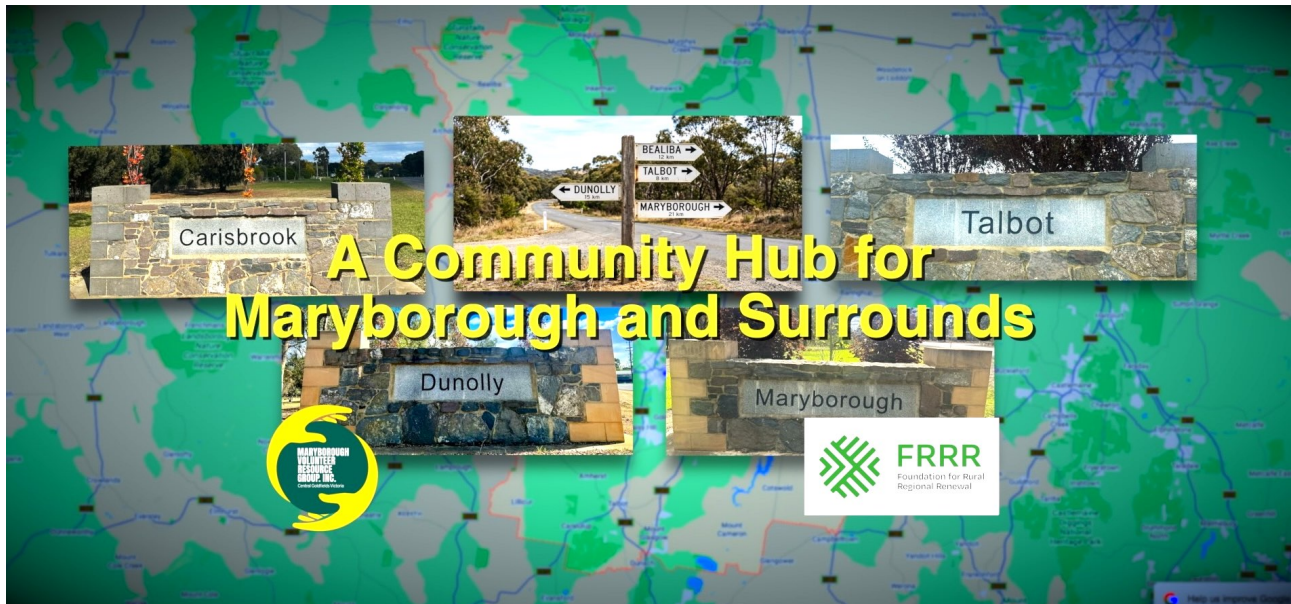


Report from the Feasibility Study for establishing a not-for-profit Community Hub across Maryborough and Surrounds



August 2026

Prepared by the Project Coordinator for the Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group

<https://maryboroughvolunteers.org.au/>

The Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group acknowledges the Stories, Traditions and Culture of the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the First People of the Central Goldfields Shire where we live, work and meet. We respect and acknowledge their Elders, past and present.

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Appendix 2: List of respondents by organisation (3 pages)

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1. Executive Summary

It is recognised that community groups and not-for-profit organisations across Central Goldfields Shire are making a major contribution to community wellbeing, local identity, social connection, and resilience.

Driven by the Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group (MVRG) and supported by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), the Community Hub Survey findings show a sector that is active, committed, and deeply valued, but is increasingly stretched by volunteer shortages, administrative pressure, funding insecurity, fragmented communication, and limited shared infrastructure.

The central finding is that the problem is not a lack of goodwill or community commitment. Rather, local organisations are being asked to do too much with too few people, too little support, and increasingly complex compliance, governance, technology, and funding requirements. Many groups are sustained by a small number of long-serving volunteers, often carrying multiple roles across multiple organisations. This situation can lead to burnout, succession risk, and vulnerability for essential community activities.

Through careful and meticulous design the Feasibility Study has provided a sharp focus on these issues, providing an accurate and genuine reflection of what is widely experienced by the local not-for-profit sector.

Survey and interview responses point strongly to the need for a practical, hybrid, decentralised community support hub. The proposed Hub should not be understood simply as a building, nor as another layer of governance. Its strongest value would be as a shared support system: a resource node that helps organisations reduce administrative burden, recruit and manage volunteers, access training and funding support, coordinate activities, share resources, and speak with a stronger collective voice.

The evidence identifies the complexities surrounding local volunteering as the most urgent pressure point. Recruitment, retention, leadership succession, and volunteer management are critical challenges across the sector. The Hub could respond by providing a central volunteer recruitment pathway, supporting compliance, developing a skills bank, promoting micro-volunteering, linking younger and older volunteers, and creating a pool of people available for specific events or short-term tasks.

Alongside volunteer strain, financial sustainability is a primary concern. Groups are seeking support not only to win project grants, but to cover core operating costs such as insurance, venues, equipment, compliance, and administration. The findings suggest that no single funding source is likely to be sufficient for the Hub itself. A mixed model funding system will be required, potentially combining grants, council or institutional support, modest, tiered membership contributions, fee-for-service options, donations, and in-kind professional support. Any contribution model should recognise that the organisations with the greatest need may also have the least capacity to pay or provide volunteer time.

A third major concern is that organisations consistently reported difficulty with administration, compliance, technology, and governance. Tasks such as bookkeeping, insurance, reporting, grant

applications, minutes, annual meetings, policy requirements, and online systems are consuming scarce volunteer capacity. A hub could provide practical administrative relief through shared templates, training, mentoring, troubleshooting, bookkeeping support, grant-writing help, technology assistance, and referral to specialist expertise.

The consultation also shows strong demand for better communication, visibility, and coordination. Respondents identified the need for stronger networking through a central calendar or website, shared promotion, and mechanisms to reduce duplication and scheduling clashes. A collective advocacy voice also emerged as a high priority. These functions are closely linked: better coordination would help groups collaborate, attract volunteers, access funding, and increase their visibility to residents, government, donors, and service providers.

The preferred delivery model is hybrid and place-sensitive. Maryborough is recognised as a natural central location, but the Hub must avoid becoming overly Maryborough-centric. A credible model would include one identifiable base, supported by outreach to towns such as Talbot, Dunolly, Carisbrook and other communities across the Shire, as well as strong digital access. Options raised include local spokes, scheduled outreach, shared facilities, and potentially a mobile or roving service. Governance should reflect this wider geography, with active representation from across the Shire.

The broader purpose of the Hub is to strengthen community wellbeing and resilience. Local not-for-profit organisations are not just service providers; they are social infrastructure. They reduce isolation, support participation, create opportunities for belonging, preserve local identity, and respond to local need. Supporting these organisations is therefore an investment in the health and resilience of the whole community.

1.1 Recommended Direction

The recommended next step is to move from broad concept to agreed direction. This includes confirming support for the Hub concept, defining its core functions, testing governance and location options, identifying early practical wins, and developing a staged implementation and funding plan. Early actions should focus on visible, useful services that build trust, such as a shared calendar, financial collaboration with joint grant submissions from groups operating in the same sector, an audit of under-utilised buildings, continuing professional development assistance, seeking involvement of those from outside Maryborough who attended the forum and who did not, and assessing for commonalities from organisations operating in the same sector.

Overall, the consultation supports the creation of a Central Goldfields not-for-profit resource hub that is practical, inclusive, and focused on reducing the burden on volunteers. Its success will depend on clear governance, local trust, mixed funding, and a commitment to serving the whole Shire. The Hub could help shift the community sector from fragmented survival towards being stronger, more coordinated, and sustainable while continuing to be a valued contributor to society.

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group
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A Central Goldfields not-for-profit resource hub

VOLUNTEER VOICE

Community groups input invited on local resource hub's feasibility study

SAM MCNEILL

A community led feasibility study is underway which explores the need for a central hub to support local volunteers and community groups.

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group

will be interviewing local community leaders and volunteers, as well as creating a website for local residents' submissions, to design a community hub proposal that suits the region's needs.

"It has to be a community driven and owned resource and in that sense I'm the facilitator."

It's a process not only backed by Mr Walker's formal qualification in community development, but almost four decades in the field, three of which overseas, as well as numerous projects in central Victoria.

MVRG president Tony Macer said local not-for-profit community groups have, for years, said they need a hub to help them prosper.

have consistently identified the pressing need for a central resource hub to help organisations with volunteer recruitment and management, red tape, grant writing, fundraising, training, meeting spaces, succession planning, health, a sustainable executive structure and various legal issues," he said.



2. Introduction

Supported by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), the Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group (MVRG) has undertaken a feasibility study into establishing a Community Hub which would be 'promoting sustainability, collaboration and connection across the NFP sector in our shire ...'

The feasibility study is the result of findings from a Volunteer Strategy Review conducted by Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) in partnership with MVRG in August 2023. In 2025 workshops conducted by FRRR and MVRG with local community groups resulted in a Roadmap that identified the need for a hub that serviced the NFP sector and other community members.

The process aligns with the MVRG 2025 Strategic Plan which has the Vision for 'A community made more connected, vibrant and vital by volunteers and volunteering' along with three Strategic Goals, namely, to Increase Volunteer Engagement and Retention, Strengthen Partnerships with Local Organisations and Groups, and to Enhance Visibility of Volunteering and Outreach to Volunteers.

To undertake the assignment, a part-time Project Coordinator was appointed and contracted for six months from February to July 2026. The Project Coordinator was managed by an MVRG Steering Committee.



Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group members were excited to welcome Philip Walker (centre), who will lead the six month feasibility study.

Volunteer hub investigated

Continued from Front Page

It's a need Mr Macer said has only grown as community groups, who rely on volunteers, struggle to fill their committees or run at their best.

"This need has continued to grow as many community groups are facing serious challenges," he said. Beyond established community groups Mr Macer said a hub could also support grassroots efforts like the recent campaign to refill Goldfields Reservoir, or respect the Mary-

borough Outdoor Pool.

"A hub is actually multi-functional — it will address the changing nature of volunteering and community participation," he said.

"It's really quite exciting." Mr Macer encouraged local organisations — leaders and volunteers to use this opportunity to work out what could help address their concerns and improve their future outlook.

"This is a really exciting and important time for our community. It's a chance to have real input into

shaping our not-for-profit sector, creating a strong network, making it more vibrant and encouraging greater engagement and participation," he said.

It's an opportunity made possible thanks to funding from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Recovery received by MVRG in mid-December last year. Interviews and consultations with the community are soon expected to begin, as well as a website launched, with further information available by contacting MVRG.

This report outlines the methodology, findings and recommendations from the feasibility study.

2.1 Methodology

A website was established (<https://www.goldfieldsconnect.net/>) which explained the origins and purpose of the project. A questionnaire on Survey Monkey was designed (attached as Appendix 1) and posted to the website, along with a request to participate being sent to 124 people representing a range of organisations across the Shire. MVRG members followed up with phone calls to many people to increase involvement.

Comprising both quantitative and qualitative questions, the survey sought responses ranging from organisation details, organisational challenges, and aspirations for what a hub would do.

Along with the survey, 28 face-to-face interviews were conducted with 32 participants. The interviews gave key informants the opportunity to provide a more expansive and detailed response.

The survey launched on Monday 30 March and closed on Saturday 21 June 2026. Eighty-three (83) people representing 55 organisations completed the survey (list in Appendix 2).



Following completion of surveys and interviews the data was compiled and analysed. Graphs were produced of the quantitative answers (Appendix 3). Qualitative responses, from the interviews along with comments made on the survey, were compiled, placed through AI to assist with identifying themes, and then transferred into recommendations.¹ This data was further analysed and amended.

The report was presented to meetings of the Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group and was given in-principle endorsement along with suggestions for amendments. A forum was held on 20 July 2026 where the findings and recommendations were presented to an audience of thirty people (all those who completed the survey were invited). Discussion at the forum led to further refinements and this report is the finalised result.

