



Volunteer Strategy 2024–2028



City of
Norwood
Payneham
& St Peters

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028 seeks to guide the development and growth of the Council's Volunteer Service, identify priority areas of action and inform the Council's role in supporting people involved in volunteering activities across the City.

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A thriving community where all citizens have the opportunity to actively engage in and make meaningful contributions to the wellbeing of the community and environment.

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Mayor's Message

Across Australia, and indeed, the world the role of volunteers has been a constant source of strength and inspiration for millions, and an invaluable social asset in the process of societies.

Whether it is helping a neighbour, a sporting club, holding a stall at a school fair, volunteers are the glue that holds communities together.

People volunteer because they want to make a difference.

In this sense, volunteering is not just an offer to lend a hand, but also an offer to join hands. It is recognition that while some things can be done alone, other things can only happen when people of good will offer themselves to something bigger than themselves.

Over the past decade, the Council's volunteer numbers have steadily declined, reflecting the trend across the country. This decline was accelerated by COVID-19, with many volunteers, particular those in older cohorts, choosing not to return to their previous role when the pandemic was over.

Since that time, the Council has refreshed its approach to volunteering with a focus on how it can develop a model that continues to meet the needs of the community, now and into the future.

For these and other reasons, the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters have developed a five-year Volunteer Strategy (2024-2029).

Now more than ever, we need a strategy which identifies the key issues of volunteering, which go beyond the three "R's: recruitment, retention, and recognition.

This strategy has three key areas of focus.

First, the strategy seeks to recognise and celebrate the rich pool of talented individuals within our City and in nearby Councils, who have so much to give. We know there are many people who want to make a meaningful contribution to help improve the lives of their neighbours, friends, and in some cases, complete strangers.

This includes understanding why people volunteer, what makes them continue in their volunteering role and what personal satisfaction they get from making a positive difference to someone's day or life.

Secondly, the strategy discusses ways in which Council can work with and facilitate its stakeholders and partners to ensure the valuable contributions made by volunteers are making a positive impact on the people, organisations, and communities they serve.

The third key area is creating and nurturing exciting and interesting volunteering opportunities, which appeal to people of all ages, abilities, experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

Volunteers are flexible and want to help where they can, but they also want to be involved where their talent, skills and experience can be best used and where they feel valued.

I commend this Volunteering Strategy to you and invite to you join with other community-minded individuals to give your time, skills, and energy to sew your own patch to what the Reverend Jesse Jackson Jr refers to as the "great quilt of unity." (1).

Robert Bria

MAYOR

(1) Reverend Jesse Jackson Jr, Speech at 1988 Democratic National Convention, Atlanta, USA

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is located five minutes east of the Adelaide Central Business District (CBD) and has a reputation of being one of Adelaide's most desirable places to live, work study and visit. It is a great place to volunteer.

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is a diverse and thriving community with an estimated population of 38,000 residents living in approximately 15 square kilometres.

25% of households earn an income of \$3,000 or more per week and employment rates are considered high with 63% of residents participating in the labour workforce.

Approximately 30% of residents were born overseas and 3% of residents speak a language other than English as their primary language.

5.8% of the population report as needing assistance in their daily lives due to living with a disability and 13% of the population were providing unpaid assistance to a person living with a disability.

19.3% of our Community Volunteer

Approximately 19.3% of the population in the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters reported undertaking some form of voluntary work in 2021 compared with 15.5% in Greater Adelaide.

There are a wide range of community-based volunteer roles within the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters, including:

- Sport and recreation clubs
- Churches
- Community services
- Schools and kindergartens
- Service clubs
- Health services
- Education
- Op shops and charity services
- Community events.

The top four (4) types of organisations people in the City chose to volunteer with were:

- sports and recreation organisations (39%);
- religious groups (23%);
- education and training organisations (22%); and
- welfare/health providers (12%).

Introduction

The *Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028* sets out Council's strategic direction for volunteering activities and the development of Council's Volunteer Service.

