

Environmental volunteering social research report

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Executive summary



Introduction and five key findings



Introduction

This executive summary outlines the findings and recommendations from a social research study conducted by Newgate Research for the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in July and August 2020, to enhance its understanding of the community's views on engaging in environmental volunteering and to inform communications and engagement.

The primary target audience for the research was the Victorian general public aged 15 years or over who were open to environmental volunteering, with findings at the total sample level being representative of this population across the State. Results are also presented for two priority audiences, which have traditionally been less engaged in environmental volunteering:

- Younger Victorians, aged 15-29 years; and
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups – in this case those who speak a language other than English at home.

The research comprised qualitative discussions with four existing volunteers (conducted online, individually and as a group), a two-day online community forum with four lapsed volunteers and 12 potential volunteers (considerers) and an online survey of n=1,000 lapsed or potential volunteers in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Photo credit: Yarra Ranges Landcare Network

Five key findings

1. There is significant latent interest within the Victorian community to get involved in environmental volunteering – and this is even higher among the two priority cohorts
2. The idea of getting out into nature holds particular appeal – to help wildlife, vegetation, and protect the natural environment for current and future generations to enjoy, whereas advocacy related environmental volunteering holds limited, niche appeal
3. Counter to findings from previous research, a lack of time was not found to be a key barrier to participation, though it was the most common spontaneous *stated* reason for not getting involved. Instead, a fear of committing to doing environmental volunteering on an *ongoing basis* was found to have a far stronger (and the biggest) impact on the public's more deeply considered likelihood to get involved – highlighting a barrier around attitudes and a lack of understanding of the options available, rather than being about capability or a lack of time
4. The environmental sector appears to have been too quiet to draw many people's attention to the need for volunteers; e.g. for the cohorts of interest, not even having thought about getting involved is the strongest barrier to overcome. This is an 'opportunity barrier' rather than motivation or capability related
5. Messaging that is designed to target *new* audiences in *different* ways is likely to be more effective than re-using approaches that attracted existing volunteers. How messaging is presented, including visual content and platforms used, has a meaningful impact on how it is received and persuades people to consider volunteering – particularly among priority groups in this study

Demands on time and spare time

The research literature on volunteering in general, and environmental volunteering in particular, highlights the importance of time availability to volunteering participation. A lack of time has been widely acknowledged as a key barrier to participation in volunteering – but is this the real issue?

The survey revealed some useful insight into the demands on people's time and the spare time that they have available (which might be used for volunteering – or at least to help environmental organisations challenge notions of people not having enough time). **All groups reported an increase in how much spare time they've had during the pandemic compared to pre-COVID conditions, rising from 26.1 to 36.5 hours on average per week.**

Most people expect their spare time to retract to near pre-COVID levels once restrictions are lifted, to an average of 28.6 hours per week. This still means an extra 2.5 hours per week on average that they didn't have before. This unprecedented period could be seen as a rare opportunity for the sector to leverage – tapping into this newfound spare time and inviting people to 'give it a go' while they do have more time (within COVID restrictions while these are in place).

Among the cohorts of interest:

- Young people reported the most significant uplift in spare time (from an average of 26.9 hours per week to 40.5 during the pandemic) which may reflect higher levels of job loss among this cohort.
- Those of a CALD background reported having less spare time before COVID (22.4 hours per week) and that they will continue to have less spare time (24.1 hours per week) afterwards.

Of course, volunteering competes with other activities to capture some of this spare time – noting that people's time always 'gets filled', perhaps as a result promoting the more automatic 'System 1' thinking* response of people not having any more time available. The range of spare time activities undertaken is detailed in the report. Of note was that the younger cohort reported higher involvement in online activities than older people, though this does not necessarily mean they are more interested in online forms of environmental volunteering.

Concern for the environment

Consistent with other research by Newgate, Victorians highly value a healthy environment and when forced to choose between a healthy economy and a healthy environment, the majority of those surveyed (65%) chose the latter. This was true for the whole community surveyed and for both priority audiences.

Most (85%) also reported that they were at least somewhat concerned about Victoria's environment, and around two-in-five (43%) were very or quite concerned. Here, somewhat more of the younger cohort were quite or very concerned than CALD participants (44% vs 37%). Indeed, an exercise in the online community illustrated this concern, with many participants painting a bleak picture of the Victorian environment when asked to project ahead to 2030 – highlighting the need for action to be taken now to avoid this scenario.

Nearly all of the lapsed and potential volunteers surveyed reported that they undertook 'softer' environmentally minded actions – using reusable shopping bags (91%) and recycling green waste (69%) being the most common. Almost half (47%) reported picking up other people's rubbish but this was less common among the younger cohort (38%).

Victorians' environmental values, concerns and existing behaviours could be leveraged within efforts to boost volunteering, as a way for people to help more.

Environmental volunteering

Unprompted understanding of what 'environmental volunteering' is revealed limited knowledge and engagement, anchored in more basic activities that take place 'in nature' e.g. planting trees and picking up rubbish. More generally environmental volunteering was seen as anything that leads to a cleaner and healthier environment. 'For nature' or advocacy activities were not top of mind.

The survey asked three times how likely participants were to give time to do any form of environmental volunteering in the next 12 months if the opportunity arose. When first asked, **just under a quarter (23%) of participants felt very or quite likely to get involved, rising to 64% when those 'somewhat likely' were included.** This suggests a **significant latent interest** in the community.

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who were **more worried about the environment were far more likely to see themselves getting involved:** 38% who were very or quite concerned about the health of Victoria's environment indicated they were very or quite likely to get involved, versus only 6% of those who were not very / not at all concerned.

* Kahneman (2011), "Thinking, Fast and Slow", United States

Executive summary (cont'd)

The two priority groups (CALD and younger people) were among those with the highest propensity for environmental volunteering: 76% of CALD audiences and 68% of those aged 15–29 were at least somewhat likely to get involved in the baseline measure. And counter to previous understandings in the sector, a significantly higher proportion of those aged 50+ reported they would be unlikely to participate.

Those inclined to give some time to environmental volunteering described having an interest in the environment or in volunteering as to why they might get involved. At this unprompted level, **younger people were especially motivated by a sense of passion and concern, while CALD cohorts were especially motivated to help improve the environment.**

Those unlikely to get involved gave the most common *spontaneous* reason as a lack of time, followed by restricted physical mobility (due to ill health, age). If pursuing the older cohort, demonstrating activities that are not physically strenuous will be important to help address this fundamental barrier. We consider lack of time claims later in this summary.

Preferences for participation in environmental volunteering

In line with their preconceptions about environmental volunteering, **people were more interested in activities based in nature (39%)** – especially protecting or restoring natural environments or rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife – **than home-based or advocacy** related activities (22%)*. Getting outdoors and connecting with nature were among the strongest motivators.

Younger people and CALD cohorts reported greater interest in advocacy opportunities – i.e. helping groups advocate for better environmental outcomes (26% and 28% very or quite interested vs 19% of all participants). Those aged 15–29 also responded more favourably to environmental volunteering which had a tone of activism, and had a notably higher interest in rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife (50% vs 38% of all participants).

Qualitative discussions highlighted a desire to contribute to one's local area or community – perhaps somewhat heightened by people spending more time locally during the pandemic. This was reflected in survey results, with half (50%) of those who preferred out-of-home activities wanting to stay within 10kms of home and 18% within 5kms. CALD participants had a more pronounced focus on local activities – 28% preferred to stay within 5kms of home.

Despite the large pool of latent interest, many held fears of commitment. Only a third (33%) of people were willing to commit to environmental volunteering on an ongoing basis (even if only a few times a year); the majority (53%) being more interested in one-offs or specific short-term projects. Those aged 50+ were most willing to commit on an ongoing basis (39% vs 28% of those aged 15–29 and 29% of those aged 30–49).

An important consideration when recruiting new environmental volunteers will be to ensure there are opportunities to 'try it out' either as a one-off activity or a time constrained opportunity. Emphasising the possibility of group-based activities will also be important, particularly for priority cohorts: 60% of 15–29 year olds and 50% of CALD cohorts would like to do this with friends (vs 40% of all participants).

Motivators and barriers

The initial qualitative discussions helped to surface a range of factors that serve as either motivators or barriers to giving time for environmental volunteering, to build upon existing knowledge. Survey participants were presented with a series of statements representing these known and new motivators and barriers, and asked to rate the extent to which they personally agreed or disagreed with each.

At least half of those surveyed agreed with each motivator – people can clearly recognise the many reasons for environmental volunteering. **Helping wildlife was the most compelling stated reason to get involved (83% agreed), overall and among young people.** We note that CALD cohorts were not only more likely to get involved, but also to agree with the motivators as well as indicating a higher propensity to get involved. This is quite common in social research and although there may be a slight element of overstatement or 'agreeableness' here, perhaps reflecting cultural characteristics, this should be seen as a useful baseline for future measurement, and an opportunity rather than a cause for concern.

Regression analysis was used to determine the motivations and barriers that were most influential or predictive of people's propensity for environmental volunteering.

Motivators that emphasised contributing to knowledge, fighting for the environment and connecting with nature were found to be most impactful in driving intentions at the general community level.

Some motivators emerged as more influential among the target cohorts. Young people were more motivated than others by reasons with activist tones (e.g. 73% wanted to fight for change vs 65% of all participants). CALD cohorts were not only more likely to feel this way (76%), but also notably more motivated than others by learning new skills (76%) and helping wildlife (87% vs 83%).

* NB: The research was intentionally program-agnostic, in that no individual environmental volunteering programs were highlighted or included in the research instruments.

Of the suggested barriers, agreement was the highest for a reluctance to commit to an ongoing involvement (49% agreed strongly or somewhat), and a lack of a catalyst (i.e. 'I haven't got around to it', at 47%) – more so than a lack of time which had much lower prompted agreement (27%). This suggests a lack of time may be used as an 'easy excuse' for not getting involved, despite a latent interest to do so. According to the Transtheoretical Model for behaviour change (also called the Stages of Change Model*), this shows some in the community have at least moved beyond the first stage of the six-stage process, from Precontemplation to Contemplation. These results further highlight a need to promote opportunities that don't involve an ongoing commitment, coupled with a call to action that makes it easy to give it a go.

For the two priority cohorts, not having thought about environmental volunteering before was the strongest predictor of intentions (i.e. lack of action to date), at 43% agreement among younger people and 41% of CALD cohorts. This indicates they are more likely to be at the very first stage in the change process (Precontemplation) – requiring a clear understanding of the problem, and why and how they should get involved. In addition to this 'opportunity' barrier, other key barriers revealed in the regression analysis related to 'motivation', and less so about their 'capability' to get involved:

- A standout barrier for younger people compared to others was a sense that it's not their responsibility (15% agreed vs 10% among all participants), suggesting a need to convey that 'everyone has a part to play'.
- CALD audiences were more affected than others by thinking their actions wouldn't make a difference (24% agreed vs 18% of all participants), highlighting the need to use empowering messages and imagery to show how easy it can be to have genuine impact.
- Of note is that older people stood out for citing capability related barriers – most specifically physical constraints or being too busy parenting.

Messaging

A suite of messages was developed and refined during the initial qualitative phases of the research, with a final set of 17 messages tested in the survey.

Succinct messages using simple language were preferred – anything too wordy or that uses complex language risked being ignored. The inclusion of a call-to-action and sense of empowerment within messages was also crucial, to help move people beyond the immediate 'I don't have time'.

A significant uplift in propensity for environmental volunteering was evident following exposure to the messages (from 64% at least somewhat likely to 73%). Using Newgate's MessageLab analysis, the messages that most contributed to this uplift were identified.

Messages that most shifted intentions for the wider community appealed to citizens' care and concern for the environment, and call for their help on behalf of the environment – as well as future generations.

In targeting younger people, the messages with the biggest impact addressed people individually, emphasising the 'care factor' and the possibility that they can make a difference. Supporting imagery also helped to maximise the impact of messaging among younger people. The most effective images showcased wildlife, the beauty of the natural environment and depicted social and fun aspects of environmental volunteering.

For people of a CALD background, the most persuasive messages were those that emphasised the potential to make a positive contribution to the natural environment in Victoria, promoting inclusion and serving as an invitation to join other Victorians who have jumped onboard to become environmental volunteers.

Information sources

The idea of a centralised resource which people could register with to find out about environmental volunteering was tested with survey participants. Responses suggest the idea is worth pursuing – some 36% indicated they would be quite or very likely to register with such a service – and in line with their higher propensity to get involved compared with others, this was even higher among the younger cohort (at 42%). People felt this should be managed by an organisation that was independent of any individual environmental group; in this case a substantial 45% were most comfortable with the Victorian Government doing so, or Sustainability Victoria (44%).

Generally though, people would be most trusting of local sources for information about environmental volunteering opportunities (which aligns with the general preference for getting involved in pursuits close to home) – local environmental groups (61%), the Victorian State Government (56%) or local councils (54%). Young people were also more inclined to trust social media sources (30% vs 20% of all participants), and being online more than older people, this provides further evidence that online advocacy and activism opportunities may exist this group – albeit latent ones.

Key takeouts by audience

Key motivations to leverage*

Key barriers to overcome*

Key messages to communicate

(Reflecting combined analysis of Persuasion and Motivation for the messages tested, as well as motivations and barriers)

Channels and trusted voices

Whole Victorian community

Efficacy / Values / Place based

- Contribute to our environmental understanding
- Fight for environmental issues or change
- Connect with nature

Motivation / Opportunity

- Reluctance to make an ongoing commitment
- Not that interested
- Haven't thought about it

- *You can help give the environment a voice*
- *Act now to protect the places, plants and animals you love for our future*
- *Just a little of your time can make a world of difference*

- Local environmental groups
- State / Local governments
- Sustainability Victoria

Younger people (15 – 29 years)

Values / Place / Learning & development based

- Fight for environmental issues or change
- Connect with nature
- Feel good about yourself

Opportunity / Motivation

- Haven't thought about it
- Not my responsibility
- Don't want to commit

- *Because you care about the environment ...*
- *You can be part of the solution ...*
- *Where every little action makes a big difference*

- Local environmental groups
- State government
- Social media platforms
- Education bodies

CALD background (Speak a LOTE)

Efficacy / Learning & development / Values based

- Contribute to understanding
- Learn new skills
- Help wildlife

Opportunity / Motivation / Capability

- Haven't thought about it
- Don't want to commit
- Not physically able

- *Every little action makes a big difference*
- *Victoria's environment needs your help*
- *Join in to help care for our environment - it's in our nature*

- Local environmental groups
- State / Federal governments

* Because these had the biggest impact on people's likelihood to get involved in environmental volunteering.



