



2018-19 Pre-Budget Submission  
The Treasury  
December 2017

Volunteering Australia Contacts

Ms Adrienne Picone, Chief Executive Officer  
[ceo@volunteeringaustralia.org](mailto:ceo@volunteeringaustralia.org) (02) 6251 4060

Ms Lavanya Kala, Policy Manager  
[lavanya@volunteeringaustralia.org](mailto:lavanya@volunteeringaustralia.org) (02) 6251 4060



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### About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering. We work to advance volunteering in the Australian community.

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

We work collectively with the seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies to deliver national, state/territory and local volunteering programs and initiatives in accordance with the Government's priorities.

### Introduction

Volunteering Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Treasury as they prepare the 2018-19 Federal Budget. Volunteering Australia engaged in consultation to inform this submission, and to ensure that our work is representative of the views of the volunteering sector.

At Volunteering Australia, we define volunteering as "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."<sup>i</sup> While volunteers donate their time willingly, it comes at a cost. The operational cost of delivering innovative and agile volunteering programs that are responsive to the needs of Australian society is increasing, and requires significant investment.

While we acknowledge the Government's contributions to the sector, Volunteering Australia emphasises there must be adequate support and investment by all levels of government to assist Volunteer Involving Organisations, Volunteering Support Services, and volunteers, to continue to engage in all areas of Australian society. This is especially relevant given that volunteering is an activity with the highest multiplier effect of any government spending.

Volunteering Australia was disappointed by the 2017-18 Federal Budget, and that volunteering was overlooked across the range of portfolios, programs and policies.<sup>ii</sup> The previous budget failed to acknowledge and recognise the contributions and impact of volunteering in Australia, as well as the depth and breadth of volunteering as a cross-portfolio issue, spanning across a diverse range of sectors, organisations, portfolios and communities. As such, Volunteering Australia is striving for volunteering to be clearly articulated in the 2018-19 Budget.

In this submission Volunteering Australia have provided an overview of current issues affecting the sector, including recognition of volunteering as a cross-portfolio, whole-of-community initiative, and the various issues pertaining to grants and funding, and their impact on the volunteering sector. We have also identified ways in which the Government can invest in the prosperity of volunteering in Australia to safeguard the future and provide security for the sector.

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### Summary of Proposed Budget Measures

The proposals put forward by Volunteering Australia in this Budget submission are the result of extensive ongoing consultation with volunteers, managers of volunteers, Volunteer Involving Organisations, Volunteering Support Services, our State and Territory peak partners and civil society.

1. Responsibility for the oversight of volunteering should return to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to recognise that volunteering is a cross-portfolio initiative, a national priority, with important budget significance.
2. A five-year funding period, to ensure fiscal certainty for the sector; community services funding should be indexed to wage movements, and efforts should be made to make reporting as transparent as possible, with separate programs listed as distinct from one another.
3. Continue to retain designated funding for Volunteering Support Services and other volunteer management, post-2021, and ensure funding indexation.
4. A restructure of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, to address the current imbalance in representation between philanthropic/charitable giving and volunteering, to allow the volunteering sector to have greater input.
5. Allocation of resources and funding for National Volunteer Week, to support Volunteering Australia to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Australia's 6 million volunteers.
6. Allocation of funds for a National Volunteering Strategy to provide a nationally consistent approach to volunteering in Australia, that is responsive to emerging trends, current challenges, and future issues.
7. Investment and recognition of volunteering as a pathway to employment, as well as appropriate resourcing and funding for Volunteering Support Services to place Mutual Obligation participants.
8. Investment in the national online volunteering platform, GoVolunteer, to ensure the needs of people from diverse backgrounds seeking volunteering opportunities are being addressed.
9. Support and funding for Volunteering Australia's Quality Mark System, that would provide a nationally consistent formal recognition system for organisations to meet the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.
10. A sustained investment in the unpaid volunteering workforce to ensure the successful rollout of the NDIS.
11. Resource schools and Volunteer Involving Organisations with information, tools, and training to create and manage structured volunteering programs for young people.
12. Investment in a national marketing and promotions strategy to boost volunteerism in Australia, that will include the linking of all volunteering resources to the 2030 Goals for Sustainable Development.
13. The provision of additional funding to encourage and support organisations, especially smaller Volunteer Involving Organisations, to welcome volunteers with barriers; as well as the allocation of resources for infrastructure projects and inclusion strategies that target diversity, access and inclusion.

