



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

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Thank you to our generous supporters

Volunteer for Knox has been supported by a grant from the Knox Council Community Development Fund. Volunteer for Knox is governed by Knox Learning Alliance and is a member of Volunteering Victoria.



ABOUT

Purpose

Volunteer for Knox aims to place passionate and willing volunteers with local not-for-profit organisations in need. The Volunteer Resource Centre's purpose is to increase volunteering opportunities for organisations and individuals in Knox.

We work with other strategic partner organisations in Victoria to promote and build a vibrant, strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable.

We lead research, policy, professional development, hold sector-wide events and undertake innovative initiatives, in conjunction with volunteer peak bodies across Australia, to support the sector. A core part of our work is providing training for leaders of volunteers on the National Standards for Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's). Our Continuing Professional Development Program recognises and encourages the professionalism of leaders of volunteers.

We define volunteering as "time willingly given without financial gain and for the common good". This broad definition encompasses diversity of organisational and informal means of civic participation.

Volunteering Victoria works alongside the Victorian Volunteer Support Network (VVSN) to support the volunteering sector. This place-based network of Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs, otherwise known as Volunteer Resource Centres) facilitates volunteer placements, regional coordination and capacity building for leaders of volunteers.

About Volunteer for Knox

Volunteer for Knox is the Volunteer Resource Centre servicing the City of Knox and is located at Coonara Community House, 22 Willow Rd, Upper Ferntree Gully, Victoria.

Volunteer for Knox was funded by Knox City Council in 2014 and is jointly governed through a partnership between the five Knox Neighbourhood Houses – Coonara Community House, The Basin Community House, Community Learning Centre (Rowville), Mountain District Learning Centre and Orana Neighbourhood House.

What we do

- ✓ Support community members find volunteer opportunities.
- ✓ Our strength is providing personalised guidance and support through a volunteer-for-volunteers model
- ✓ Providing training and support to coordinators and managers of volunteers, and to organisations that run volunteering programs
- ✓ Advancing volunteering leadership through research and evaluations



Impact and Reach

257

volunteers referred

53%

born overseas

48

different languages other than English with Mandarin, Cantonese and Hindi the top three

75%

identify as female

90%

aged 65 and under, 101 volunteers aged under 25



Accessible and affordable service

We provide a free service to non profit communities and low cost training featuring more than 80 different courses and volunteer focused workshops per calendar year

134

City of Knox non-profit organisations registered

We provide support and information via newsletters, a strong volunteer managers network, personal consultations and training

1,000

Followers on Social Media

A combined total of 1000 followers increasing the reach across our community



Promoting and Advocating for Volunteering

National Volunteer Week celebration held at Westfield Knox Community Space, activities five days a week promoting volunteerism, Knox Learning Alliance promoting volunteering through their individual kiosks



Volunteers supporting Volunteerism

Our V4K ambassador team and volunteer administration team contribute meaningfully to support our work out in the community



Value to the Knox Learning Alliance

Promotion of training and workshops, promotion of courses at Westfield Knox community space and access to volunteers

1,115

Expressions of interest in V4K advertised positions

Friends of Koolunga Reserve advertisement for Conservation Assistants was the most popular position especially for young passionate people driven by their values and specific issues

Four Projects

Reach Out and Connect

Connecting people back into the community post-Covid with a celebration lunch for volunteers at the Westfield Knox community space and plans for a Volunteer expo in September 2021

Covid vaccination booking mentors

Providing quick response by helping 200 people with low digital literacy skills enrol online for their Covid vaccines

Be Kind project

Teaming up with Knox City Council Marketing and communications team Be Kind project to promote the benefits of volunteerism in Knox to all non profit organisations in Knox

Soup Angels

Organised a kitchen team at Coonara Community House to help cook and feed the communities in the Dandenongs devastated by the storms in June 2021

Benefits of Volunteering

One of the better-known benefits of volunteering is the impact on the community. Unpaid volunteers are often the glue that holds a community together. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. However, volunteering is a two-way street, and it can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help. Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, improve your mental health, expand your network, gain work skills and boost your social skills.

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest, most disruptive event to the volunteering sector in decades.

In Victoria, in addition to health concerns and the spread of the virus among members of the community, the key impacts to volunteering were from the requirements for social distancing of 1.5 metres, restrictions to gatherings and specific activities and the Victorian Government's 'stay at home' messaging.

But the impact also brought a surge of interest in formal volunteering opportunities, with many highly skilled people losing jobs and people wanting to "help" during this difficult time.

Volunteer for Knox expressions of interest to volunteer tripled during this period.

But the COVID-19 pandemic was also a catalyst for Volunteer for Knox to "pivot" and encourage organisations to modernise and streamline their practices. This included initiatives to develop online training via Zoom to encourage and develop online skills, inducting volunteers online and connecting to registered organisations and volunteers through other digital means, like social media, Facebook and Instagram. Much of this work was innovative and improved efficiencies.

Volunteer for Knox developed a training calendar with new training opportunities during lockdown to keep volunteers and agencies connected. We also ran a weekly online support group via Zoom for volunteers and volunteer managers called **"Staying Connected."** This was especially important during the hard lockdowns.

Volunteer for Knox is the only resource centre in the state that has unique access to adult learning opportunities through their governance team, the five community houses in the City of Knox. This played a huge part in keeping volunteers and organisations engaged with more than 40 online courses to choose from during lockdown to upskill, de-stress and most importantly to stay in touch for our mental health.