The research findings in this report give rise to the following seven broad recommendations to help the Department in its aim of engaging audiences of interest and increasing participation in environmental volunteering:

1. **Plant the seed.** Be more proactive in reaching out to the community to raise awareness of the problem and need for action: make it clear that the environment needs everyone's help – and more specifically, that more environmental volunteers are needed. This is especially important for young people and CALD audiences who tend to be at the 'Precontemplation' stage of the process of getting involved; i.e. they haven't even thought about it.
2. **Allay commitment anxieties and 'reset the clock'.** Emphasise that an ongoing commitment is not necessary and that taking action can be quick, close to home, easy and still make a real difference – promote opportunities and tangible examples for one-off or short-term activities that will allow people to 'sample' environmental volunteering, especially as people expect to have more time on their hands in future (e.g. 'why not join a local beach clean up for just an hour or two and see how much you can achieve?', with results-based images from past clean-ups).
3. **Fly the flag.** Explore how to better promote ways for people to get involved, the many types of activities available and, importantly, show how their involvement will lead to positive outcomes.
4. **Change tac.** Be mindful that this is not about 'preaching to the converted': different messaging, language and channels may be required to attract new groups of people who haven't traditionally engaged with the sector. In addition to targeting messaging by segment, messages should encourage deeper reflection to go beyond the automatic 'I don't have enough time' to tap into people's values, while conveying empowerment and inclusion.
5. **Get organised.** Give further consideration to the idea of a centralised resource for individuals to register their interest and enable organisations to reach out to interested people more actively – including a scenario in which this is managed by DELWP and/or Sustainability Victoria.
6. **Engage the sector to strategically map the way.** Generating an increase in environmental volunteerism will require a strategic, joint effort by the Department and the sector to engage, communicate to, and drive behaviour change by targeted community cohorts. Aligning all stakeholders to understand how to coordinate efforts, facilitate buy-in for such a strategy or campaign, and rollout messaging will likely be the difference between success and a lack thereof.
7. **Test materials.** Building on Recommendation 6, such a strategic approach to communications or a campaign should include consideration of further research with the community – including priority audiences – to test and refine engagement materials and tools.

Specific recommendations follow for targeting Victorians overall, as well as the two priority audiences.



Background, objectives and methodology



Background and objectives

Background

The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) contracted Newgate Research to conduct a robust social research study with the Victorian public to enhance its understanding of the drivers and barriers to engaging in environmental volunteering, and to inform communications approaches and campaign development. The ultimate goal here is to use this research to expand the environmental volunteering base by recruiting new volunteers.

The primary target audience for the research was the Victorian general public, noting that this spanned the whole State. Therefore location quotas were set for Melbourne versus the rest of the State to ensure robust samples of both and enable analysis of differences. However, the Department was particularly interested in the following priority audiences which have traditionally been less engaged in environmental volunteering:

- **Younger Victorians, aged 15-29 years**
- **Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups** – defined throughout this report in terms of those who speak a language other than (or in addition to) English at home, though we also captured which country people were born in to enable additional analysis of this cohort.

More specifically, the core focus for the research was with potential environmental volunteers. As such, the research needed to exclude those who rejected the idea of doing environmental volunteering, though re-engaging lapsed volunteers was of interest to the Department. And while there was limited value in including active environmental volunteers within scope, a small number were included in the developmental stage to provide context for the main study. The following definitions were agreed upon for use in the research:

- **Existing volunteers:** Had volunteered or given time for the environment for no financial gain in the past 12 months;
- **Lapsed volunteers:** Had volunteered or given time for the environment for no financial gain, but more than a year ago;
- **Potential future volunteers:** Had never volunteered or given time for the environment (for no financial gain) but would consider doing so.

Research purpose and objectives

The natural environment is facing unprecedented challenges due to climate change and a wide range of other existential threats. Environmental volunteering plays a vital role in sustaining biodiversity, and while Victoria has an impressive history of volunteering, already low levels of participation have been declining in recent years. Further, recent research by the Australian National University* found that volunteering in general had reduced significantly due to COVID-19. This context highlights an ongoing and heightened need to sustain and expand the volunteering effort – but also potentially a significant opportunity to engage people in new ways as a result of this ‘pause and reset’ moment for not only Victorians but also humanity.

The findings from this research will be used to progress the implementation of the ‘*Victorians Volunteering for Nature - Environmental Volunteering Plan*’. Specifically, this includes guidance on adapting existing environmental volunteer programs to be more inclusive and appealing; informing recruitment campaigns to attract more Victorians to volunteer for nature in ways that are enjoyable and impactful; providing practical advice and support to program managers and environmental volunteer groups on recruiting new volunteers and keeping existing volunteers engaged; and informing the types of activities that are prioritised and promoted by the Department and its partners.

Against this backdrop, the main objectives of the research were to gain an understanding and measure of:

- What would motivate people to do environmental volunteering and, conversely, what is preventing them from getting involved, or why have they lapsed?
- What levers can be pulled to activate latent interest in environmental volunteering? How could former environmental volunteers be re-engaged?
- What specific environmental volunteering activities – including those *within* nature and those *for* nature – are most appealing and likely to be undertaken? What is it that appeals about some activities over others?
- What messaging and which communication channels would be most effective in reaching and engaging new or lapsed environmental volunteers?
- For all areas of exploration, where are there meaningful and actionable differences between subgroups of the population (i.e. demographic cohorts), particularly for young people aged 15-29 and the CALD community?

* Biddle, Grey (2020), “The experience of volunteers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic”, ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods

A multi-phase, mixed method research program to explore the drivers and barriers to engaging in environmental volunteering, focusing on potential and lapsed environmental volunteers in Victoria.

Newgate took a broad **behaviour change lens** to the research, drawing on learnings from the Department's briefings and literature review ('Youth & environmental volunteering: motivations & barriers'), as well the **Stages of Change and COM-B frameworks**. The Stages of Change model posits that behaviour change is a process people have to move through, with different intervention opportunities at each stage to help them move to the next stage, and the COM-B model considers that behaviour is facilitated by having the right Capabilities (C), Opportunities (O) and Motivations (M) in place – again, with different interventions required depending on the nature of the barriers that exist. We also sought to build on the **Proposed functional framework for EV motivations** outlined in the literature review.



1. Qualitative discussions with existing volunteers



2. Qualitative forum with potential volunteers



3. Quantitative measurement

- **Why:** To help shape the subsequent research materials and sense check outcomes won't alienate the core base
 - **What & who:** Individual interviews (30-minutes), followed by a group discussion (30-minutes) with 4 existing volunteers
 - All had participated in environmental volunteering in the past 12 months
 - Sample included 2 females, 2 males, 1 CALD, 1 aged 15-29 and 3 aged 30+
 - **Platform:** Online via Zoom
 - **Facilitators:** Jasmine Hoyer, Keith McGowan, Siobhan Twist (as per Stage 2 fieldwork)
 - **When:** Wednesday 22nd July 2020
-
- **Why:** To explore knowledge, experiences, values, drivers and barriers, gain feedback on messaging and shape the survey
 - **What & who:** Two-day online community forum with potential volunteers:
 - 12 potential new volunteers: had never done environmental volunteering but would consider it
 - 4 lapsed environmental volunteers who had not done any activities in the last year
 - Sample also included a mix of:
 - ✓ Males and females
 - ✓ Those aged 15-29 years and 30+
 - ✓ Non CALD & CALD (those who also speak a language other than English)
 - ✓ Locations (residents of Melbourne and the rest of Victoria)
 - **Platform:** Recollective
 - **When:** 28th and 29th July 2020
-
- **Why:** To measure interests, motivations and barriers to prioritise the focus of programs and messaging
 - **What & who:** Online survey of n=1,000 Victorian residents aged 15+ who were not involved in environmental volunteering in the last 12 months (if ever), but would consider it in future
 - Panel sample from Lucid, with quotas set to enable analysis of key groups:
 - ✓ Aged 15 -29 years
 - ✓ CALD audiences (LOTE)
 - Quotas also set by sex, broad age groups and location (Melbourne vs rest of Victoria) to ensure a broadly representative sample of the public
 - Weighting was applied to the survey dataset to more accurately reflect the target population. For full details of the participant profile and weighting approach, please see the Appendix
 - **Average completion time:** 20 minutes

+ **Strategic communications support** from Newgate Communications for 'campaign ready' message development



When interpreting findings in this report, please note:

- For all survey results, the base (number and type of respondents asked each question) and the survey question itself are shown in the footnote.
- All survey results have been examined for statistically significant differences between subgroups (within the same category) where meaningful in the context of the question. For example, the subgroup of those aged 15 to 29 years has been tested against those aged 30 plus, or where relevant 30 to 49 years and those aged 50 years or older, and for the CALD audience, the comparison was made between those who prefer to speak a language other than English at home versus those who only speak English.
- Where significant differences have been noted, they are significant at the 95% confidence level. Where no differences have been noted, it should be assumed that no differences existed or were meaningful. Significant differences are indicated using coloured boxes:

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

- Throughout the report, the term 'net' has been used where survey responses from a similar group or that are similar in nature are grouped into one overarching theme (e.g. 'strongly agree' and 'somewhat agree' netted as 'net agree').
- Survey results may not always total 100% due to rounding or multiple-response questions. Where questions were multiple response this is noted in the footer, which provide the question and base (nature and number) of participants asked each question.
- To ensure data reliability, survey results are typically only shown when the base size is at least n=30. Results with lower base sizes, where used, should be interpreted with caution.
- Qualitative research findings have been included throughout this report to provide richer context to the survey findings. Please note that qualitative findings should not be considered statistically representative and cannot be extrapolated to the general population. To help enhance the mix of qualitative participants (as recruited by Read Recruitment using a specification and screening questionnaire prepared by Newgate), incentives were paid to each participant in line with industry standards.



Setting the scene

Setting the scene: Key findings



Photo credit: Landcare Australia Limited

This section provides context for the later sections which focus on environmental volunteering. It provides information on how people spend their time and what spare time they have available – including how this has been affected by restrictions due the COVID-19 pandemic. A measure of past involvement in, and future consideration of, volunteering and activist behaviours is provided as well as views and concerns about the environment.

Key findings:

- Estimates of participation in environmental volunteering were higher than previous surveys have found – reflecting a broader definition that includes informal activities.
- The survey sample comprised lapsed and potential new environmental volunteers – 18% of whom were already involved in other forms of volunteering.
- Most people expect to have a little extra spare time after pandemic restrictions are eased – 2.5 per week on average; something the sector should explore how to leverage.
- Older participants and those who do not have dependent children reported having the most spare time.
- Those from a CALD background have less spare time than others (they are also more likely to be parents), and they expect this to continue after the pandemic.
- Concern for the environment is high and most people already engage in 'soft' environmental behaviours.

Environmental volunteering segments

The survey was conducted with lapsed (and not active) environmental volunteers and those who have not taken part in environmental volunteering before but would consider doing so (considerers).

Survey participants were screened to establish their past involvement with environmental volunteering and future intentions. They were allocated to one of four segments:

1. **Active:** Those who have taken part in environmental volunteering within the past 12 months
2. **Lapsed:** Those who have taken part in environmental volunteering more than 12 months ago and would consider doing so again
3. **New considerers:** Those who have not taken part in environmental volunteering before but would consider doing so
4. **Rejectors:** Those who would not consider taking part in environmental volunteering in future – noting that this may have included people who have done so before and did not want to do so again

Only the Lapsed and Considerers segments qualified for the survey. The Active and Rejectors segments were considered ineligible.

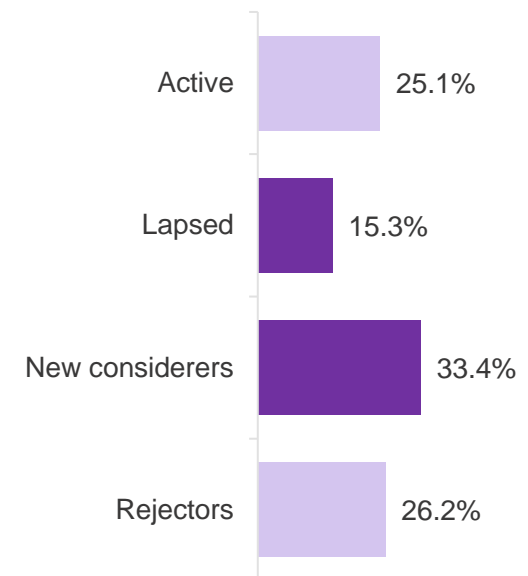
The screening data suggested a higher incidence of participation in environmental volunteering than was expected – if compared to the General Social Survey* (GSS). There are however some methodological differences which go some way to explaining the variation.

Mode effect – the GSS is administered via face-to-face interviewing and uses probability-based sampling whereas this survey was administered online, and participants were sourced from opt-in research panels. There is some evidence that people on research panels are more likely to engage in volunteering (although not environmental volunteering specifically).

Question framing – the GSS item emphasises formal volunteering activities whereas this survey used a broad definition of environmental volunteering (see opposite) which may well have picked up a broader mix of both formal and informal activities.

Notably, there were no significant skews in the demographic profile of either the Lapsed or Considerer segments – who represent around half of the population. We are confident that the research sample and weighting factors (described further in the Appendix) provide an accurate view of the target audience: i.e. members of the Victorian public who are open to environmental volunteering but not actively doing so.

Environmental volunteering segments (including those screened out of survey)



‘Volunteering or giving your time to something for no financial gain – specifically for the environment’

Most people feel they have at least a little spare time to do whatever they wish (and more than half have a fair bit or a lot) – with those who are older and don't have children reporting the most spare time.

Before they knew the specific topic of the survey, nearly 6 in 10 participants (58%) reported having a fair bit or a lot of spare time to do whatever they wish. On average, people reported about 10 hours more spare time per week now compared to pre-pandemic levels (36.5 vs 26.1 hours).

