

# Project Outcomes



**Victoria ALIVE - Project Outcomes**

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# Resources



## Research

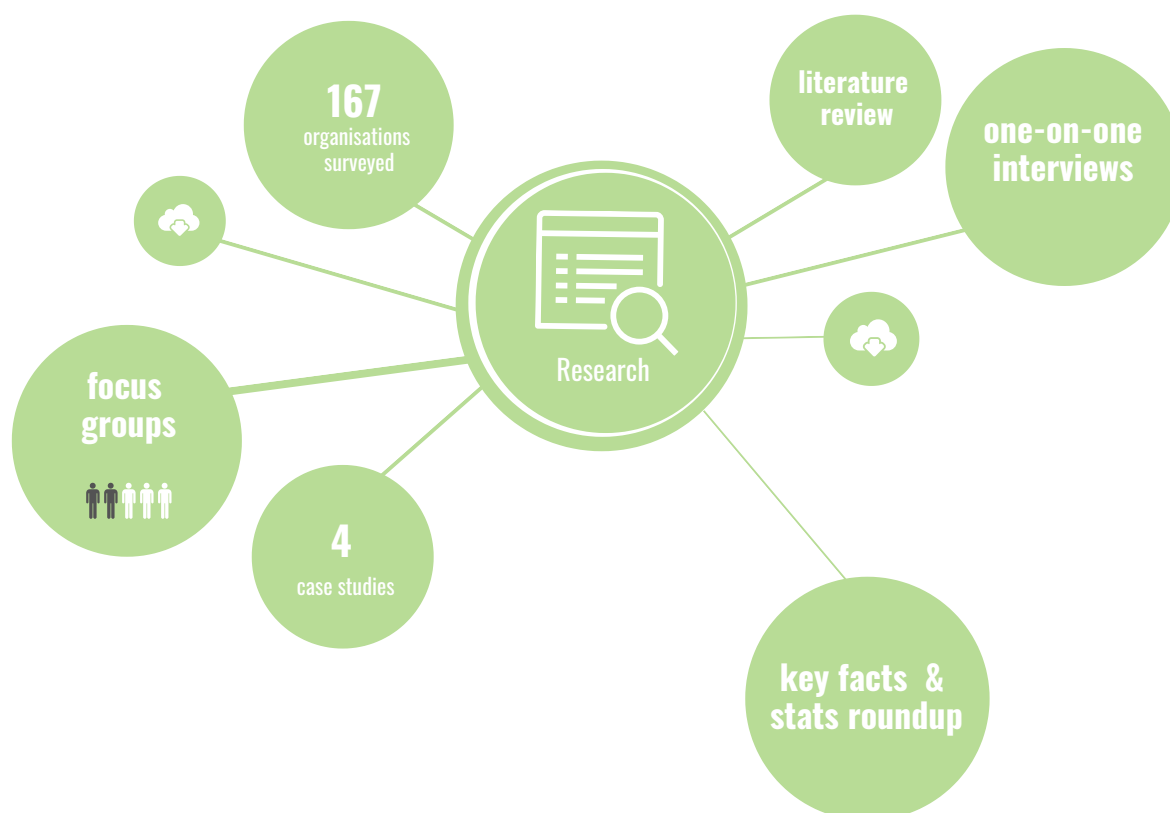
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) led the research for the Victoria ALIVE project. The research was conducted to better understand the extent of disability inclusion in volunteer-involving organisations in Victoria, the strategies that organisations use and how the Victoria ALIVE project can best support the sector.

### The project research activities included:

- A survey of volunteer-involving organisations.
- Focus groups and one-on-one interviews with volunteer managers and volunteers with lived experience of disability.
- Case studies on organisations identified as undertaking best practices.

## DAVID PERRY | POLICY & RESEARCH | NHVIC

"There is a key element, it's about leadership. It's about people who are prepared to make this happen."



