



# VMA Project-Based Implementation Strategy

## Final Report

15 April 2022



*Wisdom. Experience. Insight.*

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This report has been prepared by



For



### **Acknowledgement to Country**

In the spirit of reconciliation, LDC Group respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and emerging leaders and to the ongoing living cultures of Aboriginal people.

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## 1. Introduction

On 1 July 2021, the Federal Department of Social Services (DSS) replaced the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) with the Volunteer Management Activity 5 (VMA5) to operate for the period 2021-2026. Volunteering State /Territory Peak bodies were appointed to deliver the new VMA across their jurisdictions. The new VMA program focus is:

- » The delivery of online services in volunteer management to build the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) within their relevant jurisdictions.
- » The breaking down of barriers to volunteering faced by three identified priority groups: People with Disabilities, First Nations People, and Newly Arrived Migrants (i.e., those who have arrived in Australia within the past five years).
- » An increase in service coverage across regional, rural, and remote areas.

In March 2022 Volunteering WA (*referred to from hereon as the Peak*) commenced discussions with LDC Group on the development of a framework for the implementation of the redesigned VMA from the conclusion of the transition period. With the end of VMA Transition funding in sight (June 22), and upon reviewing the VRC's previous six months activities the Peak had decided that a Project Based Strategy (PBS) was preferable in achieving the KPIs for the VMA Program. LDC Group was engaged to undertake desk research and consultations, and to develop a Framework for Project-Based Strategy (*referred to from hereon as the PBS Framework*) by April 2022 that would enable the peak to fulfill the requirements of the VMA. Data compiled and a workshop conducted with the Peak provided the foundations for a PBS Framework for the delivery of the VMA in Western Australia.

The Peak is responsible for the successful implementation of the VMA and therefore are committed to delivering projects that will fulfill the VMA requirements. The successful implementation of the PBS Framework has been identified as essential for meeting the VMA priority group requirements and to ensure the volunteering sector builds its capacity and reach. The Peak wants to provide leadership and support to volunteering organisations to work effectively under the VMA to 2026.

## 2. Environmental Scan

The development of the VMA strategy and implementation process has been informed by desk research, including WA survey data, advisory group minutes and Volunteering WA reports and focus groups with the sector in WA conducted by LDC Group, as well as discussions with Volunteering WA.

### Western Australia regions – Geography and Demographics

The geography and demographics of the nine regional areas summarised here has been drawn from the Department of Primary Industries WA and Regional Development Commission WA websites.

Western Australian (WA) regions have some clear differences which will have implications for the focus and implementation VMA activities. Regions such as the Pilbara and Goldfields Esperance and

the Mid-West cover large areas with populations between approximately 53,000 and 66,000, with those identifying as Indigenous between 10 -12% of the population. Conversely in Kimberley an area of 424,517 sq kms, the Indigenous population makes up 41.6% and represents more than 30 language groups. The region includes several small towns and over 150 Aboriginal communities.

Gascoyne, while smaller, has 600 kms of coastline, and stretches more than 500 kilometres inland through to the remote outback. The population is 9262 (2020) The Indigenous population is 1261 compared to 7083 non-Indigenous and mostly Australian born. The Wheatbelt spans across 154,862 sq kms, with a population of approximately 73,690. Within the Wheatbelt the Shire of Northam has more than 11,700 people, compared to most communities in the region which have between 500-1000 residents. The Indigenous population is approximately 4.4%.

Peel located only 75 kilometres south of Perth is Western Australia's smallest region with a population of 146,239. Mandurah is the second fastest growing regional city in Australia and is home to 65 per cent of the region's population with an Indigenous population. Immigrants are primarily from English speaking backgrounds approximately 15% with very small numbers of people from Europe, Africa, the Philippines and India<sup>1</sup>.

The Great Southern is a region of 39,007 sq kms on the south coast of Western Australia. 11 local government areas have a total population of approximately 60,000, of whom 88 percent live in the City of Albany. The Non-Indigenous cohort stands out with 52,535 First Nations people constituting 2098. Immigrant numbers are small and tends to be from English speaking backgrounds with a very small number from Asia and India.

### Southwest

The Southwest an area of nearly 24,000 sq kms made up of 12 local government authorities has a population of 179,000 and is the most populated region outside Perth. 73% are non-Indigenous, 2.2% identify as Indigenous. Immigrants predominantly from English speaking countries make up approximately 15% of the population.

### Volunteering in WA

Information that has informed this summary of volunteering in WA includes information provided by the VRC's in response to questions from Volunteering WA which formed part of a high-level evaluation, VIO survey responses, and minutes from advisory groups for each of the priority populations. The responses from

The information provided suggests there is considerable diversity in the type of volunteering involving organisations, from health focussed, to environmental and multicultural interests, many, particularly in regional and rural areas, are based in small communities with significant distances

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Volunteering WA, Department of primary industries and regional development WA, regional development commission community profiles Website.

between towns. For some of the organisations resources are limited and networks and activities can be person dependent.<sup>2</sup>

## Use of online resources and training

**Feedback regarding the use of online resources and training** suggests that there is a variety of training methods and resources used including online training. It was also suggested that there remains a preference for face-to-face training by many volunteers, particularly those in older age groups. A broad range of resource needs were identified by the 15 survey respondents including policy and procedures, induction manuals, diversity and inclusion training and cultural awareness training<sup>3</sup>.