The Strategy serves as a framework for achieving an inclusive community service that supports individuals to participate and contribute to the community and environment in a meaningful way.

The Strategy seeks to support three key outcomes:

1. A thriving, active, satisfied, and participating 'volunteer-force'.
2. A City known for excellence in volunteering services.
3. A supportive City that attracts volunteers and delivers a meaningful program.

In establishing the strategic framework for the *Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028*, the Council considered the views of current volunteers, volunteering-involving organisations (VIOs), the demographic profile of the City, and recent volunteering research. In doing so, the Strategy aims to address emerging opportunities and challenges facing volunteerism in the City.

Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering Australia defines Volunteering as *'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.'*

Valuing Volunteering

Volunteering plays a key role in connecting, strengthening, and building stronger local communities, keeping communities and organisations working together.

The Council recognises the valuable and integral role volunteers play, alongside employees, in contributing to and working towards achieving shared community wellbeing goals.

This *Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028* reflects Council's commitment to continuous improvement of the Council's Volunteer Service and the experience of volunteers, achieving meaningful volunteer program outcomes for participants and the community, and enhancing outcomes for volunteer involving organisations in the City.

Our Volunteer Service

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters has a long history of involving volunteers to assist and extend services offered to the community. There are almost as many volunteers (220) as there are employees (226), with Council operating a wide range of volunteer programs including:

- Community care and active ageing
- Cultural heritage
- Environmental conservation
- Graffiti Removal
- Justice of the Peace services
- Library services
- Events.

The diversity of the community, their needs, and the mixture of volunteer contributions, result in a skilled and comprehensive volunteer program, hosted and supported by the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters.

One (1) full time staff member (Coordinator, Volunteer Services) is responsible for the development, implementation, review and maintenance of policies and procedures associated with Council's volunteers.

In addition, each program is assigned a staff member (Program Coordinator) who is responsible for the operational implementation and supervision of specific volunteer programs and its volunteers.

Models of Volunteer Engagement

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters designs the volunteer service around the delivery of specific services and Council programs. This model is common across Adelaide metropolitan Councils

The City also recognises the broader value of volunteering and the various forms in which this is undertaken, examples of which are listed in the below table:

Examples of Models of Volunteer Engagement

Model	Approach	Examples
Formal	Volunteering within organisations and groups (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way. Organised around the delivery of specific services, structured roles, often long term or regular attendance.	Cataloguing service in a library. Community bus driver.
Non-formal	Volunteering outside the context of a formal organisation or group. This includes assisting people in the community, excluding one's own family members. Community members, with a shared interest, coming together to address specific community needs. Relatively unstructured and occurring in a range of settings.	Volunteering for a neighbourhood group or organisation. Giving someone professional advice. Looking after children, property, or pets. Providing home or personal assistance.
Governance	Defined board member or management committee roles to provide leadership and direction for the organisation which are required by the Associations Incorporated Act 1985 (or other legislative requirements).	President of an Incorporated Association. Treasurer of a sporting club.
Project	Outcome driven with a defined period of engagement, often short term, to achieve a particular project. Often attracting a range of demographics that utilise volunteers' specific skills and knowledge.	Planning and delivering an event. Environmental education project.
Social Action	Shared interest and passion in a social cause and bringing about defined changes. These groups are relatively un-structured.	Lobbying for change for a specific target group of people or cause.

An assessment of local government volunteer programs nationally indicate that some local governments in other Australian capital cities have begun to adopt alternative models of volunteering in an effort to reposition volunteer programs from direct service delivery to facilitator and supporter of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs), short term community projects and community led action.

In these instances, local governments support this activity through:

1. Creating community awareness about VIOs, and their associated volunteering opportunities, in their community.
2. Partnering with community groups to reach a common objective or project outcome.
3. Reducing red tape and barriers to community led action to create an enabling environment.
4. Facilitating programs and initiatives that build community capacity and confidence to act.
5. Acting as a connector, connecting community members to work together to achieve community outcomes.

