



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY TO BE DEVELOPED

As part of National Volunteer Week celebrations, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello today committed the NSW Government to developing and releasing a NSW Volunteering Strategy by year's end.

"Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the well-being of our State, and the NSW Volunteering Strategy will build on this wonderful contribution by fostering more volunteering," Mr O'Farrell said.

"Each year, our 1.7 million plus volunteers contribute more than 235 million hours of voluntary work in NSW. This effort has been estimated to be worth a remarkable \$2.4 billion to the NSW economy," he said.

"However, the value of volunteering to the community as a whole cannot be judged in monetary terms. Without these volunteers, we would not enjoy most of the local level sporting, artistic, cultural and environmental activities that make this State great.

"The passion and commitment of our volunteers brings people together to build stronger communities, and the NSW Volunteering Strategy will further add to this strength," he said.

Mr Dominello said the development of the NSW Volunteering Strategy will feature extensive consultation with grassroots volunteers, volunteering sector NGOs, businesses helping their staff participate in volunteering, and people who may not be currently volunteering but may wish to do so.

"We will determine what's working best in volunteering and how to better support it, as well as barriers to more volunteering and what can be done to overcome them," Mr Dominello said.

"NSW has a volunteering participation rate of approximately 32% in Sydney and 38% in regional NSW, which underscores its importance in the bush. This has largely developed without benefit of a strategy or external assistance.

"However, according to the available data, we know that NSW can improve this community participation compared to other States, and lead the way in volunteering. That's why it's timely and appropriate for the NSW Government to reach out to the sector and bring new energy to a common strategy," Mr Dominello said.

Mr Dominello said the NSW Government will work with all volunteering stakeholders to consider a range of initiatives during the strategy's development:

- Valuing and celebrating volunteering, and providing more support and information for greater general participation in volunteering;
- Better recognising and harnessing volunteering in our growing multicultural communities;
- Further helping “baby boomers” – with all their skills – participate in volunteering even as they undertake retirement-related activities such as travel;
- Encouraging more volunteering from young people, including recognising their preference for event-based, shorter-term volunteering;
- Increasing opportunities for “whole of family” volunteering, including in environmental initiatives;
- Encouraging more digital and distance volunteering, including for the benefit of regional and remote NSW;
- Leveraging the business and corporate sectors’ participation in volunteering;
- Leveraging volunteering activities into employment opportunities, including for disadvantaged people; and,
- Better assisting volunteering organisations with emerging management challenges, such as issues in volunteer management, regulatory requirements, volunteer training, and adaptation to changing community and local needs.

The development of the NSW Government’s Volunteering Strategy will be led by the Office of Communities.

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