







ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24







SHARE YOUR STORY

The images on the cover of this Annual Report are from National Volunteer Week's Share Your Story initiative.

Share Your Story highlights the vast array of volunteering roles available across Australia; celebrate the dedication and impact of volunteers; and inspire others to find their volunteering passion.

Through these stories we celebrate the diverse passions and talents that everyone brings to volunteering, recognising the breadth of volunteer stories and the positive impact volunteers have in our communities.

Volunteers featured on the cover:

- Amanda, a volunteer with Kununurra Community Garden Kitchen
- Arisara, a student volunteer with St John Ambulance
 Queensland
- Lisa, a volunteer at Orange Sky
- Fran, a volunteer at the Riding for the Disabled Association, Tall Timbers Centre
- Alexander, a versatile volunteer who dedicates his time wherever needed
- Ruby, a volunteer visitor for the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme at Balwyn Evergreen

Volunteers featured on page 24:

- Sadie, a Legal Literacy volunteer with Launceston Library
- Olivia volunteers with Pets of Older Persons (POOPs)
- Vanessa, a volunteer at St John Ambulance Tasmania
- Amber and Farzana, volunteers for Birth for Humankind sharing their stories about birth and their work with their clients

To read these volunteer stories, or to share your own story, visit **volunteeringaustralia.org/shareyourstory**

FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER



The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP Minister for Social Services

Every day around Australia, volunteers give up their time to support our communities.

They cook sausages at local sports events. They patrol beaches to make sure those swimming while on holiday are safe. They support people impacted by floods, bushfires, and other disasters that can threaten lives.

Volunteering is good for us collectively, but it is also good for us individually. And this is particularly so for young Australians. Research shows that young people who volunteer before entering the workforce are more likely to build skills and have a lifelong connection to volunteering.

However we know that since the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people are volunteering.

I believe this decline in volunteering is not because Australians have stopped caring, but that post-covid barriers to get involved in volunteering still remain.

The Albanese Labor Government recognises, values and celebrates the fundamental contribution volunteers make across Australia and we want to see volunteering rates grow again.

FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER

And we are committed to encouraging more people to take up volunteering and supporting the right conditions for it to thrive.

From October 2024, we will also deliver a \$3 million national advertising campaign to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities for young people.

We are investing around \$81.4 million to support volunteering to 30 June 2026.

We are also working closely with Volunteering Australia to deliver on the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-33. The Strategy is a blueprint for volunteering, co-designed by Volunteering Australia and the volunteering ecosystem.

In August, I was proud to join Volunteering Australia to launch our first three-year Action Plan under the Strategy. The Action Plan includes 22 concrete actions to achieve the National Strategy's shared vision and desired outcomes.

I'd like to thank and congratulate Volunteering Australia for the significant work they put in to develop the Action Plan, which will chart the way towards a thriving Australia through volunteering.

Volunteers are integral to cohesive, resilient and healthy communities.

Together, we can make volunteering sustainable, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone.

CHAIR'S REPORT



Professor Michael E. Drew Chair

After setting our collective vision for a future where volunteering is the heart of Australia communities, this year has been about the establishment of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

The National Strategy's vision will be achieved through the combined efforts of stakeholders across Australia. It's wonderful to see volunteers, organisations and governments using the National Strategy to strengthen volunteering and create opportunities to work together.

Over the last year, hundreds of people have given their time to identify key actions for the next phase of the National Strategy and beyond. The first three-year Action Plan phase will offer opportunities for everyone to participate and work together for a better future for volunteering.

This National Volunteer Week we came together to showcase that volunteering offers 'Something for Everyone'. Thank you to the entire volunteering ecosystem for sharing the powerful impact volunteers make supporting individuals, communities and the nation.

To infuse our Board meetings with inspiration, we have introduced a new tradition of opening each meeting with a volunteer story. This initiative aligns seamlessly with Volunteering Australia's pivotal role in supporting volunteering and advocacy, creating a meaningful and uplifting start to our discussions.

Volunteering Australia continues to influence key reform agendas and with our involvement, the role and strategic importance of volunteering continues to be highlighted in reform processes.

Meanwhile, Volunteering Australia has undertaken a strategic planning process, and we look forward to delivering on our Impact Strategy 2024-2027.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our members, partners and stakeholders for their ongoing support. Together we will enable volunteering to thrive for future generations.

I would also like to thank my Board for their passion and dedication to advancing volunteering by providing governance and strategic leadership to the national peak body for volunteering.

To the Volunteering Australia team, led by Mark Pearce (CEO) and Dr Sue Regan (Deputy CEO), thank you for your hard work and commitment to advocating for volunteering and supporting the volunteering ecosystem.

Finally, a very special thank you to every volunteer for being an essential part of society and for your contribution towards making volunteering the heart of Australian communities.

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Professor Michael E. Drew Chair

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Mark Pearce Chief Executive Officer

As I reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2023-24, I am reminded of the significant strides made across the volunteering ecosystem in Australia. This year, we've seen a wonderful demonstration of the self-directed leadership from volunteer involving organisations across the country. During National Volunteer Week, volunteer involving organisations have shown their commitment to volunteering, stepping forward to engage communities in meaningful and impactful ways, and highlighting the integral role that volunteers play in shaping a more resilient and connected society.

This has been a year of considerable advancement and reform at the federal level, with initiatives that lay the foundation for a stronger, more inclusive future. The Federal Government's reform agenda has included pivotal work in sectors that deeply affect volunteers and the communities they support. The ongoing transformation in Aged Care acknowledges the critical role of volunteer support in providing compassionate, personcentred care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Similarly, the Productivity Commission's recent report into philanthropy has emphasised the importance of sustainable and strategic volunteer engagement in achieving broader societal goals, supported by philanthropy.

