# LAKE MAC VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
## 2021 - 2024

**LAKE MACQUARIE CITY**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

– Margaret Mead

## Acknowledgement of Country

*We remember and respect the Ancestors who cared for and nurtured this Country. Dhumaan ngayin ngarrakalu kirraanan barayidin.*

*It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters. Ngarrakalumba yuludaka bibayilin barayida baaduka.*

*Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal people and Elders past, present and future. Lake Macquarie City Council dhumaan Awabakala ngarrakal yalawaa, yalawan, yalawanan.*

Wording by the Aboriginal Reference Group and translated by Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre.

Lake Macquarie City Council has prepared this strategy on behalf of the Lake Macquarie community and would like to thank:

- Lake Mac volunteers
- Focus Group volunteers
- Councillors and Council staff who participated in workshops
- Volunteer Strategy Project Group

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Volunteers play an integral role in Lake Macquarie each and every day. They help enhance our community connections and provide valuable services and support to people in need right across our city.

We are so lucky to have a volunteer network of thousands across our community, many of whom go unrecognised but have a passion for helping out where they can, through sport, environmental, welfare, emergency, cultural and education services.

Many of these services and the support these amazing people offer could not be delivered without their commitment and willingness to help. Through this Volunteer Engagement Strategy, we hope to connect with even more people who would like to contribute their energy and ideas for the benefit of the community.

Spontaneous volunteering is also on the rise as more people are seeking opportunities to assist their communities during one-off emergency events. There are also many benefits of volunteering, including increasing social connection, boosting physical and mental health, as well as the intrinsic positive feeling we all get from giving.

Thank you to all our current volunteers and I look forward to seeing our network grow as we continue to work together to make our community a better place.

**Cr Kay Fraser**
*Lake Macquarie Mayor*

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Here in Lake Macquarie, we're lucky to have access to a tremendously valuable resource; the people who call our city home.

The people of Lake Macquarie are passionate about their city. They value our unique landscape, our lifestyle and wellbeing, creativity, diversity, our connected communities, and all the other aspects of life in Lake Mac that help make our city a place like no other.

As an organisation, we benefit from our engagement with these city advocates; the people who put their hand up to get involved and play an active role in contributing to our city.

Offering a diverse range of volunteering opportunities allows us to tap into the wealth of skill, knowledge and experience that is available within our community. A diverse workforce,

that includes volunteers, will deliver a diversity of ideas and mindsets that help improve our organisation and our city. It also allows us to be a more agile and efficient organisation, with the flexibility to respond to seasonal changes and shifting customer needs.

The benefits of volunteering are vast for both organisations and the individuals who choose to join them, and I am hopeful that our Volunteering Engagement Strategy will allow us to provide an increasingly diverse range of volunteer opportunities for more people in our community.

**Morven Cameron**
*Chief Executive Officer*

# OUR VISION AND VALUES

Lake Mac's City Vision and set of Community Values, developed by the community in 2016, guide our planning and provide direction.

Our seven Community Values, or key focus areas, include Unique landscapes, Lifestyle and wellbeing, Mobility and accessibility, Diverse economy, Connected communities, Creativity and Shared decision-making.

Volunteering is located in the key focus area of 'Connected communities' and is particularly linked to the objective of a supportive and inclusive community.

We value
**CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**
that support and care for all and provide a sense of belonging.

However, by its nature, volunteering sits across many of the key focus areas and their various objectives such as:

Natural environments are protected and enhanced

Our public spaces help us feel healthy and happy

Our community responds and adapts to change

We are proud of our city's heritage and cultures

Creative thinking drives our city

Our community influences decisions that shape our city

# Our Vision

## We have a vision of transforming volunteer impact.

We believe that by cultivating our volunteers, sharing our aspirations, and sustaining those who volunteer with us, we will evolve to a new level of working together.

