

VOLUNTEER HOBSONS BAY STRATEGY *DRAFT*

2017



Active Community Volunteer Hobsons Bay Strategy

Introduction

People in Hobsons Bay love to volunteer, and volunteers play a major role in the day-to-day life of the community. The volunteer sector is both diverse and active in many areas of community life. The impacts of these efforts are felt across the municipality, both directly and indirectly, in supporting the vulnerable, strengthening or repairing the environment, protecting heritage, celebrating life in Hobsons Bay and by being the village that helps to raise the next generation of volunteers.

Many voluntary activities come into being from a call to action, through the vision, interest or skill of an individual who saw a need and responded. As a reflection of this environment, Hobsons Bay has a rich and diverse range of clubs, advisory committees, community groups and organisations, each of which sustains and contributes to the community as a diverse, dynamic and unique place.

Aim and Purpose of the Strategy

The volunteer sector is complex, and is undergoing a period of dramatic change. These changes are multifaceted:

- the changing nature of community – shifting expectations and engagement methods
- the changing expectations of volunteers by managers and agencies
- the changing legislative environment

Council is a partner or funding body for many volunteer-involving organisations, as well as being a manager of volunteers in its own right. The impact from these changes will be felt by Council as greatly as it will be by the sector and the municipality overall. It is in this environment where Council and the sector must invest and adapt to stay relevant and compliant.

As a response, Council committed to developing a volunteering strategy aimed at clarifying and defining a strategic direction for Council, capturing the heart and voice of the volunteering community. Together, we have created an inspiring shared vision which will guide the planning, resourcing and management of the volunteering sector, within a rigorous strategic context.

As such, this strategy is more than a planning document, it is the next iteration in a continuum of deliberative democratic actions by the people of Hobsons Bay, the volunteers who, together with Council, have driven its inception. It is a call to action seeking to demonstrate and support the diversity, agility and resilience of the Hobsons Bay community.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Methodology and background

Background

The energy underpinning the development of the Volunteer Hobsons Bay Strategy has been contingent on the development of partnerships across the community and volunteer sector. It is important a culture of collaboration is fostered, strengthening the environment where the volunteering strategy will prosper, both internally and externally. Mutual investment by Council and the sector has resulted in relationship development and capacity building, a deeper understanding of the local volunteer landscape and opportunities for collaboration into the future. Significant achievements have been achieved in the following areas:

- LGPro Volunteer Working Group
- Volunteer West
- Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres
- Cultivating Communities – pilot governance training program delivered by Hobsons Bay in February – July 2017

Methodology

The following activities have been undertaken in the development of the Volunteer Hobsons Bay Strategy:

- review of evidence-based research and trends in community volunteering
- review of the 2015 Active Community Volunteering Discussion Paper
- research into the policy context at national, state and local levels
- benchmarking across six Western regional councils
- benchmarking Victorian councils with similar demographics and volunteer resourcing structures
- consultations, interviews and discussions with leaders across the volunteering and community sector. Survey and consultations with the Western Region Councils' Volunteer Management Group
- survey, consultations and interviews with the Hobsons Bay City Council internal Volunteer Management Group
- survey, consultations and interviews with community organisations and volunteers to explore their issues and experiences of volunteering.

Volunteering

A definition of Volunteering

The concept of a volunteer may, at first glance, appear simple. Intrinsically many of us would think that we know and can define what it means to volunteer. At its most direct, volunteering may be defined as ‘time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain’. (Volunteering Australia in 2015). Volunteering therefore covers a wide diversity of activities in society and across the municipality. It includes formal and informal volunteering, by individuals or groups and fits neatly within the broader concept of civic participation and leadership.

This definition is adopted for the purposes of this strategy.

The value of volunteering

However this definition on its own does not describe the underpinning motivations for volunteering. The State of Volunteering in Australia Report (2012) states that ‘volunteering is a human activity, a basic expression of human relationships that occurs in every society in the world. People engage in volunteerism for a great variety of reasons. The terms which define it and the form of its expression may vary in different languages and cultures, but the values which drive it are common and universal: ‘a desire to contribute to the common good, out of free will and in a spirit of solidarity, without expectation or material reward’.

Volunteering can be seen to represent many of the intangible aspects of our values, customs and patterns of life.