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### Volunteering Australia Response

#### Return Volunteering to Prime Minister and Cabinet

Volunteering Australia reiterates that volunteering is a cross-portfolio initiative, a national priority with important budget significance, and should fall within Prime Minister and Cabinet's remit.

Volunteering is at the centre of Australia's national identity, with 5.8 million Australians or 31 per cent of the population engaging in volunteering, making an estimated annual economic and social contribution of \$290 billion.<sup>iiiiiv</sup>

From the arts, education, emergency services, sports, environment, health, aged care, disability, and community welfare; volunteering has woven itself into the fabric of everyday life, and Australian society is increasingly dependent on volunteering activities and programs.

Volunteering is also critical to the delivery of the Australian Government's priorities of building strong and resilient communities, by encouraging economic participation, mitigating isolation and loneliness, and increasing social inclusion, community resilience, participation and social cohesion.

Prior to the 2013 election, volunteering fell under the responsibility of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In our view, this demonstrated the prioritisation of volunteering, and an understanding of its whole-of-Government reach and significance. In the Portfolio Overview of the *2013-14 Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio Budget Statement*, social inclusion, the non-profit sector and volunteering was also listed as one of the portfolio's "principle responsibilities".<sup>v</sup>

However, following the election of the Government in 2013, there has been a shift in the prioritisation of volunteering, which has seen the Volunteer Management program, Volunteer Grants program, the one-off Volunteer Innovation and Collaboration Grants program, and Volunteering Australia's peak body funding, all relocated to the Department of Social Services.<sup>viii</sup>

Due to this shift in Departmental responsibility, there have been several changes in funding approaches which have resulted in a lack of consistency or ability to plan for the sector. These changes have also resulted in small, individual and one-off funding for volunteer supported projects, rather than longer-term funding for Volunteering Support Services and volunteer management.

**Recommendation:** Responsibility for the oversight of volunteering should return to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to recognise that volunteering is a cross-portfolio initiative, a national priority, with important budget significance.

#### Grants, Longer-term funding and Indexation

Nationally there continues to be a growing demand for volunteers, yet there has been a decrease in formal volunteer participation across the country. These changes in the rates of formal volunteering across the country present a growing challenge for Volunteering Support Services and Volunteer Involving Organisations, requiring innovation in workforce planning and management strategies.

To support our volunteers, it is important to acknowledge that volunteering requires considerable leadership and continued investment to ensure safe and effective volunteering. Managers of Volunteers and Volunteering Support Services provide this. They are the stable and secure volunteering infrastructure required to support volunteers and volunteer programs on the ground every day.

Volunteering Australia is acutely aware of the challenges presented by short-term funding, funding uncertainty, and competitive grants programs, and the strain this puts on the sector. Many organisations have been asked to increase their operational output, with a critical lack of funding and resources. Short

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term grants and funding place immense stress on the sector, and does not allow for the strategic workforce planning required to operate and deliver successful programming. Longer-term, ongoing funding is essential for stability and valuable outcomes within the sector.

A participant in Volunteering Australia's pre-budget consultations stated that, *"One issue is the ability to increase grant and funding opportunities to drive innovation for the attraction, recruitment and experience of the volunteer journey"*.<sup>viii</sup>

In fact, the limitations enforced by short-term grants were recognised by the Government in their response to the *Senate Community Affairs References Committee Report*, which agreed that grant terms offered by the Department of Social Services should ideally be five-years in length in order to "allow community organisations to better undertake long-term business planning and provide consistency of services"<sup>ix</sup> and ensure that "community organisations are able to dedicate more resources to service delivery, rather than administrative processes, in turn providing valuable support to vulnerable Australians".<sup>x</sup>

We underscore that there have been no concerted efforts to increase indexation for funding to wage movements, and this has a direct impact on staffing, retention and service delivery for Volunteering Support Services and Volunteer Involving Organisations across the country. Organisations have been asked to increase their output, while receiving less.

Volunteering Australia calls for a five-year funding period, to ensure fiscal certainty for the sector, allow for workforce planning, strengthen outcomes and build resources and structural capacity. In addition to longer-term funding, community services funding should be indexed to wage movements.

