

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Strategic Service Plan

2022

Submission by Boroondara City Council

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Table of Contents

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Strategic Service Plan	1
2022	1
1. Executive summary	3
2. Introduction	5
2.1 Purpose	5
2.2 Corporate framework	5
3. Background	7
3.1 Overview of the BVRC	7
3.2 Volunteering definition and framework	9
3.3 Volunteering trends	9
4. Methodology	29
5. Vision	30
6. Strategic objectives and actions	30
7. Implementing and monitoring	31
7.1 Evaluation	31
7.2 Accountabilities	31
8. References	31
8.1 Related documents	31
8.2 Definitions	31
Appendix 1: Implementation Plan	32
Appendix B: References	36
Appendix C: Glossary	38

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.

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

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
- **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 2019-25.⁶

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
- **the Boroondara Volunteer Skills Bank**, which matches skilled professionals with short-term volunteer projects, alongside board and committee roles with community organisations

² City of Boroondara (2019). [Multicultural Action Plan 219-2023](#). 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

- **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)
- 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

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

⁸ Volunteer 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

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).

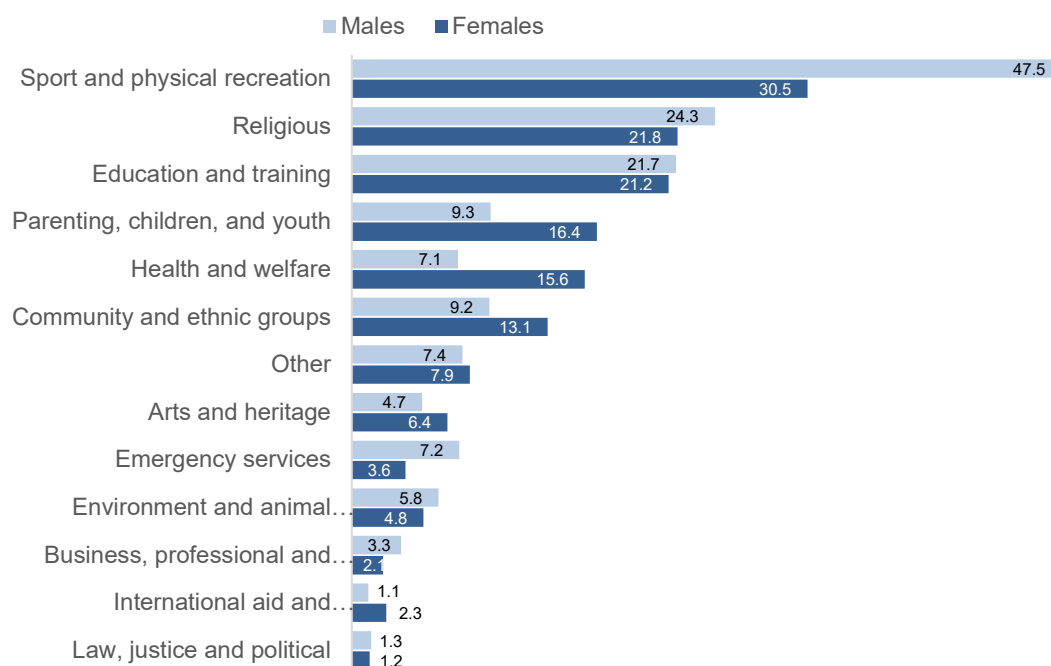
When looking at participation rates at various types of VIOs, Figure 2 below shows that the most popular VIOs were those relating to sport and physical recreation, religious groups and education and training for Australian males and females aged 15 years and over.