There is an expectation of having an average of 2.5 hours more spare time after restrictions have been lifted versus pre-pandemic levels. This may, at least in part, reflect an expectation of working remotely more often – with some spare time freed up for many due to not having to commute every day. It would be worth exploring how the environmental sector might tap into this rare opportunity.

Those aged 15 to 29 years were less likely to say they have a lot of spare time. Conversely, they were also less likely to say they have no spare time. However, they reported a significant increase in spare time during the pandemic – this may reflect higher levels of job loss among this younger cohort (compared to older age groups), noting that they expect their spare time to return to near pre COVID levels once restrictions are eased.

CALD participants reported having less spare time than non-CALD participants. Notably, these participants were also far more likely to have children (45% vs 31% of those who only speak English), and parents generally reported having less time than non-parents.

Of interest is that 27% of all survey participants said later in the survey that they didn't have any time for environmental volunteering, but here these people indicated an average of 21.4 hours per week of spare time (pre-pandemic). By comparison, those who *disagreed* that they had no time indicated an average of 29.4 hours spare time a week. This highlights that while most people *do* have some spare time, other priorities are doing a better job of competing for it than the environment.

Would you describe yourself as someone who has...? (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
A lot of spare time	15	10	11
A fair bit of spare time	43	46	43
A little spare time	38	43	43
No spare time	4	1	3

Hours of spare time per week (average)

Before the pandemic	26.1	26.9	22.4
Now	36.5	40.5	31.4
Expected when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted	28.6	28.4	24.1

Least spare time (after pandemic):

- Parents (19.5 hours)
- Aged 30-49 years (21.9 hours)
- Employed full-time (25.3 hours)

Most spare time (after pandemic):

- Retirees (38.8 hours)
- Aged 50 plus (34.8 hours)
- Non-parents (32.7 hours)

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

How spare time is spent

Watching television or movies is, universally, the most common free time activity. While young people report some distinct interests in how they spend their free time, CALD participants had no standouts.

Young people (aged 15 to 29 years) had some distinct interests in terms of how they spend their free time...

As might be expected, they were significantly more likely to say they spend their free **time browsing online, including using social media (also a more popular pastime among CALD cohorts)**. This will be a key channel through which to engage both of the priority cohorts.

Younger males were most likely to spend their free time either **gaming** (76% vs 28% of females) or **playing sports** (42% vs 19%). This suggests that an element of gamification might be effective in engaging this cohort.

Young people were less likely to say they like to spend free time with family. Promoting aspects of independence may be a way of connecting with them.

Just under a fifth of participants reported that they liked to do **volunteering** during their free time.

This was highest among **retirees** (33%) and those aged **50 years or older** (23%).

On average, volunteers spent **5.4 hours** per week doing so.

Leisure activities (% who like to do each activity)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Watching television / movies	76	74	72
Spending time with family	69	61	73
Browsing online, including using social media	62	69	71
Socialising with friends	61	65	53
Exercising	54	56	59
Reading	49	40	42
Outdoor activities, including going to the beach or parks	45	47	40
Gardening	40	17	34
Creative hobbies (e.g. art, music)	32	37	31
Gaming	25	47	28
Playing sports	18	28	21
Volunteering / giving time to community groups, organisations or causes	18	15	19

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Volunteering and related behaviours

Younger people were far more likely to report a willingness to stand up for causes they believe in, despite few having done so to date. Later in the report we can see this is likely due to not having thought about it and/or a lack of opportunity to do so.

Young people (aged 15 to 29 years) reported a willingness to take action for causes they believe in.

While they were less likely to have donated blood or made a financial donation in the past; they were open to doing so in the future.

Almost half (48%) of those aged 15 to 29 years indicated they would consider attending a demonstration, protest or rally – a significantly higher proportion than those aged 30 years or older.

Those who speak another language were less likely to have donated money or posted a comment online for a cause they cared about, or done environmental volunteering compared to others. Also, a higher proportion of those born in Australia reported they would consider attending a demonstration (32%) or signing an online petition (22%) compared to those born overseas (23% and 14% respectively).

Those classified as environmental volunteering considerers were more likely to consider *all* of these behaviours, compared to those classified as lapsed environmental volunteers.

Have done this before (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Donating money to a cause you care about	81	74	72
Signing an online petition for any cause	67	68	66
Volunteering or giving your time for no financial gain - for any reason or cause	65	59	58
Posting a comment online as part of a discussion or debate about any cause	49	48	39
Donating blood	38	22	38
Volunteering or giving your time for no financial gain - for the environment	31	28	23
Attending a demonstration, protest, or rally	17	14	16

Haven't done before but would consider it* (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Attending a demonstration, protest, or rally	30	48	24
Signing an online petition for any cause	20	23	17
Posting a comment online as part of a discussion or debate about any cause	27	29	31
Volunteering or giving your time for no financial gain - for any reason or cause	33	38	39
Donating blood	43	64	47
Donating money to a cause you care about	15	23	26

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Outdoor activities

Almost everyone spends at least some time outdoors. Walking is, universally, the most common outdoor activity and around half enjoy simply spending time in nature.

Those aged 15 to 29 years were more likely to take part in a range of **active outdoor activities**, such as jogging/running, bushwalking/hiking, water sports and trail running.

They were also more likely (than older age groups) to **walk a dog** outdoors, whereas CALD participants were significantly less likely to do this – perhaps because they are much less likely to own a dog (19% vs 39% of those who only speak English at home). CALD cohorts were more likely than others to engage in jogging and visiting playgrounds (the latter reflecting that they were more likely to be a parent).

Unsurprisingly, young people were significantly less likely than their older counterparts to take part in gardening.



Outdoor activities (% who take part, at least occasionally)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Going for walks (for leisure or exercise)	68	66	66
Just spending time out in nature	47	46	53
Gardening	45	21	39
Visiting national parks or places of interest	40	37	37
Visiting the beach (swimming, surfing, sunbathing, walking)	39	39	42
Dog walking	28	35	15
Jogging / running	23	37	35
Bushwalking / hiking	20	29	19
Going to playgrounds	16	13	24
Cycling (including mountain biking)	16	18	17
Birdwatching	6	4	7
Water sports (e.g. kayaking, windsurfing)	5	8	3
Trail running	4	6	4
Net – Any outdoor activity	95	94	95

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

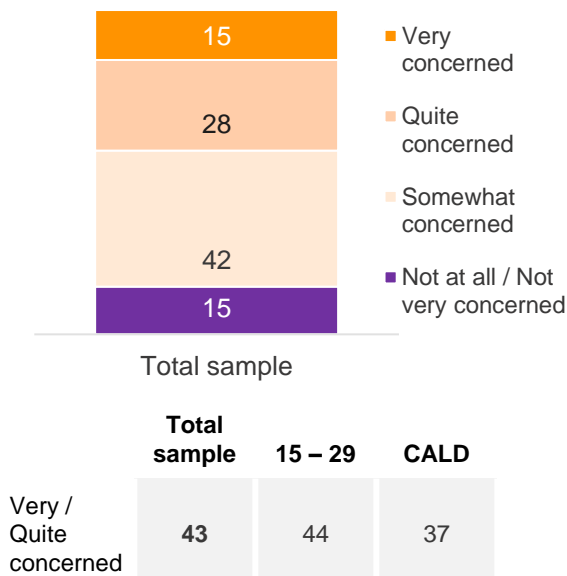
Values and concern for the environment

More Victorians value a healthy environment over a healthy economy (when asked to choose) and nearly all behave in some way with the environment in mind. Younger and CALD cohorts were no different here.

More than two in five surveyed were quite or very concerned about the health of Victoria's natural environment (43%) – with similar levels among the cohorts of interest.

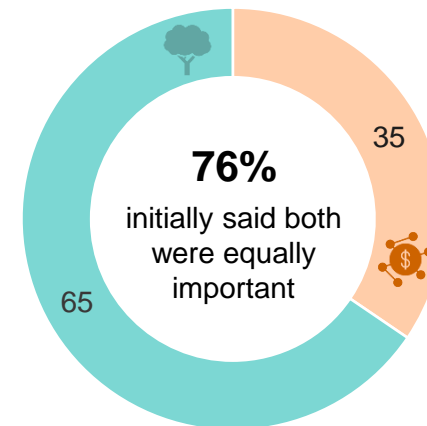
The younger cohort was just as likely to do many of the things others do with the environment in mind, except for **picking up other people's rubbish**. This activity has been in the spotlight during the pandemic – perhaps there is an angle that can be used to engage young people on this front?

Concern for Victoria's environment (%)



Which is more important to you? (%)

	15 – 29	CALD
A healthy economy	32	30
A healthy environment	68	70



This is unchanged from a February 2020 survey when 66% of Victorian participants said the environment was more important to them and 34% said the economy was more important, when asked to choose, illustrating environmental leanings and values in the community.*

Environmentally minded behaviours (% who do at least occasionally)



Take reusable bags when you go shopping	91	88	90
Recycle food and organic waste (green waste)	69	64	62
Pick up other people's rubbish / litter when you are out and about	47	38	44
Take your soft plastics to the supermarket for recycling	33	29	37
Sign petitions for environmental causes	27	29	19
Donate money to environmental organisations	17	17	12
Purchase carbon offset units (e.g. when booking a flight)	9	11	7
None of these	3	5	2

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Environmental outlook: Note from future self

Most of the qualitative research participants were pessimistic about the environment in the future, highlighting the need to promote ways for people to take action now and build a sense of empowerment.

Qualitative participants were asked to write a note from their 2030 'future self' focusing on the condition of Victoria's environment, their concerns and their advice to their 2020 'current self'.

The common themes that emerged included:

- A belief that the health of the environment would continue to degrade, rather than improve;
- That pollution would worsen, with negative impacts on air quality and people's health;
- That there would be more development in Victoria with more crowded spaces and less greenery to enjoy;
- That the ongoing extinction and loss of wildlife would worsen; and
- That they didn't know what to do about it, or felt that it was inevitable.

However, there were a few who were more positive about Victoria's future environment. They felt that in ten years, people would be more respectful and conscious about the environment and the impact of their decisions, e.g. having a greater focus on recycling and reduction of waste.

The concern that many people share about the environment is something that can be touched on in communications to motivate and engage people to get involved – especially with the view of giving people a sense of hope and empowerment.

"Mate, I told you to look after the waterways and that included the little streams. Waterways need to be healthy and we need to protect everything that goes with them. It is not all about fish, it is also about the frogs, grasses and every other living thing along our waterways. You have allowed over development in the country and also allowed over development too close to our rivers and streams. I told you this would damage our environment and it is. In the cities and including Melbourne you are letting far too much waste flow into what was once pristine waterways. In some areas you have killed everything, mate. You need to start taking immediate action to cease any damage and put in place plans to rectify your damage."


- 60-69yr old, Non-CALD

"Pollution will be greater than ever and air quality will decline. We will have more efficient ways of managing pollution and air quality than we do currently, however it will be too late to negate the poor effects of our bad behaviour. Sky rise buildings will continue increasing in suburban areas especially where there were once beautiful parks and greenery, a multi million dollar complex destroys it. I will worry about the future of my children (which I do not have now, but by 2030 I probably will). With pollution worsening, this could greatly affect their health. I didn't take many actions other than recycling and trying to minimise the use of resources through turning off power points when I can, and not wasting food where possible."


- 15-29yr old

*"I'm hopeful the environment is better as people are more conscious of its impact. I have a younger brother and sister who are aware because they learnt it in school, whereas this was never a focus when I was in school. I believe the environment is always something to be worried about or conscious about as it is **something that cannot be vocal when it is suffering**. I incorporated sustainable living in my home however I could have participated outside of my home environment. **If anything was standing in my way it would be being unsure where to go to help the environment.**"*

- 15-29yr old



Environmental volunteering: Understanding and interest



Environmental volunteering: Key findings



Photo credit: Drew Ryan, Zoos Victoria

This section provides an overview of preconceptions about environmental volunteering and insight into the appeal of different types of environmental volunteering activities.

Survey participants were asked to describe, in their own words, what they understood 'environmental volunteering' to mean. They were asked to rate how interested they would be in taking part in various environmental volunteering activities and the ways in which they would like to get involved.

Key findings:

- Top of mind perceptions of environmental volunteering were largely focused on 'in nature' activities whereas activities 'for nature' were not as prominent.
- Planting trees and picking up rubbish were the two main activities that people immediately think of in relation to environmental volunteering.
- Otherwise, environmental volunteering is thought of as anything that leads to a cleaner, and healthier, environment.
- Latent propensity for environmental volunteering is strong – almost two thirds of participants would be at least somewhat likely to get involved if the opportunity arose (rising to three quarters of those who had indicated they were highly concerned about the health of Victoria's environment). However, the majority are cautious about getting involved in anything ongoing, with over half saying they'd prefer it to be once-off or over a short-term project
- Despite their numbers traditionally having been lower, younger people (aged 15 to 29 years) and CALD participants were among those with the greatest propensity for environmental volunteering. So the barriers will be important to understand, to tap into this latent interest.
- Overall there is greater interest in activities 'in nature' (helping wildlife or the natural environment) than those that are 'for nature' however interest in issues-based activities was higher among younger people.

Understanding of environmental volunteering

Unprompted perceptions of environmental volunteering are dominated by activities undertaken 'in nature' to mitigate environmental impacts or damage.

Unprompted associations with environmental volunteering were mostly anchored within 'in nature' activities. Two activities were prominent...

- Around a third (34%) of people thought this was about **planting trees** – perhaps an entrenched legacy of childhood (i.e. when kids participate in National Tree /Arbor Day).
- **Picking up rubbish** was the next most mentioned activity (29%) – though this was significantly less likely to be something people from a CALD background thought of (19%).

Other notable associations were less specific and included themes of protection and nurturing ("looking after", "caring for", helping") the environment.

A selection of example verbatim responses is provided on the next page.

What is environmental volunteering? Unprompted associations (%)	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Planting trees/ vegetation	34	33	30
Picking up rubbish/ cleaning rubbish	29	33	19
Taking care of the environment/ of nature/ protecting nature	12	16	13
Looking after or cleaning up local parks/ gardens/ waterways	11	6	12
Time given willingly to the environment/ environmental causes	8	8	10
A clean environment / cleaning the environment	8	8	12
Clean up days / Community clean ups / Clean Up Australia Day	6	5	6
Looking after or helping wildlife / injured animals	5	4	5

Weeding was suggested by 10% of those aged 50 years or older – significantly higher than other age groups.

