National Strategy for Volunteering
2023–2033

Governance Blueprint

Overview

The National Strategy for Volunteering is co-owned by the volunteering ecosystem and responsibility for its implementation is shared among stakeholders. How this responsibility is expressed can vary between stakeholders depending on their role. Specific responsibilities for governance and oversight of the National Strategy belong to the National Strategy for Volunteering Council: an independent group recruited from across the Australian volunteering ecosystem, empowered to represent the needs and perspective of the National Strategy itself.

The work of the National Strategy for Volunteering Council is underpinned by procedures and priorities that inform their approach to the oversight of the National Strategy. These support the ongoing implementation of the National Strategy and ensure it is effective in realising its Vision and Strategic Objectives. The Governance Blueprint describes these procedures and the approach taken to provide effective governance for the National Strategy for Volunteering in pursuit of its vision:

Volunteering is the heart of

Australian communities.

Introduction

The Governance Blueprint provides a framework for oversight of the implementation and evaluation of the National Strategy for Volunteering. The Blueprint identifies the processes and systems required to ensure the National Strategy for Volunteering is implemented effectively and efficiently to maximise outcomes and achieve its objectives, aims, and vision. It also provides mechanisms for accountability and oversight, including measures to ensure the participation of marginalised and underrepresented groups in decision-making.

The Governance Blueprint outlines involvement in the oversight of the National Strategy of the following:

- The National Strategy for Volunteering Council
- The coordinating body for the National Strategy for Volunteering
- The volunteering ecosystem

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council (the Council) is a committee drawn from across the volunteering ecosystem that is responsible for strategic oversight of the National Strategy for Volunteering. The vision of the National Strategy for Volunteering can only be achieved with the collaboration of many volunteering stakeholders. The Council is empowered to independently consider the needs the National Strategy for Volunteering and the opportunities that can be pursued with stakeholders in the volunteering ecosystem.

Council members may include volunteers, managers of volunteers, leaders of volunteer involving organisations, government staff, researchers, volunteer-enabling organisations and any other members of the volunteering ecosystem. The Council will draw upon their skills, experiences and networks to aid the National Strategy for Volunteering in achieving its vision.

The Council has primary responsibility for the oversight of the National Strategy for Volunteering and associated governance procedures. In addition to their prescribed governance duties, Council members further amplify the effectiveness and oversight of the National Strategy for Volunteering by:

- Championing the National Strategy and its benefits, promoting and advocating for the National Strategy and its implementation.

- Serving as a contact point for interested parties across the volunteering ecosystem.

- Identifying and sharing positive examples of National Strategy implementation.

- Reviewing the outputs of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, electing to endorse the report or nominate refinements to the process.

- Where appropriate, participating in the coordination of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

The Coordinating Body for the National Strategy for Volunteering

The organisation with responsibility for coordination of the National Strategy for Volunteering has a supporting role in governance and oversight procedures. This group provides administrative support to the Council, informs the Council of recent developments and future milestones, and has responsibility for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Throughout the Development and Establishment Phases, this role has been fulfilled by Volunteering Australia: the national peak body for volunteering.

The Volunteering Ecosystem

The volunteering ecosystem refers to the network of relationships between stakeholders with an involvement or interest in volunteering and its outcomes. This may include volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, Volunteering Support Services, State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, Volunteering Australia, other national peak bodies, philanthropy, researchers, businesses and governments. The actions of these stakeholders influence and support each other, ultimately contributing to the collective viability and recognition of volunteering in Australia.

The Governance Blueprint contains, and expands upon, the National Strategy for Volunteering Council Charter. This charter is the procedural document that outlines the processes used for effective governance of the National Strategy. Specifically, it provides detail on the conduct of meetings, decision-making, and the composition of the Council.

Use of the Governance Blueprint framework will help to ensure that the National Strategy for Volunteering is implemented in a transparent, accountable, and ethical manner, and will help to build trust and confidence among stakeholders. The Governance Blueprint is one document within a suite of documents that inform the implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering, including:

- **Three-Year Action Plans**
  The Three-Year Action Plans are a co-designed set of initiatives developed to progress each phase of the National Strategy for Volunteering. They provide detail on commitments made by leading stakeholders in the volunteering ecosystem, as well as more accessible opportunities for other stakeholders to contribute and take action. The Action Plans complement independent action taken to implement the National Strategy across the volunteering ecosystem.

