



DIAMOND VALLEY
community support

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**All you need to know about
Volunteering with
Diamond Valley Community Support**

June 2019

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

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FOREWORD

We are very pleased that you are a part of the Diamond Valley Community Support (DVCS) Volunteer Team and hope that your time with us is positive and rewarding.

Firstly, some history. DVCS was established in 1972 as the Diamond Valley Eltham Citizens Advice Bureau, an independent not-for-profit organisation providing emergency relief, referral, support and information to the people of Greensborough and surrounding suburbs.

Today DVCS is the leading Community Information Support Centre in the North East Melbourne Region covering North East Banyule and all of Nillumbik Shire. Each year approximately 2,000 people are assisted by DVCS.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone has equal access to information about their rights, responsibilities and services available. DVCS services are free, confidential, impartial and independent. We respect everyone's right to make their own decisions.

DVCS is managed by a committed and skilled group of volunteers (the Committee of Management), many of whom reside in the local area. DVCS operates social enterprises which help fund the organisation and our support programs. Our social enterprises include the Kingsbury Drive Community Market, the Hurstbridge Market and two Opportunity Shops located in Macleod and Diamond Creek.

DVCS is extremely fortunate to have a large volunteer base of experienced, dedicated, hardworking and passionate volunteers who form part of a friendly, fun and welcoming team. Volunteers are the backbone of our organisation and we are fortunate to have over 100 volunteers working across various roles. Our volunteers tend to stay with us for a long time. Indeed, many current volunteers have more than 20 and 30 years' service with our organisation.

The contribution of our volunteer team is highly valued and we aim to create to a positive and meaningful volunteer experience.

This handbook contains important information about DVCS and your role as a volunteer. We hope you find this handbook informative. Please take the time to read it and do not be afraid to ask questions.

All the Staff and Volunteers at DVCS greatly appreciate your time, effort and contribution, and we wish you all the very best in your volunteering role.

Warmest regards,



Judy Thompson
Executive Officer



Kerri Wellington
Client Programs and Volunteer Coordinator

DVCS PURPOSE AND VALUES

DVCS is a not-for-profit charitable organisation whose primary role is to provide information, support and referral services to people residing in the City of Banyule and Shire of Nillumbik.

Services are offered in a way that provides people with choices and empowers them to make informed decisions that best suit their needs. DVCS offers unbiased information and access to services that can enhance a person's skills and development opportunities to participate in community life. All DVCS services are free of charge.

Our Purpose

To provide support and assistance in the City of Banyule, Shire of Nillumbik and the surrounding areas to people who need relief from poverty, sickness, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness.

- Provide emergency relief by means of food vouchers, food parcels, financial assistance and other material to those in need.
- Assist in solving the problems that beset many of the disadvantaged by the provision of relevant information regarding rights, privileges, support services and help available, together with counselling services.
- Work in conjunction with other community organisations in providing services to alleviate poverty and distress within the community.
- Recruit, train and retain a staff of volunteers dedicated to providing expert assistance to enable individuals and families to cope with diverse life situations.
- Pursue gifts and donations from benefactors, benevolent societies and like organisations as a means of support.
- Ensure that individuals and groups have equal access to information about their rights, responsibilities and the services available, in order that they can be independent and effective members of the community.

Our Values

- Unity – we have a valued team of volunteers and staff who work together in caring for our clients
- Development – we constantly look for ways to develop and improve our services to meet our clients' current and future needs
- Opportunities – we give our volunteers and staff the means to develop new skills and reach their own personal and professional goals
- Cooperation – we collaborate with other relevant agencies and service providers to deliver efficient services that fulfil our clients' needs
- Responsibility – we demonstrate good governance and work to ensure we have the financial strength to sustain our purpose.

YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

DVCS volunteers can be involved in many different roles. These include:

- Receptionists who welcome visitors and assist those seeking information about the local community
- Community Support Workers who assist clients with emergency relief, information, advocacy and referral to other specialist support agencies
- Op Shop Workers and Supervisors who operate our Op Shops
- Administration and Data Entry Volunteers who assist with data reporting
- Project-based Volunteers who work on special projects
- Tax Help Volunteers who assist people navigate MyGov and submit their annual returns
- Personal Counsellors who support people experiencing personal problems
- Volunteers on our Committee of Management and other sub committees

There are endless opportunities for people who want to become a DVCS volunteer. We try to find roles that suit volunteer interests and skills and volunteers are invited to apply for new roles as they arise.

By volunteering at DVCS, you are not only contributing to building and developing a vital local community service and assisting vulnerable community members, but you will also gain a range of personal skills and satisfaction through your involvement.

Volunteering is all about making a difference in your community; it also benefits you personally as it offers the chance to:

- act on your values, passions and interests
- make new friendships and create professional networks
- gain work experience and learn new skills
- develop personally and build confidence
- enjoy better physical and mental health as studies show volunteering makes us healthier and happier
- challenge yourself in a supportive environment
- help your community
- have fun!

DVCS services wouldn't be able to be provided if it wasn't for the important, vital contribution our volunteers provide. Your volunteer efforts help enhance and extend the work of DVCS, improve the quality of life for clients and recipients of our services and benefit the community at large.

Making a World of Difference



Your Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights

As a Volunteer you have the right:

- to work in a healthy and safe environment
- to be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- to be adequately covered by insurance
- to be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working
- to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- to be given a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policy that may affect your work
- not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- to have a job description and agreed working hours
- to have access to grievance and OH&S incident reporting procedures
- to be provided with orientation to the organisation
- to have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act; and
- to be provided with comprehensive training to do the role.

Your Responsibilities

As a Volunteer you are accountable to DVCS and must abide by DVCS Code of Ethics at all times. The general duty of DVCS Volunteers is to act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence and to behave in a way that upholds DVCS values, integrity and good reputation.

More specifically it is your responsibility as a volunteer to:

- be reliable in meeting all agreed volunteering obligations
- be punctual and reliable in attendance
- respect the confidentiality of all colleagues and clients
- carry out the tasks defined in the position description
- be committed to the organisation, its values and philosophy
- carry out work agreed upon responsibly and ethically
- adhere to DVCS policies and procedures
- provide reasonable notice to any change in your ability to fulfil the role
- undertaking training as requested
- be accountable for all your efforts
- value and support other team members
- notify the organisation as soon as possible of absences or resignation.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All volunteers must comply with the Privacy and data Protection Act 2014 to protect personal information of clients, volunteers and paid staff.

As a volunteer, you may have authorised access to information relating to clients, paid staff, members of the public or the overall operations of DVCS. This information must be stored securely and appropriately at all times and not disclosed to any person including other paid staff, volunteers, friends or family except in the course of your volunteer duties.

Confidentiality of information must be respected for:

- Protection of the client and their right to privacy
- Protection of the DVCS service and its reputation
- Protection of the reputation of paid staff and volunteers.

DVCS is also committed to protecting your right to privacy. Further, it is important that you do not disclose your personal details to clients.

Conflict of Interest

It is important for volunteers to declare if they have self-interest, private affiliation or a likelihood of personal gain or loss in conjunction with their volunteer role. If you believe you have a conflict of interest, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Officer to advise the nature of a potential or realised conflict of interest.

Continuous Improvement

DVCS aims to provide safe and satisfying volunteering opportunities. To keep us on track we encourage volunteers to tell us how well things are going, what could be improved and any new ideas you may have to improve our volunteer program. We welcome volunteer involvement in decision making so please take advantage of opportunities to participate in our various committees and to provide feedback to your Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Recruitment, Induction and Orientation

A comprehensive recruitment, induction and orientation program is provided to welcome and prepare volunteers to undertake their role.

