

## New face at Wimmera Volunteers

**W**elcome to May's Wimmera Volunteers information sheet. Hello everybody, my name is Brian Mannix and each month I will be producing these informative sheets on issues relating to volunteering.

These info sheets are designed to keep you up-to-date with events and news to do with the many areas of volunteering. If you would like a certain area you would like me to cover in the info sheet, let me know and I'll see if I can help.

Wimmera Volunteers is a resource centre for volunteers and organisations seeking volunteers. It is a starting point for people wishing to give up their time to volunteer. We have a diverse range of volunteers who give up their free time each day to make somebody else's life more enjoyable. One of my responsibilities at Wimmera Volunteers is to manage the Business Volunteer project.

### What is Business Volunteering?

Business Volunteering is a way in which business can strengthen the community in which they operate and fulfil their social responsibility.

Businesses that engage in Business Volunteering actively support and encourage their employees to participate in the local community.

Growing in popularity since the 1990's, Business Volunteering involves the contribution of time, talent, energy, skills and resources by the business's workforce.

Regularly, businesses in our rural areas are engaged in community: They allow staff to write minutes of a meeting during work time on the businesses equipment or they may allow office stationery to be used for the printing of posters or they may release a staff member to allow them to attend a meeting that is not directly related to the work role. These activities all describe Business Volunteering

### An Opportunity

Business Volunteering is an opportunity for organizations and groups to receive support from Businesses. Local businesses have the people and the infrastructure to provide a range of supports.

Larger businesses are increasingly setting up volunteer programs as part of their long-term corporate and human resource planning. To this end, businesses are

pursuing partnerships with local organisations and identifying volunteering opportunities for employees. Some businesses also have corporate volunteering programs in place with enthusiastic individuals or teams of employees who want to become actively involved in the community.

There is enormous potential for community organisations to work with business. Business Volunteering has many benefits for not-for-profit organisations, as well as for the community as a whole.

These include:

- Contributing new skills, knowledge and technical expertise
- Forming teams of volunteers who can periodically perform major tasks
- Creating wider community awareness of local issues and needs
- Promoting the work of a not-for-profit organisation through associated publicity
- Providing access to free or subsidised resources
- Making a difference to the people and the causes an organisation cares about
- Improving understanding between the business and the voluntary sectors

I've been out talking to businesses in the Wimmera since my appointment, and I have heard some remarkable stories of businesses that are involved with not-for-profit organisations. Businesses giving up their time and staff to deliver meals on wheels every week; one business I spoke with recently told me that can't provide manpower, but donates 10s of thousands of dollars each year in goods to organisations and to people enduring hardship through no fault of their own. Some companies allocate two days a year for their staff to volunteer.

What to know more about business volunteering, give me a call at Wimmera Volunteers on 5382 5607. I would love to arrange a meeting with you and your business.

\* A reminder for organisations to return National Volunteers questionnaire by Monday, May 5.



## **Business volunteering – why not make it a part of your business**