



SPORT VOLUNTEER COALITION ACTION PLAN

2022–2026



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission





FOREWORD

Since coming together in early 2022, the Sport Volunteer Coalition have been working hard to understand how to ensure Australia's 2.9 million sport volunteers receive the recognition they deserve and raise awareness of the role they play.

Without volunteers, Australian sport wouldn't exist. Volunteers are the backbone of local sporting clubs, freely contributing their time and knowledge for the benefit of their sport as well as the participants, their families and the local community. We want to celebrate all that volunteers bring to sport, while attracting more volunteers, and better supporting the ones we have.

We are delighted to share the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan, which outlines the actions we will take to achieve our vision for volunteering in Australian sport:

"People from all walks of life see and realise opportunities to contribute to individual, club and community goals in a way that suits them."

We want to enable more Australians to experience volunteering, create inclusive and accessible opportunities to volunteer and foster a positive safe and fulfilling experience that puts people and our communities first. At its heart, volunteering is about helping others. Volunteering in sport has many benefits, it can create a sense of belonging, connect communities, can improve physical and mental health, all whilst enjoying the fun of sport.

With community sport facing many challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic that interrupted so much of 2020 and 2021, the focus on volunteering is more critical than ever.

This plan includes actions for the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the Sport Volunteer Coalition however to make meaningful change it will require the entire sport sector to get involved. We call upon national and state sporting organisations, all levels of Government, and the broader sport industry to reach out and seek opportunities to work together to advance sport volunteering.

We look forward to reimagining the future of volunteering in sport, with a renewed focus on putting our volunteers at the heart of community sport.

SPORT VOLUNTEER COALITION



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Volunteers in sport contribute an estimated \$4 billion of labour value each year.

An estimated 2.9 million volunteers make sport happen across Australia, coaching players, managing community clubs and providing positive sporting experiences for participants of all abilities and at all stages of life.

The ASC is specifically focusing on volunteering in sport to support the industry's recovery from COVID-19. In 2021, the ASC worked with partners from across the sport and volunteering sectors to produce the 'Future of Sport Volunteering' Insights report, develop a vision for sport volunteering and a Sport Volunteering National Plan.

The ASC formed the inaugural Sport Volunteer Coalition in January 2022 to provide expert advice and guidance on development, implementation, and evaluation of this four-year Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan.

Informed by consultation and insights, the plan includes four strategic themes and clear actions which will be coordinated by the ASC and the Sport Volunteer Coalition. The impact of the plan will be measured through a robust evaluation framework.

"We want to position volunteering as more than just an "enabler" for Australians to play sport and shine a light on the additional benefits realised from individuals becoming involved in the sporting community through volunteering, including a sense of belonging and community connectedness."

– Sport Volunteer Coalition



Volunteering:

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain

There are significant challenges for sporting organisations and sport volunteers that have been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

THESE CHALLENGES INFORM THE ACTIONS IN THIS PLAN.



COVID-19 has significantly impacted volunteering with immediate concerns about the return of volunteers to sport.

The proportion of Australians who volunteer **increased** in the past year but is still well below the pre-COVID rate¹



The majority of people who stopped volunteering have **not yet returned**¹

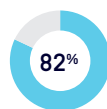
Between 2019 and 2021:

- > the estimated number of Australians aged 15+ who took on a non-playing role in sport fell by **106,000**, a 3% decline²
- > the proportion of volunteers doing just one role has declined, while those doing three or more has increased²



- > the roles that lost the most volunteers were officials and ad-hoc helpers (carrying out tasks such as setting up, packing down, cleaning etc)²

In 2021 there were an estimated **75,000** fewer Australians 15+ putting their hand up to be officials and **73,000** fewer offering to do ad hoc tasks²



Only 82% of pre-COVID and current volunteers are **likely to volunteer** in the next 12 months²



Many environmental changes such as busy lifestyles, desire for more flexibility and constant distractions with technology are creating new challenges for sport and sport volunteering.

