

PARTICIPATE

GET INVOLVED > STAY CONNECTED

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**Celebrating
inclusion**

AN INITIATIVE of the Centre for Participation, **PARTICIPATE** has been created to encourage participation within the broader Wimmera Mallee community and to help readers in staying connected with current events and opportunities across the district.

Formed following the amalgamation of Volunteering Western Victoria and the Wimmera HUB in 2016, the Centre for Participation encourages people from all walks of life and all skill sets to fully participate in their lives and their communities, via the four pillars of Community, Learning, Volunteering and Partnerships.

As such, the theme of our fourth edition is inclusion.

We are exceptionally proud of **PARTICIPATE** and welcome any feedback you may have about it.

Please enjoy.

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COVER:

Beulah Historical Learning and Progress Association won the Overall Leading Volunteer Organisation/Program Award at the 2017 Volunteering Recognition Awards.

CEO WELCOME >

Celebration time...

I can't believe how fast these past two years have gone and here we are again reading about all the amazing volunteering that happens across our region in preparation for the 2019 Volunteering Recognition Awards.

Volunteering is lifeblood of our communities, one could say it is a critical part of the DNA that make our communities who they are. National Volunteer Week, established in 1989, is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight volunteering across Australia.

National Volunteer Week in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is being kicked off with the Volunteering Recognition Awards, hosted at Horsham Town Hall on May 17. This is an amazing chance to recognise some of the wonderful volunteers, volunteering programs and volunteer-involving organisations in our region.

This year is seeing some great changes to the Volunteer Recognition Awards:

- Firstly with welcoming our new Gold sponsor, 1089 3WM, Mixx FM and The Weekly Advertiser; this is in addition to their amazing media support since the inception of the awards in 2013.

→ The launching of an inaugural "People's Choice Award". This will provide a great opportunity for community members across the Wimmera Southern Mallee to be the judges and vote! This new award is being made possible by Bendigo Bank.

→ Another big change is the judging process. Judges (different for each of the Awards) will be visiting all of the shortlisted finalists to get a bigger picture of what great work the finalist is doing in their community to enable them to select the winners.

National Volunteering Week will see celebrations across the Wimmera Southern Mallee and we are inviting all volunteer-involving organisations in the region to let us know what they are doing to celebrate their volunteers in the region... let's promote all our volunteering and celebrate all our volunteers, and those that support such wonderful activity.

Julie Pettett

CEO, Centre for Participation

Farwell Serena

Centre for Participation would like to acknowledge and thank Manager Community Services and Volunteering Serena Kereopa for the contribution she has made to the growth of our organisation over the last 8 years.

Starting with Wimmera Volunteers as an Administration Officer in 2011, Serena has now moved to Queensland and on to the next phase in her life.

We wish her well.

MOVING ON: Serena Kereopa with colleagues Roman Ulanowicz (left) and Robbie Millar.



VOLUNTEERING >

Recognising **outstanding effort**

NOMINATIONS have now closed for the biennial Volunteering Recognition Awards with preparations in full swing for the gala evening at Horsham Town Hall on May 17.

GET YOUR TICKETS

*Tickets on sale from
April 29*

VOLUNTEERING RECOGNITION AWARDS 2019

The awards celebrate the contribution of volunteers, volunteer programs and volunteer-involving organisations that make our Wimmera communities so vibrant and are a great opportunity to recognise outstanding achievements.

Marking the start of National Volunteer Week, judges are now in the process of selecting finalists from the 12 categories including Young Volunteer, Kinship and Foster Carer Award, Landcare awards and Celebrating Diversity.

The Volunteering Recognition Awards are underpinned by our major donors and we thank them for their continued involvement and their commitment to celebrating volunteering - it is a credit to each of the organisations.

Ticket sales open April 29 and can be purchased from Horsham Town Hall.

MAJOR SPONSORS

Gold donor



Silver donor



Bronze donor



Supporter



VOLUNTEERING RECOGNITION AWARDS 2017

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

LOOKING BACK TO 2017 >

Volunteers the **beating heart of communities**

What makes a person choose to volunteer? Is it because they feel obligated, or rather because they find it enjoyable and want to see their communities thrive? As indicated in the biographies of some of the 2017 Volunteering Recognition Award winners, it is most definitely the latter.

