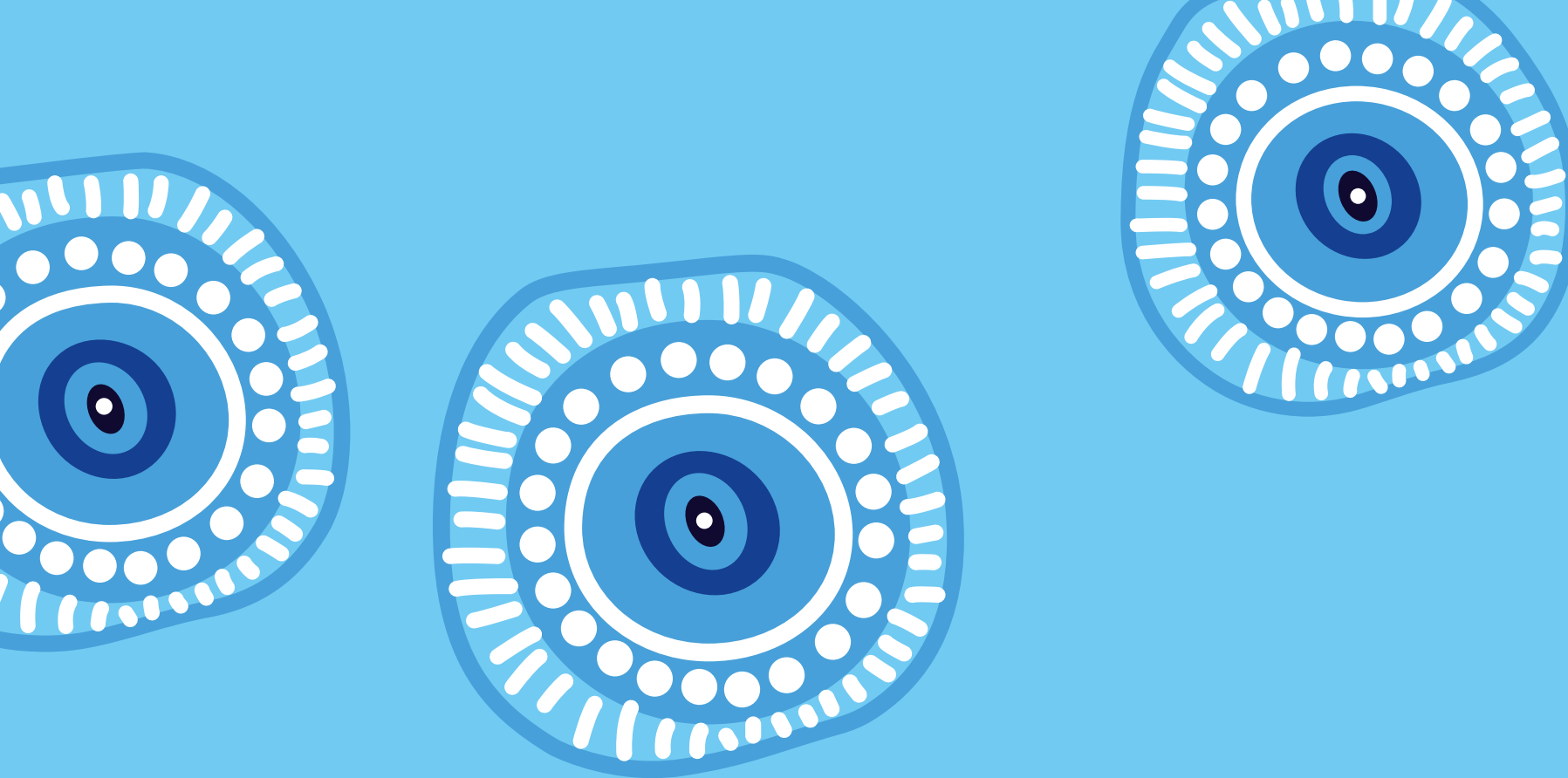


Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Sport Volunteer Coalition
Action Plan
Year 2 Report





Australian Sports Commission Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where its offices are located, the Ngunnawal people and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the people of the Yugambeh Nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

The ASC extends this acknowledgment to all the Traditional Custodians of the lands and First Nations Peoples throughout Australia and would like to pay its respects to all Elders past, present and future.

The ASC recognises the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to society and sport in Australia and celebrates the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.

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Chair's message

I am thrilled with the progress the Sport Volunteer Coalition (the Coalition) has made implementing Year 2 of the Sport Volunteer Action Plan (the Plan). Greater awareness of our plan across the sector was marked notably by the Sport Ministers in November 2023, who collectively acknowledged progress made in implementing the Plan and endorsed continued collaboration on its implementation. This endorsement underscores the collective commitment to advancing volunteerism within the sports community.

The Coalition welcomed the release of the first sector-owned, national participation strategy, [Play Well](#), which aims to change the way people lead, deliver and experience sport. Acknowledging the value of volunteers is a prominent feature within Play Well and empowering people is central to the strategy's vision that 'Everyone has a place in sport.'

Celebration of our volunteers in sport remains an ongoing priority as we focus on empowering sport with volunteer resources and connections. Congratulations to all our nominees of the 2023 Sport Volunteer of the Year Award, with a special celebration for 17-year-old Elysa Olivieri, who shone a spotlight on the value that young people can bring to volunteering. Elysa's commitment and passion should inspire us all to mobilise volunteers of all ages. More broadly, it challenges sport to tailor and design our volunteer opportunities with a person-first approach, shaping roles to fit the unique interests and skills of the people in your local communities.

Volunteering Australia's theme for 2024's National Volunteer Week, 'Something for Everyone' provided a platform for a sport-focussed marketing campaign that elevated the value of our sporting heroes in delivering and enabling sporting experiences. Throughout May, our social feeds were filled with inspiring stories, and I extend a personal #3cheersforvolunteers. Thank you.

Driven by our community insights data, this past year saw a transition to focus on the volunteer experience as a fundamental element impacting volunteering in sport. Key achievements to reflect this shift include the launch of the Sport Volunteer Resource Hub (the Resource Hub), a centralised one-stop shop for sport resources and knowledge, enhanced knowledge sharing throughout the system through newsletters, and webinars, whilst working with individual organisations to develop tailored volunteering action plans in local communities and sporting organisations.

Supporters of the Plan were invited to join a sector-led peer network to provide a space for sharing learnings and resources in developing and implementing volunteering strategies within National sporting organisations (NSOs) and National sporting organisations for people with disability (NSODs). Connecting the sector in this way showcases how sports are banding together to collectively improve all volunteering experiences. More than ever, we're putting volunteer experience at the heart of all we do.

I would like to thank the continued efforts of our Coalition, both now and into the future. I extend a personal note of gratitude to Scott Tutton and Molina Asthana for their hard work and passion. Their legacy continues in conversations around diversity, equity and much more. I am delighted to welcome DJ Cronin, Dr Aish Ravi, Marcus Rosas and Jason Russell-Jones to the Coalition to assist in driving Year 3 of the Plan.

