

Volunteering in parks Vision for the future

An important step in implementing the "Volunteering in Parks" vision for the future is the modernisation of our volunteer management practices. ParkConnect, an online interactive volunteer management system, has been developed to assist in the support and growth of volunteerism.

Parks Victoria and volunteer friends and community groups will be able to promote opportunities to the wider community through an online volunteer portal enhancing and diversifying volunteer numbers, strengthening group recruitment and retention and aiding in volunteer succession.

The public can look for volunteer opportunities that match their interest or location, join an activity or group and manage their personal details including skills and accreditation

Visit www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au to discover how you can volunteer.

How to get involved

Discover

Discover hundreds of exciting volunteer opportunities around Victoria and learn about groups working in your local area at www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au.

Join

Register to become an official Parks Victoria volunteer by creating a user account and volunteer profile with details about your interests, skills, and contact information.

Volunteer

You're ready to go! Once registered, you can sign up for activities, join local volunteer groups and manage your personal profile through ParkConnect.

The Volunteering in Parks Strategic Plan has been developed by the Healthy Parks Healthy People team in Parks Victoria. For more information please contact 13 1963 or volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

 **Parks**
VICTORIA
Healthy Parks
Healthy People

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Parks Victoria works with a large network of committed volunteers to help protect and enhance Victoria's parks and connect with our diverse community.

The benefits of volunteering in parks are many: for park managers volunteers assist in data collection, track and trail maintenance, conservation works and customer service; volunteers gain new skills, physical exercise in wonderful landscapes, social connection and the satisfaction of being able to actively contribute to protecting our great parks network.

Volunteers currently make an outstanding contribution of more than 220,000 hours to park management. Over 20,000 volunteers and 150 partner volunteer groups each year provide invaluable support to Parks Victoria by dedicating their time to improve park conservation values and deliver visitor services.

Parks Victoria recognises its significant role in supporting volunteering and commits to a vision for the future which both supports our existing volunteers and seeks to build opportunities to reinvigorate, grow and diversify volunteering experiences that are innovative and inclusive.

Parks Victoria aims to establish a world class approach to working with volunteers that is embedded within our core business and effectively engages and supports volunteers in safe, innovative and meaningful activities to improve the health of the park, the broader community and volunteers themselves.

What does the plan aim to achieve?

Volunteering in Parks aims to deliver a well-managed and world class volunteering program with benefits including:

- increased capacity to support Parks Victoria to maintain and enhance Victoria's parks,
- Greater connection of parks with our diverse community to enhance health and wellbeing and;
- ensure safe and effective volunteer engagement

Parks Victoria renews the commitment to volunteering and recognises the important role it plays as a volunteer management agency.

How is it aligned to Healthy Parks Healthy People?

Parks Victoria's management of parks is embodied through its Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP) message, which highlights the interdependence between healthy environments and community health and wellbeing. It is based on a strong body of research and cultural knowledge that time spent in nature is good for the body mind and soul.

Our Volunteering in Parks plan underpins Parks Victoria's important relationships with volunteers recognising the invaluable contribution of volunteers to improving the health of our parks and at the same recognising that volunteering improves physical, health, reduces stress, builds resilience and promotes social connection.

Parks Victoria volunteer partners and opportunities

Parks Victoria commits to support Parks Victoria's existing and future volunteer program.

The strength of existing partnerships, and networks cannot be understated. Enhancing these relationships with transparent governance, capacity building and promoting leadership will create more opportunities and support this important group.

Parks Victoria will also initiate and grow a range of programs to help support and extend volunteerism.

Opportunities will have three overarching themes including;

Interpretation – Volunteer interpreters, Campground hosts, Track and Trail guides, Voluntourists, Community companions

Practical delivery – Healthy habitats, Heritage heroes

Research – Citizen science, Online volunteers and Corporate support and recognition programs.



Volunteering in Parks' vision for the future

To empower volunteerism for all, enhancing Victoria's special places and increasing community health and wellbeing.

Parks Victoria's commitments

Parks Victoria makes the following commitments to encourage volunteerism in parks and improve volunteer management and support.

1. Parks Victoria is a Volunteer Management Agency
2. Safety of our volunteers and staff is our highest priority
3. Strengthen, extend and expand our current volunteer opportunities
4. Grow and diversify our volunteer population
5. Improve the governance and structure of volunteering to mitigate risks and enhance safety in addition to aligning to the National Standards of Volunteering
6. Create an enabling environment for volunteers, partners and community to engage; and
7. Promote staff and volunteer professionalism through development of skills and capacity building

The program structure will be made up of three pillars

Safety, learning and culture – ensuring safety is our highest priority and enabling staff and volunteer skill and capacity building through provision of training, knowledge exchange and empowering champions and ambassadors

Community collaboration – promoting an enabling environment for partnership, collaboration and activation with clear governance, structure and delineation between volunteer group types and motivation; and

Volunteer opportunities – innovative, attractive ways to engage a large diverse volunteering community

