



VolunteeringACT  
an inclusive Canberra



# 2025 Annual Report

# 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. We acknowledge and respect their vital ongoing contribution to the community and are committed to reconciliation. We will continue to walk alongside First Nations Peoples and embrace the traditions, stories, and wisdoms of the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

This document was created on Ngunnawal Country.

VolunteeringACT acknowledges volunteers of all ages, abilities, genders, and sexualities, and from all cultures. Their skills, expertise, and time are critical to delivering services and programs, and making Canberra a better place to live.

We also acknowledge the contribution of volunteer involving organisations that contribute to the health and happiness of our community.

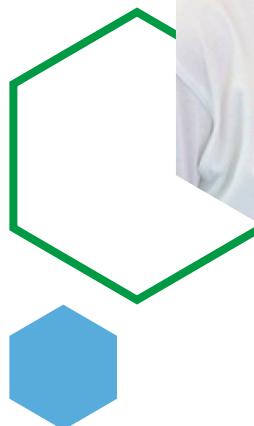
We extend our sincere gratitude to our members, Board of Directors, committee members, volunteers, volunteer managers, partners, advisory group members, consultants, staff and everyone who has engaged with us over the past year. Your contributions have played a pivotal role in driving our organisation's success.



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# Message from Chair and CEO



It has been a year of remarkable achievements and strategic advancements for the ACT volunteering ecosystem, as we continue to proudly champion the issues of key importance to our members and to volunteers.

This year we celebrated a defining moment with the launch of the ACT Government and ACT Volunteering Strategy 2024-2034 and the first Action Plan 2024-2027. It is only the second strategy on volunteering in the ACT to be developed and delivered in partnership between community voices and the ACT Government. We are very proud of this work and the volunteering roadmap it delivers for the Territory.

This milestone achievement — informed by our landmark State of Volunteering in the ACT Report 2024 — laid the framework for our engagements and advocacy initiatives.

Building on this momentum we met with 19 of the 25 Members of the

Legislative Assembly since the beginning of 2025 to highlight the contributions of volunteers to the ACT and collaborate on ways to address volunteering sector challenges.

We know that almost three quarters of Canberrans volunteered in 2023 and that many of the city's programs and organisations would not function without volunteers: supporting families to access and navigate health and education services, assisting people experiencing mental health challenges or homelessness, promoting our cultural institutions, protecting the natural environment, organising school fêtes or sports activities, reaching out to and protecting Canberrans in crisis.

Volunteers are involved in these areas and many more throughout the Canberra Region community.

Over the year our commitment to sector sustainability drove our advocacy discussions with stakeholders

to highlight the costs to organisations in supporting volunteers and to volunteers themselves.

We strengthened our volunteering ecosystem through representation in national policy forums and local peak bodies and by being a trusted partner to government in policy development and volunteering program design. The ecosystem has also been strengthened through our sector capability building portfolio, including our Conference, Leaders Seminar, Expo, training, networking and consultations. Specifically, our Inclusive Volunteering Program continues to support organisations to remove barriers to participation and connection for people so they can find the right volunteering opportunity for them.

Our Community Info Hub had record engagement this year, welcoming more people than ever for support, connection, and community — bringing our vision of an inclusive Canberra to reality every day, particularly for

Canberrans who are doing it tough or new to the region.

We are proud of our ongoing leadership and work through the Food Relief Network and are pleased the ACT Government has provided additional funding for the continuation of this important work into 2025-26. Through this Network, we continue to contribute to the Government's Food Relief Action Plan.

As we look ahead, we are energised by the strategic foundations we have built with the new ACT Government and the partnerships we have strengthened with it and the new Australian Government. We thank our members, volunteers, and the broader volunteering ecosystem for their ongoing support throughout the year.

In sharing our achievements and initiatives, we invite you to celebrate the spirit of generosity and connection that makes Canberra a place where volunteering truly thrives.



L-R: Heather Fitt, Senior Manager: Policy and Advocacy; Aunty Violet Sheridan, Ngunnawal Elder, and Jean Giese, Chief Executive Officer, VolunteeringACT

# About Us



VolunteeringACT is the peak body for volunteers and volunteering in the Canberra Region.

We deliver inclusive services and information that connects people with their community and enables participation. We lead the design and delivery of high quality, safe, ethical and sustainable volunteering.

VolunteeringACT has a vision of an inclusive Canberra that values volunteering and connection as central to wellbeing and a thriving community.

We work to represent, support, and celebrate volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, and the wider volunteer community in the Canberra Region. We seek new ways of supporting the volunteering sector to grow, improve, and collaborate,

helping to ensure that all Canberra have access to meaningful, safe, and inclusive volunteering opportunities.

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

We are foundation members of Volunteering Australia and support the delivery of the National Strategy for Volunteer Involvement and ensure the voices of ACT's volunteers and volunteer managers are reflected in national policy and advocacy.

# Board of Directors

When we reach our annual general meeting in November 2025, Chair Robyn Hendry will be stepping down as she reaches her maximum tenure according to our Constitution.

Robyn has these parting words:

“

“It has been an absolute pleasure to work with and represent volunteers and the organisations that involve them over the last eight years, most recently for the past four as Chair of the Board. I have been personally proud to work with such a high functioning organisation, only made possible by the incredible people who work with us and those who have come before us to create the enduring foundation. We have been exceptionally successful in our advocacy with the launch of the ACT Volunteering Strategy 2024-2034 in August 2024. Our engagement with decision makers has never been stronger than in the last year as we continue to celebrate volunteers’ successes and highlight where more support is needed. I wish VolunteeringACT and its members all the best as they implement the Strategy’s Action Plan over the coming years.”



Appointment and cessation dates

**Robyn Hendry – Chair**

25 September 2018

**Helen McKenna – Deputy Chair and Treasurer**

28 July 2020

**Jayne Curnow**

29 May 2018

**Bobbi Campbell**

16 June 2023

**Sajid Hassan**

27 September 2022

**Michael Brady**

11 September 2023 – 4 August 2025

**Rachel Thomas**

10 October 2023

**Cherie Hughes**

21 November 2023

**Annette Watson**

15 August 2025

# Our strategic priorities

VolunteeringACT continues to foster vibrant and effective volunteer communities through our advocacy to recognise the economic and community value of volunteering, and through empowering volunteer involving organisations to enable participation, collaboration, and connection. We provide inclusive services to support Canberrans in need and to relieve distress. As a peak body charity, we are mindful of our need to operate efficiently, effectively, and sustainably.

This year we commenced a new Strategic Plan 2024-2027 with four pillars to reflect these key areas. This work was implemented in line with our 2024-25 business strategy.



**Advocacy** - Promote volunteering through focused policy, advocacy, communication, and collaboration to showcase real impacts and cultivate a culture that values and encourages volunteerism.



**Capacity building** - Empower volunteer involving organisations to develop and sustain best practices in volunteering through capacity building, collaboration, and enhancing capabilities.



**Inclusive services** - Provide inclusive services that actively identify, challenge, and eliminate barriers to participation in volunteering and the community.



**Organisational effectiveness** - Enhance organisational sustainability and preparedness through effective strategic planning, financial management, operational efficiency and governance effectiveness.

## Our values



- **Collaboration** - We engage and create with our communities
- **Inclusion and diversity** - We purposefully welcome and involve people from all experiences and backgrounds
- **Integrity** - Our intentions and actions are genuine, honest, and transparent
- **Leadership** - We lead and support work within our communities
- **Creativity** - We are always learning and exploring ways to achieve excellence

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

# Éloïse



Eloise has been a Community Engagement Volunteer at the Community Information Hub since January 2025. In addition to being a volunteer, she is a mediator with a background in education and public sector asset management and has recently completed her studies in Family Dispute Resolution.

Her role at the Hub perfectly aligns with her passion for connecting with people and making a positive impact in the community. It allows her to utilise her communication skills, meet diverse individuals, and contribute to a welcoming environment where people can access essential information and support. This experience has strengthened her sense of purpose and commitment to helping others.

For anyone considering volunteering, Eloise states:



**“Volunteering is a rewarding experience that fosters both personal and professional growth. It offers opportunities to meet new people, learn, and contribute to something meaningful. If you’re considering volunteering, just give it a go – you might be surprised by how fulfilling it can be!”**

# Volunteers are our backbone

Volunteers are the reason we exist.

