

Response by Volunteering Australia to an  
invitation to comment on

National Compact Consultation Paper  
*learn, work, engage, have a voice*

September 2009

## Acknowledgements

Volunteering Australia wishes to acknowledge the contribution to this response from the following Foundation members who provided submissions:

Volunteering WA

Volunteering QLD

Volunteering SA&NT

Volunteering TAS

Volunteering Australia also wishes to acknowledge the input of individuals and organisations who participated in targeted consultations in their respective states/territories (see appendices).

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## 1 Executive Summary

Volunteering Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the draft National Compact Consultation Paper, *learn, work, engage, have a voice*. This submission synthesizes the main points arising from consultations undertaken by our Foundation members. (see appendices).

The volunteering sector is committed to working with government for the benefit of the community and supports the development of the National Compact.

The potential for the National Compact is significant, and we believe a commitment by all political parties is required so that its sustainability and development is assured. Related to this is the call for government departments at federal, state and local levels that resource and support volunteering to engage and be a part of the National Compact (Compact). A whole of government and inter-departmental agreement is required to ensure the success and relevance of the Compact and the ability of the not for profit sector to effectively implement the Compact.

The third sector would benefit from certainty and continuity across government, rather than the constant changes and mounting levels of complexity of compliance, funding and reporting imposed on the sector. Sector capacity building is critical and needs to be mentioned. If government wants a sector that is able to fully engage with government, there is a need to appropriately and adequately fund and resource it.

Government needs to respect and work with peak bodies to maximise the effectiveness of Compact outcomes. Peak bodies provide a significant untapped level of expertise and experience; have the trust of their member organisations; provide one point of contact for their area of representation and have enormous networking capabilities. Furthermore their independence helps to amplify the 'voice' of volunteering.

The Compact and other processes must be representational and equitable. Many in the sector feel they don't have a 'seat at the table' and that volunteering has no 'voice'. Sector representatives are consistently the 'same faces', often from welfare and social service groups and from the larger bodies with more resourcing. In national engagement there is often no recognition of the critical, unique and across sector relevance of volunteering.

### 1.1 Summary of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: That all government departments that support volunteering commit to, and are involved in the development and sustainability of the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 2: That reference to volunteers and volunteering is included in the rules of engagement.**

**Recommendation 3: The National Compact needs to incorporate the contribution and value of volunteering in all areas of the compact beyond service delivery.**

**Recommendation 4: Government to provide reports and feedback to the Sector reflecting the innovations, development and progress of the Third Sector organisations as gained through the lodgement of applications, reports and evaluations of programs.**

**Recommendation 5: That when government wants to consult it calls for nominations from all sub-sectors within the not for profit sector. This would allay concern that small organisations or organisations at a geographical distance, such as Western Australia, do not continue to feel overlooked.**

**Recommendation 6: That government recognise and value the work of volunteers, researchers and not for profit organisations specifically by not 'reinventing the wheel'. The National Compact needs to identify existing tools and resources and build on the policies, materials and resources that already exist.**

**Recommendation 7: That we learn and value each community, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and learn about different methods of engagement.**

**Recommendation 8: Provision of information, resource and facilities hubs in each State with easy access for not-for-profit organisations. These need to be representative of the whole of the third sector and not be located only in and dominated by 'welfare' and issue focussed groups.**

**Recommendation 9: That the National Compact provide a basis through which greater communication between peak bodies and government is encouraged and facilitated.**

**Recommendation 10: That research and reports on volunteering commissioned and required by government departments be made available to the Sector.**

**Recommendation 11: That evidence of accountability extend past the current outcomes focus and that the National Compact engage with the Sector to devise reporting mechanisms that are streamlined, robust, and take into account resource capacity.**

**Recommendation 12: That government consult with a wide cross section of volunteers, not for profit organisations and the volunteering peak bodies in the development of any public policy impacting on volunteering.**

**Recommendation 13: In the formulation of public policy that government consult with the Third Sector to ensure enduring outcomes.**

**Recommendation 14: Tax treatment of non-profit organisations needs to be fair, equitable and reflective of lack of salary parity.**

**Recommendation 15: That government fund research on both (a) the measurement of the not for profit sector and (b) the measurement and contribution of volunteering, that moves beyond economic contribution only e.g. research to measure benefits to clients' and volunteer's health and wellbeing.**

**Recommendation 16: Government needs to acknowledge the value of volunteering peak bodies to their members and networks throughout the establishment and development of any agreement that is to become the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 17: That government work towards achieving support by all political parties to the sustainability of not for profit organisations and the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 18: Government needs to acknowledge and legislate to reinvest a portion of the volunteering contribution back into the sustainability and growth of the sector.**

**Recommendation 19: That the government commission research on the establishment and development of similar national agreements. This evidence based research will provide valuable background to the Australian experience.**

## **2 Introduction**

We acknowledge the importance of the need for both government and the Third Sector to work together for the betterment of communities. The Third Sector is not an amorphous entity but rather a complex and as yet, not completely explored group, consisting of movements in volunteering, environment, sport/recreation, culture, education, community services, health, religious bodies and emergency, etc. Government gives authority, recognition and support to industry and business but often overlooks the volunteering sector.

Volunteering is more than unpaid service provision. The volunteer sector provides the largest workforce in the Third Sector, and also provides enormous benefits at personal and societal levels with ramifications for social inclusion and economical stability of this country. Volunteers drive innovation and development and request that the 'voice' of volunteers be heard throughout the Compact. Volunteering makes a significant contribution to the national economy despite a lack of resources.

Since the 1980s the Australian Bureau of Statistics has measured volunteering and its contribution and value to society. Other investigations include the work of the Productivity Commission, the Henry Report and COAG consultations. However, neither these estimable works, nor the growing scholarly interest in volunteering, have measured those organisations that do not have an ABN or do not employ paid staff. We do not yet know the breadth and depth of volunteering in this country. In its previous submission (2009 p. 6) Volunteering Australia called for greater research in the development and continuous improvement of other compact experiences both in Australia and internationally. In the development of the Compact principles and actions, the role of research must not be overlooked.

It is felt that any relationship between the government and the Third Sector needs to consider that volunteering has a pivotal and unique role in the Third Sector as it crosses and is embedded in all types of not for profit organisations. Without volunteering the service

provided by the Third Sector would not be sustainable. Volunteering is the foundation upon which the viability of the Third Sector is built.

Government needs to acknowledge and support the critical role, contribution and proven track record of the volunteering sector and it needs to work in collaboration with the expertise and experience within the sector. Thus Sector capacity building needs to be addressed to ensure the strength and longevity of the Compact as the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the nation relies on volunteer effort.

Currently work is being undertaken by the Productivity Commission, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Henry Review, and the COAG agenda on measuring the contribution of the not for profit sector. It is understood that this work will be taken into account in the development of the Compact. There is concern that these studies are concentrating on economic value and not the broader value of volunteering, nor will those outside the scope of such work be considered in the development of the Compact. The danger is that if only a segment of the volunteering sector is included, the Compact will not meet its potential as an agreement with the Third Sector as a whole.

Strong relationships are based on trust and a commitment to respecting the independence and legitimacy of all partners. Fundamental issues such as government appropriation of intellectual property from third sector partners needs to be addressed if there is to be a truly respectful relationship. The Compact will need to successfully create a new environment where trust and expectations bring quality outcomes for all parties involved. It is in our mutual interest to work as one and not keep duplicating and reinventing services, programs, reporting, etc. There needs to be an articulation of trust and acknowledgement. This relationship needs to be mutual and endure beyond the term of any one government.

Engagement of whole of government and whole of sector is required and content of the Compact should set standards for both parties to aspire to.

The volunteering sector delivers services often at grass roots level and has a proven track record. Instead of continually reinventing the wheel, government needs to work with the 'wheel-makers' who have skill, knowledge, experience, networks, methodology and an understanding of the sector.

Relationship between National, State and Local Compacts needs to be clearly articulated. This will avoid duplication; clarify who has authority and ensure that local need and circumstance are accommodated.

#### **Broad questions arising about the National Compact:**

The consultations gave rise to questions that people still thought needed to be addressed. These included:

- The role of the volunteer peak bodies is important and they need to be valued, recognised, given status and consulted. Would peak bodies be representing their members if they sign the Compact and what if some peaks did not want to sign, where does this leave their members?
- What is the commitment of government to include those bodies, not counted in current economic statistics but operating within the Third Sector, into the Compact?

- Has the role of business and local government been considered in the adoption of the Compact?
- The Third Sector is enduring and beyond the term of any particular government both at a political party level and at a bureaucratic level. What is the longevity of the Compact?
- What does the term 'Third Sector' mean? This is not a well known term and not universally accepted as appropriate by those it appears to want to encompass.

Government processes, practices and policies often force the third sector to compete instead of sharing. Could the actions be defined to overcome this?

### 3 Principles of engagement

The volunteering sector and voice is represented in all sub-sectors of the Third Sector and should not be limited to representation in the welfare and social services area only. Volunteering is a critical contributor to this area but is far broader in its scope, representation, contribution and influence. There is a commitment by a number of government departments to volunteering and this also needs to be reflected in the Compact rather than one or two leading government departments.

**Recommendation 1: That all government departments that support volunteering commit to, and are involved in the development and sustainability of the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 2: That reference to volunteers and volunteering is included in the rules of engagement.**

**Recommendation 3: The National Compact needs to incorporate the contribution and value of volunteering in all areas of the compact beyond service delivery.**

#### 3.1 Respect

In the Consultation Paper this principle recognises the contribution of the Third Sector, values the economic and social contribution of volunteers as well as mutual respect and understanding of each other's strengths and expertise.

