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Welcome from Mayor

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Traditional acknowledgement

Wyndham City recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Custodians of the lands on which Australia was founded. Council acknowledges the Wathaurong, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which Wyndham City is being built.

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibilities for its land.

Council pays respect for the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders. We share commitment to nurturing future generations of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Contributor acknowledgement

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Introduction

Volunteering is important in the life of our community.

Volunteering delivers many benefits to people who volunteer, as well as to the community as a whole. It improves health and wellbeing and increases community connection.

Volunteering improves confidence and mental health. Many organisations rely and thrive on volunteer passion and commitment.

Volunteering is changing.

People have busy lives and many competing commitments. Volunteers are increasingly looking for diverse and flexible ways to contribute their time. Not everyone who would like to volunteer is able to access opportunities. In our rapidly growing city, programs can struggle to keep up with community expectations and needs. We need to find new ways to attract people to volunteering and support them to stay involved.

The Wyndham community is committed to strengthening volunteering.

Throughout 2018 and 2019 we had many conversations about the current and future state of volunteering in Wyndham.

This five-year strategy is the result of those conversations.

It aims to strengthen a shared understanding of volunteering and its value to the community and promote best practice in volunteer management.

Through the strategy the community will work together to grow volunteer numbers and opportunities in Wyndham. We will support partnerships that respond to the changing needs of our diverse communities and address the impacts of Wyndham's growth.

We look forward to taking this journey together.

Defining volunteering

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is often defined as *time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain*.

This definition recognises there are many ways people give their time, service or skills. It includes 'just helping out' in the community even if this isn't always thought of as volunteering.

Volunteering generally does not include paid activities or those linked to some other obligation. For example, caring for family members and domestic duties, paid work, training programs and work experience are not considered volunteering.

Even so, volunteering is seen as an important way for many people to develop skills and networks for future work or study opportunities.

Types of volunteering

Formal volunteering includes activities within an organisation, club or group. It usually involves a level of structure, support or management.

Informal volunteering includes activities outside of an organisation and often involves a private arrangement - for example looking after a neighbour's children, house or pets or providing personal help.

Spontaneous volunteering includes activities that happen without planning. It often occurs during or immediately after an event - for example responding to an accident or a natural disaster.

Workplace volunteering (or corporate volunteering) includes activities where an employer supports staff to offer professional skills or practical supports to others during work or paid time. It is one way that businesses might choose to "give back" to community.

Virtual volunteering includes activities performed online. Communications and social media, fundraising and advocacy are common forms of virtual volunteering.

Valuing volunteering

Volunteering lies at the heart of our community. It delivers many benefits to individuals, organisations and the community overall.

Wyndham volunteers get personal satisfaction from helping, giving back, and making a difference. They feel satisfied and more connected and enjoy learning and developing skills. They feel they are adding to the strength of the community. Volunteering is good for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Wyndham organisations benefit from volunteers. Organisations that use volunteers have access to a wider pool of skills and experience. Volunteers are an important resource and support. They build community trust in organisations. Many organisations could not survive without the commitment of their volunteers.

The **Wyndham community** benefits from volunteering. Volunteering helps build social networks, increase shared values and strengthen social cohesion. People who volunteer are more likely to take part in other aspects of community life.

Volunteering also adds to the economy. In Australia, formal volunteering is estimated to directly contribute around \$20- \$30b each year. When all the flow on benefits are included (saved lives, health, social benefit) this figure is estimated to be as high as \$290b each year.

Volunteering in Wyndham

Approximately 33,500 Wyndham residents volunteer.

They participate in a wide range of activities in diverse settings and contribute around \$145m of unpaid work to the Wyndham community each year.

If we include informal volunteering, these numbers are likely to be even greater.

However, Wyndham residents volunteer less than other Victorians (13.9% compared with 19.2% of the population). The reasons for lower participation are complex.

