

**MEDIA RELEASE – 12 May 2014**  
**Redefining Volunteering in Australia**

Volunteering Australia today announced that it is time to challenge long held assumptions of what constitutes volunteering in Australia in 2014.

What it means to be a volunteer will be a key question during National Volunteer Week which starts today.

‘National Volunteer Week turns 25 this year, celebrating the power of volunteering’ said CEO of Volunteering Australia, Brett Williamson. ‘It is a landmark year so we are taking landmark action. We are kicking off a national review to update our definition of volunteering.’

In 1996 Volunteering Australia identified a set of principles to describe volunteering. These principles still underpin volunteering policy for not for profits, business and government.

‘25 years ago volunteers expected to commit long-term and work in traditional organisations. Now volunteering opportunities have exploded with options like corporate volunteering, micro and episodic volunteering to meet the myriad of needs and opportunities now out there’

‘The 1996 definition has not really kept pace with emerging trends of how over 6.1 million Australians are volunteering their time today with over 600 000 not for profit organisations.’

‘The definition of volunteering is a critical reference for the volunteering sector. It has a bearing on decision making by governments, volunteer resource centres and volunteer involving organisations. Not only does it enhance workforce planning, it underpins the integrity of volunteering and volunteers, ensuring a common understanding of what volunteering is. Much rests on it.’

‘It will also influence how companies manage employee volunteering programs, how organisations manage insurance needs for volunteers, how we measure volunteering and how we implement best practice standards across the sector.’

Mr Williamson said that ‘Volunteering Tasmania will lead the review. With the support of Volunteering Australia and the State and Territory peak bodies we intend to engage as comprehensively as possible with volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, government and the corporate sector.’

The review is expected to be completed by December 2014.

To view the Media Backgrounder: 10 Surprising facts about volunteering [click here](#).

**Check National Volunteering Week events at**  
[volunteeringaustralia.org/nvw2014](http://volunteeringaustralia.org/nvw2014) and #NVW2014 on Twitter and Facebook

---

**Media Inquiries:** Rikki Blacka, 0447841126, [marketing@volunteeringaustralia.org](mailto:marketing@volunteeringaustralia.org)