

# Key Volunteering Statistics

**March 2024**

*Disclaimer*

These statistics have been compiled primarily from external sources. While every effort has been made to provide accurate and up to date data, Volunteering Australia does not accept any liability for the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of data in this summary. Users are encouraged to visit the source report to assist in the understanding of the data and context of information provided.

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## Introduction

This document provides key statistics about volunteering in Australia.

Multiple sources of data on volunteering exist and this document draws on relevant information from across this data landscape. The volunteering data landscape is extensive and diverse. There are many sources of data on volunteering in Australia, many of which are published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). In addition to this, data is collected by universities, peak bodies, and volunteer involving organisations. This work complements official data collection and provides greater detail on particular subjects, giving us a more complete understanding of volunteering in Australia. For this reason, this factsheet presents both official data, produced by the Australian Government, and unofficial data collected by other organisations.

A key source of data utilised is official statistics produced by the ABS, specifically the General Social Survey which includes a series of questions about volunteering. The most recent data available is the 2020 General Social Survey,<sup>1</sup> with previous surveys conducted in 2019, 2014, 2010, 2006, and 2002.

The GSS is considered to provide the most reliable official estimate of the number and proportion of people who volunteer formally in Australia. For this reason, the GSS is used as a key data source for Government publications, such as the Measuring What Matters Wellbeing Framework and the analysis published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Other official data sources such as the Census and the Time Use Survey are referenced where they provide the most relevant information. Given GSS data has not been collected since 2020, alternative data sources are used where they provide a more up-to-date picture.

This document provides largely a national picture, with some State and Territory breakdowns being provided where the data is available. Increasingly, States and Territories produce their own 'State of Volunteering' surveys and reports which are a rich source of information within each jurisdiction. These can be found via the State and Territory volunteering peak bodies.<sup>2</sup>

Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering is "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."<sup>3</sup> This document deploys this definition and hence includes information on formal and informal volunteering. The ABS defines 'formal volunteering' as unpaid voluntary work through an organisation and 'informal volunteering' as the provision of unpaid work/support to non-household members, excluding that provided only to family members living outside the household.<sup>4</sup>

Volunteering Australia acknowledges that the surveys used to collect the data presented here are not inclusive of the diversity of gender identities in our community. This document uses the terms 'woman/female' and 'man/male' to denote those who have selected 'female' or 'male' respectively as their sex in their response to the survey. Volunteering Australia recognises that only those who identify as female or male are represented in these statistics. For the first time, the 2021 Census allowed all respondents to select from three response options for the sex question: male, female, and non-binary sex. Census data presented in this factsheet does not include analysis of responses by gender.

Note: Throughout this document, estimates marked with a '#' have a high margin of error and should be used with caution.

## Volunteering numbers and rates

### Note on data sources

The most reliable official data, produced and published by the Australian Government, on the proportion and estimated number of people who volunteer in Australia is collected through the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS includes the most extensive module on volunteering produced by the government and is considered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide more reliable estimates of the rate of volunteering in Australia than other official sources, such as the Census of Population and Housing.

For this reason, in this factsheet, data from the GSS is presented first where available. Other data sources are also included where they provide more recent or more detailed data.

### Formal volunteering

Across Australia, it is estimated that over 5 million (5.025 million) people volunteered through an organisation or group in 2020. This is almost one quarter (24.8%) of people aged 15 years and over. By comparison, 29.5 per cent (5.897 million people) volunteered through an organisation or group in 2019.

Rates of formal volunteering (through an organisation or group) are similar across the country.

#### Formal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2019 and 2020

State/Territory	Formal volunteering rate (2019)	Formal volunteering rate (2020)
New South Wales	28.9%	23.1%
Victoria	32.1%	24.4%
Queensland	26.5%	25.4%
South Australia	27.1%	26.2%
Western Australia	27.1%	25.6%
Tasmania	34.2%	30.2%
Northern Territory	28.7%	28.4%
Australian Capital Territory	29.8%	30.9%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 15: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By State and territory, estimate' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Customised report, ABS, 2021

The rate of volunteering through an organisation has declined over time: for people aged 18 years and over, the rate has declined from 36.2% in 2010 to 28.8% in 2019.<sup>5</sup> The decline is most evident for women, whose rate decreased from 38.1% in 2010 to 28.1% in 2019. By comparison, the proportion of men who volunteer decreased from 34.4% to 29.4%.

Volunteers contributed 596.2 million hours to the community in 2019. This is a 20% decrease in the total number of volunteering hours from 2014 (743.3 million hours). In 2020, they contributed 489.5 million hours, a further decrease of 18%.

In 2022, the Volunteering in Australia research was undertaken to inform the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering (2023-2033).<sup>6</sup> This project included analysis of new data collected in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Following the release of the Volunteering in Australia reports, an additional survey was

conducted in 2023. In April 2023, 36.0 per cent of people in Australia had volunteered formally in the previous 12 months. This represents an increase from about a quarter (26.7 per cent) of people in Australia in April 2022. The 2022 data is also available by state and territory, as summarised below.

Formal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2022

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Per cent of respondents who volunteered in the previous 12 months</b>
New South Wales	26.6
Victoria	25.6
Queensland	26.6
South Australia	26.2
Western Australia	31.6
Tasmania	30.4
Northern Territory	34.9
Australian Capital Territory	28.7
Australia	26.7

Source: Biddle, Nicholas, 2022, "ANU Poll 50 (April 2022): Volunteering, aged care, policy priorities and experiences with COVID-19", doi:10.26193/AXQPSE, ADA Dataverse, V1. Analysis is undertaken on a blended sample of data from the Life in Australia panel (n = 3,587), conducted by the Social Research Centre, as well as the Australian Consumer Panel (n = 2,014), conducted by the Online Research Unit. The former is a probability-based panel, and the latter a non-probability panel. Both panels are recruited using both online and offline methods.

In 2023, the Centre for Volunteering published the NSW State of Volunteering 2023 report, which presents a detailed examination of the characteristics of volunteers and volunteer management in New South Wales. The report found that 63.9 per cent of people in NSW volunteer either formally or informally.<sup>7</sup> The Western Australia State of Volunteering 2023 report similarly found that 65.1 per cent of people volunteered either formally or informally in WA in 2023.<sup>8</sup> Similar reports are currently in development by Volunteering Queensland, VolunteeringACT, Volunteering Tasmania, and Volunteering SA/NT, which are due to be published in 2024. These will provide valuable and up-to-date data on volunteering in each jurisdiction.

Alternative sources provide different estimates for volunteering and of trends over time. For example, according to the 2016 Census,<sup>9</sup> 2.9 million people, or 15.1% of the population aged 15 years and over, were engaged in voluntary work through an organisation or group. This represents a significant decline since the 2016 Census, which found that 3.6 million people, or 20.1% of the population aged 15 years and over, volunteered formally.<sup>10</sup>

The 2016 Giving Australia Survey estimated that 43.7% of people volunteered their time to charities and Non-Profit Organisations in 2016. This is an increase from the 2005 Giving Australia survey which estimated 41% of the population volunteered.<sup>11</sup>

## Key characteristics of formal volunteering

- Based on GSS 2019 data, men and women now volunteer at similar rates, 30.7% and 28.5 % respectively (aged 15 years and over).
  - In 2020, 23.1% of men and 26.3% of women volunteered formally.
- People aged 40-54 years are more likely to volunteer (30.5%) than other age groups. Volunteering rates for other age groups are: 15-24 (19.4%), 25-39 (20.9%), 55-69 (24.9%), and 70 years and over (28.0%).

- The most common types of organisations for which people volunteered were those relating to sport and physical recreation (30.7% of volunteers), religious groups (23.1%) and education and training (18.8%). This was largely unchanged between 2019 and 2020, though the proportion of people involved in community/ethnic groups increased from 11.6% to 15.7%.
- The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research also revealed sizeable volunteer workforces in specific sectors that are not identified in official data collection, such as aged care (8.8 per cent), disability (4.7 per cent), and mental health (4.4 per cent).<sup>12</sup>
- 66.4% of people volunteered for one organisation only, 23.0% for two and 10.4% for three or more.
- In 2019, nearly all formal volunteering (98.3%) involved volunteering in person, in the office or the field, but 8.5% of people said they volunteered over the internet and 9.5% over the phone. In 2020, 96.6% of volunteers undertook some in person volunteering, 17.3% volunteered over the internet and 13.9% over the phone.
- Most volunteers (47.8 per cent) undertook activities that were targeted towards the general community. Where there is a focus on particular groups of beneficiaries, the most common focus was children / youth (32.5 per cent) and older people (20.5 per cent).<sup>13</sup>

Further detail on these characteristics is provided in sections below.

## Informal volunteering

Over 6.5 million (6.511 million) people aged 15 years and over provided informal volunteering support in their community in the four weeks prior to the 2020 GSS survey. This is 32.1% of the population. In 2019, 6.676 million (33.4%) volunteered informally.

Informal volunteering rates tend to be higher than formal volunteering. This pattern is consistent across the country. Further, the rate of informal volunteering was less strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than the rate of formal volunteering.

### *Informal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2019 and 2020*

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Informal volunteering rate (2019)</i>	<i>Informal volunteering rate (2020)</i>
<i>New South Wales</i>	29.1%	33.8%
<i>Victoria</i>	36.0%	31.0%
<i>Queensland</i>	31.9%	32.6%
<i>South Australia</i>	36.3%	28.9%
<i>West Australia</i>	35.6%	30.0%
<i>Tasmania</i>	36.3%	32.9%
<i>Northern Territory</i>	42.3%	36.2%
<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>	40.9%	38.9%

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 15: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By State and territory, estimate' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Customised report, ABS, 2021*

In 2020, most informal volunteers (89.7%) contributed between 1 and 20 hours in the past four weeks. This proportion is similar to 2019 (87.2%).

In 2020, the most common types of informal volunteering were ‘providing emotional support’ (53.8%), ‘providing transport and running errands’ (38.2%), and ‘domestic work, home maintenance or gardening’ (37.2%). In 2019, these were ‘domestic work, home maintenance or gardening’ (41.9%), ‘providing transport or running errands’ (42.4%) and ‘providing emotional support’ (50.5%).

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that 46.5 per cent of people had volunteering informally in the 4 weeks leading up to April 2022.

Informal volunteering rates by State/Territory, 2022

State/Territory	Per cent of respondents who volunteered in the previous 4 weeks
New South Wales	46.7
Victoria	43.9
Queensland	48.6
South Australia	44.2
Western Australia	45.3
Tasmania	41.7
Northern Territory	47.2
Australian Capital Territory	48.3
Australia	46.5

Source: Biddle, Nicholas, 2022, "ANU Poll 50 (April 2022): Volunteering, aged care, policy priorities and experiences with COVID-19", doi:10.26193/AXQPSE, ADA Dataverse, V1. Analysis is undertaken on a blended sample of data from the Life in Australia panel (n = 3,587), conducted by the Social Research Centre, as well as the Australian Consumer Panel (n = 2,014), conducted by the Online Research Unit. The former is a probability-based panel, and the latter a non-probability panel. Both panels are recruited using both online and offline methods.