¹ This report has been written by human beings, enhanced by AI, and then scrutinised with final edits made by human beings.

2.2 Respondents

Responses covered the whole Shire representing (or indicating that their organisation covered) Adelaide Lead (1), Avoca (2), Bealiba (2), Central Goldfields Shire (24), Carisbrook (3), Dunolly (4), Majorca (1), Maryborough and surrounds (36), St Arnaud (1), and Talbot (8). Some areas were not reached which needs to be considered in any future iterations of the project

Noting that not all respondents answered every question, seventy-one (85%) responses indicated that their organisation was part of the not-for-profit (or volunteer) sector, with the next highest category (seven or 9%) being government or public service. Most respondents were committee members (44%), and while 'other' was the second highest category (23%) - this was people listing their role or noting they were also activity volunteers (staff member 20%, regular volunteer 13%). Responses showed that 25 organisations (37%) had more than 20 volunteers, 23 (33%) between ten and twenty volunteers, 11 (20%) between one and ten), while 6 (9%) cited no volunteers. Overwhelmingly, 46 responses (67%) had no employed staff.

3. Findings

A number of processes were used to analyse the collected data with the results summarised as challenges in four categories; namely 'Volunteering', 'Finances', 'Administration and Technology', and 'Networks and Advocacy'. Appendix 3: Quantitative Findings displays this in Chart form with the second image on page 2.

Transcripts from the interviews were fed into AI with the result producing a similar distillation into six strategic insight themes, as follows below. Similarly, collated comments from the online survey were fed into AI and produced Main Themes, listed below strategic insight themes.

These were then used to prepare a presentation to the 20 July 2026 Forum and can be found attached as Appendix 4: Findings Presentation

The data from Findings were used to determine Recommendations.

3.1 Strategic Insight Themes

1. The Volunteer & Leadership Crisis: Moving from Hand-to-Mouth to a Shared Ecosystem

Small community groups are facing an existential talent shortage. It is not just a lack of general volunteers; it is a critical deficit in individuals willing or able to step into executive, governance-heavy roles (Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries). An ageing volunteer base and a shift away from long-term commitments mean that traditional, siloed recruitment is failing.

- Strategic Shift: The solution requires moving away from individual group recruitment toward a centralised, shared volunteer pool and coordinated ecosystem.

2. Operational Suffocation: The Burden of Compliance and 'Red Tape'

Volunteer-run organisations are feeling overwhelmed and under-equipped to handle the heavy administrative overhead of modern governance—including tax, insurance, charity compliance, bookkeeping, and AGM management. This behind-the-scenes "red tape" triggers a crisis of confidence, causing groups to stall or fold under administrative fatigue.

- Strategic Shift: There is an urgent demand for centralised administrative infrastructure—such as shared templates, expert mentoring, and centralised bookkeeping—to lift the regulatory burden off grassroots volunteers.

3. Financial Vulnerability: A Cry for Structural Sustainability over Ad-Hoc Grants

Funding is consistently tied directly to organisational survival. Groups are trapped in cycles of anxiety over operational basics like insurance, equipment, and venue costs. The current system relies heavily on complex grant processes that volunteers lack the time or specialised skills to successfully navigate.

- Strategic Shift: Strategy must focus on building capacity around grant-writing, expanding access to long-term operational funding, and exploring collective sponsorships or shared resource models.

4. The Digital Divide: Technology as a Tool for Inclusion and Confidence

Technology is currently viewed as a barrier rather than an enabler. Groups report a mix of infrastructure deficits (lack of devices/internet), a skills gap (social media, websites, software), and a deeper psychological "fear of tech".

- Strategic Shift: Any digital intervention must be rooted in patient, respectful, and highly accessible capacity building. Technology support cannot just be an IT help desk; it must be an inclusion strategy.

5. The Hybrid Hub: A One-Stop Ecosystem for Connection and Space

The proposed Hub is widely supported, but the data clearly shows it cannot just be a physical building or a website alone. Stakeholders are asking for a *hybrid ecosystem*. They need a visible, accessible physical home base (for meetings, storage, face-to-face drop-ins) seamlessly integrated with a digital infrastructure (centralised calendars, online noticeboards, virtual service access).

- Strategic Shift: The Hub must be designed from day one to bridge isolation, break down organisational silos, and serve as a centralised "one-stop shop" for cross-sector collaboration.

6. Amplifying Impact: Shifting from Fragmented Services to a Collective Voice

Underneath the logistical frustrations lies a powerful, unified purpose: reducing isolation, supporting mental health, and building local resilience. However, groups currently feel isolated and politically quiet. They want to leverage their collective footprint to have a seat at the table with council, government, and major service providers.

- Strategic Shift: The Hub's ultimate value proposition is dual-layered. It must act as a practical service provider to groups on the inside, while serving as a unified advocacy platform and "collective voice" on the outside.

3.2 Common Themes

1. Volunteers are the biggest pressure point

This is the strongest recurring theme across the responses. Groups repeatedly mention:

- difficulty recruiting volunteers
- trouble finding people for leadership roles like president, secretary, and treasurer

- concerns about ageing volunteers
- lack of reliable, long-term commitment
- need for a shared volunteer pool or coordinated volunteering system

This shows that many groups are not just short on people - they are short on people who can commit, lead, and handle ongoing responsibilities.

2. Funding and financial sustainability

A second major theme is the need for more money and more stable funding. This appears as:

- need for operational funding
- requests for grant writing help
- concern about long-term sustainability
- desire for sponsorships, grants, and practical financial support
- worries about paying for insurance, equipment, venues, and admin support

In several responses, funding is tied directly to whether a group can survive or grow.

3. Need for shared admin, governance, and compliance support

Many groups feel overwhelmed by the behind-the-scenes work of running an organisation.

Common issues include:

- compliance and red tape
- charity, tax, insurance, and reporting requirements
- committee administration
- bookkeeping, minutes, budgets, and AGM processes
- lack of confidence in governance responsibilities

A strong cross-file pattern is that people want centralised admin help, templates, mentoring, or expert guidance so small volunteer-run groups are not left figuring everything out alone.

4. A need for better networking, communication, and visibility

A lot of groups feel isolated from one another and want stronger connection across the community sector. This shows up as:

- not knowing what other groups are doing
- wanting a central calendar
- wanting a noticeboard, website, or digital promotion system
- desire for a collective voice
- calls for stronger information-sharing and collaboration

This theme is especially strong in the hub-focused responses: many see the Hub as a way to make community activity more visible and coordinated.

5. Strong support for a hub as a connecting point

Across Q6-Q9 (Survey) especially, many respondents imagine a hub as a shared support structure.

The most common Hub functions mentioned are:

- a central place for information
- a one-stop shop for referrals, services, and guidance
- a space for training, meetings, workshops, and networking

- somewhere to access shared admin support
- a base for advocacy and collective problem-solving
- a sharing of ideas

A repeated idea is that the Hub should help groups work together rather than operate in silos.

6. Physical space matters - but many want a hybrid model

A major theme is the need for space, but not everyone imagines that the same way. Recurring requests include:

- a permanent home base
- meeting rooms, storage, training space, and venue access
- a central, visible, accessible location
- a place for community members to drop in for help

At the same time, many respondents also want:

- an online calendar
- digital noticeboards
- web presence and online access
- a mix of physical and virtual services

So the shared pattern is not "building only" or "online only" - it is mostly hybrid.

7. Technology skills and access are a recurring gap

A number of groups mention:

- fear of technology
- need for IT training
- website and social media support
- lack of up-to-date devices or internet access
- need for patient, respectful tech help

Technology is not just a practical issue here; for some respondents it is also a confidence and inclusion issue.

8. Training and capacity building

Many responses ask for more opportunities to build skills, especially in:

- governance
- grant writing
- IT and software
- volunteer training
- first aid
- financial literacy
- leadership and succession planning

This suggests that groups do not just want resources - they want help becoming stronger and more self-sustaining.

9. Community connection and social impact

Underneath the practical issues, there is a broader shared goal: stronger community wellbeing.

Many groups frame their work in terms of:

- reducing social isolation
- supporting mental health
- helping vulnerable people
- building inclusion
- connecting residents
- strengthening local identity and resilience

So even though the organisations are diverse, they are often working toward the same bigger outcome: a more connected, supported, and resilient community.

10. Advocacy and collective voice

A recurring theme is that groups want more power when speaking to:

- council
- government
- service providers
- the broader community

Several respondents explicitly want:

- advocacy support
- a unified voice
- help identifying service gaps
- stronger influence in local decision-making

This suggests the Hub is seen not only as a service point, but also as a platform for representation.

4. Analysis

The findings were analysed by humans and AI to provide the following insights:

1. Design the Hub as a support system, not just a venue. The evidence points to a hub that provides:

- admin and compliance help
- shared templates and systems
- referral and information services
- training and troubleshooting
- networking and advocacy support

2. Prioritise volunteer sustainability. The strongest strategic priority should be:

- volunteer recruitment pathways
- leadership succession support
- flexible volunteering models
- youth and skills-based micro-volunteering
- reducing the admin load placed on volunteers

3. Build a hybrid physical-digital model. The Hub should combine:

- a clear physical presence
- strong online visibility and access
- a shared calendar and communications platform
- virtual access to information, training, and support

4. Consider a decentralised or roving model. The interview data strongly suggests avoiding an overly centralised structure. A stronger model may be:

- one identifiable base
- scheduled outreach to smaller townships
- shared digital access across the whole region

5. Focus early delivery on visible, practical wins. Trust will likely depend on proving usefulness quickly. Early actions could include:

- grant and compliance templates
- centralised event calendar
- volunteer onboarding tools
- tech troubleshooting support
- governance help desk or mentoring
- bookable shared workspace or meeting support

6. Develop a mixed funding model. Both documents support a model that avoids over-reliance on one source. A workable approach may combine:

- seed funding or grants
- council or institutional operational backing
- modest scaled memberships, donations, or pay-as-you-go services
- in-kind professional support where possible

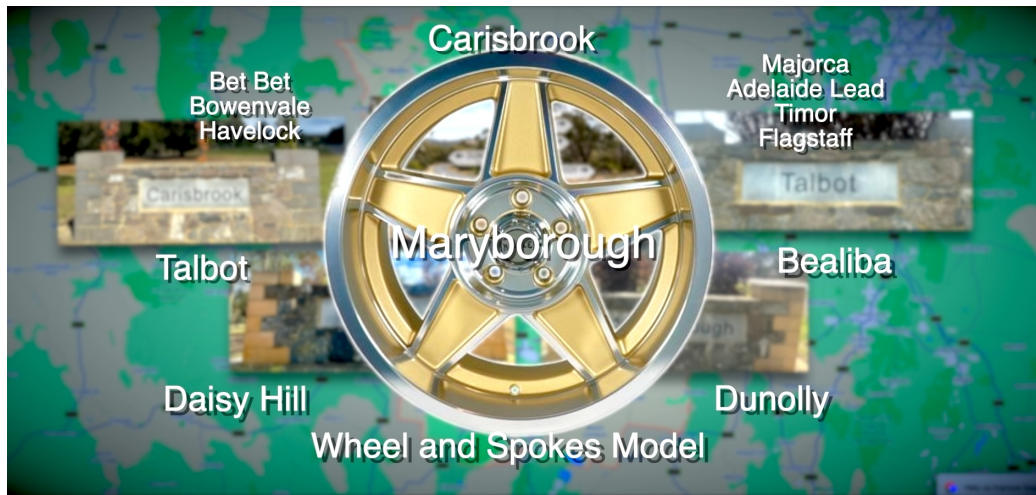
7. Include advocacy as a formal function. The Hub should not only support operations but also help groups speak collectively about:

- service gaps
- funding needs
- local priorities
- barriers created by compliance systems or fragmented decision-making

5. Recommendations

Following the analysis Recommendations for the Hub were compiled and presented to the July Forum (attached as Appendix 5). With an inclusive governance system, recommendations focused on the four core areas of ‘Volunteering’, ‘Finances’, ‘Administration and Technology’, and ‘Networks and Advocacy’.

