



CENTRE for  
PARTICIPATION

> COMMUNITY > VOLUNTEERING > LEARNING > PARTNERSHIPS



**“ANYTHING IS  
POSSIBLE FOR  
ANYBODY”**

ANNUAL REPORT 2015–2016



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

## CONTENTS

An introduction from the CEO and Chairman	02
Our vision, our values and our goals	03
Embracing the future, acknowledging the past	04
Actively planning for growth and development	06
Board profiles	08
Management and staff	10
Community	12
Licencing the Wimmera	14
Wimmera social support	15
Governance mentors	16
Community visiting	18
Community outreach	19
Volunteering	20
Volunteering resources	22
Rural and remote project	25
Learning	26
Community learning	28
Learning for opportunity	33
Partnerships	34
Strengthening volunteering	
Project with HRCC	36
Volunteer enhancement	
Program with WHCG	37
Right on Track with Goolum Goolum	38
Partnerships, networks and funders	40
Financial overview	42
Independent Auditor Report	43
Memberships	44

1,825

**TOTAL  
PARTICIPANTS**

36,059

**TOTAL  
PARTICIPATION  
HOURS**

Defined by the overarching motif “embracing the future, acknowledging the past”, this annual report sets out to tell you **our journey** and highlight the **work** of the previous financial year.

# AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE **CEO** AND **CHAIRMAN**



As we put the report together, parts of our region were experiencing some of the wettest weather of the past 20 years. It followed a summer whereby drought was declared and comes on top of our region experiencing the ongoing impact of contracting populations and ageing communities.

We truly believe with the right support and framework individuals and communities can achieve their goals; however, encouragement, opportunities and support are critical if we are to build community resilience to adapt to such challenges along with future policy, financial and environmental changes.

Over the past four years, we have reached out to our communities to determine their priorities for volunteering and community learning. The information gathered has been crucial; it has informed the planning process for our strategies and directions and resulted in us making significant investments to bolster our capacity, pilot new ways of working and build in evaluation measures to better understand the impact of our work.

Following the signing of an MoU in early 2015, our respective boards (Volunteering Western Victoria and Wimmera HUB) spent the past 18 months developing a shared vision and bringing together the Centre for Participation. Our new constitution sets the framework for good governance of this multi-purpose and multi-focused organisation.

The report also tells the story of our 2016–2020 strategic direction, how we arrived there and details our core themes. Themes which are active, vibrant and position us for innovation, expansion, deeper partnerships and strong leadership. We see the four pillars of the Centre for Participation – community, volunteering, learning and partnerships – as the fundamental cornerstones to achieve our goals and to have the greatest benefit to our communities. Our values will underpin all that we do.

**LEARNING**

**COMMUNITY**

*“We truly believe with the right support and framework individuals and communities can achieve their goals”*

Finally, as Chair and CEO, we duly acknowledge and express our sincere appreciation to our board members, staff and volunteers for supporting us. The input of each and every one is valued and truly creates the sum of our parts. We are proud of what we have achieved. The board and management are committed to continuing to focus on strengthening our future by balancing the need for long-term sustainability with the recognition that we have built the infrastructure to support growth.

We welcome your feedback in all that we do; it continues to assist us to stay focused and meet the needs and expectations of the region.

## OUR VISION

To provide innovative and sustainable programs, services and facilities which will act as a catalyst for positive personal development and stronger communities by empowering people of all ages to actively participate in their community through learning, volunteering and social activities.

## OUR VALUES

The board, staff and volunteers share a common set of values that guides the Centre for Participation in fulfilling its vision. These values influence our actions, guide our decisions, mold our policies and determine 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, public sector and private sector businesses improves our ability to support positive outcomes for individuals and our communities

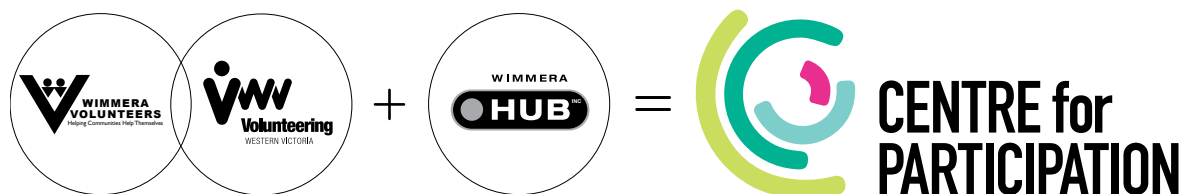
## OUR GOALS

1. Anything is possible for anyone
2. We're all in this together
3. Authentic leadership
4. Getting on with business



Our board's strategic planning retreat in January 2016 sparked the resolve to **rebrand** the **partnership** between **VWV** and the **HUB** to truly reflect its identity, scope and capacities.

# EMBRACING THE **FUTURE**, ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAST



## SHARED PERSPECTIVES, SHARED INPUT

Aided by a design studio that specialises in communications for community-focused organisations, the process began with the formation of an advisory group. It comprised board members, external representatives and VWV staff. The overarching question that framed the rebranding process was: "How do we create new pathways to participation in the Wimmera region?"

At stake were issues such as combining two organisations with separate histories without losing respective identities, community perceptions and internal perceptions.

The group focused on the role and values of the organisation, programs and activities, a new name, logo/s and website/s, organisation messaging and a communication strategy.

## A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

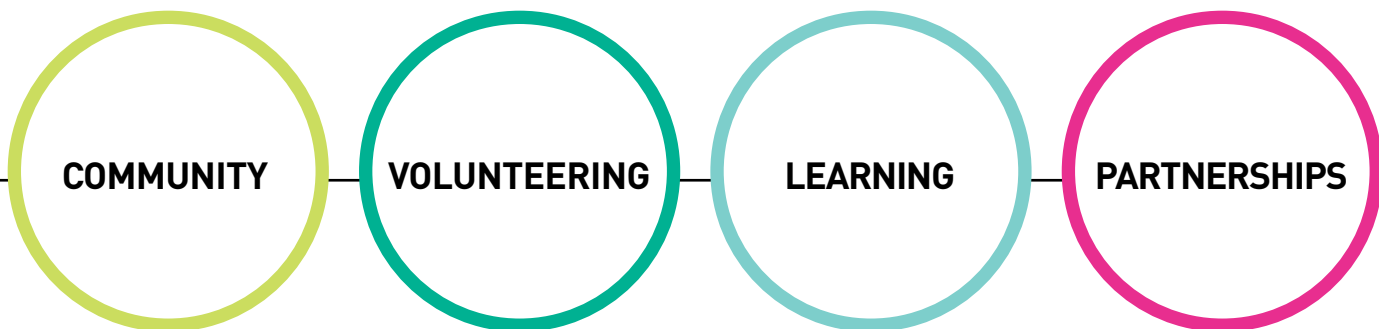
A branding workshop, presentations and reviews were conducted in June 2016; a range of participants then went through material as it came to hand. The workshop framed the requirements for the branding and communications of the partnered organisations, such as capturing its unique qualities, joining the dots between the organisation, the community and other stakeholders and informing how we make the communications pathways more visible, accessible and engaging.

## UNVEILING OF THE NEW NAME

From the workshop and follow up reviews, the outcomes were used to develop six names and strapline concepts. These were forwarded to the management team to narrow down. Two concepts were developed further, taken back to the advisory group for further discussion and then a preferred name and strapline went to the board. From there a new logo and name, the 'Centre for Participation', were approved. The name sits alongside the strapline, or pillars, of our new identity: 'Community, Learning, Volunteering, Partnerships'.

## RATIONALE BEHIND THE CHOICE

The name encompasses the essence of the new entity; it supports people to fully participate in their lives and their community. Using a general term such as 'participation' serves to link all the different offerings of the organisation and ways that people can participate. It provides an opportunity to draw together the organisation's four pillars: community, volunteering, learning, partnerships. The name provides scope for growth as the organisation evolves in the future. Further, it positions the organisation as a leader in this area. The VWV and HUB boards believe this is a positive step forward. The name was presented at a special general meeting in July 2016 where there was unanimous endorsement of the new name.



### GET INVOLVED > GET CONNECTED

We help people build the type of community they want to live in.

We do this by strengthening individuals, organisations and communities. Through localised opportunities to participate, we connect people and organisations with support and services that help them and their communities flourish.

Our focus is on helping people get involved, responding to local needs, and creating a strong and active community.

### TAKE PART IN SOMETHING BIGGER > CREATE CHANGE

Volunteering is at the heart of any vibrant, thriving community.

That's why we offer a range of services designed to promote and strengthen volunteering within localised regions. We help recruit, train and support quality volunteers, and develop volunteer management systems for organisations that make the process simple.

