



Volunteering
AUSTRALIA



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

volunteeringaustralia.org

Message from our Patron



His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Volunteering Australia – Annual Report, 2019-2020

I've long held the view that volunteering is one of the best things you can do. It is good for personal development, it is incredibly rewarding and it helps strengthen our communities. The past year in particular has highlighted the important role of volunteerism in our country and the benefits to communities from Australia's six million volunteers.

Against a backdrop of natural disasters and a health pandemic the capability and effectiveness of Australia's unpaid workforce has been strikingly evident. While many of us were required to stay at home during the pandemic, or take refuge in recovery centres or stay with friends as a result of the fires, our essential services volunteers remained on the front line. Many of them put their own lives at risk or on hold to help fellow Australians in need.

One of the effects of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 is that many volunteers have been unable to work. Recent analysis of the impact of the pandemic on volunteers and volunteering across Australia undertaken by the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods has found that two in three volunteers stopped volunteering during the pandemic. This equates to an estimated loss of 12.2 million hours per week of volunteer work. While this decline in volunteer hours has had a profound impact across the sector it also serves as a salient reminder of the value of volunteerism to our society.

We must never take the efforts of volunteers for granted. To that end, I congratulate Volunteering Australia for its leadership and support of volunteering and volunteers, and for its work in promoting safe and effective volunteer working conditions.

This past year we have called on our volunteers to go above and beyond. I encourage all Australians to reflect on the outstanding contributions made by our volunteers across all areas of society every single day.

Foreword from the Minister



Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

Minister for Families and Social Services
Senator for South Australia
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

FOREWORD

2020 has been an extremely challenging year for our country.

The devastating bushfires over summer destroyed homes and livelihoods, and devastated communities.

Now we are experiencing the global coronavirus pandemic, which has put further demand on service providers Australia-wide.

Through it all, our Australian volunteer workforce has been there, supporting our community and helping fellow Australians.

The importance of volunteering has never been more evident.

This year has highlighted the significant role of volunteering in the Australian community and our way of life.

We have seen volunteers fighting fires, delivering food to vulnerable Australians and providing much-needed comfort, in some cases at considerable risk to themselves.

If there is one thing this year has shown us, it is our resilience. In the face of adversity, Australians pull together. We work together and help each other through.

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than amongst our volunteers.

This year, many Australians who had never before had to ask for help, found themselves in need of support and so much of that support was delivered through our 8.7 million volunteers.

To support our volunteers the Federal Government was pleased to provide support to our volunteer community through both the annual \$10M Volunteer Grant program and the \$3.2M support package to volunteering peak bodies to assist the volunteering sector during the pandemic.

This funding is focusing on encouraging and supporting volunteer participation and new recruitment as the economy reopens.

On behalf of all Australians, I would like to recognise and thank you for the invaluable work that you do to ensure our communities thrive.

Chair & Chief Executive Officer Report

Whilst the pages of history are invariably written under the chapter headings of major events, and certainly 2019-20 provided some significant headline material, the lived experience is richer and far more nuanced than those titles can convey.

It would be easy to lose sight of the central importance of individual and community lived experience as we interrogate the data, analyse the trends, develop policy, and advocate for structural change. However, volunteerism is not an amorphous statistical mass, it's a complex, deeply personal and nationally significant sum of its nearly six million parts.

As we reflect upon the year past and consider it in the context of our ongoing organisational goals and planned aspirations for the volunteering eco-system, we are particularly cognizant that 2019-20 marked a turning point in the story of Volunteering Australia and Australian volunteerism.

The systemic societal risks associated with a long-term decline in volunteering were dramatically highlighted by COVID-19. An ANU report commissioned by VA estimated that during the period February 2020 to April 2020 almost 66 per cent of volunteers stopped volunteering as a result of COVID-19. This amounted to an estimated loss of 12.2 million hours of productivity each week.

Witnessing the effects of this exogenous shock gave further impetus to VA's decision to engage more widely and develop strategic partnerships to build system resilience through innovative thinking and practices and the use of technology to expand the reach of volunteering efforts.

This year past saw Volunteering Australia develop 15 policy guidance, position papers, budget, senate, and royal commission submissions, and our national advocacy work assisted by our Foundation Members continued to champion the central importance of volunteering in building and maintaining stronger and more connected communities.

Whilst the necessary travel and meeting restrictions visited upon us by COVID-19 meant that many of the planned events to support and celebrate National Volunteer Week 2020 could not take place, Volunteering Australia through our very successful Wave Your Appreciation initiative, encouraged celebration of volunteers via social media or other digital formats.

