

Public Exhibition Response Summary Draft Yarra Volunteer Strategy 2019-2023

This report provides information on consultations for the draft Yarra Volunteer Strategy 2019-2023.

Methodology & Sample

The draft Yarra Volunteer Strategy 2019-2023 went out for public exhibition from 25 June to 24 July 2019 with the aim of seeking feedback from both internal and external stakeholders on volunteering and areas where Yarra City Council (Council) can play a role.

Online and face-to-face methods were used for consultation comprising of an online survey via Your Say Yarra (which included access to the full strategy and Year One Action Plan), eNewsletters via Community Grants, Library and Yarra Life, a hardcopy newsletter through the Yarra Neighbourhood Houses (May/June 2019 issue of the 3Towers LINK newsletter) and a range of focus groups.

External Consultation

A wide range of volunteers and people who manage volunteers / volunteer programs were consulted and given an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft strategy and key priority areas. External responses were received from the following:

Demographic (who)	Approach (what)	Method (how)	Total responses received
Yarra volunteer involving organisations and the general public	Email of Your Say Yarra survey	Online survey	25 responses 440 site visits
Yarra U3A	Flipping Volunteering on its Head Collingwood Library	Focus group	30
People with a disability	Disability Advisory Committee representative	Focus group	1
Volunteer managers	Yarra Volunteer Leaders Network	Focus group	18

Internal Consultation (One Yarra)

Internal staff from relevant council divisions were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft strategy and in particular the focus areas of the first year action plan that pertain to their service areas. The following responses were received:

Demographic (who)	Approach (what)	Method (how)	Total responses received
Council staff	Yarra City Council staff from relevant departments: Library Services Family Youth & Children's Services Aged & Disability Services Arts & Culture Services Recreation & Leisure Services Organisational Development – People & Culture City Works	Email survey	8

There were over 440 visits to the Your Say Yarra page and 25 people who provided feedback to the short survey of the draft Volunteer Strategy during the second consultation period. Visitors to the webpage were able to access a summary as well as the full draft strategy report and the year one action plan.

The types of questions sought during consultation were based on summary statements of the strategy key priority areas, asking if people agree, disagree or are unsure about the following statements and to add further comments.

1. We will promote volunteer opportunities in Yarra and encourage volunteering as a way for people to connect with, and participate in, their community.
2. We will support people in the Yarra community who volunteer, and who manage volunteers, and strengthen relationships and create linkages.
3. We will promote the value and benefits of volunteering, and recognise how volunteers and people who manage volunteers contribute to the Yarra community.

The findings

In total, over 80 responses were received throughout the public exhibition period, mostly from stakeholders whose voices were heard in the initial consultation for the strategy development phase. Although out of these responses it was the 17 qualitative comments from Your Say Yarra survey that were most constructive and that may have required amendments to the action plan. Below includes direct quotes from this feedback and how Council has responded by incorporating into relevant sections of the action plan.

Your Say Yarra (external feedback)

Comments (direct quotes from Your Say Yarra)	How this might affect the strategy	Relevant section of Action Plan
Council is in the perfect position to connect potential volunteers with appropriate organisations for their mutual benefit.	Comment consistent with strategy.	1.2 Encourage volunteering as a way for people to connect with and participate in their community
The Action Plan seemed to be a bit short on the rights of volunteers - I have volunteered in places where newbies get awful jobs eg dusting in far corners when they in fact have volunteered to get more social contact, to improve their skills and their English. Managed for organisational needs not much consideration of volunteer needs. I have also seen older Anglo volunteers not be very welcoming to CALD volunteers - those volunteers generally needed to be more welcoming.	Included the wording "making organisations more welcoming for volunteers".	2.1.3 Advocate for volunteer's rights and responsibilities.
As a part of your promotional strategy, you could consider supporting a half hour weekly program on 3CR Community Radio (in Fitzroy) that would be produced by Yarra volunteers with a focus on news about and for Yarra volunteers and Yarra organisations. It could have segments such as a volunteer gig guide - Yarra organisations could	Included wording "work with local organisation's promotion outlets eg community radio to use volunteers on a program focussed on volunteering."	1.1.1 Improve promotion of volunteering opportunities through a range of multi-media channels, events and other activities.

