



Central Coast
Volunteer Strategy
2018 - 2023

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Background

The socio-economic and cultural value of volunteering to Tasmania was conservatively estimated, in 2014, to be worth \$4.9 billion dollars. This figure is much greater than previous estimates based on price or economic impact alone.

If participation in volunteering was increased by 1% per year, it would add an average of \$70.6m. per year in value to the Tasmanian Community.

Treated as a sector in its own right, Volunteering is Tasmania's largest industry by employment. It 'employs' more people than the hospitality, arts and recreation sectors put together, as well as being bigger than all of the agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining industries combined.

Data collected by Volunteering Tasmania in 2014 also noted that most active volunteers were in the 65 –74 year age group.

Aim of this Strategy

This strategy outlines our vision for volunteering in the Central Coast over the next five years.

Its purpose is to guide the Council's actions in developing volunteering across Central Coast, and outlines where we can support and develop volunteering in the wider community during this period.

Why have a volunteer Strategy?

Anecdotally we know that our Central Coast residents are engaged in many and varied volunteer activities that make an invaluable contribution to our community.

We are committed to encouraging, supporting and recognising the importance of volunteering in our local community. Besides having economic value, volunteering gives people a way to connect with and help others in their local community.

Having a volunteer strategy means we can:

- . Respond to new and emerging trends in volunteering
- . Identify future opportunities for volunteering across Council
- . Make sure we have relevant systems and processes in place to respond to spontaneous volunteering in emergencies which affect the broad community
- . Promote best practice in volunteering
- . Target our messages to best reward and recruit volunteers

Alignment with Federal and State Government Volunteer Strategies

Federal and State Governments have developed their own volunteer policies and strategies. These highlight the important role that all levels of government have in developing and supporting the volunteer sector.

Australian Government context

The Australian Governments' National Volunteer Strategy outlines the Governments six Key Focus Areas. Their areas for action include:

- . Understanding and responding to trends that are changing the way people volunteer
- . Harnessing technology to increase access to opportunities for volunteering, increase engagement amongst volunteers and enable collaboration between organisations
- . Reduce the complexity of regulation and risk management requirements
- . Strengthen volunteer management and training
- . Improve advocacy for the sector
- . Increase recognition of volunteers and the contribution they make to Australian society.

Volunteering Tasmania context

Volunteering Tasmania is the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania.

Volunteering Tasmania has identified 5 key actions in its strategic plan 2015 – 2018, they are:

- . Volunteer engagement – individuals and communities achieving positive outcomes by engaging in volunteering.
- . Volunteer Sector Development – Organisations achieve positive outcomes by engaging and effectively managing volunteers.
- . Organisational strength – Volunteering Tasmania has a sustainable future
- . Research – Volunteering Tasmania has a strong research platform
- . Policy and Advocacy – Volunteering Tasmania influences decision makers as the leading professional body in the volunteer sector.

Documents that support this Strategy

Strategic Plan 2014 – 2024

This Volunteer Strategy is supported by two of the platforms outlined in the strategic plan:

Platforms:

Liveability – encompasses notions such as quality of life, the character of our place, ease of living, the health and well-being of our community who live here, and the sense of security afforded by living and working in a given community.

Sustainability – the Council and its community need to have within their control and/or at their disposal the capability and resources to meet the needs of the community now and into the future.

Strategic Direction 2 – A connected Central Coast

Seeks to enhance connectivity both within Central Coast and the region – how people move from place to place, how accessible places are, and how people connect with each other and the services in the Central Coast.

- Engage with the community to achieve meaningful positive local ageing outcomes
- Engage with youth to achieve meaningful local youth outcomes
- Engage with the community to achieve meaningful local arts and cultural outcomes

Strategic direction 3, Community capacity and creativity

In conjunction with community, volunteer and business groups, develop capacity and cultivate a culture that values and showcases creativity, encourages community-based solutions, stimulates innovation and supports innovators in order to achieve quality opportunities and outcomes across all sections of the community.

- Engage with the community to achieve positive local ageing outcomes
- Engage with the community to achieve local youth outcomes
- Engage with the community to achieve meaningful local arts and culture outcomes

Central Coast Social Planning Framework

In June 2016 the Council adopted the Central Coast Social Planning Framework.

Outlined in the Social Planning Framework are the 6 areas identified where Council can undertake within its roles as provider, facilitator and advocate to work to achieve around those 6 areas which are known to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of its residents.

Those 6 areas are:

Active – Opportunities and facilities to gather and participate in recreational activities and cultural experiences.

Engaged – capabilities and networks to volunteer our time and skills and engage in decisions that affect us.

Included – Connectivity and inclusivity for our communities to access services, shops, education, work and play.

Learning – The knowledge, skills and commitment to learning needed to participate fully in society and reach our potential

Secure – Local work opportunities and affordable living in a well-governed and safe community environment

Healthy – Local resources to support good food and lifestyle choices that build physical health and emotional resilience.

Volunteering by its nature and benefits, as outlined further in this document is an appropriate vehicle to support Council in its commitment to “working with its community to

make sure that the Central Coast is a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. The aim is that everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential and fully participate in all aspects of community life.

