

Submission on the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint Issues Paper

December 2023

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Overview

Australia's not-for-profit sector plays a central role in enabling a fair, inclusive, vibrant, and prosperous society. The Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint Issues Paper, in line with the Blueprint terms of reference, focuses on the 60,000 charities that are regulated through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). However, formal organisations that are not registered as charities and the broader not-for-profit sector are also referenced throughout. The scope of the Blueprint must be articulated more clearly. Volunteering is vital to the work of Australian charities and the crucial infrastructure that supports them. The Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint, as a strategic roadmap to ensure a strong future for Australian charities, must advance the vision for volunteering identified in the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 and identify government reforms and sector-led initiatives that progress its Strategic Objectives.

The following recommendations should be adopted to support successful outcomes associated with the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint:

1. Align the goals of the Blueprint that relate to volunteering with the Strategic Objectives outlined in the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033.
2. Adopt the vision for volunteering outlined in the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033.
3. Ensure each focus area of the Blueprint supports the relevant Strategic Objectives of the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033.
 - The Blueprint should draw attention to the role of all levels of governments in implementing the National Strategy for Volunteering, with a particular emphasis on:
 - i. Ensuring volunteering is not exploitative
 - ii. Recognising the inherent value of volunteering
 - iii. Enabling a community-led approach
 - iv. Making volunteering a cross-portfolio issue in Government
 - v. Building strong leadership and shared accountability
 - vi. Committing to strategic investment
 - vii. Recognising the value of volunteer management
4. Delineate volunteering and philanthropy and make clear when recommendations apply to volunteering and consider the impact of any other recommendations on the volunteering ecosystem, in alignment with the 'Future foundations for giving' Draft report from the Productivity Commission.
5. Ensure support for the not-for-profit sector is sufficient to fund the full cost of service delivery, including the cost of engaging and managing volunteers.
 - While a long-term strategic framework will be greatly beneficial to the development of the sector, this should include immediate funding for not-for-profit organisations to address the effects of ongoing increases in the cost of living.

Introduction

Charities play a vital role in Australian society, delivering essential services in communities and fostering strong community connections across the country. The valuable work of these organisations is supported by the contributions of millions of volunteers, and half of Australia's

charities are staffed entirely by volunteers.¹ However, available data shows that formal volunteering in Australia has been in decline over the past decade, while demand for volunteers in the community sector has increased.²

The Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint includes volunteers in its scope and includes ‘philanthropy and volunteering’ as one of its focus areas. This submission primarily provides input on this section of the Issues Paper, focusing on question 5.1.5: How should the NFP Blueprint support the goals and required reforms for the National Strategy for Volunteering?

About the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint

Ahead of the 2022 Federal Election, then Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury and Shadow Assistant Minister for Charities indicated that a Not-for-Profit (NFP) Sector Expert Reference Panel would be established to guide development of the NFP Blueprint to ensure a strong future for Australian charities. The 2022–23 October budget provided the *Development of the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint (the Blueprint) and doubling philanthropic giving by 2030* measure, designed to meet the Government’s election commitment of supporting a:

- a) Blueprint to provide a roadmap for government reforms and sector-led initiatives to boost the sector’s capacity to support and reconnect Australian communities; and
- b) Review of Philanthropy to understand trends in philanthropic giving in Australia, the underlying drivers of these trends, and to identify opportunities and obstacles to increasing such giving. The Productivity Commission has been tasked with delivering an inquiry into philanthropy by May 2024, and the draft report was published in November 2023.

The Blueprint Expert Reference Group (BERG) was established in December 2022. Guided by its terms of reference, the BERG ‘will deliver advice to the government including the development of a fully consulted Blueprint charting out a better future for the Australian NFP and charities sector. The Blueprint will be used to develop a suite of sector-led workable and effective options for reform to strengthen social capital and a vibrant sector’.

In line with the Blueprint terms of reference, this paper focuses on the 60,000 charities that are regulated through the ACNC.

The Blueprint will complement other relevant strategies and frameworks, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033, as well as findings and recommendations from the current Productivity Commission Inquiry into Philanthropy.³

¹ <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/reports/australian-charities-report-9th-edition>, 19

² <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

³ <https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/not-for-profit-sector-development-blueprint-issues-paper.pdf>, 5

About this submission

This submission was drafted by Volunteering Australia in collaboration with the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies. It focuses primarily on the ‘philanthropy and volunteering’ section and emphasises the need to align the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint with the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033. Our recommendations related to the ‘Government funding, contracting and tendering’ section can be found in [our submission to the stronger, more diverse and independent community sector consultation process](#).⁴ These recommendations are also valuable to the development of the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint.

