



## **VOLUNTEERING NSW 2023 STATE CONFERENCE**

### **Volunteering in an age of Disruption**

#### **Call for Abstracts**

The 2023 Volunteering NSW State Conference, Thursday 8 June, 2023, to be held at The Amora Hotel Sydney and live streamed to 5 regional centres, is expected to attract around 250 attendees from across the sector. Our wide-ranging audience will include volunteer managers, CEOs and Board Members of volunteer-involving organisations, corporates who are involved in employee volunteering programs, government departments, tertiary institutions, and those with a general interest in volunteering.

With the goal to challenge, inspire and empower, the Conference program will explore current issues in volunteering with a focus on:

- Leadership and Collaboration
- Innovation, Diversity and Inclusion
- Valuing and Repositioning Volunteering

The Conference program will encompass a variety of presentation formats that involve and engage Conference participants.

We are seeking Conference presenters who wish to share their knowledge and experience, and to showcase practical solutions with their colleagues, thereby contributing to the advancement of volunteering in NSW. As a Conference presenter, you will join a network of influential thought leaders to showcase current innovation and future potential within the sector.

#### **Interested in Presenting?**

All abstract proposals should be submitted on the [Call for Abstracts Template](#) by 5.00pm on Friday 14 April, 2023.

- Please read the following information regarding the conference themes and presentation formats.
- All presentation abstracts should be limited to 500 words and follow the guidelines outlined for each presentation format.
- Please ensure all requested information is provided, including the presentation title, the presenter/s name, contact details and a short biography of the presenter/s, together with any organisation affiliations.
- All abstracts will be reviewed by the Volunteering NSW Conference Organising Committee.
- All enquiries and submissions should be sent to the Conference, at [conference@volunteering.com.au](mailto:conference@volunteering.com.au).
- Successful presenters will be notified by Friday 28 April, 2023
- Successful presenters will be provided with complimentary Conference registration



## **Conference Themes**

**THEME :**       **Volunteering in an age of Disruption**

**SUB-THEMES :**

- Leadership and Collaboration
- Innovation, Diversity and Inclusion
- Valuing and Repositioning Volunteering

### **Leadership and Collaboration**

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement provide clear guidelines for best practice volunteer management. Unfortunately, too often there is little or no meaningful investment in volunteer management. This disrespects and devalues the role of the managers of volunteers, as well as the volunteer workforce. It can put volunteers at risk, reduce their productivity, effectiveness and well-being, and impact their morale and motivation. It can also reduce a volunteer-involving organisation's agility, and ability to meet the challenges of current and emerging trends in present-day volunteering.

Given the importance and scope of volunteering, and the limited investment in, and resources devoted to support volunteering, it is critical that the sector collaborates to optimise outcomes.

Presentations will explore the factors that contribute to and support successful collaboration, and showcase examples of collaborations that advance volunteering.

### **Innovation, Diversity and Inclusion**

The volunteering sector is wide-ranging in its scope. It comprises volunteer-involving organisations, volunteer support services, corporates, the 3-tiers of government as well as current and potential volunteers. It covers industries as diverse as social services, health, emergency services, sport, community development, creative industries, tourism, the environment, disability services, education, animal welfare – to name a few. It reflects the diversity of the NSW community and is critical for the successful delivery of many services, programs and activities we take for granted, and which contribute to the wellbeing and richness of the wider community.

As a result of the recent natural disasters and COVID 19, the volunteering sector needs to adopt a broad view of innovation and focus on how leaders can pivot to address the social challenges within the community and achieve effective change through new programs.

Presentations will explore the role of leaders in building an inclusive, diverse, resilient, sustainable and productive volunteer workforce and programs. It will also address the role of leaders as the stewards of volunteering, ensuring volunteering remains true to the spirit and intent of the definition of volunteering and is not misused and abused.



### Valuing and Repositioning Volunteering

It is widely acknowledged volunteering makes a very significant economic, social and cultural contribution to our community, yet volunteering and volunteers are not always valued in a meaningful way.

Even though volunteers make up a significant proportion of the workforce in many sectors, often the impact on that volunteer workforce is not considered in policy debates, changes to programs and service delivery models, or sector reform. In addition, many organisations (even those with a significant volunteer workforce) do not invest in the management of their volunteers like they do with paid staff.

Further, perceptions of volunteering and volunteers are often limited and outdated, and don't reflect contemporary volunteering. Even volunteers undervalue their contribution and impact – too often describing themselves as 'just volunteers'.

Funding from all levels of government to support volunteering (as opposed to activities that rely on volunteers) is limited. The volunteering sector also needs to focus on, and discuss new opportunities for funding in the sector in relation to grants, sponsorships and philanthropic partnerships.

Presentations will explore how volunteering can be repositioned to reflect and acknowledge its true value and contribution to the NSW community; how volunteering can attract funding when it is competing for funding with the services it supports; why volunteers and volunteering are not valued in a meaningful way and what we can do about it; and how volunteering can be repositioned as an active community building activity with volunteers as active citizens.



## **Formats**

### **Plenary**

Duration: 30 minutes

- A 30 minute plenary session which focuses on either the main theme or one of the three sub-themes of the Conference
- These sessions are intended to grab the attention and engage the audience, conveying key information on the theme and offer relevant learnings / insights.
- Your abstract should detail the focus of your talk, the ways it contributes to thinking or understanding and the presentation format. In selecting plenary presentations, priority will be given to proposals that allow the audience to connect, engage and learn in new or different ways.

### **Workshop**

Duration : 45 minutes, including Q&A

- A 45 minute workshop session which begins like a traditional presentation, with a speaker (or multiple speakers) presenting on one of the three sub-themes of the Conference. After 15 to 20 minutes, the shift focuses from the speaker/s to the audience with the aim of creating a facilitated, open forum enabling the attendees to generate the majority of the discussion and knowledge sharing.
- For the remainder of the session, the speaker becomes a facilitator, inviting responses to comments and questions from those around the room and letting the audience dictate the ultimate direction of the conversation.
- Your abstract should detail the focus of your talk and the way it contributes to thinking about or understanding of issues impacting volunteering.

### **Panel**

Duration : 45 minutes

- A 45 minute panel discussion with a moderator briefly introducing the topic or theme of the session, and involves a live discussion on the topic amongst a selected group of panellists who share differing perspectives with the delegates.
- Your abstract should detail the focus of the panel session and the way it contributes to the theme of the Conference. You may wish to collaborate with one or more other speakers to showcase different perspectives on your Conference theme.



## **Exhibition Spaces**

A limited number of Exhibition Spaces will be available at the Conference. Posters, relevant visual materials and information will be displayed in a specific area of the Conference venue where they can be viewed by all Conference delegates. There will be designated times when representatives should be available on-site to discuss their exhibition with delegates.

The Exhibition Spaces should provide a succinct visual representation of an idea, program, service, research findings, etc.

Your application should detail the focus of your space and the way the information presented contributes to the theme and sub-themes of the Conference.

Additional costs will be associated with Exhibition Space at the Conference. For all enquiries and to register your interest, including size of floor area required, contact The Conference Team, at [conference@volunteering.com.au](mailto:conference@volunteering.com.au).