

# Policy Statement on Volunteering

This *Policy on Volunteering* outlines Australian Red Cross commitment to voluntary service. The policy is consistent with and builds upon the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Volunteering Policy (2011).

Voluntary service is one of the Seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. It is the foundation on which Australian Red Cross was created and continues to be an essential element of how the organisation operates in its second century.

Volunteering is at the heart of community building and contributes to sustainable human development. Our capacity to take effective humanitarian action achieving our mission is directly related to our ability to mobilise, manage and empower volunteers from the diverse Australian society and from the communities and groups that it serves.

Australian Red Cross operates across a range of diverse and complex contexts - changes in social, demographic, economic, environmental and technology as well as increased professionalism of service are altering the shape and functioning of communities and the ways in which people volunteer.



Australian Red Cross also seeks to ensure that voluntary service is a part of everything we do. We therefore, recognise the need for and commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in our approach to volunteering and will develop new models in response.

***Australian Red Cross takes a broad view of volunteering. This policy encourages the engagement of both formal and non-formal volunteers in all of our work. It opens the door to Red Cross members and supporters, community development workers, and all community members to engage in our activities. We welcome people who seek to participate in humanitarian activities in helping to achieve our mission. We make the following undertakings in respect to volunteering:***

**To contribute to stronger, more interconnected communities**

Volunteering promotes a sense of belonging and social wellbeing, connects people to the causes they care deeply about and contributes to social inclusion outcomes for individuals, communities and society.

Through volunteering, Australian Red Cross works with communities and community partners to strengthen the response to community challenges. The feeling of connection that clients have through interacting with volunteers, the trust that they establish, and the new social connections they might make are vital elements. These intangible benefits often are the expression of humanity at the core of a strong community.

We acknowledge both the importance and the impact of volunteering. We recognise its role in advocacy of volunteering and in creating a sustainable future for volunteering in Australia and internationally.

**To empower and support volunteers**

Recognising that volunteers are motivated by diverse factors, Australian Red Cross is committed to engaging volunteers in meaningful activities suited to their skills and interests.

We will provide our volunteers with the necessary support and recognition to enable them to perform their roles effectively. Volunteers will be invited and encouraged to participate in decision-making, governance, voicing their perspectives, advocating, and improving the work in which they are involved.

We value diversity and commit to engaging and supporting a diverse volunteer base which is more representative of our community.

**To build a supportive organisational environment**

Australian Red Cross acknowledges that to drive and sustain a culture of volunteering requires a deep commitment from leadership at all levels. Effective volunteer engagement provides the organisation with the skills, talents, and perspectives that are essential to remaining relevant and sustainable and extends our capacity to accomplish our mission.

We are committed to allocating infrastructure and resourcing to support volunteers and voluntary service including well functioning technology; communications and management systems; and quality human resource practices.

