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## ANNUAL REVIEW



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## OUR MISSION

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. Its' role is to represent the diverse views and needs of the volunteer sector while promoting the activity of volunteering as one of social, cultural and economic value.



## WHY WE EXIST

Volunteering Australia exists to ensure that the rights and working conditions of all volunteers are protected, that their involvement is governed by standards designed to ensure that they are not exploited and their work is of social, cultural and economic value to Australia.

In Australia there are over 340,000 registered not-for-profit organisations involving almost 5 million Australian volunteers.

Without this huge voluntary contribution the health, community, education, environment, arts, sport and emergency services sectors would be hard pressed to provide quality services.

The voice that Australia's volunteers bring to matters relating to social and economic equality, human rights and environmental degradation ensures these issues become part of the public's consciousness.

Without the dynamic involvement of young volunteers the not-for-profit sector would have a bleak future. Volunteering is a unique form of citizen participation.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA  
CONTINUES TO GROW AND FLOURISH.  
AS MORE AUSTRALIANS VOLUNTEER  
EACH YEAR, THERE IS A CONCOMITANT  
INCREASING NATIONAL AWARENESS  
OF THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE  
OF VOLUNTEERING, AND A GREATER  
WILLINGNESS TO TAKE VOLUNTEERING  
AND THE MANAGEMENT OF  
VOLUNTEERS SERIOUSLY.

> Volunteering Australia has worked hard over the past 12 months to promote the benefits of volunteering and foster recognition of volunteer effort by the broader community. Volunteering Australia also has ensured that volunteer-involving organisations have access to the advice, tools and resources they need to effectively involve volunteers in their activities.

The activities of Volunteering Australia are commented on elsewhere in this review but it is worth highlighting two initiatives here. Firstly, Volunteering Australia was successful in having a question on volunteering included in the 2006 Census. This will provide much more information about the demographics of volunteering for future policy development. Secondly, Volunteering Australia has continued to pursue advocacy on behalf of Australian volunteer effort through a presentation to Federal parliamentarians and through the active participation in various forums during the past year, including the National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations.

The Board of Volunteering Australia acknowledges the work of Sha Cordingley, who led the development and growth of Volunteering Australia to its recognised position as a respected national peak body. The Board also thanks the group of well-informed and committed paid and volunteer staff for the high level of professionalism they bring to the work of Volunteering Australia. We would also like to express our gratitude to our many partners and supporters, large and small, whose involvement adds significantly to our achievements and to the infrastructure that supports volunteering in Australia.

We again can report that Volunteering Australia remains in a sound financial position, because of the efficient allocation of resources and the partnership opportunities that have been negotiated. We are pleased, therefore, to present our Annual Review for 2005-2006.

**Ian Rentsch**  
**President**

# OUR ROLE

Volunteering plays a vital role in the creation of social capital, building community and citizenship. Volunteering Australia's goal is to ensure this role is recognised, understood and facilitated through the following means:

Encouraging, facilitating and promoting volunteer participation

Advocating for the proper recognition of volunteer effort in Australia and providing sound policy advice on matters relating to volunteering

Encouraging best practice in volunteer involvement, management and referral, and providing quality information, advice and resources to assist in this

Conducting, promoting, supporting or facilitating research on all aspects of volunteering in Australia

Establishing cooperative relationships with key national and international volunteering stakeholder organisations



# ENCOURAGING FACILITATING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

## PROVIDING VOLUNTEERS WITH WAYS TO SOURCE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering Australia maintained and promoted the GoVolunteer website, ensuring information about volunteering opportunities was accurate and up-to-date. The site was promoted during the National Volunteer Awards.

We facilitated volunteer placements through the Melbourne and Darwin Referral Services and through Volunteer West.

'Change Your World – Start Now' was the call to action in the National Volunteer Week Campaign.

Not-for-profit organisations were provided with promotional materials and ideas, and a space for advertising events on the Volunteering Australia website. A National Event Calendar was also added to the GoVolunteer site.

The Voluntary Work Initiative scheme was promoted as an avenue for volunteering in local communities via a mail-out to community organisations and to businesses with a large retail presence, such as McDonalds.

## HELPING ORGANISATIONS PROVIDE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES THAT MEET ORGANISATIONS' AND VOLUNTEERS' NEEDS

Volunteering Australia approached this objective in 2005–2006 by publishing information that would provide support with recruitment, job design and training, and policy guidance.

Volunteering – what's it all about?

– an information kit designed to promote involvement in volunteering and improve community understanding of volunteering was developed for organisations and managers holding volunteering information sessions.

Volunteering Australia responded to inquiries from not-for-profit organisations regarding corporate volunteering projects through publicity tied in with the National Volunteer Awards.

