



VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA 2014 – 2020

Annual Report 2017 - 2018



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INTRODUCTION

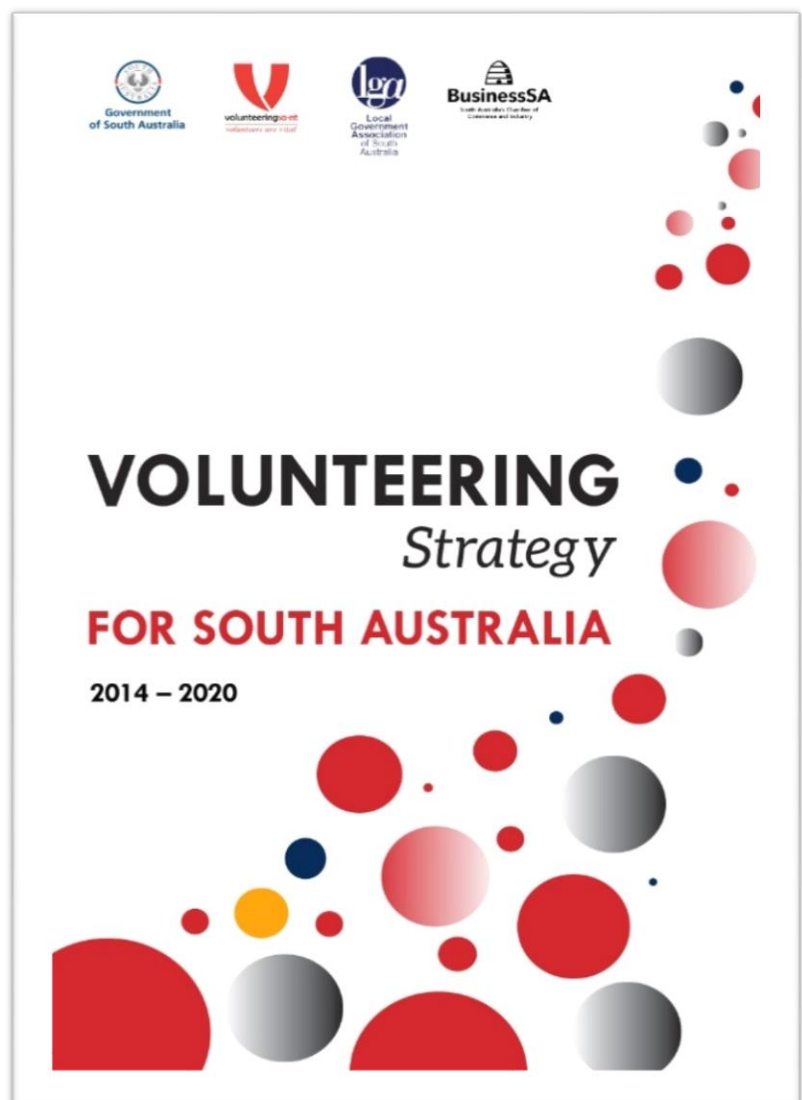
The *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014 – 2020* was launched in February 2014 by the South Australian Government in partnership with Volunteering SA&NT, Business SA and the Local Government Association of SA.

It provides a practical “blueprint” for action until 2020 and has been developed to improve the experience of volunteers and enhance the outcomes for volunteer involving organisations.

For the Strategy to meet its objectives, a governance board was established consisting of a representative from each of the four partners and an independent chairperson. All governance positions are occupied on a voluntary basis.

From 2014 to late 2017, the Strategy was also supported by four working groups that focused on the four focus areas outlined in the Strategy – invest in the foundations of volunteering, promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering, implement leading practice and high quality standards, and progressively adapt through continuous improvement.

Although this annual report reflects the halfway point in the Strategy, it is the first annual report that focuses solely on the Strategy. Previously, progress against the Strategy was incorporated with other activities undertaken as part of the Government of South Australia’s volunteers portfolio in annual reports of the (former) Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.



PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEMBERS



Janet Stone
Independent Chairperson



Karen Van Gorp
Business SA
Representing business and industry in
South Australia



Evelyn O'Loughlin
Volunteering SA&NT
Representing volunteers and volunteer-
involving organisations, and supported
by statewide volunteer resource centres



Lois Boswell
Department of Human Services,
Government of South Australia
Supported by the Ministerial Advisory
Group for Volunteering and the Office
for Volunteers



Lisa Teburea
Local Government Association of South Australia
Representing local councils and supported by the Local Government Volunteer
Manager's Network

MESSAGE FROM THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON

I am honoured to have been accepted in the role as Independent Chairperson of the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia Partnership Board in November 2017. This follows three years of involvement with the Strategy, including one year as Chair of one of its working groups. During this time I was able to work closely with Rosina Hislop who chaired the Partnership Board from 2014 to 2017. I take this opportunity to thank Rosina for her dedication to the Strategy, and for leading its numerous achievements during this time.

