



# VOLUNTEERS OF BOROONDARA





“ People in Boroondara are very keen to volunteer. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and they all share an incredible enthusiasm to want to be involved in rich and meaningful volunteering ”

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# ABOUT THE BOROONDARA VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTRE

The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) actively encourages and supports volunteering through a variety of free services for volunteers and community organisations seeking volunteers.

Support for volunteers includes:

- a referral service to help you find volunteering opportunities
- community events to meet with community organisations and learn about volunteer opportunities
- the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank; an initiative which connects professionals with community organisations seeking specialised skills for short-term, project based roles
- training workshops
- newsletters to keep you up to date on the latest volunteer opportunities and community news
- recognition events.

**Contact the BVRC today:**



9278 4550



[bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au)

Explore volunteer roles which meet your interests, skills and availability by visiting the volunteer portal: **[volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au](https://volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au)**



# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Boroondara is home to a thriving and diverse volunteering community. On any given day, hundreds of volunteers generously give their time to add value and improve the lives of others in the Boroondara community.

Volunteering is an important way of life for our community, with 26% of residents (35,999 people) reporting that they performed voluntary work in the 12 months prior to the 2016 Census, the highest rate of volunteering in the greater Melbourne area.

From preparing meals, revegetating parklands, preserving local history to providing transport for vulnerable residents to get to medical appointments - volunteers are there to roll up their sleeves where it is most needed.

Volunteers of Boroondara is a collection of 12 stories highlighting the unique contribution volunteers make to our community. The stories reveal their motivations, what it means to participate to their community and why they encourage others to take up a volunteer role.

I would like to thank our featured volunteers for sharing their inspiring stories with us, and for helping to make our city vibrant and inclusive, meeting the needs and aspirations of our community.

If you're inspired to take up a volunteer role, I encourage you to visit our volunteering portal at [volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au](http://volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au) to find opportunities that match your interests, skills and availability.



# ADAM TRUDGEN

Technical Volunteer, Solve Disability Solutions

“ I feel the technology I make helps by giving people extra freedom in life and reduces the impact that a disability brings. ”

By day, Adam works as an electrician. By evening, Adam uses his skills as a technical volunteer, creating modified equipment for Boroondara residents living with a disability. Over the last seven years, Adam has used his qualification as an electrician and experience in electronic design and automation, to create custom made assistive technology devices, including a wheelchair friendly mini-golf putter, modified cutlery, a foot controlled camera shutter and even a fully robotic pool cue arm.

His volunteer work supports the mission of Solve Disability Solutions, an organisation that provides Occupational Therapy (OT) and custom Assistive Technology (AT) services for people living with a disability or chronic illness.

With the assistance of an occupational therapist, Adam meets with clients and then spends time researching, designing, and developing a prototype to test, then fine-tunes the device until it meets the client’s needs and is safe and fit for purpose.

“I enjoy the challenge of solving problems and working with the client to create exactly what is needed,” Adam said.

For Adam, helping people with a disability achieve independence is key. Using his technical expertise, he enables people in the community to participate in leisure activities or complete everyday tasks that would otherwise not be possible.

Adam encourages others in the community to share their time and skills as well. “Volunteering is a very rewarding activity and definitely deserves making time for,” said Adam.

SNAPSHOT

6 YEARS

25 COMPLETED PROJECTS

# SUSAN WRIGHT-JONES

Volunteer, Villa Alba Museum

“Volunteering at Villa Alba Museum has been my long standing passionate community commitment.”

Susan’s volunteer story began 25 years ago, after reading a story in a newspaper about the discovery of hidden paintings at Villa Alba Museum. From that moment, Susan knew she wanted to be involved, and has been volunteering ever since.

Susan assists with the museum’s monthly open days where she welcomes visitors, leads tours and looks after the decorated finishes of the house to preserve the conservation process. Susan also helps in the garden.

“When I volunteer at Villa Alba Museum I feel a proud sense that I am helping save a significant piece of Melbourne history and share its beauty with the community,” said Susan.

Susan wants to see more of the artworks on the walls uncovered and more of the garden restored and recognises that without volunteers like her it will not be possible.

“I feel that my impact in the community is to help raise awareness of the importance of Villa Alba as one of our hidden treasures of Melbourne. So many historic homes and their stories have been demolished and lost”.