The situation varies across the different regions, however access to internet is considered an issue in a number of regional areas. When asked, 45.5% of the 22 respondents said that digital access has impacted their organisations' ability to undertake online training or access online resources<sup>4</sup>. It was noted that VIKTOR and other online programs are used along with face-to-face for recruitment and referral<sup>5</sup>.

## Engagement with priority groups

Six volunteering resource centres (VRCs) or Volunteer Support Services (VSSs) across the nine regions received VMA transition funding. Responses from VRCs/VSSs to questions about the level of engagement with three priority groups was fairly consistent with very little volunteer promoting activity with new migrants and First Nations peoples, and slightly more engagement with people with a disability. Several examples of programs specifically for people with a disability or experiencing mental health issues were given by a few organisations. It was thought that these other services could be leveraged to increase engagement. Common linkages identified included with local government, job service providers, and disability support services, Kimberley and Pilbara hubs were identified as having good connections with First Nations groups. There were also some connections with multi-cultural groups identified. It is likely that in some smaller areas the situation can be person dependent, influenced by their local networks<sup>6</sup>.

Barriers for individuals identified by survey respondents included commitments in their own communities, 54%, awareness of volunteering and volunteering activities 72%, time poor 36%, culturally specific and appropriate outreach by organisations to individuals in priority groups, 27%, cost of volunteering, 27%. Volunteering has a different meaning, or another word is used 22%, individuals perception of volunteer organisations being culturally safe 9%<sup>7</sup>.

Challenges for organisations included time to support priority group volunteers 70%, engaging and recruiting volunteers from priority groups, 60%, access to cultural awareness resources and training,

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<sup>2</sup> VRC Current Status information

<sup>3</sup> VIO Utilisation Report 2021

<sup>4</sup> 2021 VMA Survey

<sup>5</sup> VRC Current Status information

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> 2021 VMA Survey

20%, support within the organisation to promote inclusion and diversity, 25%, culturally specific and appropriate engagement with people from priority groups 25%, and digital access and literacy 20% <sup>8</sup>.

Email feedback received from the Broome Circle VRC made a number of observations about what is not working well under the redesigned VMA model. This reflects many of the comments made by VRCs/VSSs across the two states as follows:

- » The amount of work required does not fit the funding hours allocated to the VRC
- » Engagement with the VIO's is now restricted to only face to face if discussing the 3 priority groups. This means that the F2F connection that you form with VIOS through regular catch ups to discuss what their needs are is missing.
- » A big gap forming in the contact with the community as a whole as the VRC is only focusing on the 3 priority groups.
- » The 3 priority target groups (First Nations, People with a Disability and New Migrants) are mostly from lower social economic backgrounds and can face additional barriers such as not having access to modern technology or the funds to support themselves to volunteer (petrol cost of getting to a volunteering position) access to a phone or computer, food and water while they volunteer.
- » Many of the 3 priority groups currently reside in locked down communities or are isolating in their homes as they are extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 so they are not presenting to the VIO's for volunteering opportunities.
- » Most Non for Profit VIO's do not have the ability to finance volunteers from the priority groups to assist in making the changes needed to be able facilitate volunteering.
- » The Model is geared to be a one size fits all model and this is just not the case with significant differences between regional and metropolitan areas.

### 3. Project Process

The VMA PBS project was conducted for the Peaks over a period of six weeks in March and April 2022. The process included:

1. Weekly meetings with the CEOs and other personnel of Volunteering WA – see [Appendix 1](#).
2. A workshop with the CEOs and key personnel from the Peak to discuss the elements of the PBS, Framework the desired outcomes, the impact on the sector of adopting this approach, and the economic modelling going forward.
3. Desk research including relevant reports and research undertaken by the Peak
4. Conducting two **focus groups** as described below.
5. Collating and analysing all data gathered for the project and preparing a draft and final report to the Peak.
6. Preparing basic communication materials for distribution to the sectors.

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<sup>8</sup> ibid

## Desk research

The purpose of the desktop research was to provide information about the current state of volunteering in WA relevant to VMA priorities along with information about geographical and demographic factors in the different regions likely to impact on volunteering and the level and type of support that is provided to volunteering involving organisations.

Documentation provided by Volunteering WA , such as survey data, reports and meeting minutes, were analysed to find information relevant to VMA priorities, and to identify key themes, commonalities and differences across WA. Priority areas included use of online tools and training, capacity to engage online, level of engagement and capacity to engage with priority groups as well as challenges and opportunities identified.

## Peak workshop

### *Purpose*

A workshop, designed and facilitated by LDC Group in conjunction with the Peak, was conducted on 14 March 2020. Participants consisted of the CEOs of both organisations and their program managers responsible for sector programs, engagement, and development.

