

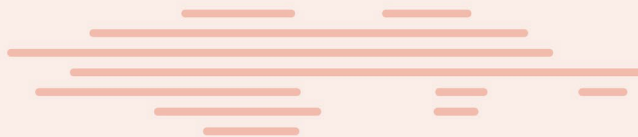


**Brighton
Council**

Brighton Community Volunteer Strategy



DATE: 20 AUGUST 2024



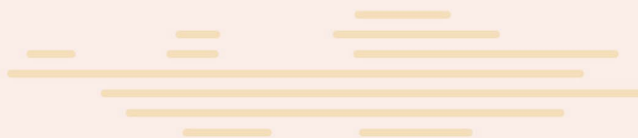
We acknowledge the traditional owners who once walked this country: the Mumirimina people.

The Mumirimina belonged to the Oyster Bay tribe. This was the largest tribe in Tasmania and covered 8000 square kilometres. kotalayna levee in Brighton was a significant meeting place where hundreds of generations of Aboriginal families hunted, gathered, corroboreed, camped and traded.

In the course of colonisation, dispossession of the Mumirimina was early, rapid and extensive.

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community today as the continuing custodians of this land, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Through our words and actions we strive to build a community that reflects and respects the history and hopes for all the people of Brighton.



Our Volunteer Strategy

Introduction

The nature of our communities and the ways in which the people of Tasmania connect and support each other through volunteering is changing. Like other sectors, there are rapid changes in technology, regulations and societal expectations that impact the volunteering workforce. People are looking for new ways to contribute or are becoming less inclined or aware of how they can contribute as citizens. As society becomes more and more individualistic, people are potentially less and less conscious of themselves as members of a broader community. Both our community and volunteer organisations need to adapt to these changes.

Community needs and demographic shifts are impacting volunteer supply and demand. In 2019 there were an estimated 5,287 volunteers in the Brighton area providing both social and economic benefits. Based on current trends in volunteering, the estimated number of volunteers in Brighton in 2029 will be 5,010 people. This represents a large shortfall in volunteers for our communities given the population of the Brighton Local Government Area (LGA) is projected to be more than 30,000 people by 2030.

This situation is set against a projected state-wide trend that suggests in coming years the demand for volunteers will increase whilst the number of people volunteering decreases, particularly in areas like community health and well-being, sustainability and youth.

How we got here

Strategy Development

Brighton Council and Volunteering Tasmania worked together to support a group of community members to develop this strategy to assist with changing the downward trend in volunteering and to ensure the communities in the Brighton area continue to grow and thrive through volunteering.

This work was undertaken using a method called co-design. Co-design processes are community-led and mean the people who will be impacted by the outcomes generate the ideas and actions to achieve an objective, ensuring local 'experts' are involved in building local change from start to finish.

Stage 1 and 2: Discovery and Planning (December 2022- April 2023)

Local people involved in volunteering, including volunteers and volunteer coordinators from small, grassroots groups, community organisations and community services were invited and encouraged to join the co-design team.

During the lifetime of the project, the co-design team had project members come and go. Members across the lifetime of the project included:

- Councillor Phil Owen, Brighton Council
- Kylie Murphy, Brighton Council (Facilitator)
- Brittany Szlezak, Brighton Council (Facilitator)
- Christine Gimblett, Brighton Community Food Hub
- Geoff Hull, Brighton Community Food Hub Inc.
- Mel Best, Jordan River Service Inc.
- Sharon Stewart, Libraries Tasmania
- Jordan Wright, Material Institute
- Angela Knight
- Robyn Booth
- Bridget Delaney, Volunteering Tasmania (Facilitator)

The co-design team facilitated by Volunteering Tasmania and Brighton Council staff were able to provide a deeper understanding of what it means to volunteer and be a volunteer in the different communities within the Brighton area, including current strengths and challenges, ideas and opportunities for the future of volunteering.

This consultation and discussion stage helped all involved gain a profound understanding of the diversity of volunteering in the Brighton communities and people's feelings about it.

The group gathered information using predominantly a qualitative approach to gathering insights and information, which included informal discussions/conversations, one-on-one interviews and focus groups.

Stage 3 and 4: Sensemaking and Prototyping (July- October 2023)

The co-design team then analysed, reviewed and sorted the information collected in Stages 1 and 2 into themes. Themes are the core ideas that run through the many comments, data and other information collected. Sorting all of the information into themes provides a clear structure for the strategy. These themes were the basis for initial brainstorming of initiatives and actions that would support them.

