

2020

# Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021-2027

STAGE 1: Individual, organisation, student  
surveys and submission findings

Annette Maher

## Contents

About this report .....	1
Summary of findings.....	2
Methodology.....	4
Combined recommendations for Focus Area Priorities.....	6
<b>Focus Area 1</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Focus Area 2</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Focus Area 3</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Focus Area 4</b> .....	<b>14</b>
SURVEYS.....	16
ORGANISATION SURVEY .....	16
Organisational profile.....	16
Demographics .....	16
Paid and volunteer staff in organisations.....	16
The value of volunteers to organisations .....	17
Age of volunteers .....	18
Area of work.....	18
Requirements to volunteer.....	18
Volunteer roles and duties .....	19
Recruitment.....	20
Recruiting people from diverse cultural backgrounds.....	20
Recruiting people with health conditions or impairments.....	21
Reaching out to potential volunteers.....	22
Volunteer retention .....	25
Retention - a nuanced area of volunteer management .....	25
Challenges retaining volunteers.....	26
Support for volunteers .....	28
Recognition and reward.....	29
Barriers to recognition and rewarding volunteers .....	29
Support for the managers of volunteers .....	30
Legislation and Regulation.....	31
Impact of government legislation and regulation .....	31
Concerns and issues organisations have with regulation and legislation in volunteering.....	31
Comments and suggestions for the focus area priorities for the next six years – Organisation survey.....	34
Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering.....	34
Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering.....	35

Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high-quality standards .....	36
Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement.....	37
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY.....	38
Recruitment.....	39
Motivation for volunteering .....	40
Retention .....	42
Plans to continue volunteering .....	42
Reasons to stop volunteering.....	43
Volunteering leading to paid employment a new business or change of profession .....	43
Organisation and coordination of volunteering.....	44
Recognition and reward.....	46
Final comments.....	46
Comments and suggestions for the focus area priorities for the next six years – Individual survey .....	48
Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering.....	48
Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering.....	49
Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high-quality standards .....	50
Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement.....	50
SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY .....	51
1.Primary Schools .....	51
Motivation.....	51
General capabilities that volunteering helps develop .....	52
2.Student results from Primary and Secondary School .....	54
How volunteering helps in the development of job ready skills.....	57
How South Australian leaders could make volunteering easier and meaningful for students .....	57
References .....	58

## About this report

After extensive consultation the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014-2020* was launched in 2014. It provides a coordinated and collaborative blueprint for action, identifying opportunities to promote and sustain volunteering. The Strategy is built on four focus areas:

- Invest in the foundations of volunteering.
- Promote and inform the benefits of volunteering.
- Implement leading practice and high-quality standards.
- Progressively adapt through continuous improvement.

The focus areas were underpinned by a series of priorities that were addressed over the life of the current Strategy.

This Strategy is coming to an end in 2020. To continue to build on its success and achievements, planning commenced for the development of a second Strategy for 2021 to 2027. A process was designed to build on the work of the first Strategy and ensure volunteering remains vibrant and strong in South Australia.

As part of the consultation with South Australians a process of two stages is underway.

Stage 1: To analyse data on current volunteering in South Australia. This will inform the coming *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia, 2021-2027*. The surveys highlight what South Australians think should be the priorities of the four focus areas. Two online surveys were designed to target individuals and organisations involving volunteers. The surveys were promoted through YourSay <<https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/>>, an online consultation hub managed by the Better Together team, Department of the Premier and Cabinet in South Australia.

The Volunteering Strategy for SA Student Volunteering Working Group, made up of representatives of the Strategy Partnership, developed and conducted a simplified version of the survey for school students.

Together with the three surveys six organisations spontaneously sent in submissions that reflect the perspectives of their members and constituents.

Stage 2: At the end of Stage 1 a number of online focus groups will provide qualitative data from stakeholders across South Australia. Together, these consultations, surveys and submissions, will inform the development of the second Strategy for 2021-2027.

This report is an analysis of the findings of Stage 1 data.

## Summary of findings

A number of respondents considered that many of the priorities listed in the first Strategy 2014-2020 would continue to be relevant in 2021-2017. Examples include the need for new ways to promote volunteering and a review of the definition of volunteering. Issues related to the current environment are:

- **COVID-19.** In dealing with restrictions due to COVID-19 concerned volunteers and organisations suggested challenges were only now being recognised and might include:
  - How to deliver programs during isolation and a potentially staggered reintroduction of face-to-face interactions.
  - The need to encourage volunteering and support volunteers to continue volunteering at the end of COVID-19 isolation.
  - Planning for future pandemics.
- **REGIONAL SUPPORT.** Greater emphasis needs to be given to the needs of volunteering in regional areas. This is particularly the case where the needs of metropolitan organisations and those of regional and rural organisations differ. The impact of distance is one such difference. For instance, distance was considered detrimental to networking opportunities and the sharing of best practice, information and support.
- **FINDING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.** There were calls for greater promotion of volunteer positions. Regardless of the work organisations and governments undertake in promoting volunteering, respondents made requests and suggestions for continued and new ways where people might learn about volunteer positions. One suggestion from students was a database built for schools on volunteering opportunities for school students.
- **DIVERSITY.** Organisations appeared to be more conversant on diversity when it came to engaging people from different cultures. They were less likely to have processes in place when it came to involving people with health or impairment issues. There appeared to be some confusion about the implications and benefits of diversity in general when organisations stated they were non-discriminatory in their recruitment messages as they were happy to accept all people. The sentiment is laudable but the inference can be drawn that recruitment measures that do not target different population groups could result in very little diversity in an organisation's volunteer base.
- **VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING BEYOND EMPLOYMENT.** Volunteering as a vehicle to facilitate paid employment was not highlighted as a priority in the individual survey. This may have been due to the age and stage of life of respondents. There was recognition of the role of volunteering played in finding paid work but for older volunteers these comments appeared to come from an intellectual understanding of the value of volunteering rather than lived experience. However, a completely different understanding between paid work and volunteering was shown by primary and secondary students. They were very clear about the value of volunteering in finding paid employment.
- **REGULATORY COMPLIANCE.** Organisations expressed concern that they might not be compliant with regulations and standards of volunteer management. Small groups, particularly those without paid staff, expressed a need for more support ensuring they were compliant. Individuals expressed concern about the 'red tape' involved and the number of checks required if volunteers worked across multiple organisations
- **EXPENSES.** Reimbursements to volunteers for costs incurred were not automatically provided. The most common reimbursements covered travel and compliance checks but other organisations did not provide any. Examples of organisations paying or reimbursing volunteer costs appeared more likely to occur when:

- Volunteers need to make purchases for their work (e.g. safety clothing) and they are reimbursed particularly if prior approval had been given.
- The volunteer costs were due when accompanying groups, e.g. a volunteer taking a small group to lunch would have their meal paid for by the organisation.
- Some organisations might pay for non-essential training to the volunteer's role, e.g. a first aid course
- One organisation paid volunteers a small sum for each volunteer day.

Individuals were more likely to call for more reimbursement of costs. The danger of not reimbursing volunteers for their costs has an impact on the diversity of volunteers in that the lack of reimbursement may result in people limiting their volunteering.

- **EMPLOYMENT.** Opinions about the relationship between volunteering and paid employment varied across age groups. Both primary and secondary school students overwhelmingly considered volunteering as a stepping stone to paid employment. For organisations paid employment could be a double-edged sword. It was a mechanism that might attract people to volunteer but once engaged and trained it could become a challenge to retain volunteers who might leave once paid work was secured. The majority of Individual survey respondents had not volunteered in order to find paid work. Even though the majority of individual respondents did not think their volunteering was too much like paid work, there appeared to be a sensitivity in comments of some older respondents that volunteer positions could be too similar to paid work positions and thus blur the essence and value of volunteering for its own sake.
- **VOLUNTEER SUSTAINABILITY.** Organisations attracted volunteers of all ages. The most common age group was over 55 years. Similarly, more people over 55 years completed the individual survey. Sustaining a viable volunteer workforce basically involves continually attracting people to ensure the organisation is able to meet its mission. This is regardless of the age of volunteers. However, there were comments on the need to attract younger volunteers and the issues experienced by organisations who want to transition from an older to younger volunteer base. Alternatively, individual respondents commented on the need for trust and respect of older volunteers:
  - **Young People.** This can entail an increased flexibility in how organisations engage young people and how volunteer positions are designed. Young people are not one homogenous group. They can have many calls on their time including studying, family and work commitments. Time can be an issue for people when prospective volunteers want to be involved outside working hours, that is, on weekends and at the end of the working day. Another group are full-time students who are keen to gain a skill, help with something they are passionate about, as well as having enjoyable and fun experiences. Some comments expressed the need for support in transitioning into volunteering outside school.
  - **Older People.** Individuals expressed some concern that the emphasis on volunteering as a stepping stone to paid employment ignored the value of volunteering and the benefits of involving older volunteers. Comments from older volunteers indicated their consistency as volunteers may not always be given due credit. As the general population continues to age, organisations and governments may need to balance messages that encourage young people to volunteer while simultaneously developing new ways to involve older people who see themselves as agents of change and action.

## Methodology

To identify the current priorities relevant to the four key focus areas of the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia (VSSA)*, Stage 1 is made up of surveys to individuals, organisations that involve volunteers, school students and submissions.

### Surveys

The surveys were developed in consultation with the VSSA Partnership Board members, the Department of Human Services (SA) and with reference to the NSW Volunteering Strategy questionnaire.

The NSW Volunteering Strategy survey questionnaire was offered as a comparison to the proposed one developed for South Australia. Both questionnaires are slightly different as they are influenced by the volunteering milieu in the respective states. For instance:

1. The questionnaires focused on issues of current volunteer experiences in the respective states.
2. The questions for the South Australian survey were developed in light of the achievements of the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia: 2014-2020
3. The SA questionnaire was designed to capture information from current volunteers and volunteering.

### Submissions

Six submissions on the next iteration of the Volunteering Strategy were made, they include:

Community Centres SA

Natural Resources, SA Murray-Darling Basin

Natural Resources, Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Parks & Regions

Commissioner for Children & Young People

Planning Institute Australia. Young Planners

The Voice of Australia's Volunteers

Their submissions were made in consultation and understanding of their member and client bases. The submissions specifically addressed the focus areas and made suggestions for priorities. The suggested priorities have been incorporated with survey findings and are listed in the Combined Recommendations for Focus Area Priorities in this report.

