

ANNUAL REVIEW

VOLUNTEERING

AUSTRALIA

06/07



volunteering australia



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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Volunteering Australia (VA) has a clear mandate to represent the diverse views and needs of the volunteer movement, while promoting the activity of volunteering as one of enduring social, cultural and economic value. This has been achieved in many ways as Volunteering Australia has met the challenges presented by the sector.

Volunteering Australia has provided sound and considered advice to the Federal Government on a range of issues and I would like to acknowledge the valued partnership we have with the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). This partnership is integral to our ability to deliver our key programs and we thank FaCSIA for their commitment to volunteering.

VA continues to manage significant research projects including the *Rising Costs of Volunteering Report*, an important survey and report that considers issues affecting volunteers.

The Voluntary Work Initiative project came to an end with 13,742 people assisted by the program to find voluntary work thanks to the partnership with 46 volunteer centres around Australia.

Financially, Volunteering Australia remains in a sound position with a strong focus on transparent reporting and budgetary control. VA strives to maintain a sustainable funding base for the organisation by adhering to the principals of financial accountability. The financial statements are available as a separate document.

During the 2006 / 2007 financial year Volunteering Australia's long serving CEO, Sha Cordingley, and Deputy CEO, Kylee Bates, resigned. Sha helped to transform Volunteering Australia from a small, vulnerable body into a respected and well funded peak organisation. Kylee Bates joined Volunteering Australia during the International Year of the Volunteer and greatly assisted Sha in the transformation of Volunteering Australia. While the bulk of the funding came from the Commonwealth Government, it was Sha and Kylee who developed the effective liaison with Government that ensured continuity of that funding. The Board thanks Sha and Kylee for the work they did to give Volunteering Australia the established base it enjoys today.

The Board of Volunteering Australia would also like to thank CEO, Julie Pollard, the management, staff and volunteers of VA for their dedication and hard work during the particularly difficult period when Sha and Kylie left Volunteering Australia. We thank our key stakeholders, the State and Territory Volunteer Centres, for their ongoing support, advice and co-operation, and we recognise our partners, FaCSIA and NAB, and thank them for their ongoing support of volunteering. Their contributions cannot be underestimated and the impact they have on volunteering in Australia is applauded.

I am pleased to present this Annual Review and assure the volunteer sector of our ongoing commitment to championing the values of volunteering as a sector, and volunteers as people making an invaluable contribution to the Australian community.

Ian Rentsch, President.

POLICY
ADVICE

Throughout 2006 / 07, Volunteering Australia has been active in the area of policy and advice. A federal budget submission was sent to the Australian Government and key ministers, while the Rising Costs of Volunteering Taskforce Report was released by the Costs of Volunteering Taskforce.

Advice was provided to:

- The Department of Health and Ageing on the new police check requirements for volunteers in aged care programs operated under the Aged Care Act – including input into development of guidelines for Community Visitors' Schemes;
- The Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training on behalf of the National Youth Careers and Transitions Advisory Group (NYCTAG) via input to Service Learning Discussion Paper with Atelier Learning Solutions;
- Australia-India Council on supporting volunteering information / knowledge exchanges between Australia and India;
- The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership Secretariat – strategies for supporting employee volunteering;
- Prime Minister & Cabinet, re support for volunteering, particularly with respect to recognition.
- Australian Government: Strengthening and Sustaining Volunteering in Australia

MEMBERS

Associate individual
members

Professor Graham Cuskelly
Christine Gray
Richard Hammond
Dr Lewis Hughes
Professor Leo Jago
Dr Lorraine Kerr
Marc Levy
Roberta Lidell
Dr Leonie Lockstone
Dr Kym Madden
Hazel Maynard
Associate Professor Jacques Metzger
Dr Melanie Oppenheimer
Professor Jenny Onyx
Dr Megan Paull
Ian Rentsch
Harry Savelsberg
Dr Wendy Scaife
Dr Art Stukas
Dr Jeni Warburton
Dr Joanne Wilkinson
Joy Woodhouse

Ordinary organisational
members

ADRA Australia
Australian Business Arts Foundation
Australia Cares
Australian Multicultural Foundation
Australian Volunteers International
Conservation Volunteers Australia
Families Australia
Good Beginnings Australia
Habitat for Humanity, Australia
Jewish Emergency Management (JEMP) Inc
Lifeline Australia
Mission Australia
National Association for Prevention of
Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)
Prison Fellowship Australia
School Volunteer Program
Surf Life Saving Australia
The Foundation for Young Australians
University of Southern Queensland
University of Technology Sydney

Foundation organisation members





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CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

KEY ISSUES

Volunteering Australia has consistently consulted with a wide range of stakeholders on key issues, to ensure that we remain relevant and representative of the sector at the peak level.

