



The Value of Volunteering Support Services

Volunteering
AUSTRALIA



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THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES

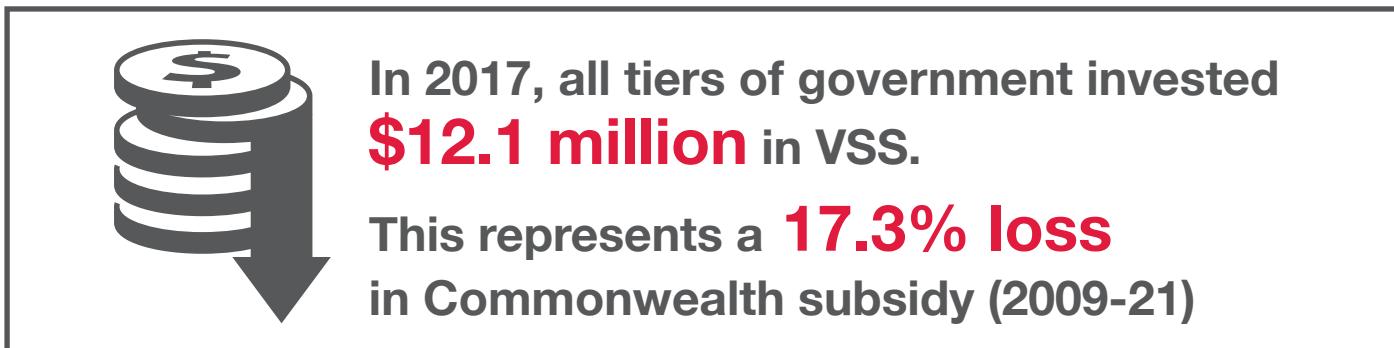
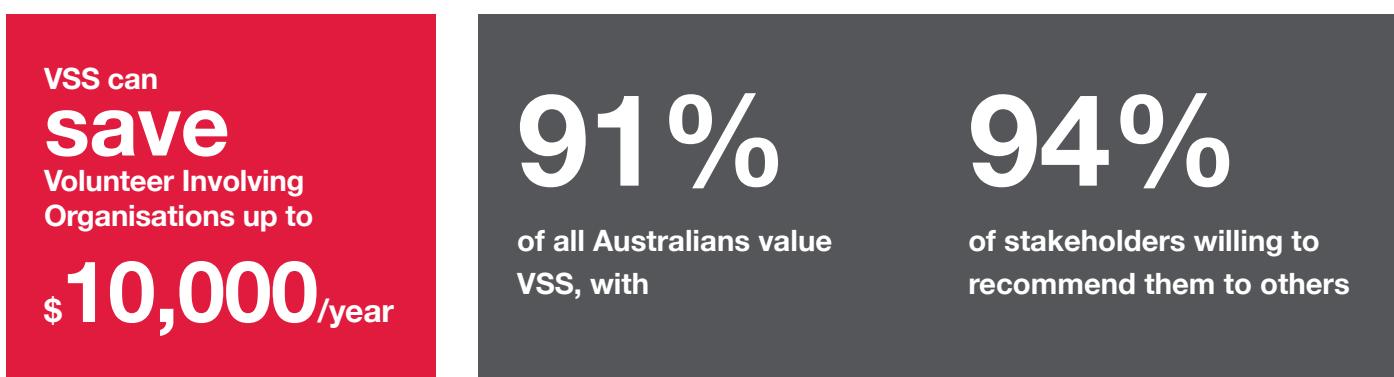
Volunteering Support Services (VSS) promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia.

VSS provide the **vital infrastructure to recruit and retain volunteers** in a variety of sectors, from civil society, human services, the environment, animal welfare and sporting groups.



$$1620 + 32,900 = \$12.6 \text{ million value}$$

The equation is broken down into three parts: 'trainings days in 2017' (1620), 'volunteers and stakeholders' (32,900), and 'million value' (\$12.6).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a socio-economic analysis and evaluation of the value of Commonwealth funded Volunteering Support Services. This includes establishing a baseline range of operational indicators and the value Volunteering Support Services deliver to the community, Commonwealth and other stakeholders.

Place-based services, such as Volunteering Support Services, provide the critical infrastructure required for safe, effective and sustainable volunteering. They are responsible for the promotion, resourcing and support of volunteering in local communities, and assist thousands of organisations across the country to recruit, retain and manage their volunteers. Volunteering Support Services promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia. They provide infrastructure in communities to lead, enable and build capacity to recruit, develop and retain volunteers in a wide variety of organisations and services, for example, from the human services and community sector, to environmental, animal welfare and sporting groups.ⁱ

To capture the value of Volunteering Support Services, two surveys and a Census were distributed to Volunteering Support Services themselves, as well as to Volunteer Involving Organisations and volunteers engaged by Volunteering Support Services. The report outlines that the analysis conducted has its limitations, and notes that not all Commonwealth funded Volunteering Support Services appeared to respond, and some responding organisations reported receiving no Commonwealth funds. The limitations of convenience sampling methodology are also highlighted, with the responses only representative of a selection of the broader volunteering population or users of Volunteering Support Services.

Methods of analysis include a demographic overview, an analysis on the impact of Volunteering Support Services on volunteers, the socio-economic impact of these services in the wider Australian community, the value they present, interpreted through the use value and contingent valuation methodologies. All calculations utilised can be found in the methodology found on page nine.

The results of the data analysed show that in 2017, the Commonwealth funded 52 Volunteering Support Services through the Volunteer Management Program. The purpose of the program is to support "...the delivery of Volunteering Support Services and one-off innovation and collaboration projects to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering."ⁱⁱ Further, in 2018, 52 Volunteering Support Services will deliver 70 programs across each State and Territory across Australia.ⁱⁱⁱ

Volunteering Support Services enabled nearly 12.3 million volunteer hours in 2017. This volunteering is worth \$477.5 million, and would not have occurred without the engagement of Volunteering Support Services. It is noteworthy to highlight that Volunteering Support Services would not exist without the \$5.7 million investment from the Commonwealth. This represents a return on investment of \$83 for every dollar invested by the Commonwealth.

The analysis outlined in this report provides evidence that despite an increasing demand for the services of Volunteering Support Services, government contribution has remained static.

The challenge for Volunteering Support Services will be to demonstrate the collective contribution they make to the wider community. For example, it is essential to consider the economic and social contributions of Volunteering Support Services, and their role in building social capital, community cohesion, and in the delivery of long-term and agile service provision.

In doing so, Volunteering Support Services will not only be better positioned to communicate the broad and often understated extent to which they advance community well-being and economic growth, but can also take internal stock of their stakeholder ecosystem and make better informed decisions about their operational conduct and strategic intent.

This report outlines the challenges for Volunteering Support Services in respect to short-term funding, increasing costs and overheads, staffing capacity and retention, and increasing demand for services. This includes recommendations to consider the benefits of appropriately resourcing and investing in these organisations to not only ensure their long-term sustainability, viability and success, but their value for the broader Australian community. It also highlights that there should be adequate consideration and allowance of the value of Volunteering Support Services in Government policy and planning to guarantee the best possible outcomes.

FOREWORD

I am both delighted and humbled to have been asked to write the foreword to *The Value of Volunteering Support Services*, which has been commissioned by NCVO's sister organisation, Volunteering Australia. Together, we share common goals around making it easier for people to make a contribution to their community, and to help the 'people that do' to make a bigger difference. That difference is writ large across this report.

Martin Luther King Jr. is reputed to have said 'Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"'. As organisations that support and involve volunteers, this is a question that we help others to answer as they begin their journey in the service of our communities. This report is a timely reminder that those people who wish to make a contribution often do so as a result of accessing services such as brokerage and support. They also get involved because of our advocacy work, raising the profile of volunteering. In a world where there is unequal access to volunteering opportunities and where myths about volunteering are still perpetuated, our voice is more important than ever.

We know that individually we can achieve much as volunteers, but that collectively we often achieve more. We are living in a digitally-enabled world where social movements are gaining recognition, and rightly so. Small actions multiplied by large scale movements can achieve real change. This report shows that there continues to be another way, where well-supported volunteers working in Volunteer Involving Organisations create real impact. My sense is that blending the power of digital with the human, face-to-face relationships we so often excel at developing is one of our main challenges for the future.

We are undoubtedly living in an age where people still want to get involved in their communities. That does not mean we can be complacent; we are in a period where questions about value and impact are sharper and more frequent. Those questions come from individuals who are pressed for time, and from governments seeking to justify expenditure. This report importantly sets out an approach for estimating the added value of Volunteering Support Services. In doing so, it establishes a much-needed research agenda that I hope to see develop further. When it comes to such services, we too often see that an absence of evidence is perceived to be evidence of absence.

Those reading this publication will no doubt wish to live in a society where we all have access to the opportunities that volunteering brings; where the experience of volunteering is fulfilling and impactful; and where the value of volunteering to the individual and wider society is recognised and valued. Volunteering Support Services are integral to all of these elements. I hope that this report generates a debate about how Volunteering Support Services can help people make an even bigger difference to their communities.

Karl Wilding
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (UK)
November 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is at the centre of Australia's national identity, with 5.8 million Australians – or 31 per cent of the population – engaging in formal volunteering, making an estimated annual economic and social contribution of \$290 billion.^{iv,v}

Volunteering has woven itself into the fabric of everyday life, and Australian society is increasingly dependent on volunteering activities and programs. This includes the arts, education, emergency services, sport, environment, health, aged care, disability support, tourism, and community welfare.

Volunteering is also critical to the delivery of the Australian Government's priorities of building strong and resilient communities, by encouraging economic participation, mitigating isolation and loneliness, and increasing social inclusion, community resilience, participation and social cohesion.

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as "Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."^{vi} However, while volunteers donate their time willingly, the operational cost of training, recruiting and placing volunteers, as well as delivering innovative and agile volunteering programs that are responsive to the needs of Australian society, is increasing.

The volunteering sector is being asked to evolve and grow, while nationally there has been a decrease in formal volunteer participation. This is coupled with an increase in the demand for the services that volunteers provide.

Place-based services, such as Volunteering Support Services, provide the critical infrastructure required for safe, effective and sustainable volunteering. They are responsible for the promotion, resourcing and support of volunteering in local communities, and assist thousands of organisations across the country to recruit, retain and manage their volunteers.

This report aims to quantify the social and economic contributions that Volunteering Support Services make to society, provide an evidence base for future resource allocation, and deliver a benchmark against which to measure future performance.

Volunteering Support Services make an important and valuable contribution to volunteering in Australia. Reliable data is critical for ongoing policy development, future planning and long-term service delivery. This has been demonstrated through the collection of data that has shown the investment of taxpayer dollars has been substantially repaid, despite measured investment by government. In particular, the research reveals that the social, economic and cultural value of volunteering yields a 450 per cent return for every dollar invested.^{vii} Furthermore, in a twelve-month period, adult Australians undertook voluntary work to the value of \$31,417,720,000.^{viii}

2 METHODOLOGY

To capture the value of Volunteering Support Services, two surveys and a Census were distributed to Volunteering Support Services themselves, as well as to Volunteer Involving Organisations and volunteers engaged by Volunteering Support Services.

In July 2017, the first national Census of Volunteering Support Services in Australia was conducted. The online survey instrument (appendix A) covers the previous twelve months of Volunteering Support Services activity. Coordinated by Volunteering Australia, and facilitated by the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies, a total of 86 valid responses were received. Responding Volunteering Support Services reported receiving \$3.7 million in Commonwealth funding for the purpose of a Volunteering Support Service. It is important to note that not all Commonwealth funded Volunteering Support Services appeared to respond, and some responding organisations reported receiving no Commonwealth funds. Of the Volunteering Support Services who did respond, this amount represents 64.5 per cent of the \$5.7 million in Commonwealth funding for Volunteering Support Services. This is the base from which population estimates have been made and stands as the proxy response rate.