## The CASE for volunteering

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

### C ULTIVATE
Grow a volunteer culture within the organisation through leadership and commitment

### A SPIRE
Create a purposeful volunteer experience, ensuring volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles that meet the needs of both the organisation and volunteers

### S USTAIN
Nourish volunteers by helping them to understand their roles, develop their skills and protect their safety and wellbeing

### E VOLVE
Value and understand the impact of volunteers and celebrate their contribution

# OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEERING

## Definition of volunteering

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain". This definition includes formal volunteering that takes place inside organisations and informal volunteering that occurs outside an organisational setting. (Volunteering Australia, 2015)

## International, national and state context:

In 2019, the UN Secretary General called for a decade of action to progress the aims of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to meet the increasing challenges faced by the global community.

The decade of action includes local people acting to generate the momentum required for transforming our cities to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as per Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities. Volunteers are an integral part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. (United Nations, 2015)

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

*At a national level*, volunteering is seen as a critical part of Australian society. Volunteering in Australia contributes to enhancing "civil society and active participation in building strong, inclusive and resilient communities" (Volunteering Australia, 2015). The benefits of volunteering are equally realised by the organisations and groups who host volunteers, and by volunteers themselves.

Volunteering Australia, the national peak body for volunteering, has developed the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015) to provide a framework for organisations to improve the volunteer experience and demonstrate the impact that effective volunteer involvement can have on achieving the strategic goals and aims of the organisation.

The NSW Volunteering strategy 2020-2030 is a 10-year plan developed by the NSW Government for the NSW volunteering sector. The Strategy provides seven guiding principles to shape the future of volunteering over the next decade. These principles are:

· **Growth:** more volunteers are needed, participation in volunteering benefits everyone

· **Vibrant:** people from every background are engaged in volunteering

· **Agile:** the volunteering sector is responsive and flexible, able to respond to changing needs

· **Accessible:** pathways to participation in volunteering are clear and accessible

· **Local:** local solutions best meet local volunteering and community needs

· **Support:** volunteer managers and leaders have the tools and support they need

· **Respect:** volunteer workplaces should be safe, fair, respectful and productive

## Volunteering in Lake Mac

Council currently delivers a range of programs through a variety of volunteering models. Key departments facilitating volunteer involvement include Community Partnerships, Communications and Corporate Strategy, Arts, Culture and Tourism, Leisure Services, and Asset Management. Most volunteer models can be **linked to four key aspects of sustainability including economic, social, environmental and governance.**

## A snapshot of volunteering at Council

**18% of**
Lake Macquarie
**RESIDENTS VOLUNTEER**

- ABS 2016

### COUNCIL MANAGED VOLUNTEERS

- Sports facilities management
- Community facilities management
- Landcare
- Cemetery groups
- Community ecosystem monitoring
- Waterwatch
- Libraries
- Event delivery
- Community history
- SEEN@Swansea
- Museum of Art and Culture
- Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel
- Youth Council
- Community-centred committees and reference groups
- Council grant panels

### COUNCIL SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS

- Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- Community gardens
- Eco Angels

### AD-HOC OR ONE-OFF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Adopt a Sensor
- Event delivery volunteers
- AUSTSWIM volunteers
- CityServe volunteers

### Aspect of sustainability

- **ECONOMIC**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL**
- **GOVERNANCE**
- **SOCIAL**

# CONTEMPORARY VOLUNTEERING

## Challenges and considerations

Volunteers reflect the community that they represent, and the diversity of volunteers must be considered in all engagement and attraction strategies. A person's maturity, life stage, experience, values, education, socio-economic background, and other factors all play a part in forging our unique personalities and preferences, and the task of attracting volunteers needs to take these elements into account.

Surveys have shown there is a disconnect between the volunteering roles people are interested in and the roles organisations are offering (Volunteering Australia, 2016). Council's traditional volunteer programs need to evolve and staff need to enable volunteers to develop their skills and experience, rather than involving volunteers as manpower.

Organisations involving volunteers must treat volunteers as workers under the *NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, and, therefore, provide workplace induction, training and insurance coverage for volunteers. While not necessarily a barrier to engaging volunteers there is recognition that training and resourcing volunteers does take time and energy for the organisation and the volunteer. Perceived by some as unnecessary 'red tape', smart organisations are able to streamline their volunteer recruitment processes and training to make it easier for volunteers to participate.