We also reaffirm that efforts should be made to make reporting as transparent as possible, with new and separate programs listed as distinct from one another. This recommendation has not been considered in the past, and we highly recommend that it is considered moving forward.

**Recommendation:** A five-year funding period, to ensure fiscal certainty for the sector; community services funding should be indexed to wage movements, and efforts should be made to make reporting as transparent as possible, with separate programs listed as distinct from one another.

### Designated funding for Volunteering Support Services into the future

Volunteering Australia highlights the huge impact on sector support if Volunteering Support Services are not a priority funding area. The operational cost of engaging volunteers must be accounted for within policies and programs. Organisations encounter significant costs with the training and management of volunteers, but many times these costs are not factored into funding structures.

Volunteering Support Services have received a temporary reprieve, with the funding period under the Strong and Resilient Communities Activity (formerly Strengthening Communities Grants) for three and a half years, from 1 January 2018 through to 30 June 2021. An allocation of \$19.95 million has been dedicated to the Volunteer Management Activity, however the future of these services remains in doubt after 2021.<sup>xi</sup> The volunteering sector also faces significant change and uncertainty as the Australian Government reviews the model for volunteer management.

In the face of a national decrease in formal volunteer participation, coupled with an increase in the demand for services that volunteers provide, Volunteering Australia is calling for the retention of designated funding for volunteer management post-2021, given the vital role they play in supporting volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations within the volunteering infrastructure.

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Volunteering Support Services play a crucial role in supporting and resourcing local volunteering programs, while empowering and ensuring the safe management of volunteers. To recognise the role of these place-based services in building strong and resilient communities, Volunteering Australia calls on the Government to retain designated funding for Volunteering Support services, and other volunteering management, and ensure funding indexation.

**Recommendation:** Continue to retain designated funding for Volunteering Support Services and other volunteer management, post-2021, and ensure funding indexation.

### The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership

The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership aims "to bring together leaders from business and community sectors to promote a culture of philanthropic giving and volunteering in Australia, and help build a strong civil society"<sup>xii</sup>. Unfortunately, while expertise in philanthropy and charitable giving is fully represented in the membership of the partnership, there is a lack professional expertise around volunteering

It is our firm view that while philanthropy plays an important and essential role in society, volunteering or time giving, is indispensable for individual and community resilience and wellbeing. Volunteering cannot provide an alternate or interchangeable role to philanthropy, and it is vitally important that volunteering has a unique and separate voice from philanthropy. Adequate emphasis needs to be applied to volunteering given the enormous social, cultural and economic impacts it offers to the community.

Volunteering Australia acknowledges the important work undertaken by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, including the contribution to *Giving Australia 2016*. However, the inclusion of the voice of volunteering in the partnership is critical for ongoing policy development, future planning and the delivery of long-term, innovative and agile service provision.

As the voice of the volunteering sector, Volunteering Australia is committed to working with the Government to address the current imbalance in the representation on the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership. Volunteering Australia is well placed to achieve this based on our knowledge and relationships with our State and Territory peak partners, volunteers, Volunteer Involving Organisations and Volunteering Support Services, and our commitment to growing a culture of giving in Australia.

**Recommendation:** A restructure of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, to address the current imbalance in representation between philanthropic/charitable giving and volunteering, to allow the volunteering sector to have greater input.

### National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is the annual celebration of our nation's volunteers, and a time to acknowledge the generous contributions they make to society. For one week in May, thousands of events are held across the country to say thank you to the 6 million Australians who volunteer their time. The week-long celebration includes open days, award ceremonies, picnics, forums and training sessions.

As the national peak body for volunteering in the country, Volunteering Australia holds primary responsibility for promotion and marketing of the week, communication of the value of volunteering, and merchandising.

Despite volunteering being a cross-portfolio initiative, with impact and significance in cities and communities across Australia, National Volunteer Week receives no funding or support from the Commonwealth. At present, all promotions, communications and acknowledgement around National Volunteer Week are conducted within current staffing capacity and existing resources. Similar events hosted by other national bodies receive federal funding and support to carry out their activities.

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Volunteering Australia estimates the cost of supporting this national week at \$250,000.

**Recommendation:** Allocation of resources and funding for National Volunteer Week, to support Volunteering Australia to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Australia's 6 million volunteers.

