LANDCARE NT

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LANDCARE NT

Landcare NT is the peak body for Landcare groups in the Northern Territory with member groups and associate members spread across the region. It provides support and advice to its members in order for them to achieve sustainable land management.

Community Landcare groups bring people together to share knowledge and take action to maintain and improve the health of their local natural environment.

Landcare NT also advocates on behalf of its members to promote the growing community Landcare movement as part of the National Landcare Network.

VISION

Connecting Community Through Environment

PURPOSE

To represent, strengthen, support and grow the Northern Territory's community Landcare movement to improve the health of the natural environment and working landscapes in the interests of the community and future generations.

VALUES

Social Connections
Caring Custodians
Natural And Working Environments
Learning
Solutions

The Volunteer Engagement Strategy aligns with Landcare NT's vision, purpose and values.

WHERE ARE LANDCARE GROUPS IN THE NT?

Darwin Landcare Groups

Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group

Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group

Rapid Creek Landcare Group

Friends of East Point

Palmerston Region Landcare Groups

Friends of Mitchell Creek Catchment

Greater Darwin Landcare Groups

McMinns Lagoon Reserve Association

Friends of Fogg Dam

Holtze Landcare Group

Berry Springs Primary School Junior Landcare Group

Gulf Savanna Landcare Groups

Katherine Landcare Group

Roper River Landcare Group

Victoria River District Conservation Association

Katherine South Primary School Junior Landcare Group

Tennant Creek Landcare Groups

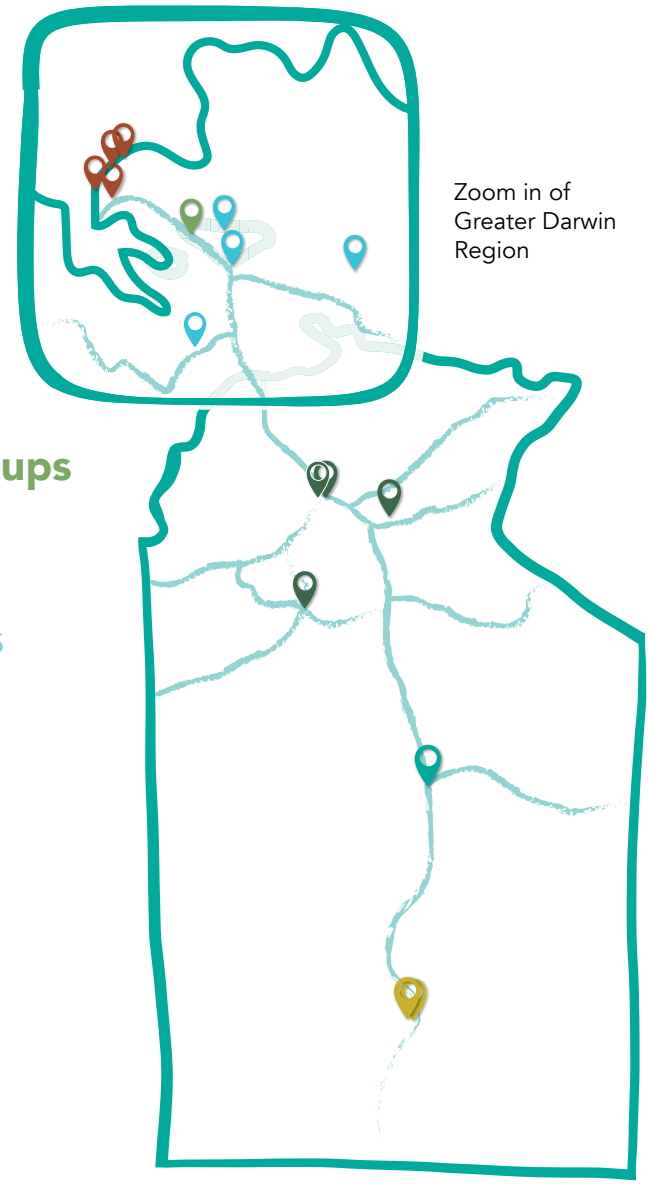
Barkly Landcare and Conservation and Association

Central Australian Landcare Groups

Centralian Land Management Association

Alice Springs Landcare Group

Olive Pink Botanic Garden Landcare Group



Zoom in of Greater Darwin Region

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Members as of December 2019

CHAIRPERSON FOREWORD

Volunteer involvement is a critical part of Australian society. It contributes to civic life and active participation in building strong, inclusive, and resilient communities. It underlies innovation and social change, our responses to community need and community challenges, and it brings together and supports the local strengths and assets of communities. For individuals, volunteering provides an opportunity to be involved in activities reflecting their interests and using their skills. Meaningful activity in turn promotes a sense of belonging and general wellbeing.

Volunteering can also be a way to develop skills, potential pathways to employment, or a way to contribute existing skills for the common good. Volunteer involvement is a two-way relationship, providing an opportunity for organisations to achieve their goals by involving volunteers in their activities, and for volunteers to make meaningful use of their time and skills, contributing to social and community outcomes[1].

Like many not-for-profit organisations, Landcare depends on volunteers – the unpaid workforce – to keep it going. Volunteers in all forms are essential to the success and sustainability of Landcare groups.

Increasingly attracting and retaining volunteers is challenging, and despite continued and diverse campaigns, maintaining volunteer numbers in many cases is demanding.

This Volunteer Engagement Strategy has been developed to assist Landcare groups in the Northern Territory, with some of the challenges of attracting and maintaining volunteers. In addition this Strategy incorporates ideas for skills development and training, social events, networking and recognition.