2020 also saw our highly respected former CEO, Adrienne Picone return home to Tasmania to take up a role with TasCOSS. We wish Adrienne every success for the future and sincerely thank her for her committed service to VA and volunteering. In endings, also come beginnings and the introduction of a new CEO to the organisation.



Former CEO of Volunteering Australia Adrienne Picone presenting at the 16th IAVE Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

We would also like to acknowledge the ongoing experience and leadership of our board. Periods of systemic instability require of organisations the guidance and expertise of a strong and capable board, and VA has been fortunate to have been able to rely upon such a capable governance body.

Finally, throughout the tumult of 2019-20 our staff have been resolute and indefatigable. We are extremely proud of their dedication and professionalism in delivering consistently high-quality outcomes despite the challenges.

VA approaches the year ahead with excitement and optimism with new partnerships and new ways of enhancing the impact of volunteering guiding our activities.



Michelle Ewington
Chair



Mark Pearce
Chief Executive Officer

About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. We actively inform policy and advocacy work, provide consultative feedback and input to Government to influence public policy, and highlight its impact on Australia's nearly six million volunteers, and the organisations to which they offer their time.

Vision

A stronger, more connected and resilient Australian community through volunteering.

Mission

To lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

2019-20 Highlights

Volunteering Australia is proud to lead National Volunteer Week (NVW), the annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contribution of our nation's volunteers. Thank you to everyone who took part in our virtual campaign by putting your hand up and waving your appreciation for volunteers during National Volunteer Week 2020.

National Volunteer Week 2020 Highlight:

795 items of coverage were secured through the [media campaign](#) reaching an estimated 39.9 million people across all states and territories of Australia. It was great to see national TV hosts join in with a wave of their own during their interviews with Volunteering Australia CEO Adrienne Picone. Adrienne appeared on [Weekend Sunrise](#), [Weekend Today](#), [ABC News Breakfast](#) and Sky News.



Weekend Today hosts Richard Wilkins and Rebecca Maddern taking part in the Wave Your Appreciation campaign.

As the national peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Australia works with the sector to influence public policy and highlight its impact on Australia's nearly six million active formal and the organisations to which they offer their time.

Volunteering Australia is proud to have influenced national policy as a result of our advocacy.

Policy and Advocacy Key Outcomes:

- Volunteer Grants program under review
- Volunteering consistently recognised in COVID-19 reports by the sector
- Volunteering Australia Interim CEO Mark Pearce gave evidence at the [Select Committee on Regional Australia](#) stating that volunteering is central to the social fabric of rural and regional communities and to community well-being.
- The final report of the [Productivity Commission's Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans Inquiry](#) acknowledged the role volunteers play and addressed ways in which the Department can better support their work.

Policy & Advocacy Key Activities:

COVID-19 impact and response

- COVID-19 Position Papers
- ANU COVID-19 analysis & stakeholder survey
- Submission to the Select Committee on COVID-19
- Charities Crisis Cabinet

Volunteer workforces

- Response & Position Statement on Compensation Scheme
- Submission to Bushfire Royal Commission
- Submission to Bushfire Senate Inquiry

Federal funding and oversight

- Position Statement on Volunteer Grants
- Submission to Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) consultation
- Pre-Budget Submission
- Briefing Paper on the Data Exchange (DEX)

Volunteering benefits

- ANU COVID-19 analysis (mental health benefits)

National Leadership, Advocacy & Policy

Volunteering Australia continued to strengthen its leadership role in the sector by advocating effectively to support and advance volunteering in Australia.

Volunteering Australia produced six submissions and five position statements during 2019-20. We are led by feedback from our members, the wider volunteering sector and sector partners. As the primary link between the volunteering sector and federal government, Volunteering Australia provides consultation into key decision making.

COVID-19 Impact and Response

Volunteering Australia provided evidence to the [Select Committee on the impact of COVID-19](#) on volunteering and the response of the Australian Government.

Volunteering has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We made recommendations to ensure that volunteers are protected and enabled to make their contribution as we learn to live with COVID-19.

Bushfire Inquiries

Volunteering Australia made two [submissions to government inquiries into the 2019-20 bushfire season](#). The bushfires focused the attention of the nation on the critical roles that volunteers play during emergencies and the significant volunteer workforce that is at the forefront of the response to such a national crisis.

We welcomed the opportunity to provide these submissions and to contribute evidence on the role of volunteers in the emergency response. A series of guiding principles and recommendations were suggested which would strengthen the emergency volunteer workforce and the enabling volunteering infrastructure.



Volunteering Australia met with the Minister for Natural Disaster and Emergency Management the Hon David Littleproud MP to discuss matters concerning volunteering and emergency management.

