



VICTORIAN
volunteering
AWARDS 2026

Showcasing the commitment, diversity and impact of Victoria's volunteering community.

Nomination Guidelines

★ *Please read before nominating*

2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards

Nomination Guidelines

These guidelines contain information about the 2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards and how to submit a nomination.

The terms and conditions can also be found below. Please read the guidelines and ensure that you understand and agree to the terms and conditions prior to participating in the Awards.

It is important to read through all the Award categories before you start your nomination to ensure you enter the best category to fit your nominee.

In addition to these Guidelines, please check the dates on the Volunteering Victoria website for details on online Awards Information sessions. These are free to attend and provide tips and hints on completing your nomination, as well as the opportunity to ask questions.

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About the 2026 Volunteering Awards

The 2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards recognise and celebrate the impact and importance of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations in building resilient communities, services and connections across Victoria.

Key stages and dates

Nominations open	12.00pm Tuesday 17 March 2026
Nominations close	4.00pm Wednesday 27 May 2026
Assessment and selection	June – August 2026
Announcement of finalists	September 2026
Awards ceremony	October 2026

Information and support

Phone: 03 9052 4524

Email: awards@volunteeringvictoria.org.au

Website: www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/awards

Award categories open to nomination:

Note: The Premier's Volunteer and Organisation of the Year are chosen from the winners of each category. You cannot nominate directly for these awards.

Individual categories

Young Volunteer

This category recognises and celebrates the enthusiasm, initiative and leadership of young people in volunteering.

Open to individuals 25 years and younger, nominees will be inspiring young people who have made a remarkable impact through volunteering for people, a community, group, organisation, or cause in Victoria.

Volunteer Commitment

This category pays tribute to dedicated individuals with a sustained and substantial record of volunteering to support people, a community, group, organisation, or cause in Victoria.

It recognises the long-serving volunteers whose reliability and commitment underpins organisational and community outcomes and whose enthusiasm for volunteering is an inspiration to others.

Volunteer Leadership

This category recognises exceptional volunteers who lead, mentor, empower or coordinate other volunteers, outside of a paid professional capacity.

Nominees will have shown exceptional volunteer leadership and influence in support of people, a community, group, organisation, or cause in Victoria. They may have built effective volunteer networks and partnerships, contributed to volunteer engagement and retention or strengthened community connection.

Volunteer Impact

This category celebrates individuals whose volunteering has made a remarkable difference for people, a community, group, organisation, or cause in Victoria

Nominees may be volunteer innovators and pioneers or dedicated hard workers whose contributions have led to a demonstratable positive change.

Organisation categories

The organisation categories are open to organisations that meet the criteria below, **operate volunteers** in Victoria, and exist to benefit the community not to make money (i.e. are a Not-for-Profit organisation). See [Justice Connect](#) (link) for more information.

Examples of past nominees include:

- A charity based in another state with a volunteer team in Victoria
- An LGA or Statutory Authority (such as the emergency services)
- A Victorian incorporated association with volunteers in Victoria
- A hospital or community health service with volunteers in Victoria

Inclusive Volunteering

This category recognises organisations that reduce barriers to volunteering and champion equity, access and participation in order to broaden who can volunteer.

Nominees will have demonstrated inclusive and accessible volunteering practices that increase volunteer diversity and participation.

Volunteering Partnerships

This category recognises the importance of collaborations and partnerships to achieve positive outcomes for communities or causes in Victoria.

Nominees will have built and maintained purposeful, enduring partnerships that enabled them to make a significant and sustained difference, beyond what could have been achieved on their own.

Volunteering Innovation

This category recognises the role of adaptation and responsiveness to continually improve the volunteer experience or enhance supports for people, a community, group, or cause in Victoria.

Nominated organisations will have implemented new or adapted approaches to address challenges in volunteer engagement. This may include innovative use of digital tools, flexible and unique volunteering models, or new practices to improve volunteering in their organisation.