As the go-to place for people looking to get involved in volunteering, we're also creating opportunities to learn new skills, boost social connections, build pathways to employment, and make a difference.

### EXPAND SKILLS > GROW OPPORTUNITIES

Learning is the key to opening different life doors and helping people create the future they want.

At the Centre for Participation, we connect people with the learning opportunities that suit them and help them reach their goals. Through our localised accredited courses, lifelong learning and skill-based education, we support people to grow, strengthen their knowledge and confidence, and have more choices in life.

We believe that anything is possible for anybody, and offer an individualised, encouraging learning environment that gives people the tools they need to succeed.

### BUILDING STRONG NETWORKS > ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

Working in partnership means we can achieve more for the communities we serve.

By bringing together networks with different skills and expertise, we strengthen organisations that support the community and help them be their best.

We also partner with organisations directly to help them build their capacity, including through localised learning to upskill staff, assistance with volunteer recruitment and training, and opportunities to support people and the wider community.

The latest strategic plan is an important step in bringing our partnered organisations together and will provide a platform for future growth, partnership and evolution.

# ACTIVELY PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

**1,485**  
Community learning  
participants

## BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

The VWV and Hub boards attended a strategic planning retreat in January 2016. There, commitment was made to create a more equitable and connected community. A workshop identified key themes in which to build the new strategic plan around. It was stressed the new plan would be an 'active' rather than passive instrument.

The strategic plan paints a picture of inclusion, vision and accountability, coupled with flexibility. This will allow both organisations to evolve and grow as we learn more about our shared role of community development with a focus on participation and learning.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 – 2020 CORE THEMES

1. Anything is possible for anybody
2. We are all in this together
3. Authentic leadership
4. Getting on with it

These are not typical 'corporate' or 'strategic' terms. They do, however, start the process of communicating our work and our plans in a simple, accessible way. Furthermore, each theme does impact at a higher or strategic level. They do have relevance to training and volunteering, with a focus not on individual activities but more so the environment required to do them well. Each theme incorporates principle, leadership, innovation and impact.





**01.**

## **ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE FOR ANYBODY**

Every member of our community deserves the opportunity to be connected and engaged with the people and organisations around them; and everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, teach and be supported to improve their quality of life.

**02.**

## **WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER**

Genuine partnerships with a wide range of government, training and community organisations open opportunities that would not otherwise be offered to our communities, without duplication. It is crucial that we share what we know and equip community groups and organisations with the skills and knowledge to thrive.

**03.**

## **AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP**

We are positioned to lead the way in inclusiveness, diversity and innovation; we have a clear vision of what a connected and engaged community looks like; and we are determined to pursue that vision.

**04.**

## **GETTING ON WITH BUSINESS**

We need to maintain strong systems and processes to keep the organisation running at optimum level; compliance with accreditation and funding bodies is vital; secure finances will give us the flexibility to explore new ways of investing in our communities; and excellent governance is required during the period of amalgamation and the expansion of responsibilities.



The Centre for Participation board comprises of directors with a broad range of **skills**, **expertise** and **experience** from a diverse range of backgrounds and geographical locations.

# BOARD PROFILES

**VENKATA PETETI**

Chair  
Volunteering Western Victoria

Venkata is the GM of Corporate and Community Services at West Wimmera Shire, director at Worawa Aboriginal College and holds a Master of Financial Management as well as an MBA.

**KYLIE ZANKER**

Secretary  
Volunteering Western Victoria  
Wimmera HUB

Volunteer Coordinator at Rural Northwest Health in Warracknabeal, Kylie holds numerous education and early childhood qualifications and has served on our board since 2008.

**LINDY MULLER –**

Deputy Chair from  
October 2016  
Volunteering Western Victoria

Lindy was a nurse for 15 years before moving into community nursing. She then pursued further studies and also represented her ward for four years for HRCC.

**BRONWEN CLARK**

Deputy Chair till October 2016  
(did not run for re-election)  
Volunteering Western Victoria

Bron has a background in public relations, governance and regional development. Her qualifications include a BA, Grad Dip (PR) and the AICD course.

**TANYA BARNES**

Wimmera HUB

Tanya is General Manager Community Corrections Services at the Department of Justice and brings extensive knowledge of governance, management and public sector roles. She was a board member with Grampians Community Health for 19 years.

**JO DEVEREAUX**

Volunteering Western Victoria

Jo is the Human Services Manager at HRCC, a registered nurse, has studied social policy and makes a priority of the strategic direction of volunteering across the region.

**ROSS HIGGINS**

Wimmera HUB

The former chairman of Wimmera HUB, Ross has over 15 years' experience of corporate governance. He is the current Manager, Legal and Corporate Resources at GWMWater and possesses significant management, budgeting and communications skills

**AVRIL HOGAN**

Volunteering Western Victoria

With a background in international business, market research and strategy consulting, Avril runs a consulting firm, has completed the AICD course and holds an MBA.

**KEVIN MILLS**

Wimmera HUB

Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital CEO, Kevin has extensive experience across the not-for-profit and corporate sectors. He also serves the Horsham District Kinder Association, Wimmera PCP, Wimmera PHN Community Council and the Wimmera Southern Mallee Health Alliance.

**STEPHEN ODGERS**

Volunteering Western Victoria

Business owner and advocate for regional tourism – Halls Gap – Stephen has a wide-ranging local profile due to his involvement in tourism and sporting events.

**CR WENDY ROBINS**

Volunteering Western Victoria  
Wimmera HUB

Wendy is a business owner and sits on the Hindmarsh Shire Council. She holds a Diploma of Local Government and has completed the Business Leaders Leadership Program.

**CLIFF UNGER**

Volunteering Western Victoria

A board member for more than seven years, Cliff's community involvement is extensive. He is a life member of both the Dimboola Football Netball Club and Dimboola Rowing Club.

**GEOFF WITMITZ**

Volunteering Western Victoria  
Wimmera HUB

Geoff is the Executive Officer of the Wimmera Primary Care Partnership. He has considerable community sector, budgeting, business development and governance experience.

**JOE XERRI**

Volunteering Western Victoria

A retired business owner and long-time volunteer with us, Joe is committed to supporting older people to stay connected with their community.





We maintain a **positive work environment**, encourage work / life balance and emphasise professional and **personal development**. Our people take pride in the organisation, its services, **learning opportunities** and positive impact in the region.

# MANAGEMENT AND STAFF



## MANAGEMENT TEAM

### JULIE PETTETT Chief Executive Officer

Julie continues to drive an expansive and influential agenda. She calls on extensive governance and management experience, is a member of the AICD and a board member of Volunteering Victoria, Wimmera Primary Care and Chair of Hopetoun Neighbourhood house.

### SERENA KEREOPA Programs Manager, Acting CEO

Serena manages a number of programs, brings diligence to our compliance requirements and processes, and is the Board minute taker and Chair of Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House.

### JOHN CLEMENTS Finance and Admin Manager

John's background is in organisational financial management. In addition to day-to-day operations he sits on our VVW Audit, Finance and Risk sub-committee. Finance Committee member for the Horsham Special School.

### ROBBIE MILLAR Training Manager

An experienced operator in community and youth services, as well as training design and development, Robbie has a further five years of learning environment experience. Board member of the Stawell Neighbourhood House Inc

### FAITH HARDMAN Partnerships and Business Development Manager

Faith's background is in commercial and family law and mediation, and she chairs Skillinvest Group.

## STAFF MEMBERS

### Training staff

- > Karen Adams
- > Dianne O'Connor
- > Bernadette O'Shannessy
- > Bernadette Delahunty
- > Elizabeth Smith
- > Jan Schmidt-Loeliger
- > Lynnelle Jefferies
- > Teresa O'Bryan
- > Bren Gilmore
- > Sarah Chamberlain
- > Marieke Dam
- > Helen Dillon

### Program and administration staff

- > Rosalie Schorback
- > Gwen Williams
- > Michelle Pitman
- > Marieke Dam
- > Barbara Eltze
- > Christine Picone
- > Fiona Werner
- > Kellie Lumby
- > Padma Giri
- > Bren Gilmore
- > Selwyn Hatherell
- > Gordon Young
- > Maxine Maher
- > Codi-Rae Fisher



*“Whilst the transition has been challenging the experience has been **rewarding**. I have seen both organisations strengthen with noticeable **improvements** to service users and students as a result.”*

Robbie Millar



**“WITH THE SUPPORT  
OF VOLUNTEERS,  
I CAN GO ON REGULAR  
SOCIAL OUTINGS”**



By **supporting** individuals, organisations, towns and regions throughout western Victoria, we help **build** the type of **community** people wish to live in.

