



# Create conditions for volunteering to thrive

*Western Australia 2025 State Election Priorities*

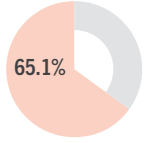


**volunteering**WA

# VOLUNTEERING in WESTERN AUSTRALIA



**All volunteers**  
(WA residents aged 15 and over)



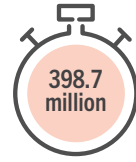
1.5 million people

**Formal volunteers**  
(as a percentage of population aged 15+)



742,000 people

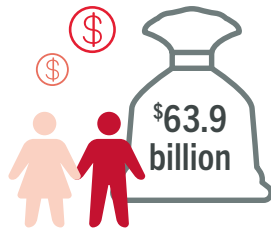
**Total hours volunteered in WA**



+4.4 percentage points

The increase in individual well-being attributable to volunteering

Value of all benefits for the community



For every \$1 invested in volunteering

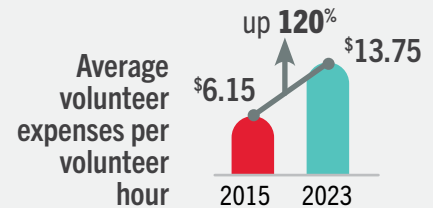


\$4.70 is returned to the community



## Cost-of-living pressures are hurting volunteers

WA residents report that **cost-of-living pressures** are one of the biggest barriers to volunteering. It **costs people in WA \$13.75 an hour to volunteer – that's up 120% since 2015**. Fewer than half of all volunteer organisations in WA have any form of reimbursement program, so we know these costs are hurting.



## Volunteering as an Industry by Employment in WA



Volunteering in WA is our largest industry by employment, with an **annual replacement value of \$16.5 billion**, which is more than **twice the size of the WA public service**.

# Actions required to create the conditions for volunteering to thrive in WA



## Create a 'WA Volunteer Card' to streamline processes and reduce the cost of volunteer screening

- Make volunteers' WWC checks free in WA
- Make volunteers' NDIS checks free in WA
- Make National Volunteers' Police checks free in WA
- Work to reduce barriers by streamlining processes for all checks
- Create a "WA Volunteer Card" in partnership with the volunteering sector to make it easier, cheaper and more appealing to volunteer in WA

## Expand Workers' Compensation coverage to some categories of volunteers

Consult with the volunteering sector to decide categories of volunteers for inclusion in coverage within the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981

Amend legislation and regulations of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 to include specified volunteer cohorts



## Provide insurance coverage for volunteers in Community Service Organisations

- Consult with the Community Services sector on the Victorian model for volunteer personal accident insurance on how a similar system could operate in WA
- Implement a model to provide volunteer personal accident insurance to Community Services Organisations

## Fund Volunteering WA's role in Emergency Services

Provide \$100,000 pa for capacity to support volunteering in times of emergencies in WA



## Connect young people to volunteering

- Provide \$200,000 pa to Volunteering WA for 5 years to invest in youth volunteering in WA

Volunteering WA has a vision that Western Australia should be the easiest and most affordable place to volunteer in Australia. Addressing cost-of-living pressures for volunteers is an essential part of this vision.

Our shared, long-term commitment to this goal would yield substantial gains in the delivery of essential services, build community cohesion and boost personal health and well-being.

Let's work together to make Western Australia the most volunteer-friendly community in Australia.

# 1

## Create a ‘WA Volunteer Card’ to streamline processes and reduce the cost of volunteer screening



### Actions required to invest in volunteering

- 1.1 Make volunteers’ WWC checks free in WA
- 1.2 Make volunteers’ NDIS checks free in WA
- 1.3 Make National Volunteers’ Police checks free in WA
- 1.4 Work to reduce barriers by streamlining processes for all checks
- 1.5 Create a “WA Volunteer Card” in partnership with the volunteering sector to make it easier, cheaper and more appealing to volunteer in WA

The WA State Government handles key volunteer screening processes:

- ✓ Working with Children (WWC) checks
- ✓ National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) checks
- ✓ National Volunteer Police checks

Western Australia is currently one of the most expensive places to volunteer in Australia.