# Recommendation

Many of the recommended improvements outlined in this report are low-cost and no-cost initiatives that volunteer-involving organisations are encouraged to implement themselves. But to continue improvements in the volunteering sector beyond the Victoria ALIVE project, disability inclusion needs to be a clear priority by VIOs, Governments and relevant agencies.

Volunteer sector-wide structural improvement would likely require further resourcing.

The following recommended activities for future work to improve disability inclusiveness in volunteering have been developed based on project findings and informed by the Victoria ALIVE Project Advisory Group and the Victoria ALIVE Project Governance Group.

## **Recommended Initiative 1. Disability inclusive volunteer management training package.**

The Victoria ALIVE project developed a range of resources (available online [www.victoriaalive.org.au](http://www.victoriaalive.org.au)). These resources could support the delivery of training. [In addition, in 2019 Volunteering Victoria will pilot disability inclusive training opportunities as part of its ongoing professional development offering.]

Further funding would allow for the robust development and delivery of a training package to ensure continuous improvement of inclusive practices within VIOs.

### **OPTIONS/VARIATIONS**

- Training opportunities should be resourced with strong regional coverage – where training opportunities are harder to access – due in part to increase travel and time required.
- Unaccredited workshops help to improve practices across the volunteering sector. Options could be explored to develop modules for accredited course on volunteer management and disability support.
- Develop training linked to The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

## **Recommended Initiative 2. Supported volunteer placement services for people with disability.**

As outlined in this report, there are a number of factors which inhibit organisations from involving and recruiting volunteers with disability, such as the lack of confidence around working with people with disability and concerns over additional resources required for support.

Disability Employment Service work with both applicants and organisation to match people to paid positions and provide appropriate placement supports. VSOs play a similar role to match and place volunteers into volunteer positions.

# Recommendation

The volunteering sector would be strengthened with specialised services with the necessary expertise and connection to the volunteering community, to be able to match and support people with disabilities into volunteer roles. A model such as this would help VIOs have the confidence to recruit people with disability and provide expert support to people with disability interested in volunteering and organisations recruiting them.

This service model is currently being delivered by Volunteering Services Australia. See [here](#).

## **OPTIONS/VARIATIONS:**

Placement services could also help prepare people with disabilities for volunteer roles. This could be in the form of individualised case management support or seminars for groups of people with disabilities to understand their rights and responsibilities and what to expect.

## **Recommended Initiative 3. Outreach to volunteer-involving organisations**

Victoria ALIVE activities engaged organisations with active interest and a commitment to improve their practices, mostly through short-term and one-off activities. The project found that exceptionally inclusive organisations often have a ‘disability champion’ who pushes for improvements in inclusive practices. Furthermore effective change often comes from self-advocacy, where people with disability are supported and empowered to lead change.

## **OPTIONS/VARIATIONS**

### **Two possible forms of outreach include:**

1. **An “ambassador” program.** People with disabilities promote inclusive change – either broadly or to selected organisations. Such a model would prioritise awareness raising and self-advocacy.
2. Targeted engagement with a cohort of VIOs. Working closely with a select number of volunteer-involving organisations over the medium term to improve their disability volunteer management practices and organisational practices (for example developing a DAP, establishing a Disability Advisory Committee and implementing a schedule of inclusive goals).

## **Recommended Initiative 4. Community engagement**

The Victoria ALIVE project engaged over 500 people through community forums, conferences, workshops and other events. For most people, these events were the first time volunteer managers and people with disability were given a platform and the time to engage on the topic of disability inclusive volunteering. The events were empowering for people with disability to share their stories and useful as professional development for volunteer managers. The forums raised awareness of issues which were consistent in every region but which have not received direct attention. Importantly, the forums encouraged communities to take steps to improve their organisations.

One forum participant said “I hope to see something like this every year.” (Quote from the Western Metro Forum).

