



VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

2010 – 2013

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.
~Sherry Anderson

INTRODUCTION

The City of Armadale is committed to assisting potential volunteers to identify volunteering opportunities and supporting agencies with recruiting and managing volunteers.

Volunteering Australia defines formal volunteering as an activity which takes place through not-for-profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- for no financial payment; and
- in designated volunteer positions only.

This Volunteer Strategy provides a broad framework to guide AVS in assisting potential volunteers and agencies in volunteer management over the period 2010-2013. While there are some specific projects stated in this Strategy there are many strategies that are ongoing and are in line with current funding opportunities. In essence, the Strategy sets out a mechanism whereby:

- Issues are clearly identified;
- Community-wide responses are developed;
- The City's role in those responses is clearly defined.

Consistent with the City's approach as the service provider of last resort, officers will always look to capacity in the community for responses before considering taking on direct service delivery. There are many benefits in this 'Maximum Outcome with Minimum Intervention' approach including:

- Building capacity in local organisations;
- Creating an environment of collaboration between stakeholders;
- Engendering ownership of issues and solutions;
- Far greater pool of expertise to consider issues and responses;
- Significant advocacy power to other levels of government.

Most significantly, this approach works towards creating a stronger, more resilient and sustainable community.

1. CONSULTATION

Information from the following consultative initiatives has informed this Strategy:

- City of Armadale Council Minutes – 14 September 2009.
- City of Armadale's Draft Strategic Plan, 2010-2014.
- Universal Declaration on Volunteering.
- Volunteering Australia's National Survey on Volunteering Issues.

- Continuing discussions with potential volunteers and agencies engaging the services of volunteers.
- The Economic Value of Volunteering in Western Australia, written by Dr Duncan Ironmonger.
- Discussions with the Volunteer Resource Centre's Alliance.

2. GLOBAL CONTEXT

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering was adopted by the Board of Directors of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) at its 16th World Volunteer Conference, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, January 2001, the International Year of Volunteers.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of human kind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety, and justice for all people.

In this era of globalisation and continuous change, the world is becoming smaller, more interdependent, and more complex. Volunteering – either through individual or group action – is a way in which:

- human values of community, caring, and serving can be sustained and strengthened;
- individuals can exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities, while learning and growing throughout their lives, realising their full human potential; and,
- connections can be made across differences that push us apart so that we can live together in healthy, sustainable communities, working together to provide innovative solutions to our shared challenges and to shape our collective destinies.

At the dawn of the new millennium, volunteering is an essential element of all societies. It turns into practical, effective action the declaration of the United Nations that “We, the Peoples” have the power to change the world.

This Declaration supports the right of every woman, man and child to associate freely and to volunteer regardless of their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, and physical, social or economic condition. All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent, and energy to others and to their communities through individual and collective action, without expectation of financial reward.

We seek the development of volunteering that:

- elicits the involvement of the entire community in identifying and addressing its problems;

- encourages and enables youth to make leadership through service a continuing part of their lives;
- provides a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves;
- enables others to participate as volunteers;
- complements but does not substitute for responsible action by other sectors and the efforts of paid workers;
- enables people to acquire new knowledge and skills and to fully develop their personal potential, self-reliance and creativity;
- promotes family, community, national and global solidarity.

We believe that volunteers and the organisations and communities that they serve have a shared responsibility to:

- create environments in which volunteers have meaningful work that helps to achieve agreed upon results;
- define the criteria for volunteer participation, including the conditions under which the organisation and the volunteer may end their commitment and develop policies to guide volunteer activity;
- provide appropriate protections against risks for volunteers and those they serve;
- provide volunteers with appropriate training, regular evaluation, and recognition;
- ensure access for all by removing physical, economic, social, and cultural barriers to their participation.

Taking into account basic human rights, as expressed in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the principles of volunteering and the responsibilities of volunteers and the organisations in which they are involved, we call on:

All volunteers to proclaim their belief in volunteer action as a creative and mediating force that:

- builds healthy, sustainable communities that respect the dignity of all people;
- empowers people to exercise their rights as human beings and, thus, to improve their lives;
- helps solve social, cultural, economic and environmental problems; and,
- builds a more humane and just society through worldwide cooperation.

The leaders of:

- all sectors to join together to create strong, visible, and effective local and national “volunteer centres” as the primary leadership organisations for volunteering;
- government to ensure the rights of all people to volunteer, to remove any legal barriers to participation, to engage volunteers in its work, and to provide resources to NGOs to promote and support the effective mobilisation and management of volunteers;
- business to encourage and facilitate the involvement of its workers in the community as volunteers and to commit human and financial resources to develop the infrastructure needed to support volunteering;

- the media to tell the stories of volunteers and to provide information that encourages and assists people to volunteer;
- education to encourage and assist people of all ages to volunteer, creating opportunities for them to reflect on and learn from their service;
- religion to affirm volunteering as an appropriate response to the spiritual call to all people to serve;
- NGOs to create organisational environments that are friendly to volunteers and to commit the human and financial resources that are required to effectively engage volunteers.

