

Media Release

Thursday 8 February 2018



Volunteer Victoria's State Budget Submission 2018-19

Volunteering Victoria submitted its *2018-19 State Budget Submission* to the Victorian Government today. There are many challenges for the volunteering sector, and opportunities and ways in which the Victorian Government could support the thousands of individuals and organisations that make up the sector.

Volunteering contributes to communities across Victoria. Volunteers are crucial to enabling many of our not-for-profit organisations to fulfil their mission. The social, economic and environmental benefits are numerous and flow not just to local communities but also to local governments, the Victorian Government, and support national and international goals too.

A key priority for the volunteering sector is to invest in the existing place-based infrastructure to support volunteering through Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs). VSOs are a vital part of the ecosystems that facilitate volunteering locally, connecting volunteers to organisations, and providing passionate and professional support to regional networks, while often being under resourced and facing financial uncertainty.

The Victorian Government could bolster the existing place-based infrastructure through VSOs to maximise and leverage the impact of volunteers, increase the reach of volunteer-involving organisations and the effectiveness of volunteer managers.

In our submission we highlight the following areas and outline opportunities to support portfolios of the Victorian Government and organisations in the volunteering sector:

- Communities transitioning through economic change (particularly in regional Victoria)
- Supporting people with disabilities through the volunteering experience and enhancing the disability workforce (through the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- Intercultural engagement and connected communities through multicultural and refugee volunteering
- Maximising the potential for the breadth of services delivered through local government volunteering programs
- Thought leadership and research into the contribution and impact of informal volunteering
- Activating and benefiting the Victorian Public Service through employee volunteering programs.

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Whether it is reducing isolation and disadvantage in a local government program; or building social inclusiveness and connectedness through opportunities for disabled, multicultural and international student communities, volunteering programs play an enormous role to strengthen the social fabric of Victoria.

Volunteers are also passionate about conservation, acting environmental stewards in well run volunteer programs which benefit us all and generations to come.

The volunteering workforce itself plays an enormous and important economic role by augmenting and empowering organisations across Victoria to deliver on their objectives. There is a strong business case to invest in volunteering which is often overlooked as a budget priority, despite investment in volunteering providing enormous returns on investment and bringing qualitative benefits to communities that differs from paid employment.

We welcome any feedback and opportunities to collaborate on any of the initiatives proposed in this submission or other ways we can support the Victorian Government and the volunteering sector.

For all enquiries, please contact

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About Volunteering Victoria

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering. Our vision is for resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

Though our dynamic and transformative leadership, we work to promote and build a vibrant, prosperous and strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable.

Volunteering Victoria is a member-based organisation, supported by a dedicated and highly professional team of staff and volunteers. From broad sectors such as social services, health, sport, culture, emergency services and local government, our membership reflects the diversity of people and organisations that work with and support volunteers in our community.