



Youth Ready Assessment

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Are you hoping to involve more young volunteers in your environmental projects? The Youth Ready Assessment and Guide will help you to increase participation of independent volunteers in the teens and twenties age range. If you are involving children under the age of 18, you'll need to meet the legal obligation of your organisation to comply with Victoria's compulsory Child Safe Standards - the Commission for Children and Young People has an Implementation and Action Plan Tool to help.

Check and assess how well your projects appeal to young people across five focus areas – then use the Youth Ready Guide to learn about best practice suggestions in each category and make an action plan.

This Assessment and the Youth Ready Guide were developed in partnership between Volunteering Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, with input from YACVic (Youth Affairs Council Victoria).



Alive Outside program (Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc)

This Assessment Tool should be used in conjunction with the Youth Ready Guide.

Cover photo credit: Turn the Tide Volunteers, Phillip Island (Dale Rodgers).

Youth Ready Assessment

Focus Area 1 – Designing projects with young people

The first step in encouraging more young people to join your projects is thinking about what motivates young people to volunteer, and what you can do to make joining your projects easy and achievable.

	We do this well	We are OK at this	This needs improvement	We're not currently doing this
We involve young people to review our activities and evaluate their appeal to youth volunteers				
We look at options for developing new and different projects or activities that are designed by young people, for young people. We take their advice on the projects and causes that are most important to them, and the best ways to structure and present opportunities to encourage young people to join in				
We consider our project timing, including semester breaks and exam periods that may impact on young volunteers' ability to join in				
We consider transport options as part of project design, especially for young people who may be relying on public transport or lifts				
We offer short and longer projects, including taster sessions for new volunteers				

Youth Ready Assessment

Focus area 2 – Inspiring young people to volunteer

Next, think about the way you describe and promote your projects, making sure that your youth appeal is high.

	We do this well	We are OK at this	This needs improvement	We're not currently doing this
Our promotional material (website, newsletter, social media) includes general information about what volunteers do and how projects work (e.g. describing activities and a typical on-ground project)				
We have messaging specifically to attract young people – we promote the broader benefits of volunteering like making friends, gaining work experience and transferable skills, recognition for being a volunteer, and the mental and physical health benefits of time spent volunteering. The photos we use show young people as part of our projects. We're clear up front about any age restrictions that apply				
We involve young people in recruitment, equipping them with the tools and information needed to present volunteer opportunities to peers at their school or with other youth clubs or networks				
We use a range of social media channels for recruitment: e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok; and we make links with other youth-friendly organisations to post to their audiences too				
We explain the bigger environmental picture as part of our project descriptions, such as how volunteering will help improve habitats or address climate change				

Youth Ready Assessment

Focus area 3 – Registration and booking (keeping in touch)

You will attract more youth volunteers if your registration and booking processes use tools which suit young people, and systems that young people expect.

	We do this well	We are OK at this	This needs improvement	We're not currently doing this
Getting in contact with us is simple and easy. Potential volunteers can contact us in one step by texting us, or through our website or via social media without needing to call or email				
We have information prepared and ready to send straight back to interested volunteers				
Making a booking to join a project is quick and easy, using one or more of the following options: by text, online through our website or social media, or by using an online event booking platform				
We make use of text messaging to confirm information or bookings to volunteers				
We keep in contact with our volunteers via newsletter and social media updates				

Youth Ready Assessment

Focus area 4 – Being welcoming and inclusive

Consider how you can make your organisation inclusive and welcoming to young people. Expectations and norms change over time – so it's important to review and update practices.

	We do this well	We are OK at this	This needs improvement	We're not currently doing this
We have a welcome process for new volunteers to introduce them to everyone				
We offer training or introductory sessions for new volunteers to help them to feel comfortable				
We have youth representation on our committee or board, or an advisory role for a youth member				
If a Traditional Owner or custodian is present, we invite them to give a Welcome to Country. If a Traditional Owner is not available, an Acknowledgement of Country is made instead				
We acknowledge or celebrate external events where we can, such as Pride Week, NAIDOC, and other events that celebrate diversity in our community				
Our group understands that it's important not to make assumptions about gender based on appearance. We practice use of personal pronouns in all our communications, written and verbal				

Youth Ready Assessment

We do this well

We are OK at this

This needs improvement

We're not currently doing this

Focus area 5 – Outlining benefits to boost youth appeal

Getting environmental projects done is key, but some extra steps from your group can help young people see the benefits of volunteering and encourage them to join.

	We do this well	We are OK at this	This needs improvement	We're not currently doing this
We offer references (letter or being a personal referee) to every volunteer				
We identify the key transferable skills that can be gained through volunteering, and describe them as part of our volunteer recruitment information				
We offer LinkedIn recommendations (and we have a process to do this)				
We provide certificates and recognition to thank our volunteers				
We plan events or activities such as a morning tea or social get togethers to recognise milestones in our projects, and achievements by our volunteers				

Assess your results and focus your efforts with the Youth Ready Guide

Now that you've completed your Youth Ready Assessment, review your answers for each of the five focus areas above and choose 1-2 to concentrate on. In the Youth Ready Guide, you will find action planning opportunities which align to each of these focus areas.

To help you choose where to focus your efforts, you might like to consider:

- Is there a focus area you are doing particularly well in? Congratulations, celebrate your success and capitalise on your strengths by embedding your actions as standard process.
- Consider the focus areas that need attention or improvement. It can be hard to achieve everything at once, so choose 1-2 focus areas or a handful of actions which resonate with your group. You'll find you can make some quick wins, as well as some longer-term plans to help your organisation become more youth friendly.