Susan encourages others to keep an open mind when exploring volunteer roles. While specialised skills can be valuable, a positive can-do attitude is the most desirable attribute: “you are not expected to be a historian or decorative arts expert, just have a passion to join and be part of a team!” said Susan.

SNAPSHOT

25 YEARS

100

ASSISTED WITH OVER 100 OPEN DAYS





# DOMINIC BOFFA

Volunteer, Uniting AgeWell - Hawthorn Men's Shed

“ Volunteering has given me the opportunity to make new friendships and have a different outlook on life. ”

Dominic didn't plan on taking up a volunteer role, the opportunity found him.

Last year, Dominic went to register as a member at the Hawthorn Men's Shed but after learning about their volunteer program, decided to sign up as a volunteer instead.

Dominic plays a key role in the Men's Shed operation, volunteering his time to encourage social connection through woodworking. Dominic provides technical and practical support for members of the Men's Shed, which includes safe use of tools and machinery and providing practical advice on how to perform tasks. He also uses his own van to collect and drop off materials, including recycled wood, for participants to use in their projects.

Dominic feels that by volunteering he is “helping and assisting Shed members to enjoy a sense of achievement and belonging and providing companionship and conversation with clients who may be feeling isolated and lonely”.

Dominic's volunteer role has not only had a profound impact on the Hawthorn Men's Shed community, but also on him. Since volunteering, Dominic has a renewed purpose in life and he is grateful that he can assist others whilst also developing his skills and friendships.

“(I have a real) sense of achievement and giving back to the community,” said Dominic.

SNAPSHOT

6 MONTHS

20 ASSISTED WITH 20 PROJECTS

# BRONWYN BILLIMORIA

Volunteer Cook, Boroondara Cooks

“ I find volunteering a really important role to undertake as it connects you with the wider community and allows you to share some of your skills and time beyond your own family and friends. ”

When Bronwyn isn't dividing time between family and work as a speech pathologist, you can find her delivering a home cooked meal as part of her volunteer role with Boroondara Cooks.

Run by the City of Boroondara, the Boroondara Cooks program is a meal-sharing and community-strengthening program, which connects people who like to cook with older residents in the community. Volunteers share an extra portion of their home-cooked meal with an older resident or 'diner'.

“I was wanting to become more involved in the local community but felt I had limited time to be actively involved in a volunteer role with work and a busy family” Bronwyn said. “I thought this was a perfect way for me

to be involved in connecting socially and contributing to a community where others were perhaps socially isolated and needed a meal prepared”.

Since volunteering with Boroondara Cooks, Bronwyn has had two diners and finds it easy to prepare a couple of extra serves of her evening meals.

“The visit is not really about the meal but about the social connection and the opportunity to meet and engage with others in your community”, Bronwyn explains. “It has been a wonderful experience and I have found that I have learnt so much and enjoyed spending time with my diners. Their wisdom, calmness and valuable insights into life have been inspirational”.

SNAPSHOT

4

YEARS

150

MEALS DELIVERED





# JENNY DODD

Volunteer, Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria

“ (Those with vision impairments) are perfectly capable of participating in any sports and recreational activities if they have a volunteer to assist them. ”

Volunteering has come in a variety of roles for Jenny, who has spent the last eight years volunteering with Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria (BSRV), an organisation dedicated to meeting the needs of people with vision loss and enabling them to participate in a variety of sporting programs.

From admin support to assisting the president on special projects, Jenny has embraced a variety of roles to increase opportunities for people living with vision impairment to participate.

Each week, Jenny also assists participants in their gym program to make sure they are comfortable with the equipment so they can complete their workouts. Soon Jenny will also be teaching a new Qigong class.

“Assisting blind and vision impaired people to participate in sports and recreational activities has helped me and the person I am helping to feel a greater connection to the community we live in. There is a sense of satisfaction that we are both part of something bigger than ourselves,” said Jenny.

“If you’ve considered volunteering, start by exploring where your passion lies then research websites, charities and visit your local community resources centres,” said Jenny.