Grassroots Volunteering

This category recognises the positive impact achieved by small organisations with limited resources. It celebrates the community leadership and responsiveness of small grassroots organisations that may have provided important local services, led positive change, or supported connection in social and community life.

This award is only open to organisations that are entirely volunteer-led and operated, with a turnover of less than \$75,000 a year.

How to nominate

Nominations must be submitted through the nomination website at:

volunteeringvictoria.org.au/awards

If you cannot complete the nomination online, please contact Volunteering Victoria at awards@volunteeringvictoria.org.au or on (03) 9052 4524 for assistance.

Nominating an individual volunteer

To nominate a volunteer, you will be asked to:

1. Agree to the terms and conditions of the Awards
2. Confirm the nominee has agreed to be nominated
3. Provide the nominee's details:
 - Name
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Home suburb or town
 - Current organisation and role
 - Primary sector or interest
 - Age range (an estimate is OK)
 - If under 18, contact details for their parent or guardian
4. Carefully select the Award Category for the nomination
5. Answer the selection criteria for that category

Please note: Individuals cannot nominate themselves.

Nominating a community organisation

To nominate an organisation, you will be asked to:

1. Agree to the terms and conditions of the Awards
2. Confirm the organisation has agreed to be nominated
3. Provide the nominee's details:
 - Organisation name

- Confirm that the organisation is not-for-profit
 - ABN (or other registration number)
 - Organisation's primary sector or purpose
 - Organisation's office address
4. Provide contact details of a representative for the organisation (this cannot be you as the nominator):
 - Name
 - Position
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 5. Carefully select the Award Category for the nomination
 6. Answer the selection criteria for that category
 7. Upload a Letter of Support for the nomination
 - This could be from a volunteer, a partner organisation, a CEO and/or staff, testimonials, etc.
 8. Upload up to three (3) supporting documents (optional)
 - Note: Attachments may not be read by the judging panels. The details of your nomination should be fully explained in the selection criteria.
 - Attachments can be used to complement your nomination, for example, as evidence of having relevant policy documents, research, or evaluation reports.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria for Individual categories

- 1. Tell us about your nominee's volunteering role(s), including their key responsibilities and commitment. [Max 250 words]**

How do they give their time and what kind of activities do they perform as a volunteer?

- 2. Describe your nominee's accomplishments and the impact made on their community through their volunteering. [Max 250 words]**

What has the volunteer achieved, and how have they made a difference in the lives of others?

- 3. What personal strengths or qualities distinguish this volunteer? [Max 250 words]**

Explain the attributes or other qualities that make them an exceptional volunteer.

- 4. Why are you nominating this individual for the 2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards? [Max 250 words]**

Explain what makes this nominee stand out, focusing on their unique contribution to volunteering or the community.

Selection criteria for Organisation categories

- 1. Tell us about the organisation you are nominating and its volunteering program. [Max 250 words]**
Who or what does the organisation support and what kind of activities do volunteers perform?
- 2. Describe the impact the volunteer program has had on the cause or community. [Max 250 words]**
What outcomes or improvements have resulted from the organisation's volunteering initiatives?
- 3. What distinctive practices, values or initiatives enable the success of volunteer programs in this organisation? [Max 250 words]**
Explain the unique qualities that make your nominee an exceptional organisation.
- 4. Why are you nominating this organisation for the 2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards? [Max 250 words]**
Explain what makes this nominee stand out, focusing on their unique contribution to volunteering or the volunteering sector.

Terms and conditions

1. A person who nominates (nominator) an organisation or a volunteer for the 2026 Victorian Volunteering Awards (Awards) and submits a nomination is deemed to have accepted these terms.
2. Volunteering Victoria are the promoters of the Awards, in partnership with the State of Victoria acting through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the Department).