VolunteeringACT expresses deep gratitude to every volunteer who generously gives their time, knowledge and experience to support us through our work and programs.

Our volunteers have extended our reach, amplified our impact, and brought diverse perspectives that strengthen our programs and enhance our connection to the communities we serve.

Throughout the year, 124 volunteers generously dedicated their time, skills, and knowledge to our various programs and operations. This engagement is an increase of 36% from last year.



The list below shows that volunteers remain at the core of who we are and all our initiatives.

## Board of Directors and subcommittees

Our Board consists of up to ten Directors; the eight Directors who were part of the Board this year are detailed on page 4. These volunteers give their time and expertise to the stewardship and future wellbeing of the organisation by focussing on strategic governance, safety, and security of VolunteeringACT.

We also have six independent co-opted members across three of the Board's subcommittees.

These volunteers bring deep expertise that improves our approach across finance and audit, information and systems technology, and governance and risk management.

## Advisory groups

Our lived experience advisory groups support our work in implementing the ACT Volunteering Strategy 2024-2034 and our own Strategic Plan by reducing barriers to volunteering for young volunteers, newly arrived migrants, and people with mental ill health and physical disabilities. Through their lived experience, skills, and knowledge, advisory group volunteers ensure our initiatives are aligned with community needs and informed by lived experience insights from community members.

Our advisory groups included contributions from more than 40 volunteers this past financial year.

## Community Info Hub

Community Engagement Volunteers lead the daily operations at the Community Info Hub. They provide information and services to visitors, assist individuals in using free computers, telephone, and printing services, and help maintain the inventory of coffee, tea, and stationery available for all guests. Additionally, volunteers support various government initiatives, including the

Be Connected program, which aims to enhance digital literacy among older adults, and the Tax Help program, which assists individuals in filing their tax returns. Community Engagement Volunteers support us by staffing stalls at our community outreach engagements and at various expos and events. They are often the most visible of our volunteers through the Hub and expos and are daily ambassadors of our work.

### **Event coordination**

Volunteers support us in planning and delivering our flagship events, through on-the-ground support during our own events to ensure smooth execution, assist with logistics such as venue setup, registration, and participant engagement. This support promotes our programs and encourages volunteering in the community.

### **Inclusive Volunteering Pathways to Employment Program mentoring**

Volunteers offer personalised support to program participants, supporting them to learn new skills, gain work experience, and build confidence for personal and professional growth.

### **Office volunteers**

Volunteers support the communications and sector development teams by managing administrative tasks such as our volunteer vacancies on behalf of members, assisting with data entry, report preparation, and outreach efforts, while also contributing to content creation for newsletters and social media channels.

VolunteeringACT is fortunate to be supported by so many enthusiastic and talented volunteers. We are grateful to every volunteer whose dedication has made all our projects and programs possible and continue to support our purpose and inspire our vision.

### **Highlights of the advisory groups**

We ensure our work reflects the diversity of the volunteering sector by collaborating with our lived experience advisory groups. These groups help us stay connected to community needs and provide valuable insights. The experiences and skills of these volunteers enrich our programs and initiatives.

## **Inclusion checklist**

Our lived experience advisory groups played a key role in developing the volunteer program inclusion checklist. This resource features a series of checklists to help volunteer involving organisations evaluate how inclusive their volunteer programs are for First Nations volunteers, volunteers with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse volunteers, and volunteers from the LGBTQIA+ community.



# Youth Volunteering Toolkits

In partnership with the Youth Volunteering Working Group, we co-designed three Youth Volunteering Toolkits to inspire, support and more effectively engage with and manage youth volunteering in the Canberra Region. The group consisted of young people (under 25), volunteer managers, and support people (eg. teachers, counsellors). The three toolkits have different but complementary content and there is one each aimed at young people, support people, and for volunteer managers.

The Youth Volunteering Toolkit for Volunteer Managers was launched as part of our National Volunteer Week activities in May 2025. This Toolkit is designed for volunteer involving organisations and outlines how to engage young people in volunteering safely and inclusively. It includes information on parental consent, recruitment, engagement, support, strategies, and helpful templates like an organisation's youth readiness checklist, engaging children and young people policy, and risk matrix.

The remaining toolkits were launched during National Student Volunteer Week in August 2025.

Collaborating with this group of young volunteers and others throughout the year on this time-limited project has positioned us strongly to improve volunteering experiences for the region's young people.

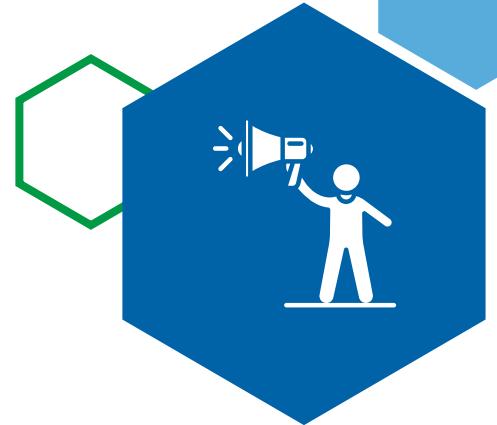
We thank all members of the Youth Volunteering Working Group for their input, enthusiasm, and expertise that was so willingly provided to us to inform this important work.



We look forward to continuing our collaboration with volunteers with lived experience through our advisory groups to create training modules for volunteer managers to support volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and volunteers with mental ill health and physical disabilities to enhance volunteering activities in the Canberra Region.

# ADVOCACY

## Driving change through strategic actions



Advocacy is the first pillar of our Strategic Plan. We promote volunteering through focused policy, advocacy, communication and collaboration to showcase real impacts and cultivate a culture that values and encourages volunteerism.

This year we have had multiple opportunities for strategic engagement and advocacy to influence key decision-makers at both the national and territory levels.

### 2024 ACT Election

In the lead-up to the 2024 ACT Election, VolunteeringACT launched the #StrengthenACTVolunteering campaign to advocate for stronger support and increased investment in volunteering across the ACT. Central to the campaign was a dedicated election platform that outlined key priorities, including making volunteering safe, inclusive, and accessible for all, and ensuring volunteer involving organisations are adequately resourced to manage and support volunteers effectively.

### Input to ACT Government

Following the election, VolunteeringACT rolled out a targeted advocacy initiative aimed at engaging newly elected MLAs, highlighting the value of volunteering and the need for sustained investment to achieve the objectives of the ACT Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027.

In line with this, our 2025-2026 budget submissions detailed key funding priorities to support implementation of the Action Plan and strengthen the Territory's volunteering ecosystem. During the year, VolunteeringACT also contributed to ACT Legislative Assembly inquiries and government policy implementation.

In partnership with the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS), we submitted a joint response to the Inquiry into Insurance Costs in the ACT. Our submission presented the impact of escalating insurance premiums faced by community organisations, the essential role of insurance in protecting volunteers, and the need for affordable options to sustain community services. We presented our input during public hearings in April 2025.

The final report of the Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation in the ACT was published in August 2024. We were pleased to see several of VolunteeringACT's recommendations incorporated into the report focusing on increased funding to maintain and promote the Community Directory and priority given to volunteerism through implementation of the ACT Volunteering Strategy.

We also worked in partnership with the Office of the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner (CYPC) to support implementation of the mandatory ACT Child Safe Standards this year.

We provided expert advice to develop tailored information and resources designed specifically for volunteer involving organisations working with children and young people and contributed to the work around the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme.

## **Networking and collaboration**

VolunteeringACT is a member of and convenes several committees, forums, groups, and taskforces to influence both jurisdictional and national decision-making processes, policies, strategies, and program design.

Throughout the year, we worked in partnership with our ACT peak body colleagues to identify and address key areas of intersectionality, ensuring the needs of the volunteering sector are embedded in broader ACT advocacy efforts.

An example of this was our involvement in the ACT for Community campaign aimed at raising awareness among ACT election candidates about the urgent need to boost funding for essential community services largely operated by volunteers. We were thrilled the campaign resulted in additional funding being allocated to ACT community services in the 2025-26 ACT Budget.