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

Figure 2

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

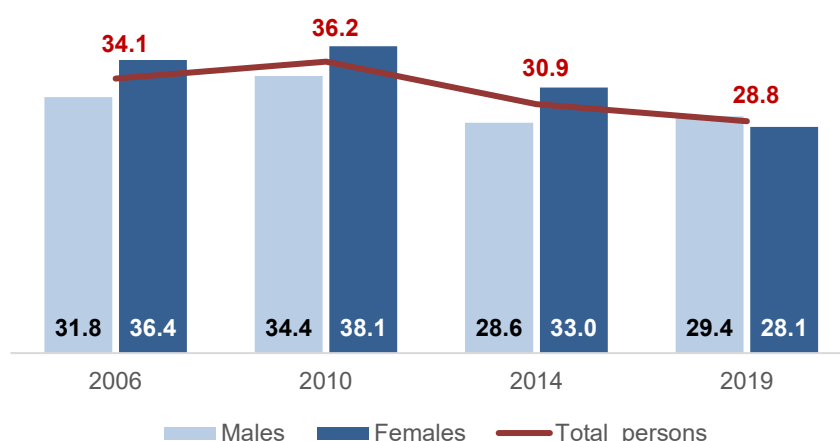


Source: General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia 2019. Table 8.3 Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work–By Sex, proportion of persons.

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

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

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

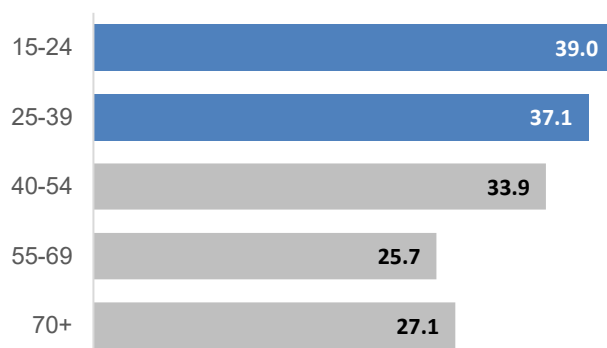
corporate volunteers. The report also suggests that VIOs are yet to meaningfully adapt to technological changes, such as conducting volunteer recruitment online or providing virtual volunteering opportunities. This is likely to have changed in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The BVRC has observed 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 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

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

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)
- 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

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

- 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

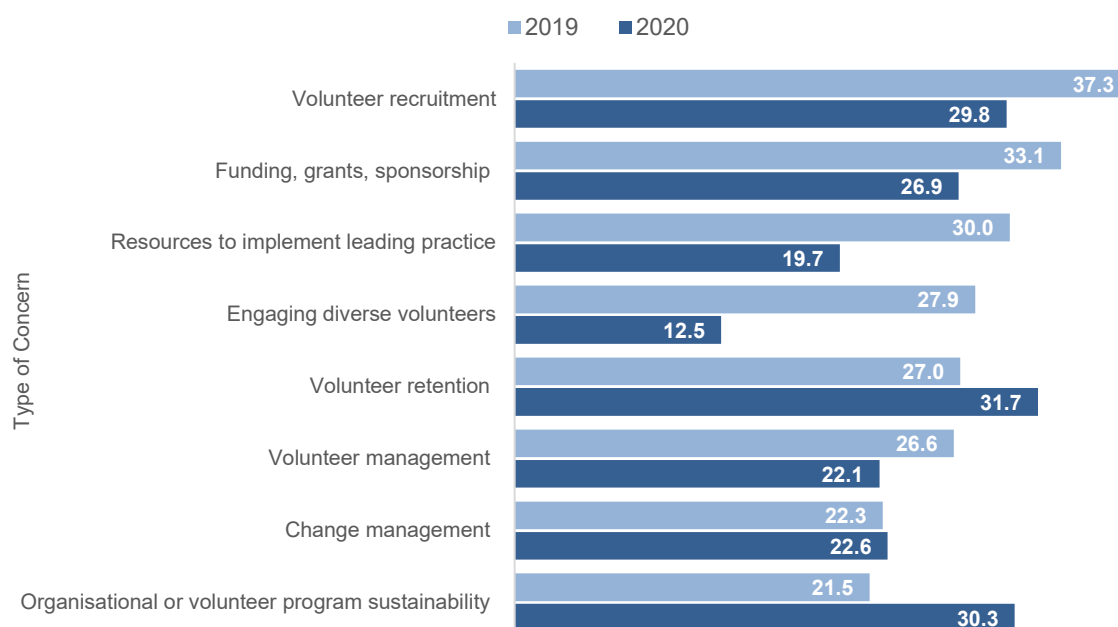
¹⁸ Volunteering Victoria (2020). [Victorian Government COVID Submission 2020](#). Viewed online 18 February 2022

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.

