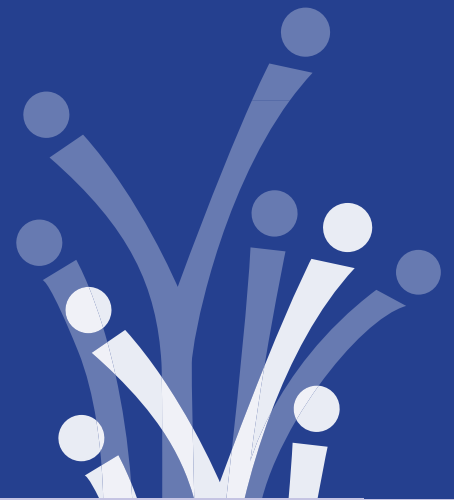


advancing the community together

A partnership between the
volunteer community and the
South Australian Government



Government
of South Australia

Office for Volunteers

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Advancing the Community Together

Advancing the Community Together (ACT) represents a partnership between the South Australian Government and the volunteer community and recognises the enormous role volunteers play in building strong, supportive and inclusive communities in South Australia. It further recognises our important social responsibility to invest in and support volunteers and their organisations to enable their significant work in the community to continue.

Vision

For South Australia to be recognised for its robust and inclusive communities, which feature high levels of volunteering and where volunteer participation is positively recognised, respected and supported.

Mission

To work together to nurture South Australian communities by enabling, encouraging, supporting and promoting volunteer participation.

The Partnership:

This Partnership outlines a commitment by the South Australian Government and the volunteer community to continue to build robust and meaningful relationships that promote and expand volunteer participation in South Australian communities. This relationship is characterised by the following eight pillars:

Accountability

We commit to:

- Working openly and transparently with each other and within the communities we operate
- Cooperating in the work we do, not competing
- Ensuring responsible and appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and reporting.

Communication

We commit to:

- Sharing information and ideas that enhance our community, promote volunteering and recognise volunteers' contributions
- Developing active communication networks and maintaining trust and collaboration
- Assessing and developing better and more efficient ways to communicate across all levels.

Equity and Inclusiveness

We commit to:

- Ensuring all forms of volunteering are recognised
- Taking into consideration, and providing opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and cultures
- Recognising and celebrating diversity
- Recognising the barriers that limit involvement and assisting in removing these to create volunteering opportunities.

Policy and Legislative Development

We commit to:

- Identifying and responding to issues impeding volunteering
- Developing and reviewing policies and best practice guidelines relating to volunteering
- Undertaking collaborative strategic planning
- Conferring when developing policies impacting on volunteering

Recruitment and Retention

We commit to:

- Fostering, encouraging and promoting volunteering
- Advocating for greater participation in volunteering
- Recognising and rewarding volunteers, volunteer managers and employers supportive of volunteers
- Advancing the vital role of volunteer management
- Ensuring volunteering is not used as a substitute for paid work.

Resources

We commit to:

- Ensuring responsible financial management and accountability
- Promoting joint ventures
- Working together to secure the resources necessary to support volunteering
- Striving for sustainability and growth of volunteerism
- Seeking to understand the changing nature of volunteering and responding to these changes.

Risk Management

We commit to:

- Working collaboratively to address volunteer protection and risk management issues impacting the volunteer community.

Training and Development

We commit to:

- Recognising the need for volunteers and people who manage their programs to develop and maintain skills and knowledge
- Acknowledging skill development is necessary for many reasons including legislation, accreditation and meeting industry or safety standards

We, the undersigned support the partnership, believing it's an important and appropriate basis for the further development of volunteerism in South Australia.

Signatories:



Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier, South Australia



Mr Christopher Overland
Council on the Ageing SA



Mr Peter Heyworth
Northern Volunteering SA



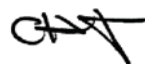
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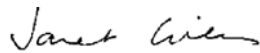
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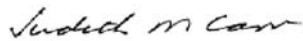
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Mr Tim Jackson
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Ms Vivienne Barker
Southern Volunteering SA Inc



Ms Anne Bainbridge
Youth Affairs Council of SA

Why the Advancing the Community Together Partnership?