Volunteering in Australia

Australian society relies on volunteers to provide a myriad of activities and programs in the not-for-profit sector. Many key community service areas, such as mental health, disability support, food and emergency relief, aged care, and youth services, depend heavily on volunteer involvement. Further, through the resilience and innovation of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, voluntary action has been a vital pillar in supporting communities through recent challenges, such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent national data reveals that 56.7 per cent of adults in Australia volunteer either formally through an organisation or group or informally in the community.

However, the rate of formal volunteering has decreased considerably over the past two decades. The rate of formal volunteering has been gradually declining from around one-third of adults in 2002 to around one-quarter in 2022.⁵ The most recent national data, collected in April 2023, reveals the post-COVID recovery of formal volunteering remains slow. The proportion of people volunteering has increased between 2022 (26.7 per cent of adults) and 2023 (32.6 per cent) but is still below pre-COVID levels, and the average number of hours people volunteer has declined.⁶ This has occurred at a time when cost of living has increased significantly and demand for services provided by many volunteers and volunteer involving organisations has increased.

The decline in formal volunteering in Australia has had a direct impact on programs and services that rely on volunteers. In 2022, 88 per cent of volunteer involving organisations identified COVID-19 as a key driver of change, and 83 per cent reported that they need more volunteers immediately or in the near future.⁷ This trend has significant implications for government-funded programs in key sectors. For example, the number of volunteers in Commonwealth Residential Aged Care programs fell from 23,537 in 2016 to 11,980 in November 2020 – a decrease of 49 percent.⁸ The reduced

⁴ <https://engage.dss.gov.au/a-stronger-more-diverse-and-independent-community-sector/a-stronger-more-diverse-and-independent-community-sector-issues-paper/>

⁵ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

⁶

https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2023/10/Ongoing_trends_in_volunteering_in_Australia.pdf

⁷ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/AGED-CARE-CENSUS-2020-factsheet-Final.pdf>

capacity of crucial programs and services, many of which are the responsibility of the Government, raises the question of how these programs can be delivered and supported in the future.

If volunteering is to recover and thrive in communities across Australia, targeted investment for the volunteering ecosystem as an integral part of not-for-profit sector funding arrangements is needed as a matter of urgency and must be sustained into the future. Faced with these challenges, recent increases in the cost of living and operating have placed further strain on volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. The future of the not-for-profit sector, as well as the Government's commitment to a stronger, more diverse, and independent community sector, depend fundamentally on a thriving and well-supported volunteering ecosystem.

Philanthropy and volunteering

The Blueprint Issues Paper refers to volunteering under the focus area 'Philanthropy and volunteering'. Volunteering Australia highlights that formal volunteering (which takes place within an organisation or group) is distinct from other forms of philanthropic giving, particularly in the form of the donation of money and assets. This distinction is recognised in the draft 'Future foundations for giving' report from the Productivity Commission, which states: "The giving of time through volunteering is included as a form of philanthropy in this inquiry, but the Commission heard that volunteering is often considered by organisations relying on volunteers, and by volunteers themselves, as distinct from what is commonly regarded as 'philanthropy'. The Commission sought to understand the differing characteristics of volunteering compared with other forms of philanthropy and reflected this in our analytical approach."⁹ Recommendations on volunteering must consider the particular motivations, barriers, and policy challenges facing volunteering in Australia, which are often different from those affecting the giving of money and assets to charities and not-for-profit organisations. Further, volunteering should be considered in the Blueprint wherever it is relevant to, or affected by the policy frameworks which support, the other focus areas of the report, including philanthropic giving.

Volunteering is defined as "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."¹⁰ This includes both formal volunteering, taking place within organisations and groups (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way, and informal volunteering, taking place outside the context of a formal organisation or group.

Volunteering can take many forms, and these should be recognised and supported where appropriate in line with Strategic Objective 2.1 of the National Strategy for Volunteering: Diversify the Understanding of Volunteering.¹¹ For example, First Nations people and volunteers in

⁹ <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/philanthropy/draft/philanthropy-draft.pdf>, 62

¹⁰ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/definition-of-volunteering/#/>

¹¹ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/National-Strategy-for-Volunteering-2023-2033.pdf>, 48

multicultural communities do not necessarily resonate with the term volunteering and more commonly use words such as ‘giving’, ‘helping’, and ‘sharing’ to describe their voluntary activities.¹²

An expanded and more contemporary understanding of volunteering will reflect Australia’s diversity and ensure all forms of volunteering are recognised, supported, and celebrated. A key objective of the National Strategy for Volunteering is recognising and respecting volunteering that is already happening in culturally specific contexts and finding ways to better support diverse expressions of volunteering.¹³ It is critical that the Blueprint also represent the diversity of voluntary participation.

