



Volunteer Plan

2019-2024

Executive Summary

Volunteering contributes to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the City of Swan community. It promotes community connectedness, reduces isolation and increases social capital and community cohesion, making the City a stronger community to live, work, study and visit.

The amount of time donated by volunteers is a significant contribution to the City and broader community.

The City of Swan Volunteer Plan 2019-2024 (the Plan) will guide the City's approach to supporting, promoting and celebrating volunteering. The Plan is guided by the Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027. The Volunteering Policy and the City's vision of a diverse and socially inclusive community in which all people in the City of Swan feel valued and have opportunities to fully participate in community life. The Plan outlines the vision for volunteering in the City over five years from 2019-2024. It provides a framework for the promotion, recruitment/retention, recognition, celebration and management of volunteers, encouraging a responsive and supportive environment for all volunteers.

The Plan development process included an analysis of demographic data and trends, Swan Volunteer Resource Centre data, broader background research, a review of Commonwealth and State policy documents and feedback from key informants. As a result of this process, the following five volunteering priority areas were identified:

- Fostering commitment to volunteer participation
- Recognising volunteering and acknowledging and celebrating volunteers
- Promoting and marketing volunteering as an essential component of the City's service delivery
- Developing and implementing appropriate volunteer policies and management practices
- Strengthening volunteer networks and partnerships





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1.0 Background

1.1 What is Volunteering?

Each year, approximately 80 per cent¹ of Western Australians aged 15 years and over give their time for the good of the community. Volunteering is an essential community resource which promotes active citizenship and social inclusion. Volunteering extends value to our communities to make them safe, robust, inclusive and culturally rich. Volunteering is important in improving positive mental health and wellbeing in individuals who demonstrate 'act, belong, commit' within the community. Volunteers come from all walks of life and come together to achieve a common goal for their volunteer organisation. It provides a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs. Volunteering is often thought of in terms of the benefits it brings to others; however it also benefits the individual, helping them to achieve their own objectives, enhance their skills and extend their experience.²

The importance of the volunteering movement in creating dynamic social change is recognised internationally by both the government and non-government sectors. Similarly, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines volunteering as "the provision of unpaid help willingly undertaken in the form of time, service or skills, to an organisation or group."

A voluntary activity is an activity that is:

- Of benefit to the community
- Non-obligatory and undertaken without coercion
- Without monetary reward

In 2015, Volunteering Australia developed a definition that reflects the contemporary nature of the sector and volunteering. It defines volunteering as, "... time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."³ This closely aligns with the United Nations (UN) definition of volunteering that refers to volunteering as, "... an action carried out voluntarily, according to an individual's own free will, not undertaken for financial reward nor stipulated by law, contract or academic requirement, and one for the common good. It includes acts that take place outside the context of a formal organisation on a regular basis."⁴





In Australia, volunteers work formally and informally, in all spheres of community and across many sectors, including:

- Health, welfare and community services
- Emergency services
- Arts, culture and heritage
- Environment
- Sport and recreation
- Education
- Youth development
- Overseas aid
- Animal welfare
- Human rights
- Religious organisations

1.2 International, National, and Local Policy Context

The importance of volunteering and its contribution to a healthy, connected and inclusive community is reflected in policy initiatives globally and across all levels of government; Commonwealth, State and

Local.

1.2.1 International

The United Nations (UN) has played a particularly significant role in developing and promoting volunteering, through the adoption of specific resolutions on volunteering. The first resolution in 1985 invited governments to observe an annual International Volunteer Day on December 5 for Economic and Social Development. The second in 1997 was sponsored by 126 countries including Australia, and proclaimed 2001 the International Year of Volunteers. In addition, the Universal Declaration on Volunteering⁵ supports the right of every woman, man and child to associate freely and to volunteer regardless of their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, and physical, social or economic condition. These resolutions noted the critical role of governments in supporting and encouraging volunteering.



1.2.2 The National Volunteering Strategy

The 2011 National Volunteering Strategy⁶ articulates the Commonwealth Government's vision for volunteering, which is to ensure that by 2021 volunteering is encouraged, supported and recognised by all Australians. It is a call to action for governments, business, not-for-profit organisations and the Australian community. It recognises that creating and sustaining a stronger volunteering sector will require a whole-of-sector effort. The strategy explores emerging issues and challenges for the volunteering sector and provides a set of strategic directions to be addressed. The following six focus areas are identified in the strategy:

Focus area 1. Respond to trends in volunteering:

A better understanding of emerging trends in volunteering will enable the development of better tailored strategies to attract and retain volunteers.