What we did:

- ✓ Developed an online induction video for volunteers to watch and register as an alternative to our regular monthly induction sessions
- ✓ Created online registration forms
- ✓ Hosted Volunteer for Knox network meetings via Zoom with registered organisations. About 20 volunteer managers attended to discuss their issues and need for support. Biggest attendance ever.
- ✓ With our encouragement a number of Knox organisations developed virtual job roles such as assistance with business planning, fundraising, grant applications and updating websites and social media. We were able to advertise these jobs nationally through our Viktor database on Seek and Go Volunteer attracting many highly skilled workers.
- ✓ Emailed newsletters to keep organisations up to date with current situation and resources

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The virtual job roles included:

- ✓ Online tutors to support socially isolated migrants and refugees to learn English
- ✓ Compiling content for social media posts and/or community newsletters (articles about anything that might be of interest to those isolated from community, e.g. Recipes, garden tips, good books to read, local businesses providing delivery services, information about local organisations to get involved with after the crisis, interesting local places to share, photos from your daily walk, ideas for relieving boredom, local history and reminiscences.
- ✓ Letterboxing community newsletters particularly to those unable to access the Internet
- ✓ Becoming a pen pal for people who were isolated including in Aged Care.
- ✓ Assisting with hosting online social events such as Talking cafés, cooking, gardening, craft demonstrations
- ✓ Providing assistance to people with trouble using their devices to connect to social media etc. – via phone or email
- ✓ Circulating resources and updates for organisations and volunteers through social media and website
- ✓ Keeping Volunteer for Knox website and social media updated (Facebook and Instagram)
- ✓ Liaising with peak body Volunteer Victoria and other state-wide volunteer resource centres to keep up with current trends and participating in online support network meetings

“**THE REMOTE VOLS
HAVE ALL BEEN
BRILLIANT. COULDN'T
HAVE ACHIEVED
ANYTHING WITHOUT
THEM AT THIS TIME!**”

— **Living Your Best Life project worker**
Leanne FitzGerald

We embraced online training with close to 200 people enrolling online through the five community houses! We have had great feedback from Volunteering Victoria and Swinburne University staff who also participated.

Our peak body Volunteering Victoria asked Volunteer for Knox to write a case study on the innovative changes we implemented quickly due to Covid-19. At the end of 2020 we received an acknowledgement from Parliamentary secretary for Carers and Volunteers Anthony Carlines MP for work on moving face to face engagement with online training programs to stay connected with volunteers and managers during lockdown.

Volunteer for Knox have now developed term training calendars in consultation with the Knox Community houses to engage volunteers and volunteer managers in learning and upskilling into the future, with around 20 courses on offer.

Sally Dusting Laird
Volunteer for Knox Co-ordinator

HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

STEP 1 → STEP 2 → STEP 3 → STEP 4 → STEP 5 → STEP 6

Watch
our online
induction

Complete our
online registration
form

We'll contact
you by phone
or email

We'll refer you to
relevant roles and the
volunteer manager

Apply for the
position you're
interested in

Start your
volunteer
journey!



FOLLOW UP IS CARRIED OUT 3 MONTHS AFTER PLACEMENT

ORGANISATION'S REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR NON-PROFITS IN KNOX

STEP 1

Contact Volunteer for Knox to register your organisation. You will be required to provide a copy of your current Public Liability insurance.



STEP 2

Provide details of your volunteer opportunity including position description, days/hours required and any other relevant information relating to the position.

Volunteer for Knox will advertise the position via GoVolunteer and Seek Volunteer and will process expressions of interest.



STEP 3

Volunteer for Knox will match suitable applicants to the role and provide an induction session. The induction session includes general information around volunteering and Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities.



STEP 4

Potential volunteers are provided with details of your volunteer opportunity and contact information. They are asked to contact you directly to arrange a suitable day/time for an interview. Please note it is the responsibility of each organization to conduct their own Police Checks should they require it. An induction/orientation should also be conducted for each new volunteer.



STEP 5

Volunteer for Knox will check in with you within three months to see how things are going.



ANNUAL SNAPSHOT

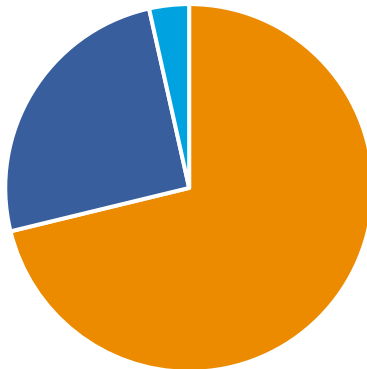
– THE VALUE OF

VOLUNTEERING IN KNOX

1 JULY 2020 – 30 JUNE 2021

257 VOLUNTEER REFERRALS

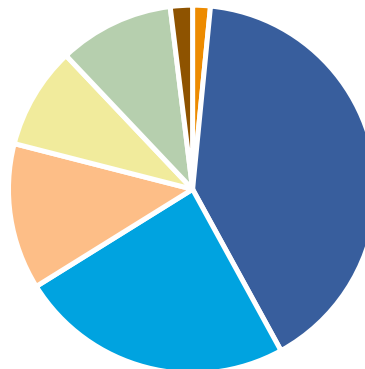
GENDER



Female Male Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified

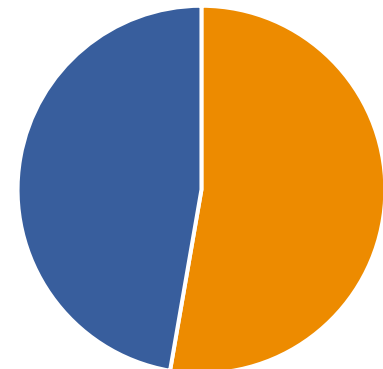
75% FEMALE

AGE



Unspecified 25 and under 25-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66 and over