An important caveat to note is that 28 of the 52 Commonwealth funded Volunteering Support Services replied to the survey. This represents 53.8 per cent of the Volunteering Support Service organisational population. However, unlike in a survey of people (where every response is considered equal), responding organisations are of unequal size. In this report, we are measuring and assessing the impact of these organisations, therefore as part of best-practice, we have extrapolated data relative to the size of each Volunteering Support Service.

Two other surveys were administered online in July 2017 by the Institute of Project Management, and broadcast to relevant stakeholders by the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies, per Volunteering Australia. There were 302 valid responses to the survey of volunteers who had previously engaged with Volunteering Support Services (see appendix A), and 205 survey respondents to the Survey of Volunteer Involving Organisations. However, the limitations of convenience sampling methodology meant that the

responses cannot be considered representative of the broader volunteering population or users of Volunteering Support Services. There are no claims made by this report that it is reflective of the views of all Volunteer Involving Organisations or volunteers.

Finally, to assist this study, Myriad Research collected responses from 896 Australian residents aged 18 years and over to the instrument appended below. Interviews were conducted by telephone and online in July 2017 by fully trained and briefed interviewers. Respondents for the telephone sample were selected via a random sample process which included:

- a representative quota of respondents being set for each state;
- a random selection of household telephone numbers within quota defined regions; and
- a random selection of an individual in each household by a ‘youngest qualifying resident’ screening question.

To ensure the sample included those people who spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call backs and appointments was incorporated.

To reflect the population distribution, results were post-weighted to ABS data on Australian age and gender distribution,^{ix} as per the following scale:

Table 1: Telephone survey post-stratification weightings

Males		Females	
Age	Weight	Age	Weight
18 to 24	4.59	18 to 24	3.75
25 to 34	1.83	25 to 34	1.50
35 to 44	1.58	35 to 44	1.29
45 to 54	1.35	45 to 54	1.10
55 to 64	0.86	55 to 64	0.70
Over 65	0.37	Over 65	0.30

3 HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

Volunteering infrastructures are not exclusive to Australia, with the first volunteer centres established in the United States in 1919.^x Similarly, Canada and the United Kingdom also set up centres, with peak bodies established to provide a nationally consistent voice.^{xii}

Volunteering Support Services were established in the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Denmark, England, Germany, Finland and the United States to great effect. Despite the impact of Volunteering Support Services internationally, there has been little research done that examines their impact in Australia.^{xiii}

The volunteering infrastructure in Australia is a combination of peak bodies, Volunteering Support Services and Volunteer Involving Organisations. Volunteering Support Services have a broad membership, providing services to organisations from across the community sector, the arts, education, emergency services, sport, environment, education, health, and tourism. This is because volunteering is a cross-portfolio activity that extends to all areas of society.

The development of the volunteering infrastructure began during the early 1970s when there was discussion around the definition of volunteers, their relationship with paid staff, and the need for volunteers within the community sector.

The Commonwealth Government's Volunteer Management Program was established to fund Volunteering Support Services in 1992 and provides dedicated funding for volunteer management, and has been managed primarily by the Department of Social Services (or its predecessors).

In 2011, volunteering was relocated to the responsibility of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In the Portfolio Overview of the *2013-14 Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio Budget Statement*, social inclusion, the non-profit sector and volunteering was also listed as one of the portfolio's "principle responsibilities".^{xiv} Since this time, there has been overwhelming sentiment from the volunteering sector that the program was best represented in Prime Minister and Cabinet due to the cross-sector nature of volunteering.

Following the 2013 Federal election, the Volunteer Management Program, the one-off Volunteer Innovation

and Collaboration Grants Program, and Volunteering Australia's peak body funding, were all relocated back to the Department of Social Services.^{xv,xvi} This refocus has suggested a limited interpretation of volunteering by the Government, that excludes the diversity of the activity.

With the repositioning of volunteering, there have been several changes in funding approaches that have resulted in an increase in one-off funding and competitive grants programs for volunteer supported projects, as well as three to three and a half-year grant funding terms. This puts a significant strain on the sector. The volunteering sector has previously asked for longer-term funding for Volunteering Support Services and volunteer management, to ensure the strategic workforce planning required to operate and deliver successful programming. In fact, Volunteering Australia has previously argued that grant terms should ideally be five-years in length in order to ensure fiscal certainty to the sector, strengthen outcomes, build resources and structural capacity.^{xvi}

The limitations enforced by short-term grant funding have been recognised by the Government in their Response to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee Report, which agreed that Grant terms offered by DSS should ideally be five years in length in order to "allow community organisations to better undertake long-term business planning and provide consistency of services" and ensure that "community organisations are able to dedicate more resources to service delivery, rather than administrative processes, in turn providing valuable support to vulnerable Australians".^{xvii}

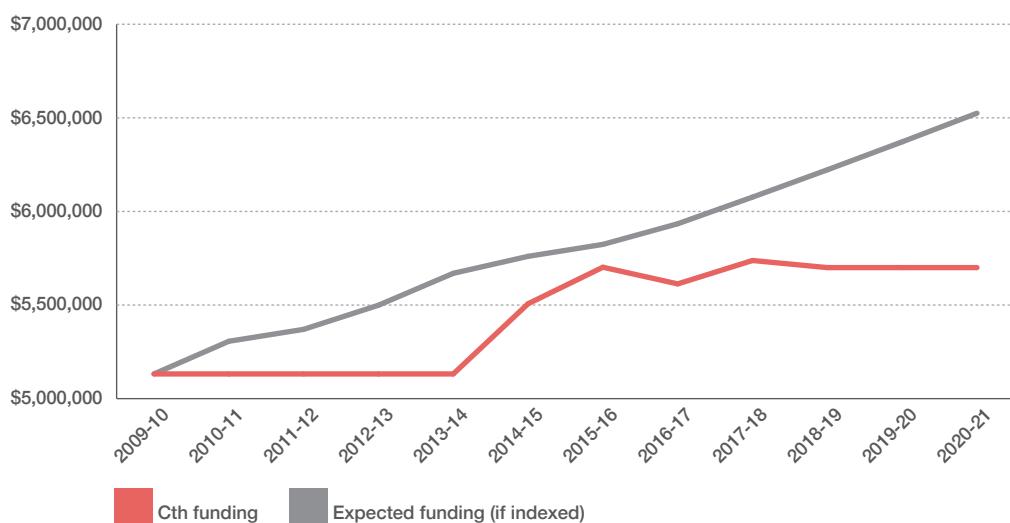
There are no State/Territory Government programs that provide funding for organisations to operate as a Volunteering Support Service, with all funding provided federally under the Volunteer Management Program. The *Strengthening Communities Grants Program* is the only source of long-term State/Territory or Federal Government funding for Volunteer Management. Therefore, many organisations are heavily reliant on the Volunteer Management Program stream of funding, provided under the Strengthening Communities Grant Program.

Table 2: Australian Government funding for the Volunteer Management Program

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
\$5.132m	\$5.132m	\$5.132m	\$5.132m	\$5.132m	\$5.507m	\$5.702m	\$5.613m	\$5.738m

Since 2009, funding has reduced by \$824,770 or 14.5 per cent in real terms due to an inability to keep pace with indexation.^{xviii} While funding has remained relatively constant, without the application of indexation, the reduction in funding in real terms can be quantified as seen in the chart below:

Figure 1: Australian Government funding for Volunteering Support Services matched with expected funding (if indexed)



While it is not clear what the rationale is for freezing funding, modelling shows that if indexation is applied, the level of funding for the Volunteer Management Program would increase. It can be estimated that if funding remains at the same level, and without the application of indexation, by 2021 there will be a reduction in capacity for Volunteering Support Services to support Commonwealth initiatives. With the increase in demand for services provided by Volunteering Support Services, either through the provision of volunteers, or by supporting referrals into non-voluntary programs such as Mutual Obligation and Work for the Dole, Volunteering Support Services will be worse off if indexation is not applied.

52 Volunteering Support Service organisations across Australia shared \$5.7 million in funding in 2015-2016 under the *Strengthening Communities Grants Program*.^{xix} Following the conclusion of the grant funding at 30 June 2016, the Commonwealth embarked on a redesign of the *Strengthening Communities Grants Program*, which could have seen many Volunteering Support Services lose designated funding. The Government proposed to abolish specific funding for Volunteer Management, forcing organisations that received such funding to compete alongside a diverse pool of deserving organisations in the community services sector (i.e. multicultural organisations, aged care, disability support, etc).

From 1 July 2016, Volunteering Support Services received three successive six-month extensions of funding of \$2.85m until 1 January 2018.^{xx} In July 2017, the Minister for Social Services announced the reinstatement of designated funding for Volunteering Support Services. Consistent with the quantum of grants for the Volunteer Management Program in 2016-17, a total of \$5.7 million was reserved annually for Volunteer Management from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2021, with the total allocation at \$19.95 million.^{xxi}

The volunteering sector is undergoing significant change as the Australian Government reviews the primary model for volunteer management. This is occurring while there is a national decrease in formal volunteer participation, and an increase in the demand for services that volunteers provide.

4 VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES

Volunteering Support Services promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia. They provide infrastructure in communities to lead, enable and build capacity to recruit, develop and retain volunteers in a wide variety of organisations and services, for example, from the human services and community sector, to environmental, animal welfare and sporting groups.^{xxii}

Volunteering Support Services play a crucial role in supporting and resourcing local volunteering programs, while empowering volunteers and ensuring their safe management. These place-based services play a vital role in building strong and resilient communities.

In 2017, the Commonwealth funded 52 Volunteering Support Services through the Volunteer Management Program. The purpose of the program is to support "...the delivery of Volunteering Support Services and one-off innovation and collaboration projects to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering."^{xxiii}

In 2018, 52 Volunteering Support Services will deliver 72 programs across each State and Territory across Australia.^{xxiv}

Table 3: Number of DSS funded Volunteering Support Services in each State/Territory

State/Territory	Number of DSS funded services
Australian Capital Territory	1
New South Wales	19
Northern Territory	4
Queensland	9
South Australia	8
Tasmania	3
Victoria	17
Western Australia	11
Total	72

In July 2017, the first national survey of Volunteering Support Services in Australia was conducted. The survey instrument (see Appendix) covers the previous twelve months of Volunteering Support Services activity. Coordinated by Volunteering Australia, and facilitated by the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies, a total of 86 valid responses were received.

Respondents highlighted that commonwealth funding accounts for 64.5 per cent of all funding received by organisations that function as a Volunteering Support Service. This is the base from which population estimates have been made and stands as the proxy response rate.

Demographic Characteristics

On average, Volunteering Support Services reported just over 280 volunteer opportunities registered at each location, with centres opening 33.5 hours per week.

Volunteering Support Services each received 1,424 volunteer enquiries in the last year. Of these, 74.7 per cent successfully engaged with a Volunteer Involving Organisation, and it took on average 3.5 contacts with each volunteer by Volunteering Support Services to successfully broker engagement with a Volunteer Involving Organisation

Extrapolating from the sample, we estimate that Volunteering Support Services across Australia successfully coordinated contact between approximately 142,000 volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations in 2017. According to the most recent national data in the General Social Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics,^{xxv} the average time a Volunteer Involving Organisation received from each of its volunteers amounted to 86.5 volunteer hours per year. (*Note that this is distinct from the total hours an individual might volunteer across a range of different interests*).