Compensation Scheme

Volunteering Australia and the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies released a [response](#) and [Position Paper to the Australian Government Compensation Scheme](#). Going forward, Volunteering Australia in collaboration with State and Territory volunteering peak bodies support the Australian Government and key emergency management agencies and organisations to put in place the most appropriate response and policy setting for volunteer emergency responses in the future.

Pre-Budget Submission

Volunteering Australia's [2020-21 Pre-Budget Submission](#) outlined several ways to strengthen the key infrastructure that supports and facilitates the volunteering sector and offers ways to better capitalise on opportunities provided by volunteering time and goodwill.

Volunteer Grants

We released a [position statement on the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants](#) outlining our concerns about the new process. We also invited feedback from the sector in relation to their experiences.

Volunteer Management Activity (VMA)

Volunteering Australia attended the Department of Social Services (DSS) consultations and completed a [submission to inform the future of the Volunteer Management Activity \(VMA\)](#). We encouraged organisations to participate in a consultation and to make a submission.

Data Exchange (DEX)

Volunteering Australia published a [Briefing Paper on Data Exchange \(DEX\)](#) as an explainer on the current issues faced by Volunteer Support Services, and outlined a way forward in our advocacy with Government. With a new Minister for Families and Social Services, this was a key opportunity to reinvigorate the conversation to work towards a place where DEX is more fit-for-purpose.

Meetings with Government

Volunteering Australia was pleased to meet with many members of Parliament and government representatives throughout 2019-20.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Government, Opposition and crossbench on addressing emerging challenges and opportunities facing the volunteering sector.

Informative & Useful Research

The experience of volunteers during COVID-19

Volunteering Australia commissioned the Australian National University (ANU) Centre for Social Research and Methods to undertake [analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on volunteers](#) and volunteering across Australia. The research found, two in three volunteers (66 per cent) stopped volunteering during the pandemic, amounting to an estimated loss of 12.2 million hours per week of volunteer work. This decline has had a profound and ongoing impact across the sector.

Volunteering Resource Hub

Volunteering Australia is establishing a national Volunteering Resource Hub, a centralised repository of information for the volunteering sector, with a focus on volunteer management. The Resource Hub is being designed by the sector, for the sector, to ensure the resources it houses are relevant and useful for volunteer management professionals across Australia.

Volunteering Australia has sought input from the volunteering sector on what information and resources should be housed in the Resource Hub and we look forward to launching this project by the end of 2020.

Corporate Volunteers: Australia's Untapped Resource

Volunteering Australia and LBG (London Benchmarking Group), managed by Corporate Citizenship produced the paper: '[Corporate Volunteering in Australia: a snapshot](#)'.

The research showed employee participation has grown steadily since 2006. The report highlighted the many benefits of corporate volunteering for the individual, the organisation and the corporate itself. There are opportunities for organisations to access corporate volunteers, with the report finding that although corporate volunteers contributed over 1 million hours to the community in 2018, there is an additional 500 FTE of corporate volunteering capacity that is not utilised every year.

Volunteer Researchers Team

Research is a key focus area for Volunteering Australia and to assist we established a Volunteer Researchers Team. Vivian Chan, Emily Wobcke and Dominic O'Neill joined the Volunteering Australia team as our first Volunteer Research and Policy Analysts.

Thank you for offering your time, knowledge and skills to support Volunteering Australia in providing informative and useful research to the volunteering sector.

Collective Viability

Partnerships

Volunteering Australia has maintained strong ongoing partnerships with Aon, SEEK, Breaking New Ground, ProBono Australia and Hall & Wilcox and started to broaden a strategic engagement plan in line with Sustainable Development Goal 17, to work together to strengthen partnerships for sustainable development, including effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.

Donors

The generous contributions of our supporters allow Volunteering Australia to continue acting as a voice for volunteers and the wider community. We are very grateful for the donations we receive from community members and supporters.

Associate Members

Members of the State and Territory peaks can now opt to also become Members of Volunteering Australia, at no extra cost and we were delighted to represent 1,726 Associate Members at a national level during 2019-20.

Foundation Members

Volunteering Australia's Foundation Members are the seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies. VA and the Foundation Members work in partnership to lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering and civic participation in Australia. We collaborate through regular network meetings, engagement at Board level, consultation on sector and policy issues, distribution of research and other relevant sector communications, and sharing and development of national resources including GoVolunteer, the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and National Volunteer Week.

Effective Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

Communication

Volunteering Australia is committed to supporting Australia’s volunteers and the volunteering community with effective communication. We have actively provided guidance to the volunteering community during these very challenging times. All our information was based on collaboration with State and Territory volunteering peak bodies and official guidance from the Australian Government.

