

State of Volunteering in Victoria 2020



Executive Summary

There are 2.3 million (or 42.1% of) Victorians over 15 years of age who volunteer in Victoria.

This includes people who volunteer formally with organisations and those that do not have an affiliation with an organisation but contribute informally to their communities. Volunteers contribute on average 223.9 hours a year or 4.3 hours every week with their fellow Victorians.

The data for this report was collected across April-June 2020 when the impact of COVID-19 altered the work, travel and daily pattern of life across the entire State (see Appendix D). This allowed us to examine both the 'usual' pattern of volunteering (undertaken in the 12 months of 2019) and to understand the initial impact of COVID-19 on volunteering behaviours.

Across the 12 months of 2019, the value of volunteering to Victoria was \$58.1 billion dollars. This includes the \$19.4 billion it would cost to replace the labour that volunteers contribute to Victoria as well as \$8.2 billion in contributions to Victoria's Gross State Product.

This represents a net return of approximately \$3.70 on every dollar invested.

To demonstrate the scale of the volunteering sector we compared the cost to replace voluntary work in Victoria with the total compensation of employees in the government and private sectors. The volunteering sector is over one and a half times larger than the Victorian government sector and nearly half the size of the private sector.

As phenomenal as this contribution is, it is also costing Victorian volunteers on average over \$1,700 a year to volunteer. On average, volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) are reimbursing only one dollar for every eight dollars a volunteer spends on volunteering. This means on top of their valuable time, volunteers are donating nearly \$6.70 per hour to volunteer after reimbursements.

This report outlines the hidden costs of volunteering, for both volunteers and VIOs. These findings should guide VIOs and governments on how to reduce the financial burden being placed on volunteers, which has the potential to exclude many who cannot afford the act of volunteering.

Volunteers are on the front lines, delivering services for communities in a wide variety of contexts, in not-for-profit organisations, private sector organisations and for governments. We found that nearly a quarter (24.7%) of all responding VIOs engaged volunteers in delivering services funded by the Victorian Government.

The value of volunteering to Victoria was

\$58.1 BILLION IN 2019



Photo 1: Grading indigenous plants for restoration projects (Bass Coast Landcare Network).

2.3 MILLION

42.1% of Victorians over 15 years of age who volunteer in Victoria

\$3.70 ON EVERY \$1 INVESTED

Volunteering is significantly more than donated time. Rather, this report shows an increasingly professionalised workforce, with leaders of volunteers actively developing the skills and careers of Victorians through volunteering. There is further potential through volunteering to contribute even more to Victorian productivity and community wellbeing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted volunteerism in Victoria. There was a sharp drop in volunteering rates in the early pandemic period of research. The volunteering participation rate was cut in half (50.2% decline) and there was a net decline in volunteering hours of almost two thirds (64.1%). At the same time, VIOs in the sector described a lot of adaptation and transition to new models of service delivery and engaging volunteers.

Socio-economic impact (in \$millions)

Costs (\$/M)

Direct costs

Volunteer expenses	3,876.3	
VIO expenses	4,807.7	8,684.0

Opportunity costs

Volunteer time	7,139.8		
Volunteering investments	78.2	7,218.0	15,902.0

Benefits (\$/M)

Commercial benefits

Producers' surplus	1,239.9		
Productivity premium	30,520.5	31,760.5	

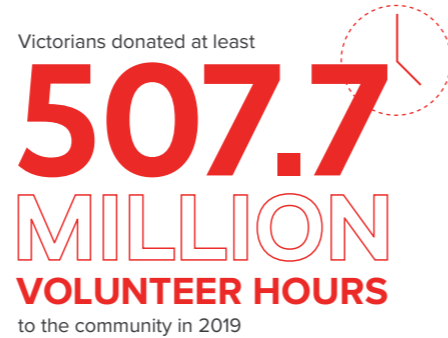
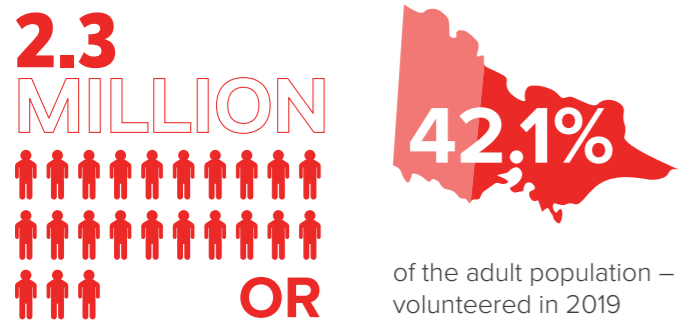
Civic benefits

Employment	5,018.0		
Taxes	1,931.6		
Volunteer labour	19,358.9	26,308.5	58,069.0
			42,167.0

Benefit: cost ratio 3.7 : 1

Key Findings

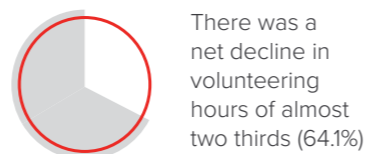
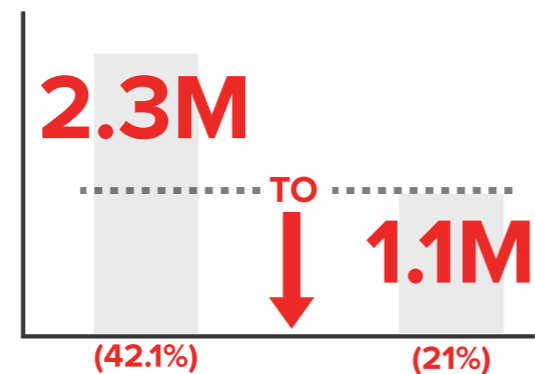
Characteristics of volunteering in Victoria in 2019



Within the set of Victorian volunteers, it was found that:



The initial COVID-19 impact in April-May 2020 saw a **50.2%** decline in the volunteering participation rate from



Volunteers donated an average of

223.9 HOURS PER PERSON

This equates to

18.7 HOURS EVERY MONTH OR 4.3 HOURS EVERY WEEK



Volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs)

78.9%

About three quarters of all organisations (78.9%) reported that they had volunteers over 65 years old

74.4%

74.4% of all organisations stated they had volunteers who either don't work or don't work full-time

42.9%

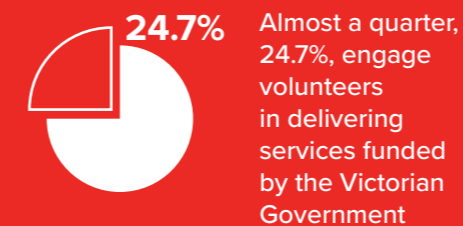
42.9% of organisations stated they had volunteers who worked full-time

35.4%

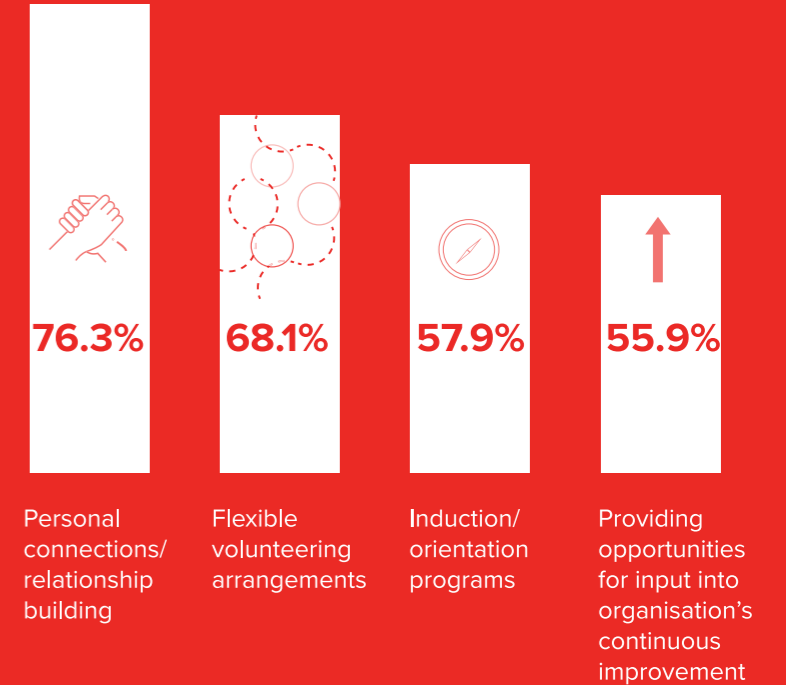
of organisations have seen an increase in the need for volunteer training across the last three years

89.3%

of organisations predicted that they would have the same or more volunteers in three years' time



The typical methods reported used to motivate or retain volunteers were



The most frequently cited strategies organisations used to recruit volunteers were



62.5% of organisations noted people prefer occasional/flexible hours for volunteering

37.5% stated people preferred to volunteer regular/fixed hours

36.2%

Only 36.2% of organisations indicated they used reimbursement of volunteers' expenses to motivate or retain volunteers

22%

and 22% stated they had seen a drop in the levels of volunteers claiming expenses across the last three years

Message from Minister Donnellan



There's no doubt that volunteering adds immense value to Victorian communities, as well as providing many benefits for volunteers themselves.

It's an act that fosters social connection and inclusion and strengthens the fabric of our society. It can also be a pathway to finding employment.

Through the State of Volunteering 2020 report, we now have an insight and a measure of the scale of that contribution. We have had around 2.3 million people in one way or another give their time and energy and goodwill to undertake activities that help other Victorians.

This year we have also endured not one but two states emergencies – the bushfires and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In these extraordinary difficult times, Victorians have needed more support than ever – and so often volunteers have risen to challenge and stood on the frontline. The passion, commitment and care has been inspiring to see.

Whether it is volunteering for an organisation that provides healthcare, serving in emergency services, sorting through donated goods at a charity store, or helping out more informally by lending a hand at your local footy club or even just running an errand for a neighbour – this report is a also reminder that volunteering takes so many forms, and all of them are in their

“The passion, commitment and care has been inspiring to see.”

own way vital.

The Victorian Government recognises all the important work done behind the scenes to make volunteering happen. That's why we are developing a Victorian Volunteer strategy to better support these activities, and to make it easier for Victorians to support each other. In partnership with Volunteering Victoria we have also recently launched We Volunteer, an online portal which enables people wanting to volunteer to link up with organisations who need the help.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Victoria's volunteers for their contributions to our Victorian people, communities, culture and environment.

The Hon. Luke Donnellan

Minister for Child Protection

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers.

Message from Parliamentary Secretary Carbines

The insights of this report will help the Victorian Government better understand the most effective ways to support our volunteer organisations across the state, and to strengthen the sector.



This report is the first of its kind in Victoria and it is an important step in our government developing the first Victorian Volunteer Strategy which will guide future policy and investments.

As Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers I understand that recruiting and retaining volunteers are common challenges facing volunteer managers on a daily basis. It has been a consistent theme during our regional consultations across Victoria in late 2019 and earlier this year.

This report also details the impacts of the early stages of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and how difficult it has been for the volunteering sector to continue to operate given the health restrictions. Volunteer leaders across Victoria have demonstrated remarkable resilience and the ability to adapt to new models of virtual and safe volunteering which has helped keep our communities connected and safe.

For this substantial contribution we say thank you. From fighting bushfires, to delivering vital services during the pandemic, to teaching people to video call their loves ones, your efforts have not gone unnoticed. It is our job to support and strengthen the

volunteering community so that people can do what they do best – which is to lend a helping hand to those who need it.

I look forward to continuing to work with Volunteering Victoria and engaging with the volunteer sector to help build a stronger and more accessible volunteer community.

Anthony Carbines MP

Parliamentary Secretary for
Carers and Volunteers

Foreword

from Volunteering Victoria



The best public investments and public policies are driven by good data, and here we can point to some extremely encouraging findings

I also commend this report to the volunteering sector on behalf of the Volunteering Victoria Board.

Volunteering is more than a passion. It is a key ingredient for active and resilient communities. The benefits of volunteering do not just flow to Victorian communities, but also to the volunteer. There are well-established mental and physical health benefits of volunteering for volunteers, not to mention increases in social supports and opportunities for skills development and career progression.

That is why the findings of this research are so significant. Our sector needs to know, in robust, defensible research, what the motivations, barriers, costs and benefits to volunteering are in our State.

This is a report that the whole volunteering sector can be proud of. Robust research does not happen in a vacuum, and I want to thank the many individuals and organisations that played a role to contribute to this report. By providing valuable survey information, participating on a reference group, or contributing your volunteer stories, many Victorians played a part in making this happen.

This initiative is a key accomplishment of our strong advocacy agenda for the volunteering sector. Advocacy is one of the key pillars of our work. With these findings we are more empowered to raise our voice about the value of our sector. For leaders of volunteers, this research is powerful proof of the value of your work and the contribution of your volunteers.

Building on past work and this research, the Volunteering Victoria Board views the volunteering sector as going from strength to strength. As a community we are facing enormous challenges, but we continue to adapt and deliver. This research provides insights into how Volunteering Victoria as a peak body can support the sector to even better enable our members and other volunteer-involving organisations to make the greatest impact possible.

Bronwen Clark

Board Chair



Photo 2: St John Ambulance Victoria volunteer Allison at a bushfire deployment.



As leaders of volunteers, committed to ongoing professional development, it is incumbent on us to understand the motivations, barriers and needs of our volunteers.

This report helps our sector to do that more effectively.

Volunteering is a unique and powerful form of civic activism. Victorians volunteer for a variety of reasons such as to have fun, to connect with communities, to progress their careers, to protect the environment and sometimes quite literally to save lives.

The current pace of change and challenges to our way of life are dramatic. As always, great events and deep structural changes will present disruptions to our volunteering community, but also opportunities to change the ways we do things. Armed with the best possible information, together we can be the most inclusive, empowered and effective sector possible.

Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations are right there on the front lines, directly engaging our communities and being civically active. This research is another powerful reminder just how critical our sector is and how important it is for the Victorian Government to value and engage with our community.

Volunteering Victoria and the volunteering sector have been advocating for this report over the past years. Our findings are a reminder that the return on investment in volunteering, for government and for organisations, is enormous. Moreover, this report should be of interest to the private sector too, as residents overwhelmingly report improved productivity because of their volunteering.

This report positions the volunteering sector, alongside the private sector and the public sector, as irreplaceable. Now is a pivotal time to direct focus to our sector, to develop sound strategy and to make wise investments to get the absolute most out of volunteering for Victorian communities.

Scott Miller
Chief Executive

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Abbreviations used in this report

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
GSP	Gross State Product
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RIOM	Regional Input–Output Matrix
VIO	Volunteer-involving Organisation

Introduction

The volunteering sector has long been an enabler and driver of equitable growth in Australia.

As such, it has made a significant contribution to community wellbeing. Beyond the altruistic nature of each volunteering act, volunteering is a vibrant source of knowledge, cultural and recreational exchange, and it enriches the lives of countless Australians.

The extent of this contribution cannot be fully captured in financial statements, for at the heart of any public investment decision is this basic question: **does the planned activity (volunteering) lead to a net increase in community wellbeing?**

For our State, we are interested in the question: to what extent does the volunteering sector improve the lives of all Victorians, and how can more well-informed investment and management decisions maximise this impact?