As we rapidly embark on Year 3 of the Plan, I urge everyone to celebrate and acknowledge our wonderful volunteers. Thank you.



Dr. Lindsey Reece
Chair, Sport Volunteer Coalition

Introduction

This report reviews the impact of the second year of the Plan, with a focus on empowering sport organisations and volunteers to achieve the vision that “people from all walks of life see and realise opportunities to contribute to individual, club and community goals in a way that suits them.”

Over the last 12 months, the Coalition has focused on centralising best practice resources to achieve improved outcomes for volunteers in sport. A significant achievement was the development of the Resource Hub, a one-stop shop housing insights on how to recruit, retain and ensure positive experiences for sport volunteers. Showcasing these insights through case studies and panel discussions during our in-focus webinar series, co-hosted with Volunteering Australia, has enabled the sector to realise the value of these resources in supporting sport volunteers.

Supplementing the Resource Hub is the optimisation of the Australian Sport Commission (ASC) Game Plan product, an online resource that provides sporting organisations with a report on their volunteer workforce activities and targeted areas for improvement, linked with the Resource Hub. This tool has assisted State, Territory, NSOs and NSODs in further understanding the needs of their community clubs in volunteering and optimising the use of data for targeted funding and support.

Building on the momentum gained from the first year of the Plan, the Coalition created a peer network for national sports that are investing in creating volunteering strategies, action plans, and resources for the sector. The Coalition has brought this peer network together to inspire and learn from each other and enable cross-sectoral collaboration.

Through this momentum around volunteering, there have been enhanced commitments to strategic plans designed to improve volunteering in sport. An example of such strategic alignment is the 2023-2025 Northern Territory Volunteering Plan which highlights the vital role volunteers play in sport participation in the Territory. These learnings, shared back via the Coalition, enable a clearer picture on the impact of the Plan, and identifies emerging needs from the sector.

This annual report serves as a crucial tool to measure the outcomes of the Coalition’s activities, ensuring that the desired impacts are achieved, and the sector reflects on progress and learnings. Enhanced knowledge from sport volunteers, sector partners, and insights from the Coalition have enriched the evidence base on sport volunteering. In addition to showcasing significant progress, this report aims to empower the sector to embrace and take ownership of the Coalition’s initiatives, fostering sustainable change for all sport volunteers. As we conclude Year 2 and reflect on our achievements, we eagerly anticipate Year 3, aspiring to reimagine the landscape of sport volunteering.



Coalition

In 2023/24, the Coalition has been instrumental in driving the success of the Plan by supporting its adoption and recognition across the sector. The Coalition has continued to implement key initiatives in Year 2 that support the four key areas of the Plan: Celebrate, Empower, Reimagine and Innovate.

Coalition Members



Sarah Wilson – Sarah has expertise in volunteer involvement and not-for-profit strategy and governance. Sarah is the National Strategy Advisor at Volunteering Australia and previously served as the Policy Manager for VolunteeringACT for nearly a decade. She holds degrees in Arts, Psychology, and Law and is currently completing her Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Clinical Psychology at the University of Western Australia. Sarah is also a passionate volunteer in animal welfare and mental health.



David Brett – David is Principal Policy Officer for the Office of Sport in the NSW Government, where he is currently leading the diversity and inclusion work. David is focussed on the implementation of the Office's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Multicultural Plan which was launched in 2024, as well as driving efforts to support and improve sport and active recreation volunteering in NSW.



Jessica Cook – Jessica is a highly motivated manager with over 11 years dedicated to the Sport and Recreation industry, currently working in the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, Queensland Government. Jessica has also been recognised for her extraordinary commitment to her local AFL club – Sandgate Hawks, where she volunteers as a coach and is a founding member of the Female Growth sub-committee.



Adam Weir – Adam is the CEO of Surf Lifesaving Australia, having been in the role since 2018. He is a life-long member of the Cronulla Surf Lifesaving Club (SLSC) as well as a member of International Life Saving (ILS) where he is the chair of the Rescue Commission and works on the ILS Rescue Operations Committee.



Lisa Hasker – Lisa is the CEO of VicSport, the peak body for sport in Victoria. Lisa has extensive knowledge of the sporting landscape including holding board positions at AFL SportsReady Foundation, Shooting Australia, Athletics Victoria and Australian Sponsorship Marketing Association. She is also the current Chair of Athletes for HopeAustralia.



Megan Carr – Megan Carr is the Acting Head of Clubs and Facilities at Golf Australia, leading strategic initiatives to enhance golf clubs' capabilities nationwide. She oversees the R&A Women in Golf Charter program to promote gender equality and increase female participation in golf. Additionally, Megan is the Vice President of Shepparton Golf Club and Managing Director of Sports Focus in Bendigo, Victoria.



Molina Asthana – Molina, a corporate lawyer, is the founder of the organisation 'Multicultural Women in Sport', which aims to empower migrant women from multicultural backgrounds through sport. She is also the chair of both AFL South-East Region, and of Handball Victoria. She is a board director for Gymnastics Victoria, Table Tennis Victoria and is a Tribunal Member for Football Victoria and Victorian Amateur Football Association. Molina has also been appointed as a member of the Play Well Leadership Group and is the Change Our Game Ambassador for Victoria.



Garry West-Bail – Garry is the Integrity and Project Manager for the Australian Alliance for People with a Disability (ASAPD) - an alliance of the 8 Australian National Sport Organisations for people with Disability. In addition, Garry is a Project Manager at Deaf Sports Australia, overseeing the delivery of the Australian Deaf Games. Garry has over 30 years experience in sports administration, having roles at club, state and national level as well as a number of volunteer roles across AFL clubs, Queensland Olympic Council and the Australian Sports Administrator Association.



Scott Tutton - Scott is the Head of Clubs and Volunteers at Cricket Australia where his current focus is on ensuring that volunteers are continually supported to have exceptional experiences in delivering vibrant and attractive community competitions that showcase cricket as a sport for all.



Lindsey Reece – Lindsey is the Chair of the Sport Volunteer Coalition. Director of Sport Programs within the ASC, Lindsey works collaboratively with the Sport Sector, Local, State and Territory, and Federal Government, as well as strategic partners to drive alignment with Play Well and the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan to ensure everyone has a place in sport.



“We want people from all walks of life to see and realise opportunities to contribute to individual, club and community goals in a way that suits them.”

THE COALITION



Empowering volunteers

National Sporting Participation Funding

Participation Growth Funding (PGF) is the investment that supports the ASC's recognised NSOs and NSODs to deliver high-quality participation outcomes.

PGF supports NSOs and NSODs to deliver participation outcomes for participants, coaches, officials and volunteers through an investment focused on supporting inclusive, welcoming and accessible participation opportunities. Going forwards, this investment will help change the way sport is experienced across Australia through alignment with Play Well.

