

Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre



# Strategic Plan 2008-2012

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## 1.1 The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre - Brief History

The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) was established in 1992, with a small grant from the then City of Camberwell. Several managers of volunteers working within local agencies and the Director of Community Services at Council sought funding to establish an organisation that supported the work of volunteers in the community. Managers of volunteers in local agencies had identified a need for peer support and information sharing within and across their agencies as well as the need to promote the work of the sector with a view to increasing volunteer recruitment. The BVRC was originally co-located with the Camberwell Community Centre before settling into its current location at Chambly House in 1996. The BVRC was then governed by a Special Committee, with support from the City of Boroondara. In 2002, the City of Boroondara took over the Centre's management as the introduction of the GST precluded the continuation of the governance arrangements under a Special Committee.

## 1.2 Core services of the BVRC

By virtue of being a resource centre for the volunteering sector, the BVRC works alongside numerous parties such as volunteers, not-for-profit organisations, and the community in general. As such, it is responsible for providing a multitude of services, including:

- Volunteer referral interviews.
- Training program for volunteers and managers of volunteers.
- Promotional opportunities for member agencies, including the Boroondara Volunteer Expo.
- Promotion of volunteering and civic participation within the community.
- Support to member agencies including agency network meetings and assistance with program development and volunteer roles.
- Development of volunteer programs which meet identified community needs.
- Contributing expertise to the volunteer sector on volunteer-related issues.
- Advocating for the needs of volunteers, managers of volunteers and the volunteer sector.
- Promotion of volunteering as a community strengthening activity which builds social capital.
- Facilitation and development of partnerships and activities between the community and organisations to strengthen community spirit.

## 1.3 Methodology

The BVRC had previously developed the *Strategy for Volunteering and the BVRC 2006-2010*. We made the decision to update this document prior to its completion as a result of the significant changes during the last two years in the state and federal arenas around volunteering and civic participation as well as changes to volunteer motivators and issues.

The development of this plan comprised the following components:

- International, national, state, regional and Boroondara-specific policies, strategies and reports relating to volunteering were reviewed and critiqued.
- Consultation via a survey with member agencies and a focus group with members of the BVRC Advisory Committee to gauge performance and understand needs.
- Analysis and assessment of all data and information relating to the services provided by the BVRC.
- Determining strategic direction, priorities, and operational recommendations for the BVRC for 2008-2012.

## 1.4 Volunteering – an explanation

According to Volunteering Victoria, the Victorian peak body representing the volunteer sector, the word volunteer:

comes from the French word 'volontaire' and its root is from the Latin 'voluntarius' or 'voluntas', meaning 'will'. The word 'volition' comes from the same source. In modern usage, 'volunteer' is used to refer to one who enters into a service of his or her own free will.<sup>1</sup>

More generally, a voluntary act is any work that is not compelled or imposed by another. In addition to the element of free choice, volunteering is distinguished from other forms of labour by the absence of any form of remuneration.

Volunteering is a reciprocal relationship – the community and individuals benefit from the efforts of volunteers, while volunteers themselves experience the satisfaction of giving, enjoy increased community involvement, learn new skills, build confidence and gain experience. Volunteering options in the community range from a formal placement in a not-for-profit organisation to informal support provided by individuals to their community, such as babysitting a neighbour's child or assisting an older neighbour to do their shopping.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au)

## 1.5 Some facts and statistics

Volunteering in the Australian community is often organised around a common interest or setting such as a school, fire station, community organisation or sports club. The work undertaken by volunteers is multi-faceted and can include office and administration work, tutoring, assisting the aged or disabled in their everyday tasks, caring for children, visiting people in their homes, gardening and environmental work, delivering meals on wheels and providing community transport. Volunteering options range from a regular formal placement in an organisation through to irregular informal support provided by individuals. Furthermore, networks developed through volunteering expand one's social connections and can lead to paid employment and a career path.

In Australia during 2006, 5.2 million people (34 per cent of the population over 18 years old) participated in voluntary work. They contributed 713 million hours to different activities, and in organisations and groups with a diverse range of interests. Overall, 32 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women were volunteers. In Melbourne, 30 per cent participated in voluntary work, while in the rest of Victoria 41 per cent participated.

People aged 35-44 years (43 per cent) were most likely to volunteer, and include a large number of parents with dependent children, reflecting commitments associated with their children, such as work for schools and sports teams. Female partners with dependent children had a volunteer rate of 50 per cent compared with 32 per cent for female partners without dependent children. Employed people, either in full-time (34 per cent) or part-time (44 per cent), had a higher volunteer rate than those unemployed (26 per cent) or not in the labour force (30 per cent).

At a state level, the Australian Bureau of Statistics survey data shows that volunteer rates increased in Victoria between 1995 and 2000 and also marginally between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, 32.7 per cent of the Victorian adult population participated in voluntary work in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group.

Victorians predominantly volunteered in sport and recreation, education and training, community welfare, religious and health organisations.

Participation in voluntary work was higher among Victorian women than Victorian men. Every year Victorian females contributed on average 62 hours of voluntary work (using the median measure) and for Victorian males, 52 hours of voluntary work. This 2006 research confirmed the higher rates of voluntary work among parents of school-aged children, particularly for parents in couple families. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All data from Section 1.4 taken from *A Social Profile of Boroondara*, City of Boroondara, 2008.

## 2.1 A national context

### 2.1.1 Federal government

The recently-elected federal government is in the midst of developing its policy position in relation to volunteering. To inform this, it has established a Social Inclusion Board to determine the issues which affect the rate and extent of social inclusion in the community.<sup>3</sup> The Board will also be tasked with exploring opportunities which increase social inclusion for identified groups within the community. Additionally, the federal government has created the new role of Parliamentary Secretary of Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector.

Through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the federal government is supporting the work of volunteers and organisations via:

- The Volunteer Management Program (VMP), which is funding the BVRC \$53,000 in 2008/09, however the future of this program is uncertain after this financial year.
- Volunteer Small Equipment Grants to community organisations.
- The National Volunteer Skills Centre, managed by Volunteering Australia, which provides organisations and volunteers with access to training, resource materials and a national volunteering network.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1.2 Volunteering Australia

In the federated system of volunteering peak bodies, Volunteering Australia operates as the national body, with a peak body in each state and territory. These peak bodies, such as Volunteering Victoria, operate as separate independent organisations rather than as a legal association. Volunteering Australia provides a range of services including research, policy advice, skills and training programs, promotion and advocacy and promotion of best practice to volunteers, their managers and the corporate sector.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 The Victorian context

### 2.2.1 State government

In the past eight years, the Victorian Government has committed resources to researching and improving volunteer experiences in Victoria with an emphasis on:

- Small grants to help local community organisations to broaden volunteering options, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of marginalised or disadvantaged groups.
- Larger grants to better equip local councils and local communities to support, extend and sustain volunteer activity in order to better share information and resources, and strengthen community connections and partnerships.
- Research into emerging models for volunteering that take account of changing demands and expectations of potential volunteer resources. In 2007, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) funded the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Management Forum (EMRMF) to undertake a study *Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation in the Eastern Metropolitan Region*.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.socialinclusion.gov.au](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> [www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au)

<sup>5</sup> [www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au)

## 2.2.1 State government cont.

In April 2008, the Victorian Government launched the *Strengthening Community Organisations Project Report and Action Plan*. These documents outline the government's efforts to streamline procedures involved in its dealings with both the community and not-for-profit organisations and in assisting the sector as it invests in building long-term capabilities and long-term sustainability. To this end, the government announced a \$4 million injection into the Victorian Volunteer Small Grants (VSG) program, which helps organisations across the state attract new volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, the *Strengthening Community Organisations Project Report and Action Plan* recommended that the Victorian Government:

- Establish an Office for the Community Sector to act as a conduit and facilitate cooperation between Government and community organisations.
- Continue to work with community organisations, volunteer sector representatives and businesses to develop new approaches to involving people in the operations and activities of community organisations.
- Continue to support organisations to engage with new types of volunteers and create different opportunities for participation.
- Provide assistance for individuals involved as volunteers with targeted training and support.
- Host an annual forum to explore policy directions, legislation and regulation, volunteering, relationships with philanthropy and business, and research.<sup>6</sup>

As part of the *Strengthening Community Organisations Project*, DPCD has now been tasked with the development of a *Whole of Victorian Government Volunteer and Participation Strategy 2009-2014*. This Strategy is to be developed by October 2008 and presented to Cabinet. This strategy should have far-reaching impacts on the community sector and local government in their work to support volunteers and the community.