Through the induction process volunteers are provided with essential information about:

- The role and purpose of the organisation
- Their volunteer role and their position description
- The organisation philosophies and policies including Code of Ethics, OH&S and emergency procedures
- Introductions to other volunteers and staff
- Workplace layout
- Use of office equipment and procedures as relevant to the position.

Induction is a two-way process. You are the best person to identify your needs. Discuss them with your Volunteer Co-ordinator or Supervisor and ask if you have any questions or concerns.

Police Check and Working with Children Check

All volunteer applicants are required to undergo a National Police Check and may also be required to undergo a Working with Children Check. The purpose of the checks is to verify the identity of volunteers and to minimise possible risk arising from engaging volunteers inappropriately. The cost of these checks is covered by DVCS.

Probation

A probationary period of up to six months applies when undertaking a new volunteer role. This allows time for both the volunteer and the team to get to know each other. During this time the volunteer and Volunteer Coordinator will decide on the suitability of the role going forward.

Attendance

Your contribution helps to support many of our programs, services and activities and so it is important that all staff and volunteers are punctual and reliable. As a courtesy to colleagues, please let your Supervisor know as soon as possible if you are running late or are unable to attend a particular shift.

All volunteers are required to sign on and off at the beginning and end of each shift. This assists us in knowing where you are in case of an emergency and to make sure that we record your attendance for insurance purposes.

We also capture the volunteer hours undertaken across the various roles to recognise your contribution and for reporting purposes.

Holidays

Taking holidays is encouraged and is considered an important part of looking after yourself. Volunteer Supervisors need to know preferably one month in advance when volunteers intend to be absent from their role so a replacement can be found.

Resignations

Notice of resignation should be communicated as soon as possible to your Volunteer Supervisor who will arrange an exit meeting to thank you for your contribution, discuss any issues and receive your ID badge, keys, etc.

A resignation period of one month would be appreciated, in order to prepare for your leaving and find a replacement.

Volunteers who are finding that their role is no longer fulfilling are encouraged to speak to the Volunteer Coordinator who may be able to match them to another position.

Supervision and Support

Each volunteer team has a Volunteer Supervisor who is responsible to guide and oversee volunteers in their work programs. Volunteer Supervisors provide support by:

- Giving encouragement and constructive feedback
- Offering meetings and training with other volunteers who may be working in a similar role
- Sharing feedback from customers or other stakeholders on aspects of service delivery
- Considering your interest in decisions that affect you
- Inviting you to team meetings, special events and social functions
- Celebrating your achievements and efforts
- Where appropriate, provide a reference or act as a referee to your prospective employer

Training

DVCS provides the necessary training for volunteers to undertake their role. This is largely in the format of on-the-job training and is generally provided by the Volunteer Supervisor.

Additional training by way of access to workshops, information sessions and accredited training is offered on a regular basis and you are encouraged to attend to develop your skills and knowledge in providing services to the local community. Opportunities that may be of interest include first aid training, occupational health and safety training, mental health awareness, service provider information sessions and much more.

There is a requirement for our Volunteer Community Support Workers to have completed the accredited CSW course – Assess and Provide Services for Clients with Complex Needs. This includes undertaking a minimum number of hours observing client interviews and conducting interviews and assessments under the supervision of a mentor.

Safety & Security

DVCS is committed to establishing and maintaining systems to protect its staff, volunteers and visitors from exposure to the risk of injury or illness in the workplace.

As a DVCS volunteer we ask that you assist us in creating a safe and secure workplace by:

- Exercising due care in the performance of your duties to prevent accidents and injury to yourself, peers and clients.
- Reporting all accidents, injuries, near accidents and unsafe conditions to your Volunteer Supervisor, Volunteer Coordinator or other staff on duty. A First Aid report or Workplace Health & Safety Incident report is to be completed for every incident to help minimise the chances of similar hazards arising in the future.
- Working in groups of two or more at all times.

