

Volunteering manual

Parks Victoria



Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engaged with their world and experienced their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

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at Lake Catani, Mount Buffalo National Park

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Chief Executive Officer's Message

At Parks Victoria we aim to inspire all Victorians to protect and enjoy the unique natural and cultural heritage of our diverse parks network. With Traditional Owners and the community, we seek to conserve nature, help connect people with Country, understand cultural heritage and contribute to people's health and wellbeing.

The enormous dedication and knowledge of our volunteers in helping to support our most special places is greatly appreciated. The efforts of volunteers, working in partnership with Parks Victoria staff and with Traditional Owners is inspiring and I know that by working together we will all achieve great benefits for parks and people.

Through this manual we aim to provide you with essential information to ensure safe, rewarding and productive volunteering experiences in our parks across Victoria. This includes an outline of roles and responsibilities, partnership commitments, vital safety information and other important information and tools you need to know to volunteer with us. Please take time to read this document and become familiar with its content.

Thank you for your contribution to nature and to our parks. I strongly encourage all volunteers and staff to share experiences and knowledge and use this to improve volunteering programs for the future.



Matthew Jackson
Chief Executive Officer

Acknowledgements

We are appreciative of the organisations that have given their time and contributed in the consultation and review of the Volunteering Manual including;

- Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN)
- Landcare Victoria
- Bushwalking Victoria
- Four Wheel Drive Victoria
- Sporting Shooters Association Australia (SSAA)
- Field Naturalists of Victoria
- Volunteering Victoria

About Parks Victoria and the Victorian parks network

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority of the Victorian Government and, through the *Parks Victoria Act 2018*, is responsible for the management of a diverse estate of more than 4 million hectares of public land and waters, making up 18 per cent of Victoria's landmass. The parks estate includes more than 3,000 parks and reserves, including national, State, wilderness, regional and metropolitan parks, marine parks and sanctuaries, conservation reserves, waterways, gardens, historic reserves and piers and jetties around the bays. Around 75 per cent of Victoria's wetlands and 70 per cent of Victoria's coastline falls within the parks network. We manage this estate in partnership with Traditional Owners, and work closely with government and non-government organisations, park neighbours, volunteering and community groups and the broader community.

Victoria's parks are home to a great diversity of landscapes and habitats containing more than 4,300 native plants and around 1,000 native animal species. Within the parks network, there are many thousands of Aboriginal and post-European cultural and heritage sites contained within diverse cultural landscapes.

The parks estate attracts more than 100 million visits every year and we are committed to providing accessible, enjoyable, diverse programs and destinations while protecting and enhancing environmental and cultural values.

Volunteering in Parks

Volunteering is an important partnership with the community. As a key partner, volunteers are vital in supporting the conservation and sustainable management of Victoria's parks as well as providing value-added experiences for visitors. The dedication, knowledge and hard work of volunteers in contributing to park management is greatly appreciated.



Purpose of the Volunteering Manual

This Volunteering Manual will provide staff and volunteers with the essential knowledge to effectively implement, support and participate in volunteering programs and activities, consistent with national standards of volunteering.

With such diversity of volunteering activities and types of volunteering engagement, the Manual provides guidance to ensure that volunteering activities will be safe, meaningful, well governed and delivered in a consistent manner. Aligned to the aim of creating mutually beneficial partnerships, with dual goals of providing a rewarding experience to volunteers while maintaining and improving the parks estate, the Manual will help to clarify responsibilities and accountabilities of both volunteers and Parks Victoria and seek to reduce risks to all parties.

The Volunteering Manual acknowledges Parks Victoria's role as a Volunteer Management Agency and is aligned to the National Standards of Volunteer Involvement developed by Australia's peak volunteering body, Volunteering Australia. It has been developed to support the implementation of Parks Victoria's Volunteering in Parks Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and Victorians Volunteering for Nature 'Environmental Volunteering Plan' 2018.

How to use this Manual

Part A of the Manual provides common information for volunteers, volunteer group leaders and staff about the types of volunteering that occur in parks, common responsibilities and commitments, directions for each component of the volunteering 'life cycle', an introduction to the ParkConnect system and an overview of volunteering governance arrangements for the different types of volunteering engagement.

Part B of the Manual provides more specific details on implementation of volunteer programs and/or activities, based on the three types of volunteering governance models (i) activities led directly by Parks Victoria staff; (ii) activities led by volunteer group leaders; and (iii) activities led by third party volunteer organisations.

Parks Victoria is committed to continuous improvement in how we work together with volunteers and volunteer partner organisations. Many elements of the manual will be implemented over time and will be accompanied by adequate training opportunities for both staff and volunteers. We would welcome your feedback as we progress the implementation of processes and will continually review and revise to ensure a successful partnership.

Part A: Important volunteering information

For volunteers, volunteer group leaders and staff

1. Volunteering opportunities in parks

A large network of committed volunteers helps to protect and enhance Victoria’s parks. Volunteers are an extremely valuable partner who make a significant contribution across parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria in partnership with Traditional Owners.

Parks Victoria recognises its significant role in supporting volunteering and commits to a vision for the future which both partners and supports existing volunteers, expands the volunteering community and seeks to build opportunities to grow and diversify volunteering experiences that are innovative and inclusive.

Like many parts of the volunteering sector, the legal, safety and risk management obligations of environmental volunteering on public land have increased in recent years. Recognising that this is sometimes challenging, Parks Victoria is seeking to establish a best practice approach to working with volunteers that meets these requirements, while supporting volunteers to engage in safe, fun and rewarding activities.

A well-managed volunteering program will:

- be based on a partnership culture, recognising the mutual benefits that volunteering brings to both to volunteers and Parks Victoria
- recognise and value the contribution of volunteers and partner volunteer groups
- ensure safe and effective community and volunteer engagement that can mitigate potential risks
- allow for a fun and rewarding experience



Volunteers contribute more than 300,000 hours to protecting Victoria’s special places. Each year, over 22,000 volunteers and 350 partner volunteer groups provide invaluable support to Parks Victoria by dedicating their time to improve park conservation values and deliver visitor services.

1.1 What is a volunteer?

Consistent with national standards, Parks Victoria defines a volunteer as:

“An individual who gives their time willingly to contribute to the conservation of Parks Victoria’s special places without financial gain.”

1.2 Volunteer motivations

Volunteers in parks have diverse motivations that need to be recognised. Figure 1 below highlights that volunteer motivations can range from wanting to contribute to protecting our parks to learning or social connection goals. Volunteer motivations are not always static and may change whilst volunteering and many people have a variety of motivations to volunteer. Understanding the motivations of volunteers is critical to designing a program that will attract, motivate and retain volunteers.

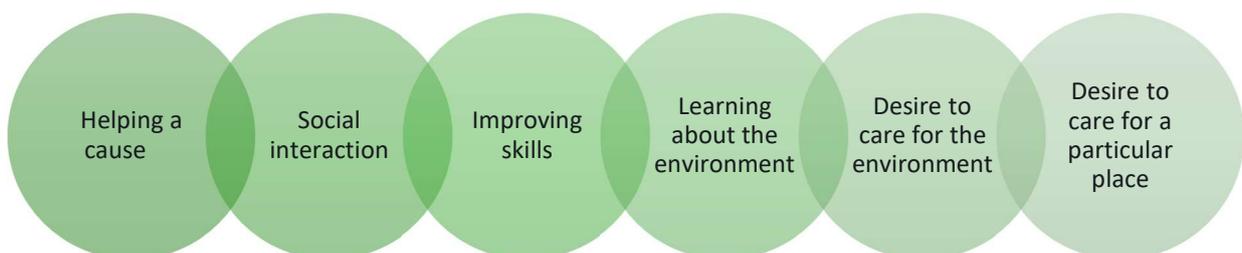


Figure 1: Environmental volunteer motivations Measham and Barnett 2007, Environmental Volunteering, Motivations, Modes and Outcomes

1.3 The benefits of volunteering in parks

Volunteering in parks creates a wide range of benefits:

- (i) For the parks estate, volunteers contribute their knowledge and time to the protection, conservation and sustainable use of parks. Volunteers provide invaluable assistance in conservation works, citizen science, track and trail maintenance and visitor services;
- (ii) For individuals and communities, volunteering enables a strong connection to nature, and contributes to community spirit, personal wellbeing and social connection;
- (iii) For Parks Victoria, volunteers assist in achieving management goals for land, waterway and marine parks through working as a partner.

1.4 Who volunteers in parks?

Parks Victoria is very fortunate to work alongside many thousands of volunteers, from individuals to partner volunteering groups, engaged in varied ways.

Volunteering Groups

Around 350 different volunteer involving groups contribute their time and skills to volunteering in Victoria’s parks estate. These include:

- **Friends and Landcare Groups** – more than 90 Friends and Landcare Groups traditionally linked to a park or species of interest, undertaking a diversity of practical environmental and other projects
- **Community groups** – most often informal groups that share an interest in nature or promotion of health benefits, for example disability agencies, church groups, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups or Rotary
- **Corporate groups** – who want to contribute to their corporate social responsibility through volunteering
- **Recreational User groups** – who share a passion for protecting the environment in which they recreate and who undertake practical volunteering such as track maintenance or pest control
- **Education groups** - such as schools, universities and TAFEs who volunteer in parks as part of for nature-based learning, practical research or work experience
- **Third party organisations** such as Corrections, who manage volunteers with their own formal structures may perform tasks within a Park to deliver agreed conservation or other aligned outcomes
- **Research Permit holders** – who engage volunteers to undertake elements of research in which they are permitted

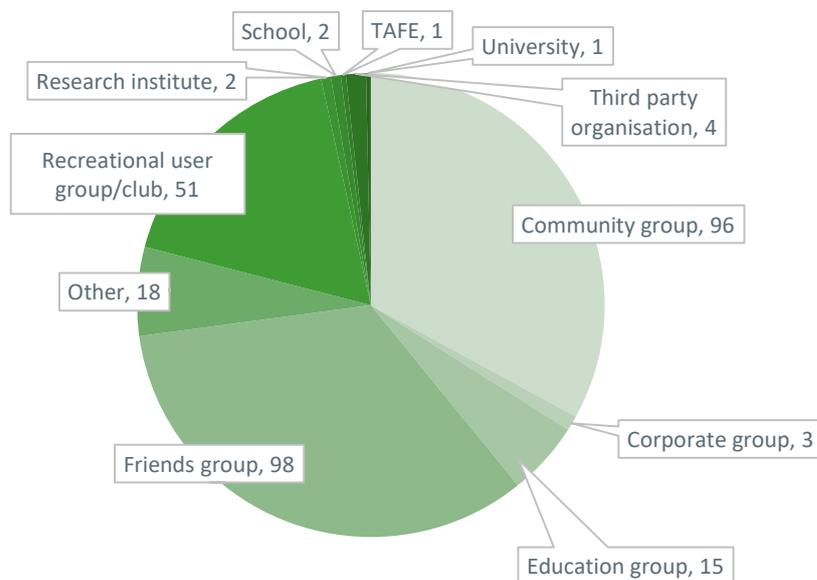


Figure 2: Volunteer Group Types

Volunteering Individuals

Individual volunteers have many opportunities to engage in volunteering activities either with a partner volunteering group or through a program that is directly organised and managed through Parks Victoria.

A growing trend in environmental volunteering is that individual volunteers wish to engage in short-term, one-off activities that do not require long term commitments. When individuals are looking for a volunteer opportunity, park managers or volunteer partner groups need to work with individuals to decide on the most suitable the type of commitment and interest their own circumstances, including the type and length of activities that match their needs. Key factors might include whether a program needs a consistent pool of volunteers requiring specialist skills and/or training or whether the program can lend itself to one off injections of energy by untrained volunteers.

There may also be an opportunity to engage individual volunteers in non-traditional volunteer activities alongside other volunteers, or with PV staff or on a dedicated project. These might include, for example, research, planning or data analysis that could be undertaken from an external office or home environment.

Demographic and social profile of volunteers in parks

Volunteers working in the Parks estate cover a broad range of age demographics. While in the past the predominant profile of volunteers has been in the older age brackets, there is an increasing trend for younger volunteers seeking alternative volunteering experiences including involvement in short, episodic activities as well as volunteering experiences associated with travel experiences (e.g. guiding walks), learning and skills development (e.g. citizen science) and associated with their recreational use (e.g. maintenance of bike tracks).

Volunteers associated with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, disadvantaged communities and/or those volunteers with a disability are currently significantly under-represented.

The Volunteering Manual will assist in considering ways in which volunteer programs and activities can be designed and promoted to encourage diversity. Staff and volunteer groups are encouraged to also consider succession planning including diversification to ensure sustainability and resilience.

Parks Victoria welcomes all community members. We wish to create an organisational culture that celebrates diversity in all its forms – diversity in First Nations, ability and disability, gender identity, sexuality, intersex characteristics, age, socio-economic status, education, ethnicities and faith. We are committed to supporting people to reach their volunteering goals and gain fulfilment from their volunteering roles.

Parks Victoria is an Equal Opportunity Employer, with a commitment to merit, equity and diversity in the workplace. Parks Victoria is committed to maintaining a workplace free of harassment, discrimination and bullying. The Volunteering Manual is strongly aligned with Parks Victoria's Disability Action Plan, Cultural Diversity Action Plan and Child Safe Policy.



1.5 Types of volunteering activities

Volunteers currently undertake over forty different types of activities across the parks estate covering three broad types of activity:

- (i) Practical ‘hands-on’ delivery of conservation and associated works
- (ii) Provision of value-added visitor services
- (iii) Research and monitoring

The largest proportion of volunteering activities are organised by external volunteering partner organisations (such as Friends Groups and Recreational User Groups) and are associated with practical on-ground activities covering a diversity of environmental, heritage conservation and visitor services. These include habitat restoration (e.g. weed control, tree planting, gardening (metropolitan parks), environmental research (including citizen science) and track maintenance (Figure 3). Volunteers are also involved in activities that are not on-ground actions, the most common being fundraising and events.

The breadth of available volunteer opportunities can be found by visiting ParkConnect www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au.

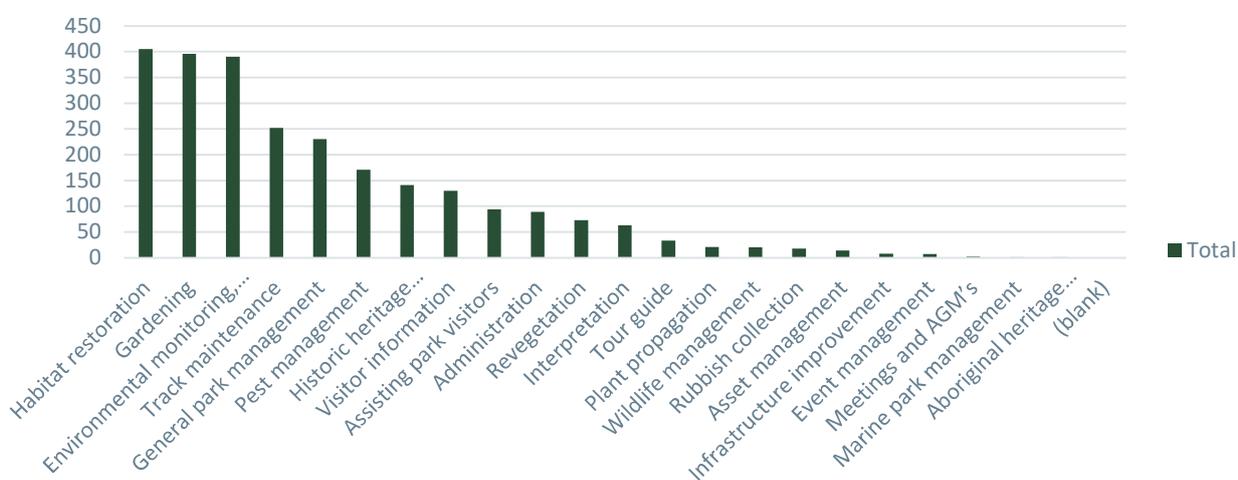


Figure 3: Volunteer Activity Types

1.6 Parks Victoria’s directly managed volunteer programs

In addition to the hundreds of community-based organisations that support volunteering activities, Parks Victoria directly organises a growing number of innovative and rewarding volunteer programs mostly focussed on providing value-added services to park visitors. Each program offers a unique experience and engages a variety of individuals from various backgrounds with differing motivations. Volunteers interested in engaging in one of the following programs should visit the ParkConnect website <http://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au>. Parks Victoria staff interested in hosting a program in their location should contact the State-wide Volunteer Team to discuss.

Some of the programs currently operating include:



Campground Host

Offering a friendly point of contact for visitors to Parks Victoria’s camping destinations.

Beginning in 2000, the Campground Host program has engaged over 2,600 volunteers, enabling them to provide a friendly point of contact to some of Parks Victoria’s iconic camping locations during peak visitation periods. Campground Hosts play an important role supporting Parks Victoria Rangers by providing campground orientation and information to guests, providing low level campground maintenance, and working as a direct link between staff and visitors.



Volunteer TrailRider Program

Assisting park visitors with mobility limitations to explore trails using the specially designed all-terrain wheelchair.

The Volunteer TrailRider Program was established in the Grampians National Park in 2014 and has recently been expanded to the Dandenong Ranges National Park, with expansions at the Dandenong Ranges and further sites being investigated. This program assists visitors with limited mobility in exploring areas which would generally be inaccessible to them by offering the use of a TrailRider wheelchair, and the support of two or more Volunteers.



Volunteer Track Rangers

Offering a friendly point of contact for visitors along tracks and trails.

The Volunteer Track Ranger Program was established in 2005, with volunteers hiking along some of Parks Victoria’s most visited mountain paths, including sites on Mount Bogong, Mount Feathertop, and Mount Buffalo over 3 to 5 days offering a visitor service to other hikers. It has now expanded to sixteen locations across the state.

In a similar fashion to Campground Hosts, Volunteer Track Rangers offer a friendly point of contact to visitors within Parks, providing up to date information, promoting minimal impact techniques, and improving awareness of the environment.



Park Guides

Offering introductory guided walks for visitors at specific park locations.

The Parks Victoria Volunteer Park Guides program began as a pilot in late 2018, as a way to engage passionate volunteers with opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences of special places on the Parks Victoria estate, while fostering connections to nature. Volunteer Park Guides received special training from staff and ran tours in two pilot parks over the summer period.

At Yarra Bend, Park Guides ran tours aimed at increasing the awareness about Grey-headed Flying Foxes, their role in the ecosystem, and the surrounding environment and habitat.

At Bogong High Plains, Park Guides were engaged at Wallace’s Hut as roving guides, who would provide information to guests about the significance of the Alpine area.

The volunteer hosted walks program is expected to grow and diversify significantly over the coming years.



Sea Search

Offering opportunities for volunteers to participate in coastal environmental monitoring.

Sea Search is a community- based monitoring program that began in 2005, in partnership with Deakin University, where volunteers are engaged in collecting environmental data to be used for the management of marine parks.

Volunteers involved in Sea Search take part in surveys of Intertidal zones and sea grass meadows, track changes using fixed point photographs and contribute to image libraries for the species in their parks. Survey methods are classified as either easy (i.e. Fixed-Point Photography and Image Libraries), and moderate to difficult (i.e., Intertidal Reef Quadrat Surveys and Sea Grass Monitoring).

1.7 Learning and Development Opportunities

Often volunteers are interested in volunteer programs for the opportunity to gain skills and on the job training as a pathway to employment, either with Parks Victoria or with any other employment organisation. Volunteering can offer skill development either by developing an activity specific program that includes the informal exchange of knowledge through on the job learning or via Parks Victoria's Work Experience and Work Placement programs.

• Work Experience Program

Work Experience is a short-term opportunity for secondary school students introducing them to the reality of working life and helping secure and sustain employment. The aim is to provide learning and insight into working life by exposing the student to a variety of tasks and experiences. Students are placed primarily to observe and learn - not to undertake activities which requires extensive training or experience. The work experience program is managed by each work centre directly, taking into consideration learning opportunities and staffing capacities for supervision of students.

For further information, Parks Victoria staff can visit the Work experience, Student/Work Placements Warnawi page and volunteers can refer to [ParkConnect Work Experience](#) page

• Work Placement Program

Work placement or student placement is a short to mid-term opportunity for tertiary students or those undertaking further studies to apply the theory and skills they are learning while studying in a professional workplace. Under these arrangements' students can gain skills they need to transition successfully from study to work, while giving Parks Victoria the opportunity to enrich student learning experiences and increase the number of work-ready graduates. It also provides an opportunity for Parks Victoria to engage enthusiastic students with the latest industry knowledge to assist with meaningful projects and build relationships between staff and community. These placements cannot replace a paid position. Each work placement or student placement requires a formal agreement between the education provider and Parks Victoria.