Focus area 2. Harness technology: Information technology can better match people to volunteering opportunities and increase participation in volunteering. Technology can also be used to increase engagement among volunteers and enable collaboration between organisations that use or support volunteers. The National Broadband Network will further enable this.

Focus area 3. Better regulation and risk

management: Easier access to reliable information and simpler, more effective regulation will reduce the complexity of volunteer protection and insurance requirements.

Focus area 4. Strengthen management and

training: Good volunteer management and training are central to attracting and engaging volunteers. This can be achieved by providing more effective information and resources to volunteer managers and volunteers

Focus area 5. Strengthen relationships and

advocacy: Governments, the volunteering sector and other key stakeholders must all work together to build a stronger volunteering sector. Intermediaries, such as peak bodies and volunteer resource centres, provide vital support and advocacy for many volunteers and organisations. The quality of the volunteering experience will be improved by strong representation and advocacy.

Focus area 6. Recognise and value volunteering.

Greater recognition of volunteers and the contribution they make to Australia society will inspire more Australians to volunteer.

1.2.3 The Western Australia Volunteering Strategy

The WA Volunteering Strategy⁷ (2018) was developed by the Department of Communities and is a call to action for the whole community to work together to encourage and support volunteering across WA. The Strategy provides a broad framework for action and suggests strategies that can be implemented by all levels of government, non-government organisations, the private sector and the community, to encourage and support volunteering.

The key focus areas for the Strategy are:

Focus area 1: Responding to emerging trends and issues. *Outcome 1:* The volunteering sector can recognise and respond to the changing needs of volunteers.

Focus Area 2: Encourage and facilitate participation in community life through volunteering. *Outcome 2:* More Western Australians, from all backgrounds, are engaged in volunteering and enriched by the experience. *Outcome 3:* The volunteering sector harnesses technological innovations to facilitate participation.

Focus Area 3: Support volunteer-involving organisations. *Outcome 4:* Communities and organisations can involve volunteers effectively for their mutual benefit.

Focus Area 4: Recognise and value volunteers and volunteering. *Outcome 5:* Volunteers are recognised and celebrated. *Outcome 6:* Volunteering is recognised and valued for the contribution it makes to our community.

1.3 Emerging Trends

The 2016 Census revealed that in Australia:

- The rates of volunteering are highest among males aged 45-54 years at 302,612 people
- The rates of volunteering are highest among women aged 35-44 at 399,889 people
- Overall, the rates of volunteering are highest in the 45-54 year age group at 679,602 people⁸

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) the national volunteer participation rate decreased from 36% in 2010 to 31% in 2014.⁹

The Commonwealth or National Volunteer Strategy (2011) identified several emerging trends:

- Men and women have shown similar volunteering rates with women being generally slightly higher
- While more people are volunteering, the median hours of voluntary work have decreased. People are volunteering for shorter hours
- Growth in volunteering is uneven. Rates of volunteering have grown in sport, religion and education but have declined in community services and emergency management
- More volunteers want roles that are flexible, or require shorter hours or a shorter term commitment
- People are increasingly time poor and volunteering competes with greater work and caring responsibilities
- People are more mobile than in the past so volunteers are less likely to stay for many years in a single role