Alignment with the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033

As stated in the Issues Paper, the Blueprint will complement other relevant strategies and frameworks, including the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033. To ensure alignment, the Blueprint should adopt the vision for volunteering outlined in the National Strategy to guide its recommendations on volunteering. The vision of the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 is:

“Volunteering is the heart of Australian communities.”

- Where more people volunteer more often.
- Where volunteers feel respected and know their contribution makes a difference.
- Where volunteering is valued and properly considered in policy settings, service design, and strategic investment.
- Where diversity in volunteering is recognised, celebrated, and supported.
- Where people individually and collectively realise their potential to create thriving communities.

To support progress towards this vision, the Blueprint should draw attention to the role of governments at all levels in implementing the National Strategy for Volunteering. In particular, the Blueprint should include recommendations for government reforms and sector-led initiatives with a focus on, and in alignment with, the following Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 1.3: Ensure Volunteering is Not Exploitative

Like paid work, volunteering activities can be hazardous. However, safeguards for volunteers are often less robust than those offered to paid workers. Volunteers may face pressure to undertake duties they do not want to undertake, are not qualified for, or that should be paid. The focus of this objective is to ensure that volunteering is safe and ethical across Australia and that there are mechanisms in place to identify and address exploitation of volunteers.

¹² <https://www.volunteering.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NSW-Multicultural-Volunteering-Report-2022.pdf>

¹³ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/National-Strategy-for-Volunteering-2023-2033.pdf>, 48

Volunteers can encounter physical and psychosocial hazards in the course of their volunteering.¹⁴ In organisations that engage both paid staff and volunteers, work health and safety laws apply to both paid workers and volunteers.¹⁵ Volunteer involving organisations comprised solely of volunteers are excluded from work health and safety laws in Australia,¹⁶ and an alarming one in four volunteer involving organisations do not offer insurance to their volunteers.¹⁷

The Blueprint should consider how funding arrangements, insurance requirements, and regulatory frameworks can better support the safety, interests, and wellbeing of volunteers.

Strategic Objective 2.3 Recognise the Inherent Value of Volunteering

Volunteering is an activity that creates and adds value, with benefits often extending beyond the immediate task being completed. However, contemporary public policy and associated programs often position volunteering as a means to achieving an alternative outcome, such as employment, rather than investing in volunteering as an end unto itself. The focus of this objective is promoting the inherent value of volunteering to ensure future resourcing is not exclusively tied to services and programs where volunteering is used only as a vehicle to achieve a different aim. The following quote from a volunteer highlights the diverse benefits of volunteering:

“As a person with a disability I value being a volunteer, but I didn't just think of my disability. I just thought I wanted to be a useful person in the community, doing something that was meaningful. And because I've got so much pleasure out of it, and growth in my skills and my ability to work with people and understand people, I just would like to think that so many other people would have the same chance that I've had over the years...”¹⁸

The ‘Measurement, outcomes and quality of services’ focus area of the Blueprint should emphasise the array of beneficial outcomes of volunteering and recommend the development of a framework for organisations to measure these outcomes.

Strategic Objective 2.4 Enable a Community-Led Approach

Policy, funding, and program design commonly takes a top-down approach where a need is identified and communities are asked to respond to that need. The focus of this objective is about devolving power and providing mechanisms for more bottom-up approaches that provide people and communities with control over the ways volunteering takes place with and through them.

¹⁴ https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VRP_Psychosocial-hazard-management-in-regional-volunteer-involving-organisations.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/A%20Guide%20to%20Work%20Health%20and%20Safety%20for%20Volunteer%20Organisations.pdf>

¹⁶ https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VRP_Psychosocial-hazard-management-in-regional-volunteer-involving-organisations.pdf

¹⁷ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>, 31

¹⁸ Quote from a Tasmanian volunteer in the not-for-profit sector, provided by Volunteering Tasmania

The Blueprint should highlight the value of co-design approaches to the development and delivery of policies and programs. To better facilitate co-design, the government should allow adequate timeframes for genuine consultation and co-design processes to occur and commit to properly resourcing involved organisations to support ongoing engagement on public advisory groups, bodies, and other decision-making structures to properly acknowledge and value lived experience and expertise.

