

Environmental Volunteering

2020 SOCIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS: SNAPSHOT

Background

WHAT: In partnership with Newgate Research the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) undertook social research to better understand the drivers and barriers to Victorians engaging in environmental volunteering. Effective communication approaches were also explored.

WHO: We were interested in Victorians aged 15+ who were open to the idea of doing environmental volunteering but weren't already active. Results are also presented for two priority audiences which have traditionally been less involved in environmental volunteering:



General community



Younger Victorians aged 15-29 years; and



Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups – specifically those who speak a language other than English at home.

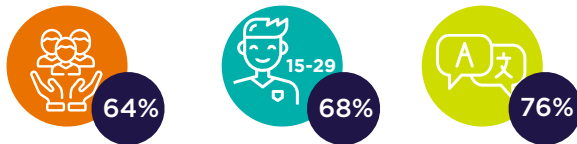
HOW: Qualitative discussions, an online community forum and an online survey of 1000 people from across Melbourne and the rest of Victoria who identified as lapsed or potential environmental volunteers.

Key findings

There is significant latent interest in environmental volunteering - especially among the two priority cohorts.

Future involvement in environmental volunteering

Almost two thirds surveyed said they'd be **likely to get involved in environmental volunteering in the next 12 months** if the opportunity arose.



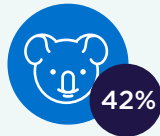
33% were willing to participate on an ongoing basis - even if only a few times a year, while the majority (53%) would prefer once-off or short term projects.



of these key target audiences **want to do environmental volunteering with friends**.

Getting out into nature holds particular interest - to help wildlife, vegetation, and protect the natural environment for current and future generations to enjoy. Advocacy-related environmental volunteering holds more-limited appeal.

What type of volunteering is most appealing?



were very or quite interested in wildlife-based activities



were interested in place-based activities



were interested in issues-based activities

What are the key motivators?

Motivators that contributed to knowledge, fighting for the environment and connecting with nature were the most impactful in driving intentions to volunteer within the general community.

- Young Victorians and CALD audiences were especially **motivated by fighting for change on issues they're passionate about** (73% and 76% vs 65% of all survey participants).
- CALD audiences were also particularly **motivated by learning new skills** (76%) and **helping wildlife** (87%).

A lack of time was the most common spontaneous reason for not getting involved, but it wasn't the biggest barrier to participation.

Reasons for not getting involved

49%

agreed that 'I don't want to make an ongoing commitment' - highlighting the importance of promoting occasional or short-term volunteering options.

40%

also agreed 'I've just not really thought about it', and 47% said they'd 'like to give it a go but haven't got around to it' - both **suggesting the environmental sector has been too quiet in reaching out and asking for volunteers**.

How much time would people give?



On average, **people were willing to give 4 hours** per occasion - with **younger people willing to give even more, at 4.6 hours**.

What messaging works?

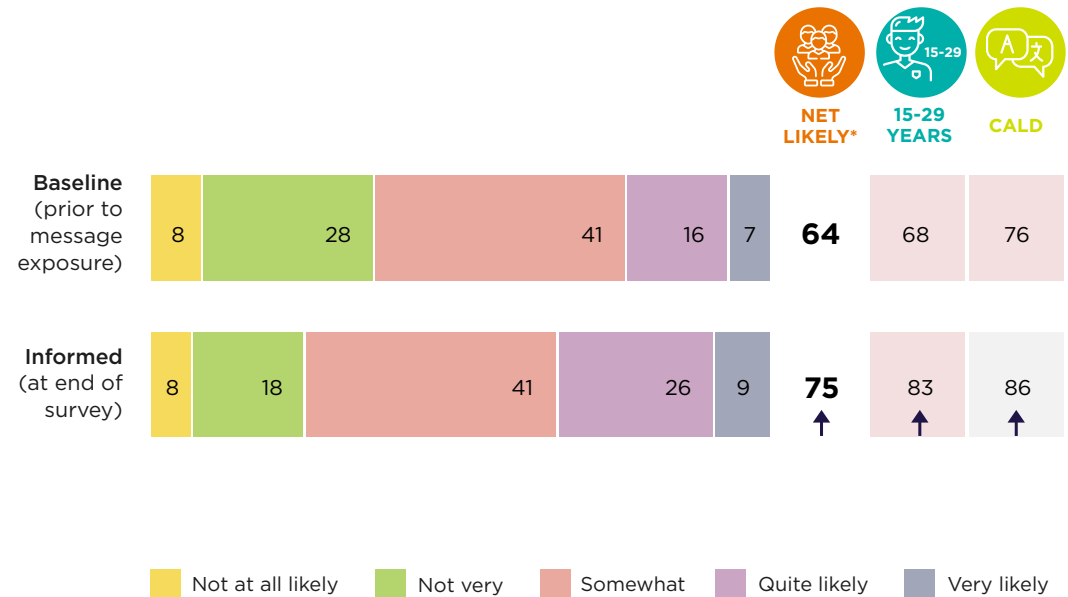
Messages to engage new and lapsed environmental volunteers were developed, tested and refined.

Messaging designed to specifically target new audiences is likely to be more effective than approaches that have attracted existing volunteers - e.g.:

- Short messages with simple language.
- A call-to-action.
- Presentation of content with visuals is crucial, particularly for younger people (e.g. depicting wildlife, the beauty of our environment, and the social aspects of volunteering).
- Tailoring messaging and information for different community segments can boost interest and is important, as different messaging resonates more strongly with different segments of the community - as summarised on the next page.

The chart opposite shows people felt significantly more likely to get involved in environmental volunteering after considering the messages, issues and options in the survey – rising from 64% at least somewhat likely before being exposed to messaging and other topics, to 75% at the end of the survey (with an even larger jump among those aged 15-29 years). This highlights the potential to unearth people's latent interest with compelling stimuli.

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



Q. 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).

*Net Likely = Very/Quite/Somewhat likely.

↑ = Significantly higher than baseline.

■ = Significantly higher vs. other cohorts in same category.

Summary of findings

	 GENERAL COMMUNITY	 YOUNGER PEOPLE	 CALD BACKGROUND
Key motivations to leverage*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help us all learn more while making a difference • Helping wildlife • Ensuring future generations can enjoy the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight for environmental issues or causes • Helping wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning new skills • Protecting native vegetation
Key barriers to overcome*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to make an ongoing commitment • (Perceived) lack of time • Physical ability (older) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haven't thought about it / got around to it • Don't feel it's my responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haven't thought about it / got around to it • Don't know how to get involved
Key messages to boost interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You can help give the environment a voice</i> • <i>Act now to protect the places, plants and animals you love for our future</i> • <i>Just a little of your time can make a world of difference</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Because you care about the environment ...</i> • <i>You can be part of the solution ...</i> • <i>Every little action makes a big difference</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Every little action makes a big difference</i> • <i>Victoria's environment needs your help</i> • <i>Join in to help care for our environment - it's in our nature</i>
Trusted voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local environmental groups • State / Local governments • Sustainability Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local environmental groups • State governments • Social media platforms • Education bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local environmental groups • State / Federal governments

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

Contact: For more information please email
environmental.volunteering@delwp.vic.gov.au



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning



NEWGATE
RESEARCH

For more information please visit
newgateresearch.com.au