2.0 Volunteering in the City of Swan

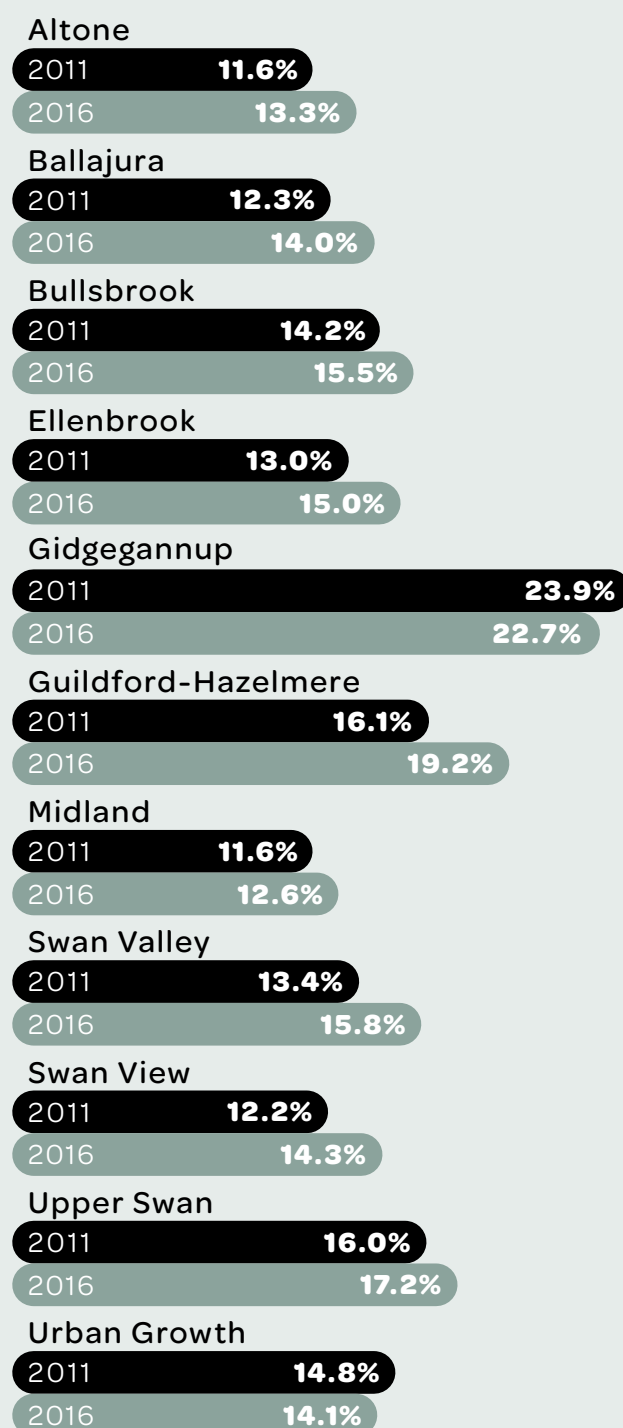
2.1 Community Profile

The City is committed to ensuring best practice procedures for volunteers including registration, induction, training, support and recognition. The 2016 Census result show that 14.7% (15,192 people) of the City's population reported doing some form of voluntary work. The number of volunteers increased by 1.8%, from 12.9% (10,715 people), in 2011. According to ABS, City of Swan volunteering statistics are below the WA average of 16.9%, and the Australian average of 17.8% which indicates a need to increase the City's volunteering rates of volunteering. An analysis of 2016 volunteer statistics by local area shows Gidgegannup (22.7%) and Guildford-Hazelmere (19.2%) had the highest number of people volunteering in the City. Midland and Altone had the lowest volunteering rates, 12.6% and 13.3% respectively.

Similar to national statistics, the ABS statistics for 2016 tend to show a high correlation between volunteering rates and household income. An analysis of household income shows in 2016, 31% of households in Gidgegannup and 25% in Guildford-Hazelmere earned an income above \$2,500 per week compared to 15% and 11% of households in Altone and Midland respectively. The analysis shows the higher the household income, the more likely one is to volunteer. This might mean people tend to do voluntary work when their household income is secure.

Figure 1

Percentage of Volunteers in City of Swan per Local Area (2011-2016)



2.2 Volunteering Opportunities in the City of Swan

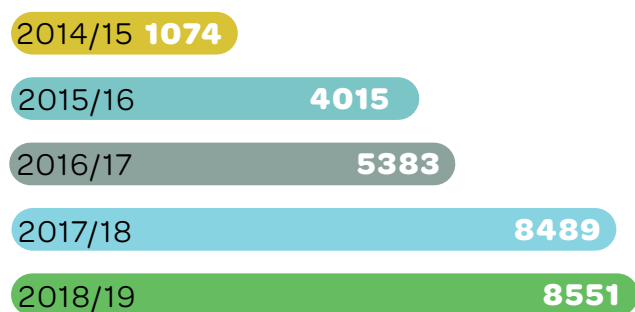
Volunteers directly engaged with the City are recruited through many avenues including expos, word of mouth, and self-referral directly by the individual business units or referral via the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre (SVRC). Opportunities across many different areas of interest exist in the City and community organisations. SVRC provides free online listing of these volunteering opportunities including events, community support programs and administration. Data retrieved from SVRC database shows the number of listed volunteering opportunities increased from 2,091 in 2016 to 2,559 in 2017.

2.2.1 Volunteer Rate

The volunteer rate is a key performance indicator of the City of Swan Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027 strategic goal S2.1.2 – Strengthen the sense of place and culture and belonging through inclusive community interaction and participation. The volunteer rate is defined as the number of people who volunteer through the City (which does not include community groups or other associations).