## 2.2.2 Volunteering Victoria

As noted earlier, Volunteering Victoria aims to represent the volunteer sector in Victoria. Membership is diverse and includes the 16 Victorian Volunteer Resource Centres as well as other volunteer-involving organisations.

In response to the Victorian Government's *Strengthening Community Organisations Project Action Plan*, Volunteering Victoria has announced that three new programs will be launched during the second half of 2008. These programs are *V-Train*, *V-Community Hubs* and *V-Knowledge eXch@nge*, which are designed to assist in the sustainability of volunteering for the long-term by building the capacity of volunteer-involving organisations as they recruit, train and manage volunteers.

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<sup>6</sup> DPCD, [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au)

## 2.2.2 Volunteering Victoria cont.

- *V-Train or Volunteer Training* is a co-ordinated and centralised training program for the volunteer sector. Volunteering Victoria will form a pool of trainers and training resources so that volunteers, volunteer managers and those in the volunteer support network can avail of training and information on volunteering from one source.
- *V-Community Hubs or Volunteering Community Hubs* will serve as the focal point for gathering information within the various communities all over Victoria, especially in the rural and regional areas. Information on volunteering will be made available through Community Hubs to help new residents and other community members get started on volunteer work.
- *V-Knowledge eXch@nge or Volunteer Knowledge eXch@nge* will be an electronic portal of information and knowledge within Volunteering Victoria's website. It will draw from the skills and knowledge of those in the many volunteer support networks that operate throughout the state and will serve as a platform for online discussion and exchange of ideas, with subjects categorised according to areas of interest such as sport, cultural, health and welfare and many others.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2.3 Volunteering in the Eastern Metropolitan Region

Planning and policy development relating to volunteering and civic participation varies greatly among the seven local governments in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) as do the ways through which support occurs.

Boroondara, Monash and (more recently) Knox City Councils have the strongest systemic and resourced commitment to supporting volunteering. Significant disparities exist between the current levels of local government support and cooperation between municipalities.

The report *Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation in the Eastern Metropolitan Region*, undertaken by the EMRMF determined that:

*Voluntary work and civic engagement is alive and well in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. The face of voluntary and civic activity is changing however, and understanding the transformations and supporting them strategically is critical to meet the key challenges facing governments – both local and state - and the communities in the region.<sup>8</sup>*

The report explored changes in the nature of people's involvement in volunteering and civic participation in the broader societal context that included:

- A shift away from some types of formal voluntary care and support work, such as delivered meal services.
- A shift towards short-term, community development and activist civil society engagement.
- A high demand for (short-term) voluntary administrative work (but less demand for IT-related work) as a pathway to paid employment or as general skills development.
- Changes in life patterns that affect motivation for and levels of engagement and thus present a challenge for recruitment and retention in many traditional volunteer roles within organisations.

<sup>7</sup> [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au)

<sup>8</sup> *Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation (Civil Society Work): Key challenges facing government and community in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne*. Eastern Metropolitan Regional Management Forum, 2008.

# The Policy Context 2

## 2.2.3 Volunteering in the Eastern Metropolitan Region cont.

The report also examined barriers to engagement in volunteering and civic participation in the EMR and determined these barriers as:

- Insufficient access to community and public transport which limit people's access to participation.
- Fear of litigation and over-governance in many volunteer-involving community organisations.
- Insufficient volunteering opportunities in manual, maintenance and outdoor tasks exist for those who like to be active and do physical work (especially men).

The report made numerous recommendations to be addressed by federal, state and local governments, peak volunteering bodies, the corporate and philanthropic sectors as well as community based not-for-profit organisations. Of particular relevance to the BVRC are the recommendations that:

- A Senior Leadership Group (SLG) be established for the next three years, charged with establishing and resourcing systems and processes geared at supporting and maintaining the practices and relationships of volunteering and civic participation in the region. The exact role of the SLG is still to be determined.
- Volunteer Resource Centres and Local Governments take a lead role in educating the community, government and business sectors through an education campaign about a more holistic understanding of volunteering and civic participation.
- Regional liaison and networking between Volunteer Resource Centres and other support services (including Local Governments) be strengthened and institutionalised and supported by ongoing research toward strengthening regional volunteering and civic participation.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.3 Considerations for Council

Issues for consideration by the BVRC arising from this scan of the policy environment include the impacts of:

- Rising petrol prices on volunteers and agencies.
- Ageing population.
- Increased cultural diversity within our community.
- The trend for individuals to work longer hours and until later in life.
- Increased focus on partnerships between agencies locally and regionally.
- Increased need and provision of capacity-building activities for volunteers, managers of volunteers, and community agencies.
- Increased regulation within the volunteer sector.

Other issues include:

- The resource implications for the BVRC arising from the *Strengthening Community Organisations Project Action Plan*, the *Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation in the Eastern Metropolitan Region* report and the *Whole of Victorian Government Volunteer and Participation Strategy 2009-2014*.
- How does the training program provided by the BVRC align with that provided by Volunteering Australia, Volunteering Victoria, and the City of Boroondara Community On Board program?

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<sup>9</sup> *Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation (Civil Society Work): Key challenges facing government and community in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne*. Eastern Metropolitan Regional Management Forum, 2008.

## 2.3 Considerations for Council cont.

- What will be the impact of the federal government's Social Inclusion Board and the work of the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector?
- Issues specific to the engagement of 'baby boomers' in volunteering. Research has identified that 'baby boomers' are volunteering in different manners and for different reasons than retirees of previous generations. 'Baby boomers', those born between 1946 and 1963, have begun to retire and are looking for more episodic or short-term volunteer opportunities and roles which utilise their work experience and expertise.

## 3.1 Capital volunteering

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) is the largest volunteering and training charity in the United Kingdom (UK) and has more than 15,000 partnerships with statutory, public, private sector and voluntary organisations, community groups and the media. In 2007, 230,000 volunteers provided innovative responses to social challenges.

In recent years, CSV has developed its work in mental health, and has created the initiative Capital Volunteering, which aims to tackle issues of mental health and social inclusion through volunteering. The program is focused on people with severe and enduring mental health issues, and features around 100 diverse volunteering projects, located across London.

Over 4,500 people have experienced, or are experiencing, improvements in the social inclusion aspects of their lives, as a result of their participation in Capital Volunteering. The projects which they are involved in include supported volunteering; befriending, mentoring and advocacy; self-help groups, peer support and social clubs; and arts, music, dance, photography, film, environment, gardening, sport and exercise.<sup>10</sup>

## 3.2 Experience Corps

Experience Corps USA is an initiative that partners with schools and local community organisations to create meaningful opportunities for adults over 55 to meet society's greatest challenges.

There are 2,000 Experience Corps volunteers working in 20 cities across the United States who tutor and mentor primary school students struggling to read. Research has demonstrated that that these programs boost student academic performance and enhance the well-being of the volunteers also.

## 3.3 E-volunteering

Online volunteering allows people to volunteer from home or work. This type of volunteering reduces the amount of time wasted in travel to and from volunteering and allows for flexibility when the volunteer activities are undertaken. This may be particularly appealing to the time-poor community members. Online volunteering also reduces difficulties associated with the costs of travel. One example of this is the United Nations Volunteers Program's *Online Volunteering* ([www.onlinevolunteering.org](http://www.onlinevolunteering.org)) which allows volunteers around the world to engage in development initiatives via the internet, regardless of their geographical location.

<sup>10</sup> [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)

## 3.4 Global trends

According to the report *Global Trends in Skill-based Volunteering* undertaken by The Allen Consulting Group on behalf of the National Australia Bank in 2007:

*Corporate volunteering is defined as allowing staff to engage in unpaid work for a community organisation during work hours for a wider societal benefit, and for the possible benefit of the volunteer and for the corporation (pg.1).<sup>11</sup>*

Allocating staff time for community projects is becoming a key feature of many corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. More companies are offering paid volunteering leave of up to three days per employee on an annual basis. In the United States it is estimated that 40 per cent of companies have a paid volunteering policy.<sup>12</sup>

In the UK, the government has recently launched an initiative to encourage all businesses to provide one paid volunteer day per employee.