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.

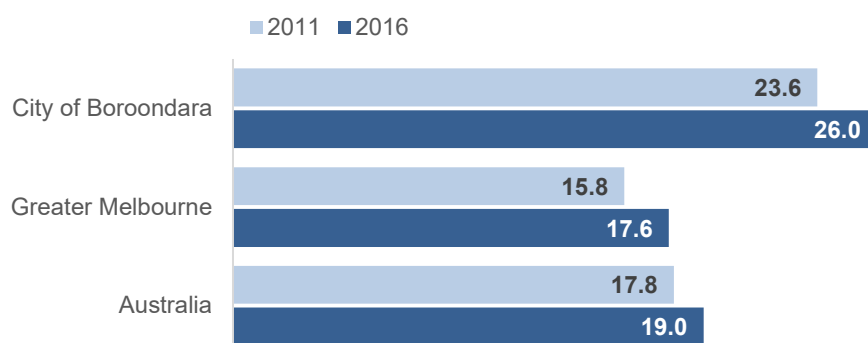
3.3.3 Volunteering in Boroondara

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).

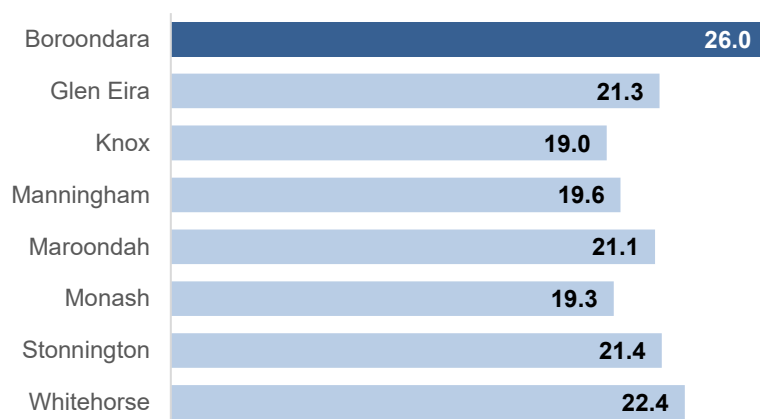
In 2016, Boroondara also had the highest proportion of residents who volunteer (26.0%) when compared to other local government areas in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (i.e. Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges²⁰) as well as nearby local governments areas including Glen Eira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

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). Viewed online 2 March 2022

²⁰ No volunteering data was available for Yarra Ranges.

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

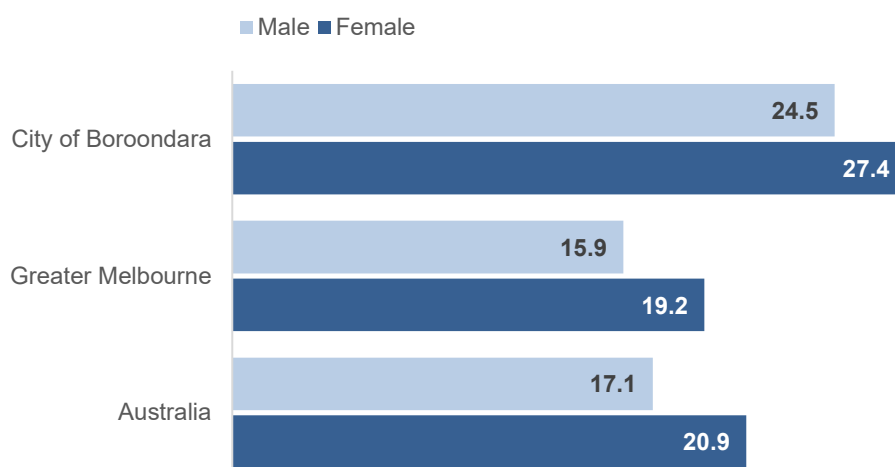


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled by .id (informed decisions).