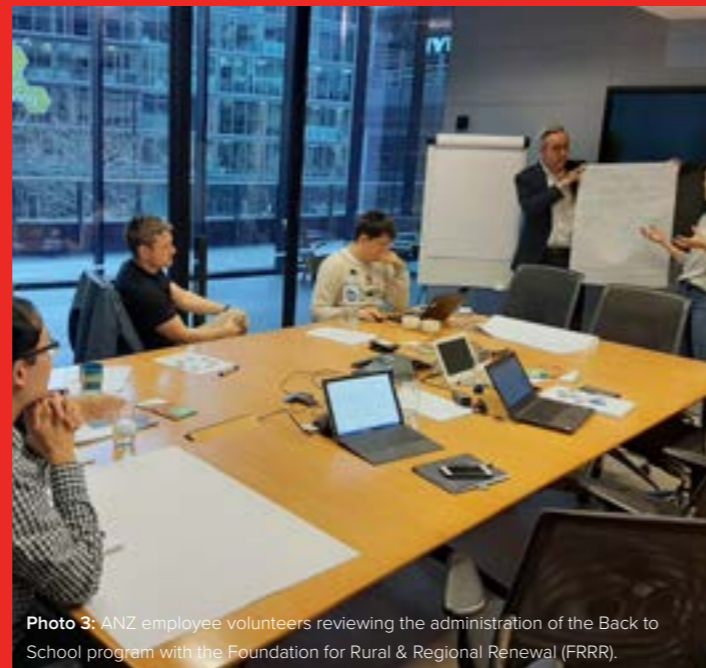


Photo 3: ANZ employee volunteers reviewing the administration of the Back to School program with the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR).

“Volunteering is a vibrant source of knowledge, cultural and recreational exchange, and it enriches the lives of countless Australians.”

This report's findings are numerous and have the potential to significantly influence the strategic direction of Victoria's volunteering sector by providing:

- quantification of the social, economic and cultural contribution that volunteering makes to Victorian volunteers, businesses and the broader community
- robust social and economic information and advice to assist stakeholders in making strategic decisions about future resource allocation
- benchmarking of the outcomes of volunteering against which to measure future performance and the impact of any strategic changes
- comparative data on the outcomes of volunteering in Victoria, the impact of a crisis and the barriers to participation, and
- evidence-based data for informed decision-making by Volunteering Victoria, Government, VIOs and other key stakeholders.

The economic assessment of volunteering has typically focused on quantifying the market replacement cost of volunteers (in other words, how much it would cost if we had to pay all volunteers). Yet although replacement cost analysis is a necessary step towards resolving the social wellbeing question, it does not distinguish costs from benefits. Similarly, such studies cannot be used to show the economy-wide impact of volunteering-induced expenditure; nor can they show the effects of volunteering on less tangible community outcomes such as productivity, civics, and individual wellbeing. Hence, standalone replacement cost and economic impact analyses alone usually fail to influence mature policy decisions.

Cost-benefit analysis is now the government-preferred approach to

evaluating policy choices. A cost-benefit approach is required to identify the opportunity cost associated with expenditure, as well as the costs and benefits that may accrue to individuals, the community and the broader society.

In this report we consider the characteristics of volunteers, volunteering and volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), and we apply the cost-benefit methodology to describe the social, cultural and economic value of volunteering in Victoria. The period of data collection means that we are also uniquely able to contrast 'normal' volunteering (2019) with the impacts of the first, statewide COVID-19 restrictions (April-June 2020, see Appendix D) on the characteristics of volunteering.

Methodology

The methodology used in this report was first undertaken in Tasmania in 2014, in Western Australia in 2015 and again in Tasmania in 2019. Iterations of the method have also been successfully applied to economy-wide valuations of public-private goods such as sport and physical recreation, live music, the Arts, and major events.

Volunteering is defined here as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.' This definition was developed by Volunteering Australia in 2015 and adopted by all states and territories.

In this report, volunteering includes both:

- » formal volunteering where someone volunteers with an organisation, association, club, corporation or government, and
- » informal volunteering where an individual is not associated with another entity, but still gives time for the common good to the community.

The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering is described using the following Model of Value Creation.¹

The Model of Value Creation

Every activity has its inputs, which come at a cost. These inputs include the direct costs of the goods and services that enable the activity, and the costs of consumption that might otherwise have been spent on alternative activities (for example, the cost of the time an individual spends performing the activity, or the otherwise idle infrastructure they demand for its performance).

From the investment of these current and opportunity costs, we create an activity – in this instance, volunteering. This activity, in turn, may alter (for better or worse) one or all of three states of capital for the participating individual.

The three states of **volunteering capital** extend Pierre Bourdieu's² classic forms (Figure 1) to include:



Economic capital: the money, assets and property created by volunteering



Social capital: individuals' levels of happiness, trust, and engagement with others impacted by volunteering



Cultural capital: individuals' health, wellbeing, knowledge and skills that are improved by volunteering and can be used for social gain.

¹ Previous iterations of the Model and a more detailed discussion of its theoretical underpinnings can be found in Volunteering Tasmania's State of Volunteering Report (2014) and Volunteering Western Australia's Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering (2015).

² Pierre Bourdieu (1985) *The Forms of Capital*.

Capital of any kind, however, is a latent attribute. It is only when the potential of capital is expressed for individuals and the community that it has utility, or value. Tangible and measurable expressions of capital include changes to commercial and civic net worth through enlarged (or diminished) profits and avoided (or added) costs.³

Explanatory note: Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between totals and the sums of the component items. Proportions, ratios and other calculated figures shown in this report have been calculated using unrounded estimates and may be different from, but are more accurate than, calculations based on the rounded estimates.

This report therefore describes:

- » financial modelling to estimate the direct costs of volunteering
- » revealed preference methods to estimate opportunity costs
- » statistical analysis to scope volunteering activity
- » input-output analysis to estimate commercial and civic benefits, and
- » econometric analysis to systematically quantify the costs avoided by the community through volunteering.

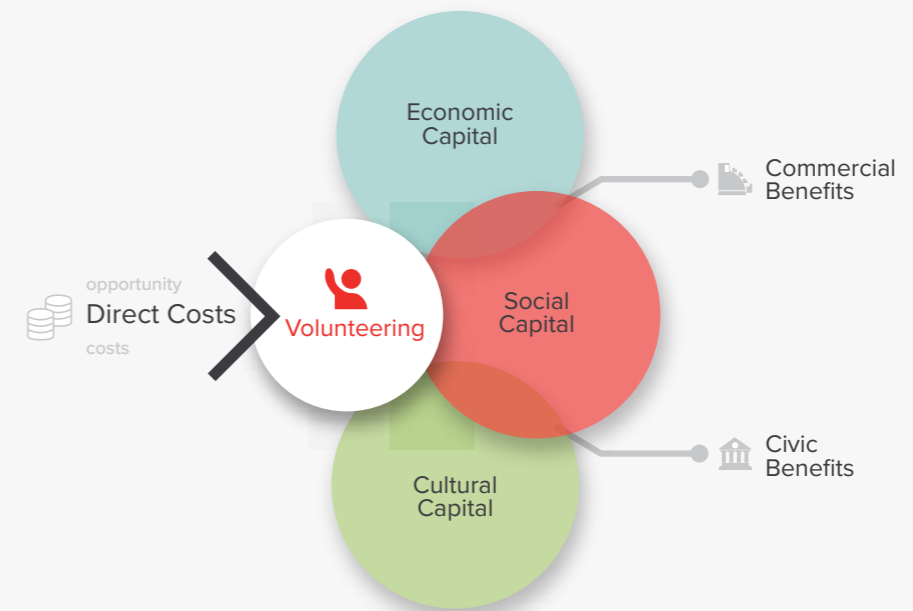


Figure 1: The Model of Volunteering Value Creation

³ Early iterations of this report in 2014 (Tas) and 2015 (WA) have contingently valued individuals' willingness to pay for volunteering as a social commodity. This is now more properly considered a measure of volunteering's potential – as opposed to expressed – value. In other words, it is an estimate of the value of volunteering capital; as such, it is not reproduced here.

Data collection

Victorian resident survey

Myriad Research conducted an online survey in May 2020 of Victorian residents aged 15 years and over (n=1,006) using the instrument in Appendix A. Although most questions related to respondents' volunteering during the 2019 calendar year, the data collection window allowed us to probe further with comparative questions about their volunteering during the initial, statewide COVID-19 restrictions period ('the previous one month') (see Appendix D for a timeline of COVID 19 related restrictions during the data collection period).

The survey used quotas to ensure a broad and generally representative sample across gender, age, household income and location. To reflect the population distribution, results were post-weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on Victorian age and gender distribution as per Table 1, below.

Age	Weight	
	Males	Females
15 to 24	1.18	1.58
25 to 34	0.92	1.24
35 to 44	0.72	0.96
45 to 54	1.01	1.36
55 to 64	0.86	1.15
65+	0.73	0.98

Table 1: Weighting of survey results as per ABS data on Victorian age and gender distribution

Following the application of post-stratification weights, chi-square goodness of fit tests revealed non-significant differences for both gender and age brackets, suggesting that the weighted sample distribution was not significantly different to the Victorian populations.

This is to say, the data for this research reflects the overall profile of Victorian communities.

Limitations – The survey asked about gender, age, income and location to ensure representativeness of the sample. However, cross tab results by these factors have not been provided, as datasets are too small to provide reliability.

Volunteer-involving organisation survey

Volunteering Victoria was supported by the Institute of Project Management (the Institute) to conduct an online survey (see Appendix B) of its database of VIOs across April-June 2020. This was a convenience sample, which means that there was no randomisation or stratification of sampling. The survey was distributed widely through multiple channels, and the respondents self-selected by answering the survey. Respondents were asked about the period of 2019 and separately about the impact of the COVID restrictions on their organisation's volunteering.

There were 315 valid responses received in the survey period, including 203 who provided financial data. Respondents came from all parts of the State, a variety of sectors and involved anywhere between 1 and 22,000 volunteers. Hence, a reasonable cross-section of respondents was achieved, and in the absence of more reliable sources, a number of population-level inferences are drawn from the data in this report.

Limitations – As the total size and composition of all the VIOs in Victoria was not known at the time of the survey, no assumptions are made as to its representativeness.



Photo 4: Huyen assisting with data entry for the flu clinic (Ballarat Community Health).

Section 1:

The characteristics of volunteering in Victoria



Photo 5: Access Inc volunteer Derek helping a participant using a computer.

The characteristics of volunteering in Victoria

This section describes volunteering as it occurred in Victoria in the 12 months of 2019, as reported in the survey of Victorian residents. The data is used in the economic analyses that follow in Section 3 of this report.

Volunteering participation

The survey results showed that 42.1% of the respondents volunteered in 2019. This indicates that nearly 2.3 million Victorians aged 15 and over volunteered in 2019.

In 2019, volunteers donated an average of 223.9 hours annually per person. This figure equates to 18.7 hours per month or 4.3 hours per week. These findings suggest that Victorians donated at least 507.7 million volunteer hours to the community.

Within the set of Victorian volunteers, it was found that:

- » 44.5% of volunteers volunteered both formally and informally
- » 39.9% of volunteers did so exclusively in formal settings with VIOs (not-for-profit, government and private organisations), and
- » 15.6% of volunteers donated their time exclusively in informal contexts.

Aggregated, this shows 84.4% of Victorian volunteers are active in formal volunteering and 60.1% are active in informal settings.

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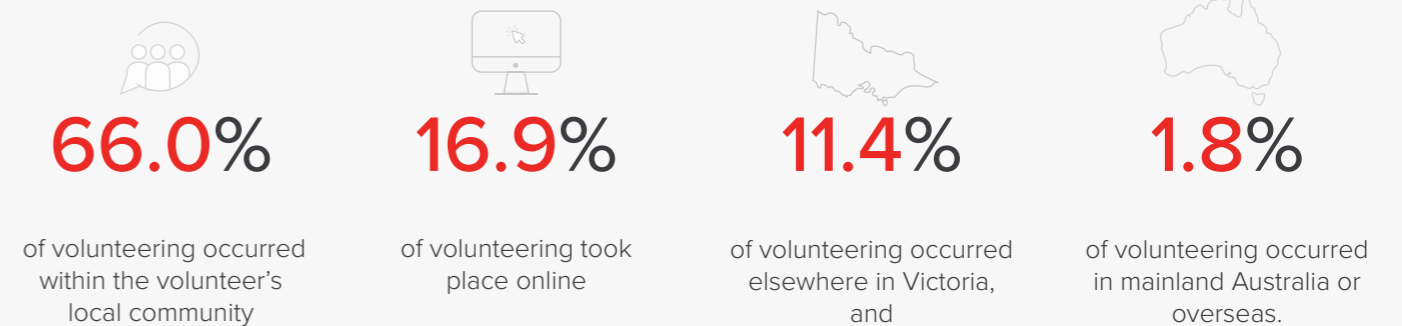
42.1% of the respondents volunteered in 2019

Additionally:

- » 28.9% of Victorians volunteered in not-for-profit organisations for an average 153.7 hours per year (12.8 hours per month)
- » 25.3% of Victorians volunteered informally in the community for an average 108.2 hours per year (9.0 hours per month)
- » 10.0% of Victorians volunteered to support government services for an average 146.5 hours per year (12.2 hours per month), and
- » 8.6% of Victorians volunteered in private (for-profit) organisations for an average 101.4 hours per year (8.4 hours per month).

Included in these figures are the 13.8% of currently employed Victorians (8.1% of the population) who participated in a workplace-organised or workplace-sponsored volunteering program.

Furthermore:



Volunteers contribute on average

223.9 HOURS A YEAR & 4.3 HOURS EVERY WEEK

Motivations and barriers to volunteering

A number of interesting discoveries were made about volunteer behaviour and intentions. Respondents were invited to list up to three reasons from a predefined list that motivated them to volunteer. People stated that they predominantly volunteered to contribute back to the community, support a cause, contribute to an activity that aligned with their values, and for enjoyment and social connection (Table 2).

Respondents were invited to list up to five issues from a predefined list 'that prevented you giving (more) time as a volunteer'. The top two barriers were the same across volunteers and non-volunteers, namely, having limited time and work commitments. Interestingly, 23.1% of non-volunteers stated they had never been asked to volunteer, and 15.1% of non-volunteers noted they don't know where to go / lack of information.

Motivation of volunteer

Motivation of volunteer	%
Community (to contribute to communities in emergencies and crisis, help build community resilience)	44.1
Support a cause (such as an association to an organisation or cause, need or desire to give back and make a difference)	43.4
Social connection (to meet new people, be involved, develop friends and social networks)	34.7
Enjoyment (for personal interest, fun)	32.3
Aligns to my values (for cultural or humanitarian reasons)	31.9
Personal development (to gain confidence and self-esteem, feel valued and part of a team)	21.8
Develop new skills, learning (for a pathway to employment, career development)	9.9
Health benefits (to stay fit, healthy, connected, needed, for mental health)	9.7
No clear motivation (such as someone suggested it)	6.6
For skilled volunteering or work-related volunteering program (encouraged to volunteer through work programs)	6.4
Other	2.6

Table 2: Motivations of volunteers

Table 3 also shows the variations in responses between 2019 and across the initial COVID-19 period in April-May 2020. As expected, many stated health risks as a barrier, but also 10.4% of volunteers noted the lack of availability of online or remote volunteering opportunities.

