

# Incoming Government Brief

June 2022



## Overview

This briefing document sets out the importance of volunteering to delivering key priorities of the incoming Commonwealth Government.

### Volunteering in Australia in 2022

Volunteers support our communities in so many ways - in aged care and disability care, in community welfare, sports and the arts, and in crisis preparedness, response and recovery. In 2019, nearly six million people volunteered through organisations in Australia, and around six million people volunteered informally in their communities. However, the COVID-19 pandemic hit volunteering hard. The most recent data shows the proportion of Australians who volunteer increased in the past year (from 24.2 per cent in April 2021 to 26.7 per cent in April 2022) but is still well below the pre-COVID rate of 36.0 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

### Supporting the incoming Government's priorities

This briefing highlights the essential role that volunteers play in the following seven priorities of the incoming Government:

1. Strengthening charities and non-profits
2. Improving aged care
3. Enhancing support for people with disability
4. Improving disaster readiness
5. Protecting the environment
6. Advancing First Nations
7. Supporting regional communities

To support these priorities, urgent action is needed to reinvigorate volunteering. An immediate Volunteering COVID-19 Recovery Plan would enable volunteers to re-engage safely, support the adaptation of volunteering programs, and facilitate the recruitment of new volunteers to ensure services and programs can recover.

### The future of volunteering

Volunteering Australia is currently leading the development of the first National Strategy for Volunteering<sup>2</sup> (National Strategy) in ten years. Through collaborative consultation, the National Strategy will be designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem and provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. It will provide strategic direction for the volunteering ecosystem and enable volunteering across Australia to be effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

The Commonwealth Government has a major role to play in the design and delivery of the National Strategy and we look forward to working with the incoming Government to reimagine the future of volunteering.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/research-early-insights-from-the-volunteer-perspective/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/>

## Volunteering in Australia in 2022

Australian society relies on volunteers to provide a myriad of activities and programs, in our schools and hospitals, residential and home care settings, playing fields, and community centres. Volunteers are often on the frontline when crises hit – fighting bushfires, delivering food packages, and providing support to those at risk in our communities. Voluntary action is, and will continue to be, vital to responding to climate change<sup>3</sup>. Through the resilience and innovation of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, voluntary action has been a vital pillar in supporting communities through recent challenges.

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as ‘time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain’. This definition was introduced in 2015 following an extensive review. Since then, it has been widely adopted across Australia and is consistent with international definitions. Importantly, this definition captures both ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ volunteering, i.e., it recognises that whilst many volunteers offer their time formally through organisations, others self-organise and volunteer informally in the community.

Prior to COVID-19, formal volunteering participation had been declining for well over a decade. Official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows that the rate of formal volunteering among people aged 15 years and over<sup>4</sup> declined from 36% in 2010 to 29% in 2019, with the decline most evident for women. Volunteers contributed nearly 600 million hours to the community in 2019; a 20% decrease since 2014.<sup>5</sup> Volunteering was hit hard by COVID-19, with two out of three volunteers (65.9%) stopping their volunteering in 2020 during the early stages of COVID-19<sup>4</sup>.

As part of the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering, Volunteering Australia is leading the *Volunteering in Australia* research project. The first paper from this research has been published.<sup>5</sup> It brings our understanding of the current state of volunteering up to date (to April 2022) and starts to identify the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on volunteering.

Key findings include:

- The proportion of Australians aged 18 years and over who volunteer for an organisation or group increased in the past year (to 26.7 per cent) but is still well below the pre-COVID rate (36.0 per cent in 2019).
- The majority of people who stopped volunteering during COVID-19 have not yet returned.
- People who stopped volunteering during COVID-19 reported lower life satisfaction than those who continued volunteering.
- Volunteers averaged 180 hours of volunteering in 2022, though many volunteered a much larger number of hours. For example, 10 per cent reported 450 hours or more over the previous 12 months.
- More than nine-in-ten volunteers were satisfied with their volunteering experience.

