

# Annual Report

## 2021-2022



# 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 2021-2022

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It is a pleasure to provide a message in support of Volunteering Australia's Annual Report.

In my role, Linda and I often have the opportunity to witness firsthand the incredible generosity of our nation's volunteers and the remarkable impact they have on our communities. Indeed, as I write we have recently returned from visits to flood-affected communities in northern New South Wales, regional Victoria and north-west Tasmania. On every flood ground, we saw and met with volunteers helping people in need.

Volunteers on disaster grounds or on the ground in communities during better times are a very visual representation of selfless service. Away from the spotlight but advocating strongly and working tirelessly is Volunteering Australia. And, by any measure, it has had a remarkable year.

Volunteering Australia has led the development of Australia's first National Strategy for Volunteering in a decade, allowing people to share their views on the current state of volunteering and their vision for the future.

Recognising that technology is changing the way Australians engage, it has implemented a Volunteer Management Online Project to improve volunteer management and increase participation in volunteering.

Its ongoing engagement with the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the collection of volunteering data has helped support the volunteering ecosystem.

And its 'Better together' message during National Volunteer Week helped raise awareness of what we can achieve by working together: a more caring and supportive society.

I'm proud to be Patron of Volunteering Australia and part of a community that comprises people who, in ways big and small and in all manner of endeavours, volunteer their time, expertise and passion to make us a stronger, more inclusive and compassionate nation.



# Foreword from the Minister



**The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP**  
**Minister for Social Services**

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A strong and vibrant volunteering sector is a reflection of our collective efforts to strengthen community connections and the bonds between us.

Australians around the nation give their time generously to create a better Australia and their impact shouldn't be taken for granted.

Whether it is picking up the phone to check in on someone, or volunteering to share skills – and picking up some new ones on the way – the benefits to society and to the individual are profound.

Never more so than during the challenges of the pandemic and the emergency weather events that we have recently experienced.

Australians pitched in and helped out their mates.

Volunteers are crucial to an inclusive society. Whether that is providing support for people who may feel isolated or have extra needs, or as a means for people to forge connections in their local community.

The spirit of volunteering goes to the heart of the Albanese Government's vision of a better future.

It goes to the heart of the Australian spirit.

That's why the Albanese Government is committed to ensuring that volunteering organisations are provided the best opportunities to continue their vital work into the future.

This year the Government will provide \$10 million in Volunteer Grants to support the efforts of volunteers, and encourage the inclusion of greater numbers of disadvantaged people through volunteering.

It's also why we are choosing to partner on a range of projects with Volunteering Australia that will re-imagine the future of the sector.

The National Strategy for Volunteering is a critical part of this vision. The insights will provide a core evidence base for future directions.

It is a huge piece of work and I congratulate everyone involved.

Finally, I'd like to end by thanking the people at the centre of this.

The volunteers who generously give up their time to support our communities and create a better Australia.

You represent the best of our nation.

# Chair's Report



As the national peak body, Volunteering Australia is guided by our vision of a stronger, more connected, and resilient Australian community through volunteering.

As 2021-22 witnessed another period of societal change in which the role and expectations of volunteering evolved, I'm pleased to report that Volunteering Australia too, continued to evolve to meet the needs of our members and the broader volunteering ecosystem.

At a governance level, Volunteering Australia has deepened the integration of its strategic risks into our operational oversight and assurance frameworks. Sustainability remains a key focus for Volunteering Australia, as it does for our members and the broader volunteering ecosystem. In an increasingly unpredictable world where the challenges faced by Australian communities are complex and diverse, the commitment of volunteers provides comfort, support, hope, and a sense of shared purpose.

The development of the National Strategy for Volunteering, which Volunteering Australia is leading, and is being co-designed with the Australian volunteering ecosystem, will provide a blueprint for community participation and volunteering for the next decade. With a profound understanding of not just the importance of volunteering to building strong and resilient communities, but also the declining numbers of formal volunteers, the National Strategy for Volunteering provides a framework for the innovative solutions needed to increase both the diversity and number of volunteers.

Whilst the National Strategy will provide insights and actions, it is incumbent upon Australian institutions including governments, corporates, and philanthropists, together with all members of the volunteering ecosystem, to ensure support and appropriate resourcing for volunteering into the future. Volunteering is an incredibly rewarding experience that offers opportunities to connect with, inspire, and give back to community. As was the theme for National Volunteer Week in 2022, we are, 'Better Together'.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for the ongoing support from our members, stakeholders, and benefactors. I would like to thank my board - volunteers all - for creating a clarity of strategy that has enabled us to deliver against our ambition to advance our nation through the shared experience of volunteering. To the Volunteering Australia team, led by Mark Pearce (CEO) and Dr Sue Regan (Deputy CEO), thank you for your hard work in serving the volunteering ecosystem. Finally, I pay sincere tribute to the vital role each and every volunteer plays in communities across this great country in the service of others.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Drew'.

Professor Michael E. Drew  
Chair

# CEO's Report



It gives me great pleasure to present Volunteering Australia's 2021-22 Annual Report. Whilst at the time of writing, the disruptions, and restrictions we all experienced because of COVID-19 have eased, Australia's social and economic landscape has changed over the past 12 months, and the effects of these changes are being felt in the volunteering ecosystem.

Although the rate of formal volunteer participation has increased slightly, it remains well below pre-COVID-19 levels. Understanding and addressing the challenges faced by volunteers and the broader volunteering ecosystem is a matter of high priority, and Volunteering Australia has the privilege of leading the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering, a key piece of national social architecture aimed at providing a blueprint for volunteering for the next 10 years.

