

Strategic plan 2021–2024

Continuing on our path for growth

This document sets out our plan for the future direction of the Centre for Participation. It brings together the insights uncovered during strategic planning workshops held in late 2020, exploring where we are now, where we're going and how we'll get there.

Importantly, this strategic plan marks a key milestone for our organisation. It signals the completion of the first strategic planning period we embarked upon when Volunteering Western Victoria and the Wimmera HUB merged in 2015, to become what is now the Centre for Participation. With the Centre for Participation now well-embedded as an organisation within our community, we're looking to build on these strong foundations and further grow our impact throughout the region.

The essence of what we want to achieve remains the same: changing lives and strengthening communities through local opportunities to participate. To make this happen, the four core themes highlighted in our first planning period still hold true and continue to underpin this current strategic plan:

→ **Anything is possible for anybody**

→ **We're all in this together**

→ **Authentic leadership**

→ **Getting on with it.**

Under each core theme in this strategic plan, we've set out a key priority we'll be focusing on during this planning period. Also included are specific goals and accompanying actions to achieve these goals, along with measures so we can see how we're tracking. Importantly, many goals and actions have been designed to link with and support other goals and actions throughout the strategic plan, helping to complement and connect the work we're doing, and shape the bigger picture for our organisation overall.

Our vision

To change lives and strengthen communities through local opportunities in community support, volunteering, learning and partnerships.

Our values

The board, staff and volunteers share a common set of values that guide the Centre for Participation in fulfilling its vision. These values influence our actions, guide our decisions, mould our policies and underpin our strategic priorities.

Inclusion and respect

We believe that everyone has the right to be culturally and socially accepted, welcomed and equitably treated.

Integrity

We are committed to being open and honest in our work and actions, believing that transparency is important.

Life-long learning

We seek to provide accessible and affordable learning opportunities for people of all ages, recognising the importance of developing knowledge and skills needed now and into the future.

Responsiveness and innovation

We seek to remain flexible and have the courage to take informed risks and 'try something new', without compromising our commitment to quality.

Partnership

Collaboration with voluntary and community groups, and public and private sector businesses, improves our ability to support positive outcomes for individuals and our communities.



Core themes of our strategic plan

One: Anything is possible for anybody

Why this matters: We believe that every member of our community deserves the opportunity to be connected and engaged with the people and organisations around them. By opening up possibilities for every person to get involved, we can help each person fulfil their potential, be part of their broader community, and shape the sort of place where they want to live.

Priority: Create a vibrant, resilient and inclusive community

Goals	Key actions to achieve these goals	Measures of our success
1. Take an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach across our strategy, operations, and program planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Brief the board/key stakeholders with more detail on what's involved with ABCD and how it would look on the ground, to inform how we can best put it into practice → Develop and implement an ABCD framework across all relevant aspects of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Briefing session is completed with agreed actions, responsibilities and timeframes → ABCD principles and metrics are embedded in strategic, operational and program plans (including in tenders and proposals)
2. Create targeted opportunities for priority groups (young people, migrants, people with a disability, aged and frail people) to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Map local demographics and undertake a SWOT analysis of potential/current opportunities for priority groups, to ensure our services are designed and delivered to meet key needs → Ensure specific program/activity opportunities are clearly communicated to stakeholders, highlighting our point of difference and why what we offer matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → We have information about different demographics in our community to guide service development for priority groups, with service design underpinned by an articulated theory of change and implementation plan → Clear and targeted communications are developed to engage stakeholders and support our service delivery
3. Build strong relationships with community groups to help meet the needs of people across our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop a strategy to work together with community leaders to create solutions grounded in co-design and ABCD approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strategy is developed with clear recommendations, actions and timeframes to guide implementation



Two: We're all in this together

Why this matters: Genuine partnerships with a wide range of government, training and community organisations open up many opportunities that would not otherwise be offered to our communities, without duplication. That's why we remain focused on pursuing the right collaborations to maximise outcomes, sharing what we know with others, and equipping community groups and organisations with the skills and knowledge to thrive.