### Sample size:

Online individual survey: n=113

Online organisation survey: n=79

Student survey: n=240

Submissions: n=6

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that in 2014, 493,900 people volunteered in South Australia. Considering the number of completed surveys and submissions this report can only be considered informative and an indication of that portion of the population who completed surveys.

It must also be noted that the surveys took place during the COVID-19 period of isolation. Many organisations were closed during the pandemic. They may have had staff, consumers or volunteers affected by the virus, or generally been distracted by current events. The upheaval caused by the pandemic may have hindered the number of completed surveys and submissions.

During 2020 students were surveyed, by the VSSA Student Volunteering Working Group, about volunteering at school and outside school. A simplified survey (taken from questions in the Individual Survey) was completed by primary and secondary students across the three education sectors (Catholic, independent and government). The simplified survey was designed to capture the opinions of children and adolescents about their volunteering experiences. All students, whether their volunteering experiences were school based or community based, expressed opinions and preferences that will benefit the development of the next volunteering strategy.

Data from the student survey is provided with the permission of the VSSA Student Volunteering Working Group. It is anonymised and illustrates the opinions of children and adolescents about volunteering in South Australia.

**Notes:**

1. Many questions allowed for multiple responses. Therefore, the raw numbers in each question do not add up to 100.
2. Location: Those who completed the surveys were mainly situated in Adelaide and surrounding suburbs (75% for the organisation survey and 82% for the individual survey).



## Combined recommendations for Focus Area Priorities

Recommendations were made by six submissions to the Department of Human Services, and completed surveys by individuals, students and organisations involving volunteers. They specifically address the four focus areas and suggest priorities for the second Volunteering Strategy for South Australia, 2021-2027.

There are some suggested priorities that currently exist in the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia: 2014-2020*. These have been included as the depth of need for those priorities has not been satisfied. The priorities are linked in sub-sets for ease of reading.

For simplicity the word 'organisation' is used to denote all bodies, i.e., organisations with hierarchical management systems, groups/associations without paid employees, clubs and associations.

### Focus Area 1

This focus area will ensure that volunteers are welcomed and valued by society and are given the opportunity to develop according to their individual abilities, needs and aspirations.

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 1		Source
Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering	<b>Sustainability of volunteering</b>	
	<b>Develop pathways for children and young people</b> to have a voice and greater engagement as volunteers, that is, as agents rather than recipients.	Submission Organisation Students
	Let children's voices be heard	Students
	<b>Explore ways to embed volunteering into South Australia's working and business culture</b> , for example, encouraging businesses to consider the skills and experiences gained through volunteering that add value to business and employees.	Submission Student
	Develop better <b>recruitment pathways between committees and boards to community and people with business expertise</b> . For example, add a specific pathway to existing volunteer recruitment services or build a free placement service	Individual
	<b>Recognise the value of volunteering</b> for all, not simply for its value to potential paid work for an individual.	Individual

	<b>Increase the visibility of different types of volunteering</b> people can do, especially young people, and prioritising smaller groups not only large organisations.	Submission
	Engage the Department for the Premier and Cabinet to explore <b>whether volunteering could become a recognised contribution to the work/life balance</b> . For example, use a similar approach taken to blood donors, where paid time is supported by some employers to allow staff to donate blood during work hours.	Submission
	<b>Raise the profile of volunteers</b> , continue individual and public recognition of the value of volunteers and volunteering.	Submission Organisation
	<b>Review the definition of volunteering</b> to reflect the strong culture of volunteering in South Australia.	Submission Organisation Individual
	<b>Build a better and more connected community</b> , promote the teamwork between State Government, local councils, volunteer organisations.	Organisation
	<b>Educate people and organisations</b> on the <b>value of networking</b> between volunteer organisations, groups and associations.	Organisation
	Provide <b>more support and resources</b> for <b>informal volunteer groups</b> such as gardening clubs, dog training clubs, carers organisations, friends of parks, etc.	Organisation Individual
	<b>Encourage specific cohorts</b>	
	<b>Identify what young people in their 20s want from volunteering</b> . For example, skills such as event organisation, interpersonal communication and personal time management.	Submission
	Find out what <b>recognition young people want</b> from volunteering.	Organisation
	In consultation with diverse communities, <b>develop innovative engagement strategies to raise awareness of volunteering</b> , its benefits and opportunities for participation.	Organisation
	Develop meaningful employment/study pathway opportunities for young people through volunteering.	Submission
	Provide support <b>more older people to volunteer</b>	Individual Organisation

Recognise the <b>value of older people as volunteers</b>	Individual
Provide mechanisms to <b>enable full time workers to volunteer.</b>	Individual
Involve and support people with <b>health conditions or disabilities to have access to more volunteering opportunities and provide them with the necessary support and training.</b>	Organisation
Focus on building the new generation of volunteers and thinking about how to engage and retain them.	Submission
More support to enable volunteers to commit to <b>long term volunteering.</b>	Organisation
<b>Create and promote digital volunteering opportunities for young people.</b>	Submission
<b>Support and recognition of people to continue volunteering</b>	
<b>More resourcing</b> , support, funding and recognition for the daily operation of volunteer programs.	Individual Organisation
<b>Greater funding to employ managers of volunteers.</b>	Organisation
<b>Offer students support before and during the volunteering experience</b> , e.g. mentoring for students who have not previously volunteered, and/or transportation to the volunteering organisation or site.	Students
<b>Greater recognition at the State level</b>	Individual
Greater recognition that <b>volunteering is not a replacement of paid work</b>	Individual
<b>Reimburse volunteer costs</b> to make volunteering more attractive, e.g. payment for parking, and other out of pocket expenses.	Individual Organisation

## Focus Area 2

This focus area will raise the profile of volunteering in South Australia to ensure all facets of the community have a greater understanding of the benefits of volunteering, with the ultimate goal of facilitating greater participation. A key challenge is to create and strengthen more resilient communities by sourcing volunteers to meet demand.

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 2		Source
Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering	<b>Promotion, promotion, promotion</b>	
	Promote the benefits of volunteering to address <b>social isolation and build healthy and resilient individuals and communities.</b>	Submission Organisation Students Individual
	Create more innovative and targeted events for volunteer recruitment, e.g. targeting specific groups such as younger student volunteers.	Submission Student Individual
	Encourage <b>peak bodies to involve more volunteer involving organisations in their conversations</b> with government departments.	Submission
	<b>Peak bodies</b> , as conduits between governments and organisations, need to put more emphasis on making volunteers and organisations aware of <b>the 'big picture' in volunteering.</b>	Organisation
	Promote lifelong volunteering.	Submission Individual
	Develop incentives to facilitate volunteering among paid workers.	Individual
	<b>More advertising about volunteering opportunities</b> for all sections of the community.	
	Highlight the role of <b>volunteering as a pathway to employment</b>	Organisation Student
	Greater promotion, by local government, of the value of volunteering in the local community.	Organisation
	<b>Clarify and separate other forms of unpaid work</b> particularly in forms of unpaid work where the volunteer is obliged to volunteer, e.g. to fulfil study requirements, to receive government payments, etc.	Individual

Provide assistance and resources for very <b>small volunteer led groups to promote and advertise volunteer opportunities.</b>	Organisation
<b>Encourage more volunteer programs in schools</b>	Students
<b>Recognition of volunteers</b>	
<b>More recognition</b> of volunteers and the impact they have on the <b>lives of clients/consumers</b>	Organisation Submission Individual
<b>Review the current level of recognition of volunteers</b> in South Australia to identify how recognition programs can be improved	Submission
Greater acknowledgment and <b>support of volunteers in government agencies.</b>	Organisation
Educate paid workers that <b>volunteers are not a threat to their jobs.</b>	Organisation
Provide <b>mechanisms volunteers, paid workers and organisations can use to work out solutions to workplace problems.</b>	Organisation
Review the current level of <b>recognition of volunteers in South Australia</b> to identify how recognition programs <b>can be improved.</b>	Organisation
<b>Recruitment</b>	
Emphasis given to inviting <b>young people to volunteer</b> , not telling them.	Individual
<b>Facilitate connections between communities in need and skilled volunteers</b> , such as after bushfires.	Submission
Providing <b>new opportunities that are fun.</b>	Student
Develop a <b>school-based website</b> through which students can access volunteering opportunities	Students
Change the <b>recruitment age to 12</b> and above	Student
<b>Training, information and education</b>	

	Increase funding to enable key stakeholders to <b>develop tailored resources for volunteer recruitment and training in the sectors involving volunteers.</b> For example, provide inexpensive training in governance to small groups.	Submission Individual
	Develop <b>volunteer leadership pathways</b> in the community to promote opportunities to groups that are under-represented as volunteers e.g. young people, Indigenous and culturally diverse community members, people with disability, and LGBTIQ+.	Submission Individual
	<b>Increase opportunities and accessibility of training for volunteers and managers of volunteers</b> to increase recruitment and retention of volunteers.	Submission
	Provide ongoing learning and professional development for managers of volunteers.	Organisation
	<b>Engage organisations in identifying what training is needed for managers of volunteers.</b>	Organisation Submission
	<b>Ensure training is accessible to managers of volunteers</b> in regional and remote areas.	Submission Organisation
	<b>Ongoing training</b> for volunteers, to provide deeper understanding.	Individual

## Focus Area 3

This focus area will support an active infrastructure that is essential to inclusive and sustained volunteer involvement. Issues that impede volunteering need to be responded to and more effective policy interventions need to be initiated to support volunteering

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 3		Source
Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high-quality standards	<b>Compliance</b>	
	<b>Greater communication and promotion of resources</b> such as the <i>WeDo</i> app and other supports offered by peak bodies.	Submission
	<b>Streamline processes and the number of times</b> volunteers are required to get checks, such as Police Checks.	Individual
	<b>Specific help</b> with 'red tape' for <b>older people</b> in transition between paid work and volunteering.	Individual
	<b>More support and clear communication to organisations</b> so they can <b>manage rapidly changing rules and regulations</b> .	Submission Organisations
	Investigate the transferability of criminal history record checks across organisations and jurisdictions.	Submission Individual
	For Working with Children Checks, adopt the same transferability as criminal history records to save on the huge time investment for volunteers completing these checks.	Submission Individual Organisation
	Identify issues and gaps in <b>volunteer understanding of work health safety, governance and recognition</b> .	Submission Organisation
	<b>Governance</b>	
	<b>Reduce the governance requirements of small groups</b> that are run by volunteers.	Individual
	<b>Implement leading practice and high-quality standards</b>	Individual Organisation
	<b>Help groups develop better management systems</b>	Organisation Individual
	<b>In regional areas, build partnerships</b> that develop the capacity of community organisations, <b>young people and diverse communities</b> .	Submission Organisation