Volunteering Australia was active in making submissions to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and to the Disability Royal Commission. Volunteering Australia's reports and submissions were referenced by Royal Commissions and used in shaping the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

With a view to deepening the research effort and evidence base supporting volunteering, Volunteering Australia established the National Volunteering Research Network. The network comprises over 90 members from universities and institutions throughout the country. Furthermore, Volunteering Australia is involved in two successful Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grants, totalling over \$500,000 of new funding to volunteering research.

Developing strategic partnerships remains a key focus for Volunteering Australia. We were pleased to welcome Unilever, through the Streets brand, as a Platinum Sponsor, joining long term Platinum Sponsor, AON.

I acknowledge the importance and support of Volunteering Australia's Foundation Members, the state and territory volunteering peak bodies. In a year of significant change, Volunteering Australia's Foundation Members have been essential to informing and strengthening national policy and advocacy positions.

In a year marked by historically high levels of stakeholder engagement and policy, research and advocacy activity by the national volunteering peak body, Volunteering Australia's workforce has grown significantly to meet the needs of the ecosystem. I'm proud to lead a team of highly capable, deeply engaged professionals who bring commitment and insight to ensuring Volunteering Australia is an effective representative for the interests of Australia's volunteering ecosystem.

Finally, I would like to thank the Volunteering Australia Board. Led by the Volunteering Australia Chair, Professor Michael E. Drew, the Volunteering Australia Board has provided insightful strategic guidance and leadership to meet the evolving needs of our organisation.

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.

## Vision

A strong, connected, and resilient Australian community through volunteering.

## Purpose

To lead, strengthen, and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

## Principles

### Leadership

We are the recognised national peak body for volunteering in Australia and play an important leadership role among our members, the ecosystem, and to the community more widely.

### Collaboration

We work hard to build strong, productive, and mutually beneficial partnerships, and believe the best results arise from effective collaboration with governments, businesses, for-purpose organisations, and individuals.

### Trustworthy

Our priorities, decisions, policies, and activities are based on sound evidence and credible research, and we actively seek to support and encourage the research that is needed to advance volunteering.

### Sustainable

We understand and appreciate the importance of good governance, financial management and reporting to maintain our reputation as a credible, trustworthy, and sustainable organisation.

## Strategic Pillars

Our strategic pillars provide the foundation for our overarching vision.

- Policy, Advocacy and Research
- Leadership and Sector Development
- Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
- Organisational Sustainability and Resilience

# Policy, Advocacy and Research

Throughout 2021-22 we have advocated that volunteering builds resilient communities, offers opportunities for social, economic, and cultural inclusion, and improves our health and wellbeing, and yet persistently governments under invest in volunteering.

Volunteering Australia will continue to advocate for the recognition and support of the vital role of volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and volunteer support services as the national voice for volunteering.

## Volunteering and Australia's Crisis Resilience

With flooding, fires and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, the past few years have undoubtedly been tough for all Australians. In honour of National Volunteer Week, Volunteering Australia published a report providing evidence that volunteers are essential to Australia's crisis resilience.

The research examined the volume and breadth of volunteers playing crucial roles in communities during natural disasters and COVID-19 outbreaks. Available data indicated that Australia's crisis resilience is supported by well over one million volunteers of which more than 400,000 work directly in emergency response and relief. Our nation's volunteers are the country's backbone during crisis and emergency.

## 2022-23 Federal Budget

The increasing frequency and scale of emergencies in Australia is creating the need for an effective, coordinated approach for the involvement of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in disasters.

Volunteering Australia sought recognition of the role volunteers play in emergencies in the 2022-23 Federal Budget. Our pre-budget submission recommended the 2022-23 Federal Budget invest in a nationally co-ordinated approach to volunteer engagement in emergencies.

We were delighted to again be invited to attend the budget lock-up and provide a summary analysis of the key budget measures relevant to volunteering. The budget confirmed ongoing spending for



Volunteer Grants and the Volunteer Management Activity. However, we saw a missed opportunity as the 2022-23 Federal Budget overlooked investment that would enable volunteering during emergencies and in their aftermath.

## Federal Election

Coinciding with National Volunteer Week, the last week of the Federal Election campaign saw thousands of volunteers across Australia generously give their time to supporting democracy.

During the Federal Election campaign, we encouraged everyone to 'Vote for Volunteers' by asking their candidates to commit to a positive agenda on volunteering, including the implementation of a sector-led and whole of government National Strategy for Volunteering.



**Vote for Volunteers**



## The COVID-19 pandemic

In the past year, we continued to advocate for policies to support safe volunteering during the ongoing pandemic including releasing several position statements. We asked the Federal Government to explicitly consider volunteers in decision making and to ensure that information regarding volunteering was easily accessible.

We regularly updated COVID-19 information and resources for both volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

Our COVID-19 impact research program continued with the release of the research paper 'Continuity and change: volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic'. This paper showed there is more to the experience of volunteers during the pandemic than figures alone can capture. Based on 800 qualitative responses gathered as part of the Life in Australia™ survey, the research revealed a striking picture of diversity and resilience.

Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce shared insights from this research as part of the 'Let's Talk Volunteering' webinar series presented by the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE). The series aimed to enhance our understanding of global trends in volunteering by bringing together some key global research.