This Strategy, offers a framework and guidance for NT Landcare groups in promoting, engaging, supporting and celebrating the active involvement of volunteering across the Northern Territory. It seeks to support existing formal and informal engagement programs within the community and to strengthen the social capital of the Northern Territory.

Landcare NT's vision is to Strengthen Community through Environment. Volunteering can assist to achieve this vision by adding social and environmental benefits to the community through the provision of opportunities to connect with and participate in the community, as well as encouraging people who give their time freely to feel supported and valued for their contributions.

The strategy development process, drawing on research and extensive community engagement, identified 6 key pillars where increased volunteer engagement can play a role in better supporting a healthy and cohesive volunteer culture in the community. These areas are:

- Empower
- Represent
- Engage
- Promote
- Recognise
- Grow

The key areas represent the current level of landcare volunteer engagement.
Landcare NT hopes you find this guide useful in delivery of Landcare activities.

Anne Andrews
Chairperson, Landcare NT

[1] Volunteering Australia, National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, 2015 (pg 3)

Landcare NT acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

AIM 1. EMPOWER

Strengthen volunteers by providing resources and training to ensure sustainability of volunteer involvement

AIM 2. REPRESENT

Highlight the positive contributions your organisation makes in the community

AIM 3. ENGAGE

Build relationships with the wider community and stakeholders

AIM 4. PROMOTE

Enhance volunteer involvement and management through innovative use of technology and traditional marketing platforms

AIM 5. RECOGNISE

Value, respect and recognise volunteers

AIM 6. GROW

Implement structures and processes to ensure long-term sustainability of volunteer involvement

1. EMPOWER

Aim: Strengthen volunteers by providing resources and training to ensure sustainability of volunteer involvement

Objectives:

1.1 Improve internal volunteer programs
1.2 Provide resources for volunteers
1.3 Offer flexible project times and roles
1.4 Establish documentation support

ACTIONS

1.1 Improve internal volunteer programs

Appropriate induction for volunteers enables them to perform their role as required and ensures they understand their responsibilities and their rights within the organisation. It is a crucial part of risk management for volunteer programs.

Consider providing:

- Vision and mission of your organisation
- Names and contact details of your organisation's committee members
- Organisational procedures manual or link to website if listed
- Emergency management and procedures
- Orientation of project areas
- Links to social media platforms for upcoming events
- Introductions - try and introduce new members to others especially the committee to make them feel comfortable and part of the team.

Encourage new members to join social media groups

Provide a position description or job procedure

Volunteer positions should involve volunteers in meaningful ways. Providing a written position description, similar to that of paid staff, will ensure that volunteers are aware of the scope of their duties. Being flexible with times, the scope or duration of the project can assist with recruitment and retention challenges.

Establishing communication platforms

A volunteer may work only a few hours per month and so have difficulty keeping up with what is going on. Establishing several communication platforms that your organisation can manage provides more pathways for volunteers to be part of your organisation. Create a system that can be managed by numerous members and avoid individuals controlling methods by training several members in each area.

REMEMBER
Not everyone is on Facebook

Methods of communication

Social Media	Print Media	Posters & flyers	Notice boards
Email	Newsletters	Website	Text
TV	Telephone	Meeting	Instant Message
Radio	Face to face		

Training programs

Develop a list of training requirements for each role, including the need to utilise external providers.

- Training helps new volunteers get to know the people, the program, and the job quickly and efficiently.
- Training your volunteers establishes that there is a minimum competency that all volunteers are expected to obtain.
- Many volunteers see training as a benefit of being part of an organisation.
- Training teaches volunteers skills that may be helpful to them elsewhere, and may even help them get a paying job.
- By training your volunteers, you are making the statement that the organisation is professional and capable of doing important work and doing it well.

Celebrate the successful completion of training with:
Awards & recognition
Certificates
Gift certificates
Party/celebration
Social media shout out

Partner with other organisations to deliver a group training session to reduce costs of external trainer

1.2 Provide resources for volunteers

Volunteers want to feel as though they are gaining something by working with not-for-profit organisations. In order for your volunteers to be able to fulfil their roles they need to have the right equipment available to them. A position description can guide on what is necessary to be able to complete the role. Some examples of resources include:

Safety Equipment

If volunteers are working outdoors, equipment to consider could include:

- High visibility vests – for safety purposes in certain locations
- Hats and sunscreen and mosquito repellents
- Satellite phone or CB radios – allowing to stay in contact if they are working a large distance apart
- Gloves, helmets, goggles, ear plugs – examples of protective equipment

Computer Equipment

Administration, marketing and fundraising are important roles for every organisation and require access to computer equipment and software. Consider a grant or shared resources with other organisations if the volunteer does not have access to their own.

Your email address matters

If you don't have an IT professional looking after your organisation, then consider switching to cloud-based email, they will provide:

- Professionalism
- Safe and secure emails that can be accessed by new volunteers
- Shared calendar and drives

There are several free email providers with discounts to not-for-profits.

Both Office 365 and G-Suite have not-for-profit programs providing email hosting for FREE for eligible organisations.

Documentation

Documentation to support volunteers can include:

- Policies and procedures for social media and your online presence
- Branding documentation so your message is consistent
- An expense or budget request form
- The template for a newsletter and the list of subscribers
- Maps
- Record sheets
- Safety briefing and contact numbers

Other Equipment

- Safety equipment
- Specific pieces of equipment, tools, or machinery
- Stationery and other office supplies
- Keys, passes or security codes

Other Considerations

In addition to the equipment that is directly required to complete the role, there are also other things to consider that play an indirect role in the volunteer being able to complete their role.
These other considerations could include:

- Does the volunteer need desk space?
- Do you need to provide training for specific equipment?
- Does the role require a license to operate equipment? ie. Forklift, truck, bus etc
- Is there a particular procedure for one of their duties, for example access to project location?