Clear entry points and institutional support are critical in this area, and the increased use of technology such as mobile phone apps and other online tools to engage and communicate with volunteers, also helps.  In a world where 'digital distraction' steals valuable time from a busy, time-poor society, it is essential that volunteer-involving organisations participate and engage with volunteers in the digital space and compete as a legitimate priority in people's lives.

## Emerging trends

Although people have always volunteered, the way in which they have done so is impacted by the current and emergent social and economic fabrics of society. For example, volunteering in Australia started through the faith-based charitable sector. It evolved through the World Wars with volunteering for the Red Cross and Legacy, and has continued to become a vibrant sector of civil society. The new millennium has given rise to new trends in the volunteering sector and these are described below:

1.  Creating a vision for volunteering throughout an organisation
2.  Integrating volunteer capabilities with organisational goals
3.  Empowering staff to better support volunteers
4.  Diversifying the roles of volunteers

There is currently a transition away from traditional volunteer programs to a focus on the impact of volunteers in assisting the organisation to achieve its goals and targets (Steinhorm, 2016). The central elements of this transition are moving from a program focus to a volunteer engagement strategy.

**Table 1 - Elements of transition (Steinhorm, 2016)**

| | Traditional volunteer program | Volunteer engagement strategy |
|---|---|---|
| **Who is responsible?** | Individual teams or departments | Senior leadership |
| **Where are priorities articulated?** | In individual teams' or departments' action plans | In the organisation's overall strategic plan, with volunteer engagement as a means to achieve all strategic priorities |
| **What is the primary role of the Director or Manager of volunteer engagement?** | To recruit, train, support and hold volunteers accountable for service | To be an internal coach and consultant to all staff across the organisation on how to engage and support volunteers strategically in achieving their departmental priorities and efforts |
| **How is success measured?** | Volunteer satisfaction, numbers of volunteers, hours contributed | Impact of volunteer efforts |
| **Where and how do volunteers serve?** | Primarily in direct service roles | Throughout the entire organisation, in every department and in support of every major strategic priority |

There has been considerable research on **the benefits of volunteering for volunteers**, including new brain research on the benefits of giving. Benefits include enhancing social connection, boosts to physical and mental health and wellbeing, assistance with achieving career goals, learning new skills, updating existing skills, improving self-esteem and the opportunity for people to do what they love doing (State of NSW, 2000). The **benefits for organisations** include access to the skills, experience, wisdom and capabilities of volunteers, tapping into diversity, helping promote the organisation's activities, and accessing new ideas and different mindsets.

**Communities benefit** from volunteering by the enhancement of community connections and the resulting increase in community resilience and social capital. Spontaneous volunteering is on the rise as more and more community members choose to assist their communities during one-off emergency events. The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) has acknowledged the rise of spontaneous volunteering and now issues 'calls to action' in a variety of roles via their local units' Facebook pages when incidents are forecast and have occurred (NSW State Emergency Service, 2015).

There are also **key technological advances** such as integrated systems and data availability shaping volunteering. This has created new opportunities for volunteering in the virtual world including volunteering from home.

The **disruptive influence of the COVID-19 global pandemic** has seen a reduction in volunteering across Australia. For example, in the 12 months to March 2021, 21 per cent of Australians volunteered for an organisation or group, a drop from 26 per cent in the 12 months to March 2020 (pre-COVID) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). It has also hastened new ways of volunteering, including episodic volunteering and online volunteering.

**Definitions:**

**Spontaneous volunteers** are community members who volunteer in one-off events such as during emergencies. They will typically assist the community without any long-term commitment.

**Episodic volunteers** prefer short-term, time-limited or irregular volunteering opportunities.

**Online or virtual volunteers** are people who provide an online service or work electronically, usually working from home using their own device.

# OUR VOLUNTEER JOURNEY

The events of recent years have highlighted the critical role that volunteers play in our communities. Whether it's through spontaneous volunteering in response to disasters, stewardship of the local environment or looking after community facilities, volunteers are the backbone of our community. It has become apparent that Council and the community would benefit from a strategy providing a framework to help attract new volunteers and enhance the experience for all volunteers into the future.

