

PETITION

to retain designated funding for Volunteering Support Services



To the Honourable President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

The petition of the undersigned recognises that volunteering is a tower of strength in our communities, with 5.8 million Australians or 31% of the population volunteering and making an estimated annual contribution of \$290 billion to our economic and social good.

For the first time in almost twenty years, the number of people formally volunteering in Australia was reported as declining in 2014, down to 31% from 36% in 2012.

Volunteering Support Services are place-based organisations that promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities. They empower people to volunteer and help ensure that their experience is positive and safe. They help the hundreds of thousands of community organisations that rely on volunteers to recruit, retain and manage those volunteers.

The redesign of the Department of Social Services' Strong and Resilient Communities grants, which take effect from 1st January 2018, has eliminated the specific allocation of funding for volunteer management services delivered by place-based Volunteering Support Services.

The removal of this funding seriously threatens the ongoing viability of many Volunteering Support Services and weakens volunteering at a time when it is struggling to adapt to societal changes and economic pressures. It poses an enormous blow to communities who rely on the volunteering programs that this funding delivers.

Your petitioners ask that the Senate:

1. Recognise the important role that Volunteering Support Services have in building strong and resilient communities;
2. Retain funding for volunteer management and Volunteering Support Services at the current level of \$5.7 million in the 2017/18 budget

Name	Address	Signature

Please return the petition to: **Volunteering Australia, PO Box 128, Civic Square ACT 2608** – no later than 26 May 2017.
For further information contact us on **02 6251 4060**.
Please photocopy unsigned petition as necessary. **Only original signatures can be accepted.**