Events

We were delighted to support [National Student Volunteer Week](#), [Wear Orange Wednesday](#) (WOW Day), [International Volunteer Managers Day](#), [International Volunteer Day](#) and [Giving Tuesday NOW](#). These important events celebrate the contribution of volunteering to our society and recognise the value that volunteers and volunteer leaders bring to communities and vital services.

Volunteering Australia CEO Adrienne Picone attended the 16th IAVE Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference in Bangkok, Thailand and spoke about volunteering and the SDGs with presenters from across the region.

National Volunteer Week 2020

Many events that would usually have been held during [National Volunteer Week](#) were postponed or cancelled. Volunteering Australia encouraged all organisations to thank their volunteers in different ways through social media or other digital formats.

We provided ideas, inspiration and tips to celebrate a virtual National Volunteer Week in 2020. We continued to sell thank you gifts via our online shop, provided resources for the week and spread the message that volunteers around Australia really are Changing Communities. Changing Lives.

We had a fantastic response to our Wave Your Appreciation campaign with increased engagement on our social media platforms.

National Volunteering Conference 2020

Volunteering Australia’s [National Volunteering Conference 2020](#) is a premier bi-annual event that inspires Australia’s volunteer leaders to take time to connect, grow their skills and find solutions to the biggest volunteering challenges they face.

For the first time in 25 years the conference was to be held in Western Australia for the three day event at the Perth Conference and Exhibition Centre on 18-20 March 2020. Prior to its cancellation over 450 delegates had registered for the Conference with over 54 per cent attending from interstate.

Unfortunately the National Volunteering Conference 2020 had to be cancelled five days prior to the start date as a result of COVID-19. While the option of postponing the conference was thoroughly investigated, with the ongoing health and economic uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, a decision was ultimately made to cancel the conference.

Volunteering Australia would like to thank Volunteering WA and everyone involved for all their hard work to deliver a conference that was shaping up to be one of our best yet, with a high-quality program of speakers and networking opportunities.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and commitment of our valued sponsors and business partners: Australian Government Department of Social Services, Woodside, Department of Communities, City of Perth, SEEK Volunteer, Perth Convention Bureau, Aon, ProBono, RAC, Beyond Bank, Eduka and Lotterywest.

Stakeholder Engagement

Volunteering Australia has continued to work closely with sector partners on issues-based policy and advocacy initiatives. We signed [Mental Health Australia’s Charter 2020: Time To Fix Mental Health](#).

Volunteering Australia was proud to represent the volunteering sector as part of [The Charities Crisis Cabinet](#) (CCC). The Cabinet work to enable charities to support their communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. We utilise this and other national fora to vigorously advocate for the needs of the sector.

We have maintained constructive working relationships with the Federal Government and have been an active participant to advisory groups and consultative processes.

Volunteering Australia has continued to work closely with sector partners on issues-based policy and advocacy initiatives including joining for-purpose leaders to help set the agenda for the development of a [2030 Blueprint for Australian charities hosted by the Community Council for Australia](#).



Volunteering Australia represented the sector to discuss the development of a 2030 Blueprint for Australian charities.

Finance Information

The financial result for FY20 was a very pleasing surplus of \$69,574, compared to the deficit result of the previous year. The organisation was fortunate to have qualified for the Federal Government Economic Stimulus payments which totaled \$72,692 for the period 1 March to 30 June 2020.

Grant income for specific projects such as the Resource Hub and National Volunteer Week was received in addition to the ongoing operational funding provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Further, \$144,727 was provided in support of the National Volunteering Conference planned for Perth in March 2020. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Conference was postponed, however, DSS acknowledged that expenditure in excess of the grant monies had already been incurred and consequently the grants were not required to be returned.

Income from our key sponsor Aon continued in FY20 with a growth of 11% in funds received. Membership fees remained steady, however, income from the sale of National Volunteer Week Merchandise saw a drop of 19% due to the cancellation of many events because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Expenditure remained consistent with the previous year except in relation to the specific projects funded by grant income. The Resource Hub development incurred an extra \$81,858 and the National Volunteer Week activities incurred \$75,000 more than the previous year.