Past Overall Leading Volunteer Team/Program winners



2013

Harrow Bush Nursing Centre Pathways to Harrow Project

Presenting the journeys of 25 women who moved to the rural hamlet of Harrow, the project involved collating their stories into a book with the aim of promoting and encouraging the idea of relocating to a rural community and the benefits of such a decision.

Inviting members of the community to nominate a person to be involved, the project encompassed younger, older and culturally and linguistically diverse women, all of whom were members of the Harrow Bush Nursing Centre.



2015

WSMLLEN Reading Buddies Program

Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network's MATES Reading Buddies program aims to give children from grades prep-six the opportunity to improve their reading.

Volunteers attend local schools and spend one-on-one time with a student listening to them read which is nice for both as, often, in classes exceeding 25 students, the teachers simply don't get time to spend with each student.

Volunteers attend schools on a casual basis and describe the program as a positive experience, with the children enjoying meeting and talking to someone new.

250

VOLUNTEERS IN 2017

2017

Beulah Historical Learning and Progress Association

Formed in 1999 as a whole community volunteer response to the local post office service closing down, the BHLPA also had the vision to expand into other connecting community activities and services. Auspicing several community groups and supporting local business and other services including: Beulah Business and Information Centre, Beulah Patchwork Group, Beulah Community Garden Historic Group and many others, produces a weekly community newsletter "The Roundabout", offers meeting rooms for other organisations to hire and welcomes monthly guest speakers.



SHORTLISTED FINALISTS 2019 >

Well done to all of the shortlisted finalists in the group categories – winner will be announced at the gala dinner on May 17. Good luck! And thank you to the award donors whose support has made these awards possible.

Young Volunteer:

- Hugh Caldwell
- Jessica Pilgrim
- Zack Currie

New Resident:

- Karen Pederson
- Carolyn Maltry
- Zack Currie

Lifetime Achievement:

- Flo Andison
- John Deckert
- Jeff Pekin

Emergency & Recovery:

- Sandmere Fire Brigade
- Warracknabeal Urban Fire Brigade
- Prevention is Better than Cure

Celebrating Diversity:

- Wimmera Pride Project
- Alphabet Soup
- Horsham-Nhill Karen Group

Community Health:

- Wimmera River Park Run
- Friends of the Foundation
- WHCG Volunteer Drivers Program

Strong Community Program:

- Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre
- Nhill & Districts Young Farmers
- St Arnaud Community Resource Centre

Connecting Communities:

- SPARK Program
- Women in Sport Good Governance Program
- MATES Mentoring Program

Local Landcare Group:

- Horsham Urban Landcare
- Jallukar Native Grasslands Project
- Rainbow Landcare

Individual Landcarer:

- Harvey Champness - Kaniva District Landcare
- Margo Sietsma - Friends of the Grampians/Gariwerd
- John Pye - Project Platypus

Young Landcare Leader:

- Mirinda Thorpe
- Emily Suter
- Tom Dunn

Kinship & Foster Carer:

- Jess and Beau Pendlebury
- Janine Harberger
- Michelle and James McKay

THE WORKS!

*The works have made
the centre more
inclusive.*

Cooking up inclusion

Centre for Participation is excited to announce that its new kitchen and training room was officially launched on Harmony Day, March 21.

Kitchen CreATE



Prepare your own adventure!

Made possible through a grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the kitchen and training room was built with the aim of giving communities an opportunity to cook and prepare meals to further their skills and training.

Learning and Community Development Manager Robbie Millar said it is set to become an inclusive centre where people can come and participate while enjoying social connectedness: "The kitchen will also feed into the Social Enterprise Café, a project we are partnering with Woodbine and Horsham Special School on, as well as our food and coffee van."

The food/coffee van was made possible via a Regional Development Victoria grant and will primarily target migrant women to give them work experience and expose them to rural communities, and vice versa.



WORKS: The new kitchen and training room will become an inclusive centre.

Creating better access

VISITORS to the Centre for Participation are thanked for their patience during construction work at the front entrance.

Construction started in December, during which time visitors were asked to enter through the rear of the building.

The works included the installation of a new ramp and greater all abilities access to the building.

Aimed at providing the community with more options to participate, to improve social inclusion and skill development, the changes are now complete.