advertise volunteer opportunities/positions on air. Radio is a great way to reach people who not social media users or computer literate or who are learning English - you could even have segments in a range of community languages.		
Our organisation is increasingly assisting unemployed people in their 40s and 50s to find volunteer opportunities as a pathway to employment. Could the word 'young' be removed in dot point 4 under 'Support and Strengthen' to be inclusive of all ages? : "Provide pathways to help (DELETE: young) people into employment opportunities within the Yarra community via volunteering."	Removed the word "young" people to make this more inclusive.	2.2.2 Develop pathways to volunteer and employment opportunities in the Yarra community.
This draft strategy does not include a commitment from the City of Yarra to provide volunteering opportunities within the council itself. Volunteer roles within the council would provide a participatory and inclusive approach to community engagement, and give community members agency in contributing to the activities of the council. This program could be implemented via collaborative models with partner organisations.	Comment consistent with strategy.	1.2.1 Consider setting up a Council-run volunteer program where there is an identified need eg. Yarra libraries, family & children's services. 2.2.1 Formalise partnerships eg. Yarra libraries, Family, Youth & Children's Services with community organisations (like Brotherhood of St Laurence) to run volunteer programs for the Yarra community eg. Homework Clubs.
I appreciated the advocacy of volunteers and would be interested in knowing more about improving the status of volunteers culturally within an organisation. Priority and the greatest assistance should be given to organisations that only service City of Yarra residents.	Comment consistent with strategy.	2.1.3 Advocate for volunteer's rights and responsibilities.
Well done on creating a draft volunteer strategy and for your intention to support volunteering in the City of Yarra. There seems to be a fundamental gap in your strategy...the development of volunteer roles within the Council itself. Undertaking a gap analysis across Council to identify where volunteers could add value and capacity would be of great benefit to the community and the Council. Hiring an expert to conduct the analysis and then employing someone with experience and knowledge to develop the roles, recruit, train, recognise etc and manage the volunteer program would be the best way to	Included the wording "Undertake a gap analysis across Council to identify where volunteers could add value and what capacity Council has to implement this."	1.2.1 Consider setting up a Council-run volunteer program where there is an identified need eg. Yarra libraries, family & children's services.

demonstrate your commitment to volunteering and utilising the valuable time and skills of individuals in the City of Yarra, as well as developing social capital. Perhaps consider reaching out to Councils in South Australia who are leading the way in regards to delivering volunteer programs within Councils.		
Action plan has a lot for the first year - great to be ambitious but I hope resourcing to support implementation is there - the Collingwood Toy Library would be grateful participants and recipients of much of this.	Comment consistent with strategy.	
We'd love to see an emphasis on retirees and people from CALD backgrounds to be able to encourage more people from both of these demographics (currently underrepresented) to volunteer with us.	Comment consistent with strategy.	1.1.1 Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to promote volunteer opportunities across all demographics in Yarra; youth, people with a disability, older people, indigenous, CALD.
I've raised with a few people from council a few times the idea of some kind of "speed dating" event to link up different community partnership groups and volunteers who may be able to provide mutual support (e.g. what the toy library and Caringbush Adult Education do or us plus LiveWires - we could do so much more of this but making the connections is hard).	Included wording "Trial networking events such 'speed dating for volunteering' to connect volunteers with volunteer involving organisations."	2.2.1 Mobilise resources on joint initiatives to strengthen partnerships and link Yarra's volunteers, organisations and groups.
When implementing things like training please keep in mind that there are some (many?) volunteers like me who run organizations powered by volunteers BUT we also work full or near full time in paid jobs (or we'd have to close the service we offer if we took time to do training during the day) and so when training or networking opportunities are only available 9am-5pm it's difficult for us to attend. e.g. we made the great evening Child Safe training but couldn't do a daytime session on developing a strategy. But conversely for others evenings will be difficult. To be inclusive covering both options would be great.	Included wording "Ensure training times/days are as inclusive as can possibly be within capacity of Council resourcing."	2.1.1 Improve support for volunteer involving organisations and groups to manage volunteers and help develop the skills of volunteer managers.
I also agree that it's important to advocate for volunteer rights and responsibilities, to add value and meaning to volunteering, particularly for retirees who volunteer.	Comment consistent with strategy.	2.1.3 Advocate for volunteer's rights and responsibilities.
Many good points in the strategy which should assist potential volunteers, volunteers and volunteer organisations. Some of the points mentioned are provided by Volunteering Victoria and Our	Comment consistent with strategy.	2.1.1 Improve support for volunteer involving organisations and

