

MEDIA RELEASE

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Study shows heart-warming benefits of volunteering

Volunteering makes the world of difference to people's personal wellbeing and feeling of purpose, according to a new Volunteer Census report by Community Information and Support Victoria (CISVic). Of 624 volunteers surveyed, 95% believe their work is meaningful, 92% feel they are a respected member of their support agency, and the vast majority believe the most is being made of their skills and expertise. Giving back to the community is the main reason for volunteering.

Volunteers speak of the impact that volunteering has on them personally, including enhanced social connections and greater awareness and understanding of other peoples' situations.

Susanne has been volunteering for 39 years, in recent years at Cranbourne Information & Support Service. Through volunteering at CISS, Susanne has built strong friendships with other volunteers and staff. Susanne believes she has also increased her awareness of social problems that impact vulnerable community members. 'Volunteering has made me more empathetic and tolerant towards people, especially toward people who struggle daily to survive', says Susanne.

Longevity of volunteering is a key attribute of the sector, with many volunteers dedicating more than 10 years of their lives to this work.

Typical is Margaret. Being raised in a country community where her mother was very involved as a volunteer, Margaret had always expected that she would do the same. Impressively, Margaret has been volunteering for Mornington Community Information and Support Centre for 35 years. Margaret highly recommends volunteering, as she believes it broadens your understanding of the lives of other people. She says a benefit of volunteering 'is meeting and working with a vast range of wonderfully dedicated volunteers and staff.'

Younger volunteers also make a great contribution to supporting the community through CISVic agencies. Marzia has been volunteering for five months at Cranbourne Information & Support Service. Marzia says 'I think it's really important for young people to get involved. It helps them integrate with people from all ages and learn how to talk to strangers.' For herself, Marzia says 'it feels like the world has gotten bigger, as I am more aware of people and their feelings'.

CISVic is the peak body representing local community information and support services. CISVic local services assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties by providing information, referral and support services, including emergency relief. CISVic's service workforce has 334 paid staff and 3,460 volunteers. The work of these volunteers is invaluable for the support provided to Victorians who are struggling and require assistance.

The Volunteer Census 2018 is being launched today at CISVic's conference in Melbourne: 'The poverty problem: whose fault is it anyway?' as part of Anti-poverty Week.

Community Information & Support Victoria



For more information or for media comment please contact Jill Wilson, Volunteer Development Manager, Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic) at jill@cisvic.org.au, or phone 9672 2003 or 0428 238 246.

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