- **Model for Shared Accountability**
  The Model is a framework that provides guidance on how stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem can work together to implement the National Strategy for Volunteering. It is designed to jointly promote accountability and learning by outlining roles and processes for stakeholders taking part in the National Strategy.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**
  This is a guide to measuring progress of the National Strategy for Volunteering. It includes an Outcomes Framework, which outlines how progress of each outcome will be measured, and guidance for reporting on the inputs, outputs and processes associated with implementation of the National Strategy.

- **National Strategy for Volunteering (2023 – 2033)**
  The National Strategy is Australia's blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering. It provides a ten-year roadmap to work collectively towards the Strategy's vision: that volunteering is the heart of Australian communities. It was co-created, and is co-owned, by stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem.

Approach

The Governance Blueprint and accompanying National Strategy for Volunteering Council Charter outline the mechanisms and principles for oversight of the National Strategy. These are designed to support the following priorities for governance:

- Effective implementation
- Inclusive participation
- Measurable impact
- Transparency and trust

Effective Implementation

The vision and objectives of the National Strategy for Volunteering will be achieved through the combined efforts of individuals and groups throughout the volunteering ecosystem. Across its three Focus Areas, the National Strategy can be flexibly applied to all forms of volunteering in Australia. Consequently, implementation of the National Strategy can take many forms, varying according to participants' roles, resources and motivations.

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council supports the effective implementation of the National Strategy by:

- Advocating for its use across the volunteering ecosystem.
- Providing strategic advice to guide implementation.
- Representing the National Strategy to networks and influential stakeholders.
- Helping to identify and model examples of the National Strategy being used to enhance volunteering outcomes.

The National Strategy for Volunteering is for everyone. Stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem can freely use the National Strategy within their volunteering practice without being required to register actions in advance or communicate with a central authority. As such, the Council's visibility of actions taken to implement the National Strategy can vary.

Action to implement the National Strategy for Volunteering can be taken:

- Through coordinated Three-Year Action Plans, with leading stakeholders who bear responsibility.

- Independently by a stakeholder, often with a local or internal focus.

Both are essential for the implementation of the National Strategy. Due to their coordinated nature, Three-Year Action Plans afford greater opportunities for Council visibility and oversight. Governance arrangements for the co-design of Three-Year Action Plans include consultation with the Council, as well as the submission of documents for feedback and endorsement prior to launch.

Through its oversight of the co-design of Three-Year Action Plans and by identifying other actions taken by the volunteering ecosystem, the Council can exert influence over the implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering for greater effectiveness and efficiency. Independent action and the Three-Year Action Plans can both serve as sources of inspiration, opportunities to collaborate and demonstrations of the value of the National Strategy to peers in the volunteering ecosystem. The risk of unnecessary duplication is reduced through Three-Year Action Plans by publicly communicating upcoming tasks, and through identifying independent actions by highlighting them as practical examples of the National Strategy in effect.

In the course of identifying actions, the Council may observe uses of the National Strategy for Volunteering that are deemed to be harmful, inappropriate or incompatible with the National Strategy's Strategic Objectives. If this occurs, the Council can encourage constructive use of the National Strategy by:

- Making contact with the stakeholder implementing the National Strategy and offering guidance.

- Presenting the stakeholder with a viable, alternative means of implementation.

- Communicating the benefits of positive uses of the National Strategy, including through highlighted case studies.

- Withholding their endorsement of that form of implementation.

- Noting the inappropriate use of the National Strategy for consideration in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Inclusive Participation

The guiding principles for the National Strategy for Volunteering include a commitment to co-design. This principle recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders from across the volunteering ecosystem to ensure the National Strategy reflects a diverse set of experiences, needs and aspirations.