In Australia, numerous companies have a policy of providing paid volunteer leave. Typically, corporate volunteer programs take several forms:

- Allowing a fixed time period for volunteering during business hours.
- Matching work time with the time employees volunteer in their personal time.
- Granting paid leave or providing secondments to work on a particular project full time.

Through the 1990s and into the first decade of this century, corporate volunteering has developed as a popular avenue for teams within corporations to work together (often outside their hierarchical or skills comfort zone).

## 3.5 Family volunteering

Family or group volunteering is where people volunteer as a family unit or in a group, for example, of friends or colleagues. This type of volunteering may be particularly relevant to baby boomers as it provides opportunities to combine both family and volunteer time. Furthermore, it can be a way to encourage older people (of grandparent age) to volunteer with their families or with other groups.

## 3.6 Skill-based volunteering

Skill-based volunteering involves using individual or collective corporate expertise to support the work of a community group. It typically involves applying or transferring individual or organisational skills - for instance, strategic planning, property management, marketing or information technology management to a community organisation or entity, such as a NGO, not-for-profit group, school, hospital or cause.

Such volunteering in the corporate environment is typically tolerated, encouraged or sanctioned by the company or entity. This mode of volunteering can generate benefits for the volunteer, the employer, and the organisation hosting the volunteer.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The Allen Consulting Group, 2007 *Global Trends in Skill-based Volunteering*, Melbourne.

<sup>12</sup> This is based on 2003 data.

<sup>13</sup> The Allen Consulting Group, 2007, p. 2

# International Initiatives

## 3

### 3.7 Innovative learning opportunities for managers of volunteers

In January 2007, Volunteering England (VE) launched the *Excellence in Volunteer Management (EVM) Training Program* which allows managers of volunteers to tailor their professional development opportunities to match their schedule and preferences. As opposed to traditional teaching methods, the EVM program allows managers of volunteers to pick and choose from a variety of online and classroom-based opportunities in order to develop their skills. Furthermore, participants have the option of completing a full 60-hour training program or a selection of specific modules.

The four main areas covered in the program include: **Managing Yourself** (leadership, delegation, taking charge of own professional development); **Managing People** (planning and organising, developing skills and talent, building teams); **Managing Resources** (legal and financial aspects of managing volunteering, measuring and demonstrating the impact of the work of volunteers, budgeting, funding volunteering); and finally, **Managing in the Community** (volunteering in the wider community, strategically planning volunteer involvement, issues of diversity and rurality).

The EVM is an accredited training program, with participants receiving an award endorsed by Institute of Leadership and Management upon completion. This program has been very well-received by managers of volunteers as it allows for flexible professional development options as well as frequent networking opportunities.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.8 Social integration and active participation of third country nationals through volunteering

In late 2006, the INVOLVE Project Group, funded by the European Commission (EU), published the final report of its 18-month long study into volunteering among third country national populations residing in the Netherlands, Hungary, England, Germany, Austria, Spain and France. The purpose of the study was to explore the concept of migrant volunteering, the attitudes surrounding it, and the national policies put in place by European governments to facilitate it.

The report, despite highlighting certain barriers to migrant volunteering, found that volunteering is an important indicator of integration into the host country, and one which allows migrants to gain basic language skills and local knowledge, to be active members of society, and to gain valuable work experience to enhance their employability. However, the INVOLVE report also indicated that third country nationals are a highly heterogeneous group, and as such, one-size-fits-all solutions were not appropriate. The project group recommended that volunteering should be included as both an instrument and indicator of integration in the subsequent *Handbook on Integration of the EU*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *The Pick 'n' Mix Pathway to Excellence in Volunteer Management*, Volunteer England, 2008

<sup>15</sup> INVOLVE: Integration of migrants through volunteering, European Volunteer Centre, 2008

# International Initiatives

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## 3.9 Considerations for Council

- In light of the CSV experience in the UK, is there a place for something like the Capital Volunteering program in Boroondara, given the demand for mental health services in the City of Boroondara?
- Does the BVRC have a role in encouraging skill-based volunteering initiatives across the municipality?
- What learnings from the INVOLVE project could be applied by the BVRC to the integration of local residents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds?
- What opportunities exist for the BVRC to explore e-volunteering systems to engage people who are housebound and/or time poor?
- What opportunities exist for the BVRC to encourage family volunteering initiatives?
- Determine the need for an accredited and flexible, multi-faceted approach to training managers of volunteers.
- Should the City of Boroondara have a role in supporting corporate volunteering, and if so, what is the role of the BVRC in fostering corporate volunteering programs within the city?

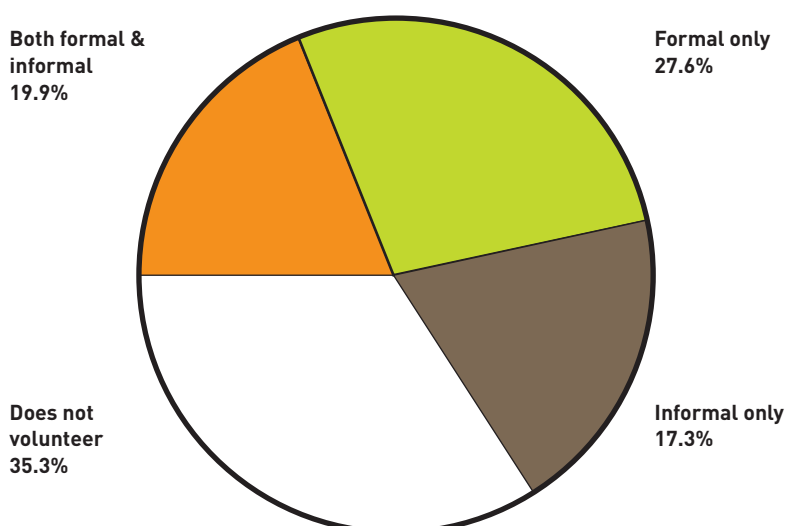
## 4.1 The Boroondara Community Voice

In May 2006, the City of Boroondara surveyed the Boroondara Community Voice (BCV) panel which comprises over 700 local residents. Of the respondents, 42.8 per cent reported that they volunteered. This was consistent with the 2004 BCV survey data, which found that 43.7 per cent of respondents volunteer.

Furthermore, the 2006 survey determined that:

- Half the respondents indicated that they currently volunteered with organisations or groups involved in community services or support, education and recreation.
- More females (55.0 per cent) than males (45.0 per cent) were involved in formal volunteering and the most common age group of these volunteers was 35-49 years (38.0 per cent).
- A smaller percentage (36.0 per cent) of all respondents were currently volunteering but not through an organisation (informal volunteering). Again more females (64.0 per cent) than males (35.0 per cent) were involved in informal volunteering and the most common age group of these volunteers was 35-49 years (36.0 per cent).
- About half of the informal volunteering mentioned by respondents was providing care for elderly or disabled friends, relatives and neighbours. These volunteers were visiting the people in their homes to keep them company, taking them shopping or to medical appointments and doing some home maintenance tasks.
- The remaining half of the informal volunteering mentioned by respondents was involvement in fundraising and support services at schools, kindergartens and community groups. A few volunteers were providing child care and babysitting services.<sup>16</sup>

**Percentage of formal and informal volunteering in Boroondara, 2006**



[Source: *A Social Profile of Boroondara*, City of Boroondara, 2008.]

<sup>16</sup> *A Social Profile of Boroondara*, City of Boroondara, 2008.

# Volunteering in Boroondara 4

## 4.1 The Boroondara Community Voice cont.

Reasons given by respondents for not volunteering were mainly work or family commitments. On the other hand, the volunteering respondents were motivated by: helping others in the community; sharing their skills with others; and having the opportunity to meet new people and socialising. Given the number of volunteers in this sample, it is not surprising that most respondents reported positive attitudes about the importance of volunteering in the community:

- 54 per cent believed that volunteers made an essential contribution to the wellbeing of their local community.
- 62 per cent agreed that voluntary work should be undertaken by all people who have the ability to do so.
- 91 per cent agreed with the statement 'volunteering is about more than providing a service – it's about being an active participant in the community'.<sup>17</sup>

## 4.2 The 2006 Census

In 2006, the importance of volunteering as a national issue was highlighted by the decision to include a question on voluntary work in the Census of Population and Housing for the first time.