# COMMUNITY

GET INVOLVED > GET CONNECTED

Through localised opportunities to participate and connect, we link people and organisations to support, networks and services that help them and their communities flourish.

The Centre for Participation's long-standing social support programs remain valued and in demand by our local populations. These are programs which maintain and build capacity by encouraging independence. By encouraging mobility and forging social connections, Wimmera Social Support and Community Visiting support the elderly, disadvantaged and socially isolated.

We focus on helping people get involved or stay involved, responding to local needs and creating strong and active communities. Licencing the Wimmera

is one example, aiding younger people who lack the requisite support networks to facilitate driving experience. Our volunteers step in and fill the breach. Governance Mentors is another, providing more specialised and detailed volunteer support to organisations in need of improved governance practices.

Further, we are deeply embedded in the region's social fabric via our partnership with the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, with the Club Leadership program – and Community Outreach, which is based in Nhill and serves people and organisations in the shires of West Wimmera and Hindmarsh.



# 75

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



## CASE STUDY

Zac, 18, and Bert have been matched since May 2016. They drive for two hours every week and are clearly enjoying their time together. Zac learns about road safety, road rules and general driving practice from Bert, who finds his volunteer time rewarding.

Zac: "It helps me to learn how to drive and otherwise I'd have no way of getting around. It's the only way of getting my licence."

Bert: "This is an excellent program for people with no access to a car or parents who can help teach their children. To see someone get their licence is a real sense of achievement."

## LICENCING THE WIMMERA

### Program overview

Many people lack the support networks to facilitate such driving experience, or face issues with finance or lack of access to a vehicle. Our program matches disadvantaged learner drivers between the ages of 16–21 (L2P) or over 21 years old (P21) with experienced volunteer mentor drivers, who help them gain the driving experience required before they are eligible to sit for their probationary licence.

### Highlights from 2015/16

We were the grateful recipients of a car donated by Toyota Melbourne (via VicRoads / L2P) for six months, which was a substantial cost saver and ensured wider availability of cars in the local area. Also, our coordinator is now a trained L2P mentor training facilitator. This means we can run in-house training, save on costs and even deliver training to other L2P programs. This not only generates extra income for the L2P program but establishes excellent working partnerships with other L2P providers and VicRoads.

### Looking ahead

A fundamental challenge is cost; the program is running at a loss as we receive no funding for the ongoing vehicle expenses and maintenance and none for the P21 program. Therefore, developing a sustainable funding structure which incorporates donations remains a priority.

Further, demand for the P21 program outstrips supply of mentor drivers. We do look forward to growing our presence in some of the outer regional areas but access to vehicles is a major barrier to this growth.

.....  
*"While getting the hours of practice is possible for most people, it can be a real challenge for those who live in regional localities if you don't have access to a car or a supervisor, no matter what age you are."*  
.....

Fiona  
L2P Mentor

.....  
Experience for learners comes from practice drives with their mentor, along with professional driving lessons. Volunteers are trained through VicRoads, typically conducted over a weekend. All mentors must have Working with Children and police checks and have satisfactory driving history.  
.....





## JOYCE CLARKE

"I love socialising and going out for coffee. I am 89 years old, live locally and have been visually impaired now for many years. I have a wonderful family who support me and visit when they can, but I was given the opportunity by VWV with the support of a volunteer to go on a social outing fortnightly, to have a 'cuppa and a chat'.

"It has evolved to a weekly get together involving lots of laughs, lovely friends and I really look forward to it. Although I have a very caring supportive 'other half' this gives me the opportunity to be self-sufficient and gives him a break."

## WIMMERA SOCIAL SUPPORT

### Program overview

We aim to keep people living at home and or involved in the community for as long as possible by helping people remain socially connected. Volunteers provide a one-on-one personalised service assisting service users achieve their needs and goals. We also have a youth program, which allows young people with a disability to catch up on a regular basis. Our dedicated volunteers ensure each activity runs smoothly and safely.

*"Our programs are supported by dedicated volunteers who ensure each activity runs smoothly and safely, as well as providing social interaction."*

Training and development is always a focus, likewise the encouragement of volunteers to be flexible and take on new challenges. We have also maintained our connections with peak organisations and forums.

### Highlights from 2015/16

Volunteer hours increased, and the theme of this year's National Volunteer Week Celebrations – "Give Happy, Live Happy" epitomises their contribution; put simply, they assist in making other people's lives happier.

Community events such as Christmas in July, Harmony Day, visits to local towns, events and markets, as well as volunteer recognition events, were duly celebrated. We have been fortunate to access quality training options to assist volunteers perform their roles. The 'Cuppa & Chat' program has encouraged new friendships.

### Looking ahead

The program continues to respond to community needs. We are keen to take a strategic approach to service delivery, in addition to maintaining the momentum around continuous quality and improvement.

Service delivery for those over 65 is at full capacity.

Ensuring volunteers are equipped with the right skills remains a challenge, as is raising our profile with other agencies. It is important that the capacity to interact with government for the provision of locally appropriate care is acknowledged.

**2,163**  
volunteer hours

**300**  
volunteer training hours

**4,709**  
service users engagement hours

*“The program was managed well especially considering the **restrictions** of volunteers ... there is only so much you can ask of people who are **giving** their **time** freely.”*



## GOVERNANCE MENTORS

### Program overview

We support community organisations to improve governance practices by linking them with recognised community leaders who offer their experience to improve financial and social outcomes. Mentors work with the whole committee, not individual participants. They work specifically to improve overall governance in an advisory capacity, empowering the committee to develop policies and processes that facilitate good governance. Mentors undergo a thorough screening and training process before they are placed with an organisation over a 12 month period.

We held a number of mentor catch-up sessions designed to create a sense of camaraderie amongst mentors. These were well attended and provided a terrific opportunity for mentors to share their experiences, strategies and governance involvement. The support, networking and discussions amongst mentors contribute to the program's overall goals of improving the outcomes of community organisations.

Organisations that undertook mentoring this year reported improved confidence in governance overall, greater commitment, a sense of optimism, enhanced teamwork, clarity around roles and responsibilities and deeper mutual respect.

### Highlights from 2015/2016

By delivering workshops on key areas of governance we have been able to establish strong community partnerships. Workshops focussing on areas such as Decision Making, Risk Management and Planning for the Future have allowed us to extend the reach of the Governance Mentors program. In late 2015 a workshops on Roles and Responsibilities was successfully delivered to 11 different sporting clubs.

### Partners in the community

Club Leadership is a program run by the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly (WRSA), in association with our organisation. The program has its basis in creating leaders and promotion good governance in the sport and recreation sector.

The WRSA is a volunteer-based organisation which supports the growth, development and promotion of sport and recreation. The program aims to prepare young people for the roles and responsibilities that come from involvement in volunteer based sporting clubs. Participants benefit from this program via accreditations they can add to their CV and use later in life or at their club.

# 13

## TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

The accreditations include Community Coaching, Sports First Aid, Strap Smart and Responsible Service of Alcohol. Education in the likes of Inclusion, Radio / Communications (we run these sessions), Governance, Risk Management, Marketing, Event Management and Future Club Development is also offered. Sports clubs benefit greatly from enrolling their young members in the program as it grows their volunteer base and provides a base for the club's future sustainability.

### Highlights from 2015/16

In the last financial year a summer group was trialled, along with the usual winter cohort, which saw us running sessions in Nhill for young members of the Nhill and District Sporting Club. This was a great opportunity for young people. Our trainers were able to engage a younger audience and part of the course has a volunteering component.

### Looking ahead

Partnering with local councils and regional associations is a priority going forward. In addition, infrastructure in the form of a database is required to measure the output and impact of the program. Creating scale in the program is a key focus to ensure it is sustainable.



### BEULAH HISTORICAL LEARNING AND PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

The association provides a sense of connectedness in the Beulah community and supports opportunities for employment, business and tourism. It runs the post office, provides spaces for various services to Beulah and publishes a weekly newsletter and tourism promotion. It sought the assistance of Governance Mentors to focus on roles and responsibilities of the committee and planning for the organisation's future.

The committee reported an excitement about the future, the clarifying of roles and responsibilities and continuing contact with their mentor as they navigated strategic planning:

"Our mentor's contribution to our committee was very welcome. She advised us on a number of strategies and gave us guidance. It was very worthwhile."

"I admire all the things they have been able to achieve for their small rural community," said mentor Paula Clark.