**1**

## AUDIT AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

Developing our Volunteer Engagement Strategy involved auditing who our current volunteers were and what they'd already told us. This was done by analysing previous volunteer surveys and identifying common themes. We also explored the strategies of other councils and volunteer organisations, and undertook some research into best practice for volunteering.

*At its core, volunteerism is about connecting people. By embracing innovation, not hiding from it, organisations and individuals will be better equipped to build trust, form authentic human bonds, focus attention, and build the clarity of purpose needed to navigate the future and change volunteerism for the better.*
*The future looks bright ahead.*

– (Johnson, 2015)

**2**

## CASE STUDY AND STAFF WORKSHOP

Once we completed our audit and document review, we were aware of some really interesting case studies. One of these was the Student Volunteer Army (SVA), formed after the Christchurch earthquake in 2011 as a student collective of volunteers motivated to help clean up the city. We spoke at length to Sam Johnson, founder and current CEO of SVA. One of the findings or key learnings was that SVA organised volunteer organisers, not the volunteers themselves. We also conducted a workshop to discover the types of themes that resonated with our staff.

*"The overwhelming feedback I get as I meet with teachers and volunteers around Aotearoa is that SVA is helping change students' perception of what it is possible for them to achieve, no matter their age".*

– (CEO Student Volunteer Army Sam Johnson)

**3**

**4**

### FOCUS GROUP FORUM

Our next step was to undertake a focus group forum with some of our current volunteers. The aim of the forum was to understand the volunteers' perceptions on Council's level of service, seek feedback on the planned goals Council has in mind, and provide information and insights to support Council planning.

**Enabling the attraction of a steady stream of new volunteers – particularly young people – was a highlight of the feedback from participants. In particular, making it easier to find out about volunteering.**

### LEADERS SURVEY AND WORKSHOP

Our final step involved gaining an understanding of Council's current volunteer culture. This involved providing a survey to senior leaders and delivering a follow-up workshop. The workshop outcomes included new insights for some of our senior leaders and commitment to further investigation.

**New insight: The aspect of community connectedness for volunteers is deemed as valuable as volunteer output.**

# Cultivate

## Objective:

We grow a volunteer culture within the organisation through our leadership and commitment.

## Target:

Volunteering is incorporated into 75 per cent of departments by 2025.

As a Council, we recognise that for volunteering to thrive, we need effective leaders who are committed to promoting a positive culture for volunteers throughout the organisation. A positive volunteer culture ensures the aims and values of volunteer involvement are promoted, and effective leadership means we recognise our responsibilities to our volunteers, including the need for good governance around volunteering. Leadership and commitment to volunteers facilitates our volunteers' understanding of the governance arrangements and how the work they do enhances and supports the work of Council.

## Supporting the work of Council

"I have been volunteering for Council for eight years and my key motivation is to see St John Oval become the premium rugby league ground in Lake Macquarie City. My volunteering role includes a range of operational duties involved in looking after an oval, including carrying out inspections of facilities and fields, submitting maintenance requests to Council and suggesting ground improvements, ensuring toilets have supplies, coordinating Council contractors, ensuring users clean the ground and facilities after use, and liaising with casual ground users.

I also have an administrative role that involves ensuring safety standards by volunteers are maintained, liaising with Council on various issues, handling initial booking enquiries from casual users, dealing with all correspondence, attending Council information sessions, maintaining the Council Operating Committee five-year plan for St John Oval and applying for grants. Importantly, I have established a very good working relationship with Council staff, which enhances teamwork between Council and the St John Oval Operating Committee. This enhances and supports the role that Council has in delivering well-maintained infrastructure for the community."

**Secretary, Terry Bryden. St John Oval Operating Committee Charlestown and Life Member Central Newcastle Rugby League Football Club**

## OUR OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

# Aspire

### Objective:

We create a purposeful volunteer experience ensuring our volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles that meet the needs of both the organisation and volunteers.

### Target:

100 per cent of volunteer positions have roles aligned with a Council objective or target.

All volunteers hope to make meaningful contributions in their chosen areas of responsibility. Council is able to turn hope into certainty by ensuring roles offered to volunteers align with Council's goals and objectives and clearly describe the types of skills and attributes we are seeking in volunteers. Ensuring volunteers are provided with appropriate information allows them to make informed decisions about applying for volunteer roles. Consistent processes across Council for attracting and recruiting volunteers will enable prospective volunteers to realise their potential.

