \$250,000 annual revenue

34 [National Volunteer Guide](#). Justice Connect. 2021.

35 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020.

36 [Addressing the pandemic insurance gap for volunteers](#). Volunteering Australia & Justice Connect. 2020.

37 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020.

- » 51% of charities operate without any paid staff
- » Extra small, small, and medium charities account for one third of all volunteers in charities³⁸

Current evidence, data, and anecdotal responses also do not account for the large number of unregistered VIOs or those without incorporated status that are more likely to operate without insurance. Further research is required to understand the impact of insurance barriers on small VIOs. The contribution of volunteering to the collective wellbeing of the state calls for an equitable reinvestment to protect those serving their community. The IAVE also outline the role and responsibility of governments in providing appropriate protections against risks to volunteers and those they serve.³⁹

The government currently subsidises volunteer insurance through VMIA for government-funded community organisations. However, most small VIOs are community-led, operate outside of membership groups, or without government funding, and are therefore ineligible. These VIOs are also more likely to lack the time, resources, and funding to access insurance coverage. The VMIA outlines that “in certain circumstances, the government may ask VMIA to provide insurance to non-government organisations where it is in the public interest and commercial insurance isn't available on reasonable terms.”⁴⁰ Small VIOs clearly meet these criteria.

There is an urgent need for:

- » The provision of accessible and affordable volunteer insurance for small VIOs. Subsidised insurance could be offered through a membership-based approach with Volunteering Victoria, or directly via VMIA
- » The provision and expansion of free training for small VIOs on volunteer safety, risk and insurance, such as that currently offered by [Justice Connect](#)

Promoting the safety of volunteers aligns with the priority outcome of the VVS that ‘volunteers have safe, effective, and rewarding experiences. Their rights and responsibilities are understood and protected.’ It is also a tangible way for government to acknowledge the value of volunteering and invest in the capabilities and capacity of organisations to re-engage, recruit and train volunteers⁴¹.

Costs

Subsidised insurance scheme through the VMIA:	Discretionary
Justice Connect Safety, Risk, and Insurance Training:	\$50k p.a. for 20 online sessions

This Victorian State Budget request is endorsed by Justice Connect.



38 [Australian Charities Report 8th Edition](#). Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. 2022.

39 [Universal Declaration on Volunteering](#). IAVE. 2021.

40 [Insurance eligibility](#). VMIA. 2022.

41 [Closing the pandemic insurance gap for volunteers](#). Justice Connect & Volunteering Australia. 2020.

6. Inclusion of volunteering into all government workforce strategies

Fund: The inclusion of volunteering into all government workforce strategies.

To address: Inadequate resourcing of volunteer programs and the direct impact on volunteer retention and satisfaction.

Volunteer time is given willingly and without financial gain. However, volunteers require acknowledgement, support, and training to sustain and grow their contribution.^{42 43 44 45} In medium to large VIOs, volunteer programs are often under-valued and receive minimal funding, curtailing the capacity of managers to unlock the full potential of large volunteer workforces and greatly limiting the social and economic contribution of volunteers. In community led and small VIOs, volunteer management is often a volunteer role with little, if any, discrete resourcing.

[Volunteering Australia's recent briefing](#) to the Federal Government's Jobs & Skills Summit outlines that volunteers are a critical part of the national workforce and highlights the capacity of volunteering to facilitate pathways into paid employment.⁴⁶ This is supported by the [Discovery Insights Report](#) released as part of the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Discovery Insight: 'Volunteering is a Workforce Issue'

Consultations with 400 key stakeholders across Australia for the National Strategy for Volunteering identified that "volunteering is a core workforce issue, but the social, cultural, and economic contribution of volunteers is absent from workforce conversations."⁴⁷

Key findings include:

- » Volunteers significantly supplement the paid workforce, provide critical surge capacity in times of crisis, and build inclusive and resilient communities
- » The boundary between what could be done by volunteers and what should be done by paid employees is increasingly being blurred
- » Discussions around Australia's workforce do not currently reference volunteering
- » It is critical that volunteers are strategically considered as an indispensable and unique workforce and are consistently accommodated
- » There is an opportunity to re-position the volunteer workforce alongside the paid workforce and promote an understanding of the important contribution of volunteering to society⁴⁸

42 Al Mutawa, M. [Impact of volunteer management practice on volunteer motivation and satisfaction to enhance volunteer retention](#). 2015.