I'm proud to say that Volunteering Australia continues to play a central role in ensuring volunteering is acknowledged and incorporated in Commonwealth policy frameworks. Of particular note is the Not-for-Profit Blueprint – a vital roadmap for building a sustainable, innovative, and thriving NFP sector. Each of these

reforms and frameworks reinforces the principles laid out in the National Strategy for Volunteering, which continues to serve as our guide in promoting a unified vision for the volunteering ecosystem. The National Strategy is not just a document; it is a shared commitment across governments, volunteer involving organisations, and communities, working together to enhance volunteer engagement and build a stronger, more vibrant society.

In closing, I extend my gratitude to volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies – our foundation members, partners, and broader stakeholders for their dedication and support. I also offer my sincere thanks to the Volunteering Australia Board, led by Professor Michael Drew. Together, we are building a future where volunteering is not only valued but empowered to make lasting contributions to our nation.

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

Volunteering Australia has identified the following values to underpin all its work:

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.

Trusted

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



Volunteering recognised in Wellbeing Framework and Data

Volunteering has been included as a measure of social connection in Measuring What Matters, Australia's First Wellbeing Framework. This is deserved recognition for the vital role volunteering plays in enhancing wellbeing, both individually and collectively.

The Federal Government will deliver a renovated annual survey on the wellbeing of people in Australia. The General Social Survey is a crucial source of official data on volunteering in Australia, and participation in volunteering, both formal and informal, is a key indicator of the wellbeing of our communities.

In partnership with our foundation members – the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies – we advocated for the inclusion of volunteering in the Measuring What Matters framework, and were delighted that the Federal Government recognised the importance of volunteering to social cohesion.

2024-25 Federal Budget

The 2024-25 Federal Budget demonstrated the need to think strategically about how volunteering contributes to social, economic and environmental outcomes. While volunteering was mentioned throughout the Budget, it lacked a strategic, whole-of-government approach to resourcing and supporting volunteering in Australia.

Volunteering Australia represented the volunteering ecosystem at the budget lock-up and provided a summary analysis of the key budget measures relevant to volunteering.

We welcomed the continuation of the Volunteering and Community Connectedness funding stream and measures to address cost-of-living pressures for everyone in Australia. However, volunteers and volunteer involving organisations remain under immense pressure.

The Budget included funding for the Australian Bureau of Statistics to deliver an enhanced annual General Social Survey, which has previously collected key national data on volunteering. More comprehensive and frequent data on

volunteering is vital to support the implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Our Pre-Budget Submission called for targeted, strategic investment in volunteering to enable the Australian Government to meet key priorities and progress the co-designed National Strategy for Volunteering.

Volunteering Research Papers Initiative

The final round of the Volunteering Research Papers Initiative was released at an online event in July. There are over 20 papers in the suite, each addressing a key area of research on volunteering.

The Volunteering Research Papers summarise important research on volunteering and outline key insights for policy and practice. These insights helped to shape the strategic objectives outlined in the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Our research agenda

The National Volunteering Research Network (NVRN) now has over 100 members across the country. An innovation for this year was the introduction of Research Spotlights. Each network meeting involves a member sharing their current research, prompting discussion and feedback from the group.

We continue to engage more broadly as industry partners on two Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage projects, a proposed Cooperative Research Centre on the Care Economy and through external presentations and dialogues. Our Deputy CEO, Dr Sue Regan, presented at the Not-for-Profit Research Network convened by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Our Data Factsheets aim to interpret and synthesise volunteering data and research for use in our policy and advocacy work and to inform the work of the wider volunteering ecosystem. Recent factsheets include Youth Volunteering Key Statistics, Ongoing trends of Volunteering in Australia and the latest update of the Key Volunteering Statistics including data from the Volunteering in Australia 2022 dataset and the Time Use Survey 2021.

Our advocacy

In the last year, Volunteering
Australia has been active in several
policy initiatives, including contributing
to submissions and reports, lobbying
and campaigns. We work closely with
the state and territory Volunteering Peak
Bodies to influence public policy and
highlight its impact on volunteers and
the organisations to which they offer their
time.

In the last year, we have provided evidence of:

 Volunteering offering opportunities for social, economic, and cultural participation and playing a key role in disability advocacy in Australia.

- Volunteers being an essential but distinct component of Australia's aged care workforce.
- The role of volunteering in supporting Australian multiculturalism.
- Volunteering providing a flexible option for parents with young children to undertake prevocational training, build skills, connect with the community, and strengthen social supports.
- Volunteering being critical to the success of Australian sport with volunteers contributing at every level.
- COVID-19 accelerating the long-term decline in the number and proportion of people participating in volunteering through organisations.
- The contributions of volunteers to enhancing the country's disaster resilience.
- Volunteering providing opportunities for social connections, pathways to employment, and fostering a powerful sense of belonging to a place and community.

Advocating for recognition of volunteering

The National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce acknowledged the valuable role of volunteers in the mental health workforce, and that volunteering should be supported as part of the implementation of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2022-2032. This is important recognition as we continue to advocate for the contribution of volunteering to the mental health workforce being better understood and strategically considered.

Volunteering Australia is actively advocating on behalf of volunteers involved in community and residential aged care. The Volunteers in Aged Care Survey found volunteers are essential to aged care and delivery of person centred and quality care. The results of the survey will help the Department of Health and Aged Care design strategies to better support, recruit and train aged care volunteers and volunteer managers, who are an integral part of the sector.

Volunteering Australia and the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies took part in the public consultation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) comprehensive review of Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). ANZSCO provides a basis for the standardised collection, analysis and dissemination of occupation data for Australia and New Zealand.

