

# 2007—2008 ANNUAL REPORT

## VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA INC



**Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering.**

**We are a member-based, not-for-profit, non-government organisation.**

**We are funded by the state and federal governments and we also receive private funding and donations for specific programs.**

**We have a small, core group of paid and voluntary staff. A voluntary professional board of management leads the organisation's governance.**

**We are one of eight state/territory members of the national peak body, Volunteering Australia. Volunteering Victoria is one of the founding members of VA, along with the other state bodies.**

### From the President

This is my last report as President of Volunteering Victoria's Board of Management, after being in the role for three years.

I write this report with optimism and confidence about the future of the organisation, particularly because by the end of 2007 – 2008, we are truly in a position of financial viability. Volunteering Victoria's financial stability is crucial in its capacity to perform as the state peak body for volunteering.

Prudence in managing our resources has been a top priority for the Board in its 2005 – 2008 strategy and during the year, Volunteering Victoria has been able to reap part of the rewards of our strict financial stewardship.

In early 2008, we employed a number of new staff. Kerrie Green as Bookkeeper, Gail Cumming as Program and Networks Manager, Elouise Holmes as Communications Manager and Maree Carroll as Administration Co-ordinator became part of the team. The new staff increased our capacity to deliver member services and contributed to achieving our aims of supporting the volunteering community. They have also contributed to further efficiencies in the organisation's operations.

Volunteering Victoria's financial stability impacts on its ability to build a strong and professional team. This will continue to be a focus of the Board in the future as we seek to employ additional staff to meet our service delivery needs.

In its 2008 – 2011 strategic plan, the Board built on the goals it set in the 2005 – 2008 strategic plan. With the assurance that we now have firmly established systems and policies to safeguard our resources, we are able to broaden our thinking for the future in achieving genuine growth as a peak organisation.

**Creativity, Innovation and Independence** are three pillars that inspire us in our march to the future as we seek to –

- **Strengthen** our members, the sector and support volunteers with training
- **Achieve sustainability** – by developing an effective response to the rising trend in employee volunteering; develop best practice within volunteer programs; conduct targeted research to support volunteering
- **Raise profile and awareness** – of Volunteering Victoria as peak body and the benefits of membership with us; of the volunteering movement

Volunteering Victoria's 2007 – 2008 has been a year of activity which will be further outlined in the rest of this report.

I leave my role as President of the Board with the firm belief that the state of Victoria needs a robust peak body and we need the support of our stakeholders, all levels of government, our partners, sponsors, and the volunteer support networks for this to continue.

On behalf of the current Board, I would like to thank all the volunteers and staff at Volunteering Victoria for their passion and commitment in their roles.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our long-serving volunteer, Phyl Witherden, who passed away in August. Phyl's dedication to her role as Volunteer Information Officer is inspiring and I'm sure many who knew her are missing those quiet, helpful ways, her bright smile and wicked sense of humour.

*Matthew Rasmussen*



## CEO's Report

Volunteering Victoria in 2007 – 2008 continued to reinforce the foundations that have been laid within the organisation, as we pursued the path to achieving the strategic goals set by the Board in its 2005 – 2008 plan.

The priorities of the plan were –

- **To improve our financial performance;**
- **To build our capacity through increased resources; and**
- **To raise our profile as the state peak body in volunteering.**

Flowing on from these priorities, though no less important, was our aim of better serving our members, volunteers, the volunteer support networks and the wider Victorian community. The plan included Volunteering Victoria seeking to build and strengthen our partnerships with all levels of government, the business sector and other supporters. Continuous improvement of our services, internal processes and procedures and the professional development and well-being of our volunteers and staff also formed part of what we wanted to do for the organisation.

I am pleased to be able to report on how we have made headway on these goals throughout the year. Detailed under different headings here are the ways in which we have implemented and continue to put in place systems and processes for reaching our 2005 – 2008 strategic goals. Also included here are plans for the future based on the 2008 – 2011 strategic plan that has been completed by the current board. We look forward to the leadership of the newly-elected board over the next three years in fulfilling the goals of this new plan.

### FINANCIAL HEALTH AND VIABILITY

As a not-for-profit, non-government organisation, we are fortunate that we can focus on fulfilling our mandate as state peak for volunteering. Having healthy finances, however, is a crucial means to an end in terms of us being able to deliver our services and to fulfill our responsibilities to our stakeholders.

