

Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021–2027

Refreshed for 2024



..... partnering to deliver the
Volunteering Strategy
for South Australia





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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal people as the State's first people and recognise their traditional relationship with Country.

We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal people come from their traditional lands and waters, and that the cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are still of importance today.

Please note that the term 'Aboriginal' in this document refers to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that this term is used as First Nations peoples in South Australia are predominantly Aboriginal peoples.

Front cover image courtesy of SA Water

Message from the signing partners

We are pleased to deliver the refreshed *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021–2027*, which builds on the success of the *Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014–2020*.

This edition has been updated in 2024 to align with the new *National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033*. It includes a change to the governance model, updated focus areas and priorities, and features the latest volunteer statistics from the *SA State of Volunteering Report 2023*.

This strategy sets out the State's volunteering goals and commitments through to 2027 and outlines how we will support and continually improve the volunteering experience for South Australians.

The changes ensure the strategy reflects a contemporary, evidence-based understanding of the needs and preferences of the South Australian volunteer sector, including volunteers from vulnerable cohorts, and actively contributes to Closing the Gap priorities and outcomes.

Nearly one million South Australian volunteers contribute to our state's economy and wellbeing, either individually, in community groups or through volunteer-involving organisations. Their time, skills and enthusiasm are fundamental to building and sustaining a strong and vibrant community.

Volunteers come from diverse backgrounds but share a common goal: to give back to their community. Whether in aged care, the arts, community welfare, disability support, education, emergency services, environment, health, or recreation and sport, we must ensure that

volunteering is well supported, effectively managed, recognised and valued.

We know that shifts in economic, social, environmental and cultural factors have impacted volunteer participation in recent years. To make volunteering better and stronger in our state, we need to understand why people volunteer, highlight the personal and professional benefits of volunteering, and make sure there are meaningful volunteering opportunities available to people wanting to engage with their community.

We need to support volunteer-involving organisations as they look at new ways to promote volunteering, find new ways to engage and support volunteers, and create more diverse workplaces, to make sure the volunteering sector is well prepared for the future.

Cross-sector collaboration and connections with diverse networks make volunteering stronger, more inclusive and more sustainable. As partners, we know that volunteering is integrated across all levels of government, business and not-for-profit sectors. This refreshed strategy provides effective ways to collaborate, participate and measure our achievements. It articulates a pathway for volunteering that reflects South Australia's social and economic way of life and provides a guide for a thriving future.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with the sector, supporting and recognising all of South Australia's volunteers, and ensuring that volunteering remains at the heart of our community.

VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA SIGNING PARTNERS, 2024



HON. NAT COOK
Minister for Human Services
Government of South Australia



HAMILTON CALDER
Chief Executive Officer
Volunteering SA&NT



CLINTON JURY
Chief Executive Officer
LGA South Australia



ANDREW KAY
Chief Executive Officer
South Australian Business Chamber



Our vision

In 2027, we have healthy, resilient communities built on the passion and skills of volunteers.

Our goal

To grow volunteer participation in South Australia through collaborative action.

Definition of volunteering

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

Volunteering Australia

A review and refresh in 2024

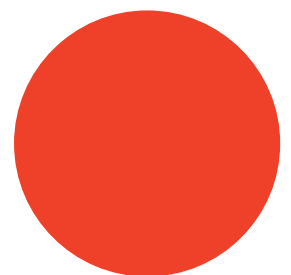
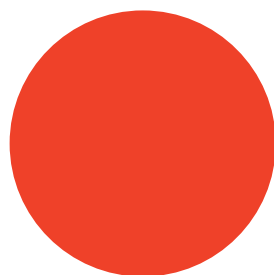
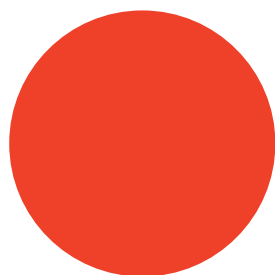
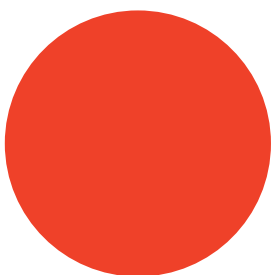
Supported by the original partner organisations, in 2024 the Department of Human Services (DHS) led a process to refresh the strategy to ensure it aligned with the newly released National Volunteer Strategy and reflected changes in volunteering trends post-pandemic. Importantly, DHS also wanted to strengthen the capacity of the strategy to support the National Agreement on Closing the Gap priority reforms and targets.

