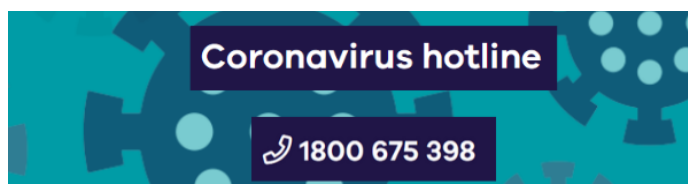




Campaspe Murray Vibrant Volunteer Network Newsletter Volume 6 July 2020

Our goal is to 'Improve capacity and sustainability of volunteering practices and support across the Campaspe and Murray areas'.

COVID-19 The Impact on Volunteering



Well Covid 19 has certainly changed the landscape in all our lives at present. All our network partners stood down volunteers for their own safety and safety to clients, residents and patients. Many have been working from home and Zoom meetings have become the new norm. The new challenge has been to discover ways to stay connected:

- Virtual Volunteering- has been highlighted as volunteers are asked to be compassionate callers from their homes, ringing the socially isolated, sending cards of kindness or chatting through zoom, skype and facetime.
- Sewing groups have emerged making scrubs and face masks, knitting beanies for the homeless
- Newsletters, Facebook groups, quiz and trivia online competitions for volunteers.
- Time for Volunteer managers and coordinators to review policies and procedures, role description, strategically plan for the re-engagement of volunteers.

In the midst of this pandemic Campaspe PCP have been keeping us all up to date and providing relevant and accurate information in their newsletter and social media pages. Proving yet again the importance of PCP's in their role, value and impact in our community.

Whilst the Covid Crisis has impacted socially and economically on our lives, there has been another pandemic happening across the land, the Kindness Pandemic- where we are constantly seeing people starting to care for their neighbours, checking in, spontaneous volunteering, people cooking and delivering meals.

As restrictions ease the main focus for many volunteer managers/coordinators currently is looking at strategies for the re- engagement of volunteers post Covid.

Our experience to date through our communications with volunteers has shown that all volunteers feel different. Some keen to return, others are still afraid and as VIO's we must support volunteers to ensure they have a psychologically healthy and safe environment to return to.

Some challenges for many of our members are:

- promoting the re-engagement plan to our CEO's & managers etc,
- determining re-induction, training and screening that is required prior to re-engagement
- Undertaking risk assessment and modifications to role descriptions, return to work plans

Campaspe Murray Vibrant Volunteer Network Benchmark Survey 2020

This survey is vital to the future of our Campaspe Murray Vibrant Volunteer Network, and will form a benchmark for our strategic plan and quantify the value of volunteering in Campaspe Murray communities. Data collated from this survey will also form our annual report to DSS as required under the terms of the Volunteer project. The survey will be open from 13th - 24th July.

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3HD26BP>



New Research: The experience of volunteers during COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted the volunteering sector substantially with almost two thirds of volunteers estimated to have stopped volunteering between February and April 2020 new research shows. The researchers estimate that this reduction in volunteering is equivalent to 12.2 million hours per week.

This research is the first analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on volunteers and volunteering across Australia. The paper, commissioned by Volunteering Australia, from the Australian National University (ANU) Centre for Social Research and Methods undertook analysis of the experience of volunteers during COVID-19 to date.

Volunteering Australia CEO Adrienne Picone said, "It is important to recognise the role that volunteering plays in people's lives, with the report showing that those who continued to volunteer had a significantly and substantially smaller decline in life satisfaction and psychological distress than those who stopped or who never volunteered in the first place. This suggests that maintaining volunteering activity appears to be a very important protective factor.

"Overall, these findings are significant in showing the impact that the COVID-19 situation has on volunteers. The scale of the cessation of volunteering reinforces the challenge ahead in reinvigorating volunteering in the future. The findings also emphasise the incredible power of the volunteer workforce and its contribution to the economic and social well-being of Australia. The nation needs these volunteers back supporting their communities."

[Read the full analysis](#)

Vibrant Volunteer Project Update

The impact of COVID-19 on the Volunteering sector has been huge, most organisations have stood down volunteers and are in the process of developing re-engagement strategies for their volunteers.