- In 2023/24, 12 NSOs and NSODs utilised their Participation Growth Funding towards the delivery of 17 dedicated volunteering activities.
- 37% of these activities are dedicated towards the reward and recognition of volunteers with volunteer of the year awards and the regular promotion and celebration of those people working in the background being highlights.
- 21% of these activities are aimed at the recruitment of new volunteers by focusing on the storytelling and celebration of existing volunteers.
- A further 21% of these activities are focused on the upskilling and development of volunteers through the development of specific resources and embedding resources within easy-to-use software.
- Two NSOs and NSODs are implementing volunteer and workforce strategies and plans. By aligning these plans with the broader aims of the organisation, and sector-wide strategies, the aim is to provide a framework and environment that will allow volunteers to grow and prosper once they enter the sport.
- The ASC is currently facilitating the development of National Participation Plans with NSOs and NSODs with the view of aligning with Play Well.
- Through the National Participation Plans, the ASC will ensure a focus on 'the people who participate in, facilitate, and deliver sporting experiences'. The participation planning process will support NSOs and NSODs in informing their future ASC participation investment priority areas.

Volunteering Webinars

Since July 2023, there have been four webinars hosted by the ASC centred around issues affecting sport volunteering. Aligned with themes within the Plan, speakers at these webinars provided insights on issues facing community sport. Awareness and engagement with the volunteering webinars has grown by 44% since our first webinar. Cross-sectoral interest in webinar topics is observed with attendance from stakeholders within the education sector, our state and federal government agencies, national and state sporting organisations, disability service providers, local governments and councils, as well as community sport partners.



4 webinars

Topics include:

- Taking the pressure down – new approaches to recruiting sport volunteers
- Give retention some attention
- Technology in sport volunteering – friend or foe?
- Community club volunteering – something for everyone



974 registrations

Reach of Webinars

Reach for these webinars include community sport leaders, federal, state and local government, education partners, state sporting organisations, NSOs and NSODs.

The Sport Volunteer Of The Year Award

The Sport Volunteer of The Year Award was, for the second year since its inception, presented at the AIS Sport Performance Awards (ASPAs), a night that celebrates excellence across the broader sport sector. The award built upon the success of its inaugural year, once again giving volunteers pride of place amongst Australia's elite athletes and recognising them for their outstanding contribution to sport.

We congratulate all our nominees and finalists: Cally Bauman (Special Olympics), Elysa Oliveri (Cricket Australia), Jennifer Kenny (Surf Life Saving Australia) and Nicole Mitchell (Football Australia). Our 2023 winner was Elysa Oliveri who received the award for her positive contribution to her community.



Elysa volunteers with the all-abilities Blowfly Cricket Club in the Hills District of NSW. Determined to make an impact, the 17-year-old gives hours of her time every week to coaching, supporting and fundraising for all-abilities cricket. In addition, Elysa has coached an Under 9s team at Thornleigh Cricket Club, managed a school fundraising event for the NSW Blind Cricket team and the McGrath Foundation, and organised the official opening of the Pennant Hills High School cricket nets.

The success of Elysa serves as inspiration and showcases that with volunteering, there is 'Something for Everyone'. We encourage the sector to continue to celebrate and nominate engaged volunteers whose stories should be shared, not only to celebrate their individual impact but to elevate the value of sport volunteering.



“We celebrate the Volunteer of the Year in Surf Life Saving through the DHL Volunteer of the Year, recognising an individual who's demonstrated achievements in a range of different areas of a club or Surf Life Saving service throughout the year. It is one of the top-three awards of the evening alongside the Lifesaver of the Year and the Club of the Year. It has been great to be able to align this award with the Sport Volunteer of the Year Award which is now included within the ASPAs each year.”

ADAM WEIR, CEO SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA

Measures of success¹

Evaluating yearly progress on the Plan

The Plan will be assessed through a comprehensive monitoring framework. This structure enables clear assessment of all parts of the ecosystem that support volunteering within the four key areas of the Plan: Celebrate, Empower, Reimagine and Innovate. This monitoring framework takes into consideration numerous sources of information including the ASC's Community Perceptions Monitor (CPM), marketing insights, social media engagement, resource use, volunteer data and insights. Driving the success of the Plan requires all areas to work cohesively and effectively with continual evaluation to understand where improvements can be made each year.



“The NT Sport Volunteer Action Plan 2023-25 localises the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan, with actions that truly fit the needs of the NT sporting community. In partnership with Volunteering SA&NT, the delivery of workshops and development of tailored resources have really helped local sports build strong volunteer programs, ensuring everyone feels supported and equipped. The NT Sport Volunteer Action Plan's tailored approach ensures it addresses the unique needs of NT sport volunteers, helping them thrive and grow.”

**MITCHELL HARDY, GENERAL MANAGER
SPORT, RECREATION AND STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE
DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORY FAMILIES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

1. **AusPlay** data on volunteers was not available for inclusion in this report. In July 2023, AusPlay moved from telephone to online data collection. This introduced a break in time series which means the data from online interviewing will not be directly comparable with the previous data and the online data will not be released until October 2024.

Community Perceptions on Volunteering

The CPM is a routine survey commissioned by the ASC, targeting random sample of the Australian population on topical issues relevant to the sport sector. The CPM is conducted nationwide through a monthly online survey of Australian residents aged 18 or older. Each month, a representative sample of 500 Australians are asked about their attitudes to a range of sport and physical activity-related topics.

Throughout February to May, around 2000 people responded to questions around volunteering in sport. This included 225 people who speak a language other than English at home (LOTE), 345 people who live with disability and 54 people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

In the survey, 1,052 respondents reported that they had experience volunteering in sport. Around a third of these (368) had volunteered in the past 12 months and were classified as current volunteers. The remaining 684 had volunteered in the past, more than 12 months ago, and were classified as lapsed volunteers. Among the 368 current volunteers, 41 were from the LOTE community (11%), 55 live with a disability (14%) and 25 were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (7%).



Diversity of ALL volunteers in sample

21.4% LOTE

32.8% live with a disability

5.1% are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin



Diversity of CURRENT volunteers in sample

11.1% LOTE

14.9% live with a disability

6.8% are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin



The experience of volunteering was similar for male and female volunteers. However, the accessibility of suitable support and more relevant resources was reported slightly more favourably by women (81%) than men (78%).



Current volunteers also rated higher fulfillment (88%) compared to past volunteers (82%). Additionally, there was a slightly higher proportion of current volunteers that found their volunteer role suited their skills either 'a lot' or 'somewhat' (88%) compared to ex volunteers (84%).



Volunteers still need more suitable resources with 20% of all respondents reporting either 'not very much' or 'no access' to suitable resources or support to execute their role. But overall, the story of volunteers that responded to the CPM was generally positive when asked about their experiences in volunteering in sport.



Recognition remains a key factor in retention that continues to require priority with 89% of current volunteers reporting they felt recognised 'a lot' or 'somewhat' well recognised for their efforts compared to 78% of ex volunteers speaking about their past volunteering experiences.