Eligibility

3. Members of the judging panel, employees and contractors of Volunteering Victoria or employees or appointed representatives of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing who are directly involved in conducting the awards, or their immediate families, are ineligible to be a nominator or a nominee.
4. Employees or appointed representatives of the Victorian Public Service are ineligible to be nominator or a nominee in their capacity as an employee or appointee.
5. Completed nominations must be received before 4.00pm Wednesday 27 May 2026. Nominations received outside these times will not be considered for the Awards and no responsibility will be accepted by Volunteering Victoria for early, lost, late, incomplete or incorrectly submitted nominations.
6. Nominations are online, completed by a nominator with one form per nominee, in a single category. Please contact Volunteering Victoria if additional support is required.
7. All nominations and materials submitted to Volunteering Victoria in connection with the Awards will become the property of Volunteering Victoria and will not be returned.

Individual volunteers

8. Individual nominees must be living Australian residents (temporary or permanent) and currently residing in Victoria who, during the period 17 March 2025 to 16 March 2026 (inclusive), have undertaken, or are currently undertaking, voluntary work or activities in Victoria.
9. All individual nominees' work or activity must satisfy Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering, being "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain" (see Volunteering Australia's website, currently <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/definition-of-volunteering/>).
10. An individual nominee cannot nominate themselves.

Volunteering organisations

11. Organisation nominees must deliver volunteer-involving programs in Victoria and, during the period 17 March 2025 to 16 March 2026 (inclusive), have delivered, or are currently delivering, the program, service or activity identified in the nomination.
12. Organisation nominees must exist primarily for the benefit of the community and operate as a not-for-profit.
13. A member of the organisation may submit the nomination. The nominator and the organisation's primary contact cannot be the same person.

Judging and selection

14. Volunteering Victoria reserves the right to verify the validity of nominations, allocate nominations into an alternative category and disqualify any nomination which, in the opinion of Volunteering Victoria or the Department, can be considered objectionable, potentially insulting or inflammatory or generally damaging to the goodwill or reputation of Volunteering, the Awards, Volunteering Victoria or the Victorian Government, or any nomination that is not compliant with these Terms and Conditions.
15. Volunteering Victoria may request further information or clarification from the nominator or nominee(s).
16. A judging panel will consider all eligible nominations and rate each against the description for the selected Award category. Nominations with the highest combined scores will be shortlisted.
17. Nominees who are shortlisted will be required to:
 - (a) confirm their acceptance of these Terms and Conditions by following the instructions set out in the email notification; and
 - (a) for individual nominees over 16 years of age, submit a completed National Police Check Consent Form with associated proof of identifying documents. The form outlines the requirements for obtaining a National Police Check and providing consent for such a check to be conducted.
18. If a nominee does not accept the Terms and Conditions or fails to submit a completed National Police Check Consent Form (if required), or does not do this in the required time, the nominee will be removed from the shortlist.
19. Award Recipients will be selected from shortlisted nominees who have, if required, undertaken a National Police Check. Consideration will be made as to the currency and seriousness of any offence(s), any known mitigating circumstances, and the nominee's subsequent contribution to Victoria.

20. Volunteering Victoria reserves the right to disqualify a shortlisted nominee if the results of their police check are deemed unsatisfactory by Volunteering Victoria or the Department with no right of review.
21. A selection panel will identify an outstanding candidate in each category. Recipients of the Volunteer of the Year and Organisation of the Year Awards will be selected from the shortlist of outstanding candidates.
22. Volunteering Victoria and the Victorian Government's decisions on all matters relating to the Awards are final and no correspondence or discussion will be entered into.