There were no other notable differences between subgroups. Lapsed volunteers and considerers shared a similar understanding of environmental volunteering.

Understanding of environmental volunteering (cont'd)

"Volunteering is to help with projects that benefit the environment. This can include activities such as removing weeds, cleaning up, planting."

- 15-29yr old

"Going to places to clean up the environment from litter."

- CALD

"I think environmental volunteering is the engagement in making the environment better in any way, shape or form."

- 15-29yr old

"Doing things to help our environment, e.g. cleaning rubbish."

- 15-29yr old

"I think environmental volunteering is volunteer work that benefits the environment such as planting."

- CALD

"Contributing to the environment, cleaning parks."

- 15-29yr old

"Volunteering for the sake of bettering the environment, doesn't always have to be a big environmental event."

- 15-29yr old

"I would consider volunteering at a community group that maintains parks and recreation areas."

- 15-29yr old

"Taking care of the environment."

- 15-29yr old

"Cleaning up green spaces in my neighbourhood."

- CALD

"Protecting the environment, clean and safeguarding the nature."

- CALD

"Anything that takes care of our planet and its inhabitants. Planting trees."

- 15-29yr old

"It means doing work that benefits the environment such as planting trees."

- 40-49yr old, Non-CALD

"Assisting in replanting trees in the environment."

- 60-69yr old, Non-CALD

"I think environmental volunteering is volunteer work that benefits the environment such as collecting rubbish."

- 15-29yr old

- Planting trees/ vegetation
- Picking up rubbish/ cleaning rubbish
- Taking care of the environment/ of nature/ protecting nature
- Looking after or cleaning up local parks/ gardens/ waterways

Propensity for environmental volunteering

Almost two-thirds of those surveyed said they would be at least somewhat likely to give some time for environmental volunteering in the next year, with young people and CALD cohorts among the most likely.

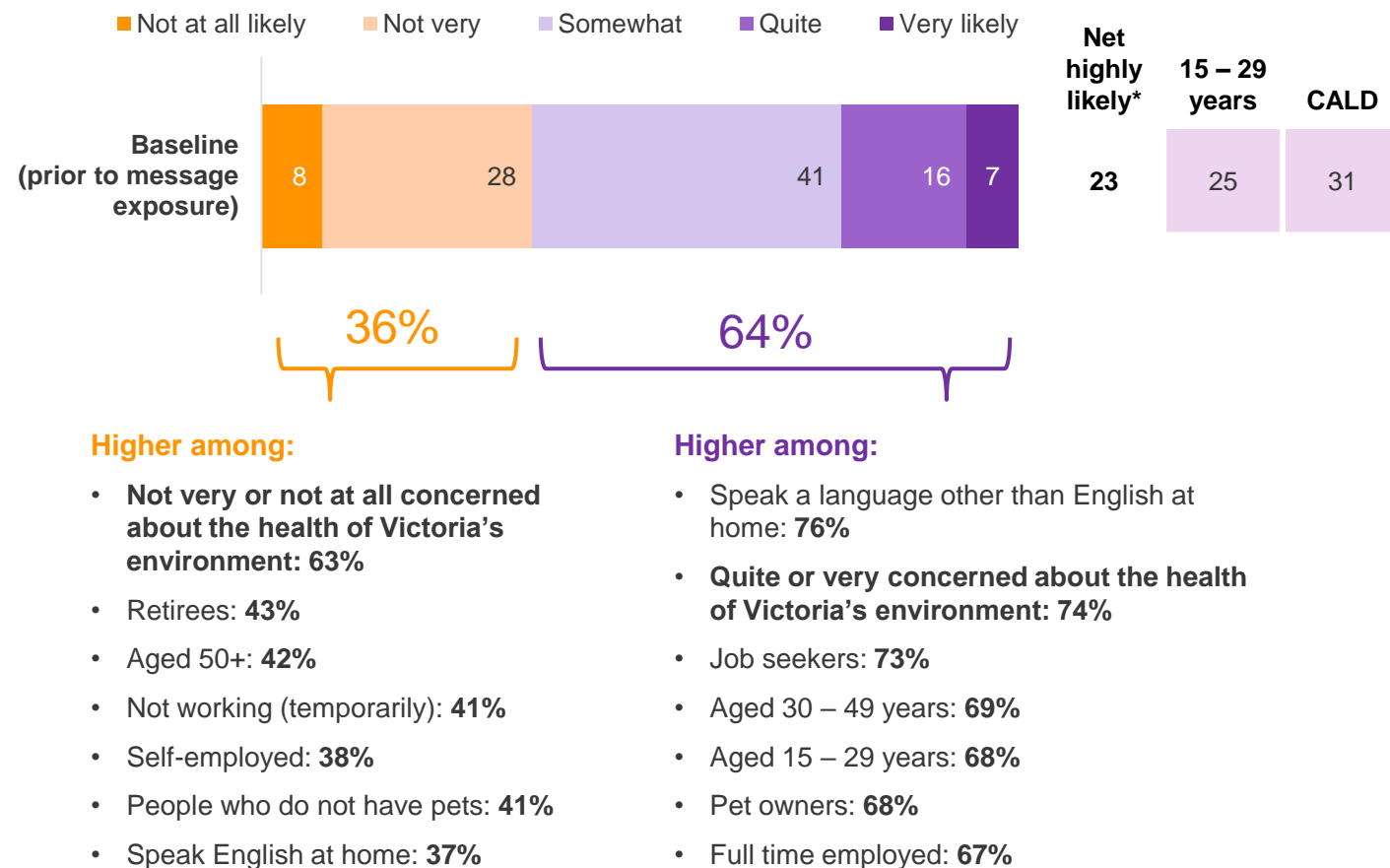
Participants were asked three times during the survey how likely they would be to give some of their time to do any form of environmental volunteering in the next 12 months (to see if certain measures shifted intentions).

When first asked, just under a quarter (23%) of participants reported that they would be very or quite likely. This rises to almost two-thirds (64%) when those 'somewhat likely' are included. Concern about the environment naturally plays a role here – those more concerned were more likely to see themselves getting involved.

Of course, not all who say they are somewhat, quite or even 'very' likely to take part in environmental volunteering will do so – not least because this assumes 'the opportunity' will present itself. Conversely, some of those 'not very likely' might be persuaded to change their mind with effective interventions. Either way, this suggests a **significant latent potential exists within the community.**

As such, this should be read as an *indicative* estimate of the potential level of participation that could be activated with the right interventions.

Later in the report we show how likelihood was impacted when participants were exposed to example communications messages, and again when they considered the various options that might be available, and a set of prompted motivations and barriers.



Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Unprompted Reasons for likelihood of 'environteering'

Those inclined to give some time to environmental volunteering described having an interest in the environment or in volunteering, while for those unlikely the immediate response (demonstrating more automatic 'System 1' thinking) was most often a lack of time, which was highest among CALD audiences.

Participants were asked to explain in their own words their reasons for being likely or unlikely to give some time to do any form of environmental volunteering in the next 12 months. These 'top of mind' responses were coded into themes, with the most common ones tabled here and a selection of verbatim responses shown on the next two pages.

Lack of time, physical constraints and a lack of interest were the barriers that featured most prominently overall, with some also concerned about COVID-19 – especially 15-29 year olds and CALD audiences. Parenting / caring duties was notable for those aged 30+ and CALD audiences.

Applying the COM-B model*, the top of mind barriers indicate that **capability, opportunity and motivation factors are all at play**. This suggests a range of interventions would be needed to convert more people into active volunteers – in particular, promoting the reasons why more help is needed (to spark interest and care, and plant the idea that environmental volunteering might be something to do), that it doesn't have to take a lot of time or involve an ongoing commitment, and can be done in COVID-safe ways. Showing how it can be fun, and options for those with physical limitations would also help address the barriers to getting involved.

By contrast, the reasons given by those who said they would be likely to give some of their time were mostly **motivational and values based**. According to the COM-B model, education, persuasion and incentivisation would be effective interventions to help activate this latent propensity.

Reasons <u>likely</u> to participate in environmental volunteering (%)	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
To do something for the environment/ To act for a better environment	12	12	13
Because I care or am passionate about the environment	10	14	3
Overall very interested in the idea/ passionate/ enjoy volunteering	8	11	5
Have the time/ have more spare time	7	5	4
Motivation to pick up or remove rubbish	7	2	7
It is the right or noble thing to do/ It is important and meaningful	6	4	-
I am already volunteering (in other ways)	5	1	4

Reasons <u>unlikely</u> to participate in environmental volunteering (%)	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Lack of time/ limited spare time/ other commitments take my time	25	29	41
Physical/ mobility/ health issues/ Illness/ Age limitations	15	1	4
Not that interested/ Doesn't look interesting/ Lack of motivation	13	12	5
Current environment/ COVID-19 restrictions/ Lack of certainty	11	20	21
Parenting/ Caring responsibilities	10	3	12
Prefer / choose to spend time on other things/ priorities	9	10	8
Work hours/ Work commitments / Work is already enough	6	10	8
Lack of information about EV and how to get involved	6	9	4
Prefer to spend time on or donate to other forms of volunteering or causes	5	7	7

In their own words: Reasons for being likely

"I am quite passionate about the environment and reducing the enormous impacts we make to the environment."
- 15-29yr old

"I would like to do something beneficial."
- 15-29yr old

"Whilst I'm not working, I have tons of free time. It makes sense to contribute to an important cause if I can."
- 15-29yr old

"I want to do my bit for the environment."
- 15-29yr old

*"I graduate this year!
So I will have time to."*
- 15-29yr old

"I would love to do something good for the environment."
- CALD

"I want to volunteer for a lot of things after COVID-19."
- CALD

"Environmental issues are important to me. I would be interested in helping environmental projects."
- CALD

"I am very passionate about the state of our planet."
- 15-29yr old

"Because of COVID-19, my work hours have been reduced. I don't see that changing too much over the next 12 months. As a result I have more spare time and would like to volunteer rather than spend it at home."
- 35-39yr old, Non-CALD

"I like volunteering and have developed a new love of gardening during COVID, so I am interested in merging these to volunteer for environmental purposes."
- 15-29yr old

"I think after everything that has happened this year and seeing how much cleaner the environment was with most countries being in lockdown, it is more important than ever to look after our environment."
- 15-29yr old

"I love volunteering."
- 15-29yr old

"It would be a good activity to make a small step in making a big difference."
- CALD

"It is important that we each play our part to preserve the environment."
- 30-34yr old, Non-CALD

- To do something for the environment/ To act for a better environment
- Because I care or am passionate about the environment
- Overall very interested in the idea/ passionate/ enjoy volunteering
- Have the time/ have more spare time

In their own words: Reasons for being unlikely

"I will be busy in doing my own work and other activities, so I am not sure if I have time to do environmental volunteering."
- 15-29yr old

"I can't stand for long and I'm high risk if I was to contract Covid19."
- 15-29yr old

"It's not something I am incredibly passionate about. I think if I were to give up my time to volunteer, it would need to be something I do truly care about."
- 15-29yr old

"My body is not very reliable at the moment, and I have difficulty standing or walking."
- 70-79yr old, Non-CALD

"No motivation and laziness would be the main problem."
- CALD

"I have small kids and a very very busy schedule. It is very difficult to take time out."
- CALD

"I don't have the time or energy to commit to something like that."
- 15-29yr old

"I will be busy because I will have study and work, so I don't have enough time."
- 15-29yr old

"Don't have enough time or motivation to consider this at the moment."
- 30-34yr old, Non-CALD

"Due to the pandemic, I would be very cautious."
- CALD

"Due to COVID-19 I am not willing to be in contact with another person."
- CALD

"My age of 55 makes me less likely to do environmental volunteering."
- 50-59yr old, Non-CALD

"I don't have much time and these sort of activities would not be high on my priority list."
- 50-59yr old, Non-CALD

"Health issues prevent me from doing so."
- CALD

"Because of the pandemic, it's hard to get out."
- 15-29yr old

- Lack of time/ limited spare time / other commitments take my time
- Physical/ mobility issues/ illness/ age limitations
- Not that interested / Doesn't look interesting/ Lack of motivation
- Current environment/ COVID-19 restrictions / Lack of certainty

Preferences for participation: Types of involvement

There is greater interest in activities which are based in nature; specifically protecting or restoring natural environments or rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. The priority cohorts were also more interested than others in helping groups to advocate for better environmental outcomes.

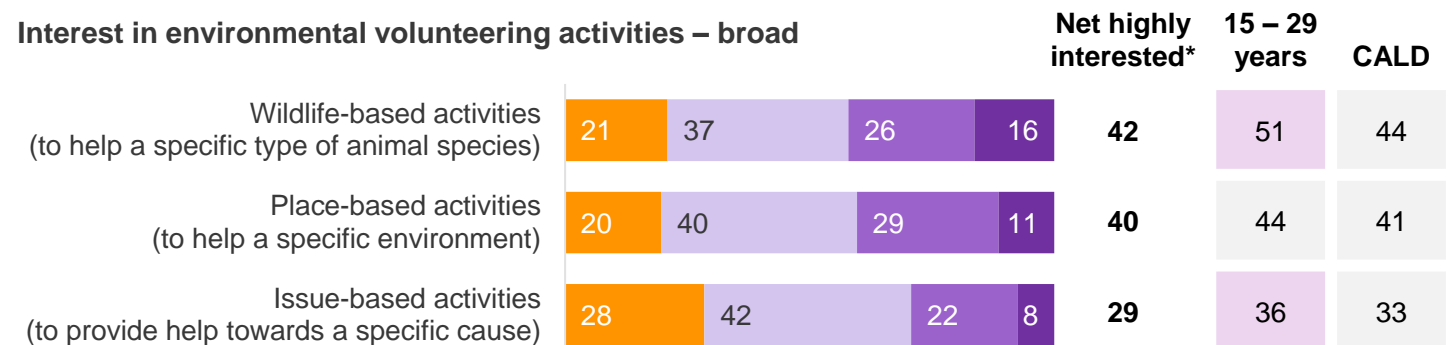
Environmental volunteering in nature was preferred over volunteering for nature. This is due both to these activities being more familiar and the appeal of getting outdoors, which qualitative research participants also expressed – some saying this was also heightened by pandemic restrictions.

