# Helping Hands

“We help people help”

# Project Brief

## Background and Context

Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing are proving to be great ways to utilize the economy of scale to affect change – be that local, state or federal government, charity organisations or the lives of individuals. Everybody can make a change for good, but some don’t know how. This is where Helping Hands comes in; utilising the idea of crowdsourcing, data analytics and big data visualisation to understand what charities, causes and community challenges need assistance and where volunteering resources can be best spent.

The inclusion of open data allows a real-time understanding of what causes are being affected by the actions of the Helping Hands platform, allowing government and volunteer organisations to understand what causes the Australian, state and local communities are interested in, and as a by-product, what they aren’t interested in supporting. Using analytics, these groups are positioned to make larger differences for the causes they care about.

Quantifying data into meaningful information allows users of the platform to understand what is happening in their local, state and national environments gives them the power to make meaningful decisions about how they can spend their valuable volunteering time. Quantifying various data sets allows searchability for users to be able to find activities, which will have the biggest impact on the causes they care about.

Giving the user this transparency, control and understanding in their environment means that whenever the data is refreshed, the effects of the users’ Helping Hand activities are made clear and real.

## Background and Context

As a group, we at Helping Hand have been involved in volunteer and organisations across many of the areas this platform addresses – education, homelessness and health. Some include:

New Hope Cambodia

Peter Mac Foundation

Melbourne University VCE Summer School

Red Cross Blood Service

Pied Pipers – Royal Children’s Hospital

Giving others a platform to understand what opportunities for change exist is the first step towards them making a change, be it to their environment, to the amount of resources they consume on a daily basis, to how often they drive their car to work.

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| --- | --- |
| **Objective:** | What is the aim of this project?  A useful way to frame the objective is to answer the question ‘why are you doing the project?’ The result is a one sentence statement, or series of statements, starting with the word ‘To’ |

The aim of this project is to connect people. To bring together all stakeholders (including volunteers, organisations, causes and local, state & federal government) to utilise open government data to create meaningful opportunities for change. The data visualisation in the Helping Hand platform influences the choices that the users will make for what they can contribute to, and the choices will, in turn, influence the data over time. Influences on some types of data sets will be more readily measurable in a short amount of time, and some will need to be tracked using historical data trends. Using these opportunities, each of the stakeholders are empowered to choose what causes their efforts will affect.

“Whether a person does any voluntary work might be influenced by whether their parents have done voluntary work. In 2010, 52% of adults reported that their parents had done voluntary work.”[[1]](#footnote-1) When we take this into consideration, and the idea that most people want to help but don’t know how, providing a platform for connectivity and meaningful representation of data as usable information, then the opportunities for change are

### Target Outcomes

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Data Set | Goal | How to help |
| Water | Reduce [Australia| State| Suburb]’s overall consumption of water by x%.  Allow resources to be better used for mitigating risk when there are natural disasters | Assign yourself to the task of reducing your own water consumption (and bill!), affecting your area’s overall consumption  2 minute showers  Ensuring that taps are off, hoses aren’t running |
| Power | * Reduce [Australia| State| Suburb]’s overall consumption of power by x%. * Helps conserve natural resources. * It reduces carbon footprint. * Saves money for individuals | Committing to turning off all unnecessary lights, electrical switches at the wall  Turning all unnecessary lights off during the evening each night during the week |
| Gas | Reduce reliance on natural gas resources  Reduce the amount spent on natural gas across your area | Ensure your thermostat is ENERGY STAR programmable  Turn off your gas when not using it  Make sure there are no water leaks |
| Education | Ensure resources – books, tutoring, study areas - for low socio-economic students to enable equal opportunity learning | Volunteer time tutoring those who can’t afford formal tutoring  Provide unused textbooks to students  Connect libraries and students |