# Recommendation

## OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

More events, such as community forums, would activate more organisations and further spread constructive messages. Opportunities for further engagement using forums or other events include:

- Events in regions the Victoria ALIVE project did not engage – the north and south-east of metropolitan Melbourne, and rural and regional areas.
- Smaller and more targeted opportunities for volunteer-involving organisations and sectors that have not yet prioritised inclusive volunteering.

## Recommended Initiative 5. More project activities such as Victoria ALIVE

Through the Victoria ALIVE project, a wide range of activities were undertaken.

**Events** – such as community forums, professional development workshops at conferences, a training workshop for volunteer managers and a Leaders Breakfast for CEOs, Board members and other organisational leaders.

**Resources for organisations** – including guides, online “micro-credentials” and a Volunteering Victoria webinar.

**Media showcase and promotion** – including the #WeAreAble social media campaign featuring video case studies, regular project newsletters and a podcast.

## OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

Many of these activities could be continued, updated, evaluated, expanded or scaled up.

## Recommended Initiative 6. Seed funding for regional or specialised networks

The Victoria ALIVE project was delivered to stakeholders in a way that was generalised (i.e. did not require expert knowledge or specialised training) and often through peer-to-peer learning place-based techniques. In lieu of state-wide project activities, networks could progress inclusive volunteering in particular regions, for example using a community of practiced model.

## OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

Resourcing could support place-based activity, for example working locally with VSOs and VIOS. Alternatively, resources could support a focus on a particular disability cohort (for example autism or people with low vision) and the relevant disability peak body to reduce similar barriers in the volunteering sector.

# Recommendation

## **Recommended Initiative 7. Strengthening governance and leadership through volunteering.**

Governance in the not-for-profit and community sector is often provided by volunteers serving on Boards and Committees (noting Board and committee members often do not identify as “volunteers”).

In general, the volunteering sector is more effective when leadership reflects the communities each organisation serves. Top down leadership is one way of empowering people with disability and ensuring workplaces are inclusive and accessible. There are currently services, institutes and projects which focus on improving the diversity of leadership.

### **OPTIONS/VARIATIONS**

Peak bodies such as Volunteering Victoria could play a role in supporting people with disabilities to develop leadership and governance skills and engage the volunteering sector to open up positions for diverse governance.

# Useful Links

**Guides:** [victoriaalive.org.au/resources-2/guides/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/resources-2/guides/)

**Micro credentials:** [victoriaalive.org.au/micro-credentials/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/micro-credentials/)

**Research:** [victoriaalive.org.au/research/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/research/)

**Previous event photos:** [victoriaalive.org.au/eventsphotos/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/eventsphotos/)

**Previous event videos:** [victoriaalive.org.au/eventvideos/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/eventvideos/)

**Event wrap-ups:** [victoriaalive.org.au/event-wrap-ups/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/event-wrap-ups/)

**Social media campaign:** [victoriaalive.org.au/weareable/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/weareable/)

**Campaign videos:** [victoriaalive.org.au/campaignvideos/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/campaignvideos/)

**External links:** [victoriaalive.org.au/resources/](https://victoriaalive.org.au/resources/)



# Resources



## Micro-credentials

The Victoria ALIVE project worked with Coonara Community House to develop inclusive volunteering “micro-credentials”.

The online micro-credentials provide organisations with training opportunities to improve inclusion for volunteers with disability.

The micro-credentials are available for anyone working or volunteering in a volunteer-involving organisation.



## Disability Inclusion in Volunteering – Course Introduction

*"Regardless of your role in your organisation, you can make a difference. You can change your own approach and attitudes. You can amend policy and write statements of inclusion. You can review the way your organisation recruits, interviews and trains your volunteers. You can change some of your core practices that are stopping people with disability from approaching you in the first place. This training is for anyone in any organisation who wants to learn how to more effectively and respectfully include volunteers with disability."*



# Resources



## Guides

The Victoria ALIVE project identified and developed a range of resources to support organisations to be more inclusive of volunteers with disability.