Awards and recognition

23. All eligible nominees will receive official written recognition of their nomination and their service by Volunteering Victoria.
24. All shortlisted nominees (Finalists) will be invited to attend the Awards ceremony to be presented with a certificate of recognition.
25. All shortlisted nominees (Finalists) in the individual categories will also receive a badge of recognition.
26. Attendee numbers are restricted by venue size and the number of finalists.
 - Finalists will be advised the number of guests they are eligible to bring.
 - Award Finalists under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
 - Nominators of Award Finalists will also be invited to attend the Awards ceremony.
27. One Finalist in each category will be selected by the panel to receive the overall award for that category.
28. The Premier's Volunteer of the Year and the Organisation of the Year will be selected from the Category Award recipients and announced at the Awards ceremony.
 - The Volunteer of the Year Award Winner will be invited to nominate one organisation of their choosing to receive a donation.
 - The chosen not-for-profit organisation must have operations in Victoria.
29. All travel costs associated with the nominator and Award Recipient (and their guests, if applicable) attending the Awards ceremony and other ancillary costs are the responsibility of the nominator and Award recipient (and their guests, if applicable).

Nominator's consent

30. By submitting a nomination, each nominator confirms consent, and has the consent of any person whose personal information is contained in a nomination, to provide that information to Volunteering Victoria, and for Volunteering Victoria to disclose that personal information to other parties including, but not limited to, the selection panel and the Victorian Government, for the purposes of conducting the Awards.
31. Each nominator consents to Volunteering Victoria and the Department to using the nominator's statements, name, likeness, image, voice and/or participation in the Awards (including photograph, film and/or recording of the same) in any media for an unlimited period without further notification, remuneration or compensation for the purpose of promoting, publicising or marketing the Awards (including any outcome).

If the nominator does not agree, the nominator must not provide their personal information or the personal information of anyone else and may be unable to submit a nomination for the Awards.

Nominee's consent

32. By accepting their nomination, the nominee(s) (or if under the age of 18, the nominee's parent or legal guardian) consents to:

- (a) Volunteering Victoria and the Department using their nomination statements, name, likeness, image, voice and/or participation in the Awards (including photograph, film and/or recording of the same) in any media for an unlimited period without further notification, remuneration or compensation for the purpose of promoting, publicising or marketing the Awards (including any outcome); and
- (b) Volunteering Victoria and the Victorian Government, using their personal information, and for Volunteering Victoria or the Victorian Government to disclose their personal information to other parties including, but not limited to, judges and the selection panel, for the purposes of conducting the Awards.

If the nominee does not agree, the nominee must not accept their nomination and will be ineligible for an Award.

33. By submitting a National Police Check Consent Form (if required), the nominee will be consenting to Volunteering Victoria and the Victorian Government being provided with the results of their National Police Check for the purposes of conducting the Awards.

Privacy statement

34. Consistent with Victorian Government policy and legislation, Volunteering Victoria and the Department endorse fair information handling practices. Personal, health and sensitive information supplied will be used by Volunteering Victoria, the Victorian Government, the judging panels, and the Award ceremony venue for the purposes of considering nominations, selecting Award recipients and providing the Award Ceremony. Information will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose without the express consent of the person to whom the information relates, unless otherwise required or permitted by law.

35. Personal and health information supplied as a part of the nomination will be used by Volunteering Victoria, the Victorian Government, the judging panel, and the award ceremony venue for the purposes of considering nominations, safety screening, selecting award recipients, and conducting the award ceremony.

36. Personal and health information will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose without the express consent of the person to whom the information relates, unless otherwise required or permitted by law.

Privacy policy

37. Volunteering Victoria's Privacy Policy sets out how Volunteering Victoria collects, uses, holds and discloses personal information. Volunteering Victoria complies with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth,) where required to do so, in respect of the collection, management and disclosure of personal information. Volunteering Victoria's Privacy Policy is located at <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-12-Privacy-Policy.pdf>

38. The Department's Privacy Policy sets out information about how the nominator or nominee(s) may access and seek correction of their personal information or complain about a breach of their privacy, and how the Department will deal with that complaint. The Department's Privacy Policy is located at <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/privacy-policy>.

Liability

39. It is intended and agreed that the conduct of the Awards shall not give rise to any legal obligations or duties, valid or enforceable in any way against Volunteering Victoria or the Victorian Government.