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council is recruited from the volunteering ecosystem and its membership is intended to capture the breadth of volunteering efforts and perspectives in Australia. The Council employs its diversity of skills and experiences to inform its approach to governance. This ensures that implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering is intersectional, shaped by diverse perspectives, and that coordinated action is inclusive and relevant in different contexts.

The National Strategy for Volunteering was developed through an extensive co-design process and the Council's oversight ensures that each subsequent phase of the National Strategy continues this approach. By maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the volunteering ecosystem, stakeholders are empowered to shape the National Strategy and its outputs. Also, a commitment to co-design ensures that National Strategy outputs are not unduly influenced by any one specific stakeholder.

In its oversight of the National Strategy, the Council gives consideration to the differing levels of access, resourcing and capacity that may be found across the volunteering ecosystem. Within any system, power imbalances may emerge, and this is also true of volunteering. While the National Strategy for Volunteering is freely available, participating in its co-design and implementation is not without cost. Time, assumed knowledge and lack of access to volunteering infrastructure may all present barriers to those wishing to engage with the National Strategy for Volunteering.

To ensure the National Strategy for Volunteering maintains its intersectional view of the volunteering ecosystem, the Council ensures that specific efforts are made to engage under-represented, under-resourced and marginalised stakeholders. At times, these stakeholders may make unanticipated and innovative contributions to the National Strategy for Volunteering. The National Strategy is for everyone and its implementation should reflect the diversity of views and experiences within communities across Australia. Diversity is strength and, through its oversight processes, the Council encourages unique approaches to National Strategy implementation.

Measurable Impact

The National Strategy makes a case for change to realise a brighter future for volunteering. This legacy can only be achieved through ongoing action with demonstrable impact across the volunteering ecosystem. To monitor its impact and progress, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is utilised by the coordinating body for the National Strategy for Volunteering. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and its outputs may also be used by the Council to inform their oversight of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

Responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy for Volunteering is shared by the volunteering ecosystem. This means that successful monitoring and evaluation requires collaboration between members of the ecosystem to collect data, report on progress, evaluate outcomes, and facilitate learning to inform future action. The coordinating body for the National Strategy for Volunteering is responsible for leading the monitoring and evaluation of the Three-Year Action Plans and the National Strategy as a whole. Any member of the ecosystem may use the Outcomes Framework found within the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess the impact of their own initiatives. Within the context of Three-Year Action Plans, leading stakeholders are expected to share information on the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of actions to facilitate learning and continuous improvement. These stakeholders may use the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to measure the outcomes of these actions at their discretion.

As part of the National Strategy's principle to utilise an evidence-based approach, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework prioritises robust and high-quality data. It combines research evidence, lived experience, and expertise to guide the evaluation of activities associated with the National Strategy for Volunteering. The Council may combine this evidence with case studies of National Strategy implementation to demonstrate the National Strategy for Volunteering's value, progress and impact.

For more information on measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the National Strategy, refer to the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Transparency and Trust

For the National Strategy to be effective, it must be trusted by the volunteering ecosystem. The activities of the Council, their independence and their ability to represent the needs of the National Strategy are essential to building and maintaining trust.

There are several tenets that guide the Council's approach to ensure the National Strategy for Volunteering is trusted by the volunteering ecosystem:

- Use of research into volunteering trends, impacts and best practice to inform the National Strategy's implementation and outputs.

- A co-design approach that reflects the needs and motivations of the volunteering ecosystem.

- Endorsements of the National Strategy from trusted and influential stakeholders.

- Maintaining the independence of the National Strategy for Volunteering Council.

- Regular sharing of case studies demonstrating the direct benefits of implementing the National Strategy, increasing trust among peers in the volunteering ecosystem. This will align with the measures outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

- Transparency around the National Strategy's ongoing development, implementation and processes. This includes the outputs of the National Strategy and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework being made publicly available.

Appendix:
National Strategy for Volunteering Council Charter

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to describe the National Strategy for Volunteering Council's objectives, responsibilities, composition and administrative arrangements.

Background

Volunteers are the often-invisible workforce that supports the nation, both with daily needs and during times of crisis. Volunteering in Australia has been facing challenges: the sudden impact and slow recovery associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened competition for people's time, and long-term trends that see formal volunteering in decline.