In 2007 – 2008, we have continued to diligently maintain efficiencies in our operations that reflect positively on our finances. As at 20 June 2008, we have a net surplus \$51,972.00. Full details of our financial report are included in this report, prepared by our auditor John Mahony. John worked in close co-operation with our Bookkeeper, Kerrie Green and with the oversight of Andrew Mattinson, Board Treasurer.

The year's surplus is a result of increased federal funding from the Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA). It is also a product of our continued responsible handling of our finances.

This additional injection to our capital means that we are positioned well to plan for growth, especially in the delivery of our services to the Victorian community and the provision of benefits to our members.

### GROWTH WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

#### • People

Our people are at the heart of our success. We achieve our goals through the efforts, talents and commitment of our human capital and we count both employees and volunteers in this.

The new members of the staff have been detailed in the President's message. Their contributions, along with those of current staff, bolster our capacity and we are already enjoying the benefits of their efforts, which you will read more about further into this report.

Our office volunteers give us significant help in running our Volunteer Information Service. There have been changes to our office volunteers and many of you

would know that one of our long-serving volunteers, Phyl Witherden, passed away in August this year. We pay tribute to Phyl in another part of this report.

#### • Systems

We undertook a major overhaul of our office IT system. As a result, we have upgraded our computer operating system to MSOffice 2007 and have the latest version of software for communication requirements; are fully-networked through an internal terminal service and have a new Internet-service provider. Our staff have remote or off-site access to their work stations and the centrally-held information of the organisation, which allows us to provide them the flexibility in their working hours and environments. We consider IT as a linchpin to our services; hence, we have invested money in this area.

#### • Infrastructure

We continue to be housed at 280 William Street. This site has worked well for us in terms accessibility but our current and expected growth in staff numbers has prompted us to start looking for another site to accommodate this. We envisage a move to new premises in the first half of 2009.

### DELIVERY OF MEMBER BENEFITS

**Professional development and training:** We offered *'Everyone Ready'*, a 12-month online volunteer management training program for those who work with volunteers. The program was designed by Susan J. Ellis of Energize Inc. in Philadelphia and delivered in conjunction with Andy Fryar, the founder-owner of OzVPM in Australia. It includes online seminars, discussion forums, self-instruction guides, articles on *'e-volunteerism'* – the online journal of the volunteer community and teleconferences facilitated by Volunteering Victoria. There were 21 participants for this program.

We delivered a full-year calendar of training sessions on topics and issues relevant to our members and facilitated by experts in the field. Members received discounted rates for all of our training sessions.

**Advice and consultancy support:** We continued to provide advice on a wide range of volunteering issues to our members. We extended this service beyond our members and assisted volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations and the business sector. Our capability for giving advice and consultancy support has been strengthened with a new program and networks manager. Talking to those from our member organisations and others in volunteering about their issues and providing advice forms part of the daily activity of this role, done either through telephone conversations or in person.

**Knowledge, information and resources:** *'Connection'* is the bi-monthly members' e-newsletter, which features volunteer/not-for-profit/community-related articles, reference lists and interviews with members who share their learnings and best practice on volunteer management.

*'eBulletin'* is the fortnightly news bulletin published to over 700 members and registered organisations. Short articles on volunteering, training information and events reminders, job vacancies and other information from the volunteer support networks and government agencies are regular inclusions to this publica-



tion.

We now have a more centralised member communications process through these two formats for information delivery. Our whole system of communicating with our stakeholders is now being filtered and organised through the communications manager's office.

We started a major re-design and revamp of our website this year and it is now near completion. Its new look, capacity for storage of more resource materials and the addition of more interactive features will soon be enjoyed by all users but members will have access to certain 'members only' sections.

**Advocacy:** We successfully represented the views and interests of our members and have worked to help shape and define government policy. We have been part of advisory or steering committees for the following: The Victorian government's 'Strengthening Community Organisations Plan (SCOP)', 'State Services Review' and Food Handling Review; the Department of Human Services' 'Count Us In' and 'Pandemic Planning; DPCD's Office for the Not for Profit Sector.

We have more actively engaged with the media this year for our work in advocating for volunteerism. We have done this through radio and newspaper interviews and also by sending media releases indicating our policy stands on volunteer-related issue, especially about the needs of those involved in volunteering; the value and benefits of volunteering; the crucial role of volunteer managers in the sustainability of volunteerism and others.

