

# MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 10 May 2018



## Mixed results for volunteering in 2018-19 Federal Budget

There have been mixed results for volunteering in the 2018-19 Federal Budget. While we acknowledge the Government's contributions to the sector through the Volunteer Management Activity and annual Volunteer Grants, we are disappointed that there is no strategic approach to grow a culture of giving in Australia.

Volunteering Australia CEO Adrienne Picone said, "We outlined a number of recommendations in our pre-budget submission, but these have been overlooked. Despite some positive measures more broadly in mental health, education, sport and aged care, there is an absence of comprehensive budgetary measures that are aimed at building the capacity of the volunteering sector."

"There are 5.8 million Australians who are engaged in formal volunteering activities and programs. This figure does not account for the millions of other Australians who informally give their time to volunteering programs, activities and initiatives. This volunteering yields a 450% return for every dollar invested. Nationally this is an estimated annual economic and social contribution of \$290 billion", said Ms Picone.

Volunteering Australia also raise concerns on the permitted activities for the Child Care Subsidy, that is due to be introduced from 2 July 2018. It is worrying that volunteering for a P&C, school canteen or coaching of a school sporting team are not permitted volunteering activities for the package, but considered "parental duties".

Volunteering Australia stresses that parents give their "time willingly", "for the common good", and contribute a great deal to the education sector. We urge the Government to revise the scope of permitted volunteering activities as part of the package.

Some of the more positive budget measures include a \$154.3 million investment in sport over five years, to support Australians to live healthier and more active lifestyles. Volunteers form an important constituent in the sporting sector, with volunteering a key preventative health measure. We look forward to working with the Government on the implementation of the National Sports Plan.

The Quality Schools Package, which has \$243.5 billion allocated from 2018-2027, will also see the introduction of volunteering, mentoring and other extra-curricular activities to enrich student learning. This was a key recommendation from the recent *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*, of which Volunteering Australia also contributed to.

Other highlights include:

- A commitment to fully fund the NDIS
- \$19,990,000 million allocation to Volunteer Grants in 2018-19 (this combines the previously unallocated funding from the 2017-18 period)
- \$82.5 million for mental health services in residential aged care facilities to combat loneliness
- \$33.8 million to Lifeline Australia to enhance its telephone crisis services and funding for beyondblue and the Way Back Support Service
- \$3.9 million over three years to ensure multicultural communities receive culturally-responsive and appropriate care
- An additional 14,000 high level home care packages in 2021-22 period

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- \$22 million for a National Plan on Elder Abuse, including the funding of trials and specialist support services
- The upkeep of funding for the DV-alert accredited training program (at \$6.7 million in 2018-19) which is available to volunteers

With [National Volunteer Week](#) just around the corner (21-27 May 2018), we hope there will be greater emphasis on volunteering, the social, economic and cultural contributions volunteerism provides, as well as a focus on building sector support to grow a culture of giving in Australia.

To read a more detailed analysis of the volunteering-related budget measures, [view Volunteering Australia's Summary Analysis of Key 2018-19 Budget Measures here](#).

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