Photography by Wimmera Mail Times

# 21

## ACTIVE VISITORS



### EVELYN TROTTER

Evelyn Trotter retired and moved to Horsham recently from a small rural town. Soon after, Evelyn contacted us looking for volunteer options. After attending training she was matched with three elderly residents, two in aged care facilities and one in her own home. Recently Win, who Evelyn visits at home, went into respite. Evelyn travelled out of Horsham to give Win a surprise visit. The look of delight on Win's face was priceless. The pair had plenty to chat about and both are planning the next visit.

"Oh I just love it, I look forward to seeing my ladies every week," said Evelyn. "We have become such good friends". Evelyn has also been attending our volunteer events and is enjoying meeting other volunteers.

### COMMUNITY VISITING

#### Program overview

Weekly or fortnightly visits by volunteers focus on those who may not have regular contact with family and friends due to distance. Friendships are created, social isolation reduced and the wellbeing of residents in aged care facilities or in their own homes is enhanced. People in need are matched with volunteers, who also help by accompanying residents for appointments, shopping or meeting friends. Volunteers are provided with training and support.

#### Highlights over 2015/16

Positive feedback from the residents, facility staff and families demonstrates the importance of the program for residents in care or their own homes. In a recent example of the program's impact, a resident described her visitor as 'a breath of fresh air'. Another said the visit always lifted her spirits.

#### Looking ahead

The recruitment of volunteers remains a constant priority, as the ageing population in many parts of the Wimmera narrows the pool. Plus, most potential volunteers are already helping out in their community. Likewise, we need to maintain and increase matches, especially in outlying areas.

.....  
*"There is a mutual understanding within the community that if I helped now, they would do the same for me when I was in need"*  
.....

Receiving referrals from aged care facilities can be an obstacle at times, due to staff commitments. From our end, ensuring volunteers are equipped with the right skills to meet resident needs is a focus. We are also aiming to increase the number of visits and volunteers engaged in the program. By raising our profile and awareness of the visiting program with residential facilities, supported living facilities and in the community, we can highlight volunteer recruitment and back it with support and training.





Photography by Nhill Free Press

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Program overview

Our Nhill office opened in 2013, primarily serving the communities of Hindmarsh and West Wimmera, to develop formal volunteering programs and support volunteer clubs and organisations. Its cost became prohibitive and we have now joined with Nhill SES in a strategic partnership – the first of its kind in Victoria – and relocated to their office. Both organisations are excited about the prospects and the arrangement was duly celebrated. We have a secure space, a place in the foyer for promotional materials and access to a great training room.

### Highlights of 2015/16

The new office location has reduced expenditure but still provides a visible presence and opportunity to work with the SES for future activities. Via our existing partnerships, we organised National Volunteer Week events throughout the region and maintained our close links with local government, the health sector and schools.

We continue to play an active role in our networks, such as LLEN Community Action Network meetings, promoting positive outcomes and new partnerships to the community and remaining on the lookout for new opportunities to work with other organisations.

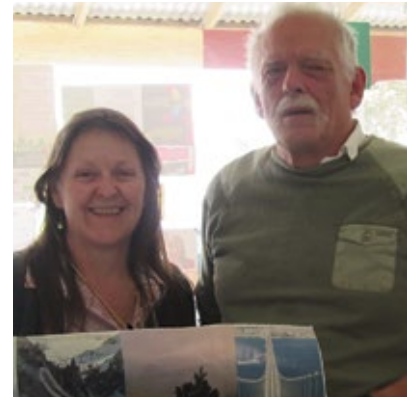
### Looking ahead

Seeking funding for the Community Transport Service is important, likewise sustaining volunteer numbers, training, social support activities and supports for service users and other organisations. We are working towards more dual service delivery on projects, such as volunteer training and recognition events like National Volunteer Week. Other goals include boosting training options for volunteer groups and volunteer managers, increasing membership and working with the Volunteers Managers Network.

.....

*“The new office location has reduced expenditure but still provides a **visible presence and opportunity to work with the SES for future activities.**”*

.....



### CASE STUDY

Wolf lives in Dimboola with a serious illness and does not drive. Our Wimmera Social Support program, volunteer drivers and a supported arts program funded by Villa Maria, enabled Wolf to attend art classes in Nhill with local artist Karen Wiseman, who uses art as therapy and to stimulate creativity. Right from the first visit, Wolf unearthed an amazing art skill; each week fantastic art pieces were created and Wolf became more confident in his ability.

“Karen has been a fantastic contact for me,” said Wolf. “She has taught me techniques and helped me with my art.”

Karen: “Art empowered him to work with his illness and to find acceptance and control. His artwork was rapid with fantastic results.”





**“VOLUNTEERING GIVES  
ME OPPORTUNITIES I  
WOULD OTHERWISE NOT  
HAVE EXPERIENCED”**

Volunteering is at the heart of any vibrant, thriving community, and our organisation has been at the heart of regional volunteering opportunities since 1984.

# VOLUNTEERING

TAKE PART IN SOMETHING BIGGER > CREATE CHANGE

In summary, we provide an extensive suite of services, programs and resources designed to promote and strengthen volunteering in our towns and regions. We do this by helping to recruit, train and support volunteers – via seminars, workshops and webinars – and develop easy to follow and effective volunteer management systems for organisations. An important feature of our work is training and supporting volunteer managers and coordinators.

As the go-to place for people looking to get involved in volunteering, we're also creating opportunities to learn new skills, boost social connections, build pathways to employment, and make a difference in local communities. We increasingly focus on the need for appropriate volunteer recognition and renewal; as our populations age and become more centralised, the pool for volunteer contributions narrows. A benefit of membership with the Centre for Participation is access to our volunteer managers / coordinators network, enabling the opportunity to learn and share with others.





*“The workshops explain the **obligations** of volunteering, as well as identifying opportunities for individuals based on their interests and **abilities**. It’s a must for anyone wishing to volunteer in our **community**.”*

Barbara Eltze



**7,589**  
total volunteers  
hours

## VOLUNTEERING RESOURCES

A fundamental part of our program offerings is promoting volunteering, providing resources, support and advocacy for organisations and individuals

### Overview

For many of our towns, volunteering is now more about community survival and its nature is changing due to multiple factors. Yes, it brings people together, but specialised skills and knowledge are required to manage growing compliance concerns, community expectations and governance obligations. We assist organisations and individuals to address these issues through workshops, training, policy and procedural frameworks to provide direction and structure to the way volunteers are managed. Likewise, we ensure that practice meets national standards.

### National Volunteers Week

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is an annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contribution of our nation’s volunteers. We continued in 2016 with the theme ‘Give Happy, Live Happy’, celebrating and exploring the research that shows volunteers live happier and healthier lives.

The week of celebrations is a terrific opportunity to acknowledge our local volunteers, put on extra training, as well as promote volunteering as a means to recruit and connect. Importantly,

it also sparks opportunities to work in partnership with other community organisations to share resources, expertise and build pathways for community based activities.

Seven events in May were conducted, involving 19 organisations and some 374 volunteers, with at least one event for each municipality:

1. **Nhill SES BBQ**  
Hindmarsh
2. **HRCC volunteer morning tea**  
Horsham Rural City Council
3. **St Arnaud Resource Centre morning tea**  
Northern Grampians
4. **Stawell supper**  
Northern Grampians
5. **Harrow Bush Nursing Centre + Edenhope morning teas**  
West Wimmera Shire
6. **Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House BBQ**  
Yarriambiack

# 374

**VOLUNTEERS**  
**19 ORGANISATIONS**  
**7 EVENTS**

## **National Volunteer Managers Day (IVMDay)**

This is an occasion to recognise the contribution of volunteers but also to recognise that it does not succeed in a vacuum. Hence, we celebrate IVMDay every year on November 5, acknowledging to those professionals that the spirit of volunteerism is enhanced and enabled by them. Just as important is to educate others about their work through the catchphrase 'education through celebration'.

Held at our office, guest speaker Barbara Eltze raised the value of the 'Introduction to Volunteering' sessions, gaining feedback from participants, the referral process, advertising volunteer opportunities and why people attend volunteer information sessions. She also spoke of assigning harder to place volunteers. These are volunteers who may have a criminal record or lack the requisite skill level for some positions but still wish to contribute.

## **International Volunteer Day**

International Volunteer Day (IVD) is mandated by the UN General Assembly and is held on December 5. It is a day for volunteers and volunteer based organisations to celebrate their efforts, share values and showcase the difference they make in their communities. The theme for IVD 2015 was all about a changing world and being prepared. The challenge was laid down: "Are you part of the change?", "Will you take the challenge?", and "Are you ready?"