The National Survey of Volunteering Issues was posted on-line and actively distributed to various sectoral groups and government bodies to increase total survey responses and the representation of lesser represented state/territories or NFP/ volunteer sectors (over 3,000 responses received).

We conducted online research on attitudes of jobseekers and employers to corporate volunteering, collaborated with SENSIS to conduct research on volunteering among small to medium-sized enterprises and VA met with delegates from the OECD Thematic Review in April to discuss the importance of training opportunities for volunteers and the role that recognition of prior learning (RPL) can play and the benefit for volunteers who undergo a recognition and prior learning process.

To provide an insight into the level of interest of both groups in accessing RPL for volunteers, (for past and current volunteering activities), we conducted an on-line survey into recognition of prior learning, aimed at both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

NVW was very successful with the support of NAB and FaCSIA enabling VA to launch a national media campaign with support to volunteering organisations in the form of promotional material. The 2007 theme was “See the change... Volunteering”.

The 2007 campaign was undoubtedly a success, and met or exceeded each of its objectives. Visitor numbers to the website increased during NVW. Other figures we can access indicate the campaign was a great success.

Highlights include:

- 461 media clips;
- 27,178 people visited the NVW section of the website from Oct 2006 – Jun 2007;
- 11,263 people visited the NVW section of the website during May; 3,759 people visited the Events section of the NVW website from Feb – May. This equates to 14% of total web traffic to the section;
- 19% increase in registrations to the VA database from 1 Feb –15 Jun 2007;
- 17% increase in registrations to the VA website during the NAB competition period (22nd Feb – 31st May 2007);
- 68% of the 2007 User Survey respondents felt that the ‘Information on Volunteering Australia’s website’ was either ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’;
- 23% increase in User Survey respondents in 2007 compared to 2006;
- Distribution of 60,000 posters, 30,000 sticker sheets and 20,000 pins Australia wide;
- The User Survey undertaken post NVW 07 will enable the promotional program to be further improved for 2008 better meeting the needs of VA stakeholders. The survey included the aims of NVW, the collateral considered useful, and the theme for 2008.



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GOVOLUNTEER

GOVOLUNTEER

GoVolunteer continues to be the major point of reference for volunteering jobs in Australia. The number of registered organisations in the year remained steady in comparison to 2005, with just over 1,190 organisations registered. As at 30 June, there were 359 organisations with current advertisements. At the end of June 2007, the total number of opportunities advertised has increased by more than 28,000. On average there are 10,500 opportunities advertised per month. The number of visitors to GoVolunteer and SEEK Volunteer have increased dramatically, particularly at the start of 2007. On average there are 55,000 visitors per month as compared to 40,000 in previous years.

OUR GOALS

Education and Skills Development

The National Volunteer Skills Centre's accomplishments for the 2006 / 2007 financial year included: Conducting 6 expert led e-discussion forums on a range of topics including; mentoring, duty of care, corporate volunteering and volunteers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

In 2006 / 2007 there were a number of new resources written:

Start Smart

A step by step practical guide that shows how to develop policies and procedures to ensure the effective operation of a volunteer management program.

How to design and write volunteer job descriptions

Provides managers of volunteers with practical tools and information for developing volunteer position descriptions that are well designed and effective.

How to develop a grievance procedure

This quick guide resource will help managers of volunteers establish a grievance policy in their organisation, and will assist volunteers understand how a grievance procedure works.

Do your volunteers need training?

This resource assists managers of volunteers in identifying the training needs of their volunteers and determining whether training is the most appropriate way for their volunteers to build new skills and knowledge.

Volunteering

A vehicle for continuous personal and professional development. The resource aims to familiarise managers of volunteers with the connections between volunteering and learning and the opportunities that volunteering provides as a way for people building individual capability.

Three new subject guides were produced

1. Involving baby boomers in volunteering, 2. Young people and volunteering, and 3. Involving Indigenous Australians in volunteering. These guides provide online links to other existing resources and provides managers of volunteers with key issues for consideration when looking to involve volunteers from these diverse groups.

Other work that was completed

Research into the Recognition of Prior Learning;

Development of a range of modifiable volunteer personnel templates available from the VA website;

Evaluation study undertaken on the Certificates in Active Volunteering;

Continued maintenance of the library of resources;

Continued provision of the free information and advice line – total of 593 enquiries.



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RESEARCH

RESEARCH

The Australian Journal on Volunteering (AJV) and the Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies Alumni sponsored the second prize for the best paper written by a student at an Australian university. The winner Danielle Leigh, a fifth year undergraduate student at the University of Technology Sydney, examined volunteer tourism in her paper 'Third cultured volunteer tourists and the process of re-assimilation into home environments'. Danielle's prize consisted of \$500 and publication of her paper in the AJV. Congratulations Danielle!