Overall, 40% of participants were highly interested (very or quite) in place-based activities and 42% in wildlife-based activities. By contrast only 29% were interested (very or quite) in issues-based activities. More specifically, half of those surveyed were not at all or not very interested in helping groups to advocate for better outcomes (49%).

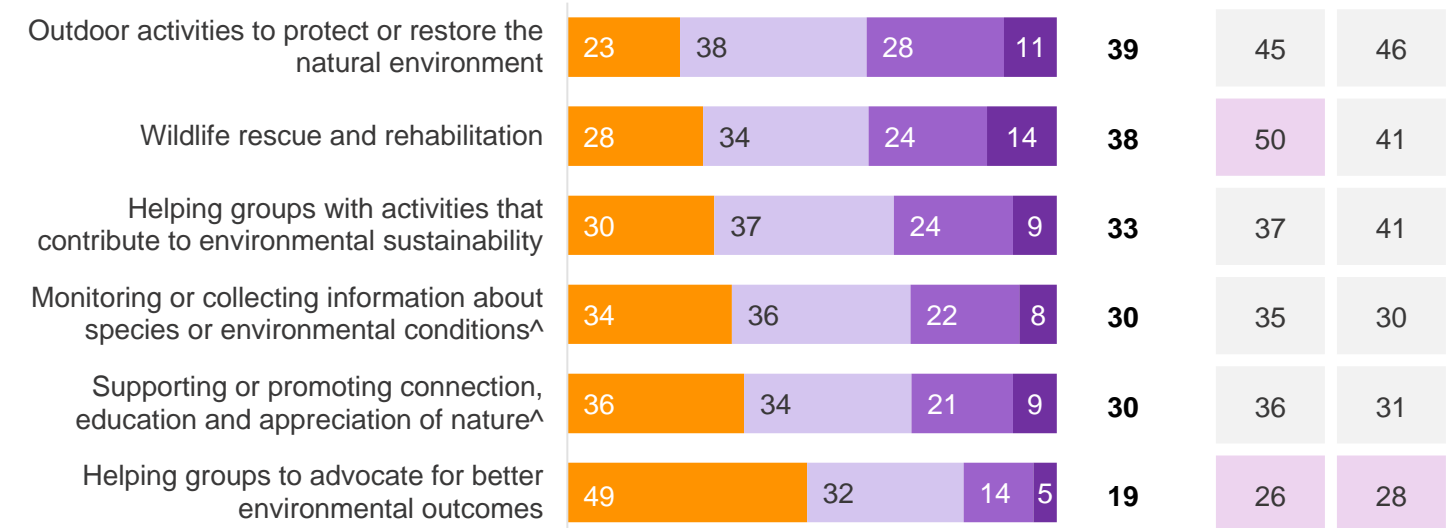
Young people (aged 15 to 29 years) had significantly higher interest in issues-based activities (36%) than those aged 30 years or older (27%). However they also had significantly higher interest in (and, seemingly, a preference for) wildlife-based activities (51% vs 39% of those aged 30 years or older).

In turn, when considering specific activities linked with wildlife and issues-based volunteering, these interest skews were also evident among younger people – especially wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. Although relatively low, both priority groups were also more interested in advocacy.

Interest in environmental volunteering activities – broad



Interest in environmental volunteering activities – specific



■ Not at all/ Not very interested ■ Somewhat interested ■ Quite interested ■ Very interested

NB: The research was intentionally program-agnostic, in that no individual environmental volunteering programs were highlighted or included in the research instruments.

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Q26. Environmental volunteering can take many forms. Broadly speaking there are three main types of activities. How interested would you be in each of these? Q27. How interested would you be to take part in each of these more specific types of environmental volunteering activities? * = % Quite + very interested.

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132). ^Statements truncated. Refer to questionnaire for full wording.

Preferences for participation: Location

Outdoor environmental volunteering activities were more appealing than home-based activities and ideally these activities would be reasonably local in nature. Further highlighting the relatively low level of interest in advocacy activities, fewer than one in ten were interested in involvement 'out in the community'.

The most popular place to do environmental volunteering was outdoors or in nature (39%), rather than doing it from home (22%) were interested in this), although around one-in-five (19%) would be happy to do it anywhere.

Very few were keen on the idea of doing it 'out in the community (e.g. helping with public education or getting donations)', at just 8%.

Those from a **CALD background** had a slightly higher **preference for home-based activities (28%)**.

Discussions during the initial qualitative phase highlighted a desire to contribute to one's local area or community. This is reflected in the survey results, with half preferring out-of-home activities wanting to stay within 10kms of home.

CALD participants had a significantly higher interest in staying closer to home – 28% preferred to stay within 5kms of home vs 18% among all participants.

Where would you prefer to do it (EV)? (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Outdoors / in nature	39	37	33
From home (e.g. using a computer or a phone)	22	23	28
Out in the community (e.g. helping with public education or getting donations)	8	10	8
Doesn't matter, happy to do it anywhere	19	21	23
Don't know / Unsure	13	9	8

How far would you be willing to travel? (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Within 5km of home	18	14	28
5 to 10kms from home	32	32	30
11 to 30kms from home	27	29	28
More than 30kms from home	9	8	5
Anywhere, distance doesn't matter	10	14	8

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Q28. If you were to give some of your time to help the environment through activities like those in the last question, where would you prefer to do it?

Q32. How far would you be willing to travel to take part in environmental volunteering activities in Victoria?

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132). Those who prefer out-of-home activities (n=661), 15 to 29 years (n=258), CALD (n=85).

Preferences for participation: Time and company

A choice between one-off and ongoing environmental volunteering activities will help ensure people can find options that suit them. Younger people are willing to give more time per occasion and are especially interested in activities that can be done with friends.

An important consideration when recruiting new environmental volunteers is to ensure there are opportunities to 'try it out' either as a one-off activity or a time constrained opportunity.

Only a third of people would be willing to commit to environmental volunteering on an ongoing basis (33%), while over half (53%) indicated it may be a once-off thing or a short-term project for them – either for something they felt strongly about or more commonly just to give it a go.

Those aged 50 years or older were most willing to commit on an ongoing basis (39% vs 28% of 15 to 29 year olds and 29% of 30 to 49 year olds).


There is a strong expectation that environmental volunteering could be done with others. Young people (aged 15 to 29 years) were especially keen to be able to take part with friends (60%), and this was also of interest to CALD cohorts (50%).

On average people indicated they were willing to give 4 hours of their time per volunteering occasion, and this was higher among younger people at 4.6 hours.




Who they would like to do EV with (%)

Friends	40	60	50
Partner/spouse	40	39	39
On your own	34	32	32
Community groups	25	21	30
Environmental groups	22	22	19
Anyone, it wouldn't matter to me	21	19	26
Your children	21	7	26
Other family members	19	29	19
People you haven't met before	17	16	16
Work colleagues	11	15	13



Message testing (MessageLab)



Message testing: Key findings



One of the core objectives of the research was to inform messaging that could be used to engage new and lapsed environmental volunteers. A broad battery of messages was developed and refined through the initial qualitative phases and a final set of 17 messages was tested with survey participants using Newgate's proprietary MessageLab approach.

Key findings:

- Succinct messages using simple language were preferred – anything too wordy or with complex language or unfamiliar concepts risked being ignored.
- The inclusion of a call-to-action within the message is crucial to drive audience behaviour; distinguishing educational messaging from motivational messaging.
- A significant uplift in propensity for environmental volunteering was evident following exposure to messages.
- Messages for the community in general should appeal to citizens' care and concern for the environment and request their help on behalf of the environment and future generations. Such messaging helps prompt people to think more deeply beyond the immediate response of 'I don't have time'.
- When targeting younger people, messages should be addressed individually, emphasising the 'care factor' and the possibility that they can make a difference.
- Supporting imagery will help to maximise the impact of messaging to younger people – the most effective imagery showcase wildlife and the beauty of the natural environment and depict social and fun aspects of environmental volunteering.
- When targeting people of a CALD background, messaging should emphasise the potential to make a positive contribution to the local environment, promote inclusion and serve as an invitation to something many people are already involved in.

The messages tested in each component of the research were drafted by Newgate and were refined and reviewed at each stage of the process.

Newgate Communications undertook draft message development based on:

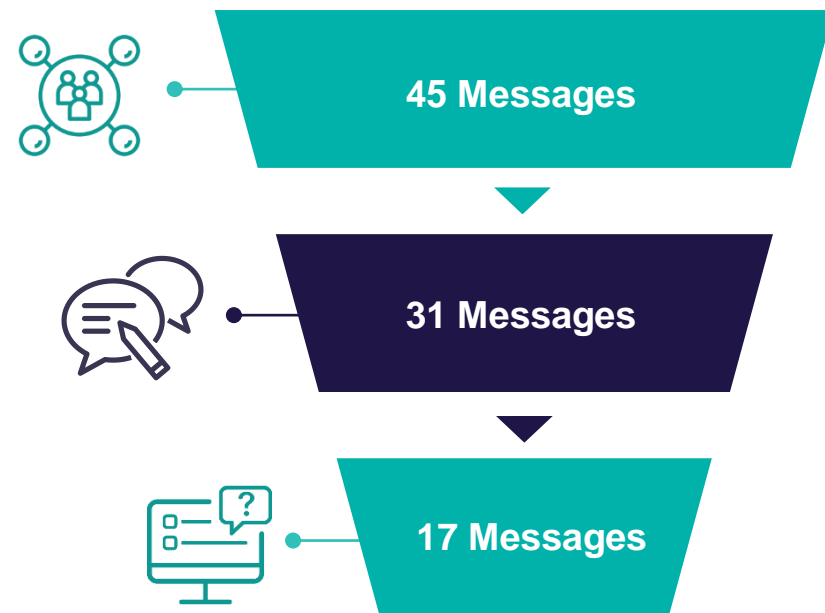
- Research and guiding materials provided by DELWP
- A review of messaging used by environmental organisations (locally and globally), including student climate marches
- Insights and learnings from previous communications, campaigns and message briefs undertaken by Newgate

This draft message set was subsequently refined with input from the Newgate network and in consultation with the Department's project team.

In drafting the messages we were very mindful of targeting new audiences; those who had not yet done any environmental volunteering and those who were no longer participating. The messages aimed to target these audiences in existing and new ways from messaging used to target existing volunteers.

Stages of message testing

1. The qualitative discussions with existing volunteers included a total of 45 messages that were tested. Some of these messages had accompanying visuals and some did not. From this, the messages were reviewed and refined by Newgate of those that were found to be most engaging and effective to test with potential and lapsed volunteers in the online forum.
2. A total of 31 messages were tested in the online forum. These did not include accompanying visuals as the first stage findings showed how important (and often distracting) imagery is in the communications process, and the importance of testing the messages without images for a cleaner response. Imagery was explored separately within the online forum. The messages were then further refined by Newgate for the online survey.
3. The final set tested in the online survey included a refined list of 17 messages. These messages also did not include any accompanying visuals.



Message development (cont'd)

In the qualitative discussions and online forum we asked people what they thought about the messages presented; the key take-outs of what people liked and disliked are noted below.

What people liked

- People preferred messages that were short, sharp and succinct in manner as they are easier to understand and direct
- Those messages that communicated how an action would lead to a positive outcome had high appeal, as it helped to address a general concern for the environment and sense of disempowerment. People wanted to feel there would be tangible benefits from their activity in the environment
- Messages that posed a question and prompted deeper, 'System 2' introspection and inspiration appealed perhaps a little more to those aged 30+, tapping further into their values and concerns
- Those that included a call to action were seen as relevant and engaging
- People also liked messages with a hyperlink for more information

*"Personally, I think the ones that speak loudest for me are either the short and sharp messages or those that speak of the small change I can make that will make a big difference. People often think that their small part doesn't make a difference to anything but it does - everyone has to start somewhere."
- 15-29yr old*

*"The top ones I liked involved taking action without too much pressure."
- 15-29yr old*

*"The ones with direct links that take you straight to volunteering resources would make me most inclined to participate."
- 15-29yr old*

What people disliked

- People didn't like messages that were too long or complicated in nature as these were less engaging and would be more effective if simplified and made more direct
 - This was especially important among CALD audiences, who stressed this as important for those with more limited English
- Many didn't take to the messages that they saw as promoting false inclusivity as they didn't feel these were that genuine
- Overly earnest messages were rejected
- Younger people were especially sensitive to anything with a parental tone or that referred directly to 'young people'
- Word play or borrowing from other campaigns was a bit 'try hard'
- Unfamiliar concepts were glossed over e.g. 'citizen science'