Response	2019		COVID	
	Volunteers %	Non-Volunteers %	Volunteers %	Non-Volunteers %
Limited time	41.1	32.3	23.3	22.2
Work commitments	37.0	25.6	19.9	17.3
Family commitments	33.8	18.3	27.2	15.9
General health	15.7	17.8	14.4	18.7
Preference for paid work	13.9	14.8	11.6	11.5
No available volunteering	13.7	7.6	9.8	13.3
Travel	13.0	9.0	15.4	5.8
Concern about level of commitment / work involved	12.8	11.9	10.4	8.2
Don't know where to go / lack of information	12.5	15.1	9.9	10.0
Age	11.5	15.4	7.3	12.5
Never been asked	10.6	23.1	7.8	16.5
Concern about health risks to yourself	9.0	10.5	32.9	26.6
Lack of communication / information about volunteering	7.2	8.1	8.1	6.9
Too shy	6.8	15.4	5.4	9.8
Lack of interest / don't want to	6.7	21.6	9.3	14.8
Lack of skills or ability	6.6	10.5	6.0	7.0
No available online / remote volunteering	6.3	4.1	10.4	6.5
Lack of appreciation	5.6	3.0	4.0	2.8
Policies and practices of VIOs	5.4	2.4	6.4	2.6
Disability	3.9	12.1	4.5	8.7
Bad experiences with volunteering	3.7	2.7	3.2	1.9
Other	2.9	5.2	7.4	8.7
Poor facilities	2.8	2.8	4.2	1.8
Worries about legal liability	2.7	3.6	3.6	2.4
Employers discourage participation	2.4	1.0	1.4	2.4
No perceived benefit	2.4	5.3	1.2	4.2

Table 3: Barriers to volunteering

Donations to volunteer-involving organisations

During 2019, 43.3% of respondents reported they directly donated money to VIOs. This money is above and beyond the donations of time they may have made, or money spent (expenses) in support of their own volunteering (discussed in Section 3).

The proportion of the donors in the population fell to 18.5% during the COVID-19 reporting period; however, the value of donations per person significantly increased in the same period, somewhat (but not perfectly) offsetting the net decline in donors. It remains to be seen whether this offset is sustained over time.

Volunteers also donated more per person to VIOs than non-volunteers in 2019, a gap that largely closed when COVID-19 restrictions first occurred.

Respondents	Donations in 2019 (average per month)	Donations during the COVID-19 reporting period (one month)
Volunteers	\$69.24	\$111.26
Non-volunteers	\$35.97	\$107.85

Table 4: Level of donations to VIOs by volunteers and non-volunteers

The impact of the 2019-20 bushfires on volunteering

Respondents were also asked about the 2019-20 bushfires, with 6.6% stating the bushfires had significantly changed their volunteering. Respondents almost exclusively indicated that the fires increased either their actual volunteering or future intent to volunteer.

“It changed my attitude to volunteering and made me want to do more than just donate money.”

How did the 2019-20 bushfires change your volunteering?

“As a firefighter, it kept me very busy.”

“Anytime we have major natural disasters I feel volunteers are essential.”

“It changed my attitude to volunteering and made me want to do more than just donate money.”

“I donated more and there were lots more publicised volunteer opportunities in my local area which were accessible without a car.”

“Deployed to provide support. Felt positive about giving back to the community and supporting communities at their time of most need.”

“I wanted to help more and I was able to. It increased my hours volunteering.”

“When this is over I will be volunteering much more, the bushfires devastated this country and now this. There are many organisations out there that need help. I am very willing to participate in volunteering in the future.”

“I started volunteering again because of the bushfires. I couldn't see all that was happening and not get involved to do something to try and help! This got me in contact with a lot of people and it was awesome to feel like I was giving something back to this country that received me so well. Hoping to do more in the near future.”

“Volunteering is somehow more essential to the community than I thought. Will be willing to volunteer if I have a chance.”

Table 5: Some resident responses: How did the 2019-20 bushfires change your volunteering?

Photo 6: Volunteer firefighter during Gippsland Bush fires in January 2020 in Bemm Forest (Country Fire Authority Point Cook).

The impact of COVID-19 during the reporting period

The following table shows the reported differences in volunteering between 2019 and the first COVID-19 restrictions of April-May 2020.

Finding	2019	COVID-19	Comment
Volunteering participation <i>Victorians 15 years and older</i>	42.1% (2.3 million)	21.0% (1.1 million)	50.2% decline
Hours volunteered per month	18.7 hours per volunteer	13.5 hours per volunteer	27.9% decline
Total volunteering hours	507.7 million hours	182.4 million hours (annualised)	Net decline of 64.1% total hours
Volunteering for a not-for-profit organisation	28.9% of Victorians volunteered 12.8 hours/month on average	8.8% of Victorians volunteered 9.9 hours/month on average	Net decline of 76.5% total hours
Volunteering for a government organisation	10.0% of Victorians volunteered 12.2 hours/month on average	2.9% of Victorians volunteered 8.3 hours/month on average	Net decline of 79.9% total hours
Volunteering for a private/ commercial organisation	8.6% of Victorians volunteered 8.4 hours/month on average	3.0% of Victorians volunteered 9.4 hours/month on average	Net decline of 61.5% total hours
Volunteering for people in your community, excluding family members (informal volunteering)	25.3% of Victorians volunteered 9.0 hours/month on average	14.1% of Victorians volunteered 10.0 hours/month on average	Net decline of 38.0% total hours
Top 5 reasons volunteers stated that prevented them from volunteering more	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time Work commitments Family commitments General health Preference for paid work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about health risk Family commitments Limited time Work commitments Travel 	Health concerns and the need to travel for volunteering were raised as barriers during COVID-19
Top 5 reasons non-volunteers stated that prevented them from volunteering more	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Limited time Work commitments Never been asked Family commitments Lack of interest / don't want to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about health risk Limited time General health Work commitments Never been asked 	Direct and indirect health concerns were raised as barriers during COVID-19
Where Victorians volunteer	16.9% online 66.0% local community 11.4% elsewhere Victoria 5.1% elsewhere Australia/global	44.1% online 45.0% local community 7.6% elsewhere Victoria 2.6% elsewhere Australia/global	Substantial increase in online / remote volunteering

Table 6: Comparison of volunteering in Victoria in 2019 v April-May 2020 COVID-19 period

Data for this table can be accessed here: <https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/resident-survey/>

How has your volunteering changed in the last month (at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic)?

“

“I'm more interested in increasing my volunteering for my local community and communities I care about.”

“My local sporting club is not currently operating which has ceased my volunteering opportunities, and ability/ need to support others who are part of the community.”

“With COVID-19 my previous contributions like catering, etc are considered to be too dangerous. I am not keen on remote volunteering without human contact.”

“As I'm over 70, with health issues, I have not been allowed to participate as I usually do, attending a craft group as a volunteer helper, and driving elderly and disabled clients to appointments, etc.”

“I need to take time out as I feel overwhelmed.”

“Before it was for my resume... now I want to help out my community through a difficult time.”

”

Table 7: Some resident responses: How has your volunteering changed in the last month?

Section 2:

The profile of volunteer-involving organisations



Photo 7: Origin employees and their families assembling solar lights for "Solar Buddy" children living in energy poverty in Tanzania (Origin Energy Foundation).

The profile of volunteer-involving organisations

Characteristics of respondents

There was a strong response to the VIO survey from Victorian organisations. Responses were predominantly from not-for-profit organisations (Table 8).



Table 8: Organisations, by type, that responded to the VIO survey

Victorian Government support

During 2019, nearly a quarter (24.7%) of all responding VIOs noted they engaged volunteers in delivering services funded by the Victorian Government. The complete impact and value of volunteering is not fully measured and captured by governments and VIOs as part of service provision and funding arrangements. Hence, there is unlikely to be

complete awareness across governments of the degree to which its funding is augmented by volunteering contributions.

For many respondent organisations, it was impractical to determine precisely how much additional service provision and impact was leveraged from volunteering specifically by

⁴ Examples of volunteering in the private sector include volunteers in private hospitals and sporting and cultural events. See www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Issues-Paper-FINAL.pdf page 6.



Victorian Government funding. VIOs are funded for service provision from various sources, including from all three levels of government. VIOs have various means of financial and impact reporting (including through internal grant reporting, and annual and financial reports). This is an area where improved data capture and accounting techniques may lead to improved understanding of volunteer impact and therefore better investment decisions.

Engaging volunteers to deliver services should not be construed as a means of cost cutting. Volunteers should not replace paid workers. Volunteers most often provide services in ways that are qualitatively different from paid workers. Investment in services where volunteers are engaged should be viewed as additional leveraging for improved social and inclusive outcomes and as generally providing high returns on investment.⁵

Volunteer profile

VIOs were asked to identify who typically volunteers in their organisation.⁶ The responses provide a snapshot of the diverse groups that VIOs engage, the different forms of volunteer engagement, and different employment and life contexts.

⁵ With a return of \$3.70 for every dollar invested, it is still critical to understand that essential investments are required to engage the volunteer workforce. These include recruitment, training, ongoing management and adherence to government regulations and legalisation. See Tables 11, 13, 22 and 23.

⁶ VIOs were not asked to provide details on the proportion of workforce each group represented.

Groups of volunteers typically represented in VIOs' volunteer profile

	% of VIOs
Volunteer Diversity	
Over 65s	78.9
People with a disability	31.5
Migrants / culturally and linguistically diverse people	30.2
Under 18s	13.6
People from Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander backgrounds	9.1
Forms of Volunteer Engagement	
Past and current program participants	36.0
Spontaneous or 'one-off' volunteers (for an event or project)	27.3
Online or remote	16.9
Corporate-sponsored groups	9.1
Corporate-sponsored individuals	8.4
Volunteer Employment and Life Context	
People who don't work or work part-time	74.4
Skilled professionals	48.4
People who work full-time	42.9
Centrelink clients/jobactive placements	31.2
Families with children	23.4
Parents of program participants	12.0
People who are travelling	4.9
Other (such as university students or club members)	13.3

Table 9: Groups of volunteers typically represented in VIOs' volunteer profile

Volunteer diversity

There are strong indications through this research that volunteering is an inclusive activity. A substantial number of organisations provided volunteering opportunities for people on income support, culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people living with a disability. For example, one respondent noted that, "Fifty per cent of our volunteers were not born in Australia and expressed an interest in wanting to give back and also practise their English skills and learn more about Australian culture."⁷

Volunteering also provides opportunities for members of newly arrived communities to experience Australian workplace culture, aiding integration.

As people in diverse groups are often at greater risk of social isolation and disadvantage, volunteering is a meaningful and enjoyable activity to increase social and community connections. Engaging diverse groups often requires resourcing and the development of the right skills by leaders of volunteers to do so effectively. Another respondent noted that, "Many people self-identify as having mental health issues. This can mean an extra layer of support is required for healthy and happy outcomes."⁸

Volunteer forms of engagement

VIOs engage volunteers in a variety of ways, from online volunteering to 'one-off' and spontaneous volunteers for events and projects (Table 9). The finding that nearly half of organisations engage skilled professionals (48.4%) speaks to the increasing professionalisation and highly skilled value

that volunteers provide, likely beyond the expectations of many.

A minority of organisations engaged in corporate volunteering (corporate-sponsored groups 9.1% and corporate-sponsored individuals 8.4%, Table 9). There is potentially an opportunity for greater engagement through this form of volunteering – provided the right resourcing and supporting infrastructure is available to VIOs.⁹

Volunteer employment and life context

It is unsurprising that senior Victorians and people not working or working part-time were identified as groups of people who typically volunteer. However, it is interesting that 42.9% of VIOs reported they had people who work full-time volunteering in their organisations (Table 9). This figure is a strong indicator that full-time work does not need to be a barrier to volunteering.

"Fifty per cent of our volunteers were not born in Australia and expressed an interest in wanting to give back and also practise their English skills and learn more about Australian culture."



⁷ Free-text response to "How else has volunteering changed for your organisation over the last 3 years?"

⁸ In response to the question "What has changed [for your organisation] over the last 3 years?"

⁹ The resourcing required is more typically for the VIO to be able to accommodate volunteers in groups and for intermittent engagements.

Volunteering profile during the COVID-19 pandemic

Across the initial COVID-19 reporting period, 57.1% of VIOs reported an alteration in the composition of their volunteers. Comments included a drop in older people who preferred to self-isolate, a rise in online volunteering and volunteering from home, a drop in families and children volunteering, a rise in younger professionals volunteering and a closure of worksites, suspending the capacity to volunteer.

The amount of volunteering reported also substantially altered. During 2019, VIOs averaged having 384.1 volunteers undertaking on average 17.9 hours per month. Across the initial COVID-19 reporting period, these figures dropped to 112.0 volunteers undertaking on average 8.2 hours per month. The number of volunteers dropped 70.9% and the average hours volunteered per month dropped 54%.¹⁰

How has the make-up of your volunteers changed (due to COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic)?

“

“Older people not allowed to volunteer. Parents tied up with children home from school. I would say 90% of our usual cohort are unable to volunteer.”

“The number of volunteers has reduced due to some volunteers not wanting to continue.”

“The ones remaining have moved to doing online or remote tasks.”

“Virtual and skilled volunteering opportunities have risen.”

“We have gone from 300 volunteers to 5. Our volunteer transport is hugely impacted; therefore patients are needing to find alternate transport methods. We have not had university students as volunteers but now we have 2 university students & the other 3 are younger Ambassadors.”

“More professionals volunteering since their work hours have been reduced.”

“All corporate, school and community groups have stopped coming, most older individuals chose to self-isolate quite early on due to the risk factors, most middle aged volunteers had to look after their children or parents and were no longer able to volunteer.”

”

Table 10: Some VIO responses: How has the make-up of volunteers changed due to COVID-19?

¹⁰ These figures fit in with the trend identified by Australian National University https://csmr.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2020/6/The_experience_of_volunteers_during_the_early_stages_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_0.pdf

Volunteer recruitment

VIOs reported attracting volunteers through a range of methods (Table 11). Word of mouth and social media / website were the most commonly used.

Methods used to recruit volunteers	% of VIOs
Word of mouth via current volunteers, participants, members and their networks	87.4
Social media / website	67.4
Traditional media (e.g. posters, signs, newsletters)	38.2
Open days / events	28.9
SEEK Volunteer / Go Volunteer	27.2
Volunteer Resource Centres (MRC) / Volunteer Support Organisations	26.6
Referral by another agency (e.g. Centrelink) Organisations	16.9
General brand investment / development	13.6
Volunteering Victoria	11.0
Other	14.6

Table 11: Methods used by VIOs to recruit volunteers

Reported methods for attracting and recruiting volunteers stated in the 'other' category included:

- » corporate programs, and
- » use of other entities and their websites such as shire volunteering websites, state organisation websites, and internal systems within clubs and groups.

Across the COVID-19 reporting period, 61.3% of VIOs noted they had altered their recruitment methods. The majority stated they had paused all recruitment. Some organisations, however, reported they had continued some targeted recruitment, for instance for virtual roles.

How has the way you recruit volunteers changed (due to the COVID-19 pandemic)?

"We are no longer recruiting volunteers within our program. As a VRC, we are still recruiting volunteers for a few roles via our website and SEEK Volunteer. We are getting inundated with responses to the few roles we post."

"Most organisations have asked their volunteers to stay away as the majority of services using volunteers are for vulnerable people. We are doing phone interviews and speaking with organisations via phone and email."

"We are not able to continue with any face to face recruitment during this time hence the reduction in volunteers."

"We have cancelled our annual recruitment campaign and training for our annual intake of volunteers in 2020."

"We have not recruited during restrictions because we are unable to deliver the intensive training required to equip volunteers for their roles. Also, programs we normally deliver into schools have been halted for the duration."

"Due to no sporting activities we are unable to provide social football programs, events, gala day and events to the football family or community."

"No more Centrelink referrals."

"It's a bit harder to get volunteers as we don't have walk-ins, and fear has stopped some people coming in. Self-isolation is also a factor. We are new to social media, and see that as a tool for us to possibly use to attract people."

"Must recruit online, rather than networking face to face events. Hard to get new people to attend a virtual event cold."

“ We are not able to continue with any face to face recruitment during this time hence the reduction in volunteers. ”

Table 12: Some VIO responses: How has the way you recruit volunteers changed with COVID-19?

