

A council's journey towards best practice volunteer management

Wyndham City is a local government organisation located on the western edge of metropolitan Melbourne. The City of Wyndham covers an area of 542km² and features 27.4km of coastline on Port Phillip, along with considerable pastoral and intensive vegetable farming areas.

The City of Wyndham has an estimated resident population of 241,902 (2017). Between 2012 and 2017 the City of Wyndham experienced one of the largest increases in population in Australia. In Victoria, the City of Wyndham had the second largest percentage increase in population of all Local Government areas and the largest volume of change, adding over 62,500 people to the population in 5 years.

There are many volunteer positions at Wyndham, extending to Visitor Services, Aged and Disability programs, Library Services and Community Centres. Wyndham City is committed to meeting best practice standards for volunteer programs and providing a collaborative, supportive and safe working environment for volunteers. An internal audit in 2017 of their volunteer management practices allowed them to evaluate and assess progress and develop further actions to aim higher for excellence in volunteer management.

By following best practice, volunteer managers feel confident and supported in their roles. This results in volunteers having clear boundaries, suitable supervision and appropriate induction and training. This flows down to the recipients of the service, but also allows the council to demonstrate what best practice looks like for other organisations in our community, empowering them to commit to following the National Standards in Volunteer Involvement.

Increase in population, creates many challenges for the council. People appear to be increasingly time-poor, face full time job insecurity (casual hours) and particularly in a City of Wyndham context, spend many hours travelling to and from work into the Melbourne CBD. This reduces people's capacity to engage in structured, regular volunteer roles.

Winning the Excellence award has helped the council raise the profile of volunteering across all areas of Council and is particularly timely in supporting work in developing a 5-year Wyndham Volunteering Strategy, which is presently being developed.

Congratulations Wyndham City on their well-deserved Excellence Award at the 2018 Volunteering Victoria State Awards.