The purpose of the workshop was to unpack and critically analyse the practical application of the PBS in the state to develop a framework, including discussion about: how it would be implemented, the strengths and advantages of this approach and the potential risks and obstacles. The workshop, together with the information obtained from desk research and the focus groups, formed the basis for determining the most appropriate strategy for rolling out the PBS to successfully deliver the VMA.

### *The process*

The workshop took participants through an inquiry process designed to gain a clear picture of the thinking underpinning the decision to take the PBS to VMA delivery and what would be involved in implementing it. Participants worked through the following:

- a. A review of key points from the information provided by the Peak to explain the volunteering context in the state and local characteristics that would impact on the delivery of the PBS.
- b. A detailed unpacking of the PBS covering: its rationale, how it would fulfill the VMA requirements, what the Peak was seeking to achieve by taking this approach, the likely impact of this strategy for the sector and the factors that would enable and get in the way of achieving the outcomes desired including the risks involved.
- c. A review and nuancing of the PBS emerging from the above discussion to explore how confident the Peak is about how well the strategy would work and meet VMA requirements, the commonalities and differences between the states and the scope for collaboration and support to strengthen each other.
- d. An agreement about next steps which involved the consultants documenting the PBS Framework for review, preparing materials for undertaking focus groups, the preparation of draft and final reports and communication materials.

The workshop provided detailed information and raised a range of questions that enabled the consultants to develop the key elements of the PBS Framework for implementing the VMA. This was further refined by the findings of the focus groups.

## Focus Groups

LDC Group conducted two 90-minute online focus groups in March 2022. One group was specifically for VRCs/VSSs, and one was for VIOs. A total of 20 persons participated in the two groups as represented in the following table.

**Table 1: Focus Group Participants**

Focus Group	Number of Participants
Group 1: WA – VRCs/VSSs conducted on 29 March 2022	10
Group 2: WA – VIOs conducted on 29 March 2022	10

## Aims of the Focus Groups

The focus groups provided the opportunity for VRCs/VSSs and VIOs to discuss and explore the proposed framework and to contribute their experience and ideas on the implementation of the new framework.

## Focus Group Discussion Points

Each of the focus groups explored and discussed the following:

- a. Understandings of the redesigned VMA and its objectives, including the implications of future funding and the focus of activities.
- b. Understandings of the PBS being implemented by the Peak body in WA, essentially differentiating block funding from project funding.
- c. The challenges that the redesigned VMA and PBS presents to VRCs/VSSs in particular, and ways that they might address these concerns.
- d. Ideas about possible projects that could fulfill the VMA requirements.
- e. Possibilities for project partnerships and collaborations.
- f. Opportunities for project funding to VIOs.

LDC Group provided two consultants for the focus group, a facilitator and a note taker. A series of guiding questions were used to prompt discussion, as follows:

- a. Based on your understanding of the redesigned VMA, what do you now consider that you could deliver?
- b. Given the VMA change in focus and practices what are important considerations for getting projects up and running?
- c. What could be significant challenges and how could they be addressed?
- d. What would help you to get projects up and running? What would the key elements of a helpful process to support your bids for projects look like?
- e. Who could help you do this?
- f. What sort of opportunities for collaboration can you see and how would this help especially in considering the need for increased access by priority groups?
- g. What would be important information for you to have after today?
- h. What potential volunteering projects do you think could be included that meet the VMA objectives? Can you give some examples?

Detailed notes were taken of each focus group and this data was thematically categorised and analysed.