This measure indicates the rate people volunteer within the City. Figure 2 shows a significant increase in the number of volunteers registered or referred through the SVRC from 2014 to 2019. This significant increase can be attributed to continued promotion of volunteering across the community, increased access to services provided by the SVRC and an increase in the number of community groups currently being supported by the SVRC.

Figure 2: Volunteer Rate (2014-2019)



Source: Swan Volunteer Resource Centre Database (2014-2017).

2.2.2 Swan Volunteer Resource Centre

The Swan Volunteer Resource Centre (SVRC) is an initiative of the City of Swan and is supported by the Department of Communities. The SVRC has been operating since 2003, initially as an online service (volunteer.com) which evolved into a shop front operation in response to community demand.

The SVRC provides a free community service with a dual purpose. It is a central point for enquiries from potential volunteers and assists them to find the not-for-profit community organisation most suited to their skills and interests. It is also a support resource for the City's 170 plus not-for-profit community organisations and assists them to find the volunteers most suited to their needs.

The SVRC provides a customer facing service five days a week across a range of locations in the City. It also offers a 24 hour a day, seven days a week online referral service.

The range of services and support include:

- Assisting members of the community to find suitable volunteering roles
- Providing resources and support to potential volunteers
- Providing information on volunteering to groups and individuals
- Sourcing volunteers for not-for-profit organisations
- Offering support to volunteer coordinators to ensure best management practice
- Providing current information to not-for-profit organisations about recruitment strategies and resources
- Promoting and increasing the profile of volunteering throughout the community
- Producing e-newsletters and information on volunteering trends



2.2.3 Volunteering positions in the city of swan

	Bullsbrook Recycling Facility Assistants Operators		Swan Community Care Services Bus drivers Activity assistants Vehicle detailers Administration assistance
	Art and Culture Gallery attendants Visual art assistants Theatre assistants		Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade Fire fighters Cadets Communications
	Natural environment, maintenance and operations support Assist volunteers to maintain the natural environment and the opportunity to provide volunteer work in the maintenance field and offices		Community events Hyper Youth Festival Resident groups Community movies Harmony Week celebrations
	City of Swan Libraries Home library service Administration assistance		Swan Valley Visitor Centre Tourism operators

3.0 Developing the City of Swan Plan

The City of Swan Volunteer Plan's development process included background research and feedback from previous community consultations. The research and feedback from consultations has provided an understanding of the key trends and issues in volunteering and opportunities to increase volunteerism in the City of Swan. The four stages in the development of this Plan involved:

Policy Context:

Review of key international, Federal and State policy, research and legislative documents relating to volunteering.

Demographic Analysis:

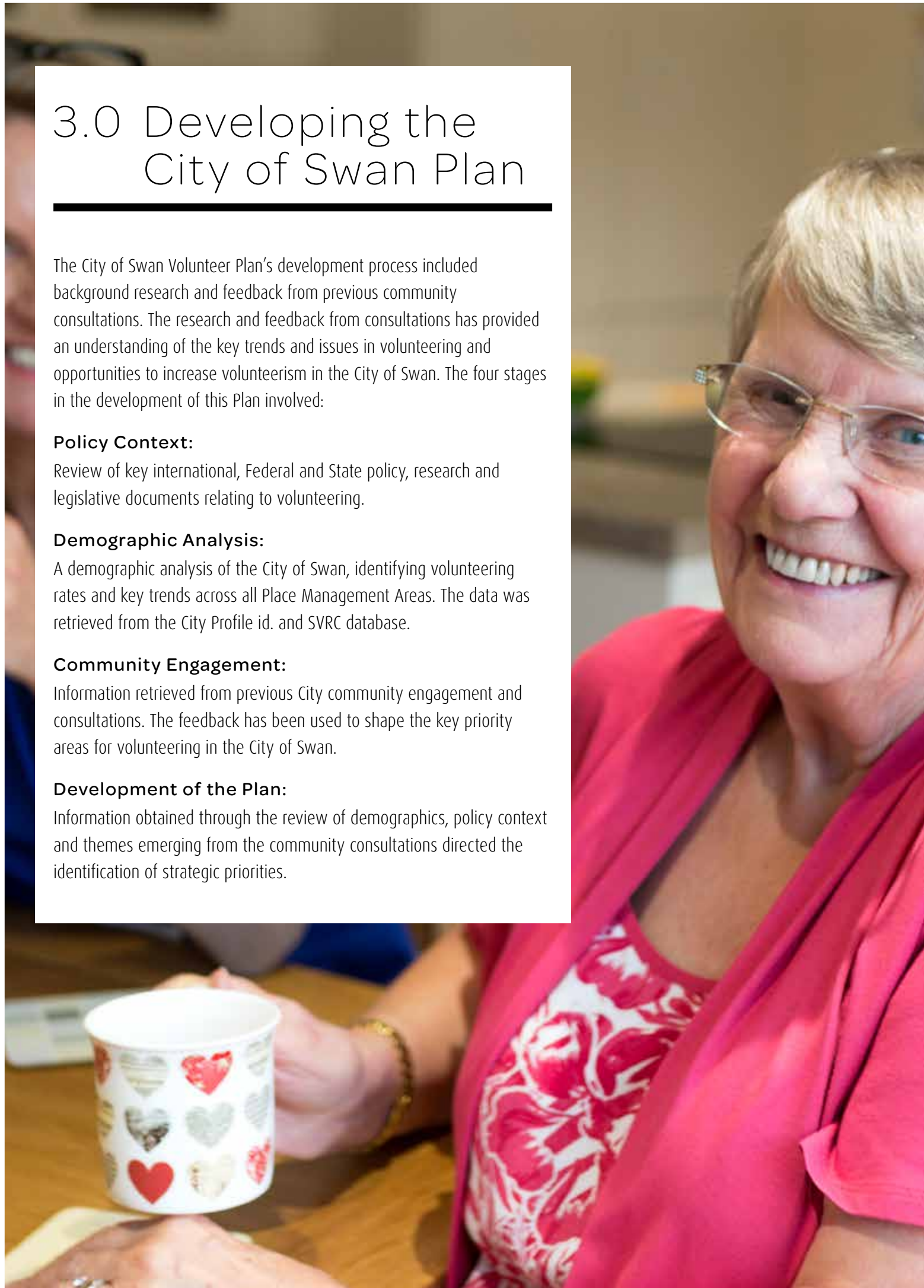
A demographic analysis of the City of Swan, identifying volunteering rates and key trends across all Place Management Areas. The data was retrieved from the City Profile id. and SVRC database.

Community Engagement:

Information retrieved from previous City community engagement and consultations. The feedback has been used to shape the key priority areas for volunteering in the City of Swan.

Development of the Plan:

Information obtained through the review of demographics, policy context and themes emerging from the community consultations directed the identification of strategic priorities.



4.0 The City of Swan Volunteer Plan 2019–2024

The City of Swan recognises where there is a vibrant culture of volunteering, communities are stronger due to the inclusiveness volunteering promotes in the community. The City's Volunteer Plan 2019–2024 will guide the approach to supporting, promoting and celebrating volunteering.

The Volunteer Plan is guided by the City's vision and Strategic Community Plan 2017–2027, Volunteer Policy as well as linking with other City plans and strategies. It closely aligns with the Strategic Community Plan (2017–2027) strategic goal S2.1.2: Strengthen the sense of place and culture and belonging through inclusive community interaction and participation.¹⁰

The Volunteer Plan outlines the vision for volunteering in the City over the next five years from 2019–2024. It articulates the City's vision and commitment to volunteering and emphasises the value of volunteering to the City, particularly:

- In contributing to the City's vision of a socially inclusive society in which all people in the City of Swan feel valued and have opportunities to fully participate in community life
- In creating social cohesion, facilitating networks to build social capital and engendering a sense of belonging
- In promoting active citizenship and community participation
- In responding to emerging trends and the needs of the community
- In building community resilience and its critical contribution to emergency services
- In its contribution to the economy

4.1 Why Have a Volunteer Plan?

The City is committed to encouraging, supporting and recognising the importance of volunteering in our local community. Besides having economic value, volunteering gives people a way to connect with and help others in their local community. A City of Swan Volunteer Plan has been developed with five key priority areas. The key priority areas where the City can play a role, either through community development or in managing volunteers directly to support City programs and activities. Key priority areas:

- Fostering commitment to volunteer participation
- Recognising volunteering and acknowledging and celebrating volunteers
- Promoting and marketing volunteering as an essential component of the City's service delivery
- Developing and implementing appropriate volunteer policies and management practices
- Strengthening networks and partnerships

4.2 City of Swan Key Priority Areas

Priority Area 1:

The City of Swan fosters a commitment to volunteer participation

Outcome 1.1

A high proportion of people from diverse backgrounds undertaking volunteering in the City of Swan

Action 1.1 Monitor emerging trends and issues and continue to seek feedback from the volunteer sector to strengthen volunteering within the City.