We collectively advocated for the addition of Volunteer Manager (Coordinator/Leader) to be included in the revised classification in recognition of the critical role Volunteer Managers in enabling effective and impactful volunteering. ANZSCO is important because it is used to describe data for governments, industry, and businesses to inform and shape educational pathways, skilled migration programs and workforce strategies.

National Strategy Advisor, Sarah Wilson continued to serve on the Sport Volunteer Coalition to bring greater awareness to the critical role volunteers play in enabling sport to take place across Australia.

Progress is being made to implement the Sport Volunteer Action Plan with a collective commitment to advance volunteering within the sports community. The Sport Ministers across Australia collectively acknowledged the progress and endorsed continued collaboration on its implementation.

Volunteering Australia participated in the National Sport Plan consultation to ensure recognition of the importance of volunteers at all levels of sport. Acknowledging the value of volunteers is a prominent feature within Play Well, Australia's Sport Participation Strategy.

Working together to build the Not-for-Profit sector

Our CEO, Mark Pearce is a member of the Blueprint Expert Reference Group (BERG), a group of sector representatives developing a Blueprint for the future of the Not-for-Profit (NFP) sector. The NFP Blueprint will provide a strategic vision for the sector for the next 10 years.

BERG has been consulting with the sector and the public to help inform the priority areas for reform. The NFP Blueprint will provide a roadmap for Government reforms and sector led initiatives that will provide NFP and charity sector organisations with sustainable solutions and business models. The NFP Blueprint will include options for reform to strengthen social capital and to build a vibrant sector.

Putting climate change and environmental volunteering on the map

Volunteering Australia is raising the profile of environmental and climate change volunteers and advocating for their representation and consideration in key policies, with the aim of strengthening environmental causes and participation.

Image: ACOSS's Fair, Fast and Inclusive Climate Change Action Blueprint Framework





Image: ACOSS's Fair, Fast and Inclusive Climate Change Action Blueprint Framework

Volunteering Australia is a member of the COP31 Collaboration Group. The group includes leaders from key environmental and community focused not-for-profit and non-government organisations.

Volunteering Australia attended and facilitated a session at the COP31 Basecamp in Sydney in 2023. The basecamp invited hundreds of delegates from diverse sectors to contribute their ideas and expertise towards a much wider, more accessible and effective COP.

Volunteering Australia took part in the Impact-X Climate and Nature Summit in Sydney in April 2024, forging relationships with key environmental groups. The COP31 Collaboration Group also met on the sidelines of the summit where discussions were held with Australia's Ambassador for Climate Change.

Volunteering Australia signed on and contributed to ACOSS's Fair, Fast and Inclusive Climate Change Action Blueprint Framework, ensuring that volunteers and their roles are visible and acknowledged as key to climate change action and response.

POLICY, ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH:

OUR IMPACT

Inclusion of volunteering in policy consultations and reports

Our advocacy and engagement efforts have resulted in volunteering being considered within several inquiry and consultation reports. For example:

- The final report for the Productivity Commission inquiry into philanthropy includes consideration of volunteering and makes several strong recommendations for the improvement of volunteering policy and practice.
- The final report of the Multicultural Framework Review highlights the role of volunteering in creating a shared sense of identity; in building stronger communities; and in supporting multicultural diversity.

Invited to participate in policy inquiries and processes

Our Deputy CEO, Dr Sue Regan, was invited to provide evidence at a Public Hearing of the Productivity Commission inquiry into philanthropy and was able to highlight policy reforms that could create the conditions for volunteering to thrive in the future.

Following the Federal Budget announcement of an enhanced and annual General Social Survey (GSS), the Australian Bureau of Statistics reached out to us on the development of the volunteering module. We engaged collaboratively with the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies to help ensure the GSS will meet the needs of the volunteering ecosystem.

Inclusion of volunteering in government strategies and policies

Following collaborative advocacy with the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has proposed a new occupation of Volunteer Coordinator to be included in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). This is the first time that there has been an occupation included for Volunteer Coordinators, Managers and Leaders.

Changes to laws and regulations to better support volunteering

The Federal Government's Aged Care reforms are progressing with volunteers as a distinct part of the workforce and are acknowledged in legislation. We have successfully advocated for a risk proportionate approach which should enable volunteering in aged care to safely thrive into the future.

New and continued funding for volunteering, Volunteering Australia, and research on volunteering

The Federal Budget announced new funding to track the Measuring What Matters Framework and to reinstate an expanded General Social Survey. This followed an advocacy campaign to recognise the role of volunteering in wellbeing and the importance of data collection to track this goal.

The Federal Government announced more than \$5 million in new funding to support Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs) and volunteer involving organisations. This new funding was welcome support for volunteering in Australia as we continue to call for targeted and strategic investment to ensure volunteering thrives into the future.

New and extended networks to support volunteering

Since its launch, the National Strategy for Volunteering's Coalition of Support has seen new members signing up each week. With over 120 members, the Coalition of Support brings together groups from across Australia and the volunteering ecosystem, including peak bodies, governments, researchers and many volunteer involving organisations.

The Reconciliation Practice Group met regularly throughout the year and continued to advance our reconciliation journey and the enactment of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

The National Volunteering Research Network grew and now has over 100 members from universities and institutions across Australia.

Recognition of volunteering in government staffing or processes

We continue to have a strong partnership with the Department of Social Services who have the lead on volunteering policy with regular dialogue throughout the year. The development of the first Action Plan of the National Strategy for Volunteering has strengthened relationships with other key government stakeholders including the National Office for Child Safety in the Attorney General's Department, the Australian Sports Commission and the Department of Health and Aged Care.