Measuring Success

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters has traditionally measured the success of its volunteer service using the following outputs and data collection methods:

- Number of active Volunteers
- Number of programs
- Number of hours contributed by Volunteers.
- Volunteer tenure
- Volunteer feedback forums and surveys.

Whilst these outputs communicate what was provided, they don't necessarily reflect the outcome or impact achieved. Well-designed targeted programs and evaluation methods is therefore required to accurately measure the success of the volunteer programs delivered by the Council. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Clearly stated goal(s) (what problem is the program trying to solve).
- Target group(s) (who is the program trying to reach?).
- Desired outcome(s) (what does success look like?).
- Defined role of Council and the volunteer.
- Program partners.
- Outputs and resources required.
- Quantitative and qualitative measures of individual, community, and organisational impact(s) (is anyone better off?).

Understanding and measuring success will provide improved clarity of the impact of volunteer programs and assist in informing future program priorities.

In addition, sharing the positive impact a volunteer program can positively influence a volunteer's decision to commence and/or to continue volunteering. Whilst not the only motivator, it is well documented that volunteers are often motivated by the opportunity to give back to the community.

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Our Volunteers

220 people volunteer with Council

49% of volunteers are female

66% of volunteers live within the City

36% of Council Volunteers are aged 70 years+

Annual economic contribution valued at \$282,819

The majority of volunteers who live outside the City boundaries primarily live in the neighbouring Councils of Burnside (7%) and Campbelltown (7%).

Feedback provided by volunteers relating to their motivation to volunteer with the City includes;

- geographic location and the size of City makes it physically accessible;
- interest in a specific program;
- reputation of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peter's and its volunteer services
- have previously been a resident within the City;
- knew someone who is currently involved as a volunteer and was asked to participate.

35% of volunteers said they learnt about volunteering with the City by word of mouth, followed by 33% who indicated they learnt about volunteer opportunities through the internet. The remaining volunteers learned about volunteering with Council via other means such as flyers and posters.

Additional characteristics of the City's volunteers are detailed in the below tables:

Age Profile of Volunteers

Age	Number of Volunteers	% All Volunteers
between 6 – 24 years	19.8	9%
between 25 – 39 years	33	15%
between 40- 54 years	24.2	11 %
Between 55 – 69 years	63.8	29 %
Over 70 years	79.2	36 %

Volunteer Tenure

0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	21-25 years	26+ Years
145	46	11	8	4	6

Volunteer Contribution

Program	Number of Volunteers	Number of hours per program	Value of hours per program
Environmental Conservation	89	816	\$36,801
Graffiti Removal	9	827	\$37,297
Justice of the Peace Services	21	1554	\$70,085
Library Services	17	783	\$35,313
Events	27	215	\$9,696
Community Care and Active Ageing	57	2076	\$93,627
Total per annum	220	7593	\$282,819

Impacts of COVID-19

The number of the City's volunteers has remained consistent over the last ten (10) years with an average of between 200-250 people.

During the 2019-20 financial year, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decrease of 13% of volunteers due to resignation and all but one (1) volunteer program being temporarily suspended.

Reasons cited by volunteers for resignation included:

- age;
- health;
- wanting to spend more time at home; and
- being in a high risk category for COVID-19.

During this period, Council's Volunteer Services sought to minimise the impact of COVID-19 through the use of proactive communication, reward and recognition strategies and risk management.

In addition, improvements to volunteer recruitment and on-boarding procedures were implemented through the use of digital technologies enabling Council's Volunteer Services improved ability and efficiency to recruit volunteers.

The impact of COVID-19 also impacted the total number of volunteer hours contributed to Council programs. In 2019 Council volunteers contributed a total of 7,153 hours, decreasing in 2020 to 5,570 hours. However, by 2023, this rebounded to a total of 7,504 hours.