Action 1.2 Promote and support Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically and Diverse (CaLD) communities volunteering through utilising culturally appropriate methods of communication and existing networks.

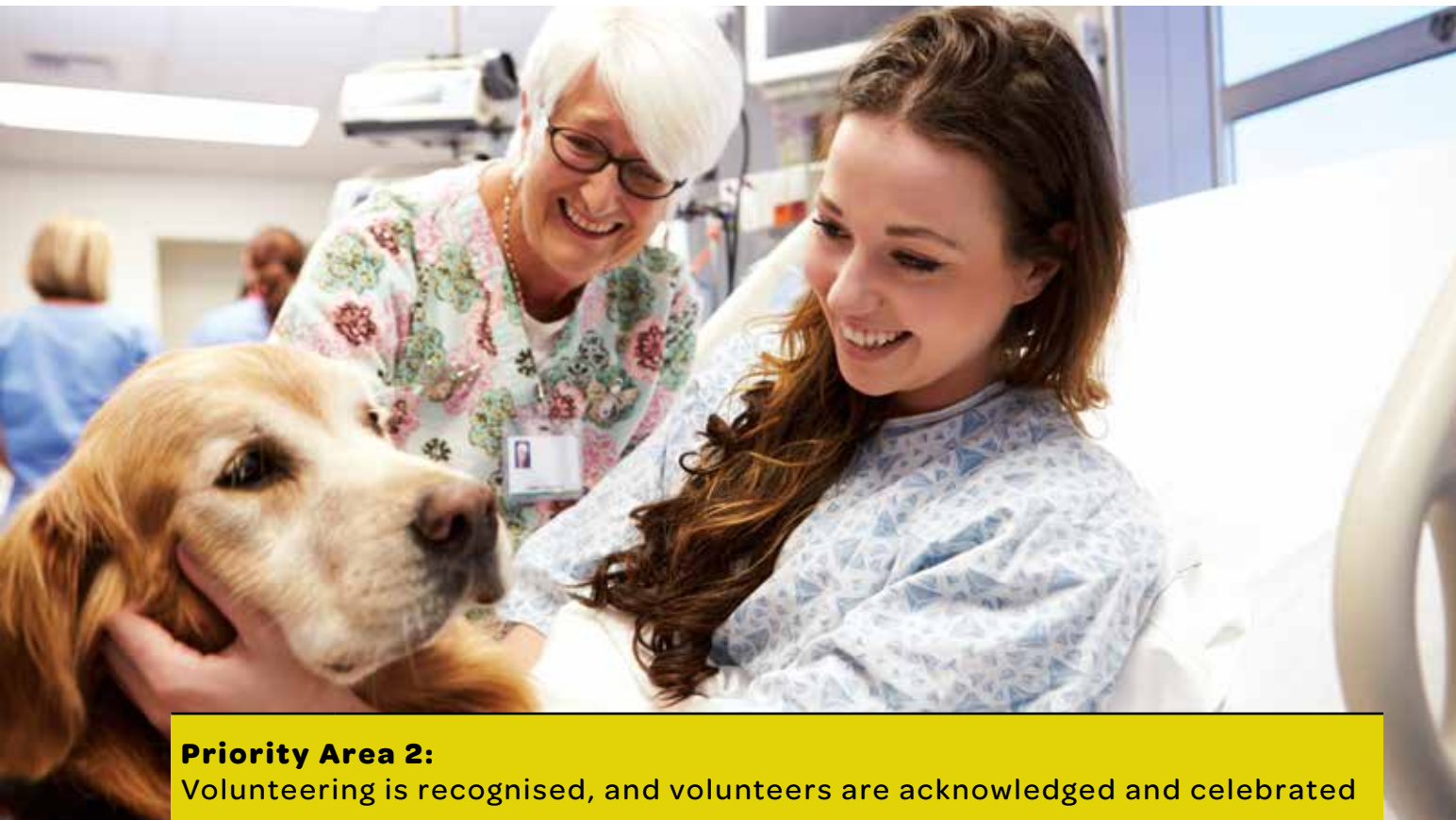
Action 1.3 Actively promote volunteering specifically designed to target the City of Swan senior population.

Action 1.4 Develop specific programs for young people to engage in volunteer activities and events that enhance their work readiness, and increase volunteering participation.

Action 1.5 Provide a range of volunteer activities to meet the diverse interests and abilities of a diverse community.

Action 1.6 Actively promote the benefits of volunteering in educational settings such as career expos; secondary schools and tertiary campuses.