As the needs of many individuals in our community become more complex, the demand on relevant support systems and services will come under increased pressure. To effectively respond, all involved will need to work together to achieve local social outcomes.

In this changing environment the contribution of volunteers both economically and socially becomes increasingly important.

Strategy Development

In May 2017 Dr Elizabeth Shannon and Dr Sue Pearsons from the University of Tasmania, released the findings of their findings on Volunteering in Tasmania in a paper 'Community volunteering – 'Understanding motivation, sustaining participation and capturing benefits.'

Volunteering has been linked to lower rates of mortality, increases in physical health and improved mental health. At a population level, increasing the volunteer workforce may be seen as a preventative, public health intervention, addressing the poor health and wellbeing outcomes of Tasmanians.

Shannon, Pearson and Girkin also surveyed Tasmanians on the physical and psychological benefits of volunteering, measuring: self-esteem, social connectedness, career, environment, altruism, learning and resilience, respondents ranked the benefits of volunteering in the following order:

- . Altruistically express personal values
- . Providing learning opportunities
- . Expressing environmental concerns
- . Growing and developing psychologically
- . Fulfilling the expectations of significant people in their lives
- . Building resilience in the face of negative experiences
- . Furthering their careers
- . Career development is not the primary benefit of volunteering, it is a common secondary benefit

As part of their research six focus groups were also taken to investigate how to encourage more people to volunteer, strategies that volunteer organisations can use to help sustain volunteer involvement over time.

The following themes were captured, and are here in order of frequency:

1. Promotion which highlights & offers benefits, including health benefits
2. People who volunteer are self-motivated and interested in the activity
3. The benefits of volunteering should outweigh costs
4. Flexibility and diversity in activities
5. Made to feel valued through reward and acknowledgement
6. Volunteers selling volunteering
7. Normalising volunteering

What motivates people to volunteer?

Volunteering in Tasmania outlines the ways in which people are motivated to volunteer.

One in three survey respondents started volunteering after encouragement by other volunteers, they either knew someone who was volunteering or were asked to volunteer.

Teaching others was also outlined as a key factor for people 'wanting to pass on knowledge and skills, or for those who wanted to learn from experienced individuals.'

Volunteers who are self-motivated to volunteer will usually only volunteer in areas of interest or in causes that are important to them. Their level of motivation and participation will also be determined largely by their level of care for the undertaking they are participating in.

The two key areas of volunteer work identified in the survey were **community** – caring about others and giving back to the community in areas such as children in state care, animals and families, and **environment**, improvement and protection of natural areas and animal habitats, preserving the Tasmanian environment for future generations.

Skill maintenance and development was also a motivator for the 'self-motivating' group, enabling them to maintain skills they no longer use or enhance those they already have.

Benefits from Volunteering

The Volunteering Tasmanian Survey reports the following four as the main benefits volunteers get from volunteering:

Value expression

Volunteers are motivated and rewarded by the opportunity to express their values through volunteering such as giving back to people in need or environmental conservation.

Health

Many people choose to volunteer to improve or maintain their health, this is especially true for older citizens who are now retired and wish to remain active.

Social connection

Volunteering provides valuable social interaction. It provides opportunities to connect, reduces isolation and can provide a sense of worth and enjoyment.

Career

Career development although not identified as a primary benefit of volunteering it is a common secondary motivator for many study participants.

Making benefits outweigh the costs

If organisations can cover some or all of out of pocket expenses they are more likely to attract a wider range of volunteers and assist in volunteers feeling valued and appreciated.

However, given that many organisations who employ volunteers are charities covering expenses is not always viable. Keeping costs low and providing rewards such as free training and certificates of appreciation can go a long way in encouraging participation.

Flexibility

Providing volunteers with a routine which works for them is important, especially where they volunteer with a number of organisations, or they have other commitments.

Activity Diversity

Motivation can be assisted by varying the activities of volunteers

Actions for Central Coast Council

In developing the Central Coast Volunteering Strategy, we spoke to volunteers, as well as developing a Volunteering survey to understand better who our volunteers are, what they are seeking from volunteering, and what the rewards and challenges are in volunteering.

Not surprisingly, feedback from our volunteers aligned strongly with the findings from the *Shannon and Pearsons report*.

Our volunteers give up their time to volunteer in their various roles to:

Give back to the community

- . Help others
- . Share ideas
- . For social interaction and to engage with people
- . For their mental health and well being
- . And to develop new skills or stay up to date

The difficulties they faced with volunteering were also in step, with respondents naming up the use of unfamiliar equipment and processes, juggling time and responsibilities and knowing where to go to find available volunteering opportunities listed up as the main challenges to volunteering.

Volunteers did however see in the main that challenges with equipment and process could be overcome with training, and that time conflicts were usually a result of them being over committed in other areas rather than volunteering. Promoting the places to access volunteer opportunities is also identified and is something Council will review.

Feedback from our Volunteer survey and the results from – ‘Community volunteering – Understanding motivation, sustaining participation and capturing benefits’ have informed the development of the Actions for the Central Coast Volunteer Strategy 2017 – 2020.

