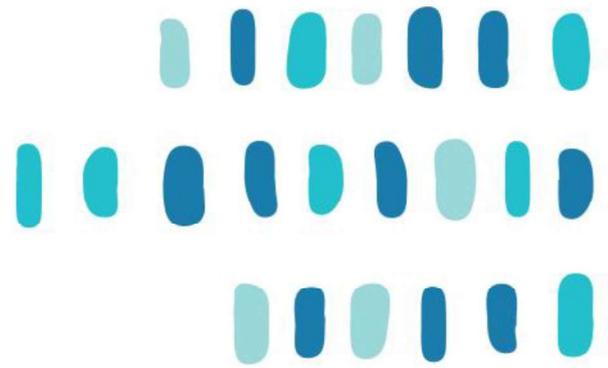




Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



Future approach for purchasing Volunteering Development Services

Policy and Service Design

Background

In March 2017, the former Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC) commenced a program review of the Volunteering Development Services program.

The purpose of the review was to conduct a point in time assessment of the scope and outcomes of purchased services and activities in the Volunteering Development Services program.

The former DLGC purchased Volunteering Development Services to provide support to volunteering sector organisations and individuals that deliver outcomes aligned with the DLGC's role in making a difference for local communities.

The Volunteering Development Services program has been in operation since 2001, with the activities delivered under the program aimed at developing the capability of volunteers and volunteering organisations to respond to community assistance needs, through practical support, recognition and awareness of the role of volunteers.

Overtime the program has been revised:

- In 2007, the program changed from grant funding to a recurrent funding model, with 16 Volunteer Resource Centres provided three-year service agreements.
- In 2009, the program budget was expanded to include support to carers, grandcarers and seniors.
- In 2011, funding was distributed across 17 volunteering services with an additional focus on youth volunteering.
- In 2012, the program was reviewed and a new service model and outcomes were implemented. This model is in effect currently.

Current state

Following the machinery of government changes in 2017, the Department of Communities (Communities) revisited the review of the Volunteering Development Services program.

In 2018-2019, Communities will provide \$661,660 to 15 Volunteering Development Services located in Albany, Busselton, Bunbury, Manjimip, Nannup, Peel, Esperance, Geraldton, Broome, and across six metropolitan areas.

This program review has been conducted in parallel with the review of the Sector Support Services program, which includes the role of Volunteering WA in providing support to the volunteering sector.

The service agreements for the Volunteering Development Services program have been extended to 30 June 2019 to align with the timeline of this program review and the concurrent review of the Sector Support Services program.

Policy context for purchasing Volunteering Development Services

State Government outcomes

The State Government endorsed a framework for the 2018-19 State Budget, which will continue to guide the State Government's work until longer term goals are developed. The four overarching goals are:

- Sustainable finances: Responsible financial management and better service delivery;
- Future jobs and skills: Grow and diversify the economy, create jobs and support skills development;
- Strong communities: Safe communities and supported families; and
- Better places: A quality environment with liveable and affordable communities and vibrant regions.

The State Government's Volunteering Strategy, launched in May 2017, sets the direction for the volunteering portfolio, and provides a strategic framework for action by all levels of government, community and private sector organisations and the community to encourage and support volunteering.

The WA Volunteering Strategy is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- for the volunteering sector to recognise the value of volunteering in our community and celebrate volunteers, and respond to their changing needs;
- for the volunteering sector to harness technological innovation to facilitate participation in and create more opportunities for diversity, to encourage West Australians from all backgrounds to be engaged in volunteering; and
- for communities and organisations to actively involve volunteers, provide support and training, for their mutual benefit and for individuals to be enriched by the experience.

Ministerial priorities

The Minister for Volunteering, the Hon Mick Murray MLA, has identified the following priorities for the portfolio, which inform how the government will support the volunteering sector:

- establish a volunteering community reference group;
- explore opportunities to use information technology to strengthen volunteering; and
- engage people from diverse backgrounds in volunteering.

Department of Communities outcomes

With the establishment of Communities, the State Government has transformed the delivery of human and social services as outlined in the People, Place, Home vision:

- strong families and kin;
- safe children;
- a place to call home;
- empowered people; and
- inclusive and accessible communities.

