

## **Australian Volunteer of the Year Honoured at Government House During National Volunteer Week**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

21 May 2026

The inaugural Australian Volunteer of the Year was announced yesterday evening at Government House, marking a national moment of recognition during National Volunteer Week 2026 (18–24 May).

Hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, the event brought together volunteers, government leaders, sector representatives and community organisations to honour the extraordinary contribution of volunteers across the country.

The Australian Volunteer of the Year Award recognises one outstanding volunteer from among eight State and Territory Volunteer of the Year recipients, each representing the strength, diversity and impact of volunteering in their communities.

Dr Felix Ho ASM OAM from Northern Territory, was named the inaugural Australian Volunteer of the Year, in recognition of their sustained commitment, leadership and positive impact through volunteering.

In her address, the Governor-General acknowledged the central role volunteers play in Australia's social fabric.

"It is the volunteers who are the beating heart, or the backbone, of our communities," said the Governor-General.

"I just want to take a moment to thank all the volunteers here and just say very clearly that our communities and our country would not work without volunteers. Your generous and precious gift of your time, your energy, your kindness, your care, sometimes it is the raising of money, but generally it is the showing up, and doing the things that need to be done."

Accepting the award, Dr Felix Ho reflected on the significance of the recognition.

“What is so important about this, especially on National Volunteer Week and the International Year of the Volunteer, is that it values the contribution that each and every one of us make to the Australian community,” said Dr Felix Ho.

“It gives an opportunity to value everyone’s contribution, that everyone’s contribution is important and makes our Australian society and community so much stronger as a result,”

“I am so privileged to be awarded this award, but importantly recognising the service of volunteers counts.”

CEO of Volunteering Australia, Mark Pearce, said the award highlighted the evolving and enduring nature of volunteering.

“This inaugural Australian Volunteer of the Year Award reflects the breadth of volunteering taking place across Australia,” Mr Pearce said.

“At a time when many Australians are under pressure, what stands out is that volunteering is adapting. People continue to contribute in ways that fit their lives and respond to the needs of their communities.”

Volunteering Australia recognised all nominees as leaders in their communities, acknowledging that each represents countless volunteers whose work often goes unseen, but whose impact is deeply felt.

The Government House event forms part of National Volunteer Week 2026, led by Volunteering Australia under the theme Your Year to Volunteer, which recognises the many ways Australians already contribute and invites reflection on how volunteering continues to evolve.

For more information on the award and this year’s nominees

[Australian Volunteer of the Year Award](#)

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