- Keeping all areas of the workplace, including storage areas, clean and tidy.
- Ensuring pathways between walkways, desks, shelving etc., are kept clear for easy access for staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Wearing appropriate clothing (neat casual dress) including closed toe shoes at all times. Identification name badges must also be worn when working in a volunteer role.
- Adhering to DVCS policies and procedures.

If you are feeling unwell, unsafe or insecure, please let the Volunteer Coordinator or your Supervisor know as soon as possible.

Personal Health

DVCS expects volunteers to be aware of their own health and wellbeing and ability to perform their role effectively. To this end, volunteers must report relevant health and/or disability issues to their Volunteer Supervisor before commencing duties or as soon as practicable after any change or injury occurs.

Every effort will be made to adapt duties and negotiate flexible hours to suit individual requirements. Please follow the instructions of your supervisor if requested to cease performing a particular task due to illness, injury or other factors that might be impacting your capacity to perform your role effectively.

We encourage volunteers to take time off from volunteering whilst recovering from illness or injury.

Fair Treatment and Grievance Resolution

DVCS aims to cultivate a culture of openness and transparency, where all staff and volunteers have working relationships characterised by mutual respect. Everybody has the right to be treated fairly and be able to undertake their role without fear of harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimisation. To this end, bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in any form will not be tolerated.

If you have a concern you should contact your Volunteer Supervisor in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the result of any informal discussions, you are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the Executive Officer.

Recognition

We like to highlight, recognise and reward the value that volunteers make to the community and we acknowledge our appreciation of volunteers in several ways.

National Volunteer Week is one event which is celebrated annually and is a special occasion to recognise the efforts and dedication of the DVCS volunteer team. We hold a celebratory afternoon tea where volunteers receive acknowledgement and length of service awards.

Other forms of recognition include:

- Christmas and end of year program celebrations
- Professional development training

- Promotion and recognition of volunteers and volunteer programs on Facebook, in Newsletters, Annual Reports and our website.
- Nominating volunteers and the efforts of our volunteer teams for recognition externally at events such as the Banyule Council Volunteer Awards and the Jagajaga Australia Day Awards.

We respect our volunteers by encouraging input and feedback, delegating authority, and giving discretion and responsibility in their volunteer duties, taking into account their skills and knowledge.

Insurance

It is DVCS's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided to protect volunteers, and the organisation against damage, loss and injury. DVCS has the following insurances to cover you while volunteering with us:

- Personal Accident Insurance provides specified benefits for registered volunteers following accidental injury, disability or death while carrying out their duties on behalf of DVCS;
- Public and Products Liability Insurance to cover DVCS for its legal liability to third parties for personal injury or property damage caused by the organisation's business activities;
- Professional Indemnity Insurance to cover DVCS for professional negligence claims (e.g. caused by incorrect specialist advice);
- Officers and Directors Liability Insurance to cover DVCS for against loss arising out of any Claim, by reason of any wrongful act committed by an Officer or Director.

DVCS is unable to provide insurance to cover damage to, or caused by, volunteers private vehicles. To insure for any possible damage to other vehicles, volunteers are required to maintain third part property coverage but are strongly advised to have full comprehensive insurance.

Expense Reimbursement

Volunteers will receive reimbursement for out of pocket expenses and fuel costs in the event that a volunteer uses their own vehicle or incurs personal costs to perform their volunteer role at DVCS.

Any speeding offences and traffic parking infringements incurred while performing a volunteer role cannot be paid by DVCS.

Receiving Gifts or Other Benefits

Occasionally volunteers may be offered a thank you gift from a customer or a client. Volunteers may accept gifts of a perishable nature such as flowers or chocolates but should inform their Volunteer Supervisor about any gift they accept. Volunteers must not accept non-perishable gifts, alcohol or money. If you have any queries or concerns regarding this, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

DVCS SERVICES and PROGRAMS

As a Community Information Support Service, DVCS aims to provide the local community with relevant, accurate and up-to-date information about local organisations, programs, services and activities across a broad range of interests and needs.

