



Information Links

December 2021

News Roundup

Development of a National Volunteering Strategy

Let's reimagine the future of volunteering together

Volunteering Australia is embarking on an exciting journey to lead the development of a National Strategy for Volunteering, and they need your help! The National Strategy will be designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem and will provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia.

This will be Australia's first National Strategy for Volunteering in ten years. Over the next 12 months, they will be engaging with all members of the volunteering ecosystem to design a National Strategy that is effective, inclusive and sustainable. Your input is needed to make this project a success.

For more information and to subscribe to updates visit:

<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/national-strategy-for-volunteering/>

Latest research highlights challenges for the for-purpose sector

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) have today released the report from Wave 2 of their national *Pulse of the For-Purpose Sector & Building Back Better* survey, revealing significant challenges for the sector as nearly 80% of service providers report struggling to meet requests for support.

Launched in May of 2020, the Pulse initiative is an Australian first in measuring the attitudes and operating conditions of the for-purpose sector, which includes charities, not-for-profits, philanthropy, social enterprises, and for-purpose businesses, and was prompted by the need to understand the long-term impact of recent events in Australia.

Wave 1 investigated the challenges faced in 2020, including the bushfire crisis and COVID-19, and identified that despite government assistance such as JobKeeper, the for-purpose sector reported being financially stretched and struggling to meet demand.

Wave 2 found that operating conditions continue to be a significant source of strain across the sector this year. In 2020, 74% of organisations reported that the operating environment for the not-for-profit sector had worsened over the preceding year. In 2021, just under half (43%) of organisations that work in community or social services felt the operating conditions had worsened yet again over the last six months (between December 2020 and July 2021).

In addition, service demand continues to outpace provision capability – across Wave 1 and 2, the Pulse survey found that approximately 80% of service providers were receiving requests for support they could not meet, with 15% experiencing a large or very large number of unmet services for their clients or communities.

Further, almost 3 in 4 (74%) of responding organisations reported being financially strained or stressed during COVID-19, with organisations reporting significant changes to volunteering. Close to a third of organisations that engage volunteers (31%) indicated they had fewer volunteers than six months prior. Only half of these organisations' volunteer programs were fully operational at the time of the Wave 2 survey.

Dr Megan Weier, Senior Research Fellow and one of the report authors, has explained that the sector was already overburdened long before COVID-19 and the bushfires struck, indicating a broader systemic issue within the sector. “Organisations across the for-purpose sector are finding that there is a huge demand for their services, but very limited capacity to adequately handle it. However, these issues existed before 2020 as a result of the prohibitive nature of short-cycle funding – the pandemic has only exacerbated the situation,” Dr Weier said. “Due to the immense shocks of COVID-19, organisations have been required to respond reactively rather than being able to plan ahead. This means that they are currently very operations-focused, which raises concerns about how our charities will fare in the future.”

The full report can be found here: <https://www.csi.edu.au/research/project/pulse-of-the-for-purpose-sector/>

Digital Technology in the Not-For-Profit Sector

How does your not-for-profit compare?

Our Digital Technology in the Not-for-Profit Sector report for 2021 is now live. This report aims to recognise areas of growth and improvement by understanding how not-for-profit organisations across Australia and New Zealand use technology. It provides a benchmark for all not-for-profit organisations across the sector to ensure they are using technology in the best way possible to achieve their mission.

Now in its sixth year, the report surveyed over 600 not-for-profit organisations across Australia and New Zealand on topics such as adapting to COVID-19, digital capability and skills, information security, infrastructure, cloud adoption and IT spending.

To read the report visit <https://www.infoxchange.org/au/digital-technology-not-for-profit-sector>

The COVID- 19 Experience

This research study by the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) examines how COVID-19 impacted on the strategic leadership role of national volunteering leadership organisations in advocacy, development and volunteer mobilisation.

Gathering insights from 70 respondents across 67 countries, the report examines how COVID-19 has impacted on the strategic leadership role of national volunteering leadership organisations (VLOs) in advocacy, development and volunteer mobilisation. It also considers what this means for VLOs and the future of volunteering.

Link to report: <https://leadership4vol.iave.org/>

New report reveals Australia is a nation of helpers

NRMA Insurance has launched The Help Economy, an inaugural report revealing that in 2020 Australians provided \$30 billion dollars of unpaid help to friends, family, or their communities.

<https://www.iag.com.au/sites/default/files/Newsroom%20PDFs/The%20Help%20Economy%20Report.pdf>

UN Volunteers

The UN Secretary-General provides an update on the implementation of the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report recognised significant progress made, however identifies the need for further efforts to integrate volunteering into national development strategies, plans and policies in order to expand and mobilise constituencies and engage people in national planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Data, evidence and knowledge-sharing on the impact of people's engagement through volunteering can also be strengthened.

<https://www.unv.org/publications/report-secretary-general-volunteering-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-a76137>

Evidence Insights: Volunteering and Mental Health

Volunteering Australia's Evidence Insights series aims to interpret and synthesise volunteering data and research for use in our policy and advocacy work and to inform the work of the wider volunteering ecosystem.