Respondents were asked to report if they did unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group, in the twelve months prior to Census Night. In 2006, two in every ten people in Boroondara (23.2 per cent) aged 15 years and over reported that they had completed voluntary work on these terms. Table 1 shows that, across the EMR, the City of Boroondara had the highest rate of volunteering of the seven LGAs.

**Table 1: Percentage of persons\* doing voluntary work for an organisation/group in the EMR, Census 2006**

LGAs	Number of Volunteers*	% Volunteer	% Voluntary work not stated
Boroondara	28,747	23.2%	7.2%
Whitehorse	24,079	20.5%	7.0%
Yarra Ranges	21,911	20.3%	7.4%
Maroondah	14,919	19.1%	7.2%
Manningham	15,138	17.0%	6.6%
Monash	22,820	16.9%	8.2%
Knox	18,752	16.3%	6.4%

\* Persons aged 15 years and over (excluding overseas visitors) who did unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group, in the twelve months prior to Census Night.

[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007 Place of Enumeration Profiles, for local government areas in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, Cat. no. 2004.0, Canberra.]

<sup>17</sup> A Social Profile of Boroondara, City of Boroondara, 2008.

# Volunteering in Boroondara

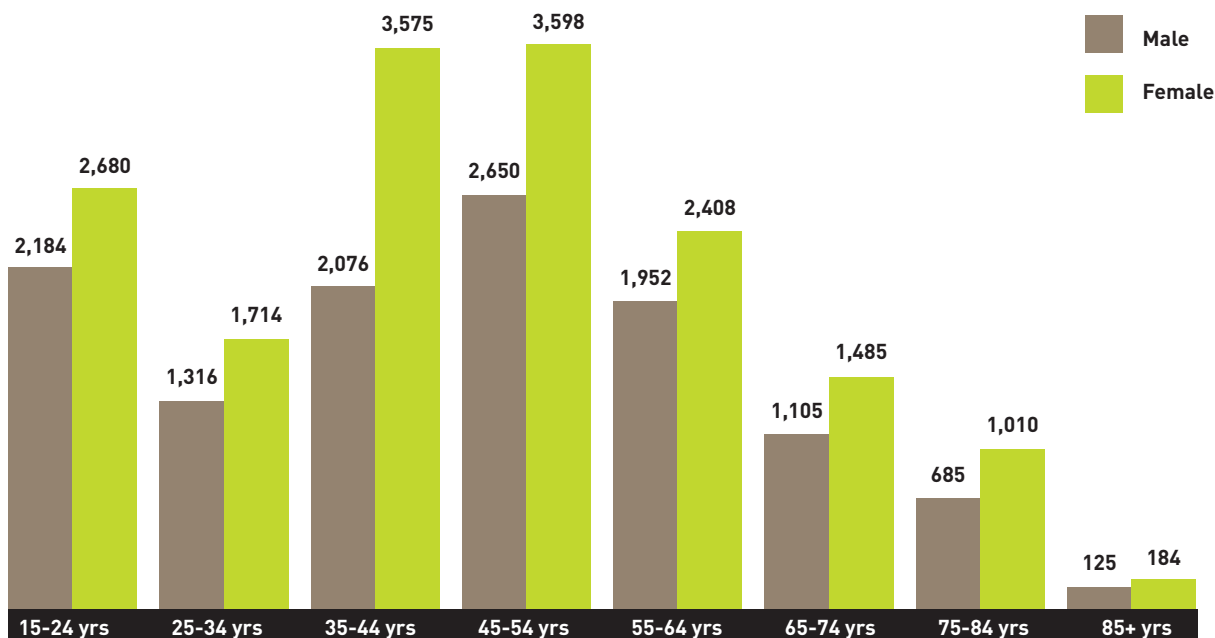


## 4.2 The 2006 Census cont.

This new Census data provides a vastly different estimate of the rate of volunteering compared to the volunteering rate reported by the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics household survey and other 2006 survey data discussed in this chapter. As noted previously, estimates may vary due to different definitions and wording of survey questions, methodologies and terms used in the volunteer sector. Respondents may be less likely, for instance, to report participation in the full range of voluntary work in a self-administered questionnaire such as the Census. Census respondents may also under-report some volunteering activities that are referred to using other terms such as course placements, compulsory community service, occasional and informal voluntary work, and unpaid work for another individual. The Census definition of unpaid voluntary work excluded any voluntary work undertaken as part of paid employment, such as working additional hours in their job, work completed to qualify for a Government benefit, or, work conducted as part of a family business.

The 2006 Census data for the City of Boroondara shows that, consistent with other studies, volunteering rates varied by age group and gender. Of the 28,747 persons in Boroondara who reported doing voluntary work for an organisation or group, 16,654 (57.9 per cent) were females and 12,093 (42.1 per cent) were males. This gender breakdown is comparable to the City of Boroondara's own survey of residents also conducted in 2006 (55 per cent female, 45 per cent male).

**Table 2: Number of persons\* doing voluntary work for an organisation /group by age group, City of Boroondara, Census 2006**



(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, Place of Enumeration Profile for Boroondara (C), Cat. No. 2004.0, Canberra.)



# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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The following section provides a snapshot of the BVRC's budget and staffing, as well as statistics related to its services.

## 5.1 Budget and staffing

The total budget for the 2007/08 financial year was \$220,000 with funding coming from three different sources. This funding covered BVRC services as well as the salaries of BVRC staff members, which amount to 3.0 EFT.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 3: BVRC budget**

Budget	Amount
Volunteer Management Program funding (FaHCSIA)	\$53,000
Volunteer Coordination funding (DHS)	\$17,000
City of Boroondara	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>

**Table 4: BVRC staffing**

Staff Position	EFT
Coordinator, Volunteer Support and Development	1.0
Program Officer	1.0
Program Assistant (jobshare)	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.0</b>

<sup>18</sup> Up until 1 September 2008, the Volunteer Community Transport Program (VCTP) was also part of the BVRC's services. It received a budget of \$100,000 from the City of Boroondara and was staffed by one employee, equalling 1.0 EFT. The program has been transferred to Aged Services so as to better integrate it into the HACC service area. It is, however, still envisaged that the expansion of client eligibility for the VCTP will be explored to meet the broader, non-HACC, demands for community transport in Boroondara.

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## 5.2 Volunteer referrals

The total number of people referred by the BVRC to member agencies for voluntary work in 2007/08 was 819, an increase of 23.7 per cent over the previous year's referral numbers and 20.4 per cent above the BVRC's target.

**Table 5: Annual referrals**

	Males	Females	Total
2004 / 05	219	436	655
2005 / 06	220	450	670
2006 / 07	242	420	662
2007 / 08	259	560	819

### 5.2.1 Profile of volunteers

Within Boroondara greater numbers of residents from Hawthorn (267), Camberwell (223) and Kew (200) sought volunteering opportunities through the BVRC than residents from Kew East (30), Ashburton (53) and Canterbury (57).

**Table 6: Volunteers by suburb, 2004/05 – 2007/08**

	2004 / 05	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	Total
Ashburton	17	8	15	13	53
Balwyn	29	24	27	28	108
Balwyn North	41	23	24	22	110
Camberwell	51	54	55	63	223
Canterbury	19	12	12	14	57
Glen Iris	42	43	29	38	152
Hawthorn	60	47	80	80	267
Hawthorn East	33	36	24	33	126
Kew	48	43	46	63	200
Kew East	9	13	5	3	30
Surrey Hills	23	24	22	29	98
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>1,424</b>
Elsewhere	283	343	323	433	1,382
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>2,806</b>

The total number of volunteer referral interviews by the BVRC for the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2008 was 2,806 of whom 1,424 were Boroondara residents. The remaining 1,382 volunteers came from neighbouring areas and suburbs as well as the CBD. This figure only captures volunteer referral interviewees and does not include prospective volunteers who were directly referred to volunteer work at community festivals, expos, school, TAFE and university presentations and those who were referred to other volunteer resource centres, due to their closer proximity, for example.

# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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## 5.2.1 Profile of volunteers cont.

**Table 7: Volunteer demographics, 2007/08**

	Males	Females	Total	CALD	PWD ^
Teenagers (12-17 years)	31	26	57	2	1
Young Adults (18-34 years)	145	301	446	138	10
Adults (35-49 years)	38	105	143	29	12
Older Adults (50-64 years)	35	95	130	11	2
65+ years	10	33	43	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>28</b>

^ PWD is an acronym for people with disabilities.

Over half of the BVRC referrals to member agencies were aged 18-34, one third were from CALD backgrounds, and ten were persons with a disability.

Only 43 people aged 65+ presented to the BVRC for volunteering opportunities, which may appear to be surprising given Boroondara's aged population. However, this figure is in line with the changes in volunteering patterns which show that members of this generation are not looking to volunteer in traditional ways. Rather, this group are choosing to enjoy their retirement, often travelling.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 8: Gender of volunteers in Boroondara by suburb, 2007/08**

	Females	Males	Total
Ashburton	7	6	13
Balwyn	18	10	28
Balwyn North	15	7	22
Camberwell	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>63</b>
Canterbury	9	5	14
Glen Iris	27	11	38
Hawthorn	<b>52</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>80</b>
Hawthorn East	23	10	33
Kew	<b>46</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>63</b>
Kew East	1	2	3
Surrey Hills	15	14	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>386</b>

The top three suburbs for the female and male categories are highlighted in bold. These suburbs continue to have the strongest volunteering activity, as evidenced by BVRC volunteer referral interviews, both currently and historically.

Sixty-five per cent of residents who sought volunteering opportunities through the BVRC were women, with the majority residing in Hawthorn (52), Kew (46) and Camberwell (39). This trend in Boroondara does not align with national trends where men and women volunteer in more equal proportions.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. Victorian Government, 2008. *Volunteering in Australia: Changing patterns in voluntary work 1995-2006*, pp. 3-8.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. Victorian Government, 2008. *Volunteering in Australia: Changing patterns in voluntary work 1995-2006*, pp. 3-8.

# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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## 5.2.2 Volunteer preferences by activity, 2007/08

BVRC-referred volunteers had an overall preference for administrative tasks, though males and females differed in their subsequent preferences, as demonstrated by the table below.

**Table 9: Volunteer preferences by activity, 2007/08**

	Males	Females	Total
Administration	44	110	154
Working with animals	13	39	52
Arts, craft, musical & other cultural pursuits	2	33	35
Environmental, gardening & other outdoor activities	28	14	42
Advocacy & counselling	5	30	35
Disability support	10	15	25
Education, tutoring & mentoring	17	44	61
Hospitals and allied health	6	11	17
Fundraising	10	12	22
Information technology & library services	19	14	33
Material relief	3	0	3
Professional, management & committees	5	3	8
Information guides	1	9	10
Technical, mechanical & maintenance tasks	8	0	8
Social visiting, social support & community transport	6	10	16
Writing, editing & research tasks	3	10	13
Working with the aged	22	75	97
Working with children and youth	9	52	61
Food services	12	16	28
Other	36	63	99

- Preferences of women were highest in the areas of administration, working with the aged or elderly or older residents followed by working with children and youth.
- Preferences of men were highest in the areas of administration, education, tutoring and mentoring and environmental, gardening and other outdoor activities and IT and library services.

# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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## 5.3 Agency membership profile

### 5.3.1 Agency Profile

The number of member agencies has increased over the past four years from 146 to 183 (a 25 per cent increase). The increase has come about due to a rise in promotional activities and the distribution of new marketing materials with consistent branding which have raised the profile of the BVRC. As the profile of the BVRC continues to grow, we have noticed an increase in referrals of agencies by other member agencies.

**Table 10: Agency profile**

Agency Category	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	2007 / 08
Arts / Cultural / Heritage	4	5	5
Community Services / Health / Welfare	125	134	147
Conservation / Environment / Animal Welfare	6	6	7
Education	14	16	12
Sport / Recreation	7	8	9
Other	1	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>183</b>

Network meetings, during which managers of volunteers come together to discuss work-related issues and share ideas, are currently held bi-monthly and are a key networking activity facilitated by the BVRC. The meetings are an excellent opportunity, not only for agencies but for the BVRC to increase its knowledge and awareness of volunteer-related issues within member agencies and the sector as they arise.

Similarly, agency visits allow the BVRC to get a detailed knowledge of the agency and allow the BVRC to share gleanings from other agencies and the sector that may be pertinent for the agency being visited. The number of agency visits only increased slightly over the last year due to resource constraints. Ideally, agencies would be visited once every two years to monitor developments and changes in an organisation.

**Table 11: Member agencies / agency visits / network meetings**

	No.of members	Agency Visits	Network Meetings
2004 / 05	146	12	5
2005 / 06	157	53*	5
2006 / 07	172	14	4
2007 / 08	183	19	6

\* Numbers were significantly higher than average due to state government funding of a project to explore volunteering within Boroondara's CALD communities.

# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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## 5.4 Training profile

After the 2005 *Best Value Review* by the City of Boroondara, it was determined that there was a large demand in the volunteer sector for training programs, both for volunteers and for managers of volunteers, as professional development and to provide information on particular topics of relevance to the sector and those working in it. As such, the BVRC commenced the development of an extensive training program relevant to the work of both groups.

**Table 12: Training program participation**

	Total Training Programs	Total No. Participants
2004 / 05	4	67
2005 / 06	9	162
2006 / 07	12	209
2007 / 08	13	125

### 5.4.1 Training programs, 2006/07

The three most popular training courses held in 2006/07 were 'Working with people who have a disability', 'Handling difficult people, behaviour, and situations' and 'Understanding depression and anxiety'. The least well-attended was 'Building better relationships in the work place', which may have been seen as quite similar to the 'Handling difficult people' session. Thus, it is clear that it is important to avoid having training courses that are too similar within a one year timeframe and instead focus on offering a variety of opportunities.

**Table 13: Training programs, 2006/07**

Training Course	Total No. Participants
Handling difficult people, behaviour and situations	26
Working with people who have disability (run twice)	37
Developing your volunteer program	14
How to make short term & project volunteering work for you & your organisation	11
Managing stress – techniques & strategies for success	15
Building better relationships in the work place	9
Risk management for managers of volunteers	18
Understanding depression & anxiety	26
Level I First Aid	22
Level II First Aid	11
Resolving conflict in the workplace	20

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## 5.4.2 Training programs, 2007/08

The most popular training sessions in 2007/08 were 'Level I First Aid,' 'Understanding mental illness,' and 'Cultural awareness and effective communication'. The least popular was 'Level II First Aid'.

**Table 14: Training programs, 2007/08**

Training Course	Total No. Participants
Cultural awareness and effective communication	14
Relationship between paid staff and volunteers	10
Understanding mental illness	15
Myer Briggs Type Indicator	9
Equal opportunity for managers of volunteers	8
Needs assessment techniques (systematically identify your organisation's volunteer needs- develop strategies to meet those needs)	8
Working with people who have a disability	9
Successful not-for-profit strategic planning	6
Level I First Aid	18
Level II First Aid	5
Continuous improvement for volunteer programs- what does it mean and how do we do it?	10
The grief of older people	13

The participant numbers dropped in 2007/08 despite the addition of one extra course. This drop in attendance rates may have to do with the fact that some courses were replicated from 2006/07 (e.g. First Aid Level I and II) while, as noted, others may have been perceived as similar (e.g. 'Understanding depression and anxiety' and 'Understanding mental illness'). This may indicate that it is important to provide courses which cater for several different volunteer fields. Another reason for the lower attendance numbers is that the programs for managers of volunteers are more targeted, as was requested by agencies when surveyed in 2006, and have less broad appeal than those offered previously.

However, in both years, the overall satisfaction of participants with the courses was very high (88 per cent of feedback made was of a positive nature).

# The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

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## 5.5 Event profile

In the past two financial years, the BVRC has engaged in numerous profile-raising events, as detailed in the tables below. These have taken the forms of presentations (e.g. for member agencies, school groups, TAFEs) as well as expos. Although presenting to smaller groups, the former allows for audience-tailored material and discussions. Conversely, the latter provides a high amount of exposure to a larger number of community members.

