



THE STATE OF VOLUNTEERING

in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

SUMMARY REPORT

2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Volunteering in the ACT Report offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of volunteering in the ACT. It shows that in 2023, 279,000 ACT residents contributed over 63 million hours of their time to volunteering, generating \$14.1 billion of value for the Canberra Region.

Despite the challenges of the current cost-of-living crisis and ongoing impacts of COVID-19 still effecting volunteering recovery, ACT volunteers have continued to actively contribute to their communities in a variety of ways. On average, each volunteer in the ACT contributed 19 hours of their time per month in 2023. ACT residents contribute to their communities as volunteers both formally through an organisation or group (41.1%) and informally, outside of an organisation (52.6%). A significant number of ACT volunteers are young people, with 74.3% of people aged 15-25 years actively engaged in volunteering.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that ACT volunteers reported significant costs associated with their volunteering, highlighting the fact that although volunteers give their time willingly for no financial gain, volunteering is not something that comes for free. The research revealed an hourly cost to volunteers of \$12.76, with volunteers absorbing 64.6% of the total expenses associated with volunteering activities, compared to the 35.4% absorbed by volunteer involving organisations. Despite this, 78.1% of volunteers intend to either maintain or increase their volunteering hours over the next three years and 41.3% of non-volunteers intend to take up volunteering activities in the same period.

The report confirms that volunteering provides huge social and economic benefits to the ACT. Every dollar invested in volunteering in the region results in a remarkable \$5.40 return. Further, the report estimates the replacement labour cost of volunteering in our region to be \$3.3 billion, which is more than two-thirds of the cost of the entire ACT public sector.

The report is based on the findings of two surveys conducted in 2023. The first, a Public Survey, involved a random sample of 534 ACT residents. The second, a Volunteer Manager Survey, included 46 ACT volunteer managers, working across a variety of volunteering programs and sub-sectors. It is the first time these surveys have been conducted in the ACT and they were simultaneously conducted in every State and Territory in Australia. Conducting the Surveys again in future years will provide a valuable opportunity to observe ACT volunteering changes and trends over time.

The findings in this Report clearly demonstrate the significant, vital, and diverse contribution that volunteers make to the ACT community and provide a clear justification for ongoing recognition, support, and investment in the volunteering ecosystem. A summary of key findings is presented on the following pages.

For a full copy of the Report (including the full survey instruments) please visit www.volunteeringact.org.au, or contact policy@volunteeringact.org.au.



ABOUT VOLUNTEERINGACT

VolunteeringACT is the peak body for volunteering and provides community information services in the Canberra region. We also deliver programs for people experiencing disadvantage and isolation, people with disability, and people needing support for mental wellness. VolunteeringACT has a vision of a vibrant and inclusive Canberra, and a mission to foster inclusion by enabling participation and connection.

VolunteeringACT values collaboration, diversity, equity, innovation, integrity, and participation. VolunteeringACT is a people driven, service-focused organisation that represents the interests of over 200 members, advocates for and supports volunteers, and engages with the broader Canberra community. Through our activities, we improve inclusivity, enable sustainable volunteering, and create a more resilient Canberra community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VolunteeringACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region and recognises any other peoples or families with connection to this Country. VolunteeringACT is committed to reconciliation and will continue to walk alongside First Nations Peoples and embrace the traditions, stories, and wisdoms of the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

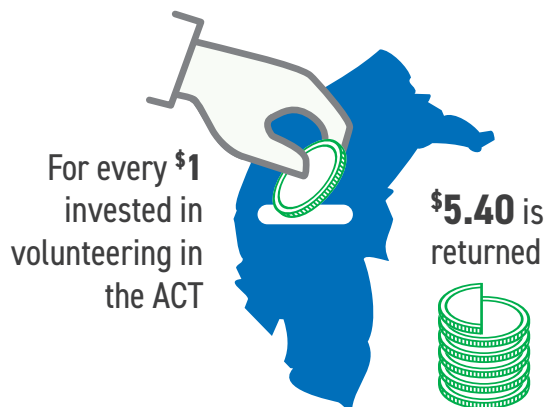
This is an independent report, coordinated by VolunteeringACT, the peak body for volunteering in the ACT. VolunteeringACT engaged the Institute of Project Management (IPM) to design the surveys, conduct the research with ACT residents and volunteer managers, and analyse findings. It is authored by Paul Muller, Managing Director of IPM with statistical assistance from Muhammad Ijaz and Dionne Morris, and supporting contributions from VolunteeringACT staff members.