Volunteer WWC and NDIS checks have been free in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT for years. In SA, National Volunteer Police Certificates have been free since 2018.

In addition to the costs involved, the onerous process of needing to go to a Department of Transport office for NDIS checks in WA has consistently been reported as being a major barrier and frustration for volunteers in this sector since its introduction in 2020. With the need for volunteers in this area growing every year, these barriers should be minimised so vulnerable people in our community can be better supported.

Recent changes to WWC and Police checks for volunteers would have benefitted from consultation with volunteers and the sector prior to introduction.

Volunteering WA does not have access to detailed data regarding the revenues generated, but estimates the following, based on publicly available data:



### Did you know that in Western Australia...?

- Volunteers report cost as being the second biggest barrier to volunteering - \$13.75 an hour
- Only 45% of volunteering organisations have a reimbursement program for volunteers
- Volunteer managers report that risk, insurance and legal requirements are the major external issues for them, and that increasing complexity is the biggest change they have seen over the past few years

	Revenue to WA State Government	Estimated number a year	Estimated gross revenue
Volunteer NDIS screening	\$11	7,000	\$77,000
Volunteer WWC screening	\$11	22,000	\$242,000
Volunteer Police Certificates	\$18	Not known	Not known

These charges are likely economically inefficient, costing more to implement than they generate. At a time when cost of living is a significant concern to Western Australians, burdensome administration and unnecessary fees should be eliminated. WA will lead the nation in addressing this major barrier to volunteering by creating a WA Volunteer Card. This could be similar to a White Card used in the construction sector (which is half of the size of WA’s volunteering sector).

## 2 Expand Workers' Compensation coverage to some categories of volunteers

### Actions required to invest in volunteering

- 2.1 Consult with the volunteering sector to decide categories of volunteers for inclusion in coverage within the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981
- 2.2 Amend legislation and regulations of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 to include specified volunteer cohorts



Volunteers must follow provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA) or risk committing an offense and incurring penalties.

However, volunteers do not enjoy the same financial protections as paid workers if an injury or illness is acquired while volunteering. In Western Australia, volunteers are not covered under the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981.

**We understand that Western Australia is the only state in Australia that does not extend worker compensation and injury management protections to some categories of volunteers.**



### Did you know that in Western Australia...?

- No volunteers are covered by Workers' Compensation schemes (unlike other states)
- Only 24.5% of volunteer organisations provide access to an employee assistance style program, which can be an important support for any psycho-social harm suffered as a result of a volunteer role

State / Territory	State / territory government Workers' Compensation extended to specified categories of volunteers
Western Australia	None
New South Wales	Emergency services workers Volunteer fire-fighters Volunteer ambulance officers
Northern Territory	Emergency services volunteers (who receive nothing more than reasonable travelling, accommodation or other out of pocket expenses)
Queensland	A voluntary emergency services or ambulance worker; or A volunteer involved in a religious, charitable or benevolent organisation; or A volunteer involved in a not-for-profit organisation
South Australia	State emergency services members Marine rescue workers Fire-fighters
Tasmania	Police volunteers Volunteer fire-fighters Volunteer police staff Prescribed volunteers
Victoria	Voluntary emergency and state emergency services workers Jurors Volunteer workers in government schools Volunteers assisting police officers Volunteer fire-fighters

## 3 Provide **insurance coverage** for volunteers in Community Service Organisations

### Actions required to invest in volunteering

- 3.1 Consult with the Community Services sector on the Victorian model for volunteer personal accident insurance on how a similar system could operate in WA
- 3.2 Implement a model to provide insurance coverage to Community Services Organisations for volunteer personal accident insurance



The *WA State of Volunteering Report 2023* notes that about three quarters (76.5%) of voluntary organisations provide coverage to volunteers for personal accident insurance.

