

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Helping hand for volunteers**

**3 February 2012**

Safe Work Australia Chair, Mr Tom Phillips AM, today launched a new volunteer assistance package developed by Safe Work Australia in partnership with Volunteering Australia.

The package includes a Volunteer Assistance Line, email and webpage designed to provide guidance and support to volunteers and volunteer organisations who may be affected by the new work health and safety (WHS) laws.

“I am proud to launch this assistance package for volunteers who are one of the most valuable parts of our community. It offers comprehensive information on the new laws and will help to dismiss concerns some volunteers may have about holding community events”, said Mr Phillips.

“The new laws make sure volunteers receive the same level of protection as any other worker, are not exposed to risks or forgotten or excluded from workplace safety standards. This greater protection will ensure volunteers are able to continue their great work in the community and return home safely.”

“This package is a great example of how government and community organisations can work together to educate and inform the community on how the new WHS laws may impact volunteers and volunteer organisations,” said Mr Phillips.

Cary Pedicini, Volunteering Australia CEO, said Safe Work Australia’s new resources will help volunteers better understand the benefits of the new laws.

“Volunteering Australia will continue to work with Safe Work Australia to ensure volunteers are well protected in the workplace and information is readily available in a variety of formats to help them understand the benefits of harmonisation”, said Mr Pedicini.

Safe Work Australia has set up a Volunteer Assistance Line on 02 6240 4990. People can call and talk to an expert for advice on how the new laws affect volunteers and their activities.

The volunteer assistance package includes fact sheets, frequently asked questions and useful contacts and is available at [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)