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

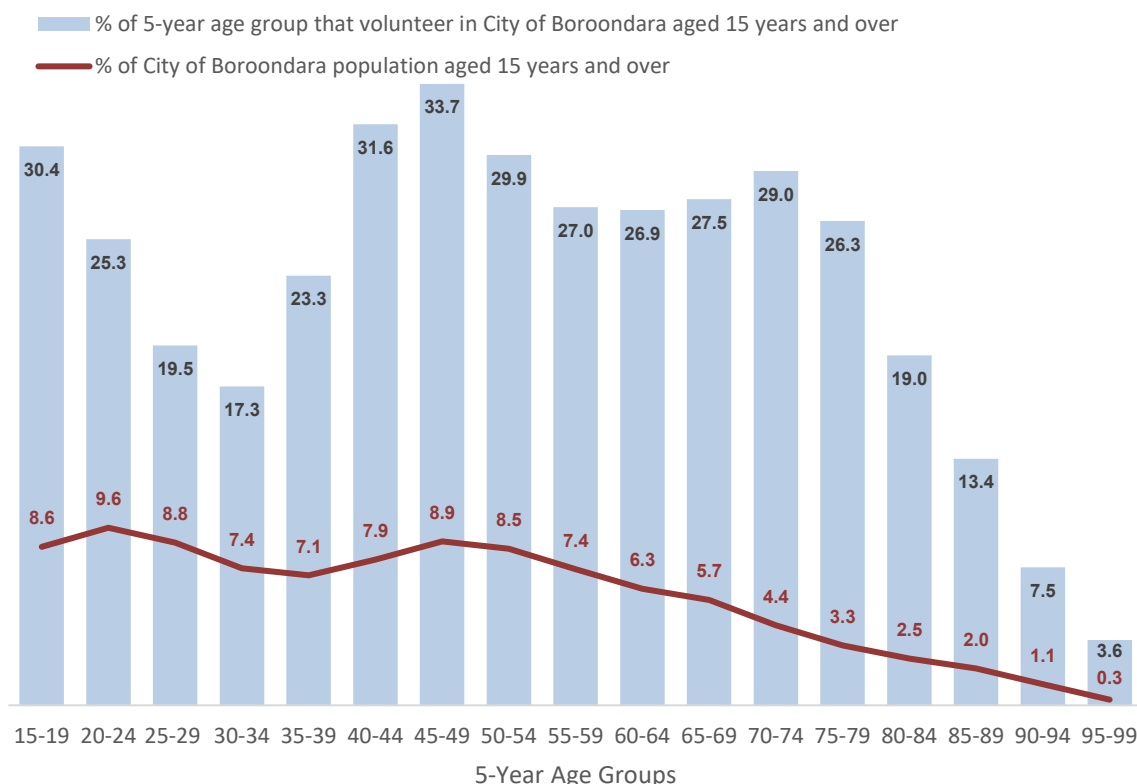


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled by .id (informed decisions).

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.