43 Kragt, D., Wilson, S., Newstead, T., & Forner, V. [Without leadership there is no volunteering: The importance of strategic investment in leadership development in Australia](#). 2022.

44 Studer, S. *Volunteer Management: Responding to the Uniqueness of Volunteers*. 2016. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(4), 688–714.

45 Tsai, A., Newstead, T., Lewis, G. [Emergency volunteering: Leading engagement and retention](#). 2022.

46 Volunteering and the Jobs & Skill Summit. Volunteering Australia. 2022.

47 [Discovery Insights: Towards a National Strategy for Volunteering](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

48 [Discovery Insights: Towards a National Strategy for Volunteering](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

There is currently an absence of sector-specific workforce mapping and evidence on volunteer-specific roles, volunteer workforce challenges, and the requirements for volunteer support, training, and management.⁴⁹ Similarly, while the importance of volunteer management is increasingly acknowledged as critical to volunteer recruitment, retention and satisfaction, further evidence is needed to best support the volunteer management workforce and the skills required for these roles. This information could be acquired by including volunteering in government workforce planning.

Government workforce strategies highlight key issues and challenges facing each sector, and appropriately plan and resource for the delivery of services and programs. However, most current workforce strategy frameworks only account for the paid workforce. The need for increased planning and support of the volunteer workforce was endorsed by VCOSS in their response to the 2022 Victorian State Budget.⁵⁰

The problematic absence of volunteering in workforce planning was exemplified in the government's [Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2021-2024](#),⁵¹ which failed to acknowledge or plan for the role of volunteers. This omission will have a detrimental impact on volunteers who are a critical part of the mental health workforce. Their contribution can also not be maximised without appropriate resourcing. The national mental health workforce includes, at a minimum:

- » Almost 65,000 people volunteering in mental health and crisis intervention charities and not-for-profits
- » 10,000 Lifeline volunteers across Australia. In 2018, these volunteers answered 739,481 calls and initiated 5,840 emergency interventions for Australians in need of crisis support⁵²

Workforce planning that includes the volunteer workforce will also be critical to the success of upcoming major events, such as the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the recovery of sectors impacted heavily by the pandemic including tourism, the arts and creative industries, and community sport.

Ensuring the volunteering workforce is accounted for and recognised in all government workforce strategies will enable better planning, protections, and resourcing to harness the invaluable contribution of volunteers in essential services and sectors. Volunteering cannot be strengthened unless it is acknowledged as a critical and unique part of the workforce. This is key to achieving the five goals of the VVS, the success of which depends on planning, resourcing, and leadership to grow the volunteer sector and support the work of volunteer managers.

Cost: Discretionary.

This Victorian State Budget request is endorsed by the national peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Australia.



49 [Discovery Insights: Towards a National Strategy for Volunteering](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

50 [Breaking down the 2022 Victorian Budget](#). VCOSS. 2022.

51 [Victoria's Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024](#). Department of Health, Victorian State Government. 2021.

52 [Volunteering and the Jobs & Skill Summit](#). Volunteering Australia. 2022.

Promoting inclusion and diversity in volunteering

7. Evidence-based and sustainable inclusion and diversity training

Fund: Evidence-based and sustainable inclusion and diversity training programs for VIOs.

To promote: Cultural awareness and safety practices in the volunteer sector and the increased participation of communities from diverse backgrounds.

Volunteering culture, organisations, and systems have historically been built on exclusionary beliefs, assumptions, and practices.⁵³ Traditionally, volunteers from dominant cultures acted from a position of power in providing aid and community support to diverse community groups, perpetuating colonial practices.⁵⁴ Contemporary volunteering structures and processes continue to privilege western systems of knowledge and social capital.⁵⁵ Volunteering Victoria recognises these structural barriers and has a [commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion](#) in volunteering.

The barriers posed by systemic and institutional discrimination has led to diverse communities being underrepresented in formal volunteering⁵⁶ including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, First Nations communities, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, people with disability, and older adults. These communities are also deterred from volunteering due to bias and microaggressions from other volunteers, organisational staff, and members of the public whom they encounter in their volunteering.⁵⁷ While community giving takes place across diverse population groups, those who are excluded from formal volunteering miss out on the pronounced wellbeing and social capital benefits associated with volunteering within organisations.