## **National Policy**

VolunteeringACT is a member of the National Policy Group which brings together Volunteering Australia and the state and territory peak bodies to share insights and undertake collective advocacy at the national level.

We provided insights to national policy and federal budget submissions, and supported national election platforms, as well as input on the subsequent incoming government brief for the Australian Government.

The CEOs of the volunteering peak bodies meet regularly in addition to National Policy Group, to advance the National Strategy for Volunteering and national projects and initiatives.

## **Social Recovery**

VolunteeringACT is active in the ACT Government's Social Recovery Reference Group Sub Committee ensuring that volunteers are properly included and reflected in all planning and recovery activities.

During this period, our role in evacuation centres was expanded to include both volunteering and community information. We also obtained a grant through the Disaster Resilience Fund to implement actions in the Social Recovery Framework.

## **Representation**

VolunteeringACT is represented on the following committees, forums, groups, and taskforces, and uses these opportunities to influence jurisdictional and national decision making processes, policies, strategies, program design, and implementation/action plans that are of interest to and impact on our sector.

These include:

- Food and Emergency Relief Network Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Canberra Food Relief Network (Chair)
- ACTCOSS CEO Forum and Community Leaders Forum
- ACTCOSS Justice Reform Group
- National CEO Peak Volunteering Network (Chair)
- National Policy Group and associated working groups
- National Marketing and Communications Group

- ACT Social Recovery Sub-Committee
- Child Safe Standards Implementation Oversight Group
- Northern Region Network meetings
- Reconciliation Network meetings
- ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Committee

- Mental Health Community Coalition Leadership Group
- ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs and Mental Health Alliance meeting



Engagement with elected officials in early 2025

# Manar

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Manar is the co-chair of VolunteeringACT's Multicultural Advisory Group. Prior to this, he was a dedicated volunteer of the advisory group since 2021. As the co-chair of the Advisory Group, Manar helps identify barriers to volunteering for people from migrant communities and co-designs solutions to those barriers.

Manar is a full-time project manager who loves to spend his free time volunteering in Canberra. His interests lie in volunteer management and organisational governance.

As a community member, Manar enjoys providing technical expertise and assistance to various not-for-profit organisations. For his work, Infoxchange and Connecting Up awarded him Not-for-Profit Technology Innovator of the Year in 2022.

In addition to VolunteeringACT, Manar also volunteers at Companion House (Chair & Board Member) and HelpingACT (Founding Board Member & Secretary).

# CAPACITY BUILDING

## Strengthening our foundation for greater impact



Capacity building is the second pillar of our Strategic Plan. We empower volunteer involving organisations to develop and sustain best practices in volunteering through capacity building, collaboration, and enhancing capabilities.

Enhancing our volunteering sector, through listening to our members, is essential for our efforts to improve inclusivity and accessibility, contributing to a more resilient Canberra.

## Volunteer Management Activities

This year we continued to deliver our work to build sector capability and improve best practice through our Volunteer Management Activity (VMA), funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. The VMA is a national collaboration between the volunteering peak bodies across Australia aiming to create a thriving, inclusive and diverse volunteering culture across the country.

### **Key highlights of this national work include:**

- the launch of the Snapshot of Volunteering in Australia research drawing on data and insights from the State of Volunteering surveys delivered in each state and territory;
- the delivery of the national self-assessment portal for organisations to assess their current volunteer management practices against the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement; and
- design of the National Volunteer Involvement Cycle built for organisations to support volunteers through each stage of involving volunteers in their work.

### **Key highlights within the VMA jurisdictional program include:**

- launching three youth toolkits to support more young people to engage in volunteering
- developing several inclusion checklists to provide organisations with an entry point to assess inclusion in their volunteering programs
- delivering key capability-building events such as the Volunteering Conference, Volunteer Leaders Seminar, monthly Sector Networking events all of which engaged 180 volunteers and volunteer managers across the year.

# Training for the sector

Our commitment to capability building encompasses the broader volunteering ecosystem of the Canberra Region.

We deliver regular training sessions to volunteers and volunteer managers upskilling them with evidence based best practices in volunteer retention, recognition, management, and program design.

Our training focuses on building inclusive and accessible volunteering, ensuring that organisations can welcome and support volunteers of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities, and cultures.

## Our training sessions

For volunteer managers:

- Essentials for volunteer managers
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- Inclusive volunteering for organisations
- Sector networking

For volunteers:

- Introduction to volunteering
- Wellbeing and boundaries in volunteering
- RUOK? workshops

## Attendee feedback

“Great facilitators, very clear and concise. Great activities, pace and examples and a lot of supportive information”

Essentials for Volunteer Managers participant

“This session gave me more information about other managers' experiences and information around communication strategies when engaging with volunteers”

Sector networking participant

## Highlights of our training sessions



**696**

volunteers and volunteer managers attended the training sessions



**51**

training sessions delivered

# Membership support

VolunteeringACT proudly represents and advocates for more than 200 members. Our members receive best practice support, advice, tools and resources on inclusive, ethical, and sustainable volunteering in the Canberra Region. Key issues facing our member volunteer involving organisations this year included volunteer leave entitlements, corporate volunteering options, and the differences between paid and unpaid roles.

Our member services focus on inclusive best practices and strategies to engage volunteers from multicultural backgrounds, young people, and individuals with disabilities. We also tackle important issues such as volunteering options for people with a criminal history, compliance with ACT Child Safe Standards, and the requirements for Working with Vulnerable People cards and national police checks.

Additionally, we offer guidance on effective volunteer recruitment, selection, program evaluation, training, and conflict management. Our scope includes governance and board volunteering, as well as recognition and rewards for the invaluable contributions of volunteers, all aligned with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

Throughout the year, we provided free consulting to our members, aiding in the review and redesign of volunteer policies, recruitment strategies, position descriptions, role guidelines, and training frameworks.

We have observed an increase in member access to pro bono legal advice and support. Members accessed more than 300 hours of pro bono legal advice across the year thanks to our remarkable legal partner Synergy Law.



Engagement with our members at the 2025 Volunteering Expo

## Feedback from volunteer managers receiving one on one support and advice

“The support was fantastic, thank you for this great work! We thought the framework and associated materials were great, and we really appreciated the VolunteeringACT team’s intelligence and knowledge”

“Thank you so much for your advice and information. It’s appreciated as always. VolunteeringACT is truly remarkable.”

100% of volunteer involving organisations attending training or receiving one on one support reported improved capability to build inclusive programs and understanding of volunteer management best practice.

## Feedback from our members

“The expertise available at the end of the phone is invaluable. The volunteer management training opened up a whole world of possibilities. If I needed something, VolunteeringACT was there to collaborate, partner with, support and encourage. We’ve been rebuilding, strengthening and enhancing our volunteer program, and to have this ‘on tap’ expertise was crucial to our success.”

“VolunteeringACT resources helped us to identify how to approach volunteer management. The real-time support and guidance was really helpful for us. It has helped us think through how we tailor volunteer advertisements to spark interest for those well suited to the role. Roles that were historically a struggle for us to recruit for are now filled by skilled volunteers. The resources and support have shifted how we approach recruitment, selection and onboarding in our organisation. Moving forward, we are very keen to make sure we maximise our engagement with VolunteeringACT in order to grow our volunteering base and learn from what other organisations are doing as well.”

# Our reconciliation work

We were delighted to demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation by participating in both Reconciliation Day and NAIDOC in the North activities with an outreach stall at each event. We also continue our commitment through our involvement in the organising committee for the Community Sector NAIDOC Week event which holds a community day in October each year.

We celebrated First Nations volunteers as part of our December 2024 Volunteering Awards, with the First Nations Volunteer of the Year Award that recognised an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individual or team whose volunteering contributions have had a significant positive community impact.

This year our judging panel for the award was comprised of First Nations Peoples including:

- Dr Karen Demmery, CEO of Burbirra Group,
- Rachelle Kelly Church, the Executive Director of Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation
- Wendy Brookman, who was one of our First Nations Volunteers of the Year 2023.

The Award was presented by Dr Karen who is a proud Wiradjuri woman and our First Nations consultant who continues to provide understanding and guidance in our reconciliation work.