SNAPSHOT

8 YEARS

20 ASSISTED WITH 20 NEW GYM CLASSES

# BRANDON KIM

Volunteer Photographer, Epilepsy Foundation

“ Volunteering is a very rewarding thing you can do in your daily life, and eventually, you will contribute to changing the whole world with a warm heart and energy! ”

Brandon was looking for a way to volunteer his professional skills in photography when he came across the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank. The wedding and lifestyle photographer registered his specialised skills on the Bank hoping to connect with a community organisation and make a positive impact with this photography and videography skills.

Brandon's first skilled volunteering opportunity was with the Epilepsy Foundation, an organisation that provides support programs, education and training for people living with epilepsy and their families.

Through his skilled volunteer project, Brandon developed a suite of images, taken from Epilepsy Foundation events and activities, for the organisation to use in celebrating and raising awareness of their organisation.

Volunteering with an organisation with similar values was important for Brandon. “My uncle developed epilepsy so I was very familiar with it,” Brandon said. Giving his time through volunteering was a way for Brandon to support others with similar experiences.

For Brandon, “photography is not just about recording what happened at a certain time of the day. It is more about capturing raw emotions and stories. I ... love to deliver the real moments captured and simply share that loving feeling with families or individuals struggling with epilepsy”.

Brandon encourages others to consider how their professional skills can benefit a local community organisation through the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank. “It's the first time that I decided to volunteer and all thanks to lovely people in the Epilepsy Foundation, my first volunteering experience turned out to be amazing!” Brandon said.

SNAPSHOT

1 YEAR

200 CAMPAIGN IMAGES PRODUCED





# JENINE FLEMING

Volunteer Committee Member, Friends of South Surrey Park

“ It is important to find an opportunity that aligns with your interest and passions and it needs to work with your other commitments. ”

When Jenine Fleming moved to Surrey Hills, she was inspired to find a way to contribute to the preservation of the parklands behind her home and find a sense of belonging in the community.

It was there that she found the Friends of South Surrey Park and registered as a volunteer and committee member. She plays an important role in the group’s aim to re-establish native plants and create a habitat for birds and animals in the park while it is enjoyed by the community.

Jenine rolls her sleeves up to help out at the regular working bees and has also coordinated the group’s participation in National Tree Planting Day, their biggest community event for the year. As coordinator for this event, Jenine liaises with Council to choose planting sites, organises event promotions and prepares invitations for the Mayor and Councillors and

State and Federal ministers. She also supervises logistics on the day.

Jenine recognises the positive impact her work has on the environment but also in the way the group provides a sense of community to the locals.

“The social connections and friendships have been wonderful” said Jenine. “It also provides me with a sense of achievement - contributing to this space for current and future residents and generations. My knowledge of indigenous plants has also increased”.

Jenine found a volunteering opportunity that aligns with her passions and other commitments and encourages others to do the same.

“I have had the privilege of meeting like-minded and very inspiring people,” said Jenine.

SNAPSHOT

6 YEARS

50 WORKING BEES ATTENDED

# AMANDA MANDIE

Volunteer Program Director, Koala Kids Foundation

“ I love volunteering for the feeling I enjoy of self-satisfaction, seeing my initiatives, enthusiasm and energy benefiting others less fortunate.” ”

Volunteering has been a lifelong commitment for Amanda whose voluntary work has extended across schools, football clubs, community groups and charity organisations.

In 2005, Amanda and her son Nick started Koala Kids Foundation to support children and their families undergoing cancer treatment. The volunteer-driven program provides quality engaging resources and activities for children and young people (from birth to 25 years) and their families. Amanda remains the fulltime voluntary program director and is also a member of the board, executive, events and volunteer committees and likes to personally interview each prospective volunteer. The organisation engages 390 volunteers and works closely with more than 20 hospitals across Victoria and Tasmania.

“I believe it is a privilege to volunteer... That families let us into their lives at

such a stressful time, when their lives feel like they are in free fall, having a child, however old, diagnosed with cancer and undergoing life changing treatment,” said Amanda.

In 2006, Amanda was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and although experiencing very poor mental health in the previous years, once she became medically stable, she has devoted her life to her family, friends and her voluntary work.

“I was unable to return to full time salaried work so in fact created my own job specification with my volunteer work. I feel very privileged to spend my time to benefit my own mental health and the wellbeing of others.”