## 4. The Project Based Strategy Framework

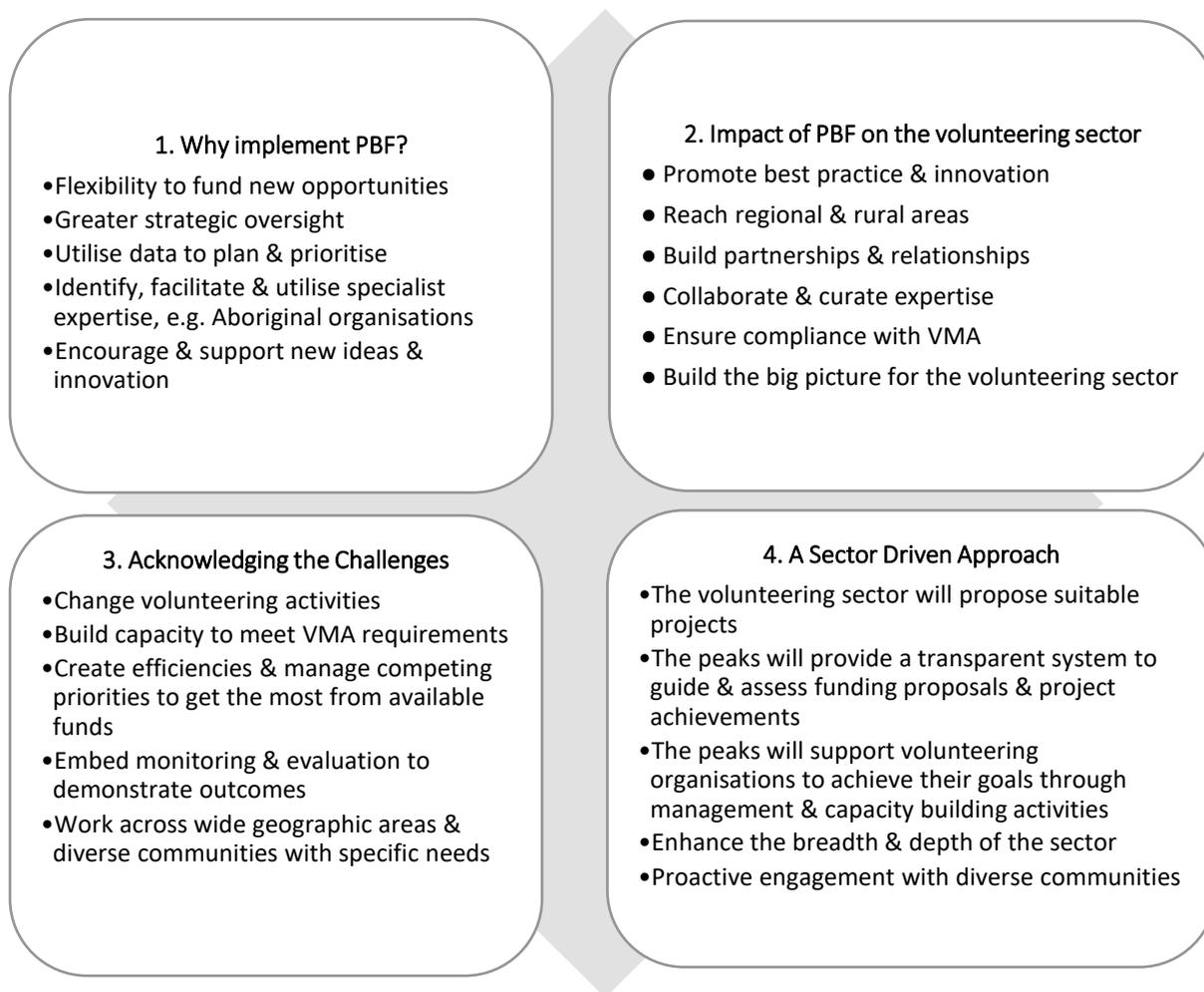
Desk research, a workshop and weekly discussions with the Peak; and consultations through two focus groups, as well as emailed feedback, have enabled the Framework for implementing the PBS to be developed.

The diagram overleaf represents the key elements of the PBS Framework and includes:

- 1.** Why Implement The PBS?
- 2.** Impact Of PBF On the Volunteering Sector.
- 3.** Acknowledging The Challenges.
- 4.** A Sector Driven Approach.

Each of these elements is discussed more fully below incorporating all data and information obtained from the research, consultations and workshop and meetings described earlier.

Figure 1: Elements of the PBS



The research and consultations with key informants in WA respectively has assisted the Peak to consolidate their thinking of the PBS as the most effective way to implement the VMA and to further develop the volunteering sector. It is anticipated that the PBS will provide clarity about the new direction and the opportunity for VRCs/VSSs, VIOs and other organisations to consider their roles in delivering the VMA.

The purpose of the consultations was to provide information about the PBS and to communicate the rationale for this approach. At the focus groups participants reported they did not have sufficient information about the PBS and why the Peak chose this approach. Participants reported could see some benefits in this strategy, but they did not feel they had a comprehensive understanding of the approach and what the Peak was aiming to achieve from this approach.

The focus group discussion indicated a curious mixture of ‘stuckness’ (still fighting the decision to change the whole VMA funding structure) and initiative (seeing opportunities in the available funding). The focus group most interested in possibilities going forward was the VIO group.

The PBS Framework is mapped out below, including the strengths of the approach and considered challenges identified by the Peak and from research and consultations.

## 4.1 Why implement the PBS?

### a. Flexibility to fund new opportunities

The design and delivery of projects that specifically address the VMA requirements, e.g. in relation to the three priority groups, will generate opportunities for a range of organisations to express their interest, commitments, experience, knowledge, expertise and capacities in specific areas and to work to their strengths. The process will tap into a wider range of skills than are currently available in the volunteering sector.

### b. Greater strategic oversight

- » The Peak will use their volunteering management expertise to achieve strategic oversight by designing projects that ensure all the VMA requirements are fulfilled. Sector development will be an important part of this, and resources developed by other states will be considered.
- » The Peak has identified that geographic coverage is a significant challenge. Collaborative efforts and partnerships may be needed involving a variety of organisations to address this challenge and create equitable delivery of the VMA across the state and extend the reach of volunteering to more communities and individuals.
- » Recognising the specialist expertise of organisations, especially those working with any or all of the priority groups will be an important part of the strategy. It will create opportunities for organisations that have not identified as belonging to the volunteering sector to consider their involvement and contributions; and how they may grow volunteering in appropriate ways.
- » The Peak recognises that each state/territory has taken its own approach to implementing the VMA, and that there may be useful learnings through inter-state/territory collaborations. For example, Volunteering Victoria has produced a number of resources providing key messages about the VMA and instructions to interested organisations on applying for funding. Some of these resources may be able to be adapted for use in WA.

