



Summary Analysis of Key 2020-21 Federal Budget Measures
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Overview

- *Key funding for the volunteering sector was maintained:*
 - Continuation of \$10 million p.a. for Volunteer Grants in 2020-21, projected in the forward estimates at \$10 million p.a. to 2023-24.
 - Ongoing indexed allocation of funds to the Volunteer Management Activity - \$6.301 million for 2021-22, \$6.358 million for 2022-23 and \$6.440 million for 2023-24.
- *Potential good news for many volunteer involving organisations:*
 - In lieu of Equal Remuneration Order (ERO)/ Social and Community Services (SACS) supplementation, \$44 million p.a. was allocated to Department of Social Services programs and a further \$29 million p.a. for family law services funded by Attorney General's Department under the Family Relationships Services Program.
 - We understand there is a commitment across government to fund the ERO/SACS supplementation for grants ongoing. Other departments/agencies will be advising in the coming weeks how they will do this.
 - Charities are eligible for the JobMaker payments (wage subsidies and training incentives) provided they meet the eligibility requirements.
- *No new funding was allocated to volunteering despite the impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing challenges that the sector faces:*
 - The allocation of funds to Volunteer Grants remains static at \$10 million p.a. despite increased need. Volunteering Australia had asked for 2010 levels of \$21million p.a. to be reinstated.
 - Funds for a Reinvigorating Volunteering Action Plan, a National Youth Volunteering Initiative, and a National Volunteering Statement were not forthcoming.
 - Consideration of a co-ordinated emergency management approach to volunteer engagement is pending the outcome of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

Two in three volunteers (66 per cent) stopped volunteering during the pandemic, amounting to an estimated loss of 12.2 million hours per week of volunteer work¹. This decline has had a profound and ongoing impact across the sector. Volunteering Australia asked the Australian Government to support vital initiatives that would safely revive volunteering. We are calling on the Federal Government to give this further serious consideration in the coming months.

Introduction

Volunteering Australia provided two sets of recommendations for the 2020-21 Federal Budget, following consultation across the volunteering sector. These were included in:

¹ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/research-briefing-the-experience-of-volunteers-during-covid-19/#/>

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- Supplementary Pre-Budget Submission, August 2020²
- Pre-Budget Submission, December 2019³

In summary, in the Supplementary Pre-Budget Submission, we put forward proposals to reinvigorate volunteering following the impact of COVID19 and to help ensure that volunteers can safely and effectively contribute to the future wellbeing of the nation. These proposals were:

- A Reinvigorating Volunteering Action Plan. The plan would enable volunteers to re-engage safely, support the adaptation of volunteer programs, and facilitate the recruitment of new volunteers to ensure services and programs can continue.
- A National Youth Volunteering Initiative. At a time when paid jobs are scarce, this initiative could mitigate against poor mental health outcomes for young unemployed people and support pathways to paid employment.
- A nationally co-ordinated emergency management approach to volunteer engagement. As the frequency and scale of emergencies in Australia increases, a nationally co-ordinated approach will help to rapidly, safely, and effectively mobilise volunteers who are vital at times of emergency.

In our original Pre-Budget Submission, we called for investment to:

- Value the volunteering contribution, through an Australian Government Volunteering Statement, a State of Volunteering in Australia Report and National Volunteering Awards.
- Maintain the supporting infrastructure that facilitates the volunteering sector, including investment in online volunteer recruitment tools and ongoing maintenance and development of the Volunteering Resource Hub.
- Restore Volunteer Grant funding allocation to 2010 levels of \$21 million p.a.
- Review volunteering services that are supporting pathways to employment and invest in preemployment programs.
- Expand Commonwealth Home Support Program sector development funding to all states and territories.
- Continue Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation and build additional funding into the base of affected grants for the community sector.

² <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Supplementary-Pre-Budget-Submission-FINAL-24-August-2020.pdf>

³ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/December-2019-2020-21-Pre-Budget-Submission.pdf>

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Key Volunteering Measures in the Federal Budget

Volunteer Grants

- Continuation of \$10 million p.a. for Volunteer Grants in 2020-21, which has also been projected in the forward estimates at \$10 million p.a. to 2023-24⁴.
- Estimated actual spend in 2019-20 is \$12.390 million (over the \$10 million allocated budget) reflecting the additional spend on the Supplementary Volunteer Grants round.

Volunteer Grants are aimed at supporting Australia's volunteers, with grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 provided to organisations and community groups to assist their volunteers, for example to purchase equipment, for training or fundraising.