### National Volunteering Strategy

In July 2017, Senator for South Australia Skye Kakoschke-Moore, raised a motion in the Senate for the development of a National Volunteering Strategy, based on the successful South Australian model, that is sector driven. The motion passed unanimously, with strong support from the Department of Social Services and the Minister of Social Services the Hon Christian Porter MP. Since this time, Volunteering Australia has been looking at ways to progress this Strategy. However, without adequate resourcing, it is unlikely that a National Volunteering Strategy will be able to be developed and implemented.

The aim is to build a strategy that will guide the sector to build strong, resilient and cohesive communities. The strategy will be formed at a whole-of-community level, taking into consideration the needs of all members of society. A National Volunteering Strategy will also complement existing, and successful, State strategies, by building on the current good work progressed by the States.

Volunteering Australia emphasises that a National Volunteering Strategy would fill a key gap for a nationally consistent approach to volunteering in the country, and provide a strategic direction for the sector. Furthermore, the strategy will allow for the identification of emerging trends, challenges and issues, and allow for a considered approach in responding to them.

Volunteering Australia calls for a partnership approach between all levels of Government, the volunteering sector, and business, in the development of a National Volunteering Strategy. The strategy will also be inclusive of the interests of a broad range of volunteers, Volunteering Support Services, and Volunteer Involving Organisations across Australia.

Volunteering Australia have identified a strong need for a National Volunteering Strategy, and our recent pre-budget consultations ascertained compelling community support for a national strategy. Therefore, we are seeking funding to advance the project, and estimate the cost of developing and implementing the strategy at \$3.36 million.

**Recommendation:** Allocation of funds for a National Volunteering Strategy to provide a nationally consistent approach to volunteering in Australia, that is responsive to emerging trends, current challenges, and future issues.

### Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment

Volunteering Australia highlights the significance of volunteering as a pathway to gainful employment, encouraging economic participation and building work skills. We identified our disappointment following the 2017-18 Federal Budget<sup>xiii</sup>, after it failed to acknowledge the social and economic contributions of volunteering, and the ways that volunteering can support key government initiatives.

A 2011 Victorian Government report on the *Indicators of Community Strength in Victoria: Framework and Evidence*, found that volunteering is a potential pathway to employment, by increasing workforce participation, and connecting people to career paths that are better paid and more stable.<sup>xiv</sup> The report also stressed that volunteering is a form of civic participation that creates 'bridging networks', and generates positive social practices that strengthens communities by fostering positive social norms, spreads information and innovation, and provides mechanisms for collective problem solving.<sup>xv</sup>

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Volunteering can be valuable in assisting many people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to engage with the workforce and build key employable skills. This is significant given older people, CALD, or people with disability, face multiple barriers, such as discrimination, and are often excluded from the labour market. Volunteering provides a crucial entry point into the workforce.

Volunteering Australia acknowledges the Government's attempts at providing alternate pathways to employment, such as the Career Transition Assistance Program, that was announced in the 2017-18 Federal Budget.<sup>xvi</sup> While this program is aimed at providing greater opportunities for older people to reskill and find work, it will only commence in full by 2020. We also reiterate our calls for the replacement of the Youth Jobs Prepare, Trial, Hire (PaTH) program, with a program that promotes engagement in genuine volunteering as a pathway to paid employment and provides subsidised placements in roles within the community and not-for-profit sectors.

Volunteering Australia also emphasises that the Government must look at investment in programs and services that facilitate volunteering as a path to paid employment. This includes appropriate financing for Volunteering Support Services to place participants as part of their mutual obligation requirements.

At present, Volunteering Support Services use their local knowledge and professional experience to assist private jobs service providers to place Mutual Obligation participants with a pre-approved Volunteer Involving Organisations. However, this is done within their existing resources and funding, while job service providers receive the primary funding.

Volunteering Australia calls for additional funding for Volunteering Support Services to place Mutual Obligation participants, given the role they play in this interaction.

**Recommendation:** Investment and recognition of volunteering as a pathway to employment, as well as appropriate resourcing and funding for Volunteering Support Services to place Mutual Obligation participants.

### GoVolunteer

GoVolunteer is an initiative of Volunteering Australia, that aims to match people interested in volunteering with an appropriate volunteering opportunity, using a national database. GoVolunteer has serviced the needs of the volunteering sector for the last decade. However, as the sector evolves and grows, the platform requires enhancements, upgrades and ongoing maintenance to remain relevant and useful to users.