References and further reading:

Community Volunteering, Understanding Motivation, Sustaining participation, Capturing Benefits: *Dr Elizabeth Shannon, Dr Sue Pearson and Fiona Girkin*, University of Tasmania, May 2017

The Economic Value of Volunteering in Tasmania, Report: MMC LINK, Hobart Tasmania, May 2014

State of Volunteering 2014:
The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering
Volunteering Tasmania 2014

Australian Government National Volunteering Strategy
Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Premier and Cabinet 2011



Central Coast Volunteer Strategy 2018 -2023 – Actions

	<i>Strategic Outcome</i>	<i>SPF Dimension</i>	<i>Actions/ related tasks</i>	<i>Council Role / Timings</i>	<i>Responsible Members</i>	<i>Start / Finish Date</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
LEARNING	Council will advocate / promote the health and social benefits of volunteering using existing channels such as social media and promotional spaces using the place brand “great natured place”	Knowledge	Use social media and display areas to promote the documented health and well-being benefits of volunteering, as well as the testimonials given by volunteers	Facilitator / med term	Community Development Officer	1 August 2018	Promotional material developed promoting the benefits of volunteering utilising “Great Natured Place” brand.
SECURE	Council will review its Volunteer Management System Manual	Governance	Council will review its Volunteer Management documentation bi-annually to ensure it is current and in line with best practice standards	Provider Long term July 2018 – Dec 2018	Visitor Services co-ordinator	July 2020	Review completed, and changes communicated to relevant parties and stakeholders
	Explore how Council can assist organisations requiring members to have working with children and other clearances to	Governance	Council will explore ways in which it can assist organisations to understand their obligations and the process of meeting clearance requirements	Facilitator	Community Wellbeing Officer	Oct 2018	Review completed. Assistance method identified. Action undertaken.

	understand the process						
INCLUDED	Work with Volunteering Tasmania to support the Pop-up desk in Ulverstone Linc.	Included (Access)	1. Develop material and utilise CCC social media to assist Volunteering Tasmania in promoting volunteering opportunities in Central Coast. 2. Promote Volunteering Tas presence in LINC	Facilitator	Community Development Officer	April 2018	1. Provision of material to Volunteer Tas and collaborative relationship developed 2. Promotional activity undertaken
	Continue to review and explore ways Council can support organisations in recognising / thanking their volunteers	Engaged (Volunteers)	Review Volunteer Week certificate / recognition awards to consider other options to assist organisations in thanking their volunteers for their contribution, including name change from recognition to 'thank you'	Facilitator Medium term	Community Wellbeing Officer	November 2018	New processes and activities developed for supporting volunteer recognition by the organisations they are involved in. Research change in language from 'recognition' to 'thank you' terminology

	Increase Council volunteer numbers	Inclusion	Explore ways to assist existing volunteers in encouraging others to try volunteering, and defining roles and responsibilities	Facilitator / Long term	Visitor Services co-ordinator	Feb 2019	Initiatives developed in response to volunteer feedback
ACTIVE	More people aware of Central Coast Council's website and social media spaces for finding out about opportunities to volunteer	Participation	Devise methods to create reach and awareness of Council's FB pages and web site including utilising existing communication avenues, e.g. electronic sign board, Coast to Canyon newsletter and VIC to promote.	Facilitator / medium term	Community Development Officer Ulverstone VIC coordinator	May 2018	Increased traffic to Website and facebook pages
ENGAGED	External Volunteer organisations utilising Councils social media avenues to promote /advertise opportunities for volunteering	Networks	Promote use of Councils Social media pages as a way for organisations seeking volunteers.	Facilitator Medium Term	Community Development Officer Community Wellbeing Officer	June 2019	Organisations requiring volunteers utilising Councils Facebook page to advertise promote

	Work with Volunteering Tas to provide training opportunities for volunteer organisations and those reliant on volunteer involvement.	Learning	Council supporting opportunities for training through Volunteering Tas to clubs and organisations.	Facilitator Medium term	Community Development Officer	Nov 2018	Training initiatives planned and held
	Explore conducting a volunteer expo with volunteer organisations	Networks	Council partnering with clubs, organisations and groups to hold a volunteer expo	Facilitator	Community Wellbeing Officer	June 2018	Expo organised, and feedback gathered from participants on relevance and enquiries from potential volunteers.
	Promoting flexible Volunteering	Volunteers	Promote the benefits and flexible arrangements of volunteering	Facilitator	Community Development Officer	April 2019	Greater opportunities identified for people to consider volunteering under role sharing arrangements
	Getting back to work/volunteering	Skills	Identify partners to deliver a 'retail skills' workshop for those wanting to volunteer in places where the use of retail technology may be required	Facilitator Medium term	Community Development Officer	March 2019	Skills workshop held

	Develop “There’s always room for one more” – Great Natured Place campaign to increase engagement in volunteer week	Volunteers	Acknowledging volunteers in their organisation ‘groups’ to overcome the barrier of volunteers not wanting to be singled out for praise	Facilitator	Community Development Officer	April 2019	Greater numbers of organisations engaging in volunteer week.
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