In 2011, the 10th anniversary of the United Nations International Year of Volunteers, it is fitting that the *Advancing the Community Together* partnership be revised, reflecting on its achievements to date, to position it to cater to the needs and challenges facing volunteerism in a rapidly changing society.

Advancing the Community Together was enacted in 2003 by the South Australian Government to bring together government and the volunteer community, in all its forms, to advance volunteering in South Australia.

With an understanding that volunteering is born from within the community the Advancing the Community Together partnership is a springboard to encourage both parties to look at values, policies and practices, creating a flexible, adaptive and innovative environment for volunteers which ultimately benefits all South Australians.

In line with the national definition, which adopts the United Nations' meaning for volunteering, the *Advancing the Community Together* partnership defines volunteering within the following broad and inclusive framework.

Three key characteristics defining volunteering are that the activity should:

1. Provide benefits to someone other than the volunteer, or be of benefit to the wider community.
2. Be undertaken without financial reward, however reimbursement for expenses or a token payment may be legitimate.
3. Be embarked on voluntarily, according to the individual's own free-will.

Volunteering can be performed in a variety of ways including formal participation through an established organisation; regular or episodic participation; and, spontaneous, for example responding to an emergency, or planned. It can be done in person or online.

Therefore it follows that the volunteer community encompasses all volunteers irrespective of the formality or informality of the individual setting, and takes in all organisations and community groups that involve volunteers in their activities or contribute to the advancement of volunteerism.

Core of the Partnership: Shared Values

The volunteer community and the South Australian Government share a commitment to the following values integral to our mutual partnership:

Openness and Transparency

Interacting with each other, and with the communities we serve honestly, openly and transparently.

Respect

Recognising and respecting each other's views, roles and contribution to society.

Equality of Opportunity

Recognising everyone's individual right to volunteer and participate in their community irrespective of gender, age, religion, race, disability, marital status, pregnancy or sexuality.

Active Citizenship

Embracing the notion that everyone is unique with a meaningful role to play in community and civic life.

Sustainable Communities

Taking into account the long term benefits and future needs of the community.

Commitments to Action

In making specific commitments to action, the volunteer community and the South Australian Government recognise the need to support and reinforce the values and principles of *Advancing the Community Together*.

The partners act together and independently under the eight key pillars:

Accountability

We commit to honour the trust of South Australians and to developing responsible and appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms. We will maintain openness and transparency in our dealings with each other and with the communities we serve.

Communication

We will continue to develop active and positive communication networks, collaboration and trust across the partnership, and be respectful of one another's confidential information.

Through good management, support and communication, we will empower volunteers to participate to their full potential; develop better ways to communicate priorities and share ideas and information.

Open communication will ensure each partner is kept informed and up to date with issues enabling appropriate planning and management of information and issues, and that volunteers' views are accurately represented and responded to.

Equity and Inclusiveness

We will continue to recognise volunteering in all its different forms making certain all volunteering is respected and valued.

In identifying barriers that limit groups including Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with a disability, socially and economically disadvantaged people becoming involved in volunteering. We will adopt an affirmative action approach, providing conditions to strengthen participation and broaden opportunities.

We recognise the challenges facing volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in remote and rural communities and on traditional lands, and work together to provide opportunities within these communities, and to address relevant legislative and policy issues.

Policy and Legislation Development

Through regular consultation and review we will identify and respond to issues affecting volunteering and respond by developing relevant policies and guidelines.

Strategic planning for community participation involves both partners and aims to expand and grow volunteering in the community, in part through easing and simplifying legislative requirements and policies.

The South Australian Government will ensure future policy decisions and regulatory requirements take into account potential effects on the volunteer community.