In partnership with West Wimmera Shire and West Wimmera Health Service, we held informal volunteer get-togethers, celebrating and acknowledging local volunteers' contribution in the Edenhope community. We also provided training on OH&S and manual handling for 20 HACC-related volunteers. Aside from the spirit of sharing, volunteers participated in activities around support for service users, emergency information, vehicle procedures and updates to police checks.

## **Volunteer Managers / Coordinators Network**

Our volunteer managers / coordinators network access is a membership benefit. It is made up of both paid and volunteer managers and coordinators and operates over five shires. The network meets quarterly and provides a safe and confidential environment where network members can discuss any challenging issues. There is a professional development component at each meeting and these have covered:

- > Volunteers and HR
- > Managing OH&S
- > Continuous program improvement
- > Volunteer recognition



---

*"For us as coordinators to spend time and bring the volunteers together, breaking down communication barriers and working through topics as a group is an effective tool for the smooth running of our volunteer based activities."*

**Amanda Munn**  
Volunteer Coordinator,  
West Wimmera Shire Council

---



### Understanding and Engaging 21st century volunteers

Rob Jackson is a renowned author and volunteering expert based in the UK. He has significant experience in the volunteering space, working for UK organisations such as Barnardo’s and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. In May, Rob held two workshops. The first was directed at HRCC board members and senior managers and covered topics such as articulating why an organisation wants volunteers, determining who will lead and manage them, clarity around volunteer roles and providing resources to support volunteer engagement.

*“The content was informative. I appreciated understanding the impact of **generational influences** on volunteering in the next few years.”*

The second was aimed at volunteer managers / coordinators. It addressed environmental changes in volunteering and how leaders of volunteers can update their practices to accommodate these changes, further enhancing their engagement and retention of 21st century volunteers.

### Introduction to Volunteering

Throughout each year we offer seminars, workshops and training through our Nhill and Horsham offices, as well as via webinar, for volunteers and managers / coordinators of volunteers. Such sessions can always be tailored to suit a particular organisation and they provide information and support to potential volunteers to assist with understanding volunteering in the current environment.

The sessions are informal workshops which introduce those new (or people wishing to refresh their knowledge) to the dynamics of volunteering.

Topics include:

- > Benefits of volunteering
- > Volunteering opportunities
- > Skill identification
- > Rights and responsibilities
- > The right position for you

For organisations, we can customise these sessions to cater for new volunteers at a general cost and membership cost. Over the previous 12 months, 44 sessions were conducted in Horsham and through the Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Northern Grampians shires.







## RURAL AND REMOTE PROJECT

### Program overview

Without effective volunteer practices many services in rural communities could not be provided. Further, poor management can lead to risk. Building the capacity for volunteer involving organisations in these communities is vital. Accordingly, we piloted the Rural and Remote project. It enabled a coordinator to work with Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs) in three regions – Stawell, Ararat and St Arnaud – chosen due to low socio-economic ratings, low rates of volunteering and located well away from volunteering support services. The Way2Go toolkit was used to embed best practice principles for managers of volunteer-involving organisations in a series of workshops.

.....

*“It was nice to have someone come to us rather than us going to them. Their willingness to do outreach meant that organisations were more likely to send people out to participate.”*

Jenny Greenberger

.....

The pilot revealed that the capacity of existing VRCs is stretched, trust and relationships take time to establish (in particular overcoming competitive dynamics), and local relationships and face-to-face contact are most highly valued by stakeholders.

### Highlights of 2015/16

The pilot project created value for the individuals and organisations involved; it strengthened the confidence and capability of volunteer coordinators and managers. Our coordinator facilitated the establishment of local networks in each pilot site, delivery of professional development training and supported a growing awareness of volunteering in each town. The sustainability of this effort is, however, varied across the pilot sites.

### Looking ahead

There is a gap between VRCs and the diverse and often disconnected efforts of the volunteer involving organisations. To support the attraction, management and retention of volunteers and manage risk, a central place for volunteer referrals and obtaining support is highly recommended. A central agency in each town with a physical space to receive referrals is required, along with a volunteer coordinator to deliver training and provide professional development, networking and peer support.



## WAY2GO WORKSHOP

“After attending the Way2Go workshop, our organisation has utilised the toolkit to improve the management of our volunteers. It was of particular interest to learn how the levels of volunteer management are reflected in the National Standards of Volunteering. Our committee recently reviewed our policies and the Way2Go templates were a valuable resource through this process. I would recommend this training to anyone who coordinates volunteers with their work”.

**Jenny Greenberger**  
Stawell Neighbourhood  
House Coordinator



**“I DIDN'T KNOW ANY  
ENGLISH, SO I COULDN'T  
TALK TO ANYONE ...  
NOW I CAN”**



With key **partnerships** in place throughout the region, we offer learning and **training** to **improve** educational and vocational outcomes.

# LEARNING

EXPAND SKILLS > GROW OPPORTUNITIES

We know that learning is the key to opportunity; by boosting literacy and numeracy, computer skills and vocational skills, we can better equip people for a career or more diverse job opportunities, or encourage them to pursue further learning.

Our courses are targeted towards people who may have experienced gaps in education or financial difficulty, or those who simply require updated professional skills. The Centre for Participation provides non-discriminatory learning opportunities that build skills, knowledge and confidence via localised, pre-accredited courses which are provided free of charge or are significantly subsidised.

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 is available for community service organisations and, proudly, we offer pre-accredited training to young people with a disability (in conjunction with Wimmera UnitingCare) to help develop living and social skills so they can live as independently as possible. We also partner a number of external training providers.



1,485  
learners



28,557  
participation  
hours





## COMMUNITY LEARNING

Adult community education provides learning access for people who might not otherwise engage, thereby closing gaps around equity, opportunities and prosperity.

### Overview

Via funding from Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) we deliver pre-accredited training to help students with further training and or employment and assist those vulnerable in the job market by providing language, literacy, numeracy and or digital literacy learning.

.....  
*“Study has given us  
 belief in ourselves.”*  
 .....

Our courses fall broadly under Employment Skills, Vocational Skills, and Adult Literacy & Numeracy. They include language programs, literacy and numeracy for people with a disability, customer service skills, preparation for education, foundation skills and computer training.

Last year we worked with ACFE and the St Arnaud Community Resource Centre to deliver pre-accredited training in St Arnaud. This partnership is stronger in 2016, with funding obtained and the resource centre delivering the training.

Across 2015/16 we accepted 334 enrolments (24 at St Arnaud) and delivered 13,580 student contact hours (1,125 hours at St Arnaud).

### VETiS in Schools

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) is designed to expand opportunities and pathways for senior secondary students and improve educational outcomes. It also addresses industry needs. It comprises nationally recognised certificates undertaken by secondary school students as part of their VCE or VCAL. We currently deliver Certificate II in Community Services and selected units from Certificate III in Community Services. Students attend weekly classes and participate in Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) with a host employer. Across 2015/16, we taught 61 students (10,370 hours).

### Partnerships

#### First Aid

We partner Allens Training to deliver first aid and CPR courses to develop skills and knowledge to learners. Provide First Aid: 229 students attained their statement (1,374 hours). Provide CPR: 312 students attained their statement (936 hours).

# 312

## STUDENTS ATTAINED THEIR CPR STATEMENT

### Food Handling and Responsible Service of Alcohol

In partnership with the College of Adult Education, we deliver courses aimed at those serving alcohol or working with food. Use Hygienic Practices for Food Safety or Participate in Safe Food Handling practices: 136 students attained their statement (408 hours). RSA: 293 students attained their statement (1,172 hours)

*“Great environment to  
learn in and I feel supported  
and treated with respect”*

### Yanng Yang Ngalung Maligundidj cultural training

In partnership with the Wimmera PCP, traditional owner Joanne Clarke delivers cultural awareness training to community service organisations and staff (120 places) at the Wimmera Healthcare Group. Yanng Yang Ngalung Maligundidj means ‘walk with the Wergaia people’. The training focuses on gaining an understanding about the Wimmera clan groups, historical factors of past policies and legislation and culturally appropriate strategies when working with the traditional owners.

### ACFE courses

#### English language programs

We blend the teaching of ‘English to Speakers of Other Languages’ (ESOL) with further programs in citizenship and community and computers. This suite of programs supports learners to extend their English language vocabulary, as well as develop skills in reading, writing and comprehension. The Citizenship and Community program focuses on the requirements of migrants and refugees to sit the Australian Citizenship test, and also includes community activities and skills such as basic first aid. We also assist learners to identify and undertake work placements.

#### Learning for Life

In partnership with Wimmera Uniting Care we deliver the pre-accredited training for the Learning for Life program. The aim of the Learning for Life program is for young people with a disability to develop living and social skills so they can live within the community as independently as possible. The program is aimed at young people with a disability aged 16 to 24 and covered topics such as budgeting, volunteering, job skills and daily living skills.

