

City of Ryde

# VOLUNTEER DISCUSSION PAPER







## Background

City of Ryde recognises the positive impact of volunteering and has a strong commitment to support and promote volunteering opportunities both within Council and in the local community.

Council currently engages volunteers in a number of our programs including bushcare, libraries and events. At present each department manages their own volunteers and there is no coordinated approach to volunteering across Council.

Council also receives funding from the Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). This funding is used to support local CHSP services to attract, support and retain volunteers.







## Aim of the Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper outlines our vision for volunteering in the City of Ryde over the next 5 years. It sets out actions to guide how Council supports and develops volunteering both within Council and in the local community.

Council has a commitment to support volunteering in the local area. We recognise the importance of volunteering in terms of providing essential support for our community services, providing economic benefit, career development and connecting our community.

By having a Volunteer Discussion Paper, Council can:

- Promote volunteering in the local area
- Support the needs of local volunteers
- Support local organisations that use volunteers in the community and encourage best practice in volunteering
- Develop Council's internal capacity to support volunteers
- Develop further opportunities to engage volunteers.







## Demographic data

The 2016 Census data shows that there is a strong commitment to volunteering in the local community.



**18.9%**

**of the City of Ryde population  
reported doing some form of  
voluntary work in 2016.**

This is higher than the Greater Sydney average of 16.7% and has increased slightly since the previous Census. There is an opportunity to increase this participation rate further, which will bring additional benefits to the City of Ryde.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are some groups within the community that find it difficult to access volunteering opportunities. These groups include people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people under 18 years of age, older people and people with a disability. This is consistent with national research trends in volunteering (National Volunteer Discussion Paper 2011).





# Alignment with Federal and State Government volunteer strategies

## Policy background

Both the Federal and State Governments have developed their own volunteering strategies. This highlights the important role that all levels of government have in supporting volunteering.

### Federal

The National Volunteer Strategy sets out the Australian Government's vision for volunteering "to ensure that by 2021 volunteering is encouraged, supported and recognised by all Australians". The strategy identifies the actions the Australian Government will take to achieve this vision.

The key focus areas of this strategy are:

1. Respond to trends in volunteering
2. Harness technology
3. Improve regulation and risk management
4. Strengthen management and training
5. Strengthen relationships and advocacy
6. Recognise and value volunteering.

### State

The NSW Government has recognised the need for a coordinated approach to volunteering and has developed the "NSW Volunteering Strategy 2016-2020". This strategy document identifies the need for a life course approach to volunteering (ie. volunteering should be available to everyone no matter what their life circumstances or age) and sets out six priority action areas and guiding principles to make volunteering available to everyone who would like to participate.

The areas are:

1. Expand participation in community life through volunteering
2. Create digital media avenues to support volunteering
3. Develop a mainstream media campaign and local marketing strategies to promote volunteering
4. Design and develop new volunteering options
5. Build capacity in volunteer organisations to innovate and deliver best practice in volunteer management
6. Enhance programs to recognise the positive contribution of volunteers.

It is recognised within the NSW Government Plan that many of the priority action areas need to be addressed on a local level. There is an opportunity within Council and in our local volunteering sector to progress the priority action areas identified in the NSW plan on a local level.





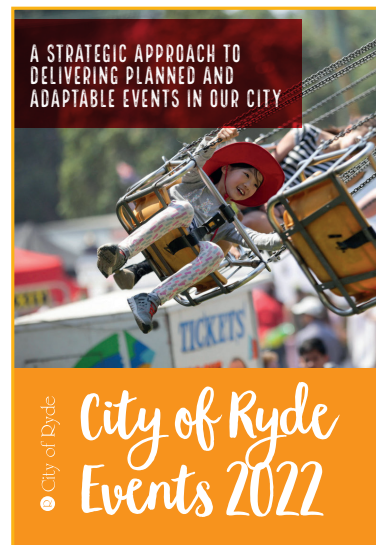
# Documents supporting this Discussion Paper



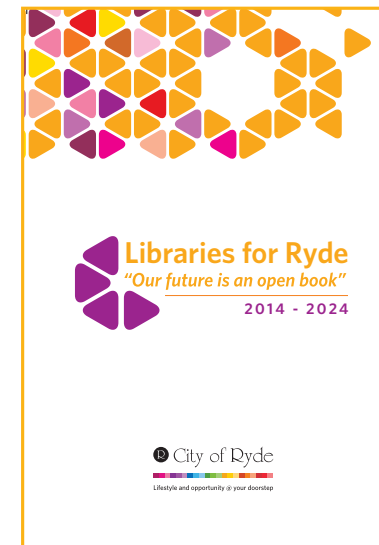
2028 City of Ryde  
Community Strategic Plan



