

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 9 May, 2016



Let's celebrate living a life with meaning this National Volunteer Week

Today marks the beginning of National Volunteer Week 2016, which runs from 9-15 May. In 2016 we continue to celebrate the theme Give Happy, Live Happy which, explores the research that shows volunteers live happier and healthier lives.

Associate Professor Dr Thomas Nielsen, University of Canberra, advocates a 'Curriculum of Giving', his research showing that giving and service to others increases wellbeing and academic outcomes in students – something much needed in a western world with high youth depression and suicide rates.

Dr Nielsen said, "Sustainable wellbeing comes not from money or consumerism, but from having meaningful happiness in our lives. There is one shared denominator for what people across cultures and religions report as giving them meaningful happiness in their lives: being something for others."

"We now know that volunteering is not just good for our physical health, but for our psychological and emotional health too. Giving is one of the strongest predictors of increasing our health and happiness," said Dr Nielsen.

Brett Williamson, OAM, CEO Volunteering Australia, said the theme Give Happy, Live Happy celebrates that there is so much more to volunteering than simply giving your time and skills to help others.

"This National Volunteer Week we say thank you to the six million Australian volunteers and celebrate that they are living healthier, happier and more meaningful lives by volunteering."

"Volunteering is a core part of the community and plays a critical role in Australian society, and in Australia's economy. 57% of staff in volunteer involving organisations are volunteers, and they form a formidable workforce powering many essential community, environmental, sporting, welfare, emergency services, education and cultural services and supports."

Thousands of volunteer involving organisations will say thank you to their volunteers this week with breakfasts, morning teas, sausage sizzles, garden parties and awards ceremonies to be held across the country. For the first time Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day) will be held during National Volunteer Week on Wednesday 11 May. The State Emergency Services (SES) is calling for people to wear orange to say thank you to the 40,000 SES members in over 1,000 locations nationally for their service to their communities.

"The 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report found that 86% of volunteer involving organisations need more volunteers. So, if you have ever thought of volunteering now's your chance! Make a pledge to volunteer this National Volunteer Week and you too can Give Happy, Live Happy. Over 10,000 volunteer opportunities are waiting for you at www.govolunteer.com.au," Mr Williamson said.

Beyond Bank Australia's General Manager Community Development Peter Rutter said Beyond Bank is proud to again partner with Volunteering Australia for National Volunteer Week.

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“Beyond Bank recognises the critical role that volunteers play in our communities, and we are honoured to support them through our relationship with Volunteering Australia.”

“National Volunteer Week provides a great opportunity for us all to say thanks to the many volunteers who help make our communities stronger, and let them know their efforts and commitment are appreciated – it’s also an appropriate time to encourage more people to get involved,” said Mr Rutter.

END.

About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the National peak body for volunteering working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. Its role is to represent the diverse views and needs of the sector and it promotes volunteering as one of the enduring social, cultural and economic values of our society. Additionally, Volunteering Australia strives to engender recognition for volunteer effort through support and consultation with organisations dependent on volunteers. For more information visit www.volunteeringaustralia.org

About Beyond Bank Australia

With more than 190,000 members and assets under management worth more than \$4 billion, Beyond Bank Australia is one of the nation's largest 100% customer-owned financial institutions. It operates 47 branches across South Australia, Western Australia, Wagga Wagga, the Hunter Valley and the ACT, and provides banking services and wealth management. It also supports a range of community endeavours via the Beyond Bank Foundation. For more information please visit www.beyondbank.com.au

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