While informal volunteering likely increased between 2020 and 2022, there is currently no available evidence that it has increased in the longer term. The 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report found that 46 per cent people in Australia volunteered informally in 2016.<sup>14</sup> By comparison, the Volunteering in Australia 2022 report found that 46.5 per cent of people volunteered informally in 2022.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that there was not a significant increase in informal volunteering between 2016 and 2022.

## Geography

The rate of formal volunteering is higher in regional areas than capital cities.

Rate and estimate of formal volunteers by remoteness of residence, 2020

Residence	Rate of formal volunteering (%)	Number of formal volunteers
Major cities	24.4	3.685 million
Inner regional	24.9	0.958 million
Outer regional and Remote Australia	28.2	0.377 million
Total persons	24.8	5.025 million

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By Remoteness area, estimate [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Customised report, ABS, 2021



Analysis of the 2021 Census data found significant differences in the rate of volunteering across the country at the Statistical Area 2 level. Geographic areas that tended to have high rates of formal volunteering were those that had a higher: median age of the population; proportion of the population who spoke a language other than English; and proportion of the population who were carers (provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition, or due to old age). Geographic areas that had lower rates of formal volunteering were those that had a higher proportion of the population who: had not completed Year 12; were Australian citizens; identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; did not report a religion; had a long-term health condition; did not undertake any domestic work; and did not provide unpaid care for a child. Areas in which there was a higher average number of people per bedroom and areas with a higher median household income also had lower rates of volunteering.<sup>16</sup>

## Demographics

### Gender

The 2020 GSS found that volunteering rates for men and women are similar.

*Formal and informal volunteering rates by gender, 2019 and 2020*

Gender	2019		2020	
	Rate of formal volunteering	Rate of informal volunteering	Rate of formal volunteering	Rate of informal volunteering
Women	30.7	33.9	26.4	32.7
Men	28.5	32.6	23.1	32.4
Total persons	29.5	33.4	24.8	32.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 3.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By Age and Sex, proportion of persons [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 3.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By Sex and Health Characteristics, proportion of persons [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

However, the type of volunteering, hours of volunteering and length of time someone has volunteered vary by gender. For further information, see below and the [Volunteering Australia - Volunteering and Gender Key Statistics](#) fact sheet.

Analysis of data collected as part of the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research also reveals differences in the types of volunteering undertaken by women and men.

- The Volunteering in Australia 2022 data found that women were slightly more likely to volunteer than men. In April 2022, 28.6 per cent of women had done volunteer work in the previous 12 months compared to 24.7 per cent of men.
- Women were much more likely than men to have volunteered informally, with 51.3 per cent of women undertaking informal volunteering in the previous four weeks compared to 41.5 per cent of males.
- Women were more likely than men to volunteer for aged care (10.6 per cent of women compared to 6.6 per cent of men), children/youth (19.7 per cent of women and 7.7 per cent of men) and education/training organisations (14.5 per cent of women and 9.9 per cent of men)

- Men were more likely to volunteer for emergency services/disaster relief (5.6 per cent of women compared to 12.4 per cent of men) and sport/recreation organisations (20.6 per cent of women compared to 30.6 per cent of men).<sup>1</sup>
- Women were more likely than men to volunteer in companionship/social support (16.7 per cent of women compared to 11.8 per cent of men), food preparation/service/delivery (23.6 per cent of women and 13.9 per cent of men), and fundraising/sales/events roles (27.8 per cent of women compared to 20.1 per cent of men)
  - Men were more likely to undertake board/committee (14.5 per cent of women and 23.8 per cent of men), emergency response/disaster relief/first aid/community safety (8.7 per cent of women and 14.8 per cent of men), and repairing/maintenance/gardening activities (6.6 per cent of women and 18.0 per cent of men).
- Among men who volunteer, those aged 65 or more years were the most likely to volunteer (34.3 per cent). Among women who volunteer, those aged 30-49 years were the most likely to volunteer (39.0 per cent).

The 2020-21 Time Use Survey also provides insights into how women and men use their time, including the interaction between volunteering, paid work, unpaid care, and domestic activities.

- According to the 2021 Time Use Survey, women were more likely than men to undertake domestic activities, such as food and drink preparation, shopping, housework, grounds care and gardening, and other activities. Volunteers of either gender were more likely than non-volunteers to undertake domestic activities than people who don't volunteer, though women who volunteered were the most likely cohort by far, with 97.0 per cent undertaking domestic activities in addition to their volunteering, which occupied 3 hours and 29 minutes of their time.
- Women were more likely than men to undertake child care activities. The gender gap in both proportion and time spent on child care was more significant among volunteers than non-volunteers. Overall, volunteers spent less time on child care than non-volunteers.
  - 31.3 per cent of women who volunteer also undertook child care activities, spending 3 hours and 1 minute on child care on average.
  - 20.6 per cent of men who volunteer also undertook child care activities, spending an average of 1 hour and 49 minutes.
  - Among non-volunteers, 27.0 per cent of women and 21.7 per cent of men spent 3 hours and 30 minutes and 2 hours and 20 minutes on child care respectively.
- Women were more likely than men to engage in social and community interactions. While this gap is also evident among volunteers, volunteers of either gender (67.6 per cent) were more likely than non-volunteers (53.5 per cent) to engage in social and community interactions, and spent more time doing so.
- Women and men with caring responsibilities were more likely to volunteer than those without caring responsibilities. While women (5.1 per cent) were more likely than men (4.7 per cent) to volunteer overall in the Time Use Survey, women with caring responsibilities (6.6 per cent) were less likely than men with caring responsibilities (7.2 per cent) to volunteer. This may suggest women with caring responsibilities face more significant barriers to volunteering than men with caring responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures indicate the proportion of volunteers who engaged with each type of organisation, by gender

Full data tables are included in the ‘Volunteering and time use’ section of this factsheet.

## Disability

In 2020, 26.0% of people with disability volunteered for an organisation, compared to 24.3% of people without disability. People with disability make up more than one quarter (29.1%) of all people volunteering for an organisation. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of people with disability who volunteered in Australia remained steady, despite an overall decrease in the rate volunteering.

In relation to informal volunteering, 29.6% of people with disability undertook informal volunteering in the four weeks prior to the survey, compared to 33.1% of people without disability. People with disability make up over one in four (27.6%) of all people volunteering informally.

### Formal and informal volunteering by health status, 2019

	<b>Formal volunteering</b>		<b>Informal volunteering</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of volunteers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of volunteers</b>
People with a mental health condition	580,400	9.8	931,000	13.9
People with a long-term health condition	2,423,000	41.1	3,009,000	45.1
People with a disability	1,472,600	25.0	1,833,000	27.5

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 4: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By Sex and Health Characteristics' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

### Formal and informal volunteering by health status, 2020

	<b>Formal volunteering</b>		<b>Informal volunteering</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of volunteers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of volunteers</b>
People with a mental health condition	641,800	12.8	741,400	11.4
People with a long-term health condition	2,362,400	47.1	2,842,500	43.7
People with a disability	1,464,100	29.1	1,670,200	25.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences—By Sex and Health Characteristics' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are more likely to volunteer informally in their community rather than formally through an organisation.

In 2020, 25.7% of people whose main language is English volunteered formally (through an organisation), compared to 18.2% of people whose main language is a language other than English. In relation to informal volunteering, 32.0% of people whose main language is English volunteer informally, compared to 32.7% of people whose main language is another language.

According to the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research, those born overseas in a non-English speaking country were more likely to have undertaken informal volunteering than those born in Australia. This is in

the opposite direction to the association with formal volunteering, where this group had lower relative probabilities. Taken together, these findings suggest it is the type of volunteering that varies by country of birth, rather than a general propensity to volunteer.<sup>17</sup>

Formal and informal volunteering by cultural and linguistic diversity, 2019 and 2020

<b>Cultural and linguistic diversity</b>	<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
	<b>Formal volunteering rate</b>	<b>Informal volunteering rate</b>	<b>Formal volunteering rate</b>	<b>Informal volunteering rate</b>
<i>Born in Australia</i>	30.9	33.5	27.2	31.9
<i>Total migrants</i>	26.5	32.8	19.7	32.4
<i>Born in another country – recent arrivals</i>	20.3	31.8#	15.0	37.3
<i>Born in another country – other</i>	28.8	34.1	22.3	31.0
<i>Main language spoken at home</i>				
<i>English</i>	31.3	34.5	25.7	32.0
<i>Other language</i>	18.9	27.3	18.2	32.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 5.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences–By Migrant Status, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support–By Personal Characteristics, estimate and proportion' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 4.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Social Experiences–By Migrant Status, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support–By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Volunteering and Settlement in Australia, 2019

<b>VIOs who recruited volunteers identifying as from migrant or refugee backgrounds in 2018-19</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
<i>Migrant and refugee</i>	65
<i>Migrant (only)</i>	23
<i>Refugee (only)</i>	5
<i>None</i>	5
<i>Unsure</i>	2

Source: Volunteering Australia and Settlement Council of Australia, May 2019

A report on giving and volunteering in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and First Nations communities in Australia by the Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) found that both communities are deeply involved in volunteering and sharing for cultural maintenance and community wellbeing.<sup>18</sup> The report states that:

*'CALD participants described volunteering as an inseparable element of their culture that needed to be passed onto the next generation and shared with other Australian communities.'*

Similarly, for First Nations participants *'sharing, giving and helping others are integral to Indigenous culture and play a key role in maintaining culture and traditions.'*

## Age

People volunteer across the lifecycle. Based on 2020 GSS data, people aged 40-54 were more likely to have participated in unpaid voluntary work through an organisation (30.5%) than any other age group. People aged 25-39 has the highest rate of informal volunteering (38.9%). The proportion of people volunteering formally declined across all age groups in 2020. However, this decline was most significant for the 15-24 years age group, among which the formal volunteering rate fell from 28.8% in 2019 to 19.4% in 2020. The rate of informal volunteering also decreased significantly among people aged 15-24 years (from 36.5% to 27.2%) but remained relatively steady among other age groups.