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, <https://forum-ids.org/i/ivco-2020/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/covid-19-research/research-briefing-the-experience-of-volunteers-during-covid-19/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/research-early-insights-from-the-volunteer-perspective/>

- A little under half of Australian adults (46.5 per cent) said they undertook some form of informal volunteering over the previous four weeks.

Data from the ABS Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey also shows significant changes in the nature of volunteer participation. For example, the number of people who volunteered online increased from 8.5% in 2019 to 17.3% in 2020, and three in four volunteers who indicated that online volunteering was available in their organisation or group chose to volunteer online.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst volunteer involving organisations have innovated to continue to meet community need throughout the pandemic, they now face ongoing challenges:

- Many organisations still do not have the capacity to recruit, induct, train, and manage new volunteers during an often complex return-to-work environment.
- Organisations are facing higher operating costs to meet COVID-19 safe workplace requirements, and to ensure compliance with vaccine advice and mandates.
- Organisations have struggled to cover these costs and to adapt.

## Volunteers supporting Government priorities

### 1. Strengthening charities and non-profits

The incoming Government has committed<sup>7</sup> to strengthening and building capacity in the charities and non-profit sector. This includes:

- Convening a Non-profit Sector Expert Reference Panel to draw up a blueprint that will set out how Australia's charities can reach their potential.
- Creating an ongoing working group to guide the implementation of that plan, and to cultivate the sector's role as experienced community builders and responders to isolation and social disconnection.
- Encouraging an efficient, informed and independent sector by modernising fundraising regimes, and protecting advocacy.
- Working with charities and donors to double philanthropic giving by 2030.

The incoming Government has indicated that the Non-profit Sector Expert Reference Panel will work with Treasury, business, volunteering, philanthropy and others to produce a Sector Development Plan which aims to chart a better future for the sector. The ongoing working group will guide the implementation of the Sector Development Plan. It will also focus on the impacts of loneliness and social disconnection and identify effective ways to amplify the community sector's role in addressing isolation and building community.

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<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (March 2021) 'Table 5.1: Persons aged 18 years and over, Participation in unpaid voluntary work and unpaid help, by selected characteristics: Proportion' [data set], *Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey, March 2021*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/household-impacts-covid-19-survey/mar-2021>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/building-capacity-building-community>

**Volunteering and volunteers are central to a reinvigorated charities sector.** The charities sector<sup>8</sup> employs 1.38 million people and engages over 3.6 million volunteers. More than half of all charities (51%) are entirely volunteer-run and operate without any paid staff.

**Volunteering reduces social isolation.** Volunteers are engaged by many organisations seeking to reduce social isolation and loneliness in the community. According to a submission by Meals on Wheels in 2020, 76,000 volunteers prepare and deliver 10 million meals a year to more than 120,000 older people across regional, rural, and metropolitan Australia. Meal service visits not only cater to the nutritional needs of older people, but also combat loneliness by enabling social connection and creating social meal experience with peers at a community-based location.<sup>9</sup>

Research indicates that volunteering generates social capital for both the giver and the recipient. High levels of social capital, in turn, contribute to enhancing quality of life, and providing informal support in times of stress.<sup>10</sup> These functions are crucial to the success of many national programs delivered by charities and non-profits, including neighbourhood houses, community centres, learning centres, men's sheds, and other social support initiatives.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to strengthen charities and non-profits and to bringing our expertise in volunteering to achieving this goal.**

## **2. Improving aged care**

The incoming Government has committed to reforming aged care<sup>11</sup>, including implementing the following measures: ensuring every aged care facility has a registered, qualified nurse on site 24/7; funding the outcome of the case before the Fair Work Commission (with regard to a pay rise for aged care workers); and ensuring there is better food for residents in aged care. The Government has also said it will mandate that every aged care resident receives an average of 215 minutes of care per day, as recommended by the Royal Commission. This includes essential medical treatment but also personal care such as helping people take a shower, get dressed or eat a meal.