The vision, or aim, is for well-functioning volunteer NFP / organisations across Central Goldfields for stronger community wellbeing and resilience. Governance and service delivery would be based on the Hub and Spokes model, with Maryborough being the central point and interested groups from surrounding towns being actively involved.



Along with investigating comparable models from across the state, this can include:

- Using under-utilised buildings in the towns across the Shire,
- Having a roving mobile bus providing services,
- Investigating a legal structure and operational policies for any Hub,

With volunteering, the goal is for The Hub as a centre supporting the recruitment and management of volunteers for the not-for-profit sector across Central Goldfields. In this context potential activities include:

- Creating a welcoming environment and a safe space, promoting volunteering,
- Central recruitment point and compliance requirements,
- Understanding changing forms of volunteering and guiding adaption to meet them – micro, spontaneous,
- A Skills Bank that matches specific need with capacity,
- Generational change with suggestions on enhancing youth-elder partnerships,
- Training in areas such as committee roles and functioning.

With Finances the goal is for the Hub to be a functional connection between funding sources and NFP's, while providing expertise and training in financial management. Examples of activities are:

- Scanning and advising members on grant opportunities. The potential for collaborative submissions.
- Training - grant writing, financial management systems, dealing with red tape.
- Developing expert advice and guides – trouble shooting, auditing, management templates, planning and/or reporting formats.

- Potential for auspicing and centralised financial management system.

Under Promotion and Advocacy, the goal was expressed as strong beneficial coordination between NFPs with a strong voice advocating their interests. This involves raising the profile of NFPs with greater connection to residents, government authorities, donors, etc. by presenting a united voice. Examples of activities are:

- Strong networks and advocacy reinforcing the ability to attract volunteers and financial support.
- Bringing NFPs closer together to provide a unified voice to governments and others.
- Strengthening links – Online presence, Newsletter, Annual conference, Media coverage.
- Organising meetings of comparable organisations. Annual NFP conference?
- Creating the online presence – events, spaces, calendar, contacts- reaching the broader community. As mentioned earlier, could be easy but requires dedication to maintain.
- Promoting the value of the volunteer / NFP networks and the contribution we all make (and how to be part of it).
- Creating regular newsletters communicating to NFP members and to the public.

Finally, under Administration and Technology the goal is for the NFP sector being supported to function effectively utilising modern technologies, with action examples being:

- An advice and connection bureau.
- Sharing resources. Spaces and Equipment available for use (hire).
- Referral centre for queries.
- Training - committee management and office bearer roles, new technology.
- Provide templates - management, planning and/or reporting formats.

5.1 Next Steps

- Following the Forum presentations, we have highlighted several practical actions that could help build early momentum and community ownership for the Hub initiative. These steps are designed to be foundational, testing ideas and building capacity while the broader governance and funding model is developed.
- **Mapping Shared Assets:** Undertake a preliminary consultation to identify under-utilised spaces, facilities, human resources and skills across Maryborough and its surrounding area. This foundational information-gathering would help the community understand what assets are already available and how they might be better shared to support a future "Hub and Spokes" model.

- **Exploring Collaborative Funding:** Initiate conversations between organisations operating in similar sectors (e.g., food security, community wellbeing, emergency relief) to identify opportunities for joint project submissions. The intention is to build a culture of collaboration and to explore how a collective approach might strengthen applications and better align with funder priorities.
- **Deepening Community Engagement:** Actively seek further input from community members in outlying townships who participated in the Forum, while also designing outreach strategies to connect with those who were unable to attend. This ensures the Hub's development is genuinely representative and responsive to the needs of the whole Shire. Could this be a roving delivery model with sessions run within each of the outlying townships?
- **Enabling Shared Communications:** Scope the need and options for a centralised information-sharing platform, such as an event calendar. This would involve reaching out to existing local initiatives to understand their challenges and successes, with the view to either supporting an existing model or co-designing a new one that reduces duplication and increases collective visibility.
- **Supporting Ongoing Local Training Initiatives:** Continue to provide coordination support to current professional development and training programs that are already underway - and extend them. This helps ensure service continuity for community groups and builds on existing momentum while the broader Hub model is being co-designed.
- **Leveraging Existing Data:** Analyse the survey data already collected to identify shared challenges, common goals, and potential synergies between organisations. This foundational analysis will provide a clearer evidence base for future planning and help target capacity-building support where it is most needed.

6. Conclusion

This evidence-based Feasibility Study offers the community confidence that the data has accurately identified the experiences of the not-for-profit sector and brings broad focus on what needs to be addressed to make its operations less burdensome, more efficient, better resourced and more collaborative.

The shared belief is that the achievement of a Hub would be transformative, providing leadership across the community sector, reducing onerous workloads, supporting and strengthening the vital role that not-for-profit community organisations play in Central Goldfields Shire. Further, it is anticipated that a more visible, collaborative and well-resourced not-for-profit sector will have a positive effect on perceptions of volunteering, attracting more residents to participate actively.

There is an express desire for a hub to be more visible, to be a roving entity with a strong presence in outlying townships, to offer a platform to give groups and volunteers a voice and advocacy, to provide assistance with red tape, to help keep volunteers abreast of best practice and latest research and to provide support and training and fundraising.

There is an awareness that the scope is ambitious, especially for a sector already stretched. Small initial steps with some early wins helps establish a strong base and provides confidence to build upon. The capacity and expressed will is there, indicated in this comment by one interviewee:

I think a Hub for our future is a great idea. Support from the Hub would mean growing our aims and vision ...and helping to bring about a more open, tolerant, thoughtful, kind and happy people in our communities.

Appendix 1

Welcome to the Goldfields Connect Feasibility Study which is exploring the potential for a community hub for Maryborough and across Central Goldfields.

We're at the exciting stage of figuring out what kind of Hub will best serve everyone. This could be a physical space, a network of support, online tools, or most likely, a mix of several ideas. Your answers will help us design the functions and services that will make the biggest difference, before we decide on the final 'shape' it will take.

This project follows a series of forums, starting in August 2023 (Community Forum) and culminating in 2026 (FRRR initiative), by representatives of not-for-profit (NFP) organisations, community groups, and other key stakeholders connected to the Maryborough region's active NFP sector.

These consultations highlighted the potential for a community hub to realise our vision for the community's future.

Our first step is a feasibility study to better understand the complexities and considerations of establishing such a Hub/Centre in Central Goldfields, Maryborough. This will include this survey as well as face to face interviews.

We want to know how a local community hub could meet the needs of you and your organisation (not-for-profit, volunteer) and how could you be part of it. Your knowledge and understanding of the local area will guide the development of a model.

Your input is essential for us to find a model that suits this community.

Please enjoy exploring and answering the questions. If you feel unable to answer any question then you can skip it. If you are responding for more than one organisation then please complete the survey separately for each organisation.

This project study is being managed by the Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group and is funded and supported by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

Section 1: Your Groups Current Reality

1. What is the name of your group / organisation?

2. What are the main activities or services your group provides? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Emergency relief / Food security
- ☐ Arts, culture and/or heritage
- ☐ Sports and recreation
- ☐ Sports and recreation
- ☐ Services for older people
- ☐ Health or wellbeing support
- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Environment or animal welfare
- ☐ Faith based activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Thinking about your group's day-to-day operations, what are your TOP THREE biggest challenges? (Select up to three)

- ☐ Finding enough volunteers and compliance issues
- ☐ Managing administration, red tape, or compliance (e.g., insurance, reporting)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing or affording technology (e.g., software, laptops, wifi)
- ☐ Finding suitable meeting spaces or forum venues
- ☐ Feeling isolated or not knowing what other groups are doing
- ☐ Finding funding
- ☐ Managing finances
- ☐ Promoting our group and its activities to the community
- ☐ Grant writing

Other (please specify)

4. What specific tools, resources, or support would make the biggest positive difference to your group right now?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above. It is positioned directly below the question text.

Section 2: Imagining the Hub's Functions

5. Imagine a "Community Hub" existed to support your group. What would be the MOST valuable functions it could provide? (Rank your top 5 from the list below, where 1 is best and then descending in preference).

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
A central online calendar/website and community notice board to promote our events and activities to the public.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shared administrative support (e.g., help with grant writing, basic bookkeeping, or meeting minutes).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Affordable, bookable workspace (e.g., a meeting room, training space, or desk for a day).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A place to securely store equipment (e.g., marquees, chairs, event supplies) that we could all share.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training opportunities for our volunteers (e.g., governance, first aid, using social media).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help with technology (e.g., access to a laptop/tablet, software, or a friendly person to help solve IT problems).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A formal or informal network to connect with other groups, share ideas, and collaborate on projects.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A collective voice to advocate on behalf of all NFPs to Council or other bodies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Access to mentoring
or skilled volunteers
(e.g., a retired
accountant to help
with budgets).

☐☐☐☐☐

Auspicing
arrangements

☐☐☐☐☐

6. Can you select one of your identified priorities and explain how you would see that working in a community hub?

Section 3: Making it Real - Service & Sustainability

7. A Hub needs a "heart" to make it all work. Which of these service models appeals most to you? (Select one)

- ☐ A paid Coordinator model: A skilled person employed to manage the Hub's services, connect groups, and provide admin support.
- ☐ A shared self-help model: Groups contribute volunteer time to run the Hub together, sharing the workload equally.
- ☐ A hybrid model: A small amount of paid coordination supported by a strong commitment of volunteer time from member groups.
- ☐ Other, please explain

8. To be sustainable, a Hub would likely need ongoing resources. Which of these ideas do you think your group would be most willing to support? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Paying a modest annual membership fee (e.g., \$50 - \$100).
- ☐ Paying a small "pay-as-you-use" fee for specific services like room hire or equipment borrowing.
- ☐ Contributing regular volunteer hours to help run the Hub (e.g., staffing a desk, helping with admin).
- ☐ Actively helping to apply for grants or seek local sponsorship to support the Hub.
- ☐ Comment

9. Thinking long-term (5+ years from now), what does success look like to you? How would this Hub have helped your group achieve your goal?

Section 4: You and Your Group

10. What is your role within your organisation?

- ☐ Committee Member / Office Bearer
- ☐ Coordinator / Manager / Staff
- ☐ Regular volunteer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. Please tell us what type of organisation you are representing.

- ☐ Not for Profit Organisation
- ☐ Education Institution
- ☐ Government or Public sector
- ☐ For Profit Company
- ☐ Self-employed / freelancer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

12. Could you tell us how many volunteers (full or part time, permanent or casual)) are engaged with your organisation?

Zero

One to Ten

Eleven to Twenty

Twenty One or More

13. How many paid staff (full or part time, permanent or casual) are engaged with your organisation?

Zero

One to Ten

Eleven to Twenty

Twenty One or More

14. Where does your organisation operate? (eg: Maryborough, Talbot, Carisbrook, Dunolly, etc)

15. Are you willing to be contacted for a short, follow-up conversation to discuss your ideas further? If so, then please provide your name and preferred contact email and/or phone number.

16. Is there anything else you would like to say, suggest, warn about, etc?

Thank you. Your insights are the foundation of this project. If you wish to assess or amend your comments then do so now. Once you press Done your response is submitted and cannot be changed.

All responses will be compiled into our Public Feasibility Report, helping us build a Hub model that truly reflects what our community needs and can sustain. Please share this survey link with others in your group!

Appendix 2

Q1 Answers – What is the name of your group / organisation?