Volunteering Australia was proud to share the Australian experience of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for the International Association for Volunteer Effort's (IAVE) research, Leadership for Volunteering: The COVID-19 Experience. Gathering insights from 70 respondents across 67 countries, the report examined how COVID-19 has impacted on the strategic leadership role of national volunteering leadership organisations in advocacy, development and volunteer mobilisation.

## Volunteering in Australia research

Volunteering Australia is leading the Volunteering in Australia research project, a core evidence base on contemporary volunteering in Australia, to inform the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

A consortium made up of researchers from the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods, Curtin University, Griffith University, and the University of Western Australia is undertaking this landmark research on the state of volunteering in Australia.

The first research output from the Volunteering in Australia research project was released during National Volunteer Week. Volunteering Australia and the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods provided an Early Insights report which focused on the changes that occurred over the COVID-19 period, bringing our understanding of the current state of volunteering up to date (to April 2022) and starting to identify the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on volunteering.

Volunteering Australia, in partnership with Curtin University, Griffith University, and the University of Western Australia, conducted the largest ever survey of volunteer involving organisations in Australia. Over 1200 organisations responded to the survey and had their say on the future of volunteering.

## The Story Project

The Scanlon Foundation is funding Volunteering Australia to undertake research looking at the experiences of community participation and volunteering in multicultural Australia. The Story Project aims to recognise the breadth of volunteering that takes place within different communities in Australia, and to profile the forms of activities and practices that may be unrecognised or unacknowledged for falling outside our dominant conceptions of volunteering.

We invited participants to take part as case studies to showcase the diversity of volunteering and look forward to releasing this rich piece of research.



## Our research agenda

Our aims for 2021-22 have been to ensure our current policy and advocacy work is informed by research evidence and to lay the foundations for future research. We have pursued these aims through internal research and data analysis and leveraging external relationships.

Volunteering Australia established a new National Volunteering Research Network (NVRN). The first meeting of the National Volunteering Research Network was held on 23 September 2021 with 40 attendees including Co-Chairs Professor Kirsten Holmes and Associate Professor Leonie Lockstone-Binney. The NVRN has now grown to over 90 members, from universities and institutions across Australia.

The network aims to facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge between researchers and members of the wider volunteering ecosystem. The NVRN should lead to greater collaboration and enhance research translation and policy engagement to advance volunteering in the Australian community.

We are a partner organisation on two Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage projects, which are both progressing well.

Developing a National Rural Volunteering Roadmap is a four-year study investigating the structural, demographic and organisational factors that influence rural volunteering. It will develop a National Rural Volunteering Roadmap for sustaining rural volunteering in Australia.

Social isolation and volunteering of older Chinese immigrants in Australia, will make an important contribution to an under-researched field—how to support socially isolated older CALD immigrants to be more socially engaged through volunteering.

## Our advocacy

Volunteering Australia actively engages in a range of advocacy and campaigns. We aim for our work to be representative of the views of the volunteer movement, by ensuring we advocate for volunteer rights, and support innovative, meaningful and best practice volunteering.

Volunteering Australia has engaged with and contributed evidence to several inquiries. We make submissions on government policy and other public policy matters that impact on or have relevance for volunteering.

In the last year, we have advocated for the vital role volunteers play as the nation's unpaid workforce in fields including aged care, disability support, veterans' care, and mental health. Volunteers make a unique contribution and are essential to these workforces and deserve better recognition and investment.

We contributed evidence in submissions to the NDIS National Workforce Plan: 2021-2025, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2021-2031.

Volunteers are at the forefront of advocating for action on climate change and supporting communities affected by catastrophic climate events. By signing the Community Sector Climate Change Declaration, Volunteering Australia stands alongside these volunteers and supports urgent collective action to address climate change.

## Advocating for inclusive volunteering

Our ambition is for volunteering to be inclusive of all members of the Australian community. We are seeking to overcome barriers and leverage current opportunities, so we can reimagine volunteering for all Australians, with a focus on people with disability, First Nations people, newly arrived migrants and young people.

Volunteering Australia has initiated an Indigenous Policy and Practice Working Group (IPPWG) as a discussion platform to further policy engagements as well as inclusive work practices with regard to First Nations people. The objective of IPPWG is to centre the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from metropolitan, regional, and remote Australia in our policy making, and to learn from their insights on social and economic participation within their communities.

We have contributed submissions to government consultations including the development of the Remote Engagement Program by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the consultation on the design of the Indigenous Skills and Employment Program.

Volunteering Australia is actively advocating for the inclusion of volunteering in national strategies and processes relating to people with disability. Volunteering Australia welcomed the launch of Australia's Disability Strategy and urged the government to collaborate with the volunteering ecosystem to ensure volunteering is more inclusive of people with disability and align the strategy with the development of the new National Strategy for Volunteering.

## Working together to protect volunteers

Together with Justice Connect, we welcomed reforms to federal laws on sexual harassment passed by Parliament. Many volunteers across Australia now have the legal right to make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission about sexual harassment or sex-based discrimination. This inclusion of volunteers in sexual harassment protections was part of a key recommendation made by Justice Connect and Volunteering Australia in our joint 2019 submission to the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces.

We were pleased to see the inclusion of volunteers in sexual harassment protections as a result of speaking up for volunteers' rights. However, there is still work to be done to protect all volunteers. The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) shows more than half of Australia's charities are run entirely by volunteers. Disappointingly, these reforms still leave many volunteers with no protection.



