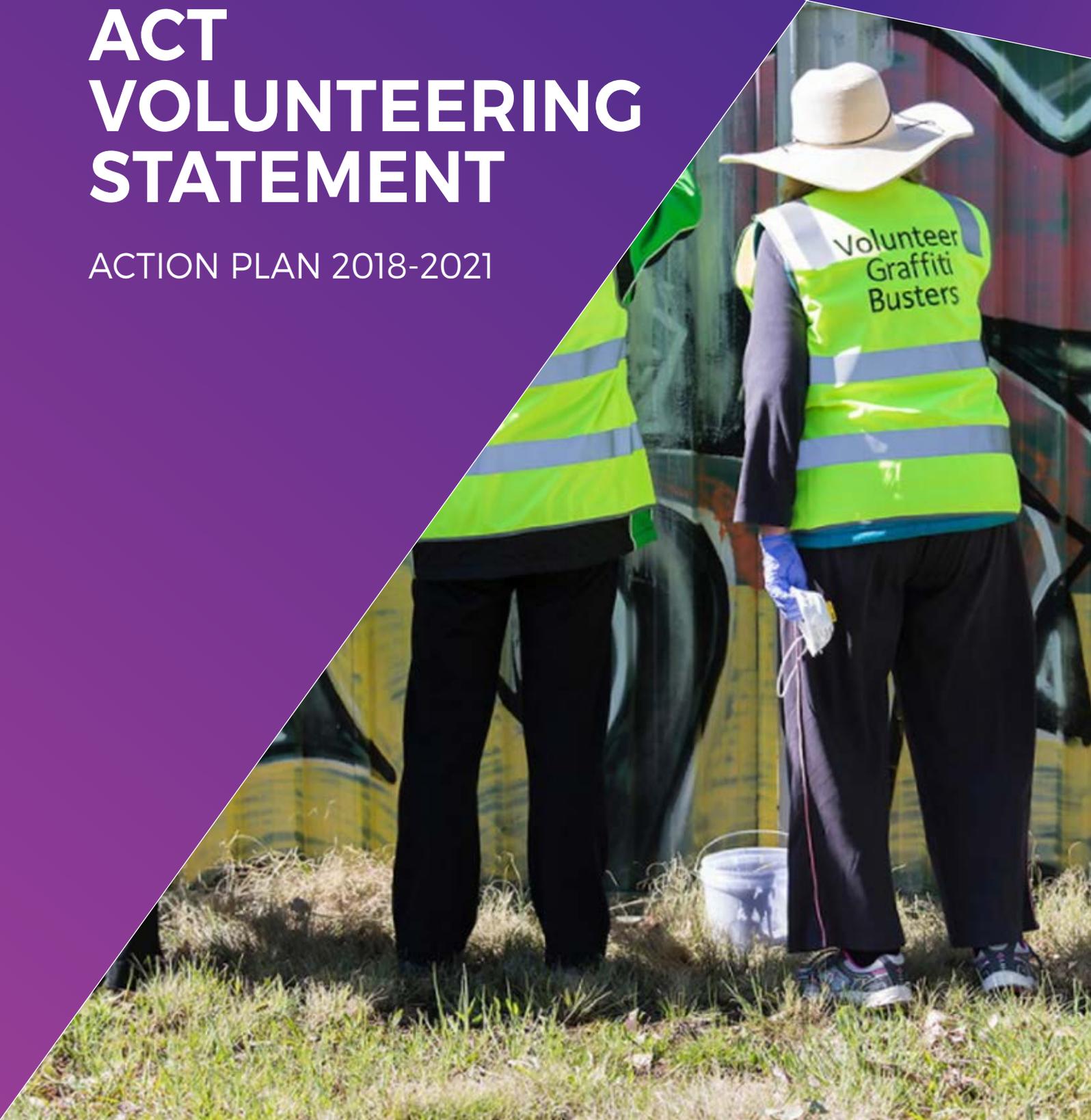




**ACT**  
Government

# ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT

ACTION PLAN 2018-2021



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Australian Capital Territory is Ngunnawal Country. The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region. The region was also an important meeting place and significant to other Aboriginal groups. The ACT Government acknowledges the historical dispossession and its continuing legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and also acknowledges their vital ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

# CONTENTS

MINISTER'S FOREWORD . . . . .	4
VOLUNTEERING SNAPSHOT . . . . .	5
PURPOSE . . . . .	9
ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT 2017 . . . . .	10
CONSULTATION . . . . .	12
IMPLEMENTATION . . . . .	12
REPORTING AND EVALUATION . . . . .	12
ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018-2021 . . . . .	13

# MINISTER'S FOREWORD



## VOLUNTEERING ENRICHES OUR COMMUNITY

Volunteers make our city stronger, fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable. Every week, thousands of people give their time to help others, organise local sports and cultural activities, and protect and preserve our natural heritage.

