

GREATER SHEPPARTON

Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan

2019-2022

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

“We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.”

Message from the Mayor

Volunteering is an essential community resource which promotes active citizenship and social inclusion. The benefits of volunteering are significant for our local communities and for individuals. The benefits are economic, social, cultural and environmental.


Council recognises the pivotal role that volunteers play within the community. Many community organisations, programs, clubs and sports would simply not exist without the dedication of volunteers. Greater Shepparton has a vibrant culture of volunteers, our community is stronger due to the inclusiveness volunteering promotes in our community.

Volunteering strengthens community connectedness and social cohesion. Social connections, such as those developed through volunteering, can provide meaning, purpose and satisfaction in people’s lives. The experience of helping others can lead to stronger social ties with different groups of people.

The Greater Shepparton Volunteer Strategy 2019-2022 is Councils second Volunteer Strategy and continues to provide a framework for how we promote, recruit, retain, support, celebrate and recognise volunteers across the municipality.

Council looks forward to implementing this strategy in partnership with the Volunteers, Volunteer involving organisations and the wider community who participate in or support volunteers in Greater Shepparton.

I wish to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy and given the enormous benefits from volunteering, all sectors of society can do more to encourage and support it.



Cr Kim O’Keeffe
Mayor
Greater Shepparton City Council



Executive Summary

The Volunteer Strategy sets out Greater Shepparton City Council's vision and approach to support volunteering in our region. This Strategy builds on the previous Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2018 and will further provide a framework for the promotion, recruitment, support, recognition and celebration of Council's volunteers at a local level, encouraging a responsive and supportive environment for all volunteers. Greater Shepparton City Council recognises, where there is a vibrant culture of volunteering, communities are stronger due to the inclusiveness volunteering promotes in the community.

Aims of the Volunteer Strategy:

- Promote volunteers and volunteering opportunities
- Engage and retain volunteers
- Ensure standards of best practice and consistency in supporting volunteers
- Recognise and celebrate volunteers.

As Council moves forward we want to be confident that our contribution to the volunteer sector serves us well. Volunteers are a resource we should nurture, support and celebrate and form a critical role in multiple community services.

Through effective collaboration we will continue to review the achievements of the action plan, evaluate new opportunities and monitor the resources available, to ensure we continue to work more effectively in today's complex world.

Vision

"The Greater Shepparton Volunteer Strategy demonstrates Council's continued commitment to the volunteering sector.

Council understands the benefits of volunteering and the significant impact volunteering has throughout the municipality; the benefits are economic, social, cultural and environmental. "

Key Directions and Action Plan

Key Strategic Direction 1: Promotion

Promote and inform the benefits of volunteering.

Key Strategic Direction 2: Recruitment

Implement leading practice and high quality standards.

Key Strategic Direction 3: Support

Ongoing commitment to volunteer participation, support and development.

Key Strategic Direction 4: Celebrate and Recognise

Volunteers are appreciated, acknowledged and celebrated.



Introduction

Greater Shepparton City Council recognises the pivotal role that volunteers play within the community. Many community organisations, programs, clubs and sports would simply not exist without the dedication of volunteers. Volunteering is an essential community resource which promotes active citizenship and social inclusion. Volunteering extends value to our communities to make them safe, robust, inclusive and culturally rich as volunteers come from all walks of life and come together to achieve a common goal for their volunteer organisation.

Volunteering provides a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs. Volunteering is often thought of in terms of the benefits it brings to others; however it also benefits the individual, helping them to achieve their own objectives, enhance their skills and extend their experience.

The economic value of volunteers is enormous, their hard work and dedication equates to large volumes of paid work. To use Greater Shepparton as an example, according to ABS statistics 2016, if our 24,000 volunteers, did only one hour of volunteering per year (that is

far from reality), calculated at \$34.89 per hour, the value of that time would equate to \$837,360 annually. This is only a fraction of the incredible contribution to the Greater Shepparton community. Nationally, this is an estimated annual contribution of \$290 billion.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community”

Greater Shepparton City Council - Volunteer Survey - 2018



What is Volunteering

Australia has a strong tradition of volunteering. Volunteers reflect the character of our nation, our distinctly Australian spirit of lending a hand and helping out. Volunteers are critical partners of, and participants in, societies throughout the world. Volunteering can be regular, episodic, formal or informal, pre-planned or a spontaneous response to emergencies. It can be done through an organisation, workplace or individually in person or online.