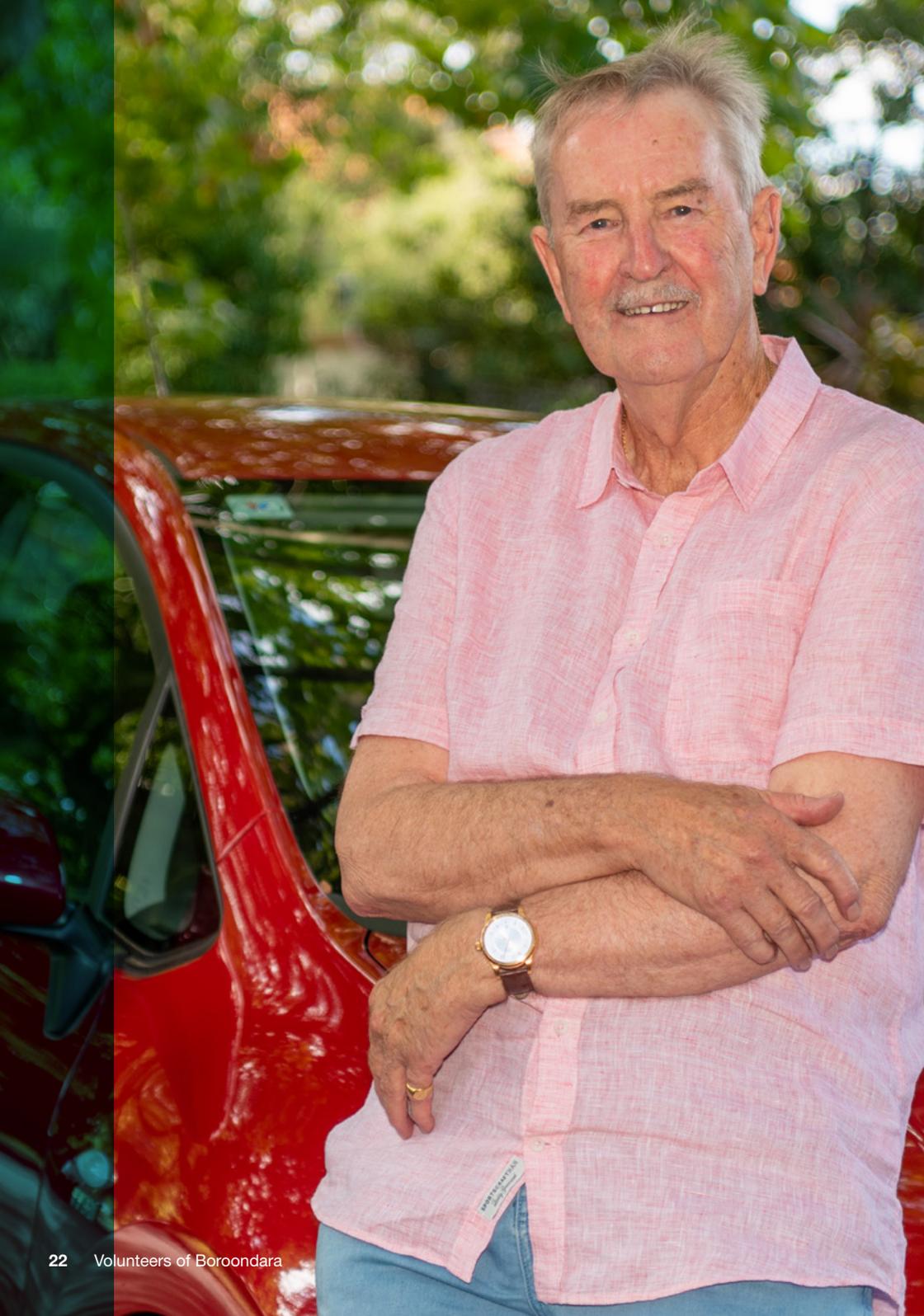
Amanda encourages others to volunteer “to create challenges for one’s self in a non-professional environment and use one’s professional skills for the advantage of those who are disadvantaged!”

