

Break O'Day Volunteering Strategy

VISION:

Break O'Day has a strong culture of volunteering that provides meaningful community connections and values giving back.

Volunteer organisations have access to all they need to support a sustainable and thriving volunteer culture in Break O'Day.



Adopted September 2022

Background

Break O'Day is a small, regional community that, like many other small communities is dependent on volunteers to help deliver services as well as provide activities for community connection in the region.

Break O' Day Council understood this and saw the need to develop a volunteering strategy that would connect potential volunteers with volunteer organisations and create a sustainable volunteering sector. To do this successfully the document had to also ensure it nurtured a culture of volunteerism in the community that was desirable and sought after.

Volunteering Tasmania received state funding to develop Volunteering Strategies in Local Government areas and asked Break O'Day Council whether we would like to be one of the participants. Council jumped at the opportunity to take part and work with Volunteering Tasmania to develop a strategy with community.

As the strategy would need to interact with a variety of different volunteers and volunteer organisations a 'co-design approach was taken. A co-design process allows all parties to have an equal voice in the development of the strategy and ensures a bottom up approach. Volunteering Tasmania defines the framework as:

Co-design centres on the people involved in the process, drawing on their experiences to develop a deep understanding of the issues and solve problems.

The Working group was made up of:

Community Members: Anita Haley, Christine Treloggen, Rosina Gallace, Helen Lowe, Rebecca Tuck

Council Members: Chris Hughes, Jenna Bailey and Jayne Richardson

Volunteering Tasmania Members: Amy Baily and Bridget Delaney.

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The Design Process

The Working Group used surveys as well as conversations to better understand what the challenges and opportunities for volunteering were in the community. With this input the group were able to develop four Key Focus Areas for the strategy as well as a number of recommendations and tips to help volunteer organisations implement.

A brief overview of how the strategy was developed follows.

Stage 1 and 2: Discovery and Planning (Dec 2021 – March 2022)

Local people involved in volunteering joined a co-design team. Input from the broader community was sought through online and paper-based surveys, groups discussions, one-on-one interviews and focus groups. This stage helped all involved gain a profound understanding of the diversity of volunteering in Break O' Day and people's feelings about it, including current strengths, challenges, ideas and opportunities for the future volunteering.

Stage 3 and 4: Sensemaking and Prototyping (April- July 22)

The group 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 provided a clear structure for the strategy. These themes then became the basis for some initial brainstorming of priorities and actions that would flow from them.

These themes, ideas and actions were then taken back out to the community. Community members were asked to rate the importance of ideas and actions based on what they believed the priorities should be. Feedback was again gathered through surveys, group discussions and one-on-one interviews.

Stage 5: Designing and Embedding (July – Sept 22)

The group used the identified priorities and other feedback gained through Stage 4 to refine the draft strategy's structure and actions. This revised draft was then shared with key stakeholders and community representatives for final input and approval.

"A volunteer must feel that whatever they are doing is meaningful and brings them satisfaction. A volunteer is a great asset to a community."

Using the strategy

The intention of this strategy is to provide volunteer organisations with a framework that will assist them in attracting and retaining volunteers. The framework focuses on emphasising volunteer opportunities and reducing the barriers to volunteering.

The document includes a number of recommendations for organisations to consider implementing that are designed to better support volunteers as well as help attract them to volunteering.

How to use the Strategy

Once completed the Strategy will be owned and driven by the community with support from Council.

This strategy has been developed with the community in mind. The hope is that anyone working with or supporting volunteers can easily use the strategy as a guide to improve volunteering.

Ways to use the strategy:

- **Pick a focus area to work through that is most important to your group**
- **Find something that might be easy to start with**
- **Take it to the committee at the next meeting to see how it can be incorporated into your organisation**
- **Reach out to the council for support on how you might get started on using the strategy in a practical way**

Thanks:

Council would like to thank the community members who gave up their time to be a part of the Working Group.

We would also like to thank Volunteering Tasmania for all their support and assistance in developing this document.

Management

What we heard:

Potential volunteers want clear direction and coordination when considering volunteering. This helps them feel safe and confident in participating in volunteering.

They felt reassured when there were clear policies and procedures in place.

“What works is a strong commitment from the organisation running the volunteer program. Providing the resources to make the volunteering program successful and giving back to the people that volunteer the hours.”