Volunteering Victoria has worked closely with the state's Department of Planning and Community Development examining and supporting the dozens of Volunteer Support Grant projects around the state. This work included jointly organising a day-long forum in Melbourne for all VSG and VRC managers to provide input to the state's Whole of Government Volunteering Strategy. We are consolidating the relationship with the state Government to ensure that we are involved at every stage of the development of this strategy and the future of the remaining VSG projects.

Volunteering Victoria has provided continuous updates to DPCD about the needs, issues and challenges faced by communities with and without regional volunteering support structures. Our main focus over the coming year will be to work closely with DPCD and other government agencies to ensure that there is an increased level of infrastructure and sustainable assistance provided across the state for volunteering support services.

**Support for regional members and the wider volunteer network in Victoria:** Another core activity that has greatly benefitted from the addition of a program and networks manager in the team is our ability to visit members and attend their meetings or those of the networks all over the state. We have provided advice and input in at these meetings and have also gathered information from those operating in the various areas of Victoria so that our programs are better informed to meet the needs of the volunteering community. Our knowledge gained from these regional visits also allows us to better play our role in connecting the different entities involved in volunteering, especially where there potential gains that can be achieved through partnerships and collaborations.

Volunteering Victoria has assisted in the facilitation of a number of workshops including in the communities of Melton, Castlemaine, Dandenong and Warrnambool. We have connected various communities that are involved in similar projects and face similar challenges. We will be using our revamped website to greatly accelerate this flow of communication around the state.

**Promoting volunteering and raising the profile of our members:** There were more opportunities for interacting with the media this year. We facilitated media requests for interviews with volunteers, especially during National Volunteer Week 2008.

We established 'Media SOS', a program whereby members opt-in to receive

regular e-mail requests from journalists for interviews or information through our communications manager.

## **BUILDING CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF VOLUNTEERISM AND THE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT NETWORKS**

Volunteering Victoria launched three new programs during National Volunteer Week 2008 to contribute to the Victorian government's 'Strengthening Communities Action Plan'. The basic framework for **VTrain**, **VCommunity Hubs** and **VKnowledge Exchange** have been formulated and delivery of **VCommunity Hubs** and **VKnowledge Exchange** will begin before the end of 2008, mainly through our new website, whilst roll-out for **VTrain** will start in early 2009.

We joined with the seven other interstate and national peak bodies in Australia in adopting a national strategy for the promotion and advancement of volunteerism. The state CEOs worked together during monthly teleconferences, when they pooled their collective ideas in resolving volunteering issues of national concern. This resulted in a strong, united voice for volunteering.

As a result of the program and network manager's on-field research, more than 20 new volunteer support networks have been identified and members linked through information and knowledge sharing.

Quarterly meetings with the 16 Volunteer Resource Centres around Victoria were organised. These have helped to maintain connections, cultivate co-operation and extend Volunteering Victoria's reach in various parts of the state.

## **WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT**

The Victorian government is a key partner of Volunteering Victoria, particularly through the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

We provided input into a number of Victorian government initiatives for the not-for-profit sector, including the Stronger Community Organisations (SCOP) Project, State Services Authority Reducing Red Tape Review, Active Aging and Pandemic Planning, Whole of Government Strategy for Volunteering and Participation.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES**

In partnership with Dixon Appointments and the Victorian Volunteer Resource Centre network, Volunteering Victoria received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Business Partnerships.

A co-operation with the Public Interest Law Clearing House (Pilch) has been established through their pro-bono assistance service.

In response to the growing interest in employee volunteering, we have formed partnerships with entities from the corporate sector through an employee/corporate volunteering brokerage service. Through this service, we have facilitated relationships between corporates and not-for-profit/community organisations.

We co-hosted with Volunteering Australia a Taiwanese delegation from the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) who visited VRCs and other agencies in Melbourne.

## **MOVING WITH CHANGING TIMES**

In the year ahead, we plan to invest in expanding and diversifying the services that we offer our members and those in the not-for-profit and community sector. Our emphasis will be an outreach to rural and regional Victoria through training. We will continue to support and develop expanded collaborative state-wide networks and are looking into a reference/advisory group that will help build strong volunteering support structures around the state.

We particularly look forward to focusing on strengthening the capacity of volunteer-involving organisations through the provision of easily accessible online resources and best practice models. We will also launch locally based training options and will continue to offer training through innovative and flexible modes of delivery, such as e-learning formats.