Volunteering does not just represent one sector or type of organisation. It extends across society, including the arts, education, emergency services, sports, environment, health, aged care, disability, community services and other vital services. Volunteering is as diverse as the communities it connects, the people that participate, and the missions they strive to achieve. Many facets of Australian society rely on the effort and goodwill of volunteers.

There is an ecosystem within volunteering. It is a network of relationships between volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, Volunteering Support Services, State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, Volunteering Australia, other national peak bodies, philanthropy, businesses and governments. The actions of these stakeholders influence and support each other, ultimately contributing to the collective viability and recognition of volunteering in Australia.

National Strategy for Volunteering

Volunteering Australia was funded to lead the development of a National Strategy for Volunteering. After an extensive co-design process, the National Strategy for Volunteering (2023 – 2033) was launched in February 2023. It is designed and owned by the volunteering ecosystem, providing a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia.

The development of the National Strategy for Volunteering resulted in a unifying vision:

Volunteering is the heart of Australian communities.

To achieve this vision, three focus areas are identified:

1. Individual Potential and the Volunteer Experience
2. Community and Social Impact
3. Conditions for Volunteering to Thrive

The National Strategy is underpinned by eleven Strategic Objectives and extensive research on volunteering trends, influencing factors and best practice.

Timeline

July 2021 – January 2023:
Development of the National Strategy for Volunteering
February 2023:
National Strategy for Volunteering launched
May 2023 – June 2024:
Establishment Phase.

This period seeks to build support for the National Strategy for Volunteering and design frameworks for implementation and evaluation, including a Model for Shared Accountability, a Governance Blueprint, the first Three-Year Action Plan and a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

July 2024 – June 2027:
First Three-Year Action Plan
July 2027 – June 2030:
Second Three-Year Action Plan
July 2030 – June 2033:
Third Three-Year Action Plan

Additionally, there are periods of assessment and refinement anticipated to take place during Three-Year Action Plans.

Stakeholders and Governance

The National Strategy for Volunteering is for everyone, and there could be as many stakeholders as there are individuals and groups within the volunteering ecosystem. Some stakeholders are detailed below, including potential roles they have in relation to the National Strategy for Volunteering.

National Strategy for Volunteering Council

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council (Council) is a committee drawn from across the volunteering ecosystem that is responsible for strategic oversight of the National Strategy for Volunteering. The vision of the National Strategy for Volunteering can only be achieved with the collaboration of many volunteering stakeholders. The Council is empowered to independently consider the needs the National Strategy for Volunteering and the opportunities that can be pursued with stakeholders in the volunteering ecosystem.

The Council's composition demonstrates the diverse range of stakeholders found in volunteering in Australia, although limitations on its numbers may mean that it is not strictly representative at times. Council members may include

volunteers, managers of volunteers, leaders of volunteer involving organisations, government staff, researchers and peak body staff. The Council will draw upon their skills, experiences and networks to aid the National Strategy for Volunteering in achieving its vision.

Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering. It was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services to lead the development of a new National Strategy for Volunteering. Following the launch of the National Strategy, Volunteering Australia has continued to have a central role in coordinating the establishment and implementation of the Strategy in pursuit of its vision and Strategic Objectives.

Volunteering Australia has several roles in relation to the National Strategy, including:

- Facilitating coordination of the development and establishment of the National Strategy for Volunteering as part of activities funded by the Department of Social Services. Governance for Volunteering Australia's contracted duties and grant activities remains with Volunteering Australia and its Board of Directors.

- Its role as the national peak body for volunteering, identifying opportunities to use the National Strategy to

progress its policy, advocacy and research aims.

- Implementation of the National Strategy within Volunteering Australia and its engagement of volunteers.

Volunteering Australia Board

The Volunteering Australia Board is responsible for the overall governance of Volunteering Australia. The Board will provide governance oversight for contracted National Strategy activities between Volunteering Australia and its funding partners, including the Australian Government. As part of Volunteering Australia's role in coordinating the National Strategy for Volunteering, the Board have received updates on the National Strategy for Volunteering from the National Strategy Director.