Methods used to motivate and retain volunteers**% of VIOs****SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Personal connections / relationship building 76.3

Out of hours gatherings / events / celebrations 47.7

REWARDS AND INCENTIVES

Rewards (e.g. movie tickets) 20.1

Discounted or free meals, uniforms, insurance, accommodation etc. 17.4

Paid honorariums 3.9

RECOGNITION

Provide opportunities for input into our organisation's continual improvement 55.9

Awards (e.g. certificates / letters of appreciation) 54.9

Out of hours gatherings / events / celebrations 47.7

Public ceremonies and events 28.0

Status (e.g. titles, ranks, Australia Day honours) 7.2

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Engagement through media (e.g. website, socials, newsletters, press releases) 49.7

Positive brand development / association (i.e. investing in your organisation's brand generally, without specifically targeting volunteers) 34.2

% of VIOs**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Induction and orientation programs 57.9

Developing volunteer training resources (e.g. handbooks, PowerPoints, wikis) 42.4

Delivering non-accredited training (e.g. short courses, workshops) 41.5

Providing statement of volunteering / references 40.8

Mentoring programs / peer support 30.9

Diverse and progressively challenging volunteer opportunities 26.7

Volunteer leadership opportunities 21.4

Formal performance reviews 9.9

Accredited training (e.g. Certificate II, Diploma) 8.2

Pre-agreed penalties / sanctions for non-participation 2.6

ROLE DEVELOPMENT

Flexible volunteering arrangements 68.1

Reimbursement of expenses 36.2

Other 10.5

*Table 13: Methods used by VIOs to motivate and retain volunteers***Volunteer recognition, engagement and retention**

VIOs use a range of ways to motivate and retain their volunteers (Table 13). Personal connections / relationship building and flexible volunteering arrangements were the top forms of motivation and retention used, followed by induction and orientation programs, opportunities to input into the organisation's continuous improvement, and awards (certificates / letters of appreciation etc.).

**Photo 8:** WWF Australia – ANZ volunteers constructing solar lights.

Reported methods for retaining volunteers stated in the 'other' category included:

- » recognising volunteers by name in published research
- » featuring Volunteer of the Month
- » email and video recognition of a job well done, and
- » volunteer events including awards, Christmas dinners, thank you lunches and in-house celebrations.

Many of the responses in Table 13 reflect essential workforce resourcing. For reasons such as legal, health and safety, and workforce development the volunteer workforce requires training and ongoing management, which involves costs. This table (supplemented by the discussion in Section 3) demonstrates the costs involved in volunteer engagement and retention – which need to be understood and reflected in government funding and organisational leadership.

Social inclusion

The standout finding of this topic is that personal connections and relationship building are a key feature of volunteer engagement for at least three quarters of organisations (76.3%). Actively encouraging personal connections and relationship building is both a way for organisations to engage volunteers and also the natural outcome of people coming together with others for the 'common good'.

Cumulatively, these direct relationships contribute to community building and ultimately to improved social capital. These relationships also in part account for the firmly established mental health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering.

Reimbursements

Best practice in accordance with the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* is that organisations have a policy and procedure for reimbursing volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses.

One in three organisations indicated they reimbursed volunteers for their expenses as a means to motivate and retain volunteers. Although it is inappropriate to infer from this data why VIOs choose (or not) to reimburse their volunteers, organisations need to be careful not to inadvertently exclude people who would be willing to volunteer but cannot afford the associated out-of-pocket costs.

The costs to volunteering should be considered and accounted for in the context of particular volunteer demographics. For example, one third (31.2%) of organisations report that they engage volunteers via Centrelink and jobactive participation. These volunteers should not absorb costs as part of fulfilling mutual obligations.

The costs of volunteering for Victorian residents are outlined in Section 3, Table 21. These findings provide insights into how organisations

might reduce the direct costs of volunteering for volunteers. It is suggested that methods to reduce costs to volunteers should be implemented in advance of, and in addition to, reimbursing volunteers.



Professional training, skills and career development

Interestingly, VIO responses relating to training as a retention technique indicate the range and high level of investment in volunteer skill development: accredited training (8.2%), non-accredited training (41.5%), mentoring / peer support (30.1%), provision of training resources (42.4%) and leadership opportunities (21.4%). The value of this is reinforced with 40.8% of responding organisations noting they provide statements of volunteering / references as a retention tool.

This also is a reflection of the ongoing process of professionalisation underway in the Victorian volunteering sector. This is driven by leaders of volunteers and by the increasing expectations of volunteers to use and develop their skills.

The changing face of volunteering

Anecdotally there is a wider global trend towards a new type of volunteer who is driven to make a high impact but over a relatively short period. Investing in their skills and providing diverse and progressively challenging volunteer opportunities may be a way organisations can attract, engage, recognise and retain this type of volunteer.

VIOs were asked how people preferred to volunteer, and 62.5% of respondents noted people prefer occasional / flexible hours for volunteering, compared with the remaining 37.5% of organisations that stated people preferred to volunteer regular / fixed hours. This result is consistent with the trend observed elsewhere that, due to people's commitments with work, family, and possibly volunteering for other organisations or groups, they may need more flexibility to fulfil their volunteering commitments.

This trend and the changing nature of work suggest that some organisations need to rethink the usual metric of 'volunteer retention'. Newer models that can better accommodate volunteers may involve people engaging and disengaging more frequently, rather than filling ongoing roles. Volunteering undertaken on a project basis is another way to engage highly skilled and time poor volunteers. In any case, the capacity of organisations to provide more flexibility may assist in recruiting and retaining volunteers in the future.

Engaging and retaining volunteers during COVID-19

Across the COVID-19 reporting period, 42.1% of respondents noted they had altered their retention strategies. Text box comments showed organisations modified their approaches in many ways, often noting the cancellation of gatherings, events and many activities and a shift to online, newsletters and telephone connections. The difficulties in providing support through this period was a common theme.

As these findings show, the means by which volunteers are engaged by VIOs in Victoria, even during this initial pandemic period, were dramatically disrupted. Further disruption is expected, as restrictions persisted and became more severe after this survey period. In addition to retaining and re-engaging volunteers, as Victoria re-emerges from the pandemic, new models of volunteer management will emerge, blending forms of engaging volunteers in person and online.

Respondents made comments about re-evaluating their overall business models and how volunteering will fit into new operations once the pandemic is over. The COVID pandemic is likely to be a catalyst for fundamental changes in the volunteering sector.

How has the way you retain volunteers changed (in the early period of the COVID-19 pandemic)?



“Most volunteers are not opting to continue in our online programs. We have sent out emails. Having a Zoom online volunteer event. Phone calling volunteers and social media.”

“Currently, as there is only a skeleton group of volunteers working, predominantly the leadership group, there is an attempt to keep the other volunteers enthused through regular contact and social media.”

“Since all volunteering has ceased, we have increased social media, newsletters, welfare phone calls to volunteers for reassurance that we need them back once restrictions are lifted.”



“Inviting volunteers to happy half hour Zoom catch ups with staff and each other. Have not conducted usual in-service training. Some recognition on social media.”

“Almost all of our volunteers are staying at home. We are attempting to connect through digital means, but this is an extremely large task with limited resources.”

“We are unable to offer incentives like theatre show tickets and free entry to Melbourne's attractions as they are not open. We are unable to host our National Volunteer Week cocktail function. We are engaging them by creating visual briefings for them on what they can do online in Melbourne e.g. feeding time at the Zoo and made 'Miss you videos' from the staff to the volunteers. We are also calling or emailing volunteers on a weekly or fortnightly basis to check in on their wellbeing.”

Table 14: Some VIO responses: How has the way you retain volunteers changed due to COVID-19?

Photo 9: Volunteers supporting new arrivals online to learn English, stay connected and mitigate the risks of increased social isolation during COVID-19 (Melbourne Polytechnic - Melbourne Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)).

The main issues facing volunteer-involving organisations

VIOs were asked about the main issues they were facing. From the 21 options suggested in the survey, responses (Table 15) showed similarities for 2019 and across the COVID-19 reporting period, but also some marked variations. In 2019, volunteer recruitment and funding, grants and sponsorship were the most commonly stated issues while, not surprisingly, across the April-June 2020 period of COVID-19, volunteer retention and organisational or volunteer program sustainability were the most common issues.

Volunteer recruitment is the main issue facing VIOs.

This likely reflects the considerable resources it takes for leaders of volunteers to recruit volunteers (not just within the organisation but through recruitment infrastructure and media). Organisations are competing with many other activities and for a limited amount of Victorians' time. Interestingly, nearly a quarter (23.1%) of non-volunteer Victorian residents reported their reason for not volunteering is that they have never been asked (see Table 3).

A wide range of issues needs to be recognised if VIOs are to maintain their numbers.

Main issues	2019 % of VIOs	COVID-19 % of VIOs
Volunteer recruitment	37.3	29.8
Funding, grants, sponsorship	33.1	26.9
Resources to implement best practice (extra people, more funds, management willingness)	30.0	19.7
Engaging diverse volunteers (younger and older, people with disabilities, CALD etc)	27.9	12.5
Volunteer retention	27.0	31.7
Volunteer management	26.6	22.1
Change management	22.3	22.6
Organisational or volunteer program sustainability	21.5	30.3
Positioning and valuing of volunteering within your organisation	19.7	14.9
Valuing and investment in volunteers and volunteering	19.7	12.0
Red tape and/or regulatory requirements	19.3	11.5
Evaluation impact, measurement and reporting	18.5	11.5
Communication and marketing	16.7	20.7
Volunteer appreciation and recognition inside our organisation	15.9	15.4
Governance	15.9	9.1
Risk, insurance and/or legal	12.9	18.3
Technology, digital disruption	11.6	25.0
Understanding and implementing National Standards for Volunteer Involvement	9.9	5.8
Appreciation and recognition of our volunteers by the community	9.0	12.5
Technology, digital disruption	9.0	9.1
Understanding and implementing National Standards for Volunteer Involvement	9.0	11.1
Appreciation and recognition of our volunteers by the community	9.0	9.1

Table 15: Main issues facing volunteer-involving organisations

Trends in volunteering

In response to the question, “How has volunteering changed for your organisation in the 3 years prior to COVID-19?” many organisations noted little change (Table 16). Some organisations noted an increase in the need for volunteer training (35.4%), a decrease in volunteers claiming expenses (22.0%) and a decrease in corporate groups wanting to volunteer (29.5%).

Interestingly other areas created mixed results: 22% of organisations noted fewer people wanted to volunteer while 31% noted more people wanted to volunteer compared with three years ago. Organisations’ experiences

with the desire of university students to volunteer also markedly varied, with 28% noting an increase over the last three years and 22% a decrease.

The results demonstrate both the diversity of VIOs that exist in Victoria and the diversity of preferences of volunteers. It does also show that a good understanding of volunteer management is essential and that using a range of approaches for recruitment and retention may be critical to the future of these organisations.

Areas of change	% of VIOs stating “LESS”	% of VIOs “ABOUT THE SAME”	% of VIOs stating “MORE”
People want to volunteer...	22.1	46.6	31.3
Corporate groups want to volunteer...	29.5	57.8	12.7
University students want to volunteer...	21.5	50.4	28.1
The hours people want to volunteer are...	20.0	69.8	10.4
Volunteering online or from home occurs...	15.7	56.1	28.2
Volunteers are claiming expenses...	22.0	71.3	6.7
Volunteers need training...	4.7	59.9	35.4

Table 16: Changes in volunteering in the last three years prior to COVID-19

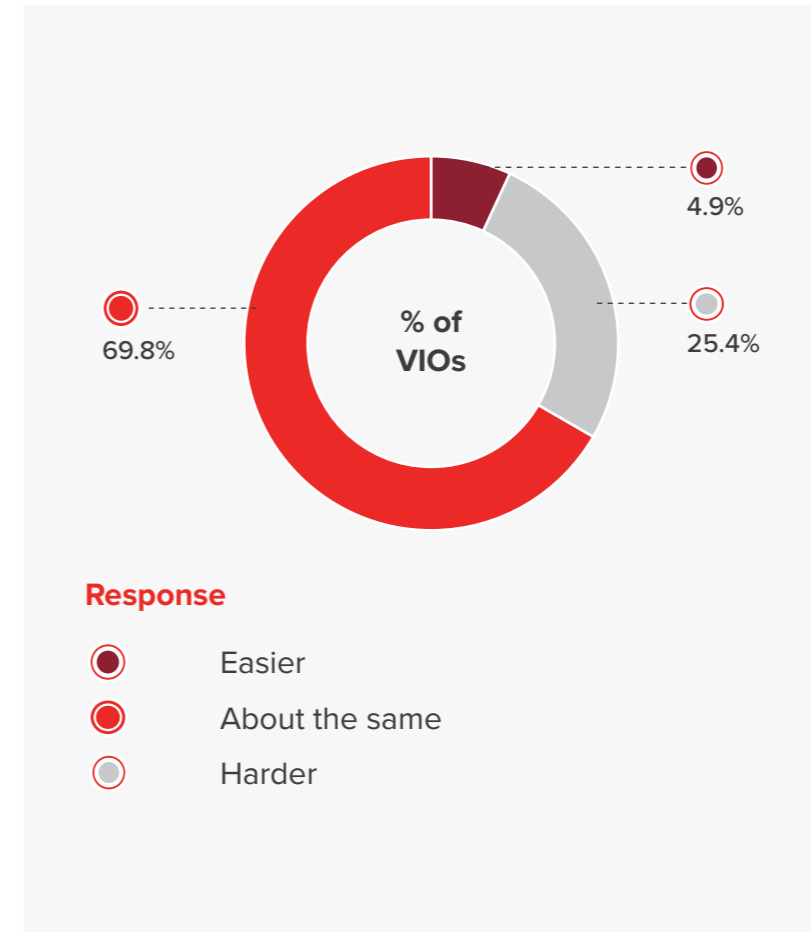


Table 17: Changes in ease of finding Board-level volunteers

The survey included a question about the ease of finding Board-level volunteers. Only a small proportion (4.9%) noted it was easier than three years ago, and over 25% stated it was harder (Table 17). While most organisations are continuing to fill Boards as usual, this finding should be of concern to the for-purpose sector. Strong and highly skilled governance is essential for effective organisational impact.



Photo 10: Callum monitors the health of the Moorabool River by conducting regular water quality tests (Waterwatch).

How else has volunteering changed for your organisation over the last 3 years?

“People self-identify as having mental health issues. This can mean an extra layer of support is required for healthy and happy outcomes.”

“More efforts put into diversifying volunteer workforce, so we now have more young people and more of CALD background.”

“More background checks and paperwork has resulted in some volunteers leaving their roles. Also, as we have moved to more web-based information, updates and logging service hours some of our (older) volunteers have struggled to adapt. Some volunteers (around 10%) do not use email.”

“Increase in university student applicants who are required to undertake volunteering roles for credit towards their university degrees.”

“An increase in the number of unemployed people wanting to get work experience especially administration.”

“People are more socially conscious and want to be associated with our organisation. We have had an increase of diverse volunteers over the past 3 years as we have a very flexible onboarding approach – especially for groups working with volunteers with disabilities.”

“People are wanting a mix of regular and fixed hours as well as opportunity for occasional. Less people are wanting to commit for the long term. People sometimes struggle with the process and level of scrutiny.”

“Volunteers are more transient and time poor we are finding. They don't volunteer for an organisation for 20 years anymore. Retention for us is fine; however, we are finding less new volunteers coming through to replace those who retire.”

“Greater push for skilled/pro-bono type opportunities to provide big impact to community groups.”

“Increased participation of volunteers in general, reduction of those undertaking mutual obligations therefore better buy-in and engagement with our volunteer team. We do better skills matching, hence increased job satisfaction.”

