



THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION 2017 CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

The Power of Association Conference Communique captures the significant learnings and directions arising out of the Volunteering Victoria 2017 State Conference. The Conference itself was another step in our collective journey to galvanise and advance the volunteering sector in Victoria.

The Communique informs our collective work going forward. It signals our collective priorities to government, organisations and individuals with a stake in volunteering, and to the Victorian community as a whole. It is a tool to be used to demonstrate the importance and value of volunteering, and to empower leaders and managers of volunteers, and us as the peak body for volunteering.

This Communique will also guide Volunteering Victoria's strategic priorities for volunteering in Victoria. It will inform our Strategic Plan, Manifesto, State Budget Submission 2018-19, professional development programs and much more.

Conference attendees affirm the following vision for Victoria's volunteering sector.

- We are committed to:**
- **Actualising the highest standards of leadership and stewardship**
 - **Advocating for and promoting the value and repositioning of volunteering**
 - **Building on and leveraging the collaboration inherent in the volunteering sector**

We are committed to actualising the highest standards of leadership and stewardship

Leadership is not a rank or a title. Good leaders underpin a resilient, sustainable and productive volunteer workforce.

- As responsible and accountable leaders who are continuously improving and evolving, we aspire to provide safe, effective and rewarding volunteering opportunities. In partnership, we want volunteers to have the opportunity to be the best they can be and to do the best work of their life, paid or unpaid.
- We are speaking up and speaking out. Sometimes this means we have to be bold and courageous and we might have to *relearn* how to make our voices heard clearly.
- Leaders and managers of volunteers are catalysts for change and provide the environment for volunteers to thrive and to be agents of change. Volunteers are the key to saving the planet and bringing about social change. Activist volunteers are game changers and a talent pool of our future leaders.
- We are responsible for, and self-aware of, our own values and assumptions. We are mindful and understanding of our own unconscious cultural biases and take action to ensure our programs, policies and practices are inclusive.
- Leaders and managers of volunteers are responsible for ensuring volunteers deliver for the common good of the organisation or community. We think about our volunteers as a target market. We provide them with pathways to make a meaningful contribution to achieve the purpose of our volunteering effort, to be safe, have fun, share their experience and to advocate for the value of volunteering.



We are committed to advocating for and promoting the value and repositioning of volunteering

We accept the challenge to reshape the future of volunteering. Volunteering makes a very significant economic, social and cultural contribution to our community, yet volunteering, leaders of volunteers and volunteers are often not valued in a meaningful way. Volunteering needs to be repositioned so its true value and contribution is recognised and supported by everyone. Through the 2017 Volunteering Management Progress Report (available at www.volpro.net) we know that a vast majority of organisations will need volunteers in the future. We recognise this as an opportunity to influence positive change.

- We will make volunteering famous. We will tell the story of volunteering. To illustrate the collective impact of volunteering, we will focus on our notable achievements, demonstrate consistent behaviours and be talked about positively by a range of people. We will tell stories about how volunteering changes lives, our communities and the world.
- Volunteering will be a well-defined brand so that people know what it stands for.
- Volunteering empowers and transforms individuals and communities. We win hearts (through emotional connection) as well as minds (through our functional abilities). We capture imagination in effective ways – with stories that stick.
- We recognise that language is important and powerful. We will change the way we talk about volunteering so its power and importance is acknowledged.
- We will be louder and prouder about our competency, professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness as leaders and managers of volunteers.
- We will also encourage our volunteers to be loud and proud about their work and contributions – we will not accept the statement “I am just a volunteer”.

We are committed to building on and leveraging the collaboration inherent in the volunteering sector

The volunteering sector reflects the diversity of the Victorian community and is critical for the successful delivery of many services, programs and activities we take for granted, and which contribute to the wellbeing and richness of the Victorian community.

- We will collaborate to be a more powerful, effective, productive and successful voice for volunteering.
- We will reimagine collaborative partnerships and build communities of practice from not for profits, the business community and government.
- We will use technology in innovative ways in new models of volunteering, and to engage new cohorts of volunteers.
- We will celebrate and embrace diversity.
- We will engage with our volunteers in meaningful ways. We will give them a voice and an opportunity to influence what affects them and the impact they have on the world.

This communique represents the collective view of the Volunteering Victoria 2017 State Conference delegates.

With special thanks to all conference delegates and our sponsors for their generosity and commitment to championing and building a vibrant and resilient volunteering community in Victoria (further information can be found here: <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/conference-2017>).