



**CENTRE for
PARTICIPATION**

> COMMUNITY > VOLUNTEERING > LEARNING > PARTNERSHIPS



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2017-2018**

CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIPS



The Centre for Participation changes lives and communities through local opportunities in **community support, volunteering, learning and partnerships.**

Chair and CEO Report

Moving into 2017/18 we continued to deliver on our vision, including providing innovative programs, services and facilities that are a catalyst for positive personal development and stronger communities.

We reconfirmed our core values of life-long learning, inclusion & respect, leadership, integrity & innovation, and kept our strategic goals at the forefront of everything we do.

The four strategic goals are: Anything is possible for anyone, We are all in this together, Authentic Leadership, Getting on with business.

Our commitment to “we are all in this together” sees us supporting genuine partnerships and enabling community groups and organisations to grow and thrive. To this end the Centre for Participation has become the auspice for the very important and valued Wimmera Primary Care Partnership (WPCP).

Our role as the auspice formally began in November 2017 and saw the arrival of staff, funds and assets. As the auspice it is our role to support the WPCP to achieve their goals by providing the legal framework for them to operate under, including: employing staff, financial accounting and funds holder. This relationship has, and will, continue to evolve as the auspice arrangement settles. We can say with confidence that the WPCP is a very important partnership to our region and it is our privilege to support them.

A commitment to increased communication and reporting to our communities, members

and stakeholders has seen us invest in communications via both print and online. The Participate newsletter was launched in April 2018, and was the first of 4 annual publications that form a core part of our Annual Report. In addition to articles in the attached Participate, key highlights for 2017/18 include:

- > Supporting community members, clients & learners to achieve their goals. Each and every one of them are important, and whilst the operating environment is changing, we seek to provide continuity of service to the best of our ability. This has seen us growing the opportunities available to migrant women and supporting people with a disability through our hospitality programs.
- > Being successful in a “Multicultural Hub” grant application to extend the building. This will see us with a new kitchen and classroom which will enable us to extend our services and programs even further.
- > Partnering with Think Impact to undertake an important piece of research. This research “How volunteerism impacts social cohesion” aims to develop an understanding of how effective volunteer engagement builds social cohesion, and how this social outcome can be explicitly designed for use in volunteer engagement programs.
- > Developing Good Governance into a social enterprise has been enabled via the provision of a three year funding grant for the Good Governance project. This

project is seeing us work with, and learn from, host organisations outside the Wimmera.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the commitment and skills that our board, volunteers and staff bring to the Centre for Participation. It is a real privilege to provide leadership to such wonderful and passionate groups of people.

To our members, volunteers, partners and supporters we say thank you.

Thank you for believing in us, for inspiring us and for holding us accountable for being the best we can be. As the quote by Maya Angelou goes **“Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better, do better”**.

Chair Kevin Mills and CEO Julie Pettett

Engagement = social cohesion?

Centre for Participation has partnered with Think Impact, who have been studying volunteerism since 2012, to conduct this research over a two year period through the Strong and Resilient Communities Research Grant from the Department of Social Services.

But how does it work, and what forms of engagement results in the most social cohesion?

Social cohesion is in decline in Australia.

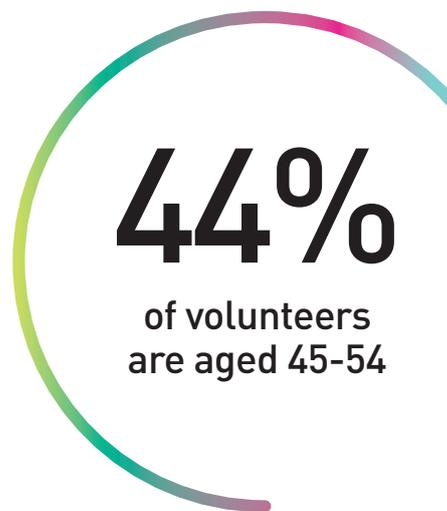
In fact, the most recent survey by the Monash Scanlon Foundation found emerging signs of increased pessimism and an increase in the proportion of people experiencing discrimination.

We know formal and informal volunteering plays a critical role in the wellbeing and fabric of our society and, yet, volunteering is in decline.

Despite this significant contribution, there has been no study conducted in Australia to date that has examined the current role and potential for effective volunteer engagement to build social cohesion and contribute to resilient communities.

That is all about to change.

Anyone who works in volunteer engagement knows in their heart that volunteering leads to stronger communities.



The research will shine a light on the value created by the volunteer sector, how this value is created, and best practice to engage and align volunteering with social cohesion to strengthen and grow positive outcomes; especially for those who are facing some form of social exclusion.

If you have any questions, or if you or your organisation would like to make a submission to this research, please email your Expression of Interest to research@thinkimpact.com.au

This is your chance to shape the future of social cohesion in Australia and how great volunteer engagement creates great communities.

Ross Wyatt, Managing Director
Think Impact



Partnerships key to success

Our Community Transport Program has seen its Wimmera Southern Mallee Community Transport Service strengthen and evolve.

The service to date has and will continue to change transport options for people in the Wimmera Mallee. There have been three routes operating since

the service launched on November 1, 2017; Route one Kaniva to Horsham, Route two Edenhope to Horsham and Route three an after-hours hospital to home service.

