

Case study: Experience and impact of inclusion

Manningham Volunteer Resource Service

EV Strengthening Communities, in partnership with Manningham City Council, coordinates volunteer activities through the Manningham Volunteer Resource Service.

About the partnership

Our services through this partnership include:

- Assisting community members to find volunteering opportunities and source suitable vacancies.
- Encouraging volunteering amongst community members from all backgrounds and abilities.
- Supporting local organisations in volunteering best practice to effectively recruit host and support volunteers.
- Providing networking opportunities to facilitate information sharing, collaborative activities, and support designed to promote vibrant and inclusive volunteer programs.
- EV Strengthening Community in partnership with Manningham City Council delivers the Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program.

Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program

Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program engages young people aged 12 to 24 years by providing personalised pathways to connect with community.

Our services through this partnership include supporting youth to:

- Explore career pathways of interest through tailored, short term, flexible volunteer experiences with child safe businesses and organisations.
- Attend workshops, training and events that increase youth connection and engagement in community life.
- Navigate employment, training, and youth support services.

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Community expos

Manningham Volunteer Resource Service and Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program both run an expo each year:

- Manningham Volunteer Resource Service run a Volunteer Expo for the whole community within Manningham
- Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program run an Employment Expo for Youth aged 12-24.

Both events were organised and run by a team of integrated paid and volunteer staff, and held at Manningham Civic Centre, Doncaster.

Over the past year, the Manningham Volunteer Resource Service including Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program had a team of 2 part-time paid staff (1 FTE), 5 ongoing volunteers, and 30 volunteers for both expos. The volunteers reflect the community within Manningham, including those from migrant backgrounds, all ages and genders, and individuals with disabilities.

Supporting individuals with disabilities

Finding volunteer roles can be a challenge for people with disabilities. Through an ongoing partnership with Burke and Beyond (a disability support service for individuals between 18-30 as a transition program post education), Manningham Volunteer Resource Service and Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program offered one-off volunteer opportunities at these expos. A group of five participants volunteered with their support worker as the greeters at the large community events. This opportunity allowed the group to work on key skills in their individual plans alongside their support worker and the wider team at Manningham Volunteer Resource Service.

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Inclusion was approached by working closely with Burke and Beyond leaders to have an opportunity that worked for their participants. It was important for the support worker to understand what the participants were learning from the experience, and they worked closely with the Manningham Volunteer Resource Service and Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program coordinator to ensure that this was achieved. The Manningham Volunteer Resource Service and Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program coordinator also briefed the team about the participants and what their role was, including education around the role of the support worker.

The participants from Burke and Beyond were the first point of contact for the exhibitors and the community, the face of the expos and they set the tone for both events. Being able to show the other exhibitors (volunteer-involving organisations, employers, and education providers) inclusion in practice and to be able to share how we achieved it provided a high level of impact. By modelling inclusion at a large event, it also encouraged conversations between the exhibitors and allowed for some networking to occur, as well as encouraged other partnerships between volunteer-involving organisations and other disability support groups.

Recommendations for other volunteer-involving organisations

- Build relationships with disability support providers and learn how they work.
- Arrange a Memorandum of Understanding between the organisations regarding onboarding documentation for participants and the support workers to allow for flexibility and to simplify the process.
- Study and understand the role of the support worker (they are not the volunteer but a paid staff member to support the volunteers).
- Ensure that all instructions and tasks are clear and in simple language.
- Put in the preparation work so everyone is clear on what the goals are for the volunteering opportunity.

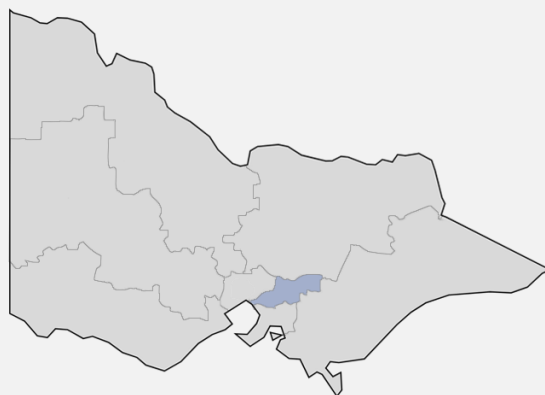
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<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/leading-volunteers/vma-2022-2026/>



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Volunteering Victoria acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.