Overall involvement in volunteering



- 18% Current volunteers
- 8% Volunteered within the last 5 years
- 26% Volunteered 5 or more years ago
- 49% Never volunteered

Note: Volunteer status does not equate to 100% due to rounding

Breakdown of volunteer roles*

- 12% Volunteer
- 4% Coach
- 3% Umpire
- 2% Administrator
- 5% Committee member

*Some people volunteer in more than one role

Highest contributors of enjoyment during volunteering*



*Reported as 'a lot' or 'somewhat'

What attracts people to volunteer

- Creating new friendships
- Effect on mental health
- Feeling a part of a community
- Exercise from volunteering
- Feelings of camaraderie and mateship

Sport organisations should consider these factors in the design of their volunteer experience and ensure to facilitate connections of volunteers within communities.

Current volunteers are far more likely to continue volunteering than ex-volunteers are to return, suggesting that once someone stops volunteering, they are unlikely to resume.

Additionally, there is a significant gap in knowledge about volunteering opportunities among non-volunteers. Specifically, 89% of non-volunteers who are not interested in volunteering themselves wouldn't know where to direct someone interested in getting involved.

Furthermore, 73% of non-volunteers who are interested in volunteering wouldn't know how to get started. Clearly, more work is needed to highlight the various entryways into volunteering opportunities.

The importance of volunteering is widely recognised with 51% of all respondents believing volunteering is essential to community sport, and 13% consider it not essential but very useful. Current volunteers especially emphasise the importance of volunteers at all levels of sport (community, professional, national competitions/championships, international major sporting events), with 60% ranking it as essential, compared to 41% from the non-volunteer cohort. This underscores the need to improve awareness and accessibility of volunteering opportunities to bolster community and sporting events.

Respondents were asked to describe, in their own words, the positive and negative experiences they have had in sport volunteering. This can provide a clear picture of the state of volunteering and where focussed effort should be placed for greater impact. The table to the right shows the key themes, both positive and negative, that comments related to. This can be used to provide further evidence supporting the need for the Coalition in improving the volunteer experience moving into Year 3 of the Plan.

Insights on Volunteering

Game Plan is a free online platform provided by the ASC that allows sporting clubs of all sizes to access insights into their current capability in key areas of club administration. The platform supports ongoing club development with a suite of tools.

Through Game Plan, the ASC captures data on workforce maturity levels, including volunteer practices, of clubs across Australia. This data is used by clubs to develop action plans to build capability in workforce and volunteer management. The data is also shared with state and national sporting organisations as well as local government and state government partners to support the development of resources, programs and initiatives to enhance volunteering at all levels.

Positive experiences	# of comments	% of volunteers whose comments related to this
Giving back to the club/supporting players to grow	200	19%
Sense of community/involvement	197	18%
Spending time with/meeting new people	174	17%
Sense of fulfillment/achievement	151	14%
Participating in activity/learning new skills	95	9%
Other	43	4%
Negative experiences	# of comments	% of volunteers whose comments related to this
Behaviour of spectators/participants	212	18%
Poor conditions/difficulty of volume of work	111	11%
Feeling unappreciated/not compensated	83	7%
Time commitment	74	7%
Injuries	17	2%
Other	45	4%

Celebrate

Communicate the broad value of sport volunteering through powerful storytelling

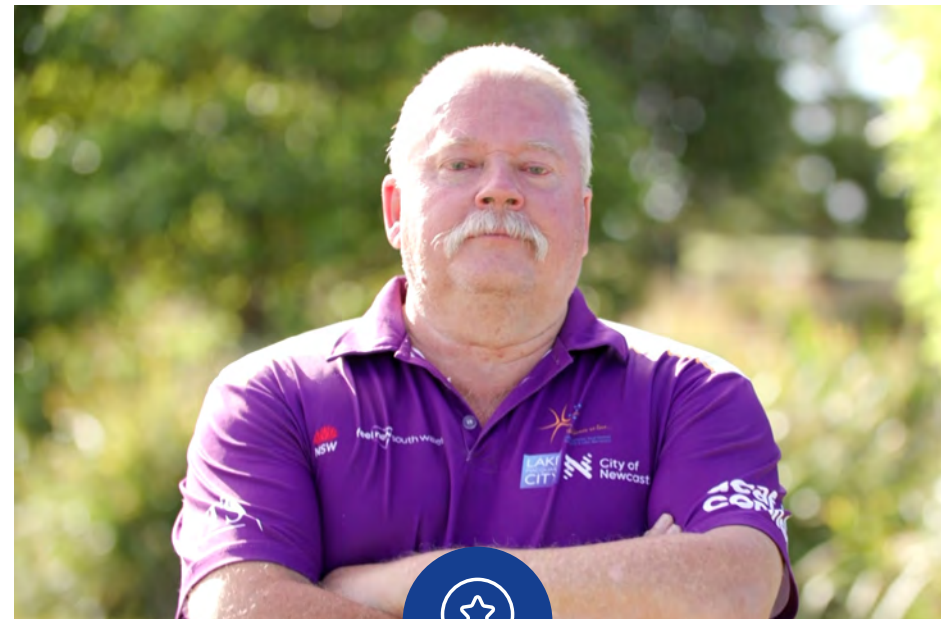
This year has seen a significant increase in the awareness of the role volunteers have in creating the fabric of community sport, bolstered through the success of the 3 Cheers for Volunteers marketing campaign, a record rise in nominations for the Sport Volunteer of the Year Award and the rising number of volunteer awards within national and state sporting organisations and at major sporting events such as the Australian Deaf Games and Surf Life Saving Australia National Championships. This recognition, available to any official, participant or volunteer signifies a notable cultural shift towards a heightened appreciation of volunteers and their impact.

Highlights

- ASC representative reappointed to the National Strategy for Volunteering Council at Volunteering Australia
- Multiple speaking occasions across the sport sector and beyond to elevate the Plan
- Continued support of the Sport Volunteer of the Year Award
- Continued celebration of the National Volunteer Week themes

2024–2025 Key Priority

Seeking to capitalise on local engagements, the Coalition now looks to prioritise participation in conferences and events to communicate the impact and considerations of volunteering in sport. We will continue to reflect on the diversity of our volunteer cohorts and understand how to best elevate the impact of volunteering and the reciprocal benefits to both the individual and the community.



Mark Cullan, recipient of the prestigious Leonie Jackson Community Spirit Award at the 2024 Australian Deaf Games, embodies the essence of volunteering and remains committed to the Deaf Games community beyond his competitive years. Acknowledging how volunteering feels like being “part of a family, around brothers and sisters... from such different communities”, Mark endeavours to support and guide the younger generation through his involvement in sports volunteering.