## Fact Sheets and Evidence Reviews

Our highly popular Data Factsheets and Evidence Reviews aim to interpret and synthesise volunteering data and research for use in our and the State and Territory peak policy and advocacy work and to inform the work of the wider volunteering ecosystem.

We have produced several factsheets drawing primarily on new official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Our fact sheets can assist with program development, funding applications and advocacy.

Our series of Evidence Reviews will present summaries of academic literature, highlight key findings, and analyse the state of contemporary research in priority areas which relate to volunteering.

Evidence Insights: Volunteering and mental health is the first of the series. It reviews research on the effects of volunteering on mental health. It draws upon local and international studies including qualitative and quantitative research, while focusing on the effects of volunteering on the mental health of volunteers themselves. The review concludes with a discussion of priorities for future research and the policy implications of the findings.

# Policy, Advocacy and Research

## Our Impact

### **Inclusion of volunteering in policy consultations and reports**

Volunteering Australia was invited to provide evidence to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention following our submission. Volunteers were recognised as an integral part of the mental health workforce in the final report including a recommendation that the Australian Government formally acknowledge the value of the volunteer mental health workforce.

### **Invited to participate in policy inquiries and processes**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has engaged with Volunteering Australia on an ongoing basis, seeking our advice on COVID impact data; the review of the General Social Survey; and the volunteering data in the Time Use Survey.

### **Our submissions and reports referenced in work of others**

Social Ventures Australia and the Centre for Social Impact Partners in Recovery series includes the impact of COVID-19 on volunteering and incorporates Volunteering Australia's research.

### **Inclusion of volunteering in government strategies and policies**

The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy published in November 2021 references the role of volunteers supporting child wellbeing. Volunteering Australia provided material during the strategy development.

### **Changes to laws and regulations to better support volunteering**

COVID-19 policies and practices were amended following advocacy from Volunteering Australia. For example, volunteers were included in the priority categories for the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out following our advocacy.

### **New funding for research on volunteering**

The Australian Government has provided funding for the Volunteering in Australia research. Two ARC Linkages have been successful, totalling over \$500,000 of new funding to volunteering research. We secured funding from the Scanlon Foundation for research on volunteering in multicultural Australia (The Story Project).

### **New networks to support volunteering**

The National Volunteering Research Network was established in November 2021. Over 90 members have joined, from universities and institutions across Australia.

The Indigenous Policy & Practice Working Group was established, with good representation and collaboration across the peak network.

### **Recognition of volunteering in government staffing or processes**

The Department of Health is progressing Recommendation 44 on volunteering from the Aged Care Royal Commission and has dedicated resources to progress this. The Aged Care volunteering team and Volunteering Australia have regular meetings.

# Leadership and Sector Development



## *Towards a* **National Strategy for Volunteering**

### **National Strategy for Volunteering**

Volunteering Australia is leading the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering, to be designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem, which will provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. The funding of the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering by the Australian Department of Social Services recognises the vital contribution of volunteers to the nation's wellbeing.

An independent National Strategy for Volunteering Council was established to provide strategic oversight to the National Strategy project. Council representatives come from across the volunteering ecosystem and have extensive experience working and volunteering in for-purpose organisations.

We received overwhelming interest in our Working Groups including the Research Working Group, the Volunteer Management Working Group and the Corporate Volunteering Working Group. These Working Groups ensure the National Strategy for Volunteering is well informed by research, best-practice volunteer involvement, and the role of corporate volunteering.

We have engaged extensively with stakeholders to ensure the process of designing the National Strategy is inclusive, accessible, and representative. We thank everyone who shared their views on the current state of volunteering and their vision for the future during our Discovery Phase. The vastness of the volunteering ecosystem was reflected in our consultations with 400 stakeholders. Challenges and opportunities varied by stakeholder type, size, and geography and there was rarely consensus across discussions. This speaks to the diversity of the ways volunteering takes place in our communities and how it is resourced and supported.

As we look to the future of volunteering, we look forward to working with the Federal Government to deliver the National Strategy for Volunteering to be launched at the National Volunteering Conference in February 2023.

### **Volunteering Management Online Project**

Volunteering Australia has been funded by the Australian Government, Department of Social Services, to implement the Volunteer Management Online Project (VMOP) to support and enhance volunteer management and increase participation in volunteering.

The project vision is to provide a nationally consistent, online approach to volunteer recruitment and management, including online tools, training, and resources. This will support Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to increase the number, retention, and diversity of volunteers across Australia, and build capacity to successfully recruit and retain volunteers online.

### **Incoming Government**

In June 2022, we welcomed the Albanese Government and the new Commonwealth Ministers. Our Incoming Government Brief highlighted the importance of volunteering and discussed the essential role that volunteers play in the following seven priorities of the incoming Government:

- Strengthening charities and non-profits
- Improving aged care
- Enhancing support for people with disability
- Improving disaster readiness
- Protecting the environment
- Advancing First Nations
- Supporting regional communities

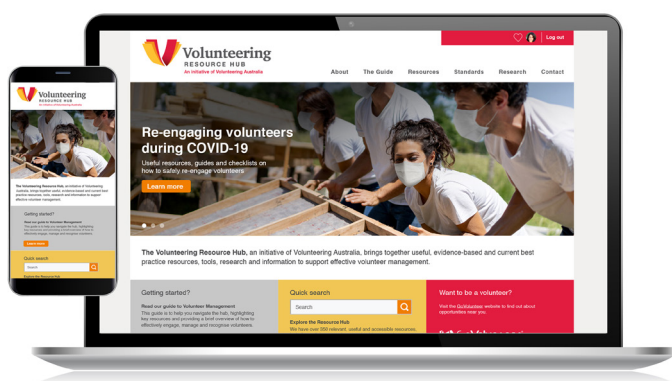
We advocated that urgent action was needed to reinvigorate volunteering including an immediate Volunteering COVID-19 Recovery Plan to enable volunteers to re-engage safely, support the adaptation of volunteering programs, and facilitate the recruitment of new volunteers to ensure services and programs can recover.