Since the 1980s the Australian Bureau of Statistics has measured volunteering and its contribution and value to society. Other investigations include the work of the Productivity Commission, the Henry Report and COAG consultations. However, while some attention is being given to the contribution of the not for profit sector in particular those organisations with ABNs and the economic value of volunteer work, the depth of volunteering effort is not being gauged. For instance, while volunteering is measured in economic terms, the social and cultural impact of volunteering needs further exploration.

Volunteering makes a significant contribution to the national economy despite a background of concern about lack of resources and confidence of long term financial sustainability of not for profit organisations. Lack of funding constricts engagement and the sector's ability to 'have a voice'.



Not for profit organisations would have greater capacity to deliver efficient services through regular reports/feedback from government on the input they provide to government provide in terms of policy advice; organisational/program information for funding applications; reports and evaluation of programs. Reciprocal reporting would be a good measure of respect and an opportunity to capitalise on success.

Acknowledgement that best practice management of volunteers in turn creates successful projects and programmes, must not be overlooked. Recognition by government that volunteering requires the same level of consideration and attention in program design and dedicated volunteer management is a necessary aspect of volunteer effectiveness and sustainability.

**Recommendation 4: Government to provide reports and feedback to the Sector reflecting the innovations, development and progress of the Third Sector organisations gained through lodgement of applications, reports and evaluations of programs.**

#### 3.1.1 Actions relating to the principle of respect

The potential undertakings or actions listed in the consultation document, i.e. 'documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector' (p. 11) occurs currently in a number of areas. For instance, volunteering is celebrated and promoted during National Volunteer Week and on International Volunteer Day. These events are an important way of promoting volunteering, and highlighting the richness and diversity of the Sector.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics through the 'Non Profit Institutions Satellite Account; is to be applauded for its work however data is limited to only those organisations that have an ABN (2009 p. 37). This means that in the year 2009 we still do not have a comprehensive understanding of the size of the not for profit sector.

#### 3.2 'Culture gap'

To improve understanding of the values of government and the Sector (p.11) it was considered unnecessary for government to always hand pick and include on its committees/forums the same selective people from the not for profit sector/community. There is a need for both the Sector and government to support bodies such as the Australian Environment Network and the volunteering peaks at national, state and regional levels. There is also a wealth of knowledge held at the grass roots level and government would gain greater community confidence in policy and decision making by incorporating local knowledge.

**Recommendation 5: That when government wants to consult it calls for nominations from all sub-sectors within the not for profit sector. This would allay concern that small organisations or organisations at a geographical distance, such as Western Australia, do not continue to feel overlooked.**

### 3.3 Inclusiveness

There needs to be greater recognition of all levels of contribution from large and small organisations. Many organisations feel they do not 'have a seat at the table' and that it is the same select individuals and groups that are being invited, all from the east coast. During consultation forums held by Volunteering WA, it was expressed that WA is unique (in terms of both distance and the ways in which communities work). There needs to be recognition and accommodation of this 'unique' environment and context. Sector representation must take this issue into account.

Consultation feedback also identified the need for clarity of terminology. For example, the principles of diversity and inclusiveness are closely related. If there is a practical and active representation of diversity in communities, then the process of inclusiveness should be in action (Appendix 1 - Volunteering TAS). For instance, the terms 'diversity' and 'inclusiveness' can both refer to involving, while recognising, differences. It was suggested that the latter term could be replaced with 'communication'.

Discussion during the consultations held in Western Australia (Appendix 3 – Volunteering WA) suggested that possible strategies and ideas for inclusion could be:

- Information sharing
- Service provision
- Innovation
- Advocacy
- Equity of representation
- Participatory consultation through national and state peak bodies
- Recognition of local knowledge
- Evaluation
- Reporting

There was a view that the Compact Paper was aimed at those organisations that currently receive government funding. To be effective it should also include organisations and groups that do not receive government funding.

Further, the protection of government funded organisations in relation to the right to advocacy needs to be guaranteed.

#### 3.3.1 Actions relating to the principle of inclusiveness

Many of the potential actions listed are in existence. For instance there are a number of tools that support advocacy and volunteering, pathways for advocacy, volunteering and paid employment as well as codes and guidelines to develop community engagement, consultation and participation.

**Recommendation 6: That government recognise and value the work of volunteers, researchers and not for profit organisation specifically by not ‘reinventing the wheel’. The National Compact needs to identify existing tools and resources and build on the policies, materials and resources that already exist.**

### 3.4 Diversity

There is a need to clearly recognise the diversity of the third sector. This includes a greater recognition of the role of volunteering in the sustainability of communities. Government needs to listen to people and be guided by what they think would benefit their communities rather than providing an overlay of programs that may actually hinder ongoing sustainability.

There is an urgency to understand the ‘who and what’ of the not for profit sector, that is who carries out the work and what that work entails. This will not be possible until the true size of the not for profit sector is understood in all its complexity.

Diversity, access, inclusion and equity need to be looked at so that the ‘voice’ of volunteering across the whole sector is listened to by government. Diversity in this context relates to ethnicity, geography, ability, language and culture. Respect and tolerance are the lynchpins of diversity.

Each community, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, have unique ways of engagement. Some of these may be different to the anglo-celtic tradition of community involvement. To honour diversity these differences must be acknowledged and incorporated so that all peoples can learn from each other.

#### 3.4.1 Actions relating to the principle of diversity

The following ideas were suggested as ways to facilitate engagement and help to ensure the ‘voice’ of all volunteers and not for profit organisations particularly those where geographical distance can be a barrier to involvement such as in West Australian not for profit organisations:

- Set up a dedicated video conferencing facility that geographically distanced non-profit organisations could access as a way of contributing to consultations, committees, reference groups and decision making processes.
- Assist with the development of State pods to facilitate engagement and communication. Important that these pods are not ‘welfare’ driven but representational of the whole not for profit sector.

**Recommendation 7: That we learn and value each community, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and learn about different methods of engagement.**

**Recommendation 8: Provision of information, resource and facilities hubs in each State with easy access for not for profit organisations. These need to be representative of the whole of the third sector and not be located only in and dominated by 'welfare' and issue focussed groups.**

### 3.5 Effectiveness

The Compact needs to include an accurate picture of volunteering and the fundamental role it plays in strengthening the third sector. Recognition of this function would ensure volunteering does not continue to be over-looked and disadvantaged.

The whole process needs to be equitable, balanced and mutually beneficial. At this time the sector provides far more than is returned by government in terms of service provision, policy advice, information sharing, resource and research development, program delivery as well as the contribution to the economic, social and environmental bottom line.

There is the perception that government uses the third sector as a 'tool' to address particular contemporary issues it is focussed on, but does not always provide additional or adequate funding and resources to properly address the issues identified to achieve positive change and outcomes. This has led to the perception that government funding is driven by 'on the run' policy and therefore does not achieve enduring outcomes. Consultation, collaboration and recognition of the experience and knowledge of the third sector are required to overcome this.

#### 3.5.1 Actions relating to the principle of effectiveness

Any new partnership must ensure equity of access to, and representational participation in, decision making processes with government. This can be achieved by greater facilitation of communication avenues for peak bodies.

Additionally, more effective mechanisms for government to share information with the sector need to be considered, to avoid duplication, misinformation, miscommunication and wastage.

**Recommendation 9: That the National Compact provide a basis through which greater communication between peak bodies and government is encouraged and facilitated.**

**Recommendation 10: That research and reports on volunteering commissioned and required by government departments be made available to the Sector.**

### 3.6 Efficiency

Overall consultation feedback showed support for a code of practice or rules of engagement between government departments to ensure discussion of policy, programs and priorities with the not for profit sector, however greater involvement by the not for profit sector during the development of public policy is required. This would enable volunteers, their organisations and their peak bodies to plan for a sustainable future.

While acknowledging the necessity of organisation accountability for the spending of public funds the cost of compliance particularly for small organisations can be onerous when departments at all levels of government have different requirements (Ryan, Newton & McGregor-Lowndes 2008). This lack of equity is very apparent in rural and remote communities and needs to be resourced in application and evaluation methods.

The requirements needed to meet funding and reporting criteria are often unrealistic, repetitive and extremely resource intensive and could be reviewed and rationalised.

A number of comments made during consultation by Foundation members remarked on issues that would impact on efficiency, these include:

- Salary parity for the recruitment and retention of skilled staff in the not for profit sector.
- Accountability needs to be relative to the funds provided so that a disproportionate number of hours are not spent on accountability requirements and can be spent on achieving the best outcomes of the funding provided.
- Inefficiencies occur through change of government and constant turnover of departmental staff.
- Build on innovations of volunteers and not for profit organisations by instituting a continuous loop whereby organisations report on programs and government departments synthesise these reports and report back to the sector. This will raise awareness and cut down on duplication.

### 3.6.1 Actions relating to the principle of efficiency

The proposed action 'initiatives to support effective volunteering' is commendable however to foster further efficiencies within the not for profit sector there are in existence a number of current initiatives that range from the promotion of best practice in the management of volunteers – the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations*, through to events that promote recruitment in volunteering such as the annual *National Volunteer Week*.