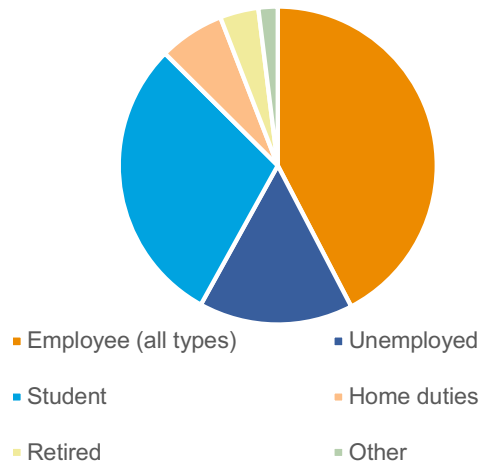
COUNTRY OF BIRTH



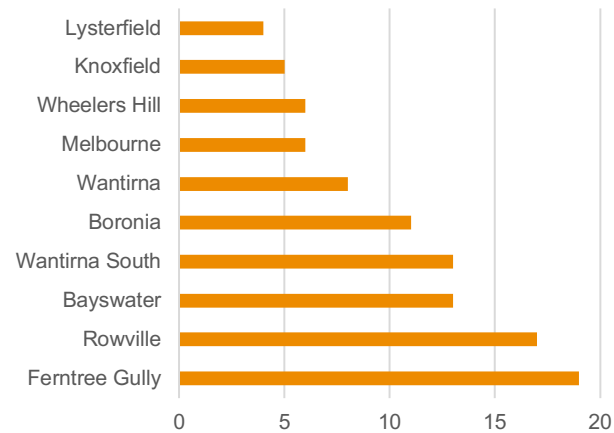
Australia Overseas

TOP 3: CHINA, INDIA & SRI LANKA

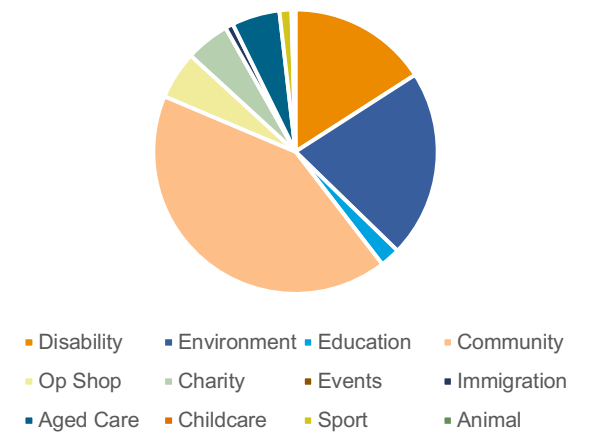
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS



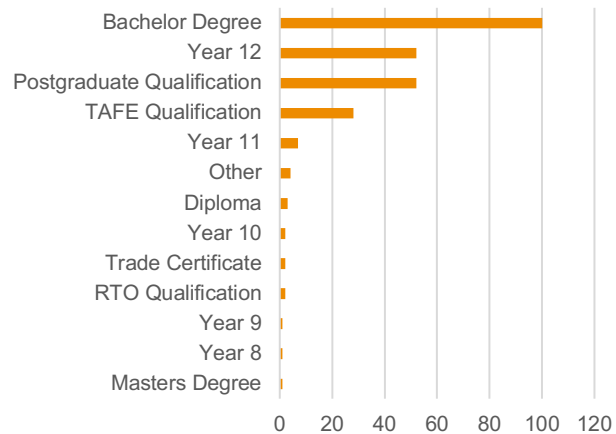
SUBURB (TOP 10)



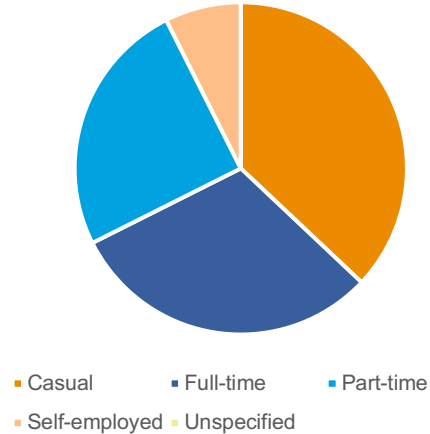
REFERRALS (CATEGORY)