Action 1.7 Investigate the feasibility of creating volunteer resource spaces within all community hubs, or libraries to reduce barriers to recruitment and participation.



Priority Area 2:

Volunteering is recognised, and volunteers are acknowledged and celebrated

Outcome 2.1

Social and economic benefits of volunteering are recognised and valued for the contribution they make to the City of Swan.

Outcome 2.2

Volunteers are appreciated, acknowledged and celebrated and are satisfied with their volunteering experience.

Action 2.1 Volunteer contributions will continue to be celebrated through a series of formal and informal recognition events and rewards.

Action 2.2 Promote the formal recognition of years of service by City volunteers.

Action 2.3 Investigate volunteer recognition programs and opportunities.

Action 2.4 Produce a profile of local volunteers through the City website and Volunteer Digest (newsletter).

Priority Area 3:

Continue promotion and marketing of volunteering as an essential component of the City's service delivery

Outcome 3.1

Volunteering opportunities and benefits will be communicated to the broader community.

Action 3.1 Increase community awareness of volunteering contribution through strategic communication.

Action 3.2 Implement targeted promotion of volunteering opportunities.

Action 3.3 Adapt technological innovations and use of digital, radio and print media to reach a wider audience in order to facilitate volunteer participation.

Priority Area 4:

Develop and implement appropriate volunteer policies and management practices

Outcome 4.1

Volunteer practices are contemporary and adaptable to emerging volunteering trends, protect the rights of volunteers and support volunteers to carry out their activities and responsibilities

Outcome 4.2

Develop an organisational governance system of internal procedures that incorporate promotion, recruitment, retention, procedural management, and induction, code of conduct, training, reporting, insurance and acknowledgement

Action 4.1 Volunteering will be considered in City planning, resourcing, reporting and evaluation processes.

Action 4.2 Develop a volunteer framework that optimises the experience for volunteers and proficiently manages volunteer recruitment, activities, risks, support and skills development.

Action 4.3 Develop and utilise a standardised volunteer management system in line with National Standards to implement a best practice approach for registration of volunteers, recruitment and mandatory training.

Action 4.4 Facilitate training opportunities for volunteers subject to City's budget.

Action 4.5 Provide opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback on activities and decisions that affect them.

Action 4.6 Establish an internal volunteer working group to strengthen volunteering within the City.

Action 4.7 Design, review and measure volunteer activities to highlight the economic value and social impact of volunteering in the City.

Action 4.8 Promote Swan Volunteer Resource Centre as a one stop shop for the delivery of volunteering services and potential volunteers seeking volunteering opportunities in the City.