### c. Utilise data to plan and prioritise

Available data in relation to meeting each of the VMA requirements will help with planning and prioritisation of projects. Data gaps will need to be addressed to further inform decision-making by the Peak.

### d. Identify, facilitate and utilise specialist expertise

Opportunities to co-design program delivery will be an important process that can incorporate the lived experiences of people in the VMA priority groups and in geographic areas across the state.

### e. Encourage and support new ideas and innovation

- » The delivery of projects that are identified as making a significant contribution to the implementation of the VMA objectives will be critical. It is anticipated that the PBS will

generate new ideas and innovative service delivery although the Peak understands that sector-wide change can be a slow process.

- » An important strength of the PBS is testing the market for projects that are innovative and effective.
- » There were very few project ideas proffered. Respondents generally were too caught up in the problems and challenges. Some suggestions however were made:
  - **Lifestyle mentoring in disability supported housing.** This suggestion included three elements: (1) student recruitment and placement; (2) social media strategy; (3) oral history project. The aim would be to recruit young people in disability supported housing. It would include helping those to upskill technological skills. (Note: came from Volunteering WA VMA Coordinator).
  - **Reframing volunteering from an Indigenous perspective** to draw on the experience of Indigenous volunteers and shift from the white colonial view embedded in the way volunteering is currently framed. This was echoed in the VIO group and VRC groups regarding new migrant groups (a potential intersectional project).
  - **Capacity building projects** – There were a couple of suggestions of projects focusing on capacity building both for the VRC (in relation to the priority groups) and the priority groups (in relation to volunteering), especially in identifying long term needs and resource requirements.
- » Ideas suggested included:
  - A volunteering model for First Nations people that explores and develops:
  - A voice about what volunteering means to First Nations people
  - To reflect the language and cultural aspects of volunteering for a First Nation Person
  - As a process of reconciliation with our First Nations People and a way for us to acknowledge the past wrongs through respect and acknowledgement of their culture
  - ‘Expansion of the target groups to facilitate longevity and growth of the volunteering sector and organisations’
  - ‘For the model to be more holistic / inclusive of community members of all diversities’
  - ‘It needs to allow for the face-to-face aspect of VIO connection and what this does in building a relationship that allows volunteering to grow with in the community’
  - ‘How face to face meetings with VIO’s can bring about better growth for the volunteers such as future job prospects’
  - ‘To see volunteering hours recognised as a trial work period to help solve the Hospitality crisis – maybe a one of payment made to the volunteer for attending a café or bar for a trial’
  - ‘To see volunteering expand to be able to offer courses like a barista course again so the volunteer could then gain employment’
  - ‘A Grey nomad/traveller data base for volunteers as they move through the states’
  - ‘A volunteer passport which could contain all their documents (WWC and PC) and a list of their VIO placements – reducing barriers for the volunteer and the VIO’

- ‘Specific funding to allow for expenses incurred by volunteers and VIO’s (additional) for petrol, food, resources’

## 4.2 Impact of PBF on the volunteering sector

While many of the focus group respondents professed a long history of collaboration in the sector, there was little evidence that VRCs/VSSs had readied themselves to submit partnership arrangements for the VMA funding. While there was some broad recognition of the value of collaboration, there was more of a focus on a sense of competitiveness for funding, rather than collaboration which was attributed to the VMA. However, this was not the case with the VIO focus group where it was quite the opposite. The VIOs saw options for partnering with major organisations and local councils (often the coordinating link between VIO’s).

There were a number of comments in the focus groups about how COVID has had a significant impact on the number of available volunteers, and a concern as to whether it is possible to rebuild the volunteer workforce.

A common theme in all focus group discussions was the concern for disadvantaged/priority groups and the elderly accessing the online requirements – both through their own lack of skills, distinct preference for face to face (First Nations communities were highlighted here) and general IT access issues in the regions. Also, some VIOs have very limited or no capacity.

### a. Promote best practice and innovation

- » The focus group discussions generated interest in new ways of delivering the VMA program. The Peak indicated it is important for the volunteering sector to feel confident that their support and products represent best practice.
- » The Peak recognises that a ‘learning as we go’ also utilising e-learning resources will be integral to the PBS.

### b. Reach regional and rural areas

Links with LGAs in regional and rural areas may be important for achieving geographic coverage. Covering the entire state will be a big challenge to the sector.

### c. Build partnerships and relationships

Individual organisations may not have the capacity to undertake projects on their own. Partnerships and collaborations can facilitate new project opportunities and the Peak encourages this.

### d. Collaborate and curate expertise

- » The roll out of the PBS offers the opportunity for new inter-agency collaborations and redefining the relationship of the Peak with organisations in the volunteering sector.
- » Advisory groups have been established for the three priority groups by Volunteering WA to assist the development of relationships with organisations, and to foster the involvement of organisations with demonstrated expertise and capabilities.

- » The Peak is continuing relationships with its Research Committee and recognises the importance of their contributions to sector development.

