

Volunteering Community Reference Group

4 February 2025

Communique #16

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 4 February 2025. In attendance were:

Representing	Name
Hon Minister for Volunteering	Benjamin Crilley, Executive Officer to the Minister
NFP volunteering sector	Craig Spencer, Chair
Volunteer Resource Centres	Elizabeth Acason, Swan VRC Vicki Pollard, Peel VRC
Corporate Representative	Carlie Jones, 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) Michael Wainwright (Metro)
Volunteering WA (VWA)	Tina Williams Dominique Hansen
WALGA	Rebecca Hicks
Department of Communities (Communities)	Karina Chicote, Director of Inclusion Claire Harding, Principal Policy Advisor, Strategy and Partnerships, Inclusion
Guest speakers	Angelo Barbaro, Executive Director, Regulation and Quality, Communities Philippa Wenn, A/Principal Policy Officer, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Implementation Team, Communities

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.

The Chair welcomed new member Phil Scanlan to his first meeting.

Topics discussed included:

1. Presentation on volunteering experience by founder of Activate Mental Health

VCRG member Rahul Seth gave a presentation about his volunteering experience founding Activate Mental Health, a not for profit which enables people to take action to improve their well-being through running and participating in fun, social events. Last year with only a \$5000 budget Activate Mental Health held 399 events which reached 2948 people. Rahul's presentation emphasized the importance of a diverse skill set, networking, teamwork and outcomes measurement when founding a small Volunteer involving Organisation.

2. Update on Volunteering WA State Election Priorities 2025

Tina Williams explained VWA have promoted the VWA State Election Platform to leaders of all the WA political parties. Party leaders have been asked to confirm their support for VWA priorities for publication in a VWA election scorecard format.

3. Removing Barriers to Volunteering: Facilitating Participation for Seniors and Financially Disadvantaged Individuals

VCRG Members discussed the issues surrounding existing volunteer screening processes arising from de-identified case studies from five volunteer involving organisations and their volunteers. These included the requirements of older and financially disadvantaged volunteers. Recommendations to Communities based on the VCRG discussion and findings will be circulated by VWA out of session for endorsement by the VCRG prior to the May meeting.

4. Update on Cross Government work to streamline volunteer checks including new online form for Working with Children Check

Angelo Barbaro Exec. Director Regulation & Quality, Communities, spoke about the current government project to streamline volunteer checks commencing with the Working with Children Check. The new process will leverage work being done on the WA government's digital ID.

The VCRG emphasised the need for consultation and testing by Volunteer involving Organisations in the development of new systems and processes. Angelo also advised that public consultations will be held on the upcoming review of the Working with Children Legislation are planned for mid-2025.

5. National Child Safe Principles and Volunteer Involving Organisations.

Phillipa Wenn, A/Principal Policy Officer, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Implementation Team gave a presentation about the resources available for Volunteering Involving Organisations to implement the principles which have come out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

General resources were shared and can be found at the Safer WA website: [Child safe organisations](#) Resources developed for TrueSport (the SportWest Child Safeguarding Initiative) are suitable for small and medium sized organisations and can be found on the SportWest website: [Child Safeguarding Resources - SportWest](#)

6. General Business

The Chair and Committee thanked Carlie Jones – outgoing VCRG member representing corporate sector for her service and valuable contributions over her term. A new Corporate Sector representative will be appointed shortly.

7. Forthcoming events

The next VCRG Meeting is on 6 May 2025.

Special events 2025	
WA Volunteer of the Year Awards	Thursday 15 May
National Volunteer Week	Monday 19 – Sunday 25 May 2025
National Student Volunteer Week	TBC
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](#).