In 2017, the ACT Government refreshed the ACT Volunteering Statement, outlining principles to ensure volunteering is recognised, valuable, diverse and supported.

The ACT Volunteering Action Plan 2018-2021 (Action Plan) was developed through an extensive consultation process to support the ACT Volunteering Statement. It draws on the initiatives and ideas of hundreds of people across the city – everyday Canberrans as well as community organisations.

The Action Plan is a whole-of-government and community approach to supporting and recognising volunteers. The actions set out in the plan support the four principles of the Volunteering Statement.

The Action Plan identifies initiatives and activities that will support individuals to volunteer, increase awareness of volunteering opportunities, and provide volunteer involving organisations with access to resources to facilitate effective, safe and sustainable volunteer involvement.

The value of volunteering cannot be understated.

I look forward to seeing even more Canberrans volunteering and experiencing all of the personal and community benefits this brings.

**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA**

Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion

# VOLUNTEERING SNAPSHOT

Volunteering plays an important role in the ACT community and contributes to building healthier and more resilient individuals, communities and natural environments. Volunteering yields significant benefits, contributing cultural, social and economic value to the Canberra Region. Volunteers themselves enjoy additional benefits gained through volunteering, with 95 per cent identifying that volunteering is related to feelings of wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

Canberra benefits from having the highest rate of volunteering in the country with 36.7 per cent of adults and 57 per cent of young people volunteering in the region.<sup>2</sup> People are motivated to volunteer for a variety of reasons, including to

give something back to the community and to make a difference to others.

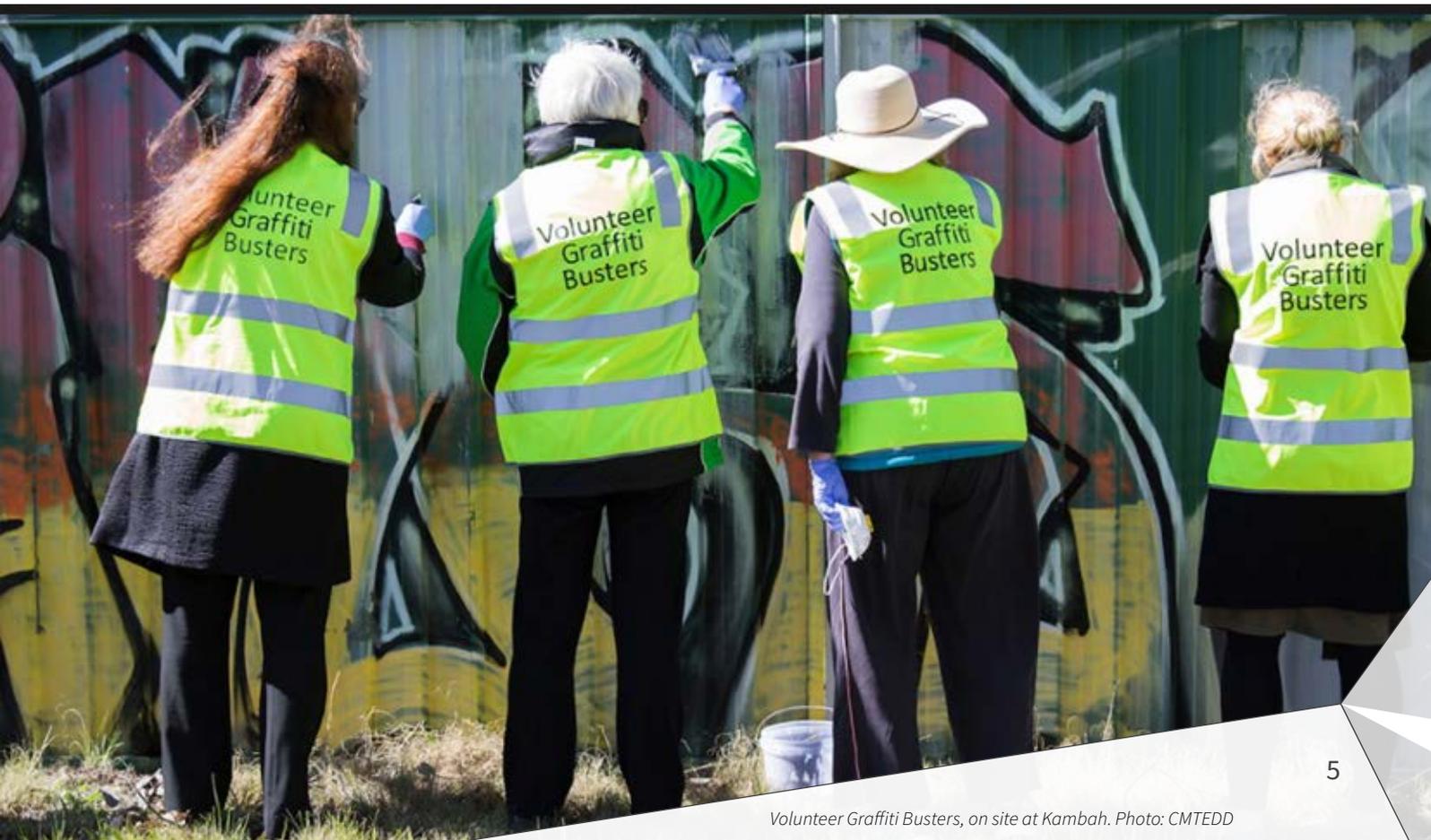
Despite the significant benefits of volunteering, there are some barriers to participation. This includes time constraints and difficulty finding volunteering opportunities. This helps to explain why 86 per cent of organisations need more volunteers.<sup>3</sup>