“The social impact sector, that we operate in, working with those that are disadvantaged requires more volunteers, resources and donations, funding more than ever before.”

Table 18: Some VIO responses: How else has volunteering changed for your VIO over 3 years?

Photo 11: Volunteers mending fences (Four Wheel Drive Victoria).

The following response was not typical of free-text responses. It is highlighted as a comprehensive example of the journey and improved efficiencies organisations can make for greater impact.

“

We have improved our use of technology. Three years ago, we were invited by many volunteer involving organisations to give talks on how we track volunteer hours online through an app. This is now in the sector! Now, more people are doing it, and we have moved on to learn how to use that data we now have to drive efficiency and improvement of the experience for volunteers and schools.

We have introduced streamed professional development sessions for volunteers with over 30-40 participants at each event, which is taking place fortnightly at the moment. We have more volunteers giving time every week than ever before, and were able to retain our record number of volunteers into 2020 from 2019. We have worked with more office volunteers than ever before, with a system of supervision and task distribution, which has meant we can do much more as an organisation.

One of the biggest changes over the last three years was the changes in legislation regarding WWCC for volunteers writing letters to children. This meant we introduced, 4 years ago, a new safety assurance system of asking over 1000 volunteers to complete WWCC in a short space of time. In 2019 we introduced a change that they must have a WWCC before they begin writing, rather than before they meet children at the mid-year group visit.

VIOs were finally asked, “Assuming things return to pre-COVID-19 social and economic conditions, in 3 years from now, are people more or less likely to be volunteering with your organisation?”

Just under half of the VIOs who responded (45.3%) indicated that the status quo will remain about the same, and 44% indicated there will be more, or a lot more, people volunteering (Table 19). Despite the challenges, then, Victorian VIOs remain broadly positive about the outlook for their sector.

Response

- A lot less
- Less
- About the same
- More
- A lot more

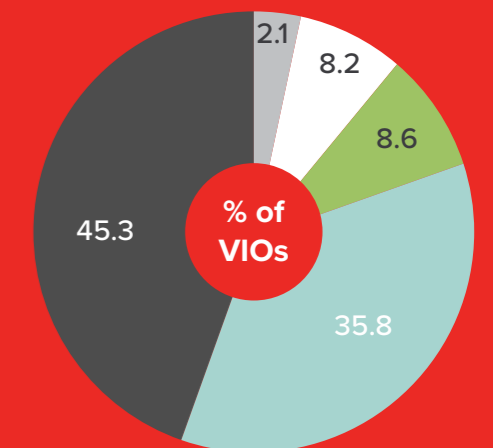


Table 19: VIOs' prediction of supply of volunteers in three years

The impact of COVID-19 during the reporting period

Data in the following table compares the differences reported by VIOs between 2019 and the first COVID-19 restrictions of April-June 2020.

Findings	2019	COVID-19
Profile of VIO volunteers	'Volunteering as usual' volunteer profile	57.1% noted a change in their volunteer profile
Main issues faced	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer recruitment 2. Funding, grants, sponsorship 3. Resources to implement best practice 4. Engaging diverse volunteers 5. Volunteer retention 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer retention 2. Organisational or volunteer program sustainability 3. Volunteer recruitment 4. Funding, grants, sponsorship 5. Technology / digital disruption
Recruitment strategies	Word of mouth and social media/ website	61.3% noted they have altered their recruitment strategies; many have largely paused; a small number are focusing on virtual skill recruitment
Strategies to motivate and retain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal connections / relationship building 2. Flexible volunteering arrangements 3. Induction and orientation programs 4. Opportunities to input into the organisation's continuous improvement 5. Awards (certificates / letters of appreciation etc.) 	42.1% altered their retention strategies, having cancelled face to face and shifted to online, newsletters and telephone connections

Table 20: Comparison summary of VIOs in 2019 v April-June 2020 COVID-19 period



Photo 12: Volunteer making a virtual home visit (MannaCare).

How else has volunteering changed for your organisation during COVID-19?

"It has allowed us to identify the gaps in people's ability to use the digital space. We are also identifying how isolating this pandemic has been and looking at ways to connect meaningfully that is still safe and cost effective. Emerging needs have not necessarily been clearly identified so we are slow to respond and some organisations are unsure of how we can assist."

"Our programs have changed, so whilst most volunteering is on hold, some volunteers are helping with food parcels and distribution, and some are supporting clients through teaching English over the phone to replace regular classes."

"Many of our volunteers use their volunteering as opportunities to engage, connect or for a purpose and without it where will they go for these."

"We have less volunteers as so many have had to isolate. Some volunteers are working more days to fill the gaps. Volunteers are doing different jobs, such as home delivery, and some of the usual roles have disappeared for the time being. All services are offered by phone, whereas previously all services were face-to-face. For this reason our volunteers get less enjoyment and satisfaction from their work."

"We are trying to establish what technologies and tech abilities our volunteers have, as this will impact our ability to reach them in non-traditional ways, e.g. Zoom, Facetime, FB."

"We have encouraged online meet-ups and support for our volunteers. We have had to postpone a number of projects, but we have sought opportunities for new projects. We are using this time to develop a rebranding strategy."

"Unfortunately we had to stand down all our volunteers due to health and safety reasons, especially as most of our regular volunteers were of retirement age."

"Increased cost to the organisation to supply PPE."

"Our sport relies heavily on volunteers and no football activity on the field has made it difficult for volunteers to give their time to the community. Our National Development Program relies on Sporting Clubs to volunteer their time to implement policies (Governance) and implement processes to ensure the club is sustainable and viable. In order to achieve a healthy sporting club we rely on dedicated and valued volunteers."

“So much has changed, I can't list it all, we're still waiting to see the full impact on our community. Mental health crises are more common, so we're promoting self-care a lot more.”

Table 21: Some VIO responses: How else has volunteering changed for your VIO during COVID-19?

Section 3:

The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering to Victoria



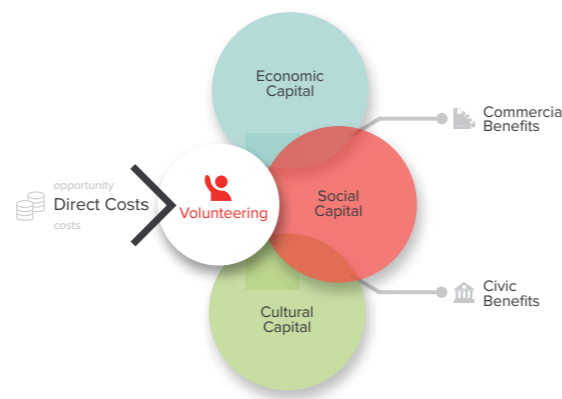
Photo 1: Grading indigenous plants for restoration projects (Bass Coast Landcare Network).

The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering to Victoria

The cost of volunteering in Victoria

Inputs that enable and facilitate volunteering in Victoria and their related outputs come at a cost. Labour, materials and infrastructure are either directly purchased or donated. Also, given the scarce resources of individuals (and the organisations that involve them), the diversion of money to volunteering implies that other opportunities to improve individual welfare are denied – another social cost that must be considered.

The total social and economic cost of volunteering in Victoria and its related enterprises in 2019 is estimated to be \$15.9 billion. This comprises direct costs of \$8.7 billion and opportunities ‘lost’ to individuals, investors and the community of \$7.2 billion.



Direct costs

The direct costs cited here estimate the change in final demand attributable to volunteering in Victoria in 2019. These are the costs borne by individuals and organisations in support of volunteering activities and associated consumption.

To avoid double counts, intermediate inputs such as the costs of production are incorporated and not counted separately. In other words, the costs of staging volunteering events are assumed in the final purchase price. Similarly, the equipment, labour and utility overheads of the related merchandise providers are assumed to be fully recovered by sales.

Costs to individuals

Individuals reported spending an annual average of approximately \$1,710 on their volunteering in 2019. The breakdown of this expenditure is shown in Table 22.

Of these expenses, volunteers reported being reimbursed an average of \$212.65 (12.4%). Therefore, on average they were out of pocket by \$1,497.11. Once this value is multiplied by the estimated number of volunteers in Victoria, this equates to volunteers in Victoria having net outgoings of approximately \$3.9 billion, or \$6.69 per volunteer hour.

As indicated in Section 1 of this report, Victorian volunteers also reported making cash donations of \$830.88 per person to VIOs across the same year. This figure is highlighted for comparative purposes only and not included as a cost of volunteering.

Costs to volunteer-involving organisations

From the responses to the VIO survey, it is estimated that a further \$4.8 billion was spent by VIOs in 2019 on the activities listed in Table 23.

Volunteers directly spent \$3.9 billion in support of their own volunteering. This is almost as much as VIOs' expenditure of \$4.8 billion.

Cost category	\$ per year
Food and beverages	488.28
Memberships and subscriptions	269.52
Phone, internet and postage expenses	203.64
Fuel and motor vehicle expenses	203.40
Office supplies	162.36
Tools, equipment and other resources	123.84
Transport and accommodation	113.88
Uniforms and clothing	43.80
Other	101.04
	1,709.76

Table 22: Breakdown of volunteering costs to the individual volunteer

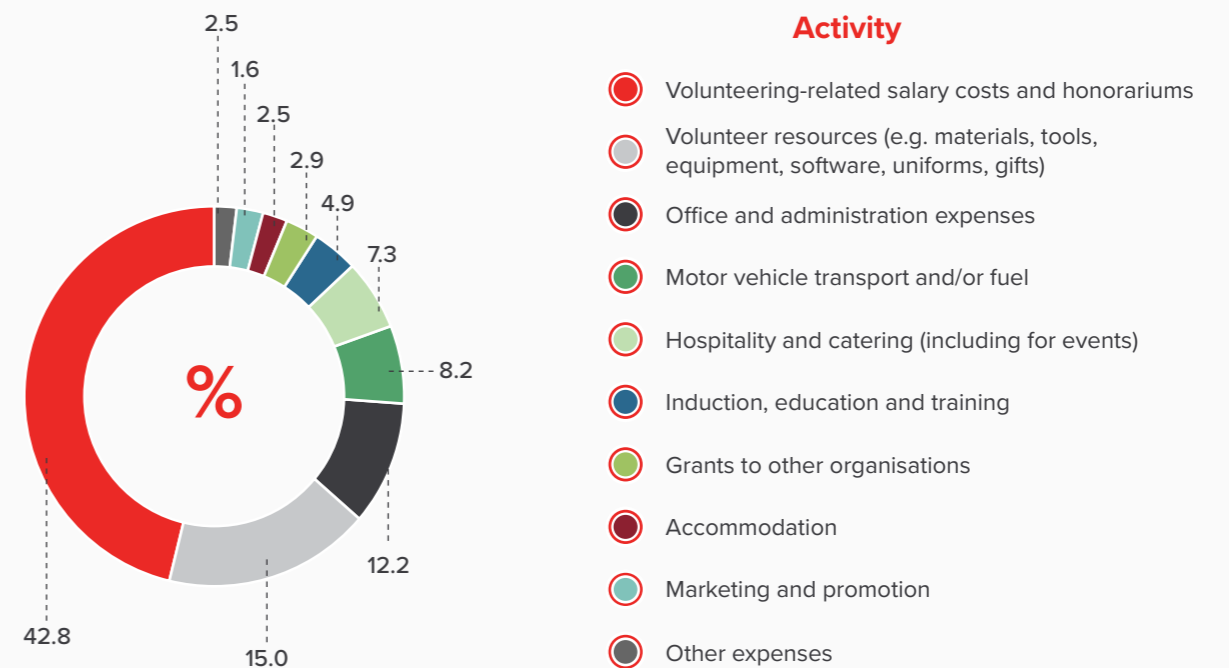


Table 23: Costs, by percentage, for VIOs to enable volunteering

Opportunity costs

An opportunity cost is a value lost (or forgone) as a result of deciding between mutually exclusive choices. Therefore, it is useful to consider what we might have gained by using the resources allocated to volunteering to their ‘next best’ ends.

To resolve the opportunity cost conundrum, this analysis supposes that there is no volunteering in Victoria and that the assets presently devoted to volunteering are put to other productive ends. The opportunity cost of the human and financial resource allocations to volunteering in Victoria can be further quantified by identifying the potential value in dollar terms of an alternative allocation.



Volunteers’ time

Recognising that not all wages are equal, the opportunity cost of volunteering labour is estimated using the average weekly earnings for part-time and full-time workers for each age cohort, less a 35% marginal rate of tax. The hourly rate is then adjusted to reflect the proportional composition of the Victorian workforce – full-time, part-time and non-participants per age group.

This approach applies a simple leisure/work trade-off model that identifies the opportunity cost of one hour of leisure by the income that could have been earned by working for an extra hour. This is consistent with a flexible labour model and assumes that additional work opportunity is available. As one would expect, the opportunity cost of leisure is low for the very young or very old – where significant numbers of people are not in the workforce or are underemployed – but quite high for those in age groups with greater workforce participation.

Therefore, the 507.7 million hours donated to the Victorian community by volunteers in 2019 came at an opportunity cost to donors of \$7.1 billion (Table 24).

Age	Opportunity cost of volunteers’ time \$/hr	Average hours volunteered/ year	Volunteer population in VIC	Total opportunity cost (\$/M)
15-24	7.09	248.6	359,846	634.7
25-34	19.55	219.5	506,774	2,174.0
35-44	24.14	159.5	402,201	1,548.5
45-54	24.36	156.6	337,745	1,288.4
55-64	18.18	268.0	224,251	1,092.5
65+	3.10	297.1	436,151	401.7
				7,139.8

Table 24: Opportunity costs of hours donated to the Victorian community by volunteers

Volunteering investments

An assumption is made here concerning the opportunity cost of the purchases by volunteers and VIOs made to enable their volunteering activity. If these purchases were withheld because no value was placed on volunteering by the community, then the value of that contribution could be invested in long-term growth – the supposed next best alternative use. Therefore, the value of volunteering to its stakeholders is at least equal to the profit forgone on their investments.

The long-run cost of investment applied here is 0.9%, the current 10-year bond rate. To that end, we estimate that the gross cost of the opportunities diverted to volunteering by individuals and VIOs in Victoria in 2019 is approximately \$78.2 million.

Volunteering capital

Volunteering capital refers to the *potential* for individuals to use their resources and capabilities for the mutual benefit of themselves and the community through volunteering. This capital is created by the investments of time and money in each unique volunteering event and is ultimately made tangible by its utilisation.

It is only when citizens collectively use (exploit) their capital that its effect can be quantified and reconciled with costs to arrive at estimates of value. Importantly, users should be mindful that this capital can theoretically be expressed positively (for example, to promote social inclusion) or negatively (for example, to promote harmful or offensive ideals).

Because expressions of volunteering capital will be unique to the social setting (in this case, Victoria), it is self-evident that, all things being

equal, the more widespread or intense the participation of the community, the greater the impact volunteering in Victoria will have on these factors.

For that reason, the value of this capital per se is irrelevant and no attempt is made to quantify it. However, it is essential to distinguish capital from inputs and outputs, as this allows a mechanism to explain the different forms of input that are at stake when looking to influence the value of volunteering.

The discussion that follows mines the extensive literature¹¹ on the relationship between volunteering and capital, isolating references to the value provided by and to individuals, communities and VIOs. It organises around the three ‘traditional’ forms of observable capital enabled by volunteering, being the sum of the economic, social and cultural capitals.

¹¹ Fully referenced discussion of the different expressions of volunteering capital can be found in Volunteering Tasmania’s State of Volunteering Report (2014) and Volunteering Western Australia’s Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering (2015)

Economic capital

Economic capital takes the form of infrastructure, goods, services and cash in its materialised form – all collectively known as tangible property. It is the latent wealth that can be readily transformed into money and institutionalised as property rights. In this report, economic capital refers to the physical assets produced and maintained by Victoria's volunteering sector.