State of Volunteering in Hobsons Bay

Snapshot of volunteers in Hobsons Bay

Demographic profile

Across the municipality, Hobsons Bay hosts many clubs, community groups and organisations. Each contributes to the diversity and sustainability of community life: the arts, people with disabilities, recreation and leisure, cultural celebration and heritage, education, childcare, community safety, people of faith, emergency relief, sporting activities, the environment and care of older people. Many of these groups are managed entirely by volunteers and the services of these groups are delivered by volunteers. Others, like Council, engage volunteer's along-side a paid workforce to deliver services and activities as part of their core business.

In 2011, almost 10,000 volunteers contributed to the Hobsons Bay community. Females were more likely to volunteer than males (56% of the volunteering population, compared to 44% for males).

Table 1: Volunteer work 2011

Volunteer status	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %
Volunteer	9,811	14.3	15.8
Not a volunteer	52,977	77.2	76.4
Volunteer work not stated	5,870	8.5	7.8
Total persons aged 15+	68,658	100.0	100.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011. [.id](#) (Usual residence data)

Table 2: Profile of volunteers in Hobsons Bay by Gender

Gender	Number	% of volunteering population
Female	5,521	56
Male	4,291	44
Total persons aged 15+	9,812	100.0

ABS Census data 2011, source: active community volunteering discussion paper, HBCC 2015

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Of the 14.3 per cent of Hobsons Bay residents who said they volunteer, people in Williamstown North (21.5%) and Williamstown (21%) were more likely to volunteer. The suburbs where the lowest percentage of people identified as volunteers were Laverton, Altona North and Brooklyn (8.7%).

Williamstown, Newport, Altona Meadows and Altona / Seaholme contributed significant numbers of volunteers, with over 1600 people identifying as volunteers from each of these suburbs. This equates to at least 17% of the total local volunteer workforce coming from each of these areas.

Table 3: Profile of volunteers in Hobsons Bay by suburb

Suburb / small area	Number	% of volunteering population
Williamstown North	728	21.5
Williamstown	1,773	21
Newport	1,662	17.8
Altona / Seaholme	1,610	16.1
Spotswood / South Kingsville	549	15.7
Seabrooke	468	12.3
Altona Meadows	1,634	10.5
Laverton	363	9.9
Altona North	897	9.5
Brooklyn	123	8.7
Total persons aged 15+	9,812	

Social Profile of Volunteers

Targeted consultation undertaken during the development of the Volunteer Hobsons Bay Strategy identified further information regarding the local volunteer profile.

When asked what benefits volunteers derived from their volunteering in Hobsons Bay, responses were strongest regarding the 'sense of belonging', 'sense of purpose' and 'community connectedness'. Many people identified multiple responses, across a range of benefits.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

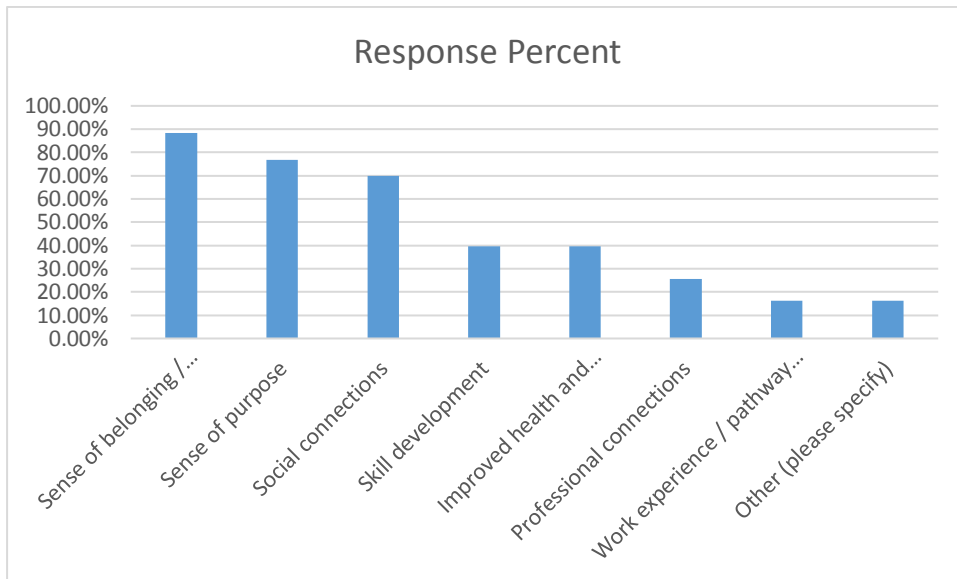


Figure 1: volunteer consultation HBCC Active Volunteering Survey 2016

Legislative and Policy Context

The volunteering sector is governed and protected by Commonwealth and Victorian legislation and policy regulatory frameworks that influence how local government plans and delivers services to the community.