#### e. Ensure compliance with VMA

The Peak is committed to demonstrating successful implementation of the VMA as per its contract with DSS. To be sure that deliverables are met, a risk management approach is required including more short-term project to allow for changes to be made to the PBS with emerging data. The tendering process for projects will need to reflect this circumstance.

#### f. Build the big picture for the volunteering sector

- » The volunteering sector in WA somewhat reflects the state of volunteering across Australia and may be characterised as mostly ‘mainstream’ with minimal sector capacity or even interest to work with diverse populations and in diverse regions. While individual focus group participants referred to examples of initiatives with people with a disability, First Nations peoples and new migrants, comprehensive and strategic initiatives were not evident. Moreover, participants spoke about the difficulties associated with engaging with each of these three groups, and many of these difficulties are practical obstacles. These expressed difficulties are consistent with challenges identified by volunteering sectors across Australia however they signal the need to generate a new picture of volunteering across Australia and in WA, which is characterised by diversity, reach and the utilisation of modern means for generating efficiencies and increasing capacities.
- » The VMA and PBS will create an opportunity for state-wide organisations to express their interest in project funding.

### 4.3 Acknowledging the Challenges

Focus group participants indicated that the implementation of the VMA starting 1<sup>st</sup> July (given it is now April) is a critical concern in relation to having sufficient time to prepare expressions of interest for projects. Given that VRC/VSS funding will not continue after 1 July, they will lose staff. One of the consequences of this is that their capacity to develop proposed projects will be reduced.

There was patchy evidence of knowledge/connections with the priority groups from focus group respondents’ comments. There were some instances of VRCs/VSSs and VIOs being strongly familiar with each of the three groups, but little evidence of VRCs/VSSs being across all three. There were strong concerns about new migrants having the ability to focus on volunteering within their first five years in Australia. It was also noted how ‘volunteering’ in Aboriginal communities is very different to the mainstream concept of a volunteer - they may not even use that term.

#### a. Changes to volunteering activities

- » The changes to the VMA have not been well understood by some VRCs/VSSs. This was reflected in questions raised during focus groups and suggests there is also resistance to change which will ultimately impact the makeup of the volunteering sector, i.e. some organisations may not have a role or have a reduced role in the delivery of the VMA, while

other organisations who have historically not identified as part of the volunteering sector may now have important roles.

- » Challenges identified from consultations include:
  - 'Uptake of volunteering opportunities by new migrants'.
  - 'Definition of volunteering: Newcomers from other cultures would need to be better educated that volunteering is not necessary a pathway to securing dream jobs though that could happen'.
  - Certainty of outcomes: Is there a way to ensure more tangible outcomes (e.g., definitive pathways to job placements) especially considering point #2 above'.

#### b. Build capacity to meet VMA requirements

- » The Peak acknowledges that organisations and the volunteering sector will continue to require support as the PBS is rolled out.
- » The Peak recognises that those organisations that have not been part of the volunteering sector but who may now have an important role in the implementation of the VMA, may need support to demonstrate their interest and ideas.
- » The transition to digital operations for a range of activities previously undertaken face-to-face was discussed in focus groups and presents both philosophical and practical difficulties for VRCs/VSSs and possibly VIOs. Focus group discussions reiterated that some activities should not be undertaken online as they compromise the level of engagement that can be achieved with individuals and communities. Simultaneously, in some areas internet connectivity and available hardware and software can impede efficiencies that are expected from the online transition. These issues require further detailed exploration to understand their full impact on the volunteering sector.

#### c. Create efficiencies and manage competing priorities to get the most from available funds

The PBS will need to demonstrate use of available funds for the purpose of fulfilling the VMA objectives. The PBS offers opportunities to prioritise projects and create efficiencies to maximise volunteering outcomes.

#### d. Embed monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate outcomes

- » It is accepted that monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of projects must be factored in project design. Setting outcomes that are aligned with the objectives of the PBS will therefore be critical to the success of a monitoring and evaluation regime.
- » Self-evaluation may be encouraged as part of the PBS.
- » The DSS evaluation strategy will inform monitoring and evaluation at a state and project level.

e. Work across wide geographic areas and diverse communities with specific needs

- » The requirement to spread services across wider geographic areas and diverse communities were acknowledged as clear challenges to VRCs/VSSs, and potentially to VIOs as well. For small organisations this may preclude their involvement in the PBS unless they are able to develop collaborations and partnerships through which they can demonstrate greater service scope.
- » Recent emergency events (bushfires, cyclone) were highlighted in focus groups as examples for why careful consideration is needed in planning around geographic areas where volunteering is critical.

