



# Volunteer Strategy 2024 - 2028

JUNE 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we stand, the Gamaragal people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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Front cover image: Former winners of Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award. Yan Hong (far left), Sophia, Marianna, Janet and Kay (far right)



Community gardening

# Mayor's Message



People in Willoughby love to volunteer with 16.3% of residents participating in some form of voluntary work. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community. They are crucial to the success

and continuity of many community services, sporting clubs, programs and events.

I am proud to present the *Volunteer Strategy 2024 – 2028* for the Willoughby community.

At Willoughby, we recognise the importance of volunteering, which is increasingly being recognised for its value and importance in the social, environmental, cultural and economic fabric of a community. Volunteering also provides health and wellbeing benefits to the volunteers themselves.

Over the next four years, this strategy sets out our vision for volunteering. It includes opportunities for residents to volunteer in ways that are convenient for them, while also leveraging support and collaboration to strengthen our local volunteer sector.

Volunteering allows people to make valuable local connections while also using and developing their skills. It provides an important opportunity to gain experience, personal satisfaction, and recognition. Volunteers improve the quality of life for people of all ages by providing activities and services that would not otherwise be available.

They make a significant contribution to the community's overall health and well-being, including feelings of inclusion and welcome. They contribute to the development of a Willoughby City that is a welcoming environment.

The strategy acknowledges the hard work and dedication of volunteers across Willoughby and recognises the continual need for ongoing support and encouragement. Willoughby already has a strong network of volunteers and this strategy will build on that for the future.

We look forward to implementing this strategy in partnership with the organisations that work with volunteers, the volunteers themselves, and the wider community which supports – and benefits from – volunteers in Willoughby.

## **Tanya Taylor**

*Mayor  
Willoughby City Council*



# About the Strategy

The Willoughby City Council *Volunteer Strategy 2024-2028* provides a framework for volunteering in Willoughby.

Volunteers characterise the unique strengths and talents of our diverse community. The time, skills and expertise that are generously contributed by volunteers are among our City's greatest assets. This strategy seeks to provide strategic direction for Council to best cultivate our community's volunteer resources. It builds on the *Volunteer Strategy 2016 - 2021* by placing a stronger focus on improving processes and practices for a coordinated approach to volunteer engagement throughout the organisation.

## HOW WE DEVELOPED THE STRATEGY

Meetings and workshops were undertaken with volunteer coordinators across Council to inform the development of the draft Strategy. The draft Strategy was placed on public exhibition in May 2024, inviting feedback and submissions from the community. 22 people participated in the consultation process, providing verbal and written comments. The feedback was closely considered and the Strategy was amended accordingly.

### The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Maximise mutually beneficial outcomes for both Council and its volunteers.
- Increase participation for diverse community groups.
- Improve organisational management practices to ensure that volunteers are well-supported.
- Promote a consistent and coordinated approach to volunteer management across the organisation.





At Home with Willoughby Out and About service

# Context



Willoughby's Community Strategic Plan, *Our Future Willoughby 2032*, highlights Willoughby as a city that seeks to be 'connected, inclusive and resilient'.

Volunteerism plays a vital role in promoting these community outcomes. Volunteer participation builds social connections and strengthens community networks, including the creation of formal and informal networks of support. The role of volunteers in promoting community resilience is highlighted in the *Resilient Willoughby Strategy and Action Plan*.

Volunteering provides opportunities for people from all backgrounds to participate and contribute. Willoughby is diverse, with 47% of the population born overseas and 41% of the population speaking a language other than English at home<sup>1</sup>. Our volunteers reflect the heart of our community.

## NSW VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

The *NSW Volunteering Strategy 2020-2030* outlines a vision for volunteering in NSW. The state-wide strategy commits to growing, strengthening and supporting volunteering in the community. Willoughby City Council recognises its role as a partner in contributing to the delivery of this vision for our community.

<sup>1</sup> Profile.id, 2021

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement have been developed by Volunteering Australia, the national peak body for volunteering.