Definition of Volunteering

In 2015, after significant community consultation, the Peak Body – Volunteering Australia adopted the following definition:

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain

The new definition of ‘volunteering’ covers a wide range of activities, including:

- Formal volunteering that takes place within organisation (including institutions and agencies); and
- Informal volunteering (volunteering that takes place outside an organisational setting).

Source - © 2015 Volunteering Australia

Principles of Volunteering

The principles of volunteering are the result of a national consultation undertaken in 1996 with a wide range of stakeholders;

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer:
- Volunteer work is unpaid;
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs;
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

Source - © 2018 Volunteering Australia

“Environmental volunteering sustains, conserves and regenerates the natural environment for the benefit of all”

Greater Shepparton City Council - Volunteer Managers Survey – 2018



Environmental Volunteers

Statistics

Statistics from the ABS Census 2016 indicate that 1 in 3 people of the Greater Shepparton population, over the age of 15, volunteer. Understanding why people volunteer makes it easier to find and keep volunteers participating. It makes sense to do everything we can to promote, support, grow and recognise volunteering, aiming to increase participation. Council acknowledges the significant contribution from our municipality's young people, in particular, those under the age of 15, that freely give their time to volunteering.

Greater Shepparton	2016		
Volunteer Status	Greater Shepparton	State of Vic	National
Volunteer	22.7%	19.2%	28.2%
Not a Volunteer	77.3%	80.8%	71.8%
Total persons aged 15+	100.0%	100.0%	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016.

Who volunteers?

- 5.7 million adult Australians (28.2%)
- Slightly more women (20.9%) than men (17.1%)
- 23.5% of those aged 40 to 49 years volunteer, the highest participation level of any age group

How many hours do they volunteer?

In 2016, there were 8.6 million volunteering involvements nationally. On average, volunteers contributed 128 hours of voluntary work in the previous 12 months or an average of 86 hours per involvement. In 2016, Australia volunteers worked a total of 743 million hours.

What do they do?

Three most common types of agencies in which people volunteer:

- Sport and recreation (31%)
- Education / training (24%)
- Welfare / community (21%)

(Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016.)

Statistics

Why do they volunteer?

- To help others or the community (57%)
- Personal satisfaction (44%)
- To do something worthwhile (36%)
- Social contact (22%)
- To be active / use skills (16%).

Four most common volunteering activities:

- Management/committees/committees (26%)
- Fundraising/sales (23%)
- Preparing and serving food (14%)
- Coaching/refereeing/judging (14%)

(Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016.)



Street Rider Volunteers

How Volunteers Contribute at Council

Greater Shepparton City Council relies heavily on volunteers to run many of our essential programs. The programs utilising volunteers include but are not limited to:

Active Living Department

Active Living is responsible for the delivery of programming that contributes to the improved physical, nutritional and mental health of the Greater Shepparton community and incorporates Aquamoves, Rural Pools, Indoor Sports Facilities and major events such as Activities In The Park and Twilight Stroll.

Events and Tourism Department

The Events and Tourism Department run, assist with events and attend various promotions annually in Greater Shepparton.

Kidstown

Volunteers support Kidsfest and other events held at Kidstown. Volunteers also assist with general maintenance; participate in gardening programs and miniature train driving assistance.

Meals on Wheels – Neighbourhoods Department

Volunteers deliver around 100 meals a day across Shepparton, Mooroopna and Tatura.

Riverlinks

Volunteers for Riverlinks work as ushers and technicians for all performances presented at the Eastbank Centre and Westside Performing Arts Centre.

Shepparton Art Museum

Volunteers provide guided tours of the Shepparton Art Museum for members of the public.

Social Connections Program – Neighbourhoods Department

Social Connections volunteer operate within the community, and provide a comprehensive range of support services for frail aged and people with a disability, who may be socially isolated, as well as their carers.

Street Rider– Neighbourhoods Department

The Shepparton Street Rider initiative provides late night transport from the nightclub district to prevent anti-social behaviour in the Shepparton CBD. This proactive and successful project is a joint partnership between Council and Victoria Police and is actively supported by multiple late night venues, Community Accessibility, Standby Security and Neighbourhood Watch. Volunteers deliver the critical component on this service, providing their time to drive residents of the community safely home.

Visitors Centre (VC) –Tourism and Events Department

Volunteers at the VC provide a first point of welcome and information for visitors to Greater Shepparton. VC volunteers play an important role as ambassadors for the Greater Shepparton area.

Some of the other Council activities that volunteers are involved in include Community Plans, Section 86 Committees, Council programs such as Council's Community Leadership Program and other short term Community Committees.