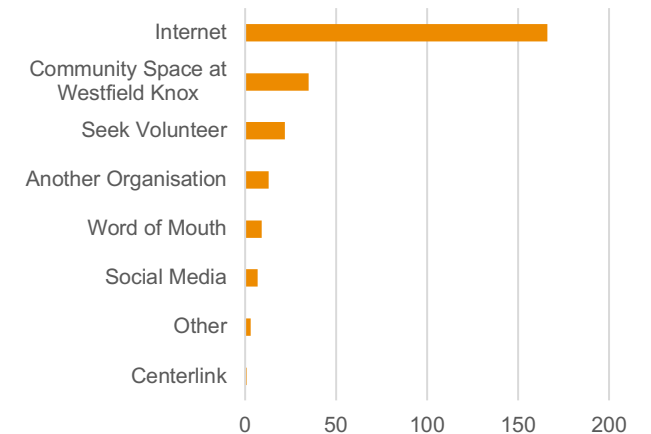
EDUCATION



EMPLOYEE TYPE



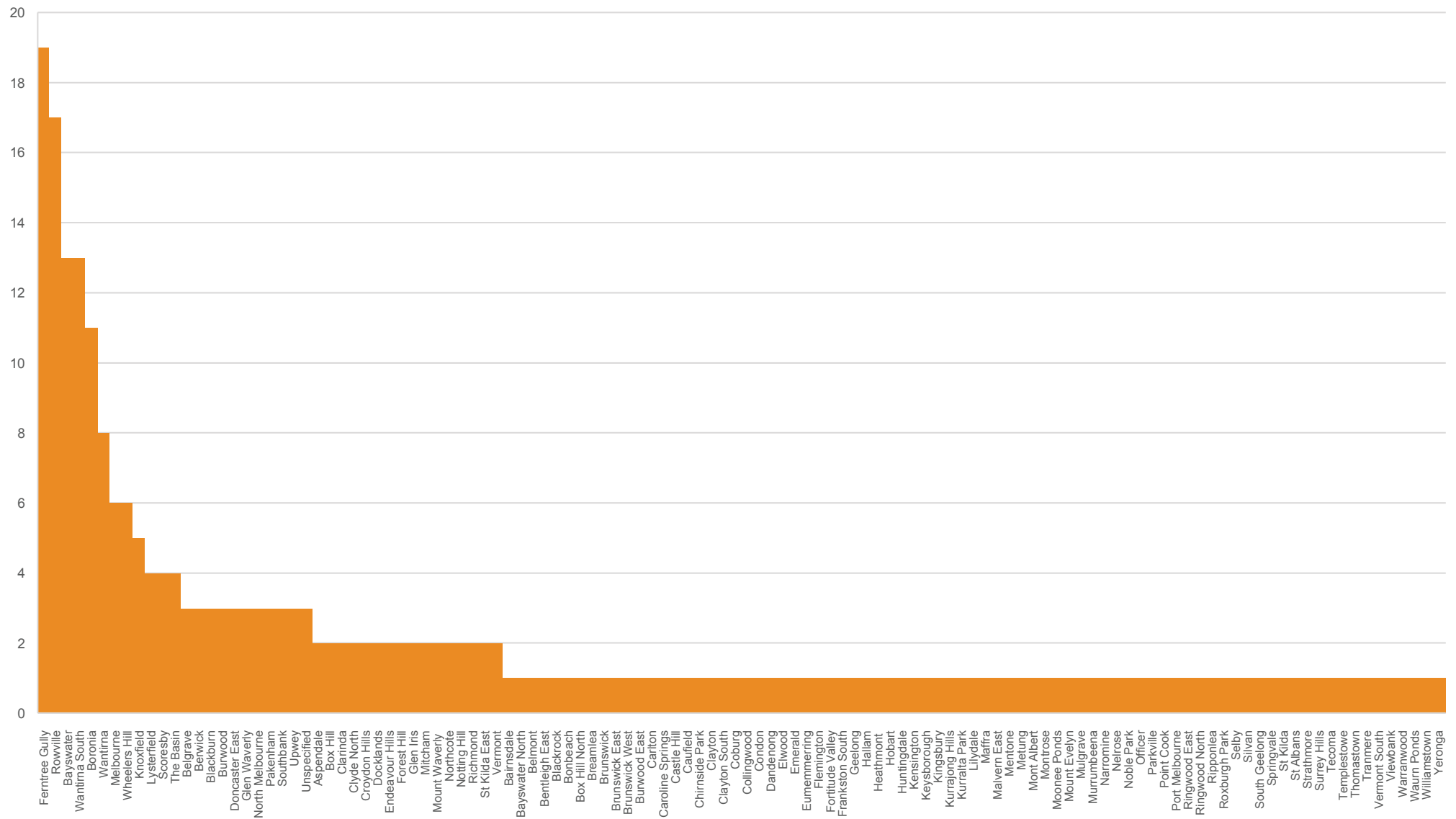
HOW THEY HEARD ABOUT V4K



REASON FOR VOLUNTEERING



SUBURB



VALUE

HOURS REPORTED ANNUALLY 81,744

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION ANNUALLY \$3.4 MILLION

BASED ON AVAILABLE DATA FROM the Volunteering Victoria State of Volunteering report. The calculator is fully compliant for organisations reporting the fair value of volunteering under the Australian Accounting Standard (AASB1058) Income of Not-for-Profit Entities



#CHANGE
SOMEONE'S
WORLD

The image shows an exhibition booth with a large white banner featuring the text '#CHANGE SOMEONE'S WORLD' in blue and orange. Two women are seated in the foreground. The woman on the left is wearing a dark quilted jacket over a red top. The woman on the right is wearing a dark jacket over a patterned top and is holding a blue and white striped bag. In the background, there is a collage of three photographs: the top one shows a young woman and an elderly woman smiling; the bottom left one shows a person preparing food; and the bottom right one is a solid orange square. The booth is set on a green artificial grass floor with orange and blue geometric shapes.

**KEY OBSERVATIONS
AND OUTCOMES**

Provide an accessible and responsive Volunteer Resource Centre with a recognisable service profile to promote and facilitate volunteer activity and participation across the Knox municipality

Volunteer for Knox had to pivot quickly when Covid hit as our monthly face to face induction sessions highlighting volunteer and organisations rights and responsibilities were no longer an option at the five community houses.

Staff employed a videographer to film and edit the volunteer co-ordinator Sally Dusting-Laird delivering the session and this was posted on You-Tube and is now sent as a link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AENDf5PSfo> to volunteers expressing interest in positions advertised on Seek and Go Volunteer.

The video included two secret code words embedded through the video to make sure people watched it to the end. The registration forms were also adjusted to be able to complete online and we also have the option of people registering through our website.

These changes were so successful following positive feedback and the quick turnaround in referring individuals that it will continue into the future.

"I watched the provided video introduction and I found it very helpful in order to understand more about volunteering in Australia."

— Ljudmila

"I loved watching the video, it's a great initiative taken by all of you."

— Tess Bell, Knox resident

- ✓ The five community houses and the Westfield Knox community space act as kiosks to promote volunteerism and these were closed until early December. But a great outcome was that Westfield retail management approached Volunteer for Knox in late October offering a much larger space rent free in a shop outside Myer realising the importance of the space for community outreach and also concerns that Covid space restrictions would severely impact activities.
- ✓ The new Community Space was refurbished with Westfield Knox bearing the cost and is manned for two full days by our team of Volunteer for Knox ambassadors who engage people through craft and knitting and then refer them onto the office.
- ✓ All five Knox community houses act as Kiosks and a referral service to Volunteer for Knox and all have flags, brochures displayed and links on their websites.
- ✓ A quarterly seasonal newsletter informed organisations and volunteers of current trends and events with a special Covid-19 newsletter sent out to keep everyone up to date with the developing situation with helpful resources attached.



- ✓ Surveys were conducted regularly by Volunteer for Knox staff to ascertain the volunteer needs and support required post Covid with registered organisations.
- ✓ The Volunteer for Knox website was used as an important tool for Covid resources with staff updating this information weekly to assist organisations and volunteers on new developments. We also created an opportunity to register online via our website and introduced a search engine with job opportunities on the front page. New online positions and opportunities were advertised and these filled quickly by highly skilled people who found themselves out of work during this challenging time. During Covid our Viktor database advertised some online positions interstate and some volunteers in Queensland and Sydney are still working on online projects. **Our profile increased Australia-wide during this period.**



“I wanted to say thank you for the amazing work you do supporting volunteer managers and volunteers in our region. I have really appreciated the support, in particular the ability to network with other volunteer managers and the support you’ve offered to volunteers, particularly this year during the Covid-19 crisis with fantastic online workshops, etc. It’s a wonderful service and I hope Knox City Council truly appreciate what an asset Volunteer for Knox is!