The volunteer experience is not meeting individual needs

Volunteer roles tend to be time consuming and rigid, discouraging some people from getting involved.

Club cultures with entrenched ways of operating can inhibit participation and involvement of new volunteers

Sport clubs do not have a complete understanding of what volunteers need and how to respond to these needs

Some sport clubs do not have the systems, tools and processes to effectively manage volunteers

The sport ecosystem is highly fragmented and does not have clear roles and responsibilities

1 Volunteering in Australia Research: Early Insights from the Volunteer Perspective

2 AusPlay Focus - How Australians' participation in sport and physical activity is adapting to COVID-normal (July 2022 update).

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF SPORT VOLUNTEERING

PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE SEE AND REALISE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO INDIVIDUAL, CLUB AND COMMUNITY GOALS IN A WAY THAT SUITS THEM



Everyone can participate in volunteering, whether they are from a culturally diverse group, are connected/not connected to the sport, young, older, committed/time poor or have a disability.



Volunteer opportunities must be visible and accessible to diverse groups of people. It isn't enough to say you are inclusive – volunteers need to see how they can contribute and see other people like them.



Realising opportunities means clubs have inclusive cultures and the sufficient structure in place to support people to be effective e.g. training, job descriptions.



Volunteering roles need to balance individual, club and community goals so everyone gets something out of it. This value needs to be clearly understood and communicated.



Volunteering needs to be flexible to accommodate different needs. This could include virtual volunteering project based roles and completely flexible roles where people opt in on a week by week basis.

SPORT VOLUNTEER COALITION ACTION PLAN – OVERVIEW

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Underlying values across every area of the plan



Sport Volunteers at the heart of community sport – supported, recognised and valued



Enable inclusive, accessible and welcoming experiences in sport volunteering



Harness the collective value of sport volunteers



Inspire and support people from diverse backgrounds to volunteer in sport



Work in partnership across the sport system and beyond



Leverage data and insights

VISION

People from all walks of life see and realise opportunities to contribute to individual, club and community goals in a way that suits them



CELEBRATE

Communicate the broad value of sport volunteering through powerful storytelling



EMPOWER

Support and connect volunteers in sport



REIMAGINE

Support the sector to re-design the sport volunteering experience



INNOVATE

Drive and stimulate innovation in sport volunteering

EVALUATE the coalition action plan and translate insights into policy and practice

OVERALL INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

More people volunteering in sport more often

Volunteers feel fulfilled and have an enjoyable and positive experience

Volunteering is a strategic priority for the sport sector

Social and economic contribution of volunteers in sport realised

Volunteers in sport reflective of local community

Evidence informed volunteer policy and practice

CELEBRATE

Communicate the broad value of sport volunteering through powerful storytelling.

| DELIVERABLES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024+ |
|--|---------|---------|-------|
| Develop and release a marketing and communication plan to communicate the value of sport volunteering to Australia | ● | | |
| Showcase the contribution of sport volunteers in community sport and major events | ● | | |
| Activate Sport Volunteer Ambassadors to share volunteering messages | ● | | ● |
| Establish a nationally coordinated set of activities to promote volunteering in sport as part of National Volunteer Week | ● | | |
| Integrate sport volunteering as a theme within existing national and international conferences and events | | ● | |
| Map existing volunteer reward and recognition initiatives and share best practice examples of volunteer recognition | | ● | |
| Explore the establishment of a National Sport Volunteer Award as part of a broader awards program | | ● | |



● Responsibility of the ASC

● Responsibility of the Sport Volunteer Coalition



EMPOWER

Support and connect volunteers in sport.

| DELIVERABLES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024+ |
|---|--|---|-------|
| Conduct an environmental scan of available training and resources for sport volunteering and create a 'one stop shop' for best practice resources |  | | ● |
| Continue partnership with Volunteering Australia to connect sport volunteering with the broader volunteering ecosystem |  | | ● |
| Enhance Game Plan – to ensure volunteers and organisations can access targeted support, tools and resources to support their volunteer involvement | |  | ● |
| Integrate best practice sport volunteer training into free online learning modules on the Australian Sport Learning Centre for community sporting personnel | |  | |
| Establish a Sport Volunteering Network to support peer to peer collaboration and connection | |  | |










