

MEDIA RELEASE



Wednesday 26 March 2025

Federal Budget leaves nation's volunteers behind

Volunteering is essential to the fabric of Australian society. Crucial national priorities – such as aged care, disability, homelessness, community welfare, emergency services, and the environment and climate – rely on volunteers to deliver services and take action. However, volunteering has been overlooked in the Federal Budget.

“Now is a critical time to invest in the future of volunteering. The response to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred is just one recent example of how volunteers are essential to the resilience and recovery of Australian communities,” said Mark Pearce, CEO of Volunteering Australia.

The Federal Budget funds no new measures for the volunteering ecosystem, and provides no funding to implement the 10-year National Strategy for Volunteering. Without adequate support, the vital contributions of millions of volunteers to Australia's resilience are at risk.

We welcome the continuation of the Volunteering and Community Connectedness funding stream, including the ongoing Volunteer Management Activity and Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) grants, as well as measures to address cost-of-living pressures for everyone in Australia. However, volunteer involving organisations remain under immense pressure with no support. Half of all registered charities in Australia engage no paid staff and are run entirely by volunteers. Increased resourcing for Australia's not-for-profit sector is needed to support volunteers and address the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. There is also no funding for reforms to the not-for-profit sector, such as those recommended in the [Not-for-profit Sector Development Blueprint](#) and the [Productivity Commission Inquiry into Philanthropy](#).

Volunteering Australia's [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. We recommended a suite of initiatives to make volunteering sustainable into the future:

1. Provide volunteering cost-of-living relief through an expanded volunteer grants program
2. Continue and increase funding for the Volunteer Management Activity
3. Invest in coordination and monitoring of the National Strategy for Volunteering
4. Invest in national peak body funding
5. Develop a national volunteer passport
6. Invest in child safe volunteering
7. Establish a climate change volunteering capacity building program

“We cannot take Australia's volunteers for granted. The work that volunteers do is not a ‘nice to have’; it is essential work that supports our schools and hospitals, our sporting teams, our aged care and disability services, and our ability to support the community in times of crisis. The foundations for a strong and

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sustainable volunteering ecosystem have been laid, guided by the co-designed National Strategy for Volunteering. Strategic investment in volunteering is crucial to safeguard its contribution to communities, and to ensure it is sustainable.”

“We are calling on future governments to invest genuinely in the volunteering ecosystem to secure its future, as demands for and on the volunteering ecosystem increase,” said Mr Pearce.

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