1.3 Offer flexible project times and roles

Busy lifestyles, changing family structures and work patterns affect people's ability to volunteer.

Volunteers want roles that are flexible or require shorter hours or a shorter-term commitment and by responding to these changes more pathways are created for volunteers in your organisation. Consider different types of volunteers to build your organisation's skill base strength.

Accommodate flexible working arrangements wherever possible. Millennials are a dynamic and tech savvy generation so providing them with flexible working arrangements, like working from home or using their own technology can go a long way to ensuring they remain engaged.

Types of Volunteer Programs

Corporate
Corporate volunteering provides companies with the opportunity to develop staff skills, build teams and bolster their reputation within their local community.

Emergency
Emergency volunteering involves short-term responses to natural disasters and other emergencies.

Project Volunteering
Volunteers may have specific periods of time available, and therefore seek out volunteer projects that have clearly defined timeframes and goals.

Formal Volunteering
Formal volunteering often revolves around the delivery of services, and involves defined supervision structures and roles. They generally depend on long term, regular attendance. Another form of formal volunteering is governance volunteering, where individuals volunteer as board members or on management committees. They help to provide leadership and direction for the organisation.

Non-formal Volunteering
Less structured and more attractive for those with a shared interest to address a specific need. Non-formal volunteers tend to join these community organisations with the goal of sharing experiences or providing assistance, and they are likely to think of themselves as members or friends rather than volunteers.

Overseas Volunteering
Opening opportunities for overseas volunteers to join your program to meet and work with locals and likeminded people to make a contribution to a community.

Virtual Volunteering
Virtual volunteering describes the growing trend of individuals volunteering online. Virtual volunteering represents a highly digital level of engagement between a not-for-profit organisation, their volunteers and members of the community. Virtual volunteering presents organisations with the possibility of tapping into a vast number of potential volunteers who have useful skills, specific areas of expertise or simply time, but find physical engagement a barrier.

Virtual volunteering can include social media management, website management, administration roles and database reporting.

1.4 Establish documentation support

An organisation should establish a system to control all documentation and personnel records. Personnel documents need to be secure with senior or executive committee members access but volunteers need to be able to access documentation such as:

- Procedures
- Project plans and records
- Evaluation forms
- Photos/social media release forms
- Sign in sheets
- Policies

Compliance for not-for-profit organisations
Use the Australia charities and not-for-profit commission website for information to assist your organisation in compliance.

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission

Cloud based drives can store shared documents for all roles and passwords can be set for confidentiality and offer less paperwork systems.

2. REPRESENT

Aim: Highlight the positive contributions your organisation makes in the community.

Objectives:

2.1 Meet with key stakeholders

2.2 Strengthen support through stakeholders and community collaborations.

2.3 Improve advocacy through strong relationships

ACTIONS

2.1 Meet with key stakeholders

Identify who the key stakeholders in the community are that can offer some support or funding for projects. Stakeholders may have authority in areas for project approvals and/or be able to assist with extra volunteers, funding or plant equipment if needed.

Meeting with stakeholders helps them to understand the values and role that your organisation provides to the community and discuss if there are ways in which you can work together and what resources they may be able to offer.

Consider asking to be invited along to stakeholder meetings so that you can meet and/or do a short presentation to their decision makers.

Who are your stakeholders?

A stakeholder is a member or organisation with an interest or concern in your organisation's activities. They could be:

- Local Councils
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Schools
- Universities
- Department of Defence and/or Defence Cadets
- Plant nurseries
- Church groups
- Nursing homes
- Detention centres
- Centrelink – Work for the dole

Corporate Social Responsibility CSR

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable — to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. It provides an opportunity for Landcare groups to align their project plans with organisations to meet volunteer shortfalls. Larger organisations may offer several pathways of support and marketing opportunities for partnerships. Share your projects with these organisations – it can assist you and in return, align with the CSR goals of the organisation involved.

2.2 Strengthen support through stakeholders and community collaborations

Collaboration is the key to strengthening your organisation. Knowing your stakeholders and understanding their vision will assist your organisation in aligning with them to benefit both groups.

Partnerships can also enhance your organisation's reach as it could boost access to more volunteers, funding opportunities, project support or equipment share. Innovative ways to work together will strengthen the relationship and are favoured more highly in funding submissions.

Stakeholders and community groups may not expect payment for their time or service, therefore consider in return offering some promotion or acknowledgement for their business or their contribution. Schools often run working bees for assistance with gardening which could also be collaborated through your organisation to build more volunteers for their event and provide opportunities for marketing in their newsletter.

Create a database of stakeholders and community groups. Keep communications open, share your newsletters and ask if they have anything they want to share to your members. Build a friendship.

Like all organisations, people rotate roles or move on, so keeping up to date with organisational changes via a contact database will improve the relationships with the decision makers.

A collaboration is a two way partnership. Both parties offer a return investment for the other. For example:
Project: School vegetable patch
Landcare group: skills, tools and knowledge
School: new volunteers, community profile, marketing (newsletter)

2.3 Improve advocacy through strong relationships

To undertake effective advocacy it is important to identify those who are most likely to be your allies, including those who can be persuaded to become allies. You will also need to identify those who stand in the way of your organisation achieving it's advocacy goals.