- Responsibility of the ASC
- Responsibility of the Sport Volunteer Coalition



REIMAGINE

Support the sector to re-design the sport volunteering experience.

| DELIVERABLES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024+ |
|---|--|---|-------|
| Establish partnerships with major sporting event organising committees to maximise volunteering opportunities throughout the event and beyond into community sport delivery |  | | ● |
| Engage with stakeholders to pilot the re-design of sport volunteer roles to help enhance the volunteer experience | |  | ● |
| Identify opportunities, including major sporting events, to deliver 'reimagined volunteering opportunities' including micro volunteering (bite size), flexible and online roles |  | | ● |
| Strengthen relationships with the secondary and tertiary education sector with a view to better enhance the engagement of students in sport volunteering |  | | ● |
| Support sporting organisations to engage with under-represented communities to co-develop strategies that support their involvement in sport volunteering | |  | ● |
| Develop a club volunteering blueprint that enables sporting organisations to redesign their volunteering program to suit local needs | |  | ● |
| Engage existing Youth Advisory Councils to enable more youth to get involved in sport volunteering | |  | ● |









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INNOVATE

Drive and stimulate innovation in sport volunteering.

| DELIVERABLES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024+ |
|---|--|---|---|
| Develop a sport volunteering stream for secondary school students in the ASC Sporting Schools program |  | |  |
| Regularly publish and share national data on sport volunteering through the ASC's national Ausplay survey |  | |  |
| Introduce a National Sport Volunteer Register to connect major sporting event volunteers with opportunities in community sport |  | |  |
| Collate current research and identify new research priorities for the National Sport Research Agenda, focused on the recruitment, retention and quality of experience for volunteers in sport | |  |  |
| Activate a formal recognition program allowing sport volunteers to showcase their skills when applying for apprenticeships, scholarships and employment | | |   |
| Engage the commercial sector to seek partnerships to support investment in and promotion of volunteering initiatives | | |   |



 Responsibility of the ASC

 Responsibility of the Sport Volunteer Coalition



EVALUATE

the coalition action plan and translate insights into policy and the sport sector.

| DELIVERABLES | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024+ |
|--|--|---|-------|
| Agree measurement indicators for sport volunteering with the sector |  | | ● |
| Develop and implement an evaluation for the Action Plan to measure progress |  | | ● |
| Develop and test an evaluation 'how-to toolkit' for the sport sector to use to guide evaluation of sport volunteer initiatives | |  | ● |
| Publish a Sport Volunteer Coalition annual report including an evaluation summary to communicate plan progress |  | | ● |
| Develop a tool that can be used to assess the social and economic value of the volunteer experience | |  | ● |
| Build a global network to share sport volunteering insights and collaborate on volunteering in sport research |  | | ● |



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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

ENCOURAGE partnerships between community sports clubs and local organisations to leverage diverse skills, experiences and resources.

FACILITATE collaboration between community sport clubs to share knowledge and resources and reduce needless duplication.

REFRAME sport volunteering, using engagement methods, collateral and tailored messaging to appeal to different volunteer groups.

REDESIGN volunteer roles so they are more accessible and bring new skills and diversity to sport volunteering.

STIMULATE innovation, creativity and new ways of working to respond to changing individual and societal shifts.

USE shared systems to streamline recruitment and support the volunteer experience.

SPORTAUS

The future of sport volunteering

April 18, 2021
Sport Australia engaged an external third party to conduct the research.

The *Future of Sport Volunteering insights report* provides further ideas as 'first steps' for different partners in the sport sector. These may be actions that your organisation is equipped to implement straight away, or they may be more useful as prompts to inspire other actions.

SportAUS.gov.au/volunteering



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