Volunteering Australia is cognisant of access and equity issues associated with digital modes of recruitment and referral systems, and the need to enhance the systems to ensure functionality is up to date with user expectations. We are seeking priority funding to ensure disadvantaged communities and the broader Australian public are not left behind through a failure to maintain adequate systems.

GoVolunteer requires significant enhancements to meet the needs of people with barriers, such as people with disability, those from CALD backgrounds, or older Australians. Enhancements will also allow for targeted access for disadvantaged groups, such as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders or people from low socio-economic backgrounds, by ensuring that when volunteer roles are entered into the system, they are identified as roles for people with specific barriers.

Volunteering WA, the Western Australian State peak body for volunteering, has run the support helpdesk for GoVolunteer for over 10 years, and overseen upgrades and system enhancements. Volunteering WA has longstanding relationships with software developers, as well as a strong degree of in-house technical knowledge. However, additional resourcing for the helpdesk to service client need is vital to address growing



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demand in virtual volunteering. Volunteering Australia estimates the cost of enhancements, system upgrades and ongoing maintenance to be approximately \$450,000.

**Recommendation:** Investment in the national online volunteering platform, GoVolunteer, to ensure the needs of people from diverse backgrounds seeking volunteering opportunities are being addressed.

### Quality Mark System

Volunteering Australia stresses the importance of recognising the profession of volunteering and volunteer management, and having a nationally consistent formal recognition system for organisations. In our view, the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and the Quality Mark system provide this, by ensuring organisations review safety, risk management, and best-practice in volunteering.

Additionally, Volunteering Australia and Volunteering SA&NT, are progressing work on a Quality Mark, and developing associated tools and resources to support the implementation of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. The Quality Mark is designed to ensure applicability for Volunteer Involving Organisations of all sizes and across all sectors.

The Quality Mark system will provide a formal recognition system for organisations, to show they meet the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. Volunteering Australia reiterates the importance of this national system for best-practice volunteer involvement and management. The projected date of roll-out for the Quality Mark System is during the 2018-19 period.

This system has been created within the existing resources of Volunteering Australia and our State and Territory peak bodies. Volunteering Australia is calling for support from the Government on this nationally consistent formal recognition system for volunteer organisations, an investment in the implementation of the Quality Mark System, and financial assistance for small organisations to attain formal recognition.

**Recommendation:** Support and funding for Volunteering Australia's Quality Mark System, that would provide a nationally consistent formal recognition system for organisations to meet the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

### National Disability Insurance Scheme

With the roll-out of the NDIS, the demand for disability services continues to grow. Volunteering Australia is pleased to see the continued investment in the NDIS, including a range of budget measures proposed in the 2017-18 Budget. The 2017-18 Budget indicated that an estimated 60,000 more full time workers would be required by 2019.<sup>xvii</sup> While the Government has committed to supporting an increase in the workforce, it is important to recognise that the disability sector and the NDIS are heavily reliant on volunteers to deliver key programs and services.

The operational cost of delivering quality, innovative, and agile volunteering programs that respond to the needs of the disability support sector is steadily increasing, and requires investment. Volunteering Australia have repeatedly voiced our disappointment that no additional funding has been provided for Volunteering Support Services or Volunteering Involving Organisations in such a critical area of need.

Volunteering Australia's submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs highlighted that calls to increase "volunteer participation in the disability sector must be met with an equivalent increase in funding for volunteer management, given the administrative costs. Volunteers should not be viewed as free labour within the disability support sector.

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There needs to be greater investment and consideration of the important role that volunteers play in the sector.”<sup>xviii</sup>

**Recommendation:** A sustained investment in the unpaid volunteering workforce to ensure the successful rollout of the NDIS.

### Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum

Volunteering Australia emphasises that volunteering can improve educational outcomes for young people, provide a pathway toward educational success and a means to prepare for employment, and therefore should be embedded in the Australian Curriculum. As such, a considered investment should be made toward resourcing schools and Volunteering Involving Organisations to create structured volunteering programs.

