



Towards a National Strategy for Volunteering

National Strategy for Volunteering Volunteering Research Papers Initiative

The Opportunity

The Australian Government Department of Social Services has funded Volunteering Australia to lead the development of a National Strategy for Volunteering. The aim of the project is to deliver a National Strategy for Volunteering, designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem, that will provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. The development of the National Strategy for Volunteering will be completed by the end of 2022 with a draft National Strategy to be published in September 2022 for feedback.

Volunteering Australia wants to ensure the National Strategy for Volunteering is well-informed by research evidence. This is being taken forward through the new *Volunteering in Australia* research project and through a series of Volunteering Research Papers.

There is an extensive base of research evidence on volunteering on a wide array of topics. The aim of the Volunteering Research Papers is to capture this wider evidence base and feed insights directly into the development of the new National Strategy for Volunteering. The Volunteering Research Papers will be:

- peer reviewed
- published on the National Strategy for Volunteering website
- publicly promoted by Volunteering Australia in collaboration with authors
- fed directly into the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering
- cited in the National Strategy for Volunteering

The Volunteering Research Papers are an initiative of the National Strategy for Volunteering Research Working Group.

Focus and Scope of the Volunteering Research Papers

Each Volunteering Research Paper should focus on a topic relevant to the design of the National Strategy for Volunteering. A list of ideas can be found in the Appendix to this document, but all ideas will be considered. The primary aim of the Volunteering Research Papers is to capture existing research knowledge and feed it into the National Strategy for Volunteering development process.

The scope of each Volunteering Research Paper is flexible but must include:

- a short summary of key insights
- a high-level synthesis of research findings on the topic
- identification of policy and practice implications of the research findings

- gaps in knowledge and future research possibilities
- references

Each paper should be a maximum of 3000 words. Shorter papers are encouraged.

Process and Deadlines

The Volunteering Research Papers Initiative will proceed as follows:

- Deadline for EOIs is Tuesday 26 April
- Review of EOIs by an Editorial Board by Monday 9 May
- Selected authors contacted to proceed
- Authors submit papers by Tuesday 7 June
- Papers reviewed by one Editorial Board member plus one additional reviewer by Friday 1 July
- Publication and promotion from Tuesday 12 July

If EOIs are received for similar topics, the Editorial Board may propose authors collaborate to deliver a co-written paper. A template and style guide for the Volunteering Research Papers will be provided.

Authors may be invited to present their paper at the National Volunteering Forum to be held in late 2022. This will be a hybrid event held in Canberra.

EOIs can be submitted at <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/research/>

Selection Criteria

In assessing EOIs, the Editorial Board will consider:

- expertise in the selected topic
- relevance of the selected topic to the National Strategy for Volunteering
- ability to deliver a paper in the above timeframe

Appendix: Ideas for Volunteering Research Papers

1. **History of volunteering:** What can we learn from how volunteering and volunteering policy and practice have changed over time? What ideas from the past might be useful for the future?
2. **Corporate volunteering:** What are the current patterns of corporate volunteering and is this changing over time? What factors contribute to differences between businesses approaches to corporate volunteering for example according to their size, industry sector or location? What are the opportunities to grow levels of volunteering through employers/corporates?
3. **International comparisons:** How do Australian patterns of volunteering compare with other countries and what factors contribute to these differences? What can we learn from international policy and practice developments?
4. **Digital technologies and volunteering:** How are the digital and social media landscapes changing volunteering? How might emerging technologies change volunteering in the future?
5. **Indigenous volunteering:** How is volunteering understood amongst First Nations, and what can we learn from this? How accessible is 'mainstream' volunteering to First Nations peoples?
6. **Emergency volunteering:** How is emergency volunteering changing? What are the challenges for emergency volunteering as natural disasters become more frequent?
7. **Civic engagement and informal volunteering:** How are patterns of civic, political and community engagement changing and how is this affecting patterns of informal (and formal) volunteering? In what ways does volunteering act as a form of civic engagement?
8. **Volunteer management:** How is the practice of volunteer management changing? To what extent is it professionalising?
9. **Volunteering Inclusion:** To what extent is volunteering inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds? What can research tell us about how to make volunteering more accessible?
10. **A lifecycle perspective on volunteering:** How do opportunities and benefits of volunteering vary across the lifecycle – from children and young people through to elderly people?
11. **Future of work:** How are trends in the future of work affecting the future of volunteering?
12. **Geographical perspective:** How is volunteering different between metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote areas? How is volunteering the same? What could different geographical areas learn from one another about participation in volunteering and volunteer involvement?
13. **Volunteering and international development:** What role do volunteers, from both sending and recipient countries, play in facilitating international development outcomes? How effective is volunteering at facilitating development outcomes, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals? How has international volunteering changed over time?
14. **Leisure volunteering:** To what extent should volunteering be considered a leisure activity? Is volunteering independent of other leisure activities? Should volunteering be studied as an individual leisure activity? What differentiates casual leisure activities from serious leisure activities?