Feedback from Volunteering Queensland (Appendix 4) also suggests that:

Further development of a code of practice for volunteering would form the basis of a standards-oriented approach to volunteering in general. This is the sign of a mature industry and would be a valuable resource in further collaborative relationships with both government and the corporate sector. However, it is critical to bear in mind that all systems bear a cost which need to be carefully examined. Building on the National Standards would be the first step towards a complete code of practice which could go hand in hand with other major initiatives within the sector such as addressing infrastructure models which support existing and new models of volunteering.

It is not efficient to ignore the need to protect volunteers and provide safe working environments. Volunteers need to be considered in the development of all relevant legislation and regulation.

Efficiency will not occur unless the strategies, materials, policies and promotion that currently exist are built upon rather than the development of new strategies and materials that do not reference what is already in existence.

Immediate outcomes do not always reflect long term outcomes. Many outcomes in the not for profit sector are not measurable in quantifiable terms. Outcome driven principles do not capture enhancements to clients' and volunteers' health and well being.

**Recommendation 11: That evidence of accountability extend past the current outcomes focus and that the National Compact engage with the Sector to devise reporting mechanisms that are robust and take into account resource capacity.**

**Recommendation 12: That government consult with a wide cross section of volunteers, not for profit organisations and the volunteering peak bodies in the development of any public policy impacting on volunteering.**

**Recommendation 13: In the formulation of public policy that government consult with the Third Sector to ensure enduring outcomes.**

**Recommendation 14: Tax treatment of not for profit organisations needs to be fair, equitable and reflective of lack of salary parity.**

**Recommendation 15: That government fund research on both (a) the measurement of the not for profit sector and (b) the measurement and contribution of volunteering, that moves beyond economic contribution only e.g. research to measure benefits to clients' and volunteer's health and wellbeing.**

### 3.7 Sustainability

Both the Sector and the government have a commitment to working together to strengthen the sector. Not-for-profit organisations and their peaks are eager to work with the government despite being stretched for resources, however maintaining participation with limited funding and lack of continuity/sustainability of funding continues to present difficulties.

A number of peak bodies at state and national level already exist. Government has a role in facilitating good communication between all peaks. This will ensure issues of respect, diversity, inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness are addressed in a coherent manner.

Government needs to recognise that the third sector, while under-funded and under-resourced, has and does deliver and value add 'above and beyond'. It adapts to, supports and works with government at every level and significantly contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the nation. In recognition of this contribution and the vital role of not for profit organisations, government needs to commit to reinvesting a part of this contribution back into the sector to ensure its growth and sustainability.

Concern was expressed that other prior partnerships such as the 'PM's Business and Community Partnership Program' are now defunct which begs the question of the sustainability of the Compact when there is a change of government. The commitment and

the tangible support of senior levels of government are required to uphold the principles, vision and purpose of the Compact.

Equitable and sustainable funding was considered necessary to build on the success of the not for profit sector to enable organisations to focus on infrastructure, not simply the paid and unpaid workforce and how it is facilitated. One option put forward for consideration is a reinvestment into the sustainability and growth of this sector by government committing to reinvesting a percentage of the value of the annual economic contribution of volunteers.

### 3.7.1 Actions relating to the principle of sustainability

A national communications strategy, funded by government and channelled through not for profit peak bodies, to raise the profile and general awareness of the contribution and critical role of the third sector in ensuring the well-being of our community is needed. This strategy should to be reflective and inclusive of the whole sector.

‘The ongoing viability of the organisations within the Third Sector is clearly a significant concern for many.’ (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2009, p. 14). There is a perception through the Consultation Paper that volunteering is measured as a proportion of the total workforce in the sector. It is necessary to incorporate that element of volunteering that is responsible for the creation of ideas, innovations, organisations and their governance. Additionally, a move beyond the boundaries of looking at the welfare sector only is needed. Therefore, to support the sustainability of the not for profit sector, further research is necessary to measure the whole of the sector, not just those with ABNs, who employ paid staff, or that receive government funding.

**Recommendation 16: Government needs to acknowledge the value of volunteering peak bodies to their members and networks throughout the establishment and development of any agreement that is to become the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 17: That government work towards achieving support by all political parties to the sustainability of not for profit organisations and the National Compact.**

**Recommendation 18: Government needs to acknowledge and legislate to reinvest a portion of the volunteering contribution back into the sustainability and growth of the sector.**

**Recommendation 19: That the government commission research on the establishment and development of similar national agreements. This evidence based research will provide valuable background to the Australian experience.**

### 3.8 Implementation and governance of the compact

It was assumed that the government does not want a heavy handed top down approach to accountability therefore questions arose about the implementation of the Compact.

It was suggested that a wide representation of peak organisations have the capacity to develop and roll out systems and need to be adequately resourced and supported to do this.

Other suggestions called for a separate consultation process. Common questions about the implementation were:

- What happens if you don't sign up?
- Would peak bodies be representing their members if they sign the Compact?
- If some peaks didn't sign, how will this impact on their members?
- Who will monitor the Compact? What outcomes will be achieved? Will there be set targets?
- How will all voices be heard?
- Will non participating organisations be stigmatised?
- This could be another red tape structure – increase in workload
- Will volunteers be considered *Third Sector Champions*?

There was concern that a group of *Third Sector Champions* might still not be representative of the diversity and size of the sector. Concern was also expressed that small and often volunteer led and run organisations/groups might not be involved. Not one size fits all and the role of peak bodies is necessary so that all can have a 'voice'.



## 4 Conclusion

The Consultation Paper in its articulation of the Principles and Undertakings (the principles in action) has provided the opportunity to raise issues and pose questions by Volunteering Australia and its foundation members. The recurring themes concentrated on are:

- Volunteering needs to be incorporated through the Compact and its processes
- Many of the actions mentioned in the undertakings do exist. There is a need to better identify what exists and communicate that to the Sector at large
- The Compact needs to transcend a perceived welfare bias to include all relevant ministerial portfolios
- Need for more research on the size of the not for profit sector in Australia
- The government is called upon to work with other political parties to come to an agreement that the Compact is sustainable regardless of the government of the day
- The value of volunteers should not be limited to its economic contribution. Rather it should incorporate the social, cultural and environmental value and impact
- There are a number of peak bodies in the Third Sector and their roles need to be acknowledged and engaged in the Compact.

## 5 References

Department for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2009, *National Compact Consultation Paper: learn, work, engage, have a voice*, Commonwealth of Australia

Ryan, Christine M. and Newton, Cameron J. and McGregor-Lowndes, Myles (2008) *How Long Is A Piece of Red Tape? The Paperwork Reporting Cost of Government Grants*, CPNS Working Paper No. 39

Volunteering Australia 2008, *A National Compact: a submission from the national, state and territory volunteering peak centres*, Volunteering Australia, Melbourne

Volunteering Australia and Australian Volunteers International 2001, *A National Agenda on volunteering: beyond the Internal Year of Volunteers*, Volunteering Australia, Melbourne

## 6 Appendix 1 – Compact Submission to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering Tasmania

### Consultation questions – vision and purpose:

- Does the proposed vision sit well with your organisation?
- Is the purpose clear? Does it represent your sense of what this compact can achieve?

### Overarching consultation questions – the compact principles:

As you consider all of the principles discussed below, think about which ones are critical for a stronger relationship between the Government and the Sector.

- Are these the principles that will underpin a productive working relationship between the Government and the Sector?
- Are any important ideas missing?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the compact principles generally needs to consider:

- That strong relationships are based on trust and shared history. Any compact will need to successfully create a new environment where trust and expectations bring quality outcomes for all parties involved.
- That it is important to create a shared vision and the compact is an ideal opportunity to explore how to foster these relationships. In this way, all perspectives involved in service delivery from the Third sector are considered and can have a voice.
- VT is especially keen for the compact to encourage a voice from volunteers and volunteer managers in the Third Sector relationships with Government. These stakeholders often have important insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a project or program that could assist in the refinement to maximise positive outcomes.

### Consultation questions: principle of respect

- Are the concepts of respect and recognition important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to respect?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of respect needs to consider:

- That an active respect of the value and contribution of volunteers is an important part of any compact.
- That the concepts related to the principle of respect of valuing the economic and social contributions of volunteers is really important to the strength of the Third Sector. The other four concepts linked to the principle of respect offer the opportunities to maximise the volunteer contribution.
- That volunteers volunteer because they want to give back to their community or a 'cause 'they feel strongly about and therefore creating an opportunity to maximise the quality of service delivery through volunteer involvement.
- That best practice management of volunteers in turn creates successful projects and programmes. That volunteering requires the same level of consideration and attention in program design as other aspects of a project and dedicated volunteer management is a necessary aspect of volunteer effectiveness and sustainability.
- The creation of stimulating volunteer experiences during planning and implementation processes of a project or programme creates a solid foundation for the success and sustainability of the project or programme. In particular, the increasing the quality of the project or programme especially in situations where volunteers are directly involved in service delivery, for example if supporting a vulnerable client group.
- That respecting the capacity and value of volunteers requires a realistic assessment and allocation of resources As this capacity depends on the role of volunteers, any maximising of the volunteer experience and the volunteer's contribution (impact) needs to be tailored to the roles undertaken and service/organisational needs.
- That although the responsibility for volunteer management needs to stay with the Third sector and the autonomy needs to be respected; its capacity is greatly influenced by the funding and reporting mechanisms of Government. In many incidences these set the agenda for the way in which project and programs can operate.