There are hundreds of volunteer involving organisations in the Canberra Region that span everything from community services, to the arts, to sporting clubs. In addition, the city benefits from the vital services and programs delivered by the ACT Government that rely on the tireless and skilled contribution of volunteers.

<sup>1</sup> Volunteering and Happiness – The Facts, Volunteering Australia, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Mission Australia (2017) Youth Survey Report, available online at <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/young-people>

<sup>3</sup> State of Volunteering in Australia Report, Volunteering Australia, 2016



Volunteer Graffiti Busters, on site at Kambah. Photo: CMTEDD

## VOLUNTEERS ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY

Volunteering is integral to community connectedness and enables people with all skills and all abilities to participate. Volunteering can be formal, typically with support offered through a specific organisation around a specific activity, or can be more informal, such as helping out a neighbour or community member as the need arises. People from culturally diverse communities may not recognise as volunteering the many ways in which they participate in and enrich Canberra's community. Volunteers and volunteer involving organisations contribute to making Canberra a fun and inclusive city, support advocacy and capacity building and deliver vital services for people and environments in need.

The community service sector is one of the largest volunteer involving sectors in the Canberra Region. Community services deliver emergency relief, social groups, disability and health support services and community events, and their volunteers also run activities and provide social support for people with disabilities and people with chronic or degenerative disease. These organisations are in every pocket of our city, and provide unique place-based assistance. There are few limits to the programs and activities undertaken by community service organisations, who expand their reach through the tireless work of their volunteers.

The education sector involves huge numbers of parent volunteers who share their time and expertise to run school P&Cs and sporting teams. Parent volunteers are critical to the functioning of school ecosystems, helping to foster a culture

of community within schools. Parent volunteers ensure carnivals, fetes and sporting events can take place in the Canberra region, and that these events are accessible and fun. Parent involvement in schools ensures that education is about more than just what takes place in the classroom.

Arts and culture are an integral part of the lives of individuals as well as the whole social and economic fabric of Canberra. The arts help to define our community's identity and give expression to community values. Canberra's arts and cultural sector has a strong community of volunteer workers. In 2016, 17 per cent of ACT residents volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities - above the national average of 15 per cent. There were over 700 volunteers in artsACT funded organisations in 2016, such as the Canberra Glassworks, Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra Potters' Society, QL2 Dance and Tuggeranong Arts Centre. These volunteers contributed over 40,000 hours of their time. Due to the small size of arts organisations in Canberra compared to other jurisdictions, the contribution that volunteers make ensures that these organisations can continue to provide services and deliver activities for the benefit of all Canberrans.

Sport and recreation volunteers, many of whom are parents of young people participating in sport, ensure that sporting clubs have the human resources they need to run their competitions. Volunteers in sport lend technical expertise as officials, referees and scorers, and run facilities such as the canteen. Participation in organised

sport is a key way to remain active and healthy, and volunteers ensure that sport continues to thrive in the ACT.