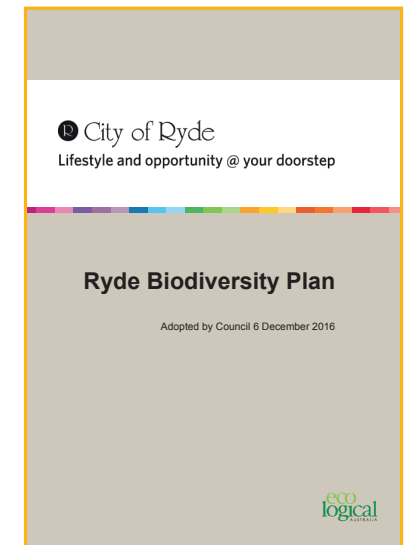
City of Ryde  
Disability Inclusion Action Plan



2022 City of Ryde  
Events Strategy



Libraries for Ryde  
2014-2024



Ryde Biodiversity Plan  
2016



# Consultation methodology

## 1. SCOPING

An internal and external scoping exercise was undertaken regarding volunteering needs. During this scoping meetings were held with:

- a. The volunteer coordinators within Council - representatives from Bushcare, Libraries, Events and Community Services attended.
- b. Commonwealth-funded sector support volunteer coordinators for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) across Northern Sydney - Services included Christian Community Aid, North Ryde Community Aid and Information Services, Sydney Community Services, Ryde Hunters Hill Community Transport, Easy Care Gardening and Catholic Community Services.
- c. Local community aged care and disability service volunteer coordinators - organisations consulted were Royal Rehab, Achieve Australia and Hunters Hill Council Community Services.

The scoping exercise identified that Council could have a greater role in promoting and supporting volunteering in the area. It would be beneficial to promote volunteering beyond Commonwealth Home Support Services. Internally within Council there are potential benefits that could result from a more coordinated approach to volunteering. A Discussion Paper was developed from this initial scoping exercise to inform the following consultations.

## 2. VOLUNTEER SURVEY

A survey was open for community members between January and March 2018. It was open to current volunteers, potential volunteers and volunteer coordinators. The survey was widely promoted throughout the community including via Council's website, social media, the local newspaper, and service networks.

The survey was available online (Survey Monkey). Paper copies were available on request.

The survey sought to identify patterns in how people are finding out about volunteering opportunities and how they engage with volunteering.



**108** potential or current volunteers responded to the volunteering survey

**24** responded to the volunteer coordinators survey.

## 3. VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS WORKSHOP

A workshop was held with local volunteer coordinators to discuss the outcomes of the survey and possible actions. Coordinators from 12 organisations across the area attended the workshop. The organisations represented were diverse including organisations that support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (list of attendees- Appendix 1).

A further two organisations were unable to attend the workshop but were consulted via a phone interview.



# Consultation methodology continued

## 4. INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION WITH INTERNAL VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

Consultations were held with Council's internal volunteer coordinators (Bushcare, Libraries, Events and Community Services). The individual consultations were held to discuss the outcomes of the survey and actions that could be taken which would be specific to Council.

## 5. A FOLLOW UP VOLUNTEER SURVEY

This survey was open to current volunteers and potential volunteers. It was open between May and June 2018. The purpose of the survey was to tease out some of the ideas and opportunities that came through the first survey and the volunteer coordinator workshop.



**128** people fully  
completed survey





# Key themes from consultation

The following themes emerged from our Consultation:

## 1. CREATING A CULTURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is of great benefit to the community. It can help to build social networks, connectedness and community resilience. On an individual level it can improve people's health, wellbeing, skills and satisfaction.

Our aim is to make volunteering more accessible for people in the local community and in doing so create a more cohesive community.

"Perhaps a dedicated website for volunteering positions."  
*Survey respondent*

- 84% of people would use the internet to look for volunteer opportunities.
- Only 57% of volunteer organisations use the internet to recruit volunteers. Volunteer coordinators identified that they would like Council to support this in the area.

