

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 15 May 2014

All Australians urged to imagine the possibilities...& volunteer

Volunteering Australia today urged all Australians to imagine the nation without the power of more than six million volunteers working each day to make it possible for hundreds of thousands of not-for-profits to deliver vital services and support to communities.

“Of the 600,000 plus not-for-profits in our country, only 60,000 – or 10% have any paid staff,” said Brett Williamson, CEO of Volunteering Australia. “Imagine our lives without the power of volunteers. It’s when we consider what we would not have, that we understand the true value of volunteering in Australia.”

Mr Williamson, who announced a review of the official definition of volunteering to launch the 25th National Volunteer Week on Monday (12 May), said it was critical to understand the changing face of volunteering when measuring the true value of volunteering in human, social and economic terms.

“Half of all people who volunteer are employed – and many of them are able to volunteer because employers increasingly understand the positive effects of volunteering on their own paid workforce, they have a responsibility to the community they operate in,” Mr Williamson explained.

Mr Williamson said Volunteering Australia was proud to partner with Beyond Bank Australia for the National Volunteer Week campaign. “We have a long association with Beyond Bank, sharing a deep desire to create a better society for all Australians. Beyond Bank’s Volunteering program works closely with us and our state and territory bodies to help match volunteers to organisations within the community that have volunteering opportunities.”

Beyond Bank General Manager of Community Development, Peter Rutter, said: “We recognise the power of volunteers and the difference they can make to not-for-profit organisations that do not have the resources of commercial businesses. Our staff also play an active role with volunteering in the community and our Volunteering program helps introduce them to organisations that need an extra pair of hands.

“We want to encourage more people to volunteer in the community by supporting major events and activities that both promote the interests of volunteers; and the organisations who rely on those millions of unpaid hours of work.”

As the 2014 National Volunteer Week celebrations draw to a close this weekend, Mr Rutter and Mr Williamson urged all Australians to imagine the possibilities volunteering offers to make positive change in communities and workplaces everywhere.

**More about National Volunteer Week at
volunteeringaustralia.org/nvw2014 and #NVW2014 on Twitter and Facebook**

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