Developing the Strategy

Process

This strategy has been formed through significant consultation with volunteers and volunteer managers across the Greater Shepparton municipality. This provided an avenue for the volunteers, volunteer managers and the wider community to give feedback regarding resourcing and ideas on strengthening the volunteer sector within the Greater Shepparton municipality. This feedback has been used to shape the key strategic direction for the action plan. The consultation has enriched Council's understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by the volunteer sector.

Consultations

Volunteers

Consultation provided an understanding of the current environment of volunteering, what is working well and opportunities moving forward. A number of different mechanisms were used to engage and consult with the volunteer community. A survey was developed and placed on the external Council website, hard copies of the survey were distributed to volunteer involving organisations and volunteer networks.

Volunteer Managers external to Council

An extensive volunteer sector engagement project was undertaken to connect with Volunteer Managers from a variety of local organisations. Volunteer managers and coordinators were encouraged to complete an online survey seeking information about the vital elements of maintaining volunteers.

Questions included:

"What is working well for your organisation's volunteers?"

"What can Council undertake to encourage more volunteers?"

The workshop provided an opportunity to give feedback on best and current practices with volunteers and identify opportunities for improvement in the future. This information was utilised to inform the development of the action plan.

Council Staff

Internal volunteer managers, volunteer coordinators and other key Council staff participated in the online survey and also came together for round table discussions to share current practices and to make suggestions on working as a collective to produce a consistent set of standards across Council. Many ideas were generated from these discussions, some highlighting trends across the different volunteering operations and some more specific to individual operations.

Feedback from Surveys

The survey of volunteers asked them to describe their volunteer experience in three words. The results clearly indicated that volunteers found their experience in volunteering rewarding and satisfying. Respondents also highlighted that they felt appreciated for their contribution.

Volunteers say that volunteering is...



"I volunteer because I like to help people and my community"

Greater Shepparton City Council - Volunteer Survey - 2018

"Our community is what it is because of the valuable work of the many volunteers"

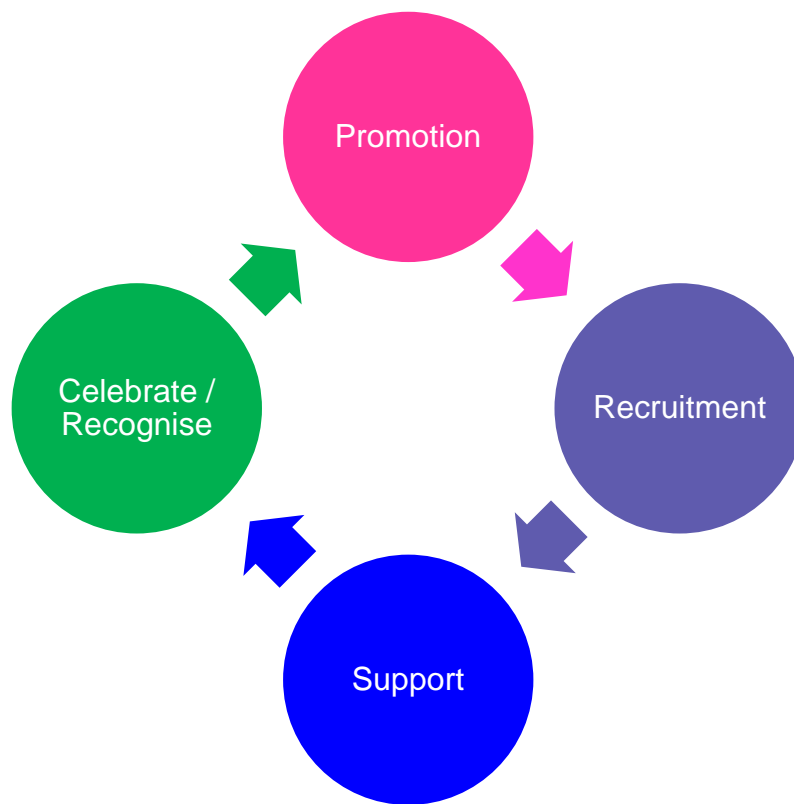
Greater Shepparton City Council - Volunteer Managers Survey – 2018

The Strategy

Key Directions and Action Plan

Through the consultation four strategic directions have been created to highlight the actions that Council will undertake to support the volunteering sector and strive for best practice for the volunteers of Greater Shepparton. The action plan consists of identified activities Council in partnership with the volunteer managers network will undertake during 2019 – 2022 based on these strategic directions.