This series of evidence reviews will present summaries of academic literature, aggregate key findings, and analyse the state of contemporary research in key areas which relate to volunteering. Evidence reviews aim to highlight causal relationships, or to explore phenomena which cannot be adequately described statistically. Evidence reviews draw upon quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research.

Evidence Insights: Volunteering and mental health is the first of the series. It reviews research on the effects of volunteering on mental health. It draws upon local and international studies including qualitative and quantitative research, while focusing on the effects of volunteering on the mental health of volunteers themselves.

<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-Insights-Volunteering-and-mental-health-Final.pdf>

Key statistics about volunteering in Australia

The factsheet Key Statistics about Volunteering in Australia: The General Social Survey 2020 and the Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey presents official data on volunteering in 2020, collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics including: rates of volunteering, the demographic of volunteers, characteristics of volunteering, trends, the decline of formal volunteering, changes in volunteering activity during COVID-19 and reasons for not volunteering during COVID-19

<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-2020-Key-Statistics-about-Volunteering-in-Australia-General-Social-Survey-Household-Impacts.pdf>

The digital divide

The digital divide is a significant issue in modern Australia, particularly with the rapid pace of digitisation brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital technology has become an essential requirement for work, study, accessing essential services and connecting with family and friends.

The positive news is that the digital divide is slowly improving in Australia, and that initial research points to more people being active online than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, some groups are still more at risk of digital exclusion than others, meaning they are at risk of being left behind and face increasing barriers when interacting with a digitised society. Even after Australians are affordably connected to the internet (a barrier in and of itself), many people still don't feel confident or safe online, or feel they can't keep up with technological changes.

Good Things Foundation Australia's Digital Nation Australia 2021 report brings together the latest research and insights from government, community and academia to help build understanding of the digital inclusion landscape in Australia and inform initiatives that could close the digital divide for all.

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au/news/digital-nation-australia-2021/>

Resources

National Volunteering Resource Hub

The Volunteering Resource Hub brings together useful, evidence-based and current best practice resources to support effective volunteer management across Australia.

The resources cover topics such as volunteer support, development and recognition. Resources on topics relevant to the current environment are also included – including resources on re-engaging volunteers during COVID-19, managing the mental health and wellbeing of volunteers and recruiting younger volunteers.

<https://volunteeringhub.org.au/>

‘How Can I Help’ podcast series

How Can I Help? Is a podcast for people who want to help, but don't know where to start.

Hosted by Pro Bono News editor Wendy Williams, the six-part series features conversations with people with lived experience and experts in the field on what we can do to help in situations that we might encounter at some point in our lives – whether that's when you see someone sleeping rough, if you think a friend or colleague is in an abusive relationship, or if a family member is suffering from depression.

Find out more at probonoaustralia.com.au/how-can-i-help/

Our Community Policy Bank

Our Community produce a range of template policies that free for any not-for-profit organisation to download and use, so long as it is for a non-commercial purpose and that the organisation is not paying a consultant to carry out this work.

They have recently added a vaccination policy template and updated their epidemic and pandemic policy template.

<https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank>

Volunteers and the COVID-19 vaccine

Justice Connect have produced a fact sheet to address the following questions:

- Can our organisation make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for our volunteers?
- What evidence of vaccination should we accept from our volunteers?
- Can our organisation end a volunteer relationship if a volunteer refuses to be vaccinated? Are there any risks in doing this?
- What information should we provide to our volunteers about the COVID-19 vaccine program?

<https://nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/media/Volunteers and COVID-19 vaccine Cth.pdf>

Southern Volunteering Annual Report 2020-21 and Highlights

<https://svsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Annual-Report-20-21.pdf>

<https://svsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Annual-Report-Highlights.pdf>

Training and Conferences

5 Secrets to Creating a Social Media Strategy for Not for Profits

Free online masterclass, various dates in December 2021

<https://hancockcreative.lpages.co/5-secrets-webinar-registration-december-2021/>

International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) 26th World Volunteer Conference

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates October/November 2022 dates to be confirmed

Southern Volunteering Fee For Service Training

Southern Volunteering can offer fee for service training on a range of topics. For more information contact melwhite@svsa.org.au

Dates for your diary

International Volunteer Day

Date: 5 December 2022

Theme: Volunteer now for our common future

Social media tag: #IVD2022

SAVI Meetings 2022

Wednesday 16th March 2022 1pm -3.30pm

Tuesday 14th June 1pm – 3.30pm

All meetings will take place on Zoom

Acknowledgement of content from the following sources:

Pro Bono News <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/>

Third Sector News <https://www.thirdsector.com.au/>

Justice Connect <https://justiceconnect.org.au/>

Volunteering Australia <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/#/>

Volunteering SA & NT <https://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au/>

Our Community Matters <https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/ocmatters>

Services Australia <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/news/all>

Department of Human Services <https://dhs.sa.gov.au/>