

## MEDIA RELEASE

### National Volunteer Week 2014 celebrates the power of volunteering

**Wednesday, 7 May 2014:** To kick off the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of National Volunteer Week (12 – 18 May) Volunteering SA&NT will host a Parade of Volunteers on **Monday 12 May**. Over 350 people have registered to march, representing approximately 30 organisations.

The Parade starts at the Torrens Parade Ground at 11:15 am and will make its way along King William Street to Victoria Square. His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR, Governor of South Australia and Patron of Volunteering SA&NT, will launch National Volunteer Week in Victoria Square at 12:10pm.

According to Evelyn O’Loughlin, CEO of the state peak body Volunteering SA&NT, “Volunteers are our society’s lifeblood and we need to recognise that. National Volunteer Week was designed to celebrate and acknowledge volunteers for their contribution, and that’s happening in hundreds of different ways around the state – including our Volunteer Parade through Adelaide.

“What most people don’t realise is that the freely donated contribution of Australia’s six million plus volunteers is valued conservatively at a staggering \$200 billion annually. That’s \$200 billion worth of skills, support, education, advice, labour, friendship, vision, leadership and inspiration being poured into our communities each year, which is why it is imperative that we invest in the foundations of volunteering, promote and inform on its benefits and implement leading practice standards across the sector.

“It is why Volunteering SA&NT, the State Government of South Australia, the Local Government Association and Business SA jointly developed a Volunteering Strategy for South Australia – a blue print for action that will take us through to 2020 – which was released earlier this year.”

The national peak body, Volunteering Australia, has also announced two initiatives to ensure that Australia keeps pace with international changes and trends in volunteering.

In addition to reviewing the National Volunteering Quality Standards, developed by Volunteer Australia in 2001, they will also challenge long held assumptions of what constitutes volunteering in Australia in 2014, by commencing a review of the definition of volunteering.

Volunteering Australia CEO Brett Williamson said: “What it means to be a volunteer will be a key question during National Volunteer Week.

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“The definition of volunteering is a critical reference for the volunteering sector. It has a bearing on decision making by governments, volunteer resource centres, volunteer involving organisations and corporates. Not only does it enhance workforce planning, it underpins the integrity of volunteering and volunteers, ensuring a common understanding of what volunteering is. Much rests on it.”

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**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

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**Note to Editors: INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

If you would like to set up an interview with Volunteering SA&NT CEO Evelyn O’Loughlin or any volunteers ahead of the Parade, or throughout next week, please contact us on the above numbers and we will assist with sourcing people and information.

**BACKGROUND FACTS ON VOLUNTEERING:**

1. Volunteers contribute \$200 billion to the Australian economy annually
2. Volunteering produces health benefits such a happiness, health and longevity
3. The rate of volunteering by young people in Australia increased from 16% in 1995 to 27.1% in 2010
4. The number of volunteers in Australia has doubled from 1995 (3.2 million) to 2010 (6.1 million)
5. The average number of hours contributed by each volunteer per year has decreased from 74 hours in 1995 to 56 hours in 2010
6. Of the 600 000 not for profit organisations in Australia only 60 000 have paid staff
7. 50% of volunteers are in employment
8. 44% of volunteers are engaged in short term volunteering roles
9. Volunteering is more common amongst those outside the capital cities, with a 38% participation rate for outside the capital cities vs. 32% in the cities
10. 35% of volunteers who became involved in volunteering in the last 10yrs were asked by someone