Given the role of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in the charities sector, it is essential that the Blueprint is well informed by the diverse voices of the volunteering ecosystem. This must be informed by a more detailed understanding of informal volunteering and the ways government initiatives can support community-led initiatives without restricting their activities. To achieve this, the Blueprint should recommend further research and data collection on informal volunteering, which contributes to a deeper understanding of community-led initiatives and explores innovative ways in which government initiatives can provide support.

Strategic Objective 3.1 Make Volunteering a Cross-Portfolio Issue in Government

While responsibility for volunteering at the Commonwealth level sits within the Department of Social Services, volunteers are heavily involved across an array of sectors. Volunteers involved in community services, welfare, and homelessness, represent only one fifth of Australia's formal volunteers. Other large sub-sectors, such as sport and recreation, religious, faith-based, and spiritual, and children and youth each engage over one million volunteers, yet the government portfolios for these areas do not have explicit responsibilities for volunteering.

Data also reveals sizeable volunteer workforces in the mental health (4.4 per cent of volunteers), aged care (8.8 per cent), and disability (4.7 per cent) sectors.¹⁹ Based on estimates of the current Australian population,²⁰ each of these sectors engage more than 300,000 volunteers. This means that key government initiatives, such as A Matter of Care: Australia's Aged Care Workforce Strategy, Australia's Disability Strategy, and the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy, need to plan for the involvement of volunteers and consider how underpinning initiatives will affect volunteering.

The value of volunteering to individual and community wellbeing was acknowledged in the 'Measuring What Matters' Framework, which includes formal and informal volunteering as measures of social connection.²¹ As the Government progresses towards greater incorporation of wellbeing metrics into the Federal Budget process, it is imperative that measures to support volunteering are considered across all relevant portfolios.

The Blueprint should recommend that the government explicitly consider the effects on volunteers when designing policies and programs across portfolios. This should align with draft

¹⁹ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>, 42

²⁰ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-census/2021>

²¹ <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters/dashboard/social-connections>

recommendation 7.5 of the 'Future foundations for giving' report from the Productivity Commission, to explicitly consider the effects on volunteers when designing policies and programs.²²

Strategic Objective 3.2 Build Strong Leadership and Shared Accountability

Many members of the volunteering ecosystem do not identify themselves as part of the ecosystem or acknowledge the common challenges that affect volunteers and volunteering across sectors in Australia. The focus of this objective is about strengthening leadership for volunteering and considering how accountability for protecting and advancing volunteering can be shared for the benefit of all. Leaders at every level, from politicians and public servants, to volunteering peak bodies, to board directors and CEOs, and to those leading volunteers and volunteering programs, need to coalesce around a strategic agenda for volunteering and advocate for common priorities.

The Blueprint should highlight the important leadership role of the government, in collaboration with peak bodies, leaders of volunteer involving organisations, and managers of volunteers. Departments and agencies across government should collaborate through interdepartmental initiatives to facilitate more efficient and consistent policymaking to support the volunteering ecosystem.

Strategic Objective 3.3 Commit to Strategic Investment

Volunteering requires fit-for-purpose infrastructure, including policy, research and data, systems, tools, and resources. The focus of this objective is building or enhancing common infrastructure, reducing duplication, and routinely investing in improvements to enable impactful volunteering.

Volunteer involvement is multifaceted and requires considerable resources. Providing and promoting volunteering opportunities requires investment in tools and resources, accessible and relevant research and data, referral services, education and training, marketing and awareness raising, fast and accessible screening processes, fit-for-purpose policy and regulation, platforms for recruiting and managing volunteers, accessible funding mechanisms, insurance and work health and safety protocols, processes for evaluation, and celebration and recognition. Currently, the volunteering ecosystem is hindered by low investment in capacity and capability-building initiatives.

Funding for programs and services that deliver specific outcomes for communities is undeniably important. But where such programs and services include volunteers in their delivery, adequate resourcing is required to support internal and external infrastructure. For volunteering in Australia to thrive, investment priorities need to be broadened to understand and account for the true costs of enabling volunteering and facilitating volunteer involvement. This will require conversations that challenge the status quo and generate new ideas about how volunteering should be funded and identify which actors in the volunteering ecosystem should have responsibility for providing financial and other support. There are multiple opportunities through the National Strategy for Volunteering implementation process to reconsider how to build and enhance volunteering infrastructure and

²² <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/philanthropy/draft/philanthropy-draft.pdf>, 44

embed sustainability to ensure the future of volunteering in Australia is as safe, inclusive, ethical, and effective as it can be.