Volunteering Support Services enabled nearly 12.3 million hours in the last year. Notably, this volunteering (worth \$477.5 million), would not have occurred without Volunteering Support Services. It is also significant to highlight that Volunteering Support Services would not exist without the \$5.7 million investment from the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Commonwealth investment of \$5.7 million for Volunteering Support Services directly enables an additional \$477.5 million of volunteering in the community. This represents a return on investment of \$83 for every dollar invested by the Commonwealth. It should also be noted that the 'true' return on investment would also include the less tangible consumer surplus enabled by Volunteering Support Services. This figure is estimated in chapter seven of this report. As such, the benefit/cost ratio of 83:1 significantly understates the actual value enabled by Volunteering Support Services, and supported by the Commonwealth

The data also shows that those volunteers shared some atypical characteristics. Female clients outnumbered male clients by a factor of almost 2:1 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Volunteering Support Services volunteer clients by gender, 2017

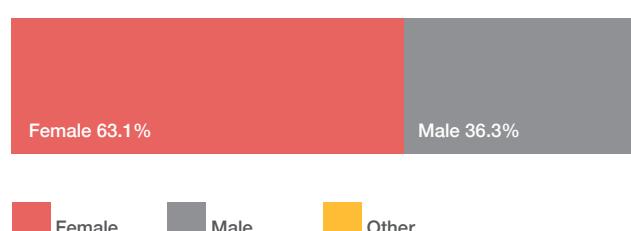
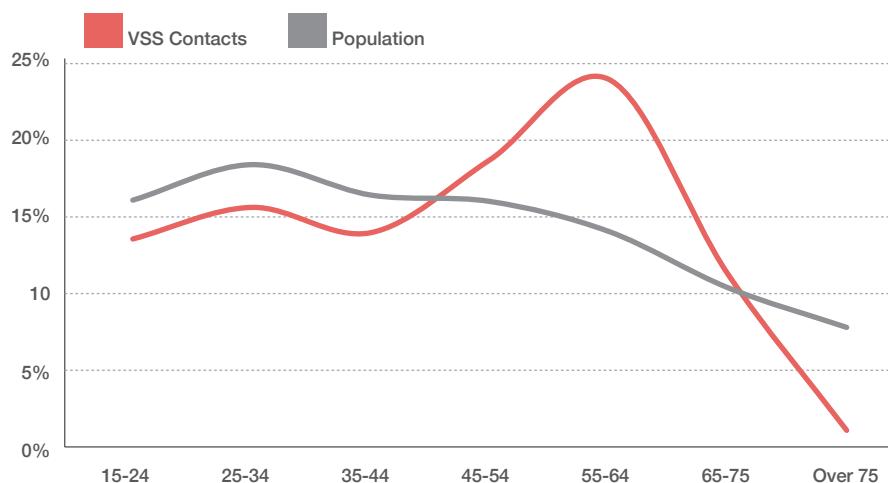


Figure 3: Per cent of Volunteering Support Services volunteer clients by age versus per cent of the Australian population



	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-75	Over 75
VSS Contacts	13.7%	15.7%	14.1%	18.7%	23.8%	11.5%	1.6%
Population	16.2%	18.4%	16.5%	16.1%	14.2%	10.6%	8.1%

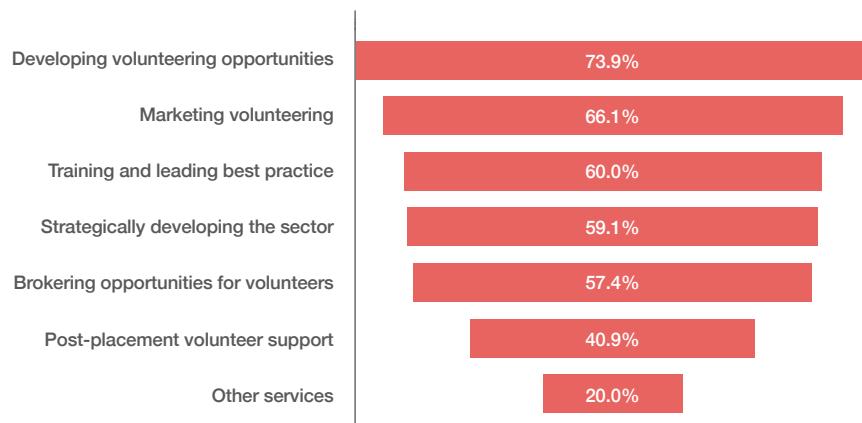
Figure 3 shows that, relative to the general population, the average age of volunteers engaged through a Volunteering Support Service skewed towards persons 45 years and older.^{xxvi} Volunteering Support Services reported that 44.3 per cent of volunteers experienced some form of physical, social or economic disadvantage. Furthermore, the data shows that the volunteering enabled by Volunteering Support Services only occurs through their intervention.

Operations

Respondents were asked to identify which of the following services they provided:

- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities (for volunteers)
- Developing volunteering opportunities (with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Good practice development (e.g. delivering consultancy, volunteer awards, training programs, resource development)
- Marketing volunteering (e.g. events/stalls, ads in media, web presence, help lines)
- Post-placement volunteer support (for volunteers placed with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Strategic development of volunteering (e.g. developing training programs, networking between Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Volunteer training (e.g. workshops)
- Other services (please state)

Nearly one in five Volunteering Support Services delivered all the specific services listed, with Volunteering Support Services delivering an average of four of the six services to their local communities. The breadth of service delivery did not correlate with the size of the Volunteering Support Services (to the threshold of statistical significance). This means that even small Volunteering Support Services were able to operate across multiple service domains. It is important to recognise that while some Volunteering Support Services engaged in post-placement volunteer support, there was no expressed obligation in their grant agreement to do this.

Figure 4: Services delivered by Volunteering Support Services, 2017

The majority of Volunteering Support Services (see Figure 4) were involved in developing volunteering opportunities with Volunteer Involving Organisations and marketing volunteering to the community. Less than half were involved in post-placement volunteer support, and only one in five were providing ‘other’ services.

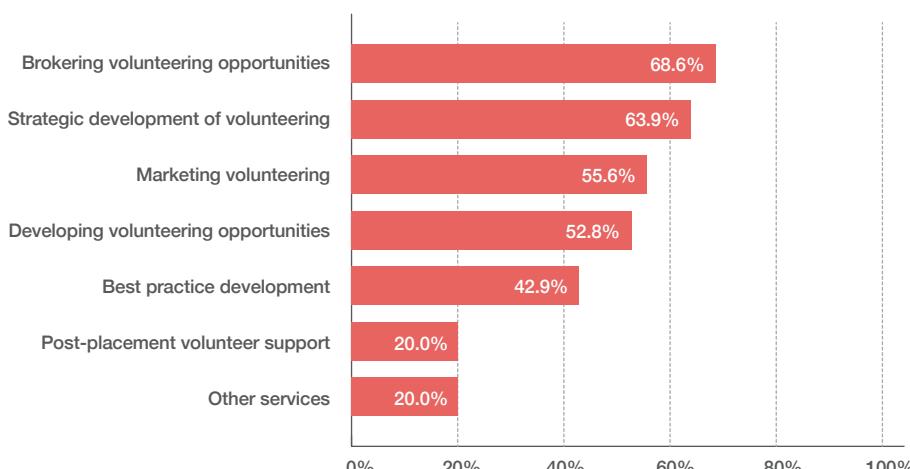
‘Other’ services Volunteering Support Services reported that they were or should be delivering included:

- Auspicing time-banking
- Participating in community development projects
- Providing ongoing support for people experiencing disadvantage
- Providing specific support to Volunteer Involving Organisations for volunteer management (i.e. workshops, training, etc.)

Volunteering Support Services were also asked whether each of these services were in high, medium or low demand.

Their perceptions of high demand services are presented in Figure 5. Volunteering Support Services reported that the highest demand for their services was in brokering opportunities for volunteers, followed by the strategic development of volunteering as a sector (this includes the training and development of managers of volunteers).

It should be noted that Volunteering Support Services are not funded to deliver post-placement volunteer support under current funding agreements. While some Volunteering Support Services deliver post-placement volunteer support at their own cost, many are unable to, without the workforce capacity or ability to invest in it.

Figure 5: Demand for Volunteering Support Services (self-reported)

Training

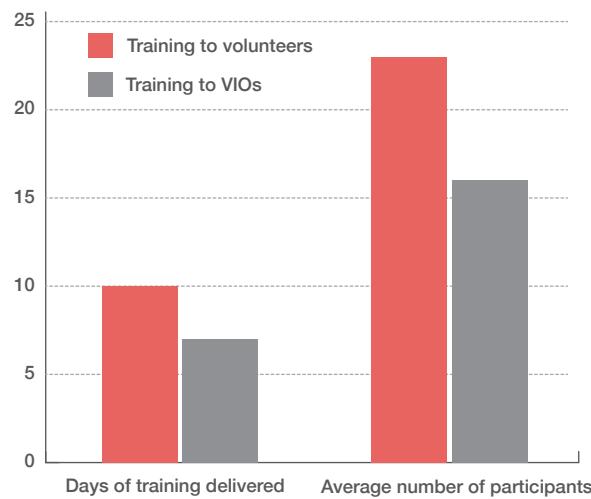
A large proportion, 70.4 per cent, of Volunteering Support Services separately reported that delivering training to volunteers was within their scope of operations. The median number of training days delivered was 10 per year, connecting with an average of 23 volunteers per session (Figure 6).

A large proportion of Volunteering Support Services (73 per cent) also delivered training directly to Volunteer Involving Organisations, averaging seven training days per year for around 16 people per session. Coupled with the direct training of volunteers cited above, this suggests that Volunteering Support Services delivered 1,620 training days in 2017 to nearly 32,900 volunteers and staff from Volunteer Involving Organisations.

An estimate of the value of this training can be formed using the conservative commercial rate of \$350 per head for volunteers and \$2,500 per training day for Volunteer Involving Organisations. This is estimated to equal \$12.6 million in value. It is important to note that the conservative commercial rate for training per day is not reflective of what Volunteering Support Services are charging.

Volunteering Support Services only received \$0.9 million in revenue from training and other sources in the surveyed period. In fact, Volunteering Support Services effectively give training at a 93 per cent discount, with many organisations delivering training either for free, or for a nominal fee. Given that the conservative estimated market value of training is \$12.6 million, this is an important donation of time and value to the community.

Figure 6: Volunteering Support Services training delivered to volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations



5 VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES IMPACT ON VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

Survey respondents reported that, on average, just under 150 Volunteer Involving Organisations were registered per Volunteering Support Service in Australia. This number grew, on average, by 17 new registrations for each Volunteering Support Service in the last year.

To better understand their relationship with Volunteering Support Services, 205 Volunteer Involving Organisations were surveyed. However, the convenience sampling methodology used meant that the survey respondents were not perfectly representative of the Volunteer Involving Organisations population.

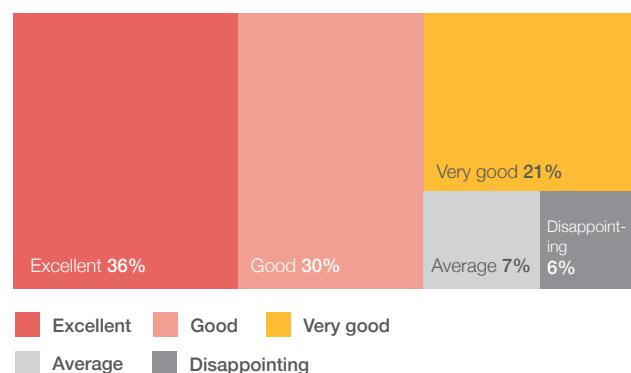
The data showed that 22.5 per cent of volunteer placements with a Volunteer Involving Organisation came from a Volunteering Support Service. The data also revealed that 51.3 per cent of referrals from a Volunteering Support Service were successfully placed.* Volunteer Involving Organisations reported saving on average just over \$9,500 per year as a result of the services provided by Volunteering Support Services. We can deduce that Volunteer Involving Organisations are equating these benefits with reductions in their recruitment, management, training and retention costs. Volunteers placed by a Volunteering Support Service were more likely[†] to deliver significant value to the acquiring Volunteer Involving Organisation. In fact, they were:

- 28.5 per cent more likely to be retained by the Volunteer Involving Organisation;
- 38.8 per cent more likely to volunteer for more hours;
- 20.5 per cent more likely to be better prepared for volunteering; and,

- 12.3 per cent more likely to be better aligned to the Volunteer Involving Organisation's purpose and needs.