**Table 15: Key promotional events**

	Presentations	Festivals/expos
2006 / 07	11	5
2007 / 08	15	5

The table represents the number of presentations made at universities, TAFEs and schools and the number of expos and festivals attended.

**Table 16: Key BVRC events, 2007/08**

Event	Total No. Participants
International Volunteer Day: 5 December 2007 - Lunch	125
2008 Volunteer Expo: 12 March 2008 - 42 agencies had stalls	454
National Volunteer Week: 14 May 2008 - Lunch	30

## 6.1 Member agency survey

In May 2008, a survey was sent to 157 member agencies of the BVRC with a view to increasing understanding of the key issues impacting on them in relation to:

- Volunteering
- The nature and scope of demand for volunteers
- Expectations of the BVRC
- How the BVRC can assist and support agencies to meet their needs and the extent to which this is being done.

Fifty-five completed surveys were returned to the BVRC (a return rate of 35 per cent).<sup>21</sup>

## 6.2 Survey findings

Results highlighted the significant diversity among the agencies in terms of their involvement with volunteers. On average, there were 126 volunteers per agency. However, some had none at all and a few had over 1000 volunteers working for them. Volunteers worked approximately 44.3 hours per week with their agencies. It was no surprise therefore, to find that all agencies rated the importance of volunteers as either critical or high, with only one agency rating it as medium. Furthermore, 42 agencies indicated that they currently required additional volunteers, while 49 indicated that they would continue to do so in the next 3-5 years.

The most popular roles that volunteers were given included administration and clerical, working with people with disabilities, social visiting, social support, and working with older people.

In regards to specific requirements, the increased demand for Police Checks and Working with Children Checks among agencies would suggest a greater regulation of the volunteer sector and more stringent risk management practices in recent years. Alongside this, the demand for transport and volunteer community transport provision is evidenced by the increased need for driver's licences.

The table below summarises the current situation in regards to requirements which volunteers must adhere to.

**Table 17: Member agency volunteer requirements**

Specific requirement	No. of agencies	Specific requirement	No. of agencies
Police Check	27	Working with Children Check	18
Driver's Licence	13	Language other than English	3
Training/Induction	5	Parenting role	1
References	5	Counselling Qualifications	1
Statutory Declaration	1		

<sup>21</sup> This is approximately one third of those surveyed. A key reason for this number of responses is the high turnover of managers of volunteers. Some managers who received the survey may have little or no experience with the BVRC because they are new to their roles.

## 6.2.1 BVRC services-related findings

In regards to the recruitment of volunteers, the vast majority of agencies stated that a portion of their volunteers had been referred to them by the BVRC. On average, agencies had four BVRC-referred volunteers working for them, though one agency reported a high of 25. However, the average referral figure could be higher than what is reported in this document. The reason for this is that 15 respondents claimed to be 'unsure' when asked to report on how many volunteers had been referred to them from the BVRC, while two responded 'None that I'm aware of' and 'Unsure, but quite a few'.

Due to the high turnover of managers of volunteers, it is also likely that BVRC-referred volunteers were in fact recruited by the agencies, before the beginning of the respondent's tenure. As such they may not be aware of this and therefore wrote 'unsure.'

Furthermore, in later sections of the survey, several agencies indicated that they had recruited a number of volunteers through the Boroondara Volunteer Expo (12 March, 2008), but they did not include this figure when reporting the number of BVRC-referred volunteers.

## 6.2.2 Extent to which the BVRC meets the needs of volunteers

After this initial scoping, the survey then asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the services offered by the BVRC met the needs of their volunteers. These services include, but are not limited to, canvassing the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, providing training and professional development opportunities, and ongoing support throughout their tenure as volunteers.

Thirty-four out of 48 respondents (70.8 per cent) felt that the BVRC met the needs of their volunteers 'sometimes' (as opposed to 'never' or 'always'). The 11 respondents who were not sure were new to their manager roles and were unaware of the services that the BVRC offers to volunteers. Therefore, it is possible that these agencies simply did not know whether the BVRC had met their volunteers' needs. However, some agencies did recommend ways for the BVRC to better meet the needs of volunteers, namely:

- More training and education opportunities and at different times. For example, certain agencies expressed an interest in training modules on recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- More BVRC contact with individual agencies.
- The development of a Volunteer Recognition Program.

## 6.2.3 Extent to which the BVRC meets agencies' needs

Following this, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the services offered by the BVRC met the agency's needs. The majority of respondents, 39 out of 47 (82.9 per cent) stated that the BVRC met the needs of their agency always or sometimes. In terms of improvements, the main issues that were raised were:

- The need for a greater number of volunteer referrals and more training for managers.
- More networking and resource-sharing opportunities among member agencies.

## **6.2.4 Level of satisfaction with the BVRC**

The respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied) their satisfaction with the quality of the BVRC's volunteer referrals. The average score was 7. However, this question was interpreted and subsequently responded to in different ways by different managers. Some managers of volunteers rated the BVRC according to volunteer referral numbers; others on the quality, as the question was intended to elicit; and others, the overall service standard of the BVRC. Several respondents also rated this scale on matters that were not relevant to the question posed.

Please refer to the Appendix for an overview of the comments provided by the member agencies in regards to BVRC services.

## **6.2.5 Member agency priorities for the BVRC**

The member agency survey also asked respondents to rate BVRC activities as 'High', 'Medium', or 'Low', depending on their level of priority. The figures in Table 18 indicate how many times each activity was rated in each category.

**Table 18: Member agency ratings of the BVRC activities' priorities**

Activities	High	Medium	Low
<b>Capacity building</b>			
Volunteer referral	44	4	1
Training of volunteers	22	19	7
Accredited training of volunteers	15	15	16
Training of volunteer coordinators / managers	26	16	4
Accredited training of volunteer coordinators / managers	18	18	9
On-line training	12	19	16
Corporate volunteering programs	12	20	9
Recognition of volunteers	29	15	3
Recognition of volunteer managers	16	14	11
<b>Promotion</b>			
Promoting the work of agencies	26	13	9
Promoting the work of volunteers	41	8	1
Promoting volunteering and civic participation to the community	39	9	1
Supporting informal volunteering and other community strengthening activities	29	16	3
<b>Information</b>			
Reviewing and strengthening information made available to agencies	22	25	2
Reviewing and strengthening information made available to volunteers	30	18	2
Reviewing and strengthening information made available to the community	30	16	2
<b>Advocacy</b>			
In relation to key issues impacting on volunteering and civic participation	18	14	1
On behalf of volunteers	29	15	4
On behalf of volunteer managers	17	25	4
<b>Community engagement and partnerships</b>			
Fostering and strengthening partnerships between agencies	22	12	13
Fostering and strengthening partnerships between agencies and the corporate sector	19	18	10
Developing targeted programs that address community needs	27	19	2
<b>Policy</b>			
Maintaining awareness of and responding as appropriate to, relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, policies, strategies and initiatives	32	13	4
<b>Community research</b>			
Undertaking research and consultation in relation to volunteering and civic participation	23	19	6

## 6.2.6 Biggest issues facing member agencies

In the subsequent section of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate what the biggest issues facing their agencies were. The table below indicates the different issues and how many agencies highlighted them.

**Table 19: BVRC member agency challenges**

Issue	No.	Issue	No.
Attracting volunteers	24	Funding	11
Retaining volunteers	19	Training	4
Supervising supporting volunteers	14	Coordinating volunteers	1
Recognising volunteers	1	Keeping in touch with volunteers	1

## 6.2.7 Issues arising from survey

There is an ongoing critical need for a **volunteer referral service**. Volunteer referral interviews were rated 'high' by 44 respondents (80 per cent), which confirms their place as a critical service provided to member agencies and should remain a high priority. However, given natural volunteer attrition rates, it may not be possible to meet the demand for volunteers in all agencies. Attrition is an unfortunate, but very common aspect, of the volunteering sector for several reasons. Individuals often volunteer in order to gain experience within the sector in which they seek employment. Thus, once they do find paid work, they are no longer able to commit their time to volunteering. Another reason may be that the volunteer relocates, and thus decides to engage in volunteer work closer to their new home. Finally, some volunteers feel they need a new challenge after engaging in volunteer work and thus leave their position in order to fulfil another ambition.