'Route two, a volunteer companion service assisting people to access the existing public bus service, experienced limited success, therefore, will be replaced with

a dedicated vehicle,' Program Coordinator Barry Crewther said.

'Route one's successful Wednesday service will increase to a two day service. I'm confident these changes will increase patronage. Thank you to our volunteers, stakeholders, partners and Transport Victoria for partnering with us to make this service possible'.

Daphne hits the road!

The Licencing the Wimmera program saw 45 learners spend over 1178 hours on the road.

There are many reasons learners access the program to get the driving experience they need. Matching them with our trained volunteer mentors is key to the program's success.

Daphne Williams entered the program in 2017 finding her regular drives with mentor Marg McEachran increased her skill levels and confidence.

Daphne hit the road in July 2018 after passing her test, 'I was a little nervous, but so happy I passed,' she said.



Volunteering

6,276
VOLUNTEER
PARTICIPATION HOURS

Career Pathway

Referral Success through the Volunteering Resources Program.

The goal of the Volunteering Resources Program is to encourage volunteering and provide resources and support for organisations and people wanting to volunteer.

While volunteering provides immense personal satisfaction, an opportunity to gain new skills and expand social networks, it can also lead to paid employment.

For Jo Bibby, volunteering did lead to a new career. As a previous Electorate Officer at former Member for Lowan Hugh Delahunty's office, the role was full on so Jo was enjoying a break from work, 'but there are only so many times you can weed or mow.' she said.

'I had been thinking about volunteering for a while when I drove past and spotted a sign in the Centre window stating 'want to volunteer? Come talk to us', so I did' she said.

During the volunteer information session Jo saw a position we were advertising on behalf of Wimmera Healthcare Group and thought 'I can do that'.

Jo started volunteering every Tuesday morning for 3 hours. 'Volunteering gave me a sense of purpose and the chance to interact with others, and it's nice to give back and not expect anything in return.'

However, Jo's skills and dedication were quickly recognised leading to her being offered one day per week paid employment in the Medical Workforce Unit.



PATHWAY: An opportunity to volunteer got Jo Bibby out of the house after retiring from working full time for 40 years, and later developed into paid employment.



1,637
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED
IN 31,190 HOURS OF LEARNING

Learning doors open

We know that learning is the key to opening different doors and helping people create the future they want.

By boosting literacy and numeracy, computer skills and vocational skills, we can better equip people for a career or more diverse job options, or encourage them to pursue further learning.

Centre for Participation courses are targeted towards people who may have experienced gaps in education or financial difficulty, or those who simply require updated professional skills.

We provide non-discriminatory learning opportunities that build skills, knowledge and confidence via localised, pre-accredited courses through the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board with funding from the

Department of Education and Training.

Courses take place in a friendly and encouraging environment with small class sizes. Students have access to the latest resources and we continue our focus on individualised tuition.

This builds confidence and greatly facilitates educational progress.

Cultural awareness training in partnership with the Wimmera Primary Care Partnership is available for community organisations.

And, in conjunction with Uniting Wimmera and Woodbine, we provide pre-accredited training to people with a disability to develop living and social skills.

We also partner with a number of external training providers, ensuring we have the capacity to flexibly respond to the evolving

learning needs of our community.

Learning programs from early 2019 will have a major focus on hospitality utilising our new training facility, harmony food van and social enterprise café.

Adult community learning provides learning access for people who might not otherwise engage, helping close gaps around equality, opportunities and prosperity.



Building community strength

Strengthening and celebrating our communities was the focus of a Strengthening Communities forum at the Centre for Participation in March.

The Strengthening Communities Forum partnered with several guest speakers to give community groups or organisations who are powered by volunteers an opportunity to explore ways they could strengthen their future direction.

Workshops explored good governance, identifying

and managing risk and the ongoing issues facing a Committee of Management were the focus of one of the workshops, as was Unlocking the Power of Events which gave groups practical tools and techniques to deliver successful events.

Money Matters examined what to look for when it came to finances and why this is important and volunteer management, and the associated tools, resources and good practice were also explored during the Recruiting

and Managing Volunteers session.

Community Led Change looked at whether groups are delivering their programs and services in an ongoing way, and according to their 'social purpose', while Grants and Fundraising assisted groups with tips on what to look for, what to consider and how to target before the day wound up with a panel discussion identifying challenges facing our community and how to prepare for these challenges going forward.



> **Community partnerships, strengthening our future**

Robbie Millar leads a grants discussion at the forum

At-risk youth connected

The 'Connect the Service Puzzle for Youth at Risk – Outreach to Mentoring' project aims to deliver a new framework for identifying, engaging with and providing linked services to young people considered vulnerable to the risk factors associated with young offenders.

Centre for Participation project manages this justice diversion program in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, local community service organisations, and the Horsham Rural City Council.

Project objectives include reducing the risk of re-offending of existing youth offenders, and preventing at-risk youth from becoming engaged with the criminal justice system.

Appendix

- Participate – Edition 1, April 2018
- Audited Financial Statement 2017/18

Program partners

Centre for Participation

Grampians Community Health

Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN

Horsham Rural City Council

Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative

Headspace

Horsham College - Alternative Pathways

Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce

Uniting Wimmera

Wimmera Primary Care Partnership

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