**11 ORIGINAL  
GUIDES &  
TEMPLATES  
DEVELOPED**

## Webinar

Volunteering Victoria's webinar series offers monthly insights and stories with experienced volunteer managers talking about their journeys, challenges and successes in our dynamic and challenging sector. **Webinar #9: Supporting Volunteers with Disability – with Victoria ALIVE** explored inclusive volunteer management at a neighbourhood house.

**24 VOLUNTEER  
MANAGERS  
ENGAGED**

## FORUM ATTENDEE

*"Be flexible and adaptable. Avoid making assumptions. Focus on the positive and opportunities. Listen to your volunteers."*

## LANA BEDFORD | DUKE STREET

*"If when people get through the door, there is warmth, there are greetings, there is empathy, there is understanding, then that overcomes physical barriers."*



# Showcasing Media

## Videos- Case Studies

Victoria ALIVE worked with Fertile Films to produce a range of films to showcase the experience of both volunteers and organisations. The films demonstrated the benefits of inclusive volunteering and how organisations can overcome barriers to involve volunteers with disability.

Victoria ALIVE also collaborated with Voice at the Table to profile one of the members of the Victoria ALIVE Project Advisory Group, who is also a graduate of the Voice at the Table Program. The video highlights the incredible contribution people with disabilities can make to inform organisational practices.

11

videos filmed and produced, focusing on volunteers with disability and the organisations where they volunteer. Disseminated through the **#WeAreAble** social media campaign on all social media channels

7

organisations involved; CFA Greendale, Travellers Aid, Melbourne Fringe Festival, Lort Smith Animal Hospital, Castlemaine Community House & the Hub Garden, 3CR Community Radio and Boomerange Network

12

volunteer stories featured, following 9 case studies

### Voice at The Table

video profile collaboration featuring a Project Advisory Group member and her involvement in Victoria ALIVE

### 3CR RADIO

*"We have people with disability [at 3CR community radio] who are programmers, panellists, producers, even admin tasks or fundraising. Also people on air, so talent as well."*

### TRAVELLERS AID

*"Volunteering is a two-way street. It's both advantageous to us as an organisation, but even more so advantageous to the individual getting some positive experience out of volunteering."*

### LORT SMITH ANIMAL HOSPITAL

*"Our volunteers are really diverse and come with a whole extraordinary array of skills and knowledge and experience, and I think that's what makes it a really rewarding place for volunteers and staff alike."*

# Project Scope

## Project Scope

The Victoria ALIVE (Ability-Links-Inclusive-Volunteering-Everyday) project is an activity of the 2018-19 Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Transition Grant Stream, within the community awareness and capacity building activity area. The project aims to improve disability Inclusion in the volunteering community sector.

