

7 Presentation of officer reports

7.1 Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Strategic Service Plan 2022

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) Strategic Service Plan 2022 (**Attachment 1**) for adoption.

Background

The BVRC is Council's dedicated function for supporting volunteering in the community and provides tailored support to the local volunteer sector through a suite of free programs, services, community events and resources designed to encourage and facilitate volunteering.

In 2020-21, the BVRC assisted over 2,400 prospective volunteers to find relevant and meaningful volunteer opportunities while providing volunteer management support to more than 320 local volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) and programs.

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2016 has been refreshed to drive the direction for the next four years.

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 (the Plan) builds on the achievements of the 2016 Plan, such as the development of a skilled volunteering program and the implementation of a nationally recognised online volunteer management system, 'VIKTOR/VIRA', and outlines Council's continued commitment to respond to the needs of the local volunteer sector through targeted services, programs and events. This Plan will also focus on supporting VIOs to engage people living with a disability, new migrants, culturally diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and identifying opportunities to facilitate informal volunteering in the community, building on learnings from skill-sharing initiatives such as Timebanking.

Attachment 2 details the achievements of the 2016 BVRC Strategic Service Plan.

Key Issues

Building on the existing work of the BVRC, the Plan outlines how essential support will continue to be provided to local VIOs, including Council volunteer programs, which rely on the BVRC's services to enhance their capacity to operate, deliver community health and wellbeing outcomes and increase opportunities for residents to participate in community life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges for the local volunteer sector. The Plan outlines the role the BVRC will play in COVID-19 community recovery, providing support to VIOs in rebuilding volunteer workforces and reshaping volunteer opportunities to align with changing prospective volunteers' motivations and expectations of the volunteer experience.

Over the last four years, the BVRC has observed how technology has rapidly changed the volunteer landscape. The BVRC will play a critical role in supporting VIOs in identifying, reshaping and promoting opportunities, while ensuring volunteer roles are attractive and accessible to Boroondara's diverse community.

The Plan is underpinned by strategic objectives, which are:

- **Strategic objective 1:** BVRC activities contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community in Boroondara
- **Strategic objective 2:** The BVRC identifies and promotes flexible volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that reflect their values, interests and skills
- **Strategic objective 3:** The BVRC builds the capacity of volunteer involving organisations by responding to contemporary trends in volunteering

Next Steps

Once adopted, the BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 will be available on Council's website.

Officers' recommendation

That Council resolves to adopt the BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022.

Responsible director: Carolyn McClean, Director Community Support

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) Strategic Service Plan 2022 (**Attachment 1**) for adoption.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The Boroondara Community Plan is structured around the following seven priority themes:

- Community, Services and Facilities
- Parks and Green Spaces
- The Environment
- Neighbourhood Character and Heritage
- Moving Around
- Local Economy
- Leadership and Governance

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 (the Plan) is aligned with Council's key strategic document, the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 (BCP). The BCP, which incorporates the Council Plan 2021-25 and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25, sets the strategic direction and shows how Council will deliver our community's aspirations over the next 10 years. The Plan is informed by our community's vision as outlined in the BCP for 'a sustainable and inclusive community'.

Volunteers play an instrumental role in fulfilling our community's vision and supporting the themes in the BCP by delivering services and programs, maintaining parks and green spaces, caring and advocating for the environment, and preserving neighbourhood character and history.

Implementation of actions in the Plan are particularly relevant to the following strategies in the BCP under Theme 1 - Community, Services and Facilities:

- Strategy 1.1: Neighbourhoods and community spaces facilitate social connections and belonging by providing, maintaining and activating places for people to meet, organise activities and celebrate events.
- Strategy 1.2: Health and wellbeing is improved through delivering, facilitating and advocating for services and programs that are accessible and affordable.
- Strategy 1.7: Community resilience, safety and public health are improved by working in partnership with community and government organisations.

The BCP also identifies six health and wellbeing priorities that can positively influence community health and wellbeing:

- improving mental wellbeing and social connection
- tackling climate change and its impact on health
- preventing all forms of violence
- reducing harmful alcohol use
- increasing healthy eating
- increasing active living.

The actions in the Plan will also contribute to the health priorities by improving mental wellbeing, social connections and active living through volunteering.

3. Background

Boroondara is home to a thriving volunteer community, with over a quarter of residents (26.0%) reporting they had completed voluntary work through an organisation or group in the 12 months prior to the 2016 Census night.

Volunteering is defined by Volunteering Australia as ‘time willingly given for the common good without financial gain’. This can take place through a ‘formal’ arrangement with a community organisation or group (for example, providing administrative support at a neighbourhood house), or ‘informally’ by participating in voluntary activity outside community organisations and groups (for example, assisting a neighbour with errands).

The BVRC plays an important role in providing critical infrastructure to support volunteering, including:

- an online volunteer portal to list volunteer opportunities
- a volunteer referral service to match prospective volunteers with volunteer roles to meet their skills, interests and availability
- volunteer recruitment events such as the Boroondara Volunteer Expo and Skilled Volunteer Meet
- professional development training for volunteer leaders and volunteers
- recognition events such as National Volunteer Week, International Volunteer Day and the Boroondara Volunteer of the Year Awards
- the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank, which matches skilled professionals with short-term volunteer projects, and board and committee roles with community organisations

In 2020-21, the BVRC supported 2,400 prospective volunteers to find relevant and meaningful volunteer opportunities, while working alongside more than 320 local VIOs and community groups to promote opportunities for residents to participate in the community. Council has 290 volunteers across 15 programs.

The Plan builds on the achievements of the 2016 BVRC Strategic Service Plan. This included the development of a skilled volunteering program and the implementation of a nationally recognised online volunteer management system, ‘VIKTOR/VIRA’, and volunteer portal to allow prospective volunteers to search for roles that align with interests, skills, and availability.

Attachment 2 details the achievements of the 2016 Strategic Service Plan.

4. Outline of key issues/options

The Plan sets Council's four-year strategic direction for the delivery of targeted support to the local volunteer sector. It outlines how the BVRC will continue to support local VIOs, including Council volunteer programs, which rely on the BVRC's services to enhance their capacity to operate, deliver community health and wellbeing outcomes and increase opportunities for residents to participate in community life.

Over the last four years, the BVRC has observed how technology has rapidly changed the volunteer landscape. Prospective volunteers have shifted the way in which they choose to receive information, favouring virtual appointments, engagement and interactions online over formal onsite appointments. The BVRC's new online volunteer management system, delivered under the 2016 Strategic Service Plan, has significantly increased the BVRC's reach and capability to service more prospective volunteers in the Boroondara community, in line with community expectations and needs in the digital environment. Following the introduction of VIKTOR/VIRA, there was an 85.9% increase in the number of prospective volunteers seeking opportunities from 1,292 people in 2018-19 to 2,403 in 2019-20 and a further 3.2% increase in 2020-21.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges for the local volunteer sector. Most community organisations connected with the BVRC were forced to temporarily suspend volunteer programs, displacing volunteers seeking opportunities to participate in the community. Following lengthy restrictions, and subsequent periods of onsite volunteer inactivity, VIOs are anticipating that significant effort will be required to rebuild volunteer workforces and redesign programs in line with changing volunteer expectations. The BVRC will play a critical role in supporting VIOs in identifying, reshaping and promoting opportunities, while ensuring volunteer roles are attractive and accessible to Boroondara's diverse community. This will include remote and virtual volunteering opportunities.

The BVRC will also continue to play a key capacity-building role in delivering training to VIOs in line with legislative frameworks, including *Child Safe Standards* and the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015*, which contain benchmarks to help organisations attract, manage, recognise and retain volunteers, and manage risk and safety. The increased uplift of training in these areas is evidence of the increasing trend towards the professionalisation of the volunteer sector, and the support offered to volunteers being aligned to that offered to paid employees.

As well as building on the work of the 2016 Plan, this Plan will also focus on supporting VIOs to engage people living with a disability, new migrants, culturally diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and identifying opportunities to facilitate informal volunteering in the community, building on learnings from skill-sharing initiatives such as Timebanking.

Three strategic objectives will guide how the BVRC will deliver a range of volunteer support services to meet the needs of the local volunteer sector and enhance the service provided to the community. They are:

- **Strategic objective 1:** The BVRC activities contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community in Boroondara

- **Strategic objective 2:** The BVRC identifies and promotes flexible volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that reflect their values, interests and skills
- **Strategic objective 3:** The BVRC builds the capacity of VIOs by responding to contemporary trends in volunteering.

The objectives and actions outlined in the Plan enable Council to strengthen the capacity of the local volunteer sector by delivering activities which contribute to community resilience and inclusivity, identifying and promoting volunteer opportunities for people of all ages and diverse backgrounds and responding to new and emerging trends in volunteering.

5. Consultation/communication

Consultation for the Plan has included workshops and surveys with volunteers, VIOs and Council volunteer managers. This is in addition to the regular consultation with volunteers and VIOs on the quality of the support and service offered by the BVRC, and input from internal stakeholders at Council.

6. Financial and resource implications

The actions in the Plan will be funded through the departmental operational budget. Where there is an opportunity, project funding will be sought.

7. Governance issues

The implementation of the Plan will be undertaken under the guidance of the Victorian Governments *Child Safe Standards* and *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015*, a set of standards developed by Volunteering Australia in consultation with volunteering peaks bodies in each state. Council's Volunteer Policy and Procedure, developed as part of the 2016 Strategic Service Plan, will also guide the implementation of actions identified in the Plan.

The officers responsible for this report have no general or material conflicts of interest requiring disclosure.

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, particularly those rights associated with respect, equality and dignity.

8. Social and environmental issues

The Plan will have a positive impact on the Boroondara community by providing a range of programs, services and events to support more than 320 local volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer programs, as well as providing volunteer opportunities for 2,400 prospective volunteers annually.

The Plan will enable volunteering, including retirees, young people, people living with a disability, new migrants, culturally diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, skilled professionals and people seeking volunteering as a pathway to employment and professional development.

9. Evaluation and review

The BVRC will develop an annual action plan to address each strategic objective as outlined in the Plan. The annual action plan will be monitored through Council's corporate reporting framework.

