

Engaging Young Volunteers



Volunteering

@Loddon



Overview

Who are young volunteers?

Benefits and barriers for young volunteers

Motivations for young volunteers

Managing safety and risk

Being youth ready

Tools & Resources





Who are Young Volunteers?

The government defines 'youth' as being young people aged 12-24 years of age.



Youth Volunteer rates



When young people were asked what activities they are involved in, **volunteering was the 4th most commonly reported**, with **43.3 per cent** of young people being involved.

(Mission Australia Youth Survey 2020)



Youth Volunteer hours

**Most people aged 15 to
24 volunteered for 21
hours or more in 2020.**

(Mission Australia Youth Survey 2020)

The changing world of volunteering

The growth in young people's online social action and e-volunteering presents an increasing challenge to the notion that youth volunteering is necessarily mediated by a formal organisation at all (Johnston et al., 2004).

Traditional definitions of volunteering may also exclude or overlook emerging forms of social action and social participation amongst young people such as youth-led social enterprises and social entrepreneurship (Black, Taylor, & Walsh, 2011).



Young People's Understanding of Volunteering

- Connecting with the word 'volunteer'

(it is not uncommon for young people to be volunteering but not call it that)

- Gap year volunteering

(volunteering abroad, building skills/ experience, following passions)

- 'Involuntary' volunteering

(e.g. as a part of a course requirement at school- not done by own choice)





Benefits of Young Volunteers

What do you think are the benefits of engaging young volunteers?

Benefits

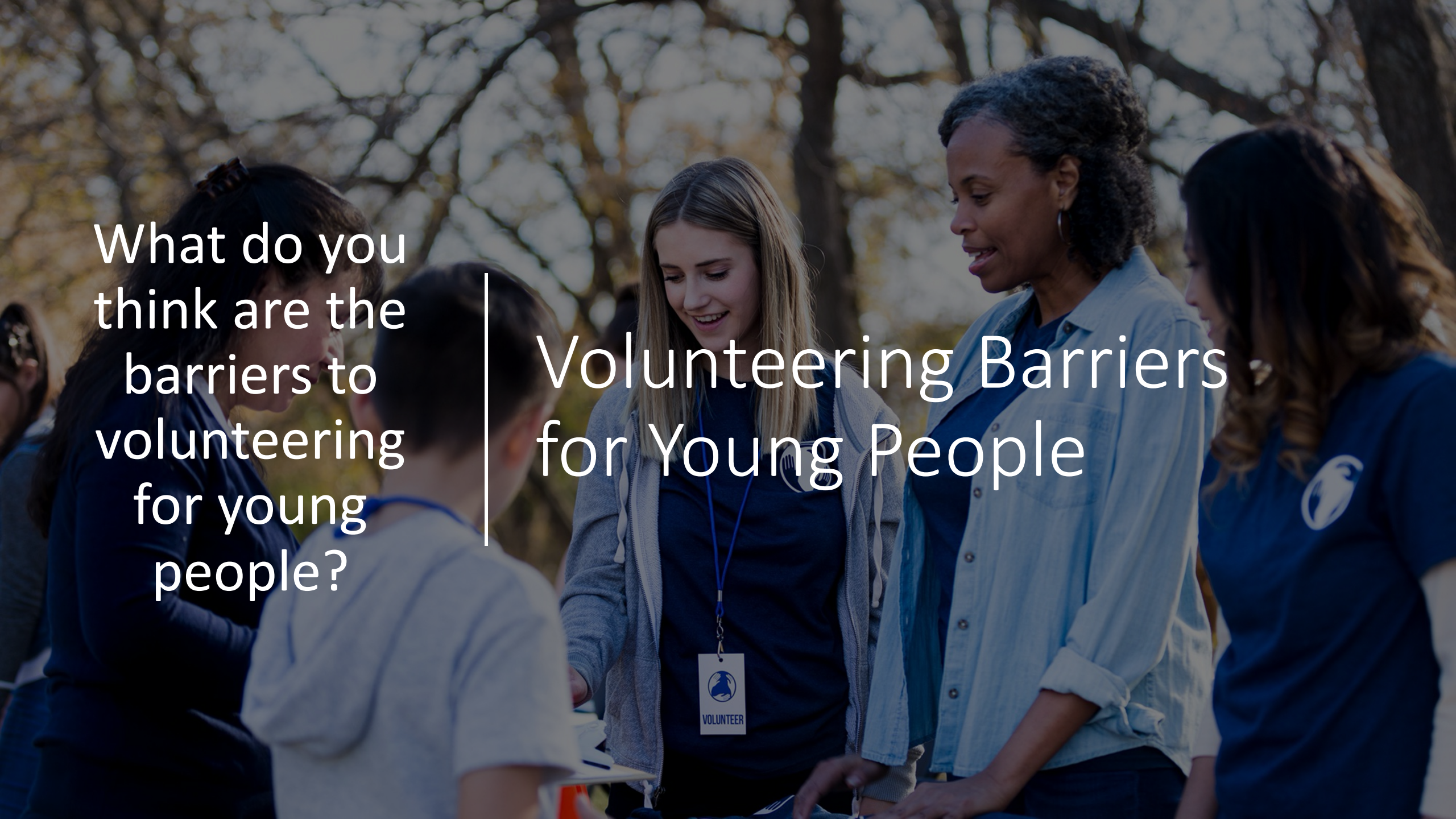
- Economic
- Boosting young people's employability
- Learning new skills and knowledge
- Communication skills
- Networks & contacts
- Increased self-confidence
- Fresh ideas, talent, enthusiasm, new perspectives and creativity
- Diverse technology and social media skills
- Social impact- civic skills, social belonging