These assets are extensive and go beyond the saleable goods and services volunteering creates to include the venues and sites where volunteering is:

- » performed (for example, at aged care facilities, community halls, and sporting fields)
- » managed (for example, in government agencies and not-for-profit groups)
- » promoted (via traditional and new media), and
- » sold (for example, at fêtes and festivals) throughout the broader community.

Volunteering infrastructure enhances and strengthens communities, contributing to a sense of belonging and place. An example is the ownership felt towards scout halls, sporting clubs and other community-owned assets by the volunteer groups which sustain them. Volunteering also increases longevity, exploiting underused capacity and creating use of equipment and infrastructure where none might otherwise exist.

Other expressions of economic capital include consumables such as volunteers' equipment, accommodation, and transport services. Consumption of these is increased through volunteering and therefore attributable to the activity.

Volunteering can also have a positive impact on the natural environment, open-air areas, public spaces and cultural assets, thereby enhancing the economic capital of a community or city.

Even though economic capital is the most visible form of capital created by volunteering, it is the tip of an iceberg – much of this economic capital would lie dormant without the social and cultural capital needed for its activation.

Social capital

Economic capital takes the form of Social capital is defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as “The norms and relations embedded in the social structures of societies that enable people to coordinate action to achieve desired goals.” The value of social capital is explained in terms of individuals' trust, reciprocity, interpersonal networks and civic engagement.

Social capital can organically emerge within community or cultural settings or be deliberately cultivated through structured programs (such as those delivered by volunteer organisations). Volunteering can strengthen social ties between groups or individuals (bonding capital) by naming and reinforcing the values and attitudes of the group. In this way, volunteering can be perpetuated and enlarged.

Volunteering can also enable *bridging* social capital, facilitating wider ties across diverse groups that may differ in terms of age, gender, ethnicity or religion. This bridging can occur when different groups work together in times of crisis or at celebrations such as festivals and sporting events.

While the mutual benefit for both volunteers and recipients is clear, it is important not to romanticise the role of volunteering in social capital development. Several studies point to inequalities and social divisions associated with volunteering, which in some cases may be traced to the negative outcomes of social capital.

Even though networks and the associated norms of trust and reciprocity can be beneficial for those inside a network (such as the member of a particular supporter group), the external effects on others can be exclusive and inequitable. Thus, social capital can, in some cases, be linked to problems such as racism, sectarianism, social exclusion and corruption.

For that reason, governments around the world have looked to structured volunteering programs as a catalyst to motivate positive social capital development to strengthen their communities.

Cultural capital

In using the term cultural capital, we reference Bourdieu's¹² longstanding definition of it as a person's knowledge and intellectual skills that provide an advantage in achieving higher social status. Also known as human capital, the OECD considers it to be critical to the wellbeing of communities. The OECD defines cultural capital as “The knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being.” A more modern appreciation of cultural capital includes psychological, symbolic and spiritual capital, as well as an individual's physical health and wellbeing.

Cultural capital may be brought into a volunteer setting with a new member or imparted to the volunteer through their participation. In this sense, cultural capital directly relates to the education and training volunteers receive. Seniors can be well regarded as volunteers because of their abundance of cultural capital accumulated over a lifetime of paid work and social interaction.

Cultural capital acquired through volunteering is also known to be transferable to other domains, including the workplace, enhancing an individual's paid employment prospects. It is equally plausible that the cultural capital created by volunteering has the potential to increase organisational profit.

Therefore, the relationship of cultural capital to volunteering is twofold: volunteers can impart cultural capital to their beneficiaries through the use of their skills and knowledge; equally, they can improve their capabilities through their voluntary engagement. This capital is enlarged as volunteers and beneficiaries employ those outcomes in their households, workplaces and social networks.

Thus, the potential for volunteering to enrich cultural capital is enormous: it can be accrued as a means of fulfilling one's sense of self-worth, it can be used by individuals, groups and even VIOs for financial or social gain, or it can be used to motivate productivity in those who require support.

¹² Pierre Bourdieu (1985) *The Forms of Capital*



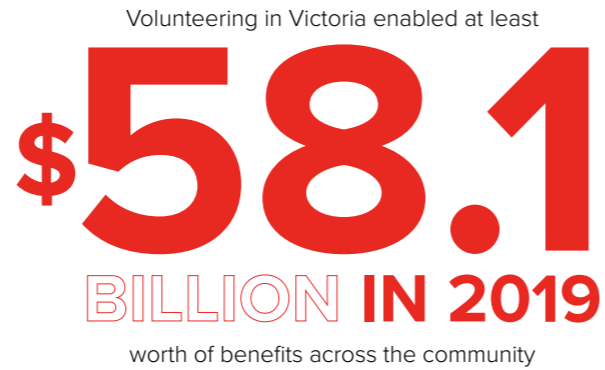
Photo 13: Wendy and Rosie monitor the health of Lake Colac by conducting regular water quality tests (Waterwatch).

“
Volunteering infrastructure enhances and strengthens communities, contributing to a sense of belonging and place.”

The benefits to Victoria of volunteering

Volunteering in Victoria alters the states of economic, social and cultural capital in individuals, organisations and communities. These forms of capital are converted into economically valuable outputs that contribute to the welfare of all.

In 2019, it is estimated that volunteering in Victoria enabled at least \$58.1 billion worth of benefits across the community. These were the sum of commercial benefits worth \$31.8 billion and civic benefits valued at \$26.3 billion.



Commercial benefits

Producers' surplus

Victorian businesses enjoy a net commercial benefit that is attributable to volunteering. Known as the producers' surplus, this is an economic measure of the difference between the amount that a producer of a good receives and the minimum amount that he or she would be willing to accept for the good. The difference, or surplus amount, is the benefit that the producer receives for selling the good in the market. An alternative, if theoretically imperfect, description of this is net profit.

Using a methodology known as input–output modelling¹³ the change in final demand of \$8.7 billion brought about by the volunteering expenditure of consumers (the direct costs of individuals and VIOs) increased output in the Victorian economy by an estimated \$14.3 billion. This includes the production of intermediate goods as well as imports of \$3.7 billion.

The Gross Value Added to the Victorian economy is therefore \$8.2 billion, or 1.8% of Victoria's Gross State Product of \$446.1 billion.

As material inputs are already allowed for – and our assumption is that the infrastructure would exist regardless of volunteering – if Gross Value Added is discounted by the cost of labour and

taxes, we are left with a theoretical producers' surplus to businesses of \$1.2 billion.

This surplus represents the fair return to providers of capital and can be assumed to cover the cost of investment and the opportunity cost of the use of land or buildings for other purposes.

It is important to note, though, that the nature of the modelling means that this \$1.2 billion is distributed among **all** Victorian firms who contribute intermediate or final goods and/or services that are consumed as a result of volunteering in Victoria, and not just volunteering producers.



Photo 11: Volunteers mending fences (Four Wheel Drive Victoria).

¹³ See Appendix C – Input–output modelling

Productivity premium

Survey respondents were also asked to what extent they believed their volunteering impacted – positively or negatively – on their work performance. They were specifically prompted that their volunteering might make them a happier person, enable stronger networks and allow them to access certain skills that might improve their productivity. On the flip side, it was suggested that they might need to take a few more days off because of their volunteering. As a follow-up, they were asked to quantify this impact in percentage terms.

It was revealed that 56.9% of volunteers believed their volunteering added an average of 35.9% value to their productivity in their paid employment. Conversely, 2.0% felt their volunteering adversely impacted their day job by a factor of 16.6%.

Applying these rates to the cost to employers of labour per age cohort (replacement cost) as per the formula below (Equation 1) allowed us to quantify a 'productivity premium' enjoyed by employers as a result of their employees' volunteering.

Thus, the extent to which volunteering in Victoria improved the productivity of individuals in 2019 (a benefit enjoyed by their employers) is estimated to be \$30.5 billion.

This figure is the sum of self-reported positive and negative impacts, where the negative impacts are noted here as a 'dis-benefit' – rather than a cost – as they are not an input into volunteering, but a negative outcome.

$$\text{Productivity premium} = \hat{w} \times m_p \times v \times r$$

\hat{w} = median annual wage per cohort
 m_p = productivity multiplier
 v = total volunteers
 r = discount rate

Equation 1: Productivity premium formula

“ 56.9% of volunteers believed their volunteering added an average of 35.9% value to their productivity in their paid employment.

Civic benefits

For this report, a civic benefit is a contribution made by having volunteering in Victoria that would otherwise have to be provided (presumably by the State) if the same community-wide standard of living were enjoyed. In other words, it typically represents a cost avoided by the government.

Important civic benefits acknowledged but not quantified by this analysis include the inbound tourism impact of volunteering in Victoria, as well as the costs potentially avoided by our civil systems of health, criminal and social justice. For that reason, our estimate of civic benefits is likely to be significantly understated.

Employment

Using the input–output model, the expenditure associated with volunteering in Victoria is estimated to generate in the order of 71,364 jobs, of which 47,467 are full-time. Again, this refers to jobs created economy-wide and not just in the volunteering sector.

This realises a wage benefit of \$5.0 billion that is directly returned to households, with an equivalent welfare cost avoided by government.

Taxes

Input–output modelling also reveals that volunteering-related expenditure of \$8.7 billion (direct costs) generated approximately \$1.9 billion in tax revenue for the government.

Note that these taxation receipts may not be directly proportional to the relevant investment of each tier of government. Nevertheless, as it is unlikely that the volunteering industry receives an equivalent quantum of reinvestment from government, it could be argued that the tax revenue generated from volunteering contributes to other policy and social investments, such as roads hospitals and schools.

Volunteers' labour

The labour of volunteers is another civic contribution of volunteering. As already stated, it is estimated that volunteers donated 507.7 million hours to Victoria in 2019. The replacement cost of this labour is determined by calculating what it would cost beneficiaries to employ people to perform the equivalent work.

It is presumed that each volunteer brings skills commensurate with their professional experience; therefore, it is not simply a case of replacing them with industry minimum wage labour. The overhead costs of administration and capital must also apply to each hour of labour, and the additional costs of taxation (such as superannuation, workers' compensation and payroll tax) should be allowed for.

Using median wage data for each age cohort; allowing an additional 15% for superannuation, payroll and administration costs; and discounting for volunteering that occurs outside Victoria (1.8%), it was found that the cost to the community of replacing volunteers' labour in Victoria would be \$19.4 billion (Table 25).

“ The volunteering sector is over one and a half times larger than the Victorian government sector and nearly half the size of the private sector. ”

Cost to the Victorian community of replacing volunteers' labour

Sector	\$/B
Volunteering replacement cost	\$19.4 billion
Private sector compensation of employees	\$45.4 billion
Public sector compensation of employees	\$11.8 billion

Table 26: Cost of volunteering vs private and public sector employee compensation

To demonstrate the scale of the volunteering sector we compare the cost to replace voluntary work in Victoria with the total compensation of employees in the government and private sectors. The volunteering sector is over one and a half times larger than the Victorian government sector and nearly half the size of the private sector (Table 26).

Age	Replacement cost of volunteers' labour	Average hours volunteered/ year	Volunteer population in VIC ¹⁴	Total replacement cost (\$/M)
15-24	\$18.19	248.6	353,368	1,597.9
25-34	\$41.15	219.5	497,652	4,495.0
35-44	\$50.11	159.5	394,961	3,156.4
45-54	\$51.46	156.6	331,666	2,672.8
55-64	\$48.15	268.0	220,214	2,841.0
65+	\$36.11	297.1	428,300	4,595.8
				19,358.9

Table 25: Cost to the Victorian community of replacing volunteers' labour

Photo 14: Gayle, a volunteer at the Kids First Australia Rosanna Op Shop.

¹⁴ Excludes the 1.8% of people who volunteered outside of Victoria and very conservatively assumes they are not replaced by other, inbound volunteers.

Conclusion:

The value of volunteering to Victoria in 2019



Photo 15: Steve, Leo, Ellen and Sue pose in The Hidden Orchard's new storage space.

The value of volunteering to Victoria in 2019

The value of volunteering to Victoria across the entire community is the sum of the benefits enabled. This analysis estimates these to be worth \$58.1 billion in 2019 (Table 27).

This figure is significantly greater than previous estimates based only on price or economic impact; yet it is likely to be an underestimate given the limitations of the available data and forensic techniques.

The power of this figure of \$58.1 billion lies in the ability to provide a standardised basis for comparison, and – short of performing the same exercise for every other human activity – a top-line valuation of every human endeavour is impractical, if not impossible.

For that reason, this study contrasts the net value of volunteering in Victoria with the cost of inputs. It can be seen that for every dollar invested by the community, approximately \$3.70 is returned. Therefore, because the external benefits of volunteering exceed the social costs, the outcome is not inefficient, and there is a substantial social, cultural and economic ‘profit’ in volunteering.

Ultimately, this analysis has examined whether those who donate their time and money to volunteering are supporting the common good. This report demonstrates the economically real and significant value of volunteering to Victoria. Although there are some limitations to the analysis that would benefit from future research, the potential now exists for decision-makers in both industry and government to leverage this framework for continual improvement in the marketing and delivery of their services.



Socio-economic impact (in \$millions)

Costs (\$/M)

Direct costs

Volunteer expenses	3,876.3		
VIO expenses	4,807.7	8,684.0	

Opportunity costs

Volunteer time	7,139.8		
Volunteering investments	78.2	7,218.0	15,902.0

Benefits (\$/M)

Commercial benefits

Producers' surplus	1,239.9		
Productivity premium	30,520.5	31,760.5	

Civic benefits

Employment	5,018.0		
Taxes	1,931.6		
Volunteer labour	19,358.9	26,308.5	58,069.0
			42,167.0

Benefit: cost ratio 3.7 : 1

Table 27: Costs and benefits of volunteering to Victoria, 2019

Data for this table can be accessed here: <https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/economic-impact/>

Recommendations for further research

The findings in this research report are significant and greatly improve our documented understanding of volunteering in Victoria. These findings are also in line with similar reports in other Australian states and territories, noting state by state variations.

While this report is thorough, there are limitations to the State of Volunteering methodology and research, and the findings also indicate other research questions worth pursuing. Volunteering Victoria, working with the Project Reference Group, has highlighted key areas below where practitioners, policymakers and researchers would benefit from further research to better understand and document the following areas.

1. Volunteering in regional and rural areas

Volunteering in rural and regional Victoria is not only a way of life but essential to maintaining a variety of services. Issues for volunteering in rural towns and regional cities differ from issues in the Greater Metropolitan Melbourne area. Some of the known issues for volunteerism, in rural areas in particular, include ageing and declining populations, the higher cost of transport, lower levels of service provision and the tyranny of distance.

Further research is needed to better understand how volunteering has been affected in regional and rural communities in recent years, the consequences of declining volunteerism and what the obstacles are to rebuilding or reshaping volunteering.

Photo 16: Animal Aid volunteering (GEM Youth Mentoring).

Photo 17: Visiting an isolated elderly resident to provide friendship. These two were lucky to meet in person just before the COVID-19 pandemic (The Centre for Continuing Education).

Photo 18: Switchboard volunteer assembling care packages for LGBTQI seniors.

2. Volunteer patterns among diverse groups

The survey design of this report included questions to Victorian residents to self-identify as part of specific cohorts (CALD, LGBTQI, Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders and people with disability). These questions helped ensure the goal of adequate representation of these cohorts in the data was met. However, the sample size for this report did not allow us to derive statistically significant findings about these cohorts. It is vitally important that the volunteering sector is able to understand volunteering patterns for these groups in more detail, including motivations, barriers to participation, the costs of volunteering, volunteering trends and so on.