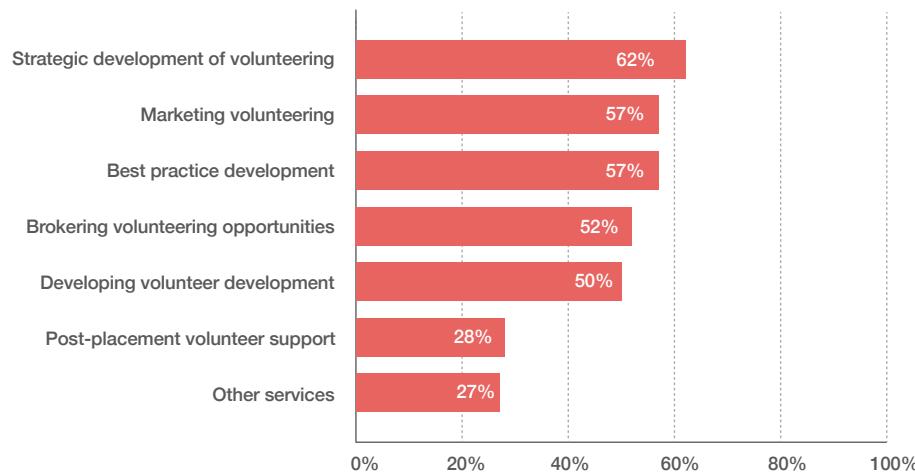
Overall, 87 per cent of responding Volunteer Involving Organisations rated the quality of support they received from Volunteering Support Services as being either good, very good or excellent (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Volunteer Involving Organisations ratings of the quality of support provided by Volunteering Support Services



Volunteer Involving Organisations were also surveyed on their demand for Volunteering Support Services using the same variables as in the Volunteering Support Services survey (Figure 8). Of those surveyed, a large proportion of Volunteer Involving Organisations (94.1 per cent) stated they would be willing to recommend Volunteering Support Services to others.

Figure 8: Volunteer Involving Organisations' demand for Volunteering Support Services



* Note that one volunteer may be referred to multiple Volunteer Involving Organisations before they are successfully placed.

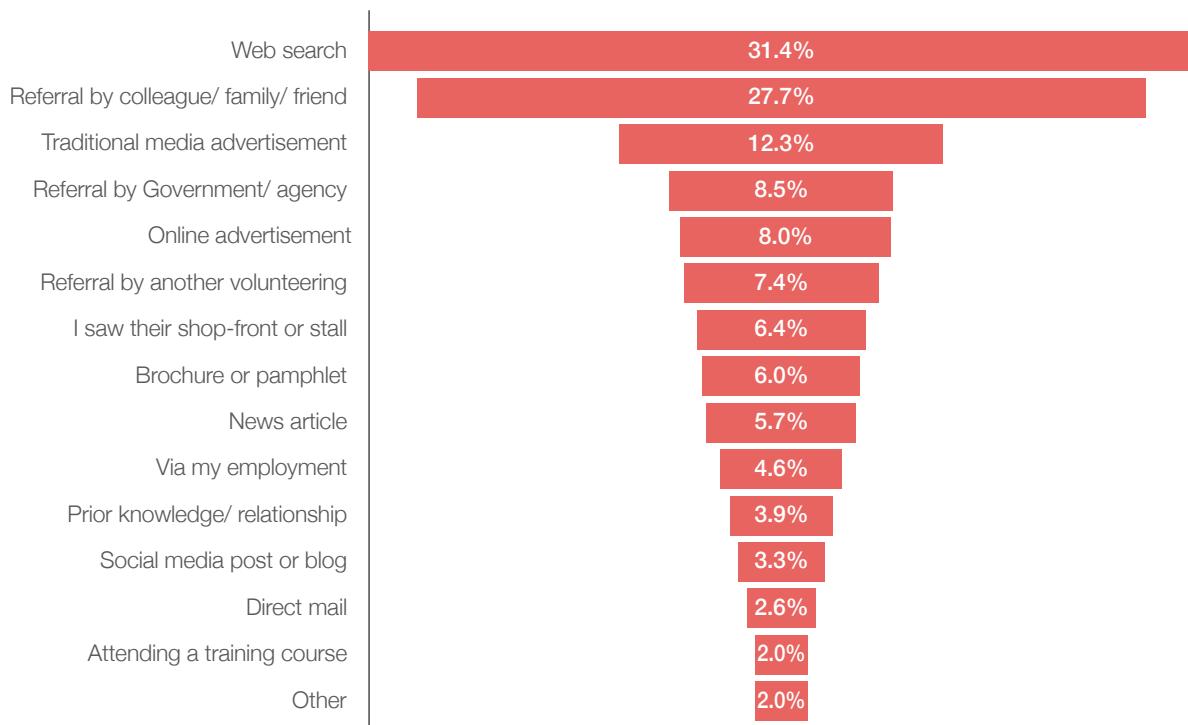
[†] Net likelihood = ((always true + often true) – (often false + always false))

6 VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS

There were 302 valid responses to the survey of volunteers who had previously engaged with Volunteering Support Services. The limitations of convenience sampling methodology meant that the responses cannot be considered representative of the broader volunteering population or users of Volunteering Support Services. Nevertheless, some interesting insights into the population were implied by the data.

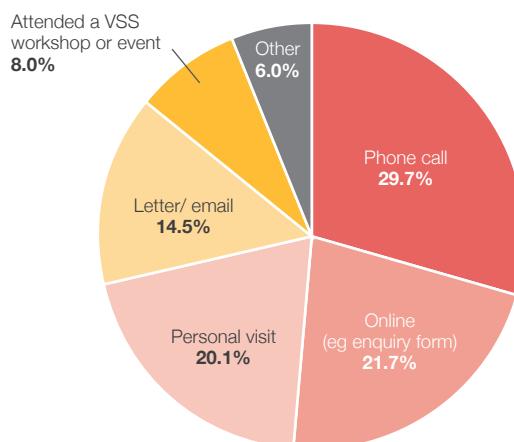
How respondents became aware of the Volunteering Support Service they engaged with was of interest (Figure 9), with a majority 'discovering' Volunteering Support Services online or via word of mouth (referrals by family, friends, other volunteers or Government agencies). (*Note that some respondents identified more than one channel of awareness*).

Figure 9: How volunteers became aware of Volunteering Support Services



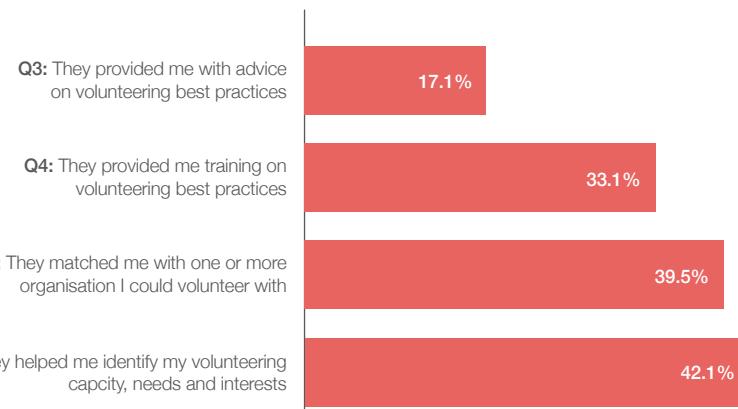
Volunteers contacted Volunteering Support Services via a broad range of communication channels, with no real preference revealing itself as obvious (Figure 10). This suggests that Volunteering Support Services need to maintain multiple communication channels to be effective, which manifests as an observable cost of doing business.

Figure 10: How volunteers initiate contact with Volunteering Support Services



The type of support volunteers received from Volunteering Support Services was also multivariate, with emphasis on a personal assessment of volunteers' capacity, needs and interests (Figure 11). No single category rated over 50 per cent, which could represent an opportunity for Volunteering Support Services to diversify how they engage with their volunteer clients.

Figure 11: Volunteer-reported support received from Volunteering Support Services



How volunteers rated the outcomes of the support they received from Volunteering Support Services was explored through the following two questions:

- Did (Volunteering Support Service) make a difference to the quality of your volunteering experience?
- How likely are you to refer (your) Volunteering Support Service to others?

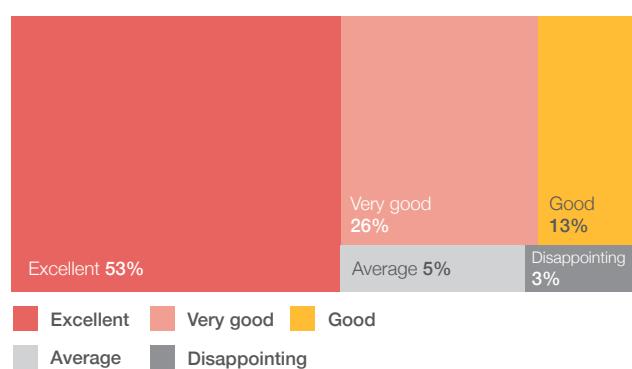
Table 4: Volunteer experiences with Volunteering Support Services

Volunteer experience		Likelihood to refer	
Significantly improved	67%	68%	Certainly
Slightly improved	21%	16%	Probably
No difference	11%	10%	Possibly
Slightly harmed	1%	4%	Unlikely
Significantly harmed	1%	3%	Not at all

Respondents rated the overall quality of the support they received from Volunteering Support Services highly, with over 90 per cent rating it positively (Figure 12).

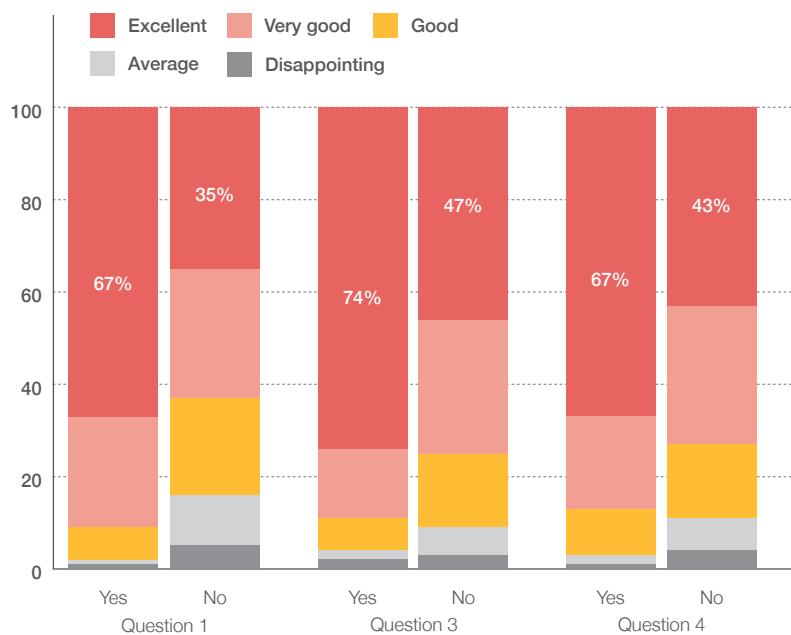
As a corollary, 80 per cent reported successful placement with a Volunteer Involving Organisation. This figure aligns with the 74.7 per cent of successful placements indicated by the Volunteering Support Services themselves (Section 4).