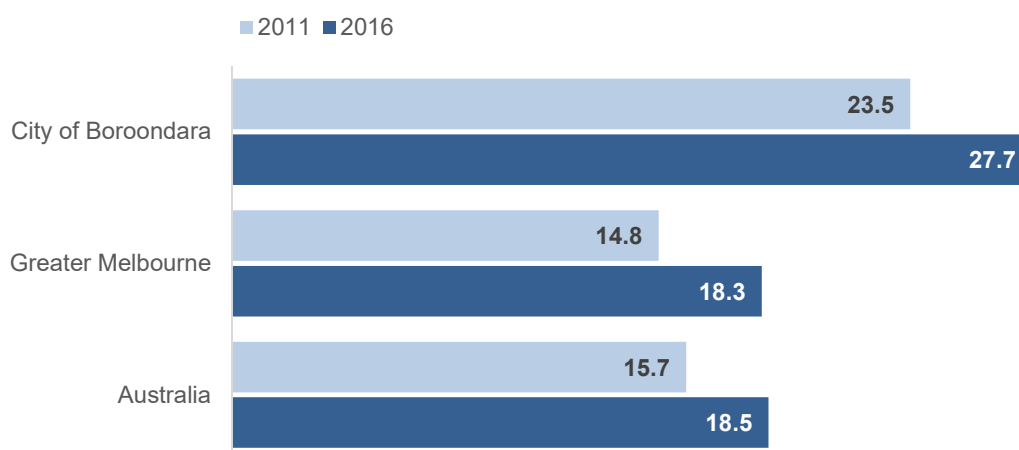
Young people and volunteering

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.

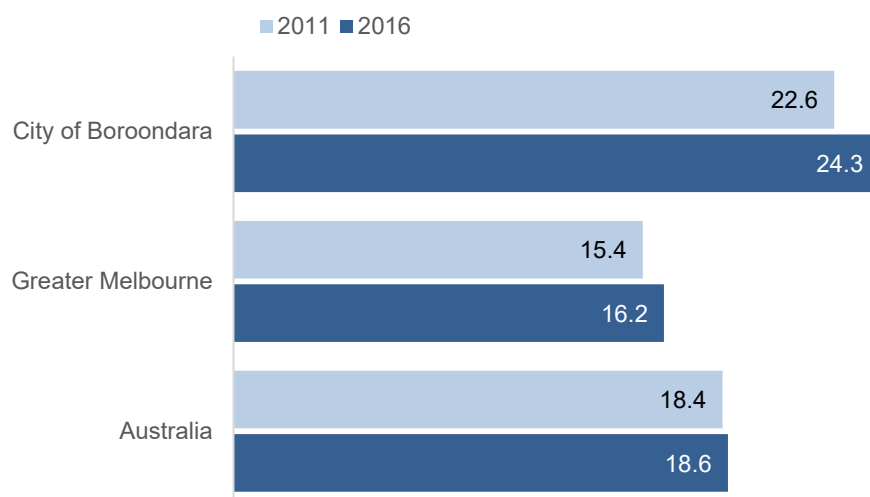
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage young people to volunteer in Boroondara, as outlined in the Children and Young People's Action Plan 2021-25. The BVRC client data shows that 26.8% of its clients were aged 15 to 24 years between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, which is similar to the 2016 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

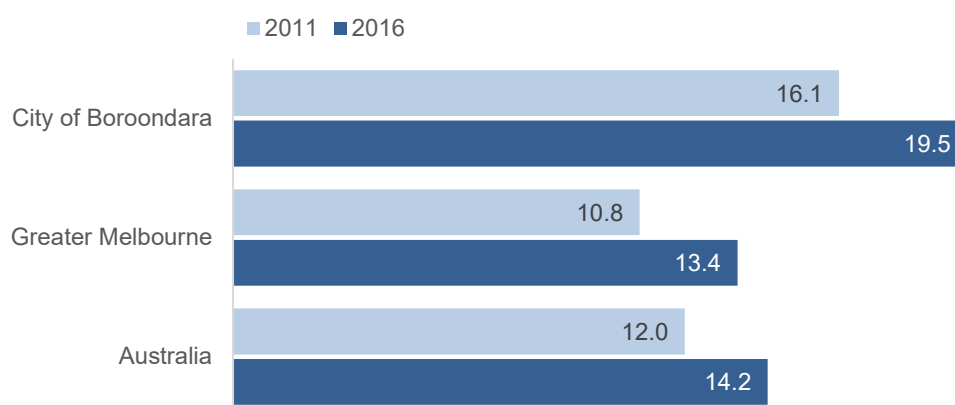
The City of Boroondara is a culturally diverse²¹ community. In the 2016 Census, 27.2% of residents reported speaking a language other than English at home. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, Boroondara experienced an increase (3.4 percentage points) in the proportion of culturally diverse residents who volunteer their time in the community. As shown in Figure 12, Australia and Greater Melbourne

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

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.