We are in the process of seeking a Training Development Officer, who will be tasked with developing training resources and support across our range of core services and projects. This new appointment will facilitate our planned training programs such as 'Train the Trainer'. Design and delivery of our training programs will be in partnership with others.

Our new Employee Volunteering Development Officer will actively assist not-for-profit and community organisations in working with employee volunteers. This role will also initiate and manage our relationships with the corporate sector.

We will continue in our work of –

- Assisting volunteers
- Supporting member organisations in achieving best practice
- Promoting volunteering to the Victorian community, all levels of government, the business sector
- Advocating for volunteers, volunteer managers to policy-makers
- Raising the profile of Volunteering Victoria and that of our members

Volunteering is very sensitive to the changes in Australian society as it is very much a people-based endeavor. To those in volunteering, the challenges of engaging Generation Y; the ability to find suitable projects for episodic volunteers; how to best harness the capabilities of employee volunteers; finding ways to help the more and more isolated communities in rural and regional Victoria are issues that are only all too familiar.

Volunteering Victoria intends to move with these changing times and we are confident in our ability to do so. Our Board has set our strategic vision for the next three years and we plan to build on our accomplishments this year. We will be able to put these plans into action with the support of our members, the volunteering community, governments at all levels, our partners and sponsors, all of whom we thank for the year that just passed. May we enjoy the same in the year that is to come.

Finally, I would like to give my appreciation to all the Volunteering Victoria staff and volunteers, who not only help me in my work everyday as CEO but who give generously of themselves to the organisation.

**Dianne Embry, CEO**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

Andy Fryar and OzVPM

Catherina Toh

Clayton Utz

Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Department of Human Services (Victoria)

Dixon Appointments

Foundation of Young Australian

Gandell Foundation

John Mahony

Martin Cowling and People First Solutions

National Australia Bank

National and State Volunteering Centres

Office of the Public Advocate

Volunteering Victoria staff and volunteers

## PHYL WITHERDEN—IN MEMORIAM

Volunteering Victoria will fondly remember and be forever grateful to Phyl for her many years of tirelessly helping people to participate as volunteers. Phyl committed the last six years of her life as volunteer information officer, guiding people through the process of finding suitable volunteer roles.

A most dedicated member of the Volunteering Victoria team, she has left a big gap in the organisation and in the lives of the many people she has helped.

Volunteering Victoria staff, board of management members and volunteers are deeply saddened by the passing of a dear colleague and friend who was compassionate, loyal and kind.

## VISION AND MISSION

### Vision

Connecting the community and building a lifetime of opportunity through volunteering.

### Mission

Supporting and promoting volunteering to all Victorians by providing excellence in service and advice.

## MEMBERS of the 2007 - 2008 BOARD of MANAGEMENT

**Matthew Rasmussen, President and Member of Sub-committee on Training**

Matthew works as an advocate/guardian in the Office of the Public Advocate.

**Mark Georgesz, Vice President**

Mark is the executive officer (Resources) at the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Economics and Commerce.

**Andrew Mattinson, Treasurer and Finance Sub-committee Chair**

Andrew is a manager at Grant Thornton, working in the Recovery and Reorganisation Division.

**Tara Cantwell, Secretary and Training Sub-committee Chair**

Tara is a team leader for Interchange Outer East.

**Hazel Maynard, Training Sub-committee Member**

Hazel is the volunteer development manager for St. Vincent de Paul Society.

**Barry Furness, Training Sub-committee Member**

Barry is Victorian operations and volunteer services manager for YMCA.

**Boyce Wong, Development Sub-committee Member**

Boyce works as a market and economic analyst for Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia.

**Effie Margiolis (Resigned August 2008)**

Effie manages Education and Operations at the Royal Australian College of GPs.

**Catherina Toh, Volunteering Australia Board Representative**

Catherina is a lawyer and consultant to the financial services industry in legal and regulatory compliance.

**Dianne Embry, Ex-Officio and CEO of Volunteering Victoria**

**VOLUNTEERS****Charet Garcia**, Information Officer**Dianna Campbell**, Information Officer**Dave Malthouse**, Administration Support**Luke Stone**, Administration Support**Fang He**, IT**Mici Tsang**, Website**STAFF****Dianne Embry**, CEO**Gail Cumming**, Program and Networks Manager**Elouise Holmes**, Communications Manager**Maree Carroll**, Administration Co-ordinator**Michelle Alabaster**, Administration Officer**Kerry Green**, Finance**VOLUNTEERING VICTORIA**

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