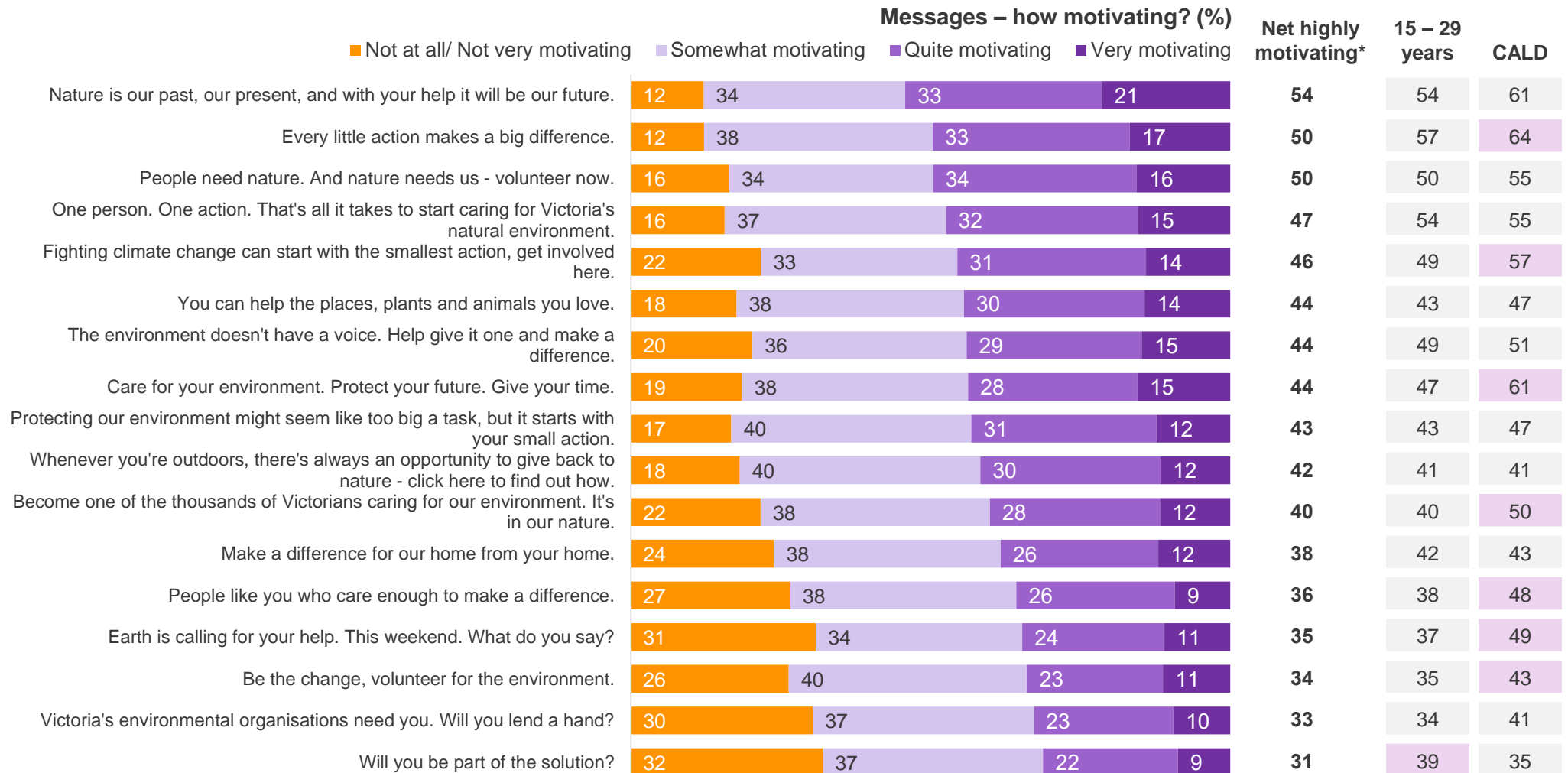
*"I feel I gravitated towards the ones that weren't too wordy but still contained the information I needed to know."
- 15-29yr old*

*"The ones that don't stand out to me are the longer ones, it needs to instantly grab your attention."
- 15-29yr old*

*"I do not like that some are too wordy, or try to include too many ways to convince someone to contribute or volunteer. I believe if the person is naturally inclined to volunteer for the environment, then they will not require much except the right link or information to quickly be able to start the process of volunteering."
- CALD*

Stated reaction to messages

The strongest messages were considered motivating, to some extent, by around half of those surveyed. Many of the messages were significantly more motivating to CALD participants (something often observed in research among CALD audiences – possibly reflecting cultural differences).



Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
 Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Propensity for environmental volunteering

Exposure to messages encouraging people to take up environmental volunteering generated a significantly greater propensity to get involved, overall and among the two priority audiences.

As shown earlier in the report, latent propensity to get involved in environmental volunteering was high, with 64% at least somewhat likely.

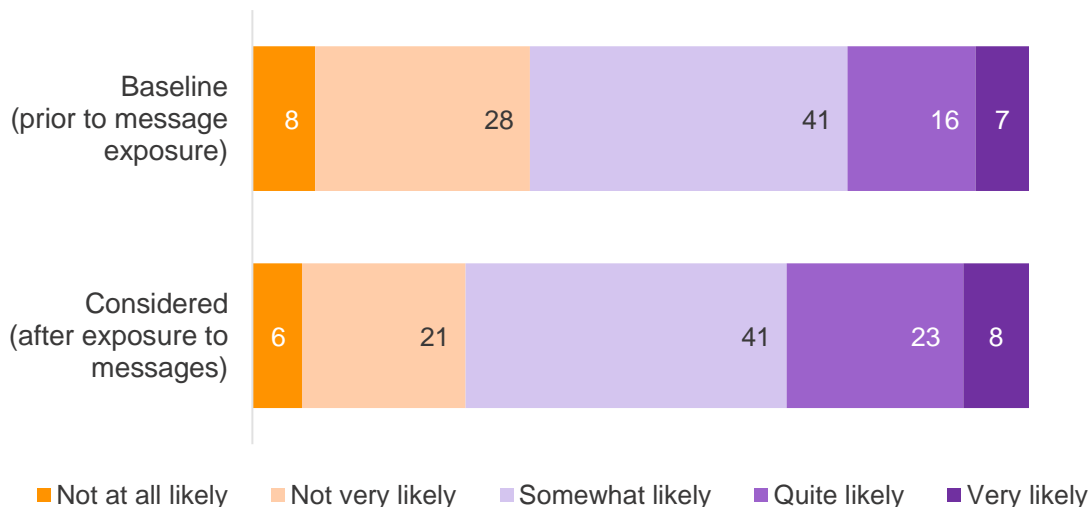


Following exposure to messages, 73% of the total sample was at least somewhat likely (to give some time for environmental volunteering) – a significant increase of 9 percentage points (pp). Among those aged 15 to 29 years, likelihood increased to 79% and among CALD participants it increased to 87% - both also statistically significant increases.



This demonstrates the potential effectiveness of communications in heightening latent interest in environmental volunteering.

Likelihood of giving time for environmental volunteering (%)



Net Likely*	15 – 29 years	CALD
64	68	76
73	79	87
Shift^	15 – 29 years	CALD
+ 9 ↑	+ 11 ↑	+ 11 ↑

* Net Likely includes those who answered Very likely, Quite likely or Somewhat likely

^Shift value represents percentage point change in proportion Net Likely

↑ = Significantly higher than baseline measure

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
 Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

An introduction to Newgate's MessageLab approach

Using Newgate's proprietary message-testing methodology, we examined how target audience intentions were likely to shift when exposed to messages.

MessageLab is a core module in a quantitative survey which is used to evaluate messages among the target audiences. While this is often both *for* and *against* the client's project, concept or position, for this study only positive statements were used, on the assumption that there would be limited opposition to environmental volunteering (though barriers are considered in the previous section).

The power of Newgate's MessageLab approach is underpinned by the machine learning analysis we apply to the data, allowing us to identify the messages with the greatest potential to influence likely outcomes (e.g. behaviours, intentions, support/opposition). This goes beyond traditional message-testing that simply measures the favourability of each message – allowing us to uncover what truly shifts opinion.

The impact of the messages is determined by the extent to which they shift people's views on the desired outcome – in this case people's likelihood to get involved in any form of environmental volunteering in the next 12 months, which was measured at three points in the survey:

- Before exposure to the messages (the **baseline measure**);
- After participants have seen the set of messages (the **post messaging measure**); and
- One final time after considering the drivers and barriers, and other related questions (the **final measure**).

For this MessageLab analysis we looked at the impact of the messages on people's intentions immediately after exposure to the messages. A **Persuasion Score was produced for each message**, and in combination with the level of stated motivation, the outcomes of this analysis are shown on the following pages, for each of the following audiences:

- All survey participants (Victorians open to environmental volunteering)
- Younger Victorians aged 15-29 years and those aged 30+
- CALD participants – those who speak a language other than English at home.

Messages are grouped into the following categories:

- Primary messages – those that were the most persuasive and/or motivating
- Secondary messages – those that had mid-level persuasion scores but were still quite motivating
- Weaker messages to consider / enhance – those with relatively lower levels of persuasion but that were still quite motivating

Priority messages – All participants

When communicating with the community in general, messages should appeal for citizens to “help” the environment, tap into what they value and address them as individuals (i.e. using the vocative “you”).

Primary messages	<i>You can help the places, plants and animals you love.</i>
	<i>The environment doesn't have a voice. Help give it one and make a difference.</i>
	<i>Care for your environment. Protect your future. Give your time.</i>
Secondary messages	<i>Nature is our past, our present, and with your help it will be our future.</i>
	<i>Every little action makes a big difference.</i>
	<i>One person. One action. That's all it takes to start caring for Victoria's natural environment.</i>
	<i>People like you who care enough to make a difference.</i>
Weaker messages to consider / enhance	<i>Will you be part of the solution?</i>
	<i>Earth is calling for your help. This weekend. What do you say?</i>
	<i>Make a difference for our home from your home.</i>
	<i>Protecting our environment might seem like too big a task, but it starts with your small action.</i>
	<i>Become one of the thousands of Victorians caring for our environment. It's in our nature.</i>
	<i>Be the change, volunteer for the environment.</i>
	<i>Victoria's environmental organisations need you. Will you lend a hand?</i>

Priority messages – Younger segment (15-29 years)

When targeting younger people, they should be addressed individually (again, using “you”), emphasising the ‘care factor’ and a sense that they can make a difference in being part of the solution.

Primary messages	<i>People like you who care enough to make a difference.</i>
	<i>Will you be part of the solution?</i>
Secondary messages	<i>Every little action makes a big difference.</i>
	<i>Care for your environment. Protect your future. Give your time.</i>
	<i>You can help the places, plants and animals you love.</i>
	<i>Make a difference for our home from your home.</i>
	<i>Be the change, volunteer for the environment.</i>
Weaker messages to consider / enhance	<i>Whenever you're outdoors, there's always an opportunity to give back to nature - click here to find out how.</i>
	<i>Victoria's environmental organisations need you. Will you lend a hand?</i>
	<i>People need nature. And nature needs us - volunteer now.</i>
	<i>'Nature is our past, our present, and with your help it will be our future.'</i>

It is interesting to note that the most persuasive messages for the younger segment were not the most motivating to them. Noting that younger participants in the qualitative phase gravitated towards messages which had supporting visual content, this suggests it will be important to have powerful and relevant images to help bring these more persuasive messages to life for younger people.

Priority messages – Older segment (Aged 30+)

If targeting an older audience, messages should emphasise that environmental volunteering – of any type – will make a difference, and that they can help give the environment a voice.

Primary messages	<i>Every little action makes a big difference.</i>
	<i>The environment doesn't have a voice. Help give it one and make a difference.</i>
Secondary messages	<i>You can help the places, plants and animals you love.</i>
	<i>Care for your environment. Protect your future. Give your time.</i>
	<i>Protecting our environment might seem like too big a task, but it starts with your small action.</i>
	<i>Nature is our past, our present, and with your help it will be our future.</i>
	<i>Earth is calling for your help. This weekend. What do you say?</i>
Weaker messages to consider / enhance	<i>People like you who care enough to make a difference.</i>
	<i>Will you be part of the solution?</i>
	<i>People need nature. And nature needs us - volunteer now.</i>
	<i>Fighting climate change can start with the smallest action, get involved here.</i>
	<i>Whenever you're outdoors, there's always an opportunity to give back to nature - click here to find out how.</i>

Priority messages – CALD segment

When targeting people of a CALD background, messaging should use a location anchor (i.e. Victoria), emphasise the potential to make a positive contribution to their environment and community, and promote inclusion, with an invitation to something many people are already involved in.

Primary messages	<i>Every little action makes a big difference.</i>
	<i>Victoria's environmental organisations need you. Will you lend a hand?</i>
	<i>Become one of the thousands of Victorians caring for our environment. It's in our nature.</i>
Secondary messages	<i>The environment doesn't have a voice. Help give it one and make a difference.</i>
	<i>Whenever you're outdoors, there's always an opportunity to give back to nature - click here to find out how.</i>
	<i>Care for your environment. Protect your future. Give your time.</i>
	<i>People need nature. And nature needs us - volunteer now.</i>
Weaker messages to consider / enhance	<i>Will you be part of the solution?</i>
	<i>One person. One action. That's all it takes to start caring for Victoria's natural environment.</i>
	<i>Be the change, volunteer for the environment.</i>
	<i>Earth is calling for your help. This weekend. What do you say?</i>
	<i>Fighting climate change can start with the smallest action, get involved here.</i>
	<i>Make a difference for our home from your home.</i>
	<i>People like you who care enough to make a difference.</i>

The top message (highest in both motivation and persuasion) highlights the importance of straight-forward, to-the-point language for CALD audiences.

Imagery preferences

Qualitative participants were asked to select from a collage of images those that they liked and those that they disliked, and explain why, to help understand essential elements of imagery to use/avoid.

Most liked images



- The cuteness of animals and wildlife was highly appealing and emotive
- Such images emphasise the vulnerability of certain species and evoke a desire to help and care for our wildlife
- Images showing clean, unspoiled coastlines and beaches had universal appeal
- These images portrayed the beauty and wonder of the Victorian environment and served as a reminder of the importance in maintaining and protecting it
- Showing people picking up rubbish was liked as it looks fun and easy to do
- The portrayal of a social element was liked – an activity that could be done with friends or as way to meet new people
- Images of tree planting were viewed positively as it looks easy to do, a way to learn new skills and fun
- The idea of volunteering in groups also appealed – it looks inclusive and motivating
- Participants liked that these people were happy and looked like they had achieved something significant

Least liked images



- This image was considered too generic – there was no obvious link to environmental volunteering
- Those who use a computer during their work (or study) day did not like the idea of spending more time 'looking at a screen' (especially those who have experienced even more of this during the pandemic)
- Indeed, for many, the appeal of environmental volunteering lies in getting out into nature
- Some felt it would be more productive and effective to 'go and get your hands dirty' and see a tangible outcome for their efforts instead of 'just protesting'
- There were also concerns about how the message can get lost in protests
- The research was undertaken while COVID-19 restrictions were in place – as such mass gatherings were viewed negatively.
- NB: Messages that called people to fight for nature, however, held some appeal. This wasn't necessarily associated with protesting

Imagery is a vital part of the communications process for message delivery promoting environmental volunteering. People responded more positively and were more engaged by those messages that had an accompanying visual (especially the younger cohorts). For this reason we didn't include images in the message testing for the online forum or online survey as they would have been too distracting and taken away from the response to the messages themselves.



