

Corporate Volunteering in Australia: *a snapshot*



CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING *Benefits*



For the employee

- Opportunities to meet new people and explore new situations and challenges.
- Unique opportunities to interact with people from other areas of the company.
- New and more positive perceptions of career, workplace, peers and management teams.
- Pathways to making a difference through community involvement.
- Opportunity to gain skills or use existing skills in a new environment.
- Increased ability to set individual performance goals, coach and counsel and evaluate performance.



For the company

- Increased company pride and loyalty from staff.
- Heightened image and positive recognition by external stakeholders.
- Improved staff morale, motivation, team spirit and initiative.
- Enhanced relationships between people from different areas of the organisation.
- Better employee attendance, recruitment and retention.
- Professional and skill development opportunities for staff.
- Improved triple bottom line.
- Transformative relationships between the company and the local community.



For the community

- Access to a different pool of volunteers, skills, knowledge and technical expertise.
- Increasing service delivery for beneficiaries.
- An opportunity to share the organisation's mission to potential ambassadors.
- Influence behaviours for positive social, economic or environmental impact.
- Access to teams of volunteers for major tasks and events.
- Increasing public awareness of community issues.
- Create corporate partnerships and potential income streams for community projects.
- Improve understanding between the business and voluntary sectors.



THE SNAPSHOT *Data*

In Australia, LBG (London Benchmarking Group) is managed by Corporate Citizenship and has tracked the levels of participation and the value of the time committed by corporate volunteers for over 10 years both in Australia and globally. Companies report the value and extent of all their corporate community investment activities annually and LBG provides a third-party verification of reported data.

LBG values the time of company employees' volunteering at the cost to the business and not at the value to the community. This ensures a level 'playing-field' to measure and benchmark contributed time.

LBG has drawn on 10 years of this verified data to provide some observations and recommendations around employee volunteering across Australia.

'Australian data' refers to data reported annually by Australian companies since 2006. 'Global data' refers to all data reported to LBG from across the world, including data from Australian companies. Additionally, insights have been drawn from LBG's annual State of Corporate Community Investment (CCI) survey where the views of community investment professionals from around the world are sought. The LBG annual review, including the State of CCI survey results, can be found in full at www.lbg-online.net/review2018/.

THE FINDINGS

78%

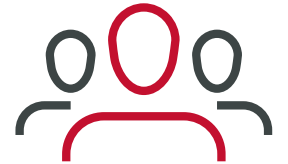
OF COMPANIES HAVE A VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM [1]

Over half of those intend to increase levels of participation [2]

15%

OF EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATED IN VOLUNTEERING IN 2018 [2]

This has grown from 3.7% in 2006 [2]



1m+
hours

CONTRIBUTED BY CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS IN 2018

An average of 27.5 hours per volunteer

10%

OF CORPORATE COMMUNITY BUDGET IS TIME [3]

Australian companies contribute a greater proportion of their total community spend in time: 10% versus 7% globally [3]

500

FTE AVAILABLE BUT NOT UTILISED EACH YEAR [4]

Amongst Australian LBG members, the theoretically available volunteering time (usually one or more days per employee per year) equates to over 1000 FTE staff. Only half of this is actually utilised, leaving the equivalent of over 500 full time staff, for a year, that are available but not being utilised. [4]

[1] A volunteer program is defined as the formal provision by an employer for paid time to enable its employees to work in the community

[2] Participation is the percentage of employees involved in corporate volunteering (working in the community during paid company time) compared to the total workforce of reporting companies

[3] Companies report to LBG total community contributions made in cash, time (corporate volunteering), in-kind and management costs. See <http://www.lbg-online.net/framework/>

[4] Australian companies reporting to LBG in 2018 reported 263,236 employees in their collective workforce. Assuming each employee has one day per annum to volunteer, this equates to over 1000 FTE for a year, of which, only half is currently used.

TRENDS AND *Challenges*



Companies appear to acknowledge the value of a corporate volunteering program: 78% of respondents to the annual State of Corporate Community Investment survey indicate they have a program in place, and an additional 10% plan to start one. Furthermore, over half of respondents indicate they aim to either increase participation or increase focus on skilled volunteering.



Community investment professionals report that the key challenges with corporate volunteering include; balancing people's workload with volunteering commitments; managing opportunities for skilled and non-skilled volunteering; and the difficulty in gaining broader uptake, where generally a small number of regular employees take up many opportunities.

Despite the increasing numbers of programs and the growing recognition of the value of employee volunteering we have not seen significant growth.



Another common challenge reported was the alignment of the volunteering programs with business strategy. Achievement of this continues to present a significant opportunity for companies to grow their positive impact on society whilst accruing meaningful business benefits. Connecting volunteering to employee development remains an under-utilised opportunity.



Despite the increasing numbers of programs and the growing recognition of the value of employee volunteering, we have not seen significant growth. While participation levels in volunteering have risen steadily since 2006, the percentage of a company's total spend in time (cash, in kind and management costs make up the rest) has not altered significantly in over ten years of reporting. Half of the potential employee volunteering time is not utilised each year, equivalent to 500 FTE across reporting LBG members. There are many more companies that make volunteer leave available to their employees.

OPPORTUNITIES *for Engagement*

Volunteering benefits for individual participants are well recognised, for example providing a sense of purpose, promoting connection with others and providing learning opportunities. Conversely, while business benefits are extensive, these are perhaps not as well recognised or understood in circles outside of community investment professionals.