'By building our body of evidence-based knowledge of volunteering and the factors which impact on it, we increase our ability to build sustainable models of volunteering that benefit the citizen as a volunteer and the community as a whole.'

Volunteering Research Framework

For the first time, Volunteering Australia became an industry partner in a successful Australian Research Council Linkage funding application, *Enhancing the grey nomad experience and increasing volunteering in outback towns*. The chief investigators Professor Jenny Onyx (University of Technology Sydney) and Associate Professor Rosemary Leonard (University of Western Sydney) led field trips to six outback towns with populations of less than 300 to explore the development of volunteer projects aimed at capturing the expertise of grey nomads. As well as the learning opportunity afforded to Volunteering Australia staff to undertake field trips in support of the researchers, this project has provided VA with the opportunity to expand our knowledge and understanding of the volunteer experience of grey nomads.

The National Survey of Volunteering Issues was published, a significant look at the range of issues affecting volunteers.

To support the nexus between research, policy and practice, VA has:

Produced two issues of the Australian Journal on Volunteering (AJV);

Held the second student prize for the best student paper written by a student enrolled in an Australian university. This is a joint project with CPNS Alumni, QUT;

Updated the Researcher's Database (list of researchers on volunteering in Australia and their recent publications);

Joined researchers Professor Jenny Onyx (UTS) and Associate Professor Rosemary Leonard (UWS) on field trips to rural and remote towns as part of the research project. *Enhancing the grey nomad experience and increasing volunteering in outback towns*. Updates on the research appeared in both issues of the AJV. Towns have been supported by email and telephone. Town participants appreciate this contact particularly the telephone conference calls as a means of sharing information and building network.

Support Dr Arthur Stukas (La Trobe University) in his ARC Linkage application for funding for a new research project *Applications and tests of the functional approach to volunteerism: understanding volunteer environments, change in motivations, and contribution to social capital*;

Developing a database of information on current and progressing research. This will include not only the work of established researchers but also PhD and Masters students investigating volunteering;

Supported email and telephone requests for assistance with literature research and information about current research and researchers.

GRANTS & AWARDS

Comic Relief Australia Grants Program 2006

Volunteering Australia acts as Grants Manager for the inaugural Comic Relief Australia Grants Program.

Volunteering Australia recruited corporate volunteers to do initial screening of grant applications.

Total of \$449,833.90 distributed to 31 successful grant recipients.

Grants distributed ranged from small grants of \$1,275 through to open grants of \$50,000.

NAB Volunteer Awards 2006

1,220 eligible nominations were received in 2006. This was an increase from the number of nominations received in 2005 (1097). Specifically, the increases were from the smaller states ACT/NT (68%), Tasmania (46%) and Western Australia (23%).

Volunteering Australia contributed to the increased number of nominations by promoting the awards through their various communication channels. For example:

- Article about how the awards recognise best practice appeared in Volunteering Australia's first e-newsletter inVOLve (circ 6,000 volunteer groups and networks) Jun 2006;
- 'Best practice on a shoestring' article using examples from previous nominations distributed via inVOLve and on VA website;
- Received over 250 media clips relating to NAB Volunteer Awards (VA named as major partner). Regional media generated by, and attributed to, 'last call' reminder press release encouraging smaller states and regional entries;

Volunteering Australia provided advice and support in respect of the format and operation and promotion of the 2006 awards as well as preparation for national judging.

CEOs of state and local volunteer resource centres participated in local award ceremonies, and addressed winners about 'best practice' in volunteer management.

2006 national winners invited to participate in Volunteering Australia's e-forum 30th – 31st October to celebrate ideas for best practice in volunteer management.



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KEY PROJECTS

KEY PROJECTS

Voluntary Work Initiative

2006–2007 marked a significant turning point for the organisation in that the Voluntary Work Initiative (VWI), which Volunteering Australia has been managing since 2001, was brought to a conclusion. Over the course of the year, working with 46 Volunteer Resource Centres around Australia, VA successfully referred 13,742 people on Centrelink Payments to community organisations to work in a variety of volunteer roles. Of these referrals, 8,670 people commenced as volunteers, successfully meeting our main Key Performance Indicator under the VWI contract.

Though VWI has now been wound up, the Commonwealth Government has not backed away from their commitment to funding volunteer referral activities. 2007–2008 will actually see a net increase in the funding for these activities, with FaCSIA dramatically increasing the funding available to Volunteer Resource Centres through an expanded Volunteer Management Program (VMP).



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THE JOURNAL

THE JOURNAL

Australian Journal on Volunteering

The Journal is the only such publication that publishes articles exclusively on volunteering. Published twice a year the Journal contains refereed articles providing indepth research on current trends in volunteering, case studies that show how theory is put into best practice, and reviews on the latest volunteering books.

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