



14th January 2021

## Media Release – ANNOUNCING VOLCONNECT – VOLUNTEER-TO-JOB PROGRAM

**Volunteer West is delighted to announce our VolConnect – Volunteer-to-Job Program, enabled by \$1M funding from the Victorian Government’s Working for Victoria initiative.**

Volunteer West is increasing our capacity to provide focused and tailored support services to community members and community organisations to meet the growing needs for volunteer-to-job (V2J) pathways in Melbourne’s west.

Due to the pandemic’s impact on the economy, and the health and well-being of individuals and communities, Volunteer West has seen an increase in demand for volunteering-to-job support services, which in turn increases pressure on community and volunteer organisations to meet the demand. Volunteer West’s program is a dedicated bridging of the volunteering support sector, and employment services sector. Our tailored services for the V2J cohorts will be designed and driven by user-needs with a series of training workshops as the starting point for deeper engagement with volunteers and managers of volunteers. The services will cover the diverse communities within the region impacted by the pandemic.

We believe in people. We believe that people are capable of changing their lives, but no one can do it alone. Volunteering is an act of community and economic participation that shapes social cohesion. We are reframing our volunteer support services to cater to the needs of the hour and bringing volunteering closer to people’s front door. Our commitment is to connect people via interesting and meaningful community projects and services where they can find and build their own supportive networks and strengths to flourish, and go on to find employment.

We will support community members find suitable volunteer roles to help them gain experience, connections and networking skills; enabling them to find paid work in future. We will support community organisations design and manage volunteer programs that provide meaningful opportunities by developing a series of workshops and resources which acknowledge the current challenges and reimagine volunteering.

Volunteer West's collaborative approach to championing volunteering includes being available to support others utilise the tools and knowledge developed from this VolConnect Program. We will also share insights and evidence of impact to advocate for co-investment in building strong local volunteering infrastructure in Melbourne's west growth corridors that can address growing unmet needs across the region.

We are recruiting multiple roles from project officers to digital operations. Please register at [www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria) then search for positions by 'Volunteer West'.

### **Media inquiries**

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### **About Volunteer West**

Volunteer West's mission is to improve the health and well-being of people in Melbourne's west through meaningful volunteering that empowers and engages. We are a registered charity and the only volunteer resource centre in the region. We work across six local government areas with a population of over 880,000 people with the region's unique community strengths and challenges as a growth area. Our service region covers 6 local government areas: Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham. Volunteer West's focus is inclusive volunteering experiences that sustain personal well-being and build community resilience. We do this by convening, championing and collaborating to create a sustainable volunteering movement.