WORKS: Entry works have given Centre for Participation visitors better access

VOLUNTEERING >

Volunteering can, and does, transform lives

Volunteering for inclusion

Living in complex and uncertain times, driven by rapid social and technological change, it is fair to say that our experiences of community, volunteering, participation and inclusion are shifting, and perhaps not for the better.

The latest Scanlon Foundation survey data identified decreased feelings of belonging, increased reports of discrimination and declining support for multiculturalism in Australia as threats to social cohesion.

Within the volunteer sector, we know that volunteering – both formally and informally – can and does transform the lives of people and communities in positive ways; promoting social inclusion and connectedness, providing opportunities for economic inclusion, and empowering people to find their voice and participate in community.

So, how can we effectively engage and mobilise volunteers to remedy exclusion and build resilient communities? How can we design volunteer opportunities with the community to maximise social cohesion?

In the 2 year research project undertaken by Centre for Participation in partnership with Think Impact, we are asking these exact questions.

Funded by the Department of Social Services through their Strong and Resilient Communities Activity, this project continues to explore how volunteer engagement impacts social cohesion, and how this outcome can be factored into the design of volunteer activities and engagement practices to build community resilience.

Emerging findings indicate that beyond the value already being created by the volunteer sector, there is further opportunity to positively impact social and economic exclusion by:

→ Supporting community mobilisation as well as structured volunteer activities

→ Designing volunteer programs and engagement practices that prioritise people's experiences and outcomes as well as filling volunteer roles with the best candidates

→ Acknowledging and working with existing community networks and groups

→ Valuing volunteering in and of itself, and not merely as a pathway to something else (eg: employment)

The next stage of the project involves co-designing volunteer programs across five regions in Australia, and testing their impact on social cohesion. The findings have the potential to transform the current volunteer engagement paradigm, and, in doing so, transform communities.

Madaline Rielly
Think Impact



HARMONY DAY: Indian and Filipino dance and music were a feature of Harmony Day celebrations at the Centre for Participation on March 21

LEARNING >

Driving app launched

Learning to drive has been given a 21st Century boost with the introduction of the myLearners app which records the learner's driving hours.

Centre for Participation Licencing the Wimmera acting coordinator Stephanie Thomson said: "It's exciting that driving has moved into the 21st Century."

"Most, if not all, learners have smartphones and this app now means they don't need to complete the old paper-based log book and get it signed by their supervising driver," she said.

"It's just a great app, and also stores the information so if the learner's phone goes flat they don't lose their hours".

Learner Laura Doolan, who used the app for the first time recently described it as "cool", while supervising mentor driver Sandra Bamkin said it was "easy to use" and "better than the book".

21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY



TECHNOLOGY: LTW acting coordinator Stephanie Thomson (left), learner driver Laura Doolan (centre) and driving mentor Sandra Bamkin say the myLearners app will make recording on-road hours easier

COMMUNITY >

Community Transport growing

Enabling regional residents to travel into Horsham and surrounding towns, the Wimmera Southern Mallee Community Transport Service has gone from strength to strength since its inception 16 months ago.

It is a cooperative venture with Centre for Participation's regional partners in Local and State Government, health and community services groups, education providers and community organisations.

Giving regional residents along each route without access to public and private transport the opportunity to connect with townships along the route for social outings, commercial reasons or appointments, it is a friendly and inclusive service operating weekly on a Wednesday.

"The Kaniva to Horsham route has averaged four passengers per service over the 206 return trips made to date. Many of these passengers are frequent travellers and love the service and companionship," Project Officer Barry Crewther said.

"We now have two mini buses and both are very visible with their bright

community transport designs covering each vehicle," he said.

Mr Crewther said the addition of a second bus will allow Centre for Participation to upgrade the Edenhope to Horsham route with a weekly mini bus service replacing the former Volunteer Companion service.

"It will start the journey from Edenhope in the morning with local community transport providing a connection from Harrow to Edenhope. The bus will then journey to Minimay, Goroke, Natimuk and Quantong on its way to Horsham with drop offs at various point around Horsham," Mr Crewther said.

"The bus will then complete the reverse journey back to Edenhope in the afternoon," he said.

"We're very excited to offer residents along this route their own weekly service

and dates and times will be released soon."