Volunteering is a key component to most South Australians' lives.

The *Volunteering in South Australia in 2018* survey report revealed that more than **66% of the population** are involved in some form of volunteering. That's some **906,000 South Australians** aged between 15 to 84 years, who donate their time and energy to contributing to their community. Many of these people (45%) volunteer formally with a local community organisation or group, and many (46%) volunteer on an informal basis, for example, helping a neighbour with home maintenance. These efforts contribute to an estimated **1.73 million volunteer hours per week**.

Everyone benefits from volunteering.

Businesses benefit, both from having volunteers provide services to them and, increasingly, by supporting their paid staff members to volunteer altruistically outside of their organisation. **Communities benefit**, with volunteering known to build social networks, inclusive neighbourhoods and community resilience. And of course, **volunteers themselves benefit**, experiencing significantly better mental and physical health, life satisfaction, self-esteem and happiness through the act of volunteering.

2017-2018 has been an exciting year for the Volunteering Strategy Partnership Board, marking the half-way point in the Strategy. Appropriately, this year has been one of 'reflection and direction', where we have taken stock of the progress made against the Strategy over the past three years, and reviewed the current landscape to ensure that we remain on track into the future. In addition, significant headway has been made towards the Strategy, including:

- promotion of the resource *Fostering a Culture of Giving* - Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum to primary and secondary schools and the volunteering sectors
- supported the Department for Education, Department of Human Services and Volunteering SA&NT to deliver the *Curriculum of Giving – Student Volunteering Workshop*
- support for the Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network established as a response to the development of the *Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Volunteers*

- development of an online learning module to assist in the implementation of the *Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Volunteers*
- continued development of the *WeDo* app.
- development of short promotional videos promoting youth volunteering

You can read more about these and other achievements on page 10 of this report.

In this past year, my first as the Chair of the Volunteering Strategy Partnership Board, I have been ably supported by a large group of people, and would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks. Firstly, great thanks must go to all members of the four working groups that have progressed much of the Strategy thus far, including the four working group Chairpersons in 2017-18, Mike Feszczak, Nick Begakis, Erma Ranieri and Tim Jackson, and Project Managers Daniella Nofi, Sophie Kavoukis, Elisa Pecorelli, Bethany Loates and Nicole Swaine. I would also like to thank my Partnership Board colleagues Evelyn O'Loughlin, Lisa Teburea and Karen Van Gorp. Thank you to Sue Wallace for her time and energy as the Government of South Australia representative on the Partnership Board throughout 2017-2018. I welcome Lois Boswell, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Human Services, who takes up this position in 2018-2019.

I am delighted that the Government of South Australia has committed to continue to support the Strategy now and in its next term, 2021-2027. It gives strength to volunteering as an important facet of the South Australian community and economy, and gives momentum to policy drivers and change makers in the volunteering sector.

Janet Stone
Independent Chairperson

THE VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY – AT A GLANCE

The Vision

Volunteering is fundamental to our communities and a vital part of being Australian.

Strategic Outcomes

- Volunteering is an integral part of life's journey
- Volunteering connects our communities
- Volunteering improves the health and wellbeing of our citizens

Focus areas

1. Invest in the foundations of volunteering

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.

2. Promote and inform on the benefits of volunteering

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.

3. Implement leading practice and high quality standards

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.

4. Progressively adapt through continuous improvement

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.

2017 – 2018 PARTNERSHIP BOARD ACTIVITIES

Ordinary meetings

Five ordinary meetings of the Partnership Board were held in 2017-18, on:

- 29 November 2017
- 30 January 2018
- 1 March 2018
- 30 May 2018
- 25 June 2018

Skipper Review

November 2017 saw the completion of a mid-term review of the Strategy's governance, completed by Anne Skipper AM and commissioned by the Partnership Board.

The review sought to:

- evaluate the progress to date of the Strategy
- review the outcomes of the Strategy to date
- review the working group structure, focus and relevance
- review the membership of the working groups
- confirm if the three remaining years of the Strategy was 'fit for purpose'
- confirm if the governance structure served the purpose/ desired outcomes of the Strategy.