Motivations and barriers



Motivators and barriers: Key findings



This section focuses on what would motivate lapsed and new environmental volunteers into action, and the barriers that will need to be overcome. The motivators have been analysed using the functional framework and barriers are analysed using the COM-B model. Regression analysis has also been used to determine the motivations and barriers that are most influential on people's likelihood to get involved in environmental volunteering.

Key findings:

- The most motivating reasons for giving time to help the environment are universal – shared by both cohorts of interest and the broader community.
- Helping wildlife was the most compelling reason for environmental volunteering when asked directly.
- Like previous studies, reasons that fall under the 'values' category of the functional framework were rated as most motivating.
- However, reasons that emphasise contributing to knowledge, fighting for the environment and connecting with nature had the greatest influence in increasing people's likelihood to engage in environmental volunteering – these are not as top of mind, but important to note.
- When prompted with a list of possible reasons for *not* giving their time for environmental volunteering, a fear of commitment emerged as the biggest issue holding would-be volunteers back – more so than lack of time which is often cited as the main barrier, followed by a lack of interest and not having thought about it before – the latter being the stand-out predictor of intentions among the younger and CALD cohorts.
- Interventions should seek to address barriers which relate to motivation and opportunity as a priority, though capability-related barriers are also evident, especially for older, physically constrained audiences and parents who genuinely have more time limitations.

Prompted motivations for environmental volunteering

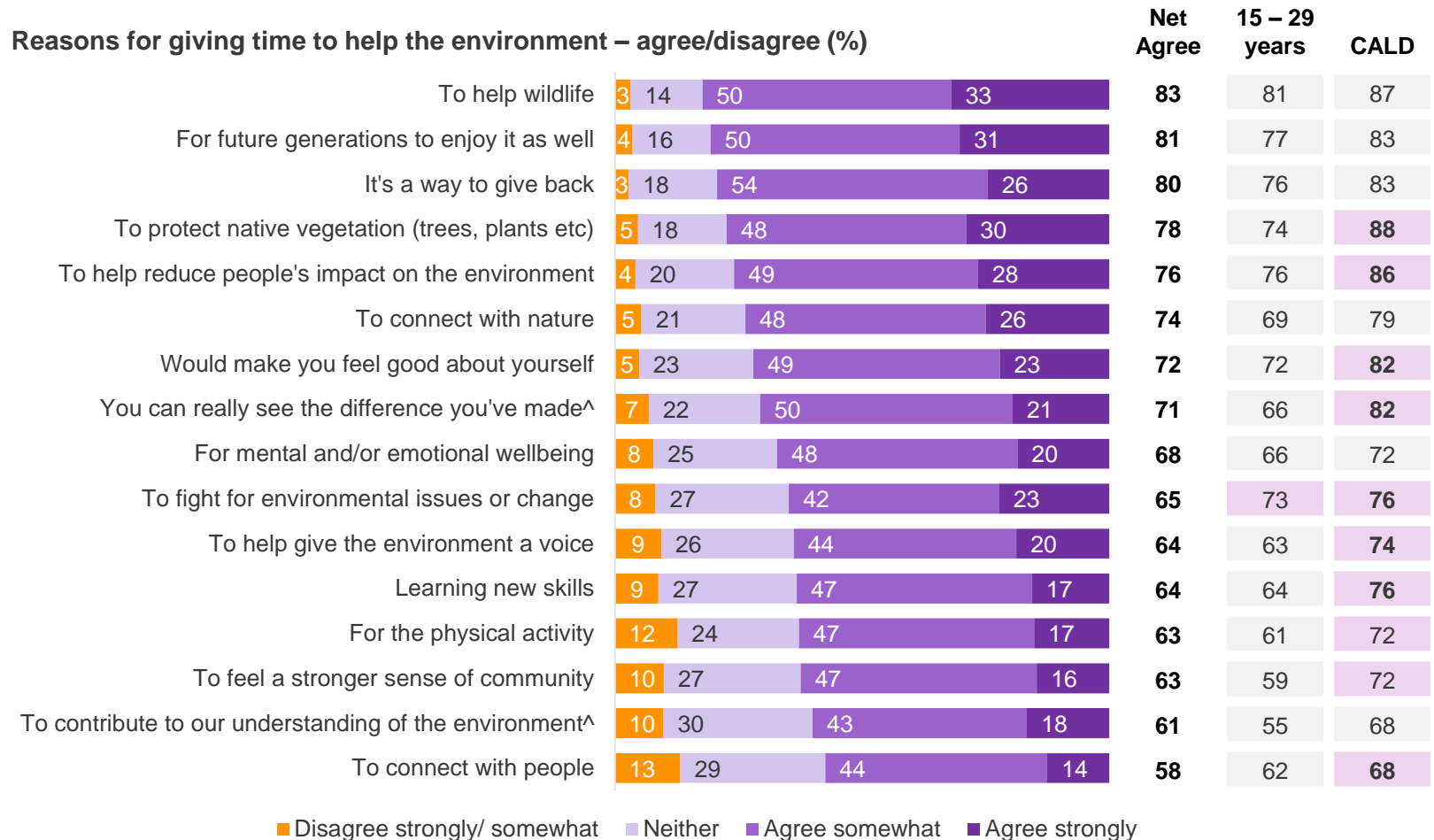
Helping wildlife was the most compelling reason for environmental volunteering at a universal level, followed by protecting it for future generations, and 'giving back' to the environment. Young people had only a couple of distinct interests, while CALD audiences agreed more with all reasons. The fact that there was very little disagreement with any reasons to get involved suggests strong recognition of the cause.

Wanting to **help wildlife** was the strongest reason overall (83% net agreement) – and this was even more pronounced among females (85% vs 79% of males) and pet owners (86% vs 77% of non-owners).

Consideration of future generations was also a strong motivator, with 81% relating to this reason.

CALD participants had a higher level of agreement with all reasons – the most significant being to learn new skills, being able to see the difference you've made and to fight for change.

A significantly higher proportion of **young people** (aged 15 to 29 years) agreed that **fighting for environmental issues** would be a reason to get involved with environmental volunteering, tapping into the stronger sense of passion they mentioned unprompted.



Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
 Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Motivations for environmental volunteering (cont'd)

Using the functional approach, values-based motivations were found to be the most influential, followed by learning and development, and place. This is in line with previous research.

The 16 specific reasons for environmental volunteering were allocated against the functions within the proposed framework of motivational functions*.

As has been found in previous studies which use this kind of framework, the 'Values' function was the most influential, in that items within this function had the highest level of net agreement.

Young people (aged 15 to 29 years) seemed to have similar underlying motivations for environmental volunteering as the wider population. The only notable difference that 'Efficacy' motivations were slightly less influential.

Survey Items with Net Agreement by Function Category (%)	Function	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
It's something where you can really see the difference you've made	Efficacy	66	61	75
To contribute to our understanding of the environment ^				
Would make you feel good about yourself	Learning & Development	68	68	79
Learning new skills				
For mental and/or emotional wellbeing	Place	68	65	74
For the physical activity				
To connect with nature				
To feel a stronger sense of community	Social	61	60	70
To connect with people				
To help reduce people's impact on the environment	Values	75	74	82
For future generations to enjoy it as well				
It's a way to give back				
To fight for environmental issues or change				
To help give the environment a voice				
To help wildlife				
To protect native vegetation (trees, plants etc)				

Source question: Q35. *Items mapped against the Environmental Volunteer Functions Index (EVFI) proposed by Wells (DELWP).

^ NB: Full item wording: "To contribute to our understanding of the environment (e.g. helping with counting, measuring, observing, science)".

The term 'citizen science' was deliberately not used in the questionnaire, as it was found to be too unfamiliar to people in the qualitative phase.

Note – values shown are the average Net Agree (Agree strongly or Agree somewhat) proportion for the items within each function.

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132). Note: the survey did not include any items related to the Career function.

Prompted Barriers to environmental volunteering

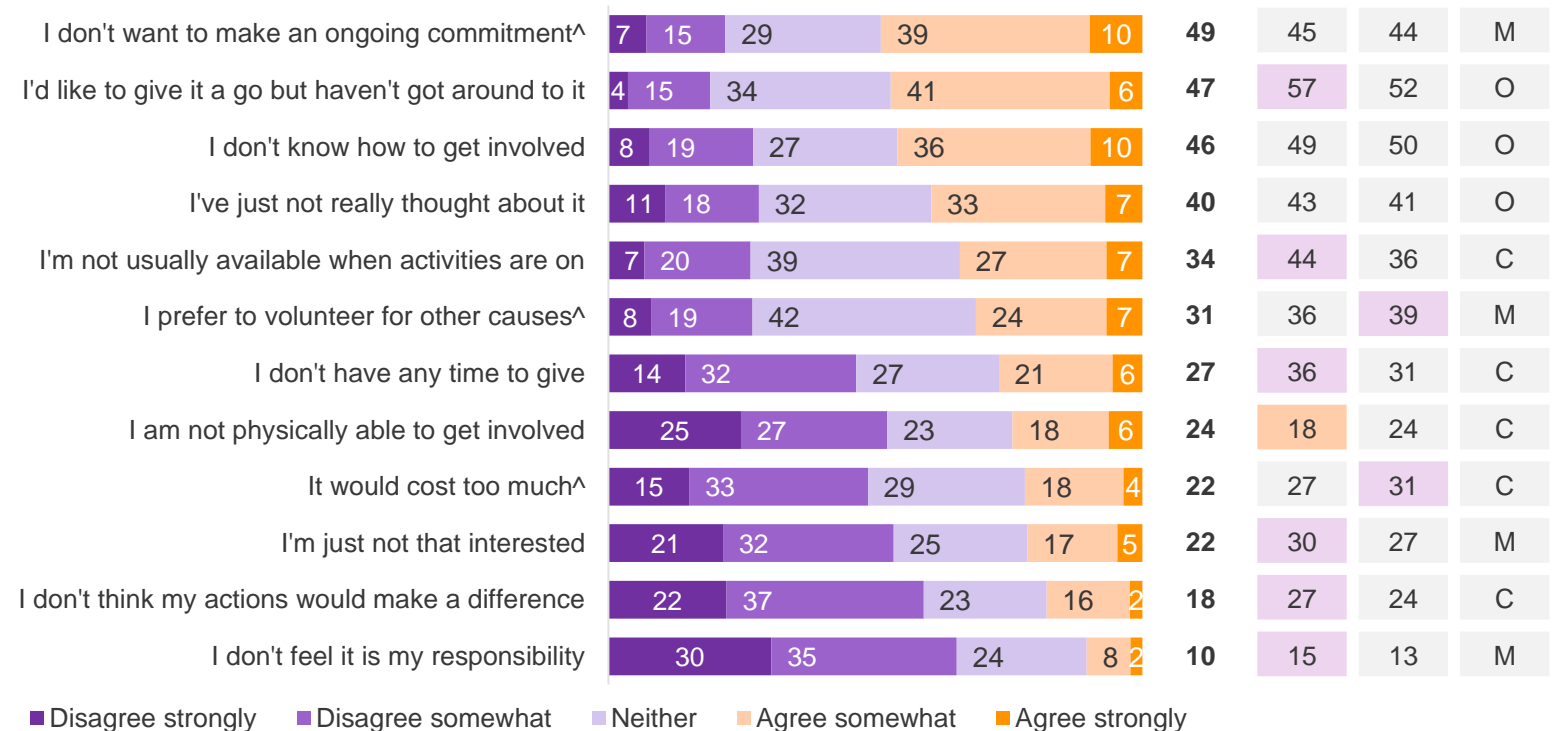
Fear of commitment or a lack of a catalyst are the biggest universal barriers. Young people also appear to need extra convincing of the relevance and efficacy of environmental volunteering.

While they were less likely to cite physical ability as a barrier to taking part in environmental volunteering, young people did tend to recognise other barriers more than their older counterparts. In particular, those aged **15-29** were most likely to cite **not having got around to it, lack of time / availability, a lack of interest or sense of responsibility, and to think it wouldn't make a difference.**

Those who speak another language were significantly more likely than others to **prefer volunteering for other causes and to say it would cost them too much.** Also, those **born overseas** were significantly more likely than those born in Australia to agree **"I'd like to give it a go but haven't got around to it"** (55% vs 44%).

As with the unprompted barriers, from a COM-B behaviour change perspective, motivation, opportunity and capability barriers are all at play:

Reasons for not giving time to help the environment (%)



Barriers by COM-B model component	Net agree (%)
Capability barriers	64
Opportunity barriers	69
Motivation barriers	66

Previous studies have found 'time' to be the biggest barrier to (environmental) volunteering. These results seem encouraging in that the barriers might be more 'Opportunity' focused and so perhaps more easily overcome.

Parents were significantly more likely than non-parents to cite Capability barriers: **"I'm not usually available when activities are on"** (40% vs 31% agree) and **"I don't have any time to give"** (35% vs 23%).

Considerers were significantly more likely (than lapsed volunteers) to agree **"I've just not really thought about it"** (44% vs 30%, respectively) – suggesting promotion and education will be key in driving consideration.