#### **Consultation questions: principle of inclusiveness**

- Are the concepts of inclusiveness in consultation and advocacy important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to inclusiveness?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of inclusiveness needs to consider:

- That the principle of inclusiveness and diversity are closely related. If there is a practical and active representation of diversity in our communities, then the process of inclusiveness should be in action.
- In the pursuit of an inclusive Australian community, volunteering is a powerful site to encourage the principles of inclusiveness.
- That volunteering is active social inclusion particularly in creating opportunities and pathways to meaningful participation.
- That if the principles of diversity are not actively pursued then there will not exist the ingredients for social inclusion and inclusion will remain elusive for many isolated and vulnerable members of our community.
- That we need to recognise the time, skill and resources required to build relationships with harder to reach communities.

#### **Consultation questions: principle of diversity**

- Are the concepts of valuing and responding to diversity important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include references to diversity?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of diversity needs to consider:

- That the volunteer workforce should be representative of the wider community and have representation of all demographics including age, gender, ethnic origin, people with disabilities and of people in transition in their lives.
- That it should be aligned with the principles of inclusive volunteering and support the opportunity of volunteering to act as an important pathway to participation.
- That in some of these situations a little more resources may be necessary to reach and support these groups in our community, including access to training, but the value of volunteering to offer pathways to inclusion in our community should be seen as an important role of the Third sector even if it is not the core function of the organisation, project or programme.
- That the Third sector is where many people are able to link to and express their relationship with community.

#### **Consultation questions: principle of effectiveness**

- Are the concepts of effectiveness important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

- Do the compact principles need to include references to effectiveness and improving policy, planning and program delivery?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of effectiveness needs to consider:

- That effectiveness is linked to quality outcomes rather than just financial and resource constraints dictating service delivery.
- That there is a need to understand the prevention element of a social issue requiring service delivery so as not to unnecessarily maintain or create an ongoing need.
- That effectiveness relates to research and to the importance of innovation in the pursuit of prevention as an outcome of the work undertaken in the Third Sector.
- That recognition of partnerships to strengthen the Third sector can be stimulated by the funding relationships with Government. These create opportunities to maximise goodwill, sector knowledge and partnership opportunities for organisations to work together. In addition it can stimulate more financial security in the Third sector.
- That these mechanisms also maximise the capacity and goodwill in the volunteer sector and create fulfilling and meaningful volunteer contributions to the sector. In addition it may alleviate the strong competition between organisations for the volunteer contribution
- That it is important to maximise the opportunities to up skill the volunteer sector and that research is valuable to react to changes in access due to demographic trends.
- That best practice volunteer management can enhance the volunteer experience and supports the potential not only of the contribution of the volunteer within that organisation but also in the important awareness raising work they do naturally in the community during their time as a volunteer and after.
- That there exists extensive opportunities in workforce development of the Third sector. Areas include professional development, security of tenure, and career path creation. Focus in these areas support sustainability and quality service delivery within the sector.

#### **Consultation questions: principle of efficiency**

- Are the concepts of efficiency important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include references to efficiency and accountability, planning and program delivery?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of efficiency needs to consider:

- That the comments related to effectiveness translate to the principle of efficiency.
- That there exists an opportunity of two way communication between the Third sector and Government. An example is that in the collection of statistics and reporting to funding bodies, this information can more closely inform innovation in the Third Sector.

**Consultation questions: principle of sustainability**

- Are the concepts of sustainability important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include references to sustainability?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to the principle of sustainability needs to consider:

- That the comments related to effectiveness and efficiency translates to the principle of sustainability. That now is an opportunity to ensure quality experiences for volunteers and paid staff resulting in quality outcomes of service delivery, especially related to the principles of prevention, the potential and sustainability of the Third sector and their important work in the Australian community.

**Consultation questions: actions and undertakings**

- A Compact is a two-way agreement. What could your organisation or your sector do differently? What do you want the Government to change?
- Do the actions in the consultation paper capture the action that is needed to improve the working relationship between the Government and Sector organisations?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to actions and undertakings needs to consider:

- That the actions and undertakings present opportunities to acknowledge and mitigate some of the unwanted outcomes of the relationship between the Third sector and Government. In particular, in relation to funding, reporting and research.

**Consultation questions: prioritising the actions**

- In your view does the list below of high priority short term actions reflect your top priorities for action in the next two years?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to prioritising actions needs to consider:

- That it is difficult to prioritise as some of these actions need to be undertaken together to actively acknowledge the value of the Third sector and give practical avenues for the sector to maximise its impact in a way that is effective, efficient and sustainable.
- That practical acknowledgement of volunteers in all areas of the Third sector can support the creation of meaningful, quality experiences for volunteers and the service they support.

**Are there high priority actions that are missing from this list?**

Can you rate the priority of action areas in the table below? (with 1 being your highest priority and 8 your lowest)

Action area	Priority rating 1-8
Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector	Priority 5
Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist	Priority 6
Recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives	Priority 4
Improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data	Priority 2
Reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting	Priority 3
Increase in consistency/simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions	Priority 7



Improvements to funding and procurement processes	Priority 8
Responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, recruitment, retention and remuneration.	Priority 1
Other (please list)	

**Consultation questions: implementation of the compact**

- Are the proposed implementation arrangements workable?
- How do you see the Sector’s governance arrangements working?
- What governance arrangements would you like to see the Government adopt to work most effectively with the Sector?

VT believes that any relationship between the Government and the Third Sector in relation to prioritising actions needs to consider:

- That the implementation of the compact will require a consideration of the perspective of and consultation with all parties involved in service delivery in the Third Sector, especially those who give up their time and resources for no remuneration for the benefit of the communities in which they live, volunteers.

## 7 Appendix 2 – Compact Submission (A) to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering WA



### Feedback form

### Environment & Volunteering Groups in Perth

1 September 2009

**Can you summarise the key themes raised during discussion on how a national compact could impact on organisations and the work that they do?**

The group agreed that it was important to see both Government and the Sector work for the betterment of communities. The environment and volunteering sectors have a critical and unique role; the Government needs to really **acknowledge and work with the expertise and experience in these Sectors as well as their proven track record and enormous contribution to the economic, environmental and social prosperity of the nation. Volunteering in particular contributes to all areas of the not for profit sector and the sustainability and well-being of the sector relies on volunteer effort.**

It was raised that the current work being done by the Productivity Commission into the contribution of the not-for-profit sector, the ABS Non-profit institutions Satellite account and the Henry Review will have much to contribute in **measuring the real 'value' and 'contribution' of the sector** and will all be taken into account in the development of a compact. There was some concern though, that these studies are not counting the value of voluntary work (unpaid) to the community and the economy.

The **real impact of a compact** will depend on the **accountability and Governance mechanisms.**

It would not be good to see duplication of agreements already in place with State and/or local Governments. Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens replied that the development of a national compact is a very significant piece of work in Community and Disability Services Minister Advisory Council. The principles and progress will be presented at their next meeting. The compact work has also been signed off by COAG. **A national compact would work to complement existing agreements and not contradict.**

**Can you summarise the group's thoughts on the proposed vision, purpose and principles? Can you outline any key concerns? Are there any important ideas missing?**

- There are currently no rules of engagement or etiquette of respect outlined, **how is the principle of respect going to translate as an outcome?**
- There are key **words missing from Principles - rules of engagement**. A big **issue** for both the environmental and volunteering sector is lack of funding and sustainability of funding – this constricts engagement. It would be good to see ‘procedural fairness’ addressed and how the environment and volunteering sectors are going to be resourced to engage with the Government. **The Principles should include statements around evaluation, feedback, reporting between the Government and the Sector**. It was expressed that the sectors are not getting any feedback compared to the significant input the sectors provide in terms of policy advice, and organisational/program information for funding applications.
- **Representation** – don’t want to see the Government always hand pick and include on its committees/forums the same selective people from the not for profit sector/community. Both the Sector and the Government really need to support bodies such as Australian Environment Network and the Volunteering peaks. There was concern that WA was often overlooked for representation on committees/reference groups (probably because of distance and associated costs, however technology should be used to overcome this issue).
- There needs to be some **weighting for issues of engagement**. For example, issues of public importance need to be both adequately resourced and recognised as priorities for government in engaging with the community. An effective model of engagement requires the commitment and tangible support of senior levels of government to uphold principles.
- The issue of **ecological and volunteer sustainability** should be mentioned somewhere in the compact.
- **Recognition of all levels of contribution from large and small organisations needs to be articulated**. Many organisations feel they do not ‘have a seat at the table’ and that it is the same select individuals and groups that are being invited, all from the east coast. It was expressed that WA is unique (in terms of both distance and the ways in which communities work). There needs to be recognition and accommodation of this ‘unique’ environment and context. Sector representation must take this issue into account.
- In discussing the principle of **Diversity** - is there something that the Government could do around best practice consultation mechanisms (departments signing up to best practice principles etc)?

Discussion raised the following ideas:

- Set up dedicated video conferencing facility that NGOs could readily access.
- Provide an information, resource and facilities hub in each State with easy access for not-for-profit organisations. These need to be representative of the whole not for profit sector and not be located only in and dominated by the ‘welfare’ sector groups. They could be known as State pods.

- Discuss and agree on what is a peak – The peaks provide a significant untapped level of expertise and experience, have the trust of their member organisations, provide one point of contact for their area of representation and have enormous networking capabilities.
- There was group support for the principle of information sharing.
- The group was asked “what sort of commitments can the sectors agree to undertake in supporting a national compact?”