Volunteering increases young people's skills for employability, including the social capital, open-mindedness, international understanding and other soft skills that formal educational institutions cannot engender (Astin & Sax, 1998; Jones, 2011; Left Right Think-Tank, 2011; Roker & Player, 2000).

What do you think are the barriers to volunteering for young people?

Volunteering Barriers for Young People



Barriers to Volunteering

- Lack of time

(a local volunteer survey in 2021 highlighted that work/study and family commitments created time barriers for volunteering for young people)

- Lack of interest

- Lack of awareness

(a local volunteer survey in 2021 highlighted that not knowing about volunteering opportunities was a barrier for young people in the Loddon Shire)

- Lack of transportation

(some young people do not have a drivers license or their own transportation)

- Lack of income

(volunteering can cost money- travel costs, costs for food/drink etc)





What Drives Young People Away from Volunteering?

- Lengthy applications
- Overregulation (red-tape)
- Ageism, discrimination and disrespect
- Being assigned unengaging or unsatisfying tasks
- Being 'talked at' or 'talked down to'
- Not being listened to
- Ideas not being given consideration
- Not being involved in decision making
- Lack of meaningful or relevant opportunities/invitations to volunteer

Myths and Stereotypes

What are common stereotypes about older people?

What are common stereotypes about young people?



Myths & Stereotypes

The literature on youth volunteering suggests that negative discourses about young people's civic disengagement are concealing the scope of their actual voluntary contribution (Roker & Player, 2000).

It has been argued that adults need to take a more positive view of young people's social participation if they are to draw on their enthusiasm and energy (Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 782).



Youth Assumptions

The Loddon Shire Volunteering Consultation captured some assumptions/beliefs about young people that could get in the way of engaging young volunteers.

'Young people don't want to volunteer unless there is payment involved'.

'Young people aren't interested in volunteering'.





Motivations

What motivates people to volunteer?

Motivations

'YOU'S - Solely community-based asks – volunteering to contribute to their community, 'make a difference', or for social interaction;

'ME'S – volunteering for personal reasons, such as to develop their skills, to enhance their career prospects, or to pursue a personal interest;

'US'S – Mixed asks – volunteering partly for community reasons and partly for their own personal reasons (Moffatt, 2011b, p. 68).

Motivations for Young People

- Being a good citizen
- Making a difference
- Socialising/being with friends/linking to other young people
- Working together with others
- Opportunities are interesting
- Good fit with values and priorities
- Learning/developing skills
- Obtaining work/career opportunities



MOTIVATION

Reflection

How are young people's motivations different to adult motivations?





Connecting to Motivations

Snyder and Omoto (2008) suggest, recognition and acknowledgement of these varied motivations by voluntary organisations could create more meaningful and more positive volunteering experiences for young people.



Attracting Young Volunteers

Research has shown that most people join as a volunteer because they were asked or because they knew someone in the organisation.
(Dolnicar and Randle 2007)





What can we do to attract more young volunteers?

- Consider flexible schedules
- Offer a variety of roles
- Offer shorter term and project-based volunteering
- Consider/support youth-led projects
- Offer informal volunteering opportunities
- Offer tasks that can be done outside of work/school hours
- Offer tasks that can be done virtually
- Provide simple and engaging induction and training
- Mentor and coach young volunteers
- Offer tasks that start small and then build up with skills and experience
- Allow young volunteers to make mistakes
- Consider incentives such as: free food, training opportunities and leadership roles

Partnerships/Tools



UNIVERSITY

(Universities students interested in building experience)



SCHOOLS

(linking to school curriculum/sharing information with students about opportunities)



YOUTH ORGANISATIONS/GROUPS

(link to shared values/purpose- explore shared project opportunities)



SOCIAL MEDIA

(use social media to share volunteering opportunities for young people)



Partnership's Work!