LEADERSHIP AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT



National Strategy for Volunteering (2023-2033)

For the National Strategy for Volunteering to be brought to life, there needs to be continued engagement, commitment, and action from across the volunteering ecosystem. The Establishment Phase is the first stage of implementation and lays the foundation for success over the National Strategy's ten-year horizon.

To support this next phase the following groups were established:

 An independent National Strategy for Volunteering Council to provide strategic oversight of the establishment and ongoing implementation of the National Strategy.

Image: Mark Pearce, Sarah Wilson, and the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, with the National Strategy for Volunteering







Images: Sarah Wilson (left) and Jack McDermott (right) speaking about the National Strategy for Volunteering at the 2023 Australian Social Policy Conference

- The Establishment Design Team, comprised of over 30 members of the volunteering ecosystem, each representing a different stakeholder and perspective.
- The Research Working Group to ensure the implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering is well informed by research and to act as an advisory body for associated research.

In keeping with the principles of the National Strategy, the first three-year Action Plan was co-designed with the volunteering ecosystem. This process saw wide engagement from hundreds of volunteering stakeholders across Australia. It included:

- A review of co-design outputs from the Development Phase.
- Six national online public workshops.
- 25 one-on-one consultations.
- Six state and territory level workshops.

Over 1,600+ ideas for action were submitted, identifying key priorities for

the next phase of the National Strategy and beyond.

The resulting Action Plan will contain commitments from leading stakeholders and actions that can be taken flexibly by others in the volunteering ecosystem, with opportunities for all stakeholders to participate and work together.

The Action Plan will be accompanied by a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Governance Blueprint, and Model of Shared Accountability. These documents will guide the execution of actions and the implementation of the National Strategy overall.

In February 2024 we put together an Anniversary Showcase to celebrate the National Strategy's first anniversary including highlights from the year and practical examples of the National Strategy in Action.

We have been overwhelmed with the response to the launch of the Coalition of Support for the National Strategy for Volunteering. Over 150 organisations have publicly committed to progress the National Strategy's vision and strategic objectives.

National Standards Refresh

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement have been refreshed to ensure they reflect the contemporary environment and continue to support the volunteering ecosystem.

The National Standards are a best practice framework to guide volunteer involvement. The National Standards can be used flexibly, recognising that volunteering takes place in highly diverse settings and ways.

The 2023 refresh of the National Standards was delivered under the national Volunteer Management Activity, a program funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. The National Standards refresh project was led by Volunteering Australia in partnership with Volunteering SA&NT.

The refresh involved consultation with the volunteering ecosystem and drew on the extensive engagement undertaken during the development of the new National Strategy for Volunteering.

Volunteer Management Online Project

The Volunteer Management Online Project envisions a thriving volunteering ecosystem where an online platform empowers organisations and individuals to connect, manage, and enhance the volunteering experience.

Funded by the Australian Government, the project will develop – a single, centralised launch pad to a curated selection of national tools and resources that support volunteer involving organisations to recruit, train, manage and retain volunteers.

We have employed a user-centred design approach, actively engaging people that manage volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in the discovery, design and development of the online platform.

The first phase will feature key functionality including dedicated resources and technology pages, comprehensive training and event listings, technology solutions and personalised user accounts.

The forthcoming public pilot will be designed to inspire Volunteer Managers, Coordinators and Leaders while providing a foundation for ongoing growth and improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT: OUR IMPACT

Progress towards delivery of major projects

Across Australia, volunteers, organisations and governments are using the National Strategy for Volunteering to strengthen volunteering and create opportunities to work together. Over the last year, hundreds of people have given their time to identify key actions for the first three-year Action Plan phase. The Action Plan will include actions from government departments and agencies, peak bodies, researchers and others in the volunteering ecosystem.

The progress made on the Volunteer Management Online Project would have not been possible without invaluable contributions from across the volunteering ecosystem. The project has been supported by user testing, robust reviews and generous collaborations with training and event coordinators, and technical specialists. The feedback and input received has been instrumental in refining the core functions of the online portal. The project will deliver key benefits to users including a curated content library, national training and events listings and the opportunity to compare leading technology solutions.

Partnerships and alliances across the volunteering ecosystem

Through our partnership with the Australian Sports Commission, we contributed to activities focused on empowering sport organisations and volunteers including:

- Supporting the 3 Cheers for Volunteers campaign recognising sport volunteers during National Volunteer Week.
- Presenting the Sport Volunteer of the Year Award giving volunteers pride of place amongst Australia's elite athletes.

 Co-hosting the Sport Volunteering Webinar Series – highlighting topics that rethink how to engage sport volunteers.

Volunteering Australia and the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods launched the report 'Ongoing trends in volunteering in Australia'. We hosted a webinar where Professor Nicholas Biddle presented the new data collected on volunteering in Australia in 2023 to the almost 400 people in attendance. The webinar explored the latest data and trends, the changes in volunteering and the invaluable contributions of volunteers during the first year of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Use of resources

The Volunteering Resource Hub has been updated to reflect the refreshed National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. During 2023-34, the Volunteering Resource Hub again saw an increase in all key metrics. Over 21,000 users accessed the site (50% increase) with 84,000 page views (75% increase) and 18,000 file downloads (20% increase). Since its launch over 550 user accounts have been created, an increase of 110 in the last year.

The Continuing Professional Development Program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers (CPD PLV) is a formal avenue to improve knowledge, skills and future employability. Endorsed by Volunteering Australia, the CPD PLV program is delivered by the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies to volunteering leaders in the ACT, NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and WA.

Since the launch of the refreshed National Standards for Volunteer Involvement the dedicated webpage has been visited over 9,000 times by almost 6,000 active users. To support implementation across the volunteering ecosystem the National Standards and accompanying resources are also available on the National Knowledge Base, the Volunteering Resource Hub and the websites of the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies.