Future approach for purchasing Volunteering Development Services

The continued purchasing of Volunteering Development Services is of value to the State Government and Communities because:

- the volunteering sector helps to grow individual and community resilience, and provide opportunities for meaningful and equitable social and economic participation that is responsive to the needs of a diverse range of Western Australians;
- it will support the increasing community needs, priorities and changing patterns of volunteering, particularly the current shift towards spontaneous volunteering in emergency situations and for specific agendas, such as Homeless Connect;
- volunteering, is an enabler of individual, family and community well-being, and social, cultural and economic inclusion, and is an important contributor to achieving the defined outcomes of the:
 - State Government's WA Volunteering Strategy;
 - Department of Communities' People, Place and Home vision;
 - State Government's Delivering Community Services in Partnership policy; and
- it represents value for money, with less than one per cent of Communities' community services budget being spent to achieve a significant number of outcomes and policy objectives, including empowering people and building inclusive and accessible communities.

Volunteering sector

During the period of this review, the Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre conducted a research project into the social and economic sustainability of Western Australia's rural volunteer workforce.

The research study explores how rural communities across WA are addressing the challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers and the pressures on rural volunteer workforces.

The research found that:

- Rural and regional communities are heavily reliant on volunteering to deliver essential and emergency services, and social and community activities.
- Despite high rates of volunteering in rural and regional communities, on average more than 50 per cent of the population are engaged in local activities, organisations face challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers. This is mainly due to demographic factors such as outmigration and population ageing, and volunteer burnout due to increased workloads and stress.
- Better strategic planning could assist volunteering involving organisations to recruit, train and retention volunteers, and implement succession plans. However, they do not have the time, resources or skills to do this.
- Funding sources, including grants and recurrent funding are decreasing, the application processes for funding are more complex, and the amount of funding available and provided is diminishing. Rural and regional volunteering involving organisations have been most affected by changes to the Royalties for Regions funding program.

Findings of the Volunteering Development Services program review

Organisations funded under the Volunteering Development Services program work towards strengthening and connecting communities through the contribution of volunteers; and work with stakeholders and partners such as local governments and community organisations to build the local community's capacity for receiving and offering volunteering.

The review of the Volunteering Development Services program examined the funding levels, location of services, client access and usage data, changes in the volunteering environment and opportunities to achieve the new broader outcomes across Communities.

The review considered the Volunteering Development Services program and the 15 currently funded organisations outlined in **Table 1**, and found that:

- The needs of the volunteering sector have changed, with an increased need for technology based support, training and development of individuals to volunteer, and matching volunteers to roles in the community. The sector would benefit from technological innovation:
 - to leverage community partnerships and networks to facilitate more wide-spread volunteering matching opportunities, through the use of platforms such as Seek and GoVolunteer; and
 - to explore the use of platforms such as Skype, video conferencing and podcasts, to improve support, development and online training efficiency for volunteers.
- Attracting and retaining volunteers in regional areas is more competitive than in metropolitan areas because opportunities are comparatively less accessible and available in regional locations.
 - In the metropolitan area there is an abundance of organisations skilled at recruiting and supporting volunteers, and opportunities for people to become engaged in volunteering.
- Competition for engaging volunteers is an increasing concern, particularly for government agencies, such as the Departments of Education, Fire and Emergency Services, and Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, which are competing with community service organisations to attract the same, limited pool of volunteers.
 - While young people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who are considered hard to reach groups, are accessing volunteer matching services, their numbers remain smaller than for other traditional volunteer cohorts.
 - People's expectations of volunteering differ between cohorts, which impacts on the types of roles people volunteer for.
 - There is an increased requirement to focus on volunteer training and support programs to assist people with developing skills to increase employability.
- The funding provided is based on historical communities of interest, with limited consideration of the current needs and outcomes to be achieved in locations. Funding levels are limited on average to \$44,110 per service.