The 2019-20 Supplementary Volunteer Grants⁵ were welcome, more than addressing the underspend of the 2019-20 Volunteer Grants round.

Volunteering Australia had called for the grant allocation to be restored to 2010 levels of \$21 million p.a. It is disappointing that there has been no increase to allocated funding of Volunteer Grants in this budget given the importance of them for Volunteer Involving Organisations. In the last decade, the volunteering sector has seen an ongoing reduction to Volunteer Grants. While \$21 million was allocated to Volunteer Grants in 2010, this was reduced to \$16 million in 2011-13, \$20 million in 2015 (a combined 2014-15 round), and then \$10 million in 2016.

2.1.13 - Component 13 (Volunteer Grants)

Annual administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)	12,390	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total component 13 expenses	12,390	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Program expenses	953,296	857,525	658,206	603,865	612,782

Source: Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.12, Social Services Portfolio

Volunteer Management Activity

- Ongoing indexed allocation of funds to the Volunteer Management Activity - \$6.301 million for 2021-22, \$6.358 million for 2022-23 and \$6.440 million for 2023-24⁶.
- Estimated actual spend in 2019-20 is \$5.539 million, below the budget of \$6.075 million.

Volunteering Australia welcomed the inclusion of funding indexation for the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) in last year's (2019-20) budget, and a commitment to the program's continuation.

⁴ Page 66, Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.12, Social Services Portfolio

⁵ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/svg2020/#/>

⁶ Page 66, Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.12, Social Services Portfolio

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This was a very positive step for the volunteering sector, with the VMA never being indexed in the programs history (including previous iterations).

Volunteering Support Services currently receive an allocation of \$19.95 million for the Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) from 1 January 2018 through to 30 June 2021. With the review of the Volunteer Management Activity still pending, it is encouraging to see a commitment from the Government to continue to fund Volunteering Support Services post-June 2021, with forward estimates projecting \$6.301 million for 2021-22, \$6.358 million for 2022-23 and \$6.440 million for 2023-34.

2.1.12 - Component 12 (Volunteer Management)					
Annual administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No.1)	5,539	6,075	6,301	6,358	6,440
Total component 12 expenses	5,539	6,075	6,301	6,358	6,440

Source: Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.12, Social Services Portfolio

Additional policy measures relevant to volunteering

Community sector

- In lieu of Equal Remuneration Order (ERO)/ Social and Community Services (SACS) supplementation, \$44 million p.a. was allocated to Department of Social Services programs and a further \$29 million p.a. for family law services funded by Attorney General’s Department under the Family Relationships Services Program.
- We understand there is a commitment across government to fund the ERO/SACS supplementation for grants ongoing. Other agencies will be advising in the coming week how they will do this.

The funding to help secure the pay of community sector workers is very welcome. In our Pre-Budget Submission (December 2019) and in other advocacy work, Volunteering Australia called on the Australian Government to address this looming funding shortfall facing the community sector.

From 1 July 2021 more than \$44 million a year has been allocated to top up the base funding for grant programs impacted by the cessation of the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account. The funding will go to support more than 460 organisations, under around 720 grant agreements, delivering services to around one million people across Australia.

There was also funding in the Attorney-General’s portfolio of around \$29 million a year for ongoing base funding to be increased to replace the supplementation for family law services funded under the Family Relationship Services Program.

Before the Budget, supplementation funding was also included for disability services transitioning through to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (estimated at \$330 million a year) as part of the

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NDIS pricing structure, as well as in funding agreements for community legal centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services under the National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreements.

DSS issued a factsheet⁷ outlining the new funding and acknowledged the vital work of the sector, the fact that the sector's workforce is 84% women and that this is an important measure for securing pay equity.

ACOSS (as of 12 October 2020) have highlighted that uncertainty remains for some services that are funded by other agencies or under partnership agreements. However, we are advised that:

- There is a commitment across government to fund the ERO/SACS supplementation for grants ongoing and that other agencies will advise how they will do this
- Some agencies may be able to fund this within existing program budgets, and some agencies will need to bring proposals through to MYEFO in December or the May Budget next year
- Supplementation for funding grants under state/territory/federal partnership agreements will need to be discussed with state and territory government partners

Charities

- Charities are eligible for the JobMaker payments (wage subsidies and training incentives) provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

Volunteering Australia welcomes that charities will be able to access JobMaker Payments, which includes the JobMaker Hiring Credit, provided the organisation meets the eligibility criteria. It is important to acknowledge that there are many conditions around this payment including that an employer must not be receiving the JobKeeper Payment⁸.

