

MEDIA RELEASE

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Volunteering Australia to take action to futureproof volunteering

86% of volunteer involving organisations are struggling to get the volunteers they need, with volunteers deterred by factors such as personal expense, red tape and a lack of flexibility, according to a report launched today by Volunteering Australia at the National Volunteering Conference in Canberra.

The *2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report*, compiled by Volunteering Australia with the assistance of PwC, analyses the findings from a national survey of 2,304 volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and for the first time corporates.

Brett Williamson OAM, CEO of Volunteering Australia said: “The primary aim of the report is to capture important details of the trends, demographics, challenges and successes of volunteering and civic participation – critical to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Australia and Australians.

“This report takes on special significance given recent ABS figures stating that the rates of formal volunteering have declined for the first time in 20 years. Now is the time for the government, corporates and volunteering sector to invest in the future of volunteering by being innovative in the ways we attract and support volunteers.

“Whilst the report’s findings are generally encouraging, with 99% of current volunteers indicating they intend to continue to volunteer in the future, the downside is that 86% of volunteer involving organisations state that they need more volunteers and resources.

“The evidence also suggests that people are deterred from volunteering because of the lack of flexibility, personal expenses and red-tape burdens,” Mr Williamson said.

In 2015 Volunteering Australia announced a new contemporary and inclusive Definition of Volunteering: ‘Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.’ In light of this new definition, the *State of Volunteering in Australia report* investigated informal volunteering for the first time.

“46% of respondents have undertaken informal volunteering, predominantly by taking care of someone in the community. These grassroots connections between people are essential to our civil society – one finding has suggested that we should look at creating a platform where people can connect to help each other in informal ways.

“The findings of this report will strategically influence the work of Volunteering Australia and its State and Territory peaks, to futureproof the volunteering sector. The National Volunteering Conference provides the perfect opportunity to start these conversations and develop key actions for the future. A key focus will be on increasing the advocacy from Volunteering Australia to reduce red tape and barriers to volunteers, promoting the best practice in the sector through the use of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and looking at the options to enhance our digital platforms.” Mr Williamson said.

At the Conference Mr Williamson outlined all of the key findings of the report (see Media Backgrounder).

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