At its most basic, enabling employees to volunteer to causes that matter to them can engender loyalty towards the business and positively influence employee engagement. However, a well-structured volunteering program can have far greater benefits than this. Opportunities exist to grow and develop employee talent, foster relationships (both between employees and business-to-business) and develop brand recognition and trust – all while delivering meaningful benefit to the community.

With these potential benefits up for grabs, the challenges reported (e.g. of balancing workload and managing opportunities) do not seem insurmountable. So, what stands in the way? Is it perhaps that volunteering is something that other people do, who have more time and don't have such busy jobs?

If volunteering opportunities were recognised and promoted as (for example) “training and development opportunities”, would this shift the dial? Until companies can integrate the huge value that experiential learning through volunteering provides, as a route to learning and development, then we are unlikely to see significant changes.

From the not-for-profit perspective, consideration should be given to the opportunities presented to corporate partners and other organisations – where do you need skilled assistance? What would have a significant impact on the organisation? Perhaps in marketing, communications, IT assistance, strategy or leadership? There are over 500 FTE resources available (every year!) from LBG members alone – how do you tap into and make the most of this?

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Opportunities to consider to increase participation and realise associated benefits:

- Consider deeper and longer forms of engagement to match with professional development objectives and community needs.
- Work more closely with training and development teams in companies to maximise engagement opportunities.
- Offer volunteer ‘banks’, through which interested employees can access unused volunteering hours.
- Turn unused volunteer leave into donations via work place giving or other employee mechanisms

CASE Study



Skills-based volunteering allows employees to expand their volunteering contribution by utilising their professional skills and knowledge to support community organisations in a more specialised and focused way that requires delivery against a requested scope of work.

City West Lotteries House (CWLH) was looking for a volunteer with the knowledge and expertise to assist their team with some much-needed upskilling in using platforms such as Excel. The small team of three at CWLH was previously using Excel at a basic level to calculate their end of month tenant charges, and were keen to undergo some training in order to work more efficiently and consistently.

CWLH are no strangers to working with Woodside volunteers, and they knew the way to gain expertise, improve their services, develop the organisation's capabilities and to move this project forward was to bring in another skilled Woodsider. Volunteering WA advertised the role with Woodside, and found the perfect skilled volunteer, Lihua Huang.

As Woodside's Finance Business Partner, Lihua Huang was the ideal candidate for this opportunity. First, Volunteering WA brokered a meeting between Lihua and the team at CWLH to get a clear understanding of their current process, and to identify where improvements were needed around re-designing the data entry procedure and standardising tenant names

across all documents. She then gathered and reviewed the documentation to identify the key issues and changes that needed to be tackled.

Lihua provided valuable ideas and inputs to amend their internal processes, working with the staff to integrate the end of month data into a more comprehensive format for recording and reporting. Several training sessions were then conducted with the team to demonstrate the new model. Lihua's recommendations were shown to reduce the number of processes and procedures involved, and they set to work implementing her ideas.

On completion of the project, a new spreadsheet capturing all the relevant data had been piloted with tenants over a two month period, with very positive feedback received. Lihua had successfully streamlined the processes used by the organisation, significantly improving the operational efficiency of the team.

"Lihua listened to what the needs of CWLH were and acted on them to achieve excellent results for us. She provided great ideas and tuition", said Trish Slee, CEO, CWLH.



Lihua Huang, Woodside

What was the best part of your experience volunteering with CWLH?



I received support from the organisation and they appreciated the efficiency gains from the new process.

Did your experience volunteering build on your existing skills and knowledge?



Yes. I learned that communication with stakeholders at all levels to ensure alignment before making changes is important.

What was the most significant takeaway from your volunteering experience?



It was great to see that I was able to add value to a community organisation with my skills. I would definitely recommend a skills based volunteer opportunity to others.

About LBG and Corporate Citizenship

LBG is the global standard in measuring and managing corporate community investment.



The LBG Framework is a robust measurement standard that any company can apply to understand the difference their contributions make to business and society. The businesses using LBG are from some of the world's leading organisations and are part of a global LBG Network.

Corporate Citizenship is a global consultancy that starts with a very simple premise – that just as individual citizens have rights, responsibilities and aspirations, so do companies.

For more than 20 years we've helped businesses find their place in the world.

As critical friends we ask the sometimes difficult questions that challenge our clients to fulfil their responsibilities and ambitions through practical action.

About Volunteering Australia

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



Its vision is a stronger, more connected and resilient Australian community through volunteering, and its mission is to lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

Volunteering Australia works with volunteering peak bodies in every state and territory in Australia. For more information on how to manage corporate volunteering in your state, please see Volunteering Australia's website for Australia-wide contact details.

About the Corporate Volunteer Council



The Corporate Volunteer Council (CVC), convened by Volunteering WA, is a coalition of businesses that recognise the importance of workplace volunteering to better address the needs of our community.

The CVC promotes and strengthens corporate volunteerism by:

- being an advocate for corporate volunteering;
- sharing amongst its members knowledge and experience of corporate volunteering; and
- promoting best practice in corporate volunteering.

The Executive Committee of the CVC is made up of representatives from Alcoa, Bankwest, Beyond Bank, BHP, Deloitte, RAC, Shell and Woodside.