Overall, across the social and charitable sectors, many argue that the Budget has failed to address the needs of the sector and many of the individuals and community they serve⁹. For example, Social Ventures Australia (SVA) demonstrate that Australia's charities have largely been left out of the major investments in the budget despite employing one in 10 workers and providing vital services that will be crucial for communities to build back better. Modelling¹⁰ by SVA and the Centre for Social Impact has shown that without additional assistance 180,000 jobs could be lost in the charities sector by September next year, even with the JobKeeper Payment continuing to March 2021.

⁷ https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/10_2020/supporting-social-and-community-services-sector-workers.pdf

⁸ The JobMaker fact sheet is available here: <https://budget.gov.au/2020-21/content/factsheets/index.htm>

⁹ <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2020/10/this-budget-falls-drastically-short-for-australians-doing-it-tough/>

¹⁰ <https://www.socialventures.com.au/partners-in-recovery/>

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Aged Care

- Additional funding for aged care of \$408.5 million to improve the care and quality of the aged care system, responding to both the COVID-19 pandemic and urgent issues raised by the Royal Commission into Quality and Safety in Aged Care¹¹.
- \$10.3million for an Aged Care Workforce Council which aims to build a skilful and flexible aged care workforce and increase recruitment and retention¹².
- Commonwealth Home Support Program funding extended for two further years¹³.

Volunteers are a vital part of the aged care workforce. The 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey estimated that volunteers are engaged extensively across aged care, with 83 per cent of residential facilities and 51 per cent of home care and home support outlets engaging the services of volunteers¹⁴. In our recent submission¹⁵ to the Aged Care Royal Commission, we stressed that volunteers should be considered strategically in workforce planning and should not be undertaking roles that are more appropriately done by paid staff.

We welcome the additional funding for aged care, including \$10.3million for an Aged Care Workforce Council, and look forward to volunteering being an embedded component of this Council acknowledging how vital volunteers are to the aged care workforce.

It is positive to see that the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) will be extended for a further two years to 30 June 2023. However, we highlight that there needs to be longer-term solutions regarding the future of CHSP to ensure continuity of service provision and care. This includes funding for all State and Territory volunteering peaks to provide nationally consistent sector development support to Volunteer Involving Organisations funded through CHSP.

[Note: as of 12 October, clarity on continuation of CHSP 'Sector Support and Development' is still being sought.]

Disability

- This year's Budget highlights that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)¹⁶ will be transitioning from a period of rapid growth and expansion to a more mature operating environment.

¹¹ Page 8, Minister Hunt Media Release

¹² Page 9, Minister Hunt Media Release

¹³ Page 122 of Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.7, Health Portfolio

¹⁴ <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-res>

¹⁵ https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteering-Australia-submission-to-the-Aged-Care-Royal-Commission_Jul-2020.pdf

¹⁶ Page 159 of Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.12, Social Services Portfolio

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Volunteering Australia has previously highlighted¹⁷ that the disability sector and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are heavily reliant on the volunteer workforce to deliver key programs and services. Volunteers provide support and services that are integral components of the NDIS.

The Australian Government, in partnership with the State and Territory governments, is currently developing a National NDIS Workforce Plan. This is to develop a cohesive and nationally agreed approach to workforce development given the size and capability of the workforce required.

Volunteering Australia continues to argue that the volunteer workforce (including the cost of volunteer management) needs to be costed and accounted for in the NDIS, given the reliance of volunteers in the scheme.

Mental Health

- Investment of \$485 million towards mental health initiatives over the course of the Budget Estimates - a combination of some measures which have been previously announced and some significant new funding¹⁸. This includes:
 - \$45.7 million over four years from 2020-21 to expand the Individual Placement and Support program under the Youth Employment Strategy to assist vulnerable young people with mental illness to participate in the workforce.
 - \$6.9 million over two years from 2020-21 to support digital mental health services including the Australian Government's mental health gateway Head to Health (which includes volunteering as beneficial activity).
 - \$2.1 million in 2020-21 for the Prevention Hub led by the Black Dog Institute and Everymind to continue to advance research that targets people at heightened risk of mental ill-health and suicide.
- The Budget also includes \$50.3m to support people affected by bushfires through funding for trauma response coordinators, trauma care training and expansion of mental health services and community grants for bushfire-affected areas, and telehealth services.