Figure 12: How volunteers rate the quality of support provided by Volunteering Support Services



There was no evidence to suggest that traditional demographics (such as age, gender and locus) influenced the rating individuals gave to the quality of support provided by their Volunteering Support Service. However, there was evidence that the types of support provided by Volunteering Support Services had some influence on the quality of support ratings (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: The significant relationships between types of support received from Volunteering Support Services and volunteer satisfaction



- Q1: The Volunteering Support Service helped me identify my volunteering capacity, needs and interests
- Q3: The Volunteering Support Service provided me with advice on volunteering best-practices
- Q4: The Volunteering Support Service provided me training on volunteering best-practices

In response to question one, individuals whose Volunteering Support Service "... helped me identify my volunteering capacity, needs and interests" rated the quality of their support much higher. Just over two-thirds of those who received such support (answering yes to the question posed) indicated that their overall Volunteering Support Service experience was excellent, whereas only one-third of those respondents who did not receive this support rated their Volunteering Support Service experience the same. This is statistically significant at the five per cent margin of error.

Question three (the Volunteering Support Service provided me with advice on volunteering best-practices) and question four (the Volunteering Support Service provided me training on volunteering best-practices) were also significant predictors of how strongly an individual would rate their Volunteering Support Services performance.

Whether or not a Volunteering Support Service matched their volunteer with one or more organisations (question two) was not a significant predictor of satisfaction. This is curious given that for many this would be the main purpose of engaging with a Volunteering Support Service, at least from the volunteer's perspective. We can deduce this is a personalisation of service and support, that is far more important to the responding cohort.

7 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES

The value of volunteer labour

The labour donated by volunteers is an important civic contribution of volunteering. It is estimated that Volunteering Support Services facilitated over 12.3 million hours of volunteer labour in the past 12 months (Section 4). The value of this labour can be determined by calculating what it would cost beneficiaries to employ people of equivalent skills and experience. This is known as the replacement cost method.

Table 5 breaks down the volunteers reported by Volunteering Support Services by age and gender, and multiplies this by the ABS reported average number of hours a person annually donates in a single placement (86.5 hours).^{xxvii} It then indexes it by the average hourly wage of each demographic^{xxviii} to arrive at the replacement cost to Volunteer Involving Organisations of each cohort.

To perfectly substitute volunteer labour with paid staff, the overhead costs of administration and capital are applied to each hour of labour, and the additional costs of taxation (such as superannuation, workers' compensation and payroll tax) are also allowed for. Therefore, it is estimated that the replacement value of Volunteering Support Services-enabled volunteer labour in Australia is \$477.5 million.

In the earlier analysis of responses by Volunteer Involving Organisations (Section 4), the people placed through Volunteering Support Services were nearly 40 per cent more likely to contribute additional time, and deliver greater value to their partner organisation. This meant that the value estimate of Volunteering Support Services-enabled volunteering is likely to be a significant underestimate.

Table 5: Replacement cost (value) of Volunteering Support Services-enabled volunteer labour

		Placements		x Volunteer hours		x Replacement cost	
Under 15	Male	0.3%	467	86.5	40,405	\$16.08	\$649,715
	Female	0.6%	809	86.5	69,991	\$16.80	\$1,175,856
15-24	Male	5.0%	7,113	86.5	615,056	\$24.84	\$15,277,998
	Female	8.7%	12,321	86.5	1,065,425	\$25.00	\$26,635,634
25-34	Male	5.7%	8,151	86.5	704,846	\$36.72	\$25,881,927
	Female	10.0%	14,119	86.5	1,220,962	\$36.36	\$44,394,175
35-44	Male	5.2%	7,320	86.5	633,014	\$44.88	\$28,409,674
	Female	8.9%	12,681	86.5	1,096,533	\$43.32	\$47,501,795
45-54	Male	6.8%	9,709	86.5	839,529	\$43.44	\$36,469,156
	Female	11.9%	16,817	86.5	1,454,267	\$40.08	\$58,287,010
55-64	Male	8.7%	12,356	86.5	1,068,492	\$43.32	\$46,287,070
	Female	15.1%	21,404	86.5	1,850,885	\$40.68	\$75,293,999
65-75	Male	4.2%	5,970	86.5	516,288	\$46.32	\$23,914,466
	Female	7.3%	10,342	86.5	894,335	\$43.20	\$38,635,279
Over 75	Male	0.6%	831	86.5	71,831	\$46.32	\$3,327,230
	Female	1.0%	1,439	86.5	124,429	\$43.20	\$5,375,343
		141,850		12,266,289		\$477,516,327	

Value to volunteers and the community

The value to Volunteering Support Services-enabled Volunteers (use value)

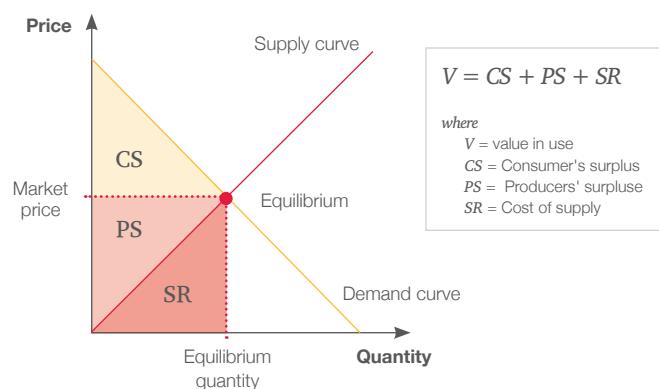
The places where transactions occur (markets) are a social good because the exchange will only occur when both buyer and seller perceive value in their end of the deal. For the seller, this means making a profit that exceeds the costs of production. This profit is also known as the producer's surplus.

For the purchaser, value means achieving a 'bargain', in that they would have been willing to pay more than they did for the article to satisfy their need. The welfare of both parties is thus improved, and goods and services that do not meet this twin threshold are naturally selected out of the market.

Thus, the net consumer surplus is the net benefit or additional utility an individual receives in excess of the cost associated with an activity or act of consumption. In many cases, consumer surplus is an important benefit in calculating the net costs or benefits of an activity, for it allows the calculation of the use value of a product or service.

The use value (or value-in-use) is what a person would be willing to pay for their purchase / consumption of a good or service, and includes the ultimate satisfaction (or utility) they derive from it. As such, it is the sum of the purchase (or market) price and consumer surplus (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Use value



How can this be applied to a non-market (un-priced) activity such as volunteering?

Theoretically, the cost of volunteer labour supply (SR) is the opportunity cost of the volunteer's time. The producer's surplus (PS) is the difference between that opportunity cost and the replacement cost of their services, where the replacement cost itself is the market price. The consumer's surplus (CS) would be the quantification of their satisfaction or enjoyment with their volunteering.

Volunteers, including those enabled by a Volunteering Support Service, are both the producers and consumers of their volunteering activity. When estimating the value of an individual's volunteering to themselves, it is sufficient to ask in market (dollar) terms, what value they ascribe to it. When looking to assign a consumer's surplus to Volunteering Support Services, we should look to the consumers of those services and also apply the contingent valuation method.

The value to the Community (non-use value)

The concept of *non-use* value is an economic means of locating the benefits of largely unutilised environmental resources which are difficult to quantify through the market.^{xxix} The idea is that *non-users* of the provided services might also value them, even if they do not use or otherwise engage with Volunteering Support Services.

In this study, it is pertinent to ask non-users of Volunteering Support Services the extent to which they value them.

Contingent valuation

Traditionally used to estimate the use value of a good or service, the contingent valuation method (CVM) is a survey-based technique used to calculate the perceived value of goods and services through stated preferences. It asks consumers how much they would be *willing to pay* (WTP) for a good, service or experience above and beyond the market price, and uses the stated value as a proxy for their satisfaction with their purchase.

In studies relevant to volunteering, WTP has been used to assess:

- the value that volunteers place on the 'intangible' benefits they receive from their participation;^{xxx}
- the value of an hour of informal care (from the perspectives of both the carer and the care recipient);^{xxxi} and
- the non-use value the community places on the existence of charitable organisations.^{xxxi}

Given our intent to determine the use and non-use values individuals and the community might assign to Volunteering Support Services, this study introduces another novel application of the CVM method.

To assist this study, Myriad Research surveyed 896 Australian residents aged 18 years and over. Interviews were conducted by telephone and online in July 2017 by fully trained and briefed interviewers. Respondents for the telephone sample were selected via a random sample process which included:

- a representative quota of respondents being set for each state;
- a random selection of household telephone numbers within quota defined regions; and
- a random selection of an individual in each household by a 'youngest qualifying resident' screening question.

To ensure the sample included those people who spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call backs and appointments was incorporated.

To reflect the population distribution, results were post-weighted to ABS data on Australian age and gender distribution,^{xxxiii} as per the following scale:

Table 6: Telephone survey post-stratification weightings

Males		Females	
Age	Weight	Age	Weight
18 to 24	4.59	18 to 24	3.75
25 to 34	1.83	25 to 34	1.50
35 to 44	1.58	35 to 44	1.29
45 to 54	1.35	45 to 54	1.10
55 to 64	0.86	55 to 64	0.70
Over 65	0.37	Over 65	0.30

Overall, 53 per cent of Australians were familiar with Volunteering Support Services. Nearly one-quarter (23.8 per cent) reported that they themselves or a family member had used a Volunteering Support Service.

When read the following statement:

Volunteering Support Services promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia. They provide infrastructure in communities to lead, enable and build capacity to recruit and retain volunteers in a wide variety of organisations and services, from the human services and civil society groups, to environmental, animal welfare and sporting groups.

The data revealed 91.3 per cent of respondents believed that this was important for the community, and valued the consequent benefits, with seven out of eight people (87.6%) expressing they would be willing to pay for them.

Survey respondents who were willing to pay were then asked what the value of this contribution might be over 12 months. However, there was evidence to suggest some people exaggerated their preferences in reporting their WTP. Of the 896 survey respondents, 56 people (or 6.25 per cent of our sample) reported a WTP greater than 10 per cent of their income.

Therefore, to control for respondents possibly attempting to influence results, WTP was capped at 10 per cent of income. Although WTP should not be confused with an

individual's capacity to pay (as it is essentially a measure of gross satisfaction), this allowed for WTP to vary within cohorts while removing the influence of potentially misrepresented preferences.

This methodology resulted in a conservative estimate of average WTP for Volunteering Support Services users of \$697.04, or approximately \$13.40 per week. With a standard error of \$154.62, there is a 95 per cent probability that the true average WTP lies in the interval \$387.80 to \$1006.28 per annum.

From the nearly one-quarter of Australians who had either personal or familial contact with a Volunteering Support Service, there was a gross consumer surplus of \$3.1 billion.

The 76.2 per cent of non-users also perceived a benefit to volunteering even though they did not volunteer themselves. Continuing the method described above estimates their gross WTP to be approximately \$1187.60 per person per year, or \$17 billion. Non-users' WTP was significantly greater than that of the user group, suggesting a disconnect between the potential value that Volunteering Support Services can deliver and the actual service offering, which is significantly resource constrained.

The value of Volunteering Support Services to individuals and the community, being the implied sum of market price and consumer surplus across users and non-users, is therefore estimated to be \$20.1 billion per annum. The fact that the community of Volunteering Support Services users and non-users is willing to defend the services they provide to the extent described is an original and significant finding.

Note: Expressions of willingness to pay measure satisfaction and should not be confused with a desire on the part of consumers to pay more. Willingness should not be conflated with an individual's capacity to pay.