Eight standards are outlined to guide best practice for volunteer involving organisations:

1. Volunteering is embedded in leadership, governance and culture
2. Volunteer participation is championed and modelled
3. Volunteer roles are meaningful and tailored
4. Recruitment is equitable and diversity is valued
5. Volunteers are supported and developed
6. Volunteer safety and wellbeing is protected
7. Volunteers are recognised
8. Policies and practices are continuously improved

These standards underpin Council's commitment to best practice volunteer management.

## VOLUNTEERING IN WILLOUGHBY

Volunteering is a hallmark of the Willoughby community. In the 2021 Census, 16.3% of residents reported participating in some form of voluntary work for an organisation, compared to 11.6% for all of Sydney, indicating an



engaged and active community of residents. Willoughby residents enjoy a high quality of life and are highly skilled; our community members are eager to contribute their talents and give back to their community.

There is also a strong desire amongst residents for more connection. The *2023 Community Wellbeing Survey* indicates that 32% of the community would like to be more engaged and connected with their local community. As we have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, people are seeking to make meaningful connections with others, and volunteering presents many opportunities for this.



More than  
**25,000**  
volunteer hours

Council was supported by almost 600 volunteers who gave more than 25,000 hours of their time during 2022/23 to support Council Libraries, Bushcare, Community Aid, At Home with Willoughby, MOSAIC Multicultural Centre, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Events teams.

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a decline in rates of volunteering across Australia. Social distancing measures in place during the height of the pandemic restricted volunteer activities. Volunteer numbers decreased by 30% across Sydney and 19% across Australia by 2021<sup>2</sup>. Many of Council's volunteer programs were put on pause. However, volunteering activity has seen a strong recovery in Willoughby, with volunteer hours returning to pre-pandemic levels by 2022.

Some volunteer programs moved to online modes of delivery during the pandemic and have since continued online. This offers volunteers the ongoing flexibility of volunteering remotely. As the landscape of volunteering continues to shift, we seek to be adaptive and responsive to the changing needs of the community.



Community gardening at Market Garden Park.

2 Profile.id, measured in the 2021 Census compared to 2016



# Context

## OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Willoughby City Council engages approximately 600 volunteers across a wide range of Council programs and services. Volunteers elect to apply for roles for each program area.

**The main areas of Council volunteering are:**

- MOSAIC Multicultural Centre
- Arts and Culture
- Bushcare
- Library Services
- At Home with Willoughby (Aged Care)
- Community Events

Each program area offers unique opportunities - from teaching language classes, to delivering Meals on Wheels, to assisting with exhibitions and concerts – our volunteers are able to find a role which suits their strengths and needs.

In the 2022 / 23 financial year, volunteers contributed 25,124 hours to the delivery of Council's services.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

Council's volunteer programs attract people from all walks of life. Our volunteers contribute a diverse range of skills and experience to our organisation, in addition to their unique personalities and life experiences. The volunteer programs on offer prioritise the individualised experiences of volunteers, tailoring roles and opportunities to match their needs and strengths.

Willoughby Council maintains many long-term volunteers, some of whom have volunteered with Council for decades. Volunteers become embedded in our local community and develop lifelong friendships and connections through their work with Council.

They gain a deep sense of fulfilment and satisfaction from being able to make a positive impact on the community.



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE | JOHN NOH

John has been volunteering at MOSAIC Multicultural Centre for 10 years. As the leader and coordinator of the Men's Group, John organises weekly activities, gatherings and outdoor adventures for the group. John's volunteer journey has been marked by enduring friendships with not only MOSAIC members but with many other volunteers.

His dedication has seen him learning Mandarin to bridge language barriers and better connect with Chinese members who speak limited English. John's exemplary service and leadership has been recognised as Citizen of the Year at the 2024 Willoughby Australia Day Awards.

*"I'm proud of what I've accomplished as a volunteer including building and maintaining long-term friendships with people from different cultural backgrounds."*



John Noh

# Context

## **VOLUNTEER PROFILE | YUKIKO FUTAMI**

Yukiko has been volunteering at Chatswood Library for 12 years. She helps to deliver the Japanese Storytime program, bringing language and culture to families from a Japanese background. Yukiko has a qualified library background and also supports the library in managing its Japanese language collection and translating information into Japanese.