The themes collected, plus the ideas and actions brainstormed, were taken back out to the community. Feedback was again gathered. Community members were asked to rate the importance of the ideas/actions and vote on what they believed were priorities that would support a strong and sustainable volunteering community in the Brighton area.

Stage 5: Designing and Embedding (February 2024)

The co-design team used the identified priorities and other feedback gained through Stage 4 to refine what was to be included in the strategy. This revised draft was then shared with key stakeholders including Brighton Council staff and community representatives for final input and approval.

The supply of volunteers for 2019 was estimated using a combination of ABS census data (2011, 2016), ABS General Social Survey data (2010, 2014), Volunteering Tasmania State of Volunteering Report data (2014, 2019) and Tasmanian Treasury population projections. All estimates are based on Tasmanians over 15 years of age. For more information, please see: <https://volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Brighton-LGA-Volunteer-Profile-.pdf>



Image: Brighton Community Food Hub Volunteers

The Strategy

The Vision

Through trust, kindness and respect, the diversity of our valued volunteers creates a thriving place with opportunities for all.

Using the strategy

The Brighton Community Volunteer Strategy has been developed by the community for the community. The actions are based on what community told us needed to change. It has been designed with the intention that anyone who supports volunteering in the Brighton area could use this strategy to build or improve on their approaches to attracting and working with volunteers and be better prepared for the challenges ahead.

Focus areas

The co-design team identified four (4) focus areas to support volunteering within the Brighton communities.

- **Focus Area 1:** Culture of Volunteering
- **Focus Area 2:** Volunteer Roles and Flexibility
- **Focus Area 3:** Organisational Capacity Building
- **Focus Area 4:** Governance and Compliance

Communication

Communication was highlighted in every theme as an area that required particular attention. Communication is to be in plain English, clear and concise and available via multiple mediums to ensure full coverage for the diversity of people. This is to be included in all forms of communication. For example, induction packs, training or expo information.

A communication campaign centralised on what skills you could transfer to volunteering was seen as an action that would increase the profile of volunteering and engage more community members e.g. If you are a mother who reads bed time stories to your children, you could volunteer at the library to read kids' books.

Focus Area 1

Culture of Volunteering

Brighton community members felt that their volunteers were understanding and non-judgemental, and that trust is a big reason for people to get involved. However, this was not broadly understood or experienced when navigating new opportunities. Community members highlighted stigma, physical and mental health, and emotional and physical safety were all concerns that raised fear of the unknown when people were seeking volunteering opportunities.

Consciously implementing an approach to attracting new volunteers is important for the sustainability and longevity of an organisation that relies on volunteers. This can be as simple as ensuring your existing volunteers take on an advocacy role for your organisation or implementing an annual recruitment campaign strategy.

“We need to share stories of volunteering opportunities far and wide in the community.”

“Organisations that have volunteering opportunities need to have open days, so we know what’s out there for us to assist with and learn new skills.”

Practical actions your volunteer group could take:

- A central point to find volunteer roles and opportunities to understand what and how to get involved. For example, work with Brighton Council to create a dedicated ‘My Community’ volunteering section on the Brighton Council website with links to potential volunteering opportunities and promotion of specific volunteering opportunities through Brighton Council’s social media channels and the Brighton Community News. This might also include a food event or annual volunteer expo run at a community wide level to promote volunteering, in a similar way to running a careers expo.
- An organisation/volunteer group information session on volunteering with your group (e.g. what the group does, role of volunteers, benefits for volunteers etc). Could be a webinar, virtual meeting or face to face.
- Vary recognition opportunities and ask volunteers how they would like to be recognised. Reward and recognition can go a long way to maintaining volunteer satisfaction and motivation.
- The idea of a ‘Volunteer Passport’ – this would highlight what roles a volunteer has done, relevant training and registrations (e.g. WWVP and Police checks).
 - For skills confirmation and verification purposes the Volunteer Passport should be signed / authorised by each volunteer organisation or supported by physical evidence such as references from past employers or education certificates.
- Share brief digital stories of your volunteer experiences, including why they volunteer and local impact.
- Partner with our local Jobs Hub to support volunteering as a pathway to employment and the potential to subsidise free training to support community members into volunteering roles. For example, first aid courses, applying for a Working with Vulnerable People card and resume development.

“Volunteering in community is a very important role and should be celebrated.”



Image: Under One Rainbow Volunteers

Focus Area 2

Volunteer Roles and Flexibility

Brighton community members are keen to pitch in and help their community. However, unclear expectations including the level of commitment and responsibility, and accessibility options e.g. childcare, literacy support and costs associated made it difficult for some to participate in volunteering opportunities. Having flexibility around the way community members could be involved, that recognises individual life circumstances was seen as an important area of focus for reducing barriers to participation.