Dr Karen Demmery (L) with Di Collins, winner of 2024 First Nations Volunteer of the Year Award

# Supporting Canberra's food relief sector

VolunteeringACT continued to facilitate Canberra's Food Relief Network to connect key stakeholders in the food relief sector and enable sharing of information and resources to address food insecurity. The Food Relief Network members met around monthly across the year.

February 2025 saw the release of VolunteeringACT's Food Insecurity in the Canberra Region: A strategic picture which drew on information from the Network on the pressures faced by services on the ground. The report sounded the alarm on the increasing problem of food insecurity in the Canberra region and provided recommendations to Government for addressing the issue.

Scan the QR code to read the report.



Following the release of the report, MLA Thomas Emerson moved a motion in the ACT Legislative Assembly to develop and deliver a coordinated ACT Food Relief Action Plan which was passed unanimously. We look forward to continuing to drive thought leadership and delivery of services that meet the needs of all Canberrans.

We were pleased to receive a grant from Hands Across Canberra to deliver training and support to the Food Relief Network. Ten volunteers and staff from seven Food Relief Network members participated in de-escalation training to strengthen their capacity for dealing with increased occupational violence and aggression. Network members also had access to training on volunteer wellbeing, self-care and boundaries, as well as having difficult conversations. An abridged online video training module of the de-escalation training was also developed to support this sector.

Below is the list of Food Relief Network members who engaged with the Network's work this year, demonstrating breadth of engagement with and by the local food relief providers. We commend them on their exceptional work supporting all Canberrans.

- Ainslie Community Pantry
- Anglicare
- Blue Door Drop-in Centre
- Awaken Church (the Pantry)
- Braddon Soup Kitchen
- Braddon Street Pantry
- Canberra City Care – Hand Up Food
- Capital Edge – Community Care Hub
- Communities at Work
- Community Services #1
- Companion House
- Dignity and Desire Women's & Baby Street Pantry
- Early Morning Centre

- Food Bank NSW/ACT
- Fyshwick Soup Kitchen (Vision Church)
- Helping ACT
- Holy Cross Tuckerbox
- Inner North Pantries Network
- Lanyon Food Hub
- Lyons Food Corner
- Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS)
- Multicultural Hub
- Mustard Seed Pantry
- O'Connor Community Pantry
- Oz Harvest
- Pam's Pantry
- Rosebush Street Pantry
- Salvos Assessment Line
- Second Bite
- Soup With Soul
- St. Benedict's Queanbeyan
- St. John's Care
- The Pantry at Watson
- UCX Food Pantry
- Uniting Care Kippax
- Vinnies Roadhouse
- Vine Community Food Care
- Woden Community Services – The Little Pantry
- YWCA

“The number of visits to Canberra City Care’s Food Pantry in West Belconnen has increased from an average of 400 per week mid-last year to over 500 per week from the beginning of 2024. We are receiving a constant flow of new members and expect to have nearly 1,000 customers on our books by the middle of this year. Both of these measures reflect a 25% increase in 6 months highlighting the “Cost of Living Challenges” for many households.

Canberra City Care supports 12 other food pantries across Canberra, and they are all reporting substantial increases in demand. This places stress on our access to affordable food, especially our food rescue program and the volunteers who ensure the centre functions.”

From Randolph Albrecht, manager of Canberra City Care



# 2024 Strong and Resilient Communities Activity

This year we facilitated the Strong and Resilient Communities grants for grassroots organisations, funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. This grant provided \$200,000 for 12 organisations in the ACT to strengthen volunteering through capability and capacity building.

Organisations were able to apply for grants (\$10,000 - \$20,000) for one-off, time limited projects that build volunteer management capability, and help the organisation to support the social and economic participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged people. Activities enabled by this funding supported more than 750 volunteers in the Canberra Region.

The following ACT organisations received this funding.

- Canberra Environment Centre
- Community Gardens Australia
- Deaf Advocacy, Sports and Recreation ACT Inc.
- Diversity ACT Community Services
- Embracing Ministries
- Fearless Women
- First Hike Project Inc
- Good Omen Goodeze Inc.
- Initiatives for Women in Need Inc.
- My Coaching My Future
- Print Handicapped Radio of the ACT Incorporated
- Special Olympics ACT



More information about the impact of these grants can be found on our website.

Scan the code below to read the Impact Report.



# Events updates

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We organise five flagship events throughout the year:

- Volunteer Leaders Seminar
- Volunteer Manager of the Year Awards
- Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region
- Volunteering Expo
- Volunteering Conference

Across our five events, we engage with volunteers, the organisations who involve them, businesses, and government across a diverse range of sectors including sports, education, arts, culture, emergency services, environment, and community services.

## **Volunteer Leaders Seminar and Volunteer Manager of the Year Awards, November 2024**

The Volunteer Leaders Seminar is a dedicated professional development event for volunteer coordinators and managers who are instrumental in facilitating volunteer programs. The sessions are designed to build participants' skills and capabilities, enabling them to create and lead diverse, healthy, safe, and inclusive volunteering initiatives in the ACT.

During the seminar, we also celebrate International Volunteer Managers Day by presenting the Volunteer Manager of the Year Awards. These awards recognise and honour the excellence, skills, and impact of volunteer leaders within our community.

Winners of the 2024 Volunteer Manager of the Year:

- Kathleen Rampant, 2024 Volunteer Manager of the Year – Excellence in Best Practice
- Greta Mauwa, 2024 Volunteer Manager of the Year – Excellence in Inclusion

Since winning the award, Kathleen has participated in VolunteeringACT's Youth Volunteering Working Group, helping to develop resources to support youth volunteering, and is now a representative on our Volunteering Strategic Advisory Group.

Greta has continued her work to enhance Fearless Women's volunteer program, helping young girls and women to thrive through education, mentoring, and counselling.

## **Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region, December 2024**

The Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region, are the premier recognition event for volunteers in the ACT and surrounding areas.

The Canberra community nominates outstanding volunteers and volunteering teams to celebrate their efforts and essential contributions to the ACT community.

This event makes the stories of spirit, kindness, innovation, inclusion, and resilience visible to the whole community.

Heartfelt congratulations to all the 2024 award winners:

- Volunteer Team of the Year: Roundabout Canberra
- Volunteer Leadership Award: Manish Raj, Canberra Multicultural Services and Radio Manpasand
- Inclusion Award: Volunteer Leadership: Louise Irvine, DeafACT
- First Nations Volunteer of the Year: Di Collins, Sisters in Spirit
- Young Volunteer of the Year: Madison (Casey) Barancewicz, various organisations
- Senior Volunteer of the Year: Margaret Dando, Volunteers in Policing, AFP
- Community Support Award: Gus Sabatino, ACT State Emergency Service
- Canberra's Choice Award: Victims Justice Volunteer Program
- Volunteer of the Year: Tom King, Ronald McDonald House

### **Volunteering Expo, March 2025**

Our Volunteering Expo is the leading exhibition connecting thousands of Canberra's enthusiastic volunteers and potential volunteers who are eager to make a difference with volunteer involving organisations.

Exhibitors are from all sectors including sport, health, arts and culture, tourism, community services, environment, and many more. It is a free event open to all people and organisations interested in volunteering.

### **Volunteering Conference, May 2025**

The Volunteering Conference is a full day of professional development for leaders in the volunteering sector, organised during National Volunteer Week.

It brings together volunteers, senior leaders and decision makers to tackle big picture challenges and opportunities in the volunteering sector.

### **National Volunteer Week, May each year**

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is celebrated annually in Australia, typically in May. It is an opportunity to recognise and appreciate the contributions of volunteers across the country.

In 2025, NVW was from May 19 to 25 May with the theme "Connecting Communities". This theme emphasised the power of volunteering to foster relationships and strengthen community ties.

During 2025 NVW, we acknowledged the invaluable contributions of volunteers in our community through several events:

- Appreciation lunch for our own volunteers
- Volunteering Conference
- Guest speaking at volunteer thank you events in the region.

These events brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds, promoting volunteering and upskilling professionals in the volunteer landscape.

# Highlights from 2024 Volunteer Leaders Seminar



**40**

attendees from 25 organisations

**15**

nominations from  
10 organisations



Sessions on volunteer training and development, youth volunteering, organisational cyber readiness, strategic volunteer recruitment, and the ACT Volunteering Strategy.