Regularly getting a 'seat at the table'

In 2023-24, we participated in the following federal advisory groups: National Coordination Group on Emergency Relief; Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group; Community Sector Advisory Group; Blueprint Expert Reference Group; National Emergency Management Agency's Charitable, Not-for-profit and Philanthropic Strategic Group; the COP31 Collaboration Group.

Recognition of excellence in co-design

The National Strategy for Volunteering was recognised in the Australian Good Design Awards for Excellence in Design and Innovation. Working with ThinkPlace we combined mass civic participation and futures thinking to facilitate meaningful co-design. The Good Design Awards Jury commented: "Congratulations on this incredible design. The project is a brilliant example of systems-level design work, and the Jury is excited to see its impact evolve over time. Well done!"





Images: Good Design Award for Excellence in Design and Innovation

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION



National Volunteer Week

What an amazing National Volunteer Week 2024! It is an absolute privilege to lead Australia's premier celebration of volunteers. Each year, this special event grows bigger and better as we dedicate a week to recognising the crucial role volunteers play in supporting our nation and inspiring others to start volunteering.

This year's National Volunteer Week encouraged organisations to showcase their volunteers with the theme 'Something for Everyone'. A suite of resources was available for everyone to join the celebration. There were over 165K event counts on the National Volunteer Week webpages throughout May and 18,000 users visited the website during the week.

The online shop offered thank you gifts for sale, with over 500 organisations purchasing gifts for their volunteers.

We collaborated with the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, event sponsors Aon Australia and the Department of Social Services as well as Palliative Care Australia (National Palliative Care Week), Australian Sports Commission (3 Cheers for Volunteers) and the State Emergency Service (WOW Day).

Over 260 people registered to attend our National Volunteer Week event, 'Something for Everyone: Charting a new course for volunteering'. The Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP was our special guest as we celebrated volunteers

Images: Volunteers from National Volunteer Week's 'Share Your Story' initiative



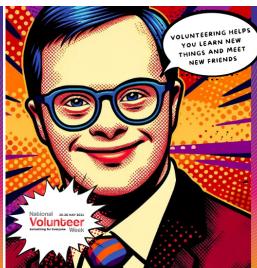












Images: National Volunteer Week online campaign

and shared insights from the National Strategy for Volunteering.

In honour of this year's theme, we invited volunteers to share their volunteering stories. We were inspired by the response and created the 'Share Your Story' webpage to celebrate the collection of over 60 stories highlighting the diversity of volunteering. To showcase the stories, we presented a heartwarming video at the online event.

To support the National Volunteer Week media campaign, we released a new report titled 'Navigating change and charting a new course: volunteering in recent times'. The report tells the story of how volunteering is changing in the face of challenges and opportunities and draws on the most recent national data.

Our media campaign resulted in a record number of items of coverage made up of 37 print and 125 digital pieces, 21 TV segments,1050 radio items and nine pieces of social coverage. Highlights included Weekend Sunrise, National Radio News, SBS NITV Radio, ABC NewsRadio, Channel 7 – Sydney, Sky News Australia, ABC News 24 and Australian Associated Press.

The online campaign assets were designed to be bright and colourful, while highlighting that there's a place for everyone in the world of volunteering by focusing on the volunteer experience. On social media Volunteering Australia had 57,000 page and profile impressions, was tagged in 463 posts and gained 304 new followers.

Thank you to our Foundation Members, the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, for your collaboration and leadership. Your efforts in highlighting the incredible impact of volunteers, and supporting volunteers and organisations all year round, are greatly appreciated. We thank our sponsor Aon Australia for their ongoing support of National Volunteer Week. We also acknowledge the continued support of the Department of Social Services.

By joining together, we amplify the power of this special celebration. Thank you for helping us showcase that volunteering offers 'Something for Everyone'.

Online events

Our program of online forums aims to bring people together to explore topics relevant to the volunteering ecosystem including:

- Trends in Volunteering: Insights from 2023.
- Volunteer Management and the National Strategy.
- Individual Potential and the Volunteer Experience.
- Something for Everyone: Charting a new course for volunteering.
- Establishing the National Strategy for Volunteering.
- Student Volunteer Experience Panel Discussion
- Volunteering Research Papers Round 3.

All public events are recorded and available on our YouTube Channel. To celebrate the first anniversary of the 2023 National Volunteering Conference we released all the conference recordings as our gift to the volunteering ecosystem for Valentine's Day.

Shining the spotlight on volunteer leadership

International Volunteer Managers
Day is a fabulous event for networking,
knowledge sharing and most
importantly recognising the impact
Volunteer Managers and Leaders

of Volunteers play in the success of volunteering efforts. We held a weeklong celebration on social media full of resources, research and information to thank our nation's dedicated Volunteer Managers and Leaders of Volunteers as the powerhouse of volunteering.

Volunteering Australia hosted an online event for participants of the Continuing Professional Development Program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers (CPD PLV). This was an opportunity for over 70 participants to take part in a national forum and learn from experiences from across the country. Thank you to Dr Darja Kragt for her inspiring keynote address and to all the amazing Leaders of Volunteers who attended and shared their stories and insights.

The National Strategy for Volunteering team hosted an engaging webinar exploring how the National Strategy can help Volunteer Managers strengthen their volunteering outcomes, drawing on practical examples of the National Strategy in action. In this session, we heard from May Bowden, Manager of Volunteer Services at Vinnies WA, presenting her experience of applying the National Strategy to her volunteer management. Project Manager, Andrew Richards also provided an update on the latest developments of the Volunteer Management Online Project.

