

# MEDIA RELEASE



Wednesday 10 May 2023

## Cost-of-living relief welcome but impact on volunteering cannot be ignored

Volunteering Australia welcomes the Australian Treasurer's significant cost of living relief package and his acknowledgement of the financial pressures facing individuals and communities. However, the Budget does not recognise that the cost-of-living crisis is having far-reaching consequences – on people's ability to volunteer, on organisations engaging volunteers, and on vital services provided to communities in need.

Chief Executive Officer of Volunteering Australia, Mark Pearce said, "We cannot ignore the long reach of the cost-of-living crisis on volunteers and volunteering, and the impact it is having on the social fabric of society. Our research shows that financial pressures are a barrier to volunteering. People are motivated to volunteer but are finding it too costly to participate."

The 2022 Volunteering in Australia [research](#), which informed the development of the new [National Strategy for Volunteering](#), revealed financial pressures to be a significant barrier to volunteering, especially among younger people. 25.5 per cent of people aged 18 to 34 years indicated 'financial reasons' as a reason they did not volunteer. Just over half (54 per cent) of volunteers incur out-of-pocket expenses through their volunteering role. The research also showed that volunteer involving organisations are also under significant financial strain, which affects their capacity to deliver services and engage their volunteers safely and effectively.

The new National Strategy for Volunteering sets out a roadmap for a sustainable future for volunteering. The National Strategy was co-designed and is owned by the volunteering ecosystem. The Australian Government has an important role in enabling the National Strategy and investing in its implementation.

Volunteering Australia's Pre-Budget [Submission](#) recommended a partnership fund to support the implementation of the new National Strategy for Volunteering which would include contributions from Government, philanthropy, corporates, and other stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem. A Volunteering Cost of Living Relief package was also recommended to help organisations survive and continue undertaking their vital work during the current cost of living crisis, particularly small, volunteer-run organisations.

"The work that volunteers do is not a 'nice to have'; it is essential work that supports our schools and hospitals, our aged care and disability services, and our ability to support the community in times of crisis. Volunteering does not just happen. As the National Strategy for Volunteering shows, it requires deliberate and ongoing strategic investment underpinned by adequate resourcing. We cannot afford to ignore the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on volunteering."

Next week, we celebrate our nation's Change Makers during [National Volunteer Week](#) (15-21 May 2023). Through our collective efforts, we can realise our vision for volunteering to be at the heart of Australian communities, but to get there we need to recognise and resource this vital activity.

ENDS

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