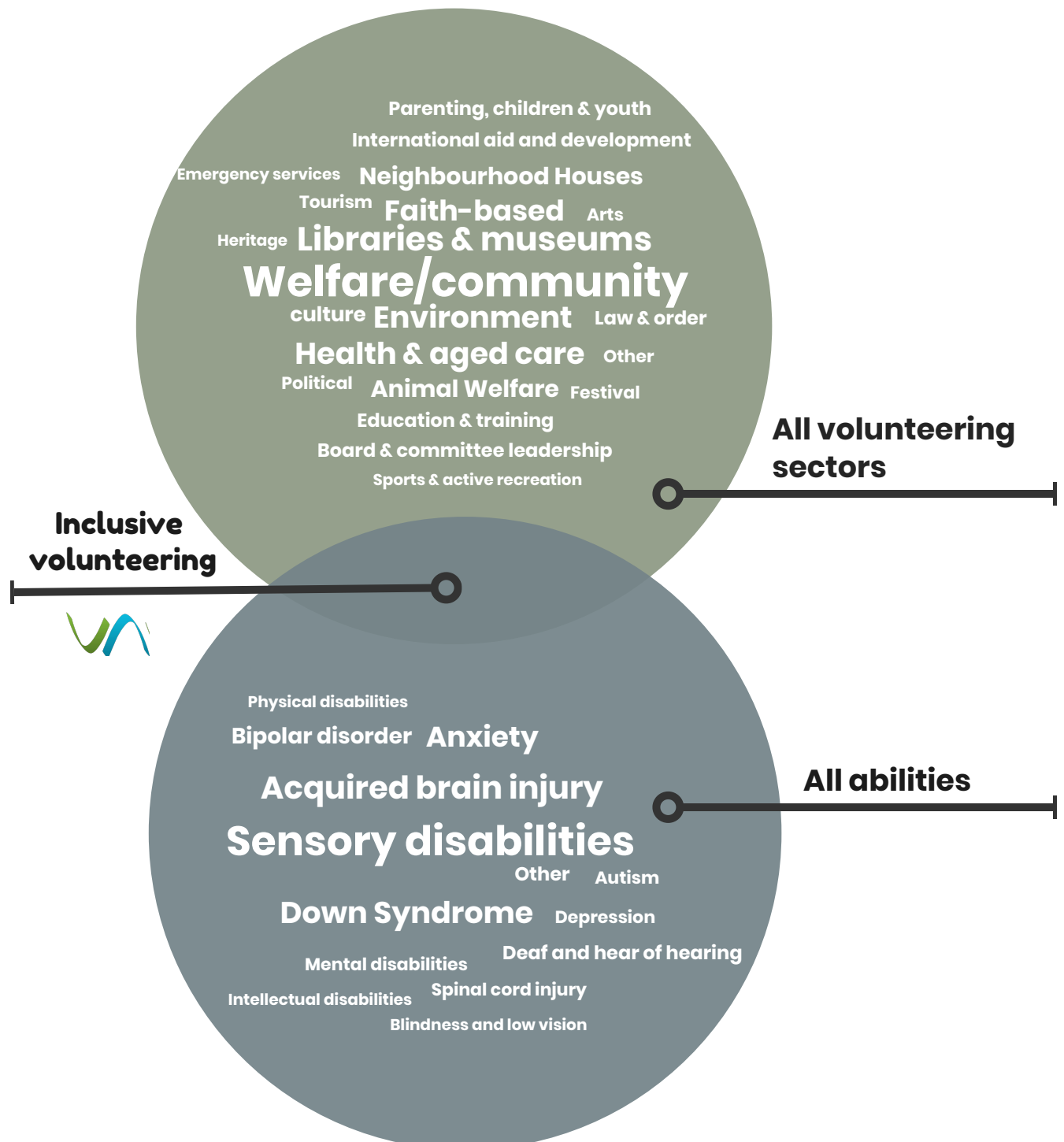
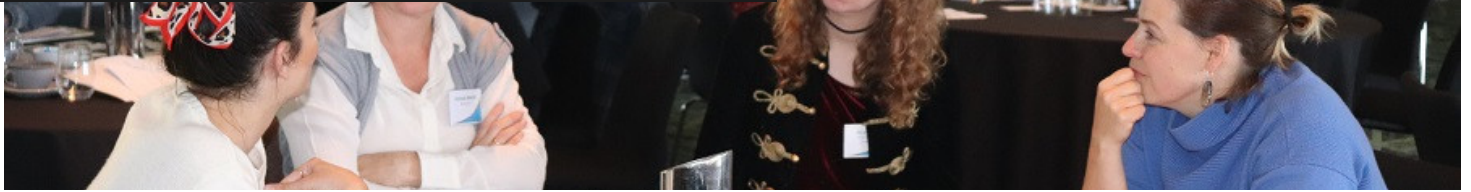
In partnership with Volunteering Victoria and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, and with the support of the Victorian Government, the project is working to build the capacity of the community and volunteer involving organisations to actively involve and engage with people with disabilities.

## Project Vision

Victoria's volunteer-driven organisations are welcoming, inclusive and accessible for people with all abilities.