A series of capacity-building workshops for not-for-profits, to help them create suitable volunteering projects for corporate volunteers, was also developed.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Being able to gain formal educational credit for their participation can motivate volunteers and to that end we produced a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Toolkit which can be used both by volunteers and their managers, and developed RPL support materials for the core units of the Certificates in Active Volunteering.

A framework to evaluate the impact of the Certificates in Active Volunteering – on the volunteer, on the volunteer-involving organisation, and on the broader community (typically the clients of the organisation) - was also developed. The evaluation will be conducted in the 2006–2007 financial year.

To strengthen the volunteer management skills within organisations, as well as working for recognition of those who manage volunteers, Volunteering Australia created three qualifications for managers of volunteers:

- Certificate IV in Volunteer Program Coordination
- Diploma of Volunteer Program Management
- Advanced Diploma of Volunteer Program Management

Four new competencies were included: Motivate and manage volunteers; Develop volunteer programs; Contribute to volunteering sector and organisation development; and advocate to achieve policy influence.

# **ADVOCATING FOR THE PROPER RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEER EFFORT IN AUSTRALIA AND PROVIDING SOUND POLICY ADVICE ON MATTERS RELATING TO VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering Australia is committed to ensuring that volunteers are afforded legal status, protected in their work, recognised for their contribution and provided with opportunities for participation.

## ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT

In 2005–2006, Volunteering Australia aimed to increase awareness of volunteering in every key government and shadow government portfolio. This included making a presentation on volunteering issues to a forum of Federal parliamentarians at Parliament House.

Every Federal MP and all government departments were sent promotional information about National Volunteer Week, which was sponsored by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). Departments were also informed about the National Australia Bank (NAB) National Volunteer Awards and Ministers for Local Government were involved in state National Volunteer Award ceremonies.

Volunteering Australia made 12 submissions or representations to government on issues with the potential to adversely affect volunteers and volunteering. These included:

- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission on 'Striking the Balance: women, men, work and family'
- The Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee Inquiry on the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Bill 2005;
- The Victorian Department of Justice concerning the Working with Children Regulations
- The Northern Territory Government on appropriate coverage for volunteers working in NT schools
- Volunteering Australia's participation on the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' Muslim Reference Group to investigate issues affecting volunteering by Muslims
- Providing the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations with information and advice on insurance for volunteers during Voluntary Work Initiative contract negotiations.

## HELPING GOVERNMENT AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY UNDERSTAND HOW VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS OPERATE

In 2005–2006, Volunteering Australia ran or participated in forums and met with a range of national peak bodies, government agencies, local government and the corporate sector to foster their understanding of the not-for-profit operating environment.

This included:

- Participation on the National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations
- Contributing to the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum
- Working with the Collaborators' Group (of national volunteering brokers)
- Providing advice to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations on developing the Voluntary Work Initiative Tender
- Co-hosting a presentation to CEOs of local councils in Victoria on Participation: A Key to Sustaining Community
- Convening a quarterly corporate volunteering forum of practitioners within national companies which run employee volunteering programs
- Running a forum for local businesses on corporate volunteering as part of the National Volunteer Week 'Change Your World – Start Now' campaign
- Using the National Volunteer Awards to promote the work of individual award-winning organisations widely in the media.



## **ENCOURAGING BEST PRACTICE IN VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT, MANAGEMENT AND REFERRAL AND PROVIDING QUALITY INFORMATION, ADVICE AND RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN THIS**

Volunteering Australia works to ensure that volunteer infrastructure organisations have access to skills development, resources and opportunities for improvement in order to better support the development of volunteering.

## **ADVOCATING FOR VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS TO BE ADEQUATELY RESOURCED**

Volunteering Australia worked with State Volunteering Centres and consultants Morgan & Disney to consider new funding for volunteering infrastructure organisations. We also negotiated an extension to the Voluntary Work Initiative Contract.

Volunteering Australia continued to advocate to the Australian government for the need for an effective funded program that supports infrastructure organisations to assist capacity building in the not-for-profit sector.

## **ENSURING VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

In 2005–2006, Volunteering Australia convened a working group of CEOs of State Volunteering Centres as the first stage of reviewing the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations.

A Policy Consultation Framework was published, outlining how Volunteering Australia will consult its stakeholders.

## **PARTICIPATING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER CENTRES**

Volunteering Australia convened a reference group and engaged a consultant to develop draft Standards for Volunteer Centres.

As a result, specific performance standards were developed for Volunteer Resource Centres subcontracted to

deliver the Voluntary Work Initiative, and the Group worked with Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to ensure that subcontractors' Key Performance Indicators were appropriate.

## INFORMING VOLUNTEERS OF THEIR RIGHTS

In 2005–2006, Volunteering Australia staff responded to over 300 telephone and email enquiries from volunteers or organisations about rights and responsibilities and workplace issues.