“As a volunteer we need to have a clear understanding of our roles and expectations so we can focus on doing the best job we can do.”

Practical actions your volunteer group could take:

- Manage volunteering roles in a similar manner to a paid role, with structure, appropriate support and training:
 - Ensure there are clear roles, clear division of labour with distinct tasks and functions, and how much time and cost commitment is required up front.
 - Ensure opportunities to progress in role and provide some variety.
 - Promote benefits e.g. child friendly.
 - Pre and post volunteer interviews to learn what can be improved/changed.
 - Fun challenges that align with peoples interests and skills and allows for creativity.
- Ensure there are rules, responsibilities and clearly defined behavioural expectations, which can be explained in depth during the volunteer interview and induction process.
- Ensure a stable leadership group that can be relied upon to support the objectives of the group and reflect the behaviours, rules and responsibilities of the group. The organisation’s values should be continually reinforced and modelled by the leadership group, so everyone clearly understands their obligations and responsibilities.
- Promote a respectful culture, where it is demonstrated that everyone plays a valuable part, and volunteers know where to access information or who to talk to if they need support.

Focus Area 3

Organisational Capacity Building

Brighton community voiced that they were keen to support each other's activities, however felt more could be done to support organisations of all sizes who have volunteers to ensure they can contribute in the best possible way to the community. Barriers such as insufficient coordination, cost of support for volunteers, lack of resources, and insufficient availability of accessible venues were all seen as barriers to effective volunteer program management by organisations, and in particular small groups/organisations run entirely by volunteers.

“Corporate organisations could adopt a community group and help them with resourcing and offer staff who can volunteer as part of their organisations corporate social responsibility, to help with things like risk assessments.”

Practical actions your volunteer group could take:

- Availability of template induction packs for volunteers.
- Guidelines/templates for policies, procedures and position descriptions.
- Organisations resource sharing - encourage and support organisations to resource share and collaborate on things like:
 - Technology
 - Social media/website development
 - Financial records/accounting
 - Venues and high value equipment e.g. audio/visual equipment
- Prioritise volunteer coordinator roles and ensure a volunteer contact person is available to provide clear expectations and be a point of contact and support volunteers from the time they start with an organisation. Ensure the role is not person dependent/is always in existence.
- Brighton Council to encourage small and medium grant applications from volunteer organisations to fund resources such as:
 - Safety equipment, office equipment, technology, supervisor training, funds for rewarding and recognising volunteers, Volunteer Tasmania Membership to enable more access to training, resources and support.

Focus Area 4

Governance and Compliance

Brighton community members were willing to share their skills. However, the increase in processes, training and procedures required to commence involvement with an organisation was seen as a barrier. Challenges to be addressed were related to literacy and support to fill in forms, support completing necessary registrations and opportunities for foundational training.

“As a volunteer for two different organisations I have two of everything in terms of forms and checks. It would make more sense to complete one check that can be used across all the organisations I volunteer at.”

Practical actions your volunteer group could take:

- Linking with local organisations and businesses to meet community mandatory registration and training needs e.g. The Library to support WWVP card registration or police checks. The access centre to support online training.
- The group supported the idea of free Working with Vulnerable People registration and police checks for volunteers as ongoing advocacy work with State Government by Volunteering Tasmania.
- Shared community training opportunities for mandatory training requirements.
 - General introduction to volunteering.
 - Work place health and safety training.
 - Child and Youth Safety Framework training and induction procedures.
 - Community RSA training.
- Advertise and support mentoring and buddy systems within volunteer programs to support new volunteers.

“It’s vital we create the conditions for volunteering to thrive and grow – our society depends on it.”

Doug Taylor, CEO The Smith Family/Chair of National Volunteering Strategy



Image: Café Connections - Volunteers

Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude goes to everyone in our local Brighton communities who provided input into the Brighton Community Volunteer Strategy.

A special thanks to the co-design team and in particular the following organisations and the volunteers from these organisations who gave us their invaluable insights into their personal experiences of volunteering:

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- Geoff Hull and the volunteers from the Brighton Community Food Hub Inc.
- Jordan River Service Inc. volunteers at the Bridgewater and Gagebrook Community Houses
- Sharon Stewart – Libraries Tasmania
- Cr Phil Owen and the Old Beach Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Andrea Garland – The Smith Family, Learning for Life Program Coordinator

A big thank you to Bridget Delaney from Volunteering Tasmania for her direction and facilitation throughout the project.



Image: Brighton Youth Action Group (BYAG)