For further information, Parks Victoria staff can visit the **Work experience, Student/Work Placements Warnawi page** and volunteers can refer to [ParkConnect Work Placement](#) page

Currently, Parks Victoria do not offer internships paid or unpaid.

• Mutual Obligation

In return for receiving income support such as Newstart Allowance / Job Seeker, most job seekers have Mutual Obligation Requirements. Mutual Obligation Requirements are the things job seekers may have to do as a condition for receiving an income support payment. Parks Victoria can provide voluntary work opportunities for eligible job seekers.

Currently several Parks Victoria work centres are approved to take eligible job seekers; including

- Parks Victoria – National Rhododendron Garden
- Parks Victoria – Alfred Nicholas Gardens
- Parks Victoria – Werribee
- Parks Victoria – Dandenong Valley
- Parks Victoria – Ringwood
- Parks Victoria – Shepparton
- Parks Victoria – Narre Warren East
- Parks Victoria – Castlemaine
- Parks Victoria – Rosebud
- Parks Victoria – Port Albert area

If a volunteer is interested in another Parks Victoria Work Area or Parks Victoria Work Area is interested in providing volunteer opportunities a 'request for organisational approval form' must be submitted in person by a Parks Victoria staff person at a Centrelink Service Centre with the relevant details for the work centre: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/community/forms/su461>

Once a Parks Victoria Work Area is registered, eligible job seekers may meet their Mutual Obligation Requirements by working voluntarily in the area. The work must be in positions which would not normally be filled by paid employees and which have a community focus. The job seeker will require Parks Victoria to sign a 'verification of voluntary work form' which any Parks Victoria staff can sign once the Work Area is approved as eligible.

- **Work for the Dole**

Work for the Dole is a government work experience program initiative which places job seekers in activities where they can build new skills, experience and confidence to move from welfare to work while giving back to their community. Eligible job seekers registered with a JobActive provider will need to participate in Work for the Dole or another approved activity for six months each year to keep receiving their income support if they have mutual obligation requirements.

Work for the Dole activities can be hosted by not-for-profit organisations and government agencies such as Parks Victoria. The program can provide an extra set of hands to help to undertake activities that would not normally be done. The JobActive provider will work with a Parks Victoria staff member to identify suitable activities. JobActive providers receive a small budget per individual they engage which can be utilised for funding activities if required.

Parks Victoria Staff interested in undertaking a Work for the Dole program and engaging a JobActive provider can approach their local providers with a well-planned six-month program of activities. If a program is to be undertaken a formal agreement must be entered in to. The agreement will need to be reviewed by the Legal team and signed by the relevant staff member based on the delegation register.

Successful examples of Parks Victoria engaging with Work for the Dole Job Active Providers include Werribee Park who have partnered with AMES, Brotherhood of St Laurence and Salvation Army since 2011.

2. Volunteering partnership commitments

2.1 Parks Victoria's commitment to the community

As a Volunteer Management Agency, Parks Victoria makes the following commitments to support volunteering and encourage increased volunteerism in parks. We will:

1. Place the safety of our volunteers and staff as our highest priority
2. Work with diverse volunteering groups to create mutually beneficial outcomes
3. Create an enabling environment for volunteers, partners and community to engage
4. Recognise and value the skills, experience and contribution of volunteers
5. Strengthen, extend and expand our current volunteering opportunities
6. Support growth and diversification of the volunteer population
7. Improve the governance of volunteering to mitigate risks to volunteers and enhance safety, aligning to the National Standards of Volunteering
8. Promote staff and volunteer skills and capacity to enhance the effectiveness of volunteering
9. Seek to minimise unnecessary administration to enable volunteering, subject to, and consistent with legal and governance obligations.

2.2 Volunteer Charter

Volunteers can expect to:

- ✓ Be welcomed and respected
- ✓ Be engaged in well planned, meaningful and mutually beneficial tasks
- ✓ Be engaged in a safe and healthy work environment, free from discrimination
- ✓ Be provided with an agreed level of supervision, support, resources, instruction and training
- ✓ Be recognised and acknowledged for all contributions
- ✓ Be appropriately insured for personal accident and public liability subject to insurance terms and conditions
- ✓ Receive feedback and constructive comment aimed to improve volunteering effectiveness

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- ✓ Work in partnership with the Parks Victoria team
- ✓ Collaborate with Parks Victoria in activity planning and implementation, paying due respect to management objectives, capacity and responsibilities
- ✓ Demonstrate professional behaviour towards Parks Victoria staff, other volunteers and the public
- ✓ Follow specific instructions and take reasonable care of themselves and others
- ✓ Consult with Parks Victoria when unclear and do not place yourself or others at risk
- ✓ Take opportunities to improve individual and group skills and capabilities
- ✓ Recognise and not exceed individual physical and skill limits
- ✓ Foster, promote and contribute to a workplace free from harassment and discrimination
- ✓ Provide feedback and constructive comment aimed at improving Parks Victoria's management of volunteer activities
- ✓ Utilise ParkConnect to register, record and report volunteers, activities and contributions

Parks Victoria has the responsibility to:

- ✓ Commit to working with volunteers
- ✓ Maintain regular, effective dialogue and build constructive relationships with volunteers
- ✓ Collaborate with volunteers in activity planning and implementation, paying due respect to management objectives, capacity and responsibilities
- ✓ Develop and work with volunteers to create and support meaningful activities
- ✓ Enable volunteer activities and experiences that support land, waterway and marine management objectives and priorities
- ✓ Ensure volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance (subject to insurance terms and conditions)
- ✓ Provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment, free from discrimination
- ✓ Provide proper induction to Parks Victoria and orientation to the volunteer activity
- ✓ Provide the level of support, resources and instructions required to effectively perform activities
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate volunteer contributions and activities and incorporate changes as necessary
- ✓ Recognise and reward the contribution of volunteers
- ✓ Genuinely listen to issues raised by volunteers and treat them appropriately
- ✓ Respect and utilise the knowledge of volunteers
- ✓ Protect personal information of the volunteers
- ✓ Provide a child safe environment aligned with Child Safety Standards
- ✓ Consult with volunteers in relation to OHS and communicate OHS Risks

2.3 Victorian Public Service Code of Conduct and Parks Victoria’s Commitments

The seven core Public Sector Values



The Victorian public sector code of conduct extends to both staff and volunteers and underpins public sector values, general standards of operation and ethical conduct expected. The Victorian Public Sector (VPS) code of conduct provides an overarching structure of seven core values and aligns with Parks Victoria’s eight commitments and subsequent guiding principles <https://vpssc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-employees/>.

Our commitments

As stewards of Victoria's Parks we will:

- 1. Put safety first**
We prioritise safety, acting consciously every day to keep ourselves and our teams safe
- 2. Provide excellent customer service**
We actively listen to, consult with and respond to our customers
- 3. Collaborate**
We work cooperatively towards achieving the organisation's goals
- 4. Lead innovation**
We think creatively, share knowledge, and remain open to new ways of thinking and operating
- 5. Be accountable**
We take responsibility for the results of our decisions, actions and behaviours
- 6. Act with integrity**
We are open, honest and ethical and treat all people with respect
- 7. Lead environmental and heritage management**
We are responsible managers of our environment and heritage
- 8. Earn the community's trust**
We manage our resources to benefit the community

Our guiding principles

- We don't accept harm occurring to ourselves and the people we work with, so we look out for each other both physically and mentally
- We facilitate appropriate access to parks
- We help each other to progress the work of Parks Victoria
- We are constantly trying to improve how we do things. We are careful to make decisions based on best evidence and experience
- We act humanely and ethically in our treatment of animals
- We take the necessary decisions and actions to actively manage a healthy ecosystem
- We support and encourage those who call out behaviours and actions that contravene our ethical framework
- We respect each other and keep our workplaces free from discrimination, harrassment and bullying
- We respect Traditional Owners as partners in the management of Country
- We strive for 100% compliance with environmental and heritage regulations and disclose all breaches
- We depend on community trust; we spend money on behalf of the community and other funders and will carefully manage our time and resources

2.4 Volunteer Terms and Conditions

When registering to volunteer on the Parks Victoria estate, volunteers will be prompted to acknowledge a set of Volunteer Terms and Conditions. These are set out to ensure an understanding of the responsibilities of both Parks Victoria and volunteers and will promote a safe, fun and rewarding experience. There is an acknowledgement button that requires a tick when completing a ParkConnect registration for the first time.

The volunteer terms and conditions state:

1. I understand my role is voluntary and I am not an employee of Parks Victoria.
2. I will review activity requirements and participate in those that I am suitable for.
3. I have declared any relevant medical conditions and I consent to Parks Victoria authorising medical treatment as necessary.
4. I will actively participate in any necessary training and induction sessions provided and will adhere to Parks Victoria's guidelines and follow all directions provided.
5. I will participate in a safe manner, following all Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures and report any accident or injury immediately.
6. I will remain professional at all times, and respectful of visitors, volunteers and Parks Victoria staff.
7. I will wear appropriate clothing for the activity as detailed in the volunteer activity information and/or if a uniform is provided, I will wear it upholding Parks Victoria's professional image.
8. I understand volunteer information I provide is subject to the Parks Victoria Privacy Policy (www.parks.vic.gov.au/privacy), these terms & conditions and may be used to contact me about topics related to volunteer activities with Parks Victoria.
9. I have the necessary checks, licenses and/or competency for required activities as necessary.
10. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult
11. I understand I have a duty of care to keep children safe from harm and that I must establish and maintain a child-safe environment during any activities and will report any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
12. I understand if I am 18+ and volunteered more than one time, I must have a valid Working with Children Check with details recorded on ParkConnect.
13. I understand when joining a volunteer activity on ParkConnect the activity organiser has access to some of my registration details including the contact information.
14. I understand when joining a volunteer group on ParkConnect the group leader will have access to some of my online registration details including contact information.
15. Parks Victoria has the right to cancel, postpone or remove volunteers if deemed necessary.
16. I understand that failure to comply with any of these conditions may result in Parks Victoria requesting me to leave.

2.5 Management responsibilities

2.5 a) Traditional Owner Engagement

The Victorian Government is proud to work with Traditional Owners to care for parks and reserves across Victoria. Volunteers are encouraged to look at Traditional Owner Country Plans, where available, and consider projects that align with Traditional Owner objectives. The ACHRIS Welcome Map can be used to determine whether there are recognised Traditional Owners in the project area and Country Plans are available from relevant Traditional Owner Corporation websites. Where appropriate, volunteer groups and volunteers will be expected to engage with Traditional Owners prior to projects starting. Volunteer groups will be required to engage with Traditional Owners. The nature of engagement will depend on rights associated with formal Traditional Owners recognition in the project area.

Do not approach Traditional Owners directly, unless you have an existing partnership arrangement. Parks Victoria will broker conversations between recipients and Traditional Owners as appropriate contact the Volunteer Team to initiate engagement volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

Joint management recognises the ongoing connection of Traditional Owners to the land. It involves Traditional Owners and staff sharing their knowledge to manage specific areas. Joint management is about Managing Country Together for the benefit of Traditional Owners and all Victorians, long into the future. Volunteer groups planning projects within jointly managed land will need to work with their contact staff member to seek endorsement from the relevant Traditional Owner group together prior to proceeding.

You can find a list of jointly managed parks here: <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/managing-country-together>

2.5 b) Parks Victoria Staff responsibilities

To ensure successful of volunteering partnerships in parks, a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities that Parks Victoria staff in supporting the various components of volunteering is required. Parks Victoria staff have many and diverse responsibilities in volunteering which are often embedded within other roles, from planning to conservation programs, visitor services, fire and emergency management and leadership roles.

Table 1 defines the roles and responsibilities of business areas and staff roles set out in the Volunteering Manual.

Business Area/Staff Role	Role	Responsibility
State-wide Volunteer Team (Community Programs Directorate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Direction Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain policies, guidelines, tools and systems
Marketing, Communications and Partnerships Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Partnerships Research Reward/Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to staff working directly with volunteers High risk activity review Strategic development of state-wide led volunteer programs and initiatives Maintain state-wide volunteer partnerships Implement initiatives to reward and recognise volunteers including skills and capacity building Instigate research and evaluation
Melbourne Regional Operations Team and Melbourne Regional Volunteer Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Partnerships Reporting Reward/Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and champion policies, guidelines, tools and systems Advice to staff working directly with volunteers Build and maintain volunteer partnerships Reward and recognise volunteers Undertake worksite monitoring and compliance Quarterly and annual reporting

*Volunteer Staff Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery • Partnerships • Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the volunteer governance framework and manual • Work collaboratively with volunteers and/or groups to identify suitable projects • Plan, budget and schedule projects/tasks • Complete all necessary documentation • Complete reporting • Supervise activities as required • Ensure safe delivery of volunteer programs • Undertake worksite monitoring and compliance • Reward and recognise volunteer effort
Area Chief Ranger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Partnerships • Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the volunteer governance framework and manual are followed • Ensure volunteer responsibilities are included in performance plans for relevant staff • Allocate appropriate budget to support volunteer projects where applicable • Ensure effective volunteer stakeholder relationships • Ensure all volunteer activities are reported on within ParkConnect • Sign appropriate planning documentation • Undertake worksite monitoring and compliance • Reward and recognise staff and volunteer effort
District Manager and Regional Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and foster a partnership culture with volunteers and the community
Health, Safety and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Procedure • Policies • Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of workplace safety policies for volunteers • Advice on high risk volunteer activities • Accident/Incident reporting and review • Policy development where applicable
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Procedure • Policies • Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of workplace policies for volunteers • Advice on engagement practices including screening • Policy development where applicable • Collaborative work on pathways to employment programs
Legal and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Agreements • Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of agreements • Legal advice and consultation • Accident/Incident review for the purposes of insurance claims • Audit support
Communications and Marketing Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion • Advocacy 	<p>Undertake communications and marketing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively promote and recognise volunteer efforts • Support advocacy for volunteering • Support change management

Table 1: Business Area and Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteer 'Staff' Contact Role

Well managed and supported volunteer activities coupled with the development and maintenance of excellent partnership relationships between Parks Victoria and volunteers and/or groups is critical to the success of volunteering and the overall volunteer experience. The role of the staff member who is the direct contact for a volunteer or volunteer group, the 'volunteer staff contact', cannot be understated. An appropriate Parks Victoria employee must be chosen to be a 'volunteer staff contact' and work with volunteers directly. This role is to be agreed upon and approved within the immediate management team, for example a Team Leader seeks approval and support from their Area Chief Ranger.

All relationships and tasks to be undertaken are to be reflected in a staff members position description, individual staff's performance development and work plans and the broader work area's operational delivery plan. Managers are to recognise and value the work by the 'volunteer staff contact' and volunteers and undertake ongoing review, offer appropriate additional support and celebrate work efforts together with volunteer recognition.

3. ParkConnect

With around 350 different volunteering groups, more than 20,000 volunteers and widely diverse volunteering activities, Parks Victoria has introduced an interactive, online volunteer management system ‘ParkConnect’ www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/volunteer that will provide a self-service system for existing and potential volunteers.

ParkConnect allows staff and volunteer group leaders to create, manage, communicate and report on their activities in a more structured way. Importantly it also enables prospective volunteers to match volunteering opportunities against their interests.

Features of ParkConnect include:

- Register to become a volunteer and manage your profile
- View and join volunteer activities
- Join a volunteer group, or start one of your own
- Manage your group details
- Create activities and promote them online for others to join
- Report on the achievements of group activities

ParkConnect is a change to the way volunteering is implemented. Recognising this, the more ParkConnect is used by Parks Victoria staff and volunteering groups, the greater the benefits that will accrue.



ParkConnect modernises the ways in which volunteering is promoted and managed. It enables direct interaction between volunteers and volunteer leaders, enabling growth of volunteering in a safe and manageable way, generating even greater value and benefits for environment, community and volunteers alike.

The ParkConnect system is embedded across Parks Victoria’s volunteering processes. For detailed information on how the system is used, help boxes have been highlighted throughout the Volunteering Manual.

Anyone can volunteer through the Parks Victoria ParkConnect online portal, discovering what opportunities are available is as easy as 1-2-3.



Step 1:

Go to <http://parkconnect.vic.gov.au> to view all our current volunteer opportunities and learn about groups working in your local area.



Step 2:

Click ‘Sign in’/Register to create a new ParkConnect user account.



Step 3:

Sign in to the ParkConnect portal using your new user account details, then complete the **online Volunteer Registration form**.

Discover. Join. Volunteer.

Registering as a Volunteer on ParkConnect

Getting started on ParkConnect is easy, simply [register for a new account on the ParkConnect portal](#).

For a newly registered account, you will have to provide your *First* and *Last* names, as well as a *Mobile Phone* number.

The screenshot shows a user profile page titled "Profile". On the left, there is a navigation menu with options: Profile, Security (with a lock icon), Change password, and Change email. The main content area is titled "Your information" and contains several input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", "E-mail" (pre-filled with "examplevolunteer@parks.vic.gov.au"), "Mobile Phone", and "Home Phone". Below these fields, there is a section titled "Please select the account type you want to create" with radio button options for: Volunteer (No/Yes), Tour Operator (No/Yes), Scientific Researcher (No/Yes), Education (No/Yes), and Events (inc. Filming and Photography) (No/Yes).

By selecting the volunteer account type, you will be prompted to provide some additional details including *Address details*, and *Emergency contact details*.

By registering as a volunteer on ParkConnect you are agreeing to the [Volunteer terms and conditions](#), as well as the [Parks Victoria Privacy Policy](#)

Upon updating your profile information as above, you will be prompted to *confirm your email address*.

This block contains two notification messages. The first is a light blue box with an information icon and the text "Your email requires confirmation." followed by a "Confirm Email" button. The second is a light green box with a checkmark icon and the text "Your profile has been updated successfully." followed by a close (X) icon.

Uploading Accreditation Skills

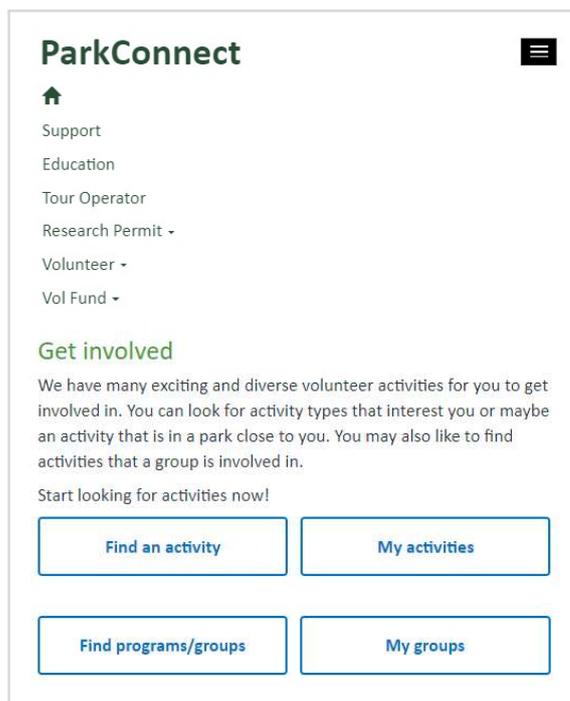
All newly registered Parks Victoria Volunteers will need to provide a current Volunteer Working With Children Check in the profile [Accreditation Skills](#) section after their first time volunteering and if they intend to become an ongoing volunteer. For further details on Working with Children Checks refer to section 4.2 Formal Screening.

The screenshot shows the "Accreditation skills" section of a user profile. On the left is a navigation menu with options: Profile, Address details, Accreditations, and Interests. The main content area is titled "Accreditations" and features an "Add" button. Below the button is a table header with columns: "Accreditation type" (with an up arrow), "Specify 'Other'", "Provider name", "Ticket/License number", and "Expiry date" (with a down arrow). Below the table, there is a text prompt: "Please click 'Add' button to add any accredited skills you have".

Finding volunteer groups and activities on ParkConnect

You're ready to find volunteer groups and activities! Log into ParkConnect, and select the *Volunteer* heading from either the top bar, or the hamburger button ☰ from the main page.