Volunteer involving organisations in the ACT play an instrumental role in caring for the region's heritage and natural environment. For example, injured wildlife are cared for by volunteers, and

volunteers also assist with tracking and reporting on the activities of native species. Volunteers foster young animals, including puppies and kittens, before they are old enough to be adopted. Caring for sick, injured and newborn animals can be incredibly hard work and would not be possible without dedicated volunteers.

---

## VOLUNTEERING ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Volunteers play an integral part of the environmental programs coordinated by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), including Waterwatch and the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) ParkCare program. ParkCare facilitates community volunteer engagement and management, wildlife programs and visitor services. ParkCare volunteers carry out a broad range of activities across our parks and reserves and contribute an average of 22,000 hours of volunteering each year. EPSDD invests in volunteers through training, on-ground support and a dedicated volunteer management team. Community volunteering initiatives such as Landcare for Singles and the Canberra Nature Map, a citizen biodiversity monitoring application, are also supported by EPSDD.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) maintains a close relationship with volunteers, including volunteer dog walkers, who are an essential part of Domestic Animal Services, and Libraries ACT volunteers, who play an important role in enhancing and extending the services that libraries provide to the Canberra community.

ACT Health has over 440 volunteers who contribute to the delivery of a range of client services and support the patient journey through the healthcare system, including within the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit, Cancer Services, Paediatrics, Speech Pathology and Auxiliary. Volunteers also provide wayfinding assistance across the hospital campus, participate in the PARTY (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth) Program, and provide Justice of the Peace services.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA), within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate is the ACT Government organisation charged with providing emergency management services to the Canberra community. The ESA includes volunteers from ACT State Emergency Service, ACT Rural Fire Service, Mapping and Planning Support, ACT Community Fire Units and ACT Fire Brigade Historic Society.

Volunteers are a vital component in the ESA meeting its obligations to Government and the community in protecting life, property and the environment in the ACT. Volunteers and the commitment they bring to the protection of the ACT Community remain part of the core strength of the ESA. Volunteers within ESA enhance the safety of the community by providing frontline response to emergencies such as bushfires, storms and floods.

ESA volunteers also deliver community education to the ACT community on a range of hazards and how to prepare for them to reduce the impact on ACT families. The Emergencies Act 2004 outlines the role of all personnel within ESA and the ESA Volunteer Charter further recognises and supports the role of volunteers within the agency.

Volunteers support students and a range of educational programs in Canberra's schools. For example, the volunteer Playground Engagement Team contributed significantly to Macquarie Primary School's Playground Enhancement Project, co-designing a brilliant outdoor learning space with students and staff. They dedicated over 120 volunteer hours and oversaw the construction of play spaces, planting forest, and a Bush Tucker Garden.

Within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), Skills Canberra administers Skilled Capital which provides subsidies for training in areas of skills need, including sectors with a high reliance on volunteer labour such as the disability services and aged care sectors. Skilled Capital provides an avenue for volunteers and volunteer supported organisations to access relevant subsidised training in the ACT. EventsACT, also within CMTEDD, relies on the contribution of numerous volunteers to support events such as Floriade and the National Folk Festival.

Canberra's largest community event, the National Multicultural Festival, is dependent on over 4,500 community volunteers who take on the roles of stallholders, performers, and showcase coordinators. In addition to these community volunteers, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) has partnered with Volunteering and Contact ACT to coordinate a volunteering team for the festival. In 2018, over 120 community members, and over 60 staff from CSD, volunteered their time to provide information to festival goers, and liaise with area wardens and festival staff, to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the event.

# PURPOSE

*The ACT Volunteering Statement Action Plan 2018-2021* (Action Plan) includes actions for ACT Government directorates and Volunteering and Contact ACT. The actions are aimed at realising the intentions of the *ACT Volunteering Statement (2017)*.

The Action Plan is designed to contribute to:

- > More integrated, person-centred and effective support for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations; and
- > Individual wellbeing, social inclusion and community connectedness.

The ACT Government supports volunteers through its funding of Volunteering and Contact ACT, the peak body for volunteering and a key enabler of volunteering services in the ACT. ACT Government directorates facilitate the involvement of volunteers in many areas, including sport and recreation, health, education, environment, tourism, major events, emergency services, libraries and community services. Other ACT Government support for volunteer good practice includes undertaking background checking free of charge for volunteers engaged in regulated activities.<sup>4</sup> The ACT Government also supports National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day, held each year in May and December.