293

students  
attained a RSA  
statement

358

ACFE  
enrolments

61

students  
participated  
in SWL

*“There are major benefits of combining the organisations. With our own increased capacity, we can better assist communities to grow a strong vibrant region.”*

**Robbie Millar**

Centre for Participation



## CASE STUDY

Bina was isolated from the community, struggling to speak, read or write English. After joining our language program, her confidence has improved immeasurably, motivating her to pursue further study. “I didn’t even know how to write my name,” Bina said.

Learning to read and write created employment opportunities and boosted Bina’s ability to meet new friends. “Before I didn’t talk to anybody and now I can talk to people, even just to say hello.”

Bina is now learning how to use computers and has subsequently attained her Learner’s permit. “I did my learning at VicRoads to get my permit ... I did it through the computer.”

### Foundation skills

The course is designed to provide basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. The training focuses on skills in reading for understanding, the writing process and thinking clearly to explain ideas, along with basic numeracy. These skills provide foundation for further study (core skills and confidence) and progression into accredited training and vocational outcomes.

.....  
*“The training focuses on skills in reading for understanding, the writing process and thinking clearly to explain ideas ...”*  
.....

### Customer Service program (Horsham and St Arnaud)

The program was developed to meet the needs of learners about to enter the workforce or formal study, or those adult learners who may have had interrupted learning and who are considering study or the workforce. Training assists learners to develop foundation skills such as verbal, body language, tone, written, emails and cultural to enhance communication with others and to support employment options.

### Preparation for Education

The program assists learners considering further study (who have had interrupted learning) with the foundation skills in reading and writing.

The learning environment is positive, safe and nurturing and students are supported by other learners.

### Computer training (Horsham and St Arnaud)

This is designed for people who want to make better use of their computer. It teaches basic skills in a range of areas including word processing, internet use, email and printing. It supports a movement towards formal study or assists with vocational requirements.

During the last year we have tailored specific computer training for job seekers to assist them to navigate the MyGov website.

### Digital Literacy – Using an iPad (Horsham and St Arnaud)

The training builds on foundation computing skills and introduces learners to smart technologies, including the use of iPads. Learners develop skills in using Apps to assist study (locating information, creating documents and storing documents). The training increases learners’ abilities to complete study and creates strong pathways towards employment.



A photograph of two men in a classroom or office setting. The man on the left is wearing a maroon polo shirt and glasses, looking down at a document. The man on the right is wearing a white shirt and glasses, also looking down at the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a computer monitor.

# 14,780

**STUDENT CONTACT HOURS**





### New Beginnings – A Women’s Journey

In a safe and supportive learning environment, women meet to set life goals, enhance interpersonal skills and communicate effectively. The course covers five topics: personal effectiveness; becoming a lifelong learner; IT; pathways to work; and women’s issues.

.....

*“Instead of wanting to drive the car over the cliff, you are wanting to **turn the corner** and see what’s around it.”*

**Heather**

A women’s journey participant

.....

Some participants are referred by agencies and some self-refer. Some are looking for a new job and some have been long-time mothers looking for personal development. All are looking for a change and future direction.

The course could be viewed as group counselling, but it is more about women’s personal development, leading to greater resilience, enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence and goal-setting.

This course is aimed at dealing with life’s stresses. It can empower participants to respond differently to themselves and their life, ultimately enabling a more positive outlook on life.

Course outcomes include: Personal effectiveness, becoming a lifelong learner, information technology skills, and pathways to employment.

### External training providers

We also work with other training providers to deliver a range of additional courses. During the reporting period training delivered via external providers included: Certificate IV in Training and Assessment; Diploma of Vocational Education and Training; Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety; HSR Initial OH&S training course; HSR Refresher OH&S training course; and Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care.



*“It’s like a door opening on **life** again ... into all sorts of **possibilities**”*

Learn Local provider

## LEARNING FOR OPPORTUNITY

### Overview

The immediate aim post-partnering of the Wimmera Hub and Volunteering Western Victoria was to guarantee the ongoing delivery of community education in the region.

### Research

This gave birth to the ‘Learning for Opportunity’ research report to inform the Wimmera Community Learning Strategy (WCLS). The purpose was to provide insight into the conditions that underpin and influence the Wimmera’s adult community learning sector. Its findings included:

- > The current business model (based on delivery hours per student) is unsustainable, in particular for organisations delivering in rural locations with higher needs populations.
- > The ability for the sector to be responsive to learner, community and employer needs is limited by the capacity, capability and perceptions of the Learn Local Organisations.
- > A broader understanding of the value created by the sector is required. This includes recognising the value created by supporting progress towards a readiness for employment, further education and training.

### Conclusion

It became clear that adult community education and the interconnectivity of services are not creating desired outcomes. A large and growing number of people are disconnected from education, employment and participation in society. The adult community education system is struggling to deliver its goals, yet good people are working with great optimism and, with the right support, the situation can be improved.

### Wimmera Community Learning Strategy

The WCLS aims to drive regional collaboration, engagement and contribute to the region’s educational, economic and social future. The strategy will enable Learn Locals to expand educational offerings, enhance links between stakeholders, strengthen governance and create a flow-through to further education and employment. It will assist in the design and delivery of relevant programs in localities not well serviced, improve pathways for those socially or economically disadvantaged, encourage engagement with community learning and develop responsive partnerships between the Learn Local sector and community and industry partners.

### Lifelong Learning

The capacity of individuals and groups to participate in developing their own learning is imperative for improving quality of life. Adult community education has the capacity to make a contribution to lifelong learning and, thereby, combat social exclusion.

*“Being ready for work is much more than actually having a skill, it’s about being able to **communicate**, it’s having confidence to deal with other people, it takes **confidence to deal with yourself** ... It takes a very long term view.”*

Learn Local provider

We have aligned with Learn Local organisations, in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee, which engage adult learners who may have experienced barriers to education, to lead its implementation. The WCLS is a response to the recognition of funding, compliance and effectiveness challenges facing the adult community education sector in the Wimmera.





**“THROUGH WORKING PARTNERSHIPS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GROW OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES IN THE COMMUNITY”**



To enable **flexibility** of delivery, shared risk and reward and the pooling of infrastructure and **expertise**, we actively seek organisations to join us.

# PARTNERSHIPS

BUILDING STRONG NETWORKS > ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

Working in partnership means we can achieve a great deal more for the communities we serve. To this end, we partner with local government, health providers, indigenous organisations and schools for mostly short-term projects with specific outcomes, tapping into mutual resources, connections and experiences to achieve mutual goals.

By bringing together networks with different skills and expertise, we are able to strengthen organisations that support the community and its aspirations. One example is our 12 month project to assess and redevelop Horsham Rural City Council's volunteer management framework. We are also heavily involved

with the Wimmera Health Care Group, providing its volunteer coordination and thereby aiding its volunteer recruitment and retention. Our partnership with Goolum Goolum, assisting with an early intervention program for young indigenous people, is also up and running.

Finally, we also partner with organisations directly to help them build their capacity. This includes localised learning to upskill staff, assistance with volunteer recruitment, recognition and training, and opportunities to support people and the wider community on a project-by-project basis.

*“We will also work with volunteer involving departments to **design a management framework** that can be standardised at different points of entry ...”*



## STRENGTHENING VOLUNTEERING PROJECT WITH HRCC

### Overview

Where possible we seek to partner with other organisations to share resources, skills and liability and create flexibility in delivery. In early 2016, we partnered with Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) to undertake a 12 month project to redevelop council's Volunteer Management Framework. Over the project's course, volunteering at council is being discussed between councillors and those who coordinate volunteer activities day-to-day.

Our role is to research current HRCC processes and work closely with council's planning group to identify areas for continuous improvement under the 2015 National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. We will also work with volunteer involving departments to design a management framework that can be standardised at different points of entry, but which also facilitates program-specific volunteering.

### Project process

The project will be conducted in four phases, or 'milestones', which will require a written report at the end of each phase. The first phase was the establishment of the Executive Planning Committee at HRCC, which has oversight of the entire project and works directly with us to identify policy and process

recommendations. A Coordinator's Reference Group has also been formed and these stakeholders will provide information, knowledge and practical assistance throughout the framework's development.

As detailed earlier in this report, international volunteering expert Rob Jackson facilitated a workshop in May with council executive staff and councillors to kick start the project and build enthusiasm, from the top down, for proactive and purposeful volunteer engagement across council services.