## National Volunteering Conference

We were delighted to announce the next National Volunteering Conference is to be held in February 2023 in Canberra. The National Volunteering Conference provides a platform for not-for-profit and corporate leaders, government representatives, academics and researchers, volunteer management professionals, and volunteers to come together to address emerging issues of high priority.

We will come together for the first time since 2018 after the 2020 National Volunteering Conference was postponed and eventually cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be an event not to be missed as we launch the National Strategy for Volunteering.



## Volunteering Resource Hub

We celebrated the Volunteering Resource Hub's first anniversary of being operational in March 2022. The Volunteering Resource Hub brings together useful, evidence-based and current best practice resources to support effective volunteer management while supporting volunteer managers to embrace the National Standards of Volunteer Involvement in their everyday practice.

In 2021-22 over 8,300 users accessed the Volunteering Resource Hub with 36,000 page views and 9,700 file downloads. Since its launch over 290 users accounts have been created.

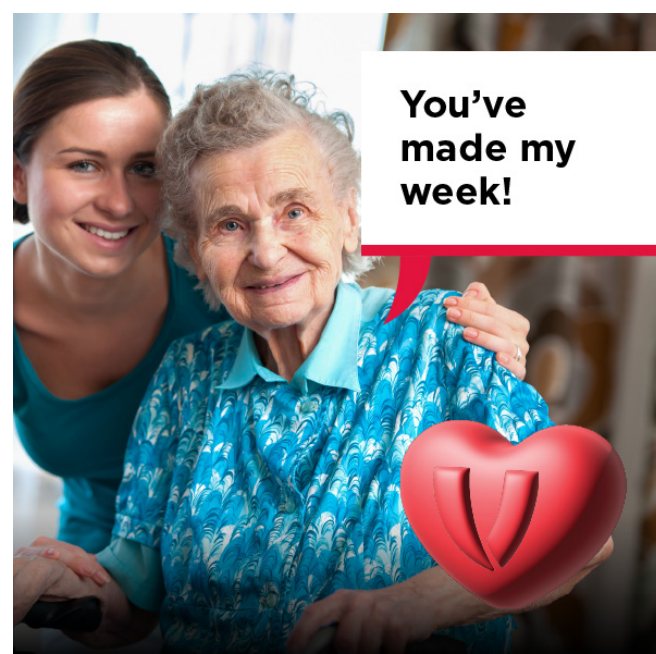
During the year we updated the Quick Guide to Volunteer Management, available on the Volunteering Resource Hub, with information on volunteering during a pandemic.

## Re-engaging Volunteers into Residential Aged Care

Volunteering Australia is actively advocating on behalf of volunteers including those in community and residential aged care. Nurturing and investing in the volunteering workforce will help ensure older people get the care and support they need and deserve.

The Re-engaging Volunteers into Residential Aged Care Facilities Program was an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and was proudly delivered by the volunteering peak bodies. The program has been established nationwide to provide non-clinical social and emotional support to older people living in Residential Aged Care Facilities and re-engage volunteers with the aged care sector.

Volunteering Australia worked with the Department of Health and the volunteering peak bodies to encourage alignment with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.



# Leadership and Sector Development

## Our Impact

### **Funding secured for key national infrastructure and sector specific projects**

The Australian Government has provided funding for the Volunteering in Australia research, the development of the new National Strategy for Volunteering, and the Volunteering Management Online Project, and further development of the Volunteering Resource Hub. The Department of Health funded the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies to deliver the Re-engaging Volunteers into Residential Aged Care initiative.

### **Progress towards the delivery of major projects**

National Strategy for Volunteering – From April to June we heard from 400 stakeholders through various means about their thoughts on the current state of volunteering in Australia, strengths, challenges, and ideas for the future. This included 86 engagements, 276 organisations represented and 44 open submissions.

The Volunteer Management Online Project has progressed with a high calibre of experts joining the project governance committees and engagement taking place across the volunteering ecosystem.

### **Partnerships and alliances across the volunteering ecosystem**

Streets and Volunteering Australia have come together with the ambition to bring communities together through volunteering to create a more diverse, inclusive and equitable world for everybody.

Volunteering Australia has embarked on several projects, with the Australian Government Department of Social Services, seeking to overcome barriers and leverage current opportunities so we can reimagine volunteering for all Australians.

Volunteering Australia, in alliance with our most respected charities as a member of Hands Off Our Charities, challenged regulations that threatened charities that speak out on behalf of the communities they serve.

### **Use of resources**

During 2021-22 over 8,300 users accessed the Volunteering Resource Hub with 36,000 page views and 9,700 file downloads. Since its launch over 290 users accounts have been created.

The Continuous Professional Development Program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers (CPD PLV) is a formal avenue to improve your knowledge, skills and future employability. Endorsed by Volunteering Australia CPD PLV is currently offered by the Centre for Volunteering (NSW), Volunteering Queensland, Volunteering Tasmania, Volunteering Victoria and Volunteering WA.