	<b>Support for managers of volunteers</b>	
	Managers supported to <b>develop more flexible volunteering options</b>	Individual
	Provide more support and resources for regional and remote organisations and volunteer managers.	Organisation
	Invest in more networking opportunities so best practice practices can be shared.	Organisation
	<b>Recognise the skills and experience required to manage volunteers</b> and build the professionalisation of volunteer management, e.g. salary benchmarking, key selection criteria guidance	Organisation
	Attract young people to volunteering through ' <b>hot button issues</b> ' that will affect the future, e.g. environmental issues, climate change, social inequality, gender race, sexuality, religious discrimination.	Submission
	<b>Introduce a taxpayer funded income and other out of pocket expense compensation scheme for emergency services volunteers</b> in times of extreme events.	Submission
	Introduce a universal taxpayer funded <b>income protection and expense reimbursement scheme for volunteers injured and/or who become sick as a result of their volunteering duties</b>	Submission
	Recognise the <b>need for locally based Volunteer Resource Centres</b>	Organisation
	<b>Fiscal barriers</b>	
	<b>More financial support provided to organisations</b>	Individual
	More financial support for individuals so they can volunteer. This could take the form of <b>tax concessions, or financial relief for low income pensioners</b>	Individual
	Financial incentives for <b>low socioeconomic groups</b> to participate as volunteers	Individual



## Focus Area 4

The value of volunteering to individuals and communities needs to be recognised across South Australia. This focus area aims to ensure that the impact of volunteering on individuals, organisations and communities is measured consistently with the aim of continuous improvement and advocacy.

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 4		Source
Focus area 4: Proactively adapt through continuous improvement	<b>Emphasis given to research and links with researchers</b>	
	Invest in ongoing research to <b>gather evidence of the social, health, environmental and economic benefits of volunteering.</b>	Submission Organisation
	<b>Increase access to existing research</b> on the benefits of volunteering to volunteers and volunteer organisations.	Organisation
	Investigate partnership opportunities and provide more training in corporate volunteering.	Submission Organisation
	<b>Learn how to improve corporate involvement</b> that provide benefits to both the organisation, the corporate and employees.	Submission Organisation
	<b>Facilitate partnerships between academia and volunteer organisations</b> to increase dialogue for research on volunteering in South Australia.	Submission Organisation
	<b>Better understand the barriers</b> that inhibit people with health or disability issues from volunteering.	Individual Student Organisation
	Educate organisations on how <b>to recruit volunteers from specific needs</b> groups and diverse communities.	Organisation
	<b>Learn what different age groups want from volunteering.</b> Draw out the complexities so that organisations can better understand how to recruit and retain volunteers.	Individual Student Organisation
	<b>Identify the barriers</b> that stop working people from volunteering.	Individual
<b>Identify the benefits and challenges when older retired people</b> are the main source of volunteers in small volunteer led groups.	Individual	
Identify strategies to <b>attract non volunteers to volunteering.</b>	Individual	

		Organisation
	Research the <b>culture of volunteering in South Australia.</b>	Submission Organisation
	Investigate examples of volunteering as a <b>lifelong journey</b> and way of life.	Individual Student Organisation
	Measure the impact of volunteering to <b>identify the value of volunteers to organisations, the resource gaps that exist, improvements in management and support</b>	Submission Organisation
	Measure the impact of <b>volunteering</b> on the <b>lives of individual volunteers.</b>	Individual
	Regulations and legislative requirements can be a significant barrier. Undertake <b>research on the challenges of compliance.</b>	Individual Student Organisation
	Review the current <b>level of recognition of volunteers in South Australia</b> to identify how recognition programs can be improved.	Individual Student Organisation
	<b>Regular evaluation of the Volunteer Strategy</b>	
	<b>Evaluate and promote the success</b> of the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021-2027 priorities, perhaps <b>annually.</b>	Submission Organisation
	<b>Research on the impact of completed initiatives</b> undertaken during the time of the current Volunteering Strategy for South Australia, 2014-2020.	Submission Organisation
	Undertake surveys to <b>better understand current and changing trends</b> on motivation, barriers, training needs, effective management	Organisation

## SURVEYS

### ORGANISATION SURVEY

The responses are divided into sections. The first section provides anonymised information about the 79 organisations that questions. Other sections sought information about:

- The value of volunteers
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Legislation and regulation
- Suggested priorities for the next six years to inform the next Volunteering Strategy.

#### Organisational profile

##### Demographics

For the organisational survey responders were predominantly situated in Greater Adelaide and Adelaide:

Located in Adelaide and its suburbs	75%	57
Located regionally	20%	16
Operated in both Adelaide and regionally	6%	5
Reported being nationally located	1.25%	1

Table 1: Location of organisation in South Australia

This indicates that the survey was more likely to be accessed and completed by organisations and groups located centrally. The findings may not reflect the experiences of volunteering involving organisations in remote areas

##### Spread of engagement

While a large proportion of respondents were located in or near the capital city, the spread of their work was more diverse with nearly equal numbers working across the State or concentrating on local needs and issues.

State e.g. across South Australia	39%	31
Local e.g. neighbourhood/suburb	38%	30
Regional/rural South Australia	33%	26
Metropolitan SA e.g. Adelaide and suburbs	28%	22

Table 2: Spread of engagement

##### Paid and volunteer staff in organisations

The number of paid staff and volunteers provides an indication of organisational staffing. Responses indicated that the greatest number of respondents were from small to medium sized organisations employing up to 10 paid staff members. Considering volunteers, 26 respondents involved between 101 and 500 volunteers.

This indicates a smaller number of paid staff managing a larger number of volunteers.

##### Paid staff

Employ up to 10 paid staff	53%	42
Employ between 101 and 500 paid staff	18%	14
Employ between 11 and 50 paid staff	14%	11

Table 3: Employed staff

## Volunteers involved

Organisations/groups involve between 101 and 500 volunteers	33%	26
Organisations/groups involve between 11 and 51 volunteers	28%	22
Organisations/groups involve between 51 and 100 volunteers	20%	16

Table 4: Volunteer numbers

## The value of volunteers to organisations

To better understand the importance of engaging volunteers 77% (61) organisations answered they would not be able to operate without volunteers. Such a finding underpins the importance of volunteers to organisations and communities.

Respondents were given options to describe the value of involving volunteers in their work:

Volunteer engagement expands the scope of the organisation's programs/work	77%	61
Volunteers increase the number of programs/operations the organisation can offer	71%	56
Volunteers run our programs/operations for longer hours or during after hours	41%	32
Our organisation is run solely by volunteers	28%	22

Table 5: Value of involving volunteers

A number of comments were made on the value and even necessity of involving volunteers in the organisation's work:

*They [volunteers] do everything. Without them there is nothing. Literally.*

*[Volunteers] improve efficiency. Without them, some programs and services would cease to operate.*

*Our volunteers are super ambassadors for our organisation, they keep our community connected and raise the profile of needs within the community.*

## The benefits of involving volunteers

This question asked respondents to articulate what they see as the benefits of involving volunteers. The esteem in which organisations hold volunteers can be summed up as:

*Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and operations.*

Vital to the organisation's viability	Support paid staff
Cost and financial benefit to engaging volunteers	Volunteers raise morale among paid staff and clients
Increased community engagement	Additional skills, experience and knowledge
Provide diversity	Advocate for clients
Build organisational capacity	Keeps organisation accountable
Bring passion to our cause	Contribute to organisation culture

Table 6: Benefits of involving volunteers

## Age of volunteers

Organisations recruited volunteers across multiple age groups. Results indicated a diversity in age but most volunteers were in older age groups.

55- 64 years	94%	74
65-74 years	92%	73
45-54 years	85%	67
35-44 years	73%	58

Table 7: Volunteer age range

Without strategies for maintaining and building volunteer groups, this may have implications for organisational memory, cultural sustainability, transferability of skills and experience.

## Area of work

Previous examinations of volunteering have found that sport, religious and community services were areas where most volunteers could be found (ABS 2014). In this survey the majority of organisations working within the community services, the environment and conservation and with young people.

Differences between this survey and the earlier ABS survey may be due to:

- respondents from community services and the environment and conservation were more likely in this instance to complete the survey.
- the findings reflect the South Australian volunteering culture.
- this particular group of respondents were more likely to interact with the online survey platform.

Community services	62%	49
Environment and conservation	37%	29
Young people	35%	28
Children	32%	25
Seniors and aged care	30%	24
Arts and culture	29%	23
Education and training	27%	21
Sport	10%	8

Table 8: Sectors and population groups

## Requirements to volunteer

This question set out the type of checks organisations require of potential volunteers. The responses may reflect the larger number of respondents working in the community services sector.

Department of Human Services screening check (i.e. Working with Children Check, Disability Employment Services Check)	61%	48
National Police Certificate	51%	40
Personal or professional references	42%	33
Volunteer must be over 18 years	38%	30

Table 9: Organisation requirements for volunteers

In this section respondents were asked questions about the type of work volunteers undertook and the infrastructure in place to support them such as policies and training.

## Volunteer roles and duties

Administration/clerical	72%	57
Client support/customer service	63%	50
Event planning/coordination and delivery	61%	48
Committee and/or governance	57%	45
Program/competition delivery	47%	37
Fundraising	42%	33
Transport/drivers	38%	30
Mentoring/coaching	37%	29
Information provision (e.g. electronic data entry, transcribing news)	35%	28
Advocacy and awareness raising (e.g. campaigning)	35%	28
Professional advice/services	15%	12
Retail	15%	12

Table 10: Volunteer roles and duties

## Volunteer policies

Policies that underpin the engagement of volunteers were commonly in place. Considering the number of small organisations represented in this survey this finding is indicative of the adoption of formal volunteer management practices.

Organisations instituting volunteer policies such as codes of conduct	90%	71
Organisations did not have any policies for their volunteer programs	10%	8

Table 11: Policies for management of volunteers

## Training

Organisations were more likely to provide inhouse training or train volunteers 'on the job' rather than engage external trainers or accredited training.

Inhouse training	84%	66
Learning on the job	82%	65
Outsourced training provision	37%	29
Accredited training	29%	23
none	11%	4

Table 12: Training of volunteers

If external training was provided it was likely to relate to particular skills and knowledge such as food safety or supported training opportunities through a government department and the opportunity to take up accredited training opportunities with the Office for Volunteers, SA.

## Recruitment

Questions on recruitment considered some of the challenges and benefits of involving volunteers. Specific questions on diversity and learning whether there is an emphasis on specific cohorts of the community were addressed.