- 1 Promotion
- 2 Recruitment
- 3 Support
- 4 Celebrate and Recognise.



Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the Greater Shepparton Volunteer Strategy and Action plan will be monitored and reviewed annually. The internal volunteer managers and coordinators together with the external Volunteer Managers Network and Council's Community Strengthening team will be responsible for driving the momentum of carrying out the actions of the strategy. The strategy will be updated and reported against annually by the Council Officers.

The attached Action Plan identifies a lead agency for each action. Where Council has been identified as the lead, they will be responsible for co-ordinating the planning and implementation of the action. Some actions will be led by the Volunteer Managers Network and Council will only report on these.

The following evaluation method's will be undertaken to ensure the strategy achieve its target.

1. Annual reviews with internal volunteer managers/coordinators working group, to review measurements, ensure timelines are being adhered to; and to adjust the process where necessary.
2. Ongoing facilitation of Volunteer Managers Network meetings.
3. Annual report provided to Council outlining achievements and the current status of implementation of actions.



Celebrating and Recognising Our Volunteers

Key Strategic Directions: Action Plan 2019 - 2022



Key Strategic Direction 1: Promotion

Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering.



Key Strategic Direction 2: Recruitment

Implement leading practice and high quality standards.



Key Strategic Direction 3: Support

Ongoing commitment to volunteer participation, support and development.



Key Strategic Direction 4: Celebrate and Recognise

Volunteers are appreciated, acknowledged and celebrated.

Definitions – Action Plan

Year 1	2019
Year 2	2020
Year 3	2021
Year 4	2022

Lead Agency: This column reflects either the Volunteer Managers Network or Council as the responsible party for coordinating the planning and delivery of the action.

Partnership: The first party listed in this column is the officer or team responsible for coordinating the planning and delivery of the action.

GSCC: Greater Shepparton City Council

VMN: Volunteer Managers Network

Key Strategic Direction 1: Promotion

Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering.

	Action	Lead Agency	Partnerships	Measurement	Year
1.1	Continue to maintain the Volunteer Manager's Network "Quick Reference Guide" and 'Young People's Volunteer Resource' which outlines volunteering opportunities and youth specific volunteer opportunities across Greater Shepparton	VMN	GSCC - Community Development Officer GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers	Review and update the guide twice a year or as required.	Year 1 / Ongoing
1.2	Develop a campaign plan to promote volunteering opportunities and volunteer profiles in the community, including print, website and social media.	GSCC	GSCC - Marketing and Communications VMN GSCC - People & Development	Develop campaign plan. Utilise Council's 'Calendar of Events' to highlight vacancies.	Year 1 / Ongoing
1.3	Actively promote the benefits of volunteering in educational settings such as career expos; secondary schools; community services; tertiary campuses; Neighbourhood houses.	VMN	GSCC - Community Strengthening Team GOTAFE Career teachers GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers	Attend a minimum of two events per year.	Year 1 / Ongoing
1.4	Promote and support volunteer opportunities for young people to volunteer in the community to develop their skills and provide assistance to individuals, groups and initiatives.	GSCC	GSCC - Youth Development Officer Word and Mouth Schools	Attend two events per year or provide young people volunteer resources as required.	Year 2
1.5	To promote and support CALD community volunteering through utilising culturally appropriate methods of communications and existing networks.	GSCC	GSCC – Multicultural Development Officer VMN	Deliver information session on volunteering twice a year or as required.	Year 2 / Ongoing
1.6	To promote and support Aboriginal community volunteering through utilising culturally appropriate methods of communications and existing networks.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Strengthening Team VMN	Deliver information session on volunteering twice a year or as required.	Year 2 / Ongoing
1.7	Promote volunteer opportunities throughout the municipality using "GSCC Volunteer Ambassadors".	GSCC	GSCC - Community Strengthening VMN	Engage volunteers to determine "Volunteer Ambassadors" to promote volunteering during National Volunteer Week or as required.	Year 2
1.8	To promote and raise awareness of volunteering within Council.	VMN	GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers Volunteer Sector	Advise Council staff, GSCC's support of volunteering through Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.	Year 4 / Ongoing

Key Strategic Direction 2: Recruitment

Implement leading practice and high quality standards.