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category. Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Propensity for environmental volunteering – Final

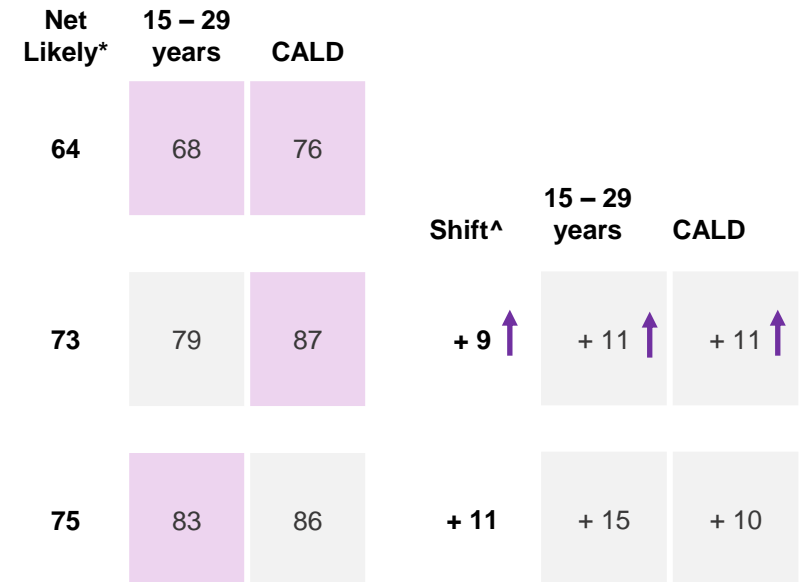
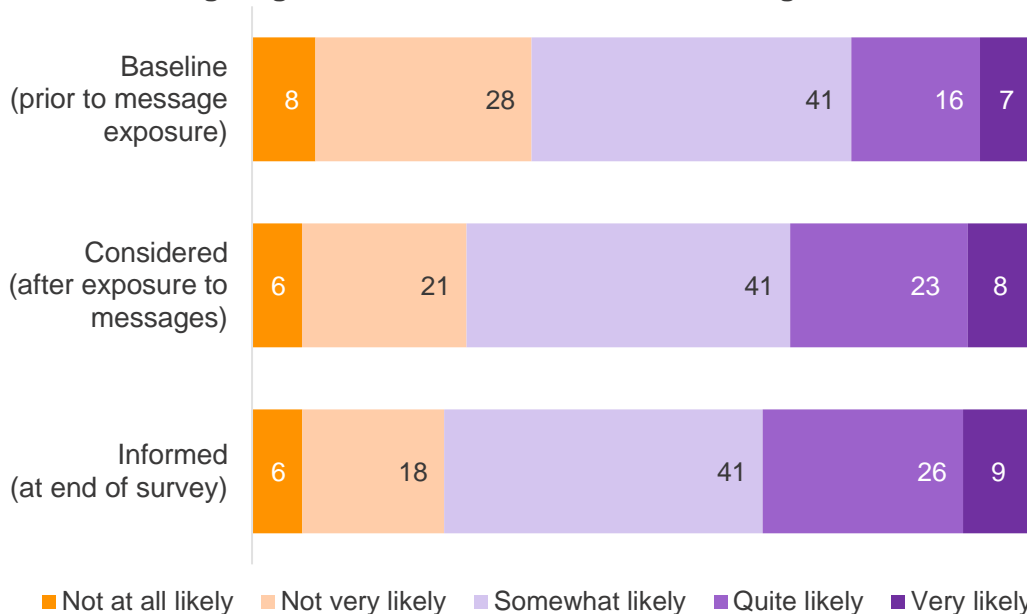
By the end of the survey, after being exposed to various details about environmental volunteering, the priority segments reported a significantly greater propensity to get involved

Participants were asked to rate how likely they would be to give some of their time to do any form of environmental volunteering (in the next 12 months) for a third time at the end of the survey. The third measure represents an 'informed propensity' given they had by that stage been exposed to a lot of information about environmental volunteering, including specific options and reasons for getting involved.



Notably, the significant jump seen after the messaging was sustained, even after considering the raft of barriers, suggesting that a positive seed of potential had been firmly planted for many participants by that stage.

Likelihood of giving time for environmental volunteering – next 12 months (%)



*Net Likely includes those who answered Very likely, Quite likely or Somewhat likely

^Shift value represents percentage point change in proportion Net Likely vs the Baseline

↑ = Significantly higher than baseline measure

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Q42. Taking into consideration everything that has been covered during this survey, and for one last time, how likely is it that you would give some of your time for environmental volunteering in the next 12 months, if you had the opportunity to do so?

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132).

Impact of motivators and barriers on propensity

Prompted motivators that emphasise contributing to knowledge, fighting for the environment and connecting with nature were most impactful in driving likelihood to get involved in environmental volunteering. 'Motivation' and 'opportunity' barriers play far more of a role than 'capability' barriers – especially not wanting to make an ongoing commitment, lack of interest and not being on people's radars.*

Regression analysis was used to determine which factors had the most impact on people's final reflections regarding their likelihood to get involved. The 'Impact Scores' here show the relative influence of each item on final likelihood ratings – in each model the Impact Scores add to 100%, noting that only the most influential items are shown here.

Some factors emerged as clearly the most influential among the total sample, while some were specific to the target cohorts:

- **Young people were more motivated by reasons with activist tones, whereas CALD participants were more motivated than others by learning new skills and helping wildlife.**
- **In terms of barriers, both young people and CALD audiences stood out for the 'opportunity barrier' of not really having thought about it – i.e. being at the Pre-contemplation stage[^] in the behaviour change process.**
- **Young people were also notable for lacking a sense of responsibility, and CALD audiences for thinking their actions wouldn't make a difference.**

Most influential motivators – Total sample	Impact Score
To contribute to our understanding of the environment	17
To fight for environmental issues or change	16
To connect with nature	14
To help reduce people's impact on the environment	9
Would make you feel good about yourself	8

Most influential motivators – 15 to 29 years

To fight for environmental issues or change	22
To connect with nature	13
Would make you feel good about yourself	13
To help reduce people's impact on the environment	8
To help give the environment a voice	6

Most influential motivators – CALD

To contribute to our understanding of the environment	18
Learning new skills	11
To help wildlife	10
To connect with nature	9
To fight for environmental issues or change	8

Most influential barriers – Total sample	Impact Score
I don't want to make an ongoing commitment (M)	20
I'm just not that interested (M)	15
I've just not really thought about it (O)	12
I am not physically able to get involved (C)	8
I don't have any time to give (C)	5

Most influential barriers – 15 to 29 years

I've just not really thought about it (O)	17
I don't feel it is my responsibility (M)	16
I don't want to make an ongoing commitment (M)	10
I'm just not that interested (M)	8
I don't have any time to give (C)	4

Most influential barriers – CALD

I've just not really thought about it (O)	21
I don't want to make an ongoing commitment (M)	15
I am not physically able to get involved (C)	13
I don't think my actions would make a difference (C)	6
I don't feel it is my responsibility (M)	3



Information sources



Information sources: Key findings



Photo credit: Chenxin Tu, 16, Sea Star removal St Kilda, Port Phillip EcoCentre

This final section of the report provides insights into how to reach new volunteers with information and communications. It includes an overview of the sources that would be trusted to provide information about environmental volunteering, and interest in a centralised resource for accessing information about environmental volunteering opportunities.

Key findings:

- People would be most trusting of local sources – local environmental groups, the Victorian State Government or local councils.
- Young people were, unsurprisingly, more inclined to trust social media sources for information about environmental volunteering, although this was in addition to (not instead of) the above sources.
- Three Victorian based organisations were considered the most trustworthy for information about environmental volunteering: Environment Victoria, Sustainability Victoria and Volunteering Victoria.
- There is a reasonable level of interest in a centralised resource for environmental volunteering information and opportunities – including among the younger and CALD cohorts.
- Governmental or other bodies independent of individual environmental groups would be most trusted to provide such a centralised resource – possibly reflecting a belief that it would maximise the breadth of opportunities that are available to get involved in.
- The results indicate that a centralised resource for environmental volunteering would be of real value in the communications approach to increasing environmental volunteer, and that such a resource should be further explored.

Trusted information sources

Local environmental groups were the most trusted for volunteering opportunities (though less so for CALD audiences), followed by the State Government (more trusted by CALD cohorts). Young people were more inclined than others to trust social media sources for information about environmental volunteering, although this was in addition to (not instead of) other sources.

Trusted sources for information about environmental volunteering (%)

General sources	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Local environmental groups	61	54	49
Victorian government / department	56	58	67
Local council	54	55	58
Larger environmental organisations	46	48	38
Australian government / department	46	52	61
Friends / peers	36	39	35
Family members	33	34	35
School / University / Education provider	29	45	37
Google / search engines	26	32	35
Social media - organisations that you follow	25	39	26
Social media - groups/ events	22	28	27
Media (TV, radio, newspaper, online news)	20	22	25
Social media - friends or people you follow	20	30	25
Church / Religious body	12	10	19

Specific groups / organisations*	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
Environment Victoria	55	50	55
Sustainability Victoria	49	49	49
Volunteering Victoria	48	48	48
Australian Conservation Foundation	45	34	30
DELWP (Vic)^	44	42	45
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	44	51	45
Conservation Volunteers Australia	38	31	25
Friends of... Groups	34	33	32
Greenpeace	30	32	28
Earthwatch Institute	23	23	19
Seek Volunteer	20	24	28
CERES	18	19	16

A significantly higher proportion of those aged **50 years or older** trusted the Australian Conservation Foundation, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Friends of... groups.

* Please note that the research was intentionally program-agnostic, in that no individual environmental volunteering programs were highlighted or included in the research instruments.

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Q38. Which of these sources would you trust to provide reliable information about environmental volunteering opportunities? Q39. Which, if any, of these specific groups or organisations would you trust for information about environmental volunteering?

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132). ^ Department name was displayed in full within the survey.

Views on a centralised enviro-volunteering hub

The younger and CALD segments were among those most likely to register with a centralised environmental volunteering resource – which the Victorian Government would be most trusted to operate.

Survey participants were asked about an idea for a centralised environmental volunteering resource, which stemmed from some of the qualitative research participants who told us they didn't know how to get involved and would like somewhere to register their interest, so they could be emailed opportunities...

"Imagine there was a secure, centralised website or organisation where you could:

- Find out about all kinds of environmental volunteering activities*
- Register your interest in getting involved in different types of activities – and how you'd prefer to hear about them*
- Nominate organisations you'd be happy to hear from directly about different volunteering opportunities."*

The idea had a favourable response, with more than a third of the survey participants (36%) indicating they would be very or quite likely to register. Even more of those aged 15-29 said they would be likely (42%).

There was a strong preference for the resource to be managed by a body that is independent of any individual environmental group (especially the Victorian Government), perhaps indicating this would enable access to a greater breadth of information and opportunities.

Likelihood of registering with a centralised resource (%)



■ Not at all likely ■ A little bit likely ■ Somewhat likely ■ Quite likely ■ Very likely

Net highly likely*	15 – 29 years	CALD
36	42	37

Trust in potential providers of centralised resource (%)

	Total sample	15 – 29 years	CALD
The Victorian Government	45	55	55
Sustainability Victoria	44	45	46
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (VIC)	42	40	39
Your local council	36	36	42
An independent organisation not linked to any one environmental group	20	21	12
A specific environmental organisation	1	0	1
A specific community organisation	1	0	0
Don't know / Unsure	22	19	19

Shading indicates statistically significant difference vs. other cohorts in same category.
Purple = higher / Orange = lower.

Q40. Imagine there was a secure, centralised website or organisation...How likely would you be to register your interest through such a service, if it was available? Q41.

Which of the following would you be comfortable with providing such a centralised website or organisation for environmental volunteering opportunities?

Base: Total sample (n=1000), 15 to 29 years (n=378), CALD (n=132). *Net highly likely includes those who answered very / quite likely.



Appendix



To ensure that the results were as representative of the target audience as possible, a two-stage data weighting process was undertaken:

1. The full sample (i.e. including those who were screened out because they would not consider environmental volunteering or because they had participated in environmental volunteering the past year) was weighted to ABS (2016 Census) population benchmarks for age, gender and location (Melbourne vs rest of Victoria).
2. Within this, the age, gender and location profile of the main sample (i.e. lapsed environmental volunteers and those who had never taken part in environmental volunteering but would consider doing so) was used to adjust the weighting benchmarks – so that the final weighted sample reflected the profile of these cohorts within the broader population.

The weighting is well within best practice parameters. The effective sample size when weighted is around 90% for most estimates. Weight factors range from 0.72 to 1.99.

Eight (8) participants indicated they had a non-binary gender identity. For weighting purposes, these participants were randomly allocated as either male or female. This is because the population benchmarks used for weighting (ABS Census data, 2016) does not contain estimates of the non-binary population. Consequently they needed to be allocated to either the male or female sex category for their responses to be counted within the sample.

Detailed sample profile

The tables here and over the page show the breakdown of survey participants across demographics and other characteristics.

Region	%	n
Greater Melbourne	80	797
Rest of Victoria	20	203
Sex	%	n
Male	45	446
Female	55	554
Age	%	n
15-29	38	378
30-49	33	326
50 +	30	296
Languages	%	n
English only	88	868
Prefer another language at home	12	132
Country of origin	%	n
Australia	73	741
Born overseas	27	259

Highest level of education	%	n
Primary school	1	12
High school	27	274
Technical certificate	13	113
Advanced diploma / diploma	10	88
Bachelor degree	27	284
Graduate diploma / certificate	10	98
Postgraduate degree	11	117
Other	1	14
Enrolled as a student	%	n
University - undergraduate	10	137
University - postgraduate or doctorate	6	65
TAFE / Vocational school	8	79
High school / Secondary school	6	78
Adult Learning	1	12
English language school	0	3
Other type of study	1	11
Not enrolled as a student	69	627

Base: All participants (n=1,000). Various demographic questions throughout the survey.

NB: Proportions are based on weighted data, except for region, sex and age, as these attributes were used in the data weighting.

Detailed sample profile (cont'd)

Employment status	%	n
Employed full-time	34	363
Employed part-time or casually	20	206
Self-employed	6	51
Not working - temporarily stood down	3	30
Not working - receiving JobKeeper	2	23
Not working - on parental leave or other long-term leave	2	17
Not working - actively looking for work	8	92
Not working - not looking for work	7	70
Retired	17	129
Unable to work	2	19
Concessions or benefits	%	n
Have a Centrelink Healthcare card	35	345
Have a Pensioner Concession card	27	240
Receive any government payments, allowance or benefits	39	355
Pet(s) or animal owner	%	n
Have pet(s) or animals	59	405
Do not have any pets or animals	41	595

Household	%	n
Dependent children who live with you permanently	28	256
Dependent children for whom you share time parenting with someone else	6	62
Caring responsibilities for elderly family members	7	68
Caring responsibilities for family members with a disability	6	47
None of these	59	615
Health factors	%	n
Chronic / ongoing illness	13	105
Mental health illness	11	114
Physical disability	7	56
Hearing disability	4	30
Visual disability	2	21
Autism	1	12
Learning disability	1	10
Intellectual disability	0	3
Other disability	2	19
None of these	69	724

Base: All participants (n=1,000). Various demographic questions throughout the survey.

NB: Proportions are based on weighted data, except for region, sex and age, as these attributes were used in the data weighting.



For more information please email:
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PHOTO CREDITS

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