**Volunteers are a vital part of the aged care workforce.** The 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey estimated that volunteers are engaged extensively across aged care, with 83 per cent of residential facilities and 51 per cent of home care and home support outlets engaging the services of volunteers. However, the recent 2021 Aged Care Census revealed that volunteers were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the paid workforce<sup>12</sup> and there is now a significant challenge to reinvigorate volunteering across aged care. The volunteering peak bodies in each State and Territory are currently working with Commonwealth Department of Health to re-engage volunteers in residential aged care facilities<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-Key-Volunteering-Statistics-2022-Update.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/submission/AWF.660.00126.0001.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Onyx, Jenny & Warburton, J. (2003). Volunteering and Health Among Older People: A Review. Australasian Journal on Ageing. 22. 10.1111/j.1741-6612.2003.tb00468.x.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/aged-care>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/AGED-CARE-CENSUS-2020-factsheet-Final.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/re-engaging-volunteers-into-aged-care-facilities/#/>

The Aged Care Royal Commission recommended that aged care providers should increase their support for volunteering and volunteers. For providers who operate a volunteer program, the Commission argued a staff member must be assigned to the role of volunteer coordination and that they should provide induction and ongoing training to volunteers and supervise their activities. Recommendation 44 stipulates how the Australian Government should promote volunteers and volunteering in aged care to support older people to live meaningful and dignified lives.

Volunteers also fulfill an important role within the context of the Aged Care Diversity Framework, formulated by the Department of Health in 2017 to guide consumers, aged care providers and the government to build inclusive practices in the aged care sector.<sup>14</sup> Around one-third (37%) of older Australians are born overseas, with 18% speaking a language other than English and 6% speaking little or no English.<sup>15</sup> Volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities play an important role in the aged care sector. They work with older people from similar backgrounds to provide language support, interpretation, and faith-based services.<sup>16</sup>

The findings of the Royal Commission emphasise the importance of a proactive needs-based approach to preserving the dignity, respect, and choice of the older population. Volunteers fulfill a critical function in catering to the emotional and mental wellbeing of the community.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to fulfil the Royal Commission's recommendations.**

### 3. Enhancing support for people with disability

The Government has committed to providing better support for people with disability<sup>17</sup>. This includes reviewing the design and operation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), building evidence through a National Disability Research Partnership, and ensuring Australia's Disability Strategy is accountable by measuring its implementation. A new Disability Employment Centre for Excellence will provide a clearinghouse for ideas and increase capacity among employment services.

**Volunteers play a vital role in disability services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.** In our submission to the National Disability Strategy, and in recent submissions to the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS and to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability<sup>18</sup>, we have argued that volunteers need to be considered strategically in workforce planning if disability services are to meet the needs and aspirations of people with

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-rights-and-health>; Aged care diversity framework pg. 2 <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/12/aged-care-diversity-framework.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Older Australians – Web Report, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 30 November 2021

30 November 2021, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australians/contents/about>

<sup>16</sup> Actions to Support Older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People, Department of Health, 2019 <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/12/actions-to-support-older-cald-people-a-guide-for-aged-care-providers.pdf>. National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from CALD backgrounds, 2012. <https://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/national-cald-aged-care-strategy.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/people-living-with-disability>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy/submissions/>

disability. In its interim report<sup>19</sup>, the Royal Commission has heard evidence about the involvement of volunteers in services and support to people with disability.

**Participation in volunteering can also play an important role in the lives of people with disability**, offering opportunities for social, economic, and cultural inclusion. Volunteering can be particularly beneficial to people with disability in offering self-empowerment and pathways to paid employment.

