

# Case study: Sharing stories of inclusion

## Valorous Place: Inclusive Disability Volunteering at the City of Casey Volunteer Expo

**I have worked with the team at Valorous Place for around 12 months, more specifically with a small group of young women and have watched them all grow in confidence through volunteering.**

One example is Chloe, who I have seen go from very shy and quiet to smiling all the time, uber confident, and now embarking on more and more things independently.

The opportunity to volunteer at council, whilst a tad scary, was taken on with excitement and willingness to learn. I worked with a coordinator who made sure the clients had the correct forms completed including media releases etc. The call was put out to ask for five to six volunteers for the day. We had an abundance of clients willing to help and ended up with seven volunteers. The team had a variety of jobs and were supported by three carers on the day, who were never far away to answer questions and offer guidance.

Sam (a quiet young man who is legally blind) was our survey extraordinaire! Supported by a carer, Sam was responsible for asking attendees to complete the survey using a QR code. I later heard Sam sharing with his father how much fun he had and when I said 'Sam did an amazing job' the look of admiration of his father's face was priceless. It was beautiful to witness Sam's face light up too.

The team were also able to meet other community groups and engage with them, learning about the various organisations and what they do in the community. It was beneficial for both groups to see what each can offer, and I believe helped organisations to see the benefits of recruiting volunteers with a disability.

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### Benefits to recruiting volunteers with disability

- Recruiting a person with a disability does not always mean having to make huge changes to your organisation and can, in fact, enhance the experience for your whole team.
- Working with a person with disability can often mean they show great attention to detail.
- Volunteers with disability are often keen to volunteer on a regular basis allowing you to plan easier.
- No task is too small.
- Recruiting a person with a disability doesn't just impact them; it also positively affects their families and their wider circle.

In my previous role as volunteer manager, I saw first-hand the positive impact having a person with a disability can have in the workplace. Volunteers were made to feel included, which directly impacted their confidence and willingness to learn.

***“Working with volunteers with disability can be a very positive experience. For me personally, the joy I receive watching the group shine cannot be measured.”***

### Volunteering at the City of Casey Volunteer Expo

The City of Casey Volunteer Expo was held on Thursday 25 May 2023 at Bunjil Place. This was the perfect backdrop, bringing together around 35 local community groups to share volunteering opportunities across Casey.

In collaboration with South East Volunteers, the event was promoted to people with disability, newly arrived migrants, and First Nations Peoples. The aim was to support and educate volunteer-involving organisations on various opportunities and to look at volunteering and volunteering roles from a more inclusive perspective.

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As the Southern Metro Project Coordinator, I was able to engage a local disability service (Valorous Place) as our main volunteer group for the event, supported by myself, their carers, and City of Casey staff.

There were seven volunteers with disability and three carers in attendance. The volunteers had a variety of roles:

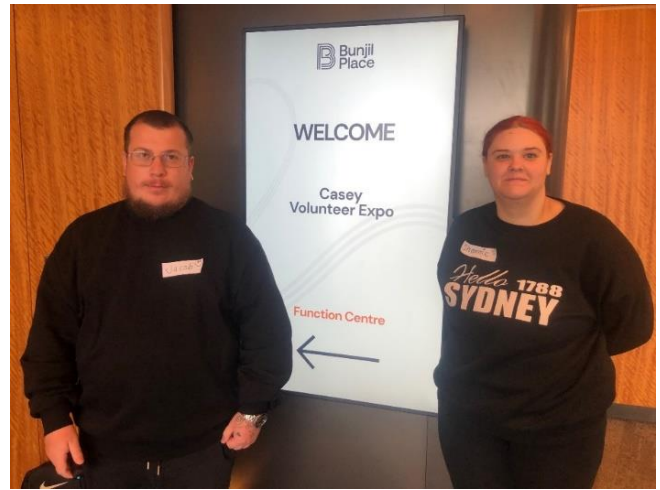
- Counting attendees
- Taking photos
- Talking to the volunteer-involving organisations
- Ensuring attendees completed the survey
- Having fun 😊

This one-off event enabled the group to learn new skills, utilise their communication skills, and show the volunteer-involving organisations in attendance that having a disability is not a barrier to volunteering.

The benefit was twofold with the group feeling included and supported to try new things throughout the day which then impacted how volunteer-involving organisations saw disability. The day was a great success, and it was an absolute joy to watch the group take their volunteering duties very seriously whilst having a lot of fun on the day.

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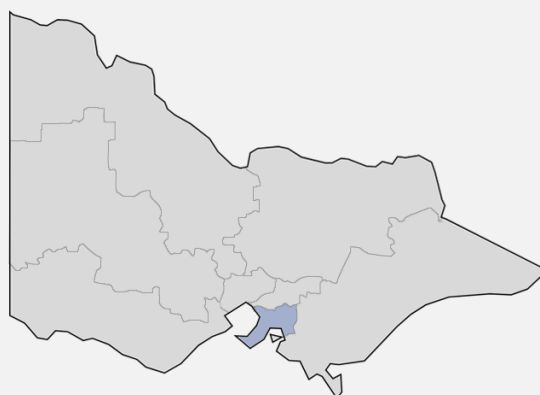
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**Author:** South East Volunteers

**Consortium region:** Southern Metro

**Date:** August 2023



This case study was produced with funding provided through the Volunteer Management Activity 2022-2026 grant. You may learn more about the program by visiting this website:

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



Funded by the Australian Government  
Department of Social Services.



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

*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.*