3. Volunteering and disadvantage

Indicative data from this research (unpublished due to small sample sizes) suggests likely variations in volunteering patterns for people on different income levels. Socio-economic volunteering patterns are complex and intersect with other factors, such as age, location, opportunities available and the behaviours of entire communities. Further research into the relationship between volunteering and socio-economic differences would be helpful to guide inclusive volunteering policy and practice.

Furthermore, as a key mechanism for service delivery, volunteerism in places of concentrated disadvantage is another area that should be examined to assist policymaking.

4. Volunteering and young people

Engaging younger people in volunteering, particularly to diversify volunteer workforces, is an area of interest for leaders of volunteers in Victoria. This report aggregates the motivations and barriers for all Victorians. Research specifically into younger Victorians will help the sector better prepare for the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related economic recession adds another layer of complexity and set of challenges to understand in relation to young people. In a time of lower employment, volunteering can provide meaningful activity and help develop skills and capabilities that can support a pathway to paid employment. Further research could aim to understand young people who are at high risk of long-term unemployment or who are from disadvantaged groups and areas.

5. Volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic

This report provides initial data on how the pandemic has affected the sector, and the findings are in line with other relevant research reports. However, as noted, this report's insights are a snapshot of specific weeks in the early stages of the pandemic and restrictions (see Appendix D).

Further research would support greater understanding of:

- » the long-term impact of health concerns and restrictions on volunteering, including how and whether volunteers re-engage with organisations, and
- » the impact of the second wave of the coronavirus and Stage 3 and Stage 4 lockdown restrictions.

6. Informal volunteering

Informal volunteering is within the scope of this report and is included in key findings and headline figures, such as 2.3 million Victorians over the age of 15 volunteer.

The data collection method for Section 2: The Profile of volunteer-involving organisations, while open to responses from non-incorporated organisations, strongly favours responses by formal VIOs. This does not compromise the integrity of the data in this report, but does not provide a full picture of informal volunteering.

Research into informal volunteering is important for improved understanding of social and cultural capital and, for example, to understand how volunteering relates to social cohesion and community resilience. A lot of volunteering activity occurs informally in the community, and often goes unnoticed, as different cultures, community groups, or age groups vary in how they perceive social participation. For example, there are high levels of informal volunteering in Aboriginal communities in Australia. Informal volunteering has not only been prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also powerful models of informal volunteering service delivery and community support have come to the fore.

7. Volunteer sector-specific research

In Victoria, some sectors are leading with the development of contemporary volunteering research. Two examples are:

- » the Victorian health volunteering sector,¹⁵ and
- » the Victorian environment volunteering sector.¹⁶

This report aggregates findings of the entire volunteer sector, which is extremely diverse. For more granular and tailored understandings, standalone research reports should be conducted to uncover issues and trends unique to those contexts. Some sector-specific areas for future research¹⁷ include:

Community sport.

Sport plays a very significant role in community connectedness and health and wellbeing, particularly for rural and regional communities. Sport is often the hub to many other connections. The community sports sector relies on in-person activities. Further understanding is needed to support the sector re-engage and revitalise communities after the pandemic.

Aged care.

Volunteers are a vital part of the aged-care workforce, supporting the wellbeing of older people in their homes and in residential settings. At a time when major reforms are under consideration that could greatly impact existing models of volunteerism, more evidence is needed to inform decision-making.¹⁸

Emergency management.

This sector has been the subject of active research and policy development. It is highlighted here due to the importance of volunteers involved in emergency management frameworks and because of the escalating challenges of emergencies, which have become national and interstate in nature. The 2019-20 bushfires are an example of this, and this research reported strong motivations by respondents to increase their volunteering and community support around this topic. Further research will help the emergency management sector undertake workforce planning and prepare for the future.

¹⁵ See www.bendigohealth.org.au/Assets/Files/LOHVE%20Report%20v1.pdf

¹⁶ See www.environment.vic.gov.au/victorians-volunteering-for-nature

¹⁷ These sectors were highlighted by the Project Reference Group for this report and is not an exhaustive list.

¹⁸ www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteering-Australia-submission-to-the-Aged-Care-Royal-Commission_Jul-2020.pdf

¹⁹ www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4159.0.55.005Main+Features5March+2018

8. Australian Bureau of Statistic collections

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the most common and reliable source of data on volunteering. It collects data on volunteering through the Census and the General Social Survey. Work has been done to improve and expand data collection methods for the 2019 General Social Survey. Further areas of research could be expanded to complement data on volunteering patterns, such as the costs of volunteering and pathways to employment.

The ABS has collected a lot of additional data on the paid workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, far less data has been collected on the volunteer workforce. Given the large number of volunteers, the wide range of volunteering activities and the economic and social value of volunteering, this information would be valuable to document and understand.

9. State of Volunteering report across Australia

It is recommended that the Australian Government commission a State of Volunteering report for all states and territories. While the research in this report improves our knowledge significantly, the benefits of a national report would include:

- » being able to make direct comparisons between states
- » an ability to more easily identify trends over time, and
- » a greater sample size to better understand volunteer patterns for socio-economic groups and geographic cohorts.

Appendix A

Victorian Resident Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey.

To make sure that we have a good cross section of the community, we would firstly like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

Gender:

- Male Female Other

What is your age?

- 15 to 24 45 to 54
 25 to 34 55 to 64
 35 to 44 65+

For the 12 months of 2019, what was your approximate annual household income? (*national quintiles*)

- <\$38,999
 \$39,000 – \$69,499
 \$69,500 – \$109,499
 \$109,500 – \$168,499
 >\$168,500

What is your postcode?

metro / regional / remote

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes of your (very valuable!) time.

This survey seeks to understand how people volunteer in Victoria.

Even if you don't or can't volunteer, your responses are important.

It all helps us understand the complete picture – we will only ask questions that are relevant to you.

We will also ask about your volunteering in 2019 and in the last month. This will help us understand further the impacts of COVID-19 on volunteering.

1a. Are you currently, or during 2019, were you employed – full time, part time or casual or on a contract basis?

- Yes No (*go to Q3a*)

1b. How many hours of paid work did you do?

On average per month in 2019	In the last month
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

2a. Do you, or did you during 2019, participated in a workplace volunteering program?

This is a program where you are paid by your employer to volunteer with another organisation such as a charity.

- Yes No (*go to Q3a*)

2b. On average, how many hours per month did this involve

On average per month in 2019	Total in the last month
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3a. Have you given your time to any of the following?

At this stage, we are only interested in unpaid donations of time, not money.

By unpaid, we mean that you did not receive a salary or wage for your effort, unless you were paid through a formal, employer-sponsored volunteering program (included below).

You may, however, receive an honorarium or have had your expenses reimbursed.

We also do not want to include donations of time that only benefit your family. For example, in this study, helping your cousin, child or grandchild with their homework is not volunteering; however, coaching their football team does count, because other, non-family members directly benefit.

Include any workplace volunteering you reported in the last question.

	In 2019	In the last month
For a not-for-profit organisation <i>Such as a sporting club, political party, environmental/ animal welfare or service club/ special interest association, church or charity</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No
For a government organisation <i>Such as a public school, hospital or a local government service and the like</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No
For a private/commercial organisation <i>Such as a private aged care facility, festival or event</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No
For people in your community, excluding family members <i>Examples might include looking after children, property or pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone a lift or advice</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No

If no to all of Q3a, please go to Q5a

3b. (if yes) Including travel time, actual volunteering, administration, and any online or other activities – how many hours did you volunteer?

	On average per month in 2019	In total in the last month
For a not-for-profit organisation <i>Such as a sporting club, political party, environmental/ animal welfare or service club/ special interest association, church or charity</i>		
For a government organisation <i>Such as a public school, hospital or a local government service and the like</i>		
For a private/commercial organisation <i>Such as a private aged care facility, festival or event</i>		
For people in your community , excluding family members <i>Examples might include looking after children, property or pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone a lift or advice</i>		

3c. What percentage of your volunteering was done?

	In 2019	In the last month
Online or from home	%	%
Within your local community	%	%
Somewhere else in Victoria	%	%
Somewhere else in Australia	%	%
In a developing country	%	%
In the rest of world	%	%
TOTAL	100%	100%

4a. On average, how much money did you personally spend **per month** on your **volunteering activities?** (Please provide a rough estimate for each. If no spend, either leave blank or enter 0)

	On average per month in 2019	Total in the last month
Memberships, licences and subscriptions	\$	
Transport, fuel and motor vehicle expenses	\$	
Self-education and training	\$	
Uniforms and clothing	\$	
Tools, equipment and other resources	\$	
Phone, internet and communications	\$	
Food and beverages	\$	
Accommodation	\$	
Any other expenses*? (give specifics)	\$	

* If you listed 'other expenses', please describe what these were

4b. Did you get reimbursed for any of these expenses?

Yes No (go to Q5)

	In 2019	In the last month
4c. (if yes) How much were you reimbursed in total?		

5a. Have you made any donations of money to volunteer involving organisations?

- Yes No (go to Q6)

5b. (if yes) Approximately how much in total?

In 2019	In the last month

If you answered no to all of Q3a skip to Q7

6a. So, why do you volunteer? (Please select up to a maximum of 3 from the following reasons)

- Social connection (to meet new people, be involved, develop friends and social networks)
- Support a cause (such as an association to an organisation or cause, need or desire to give back and make a difference)
- Develop new skills, learning (for a pathway to employment, career development)
- Community (to contribute to communities in emergencies and crisis, help build community resilience)
- Aligns to my values (for cultural or humanitarian reasons)
- Personal development (to gain confidence and self-esteem, feel valued and part of a team)
- Enjoyment (for personal interest, fun)

- Health benefits (to stay fit, healthy, connected, needed, for mental health)
- For skilled volunteering or work-related volunteering program (encouraged to volunteer through work programs)
- No clear motivation (such as someone suggested it)
- Another reason - please list

Have your reasons for volunteering changed in the last month?

- Yes No

(if yes) How have they changed?

7. What would you say are the things that **prevented** you giving (more) time as a volunteer? (Please select **up to 5** reasons from each column)

	In 2019	In the last month
Limited time		
Work commitments		
Family commitments		
Travel		
Never been asked		
Lack of communication / information about volunteering		
No perceived benefit		
Lack of interest / don't want to		
Concern about level of commitment / work involved		
Too shy		
General health		
Age		
Disability		
Bad experiences with volunteering		
Lack of skills or ability		
Don't know where to go / lack of information		
Worries about legal liability		
Employers discourage participation		
Poor facilities		
Preference for paid work		
No available volunteering		
No available online / remote volunteering		
Policies and practices of volunteering involving organisations		
Lack of appreciation		
Concern about health risks to yourself		
Other *		

* Which other reason/s prevented you giving more time as a volunteer **in 2019**?

8a. (If you answered no to Q1a OR Q3a, you are not employed, or not a volunteer – go to Q8c)

Now we'd like you to think about how volunteering impacts on your employment.

For example, you might be a happier person, have stronger networks, and have access to certain skills that all improve your productivity.

On the flip side, you might need to take a few more days off, feel less productive or more tired due to your volunteering.

So do you think your volunteering impacts positively or negatively on your employment, or does it make no difference?

- Positively
- Negatively
- No difference (go to Q9)

8b. And to what extent is that? (just an approximate percentage is fine)

%

8c. Now we'd like you to think about how volunteering impacts on people's employment.

For example, you might be a happier person, have stronger networks, and have access to certain skills that all improve your productivity.

On the flip side, you might need to take a few

more days off, feel less productive or more tired due to your volunteering.

So do you think your volunteering impacts positively or negatively on people's employment, or does it make no difference?

- Positively
- Negatively
- No difference (go to Q9)

8d. And to what extent is that? (just an approximate percentage is fine)

%

9a. Assuming things return to normal in a post-COVID world, in **3 years' time** are you likely to be volunteering more or less than you did in 2019?

- More
- Less
- About the same
- Not volunteering at all
- Don't know/unsure

9b. And by how much? (an approximate percentage is fine)

%

10. Finally, we would like to know if the 2019-20 bushfires significantly changed your volunteering?

- Yes, it significantly changed my volunteering
- No, it did not change my volunteering

(if yes) Please explain how the 2019-20 bushfires changed your volunteering?

To help us understand the diverse needs of Victorians, please tell us a little more about yourself.

11. In which country were you born?

Prefer not to say

13. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

12. Do you identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex and Queer and questioning (LGBTIQ) community?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

14. Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Appendix B

Volunteer-involving organisation (VIO) survey

Due to the bushfires and current impacts of COVID-19, responses to relevant questions have been split into two sections, about volunteering patterns across the 12 months of 2019 and current volunteering patterns (use the last one month to create an average).

1. What is the name of the organisation/group you represent?

2. What type of organisation/group are you?

- A tax-exempt, not-for-profit organisation (such as a sporting club, political party, religious or other incorporated body)
- Local government agency using volunteers to deliver services
- State government agency using volunteers to deliver services
- Federal government agency using volunteers to deliver services
- Commercial (private) firm using volunteers to deliver services
- Informal, ad hoc or casual community group using volunteers to deliver services
- Workplace donating employees' / members' time to others (eg workplace volunteering program)
- Volunteer Resource Centre (VRC)

3a. Does your organisation deliver services funded by the Victorian State Government?

Definition: Does your organisation receive funding under a service agreement or contract with a Victorian State Government department or agency; where the contract requires you to deliver requested activities (e.g. number of beds or client contact hours), with defined performance indicators, regular reporting, mandatory standards and/or compliance requirements. The department may have requested these services through a tender or expression of interest.

- Yes No (go to Q4)

3b. Approximately how much Victorian Government funding did your organisation receive in 2019 for these services?

3c. To what extent does your organisation use volunteers to deliver these services? *Rate on a scale 1-5*

Volunteers:

Are not used

1 2 3 4 5

Provide less than 25% of work

1 2 3 4 5

25-49% of work

1 2 3 4 5

50-74% of work

1 2 3 4 5

75-100% of work

1 2 3 4 5

4. How many individuals volunteered with your organisation

For the 12 months 2019?

Currently (in the last month)?

5. On average, how many hours per month did they volunteer?

For the 12 months 2019?

Currently (in the last month)?

6a. Who volunteers in your organisation/group?

- People who work full-time
- People who don't work or work less than full-time
- Families with children
- Skilled professionals
- Corporate sponsored individuals
- Corporate sponsored groups
- Under 18s
- Over 65s
- Indigenous / Torres Strait Islanders
- People with a disability
- People who are travelling
- Migrants / culturally and linguistically diverse people
- People volunteering online or remotely
- Spontaneous or 'one-off' volunteers (for an event or project)
- Parents of program participants
- Past and current program participants
- Centrelink clients / jobactive placements
- Other (please specify)

6b. Has this altered in the last month due to COVID-19? If so how, text box

7. How do you typically attract volunteers?

	For the 12 months 2019?	Currently (in the last month)?
Personally approaching participants, members and their networks (word of mouth)		
SEEK volunteer		
Social media / website		
Traditional media (e.g. posters, signs, newsletters)		
Referral by another agency (e.g. Centrelink)		
Open days / events		
Volunteer Resource Centres / Volunteering Victoria		
General brand investment / development		
Other (please specify)		

8. How do you motivate and retain volunteers?

	For the 12 months 2019?	Currently (in the last month)?
Reimbursement of expenses		
Paid honorariums		
Awards (e.g. certificates / letters of appreciation)		
Rewards (e.g. movie tickets)		
Out of hours gatherings / events / celebrations		
Public ceremonies and events		
Status (e.g. titles, rank, Australia Day honours)		
Accredited training (e.g. Certificate II, Diploma)		
Non-accredited training (e.g. short courses, workshops)		
Mentoring programs		
Engagement through media (e.g. website, socials, newsletters, press releases)		
Pre-agreed penalties / sanctions for non-participation		
Personal connections / relationship building		
Flexible work arrangements		
Diverse and progressively challenging volunteer opportunities		
Dedicated volunteer management training and/or resources		
Induction and orientation programs		
Discounted or free meals, uniforms, insurance, accommodation etc.		
Positive brand development / association (i.e. investing in your organisation's brand generally, without specifically targeting volunteers)		
Other (please specify)		

9. How has volunteering changed for your organisation?

	Over the last 3 years?	Currently (in the last month)?
More people want to volunteer		
People want to volunteer for more hours		
More people want to volunteer for occasional as opposed to regular hours		
Volunteers want more flexible hours		
There are more companies wanting to volunteer employees' time		
More volunteers are claiming expenses		
Volunteers require more training		
It is easier to find volunteers for service delivery		
It is easier to find Board-level volunteers		
More university students volunteer		
More volunteering is done online or from home		

10a. What were your total volunteering-related expenses in the 12 months of 2019?