National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015 are a set of standards developed by Volunteering Australia to guide and assist organisations when involving volunteers in meaningful, relevant and useful activities. The standards can assist to clarify the rights, roles and responsibilities of volunteers. For organisations they provide a framework to consider the role of volunteers within the organisation and the impact effective volunteer management and coordination can have on achieving the strategic goals and aims of the organisation.

(<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Documents-FINAL-3004.pdf>)

There are 8 standards addressing the key areas of volunteer involvement:

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

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

These standards have explicit intent, scope and measurability. Developed with the volunteering sector, they incorporate the following principles:

- Volunteer involvement should be a considered and planned part of an organisation's strategic development, aligning with the organisation's strategic aims and incorporated into its evaluations framework.
- Effective volunteer involvement requires organisational leadership, and a culture and structure that supports and values the role of volunteers.
- Volunteers have rights, which include the right to work in a safe and supportive environment with appropriate infrastructure and effective management practices.
- Volunteers have responsibilities, which include acting responsibly, being accountable for their actions to the organisations, and respecting the organisation's values and practices.

Victorian State

The following Victorian legislations apply to volunteering:

- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006,
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004,
- Wrongs Act (Vic) 1958,
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010,
- Fair Work Act (Cth) 2009,
- Privacy Act (Cth) 1998 (Australian privacy Principles),
- Privacy Data and Protection Act (Vic) 2014 (Information Privacy principles),
- Health Records Act(Vic) 2001(Health Privacy principles),
- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (the Act).
- The Child Safety Standards – introduced in 2016.

Hobsons Bay City Council

The Hobsons Bay Volunteering Strategy aligns with Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the Integrated Community Health and Wellbeing Plan and is informed by a range of policy documents and strategies developed by Hobsons Bay City Council including:

- Multicultural Policy 2016 – 2020
- Advocacy Strategy 2014 – 2018
- Hobsons Bay City Council Plan 2017-2021
- Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2017
- Learning Communities Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019
- Hobsons Bay 2030 Community Vision.

Voices from our Community - What the local sector told us

Targeted conversations and workshops were held through the development of the strategy. The following critical messages were identified through a detail SWOT analysis:

Strengths

Our community has a strong and proud tradition of volunteering in Hobsons Bay.

Volunteer involving organisations are networked together, provide peer support and improve the local volunteering environment, but many insist they couldn't do this without what was considered the 'very real' and tangible support and advocacy of Council.

Council's resources as such extend beyond the economic via leadership expertise, skills and the talents of our paid employees. The social and cultural connection teams have and bring to their roles is an invaluable asset to Council and the broader community.

Challenges

- Relatively low levels of volunteer engagement with people from vulnerable communities especially in areas such as Altona North, Laverton, Brooklyn and Seabrook are worthy of further exploration.
- The changing face of volunteering – Renewal of the volunteer workforce as the existing workforce ages. The transition of responsibility and leadership to the next generation.
- Whilst it is recognised that the knowledge economy and digital literacy is growing, this is not experienced equitably by all agencies or the community. In particular, vulnerable people indicated they would prefer face to face contact in brokering volunteer opportunities.
- Community awareness of volunteering opportunities and understanding of the role of Volunteer West is low. It is noted consistently that people find navigating the current recruitment systems prohibitive and highly complex. Members from newly arrived, vulnerable and local communities struggle to find information about volunteering opportunities within the community and at Council.
- The implementation of policies and procedures within volunteer-involving organisations is challenging for volunteers and managers of volunteers to navigate. For volunteer-involving organisations, the degree of administrative burden has continued to increase and, in some cases, is hindering the delivery of services, with a call for governance support and training. Small volunteer involving organisations identify the need for project support.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

- Community agencies seek a more consistent approach to funding, administration and the removal of red tape particularly given the many complex businesses across which small agencies may operate. Volunteer West report that the lack of consistency of funding limits the services they can provide across the Western region.
- Exploring creative approaches to the use of and access to facilities, rental and service agreements, would create a genuine impact across the sector.