The strength of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peter's recovery from the impact on volunteer hours due to COVID-19 is considered, in part, to relate to the organisation's strong history of volunteer acknowledgement. Every level of the organisation, from the Mayor and Elected Members to Executive leadership and the staff that lead volunteers, consistently demonstrate appreciation for the volunteer contribution to the organisation and community by assisting in a variety of volunteer reward, recognition and wellbeing endeavours including but not limited to:

- City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters volunteer Christmas dinner;
- volunteer service mile-stones;
- Volunteer Week events;
- reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses;
- training and equipment provisions; and
- free access to counselling services and flu immunisations.

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Strategic Alignment

The *Volunteer Strategy 2024–2028* will operate alongside other relevant strategies, plans, and legislation. Key strategies informing this document are summarised below.

National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033

The National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033, led by Volunteering Australia and funded by the Department of Social Services, vision is “Volunteering is the heart of Australian communities.”

To achieve this vision, the National Strategy identified three (3) focus areas and aims:

- individual potential and the volunteer experience;
- community and social impact; and
- conditions for volunteering to thrive.

To ensure alignment with and to underpin this National Strategy, the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Volunteer Strategy 2024–2028 identifies localised priorities and objectives under each of these three (3) interconnected National focus areas and aims.

The National Standards for Volunteering

The National Standards for Volunteering were implemented in 2015 and revised in 2023. These provide guidelines for volunteer involving organisations to develop effective volunteer involvement strategies and practices.

The Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028 recognises the National Standards for Volunteering as a nationally acknowledged best practice tool that will help guide, implement, and audit the strategies actions. This recognition will play an important role in ensuring a quality outcome when implementing the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028.

CityPlan 2030: Shaping Our Future

CityPlan 2030: Shaping Our Future is the Council’s long-term Strategic Management Plan, which outlines the long-term Vision and Outcomes for the City. The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is committed to its vision of creating a City which values its heritage, cultural diversity, sense of place and natural environment. A progressive City which is prosperous, sustainable, and socially cohesive, with a strong community spirit.

Due to the inter-departmental nature of volunteering within the City, the Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028 contributes to all four (4) Outcomes of the Strategic Plan, aligning closely with Social Equity – An inclusive, connected, accessible and friendly community. The Objectives that support this Outcome are:

- Convenient and accessible services, information, and facilities.
- An engaged and participating community
- A strong, healthy, resilient, and inclusive community.

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Key Influences, Trends, and Emerging Issues

The following section identifies and briefly explores key national, state, and local influences, trends, and emerging issues.

The *National Strategy for Volunteering* reports that volunteering is prolific across Australia, with volunteer contributions supporting the delivery of arts, sports, events, community building, social welfare, health, education, animal welfare, conservation, and emergency services. However, a multitude of factors are threatening its sustainability, including declining numbers of formal volunteers, barriers to participating in volunteering, and increasing demand for services delivered by volunteers.

Volunteer Participation

As cost-of-living rises, it is predicted that organisations will face increasing difficulties in attracting and retaining volunteers. As the paid workforce seek to increase hours of paid work, remain in the workforce longer or take on second jobs, will reduce the time available for volunteering. Conversely, as larger numbers of individuals and families are negatively impacted by the escalating cost-of-living, there are likely to be higher demand on services that are typically supported by volunteers.

National volunteering levels remain lower than the pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels and are at a similar level to that recorded during the Great Recession. Formal volunteering in Australia has steadily declined from approximately one (1) in three (3) people in 2010 to just over one (1) in four (4) in 2022.

Between 2016 and 2021 the number of volunteers in the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters local government area decreased by 854 people, with many Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIOs) forced to cease volunteering programs. Predictions suggest it is unlikely there will be a return to pre-COVID rates across Australia in the coming years.

While participation rates are lower than in the past, monetary donations to charities appear to be increasing, indicating that many people are still happy to 'give', however the experience during the pandemic, and needing to reduce human contact as a preventative measure during this time, has made people more cautious or set new habits in the ways that people contribute.

Why do people Volunteer?

Volunteering Australia, in 2022, reported that volunteers often have multiple motivations for volunteering such as *helping others/community* (74%) and *to do something worthwhile* (66%). Whilst these motivations have largely remained unchanged, volunteers are increasingly focused on their own experience.