### **Regularly getting a ‘seat at the table’**

In 2021-22, Volunteering Australia participated in the following national advisory groups: Charities Crisis Cabinet; Emergency Relief National Coordination Group; Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group; Community Services Advisory Group (CSAG).

Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce was appointed to the Emergency Relief National Coordination Group to provide a voice for volunteering as the group advises Government on how the response to Emergency Relief can assist individuals in need across Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a member of the Charities Crisis Cabinet, Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce supported an Open Letter to All Australian Governments, asking governments to engage with charities, enable us to do our work, and serve our communities. This was particularly important at a time when so many more Australians are relying on the services of charities and their volunteers.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

## National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week is a chance for all of us to celebrate and recognise the vital work of volunteers and to say thank you. This year's theme 'Better Together' celebrated the power of volunteering to bring people together, build communities and create a better society for everyone.

We were moved by the dedication, care and community spirit portrayed in every single post dedicated to volunteers this National Volunteer Week. Our social media was flooded with heartfelt posts of gratitude for volunteers reinforcing our purpose to lead, strengthen, and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

Our media campaign highlighting volunteers as Australia's backbone in times of crisis achieved 806 items of coverage, reaching an estimated 37.5 million people across Australia. We had 39 items on television and over 700 items on radio including coverage on Today Extra, Sky News, Nine News Sydney, ABC News Breakfast, SBS World News, ABC Radio National Life Matters and an opinion piece in the Daily Telegraph.

In leading National Volunteer Week, Volunteering Australia works in collaboration with the state and territory volunteering peak bodies to set the theme, develop collateral and coordinate merchandise for the sector.

The National Volunteer Week Resources are available for everyone to use, and we encourage all volunteer involving organisations to proudly promote the celebrations and use the resources widely to help increase the awareness of the vital role volunteers play in our lives.

The Volunteering Australia shop allows volunteer involving organisations to say thank you to your volunteers with high quality, volunteer-specific gifts while supporting Volunteering Australia in advocating for the volunteering sector in Australia.

National Volunteer Week was supported again in 2022 by Aon Australia. Aon has been a proud supporting partner of Volunteering Australia for over 20 years, and we thank them for their continued support. Aon was joined by Streets in a new

partnership with Volunteering Australia to celebrate the impact volunteers make in our community. We also acknowledge the support of The Australian Department of Social Services.



## Better Together stories

After the success of the theme for National Volunteer Week we launched the Better Together story series. These stories demonstrate that volunteering is changing communities for the better.

The first in the Better Together series focused on the important work of Bloodbikes Australia's 400 volunteers across the country. Other examples included highlighting the critical role volunteers play in charities and to celebrate Pride Month, we recognised the power of volunteering to create inclusive communities as we acknowledged volunteer involving organisations supporting LGBTIQ+ communities.

## Celebrating volunteering with the ABC

The ABC partnered with Volunteering Australia to encourage everyone to come together and give back through volunteering. As part of the ABC's 90-year milestone celebrations, the #ABC90for90 initiative encouraged the nation to support volunteering in Australia by pledging 90 minutes to support their local community.

The #ABC90for90 campaign for community kindness was a success. The final total of pledges by Australian's came to 229,860 minutes of volunteering, well exceeding the goal of 100,000 minutes.

The campaign shared stories of volunteering, highlighting the many benefits of community participation for both individuals and our communities. Volunteering Australia congratulates ABC Australia for 90 years of connecting the community to news, stories, and each other.

Thank you for boosting awareness and inspiring Australians with the power of volunteering.

## Inspiring volunteering in Sport

Volunteering Australia continues to work in partnership with Sport Australia to bring the sectors together and work towards securing the future of Australia's sport volunteers. The partnership aims to explore opportunities for collaboration between sport and volunteer organisations across the sector and examine ways to enhance the volunteer experience.

The inaugural Sport Volunteer Coalition is made up of experts from the sports industry, government and volunteering working together to transform the sport volunteer experience and promote the value of volunteering in sport. Volunteering Australia's National Strategy Director, Sarah Wilson serves on the Coalition to bring greater awareness to the critical role volunteers play in enabling sport to take place across Australia.

## Volunteering Australia in the media

The past year has seen an increase in the number of media enquiries. Below are some highlights from the year:

Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce spoke to the ABC about the strong connection between volunteering and improved mental health as demonstrated in our research.

Volunteering Australia's Policy Director, Sue Regan spoke to the ABC about the importance of leading the development of a new National Strategy for Volunteering, as the Black Summer bushfires forced a rethink of volunteer firefighting.





Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce shared his predictions for volunteering in 2022 with ProBono News. “I believe 2022 can be a year of positive change for volunteering and the social sector.”

In the article ‘Budget reveals there is no plan for Disaster Volunteering’ in the Budget Forum 2022, Volunteering Australia’s Policy Officer, Jack McDermont addressed the implications of the lack of investment in volunteering while providing suggestions to improve clarity in existing national disaster arrangements and better support for emergency management volunteering.

Following our article on the Volunteering Resource Hub in Issue 9 of IAVE’s Volunteering Together magazine, Issue 10 included another article by Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce on the development of Australia’s first National Strategy for Volunteering in ten years.

## Celebrating the power of volunteering

National Student Volunteer Week celebrated and acknowledged the impact that student volunteers make through volunteering. The event also aims to empower students and young people to rise up and participate in their local communities. In recognition of this special event, we released a Youth Volunteering fact sheet providing key statistics about youth volunteering in Australia.