Opportunities

- Face-to-face and digital opportunities regarding integration of a volunteer resource centre or hub into Council and community agencies.
- To foster collaboration across the volunteer sector. Council can play a part in connecting local people with local opportunities by facilitating networks, connections and strategic partnerships, both within the organisation and across the municipality.
- To develop a coordinated approach to communicating the benefits of volunteer involvement.
- Develop a coordinated approach to volunteering across the Western Region, potentially identifying cost-saving benefits and increased impact within the community.
- Recognise the contribution of the volunteering sector including volunteers, organisations and managers.
- Build on the assets and strengths of the community by building a better understanding of the different ways that various cultural groups, generations, faith groups and communities engage with volunteering, both informally and formally.
- Utilise digital technologies to extend Council's internal volunteer management system and better support volunteer management processes.
- Develop Council's Volunteer Induction and Training program to streamline the engagement of volunteers into Council programs.
- Explore opportunities to develop placed based/neighbourhood emergency management initiatives.

The changing landscape of volunteering

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Volunteering is increasingly being recognised for its value and importance in the social, environmental, cultural and economic fabric of a community, whilst also providing, health and wellbeing benefits to the volunteers themselves.

The way community engages with volunteering is also changing, with increased expectations and scrutiny regarding the roles they undertake. This may take several forms, namely: what they are prepared to do, are interested in doing and for what they are prepared to take ongoing responsibility. Potential volunteers are prudent in the way they engage volunteer organisations and what they expect in return – investment, development and proven impact for their efforts.

In parallel to this, the sector is being increasingly regulated, which is a challenge for volunteer agencies. Long-serving volunteers struggle to change with the new bureaucratised and professionalised environment with increased processes, training requirements and boundaries. This increases responsibilities and the subsequent processes required to engage, induct and manage volunteers.

This time is therefore equally daunting and exciting, to protect Council, local agencies, the volunteers themselves, in order to engage new volunteers and create a local economy which is resilient and strengthened into the future. Therefore deliberate strategic and operational changes must be undertaken. Agencies have different capacities to undertake this work alone, as such this strategy fosters an environment of shared learning, collaboration and consistent practice across the municipality.

Council's dual role in volunteering

Council is directly responsible for its volunteers as well as acting alongside the sector in several ways, including as: partner, funder, landlord or informal relationship holder with many organisations across the municipality. This crosses many different council departments, and involve varying types of relationships and expectations.

Council as manager of volunteers

Council currently manages 200 volunteers who volunteer formally; defined as - taking place within an organisations, institutions and agencies in a structured way – as part of the: Meals on Wheels program, Planned Activity Group, Council's Library Service, Youth Services, Community Hubs and Centres and as part of the Parks team, Friend's group network.

Council as municipal leader and community sector partner

Council has an important role and obligation to the community, stakeholders and partners to plan and deliver innovative, proactive, financially sound services that provide equitable access to the community in order to achieve a healthy, connected and sustainable future for Hobsons Bay.

Local government cannot work alone in the face of change and recognises that sustainable change happens when people and organisations acknowledge the transforming environment and proactively engage in the process. Council has a leadership role in facilitating change and supporting the sector to face challenges together. Council has a dynamic role to play in the area of change management as advocate and supporter, planner and capacity builder and has the ability to develop targeted responses for the community that foster, agility, resilience and connection to place or belonging.

Council does, and can continue to, support agencies and the sector in the face of change, particularly assisting agencies and community organisations to review their methodologies or approaches. Council has a long history and values the relationships it has developed across a broad range of sectors, with agencies and stakeholders who form a part of the volunteering community.

Local government models and benchmarking

When comparing councils and services there are a large number of variables that need to be taken into account. Staff allocations and budget sizes are significantly different across local government therefore the benchmarking identified there is no single model for Council to explore when resourcing a volunteer management model or industry standard. However, further exploration is recommended to build a more comprehensive understanding of Best Practice elements facilitated across Melbourne's West for consideration locally.

Everyone has role to play

Council cannot work alone, and does not work alone, in fostering a culturally vibrant, inclusive and diverse volunteering environment. It requires the collective efforts and the development of relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders locally, regionally across all six western councils, across the State and with the Commonwealth Government of Australia. These key relationships extend further to peak associations and organisations, leaders and passionate people.

The peak bodies and critical agencies in volunteer management and sector development include:

- Volunteering Australia
- Volunteering Victoria
- Ministerial Council for Volunteers
- LGPro Volunteering Special Interest Group
- Western Region Councils' Volunteer Management Group
- Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs) / Volunteer Resource Centres
- Volunteer West
- Volunteer Involving Organisations

There are many sectors across the municipality engaging volunteers that depend on volunteer energies and expertise to succeed. The diversity is great - from sporting clubs to environmental and libraries 'friends of' groups, Surf Lifesavers to historical societies, committees of management overseeing facilities or kindergartens to boards or interfaith groups. Others provide welfare and personal care support or manage Op Shops. Many people and agencies create great impact but some groups may not even label their efforts as community volunteering, even though it fits within the definition. Beyond the formal structures, many people seek informal or situational volunteering – such as tree planting days, working bees, one off arts events or engage in volunteering following disasters and emergencies.