### Benefits to an organisation involving a diverse volunteer workforce

Organisations were clear that attracting volunteers from diverse groups benefited the individual, organisation and the community.

To seek to build mutual respect and understanding	76%	60
To learn from new perspectives	73%	58
It connects our organisation to a wider population	72%	57
To gain new skills and experience	66%	52
To gain useful knowledge of specific cultures	60%	47

Table 13: Benefits of involving a diverse volunteer base

### Recruiting people from diverse cultural backgrounds

Organisations actively seek out and recruit volunteers of diverse cultural backgrounds	61%	48
Organisations do not actively seek out volunteers of diverse cultural backgrounds	20%	16
Respondents were unclear about organisational volunteer recruitment practices	19%	15

Table 14: Diversity in recruitment

Similar to the question on cultural diversity, comments by 10 respondents stated their recruitment practices were all inclusive:

*We accept applications from all and consider suitability for various roles.*

*We encourage all backgrounds to join, but don't actively seek people from this specific background.*

Such attitudes, depending on the cause and mission of the organisation as well as its physical location, can lead to a homogenous volunteer workforce. Interestingly one organisation considered that targeting specific groups could be interpreted as discrimination:

*Actively seek out any willing volunteer, non-discriminatory.*

The comments on having holistic policies appear to ignore the needs of specific groups. By making statements of inclusivity without positive steps to ensure it occurs may result with cultural groups being left out and not involved.

Comments addressed specific areas related to engaging volunteers generally:

***Seek out volunteers with diverse backgrounds for specific programs:***

*We do actively encourage and seek out volunteers from different cultural backgrounds but usually only for specific programs.*

***The low population numbers of remote communities:***

*We are open to having volunteers from different cultures, we don't advertise for volunteers the people offer to volunteer. We are in a small rural community (6000 people) and there [aren't] many different cultures here*

***Want to build on strategies:***

*not enough. Have enough trouble getting diversity of age groups. Everyone is invited but only old retired white people show up.*

***Lack of resources:***

*at present this is not happening mainly due to the lack of resources*

**Recruiting people with health conditions or impairments**

The results on whether organisations had recruitment strategies to involve people with varying health conditions or impairments were:

Do not have any specific recruitment strategies	37%	29
Have specific recruitment to recruit people with health conditions or impairments	35%	28
Unsure	28%	22

Table 15: Recruitment of people with health conditions or impairments

If specific people with health conditions or impairments were targeted, it was due to the needs of particular programs, as in the case where volunteers with 'shared lived experiences' were necessary for the success of that program.

*We do encourage and seek out volunteers with intellectual, mental health, and/or physical disabilities but usually only in one specific program.*



*Dependent on client need as volunteers are recruited and matched to individual client requirements.*

It would appear that organisations were more conversant with strategies to attract people from diverse cultural backgrounds than attracting people with health conditions or impairments.

### Messages for older and younger volunteers

Comments were made on the perceived emphasis on recruiting young volunteers. Older volunteers and organisations suggested more balance in recruitment messages:

*The country is rather divided on youth versus boomers, and portrays stereotyped images of retirees as privileged and greedy. In fact, without the free contributions of many older volunteers, many services would struggle (as in Meals on Wheels when COVID hit). Volunteering policy is an opportunity to highlight contributions of older people as well as youth.*

Suggestions on supporting older volunteers included peer support, i.e. older people supporting older people.

### Reaching out to potential volunteers

The results of this question show that there has been a shift in methods to inform and encourage people to volunteer. Historically, word of mouth has been the most common method of recruitment, as stated by both volunteers and organisations (Volunteering Australia, 2016). This survey indicates that social media channels are as necessary to recruitment as word of mouth.

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	76%	60
Word of mouth	76%	60
Volunteer organisation website	52%	41
Community events	43%	34

Table 16: Volunteer recruitment channels

### Challenges recruiting volunteers

A quarter of respondents stated that they had no problems recruiting volunteers. The other three quarters identified challenges.

COVID-19 was also mentioned as a challenge particularly when organisations were unable to continue programs that required face-to-face interaction between volunteers and consumers.

Organisations do not face challenges recruiting volunteers	28%	22
A lack of commitment to the hours the organisation needs	25%	20
Lack of resources to recruit volunteers	22%	17
Volunteers want to work evenings or on weekends	14%	11
Lack of interest in involving volunteers	13%	10

Table 17: Challenges recruiting volunteers

Thirty-one respondents commented on other challenges and these involved the motivations of potential volunteers, the capacity of the organisation, compliance and 'red tape' issues. The issue of 'time' was brought up as an issue for busy volunteers and their ability to commit consistent and long hours. For some organisations a lack of time was considered a barrier for supporting volunteers. Specific comments on challenges included:

### Government regulation and requirements

*We find the 'red tape' prevents people wanting to volunteer. Lack of computer skills can be a barrier to some people wanting to volunteer. We find people are working for longer these days and this can be a barrier to recruitment of new volunteers.*

*... many just want to come and engage at their leisure. They dislike induction or too much framework. Some roles require a lot of training and the development of expertise and resources to achieve this can be a barrier to recruitment of new volunteers.*

*Inability to meet Centrelink requirements.*

*Challenges volunteers face during the screening process and the time it takes to do checks is a significant barrier to recruitment.*

*Time it takes to do all the paperwork*

*Government bureaucracy*

### Organisation and management issues

*Management at the paid staff level ... mismanagement. Mistrust of the paid staff. Being overworked and used for political and career gains.*

*Staffing capacity and resources to increase volunteer programs and numbers.*

*Lack of available and/or suitable roles*

*Limited staff capacity to manage a larger volunteer program*

*Our biggest challenge is one of timing. Having vacancies at the same time someone is looking for volunteer work.*

*Lack of opportunity to recruit and engage with younger volunteers*

*Finding volunteers with the right skill set*

*Change management with limited human & financial resources and time as our organisation develops and changes in a dynamic conservation and tourism environment.*

*We have experienced challenges where we receive many enquiries from young people with disability seeking volunteer opportunities as a pathway to employment but we are unable to provide them with the on-going support they need.*

#### **Time of life**

*Working people seem too busy to be able to give time to service clubs. Maybe government funding has left us as irrelevant, people are having kids later, etc. We are all retired in our Club.*

*Young people have busy lives with work, study and families, and are unable to sustain the commitment. Our permanent members are all retirees who volunteer on a weekday.*

*Our volunteers prefer to work during the week. Potential volunteers (young ones) prefer weekends.*

#### **Lack of interest in volunteering by volunteers**

*Apathy*

*We don't receive a lot of expressions of interest to volunteer.*

*Other things seem more important. Lack of time to commit to once a month meeting*

*Lack of availability to the hours the organisation needs - due to other commitments, i.e. study and family.*

*Volunteers wanting to tick a box for experience or volunteering or visa requirements*

## Volunteer retention

Together with recruitment, retention of volunteers can be an issue for organisations. A number of questions addressed issues of retention together with support for volunteers and for managers of volunteers.

At first glance, volunteer retention did not appear to be a huge problem for respondents, for example over half found it fairly easy to retain volunteers.

Somewhat easy to retain volunteers	52%	41
Retention very easy	24%	19
Somewhat difficult to retain volunteers	22%	17
Very difficult	3%	2

Table 18: Retention

## Retention - a nuanced area of volunteer management

The comments pointed to retention as being a very nuanced area of volunteer management. Some of the issues surrounding retention were:

### Love for the cause

*People love bushwalking!*

*Our volunteers are passionate about family history and providing resources for others*

### Esteem for the organisation

*Our volunteers enjoy working here*

*Once a volunteer starts volunteering with us they seem to be very happy and end up staying for a period of time.*

### Influence of others

*Most volunteers are parents/grandparents and they tell us they are happy to stay involved if*

- a) Their work commitments allow, and*
- b) Their kids want them to volunteer*

### Good management

*We are committed to resourcing, supporting, listening and connecting so they stay*

*We keep the channels of communication open so check in to see they're happy – hence they stay on*

*We retain volunteer well as we match them well in the first place, train and support them, keep them engaged, and celebrate and acknowledge them as a key part of our organisation*

### Time of life

*Usually the volunteers we recruit have retired and have the work ethic and personal ethos to help in their community*

*We recognise that retired volunteers have a long-term commitment to their role. Volunteers who wish to acquire employment are mobile and we celebrate their success when they move from unpaid roles to employment.*

### **Sustainability**

*[when] aged and retired members .... are no longer able to actively participate in on-ground work or become deceased there are few younger persons wanting to volunteer or capable of doing so.*

*We have regular volunteers that have been with the organisation for years. It is the newer volunteers that are a little more difficult to retain as they usually use the volunteering activities as a stepping stone to the next path in their life.*

Some comments indicated a lack of clarity about why volunteers continue working for the organisation. Rather an assumption that if volunteers were happy to remain the organisation's processes were successful:

*We don't have a huge turnover which suggests they are happy to stay and we have volunteers that have been volunteering for a long time.*

The reasons organisations cited for not retaining volunteers covered a range of areas such as not having a dedicated volunteer manager, lack of resources, social trends, management that could be improved or the need for volunteers to find employment –

*Retention is somewhat difficult in the absence of a volunteer coordinator.*

*As the org has grown it has become slightly more difficult, as volunteer management has not grown resources alongside.*

*Trend indicates volunteers are engaged for shorter periods.*

*Overworking people who don't have to be somewhere makes it difficult to convince good people to stay.*

*A majority of volunteers are seeking employment*

*Most skilled volunteers have busy lives and retaining these volunteers over the long term is challenging.*

### **Challenges retaining volunteers**

The mobility of volunteers such as when they moved away or went on holiday was nominated as a problem for organisations retaining volunteers. Alternatively, respondents stated they do not face challenges retaining volunteers.