Thank you to everyone involved in recognising the vital work of young volunteers. A special thank you to Volunteering Queensland for managing this great event in collaboration with Volunteering Australia and the state and territory volunteering peak bodies.

As an official International Volunteer Managers Day supporter, we acknowledged the vital work that volunteer managers and coordinators do to ensure safe and effective volunteering. We celebrated the

profession of volunteer leadership in the lead up to the special day and Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce shared a personal message of thanks for all volunteer managers and coordinators.

International Volunteer Day celebrated the millions of volunteers from around the world and encouraged people to ‘Volunteer now for our common future’. We acknowledged that as we look to the future of volunteering in Australia with the design of a new National Strategy for Volunteering, it is important to recognise the critical work of volunteers and the impact that they make in communities, not just in Australia but around the world.

## Shining the spotlight on volunteering

We aim to shine the spotlight on the power of volunteering through our communication on social media including supporting events throughout the year. Below are a few examples:

We partnered with Mental Health Australia for Australia’s World Mental Health Day campaign and shared the integral role volunteering plays across the mental health landscape, in prevention, intervention, recovery, and resilience.

Volunteering Australia was named a Very Neighbourly Organisation by Relationships Australia in the lead up to Neighbour Day. We understand the importance of being neighbourly, as research continues to demonstrate the mental health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering including combating social isolation and loneliness.

During National Safe Work Month, we highlighted how volunteers are a large and vital part of the nation’s workforce.

For Harmony Week, we shared early insights from the Story Project - a research project looking at the experiences of community participation and volunteering in multicultural Australia.

In recognition of International Day of People with Disability, we highlighted resources aimed at supporting Volunteer Managers and Coordinators to engage volunteers with disability.

On International Women’s Day we shared our latest factsheet exploring the key statistics on Volunteering and Gender: changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During Social Inclusion Week we highlighted the important role volunteering can play as a pathway to social inclusion.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

## Our Impact

### Brand and reputation strong

Overall, 806 items of coverage were secured reaching an estimated 37.5 million people across all states and territories of Australia. The estimated advertising value equivalent was over \$1.1 million. The number of items exceeded all previous National Volunteer Week media campaigns and increased by 18 per cent from 2021.

The #ABC90for90 campaign for community kindness was a success. The final total of pledges by Australian's came to 229,860 minutes of volunteering, well exceeding the goal of 100,000 minutes.

### Leading collaborative forums across the volunteering ecosystem

Policy Group – met throughout 2021-22 – all submissions and position papers were endorsed by all the state and territory peak volunteering bodies.

The National Marketing and Communications Network – met throughout 2021-22 – collaborating on national events and initiatives including the Residential Aged Care Facilities Program.

### Volunteering Australia approached to give speeches/presentations

Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce was pleased to speak about engaging and supporting volunteers at the virtual Good Things Foundation Australia Digital Nation Conference. The greater use of technology presents an exciting vehicle for volunteers to engage with community in ways not previously possible.



# Organisational Sustainability and Resilience

As a result of increased funding, to deliver projects which will provide strategic leadership to the volunteering ecosystem, Volunteering Australia has experienced significant growth over the last year. Leading the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering, the Volunteering in Australia research and the Volunteering Management Online Project has further strengthened our standing as the nationally representative volunteering peak as recognised by government and the broader volunteering ecosystem.

As we all have experienced, COVID-19 truly changed the way we work in Australia. Volunteering Australia prides itself on its continued support of flexible work arrangements, strong inter-connection and collaboration across all business portfolios, fortnightly team meetings, and a strong focus on creating a mentally healthy workplace.

We recognise volunteer involvement as integral to its operations and is committed to run a safe, supported and sustainable volunteering program that meets the needs of the organisation and our volunteers.

## The growth of Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia's workforce has grown during 2021-22. While we had 9 staff with a total FTE of 6.6 on 1 July 2021, this number had grown to 11 with a total FTE of 9.3 on 30 June 2022.

Naturally with the growth we've experienced, our inclusive workplace culture has remained a high priority. A Governance and Operations Manager was hired to oversee the organisation's governance, planning, human resources, IT and stakeholder engagement systems, policies and procedures. We are always striving to do better and be better; we never want to just stick with the status quo.

Volunteering Australia utilised this opportunity to advance and promote our flexible and family-friendly approach to working. When businesses asked staff to return to the workplace, Volunteering Australia gave its staff the option. The result was a hybrid working model where staff can choose to work in the office, or from home, or a mixture

of both. We continue to recognise and reward outputs, not hours spent in the office.

To support this growth and ensure our policies and procedures remain fit-for-purpose, Volunteering Australia committed to undertaking a thorough internal review of our policies and procedures. This review will also ensure our policies and procedures are reflective of the contemporary Volunteering Australia and what we value. The review is due to be completed in February 2023, to align with the inherent strategic goals which will come out of the National Strategy for Volunteering.



## The Volunteering Australia Board

The Volunteering Australia Board of is made up of up to nine Board Members and is a skills-based Board of highly intelligent and prominent people who have a passion for the work we do and the power of volunteering in our communities.

Professor Michael E. Drew was announced as the newly elected Chair of the Volunteering Australia Board in July 2021. Michelle Ewington handed over the role after being elected Chair in 2018.