Priority Area 5: Strengthen networks and partnerships

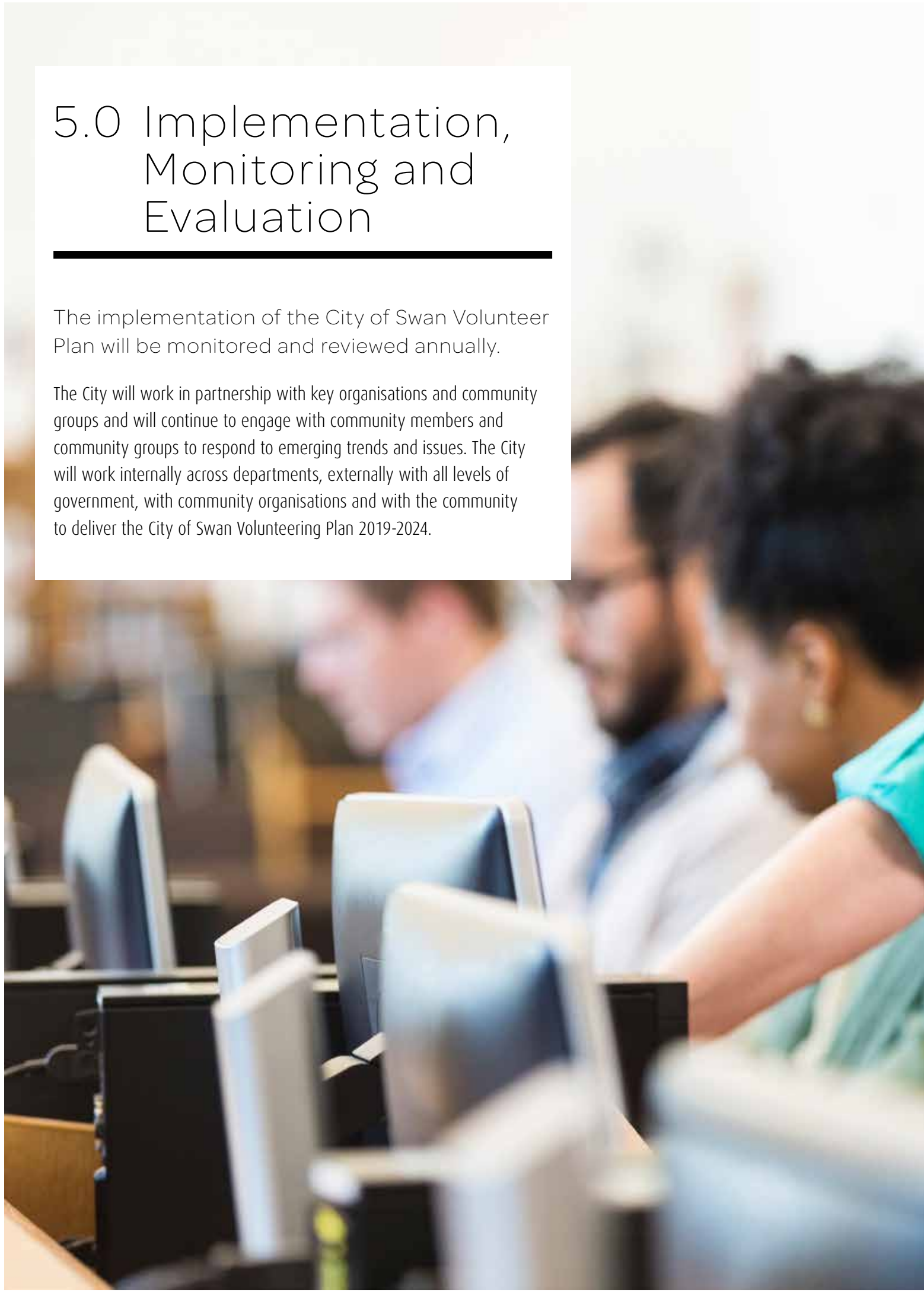
Outcome 5.1 Volunteer networks collaborate effectively to ensure a shared understanding of volunteering trends, opportunities and issues

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|-------------------|--|
| Action 5.1 | Identify suitable partnership with volunteer agencies and community organisations with shared interests on volunteering. |
| Action 5.2 | Develop partnerships to deliver volunteering activities that address community needs. |
| Action 5.3 | Identify opportunities to mobilise resources for joint initiatives such as hosting events and volunteer management training. |
| Action 5.4 | Strengthen information sharing among volunteer organisations and networks. |
| Action 5.5 | Strengthen relationships and investigate opportunities to promote volunteering in the community. |
| Action 5.6 | Encourage and support local business and other organisations to develop volunteering programmes that promote corporate volunteering across the City. |

5.0 Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the City of Swan Volunteer Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually.

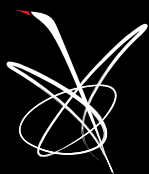
The City will work in partnership with key organisations and community groups and will continue to engage with community members and community groups to respond to emerging trends and issues. The City will work internally across departments, externally with all levels of government, with community organisations and with the community to deliver the City of Swan Volunteering Plan 2019-2024.





Endnotes

- 1 The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering to Western Australia (2015), commissioned by Volunteering WA.
- 2 Meier, S., & Stutzer, A. (2004). Is volunteering rewarding in itself? (IZA Discussion Paper No. 1045). Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor.
- 3 Volunteering Australia. 2015. Volunteering Australia Project: The Review of the Definition of Volunteering.
- 4 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011, Universal Values for Well-being, United Nations Volunteers, 2011, United Nations Volunteers UNV, Bonn, Germany.
- 5 <http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/ensino/voluntariado/DeclaraoUniversaldoVoluntariadoJaneirode2001.pdf>
- 6 Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2011.
- 7 https://www.dlqc.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/WA_Volunteering_Strategy_2017.pdf
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics, "2016 Census of Population and Housing", G19 Voluntary work for an organisation or group by age by sex, 2016 Census.
- 9 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4159.0.55.004>
- 10 City of Swan Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027



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If you would like to speak to someone about available opportunities please contact us at the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre.

Swan Volunteer Resource Centre

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swan.volunteers@swan.wa.gov.au

This document is available in alternative formats upon request including in standard or large print, electronically by email, in audio format on CD and on the City of Swan's website.

If you would like further information or to provide feedback, contact us at **9267 9267** or at **access@swan.wa.gov.au**