The IAVE has acknowledged these issues and committed to addressing the structural exclusionary practices that exist in the global volunteering sector through its commitment to social equity throughout its operations, programs, and advocacy.^{58 59 60} They also identify that governments have a responsibility to promote greater inclusion in volunteering.⁶¹

The deeply engrained nature of exclusionary attitudes, practices, and structures means that a long-term commitment is necessary to fully address these issues and create sustained change within organisations.⁶² ^{63 64} Research within the volunteer sector highlights the need for evidence-based awareness, education, and mentoring programs to address the complex factors that pose a barrier to inclusion.⁶⁵

53 [Recognising Racism in Volunteer Engagement](#). Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement. 2020.

54 Blum, A., & Schafer, D. Volunteer work as a neo-colonial practice: racism in transnational education. 2017. *Transnational Social Review*, 8:2, 155.

55 [Recognising Racism in Volunteer Engagement](#). Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement. 2020.

56 [Key Volunteering Statistics](#). Volunteering Australia. 2021.

57 [How to Talk About Race & Volunteerism: Advice for Allies](#). VolunteerPro. 2020.

58 [Being an Ally for Racial Justice](#). IAVE. 2020.

59 [The power of volunteering to change the world: IAVE's Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#). IAVE. 2021.

60 [Being an Ally for Racial Justice](#). IAVE. 2020.

61 [Universal Declaration on Volunteering](#). IAVE. 2021.

62 Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. [Why diversity training doesn't work](#). 2018. *Anthropology Now*, 10, 48.

63 Leslie, L. [Diversity Initiative Effectiveness: A Typological Theory of Unintended Consequences](#). 2019. *Academy of Management Review*, 44, 3.

64 Cooley, Erin et al. [Complex intersections of race and class: Among social liberals, learning about White privilege reduces sympathy, increases blame, and decreases external attributions for White people struggling with poverty](#). 2019. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 148(12), 2218.

65 Donahue, K., et al. [Time well spent: diversity and volunteering](#). National Council for Voluntary Organisations. 2020.

Diversity and inclusion interventions are most effective when targeted at all organisational levels, operations, and practices, including:

- » Organisational culture
- » Leadership
- » Capacity and resources
- » Volunteer management
- » Attitudes of staff and volunteers
- » Data
- » External perceptions and communications
- » Community engagement⁶⁶

Inclusion and diversity initiatives also need to be targeted at the unique and specific issues pertaining to the volunteer sector.

"Organisations need clear strategies for their work on equality, diversity, and inclusion... those strategies must specifically focus on the role volunteering, volunteer managers and volunteers play in creating inclusive organisations."⁶⁷

Best practice models on inclusion and diversity advocate for:

- » Supported self-reflection on unconscious biases and privilege that contribute to microaggressions, stigma, and discrimination⁶⁸
- » Cultural education and learning on the history and experiences of diverse communities
- » Education on allyship and the need to actively address discrimination and systemic barriers within organisations and society⁶⁹
- » The development of organisational practices and procedures that make organisations a safe place for all communities and actively facilitates the involvement of people from diverse demographic backgrounds^{70 71}

Long term education, mentoring, and support on inclusion and diversity practices is required to achieve genuine change within VIOs. A sustainable diversity and inclusion program could be coordinated by Volunteering Victoria and developed and implemented in partnership with organisations representing diverse community groups. Investment in evidence-based interventions is required to improve equity, inclusion, and diversity within volunteering and achieve the aim of the VVS for accessible and inclusive volunteer experiences for all Victorians.

Cost: \$250k p.a. over 5 years

This Victorian State Budget Request is endorsed by AMES Australia.



66 Donahue, K., et al. [Time well spent: diversity and volunteering](#). National Council for Voluntary Organisations. 2020.

67 Timbrell, H. What the bloody hell are you doing here? A comparative study of the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White volunteers in four organisations. 2019.

68 Timbrell, H. What the bloody hell are you doing here? A comparative study of the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White volunteers in four organisations. 2019.

69 [Racism: It Stops with Me](#). Australian Human Rights Commission. 2020

70 Southby, K., South, J., & Bagnall, A.M. [A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities](#). 2019. *Voluntas*, 30, 907.

71 [Recognising Racism in Volunteer Engagement](#). Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement. 2020.

8. A fund to reduce financial barriers to volunteering for diverse communities

Fund: A contestable funding pool to reduce barriers to volunteering for diverse communities.

To promote: Increased uptake of volunteering by those under-represented in formal volunteering rates.