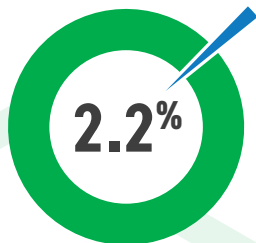


KEY FINDINGS

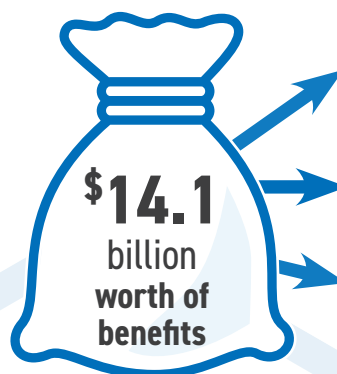
THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING



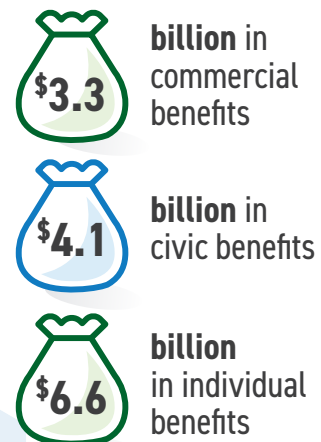
The contribution of volunteering expenditure to the ACT's Gross Product:



In 2023, Volunteering in the ACT enabled an estimated



Incorporating:

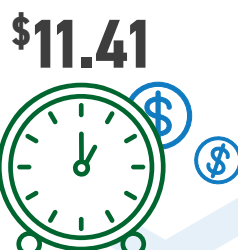


ACT volunteers spend



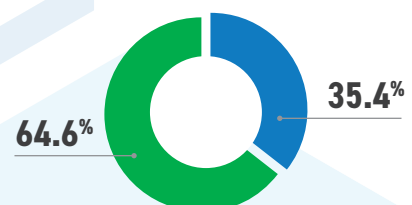
per hour they volunteer

Volunteer-involving organisations spend



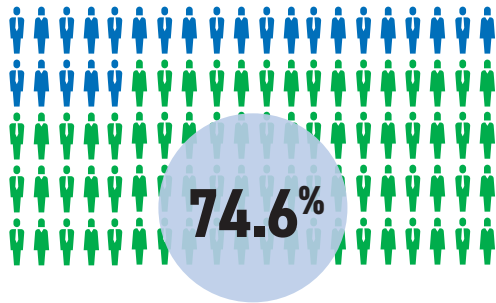
per volunteer hour

Volunteers shoulder **64.6%** of the financial burden associated with volunteering, while volunteer-involving organisations shoulder **35.4%**





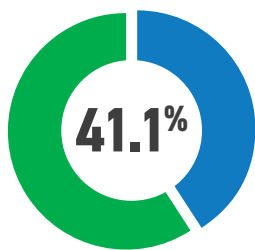
VOLUNTEERS



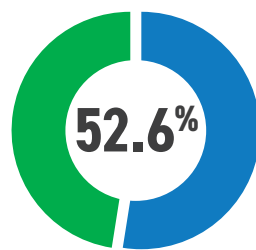
of the ACT population aged over 15 years
(**279,000 people**) volunteered in 2023

In 2023, ACT volunteers contributed
63.7 million hours

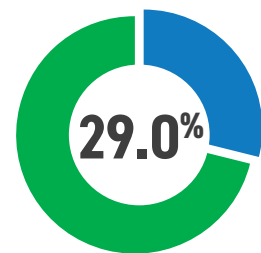
On average, ACT volunteers spend
19 hours per month volunteering



of ACT residents over 15
volunteered in formal settings with
volunteer-involving organisations,
such as not-for-profit, government
and private organisations

