

Highlights of 2020-21 Federal Budget Measures October 2020

The Treasurer referred to volunteer firefighters and their efforts during the Summer bushfires in his opening remarks, in the context of thanking our frontline healthcare workers. The Treasurer highlighted the “courage, commitment and compassion reflect the very best of Australia” and that “these qualities are the invisible strength of Australia.”

No new funding is allocated to volunteering in the Federal Budget.

Volunteer Grants

- Continuation of \$10 million p.a. for Volunteer Grants in 2020-21, which has also been projected in the forward estimates at \$10 million p.a. to 2023-24.
- Estimated actual spend in 2019-20 is \$12.390 million (over the \$10 million allocated budget) reflecting the additional spend on the Supplementary Volunteer Grants round.

Volunteer Management Activity

- Ongoing indexed allocation of funds to the Volunteer Management Activity - \$6.301 million for 2021-22, \$6.358 million for 2022-23 and \$6.440 million for 2023-34.
- Estimated actual spend in 2019-20 is \$5.539 million, below the budget of \$6.075 million.

Other highlights relevant to volunteering

- \$44 million per annum allocated to top up the base funding for grant programs impacted by the cessation of the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account (in lieu of Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation).
 - Additional funding for aged care, including \$10.3million for an Aged Care Workforce Council.
 - Commonwealth Home Support Program funding extended for two further years.
 - Investment of \$485 million towards mental health initiatives over the course of the Budget Estimates - a combination of some measures which have been previously announced and some significant new funding. This includes:
 - o \$45.7 million over four years from 2020-21 to expand the Individual Placement and Support program under the Youth Employment Strategy to assist vulnerable young people with mental illness to participate in the workforce.
 - o \$6.9 million over two years from 2020-21 to support digital mental health services including the Australian Government’s mental health gateway Head to Health (which includes volunteering as beneficial activity).
 - o \$2.1 million in 2020-21 for the Prevention Hub led by the Black Dog Institute and Everymind to continue to advance research that targets people at heightened risk of mental ill-health and suicide.
 - \$2.4 million to the Football Federation Australia to support the delivery of the 2023 Women’s World Cup (which the media release cites will be the nation’s biggest sporting event since the 2000 Olympics).
 - \$4.7 million to the Australian Sports Foundation to increase the fundraising capacity of community sports clubs.
 - \$7.9 million to tracking social cohesion, which includes a partnership with the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute.
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The Budget also flags some important ongoing processes that should reflect the vital role of volunteers:

- The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements
- The National Preventative Mental Health Strategy and the Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health

About Volunteering Australia

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. The seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies work to advance and promote volunteering in their respective jurisdictions and are Foundation Members of Volunteering Australia.

Volunteering Australia's vision is to promote strong, connected communities through volunteering. Our mission is to lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia.