Older people are more likely to volunteer in welfare, community, and health settings. The proportion of volunteers over 65 years of age is 17% (16.6%). However, 30% of those who did voluntary work for welfare or community organisations are aged 65 years and over, 19% for health organisations, and 27% for both types of organisations.<sup>19</sup>

### *Formal and informal volunteering rates by age, 2019 and 2020*

Age	2019		2020	
	Formal volunteering rate	Informal volunteering rate	Formal volunteering rate	Informal volunteering rate
15-24 years	28.8	36.5	19.4	27.2
25-39 years	25.7	38.8	20.9	38.9
40-54 years	36.2	34.0	30.5	32.7
55-69 years	29.0	27.3	24.9	29.1
70 years and over	24.5	26.9	28.0	26.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, estimate and proportion' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

The Giving Australia 2016 Report found that younger Australians were more likely to have volunteered in the previous 12 months, with nearly half (47%) of 18-24-year-olds having volunteered, compared to 28% of those aged 55 and over.

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 report found that volunteers aged 18-29 years are more likely than average to volunteer for particular types of organisations, accounting for 37.8 per cent of volunteers in Animal Welfare organisations and 28.8 per cent of volunteers in Health organisations. They are less likely to volunteer for Aged Care (7.5 per cent of volunteers in this sector), Arts / Heritage (9.9 per cent), Environment (12.4 per cent), and Sport / Recreation (11.3 per cent) organisations.<sup>20</sup>

Census data shows that there was an increase in volunteering amongst young adults (15-24 years) between 2006 to 2016, but then a big drop between 2016 and 2021, which includes the impact of COVID-19. For those over 25 years of age there were relatively small changes in the rates of volunteering between 2006 and 2016, but similar to young adults, there was a substantial decline in volunteering between 2016 and 2021.

Formal volunteering numbers and proportions by age, 2016

Age	Number of volunteers 000s	% all volunteers
15-17 years	347.4	6%
18-24 years	564.5	10%
25-34 years	931.0	16%
35-44 years	1,244.1	21%
45-54 years	966.2	17%
55-64 years	773.9	13%
65-74 years	656.8	11%
75 years and older	314.4	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.8 m</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Giving Australia (2017)

According to Census data, formal volunteering among young people increased gradually between 2006 to 2016, but decreased significantly between 2016 and 2021, which includes the impact of COVID-19. Between April 2021 and April 2022, people aged 18-24 were the only age group for which the rate of formal volunteering did not increase.<sup>21</sup>

## Labour force status

Almost a third (29.8%) of part-time employees' volunteer. They are the most likely segment of the labour force to volunteer, followed by people who are unemployed (26.3%#).

Formal and informal volunteering by labour force participation, 2019 and 2020

Labour force participation	2019		2020	
	Formal volunteering rate	Informal volunteering rate	Formal volunteering rate	Informal volunteering rate
Employed Full-time	30.7	37.5	23.3	35.9
Employed Part-time	34.4	36.6	29.8	39.6
Unemployed	23.4#	40.1#	26.3#	29.7
Not in the labour force	25.4	24.4	22.8	23.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, estimate and proportion' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that people in paid employment were more likely to volunteer than people who were not in paid employment. However, as the number of hours of paid employment increases the likelihood of volunteering decreases.

- 29.7 per cent of people who were not in paid employment in April 2022 had volunteered in the previous 12 months.
- 50.0 per cent of those who worked 1 to 10 hours per week had volunteered.
- 27.1 per cent of those working 11-34 hours per week had volunteered.
- Only 21.4 per cent of those working 35 hours or more per week (i.e., full-time) had volunteered.

Research data also demonstrates that volunteering can support a pathway to paid employment. For example, in a 2018 SEEK survey, 85% of recruiters thought volunteering was just as credible as paid work if it was relevant to the role or industry.

Relationship between volunteering and employment, 2018

<i>Pathway to employment</i>	<i>Proportion</i>
<i>% employers who believe volunteering is a credible way to gain real world experience</i>	95%
<i>% recruiters who believe that volunteering is just as credible as paid work if it is relevant to the role or industry</i>	85%
<i>% employers who believe volunteering gives an advantage at job interviews</i>	92%

Source: SEEK, *Get ahead in volunteering in 2018*<sup>22</sup>

## Household type

Households that comprise couples with children are the most likely (37.3%) to volunteer formally. Along with couples without children (34.5%), this group also has high levels (34.1%) of informal volunteering. In 2020, households that comprise couples with children experienced the most significant decrease in formal volunteering, while other household compositions were less strongly affected.

Formal and informal volunteering by household type, 2019 and 2020

<i>Household type</i>	<i>2019</i>		<i>2020</i>	
	<i>Formal volunteering rate</i>	<i>Informal volunteering rate</i>	<i>Formal volunteering rate</i>	<i>Informal volunteering rate</i>
<i>Couples with children</i>	37.3	34.1	30.1	32.5
<i>One parent family with dependent children</i>	23.0	25.6#	28.3	28.3
<i>Couple only</i>	27.2	34.5	24.8	30.2
<i>Other one family households</i>	22.2	28.6	19.4	29.8
<i>Lone person</i>	23.4	32.5	21.8	35.8
<i>Other households</i>	23.5#	30.3#	16.3	36.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, estimate and proportion' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support—By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Level of education

Volunteering is associated with higher levels of post-secondary education. The rate of both formal (31.4%) and informal (38.4%) volunteering is highest among people with a bachelor's degree or above.

### Formal and informal volunteering by level of education, 2020

<b>Highest level of education achieved</b>	<b>Rate of formal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of informal volunteering</b>
Bachelor Degree or above	31.4	38.4
Advanced Diploma/Diploma or below	24.6	34.0
No non-school qualification	18.0	23.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support–By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Income

People volunteer across the income distribution. For example, in 2019, the lowest quintile (those in the bottom 20%) have a formal volunteering rate of 26.1%; those in the highest quintile have a formal volunteering rate of 30.0%. However, the gap in volunteering rates between the lowest and highest quintiles increased in 2020 compared, at 20.1% and 27.1% respectively.

### Formal and informal volunteering by income, 2019 and 2020

<b>Main source of household income</b>	<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
	<b>Rate of formal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of informal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of formal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of informal volunteering</b>
Employee income	30.5	35.7	24.6	34.4
Unincorporated business income	31.4#	39.2	39.2#	34.4
Government pensions and allowances	20.5	24.7	19.4	25.8
Other income	34.5	32.4	36.4	31.4

<b>Gross household income</b>	<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
	<b>Rate of formal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of informal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of formal volunteering</b>	<b>Rate of informal volunteering</b>
Lowest quintile	26.1	28.3	20.1	24.6
Second quintile	23.0	30.0	23.2	28.7
Third quintile	33.4	34.5	26.0	36.5
Fourth quintile	32.8	36.8	28.1	33.2
Highest quintile	30.0	38.6	27.1	39.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 7.1: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support–By Personal Characteristics, estimate and proportion' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 9.3: Persons aged 15 years and over, Voluntary and Unpaid Work/Support–By Personal Characteristics, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia



## Method of travel

In the 2016 Census, adult volunteers' methods of travel in their organisational capacity were as follows:

- Public Transport – 11%
- Personal Vehicle – 65%
- Active Transport – 5%
- Worked at home – 18%<sup>23</sup>

## Level of satisfaction with volunteering

Data on volunteering from the April 2023 ANUpoll survey found that 92.6 per cent of volunteers were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience volunteering. The full breakdown of responses is below:

- Very satisfied – 31.2%
- Satisfied – 60.5%
- Unsatisfied – 5.5%
- Very unsatisfied – 1.7%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 0.1%

These results are consistent with previous data, such as the 2011 National Survey of Volunteering Issues:<sup>24</sup>

- Very satisfied – 47%
- Satisfied – 45%
- Unsatisfied – 5%
- Very unsatisfied – 3%
- Not sure – 1%

In the 2016 State of Volunteering report, 93% of survey participants responded that they had seen positive changes because of their volunteering efforts.<sup>25</sup>

## Nature of organisations and activities

### Type of organisation

In 2019, overall people were most likely to volunteer for a sport and physical recreation organisation (39.1%), followed by religious organisations (23.3%) and education and training (21.8%). These were still the most common types of organisation in 2020, though the proportion of volunteers in sport and physical recreation organisations fell significantly to 30.7%.

Men are more likely than women to volunteer for sport and physical recreation – 47.5% and 30.5 % respectively. Women are more likely to volunteer than men in 'health and welfare' organisations and in 'community/ethnic groups'. Although women volunteered for 'parenting, children and youth' organisations

at a significantly higher rate than men did in 2019 (16.4% compared to 9.3%), this difference is much smaller in 2020, at 9.2% among women and 7.0% among men. Also, while women and men volunteered for 'education and training' organisations at similar rates in 2019, women (24.4%) volunteered for these organisations at a much higher rate than men (12.1%) in 2020.

*Formal volunteering rate by type of organisation, by gender, 2019 and 2020*

Type of organisation	2019			2020		
	Persons	Females	Males	Persons	Females	Males
Arts/Heritage	5.1	6.4	4.7	5.6	6.1	4.5
Business/Professional/Union	2.5	2.1#	3.3#	4.3	2.5	6.8
Community/Ethnic groups	11.6	13.1	9.2	15.7	17.7	14.1
Education and Training	21.8	21.2	21.7	18.8	24.4	12.1
Parenting, children and youth	12.3	16.4	9.3	8.0	9.2	7.0
Emergency services	4.7	3.6	7.2	4.9	3.7	6.6
Environmental/Animal welfare	6.0	4.8	5.8	5.0	5.2	4.6
International Aid/Development	1.8	2.3#	1.1#	1.7	2.7	1.0
Health/Welfare	11.6	15.6	7.1	12.1	13.6	9.8
Law/Justice/Political	1.0	1.2	1.3	2.7	1.8	3.1
Religious	23.3	21.8	24.3	23.1	22.4	25.1
Sport and physical recreation	39.1	30.5	47.5	30.7	25.1	37.8
Other	8.1	7.9	7.4	8.7	9.2	8.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 8.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% as people volunteer for more than one type of organisation.

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research also revealed sizeable volunteer workforces in specific sectors that are not identified in official data collection, such as aged care (8.8 per cent), disability (4.7 per cent), and mental health (4.4 per cent).<sup>26</sup> This survey also collected information from non-volunteers on the types of organisations they would be interested in volunteering for in the future. These results are included in the table below.

Type of organisation people volunteer for, by gender, 2022

<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Current volunteers</b>		
	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Sport / Recreation	25.0	20.6	30.6
Community Services / Welfare...	22.2	22.6	21.3
Religious / Faith-Based / Spiritual	20.5	22.5	18.3
Children / Youth	14.7	19.7	7.7
Education / Training	12.4	14.5	9.9
Other	10.0	--	--
Aged Care	8.8	10.6	6.6
Emergency Services / Disaster Relief	8.6	5.6	12.4
Health	8.4	8.6	7.4
Environment	7.0	7.0	7.1
Arts / Heritage	6.9	7.6	6.2
Animal Welfare	5.3	6.3	4.1
Disability	4.7	5.7	3.4
Mental Health	4.4	5.9	2.4
Cultural / Ethnic groups	3.8	4.2	3.4
Human Rights / Justice / Legal	2.8	2.4	2.5

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>. Table includes additional analysis of type of organisation by gender, available at <https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.26193/AXQPSE>

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% as people volunteer for more than one type of organisation.