National Strategy for Volunteering Team

The National Strategy for Volunteering Team within Volunteering Australia have been responsible for the coordination of the National Strategy for Volunteering throughout the Development and Establishment Phases. This includes the development of the National Strategy and production of its Establishment Phase deliverables. Other duties can include promotion of the National Strategy, reporting, network building, impact evaluation and hosting events. This team is led by the National Strategy Director.

The National Strategy for Volunteering Team also coordinate National Strategy working groups, including the Research Working Group and the Establishment Design Team.

State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies

Australia has seven State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies. Each state and territory is represented by a Volunteering Peak Body who support and strengthen volunteering through the variety of services they provide. These include advocacy, capacity-building measures, training, volunteer recruitment, resource development, research and promoting recognition of volunteering efforts. As the peak body at the state and territory level, these organisations are important stakeholders in implementing and promoting the National Strategy for Volunteering, using their local knowledge, networks and influence to affect change.

Australian Government

The Australian Government has an important role relating to volunteering in Australia and the National Strategy for Volunteering. Many government departments, agencies and portfolios are heavily influenced by volunteer participation, including within sport, health and emergency services. Both the Development Phase and Establishment Phase of the National Strategy for Volunteering were funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Social Services.

Department of Social Services (DSS)

The Department of Social Services is the Australian Government department with responsibility for volunteering policy and funding. DSS resourced the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering and participated in the co-design process. The Department has provided resources to Volunteering Australia to coordinate the Establishment Phase of the National Strategy for Volunteering.

National Strategy for Volunteering Working Groups

The National Strategy for Volunteering project aims to amplify the voices and viewpoints of all stakeholders in the volunteering ecosystem. This includes collaborating with individuals with lived experience and organisations that represent the interests of diverse communities. Several working groups have been established to provide a platform for meaningful consultation that takes into account diverse focus areas, differing resourcing and capacity, and systemic barriers to participation. These groups include Design Teams, who contribute to National Strategy for Volunteering documents and deliverables, and the Research Working Group who ensure the National Strategy is well-informed.

Other Bodies Participating in the National Strategy for Volunteering

The National Strategy for Volunteering is available for use by the stakeholders across the volunteering ecosystem to enhance their practice, outcomes and strategic vision. Many groups have independently progressed the National Strategy for Volunteering in ways that contribute to both their internal goals and National Strategy Strategic Objectives. These groups may have their own governance arrangements that intersect with their work on the National Strategy for Volunteering. Like volunteering itself, participation in the National Strategy for Volunteering is not mandated and the stakeholders who are progressing the National Strategy independently may not report this progress to the Council. However, opportunities to recognise progress and collaborate should be identified where possible.

Purpose of National Strategy for Volunteering Council

The National Strategy for Volunteering Council (Council) represents the needs and perspective of the National Strategy for Volunteering (National Strategy) in the context of the wider volunteering ecosystem. The Council will provide advice and guidance on the National Strategy through updates, reports and key National Strategy deliverables to support the National Strategy to be progressed to a high standard. Drawing upon its members' diverse set of skills and experiences, the Council will provide guidance for the coordination and ongoing implementation of the National Strategy.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Council will act in the interests of the National Strategy and:

- Provide strategic guidance for the coordination and implementation of the National Strategy.

- Review updates on the National Strategy and its progress.

- Review key reports and deliverables associated with the National Strategy for Volunteering.

- Identify opportunities for promotion and collaboration among volunteering stakeholders, enhancing engagement across the volunteering ecosystem.

- Identify and provide advice on risks that may impact the progress or reputation of the National Strategy.

- Participate in the development and ongoing refinement of National Strategy outputs including the Governance Blueprint.

The Council is not a legal entity and therefore has no legal or financial accountability for any aspect of the National Strategy. Neither the Council nor any individual member will be liable for any decisions or omissions made through their participation.

Several contractual arrangements and funded projects may be in place to enhance the National Strategy (for example, between DSS and Volunteering Australia). Sole responsibility for delivering these projects and fulfilling contractual obligations lies with the relevant parties.

