



Volunteer Management Activity

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does the redesigned Volunteer Management Activity look like?

- From 1 July 2021, the Australian Government will distribute around \$40.1 million (excluding GST) over five years under this redesigned Volunteer Management Activity (VMA), through the state and territory volunteering peak bodies (peak bodies).
- This includes \$33.5 million (ex. GST) over five years for the peak bodies to develop and implement strategies that will:
 - Deliver online services to build the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) within their relevant jurisdictions and;
 - Break down barriers to volunteering faced by identified priority groups, including, People with Disabilities, First Nations People, and Newly Arrived Migrants.
- Through the 2021-22 Budget, additional one off funding of up to, \$6.6 million (ex. GST) was provided to support a smooth transition to the redesigned VMA in 2021-22.
- Grant agreements with the peak bodies are from 1 July 2021 until 30 June 2026, with a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the program to be undertaken after three years.
- The redesigned VMA focuses on building the capacity of VIOs, primarily through online volunteer management services, and breaking down barriers to volunteering for identified priority groups including People with Disability, First Nations people, and Newly Arrived Migrants.
 - The online services delivered to VIOs will focus on implementing best practice recruiting and training of volunteers, retaining volunteers, volunteer management and understanding regulatory

obligations and risk management. There will also be online resources.

- Increasing the accessibility of volunteering opportunities for people in priority groups includes building the capacity of VIOs to engage volunteers from these groups and providing face-to-face and other services to support these groups to participate in volunteering.
- Peak bodies know their state or territory's needs and are best placed to work closely with their local volunteer organisations. This approach enables volunteering peak bodies to respond more efficiently to the current and emerging needs of local volunteer organisations and their volunteers.

2. Who is funded through the redesigned VMA?

- Under the redesigned VMA, funding of up to \$40.1 million (excluding GST) over five years will be provided to the peak bodies.
- The peak bodies are responsible for effective channelling of VMA funding to meet needs and priorities across their jurisdiction.
- Peak bodies are best placed to work closely with the volunteering sector within their own jurisdiction, guided by a thorough understanding of local issues and needs.
- Peak bodies are developing appropriate strategies and mechanisms to ensure equitable service coverage, using existing localised services and structures where possible. They are required to partner with relevant local organisations to develop service delivery strategies.
- This approach enables peak bodies and their partners to respond more effectively to the current and emerging needs of local volunteering organisations and their volunteers.

3. Why did the Government choose to defund VSS organisations and its face-to-face services, and shift VMA funding to an online model of support?

- The Government has a responsibility to ensure that activities undertaken by VMA funded organisations are aligned to a Commonwealth head/s of power under the Australian Constitution. The redesigned VMA has addressed this issue.
- The Government also has a responsibility to ensure that funded programs deliver services efficiently and effectively to Australian communities.
- The sector has been undergoing constant change for the last 20 years.

- A review of the VMA found the current model could lead to duplication and confusion amongst VIO's, and there was varying support depending on location.
- The review found that, in its current state, the VMA led to an inconsistent use of resources, IT infrastructure, and application of best practices.
- The Government is prioritising vulnerable target groups and regional and rural Australia through the redesigned VMA. This will:
 - reduce barriers for priority groups, e.g. People with a Disability, First Nations people, and Newly Arrived Migrants in accessing volunteering services
 - guarantee service coverage of rural and remote areas.
- The redesigned VMA will grow the sector's resilience and adaptability.
- Under the redesigned VMA, not all services will be online. Peak bodies will work with other organisations to build the capacity of VIOs to decrease barriers faced by priority groups.
- This means that the peak bodies can, as part of their strategies, include face-to-face delivery of services, but only to priority groups that the Government has the power to fund. These groups include:
 - People with Disability
 - First Nation Peoples
 - Newly Arrived Migrants

4. How will the Government support VRCs/VSS in the future?

- Under the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs) the peak bodies are required to work in partnership with other relevant organisations to deliver the redesigned VMA. Where peak bodies need to leverage the knowledge and resources of the previous VMA providers, they may choose to sub-contract additional services.
- This means that any funding decisions, under the redesigned VMA, are a matter for the peak bodies. Organisations that the peak bodies partner with will be required to adhere to the requirements as outlined in the GOGs.

5. What does the additional funding for the VMA in the 2021-22 budget mean for the program?

- The Government announced in the 2021-22 Budget that an additional up to \$6.6 million would be provided under the VMA.

- The additional funding of up to \$6.6 million is for the first year of the redesigned VMA.
- This additional funding is being used to support a smooth transition to the redesigned VMA and will help ensure the redesigned Activity is properly developed and embedded.

6. What can organisations who were funded by peak bodies in 2021/22 do after 30 June 2021?

- The Government contributions are only one source of funding for the operation of many community services. As well as state and local government websites, information about alternative funding opportunities can be found through Our Community website at www.ourcommunity.com.au, and Philanthropy Australia website at www.philanthropy.org.au.

7. What will the \$3.4 million one off investment in IT infrastructure be used for?

- The Government invested a one off sum of \$3.4 million in 2020-21 to develop and improve volunteer management IT infrastructure for the program. The aim of this investment is to support national consistency in volunteer management.
- This one off investment in IT infrastructure will support organisations by reducing cost barriers to information, training materials, governance materials etc.

8. What factors were taken into consideration when determining the redesigned funding model and jurisdictional split?

- From 1 July 2021, the Government will distribute up to \$40.1 million (ex. GST) over five years under the redesigned VMA.
- The redesigned VMA is a simple yet robust population based model that takes into account the following factors:
 - State and territory population of formal volunteers (pre COVID-19)
 - Diversity of each state and territory's population and remoteness of the population
 - A base rate to ensure financial viability – particularly for the smaller states and territories.
- In addition, the Commonwealth Government has invested a one off sum of up to \$3.4 million in 2020-21 to develop and improve volunteer

management

IT infrastructure associated with the delivery of the program.

9. Can the Government ensure that rural and regional Australia will have representation in the Volunteer Management Activity?

- The Government is committed to ensuring that the VMA has a national footprint. More equitable service delivery, particularly for rural and regional areas, is a priority under the VMA model.

10. What is the Government doing to address the lack of engagement of volunteers?

- The Government has partnered with Volunteering Australia to embark on several projects with the aim of seeking to overcome barriers and leverage current opportunities to reimagine volunteering for all Australians. The Strategic Awareness Communication Campaign, Volunteering in Australia Report, National Strategy for Volunteering and the Volunteer Management Online Project, will provide volunteering in Australia a much-needed blueprint to ensure that it is operating at its optimum.

11. Will the redesigned VMA be reviewed?

- Yes, a Post Implementation Review (PIR) will be conducted by an external company in the first year of the redesigned VMA. Part of the PIR will include the development of a performance management framework to inform the design of a potential impact review that will be undertaken during year three of the VMA by identifying current and future sources of data required to measure program performance.

12. What progress has been made on the National Volunteering Strategy?

- Volunteering Australia (VA) announced the development of the National Strategy for Volunteering on 1 November 2021, which will provide a blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia.
- An independent National Strategy for Volunteering Council has been established to provide strategic oversight to the National Strategy project.
- Council representatives have been engaged from across the volunteering ecosystem, as well as a departmental representative, and will contribute their expertise to the project over the coming year.