The United Nations to:

- declare this to be the “Decade of Volunteers and Civil Society” in recognition of the need to strengthen the institutions of free societies; and,
- recognise the “red V” as the universal symbol for volunteering.

IAVE challenges volunteers and leaders of all sectors throughout the world to unite as partners to promote and support effective volunteering, accessible to all, as a symbol of solidarity among all peoples and nations. IAVE invites the global volunteer community to study, discuss, endorse and bring into being this Universal Declaration on Volunteering.

3. LOCAL CONTEXT

Local Governments in Western Australia are not required to have a Volunteer Plan, unlike the requirement to have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan or a Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan. However, Armadale Volunteer Services sees the benefits in considering how to best engage with volunteers and not-for-profit organisations and how AVS can assist in implementing initiatives that result in good outcomes for agencies and volunteers and to articulate this in a volunteer focused plan.

In September 2009, Council approved a Volunteer Policy and Management Practice for the City’s volunteers.

The intention of developing the Volunteer Policy and related Management Practice was to ensure the City’s volunteers were managed within a structured system by capable personnel, with appropriate authority and resources.

The City is also committed to continually work towards best practice in volunteer management, utilising the ‘Volunteering Australia National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations’.

The City’s volunteer portfolio sits in the Community Services Directorate and is promoted as Armadale Volunteer Services (AVS). AVS provides a referral service for individuals and organisations and receives an annual State Government grant through the Department for Communities to complement City funds to assist in delivering the service. AVS is currently waiting the results of an independent review of the Department

for Communities and in particular, the volunteer program area to ascertain if the current funding will be extended.

AVS has received enquiries from over 1,300 potential volunteers since its inception in 2003. The service aims to link volunteers to agencies and agencies to volunteers by best matching the needs of both parties. Volunteers enhance and extend many of the City's services. The volunteers in these programs are managed by the Coordinators running these programs. Several of the City's programs are registered as agencies with AVS.

These programs include:

- Birtwistle Local Studies Library
- History House Museum
- Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group
- Drop n Shop
- Events
- Armadale Visitor Centre
- Champion Centre
- Civic Pride Action Group
- ARK Roadwise Committee

AVS also assists over 100 registered external agencies with recruiting volunteers and volunteer management.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data analysis of the voluntary work performed by the population in City of Armadale compared to the Perth Statistical Division shows that there was a similar proportion of persons who volunteered for an organisation or group.

Overall, 14.9% of the population reported performing voluntary work, compared with 15.2% for the Perth Statistical Division.

In 2008, the Department for Communities released the report "*The Economic Value of Volunteering in Our Community*". Key indicators in the report included estimating the volunteering contribution made to WA in 2006 was \$6.6 billion and the equivalent of 146,000 full time jobs.

The Australian Government's National Strategy for Volunteering is due for release late in 2010 and this has the potential to provide a substantial stimulus to volunteering through better harmonization of Commonwealth, State and Local Government initiatives.

The West Australian Government is also committed to developing a volunteering strategy that recognises the contribution volunteers make and has released a discussion paper on the Draft State and Community Strategy for Volunteering. The consultation period for this document began on the 21 May 2010 and runs for a period of eight weeks.

2011 is the International Year of Volunteers Plus 10 (IYV+10) and the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution, inviting Governments to carry out activities focused on marking the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteering in 2011 at the regional and national levels.

Volunteering Australia conducts an annual National Survey of Volunteering Issues and the 2009 results have been released. The key findings from WA include:

- Almost one quarter of volunteers have been with their organisation for between 2 and 5 years, whilst 40% of volunteers have been with their organisation for 5 years or more.
- 86% of respondents selected 'knowing that my contribution would make a difference' as one important factor in deciding to volunteer, with 67% selecting 'personal belief for a particular cause.'
- 65% of respondents have received recognition for their good work within the previous month and the two most valued recognition methods are 'being accepted as a valuable team member' (66.4%) and 'a personal thank you' (58.8%).
- The volunteering-related areas of public policy that have most impacted on respondents in the past 12 months are 'none'(56%), 'out of pocket expenses associated with volunteering'(13.4%) and 'background checking such as working with children checks and police checks'(10.5%).