SNAPSHOT

15 YEARS

190 OVERSEES 190 VOLUNTEERS





# PETER SCHILLER

Volunteer Driver, Boroondara Community Transport

“ You get a lot back from volunteering and putting something back into the community and it is good for the soul. ”

Not all heroes wear capes and Peter's volunteer efforts through the City of Boroondara's Community Transport team is a true testament to this. Every Monday the humble volunteer picks up local residents who would otherwise be unable to travel to medical appointments, drops them off to their appointment and then takes them home.

Peter's volunteering began two years earlier, after planning how to spend his retirement. Volunteering and making a meaningful contribution, was a key part of his plan.

“I always had in the back of my mind that when I did retire, I would seek out details from the council about getting involved in the sort of volunteering that I am doing” said Peter.

“The elderly citizens are sometimes surprised that I would put myself out to assist them, but I assure them that I enjoy my volunteering role. I engage them in a bit of social chitchat and I have found they enjoy this as much as I do. The impact my volunteering has on our elderly citizens is profound. They are forever grateful for the assistance and wondering how difficult it would be to get to their appointments without volunteer drivers,” said Peter.

Peter encourages other new retirees to consider how volunteering their time can make a difference in the lives of others.

Peter says, “I would tell someone thinking about volunteering that it is a healthy way to spend some of their time when they retire.”

SNAPSHOT

2 YEARS

123 DRIVING TRIPS FOR 40 CLIENTS

# SUNI EDGLEY

Active Volunteer, Boroondara Neighbourhood Watch

“ (Volunteering) is a great way to meet people in the community. It’s fun. ”

Community and safety are two values which Suni holds close, which is why she enjoys her volunteer role in community education with Boroondara Neighbourhood Watch.

The organisation promotes crime prevention to create safer communities by distributing police advice leaflets, participating in events and producing newsletters.

For the last six years, Suni has thrived in her role, which allows her to speak with her community about safety, meet residents at street festivals and events, and distribute information through local letterbox drops.

“I always feel humble in knowing that I’ve passed on the message of volunteering to hopefully support police including other emergency services, and to educate young children to be aware of their

surroundings and to learn how to look out for others,” said Suni.

Suni is proud of the important message she delivers through her volunteer role. “Everyone, including children, should feel that they can report something suspicious anonymously without getting into trouble for reporting anything they have seen or heard,” said Suni.

While Suni’s volunteer effort plays an important role in community safety, Suni calls on others to consider how volunteering can help develop new skills and build connection to community.