# Project Scope







# Events

## Peer learning & consultation: themes & Issues

A key feature of the forums was a world café style consultation, exploring issues and challenges in providing meaningful opportunities for volunteers with disability. While some regional-specific issues were raised, several key themes were identified across the forums:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Organisational systems for volunteer management | Volunteer capability: the importance of providing volunteer experiences that promote autonomy, empowerment & self-esteem   |
| Organisational culture                          | Environment: an accessible physical environment, facilities, equipment & use of adaptive technologies  |
| Organisational capability                       | Leadership: including leadership to drive cultural change & inclusive systems development, and increased inclusion of people with disability in board and leadership positions |
| Organisational capacity                         | Measuring outcomes: specifically of the volunteer program and new systems for inclusive volunteering, particularly from the perspective of people with disability              |

Of these '**Organisational Systems**', '**Organisational Culture**' and '**Organisational Capability**' were consistently the dominant three issues raised at all forums.

## Place- based approach and regional collaboration

Each regional forum involved engagement with a locally based organisation to plan and implement the forum, ensuring it was relevant to local need. The initiatives of these organisations were promoted at each forum. The organisations included:

|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Eastern Volunteers     | DHHS Geelong Regional Office |
| Moirā Shire Council    | Volunteer West               |
| Cobram Community House | Brimbank Council             |
| Volunteering Geelong   |                              |

**In three of the regions, local organisations contributed/donated to the event including:**

Western Metro event space and catering by Brimbank Council  
Gippsland event space by Latrobe Community Health Service  
Cobram event space by Moira Shire Council

# Showcasing Media

## Newsletter

A project stakeholder newsletter was been developed to provide project updates and promote awareness of issues and activities relating to volunteering and disability. Most importantly the newsletters provided a platform for people with disabilities to tell their stories. The newsletter also put a spotlight on people undertaking disability inclusion work. Each newsletter followed the same format with sections for the Editorial, Spotlight, Promoting Change (articles, videos, podcasts etc), Events, Resources (grants, awards etc) and Research.

This newsletter was produced by Marnie Higgs, who has lived -experience with mental health.



**349**  
SUBSCRIBERS



**65%**  
INCREASE IN  
SUBSCRIBERS



**6**  
NEWSLETTERS  
DISTRIBUTED

**“Spotlight”**; highlighted some of the people involved in and around the Victoria Alive project, introducing them and some of their own thoughts about volunteering and disability based on their own experience.

### JAKE LEWIS

*“Having both lived experience of a disability and extensive volunteering experience, I can see we need to recognise the value that each volunteer can bring to organisations and the community, whatever their ability.”*

### SARAH BARTON

*“Real disability access is everybody’s business and it’s a matter of tuning in, listening to people’s access needs and finding a way to make it work.”*

### JULYNE AINSLEY

*“There is still a long way to go to be fully inclusive, but I really do think people are more aware now of people with disability and how to accommodate them. It’s just slow to change because people are slow to change their old views.”*



# Events

## NHVic 2019 Conference

The Victoria ALIVE project held a stall and delivered a breakout workshop on Thursday 9 May. The workshop was entitled "Making volunteering disability inclusive". The session provided a professional development opportunity for the neighbourhood house sector to learn about the project research findings, hear from a panel with lived experience with disability on how best practice volunteer management and also to commit to actions in their organisations to become more disability inclusive.



**23**  
CALL TO  
ACTION CARDS



**69**  
INDIVIDUAL  
CALLS TO  
ACTION

*"Advertise that our house is open to all, no one is excluded, everyone has one thing they can do."*

## Volunteering Victoria 2019 State Conference

The Victoria ALIVE project collaborated with the Department of Health and Human Services to deliver a conference session called "Inclusive Program Design: Delivering for Your Volunteers and Community". The workshop included a panel discussion of people with lived experience, a presentation of **Designing for Diversity** and an interactive group discussion.