Volunteering Australia welcomes the focus on mental health in the Federal Budget. Research evidence¹⁹ consistently demonstrates that volunteering has significant preventative mental health benefits for those who volunteer. We also know that young people will be particularly badly affected in the coming years experiencing higher levels of unemployment and subsequent risks to their

¹⁷ https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/files_mf/1499838799VAResponsetoProductivityCommissionsinquiryontheNationalDisabilityInsuranceSchemeNDISCosts.pdf

¹⁸ Page 6 of Minister Hunt Media Release and Budget analysis by Mental Health Australia https://mhaustralia.org/sites/default/files/docs/final_2019_mental_health_australia_budget_summary.pdf

¹⁹ For example, see literature review and recent research by Kim et al (2020). Volunteering and subsequent health and well-being in older adults: an outcome-wide longitudinal approach. American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

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mental health and to their future wellbeing. Particularly when paid jobs are not available, volunteering can provide meaningful activity and help develop skills and capabilities that can support a pathway to paid employment.

For this reason, we advocated in our Supplementary Pre-Budget Submission for funding for a National Youth volunteering Initiative. We continue to call on the Government to invest in this important initiative. It could link to the idea of a 'My Volunteer Year' which would allow young volunteers to record and receive certification for their volunteering achievements.

However, the mental health of volunteers must also be protected, particularly those who volunteer during crises and emergencies. The additional funds to support the mental health of communities and workers affected by the bushfires is welcome.

Employment, education and social security

- Investment in apprenticeships, skills and training to help people to get a job as part of the Government's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan.²⁰
- This includes the \$4 billion JobMaker Hiring Credit payable for up to 12 months for each new job to employers who hire eligible employees aged 16-35.
- A transition to the New Employment Service Model²¹ from July 2022 which aims to allow most jobseekers to manage their job search requirements online (estimated to result in savings of \$1.4bn over four years).
- No permanent increase to Jobseeker Payment – at the end of 2020, income support rates will return to pre-COVID levels of \$40 per day.

Volunteering Australia welcomes the investment in supporting young people into training and employment. There are still more opportunities for government to support employment pathways through volunteering, particularly for young people with a National Youth Volunteering Initiative (as discussed above).

In the context of employment services, there is no dedicated funding for Volunteering Support Services, despite the vital role they play in assisting people to satisfy their mutual obligation requirements. Volunteering Support Services frequently use their local knowledge to assist mutual obligation participants to find a volunteer role with pre-approved Volunteer Involving Organisations. However, these organisations are currently not funded to perform this function, delving into existing resources to support jobseekers. This includes assisting jobseekers to ensure they meet their mutual obligation requirements, boosting the confidence of jobseekers, placing them in a volunteer role or providing them with training.

²⁰ Page 1, Minister Cash Media Release

²¹ Page 2, Minister Cash Media Release

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As set out in our Pre-Budget Submission, we recommend that the Australian Government undertakes a review to cost the placement services currently provided by Volunteering Support Services but attributed to jobactive providers. This should include an audit of the number of placements made by Volunteering Support Services and a valuation of the cost of providing placement services for mutual obligation participants. Ultimately this should lead to service agreements which clearly delineate responsibilities of client placements between Volunteering Support Services and jobactive providers and which resources each sector accordingly.

In relation to education, the Government has committed an additional \$146.3 million²² over five years from 2020–21 to improve school education outcomes of young Australians, “particularly disadvantaged students, regional students and those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as contribute to social cohesion”. This includes an additional \$38.2 million over four years from 2020–21 for The Smith Family to extend support through its Learning for Life program to a further 76,000 disadvantaged young Australians as they complete secondary school and move into work, training or further study.

Sport

- \$230.8 million injection into sport and preventive health.²³
- \$4.7 million to the Australian Sports Foundation to increase the fundraising capacity of community sports clubs.
- \$2.4 million to the Football Federation Australia to start planning the 2023 Women’s World Cup (which the media release cites will be the nation’s biggest sporting event since the 2000 Sydney Olympics).

Volunteering Australia strongly supports these measures, with volunteering in sport an important way to deliver on a range of health, social and economic benefits, particularly with clubs and sporting organisations playing a vital role in connecting individuals and communities.

It is also encouraging that the Federal Government has acknowledged the impact of COVID on sporting clubs which we know rely heavily on volunteers. This includes \$4.7million to the Australian Sports Foundation to increase the fundraising capacity of community sports clubs.