However, most volunteers are unaware that even if there is a policy they are likely to be out of pocket for several costs including:

- Medicare-related costs
- caps or exclusions to capital losses (such as permanent disability)
- the deductible payment
- limits to income protection

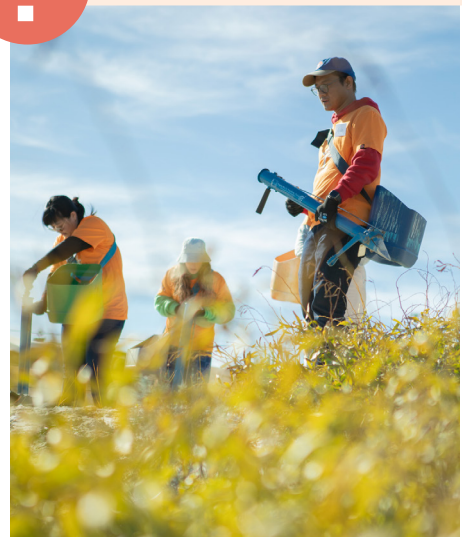
The Victorian Government, through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), provides a suite of insurance policies, free of charge, to a wide range of Community Service Organisations (CSOs). Insurance coverage for eligible organisations includes:

- Public and Products Liability
- Professional Indemnity
- Directors and Officers Liability
- Entity Fidelity (fraud)
- Volunteer Personal Accident
- Medical Indemnity
- Volunteer Care Givers Property

A copy of the Victorian Government's Volunteer Personal Accident policy is available [here](#).

We understand that as a result, in Victoria there:

- are significant savings to eligible CSOs from not having to take out separate policies;
- is a consistent level of coverage for volunteers in the sector; and
- there is process support for volunteers making a claim from VMIA



### Did you know that in Western Australia...?

- Only 76.5% of volunteer involving organisations provide volunteer personal accident insurance
- The quality of these policies varies greatly, with most having significant limitations



# 4

## Fund Volunteering WA's role in Emergency Services



### Actions required to invest in volunteering

- 4.1 Provide \$100,000 pa to Volunteering WA for capacity to support volunteering in times of emergencies in WA

**“Coordinating the engagement of spontaneous volunteers is at the heart of a successful spontaneous volunteer management system.”**

– Volunteering WA report on Spontaneous Volunteer Engagement in Recent Emergencies in WA

Natural hazards are an inherent part of the Western Australian landscape and a growing risk to be managed. Spontaneous emergency support volunteers play an essential role in disaster response and recovery, particularly when local skills and relationships can be harnessed.

Volunteering WA provides extensive services to the Emergency Services sector in Western Australia including:

- providing a collaborative program with organisational stakeholders to maximise the involvement of spontaneous community volunteers in times of emergencies
- managing a portal (to call for community volunteers for community organisations in times of emergencies)
- participate in meetings convened by the WA State Government to help in the planning and response to emergencies

Volunteering WA operates an emergency volunteering recruitment portal, [emergency.volunteer.org.au](https://emergency.volunteer.org.au), which enables people to register their details to become a community emergency support volunteer during the response and recovery stages of an emergency or natural disaster. The development of this platform has been financially supported in part by the WA State Government.

Volunteering WA is currently delivering an emergency volunteering program through the Australian Government's National Recovery and Resilience Agency's National Disaster Risk Reduction program. This work is due to be completed in December 2024.

There is a need to fund Volunteering WA's ongoing role in emergency services, to help attract, retain and recognise formal and affiliated emergency services volunteers (such as for bushfire, marine and emergency services brigades, groups and units) and spontaneous volunteers to support community welfare in times of response and recovery.

Volunteering WA currently provides these services without ongoing funding from the WA State Government.