**Training** is required for both managers and volunteers. This rated highly among respondents. Interestingly though, respondents felt that training should be provided more to managers of volunteers than volunteers themselves. In follow-up conversations at a recent agency network meeting, agencies felt that training for volunteers was better conducted by them as they could tailor this for their agency's needs. However, professional development of managers of volunteers was seen as a capacity-building activity more suited to the role of a volunteer resource centre. This, to an extent, is already covered by the BVRC in training modules such as 'Continuous improvement for volunteer programs,' 'Working with volunteers recovering from mental illness,' and 'Evaluation skills for managers of volunteer programs.' As such, future endeavours should focus on increasing the number of these types of training sessions which target managers of volunteers specifically.

**Volunteer recognition** should be a high priority. Recognition of volunteers was rated highly by 29 respondents (53 per cent) as a priority for the BVRC. This could take the form of a Volunteer Award scheme or the creation of a discount card for volunteers that can be used in their local communities.

## 6.2.7 Issues arising from survey cont.

**Promoting volunteering and civic participation** to the community were generally rated very highly as a priority for the BVRC. It is a core function for the BVRC and, as such, this rating is not surprising. While the work of volunteers will continue to be a focus in the BVRC's promotional activities, there is likely to be an increase in the community strengthening benefits of civic participation as a result of the finalisation of both the *Regional strategic plan for volunteering and civic participation* as well as the whole-of-government volunteer strategy being developed by the DPCD. Activity at the federal government level is also increasing, with the establishment of the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector.

### **Providing sector-relevant information to agencies and making information available to the community.**

Respondents saw the provision of information to both volunteers and the community generally as a high priority. This is a core function of the BVRC and, as such, will continue to be strengthened in line with changes to the regional, state and federal policies which will occur over 2008/09.

## 6.3 BVRC Advisory Committee consultation

The BVRC has an Advisory Committee which provides advice, guidance and input into its key directions and activities. The Advisory Committee is made up of both agency and community representatives. As part of the development of this strategic plan, the BVRC Advisory Committee was consulted on the key issues and considerations for the BVRC for the next four years, and the key issues they identified were:

- Investigate availability and need for accredited training for member agencies, volunteers, and volunteer coordinators.
- Ascertain support for a 'Boroondara Volunteer of the Year Award' and encourage agencies to develop processes to recognise and reward their volunteers.
- Explore requirements of and opportunities for university and school students to volunteer.
- Review marketing and promotional strategies directed at volunteers, agencies and Council.
- Develop qualitative indicators that measure success to augment quantitative indicators which are used.
- Strengthen relationship with Council's internal service providers to streamline volunteer pathways.
- Connect with newly appointed volunteer managers to increase awareness of BVRC, initially through agency visits.
- Explore opportunities for peer support for volunteer managers separate to agency network meetings.
- Review the agency orientation pack with a view to incorporating relationship-building opportunities.
- Provide information about key policy initiatives to member agencies. Review and summarise key points of policies into more user-friendly language.
- Explore opportunities to undertake research with Swinburne University on issues impacting on volunteers, including barriers and retention.
- Investigate interest in hosting a forum for CEOs in volunteer-involving organisations to increase their understanding of volunteerism.
- Explore training opportunities for managers that currently exist to reduce duplication.
- Explore the possibility of online training modules.
- The BVRC website requires updating.

### **6.3 BVRC Advisory Committee consultation cont.**

The issues listed above, along with those arising from the state and federal government initiatives discussed earlier will need to be addressed by the BVRC. However, the BVRC's resources limit its capacity to tackle all these issues. The current staff (3.0 EFT) are almost fully occupied with volunteer referrals and interviews; network meetings; and training and promotions. If the BVRC is to respond to the issues raised in this strategy and the emerging state and federal initiatives, it requires a full-time Band 6 Officer in addition to the full-time Band 5 Officer<sup>22</sup>. This would provide the BVRC with more capacity to: respond to policy initiatives and develop strategies; develop new volunteer training programs; strengthen partnerships with community agencies and the corporate sector; take a leadership role in regional and/or state volunteering initiatives; and conduct ongoing research about volunteering and civic participation.

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<sup>22</sup> The three current staff are 1EFT Band 7, 1EFT Band 5 and 1EFT Band 4.

# Cost and Quality Standards

7

In order to assess the cost and quality standards of the BVRC in the Council planning and annual reporting processes, volunteer referrals are used as a performance indicator. As demonstrated in the table below, the BVRC has exceeded its annual referral target for the past two years.

**Table 20: Cost and quality standards**

Performance Measures	2006 / 07 Target/Result	2007 / 08 Target/Result	2008 / 09 Target
Number of volunteer referrals made by the BVRC to member agencies	650 / 662	680 / 819	700
Target and actual percentage increase in the number of referrals made by the BVRC to member agencies over the previous year's actual figures.*	4 / 0	4 / 23.7	4 per cent
Satisfaction with referrals made by BVRC to member agencies.	75 per cent	70 per cent **	80 per cent

\* The first figure represented is the target percentage increase in referrals over the previous financial year's target figure. This figure is currently set to increase 4 per cent per annum. The second figure is the percentage increase in actual referrals over the previous year's actual referral result.

\*\* Rating is less than 2006/07 due to a mixture of understanding of the questions. Some managers of volunteers rated volunteer referral numbers, others on the quality of the volunteers, and others the overall service standard of the BVRC. Several respondents also rated this on matters that were not relevant to the question posed.<sup>23</sup> The question will be re-tested in 2008/09.

<sup>23</sup> The survey identified two key issues that affect this rating: high-turnover of managers of volunteers which affects the BVRC's profile and capacity to deliver a well-informed and targeted service; and, an increased number of agencies and prospective volunteers. This is harder to service with limited BVRC staffing.

# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Information &amp; Advocacy</b></p> <p>Acquire, develop &amp; provide information to inform service planning, development, evaluation &amp; funding.</p>	<p>Analyse &amp; update volunteering data / profiles.</p> <p>Identify &amp; strategically respond to key issues impacting on the community as identified through network meetings, the Advisory Committee &amp; other forms of consultation &amp; research.</p> <p>Acquire and make available current &amp; accessible volunteer-related information to the community &amp; Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporate any DPCD and ABS data into profiles.</li> <li>● Advocate on behalf of the community to commonwealth, state or regional bodies in relation to key issues impacting on volunteering and civic engagement.</li> <li>● Advocate to community agencies and the volunteer sector on behalf of managers of volunteers in relation to the importance of their roles.</li> <li>● Advocate to community agencies and the volunteer sector on behalf of volunteers to ensure minimum standards for their engagement are observed, including the provision of personal accident insurance and OH&amp;S guidelines.</li> <li>● Provide a volunteer referral service for prospective volunteers in the community.</li> <li>● Regularly review &amp; strengthen information on the Boroondara Website / Intranet and in Council publications regarding developments in the volunteering sector.</li> <li>● Explore the development of an annual agency forum to share information, raise the profile of volunteers and the sector, and strengthen partnerships.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Years 1 and 2</p>

# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Community Research</b></p> <p>Undertake research &amp; consultation to inform service planning, development, evaluation &amp; funding.</p> <p>Research global perspectives and innovations in volunteer sector and determine if/how these can be incorporated by BVRC.</p>	<p>Identify &amp; respond to key issues impacting on the community as identified through community consultation &amp; research.</p> <p>Investigate innovations and policies in volunteer sector including the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Europe, and USA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research community attitudes towards volunteering &amp; civic engagement, including areas of volunteer recruitment and retention and changes in volunteer motivators, particularly across different age groups.</li> <li>● Contact local universities and educational bodies to explore interest in carrying out this research.</li> <li>● Review literature (Strategic Plans, Annual Reports, etc.) of national volunteering bodies such as Volunteering England (VE).</li> <li>● Determine if these strategies can enhance current BVRC policies and projects and incorporate these initiatives into BVRC operations.</li> </ul>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Years 1 and 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p>
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Policy Development</b></p> <p>Review existing &amp; develop new policies in response to key commonwealth &amp; state initiatives &amp; community priorities.</p>	<p>Maintain awareness of &amp; respond as appropriate to relevant commonwealth &amp; state legislation, policies &amp; strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in relevant state-wide &amp; regional conferences, seminars, forums &amp; working parties.</li> <li>● Identify &amp; respond to relevant program &amp; policy initiatives at local, state and federal levels.</li> <li>● Monitor developments &amp; consider impacts of the DPCD Regional Strategic Plan for Volunteering &amp; Civic Participation as well as the State Government's Whole of Government Volunteer Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Service Planning, Development &amp; Targeting</b></p>			
<p>Strengthen the responsiveness, quality &amp; targeting of the BVRC's programs.</p>	<p>Ensure that adequate policies, procedures &amp; systems are developed, maintained &amp; evaluated to support service provision and development.</p> <p>Promotion and annual update of the revised operational guidelines for volunteers in Council services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On an annual basis, review the nature and scope of training provided in Boroondara to the volunteer and community sectors.</li> <li>● Develop further training specifically related to managers of volunteers and their roles.</li> <li>● Explore the possibility of developing online training modules.</li> <li>● Provide training and presentations at relevant Council staff meetings on Council's operational guidelines for involving volunteers in Council services.</li> <li>● Review the way Council utilises volunteers, annually.</li> <li>● Annually, review &amp; administer the BVRC Satisfaction Survey to member community agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Involving CALD Communities</p> <p>Increase the numbers of CALD background individuals in volunteer work.</p>	<p>Identify local CALD community groups, scope interest in volunteering, and liaise with agencies to encourage creation of volunteer job opportunities for CALD individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review existing data for local CALD communities.</li> <li>● Develop partnerships to promote and support CALD engagement in the community.</li> <li>● Explore the establishment of a CALD event, possibly on Harmony Day (21 March), which recognises and celebrates the contribution of CALD members of the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 1</p>
<p>Strengthening ties with Agencies</p>	<p>More regular agency contacts are required in order to ensure that both the BVRC and member agencies are up-to-date with recent developments and opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actively develop partnerships with the community sector and strengthen BVRC/agencies' relationships.</li> <li>● Identify which agencies require visits and prioritise them annually.</li> <li>● Hold agency network meetings monthly alternating between one in the morning and one in the afternoon.</li> <li>● Provide information to agencies via email bulletins.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Service Planning, Development &amp; Targeting cont.</b></p> <p>Volunteer Recognition</p> <p>Promote the need for formal volunteer recognition among agencies as well as Council.</p>	<p>Recognise the work of volunteers. Additionally, research what volunteer award schemes currently exist, how they are implemented, and offer models/ suggestions for member agencies to incorporate into their programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investigate existing volunteer awards and begin discussions with member agencies as to how they would undertake awards.</li> <li>● Ensure National Volunteer Week (Second week in May) is marked each year with a series of events, general or promotional activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Community Engagement &amp; Partnerships</b></p> <p>Foster &amp; strengthen partnerships with state, local &amp; regional bodies to strengthen service planning, development &amp; provision.</p>	<p>Strengthen our community through a strategic approach to the promotion, support, development &amp; resourcing of volunteering and civic participation.</p> <p>Strengthen our community through a strategic approach to the development &amp; support of state wide, regional &amp; local networks, community advisory committees &amp; community groups.</p> <p>Strengthen our community through a strategic approach to community building.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership in partnership development.</p> <p>Establish &amp; strengthen relationships with Service Clubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In collaboration with Economic Development, assist local corporate partners to explore the establishment of a community volunteer recognition and reward program.</li> <li>● In line with the work of Experience Corps, investigate the possibility of linking community members over the age of 55 with local primary schools and day care centres to engage in volunteer tutoring/mentoring roles.</li> <li>● Actively support and engage with key strategic networks, such as the Victorian Volunteer Resource Centre network, the City Network, the Managers of Volunteers (Eastern) network, the HACC CALD EMR network and the Volunteering and Civic Participation in the EMR network.</li> <li>● Initiate &amp; facilitate partnerships in response to recommendations from the <i>Our Boroondara</i> vision statement.</li> <li>● Initiate &amp; facilitate partnerships in response to recommendations from the <i>Community Support Strategy</i>.</li> <li>● Where possible and appropriate, collaborate with Neighbourhood Renewal on improved outcomes for the Ashburton &amp; Alamein communities.</li> <li>● Strengthen partnerships with Council service providers to maximise outcomes for the departments and the community.</li> <li>● Initiate meetings &amp; networking opportunities in order to establish formal partnerships with Rotary, Lions and Probus Clubs.</li> </ul>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Years 1 and 2</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 2</p>

# Strategic Directions and Priorities 2008-2012

8

Issue / Strategic Objectives (4 Year Goals)	Key Focus Areas (4 Year Actions)	Priorities	Year of Implementation
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Information Technology</b></p> <p>Ensure IT systems fully support the operating requirements of service planning, coordination, delivery &amp; evaluation.</p>	<p>Identify &amp; seek to implement the most appropriate available technology to support requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a process to record issues &amp; feedback ascertained through community consultation &amp; research.</li> <li>● Develop and update new BVRC database (including volunteer, agency, and appointment data).</li> <li>● Continue the discussions with FaHCSIA, VA, VV and DPCD about a centralised insurance and agency registration database.</li> <li>● Develop systems to allow the BVRC to undertake six-monthly agency updates.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 1</p>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>Organisational Capacity</b></p> <p>Support staff in the provision of quality &amp; responsive services.</p>	<p>Strengthen the capacity of the BVRC to effectively identify and respond to volunteering &amp; civic engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review the structure &amp; budget to ensure alignment with expectations &amp; identified priorities.</li> <li>● Submit budget bid for additional funding to increase capacity of the BVRC to meet the demand for its services. Specifically, the creation of an ongoing Policy Officer position (Band 6) to provide high-level policy, research and volunteer program development as well as training development.</li> <li>● Strengthen connectivity &amp; communication between staff within the department &amp; across Council.</li> <li>● Administer police checks for Council volunteers utilising Crimcheck.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>Council's Corporate Volunteering Program</b></p>	<p>Assist Council's Learning and Development Department to scope and develop appropriate corporate volunteering opportunities with member agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore what volunteer opportunities may be available in the community through member agencies.</li> <li>● In consultation with Economic Development, collate list of corporate volunteering projects available.</li> <li>● Link Council staff who wish to volunteer with member agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>To be determined by Learning and Development</p>

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## Appendix: BVRC Member Agency Survey comments

The member agencies' comments in regards to their general satisfaction with the BVRC are provided below. They have been organised into three categories, depending on the nature of the comment.

### ● Positive

- BVRC staff very helpful, workshops & training of high standard, important to have such support bodies.
- I've appreciated the general support so far. I am also linked in with other volunteer resource centres across the EMR and BVRC is definitely the most professional, the best at communicating with agencies, and the most organised.
- I would like to express my thanks to all of the staff at BVRC. I find your approach always to be professional and yet friendly. I have found the training offered most useful and enjoy the networking. The expo is also an excellent provision.
- I think the BVRC has a crucial role in encouraging more collaborative working between agencies, sharing resources, training, etc.

### ● Negative

- Our association with BVRC has not been worthwhile.

### ● Constructive

- It would be great if BVRC could use online survey tools (i.e. survey monkey). Would save you money, time, trees, and also save survey-ees time. I think the response rate might be better and would be much easier to compile results.
- I live and work as a volunteer also in Boroondara. Find the business of insurance tiresome when we want to attract volunteers for Kew Community Festival when council support us so much. BVRC seems only focussed long term volunteering for big agencies and not smaller groups who are all volunteers. 2) Happy to have our opportunities listed with you for volunteers walking into BVRC but not if you list our jobs on seek- we can do that ourselves if we want students.
- Advocacy for volunteer benefits (e.g. travel vouchers, tax exemptions, etc. is an important thing to aim for).
- It is hard for facilities such as BVRC to have such a general brief re volunteering and to cover such a large spectrum mainly because successful volunteering is dependent on motivation and feel-good reward. These usually rely on specifics.



**BOROONDARA**  
*City of Harmony*