As planning for the 2023 Women’s World Cup gets underway, it will be important to consider the role of volunteers strategically in making this historic sporting event a success. During the 2000 Sydney Olympics, over 40,000 volunteers contributed to making these the ‘best Olympics ever²⁴’.

²² Page 12 of Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21 Budget Related Paper No. 1.4 Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio

²³ Page 17 of Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.7, Health Portfolio

²⁴ Comment made by the then IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch at the Olympic Closing Ceremony.

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Emergency Management

- The federal Government has said²⁵ that following the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, it will look to enhance the capabilities of Emergency Management Australia to better coordinate resources to strengthen preparedness, mitigation and recovery from disasters that are national in scale.
- Bushfire relief and recovery payments and benefits, *as well as support payments to volunteer firefighters*, provided by Australian government in relation to the 2019-20 bushfires have been made free from tax. The measure applies to the 2019-20 income year and later income years²⁶.
- As part of the additional mental health funding, \$50.3m to support people affected by bushfires through funding for trauma response coordinators, trauma care training and expansion of mental health services and community grants for bushfire-affected areas, and telehealth services.

In our Supplementary Pre-Budget Submission, we called for a nationally co-ordinated emergency management approach to volunteer engagement. As the frequency and scale of emergencies in Australia increases, a nationally co-ordinated approach will help to rapidly, safely, and effectively mobilise volunteers who are vital at times of emergency. We look forward to the report of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (due on 28 October 2020) and the Government's response and stand ready to work with the government on this.

Social cohesion

- \$62.8 million allocated to support social cohesion programs (which builds on the \$71 million package of social cohesion measures announced in March 2019)
- \$7.9 million to tracking social cohesion, which includes a partnership with the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute²⁷.

Research²⁸ commissioned by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership in 2016 demonstrated the volunteering strengthens community connectedness and social cohesion. They show that volunteering enhances social capital by helping to create networks, reducing social exclusion, and empowering people to give back to their communities.

Volunteering Australia will continue to promote the benefits of volunteering to social cohesion.

²⁵ Page 15 of Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.8, Home Affairs Portfolio

²⁶ Budget Measures, Budget Paper No. 2, 2020–21

²⁷ Page 22 of Economic Recovery Plan for Australia, Guaranteeing the Essential Services. Budget 2020-21

²⁸ https://www.communitybusinesspartnership.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/giving_and_volunteering_in_culturally_and_linguistically_diverse_and_indigenous_communities_-_literature_review.pdf.

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Environment

- The Practical Environment Restoration fund and the Communities Environment Program have reduced funding.

The \$137.4 million allocated in last year's budget to the 'Practical Environment Restoration' fund appears to have been reduced in this year's budget. This fund specifically aims to fund environmental protection projects, threatened species, the restoration of coastal waterways and waste recycling. (This funding was intended to build upon the government's National Landcare Program, which already funded a range of environmental initiatives.)

The 'Communities Environment Program' for community-led projects (also announced in last year's budget) has not received funding in future estimates.

These are disappointing developments. Local environmental and community care projects are often entirely volunteer run, and this funding was vital in supporting these local projects and ensuring safe and effective volunteering at the local level (for example covering administrative overheads such as insurance and out-of-pocket expenses).

	2019–20 Estimated actual \$'000	2020–21 Budget \$'000	2021–22 Forward estimate \$'000	2022–23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023–24 Forward estimate \$'000
Program 1.1: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment					
Administered expenses					
Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill (No. 1))					
Australian Marine Parks	3,578	6,500	4,000	1,009	-
Bushfire Recovery for Species and Landscapes	-	61,000	61,000	-	-
Communities Environment Program	18,055	-	-	-	-
Environment and Energy and Emissions Reduction Campaign	900	-	-	-	-
Environment Restoration Fund	17,291	51,228	24,991	19,801	-
Environmental Stewardship Program	9,672	9,179	9,397	9,266	7,365
Improving your Local Parks and Environment	2,027	-	-	-	-
National Landcare Program:					
Natural Heritage Trust ^(a)	176,338	153,533	151,659	153,800	186,308
Less special account	(176,338)	(153,533)	(151,659)	(153,800)	(186,308)
Reef 2050 Plan	40,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	-
Less special account	(40,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	-
Administered total	51,523	127,907	99,388	30,076	7,365

Source: Portfolio Budget Statements 2020-21, Budget Related Paper No. 1.1, Agriculture, Water and Environment Portfolio

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Conclusion

The Treasurer²⁹ referred to volunteer firefighters and their efforts during the Summer bushfires in his opening remarks, in the context of thanking our frontline healthcare workers. The Treasurer highlighted the “courage, commitment and compassion reflect the very best of Australia” and that “these qualities are the invisible strength of Australia.”