This can include brochures and flyers for community organisations like Neighbourhood Houses, public transport information, information to help link community members into specialist community support agencies with regard to housing, disability services, mental health, legal aid, financial counselling and employment and training opportunities, plus many others.

The range of services that DVCS provides includes the following:

Emergency Relief

DVCS provides Emergency Relief (ER) and provides direct material aid to people in financial and emotional crises. All clients are assessed by a trained Community Support Worker on an individual basis for their eligibility for each service.

ER may be available in the form of:

- Coles gift vouchers
- Diamond Valley FoodShare Referral
- Food pantry
- PTV Day Pass Cards
- Petrol vouchers
- Telstra vouchers & Phone cards
- Referral to other specialist support agencies
- Chemist Vouchers
- Mailbox Service
- DVCS Op Shop Referral
- Hygiene Poverty Programme (toiletries, sanitary items).
- TLC Bags, Kogo Knit Wear, Quilts

Back to School

The DVCS Back to School Program operates from November to February each year and provides financial assistance to families experiencing financial hardship to help meet the costs of education expenses. Assistance is available for primary and secondary school students who reside in the DVCS Banyule emergency relief area. Payments are made directly to the school and can assist with stationery, textbooks, excursions and camps, etc.

KidsAssist

The DVCS KidsAssist program aims to support needy families attending schools in the Shire of Nillumbik, and the suburbs of Macleod and Rosanna with education expenses and provides a pathway for schools to refer families and children who require financial assistance. KidsAssist funding can be applied for all year round and can be used to assist with expenses such as stationery, textbooks, electronic devices, excursions and camps, school sports and other essential school items and activities. Payments are made directly to the school.

Personal Counselling

A personal counselling service is available to clients one day per week at the Greensborough office. The personal counsellor can provide assistance and advice regarding matters relating to relationships, depression, anxiety, anger management and grief related symptoms. Clients can access up to five free counselling sessions of 50-minute duration and may be referred on for further sessions or to other services if the need arises.

Financial Counselling

Better Place Mediation and Counselling, an independent counselling service, provides one on one financial counselling support at the Greensborough office one day per week. Many clients have found this support extremely useful in understanding their spending and managing their money. The Financial Counsellor can help clients manage their finances, organise payment plans, advocate on behalf of clients with utility companies and debt collection agencies, apply for utility relief grants and give other financial information.

Family Legal Service

The West Heidelberg Legal Service offers a free family law service based at the Greensborough office on a fortnightly basis. The service provides clients with advice and support with regard to separation, divorce, child support, property settlement and dispute, custody and domestic violence matters.

Tax Help

The Tax Help Program is a free and confidential service available at the DVCS office annually from July to October. ATO accredited Tax Help volunteers give their time and expertise to help people prepare and lodge their tax returns online through MyGov and give assistance on how to complete tax returns in the future.

Banyule Children's Gift Appeal

DVCS is the major partner with Banyule Council in delivering the Banyule Children's Gift Appeal which supports vulnerable families at Christmas time. The end of year can be a very stressful time for many families as they struggle to meet the costs of school holidays, back to school expenses and Christmas all at the same time. The Banyule Children's Gift Appeal provides gifts and some welcome relief to disadvantaged families and their children on Christmas day. The program operates in November and December each year.

DVCS SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

DVCS receives funding from a number of sources. Some of this is from the Federal Government Department of Social Services (DSS) through CISVic, some in-kind funding and support from local Council, and sometimes through philanthropic donations and government grants. The majority of DVCS funding comes from DVCS Social Enterprises, which include the Kingsbury Drive Community Market, the Hurstbridge Market and the two Opportunity Shops in Macleod and Diamond Creek.