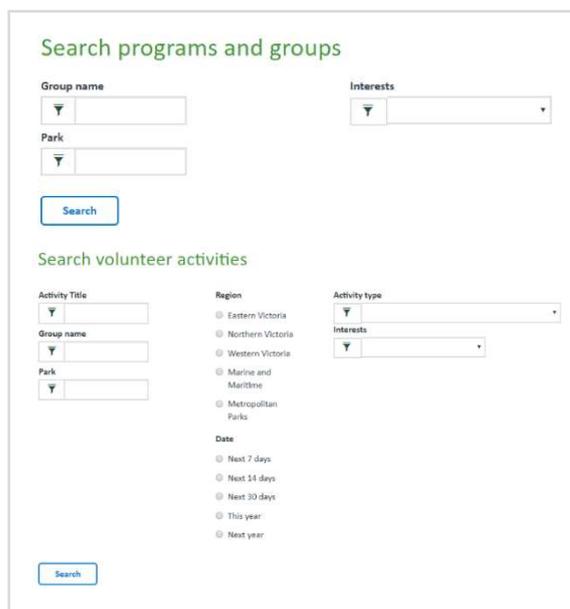
From here you can navigate to [Find an activity](#), and [Find programs/groups](#) and search for individual volunteer activities, or registered volunteer groups. You can also navigate from here to previously joined groups and activities by selecting [My Activities](#), or [My Groups](#).



Volunteer programs and groups can be filtered by their name, park, and interests, while volunteer activities can be searched for by a variety of variables, including title, group name, park, region, and date, as shown here.

Further details about each activity, program or group can be found by following the link in the Group name, or Activity title column.

After finding an activity, group or program you are interested in, you can join up on ParkConnect by selecting Join group or Join activity, after which you should receive an email notification to confirm.



ParkConnect User Guides have been designed for both staff and volunteers and accessed externally via www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/contactus/. Parks Victoria also offer over the phone support for any queries, please contact **13 1963** and ask for the Volunteer Team.

4. Volunteering life cycle

Aligned with the National Standards of volunteer involvement, a volunteering lifecycle approach is being implemented (Figure 4 below). This will ensure a more planned and consistent approach to volunteering across the parks estate, so that the benefits are optimised for all parties.

Each life cycle stage, further described in Table 2 below, will be addressed throughout the Volunteering Manual including the implementation sections for staff, volunteer group leaders and third-party partnerships (Part B). Each stage may be different for each of these three audiences. The circular notion of the life cycle approach allows for continual monitoring and improvement over time. Feedback on the processes is important to Parks Victoria and is welcomed.

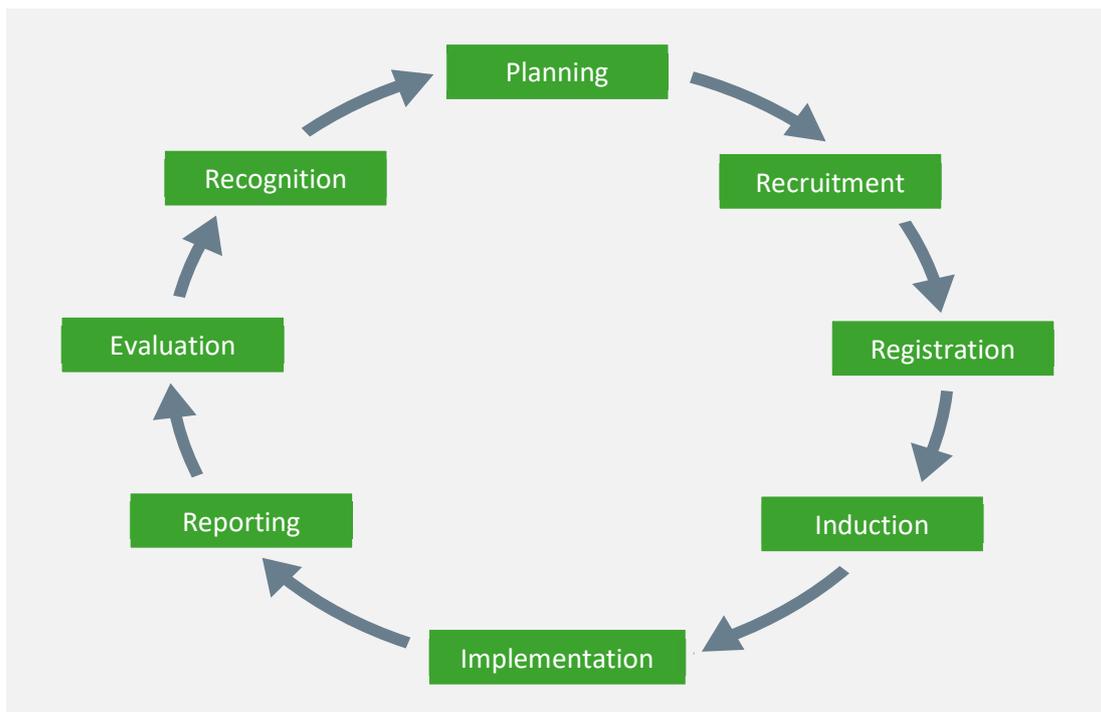


Figure 4: Volunteer Management Life Cycle

Life Cycle Stage	Inclusions
Planning	Governance, needs assessment, objectives, funding, approvals
Recruitment	Promotion, selection, screening
Registration	Volunteer details, terms and conditions, attendance recording
Induction	Introduction, place and activity orientations, skills, safety
Implementation	Safety, uniform, supervision, training, incidents, discipline
Reporting	ParkConnect, reports
Evaluation	Worksite monitoring, feedback
Recognition	Formal and informal

Table 1: Life Cycle Stage Inclusions

4.1 Planning for volunteer programs and activities

Volunteer activities that are well considered and planned effectively will provide the best volunteer experience and most effective results for all. For this reason, planning is seen as a critical step in the volunteering life cycle. Good planning will help determine:

- Will the volunteer have a positive experience and outcome?
- Is the program/activity appropriate for volunteers?
- Does it complement existing activities?
- Are activities aligned with Park management priorities?
- Will they have a negative impact on natural or cultural values?
- Can the activity and volunteers be appropriately managed and resourced?
- Can any safety risks be mitigated or controlled?

The planning process for volunteer activities differs for the three types of volunteering engagement models (staff-led, volunteer affiliated groups and third-party volunteer partnerships) and is addressed in the respective implementation sections (Part B). However common to all is the need for local teams to schedule time to meet with and discuss the proposed schedule of activities and programs.

4.2 Recruitment

Promotion

Both Parks Victoria and its partner volunteering organisations have an important role promoting the benefits of volunteering and encouraging existing, new and diverse volunteers to engage in meaningful and fun activities.

Available volunteering activities can be found on Parks Victoria's interactive online portal www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au. Areas of specific interest can be searched including, activity type, Park area and/or volunteer group. There are hundreds of opportunities to choose from. More information on how to use ParkConnect is provided in Section 1.3

Parks Victoria also has a hub of information on a dedicated volunteer page on Parks Victoria's webpage www.parkweb.vic.gov.au where up to date information on volunteer programs and initiatives can be found.

Parks Victoria and many of its volunteering partner organisations have active social media platforms through Facebook, Instagram and twitter that can be used to keep the community updated to share stories, attract new volunteers and provide recognition of the great efforts of volunteers.

Posters, flyers, postcards or other materials can be distributed throughout local communities with relevant local volunteer projects to join or hear a staff member or volunteer promoting a unique opportunity via radio or through local papers.

Taking Photos

At times when a volunteer is participating on a project images may be taken for promotional purposes. Images can only be used with written consent from the volunteer via a completed 'adult talent request form' available from Parks Victoria. Volunteer group leaders are welcome to amend this talent release form for their own group purposes. Not all volunteers will want to be photographed so be mindful of volunteers' requests.

Selecting Volunteers

In most cases activities will be advertised on ParkConnect for volunteers to join directly with no screening processes. This involves simply finding an activity and pressing the 'join' button. It is important that staff and/or volunteer group leaders enter all the details relevant to an activity so that volunteers can match their needs and preferences to the location and type of activity. Volunteers will need to consider their own skills, abilities and pre-existing conditions that may affect participation. Details may include but are not limited to;

- the condition of the site (e.g. steep terrain, remote location)
- the duration of an activity
- access to facilities
- the age requirements

Screening

Informal Screening

Parks Victoria staff or partner volunteer group leaders may put in place an informal screening process to ascertain suitability. Informal screening could include;

Expression of Interest – which requires the volunteer to submit a response to a series of questions and a resume or evidence of experience and skills. An EOI template is available for staff and volunteer group leaders.

Interview – to confirm suitability an interview can be conducted either face to face or by phone/Skype/MS Teams, requiring the volunteer to respond to a series of predetermined questions relevant to the program. An interview template is available staff and volunteer group leaders.

References – references can be sought to provide supporting evidence to the volunteer's application either written and/or verbal. A reference request letter is available staff and volunteer group leaders.

Induction Day or Trial – to ascertain suitability a volunteer may be requested to attend an induction day or trial.

This allows all parties to understand if the volunteer is suitable for the task but also the right fit for the work environment. Volunteers must still be registered on ParkConnect prior to participating in an induction day and/or trial.

Formal Screening

Working with Children Check

Parks Victoria has one mandatory formal screening process, the Working with Children Check, which must be attained by all volunteers aged 18 or over who attend more than one activity. If you attend a volunteering activity for the first time (e.g., a litter collection/tree planting day) you do not need a Working with Children Check for that activity. If you plan to continue volunteering, and want to become an ongoing volunteer, you will need a Working with Children Check.

Parks Victoria is a child safe organisation, seeking to protect all children and vulnerable people from harm. As a result, new child safety policies and procedures are progressively being introduced and updated consistent with Government directions to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards. Parks Victoria's Commitment to Child Safety is accessible on <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/statement-of-commitment-to-child-safety>.

The Working with Children Check is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing a volunteer's criminal history, and relevant professional conduct findings to ensure the protection of children from harm. Working with Children Checks are conducted online by the volunteer <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

Working with Children Checks are free for volunteers and must be renewed every 5 years. It is important that Parks Victoria is named as a relevant organisation through the application process as any child related offences that occur following the issue of a card will be reported directly to Parks Victoria. Further information on Parks Victoria's Working with Children Check requirements are provided in the [WWCC Frequently Asked Questions](#) with accompanying [Flowchart](#) to assist in attaining the check.

If a volunteer has an existing WWCC they do not need to reapply however, if they have NOT nominated Parks Victoria as an organisation that they volunteer with, this needs to be updated on their current WWCC. As a WWCC cardholder it is their obligation to keep your records up to date. Every WWCC cardholder can login to check their WWCC to change or update their details. Visit the WWCC website and login in via MyCheck.

Criminal History check

At times Parks Victoria and/or a partner volunteer group will request an additional Criminal History Check. Criminal History checks are only required when it is relevant to the core functions of a role which may include;

- Financial duties, especially those involving access to bank accounts
- Driving duties involving Parks Victoria vehicles
- Unsupervised activities in bushland

Consideration of a check would be where a volunteer is going to be involved in managing money or accounts, is to be trusted with confidential information or equipment and may be relatively unsupervised.

In particular, where a volunteer is expected to be alone or with minimal supervision in bushland, it would be prudent to require a criminal history check to screen for crimes such as arson.

Criminal history checks are facilitated by the State-wide volunteer team through the 'crimcheck' online system. The criminal history check will be returned directly to the volunteer.



The volunteer is then to upload the check on to the 'accreditations' section of ParkConnect.

Criminal history checks cost approximately \$20 and must be renewed every 5 years. Parks Victoria is not updated of any crimes committed after the date of the check. Depending on budget and resources available for the program/activity, Parks Victoria may assist in the facilitation of the screening process or request that these requirements are provided by the volunteer prior to placement.

Criminal history checks cost approximately \$20 and must be renewed every 5 years. Parks Victoria is not updated of any crimes committed after the date of the check. Depending on budget and resources available for the program/activity, Parks Victoria may assist in the facilitation of the screening process or request that these requirements are provided by the volunteer prior to placement.

Interstate Volunteers

If a volunteer is travelling from interstate to participate on a volunteer activity, then a Working with Children Check must be provided from the volunteer's resident state after their first time volunteering. Working with Children Checks will only review criminal history from the state that the check is undertaken in therefore will not return relevant information for a non-Victorian resident.

Criminal history checks are not required for an interstate volunteer. In consideration of this interstate volunteers will only be placed on activities assessed to not require a criminal history check.

International Volunteers

If a volunteer is travelling from an international country to participate on a volunteer activity, then a Working with Children Check cannot be provided. In consideration of this international volunteers will only be placed on activities assessed to not place a child at risk. An informal screening processes must be implemented to ascertain the suitability of the volunteer. Criminal history checks are also not required for an international volunteer.

International volunteers that are living in Victoria for longer than 8 weeks in a residential type arrangement, e.g. students, must provide a Working with Children Check as per other Victorian volunteers after their first time volunteering.

Accreditations or targeted skills

At times activities may require volunteers to have a specific skill set and accompanying accreditation and/or competency. This will be detailed on the activity when promoted and the volunteer must provide the accreditation/licence or competency prior to commencing the activity. Accreditation, licences and competency checks will be reviewed and checked by Parks Victoria staff.



All accreditations/licences and competencies are to be uploaded on the individual volunteer contact record in ParkConnect. A Parks Victoria staff member is required to verify the check by ticking the accreditation sighted box. The volunteer will receive an email 30 days prior to the check expiry, **they are then required to update the accreditation/licence/competency and upload the new one to their ParkConnect profile.** Competency checks are valid for a three-year period but may depend on the equipment and/or skill tested.

Age restrictions

Volunteers can range from the age of 5 years old to 100 years of age as set out by Parks Victoria's Group Personal Accident Insurance Policy. Some programs may be more suitable for a specific age bracket and this will be determined throughout the planning of an activity and clearly communicated through promotion. For example, some activities may only be suitable for volunteers aged 18 and above and this will be detailed on the ParkConnect activity page.

Volunteers under the age of 18yo or vulnerable adults must be accompanied by a responsible adult (Volunteer group leaders and/or Parks Victoria staff do not take responsibility for the guardianship of a minor or vulnerable adult).

Parks Victoria is a child safe organisation and all activities must be consistent with Child Safe Standards, further information see 'Working with Children Checks'.



The action plan associated with the management of the condition must be communicated to the staff and/or volunteer group leader and uploaded on to their ParkConnect profile.

It is not mandatory that volunteer medical conditions are disclosed to staff. If, however, medical information is disclosed it is subject to the Health Records Act and must not be shared with anyone including other staff or volunteers either verbally or in writing without permission of the volunteer.

No Volunteer Group Leader and/or Parks Victoria staff is permitted to administer or take responsibility for medication. Individuals are responsible for administering and controlling their own medication.

4.3 Volunteer Registration

All volunteers must complete a full volunteer registration on ParkConnect prior to participating. See section 'The Role of ParkConnect for details on how to register'.

By registering to volunteer Parks Victoria will capture all the necessary details to ensure safe participation particularly in the case of emergency and be able to effectively reward and recognise participation.



All volunteers must complete a full volunteer registration on ParkConnect prior to participating. In doing so the group and Parks Victoria will capture all the necessary details of the volunteer including emergency contact details, Working with Children Check and confirm acknowledgment of the terms and conditions. Registration will allow for reward and recognition of participation.

Volunteer details record management

Parks Victoria collects volunteer and volunteer group information for the purposes of safe, effective engagement. Volunteer personal information is collected via Parks Victoria's online volunteer management system ParkConnect. Mandatory fields include; full name, email, contact phone number, emergency contact name, emergency contact phone number and an acknowledgement of terms and conditions.

Volunteer personal information is subject to the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014) and the Health Records Act (2001) and is only to be used for the purposes of volunteer management. On acknowledging the Volunteer Terms and Conditions a volunteer recognises information is subject to Victorian Privacy Laws. Inappropriate handling or disclosure (verbally or in writing) of this information is a breach of Parks Victoria's Code of Conduct and could leave the organisation and/or volunteer group liable for legal action. Volunteers can access or update their own details through ParkConnect or by submitting a request to FOI@parks.vic.gov.au.

4.4 Volunteer Induction

Volunteers will receive an induction when commencing with Parks Victoria and/or a partner volunteer group aimed at introducing the role and organisation to the volunteer and in turn the volunteer to the organisation. A good induction will ensure volunteers are able to contribute effectively and feel part of the organisation. There are several volunteer induction types that may occur including;

- Online introductory induction video
- Program induction
- Site/Office induction

Parks Victoria has an introductory induction video for all volunteers to view on ParkConnect upon registration. This welcomes the volunteer, provides context to Parks Victoria, safety and volunteer management essentials and recognises volunteer efforts. In addition, all volunteers will be required to either participate in a 'program' induction and/or a site/office orientation.

A program induction will be a more in-depth introduction in to a chosen volunteer program. Program inductions are particularly relevant for Parks Victoria programs such as Campground Host, Park Guides, Volunteer Track Ranger etc. An induction could include a few hours, day or more of intense training to ensure a volunteer is feeling confident and capable to deliver the role they have chosen to perform. The details and commitment required for a program induction will be provided when joining a program and/or activity.

A site and/or office-based orientation will be completed at the location of the activity prior to commencement, delivered by a Parks Victoria staff and/or volunteer group leader. An orientation is a more specific process than the induction and is aimed at providing an introduction based on the particular site/office and activity the volunteer is intending to engage in. A check list will be completed to ensure that volunteers understand the requirements of the day and any specific considerations. An orientation will be accompanied by a Site Safety Survey to ensure volunteers are aware of any safety considerations. An orientation must include;

- A site safety survey
- Confirmation of any skills required, and corresponding accreditation and/or competency checks e.g. chainsaw induction checklist (see training)
- Emergency procedures

Checklists for both site and office orientations are provided for staff and volunteer group leaders.

Training

Ensuring volunteers and staff have the appropriate skills to undertake activities as well as further building their capacity is a Parks Victoria priority. Relevant training opportunities will be identified, developed and distributed every year for engagement.

Volunteer group leaders can attend staff First Aid training sessions organised by the Regional Training Coordinators in each region. Several dates will be available throughout the year and based on course capacity.

An online Workplace Health and Safety training module is available to provide volunteers with skills to keep them safe. Volunteers can undertake the course at www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/training. At the completion of the course volunteers will receive a certificate of completion that will be also be uploaded to the ParkConnect volunteer profile.

Further modules are in development including Child Safe Standards which will be available shortly.

4.5 Implementation

Safety

The safety of volunteers and employees is Parks Victoria's highest priority and as such, Safety-First principles apply to anyone volunteering or doing works on behalf of Parks Victoria regardless of their capacity.

The four *Safety First, Zero Injuries* key expectations are:

1. **Take responsibility for safety**
2. **Stop, think, and plan**
3. **Talk about safety everyday**
4. **Call out unsafe behaviour**

Under Section 21 of the OHS Act 2004 Parks Victoria must so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for its workers a working environment that is safe and without risk to health. This means that like a paid employee, a volunteer is entitled to work in a workplace which does not put them at risk of harm as far is reasonably practicable. This protection relates to both physical safety and psychological safety at work.

As outlined in section 25 of the OHS Act 2004 a Volunteer worker with Parks Victoria must:

- take reasonable care for your own health and safety
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions at the workplace (including other employees, volunteers, contractors or members of the public)
- co-operate with Parks Victoria with respect to any actions taken by Parks Victoria to comply with the OHS Act 2004 and requirements regarding safety.

A volunteer **must NOT** intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided at the workplace in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

Parks Victoria staff and volunteer group leaders will determine the safety controls required for an activity and document them using Safe Work Practice (SWP) or Job Safety Analysis (JSA) for routine activities or a Safe Work Method for regulated or non/routine activities. Safety documents will be available prior to commencement of the activity and will be carried on site. At every activity a site safety survey will be undertaken prior to the work commencing along with a site and/or office orientation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Uniform

Volunteers will be provided all the personal protective equipment required for an activity as determined through the Safety Assessment and relevant safety documentation.

Volunteers will be provided at a minimum with;

- Outdoor practical activities - Yellow hi-vis vests, gloves, glasses and all related PPE to the activity
- Indoor work - name badge

Supervision

The level of supervision will vary across volunteer activities. Supervision can be used to support volunteers, develop relationships, share knowledge, ensure implementation of safety requirements and volunteer management and reach successful objectives. There are various levels of supervision required for volunteer activities, which are determined through the risk assessment process and depend on the level of risk associated with the task(s), work being carried out and the degree of experience or competency required.

'Supervision' means the level and pattern of control exercised over a person or group when allocating work to be performed or undertaking that work. The supervision pattern of direct-general-broad is used to provide high levels of support when new or unfamiliar work is performed with reductions in monitoring and support as knowledge and skills are developed or learnings from previous experiences are adopted.