ERH Volunteer Lena Vicary received OAM



Congratulations to ERH volunteer Lena Vicary who has this week received a Medal of the Order of Australia for her community and volunteering work. Lena has been part of the fabric of ERH since the 1970s, first as an employee for many years, then as a volunteer and founding member of the Friends of Glanville Committee, which, since 2014, has raised over \$120,000 for the Glanville Village Leisure and Lifestyle team supporting the residents in various ways. Lena has in the last few weeks decided to retire from her volunteer role and we wish her all the best. Well done Lena on this fantastic achievement.

Strategic Planning

Campaspe Murray
Vibrant Volunteers
Outcomes Strategy
2020-2023



Developed by the Vibrant Volunteer Network 2020 and facilitated by
Vivienne Cunningham-Smith of Eastern Volunteers using
Result Based Accountability™ Outcomes Methodology.

In February the steering group met and with the help of Viv Cunningham- Smith from Eastern Volunteers, created a Strategic Plan for the Network, ensuring our Network will continue working towards our aim of improving the capacity and sustainability of volunteering practices across the Campaspe & Murray area.

One of our objectives is to investigate the possibility of establishing a Volunteer Resource Service in Echuca with a particular focus on opening up meaningful opportunities for people experiencing barriers to volunteering.



Community Living & Respite Services

CLRS posted a certificate of appreciation, along with the 2020 volunteer badge and voucher to volunteers. As well as a Facebook post each day of that week highlighting a different area of volunteering within our organisation; board of management, community volunteers, supported volunteers, corporate volunteers, fundraising committee, ambassadors. National Volunteer Week was also mentioned in our volunteer newsletter and community newsletter.

Due to COVID-19, CLRS closed the doors of the Murray River Tea Rooms and No. 4 Op Shop on 23 March. Community activity programs also ceased. All volunteering ceased to keep everyone safe. The Tea Rooms re-opened on 1 June and No. 4 Op Shop re-opened 15 June. Volunteers were happy for the re-opening and most were happy to return.

Johnno's Run, which is a major fundraiser for CLRS each year through having a team participate in Run Melbourne, was put on hold and all fundraising suspended. CLRS is now hosting a virtual event on 26 July 2020. People can register for this event (free) and/or purchase a Johnno's Run singlet \$15 via Try Booking <https://www.trybooking.com/BKCLC>. All proceeds raised from singlet sales goes towards the Opening Doors Project – building homes for people with disability.



National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week May 18-24 was celebrated virtually with some great ideas shared in Facebook posts, Webinars, Zoom Morning & Afternoon teas and the Wave for volunteers idea. A simple way of thanking the millions of volunteers, visiting volunteers with bags of goodies and a million other ways of saying thanks.

News from Echuca Regional Health



Waving smiles to you!



Things certainly looked different this year over National Volunteer Week at Echuca Regional Health without the usual smiles and joy of our volunteers and the staff saying thanks to our 'volunteers in red' in the corridors. Thankfully, our volunteers have been really receptive to trying out new ways of connecting during COVID-19 like via Zoom, which we used to hold our virtual volunteer morning tea! We had a whole heap of volunteers join, as well as our CEO and Exec team who gave updates from their areas on COVID-19 and thanked our volunteers for their contributions and said how much we missed them!

Some of our volunteers have gone far beyond their comfort zone to join these meetings, and have gone on to use these new skills in their personal lives by connecting with their families! We also made a 'Wave a Smile of Thanks' video to join Volunteer Australia's campaign, which can be viewed [here](#) and we had a couple of stories in the Riverine Herald which you can read [here](#) and [here](#).

Whilst it was certainly not the same or how we would have chosen to acknowledge the 'Changing communities, Changing Lives' theme for this year, it was great to all come together for a cuppa and a chat and say thanks for the wonderful work our volunteers do. In the past 12 months, ERH's 120 Volunteers have contributed over 9,800 hours to the health service and we cannot thank them enough for their passion, support and the joy they bring to our staff, patients and families.

For further information on the Vibrant Volunteer Network or to contribute to this newsletter please contact Alma Limbrick, Volunteer Project Coordinator
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