## 4.4 A Sector Driven Approach

a. The volunteering sector will propose suitable projects

- » The Peak has indicated that they will design the projects which will form the PBS, however they are interested in ideas from the sector about suitable projects. The focus groups identified the following ideas for consideration by Volunteering WA:
  - ‘To create and build a model specific to our First Nations Peoples from their perspective (as volunteering from a colonial perspective using colonial language does not take into account the history of slavery and stolen wages in our region which impact participation)’.
  - ‘A way forward in recognition of volunteering from our First Nations perspective – a total rewrite and reframe embracing reconciliation through history and culture’.
  - ‘A specific award for a First Nations Person who has contributed to volunteering for their community through their version of volunteering’.
  - ‘Continue to lobby local government to partner with us in support of volunteering initiatives’.
  - ‘**Reverse mentoring** - A new migrant would typically have something to offer (and would eagerly contribute) e.g., valuable lessons from previous work experiences, new culture and different approaches to doing things, storytelling, etc. that they can bring to the table. So instead of promoting volunteering as much “helping people that so desperately need help,” it can be promoted based on mutual benefits. This would be motivating for all parties involved’.

b. The Peak will provide a transparent system to guide and assess funding proposals and project achievements

- » Focus group participants agreed that consistent and timely information is now needed with the details of the PBS so that organisations can assess their interest and readiness to apply for projects.
- » One VRC (Broome Circle) stated that what is needed now is:
- » Regional advice and guidance through transparency and open lines of communication.

- » To be able to assist adapting a model that would suit the Kimberley and reflect the cultural diversity located here through already formed cultural relationships.
- » Expansion into the Kimberley for VWA through collaboration with BVRS / Kimberley Volunteer Hub.

#### c. The Peak will support volunteering organisations to achieve their goals through management and capacity building activities

- » Feedback from one VRC indicated the following are working well at present:
  - Online resources provided by the Peak and shared with VIOs.
  - Updates and expansions to the current website.
  - Regular meetings to discuss and debrief about what is available regarding training and what is needed to be developed to meet the VRC needs.
  - A clear line of communication regarding the expectations of the VRC regarding the new funding guidelines.
- » Volunteering WA has initiated the establishment of advisory groups to help steer the PBS.

#### d. Enhance the breadth and depth of the sector

The PBS will potentially offer a suite of projects that range in size, objectives and time frames. While this approach can stimulate interest in short, medium and long-term projects, it will also generate the risk that some supplier organisations may not be interested in undertaking projects that are not substantial in their breadth, depth and funding. Several focus group participants indicated that this could be a deciding factor in their interest to operate under the VMA or not.

#### e. Proactive engagement with diverse communities

Both the Peak and focus group participants acknowledged that engaging with the three priority groups will require processes for building trust and respect, and for developing narratives around volunteering that are relatable to specific groups of people.

## 5. Steps to Implement the Project-Based Strategy

To ensure the successful implementation of the PBS, VRCs/VSSs and VIOs stated they need detailed information about the PBS process and timeframe from the Peak including but not limited to:

- a. **Types of projects preferred or prioritized**, e.g. for capacity building, awareness raising, specific programs. Guidance on the identification of projects was also suggested.
- b. **Project periods**, e.g. short term, medium term, long term – it was indicated by all respondents that while there may be some projects suitable for short term funding of say 12 months, in the majority of cases, projects are more likely to need to be conducted over several years to achieve the VMA objectives. Some respondents indicated they would not offer an expression of interest for projects that clearly could not be achieved within a short time frame.

- c. **Project coverage** in relation to geographic coverage and priority group targeting—most respondents indicated they were unclear about Volunteering WA respective priorities and plans for meeting the VMA objectives.
- d. **Project funding**, e.g. allocated funding for particular types of projects, funding range for larger projects etc. Guidance on how to optimize project bids was also suggested as were options for oral presentations of project bids. Will there be set amounts for regions and for each priority group, or will it be open ended?
- e. **Monitoring and evaluation of projects**, i.e. how will this occur, what are the expectations.
- f. **Project design**—co-design was recognized as an important element in the design of projects especially from disability representatives, as was the centrality of the lived experience.

Respondents generally agreed that the principles guiding project development should include:

- » Voices from the community
- » Codesign
- » An action focus
- » Empowering choice and the lived experience
- » Intersectional – recognize the factors that overlap and magnify experience and do this across three priority groups.
- » Provide a foundation to get started that will enable other projects to build from that
- » Seeking collaborations

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the Peak and reflect the analysis of data collected from the research and discussions with the Peak.

**Recommendation 1:** Review processes used by other jurisdictions, e.g. Volunteering Victoria, to identify processes that may be helpful for the roll out of the PBS, e.g. a schedule of information sessions, frequently asked questions sheets etc.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop and publish a plan for how the PBS will be rolled out. It will be useful to map the PBS Framework against the VMA objectives to provide a logic sequence. This should include activities, time frames and who will be involved.