The refresh process included a review of the latest data and research to understand what had changed in the volunteer sector since COVID-19. DHS also sought feedback from volunteers, volunteer managers and working group members about what had worked well over the past three years and where there were gaps or opportunities to improve processes and governance. Recommendations to update the focus areas and governance model were subsequently endorsed by the four partner organisations and Minister for Human Services in June 2024.

Strategic alignments

This strategy combines with other plans to make a broader impact including, but not limited to:

- National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033
- South Australia’s Implementation Plan for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- SA Youth Action Plan 2021–2022 and 2024–2027
- South Australia’s Plan For Ageing Well 2020–2025
- State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023
- Volunteering SA&NT Strategic Framework 2020–2023
- LGA25 Strategic Plan 2021–2025
- Healthy Parks Healthy People SA 2021–2026



Why volunteering is important

Volunteering is an important part of an inclusive society in which all South Australians have the opportunity for meaningful participation. Volunteering connects us, strengthens our sense of belonging and creates positive relationships that build stronger local communities.

South Australia has a long history of volunteering and the value of volunteering contributes directly to the health and wellbeing of individuals, our communities and the economy of our state.

Volunteering keeps our communities and organisations working together. It maintains the quality of life in our communities by meeting critical, local needs and enables individuals, families and community groups to offer essential support and enhance their future potential.

“ *Volunteering is important to the health and wellbeing of volunteers and to the economy* ”

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare¹

Volunteers enhance an organisation's brand and image and can help improve performance by bringing new people and ideas into the organisation.

“ *Volunteers broaden their social networks and professional skills through volunteering* ”

Volunteering Australia and
PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia²

Through volunteering, we are committed to working towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Photographer: Bryan Charlton
Courtesy of SA Health

Focus areas

To help us realise our shared vision for volunteering, we will focus on the following areas and priorities that have been refreshed to align with the new *National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033* and support a strong South Australian volunteering sector into the future.

Include and support

1 Invest in the foundations of volunteering

Aim

Build the capability of organisations to engage in inclusive volunteer management.

Priorities

- 1.1 Support organisations to ensure volunteering opportunities are inclusive and accessible to everyone regardless of socioeconomic status, ability, age, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity or cultural identity.
- 1.2 Support organisations to use flexible recruitment strategies and offer meaningful opportunities that suit a wide range of volunteers and personal goals.
- 1.3 Support organisations working in place to involve local Aboriginal communities as active participants in the development and design of community-led volunteering opportunities that support Closing the Gap outcomes.
- 1.4 Support improved understanding of compliance and risk management so that volunteers are protected and safe from discrimination and exploitation.

Promote and grow

2 Raise the profile and promote the benefits of volunteering

Aim

Build community awareness of the benefits and value of volunteering to encourage greater participation and growth.

Priorities

- 2.1 Broaden understanding of volunteering and how it is reflected in different cultures and contexts throughout our communities.
- 2.2 Promote how volunteering improves health and wellbeing and benefits the individual, community and the environment.
- 2.3 Support organisations to adopt community-led approaches to the design and promotion of volunteering opportunities in the priority areas of youth, regional and remote communities and Aboriginal Peoples.

Collaborate and improve

3 Strong leadership and continuous improvement

Aim

Build cross-sector relationships, networks and partnerships to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of volunteering across the State.

Priorities

- 3.1 Encourage partnerships and collaboration across government and between industry sectors to promote and sustain volunteering.
- 3.2 Support research into the impact and growth of volunteering and use this data to inform decision-making.
- 3.3 Ensure organisations have access to relevant information, resources and networks to support effective volunteer governance, management and continuous improvement.
- 3.4 Encourage organisations to include volunteers and volunteer managers in program planning, design and evaluation.