Composition

The Council will be made up of between 8 and fifteen members. Membership will demonstrate the breadth of volunteering efforts and perspectives in the volunteering ecosystem rather than strictly proportional representation of specific sectors or geographies. Membership will include:

- Volunteering Australia or a representative.
- Australian Government or a representative.
- State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies, or representatives.
- Other members from across the volunteering ecosystem .

Selection criteria

Members will be sought based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience and engagement with volunteering.
- Commitment to regularly participate in meetings and other engagements.
- Skills in areas relevant to the project, including governance, strategy, legal, volunteer involvement, diversity, and inclusion.

Factors and perspectives to be considered in the composition of the members include:

- Major areas of volunteering, such as:
  - Sport
  - Aged care and health
  - Community services
  - Arts and culture
  - Emergency management and disaster response
  - Informal volunteering (volunteering taking place outside of an organisational or institutional structure)
  - Employee volunteering
  - Environmentalism and animal welfare
- Geography, including both consideration of all states and

territories as well as urban, regional and remote communities.

- Governments, including state, territory and local governments.

- Researchers and academics.

- Other bodies enacting complementary strategies that impact volunteering.

- Inclusion and diversity, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, First Nations Peoples, disability, age and gender.

Appointments

Appointment of National Strategy for Volunteering Council Members:

If the number of Council members is at or beyond its maximum, new members cannot be appointed except as pending members. If the number of Council members has fallen below its minimum, meetings may be held to progress new appointments to bring the Council membership to its minimum.

Membership terms ordinarily align with the calendar year:

- Beginning during their first meeting of the year for new members or those renewing their membership.

- Expiring at the end of the calendar year, unless the member still has at least one year remaining in their term (for example, having completed one year of a two-year term).

Appointing Council members is a major decision and has the associated requirements for quorum and the vote majority required to pass.

Ordinary appointment process (in line with membership term cycle):

Prior to the expiration of a Council member's term, the Council will review membership terms and the next membership cycle to decide if new members are sought. If new members are sought, the Council will solicit expressions of interest from the volunteering ecosystem.

The Council may delegate administrative duties for this process to the Secretariat or to a sub-committee formed for this purpose. This may include shortlisting potential members.

The Council will decide whether to appoint potential members with a major decision vote.

Council members are appointed to a two-year term, unless otherwise decided by the Council, or unless this exceeds the maximum duration or number of terms permitted.

Casual vacancy appointment process (outside of membership term cycle):

If a Council member withdraws or has membership revoked during their term, the Council will decide if a new member should

be appointed as a casual vacancy and the process to identify potential members. This may include seeking expressions or interest, or direct contact with potential members known to the Council.

The Council will decide whether to appoint a member through a casual vacancy with a major decision vote.

The term of a member appointed through a casual vacancy expires at the end of the calendar year. Partial terms served through casual vacancies do not contribute to the maximum number of terms a Council member may serve. However, the duration of the casual vacancy does contribute to the maximum length of time a Council member may serve.

A member appointed through a casual vacancy may nominate to renew their membership for an additional term unless they have reached the maximum duration or number of terms that a Council member may serve.

Pending members

Council members are pending until attending their first Council meeting. At this time, if the Council has not reached or exceeded its maximum number of members, the pending member becomes a full Council member.

Pending members are not considered full members and cannot vote in Council meetings.

The Chair may decide to invite pending members to observe Council meetings.

Revoking membership

A Council member may withdraw from the Council at any time by notifying the Chair.

Council membership may be revoked if the Council member is absent from Council meetings for six months without notice or if they are found to be in serious breach of the Charter.

The Council will decide whether to revoke Council membership through a major decision vote.

Appointing Chair and Deputy Chair

Once appointed, the Chair ordinarily serves in this role for the remainder of their current term of Council membership.

The positions of Chair or Deputy Chair may become vacant if:

- The Chair or Deputy Chair withdraws from the role.
- The Chair or Deputy Chair reaches the end of their current term.
- The Council decide to remove the current Chair or Deputy Chair as a major decision.