Type of organisation people are interested in volunteering for, 2022

<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Persons</b>
Sport / Recreation	19.0
Community Services / Welfare...	21.4
Religious / Faith-Based / Spiritual	6.3
Children / Youth	22.7
Education / Training	20.0
Other	2.4
Aged Care	16.0
Emergency Services / Disaster Relief	17.9
Health	12.9
Environment	23.0
Arts / Heritage	13.3
Animal Welfare	29.4
Disability	12.0
Mental Health	15.4
Cultural / Ethnic groups	11.4
Human Rights / Justice / Legal	12.1

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

Note: Totals add up to more than 100% as people volunteer for more than one type of organisation.

## Nature of volunteering activity

Most reported volunteering is undertaken in fundraising/sales roles followed by management/operations and coaching/refereeing.

### Type of volunteering activity, 2014

<i>Type of voluntary activity spent most time on in last 12 months</i>	<i>Proportion of persons</i>
Fundraising/sales	23%
Management/committee work/coordination	12%
Coaching/refereeing/judging	14%
Food preparation/serving	14%
Teaching/instruction/providing information	15%
Administration/recruitment/information management	12%
Befriending/supportive listening/counselling/mentoring	10%
Repairing/maintenance/gardening	9%
Other	21%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 23.1: Persons who volunteered in the last 12 months, Selected characteristics of voluntary work—By state/territory—Estimates ('000) and Proportions (%)' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Data on volunteering activities was also collected in the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research. This data similarly shows the highest proportion of volunteers in fundraising/sales/events roles, board/committee roles, and coaching/refereeing/judging roles.

### Type of volunteering activity, 2022

<i>Type of voluntary activity spent most time on in last 12 months</i>	<i>Proportion of persons</i>
Fundraising/sales/events	24.6%
Board/Committee work	18.5%
Coaching/refereeing/judging	13.4%
Food preparation/service/delivery	19.2%
Teaching/instruction/providing information	24.5%
Accounting/finance/administration/management	22.8%
Companionship/social support	14.4%
Counselling/help line/mediation	6.5%
Personal care/assistance/transport	9.5%
Repairing/maintenance/gardening	11.6%
Emergency response/disaster relief/first aid/community safety	11.7%
Advocacy/lobbying/policy/research	9.4%
Arts/performing/media production	9.3%
Environmental protection/conservation	6.6%
Working with animals/fostering animals	4.4%
Other	16.8%

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

## Number of volunteering organisations

About two thirds of volunteers (66.4%) work for a single organisation. 23.0% volunteer for two, and 10.4% volunteer for three or more organisations.

### Number of organisations volunteered for in last 12 months, 2020

Number of organisations	% of volunteers
One	66.4%
Two	23.0%
Three or more	10.4%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Reasons for volunteering

People reported multiple motivations for volunteering with the most often cited being to help others, for personal satisfaction and to do something worthwhile. One in five people (20.8%) reported undertaking volunteering to learn new skills or gain work experience. Despite other changes in volunteering activity during 2020, motivations to volunteering remained consistent with previous years.

### Reasons for being a volunteer, 2020

Reasons	Persons	Females	Males
Personal satisfaction/To do something worthwhile	66.2	64.7	68.1
Help others/Community	74.2	76.4	71.6
Personal/Family Involvement	37.0	36.3	36.6
Social contact	33.7	34.1	34.0
To be active	30.8	27.6	34.4
Use skills/Experience	36.6	35.5	38.2
To learn new skills/Gain work experience	18.9	21.6	15.6
Religious beliefs	20.3	18.9	22.2
Just happened	9.0	8.8	9.1
Felt obliged	9.5	7.9	11.6
Other	1.4	0.9	2.6

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found similar results.

Reasons for being a volunteer, 2022

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Personal satisfaction/To do something worthwhile	71.9	69.3	75.7
Help others/the community	61.4	65.8	55.6
Family involvement	18.4	19.9	16.9
Social contact	33.3	32.4	34.5
To be active	27.8	24.5	31.9
Use skills/experience	32.3	31.4	33.6
To learn new skills	20.1	23.5	15.9
Gain work experience	10.2	11.5	8.8
Religious/faith-based beliefs	17.8	19.2	16.3
Just happened	8.6	8.2	8.3
Felt obliged	7.8	7.3	8.5
In response to a disaster/emergency	4.8	5.8	3.5

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

The main reason people first became involved in volunteering is that they knew someone who was involved or that they were asked.

How first became involved in voluntary work, 2020

<b>How first became involved</b>	<b>Proportion of persons</b>
Knew someone involved/was asked	43.7
Self-involvement in organisation	37.0
Saw advertisement/found out about it myself	9.3
Other	9.6

Source: Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Family history may be a predictor of future participation, with 70% of all volunteers having parents who also undertook voluntary work. In addition, most volunteers reported as being personally involved in a volunteering organisation or endeavour as a child.

Family history of volunteering, 2014

<b>Family history</b>	<b>Proportion of persons</b>
Volunteers' parents have volunteered	70.1
Volunteers' parents have not volunteered	21.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 23.1: Persons who volunteered in the last 12 months, Selected characteristics of voluntary work—By state/territory—Estimates ('000) and Proportions (%)' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Childhood activities, 2014

<i>Activities participated in as a child</i>	<i>Proportion of persons</i>
Organised team sport	83.2
Youth group	50.1
Arts/culture related activities	58.8
Did some kind of volunteer work	43.9
Raised money door-to-door or in public place for a cause or organisation	41.8
Active in student government	14.0
Active in a religious organisation	34.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 23.1: Persons who volunteered in the last 12 months, Selected characteristics of voluntary work—By state/territory—Estimates ('000) and Proportions (%)' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Nature of volunteering

During 2019, nearly all formal volunteers (98.3%) stated their work involved volunteering in person, in the office or the field. This decreased only slightly in 2020, with 96.6% of formal volunteers undertaking voluntary work in person. However, the proportion of people volunteering over the internet increased from 8.5% in 2019 to 17.3% in 2020, and the proportion of people volunteering over the phone increased from 9.5% to 13.9%.

How voluntary work was undertaken, 2019 and 2020

<i>How voluntary work was undertaken</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>
	<i>Proportion of persons</i>	<i>Proportion of persons</i>
In person/at the organisation/in the field	98.3	96.6
Over the internet	8.5	17.3
Over the phone	9.5	13.9
Other	2.4	2.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2020) 'Table 8.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research separated the category 'in person/at the organisation/in the field' into two separate categories. The results are included in the table below.

### How voluntary work was undertaken, 2022

<i>How voluntary work was undertaken</i>	<i>Proportion of persons</i>
<i>In person at the organisation</i>	69.4
<i>In person in the field</i>	41.5
<i>Over the internet</i>	30.2
<i>Over the phone</i>	16.9
<i>Other</i>	4.6

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

## Duration of volunteering

A large proportion of people (42.5%) have volunteered for more than 10 years.

### How long ago first became involved in voluntary work, 2020

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>Less than one year</i>	9.9	9.9	9.3
<i>One to five years</i>	36.4	36.9	36.5
<i>Six to nine years</i>	11.2	11.6	10.1
<i>Ten years or more</i>	42.5	41.0	43.5

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 10.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Characteristics of voluntary work—By Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Volunteering hours

Over one in four volunteers (28.3%) undertake voluntary work for an organisation for 100 hours or more each year. The hours undertaken by different proportions of volunteers remained steady between 2019 and 2020.

### Annual hours spent volunteering by sex, 2020

<i>Hours</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>1-20 hours</i>	38.0	40.9	42.2
<i>21-99 hours</i>	34.0	30.8	29.0
<i>100 hours or more</i>	27.9	29.1	27.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) 'Table 11.3: Persons aged 15 years and over who have undertaken unpaid voluntary work through an organisation in last 12 months, Annual hours—By Age and Sex, proportion of persons' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

Data from the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research shows that volunteers spent 180 hours volunteering on average in 2022.



Annual hours spent volunteering, 2022

<i>Hours spent volunteering</i>	<i>Per cent of volunteers</i>
10 hours or less	16.5
11 to 25 hours	12.1
26 to 50 hours	12.7
51 to 100 hours	14.2
101 to 150 hours	13.1
151 to 250 hours	11.9
251 to 450 hours	9.9
451 to 700 hours	4.3
701 hours or more	5.5

Source: *Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective*. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

Using the 2014 GSS data (the latest data available on this breakdown), there was a wide variation in the number of hours of work done by volunteers across different sectors. Over 50% of volunteers contributed more than 50 hours a year. Nearly one in five (18.7%) volunteers undertake voluntary work for over 200 hours in the year. Volunteers in emergency services volunteer more hours than in other sectors. Two thirds (67.2%) of emergency service volunteers contribute 50 hours of more.

Type of volunteering by annual hours, proportions, 2014

<i>Type(s) of organisation(s) did unpaid voluntary work for in last 12 months</i>	<i>1 to 10 hours</i>	<i>11 to 49 hours</i>	<i>50 hours or more</i>	<i>100 to 199 hours</i>	<i>200 hours or more</i>	<i>Total involvements</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
<i>Sport and physical recreation</i>	21.4	37.8	19.4	13.0	8.9	100.0	100.0
<i>Welfare/Community</i>	27.0	31.7	15.5	12.0	13.8	100.0	100.0
<i>Religious</i>	13.6	35.2	15.4	19.7	16.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Education and training</i>	33.8	42.4	11.5	6.9	5.1	100.0	100.0
<i>Health</i>	44.8	30.5	7.8	9.9	9.9	100.0	100.0
<i>Parenting, children and youth</i>	29.2	36.7	13.7	11.4	6.5	100.0	100.0
<i>Arts/Heritage</i>	27.3	37.5	14.7	13.7	7.6	100.0	100.0
<i>Business/Professional/Union</i>	16.5	27.4	32.0	13.8	12.2	100.0	100.0
<i>Emergency Services</i>	6.8	23.8	15.9	27.0	24.3	100.0	100.0
<i>Environment/animal welfare</i>	24.7	38.0	9.1	14.2	13.8	100.0	100.0
<i>Other</i>	21.5	46.0	8.3	13.2	11.8	100.0	100.0
<b>Total volunteering involvements</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All volunteers (%)</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 24.3: Volunteering involvements, State/territory, Type of organisation—by annual hours—Proportions (%)' [data set], *General Social Survey, Australia*

