NSW

VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

2016-2020
The NSW Government is proud of the results of the first NSW Volunteering Strategy. Together with communities across NSW, we have improved dignity and respect for volunteers, improved fairness through better volunteer management, and provided new tools and resources to support the work of volunteers.

The NSW Government recognises the estimated $5 billion of value volunteers add to local communities each year in NSW. Volunteers deliver a range of expertise and support, from helping to run local sporting competitions to fighting bushfires. They build relationships between individuals and across communities, and strengthen our social fabric.

Volunteers span generations and are present in every community. They tell us their participation provides personal meaning, improves their health and wellbeing, makes them more trusting and empowers them to actively engage. Volunteers develop new friendships and networks, as well as knowledge and skills that can transform their lives. They feel part of a connected, more caring society. Everyone experiences the benefits of volunteering, and each of us can contribute in our own unique way.

The second NSW Volunteering Strategy is a four year plan that will build on the accomplishments of the first. The Strategy recognises that everyone who wants to volunteer should be supported to do so. We know that decisions people make early in life influence their later lives, so there will be a strong focus on attracting young people to volunteering. People who are newly retired, or nearing retirement, will also be supported to explore the range of volunteering opportunities in their local communities.

Many volunteers are contributing in new ways, participating online, in corporate volunteering programs, or informally volunteering in their local neighbourhoods. People want to volunteer when and how they can. The Strategy will create new opportunities by linking those seeking to volunteer with organisations needing their support, making better use of new technology.

The Strategy will promote volunteering through a new marketing campaign with a focus on local communities and local needs. It will facilitate and strengthen innovation in volunteering, explore new ways to support existing organisations, create support for new causes and aims to address emerging social, economic and environmental issues.

Our state-wide consultation engaged more than 2,200 people across NSW, and through online surveys. We have listened and will build on what is already working well.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of the Strategy. I look forward to working with you to expand the reach and benefits of volunteering in all our communities.

The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Minister responsible for Volunteering
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What We Have Achieved Since 2012

The first NSW Volunteering Strategy will conclude on 30 June 2016. In developing the second NSW Volunteering Strategy 2016–2020, we have reviewed the tangible results of the first, which show that it is now easier to volunteer in NSW and that support for the State’s 2.1 million volunteers has improved.

According to the Productivity Commission, each year NSW volunteers contribute 240 million hours, valued at $5 billion to local communities. Collectively, NSW volunteers constitute the largest and most diverse workforce in the state.

Highlights of the first Volunteering Strategy include the following:

- Timebanking set up in 70 communities across the state, with 5,800 members exchanging more than 23,000 hours of support
- 800,000 volunteers covered under the Statement of Principles for the Recognition of Volunteers
- Subsidised volunteer management training delivered to over 300 community leaders
- Reduced cost police checks provided for 5,607 volunteers in aged care
- Premier’s Volunteer Recognition Program established, with 7,000 volunteers recognised in the first year
- Student volunteers mobilised through a statewide campaign: Shape Your Future NSW
- A range of resources developed to support volunteer managers, including toolkits for social media, risk management and dispute resolution
- 5,000 people per month access volunteering resources through NSW Volunteering website
- Over 1,000 people participated in NSW Volunteering’s online community through the Shape Your Future NSW and NSW Volunteering social channels – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
These programs, resources and communication tools have increased community participation, and helped build social capital and social cohesion. Initiatives in the second NSW Volunteering Strategy have been developed to better support people of all life stages to volunteer, and to strengthen and promote volunteering as a vehicle for active citizenship.

“As a volunteer I want to set an example for my children and other young people that communities need people to give their time and effort.”

– Have Your Say online response.
The Second NSW Volunteering Strategy 2016-2020

The second NSW Volunteering Strategy 2016-2020 articulates how the NSW Government will build on the outcomes of the first Strategy and work towards making volunteering more accessible to everyone.

The Strategy takes a life course approach to volunteering. This approach recognises age-related transition points in people’s lives, and provides a framework to develop volunteering opportunities for people across all life stages.

We have consulted with over 2,200 people, including people actively volunteering in their community, people who do not currently volunteer, and community organisations, businesses and government. These extensive community conversations have helped us to better understand people’s aspirations and the sorts of changes required to make it easier for everyone to participate.