Recruitment and Retention

The partnership will continue to promote, support and grow participation in volunteering, through a range of strategies, including providing opportunities for people to volunteer in areas matching their abilities, interests and skill sets.

We will continue to recognise, celebrate and encourage employers who release staff to deliver volunteer services.

We acknowledge the right of any organisation to screen potential volunteers to ensure they are the appropriate cultural and operational fit for their organisation.

We recognise that whilst volunteering is not a substitute for paid work there are many shared values between paid and unpaid work and volunteering can be a valuable pathway to paid employment.

The partners will promote, encourage and foster volunteering in the community and provide opportunities for volunteering both within government agencies and the broader community.

We continue to advance the important role of volunteer management in supporting volunteers.

Resources

Resources within the community are at a premium. The partners will respect and responsibly manage those resources, account for their use, and ensure relevant government policy and legislation is complied with.

To raise the profile of volunteering and strengthen its position in society we will promote joint ventures with the volunteer community, various levels of government, the corporate sector, educational institutions and the media. Cooperation to avoid unnecessary duplication of services and resources will be encouraged.

The partners acknowledge the unique circumstances of small volunteer groups as well as rural and remote volunteers and volunteer involving organisations and the specific challenges they face in accessing resources. We recognise these challenges and encourage further development towards cooperative use of, and access to resources.

The partners will continue to work in the design, review and modification of guidelines and application processes to ensure consistent and clear information, equitable access to resources and appropriate agreements.

Risk Management

We acknowledge the value of adopting quality management frameworks and the need to identify risk and ensure appropriate and sensitive risk mitigation strategies are implemented.

The South Australian Government will circulate information on issues of liability, insurance and risk management that affect the roles of volunteers and the management of community based organisations, while volunteers and volunteer based organisations will introduce appropriate risk management measures and encourage the volunteer community to make individuals aware of their obligations and responsibilities.

The Government will continue working to initiate legislative action and release policy guidelines ensuring protection and support to groups of volunteers where appropriate, and the volunteer community will take part in information sharing regarding risk management and insurance issues.

Training and Development

We acknowledge the need for volunteers and managers of volunteer programs to develop and maintain the skills, knowledge and abilities required to provide quality services, and that some training may be required to meet legislative obligations or for accreditation needed to meet industry or safety standards.

The Government and the volunteer community will work in collaboration to create appropriate training opportunities for all volunteers and their managers.

Taking the Partnership Forward

The Government of South Australia will work with the volunteer community to ensure *Advancing the Community Together* provides an ongoing framework with:

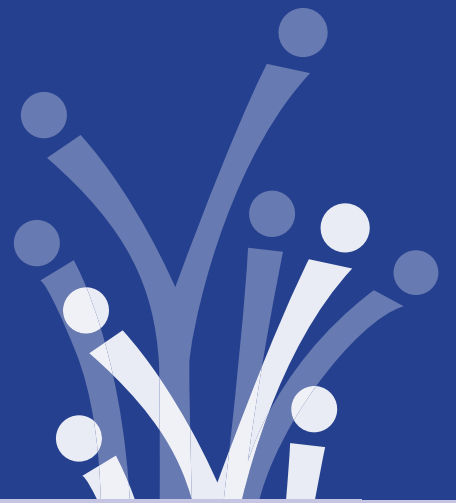
Appropriate structures consisting of representatives from the government and the volunteer community to ensure the partnership remains relevant and proactive in the advancement of volunteering and to oversee implementation and monitor progress of *Advancing the Community Together*

Opportunities for wide consultation and open dialogue with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across South Australia on areas that impact on the volunteer community

An annual congress to address issues and respond to trends impacting on the volunteer community and *Advancing the Community Together*

Regular communication on accomplishments as well as future goals and directions

To ensure the relevance of *Advancing the Community Together* is maintained the partnership will be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis and will incorporate ongoing community consultation.



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