*Type of volunteering by annual hours, estimates, 2014*

Type(s) of organisation(s) did unpaid voluntary work for in last 12 months	1 to 10 hours	11 to 49 hours	50 hours or more	100 to 199 hours	200 hours or more	Total involvements	Total hours millions
Sport and physical recreation	446.8	788.1	405.1	272.3	184.9	<b>2,087.7</b>	<b>157.5</b>
Welfare/Community	367.2	431.4	210.8	163.6	187.3	<b>1,360.2</b>	<b>141.1</b>
Religious	156.4	403.3	176.3	226.3	183.7	<b>1,146.1</b>	<b>147.6</b>
Education and training	504.1	633.3	172.3	102.3	76.3#	<b>1,492.0</b>	<b>71.2</b>
Health	284.8	194.3	49.9#	63.3#	63.1#	<b>636.4</b>	<b>43.4</b>
Parenting, children and youth	98.4	123.6	46.2#	38.5#	21.8#	<b>337.1</b>	<b>17.9</b>
Arts/Heritage	65.3#	89.7	35.1#	32.9#	18.1#	<b>239.3</b>	<b>18.5</b>
Business/Professional/Union	22.9#	38.2#	44.6#	19.3#	17.0#	<b>139.3</b>	<b>15.9#</b>
Emergency Services	15.4#	54.1	36.1#	61.3#	55.1#	<b>227.2</b>	<b>42.5</b>
Environment/animal welfare	61.1#	94.2	22.6#	35.2	34.1#	<b>247.8</b>	<b>29.4</b>
Other	146.0	312.0	56.2	89.7	80.3	<b>678.3</b>	<b>58.3</b>
<b>Total volunteering involvements</b>	<b>2,180.0</b>	<b>3,142.8</b>	<b>1,266.6</b>	<b>1,075.0</b>	<b>928.0</b>	<b>8,595.7</b>	<b>743.3#</b>
<b>All volunteers</b>	<b>1,015.1</b>	<b>1,824.9</b>	<b>979.7</b>	<b>886.5</b>	<b>1,082.8</b>	<b>5,790.6</b>	<b>743.3#</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 24.1: Volunteering involvements, State/territory, Type of organisation—by annual hours—Estimates ('000)' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

## Time use and volunteering

The Time Use Survey, conducted most recently by the ABS in 2021, is a highly valuable source of information on time spent volunteering, and how this relates to how people in Australia use their time in general. Respondents' volunteer status (i.e., whether or not they volunteered in the past 12 months) was measured through a brief paper survey, which did not provide the extensive prompts included in the General Social Survey. Further, time spent volunteering was measured over a short observation period (two consecutive days) in which respondents provided information about how they used their time using a diary. This means that time spent volunteering outside this window is not represented in the results, even if a respondent volunteers regularly. The tables below show the proportion of people who participated in each activity and the average time spent per day on each activity, by volunteer status (whether they also volunteered in the previous 12 months) where available.

- Women (1:32) and men (1:37) spent a similar amount of time volunteering.
- Women were more likely than men to undertake domestic activities, such as food and drink preparation, shopping, housework, grounds care and gardening, and other activities. Volunteers of either gender were more likely than non-volunteers to undertake domestic activities, though women who volunteered were the most likely cohort by far, with 97.0 per cent undertaking domestic activities in addition to their volunteering, which occupied 3 hours and 29 minutes of their time.
- Women were more likely than men to undertake child care activities. The gender gap in both proportion and time spent on child care was more significant among volunteers than non-volunteers. 31.3 per cent of women who volunteer spent an average of 3 hours and 1 minute on child care, compared to 20.6 per cent of men who volunteer with an average of 1 hour and 49 minutes. Among non-volunteers, 27.0 per cent of women and 21.7 per cent of men spent 3 hours

and 30 minutes and 2 hours and 20 minutes on child care respectively. Overall, volunteers spent less time on child care than non-volunteers.

- Women were more likely than men to engage in social and community interactions. While this gap is also evident among volunteers, volunteers of either gender (67.6 per cent) were more likely than non-volunteers (53.5 per cent) to engage in social and community interactions, and spent more time doing so.
- Women and men with caring responsibilities were more likely to volunteer than those without caring responsibilities. While women (5.1 per cent) were more likely than men (4.7 per cent) to volunteer overall in the Time Use Survey, women with caring responsibilities (6.6 per cent) were less likely than men with caring responsibilities (7.2 per cent) to volunteer. This may suggest women with caring responsibilities face more significant barriers to volunteering than men with caring responsibilities.

Average time spent per day, proportion who participated, 2021

	Proportion who participated in activity			Average time spent per day, of persons who participated in activity		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
<b>Voluntary work activities</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>1:37</b>	<b>1:32</b>	<b>1:34</b>
Voluntary work	2.4	3.1	2.7	2:03	1:59	1:58
Help/favour for friend/neighbour	1.7	1.8	1.8	0:57	0:40	0:49
Travel associated with voluntary work	0.8	1.2	1.0	0:39	0:36	0:35

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

*Work and education activities by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Employment related activities (proportion)</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>42.6</b>
Work	47.2	35.6	48.5	12.6	40.8	45.7	36.0	48.9	7.8	41.0
Job Search	0.8#	1.0	1.4	0.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.4	1.0
Travel associated with employment activities	28.0	22.4	31.3	4.1	25.0	33.6	24.9	35.2	4.6	29.3
<b>Education activities (proportion)</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>2.2#</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Formal education	8.8	10.5	11.1	2.3#	9.4	7.5	7.7	9.2	0.8	7.6
Travel associated with education activities	3.3	5.7	5.3	0.0	4.1	2.5	3.6	3.7	0.1#	3.1
<b>Employment related activities (time spent)</b>	<b>7:25</b>	<b>6:38</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>4:01</b>	<b>7:02</b>	<b>8:26</b>	<b>7:27</b>	<b>8:06</b>	<b>6:00</b>	<b>8:01</b>
Work	7:04	6:09	6:51	3:33	6:38	7:49	6:57	7:30	6:02	7:27
Job Search	0:57#	1:31#	1:08#	0:00	1:08#	2:07#	1:31#	1:56	0:42#	1:54
Travel associated with employment activities	1:03	1:05	1:05	0:32	1:04	1:11	1:07	1:08	1:36#	1:09
<b>Education activities (time spent)</b>	<b>3:30</b>	<b>3:58</b>	<b>4:00</b>	<b>1:06#</b>	<b>3:49</b>	<b>4:32</b>	<b>3:29</b>	<b>4:02</b>	<b>0:59#</b>	<b>3:58</b>
Formal education	3:26	4:22	4:11	1:10#	4:01	4:37	3:38	4:12	1:27#	4:08
Travel associated with education activities	1:02#	0:39	0:44	0:00	0:44	0:36	0:47	0:42	0:13#	0:42

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

*Domestic activities by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Domestic activities (proportion)</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>90.6</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>84.6</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>86.4</b>
Food and drink preparation/service	56.4	77.9	66.5	72.7	67.6	54.9	74.5	62.5	74.2	64.7
Shopping	34.8	44.3	38.2	43.3	39.5	29.8	37.0	32.3	37.4	33.3
Housework	48.8	72.4	57.9	72.9	61.2	41.2	69.5	52.3	67.8	55.2
Grounds care and gardening	15.2	17.8	12.1	32.0	16.8	15.3	12.4	9.8	31.2	13.9
Home and vehicle maintenance	11.4	5.0	7.7	10.6	8.1	9.0	3.9	5.5	10.6	6.4
Household management	41.8	42.2	38.6	54.0	42.0	27.4	33.4	28.1	39.9	30.3
Pet and animal care	16.0	28.3	21.6	25.1	22.5	14.6	21.1	17.6	18.4	17.7
Travel associated with domestic activities	30.1	37.8	33.2	38.8	34.2	24.5	29.2	26.3	29.5	26.8
<b>Domestic activities (time spent)</b>	<b>2:52</b>	<b>3:29</b>	<b>3:00</b>	<b>3:58</b>	<b>3:13</b>	<b>2:34</b>	<b>3:21</b>	<b>2:45</b>	<b>3:52</b>	<b>2:59</b>
Food and drink preparation/service	0:50	1:03	0:57	1:01	0:58	0:51	1:05	0:56	1:09	0:59
Shopping	0:51	1:04	0:57	1:04	0:58	0:58	1:04	0:58	1:16	1:02
Housework	0:58	1:25	1:15	1:17	1:15	0:58	1:27	1:15	1:18	1:16
Grounds care and gardening	1:41	1:10	1:14	1:34	1:23	1:39	1:12	1:28	1:24	1:26
Home and vehicle maintenance	2:10	0:42	1:38#	1:47	1:42	1:41	0:44	1:15	1:43	1:24
Household management	0:46	0:47	0:41	1:00	0:46	0:47	0:43	0:42	0:56	0:45
Pet and animal care	0:47	0:40	0:44	0:41	0:43	0:42	0:44	0:41	0:50	0:43
Travel associated with domestic activities	0:51	0:42	0:46	0:47	0:46	0:47	0:45	0:46	0:46	0:46

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

*Child care activities by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Child care activities (proportion)</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>24.5</b>
Physical and emotional care of children	9.1	20.9	18.7	3.3	15.2	11.4	20.0	18.9	2.1	15.7
Teaching/helping/rep rimanding children	2.2	5.4	4.5	0.3#	3.8	1.3	2.7	2.4	0.0	2.0
Playing/reading/talkin g with child	8.8	15.8	13.9	7.6	12.4	12.1	15.4	16.2	3.9	13.9
Minding child	3.8	7.9	5.9	5.1	5.9	5.7	8.0	7.6	2.7	6.8
Accompanying child to school or extra- curricular activities	1.6	4.7	3.5	1.0#	2.9	0.9	1.7	1.6	0.1#	1.4
Feeding and food preparation for children	5.9	13.0	12.0	1.1	9.6	4.2	11.0	9.0	1.6	7.6
Travel associated with child care activities	11.7	17.5	17.7	3.7	14.8	8.5	13.2	12.6	3.1	10.7
<b>Child care activities (time spent)</b>	<b>1:49</b>	<b>3:01</b>	<b>2:33</b>	<b>2:28#</b>	<b>2:34</b>	<b>2:20</b>	<b>3:30</b>	<b>3:01</b>	<b>2:19</b>	<b>2:59</b>
Physical and emotional care of children	0:53	1:35	1:19	3:00#	1:23	0:49	1:23	1:11	1:03	1:11
Teaching/helping/rep rimanding children	0:40#	0:32	0:36	0:19#	0:36	1:03	0:59	0:58	0:20#	0:58
Playing/reading/talkin g with child	0:54	1:05	0:56	1:19#	1:01	1:14	1:23	1:20	1:06	1:20
Minding child	1:11	1:17	0:58	2:18#	1:14	2:29	1:52	2:06	2:07#	2:07
Accompanying child to school or extra- curricular activities	1:55#	1:31	1:31	0:51#	1:31	1:44	0:50	1:06	4:01#	1:08
Feeding and food preparation for children	0:37	0:45	0:43	0:12#	0:42	0:33	1:03	0:55	0:43#	0:54
Travel associated with child care activities	0:55	1:07	1:02	1:28#	1:03	0:47	1:00	0:55	0:59	0:55