The contributions of volunteering, both in the disability services workforce and in the lives of people with disability, need to be recognised and resourced. This means including volunteering in the Targeted Action Plans<sup>20</sup> established to support Australia's Disability Strategy and in the Government's response to the Disability Royal Commission.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to support and progress the role volunteers and volunteering play in improving the lives of people with disability.**

#### 4. Improving disaster readiness

The incoming Government has committed to improving Australia's disaster readiness<sup>21</sup> through an investment of up to \$200 million per year on disaster prevention and resilience. This Disaster Ready Fund will target disaster prevention projects like flood levees, sea walls, cyclone shelters, evacuation centres, fire breaks and telecommunications improvements. The Government is seeking to improve the efficiency of disaster recovery processes and to simplify and speed up payments to disaster victims and repairs to damaged infrastructure.

The incoming Government has committed additional funding<sup>22</sup> to Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) which runs the National Veteran Volunteer Service<sup>23</sup> – a veteran-led and delivered service responding to natural disasters. It is estimated that the funding will allow DRA to add another 5,200 volunteer veterans to its ranks. This will lead to a total of 6,700 veteran volunteers able to provide over 13,600 volunteer days per annum. This policy is also part of the incoming Government's plan to provide wellbeing and sense of purpose for ex-ADF veterans<sup>24</sup>.

**Volunteers are central to crisis resilience.** Australia's crisis resilience is supported by over one million volunteers, of which more than 400,000 work directly in emergency response and relief through government emergency services organisations and recovery and relief charities<sup>25</sup>.

Volunteers support crisis resilience across prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities, facilitate social connections, contribute to the development of social capital, and improve access to local supports and services.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-10/Interim%20Report.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/key-actions-strategy>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/disaster-readiness>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/disaster-relief-australia>

<sup>23</sup> <https://disasterreliefaus.org/three-years-funding-support-of-dras-national-veteran-volunteer-service-nvvs/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-to-address-the-veterans-crisis>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/volunteers-australias-backbone-in-times-of-crisis/#/>

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to develop and strengthen the frameworks for coordinating and engaging volunteers to support Australia's resilience to future crises.**

## 5. Protecting the environment

The incoming Government has committed to a suite of environmental policies, which includes policy changes relating to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, improving Australia's urban rivers and catchments, increasing the number of Indigenous Rangers, and a new Saving Native Species Program. A renewed Landcare Rangers program<sup>26</sup> aims to deliver up to a 1000 full time Landcare Rangers across the country. This is designed to increase the capacity of local Landcare and Natural Resource Management groups with Landcare Rangers, who will work with local volunteers on conservation and restoration projects.

**Volunteers are the backbone of environmental protection in Australia.** According to the Annual Information Statement (AIS) data published by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, there are over 900,000 volunteers in charities which identified 'environmental activities' as their main activity.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to develop opportunities for local volunteers to contribute to environmental protection and restoration.**

## 6. Advancing First Nations

The incoming Government has committed to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart<sup>27</sup> in full and proceed with a national process of reconciliation, stating it will work in genuine partnership with First Nations people. Other commitments include abolishing the Community Development Program and improving First Nations economic and job opportunities.

Volunteering Australia and the State and Territory peak volunteering bodies welcome the incoming Government's commitment to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Primarily understood as cultural obligation and reciprocity, different forms of 'Community Giving' among the First Nations people actively embody the principles of volunteering, i.e., 'time freely given for the common good', and represent a core feature of their everyday cultural life. The first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1994 found that First Nations people engage in voluntary work at a higher rate at 26.9 per cent than non-Indigenous Australians at 19 per cent respectively.<sup>28</sup> These activities are a primary means through which community is constituted and ownership to place is established among First Nations People.<sup>29</sup> They also create important skill sets for further economic participation and

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/landcare-rangers>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/first-nations>

<sup>28</sup> [The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, Findings and Future Prospects](#), Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU, p 67

<sup>29</sup> Spencer, M., & Christie, M. (2017). [Collaboratively rethinking the nature and practice of voluntary service in three North Australian aboriginal communities](#). *Third Sector Review*, 23(1), 9–27.