Key Focus Area:

Improve the capacity of groups and organisations to support volunteers

Recommendations

Recommendation	Tips
Provide an Info Pack for volunteers and Organisations that include guidelines, induction processes, insurances and risk management	Does your organisation have a welcome pack? A welcome or info pack should give volunteers clarity around the ‘nitty gritty’ of volunteering for your organisation. BODC will work with Volunteering Tasmania to provide templates and checklists – these will be hosted on the BODC website.
Provide a central place for volunteer information including information on organisations and available volunteer roles	Would your organisation benefit from listing needed volunteer roles in a central location? Volunteers want a quick easy way to find out about volunteering roles. BODC will set up a page on their website where volunteers can register their interest and view any volunteer opportunities that may be available.
Recognise and celebrate volunteer contributions	Does your organisation celebrate your volunteers? Recognising volunteers so they feel valued for their efforts inspires them to continue to contribute to volunteering. BOD will hold an annual volunteer event that recognises and celebrates our volunteers.

Access

What we heard:

When considering volunteering, potential volunteers have to weigh up the costs, transport and time required to participate. Potential volunteers with disability must also consider accessibility to facilities and activities.

***“Value volunteers and embrace what skills they can bring to a role”
“Be flexible with other priorities such as family or health commitments, and practice kindness and understanding”***

Key Focus Area:

Increase access to volunteering opportunities

Recommendations

Recommendation	Tips
Talk with potential volunteers about what they need to meaningfully engage in volunteering.	How does your organisation support the needs of volunteers? Consider an initial chat with new volunteers where any barriers to volunteering are addressed together. During our consultation, transport was named up as one of the main barriers for volunteers – if this is the case your organisation could consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catch a ride with a friends• Carpooling options• Fuel vouchers etc
Provide potential volunteers with Position Description (PD) that include all the info needed for the Volunteer Role.	How does your organisation develop volunteer roles? Consider developing PDs on volunteer roles so potential volunteers have all the information needed to make an informed decision about volunteering with your organisation.

Expectations

What we heard:

When deciding whether to volunteer, potential volunteers wanted to understand what the expectations of the volunteering role was so they could make an informed decision around committing to volunteering.

Outlining the role's requirements, expectations, and commitment allows potential volunteers to participate in volunteering activities with confidence

“A volunteer must feel that whatever they are doing is meaningful and brings them satisfaction. A volunteer is a great asset to a community.”

Key Focus Area:

Create volunteer roles that are suitable for our community

Recommendations

Recommendation	Tips
Work with individual volunteers to design flexible training and cooperative volunteer roles together	<p>How could your organisation better help volunteers make informed decisions about volunteering?</p> <p>Volunteer organisations could consider an interview process where any barriers to volunteering are addressed together.</p> <p>Some of the things volunteers wanted to understand before committing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time commitments• Details of the position• Who they will report/work with• How they can get there• Costs required• What training they will undertake etc.
Provide new volunteers with a mentor within the organisation	<p>Do you have a mentor program in your organisation?</p> <p>Volunteer organisations could consider pairing their new volunteers with a mentor that they can comfortably defer to when needed.</p> <p>This will also help volunteers be confident in their volunteering roles.</p>

Environment

What we heard:

A Volunteer Organisation that provides a welcoming and safe environment that embraces diversity and inclusivity is highly desired by potential volunteers.

Volunteers want to feel valued and recognised in their roles. This not only increases Volunteer confidence but also the community's appreciation and understanding of the benefits of volunteering.

“Create an environment that is healthy and robust and values volunteers. Enable volunteers to be supported and nurtured. Talk about the impact that volunteers make”

Key Focus Area:

Improve the culture of volunteering in Break O'Day

Recommendations

Recommendation	Tips
Designate someone as a Wellbeing Officer to enact an agreed to 'Code of Conduct'.	<p>Does your organisation have a designated wellbeing Officer or similar?</p> <p>Volunteer organisations could consider developing a Code of Conduct that outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed to behaviours• Organisational values and principles• Moral and ethical expectations <p>Once completed, the Code of Conduct will need to be overseen by someone within the organisation, perhaps a Wellbeing Officer.</p> <p>This person will be responsible for ensuring the values of their organisation are enacted.</p>
Work hard to embed inclusivity and diversity values	<p>Would you consider your organisation inclusive?</p> <p>Volunteer Organisations should consider including values of inclusivity and diversity in their code of conduct document such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No discrimination, bullying or harassment against any individual• All individuals have the right to be heard• All individuals have the right to be treated with respect, etc
Build a feedback processes for volunteers	<p>Does your organisation have a way for volunteers to provide feedback to your organisation?</p> <p>Volunteer organisations should consider including a way volunteers can pass on feedback in a safe and comfortable environment.</p>

Resources

Volunteering Tasmania website:

<https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/>

Break O'Day Council website:

<https://www.bodc.tas.gov.au/>

Volunteering Profile 2029: Break O'Day Local Government Area

https://www.volunteeringtas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Break-O_Day-LGA-Volunteer-Profile-.pdf