— Jane Thomas,
Customer Experience Coordinator

During Covid we provided a choice of more than 40 courses delivered online through the governance team’s community house network to upskill and most importantly to keep people in touch with each other. Many were Free or under \$50 for eight week pre-accredited courses. We advertised the training through a MailChimp mailout to all our registered volunteers over the past few years. We made it easy to just click on links to the various course and enrol directly with each individual community house. The courses included the extremely popular Zoom workshops, meditation, office administration, Introduction to Mental Health, Creative Writing, Digital storytelling, Work/Life balance during Covid, cooking and crafting activities. More than 180 people enrolled in these courses. The most popular were:

1. How to use Zoom X2 (50 enrolments)
2. How to Host Zoom X 2 (30 enrolments)
3. Officer Administration (20 enrolments)
4. Work/Life balance during Covid (10 enrolments)
4. Managing Diversity in the Workplace (10 enrolments)

The training also meant that the community houses could still operate online and engage isolated people in the community.

“The “Start Using Zoom” really gave me an enormous boost of confidence upon which I would now like to build. The Zoom information and notes were both brilliant!”

— Robin McGlashann

Volunteer for Knox also facilitated a support group for eight months every Wednesday for volunteers and the community called **“Staying Connected”** that had a huge positive impact on many people’s mental health especially during those cold dark weeks of hard lockdown in Melbourne. Anyone in the community could drop in and discuss anything and everything.



“HAVING ACCESS TO TRAINING AND TRAINERS FROM THE MANY COURSES RUN AT THE FIVE COMMUNITY HOUSES GIVES VOLUNTEER FOR KNOX UNIQUE ACCESS TO ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THAT OTHER VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTRES IN VICTORIA DON’T HAVE.”

“The ladies at Volunteer for Knox are to be congratulated on their ability to include and welcome all participants no matter what our background so that we can fit in with ease and gain valuable knowledge and companionship during this testing time of which we know no end.”

— Participant and Knox resident
Julienne Hyams

- ✓ Westfield Knox also advertised the training through their social networking channels.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox teamed up with Knox City Council Community Partnerships team to facilitate a training session with Justice Connect on “Volunteers and the Law” during lockdown in early October 2020 with 15 community groups participating.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox was also a guest speaker at The Knox rotary club during lockdowns and at Talking Café’s at Boronia and Wantirna promoting volunteerism.
- ✓ In March 2021 Volunteer for Knox was approached by a doctor from one of Knox’s largest respiratory clinics to assist them with elderly patients with no or low-level computer skills to book vaccination appointments online. We quickly developed a Covid-19 vaccination booking mentor position.
- ✓ Volunteers were engaged to help out with the booking process for these vulnerable people and a tech support volunteer was available on Wednesday’s at the Westfield Knox community space. To date we have supported more than 200 people.

Covid bookings feedback

“They are super-grateful! We hear it at our end. Thank-you so much Sally.”

— Dr David Ringelblum,
Rowville Respiratory Clinic

In mid June Volunteer for Knox organised a kitchen team at Coonara Community House to help cook and feed the communities in the Dandenongs devastated by the storms in June 2021.



Recruitment and placement of individuals interested in volunteering in Knox

Volunteer for Knox was inundated with Expressions of Interest during lockdowns (numbers tripled) as staff encouraged registered organisations to advertise online positions that included web designers, business planners, creating online shops, online mentors, Phone and write a letter to a Knox resident.

With our new and updated online induction process volunteers are referred onto organisations within two days and follow up calls are made after a three month period. Volunteer for Knox conducted a survey with volunteers to gauge their satisfaction in their placement. Around 20 per cent responded (similar number to other VRC’s) and were satisfied with their placement.

“We are very happy with the handy man that answered the advertisement and went through your induction process. Lovely man who has already assisted us in several completed tasks. We thank you for your assistance.”

— Knox Opportunity shop Bayswater

Assistance for local volunteer-based and volunteer-involving organisations to effectively recruit, host, support and develop volunteers in line with contemporary best practice.

- ✓ Volunteer for Knox is an active member of state peak body Volunteering Victoria and the Volunteering Victoria Support Network (VVSN) The VVSN provides an opportunity for Volunteer Support Services and Resource centre co-ordinators and managers four times a year to share information and resources, discuss issues of common interest, access professional development and make new connections and collaborate on projects and activities.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox was in touch constantly with Volunteering Victoria during the Covid lockdowns and attended and Professional Development Zoom workshops to gather information to pass onto our registered organisations.
- ✓ Bi-annual Network meetings were also changed from face to face to using Zoom which worked extremely well for all. We were able to host re-known epidemiologist Professor John Catford as a special guest speaker in September 2020. Our Network meetings involved 20 volunteer managers and offered a platform to talk through concerns and share experiences.
- ✓ Co-ordinator Sally Dusting-Laird also attended PD's with international guest speakers to gain knowledge on what was happening in other parts of the world. UK based Rob Jackson has worked in the volunteering movement for more than two decades, during which time he has led and managed volunteers and volunteer programmes was one of the guest speakers and considered one of the leading authorities on volunteering in the world. Other PD's attended included Masterclasses on re-engaging volunteers and Covid 19.

- ✓ Updating links consistently on the website to Volunteering Victoria resources and VV newsletters was especially important during the Covid-19 period.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox co-ordinators also conducted surveys with our registered volunteers and organisations to find out what training they needed to upskill and four online training sessions were developed following feedback via Zoom.
- ✓ The Knox Community Chess Enthusiasts who would usually run free chess workshops at the Westfield Knox community space were also supported with training sessions via Zoom to continue their games online during the lockdowns.

Co-ordinator Sally Dusting-Laird also enrolled in Volunteer Victoria's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program for 2021 comprising learning activities that enhance individual professional knowledge and skills. The objective of the CPD is to keep professional knowledge and skills current, develop and adapt careers and manage public risk.