	Action	Lead Agency	Partnerships	Measurement	Year
2.1	Council will monitor its Volunteer Policy that reflects the national standards of volunteering.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers	Council will review its Volunteering Policy.	Year 2
2.2	Council will monitor and review its internal volunteering recruitment process across Council.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - People & Development GSCC - Volunteer Managers	Update registration forms that are easily accessible for volunteer managers and customer service.	Year 1 / Ongoing
2.3	Create position descriptions for all volunteer positions within Council.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - People & Development GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers	Position descriptions completed for all volunteer positions within Council.	Year 2
2.4	Monitor and review Council Volunteer Induction kit for all volunteers.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - People & Development GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers GSCC - Governance	Update Kits developed and distributed to volunteer managers.	Year 2 / Ongoing
2.5	Explore professional development opportunities for volunteers including links with Council and Volunteer Sector Training programs.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - People & Development VMN	Identify Volunteer Manager and Volunteer specific training needs and assist to deliver.	Year 2
2.6	Council will continue to develop and utilise a central management system for the registration of volunteers and mandatory training in OHS and Code of Conduct.	GSCC	GSCC - People & Development GSCC - Community Development Officer	All current volunteers registered on existing central system. New volunteers added on sign up.	Year 2
2.7	Council will monitor emerging volunteer trends and advocate options for the sector.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Strengthening team GSCC - Marketing and Communications	Council Officer to attend regular volunteer professional development. Collect local data on volunteer trends. Evaluation of data collected.	Annually Year 3

Key Strategic Direction 3: Supporting Volunteers

Ongoing commitment to volunteer participation, support and development

	Action	Lead Agency	Partnerships	Measurement	Year
3.1	Support the Volunteer Managers Network to continue to strengthen volunteering within the municipality.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development Officer All organisations that utilise volunteers.	Coordinate bi-monthly meetings per year hosted by various members of VMN	Year 1 / Ongoing
3.2	Support Internal Volunteer Managers/Coordinators Working Group to strengthen volunteering within council.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development Officer GSCC - Representatives from all who manage or coordinate volunteers	Conduct a minimum of two meetings per year.	Year 1 / Ongoing
3.3	The VMN will continue to seek feedback from the volunteer sector to strengthen volunteering within the municipality.	GSCC	VMN GSCC - Internal Volunteer Managers	Conduct an annual survey to understand the volunteer experience. Gain regular feedback from Council volunteers specifically post events.	Year 1 / Ongoing
3.4	Investigate the feasibility of creating a volunteer resource space, either a physical or virtual location.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - Community Strengthening Team GSCC – Internal Volunteer Managers	Conduct a feasibility study.	Year 3 or 4
3.5	Investigate opportunities to assist volunteers to develop and enhance skills in preparation for the volunteering experience.	VMN	GOTAFE Registered Training Organisations	Identification of appropriate study opportunities. Develop a “Get Ready to Volunteer” information session, to prepare people to volunteer.	Year 2 / Ongoing
3.6	Investigate options for succession planning in the volunteer sector and continue to value volunteers	GSCC	GSCC – Community Development Officer VMN All organisations that utilise volunteers	Identify the opportunity of a Volunteer Mentor Program.	Year 2 / Ongoing
3.7	Support Volunteers as per the Municipal Emergency Management Plan	GSCC	GSCC – Emergency Management Coordinator GSCC – Community Development Officer	Investigate opportunities to provide support to MEMP volunteers. Attend MEMP meetings as required.	Year 1 / Ongoing

Key Strategic Direction 4: Celebrate and Recognise

Volunteers are appreciated, acknowledged and celebrated.

	Action	Lead Agency	Partnerships	Measurement	Year
4.1	Continue to host an annual Greater Shepparton Volunteer Recognition Awards during National Volunteer Week.	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer Volunteer Sector	One event per year.	Year 1 – annually in May
4.2	Council will investigate opportunities to reward volunteers through in-kind resources from within Council, other organisations and explore local business discounts for volunteers.	GSCC	GSCC - Arts, Events and Tourism Shepparton Show Me	Identification of sustainable rewards.	Year 3
4.3	Council will advocate for recognition of the municipality's volunteers by profiling local volunteers in the media.	GSCC	GSCC - Internal volunteer managers GSCC - Marketing and Communications	Prepare two media releases per year to celebrate and recognise volunteers.	Year 1 / Ongoing
4.4	Volunteer Manager Network will prepare media releases profiling local volunteers.	VMN	GSCC - Community Development officer Media organisations	Advocate with local media sources for volunteer promotion every two months.	Year 1 / Ongoing
4.5	Investigate volunteer recognition programs and opportunities for Council volunteers	GSCC	GSCC - Community Development officer GSCC - Internal volunteer managers GSCC - People & Development	Development of a CEO directive or guidelines	Year 3 or 4



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SHEPPARTON**

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