



volunteering sa&nt

*Leading volunteering in South Australia
and the Northern Territory*

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Reinvigorating Volunteering

South Australian's are being asked to put their hand up to volunteer as organisations currently face a shortage of volunteers to undertake essential work.

At the height of the pandemic last year, two out of three volunteers stopped volunteering which added to the existing decline in volunteer numbers which was down 7 percent in 2019/2020. Many volunteers were temporarily stood down, and as volunteer programs get back up and running, some of these volunteers are sadly, not returning.

Volunteer involving organisations are now finding it difficult to re-engage or recruit volunteers even though the demand is there.

These statistics are substantiated by the research from the *Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19*¹ survey undertaken last year by Volunteering Australia.

Evelyn O'Loughlin, CEO Volunteering SA&NT, said that during the pandemic, older volunteers and those in vulnerable groups stopped volunteering. The good news though was that younger people stepped up, however with other commitments, such as study and sport, they may not be ongoing volunteers.

"The pandemic gave many people the opportunity to reassess their lives and with more time on their hands, many people turned to new hobbies or chose to spend quality time with family members.

"It provided the opportunity to take life a little slower, and with that, some people have re-prioritised their lives, with volunteering taking on a new dimension,' said Ms O'Loughlin.

For those that haven't stopped their volunteering, the way they used to volunteer has changed. Rather than being structured, volunteers may now prefer to allocate a certain amount of hours on certain days. These people, who are still very willing and able to help in their communities, are wanting more flexibility with their volunteering.

It is vital for the sector to work together to support our amazing and invaluable volunteers – to look at ways to make volunteering easier and more accessible for time-poor South Australians.

"We can help volunteer involving organisations and volunteers with these changes, looking at new ways around flexibility, innovation and openness.

"It's time to start the discussions and to reinvigorate volunteering,' Ms O'Loughlin said.

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From 17-23 May, South Australian volunteers are recognised and thanked for their amazing contribution during National Volunteer Week.

Everyone is invited to join in on the #colouryourcommunityred social media campaign by wearing red and decorating their homes, offices and businesses in red. Post a picture or video to socials, tagging Volunteering SA&NT and use hashtags #colouryourcommunityred #NVW2021 #SAvolunteer

Volunteering SA&NT has led the volunteering sector in South Australia and the Northern Territory for 39 years. They continue to work with individuals, organisations, businesses and communities to lead, advance, grow, promote and celebrate volunteering.

www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Media enquiries and interviews

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¹ Volunteering Australia, February 2021, '[Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19](#)'. Survey of 584 volunteer involving organisations on their experience engaging volunteers in the wake of COVID-19.