Community Planning and Development is responsible for overseeing the implementation and evaluation of actions in the Plan.

10. Conclusion

The Plan will provide the direction for the BVRC for the next four years in responding to the needs of the local volunteer sector through targeted services, programs and events.

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Report officer: Georgia Lukacs-Rotow, Acting Volunteer Support and Development Lead

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Strategic Service Plan

2022

Responsible Directorate: Community Planning and Development

Authorised By: Council

Date of Adoption: <Date>

Review Date: 30 June 2026

Plan Type: Council

Table of contents

1	Executive summary	3
2	Introduction	5
2.1	Purpose	5
2.2	Corporate framework	5
3	Background.....	6
3.1	Overview of the BVRC	6
3.2	Volunteering definition and framework	7
3.3	Volunteering trends.....	8
3.3.1	Volunteering trends in Australia	8
3.3.2	Volunteering trends in Victoria	11
3.3.3	Volunteering in Boroondara	13
3.3.4	Local volunteering landscape.....	20
4	Methodology	22
5	Vision.....	23
6	Strategic objectives and actions.....	23
7	Implementing and monitoring	24
7.1	Evaluation	24
7.2	Accountabilities	24
8	References	24
8.1	Related documents	24
8.2	Definitions	24
	Appendix 1: Implementation Plan.....	25
	Appendix 2: References.....	27
	Appendix 3: Glossary	28

1 Executive summary

The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) is Council's dedicated function to facilitate and strengthen volunteering in the Boroondara community. The BVRC provides tailored support to the local volunteer sector through a suite of free programs, services, community events and resources designed to encourage and facilitate volunteering.

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 (the Plan) sets Council's four-year strategic direction for the delivery of targeted support to the local volunteer sector. The Plan reflects Council's continued commitment to supporting volunteering and supports our community's vision as outlined in Council's key strategic document, the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31, for 'a sustainable and inclusive community'.

The Plan builds on the achievements of the 2016 BVRC Strategic Service Plan, which has successfully delivered:

- a skilled volunteering program that responds to the needs of Boroondara's skilled community, through the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank and Skilled Volunteer Meet
- a new online volunteer management system, VIKTOR/VIRA, and volunteer portal to allow prospective volunteers to search for roles which align with interests, skills and availability
- a Council Volunteer Policy and Procedure
- a research report on the important role volunteering plays in strengthening the Boroondara community.

Boroondara is a proud volunteering community. In the 12 months prior to the 2016 Census, 26% of residents reported volunteering through an organisation or group, the highest rate in Greater Melbourne.¹ Volunteering provides pathways to employment, opportunities to use and build skills, contributes to volunteer health and wellbeing, and provides opportunities for social connectedness.

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, the BVRC provided support to more than 320 local volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) and volunteer programs while assisting over 2,400 prospective volunteers find meaningful volunteer opportunities that enabled the delivery of essential services and support to the Boroondara community.

The Plan was developed through community consultation, research and an analysis of community need including the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Plan outlines the role the BVRC will play in COVID-19 community recovery, providing support to VIOs in rebuilding volunteer workforces, and reshaping volunteer opportunities to align with changing prospective volunteers' motivations and expectations of the volunteer experience.

Three strategic objectives will guide how the BVRC will deliver a range of volunteer support services to meet the needs of the local volunteer sector and enhance the service provided to the community. They are:

- **Strategic objective 1:** The BVRC activities contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community in Boroondara

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2016. Compiled and presented by [.id](#) (informed decisions). Viewed online 2 March 2022

- **Strategic objective 2:** The BVRC identifies and promotes flexible volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that reflect their values, interests and skills
- **Strategic objective 3:** The BVRC builds the capacity of VIOs by responding to contemporary trends in volunteering.

The three strategic objectives are supported by 18 actions, which will be undertaken over the four years of the Plan. These can be found in Appendix 1.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 (the Plan) reflects Council's commitment to supporting volunteering and its role in promoting a resilient and socially inclusive community. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework for the work of the BVRC to deliver programs and activities that respond to current and emerging trends in volunteering.

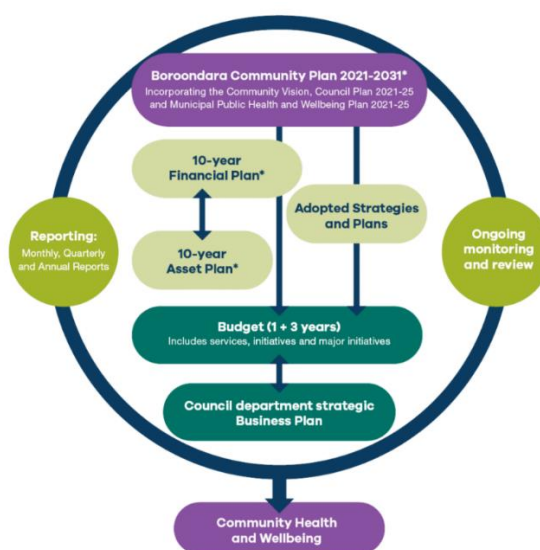
2.2 Corporate framework

The Plan sits within Council's overarching planning framework.

The Boroondara Community Plan (BCP) 2021-31 incorporating the 10-Year Community Vision, Council Plan 2021-25 and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 is Council's key strategic document. The BCP demonstrates how we will deliver the community's aspirations while protecting, improving and promoting our community's health and wellbeing.

Figure 1

City of Boroondara Corporate Framework



There are seven priority themes in the BCP and they are:

1. Community, Services and Facilities
2. Parks and Green Spaces
3. The Environment
4. Neighbourhood Character and Heritage
5. Moving Around
6. Local Economy
7. Civic Leadership and Governance.

Volunteers play an instrumental role in fulfilling our community's vision for a 'sustainable and inclusive community' and supporting the themes in the BCP by delivering services and programs, maintaining parks and green spaces, caring and advocating for the environment, and preserving neighbourhood character and history. Implementation of actions in the Plan

are particularly relevant to the following strategies in the BCP under Theme 1 - Community, Services and Facilities:

- Strategy 1.1: Neighbourhoods and community spaces facilitate social connections and belonging by providing, maintaining and activating places for people to meet, organise activities and celebrate events.
- Strategy 1.2: Health and wellbeing is improved through delivering, facilitating and advocating for services and programs that are accessible and affordable.
- Strategy 1.7: Community resilience, safety and public health are improved by working in partnership with community and government organisations.

The BCP also identifies the following six health priorities:

- improving mental wellbeing and social connection
- tackling climate change and its impact on health
- preventing all forms of violence
- reducing harmful alcohol use
- increasing healthy eating
- increasing active living.

The BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2022 will contribute to addressing the health priorities of improving mental wellbeing, social connection and active living.

The Plan has also been informed by the following Council plans and strategies, which have actions relating to volunteering including:

- Boroondara Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23²
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-22³
- Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22⁴
- Children and Young People Action Plan 2021-25⁵
- Add Life to Your Years - Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019-25⁶.

3 Background

3.1 Overview of the BVRC

The BVRC was established in 1992 to encourage active participation in community life by promoting, supporting and resourcing volunteering within Boroondara and surrounding areas. Three decades later, the BVRC is regarded as a leader in contemporary volunteer support at a local, national and international level.

The BVRC delivers a suite of free volunteer support services including:

- a volunteer referral service, which promotes volunteer opportunities on behalf of Council programs and VIOs
- tailored advice and assistance to VIOs and Council volunteer managers specific to their volunteer programs
- a volunteer management system, VIKTOR/VIRA and an integrated volunteer portal, which has enabled VIOs to manage their volunteer opportunities and assist prospective volunteers in self-referring to relevant volunteer roles listed through the portal

² City of Boroondara (2019). [Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

³ City of Boroondara (2016). [Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

⁴ City of Boroondara (2018). [Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

⁵ City of Boroondara (2021). [Children and Young People Action Plan 2021-25](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

⁶ City of Boroondara (2019). [Add Life to Your Years - Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019-25](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

- the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank, which matches skilled professionals with short-term volunteer projects, alongside board and committee roles with community organisations
- a professional development program to strengthen the capacity of VIOs, Council volunteer managers and volunteers
- bi-monthly volunteer leader network meetings to raise emerging volunteer trends, issues and opportunities while facilitating peer-learning
- public events for VIOs to connect with prospective volunteers such as the Boroondara Volunteer Expo and Skilled Volunteer Meet
- annual recognition activities and events to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of local volunteers, such as National Volunteer Week, Boroondara Volunteer Awards, and International Volunteer Day
- information and resources in response to trends in volunteering, as disseminated through monthly emails to VIOs and Council volunteer programs.

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, the BVRC supported 2,400 prospective volunteers find relevant and meaningful volunteer opportunities. The BVRC has over 320 member VIOs and programs, including 15 Council volunteer programs. Over 290 volunteers are engaged in volunteer programs at Council, including the Home Library Service program, meal-sharing program Boroondara Cooks, environment and parkland preservation through Friends Groups, and support for elderly residents to attend medical appointments through Community Transport.

In 2021, the BVRC received a grant from Volunteering Victoria and the Department of Social Services to enhance the capacity of VIOs to engage new migrants, people living with a disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in volunteering. Project funding was also received in 2021 through Volunteering Victoria to deliver a learning portal to support volunteers, prospective volunteers and VIOs build confidence in returning to volunteering through the pandemic, including a module to engage diverse cohorts, such people from multicultural backgrounds and people living with a disability.

In 2019, Council undertook research to assess the impact of volunteering in Boroondara and to inform the future direction of the BVRC. The research found:

- volunteering contributes to social connectedness and community resilience
- volunteering has a positive impact on volunteer health, including mental health and overall wellbeing
- volunteering provides enhanced opportunities for those seeking work
- volunteering substantially increases the reach of community organisations to provide community services with many totally or partially volunteer dependent
- the BVRC plays a critical role in supporting volunteering in Boroondara
- the BVRC has opportunities to build greater community awareness about the full breadth of services offered to volunteers and prospective volunteers.⁷

3.2 Volunteering definition and framework

Australia's peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Australia, defines volunteering as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.' It can take place through formal and informal arrangements:

- formal volunteering - volunteering activity that takes place within organisations (e.g. volunteering as an administrative assistant with a neighbourhood house)

⁷ Quest Consulting (2019). Research on the Role of Volunteering in Strengthening the Boroondara Community

- informal volunteering - volunteering activity that takes place outside an organisation (e.g. running errands for an elderly neighbour).⁸

In 2015, Volunteering Australia released the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*,⁹ a framework for VIOs to implement best-practice volunteer management, including volunteer attraction, retention, risk and safety. The *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* comprises eight standards:

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development
6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer recognition
8. Quality management and continuous improvement.