Celebrating youth volunteering

National Student Volunteer Week 2023 inspired us with the theme 'Give. Grow. Belong.' Student Advocates across the country championed and celebrated student volunteers within their educational institutions. We were thrilled to witness the collective efforts of thousands of students and organisations nationwide, who recognised the unique contributions students make through volunteering.

In honour of National Student Volunteer Week, Volunteering Australia hosted a panel discussion on the Student Volunteer Experience. Amber Tsai, Janice Rodrigues and Jamien Frankcombe discussed how volunteering empowers them to contribute to causes they care about. The panel reflected on their insights as student volunteers discussing how we can inspire and enable students to get involved and what organisations need to do to encourage participation.

The latest release of our Youth Volunteering Key Statistics was published during National Student Volunteer Week showcasing the remarkable impact of youth volunteering in Australia.

Thank you to Volunteering Queensland for successfully leading National Student Volunteer Week in collaboration with the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies and Volunteering Australia.

International Volunteer Day

This year's International Volunteer
Day recognised the power of collective
action with the inspiring theme 'If
Everyone Did' from UN Volunteers.
It was fantastic to see organisations,
politicians and volunteers themselves
joining in on the day through various
events and acknowledgments.

International Volunteer Day reminds us of the immense potential of collective action in addressing global challenges and fostering unity and cooperation among people with diverse backgrounds. It's a day to celebrate and express gratitude to volunteers around the world and appreciate them for their unique contributions.

Working together to support volunteering

Volunteering Australia is proud to partner with members of the wider volunteering ecosystem to ensure volunteering is recognised as a valued and integral part of society.

Justice Connect's National Volunteering Guide is a key resource which helps volunteers and volunteer involving organisations understand their legal obligations. This guide has been updated to incorporate the refreshed National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. Cooperation between Justice Connect and Volunteering Australia enhances our ability to support the volunteering ecosystem and advocate for volunteers. We have been working with Justice

Connect on an identified action to be included in the first three-year Action Plan of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Our successful partnership with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) continues, as we work together to grow and enhance the sport volunteer workforce and implement the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan. The ASC was one of the first organisations to join the National Strategy for Volunteering's Coalition of Support. The ASC again supported National Volunteer Week with the 3 Cheers for Volunteers campaign. In the lead up, we co-hosted the online webinar 'Community Sport Volunteering: Something for Everyone' celebrating the theme by inviting community sport leaders to discuss strategies to ensure everyone can see opportunities to volunteer in sport.

As a member of Ending Loneliness Together we celebrated Australia's first Loneliness Awareness Week aimed at raise awareness, encourage conversations, and support those who feel lonely. Ending Loneliness Together is a national network of members working together to tackle chronic loneliness in Australia. Research tells us that volunteering not only combats loneliness but also nurtures meaningful connections.

As a 'Very Neighbourly Organisation,' we were proud to again support Neighbours Every Day with the theme 'Create Belonging | Share Belonging'. The campaign included a call to action for everyone to take everyday actions that create social connection and foster respectful relationships, including volunteering. When we volunteer, we not only contribute to our

Image: Elysa Oliveri, Sport Volunteer of the Year (centre), with Sarah Wilson and Mark Pearce



community we can also forge meaningful connections.

Volunteering Australia continues to work together with the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) to promote the crucial role of volunteering in community broadcasting. The partnership is aligned with the National Strategy for Volunteering and will play an essential role in promoting and improving the volunteer experience.

Volunteering Australia in the media

In July 2023, the community sector welcomed the Community Advocate, a new weekly newsletter by the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA), covering community sector news including volunteering. Our relationship with the Community Advocate has resulted in several stories in the past year including:

- Post-pandemic volunteering recovery slow: report – the release of the Ongoing Trends in Volunteering in Australia report.
- Diversity the key in updated volunteering standards – the launch of the refreshed National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.
- Australia's National Strategy for Volunteering turns one – an opinion piece by Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce.
- The importance of volunteering skills, not just time – an opinion piece for

National Volunteer Week by the head of the Origin Energy Foundation, Michelle Zahra.

Outside of National Volunteer Week, mainstream media has sought information from Volunteering Australia on over 20 occasions in the last year including TV, radio, newspapers and online media.

Our relationship with The Community
Advocate has resulted in a story on
the refresh of the National Standards,
an opinion piece on the anniversary of
the National Strategy and another story
highlighting the power of volunteering.
Media outlets continue to seek our
opinion with a further six media
engagements since January.

Outside of National Volunteer Week, mainstream media has sought information from Volunteering Australia on over 20 occasions in the last year including TV, radio, newspapers and online media. Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce completed over 30 interviews including discussing the state of volunteering in Australia with Ros Childs on the ABC News Channel and in the Australian Women's Weekly.

Shining the spotlight on volunteering

Throughout the year we shine the spotlight on the impact of volunteers via our social media platforms and news posts on our website while supporting national events.

A few examples are:

Volunteering can transform lives and make an impact in communities.

Volunteers can be invisible and we believe outstanding volunteers should be recognised, so we promoted the nomination process for the Australian of the Year Awards.

In our work raising the profile of environmental and climate change volunteers we recognised the contributions of volunteers on World Environment Day and on Earth Day we were taking action at the Impact X Summit Sydney. We recognise the need to raise the voice of all Australian communities on the issues of climate change and turn our collective concern into action.

As proud allies of the LGBTQIA+ community, today and every day we supported, Pride Month, Wear It Purple Day and IDAHOBIT, the International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination. Volunteering Australia remains committed to amplifying diverse voices and making volunteering inclusive and safe for all.

For 70 years, Meals on Wheels has supported the wellbeing, connection and independence of older people. Each year the iconic service prepares and delivers nourishing meals for over 200,000 Australians. This could not be achieved without the support of their 45,000 volunteers who provide a daily opportunity for social connection, a chat and a smile. On National Meals on Wheels Day, we recognised these dedicated volunteers for their crucial role.

providing nourishment, conversation and friendship.

