

# Volunteering Community Reference Group

**6 May 2025**

**Communique #17**

The Volunteering Community Reference Group (VCRG) is convened by Volunteering WA (VWA) to provide community input to the Minister for Volunteering. This communique refers to the meeting held on Tuesday 6 May 2025. In attendance were:

Minister for Volunteering	The Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA
Ministerial staff	Rachel Sackville-Minchin, Chief of Staff Jacob Mitchell, Policy Advisor Sarah Makse, Media Advisor
<b>VCRG Members</b>	<b>Name</b>
NFP volunteering sector	Craig Spencer, Chair
Volunteer Resource Centres	Vicki Pollard, Peel VRC
Corporate Representative	Heidi Madden, Chair, Corporate Volunteer Council
Research representative	Dr Megan Paull, Murdoch University
Emergency Services Volunteer	Phil Scanlan (Metro)
Individual volunteer	Esther Bliss (Regional) Dr Tina Firth (Metro) Sandra Prosser (Regional) Rahul Seth (Metro)
Volunteering WA (VWA)	Tina Williams Dominique Hansen
Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)	Hannah Godsave
Department of Communities (Communities)	Karina Chicote, Director of Inclusion
Other Communities staff in attendance	Angelo Barbaro, Executive Director, Regulation and Quality  Claire Harding, Principal Policy Advisor, Strategy and Partnerships, Inclusion

**Apologies:** *Elizabeth Acason, Swan VRC; Michael Wainwright (individual volunteer).*

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which we met, the Wadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and paid his respects to elders past and present.

## 1. Presentation by Minister Beazley

The meeting commenced with a presentation by The Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA Minister for Volunteering which included the ways in which her portfolios of Local Government, Disability Services, Youth and the Gascoyne region intersect. The Minister indicated special interest in the intersection of Youth and Volunteering, noting the recent release of the [Government's Koorlangka Bidi - WA Youth Action Plan 2024-2027](#) and the potential for discussions about how volunteering in schools and youth volunteering can align with that strategy.

## 2. Status Update on Streamlining Volunteering Checks

During the February 2025 VCRG meeting, members discussed the current barriers to volunteering posed by existing volunteer screening processes and associated fees. The discussion was informed through several sources – [Reducing the Burden Campaign](#), [Volunteering WA State Election Priorities 2025](#) and de-identified case studies from five Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs), presented by Volunteering WA.

In April 2025, recommendations to the Minister and Department of Communities based on the VCRG discussion and findings were circulated by Volunteering WA, for out of session endorsement.

The 10 recommendations endorsed by the VCRG are set out below. Volunteering WA will now convene a working group of experts from the sector, to work through these recommendations to guide implementation of WA Labor's commitment of 24 February 2025 to streamline volunteering checks.

1. Abolish fees for all volunteer screening checks.
2. Provide one entry point to an online portal for volunteers in WA to apply for all volunteer screening checks.
3. Leverage the Government's current Digital ID and Digital Wallet investments to create a digital WA volunteer passport.
4. Wholly digitise Working with Children and NDIS checks, as well as the future Aged Care Checks, removing the need for in-person attendance at either Australia Post or the Department of Transport.
5. Amend the WAPOL digitised process to allow for a Volunteer Involving Organisation to nominate both a primary contact and a delegate who also has power to send and receive link for national Police Clearances.
6. Provide a free photo card for volunteers who lack a driver's licence or Australian passport or other recognised photo ID. This will provide greater access to streamlined online applications.
7. Provide funded in-person support for the digitally excluded (without internet, mobile phone or PC) to apply for digitised screening checks.
8. Where necessary, enable funded in-person support services to use the portal to print a hard copy Volunteer Passport as an alternative for the digitally excluded. The hard copy would confirm the clearances that are held by the Volunteer along with their date of issue and date of expiry. This will especially assist people in remote and regional Australia, older people and Aboriginal people.
9. Continue to educate Volunteering Involving Organisations and volunteers about what clearances are needed, to avoid over-servicing.
10. Work with Volunteering WA and the volunteering sector to enable user testing and finessing of the new streamlined checks

The Department of Community Services (DoCS), separately confirmed that work is underway to enable a wholly online Working with Children Screening check application and renewal process. An online NDIS screening check renewal process is also underway and should be completed this year.

### 3. Working With Children Check Legislative Review

Angelo Barbaro Exec. Director Regulation & Quality, Communities, spoke about the upcoming legislative review which will focus on child related work and exemptions. VCRG members and the community will have the opportunity to make submissions as part of a consultation to be held in the second half of 2025.

Members of the group acknowledged the need to clarify the exemptions to assist with streamlining of screening checks for volunteers.

### 4. Volunteer Insurance

Volunteering WA spoke to a paper on gaps in personal accident and worker's compensation insurance cover for volunteers in Western Australia. The paper also highlighted some best practice approaches within parts of government such as National Parks and Wildlife and Local Governments in Western Australia and also in Victoria for community services.

To provide further information the group agreed to invite the WA Government insurer, RiskCover to present at the next meeting.

The Western Australian Local Government Association representative agreed to advise what arrangements are in place for the Local Government insurance Scheme to provide personal accident insurance cover to "auspiced" local volunteers.

### 5. Youth Volunteering and Public Schools

The group discussed the opportunity for youth volunteering in the education system with the Western Australian Certificate of Education recognising 20 hours of volunteering but noted the current disparity in opportunity to volunteer through the public education system. This issue will be further explored in a paper to be prepared by the Department of Communities and Volunteering WA for the August meeting.

### 6. New Publication - Snapshot of Volunteering in Australia Report

Volunteering WA highlighted the recent publication of the [Snapshot of Volunteering in Australia Report](#). This report was commissioned by all State and Territory Volunteering Peak Bodies to provide a detailed overview of volunteering in Australia. The data used in the report is from State and Territory surveys conducted in 2023 for their State of Volunteering Reports.

### 7. Forthcoming events

Special events 2025	
National Volunteer Week	Monday 19 – Sunday 25 May 2025
National Student Volunteer Week	Monday 4 – Sunday 10 August 2025
VWA State Conference (inc. VWA AGM)	Thursday 6 & Friday 7 November
IVD Garden Party	Thursday 4 December (TBC)
International Volunteers' Day	Friday 5 December

More information on the Volunteering Community Reference Group, including Terms of Reference and membership, is available [here](#).