The strategic objectives and actions outlined in the Plan draw on the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* to ensure best practice volunteer management is modelled through Council volunteer programs and promoted to local VIOs.

3.3 Volunteering trends

3.3.1 Volunteering trends in Australia

Formal volunteering in Australia

According to the 2016 Census, 19.0% of the Australian population aged 15 years and over volunteered in the community in the previous year (≈3.6 million people), an increase of 1.2% from the 2011 Census.¹⁰

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2019 General Social Survey (GSS)¹¹, which also collected data about volunteering rates in Australia, found when analysing a sample of 3,535 Australian households, almost one-third (29.5%) of respondents aged 15 years and over had participated in volunteering through an organisation, contributing an estimated 596.2 million hours to the community in the previous 12 months.

When reviewing formal volunteering by age group, the 2019 GSS found respondents aged between 40 and 54 years were most likely to have participated in formal volunteering, accounting for 36.2% of Australian respondents aged 15 years and over. This was in contrast to individuals aged 70 years and over (24.5%) and those aged 25 to 39 years (25.7%), which were the age groups least likely to volunteer.

The 2019 GSS also found females were more likely to report having participated in unpaid voluntary work through an organisation for more than 10 years than males (43.0% compared to 32.9% respectively).

⁸ Volunteering Australia (2015). [Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

⁹ Volunteering Australia (2015). [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

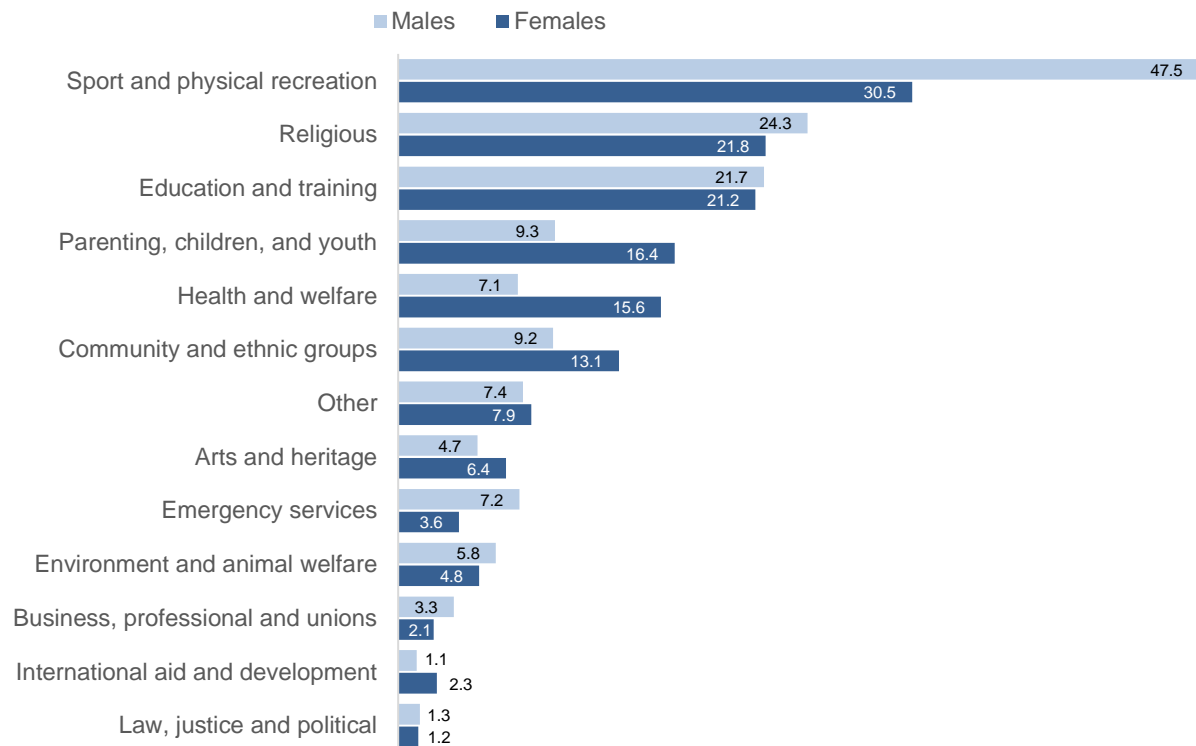
¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). Viewed online 2 March 2022

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019). [General Social Survey](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

When looking at participation rates at various types of VIOs, Figure 2 below shows that the most popular VIOs were those relating to sport and physical recreation, religious groups and education and training for Australian males and females aged 15 years and over.

Figure 2

Volunteer participation rates (%) of Australian males and females aged 15 years and over by volunteer involving-organisation (VIO) sector in 2019

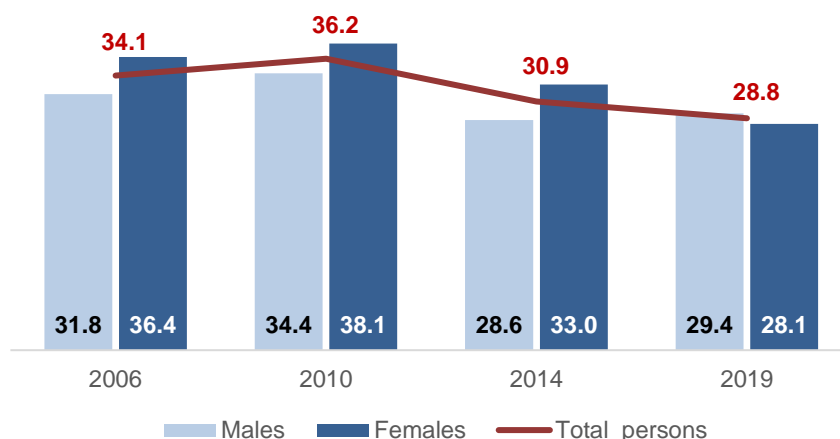


Source: General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia 2019. Table 8.3 Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work–By Sex, proportion of persons.

Additional information from the 2019 GSS on the formal volunteering rates of Australian adults aged 18 years and over, found there was an overall decline of 7.4% in volunteering between 2010 and 2019, from 36.2% to 28.8%. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 3, between 2014 and 2019, there was a decline in formal volunteering by females (-4.9%; 33.0% vs. 28.1%) compared to a small increase by males (0.8%; 28.6% vs. 29.4%).

Figure 3

The proportion (%) of Australian adults (18 years and over) who took part in formal volunteering in 2019



Source: General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia 2019. Table 1.1 Persons aged 18 years and over, Social Experiences–By Sex, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2019, proportion of persons.

Volunteering Australia’s 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report¹² found 86.0% of VIOs are routinely unable to fill volunteer roles, with evidence suggesting there could be a difference between the types of volunteer opportunities prospective volunteers are seeking and the opportunities VIOs are offering. Ninety-two percent of the roles promoted on the volunteer recruitment platform, GoVolunteer¹³, were listed as ongoing, which indicates these roles could have been inaccessible to the 38.0% of registered volunteers who nominated having a full-time job or study commitment and expressed interest in volunteering casually or part-time.

The 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report also found a variety of limitations that impacted on volunteer participation, including inflexible volunteer roles, out-of-pocket expenses and burdensome administrative requirements. Suggested reasons for reductions in volunteering rates in Australia are that VIOs are under resourced, therefore limiting their ability to engage with volunteers who may require additional support, including those who live with a disability and those who require language support. A further limitation may be that VIOs often do not have the internal resources to invest in new processes and systems, including accommodating corporate volunteers. The report also suggests that VIOs are yet to meaningfully adapt to technological changes, such as conducting volunteer recruitment online or providing virtual volunteering opportunities. This is likely to have changed in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The BVRC has observed significant changes in the way VIOs have been engaging volunteers since 2020, which will be outlined further in section 3.3.2.

Informal volunteering in Australia

The 2019 GSS also collected data on informal volunteering, which is defined as ‘the provision of unpaid work or support to non-household members, excluding that provided only to family members living outside the household’¹⁴. The results suggest there is strong

¹² Volunteering Australia and PwC (2016). [State of Volunteering in Australia](#). Viewed online 22 February 2022.

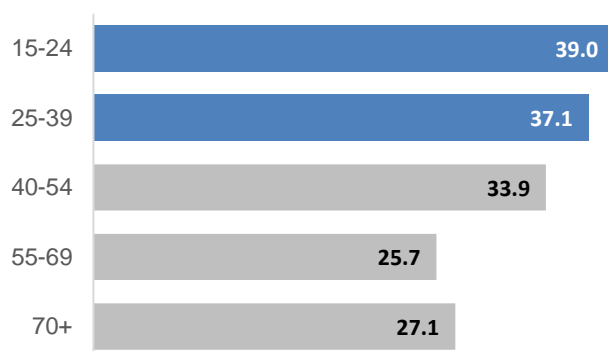
¹³ [Volunteering Opportunities in Australia | GoVolunteer](#)

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019). [General Social Survey](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

interest in informal volunteering across age cohorts as shown in Figure 4, particularly in people aged 15 to 39 years where the informal volunteering rate exceeded 35.0% depicted by the blue bars. Moreover, in the four weeks preceding the survey, approximately one-third of respondents aged 15 years and over participated in informal volunteering.

Figure 4

The proportion (%) of the Australian population aged 15 years and over who participated in informal volunteering by age group



Source: General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia 2019. Table 3.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences–By Age and Sex, proportion of persons.