Projects

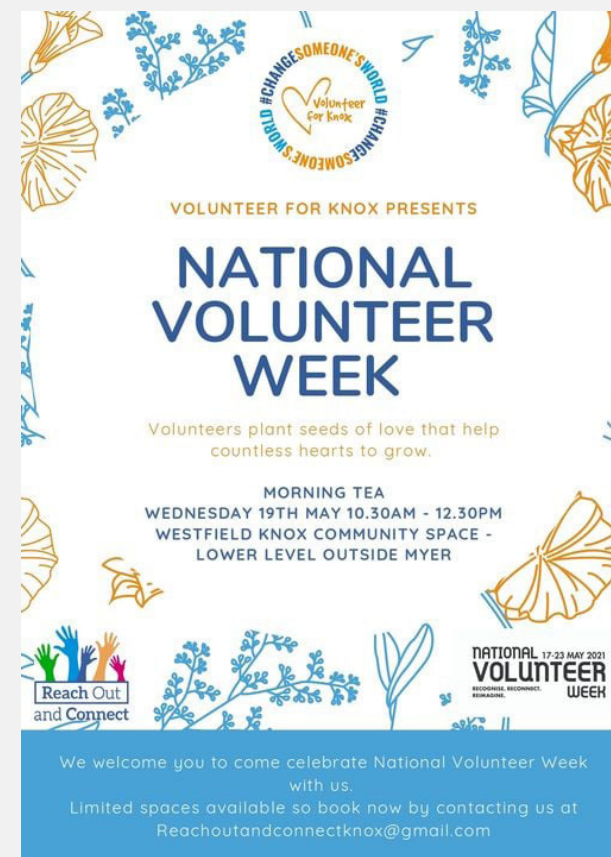
- ✓ Be-Connected project - we organised a fabulous morning tea for our Knox Volunteers at the Westfield Community Space during National Volunteer Week on May 19 that attracted 50 volunteers from organisations including the Australian Jazz Museum, Knox aged care, Meals on Wheels, Swinburne University and Gardens for Wildlife.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox has been involved in recruiting volunteers for the annual Knox Infolink Share the Joy appeal. We engaged with a number of local corporate organisations during this process and they now offer their services annually by providing staff to assist with packing and distributing hampers annually to the event.
- ✓ "Be Kind" joint project with Knox Council marketing and communication team to promote volunteerism during Covid. \$100 vouchers were distributed and used to recognise our most resilient volunteers.

Enhance community awareness of the contribution made by volunteers to community life and the local economy

- ✓ During Covid Volunteer for Knox constantly looked for new ways of adapting our service to the changed environment.
- ✓ We stayed connected with volunteers by calling them in person, sending texts and emails to support them, updating our website and social media pages daily and keeping them in the loop about the current situation.
- ✓ We actively encouraged organisations to think about creating online roles.
- ✓ Social media pages special guest speaker Ferntree Gully Rotary via Zoom
- ✓ Our Facebook page has just reached 520 likes and is updated regularly with job opportunities, industry updates and includes resources to assist organisations in celebrating volunteers.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox celebrates International Volunteer Day in December and National Volunteer Week in May annually using social media as a promotional tool and visiting organisations to acknowledge their volunteers with certificates and gifts.
- ✓ We teamed up with Knox City Council Marketing and communications team to promote volunteerism in Knox with a volunteer competition to highlight our volunteers who go above and beyond and also creating new brochures and social media campaigns on both websites.
- ✓ Volunteer for Knox Ambassadors have engaged with Westfield Knox library to promote their services, activities and volunteerism to library participants!

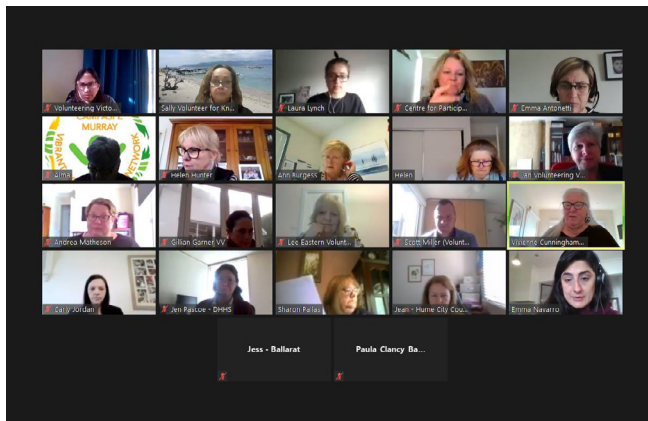
The Westfield Knox Community Space continues to be a fabulous venue for promoting volunteerism and holding community events.

Volunteer for Knox was notified by the Westfield Knox retail manager Shaun McCabe that there would be renovations in the future at the centre that could impact the location. *"However, we will provide alternative locations when this happens. At this stage we cannot share much information, but rest assured a community spaced will be a feature of the development!"*



Provide municipal level role in local volunteer sector planning and advocacy. Contribute to data collection emerging trends and analysis of volunteering issues in Knox to inform local advocacy and service planning

- ✓ Volunteer for Knox is an active member of the Volunteer Victoria Support Network (VVSN) attending quarterly meetings.
- ✓ Our data informs Knox Council regarding trends emerging in our Knox community.
- ✓ Attend Volunteering Victoria workshops and PD's to keep up with current statewide trends and call on support when needed.
- ✓ Needs surveys of volunteer involving organisations are conducted and appropriate training and resources developed, promoted and or provided.
- ✓ We have established, facilitated and maintained a Volunteer for Knox network of volunteer involving organisations; including biannual network meetings, and online communication.
- ✓ V4K staff and steering group (Knox Learning Alliance) meet on a regular basis with council staff to provide ongoing information around volunteering activities. Our V4K Viktor database also gives council information on emerging trends and informs our service planning.



A photograph of three women standing in an office. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a black top with a green patterned scarf. The woman in the middle has brown hair and glasses, wearing a black blazer over a coral-colored top. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a black and white patterned blazer over a black top; she is holding a silver award plaque. The plaque has the CCH logo and text: 'Margaret James Community Services Award Presented by Sally Darling-Lewis 2021'. In the background, there is a red bulletin board with various notices, including one with the CCH logo and another with the text 'WH&S'. A sign on the wall to the left says 'Staff Only'.

TRENDS

2016-2021

25 AND UNDER, AND 25 - 35 YEAR OLDS ARE THE CORE VOLUNTEERING GROUPS

Type of volunteering

Community services volunteering followed by disability services and education are the most popular positions.