## Meeting the needs of the organisation and the volunteer

"I had begun walking regularly in the local reserves around the lake in 2011, and was quite horrified by all the weeds I saw. Our Landcare group met once a month and after I retired, I was keen to do more. Everywhere I went I would find myself pulling out lantana or bitou bush so I enrolled to do the Landcare Team Leader training in order to have the knowledge I needed to work on my own. Then, after 2014, I took on the role of Team Leader to help guide our group's bush regeneration efforts throughout our local reserve.

I love volunteering with Landcare because I enjoy the tranquillity of the bush and also love to see how our work can make such a positive difference to our natural environment. Stemming the onslaught of invasive weeds and restoring the bush in the place I live in is absolutely key to me. I know our work in the local reserve is supporting Council's responsibilities for the environment across Lake Macquarie and it's inspiring to know we are part of a bigger picture."

**Landcare Team Leader Marion Lugg**

# OUR OBJECTIVES
# AND TARGETS

# Sustain

**Objective:**

We nourish our volunteers by helping them to understand their roles, developing their skills and protecting their safety and wellbeing.

**Target:**

100 per cent of staff working with volunteers have undertaken relevant training.

Staff have a key role to play in the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers, including assisting volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities. Working in partnership allows for supportive relationships to develop over time and enhances and sustains volunteer contributions.

## Working in partnership with our volunteers

*"I've always worked in the arts, first as a teacher, then for about 25 years as a graphic designer, then in aged care in lifestyle and art therapy.*

*I am interested in what is happening in the arts world and love to explore and be among like-minded people. A highlight for me is the Sunday Sessions program. I love these events and they give me a great feeling of being able to help people enjoy art and different media.*

**Hanneke Bongers, visual arts volunteer since 2020**

## OUR OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

# Evolve

### Objective:

We value and understand the impact of our volunteers and celebrate their contribution, while striving for continuous improvement in how we work with our volunteers.

### Target:

100 per cent of volunteers receive formal or informal recognition from Council for their work. Feedback is sought from volunteers on an annual basis.

Volunteer recognition ensures we understand and appreciate the contribution made by our volunteers. Recognition involves considering the results of the work performed by volunteers, the value to Council and the less tangible benefits such as volunteer contributions to change and innovation. Using practices consistent with continuous improvement ensures Council is able to monitor, identify and implement ways of improving the outcomes for both volunteers and the organisation.

## Valuing our volunteers' positive impacts for Council

"I became involved with Council as a member of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel in 2000. I also volunteered in Council's Development Assessment and Certification department (DAC) for about 12 months.

I suffered from a brain tumour in 1991 and through some friends I heard about Council and what they were doing to help the community make things more accessible for everyone. I wanted to help make a difference for people with disability to improve their quality of life. I also have a lot of skills that I wanted to put to use.

As a panel member, I am consulted and have input into planning the Over 55s program, seniors' concerts and events such as celebrating International Day of People with Disability. I was a strong advocate for the need for a free program for people with disability.

I am proud to have been directly involved in introducing the Me2 Program in 2017, and many of these projects, including the design and construction of four new state of the art accessible cabins in Lake Mac Holiday Parks. During my time spent in DAC, I was responsible for searching for properties with swimming pools for safety compliance audits to be conducted. It was a great environment to work in and staff were friendly and supportive.

As a member of the Panel, I have been able to see how the smallest things can have the biggest impact on people's lives. It's important that Council consults and is involved with people that have lived experience and knowledge of target groups and also that it shares information with the groups it represents. I feel like Council values my input and listens to advice when planning for services and infrastructure, which is important to the wider community."

**Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel member Tracey Blair**

## GOAL 1. CULTIVATE

We grow a volunteer culture within the organisation through our leadership and commitment.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION | TIME-FRAME | RESPONSIBILITY (LEAD DEPT IN BOLD) | STRATEGIC LINKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1**<br><br>**IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT** | 1.1.1 Develop and implement an organisational Volunteer Management System | 2021-2022 | · **Business Information and Technology Solutions**<br>· Community Partnerships | |
| | 1.1.2 Develop and implement a corporate volunteering program | 2021-2022 | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships | |
| | 1.1.3 Continue to train staff and volunteers in digital story-telling to showcase volunteer activities | ongoing | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Arts, Culture and Tourism<br>· Communications and Corporate Strategy | |
| | 1.1.4 Develop an internal training program for staff who manage volunteers | 2021-2022 | · **People, Culture and Risk** | |
| | 1.1.5 Establish the redeveloped Landcare Resource Centre as a volunteer hub being a central touchpoint for supporting and resourcing a range of Council volunteering programs | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** | |
| | 1.1.6 Ensure all promotion and recruitment actions for volunteers have a focus on diversity and inclusion | ongoing | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships | Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Management Plan 2019-2022 |
| **1.2**<br><br>**VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IS PLANNED AND DESIGNED TO ALIGN WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION** | 1.2.1 Develop a volunteer 'champion' network across Council's operations to support and encourage volunteer involvement | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** | |
| | 1.2.2 Include a standard reference to volunteering in identified staff position statements | 2021-2022 | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships | |
| | 1.2.3 Create a volunteer web-portal for access, registration, and current opportunities | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Arts, Culture and Tourism<br>· Business Information and Technology Solutions | |
| | 1.2.4 Extend Council's Business Improvement (BI) program to volunteers to capture and develop innovative improvement ideas | 2022-2023 | · **People, Culture and Risk** | |
| | 1.2.5 Increase volunteering opportunities at Council for people with disability through partnership with service providers | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· People, Culture and Risk | Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025 |

## GOAL 2. ASPIRE

We create a purposeful volunteer experience ensuring our volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles that meet the needs of both the organisation and volunteers.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION | TIME-FRAME | RESPONSIBILITY (LEAD DEPT IN BOLD) | STRATEGIC LINKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1**<br><br>**VOLUNTEER ROLES ARE DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO ORGANISATIONAL GOALS** | 2.1.1 Develop standard position statements for all volunteers that include information on the volunteer's relationship with Council | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Arts, Culture and Tourism | |
| | 2.1.2 Annually review all volunteer roles in collaboration with volunteers | ongoing | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· All relevant departments | |
| | 2.1.3 Explore links to educational institutions (e.g. schools, University of Newcastle, TAFE) to engage young people in volunteering and match students to community projects | 2022-2023 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· People, Culture and Risk | |
| | 2.1.4 Strengthen existing citizen science programs and explore collaborative citizen science partnerships | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships** | Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2027 |
| **2.2**<br><br>**ENABLE VOLUNTEERS' INTERESTS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLSETS** | 2.2.1 Develop and implement consistent volunteer recruitment and induction processes across Council volunteer programs | 2021-2022 | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships<br>· Arts, Culture and Tourism | |
| | 2.2.2 Investigate opportunities for people to volunteer in non-traditional programs and activities (eg. parkcare) by exploring new models of volunteering | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** | |
| | 2.2.3 Investigate a Lake Macquarie 'tourism ambassador' program | 2021-2022 | · **Arts, Culture and Tourism** | |
| | 2.2.4 Provide online entry point for episodic volunteers in natural disasters and refer to relevant service agency | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Business Information and Technology Solutions | |
| | 2.2.5 Investigate the engagement of volunteers through community panels, using deliberative democracy principles | 2021-2022 | · **Communications and Corporate Strategy** | |
| | 2.2.6 Assist in developing cultural volunteer opportunities and programming within Lake Mac Libraries, MAC and our heritage sector | 2021-2022 | · **Arts, Culture and Tourism** | Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027 |
| | 2.2.7 Investigate innovative volunteer and professional models of management for existing Council cultural assets | 2021-2022 | · **Arts, Culture and Tourism** | Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027 |
| | 2.2.8 Establish an internal Heritage Working Group and external Heritage Volunteer Network | 2022-2023 | · **Arts, Culture and Tourism** | Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027 |
| | 2.2.9 Support the wider volunteer program for Council with an events volunteer stream | 2022-2023 | · **Arts, Culture and Tourism** | Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027 |
| | 2.2.10 Support the Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance to deliver the Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance Strategic Plan | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** | Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2027 |