The role of supervising staff and volunteer group leaders also needs to be considered for volunteers. This person is responsible for the management oversight of work being performed and is required to have the appropriate skills and ability to respond to emergencies and unplanned events. The three supervision types are defined below.

Direct supervision

Direct supervision is for situations where the supervising person constantly monitors individuals reviewing the work practices and standard of work.

The supervising person must remain readily available, within visual contact and/or earshot (audible range) at all times.

Direct supervision would be appropriate where:

- The volunteer group or personnel are new to a task or have not yet demonstrated a consistent ability to perform the task to the standards required
- The task contains variations that have not been practiced
- The hazards and risks associated with the task are high consequence which would result in serious or fatal injuries if an incident occurred
- Training that supports the competent performance of the task has not yet been completed
- There is a foreseeable risk of unplanned events occurring that may be beyond the ability of volunteers to manage

General supervision

General supervision is for situations where the supervising person is not constantly monitoring individuals but remains in face-to-face contact on a recurrent (periodic) basis.

The supervising person must continue to provide instruction and direction for tasks to be performed by being contactable for assistance as required which may not be in close proximity.

General supervision would be appropriate where:

- The volunteer group or personnel have previously demonstrated their ability to perform the task safely and to the standards required without the need for constant intervention
- The hazards and risks of the task are well understood which can be managed to the satisfaction of the supervising person
- When and how to seek assistance is known and understood
- The hazards and risks associated with the task are low consequence which would result in first aid injuries if an incident occurred
- Current knowledge and skills can be demonstrated
- Foreseeable unplanned events can be managed

Broad supervision

Broad supervision is only suitable where it can be demonstrated by volunteer groups or personnel that the intended work can be performed autonomously.

The supervising person need only make occasional face-to-face contact to provide instruction and direction but must be contactable for assistance as required which may not be in close proximity.

Broad supervision would be appropriate where:

- The volunteer group or personnel have previously demonstrated their ability to perform the task safely and to the standards required without the need for supervisor intervention
- The hazards and risks of the task are well understood which can be managed to the standards required without the need for supervisor intervention
- When and how to seek assistance is known and understood
- The hazards and risks associated with the task are low consequence which would result in first aid injuries if an incident occurred
- Current knowledge and skills can be demonstrated
- Foreseeable unplanned events can be managed

Activity Modification/Cancellation

At times Parks Victoria and/or the volunteer group leader may need to modify or cancel an activity based on environmental conditions.

The guiding principles associated the modification and/or cancellation of activities include:

- a) Parks Victoria Staff will modify or cancel activities consistently across the Organisation and promote a proactive planning approach which reduces the likelihood of volunteers and staff being involved in a reasonably foreseeable emergency.
- b) The Triggers described herein are provided as threshold values that is the maximum permissible external threat that the Organisation is prepared to tolerate when hosting an activity. Staff may choose to adopt a lower threshold value based upon local knowledge and experience but not exceed them unless authorised to do so.
- c) Risk Assessment processes should be used to develop and design each program within the defined 'limit of operations'; the trigger conditions for extreme environmental factors.
- d) Staff and volunteers use respected sources of information (e.g. Bureau of Meteorology, Organisational directives) to base their decisions for activity cancellation and modification.
- e) Volunteers are engaged in timeframes which promote safe choices to be made prior to participation in the activity itself, especially in circumstances where cancellations have occurred due to threatening conditions.

It is the responsibility of the Contact staff member and volunteer group leader to maintain their situational awareness prior to a planned activity and during. A staged preparedness approach should be used and is based upon the following principles:

- 1) **Normality** – Activities occur in accordance with the risk- based activity plan developed by local staff and approved by Organisation.
- 2) **Prepare** – Conditions are less favourable and may be unpleasant but 'tolerable' generally. Volunteer activities may continue based on a modified approach. This is a risk-based decision by the staff and volunteer group leader of the activity.
- 3) **Proactive Response** – Environmental Trigger conditions are reached or likely to occur requiring cancellation of the planned activity. State approval required to proceed with any activity under these conditions



Staff and volunteer groups are required to monitor prevailing conditions before and during planned activities, typically monitoring a few days prior when conditions are more 'extreme'. The monitoring process is ongoing and should be based on a 'single point of truth' including;

- i. Bureau of Meteorology and Emergency Messaging
- ii. Regional or Corporate guidance
- iii. Emergency Services directives

Code orange proactive cancellations are based on a range of environmental triggers described in Table 2 on the following page. Broadly speaking, if the activity falls in the warning area then the activity must be cancelled.

Environmental Threat	Trigger Conditions	Grounds for decision
Heatwave	Heatwave Warnings: SEVERE or EXTREME	Human body is unable to cool itself adequately leading to heat stress related illnesses and deaths. Young, pregnant and elderly populations more at risk.
Storm (Winds)	Storm Warnings: DESTRUCTIVE WINDS	Many Park structures will be subject to damage and debris may strike visitors. Trees and limbs will fall.
Snow	Storm Warning: BLIZZARD CONDITIONS	Unsafe winds, high potential for hypothermia, heavy snow loads cause trees to break limbs of fall across roads and tracks, high likelihood of becoming disorientated (e.g. lost).
Storm (Lightning)	Storm Warning: SEVERE THUNDERSTORM AUDIBLE THUNDER	Potential for lightning strike or injury through large diameter hail, possible flash flooding and loss of access in areas dissected by water courses.
Flooding (Riverine)	Flood Warning: Inundation Maps	Historical data suggests activity area or access to the site is subject to inundation and isolation making visitor/emergency access unsafe.
Bushfire	Bushfire Warning: EVACUATE or EMERGENCY WARNING	Fires are likely to impact directly upon the volunteer activity area or in transit. Flame contact, radiant heat, smoke and ember attack all pose risk to life.
Cetacean Stranding	Warning: DANGEROUS ANIMAL	Whale and Dolphin stranding and their remains act as a shark attractant, thus any water-based activities are to be avoided (including wading) and regulations prevent people interfering with remain or attempting to assist due to injury.
Fire Risk	Warning: CODE RED	Any fires occurring under these conditions cannot be controlled and will spread rapidly. Park closure policy with few exceptions in some coastal areas and Metropolitan Parks.
Tsunami	Warning: TSUNAMI WARNING	A tsunami has been identified and a real risk exists (as opposed to a THREAT ADVICE). Any water-based activities may be impacted, and low-lying coastal areas inundated.
Earthquake	Warning: Magnitude 2.4 or greater	Potential for damage to key assets in affected area including dam stability and other structures, liquefaction and similar threats to wellbeing. Disruption of road networks is likely.

Table 3: Recognised triggers for cancellation of Volunteer Activities

Emergency preparedness

Volunteers are subject to a wide range of emergency events including medical incidents, storm and fire as indicated in Table 3.

Emergency preparedness should be addressed in the volunteer activity planning process and included in any volunteer inductions. Staff should have access to an emergency response plan which includes;

- A map showing the area of activities, track names and any key emergency features (e.g. ESTA Markers and Muster Points)
- Communication equipment for Staff and/or volunteers to 'raise an emergency'
- Emergency contact list
- Trained volunteers

The principles, specific to emergency preparedness, by which volunteers are governed are:

- Prior to performing any activities on Parks Victoria estate, each volunteer is aware of the types of emergency which may occur in their assigned areas, the shared responsibility to prepare and how to act should an emergency occur
- There is a clearly defined relationship (e.g. chain of command) between Parks Victoria staff and the volunteer at any time the volunteer is on Parks Victoria estate
- The volunteer notifies Parks Victoria any time they are present (and leaving) the estate, their intended task and extent of activities
- Information about the volunteer, which impacts on an emergency response, is available to Responders and an Incident Management Team when required and without delay
- Volunteers can communicate with Parks Victoria and Emergency Services at any time they are present in the Park using methods which are consistent with agreed workplace and emergency practices
- The volunteer only performs their planned activity when 'prescribed' conditions (specific to the Park) are occurring and likely to continue. Further, the volunteer is able to receive and acknowledge information which prompts agreed actions to occur in a timely manner (e.g. emergency alert).
- Activities with a 'history of emergency' (e.g. medical incidents) are only performed when sufficient equipment, skills and people are available to implement a response which intervenes in the incident and promotes recovery (this includes staged relocation)

Incidents

The safety of volunteers is our highest priority however sometimes volunteers will encounter hazards and experience injuries, near misses and/or incidents. All volunteer hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents must be reported via Parks Victoria's General Incident reporting form and entered into Parks Victoria's OHS on-line portal report.

There is an explicit expectation, that hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents are reported as normal business practice by any person who performs work as an employee, contractor or volunteer as part of their personal safety requirements and obligations. This is essential so we can support volunteers through an incident and improve our practices to continue to ensure a safe work environment.

If volunteers are injured while undertaking a volunteer activity, the relevant Parks Victoria staff contact or if volunteering with an affiliated group, the relevant Volunteer Group Leader must be informed immediately. The Volunteer Group Leader must inform their Parks Victoria staff contact as soon as they become aware of the injury. This can be done via phone in the first instance with written documentation using the general incident form.

To notify the VMIA and start the claims process, visit the website <https://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/claim/make-a-claim> and select "Group Personal Accident Volunteers" from the drop down list. Alternatively, please complete the form available on this page and forward to the state-wide volunteer team volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au. For further questions, please contact the state-wide volunteer team at volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

Child Related Incidents

Parks Victoria is committed to be a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. Volunteers and/or staff must report child abuse, even if they are not sure or suspect it may have happened or be happening. It is everyone's responsibility to keep children safe and it must be reported.

To report child abuse that has been witnessed or told about, it must first be determined if the child is safe or if it is an emergency. If it is not an emergency and it has been witnessed or been disclosed to about child abuse, as much information as possible should be collect and reported to Victoria staff member, and potentially an external body, such as the Police.



Call '000' immediately and get help from the police or ambulance if it is an emergency.

When information is collected about an allegation, consider the following fact-finding questions should be considered:

- Can you tell me what happened from the start?
- When and where did the incident occur?
- Did anyone see the incident?
- Who was there?
- What was said/done?

Especially if the complainant is a child, it is important to write down the details of the allegation using the complainant's own words to avoid jumping to conclusions without getting all the facts. For instance, a six-year-old child is unlikely to say, "That person sexually assaulted me," but they might say something like, "I don't like the games that person plays with me."

Insurance

Parks Victoria holds a Group Personal Accident (GPA) Insurance Policy through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA). This GPA policy provides a specified level of cover for volunteers while they are undertaking volunteer activities, including their direct travel too and from the activity site.

Only volunteers participating in activities that are 'approved and controlled' by Parks Victoria will be eligible for insurance. In addition, the volunteer will need to be registered and documented as having attended the activity. Any insurance claims are subject to VMIA insurance conditions.

Some benefits of the GPA policy include:

- Lump sum benefit in relation to permanent total disablement or accidental loss of life
- Weekly injury benefits payable for up to 24 months
- Non-Medicare medical expenses (payable subject to the Commonwealth Private Health Insurance Act 2007 and excludes any Medicare gap), up to 100% of the claimed amount and capped at \$10,000
- This benefit includes ambulance services and it is suggested that you familiarise yourself with the current Ambulance Victoria fee schedules to determine if any additional cover is required
- A separate, higher limit applies to Air Ambulance services, capped at \$30,000
- Lump sum benefit in relation to fractured bones
- Lump sum benefit in relation to dental procedures
- Additional rehabilitation and non-income earner benefits as per policy wording.

The GPA policy is "supplementary" to any other insurance you may hold, and will pay a benefit after all other insurance that may apply has been used including, not limited to;

- Medicare
- Private Health Insurance

- TAC or any other statutory third-party insurance
- Victorian Ambulance Cover

The Parks Victoria Group Personal Accident policy provides a basic level of cover for volunteers and has not taken into account an individual's financial needs or circumstances. *Parks Victoria encourages all volunteers to consider their own Private Health Insurance, Life Insurance and Income Protection requirements to ensure an adequate level of cover is in place and is based on personal circumstances.*

If a volunteer has suffered hardship as a result of volunteering on Parks Victoria estate, they may be provided access to Parks Victoria's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program provides volunteers with counselling support that is confidential, solutions-oriented and at no cost. Volunteers will be provided with the details of the service if they have experienced an incident or emergency whilst volunteering that may impact on their health and well-being.

Volunteers can also contact their local staff contact or Statewide Volunteer Team volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au if they feel they need to access support services.

4.6 Reporting of Volunteer Contribution

Recording and reporting of volunteer hours is a requirement of all volunteer programs. While volunteers make an incredible contribution across the Parks Victoria estate, the benefits of volunteering can be difficult to measure and therefore be under-recognised. Recording and reporting of volunteer contribution is critical in accounting for investment and in communicating the efforts and outcomes of volunteer participation. It is also essential for the safety of volunteers and in the case of an accident or incident, is required for insurance purposes to confirm the activity was 'approved' and the volunteer attended.

The simplest way of recording volunteer contribution is through recording of volunteer hours. Each time a volunteer participates in a park activity the time given is recorded in ParkConnect as volunteer hours. The responsibility of accurate recording of volunteer hours falls to Parks Victoria staff and/or volunteer group leaders, ensuring that the attendance at/on an activity reflects the ParkConnect volunteer attendee list.



Volunteers can view their own volunteer contribution on their ParkConnect profile as well as the activities and groups they have contributed too.

Parks Victoria collates volunteering contribution data across many sites within the parks network and reports regularly to the Parks Victoria Board. It reports this data annually to the Government including to responsible Ministers for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Ports and Freight. The contribution data is used to inform budget business cases for park management and supporting volunteering programs. Annual reporting can be found on Parks Victoria's web page; <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/about-us>

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Worksite Monitoring

Worksite monitoring is an effective way for Parks Victoria staff including more senior managers, to meet and greet volunteers and see firsthand the contribution and outputs of volunteer effort. It is a fantastic opportunity for Parks Victoria staff to make connections with volunteers, listen to volunteers' achievements and concerns and formalise reward and recognition. It provides staff an opportunity to ensure that everyone understands the safety and volunteer responsibilities and reduces the potential for incidents.

Whilst on site the Parks Victoria staff member will complete a worksite inspection form. This is a positive process to enable the celebration of successes, assist with any challenges and explore improvement opportunities.

Evaluation

Evaluation of volunteering programs allows both Parks Victoria and its volunteering partner organisations to review and continuously improve and adjust programs to ensure the best outcomes for volunteer partner groups and Parks Victoria.

A joint approach to evaluation helps to understand the volunteer experience, what has worked well, lessons learned and the effectiveness of volunteer programs in meeting program objectives. More formal research-based approaches to evaluation may be to develop understanding of specific issues that will contribute to broadening the knowledge of environment, health and volunteer sectors (e.g. does volunteering increase your mental health and wellbeing?).

Program evaluation is conducted in various formats including both informal and formal processes such as:

- Informal evaluation conducted by seeking feedback directly from volunteers via conversations, end of project debriefs and day to day conversations.
- Story sharing and recording encouraged so that other staff and volunteers can both learn from experience and celebrate other successes. This can be done via promotional channels highlighted in section 4.2 Promotion.
- Formal evaluation is undertaken by completing surveys, feedback forms, capturing stories or facilitated research studies.

Local teams should meet with their volunteers at least annually to undertake evaluation of the volunteer programs. This can be separate to, or as part of, annual planning days to review and plan for the upcoming year.

4.8 Reward and Recognition

Volunteers devote their time and knowledge to improve the conservation and sustainable use of parks. Recognition and celebration of achievements, innovations, and effort is an important part of the partnership. Reward and recognition can take many forms both informal and formal.

Informal reward and recognition are extremely important, and staff and volunteer group leaders will undertake this regularly. This may include;

- thanking volunteers for their time
- greeting them when they arrive
- complimenting them for their efforts
- acknowledging when they have made an effort
- spending time on activities
- hold a special 'thank you' function in honour of volunteers
- have morning tea together and talk about successes
- hold a bbq
- celebrate formal recognition events such as International Volunteer Day and National Volunteer Week
- create a volunteer notice board
- nominate volunteers for community awards
- provide letters of reference
- and more

Length of Service Awards

Length of service Awards are currently available for volunteer groups who have undertaken a given time to volunteering, awards are presented for 10, 20, 30, 40 years. The groups are recognised with a certificate signed by the CEO, the process is managed by the State-wide Volunteer team for Regions and Volunteer Officer in Melbourne Division.

The number of activities and length of time individual volunteers give is now recorded on ParkConnect and available on each volunteer's individual ParkConnect profile. Volunteers can use this for formal recognition for example through school programs, Duke of Edinburgh etc or it may be used for evidence for other purposes such as resumes, job applications.

External Awards

The several external organisations also offer recognition to volunteers through their own awards, with support from government agencies.

Landcare Awards

Landcare Awards celebrate individuals and groups for their contributions to natural resource management. There are three major Landcare awards supported by the Australian Government:

- **National Landcare Awards** are biannual awards organised by Landcare Australia, which celebrate achievements within Australia's Landcare community.
- The State and Territory Landcare Awards are a second biannual award organised by Landcare Australia, held on alternate years to the National Landcare Awards. The State and Territory Landcare Awards recognise individuals and groups who make significant contributions towards protecting Australian ecosystems and landscapes.
- The **Bob Hawke Landcare Award** is supported by the National Landcare Program, and Landcare Australia, which seeks to publicly recognise an individual involved in championing Landcare, focusing on leadership surrounding natural resource management and sustainable agriculture.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/natural-resources/landcare/national-landcare-program/landcare-awards>

Premier's Sustainability Awards

The **Premier's Sustainability Awards** aim to recognise Victorians who make significant contributions to future sustainability. The awards have multiple categories supported through EPA Victoria, and DELWP for which volunteers, and volunteer groups are eligible, including Environmental Protection, and Environmental Volunteering.

VEFN Best Friend Awards

The Victorian Environment Friends Network organises an annual 'Best Friend' Award, to highlight the dedication of friends group members who work in Victorian parks and reserves. Awardees demonstrate a strong relationship which benefits reserves through funding, and promotion through the community.

<https://www.friendsvic.org/category/best-friend-award/>

Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards

The **Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards** are hosted by the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, and build on the history of the Victorian Coastal Awards. These awards aim to highlight the connection between the community and external partnerships in protecting Victoria's coastal and marine areas are protected.

Volunteering Victoria Awards

Volunteering Victoria's annual awards celebrate the leadership and contribution of volunteers in Victoria. The awards cover four categories, which aim to demonstrate the commitment, diversity and impact of Victoria's volunteers. Judges for the awards are drawn from the volunteer sector.

<https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/events/state-awards/state-awards-2020/>

Reimbursement

Parks Victoria does not reimburse expenses or generally provide monetary gifts to volunteers. At times a volunteer program may receive funding for items such as accommodation which will be provided to the volunteer, this will be detailed in the promotion of the activity for volunteers to see prior to joining.

If a volunteer group leader feels it is appropriate to provide reimbursement this is to be conducted directly through the group's and not Parks Victoria.

Grievance procedures

Parks Victoria is committed to creating a positive volunteering experience for all. There may however be times that staff, a volunteer group leader and/or volunteer feel that this is not their experience and have the right to express grievances, concerns or dissatisfaction.

A grievance procedure has been established to assist the process. Grievances will be dealt with efficiently and in a manner that is equitable and fair to all involved. Wherever possible, all attempts will be made to informally resolve grievances at a local level between the affected parties prior to escalating grievances to a formal stage.

Parks Victoria maintains a 'Volunteering Charter' and 'Code of Conduct' for the organisation, staff and volunteers that must be abided by. These details are provided in the Volunteering Manual Section 1.2.

Upon registration on ParkConnect all volunteers acknowledge 'Terms and Conditions'. This ensures both staff and volunteers are aware of their volunteer role and responsibilities. It also allows staff and volunteer group leaders the opportunity to either performance manage and/or remove a volunteer if they prove inappropriate in any manner.

There are various levels of management that a staff or volunteer group leader might choose to enact starting from a verbal warning to ceasing volunteer work.

Volunteer group leaders and staff also have a responsibility to act in an appropriate manner. These responsibilities are detailed in the letter of collaboration issued between Parks Victoria and the group in addition to the Victorian Public Service Code of Conduct and Volunteer Terms and Conditions. Volunteers have the right to express concerns over staff or volunteer group leader behaviour and management in the same manner.