There are distinct, evidence-based benefits of volunteering for individuals and communities. Those who volunteer report a significant improvement in their health, social connections, employment prospects, and life satisfaction.^{72 73 74 75} However, despite the universality of community giving across all population groups, many cohorts remain underrepresented in formal volunteering due to social inequity and systemic disadvantage. People with English as a second language, young people, and those with lower education, employment and income levels are much less likely to volunteer within an organisation.^{76 77}

The [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#) report highlights the out-of-pocket costs absorbed by individuals who volunteer. In 2019, volunteers reported spending an annual average of \$1,710 on their volunteering. Of these expenses, volunteers were reimbursed an average of \$212.65 (12.4%). On average, volunteers were therefore left with \$1,497.11 in out-of-pocket costs.⁷⁸ While these costs may be affordable to those from middle and high socio-economic groups, they are highly problematic for marginalised and financially disadvantaged individuals. Data on household income and financial stress over 2020-2021 shows that close to 40% of Australian families are experiencing financial stress with rates expected to rise as cost-of-living expenses continue to increase.^{79 80} Many people are willing to devote their time to making a difference in their communities but are rarely able to absorb the associated costs.

All individuals and communities should have access to volunteering and its myriad of benefits.⁸¹ Traditional notions of volunteering in policy and program development place the emphasis on individual choice. However, there needs to be an increased emphasis on the structural factors that prevent people from volunteering. It is paramount that government and community leaders recognise the current barriers and use their power and influence to foster increased opportunities for participation.⁸² [The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) outline best practice on reimbursing the costs associated with volunteering. However, poorly resourced VIOs are not in a position to do so.

A government fund to help VIOs cover the out-of-pocket expenses of volunteering for volunteers from under-represented cohorts would reduce financial barriers to volunteering, including those associated with screening checks, transportation, uniforms, equipment, and essential training and professional development.

72 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020

73 [Evidence insights: Volunteering & Mental Health](#). Volunteering Australia. 2021

74 [Universal Declaration on Volunteering](#). IAVE. 2021.

75 [Key Volunteering Statistics](#). Volunteering Australia. 2021.

76 Southby, K., South, J., & Bagnall, A.M. [A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities](#). 2019. *Voluntas*, 30, 907

77 [Volunteering, health & wellbeing: what does the evidence tell us?](#) Volunteering Scotland. 2018.

78 Ellis, C., Muller, P., & Szeker, D. [State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020](#). Volunteering Victoria. 2020

79 [Australian families' experiences of financial stress](#). Savvy and Australian Digital Finance Analytics. 202.

80 [Household financial resources, June 2020](#). Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2020.

81 [Universal Declaration on Volunteering](#). IAVE. 2021.

82 Southby, K., South, J., & Bagnall, A.M. [A Rapid Review of Barriers to Volunteering for Potentially Disadvantaged Groups and Implications for Health Inequalities](#). 2019. *Voluntas*, 30, 907

To access funding for reimbursement of volunteers, VIOs would need to demonstrate that:

- » They are engaging volunteers from under-represented communities
- » Their organisation and volunteer programs work with or provide services to marginalised or disadvantaged communities
- » They have a formal process by which funds are transferred directly to volunteers
- » They can account for the out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers

Reimbursing the expenses of community members from under-represented cohorts in formal volunteering is a practical and achievable intervention to increase community participation, promote equitable access to the benefits of volunteering, and assist in the sustainable delivery of programs and services delivered by volunteers. It is also a key means of achieving the goal of the VVS to make volunteering inclusive and accessible for all Victorians.

Cost: \$1m p.a. over 4 years.

9. Investment in volunteering initiatives for young people

Fund: Initiatives to promote, recruit, and support young people and students to volunteer.

To promote: Community participation and increased uptake of volunteering by diverse young people and students in Victoria.

Volunteering holds enormous benefits for young people, which result in improved social, economic, and health outcomes. Participation in volunteering from a young age delivers clear positive impacts on pathways to employment, the development of new skills, professional networking, increased confidence, and improved mental health and social connections.^{83 84 85} Young people who engage in volunteering are also more likely to continue to be active citizens and volunteer throughout their lifetime.⁸⁶

Previous research has indicated that while 1 in 3 young people in Australia (aged 12 to 24 years) volunteer, they do not do so on a regular basis.⁸⁷ More recently, the results of the General Social Survey indicate that youth volunteering has been heavily impacted by COVID-19, with a sharp decrease in volunteering rates. In 2019, 28.8% of people aged 15-24 reported engaging in formal volunteering. By 2020, volunteering participation of young people dropped to 19.4%.⁸⁸