Discussion:

- Government will get more community confidence in policy and decision making. Less conflict, basic participatory democracy. Cannot discount local knowledge. Knowledge is held at the grass roots level.
- Both the Sector and the Government want to work well together. In the long term, the work done benefits everyone and strengthens our community and nation. There is a role for peaks in helping the smaller organisations. There has to be a level of trust, and roles need to be recognised. The sectors are eager to work with the Government despite being stretched for resources as there is a lot the sectors can offer. It is however very difficult to maintain participation with limited funding and lack of continuity/sustainability of funding.

**After discussion, can you outline the issues in your part of the sector that you hope a compact could address?**

Volunteers as lobbyists find it difficult to compete with paid lobbyists. Change of Government and staffing within departments is really frustrating as relationships then need to be rebuilt. A solid, beyond term of government process is needed so the compact does not become a victim of such changes.

- There tends to be a real **lack of awareness and appreciation for the history and context for individual organisations**. A change of government, and even staff turnover in Departments, can be very challenging and exacerbate the difficulties.
- Many in the sectors feel they don't have a seat at the table; **there is no 'voice'**. Sector representatives are consistently the 'same faces', often the larger bodies with more resourcing. In national engagement there is often no recognition of the critical role of smaller, unique and geographically relevant organisations.
- Big issue for sector is **lack of funding and sustainability of funding** – this in turn constricts engagement and the sector's ability to 'have a voice'.
- Whilst communities and the Government might 'appreciate' the Sector's **value** this is **not matched with re-investment by Government in the sector**. The notion of a legislated commitment by Government to reinvest an agreed amount of the annual economic contribution made by the not for profit sector back into the sector was raised.
- The **contribution of the voluntary 'unpaid' workers of the sector is not valued** and has not been measured. The voluntary 'unpaid' workers are often treated less respectfully than 'paid' staff.
- The requirements needed to meet **funding criteria** are **often unrealistic and extremely resource intensive**.
- It was expressed that the '**Environment**' sector is often **treated more stringently** than other sectors.
- It is historically very **difficult** for Environment organisations to get **funding at the Federal level**.

- **Salary parity** is a very critical issue for both the sectors and indeed the whole not for profit sector. Staff cannot afford to continue to support their living costs on sector wages. It is therefore challenging to attract and retain skilled staff.
- **Attitudinal change by Government and Government Departments** – big business groups, which often do not contribute as much to the annual economy as the not for profit sector are given ‘the ear’ of and promoted and acknowledged by Government and Government Departments, while the not for profits are not recognised, consulted, supported or promoted.

**As a group, do you think the actions outlined capture the action that is needed to improve the working relationship between the Government and Sector organisations?**

- In discussing the principle of **Diversity**, an associated action related to **best practice consultation mechanisms** was suggested (this means Departments signing up to best practice principles). The following ideas were suggested as ways to facilitate this action and help to ensure the ‘voice’ of West Australian non-profit organisations was heard:
  - Set up a dedicated video conferencing facility that geographically distanced non-profit organisations could access as so contribute to consultations, committees, reference groups and the decision making processes.
  - Assist with the development of State pods – facilitating engagement and communication, but ensure these are not ‘welfare’ driven and representational of the whole not for profit sector.
- **Capacity building** is not mentioned in the current list of action items. If the Government wants a Sector that is able to engage there is a need to recognise **appropriate and adequate resourcing**.
- In the action, **‘Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector’** the words acknowledgement, knowledge, understanding, and willingness to communicate need to be expressed
- The comment was made that **Actions 5, 6 and 7** seem to be addressing the same issues

*Senator Stephens replied to this comment:* These actions reflect the level of frustration around cumulative levels of compliance in the Sector. Addressing specific compliance requirements through discrete actions acknowledges the level of complexity in funding arrangements.

- **Action 2- ‘Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist’** - does this mean the Government will amend tax regulations so that non-profit organisations can express dissent without running the risk of being stripped of funding? Sector funding needs statutory protection.

*Senator Stephens:* The issue is being considered by the tax review (the Henry Review) and the Productivity Commission’s study into the contribution of the not-for-profit sector. The Government sees the issue of the current tax treatment of non-profit organisations as very important. The Government agrees that it is time to do something and is conducting a review to determine what the approach will look like. Advocacy is critical to the Government.

- The group expressed support for **developing rules or codes of practice /engagement** between departments to ensure discussion of Government policy, programs and priorities with the community network.

*Senator Stephens:* It is the challenge of a national compact to capture issues at a national level with a strategic direction whilst still working to address sub-sector issues. Once the Government captures the important principles, the compact would then roll out across Commonwealth Departments and Departments would be asked to articulate compact action plans in their portfolio.

- How do we make a compact accountable? **What are the accountability mechanisms?** The Government does not want a heavy handed top down approach to accountability.

Discussion:

- All Commonwealth agencies reflect a different culture and attitude. There does need to be some consistent accountability, particularly in the case of critical public interest issues.
- Reporting: Information should be shared, for example peak organisations that could assist in developing funding agreement templates. Peak organisations have the capacity to develop and roll out systems and need to be adequately resourced and supported to do this.

- **Advocacy:** The action to ‘Invest in building capacity in advocacy skills’ was suggested

Discussion:

- Agree with action suggested. This should also be reflected in the **Principles – ‘Greater guarantee of equity of access to decision makers’**. It was suggested that existing structures be used to assist actions, such as the University of Western Australia’s chapter of the Centre for Social Impact or Notre Dame (WA) University’s post graduate course in not for profit leadership.
- A system of advocacy training would also assist the sector’s capacity to contribute to sustainability.
- It is common in the sector that older generation staff with excellent skills are leaving without the opportunity to pass their skills and knowledge on to younger people.
- There are not enough resources currently in the Sector to cover the basics – resourcing the basics should be the first priority.
- **Third sector funding needs to be institutionalised.** As a suggestion a dedicated amount of the economic contribution could be annually reinvested in the not for profit sector by Government. This model of reinvestment could work as a **capacity building fund** that was legislated/institutionalised. **A percentage of the Sector’s ‘value’ contribution should be reinvested into capacity – to build a long term picture**
- There is also a need for some support for building the public profile of the third sector. **A national communications strategy, funded by Government** to raise the profile and general awareness was suggested. This needs to be reflective and inclusive of the whole sector.

*Senator Stephens:* In response to the **notion of embedding capacity building for the Sector in some way** – It is expected that Departments will have their own portfolio approach, no one would be expecting that a commitment from Commonwealth for capacity building would dampen down the unique contribution of sub sectors.

### **Prioritising the actions**

**As a group, can you rate the priority of action areas in the table below? (with 1 being your highest priority and 8 your lowest)**

Action area	Priority rating 1-8
Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector	
Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist	
Recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives	
Improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data	
Reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting	
Increase in consistency/simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions	
Improvements to funding and procurement processes	
Responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, recruitment, retention and remuneration.	
Other (please list)	
Resourcing of back room administration and facilitation of supporting smaller organisations' engagement in national conversations e.g. setting up dedicated video conferencing facilities that non-profit organisations could access; assisting the development of representational and sector inclusive 'State pods' for communication, engagement and information sharing	
Reporting: role of peaks – populating funding agreement templates – use and support peaks organisations with capacity to develop and roll out these systems. This is about information sharing	
A percentage of the Sector's value contribution to be annually reinvested into capacity – a long term picture and legislated commitment by Government	
Also need some support for public profile of the third sector – learnt, encouraged. <b>A national communications strategy</b> – raise profile, awareness. Needs to be representational and inclusive of whole not for profit sector	

**The compact will need to be managed by the Government and the Sector in partnership. This would require a governance (management) mechanism for the Sector and one within the Government.**

**As a group can you summarise the sort of governance arrangements you would like to see the Government adopt to work most effectively with the Sector?**

The question was asked: How is a national compact going to be implemented past a change of government and with constant changes to departmental personnel?

Senator Stephens cited the UK compact, introduced by the previous Blair government and still on the government's agenda, as an example of how a changed relationship can endure beyond the life of any particular political party.

There was support for this sort of outcome amongst the group. To achieve this sort of outcome, an Australian national compact has to be **a strong document with strong outcomes.**



## 8 Appendix 3 – Compact Submission (B) to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering WA

Response by



Volunteering WA is the peak body for volunteering in Western Australia with a membership of over 300 volunteer involving organisations that collectively represent in excess of 220,000 volunteers.

Volunteering WA extended an invitation to its membership, volunteers, Board and staff to come together to be a part of the National Compact Consultation process. This was done via a number of opportunities between 25 August and 9 September. Member organisations and other stakeholders were also encouraged to contribute individually to the consultation.

Volunteering WA welcomes this opportunity to respond on behalf of all who participated.