Volunteering in South Australia at a glance³

In 2023:

MORE THAN
951,000
SOUTH AUSTRALIANS
VOLUNTEERED

63.1%
OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN POPULATION
AGED OVER 15 VOLUNTEERED

A TOTAL OF
223
MILLION
HOURS WERE CONTRIBUTED

GENERATING
\$36.1
BILLION
IN SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC BENEFITS

HOW PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

FORMAL VOLUNTEERING **30%**

INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING **42.8%**

BOTH **21.2%**

WHERE PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY **49.7%**

ONLINE OR FROM HOME **26.7%**

OTHER PARTS
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA **12.4%**

OUTSIDE SOUTH AUSTRALIA **6.2%**

OVERSEAS **5%**

MOTIVATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

**TOP
5**

TO HELP OTHERS

FOR ENJOYMENT

TO USE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

FOR SOCIAL AND
COMMUNITY CONNECTION

TO BE ACTIVE

Infographics indicate that in 2023, more than 951,000 South Australians volunteered; a total of 223 million hours; 63 per cent of South Australians over 15 years old volunteered providing \$36.1 billion in social and economic benefits; 30% of volunteering was formal and 42% was informal; and 21 percent was both. People volunteered 49.7% in their local community; 26.7% online or from home; 12.4% in other parts of South Australia; 6.2% outside SA; and 5% overseas. Top motivations for volunteering include to help others; for enjoyment; to use skills and experience; for social connection; to be active.

How we will reach focus area priorities

Cross-sector partnerships that involve state and local government, business and not-for-profit organisations are essential to achieving real social impact. This strategy will open up innovative ways of working, organise expertise and resources, create shared accountability, and generate shared value. Each sector has a key role to play, and through collaboration, real transformation will happen.

Organising the collaborative effort takes work, so we will use a collective impact approach to achieve our goals.⁴

We will:

Make sure that shared goals and outcomes are met by creating action plans with specific targets and reporting on progress.

Ensure accountability by documenting and analysing results and sharing evidence and lessons with stakeholders.

Build strong relationships and partnerships by establishing long-term, mutually respectful and valued cross-sector partnerships.

Support good governance by establishing a steering committee to drive our shared commitment to achieving priorities.

Establish a supporting team to support the steering committee and coordinate the work. This will be known as the secretariat.

Design effective place-based approaches by encouraging locally driven projects that respond to local needs.

Support capacity development by developing and strengthening skills, abilities, and resources for organisations and communities.

Communicate better by encouraging open communication to improve knowledge and resource sharing.

Support co-design by bringing people and professionals together to share expertise and make decisions together.

Ensure sustainability by keeping the strategy flexible so that it can respond to changing community needs and developments in volunteering.

Governance model 2024–2027

To support cross-portfolio investment and collaboration, strategy partners agreed to the establishment of a steering committee, led by DHS, which will have strategic oversight, governance and reporting responsibility for the remaining years of the strategy.

Steering committee membership will reflect the broad range of industries and volunteer demographics that the strategy impacts and ensure an intersectional, cross jurisdiction approach to governance. Additional advisory members will be engaged by the committee when advice on specific subject matters is required.



Shaping this strategy

Community members, volunteers, and the volunteering sector contributed to the development of this strategy through a range of public and stakeholder consultations held between April 2020 and February 2021.

Who we heard from

240 school students and young people

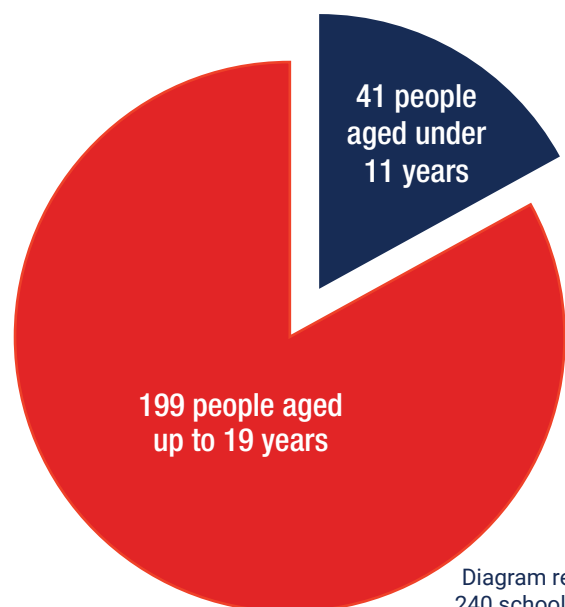


Diagram represents 240 school students and young people: 41 people aged under 11 years and 199 people aged up to 19 years.