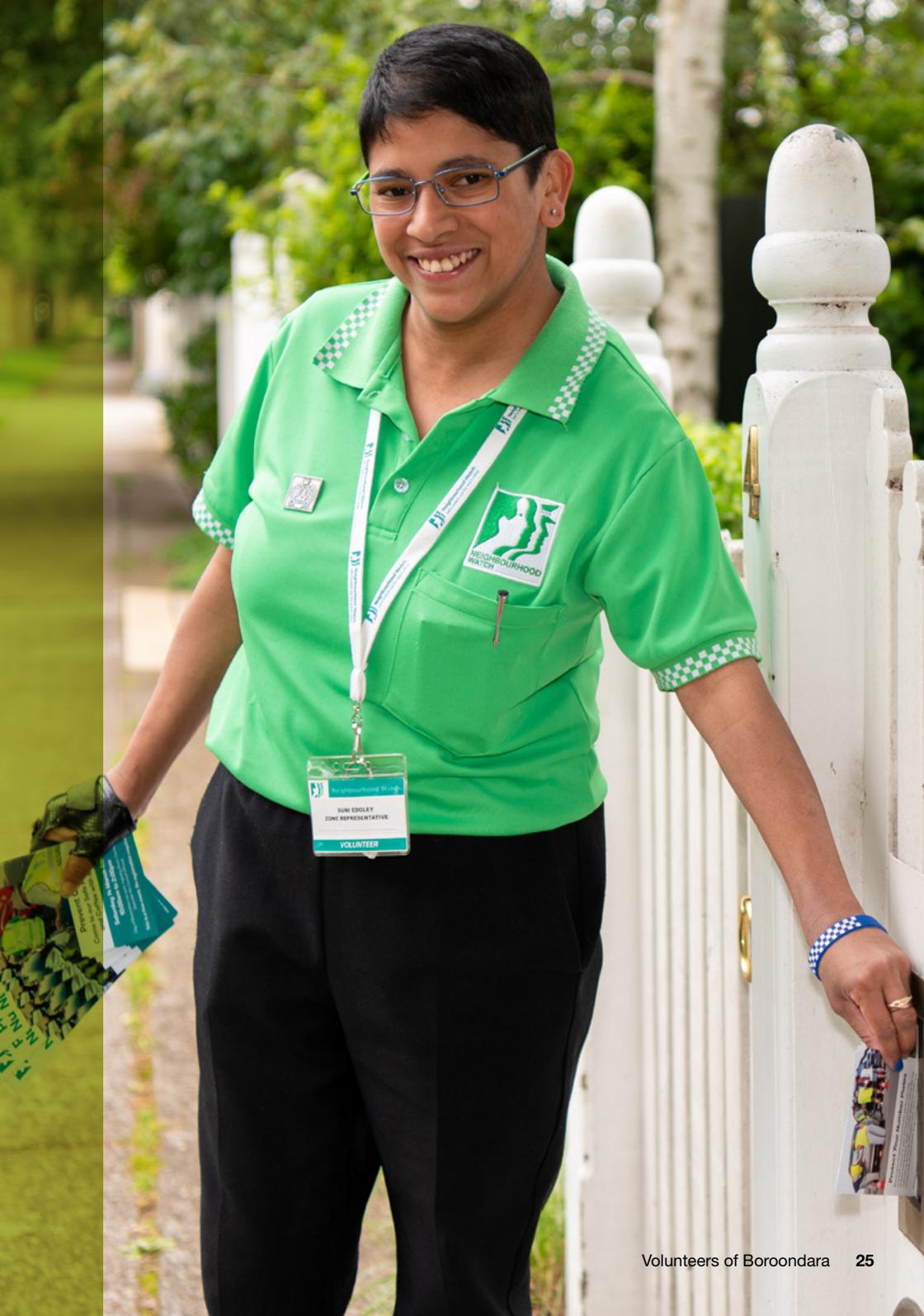
“[Volunteering] is very rewarding as you are constantly learning new skills and being more aware of what’s happening in the media and in your local area,” said Suni.

SNAPSHOT

6 YEARS

25

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY SAFETY





# RUBY CHU

Volunteer Office Administrator, Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre

“ (I have) satisfaction in still using my skills and knowledge to return benefits to the community. ”

When retirement called, Ruby responded by searching for a volunteering opportunity. It was in her search that she found an administration role with Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre - and leapt at the opportunity.

Ruby was immediately drawn to what the organisation provided the community; courses and activities, further education and opportunities for locals to foster social connection.

‘The benefit I get from volunteering is job satisfaction from using the skills and knowledge that I have acquired over the years of working’ said Ruby.

In her administrative role, Ruby volunteers her time to take calls and respond to queries, assisting the Centre’s day-to-day operations.

Ruby also volunteers as an occasional tutor and will soon be running a class on how to make dumplings.

Ruby relishes in the opportunity to continue using her skills to support her community and enjoys “contributing to a more efficient and inclusive community program.”

Ruby is deeply motivated through a desire to add value for her community, sharing “(volunteering is) payback to the community that has given me so much in my 50 years of living here. I feel that at this time of my life I am not ready to give it all up and I would like to assist in the community.”

When asked what she would say to someone considering volunteering their time, she put it simply: “just do it!”

SNAPSHOT

3 YEARS

1500 ASSISTED WITH 1500 ENQUIRIES

# KYM DECKART

Volunteer Local Coordinator, The Fathering Project

“ Volunteering offers a non-commercial way of offering something back to your community. ”

Kym Deckart has always been involved in activities with his children's school. Two years ago, he became the local coordinator for the Fathering Project, and officially formed the group known as the Dashers (Dads of Ashburton).

Kym feels a close connection with the mission of the Fathering Project, which aims to engage fathers and father-figures with their children through resources, programs and events.

Kym volunteers his time to coordinate events such as 'Icy Pole' days, 'Barefoot Bowls' and regular Pizza nights that encourage and create an environment for dads and kids to spend quality time together.

"It's about getting the dads involved with their kids, and trying to create a fathers group, in the same way that mothers' groups provide support from an early age for mums," said Kym.

"It's a great initiative for dads to share their own parenting experiences with one another and offer a community for dads in times of need."