Future approach for purchasing Volunteering Development Services

- Funding is not distributed equitably across organisations or locations. There is a \$26,852 difference in funding to services, with the highest allocation of \$57,163 in Geraldton and the lowest allocation of \$30,311 in Nedlands:
 - \$443,846 is allocated to the nine regionally based services, with an average allocation of \$49,316. Of these, four service the South-West region, while there is only one service each in the Kimberley, Great Southern, Peel, Goldfields and Midwest.
 - \$217,814 is allocated to the six services in the metropolitan areas, with an average allocation of \$36,302.
 - There are no services in the Pilbara, Gascoyne or Wheatbelt.
- The funding provided under the program is often only a small percentage of the funding sourced by the organisations to support the ongoing sustainability of their business model:
 - There are 35 Volunteering Development Centres across the State, with 15 organisations funded under this program; six of those organisations are also funded by the Department of Social Services Volunteer Management program, while nine organisations are also funded by the relevant local government.
 - For the six metropolitan based services, the local governments that operate the Volunteer Service Centres provide greater financial support, on average 70 per cent, than the program funding allocation.
 - Volunteering WA has been awarded funding by the Department of Social Services to deliver a Volunteer Management Program for the volunteering sector in 12 locations across the State, including in the regional areas of the Pilbara, Wheatbelt, Kimberley, and seven metropolitan locations.

While undertaking this review of the Volunteering Development Services program, consideration has been given to the role of Volunteering WA in developing, managing and supporting volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to actively participate in the sector.

In 2018-19, Communities will provide Volunteering WA with \$650,343 to deliver Sector Support Services. This level of funding is greater than that provided to all other jurisdiction's volunteering peak bodies in Australia, noting that the funding provided to Volunteering WA equates to \$0.24 per capita, while the Victorian State Government provides \$0.03 per capita to Volunteering Victoria.

Table 1 - Volunteering Development Services funded by the Department of Communities

The table below identifies the 15 services currently funded under the Volunteering Development Services program, also noting their other sources of funding.

Organisation	Volunteering Development Service	Current \$2018-19 (ex GST)	Other Sources of Funding
City of Armadale	Armadale Volunteer Services	31,243	LG
City of Cockburn	Cockburn Volunteering Development Service	37,470	LG
City of Fremantle	Fremantle Volunteer Service	34,331	LG
City of Melville	Melville Volunteer Resource Centre	34,974	LG
City of Nedlands	Nedlands Volunteer Resource Centre	30,311	LG
City of Swan	Swan Volunteer Resource Centre	49,486	LG
Shire of Esperance	Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre	36,315	LG and DSS
Albany and Regional Volunteer Service Inc	Albany and Regional Volunteer Services	47,376	LG and DSS
Broome Community Information Resource Centre & Learning Exchange	Broome Volunteer Resource Service	41,317	LG
Busselton / Dunsborough Environment Centre Inc	Busselton Dunsborough Volunteer Centre	54,954	Nil
Manjimup Community Resource Centre	Volunteer Opportunity Development Service	47,376	R4R and DSS
Nannup Community Resource Centre	Nannup Volunteers	47,376	Nil
Peel Volunteer Resource Centre	Peel Volunteer Resource Centre (Bunbury and Mandurah)	56,010	DSS
The Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton	Centacare Volunteer Service (Geraldton)	57,163	DSS
Volunteer South West Inc	Volunteer South West (Bunbury) Inc	55,958	DSS
Total funding allocated to Volunteering Development Services		\$661,660	

Key:

LG – Local Government hosting the Volunteer Service/Resource Centre

DSS – Department of Social Services – Volunteer Management Program

R4R – Royalties for Regions

Future approach for Volunteering Development Services

The review found that the future approach to purchasing Volunteering Development Services needs to be more responsive to the changing environment of the volunteering sector.

It is therefore proposed that the Volunteering Development Services program be amended with the aim of enhancing the capability of the volunteering sector to deliver the Communities outcomes, as well as being able to respond to the priorities, needs and changing environment of volunteering in the State, particularly in regional areas, by:

- addressing the disparity in funding for metropolitan and regional service provision and fund person-centred programs that support inclusion and participation with improved volunteer engagement;
- supporting the development and implementation of technological platforms to attract, retain and match volunteers;
- encouraging and supporting organisations to:
 - change public perceptions of volunteers and volunteering by promoting diversity of volunteering opportunities, including spontaneous volunteering;
 - engage with multicultural community groups and organisations to facilitate the participation and engagement of these cohorts; and
 - explore innovation to address community participation in volunteering and increase technology options for training, development and support.