MORE THAN 400 volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and members of the community

REPRESENTED GROUPS

- Aboriginal Peoples
- Business
- Culturally diverse groups of people
- Young people and seniors
- People with disability
- Recreation and sporting clubs
- Regional and emergency services
- Volunteer resource centres
- Volunteer involving organisations
- Public sector
- Local government

Who was involved

6 INDEPENDENT SUBMISSIONS

5 online focus groups involving

69 participants

13....

537 ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The key issues they mentioned

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| Clear language | Education |
| Innovation | New ways to engage |
| Better ways to connect | Recognition |
| Volunteering is for all | Expanding roles |
| Volunteering for different groups of people | |

Leave no one behind

Children and young people

Through volunteering, children and young people can make a positive contribution to their communities and become more confident learners.

These benefits can be realised through well-structured in-school and university volunteering programs. This can help build connections between education settings and the wider community by sharing knowledge and experiences, and by making links across generations and cultures.⁵

Older South Australians

Older South Australians have a lot of life experience, skills and knowledge that they can share through volunteering. Research shows a link between volunteering and mental and physical health benefits for older people.⁶

People with disability

Volunteering provides opportunities for people with disability to increase their social connections within their local communities.

Supporting access and inclusion for people with disability plays an important role in improving their health and general wellbeing, as well as bringing benefit to the organisations, their clients and the broader community.

Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal Peoples have unique skills, knowledge and experience that can help contribute to meaningful change in communities. Aboriginal Peoples have always had a strong commitment to community - the obligation to contribute for the benefit of the community as a whole is a strength of Aboriginal cultures.

People from non-English speaking backgrounds

Volunteering among people from diverse backgrounds brings benefit to both the volunteers and the organisations engaging with volunteers. For new arrivals, volunteering can help to make new friends, improve their English, and gain local work experience.

LGBTIQA+

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, asexual, ally, pansexual (LGBTIQA+) bring an abundance of life experience and resilience that contributes to organisational culture and the community. Additionally, volunteers from the LGBTIQA+ community can benefit from the confidence, skills and networks that they get through volunteering to support them in becoming leaders in their own communities.⁷

More information

Visit dhs.sa.gov.au/SAVolunteeringStrategy

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References

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- 6 Hugo Centre for Migration and Population Research, The University of Adelaide for Office for Ageing Well, *Retired Not Expired*, 2020.
- 7 W Leonard, M Pitts, et al, *Private lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of gay, lesbian, bisexual (GLBT) Australians*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Melbourne, 2012.



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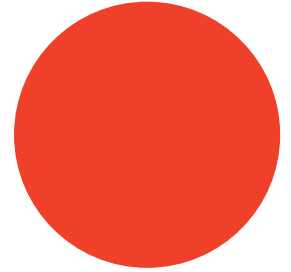
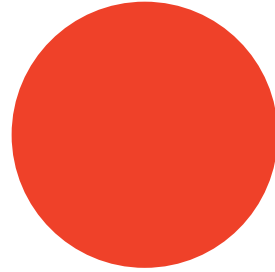
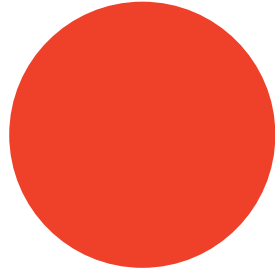
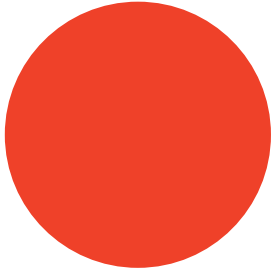


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