constitute a unique form of social capital in Australian society. The skill sets inherent in the voluntary activities of Community Giving can include privileged and embedded insights on cultural tourism, land management, water management, wild food harvesting, pest control, as well as community care and rehabilitation.<sup>30</sup> Recognition of First Nations Community Giving, therefore, is crucial in ensuring an ongoing process of choice that would meet their social, cultural and economic needs.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to recognise and support the First Nations ecosystem of Community Giving and enable greater economic participation for First Nations people.**

## 7. Supporting regional communities

The incoming Government has committed to a raft of policies<sup>31</sup> to respond to the challenges being faced in regional communities. Proposals include: reserving \$500 million of its proposed National Reconstruction Fund specifically for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food and fibre; making changes to the Regional Development Australia (RDA) structure and purpose; and providing additional funds to the Regional Australia Institute.

**Volunteers are critical to community life and service provision in rural and regional areas**, but a major volunteer challenge is looming. Recent evidence<sup>32</sup> has shown that many parts of rural Australia are facing challenges in being able to attract and retain volunteers. This is driven by a combination of factors - a rapidly ageing population in some regional and rural areas, residents moving away from rural communities, and new residents not being as actively engaged in community life. This is then combined with volunteer burnout and the lack of funding for essential services, which further places the burden on volunteers. The rising cost of living puts additional pressure on regional volunteers, notably to cover costs associated with transport.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to reinvigorate volunteering in our regional and rural communities.**

## Mental health

Investment in mental health has become an urgent priority in Australia in recent years. In 2020, the Productivity Commission released its final Inquiry Report on Mental Health, which acknowledges the mental health benefits of volunteering. Ensuring that mental health support is accessible to volunteers was also a key recommendation in the Senate Inquiry Report 'The people behind 000: mental health of our first responders.'<sup>33</sup> Given the well-recognised mental health implications of

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<sup>30</sup>Kerr et. Al (2001); Not So Simple: Enhancing Indigenous Economic Opportunity, ACTU Submission to the Pathways and Participation Opportunities for Indigenous Australians in Employment and Business Inquiry, January 2020

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/better-future-for-our-regions>

<sup>32</sup> Davies, A., Holmes, K., and Lockstone-Binney, L., (2018), Why Rural Australia is facing a volunteer crisis, *The Conversation*.

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Education\\_and\\_Employment/Mental\\_health/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/Mental_health/Report)

volunteering, ensuring appropriate support for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations will be essential to protecting and promoting mental health in Australian communities.

**Volunteering has demonstrated benefits to mental health, and volunteers are an integral part of the mental health workforce.** According to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, 64,811 people volunteered for mental health and crisis intervention charities and not-for-profits in 2019. Further, while not limited to mental health specifically, the ABS estimates that 606,700 volunteers worked in a health or welfare organisation in 2020.

**We hope that the incoming Government will prioritise effective policy to promote mental health and support the contributions of volunteering to positive mental health outcomes for Australian communities.**

### Reinvigorating volunteering in 2022

Volunteering is essential to the nation's recovery and its ongoing wellbeing.

Volunteers are part of the nation's workforce, playing vital roles in disability, health, welfare and aged care services, sports and the arts, environmental protection, and crisis resilience, response, and recovery. We urge the Commonwealth Government to ensure the role of volunteers is accounted for and recognised in all Government workforce strategies. This will enable better workforce planning, protections and resourcing for volunteers and ensure their invaluable contribution, and the services they provide, are sustainable into the future.

Research consistently demonstrates that volunteering can contribute to good mental health and wellbeing. Volunteering also builds social cohesion and community resilience which will be much needed in the coming years. We support the new Treasurer's aspirations for a Wellbeing Budget<sup>34</sup> that can better reflect what people value and that can properly account for the social, cultural and economic value of volunteering.