*Panel discussion at the 2024 Volunteer Leaders Seminar*



## Attendee feedback

“It was a thoroughly well organised and well-structured event. Each participant engaged actively in the forum, contributing their perspectives with enthusiasm. The breaks were thoughtfully scheduled, providing valuable opportunities to connect, discuss, and exchange insights with fellow leaders on our shared community experiences.”



*Winners, highly commended recipients and nominees for 2024 Volunteer Manager of the Year Awards*

# Highlights from 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region

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Winners and highly commended recipients for 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



L-R: Jean Giese, VolunteeringACT CEO; Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia; and Robyn Hendry, VolunteeringACT Chair



Uncle Johnny Huckle, Wiradjuri Elder performing at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



70

nominations across seven award categories

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300

attendees

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VIP guests included

- Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia
- Ms Alicia Payne MP
- Mr Peter Cain MP



17,000+

public votes for  
Canberra's Choice  
Award



15

items of news coverage

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# Highlights from 2025 Volunteering Expo

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**60**  
exhibitors from  
all sectors



*L-R: Suzanne Orr MLA with Jean Giese, VolunteeringACT CEO at the 2025 Volunteering Expo*



*Visitors at the Smoking Ceremony conducted at the 2025 Volunteering Expo*

**900**  
attendees



**93%**  
happiness score  
in public surveys



*Exhibitors and visitors at the 2025 Volunteering Expo*

# Highlights from 2025 Volunteering Conference



Panel discussion at the 2024 Volunteering Conference

20

speakers delivered sessions



99



participants across 58 organisations attended



## Attendee feedback

“The best part of the conference for me was advice from panellists and other attendees. Inspiration on how to recruit, energise, and reward volunteers”

“I've enjoyed learning about the wide world of volunteering and how many different strategies and great work is going on to make it all work in the ACT”



88%

attendees found it to be good, very good, or excellent



Prudence Slaughter, CEO MIEACT - Keynote speaker at 2025 Volunteering Conference

# Anne



Anne was a regular volunteer at the Community Info Hub, undertaking at least a weekly shift from October 2023 till June 2025, where she used her strengths and talents to help the community.

When asked if volunteering is something she would recommend to others, Anne states: "Absolutely - It's a way to give back to society and to learn new things".

When asked about her thoughts on volunteering, Anne says,

**"Being new to Australia, working at the Community Info Hub helped me to learn a lot about Canberra. I enjoy interacting with colleagues and helping people in need and am motivated by the opportunity to meet different people and learn new things myself every day. Seeing the end results of my work and seeing the look of satisfaction on the face of the people I have helped have been memorable moments."**

# INCLUSIVE SERVICES

## Improving diversity and accessibility

Inclusive services is the third pillar of our Strategic Plan. We provide inclusive services that actively identify, challenge, and eliminate barriers to participation in volunteering and the community.

This year we have seen increased demand for all of our inclusive services, as the cost of living impacts on more Canberrans than ever before.

## Community Info Hub

The Community Info Hub is a welcoming and inclusive space providing face to face information and referrals to community services. With many government and essential services moving to online interactions, the Community Info Hub provides a link for people who do not have online access and still need to speak with someone in person.

We also provide free access to computers, printers, and phones to all our visitors. This year we added two new services at the Hub: mobile phone recharge stations, and hot drink and snack facilities.

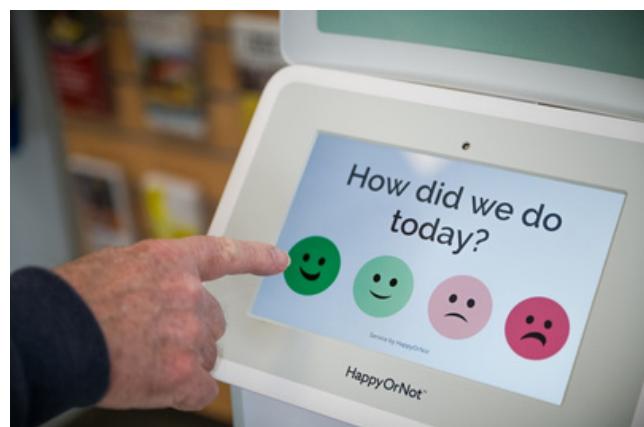
The daily operations of the Community Info Hub are managed by our team of staff with the support of 57 volunteers contributing 2,600 hours of volunteer time to provide friendly service in a safe and welcoming space.



At the Hub we hear from people every day who are doing it tough. We see people in the Canberra community facing increasing struggles in a variety of ways, for example, through an increase in uptake of our information guide for free meals, laundry and showers. Our info guides are distributed through our website, public libraries, community services and some Centrelink offices.

Our most frequently utilised information guides are -

- Free meals, laundry and shower services
- Food relief services
- Emergency and crisis support services
- Short stay accommodation
- Homelessness services



*Happy or not stand at the Community Info Hub*

# Highlights from Community Info Hub



**33%**

increase in visitor numbers



**57**

volunteers supported the work of the Community Info Hub



assisted nearly

**1,800**

people in finding a volunteering opportunity or a community service through community information guides at the Community Info Hub, 18 expos and events and 10 outreach sessions through our partnership with Communities at Work in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin.



**3,158**

hard copies of the community information guides disseminated

**220%**

increase in referrals to emergency relief services



**230%**

increase in referrals to housing support

**19,959**



referrals from within the Canberra Community Directory



## Visitor satisfaction

Introduced in May 2024, VolunteeringACT uses a Smiley Touch console in the Community Info Hub to assist in assessing levels of visitor satisfaction.

The console allows visitors to rate the Hub by choosing a 'very happy', 'happy', 'upset' or 'very upset' face with additional input to the questions of either "What was good?" or "What could be improved?"

During the reporting period, visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We had 236 responses to the initial satisfaction face/question, demonstrating an overall satisfaction index of 93%.

# Community programs

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VolunteeringACT engages in community programs and collaborations at the central city Community Info Hub as well as delivering outreach services with community groups.

## Community Collaborations

We often collaborate with other service providers to widen their and our reach. For instance, in February 2025, the Community Info Hub collaborated with Women's Health Matters to promote Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month with VolunteeringACT employees and volunteers wearing teal ribbons as part of providing information to visitors about the issue.

The Community Info Hub continues to collaborate with the Bush Capital Guide and the National Capital Authority to regularly update tourist information at the Hub. This ensures that staff and volunteers can better support visitors and provide contemporary information to the numerous tourists who visit the Hub each week.

## Be Connected

VolunteeringACT is separately funded to deliver the Be Connected program (a free Australian Government initiative) which enhances the services we deliver in the Hub – particularly in supporting people to increase their digital literacy.

Over the reporting period, VolunteeringACT supported 60 older Australians to stay safe online through the Be Connected program. We presented to the Sri Lankan Group of Carers ACT to increase their familiarity with IT and digital sources.

VolunteeringACT participated in Get Online Week which aims to help Australians to improve their confidence when using technology and the internet. VolunteeringACT ran a Digital Literacy Games session at the Navitas Better Futures group for recent migrants, with 25 people in attendance.

VolunteeringACT designed a Digital Literacy Snakes & Ladders, Digital Literacy Snap card game, Digital Literacy Word Search and Crossword, and a Digital Literacy Bingo game. These sessions were delivered by an employee of VolunteeringACT assisted by three multilingual volunteers.

## Tax Help

Tax Help is a network of Australian Tax Office (ATO) trained and accredited community volunteers who provide a free and confidential service to help people complete their straightforward tax returns online. In 2024-25, the Community Info Hub regularly hosted one ATO-trained community volunteer during tax time who supported eligible persons to submit their tax return.

# Community information

Across the year, VolunteeringACT visited a range of groups and organisations to talk about the benefits of volunteering and presented an adapted plain language version of the Introduction to Volunteering training materials to groups of people from a culturally diverse background.

## ACT Community Directory and ACT Community Diary

VolunteeringACT manages the ACT Community Directory, a curated list of community services from over 2,000 organisations in the Canberra Region. Similarly, the ACT Community Diary lists over 3,300 events.