Volunteer Group leaders must attempt to proactively resolve any disputes within their group whilst keeping Parks Victoria staff informed of issues and/or incidents. Volunteer group leaders are to follow Parks Victoria grievance procedure if they do not have one themselves.

5. Volunteering Governance arrangements

Consistent with the changes across the broader volunteering sector, the governance of environmental volunteering is changing. While some of these measures may be perceived as creating additional 'bureaucracy', they are designed to ensure that volunteers can continue to be engaged in safe, meaningful and rewarding activities whilst ensuring that volunteering in parks meets contemporary standards, including compliance with legislation (e.g. Parks Victoria Act, Workplace Manslaughter laws), safety and risk obligations and alignment to National Standards and Volunteering. Just as for paid staff, parks are a workplace for volunteers.

The Parks Victoria's Volunteer Governance Framework (Figure 5) has been designed to clarify the **formal** (legal) relationship and responsibilities between Parks Victoria as the public land manager, volunteers and partner volunteer involving organisations. These governance structures will complement the already strong and valued informal relationships between Parks Victoria and volunteers, provide an effective basis to work together on and ensure the continued success of volunteering.

5.1 Types of volunteer partnerships

The Volunteer Governance Framework divides volunteering in to three types of governance models. Each of these has an accompanying agreement that confirms the relevant roles and responsibilities and has distinct processes to ensure safe and effective engagement that meets National Standards. The three governance models are:

1. **Parks Victoria's directly managed programs and activities** (e.g. Volunteer Track Ranger, SeaSearch)
2. **Affiliated groups** (e.g. Friends, Landcare and Community groups)
3. **Third Party** volunteer partnerships (e.g. Conservation Volunteers Australia, Corrections Victoria)

The following table defines the relevant legal responsibilities for each of the three types of volunteering:



Figure 5: Volunteer Governance model

Directly managed programs and activities	Affiliated Groups	Third Party Volunteer Partnerships
<p>Parks Victoria takes on full responsibility for all volunteers directly managed within a Parks Victoria program. The program requires appropriate approval through Parks Victoria line management.</p>	<p>Parks Victoria takes responsibility for volunteers working within a group who are undertaking activities that are ‘approved and controlled’* by Parks Victoria.</p> <p><small>*as per Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) see Insurance section 4.5</small></p>	<p>The group takes on legal responsibility for its volunteers. They must have sufficient evidence of management ability to National Volunteering Standards in addition to necessary business structures including insurances.</p> <p>The project/program/activity must be aligned to the agreed park objectives and not be inconsistent with Parks Victoria management priorities. They must be approved by a Parks Victoria staff member.</p>

Table 4: Overview of Legal responsibilities

5.2 Determining Partnership Types

For **new** partnerships, a Parks Victoria staff member and volunteer group leader should first, together, determine what the partnership will involve. Parks Victoria has a ‘partnership tool’ that can be used as a discussion aid to detail the shared mission and objectives of the initiative. Parks Victoria staff can access the [Partnership Planning Tool](#) on the Warnawi site.

For **existing** partners, the Parks Victoria volunteer staff contact, and volunteer group leader should work together to update any necessary governance documentation, for example, the Letter of Collaboration and Annual Volunteer Activity Plan. All existing partners should have an ‘active’ record in ParkConnect with relevant details of the partnership including any agreements, if this is not up to date these details should be entered.

If a volunteer group does not neatly fit into either an ‘Affiliated group’ or a ‘third-party volunteer partner’, (for example a corporate organisation, culturally and linguistically diverse group, community group), that group can fit into the ‘directly managed volunteers’ category as either a Parks Victoria program or activity, depending on the duration of involvement. This would occur if the group cannot meet the requirements of the third-party agreement including for example, safety standards and/or national standards of volunteering, or if the group cannot meet the responsibilities of an affiliated group, such as conducting a group leader induction, or having a first aid qualified representative on site or is not intending to have an ongoing involvement.

5.3 Governance for Affiliated Groups

Parks Victoria and volunteering involving organisation have a long and successful history of partnering together to conserve, enhance and protect special places. From working with Friends Groups and Field Naturalists, to a recreational user groups such as Bushwalking, Sporting Shooters and Four-Wheel Drive clubs, to a variety of community groups, the efforts of affiliated volunteer groups cannot be understated, and Parks Victoria is committed to supporting and enhancing these valuable partnerships. Parks Victoria, as Land Manager, has a responsibility for volunteers working within a group who are undertaking activities on Parks Victoria estate and groups need to be 'approved and controlled'¹ by Parks Victoria.

Under the Parks Victoria Act 2018, Parks Victoria is appointed to manage Crown land on behalf of the Crown. In doing so, Parks Victoria must act and ensure all partners and activities on the estate act in a manner that protects, conserves and enhances Parks Victoria managed land (section 7 and 8). To ensure Parks Victoria can comply with these obligations we must work together with partner volunteer organisations for mutual priorities and always be aware of and approve activities that occur.

The terms 'approved and controlled' are provided by Parks Victoria's insurance provider VMIA who require activities to be authorised (approved) with appropriate safety and management controls (controlled) in place. **Although a volunteer group may hold their own insurance, they are still required to follow the same processes set out in this Volunteering Manual.** Parks Victoria takes responsibility for volunteer individuals participating within a group however it does not indemnify the group and/or organisation itself.

To demonstrate the commitment to working in partnership, Parks Victoria and all affiliated groups will sign an overarching 'Letter of Collaboration' which articulates the relationship between the group and Parks Victoria, so each party is clear on their mutual roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. This letter will set the standard for working together for each party and will allow for the continual strengthening and growth of the partnership.

5.4 Governance for Third-Party Volunteer Partnerships

There are various volunteer involving organisations that run as a business, meet National Standards of volunteer involvement and with appropriate insurance provisions that may want to engage volunteers on the Parks Victoria estate. These organisations can establish a third-party contractual relationship with Parks Victoria and manage their volunteers using their own business structure and volunteer management processes. Organisations currently operating in this manner include; Corrections Victoria, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Greening Australia.

Once a contractual arrangement has been established between Parks Victoria and the third- party volunteer organisation, program/activity implementation is the responsibility of the third-party organisation. All volunteer management process standards must align at a minimum with Parks Victoria's guidelines and national standards of volunteer involvement.

For the organisation to be eligible to form a third-party relationship with Parks Victoria, the following requirements must also be met:

- The program/activity(s) proposed has mutual benefits and are aligned to Parks Victoria priorities
- The organisation has an appropriate business structure and volunteer management principles that meet National Volunteering Standards,
- The activities are not high risk,
- The organisation has insurance cover to the value of \$20 million,
- The organisation has public indemnity insurance
- A 'volunteer third - party agreement' is completed between the organisation and Parks Victoria; and
- It is approved at Director level

¹ 'approved and controlled' are conditions provided by Parks Victoria's insurance body 'VMIA'

Part B: Implementing volunteering programs

For staff, volunteer group leaders
and third-party partnerships



Section One:

Parks Victoria Directly
Managed Programs/Activities

1. Programs and activities directly managed by Parks Victoria staff

Parks Victoria led volunteer programs and activities must be aligned to Parks Victoria management priorities and objectives and approved and controlled for management and safety purposes. The program /activity requires approval through Parks Victoria line management using the tools identified in the planning stages. Parks Victoria takes on full responsibility for all volunteers directly managed within a Parks Victoria volunteer program and/or activity. The workflow of a Parks Victoria managed program and/or activity is displayed below in Figure 1 below.

For further details on each of the components of the volunteering lifecycle described below refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual.

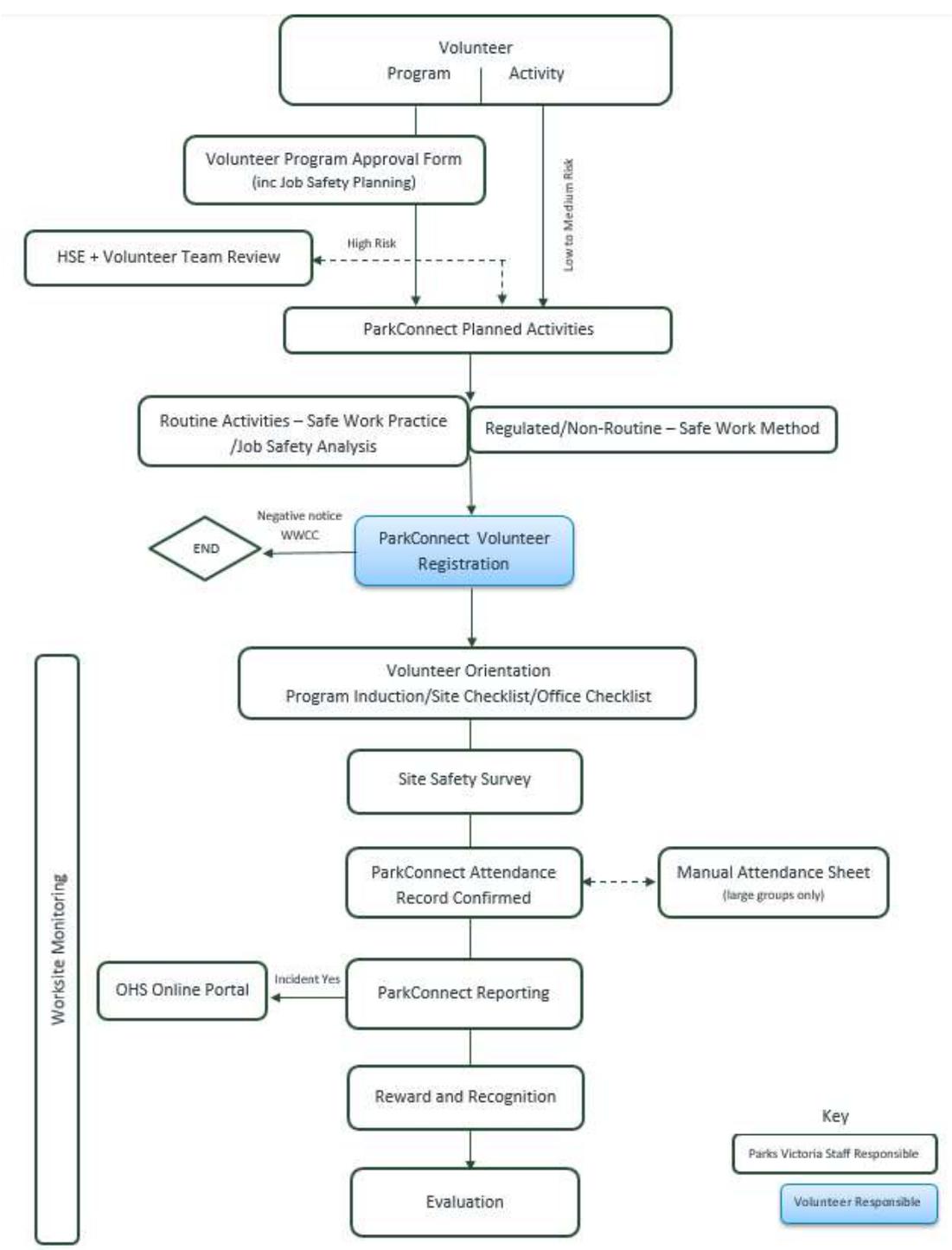


Figure 1: Process Flow Parks Victoria Directly Managed Programs/Activity

1.1 Planning for Directly Managed Programs/Activity

The planning process path to follow will be dependent on whether staff are intending to implement a program or activity.

A **program** is defined as a series of related volunteer activities that will be undertaken over a period of time for the same overall goal/priority e.g. revegetation of Yarra Bend Park.

An **activity** is defined as one single or episodic activity that is not related to any other series of activities but still contributes to a Parks Victoria objective and/or priority e.g. tree planting at Bell Bird picnic area.

Volunteer 'program' planning process

For a volunteer 'program', the initiating staff member will be required to fill in a 'Volunteer Program Approval Form', Appendix A. The volunteer program approval form will allow you to assess and define:

- Objectives
- Alignment with priorities
- Needs analysis
- Success measures
- Resources required
- Risk rating and analysis
- Monitoring
- Skills required

Any staff within the State-wide volunteer team will be required to complete a program specific project brief in addition to the 'volunteer program approval form'.

All programs must include the development of a volunteer role description using the volunteer role description template detailing responsibilities, skills required and commitment, detailed in *Recruitment (p.23)*.

Volunteer 'program' approval

The approval of a new volunteer program is determined by:

- The objectives of the program/activity
- A needs basis and;
- In consideration of risk at either a park, district, region, corporate or state-wide level.

The volunteer program approval form, for low and medium risk activities, in the absence of associated funding, is to be approved by the Area Chief Ranger. If there is funding associated this is to be signed according to Parks Victoria's delegations register. All state-wide programs are to be approved by the Director of Community Programs.

Seeking approval ensures that volunteer programs can be adequately supported and resourced. In addition, it allows the recognition of efforts for staff that are managing volunteer programs across the whole organisation as well as volunteer recognition.

Volunteer 'activity' approval



For a volunteer 'activity', a planned activity must be submitted to ParkConnect and approved by the staff member entering the details for 'low to medium risk activities'.

If the activity is assessed as 'high risk' a corporate risk assessment form must be completed and forwarded to the Health Safety and Environment and Volunteer teams, see below 'Assessment of risk'.

Assessment of risk

Volunteer program and activity planning requires an initial assessment of level of risk which could range from low, medium or high. This is to be undertaken through a dynamic risk assessment process which evaluates the likelihood and consequence of a potential outcome using the HSE Corporate Risk Assessment Matrix in Figure 3. If the program or activity is assessed as 'significant and/or high' risk, a corporate Risk Assessment form must be completed and forwarded to the HSE and Volunteer Team.

Following a review, the program will be assessed as either appropriate for volunteer involvement or not. If the program is assessed as not appropriate, then the program cannot go ahead or needs to be altered to exclude the high-risk component. If the program is assessed as appropriate, then it can move forward to approval in consideration of implementing the necessary safety controls. All high-risk activities assessed will be entered on the 'Volunteer High Risk Register' for future reference located on Warnawi.

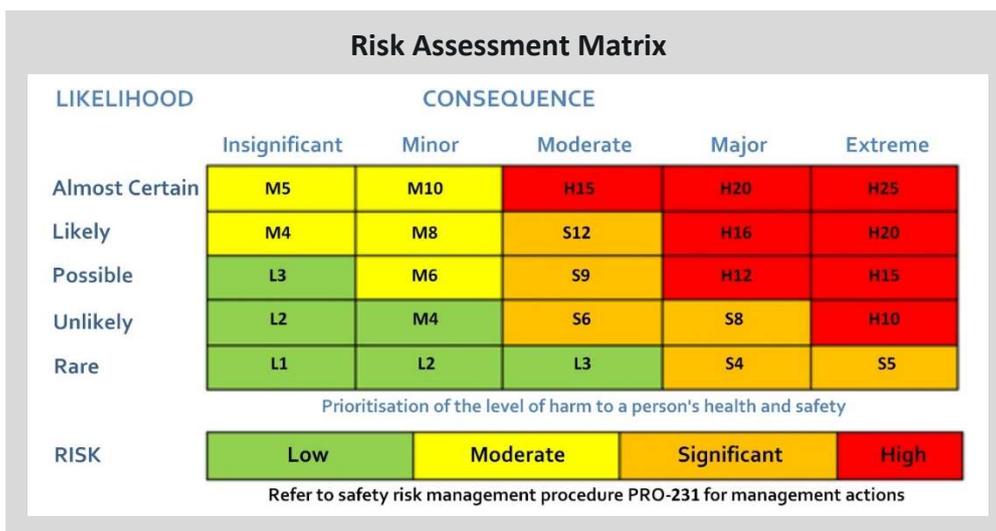


Figure 2: Risk Assessment Matrix

Managing safety



For all routine activities, a Safe Work Practice (SWP) or Job Safety Analysis (JSA) must be attached to the planned activity on ParkConnect under 'associated documents'.

For all regulated and/or non-routine activities, a Safe Work Method must be completed and attached to the planned activity on ParkConnect under 'associated documents'.

Volunteer safety is to be managed in the same way staff manage their own safety at a minimum unless the risk has been assessed as High and then the activity will have a strict set of safety management requirements. Safe Work Practices, Job Safety Analysis and Safe Work Methods are located on Warnawi.

Safety documentation is to be accessible to all volunteers and provided during the induction process.

1.2 Recruitment

Promotion

Active promotion may be necessary to engage the types of volunteers identified in the Volunteer Program Approval Form. A staff member can either choose to promote their project publicly or recruit from their existing volunteers, groups and/or partnerships.



All activities within a 'volunteer program' must be submitted in ParkConnect with a selection to either promote on portal/webpage or not.

If further promotion is required outside of ParkConnect, staff members can choose to create hard copy promotional collateral including posters, postcards and emails. Parks Victoria's marketing team can assist with this process and you can submit a creative brief request for assistance found on Warnawi: [Creative Brief](#).

Other methods might include using local networks, other industry partners and email contact lists.

Parks Victoria has an active social media presence through Facebook, Instagram and twitter. To promote the program/activity through social media the digital marketing team must be contacted as soon as possible to request a posting via email webteam@parks.vic.gov.au.

A short summary of the project/activity and image if available will need to be provided. If using images of volunteers written permission will be required via a completed 'adult talent request form' (appendix C).

If further marketing is required including print or radio, the staff member responsible for the volunteer program is to liaise directly with the relevant regional media and communications manager for direction.

Selection

Selection of volunteers will be determined by the goals and types of skills identified in the Volunteer Program Approval Form or ParkConnect planned activity. For low risk activities requiring no special skills, volunteers can join an activity directly through ParkConnect.

Informal and/or formal screening processes will need to be implemented for volunteer activities that have:

- Limited spaces
- Are proven to be popular
- Require specialist skills e.g. accreditations, licences etc.
- Formal screening

Working with Children Check

Volunteers require a valid Working with Children Check to participate after their first activity, if they intend to be an ongoing volunteer. Parks Victoria will accept an existing Working with Children check, however you will need to nominate Parks Victoria as a volunteer organisation you participate with via [MyCheck](#). For further details refer to section 4.2



The volunteer must upload their working with children check and/or criminal history check to ParkConnect with the corresponding expiration date. A Parks Victoria staff member in the State - wide volunteer team will verify the check by ticking the accreditation sighted box. Staff can view a volunteers contact details on ParkConnect to confirm if a check has been submitted and verified.

Once verified the volunteer can participate on activities. The volunteer will receive an email 30 days prior to the check expiry, **they are then required to update the check and upload the new check to their ParkConnect profile.**

Accreditations/Licenses/Competencies

Activities may require specific skill sets and accompanying accreditation and/or competency. This is to be determined through the Volunteer Activity Planning process. Any accreditations, licenses or competencies required for a particular activity or equipment are to align with staff requirements at a minimum.

There is an 'Accreditation List' detailing activities with corresponding accreditation requirements available on Warnawi [Accreditation Standards](#). Even though a volunteer may have an accreditation an activity still needs to be assessed based on risk. The current list of [high risk activities](#) and accompanying accreditations can be found on Warnawi.

If a staff member is intending to undertake an activity that has not been assessed and/or not on the list, then this must be sent through to the HSE Team and State-wide volunteer team for review. If a staff member is unsure if an accreditation meets the requirements this is to be forwarded to the regional safety advisor for further advice.

At times a volunteer who holds a current accreditation may still not be competent to undertake the activity or use of the specific equipment. Therefore, competency checks have been designed and will be required for all high-risk activities. Competency checklist templates are available for the relevant accreditations e.g. chainsaw, plant/machinery. Please note, Parks Victoria staff are responsible for checking any accreditations, licenses or competencies required for a particular activity or equipment of both volunteer group leaders and/or volunteers. This role cannot be delegated to a volunteer.

Some activities are determined too high risk to be performed by volunteers and will not be permitted at all, for example the use of quad bikes.



All accreditations/licences and competencies are to be uploaded on the individual volunteer contact record in ParkConnect. A Parks Victoria staff member is required to verify the check by ticking the accreditation sighted box. The volunteer will receive an email 30 days prior to the check expiry, **they are then required to update the accreditation/licence/competency and upload the new one to their ParkConnect profile.** Competency checks are valid for a three-year period but may depend on the equipment and/or skill tested.

1.3 Volunteer Registration



All volunteers must complete a full volunteer registration on ParkConnect prior to participating. In doing so the group and Parks Victoria will capture all the necessary details of the volunteer including emergency contact details, Working with Children Check and confirm they have acknowledged the terms and conditions.