Government agencies also administer various grants programs supporting scores of community organisations that depend on the work of volunteers.

<sup>4</sup> Background checking is guided by the *Working with Vulnerable Children (Background Checking) Act 2012*. An application fee of \$82.00 applies to people who are employed to work with vulnerable people. Registration is free for volunteers; however, if the volunteer also works in a regulated activity, they are still required to pay the \$82.00 fee (Source: Access Canberra).

# ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT 2017

The ACT Volunteering Statement represents a central point of reference for volunteering in the ACT. It reflects a whole-of-government and community approach to supporting and recognising volunteers. The Statement sets out four high-level principles – that volunteering in the ACT is recognised, valuable, diverse and supported – as a platform for good practice in volunteer engagement, management and support.

In 2011 the ACT Government launched the initial ACT Volunteering Statement to establish a whole of government approach to volunteering. On 24 September 2014, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a resolution calling on the ACT Government to review and update the 2011 ACT Volunteering Statement.

In May 2017 the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion launched the refreshed *ACT Volunteering Statement* and indicated that the ACT Government would develop an action plan to realise the intentions of the Statement.

Extensive consultations with the community and across government contributed to the development of the ACT Volunteering Statement.

# VOLUNTEERING ENRICHES OUR COMMUNITY



Volunteering brings people together to build a more active, engaged and inclusive community. It enriches the lives of volunteers themselves, as well as those who benefit from their commitment to Canberra, its people and places.

The reasons people volunteer are as many and varied as the volunteers themselves. People volunteer because it is fun, to make friends, to give back to society and to build their skills and networks. In doing so, volunteers enable sports clubs to prosper, support the most vulnerable in our community, help build a more environmentally sustainable city, and foster diverse artistic and multicultural community activities.

The principles set out in this refreshed ACT Volunteering Statement reflect a whole-of-government and community commitment to supporting and recognising volunteers. Working together, we aim to provide the best possible environment for volunteering and volunteers to flourish.

## VOLUNTEERING IN THE ACT IS:

### Recognised

- › Volunteers in the ACT are acknowledged and celebrated.
- › Individuals, community organisations, businesses and government all play a role in promoting the contribution of volunteering in the ACT.

### Valuable

- › Volunteers make a vital contribution to the life of the ACT.
- › Organisations enable volunteers to draw on their passion, skills and experience to build a more inclusive, creative and sustainable city and region.

### Diverse

- › Volunteering is for all ages and abilities, and volunteers can contribute in all sorts of ways.
- › Organisations demonstrate commitment to social inclusion and diversity by encouraging and supporting volunteers from all walks of life.

### Supported

- › Volunteers are included in the life of organisations and have clear roles.
- › Organisations are committed to best practice in volunteer management, provide appropriate training and support, and take pride in the role of volunteers.

For more information about the ACT Volunteering Statement, visit:  
[www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)



# CONSULTATION

The ACT Volunteering Statement Action Plan is based on the four principles outlined in the ACT Volunteering Statement (Recognised, Valuable, Diverse and Supported).

Community consultation on the Action Plan took place between December 2017 and February 2018 building on earlier engagement. Consultation was led by the Community Services Directorate, with assistance from Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) and Volunteering and Contact ACT. Consultation methods included a community workshop, an online survey and the receipt of written submissions.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Community Services Directorate will coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan across ACT Government directorates, in collaboration with Volunteering and Contact ACT, volunteer involving organisations and volunteers in the Canberra community.

## REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Each ACT Government Directorate will contribute to an annual Ministerial Statement or update that will be tabled in the Assembly by the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion. The statement will detail activities and efforts undertaken on practical efforts and outcomes in relation to the Action Plan.

# ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018-2021

THEME in ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT	ACTION	OUTPUT	INDICATORS	AGENT
<p><b>Theme One: RECOGNISED EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Volunteers in the ACT are acknowledged and celebrated</p> <p>Individuals, community organisations, businesses and government all play a role in promoting the contribution of volunteering in the ACT</p> <p>Volunteers are celebrated and recognised through a wide range of ACT Government and community events</p>	<p>Promote volunteering to government, businesses, and the wider community to ensure that people are aware of the breadth of opportunities and supports available and the value of volunteering across the community</p>	<p>ACT Government directorates support Volunteering and Contact ACT's Volunteering Awards (Canberra Region)</p>	<p>Number of communications advertising the Volunteering Awards within the ACT Government.</p>	<b>CSD</b>
		<p>Volunteers are celebrated through awards across ACT Government, including ACT Public Education Excellence Awards, CBR Sports Awards and Canberra Citizen and Young Canberra Citizen of the Year</p>	<p>Number of nominations for Volunteering Awards supported by ACT Government Directorates</p>	<b>CSD &amp; VCA</b>
		<p>Volunteers are publicly acknowledged at events attended by ACT Government representatives/spokespeople</p>	<p>A standard volunteer recognition script is drafted and disseminated to ACT Government officials</p>	<b>CSD</b>
		<p>ACT Government employees attend Volunteering and Contact ACT's annual Volunteering Expo</p>	<p>Number of ACT Government employees who attend Volunteering Expo</p>	<b>All ACT Government</b>

<b>THEME in ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTPUT</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>AGENT</b>
<p><b>Theme Two: VALUABLE EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Organisations enable volunteers to draw on their passion, skills and experience to build a more inclusive, creative and sustainable city and region</p> <p>Improved coordination and collaboration across sectors, of volunteering opportunities and support</p>	Encourage collaboration to link people with meaningful volunteering opportunities	Government and community volunteers are linked through Volunteering and Contact ACT's Network Forum	Number of volunteer managers engaged in network forums	<b>CSD &amp; VCA</b>
		Establish an ACT Government Volunteering webpage, to improve access to information on volunteering	Page is created and links volunteers with relevant material	<b>CMTEDD</b>
		An employee volunteering program is scoped to consider engagement and participation of ACT Government employees	Scoping exercise for an employee volunteering program is undertaken	<b>CSD</b>
		Host an event to facilitate employee volunteering, and connect prospective volunteers with interested Volunteer Involving Organisations	Event is promoted and hosted	<b>VCA</b>
<p><b>Theme Three: DIVERSE EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Volunteering is recognised as being for all ages and abilities, and volunteers contribute in all sorts of ways</p> <p>Organisations demonstrate commitment to social inclusion and diversity by encouraging and supporting volunteers from all walks of life</p>	Tailored promotion of volunteering opportunities for people of all cultural backgrounds, ages, abilities and gender identities	ACT Diversity Register to encourage diverse representation on government boards and committees, including voluntary positions	Increased number of diverse volunteering opportunities through the Diversity Register	<b>All ACT Government</b>
		Minimise barriers and maximise volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities	Increased number of volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities	<b>CSD &amp; VCA</b>
		Host a workshop at the Multicultural Summit in November 2018	Workshop is hosted	<b>VCA</b>
		Connect and Participate Expo is promoted to encourage volunteering and engagement across the community	Number of communications promoting CAP	<b>VCA</b>
		Volunteers from diverse backgrounds are celebrated through Multicultural Awards and Chief Ministers Inclusion Awards	Awards are hosted and volunteers acknowledged and promoted	<b>CSD</b>

THEME in ACT VOLUNTEERING STATEMENT	ACTION	OUTPUT	INDICATORS	AGENT
<p><b>Theme Four: SUPPORTED EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Volunteers are included in the life of organisations and have clear roles</p> <p>Organisations are committed to best practice in volunteer management, provide appropriate training and support and take pride in the role of volunteers</p>	<p>Support the professional development of volunteers and managers of volunteers, and facilitate access to relevant resources</p>	<p>Promote ACT Government volunteer parking permit scheme to reduce financial barriers to volunteering</p> <p>Promote grants opportunities to volunteer involving and volunteer led organisations and ensure application processes are as simple as possible for the size of the grant</p> <p>Deliver free quarterly workshops on the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement</p> <p>Create new resources to support volunteers</p> <p>Host three Volunteering and Mental Health Roundtables per annum</p> <p>Continue to support grants programs across government that provide opportunities to improve volunteer engagement, safety and enjoyment</p>	<p>Volunteer involving organisations are advised of the Parking Permit Scheme</p> <p>Review grant processes and renew guidelines as appropriate</p> <p>Quarterly workshops delivered</p> <p>Four resources created and promoted</p> <p>Three roundtables hosted each year</p> <p>Increase grant applications from Volunteer led organisations</p>	<p><b>CSD</b></p> <p><b>CSD &amp; VCA</b></p> <p><b>VCA</b></p> <p><b>VCA</b></p> <p><b>VCA/Health</b></p> <p><b>ACT Government</b></p>