Wyndham has a high proportion of recently arrived residents; culturally and linguistically diverse communities; people caring for children; people employed full-time or unemployed, working in certain professions, or travelling for work; and people living with a profound disability.

These are groups that typically have lower volunteering participation rates.

There are many opportunities to overcome participation barriers for specific groups, and to better recognise informal volunteering among others.

The Wyndham volunteering strategy aims to increase participation rates in our community.

We can better harness the energy and skills of those who would like to balance volunteering with their other commitments, through technology and more flexible options.

We can improve access for culturally diverse communities, younger and older people, and people with disabilities.

With Wyndham at the forefront of population growth we can embrace our diversity, be more inclusive and offer new ways for communities to support one another through volunteering.

Every percentage point increase towards the Victorian participation rate is estimated to generate approximately \$10.5m of additional unpaid work that benefits the Wyndham community.

Volunteering policy

Wyndham policy context

Wyndham City has invested in volunteering over many years. It engages over 200 volunteers in many roles across Council. It also recognises, trains, and provides networking opportunities for the wider Wyndham volunteering sector.

The Wyndham Volunteering Strategy 2019-2024 builds on and expands this work. It includes a whole of community focus and is supported by many Council plans and strategies.

<u>Wyndham 2040 Vision</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our vision for leadership and participation: Wyndham will have a variety of ways for community members to volunteer in support of others.• Council will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to celebrate the contributions made by volunteers• Apply new approaches to volunteer management to attract a greater diversity of volunteers registered for Wyndham programs.• Develop strategies to increase volunteer rates in a wide range of settings across the community.• Broaden the support provided to organisations and services that rely on volunteers to deliver successful programs.
Wyndham 2040: District plans – <u>East</u>, <u>West</u>, <u>Central</u> and <u>Rural</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West: Promotion of volunteer opportunities is included as an example of community-led action to respect, preserve and protect the natural environment• Central: Volunteering is identified as an important form of social and community connection; the plan identifies volunteering as a priority focus area in its own right and commits Council to developing a volunteering strategy that includes new ways to volunteer and raises the profile of volunteering in Wyndham.
<u>Wyndham City Plan 2017-2021</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognises that engaged communities are key to building cohesion, resilience and social networks which are known to improve health and wellbeing• Strategic indicator 4.3 (31) measures the percentage of the population that volunteered in the last 12 months.
<u>Accessibility Action Plan 2019-2022</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim 1.8 Volunteers are valued in Wyndham (Theme 1 People and Community), including to specifically increase participation by people with disability.
<u>Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2016 – 2040</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes within its community engagement targets the establishment of a pool of volunteers to assist environment and sustainability programs.

Victorian policy context

In Victoria, the Ministerial Council for Volunteers operated from 2015-18. It provided high-level, independent advice to government through the Minister for Families and Children.

In late 2018 the Ministerial Council released its *Priorities for strengthening volunteering in Victoria*. Priorities included a focus on diversity and inclusion, volunteering for all ages and quality volunteer experiences.

A new Ministerial Council is expected to be established in 2019. The Victorian Government has said it also plans to develop a State volunteering strategy.

National policy context

In Australia, the *2011 National volunteering strategy* is the main national policy statement on volunteering. The strategy includes a number of key focus areas, including:

- responding to trends in volunteering;
- harnessing technology;
- better regulation and risk management;
- strengthen management and training;
- strengthen relationships and advocacy; and
- recognise and value volunteering.

The national strategy recognises the need to attract younger and older people to volunteering, and better engage culturally diverse communities. It promotes new technologies as a way to support volunteer engagement and reduce costs. The national strategy also considers the growing role of workplace volunteering.

In addition, the *National standards for volunteer involvement* exist to help organisations:

- incorporate the values and maximise the benefits of volunteer involvement;
- develop effective volunteer involvement strategies and practices;
- involve volunteers in meaningful and useful activities that contribute to the outcomes of the organisation's work; and
- ensure the rights of volunteers are protected and that they are supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Developing the strategy

A large number of people had their say and shared their perspectives, passion and creativity to develop the Wyndham Volunteering Strategy.