Volunteering Strategic Framework – Distinctly Hobsons Bay

The Hobsons Bay community are inclusive, vibrant and diverse; they give their time, share their skills, and talents and make a difference locally.

Strategic Vision

A vibrant volunteering community, thriving through the collective and deliberative efforts of Council and the volunteering community.

Contributing to Council's Vision and 2030 Community vision

Mission

Working with community and the sector to foster a dynamic, cohesive and resilient community.

Volunteer strategy

Values

We believe in accountability, integrity, respect, collaboration, trust, honesty and aspiration through the work we do.

Hobsons Bay City Council values

Principles

The principles of community-led, innovation, sustainability and partnership guide how we identify, prioritise, support and deliver what we do within our community.

Learning Communities Strategic Plan 2016-19

Goal 1

Vibrant Volunteering Culture

Foster a dynamic, inclusive volunteering culture across the municipality, with strong and diverse participation.

Goal 2

Celebrated, Valued and Proud

Recognise and reward endeavour and innovation, both individually and collectively where volunteers know they are worth their weight in gold.

Goal 3

Build capacity

Foster an environment where leadership and collaboration thrives to respond to current and emerging challenges and opportunities.

Goal 4

A Council of Excellence in Volunteering

An innovative, pro-active and leading organisation in volunteering strategy, management and engagement.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Goal Area 1 Vibrant volunteering culture

Strategy: Cultivate a Connected, Valued and Empowered volunteering environment across Hobsons Bay.

To nurture and cultivate a connected, valued and empowered volunteering environment Council will:

Strategic Commitment	
1a	Continue to build a shared comprehensive understanding of the volunteering profile across the municipality, the changing landscape and challenges ahead.
1b	Facilitate opportunities to listen and plan together, explore ways to connect, to share knowledge and resources, foster new projects and environments.
1c	Facilitate, co-create and co-design programs, projects and spaces with our partners and stakeholders that invite and nurture connection, engagement, safety and allow for innovation, continuous improvement and celebration.
1d	Explore volunteering across CALD, Interfaith, vulnerable and new communities.
1e	Provide resources and support for face to face volunteer recruitment and referral that is welcoming, knowledgeable and accessible.
1f	Explore the role of digital technology and how it can add value, empower and cultivate a connected volunteering environment.
1g	Foster a collaborative environment across volunteer-managing organisations to strengthen the knowledge and resilience across the municipality.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Goal Area 2 Celebrated, Valued and Proud

Strategy: Recognise and Celebrate Volunteering in Hobsons Bay

Hobsons Bay City Council values and is proud of the contributions of volunteers. A key aspect of the strategy is to recognise and celebrate the role of volunteering in Hobsons Bay.

To recognise and celebrate volunteering in Hobsons Bay Council will:

Strategic Commitment	
2a	Increase visibility and pride in the volunteer sector within Hobsons Bay.
2b	Facilitate opportunities for the volunteering community to recognise and celebrate their endeavors.
2c	Explore the vast range of volunteer-involving organisations, networks and stakeholders and their activities.
2d	Undertake mapping across our volunteering community for the benefit of the entire sector.
2e	Leverage digital technology to promote and celebrate volunteering

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Goal Area 3 Build Capacity

Strategy: Create an environment where leadership thrives

We will create an environment where people can take risks, develop skills and improve agility allowing for innovation, excellence of volunteer management and coordination across the municipality to emerge.

To create an environment where leadership thrives Council will:

Strategic Commitments	
3a	Deliver or facilitate training to existing and future volunteers, drawing upon the expertise, knowledge and resources that exist within the community.
3b	Enable the community to build a volunteer movement in Hobsons Bay.
3c	Partner with the Volunteer Resource Centre to deliver networking opportunities to encourage collaboration across the volunteering sector.
3d	Promote the National Standards of Volunteer Involvement and best practice across the organisation.