Advocacy is improved by building relationships with others as it demonstrates a whole of community response to areas which require your organisation's involvement. It may even influence decisions of local control authorities to allow access to land or resources if other stakeholders and community groups share involvement.

Advocacy brings awareness to specific causes and social issues in the world.

3. ENGAGE

Aim: Build relationships with the wider community and stakeholders

Objectives:

3.1 Engage with new volunteer groups

3.2 Grow volunteers in the workplace

3.3 Build inclusive volunteer systems

ACTIONS

3.1 Engage with new volunteer groups

Reach out and engage new groups in the community. If using online platforms utilise this space to share stories with community groups and ask your members to share who you are and what you do. Understand what roles you require and target to those individuals and interested groups.

Consider advertising in school newsletters, local community boards and talk with your local member for suggested groups in your community that align with your needs. Learn about new groups in and around your community to broaden networks.

Volunteers can be all types of people and organisations:

- Schools – term programs
- Retirees
- Multicultural groups/societies
- Family groups
- Grey Nomads
- Councils
- Batchelor Institute
- Backpackers
- Universities
- Students – youth and adult
- Disability groups
- Residential homes
- Environmental tourists
- Landowners
- Prisoner programs
- International Conservation groups/individuals
- Local residents
- Boarding schools – weekend programs
- Indigenous groups
- Small businesses
- Tourism Industry
- Trade schools
- Senior groups

How to engage with a school?

Reasons for engagement:
Long term, community project participation, curriculum alignment, Duke of Edinburgh Award.

How to engage with schools:
Contact your local school(s) through the administration office and arrange to meet with the principal. Discuss your project and outline the objectives, location, proposed outcomes and timeframe. Be realistic on the timeframe, schools plan ahead.

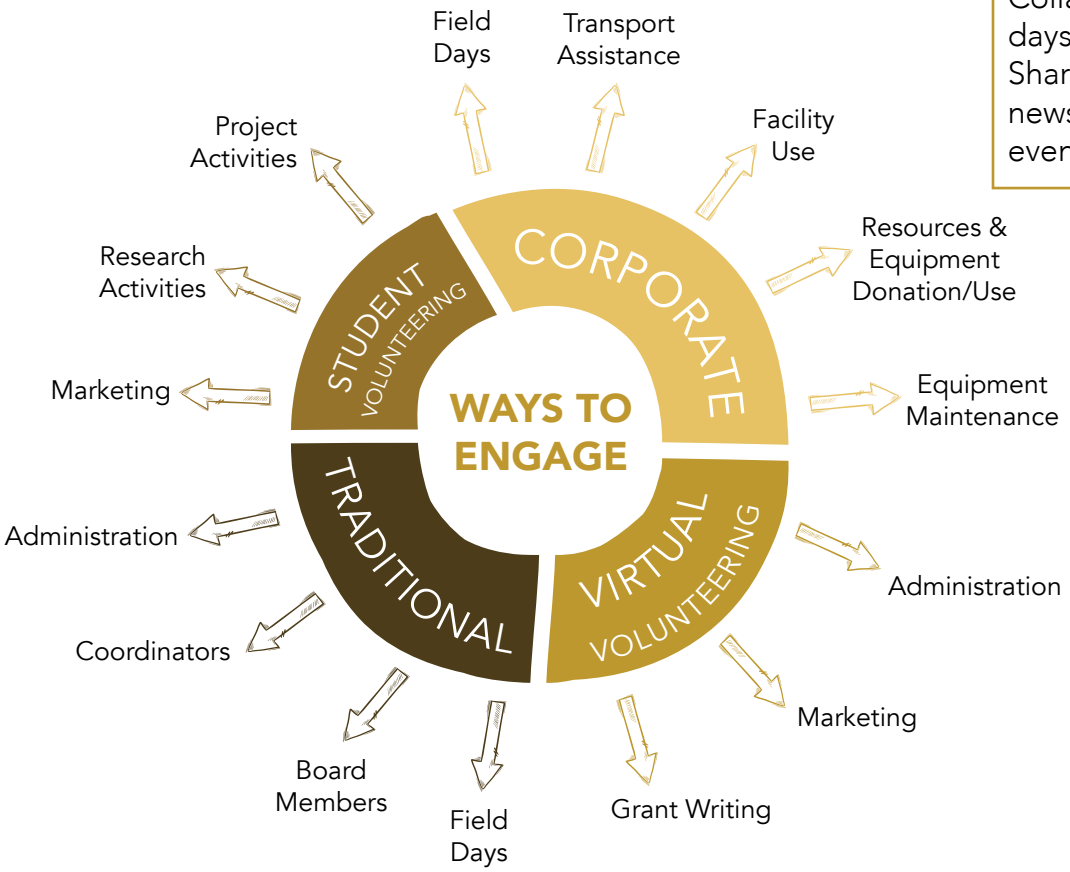
Project Name:
Consider an interesting name to engage younger audiences – replace the word weeding with hunt or incorporate adventure skills.

Look at the strengths of young people and the skills they can bring to your organisation. Identify special positions they can fill. For example, most young people are good with technology so why not recruit them to develop a website or membership database? Promote the benefits of having volunteer roles on their resume.

Align the project with the education curriculum:
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) is popular and encompasses several activities carried out by Landcare groups.

Engage with groups that can support your organisation's needs.

Collaborate on field days with other groups. Share resources such as newsletter writing, tools or even computers.