Further displaying its growth, the service is also exploring potential additional routes within the region to provide community transport to a new and wider audience, and is working with the regional partners to bring these and new routes to fruition.

"The weekly, highly popular men's and ladies outings form part of the Social Enterprise component of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Community Transport Service and we are seeking further opportunities to expand upon this area and encourage interested business and community groups to contact Centre for Participation about this aspect of our service".

To find out more or to book a seat please call 1800 952 211 – bookings close 2pm Tuesday.



GROWTH: Since its inception in 2017, the Wimmera Southern Mallee Community Transport Service has gone from strength to strength

PARTNERSHIPS >

Good GOVERNANCE

Helping community organisations be their best

Supporting **stronger communities**

Good Governance creates stronger, more cohesive and more resilient communities by boosting good governance practices in community organisations.

The initiative matches trained volunteers skilled in governance with a community organisation. These volunteers act as mentors over 12 months, working with the entire committee or board on a systematic, tailored program to empower the organisation and facilitate good governance. The mentor and community organisation are connected to the same host, which is a community development organisation, local council or peak body.

As one of five Volunteer Resource Centres involved in a national research project into enhancing volunteering towards improving social cohesion, Centre for Participation is testing how it can better support informal volunteering.

This involves a focused plan of activity responding to the needs of four local organisations. Each has volunteer leadership but they have a mix of volunteers and staff to support their operations. The groups, and the activity Centre for Participation are considering are:

1. **Horsham Agricultural Society**

The Agricultural Society has traditionally, (for 131 years!), run an annual show but is transitioning to an operation where its showgrounds are an events space, and a facility that enables a range of community-driven activities.

We are looking to work alongside the committee so we can identify what skills and capabilities the Ag. Society needs to have access to, the things it needs to consider, and the ways it needs to engage through this transition.

The society is facing a key moment in its history as the future of the showgrounds is at the centre of community and civic discussions.

2. **St Arnaud Community Resource Centre**

St Arnaud is a town with a population of around 2000, which sits 100 kilometres east of Horsham. Two years ago Centre for Participation successfully supported the St Arnaud Community Resource Centre through a series of financial and personnel issues that threatened its viability.

The community centre provides office services and hosts counsellors, employment agencies and Centrelink. It is also a volunteer hub, a meeting place for community organisations, operates a foodbank and offers learning opportunities.

Centre for Participation will work alongside the centre's board, now that its future is secure, to think about how it can move to the next level of serving the needs of its community.



**HELPING
COMMUNITY
ORGANISATIONS
BE THEIR BEST**

The 'Good Governance' model

3. Horsham Table Tennis Association

Horsham Table Tennis Association operates significant social programs, from a regional Active All-Abilities program for disabled people, a "keen-agers" social inclusion program and keep-active program for retirees, juniors' training and competitions, and programs for school students.

It also runs regular adult A and B Grade competitions and, in 2018, bought the former Italian Social Club and is now in the process of converting it into its stadium. This will be successful if other groups can be included in this process, and the association draws on its place in, and support from, the broader community.

Centre for Participation is intending to help the club with strategic and business planning as it builds its community asset, and considers more formally its role in social inclusion.

4. Heartland Horsham

Heartland Horsham is a project led by Wimmera Landcare, with many other local and Melbourne partners. It is organised around a community planting weekend which welcomes migrants and their families from Melbourne to visit and volunteer in the Horsham area.