Yukiko's passion for culture and education shines through in her dedication to her work at the library. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Yukiko helped to create videos of Japanese Storytime for children to continue learning and engagement online when they were unable to visit the library.

*"I wanted to contribute to the Willoughby community and I am glad to be able to help Japanese immigrants start a new life or feel secure.*

*My favourite moment is when I see the children and their parents happy after the Storytime session. Some children say "please do it again tomorrow!" though the Storytime is held once a month."*



Yukiko Futami



# Strategic Directions

## 1 | SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS TO THRIVE

Support volunteers throughout the life cycle of their engagement through best practice volunteer management.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
<p><b>1.1</b> Provide a safe and easy volunteering pathway</p> <p>Provide a supportive environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update volunteering processes</li> <li>Provide assistance to coordinators to effectively administer their volunteer programs</li> <li>Engage with peak organisations to stay informed of trends</li> <li>Use diverse communication methods to reach various groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systems and processes are easy to navigate</li> <li>Policies and processes are relevant, up to date and communicated effectively</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2</b> Strengthen the capacity of volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction training is provided</li> <li>Ongoing learning and development opportunities</li> <li>Roles are tailored to suit volunteers' needs, skills and experience</li> <li>Support volunteer pathways to paid employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved skills and knowledge of volunteers</li> <li>Increased access to training activities</li> <li>Volunteers feel valued</li> <li>Volunteers gain opportunities in paid employment</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.3</b> Work collaboratively with key stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity of local volunteer involving organisations</li> <li>Share resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local volunteer sector is strengthened</li> <li>Volunteerism is boosted throughout the community</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4</b> Involve volunteers in decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek feedback from volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers feel heard and empowered</li> </ul>





Volunteer at Chatswood Year of the Dragon Festival



# Strategic Directions

## 2 | PROMOTE AND GROW

Raise the profile of volunteerism in the local community to increase participation.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
<p><b>2.1</b> Promote volunteering in Willoughby</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the social and economic value of volunteers in the community</li> <li>Highlight the mutual benefits of volunteering</li> <li>Market Council's volunteer programs and available opportunities</li> <li>Volunteering is championed by organisational leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased participation</li> <li>Increased awareness of Council's diverse volunteer opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2</b> Grow Council's volunteer program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to increase Council's volunteer opportunities</li> <li>Create a volunteer program offering skill development for young people</li> <li>Investigate volunteer opportunities suitable for the Duke of Edinburgh program</li> <li>Explore ways to remove barriers to participation for volunteers with disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More volunteer roles are available</li> <li>Increase in young volunteers</li> <li>Improve inclusive volunteering programs, guidance and opportunities</li> </ul>



## 3 | CELEBRATE VOLUNTEERS

Acknowledge and celebrate our volunteers for their contributions.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
<b>3.1</b> Appreciate and recognise Council's volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark National Volunteers Week each year</li> <li>• Conduct volunteer appreciation events</li> <li>• Offer awards and recognition programs for volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers feel valued and appreciated for their contributions</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b> Highlight volunteer achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominate volunteers for awards</li> <li>• Celebrate milestones and achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers who demonstrate exemplary service are celebrated</li> </ul>



Willoughby parkrun volunteers with Mayor Tanya

# Monitoring and Evaluation

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

This strategy will be supported through a series of Action Plans with measurable outcomes and deliverables. These Action Plans will be specific to each program area and overseen by their respective teams. As the community and volunteering landscape evolves, our actions, guided by this strategy, will be responsive to emerging needs and trends.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In collaboration with volunteer coordinators and volunteers, a suite of key performance indicators will be developed to assess the effectiveness of the overall strategy.

## INTERNAL WORKING GROUP

An internal Council Volunteer Working Group will support the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plans.

## VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

A range of consultation mechanisms will provide opportunities for feedback from volunteers and gauge the level of satisfaction and overall sentiments toward Council's volunteer programs. These feedback mechanisms will provide quantitative and qualitative data to guide the planning and delivery of Council's volunteer program.





Artarmon Bushcare volunteer group





WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL

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