Michelle led a journey of change for the organisation since joining the Board in 2013. We acknowledge Michelle for her contribution and service to Volunteering Australia. Michelle's leadership as Chair of the Board was instrumental in guiding Volunteering Australia during the transition to an independent Board of governance. This considerable change has shaped the future of the national peak body for volunteering.



We also acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Peter Lucas who completed seven years of service. Peter Lucas was elected to the Board in 2014 and saw the transition to a skills-based Board as Treasurer for six years.

Also in July 2021, the Board endorsed Volunteering Australia's Strategic Plan 2021-2024. A culmination of hard work and collaboration between the Board, Leadership Team, and stakeholders, the Strategic Plan informs the direction of Volunteering Australia until 2024.

The Volunteering Australia Annual General Meeting was held on 26 November 2021, and we were pleased to welcome three new directors - Kim Hughes, Claudine Lombard and Amy Williams - and officially farewell Michelle Ewington at her last meeting.

## Staff Scholarships

Deputy CEO and Policy Director, Dr Sue Regan was awarded a scholarship to the McKinsey Executive Leadership Program for 2022. Scholarships were awarded to not-for-profit executive leaders to join the leadership development program and study alongside 200 executives from the private, public, not-for-profit and social sectors across Australia.

Governance and Operations Manager, Carla Albrighton was awarded a scholarship to the Australian Institute of Company Directors 'Governance Foundations for Non-For-Profits Directors' course. By attending this program, Carla will gain valuable skills to support Volunteering Australia to adhere to best-practice governance principles.

## Foundation Members

We continued to work collaboratively with our seven Foundation Members through regular network meetings, relevant working and steering committees, 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.

# Organisational Sustainability and Resilience

## Our Impact

### **Following contemporary best practice and being mindful of emerging trends, risks, and opportunities across all areas of the business**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Volunteering Australia was able to effectively minimise the potential business interruptions and ensure the safety of its staff by enacting its business continuity plan and ensuring staff had the tools and resources necessary to be able to work from home.

### **Policies and procedures are fit for purpose, scalable and regularly reviewed**

Volunteering Australia conducted an in-depth analysis of its corporate governance processes and systems to ensure alignment with contemporary good practice. We recognise there is no 'one-size-fits all' approach to good governance, however we are confident our current systems and processes are robust and enable Volunteering Australia to keep abreast of emerging trends, risks, and opportunities.

### **Volunteering Australia is an employer of choice.**

Volunteering Australia prides itself on its ability to attract and retain a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce. While many organisations are struggling with the 'Great Resignation' and competing demands for attracting suitably qualified candidates, Volunteering Australia has been largely immune to this. Between July 2021 and 30 June 2022, Volunteering Australia advertised a total of 8 roles (both staff and volunteers). On average we received 20 applications for each role and we were able to successfully fill all of these positions.

### **A highly engaged workforce that is supported, rewarded and recognised**

Volunteering Australia's absenteeism and turnover rates remain low which we attribute to many factors including:

- enabling our staff to manage their hours across the fortnight to meet family and personal commitments
- encouraging and actively pursuing a mentally healthy workplace with trained mental health first aid officers and a fit-for-purpose employee assistance provider. We also encourage staff to have 'mental health days' as needed
- regularly recognising and celebrating the achievements of staff
- providing additional paid time off at the end of the year to enable staff to rest and recuperate before the next calendar year.

# Financials

The total income for FY22 saw an increase of 66 per cent to \$1,405,929 when compared to FY21. The increase in revenue is due to an increase in revenue recognition of grant funding during the year.

Total expenditure for the year was \$1,377,165, a 97 per cent increase as compared to FY21. The main contribution was an increase in employee costs as a direct result of project funding.

Volunteering Australia achieved an overall operating profit for the year totalling \$28,764. Even though this shows a decrease in profit when compared to \$149,869 for FY21, it should be viewed as a positive result. With COVID-19 interruptions, the organisation was still growing, managing multiple projects and increased staffing. It is an uptrend over time.

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2022

	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,249,301	4,794,982
Trade and other receivables	16,880	8,771
Inventories	18,594	13,394
Other assets	22,942	13,497
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>4,307,717</b>	<b>4,830,644</b>
Office Equipment	-	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,307,717</b>	<b>4,830,644</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	45,458	403,255
Employee benefits	95,223	44,747
Income in Advance	3,595,629	3,839,999
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>3,736,310</b>	<b>4,288,001</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>3,736,310</b>	<b>4,288,001</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>571,407</b>	<b>542,643</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	571,407	542,643
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>571,407</b>	<b>542,643</b>

# Our Supporters and People

## Patron

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

## 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 1590 Associate Members at a national level during 2021-22.

## Accord Partners

Save the Children Australia  
Sport Australia  
Disability Sports Australia  
Justice Connect  
Relationships Australia

## Platinum Sponsors

Aon  
Unilever - Streets

## Our Supporters

Australian Government  
Department of Social Services  
Scanlon Foundation  
Pro Bono Australia  
SEEK  
Hall & Wilcox  
Breaking New Ground (BNG)

## Board as at 30 June 2022

Michael Drew, Chair  
Kit McMahon, Deputy Chair  
Kerry Harris, Treasurer  
Esme Bowen, Secretary  
Susan Alberti AC  
Dr Norman Chorn  
Amy Williams  
Claudine Lombard  
Kim Hughes



# 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.

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Contact our NFP team for a complimentary insurance health check

**[aon.com.au/va](https://aon.com.au/va) | 1800 123 266**

**[au.nfp@aon.com](mailto:au.nfp@aon.com)**

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