Priority: Strengthen our reach and impact through strategic partnerships and alliances

Goals	Key actions to achieve these goals	Measures of our success
1. Position ourselves as a regional participation centre in alignment with the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) report findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review the recommendations of the VMA report and consider how they fit within our local context → Develop a regional participation strategy based on the VMA report and external stakeholder feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → VMA report is reviewed with recommendations embedded in operational and program plans → A regional participation strategy is developed that draws on the VMA report and findings from external stakeholder feedback
2. Establish the value of regional collaborations and partnerships, to ensure we focus our resources for maximum impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Assess and evaluate our current collaborations/partnerships and map/explore potential partnerships and alliances to establish their value, reach and impact → Identify priority collaborations/partnerships and take action to build and strengthen these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A working map is created that captures and explains the value, reach and impact of current collaborations/partnerships, and identifies new opportunities → Engagements and activities with priority collaborators/partners are planned and implemented, with qualitative and quantitative evidence provided regularly to show the progress we're making through these relationships
3. Support and empower smaller community organisations and volunteer-involving organisations to do their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Maintain and/or strengthen our relationships with appropriate organisations → Make tools and resources available to support organisations to extend and strengthen their work → Extend our reach and connection with organisations through innovations such as online platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Engagements and activities with appropriate organisations are planned and implemented → A suite of tools and resources are developed and made available to support the work of organisations → Increased uptake of services/support by organisations



Three: Authentic leadership

Why this matters: With a clear vision of what a connected and engaged community looks like, we are determined to pursue that vision – and bring others along with us to help it come to life. We'll do this by continuing to lead the way in inclusion, diversity and innovation, ensuring our values as an organisation are at the heart of everything we do. We remain committed to making sure our governance practices are sound, are resources are used wisely and our finances are managed sustainably.

Priority: Lead the way – inside and out

Goals	Key actions to achieve these goals	Measures of our success
1. Strengthen oversight, planning and accountability, including financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Evaluate current planning, resourcing and accountability arrangements to identify areas for improvement to strengthen board oversight → Develop a plan to address areas for improvement and measures for oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) committee reports to the board with consolidated documentation that identifies areas for improvement → An improvement plan is developed and presented that includes measures for board oversight
2. Consolidate and further develop the sound management of services and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review and consolidate quality improvement initiatives to ensure we're making the most of our resources → Set up systems and processes to support and enable the best use of our assets (workforce, volunteers, technology, communications and finances) → Identify and selectively pursue opportunities for innovation in the way we manage services and resources, so we can continue to meet the needs of our community – now and into the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review is conducted and documented, with clear outcomes and recommendations → A quality improvement plan, including supporting systems and processes, is developed and implemented → Regular reports are provided on emerging opportunities in our delivery and management of services and resources
3. Ensure people both inside and outside our organisation are clear about who we are, what we do and how we do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review our communications strategy to step out key messages for all stakeholders (internal and external), to help guide the development of communications that are clear, consistent, targeted and aligned with purpose → Develop social indicator measures of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Communications strategy is revised and implemented, with appropriate communications developed for key stakeholders → Social indicator measures show our organisation is more understood, recognisable and seen as a valued leader in our community



Four: Getting on with business

Why this matters: As an organisation, we have a lot to do – which is why we need to maintain the strongest systems and processes to keep running at our peak. Our commitment to operating effectively and efficiently includes complying with all accreditation and funding bodies, exploring new or better ways of working, and pursuing financial sustainability so we can best meet the needs of our communities.

Priority: Diversify revenue streams for sustainable impact into the future

Goals	Key actions to achieve these goals	Measures of our success
1. Get a clear picture of opportunities to diversify revenue streams, based on the VMA report and ABCD/social cohesion models	<p>→ Develop business/community-needs case and identify revenue streams for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tapping into self-managed and plan-managed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funds – expanding aged care programs and services – establishing the Centre for Participation as a Neighbourhood House 	<p>→ Business/community-needs cases (including rationale and points of difference) are developed for NDIS, aged care programs and Neighbourhood House initiatives. Recommendations are implemented, with regular reports provided to board regarding progress</p>
2. Determine the future of regional social enterprises and small business support (including work with Social Enterprise Network Victoria [SENVIC])	<p>→ Develop a regional participation strategy including current/potential activities and opportunities, to evaluate our support and approach for regional social enterprises and small businesses</p>	<p>→ A strategy and implementation plan is developed and executed, with regular progress reports provided</p>