### List of Attendees

Attendee	Organisation	Consultation Date
Dr Susan Young	University of WA	25/08/2009
Stephanie Withers	Dept for Communities	25/08/2009
Matthew Rutter	CBH	25/08/2009
Paul Lynch	Westpac	25/08/2009
Dr Ian Fairnie	Service Abroad Australasia/Foodbank	25/08/2009
Kath Snell	Volunteer Task Force	25/08/2009
Rachel Kemp	Perth Fashion Festival Inc	25/08/2009
Christine Gray	School Volunteer Program	25/08 & 07/09/2009
Kellie Hanna	Ronald McDonald House	07/09/2009

Dr Megan Paull	Murdoch University	07/09/2009
Sandy Beardwood	Brightwater Group	07/09/2009
Tim Allan	School Volunteer Program	07/09/2009
Jen Patience	Volunteering WA & West Perth Volunteer Resource Centre	07 & 08/09/2009
Traci Gamblin	Volunteering WA	07 & 08/09/2009
Jennie Loveridge	Volunteering WA	07/09/2009
Denise Bertilone	Volunteering WA	07/09/2009
Caroline Kellow	Volunteering WA	07/09/2009
Lorien Doherty	Volunteering WA & Joondalup Volunteer Resource Centre	07 & 08/09/2009
Margaret Andrews	Volunteering WA	07 & 08/09/2009
Martha Barnard	Volunteering WA	07/09/2009
Maurene Palmer	Volunteering WA	07 & 08/09/2009
Patrick Cornish	Volunteering WA	07/09/2009
Mara Basanovic	Volunteering WA	07 & 08/09/2009
Jennifer Valesini	Fremantle Volunteer Service	08/09/2009
Audrey Bell	Bassendean Volunteer Resource/Referral Centre	08/09/2009
Catherine Gillan	Swan Volunteers	08/09/2009
Wendy Stanley	Armadale Volunteer Resource Service	08/09/2009
Erica Austen	Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Ilona Dresner	Albany & Regional Volunteer Service	08/09/2009
Michele Legge	Kwinana Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Barbara Shepard	Geraldton Centacare Volunteer Services	08/09/2009
Nicola Sherman	Melville Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Brian Preston	Manjimup Volunteer & Resource Centre	08/09/2009

Marj Wilson	Peel Volunteer Resource Centre & Rockingham Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Amy Neale	Cockburn Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Greg Wright	Yanchep Volunteer Hub	08/09/2009
Keith Almond	Kalgoorlie Boulder Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009
Jenni Browne	University of WA VRC	08/09/2009
Tania Jackson	Volunteer South West	08/09/2009
Carl Holroyd	Busselton-Dunsborough Volunteers	08/09/2009
Carolyn Biar	Pilbara Volunteer Online Information Service	08/09/2009
Katherine Waddington	Nannup Volunteer Resource Centre	08/09/2009

**Can you summarise the key themes raised during discussion on how a national compact could impact on organisations and the work that they do?**

- All participants agreed that Government and the third sector are on the 'same team', working to the same purpose to achieve the same goals and ideals – the betterment of our community. It is in our interests to work as one and not keep duplicating and reinventing services, programs, reporting, etc. There needs to be an articulation of trust and acknowledgement.
- It was further agreed that it is in everyone's interest to work together to strengthen our relationship and use our collective capacity to support the provision of policy advice and the effective delivery of services to the community. This relationship and agreement needs to be mutual and endure beyond the term of any one Government.
- Volunteering has a pivotal and unique role in the third sector as it crosses and is embedded in each segment of the not for profit area. Without volunteering the service delivery provided by the third sector would be significantly impacted.



Can you summarise the group's **thoughts on the proposed vision, purpose and principles?**

Can you outline **any key concerns?** Are there **any important ideas missing?**

- Participants felt that a agreement to engage would be useful – at present there are no rules of engagement or reference to engagement of volunteers
- Would also like to include reference to principles of mutual trust, cooperation, sharing, acknowledgement and procedural fairness between Government and the third sector
- The words are written, but now need an explanation or measures of how they will be translated into outcomes
- Lack of funding, resources and reinvestment into the third sector by Government constricts engagement. Sustainability of funding and adequacy of resourcing need to be addressed by Government to ensure Compact engagement, effectiveness and longevity.
- Ensure clarity of terminology – term 'diversity' and 'inclusiveness'. This latter term could be replaced with 'communication'. Need to clearly recognise diversity of the third sector.
- Recognition of volunteering as a key contributor. Compact needs to include the real picture of volunteering and the 'cornerstone' role it plays in holding up and strengthening the third sector. Recognition of this function would ensure volunteering does not continue to be over-looked and disadvantaged by the visibility and 'heart string' pull of the 'issues'.
- Ensure the concept of valuing the economic and social contribution of volunteers remains under 'Respect'
- A question was asked – “What happens to PM’s Business and Community Partnership Program set up under previous government?”
- Then another – “What is the role of industry, business and Local Government and is there a need to somehow factor them in to the Compact and its implementation?”
- Possible ideas for inclusion could be:
  - Information sharing
  - Service provision
  - Innovation
  - Advocacy
  - Principle of reinvestment of a portion of the contribution of the third sector by Government to ensure adequate funding for growth and sustainability
  - Equity of representation
  - Participatory consultation through national and state peak bodies
  - Recognition of local knowledge
  - Evaluation
  - Reporting
- A potential clash of some areas of this section could be seen and strategies to address this may need to be developed
- Whole process needs to be equal, balanced and mutually beneficial – at this time the sector provides far more that is returned by Government – ie service provision, policy advice, information sharing, resource and research development, program delivery as well as contribution to the economic, social and environmental bottom line.
- Equality of sector representation is required at all levels and not the Government always inviting and including the same people and groups onto its committees/reference groups. The WA volunteering sector and the volunteering sector across Australia is overlooked for representation on committees/reference groups and not invited to 'have a seat at the decision making table'. Recognition and accommodation of 'unique' environment, location and context needs consideration.
- The commitment and the tangible support of senior levels of government are required to uphold the principles, vision and purpose of the Compact.
- The voluntary sector is and always has been committed to working with Government for the benefit of the community and supports the Compact. Volunteering makes a significant, yet unrecognised annual contribution to the national economy despite being resource stretched. In committing to the Compact, Government needs to acknowledge and legislate to reinvest a portion of the volunteering

**After discussion, can you outline the issues in your part of the sector that you hope a compact could address?**

- The context and history of the voluntary sector is not acknowledged or valued and its significant contribution has not been effectively measured. Reviews, investigations, commissions are not including or acknowledging the value of volunteering – eg the Productivity Commission, ABS and others.
- The volunteering sector requires acknowledgement of its pivotal role across the third sector and a commitment of reinvestment back into the sector by Government of a portion of the contribution it makes to the economic, social and environmental bottom line.
- The big issue for the sector is lack of funding and sustainability of funding. This constricts engagement and the sector's ability to 'have a voice'.
- Change of Government and the constant turnover of staff in Government Departments can be challenging and taxing on already scarce resources and tight timelines.
- Agreement on what is a peak body and the role it has in representing, informing and advocating its sector. Peak bodies provide a significant untapped level of expertise and experience, have the trust of their member organisations, provide one point of contact for their area of representation and have enormous networking capabilities. Government needs to respect and work with peaks to maximise the effectiveness of Compact outcomes.
- Provision of information, resource and facilities hubs in each State with easy access for not-for-profit organisations. These need to be representative of the whole third sector and not be located only in and dominated by 'welfare' and issue focussed groups.
- The Compact and other processes must be representational and equitable. Have had a tendency to be 'welfare' or 'flavour of the month' driven. Many in the sector feel they don't have a 'seat at the table' and that volunteering has no 'voice'. Sector representatives are consistently the 'same faces', often from 'welfare' and social service groups and from the larger bodies with more resourcing. In national engagement there is often no recognition of the critical, unique and across sector relevance of volunteering.
- Volunteers and volunteer organisations as lobbyists and advocates find it difficult to compete with paid lobbyists and advocates. Change of Government and of staffing within departments can be really frustrating as relationships then need to be rebuilt and scarce resources found for this. A solid, beyond term of government process is needed so the Compact does not become a victim of constant and unnecessary change. Across Government and Departmental agreement is required to ensure the success and relevance of the Compact and the ability of the not for profit sector to effectively implement the Compact.
- The requirements needed to meet funding and reporting criteria are often unrealistic, repetitive and extremely resource intensive and could be reviewed and rationalised.
- Salary parity is a critical issue for sector recruitment and retention of skilled staff.
- An attitudinal change is required from both Government and Government Departments. Industry and business groups that often do not contribute as much to the annual economy and social and environmental well-being of the nation as the not for profit sector are promoted, embraced and given 'the ear' of Government and Government Departments, while the enormous annual contribution of the not for profit sector is silently absorbed into the national coffers and taken for granted. This attitudinal and equity issue needs addressing and the sector recognised, consulted, supported and promoted.

**As a group, do you think the actions outlined capture the action that is needed to improve the working relationship between the Government and Sector organisations?**

- Must ensure equity of access in and representational participation to decision making processes and to Government.
- Government needs to recognise that the third sector, while under-funded and under-resourced, has and does deliver and value add 'above and beyond'. It adapts to, supports and works with Government at every level and significantly contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the nation. The sector cannot give more. In recognition of this contribution and the vital role of not for profits, Government needs to commit to reinvesting a part of this contribution back into the sector to ensure its growth and sustainability.
- The third sector would benefit from certainty and continuity across government, rather than the constant changes and mounting levels of complexity of compliance, funding and reporting imposed on the sector.
- Government uses this sector as a 'tool' to address particular contemporary issues it is focussed on, but does not provide additional or adequate funding and resources to properly address the issues many of which take time to achieve positive change and outcomes.
- Funding that is driven by policy 'on the run' or ill-conceived is wasteful of does not achieve enduring outcomes. Consultation, collaboration and recognition of the experience and knowledge of the third sector is required to overcome this.
- Do the actions and Government adequately reflect and value voluntary contribution?
- Seems to be geared at organisations that receive government funding. What about those that don't? To be effective it should also include the non-government funded organisations.
- What is the relationship and benefit for non-government funded organisations being a part of the Compact?
- Could some actions be combined - eg 5, 6 and 7?
- Government is traditionally not effective about sharing information with the sector. This results in duplication, misinformation, miscommunication and wastage.
- The not for profit needs to be acknowledged, trusted, receive better communication, and not have to rely on the good will of Government or individuals within Government. The sector and Compact should be apolitical and be sustainable beyond the term of Government. Recognition that we are all on the same team and productive partnerships achieve positive outcomes.
- Government processes, practices and policies often force the third sector to compete instead of sharing. Could the actions be defined to overcome this?
- Reword action 8 - to include volunteers and volunteer managers.
- Diversity, access, inclusion and equity need to be looked at so that the 'voice' of the Western Australian volunteering sector, which crosses the whole sector is listened to by Government, included at 'the table' and not hidden under the 'welfare' and social service umbrella.
- Sector capacity building is critical and needs to be mentioned. If Government wants a sector that is able to engage there is a need to appropriately and adequate fund and resource it.
- The words acknowledgement, knowledge, understanding, and willingness to communicate need to be expressed in the actions
- Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship needs to be guaranteed, Sector funding needs protection and advocacy skills need to be strengthened.
- Tax treatment of non-profit organisations needs to be fair, equitable and reflective of lack of salary parity.
- Support for a code of practice or rules of engagement between Government Departments to ensure discussion of policy, programs and priorities with the not for profit sector.
- A national communications strategy, funded by Government to raise the profile and general awareness of the contribution and critical role of the third sector in ensuring the well-being of our community is needed. This strategy should to be reflective and inclusive of the whole sector.