There is compelling evidence to suggest that Volunteering Support Service users are highly price-sensitive given their relative socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, non-users would be alienated by price rises that were not linked to new value, and this would reflect in their adjusted WTP.

As it is assumed that a significant community benefit can be realised by converting non-volunteers into active participants, deliberately exploiting the presently high levels of the community's WTP for Volunteering Support Services by either increasing prices or withdrawing subsidies is likely to be counterproductive.

8 THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT SERVICES

In 2017, the Commonwealth announced \$19.95 million of funding for 3.5 years to the 52 federally funded Volunteering Support Services through the Volunteer Management Program (VMP).^{xxxiv} This grant has increased incrementally over time from the 2009 commitment of \$10.3 million in funding over two years, for 50 Volunteering Support Services.^{xxxv} In gross terms, there has been an increase in funding from \$5.2 million to \$5.7 million per annum.

From 1992 to 2009 Volunteering Support Services experienced a variable period of expansion and program development to meet community needs. However, demand has continued to outstrip supply, without the subsequent investment to meet it. In fact, over 13 years from June 2009 to June 2021, the consumer price index (CPI) is conservatively expected to have increased by 27.1 per cent. This assumes that the CPI continues to grow in line with its 10 year average of 2.4 per cent from July 2018 to June 2021. Therefore, the 2017 announcement represents an effective drop in funding of 14.5 per cent (1.3 per cent per annum) or \$0.9 million in real terms to Volunteering Support Services.^{xxxvi}

It can be estimated that without the application of indexation, there will be a stagnation of funding by 2021 (see section 3), which will not match the demand in service. This suggests that Volunteering Support Services and the services they provide are now perceived by Government to be less valuable than they were ten years ago. However, there seems to be little empirical evidence for this assumption.

In the survey of Volunteering Support Services, the sources of funding shown in Figure 15 were declared.

As shown in Figure 15, organisations funded to be a Volunteering Support Service also receive other sources of funding, such as from State Government, Local Government,

private grants, etc. However, these sources provide funding for other services, separate to that of a Volunteering Support Service. Funding specifically for Volunteering Support Services is solely from the Federal Government's VMP Grant and is represented at 37.9 per cent of total funding for these organisations. The true operating costs of Volunteering Support Services reveals that the Federal Government effectively subsidises less than half of Volunteering Support Services operations, with the Commonwealth accounting for less than one dollar in five (Figure 16).

The Federal Government's annual contribution of \$5.7 million represents 37.9 per cent of the total pool of expenditure for organisations that perform functions as a Volunteering Support Service. It should be acknowledged that any funding contributed by other tiers of Government to these organisations is generally outside the scope of the function of a Volunteering Support Service. Many of these organisations funded to be a Volunteering Support Service were also funded to provide services other than that of a Volunteering Support Service, such as the provision of aged care services, the roll-out of the NDIS, etc.

The sample of Volunteering Support Services surveyed reported benefiting from 53.6 hours per week of volunteer involvement to support their operations. Extrapolated to the population, this equates to an annual contribution of just over 37,000 hours. Using the replacement cost method described in Section 7 of this report, this donation of time and effort can be valued at \$14 million per annum.

Not only does this observation rebut the presumption that Volunteering Support Services are unreasonably dependent on the government, but it is evidence that the community places significant value on the services provided by Volunteering Support Services.

Figure 15: Sources of funding for organisations that also operate as a Volunteering Support Service

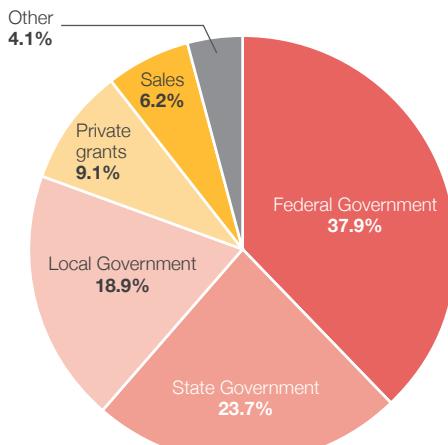
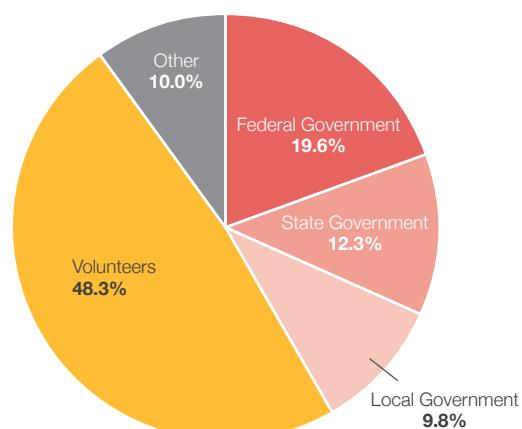


Figure 16: Sources of support (as a percentage) for organisations that also operate as a Volunteering Support Service (direct and indirect)



While the rates of formal volunteering are on the decline, with a misalignment between the level of community interest in volunteering, especially in sectors with the highest unmet demand,^{xxxvii} It is reticent to acknowledge the role Volunteering Support Services play in fostering a culture of giving, advancing volunteering in Australia, and supporting sectors that are reliant on a volunteer workforce.

The work of Volunteering Support Services directly intersects with major Commonwealth programs including the NDIS, aged care, workforce participation, emergency management, multicultural participation, sport and the arts.

Volunteering Support Services are embedded in their local communities and provide unique placebased connections, linking people to their local community and its opportunities. Through their local networks, these organisations have the capacity to deliver comprehensive initiatives at a local, contextualised level. This sets Volunteering Support Services apart from other organisations, which may provide an umbrella service, but are also larger, inexpert or single-cause.

Australian charities are reliant on the efforts of volunteers. Volunteering Support Services enable the social services sector to deliver expanded services by recruiting, resourcing, training and placing volunteers to provide support in aged care, disability support, support for those experiencing homelessness, and to assist vulnerable families, children and communities.

Volunteers comprise 2.9 million members of the charitable sector workforce, compared to one million paid staff.^{xxxviii} The Giving Australia 2016 report on non-profits and volunteering found that 62.3 per cent of organisations in the not-for-profit sector actively recruited volunteers.^{xxxix} “In residential aged care, volunteers contribute 2.5 million hours of service annually, saving the sector \$49.5 million in unpaid wages on average.”^{xl} The Commonwealth Government also recently acknowledged the contribution that volunteers make as the primary provider of emergency services in rural areas.^{xli} The Giving Australia 2016 report also highlighted that not-for-profit organisations would like to devote more money to recruitment and training of volunteers, as this would improve the capacity of the organisation to recruit volunteers.^{xlii}

Volunteering Support Services work to promote best-practice volunteering in line with Volunteering Australia's *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*, with the notion that volunteers who work in safe and supportive environments are more likely to continue volunteering. A Quality Mark System (QMS) is being progressed by Volunteering Australia to support the implementation of the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* and will have associated tools and resources. The aim of the Quality Mark System is to provide a comprehensive system of certification against the Standards and will endorse those organisations that actively promote best-practice volunteering.

Volunteers identified that engaging a Volunteering Support Service can be effective for building key work skills,

by encouraging economic participation. These organisations also inspire cohesion and social inclusion, with a subsequent reduction in public health and welfare costs by actively encouraging volunteering. Volunteering Support Services play a pivotal role in cultivating the social and cultural life of local communities. As a result, there is also increased engagement and participation in society, particularly from vulnerable or at-risk groups, such as those from low socio-economic, culturally and/or linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, or people with a disability.

Volunteering Support Services provide face-to-face, individualised and intensive engagement for people experiencing barriers or disadvantage, with the view that volunteering can be particularly useful in providing:

- a chance to establish new friendship circles for people who have recently moved to a new area;
- professional development opportunities for those looking to enhance their skills or to apply their skills to a role;
- a chance to give back to the community;
- an opportunity for people experiencing barriers who may be precluded from certain activities to become more engaged with the community; and
- additional linkages for older Australians and mental health consumers to engage with their local community, thereby reducing isolation.

The social capital derived from volunteer engagement is also of profound benefit to both volunteers and the wider community. Volunteering Support Services play a uniquely important role in assisting people they engage with to develop meaningful relationships, and in reducing social isolation.

Volunteering Support Services can contribute towards the inclusion of migrant communities by fostering community engagement. Volunteering Support Services encourage people to stay active, improve English language skills, connect them with their local communities, and provide an important step towards improving multicultural engagement.

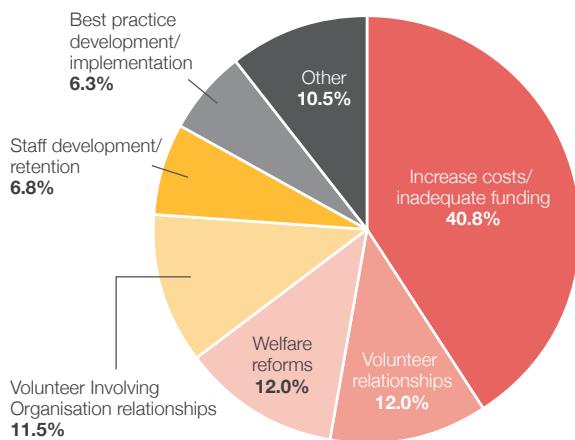
Recent studies have indicated that 96 per cent of volunteers say that engaging in volunteering “makes people happier”,^{xliii} while 95 per cent of volunteers say that volunteering is related to feelings of wellbeing.^{xlv} Only a few hours of volunteer work has an impact on an individual’s happiness and mood, and sustained volunteering is associated with better mental health.^{xlv}

In addition, the experience of helping others provides meaning, a sense of self-worth, a social role and health enhancement.^{xvi} Volunteers have also identified personal benefits from their involvement in volunteering activities including, “improved wellbeing and a community connection, and (they) believe they have made a notable contribution to common good.”^{xvii}

9 THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

To complete the survey, Volunteering Support Services were asked to anticipate their top three challenges over the next 12 months. Qualitative weighting, where the responses were scored 3-2-1 in order of priority, revealed the results illustrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Prioritised challenges for Volunteering Support Services over the next 12 months



Nine out of ten responding Volunteering Support Services reported either the increased cost of maintaining services, or funding, as one of their top ten challenges. Increased costs of maintaining services and funding dominated as the most critical challenges faced by Volunteering Support Services.

At the time of the survey, the Commonwealth government announced that it was withdrawing dedicated funding for Volunteering Support Services. This funding was reinstated at the levels described in Section 3. Despite the restoration of funding, there is likely to be significant strain on the capacity of the sector, especially if it is accepted as the new standard.

If Commonwealth funding were to decline in real terms, and at the rate of 1.4 per cent per annum, the burden to maintain service quality could fall on the other tiers of government and the community, presenting several risks.

Foremost is the need to divert effort from service delivery to administrative, fundraising and regulatory burdens, whether it be writing grant applications, acquiring donors or running events. The ‘sales’ skill-set (and the subsequent accountability it demands) is distinct from the skills required to deliver current Volunteering Support Services, and would necessitate a market-oriented restructuring of the operations of Volunteering Support Services.

Doing more with less is a laudable aim. However, this requires an initial investment in staffing capability and capacity, above and beyond the program funding.

The volunteering sector is undergoing dynamic change. Relationships with key stakeholders were seen as a risk moving forward. The types of issues specifically identified included:

- A lack of community awareness of the role of Volunteering Support Services;
- Attracting and recruiting volunteers;
- Responding to changes in volunteer demographics, intentions and expectations;
- Supporting disadvantaged volunteers (including CALD communities and people with disability); and
- Supporting smaller Volunteer Involving Organisations.