## Benefits for Stakeholders of Helping Hand Platform

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **As a…** | **…I want…** | **…so that…** | **Causes** |
| Individual | To help out a charity/ organisation that I care for or other individuals in need | I affect change, do and feel good | * Community growth * Positive outcomes * Role Model * Belonging |
| Individual | To increase my hire ability | I can show that I am willing to commit my time to a good cause, willing to work hard | * Job prospective * Resume building * Opportunities |
| Individual | To meet new people with similar interests in causes | I can grow my friends group/ network while doing good | * Community involvement * To be heard about what issues matter to you |
| Council or Local Business Owners | To increase the amount of local customers purchasing my products  Increase consumption of my services | Promote local farmers and produce | * Increase council wealth * Increase business wealth * Reduce reliance on councils to address local issues |
| Local Council  https://www.gbca.org.au/uploads/100/35940/Geelong.png | To lower water usage per household | The overall water usage in my region is reduced | * Lower rates * Quotas are met * Regional water reserves are conserved |
| Local Council  https://www.gbca.org.au/uploads/100/35940/Geelong.png | To include younger people in the community | The younger generations will care about the community | * Proliferation and inclusion of users’ friends, colleagues to get involved |
| Charity | To increase the amount of volunteers | My charity can prosper and our mission can be successful | * Achieve its mission statements and goals * Satisfy stakeholders * Raise public awareness for causes |
| State Government  http://www.aimia.com.au/images/patrons/state-government-victoria.jpg | To have my citizens engaged with state-level issues | The state’s resources won’t be stretched to address issues | * State is better prepared to allocate resources to major issues * Engaged and included citizens |
| Federal Government  http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/PublishingImages/aus-gov-logo-stacked-black.jpg | My citizens to collaborate to make change for good causes | Australia will benefit from more community involvement in causes that need assistance | * Community growth * Causes are distributed across nation |

## Stakeholders & Communication Strategy

At each iteration in which the data is refreshed, the categories for change are compared and measured as an output with trend data. This gives the user a feeling of influence as a part of the whole initiative to change the data – be it saving water, gas or electricity, helping the homeless or elderly, or even doing what they can in emergency situations.

Being able to see the iterative cycle of data influencing action and actions influencing data.

The Helping Hand platform aims to keep each of the following groups engaged:

* Users and volunteers
* Organisations
* Volunteer organisations
* Emergency groups
* Governments
  + Local
  + State
  + Federal

The platform gives the users the ability to view the current measured data and the objectives created to affect change on that data for good. The user is able to commit as much or as little time as they want (or can) to the cause. The user has the ability to create an account and track what causes they are involved in and the associated small- and large-scale effects the crowdsourced effort they are a part of has achieved.

## What is next for the Helping Hands platform?

Future state example - The platform allows context-aware volunteering allocation, for example, when a natural disaster occurs, organisations like the SES are able to provide a list of jobs that people can help out including food assistance, blanket donations, etc.

# Script for Video

Helping Hand is a charity organisation that provides different ways that people can help.

Helping Hand uses open data from local, state and national sources.

Existing problems can be identified by the visualizing multiple sets of data.

Each problem then can be acted upon to make real world change.

Every person matters and every task helps.

This is Dave. Dave wants to help but is unsure how.

Dave visits the Helping Hand website, he sees all the problems he can contribute to which are all based on open data.

Dave finds a cause that he is interested in in his local community and an action he is able to perform and then decides to make a pledge.

Users can combat issues like water, electricity and gas use overuse by pledging to reduce their usage in measurable ways.

Dave has picked water use and intends to reduce his overuse of water by only watering his garden in the evening; reducing the amount of time he spends showering and investing in water tanks for his home.

The Helping Hand platform gives users the ability to view the current measured data and the objectives created to affect change on identified problems, which overall changes the data for good.

When crowdsourcing these activities through the Helping Hand platform, a little effort adds up to a big impact.

Dave regularly checks back to the Helping Hand dashboard to see the results of his pledge in action.

Other people like Dave have all contributed to the same cause and can see how they have affected change in their community.

The helping hand platform currently supports data on gas, electricity & water use. However, the platform allows any open data APIs which can be easily included.

Helping Hand, helping people help.

Website, dashboard:

Over the past month, you and 14,324 other Helping Hand users have contributed to reducing water usage in your region by 16%!

Congratulations! You can up the ante by using an ENERGY STAR-rated washing machine and only wash when you have a full load.

1. Source: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/70673659385DC4E3CA25791A0082C494?opendocument [↑](#footnote-ref-1)