Research demonstrates that a significant proportion of young people are volunteering, evidencing the value of further investment. It is vital that we equip schools with the information, tools and training to understand how to create and manage structured volunteering programs for young people. In addition, there would be great benefit from the implementation of Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum in Australian schools.<sup>xix</sup>

**Recommendation:** Resource schools and Volunteer Involving Organisations with information, tools, and training to create and manage structured volunteering programs for young people.

### Support to Boost Volunteer Numbers

While Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as “time willingly given, for the common good and without financial gain”<sup>xx</sup>, it comes at a significant cost to the individual. Findings from our *2016 State of Volunteering in Australia* report indicates that while 99% of volunteers would continue to volunteer in the future, volunteers were deterred by factors such as personal expense, red tape, and a lack of flexibility.<sup>xxi</sup>

The report also identified numerous barriers to attracting and retaining volunteers, with 86% of Volunteer Involving Organisations struggling to attract the volunteers they required for adequate operations. Many Volunteer Involving Organisations surveyed (86%) also stated that they required more volunteers and resources.<sup>xxii</sup>

Volunteering Australia has previously recommended that the Government, NDIA and Volunteering Australia should collaboratively explore measures to encourage more Australians to volunteer in high-demand community services such as disability support, and additionally ensure that volunteering is accessible to Australians from all walks of life. Unfortunately, this measure has not been considered.

While a decline in volunteers has an impact across all Australian communities, the effects are felt more acutely in regional areas, where communities are heavily reliant on volunteers. Volunteers also play a crucial role in the delivery of community and emergency services, and are more likely to contribute financially to charitable causes.<sup>xxiii</sup> The recent Public trust and confidence in Australian charities report also stressed that “while more individuals are volunteering or are in contact with charities, they are volunteering their time less frequently.”<sup>xxiv</sup> Therefore, we are calling for a national marketing and promotions strategy to boost volunteerism in Australia, and address lagging volunteer rates across the country.

As volunteering is a cross-portfolio initiative, Volunteering Australia calls for a partnership approach to promotions. The strategy should seek to link volunteering resources to the 2030 Goals for Sustainable Development, so that as a nation we strive to achieve these goals.

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises that volunteerism is one of only a few initiatives that extends across portfolios. The United Nations Volunteers have stated that, “Volunteerism strengthens civic engagement, safeguards social inclusion, deepens solidarity and solidifies ownership of development results.”<sup>xxv</sup> The 2030 Agenda recognises volunteers are essential stakeholders to achieving and supporting all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Volunteering Australia is committed to advancing the goals.

**Recommendation:** Investment in a national marketing and promotions strategy that will boost volunteerism in Australia, that will include the linking of all volunteering resources to the 2030 Goals for Sustainable Development.

### Inclusion Strategies

Volunteering Australia is cautious of calls by the Government to increase the number of volunteers, when they are not matched by funding. A sustained investment in infrastructure projects and modifications for organisations, is critical to support volunteer involvement. This will be particularly beneficial for small organisations who may be deterred from involving volunteers with barriers due to the costs associated with modifications, specialised training, or management.

According to Volunteering Australia’s *2016 State of Volunteering in Australia* report, “Volunteering Involving Organisations generally lack resources both human and financial, and this can inhibit their ability to engage volunteers with barriers.”<sup>xxvi</sup> This includes people with disability and language barriers. This lack of resources inhibits a Volunteer Involving Organisation’s ability to “recognise their existing volunteer base.” The report identified that 46% of respondents had difficulty or were unable to recruit or engage volunteers with barriers. This generally stemmed from organisations not having the vital resources (at 51 per cent).<sup>xxvii</sup>

Volunteering Australia is of the view that many Volunteer Involving Organisations and volunteers would benefit from Mental Health, First Aid, and Supported Decision Making training. While these modules are highly valuable to the provision of quality supports and services, the costs associated with them can be prohibitive. Disability Awareness Training is also of great benefit to staff, organisations and volunteers, and is essential to the delivery of a human-rights based approach to service delivery. However, Volunteering Australia’s *2016 State of Volunteering in Australia Report* identified that many smaller Volunteer Involving Organisations may not have had the opportunity to participate in Disability Awareness Training, either due to funding restraints or lack of access.<sup>xxviii</sup>

A 2011 Productivity Commission Report noted that “Funding for services which engage volunteers in service delivery should consider the costs associated with: volunteer administration and regulation; and appropriate training and support for volunteers.”<sup>xxix</sup>

It is vital that there is additional funding and support for Volunteer Involving Organisations to engage volunteers across all policies and programs. This will ensure that organisations can fund access to training, education, supports and service for their volunteer workforce, and reduce barriers for individuals to engage in volunteering. It is also an incentive for people to begin volunteering in settings with a high area of need (aged care, disability, community services, etc).