The future approach to purchasing Volunteering Development Services would aim to 'promote the benefits of volunteering to the community, encourage and support the diversity of individuals in volunteering activities, develop the capacity of volunteers and volunteer networks through innovative solutions'.

The future Volunteering Development Services program would achieve the following service outcomes:

- Western Australians from a range of backgrounds, age groups and abilities are engaged in volunteering and enriched by their experience;
- Individuals have the knowledge, confidence and skills to volunteer;
- Organisations have confidence that volunteers can fulfil their role and deliver good outcomes for the broader community; and
- The community is aware of the value of volunteering and volunteers are recognised by the community.

Additionally, it is proposed to explore options to source, develop and implement an innovative technology solution to respond to the needs of volunteers and the sector in attracting, matching and retaining volunteers, as part of the new sector support activities to be purchased.

New Regional Volunteering Development Service program

The new Regional Volunteering Development Services program, is intended to develop a sustainable and adaptable sector that is responsive to current and changing needs of volunteers and the communities of Western Australia.

Under this new program funding to regional areas would be increased, to initiate local, place based programs and activities that include and engage individuals, and foster community and social wellbeing.

This proposes allocating the total existing program funding of \$661,660 across the nine regional areas of:

- Gascoyne
- Kimberley
- Pilbara
- Goldfields-Esperance
- Mid-West
- South West
- Great Southern
- Peel
- Wheatbelt.

This new program would address funding level and service location disparities. It is intended that the program would increase development of Volunteering Development Services in regional areas, particularly those that are not well serviced by currently funded services.

Future Regional Volunteering Development Services will be prioritised and delivered according to the Communities designated service delivery boundaries, with consideration of population demographics, service accessibility and local need. It is anticipated that the total allocation of the program will be applied to the regions using a program funding model, as used for the state-wide Parenting funding program.

Under this new program, funding to the six metropolitan services would cease. The resulting impact for these metropolitan services is considered low risk, as local government's currently support these services with 70 per cent or more funding. Additionally, the metropolitan areas are saturated with opportunities for individuals to access volunteer development, training and support services.

The funding required for the new Regional Volunteering Development Services program in 2019-20 would be **\$661,660** and would be indexed annually thereafter.

LC QWN No C1355, Question 1-2.

Organisation	Service name	Location	2019/20 Annual Funding ex GST
Albany & Regional Volunteer Service Incorporated	Albany and Regional Volunteer Services	Albany	\$48,072.27
Broome Community Information Resource Centre and Learning Exchange	Broome Volunteer Resource Service	Broome	\$41,924.79
Busselton Dunsborough Environment Centre Inc	Busselton Dunsborough Volunteer Centre	Busselton	\$55,761.83
City of Armadale	Armadale Volunteer Services	Armadale	\$31,702.63
City of Cockburn	Cockburn Volunteer Resource Centre	Cockburn	\$38,020.68
City of Fremantle	Fremantle Volunteer Service	Fremantle	\$34,835.54
City of Melville	Melville Volunteer Resource Centre	Melville	\$35,488.01
City of Nedlands	Nedlands Volunteer Resource Centre	Nedlands	\$30,756.28
City of Swan	Swan Volunteer Resource Centre	Midland	\$50,213.14
Manjimup Community Resource Centre Inc	Volunteer Opportunity Development Service	Manjimup	\$48,072.74
Nannup Community Resource Centre Inc	Nannup Volunteers	Nannup	\$48,072.27
Peel Volunteer Resource Centre Inc	Peel Volunteer Resource Centre	Mandurah	\$56,833.56
Shire of Esperance	Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre	Esperance	\$36,848.39
The Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton Centacare Family Services	Centacare Volunteer Service	Geraldton	\$58,003.32

Volunteer South West Inc	Volunteer South West Inc	Bunbury	\$56,781.05
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