

# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 27 June 2017



## 2016 Census reveals Australians still committed to volunteering

The 2016 Census was released today, with data revealing that Australians are still engaged and committed to volunteering activities.

The 2016 Census revealed that Australia's population is 23.4 million people. Of this:

- 3.6 million people or 19.0% of the population aged 15 years and over are engaged in voluntary work through an organisation or group. This is a 1.2% increase from the 2011 Census results, where 17.8% of people responded they were engaged in voluntary work.<sup>1</sup>
- The rates of volunteering are highest among males aged 45-54 years at 302,612 people.
- The rates of volunteering are highest among women aged 35-44 at 399,889 people.
- Overall, the rates of volunteering are highest in the 45-54 year age group at 679,602 people.<sup>2</sup>

While this Census data is encouraging, Volunteering Australia believes that it is vital that we ensure accurate and robust data collection. The data on volunteering in the 2016 Census may not necessarily be indicative of the narrative of Australian volunteering activity. This is because currently the way the question is framed limits those who volunteer to those in the not-for-profit (NFP) sector, and leaves out capturing volunteers who are informal, in the emergency services, private sector, sporting, education, arts, and who volunteer in their community.

In May, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) launched a national public consultation on statistics for volunteering and giving to clarify the data needs for information on volunteering and giving activity. This was because the Census has included an unchanged volunteering question in the past three Censuses.

Volunteering Australia supports the Australian Government's priorities, including the delivery of jobs and growth, important community programs and a range of services across a number of portfolios. It is critical that there is precise data collection for ongoing policy development, future planning and long-term service delivery.

Volunteering Australia looks forward to the outcome of the national public consultation in the coming months. You can [read Volunteering Australia's Response to the National Public Consultation on Statistics for Volunteering and Giving here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, "2016 Census QuickStats", 2016 Census, [http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/036?opendocument](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/036?opendocument).

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, "2016 Census of Population and Housing", G19 Voluntary work for an organisation or group by age by sex, 2016 Census.

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