The 2020-21 Budget falls well short in supporting Australia’s volunteers and the volunteering sector. The Federal Government needs to more broadly recognise and invest in the ‘invisible strength of Australia’ contributed by volunteering.

²⁹ <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/josh-frydenberg-2018/speeches/budget-speech-2020-21>. Also, see Opposition Budget response <https://anthonyalbanese.com.au/anthony-albanese-speech-budget-in-reply-parliament-house-canberra-thursday-8-october-2020>

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Authorisation

This document has been authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Volunteering Australia.



Mr Mark Pearce
Chief Executive Officer

About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. The seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies work to advance and promote volunteering in their respective jurisdictions and are Foundation Members of Volunteering Australia.

Volunteering Australia's vision is to promote strong, connected communities through volunteering. Our mission is to lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia.

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Annex: Pre-Budget Submissions

Pre-Budget Submission December 2019

The proposed Budget Measures and Priorities in the December 2019 submission were:

- Valuing the volunteering contribution
 - Launch an Australian Government Volunteering Statement (\$30,000).
 - Commission a State of Volunteering in Australia Report (\$250,000).
 - Launch National Volunteering Awards in 2020 (\$110,000).
- Maintaining the supporting infrastructure that facilitates the volunteering sector
 - Investment of \$250,000 (and \$100,000 p.a.) to enhance online volunteer recruitment tools.
 - Ongoing maintenance and development of the Volunteering Resource Hub (\$80,000 p.a.).
 - Restore Volunteer Grant funding allocation to 2010 levels of \$21 million p.a.
- Review volunteering services that are supporting pathways to employment and invest in preemployment programs (Reallocation of funding).
- Resource volunteering in aged care by expanding Commonwealth Home Support Program sector development funding to all states and territories (Costs to be determined in accordance with the Commonwealth Home Support Program Sector Support and Development funding model).
- Continue Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation and build additional funding into the base of affected grants (Estimated at \$566 million in 2021/2022).

Supplementary Pre-Budget Submission August 2020

The supplementary Pre-Budget Submission was made following the postponement of the federal Budget and in the context of the profound impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on volunteering.

Overall, two in three volunteers (65.9 per cent)³⁰ stopped volunteering during COVID-19, amounting to an estimated loss of 12.2 million hours per week of volunteer work. Many volunteers (particularly those in high-risk groups, such as older volunteers) are not returning, the costs of recruiting new volunteers is prohibitive (for organisations already hit hard by COVID-19), and the capacity to adapt volunteer programs and absorb higher operating costs (due to COVID-19 safe workplace requirements) is limited.

In our supplementary submission we argued that, without action and investment, volunteering will not recover. This will have deep consequences for volunteers, organisations that rely on volunteers, and the individuals and communities they serve. Volunteers are a vital part of the nation's workforce

³⁰ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/research/research-briefing-the-experience-of-volunteers-during-covid-19/>

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and play significant roles in disability, health, welfare and aged care services, the sustainability of sports and the arts, environmental protection, and emergency management. Pre-COVID, nearly six million³¹ Australians volunteered each year.

The following proposals were put forward to reinvigorate volunteering and help ensure that volunteers can safely and effectively contribute to the future wellbeing of the nation:

- A Reinvigorating Volunteering Action Plan. This requires investment of \$5million³². The plan would enable volunteers to re-engage safely, support the adaptation of volunteer programs, and facilitate the recruitment of new volunteers to ensure services and programs can continue.
- A National Youth Volunteering Initiative. Investment of \$10million should be earmarked for this. At a time when paid jobs are scarce, this initiative could mitigate against poor mental health outcomes for young unemployed people and support pathways to paid employment.
- A nationally co-ordinated emergency management approach to volunteer engagement. Investment of \$3million should be dedicated to developing and rolling this out. As the frequency and scale of emergencies in Australia increases, a nationally co-ordinated approach will help to rapidly, safely, and effectively mobilise volunteers who are vital at times of emergency.

³¹ 4159.0 - General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014

³² It should be noted that this quantum of investment does not address the wider needs of volunteer involving organisations who are financially vulnerable because of the impact of COVID-19. For example, see https://www.csi.edu.au/media/Charities_and_Covid-19_Report.pdf and <https://covid.sportsfoundation.org.au/>