Many Volunteering Support Services felt under-resourced to respond to challenges, and without other public, private or not-for-profit investment to respond to them. New partnership opportunities, such as the auspicing of private sector volunteer time-banks and the development and maintenance of online volunteering portals, were also being under-delivered or missed out on entirely because of funding constraints.

There is cause to revisit the way that Volunteering Support Services are funded by the Commonwealth Government. The current system does not correspond with the overall intent of the Department of Social Services New Way of Working Grants Program, which recommends three to five-year grant terms to “provide greater certainty for service providers to improve service delivery and enable them to continue to deliver the critical work they do.”^{xlviii} Overall, funding for volunteer management has decreased in real terms over recent years, failing to keep pace with CPI and growth in demand for volunteer placement services. Most pressing is that the Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Social Services, should commit to continue funding Volunteering Support Services to do their vital work, given there is an absence of other existing avenues of funding.

The challenges presented by short-term funding, funding uncertainty, and competitive grant programs has a direct impact on service delivery. Many organisations have been asked to increase their operational output, with a lack of funding and resources. The challenges posed by short-term and insecure funding have placed immense strain on Volunteering Support Services, and have not allowed for the strategic workforce planning required to operate and deliver successful programming.

While there has been a push for greater sustainability and self-sufficiency within the volunteering sector to diversify funding and become less reliant on government funding, this is not an easy prospect. Volunteering Support Services experience the same challenges many other service providers face with respect to traditional fundraising. These organisations represent the infrastructure of the volunteering sector, and it is not obvious to the public on the cause and appeal when it comes to traditional fundraising.

There is little understanding of the critical role performed by volunteer managers in the recruitment, induction, training, support and management of volunteers. This includes the invaluable support provided by volunteer managers or volunteer coordinators to Volunteer Involving Organisations. Volunteer managers experience a number of challenges to ensure that volunteers are safely and effectively able to conduct their duties. This is especially challenging with limited and insecure funding. There needs to be further consideration of the vital role of volunteer management, as it is an essential component in the function of a Volunteering Support Service.

Staff development and retention was another concern for Volunteering Support Services, as was their ability to collaborate and strategically develop the sector. Ultimately, Volunteering Support Services saw themselves as an important custodian of the culture of volunteering in Australia. They enable safe, effective and inclusive leadership/management of volunteering, and this is what makes volunteering both effective and desirable.

The increasing expectation that Volunteering Support Services support Mutual Obligation (work-for-the-dole) schemes and the NDIS, were also highlighted as a significant challenge to the sector. Volunteering Support Services frequently use local knowledge to assist Mutual Obligation participants to find a volunteer role with a pre-approved Volunteer Involving Organisation. This interaction is done within the existing resources and funding of the Volunteering Support Service. Volunteering Support Services felt they should be adequately resourced and recognised for supporting Mutual Obligation participants, given the role they play in facilitating volunteering opportunities and improving employment outcomes.

Other issues raised included adapting to changes in technology, competition from new entrants, and the (in)ability of some Volunteering Support Services to provide robust post-placement support, with only 55 per cent of Volunteer Involving Organisations having systems in place to monitor and measure post-placement outcomes. It should be noted that Volunteering Support Services are not funded to measure post-placement outcomes under current funding agreements, and do not have the capability to provide individual case management.

The challenges in adapting to changes in technology is a frequently raised issue among Volunteering Support Services, who are heavily reliant on volunteering platforms to assist with connecting stakeholders to volunteering opportunities. Digital modes of recruitment and referral, such as GoVolunteer and VIKTOR are Australia's most comprehensive and widely used volunteering platforms; however, these platforms need continual development, maintenance, and upgrades to stay ahead of competitors. In addition, these platforms require enhancements to ensure they comply with digital access and equity requirements, and to meet the needs of people experiencing barriers.

10 CONCLUSION

The intent of this report is to establish a baseline range of operational indicators, provide a valuable source of industry intelligence, and to demonstrate the value Volunteering Support Services deliver to the community, Commonwealth and other investors.

Volunteering Support Services make a significant and valuable contribution to the community and to volunteering in Australia, with the investment of public monies handsomely repaid. The analysis outlined in this report provides evidence that despite an increasing demand for the services provided by Volunteering Support Services, government contribution has remained static.

Consideration of the benefits of appropriately resourcing and investing in these organisations could ensure the long-term sustainability, viability and success of Volunteering Support Services. Furthermore, ample consideration and allowance of the value of Volunteering Support Services in Government policy and planning would ensure the best possible outcomes.

It has been demonstrated that Volunteering Support Services support the Australian Government's priorities, including the delivery of jobs and growth, important community programs and a range of services across a number of government portfolios. Adequate ongoing funding will guarantee there is recognition of the numerous social, cultural and economic contributions of Volunteering Support Services.

The challenge for Volunteering Support Services will be to go beyond articulating what they do individually and demonstrate the contribution they collectively make to the wider community. For example, it is essential to consider the economic and social contributions of Volunteering Support Services, and their role in building social capital, community cohesion, and in the delivery of long-term, innovative and agile service provision.

In doing so, Volunteering Support Services will not only be better positioned to communicate the broad and often understated extent to which they advance community well-being and economic growth, but can also take internal stock of their stakeholder ecosystem and make better informed decisions about their operational conduct and strategic intent.

Directions for future research

This study has established a long overdue baseline for how the value created by Volunteering Support Services is understood. It is important that these findings are revisited periodically to determine if trends are emerging or if specific macro-interventions are achieving their desired outcomes.

Future research can benefit from the lessons learned by the authors of this study. Here are some methodological findings that may be valuable to the sector and to future researchers:

- A high invalid response rate (>60 per cent across all instruments) frustrated analysis. When targeting Volunteering Support Services, Volunteer Involving Organisations and volunteer respondents, better explanations of the purpose of the study and greater awareness of the campaign could result in more robust data sets.
- Especially in the analysis of service supply, demand and capacity, it is assumed these functions are all the responsibility of Volunteering Support Services. This assumption should be tested with all key volunteering stakeholders.
- A study of how Volunteering Support Services allocate their time across their different functions might inform potential interventions and efficiency gains.
- Further, detailed analysis of Volunteering Support Services is inevitably required, including:
 - sub-regional and other demographic drivers; and,
 - motivations for and constraints to participation.
- Empirical research into the impact enabled by Volunteering Support Services versus other forms of volunteering.
- Modelling of various efficiency-based scenarios to better inform policy-makers at all levels on the costs and benefits of future Volunteering Support Services operations.

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GLOSSARY

Volunteers

Those who give their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO)

Any organisation that engages volunteers may be known as a Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO).

Volunteering Support Service (VSS); Volunteer Support Organisation (VSO); Volunteer Resource Centre (VRC)

Volunteering Support Service, Volunteer Support Organisation or Volunteer Resource Centre 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 thousands of community organisations that rely on volunteers to recruit, retain and manage those volunteers.

Volunteering

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

Formal Volunteering

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way.

Informal volunteering

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place outside the context of a formal organisation. This includes assisting people in the community, excluding one's own family members. For example, looking after children, property or pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone professional advice.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure in a volunteering context refers to the organisations in place that promote, advocate for, support, and manage volunteering. This includes peak bodies, Volunteering Support Services (or Volunteer Resource Centres), and Volunteer Involving Organisations.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's national statistical agency, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the most commonly used statistic in the calculation of inflation. The CPI is a fixed weighted price index that relates to household expenditure on retail goods and services and other items, such as housing, government charges and consumer goods.^{xlix}

Contingent Valuation Method (CVM)

The Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) has been traditionally used to estimate the use value of a good or service. It is a survey-based technique used to calculate the perceived value of goods and services through stated preferences.

Department of Social Services (Cth)

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is Australia's pre-eminent social policy agency, with the mission of improving the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia.ⁱ

Volunteer Management Program (VMP)

The Volunteer Management Program supports the delivery of volunteer support services and one-off innovation and collaboration projects to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering.ⁱⁱ

Willingness to Pay (WTP)

The Willingness to Pay theory asks consumers how much they would be *willing to pay* (WTP) for a good, service or experience above and beyond the market price, and uses the stated value as a proxy for their satisfaction with their purchase.

Brokering Opportunities

Volunteering Support Services (VSS) act as a conduit between Volunteer Involving Organisations and prospective volunteers, by acting as a representative and negotiating for potential opportunities for each party.

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APPENDIX: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

2017 Census of Volunteering Support Services

Welcome to the 2017 Census of Volunteering Support Services (Volunteering Support Services).

The census is being conducted by the Institute of Project Management on behalf of Volunteering Australia.

This census will provide invaluable data on the activities of Volunteering Support Services in Australia. The results will be used by Volunteering Australia (VA) and the Volunteering Support Services network to inform development work and improve practice. The evidence base is also a powerful tool for representing the interests of Volunteering Support Services to all tiers of government.

The deadline for completing the survey is 11 August, 2017. This will allow us to analyse the results in August and publish the results in September.

The survey should take no more than five (5) minutes to complete. If you require any assistance in answering the questions, please contact Dr Dave Arthur at dave.arthur@ipm.edu.au

About your Volunteering Support Service (Volunteering Support Services)

Q1: What is the name of your Volunteering Support Services?*

Q2: What services does your Volunteering Support Services provide?

- Developing volunteering opportunities (with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities (for volunteers)
- Post-placement volunteer support (for volunteers placed with VIOs)
- Volunteer training (e.g. workshops)
- Marketing volunteering (e.g. events/stalls, ads in media, web presence, help lines)
- Good practice development (e.g. delivering consultancy, volunteer awards)
- Strategic development of volunteering (e.g. developing training programs, Volunteer Involving Organisations networking)
- Other services (please state)

Q3: Which states and/or territories does your Volunteering Support Services operate in?

- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

Q4: How many branches or outreach points does your Volunteering Support Services have?

Q5: On average, how many hours per week is your Volunteering Support Services open for enquiries by the public?

By open we mean that it is staffed (paid or unpaid) so that people can make personal or telephone enquiries or appointments.

Volunteering Support Services Operations

Q6: What was the total income of your Volunteering Support Services for 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017? *Income includes all sources of funding, including grants. If your Volunteering Support Services is integrated with another organisation, please estimate the total income exclusively set aside for the Volunteering Support Services. If you are unsure of the exact amount, your best estimate is fine.*

Q7: Please breakdown your income by percentage as per the following table:

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Local Government (Council)
- Private grants, donations and bequests
- Sales (e.g. fees for service)
- Other sources

Q8: On average, how many paid staff hours per week are devoted to your Volunteering Support Services?

Q9: On average, how many volunteer hours per week are donated to your Volunteering Support Services?

Q10: How far into the future is your Volunteering Support Services funding guaranteed?

- Less than 12 months
- One year
- Two years
- Three years
- Four years
- Five years
- More than five years

Volunteer Engagement

Q11: How many opportunities for volunteers are currently registered as active with your Volunteering Support Services? *The number of opportunities is the number of volunteers who would be needed to fill them all (e.g. if ten volunteers can fill one role then count ten opportunities).*

Q12: How do you engage with prospective volunteers?

- Phone calls
- Letters / email
- Casual drop-ins (to your Volunteering Support Services)
- Arranged visits (from your Volunteering Support Services)
- Social Media
- Other online (e.g. website)
- Other:

Q13: In total, how many volunteer enquiries did you receive between 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017?

Actual number / best-estimate

Q14: How many people (unique individuals) did you refer to a volunteer opportunity? *For example, you gave the individual or Volunteer Involving Organisations contact details via phone, email, post or in person*

Actual number / best-estimate

Q15: Do you have a system in place to monitor the number or percentage of people who have started to volunteer? *This would be defined as a person who has exchanged information with a Volunteer Involving Organisations, agreed to be a volunteer and has either started or completed preparations to volunteer, or started or completed any volunteer activity.*

If yes: What is the total number (or percentage) of those registered who have started to volunteer?