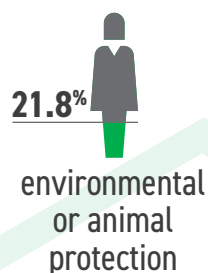
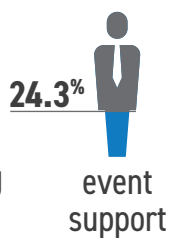
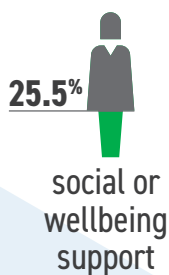


donated their time
informally without
organisational support



volunteered both
formally and informally

The top three ways ACT residents volunteer are:



55.7% of ACT
volunteers do
so in their local
community



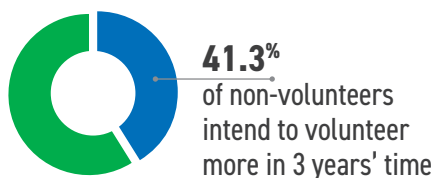
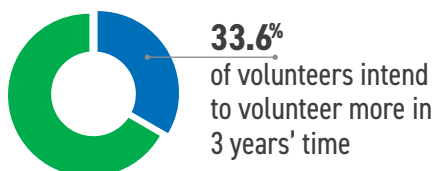
25% volunteer
online or from
home



KEY FINDINGS

VOLUNTEERS

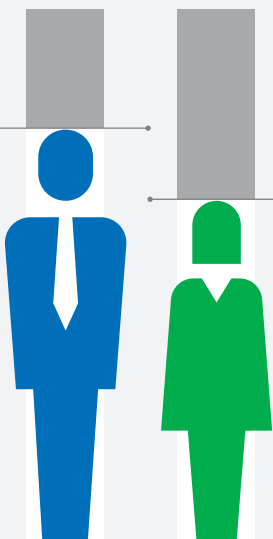
The top 3 **motivations** for **volunteering** in the ACT:



The ACT volunteering workforce

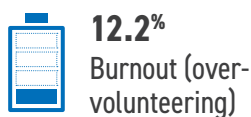
...is **over 4/5** the size of the private sector workforce ...

... and **over 2/3** the size of the public sector workforce



If volunteering was recognised as an industry, **it would be the largest industry by employment in the Territory**

The top 3 **barriers** to ACT **volunteers** volunteering more:



The top 3 **barriers** to ACT **non-volunteers** volunteering:



VOLUNTEER MANAGERS

KEY INCLUSION METRICS – The percentage of volunteer managers that include these volunteer demographics in their programs:



89.1%

include
volunteers
aged 65+



69.6%

include
volunteers
aged under 25



52.2%

include
culturally and
linguistically
diverse
(CALD)
volunteers



43.5%

include First
Nations
peoples



10.9%

include online
or remote
volunteers

Top 3 volunteer retention strategies used by volunteer managers



Volunteer training and development



Personal relationship building



Awards and formal recognition

Top 3 volunteer recruitment strategies used by volunteer managers



Word of mouth



Website



Social media

Top 3 changes in the last 3 years (as reported by volunteer managers)



Number of volunteers has decreased

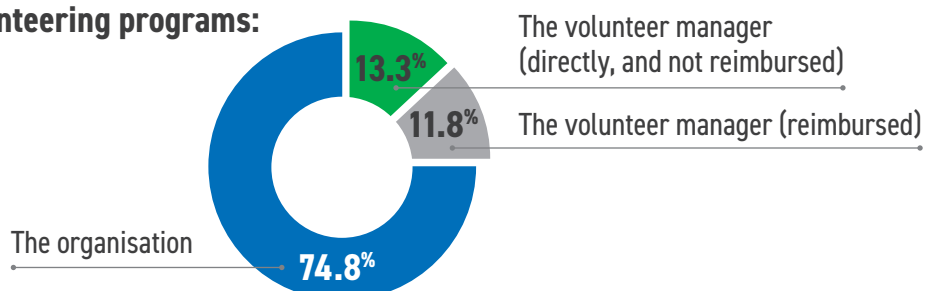


Number of hours people want to volunteer has decreased



Number of young people volunteering has decreased

Who pays for volunteering programs:



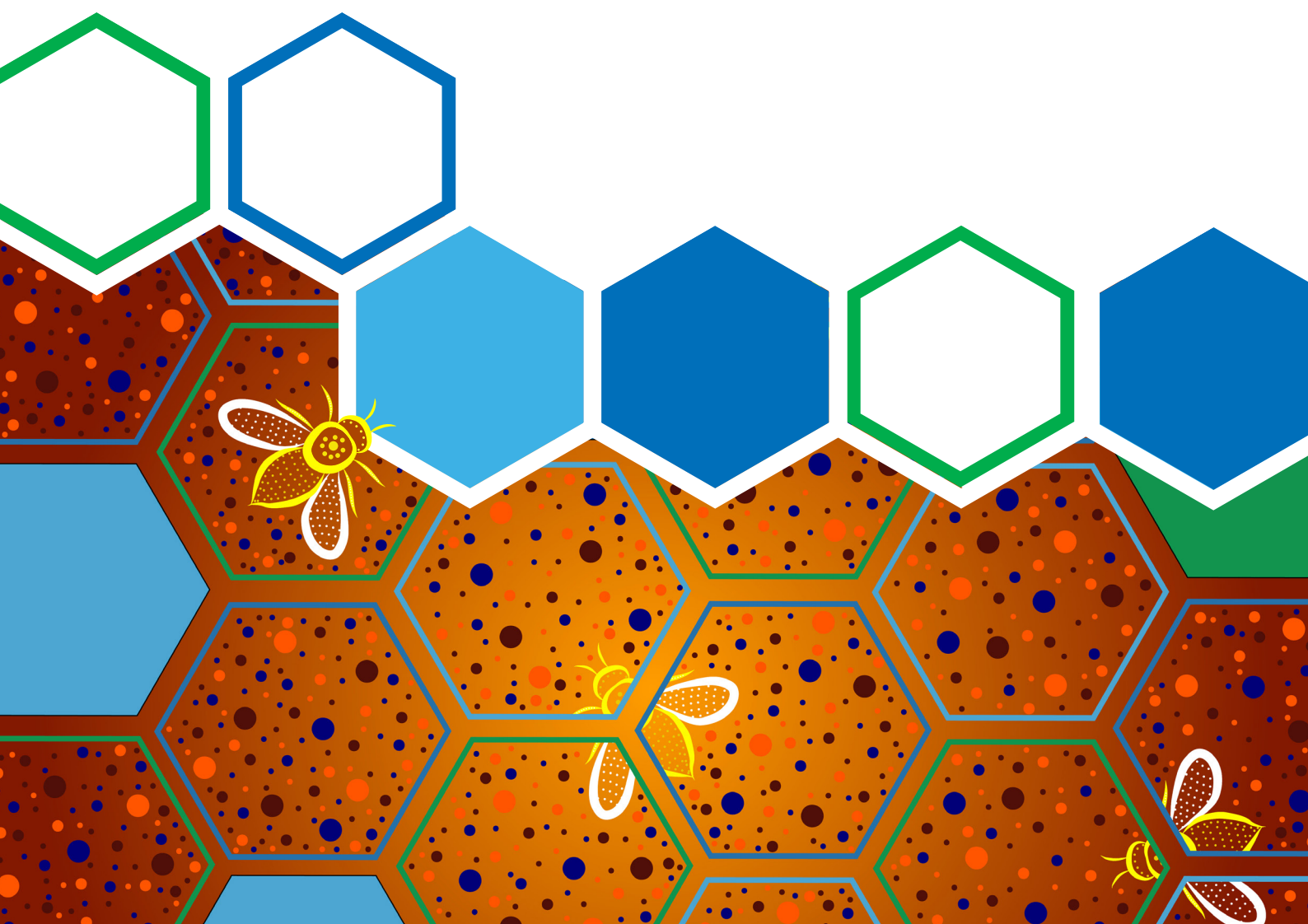


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VolunteeringACT
an inclusive Canberra

