



INFORMATION SHEET FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS CONNECTING WITH VOLUNTEERS FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) BACKGROUNDS

The Centre for Volunteering recognises that building relationships between Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) and volunteers requires time, effort, resources, communication skills and active engagement in the volunteering process. Volunteer programs involving volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are an easily noted illustration of your organisation's social responsibility principles and the incorporation of such standards within the working domain of your organisation.

WHY HAVE CALD VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Involving Organisations and the society in which they operate, are enriched in multiple ways by the inclusion of people from CALD backgrounds. Individuals from CALD backgrounds enhance the culture of the organisation by bringing in new ideas, skills and, an appreciation of other cultures. Further, the inclusion of CALD background persons increases the field of suitable and skilled persons who may be available to be chosen to do a particular type of volunteer activity.

Volunteer Involving Organisations who involve CALD background volunteers are demonstrably adaptable, amenable to innovation and have specific and particular solutions to problems. VIOs also have direct access to a larger number of perspectives, abilities and capacity, originating from their volunteers. Within your organisation CALD volunteers will add value, boost cultural awareness and advance the organisation's reputation in the community as being progressive and inclusive of diversities.

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN SETTING UP A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR CALD BACKGROUND VOLUNTEERS

A volunteer program can contribute greatly to the community in which it exists. Nevertheless, many VIOs do not engage specifically with CALD background volunteers because of the perception that extra-ordinary efforts are required to recruit, instruct and retain such volunteers and that the 'cost' of such training and recruitment will far outweigh the benefits which may accrue from such volunteers. However, this perception has no foundation in fact. CALD background volunteers may only require minimal modifications or none at all, to be made in order for them to be able to fully participate in a volunteer project.

Before proceeding with volunteer projects involving CALD background volunteers, VIOs need to consider the following:

1. the objective of the volunteer project:
 - what the project ultimately aims to achieve and for whom and



2. what resources are required to initiate and maintain the project: including
 - personnel assets
 - physical assets
 - monetary capacity.

HOW TO FIND, ATTRACT AND RETAIN CALD BACKGROUND VOLUNTEERS

Once a volunteer project involving CALD background volunteers has been identified, the Volunteer Manager needs to determine the criteria which will ensure its success.

1. **VIOs wishing to attract CALD volunteers may need to employ different approaches to recruitment.** For example, the advertising and marketing of the project ought to be in community languages as well as in English so that it is both conspicuous and attractive to potential CALD volunteers. Community advertising should also be a means by which to highlight the benefits to be gained by CALD background persons through participation in volunteer projects.
2. **All volunteer projects need to appeal to the community as a whole.** There is no doubt that by accessing the CALD community, you bring to your volunteer project not just participative assistance, but also resources such as funds and equipment. The best case scenario for a volunteer project allows for the full and co-operative contribution from the *whole community* towards a common goal.
3. **Innovative and situationally appropriate volunteer programs allow for the strategic placement of your organisation and its objectives.** Being involved with, and visible to, CALD communities allows your organisation to form and maintain mutually rewarding relationships as well as allowing your organisation to be exposed to new markets and diverse opportunities. VIOs can design programs to meet the social needs of a community which may be a collective goal, as well as meeting their own social responsibility objectives which is a specific goal.

Finally, VIOs wanting to attract CALD backgrounds volunteers should ensure that the following matters are addressed prior to advertising the project:

- a detailed description of the role of the CALD volunteer within the parameters of the volunteer program,
- placement of individuals who are able to set standards of conduct and provide encouragement to CALD volunteers,
- have Volunteer Managers and team leaders who are able to deal with conflict in a constructive, non-confrontational and culturally sympathetic manner, (i.e. have cross cultural training)
- Identify what extra training, if any, is required to be provided to CALD background volunteers and



- Note whether there are training opportunities for CALD volunteers within the volunteer program, if there are, emphasise those in the advertising for the volunteer role.

The Centre for Volunteering has a range of services and resources available for Volunteer Involving Organisations interested in connecting with volunteers from a CALD background and other volunteers. For more information please visit www.volunteering.com.au or contact us on 02 9261 3600.