If a volunteer has limited technological capacity and does not have an email address, staff can provide the volunteer with a manual volunteer registration form and request a Park Connect profile be created on their behalf by the State-wide Volunteer Team. This is to be avoided if possible and used only in the conditions of limited capacity. Note that if this is done then the volunteer will not have access to their volunteer profile via the ParkConnect webpage/portal unless they reset their password. The manual volunteer registration form can be found on Warnawi.



For large groups and/or one-off groups eg schools that are unlikely to attend again, a manual attendance sheet is to be completed with all the names of attendee's who are present. This is then uploaded into the ParkConnect activity record as 'unregistered attendees'. The manual attendance sheet can be found on Warnawi.

Staff managing an activity will receive an attendance sheet via email from ParkConnect 24 hours before a planned activity depicting which volunteers are registered on the activity to attend. This is then used to cross reference on the day of the activity to ensure accuracy.

If a volunteer attends on a day of the activity that is not on the ParkConnect attendance list and there is no capacity to complete an online registration at the worksite they will need to complete the manual attendance sheet and provide essential details including; emergency contact and Working with Children Check. The volunteer is to be prompted to complete a ParkConnect online registration at the end of the activity.

After an activity staff should ensure the volunteer attendance sheet reflects who attended on the day. This may mean volunteers need to be removed from the activity or added via ParkConnect. Alternatively, a manual attendance form can be uploaded with the correct details.

As staff have access to a volunteer's personal information you are subject to the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014) and the Health Records Act (2001).

1.4 Volunteer induction

A volunteer induction is a mandatory process aimed at introducing the role and organisation to the volunteer and in turn the volunteer to the organisation. There are a number of volunteer induction types a staff member could be required to provide including:

- Program induction
- Site/Office orientation

All volunteers will be required to either participate in a 'program' induction and/or a site/office orientation. Participation will be determined by the Volunteer Program Approval Form and/or planned activity.

All state-wide programs will require a program induction with the program delivery staff member, invited specialists where required and a regional Park staff member when possible. The volunteers will also need a site-based orientation, completing the site orientation checklist with a regional Park staff member.

Volunteers that are engaged in a regional program on an ongoing basis will also require a program induction and a site or office-based orientation by the staff member managing the program and/or volunteer(s).

A program induction template is available and must be used to ensure all topics are covered.

All Parks Victoria office-based volunteers require an office induction and orientation which includes completion of relevant FAP forms and orientation checklist.

Volunteers that are involved in sporadic or one-off activities are required to watch the introductory video upon registration of ParkConnect and complete a site-based orientation at a minimum.

Volunteer orientation

An orientation is a more comprehensive process than the induction and is aimed at providing an introduction based on the particular site/office and activity the volunteer is intending to engage in. The orientation must be completed by the staff member managing the volunteer(s). There are two types of orientations available, either site-based or office-based. All volunteers are required to participate in one or the other in addition to;

- A site safety survey
- Confirmation of any skills required, and corresponding accreditation and/or competency checks e.g. chainsaw induction checklist (see training)
- Emergency procedures

Checklists for both site and office orientations are available.

1.5 Implementation

Safety induction

The safety of volunteers and employees is our highest priority and as such the Safety-First principles apply to anyone volunteering or doing works on behalf of Parks Victoria regardless of their capacity. Volunteer safety management will be determined through the volunteer program/activity planning process.

Parks Victoria is working towards a close alignment of safe systems of work for volunteer activities with employee safe systems of work in most instances. The Parks Victoria safety and environment documentation must be followed unless an activity is identified as high risk through the volunteer activity approval process and a risk assessment undertaken by the responsible Parks Victoria employee, see *Assessment of risk section 1.1*.

For all routine activities a Safe Work Practice (SWP) or Job Safety Analysis (JSA) must be completed indicating the necessary management controls. For regulated or non/routine activities a Safe Work Method (SWM) must be completed.



The SWP/JSA or SWM is to be attached to the relevant ParkConnect activity as 'associated documents'. The document is to be available to all volunteers and carried on site during activities. If a risk assessment has taken place for a high-risk activity this must also be attached to the ParkConnect activity with the approval evidence.

At every activity a site safety survey must be undertaken prior to the work commencing along with a site and/or office orientation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Uniform

Staff should ensure volunteers have all the personal protective equipment required for an activity as determined through the Risk Assessment and/or Safe Work Practice.

For all programs and/or activities volunteers are to be provided at a minimum with:

- Outdoor practical activities - Yellow hi-vis vests, gloves, glasses and all related PPE to the activity
- Indoor work - name badge

Each regional Community Engagement and Partnerships team has a small budget for the provision of PPE including hi-visibility vests.

For all state-wide volunteer programs volunteers are provided with a short/long sleeved shirt, cap/bucket hat and name tag to ensure they are clearly identifiable.

Supervision

The supervision pattern of direct-general-broad is to be used as determined through the volunteer program/activity planning process. For further details refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual.

Activity Modification/Cancellation

At times Parks Victoria may need to modify or cancel an activity based on particular environmental conditions. For further details refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual.

Emergency preparedness

Emergency preparedness should be addressed in the volunteer activity planning process and included in any volunteer inductions. Staff should have access to an emergency response plan. For further details refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual.

Incidents

The safety of volunteers is our highest priority however sometimes volunteers will encounter hazards and experience injuries, near misses and/or incidents. All volunteer hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents must be reported via Parks Victoria's General Incident reporting form and entered into Parks Victoria's OHS on-line portal report.

The organisation has an explicit expectation that hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents are reported as normal business practice by any person who performs work as an employee, contractor or volunteer as part of their personal safety requirements and obligations.

For further details refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual.

1.6 Reporting

Reporting on volunteer contribution is mandatory as it is required for Board and Government reporting as well as being an insurance requirement. Effective reporting also provides the information required to perform effective reward and recognition practices for both staff and volunteers and assists in building funding cases to support volunteering.



All volunteer reporting must be completed through ParkConnect. Reporting must include volunteer attendees, hours of contribution and results of the activity at a minimum.

It is essential to collect an accurate attendance record. **This can either be done by confirming the accuracy of the ParkConnect activity attendees online (preferred) and/or for large or bespoke groups, completing an attendance list that confirms the attendees on the day and subsequently uploading it to ParkConnect.**

Statewide volunteering contribution statistics are collated by the State-wide Volunteer team quarterly and provided to the Corporate Planning team. Each work centre is required to provide regular updates (quarterly) via ParkConnect.

Activity reporting record management

Activity management is essential for the safety of volunteers and in the case of an accident or incident is required for insurance purposes to confirm the activity was 'approved'. It is also used to provide overarching statistical data for ministerial and annual reporting requirements and recognition of staff and volunteer efforts.

All activity management must be undertaken in ParkConnect. This is a secure internal management system with data only accessible to those with the appropriate permissions.

Data must not be shared outside the system or with non-Parks Victoria individuals.

Data will be retained within ParkConnect until approved for disposal in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973. Requests for activity details from the public must be directed to the Freedom of Information page on the Parks website.

1.7 Monitoring and evaluation

Worksite monitoring

Worksite monitoring must be conducted by a Parks Victoria staff member. Worksite monitoring frequency is to be determined by the risk rating of the activity and the level of supervision a staff member is required to provide the volunteers. For volunteers that are under 'broad' supervision, staff will need to conduct at least one worksite inspection and monitoring visit per program.

At this visit staff are required to complete the worksite inspection form (Warnawi link). Staff must be open and transparent with volunteers, introduce the process as a positive way in which Parks Victoria can ensure the success of the activity and their efforts. It is important the form be completed when on site, so all the areas for inspection are addressed. Feedback should be provided to the volunteers that can assist them to improve if needed and/or celebrate what they are doing well.



Once complete the worksite inspection form is to be attached to the planned activity record of the activity you attended in ParkConnect.

Evaluation

Parks Victoria conducts both informal and formal evaluation. Evaluation can also occur by undertaking a review of success against the program/activity’s objectives identified in the volunteer program approval form.

A guideline describing the evaluation tools in more detail will be developed with accompanying templates to utilise.



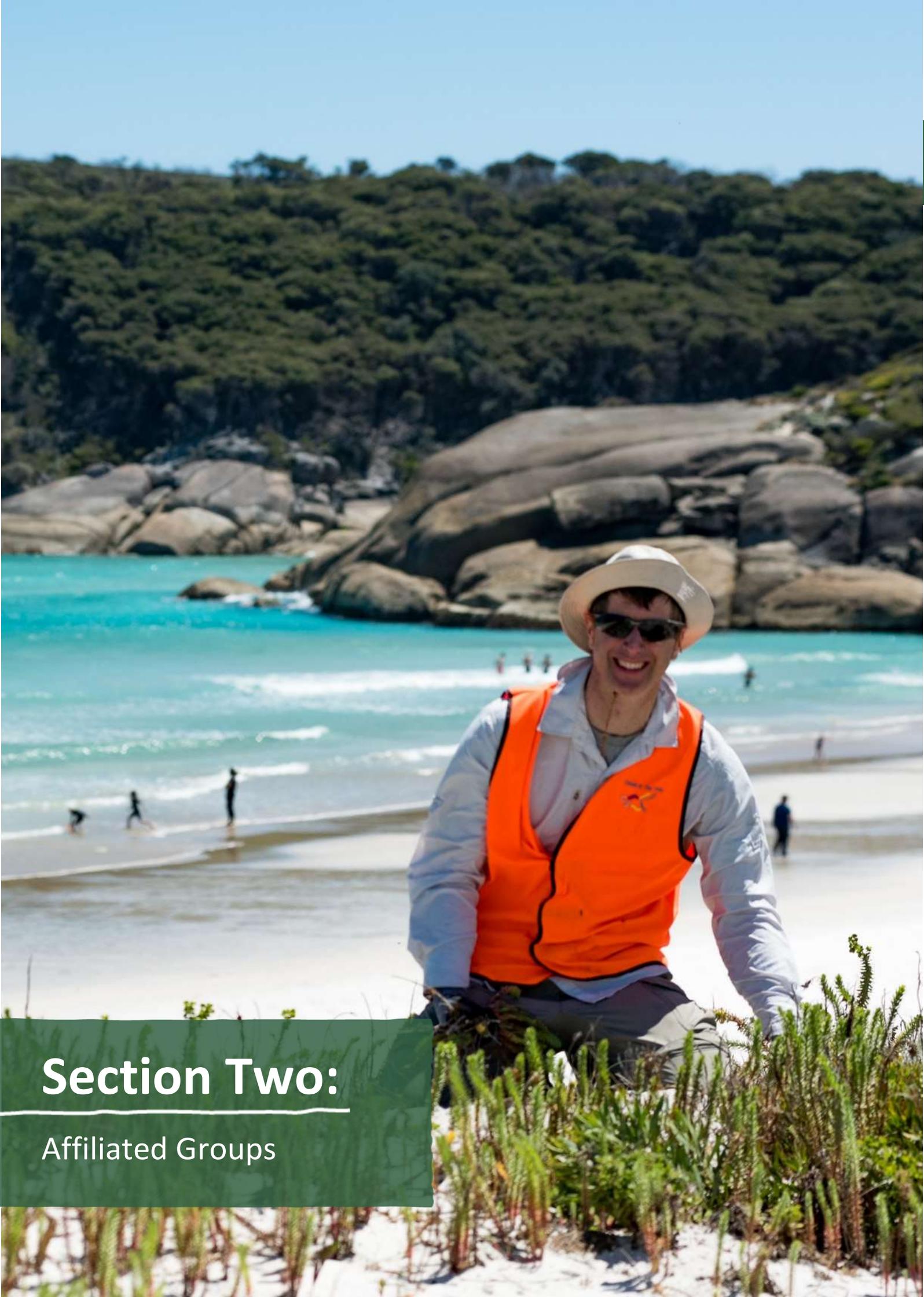
Any evaluation results must be uploaded to the activity in ParkConnect.

1.8 Reward and Recognition

Informal reward and recognition is extremely important and staff and volunteer group leaders are asked to engage in this process as much as possible e.g. thanking volunteers for their time, greeting them when they arrive, complimenting them for their efforts, acknowledging when they have made an effort etc.

Currently Parks Victoria engages in formal recognition processes through the Length of Service Awards.

For further details refer to Part A (4.8) of the Manual.



Section Two:

Affiliated Groups

2. Programs and activities directly managed through Affiliated Groups

An 'Affiliated Group' is a volunteer involving organisation that partners with Parks Victoria to undertake activities on Parks Victoria estate. Affiliated groups have a range in level of autonomy however there are mutual objectives agreed between the group and Parks Victoria. Legally, Parks Victoria takes responsibility for volunteers working within the group and activities are 'approved and controlled'* by Parks Victoria.

For further details on defining an Affiliated Group refer to Part A, Section 5.

The process flow for an Affiliated Group is displayed in Figure 3 below.

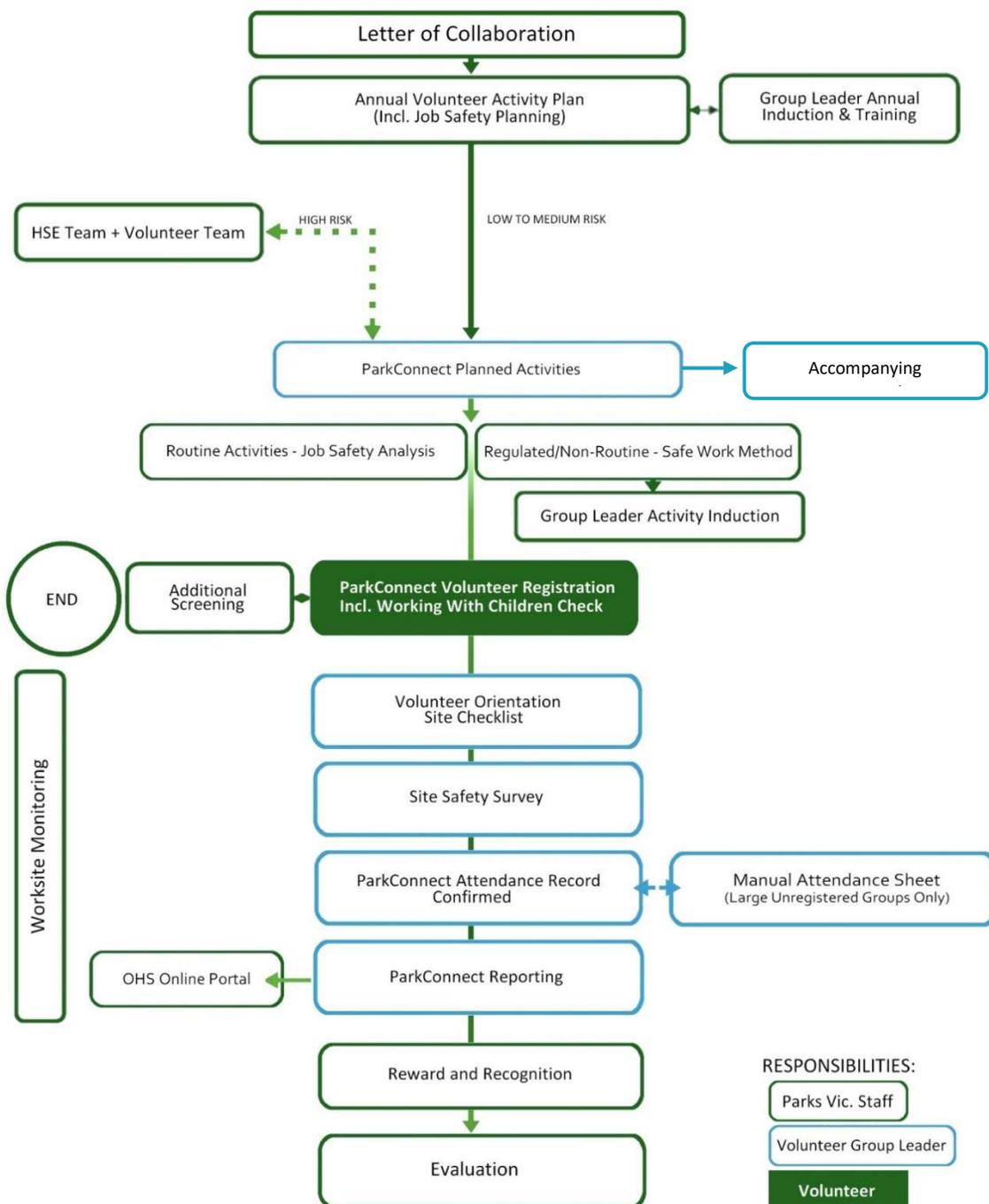


Figure 3. Process Flow Affiliated Groups

2.1 New Groups

New groups can express an interest in engaging with Parks Victoria through regionally-based staff or through the Statewide Volunteer Team.



All interested groups will be referred to the 'start a group' page on ParkConnect to verify their interest and fill out all the necessary information to enable review.

The request will initially be sent to the Statewide Volunteer Team who will then refer it to the Area Chief Ranger of the park(s) that have been indicated of interest. The Area Chief Ranger and the group can together determine whether the group, site and/or activity are required with considerations including; alignment to management, park and environment priorities, positive outcomes for staff and volunteers, resources, safety and other park users. A staff member may at times decide not to allow a group to commence, however they will provide justification for this decision and volunteer groups have the option to appeal this decision.



On approval the group will be entered in to ParkConnect. A group leader must be assigned as determined by the group and provided access once registered on ParkConnect to the 'groups I lead' page.

This can be an individual email address or group email address e.g. FriendsofParks@gmail.com which is securely shared with only the leaders of the group. **Assigning of access is done through Parks Victoria's internal ParkConnect (CRM) system by a staff member.**

A staff member will also need to be allocated as the group's contact 'ranger or staff' member to approve activities and provide a key contact to the group for support and assistance, again undertaken through the internal ParkConnect CRM system.

Groups intending to only undertake a single or series of episodic activities do not need to register as a 'volunteer group'. Rather they can volunteer as an informal group of volunteer individuals directly managed by a Parks Victoria staff member to ensure appropriate and safe management.

For new groups that are not incorporated an alternative option is to consider the requirements of registering as an incorporated association. An incorporated association is a registered legal entity that's usually established for recreational, cultural or charitable purposes. It must have at least 5 members and put all profits back into the association's activities. It is not mandatory for groups to be incorporated and each group should consider their own circumstances and situation. More information can be found at www.consumer.vic.gov.au

New groups may also be interested in establishing themselves as a 'Friends' group. A Friends Groups consist of a group of volunteers with an interest in a particular park, reserve, or species of native flora or fauna. While each group will have its own specific objectives, they can be broadly summarised as:

- Providing support to enable the effective management of a park, reserve or species;
- Collaborating with the appropriate management authority to design, select and deliver particular projects and activities;
- Providing inclusive opportunities for bringing together people with a common interest in the reserve or species;
- Building public awareness of the reserve or species; and
- Experiencing the benefits of volunteering and spending time in nature.

A Friends Group can be unregistered and unrecognised bodies acting under their own rules (as approved by Parks Victoria) or they may be formally recognised bodies incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 with a legal personality of their own.

More information can be found via the Victorian Environment Friends Network <https://www.friendsvic.org/>

2.2 Planning

Letter of Collaboration

All affiliated groups or those wishing to be affiliated will be required to enter in to a 'Letter of Collaboration'. The Letter of Collaboration is designed to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both Parks Victoria and the Affiliated Group and will replace other types of agreements such as Memoranda of Understanding.

The letter is entered into once and is not required to be renewed unless conditions of either party change. Where possible this will be done at a face to face meeting to ensure the strengthening of the relationship and the ability to answer any queries or concerns. The Letter of Collaboration will be the foundation for more detailed agreed annual activity plans that outline agreed priorities. The letter is to be signed dependent on where the group operates across the Parks estate including;

- For local area/park specific volunteer groups the Area Chief Ranger (based on the location the group is considering/ volunteering at) and the Group Leader
- Beyond one local area/park but within the one district the District Manager (based on the location the group is considering/ volunteering at) and the Group Leader
- If the group operates in more than one District the Stakeholder Manager in ParkConnect and the Group Leader



The signed Letter of Collaboration is to be attached to the **Groups ParkConnect account**.

Annual Volunteer Activity Plan

All Affiliated groups are required to develop a plan for the following year. Having an agreed plan in writing will formalise the agreed priorities and mutual commitments between Parks Victoria (local teams) and volunteer groups. It will ensure well-planned volunteer activities and will seek to align both the group and Parks' priorities to ensure effective, safe, mutual beneficially activities, that are supported and eligible for insurance coverage.