### Outcomes to date

We have since conducted a major survey of current volunteer processes and activities at HRCC. The findings from this exercise resulted in recommendations to the project for the first 'Milestone Report' in May 2016. They were received positively, with council actively engaged in the necessary cultural and organisational changes required to effect the Volunteer Framework's main objectives. It is anticipated that the framework, once developed, will not only enhance and improve volunteer management at council, but also support new and existing volunteers to realise their donation of time and skills has value and benefit in the community.

# 378%

**MORE VOLUNTEER HOURS  
COMPARED TO 2013/14**

## VOLUNTEER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM WITH WHCG

### Overview

We partner with the Wimmera Health Care Group (WHCG) to provide its volunteer coordination. We continue to recruit, screen, refer, manage data and train volunteers, thereby aiding in the growth and retention of volunteers. Further, we provide staff support to coordinate the day-to-day processes required for effective volunteer coordination, along with support to nurse unit managers and WHCG.

This year, WHCG's Volunteer Planning Committee met with us every second month to effect continuous improvement of its volunteer enhancement program. Together, we are working to bring the program into alignment with the new definition of volunteering (Volunteering Australia, 2015a) and the 2015 National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

### Highlights from 2015/16

The volunteer framework was reviewed with the intent to embed volunteering as crucial to WHCG's strategic and workforce planning. We are developing processes with the Volunteer Planning Committee to facilitate volunteer engagement in units and departments across all campuses. A new way of requesting volunteers has proved successful, with liaison between unit managers, unit teams and the volunteer program coordinator to draft a position description, which then goes through the hospital's normal process.

A new volunteering position in Oncology was one result, with other positions in development. A review after implementation concluded the program is adding value to volunteers, staff and patients. Also, more than 60 volunteers were recognised by WHCG with certificates of appreciation for IVD 2015 and the organisation was heavily involved with others for National Volunteer Week.

*"I have found the experience fulfilling and look forward to my responsibility. To see the improvement in the wellbeing of the clients is rewarding and I have helped in some way."*

Volunteer Satisfaction Survey

### Looking ahead

We will maintain the momentum around improving processes and continue to monitor the program's health with our regular 'snapshots'. These measure the number of volunteer visits and aggregated hours per day. Despite ad hoc supply of volunteer data by units, it is evident from the results below that significant growth has occurred in the recruitment and retention of volunteer engagement across WHCG.

250

volunteer visits  
2015/16

689

volunteer hours  
2015/16

54%

more volunteer visits compared  
to 2013/14



*“The bigger picture is behavioural change; all participants come from at-risk backgrounds, which can result in antisocial behaviours, and disengagement. We’ve had success in promoting positive changes, but ensuring these improvements persist in the long-term is challenging.”*



## CASE STUDY

One particular highlight from the first six months of the project was the completion of several personal bikes, particularly that of Kaylup Lofthouse. His was the first finished, thanks to Kaylup’s strong focus and drive to get it done. He refurbished an old frame with powder coating, selected several new parts, and reclaimed and cleaned up old parts from donated bicycles. Kaylup said the best part of the project so far has been “finishing my bike and showing it off”.

## RIGHT ON TRACK WITH GOOLUM GOOLUM

### Overview

‘Right on Track’ is a hub of bike-focused creative, mechanical, physical and community activities designed as an early intervention program for young indigenous people aged 12–19 living in the Grampians region. It aims to encourage re-engagement with education and career opportunities. We provide participants with materials, tools, a workshop and assistance to build three sets of bicycles: one to be kept by each participant; a set of ten bikes to be gifted to others in the community; and a set of three ‘pimped up’ Deadly Bikes for exhibition. The program encourages physical activity, increases skill development and improves connectedness to training opportunities.

### Highlights from 2015/16

We are only six months into two year-long projects but some benefits are already noticeable. Participants are calmer, less fractious, display greater confidence in their own abilities and are building trusting relationships with project staff and mentors.

They report that the group feels closer, trust each other more and are more willing to help. Self-confidence has risen, likewise pride in their labours. An excursion to see the AFL Dreamtime round in May 2016 was a high point; five participants went to the MCG and participated beforehand in the ‘Long Walk’, which celebrates indigenous achievements.

### Looking ahead

Due to circumstances and background, attendance to classes varies considerably. We will improve this by making the project more welcoming and establishing goals for each participant. The bigger picture is behavioural change; all participants come from at-risk backgrounds, which can result in antisocial behaviours, distrust and disengagement. We’ve had success in promoting positive changes, but ensuring these improvements persist in the long-term is challenging. Ideally, we would like to see participants take up further study or find fulfilling employment.



15

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Our partnerships stem from the fundamental belief that **together** we can better **achieve** our shared or common **goals** by **working** together.

# PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS AND FUNDERS

Partnerships are critical. They provide opportunities and build capacity to generate outcomes that otherwise may not be achieved.

Forming partnerships also enables us to deliver better outcomes for the communities we operate in and provides for unique resources, benefits and outcomes. We look forward to working with our partners into the future and developing new partnerships.

- > Albury-Wodonga Volunteer Resource Centre
- > Allens Training Pty Ltd
- > Ararat Neighbourhood House
- > Ararat Volunteer Managers/ Coordinators Network
- > Beverlie Wood Training and Assessment
- > Campaspe College of Adult Education
- > Community Action Networks
- > Community Axis
- > Community Learning Alliance
- > Community Visiting Scheme State Network

- > Community Visiting Scheme Rural Network
- > Dessert Edge Art Gallery
- > Federation University
- > Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative
- > Grampians Community Health
- > Health Promotion Network
- > Hindmarsh Shire Council
- > Home and Community Care Managers Network
- > Horsham CEO Network
- > Horsham College
- > Horsham Friends Abreast
- > Horsham Rural City Council
- > Horsham Volunteer Managers/ Coordinators Network
- > Memory Lane Café Network
- > Northern Grampians Shire Council
- > SES – Nhill Unit
- > St Arnaud Resource Centre
- > St Arnaud Volunteer Managers/ Coordinators Network
- > Stroke Support Group
- > The Centre Wangaratta
- > Think Impact

- > Transition Action Network
- > Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) Cluster
- > Victoria Volunteer Support Network (VVSN)
- > Voices of Wimmera
- > Volunteering Victoria
- > West Wimmera Health Service
- > West Wimmera Shire Council
- > Wimmera Community Options
- > Wimmera Disability Action Network
- > Wimmera Health Care Alliance
- > Wimmera Health Care Group
- > Wimmera Men's Shed network
- > Wimmera Primary Care Partnership
- > Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly
- > Wimmera Settlement Committee
- > Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN
- > Wimmera Uniting Care
- > Wimmera West Grampians Neighbourhood House Collective
- > Western District Employment Access
- > Yangg Ngalong Maligundidj
- > Yarriambiack Shire Council





We duly acknowledge our donors, funders and sponsors. With your ongoing support, the Centre for Participation continues to empower communities and support volunteering in a richer, more effective and meaningful way. The Centre for Participation is a charitable organisation with all contributions, donations and sponsorships directed towards delivering our programs to benefit those socially or geographically isolated and initiating events recognising the efforts of volunteers, such as the Volunteering Recognition Awards.

- > Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- > Department of Health and Human Services
- > Department of Health
- > Department of Social Services

## MAJOR FUNDING BODIES



**Australian Government**  
 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
 Department of Health and Human Services  
 Department of Social Services



COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME  
 AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## FINANCIAL YEAR SUMMARY

In addition to our own financial obligations, we took on a new office, refurbishments and management of the Wimmera Hub's finance and operations. The transition was achieved smoothly with processes improved.

During the year, the finance team saw funding changes in the commencement of two new funded programs, Goolum Goolum for the 'Right on Track' project and a new relationship with Horsham Rural City Council, to review its volunteer management programs in line with current standards. Simultaneously, we wound up the Rural and Remote

grant for volunteer management in the Grampians with initial project objectives achieved. The financial year also saw the finalisation of HACC funding moving across to the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

At our new head office, refurbishments costs were undertaken from our capital reserves and the improvements greatly add to the learning environment for the community. Our board has continued to oversee investment from these reserves; in particular, business development, asset and infrastructure, enabling us to explore new sustainable programs.

## FINANCIAL YEAR RESULTS

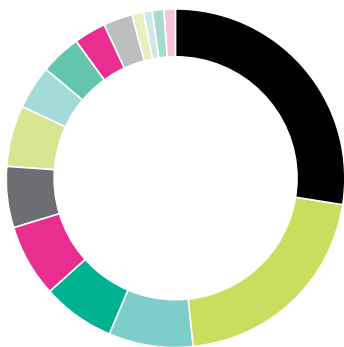
The past financial year derived an operating loss of -\$197,358 which includes depreciation of \$116,968.