Approximately 300 people took part in surveys, meetings, interviews, workshops and community events between November 2018 and June 2019.

In our conversations we focused on:

- factors that support participation in volunteering;
- factors that limit participation in volunteering;
- benefits of volunteering for individuals, organisations and communities;
- volunteer management strengths and gaps; and
- ideas for the future of volunteering in Wyndham.

By working together to share perspectives and test ideas we have been able to distil the things we value most about volunteering in Wyndham and the things we think are most important for the future.

The following pages present our collective VISION for the future of volunteering, our MISSION for how we will work together to achieve the vision, and the shared PRINCIPLES that will support our work.

Like most strategies, this document does not detail everything we will do over the next five years. Its purpose is to outline the most important priorities.

These are laid out in five key focus areas, each of which includes priority actions and ways our work can make a difference. Detailed action plans will be developed each year to support and report on our progress.

Our Strategy

Vision

Volunteering that enriches lives, delivers benefits and connects communities.

Mission

To recognise, strengthen and promote accessible volunteering for all in Wyndham.

Principles

Inclusive

We support and grow diverse volunteering opportunities that are welcoming and accessible to all community members.

Dynamic

We remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs of our community.

Empowering

We support a strength-based approach that harnesses passion and develops skills and leadership.

Collaborative

We build community connection through partnerships and supporting structures that foster meaningful relationships

Valuing

We promote the value of volunteering and celebrate volunteers and their contributions.

Key focus area 1: Engaging, recognising and supporting volunteers

The Wyndham community wants to increase the number of people who volunteer and make it easier for people to find volunteering opportunities. Keeping people in volunteering by recognising their contribution and providing quality support is also important.

Council will work together with community and stakeholders to:

- 1.1 Explore the feasibility of establishing volunteer recruitment, support and activity hubs across Wyndham, linked to existing community infrastructure
- 1.2 Explore the creation of a team of volunteer leaders responsible for promoting volunteering in the community, supporting and linking volunteers, and engaging volunteer voice
- 1.3 Grow the ways formal and informal volunteer effort is recognised and the diversity of those recognised
- 1.4 Ensure volunteering is integrated and embedded in other key Council and community sector plans and strategies
- 1.5 Explore opportunities to develop and promote increased uptake of workplace volunteering in Wyndham

Our success will help create:

For volunteers

- Higher participation in volunteering
- Volunteers who feel valued, recognised and supported
- Volunteering builds confidence and improves mental health and wellbeing

For organisations

- Easier to find skilled volunteers matched to need
- Volunteers that stay involved

For community

- Increased social capital and cohesion
- An expanded volunteer sector and greater access to its benefits

Key focus area 2: Being flexible and inclusive of diversity

The Wyndham community is diverse and has different needs, interests and skills when it comes to volunteering. To grow volunteering we must cater to this diversity by having a broad range of options, being accessible and welcoming to all people, and being responsive to needs as they change over time.

Council will work together with community and stakeholders to:

2.1 Increase the visibility and availability of volunteer opportunities responsive to diverse need (including after-hours, short-term, family-friendly, formal / informal / virtual)

2.2 Support community-led initiatives specifically designed to engage people of different ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities, caring responsibilities and locations

2.3 Support increased accessibility of Wyndham's volunteer groups and organisations, including through the delivery of training

2.4 Facilitate cross-cultural and intergenerational exchange within Wyndham's volunteer sector and the broader community

2.5 Support communities to navigate the barriers and costs of volunteering, particularly for individuals, small groups and emerging and culturally diverse communities

Our success will help create:

For volunteers

- Easier to find and access diverse opportunities matched to skills and interests
- Increased feelings of cultural safety and inclusion

For organisations

- Access to more diverse skills and experience
- Volunteers who stay involved

For community

- Volunteers that reflect Wyndham's diversity
- Increased intercultural exchange

Key focus area 3: Training and development

Training for volunteers and managers is important to ensure quality services and a positive experience. Volunteers and managers want to develop new skills and share existing skills with one another. The Wyndham community also values a development approach for individuals and emerging communities.