Volunteers move away or go on holiday	34%	27
We don't face any challenges retaining volunteers	33%	26
Lack of resources to manage volunteers	22%	17
Volunteers lack skills	13%	10
Volunteers want to work evenings or on weekends	10%	8

Table 19: Challenges retaining volunteers

Twenty-five respondents articulated their individual challenges including:

### Government regulations

*We are subject to Government Registration*

### Need to gain paid employment

*Generally, the volunteers who resign, do so due to career opportunities.*

*Some gain full time employment*

*[one program] has a large turnover of volunteers .... These volunteers mostly have a priority to find employment. Volunteering in these programs are a good pathway to employment.*

*They are seeking employment*

### Time of life

*Ageing volunteers, lack of younger people stepping up*

### Motivation

*Keeping the motivation up [among volunteers]*

### Busy lives

*We're unsure. Usually it seems that people just want it as a stepping stone for their next pathway, or they end up getting super busy and they don't feel like that they can commit enough time to what they had hoped to.*

*Seasonal challenges - in Winter volunteers travel [overseas], in Summer the heat impacts on volunteer numbers. Looking at solutions to cover the peaks and troughs of demand for our industry.*

### Lack of resources

*Lack of funding to resource volunteer activities - specifically funding for modest catering during volunteer training and community education programs. And mileage reimbursement when delivering community programs externally*

*a lot of the tech we need to build membership and keep track - is expensive, the insurance we need for fundraising events is very expensive. people get the newsletter anyway and don't see a need to pay for it. They do want it.*

## Support for volunteers

Organisations used a number of methods to motivate and support volunteers. The variety used indicated a degree of creativity and flexibility:

Constant open communication	84%	66
Be flexible in how volunteers donate their time and effort	81%	64
Ensure volunteers have access to the resources they need	77%	61
Offer a variety of volunteer roles and activities	71%	56
Share success stories	67%	53
Provide feedback on their volunteering	62%	49
Clarify what volunteers want from their volunteer experience	58%	46

Table 20 Motivation and support of volunteers

Responses hinted at a formula on how to support volunteers:

*Communication + flexibility + resources + role options = successful volunteering.*

Flexibility and responding to the current environment entailed trying new way to communicate:

*Use social media to allow them to connect with each other in a closed group – new for us due to COVID-19 – but very successful*

The size of an organisation and the number of programs could affect its ability to motivate volunteers:

*We have many different volunteer programs available. It is dependent on individual Volunteer Supervisors how well this is done*

For groups and clubs that are totally run by volunteers, motivation is drawn from within the group:

*We are all volunteers and peers*

Comments suggested that if volunteers are not motivated they cease to volunteer. There was also a warning of role organisations have in managing volunteer stress:

*Those volleys who hold the organisation together are stressed and have work heaped upon them.*

## Reimbursement for volunteering costs

It is notable that included in the reimbursements offered to volunteers are compliance costs and training necessary for carrying out volunteer work. One organisation expanded on its payment for training stating that they would pay for training that was considered non-essential to the volunteer's work. Hence reimbursement was not always a financial transaction.

Travel	34%	27
National Police Checks	33%	26
Training	24%	19
First Aid Course	22%	17
Lunch/meals	19%	15
Mobile/internet costs	8%	6
Accommodation	3%	2

Table 21: Reimbursement

Not all organisations provide out of pocket reimbursement. Twenty-three (29%) stated their organisation does not provided any reimbursement for expenses caused by volunteering.

### Recognition and reward

Recognition and reward for volunteer effort was common among organisations. Of the 79 respondents -

96% (76) organisations recognise and reward volunteer effort

The means used to recognise and reward the work of volunteers varied particularly as not all volunteers wish to be rewarded. The variety of methods chosen indicated that organisations actively try to provide recognition that was meaningful to the volunteers:

Organisations provide a verbal or written 'thank you' to each volunteer	80%	63
Provide a celebration or free social event for all volunteers	75%	59
Recognise volunteers publicly through media or social media	72%	57
Distribute a volunteering certificate e.g. Certificate of Recognition, Premier's Award for outstanding volunteer service, etc	61%	48
Provide a reference letter	50%	39
Nominate volunteers for external award programs such as the South Australian Volunteer Award	48%	38
Give each volunteer a gift, e.g. flowers, voucher	39%	31

Table 22: Recognition and reward

For organisations without paid staff, the need for volunteer recognition and reward was not immediately obvious:

*[we give a] gift for the auditor and for longstanding retiring committee members, we could do better but it would be like us giving ourselves gifts. Weird.*

### Barriers to recognition and rewarding volunteers

The majority of respondents continue to recognise and reward volunteers. However, for those organisations that do not provide recognition or reward the following reasons were given:

No or little funding, time or resources available	14%	11
Volunteers prefer not to be rewarded	8%	6
Rewarding volunteers has never been considered	5%	4

Table 23: Barriers to recognition and rewarding volunteers

Two comments from small groups which were wholly made up of volunteers indicated that their equal power sharing and relationships appeared to preclude recognition and reward –

*We are all volunteers*

*Hadn't really thought about it. Committee handing out gifts to each other. I guess the president (me) could write 'thank you' letters to everyone, not just the ones who leave*



## Support for the managers of volunteers

The spread of supports for people managing volunteers indicates an awareness of mechanisms, networks and people available in South Australia. It should be noted that many of the support organisations, particularly websites, could be used as gateways to other support organisations.

Other leaders of volunteers and/or managers of volunteer organisations	53%	42
Volunteering SA&NT	53%	42
Volunteering network groups	37%	29
Local government	33%	6
Volunteer Resource Centres (e.g. Northern Volunteering, Southern Volunteering etc)	24%	19
sa.gov.au – managing volunteers	11%	9
Justice Connect – Not-for-profit Law	11%	9
Department of Human Services – Volunteers	10%	8

Table 24: Support for managers of volunteers

Thirty respondents provided information of alternative supports in South Australia as well as those available in other states of Australia and internationally.

### Within the organisation

*support is provided by other paid managers within the organisation*

*Engaging with volunteers is a great way to review, gain support around VM practices*

*To our departments volunteer unit*

### Local support

*Ask our local community via, email, the newspaper and facebook*

### Within South Australia

*peak body - Community Centres SA; peers within the sector*

*Office of Recreation and Sport*

*Local member of SA Parliament*

*We connect with other regional volunteer managers within our organisation and also our direct Managers.*

### International and Australian

*Volunteer management blogs and articles. Workshops and conferences.*

*QLD based*

## Legislation and Regulation

### Impact of government legislation and regulation

The Department of Human Services screening checks appear to have the greatest impact on the work of managers of volunteers. Considering the number of respondents from the community services sector, this result may not be unexpected.

Department of Human Services screening check (i.e. Working with Children Check, Disability Employment Services Check)	76%	60
Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)	51%	40
National Police Certificate	48%	38
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)	43%	34
Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017	39%	31
Volunteer Protection Act 2001	24%	19
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016	24%	19
Volunteers Protection Regulations 2019	23%	18
Food Safety Act 2001	22%	17
Aged Care Act 1997	19%	15
Disability Services Act 1993 (SA)	15%	12

Table 25: Legislation and regulation compliance

### Concerns and issues organisations have with regulation and legislation in volunteering

For this question respondents were asked to provide comments about their concerns. All 79 respondents left comments although thirteen stated that this question was either not applicable or they did not have any concerns.

#### Responding to COVID-19

*Current protocols of social distancing and working from home are providing fresh challenges - when face to face has been the standard methodology for 'people powered' community education. Also - how do you provide digital literacy programs for vulnerable groups - when only digital platforms are a viable option?*

#### Regulatory requirements

*Working with Children Checks for volunteers who are under 18 years of age have been difficult for young people to obtain. Guidance and support for young people to obtain this check from DHS is limited. The process is not clear, there is no 'how to' fact sheet for young people and requires significant help from schools and parents. This has significantly impacted the number of young people who can volunteer for our peer support programs. The paperwork for under 18s requires that the young person ask a JP (or another registered certifier) to overlook the stated ID requirements in the document for a person over 18 and to accept theirs as adequate. This is a big ask for a young person to do. They need a process designed for them.*

*The print and seek process for WWCC for people without the ID to apply online via the DHS website for people with English as a second language the process is unclear and support and guidance is hard to find. They have to navigate the online form without knowing what boxes to tick in advance. They also need a fact sheet designed for that cohort/process.*

*Volunteers usually assist with several organisations. Having to repeat WHS inductions puts people off. This is quite different to site or machinery/tool inductions which need to be specific*

*Travel and volunteering in remote locations, and consistent approach to WHS. Program is coordinated centrally, but supervised in regions.*

### **Constant changes**

*Ever changing environment in regard to compliance. Also, contractual agreements dictate what compliance checks are required.*

### **Lack of clarity or support from government departments**

*Lack of clarity re DHS screening  
Lack of a coordinated state/national approach to volunteer police checks. Volunteers often have to reapply for police checks across different organisations. There needs to be a single coordinated approach whereby when a volunteer receives a relevant police check, that becomes valid across all organisations within the agreed parameters. The current process is quite cost and resource heavy.*

*A bit bureaucratic on safety.*

*Travel and volunteering in remote locations, and consistent approach to WHS. Program is coordinated centrally, but supervised in regions.*

### **Concern organisation may not be compliant or up-to-date**

*We are a small organisation and ensuring we are across all of the relevant legislation/ rules is difficult.*

*Ensuring our volunteer managers are checking their volunteers have WWCC and that they're keeping record of it*

*Policy implementation and training volunteers when we have no funding support/resources*

*Ensuring that the regulations are met consistently and effectively across the org. and remaining up to date with legislation as Vol Man. is at capacity. Screening and criminal checks are a constant unclear area due to so many clearances required for each funding body, on top of so many changes within DCSI.*

*The time it takes to process police checks and DCSI screening*

*Ensuring all volunteers understand and comply with Health and Safety requirements*

*Lack of awareness and procedures attached to compliance*

### **Compliance obligations and resistance from volunteers and community members**

*Volunteers not understanding why it is necessary*

*Volunteers not wanting to go through the National Police Certificate Process*

*Over-regulation e.g. requiring unnecessary police checks*

### Suggested changes

*Receiving information when there are changes in a timely manner*

*[Under 18 years olds] need a process designed for them.*

## Comments and suggestions for the focus area priorities for the next six years – Organisation survey

Respondents were clear about their vision for the Volunteering Strategy over the next seven years. Only 11 were unsure, could not think of anything or thought the question was not applicable to their organisation. One respondent suggested that the priorities remain the same:

*I read the key areas and I love all of them*

### Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 1	
Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering	Teamwork from State Government to local councils to volunteer organisations. <b>Linking together to build a better and more connected community</b>
	Involving and supporting <b>people with a disability to have access to more volunteering opportunities</b> and providing them with the support and training to learn the roles
	<b>Involving young people</b> in volunteering including those <b>under 18 years of age</b> . everyone can do it! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting school kids involved.</li> <li>- Youth Engagement Sector Connection/Development across all stakeholders</li> <li>- Youth engagement, recognition and employment pathway opportunities</li> </ul>
	<b>Recognition of skills and experience required to manage volunteers</b> (salary benchmarking, key selection criteria guidance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the professionalization of Volunteer Management</li> </ul>
	Supporting <b>aged care sector</b> . <b>Older people as volunteers</b>
	<b>More help for not-for-profit community organisations</b> like resident's associations with <b>no paid staff</b> e.g. grants to
	A mindset shift regarding <b>reimbursement of expenses</b> to ensure volunteering is a truly inclusive activity for all
	<b>Increased funding to support the daily operations of a volunteer program</b> e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding to employ volunteer managers</li> <li>- accredited training (i.e. Mental Health First Aid)</li> <li>- basic resources which are usually available for paid employees (i.e. modest catering during volunteer training)</li> <li>- travel reimbursement when delivering programs externally</li> <li>- funding to reward and recognise volunteers (i.e. small gifts).</li> </ul>
	More support in initiatives for volunteers to commit longer term
	Increased funding to support volunteers
Recognition of the need for locally based Volunteer Resource Centres	

## Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 2	
<b>Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering</b>	Lifting the profile of volunteering within SA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More recognition of all volunteers</li> <li>- Promoting volunteering as a way of building personal well-being</li> <li>- Volunteering as pathway to employment</li> </ul>
	Volunteering and connections - creating opportunities for people to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing through volunteering. For all ages.
	Local Government rating the value of volunteers - community service and economic benefit, more
	Encourage volunteering during University and Schooling Years. It is no longer ingrained in their upbringing like older generation
	<b>Raising awareness of available resources</b>
	Assistance with advertising opportunities in volunteer organisations

### Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high-quality standards

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 3	
<b>Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high quality standards</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
	Government cover for public liability
	Building awareness of obligations and good practice in volunteering. Simplifying the processes attached to becoming compliant and the ongoing management of volunteers. Improving the recognised value and culture of volunteering in South Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Streamlining of compliance requirements for Volunteers to come on board</li> </ul>
	Reducing governance requirements of NGO's that are run by volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support for the obtainment of WWCC for volunteers</li> </ul>
	More training courses available for managers in overseeing legislation and regulations. More support for management of day to day volunteer issues, e.g. conflict resolution, manual handling, privacy, customer service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More templates/tools provided to support WHS</li> <li>- Safety</li> </ul>
	Regional organisations are often less supported and resourced in their roles as volunteer managers. There are fewer networking opportunities, reducing the sharing of best practice and the sense of support among those managing volunteers. From our experience 'we don't know what we don't know' and there is potentially a lot of areas that need to be improved regarding compliance with legislation and other activity that protects the interests of volunteers to appropriate standards.
	<b>Training – leading practice</b>
	Implement leading practice and high quality standards - how organisations can best achieve these
	Free training for volunteers
Retention and engagement support for organisations	

#### Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 4	
Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement	Funding to support the development of sector wide projects that address the inclusion of young people and people with disability in volunteering
	Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy
	Involving young people in volunteering to future proof volunteering in our state. Recognition of volunteering as a state agenda that is active and doesn't just sit in the strategy
	Review communities that have many organisations and maybe help them to do a community audit to have all the organisations in aligning with volunteer act. As many local organisations are unaware and maybe ignorant to the fact that these acts are available



## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

The responses are divided into sections. The first section provides anonymised information about the 113 individuals who answered questions. Other sections sought information about:

- recruitment and recognition,
- volunteering experiences in the past 12 months
- information about the organisations/groups where they volunteered
- Suggested priorities for the next six years to inform the next Volunteering Strategy.

### Who answered this survey?

A series of questions were asked of individuals to provide information on their experiences, thoughts and feelings about volunteering in South Australia. This survey is part of the methodology that will help shape the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia: 2021-2027.

### Make up of respondents by gender, age, cultural diversity and geography

One hundred and thirteen individuals completed the online survey. Briefly:

- more than twice the number of women (83) responded as men (30).
- 58 were older than 55 years, while 23 were aged between 35-44 years and 16 were 45-54 years. No respondents identified as being under 18 years.
- Regarding cultural diversity, 2 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, 11 identified as belonging from a particular cultural group and three preferred not to say.
- The majority of responders lived in Adelaide and its suburbs with 20 (18%) living in regional or remote areas.

Age	No.	%
18-24 years	8	7%
25-34 years	8	7%
35-44 years	23	20%
45-54 years	16	14%
55-64 years	26	23%
65-74 years	29	26%
75+ years	3	3%

Table 26: Age of respondents

### Employment

Two respondents were either unemployed or on leave due to Corvid-19 and the impact of bush fires.

Retired	29%	33
In full-time employment (35+ hours a week)	25%	28
In part time work (less than 35+ hours per week)	18%	20
Looking for paid employment	7%	8
Casual/temporary/contract employees	6%	7
Unemployed	6%	7
Studying	4%	5
On carer/parental leave	3%	3

Table 27: Employment status

## Volunteer transport

Most respondents used their own vehicles to get to their volunteer work. And car drivers were more likely than other modes of transport to travel the furthest distance and spend the most time travelling (although one person travelling by bus spent 3 hours a week travelling to and from the volunteering position). Thirty car drivers estimated they drove between 8km-200km on average. Public transport users travelled up to an hour and walkers up to 2km in distance or around 35 minutes.

Car, I drive myself to volunteer	83%	69
Public transport	22%	18
Walk	14%	12

Table 28: Mode of transport

The distance and costs of transport were indicative of the value of volunteering in the lives of respondents.

## Recruitment

This section considered how volunteers heard about their volunteering positions as well as issues related to volunteering. Also, of interest were their motivations to volunteer.

### Methods of volunteer recruitment

Word of mouth is the most common method cited by volunteers about how they heard about their volunteering organisation and role. For comparison, the Stage 1 organisation survey found that volunteers used both social media and word of mouth.

Word of mouth	57%	47
Approached by community leader	18%	15
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	14%	12
Volunteer organisation website	13%	11
Attended a community event	12%	10
Volunteer resource centre (Volunteering SA&NT, Northern Volunteering etc)	10%	8

Table 29: Recruitment method

Other means of recruitment included education career services and family experiences of volunteering.

### Regular – one off volunteering

The majority of respondents volunteered on a regular basis.

Regular – for more than 6 months	86%	71
One off – for a few hours	6%	5
Regular – for less than 6 months	5%	4
One off – for an event	4%	3

Table 30: How often people volunteered

## Volunteering hours per week

Volunteers were more likely to spend up to 2 hours or between 5-10 hours volunteers per week.

5-10 hours	30%	25
0-2 hours	23%	19
2-5 hours	17%	14
10-15 hours	16%	13
15-20 hours	7%	6
20+ hours	7%	6

Table 31: Number of hours volunteering per week

## Motivation for volunteering

Respondents were clear about their reasons for volunteering although for the questions regarding retention only 83 responses were made.

I want to make a difference/contribute to my community	78	94%
I am passionate about the cause/issue	46	55%
I want to learn, develop new skills and/or experience	40	48%
I want to meet new people	31	37%
I want to have fun	26	31%
I am a parent/grandparent/carer and I want to get involved in my child's school/sport activities	11	13%

Table 32: Reasons for volunteering

When people were asked to scale their statements from strongly agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, the strength of statements such as:

'It makes me feel like I am making a difference' 81 chose either 'definitely agree' to 'tend to agree'

'I enjoy it' 79 chose either 'definitely agree' to 'tend to agree'

Alternatively, the strongest statement in the negative 'tend to disagree' and 'definitely disagree' was:

'It helps me explore ideas for a new business/endeavour'. In this instance 55 chose to answer 'definitely disagree' and 'tend to disagree'

'It helps me to explore another career', 44 chose to answer 'definitely disagree' and 'tend to disagree'

Specific comments about why they volunteer could be divided into the following sets:

### Role model

*Role model volunteering for my own children and those I teach*

*My parents always volunteered so it was never a question that I might not*

### Potential employment

*Experience for future career.*

*I want to make professional connections and make myself more hireable in the relevant field*

### Provides structure and meaning in daily living

*Give some structure to life.*

*It gives me something to do rather than watching tv at home all day.*

*I want to keep busy*

### Organisation needs

*there was an opportunity/need to fill a "spot" that was needed, numbers were low*

### Income support requirements

*Work for dole*

### Reasons for not volunteering

Of the 113 respondents to this survey 21 had not volunteered during the previous twelve months.

I have work/study commitments	9	43%
I don't have time	7	33
Not enough volunteer opportunities on weekends or during the evening	6	29%
Carer responsibilities	5	24%
I don't know where to find volunteer opportunities	3	14%

*Table 33: Reasons for not volunteering*

Of these non-volunteers seven provided specific reasons related to health problems and legal commitments.

Two respondents pointed to negative reasons beyond their control:

*Bad experience when previously volunteered*

*Have offered to volunteer for ... did the training but never contacted*

## Retention

Respondents were asked the volunteer roles and activities they undertook in the last 12 months.

Organised or helped run an activity or event	58%	48
Provided practical help (e.g. helping out at school, etc.)	45%	37
Fundraising	39%	32
Leadership	36%	30
Represented the organisation at meetings or events	35%	29
Trustee or member of a committee	35%	29
Administration (e.g. secretarial or clerical work)	34%	28
Befriended or mentored people	33%	27
Gave advice, information and/or counselling to people	33%	27
Campaigned on behalf of an organisation/movement	27%	22
Coordinated and recruited volunteers	24%	20
Handled money (e.g. club treasurer)	20%	17
Visited people (e.g. those in need, elderly)	20%	17
Provided transport/driving	16%	13
Emergency and post emergency work	14%	12

Table 34: Types of volunteer activities

Other types of volunteer work undertaken included

Applying for grants	Training
JP work	Religious services in Aged Care facilities
Animal care, e.g. working in a wildlife park	Gardening
Carrying out field surveys	

## Plans to continue volunteering

Respondents reported that 82% (68) were very likely to volunteer in the next 12 months with 11% (9) being fairly likely. Only 4% (3) stated they were 'very unlikely' or 'fairly unlikely' to volunteer in the next 12 months. Thirty people skipped this question.