If a group would like to informally collaborate for a short-term project or basis an Annual Volunteer Activity Plan can still be put in place for the period of the project.

Activity planning is to be conducted using the [Annual Volunteer Activity Plan \(AVAP\)](#) function on the Groups I Lead page on ParkConnect. The Annual Volunteer Activity Plan (AVAP) provides a tool to plan the group's volunteer program. AVAP's must be completed by the group's Parks Victoria staff contact via a face to face meeting with the group on an annual or program basis.

The AVAP planning process will:

- Facilitate discussion and agreed priorities between Parks Victoria staff and volunteer involving groups
- Provide information on the group's long-term vision and goals
- Formalise a process to align volunteering goals and activities with park management goals and priorities
- Develop a 12-month program of volunteering activities for the group
- Identify funding and other resources required for the group to undertake their activities and projects
- Provide documentation to ensure activities and projects are safely managed
- Provide a guide to necessary qualifications and accreditation
- Demonstrate the legal requirement of 'approval and control' of projects which is required for Parks

If a project and/or activity is deemed to require additional permits/agreements; for example, a commercial agreement, research permit or Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment the Parks Victoria staff member will contact the appropriate team to commence the review and application process.

The AVAP is approved by the Area Chief Ranger and Volunteer group leader to confirm an agreed program of activities for the year or program period.



The AVAP form can be accessed on Groups I Lead page on ParkConnect under 'Volunteer Activity Plan'.

The AVAP defines the groups plans at a project level, **following approval all individual project activities that make up each project, are to be submitted as 'planned activities' into ParkConnect to allow for details including; dates, location, specific activity etc.** This can be done at the time of the AVAP approval or on progressively throughout the year dependent on the nature of the project timelines and activities.

Assessment of risk

To meet insurance and safety requirements, all volunteer activities require an initial assessment of level of risk which could range from low, medium or high. This is to be undertaken through a dynamic risk assessment process with the Parks Victoria staff contact and the Volunteer Group Leader during the AVAP process, which evaluates the likelihood and consequence of a potential outcome using the HSE Corporate Risk Assessment Matrix in Figure 4. If the project or activity is assessed as 'significant and/or high' risk, a Risk Assessment form will be completed by the Parks Victoria staff contact.

Following a review, the program will be assessed as either appropriate for volunteer involvement or not. If the project is assessed as not appropriate, then the project cannot go ahead or needs to be altered to exclude the high-risk component. If the project is assessed as appropriate, then it can move forward in consideration of implementing the necessary safety controls. All high-risk activities assessed will be entered on the 'Volunteer high risk register' for future reference and to prevent a need for reassessment.

Risk Assessment Matrix					
LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Almost Certain	M5	M10	H15	H20	H25
Likely	M4	M8	S12	H16	H20
Possible	L3	M6	S9	H12	H15
Unlikely	L2	M4	S6	S8	H10
Rare	L1	L2	L3	S4	S5
RISK	Low		Moderate	Significant	High

Prioritisation of the level of harm to a person's health and safety

Refer to safety risk management procedure PRO-231 for management actions

Figure 4: Risk Assessment Matrix

For volunteer groups an activity assessed as high risk is likely to require direct supervision by the Parks Victoria staff member whilst the group is undertaking the activity. Examples of high-risk activities have included snorkelling, and plant or other large machinery. The Statewide Volunteer Team maintain a risk register with history of high-risk volunteer activities and the agreed management action.

For all routine activities a Safe Work Procedure (SWP) must be completed by a Parks Victoria staff member indicating the necessary management controls. This is to be provided to the volunteer group leader and carried on site to ensure appropriate controls are put in place for the activity.

For regulated or non/routine activities a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) must be completed by a Parks Victoria staff member. The group leader will require an activity specific induction on site by the Parks Victoria staff member as well as provision of the SWMS documentation.



ParkConnect

SWP/SWMS documentation must be attached to the relevant ParkConnect activity as 'associated documents'. The document is available for download to all volunteer group leaders and must be carried on site during activities. If a risk assessment has taken place for a high-risk activity this must also be attached to the ParkConnect activity with evidence of approval. This can be done by either the volunteer group leader or staff member.

Volunteer Group leaders can upload SWP documentation completed themselves via the ParkConnect activity on the ParkConnect portal. All regulated or non/routine activities requiring a SWMS must be completed by Parks Victoria staff.

At the commencement of every activity a site safety survey must be undertaken including providing access to the SWP/SWMS to volunteers, along with a site orientation.

For further details refer to Part A, section 4.5.

2.3 Applying for Grants

Each year various government, not for profit and philanthropic organisations list grants that are available to volunteer and community groups. Volunteer groups are usually very successful in funding opportunities to further resource practical activities, skill building or other needs. Parks Victoria is very appreciative of volunteer groups seeking funding to undertake works on Parks Victoria estate.

Unfortunately, grants are not offered at any regularity so requests for support of grants could vary throughout each year. Grants that affiliated groups are aware of and are considering applying for are to be detailed in the AVAP and discussed at the planning stage. If a grant is offered that the group wasn't aware of in the planning stage this is to be discussed with a Parks Victoria staff member for approval.

Affiliated groups that are intending to seek funding for activities on Parks Estate must attain a **Letter of Support** to accompany any funding application, from the relevant Parks Victoria staff contact. If the funding is to engage a contractor, please see details in Engaging Contractors section of this Manual.

Please note if the contractor is being engaged for training purposes for low risk activities the volunteer group can manage the funds themselves if they have confirmed the training organisation is a Registered Training organisation and maintains \$20million public liability insurance.

2.4 Partnerships between Affiliated Groups and other groups

Affiliated groups may at times form partnerships with other groups. These could include corporate organisations, schools, contractors and others.

There are critical legal considerations to how a group engages another partner as groups that are not the Land Manager. Under the Parks Victoria Act (2018), Parks Victoria is delegated to act as Land Manager and cannot legally delegate its land manager responsibility to a volunteer group. In addition, complimentary safety, insurance and legislative mechanisms may need to be engaged e.g. partnerships with contractors that would instigate further insurance obligations.

2.5 Engaging Contractors

At times Volunteer groups may wish to engage contractors to undertake a particular activity. Activities that require contractor engagement must be outlined in the Annual Volunteer Plan process. If the activity emerges throughout the year a discussion must be had with the Contact Staff member to seek approval and process next steps.

Contractors can be engaged in two ways; either:

- A. Parks Victoria engages the contractor directly; or
- B. The Volunteer Group engages the contractor via an agreement

A: Parks Victoria engages the contractor directly

If Parks Victoria engages the contractor directly the volunteer group is required to transfer any necessary funding to Parks Victoria to engage the contractor through the organisation's internal procurement process. For Parks Victoria to engage the contractor the following process must be followed by the Volunteer Group and Contact Staff Member;

1) Provision of Written Funding Confirmation (Volunteer Group)

The Volunteer Group will need to write a letter to Parks Victoria advising they were successful in receiving a grant and/or funding and in accordance with our engagement of contractor process, are required to transfer the funding (including the amount) to deliver the specified activity through a contractor. The letter should specify that the volunteer group will meet all of the requirements of the grant agreement with the grant provider and they will pay the funds required by Parks Victoria to engage the contractor on invoice within 30 days of receipt. A template letter can be provided. The volunteer group should also provide Parks Victoria with confirmation of funding either with; a signed funding agreement / funding letter /letter of appointment or even a signed project plan. The signatures on the written funding confirmation must be from the Volunteer Group and funding provider (if different e.g. grant provider).

2) Parks Victoria Delegate Sign-Off (Contact Staff Member)

The contact staff member will draft a letter that the Executive Director can execute and return to the volunteer group confirming the following details: group name, funding amount to be transferred, project activity and scope, timing, invoicing and payment details and any conditions including accountabilities and reporting. The Letter is accompanied by a Request for signing document and coupled with the written funding confirmation from Step 1 and sent to the relevant Executive Director (if funding is up to \$500k, other sign-off is required if higher) for endorsement and signing. Once executed the signed letter will be sent to the volunteer group directly.

3) Completed Project Workbook (Contact Staff Member)

The contact staff member will need to provide a project workbook and send to the Project Management Office via Program@parks.vic.gov.au which will provide details including how to set the project up (i.e. project name, project manager, region/division, district/branch, cost centre and project program).

4) C-0113 Request to for invoice (Contact Staff Member)

To receive funding from the volunteer group the contact staff member must send the request for invoice to the Project Management Office. The Project Management Office will then work with Finance to process this. (send to Project Management Office via Program@parks.vic.gov.au)

5) Request to create an Account (Volunteer Group)

If you do not already have an account with Parks Victoria's finance team, they will contact you to confirm the organisation details.

6) Payment of Invoice (Volunteer Group)

Parks Victoria will send an invoice for payment to the volunteer group for the full amount detailed for the contractor component of the agreement. Full transfer of funding is required prior to contractors being engaged.

7) Contractor Engagement (Contact Staff Member)

The contact staff member will use the internal vendor panel system to engage the most appropriate contractor for the works. The agreement will be between these two parties. Parks Victoria is responsible for inducting and managing the Contractor on site following Parks Victoria's Contract engagement processes.

B: Volunteer Group engages the contractor via a Parks Victoria Volunteer Contractor Agreement

Volunteer Groups may wish to engage contractors for certain types of activities. To do so, Parks Victoria has developed a contractor engagement process that will minimise legal risk to all parties. Activities that are proposed to include contractor engagement should be detailed in the Annual Volunteer Activity planning process and assessed together with the volunteer group and staff contact. A list of approved activities for contractor engagement have been provided in Table 1. **For any other activities or for activities that exceed \$25,000, Parks Victoria must engage the contractor directly.**

For a Volunteer Group to engage a contractor directly the following process is to be followed;

1. The activity(s) must be detailed in the Annual Volunteer Activity Plan, if it emerges throughout the year the group should contact the staff member immediately to discuss approval, update the Annual Activity Plan and commence with next steps
2. Confirmation that the activity is on the approved list of pre endorsed activities in Table 1
3. Any additional approvals and/or permits are identified, sought and attained e.g. cultural heritage permits, filming permits etc
4. The contractor agreement is signed by the Volunteer Group Leader and Contractor
5. The Area Chief Ranger or District Manager (dependent on funding amount in step 3 and aligned to the delegations register) signs the agreement with consideration of; contractor selected, approved activity, financial amount, completion of additional permits (as required)
6. The Contact Staff Member must attach the signed agreement to the Volunteer Groups ParkConnect record in the Associated Documents tab (Type Agreements Sub Type Tri-Party Contractor Agreement) in the staff CRM and a final copy provided to the Group
7. The Parks Victoria staff contact must conduct the initial contractor induction and provides supervision if necessary, aligned with Parks Victoria’s contractor engagement handbook

Pre-endorsed Activities

Tree planting
Tree guard installation and removal
Seed collection
Revegetation - ripping to prepare site and manual digging
Revegetation - direct seeding
Weed control - pulling and manual digging
Weed control - chemical - spraying, cut-and-paint, injection
Weed control - slashing, mowing, grooming, mulching
Nest box installation and maintenance
Temporary/removable conservation fencing
Removing specified pest animals including only baiting for fox and rabbit, trapping for foxes and cats
Rubbish removal/disposal (non asbestos) (in conjunction with waste management procedure)
Filming and photography (in conjunction with a filming permit)
Survey and monitoring (in conjunction with a research permit)
Minor Trail/track maintenance of existing network (no construction of new assets or changes)
Minor maintenance of structures (excluding high risk infrastructure or were a building permit is required)
Transporting or delivery of facilities e.g. portable toilets, machinery
Consultant
Painting
Transport (to and from authorised activities)
Catering
Providing and installing minor signs (in conjunction with signage manual)
Education provider/trainer

Table 1. List of Approved Activities for Contractor Engagement

2.6 Permits

Cultural heritage permissions

All activities undertaken on Crown land, whether done by Parks Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, volunteers or other groups, should make every effort to avoid harming Aboriginal heritage and must comply with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. Where harm to heritage is unavoidable, appropriate permissions must be sought. to determine the risk to Aboriginal heritage prior to the activity starting.

All projects that include ground disturbance (including tree planting) must undertake a cultural heritage assessment to determine the risk to Aboriginal heritage prior to the activity starting. These activities should be highlighted.

Cultural Heritage assessment

A cultural heritage assessment must be undertaken is done by a registered Heritage Advisor. They will do a desktop assessment and possibly a field visit to identify what cultural heritage is known (or is likely to occur) on the site, and whether the activity is likely to cause harm. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the Advisor may recommend that the project:

- go ahead, potentially with a contingency plan or protection plan in place
- be moved or adapted to avoid harming Aboriginal heritage
- seek permission to harm Aboriginal heritage, through a Cultural Heritage Permit or Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Further information can be found;

- ACHRIS map <https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html>
- Aboriginal Heritage Identification Guide <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/managing-country-together>

Research Permits – now called ‘Access Agreement for Research Activities’

Parks Victoria is currently improving its research application process making it easier to undertake research in Victoria’s parks and waterways. As part of simplifying the application process, Parks Victoria will issue research permits for activities in all parks and waterways it manages (previously issued by DELWP). The new research permit, called an ‘Access Agreement for Research Activities’ will be managed through ParkConnect.

Volunteer groups working in partnership or on behalf of Parks Victoria may not require an Access Agreement. However, you still need to obtain the relevant permit(s) from DELWP if required including activities under the Wildlife Act or Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. To apply for these permits, go to [Wildlife Research Permits \(DELWP\)](#).

Volunteer groups undertaking research on Parks Victoria estate will need to:

- Discuss research activities with your contact staff member
- Enter the research activity(s) in the volunteer groups Annual Volunteer Activity Plan (AVAP) in the ‘onground activities’ tab on ParkConnect
- For those activities that require a permit through DELWP attach in the supporting documents tab of the AVAP in ParkConnect
- Submit the AVAP for ACR approval on ParkConnect
- Enter the individual research activities as planned activities in ParkConnect for the specific date/time/locations
- Contact Staff member approves the ParkConnect planned activities
- Conduct research activities in the field following research, safety and volunteer management processes
- Following any activities conduct reporting including volunteer attendees and hours in ParkConnect

Further information can be found; <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/conservation-and-science/science-and-research/research-permits> or alternatively call the Parks Victoria Customer Service Team on 13 1963 or email Accessagreements@parks.vic.gov.au.

2.7 Recruitment Actions

Promotion

Promoting a Group on ParkConnect

A group can choose whether to maintain a profile on the external facing ParkConnect webpage to encourage recruitment and further profiling to the wider community.



If a group is promoted on ParkConnect it can either choose to have the button for public volunteers to automatically 'join' their group or for no button to appear. In the latter case the public volunteer can contact the group leader for further details. **A volunteer group leader can invite volunteers to join their group on the 'groups I lead' ParkConnect portal page by sending an email via the 'Invite New members' button.**

Promoting Activities



All activities undertaken by a volunteer group are submitted to ParkConnect to ensure activity details are confirmed e.g. dates and location, for accurate reporting, attendance records and approval by the contact staff member.

The volunteer group can select whether to;

- a) Promote the program publicly on the portal for anyone to join
- b) Promote the program only to group members, by selecting Yes to 'Members only' in the activity record on ParkConnect or
- c) To not promote the activity at all and add the volunteers themselves to the private activity (Volunteer group leader can only add registered group members).

If an Affiliated Group wants to embark on additional media campaigns to promote to the wider community for example print media etc. the Parks Victoria marketing team can assist in providing Parks Victoria logos, appropriate contacts and support. Please contact the Parks Victoria volunteer team to facilitate assistance; volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

Selection



Selecting volunteers is largely the responsibility of the group. **All group members must be registered on ParkConnect and have their own individual volunteer profile so they can join and leave activities or be placed on them by the group leader depending on attendance.** This also provides both staff and the group leader with all the necessary information to manage the volunteer for example emergency contact details and ensures the volunteer is covered for insurance (subject to terms and conditions).

Screening of volunteers will be required to ensure the volunteer fits with the group, has the competency to undertake activities, and or it may be a legislative requirement like Working with Children Checks.

Screening can be both informal and/or formal depending on the requirement of the volunteer position.

Refer to Part A (4.2) for further details on screening.

Working with Children Check

If you attend a volunteering activity for the first time (e.g., a litter collection/tree planting day) you do not need a Working with Children Check for that activity. If you plan to continue volunteering, and want to become an ongoing volunteer, you will need a Working with Children Check.



The volunteer must upload their Working with Children Check and/or Criminal History Check to ParkConnect accreditations and include the expiry date. A Parks Victoria employee will verify the check by ticking the accreditation sighted box. Once verified, the volunteer can participate in activities. The volunteer will receive an email 30 days prior to the check expiry, they are then required to update the check and upload the new check to their ParkConnect profile.

Refer to Part A (4.2) for further details on Working with Children Checks

Accreditations/Licenses/Competencies

Skills and accreditation required is to be determined through the AVAP planning process so a group can identify if they have volunteers that are appropriately qualified prior to activity approval. If a group does not have the necessary skills the activity either cannot be approved, a Parks Victoria staff member will need to complete the activity, or a suitable contractor may be engaged (see engaging contractors).

Any accreditations, licenses or competencies required for a particular activity or equipment are to align with staff requirements at a minimum. Complimentary competency checks have been designed for all high-risk activities e.g. chainsaw, plant/machinery.

Some activities are determined too high risk to be performed by volunteers and will not be permitted at all, for example the use of quad bikes.



All accreditations/licences and competencies are to be uploaded on the individual volunteer group leader/volunteer contact record in ParkConnect. A Parks Victoria staff member will verify the check by ticking the accreditation sighted box. The volunteer will receive an email 30 days prior to the check expiry, they are then required to update the accreditation/licence/competency and upload the new one to their ParkConnect profile.

Competency checks are valid for a three-year period but may depend on the equipment and/or skill tested.

Parks Victoria staff are only responsible for checking accreditations, licenses or competencies required for a particular activity or equipment of both volunteer group leaders and/or volunteers. This role cannot be delegated to a volunteer group leader. This can happen at any time prior to the activity including during the annual planning process or on site prior to the activity commencing during the activity induction.

2.8 Volunteer Registration for activities



All volunteers must complete a full volunteer registration on ParkConnect prior to participating. In doing so the group and Parks Victoria will capture all the necessary details of the volunteer including emergency contact details and confirm they have acknowledged the terms and conditions.

If a volunteer has limited technological capacity and does not have an email address, the group leader can provide the volunteer with a manual volunteer registration form and request a Park Connect profile be created on their behalf by a Parks Victoria staff member. It is to be noted that if this is done then the volunteer will not have access to their

volunteer profile via the ParkConnect webpage/portal unless they reset their password. This is to be avoided if possible and used only in the conditions of limited capacity.

Volunteer Group Leaders will receive an attendance sheet via email from ParkConnect 24 hours before a planned activity depicting which volunteers are registered on the activity to attend. This is then used to cross reference on the day of the activity to ensure accuracy.

If a volunteer attends on a day of the activity that is not on the ParkConnect attendance list and there is no capacity to complete an online registration at the worksite they will need to complete the manual attendance sheet and provide essential details including emergency contact details. The volunteer is to be prompted to complete a ParkConnect online registration at the end of the activity.

After an activity the Volunteer Group Leader should ensure the ParkConnect volunteer attendance reflects who attended on the day. This may mean volunteers need to be removed from the activity or added via ParkConnect. Alternatively, a manual attendance form can be uploaded with the correct details.



For large groups and/or one-off groups eg schools that are unlikely to attend again or become members of the group, a manual attendance sheet is to be completed with all the names of attendee's who are present, a template sheet is provided on the Supporting Documents tab when you sign in to ParkConnect as a Volunteer Group Leader. This is then uploaded into the ParkConnect activity record as 'unregistered attendees'.

As Volunteer Group leaders have access to a volunteer's personal information, they are subject to the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014) and the Health Records Act (2001) as per staff. A Volunteer Group Leader confirms they understand and will commit to this responsibility when agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of volunteering.

2.9 Induction

Group Leader Induction

All Group Leaders are required to undertake an annual induction with their contact staff member to confirm any new requirements, conditions or systems dependent on the activities defined in the AVAP. This could be done at the same time the AVAP is developed. This will ensure the group and Parks Victoria can work together to ensure all safety, environmental, cultural and volunteer management processes are mutually understood. It will also ensure that any new systems are introduced and a refresh of processes is provided.

For activities deemed high risk or are regulated and/or non-routine activities the group leader will need a specific activity induction by a Parks Victoria staff member prior to commencing that particular activity.