- Only 48% of respondents were aware of the volunteer page on the City of Ryde website and of those only 24% had positive sentiments about the webpage.

What people would like to see:

- The most common themes of missing information on the Council website are current volunteer positions, links to volunteer organisations and what to expect when volunteering.
- People would like to be able to locate volunteering opportunities by cause.
- Respondents felt the webpage could be promoted via the local newspaper, rates notices and social media.

"I only refer to Seek as it is the only one I know."  
*Survey respondent*

- Respondents also expressed an interest in face-to-face engagement to find out about volunteering, especially introductory workshops and drop-in events such as expos. This could be tailored to specific groups such as specific cultural groups or youth.

## 2. BEST-PRACTICE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Quality volunteer management helps to ensure that volunteers have a clear understanding of their volunteer roles, they work in safe environments and they are not exploited. It also helps organisations to involve and retain volunteers.

Our aim is to strive towards a situation whereby all volunteer organisations in the area are implementing best-practice volunteer management strategies.

"Need an overarching policy or document which includes the principles of volunteering, rights, responsibilities etc."  
*Council volunteer coordinator*



# Key themes from consultation

Internal stakeholders from four departments identified the lack of Council policy to guide volunteering across the organisation as a gap.

“Consider an online volunteer handbook so people know what to expect.”

*Workshop participant*



**69%** of people would like information sheets or a handbook on what to expect when volunteering

Volunteer coordinators agreed that this would be a high priority. Most respondents felt a handbook should cover general volunteer information. There appears to be a disconnect between the expectations of volunteers and volunteer coordinators regarding volunteering.

Most respondents identified “on-the-job training” as important to their volunteer role.



**59%** of respondents did report that they would consider volunteer workshop training especially for generic topics

## 3. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

One of the best ways to demonstrate to the community the importance of volunteering, is by recognising and showing the value that volunteers bring to the community.

Our aim is to provide public opportunities to recognise the efforts and contributions of our local volunteers.

Volunteer best-practice (Centre for Volunteering) suggests that volunteer recognition is an important part of volunteering.



**41%** of respondents stated that they did not require recognition for volunteering

Points that have been identified in the surveys as motivators for people to volunteer are:

- References to assist with a job (27% of respondents)
- Accredited training opportunities (27% of respondents)
- Social gathering and events
- Public acknowledgement of contribution.

# Key themes from consultation continued

## 4. COLLABORATION TO INCREASE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Creating links between organisations that engage volunteers, will improve the knowledge, skills and capability of the sector and volunteering will ultimately be strengthened.

Our aim is to build the capacity of not-for-profit organisations across the Ryde area to support volunteering including volunteer promotion, best-practice volunteer management and the development of new volunteering opportunities.

- Communication and networking - volunteer coordinators have identified that they would like Council support with volunteer promotion, support and training for volunteers, volunteer management resources and recognition of volunteers. A sector network meeting has been identified as one of the ways to share ideas and best practice resources between volunteer coordinators and Council.



**71%**

of people would be interested in receiving a quarterly newsletter to keep them up to date with local volunteer information



**11 out of 12**

volunteer coordinators at the workshop supported this communication initiative



- Develop new volunteering options – Most people who currently volunteer do so between 9.00am and 4.00pm on weekdays.



**50%**

of potential volunteers stated that they would prefer opportunities on the weekend or after 4.00pm



This is an area that could be developed.



# Volunteer Discussion Paper action plan

## VOLUNTEER PROMOTION

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Readily available information on volunteer opportunities	Update Council's webpage dedicated to volunteering to ensure links to local volunteer organisations are accurate, improve access to volunteering opportunities, define volunteering cause and explain what to expect when volunteering	CS CE	LVO	High
	Link volunteer webpage to other volunteer resources such as SEEK volunteer, The Centre for Volunteering, University, TAFE, etc.	CS CE	Uni TAFE Other volunteer promotion websites	High
	Promote volunteer webpage via social media/ newspapers/ rates notices etc. with at least two dedicated campaigns per year	CS CE	LVO	High
Better promotion of volunteer opportunities to the community	Introduction to volunteering workshop to be held at least once per year	CS LS	LVO	Medium
	Explore opportunities for a volunteer stall at events such as Granny Smith Festival, Macquarie Uni events, TAFE events etc.	CS CE	Macquarie University TAFE	Medium
	Explore opportunities for potential volunteers to have 1:1 meetings to discuss volunteering via a volunteer information day once per year.	CS	LVO	Low
Better connections between organisations to promote volunteering	Create at least one community partnership per year to promote volunteering to people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background	CS	CALD orgs	Medium
	Explore options to promote volunteering opportunities to younger people	CS	Youth services	Medium