In the next few years, the Government will be grappling with a very challenging economic and budgetary environment. Volunteering contributes to Australia's productivity performance<sup>35</sup> and the wellbeing of Australians, with the most recent official estimate valuing the annual contributions of volunteers in non-profit institutions at \$17.3 billion. Supporting the reinvigoration of volunteering is an economic investment.

Whilst there are many challenges facing volunteering, opportunities also exist - for example, to bring in new cohorts of volunteers and to redesign volunteering programs to be more inclusive, efficient and responsive to future needs. Opportunities exist for volunteering to become more diverse and inclusive and ensuring volunteering is open to everyone.

We have an opportunity to do things differently. Volunteers and organisations have already shown great resilience and adaptability during recent crises. During COVID-19, many informal community

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.afr.com/policy/economy/chalmers-wants-nz-style-wellbeing-budget-for-australia-20200219-p5427w>

<sup>35</sup> <https://bit.ly/Productivity-Inquiry>

volunteers emerged to support those in need. Now is the time to build on this community spirit and invest in the adaptation of volunteering.

A National COVID-19 Recovery plan for volunteering needs to be urgently developed, funded and implemented. Reinvigorating volunteering will require all elements of the volunteering ecosystem to play their part and work together. The plan could include:

- *A national 'good to volunteer' communications campaign* – to communicate to volunteers and organisations how volunteering can be safely undertaken, both continued and re-started, in accordance with Government public health directives.
- *Resources to support volunteer recruitment and management* – to support the costs of recruitment, onboarding, accreditation, training, and management of new volunteers and streamline the registration process.
- *Better data collection and impact measurement* – to enable volunteering peak bodies and volunteer involving organisations to capture levels of volunteering activity and how it impacts on wellbeing outcomes.
- *Adaptation of volunteering programs* – to enable organisations to adapt volunteering programs digitally or in other ways to meet COVID-19 safe working practices.

It should be noted that the General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics was the only official data source which consistently provided information on volunteers and volunteering using a sample of the general population. The GSS is currently being reviewed and the last data enumerated was in 2020. This data generated from the GSS is vital to the volunteering ecosystem and is extensively used within Australia and internationally.

To assess the contribution of volunteering to government priorities as we endeavour to reinvigorate volunteering, data on volunteering should be included in a nationally representative survey of the general Australian population conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If the Commonwealth Government is to move to Wellbeing Budgets (discussed below), then it becomes all the more important that robust official data on volunteering is available.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to reinvigorate volunteering in 2022.**

### Reimagining volunteering: a new National Strategy for Volunteering

Volunteering Australia is currently leading the development of a National Strategy for Volunteering (National Strategy). To provide a core evidence base for the National Strategy development, Volunteering Australia is also leading the *Volunteering in Australia* research program, which will provide a comprehensive understanding of the landscape of volunteering in Australia, map current trends, and provide insight into how volunteering may evolve into the future.

Through collaborative consultation, the National Strategy will be designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem and provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. It will provide strategic direction for the volunteering ecosystem and enable volunteering across Australia to be effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

All members of the volunteering ecosystem will have a role to play in ensuring volunteering thrives in the future. The volunteering ecosystem is a network of relationships between volunteers,

volunteer involving organisations, volunteering support services<sup>36</sup>, State and Territory volunteering peak bodies, Volunteering Australia, other national peak bodies, community organisations, philanthropy, business, the research community, and Governments, all working for the collective viability and recognition of volunteering in Australia.

The Commonwealth Government has a major role to play in the design and delivery of the new National Strategy for Volunteering.

**We look forward to working with the incoming Government to reimagine the future of volunteering.**

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<sup>36</sup> Volunteer Support Services are also known as Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs) and Volunteer Support Organisations (VSOs)

## Authorisation

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



Mr Mark Pearce  
Chief Executive Officer

## Endorsements

This briefing 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.

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## State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies

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Volunteering SA&NT

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The Centre for Volunteering (NSW)

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