The 2016 State of Volunteering Australia report¹² also found 46.0% of survey respondents had participated in informal volunteering in the 12 months prior to the survey, with informal volunteering described as prevalent in Australian society. In the same report, when survey respondents were asked what support they would like for informal volunteering, 33.0% of respondents indicated they would like help to find informal volunteering opportunities.¹⁵

Impacts of COVID-19 on volunteering in Australia

Volunteering Australia commissioned research on the experience of volunteers and volunteering across Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶ A survey of approximately 3,000 Australians showed a substantial decline in volunteering, with 65.9% of volunteers estimated to have stopped volunteering between February and April 2020. Those over the age of 65 were the most likely to have ceased volunteering. The report also found volunteers who were able to continue volunteering reported lower levels of psychological distress through the pandemic, compared to volunteers who ceased volunteering or those who were not volunteering to begin with. This finding suggests volunteering has a potential beneficial effect on wellbeing, which aligns with the findings from the research undertaken by the BVRC in 2019 that highlighted the positive benefits of volunteering.

3.3.2 Volunteering trends in Victoria

Volunteering Victoria's 2020 State of Volunteering report found that 42.1% of Victorians (more than 2.3 million people) aged 15 years and older had volunteered their time, either formally through a community organisation or informally in their community.¹⁷ The report provides insight into the primary reasons Victorians volunteer, with the top three being:

- to contribute to their community in times of emergency and crisis and to build community resilience
- to become involved in an interest area (e.g. a specific sector, cause or association)

¹⁵ Volunteering Australia and PwC (2016). [State of Volunteering in Australia](#). Viewed online 22 February 2022

¹⁶ Volunteering Australia (2020). [Research Briefing: The Experience of Volunteers During COVID-19](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

¹⁷ Volunteering Victoria (2020). [State of Volunteering Report](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

- to meet new people, develop friendships and form social networks.

Other findings captured in the report include:

- volunteers contribute on average 224 hours of volunteering per year
- four out of five volunteers performed their role from home or within their local community
- 16.9% of volunteering took place online
- 13.8% of employed Victorians participate in employee supported volunteering
- a range of barriers either preventing people from volunteering or preventing existing volunteers from committing to additional hours. The primary barriers were:
 - time limitations with individuals seeking greater flexibility in accessing volunteering
 - individuals not being directly asked or approached with volunteering opportunities.

Impact of COVID-19 on volunteering in Victoria

In July 2020, Volunteering Victoria provided a submission¹⁸ to the Victorian State Government on the impact of the pandemic on volunteering in Victoria. In the submission, Volunteering Victoria noted most formal volunteering activities ceased during the pandemic with the primary reasons being restrictions on onsite activity, health and safety requirements and VIOs exercising their duty of care towards their volunteers.

Volunteering Victoria cited the primary threat to the volunteering sector as a result of the pandemic being the retention of the volunteering workforce. The main concern of Volunteering Victoria members was their ability to keep engagement levels high across their volunteer base, with fears many volunteers would not return once the pandemic restrictions were eased.

In the report, Volunteering Victoria also recognised a positive development for some VIOs who received interest in volunteer roles from highly skilled people, such as professionals who were out of work and wanted to contribute skills, such as graphic design, mentoring and tutoring. Additionally, Volunteering Victoria noted the rise of informal volunteering during the pandemic, which was largely made possible through social media. Through these channels, people were able to directly help others in their community, particularly neighbours in need or those who were isolated.

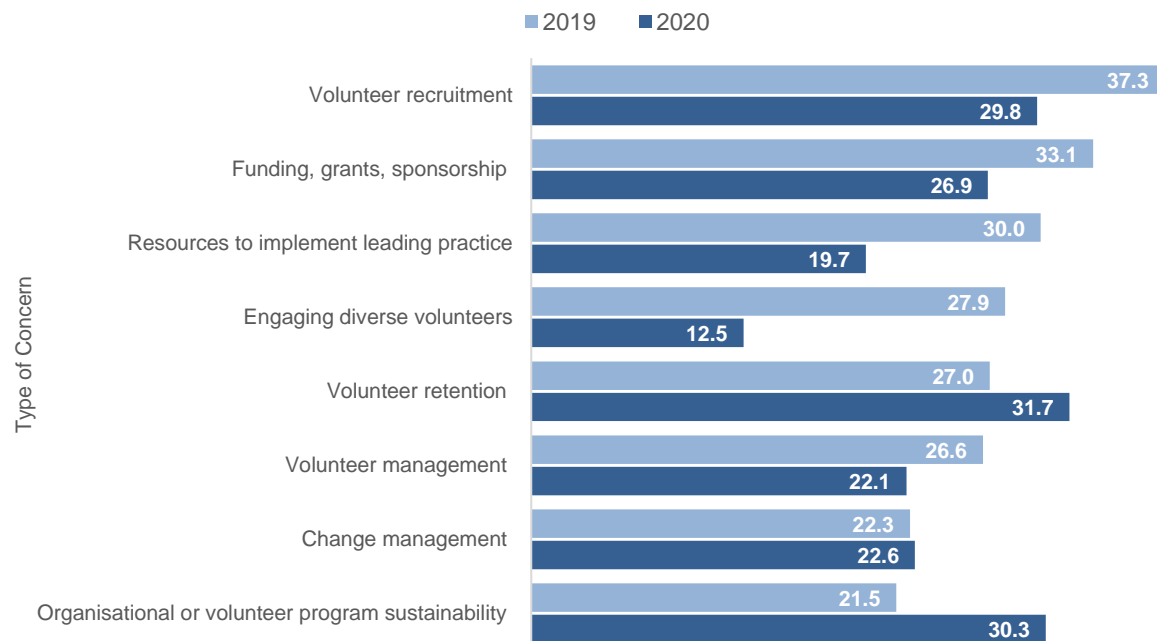
In response to the pandemic, many VIOs had to adapt to the changing COVID-19 landscape by modernising their practices, including the provision of online training, online recruitment and coordination of online forums to keep volunteers engaged.

As observed in Figure 5, there was a shift in the primary concern for VIOs through the pandemic in Victoria. In 2019, the top two concerns for VIOs were volunteer recruitment (37.3%) and funding, and grants and sponsorship (33.1%), which transitioned to volunteer retention (31.7%) and organisational or volunteer program sustainability (30.3%) in 2020.

¹⁸ Volunteering Victoria (2020). [Victorian Government COVID Submission 2020](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

Figure 5

The proportion (%) of VIOs that noted a primary volunteer related concern in 2019 and 2020 (with the impact of COVID-19)



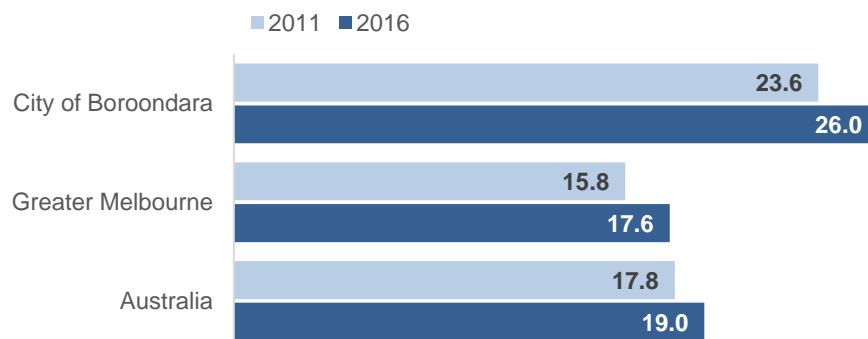
Source: https://stateofvolunteering.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOVR_21.10.2020_WEB.pdf Table 15.

3.3.3 Volunteering in Boroondara

According to the 2016 Census, Boroondara has a high rate of volunteering, with 26.0% of residents reporting participation in a form of volunteering in the 12 months prior to data collection.¹⁹ Figure 6 shows that this rate has increased since 2011 by 2.4 percentage points and is greater than the 2016 Census rates reported for Greater Melbourne (17.6%) and Australia (19.0%).

Figure 6

The proportion (%) of Boroondara residents who volunteer versus those in Greater Melbourne and Australia



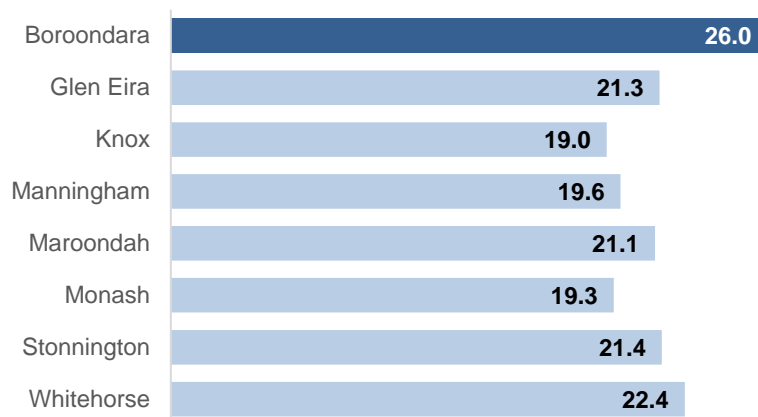
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016. Compiled by .id (informed decisions).

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](https://www.abs.gov.au/census) 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). Viewed online 2 March 2022

In 2016, Boroondara also had the highest proportion of residents who volunteer (26.0%) when compared to other local government areas in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (i.e. Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges²⁰) as well as nearby local governments areas including Glen Eira and Stonnington, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7

The proportion (%) of residents who had volunteered 12 months prior to the 2016 Census in the City of Boroondara and neighbouring local government areas

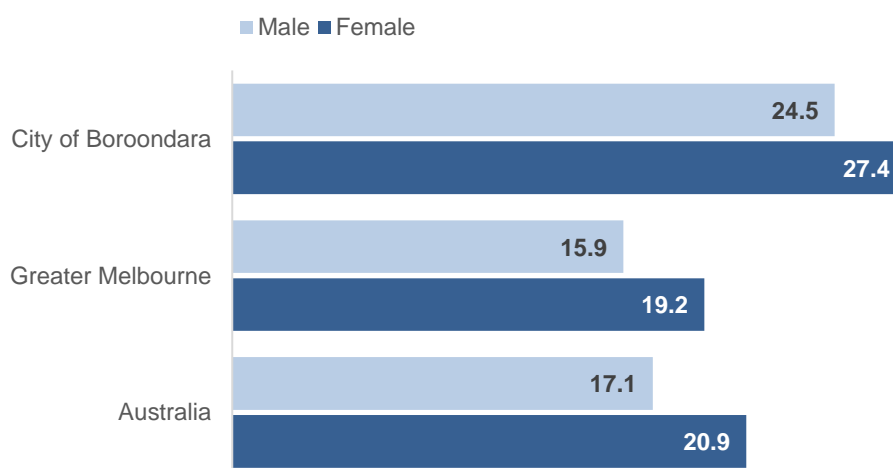


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled by .id (informed decisions).