## GOAL 3. SUSTAIN

We nourish our volunteers by helping them to understand their roles, developing their skills and protecting their safety and wellbeing.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION | TIME-FRAME | RESPONSIBILITY (LEAD DEPT IN BOLD) | STRATEGIC LINKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1** <br><br> **VOLUNTEER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED THROUGH TRAINING, SUPPORT AND REGULAR FEEDBACK** | 3.1.1 Review existing training, reporting and induction materials and develop apps and other technological solutions so that volunteers can access information on mobile devices | 2023-2024 | · **Business Information and Technology Solutions** <br> · Arts, Culture and Tourism <br> · Community Partnerships | |
| | 3.1.2 Develop volunteer skills through training programs, mentoring opportunities and a volunteer leaders network | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships** <br> · Arts, Culture and Tourism | |
| | 3.1.3 Provide at least two training workshops each year for members of Youth Council in areas of relevant interest and promote opportunity for any resident aged 12-24 years to attend | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** | Youth Strategy 2020-2023 |
| **3.2** <br><br> **THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF VOLUNTEERS IS PROTECTED** | 3.2.1 Review Work Health and Safety responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities and develop consistency across volunteering programs | 2021-2022 | · **People, Culture and Risk** <br> · Community Partnerships <br> · Arts, Culture and Tourism | |
| | 3.2.2 Develop volunteer-specific code of conduct and associated processes | 2022-2023 | · **People, Culture and Risk** <br> · Community Partnerships | |
| | 3.2.3 Identify situations where volunteers are informally operating as Council volunteers and formalise Work Health and Safety arrangements | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships** <br> · People, Culture and Risk | |
| | 3.2.4 Embed child safe standards and guidelines in all volunteer resources, programs and activities | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships** | |

## GOAL 4. EVOLVE

We value and understand the impact of our volunteers, and celebrate their contribution, while striving for continuous improvement in how we work with our volunteers.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION | TIME-FRAME | RESPONSIBILITY (LEAD DEPT IN BOLD) | STRATEGIC LINKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.1**<br><br>**VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION, VALUE AND IMPACT IS UNDERSTOOD, APPRECIATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED** | 4.1.1 Annually analyse and quantify the social and financial benefits of volunteering | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships** | |
| | 4.1.2 Develop an annual recognition process for all volunteers and link to National Volunteer Week | 2021-2022 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Arts, Culture and Tourism | |
| | 4.1.3 Investigate volunteer reward system, including items such as discounts, partnerships or reimbursement | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· People, Culture and Risk | |
| | 4.1.4 Link with the University of Newcastle to investigate studies of Council volunteer programs in relation to the social and health values and benefits gained from volunteering | 2023-2024 | · **Community Partnerships** | |
| **4.2**<br><br>**ENSURE A QUALITY EXPERIENCE FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS** | 4.2.1 Link volunteer opportunities to potential employment opportunities | 2023-2024 | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships | |
| | 4.2.2 Investigate volunteer value proposition (e.g. rewards, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) extension, Corporate Fitness, etc.) | 2023-2024 | · **People, Culture and Risk**<br>· Community Partnerships | |
| | 4.2.3 Implement an annual Council-wide volunteer 'Voice' survey and evaluation of volunteer-involving programs | 2022-2023 | · **Community Partnerships**<br>· Communications and Corporate Strategy<br>· People, Culture and Risk | |

# REPORTING OUR PROGRESS

The Volunteer Engagement Strategy is part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. Actions in the plan will be monitored, reviewed and reported through monthly Business Plan reports and Council's quarterly Operational Plan reports.

A summary of annual successes and progress against the action plan will be recorded, reviewed and shared with volunteers and community organisations through Council's volunteer networks and interagency forums. Regular reviews will enable Council to respond to changes in volunteering practices, priorities for the community, and residents' expectations.

The Volunteer Engagement Strategy will be reviewed in 2024.

## References

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*For more information*