Answered: 81

Skipped: 2

Anglicare Victoria

are-able

Asuria

Asuria – IEA

ASTERIA Services

Australian Red Cross - Emergency Services Division

Becks Busy Kids Pty. Ltd.

Carisbrook Recreation Committee and football netball club

Carisbrook Cricket Club Inc

Carisbrook historical society

Central Goldfields Art Gallery

Central Goldfields Art Gallery

Central Goldfields Bushwalking & Hiking Club

Central Goldfields District Girl Guides

Central Goldfields Shire Council

Central Goldfields Shire Council

Central Goldfields Shire Council

Committee for Maryborough

Community Bank

Community Media and Marketing

Community Markets and Gardening

Dunolly and District Neighbourhood Centre Inc

Dunolly Gilbert & Sullivan Society inc. Goldfields Historical & Arts Society inc

Energy Breakthrough Maryborough

Friends of Maryborough Outdoor Pool

Friends of Maryborough Outdoor Pool photos

Friends of Maryborough outdoor pool

Goldfields Bushwalking and Hiking Club⁴

Goldfields community connect

Goldfields Historical Precinct Inc

Goldfields historical and arts society

Goldfields Sustainability Group

Goldfields Sustainability Group (GSG)

GRAG - goldfields reservoir action group

Girl Guides

I am not authorised to answer on behalf of any of the six community groups I am involved in so this response is a general and personal response

Maryborough City Brass Band

Maryborough Community House

Maryborough Community House Inc.

Maryborough community garden

Maryborough community house Inc

Maryborough Family History Group Inc

Maryborough Guides

Maryborough Mercury, Talbot Market

Maryborough Senior Citizens

Maryborough SES

Maryborough Soccer Club

Maryborough Soccer Club

Maryborough Tennis Centre

Maryborough VRI Croquet Club

Maryborough VRI Croquet Club⁴

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group

Maryborough Volunteer Resource Group NFP community group promoting volunteering, to work towards advocating for the importance of volunteering, to attract volunteers for community

groups, to work towards stopping declining trends, to connect people in the community, give them purpose, the importance for their physical and mental health when working with others.

Maryborough volunteer group

Maryborough volunteer resource group

Men's Shed

Mill House Neighbourhood House

Mindful Arts Therapy

MVRG

MVRG

MVRG

REDS Emergency Services

Rivergum Support

Riding for the Disabled Maryborough

Robyn's Nest & All The Rest Animal Rescue

Rotary

SES

St Vincent de Paul Assistance Centre

St Vincent de Paul Society, assistance Centre

Talbot Action inc

Talbot Community Library and Online

Talbot Today & Tomorrow Inc

Upper Loddon & Avoca Landcare Network

VMCH Carer Services

Welcome Record Inc, Dunolly

Words in Winter Central Goldfields

Zonta Club of Central Goldfields

Zonta Club of Central Goldfields

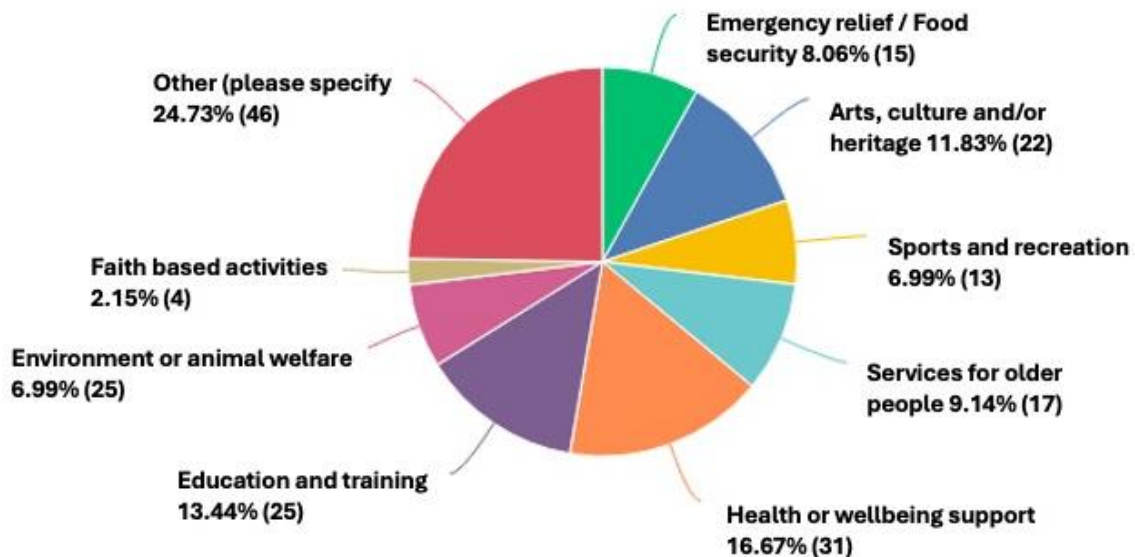
Zonta Club of Central Goldfields

Appendix 3

Quantitative Findings from the online survey

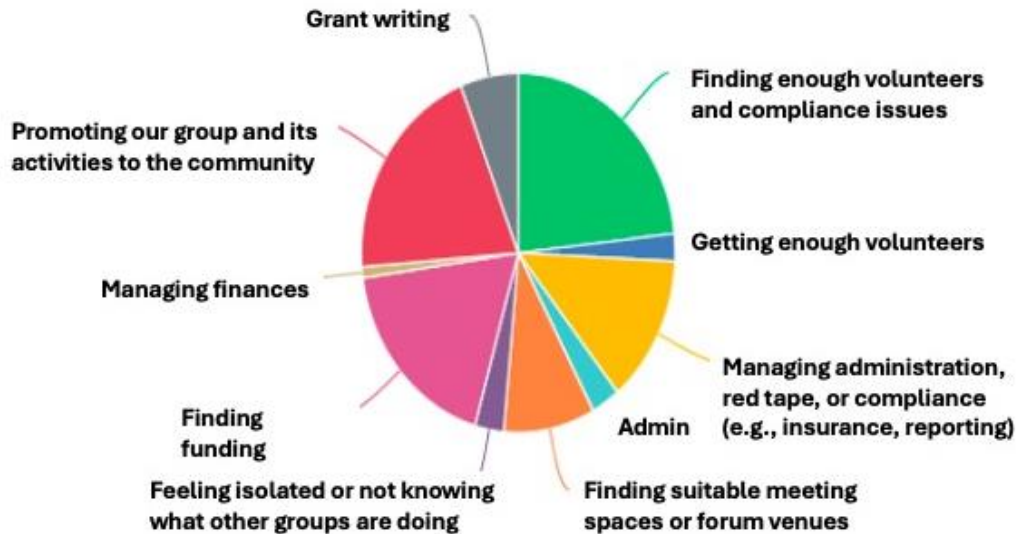
These charts display the quantitative answers to survey questions. In this regard they indicate the services offered by the not-for-profit organisations that responded, their challenges, suggested solutions, and a mechanism to achieve them.

1. What are the main activities or services that your group provides?

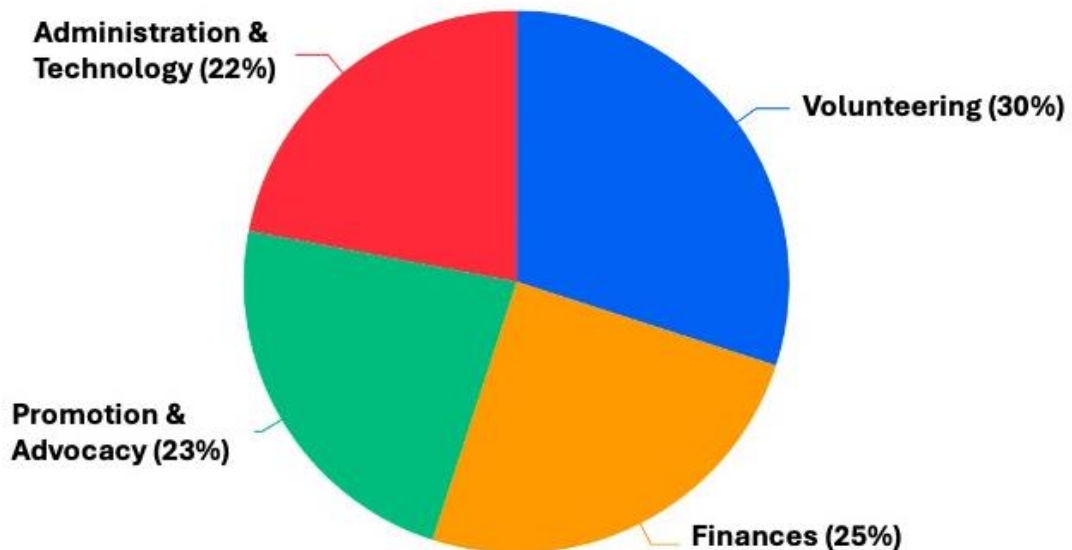


While 'Other' is the largest category of responses (25%) the comments consist of people providing specific details which tended to align with major headings or mentioning that they covered more than one area (such as services for older people and health / wellbeing support). For example, in 'Health or Wellbeing Support' comments refer to disability, mental health, etc. 'Education and Training' (14%) references were to formal or informal education, age group, and particular type (eg: sustainability, gender, grant writing). 'Arts, Culture and/or Heritage' (12%) covers festivals and history groups. Under 'Sports and Recreation' (7%) reference is made to the specific sport.

2. Thinking about your group's day-to-day operations, what are your top three biggest challenges?

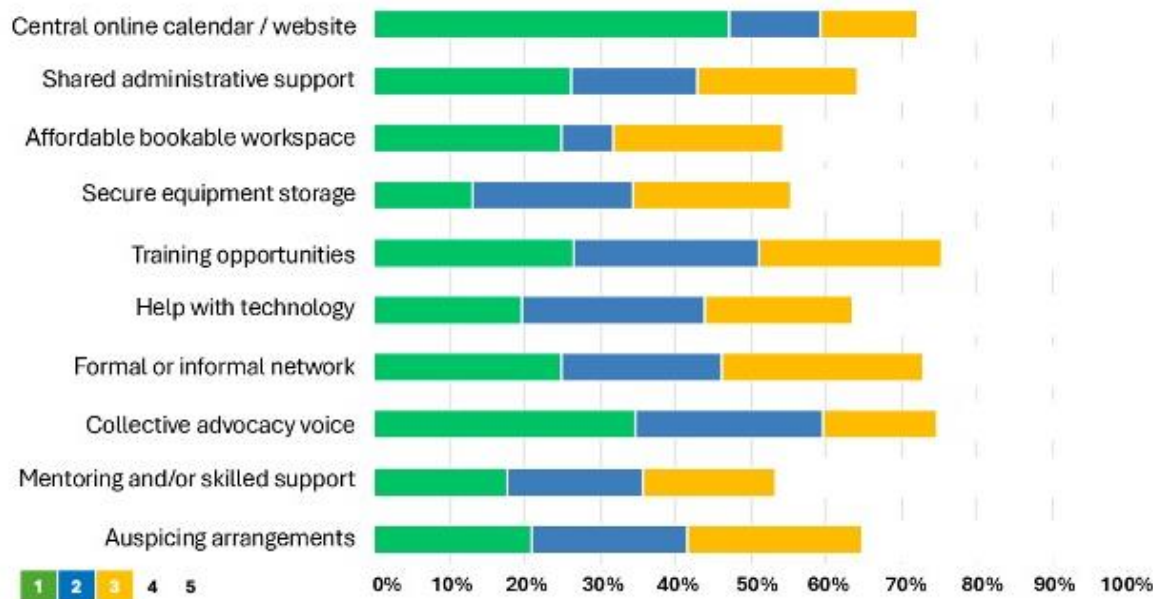


As some of the responses overlap, in effect people are saying the same thing in a different manner, these were combined to display four key challenge areas.