Young people's understandings and practices of community contribution differ from those of traditional definitions of volunteering. There has also been a rise in non-traditional volunteer roles and practices, such as online social action, e-volunteering, alternative reciprocal, and monetary systems, and 'tourism volunteering', which are more frequently undertaken by young people.⁸⁹

Young people's interest in non-traditional roles and their preferences for volunteering options are not reflected in the current approaches to recruitment, roles, and retention within VIOs. Young people express a preference for flexible volunteer opportunities, in roles that provide tangible personal and professional benefits, and within organisations that align with their values and interest in social justices causes.⁹⁰ Based on the trend of declining volunteer participation, there is an urgent need for VIOs to become more accessible and attractive to young people seeking to volunteer.

In 2021, Volunteering Victoria partnered with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and YACVic to develop a [Youth Ready Guide and Assessment Tool](#) to support environmental organisations to attract and support young volunteers. The guide provides evidence-based and practical resources, strategies, and guidance to make environmental organisations accessible to young people and increase participation. Adapting and expanding such resources for other sectors is likely to increase the uptake of volunteering by young people.

There is also a need to promote the benefits of volunteering and provide tools and resources that support young people to maximise the benefits of their volunteering experience. This has been demonstrated in other states where innovative approaches have been developed to support young people to volunteer, including Western Australia's [YVolunteer program](#) and Tasmania's Youth Volunteer Army.

83 Wynne, C. [Volunteering is catching: A study into young people's volunteering in 2011](#). YACVic. 2011.

84 Lindsay, S. [A scoping review of the experiences, benefits and challenges involved in volunteer work among youth and young adults with disability](#). 2016. *Disability & Rehabilitation*, 38(16), 1533

85 Jardim C, Marques da Silva S. [Young People Engaging in Volunteering: Questioning a Generational Trend in an Individualized Society](#). 2018. *Societies*, 8(1):8.

86 Walsh, L., & Black, R. [Youth Volunteering in Australia: An Evidence Review](#). 2015.

87 Walsh, L., & Black, R. [Youth Volunteering in Australia: An Evidence Review](#). 2015.

88 [General Social Survey: Summary Results](#). ABS. 2021.

89 Walsh, L., & Black, R. [Youth Volunteering in Australia: An Evidence Review](#). 2015.

90 Walsh, L., & Black, R. [Youth Volunteering in Australia: An Evidence Review](#). 2015.

Tasmania's Youth Volunteer Army

Supported by the Tasmanian Government, Volunteering Tasmania has partnered with [Student Volunteer Army](#) New Zealand to launch the [Youth Volunteer Army](#). Available to high school students and young job-seekers, the program recognises and links youth volunteering to skills that support young people to find employment, build networks, and increase civic participation. Through the Student Volunteer Army Service Award app, volunteers can record and reflect on the good they do in their communities, and automatically build a CV of volunteering. Volunteers can use this CV to stand out when applying for apprenticeships, scholarships, and employment. Overall, the Youth Volunteer Army aims to:

- » Change a young person's trajectory by improving their resilience, confidence, and employability
- » Link volunteering with education
- » Support VIOs by encouraging a culture of volunteering in young people

“Our youth are incredible volunteers and contributors to our community, and this deserves to be recognised to secure the future of volunteering. Through the Youth Volunteer Army, we will support a new generation of volunteers through school-based, community-led volunteering initiatives and recognition of youth volunteering efforts. This program has already provided much greater recognition to our young volunteers in its first 6 months. I cannot endorse the model, the app or the relationship with Student Volunteer Army enough and can only encourage the Victorian Government to take to the opportunity to support our sister peak body Volunteering Victoria to emulate this program in Victoria.”

– Dr Lisa Schimanski, CEO, Volunteering Tasmania.

Young people from diverse backgrounds have the right to access volunteering that is suited to their interests and preferences. Increased participation in volunteering is critical to supporting young people to be empowered, active participants in their communities, strengthening the volunteer sector, and promoting the collective wellbeing of Victoria.

Costs

Sector-specific youth ready guides, resources, and tools:	\$40k per sector-specific guide
Youth Volunteer Army initiative:	\$150k p.a. for 4 years

This Victorian State Budget request is endorsed by Volunteering Tasmania, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), VicWise, the Victorian Working Group on Student Employability, and Student Volunteer Army New Zealand.



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