When asked why volunteers choose to volunteer with the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters, respondents identified their primary drivers as:

- giving back to people, place, and community;
- social reasons such as getting to know the community and meeting new people;
- taking part in a particular program;
- learning new skills and gaining experience; and
- environmental interests.

"I would like to help the community that I live in as I want to be a contributing member of the society and would like to help people, plants and animals in need."

"I believe that contributing to the community is my way of giving back and the skills I have may be useful to the community. I also enjoy interacting with people socially."

"Volunteering is a very good opportunity to know the community and be a member of the community. I really like helping people and communicating with different people. For myself, I can improve my English speaking."

The primary reason why people commence volunteering with the City is because someone they know is already volunteering. This indicates that word of mouth promotion is one of the most effective ways to recruit volunteers.

The Changing Landscape of Volunteering

Volunteering is increasingly being recognised for its value in improving wellbeing and supporting social cohesion. The *Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework* recognises formal and informal volunteering as measures of social connection, which is essential for feeling satisfaction with life. Volunteering, therefore, is increasingly being shaped by broader social issues and patterns, such as climate emergency and an increased focus on health and wellbeing.

Volunteering Australia's, *Navigating Change and Charting a New Course: Volunteering in Recent Times* (May 2024) captures key changes in volunteering practices and reports:

- That a mismatch exists between the volunteering opportunities being offered and what people who are currently not volunteering are interested in. Increasing individualism in decision-making as to where, how, and why individuals volunteer.
- A decline in 'formal' volunteering. There is greater interest in short-term or one-off volunteering.
- Financial pressures are a significant barrier to volunteering, especially among younger people.
- Volunteer involving organisations are also under significant financial strain and the decline in formal volunteering has affected their capacity to deliver services and engage volunteers.

Volunteer Experience

The National Strategy for Volunteering 2023 identifies the 'Volunteer Experience' as a key area of change and Volunteer Involving Organisations are encouraged to develop a positive volunteer experience within their services. Research indicates that volunteers seek an experience that is meaningful and enriching, which makes them feel valued and reflects how their contribution makes a difference.

The volunteer experience influences the way in which volunteer programming is designed and the volunteers' perceptions about their interaction with the service, such as the way they are onboarded and/or the personal opportunities which were available to them. Continuing to invest in meaningful and diverse volunteer programs is integral to the attraction, recruitment, and retention of volunteers.

Accessibility and Use of Technology

New technologies has facilitated greater access to online volunteering, making volunteering more accessible, '*beyond the retiree role*'. In 2020 the number of people that volunteered through an online medium increased from 8.5% in 2019 to 17.3% in 2020. Further, it is reported that when an organisation or group provides online volunteering options, their existing volunteers participate at a rate of up to 76%.

<https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

Young Volunteers

Young people are often highly motivated to volunteer, however struggle to balance the desire to effect change with the demands of everyday life, citing the cost-of-living as their greatest concern. *Deloitte. (2022). Striving for balance, advocating for change.*

Young people's volunteering preferences are therefore generally flexible, short-term, one-off, and non-committal. Consequently, it can be challenging for organisations to attract younger volunteers, as their volunteer programs are typically designed in more traditional formats. In response, some organisations have adopted a multi-model approach, incorporating formal, non-formal, project based and/or social action models of volunteer engagement to reflect contemporary, outcomes-driven and time conscious communities.

Ageing Population

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters' population is ageing, illustrated by a higher proportion of people aged 70 to 84 (12%) than the greater Adelaide region (10.7%). This has implications on a growing need for volunteers to support programs for older citizens.

However, with an increased interest in active ageing and social connection among 'baby boomers', presents an opportunity to address this need.

Responding to the Changing Landscape

Whilst local government organisations often seek to support positive wellbeing within their communities, it is important to recognise their contribution as part of a system level response. Whilst high levels of volunteerism within a local government can be reflective of positive wellbeing, the capacity of local government's ability to drive this are often limited. In this regard, many local governments have focussed on the role volunteerism plays in supporting their programs.