The loss was represented by approved investment from our capital reserves in the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan. This also included our financial obligations under the Memorandum of Understanding in management of Wimmera HUB Inc.

Total income for the organisation for 2015-2016 was \$1,285,544 which included non-operating interest income of \$13,943 from investments.

The current net equity of the organisation as at the 30th June 2016 were \$1,000,827.

**Income Summary**  
by program 2015-2016 (%)



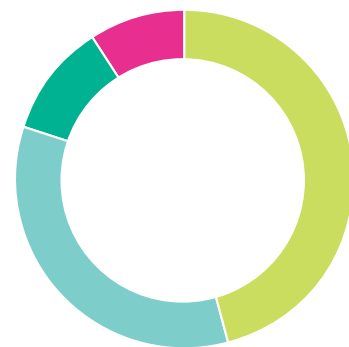
● Wimmera HUB MOU	28%
● Social Support	21%
● Volunteer Resource Program	8%
● Volunteer Remote Grant	7%
● Other Income	6%
● Licencing the Wimmera	6%
● Right on Track	6%
● Governance Mentors	4%
● Memory Lane Café	4%
● Community Visiting	3%
● Wimmera Health Care Group	3%
● Youth Disability Support	1%
● Interest	1%
● Horsham Rural City Council	1%
● Fundraising/Contributions	1%

**Expense Summary**  
2015-2016 (%)



● Staff Wages / On-costs	68%
● Depreciation	8%
● Program Delivery	5%
● Occupancy	3%
● Administration	3%
● Motor Vehicle	3%
● Governance	3%
● Staff Expenses / Training	2%
● Project Costs	2%
● Outsourcing	1%
● Information technology	1%
● Accounting	1%

**Projected Cash Reserves Commitment**  
Summary to June 2017



● Staff Provisions	46%
● General Operating Reserves	34%
● Capital Purchase	11%
● Research & Development	9%

# INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT



## Independent Audit Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Wimmera Volunteers Inc T/As Volunteering Western Victoria (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by members of the board.

### Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The board of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (VIC) and for such internal control as the board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In Note 1, the board also state, in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, that the financial statements comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

### Opinion

In our opinion:

- a. the financial report of Wimmera Volunteers Inc T/As Volunteering Western Victoria is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (VIC), including:
  - i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2016 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
  - ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (VIC)
- b. the financial report also complies with International Financial Reporting Standards as disclosed in Note 1.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Bertram Carter'.

John Bertram Carter CPA  
Olsen & Carter Pty Ltd  
95 Firebrace Street, Horsham

Dated this 19 day of August 2016



Membership creates numerous opportunities to **participate**, **give**, **mentor** and **belong**.

# MEMBERSHIP

This greatly benefits individuals, organisations and our communities. For example, access to free or discounted workshops and seminars, learning and development, notifications of upcoming training and our volunteer referral service are all part of organisational membership.

For organisations, membership also provides access to our networks and expertise. This includes 'VIP' invitations to all events.

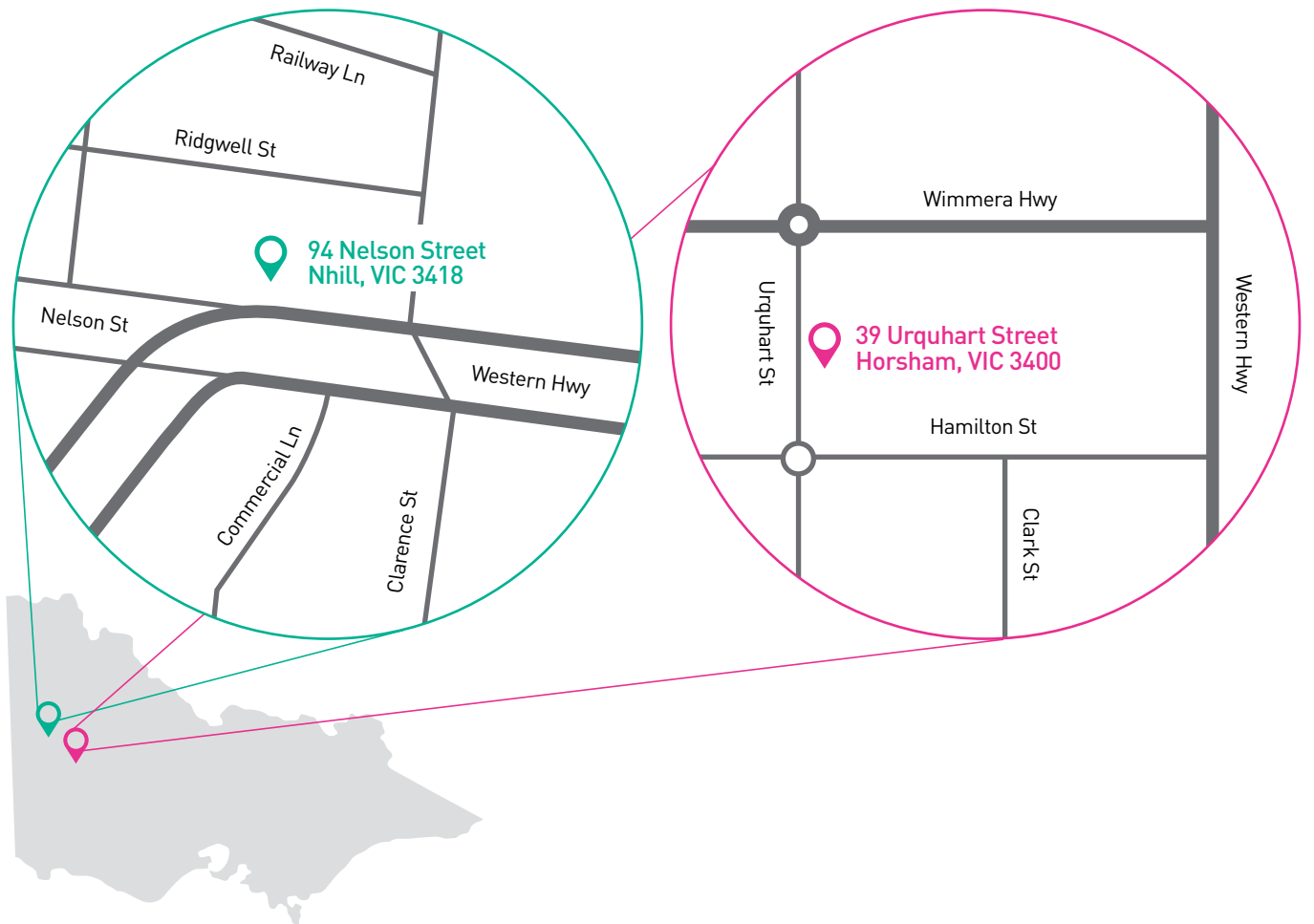
Individual membership has its own rewards for volunteers and communities. It provides an opportunity to participate, create networks and get to know your local community, especially if you have recently moved into the area.

It also assists us to advocate on behalf of volunteers and the community sector. Members support the work we do, and they receive the latest information on issues affecting the community sector and other relevant volunteer and volunteer management information and resources.

## ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

- > 4th Horsham Scouts
- > Art Is
- > Australian Red Cross
- > Budja Budja Neighbourhood House
- > Business Horsham Inc.
- > Central Grampians LLEN
- > Conservation Volunteers Australia
- > Dunmunkle Lodge
- > East Wimmera Health Service
- > Grampians Community Health Stawell
- > Grampians Junior Basketball
- > Halls Gap Tourism Inc.
- > Harrow Bush Nursing Centre
- > Hindmarsh Landcare Network
- > Hindmarsh Shire Council
- > Hopetoun and District Neighbourhood House
- > Horsham College
- > Horsham Rural City Council
- > Horsham Special Development School
- > Kaniva District Progress Association
- > Kaniva LINK Inc.
- > Nhill SES Unit
- > Riding Develops Abilities
- > St Arnaud Community Resource Centre
- > Stawell Neighbourhood House
- > Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House
- > West Wimmera Shire Council
- > Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
- > Wimmera Development Association
- > Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN
- > Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly
- > Wimmera Regional Library Co-Op
- > Wimmera Uniting Care
- > Wimmera West Grampians NH Network
- > Yarriambiack Shire Council

# WHERE TO FIND US





---

**CONTACT US ON**



03 5382 5607



info@centreforparticipation.org.au



P.O. Box 267 Horsham, VIC 3402



centreforparticipation.org.au

**FIND US ON**



@centreforparticipation