The review confirmed the roles and skill sets required by the Partnership Board, Independent Chair, any committees and working groups and the Executive Officer. Ultimately, it recommended a continued partnership between the four Board partners to oversee the Strategy, and a new model in which two working groups (rather than four) would focus on two priority areas from 2019 onwards: volunteering as a pathway to employment for young people, and enhancing regional communities through volunteering.

Plenary Session

In December 2017, the Partnership Board presented a Plenary Session for 45 of the Strategy's key stakeholders. Attendees heard from each of the Partnership Board members who detailed the outcomes of the Skipper review and plans for implementation for the remaining three years of the Strategy. The afternoon event provided an opportunity for all to celebrate the successes reached through the first half of the Strategy and thank all working group members for their efforts to date.

Stakeholder workshop

In April 2018, the Partnership Board commissioned the Public Sector Innovation Lab to host a workshop for over 80 stakeholders from diverse sectors. Attendees were invited to scope potential actions to be progressed under the Strategy to address the priorities that were identified by the Skipper review.

Participants discussed the future directions of the Strategy and how they align with their own organisations' interests. Challenges and opportunities associated with promoting volunteering among young people and in regional areas were identified and dissected.

This event provided an opportunity for many of those previously involved in the Strategy's four working groups to maintain input into the future of the Strategy, contributing their experience and expertise.

The resulting four key themes from the workshop were:

1. Curriculum and education -
Opportunities for school based learning that can also be regional specific
2. Data and evidence -
Better understand young people's perspectives of volunteering, including in regions
3. Communication -
Build better messages that resonate with young people, particularly around life experience and personal development benefits
4. Culture development -
Enhancing a culture that promotes new incentives for volunteering, new modes of engagement between stakeholders, and diversity.

2017 – 2018 ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST THE STRATEGY

Fostering a Culture of Giving - Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum

In 2016, Volunteering SA&NT and the Department for Education brought the idea of embedding student volunteering in South Australian schools to the *Volunteering Strategy* to be considered for action. As a result, Working Group 3 began to promote *Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum* to the education and volunteering sectors with the aim of providing safe opportunities in education settings for young people to learn about and get involved in volunteering. Members of this group continue to meet regularly with a consultative group of volunteering champions.

Through the group, links were made with Tracey Wallace, then from Ocean View College, who was running a successful student volunteer program with year 9 students called *uBuntu*. Its aim was to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the students. In late 2017, Ocean View College successfully trialled lesson plans from the '*Fostering a culture of giving - Volunteering and the Australian Curriculum.*'

On 31 May 2018 the consultative group, in partnership with the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia*, the Department of Education, Department of Human Services and Volunteering SA&NT, delivered the 'Curriculum of giving student volunteer workshop'. More than 100 delegates from government, independent and Catholic education sectors, volunteering and not-for-profit organisations, businesses, local government, and state government agencies attended the workshop, at which delegates:

- learnt about strategies to encourage student learning and improve wellbeing through volunteering
- heard about the wellbeing and learning benefits of volunteering
- gained insights into how to run a successful student volunteer program.

Keynote speakers included Dr Thomas Nielsen, Associate Professor, University of Canberra and Tracey Wallace, now the Service Learning Coordinator, Scotch College. Dr Nielsen shared his research that showed giving and service to others increases wellbeing and resilience, something much needed with high youth depression, anxiety and suicide rates. Tracey Wallace and four students presented on the student volunteer program at Ocean View College and how it enhanced student wellbeing and learning, and gave students a passion for volunteering.

Since the workshop the Department for Education has completed development of a teacher toolkit about student volunteering that can be adapted for students' ages and abilities. Department for Education staff are promoting this resource in the latter half of 2018 and into 2019, to help school staff set up volunteering at their schools.

The resources can be found here: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/parenting-and-child-care/volunteers/student-volunteers>

Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network

In response to Volunteering Strategy's development of the *Guidelines of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Volunteers* in 2016, and to address issues relevant to today's public sector volunteer workforce, in 2017 a new Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network (PSVPN) was established.