If a position becomes vacant during a Council meeting, nominations are sought and a vote is held immediately. If a position becomes vacant outside a Council meeting, nominations are sought and a vote is held at the next Council meeting. An extraordinary meeting may be convened for this purpose. All Council members may nominate for one or more vacant positions, except pending members.

A vote is first held for Chair (if vacant) before any other vacant positions. A member appointed to a position withdraws their nomination from any other vacant positions.

Members may cast one vote for a nominated member for each position. The member with the most votes for a position is appointed. In case of a tied vote, any nominated members with fewer votes are eliminated and a vote is held again.

The Council may decide to appoint an interim chair as a major decision to serve in the role until a determined time, not exceeding the Council member's current term.

Member duties

Members will represent the totality of their skills and experience as they relate to the National Strategy, not only the criteria or organisation with which they are most strongly associated.

Members should notify the Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting or require a period of leave. Members may have their position on the Council revoked if they are absent from Council meetings for six months without notice.

Council membership may be revoked if a member is found to be in serious breach of the Charter, including benefitting from undisclosed conflicts of interest or by working against the aims of the National Strategy.

Chair

The Council will have a designated Chair. The role of the Chair is to:

- Preside over Council meetings.

- Ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions, and concerns through maintaining a positive and constructive dialogue.

- Act as a public spokesperson for the Council as required.

- Facilitate voting where required.

- Welcome and onboard new members.

- Prepare Council reports and correspondence with other bodies as needed, in collaboration with the Secretariat.

Deputy Chair

The Council will have a Deputy Chair who will fulfil the role of Chair in the Chair's absence.

Observers / Expert Advisors

Stakeholders with relevant expertise may be invited by the Chair to attend and observe or provide expertise at meetings. Neither Observers nor Expert Advisors have the right to vote.

Meeting Schedule

The Council will meet a minimum of four times per year with supplementary and extraordinary meetings scheduled as decided by the Chair. Each year, the Council will agree to an annual meeting schedule and high-level annual workplan.

Meeting Procedure

Meetings will be facilitated by the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, meetings will be facilitated by the Deputy Chair.

Quorum

Quorum is a majority of current Council members, rounded up. The number of current Council members excludes pending members, members on leave and members who have reached the threshold of unexplained absences.

Decision-making

Decisions will be decided by consensus or a majority vote of attendees at the meeting where there is quorum, except when it is a Major Decision.

Major decisions

Meetings that include major decisions require a quorum of three-quarters of current Council members, rounded up. A major decision requires a majority of three-quarters of attending Council members, rounded up. The number of current Council members excludes pending members, members on leave and members who have reached the threshold of unexplained absences.

Major decisions include:

- Amending the Charter.
- Membership of the Council.
- Appointing the Chair.

Agenda, papers and Minutes Reporting

The coordinating body will provide secretariat support for the Council.

The agenda and papers for a meeting will normally be released seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Papers will need to be submitted in the appropriate format and timeline to the Secretariat, unless otherwise agreed with the Chair.

Minutes from the meeting will normally be prepared within two (2) weeks of the meeting. The Minutes will be distributed to Council Members. A communique for external communication will normally be prepared within two (2) weeks of the meeting.

Privileged Information

The Council may have access to privileged or confidential information. This may include previews of upcoming reports and documents, exposure to a group's internal planning and correspondence, and prior notice for upcoming announcements. Whenever privileged or confidential information is disclosed, Council members must maintain its confidentiality and refrain from discussing or revealing this information outside of Council membership. If a Council member is unsure whether information is privileged, they are to seek the advice of the Chair or Secretariat to clarify.

Conflicts of Interest

It is acknowledged that Council Members are likely to have conflicts of interest due to their existing role in the volunteering ecosystem. Members must make declaration of any real or perceived conflicts of interest to the Chair as soon as possible. The Chair will manage any conflicts.

All declarations will be noted in a Conflicts of Interest Register will be maintained throughout each Council Member's term.

Review and Amendment of Charter

The Charter will be reviewed regularly in line with the major phases of the National Strategy for Volunteering implementation phases.