4. KEY FOCUS AREAS

This Volunteer Strategy has been developed with four key focus areas:

- **Volunteer promotion and recognition** by increasing the level of volunteering in the community and ensuring the efforts of volunteers are valued and recognised.
- **Volunteer management** by ensuring effective and respectful volunteer management throughout the City and ensuring good community outcomes are achieved.
- **Strengthening networks** that link volunteers to agencies and vice versa.
- **Identifying the City's role** to ensure the best community outcomes are achieved with minimal intervention by the City.

The Plan has been developed to recognise both the economic and social value of volunteering and to review how resources are targeted towards supporting volunteering and the agencies that engage volunteers and to maximise outcomes.

Evaluation of volunteer programs may be either quantitative or qualitative. Some aspects of voluntary impact are not identified easily and this may be referred to as qualitative data. Therefore, the reporting mechanisms for this Plan will contain both quantitative

and qualitative information. Information will be collected through both formal and informal means to ensure a more holistic picture is presented.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN LINKS

The City of Armadale's Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014 sets out Community values and a vision for the future development of the City. The Plan describes the strategies that will be put into place to turn that vision into a reality.

The City's Mission is to provide the leadership, facilities and infrastructure that will serve the needs of our local and wider communities.

While the City's values are:

- Honesty
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Accountability

The City's future directions have been built around the following four major goals:

1. Community Wellbeing
2. Enhanced Natural and Built Environments
3. Economic Growth
4. Good Governance and Management

Elements of the City's Strategic Plan 2010-2014 relevant to this Volunteer Strategy are:

Direct links:

- 1.1.2 Support and strengthen community groups, organisations and volunteer services.

Indirect links

- 1.2.2 Advocate and promote programs and services that enhance the wellbeing of seniors;
- 1.2.3 Increase engagement and participation of youth in the community.
- 1.2.4 Advocate and support equitable access to services and facilities for those with special needs.
- 1.6.3 Promote and support planning and activities that encourage a safe and responsible community.
- 3.3.1 Facilitate provision of a full range of education and training opportunities

- 4.5.2 Provide professional administrative services to support Council operations and services

ARMADALE VOLUNTEER SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT

Working with and for the City of Armadale focusing on volunteering by providing access to a free volunteer referral service for agencies and potential volunteers supported by staff who are committed to the pursuit of excellence and equality of opportunity.

STRATEGY 2010-2013

Focus Area 1

VOLUNTEER PROMOTION and RECOGNITION

Aim

Increase the level of volunteering in the community and ensure the efforts of volunteers is valued and recognised.

Strategies

- Undertake guest speaker roles at community events and meetings.
- Distribute a newsletter three times a year to strategic positions across The City and to registered agencies and volunteers.
- Work closely with Public Relations to ensure appropriate media releases and editorials are sent to local community newspapers.
- Celebrate the role of volunteers in our community.

Key Success Factors

- Opportunities to conduct presentations on volunteering.
- Volunteering is promoted and recognised by local publications.

Focus Area 2

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Aim

To ensure effective and respectful volunteer management throughout the city and to ensure good community outcomes are achieved.

Strategies

- Facilitate volunteer management networks and training opportunities for local volunteer coordinators.
- Respond to individual requests for support and advice.
- Inform agencies of upcoming grant opportunities, trends, research and pertinent information to coordinating volunteers.

Key Success Factors

- High levels of participation in volunteer management networks.
- Positive feedback from organisations about improved volunteer management.

Focus Area 3

STRENGTHENING NETWORKS

Aim

Free flowing communications between volunteer-focused organisations and agencies to ensure a shared understanding of issues; identify opportunities for collaboration and advocate key messages to decision makers.

Strategies

- Maintain close relationships with all stake holders.
- Retain an active membership in the Volunteer Resource Centre Alliance.
- Facilitate volunteer management networks and training opportunities for local volunteer coordinators.

Key Success Factors

- Development of Armadale Volunteer Services as a one-stop shop for the delivery of services to agencies seeking volunteers and potential volunteers seeking volunteering opportunities.
- Ideas and resources shared through community groups.

Focus Area 4

THE CITY'S ROLE

Aim

The best community outcomes are achieved with minimal intervention by the City.

Strategies

- Provide a reliable, confidential referral service.
- Assist agencies with volunteer management issues.
- Recognise and promote volunteering in the community.
- Continue the development of Armadale Volunteer Services as a 'one stop shop' for the effective delivery of services to agencies seeking volunteers and potential volunteers seeking volunteering opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for people to volunteer within The City's programs.

Key Success Factors

- Develop and implement appropriate policies and management practices.
- Positive feedback received from volunteers at the City of Armadale.
- Increased participation in local volunteering activities.