The ACT Community Directory and Diary are integrated systems that provide a calendar of events and activities, community sector meetings, training and networking forums in the Canberra Region.

## Community Outreach

Commencing in November 2024, VolunteeringACT provided an outreach service in collaboration with Communities at Work in Tuggeranong on alternate Mondays. This outreach helped us provide visitors with copies of Community Info Guides and access to the Canberra Community Directory; we also facilitated volunteering opportunity searches via the VolunteeringACT website. In June 2025, this service was extended to Communities at Work in Gungahlin on alternate Thursdays.

## External events and expos

During the reporting period, VolunteeringACT attended 18 external events and expos, and held our own information stall at the annual Volunteering Expo, connecting with nearly 1,800 people across the year. Through these events, we discussed the services available at the Community Info Hub, the programs delivered by VolunteeringACT, linked people to volunteering opportunities, and outlined the benefits of volunteering.



*Our stall at the 2025 Multicultural Festival*



*Festival attendees playing Benefits of Volunteering memory game at our stall*

# Inclusive programs

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Our work this past year reflected our strong commitment to enhancing inclusion within the volunteering sector and across the broader Canberra community.

With around one in five people in Australia living with a disability or mental health condition, our programs are strategically designed to improve access to supports and strengthen community connection for people in these communities, inevitably benefiting accessibility for the wider community. We also actively seek ways to ensure people of all ages, abilities, genders, sexualities, and from all cultures are engaged in our work.

Through our inclusive volunteer programs, we actively work to address these critical issues by:

- Providing individuals with growth opportunities by facilitating connections with local organisations and services.
- Empowering volunteer involving organisations by providing crucial support enabling them to foster greater inclusivity within their own operations.
- Deepening community partnerships, and strengthening our collaborations with people in marginalised communities, ensuring our efforts are culturally responsive and have a genuine impact.

## **Inclusive Volunteering Pathway to Employment Program**

A cornerstone of our broader inclusion efforts continues to be the Inclusive Volunteering Pathway to Employment Program (IVP Program) delivered in partnership with the volunteering peak bodies in Tasmania and NSW. This Program offers individuals with disability or mental health conditions a unique opportunity to engage in volunteering within a supportive and collaborative framework by building the capability of volunteer involving organisations.

The Program is built around delivering two pivotal outcomes:

- Empowering skill development and confidence: It enables participants to acquire new skills, build self-confidence, and forge new connections, all while actively progressing towards finding meaningful paid employment.
- Equipping inclusive organisations: The Program also plays a vital role in supporting organisations by providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and expert advice to become more inherently inclusive in their practices.

Through these efforts, VolunteeringACT continues to drive positive change, ensuring that the benefits of volunteering are accessible to everyone and that our community thrives on the strength of its diverse contributions.

## Highlights from IVP program



participants supported



volunteer involving organisations supported



Our IVP coordinators consistently receive 5-star ratings from volunteer involving organisations for the training and support they have received.

We measure against:

- Improved knowledge and awareness of barriers
- Increased motivation to identify and reduce organisational barriers
- Satisfaction with the support received through the Program.  
(This includes training, one to one coaching, practical support, or advice.)

## Feedback from host organisations

“I have been incredibly impressed with the support we have been given so far. The coordinator was able to offer specific advice, general templates and resources, and really creative ideas for how we could build our new processes.”

“Our volunteer program has become more inclusive.”

“VolunteeringACT has provided excellent support to our Volunteer Manager.”

“The IVP participant is doing great. He comes in every Thursday, and we love having him here.”

“We expected the support would be quite short term, however the ongoing relationship with the IVP team has been really wonderful.”

# IVP Program

Prior to self-referring to the IVP Program, Taylor\* reported she was bored, frustrated and unsure of her future. She was yet to reach out to any disability organisations and said she quickly became lonely after finishing school and losing the daily routine.

Since being part of the IVP Program, Taylor says she has increased confidence and her connection to others has strengthened. Her ability to try out different activities and to build upon her employable skills has increased. Taylor was able to find a community in which she felt safe and that gave her a sense of purpose and direction. The IVP placement has also impacted upon her family, who have witnessed their daughter thrive, and on the organisation that hosted Taylor which has benefitted from her volunteer contribution.

\*Name changed for privacy.



Peter\* was new to Australia and studying a Masters. He was looking to find local opportunities and connections to use his advanced skills in animal welfare. The IVP coordinator was able to reach out to organisations that could benefit from Peter's skills through volunteering, and ensure these roles were wheelchair accessible and inclusive, and were appropriate to the level of skill he had from working elsewhere.

The IVP team was able to connect Peter to an organisation that welcomed him to use his advanced skills, as well as the new ones he was learning at university, and that will provide him with more pathways to employment once he has finished his studies.

\*Name changed for privacy.

## **Inclusive work-based experience through volunteering: pilot project**

This year marked an exciting expansion in our mission to embed inclusion in activities to support young people. Our pilot project with the ACT Education Directorate is an initiative aimed at supporting school leavers with disability and/or mental health conditions to gain valuable experience through volunteering.

As part of this pilot, we are actively working with three ACT schools to support students to gain practical volunteering experience, equipping them with essential work-ready skills.

We are also delivering introduction to volunteering training to student classes, fostering an early understanding and appreciation for community contribution and participation.

This project broadens our footprint within the community and underscores our dedication to nurturing a new generation of inclusive and engaged individuals.

## **Supporting young people through volunteering pathways: pilot project**

VolunteeringACT worked on a pilot project in partnership with Keystone Australia to support young people aged 12 - 17 exiting the justice system to engage in volunteering as a pathway to community engagement. Feedback showed the program had a positive impact for participants through an increase in confidence in engaging with people and in overall confidence.

## **Feedback from IVP participants**

“The IVP coordinator has been very helpful and thoughtful.”

“Having a coordinator with lived experience of a disability empowered me and showed me that I could succeed. Having someone that understands and seeing them do well was comforting. It made me feel powerful and heard and seen. They have made a big impact.”

“She is really enjoying her time there. The change in routine is something that she is really enjoying, as well as meeting new people. It has put a spring in her step” (parent of IVP participant).

“It is positive every day. Allows me to keep connecting with people and keeps me engaged.”

“The organisation staff treat me like a person and look out for me and ensure I’m doing well.”

“Volunteering has opened my eyes to other options.”

“All these good things are in the pipeline, and I feel more myself and settled.”

“Volunteering has connected me to the community. It has grounded me and made me appreciate more things. It has humbled me. It has made me feel all the feelings—and it’s enlightening.”

“You do wonderful work. You got me a volunteer role at Vinnies, it’s great work.”

# ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Ensuring our own sustainability to better support our members



Organisational effectiveness is the fourth pillar of our Strategic Plan. We enhance organisational sustainability and preparedness through effective strategic planning, financial management, operational efficiency and governance effectiveness.

This year we have focussed on the safety of our organisation, our staff and volunteers, and visitors through implementing a range of mechanisms across cybersecurity, child safety, de-escalation and conflict resolution, and installation of CCTV across all sites.

### Security additions

We invested in developing our team's skills and knowledge to serve our community more effectively and safely. Frameworks or policies were developed and training undertaken across three key areas:

- understanding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to strengthen our commitment to protecting young people in our programs and services;
- cybersecurity to safeguard our organisation's digital infrastructure;
- de-escalation and conflict resolution skills to enhance our team's ability to navigate challenging situations with professionalism and care.

These training sessions support our team to be equipped to respond to evolving community and member needs.

We installed CCTV in all sites: our office and separate training space at City Walk, and at the Community Info Hub. This was in response to escalating incidents at the Hub in particular, as more Canberrans face cost of living pressures. The presence of CCTV is well signposted, acting as a deterrent to escalated behaviours. Feedback from Hub volunteers and visitors has been positive about the enhanced safety at the Hub.

### Engagement

This year VolunteeringACT refreshed our marketing and communications framework to provide a stronger focus on storytelling to highlight volunteer profiles and member experiences.

### Website

Total website views for this year were 201,842, and the total event count (the number of times a user interacted with website content, such as clicking, reading, browsing, and downloading) was 544,911. The total number of users was 57,083, of which 55,053 were new users.