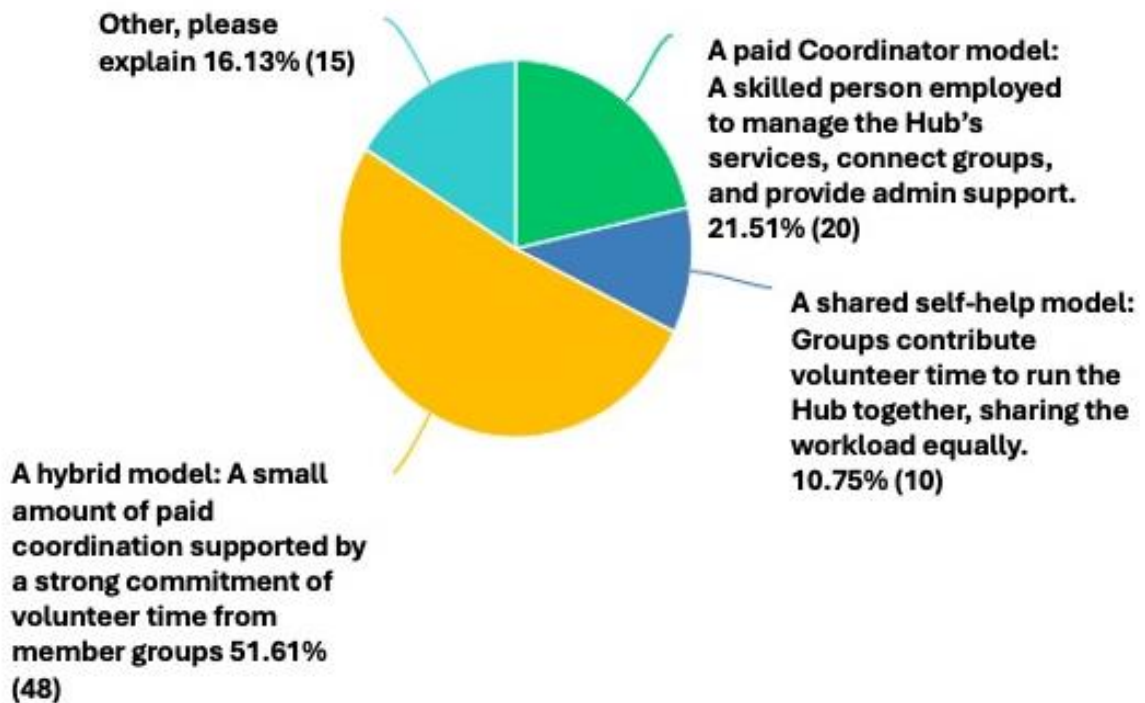


3. Imagine a "Community Hub" existed to support your group. What would be the MOST valuable functions it could provide? Rank your top 5 from the list below, where 1 is best and then descending in preference).

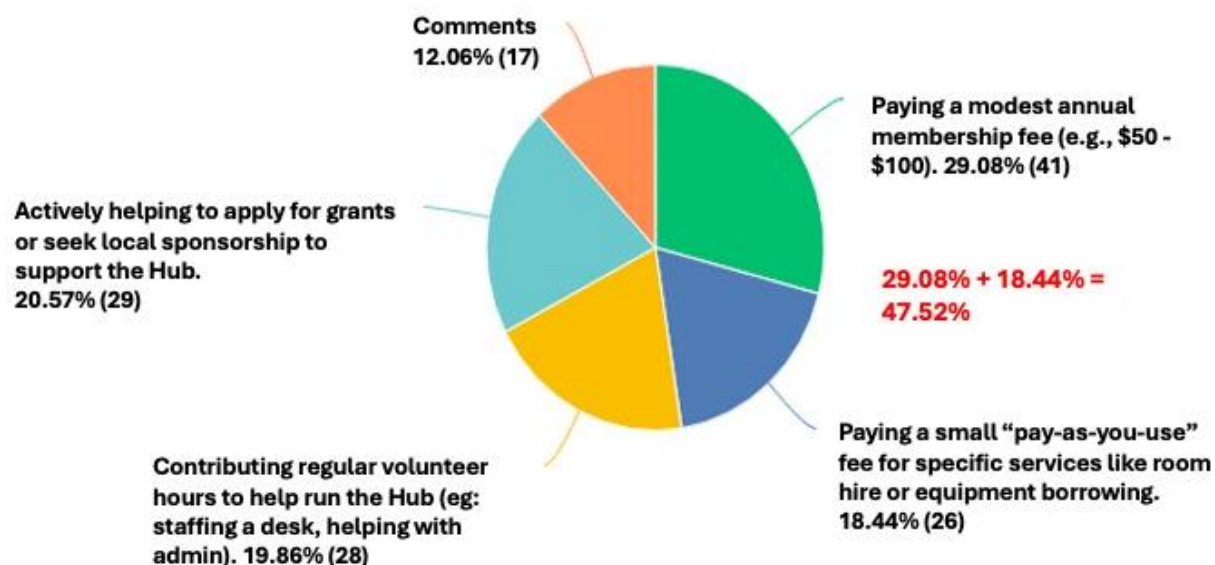
NB: People were provided ten options. When analysing the survey template rounded all responses out to 100% which distorted the image. By removing the further and fifth criteria the priorities the preferences became clearer, namely options 1, 5, 7 and 8.

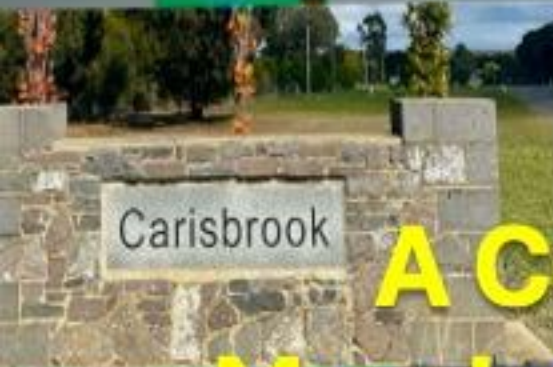


4. A Hub needs a "heart" to make it all work. Which of these service models appeals most to you? (Select one)



5. To be sustainable, a Hub would likely need ongoing resources. Which of these ideas do you think your group would be most willing to support?
(Select all that apply)