Notwithstanding, as diverse and often trusted organisation, there are opportunities available to many local governments to support Volunteer Involving Organisations by leveraging their communication channels, providing access to infrastructure and providing referral to specialist resources, such as peak bodies.

What We Heard

The development of the Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028 has been informed by ideas and feedback from Council volunteers (72 volunteers, 35% of Council Volunteers), Volunteer Program Coordinators, Local Government Volunteer Managers Network and Volunteering Involving Organisations (15 organisations, 32% of identified VIOs in the City). An overview of the feedback provided is outlined in the below table:

<p>Volunteering and Paid Work</p> <p>27% of Council volunteers are actively engaged in paid work while volunteering and hence, volunteering opportunities need to provide the flexibility to accommodate volunteer's commitments.</p>	<p>Ageing Population</p> <p>Consider the impact of ageing in Council's volunteer workforce and strategically plan to assist ageing volunteers to transition out of roles and replace with new volunteers.</p>
<p>Barriers to Volunteering</p> <p>21% of Council volunteers reported paperwork and procedures as being arduous which could represent as a barrier to volunteering with the City.</p>	<p>Respond to Changing Patterns of Volunteering</p> <p>Consider adopting a flexible approach to models of volunteering, beyond formal volunteering, to increase non-formal, short term and project-based volunteering and community led action.</p>
<p>Challenges for Volunteering Involving Organisations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment and promotion. 2. Reduced commitment to ongoing formal volunteering. 3. People willing to pay for service rather than volunteer. 	<p>Top Volunteer Program Ideas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elderly Support Programs 2. Social Inclusion Programs 3. Environment Programs 4. Life Skills Programs
<p>Volunteer Experience</p> <p>Council volunteers suggested the Council consider social connection and mentor programs with inter-generational participants to increase interaction, decrease loneliness and provide practical life and work skills in the community.</p>	<p>Volunteering and Capacity Building</p> <p>Consider capacity building initiatives to target hard to reach groups and provide a pathway to volunteering (e.g. young people and people from CALD backgrounds). Moving away from the formal 'giving/charitable' approach to a community development approach.</p>

Guiding Principles

To assist Council to operationalise its volunteering vision, and shape and prioritise actions, the Strategy is guided by the following principles:

Access & Participation

We believe everyone has the right to access volunteering participation opportunities. We will seek to engage people of all abilities and ages in meaningful experiences and will support equitable access, active participation, and contribution to our community.

Collaboration

We appreciate that the work of many organisations, clubs, local government, and peak bodies, can overlap or help to inform and deliver volunteering programs and initiatives. Taking a broad view of these interconnections we will identify partnership opportunities to work as a coherent system to achieve our shared goals.

Continuous Improvement

We recognise that volunteering requires innovative initiatives to meet the challenges Volunteer Involving Organisations face.

With volunteer needs continually evolving, volunteer management must adapt to help support volunteers to be engaged through experiences that match their expectations.

Recognition and Support

We understand and appreciate the value volunteers contribute to our organisation and the community. It is our responsibility to ensure volunteers are provided adequate support to perform their role and the impact of our volunteers' efforts is celebrated.

Volunteer Strategy Framework

Vision

An inclusive community service that enables everyone to participate and contribute to their community and environment in a meaningful way.

The Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028 has been informed by the following five (5) key inputs:

- Listening to our Volunteers, Volunteering Involving Organisations and staff;
- The demographic profile of the City;
- Volunteer sector research into key influences, challenges, and trends.
- The City's current state of volunteering.
- An understanding of Local Government Volunteer Service best practice models.

Our Commitment

Our community can expect the City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters to:

- Implement best practice standards guided by the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and advocate for community needs.
- Partner and collaborate with key stakeholders to strengthen the culture of volunteerism and identify opportunities for joint efforts to achieve shared goals.
- Promote volunteering opportunities and the importance volunteering plays in the community.
- Improve the experience volunteers have when volunteering with the Council.
- Support the well-being of Council volunteers and include volunteers in decisions that affect them.
- Advocate for improved access to training and resources that support volunteers and Volunteering Involving Organisations.