**Recommendation:** The provision of additional funding to encourage and support organisations, especially smaller Volunteer Involving Organisations, to welcome volunteers with barriers; as well as the allocation of resources for infrastructure projects and inclusion strategies that target diversity, access and inclusion.

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### Recommendations

1. Responsibility for the oversight of volunteering should return to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to recognise that volunteering is a cross-portfolio initiative, a national priority, with important budget significance.
2. A five-year funding period, to ensure fiscal certainty for the sector; community services funding should be indexed to wage movements, and efforts should be made to make reporting as transparent as possible, with separate programs listed as distinct from one another.
3. Continue to retain designated funding for Volunteering Support Services and other volunteer management, post-2021, and ensure funding indexation.
4. A restructure of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, to address the current imbalance in representation between philanthropic/charitable giving and volunteering, to allow the volunteering sector to have greater input.
5. Allocation of resources and funding for National Volunteer Week, to support Volunteering Australia to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Australia's 6 million volunteers.
6. Allocation of funds for a National Volunteering Strategy to provide a nationally consistent approach to volunteering in Australia, that is responsive to emerging trends, current challenges, and future issues.
7. Investment and recognition of volunteering as a pathway to employment, as well as appropriate resourcing and funding for Volunteering Support Services to place Mutual Obligation participants.
8. Investment in the national online volunteering platform, GoVolunteer, to ensure the needs of people from diverse backgrounds seeking volunteering opportunities are being addressed.
9. Support and funding for Volunteering Australia's Quality Mark System, that would provide a nationally consistent formal recognition system for organisations to meet the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.
10. A sustained investment in the unpaid volunteering workforce to ensure the successful rollout of the NDIS.
11. Resource schools and Volunteer Involving Organisations with information, tools, and training to create and manage structured volunteering programs for young people.
12. Investment in a national marketing and promotions strategy to boost volunteerism in Australia, that will include the linking of all volunteering resources to the 2030 Goals for Sustainable Development.
13. The provision of additional funding to encourage and support organisations, especially smaller Volunteer Involving Organisations, to welcome volunteers with barriers; as well as the allocation of resources for infrastructure projects and inclusion strategies that target diversity, access and inclusion.

### Conclusion

Volunteering Australia thanks the Treasury for the opportunity to provide a response on the 2018-19 Budget, and a chance to highlight the sectors critical work in supporting the Government's key priorities in delivering jobs and growth, and other important community programs.

We look forward to working with the Government to ensure that the social, economic and cultural contributions of the volunteering sector is acknowledged and supported, through ongoing funding, recognising the value of volunteering as a pathway to employment, and the vital role of volunteering in high quality service delivery.

The projected costings are estimates only, and are not supported by economic modelling. Volunteering Australia would welcome further opportunity to consult or expand on any of our recommendations raised in this submission.

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### Authorisation

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



**Ms Adrienne Picone**

Chief Executive Officer

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### Endorsements

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

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### Glossary

<b>VA</b>	Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering in Australia. It works collectively with the peaks to deliver national, state and local volunteering programs and initiatives.
<b>VIO</b>	Volunteer Involving Organisations are organisations that engage volunteers as part of their workforce.
<b>VSS</b>	Volunteering Support Services (also known as Volunteer Resource Centres or Volunteer Support Organisations) provide place-based volunteer support services to volunteers and VIOs in their locality.

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<sup>i</sup> Volunteering Australia (2015) 'Definition of Volunteering', <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/definition-of-volunteering/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Volunteering Australia (2017), Summary Analysis of Key 2017-18 Federal Budget Measures, [https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/1495072886VASummaryAnalysisofKey201718FederalBudgetMeasures.pdf](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/files_mf/1495072886VASummaryAnalysisofKey201718FederalBudgetMeasures.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Flinders University (31 October 2014) 'Volunteering worth \$290 billion a year', <https://indaily.com.au/news/2014/10/31/volunteering-worth-290-billion-year/>.

<sup>iv</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) 'General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014', available online at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4159.0>.

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