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
1.1 Develop and release a marketing and communication plan to communicate the value of sport volunteering to Australia	On track/in progress	The marketing plan worked to reposition volunteering in sport and focus on the value to volunteers. This built on the success of Year 1 and showcased best practice examples of the Plan in effect.	Empower the sector to continue ownership of shared messaging and driving change in volunteering in sport.
1.2 Showcase the contribution of sport volunteers in community sport and major events	On track/in progress	The ASC and the Coalition captured and shared <u>stories of sport volunteers</u> across digital channels, highlighting the value of sport volunteers, as well as the individual and community benefits of volunteering in sport.	Work to understand the characteristics and motivations of major event volunteers. Work closely with major events to leverage their legacy to support community grass roots sport. Leverage the diverse backgrounds of volunteers in sports to understand innovative approaches to recruit and retain our volunteers. We'll share compelling volunteer stories to showcase benefits and inspire community engagement both locally and at major events.
1.3 Activate sport volunteer ambassadors	On track/in progress	Through consistent messaging and advocacy at state and national conferences, state government meetings, and various organisational board meetings, the Coalition have raised awareness and relevance of the Plan.	The Coalition's plans to expand its stakeholder-based strategic partnerships will be targeted through Play Well to facilitate meaningful volunteering experiences for diverse cohorts.
1.4 Establish a nationally coordinated set of activities to promote volunteering in sport as part of National Volunteer Week	On track/in progress	<p>The ASC coordinated a targeted marketing strategy throughout the month of May, recognising diversity in both who volunteers, and how they volunteer as part of the 2024 National Volunteer Week.</p> <p>Five unique stories were shared to celebrate the diversity and value in volunteering and supported with a targeted paid campaign and editable resource toolkit shared with the sector. Full campaign outcomes on page 17.</p>	<p>Create a consistent narrative around sport volunteering, build on momentum of this National Volunteer Week, every week, and continue to encourage sporting organisations to get on board.</p> <p>Leverage existing and new networks to ensure the sport sector mobilise the messaging around volunteers in sport during National Volunteer Week.</p>

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
1.5 Integrate sport volunteering as a theme within existing national and international conferences and events	On track/in progress	<p>The Coalition and ASC representatives presented a keynote presentation at the National Sports Convention, as well as presentations at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sport NSW Conference • Parks and Leisure Australia Vic/Tas Conference • Perth Industry Roundtable • Festival of Sport (SA) • NSW Football Conferences • State and national Volunteering Australia conferences <p>The scope of presentations was varied from NSOs or NSODs, state and territory government, and community sporting leaders. Core messages from the Plan were communicated appropriately to different stakeholders, with relevant case studies and learnings shared.</p>	The Coalition aims to build momentum from domestic appearances to share insights on sport volunteering at international conferences and events.
1.6 Map existing volunteer reward and recognition initiatives and shared best practice examples of volunteer recognition	On track/in progress	The ASC remains committed to sourcing volunteer reward and recognition initiatives across all levels of the sports sector, disseminating best practices through channels such as the ASC Volunteering Newsletter, ASC Volunteering Webinars, and the Resource Hub.	Sourcing specific examples of best practice volunteer recognition will be achieved through an expanded network in Year 3 of the Plan.
1.7 Explore the establishment of a National Sport Volunteer Award as part of a broader awards program	On track/in progress	The 2023 Sport Volunteer of the Year Award received nominations across 31 sports. Inspirational teenager Elysa Oliveri was awarded the prestigious title at the ASPAs for volunteer work with the all-abilities Blowfly Cricket club in the Hills District of NSW.	Seek nominations and award the 2024 Sport Volunteer of the Year. We will also share the stories of award nominees to celebrate their contributions and achievements.

2024 National Volunteer Week

3 Cheers for Volunteers

National Volunteer Week is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering, and on May 20 to 26, 2024, the ASC once again rallied the sport sector to celebrate and thank the 3 million sport volunteers across Australia with a big 3 Cheers for Volunteers!

The ASC collaborated with sport partners across Australia to unearth stories of real-life volunteers and publish content to recognise and celebrate the incredible people who get involved to make sport possible in Australia. Key to this year's campaign was the effort to showcase the diverse communities of volunteers and the different ways people can give back to sport, aligning to Volunteering Australia's 'Something for Everyone' theme. Visit the [volunteer stories](#) page to watch the series.

A large nation-wide paid campaign across all digital platforms, a thorough organic content plan and a downloadable promotional toolkit built upon the success of the 2023 '3 Cheers for Volunteers' campaign. The toolkit, shared via the ASC website, offered more than 30 customisable website and social media tiles, key messages, certificates and posters to help sporting organisations promote National Volunteer Week and thank their volunteers.

It was incredible to see the collective response from the sport community. Over 280 members of the sport community rose to the challenge to spotlight their sport volunteers on social media. From the Perth Scorchers Big Bash team to the South-East Melbourne Phoenix NBL team, to regional and rural sporting clubs, there was a groundswell of support for the campaign with over 550 posts about National Volunteer Week on social media from across the sport sector.



Campaign Results



Engaged with the campaign –
10% increase on 2023



Which had over 30 easy-to-use,
customisable templates –
320% increase on 2023



Stakeholders shared
content across social media,
using the toolkit and/or
#3CheersforVolunteers



on content displayed to our audience
throughout the campaign period,
20 May to 9 June.



Through likes, shares and
comments on paid and owned
channels – **140% increase** on 2023



On paid and owned assets
throughout the campaign –
257% increase on 2023



To the ASC Get Involved page
during the campaign



Across paid and owned channels –
30% increase on 2023

Empower

Support and connect volunteers in sport

Entering the second year of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Volunteering Australia, the ASC have ensured sport volunteering remains a part of the broader conversation around volunteering. Integrating learnings from collaborating with experts, and co-designing resources, ensures relevant and accessible tools are shared to the sport sector regarding sport volunteering. This has included a revision of the Game Plan club development platform to enhance volunteering practices at a community sport level, as well as enhancing the resources housed on the Resource Hub. Bringing NSOs and NSODs together to discuss matters around volunteering improves connection points and opportunities to learn what works in engaging and retaining volunteers, a key resource the Coalition aims to leverage further in the coming years.

Highlights

- Completed environmental scan of volunteer resources throughout the sport system to inform the Resource Hub
- Launch of the Resource Hub, hosted by the ASC, utilised by the sector
- Delivered bi-monthly volunteering webinars to showcase and learn from leaders at all levels in sport volunteering
- Connected sporting organisations to high-quality resources through the Resource Hub
- Enhanced the ASC's Game Plan club development platform to support and enable volunteer engagement in local sporting organisations
- Fostered collaboration amongst NSOs and NSODs on sport volunteering initiatives through a peer network
- Retained focus of sport volunteering activities as priorities on ministerial agendas
- Collating evidence to support the prioritisation of volunteering in sport at board level

2024–2025 Key Priority

Enhancing the uptake and use of resources through Game Plan and the Resource Hub. The ASC will also support sporting organisations to enhance the sport volunteer experience through the release of new resources and microlearning opportunities. The ASC will continue to provide opportunities for the sector to come together to learn and share insights on volunteering in sport, and ultimately improve the experience for all sport volunteers.



DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
2.1 Conduct an environment scan of available training and resources for sport volunteering and create a one-stop-shop for best practice resources.	Complete	The ASC collaborated with state and territory partners and Invictus Australia to develop and launch the Resource Hub in July 2023. The Resource Hub is a one-stop-shop that brings together useful resources, tools and practical tips and tricks in one place.	Continue to connect sporting organisations to the best volunteering resources via the Resource Hub. The Resource Hub will also be connected to Volunteering Australia's Volunteering Gateway to broaden it's reach and impact
2.2 Continue partnership with Volunteering Australia to connect sport volunteering with the broader volunteering ecosystem.	On track/in progress	An MoU between the ASC and Volunteering Australia continues to provide a platform for collaboration. The ASC has endorsed the National Strategy for Volunteering and is representing the sport sector during the establishment phase. The ASC and the Coalition are increasingly recognised as innovators in volunteering across the broader volunteering ecosystem.	Continue to collaborate with Volunteering Australia to align strategy and action for the benefit of sporting organisations and volunteers in sport.
2.3 Enhance Game Plan to ensure volunteers and organisations can access targeted support, tools and resources to support their volunteer workforce involvement.	Complete	A refresh of the Workforce module in Game Plan was published, incorporating improved and fit-for-purpose content to evaluate the maturity of sporting clubs in catering to their volunteer workforce.	Collaborate with national and state sport organisations to support more sporting organisations to enhance their volunteer management practice through Game Plan.
2.4 Integrate best practice sport volunteer training into free online learning modules on the Australian Sport Learning Centre for community sporting personnel.	On track/in progress	The ASC has commenced development of microlearning resources to support sporting organisations and enhance the sport volunteer experience. These resources will be available in the second-half of 2024.	Release new resources for sporting organisations to support them to 'try new things', 'work collaboratively', and 'use data and insights' to enhance the sport volunteer experience.
2.5 Establish a sport volunteering network to support peer-to-peer collaboration and connection.	On track/in progress	Twelve workforce and volunteering managers from Australian NSOs and NSODs have joined a collective to support the localisation of the Plan. This presents an opportunity for NSOs and NSODs to work in partnership across the sport system and beyond.	Grow the peer network to foster collaboration and innovation on sport volunteering initiatives amongst sporting organisations.

Use and Impact of Resource Hub

Since July 1, 2023, the Resource Hub has generated 31,308 active users. Serving as a central repository, the Resource Hub collates the most relevant and innovative resources to support the delivery of the Plan. The platform aims to ensure a high-quality experience for all sports volunteers. The Coalition is dedicated to widely sharing these resources, actively seeking feedback on their relevance across various voluntary settings in sport, and continually adding to the existing content to ensure the Resource Hub remains relevant and fit-for-purpose for all users.

Tangible resources that are required within the sector to improve practical aspects of recruitment, retention and positive experiences remain high on the priority list. The Resource Hub had international reach with 28,686 users from Oceania (96%), 406 from the Americas (1.5%), 380 in Europe (1.3%), 352 from Asia (1.2%), and 46 from Africa (0.2%).

Top pages within the Hub for 2023–24



Attracting volunteers



Setting up for success



Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan



Supporting your volunteers



Sport Volunteer Coalition



Stories



“Volunteering with **Invictus Australia** profoundly impacts the lives of ex-service men and women by restoring their sense of purpose and community. Since 2018, Invictus Australia has welcomed and provided opportunities for thousands of volunteers from the Defence community at our local sporting activities. It provides a supportive environment where they can connect with others who share similar experiences, learn new skills, and contribute meaningfully to local sporting events. This involvement helps bridge the gap between military and civilian life, fostering a renewed sense of belonging and camaraderie that is often missing after leaving the Defence Force. Through these opportunities, veterans find empowerment, healing, and a vital support network that enriches their post-service lives.”

MICHAEL HARTUNG, INVICTUS AUSTRALIA

Supporting Volunteer Skills

The ASC is leading the transformation to adopt a modern approach to officiating and coaching. Developed in collaboration with the sport sector, the new approach focuses on the participant, their individual needs, aspirations and motivations. We want to empower the 1.1 million officials, 1 million of whom are volunteers (AusPlay 2022-23), to create positive sporting environments where participants, coaches, volunteers and communities can thrive. New or current officials are supported to update their officiating practice by enrolling in the free [Community Officiating Essential Skills](#) online course, available now on the Australian Sport Learning Centre.

Enhancing Volunteer Management in WA Baseball Clubs with Game Plan

Baseball Western Australia (Baseball WA) identified a critical gap in strategic planning and volunteer management across its clubs, where a predominant focus on operational tasks left little room for future planning and success. These clubs faced significant challenges in volunteer recruitment, with committee members often overburdened with multiple roles and lacking planning expertise. This lack of structured planning and role clarity made it difficult for clubs to engage volunteers effectively, leading to staff burnout and inefficiencies.

To address these issues, Baseball WA introduced Game Plan as a collaborative resource to streamline planning processes and improve volunteer management. By partnering with clubs and involving local government club development officers, Baseball WA facilitated workshops that shifted the focus from operations to strategic planning. Game Plan provided simple and actionable activity plans with clear documentation of tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines. Regular assessments and check-ins ensured ongoing support and progress tracking. This hands-on approach fostered a sense of partnership and shared success, significantly enhancing the planning capabilities and volunteer engagement within WA baseball clubs.





Reimagine

Support the sector to re-design the sport volunteering experience

Understanding that volunteering requires a person-centred focus has been a powerful initial step to creating modified volunteering opportunities for more accessible and inclusive volunteering in sport. Encouraging the sharing of information on volunteering experiences at major sporting events, including the World Transplant Games and the FIBA Women's Basketball World Championships, boosts understanding on how to modify volunteer opportunities to suit individual needs.

Leveraging key partnerships continues to provide insights across the sector around modified volunteer opportunities.

The sector has responded positively when learning how others have trialled new modes of volunteering, and the benefits of the volunteer experience in recruitment and retention.

Highlights

- Collaboration with sector partners to advance research and understanding of the new approach to volunteer role design
- Presentations at national sport conferences on the Plan, providing examples and case studies of how to implement change effectively
- Collaboration with the Duke of Edinburgh program to understand the motivations and opportunities that sport volunteering offers young people

2024–2025 Key Priority

The Coalition aims to improve the collection, understanding, and use of data on volunteers in sport to reimagine traditional volunteer roles. Engaging more closely with the Brisbane Organising Committee for the 2032 Olympic Games (BOCOG) will ensure that volunteer roles leading up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will continue to evolve to secure positive volunteer experiences. Further support for sports to collect data to both review the volunteer experience and provide opportunities to try something new that suits target volunteer cohorts.