The proportion of males (24.5%) and females (27.4%) residing in Boroondara who volunteered in the 12 months prior to the 2016 Census was higher than Greater Melbourne (males - 15.9% and females - 19.2%) and Australia (males - 17.1% and females - 20.9%), as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8

The proportion (%) of male and female residents who had volunteered 12 months prior to the 2016 Census in the City of Boroondara, Greater Melbourne and Australia



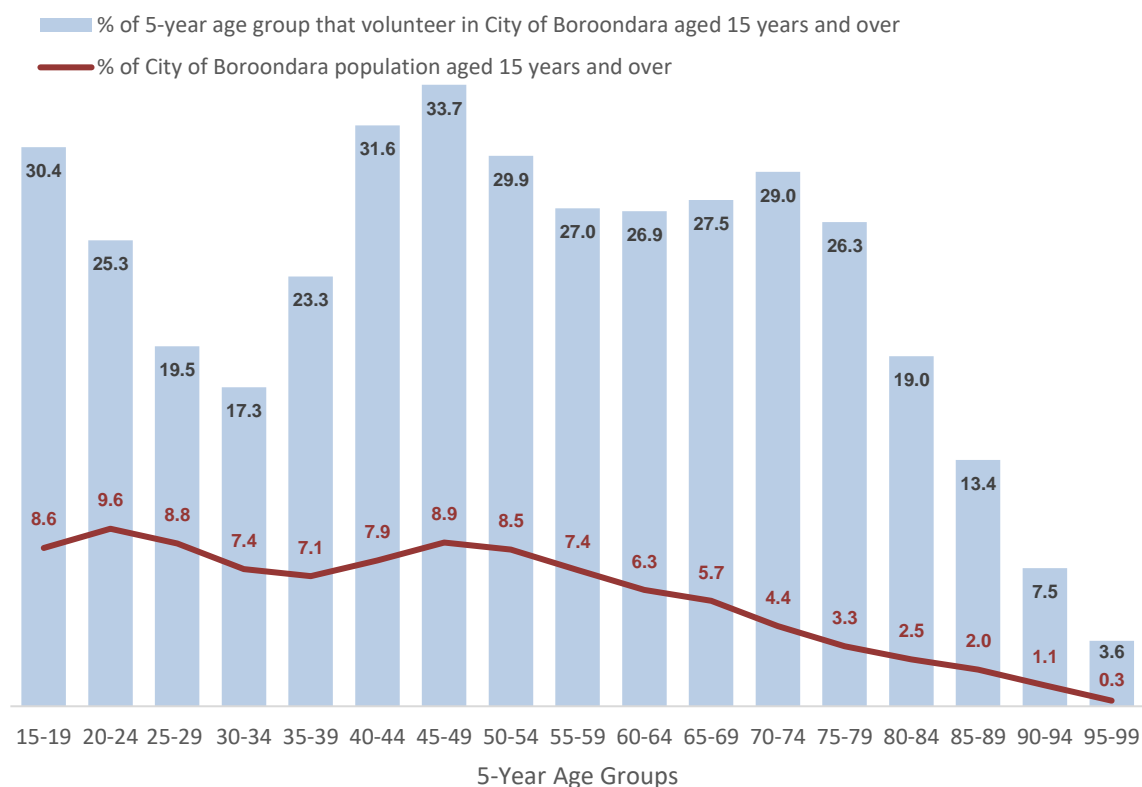
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled by .id (informed decisions).

²⁰ No volunteering data was available for Yarra Ranges.

As shown in Figure 9, volunteering rates across age groups in Boroondara vary. Although young people aged 15 to 19 years make up only 8.6% of the Boroondara population aged over 15 years, 30.4% of this age group volunteer. This is similar to the trend seen for people aged 40 to 49 years, who account for 8.4% of residents in Boroondara aged over 15 years but show the highest rate of volunteering (32.7%). In contrast, there was a lower rate of volunteering in Boroondara residents aged of 25 to 34 years.

Figure 9

The proportion (%) of City of Boroondara residents aged 15 years and over in each 5-year age group compared with the proportion (%) who volunteered in the 12 months prior to the 2016 Census



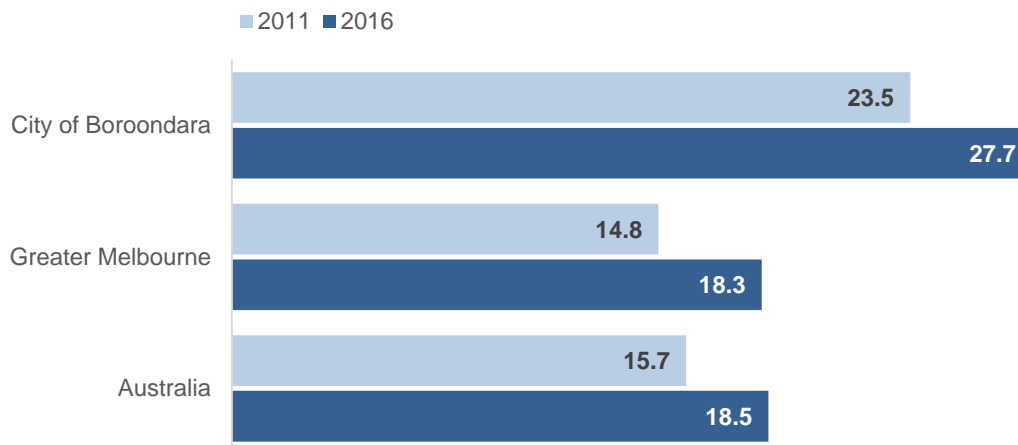
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016.

Young people and volunteering

Young people aged 15 to 24 years make up 15.1% of the total Boroondara population. As shown in Figure 10, the 2016 Census found there was a higher proportion of young people volunteering in Boroondara (27.7%) compared to Greater Melbourne (18.3%) and Australia (18.5%). The increase in volunteering in young people between 2011 and 2016 was also slightly higher in Boroondara (4.2 percentage points) than Greater Melbourne (3.5 percentage points) and Australia (2.8 percentage points).

Figure 10

The proportion (%) of young people (15-24 years) who volunteer in the total young population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

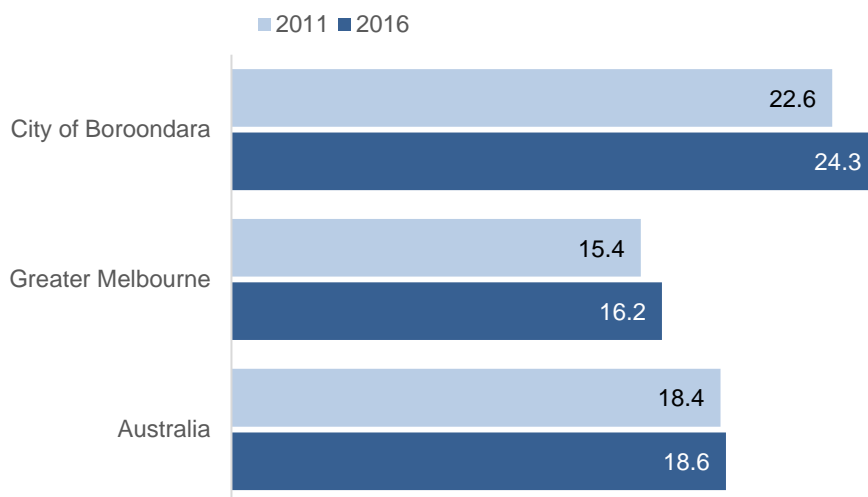
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage young people to volunteer in Boroondara, as outlined in the Children and Young People's Action Plan 2021-25. The BVRC client data shows that 26.8% of its clients were aged 15 to 24 years between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, which is similar to the 2016 Census volunteer participation rate for this age group. These findings indicate the BVRC can continue to play a role in promoting opportunities to younger volunteers, while also encouraging local VIOs to develop targeted recruitment activity to engage young people in volunteering. This strategic effort will support organisations to fill gaps in volunteer workforces, depleted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Volunteering in people aged 60 and over

One-fifth (21.3%) of Boroondara's residents are aged 60 years and over. The 2016 Census found the proportion of people aged 60 years and over who volunteered increased by 0.2 percentage points across Australia between 2011 and 2016, as highlighted in Figure 11. In Boroondara, the rate of volunteering for this age group increased by 1.7 percentage points. In 2016, approximately one-quarter of residents aged 60 years and over in Boroondara were volunteering their time and skills (24.3%), which is considerably more than Greater Melbourne (16.2%) and Australia (18.6%).

Figure 11

The proportion (%) of adults 60 years and over who volunteer in the total population 60 years and over



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage people aged 60 and over to volunteer in Boroondara, as outlined in the Add Life to Your Years - Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019-25. While the 2016 Census found 24.3% of adults over 60 years engaged in volunteering, BVRC client data shows that between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, only 8.5% of the total volunteers referred by the BVRC to volunteer roles advertised by VIOs were aged 60 years and over.

While the lower rate of volunteering captured in BVRC data may be due to the impacts of COVID-19 on older volunteers, it may also indicate there is an opportunity for the BVRC to focus on engaging people aged over 60 in volunteering, such as those transitioning into retirement.