Volunteer group member induction

Group leaders are responsible for providing an onsite induction acknowledging Traditional Owners and specific to the group's history, vision, mission and objectives.

Group Leaders must provide the site orientation to all new volunteers at each activity as below if a Parks Victoria staff member is not deemed to be required at the activity.

Parks Victoria staff are responsible for conducting all inductions for activities deemed high risk or are regulated and/or non-routine activities. Parks Victoria staff are also responsible for conducting competency checks for relevant activities and/or equipment for either volunteer group leaders and/or volunteers for example chainsaws. Once the relevant accreditation and competency has been verified the Parks Victoria staff member will indicate this on the volunteer's ParkConnect profile which is then also visible to the volunteer group leader see Part A Section 4 Accreditations.

Volunteer orientation

An orientation is a process of introduction based on the site and activity. The orientation must only be completed by Volunteer Group Leaders who have been inducted by a Parks Victoria staff member.

An orientation is more specific than the induction and is aimed at providing an introduction based on the particular site and activity the volunteer is intending to engage in. There are two types of orientations available either site-based or office based. All volunteers are required to participate in one or the other.

An orientation checklist is provided for completion and will be accompanied by;

- a site safety survey
- confirmation of any skills required and corresponding accreditation and/or competency checks e.g. chainsaw induction checklist
- emergency procedures

Training

Ensuring volunteers and staff have the skills to undertake activities as well as further building their capacity is a Parks Victoria priority. Relevant training opportunities will be identified, developed and distributed every year for engagement. Volunteer group leaders can attend staff First aid training sessions organised by Parks Victoria in each region. Dates will be available throughout the year and based on course capacity.



A minimum of one first aid trained volunteer group leader and/or volunteer must attend any activity if not directly supervised by a Parks Victoria staff member. **The first aid trained volunteer group leader/volunteer must be recorded on the AVAP and their accreditation uploaded on their contact record in ParkConnect.**

2.10 Implementation

Safety

Parks are considered to be 'workplaces' for both paid staff and volunteers. The safety of volunteers and employees is our highest priority and as such the Safety-First principles apply to anyone volunteering including volunteer groups regardless of their capacity.

Affiliated groups must follow all Parks Victoria's Occupational Health, Safety and Environment procedures, policies and guidelines. Volunteer safety management will be determined through the AVAP planning process. The Parks Victoria safety and environment documentation must be followed unless an activity is identified as high risk through the AVAP planning process and a risk assessment has been undertaken by the responsible Parks Victoria employee. The Parks Victoria contact staff will guide and assist volunteer groups through these safety procedures as required.

Personal Protective Equipment and Uniform

Volunteers should ensure they have all the personal protective equipment (PPE) required for an activity as determined through the Risk Assessment and/or Safe Work Procedure. Where possible Parks Victoria will try to supply personal protective equipment including safety glasses and hi-vis vests. If the volunteer is required to supply their own PPE for example work boots this should be communicated when promoting the activity. Volunteers within each group are to be provided at a minimum with; Yellow hi-vis vests, gloves, glasses and all related PPE to the activity.

For volunteer groups that would like to wear their own uniform and include the Parks Victoria logo, support and endorsement is required from the Parks Victoria marketing team. Please contact the Statewide Volunteer Team for details volunteering@parks.vic.gov.au.

Supervision

The supervision pattern of direct-general-broad is to be used as determined through the AVAP. Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details

Activity Modification/Cancellation

At times Parks Victoria may need to modify or cancel an activity based on particular environmental conditions. Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details

Emergency preparedness

Emergency preparedness should be addressed in the AVAP and included in any volunteer inductions. Volunteer Group Leaders and volunteers should have access to an emergency response plan. Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details

Incidents

The safety of volunteers is our highest priority however sometimes volunteers will encounter hazards and experience injuries, near misses and/or incidents. All volunteer hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents must be reported. If a volunteer is injured while undertaking a volunteer activity the Volunteer Group Leader must inform their Parks Victoria staff contact as soon as they become aware of the injury. This can be done via phone in the first instance with written documentation using the general incident form.



If a volunteer group is undertaking an activity without the direct supervision of a Parks Victoria staff member the volunteer group leader is responsible for reporting all hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents on the day it occurs. This can be done via phone in the first instance with written documentation using the general incident form. **The incident is also to be recorded in the ParkConnect planned activity which will alert the contact staff member of an incident via email.**

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details

Insurance

Volunteer groups may hold their own insurances and should seek appropriate advice on what coverage may be required for their own circumstances. Even when a group holds their own policies it does not grant authority to conduct activities on Parks Victoria estate outside of the systems detailed within this manual. Approval and control of activities is critical to ensure Parks Victoria can uphold its Land Manager responsibility to conserve, protect and enhance the estate as well as keep staff, volunteers and the community safe at all times.

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details.

2.11 Reporting

Reporting of volunteering contributions provides both Parks Victoria and volunteer groups with accurate information to demonstrate the benefits of volunteering to the government and the community at different scales (from local to the whole parks estate). Providing accurate information on volunteer contributions assists in resource allocation as well as enabling stronger business cases for volunteering support. Recognition of volunteer group efforts is extremely important to Parks Victoria and only possible through the reporting of contributions.



Volunteer group leaders have a responsibility to report on the contributions of each activity including at a minimum; number of volunteers attended, number of volunteer hours and achievement. **Volunteer reporting is completed on ParkConnect in the relevant Planned Activity following the 'Update Planned Activity' process with data entered in the 'achievement details and contribution details' tabs.** Volunteers can also record any other time they have contributed outside of activities for example administration, planning and meetings. These can be entered as a separate activity on ParkConnect to ensure all volunteer contribution is recorded and recognised.

If a volunteer group leader does not have the capacity to report in ParkConnect results must be provided to the contact staff member who must report it in ParkConnect on their behalf.



Volunteer reporting achievements are accessible to volunteer group leaders via the 'groups I lead' portal page or staff can provide them through the ParkConnect CRM. Having an easily accessible list of achievements can aid groups in applying for grants or awards submissions or other appropriate reports.

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details.

Activity reporting record management

Activity management is essential for the safety of volunteers and in the case of an accident or incident is required for insurance purposes to confirm the activity was 'approved'. It is also used to provide overarching statistical data for ministerial and annual reporting requirements and recognition of staff and volunteer efforts.

All activity management must be undertaken in ParkConnect. This is a secure internal management system with data only accessible to those with the appropriate permissions. Data must not be shared outside the system or with non-Parks Victoria individuals.

Data will be retained within ParkConnect until approved for disposal in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973. Requests for activity details from the public must be directed to the Freedom of Information page on the Parks website.

2.12 Monitoring and Evaluation

Worksite Monitoring

Worksite monitoring will be conducted by a Parks Victoria staff member. Worksite monitoring frequency is to be determined by the risk rating of the activity which guides the level of supervision a staff member is required to provide the volunteer group.

Risk rating and supervision are to be determined through the AVAP planning process. At a minimum a Parks Victoria staff member must conduct at least one worksite monitoring visit every 6 months.

At this visit the staff member will be required to complete a [worksite inspection form](#). This process is a positive way in which Parks Victoria can ensure the success of the activity and efforts as volunteers. It may also highlight areas of support or further recognition required.

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details.

Evaluation

Parks Victoria staff will work with each volunteer group leader to evaluate programs and activities at a minimum once per year (during the Annual Volunteer Activity Planning process). A review of successes, opportunities and challenges will be considered, based on a review of the original Annual Activity Plan goals and objectives.

Areas of improvement are to be factored into the upcoming year planning to ensure volunteer group leaders, groups and Parks Victoria can continue to be successful.

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details.

2.13 Reward and Recognition

Informal reward and recognition is extremely important and staff and volunteer group leaders are asked to engage in this process as much as possible e.g. thanking volunteers for their time, greeting them when they arrive, complimenting them for their efforts, acknowledging when they have made an effort etc.

Currently Parks Victoria engages in formal recognition processes through the Length of Service Awards.

Refer to Part A (4.2) of the Manual for further details.



Section Three:

Third Party Volunteer
Partnerships

3. Programs and activities through Third Party Volunteer Partnerships

Third Party Volunteer partner organisations take on the legal responsibility for its volunteers. They have sufficient evidence of business and governance structures and management capacity implement to implement National Volunteering Standards in addition including insurance and indemnities. The project/program/activity is aligned to the agreed park objectives and not inconsistent with Parks Victoria management priorities. They are approved by a Parks Victoria staff member.

For further details on defining a third-party volunteer organisation see Part A , section 5.4

The process flow for a Parks Victoria Third -Party volunteer organisation is displayed in Figure 5 below.

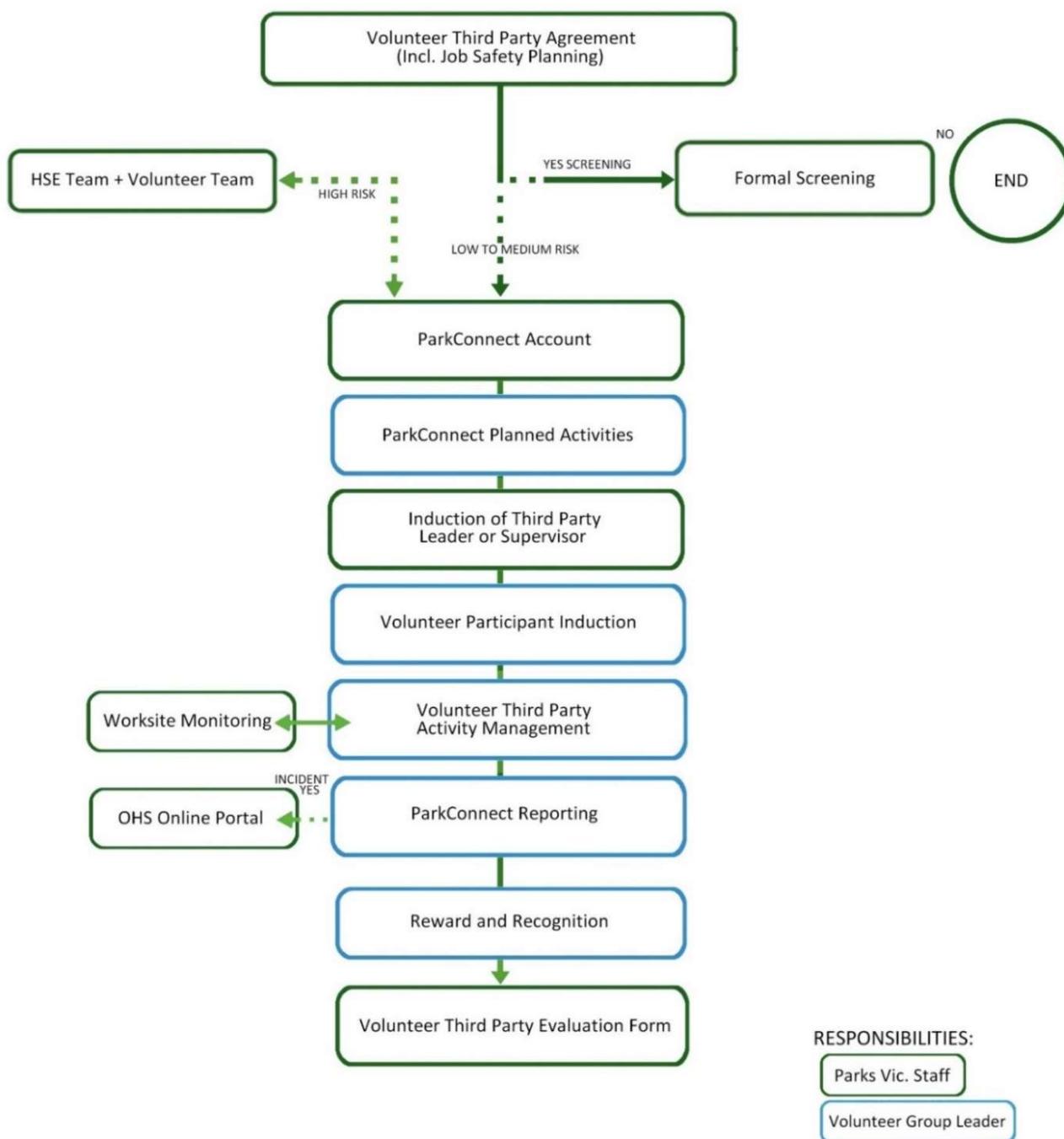


Figure 5. Process Flow Third Party Volunteer Partnerships

3.1 Planning for Third Party Volunteer Partnerships

Third-Party Agreement

A 'volunteer third - party agreement' is completed between the organisation and Parks Victoria; and it is approved at Director level. For further information on the definition of organisations eligible for Third Party Agreement refer to Part A section 1.5

If the organisation is intending to undertake scientific research and/or monitoring activities the volunteer third -party agreement will be replaced by a research permit. The appropriateness of this request will be determined through the research permit application process via ParkConnect and with the state-wide research team deciding upon the provision of a research permit to the group.

If an activity is deemed to require additional permits or licenses for example; a commercial agreement, community licence, Aboriginal heritage assessment the appropriate team must be contacted immediately by the Parks Victoria staff member for application.



Once the Volunteer Third- Party Agreement is signed the organisation is to be entered in to the ParkConnect CRM as a volunteer group account (if not already) and the agreement attached to the account record. The lead representative is to be established as the group leader with access to the groups I lead page via the ParkConnect portal.

Activity Planning

The activities a third-party organisation intends to undertake along with timelines are to be listed in the volunteer third-party agreement and agreed upon prior to signing. All activities will require the Parks Victoria staff member to undertake an initial assessment of level of risk which could range from low, medium or high. This is to be undertaken through a dynamic risk assessment process which evaluates the likelihood and consequence of a potential outcome using the HSE Corporate Risk Assessment Matrix. If any activity is assessed as 'significant and/or high' risk, a corporate Risk Assessment form must be completed. Following a review, the activity will be assessed as either appropriate for volunteer involvement or not.



Once the volunteer third -party agreement is signed all activities must be uploaded as ParkConnect planned activities under the organisations account. A Parks Victoria staff member must document within the volunteer third- party agreement whether the organisation or the staff member is to create the ParkConnect activities and if they will be promoted to the public or not.

If timelines were not confirmed or a change is required, the organisation must provide a minimum of 2 weeks' notice prior to commencing an activity by sending a planned activity or modified activity through the ParkConnect portal.

Many management requirements throughout the planning process for third-party organisations are the same as those of an Affiliated group. These are listed below with the relevant section for reference highlighted:

- [Partnerships with other groups](#) - p. 57 (noting the documentation in this instance a third-party agreement not AVAP)
- [Engaging Contractors](#) – p. 57
- [Applying for Grants](#) – p. 57

3.2 Recruitment

Selection

Volunteer selection is the responsibility of the third-party organisation.

The third-party is provided with Parks Victoria's volunteer code of conduct and terms and conditions as part of the volunteer third-party agreement and all volunteers must abide by these standards at a minimum.

Screening

Parks Victoria staff need to determine with the group whether the project/activities proposed whilst undertaking the partnership planning and volunteer third-party agreement phase, require screening.

All volunteer leaders and volunteers participating on the Parks estate via the third-party organisation will require a Working with Children Check after their first-time volunteering. The third-party organisation is responsible for managing the collation and recording of all screening documentation. This is not required to be held by Parks Victoria but will be required of the organisation if compliance monitoring is undertaken by Parks Victoria or other responsible agencies.

Any qualifications, accreditations and/or competencies required for the program/activities must be identified in the volunteer third-party agreement phase. The third-party organisation is responsible for ensuring that the volunteer group leader and/or volunteers have the required qualifications and competencies to complete the tasks. Collation and recording of these qualifications are the responsibility of the third-party organisation. They must be made available to Parks Victoria if worksite compliance monitoring is undertaken.

3.3 Registration

The third-party organisation is responsible for all registration processes of volunteers engaged within their program/activities. Parks Victoria will require, at a minimum, an end of project report including the number of volunteers, hours contributed and outcomes of the activity.



These details are to be entered into ParkConnect by the third-party organisation or the Parks Victoria staff member as determined in the Volunteer Third Party Agreement.

3.4 Induction and Training

Induction

The third-party organisation must assign a volunteer leader who will be responsible for leading the volunteers whilst undertaking the on-ground activities. The nominated leader must receive a Parks Victoria volunteer third-party induction with relevant inclusions to the site and activities. The volunteer third-party induction requires Parks Victoria staff to provide any Risk Assessments, JSA and or SWMs to be followed in accordance with Parks Victoria processes.

The third-party organisation is then responsible for inducting all volunteer participants at each activity. They must be provided with Parks Victoria's introductory video to pass on to volunteer participants to provide the necessary Parks Victoria background information. The third-party organisation must maintain any induction related documentation to be made available to Parks Victoria when worksite compliance monitoring is undertaken.

Orientation

The third-party organisation is responsible for the orientation of all volunteers participating in their program/activities. Orientation must include adequate safety information and documentation including a JSA, SWM, SSS or similar. The third-party organisations ability to orientate the volunteers adequately is to be assessed at the planning and volunteer third party agreement stage.

Safety management documentation and processes must be checked at this planning and agreement stage to ensure the organisation can appropriately manage the volunteers on site.

Training

The third-party organisation is responsible for ensuring all training requirements based on the program/activities within the volunteer third -party agreement stage are met by both the volunteer leader and volunteers. At a minimum, the volunteer leader must have a current First Aid certificate and have completed a volunteer third -party induction with a Parks Victoria staff member.

3.5 Implementation

Safety

The third-party organisation is responsible for the safe management of program/activities and volunteers.

No activities are to be approved that fall outside of Parks Victoria's own acceptable volunteer safety management for example use of quad bikes.

Personal Protective Equipment and Uniform

The third-party organisation is responsible for any provision of PPE and uniform to volunteers. At a minimum, appropriate PPE must always be adhered to as defined in the third-party volunteer agreement and resultant safety documentation and is to be provided by the third-party organisation.

For volunteer groups that would like to propose their own uniform displaying the Parks Victoria logo, support can be provided by the Parks Victoria marketing team and endorsement is required for details contact the State-wide Volunteer Team volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au.

Supervision

The third-party organisation is responsible for supervising the volunteers at all times.

It is expected that the nominated volunteer group leader that has attended the volunteer third -party induction with a Parks Victoria staff member will always be present on site.

Incidents

Even when a volunteer group is being managed under a third-party volunteer agreement any hazards, injuries, near misses or incidents that occur on an activity must be reported to the Parks Victoria staff member responsible for the partnership. This can be done via phone in the first instance with written documentation following using the general incident form.



The incident is also recorded in the ParkConnect planned activity which will alert the contact staff member.

3.6 Reporting

The third-party organisation is responsible for all registration processes of volunteers engaged within their program/activities. Parks Victoria will require, at a minimum, an end of project report including the number of volunteers, hours contributed and outcomes of the activity.

3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Worksite Monitoring

Worksite monitoring will be conducted by a Parks Victoria staff member. Worksite monitoring frequency is to be determined by the risk rating of the activity and stipulated in the third-party volunteer agreement.

At a minimum a Parks Victoria staff member must conduct at least one worksite inspection and monitoring visit within 6 months whilst a third-party volunteer group is undertaking their agreed program. If the program is longer in duration, one visit must be conducted every 6 months. At this visit the staff member will be required to complete a [worksite inspection form](#).

Evaluation

It's important that Parks Victoria staff undertake evaluation as to the success of the third-party volunteer partnership. At the end of the agreement the Parks Victoria staff member and organisation are to come together to evaluate the successes against the measurable outcomes planned at the volunteer third -party agreement stage. A post agreement evaluation form will be designed to aid in this process. This is an opportunity to also discuss challenges and opportunities for the future.



If the third-party organisation has a long-term agreement, then Parks Victoria staff must at a minimum undertake an evaluation once per year. **Once the evaluation is completed this must be uploaded on to the groups ParkConnect volunteer group account form.**

The third-party organisation is responsible for evaluating their own volunteer's satisfaction. Third -party volunteers can evaluate group volunteers in a variety of ways and may like to consider either via informal and formal mechanisms.

3.8 Reward and Recognition

Although managed as a third-party organisation it is still important to reward and recognise volunteer contribution.

Third- party organisations are eligible for Parks Victoria's recognition programs and Parks Victoria may support award submissions for other award programs.

Informal reward and recognition are still extremely important even in a third-party partnership arrangement to ensure the volunteers know they are valued. Parks Victoria staff will engage in this process as much as possible e.g. thanking volunteers for their time, greeting them when they arrive etc. See section Part A 4.8.



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