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.

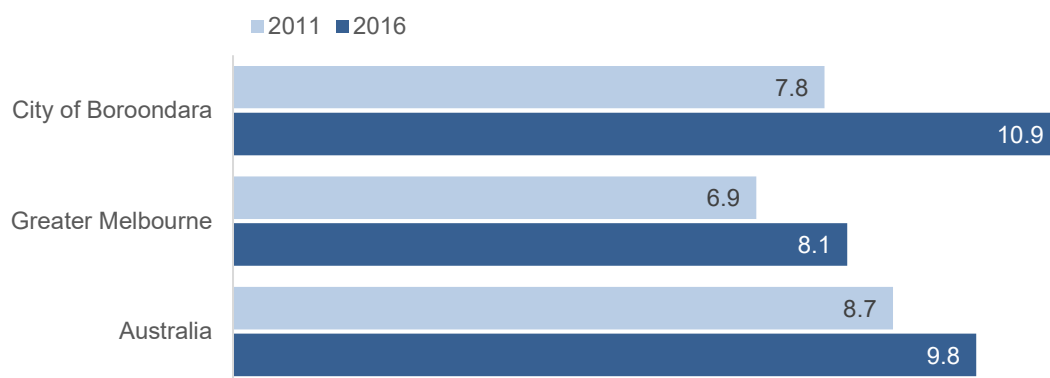
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage people from culturally diverse backgrounds to volunteer in Boroondara, as outlined in the Multicultural Action Plan 2019-23. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 39% of clients referred to volunteer roles by the BVRC were from a multicultural background.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

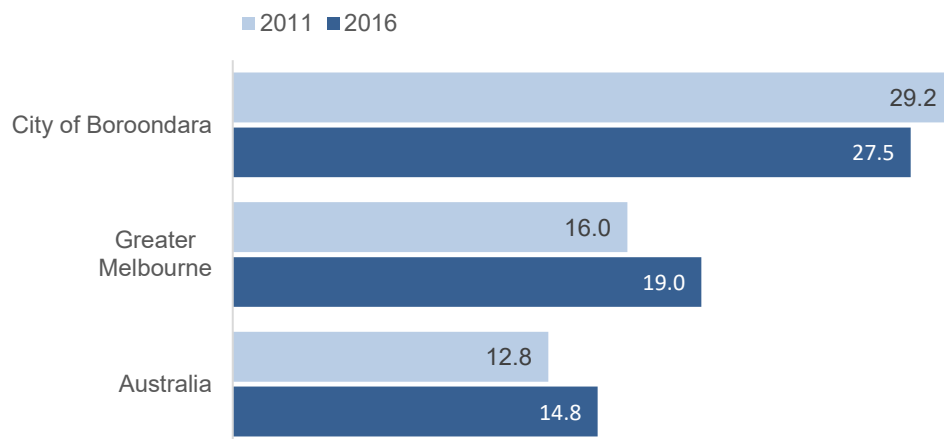
The BVRC has a strategic commitment to encourage volunteering by people with a disability, as outlined in the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 2% of the volunteer role referrals by the BVRC were to clients living with a disability. The BVRC can play a role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