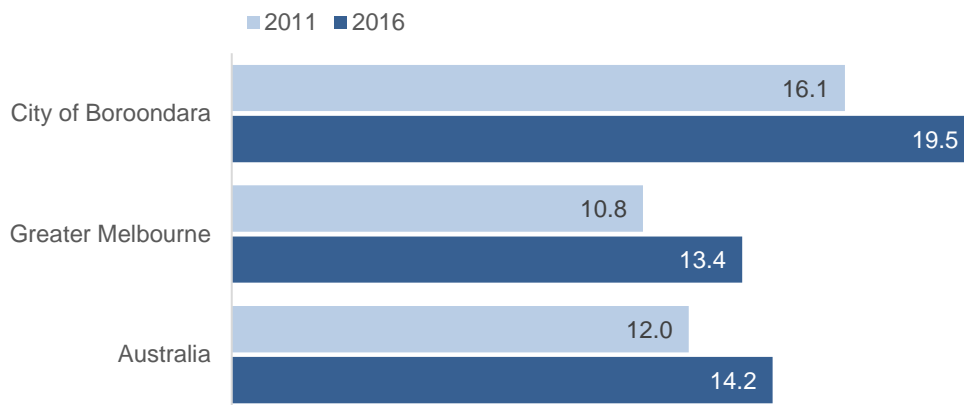
Multicultural communities and volunteering

The City of Boroondara is a culturally diverse²¹ community. In the 2016 Census, 27.2% of residents reported speaking a language other than English at home. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, Boroondara experienced an increase (3.4 percentage points) in the proportion of culturally diverse residents who volunteer their time in the community. As shown in Figure 12, Australia and Greater Melbourne experienced a 2.6 and 2.2 percentage point increase respectively in the number of culturally diverse residents who volunteered their time, demonstrating a growing interest in volunteering by the multicultural communities.

²¹ Speaks English and another language (does not include people who only speak English)

Figure 12

The proportion (%) of culturally diverse adults (15 years and over) who volunteer in the total culturally diverse population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

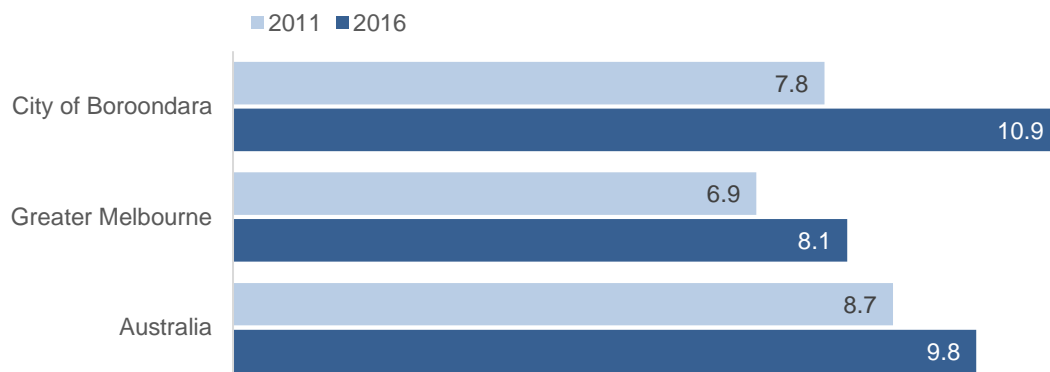
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage people from culturally diverse backgrounds to volunteer in Boroondara, as outlined in the Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 39% of clients referred to volunteer roles by the BVRC were from a multicultural background. The BVRC can continue to encourage and promote volunteering by residents from multicultural backgrounds.

People living with a disability and volunteering

The 2016 Census found 4.3% of those aged 15 years and over in Boroondara were living with a disability. As shown in Figure 13, in 2011 the rate of volunteering within the population of people living with a disability in Boroondara was 7.8%. This was 0.9 percentage points more than the rate in Greater Melbourne (6.9%) and 0.9 percentage points less when compared to Australia (8.7%). However, by 2016, Boroondara saw higher growth (3.1 percentage points) in volunteering rates of people living with a disability compared to Greater Melbourne and Australia (1.2 and 1.1 percentage points respectively).

Figure 13

The proportion (%) of people living with a disability who volunteer in the total disability population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

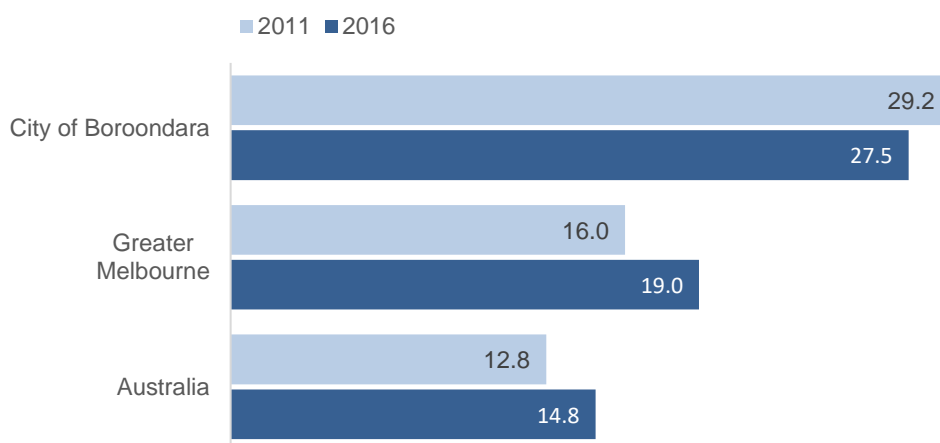
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage volunteering by people with a disability, as outlined in the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 2% of the volunteer role referrals by the BVRC were to clients living with a disability. The BVRC can play a role in encouraging volunteering by people living with a disability by working with VIOs and highlighting the stories of these volunteers.

Boroondara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and volunteering

The 2016 Census found 316 or 0.2% of residents aged 15 years and over in Boroondara identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people or both. The rate of volunteering in this group was 27.5%. Unlike Greater Melbourne and Australia that saw a slight increase in this cohort (3.0 and 2.0 percentage points respectively) between 2011 and 2016, there was a decline of 1.7 percentage points in Boroondara.

Figure 14

The proportion (%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who volunteer in the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, the BVRC referred volunteer roles to one person who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. As part of Council's commitment to reconciliation as outlined in the Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-26, the BVRC will seek to understand how volunteering happens within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and identify opportunities to facilitate and support this where appropriate.

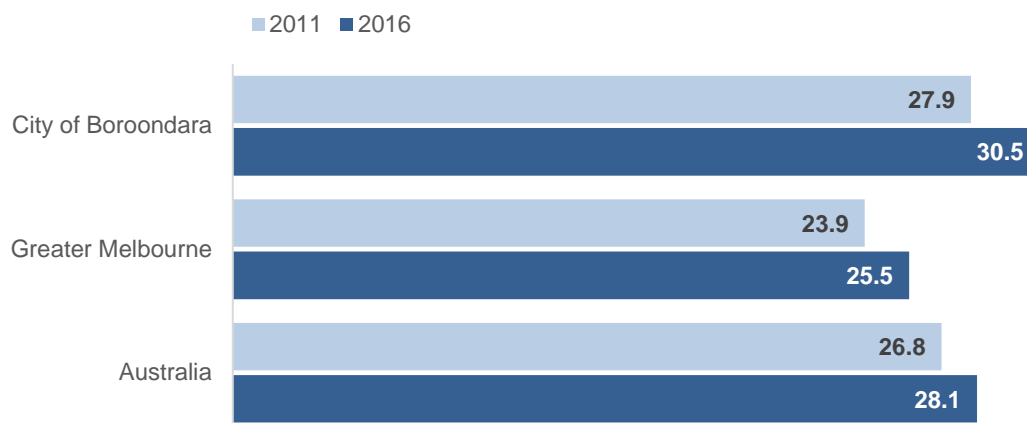
Skilled volunteering

Boroondara is a skilled community, where 46.9% of Boroondara residents aged 15 and over held a Bachelor degree or higher in 2016.²² Figure 15 below shows a high proportion of volunteering for 'skilled' people in Boroondara, Greater Melbourne and Australia. All three cohorts experienced an increase in skilled volunteers between 2011 and 2016, with the greatest occurring in Boroondara (2.6 percentage points).

²² Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016.

Figure 15

The proportion (%) of adults (15 years and over) with a Bachelor degree (skilled) who volunteer in the total skilled population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

The largest proportion of BVRC clients is in the 20 to 29 age cohort (44.5%), significantly higher than any other BVRC client age group. This may suggest increased interest in volunteering through tertiary education/early career, where volunteering plays a key role in skill development and pathways to employment.

In response to this, the BVRC launched the 'Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank' in 2017. The Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank is a skilled volunteering program designed to connect skilled professionals with short-term, project-based volunteer opportunities. Since the program's inception, the Bank has registered more than 1,900 skilled professionals. With an already engaged skilled volunteering community, the BVRC is well positioned to continue the expansion of the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank program by growing participant membership and working closely with community organisations to increase the number of skilled positions on offer. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, the BVRC registered 651 clients on the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank.

3.3.4 Local volunteering landscape

Impact of COVID-19 on volunteering in Boroondara

While the pandemic has provided an opportunity for larger local VIOs to harness technology to establish remote volunteer roles and stay connected (by using volunteer management platforms like VIKTOR/VIRA and Better Impact to engage volunteers), smaller organisations with limited resources struggled. The BVRC conducted a survey in July 2020 with 21 member organisations to understand their experiences through COVID. The survey revealed:

- 80.9% of organisations will undertake volunteer workforce planning
- 61.9% need to find new ways to continue to engage volunteers remotely
- 61.9% were seeking support to maintain regular communication and engagement with volunteers
- 42.8% wanted an online forum to connect with other volunteer leaders
- 33.3% were seeking dedicated COVID network meetings
- 33.3% were seeking workshops and training for leaders of volunteers.

The BVRC also supported Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020²³ to assist with the recruitment, support and coordination of volunteers for COVID-19 specific roles through the pandemic. The BVRC worked closely with local emergency relief providers to understand demand for service and emerging community need and designed dedicated COVID-19 opportunities to support community organisations to continue essential services, while also collating a register of spontaneous volunteers seeking ways to support the frontline effort locally. These volunteer roles included food collection and delivery drivers, sewers to produce personal protective equipment for healthcare professionals, translators to relay health and wellbeing information and COVID-19 marshalls.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions and the return to onsite operations, the demand for volunteers is expected to increase. Discussions at Volunteer Leader Network meetings and surveys throughout 2021 have informed the support the BVRC will deliver from 2022 onwards, such as:

- how to reintroduce volunteer programs in a COVID safe environment
- developing informal volunteering opportunities and pathways
- leading teams through change
- developing virtual volunteer roles
- digitising processes and using online platforms to engage with volunteers.