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

*Adult care activities by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Adult care activities (proportion)</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Physical care for adults (sick, with disability or aged)	1.1	3.6	2.3	2.8	2.4	1.3	3.5	1.9	4.4	2.4
Travel associated with adult care activities	1.0#	1.9	0.9	3.5	1.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.6	1.0
<b>Adult care activities (time spent)</b>	<b>1:36</b>	<b>1:15</b>	<b>1:10</b>	<b>1:36</b>	<b>1:20</b>	<b>1:17</b>	<b>1:37</b>	<b>1:34</b>	<b>1:32</b>	<b>1:31</b>
Physical care for adults (sick, with disability or aged)	0:37#	0:49	0:54	0:25#	0:49	0:39	1:14	1:08	0:54#	1:05
Travel associated with adult care activities	1:21#	0:50	0:59	1:00#	0:58	1:09#	0:37	0:50	0:59#	0:53

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], *How Australians Use Their Time, Australia*; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], *How Australians Use Their Time, Australia*

*Social and community interaction by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Social and community interaction (proportion)</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>71.7</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>53.5</b>
Social Interaction	45.2	60.9	52.2	57.8	53.6	36.4	47.9	41.9	43.9	42.1
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	3.0	2.0	2.3	2.2#	2.2	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5
Eating and drinking out	17.5	19.4	18.6	16.5	18.1	12.9	15.1	13.8	15.1	14.1
Religious or cultural practices	12.7	10.1	11.9	8.5	11.0	2.1	3.4	2.4	3.7	2.6
Community participation	1.6#	3.8	2.5	3.4	3.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.7
Travel associated with social and community interaction	29.4	27.6	27.9	31.8	28.5	18.5	23.1	21.3	19.5	20.9
<b>Social and community interaction (time spent)</b>	<b>2:24</b>	<b>2:02</b>	<b>2:12</b>	<b>2:15</b>	<b>2:12</b>	<b>1:57</b>	<b>2:00</b>	<b>1:59</b>	<b>1:57</b>	<b>1:59</b>
Social Interaction	1:39	1:25	1:31	1:30	1:30	1:30	1:29	1:30	1:25	1:29
Visiting entertainment and cultural venues	1:26	2:18#	2:06	0:56#	1:52	2:25	1:34	2:03	1:46#	1:58
Eating and drinking out	1:04	1:09	1:04	1:10	1:05	1:14	1:15	1:14	1:11	1:14
Religious or cultural practices	1:37	1:11	1:23	1:24	1:23	1:25#	1:11	1:14	1:19	1:15
Community participation	0:53#	0:51	0:45#	1:10	0:49	1:03#	1:44#	0:40#	3:03#	1:27#
Travel associated with social and community interaction	1:00	0:50	0:53	0:59	0:55	0:52	0:55	0:53	0:59	0:53

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia



*Recreation and leisure activities by volunteer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021*

Primary activity	Did unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months					Did not do unpaid voluntary work in last 12 months				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Recreation and leisure (proportion)</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>93.1</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>92.9</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>93.2</b>
Exercise, sport and outdoor activity	37.5	37.3	36.6	38.6	37.4	28.1	28.6	27.7	30.4	28.2
Reading	24.9	31.2	22.4	49.2	28.1	16.4	23.6	15.0	40.2	19.9
Playing games and puzzles	5.5	4.5	4.1	8.2	4.9	4.6	5.7	3.7	10.9	5.1
Digital games	15.8	6.9	11.4	9.1	11.0	13.3	5.2	10.4	4.4	9.2
Watching TV and video	72.0	69.9	65.1	90.3	70.6	76.4	76.8	72.7	93.3	76.5
Listening to music, radio, podcast	9.0	12.9	9.1	17.2	11.1	7.6	8.6	6.3	15.4	8.0
General internet and device use	37.8	47.7	42.3	45.9	42.9	31.6	36.4	35.3	28.9	33.9
Participation in non-formal courses	1.6	0.8	0.8#	0.7#	1.0	0.3#	0.2#	0.3	0.3#	0.2#
Relaxing	13.0	13.7	13.0	14.7	13.3	12.6	15.9	12.9	19.6	14.1
Hobbies and arts	8.1	9.5	6.8	15.6	8.8	3.5	6.0	4.0	7.7	4.8
Travel associated with recreation and leisure	15.8	16.5	16.7	14.4	15.8	10.6	8.5	9.7	9.1	9.5
<b>Recreation and leisure (time spent)</b>	<b>4:43</b>	<b>3:52</b>	<b>3:52</b>	<b>5:35</b>	<b>4:16</b>	<b>4:49</b>	<b>4:04</b>	<b>4:02</b>	<b>6:05</b>	<b>4:27</b>
Exercise, sport and outdoor activity	1:51	1:17	1:35	1:29	1:34	1:37	1:16	1:26	1:29	1:26
Reading	1:17	1:11	1:07	1:26	1:14	1:33	1:26	1:29	1:32	1:30
Playing games and puzzles	1:18	1:06#	1:15#	1:01	1:09	1:52	1:27	1:53	1:15	1:38
Digital games	2:50#	1:15	2:36	1:04#	2:20	2:37	1:32	2:25	1:23	2:19
Watching TV and video	2:50	2:22	2:21	3:13	2:35	3:15	2:47	2:44	3:58	3:01
Listening to music, radio, podcast	0:37	0:35	0:28	0:52	0:36	0:53	0:51	0:41	1:12	0:51
General internet and device use	1:04	0:49	0:55	0:56	0:55	1:14	0:56	1:04	1:06	1:04

Participation in non-formal courses	1:03#	1:08#	1:02#	1:19#	1:07#	1:12#	1:16#	1:10#	1:25#	1:21#
Relaxing	1:02	0:57	0:57	0:58	0:57	1:15	1:11	1:13	1:13	1:14
Hobbies and arts	1:41	1:27	1:31	1:41	1:36	1:56	1:41	1:41	1:54	1:46
Travel associated with recreation and leisure	0:43	0:41	0:43	0:34	0:42	1:01	0:51	0:56	0:58	0:57

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 10.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by volunteer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

Volunteering and carer status, proportion who participated and time spent (hh:mm) participating, 2021

Primary activity	Provided care to another person					Did not provide care to another person				
	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons	Males	Females	15 to 64 years	65+ years	Persons
<b>Proportion that participated in voluntary work activities</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Voluntary work	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.2	3.2	2.2	5.0	2.6
Help/favour for friend/neighbour	3.1	3.4	2.4	6.9	3.6	1.5	1.6	1.4	2.5	1.5
Travel associated with voluntary work	1.3	1.9	1.0	2.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.9
<b>Time spent on voluntary work activities</b>	<b>1:08#</b>	<b>1:04</b>	<b>1:21</b>	<b>0:43</b>	<b>1:09</b>	<b>1:44</b>	<b>1:40</b>	<b>1:28</b>	<b>2:14</b>	<b>1:42</b>
Voluntary work	1:36#	1:53	1:56	1:07#	1:48	2:07	1:59	1:51	2:15	1:59
Help/favour for friend/neighbour	0:25#	0:28	0:26#	0:29#	0:26#	1:07	0:46#	0:49	1:15#	0:57
Travel associated with voluntary work	0:54#	0:14#	0:26#	0:35#	0:27#	0:38	0:44	0:34	0:56	0:39

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 9.1 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Proportion who participated, by carer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2022) 'Table 9.3 Persons aged 15 years and over, Primary activity, Average time spent per day of persons who participated, by carer status' [data set], How Australians Use Their Time, Australia

## Volunteer involving organisations and recruitment

### Volunteer recruitment

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that:

- word of mouth referrals (89 per cent) and personal approaches (69 per cent) were the most widely used methods for recruiting volunteers. Both were rated as highly effective by organisations
- recruitment via an organisation's own website was also prominently used (75 per cent) but was viewed as being less effective. Referrals from volunteering peak bodies and recruitment through corporate volunteering programs/initiatives were viewed as less effective for recruitment.

#### Recruitment methods used by volunteer involving organisations, 2022

<i>Recruitment method</i>	<i>Proportion of organisations</i>
Word of mouth	89%
Organisation's website	75%
Personal approaches	69%
Social media	66%
Promotional events	44%
GoVolunteer/SEEK Volunteer	35%
Traditional media	34%
Referral from VSS/Peak	30%
Corporate volunteering	16%
Employment Service Provider	14%
Religious organisations	11%
Other	8%

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Organisation Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research also found that demand for volunteers was significant in Australia, and varied by sector. 83 per cent of surveyed volunteer involving organisations reported that their organisations need more volunteers immediately or in the near future. Of these organisations, most reported that they needed between 1 and 20 volunteers. Alarmingly, 11 per cent of organisations reported that they needed more than 101 volunteers in the short-term.

Data from the Viktor database also shows that on-line recruitment is particularly strong in the community services sector.

On-line volunteer recruitment, 2019

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of advertisements</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Ratio of applications to positions (x:1)</b>
Community service	4,604	34%	14
Other	2,657	19%	14
Seniors	2,259	17%	9
Disability Services	999	7%	9
Education	794	6%	15
Young people	743	5%	16
Health	633	5%	32
Environment and conservation	506	4%	18
Arts & culture	262	2%	23
Emergency response	151	1%	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,608</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>210,209</b>
	<b>advertisements</b>		<b>applications</b>

Source: Viktor data set, on-line recruitment, 2019

## Volunteer training

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that most volunteer involving organisations (84 per cent) provide training for their volunteers. According to the 2020 Volunteer Management Progress Report, most volunteer training happens on the job or is classroom based.

How volunteer training takes place, 2020

<b>Type of training</b>	<b>Proportion (%) who offer</b>
On the job	71
Classroom based	63
Paper based (worksheets, reading)	44
Peer mentoring	38
Email	25
Online courses	20
Recorded videos (You Tube etc.)	19
Webinars or video chats	8
Online platform	4
Social media (Facebook group etc.)	3
Average hours volunteer induction and orientation	14 hours

Source: Volunteer Management Progress Report, Johnson T, 2020 (international data)<sup>27</sup>

## Corporate volunteering

Corporate or employee volunteering is defined as allowing staff to engage in unpaid work for a community organisation during work hours for a wider societal benefit, and for the possible benefit of the volunteer and for the corporation.<sup>28</sup>

According to the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research, only 30 per cent of organisations reported that they involved employee/corporate volunteers. Employee volunteering appears more common among Animal Welfare, Environment, Disability, and Community Services / Welfare / Homelessness organisations. By contrast, Religious / Faith-Based / Spiritual, Sport / Recreation, and Emergency Services / Disaster Relief organisations were the least likely to involve employee volunteers. Organisations that did not engage employee/corporate volunteers were asked why, and responses are included below.

