Volunteer Strategy Template

13. Volunteer Strategy Resource

This guide was produced through the Safeguarding Volunteering Project with the input of community participants, local governments and Volunteering Tasmania.

The key to any good volunteer strategy is making sure it's easy-to-read and easy-to-use. Part of this is having a clear structure. The headings and information below will get you started and are useful as a checklist to make sure your document covers everything.

1. Message from the Mayor
2. Introduction
3. Focus areas
4. Action plan
5. Supporting documents

1. Message from the Mayor

It's important to include a message from your local council Mayor. It doesn't need to be long but it does need to:

☐ put the strategy into the local council and community context, and

☐ demonstrate local government support for your strategy and its actions.

Capture the voices of your community by collecting quotes from participants at consultation sessions. Include some of these in your strategy to illustrate contributions by local people.

2. Introduction

The introduction sets the scene for the strategy, explaining the who, why and how behind it. It doesn't need to be more than 300-500 words, but it does need to answer readers' questions about why this is important to their community and how the community has been involved in developing the strategy. Some important information to include:

- ☐ The issue you are trying to solve with the strategy, including data that provides an evidence-base for taking action. Relevant research includes:
  - ○ Tasmanian State of Volunteering Reports[1]
  - ○ Tasmanian Local Government Area Volunteering Profiles[2]
  - ○ Volunteering Australia Fact Sheets and Resources[3]
  - ○ ABS Census and General Social Survey data[4]
- ☐ The official definition of volunteering[5]
- ☐ The process you followed to develop the strategy. By including this, you'll demonstrate how and when community members were involved and explain the logic behind the final action plan. Use the co-design stages to get you started.
- ☐ You can refer to the steps of the co-design process here, highlighting the number of people in the community who were engaged in developing the strategy and the ways in which this was achieved.

> Include evidence in your strategy so people understand the problem you are working to solve.

3. Vision / purpose statement

During the co-design process, identify a clear vision for the strategy and highlight the purpose of the strategy. Include:

- ☐ Your community's vision of volunteering into the future. This is what your strategy and its actions are working towards achieving.
- ☐ Outline the benefits / impact the community will experience as a result of working towards its vision of volunteering.

4. Focus areas

Include a section in your strategy for each focus area. Use the headings below and explain in two or three sentences or dot points, the what, why and how developed by your community through the co-design process.

- ☐ Objectives – what are your aims in each focus area?
- ☐ Why – what is the evidence, why is this important?

---

[1] https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/State-of-Volunteering-Report-2019.pdf
[2] https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/future-of-volunteering/safeguarding-volunteering-project/#/
[3] https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/
[4] https://www.abs.gov.au/research/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/collection-volunteering-data-abs
[5] https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/for-volunteers/what-is-volunteering/

☐ Key Actions – what actions will be taken to achieve your objectives?

The below is taken from the Devonport Community Volunteer Sustainability Strategy and provides an example of how you can do this.

Focus Area 2: Volunteer sector collaboration & connection

Objective

- To work more effectively and efficiently as a volunteering community in Devonport by networking and collaborating.

Why

- Volunteers and people working with volunteers highlighted the benefits of working more collaboratively across the volunteer community in Devonport. This was identified as a way to share resources and best practice for working with volunteers as well as being a more efficient and effective way of operating.
- In Devonport, group and peer support is highly valued as it improves volunteers' overall experiences and builds capacity among volunteer organisations.

Key actions to create the change needed

Key Action 2.1
Offer mentoring opportunities across the sector to share knowledge, skills and build stronger connections throughout Devonport's volunteering community.

Key Action 2.2
Develop a local volunteering community networking group for connection and collaboration.

5. Action plan

When developing your action plan, use the focus areas as a structure and make sure you include:

☐ An outline of the key actions under each focus area (what you want to achieve).

☐ The tasks required to achieve each key action (the steps you'll take to achieve the key actions).

☐ Names of the lead organisation and partners (who will be responsible for the key actions and who will support them to be done).

☐ An indicative timeline. This doesn't need to be precise. Instead indicate whether each task is expected to be completed in the short, medium or long-term.

☐ The outputs that will let you know you've achieved the tasks. Make sure these are things that can be measured (for example, the number of people who attended a planned event) so you can use them as indicators of how well the task was done.

The example below from the Devonport community demonstrates one way your strategy can tie focus areas to key actions and their related tasks, lead and partners, timeline and outputs.

Activity		Tasks	Lead and Partners	Timeline*	Outputs (Tangible items)
Focus Area 2: Volunteer sector collaboration & connection					
2.1 Offer mentoring opportunities across the sector to share knowledge, skills and build stronger connections throughout Devonport's volunteering community.	Trial a local mentoring program with people managing and supporting volunteers in the region.	Explore other mentoring programs and look at a suitable model to trial.	DCC / LVNG	Long-term	No. of mentors and mentees
		EOIs for mentors across the volunteering community developed and circulated.	DCC / LVNG	Long-term	Outcomes of support
		Call for mentees to join the program via networks.	LVNG / DCC	Long-term	
		Review and evaluate program	LVNG / DCC	Long-term	
2.2 Develop a local volunteering community networking group for connection and collaboration	Establish a Devonport Community of Practice (CoP) for volunteers and people working with volunteers.	Develop Terms of Reference and promote Community of Practice (CoP) opportunity across the volunteering community.	LVNG / DCC	Short-term	Collaboration / outcomes from CoP Regular meetings
		CoP established and members meet to share learnings, collaborate on sector / common issues and look for opportunities to collaborate on events / activities.	LVNG / DCC	Short-term	

6. Supporting documents

If your strategy refers to specific documents or local council strategies, it's a good idea to include them at the back of your strategy document in this section.

Documents useful to include here are:

☐ Best Practice Volunteer Management (National Standards), including checklists

☐ Your local council's Strategic Plan

☐ List of stakeholders involved in development of the Volunteer Strategy

SUPPORTED BY

Tasmanian Government