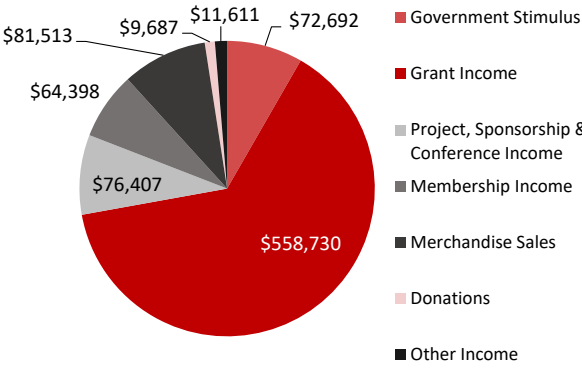
Expenses relating to Professional Services saw a significant decrease compared to FY19 when \$67,190 was incurred in relation to the constitutional changes that were made. These services were provided via probono support (Donations in-kind) from our legal partners. There were no significant legal expenses incurred in FY20.

Volunteering Australia remains in a sound financial position with retained earnings of almost \$400,000 held at 30 June 2020. The complete financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2020 and the audit report relating to those statements are available for review at [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](#) and [www.acnc.gov.au](#).

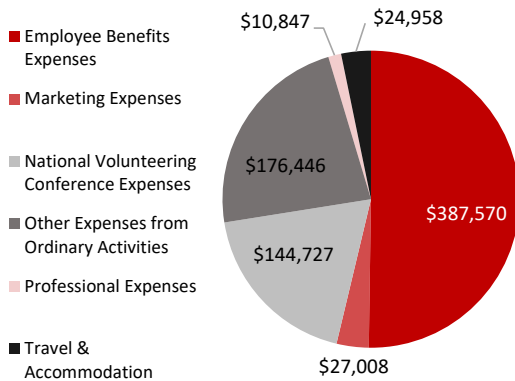
Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2020

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)	% change
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	409,459	462,357	-11%
Investment held to maturity	-	200,000	-100%
Trade and other receivables	2,748	902	205%
Inventories	10,461	11,828	-12%
Other assets	56,023	9,635	481%
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	478,691	684,722	-30%
TOTAL ASSETS	478,691	684,722	-30%
LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable	20,714	49,771	-58%
Employee benefits	9,203	11,893	-23%
Income in Advance	56,000	299,858	-81%
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	85,917	361,522	-76%
TOTAL LIABILITIES	85,917	361,522	-76%
NET ASSETS	392,774	323,200	22%
EQUITY			
Retained earnings	392,774	323,200	22%
TOTAL EQUITY	392,774	323,200	22%

Sources of Income FY20



Expenses FY20



Our Supporters and People

Patron

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Our Supporters

- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Aon
- Pro Bono Australia
- SEEK
- Hall & Wilcox
- Breaking New Ground (BNG)
- Susan Alberti AC

Our Members

As a membership organisation, Volunteering Australia draws on the expertise of our members and partners to inform policy submissions and strengthen the impact of our advocacy work.

Foundation Members

- VolunteeringACT
- The Centre for Volunteering (NSW)
- Volunteering Queensland
- Volunteering SA&NT
- Volunteering Tasmania
- Volunteering Victoria
- Volunteering WA

Associate Members

Associate Members are organisations or individuals who are current members of their State or Territory volunteering peak body.

We were delighted to represent **1,726** Associate Members at a national level during 2019-20.

Board as at 30 June 2020

Michelle Ewington, Chair
Peter Lucas, Treasurer
Kit McMahon, Secretary
Susan Alberti
Esme Bowen
Amit Jois
Tara Waniganayaka
Kerry Harris (from November 2019)
Mark Pearce (to May 2020)
Con O'Brien (Governance and Risk Committee member)

Staff

Adrienne Picone, CEO & Public Officer
(to June 2020)
Mark Pearce, Interim CEO
(from June 2020)
Lavanya Kala, Policy Manager
(to November 2019)
Sue Regan, Policy Manager
(from January 2020)
Rebecca Rowland, Office and Systems Administrator
Helen Quiggin, Finance Manager
Jenny Brain, Communications Coordinator
(to June 2020)
Fiona Doyle, Communications Coordinator
(from June 2020)
Kylie Hughes, Communications Consultant
(from January 2020)
Vivian Chan, Volunteer Research and Policy Analyst
Emily Wobcke, Volunteer Research and Policy Analyst
Dominic O'Neill, Volunteer Research and Policy Analyst



Members of the Volunteering Australia Board and staff taking part in the Wave Your Appreciation for Volunteers campaign during National Volunteer Week 2020.



Supporting Volunteering Australia and its members for over 20 years

Aon are proud to continue our long-standing relationship with Volunteering Australia and its members throughout this difficult year.

Contact our NFP team for a complimentary insurance health check

aon.com.au/va | 1800 123 266

au.nfp@aon.com

Level 2, 202 City Walk, Canberra ACT 2601

PO Box 128, Civic Square ACT 2608

P: 0480 258 723

E: hello@volunteeringaustralia.org

© Copyright 2020 Volunteering Australia

