

## School student survey

Extract from:

Volunteering Strategy for South Australia  
2021-2027

STAGE 1: Individual, organisation, student  
surveys and submission findings  
(June 2020)

[www.savolunteeringstrategy.org.au/volunteering-strategy-2021-2027](http://www.savolunteeringstrategy.org.au/volunteering-strategy-2021-2027)

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## 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 1: Reasons to volunteer

Respondents thought they would be likely to volunteer with the encouragement of their parents and family, their relatives, friends and advertising.

## 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 2: 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%).

Animals	76%	31
Arts, museums, history	49%	20
The environment	46%	19
People	44%	18
International communities	29%	12
Being in a club that provides volunteer opportunities for young people	29%	12

*Table 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: 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 7: 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 8: 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 9: 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 10: Areas for future volunteering

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