Council will work together with community and stakeholders to:

- 3.1 Collaboratively develop and deliver high-quality and low-cost localised training for volunteers, volunteer managers and start-up volunteer groups and programs based on identified need
- 3.2 Establish a bank of volunteer trainers available to support the delivery of localised training
- 3.3 Facilitate the collection and sharing of volunteer management resources, case studies and tools to strengthen volunteer management
- 3.4 Support volunteer development pathways by strengthening links with education, employment and training sectors
- 3.5 Facilitate access to Council and other grant programs, particularly for small, emerging and underrepresented communities and groups

Our success will help create:

For volunteers

- Volunteers who've gained new skills
- Increased access to further volunteering and employment opportunities

For organisations

- Strengthened volunteer leadership and management
- Improved quality, reduced risk
- Increased support for small groups and organisations

For community

- Access to safe and high-quality activities, services and programs
- Better identified and supported community needs

Key focus area 4: Communication and collaboration

A strong and sustainable volunteer sector relies on quality communication and collaboration. The Wyndham community wants volunteering opportunities and benefits to be visible and celebrated, and is looking for ways to foster stronger professional relationships and networks across the volunteering sector.

Council will work together with community and stakeholders to:

- 4.1 Deliver marketing and communications initiatives to increase understanding of the concept of volunteering and promote volunteer opportunities, organisations and benefits in Wyndham
- 4.2 Continue to support and grow the Wyndham Volunteer Managers Network
- 4.3 Develop new forums for volunteer networking and collaboration that apply peer-led models of training, mentoring and coaching
- 4.4 Develop a suite of core volunteer information and referral resources, including for all new Wyndham residents, available in a range of community languages
- 4.5 Scope the use of interactive online platforms to engage, inform, train, communicate with, promote and link volunteers, organisations and opportunities

Our success will help create:

For volunteers

- Increased access to relevant and timely information via preferred means
- Volunteers who feel greater engagement, ownership and connection
- Stronger and more connected volunteer networks

For organisations

- Increased accountability
- Increased profile, brand and reputation
- Reduced duplication and costs

For community

- Increased transparency, trust and awareness of organisation roles
- Greater awareness of volunteering and its benefits

Key focus area 5: Driving good practice and delivering outcomes

The Wyndham community commits to strengthening the quality and effectiveness of the volunteer sector over the life of the strategy. This means having a collective role in shaping the future work and evaluating its effectiveness. It also means ensuring the Wyndham volunteering sector is informed by, and helps shape, the wider volunteering landscape.

Council will work together with community and stakeholders to:

5.1 Establish an appropriate governance structure to promote community ownership, decision-making and oversight of the Strategy's delivery

5.2 Develop an evaluation and reporting framework to measure Strategy progress and report outcomes to the community and Council

5.3 Strengthen awareness and the practical application of the National Standards for Volunteering in Wyndham

5.4 Foster stronger awareness and linkages between Wyndham's volunteer sector and other regional, state and national volunteering organisations

5.5 Contribute to consultation and research over the life of the Strategy to support joint advocacy and promote good practice

Our success will help create:

For volunteers

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Improved performance and role satisfaction

For organisations

- Improved governance, leadership and performance
- Increased opportunities to innovate

For community

- More and better use of community resources
- Improved responsiveness to community need

Action planning, monitoring and reporting

In partnership with community and the Wyndham volunteering sector, Council will develop annual actions plans to deliver actions within key focus areas.

Council will measure and report on progress annually to the community and Council.

A governance group will oversee implementation of the strategy.

Progress in each area of the strategy will be communicated to Council, our key partners and the broader community.

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