We recognised World Suicide Prevention Day and the powerful theme 'We all have a role to play'. Communities are vital in promoting wellbeing and preventing suicide. We acknowledged the dedicated volunteers who provide support during life's tough times and are integral to the mental health workforce.

We were excited to share that the United Nations General Assembly has designated the year 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. We look forward to celebrating the vital role of volunteers as change makers in our world.

Stakeholder Survey

As the national peak body for volunteering, we rely on feedback from our stakeholders to shape our future initiatives and better serve the volunteering ecosystem. Our annual stakeholder survey asks questions on our advocacy, communications and engagement, as well as research and promotion of policy solutions. The results help us make informed decisions and drive positive change.

In the last year we have also sought stakeholder feedback during online events by asking poll questions and sending out post-event surveys.

Responses to our National Volunteer Week survey let us know how the event was celebrated across the country and help us plan for 2025.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION: OUR IMPACT

Brand and reputation strong

The National Volunteer Week media campaign secured 1,242 items of coverage, breaking the previous year's record. The campaign achieved an estimated 61.5 million impressions across all states and territories, and an Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of over \$1.88 million.

Media interest in National Volunteer Week was very strong with many volunteer involving organisations getting involved and pitching their own stories. In total across Australian media National Volunteer Week received over 2,800 media mentions with over 367 million impressions.

Media seeking our opinion

Volunteering Australia is a trusted source for media outlets covering stories on volunteering. Journalists and producers from across the country regularly contact us for interviews, fact checking, or the latest volunteering data. Outside of National Volunteer Week, mainstream media has sought information from Volunteering Australia on over 20 occasions in the last year including TV, radio, newspapers and online media.

Increased social media profile

Volunteering Australia is closing in on 40,000 followers having gained more than 3,000 new followers on social media during 2023-24. The total number of impressions across all social media platforms was 583,000. Post impressions increased across all platforms including Facebook (384,000), LinkedIn (125,000) and Instagram (74,000). National Volunteer Week is our top performing week across all platforms with the most reactions, comments, shares and new followers.

Our website is a trusted resource

The Volunteering Australia website continues to be a trusted resource for individuals and organisations interested in volunteering with over 151K new users. During 2023-24, there were 1.2 million user interactions across the website, 402K website visits and 25K file downloads. The home page was visited over 68,000 times. National Volunteer Week is the busiest period for the website and on day one of National Volunteer Week there were over 13.7K website visits.

Website highlights for 2023-24 included:

- 46K views of the National Volunteer Week page
- 27K views of the Career Opportunities page
- 23K views National Volunteer Week Resources
- 13K views of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement page
- 10K views of the Online Certificate of Appreciation page
- 7.7K views of the Corporate Volunteering page
- 8.6K views of the GoVolunteer page
- 4.2K views Looking to volunteer page
- 2.4K views Share Your Story page

National Volunteer Week recognition

Media interest in National Volunteer Week continues to increase year-on-year and this year was supported by volunteer involving organisations taking the lead and pitching their own stories. Across Australian media National Volunteer Week received over 2,800 media mentions with over 367 million impressions. This is a phenomenal effort and shows the power of the volunteering ecosystem working together to raise awareness of the role of volunteering.

Leading collaborative forums across the volunteering ecosystem

The National Policy Group met throughout 2023-24 with submissions and position papers developed collaboratively with the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies. We also undertook collective advocacy, for example through the Wellbeing advocacy campaign, which sought to get volunteering in Measures What Matters (wellbeing) framework and to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations Review.

The National Marketing and Communications Network met throughout 2023-24 collaborating on national events and initiatives. The extraordinary success of the National Volunteer Week media campaign would not be possible without strong support from the state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies.

Volunteering Australia approached to give speeches/ presentations

Volunteering Australia took part in the 2023 Australian Social Policy Conference, leading a symposium exploring the different ways in which research and researchers can influence policymaking. This panel explored how research evidence informed the new National Strategy for Volunteering. The symposium also debated the challenges of undertaking research that directly informs public policy and shared lessons for ensuring social policy research has influence and impact.

CEO, Mark Pearce and National Strategy Director, Zac Reimers presented at the SA State Volunteering Conference held during National Volunteer Week. Mark presented at the breakout session 'Managing spontaneous and emergency volunteers' and Zac presented the final keynote of the day on the National Strategy for Volunteering.

National Strategy Advisor, Sarah Wilson attended Volunteering WA's State Volunteering Conference and Volunteering Victoria's State Conference. In Perth, Sarah presented two keynote presentations: an update on the National Strategy for Volunteering and the results from her recent research on volunteering and mattering. She also facilitated a panel discussion on 'The Executive Perspective', which featured a lively discussion on embedding volunteering in organisational strategy. In Melbourne, Sarah again presented her world-first qualitative research and participated in the Great Debate with the topic 'Our Culture is Killing Volunteering'.









Images: Sarah Wilson at the Volunteering WA State Volunteering Conference (top), Zac Reimers and Mark Pearce at the SA State Volunteering Conference (bottom)

ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is a testament to our dedication to reconciliation and the broader wellbeing of Australian communities. In our role as the national peak body for volunteering, we aim to lead by example in promoting reconciliation. We will continue prioritising relationship-building with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We

understand that by fostering strong relationships, we can amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices through our collaborative research and advocacy.

First Nations Voice to Parliament

Volunteering Australia released a position statement for a First Nations Voice to Parliament supporting Aboriginal and

Image: The Reconciliation Action Plan artwork was created by artist Leah Brideson (Kamilaroi) and is titled 'wuu-rri' (means 'give' in Gamilaraay language).