Enhancing informal volunteering - the Timebanking model

In early 2020, the BVRC investigated the feasibility of a 'Timebanking' model to facilitate informal volunteering in the community. Timebanking is the reciprocal exchange of time and skills between individuals in a community and enables informal acts of assistance, for example, assisting a neighbour with one hour of weeding in exchange for receiving a one-hour tutoring session. Initial consultations suggested Timebanking could be an opportunity for residents who are not engaged in the formal volunteering model to connect with others through informal volunteering. While initial interest was expressed in the concept of Timebanking (85.8% of survey respondents reported an interest in participating in a local Timebanking initiative), there was a discrepancy between the skills Boroondara residents were prepared to offer and the skills in demand. For example, 65.4% of survey respondents wanted to offer 'transport' to people in their community but only 4.3% of survey respondents indicated they would use Timebanking to seek help with transport. Further investigation is required to determine the most suitable informal volunteer model and investigate the role the BVRC can play in facilitating informal volunteering.

Enhanced online service delivery

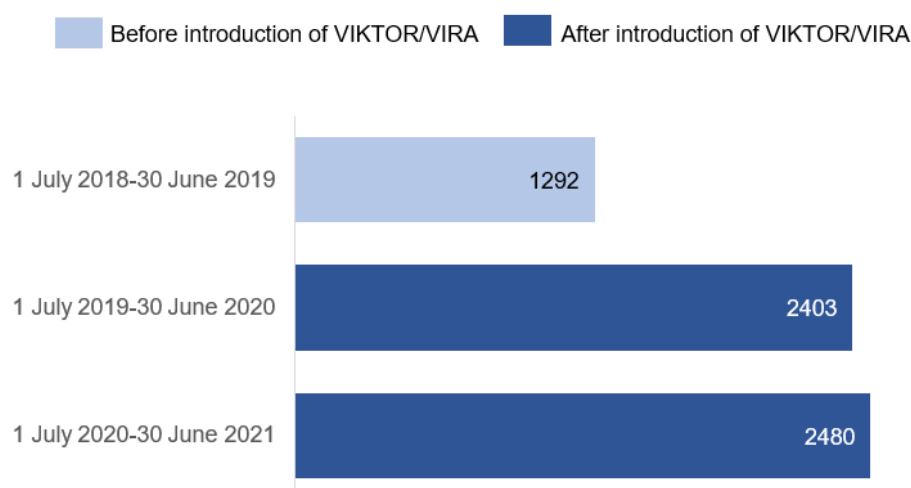
In 2019, the BVRC implemented a nationally recognised volunteer management system, 'VIKTOR/VIRA,' alongside an integrated volunteer portal to manage membership information, promote volunteering opportunities and provide centralised infrastructure for Council volunteer programs to manage their volunteers. This directly addresses the suggestion raised in the 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report to use new processes and systems to provide greater opportunities for online recruitment to increase volunteer numbers. The BVRC has observed a significant increase in the number of volunteer enquiries since the system's implementation, with the infrastructure enhancing the BVRC's ability to reach a greater number of prospective volunteers online and provide a referral service.

Prior to the system's introduction, the BVRC referred 1,292 prospective volunteers to local VIOs in 2018-19. Figure 14 below demonstrates the increase in prospective volunteers following the introduction of VIKTOR/VIRA in 2019.

²³ City of Boroondara (2020). [Boroondara Municipal Emergency Management Plan](#)

Figure 16

The number of prospective volunteers who received a volunteer referral from the BVRC between 2018 and 2021



Source: BVRC client referrals VIKTOR/VIRA

Following the introduction of VIKTOR/VIRA, there has been an 85.9% increase in the number of prospective volunteers seeking opportunities from 1,292 people between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 to 2,403 between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020. The referral rate remained stable in 2020-21 with a small increase of 3.2% to 2,480 prospective volunteers connected by the BVRC to volunteer opportunities.

As demand for the BVRC's services continues to grow following the implementation of VIKTOR/VIRA, the BVRC has an opportunity to continue promoting the known social, health and wellbeing benefits volunteering provides to incentivise volunteering in Boroondara, particularly during a time where local VIOs are actively rebuilding volunteer workforces as they recover from the pandemic. An ongoing campaign to promote these benefits can also play a role in building community awareness of BVRC's service offering.

4 Methodology

The refreshed Plan has been informed by:

- a review of the 2016 BVRC Strategic Service Plan
- a literature review of the volunteering context, including local, state, and national trends for volunteers and VIOs
- a review of the research on the Role Volunteering Plays in Strengthening the Boroondara Community report²⁴
- an analysis of volunteering trends observed by BVRC
- an examination of learnings and impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- a review of the BCP and other Council plans relevant to volunteering including the Children and Young People Action Plan, Add Life to Your Years – Healthy Ageing in

²⁴ Quest Consulting (2019). Project Report: Research on the Role of Volunteering in Strengthening the Boroondara Community

Boroondara Plan²⁵, Sports and Recreation Plan²⁶, Disability Action Plan 2018-22²⁷, and the Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23²⁸

- consultation with VIOs, volunteers, prospective volunteers and Council staff including:
 - an online survey for VIOs, completed by 42 volunteer leaders and eight Council volunteer managers
 - an online survey for volunteers and prospective volunteers, completed by 63 respondents
 - focus groups with representatives from 15 VIOs
 - focus groups with volunteers and prospective volunteers in Boroondara
 - focus group with Council volunteer managers.

The priorities identified from the research, the review of the 2016 BVRC Strategic Service Plan and the consultation informed the development of this Plan including the strategic, objectives and actions.

5 Vision

The Plan is governed by the following vision statement, which was developed in consultation with local VIOs, Council volunteer programs, volunteers and prospective volunteers:

Volunteering is valued, meaningful and accessible, and contributes to Boroondara's sustainable and inclusive community.

The Plan also supports our community's vision, as outlined in the BCP for 'a sustainable and inclusive community'.

6 Strategic objectives and actions

The Plan outlines the strategic objectives and actions for the BVRC to achieve the vision and respond to volunteering trends observed at a national, state and local level, including the impacts of COVID-19 on the local volunteer sector.

Strategic objective 1: BVRC activities contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community in Boroondara

- Objective 1.1 - BVRC activities are integrated with community strengthening initiatives led by other departments within the City of Boroondara
- Objective 1.2 - The BVRC provides opportunities for volunteers and VIOs to engage with the BVRC online
- Objective 1.3 - The BVRC acknowledges and celebrates the contribution of volunteers in strengthening the Boroondara community through events and initiatives

Strategic objective 2: The BVRC identifies and promotes volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with flexible volunteering opportunities which reflect their values, interests and skills

²⁵ City of Boroondara (2019). [Add Life to Your Years - Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019-25](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

²⁶ City of Boroondara (2016). [Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

²⁷ City of Boroondara (2018). [Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

²⁸ City of Boroondara (2019). [Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

- Objective 2.1 - The BVRC builds community awareness of the BVRC's services, programs, and events to drive volunteering
- Objective 2.2 - The BVRC expands its pathways to volunteering to support the interests and needs of prospective volunteers
- Objective 2.3 - The BVRC fosters social inclusion by working with Council departments and VIOs to provide opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer (including younger, older and culturally diverse people, and people living with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)

Strategic objective 3: The BVRC builds the capacity of VIOs to respond to contemporary trends in volunteering

- Objective 3.1 - The BVRC continues to build awareness of the issues and trends in volunteering amongst VIOs and Council volunteer programs
- Objective 3.2 - BVRC capacity building programs respond to the needs and interests of VIOs in Boroondara, including COVID-19 recovery and skilled volunteering
- Objective 3.3 - The BVRC works with Council volunteer managers to strengthen and adapt volunteer programs post COVID 19
- Objective 3.4 - The BVRC captures data and monitors trends across BVRC services

The 28 actions can be found in Appendix 1.

7 Implementing and monitoring

7.1 Evaluation

The Plan actions will be monitored through Council's internal corporate reporting system, alongside reporting when required by external funding bodies. The Plan will be refreshed and updated in 2026.

7.2 Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this Plan, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position Title	Contact number	Contact department email
Volunteer Support and Development Lead	9278 4550	bvrc@boroondara.vic.gov.au

8 References

8.1 Related documents

Appendix B: References details the range of information accessed during the research and consultation phase of the Plan 2022.

8.2 Definitions

Appendix C: Glossary contains the terms and definitions related to this document.

Appendix 1: Implementation Plan

Strategic objective 1: BVRC activities contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community in Boroondara

Objective	Action
1.1 BVRC activities are integrated with community strengthening initiatives led by other parts of the City of Boroondara	1.1.1 Work with Council departments to identify volunteer opportunities that support community strengthening, social inclusion and wellbeing objectives, which can be incorporated into programs, projects and activities
	1.1.2 Collaborate with Council departments to co-deliver workshops for VIOs, which build their capacity to respond to contemporary issues and trends (e.g. a shared COVID-19 forum)
1.2 The BVRC provides opportunities for volunteers and VIOs to engage with the BVRC online	1.2.1 Review the volunteering systems and processes (i.e. VIKTOR / VIRA platform, volunteer consultation booking system) to identify enhancements to improve customer experience for prospective volunteers and VIOs
1.3 The BVRC acknowledges the contribution of volunteers in strengthening the Boroondara community	1.3.1 Recognise the outstanding volunteer contributions in Boroondara through awards and recognition events

Strategic objective 2: The BVRC identifies and promotes flexible volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that reflect their values, interests and skills.