The top five pages by views were:

1. Find a volunteering opportunity
2. 2024 Canberra's Choice Awards
3. Food Relief Network
4. Info Guides
5. Community Directory

## Newsletter

We sent 35 newsletters to 3,580 subscribers including volunteers, volunteer managers, volunteer involving organisations, members, and government. The newsletter goes to organisations such as hospitals, universities, community radio stations, sports, social clubs, galleries and theatres, and cultural groups.

Through our newsletters, we actively share volunteer profiles highlighting experiences of our volunteers as well as the diversity of volunteer roles available in the Canberra Region, enhancing member engagement during events, and growing interest in volunteering for events. We also communicate about our upcoming events, policy submissions, and promote volunteering resources.

We use our newsletter to acknowledge various events to support inclusion and diversity such as Pride Month, National Reconciliation Week, Youth Homelessness Awareness Day, International Women's Day, Harmony Day, among others.

## Social media

We have a comprehensive social media plan that is focused on storytelling about our volunteers, our members, and about our policy and advocacy work.

Our combined social media engagement (including follows, likes, comments, impressions and shares) was 139,617 this reporting period.

## Media

We had strong media engagement around each of our flagship events and release of important reports like the Food Insecurity in the Canberra Region report and our ACT Budget Submission.

This approach keeps media engaged in VolunteeringACT's peak body activities and the volunteer involving organisations we represent receive better and more meaningful coverage of the issues of most importance to them.

### **Report | Food insecurity in the Canberra Region: A strategic picture**



### **Report | ACT Budget Submission**



### **We changed our logo in celebration of 2025 Pride Month**



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

# Jane



Jane has been a community engagement volunteer at the Community Info Hub since March 2025.

In this role, she is the first point of contact for visitors, providing them with tourist and community information. She also assists visitors in using other free services at the Hub, such as making tea/coffee, using computers, using the phone, or printing documents.

Jane volunteers with her son Darren at the Community Info Hub.

Volunteering has given Jane the opportunity to connect and help people. She adds, "Noticing the impact I have on others, even during a brief five-minute interaction, brings joy as they leave with a smile. I realised this on my second volunteering shift when I began making relationships. People recognised me and called me by my name."

When asked for a message for people considering volunteering, Jane said,

**"Jump in and do it! It will be one of the best things you'll do! Nothing ventured, nothing gained."**

Inclusion for Jane means:

**"being accepted, being useful, helpful...knowing that I do have value. I once heard Dylan Alcott (Australian paralympic athlete for basketball and tennis) on television about how he deals with his disability, and it helped me feel proud of who I am and what I have achieved because I do know I have achieved!"**

# Our members

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At 30 June 2025

Our members are as diverse as the volunteers who work within and for them giving voluntary time and energy to support a range of sectors.

We know most of our members are engaged in multiple service delivery areas, however when joining VolunteeringACT they choose one primary focus category. The service focus below gives a sense of the diversity of the volunteering ecosystem in the Canberra Region.

## MEMBER

- 2XXfm
- Abbeyfield Australia
- Abilities Unlimited Australia
- Abundant Water Inc
- ACT Chinese Australian Association
- ACT Disability, Aged and Carers Advocacy Service (ADACAS)
- ACT Emergency Services Agency
- ACT Fencing Association
- ACT Government Office of Nature Conservation
- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Inc
- ACT Natural Resource Management (ACT NRM)
- ACT Volunteers in Policing
- ACT Wildlife
- ACTCOSS
- Active Canberra
- Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Association ACT
- Australian National Capital Artists Gallery (ANCA Gallery)
- Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT
- Annecto Canberra
- ANU - School of Medicine and Psychology
- ANU Research Ethics Office
- ANU Student Life
- Arthur Wilks OAM
- Artsound
- Association of Parents & Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS)
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Australian National Botanic Gardens
- Australian National Eisteddfod
- ANU - Student Experience and Career Development
- Australian Red Cross ACT

## SERVICE FOCUS

- Arts & Culture
- Disability Services
- Sport
- Human Rights
- Migrant Services
- Community Services
- Emergency Response
- Sport
- Environment & Conservation
- Health
- Environment & Conservation
- Emergency Response
- Environment & Conservation
- Other
- Sport
- Health
- Arts & Culture
- Community Services
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Animal Welfare
- Education & Training
- Life Member
- Arts & Culture
- Education & Training
- Other
- Environment & Conservation
- Arts & Culture
- Education & Training
- Community Services

## MEMBER

- Australian War Memorial
- BaptistCare NSW/ACT
- Barnardos Canberra Australia
- Basketball ACT
- Belconnen Arts Centre
- Belconnen Dog Obedience Club
- Beryl Women Inc.
- Bob Pillifeant
- Bobbi Campbell
- Bosom Buddies ACT
- Braddon Collective
- Calvary Regional Offices
- Canberra and Region Visitors Centre
- Canberra Blind Society
- Canberra Bush Walking Club
- Canberra City Care (Life Unlimited Church)
- Canberra Environment Centre
- Canberra Hospital and Health Services
- Canberra Hospital Foundation
- Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF)
- Canberra Multicultural Services Radio (CMS)
- Canberra Museums and Galleries (CMAG)
- Canberra Railway Museum
- Canberra Region Rugby League
- Canberra Repertory Society (REP)
- Canberra Runners
- Cancer Council ACT
- Capital Nordic Walking Community Outreach
- Capital Region Community Services (CRCS)
- Charles Sturt University - Canberra
- Cherie Hughes
- Collective on Anti Racism (COAR)
- Communities at Work
- Community Connections Inc
- Community First Development
- Community Services #1
- Council on the Ageing (COTA ACT)
- Covenant Care
- Cystic Fibrosis ACT
- Deaf Advocacy, Sports and Recreation ACT (DeafACT)
- Dementia Australia - ACT
- Diversity ACT Community Services
- Doris Women's Refuge
- Duntroon Community Centre
- Epilepsy ACT

## SERVICE FOCUS

- Arts & Culture
- Seniors & Aged Care
- Mentoring & Advocacy
- Sport
- Arts & Culture
- Animal Welfare
- Community Services
- Life Member
- Individual
- Health
- Community Services
- Health
- Arts & Culture
- Disability Services
- Sport
- Community Services
- Environment & Conservation
- Health
- Health
- Migrant Services
- Migrant Services
- Museums & Heritage
- Museums & Heritage
- Sport
- Arts & Culture
- Sport
- Health
- Health
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Individual
- Other
- Community Services
- Disability Services
- Indigenous Australians
- Community Services
- Seniors & Aged Care
- Community Services
- Health
- Disability Services
- Health
- Community Services
- Human Rights
- Community Services
- Health

## MEMBER

- Embracing Ministries
- Events ACT
- Family Drug Support
- Fearless Women
- Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra
- Geoscience Australia
- Ginninderra Catchment Group Inc
- Girl Guides NSW, ACT & NT
- Good Omen Goodeze
- Goodwin Aged Care Services
- Greening Australia Capital Region
- Greyhound Connections
- Grind to Ground
- Hammondcare (ACT)
- Hands Across Canberra
- Hartley Lifecare
- Havelock Housing Association
- Health Research Institute UC (Connect Up 2617)
- Helen McKenna
- Hospital Research Foundation Group Parkinson's (THRGF)
- Indigenous Reading Project
- IRT Group
- Jayne Curnow
- John XXIII College - ANU
- Karinya House
- Karralika Programs
- Kids in Care ACT
- Kidsafe ACT
- Koomarri
- Lake Ginninderra College
- Landcare ACT
- Laura Turnbull OAM
- Lee Maiden
- Libraries ACT
- Lids4Kids
- Lifestream Christian Fellowship
- Lions Club of Canberra Belconnen
- Lynette Grayson
- Margaret Reid AO
- Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
- Mathew Franklin
- Matthew Watts
- Maureen Cane
- Multicultural Communities Council Of Illawarra (MCCI)
- Menslink