A Community Hub for Maryborough and surrounds

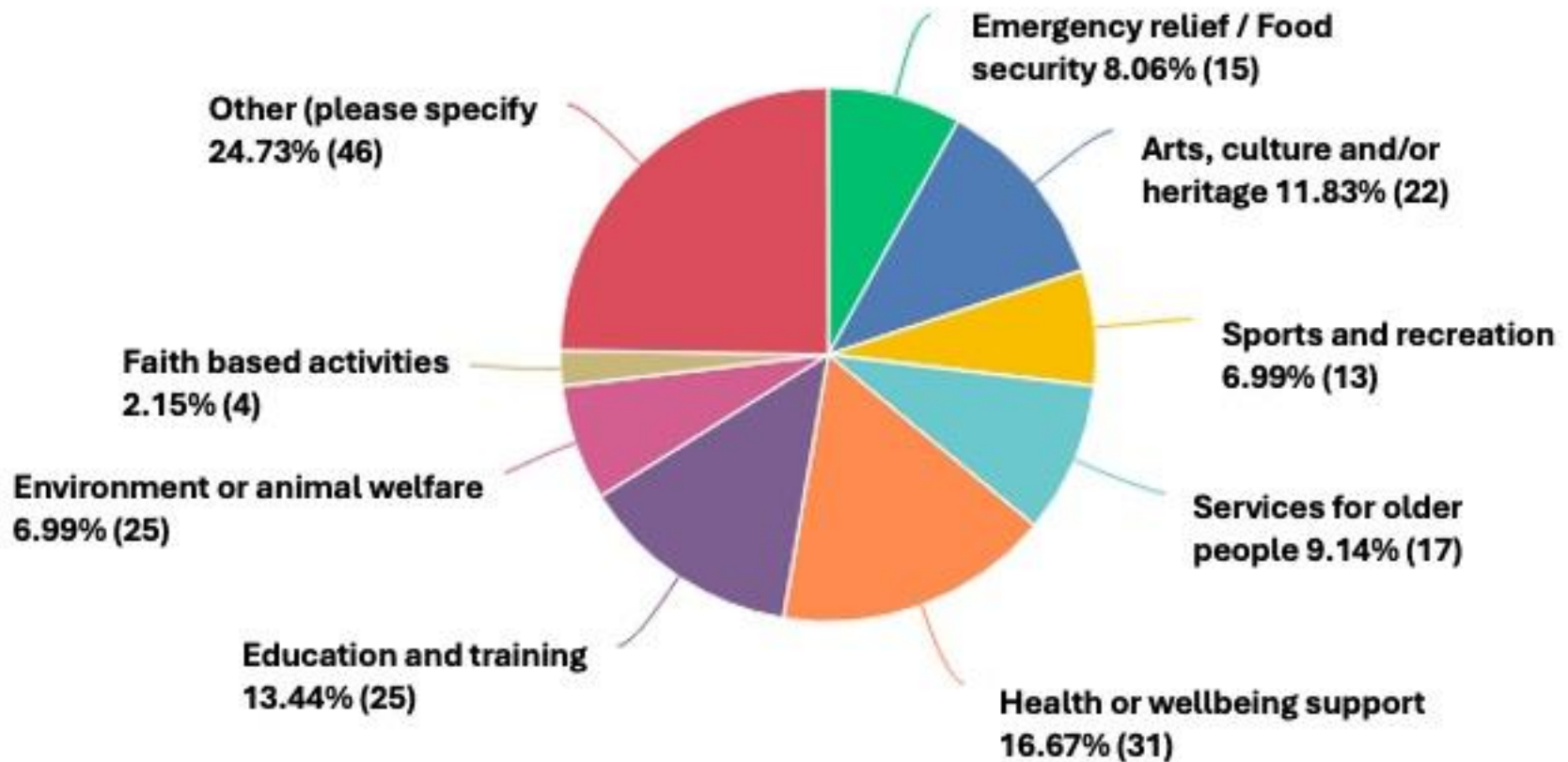


FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

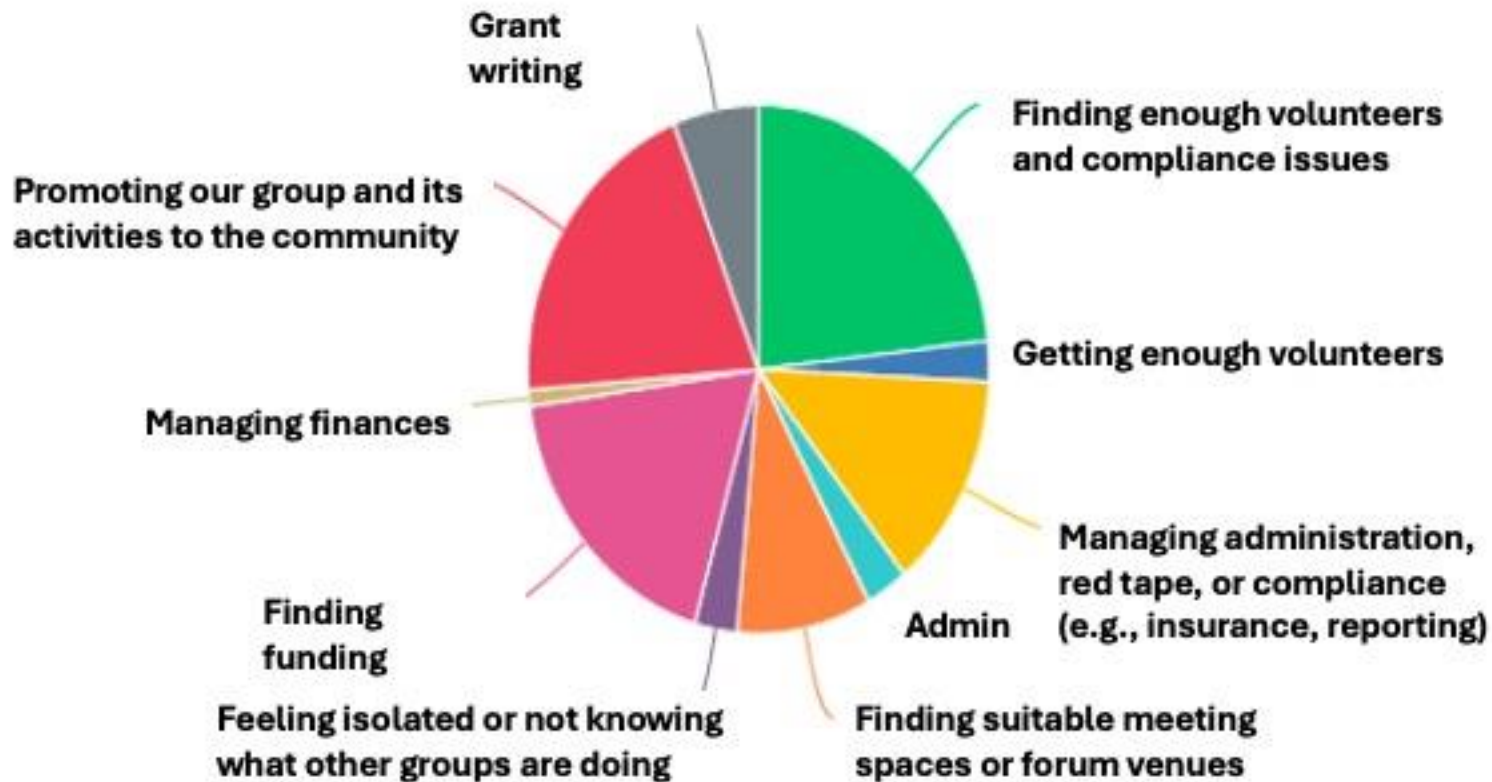
Who Participated?

- 83 responses were received representing 55 organisations
- Covered Maryborough and surrounds (35), Avoca (2), Talbot (8), Adelaide Lead (1), Dunolly (4), Bealiba (2), Daisy Hill (2), Carisbrook (3), Majorca (1), St Arnaud (1) and Goldfields Shire (24).
- 28 interviews were conducted with 32 people participating.
- 85% of responses were in the not-for-profit (or volunteer) sector, with the next highest category (at 9%) being government or public service.
- Most respondents were committee members (44%), and while 'other' was the second highest category (23%) this was people listing their role or noting they were also activity volunteers (staff member 20%, regular volunteer 13%).
- 25 organisations (37%) had more than 20 volunteers, 23 (33%) between one and ten, 11 (20%) between one and ten, while 6 (10%) cited no volunteers.
- 46 responses (67%) did not employ staff.

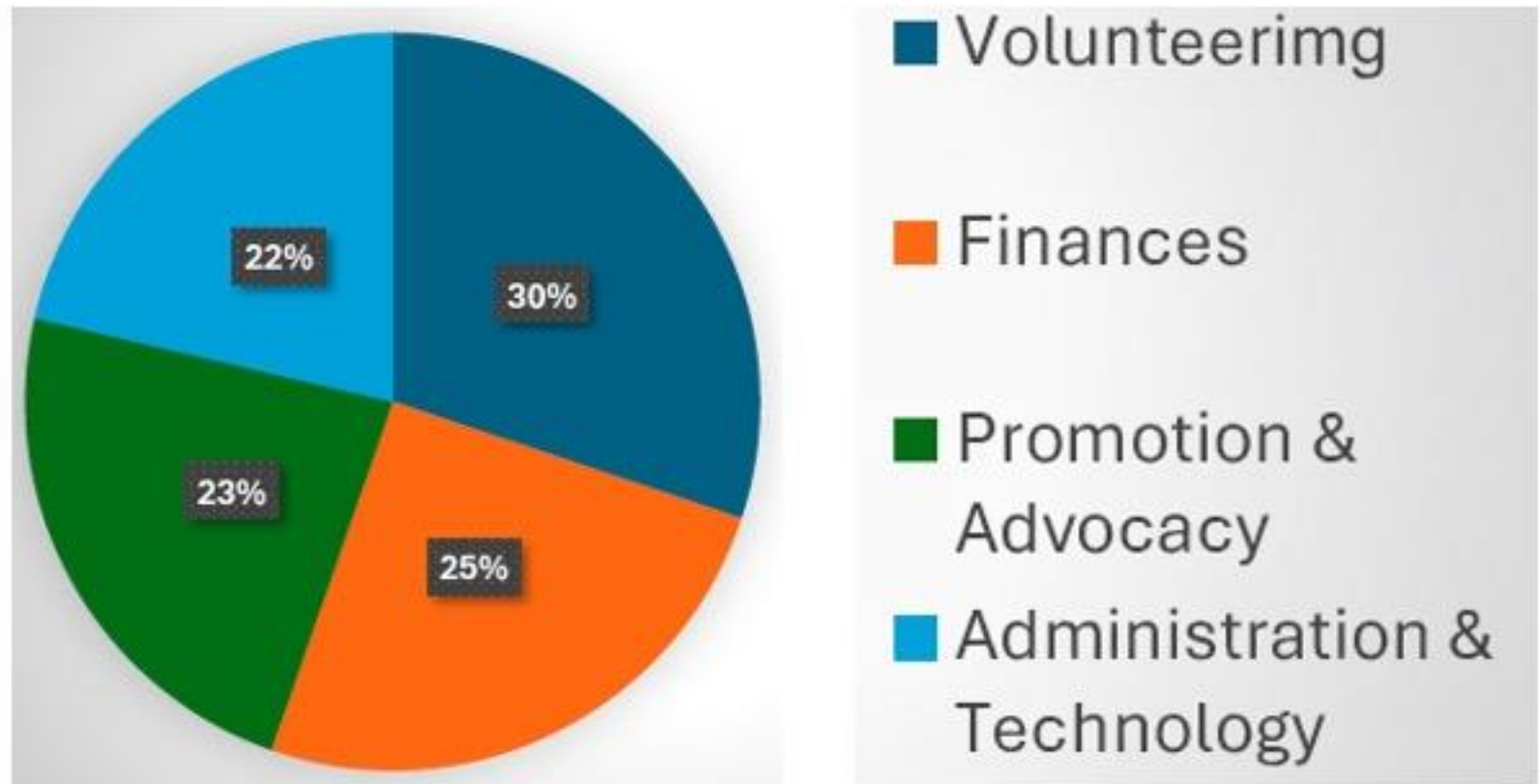
Q2. What do we do?



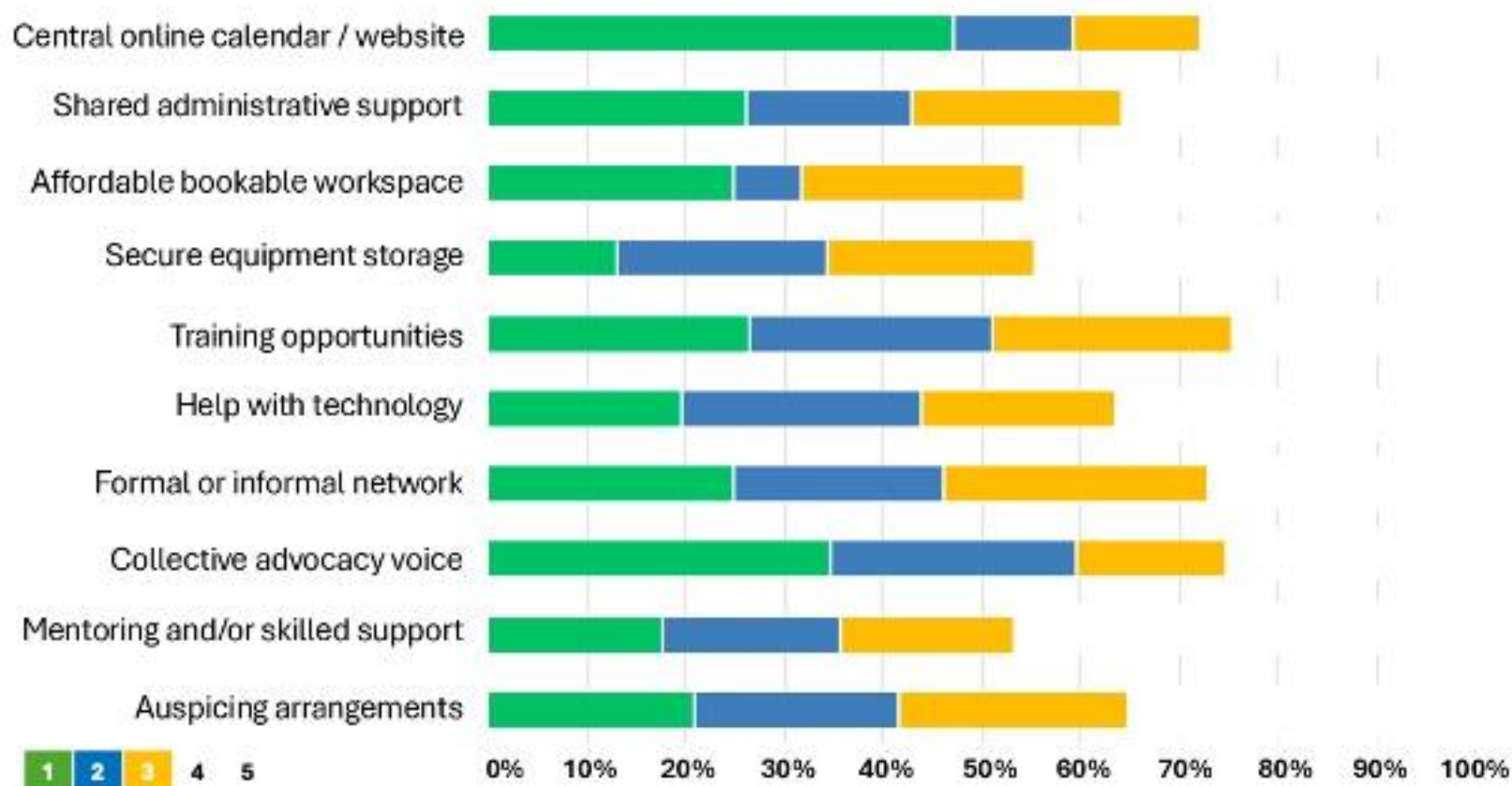
Q3a. What are our prime challenges?