Community (such as policy templates). Assisting the organisations and individuals who manage volunteers through training is a great idea.		groups to manage volunteers and help develop the skills of volunteer managers.
Yarra are well placed to link together organisations seeking volunteers. For example Fareshare have a huge volunteer base and a waiting list, but others struggle to recruit volunteers. Volunteering is wonderful. Thanks for supporting it.	Comment consistent with strategy.	2.2.1 Investigate opportunities to link and enhance community organisations with shared interests on volunteering, for example cross promote volunteer opportunities when capacity has been reached.
These are great aims; it would be good to connect with people in Yarra who may be interested to volunteer with us. A 'volunteer' section of the Council website sounds good. The only downside is budget allocation - the aims are good as long as they don't use up too much of the budget that could be otherwise put toward safe travel infrastructure eg. Streets Alive Yarra.	Comment consistent with strategy.	1.1.1 Investigate options for hosting a dedicated online platform for information regarding all aspects of volunteering in Yarra, including promotion of volunteer opportunities and volunteer's skills they can offer.
When having specific information sessions such as Volunteers and the Law, have more than one session so that all interested people can attend.	Included wording "Ensure training times/days are as inclusive as can possibly be within capacity of Council resourcing."	2.1.1 Improve support for volunteer involving organisations and groups to manage volunteers and help develop the skills of volunteer managers.
I coordinate a very small mystery book club that was initiated by Yarra Libraries some 10-15 years ago. Yarra Council continues to support us through free access to meeting space at Collingwood library. However, our group would benefit from being able to promote the group more regularly to encourage new members. A mechanism to promote activities already support by Council would be welcome. It is an ambitious strategy; there are many strategies and many that are quite similar. It might be more impactful to aggregate so that you tell a clearer story of success in implementation.	Comment consistent with strategy.	1.1.1 Improve promotion of volunteering opportunities through a range of multi-media channels, events and other activities.
When I started volunteering, I first found out my rights @ Volunteers Vic. What I am most concerned about is, volunteering being seen as an extra more than sharing the work environment. I understand it's meant to help employ people & teach those skills as well as be social place for retirees & others. All the best, keep up the good work.	Comment consistent with strategy.	

Of the internal staff that were consulted on the draft strategy and action plan, the main suggestions that were provided for consideration in the strategy action plan include the following.

Email survey and one-on-one consultation (internal feedback)

What area of Council	How they link to volunteering	Relevant section of Action Plan where this area of Council has been included under 'Responsibility'
Recreation & Leisure Services	The Recreation team service volunteers via approximately 50 sports clubs in Yarra, mainly through the allocation of infrastructure to use but also grants funding, development programs and provision of advice on key information.	1.2 Encourage volunteering as a way for people to connect with and participate in their community.
Compliance	Compliance is a significant stakeholder in the volunteer space (sports clubs) but not referenced in the strategy eg. permits / licences / processes are involved in everything from hosting sausage sizzles and fundraising activities to putting up promotional or sponsorship signage etc.	2.1.1 Improve support for volunteer involving organisation and groups to manage volunteers - Explore processes to help make it easy for volunteers and volunteer groups by reducing red tape by providing advice and assistance, for example induction policies'.
City Works	Driven by the State Government's Biodiversity Strategy 2017-2037, support for volunteering with an environmental focus is going to be a massive component with an expectation on Local Government to deliver and report upon conservation volunteering. The draft Yarra Nature Strategy has a key action with a focus on volunteers: Link opportunities to connect with nature with on-the-ground biodiversity management needs, such as expanding support for volunteers, businesses, community groups, Friends groups, citizen science, Landcare, clubs and associations.	1.2.1 Identify ways to encourage volunteering and community participation, across a range of cohorts in Yarra, to include innovative and flexible options and how to access them.
Sustainability	Climate Emergency Plan	1.2.1 Identify ways to encourage volunteering and community participation, across a range of cohorts in Yarra, to include innovative and flexible options and how to access them.
Aged & Disability Services on behalf of the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)	Would like Council to employ a volunteer coordinator to match volunteers with residents needing different types of assistance eg. reading, outings, etc. Direct quote: "Your strategy does not talk about or include ways in which Yarra residents can link up with volunteers whether this is through a not-for-profit organisation for an actual volunteer coordinator	1.2.1 Consider setting up a Council-run volunteer program where there is an identified need eg. Yarra libraries, family & children's services. -Undertake a gap analysis across Council

	employed by Yarra. Many residents already volunteer in a whole range of activities but at times may wish to get someone to assist them. People with disabilities and elderly people in the community often rely on informal contacts with neighbours to help them out. However for those who are more isolated some sort of organised way in which they could connect with volunteers who could help them with various activities should be a major part of any volunteering strategy in Yarra. Until Yarra strategy included this it only half connects people with people.”	to identify where volunteers could add value and what capacity Council has to implement this.
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Conclusion

The information and suggestions collected from key stakeholders during the second consultation period have been taken into consideration for the final version of the Yarra Volunteer Strategy. This will be presented to Council for adoption in September 2019.