**22**  
CALL TO  
ACTION CARDS



**66**  
INDIVIDUAL  
CALLS TO  
ACTION

*"Include people with disabilities in our strategic planning process. Survey our volunteers, ask about their experience and seek feedback at the end of their time with us."*

# Events

## Calls to action

A key aim of the forums was to activate the community and encourage local, sustainable actions to promote inclusive volunteering.

In addition, many attendees reported making important connections with other organisations through attendance at the forums, and planned to follow up on these connections and engage in inclusive initiatives being run by collaborating partners or other local organisations.

**41**

attendees planned to discuss their learnings with their volunteers/staff/management



**35**

organisations committed to develop more volunteer opportunities for PWD



**30**

organisations committed to reviewing their volunteer role PD's/ads/recruitment processes



**18**

organisations planned to develop or review their DAP



**17**

attendees committed to network with local disability organisations/service providers



**10**

organisations committed to organising disability inclusion training for their organisation



**9**

organisations committed to developing pathways to employment for volunteers with disability



**5**

organisations committed to setting up an advisory group





# Events

546

"call-to-action"  
commitments

276

forum  
attendees

32

forum  
panellists

7

partner  
organisations

5

performances  
by all abilities  
choirs

## Forums

The community forums engaged volunteering-involving organisations in an active process of identifying the barriers they face to provide disability inclusive volunteer opportunities for people with disability. The forums utilised a place-based approach and ran 5 highly successful forums in different regions in Victoria including Gippsland, Eastern & Western Melbourne Metro, Cobram and Geelong, with a regional collaborating partner in each location.

The community forums provided a platform for people with lived experience with disability and volunteer-involving organisations to share their experience and for attendees to benefit from a participatory learning environment.

A key aim was to activate the community. Attendees, organisations and networks were encouraged to continue progressing inclusive volunteering initiatives in their regions and to commit to three actions that they would take in their own organisation over the next 3 months to make volunteering more inclusive for people living with disability.

## Western Metro Forum Attendee

*"I thought today was a really great day. It was a big chance to see all sides. Also, to be able to put across our point about how it is very hard to get employment and even volunteer work for people with disabilities. And I hope to see something like this every year. I think it was great."*

## Eastern Forum Attendee

*"One of the important things from the forum today was hearing from people with a lived experience of disability- the things that they found important and helpful in terms of finding roles... being able to capture that knowledge and experience and for everybody in the room to hear that and include that in what they are doing."*



## Events

110

leaders  
activated

8

calls to actions for  
leadership in inclusive  
volunteering

4

community leaders with  
lived experience as  
panellists

2

Victorian  
parliamentary  
representatives

### Leaders Breakfast

The Breakfast explored aspects of organisational leadership for more inclusive volunteering. The event also provided practical ideas that leaders can implement in their organisation with a goal to provide achievable action by attendees.

### Luke Donnellan, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

*“Whether it’s down at the local footy club, at your library, out planting trees or in an animal shelter, you’ll find volunteers everywhere making Victoria the best place to live. It’s on us to recognise the incredible contribution volunteers with disability are making for our communities, and to break down every barrier so that they can volunteer effectively.”*



# Project Advisory Group

10

members

5

regular meetings

7

instances of involvement in  
event panel discussions

## Project Advisory Group

Project Advisory Group (PAG) consisted of people with lived experience with disability, including people with firsthand experience of disability and family members and carers of people with disability. The PAG not only informed the project activities, but also co-developed many of the resources produced by the project and participated in all the project events, by speaking on panels, featuring in content and appearing in videos.