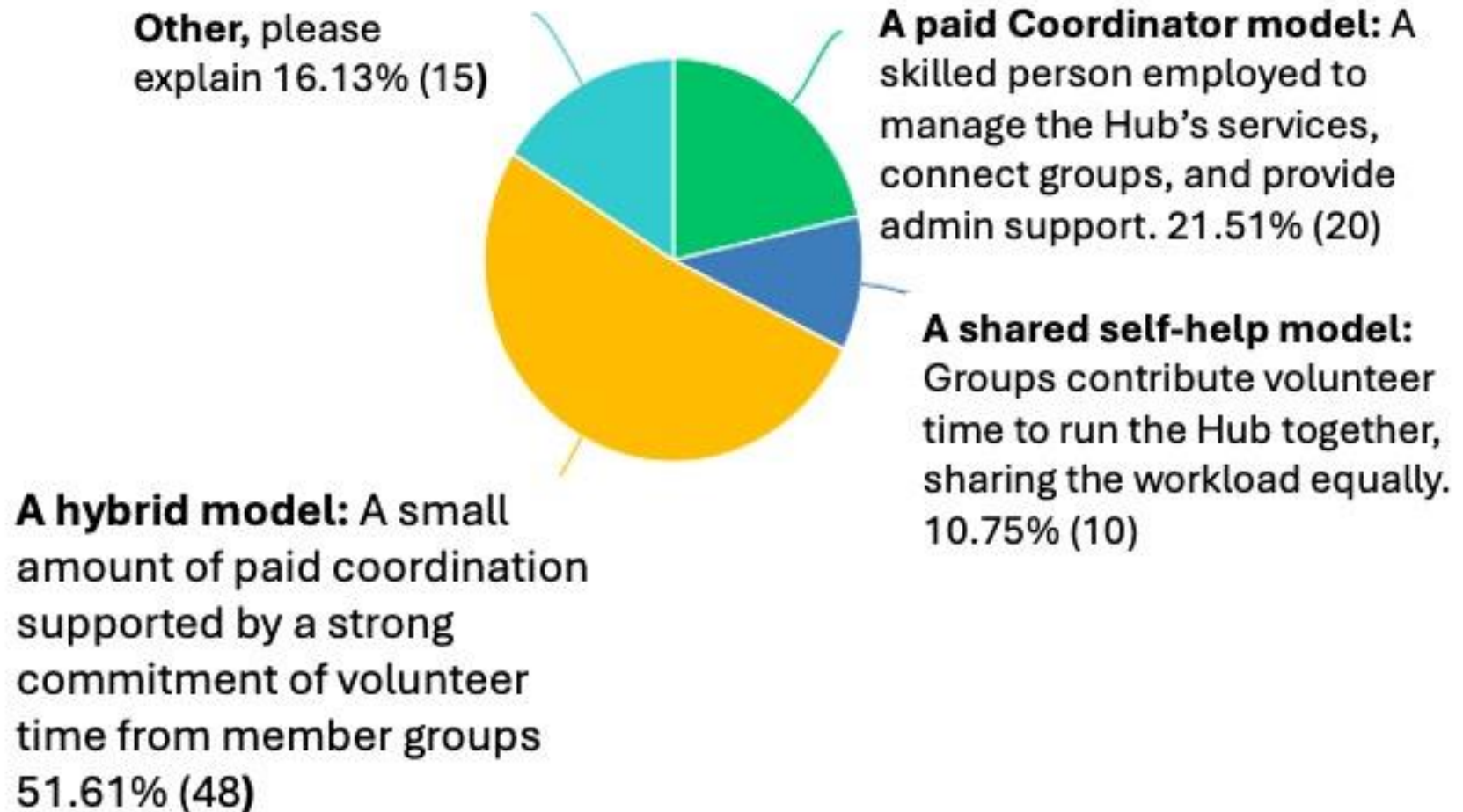
Q3b. What are our prime challenges?



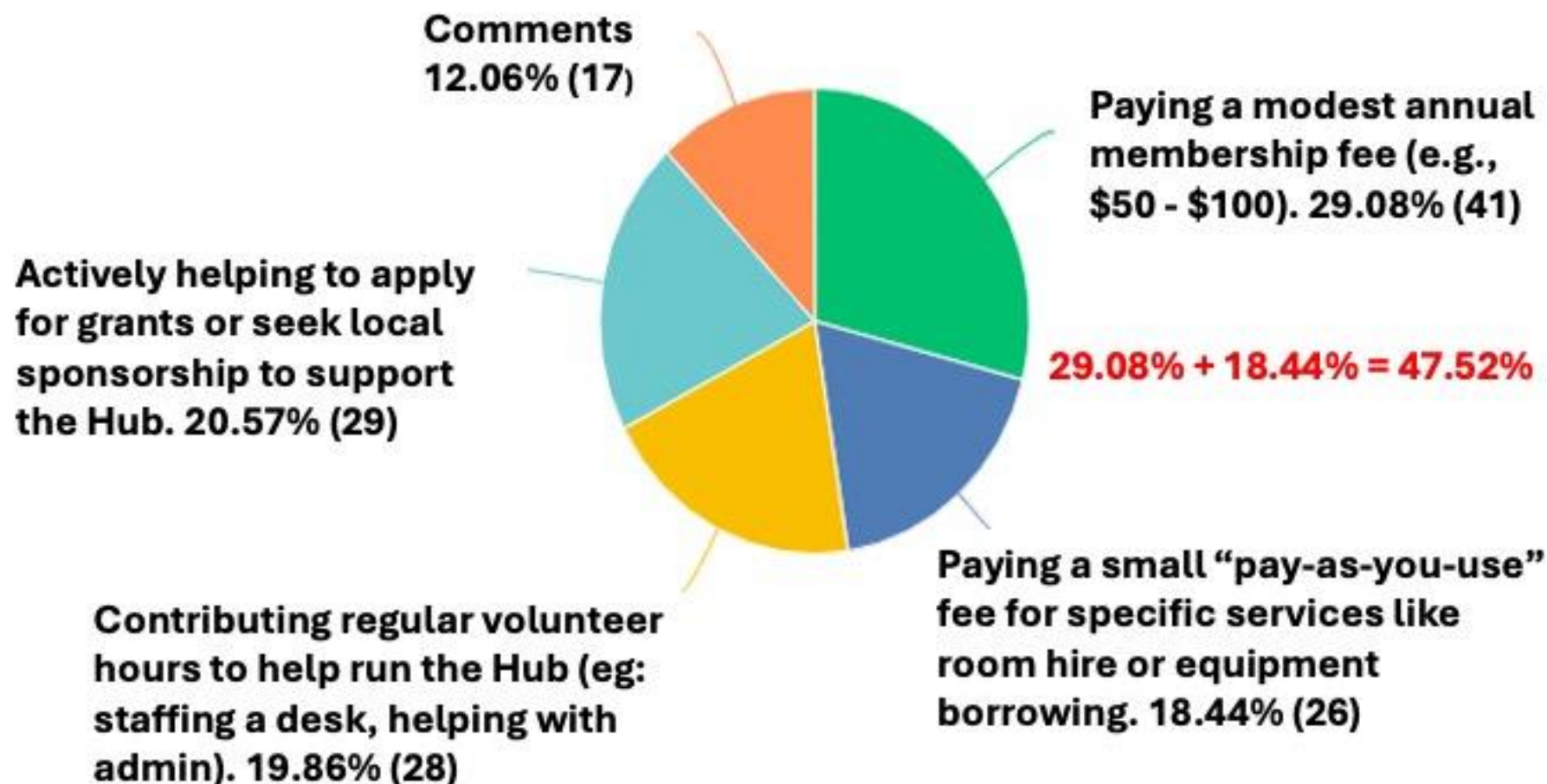
Q5. What are our priorities from a Community Hub?



Q7. Which service model



Q8. How do we resource it?



Summarising the Issues

Declining Volunteer Numbers



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graph TD; A[Declining Volunteer Numbers] --> B[Lack of Finances]; B --> C[Sense of Isolation and Lack of Voice]; C --> D[Administrative hurdles and Technology barriers]
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Lack of Finances

Sense of Isolation and Lack of Voice

Administrative hurdles and Technology barriers

Discussion

Where to from here?

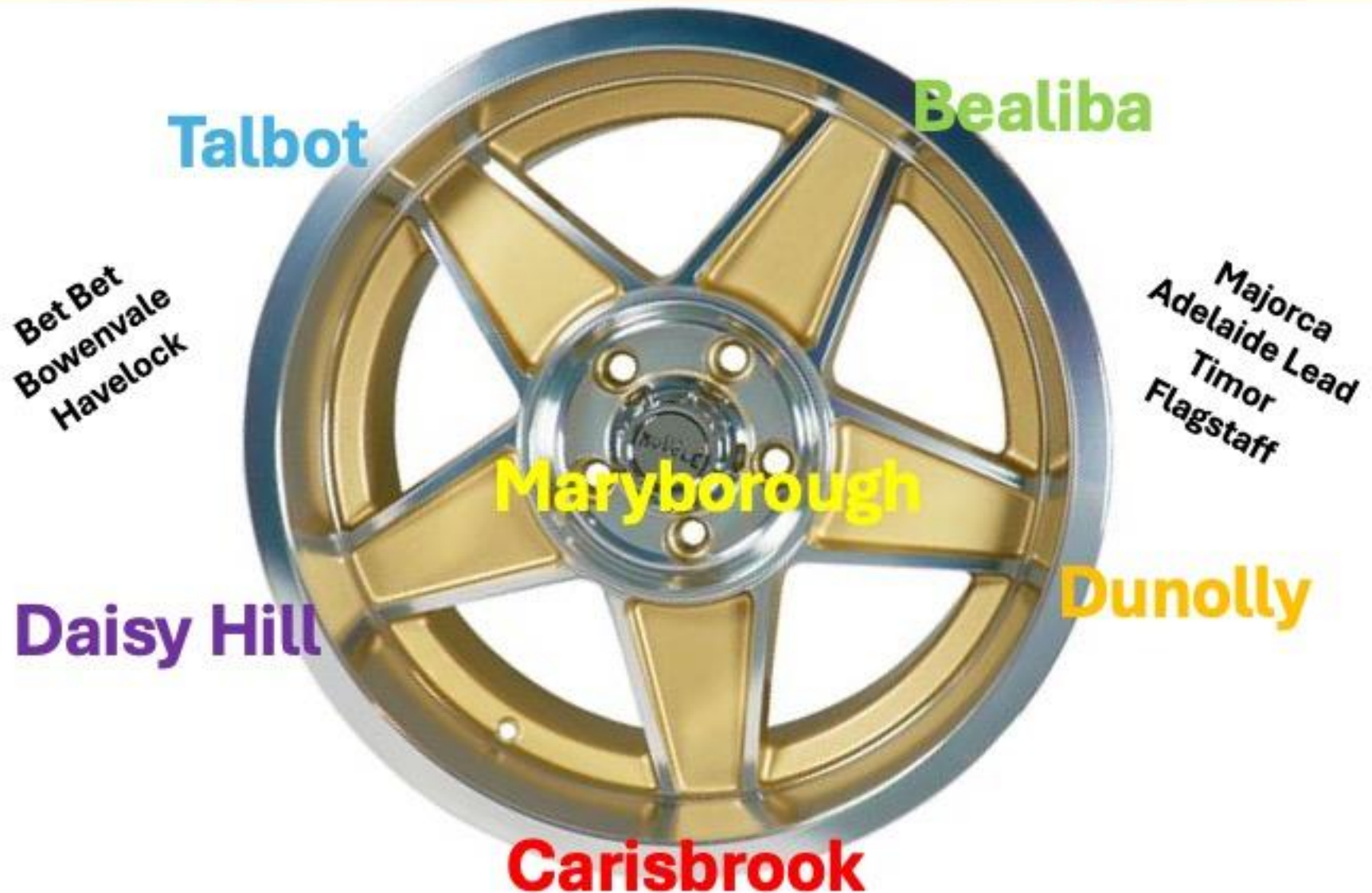


The Route To Success



The Hub as a Support System

The Hub is efficiently governed and managed with active members from across the whole Shire



Networks
and
Advocacy

Finances

Volunteers



Administration
and
Technology

Volunteers:

The Hub as pathway for the recruitment and management of volunteers.

- Creating a welcoming environment, a safe space.
- Promoting volunteering. Central recruitment point and compliance requirements.
- Understanding changing forms of volunteering – micro, spontaneous.
- Skills Bank – Matching need with capacity. Training.
- Generational change – Youth-elder partnerships.

Finances:

The Hub is a functional connection to funding sources and providing expertise in financial management.