Reasons for Volunteering

The top reason for people volunteering is to Give Back to the Community followed by Gaining Work Experience and Building Confidence. Nearly 50 per cent of people volunteering came from an Administration background followed by Education, Customer service, Healthcare and IT. Part time and casual workers were more likely to volunteer.

Job seekers

Approximately a quarter of all registered volunteers were seeking work or were students. This has remained consistent over the last few years with volunteering being recognized as a pathway to employment and working with jobseeker agencies.

Diversity

Fifty-three percent of the V4K registered volunteers were born overseas. They come from 36 different countries. In 2016/2017 fifty-one percent were born overseas from 31 different countries and in 2018/2019 forty-five percent were born overseas from 26 different countries. China, India and Sri Lanka are the top three.

The fastest area of growth for volunteering within Volunteer for Knox has been by people with a disability. In 2016/2017 eight volunteers identified as having a disability. In 2017/2018 37 identified as living with a disability and nearly 20 per cent in 2018/2019. This year 11 people identified as having a disability.

Languages other than English

V4K volunteers spoke a total of 48 languages other than English with Mandarin, Cantonese and Hindi being the top three.

How they heard about V4K

More than 95% of volunteers made contact through email, the internet and Seek Volunteer advertisements with the Community Space at Knox, Word of Mouth and community houses the top three sources.

Volunteer frequency

4 – 6 hours a week.

Students, jobseekers and part time employees are the top three groups looking for volunteer opportunities.

Over the past five years the internet has been the most popular method of finding out more about Volunteer for Knox, followed by Word of Mouth, the Westfield Knox Community space and other organisations.

Total registrations

Registrations continue to grow annually even during the Covid pandemic with online opportunities very popular.

Gender

The trend for females to outnumber males continues with 75 per cent female volunteers. This year a couple of volunteers identified as other than male/female.

Age groups

Ages	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Grand Total	Trend
25 and under	34	27	27	70	104	262	Fluctuates
26-35	29	17	25	48	62	181	Fluctuates
36-45	14	18	29	34	33	200	Increase
46-55	26	15	14	31	23	109	Fluctuates
56-65	32	37	35	17	26	147	Fluctuates
66 and over	16	14	12	12	5	59	Steady
Unspecified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	4	
Grand totals	151	128	142	212	257	962	

Observations on age groups

People aged 35 and under are the core volunteering groups.

Students, jobseekers and part time employees are the top three groups looking for volunteer opportunities.



CASE STUDIES

JULIENNE HYAMS

I've been a Business Manager in schools with the Education Department for twenty years.

Of late I've been a relieving BM when a Primary or Secondary school Business Manager wishes to take long service leave or other long term leave to either travel overseas or for health issues like operations.

When C19 hit all my contracts were postponed/cancelled because the girls were not going overseas etc. therefore leaving me unemployed.

I had been thinking of preparing to transition into retirement eventually with some volunteer work hence my enrolment with the Knox Volunteers.

Thank goodness I had as I am home on my own and have welcomed the courses and contact that I have been offered through volunteer for Knox.

The isolation of living on your own is possibly the hardest to deal with for me. I find myself talking to the walls now - something I would never ever have envisaged prior to March this year.

I am a people person - I love being around the energetic staff in schools and the students have a wonderful way of keeping you young.

I love the work I do in managing the administration side of a school so that teachers could do what they do best - I do admire them.

Which brings me to the teachers at Volunteer for Knox. They have saved my sanity of late.

I've learnt to do zoom meetings with ease so that I can stay connected face to face which is so important in this lockdown when you live alone and when you have always been surrounded by people daily.

The ladies of Knox are to be congratulated on their ability to include and welcome all participants no matter what our background so that we can fit in with ease and gain valuable knowledge and companionship during this testing time of which we know no end.



RAMONA THAMBIRATNAM



Knox local Ramona Thambiratnam joined the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) at Melbourne Polytechnic right in the middle of Melbourne's COVID pandemic/ lockdown period in July 2020.

The role required her to support someone from a migrant or refugee background for one hour a week as they learnt English and settled in the community.

The Volunteer Tutor Scheme was operating as a strictly online service at this point and Ramona took on the challenge of getting to know a learner via a digital platform in her stride.

As a volunteer tutor, Ramona has supported both students of refugee and migrant backgrounds within the program.

She found it fascinating to discover more about the different cultures in areas that were really close to where she lives.

Ramona's family is from Sri Lanka and was aware of "the Sri Lankan community in the east and south-east" but found it fascinating to learn that there was also a local South Korean community nearby.

Ramona was initially paired with a learner from Myanmar and was immediately conscious of making sure accurate and accessible Covid information was available to her in her native language.

This was something she saw as an "immediate need" in her community, though outside of this she also considered how to connect her students with other areas of interests.

Art lessons, exercise and help them to gain the confidence to participate in spaces not dominated by new arrivals.

Ramona always remained open to ideas of helping her students gain confidence using English in really practical ways – like role-playing parent-teacher interviews or asking her students to present on topics of interest to them and facilitating the opportunity to gain confidence using English.

Ramona also spoke about 'drawing on her student's hobbies and interests such as film making and both watching clips throughout the week to later discuss in a session together, a fun activity which worked well within the limitations of remote contact.

Post-Covid Ramona met with her second student in a local park and found appreciation for the spontaneity of conversation invited by face-to-face meetings.

But Ramona also said there was many challenges volunteering through Covid.

"I felt that while it was a hard period for all, some of the challenges for those from migrant and refugee background were amplified during the lockdown," she said.

"But I was inspired by the resilience, adaptability and spirit of the learners and this is what kept me going.

Ramona's message to those thinking about getting involved in volunteering is "having the opportunity to think of someone outside of yourself can set you free from your own anxieties in often uncertain times."

"While giving up your time can seem like a hard decision, really, you get out of it what you put into it – perhaps even more" she said.

She believes your life will be richer for the experience.



VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA AWARDS COVID19 SUPPORT AND CONNECTION (GRASSROOTS)

LEANNE FITGERALD LIVING OUR BEST LIFE PROJECT OFFICER

CHAOS NETWORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TEMPLE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

I am pleased to have this opportunity to write this. It provides me with a chance to express my appreciation for Volunteer for Knox's wonderful support and to provide them with some recognition for their service to our community.

I reached out to V4K for support to recruit some virtual volunteers early in the COVID19 crisis as our new project was in danger of becoming redundant. Our project was funded to trial a model of social prescribing to assist older people experiencing loneliness to link into community activities to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. Suddenly we were unable to go ahead with the primary objective and needed to pivot the project. It was decided that we needed to focus on engagement with our cohort to support them through this difficult time in preparation for helping them engage in person when it was deemed safe.

As the project was only new and needed to be revised, I needed assistance with several tasks. Volunteer for Knox was able to recruit five very skilled virtual volunteers for us who were based in other parts of Melbourne and even two from Sydney! These volunteers assisted me to develop a new communication and marketing plan for the project, research available activities to populate a database, write content for a newsletter and social media posts and assist with hosting an online weekly café for lonely people.

With the volunteer support we were able to connect with many people, some of whom had previously experienced social isolation and others who were very new to being isolated in their own homes. We have been able to share fun, information and social contact with them and they are all now keen to engage in face to face activities as soon as it is safe.

Volunteer for Knox is currently assisting with recruiting volunteers who can be trained and ready to help people in the community overcome barriers to participation once the restrictions ease.

Our project has gone from being in danger of being shelved for a long time to actively helping people connect with each other and their wider community during this very difficult time. I can't thank V4K enough for that vital assistance."

THE HAVEN DAY CENTRE MANAGER KATHY MILLER

The Haven Day Centre in Boronia meets the needs of people living with memory loss by delivering a person centre program in a warm, friendly and inclusive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

We have received six referrals from you recently and appointed an admin volunteer who is wonderful, reliable and committed. She has settled in very quickly to our routine and enjoys interacting with staff and clients at lunch time. We give a good orientation and our admin worker leaves tasks for her to do to keep her busy.

Other applicants have been accepted but then unforeseen things pop up and they don't have the time to spare or end up in hospital. Some appear to be half hearted or unsure if they have the time to volunteer with everything else on their plates. That is life...and that is ok too.

I think your service is great because you refer volunteers and educate them of their rights and responsibilities to prepare them for future roles. I would not have the time to do it myself. The team are easy to communicate and deal with and I am grateful for all you do for The Haven.

My advice for anyone wanting to include volunteers in their workplace is to give them a good orientation, make them feel part of the team, recognise their achievements and give them a defined role.

We have several volunteers and many have been long term, happy contributors. They provide valuable support to our staff. They also personally get a lot of satisfaction from volunteering.



COMMUNITY SPACE AT WESTFIELD KNOX

The Community Space at Westfield Knox received an unexpected gift during Covid 19 lockdowns. A change of venue during this challenging year with the offer of a new location and shopfront.

It is bigger, better and brighter allowing more people to use the space with social distancing rules in place.

Westfield Knox management really acknowledge the benefit of engaging with community through the space and fitted out an empty shop outside Myer on the lower level.

It is four times the size of the original community space and allows for its use to continue into the future.

The Westfield Knox Community Space has highlighted local community groups and what they do best to the public since 2014. It is one of a kind in Australia and we feel honoured to be trusted by Westfield to manage this special space.

The aim of the Community Space is to celebrate community, volunteering and learning in the Knox community. This space has enabled the:

- ✓ Promotion of important services provided in the community
- ✓ Recruitment of new members and volunteers
- ✓ Promoting Volunteer for Knox Resource Centre
- ✓ Celebration of community achievements
- ✓ Educating the community about issues and events

- ✓ Adult Learning Opportunities
- ✓ Showcasing local sporting clubs and schools
- ✓ Cultural celebrations
- ✓ Reducing social isolation for seniors

Since lockdowns were lifted we have filled the space with community activities six days a week and promoted our Volunteer for Knox training calendars for volunteers and organisations.

We host Talking Cafes, community celebrations, tech help for shoppers, crafting and games, Seniors activities and of course our famous Knox Community Chess Enthusiasts every Thursday facilitated by Eddie Atacador.

One of our incredible success stories is the ongoing growth of the Knox Community Chess Enthusiasts (KCCE) who recently celebrated four years at the space. We managed to facilitate online chess sessions via Zoom during lockdowns but it wasn't quite the same as playing in person. So when we reopened the KCCE participants were first in line to break in the new shopfront.

A story on the group was featured in the National newspaper The Phillipine Times.

Westfield Knox has continued to provide the Community Space to Coonara Community House to contribute to the ability of local community groups to promote themselves as well as recruit valuable volunteers.

We have hosted more than 150 community organisations and around 1250 events over the past seven years.

The ACFE board and Knox City Council contributed towards the initial setup and now it is resourced by the five community houses in Knox, including The Basin, Mountain District LC, Rowville NLC and Orana.





ENJOY THE LITTLE THINGS

**LOOK WHAT'S COMING
IN 2021/2022**



VOLUNTEER EXPO – WESTFIELD KNOX COMMUNITY SPACE – OCTOBER 13 2021

An opportunity for volunteer involving organisations in Knox to present information to potential volunteers in the community.



COVID 19 - RECOVERY & RESPONSE

In 2021 - 22 Volunteer for Knox will be assisting volunteer involving organisations to reconnect with their volunteers with current resources and training.



COVID VACCINATION APPOINTMENT BOOKING MENTORS PROJECT

Continuing our partnership with local doctors clinics to assist community members with low level digital literacy skills to make an appointment for vaccinations online.



STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

The KLA and Volunteer for Knox to discuss post Covid strategies, set priorities, focus energy, strengthen operations and work towards a common goal over the next four years.





EXPENDITURE

REPORT

VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTRE FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE

1st July 2020 – 30th June 2021

Expenditure Description (itemised summary)	Amount \$ (GST exc)
Governance	\$11,264
Staffing	\$100,431
Web Maintenance/Design of Promotional Marketing Products	\$6,902
Administration Costs	\$15,128
TOTAL	\$133,725

