

FEDERAL ELECTION PLATFORM 2022



All political parties and candidates should commit to a positive agenda on volunteering, including the implementation of a National Strategy for Volunteering.

VOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the often-invisible workforce that supports the nation every day and through challenging times. Volunteering extends across society, including in the arts, education, emergency services, sports, environment, health, aged care and disability, community welfare and other vital community programs.

Australian society relies on volunteers to provide a myriad of essential activities and programs, in our schools, hospitals, playing fields and community centres. Volunteers are often on the frontline when crises hit – fighting bushfires, supporting recovery from floods, and providing support to those at risk in our communities.

However, volunteering has been badly impacted by COVID-19 with two thirds of volunteers who give their time through organisations stopping volunteering during the pandemic, coming on top of a longer-term decline in volunteering participation.

This Federal Election, we are asking the nation to ‘Vote for Volunteers’ and call upon all candidates to recognise and support the vital role of volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and volunteering support services in their electorates.



VOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Delivering a National Strategy for Volunteering

This Federal Election we have one request for an incoming Federal Government: to commit to the ongoing design and delivery of a sector-led and whole of government National Strategy for Volunteering.

Volunteers are integral to achieving many national priorities.

- Volunteers play vital roles in the key national workforces – in aged, disability and palliative care and in mental health and community services. Volunteers are central to emergency response, recovery and resilience-building. Volunteers are the backbone of community sport. Yet repeated governments have failed to recognise and invest in these key volunteer workforces.
- Volunteering has recognised mental health and wellbeing benefits for those who volunteer. Communities with active volunteers have strong social capital and are more resilient when crises hit. If we care about the nation's mental health and the resilience of communities, we need to care about sustaining volunteering.



VOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Why we need to deliver a National Strategy for Volunteering

A whole of government and whole of community National Strategy for Volunteering provides an opportunity to embed volunteering in the fabric of the national policy agenda, enabling the Federal Government to deliver on its broader priorities, including aged care and mental health reforms.

Volunteering does not 'just happen'. It is one of the most agile and innovative forms of work and participation in modern day Australia, and it requires strategic consideration and investment to ensure its sustainability.

Effective volunteering programs are predicated on robust recruitment, training, ongoing support, and recognition. Deliberate and ongoing investment in volunteering infrastructure is essential to ensuring that volunteering can continue to deliver the myriad of benefits it provides. Strategic consideration at a national level is needed, which includes volunteering in all relevant policy settings, programs and strategies.

Failure to invest in a National Strategy for Volunteering is a direct threat to an activity that has found itself in a precarious position following sustained decline in formal volunteering over the past twenty years, significantly exacerbated by COVID-19.

Without a National Strategy for Volunteering, we risk taking volunteers and the breadth of their contribution for granted, which could have untold effects on the organisations, communities, and citizens who rely on the service of Australia's volunteers every day.

Volunteering Australia has received project funding from the current Australian Government to lead the development of a National Strategy for Volunteering. The aim of the project is to deliver a National Strategy owned by the volunteering ecosystem that will provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. We are taking forward the project with an inclusive and non-partisan approach.

An incoming Federal Government should embrace the development and implementation of a sector-led National Strategy for Volunteering, commit to its role as a major stakeholder, and acknowledge that the work of volunteering crosses all Government portfolios.



Towards a
**National Strategy
for Volunteering**



VOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Further information

Volunteering Australia, in collaboration with the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies, produced a Federal Pre-Budget Submission. We continue to advocate for a suite of investments that would reinvigorate and sustain volunteering.

1. A Volunteering COVID-19 Recovery Plan

This plan would enable volunteers to re-engage safely, support the adaptation of volunteering programs, and facilitate the recruitment of new volunteers to ensure services and programs can recover.

2. A Volunteering Futures Program

This fund would facilitate the future adaptation of volunteering and support the strategic priorities identified in the new National Strategy for Volunteering currently under development.

3. A National Youth Volunteering Initiative

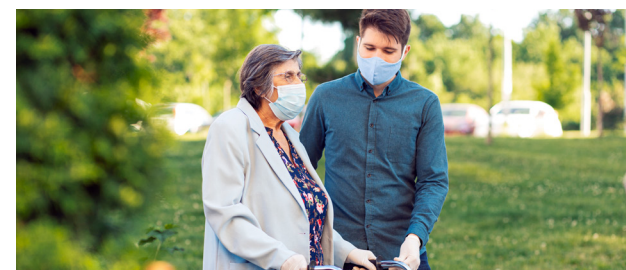
Young people have been disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19. This initiative could mitigate against poor mental health outcomes for unemployed young people and support pathways to paid employment.

4. A nationally co-ordinated approach to volunteer engagement in emergencies

As the frequency and scale of emergencies in Australia increases, a nationally co-ordinated approach will help to mobilise volunteers rapidly, safely and effectively.

5. Investment in the Aged Care volunteer workforce

Funding should be allocated for the Aged Care Royal Commission's volunteering recommendations.



VOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS

About us

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

Volunteering Australia's vision is strong, connected and resilient communities through volunteering. Our purpose is to lead, strengthen and celebrate volunteering in Australia. Many volunteers offer their time formally through organisations, whilst others self-organise and volunteer informally in the community. We recognise the breadth, diversity and richness of volunteering activity in our communities and how it is evolving over time. We celebrate all forms of volunteering as contributing to a strong civil society.



Volunteering Australia CEO Mark Pearce speaking with ACT State Emergency Service volunteers.