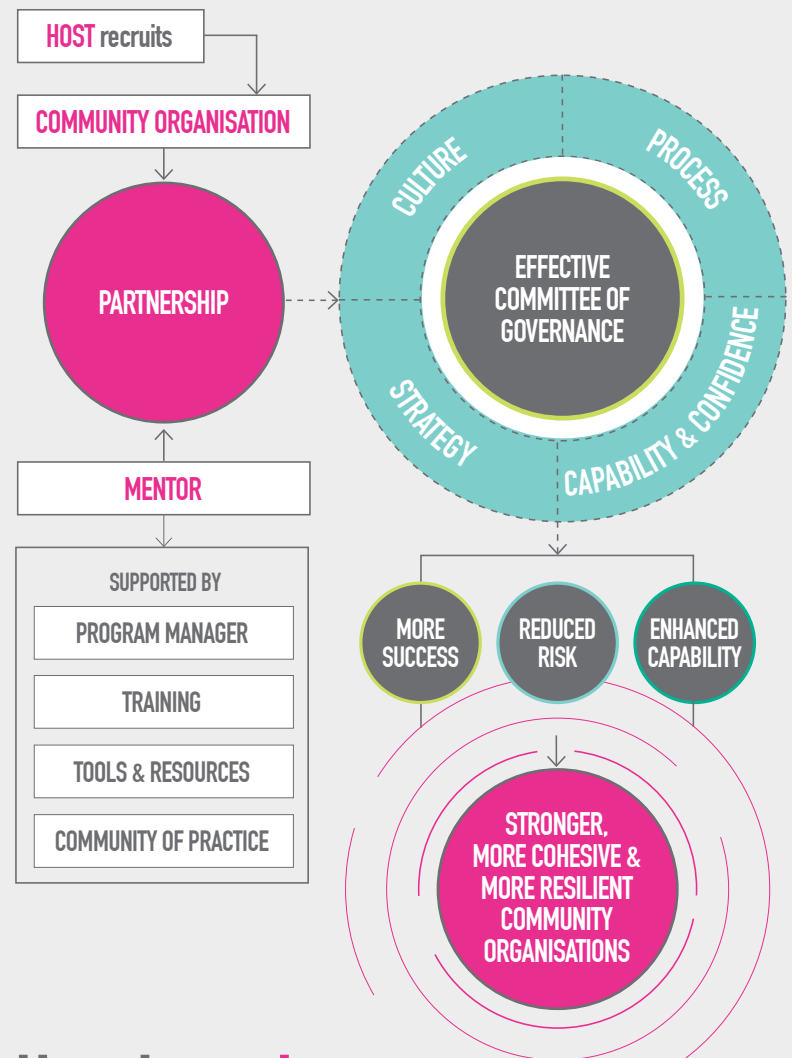
Our support involves helping with the sustainable shift of a highly successful program from one location to another; Warracknabeal to Horsham.

It also involves helping to understand what the new local conditions mean and supporting the intersection between social inclusion, environmental activity, the involvement of migrants, and volunteering.

For each group Centre for Participation will co-design a 12 month plan of activity. However, wherever possible, we will try to look at what we can do to support community groups across our region with the issues that we identify.

So any training we do for the four groups, such as workshops, will be made available more generally.

In addition, any tools and materials developed will be produced as templates in the first instance. In this way, while Centre for Participation test and work with its four specific groups its goal, even throughout the research project itself, is to have a much greater impact.



How it works

1. Trained volunteer mentors skilled in governance are referred to hosts (local councils/peak bodies/community development organisations)
2. Community organisations attend an introductory workshop
3. Hosts match a mentor to a community organisation
4. Mentors work directly with community organisations over 12 months, through a systematic program supported by an evaluation framework
5. Mentors are connected with one another in a Community of Practice
6. Small and medium community organisations improve their governance practices
7. Program helps to create stronger, more cohesive and more resilient communities

Good Governance is an initiative of the Centre for Participation.

To find out more about how you can support community organisations to be their best, contact the Centre for Participation on **03 5382 5607** or email info@centreforparticipation.org.au

MIGRANT LEARNING >

Finding their happy place

For Eddie Nsanzimana, it was attending a conference that led to the creation of a safe space for young people to come together and share their stories.

Originally from East Africa, when Eddie moved to Horsham he joined the Centre for Participation's Licencing the Wimmera program and learned the driving skills necessary to successfully gain his driver's licence and, in turn, was able to gain employment to support his family.

Keeping in touch with the centre, about 4 years ago he attended a conference in Ballarat which asked attendees to identify a gap in their community.

"I identified that young people, and particularly new arrivals, needed a happy, peaceful place to come together, share their stories and hang out," Eddie said.

"Young Generation, or Young G, was created from that," he said.

Initially operating from Grampians Community Health, Centre for Participation is excited to have now taken on the Young G program and has welcomed Eddie on board to run the next phase of the program.

"Young G is hosted fortnightly on a Wednesday and welcomes an average of 10-14 kids," Eddie said.

"It's a good group for all and I'm very happy with how well it has been embraced," he said.



YOUNG G: A safe place to share stories and hang out

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