### Prioritising the actions

As a group, can you **rate the priority of action areas** in the table below? (with 1 being your highest priority and 8 your lowest)

Action area	Priority rating 1-8
<p>Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector</p> <p>Phrase is too passive Needs to also include words such as “acknowledgement”, “recognition”, understanding, communication Needs to include and recognise/acknowledge voluntary contribution – ie both paid and voluntary Word “documentation” should be included as there is a need to show evidence of the value contributed by the sector</p>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting</li> <li>- Increase in consistency/simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions</li> <li>- Improvements to funding and procurement processes</li> </ul>	Equal 2 (Believe these three should be combined into one)
<p>Responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, recruitment, retention and remuneration</p> <p>Parity through commitment to reinvestment of part of the economic contribution back into the sector Legislate to ensure government reinvestment of a portion of the economic contribution made by the third sector back into the sector – ie 1% of combined paid and voluntary contribution</p>	Equal 2
Improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data	3
<p>Recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives</p> <p>Including non-government funded organisations Need to ensure non-government funded agencies are consulted and involved in the Compact process</p>	4
Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist	5
<b>Other</b>	
Role of Peaks in information sharing, reporting, funding, advocating. Use and support peak organisations for they have capacity, networks, expertise and systems to develop, manage and roll these out effectively.	
Reinvestment into the sustainability and growth of the third sector by Government of a percentage of the value of the annual economic contribution of the sector.	
A national communications strategy to raise profile and awareness of the not for profit sector.	
Equitable representational and inclusiveness of the whole not for profit sector.	



**The compact will need to be managed by the Government and the Sector in partnership. This would require a governance (management) mechanism for the Sector and one within the Government.**

**As a group can you summarise the sort of governance arrangements you would like to see the Government adopt to work most effectively with the Sector?**

- Compact must articulate clear and measurable commitments from both government and the third sector. Will Government and Government Departments set the example and sign first and then encourage others to follow? How would Government implement the agreement and partnership if only the third sector is encouraged to sign?
- Need clarity on how the operation of the Compact once it is formed - who will monitor it? What outcomes will be achieved? Will there be set targets/KPIs?
- Need further information on how will the governance of the Compact be implemented (P15)
- The real impact of a compact will depend on accountability and governance mechanisms.
- To ensure equity of access, independence, compliance, will Government establish and fund an independent, representational statutory Compact council or commission? All stakeholders need to have confidence in the capacity of the independent statutory body and its Board to be reflective of the various parties, understand and take into account their interests and have the required knowledge and experience of the not for profit sector and Government.
- Government is historically not helpful or effective with sharing information with the third sector and is particularly inefficient with sharing information between departments, between departmental sections, between bureaucrats and between Ministerial offices, departments and bureaucrats, resulting in duplication, wastefulness, misinformation and miscommunication across the sector and across Government.
- Acknowledgement of volunteering as a key contributor across the board is important
- Would peak bodies be representing their members if they sign the Compact?
- If some peaks didn't sign, how will this impact on their members?
- Role of the peaks should not be overlooked by Government as they add value, recognition and status to the Compact.
- Adequate funding and resourcing is important for the implementation and continued relevance of the Compact.
- Must ensure accountability, transparency and openness at all times and that processes remain consultative and representational.
- The Compact be a voluntary agreement – can it be readily ignored? Would this dilute its efficacy? Would not for profit organisations be penalised if they do not sign? How and where do non-government funded not for profit organisations fit into the Compact? Some clarification of this would be appreciated.
- The compact must remain open to review to ensure it is fit for purpose and can readily be revised to accommodate changes as required. These changes need to be developed in the spirit of the Compact through dialogue, cooperation, communication, mutual respect and joint working, and not imposed by Government
- Discussion arose regarding the merits, challenges and disadvantages of voluntary verses statutory compliance.
- The Compact needs cross Government approval and support so that it transcends a change of Government and the constant changes to Government Departmental personnel.

# How to submit your thoughts:



**Australian Government**

**Department of Families, Housing,  
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

## **Internet privacy consent form – Please send in with your submission**

### **Consent to publish contact details and submission to the consultation on a national compact**

I, **Mara Basanovic** of **Volunteering WA**  
**City West Lotteries House**  
**2 Delhi Street**  
**WEST PERTH WA 6005**

On behalf of all participants in this consultation hereby give my and all permission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to publish my personal information, such as contact details, in printed publications and/or multi-media applications, including the Internet.

I also give my permission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to publish my submission for the consultation on a national compact. Usual copyright laws will apply.

I am aware that the above personal information may be printed in publications and/or used for the purposes of multi-media applications, including the Internet and may be viewed by members of the public.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent to publish the personal information at any time and as a result the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) will arrange for this information to be removed from all future printed publications and withdrawn from the electronic media, including the Internet.

Dated **this twenty second** Day of **September** **2009**

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mara Basanovic'.

# Internet privacy consent form

(A)

**Please send in with your submission**

**Consent to publish contact details and submission to the consultation on a National Compact**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

hereby give my permission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to publish my personal information, such as contact details, in printed publications and/or multi-media applications, including the Internet.

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Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) will arrange for this information to be removed from all future printed publications and withdrawn from the electronic media, including the Internet.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2009

Signature

## 9 Appendix 4 – Compact Submission to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering SA&NT – Responses from metropolitan organisations

### Consultation Guide — key questions

#### Consultation questions – Vision and Purpose:

- Does the proposed vision sit well with your organisation?

Yes, as an over achieving statement, the concept of working in partnership is to be commended, but we are concerned whether the partnership will work.

- Is the purpose clear? Does it represent your sense of what this compact can achieve?

On paper the purpose is clear, but how does this translate into reality.

#### Overarching consultation questions – the Compact principles:

As you consider all of the principles discussed below, think about which ones are critical for a stronger relationship between the Government and the Third Sector.

- Are these the principles that will underpin a productive working relationship between government and the Sector?
- Are any really important ideas missing?

#### Consultation questions: principle of respect

- Are the concepts of respect and recognition important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes.

- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to respect?

Yes.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Respect has to be based on understanding, outlined in the statement "The..... on understanding".

Affirmation that volunteers social contribution is qualitative outcomes, not always measurable.

#### Consultation questions: principle of inclusiveness

- Are the concepts of inclusiveness in consultation and advocacy important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes.

- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to inclusiveness?

Yes.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Not every model of consultation fits every community. Consultation on specific smaller concepts, not too broad, so the answers are more meaningful and feed back to consultation participants.

### **Consultation questions: principle of diversity**

- Are the concepts of valuing and responding to diversity important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes

- Do the compact principles need to include references to diversity?

Yes – Definitely.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

- Actively engage with communities of interest in second existing dot point. (define)
- Economic status
- Missed organisational diversity in dot points

### **Consultation questions: principle of effectiveness**

- Are the concepts of effectiveness important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes

- Do the compact principles need to include references to effective and improving policy, planning and program delivery?

Immediate outcomes don't always reflect long term outcomes. Many outcomes in the NFP sector are not measurable in quantifiable terms. Outcome driven principles won't capture enhancements to client and volunteers, health and well being.

4<sup>th</sup> Dot point – Who's decision making? What is reliable evidence? What about anecdotal evidence for emerging needs?

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

We are concerned that the outcomes are the main focus rather than planning and delivery processes, which are fundamental to community development and successful outcomes.

### **Consultation questions: principle of efficiency**

- Are the concepts of efficiency important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Implement at all levels of government

- Do the compact principles need to include references to efficiency and accountability, planning and program delivery?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Office for the Third Sector, to streamline government processes and efficiencies.

Increased understanding of Not for Profit and Government by job swaps and mentoring.

### **Consultation questions: principle of sustainability**

- Are the concepts of sustainability important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Focus on infrastructure, not simply the paid and un-paid workforce how it is facilitated.

- Do the compact principles need to include references to sustainability?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Key principle: it occurs without partnerships so there is potential for partnership approaches, not need, meaning it has to be.

### **Consultation questions: actions and undertakings**

- A compact is a two-way agreement. What could your organisation or your sector do differently? What do you want the Government to change?