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

Goal Area 4 Council of excellence in volunteering

Strategy: Organisational Volunteer capacity building

Council officers are passionate about Council's significant volunteer workforce and the programs that provide opportunities for volunteer involvement. There are many areas of responsibility and compliance for Council to operate within. To achieve this goal Council will:

Strategic Commitments	
4a	<p>Champion a culture within the organisation that recognises and values the importance of volunteer management and coordination, that builds the capacity for the organisation to adopt best practice in volunteer management, coordination and program delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resourcing• Corporate volunteering calendar
4b	<p>Foster a culture of best practice to build, maintain and monitor systems, processes and shared practice in meeting our obligations and responsibilities in the following areas:</p>
	<p><u>4bi Risk and vulnerability management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk management / Occupational Health and Safety• Alignment with the new HR/OD strategic plan in development. Recruitment, Induction, Training and Referral.• Volunteering made visible in organisational policy development
	<p><u>4bii Structure and development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training for Volunteers and their managers• Professional development for volunteers and their managers• Processes and systems in place

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A Volunteering Action plan will be developed to support the implementation of the Strategy.

Council will provide opportunities for the volunteering community to participate in working groups to provide feedback and help prioritise activities for the annual action plan and to inform evaluation and monitoring activities.

While the process of developing the Volunteering Strategy was comprehensive, significantly it identified further work, discovery, knowledge-sharing and learning to be undertaken through the life of the strategy. The processes for developing the next Volunteering Strategy are therefore embedded within the practice of this Strategy, as Council and the municipality fully engages with the changing volunteering landscape and forms a comprehensive response to sustain their energies into the future.

Appendix 1 – The value of volunteering

The Value of Volunteering in Hobsons Bay.

As with all sectors there are a range of challenges and gaps. A priority to Council as identified in the Hobsons Bay Active Volunteering discussion paper 2014 is a measureable and quantifiable model to measure and value the work and impact of Council's resources and or investment in volunteering. It also stated the need to compare the efficiency of different programs and activities on various community indicators. Research for the consultation found, it would be reasonable to expect social returns on investment in line with other reports, such as that from Volunteering Western Australia or the G21 project in Geelong where \$4.50 and up to \$8, respectively, was the return on investment for every dollar invested in volunteering.

Many in the sector are reluctant to place an economic value on volunteering concerned that it misses the point, simplifying the true value and impact of volunteering and active participation into a pure economic framework.

Research for the Hobsons Bay City Council Volunteering Strategy found there are three reputable models within the sector:

1. The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) which puts a value on the resources used to support volunteers in relation to the volunteer time.
2. A specific outputs and pricing model for comparable market goods and services.
3. A 'comparable' market wage model - employed by the ABS, which involves valuing time spent in unpaid activities at comparable market wage rates.

It is possible to use financial modelling to estimate the value of volunteering in Hobsons Bay. In the Hobsons Bay Active Volunteering survey the participants quantified their volunteering at an average of 25 hours each month. As only 60 per cent of respondents provided data on this question, we might estimate that 60 per cent of all volunteers volunteered an average of 25 hours each month in Hobsons Bay. Extrapolating this to the ABS 2011 Census data would deliver the following result:

- i. 60% of 9812 volunteers = 5887 volunteers
- ii. 5887 volunteers volunteering 23 hours each month = 135,401 hours of volunteer work undertaken across Hobsons Bay each month
- iii. 135,401 hours multiplied by 12 months equates to 1,624,812 volunteer hours per annum
- iv. 1,624,812 volunteer hours costed at \$34.89 per hour = a financial benefit to the local community of **\$56,689,690 per annum**.

Obviously without a detailed question in the Census or other ABS datasets clarifying the exact number of hours volunteered by each volunteer, the exact contribution in hours and subsequently in economic benefit cannot be known. The estimates given above provide insight into the significant economic benefit for the Hobsons Bay community that even a relatively small number of individuals can have.

Another method garnering more support from the sector is the Social Return on Investment (SROI), an accredited approach to understanding and measuring the impact of a project, program, policy on an organisation. The methodology assists to identify the social, environmental, and economic benefits generated and place a value on this impact. This value can then be compared to the investment

Volunteer Hobsons Bay

2017 Strategy

required to generate the benefits and has been in use in Australia for more than a decade through a network of accredited practitioners. A single model which combines all methods perfectly is yet to be developed, however a recent report commissioned by Volunteering Western Australia (2015) sought to identify the economic, social and cultural value of volunteering to Western Australia. Looking at the impacts on the various forms of capital (economic, physical, social, human, symbolic) and using modified social and economic return on investment methods and input/output modelling, a rich picture of the broad value of volunteering to the Western Australian community has been produced and could be considered appropriate to undertake in other volunteering contexts, including at a local government area level. A research project at a regional level involving the Western Region Volunteer Managers group could be of benefit to Council.