Focus Areas

The strategic objectives of the Volunteer Strategy are mapped under the three interconnected focus areas identified in the *National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033*:

1. individual potential and the volunteer experience;
2. community and social impact; and
3. conditions for volunteering to thrive.

Underpinning these focus areas, the Council has developed strategic objectives that are relevant to its local context. Aligning these objectives with the National framework re-affirms and advances the shared agenda of enhancing community well-being, ensuring volunteering continues to be sustainable and an integral part of the social and cultural fabric.

Action Plan

The actions outlined below inform and guide the Council Volunteer Service priorities over the coming three-year period to achieve the vision, focus areas and objectives of the Service.

Focus Area 1: Individual Potential and the Volunteer Experience

Outcome: *A City known for excellence in volunteering services.*

Strategy		Timeframe	Budget Estimate
1.1	Create an accessible, inclusive, interactive, and easy to navigate Volunteer Lifecycle.		
	Actions:		
1.1.1	Review the Council's Volunteer Program procedures and where possible create an online alternative and/or more effective and easier to navigate process.	Year 1 (review) Year 2 (implementation)	Existing resources
1.1.2	Understand and document the intended tenure and 'retirement' timeframes of volunteers and identify the 'at risk' roles of volunteers which may be facing higher vacancy rates.	Year 2	Existing resources
1.1.3	Research, design & trial a volunteer service that offers a range of volunteer engagement opportunities, including formal, informal, project based or one-off, to attract diverse volunteers to meet community need.	Year 2 & 3	Existing resources
1.1.4	Explore ways to actively increase the visibility of volunteering opportunities within our City (internal and external opportunities).	Ongoing	\$1,500
1.2	Raise community awareness of the value of volunteering.	Timeframe	Budget
	Actions:		
1.2.1	Explore ways to actively promote the personal and community benefits and impact of volunteering.	Ongoing	Existing resources
1.2.2	Trial a 'share your story' initiative on the Council's website or other online platform, where volunteers can share real life stories about their volunteering experience.	Year 3	Existing resources
1.2.3	Develop volunteer social media guidelines to support volunteers to actively utilise social media to share their stories and experiences.	Year 1	Existing resources

Strategy 1.3	Support and encourage broad demographic representation across Council volunteers	Timeframe	Budget
	Actions:		
1.3.1	Work with the community to explore barriers to volunteering and generate ideas to overcome them.	Ongoing	Existing resources
1.3.2	Identify and trial opportunities to mentor and develop young person specific community led volunteer projects.	Year 2 & 3	Existing resources
1.3.3	Identify collaborative partnerships to increase sustainability of the Volunteer Program, increase volunteer participation and develop new volunteer initiatives where both parties contribute and receive mutual benefit.	Ongoing	Existing resources
1.3.4	Explore ways to make community led action easier by reducing red tape, building community capacity and supporting co-design volunteer initiatives that collectively utilise local resources, skills, and expertise to foster local solutions to address local needs and aspirations.	Year 2 & 3	Existing resources
Strategy 1.4	Recognise, communicate, and celebrate volunteer's positive contribution to the community.	Timeframe	Budget
	Actions:		
1.4.1	Develop a Volunteer Recognition Plan to publicly recognise and celebrate volunteers' contribution.	Year 1 & 2	Existing resources
1.4.2	Include volunteers in decisions that affect them.	Ongoing	Existing resources
1.4.3	'Close the loop' by providing information to volunteers on the results of their involvement.	Ongoing	Existing resources
1.4.4	Establish an e-newsletter to keep volunteers informed and connected to the Council and their volunteering community.	Year 1	Existing resources

Focus area 2: Community and Social Impact

Outcome: *A supportive City that delivers a diverse Volunteer Program aligned with community needs and implemented to a high standard.*