Valuing Volunteer Management as a profession. More money equals services and remunerate and resources accordingly in the NFP sector.

- Do the actions in the consultation paper capture the action that is needed to improve the working relationship between the Government and Sector organisations?

They do is you adopt our suggested changes.

### **Consultation questions: prioritising the actions**

- In your view does the list below of high priority short term actions reflect your top priorities for action in the next two years?

No, valuing of the NFP sector, raising the bar of the profession.

Recognise opportunity of learning pathways for career development.

- Are there high priority actions that are missing from this list?

Government can't control the NFP sector nor voluntary contribution. They can't always harness this.

NFP sector will contribute to do what it does best. Government value add to these achievement occurring.

Can you rate the priority of action areas in the table below? (with 1 being your highest priority and 8 your lowest)

### Action area Priority rating 1-8

Other (please list)

Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the sector	1
Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist	1
Recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives	1
Improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data	1
Reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting	1
Increase in consistency/simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions	1
Improvements to funding and procurement processes	1
Responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, recruitment, recognition and remuneration.	1
Learning pathway and career development	
Community both paid and unpaid	
Volunteering	
Promotion of the value and contribution to the individual and community by volunteer	
Building individuals and building	

### Consultation questions: implementation of the compact

- Are the proposed implementation arrangements workable?
  - No. It is a huge question that needs to be a separate consultation.
  - What happens if you don't sign up?

- This should be another step
- How will all voices be heard?
- Will no participating organisations be stigmatised?
- Another red tape structure – increase in workload.
- How do you see the Sector’s governance arrangements working?

Very limited information about the mechanisms.

Are the **champion** volunteers equality heard?

• What governance arrangements would you like to see the Government adopt to work most effectively with the Sector?

- Understand the diversity of the sector
- One size of compact doesn’t fit all
- Whose voice will be heard?
- How will the government review that the compact is successful?
- What mechanisms to ‘hear’ all voices
- The “what” need to be agreed first and the “how”, “who” and “where” to be done and agreed once the “what” is agreed.
- Capacity of small (often volunteer run) to participate
- Pilot compact with one of the NFP silos.



# Internet privacy consent form

(B)

**Please send in with your submission**

**Consent to publish contact details and submission to the consultation on a National Compact**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

hereby give my permission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to publish my personal information, such as contact details, in printed publications and/or multi-media applications, including the Internet.

I also give my permission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to publish my submission for the consultation on a National Compact. Usual copyright laws will apply.

I am aware that the above personal information may be printed in publications and/or used for the purposes of multi-media applications, including the Internet and may be viewed by members of the public.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent to publish the personal information at any time and as a result the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) will arrange for this information to be removed from all future printed publications and withdrawn from the electronic media, including the Internet.

Dated this                      day of                      2009

Signature

## 10 Appendix 5 – Compact Submission to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering SA&NT. Responses from regional organisations

### Consultation Guide — key questions

Consultation questions – Vision and Purpose:

- Does the proposed vision sit well with your organisation?

No we are not in partnership with the government. We provide roles and services that government cannot provide, nor should provide.

- Is the purpose clear? Does it represent your sense of what this compact can achieve?

The big voices are always going to be heard, how will the smaller organisations be heard?

Overarching consultation questions – the Compact principles:

As you consider all of the principles discussed below, think about which ones are critical for a stronger relationship between the Government and the Third Sector.

- Are these the principles that will underpin a productive working relationship between government and the Sector?
- Are any really important ideas missing?

Consultation questions: principle of respect

- Are the concepts of respect and recognition important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes.

- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to respect?

Yes. – Very important.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Respect has to be based on understanding, outlined in the statement "The..... on understanding".

Affirmation that volunteers social contribution is qualitative outcomes, not always measurable.

#### Consultation questions: principle of inclusiveness

- Are the concepts of inclusiveness in consultation and advocacy important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes.

- Do the compact principles need to include a reference to inclusiveness?

Yes.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Not every model of consultation fits every community. Consultation on specific smaller concepts, not too broad, so the answers are more meaningful and feed back to consultation participants.

### **Consultation questions: principle of diversity**

- Are the concepts of valuing and responding to diversity important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Yes

- Do the compact principles need to include references to diversity?

Yes

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?
  - Actively engage with communities of interest in second existing dot point. (define)
  - Economic status
  - Missed organisational diversity in dot points

### **Consultation questions: principle of effectiveness**

- Are the concepts of effectiveness important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include references to effective and improving policy, planning and program delivery?

Yes, Community capacity building outcomes must be the priority.

Limited capacity and skills base to articulate and report on outcomes.

- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Government not asking for too much.

### **Consultation questions: principle of efficiency**

- Are the concepts of efficiency important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?
- Do the compact principles need to include references to efficiency and accountability, planning and program delivery?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Smaller groups do not have the capacity

Not to the detriment of the smaller organisation and voices

Unique is really important

Office for the Third Sector, to streamline government processes and efficiencies.

Increased understanding of Not for Profit and Government by job swaps and mentoring.

### **Consultation questions: principle of sustainability**

- Are the concepts of sustainability important for your organisation's work and your relationship with the Government?

Focus on infrastructure, not simply the paid and un-paid workforce how it is facilitated.

- Do the compact principles need to include references to sustainability?
- What are the key ideas that need to be included when considering this principle?

Funding is not equitable for many smaller organisations and don't in rural and remote communities. A lot of time is spent on grant writing often with no success. Gaps identified across.

Once off funding or short term – short term results – limited outcomes.

### **Consultation questions: actions and undertakings**

- A compact is a two-way agreement. What could your organisation or your sector do differently? What do you want the Government to change?

Sectors/regions and money allocated accordingly – different models.

- Do the actions in the consultation paper capture the action that is needed to improve

the working relationship between the Government and Sector organisations?

### **Consultation questions: prioritising the actions**

- In your view does the list below of high priority short term actions reflect your top priorities for action in the next two years?
- Are there high priority actions that are missing from this list?

Can you rate the priority of action areas in the table below? (with 1 being your highest priority and 8 your lowest)

## Action area Priority rating 1-8

Other (please list)

Documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the sector	
Protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist	
Recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives	
Improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data	
Reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting	
Increase in consistency/simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions	
Improvements to funding and procurement processes	
Responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, recruitment, recognition and remuneration.	

### ***Consultation questions: implementation of the compact***

- Are the proposed implementation arrangements workable?
- How do you see the Sector's governance arrangements working?
- What governance arrangements would you like to see the Government adopt to work most effectively with the Sector?

## 11 Appendix 6 – Compact Submission to Volunteering Australia from Volunteering Queensland

# National Compact Consultation Paper

*learn, work, engage, have a voice*



Prepared by: Mark Creyton, Manager Education, Research, Policy, Volunteering Queensland  
Date: September 2009

**Volunteering has never been so easy**

## National Compact Consultation Paper



In addition to the key recommendations suggested by Volunteering Australia, Volunteering Queensland believes that there are some key issues to keep in mind in regards to volunteering and a proposed National Compact.

1. It is critical to recognise that most groups and organisations that make up the Third Sector employ no paid staff. Community involvement and volunteering are central drivers for civil society, and platform and lead many of the initiatives of Third Sector. This applies to initiatives in the delivery of service, in advocacy and in groups providing opportunities for belonging and inclusion. The impacts of volunteers and volunteering should be valued and evaluated with this in mind. The following facts provided by the Centre for Social Impact dramatically demonstrate this point.

- There are as many as 700,000 nonprofit organisations in Australia, most of which are small and entirely dependent on the voluntary commitment of members
- Approximately 380,000 nonprofit organisations are incorporated in some form or another (meaning that they have a legal identity independent from their members)
- About 38,000 nonprofit organisations employ staff; a further 3000 are also deemed by the ABS to be economically significant

Briefing Paper No. 3 The Nonprofit Sector in Australia: A Fact Sheet (4th edition, 2009)  
<http://www.nds.org.au/national/Facts/FactSheet-NonprofitSector.pdf>

2. Volunteering is currently undergoing a rapid transformation. There are a number of significant changes in the way people perceive volunteering and the way they volunteer. This includes the utilisation of new technologies, a variety of new models and initiatives, as well as the recognition of informal volunteering. In addition to this the growing interest in social innovation and a new generational approach offer unprecedented opportunities in the field of engagement. This potential increase in capacity offers tremendous scope for resourcing and further enhancing the Third Sector. Research is required to further identify and qualify these opportunities.

3. The link between social inclusion and volunteering is critical. Volunteers play an essential role in working with agencies and projects addressing social exclusion, and encouraging more innovative and impactful volunteer opportunities. At the same time the power, benefits and track record of volunteering itself as a strategy for social inclusion needs to be recognised. Volunteering is extremely effective as a vehicle for people to experience meaningful inclusion. Volunteering can

- I. Provide a level of social cohesion and access to networks
- II. Create a sense of agency and making a difference
- III. Provide opportunity to share meaning and values
- IV. Enhance confidence and self-esteem
- V. Provide opportunities for learning and development
- VI. Act as a pathway into paid work

4. Further development of a code of practice for volunteering would form the basis of a standards-oriented approach to volunteering in general. This is the sign of a mature industry and would be a valuable resource in further collaborative relationships with both government and the corporate sector. However, it is critical to bear in mind that all systems bear a cost which need to be carefully examined. Building on the National Standards would be the first step towards a complete code of practice which could go hand in hand with other major initiatives within the sector such as addressing infrastructure models which support existing and new models of volunteering.