Torres Strait Islander peoples in pursuing their right to self-determination. We strive to create space for truth telling and justice through our policy and practice.

Volunteering Australia and over 80 other prominent community groups signed a community sector joint statement accepting the generous invitation from First Nations peoples for a constitutionally recognised Voice to Parliament.

Volunteering Australia is a member of the Allies for Uluru Coalition, made up of more than 275 community, non-government and corporate organisations from across the country that have come together to support the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Our Impact Strategy

Volunteering Australia's Impact Strategy 2024-2027 was developed through an extensive strategic planning process. The Impact Strategy includes a vision, mission, purpose, principles and strategic directions as we look to amplify our impact to support and enliven Australia's volunteering ecosystem.

The next three years, starting 1 July 2024, will see Volunteering Australia elevate our already extensive policy and advocacy activities, in addition to enhancing communications and engagement, domestically and internationally. We will lead national research and knowledge sharing to better inform volunteering practice, and

shape national volunteering policy. Our Impact Strategy is firmly focused on creating a better future for volunteering in Australia.

We are committed to enacting it sustainably, driven by collaboration, effective leadership, and accountability. Our refreshed Theory of Change will guide us in tracking progress and measuring impact.

Volunteering Australia Board

Volunteering Australia is governed by a diverse, skilled, and purpose-driven Board. Our Board comprises between seven and nine Directors with each member contributing their unique skills, passion, and experience to govern and guide Volunteering Australia to meet its mission. This year the Board has been focused on implementing strategic objectives and looking forward to identifying strategic risks including the impact of artificial intelligence and cyber security.

At last year's Annual General Meeting Dr Michael Drew, was re-elected to the Board for a second three-year term and re-elected as Chair of the Board in the subsequent Board Meeting. The Board also welcomed Brianna Casey, CEO Foodbank Australia to the Board.

We take this opportunity to thank our Chair, Dr Michael Drew, Kim Hughes (Deputy Chair), Kerry Harris (Treasurer), Esme Bowen (Secretary), Amy Williams, Dr Claudine Lombard and Brianna Casey for their ongoing commitment to Volunteering Australia. We also acknowledge the work of Kit McMahon and Susan Alberti AC for their dedicated service to Volunteering Australia since both joining the Board in 2018.

Foundation Members

Volunteering Australia works collectively with our Foundation Members, the seven state and territory Volunteering Peak Bodies to support volunteers across Australia. By advocating for volunteering in our respective jurisdictions and working together we amplify our impact and ensure a thriving volunteering ecosystem.

Together we collaborate on national resources including the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and the Continuing Professional Development Program for Professional Leaders of Volunteers (CPD PLV). With the launch of the National Strategy for Volunteering the Volunteering Peak Bodies are developing state-based strategies and will be lead stakeholders in the first three-year Action Plan.

We engage at Board and CEO level and collaborate via regular network meetings, working and steering committees. The National Policy Group meets fortnightly to collaborate on policy issues including

collective advocacy. The National Marketing and Communications Network collaborates on national events and initiatives including National Volunteer Week and National Student Volunteer Week. The Reconciliation Practice Group is a discussion platform to further our reconciliation journey with First Nations peoples and to learn about Indigenous practices of community giving.

Patron

David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) has admirably served as the Governor-General of Australia and as the distinguished Patron of Volunteering Australia.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to both Mr and Mrs Hurley for their genuine support and invaluable contributions, which have significantly elevated the recognition of Australia's volunteers.

We welcome the announcement of Sam Mostyn AO as Australia's incoming 28th Governor-General. We eagerly anticipate the vision and contributions she will bring to her role as Governor-General.

FINANCIALS

The overall 2024 financial year result shows a total profit totalling \$382,362. There is a significant increase as compared to a total profit of \$99,732 for the year 2023. This is due to capitalisation of expenses incurred in development of intangible asset (Volunteer Management Online Project) of \$370,250.

Total income for the 2024 financial year of \$2,872,954 represented an increase of 22% as compared to 2023 year of \$2,354,407. Total expenditure for the year of \$2,490,592 represented an increase of 10% as compared to 2023 year total of \$2,254,676. The increase is mainly contributed by higher employee costs.

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023	2022
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2,550,616	4,024,262	4,249,301
Trade and other receivables	-	157	16,880
Inventories	8,579	25,485	18,594
Other assets	50,606	79,997	22,942
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,609,801	4,129,901	4,307,717
	687		
Right of use assets	136,263	179,295	-
	370,250		
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	507,200	179,295	-
TOTAL ASSETS	3,117,001	4,309,196	4,307,717
LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable	244,073	130,419	45,458
Employee benefits	150,783	113,613	95,223
Lease liability	43,695	40,631	
Income in Advance	1,516,437	3,201,187	3,595,629
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,954,989	3,485,850	3,736,310
Lease liability	108,512	152,207	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	108,512	152,207	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,063,501	3,638,057	3,736,310
NET ASSETS		671,139	571,407
EQUITY			
Retained earnings	1,053,501	671,139	571,407
TOTAL EQUITY	1,053,501	671,139	571,407
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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 1,783 Associate Members at a national level during 2023-24.

Accord Partners

Australian Sports Commission

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

Justice Connect

Relationships Australia

Our Supporters

Australian Government Department of Social Services

SFFK

Aon

Hall & Wilcox

Volunteering Australia Board

Dr Michael Drew. Chair

Kim Hughes, Deputy Chair

Kerry Harris, Treasurer

Esme Bowen, Secretary

Amy Williams

Dr Claudine Lombard

Brianna Casey (from 16 November 2023)

Kit McMahon, Deputy Chair (to 15 November 2023)

Dr Susan Alberti AC (to 15 November 2023)



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