For Kym, volunteering is an opportunity to share skills in a meaningful and relevant way with the community. "I really enjoy the personal reward and social aspect of supporting community and I have the skills to be the coordinator so I'm happy to offer my help in this area," said Kym.

"It is both personally rewarding and enriching to participate in your local area and give something back to what is a lovely neighbourhood. I would encourage anyone who has the energy and the time to reach out and offer your support to volunteer organisations within your community," said Kym.

SNAPSHOT

2 YEARS

25

EVENTS LEAD TO BUILD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FATHERS



# MAKE AN IMPACT

## Did you know?

**Over a quarter of Boroondara residents volunteer their time**

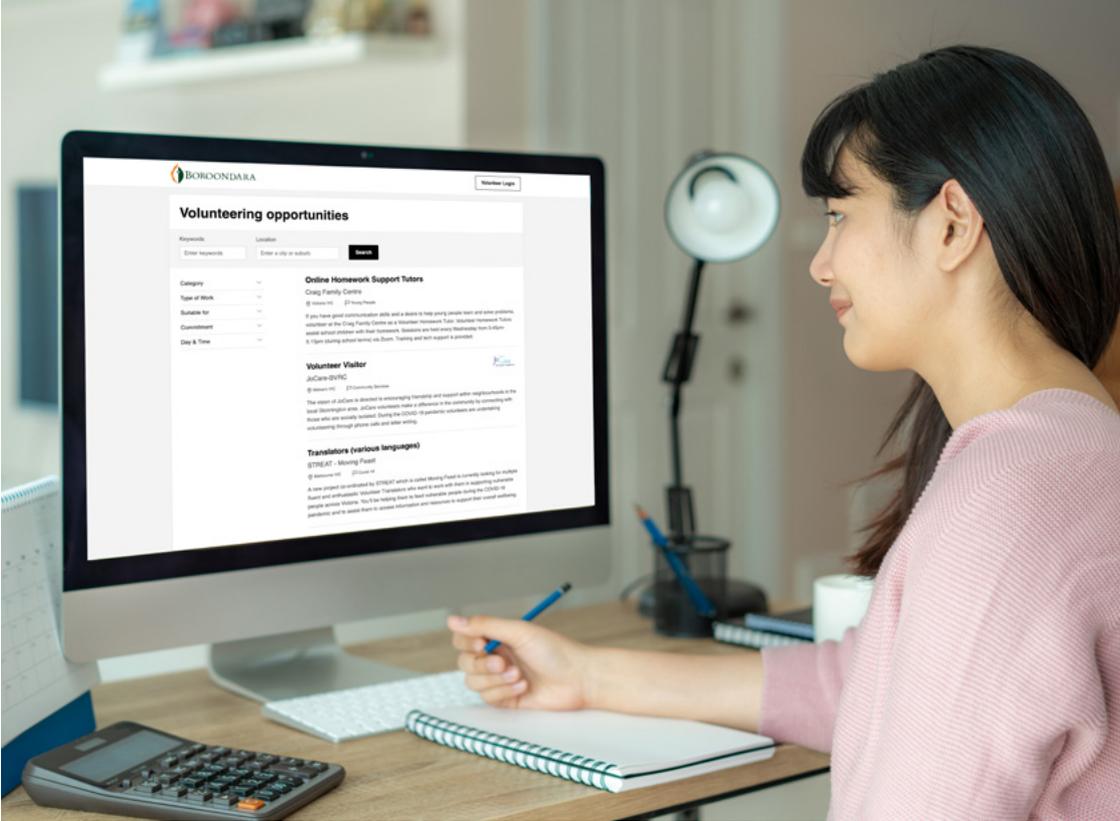
(Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016)

Volunteering plays a critical role in supporting the community by assisting in the delivery of important services and programs, as well as allowing volunteers to:

- learn new skills
- meet new people
- stay active
- get involved
- gain experience
- try something new
- support a cause
- have fun
- contribute to their local community.

**How will you make a positive impact in your community?**





## Explore volunteer roles

It's easy to explore hundreds of volunteer opportunities to suit your interests, skills and availability. Visit the portal: [volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au](https://volunteer.boroondara.vic.gov.au)

**For information about volunteering, contact the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre:**

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 [bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au)

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