

## Community Forum set to grow volunteering options for disabled people

Creating more meaningful volunteering opportunities for people with a disability is soon to be a reality for Carrington Health. Ronda Jacobs, CEO of Carrington Health explains “as an organisation we are aware of the importance of representing our local community, however until now we haven’t had the opportunity to think about the skills and resources, we need to create more volunteer opportunities for people living with disability”.

Victoria ALIVE, an initiative supported by the Victorian Government, is bringing their first community forum to Box Hill on Thursday, 28 March 2019.

Vivienne Cunningham-Smith, CEO of Eastern Volunteers who is co-hosting this Eastern Metro Community Forum remarks "1 in 5 people in Australia have a form of disability. While many people with a disability already give back to their communities through volunteering, some organisations feel unprepared to recruit and meaningfully involve volunteers with a disability."

As volunteering is mutually beneficial for both the volunteer and the organisation, Vivienne sees this event as a big opportunity for organisations in the region to make progress for the benefit of the whole community. “We know that there is a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of interest and a lot of good will. This is about making time for people to reflect on their volunteer workforce and prioritise better involvement of volunteers with disabilities.”

This forum is an opportunity for community organisations who involve, or want to involve volunteers in the East of Melbourne to come together and:

- Discuss the challenges and benefits the sector experiences around including volunteers with a disability
- Hear from people with lived experience of disability about their experience volunteering
- Learn how organisations can be more accessible and inclusive for volunteers with disability.
- Take action to improve the involvement of volunteers with disabilities.

For disability advocates like Jake Lewis, the promotion of disability inclusion in volunteering is important for the numerous benefits including the chance to give back to the community, developing valuable skills and fostering social connections. Jake explains “Volunteering provides so many opportunities and allows people to contribute to issues that are important to them. We need to recognise the value that each volunteer can bring to organisations and the community, whatever their ability”.

To register for the Forum visit: [www.ivvy.com.au/event/L4GSX2/](http://www.ivvy.com.au/event/L4GSX2/)

To learn more about the Victoria ALIVE project visit: [www.victoriaalive.org.au](http://www.victoriaalive.org.au)