During all award and grant promotions, we promoted best practice in volunteer management and directed volunteers to our website for information about rights. We also completed a jurisdictional mapping of occupational health and safety legislation and other protections for volunteers, and this will help us to field enquiries we receive from all parts of the country.

We ensured that Volunteer Resource Centres maintained up-to-date

insurance for approved organisations, and we produced an Insurance & Risk Management for Corporate Volunteers booklet for not-for-profits and companies.

The new online discussion forum inside our new website allowed volunteers to share information and experiences, with featured experts leading focused discussions on a particular topic each month.

Postings in the first months of operation were very positive, with visitor numbers exceeding or matching the experience of comparable e-forum launches in other countries, and in the not-for-profit field.

## ASSISTING ORGANISATIONS IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

In 2005–2006, Volunteering Australia provided volunteer-involving organisations with practical information about achieving ‘best practice’ in volunteer management through our telephone and email enquiry system,

via publications such as our newsletter, inVOLve, through the Best Practice and Skills and Training sections of our website and through the National Volunteer Awards.



# CONDUCTING, PROMOTING, SUPPORTING OR FACILITATING RESEARCH ON ALL ASPECTS OF VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA

## EXPANDING THE COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE BASE ON VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering Australia successfully lobbied for a question on volunteering to be included in the 2006 Census, so that over time more can be understood about the demographics of volunteering as a basis for policy development.

Our commitment to evidence-based policy development also led to research and information gathering on key issues affecting volunteers.

- We conducted and released the inaugural Annual Survey on Volunteering Issues
- We surveyed the impacts of petrol price increases on volunteering and released the results in a Research Bulletin
- We published a Research Bulletin on the Work/Life Balance
- The Corporate Volunteering Survey investigated the extent and nature of corporate volunteering in Australia.

# ESTABLISHING COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS

## DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON NATIONAL AND WORLDWIDE TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN VOLUNTEERING

The Volunteering Australia website was relaunched with a more attractive and useful interface, and with more guidance on what information it holds. A Fast Facts section on the website makes basic statistics about volunteering quickly available.

inVOLve, a fortnightly e-newsletter, was launched in May, bringing discussions of trends and policy issues, local and national news, and event and conference information to a subscriber base of more than 4000. A national I Can Do That newsletter was produced for Jobnetwork members, Centrelink and Community Work Co-ordinators as part of the Voluntary Work Initiative.

Public access to specialised information collections was increased through the networking of seven libraries across Australia (AVALON) and by making its' joint catalogue available online.

The concept of 'best practice in volunteer management' was promoted to a wider range of volunteers and volunteering groups than ever before through the National Volunteer Awards, offered in

partnership with the National Australia Bank, while media coverage of the awards raised public awareness of volunteering.

Volunteering Australia hosted the 11th National Conference on Volunteering in March, and the inaugural National Volunteering Research Symposium, and later participated with Volunteering England, IAVE and George Washington University in developing the Research Forum within the World Volunteering Conference in India in November 2006. We were also represented at the IAVE Regional Conference in Hong Kong.

We also held our first Corporate Volunteering Conference in parallel to the National Conference, and hosted international corporate volunteering expert, Dr Kenn Allen, to conduct a series of seminars and workshops to companies and not-for-profits in three states.

We awarded the inaugural annual prize for the best article by an Australian university student on volunteering, to be published in the Australian Journal on Volunteering.

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

**VOLUNTEERING AUSTRALIA IS COMMITTED TO BEING A ROBUST, WELL MANAGED AND GOVERNED, ACCOUNTABLE ORGANISATION THAT MAINTAINS BEST PRACTICE IN EVERY AREA OF ITS OPERATIONS.**

## **Implementing a Total Quality Management System**

Organisational work plans were developed in accordance with the Key Result Areas and Strategic Objectives under the current Strategic Plan 2006–2008.

## **Developing a diverse long-term funding stream for Volunteering Australia**

Funding was secured from:

- Cricket Australia to consult on developing a national volunteering strategy
- FaCSIA to develop various information resources under the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Implementation Project

- a partnership with Australia Cares to broker volunteer opportunities for not-for-profit organisations
- EXXON/Mobil to enable printing of the Insurance and Corporate Volunteering Programs publication
- ESANDA and Melbourne Cares to enable printing of the Corporate Volunteering Survey
- FaCSIA, Emergency Management Australia, the Victorian Government, Tourism Victoria, AON, Alcoa, University, and the City of Melbourne for sponsorship of the 11th National Conference on Volunteering.

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### Subject Guide: Involving Volunteers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

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### Subject Guide: Involving Volunteers with a Disability

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