## SERVICE FOCUS

- Disability Services
- Other
- Drug & Alcohol Services
- Mentoring & Advocacy
- Environment & Conservation
- Other
- Environment & Conservation
- Young People
- Mental Health
- Seniors & Aged Care
- Environment & Conservation
- Animal Welfare
- Environment & Conservation
- Community Services
- Community Services
- Disability Services
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Individual
- Disability Services
- Indigenous Australians
- Seniors & Aged Care
- Individual
- Education & Training
- Other
- Drug & Alcohol Services
- Young People
- Young People
- Disability Services
- Education & Training
- Environment & Conservation
- Life Member
- Individual
- Community Services
- Other
- Other
- Community Services
- Life Member
- Life Member
- Community Services
- Individual
- Individual
- Life Member
- Community Services
- Mentoring & Advocacy

## MEMBER

- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
- Mental Health Foundation ACT
- Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
- Meridian
- Michael Brady
- Mosaic Life Care - Canberra
- MTC Australia - Canberra
- Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MOAD)
- Narrabundah Early Childhood School
- National Arboretum Canberra
- National Capital Authority
- National Folk Festival
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- National Multicultural Festival
- National Museum Of Australia
- Nationsheart Christian Community
- Navitas Skilled Futures ACT
- Neighbourhood Watch ACT
- North Canberra Hospital
- Orange Sky Australia (ACT)
- Palliative Care ACT
- ParkCare
- Pedal Power
- Pegasus - Riding for the disabled
- Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
- Prisoners Aid (ACT)
- Project Independence
- Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre
- Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council
- Questacon Volunteer Explainer
- Rachel Thomas
- Radio 1RPH (Print Handicapped Radio of ACT)
- Raise Foundation (ACT)
- Rise Above Capital Region Cancer Relief
- Robyn Hendry
- Ronald McDonald House Charities ACT & South East NSW
- Rotary Club of Woden Daybreak
- Roundabout Canberra
- RSI & Overuse Injury Association
- RSL LifeCare (ACT)
- RSPCA ACT
- Sabine Godfrey
- Sajid Hassan
- Sanctuary Aus

## SERVICE FOCUS

- Community Services
- Mental Health
- Mental Health
- Community Services
- Individual
- Mental Health
- Education & Training
- Museums & Heritage
- Education & Training
- Environment & Conservation
- Museums & Heritage
- Arts & Culture
- Arts & Culture
- Arts & Culture
- Community Services
- Museums & Heritage
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Community Services
- Health
- Homeless Services
- Health
- Environment & Conservation
- Sport
- Disability Services
- Mental Health
- Community Services
- Disability Services
- Human Rights
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Individual
- Arts & Culture
- Young People
- Community Services
- Individual
- Health
- Community Services
- Family Services
- Health
- Veteran Services
- Animal Welfare
- Life Member
- Individual
- Family Services

## MEMBER

- Scout Association of Australia, ACT Branch
- SEE-Change
- Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT
- Sharing Places
- Soldier On
- Sole Motive
- Special Olympics ACT
- St John Ambulance ACT
- St John's Care
- St Margaret's Uniting Church
- St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn (Vinnies)
- Strathnairn Arts Association
- Technology for the Ageing and Disability ACT (TADACT)
- Ted Noffs Foundation
- Tender Funerals Canberra Region
- Tennis ACT
- The Embroiderers' Guild ACT
- The Food Co-op Canberra
- The Salvation Army (ACT)
- The Smith Family (ACT)
- Tony Hobbs
- Toora Women & Parentline
- Transplant Australia
- Transport Canberra and City Services, Urban Parks and Places Program
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Tuggeranong Community Council (TCC)
- UN Women Australia
- UniSport Australia (ACT)
- Unitingcare Kippax
- Unity College Australia
- University of Canberra - UCX
- Victim Support ACT
- Victims of Crime Assistance League (ACT)
- Warehouse Circus
- Warrigal
- Wellways Australia (ACT)
- Woden Community Service
- Women With Disabilities ACT
- Women's Legal Centre ACT
- Young Neighbourhood Centre
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- YWCA Canberra
- ZamZam Foundation Australia
- Zonta Club of Canberra Breakfast

## SERVICE FOCUS

- Young People
- Environment & Conservation
- Health
- Disability Services
- Veteran Services
- Sport
- Sport
- Health
- Other
- Disability Services
- Community Services
- Arts & Culture
- Community Services
- Young People
- Community Services
- Sport
- Arts & Culture
- Other
- Community Services
- Young People
- Life Member
- Community Services
- Health
- Environment & Conservation
- Arts & Culture
- Community Services
- Human Rights
- Sport
- Community Services
- Education & Training
- Education & Training
- Other
- Community Services
- Other
- Seniors & Aged Care
- Mental Health
- Community Services
- Disability Services
- Community Services
- Community Services
- Young People
- Community Services
- Human Rights
- Other

# Partners, supporters and funders

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**ACT**  
Government  
Community Services

**ACT Government Health and Community Services Directorate** supports VolunteeringACT as the peak body for volunteering and community information services; also supports our work on food security



**Australian Government**  
Department of Home Affairs

**Australian Government Department of Home Affairs** supports VolunteeringACT to raise awareness with the sector on cybersecurity



**Australian Government**  
Department of Social Services

**Australian Government Department of Social Services** supports VolunteeringACT as a Volunteering Support Service and funds our Volunteer Management Activity and the Inclusive Volunteering Program; also supported provision of small grants to enhance the work of volunteer involving organisations

Community Bank  
Canberra Deakin

**B** Bendigo Bank

**Bendigo Bank** supported the Young Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



**BlueArc IT Solutions** supported the Community Support Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



**Burbirra Group** Dr Karen Demmery is our First Nations Consultant; also supported the First Nations Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



**2024 Canberra Foundations Collaborative (Hands Across Canberra)** supported VolunteeringACT to work with Canberra's Food Relief Network to support and upskill volunteers



**Canberra Daily/ Canberra Weekly** supported the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region as our media partner and presented the Canberra's Choice Award



**Canberra Labor Club Group** generously provides ongoing support to VolunteeringACT through our office space; also supported the Volunteer Team of the Year Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region



**Good Things Foundation Australia** supported VolunteeringACT to provide digital literacy mentoring to older people



**State and territory volunteering peak bodies** - we work with the other peak bodies to collaborate and partner including delivering nationally consistent products and services aligned with best practice



**Synergy Law** provides pro bono legal advice to VolunteeringACT and its member organisations; supported the Volunteer Leadership Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region.



**Volunteering Australia** - we are foundation members of Volunteering Australia and support the delivery of the National Strategy for Volunteer Involvement and ensure the voices of ACT's volunteers and volunteer managers are reflected in national policy and advocacy; supported the Senior Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2024 Volunteering Awards, Canberra Region

### Feedback from volunteer manager receiving one on one support and advice

“On behalf of our organisation, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the time, energy, and effort that VolunteeringACT and the Synergy Law team have dedicated to providing such comprehensive support.

The expertise and thoughtful advice went far beyond our expectations, and we are truly appreciative of the invaluable guidance you've shared with us. Thank you for your commitment and the positive impact you've made. We are incredibly grateful for your support!”

# Financial review 2024-2025

VolunteeringACT's 2024-25 financial outcome was a modest surplus of \$59,315. This result is mainly due to strategic delays in recruitment and tight fiscal management. Core grant funding meant the organisation was able to deliver all programs and projects and meet all milestones.

The organisation has again finished the year with substantial reserves. The approach to investment will be reviewed in 2025-26.

The lease for our City Walk office premises was renewed and rent costs are offset by an equivalent rent rebate. The current lease extends to 30 June 2027.

The purpose of Volunteering and Contact ACT Limited is to foster quality of life and an inclusive Canberra by enabling participation and connection. Through our activities we drove change through strategic actions, strengthened our foundation for greater impact, improved diversity and accessibility, and ensured our own sustainability to better support our members.

VolunteeringACT remains committed to delivering high-quality outcomes and fostering a sustainable future for our organisation and the volunteering ecosystem. The 2024-25 audited financial statements are available in their entirety on our website [www.volunteeringact.org.au](http://www.volunteeringact.org.au).

Category	FY25 (\$)	FY24 (\$)
Revenue	2,982,402	2,550,415
Expenses	2,923,086	2,633,362
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	59,315	(82,947)
Unearned grant funds held	166,241	171,659
Cash and cash equivalents	1,731,592	1,628,213