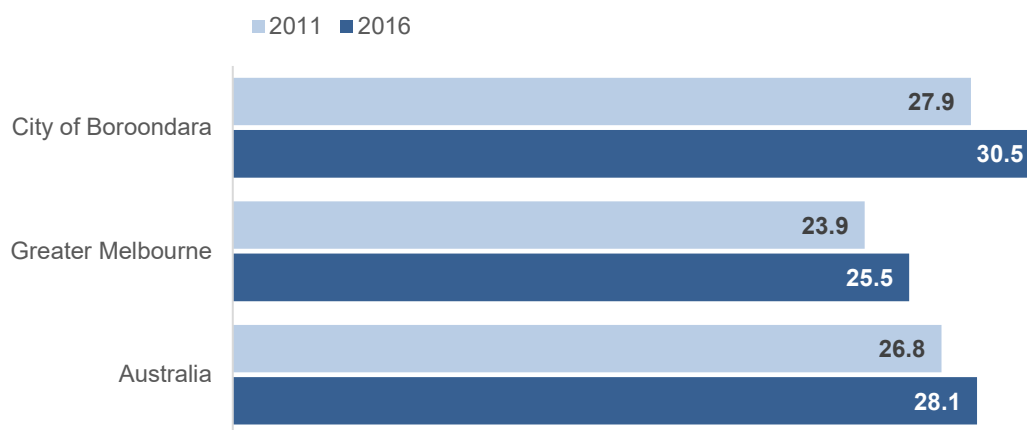
Skilled volunteering

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 marshals.

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

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

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.

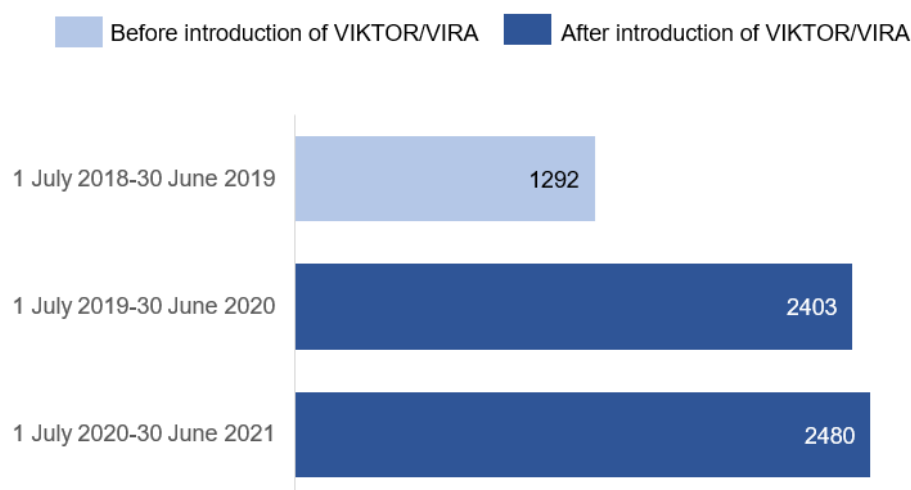
Enhanced online service delivery

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.

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 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.

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

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 2016-2022](#). 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

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

- 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

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	<p>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</p> <p>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. shared COVID-19 forum)</p>
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	<p>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</p> <p>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</p>
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 disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)	<p>2.3.1 Deliver community events to provide information about volunteering opportunities with local community organisations</p> <p>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</p>

Objective	Action
	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

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	<p>3.1.1 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</p> <p>3.1.2 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</p>
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'

Objective	Action
	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	<p>3.3.1 Review the Council Volunteer Policy and Procedures to ensure continued alignment with the national standards, legislation and contemporary sector developments</p> <p>3.3.2 Review the role of the BVRC in Council's Emergency Management Plan and align with Council's Volunteer Policy and Procedure</p>
3.4 The BVRC captures data and monitors trends across BVRC services	<p>3.4.1 Produce an annual performance report, which monitors progress, performance and achievements of the BVRC for Councillors and VIOs</p> <p>3.4.2 Capture data and monitor trends across BVRC services through volunteer referral surveys, VIO surveys and workshop evaluations</p>

Appendix B: References

Reference Number	Reference detail
1	Australia 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
10	City of Boroondara (2016). BVRC Strategic Service Plan 2016
11	Quest Consulting (2019). Research on the Role of Volunteering in Strengthening the Boroondara Community

Reference Number	Reference detail
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-19 Submission 2020 . Viewed online 18 February 2020.

Appendix C: Glossary

Abbreviation	Full word
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	Volunteer Victoria