Investigate organisations such as:

- International Conservation groups/individuals – CVA
- GoVolunteer
- Our Community
- LinkedIn
- GoodSurfing
- Volunteer Match
- Citizen Science Association
- Volunteering SA/NT
- Seek volunteer
- Volunteer Hub
- Guardian and Watchmen programs

3.2 Grow volunteers in the workplace

Several companies have a volunteering program with many wanting to increase their social responsibility.

The Territory has the perfect climate to attract international volunteers, consider listing through worldwide programs.

Research corporate industries you would like to partner with. Many of the larger corporations have programs in place but may be on a submission basis. Be prepared for projects taking time to commence. Have a project plan written, outlining the objectives, outcomes and timeframe. Understand that your project is not their main business and therefore they will need guidance and support from you. Share your organisation's projects, inviting companies to collaborate.

Also consider:

- Detention Centres
- NDIS partner
- Centrelink's Work for the Dole
- Job seekers program
- Community Service organisations eg: aged care, disability, veterans, youth

A not-for-profit organisation may register with Centrelink to provide voluntary work opportunities for eligible job seekers.

3.3 Build inclusive volunteer systems

Inclusive Volunteering programs can include people living with a disability or mental health condition, and refugees or migrants. It is an opportunity to refresh and reinvigorate your community organisation, target a greater reach of community members and provide a more positive and productive contribution to programs you create.

Being a member of a working group or committee in an organisation are examples of volunteering. There are many instances where people with a disability successfully undertake such roles. This type of leadership role can have a positive impact on attitudes while helping the organisation become socially inclusive. People with a disability can volunteer in all types of organisations and in all sorts of ways.

Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others. It promotes human rights and equality and allows people to use and develop their knowledge and skills.

Volunteers need to feel a sense of fulfillment so being valued and included will encourage future volunteering.

Broaden your language
Use broader words to speak to a person, consider including works like help, give or support instead of volunteer.

Build relationships
You need to identify the specific communities you're hoping to engage with and build relationships in each of those communities. Partner with organisations to provide you with advice and support (disability, ethnic and multicultural support groups).

Understand the importance of socio-economic status
Consider the barriers for the person wanting to volunteer – transport, food, childcare. How can your organisation overcome these challenges?

Remove barriers
Immigrant and diverse populations face a variety of barriers to volunteering, including difficulty with background checks and obtaining licences and understanding of the project aims.

Create an inclusive organisational culture
Work to educate everyone within your organisation about the importance of engaging volunteers of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Botanic Gardens
Alice Springs

4. PROMOTE

Aim: Enhance volunteer involvement and management through innovative use of technology and traditional marketing platforms

Objectives:

4.1 Market your organisation's activities and programs

4.2 Use innovative techniques to engage and promote projects

4.3 Harness technology

4.4 Promote online and virtual volunteering

ACTIONS

4.1 Market your organisation's activities and programs

Find a way to promote your organisation that is within your capabilities and budget. People will not volunteer for projects if they do not know about them.

Ways to market can include:

- Radio
- Media Release
- Posters
- Facebook event notice
- Email to key stakeholders and community groups
- Free Community TV Advertising
- Advertise in Community Newsletters
- Email to volunteers registered with Landcare NT
- Social Media targeted marketing

Radio and TV stations have Corporate Social Responsibility plans, invest in them and they will invest in you.

4.2 Use innovative techniques to engage and promote projects

Technology allows us to engage and promote projects but we must first know how to use it and be prepared to keep up with emerging trends in order to connect with the community.

Technology techniques include but are not limited to:

- Direct marketing to a demographic area via Facebook and Instagram ads.
- Remarketing people who have clicked on a social media advertising but not yet followed up in signing on.
- Newsletter and emails which allow click to view access taking the reader direct to the information source about a project and details on how to become involved.

Consider running community engagement competitions and discussions such as photographic competitions of the NT landscape or online discussions about areas the public are connected with.

4.3 Harness technology

By harnessing available technology, it can amplify your organisation to a greater audience and make onerous tasks faster and more reliable.
Technology can include:

- **Website** - crucial to provide a central resource for members, stakeholders and volunteers for information about your organisation, such as:
    - Policies and procedures
    - Contact information
    - Upcoming events
    - Newsletters
    - Volunteer sign up
    - Past events
- **Emails** - provide links to online training and introduction to new members. Consider a professional organisation email account other than a yahoo or gmail.
- **Microsoft Office** – Office 365 for eligible not-for-profit organisations is available for free in Australia. The software provides programs such as Excel, which can be used to create record keeping or database. There is also project planning software such as Planner and Teams. It can also open opportunities in SharePoint to create an intranet for storing and sharing organisation documents from any location and any device, at any time.
- **Social Media** - Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn offer platforms to build an audience and engage with its members and followers. Social media is an extremely effective way of promoting upcoming events and can even be shared by other community groups.
- **Creative desktop and mobile applications** – several for free with some offering premium versions available at a reduced rate or free for not-for-profit organisations.
    - Graphic design – offering interesting and professional looking templates for newsletters, social media posts, posters and a large variety of other mediums.
    - Photography – editing suite and tools to help create and enhance pictures transforming into amazing works of art.
    - Video - editing suite and tools to help create and enhance video with several drag and drop options to create amazing stories.
- **Cloud Share** - enables storing and sharing organisation documents from any location and any device, at any time.

4.4 Promote online and virtual volunteering

Virtual Volunteering can be a way that time poor and tech savvy community members can engage. Whilst technology can be beneficial, in order for it to be relevant it needs to be kept up to date and interesting so that the community continues to engage and events can be marketed effectively.