Of the 77 respondents who were either 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to volunteer multiple responses were provided:

I get personal satisfaction from volunteering	84%	70
To do something worthwhile	78%	65
The cause the organisation stands for	69%	57
The positive impact it has on my health and wellbeing	53%	44
Social contact	49%	41
I like being active	43%	36
I like working with other volunteers, employees and members	43%	36
I feel a sense of duty or obligation	40%	33
It's fun	36%	30
The skills/experience I'm gaining	35%	29
It fits in well with my everyday life	28%	23
There is a lack of people to take my place	19%	16

Table 35: Reasons for continuing to volunteer

Six comments were made and spoke of the importance of volunteering in people's lives –

*I am deeply invested with time and effort over 19 years of it*  
*To help make a difference and improve things where I can*  
*Innate to who I am as a person*  
*To give back*

### Reasons to stop volunteering

From some of the comments it might be that respondents hypothesised about the reasons they might be unlikely to continue volunteering. In other words, they plan to continue to volunteer (in line with their previous answers on volunteering). As respondents stated –

*Please note these replies are only hypothetical; I'm NOT likely to stop but these are the reasons why I would*

*Eventually I will be too old!*

Others noted the impact of COVID-19 and bushfires –

*Due to COVID-19*

*I will be continuing volunteering once the organisation is able to re-open*

*Possibly the impact of bushfires, leaves little emotional/physical 'strength in the tank', to do a good job and support others*

I don't have the time anymore	29%	24
I feel my efforts aren't appreciated	24%	20
I don't enjoy it	20%	17
It negatively affected my health and wellbeing	20%	17
I am unhappy with the way my volunteering is managed/organised	19%	16
The volunteer opportunity ended	17%	14
I feel I have done my part and someone else can get involved	17%	14
I was out of pocket financially	14%	12
I moved away from the area	12%	10

Table 36: Reasons for not volunteering

Seventeen of the 28 comments stated that this question was not applicable or

*Cannot foresee this happening*

*Not relevant as I am going to continue*

### Volunteering leading to paid employment a new business or change of profession

In line with demographic information such as age, it is not surprising to find that the majority of individuals were not seeking paid employment.

No	76%	63
Yes – I found paid employment at my volunteer organisation	2%	2
Yes – I found paid employment at another organisation	2%	2
Yes – it helped me decide to go to university, TAFE	1%	1

Table 37: Volunteering leading to paid work or study

## Organisation and coordination of volunteering

A number of statements about volunteering allowed respondents to comment on their experiences of volunteer management. The scale of responses ranged from 'Definitely agree' to 'Definitely disagree'. Considering the responses in Table 38, respondents generally agreed that:

- volunteer programs were well managed
- volunteers knew who to go to if a problem or issue arose
- volunteers were well trained
- red tape was not a barrier
- their organisation was flexible about the amount of time they were able to give and did not have unreasonable expectations
- volunteers were reimbursed for expenses and they felt well supported.

	Definitely agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Definitely disagree	Don't know
Things could be much better organised	10	19	24	24	4
There is too much red tape	16	16	26	18	5
I know who to go to if I have a problem	44	26	6	6	0
I have been well trained for the volunteering I do	32	37	4	6	3
It's becoming too much like paid work	7	24	27	24	0
The organisation is flexible around the time I give	45	28	2	5	1
Organisation has unreasonable expectations	4	7	25	39	6
My organisation would reimburse me for any expenses	20	24	10	6	22
I feel well supported by the organisation/group	37	33	8	2	1
The organisation is too concerned about risk	4	16	38	19	4
I know how to raise an issue within the organisation	35	39	5	1	1
The process of getting involved was easy and straightforward	36	38	8	0	0

Table 38: Opinions on the organisation of volunteering

### The benefits of volunteering with organisations

Volunteers were able to articulate a number of benefits derived from volunteering. The most common reasons spoke to both, the external benefit of making a valuable contribution to the community and, the internal benefit of feeling empowered.

Gives me worthwhile work that makes a valuable contribution	69%	57
Helps me feel empowered and that I am making a difference	64%	53
Provides me with a clear understanding of what they expect from me	36%	30
Recognises and rewards my volunteering efforts	35%	29
Gives me a say in the decisions about volunteering in my organisations	31%	26
Provides volunteer training, flexible hours and out of pocket reimbursement	29%	24

Table 39: Benefits of volunteering with organisations

There were statements that acknowledged that volunteering could have negative outcomes such as the impact of stress:

*Created excessive amounts of stress, that I had to resign as a unit manager*

*I have negative feelings around the amount of work required of us, the inflexibility of rosters*

### The value of volunteering in your community

This question asked volunteers to think about the value of volunteering to the community and the value of volunteering to individual volunteers. As can be seen in the following table respondents found it easier to think of volunteering in terms of community value than for individual value.

Volunteering makes a positive difference in the lives of others	65%	54
Volunteering makes a valuable contribution	64%	54
Volunteers are respected, valued and feel a part of their community	13%	32
Volunteers can find employment or start a new business/endeavour	13%	11

Table 40: The value of volunteering in the community

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on values not articulated in the question.

Misunderstanding and distrust between employers and volunteers: *Employers don't care that you are a SES vol, all they see is potential for time off work*

Volunteer roles beyond service delivery: *Volunteers are also advocates for causes*

The value of volunteering to the individual: *[Volunteering] gives me a purpose*

Limited expectations of volunteers, or, lack of ability to take advantage of a volunteer's skills and experience: *Volunteers are not utilised to the best of their skills*



## Recognition and reward

Fifty-five (66%) people stated they were recognised and rewarded for their volunteering efforts. Twenty-eight (34%) stated they were not recognised or rewarded while 30 respondents did not record an answer.

The range of responses gives an indication of the work organisations undertake to recognise and reward volunteers. One of the differentiating factors between paid work and volunteering is that not all volunteers want to be recognised or rewarded. In this instance 20% of respondents did not think recognition and reward were necessary. This may be due to the make-up of their organisation. For instance, wholly volunteer organisations may not institute reward strategies.

Personal verbal or written 'thank you' or certificate from the organisation	65%	35
A celebration or social event (breakfast, lunch, morning/afternoon tea)	48%	26
Verbal/written 'thank you' from individual(s)the volunteer has helped	39%	21
Not applicable – I don't want any recognition in particular	20%	11
Award program or ceremony organised by the organisation	19%	10
A certificate for years of service	15%	8
A gift (e.g. voucher, flowers, etc)	15%	8
Recommendation in the media and on social media	7%	4
A reference letter from the organisation	4%	2

Table 41: Recognition and reward

Other forms of reward and recognition were provided. Such examples pointed to reward that was specific to that volunteer or group of volunteers:

*Counting towards a University of South Australia extracurricular award*

*Personal invite to attend functions to share knowledge/opinion/decision making, recognition or reward is seeing a good result, seeing good outcomes*

## Final comments

Fifty-four respondents offered final comments on a range of volunteering issues, on their personal experience to more broadly, volunteering in South Australia. Comments also stressed points earlier made in the survey.

### Points that stress earlier comments:

*Bring more young and older people together to share ideas*

*Volunteers should get reimbursement for their travel*

### Recognition of volunteering in South Australia:

*I think in SA that volunteers are well appreciated*

### Dissatisfaction:

*Just because we don't get paid, doesn't mean we don't have a brain - include us in decision making or at least ask us for input.*

*I feel that much attention around volunteering is given to umbrella organisations, particularly in the community service and welfare. There is a perception that the volunteering industry is a career path. My involvements are at grass roots groups where few people are actively committed, volunteers hard to recruit and keep,*

*and volunteer support depends on the size of organisation. For some organisation it seems we are a long way down the pipe from the policy and direction at administrative level. In the end it comes down to the number of people to share the load and carry it on, ...*

*As a volunteer for SA Ambulance service, I have negative feelings around the amount of work required of us, the inflexibility of rosters and knowledge that the user is paying a considerable amount for the service. Providing some form of tax deductions or concessions for government emergency services volunteers relative to the amount of time given would surely encourage and enable more volunteers to contribute.*

#### **Frustration with red tape:**

Surf Life Saving is a wonderful organisation of volunteers that works hard - under much red tape and administrivia to deliver their valuable work

As a volunteer for SA Ambulance service, I have negative feelings around the amount of work required of us, the inflexibility of rosters and knowledge that the user is paying a considerable amount for the service. Providing some form of tax deductions or concessions for government emergency services volunteers relative to the amount of time given would surely encourage and enable more volunteers to contribute.

The Council I did transport duties for insisted on me writing a receipt for each client. It was only a small amount, nobody ever wanted it, and they were never checked or used for any purpose. Stupid!!

Continuing from 24, I am retired & do not wish to be told what to do, how to do it & forced to do training. When I have survived 75yrs on this earth I want to make my own decisions & determine my own level of risk.

#### **Sustainability of volunteering:**

Strengthening the links with schools so we can have students involved early and it becomes an expectation and gives a sense of pride

#### **Time poor:**

After speaking to several volunteers, it appears that a lot of people feel they don't have time or volunteering is for retired people. I think more emphasis on unemployed, younger people and small amount of time needed to attend meetings in advertising maybe an advantage.

#### **Informal volunteering:**

The ability to raise the profile and capture the informal volunteers within our community. ... the informal volunteers have the same motivations. Just don't want the red tape - three steps back to move forward.

## Comments and suggestions for the focus area priorities for the next six years – Individual survey

Clear themes appeared in the 82 responses to the question what volunteers would like see improved over the next six years until 2027. The most commonly mentioned were:

### Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 1	
Focus area 1: Invest in the foundations of volunteering	Greater support for organisations
	Greater support for organisations that are made up of volunteers
	- More resourcing, support and recognition
	- Reimbursement of volunteer costs to make volunteering more attractive
	Develop better management systems
	Managers supported to develop more flexible volunteering options
	Managers trained to make better use of existing volunteer skills
	- Support organisations to re-engage volunteers post COVID-19
	Support organisations develop more volunteering opportunities
	Financial support to organisations and people wanting to volunteer
	Financial support provided to organisations
	Financial support for individuals so they can volunteer. This could take the form of tax concessions, or financial relief for low income pensioners
	Financial incentives for low socioeconomic groups to participate as volunteers

## Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 2	
Focus area 2: Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering	Promotion suggestions
	Greater emphasis given to the value of volunteering per se
	More promotion on the benefit of volunteering to the individual and community, e.g. concentrating on wellbeing, the development of 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills
	Recognition of volunteers at the organisational level but also in the broader socio-economic context: <i>Proper respect for volunteers, particularly recognising that volunteers give an incredible amount of unpaid "work" and especially the older folk who volunteer should NOT be referred to as a burden on the budget. Some unwise politicians call it the "ageing problem" but it is an asset!</i>
	Recruitment
	Emphasis given to inviting young people to volunteer
	Provide support for more older people to volunteer
	Provide mechanisms to enable full time workers volunteer
	Recognition of volunteer effort
	More recognition of the vital role volunteers have on the lives of clients/consumers
	Recognition of the skills volunteers bring to their work and recognition of the skills and experience developed as volunteers
	Greater recognition at the State level

### Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high-quality standards

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 3	
Focus area 3: Implement leading practice and high quality standards	Minimisation of 'red tape' and bureaucratic processes
	'Less red tape' was a repeated theme considered almost antithetical to volunteering – - <i>Less red tape, remember the meaning and essence of the word Volunteering!</i>
	Streamline processes and the number of times checks, such as Police Checks, need to be made
	Specific help with 'red tape' for older people in transition between paid work and volunteering

### Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement

Suggested proprieties for Focus Area 4	
Focus area 4: Progressively adapt through continuous improvement	Separate other forms of unpaid work e.g. mutual obligation from volunteering
	Greater recognition that volunteering is not a replacement of paid work
	Plan looks very similar to previous plan and building on work that needs to be measured. Also need more resources for volunteers to grow - good economic case to make in current times.

## SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

This survey is a simplified version of the Individual Survey and was promoted through the networks of members of the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia Student Volunteering Working Group. It was completed by primary and secondary students across the three education sectors (Catholic, Independent and government). The aim of this survey was to capture the opinions of children and adolescents about their current and future plans for volunteering.

The first set of findings is from two primary schools and the second is from combined primary and secondary schools.

The students appeared to have clear ideas about volunteering and where it might occur. For example, sport was seen by students as a common area where people could volunteer.

It must be noted that in the first survey the students had only experienced volunteering through their school, although they appeared clear about why they might volunteer outside, the supports they would need, and the value of such volunteering.

Notes: Percentages were rounded up to the nearest whole number.

A number of questions allowed respondents to choose as many items as applicable and so they do not add up to the total number taking part.

### 1.Primary Schools

Sample: = 41

Ages: 9-11. Nearly 20 in number were aged 10 years

Years: Years 4 to 6. Ten students (49%) were aged 10 years.

Gender: 27 (66%) were male and 14 (34%) female

The majority 29 (71%) students had experienced volunteering through their school.

None of the children had volunteered outside their school, but 5 would like to volunteer at a zoo and 6 at a homeless shelter.

### Motivation

The children listed a number of motivations that would encourage volunteering:

Try new things	71%	29
Develop my skills and capabilities	59%	24
Develop friendships	56%	23
Contribute to something (e.g. help people, animals, the environment)	56%	23
Get a job	46%	19
Follow my passions	44%	18
Step outside my comfort zone	41%	17
See if I would like to pursue a career in a particular industry	37%	15
Get exposure to the workplace	29%	12
To meet school friends	12%	5

Table 42: Reasons to volunteer

Respondents thought they would be likely to volunteer with the encouragement of their parents and family, their relatives, friends and advertising. volunteering ‘as a way of life rather than a way to employment only’ Do we reinforce the value of volunteering holistically? Or are recruitment messages slanted towards people seeking work?

### General capabilities that volunteering helps develop

Of the seven general capabilities outlined in the Australian curriculum, students appeared clear about how volunteering could help them develop in six capability areas: literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology, personal and social capabilities, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding.

Personal and social capabilities	68%	28
Information and communication technology	41%	17
Critical and creative thinking	41%	17
Literacy and numeracy	39%	16
Intercultural understanding	34%	14
Ethical understanding	27%	11

Table 43: Capabilities gained through volunteering

**80% anticipated that volunteer helps in the development of job ready skills.** Job ready skills included developing social skills, gaining experience and making new friends.

Students commented on those aspects that would make volunteering more meaningful and fun. These included:

<b>Cheering me on</b>	<b>More learning activities and fun sport</b>
By [students] <b>putting what they like</b>	<b>Social interaction</b>
Showing and telling you how much <b>fun</b> it is and <b>encourage you to do the right things</b>	Add more people and do more <b>fun</b> things with the <b>community</b>
Letting us <b>choose</b> some type of volunteering programs	How to be kind and <b>caring for our animals and our environment</b>
Having good <b>friendships</b>	Focus on the meaning and <b>why you’re doing it and what a difference it could make</b>

Students commented on factors they consider important in a volunteer position:

- Fun, choice, friendships, support, learning, social interaction,
- Community, animal welfare and the environment,
- Understanding why students are volunteering and what difference they are making in the broader social context.

### Type of organisation where children would like to volunteer

Students would most like to volunteer in animal related areas (76%) followed by arts, museums and history areas (49%).

Type of organisation	Percentage	Number
Animals	76%	31
Environment	49%	20
People	46%	19
International communities	29%	12
Being in a club that provides volunteer opportunities for young people	29%	12

Table 44: Preferred types of organisations



## 2.Student results from Primary and Secondary School

Sample =199

Respondents were at school year levels 5-12 or from the Flexible Learning Options program. Seven people were either teachers, reception staff or students from years 3 and 5.

Ages: 8 years to 80. The most common ages were 15- and 16- year olds, 32 (16.08%) and 33 (16.58%) students respectively. This equates to approximately 65 respondents were aged 15-16 years old.

Gender: 56% were female and 38% male.

80% (160) respondents had been involved with student volunteering at school.

### Volunteer recruitment methods

In this, and in similar, questions responses pointed to the importance of family and friends.

Parents/siblings/grandparents	Sport and recreation organisations
Friends	Word of mouth
Teachers/schools	Education institutions
Flyer / Notice board	Printed media
Internet / email	Internet / social media
Sporting clubs / my own interests	

Table 45: Where students learned of volunteering opportunities

## Experiences of volunteering outside school

Students listed their current or previous volunteer engagements. The most common were:

Community services 11

Sport & Recreation 7

Health 3

<b>Volunteer organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Volunteer organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>
Homeless Shelters	<i>Community Services</i>	Foodbank	<i>Community Services</i>
Local council	<i>Community Services</i>	Youth Advocacy Centre (YAC)	<i>Youth &amp; children</i>
Sporting clubs	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>	Youth at the Zoo	<i>Youth &amp; children</i>
Red cross steering committee, through Facebook	<i>Health</i>	Festival programs	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>
Oz Harvest	<i>Community Services</i>	Rest haven	<i>Aged care</i>
Church	<i>Religious</i>	Surf Life Saver	<i>Emergency</i>
Horse riding club	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>	Student2Student (online reading with a buddy)	<i>Education</i>
Kindergartens, primary schools, high schools	<i>Education.</i>	Bushfire Relief	<i>Emergency</i>
Trees for life	<i>Environment</i>	Animal shelters	<i>Animal services</i>
Swimming instructor @ school	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>	Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>
Local Aged Care Home	<i>Aged care</i>	Food kitchens	<i>Community Services</i>
Disabled Surfers Association	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>	Kick-start for kids	<i>Education</i>
Dance school	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>	Big week out	<i>Sport &amp; Recreation</i>
Salvation Army	<i>Community Services</i>	Rotary	<i>Community Services</i>
Smith family	<i>Community Services</i>	40H Famine Challenge	<i>Community Services</i>
Cancer Council Youth Ambassador	<i>Health</i>	Motor Neurone Disease Association of SA (MND)	<i>Health</i>
Rotary	<i>Community Services</i>	Refugee and Immigration Ambassador	<i>Community Services</i>

Table 46: Organisations and sector where students had volunteered

## Reasons to volunteering

Messages about the value of volunteering appeared to be clear and consistent with those expressed by adults. One difference was the reason 'step outside my comfort zone'. This indicated that the element of risk was considered in a positive light.

Contribute to something (e.g. help people, animals, the environment)	82%	163
Try new things	72%	143
Develop my skills and capabilities	69%	138
Step outside my comfort zone	52.76%	105
Develop friendships	45.73%	96

Table 47: Reasons to volunteer

## Encouragement for volunteering outside of school

The responses reflect a combination of who, what, where and why reasons that would motivate students to volunteer outside of school. Support, both practical and emotional would be welcomed through 'anxiety support' and 'transportation' The last would be important to any young person when they cannot drive or have a regular income.

Friends/family	Volunteering with people of the same age
Passion	Helping the environment
Self-motivation	Helping animals
Great for wellbeing	More advertising
Anxiety support	Transportation
Learning new skills / opportunity to grow	Caring for little kids
Giving back to community	Employment
Enjoyment	Having the resources available in school

Table 48: Reasons and encouragement needed to volunteer outside of school

## General capabilities that volunteering helps develop

Of the seven general capabilities outlined in the Australian curriculum, students appeared clear about how volunteering could help them develop in four capability areas: personal and social capabilities, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding.

Personal and social capability – have the personal and social capability to effectively communicate and collaborate, and display resilience and leadership	76%	151
Critical and creative thinking – be critical and creative thinkers who are innovative, enterprising and adaptable	61%	121
Intercultural understanding – be empathetic, responsible young Australians with intercultural understanding, and respect their own and others' cultures	60%	119
Ethical understanding – have a strong ethical understanding, and can reason, investigate, evaluate and reflect	55%	109

Table 49: Capabilities gained through volunteering

**95% (190) anticipated that volunteer helps in the development of job ready skills.**

### How volunteering helps in the development of job ready skills

Communication and connections with others	Learn about working with different kinds of people
Teach me some skills more focused towards the jobs I would like	Experience
Respect others and self-respect	Teaches responsibility (work ethics, punctuality)
Interpersonal skills	Good for resume
Social skills	Life experience
Confidence	Exposure

Table 50: Development of job ready skills

### How South Australian leaders could make volunteering easier and meaningful for students

The answers to this question can be interpreted as priorities for the four focus areas.

More volunteering events in a range of categories	Provide more options
Offering new ways to volunteer, making it fun	Advertising
Encouragement, more opportunities, support before and during the process	Change the age – 12 and above
Make a school-based website where school kids can access volunteering opportunities	Children’s voices to be heard
Transportation	Want a directory of available services to Volunteer
Placements	Volunteer programs in schools (support in schools)

### Anticipated future volunteering

Students displayed an understanding of different areas where they might volunteer as well as specific volunteer positions.

Animals	68%	135
People	56%	111
Environment	53%	105
Being in a club that provides volunteer opportunities for young people	38%	75
Arts, museums, history	32%	63
International communities	28%	55
Cooking e.g. for homeless, firefighting, elderly, sport	13%	25

Table 51: Areas for future volunteering

Students in all schools showed a preference for working with animals, people/arts and museums and the environment.

## References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2014. *General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2014*, Cat No 41590.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (n.d.). General capabilities, viewed 24 June 2020, <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/curriculum-connections/portfolios/food-and-wellbeing/general-capabilities/>

PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia (PwC) 2016. *State of Volunteering in Australia*, Volunteering Australia, April.

Tuckey, Sophie 2018. *Volunteering in South Australia 2018*, Harrison Research.