Opportunity Shops

DVCS operates two Op Shops – located at Macleod and Diamond Creek. There are more than 60 hard-working, committed and passionate volunteers that form the Op Shop Volunteer Team who staff and manage the shops six days a week.

Apart from raising funds, DVCS Op Shops provide clothing and goods to emergency relief clients in need, support and donate to other charities, promote volunteering in the local community and actively encourage product recycling.

The profits from DVCS Op Shops are essential in funding the DVCS emergency relief program and Back to School and KidsAssist Programs.

Kingsbury Drive Community Market

DVCS operates the Kingsbury Drive Community Market (KDCM) located at La Trobe University each week on Sundays between 9am and 1pm. There are over 150 stallholders who sell a large variety of crafts, bric-a-brac, flowers, produce and plants and many new diverse casual stallholders bringing something fresh to market, which complement the already wide variety of quality goods and fresh produce.

Proceeds from the KDCM help fund our operations including staff wages and operating overheads.

Hurstbridge Market

The Hurstbridge Market is held at Ferguson's Paddock in Hurstbridge on the first Sunday of every month from 8.30am -1pm. The Market includes artisan and craft stalls, fresh produce, entertainment, food trucks and incorporates the Hurstbridge Farmers Market.

Proceeds from the Hurstbridge Market will help fund emergency relief and other support programs in Nillumbik.

DVCS KEY CONTACTS

STAFF

Executive Officer:

Ms Judy Thompson

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Mobile: 0417 559 051

Email: eo@dvsupport.org.au

Office Manager:

Ms Anne Tattersall

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Email: admin@dvsupport.org.au

**Client Programs & Volunteer
Coordinator:**

Ms Kerri Wellington

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Email: volunteers@dvsupport.org.au

**Kingsbury Drive Community
Market Manager:**

Mr Darrell James

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Email: market@dvsupport.org.au

**Hurstbridge Market
Coordinator:**

Mr Gavin Watson

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Email: hurstbridgemarket@dvsupport.org.au

Bookkeeper:

Ms Evangelina Kealy

Phone: 03 9435 8282

Email: accounts@dvsupport.org.au

Opportunity Shops

**Macleod Op Shop:
44 Aberdeen Road
Macleod**

Coordinator: Ms Carmel Crane

Phone: 03 9456 9817

Email: opshop@dvsupport.org.au

**Diamond Creek Op Shop:
37 Chute Street
Diamond Creek**

Coordinator: Ms Cheryl Bahen

Phone: 03 9438 5656

Email: opshopdc@dvsupport.org.au

Emergency Numbers:

Police/ Ambulance and Fire: 000

Greensborough Plaza Centre Security: 0409 160 180

Greensborough Plaza Customer Service Desk: 9435 4000

Diamond Valley Community Support

Shop 378a - Level 3, Greensborough Plaza

Greensborough 3088

Telephone: 03 9435 8282 Email: info@dvsupport.org.au

Web: www.dvsupport.org.au

Hours: Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4.30pm

HANDY RESOURCES

Volunteering Victoria is the Victoria peak body for volunteering, training, support and advocacy. They offer a referral service and link volunteers with a diverse range of volunteer opportunities.

Website: www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the community.

Website: www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Community Information Support Victoria (CISVIC) is the state peak body representing community information support services such as DVCS. CISVic supports member agencies by providing training and workforce development opportunities, undertaking research and liaising with local, state and federal governments on behalf of member agencies for funding and support.

Website: www.cisvic.org.au

Other CISVIC member agencies located close by include:

- Banyule Support Information Centre Support – West Heidelberg
- Darebin Information Volunteer Resource Service – Preston
- Whittlesea Community Connections – Epping

THANK YOU

Every day we witness people making extraordinary contributions to the community by supporting many valuable projects and services.

We hope this booklet provides you with useful information to support you in your volunteering.

We genuinely thank you for your commitment to our organisation and wish you every success in your volunteer role.