Strategy	Regularly review the Council's Volunteer Program to identify program gaps, ensure the program aligns with the Council's vision, and is continuing to deliver outcomes for the community.	Timeframe	Budget
2.1	<p>Actions:</p> <p>2.1.1 Design and implement program evaluation measures to assess the outcomes and impact of volunteer programs to inform future planning.</p> <p>2.1.2 Conduct a community needs assessment to inform the development of new initiatives to better fulfill community needs and respond to service gaps.</p> <p>2.1.3 Continue to research emerging trends in program development and delivery and consider their application to the Council's Volunteering Program.</p> <p>2.1.4 Develop a 'New Volunteer Program Procedure'.</p>	<p>Year 2 & 3</p> <p>Year 2 & 3</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p>
Strategy 2.2	Advocate to meet community needs	Timeframe	Budget
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>2.2.1 Work with key stakeholders to share knowledge, expertise, and resources to strengthen the culture and best practice delivery of volunteering in the City.</p> <p>2.2.2 Advocate and partner with peak bodies and training providers to deliver governance and other relevant training for Volunteering Involving Organisations in the City to build stronger and more resilient community services.</p> <p>2.2.3 Include Volunteer Involving Organisations, where relevant, in Council led business networks and training.</p> <p>2.2.4 Ensure Council is represented on volunteering networks, committees, and relevant working groups, as appropriate.</p> <p>2.2.5 Monitor and share volunteering data and trends with the organisation to inform planning.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p>

Focus Area 3: Conditions for Volunteering to Thrive

Outcome: *A thriving, active, satisfied, and participating volunteer-force.*

Strategy 3.1	Invest in volunteer training to improve capacity and capability of volunteers.	Timeframe	Budget
Actions:			
3.1.1	Conduct a Training Needs analysis to inform the development of an annual Volunteer Training Program.	Year 1 & 2	Existing Resources
3.1.2	Improve access to training and resources that support volunteers to excel in their roles and further develop their skills and knowledge to respond to emerging community needs.	Year 2 & 3	TBC
Strategy 3.2	Use innovative and leading practices to support volunteering in the City	Timeframe	Budget
Actions:			
3.2.1	Maintain and enhance volunteer management software and platforms to maximise resource use and explore options for including external volunteer involving organisations.	Year 2 & 3	Existing Resources
3.2.2	Identify opportunities for collaborative projects with Volunteer Involving Organisations to meet community needs.	Year 2 & 3	TBC
3.2.3	Explore ways to share knowledge, available volunteering resources and sector opportunities with Volunteering Involving Organisations.	Year 2	Existing Resources
3.2.4	Be guided by the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement to inform Council volunteer service planning and actions.	Ongoing	Existing Resources
3.2.5	Monitor and be responsive to volunteer trends and emerging needs.	Ongoing	Existing Resources

Strategy 3.3	Establish volunteer feedback and record management processes.	Timeframe	Budget
Actions:			
3.3.1	Continue to train volunteers in volunteer management software to assist volunteers to easily maintain accurate record keeping and provide critical information and updates.	Ongoing	Existing Resources
3.3.2	Establish a volunteer feedback and review process to gather, analyse and implement feedback to improve the Volunteer Service.	Year 2	Existing Resources
3.3.3	Host volunteer focus groups and forums to inform volunteer service planning and development.	Year 2 & 3	Existing Resources

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Implementation & Monitoring

Each year throughout the lifecycle of the Strategy an annual *Implementation and Management Plan* will be developed. The *Implementation and Management Plan* will identify actions from the *Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028* that the Council will focus on during that year and map, projects, resources, budget, stakeholders, collaborative partners, project team members and timelines against each action to ensure efficient and effective delivery.

The Strategy has been developed, and will be delivered through, close working relationships with Council's volunteering community, Volunteering Involving Organisations and program participants. To continue this two-way dialogue, key outcomes, and progress updates will be reported annually and shared via the Council's website and the Council's Annual Report.

The success of this Strategy may be influenced by external factors and changes in the external environment, legislation, and the volunteer sector.

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