### Did you know that in Western Australia...?

- Emergency services organisations in WA report the most acute shortage of volunteers of any sector, with 38.5% needing more than 50 volunteers



# 5

## Connect young people to volunteering

### Actions required to invest in volunteering

#### 5.1 Provide \$200,000 pa to Volunteering WA for 5 years to invest in youth volunteering in WA



Volunteering can help to increase young people's personal confidence, skills, health and wellbeing and social connections.

Volunteering WA partnered with the WA State Government to fund the *Volunteering as a Pathway to Job Readiness* project from 2020 – 2023. The [YVolunteer.org.au](https://www.yvolunteer.org.au) platform was built to support this initiative, which has contributed to WA having one of the highest rates of youth volunteering in Australia.

Some insights from this project were:

- young people are critical for the ongoing health and vibrancy of the WA volunteer sector
- there are several barriers to volunteering that young people face, and we need to support change to empower them to participate
- volunteer youth ambassadors can be a powerful force for change
- family volunteering can be a stepping-stone to a lifetime of volunteering
- the value of intergenerational programs connecting school-age youth with older people
- more work is needed to help volunteer organisations support youth to volunteer – such as greater flexibility and providing reimbursement to offset the costs of volunteering

Western Australia has one of the highest levels of youth volunteering, with 78.5% of people between 15-24 years participating. These settings include formal volunteering (e.g. with an organisation or group) or informally (outside of family and home such as event volunteering or community planting days).

To continue to build on these strong foundations, we believe that a longer-term program is needed to foster the future of youth volunteering. This could include:

- development of micro credentials for volunteering and source appropriate opportunities
- working with volunteer organisations to design and promote youth-friendly opportunities, including through family and intergenerational volunteering
- school liaison
- liaison with TAFEs to facilitate volunteering opportunities, to develop technical and interpersonal skills
- maintaining the YVolunteer platform



### Did you know that in Western Australia...?

- Volunteering is associated with a 4.4% increase in personal well-being
- 69% of all volunteers have parents who volunteer or volunteered
- 100% of young people who completed the learning modules on our YVolunteer platform felt better equipped to undertake volunteering



**78.5%**  
of people between  
15-24 years participate in  
volunteering in WA



# Invest in Volunteering in WA

## Volunteer engagement and support:

- Make volunteers' WWC checks free in WA
- Make volunteers' NDIS checks free in WA
- Make volunteers' Police checks free in WA
- Work to reduce barriers by streamlining processes for all checks
- Create a "WA Volunteer Card" in partnership with the volunteering sector, to make it easier and cheaper to volunteer in WA
- Consult with the volunteering sector to decide categories of volunteers for inclusion in coverage within the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981
- Amend legislation and regulations of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 to include specified volunteer cohorts
- Provide \$100,000 pa funding to Volunteering WA for capacity to support volunteering in times of emergencies in WA
- Provide \$200,000 pa to Volunteering WA for 5 years to invest in youth volunteering in WA

## Volunteer organisation support:

- Consult with the Community Services sector on the Victorian model for volunteer personal accident insurance on how a similar system could operate in WA
- Implement a model to provide insurance coverage to Community Services Organisations for volunteer personal accident insurance







## ABOUT US

Volunteering WA is the peak body for volunteering in Western Australia, founded in 1988. With over 800 member organisations, we have a successful 36-year track record of championing and supporting the volunteering sector. Recognised as the go-to place for all things volunteering – businesses, government, educational institutions, NFP organisations and community groups can reach out to Volunteering WA for reliable resources, advice and expertise in volunteering.

With a purpose of empowering people and communities to enrich Western Australia, Volunteering WA supports volunteering involving organisations and the volunteering community, so they can focus on service delivery and making a difference.

We commend the WA State Government for having a Minister for Volunteering and the Volunteering Community Reference Group, which provides a vehicle for the sector to engage directly with the Minister.

Volunteering WA works proudly and collaboratively with partners to enhance the volunteering sector in WA, for the benefit of all Western Australians.



Empowering people and communities to enrich Western Australia

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