The Strategy responds to the diversity of our communities and the challenge of distance that exists in rural and regional areas. These realities, combined with the complexity of the volunteering sector, and the wide variation in volunteer responsibilities, mean local solutions are required to meet local needs. A one-size fits all solution will not work.

A set of guiding principles emerged from the engagement process:

- All people should have clear and accessible pathways to participation through volunteering
- Communities are strengthened through volunteering
- Local solutions best meet local volunteering and community needs
- People from every background should be engaged in volunteering at every life stage
- Volunteer managers should have the tools they need to support their volunteer workforce
- Volunteer workplaces should be fair, respectful and productive
- Volunteers and employers benefit from volunteering experiences
- Volunteers should be recognised and celebrated for their contribution.
Volunteers need recognition of their efforts and acknowledgement of the value they contribute to their communities.

– Have Your Say online response
Strategic Approach

Life course
Priority actions are compatible with age-related transition points in people’s lives.

Innovation and excellence
Foster a culture of excellence and innovation in volunteering workplaces.

Technology
Expand digital media capacity and reach to include and attract more people to volunteering.

Evaluation
Develop an evaluation framework to establish an evidence base and inform future planning.
How We Work

The NSW Government works with volunteers in the following ways:

We are volunteer focused:
- We engage citizens and volunteers in decision making about issues that affect them
- We work with volunteers to develop volunteer-owned solutions to challenges and opportunities.

We are collaborative:
- We work with communities, government, non-government and business sectors to develop place-based solutions that meet local volunteer needs
- We develop partnerships and links that strengthen communities.
Priority Action Areas

The following priority action areas have been identified:

1. Expand participation in community life through volunteering
2. Create digital media avenues to support volunteering
3. Develop a mainstream media campaign and local marketing strategies to promote volunteering
4. Design and develop new volunteering options
5. Build capacity in volunteer organisations to innovate and deliver best-practice volunteer management
6. Enhance programs to recognise the positive contribution of volunteers.
1 Expand participation in community life through volunteering:
- Promote short term and long term volunteering options through different age-appropriate channels
- Support volunteer organisations to develop and provide a broad range of integrated volunteering opportunities that match the expectations of people from different age groups, backgrounds and circumstances, particularly including people with disability
- Undertake market research into how to invite more people into local participation.

2 Create digital media avenues to support volunteering:
- Develop a NSW Volunteering Participation Portal and apps that are relevant and accessible to people from different backgrounds, ages and with varying degrees of technology literacy, particularly for people with disability
- Develop online tools to support volunteers transitioning to new roles across life stages
- Expand and enhance Timebanking for people across all life stages.

3 Develop a mainstream media campaign and local marketing strategies to promote volunteering:
- Campaigns will be designed to:
  - Appeal to people from different backgrounds across the life course (with particular focus on students, young people, those with disability and those soon to retire)
  - Connect interested people with organisations, opportunities, contacts and avenues
  - Highlight the extensive reach of volunteering and the critical role volunteers play
  - Identify and promote local volunteering opportunities
  - Promote health, personal, educational, professional and community benefits of volunteering.

4 Design and develop new volunteering options:
- Design place-based strategies to attract and retain volunteers across the life course, and from different backgrounds
- Develop tools and resources that attract and retain local volunteers and expand volunteer bases
- Develop resources and case studies that illustrate the difference between volunteering and unpaid work
- Increase the evidence base on approaches to expanding volunteering
- Work with communities, other government departments, non-government and business sectors to understand local volunteering needs.

5 Build capacity in volunteer organisations to innovate and deliver best-practice volunteer management:
- Work with volunteer organisations to establish a culture of excellence and innovation through:
  - Expanding the coverage of the Statement of Principles for the Recognition of Volunteers
  - Building digital engagement capacity and developing digital tools to support best-practice volunteer management and promote access and inclusion for volunteers from different age groups and different backgrounds
  - Developing best practice large scale, spontaneous volunteer management framework
  - Developing organisational leadership capacity
  - Providing volunteer management training.

6 Enhance programs to recognise the positive contribution of volunteers:
- Expand the Premier’s Volunteer Recognition Program to include a category for the newly retired
- Further promote and continue to support the Volunteer of the Year Award.