The Benalla Lions Club had a long-term contract to deliver phone books to all houses. Volunteers were declining and ageing and the contract was challenging. The Lions Club formed a partnership with a local football club. The football/netball players were the 'legs' for delivering the phone books and the Lions Club members organised the task/drove volunteers around town.

Welcoming, Supporting & Making Space for Young Volunteers

- Make volunteers feel welcome
- Understand/draw on young people's strengths & skills
- Assign meaningful and impactful roles/tasks
- Be prepared
- Offer support/be available
- Mentor/coach/shadow
- Welcome mates (support young people to volunteer with mates)
- Follow up to give /ask for feedback



Risk Management

- ✓ Provide suitable duties
- ✓ Provide supervision
- ✓ Provide and maintain a safe working environment
- ✓ Have clear policies about protection of children (under 18-year-olds)
- ✓ Ensure all adult staff and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard. The central focus is a large, rectangular green key with the words "Manage Risk" printed in white, sans-serif font. The key is slightly raised and has a soft shadow. Surrounding it are several other white keys, including one with a bracket symbol and another with a vertical line. The background is a blurred keyboard surface.

Child Safe Standards



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people, by requiring organisations to put policies, procedures and processes in place to prevent and respond to abuse.

In July 2022 there will be 11 Child Safe Standards

www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

Child Safe Standards-So what does this all mean?

- ✓ Conduct background checks on ALL adult volunteers and staff
- ✓ Ensure training and supervision for the role are in place
- ✓ Recruit the most suitable staff or volunteers
- ✓ Have key selection criteria for roles
- ✓ Assess applicant's skills and suitability for roles
- ✓ Do reference checks
- ✓ Provide induction, supervision/support ensuring staff/volunteers know how to keep children safe
- ✓ Make clear that child safety forms part of your organisation's culture

Consent/Permission

Parent or guardians consent for under 18's is good practice, also ensure:

- Appropriate supervision given age and experience, and any special needs
- Adjusting the time of day or duration (e.g. hours in a week)
- Adapting around school/education commitments
- Appropriate working conditions/health and safety of the young person

I Agree



Being 'Youth-Ready'



Be flexible



Mates volunteer with mates



Match motivations



Understand and utilise skills of young volunteers



Give/share ownership to young volunteers



Build capacity and leadership of young volunteers



Mentor young volunteers



Promote/acknowledge the contributions of young volunteers



What else can your organisation/group can do to attract young volunteers?

Engaging Young Volunteers-Tools & Resources

Being Child Safe

Volunteer organisations/groups that support young volunteers and or work with children and young people are required to comply with Child Safe Standards. This is to ensure that child safety is promoted, child abuse is prevented and any allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.

Tips for being Child Safe:

-  Conduct background checks.
-  Provide training and supervision for the role.
-  Recruit the most suitable staff or volunteers.
-  Have key selection criteria for roles.
-  Assess applicant's skills and suitability for roles.
-  Do reference checks.
-  Provide induction, supervision/support so volunteers know how to keep children safe.
-  Make clear that child safety is



Starting in July 2022 there will be 11 Child Safe Standards.

You can find them here: www.cryp.vic.gov.au



Engaging Young Volunteers

Young people living in the Loddon Shire have told us that they want to volunteer more in the future.

Young people also shared that they were more highly motivated to volunteer for learning, social connections and personal interest/fun compared to other age groups.

“In 5 years time I will be volunteering more. I will have more time to help out the community. Volunteering could also help in my studies in University.”

BENEFITS OF YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

There are many benefits of engaging young volunteers for young people themselves and for organisations/groups. Some noted benefits:

- Economic
- Boosting young people's employability
- Learning new skills and knowledge
- Communication skills
- Networks & contacts
- Increased self-confidence
- Fresh ideas, talent, enthusiasm, new perspectives and creativity
- Diverse technology and social media skills
- Social impact- civic skills, social belonging

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

Like adults, young people can experience barriers to volunteering:

- Lack of time (sport, work, study commitments)
- Assumptions and stereotypes about youth
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of awareness of opportunities
- Lack of transportation/travel distances
- Lack of income

BEING 'YOUTH READY'

-  Be flexible- offer many ways for young volunteers to get involved
-  Support mates to volunteer with mates
-  Tap into/match young people's motivations
-  Understand and utilise young people's skills and talents
-  Give/share ownership so young people feel genuinely involved
-  Build young people's capacity and leadership skills
-  Mentor and coach young volunteers
-  Promote and acknowledge the contributions of young volunteers

On Loddon Shire's Website you will find free resources/tools to assist you to engage young volunteers:

- ✓ Being Child Safe Flyer & Poster
- ✓ Engaging Young Volunteers Tip Sheet