Objective	Action
2.1 The BVRC builds community awareness of the BVRC's services, programs, and events to drive volunteering	2.1.1 Develop and implement a marketing plan, including a refreshed image library that represents Boroondara's diverse population, to promote the BVRC in the community
2.2 The BVRC develops and implements new pathways to volunteering, including new approaches to recruitment, referral and matching of volunteers and opportunities	2.2.1 Refresh current volunteer recruitment strategies, procedures, documentation, selection and follow-up procedures, including any updates required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
	2.2.2 Deliver Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank system enhancements to support the matching of skilled professionals with VIOs through volunteer management system, VIKTOR/VIRA
2.3 The BVRC fosters social inclusion by providing opportunities for people of all ages to volunteer (including younger, older, culturally diverse people, people living with	2.3.1 Deliver community events to provide information about volunteering opportunities with local community organisations
	2.3.2 Identify opportunities for the BVRC to facilitate informal volunteering in the community and building on learnings from skill-sharing initiatives, such as Timebanking

disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)	2.3.3 Develop a set of targeted resources, in partnership with key stakeholders, to support VIOs to engage people living with a disability, new migrants, multiculturally diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
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Strategic objective 3: The BVRC builds the capacity of VIOs by responding to contemporary trends in volunteering

Objective	Action
3.1 The BVRC builds an awareness of the issues and trends in volunteering amongst VIOs and Council volunteer programs	3.3.1 Consult with the local volunteer sector (including VIOs, prospective volunteers and Council volunteer programs) to understand the continued impacts of COVID-19 to identify new and emerging needs
	3.3.2 Establish a volunteer leader register with self-nominated subject matter experts (e.g. volunteer management systems, redesigning volunteer programs), who can provide peer-to-peer support to members of the BVRC network
3.2 BVRC capacity building programs respond to the needs and interests of VIOs in Boroondara, including COVID-19 recovery and skilled volunteering	3.2.1 Deliver a foundational professional development program for new volunteer leaders, which includes topics such as 'fundamentals of volunteer management' and 'rebuilding volunteer workforces through COVID-19' and an advanced program for experienced volunteer leaders, to build on foundational volunteer management skills to include topics such as 'Change Management' and 'Communication and Influencing'
	3.2.2 Build the capacity of VIOs to attract, recruit and retain volunteers post-pandemic through information/resource sharing in workshops, connection to skilled professionals through the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank and delivery of forums and Volunteer Leader Network Meetings
3.3 The BVRC reviews Council volunteer programs and related documentation	3.3.1 Review the Council Volunteer Policy and Procedures to ensure continued alignment with the national standards, legislation and contemporary sector developments
	3.3.2 Review the role of the BVRC in Council's Emergency Management Plan and align with Council's Volunteer Policy and Procedure
3.4 The BVRC captures data and monitors trends across BVRC services	3.4.1 Produce an annual performance report, which monitors progress, performance and achievements of the BVRC for Councillors and VIOs
	3.4.2 Capture data and monitor trends across BVRC services through volunteer referral surveys, VIO surveys and workshop evaluations

Appendix 2: References

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019). [General Social Survey](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016). [2016 Census QuickStats](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 3 City of Boroondara (2021). [Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 4 City of Boroondara (2021). [Children and Young People Action Plan 2021-25](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 5 City of Boroondara (2020). [Boroondara Municipal Emergency Management Plan](#)
- 6 City of Boroondara (2019). [Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 7 City of Boroondara (2019). [Add Life to Your Years - Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019-25](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 8 City of Boroondara (2018). [Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 9 City of Boroondara (2016). [Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-22](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
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- 12 Volunteering Australia (2020). [Research Briefing: The Experience of Volunteers During COVID-19](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 13 Volunteering Australia and PwC (2016). [State of Volunteering in Australia](#). Viewed online 22 February 2022
- 14 Volunteering Australia (2015). [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 15 Volunteering Australia (2015). [Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 16 Volunteering Victoria (2020). [State of Volunteering Report](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022
- 17 Volunteering Victoria (2020). [Victorian Government COVID Submission 2020](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

Appendix 2: Glossary

BCP	Boroondara Community Plan
BVRC	Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre
VIKTOR/VIRA	Volunteer management system used to manage community organisation information, promote volunteer roles, facilitate the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank and manage Council volunteer programs
VIO	Volunteer involving-organisation
VV	Volunteering Victoria

Attachment 2: Summary of achievements against the 2016 Strategic Service Plan July 2016 - May 2022

Strategic goal	Summary of achievements
Strategic goal 1: BVRC activities contributed to a resilient and inclusive community in Boroondara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated the development of volunteer opportunities within Council and developed induction and onboarding processes (including the provision of National Police Checks and Working With Children's Clearances) Collaborated with Council programs to deliver a 'thank you' event to volunteers for National Volunteer Week 2021 and 2022 Delivered 13 workshops for volunteers, 22 workshops and four forums for volunteer managers Partnered with Eastern Volunteers to deliver the Volunteering Learning Hub, a free resource for volunteer-involving organisations, prospective volunteers and volunteers to rebuild confidence to volunteer through the pandemic and ensure equitable access to volunteer opportunities through seven self-guided learning modules Delivered training to Swinburne Student Life's volunteer ambassadors, which equipped students to deliver peer-to-peer role referrals through the BVRC's volunteer portal Researched the role of volunteering in strengthening the Boroondara community and produced a report Showcased volunteer opportunities at student expos at Swinburne and Deakin University Partnered with Liveable Communities to deliver five annual Skilled Volunteer Meet events, which connected skilled professionals with local volunteer-involving organisations seeking specialised skills Partnered with Volunteering in Manningham, City of Whitehorse and South East Volunteers to build the capacity of volunteer leaders by running workshops on the topics of engaging people living with a disability and older people in volunteering.
Strategic goal 2: BVRC provides people of all ages, cultures and abilities with flexible volunteering opportunities that reflect their values, interests and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented a new volunteer management system, VIKTOR/VIRA, alongside an integrated volunteer portal Registered 1,585 skilled professionals on the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank Registered 439 attendees at the Skilled Volunteer Meet between 2017-21 Promoted volunteer opportunities on behalf of community organisations through a multi-channel approach, including Council's website, EDMs (electronic direct mail), social media, third-party volunteer recruitment sites, posters/postcards, articles in the Boroondara Bulletin and Ward Newsletters, university open days and pop-up BVRC stalls Delivered four Boroondara Volunteer Expos, attended by up to 50 exhibitors (volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer programs) with an average of 500 attendees at each pre-COVID Promoted a total of 733 roles on the volunteer portal between July 2018 – June 2021 following the implementation of VIKTOR/VIRA.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the 'Volunteers of Boroondara' campaign in 2019, which featured the portraits and stories of twelve local volunteers. The campaign was designed to increase the number of volunteer enquiries through online promotion (including website and social media), a roving portrait gallery (including exhibits at the 2021 Boroondara Volunteer Expo and Balwyn Community Centre open day), as well as a booklet distribution to libraries and neighbourhood houses across Boroondara • Collaborated with Eastern Volunteers and Inner East Primary Care Partnership in 2019 to design a disability and inclusion training package for volunteer leaders, for launch at the BVRC's Disability Forum in 2022 • Completed a feasibility study on a Timebanking model in Boroondara • Facilitated discussions with leaders of volunteers in engaging volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities at quarterly Volunteer Leader Network Meetings • Delivered a tailored presentation for culturally and linguistically diverse students at Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre focused on volunteer opportunities in Boroondara in April 2018.
Strategic goal 3: BVRC enabled volunteer involving organisations in Boroondara to develop volunteer programs that respond to volunteering trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted research to assess the impact of volunteering in Boroondara and developed a report 'Research into the role volunteering plays in strengthening the Boroondara community'. Report findings have informed the work of the BVRC, including workshops for leaders of volunteers and discussion forums. The report found that volunteering contributes to social connectedness, community resilience, volunteer wellbeing and enhanced program reach for volunteer-involving organisations. The report also confirmed the BVRC plays a critical role in promoting a thriving volunteer sector through the delivery of volunteer support services for volunteer-involving organisations, volunteers and prospective volunteers • Presented local volunteering trends, as captured through the BVRC's 'Report on the role of volunteering in strengthening the Boroondara community', at the 2020 International Volunteer Managers Day forum and a Volunteer Leader Network Meeting. Volunteering trends were presented alongside practical tips and opportunities for volunteer leaders to pursue in refreshing volunteer programs, in line with changing needs and expectations of local volunteers. • Coordinated 22 onsite and online volunteer leader workshops designed to support organisations in developing responsive volunteer programs. Session topics included 'Managing Volunteers and the Law', 'Creating Remote Skilled Opportunities', 'Raising the Profile of Volunteers' • Delivered two 'International Volunteer Managers Day' forums in 2020 and 2021, which featured local and international volunteer management experts, to discuss current volunteering trends with tips to adapt to changing volunteer landscape. 280 registrations were collected for both forums • Facilitated two COVID-19 forums in 2021, which featured a discussion by Department of Health's Professor John Catford on the impacts of COVID-19 on the local volunteer sector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published national and state volunteering trends in monthly volunteer leader bulletins and facilitated discussion groups at bi-monthly network meetings to discuss the impact of changing volunteer trends on volunteer programs.
Strategic goal 4: BVRC develops and implements platforms to enable improved collection, analysis and management of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published monthly service activity reports to collate information about service performance and record and analyse service trends over time (including expressions of interest received in roles, role referrals made, number of new membership applications received, and email open rates) Launched a new online consultation bookings system, which has enabled prospective volunteers to independently book a consultation appointment around their availability (including nominating a consultation format - onsite, phone or video) Implemented the VIKTOR/VIRA volunteer management platform and integrated volunteer portal to promote volunteer opportunities. Since the system rollout in 2019, the BVRC has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experienced a significant increase in the number of prospective volunteers seeking volunteer opportunities. Before the VIKTOR/VIRA rollout, the BVRC would typically service 1,200 prospective volunteers annually. Over the last two years, this number has increased to 2,400 per year provided training support to 15 Council volunteer programs to transfer volunteer records supported 330 volunteer-involving organisations and volunteer programs in transitioning across to the new system, which has enabled volunteer leaders to manage their account information and volunteer opportunities improved systems to manage requests from organisations to advertise volunteer role vacancies and audit roles and promotion of the roles through the volunteer portal enabled prospective volunteers to search for relevant and meaningful volunteer roles through multiple search functions on the volunteer portal, empowering users to create and maintain their volunteer account and independently search for opportunities improved the process for skilled professionals to opt-in to register their skills on the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank and update information about their experience over time.