## PAG member talking about their involvement in advising the Victoria ALIVE project

*“I’ve found a voice, that I’ve always had, but I’ve lost it along the way. But now I’ve found the voice back and I can use it. And use it quite confidently.”*

## PAG member giving feedback on involvement in the project

*“It’s been a great chance to connect with other people and work together as a team. I’ve been able to learn about the perspectives of other people with disability, particularly people with different disabilities to my own”*

## PAG member giving feedback on the project

*“It’s been great being part of this, giving feedback and contributing to all of these wonderful activities – the forums, the training, the guides. It’s so needed out there. I feel like we’ve only just started”*





# Events

60

attendees

7

panellist with lived experience or  
from peak disability organisations

## Managers Training Session

The Victoria ALIVE project held a one-off training session to help people who lead volunteers with the basic theoretical basis and a range of practical skills to support inclusive volunteering. Those who attended were provided with an introduction to Disability Inclusion in Volunteering micro-credentials and participated in workshop activities on volunteer management developed by Volunteering Victoria.

### Workshop Attendee

*“Speak to everyone the same way. For example, when speaking with someone who is blind or has low vision, talk to them just how you would anyone else as they can tell if you are speaking off into the distance”.*

### Workshop Attendee

*“Since attending the training, we have already had a meeting with our Inclusion Officer about including more volunteers with a disability, and we have started working with our Volunteer Supervisors to provide them with professional development opportunities in this area”*

### Workshop Attendee

*“Since attending the training, we have now included an inclusive statement in our recruitment process, highlighting to applicants that we can accommodate any support or access requirements”*

### Workshop Panellist

*“Just ask people. It’s not that hard yeah?”*



- Being flexible – fitting volunteering around the person with meaningful roles and pathways
- Volunteering integrated – not separate

## Showcasing Media



150%

increase in  
LinkedIn  
Followers

187%

increase in  
Facebook  
followers

43%

increase in  
Instagram  
followers

59%

increase in  
Twitter  
followers

95%

in Pageviews

## #WeAreAble Social Media Campaign

Through September & October the Victoria ALIVE project ran a social media campaign #WeAreAble. #WeAreAble was developed to put inclusive volunteering for people of all abilities in Victoria at the top of the agenda.

#WeAreAble refers both to organisations and volunteers. Organisations can make improvements to the volunteer programs to be more disability inclusive. Volunteers lived experience, who despite disability, contribute to our communities through volunteering and are not defined by what they cannot do but what they can do. The campaign showcased the video case studies developed for the Victoria ALIVE project.

## The "So..." Podcast

The "So..." podcast focused on disability issues through conversation with everyday people, such as: social workers, CEOs, activists, politicians, artists, accountants and "everyone with a story to tell". Members of the Victoria ALIVE project team featured on the podcast to talk about the project and what they had learned.

Two project team members were interviewed as part of the "So..." podcast hosted by John McKenna, a passionate disability advocate with lived experience.

## MARNIE HIGGS

*"There's a misconception that people with disabilities are in need of volunteers to help them, and not that people with disability are able and willing and wanting to be volunteers themselves."*



# Events

## Key Eastern Forum Commitments

*“I plan to expand my organisations diversity committee that currently only includes paid staff, to include representatives from the volunteer program”*

*“I’m going to raise awareness on disability inclusion & commit to taking action to increase volunteers with a disability within my organisation, and support the action plan in the Eastern region”*

## Key Cobram Forum Commitments

*“We’re going to create a business plan to develop a social enterprise that will create roles for people with mental health & disabilities, to develop volunteering & employability skills”*

*“I’m planning to develop to a partnership with the local special development school to organise volunteer opportunities at the Op Shop for the VCAL students”*

## Key Geelong Forum Commitments

*“I commit to increase volunteering opportunities at the City of Greater Geelong and convene a reference group to inform our practice. We’re also going to work with Volunteering Geelong to increase capacity for the volunteer sector”*

*“I plan to strategically work with local organisations to build inclusiveness into their volunteer systems”*

## Key Western Forum Commitments

*“I am going to organise training on communication accessibility for the reception and visitor guides at our hospital”*

*“I commit to developing an inclusive framework for our organisation for addressing the specific issues and developing effective strategies for inclusive model for people with disability”*