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
3.1 Establish partnerships with major sporting event organising committees to maximise volunteering opportunities throughout the event and beyond into community sport delivery.	On track/in progress	Survey results on volunteer experiences at events like the World Transplant Games, FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup, and Australian Deaf Games were shared with the ASC. These reports offer insight into volunteer impact, helping us enhance support and celebrate their contributions going forward.	Collaborate with NSOs and NSODs and major sporting event organisers to develop pilot volunteering programs inspired by insights from event reports, fostering innovation and improvement.
3.2 Engage with stakeholders to pilot the re-design of sport volunteer roles to help enhance the volunteer experience.	On track/in progress	The ASC is collaborating with researchers at Griffith University on innovative approaches to volunteer role design in sporting clubs. The ASC is also connecting sporting organisations to a Department of Social Services youth volunteering initiative.	Continue to engage in collaborative, industry-led research with stakeholders to pilot new volunteer roles and study the volunteer experience through an intersectional lens.
3.3 Identify opportunities, including major sporting events, to deliver 'reimagined volunteering opportunities' including micro volunteering (bite size), flexible and online roles.	On track/in progress	The ASC supported the collation of data and support for legacy initiatives to include volunteering. Data has been shared from major sporting events like the FIBA Women's World Cup and the World Transplant Games, prompting a rethink of volunteer roles emphasising flexibility. Following the FIFA Women's World Cup, Football Australia launched the National Volunteer Focus Group with overwhelming interest from clubs, joining to support tailored approaches to club volunteering needs.	Empower the sports sector by leveraging existing insights on innovative volunteering opportunities. Use major sporting events and other platforms to pilot new approaches in sports volunteering, offering tailored and enjoyable roles for volunteers.

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
3.4 Strengthen relationships with the secondary and tertiary education sector to better engage students and youth in sport volunteering.	On track/in progress	<p>The ASC is collaborating with researchers at Griffith University on innovative approaches to volunteer role design in sporting clubs. ASC x Griffith University collaboration</p> <p>The ASC continues to engage and embed contributions from the secondary and tertiary education sectors in key projects such as the National Sport Volunteer Passport project and Volunteering Webinar Series.</p> <p>Learnings from Sporting Schools Year 9 and 10 pilot projects will inform future approaches to engaging youth in sport volunteering.</p>	Continue to engage with the secondary and tertiary education sectors to identify opportunities to better connect youth to sport volunteering opportunities.
3.5 Support sporting organisations engage with under-represented communities and help develop strategies that support their involvement in sport volunteering.	On track/in progress	The ASC and the Coalition have collaborated to develop resources and amplify messages from the sporting community on effective strategies to recruit, retain, and foster positive experiences for diverse communities.	Look to leverage key partnerships within the Coalition, peer network, and elsewhere to enhance volunteer opportunities for under-represented communities including youth, women and girls, and people with disability.
3.6 Develop a club volunteering blueprint that enables sporting organisations to redesign their volunteering program to suit local needs.	On track/in progress	The sector have come together to discuss challenges and opportunities in creating effective volunteering strategies. This NSO peer network provides a platform to share insights between sports and improve the capability of the sector to cater to volunteers.	Co-design a draft blueprint that speaks to fundamental requirements for successful volunteering programs.
3.7 Engage existing Youth Advisory Councils to enable more youth to get involved in sport volunteering.	On track/in progress	The Coalition remain committed to listening to the voices of young volunteers. Listening to stories, including our national award winner, challenges us all to consider how to listen and learn from youth voice.	Engage with existing Youth Advisory Councils to understand the key opportunities and barriers to sport volunteering for youth. Collaborate on story capture and sharing to highlight sport volunteering opportunities for youth.

Duke 4Sport

The New South Wales (NSW) Office of Sport is exploring the establishment of one or more place-based pilots facilitated through Duke 4Sport partners that provide structured and interesting volunteering opportunities and pathways in sport for Duke of Edinburgh participants over the life of their Award. These pilots would involve a partnership between the Duke 4Sport partner, their community sporting club, participants and their local Award Centre(s).

The program aims to engage more young people in sport volunteering, whilst also empowering community sports to consider how to best structure volunteer programs for young people in their communities.

The overall aim of the project is to increase youth volunteer participation in community sport by increasing volunteering from Duke of Edinburgh participants as part of the Award, and through retention of participants as volunteers beyond their Award participation.



“The NSW Office of Sport, in collaboration with the National Sports Volunteer Coalition and Volunteering NSW, is committed to enhancing sport volunteering in NSW. Developing projects like the Duke 4Sport pilot project is an example of how we are collaborating to create inclusive, impactful volunteering initiatives, recognising sport’s crucial role in the broader volunteering sector.”

**DAVID BRETT, NSW OFFICE FOR SPORT AND
SPORT VOLUNTEER COALITION MEMBER**



Innovate

Drive and stimulate innovation in sport volunteering

Reviewing last year's innovative volunteering opportunities has enhanced our understanding of what's achievable and what requires adjustment, to better support tailored sports experiences. Continued data collection will enhance insights, guiding focused research to address unanswered questions. Committed to driving innovation, the Coalition aims to learn from the user research for a National Sport Volunteer Register/Passport, integrating these learnings into a product fit for delivery.

Highlights

- Integration of sport volunteering opportunities into the Sporting Schools Year 9 and 10 Pilot Program
- Exploring the design of a National Sport Volunteer Register/Passport through cross-sector engagement
- Enhanced data collection on sport volunteers through AusPlay and the CPM

2024–2025 Key Priority

Improving the availability and collection of routine data on sport volunteers across the sector will be achieved through targeted support and data collection frameworks. This data, along with unique research insights, informed by the National Sport Research Agenda (NSRA), will support innovative strategies for recruitment and engagement of volunteers in sport across Australia's unique landscapes.

Revamping Volunteer Management for Sustainable Success

Unlike many community clubs, North Geelong Warriors Football Club (NGWFC) owns its facilities, which brings additional responsibilities, not typically faced at the grassroots level. "We rely heavily on the dedication of both skilled and unskilled volunteers to keep our operations running smoothly. This includes tradespeople for repairs and upgrades, groundskeepers, pest controllers, fencing contractors, electricians, and plumbers, as well as individuals to plan, oversee, and ensure regulatory compliance," explains Courtney Vodopic, Media and Operations, NGWFC. Recognising the need for a more structured approach, a core group of volunteers from the Juniors' and Volunteering sub-committees, leveraged Football Australia's Game Changer program last year to revamp their volunteer management strategies.

"We identified several challenges: the concentration of volunteer management with one person, the lack of written policies or procedures, and the recognition of volunteering as a key operational pressure point without alternative perspectives," said Denis Vodopic, Junior Football Coordinator, NGWFC. Through meticulous planning, we created a comprehensive spreadsheet outlining over 100 distinct volunteer roles across 12 operational divisions, allowing us to anticipate needs, calculate hours worked, and manage intra-club networks. This tool helps address community challenges, such as communication barriers and competing priorities, and supports initiatives to empower volunteers with valuable skills. To ensure sustainability, we developed a 'Recruitment Roadmap', providing structure to volunteer recruitment. This is embedded into the Club's wider vision, with plans to enhance our approach through feedback on social media and club management platforms. NGWFC Club President, Tom Pausak, was supportive of the initiatives, saying "Since 1967, our volunteers have been the backbone of our organisation, and we extend our deepest gratitude for their unwavering support."