How organisations connect with employee/corporate volunteers, 2022

<i>How organisations connect with employee/corporate volunteers</i>	<i>Proportion (%) of organisations</i>
<i>Through corporate networks</i>	28
<i>Through personal connections</i>	18
<i>Word of mouth</i>	17
<i>Volunteering support services/volunteering peak body</i>	14
<i>Online sources (such as researching a website)</i>	6
<i>Other</i>	17

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Organisation Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>

Reasons for not involving employee/corporate volunteers, 2022

<i>Reason for not involving employee/corporate volunteers</i>	<i>Proportion (%) of organisations</i>
<i>It's too time consuming</i>	7
<i>We don't know how to get employee volunteers on board</i>	15
<i>We don't have the appropriate volunteering opportunities for employee volunteers</i>	53
<i>Other</i>	25

Source: Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Organisation Perspective. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>

A 2019 survey found 78% of companies have a volunteering program, with 15% of employees participating in corporate volunteering.

Corporate volunteering, 2019

<i>Findings</i>	<i>Proportion/estimate</i>
<i>Companies that have a volunteering program</i>	78%
<i>Employees who participated in corporate volunteering</i>	15%
<i>Amount contributed by corporate volunteers (cash, employee time, in-kind and management costs)</i>	Over 1,000,000 hours Average 27.5 hours per volunteer
<i>Proportion of corporate community budget in time</i>	10%
<i>Available FTEs not utilised in corporate volunteering</i>	500 FTE per annum

Source: LBG Corporate Citizenship and Volunteering Australia, 2019<sup>29</sup>

## The value of volunteering

### Economic value

Estimates of the economic value of volunteering vary significantly depending on the valuation method used. The most common method is the monetary value of volunteers' time based on a notional hourly wage rate. Many organisations use the average hourly part-time wage of a person of their age in their state or territory of residence, plus 15% employer on-costs (inclusive of superannuation, payroll tax and administration expenses). However, different figures may be used for the amount of voluntary work being done, the hourly wage rate, and projections of future growth in volunteering. There is also a broader debate about how to calculate a dollar figure for the social and cultural value of volunteering.

In the 2012-13 National Accounts, volunteering for non-profit institutions was estimated to have an imputed value of **\$17.3 billion**.

*Non-profit institutions volunteering hours and value, Australian National Accounts, 2012-13*

<i>Non-Profit Institutions</i>	<i>Estimate</i>
<i>Number of organisations</i>	56 894
<i>Income</i>	\$107.5 billion
<i>Assets</i>	\$176.0 billion
<i>Employment</i>	1,081,900 persons
<i>Volunteers</i>	3,882,300 persons
<i>Volunteering hours</i>	520.5 million hours
<i>Imputed value of volunteer services (replacement cost methodology)<sup>30</sup></i>	\$17.3 billion

Source: Australian National Accounts: Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account, 2012-13

Note: Non-profit institutions (NPIs) surveyed by the ABS in this report were those registered with the ATO.

### ABS Satellite Accounts 2006-07

The contribution of the volunteer workforce was estimated in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account to provide over \$14.6 billion of unpaid labour to not-for-profit organisations in 2006-07.

In addition to official reporting, there have been a number of further reports on volunteering, which have sought to produce a more comprehensive valuation of the contributions and costs of volunteering. These include methods used by Duncan Ironmonger (in 1998) and Lisel O'Dwyer (2013) to calculate the value of volunteering in Australia, and the Institute for Project Management (IPM) (2014, 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021) to calculate the value of volunteering at the state and territory level. A review of the value of volunteering, including methods to calculate its economic value, is due to be published later in 2024.

### Social and community value

Analysis of the 2010 GSS showed that volunteers were much more likely to be involved in other aspects of community life than non-volunteers.<sup>31</sup>

- Volunteers (81.8%) were more likely than non-volunteers (55.2%) to have attended a community event recently.

- Volunteers (44.4%) were much more likely than non-volunteers (15.1%) to have ever provided a service or activity in their local area.
- 62.2% of volunteers agreed (either strongly or somewhat) that most people could be trusted, compared with 49.5% of non-volunteers.
- 82% of volunteers were delighted, pleased or mostly satisfied with their lives, compared to 75% of non-volunteers.
- People who volunteered through an organisation (64%) were more likely to provide informal assistance to someone outside their own household than non-volunteers (41%).

*How volunteers and non-volunteers contribute to community life, 2010*

<i>Participation in community life</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Non-volunteers</i>
<i>Attend a community event in last 6 months</i>	81.8%	55.2%
<i>Ever provided a service in their local area</i>	44.4%	15.1%
<i>Agreed that most people could be trusted</i>	62.2%	49.5%
<i>Feel able to have a say in the community on important issues all or most of the time</i>	33.5%	26.5%
<i>Delighted or pleased with their lives</i>	47.9%	40.7%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 7 PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER, Volunteer status by sex and age by community involvement, trust and life satisfaction–2010' [data set], Voluntary Work, Australia

## Financial costs

About half of all volunteers reported incurring costs to volunteer, with the most common being travel and phone.

*Financial costs of volunteering, 2014*

<i>Expenses personally incurred as a result of volunteering</i>	<i>Proportion (%)</i>
<i>All volunteers incurring expenses</i>	52.6
<i>Phone calls</i>	32.1
<i>Postage</i>	7.6
<i>Travel costs</i>	4.5
<i>Meals</i>	41.5
<i>Other</i>	13.8
<i>No expenses</i>	4.9
<i>Expenditure reimbursement available (all volunteers – incl. those not incurring)</i>	6.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2015) 'Table 23.1: Persons who volunteered in the last 12 months, Selected characteristics of voluntary work–By state/territory–Estimates ('000) and Proportions (%)' [data set], General Social Survey, Australia

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that just over half (54 per cent) of volunteers incurred out of pocket expenses through their volunteering role. Amongst volunteers who incurred expenses, only 14.5 per cent were reimbursed in full and 13.0 per cent were reimbursed in part. By contrast, 41.0 per cent of volunteers who incurred expenses through their volunteering role indicated that reimbursement was not available or offered.

The remaining 31.5 per cent of volunteers who incurred expenses did not apply for reimbursement even though it was offered. Further, among those who incurred costs, the average amount that volunteers spent

personally on volunteering over the past 12 months (after reimbursement) was \$582.83.

*Expenses and reimbursement, per cent of volunteers, April 2022*

<i>Expenses personally incurred as a result of volunteering</i>	<i>Proportion (%)</i>
<i>I had no expenses</i>	46.2
<i>I had expenses but reimbursement was not available or offered</i>	22.1
<i>I had expenses but did not apply for reimbursement even though it was offered</i>	17.0
<i>My expenses were reimbursed in full</i>	7.8
<i>My expenses were reimbursed in part</i>	7.0

Source: *Volunteering in Australia 2022: The Volunteer Perspective*. <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>

## Trends in volunteering

### National

The rate of volunteering through an organisation or group has declined over time. Rates of volunteering have been gradually declining from around one-third of adults in 2002 to around one-quarter in 2022. Both men and women are volunteering at lower rates.

In the 2019 GSS, more females (43.1%) reported 'Always' or 'Often' feeling rushed for time than males (35.8%). This trend is stable over time, with similar data reported in the 2014 GSS<sup>32</sup> and the 2020 GSS.<sup>33</sup> According to the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research, work and family commitments were the most common reason for not volunteering, reported by 40.8 per cent of non-volunteers. Women were more likely than men to give work and family commitments as a reason for not volunteering – 46.3 per cent of women and 35.6 per cent of men.

Volunteers contributed 596.2 million hours to the community in 2019. This is a 20% decrease in the total number of volunteering hours from 2014 (743.3 million hours). In 2020, this number fell further to 489.5 million hours—a decrease of 18%. Recent research has found that although the proportion of people who volunteer has increased in 2023, the total number of volunteering hours has remained stable.<sup>34</sup>

Formal volunteering was already declining before COVID-19. Other changes in the volunteering landscape, such as increases in administrative requirements or increased interest in 'informal' volunteering, do not emerge as major contributors to this trend in the data. According to the Volunteering in Australia 2022 research, only 6.0 per cent of non-volunteers indicated that they did not volunteer due to onerous paperwork or administrative requirements. While informal volunteering likely increased between 2020 and 2022, there is no evidence that it has increased in the longer term, with comparison to earlier data suggesting that it did not increase between 2016 and 2022.

Over the longer-term, the rate of youth volunteering has been gradually increasing. According to Census data, there was an increase in volunteering amongst young adults (15–24 years) between 2006 to 2016, but



then a big drop between 2016 and 2021, partly due to the impact of COVID-19. The rate of volunteering among people aged 18–24 years has not shown signs of recovery in 2022.

The review of the Volunteer Management Activity undertaken for the Department of Social Services highlighted several ways in which the volunteering landscape in Australia is changing:<sup>35</sup>

- The population is ageing, the workforce is contracting, and people are more discerning about how they want to volunteer their time.
- There is growing demand for services that traditionally rely heavily on volunteers to supplement government funding (such as community, aged care, and disability support services).
- Government programs are encouraging volunteering to engage people experiencing disadvantage, for example to meet mutual obligation requirements or to help build skills and relationships for people living with a disability.
- Information technology is providing new opportunities for people to find a volunteering opportunity that suits their interests and circumstances, and to volunteer in different ways.

The term ‘new volunteerism’ has been used to portray how volunteering is becoming more episodic, more self-oriented in volunteer motivations and taking place with weaker organisational attachments.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the potential of volunteering to promote social innovation and strengthen people-state relationships, especially in developing countries, is increasingly acknowledged.<sup>37</sup>

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that there are substantial mismatches between the types of activities that current volunteers undertake and the types of activities that non-volunteers would consider. The most common potential future activity given is working with animals / fostering animals (28.5 per cent of non-volunteers), whereas just 4.4 per cent of current volunteers are with this type of organisation. Amongst non-volunteers, 14.3 per cent said they would consider counselling / help line / mediation as their preferred activity, whereas only 6.5 per cent of current volunteers were engaged in this type of role.<sup>38</sup>

## COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of volunteering through an organisation or group in Australia fell sharply from 29.5% in 2019 to 24.8% in 2020. A study on the impact of COVID-19 on volunteering found that only slightly more than half (56.4 per cent) of those who stopped volunteering in 2020 resumed in the 12 months leading up to April 2021, despite the easing of lockdowns and social distancing restrictions in many jurisdictions in Australia at that time.<sup>39</sup> The Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey found a further decrease in formal volunteering, from 25.9 per cent before March 2020 to 20.6 per cent in March 2021.<sup>40</sup> However, the rate of informal volunteering remained steady at 32.1% in 2020, compared to 33.4% in 2019. The rate of formal volunteering increased to 26.7 per cent in 2022 and 36.0 per cent in 2023.