### KEY

CS - Community Services, LS - Library Services, CE - Communications and Engagement, EHB - Environment, Health & Building, UB - Urban strategy, LVO - Local Not-For-Profit organisations that engage volunteers

### PRIORITY KEY

High - within 1 year, Medium - 2-3 years, Low - within 5 years

# Volunteer Discussion Paper action plan

## BEST-PRACTICE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Organisations are supported to develop a volunteer policy	Information on Volunteer Policy development and best-practice examples are distributed to volunteer organisations in the area	CS	Peak bodies LVO	High
	A City of Ryde Volunteer Policy is developed	CS		High
Potential or new volunteers are aware of the requirements of volunteering	Develop a set of volunteer help sheets or handbook to prepare potential volunteers for what to expect when volunteering	CS CE	LVO	High
Induction information is available for new volunteers	Information on volunteer induction resources are distributed to volunteer organisations in the area	CS LS		Medium
	A volunteer induction pack is available for all Council volunteers including those who are volunteer members of Council Committees	CS CE EHB LS		Medium
Local volunteers have better access to suitable training for their volunteering role	Investigate opportunities to provide low cost training for volunteers via workshops once per year (this would be generic training as role specific training should occur on-the-job)	CS	LVO	Medium
	Investigate opportunities to support volunteer organisations to provide role-specific training for volunteers	CS	LVO	Low
Better support for best-practice volunteer management	Investigate opportunities to provide low cost Police Checks or similar for volunteers	CS	LVO	Low

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# Volunteer Discussion Paper action plan

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Volunteers are acknowledged and recognised in the community	Explore accredited training opportunities that Council could facilitate to support local volunteering	CS	TAFE Centre for Volunteering	Medium
	Explore resources such as a reference template to be available for organisations which support volunteers in the Ryde area	CS UB	LVO	Medium
	Explore significant achievement awards for Council volunteers, eg. 5- or 10-year service	CE		Low
	Continue Council's annual Volunteer Recognition Awards	CE		Medium
	Continue to recognise local volunteers with social events	CS CE		Medium
	Explore social recognition opportunities that are specifically targeted to younger volunteers	CS		Low
	Provide name badges for volunteers on Council committees (or t-shirts for youth)	CS		Low

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# Volunteer Discussion Paper action plan

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Regular sector updates are available for volunteers and volunteer coordinators	Develop and distribute a quarterly newsletter on volunteering to volunteers and volunteer coordinators	CS CE	LVO	High
Increased opportunities for sector networking and information sharing are available	Organise a workshop for volunteer coordinators to provide feedback on findings from the Volunteer Discussion Paper surveys eg. Information on the preferences of volunteers to receive information, recognition, training etc.	CS	LVO	High
	Investigate the potential of establishing an interagency meeting of local volunteer coordinators twice per year	CS	LVO	Medium
	Share resources with staff that convene Council committees	CS		Medium
Volunteering opportunities are developed and expanded within Council and local organisations	Investigate additional/ new opportunities for volunteering within Council	CS		Low
	Explore options for new volunteering opportunities within the community	CS	LVO	
	Look for opportunities to encourage local employees to be involved in local volunteering	CS CoR UB	LVO	Low

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## PRIORITY KEY

High - within 1 year, Medium - 2-3 years, Low - within 5 years



# Monitoring and review

This Discussion Paper sets out actions for Council to guide and develop volunteering in the area over the next 5 years. The Discussion Paper includes who is responsible and the timeframes for each action. The progress against these actions will be reported through Council's annual planning and reporting framework.

## Appendix 1

Organisations represented at the City of Ryde volunteer coordinators consultation workshop Wednesday 11 April 2018

- Royal Rehab
- Sydney Community Services
- Primary Ethics
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- The Habitat Network
- 2RRR
- Relationships Australia
- Mahbouba's Promise
- Eastwood Uniting Church English Classes
- Chinese Christian Community Services
- Country Women's Association
- Women's Sport

Other Organisations Consulted:

- Adults with ADD
- Catholic Community Services

 City of Ryde

# **VOLUNTEER DISCUSSION PAPER**