- Wages and salaries
- Materials, tools and equipment
- Induction, education and training
- Motor vehicle, transport and fuel
- Food and beverages
- Accommodation
- Volunteer reimbursements
- Grants to organisations
- Administration costs
- Other

10b. Has this increased, decreased, stayed about same in the last month due to COVID-19?

12. What were the main issues facing your organisation/group?

	For the 12 months 2019?	Currently (in the last month)?
Volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition		
Red tape and/or regulatory requirements		
Governance		
Organisational or volunteer program sustainability		
Resources to implement best practice (extra people, more funds, management willingness)		
Engaging diverse volunteers (younger and older, people with disabilities, CALD etc.)		
Risk, insurance and/or legal		
Change management		
Valuing and investment in volunteers and volunteering		
Volunteer rights, responsibilities, protection, dispute management		
External changes and influences (e.g. NDIS, Centrelink, jobactive)		
Time management		
Volunteer management		
Evaluation impact, measurement and reporting		
Workforce (paid and/or unpaid) culture, inclusion and diversity		
Technology, digital disruption		
Communication and marketing		
Positioning and valuing of volunteering within your organisation		
Funding, grants, sponsorship		
Understanding and implementing National Standards for Volunteer Involvement		
Other (please specify)		
Please comment		

13. In 3 years from now, are people more or less likely to be volunteering with your organisation?

- More
- Less
- A lot more
- A lot less
- About the same

Appendix C

Input–output modelling

The value of expenditure associated with volunteering in Victoria can be understood in two contexts. Firstly, the amounts spent by individuals, businesses or government on volunteering reveal a value that the community perceives in the activity. Secondly, expenditure on volunteering creates a change in final demand that has an economic impact on employment, output and gross national product. The economic impact includes the impact on intermediate goods and the compensation of employees.

Analysis of the total impact, including indirect effects, is based on an understanding that industries, and individual companies within these industries, do not exist in a vacuum, but use each other's products to produce their own. Thus, an increase in demand for one industry's products leads to increases in the demand of other 'linked' industries.

An input–output representation of the economy comprises a set of industries that are linked by these input–output or intermediate relationships and by the final demand for each industry's output. The model used in this report is the Victorian Regional Input–Output Matrix (RIOM) model.

Broadly speaking, input–output modelling examines how different industries interact to produce final demand. For example, a dairy farmer (as part of the Agriculture industry) may sell some of their milk to a cheesemaker (part of the Manufacturing industry), who uses it as an ingredient. This company in turn sells some of its output to a retail wholesaler (part of the Wholesale Trade industry), who sells some of it to a VIO, who passes it on in a meal to a homeless person.

The same milk has been sold several times, but only the last transaction represents final demand. Thus, the inputs required by one industry form

part of the demand for the products of another.

There are two major types of input–output model: open and closed models. In open models, the labour and wages of employees and the gross operating surplus of companies are treated as primary inputs in the production of goods and services; if you want to produce more widgets, you must employ more widget makers. This type of model captures the direct and indirect effects of changes in demand in one industry on the other industries in the economy.

By contrast, RIOM is a closed model that includes the household sector as a separate industry. This enables the consideration of induced effects of changes in demand. Induced effects reflect the changes in consumer spending resulting from changes in economic activity and therefore in employment. The household sector is considered as an 'industry' whose outputs are labour, and whose inputs consist of consumer spending; if you create more employment, you also create an increase in demand from the household sector for consumer goods like food, accommodation, entertainment and so on.

RIOM applies the ABS 2016-17 transaction tables in conjunction with demand and employment information for each Australian state and territory to model the impact of changes in demand on these regional economies, estimating changes in their output, employment and gross state product.

The transaction tables used in the model identify 60 industries across 19 industry sectors. For expenditure allocated to each industry sector, a unique multiplier effect is calculated estimating the impact on gross supply, output, gross state product (following the value-added method), employment, wages, imports, and taxation.

The Leontief multiplier is given here as:

$$(1-X-C)^{-1} \times LV_E = \Delta O$$

LV_E = vector of volunteering expenditure
 ΔO = change in total output
 X = transaction table of intermediate demand
 C = table of induced consumption demand

As previously noted, the producers of volunteering (the volunteers) in Victoria spent a combined amount of \$396.8 million (direct costs) in 2018-19. This figure represents final demand in three main industry categories:

- » Community services
- » Road transport, and
- » Retail trade.

The expenditure on volunteering in Victoria has an economic impact that includes a combination of increased output by industries directly subject to increased volunteering-related demand, increased output by suppliers to those industries and their suppliers, as well as increased output by all industries that have a role in supplying the demand of increased expenditure by households, generated by increased wages.

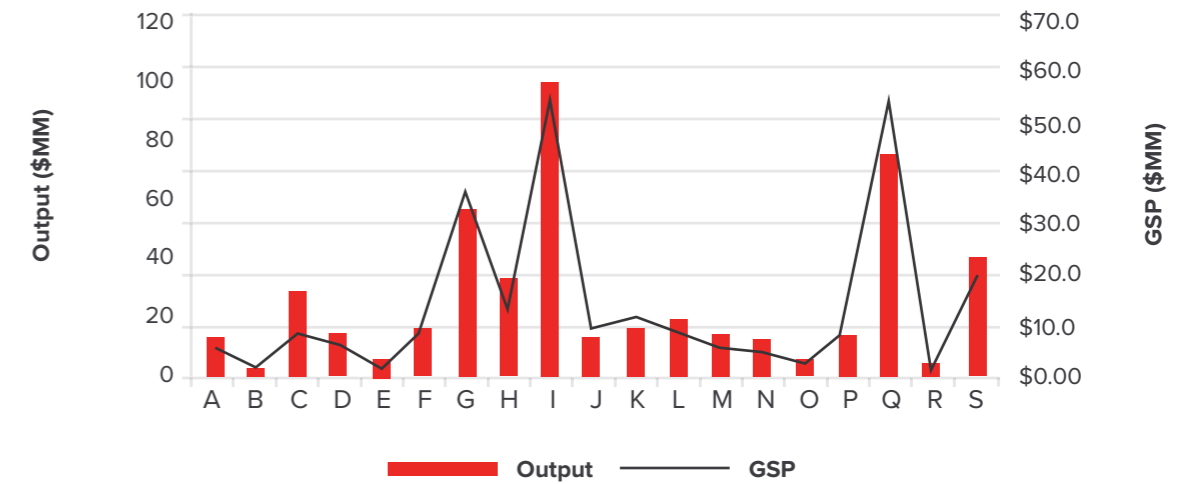
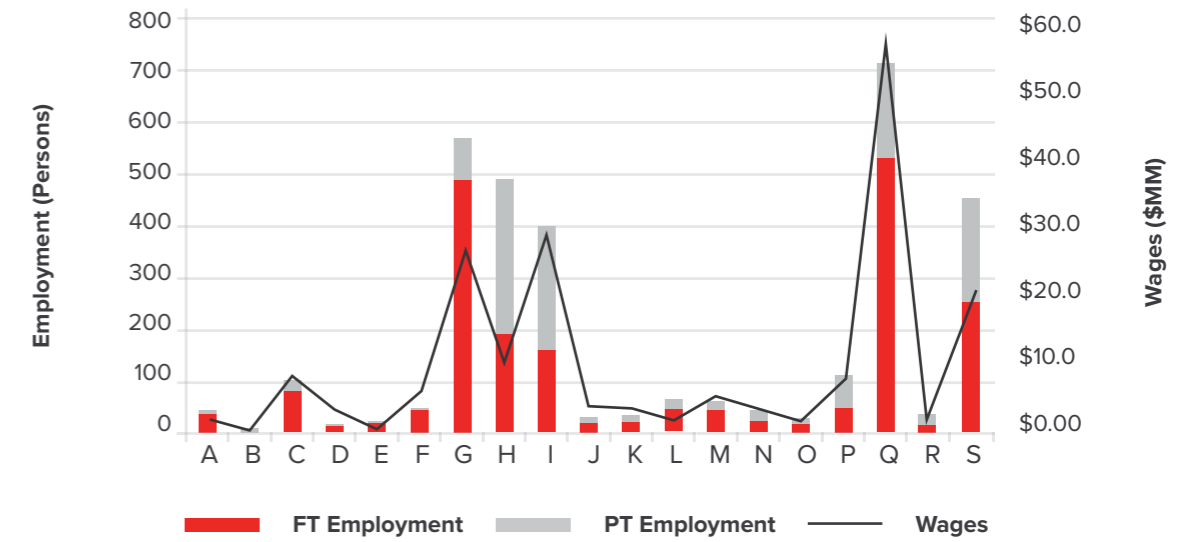
Changes in employment and gross state product (GSP) are proportional to changes in output following the constant return to scale assumption inherent in input–output models. A number of the assumptions that underpin the

analysis are disclosed here:

- » The motivating expenditure for the analysis is the estimated expenditure in 2019. Unless explicitly stated and adjusted for, all data is sourced from that period.
- » Financial multipliers are calculated using the Victorian RIOM model. This model is derived from the ABS 2016-17 Victorian Input–Output Table. Financial multipliers are assumed to be consistent between 2019 and 2016-17.
- » Volunteering activities were fully realised within Victoria in 2019. Investment expenditure is limited to items included in the survey responses, which are assumed to represent typical annual expenditure.
- » Impacts are calculated based on direct, indirect (intermediate inputs), and household consumption effects. Increases in gross operating surplus or taxation revenue are not assumed to directly result in increased expenditure in the Victorian economy (the government sector is not closed).
- » Where demand results in importation of goods or services from outside Victoria (interstate or overseas), no further impact is assumed on the economy.

Impacts across alpha-coded industry sectors and by outputs, GSP and employment are shown in the tables below.

Sector	Code
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	A
Mining	B
Manufacturing	C
Somewhere else in Australia	D
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	E
Construction	F
Wholesale Trade	G
Retail Trade	H
Accommodation and Food Services	I
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	J
Information Media and Telecommunications	K
Financial and Insurance Services	L
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	M
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	N
Administrative and Support Services	O
Education and Training	P
Health Care and Social Assistance	Q
Arts and Recreation Services	R
Other Services	S



Appendix D

Timeline of COVID-19 events, Victorian restrictions and data collection

Month	Key events	Data collection period
January	<p>25 January Australia confirms first case of coronavirus.</p> <p>31 January The World Health Organization declares a global health emergency.</p>	
February	<p>1 February Australia imposes restrictions on air passenger arrivals from China.</p> <p>11 February Coronavirus disease named COVID-19 by World Health Organization.</p>	
March	<p>15 March People arriving in Australia from overseas required to self-isolate for 14 days.</p> <p>16 March State of Emergency declared in Victoria. Ban on non-essential mass gatherings of over 500 people such as cultural events, sporting events or conferences.</p> <p>18 March Victoria ban on indoor public gatherings of more than 100 people and restrictions placed on aged care.</p>	

Month	Key events	Data collection period
March	<p>23 March School close in Victoria. All bars, clubs, restaurants, cinemas, places of worship, casinos and gyms are closed in Australia.</p> <p>26 March Stage 2 restrictions placed on venues and activities. If Victorians can stay home, they must stay home.</p> <p>30 March Stage 3 Stay at Home restrictions imposed.</p> <p>The four reasons to leave the house in Victoria are to get food and supplies, medical care, exercise, or for work or education. Volunteering work is allowed only if it is essential and cannot be done from home.</p> <p>Fine of more than \$1,600 for people breaching restrictions on gatherings of two people and for leaving the house for non-essential reasons.</p>	
April	<p>2 April Over 1,000 cases in Victoria, including over 100 healthcare workers.</p>	<p>30 April VIO survey opened.</p>
May		<p>10-29 May Resident survey open (and included a question about volunteering for the one month prior i.e. April-May).</p>

Month	Key events	Data collection period
June	<p>6 June Victoria reports no new cases for the previous 24 hours.</p> <p>30 June Restrictions placed in priority areas in metropolitan Melbourne.</p>	<p>30 June VIO survey closed.</p>
July	<p>4 July Restrictions for two additional priority areas in metropolitan Melbourne.</p> <p>8 July Victorian and New South Wales interstate border closed.</p> <p>9 July Stage 4 restrictions? for metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.</p> <p>22 July Face coverings mandatory in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire when residents leave their home.</p>	
August	<p>2 August State of Disaster declared in Victoria. Curfew in Melbourne from 8pm to 5am introduced. Stage 4 restrictions imposed in metropolitan Melbourne and Stage 3 restrictions in regional Victoria.</p>	

Appendix E

Photo acknowledgements

Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that submitted a photo for this report.

A complete photo gallery can be found at www.stateofvolunteering.org.au

- Photo 1:** Grading indigenous plants for restoration projects (Bass Coast Landcare Network).
- Photo 2:** St John Ambulance Victoria volunteer Allison at a bushfire deployment.
- Photo 3:** ANZ employee volunteers reviewing the administration of the Back to School program with the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR).
- Photo 4:** Huyen assisting with data entry for the flu clinic (Ballarat Community Health).
- Photo 5:** Access Inc volunteer Derek helping a participant using a computer.
- Photo 6:** Volunteer firefighter during Gippsland Bush fires in January 2020 in Bemm Forest (Country Fire Authority Point Cook).
- Photo 7:** Origin employees and their families assembling solar lights for "Solar Buddy" children living in energy poverty in Tanzania (Origin Energy Foundation).
- Photo 8:** WWF Australia – ANZ volunteers constructing solar lights.
- Photo 9:** Volunteers supporting new arrivals online to learn English, stay connected and mitigate the risks of increased social isolation during COVID-19 (Melbourne Polytechnic - Melbourne Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)).
- Photo 10:** Callum monitors the health of the Moorabool River by conducting regular water quality tests (Waterwatch).
- Photo 11:** Volunteers mending fences (Four Wheel Drive Victoria).
- Photo 12:** Volunteer making a virtual home visit (MannaCare).
- Photo 13:** Wendy and Rosie monitor the health of Lake Colac by conducting regular water quality tests (Waterwatch).
- Photo 14:** Gayle, a volunteer at the Kids First Australia Rosanna Op Shop.
- Photo 15:** Steve, Leo, Ellen and Sue pose in The Hidden Orchard's new storage space.
- Photo 16:** Animal Aid volunteering (GEM Youth Mentoring).
- Photo 17:** Visiting an isolated elderly resident to provide friendship. These two were lucky to meet in person just before the COVID-19 pandemic (The Centre for Continuing Education).
- Photo 18:** Switchboard volunteer assembling care packages for LGBTQI seniors.



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