The number of people who volunteered online increased from 8.5 per cent in 2019 to 17.3 per cent in 2020. Further, of those who indicated that online volunteering was available in their organisation or group, 75.6 per cent participated in online volunteering.

The effects of COVID-19 have been particularly significant for certain demographic groups. According to the Volunteering in Australia research, the rate of volunteering fell among women and men, and across age

groups. The biggest decline was amongst those aged 45 to 54 years, with an almost halving of the rate of volunteering for this age group (a drop from 39.4 to 21.4 per cent). Between April 2021 and April 2022 for all age groups there was either no change or a small increase in volunteering rates. The rate of volunteering in April 2022 was lower than the pre-COVID-19 rate for all age groups.

- Amongst those respondents in April 2020 who said that they stopped volunteering due to COVID-19, by April 2022:
  - o 50.9 per cent of women had recommenced volunteering compared to 39.3 per cent of men;
  - o 35.6 per cent of those born overseas in a non-English speaking country recommenced volunteering, compared to 49.7 per cent of those born in Australia;
  - o 38.2 per cent of those who reported financial difficulties recommenced volunteering compared to 49.4 per cent of those who did not.
- People were particularly likely to have stopped volunteering due to COVID-19 if they were involved in organisations with a focus on Disability (49.8 per cent), Arts / Heritage (42.9 per cent), Environment (42.2 per cent), Aged Care (42.2 per cent), and Mental Health (40.9 per cent). In comparison, only 26.3 per cent of those volunteering for organisations with a focus on Emergency Services / Disaster Relief stopped volunteering due to COVID-19.

Volunteer involving organisations have been significantly affected by these changes. According to the 2021 Pulse of the For-Purpose Sector survey, 31 per cent of organisations that engage volunteers indicated that they had fewer volunteers than six months prior. A similar rate was found in the 2020 survey. When asked, the vast majority of for-purpose organisations that engage volunteers indicated that they needed volunteers (84%), and that they were experiencing a demand for volunteer-led services (59%).<sup>41</sup>

## Global

The following global trends in volunteering policy and practice have been identified:<sup>42</sup>

- Concern for the effects of time pressure on individuals
- Variations in the definition and value of volunteering from country to country
- Demographic changes and volunteer programs that concentrate on the extremes of the age continuum
- The importance of pluralistic approaches to recruitment, engagement and management
- Recognition of the role of volunteering in building community, reciprocity, social solidarity and citizenship
- The role of information technology in volunteering

Volunteering has undertaken significant digital advances over the last decade.

Deployment of digital tools, 2020 and 2021

<i>Digital tools for volunteer management on a regular basis</i>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Online Application Forms	63.4	62.1
Broadcast Emails/Newsletters	54.1	60.0
Volunteer Opportunity Listings	73.4	59.9
Video Meetings/Conferencing	15.7	54.7
Online Volunteer Training	31.7	53.4
Time Tracking	50.5	46.5
Background Screening	45.3	41.4
Shift Scheduling/Check-In	40.9	40.5
Online Document Sharing	34.3	36.8
Automated Drip Email Campaigns	6.0	22.1
Broadcast Group Texts	13.6	17.3
Discussion Forum/Chat	11.1	15.6
Online Collaboration/Editing	13.6	15.3

Source: Volunteer Management Progress Report, Johnson T, 2020<sup>43</sup>; Volunteer Management Progress Report, Johnson T, 2021

The Volunteering in Australia 2022 research found that just over half (51 per cent) of organisations indicated that they use technology to manage their volunteers, 41 per cent indicated that they did not use technology, and the remaining 8 per cent of respondents were unsure. There was considerable variability in the adoption of technology to manage volunteers by sector, with technology being more widely adopted within the Emergency Services / Disaster Relief, Health, Animal Welfare, and Education / Training sectors, and less widely adopted by Cultural / Ethnic groups, Environment, Aged Care, and Sport / Recreation organisations.

## Challenges for volunteer managers

The challenges for volunteer management have stayed remarkably consistent in recent years (prior to the COVID19 pandemic).

Volunteer management challenges, 2016 - 2023

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
1	Recruitment (25%)	Recruitment (24%)	Recruitment (31%)	Recruitment (33%)	Recruitment (30%)	Supervision (18%)	Recruitment (28%)	Recruitment (33%)
2	Support and buy-in (9%)	Respect & reliability (16%)	Respect and buy-in (14%)	Respect and buy-in (13%)	Respect and buy-in (13%)	Retention (16%)	Change management (13%)	Time (14%)
3	Time (9%)	Roles & matching (9%)	Retention (8%)	Retention (9%)	Time (11%)	Recruitment (16%)	Supervision (11%)	Respect and buy-in (10%)
4	Financial investment (7%)	Retention (8%)	Roles and matching (10%)	Roles and matching (9%)	Roles and matching (12%)	Roles and matching (12%)	Retention (10%)	Roles and matching (10%)
5	Retention (6%)	Time (8%)	Time (8%)	Time (7%)	Retention (9%)	Change management (9%)	Respect and buy-in (9%)	Supervision (7%)

Source: Volunteer Management Progress Report, Johnson T, 2023<sup>44</sup>

As part of the Volunteering in Australia research, volunteer involving organisations were asked about a series of circumstances that might be affecting their organisations. Organisations reported their top three negative challenges as recent events in Australia putting their operations under financial strain, volunteers having less time to commit and their volunteering programs yet to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Spontaneous volunteering

Spontaneous volunteers are people who are not affiliated with recognised volunteer agencies, and may not have relevant training, skills or experience, but seek out or are invited to contribute their assistance to various volunteering opportunities.<sup>45</sup> National data on spontaneous volunteering in Australia can be difficult to assess.

Following Victoria's 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, more than 22,000 potential spontaneous volunteers offered their help online, via the Go Volunteer website, and by a phone hotline managed by the Victorian Government.<sup>46</sup>

A surge in interest from the public has occurred in support of the emergency COVID-19 response. In partnership with their relevant Governments, the State and Territory peak bodies for volunteering have established registration and matching platforms to organise assistance from spontaneous volunteers. For example, Volunteering Queensland in partnership with the Queensland Government received over 28,000 registrations for the 'Care Army'.<sup>47</sup>

## Volunteering in charities and the wider not-for-profit sector

The ACNC Australian Charities Report 9<sup>th</sup> Edition reported that:<sup>48</sup>

- Charities employ 1.42 million people in the 2021 reporting period.
- 3.2 million people volunteer for Australian charities. This is a decrease from 3.4 million in the 2020 reporting period, and 3.77 million in the 2018 reporting period.
- More than half of all charities (50%) operated without any paid staff.

In 2010, the Productivity Commission estimated that there were around 600,000 not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) in Australia.<sup>49</sup>

In 2006-07, over 4.6 million Australians volunteered with the NFP sector (out of a total of 5.2 million volunteers).<sup>50</sup>

Around two-thirds of these volunteers worked for small NFPs that do not have paid employees.<sup>51</sup> Volunteers provided 623 million hours of work to the NFP sector (equivalent to 317,000 full-time positions).<sup>52</sup>

## Volunteering in regional, remote, and rural Australia

According to the 'Heartbeat of Rural Australia Research Study' by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR), over half of all community organisations in regional, remote, and rural Australia employ no

paid staff and are run primarily by volunteers. Volunteering in regional, remote, and rural Australia was also significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Approximately a third of community organisations have either reduced volunteer hours, lost volunteers altogether to illness, isolation, relocation or caring responsibilities, or lost them due to a lack of need, as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Conversely, some report that volunteers are working more to deal with demand (22%), and that they are recruiting or trying to recruit more volunteers (25%).
- Three-quarters of respondents who had tried to recruit new volunteers indicated that it has become more difficult over the last 18 months (75%).
- Of those who indicated that their volunteer cohort has changed over the last 18 months, by far the biggest concern is that current volunteers were getting older and looking to retire. For some, this desire has been accelerated by COVID-19, with many feeling unsafe about returning to volunteering.
- Organisations with lower turnover were far more likely to “struggle to meet operational costs, let alone have money to spend on technology”. They were more reliant on volunteers using their own devices to meet organisational needs, rather than funding it as a business.
- In general, volunteer-only organisations were significantly less likely to be using most forms of digital technology than were their counterparts with paid employees, with the largest difference being in their use of video conferencing (41% vs. 83%).

## Sources of data on volunteering

### On volunteers

- General Social Survey
  - 2002
  - 2006
  - 2010
  - 2014
  - 2019
  - 2020
- Census 2021
- Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey
  - March 2021 (full module on unpaid voluntary work)
  - June 2021 (full time-series [before 1 March 2020 to June 2021]—includes rates of formal and informal volunteering)
- State of Volunteering (for detailed data at the state and territory level, available for most jurisdictions)
- Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
- ANUPoll 46 (April 2021)

- [Giving Australia 2016](#)

### **By demographic**

- [Youth](#)
  - [Mission Australia Youth Survey](#)
- [Migrants](#)
  - [Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants, Release 5 \(Waves 1-5\)](#)
- [Australians in regional, remote, and rural communities](#)
  - [The Heartbeat of Rural Australia Research Study](#)

### **By sector**

- Aged care
  - [Aged Care Workforce Census 2016](#)
  - [Aged Care Workforce Census 2020](#)
- Arts and heritage
  - [The State of the Arts Survey \(House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts report\)](#)
- Disability support
  - [NDS Workforce Census](#)
- Emergency management
  - [Report on Government Services 2021 D: Emergency Management](#)
- Mental health
  - [State of the Nation in Suicide Prevention 2021](#)
- Sports
  - [AusPlay Survey](#)
- All sectors (data on volunteers broken down by sector)
  - [Australian Charities Report Data \(includes volunteers in ACNC-registered charities and not-for-profit organisations only\)](#)
  - [Pulse of the For-Purpose Sector](#)

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- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/latest-release#voluntary-work-and-unpaid-work-support>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/contact/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/definition-of-volunteering/>
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- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2023-11/nsw-state-of-volunteering-report-2023.pdf>, 5
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- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/census>
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- <sup>16</sup> <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>, 31-33
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- <sup>27</sup> [Volunteer Progress Report 2020.pdf](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteer-Progress-Report-2020.pdf)
- <sup>28</sup> The Allen Consulting Group *Global Trends in Skill-based Volunteering, report prepared for NAB*, The Allen Consulting Group, 2007, p1.
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- <sup>30</sup> Refer for more information on valuation methodology and options <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/5256.0Appendix62012-13>
- <sup>31</sup> Voluntary Work Australia 2010, op. cit., p.26-27
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