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
4.1 Develop a sport volunteering stream for secondary school students in the ASC Sporting Schools program.	Complete	Implementation of the Year 9 and 10 Pilot Programs within Sporting Schools has improved understandings on what is required to ensure successful future iterations.	Resources and modifications to delivery will be drafted to improve future programs.
4.2 Regularly publish and share national data on sport volunteering through the AusPlay survey.	On track/in progress	The refreshed AusPlay methodology prompts reflection on essential volunteer data collection in sports. Knowing who volunteers, their roles, duration, and motivations is vital for retention efforts. Enhanced data utilisation can drive innovative sector solutions.	Continue to educate on the use of AusPlay data for volunteers. How it will look different to data before the change. How to best use data to understand current state of play and gaps/opportunities.
4.3 Introduce a National Sport Volunteer Register/Passport to connect major sporting event volunteers with opportunities in community sport.	On track/in progress	The ASC have commenced the co-design of a National Sport Volunteer Register/Passport with engagement across the sport, government and volunteering sectors. The vision for the product is to make it easier for sporting organisations to engage volunteers, and easier for volunteers to connect to sport volunteering opportunities.	Following the design phase, the ASC will test the concept with key stakeholders and explore options for future delivery.
4.4 Collate current research and identify new research priorities for the NSRA, with a focus on the recruitment, retention, and quality of experience for volunteers in sport.	On track/in progress	Existing and new research on volunteering has been continually embedded in all key projects delivered under the Plan. Research on volunteer participation and retention in sport continues to be a priority of the NSRA which is stimulating and guiding new research through universities.	Connect new research opportunities to the NSRA to promote knowledge sharing. Identify and highlight knowledge gaps for future research.



Evaluate

Evaluate the Plan and translate insights into policy and the sport sector

Improvements in data literacy and utilisation have enhanced sport volunteering evaluation, underpinned by a commitment from the sector to ensure consistent and routine evaluation of their impact in improving the volunteer experience.

2024–2025 Key Priority

Data collection on volunteers in sport will become routine, and appropriate support will be provided to ensure the rigour and accuracy of this data, from major sporting events to community sport settings. The development of a tool aims to comprehensively evaluate the value of volunteering for both the individual experience and sector-wide impact in sport.

Framework for Evaluation

Progression of the Plan depends on collaborative efforts to not only action deliverables but measure their impact. Clarity in what is being achieved, and what should be measured, is required to ensure the efficacy of the Plan is measured correctly. In the first 2 years of the Plan, the Coalition has seen an increase in the inclusion of volunteers in measurement frameworks. Critically important is understanding the volunteering experience, to ensure factors that improve retention and ensure positive experiences are prioritised across the sector. Working with the sector on what is currently being measured, and how to ensure consistency in this area is a key feature of the Plan. Great connections and collaborations across the sector have been secured in the second year of the Plan and we look forward to creating consistent tools for evaluation of volunteering in sport across Australia into the third year of delivery.

DELIVERABLE	STATUS	PROGRESS	ACTIONS FOR 2024-25
5.1 Agree measurement indicators for sport volunteering with the sector.	On track/in progress	Agreed-on minimum viable metrics on volunteering have been shared and discussed across the sector.	Create a unified data charter to inform on how, when and what data is collected from whom.
5.2 Develop and implement an evaluation for the Action Plan to measure progress.	On track/in progress	Reflecting on the first year of implementation and using collected data to inform the behavioural, societal, and sector outcomes of the Plan.	These insights inform modifications to adopting the Plan and improving tailored delivery of the Plan specific to various settings.
5.3 Develop and test an evaluation 'how-to toolkit' for the sport sector to use to guide evaluation of sport volunteer initiatives.	On track/in progress	Discussions have commenced with the NSOs and NSODs peer network on the value and use of data on volunteers and volunteer initiatives. Resources have been shared across this network to improve the capability of NSOs and NSODs/ to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer initiatives.	The NSOs and NSODs peer network will be leveraged to develop a resource for evaluating sport volunteer initiatives for the broader sport sector.
5.4 Publish a Sport Volunteer Coalition annual report including an evaluation summary to communicate plan progress.	Complete	This is the second iteration of a yearly report on the progress of the Plan and will remain a priority for each year of the delivery.	Continue to build on Year One Report and use insights from Year 2 to implement the Plan in Year 3 and beyond.
5.5 Develop a tool that can be used to assess the social and economic value of the sport volunteer experience.	On track/in progress	The broader impact of volunteering has been flagged as a valuable metric to be measured by several stakeholders across the sport sector. Work has begun on collating metrics to develop a broader tool that assesses the social and economic value of volunteering in sport.	Collaborate on the development of a tool to measure the social and economic value of the sport volunteer experience
5.6 Build a global network to share sport volunteering insights and collaborate on volunteering in sport research.	On track/in progress	The ASC and the Coalition have engaged with and hosted delegations from Team Nila, Sport Singapore's volunteering program, to share knowledge on sport volunteering.	Continue to engage and collaborate with Team Nila, Sport Singapore to share knowledge and enhance sport volunteering initiatives. The ASC will also explore opportunities to foster discussions on sport volunteering at the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) World Volunteer Conference.



Official supporters

Working in partnership across the sport system and beyond

The ASC and the Coalition are excited to play a part in reimagining volunteering in sport and are urging organisations to come on board as official supporters the Plan. We encourage organisations to read, digest and promote the Plan in their communities and share what they doing to contribute to the ongoing enhancement of the volunteer experience.

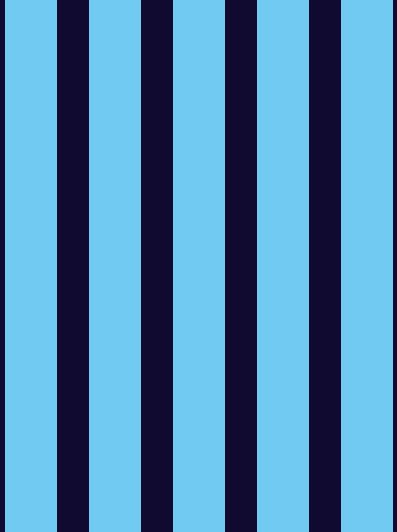
We celebrate all of the organisations who have already publicly endorsed the plan and committed to improve the volunteer experience. These organisations have committed to take action within their own communities to attract and retain more volunteers in sport.



For an updated list of supporters scan the QR code or visit the Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan website www.ausport.gov.au/SVCactionplan







Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

ausport.gov.au



Leverrier Street Bruce ACT 2617
PO Box 176 Belconnen ACT 2616
+61 2 6214 1111