The PSVPN is comprised of representatives from across 20 state government agencies and works to:

- provide an avenue for awareness of the strategic overview of volunteering within South Australian public sector agencies
- connect public sector agencies that involve volunteers, creating space for learning, sharing and innovation
- influence the policy agenda at State level, as it relates to volunteering
- strengthen the development of good practice in volunteering management throughout South Australian public sector agencies
- engage with public sector agencies to ensure appropriate recognition for and commitment to volunteering
- promote the implementation of the Commissioner's Guidelines
- advocate on behalf of the public sector volunteer managers, and
- encourage consistency in agency specific volunteer policies and procedures.

Advocacy for reduction in security screening costs for volunteers

In 2017, one of the Strategy's working groups began work towards reducing the cost of screening check fees for South Australian volunteers.

First, the group developed a comparison table in consultation with all state and territory departments responsible for conducting screening checks, identifying that the application fees for screening volunteers were highest in South Australia. The resource followed the release of a discussion paper on the transferability of screening checks; a fact sheet in response to legislative changes to the South Australian *Disability Service Act 1983*; and a flow chart to assist organisations to determine whether their volunteers were required under legislation, to undergo a police or screening check.

Alongside Volunteering SA&NT, the working group advocated reducing and/or abolishing volunteer screening fees. As a result, at the March 2018 State election, the incoming Government committed to abolish screening costs for all volunteer screening check fees for South Australians.

Development of an online learning module for public sector agencies

An online learning module, *Implementing the Commissioner's Guideline: Volunteers*, has been developed to assist those who are responsible for public sector volunteer programs or who provide advice about managing volunteers. This module supports the *Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment: Volunteers*. The online learning module was developed by the Volunteering Strategy working group, in collaboration with the Online Channel team from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It was launched on 1 May 2018.

The Guideline can be found here:

<https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/policies-standards/guidelines-and-determinations/>

The learning module can be found here:

<https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/policies-standards/volunteers-online-module/>

WeDo App

In 2016, Volunteering SA&NT successfully piloted the *Volunteering Recognition Scheme* which aimed to increase the participation of young people in volunteering and create pathways to employment. The pilot project included extensive community consultation and the development of the 'WeDo' app, which involves potential volunteers registering with organisations to volunteer and having their hours 'banked' through the app and then linked to redeeming rewards from participating sponsors. This work was funded by the Government of South Australia, carried out by Volunteering SA&NT, and supported by one of the Strategy working groups.

With continued South Australian Government funding in 2017-18, development of the WeDo app has progressed to better connect potential volunteers with volunteering opportunities across the community. The app now includes information for businesses on the benefits of utilising the skills of volunteers, and how businesses can benefit from providing rewards for volunteers to redeem through the WeDo app.

Further development of the app is continuing in 2018-2019.

For more information on the WeDo app, visit: <https://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au/volunteers/wedo-app/>

Video about youth volunteering

This year has seen the completion of four short videos promoting the benefits of volunteering to young people. This project aimed to produce upbeat, exciting and fresh materials that can be used to promote volunteering to people under 25 years of age, with messages including:

- showcasing volunteering as a pathway to employment and skills recognition
- that volunteering can enhance learning and social opportunities

The videos also include calls to action including:

- signing up to the WeDo app to learn about volunteering opportunities
- visit the Volunteering SA&NT website
- Signing up to relevant social media platforms

The final videos can be found here:

<https://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au/volunteers/types-of-volunteering/employment-pathways>

In the past six months the video page has received 860 'hits' from the Volunteering SA&NT website and facebook page, and have been viewed 323 times.

NEXT STEPS

The Partnership Board offers a unique combination of skill, knowledge and reach through its partner organisations – Volunteering SA&NT, Business SA, the Local Government Association of South Australia and the Government of South Australia. We expect that 2018-19 will see the Board work ‘smarter’ and ‘harder’ with its available resources by collating knowledge, promoting existing programs and services and connecting change makers to one another, to enable projects and programs to exist or expand.

New and extension works will focus on the two priority areas identified in the Skipper review, and particularly:

- Volunteering as a pathway to employment for young people, and
- Volunteering as a means to enhance regional communities.

The Partnership Board will be looking at clever structures to best support this work, bring the right people around the table maximise connections and results.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The Volunteering Strategy for South Australia Partnership Board is funded through in-kind support from the four partner agencies (Volunteering SA&NT, Business SA, Local Government Association of South Australia and Government of South Australia) and the Independent Chair, with administrative support provided by the Department of Human Services.

All governance positions are occupied on a voluntary basis with their associated salary costs, where applicable, funded by their respective partner organisation.

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information about the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014 – 2020* and the Strategy's Partnership Board, contact the Office for Volunteers in the Department of Human Services, South Australia.

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