- Scanning and advising members on grant opportunities. The potential for collaborative submissions.
- Training - grant writing, financial management, dealing with red tape.
- Expert advice – trouble shooting, auditing.
- Potential for auspicing and centralised financial management system.

Networks and Advocacy:

Enhanced coordination between NFP's and with a strong voice advocating their interests.

Strong networks and advocacy reinforce the ability to attract volunteers and financial support.

- **Bring NFPs closer together to provide a unified voice to governments and others.**
- **Strengthening links – online presence, newsletter, annual conference. Media coverage.**
- **Promoting the value of the volunteer / NFP networks**
- **Potential for engagement with the private sector.**

Administration and Technology:

The NFP sector is actively supported to function effectively utilising modern technologies.

An advice and connection bureau

- Sharing resources. Spaces and Equipment available for use (hire).
- Referral centre for queries.
- Training - committee management and office bearer roles, new technology.
- Provide templates - management, planning, reporting formats.

Next Stage

**Form an inclusive steering committee to,
Design an implementation plan**

Governance /
Management

Volunteers.
Youth.

Finances

Online
Calendar

Buildings
Audit

Functions

Sustainable Service Delivery



Governance

Coordination

Legality & Policy

Functions

Financing

- *I think a Hub for our future is a great idea. Support from the Hub would mean growing our aims and vision ... and helping to bring about a more open, tolerant, thoughtful, kind and happy people in our communities.*

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Appendix 6

We express thanks to the following people who participated in face-to-face interviews - Alex Stoneman, Aileen Marshall, Heather Carr, Chris-Meddows Taylor and Lindsay Hazelman, Garry Higgins, Greg and Heather McNeill, Heather Carr, Jeffrey Hooper, Jenny Hurse, John Weston, Kath Ryan, Kerrie Dowling, Tony Savage, Kerry Cameron, Sedigh Khademi and Ebony Miller, Veronika Miles, Belinda Pritchard, Rachel Buckley, Darryl Wagstaff, Janice Simpson, Kaitlyn Howell, Duncan Bates, Elizabeth Lewington, James Walsh, Carlene Dowie, Rachel Nagy, Angela Ang, Mike and Shelley Hayes, Patty Brown.

The following quotes come from those interviews plus remarks made on the online survey.

What You Said: What are your group's top three biggest challenges?

Do not know what other groups do. Compliance is the big one.

Goal of establishing volunteer network. Fundraising and grant writing.

I have limited hours in the week to manage all of my responsibilities... this limits our growth.

After the ordeal by fire of obtaining the Charity status for and sorting the State Land Tax and the ATO paperwork ... A virtual hub and networking would have been immensely helpful.

Finding enough volunteers and compliance issues, managing administration, red tape, or compliance, such as insurance and reporting, difficulty accessing or affording technologies, such as software, laptops, Wi-Fi, finding suitable meeting places or forum venues, feeling isolated or not knowing what other groups are doing, finding funding, managing finances, promoting our group and its activities to the community. Grant writing or other issues.

What you said: What would make the biggest positive difference to your group right now?

Fundraising and grant writing. I have limited hours in the week to manage all of my responsibilities... this limits our growth.

Accessing volunteers who are already vetted and ready-to-go with their WWCC, Police check, governance suitability, and clearly defined skillset that is matched with what we need now and into the future.

Access to training, support with recruitment, funding for operations and insurance

Training in social media. Volunteers. Funding - biggest.

More opportunity for community engagement opportunities

Access to up-to-date technology for members to use, prior notification to upcoming community events, list of local venues available for community group use

More, younger people to join.

Bringing my skills up to date and networking

A coordinated approach to volunteering across our shire that has a unique style that best reflects our community.

The promotion of the groups' activities. The provision of a central contact point whether physical or virtual where information can be shared, promoted.

More volunteers and funding (rather than income)

Access to training, support with recruitment, funding for operations and insurance

Activities and education opportunities. Face to Face mental health support. Community hub for providers.

An increase in membership, particularly active members to assist with sorting, indexing and digitising.

More space. Promoting the group more. Need to be asked by volunteer newsletter.

Finding younger aged volunteers to become involved in the community

More opportunity for community engagement opportunities

A permanent central home base.

Gaining volunteers. Promotion to the community. Funding.

Having a community place where we can train people, run workshops, and hold meetings.

Fast and reliable WiFi. Experienced and skilled Committee members. Policy manual and training.

Accessing volunteers who are already vetted and ready-to-go with their WWCC, Police check, governance suitability, and clearly defined skillset that is matched with what we need now and into the future.

More volunteers to join our committee to take an active role.

There is a direct need for volunteers coming into the club and having the confidence to do things. Training sessions for volunteers. Team coaching. A space to do that.

Storage for equipment and pots, admin paperwork.

What you said: Select one of the priorities (most valuable functions of a hub) and explain how that would work.

Collective voice - find commonality, people on the same page. A lot of it is to do with the people. We need one voice.

Attracted by efficiency cost and durability of technology. Access to a central node to coordinate and capture various ideas of volunteer organisations.

We can auspice groups and have grant writing capabilities.

An online calendar or physical notice board that was centrally located,

A community hub that is safe for all where they are able to find the assistance they need in the community in one spot.

Accessing the community on an overall basis.

Having a unified voice will only deliver better outcomes for our NFP organisations

Needs to be a physical space, a combination with online.

Seeking other people who have previous experience is establishing models like this.

Avoid becoming another bureaucracy.

Attracted by efficiency cost and durability of technology. Access to a central node to coordinate and capture various ideas of volunteer organisations.

A community hub that is safe for all where they are able to find the assistance they need in the community in one spot access to mental health support when needed as well as food services programs and groups all under the same roof.

We do not have a permanent home where we can meet, so a community hub would benefit us greatly.

Need something that is easy to update, has online and off-line accessibility.

Someone available to assist with an issue. One to one rather than group. Specific assistance. Referrals.

Shared admin - a pool of people who can help multiple organisations with: eg, bookkeeping, minutes, etc

Also need a physical noticeboard. Virtual, not physical. We need people. Can call the IT person. Talk to someone.

Attracted by efficiency cost and durability of technology. Access to a central node to coordinate and capture various ideas of volunteer organisations.

Each year the Committee changes. Generally Committee members lack governance experience. Hence, training soon after the AGM would be of great benefit.

Community input/ influence. Hub is an ongoing ideas centre.

Auspecting arrangements - having a central auspice so that all the community NFP groups can apply for grants.

Store for equipment would allow potential for sharing with other groups, eg: marquees tables.

Casual meetings at a hub which might lead to involvement in other community groups.

Like many of our volunteers, I am aged and find technology challenging. I would to be able to send a quick email to our virtual hub and ask a question. For example, if we had a retired accountant I could ask advice for reporting tax returns.

What you said: A Hub needs a "heart" to make it all work.

Which of these service models appeals most to you?

A body that can hire or employ the expertise to address the issues that we have.

I think to start we could all help out, as it grew could look at paid positions.

Someone paid would be ideal, but most organizations haven't the finances.

Whatever the model, the key is focusing on sustainability. A paid coordinator role is definitely appealing, however, how this could be funded into the future is unclear.

The right paid coordinator. Passionate and knows what they are doing.

Reprioritise council work to include this sector. Not sure about paid coordinator but some resources need to be allocated.

Unsure. Difficult to get funds for paid role. Need to lobby. Council should be providing administrative support.

Moving to a hybrid model.

A hub needs a heart to make it all work. Long-term a vibrant central point. it's very important that there's a physical location.

We need to be independent of council.

You need to have some paid coordination because right now they're trying to get all the volunteers to do everything, and to have a coordinator would actually help a lot.

Not just online. I think of physical presence. The way this community works, the way the Central Goldfield's community works, I think that the opportunity to see people in person is important.

**What you said: To be sustainable, a Hub would likely
need ongoing resources. Which of these ideas do you
think your group would be most willing to support?**

Annual donation.

Grants.

While I would like to say that offering volunteer time, I don't think that the groups I represent would manage to do that, the majority are busy in that their volunteer time is also an integral part of their family business which is an ongoing commitment 7 days per week, supporting their own smaller communities is also a priority for them.

Physical location that moves around.

Seek local sponsorship.

To pay a membership requires a decent return.

Enough problems getting volunteers.

All our money is allocated to support our community.

Emphasis on 1 (annual membership fee) and 2 (pay-as-you-use). I feel a combination of the above would allow all groups, no matter how small to access what they need.

Volunteering lowers user pays charge

It's fine for organisations to be asked to assist, but please be mindful that we are already struggling to retain volunteers without being asked to offer volunteers to assist managing a hub.

**What you said: Thinking long-term (5+ years from now),
what does success look like for you?**

Permanent physical presence. Building volunteer network.

Shared training programs. Connections with other rural NFPs.

Collaborative fundraising. Grant writing.

Recognition that volunteer groups provide economic and health benefits.

Anything to bring people together to attain more volunteers and work together would have to be of benefit to the whole community and organisations

Contributions from across the community from a diversity of representation - young people etc. Dynamic, relevant and engaged. Everyone's success is our success

Success looks like a group of committed volunteers who are set up in a building that already exists, with the ability to roam our Shire assisting our numerous NFPs in ways that are needed at that moment.

A fully operational hub building being used by all local NFP organisations for sharing resources, ideas, and building a healthy volunteer bank.

An integrated community, networking widely across the community to support community groups of all descriptions supported by many volunteers.

Goldfields Connect operates independently across Central Goldfields townships with connected residents, trained volunteers, and community centres. Elderly residents are no longer isolated, young families feel welcome and integrated, and our centres are vibrant hubs of intergenerational activity.

We are financially sustainable and our model is documented for other rural communities to replicate.

One area that we can be helpful is to build the network with other people that are doing something similar to us. So I'll tick the box for feeling isolated and not knowing what other groups are doing. And then when it comes, when we get to the future, we can talk about the networking side of things. The other one is fundraising, grant writing, anything that can help us ... we are just surviving with no grant.

I think a Hub for our future is a great idea. Support from the Hub would mean growing our aims and vision ... and helping to bring about a more open, tolerant, thoughtful, kind and happy people in our communities.

This is where I think the surrounding towns need to be a subcommittee to sit there and trash out the issues that matter to us.

That would help coordinate and would capture the range of ideas and considerations of the various organisations, volunteer organisations. And all of the organisations cooperate, send delegates, and that's critical in getting funding and resources. And helping support each other with the various elements that you need to run an organisation whether it be at finance or communication or whatever it was.

So something like that which could operate at a higher level? Because it would be servicing a number of towns. Operating at a collective level. They're still democratic and responsive and responsible.

When I think of a hub, it's like a space where you can go and use it and be active in it. You can say to people, we're going to the hub and then people just know where it is. It would be a vital one stop shop for the community, an important go to place to connect groups and individuals.

What you said: Is there anything else you would like to say, suggest, warn about, etc?

I think a Hub for our future is a great idea.

Really good initiative. A lot of good positive things can come out of it.

The most important resource in a volunteer's time.

Must be community driven, supportive, collaborative venture with no one left behind.

Unsure what the hub will end up as. The biggest thing is to work together on advocacy issues. These funds are limited and should be used for what is really needed across our Shire. Small towns like Dunolly, Bealiba and Talbot have a tough enough time accessing services, so must remain front and centre of all discussions.

This is going to be a long road.

Be fully inclusive of all genders and cultures.

I have a strong preference for a physical, centrally located hub that would be seen by residents as a 'one stop shop' for all community- based information and training. A place that brings a lot of community groups together. I believe there are already some ideal locations - buildings that already exist and that could be modified much more cheaply than the cost of a new building.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. While we are largely rural based, we do lack affordable places to run our education courses and work displays, we would also like to foster an awareness of what we do in Maryborough.

Keep up the great work!!! This is wonderful what you are all doing.