

## Volunteering should be a core indicator in Australia's Wellbeing Framework

### ~Key points~

- 'Measuring what matters' is a valuable reform agenda that will ensure the Australian Government better understands how to invest in ways that improve both the economy and society.
- VolunteeringACT argues for including volunteering as an essential indicator within Australia's Framework for measuring what matters to improve the lives of all Australians.
- Volunteering ACT recommends alignment between the ACT and national measurement frameworks.

**Canberra, February 07, 2023.** VolunteeringACT has provided a submission to the Australian Treasury consultation on "Measuring What Matters". This submission recommends collection of data on volunteering activities by diverse communities and across a wide range of activities including welfare, emergency response, sports, arts, cultural institutions, family and neighbourhood support, animal care, education, tourism, events and conservation is included as a core indicators of social and economic wellbeing and progress.

The submission states that the volunteering landscape in Australia is changing, and programs are evolving. It is important that any volunteering indicator captures informal as well as formal volunteering activities. The submission notes that the data already collected via relevant questions about voluntary work contained within the General Social Survey and Social Connections domain could be included in a national data set. Other OECD Domains such as Health, Civic Engagement, and Work and Life Balance could expand their collection of volunteering data to inform economic, health, social and environmental policies and investment priorities.

Acting CEO of VolunteeringACT, Susan Helyar, said: "We know that volunteering activities have a significant positive impact on society and the economy. It is estimated to be worth \$1.5 billion to the ACT economy annually. However, an even more significant contribution is made improving social connections and strengthening many determinants of wellbeing".

"In fact, Volunteering has been found to help individuals develop stronger social networks and interpersonal relationships, improve self-esteem, relieve stress, alleviate symptoms of depression, and help with mental health recovery".

"There are already several examples of volunteering successfully being used as an indicator within different wellbeing framework domains in Australia and internationally".



“For example, in the ACT Wellbeing Framework, within the Social Connection and Time domains, volunteering is recorded as a key indicator of Canberrans being connected with family, friends, and community, and having the time to live life well”.

Ms Helyar concluded: “It is vital that the Commonwealth Government works together with the ACT and other jurisdictions to ensure volunteering activities are core components of the data collected, shared, analysed and used to inform economic, social and environmental policies and investment priorities over the coming decade”.

To read the complete submission, please go to our website or click on this link:

<https://www.volunteeringact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VolunteeringACT-Submission-to-the-Measuring-What-Matters-Consultation-1.pdf>

- Ends -

If you would like to receive further information or interview the Acting CEO, please contact Luz Gale, VolunteeringACT Marketing and Communications Coordinator on [luz@volunteeringact.org.au](mailto:luz@volunteeringact.org.au).

### **About VolunteeringACT?**

VolunteeringACT is the peak body for volunteering, provides community information services in the Canberra Region, and is a service provider of programs for people experiencing disadvantage and isolation, people with disability, and people needing support for mental wellness.

VolunteeringACT improves inclusivity, enables sustainable volunteering, and creates a more resilient Canberra community through its activities.

For more information about VolunteeringACT, please visit: <https://www.volunteeringact.org.au>