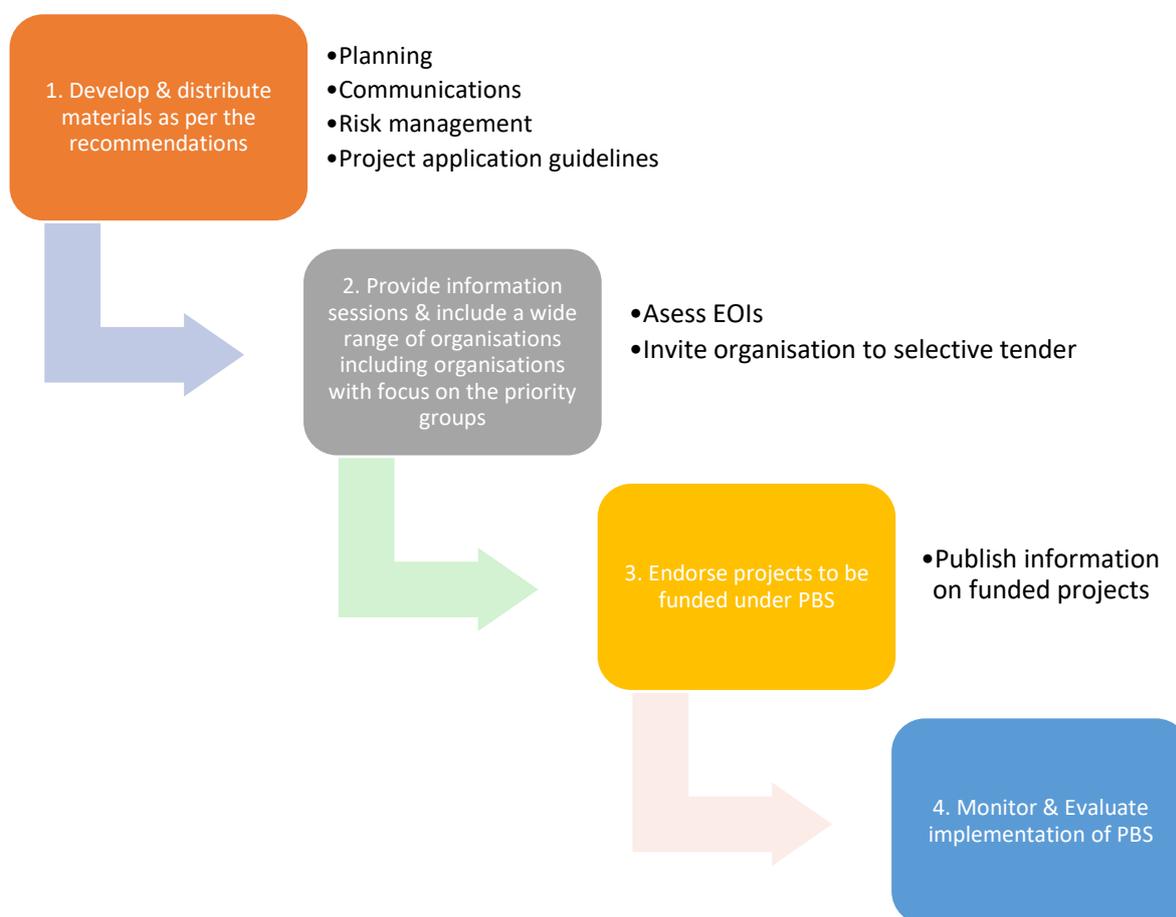
**Recommendation 3:** Develop a risk management plan to address identified risks to the roll out of the PBS.

**Recommendation 4:** Develop and distribute guidelines and associated materials that will assist organisations to apply for project funding. This should include information about the scope of projects and requirements, criteria for success, collaborations and funding available. Some materials developed by other jurisdictions may be usefully adapted, e.g. EOI criteria and budget templates; partnership MOUs, self-assessment templates for monitoring and evaluation.

**Recommendation 5:** Introduce a selective tendering process whereby organisations can provide an initial brief EOI and if they are assessed as appropriate according to developed criteria, they can then be asked to provide a project application. It should be noted that this approach is likely to be most successful with longer term projects and large organisations that the Peak has not had a strong relationship with.

## 7. Process

The following process steps out how the PBS could be rolled out across a sector, with reference to the recommendations.



## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix 1: Key Peak Body Personnel

1. Tina Williams, CEO, Volunteering WA.
2. Jen Wyness, Executive Manager, Services, Volunteering WA.
3. Mel Baker, Manager, VMA Program, Volunteering WA.

### 8.2 Appendix 2: Focus Group Participants

WA GROUP ONE	
NAME	AGENCY
1. Tracy Sleeman	Albany VRC
2. Cate Warne	Broome Circle
3. Denisa	Broome Circle
4. Leisa	Centacare Geraldton VRC
5. Vicki Pollard	Peel VRC
6. Susanne Becker-Hammersely	Volunteer Southwest
7. Shamara Williams	Volunteer Southwest
8. Simon Order	Volunteering WA
9. Tanya Richardson	Volunteering WA
10. Kelly Nunn	Volunteering WA
11. Mel Ammon	Esperance VRC
12. Denisa Konecny	Broome Circle (written response)
WA GROUP TWO	
NAME	AGENCY
7. Helen Maddocks	Office of Multicultural Interests
8. Wendy Kearns	VIO Child Cancer Research
9. Larr Rose	VIO Kings Park
10. Andrea Moss	Individual Disability Advisory Group
11. Melissa Northcott	Individual Disability Advisory Group
12. Eleanor Ingram	Consultant Disability Advisory Group
13. Steve Martin	Reconciliation WA
14. Ephraim Eosaghae	Individual New Migrant Advisory Group (and written response)
15. Rika Asaoka	Consultant New Migrant Advisory Group
16. Lesley Lord	Communicare