Tasks which virtual volunteers may assist:

- Updating website information
- Creating newsletters
- Data entry of new and outgoing members
- Social media profile management

Only promote your organisation on platforms that are relevant and that can be managed

5. RECOGNISE

Aim: Value, respect and recognise volunteers

Objectives:

5.1 Establish structured processes to recognise volunteers

5.2 Provide incentives

ACTIONS

5.1 Establish structured processes to recognise volunteers

A recognition plan establishes how your organisation recognises and values your volunteers. A valued volunteer can become a great ambassador for your organisation and can help to attract new volunteers. The plan should outline the eligibility of how volunteers can be recognised, especially for long service or outstanding performance, this con be included in your constitution or as a policy.

How do volunteers feel valued?

- Match tasks with skills
- Provide training
- Let your volunteers know that their work makes a difference
- Trust your volunteers
- Express gratitude
- Keep them in the loop
- Create an identity
- Utilise social and digital media platforms to recognise volunteers
- Thank them for their time
- Feeling connected and making new networks

Consider calculating projects against what it would cost for a paid member of the community to fulfil the role for each activity. This data will assist with funding submissions.

Based on May 2017 to May 2018 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures, **volunteers** are worth $41.72 per hour.

Sometimes a simple thank you is all the recognition that a volunteer wants. This can be a group shout out on social pages or a volunteer of the month post. Meet the volunteers can become a weekly or monthly post and can include why they volunteered and what they got out of it.

5.2 Provide incentives

Trusting Volunteers	Giving volunteers a new task with a different role, or more responsibility, demonstrates trust. Trusting volunteers is an important way to show volunteers that you value and recognise their contribution.
Saying "thank you"	Sometimes a simple thank you is all the recognition that a volunteer wants. This can be informally in person, by telephone, by email, in a Christmas card or formally at the annual general meeting. You may also choose to write articles about volunteer tasks or profile specific volunteers for newsletters, newspapers or volunteer's week. However you decide to do this it should be consistent and fair. But remember the same thanks every time can end up being tokenistic, so be sure to be personal, genuine, timely and specific.
Keeping Volunteers Informed	Volunteers can feel valued if they are kept up to date about what is happening with the organisation. Some organisations have started to use social media and set up blogs, or have dedicated pages for volunteers on their website.
Creating an Identity	There are lots of different ways that you can do this. Being given clothing to wear and relevant equipment whilst doing their role helps volunteers feel part of the team. For example, some heritage volunteers said that having a 'volunteer' identity badge often helps the public appreciate that they are volunteers, and as such this gains respect.
Volunteer Events	Providing time for volunteers to get together socially is a good way to acknowledge their contribution and keep them inspired. Meeting new people gives volunteers a chance to share their experience, hear about what others do, feel part of the larger team of volunteers and maybe think about doing more roles in the organization.
Arrange Discounts	Arrange discounts at local stores or restaurants for your volunteers.
Access to Training	A volunteer may value being able to attend training for development purposes (this has to be relevant to the delivery of the role so it's not considered a perk in lieu of payment). This is especially important for volunteers who are looking to develop their CV or boost their employability skills. This can be done face to face or online. Volunteers might value being invited to attend a seminar, convention, or meeting as the organisation's representative, as it demonstrates to them that they are trusted volunteers.

5.2 Provide incentives continued

Being Honest in Feedback	Sometimes volunteering is not always positive and as an organisation or group you may have to give volunteers constructive criticism. The best way to give feedback is to be specific, focus on the requirements of the role, give real examples, and make sure it is not too long after an incident or issue arises. Know what you want to achieve and have some suggestions about how you think this could be done. Let volunteers talk and discuss their suggestions. Be prepared to be flexible. Being honest is a positive way to build mutual trust with your volunteers.
Meeting Needs	Show empathy and try to adapt roles or activities to suit your volunteers. This is most effective when you ask how you can help, instead of implementing change without taking into consideration a volunteer's views and opinions.
Volunteer Awards	Some organisations nominate volunteers for their in house awards ceremonies. This could be for team effort, length of time in service, inspiring volunteer or even a life time commitment award. Consider nominating for external awards such as Volunteering NT Awards or the Australia Day Awards.
Acknowledging the people behind your volunteers	Sometimes inviting the family and friends of the volunteer to events can be a great way to show your appreciation to those who support or enable your volunteers to participate. This does not have to be costly, for example it may just be a 'bring your own' picnic or games in the park.
Saying "goodbye"	Although it is important to keep volunteers once you have supported them into their role it is also important to remember that most volunteers will eventually leave. Thank them for their time and let them go with gratitude.
Provide a Reference	Sometimes you may be requested to provide a reference for a volunteer if they are moving into paid work, education or another volunteering role.
Valuing	Send get well, birthday and Christmas cards to your volunteers. Provide complimentary tickets to volunteers for special events and functions
Involving Volunteers in Consultation	Involving volunteers in planning and shaping volunteering practice can show volunteers that you value their opinion and views. You could have an anonymous suggestion box, invite volunteers onto the relevant committee, ask for comments by email or set up a volunteer forum. Be sure to acknowledge their involvement where you can.

TOW TRUCK
SERVICE/REP
KATHERINE SOUTH
PRIMARY SCHOOL

6. GROW

Aim: Implement structures and processes to ensure long-term sustainability of volunteer involvement

Objectives:

6.1 Investigate new approaches to enhance volunteer capacity

6.2 Review program objectives

6.3 Explore partnership opportunities

6.4 Provide formal management training

ACTIONS

6.1 Investigate new approaches to enhance volunteer capacity

Volunteers come from all different walks of life and are motivated by different reasons in offering their time and expertise for projects and events. In order to acquire new members to build on capacity, investigate new approaches, adapt to current trends and be flexible and innovative in the way your organisation attracts and retains volunteers.