How do you track this information?

- Active follow up with all people who have registered with you (Volunteering Support Services staff make phone calls to clients)
- Passive follow up with all people who have registered with you (Volunteering Support Services staff send letters or emails to clients asking them if they have started to volunteer)
- Active follow up (Volunteering Support Services staff make phone calls to clients) with a subset or sample of people who are registered with you
- Passive follow up with a subset or sample of people who are registered with you (Volunteering Support Services staff send letters or emails to clients asking them if they have started to volunteer)
- Follow up with VIOs who are registered with you
- Other:

How long is it between volunteer registration / placement and your follow up contact?

- Less than 2 months
- 2-6 months
- 6-12 months
- More than a year

Q16: Based on your experience, how many contacts does it take to place a volunteer with a Volunteer Involving Organisations?

Q17: What is the demographic breakdown by percentage of your prospective volunteers by gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q18: What is the demographic breakdown by percentage of your prospective volunteers by age groups?

- Under 15 years old
- 15-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-75 years old
- Over 75 years old

Q19: What percentage of your prospective volunteers are experiencing physical, social or economic disadvantage?

Q20: Did you provide any training for volunteers in the last financial year?

If yes: How many days training did you provide?
How many volunteers attended this training?

Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs)

Q21: In total, how many Volunteer Involving Organisations are registered with your Volunteering Support Services?

Q22: How many new registrations did you have from Volunteer Involving Organisations in the last financial year?

Q23: Did you provide any training for Volunteer Involving Organisations in the last financial year?

If yes: How many days training did you provide?
How many VIOs attended this training?

Service Delivery

Q24: How would you rate the level of demand for your services?

*Please choose the appropriate response for each item:
High / Medium / Low*

- Developing volunteering opportunities (with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities (for volunteers)
- Post-placement volunteer support (for volunteers placed with VIOs)
- Volunteer training (e.g. workshops)
- Marketing volunteering (e.g. events/stalls, ads in media, web presence, help lines)
- Good practice development (e.g. delivering consultancy, volunteer awards)
- Strategic development of volunteering (e.g. developing training programs, Volunteer Involving Organisations networking)
- Policy response and advocacy (e.g. representing volunteering to government)
- Other services (please state)

Q25: How would you rate your capacity to deliver these services?

*Please choose the appropriate response for each item:
High / Medium / Low*

- Developing volunteering opportunities (with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities (for volunteers)
- Post-placement volunteer support (for volunteers placed with VIOs)
- Volunteer training (e.g. workshops)
- Marketing volunteering (e.g. events/stalls, ads in media, web presence, help lines)
- Good practice development (e.g. delivering consultancy, volunteer awards)
- Strategic development of volunteering (e.g. developing training programs, Volunteer Involving Organisations networking)
- Policy response and advocacy (e.g. representing volunteering to government)
- Other services (please state)

Q26: What are the top 3 challenges facing Volunteering Support Services over the next 12 months?

2017 Survey of Volunteering Support Services Volunteer Involving Organisations Partners

Welcome to the 2017 Survey of Volunteering Support Services (Volunteering Support Services) Volunteer-Involving Organisation (Volunteer Involving Organisations) Partners.

The survey is being conducted by the Institute of Project Management on behalf of Volunteering Australia.

This survey will provide invaluable data on the activities of Volunteering Support Services in Australia. The results will be used by Volunteering Australia (VA) and the Volunteering Support Services network to inform development work and improve practice. The evidence base is also a powerful tool for representing the interests of Volunteering Support Services to all tiers of government.

The deadline for completing the survey is 11 August, 2017. This will allow us to analyse the results in August and publish the results in September.

The survey should take no more than five (5) minutes to complete. If you require any assistance in answering the questions, please contact Dr Dave Arthur at dave.arthur@ipm.edu.au

About your volunteers

Volunteering Support Services (formerly known as Volunteer Resource Centres) promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia.

They provide infrastructure in communities to lead, enable and build capacity to recruit and retain volunteers in a wide variety of organisations and services, from the human services and civil society groups, to environmental, animal welfare and sporting groups.

Q1: How many Volunteering Support Services are you partnered with?

Q2: How many volunteering opportunities do you have listed with Volunteering Support Services?

The number of opportunities is the number of volunteers who would be needed to fill them all (e.g. if ten volunteers can fill one role then count ten opportunities).

Q3: In the last 12 months, how many prospective volunteers were referred to you by a Volunteering Support Services?

Q4: In the last 12 months, how many Volunteering Support Services referrals have been successfully placed with you? *A placement is defined as a person who has been introduced to you by a Volunteering Support Services, agreed to be a volunteer and has either started or completed preparations to volunteer or started or completed any volunteer activity.*

Q5: How many hours per year do volunteers provide to your organisation?

Q6: What percentage of these hours are filled by Volunteering Support Services placements?

Q7: Compared to volunteers that you directly recruit, how would you rate the quality of Volunteering Support Services placements?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:
Always true / Often true / No difference / Often false / Always false / Unsure

- Volunteering Support Services volunteers are better aligned to our organisation's purpose and needs
- Volunteering Support Services volunteers arrive better prepared for volunteering
- Volunteering Support Services volunteers are likely to volunteer more hours with our organisation
- Volunteering Support Services volunteers are likely to volunteer for a longer period of time with our organisation

About your Volunteering Support Service (Volunteering Support Services)

Q8: How would you rate the quality of Volunteering Support Services support?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Average
- Disappointing

Q9: How important are the following Volunteering Support Services to your organisation?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:
Very Important / Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Developing volunteering opportunities (with Volunteer Involving Organisations)
- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities (for volunteers)
- Post-placement volunteer support (for volunteers placed with VIOs)
- Volunteer training (e.g. workshops)
- Marketing volunteering (e.g. events/stalls, ads in media, web presence, help lines)
- Good practice development (e.g. delivering consultancy, volunteer awards)
- Strategic development of volunteering (e.g. developing training programs, Volunteer Involving Organisations networking)
- Other services (please state)

Q10: In dollar terms, how much do you estimate you save (or benefit) as a result of access to Volunteering Support Services every year?

This is a difficult question! Think about what it might cost you to conduct all these services yourself. An approximate answer is fine.

Q11: How likely are you to refer Volunteering Support Services services to others?

- Certainly
- Probably
- Possibly
- Unlikely
- Not at all

2017 Survey of Volunteering Support Services Volunteers

Welcome to the 2017 Survey of Volunteering Support Services (Volunteering Support Services) Volunteers.

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The survey should take no more than five (5) minutes to complete. If you require any assistance in answering the questions, please contact Dr Dave Arthur at dave.arthur@ipm.edu.au

About your Volunteering Support Service (Volunteering Support Services)

Volunteering Support Services (formerly known as Volunteer Resource Centres) promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities across Australia.

They provide infrastructure in communities to lead, enable and build capacity to recruit and retain volunteers in a wide variety of organisations and services, from the human services and civil society groups, to environmental, animal welfare and sporting groups.

Q1: What is the name of the Volunteering Support Services you most recently engaged with?

Q2: How did you hear about their services?

- Web search
- Online advertising
- Traditional media advertising
- Brochure or pamphlet
- News article
- Social media post or blog
- Referral by a personal contact (e.g. colleague, family member, friend)
- Referral by another volunteering organisation
- I saw their shop-front or stall
- Other:

Q3: How did you initially contact them?

- Attended a Volunteering Support Services workshop or event
- Phone call
- Personal visit
- Letter / email
- Online (e.g. enquiry form)
- Other

Q4: What support did your Volunteering Support Services provide?

- They helped me identify my volunteering capacity, needs and interests
- They matched me with one or more organisations I could volunteer with
- They provided me with advice on how to be a better volunteer
- They provided me training on volunteering
- Other:

Q5: How many contacts have you had with your Volunteering Support Services in the last 12 months?

Q6: How would you rate the quality of their support?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Disappointing

Q7: Did they successfully support you into a volunteering placement?

If yes: Did their service make a difference to the quality of your volunteering experience?

- It significantly improved my volunteering experience
- It slightly improved my volunteering experience
- It made no difference to my volunteering experience
- It slightly harmed my volunteering experience
- It significantly harmed my volunteering experience

Q8: How likely are you to refer this Volunteering Support Services to others?

- Certainly
- Probably
- Possibly
- Unlikely
- Not at all

About you

Q9: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q10: What is your age?

- Under 15 years old
- 15-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-75 years old
- Over 75 years old

Q11: Do you identify as experiencing physical, social or economic disadvantage?

2017 Survey of VSS Users and Non-Users

Hello, my name is ... from Myriad Research.
We're talking to local residents about volunteering support services in your community.

May I speak to the youngest adult in your household (aged 18 years or over)? (repeat intro as required)

Is now a convenient time to ask you a few quick questions?

Start time:

Q1: Are you familiar with volunteering support services (also known as volunteer resource centres) operating across Australia?

- Yes 1
- Unsure 2
- No 3 (go to readout *)

Q2: Have you, or an immediate family member, ever used volunteering support services?

- Yes 1
- No 2 (go to readout *)

*Volunteer resource centres support volunteering in local communities across Australia. They provide support services in communities to encourage volunteers across a wide variety of organisations and services.

Q3a: Do you think this is important for the local community – do you value these benefits?

- Yes 1
- Unsure 2
- No 3 (go to Q4)

On a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 means it has no worth at all and 100 means it is as important as oxygen, how valuable to the community is it to ...

Q3b: develop volunteering opportunities and connect people to them?

Q3c: encourage and promote volunteering in the community? (scale 0 – 100)

Q3d: develop best practice in volunteering, delivering it to volunteers and relevant organisations? (scale 0 – 100)

Q3e: respond to and advocate for government policy on volunteering? (scale 0 – 100)

Q3: So thinking about all the possible benefits, using the same scale 0 – 100, (where 0 means it has no worth at all and 100 means it is as important as oxygen) what do you think is the total value to the community of having volunteering support services?

Q5a: Now, this is strictly hypothetical, but what if those benefits were to be lost, or if there was another way to create them? Assuming that others in the community were also willing to make a contribution, would you be personally willing to make a financial contribution or donate goods, services or your time to keep all of those benefits?

- Yes 1
- Unsure 2 (go to Q6a)
- No 3 (go to Q6a)

Q5b: Over 12 months, what do you think the dollar value of that contribution might be worth (just an approximate amount is fine)?

And just to finish...

Q6a: What is your age range? Are you ...

- 18 – 24 1
- 35 – 44 3
- 55 – 64 5
- 25 – 34 2
- 45 – 54 4
- 65 + 6
- declined 7

Q6b: Gender

- Male 1
- Female 2

Q6c: And your combined household income for the last 12 months – was it ...

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Under \$30,000 | 1 |
| • \$90,000 to \$110,000 | 5 |
| • \$30,000 to \$50,000 | 2 |
| • Over \$110,000 | 6 |
| • \$50,000 to \$70,000 | 3 |
| • declined | 7 |
| • \$70,000 to \$90,000 | 4 |
| • unsure/don't know | 8 |

And may I record your first name and phone number to verify the survey?

Name:

Phone:

This study is being conducted by the Institute of Project Management on behalf of Volunteering Australia.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact our office or the researcher conducting this study – would you like the contact details?

Myriad - 03 6244 2807 mail@myriadresearch.com
Dave Arthur - 0422 267 813 dave.arthur@ipm.edu.au

That completes the survey. In case you missed it, my name is ... from Myriad Research.

Thank you very much for your time today. Goodbye.

Finish time: Length: mins

ID No: Date: / 6 / 2017

Audited by:

.....

Date: / / 2017

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