Strategic Objective 3.4 Recognise the Importance of Volunteer Management

Those responsible for leading, managing, and coordinating volunteers, whether paid or unpaid, are the gatekeepers to positive volunteering experiences and impactful volunteering outcomes. Elevating the profession of Volunteer Management, raising awareness of its complexity and the level of skill required, and investing in infrastructure to reduce the burdensome administration associated with volunteer involvement are critical to any serious effort to futureproof volunteering. Achievement of this strategic objective is a fundamental pillar of the National Strategy for Volunteering and will have a profound return on investment.

The Blueprint should recommend increased support for volunteer management through ongoing funding, grants programs, and other mechanisms. This should include investment in bespoke professional development pathways for Volunteer Managers, recognition of and investment to support the true cost of involving volunteers, and efforts to simplify administrative requirements for volunteer involving organisations.

Funding the full cost of service delivery

While volunteers offer their assistance without expectation of financial gain, volunteering is not free. Resourcing is required to recruit, induct, train, manage, support, and recognise volunteers. These costs can place significant pressure on volunteer involving organisations when they are not adequately funded.

Volunteering is a vital part of the charity sector, with charities reporting that 3.2 million volunteers helped deliver services in the 2021 reporting period.²³ 50 per cent of the charities that operated in 2021 reported having no paid staff – meaning they relied solely on volunteer efforts.²⁴ Research has shown that the sector was already facing significant financial pressure prior to recent cost of living increases. A recent survey found that one third of not-for-profit organisations believe that COVID-19 created a significant threat to their viability, and 78 percent experienced a downturn in revenue due to COVID-19, with 40 percent reporting a revenue decrease of more than 15 percent.²⁵ These challenges, combined with increased demand for services, place significant pressure on many volunteer involving organisations, as evidenced by quotes from two Tasmanian organisations:

²³ <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/reports/australian-charities-report-9th-edition>, 19

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ <https://www.mckinsey.com/au/our-insights/building-from-purpose-unlocking-the-power-of-australias-not-for-profit-sector#/>

“The organisation’s overall income has grown (due to new programs) but viability has reduced significantly as funding does not meet the real cost of service delivery”. CEO, Provider of multiple services, Tasmania.²⁶

“We have budgeted for a loss in FY23 in order to meet the needs of our clients/communities due to increased costs of doing business. We are awaiting clarity of ongoing Australian Government funding.” CEO, Domestic and family violence service, Tasmania.²⁷

To ensure grant agreements reflect the real cost of delivering quality services, costs associated with engaging volunteers must be covered under grant agreements. This means ensuring that management, equipment, administration, and other costs are fully covered, that grant agreements allow organisations to fund volunteer management roles, and that indexation keeps pace with increases in the cost of service delivery. Volunteering Australia supports the recommendations from ACOSS that the government should:²⁸

- incorporate into grants all relevant overheads required to support a community service organisation to provide quality service delivery
- guarantee necessary funding for pay decisions made by the Fair Work Commission affecting the community sector
- develop better indexation arrangements that reflect actual increase in costs incurred by not-for-profit organisations

Improving government-sector communications

The Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint summary vision highlights mechanisms for good government-sector communications as a key priority area for action.²⁹ Implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering relies on a strong and productive relationship between the not-for-profit sector and government. To support this, the Blueprint should recommend that the Government allow adequate timeframes for genuine consultation and co-design processes to occur, and commit to properly resourcing organisations in the not-for-profit sector to support ongoing engagement on public advisory groups, bodies, and other decision-making structures to properly acknowledge and value lived experience and expertise.

Recommendations

Volunteering Australia and the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies make the following recommendations to support successful outcomes associated with the Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint:

²⁶ <https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL-ACOSS-Submission-to-SMDICS-16.11.23.pdf>, 26

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ <https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL-ACOSS-Submission-to-SMDICS-16.11.23.pdf>

²⁹ <https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/not-profit-sector-development-blueprint-issues-paper-summary-vision.pdf>, 2

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 - While a long-term strategic framework will be greatly beneficial to the development of the sector, this should include immediate funding for not-for-profit organisations to address the effects of ongoing increases in the cost of living.

Authorisation

This submission has been authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Volunteering Australia.



Mr Mark Pearce
Chief Executive Officer

Endorsements

This submission has been endorsed by the seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies.



About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. The seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies work to advance and promote volunteering in their respective jurisdictions and are Foundation Members of Volunteering Australia.

Volunteering Australia's vision is to promote a strong, connected, and resilient Australian community through volunteering. Our mission is to lead, strengthen, and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

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