6.2 Review program objectives to meet changing needs

It is necessary to identify and review program objectives on a case by case basis in order to find innovative ways to attract and retain volunteers. The requirements of the projects as well as the requests of the volunteers need to be reviewed in order to meet the changing needs and demographics of the local community.

What worked 1 year ago may not work today

Consider these questions to reveal the impact of volunteers.

- Have our stakeholders expressed any awareness of, appreciation for, or comments about volunteers?
- What were we able to do more of this year than last because of the extra help from volunteers?
- What were we able to innovate or experiment with this year because volunteers offered or agreed to test/trial something new?
- Did the involvement of volunteers allow your organisation to offer enlarged or improved projects?
- Has your organisation's public relations or image changed, and can this be contributed to volunteers?

Did you deliver your organisation's objectives?

Consider a volunteer satisfaction survey

Create conversations with volunteers to support expectations
Talk with your volunteers about their expectations and make changes based on feedback if necessary.

ESSENTIAL STEPS OF AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

- Develop job descriptions
- Recruit volunteers
- Screen potential volunteers
- Conduct orientation of volunteers
- Train volunteers
- Supervise volunteers
- Evaluate volunteers
- Recognise efforts and achievements

6.3 Explore partnership opportunities

Reach out to the community and discuss projects with potential stakeholders and community groups. Community organisations such as local supermarkets and businesses which are in the proximity of a program may be likely to support the program if they are aware of it and know the value to the community.

Ways to explore partnerships:

- Walk or drive around the project area.
- Talk with businesses
- Put up signs
- Hand out flyers
- Talk with local members about your project and ask for connections
- Post on social media for partnerships
- Talk with community radio programs
- Advertise on community TV

6.4 Provide formal management training

Build on training and skillsets wherever possible. Formal management training will support the long-term sustainability of your organisation. Follow funding websites and sign up for grant newsletters to source funding to assist with training needs.

Training to consider:

- Governance
- Minute taking
- Grant writing
- Financial reporting
- Risk Management
- Fundraising planning
- Constitution and AGM operations
- Not-for-profit management
- Event planning

i Your approach to volunteering must be responsive to the changing needs and demographics of local communities.

THE JOURNEY

Reasons behind the Strategy

Landcare NT Members expressed a need for support to attract, engage and retain volunteers. Currently, traditional methods of volunteer recruitment for Landcare groups are not attracting sufficient numbers of people needed to maintain on ground momentum, with some Landcare groups not being able to fully operate and meet strategic objectives. It is proposed the plan will investigate options that will inspire the community and address issues of volunteer recruitment, retention, training, leadership and succession planning and increase Northern Territory Landcare Groups' volunteer base.

Landcare NT were successful in receiving funding through the Northern Territory Government's Environment Grant to develop a Volunteer Engagement Strategy.

This strategy along with the resources bank is part of the support to our members to establish stronger volunteer engagement.

Outcomes

The Strategy will seek to develop and enhance existing volunteer programs while providing future directions and alignment of common goals for both Landcare NT and Landcare groups in the Northern Territory. It is proposed to:

- Increase capacity to develop a more resilient volunteer network
- Align volunteer programs with National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- Develop sustainable volunteer programs, including increased rates of volunteerism.

Resources

To support the integration and aims of this plan the creation of several resources have been produced for Landcare NT members. Contact Landcare NT for more information or access.

Development of the Strategy

The development of this Volunteer Engagement Strategy was informed by research that included:

- Stakeholder consultations (public forums, volunteering and member surveys)
- Desktop research
- Steering Committee review

3	2	6
WORKSHOPS	**ONLINE SURVEYS**	**STEERING**
1. Alice Springs 2. Darwin 3. Katherine	1. Organisations 2. Volunteers	Committee Members

Stakeholder consultations

Stakeholder consultations were designed to capture what is working well, what is not working well and ideas for improvement for engaging Volunteers within Territory Landcare groups. Consultations were held in Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine in June/July 2019.

Stakeholder Engagement Workshops Summary

Challenges

Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine
• Time poor • Lack of skills in some areas including marketing & technology • Recruiting and retaining young people • Lack of equipment • Maintaining tools - tool storage	• Landcare Brand to the wider community – do people know what Landcare do?	• Money and funding

Opportunities

Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine
• Greater online exposure • Exciting event branding - treasure hunts, adventure activities, cook offs, guest speakers • Job descriptions • Presentations to potential member groups - schools, universities, • Social gatherings - attract people to meet other people and learn new skills at the same time • Members portal • Manuals, policies & check lists - jobs, events, board handover manual • Inspiration - other volunteers - success stories • Training program • Influencers and Empowerment • Email / online database • Annual group training workshop	• Package the 'experience' • School holiday activities • Its ok to volunteer once campaign • Schedule events • Site visits • Mirror interstate & overseas programs • Partnerships - schools, scouts, corporate • Natural events - large tides, sunsets, bird migration • Engage a local business • Signage - partner with a signage company • Job descriptions • Identifying one off and on-going roles • Event roles - traffic control, wildlife observer, first aid officer • Networking opportunities and annual function • Structured reward recognition - 50 hours, 100 hour	• Adopt an area - schools (similar to adopt a star program) • Regional Competitions • Bring a friend

Who are our volunteers?

Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine
• Retirees • Environmentally conscious • Local residents • Qualified in the trade/field • Employed - middle aged • Empty nesters • New to the area - looking for socialising • Community minded people	• Retirees • Local residents • Corporate sponsors • Environmentally conscious • Ethical tourists • Community minded people • Backpacker • Friends / family of those involved	• Environmental interest - NRM • Conservation tourists • Meaningful travel - experience • Background in industry • Local - businesses, residents, landowners • Local tourism businesses • Local - directly effected • Work experience or employment pathways

How do we attract volunteers?

Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine
• Facebook • Email & website • Radio • Word of Mouth • Networking • Flyers & print media • Workshops/Sessions • School Newsletters • Research Positions • Boards/AGM	• Facebook • Emails • Word of Mouth • Advertising • Site visits • Planning activities • Recognition • Events • Brochures and posters	• Word of mouth • Small social events • Social media • Seeing results of other activities

Our volunteers: (answers from each location combined in each section)

Roles	Resources	Support/Recognition
• Board roles • Admin • Grant writer • Coordinator • Asset management • On site roles • Event roles • Stakeholder liaison • Specialised roles - motion camera carer, brushcutter carer • Vehicle use / drivers	• Networking • Skills & Training • Safe working environment • Insurance • Healthy activities • Ecological Knowledge • Facilities - shop front • Industry connections • Insurance • Marketing • Research Assistants • Auditor	• Certificates & Awards • Newsletter articles & Thank-yous • Property assessments • Event - party, BBQ • Local paid support worker • Media recognition • Local and national volunteer awards • Attendance recognition

What could we do differently?

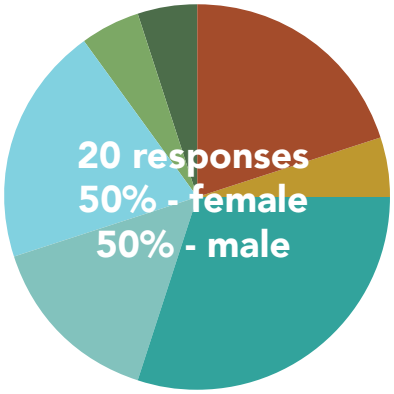
Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine
• Conversations with people using various platforms • Instagram • Clear and consistent message • Pooling resources / collaboration / sharing knowledge • Peak industry support - TNRM, Council etc • Share Job descriptions and resources • Shared Website platform	• Events - branding packaging, connecting with a priority or activity, rather than a place • Connecting with corporates, schools & industry • Connecting with other Landcare groups • Marketing - larger events, consistent, right audience, families, new migrants, schools, corporate • School holiday activities	• Adopt an area - schools (like adopt a star) • Regional Competitions • Bring a friend • make Volunteering compulsory in schools • Partnerships • Workshops on information • School Group projects/ partnerships • Don't confuse and offer too many options

Online Surveys

The two online surveys were designed to capture feedback from people who could not attend the community forums and volunteers of all networks. The survey included the demographics of the respondents, their assessment of the volunteer programs they were involved with and their ideas for improvement of these programs. One survey was for organisations and the other for individual volunteers.

Volunteers

Ages:
20% 25 – 34
5% 35 – 44
30% 45 – 54
15% 55 – 64
20% 65 – 74
5% +75
5% No response



70% - Employeed
75% - Regularly volunteer

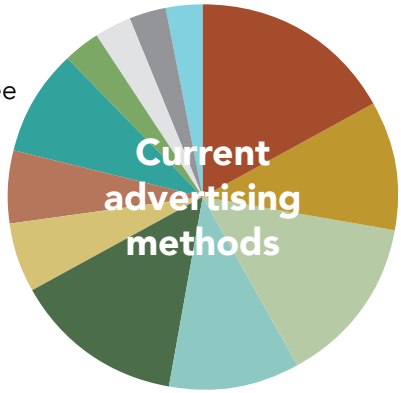
Reasons for volunteering:
45% - Sharing skills
45% - Sense of purpose
20% - To develop new skills

80% Volunteer for more than one organisation
(with 40% volunteer over 3 organisations)

How do they hear about volunteering?
80% - Word of mouth
30% - (also on) Social Media

Organisations

17% Word of Mouth
11% Working bees
14% Through committee
11% Email
14% Social media
6% Posters
6% Website
9% Newsletter
3% School newsletter
3% Direct calling
3% Signs
3% Field days



How could you attract volunteers differently?
- Paid advertising
- Being seen as attractive to young people
- Paper or TV advertising if in budget
- Work with councils and corporate businesses
- Be more active

Current support offered to your volunteers:
- Information to attend workshops for PD and conferences
- Education, linking with others, information, encouragement
- Training, insurance, mentoring

How are your volunteers recognised?
- Certificates
- BBQ's and events
- Newsletter
- Award nominations
- Public recognition (meetings/emails etc)

Desktop research

In developing this volunteer strategy it was important to consider research and information regarding current volunteering trends and issues at international, national, state and regional levels. Examples of research resources used in the development of this strategy include:
- Volunteering Australia
- Volunteering SA&NT
- NRM Australia

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Volunteer Strategy is to establish stronger volunteer engagement for all Landcare NT members.

Six Aims with twenty-one objectives were identified to support the achievement of the strategy's aim. The objectives were highlighted during the steering committee consultations and are aligned to priorities identified through desktop research. The objectives will support volunteers' programs with Landcare groups in the Northern Territory and through the development of the supporting resources enable the groups to implement the strategy.

Thank you to everyone who supported the creation of this document.
For more information contact Landcare NT

www.landcarent.org.au