

2012



The Economic Value of Volunteering in Victoria

December 2012

A Report Commissioned by

The Department of Planning and Community Development
Victorian Government

Duncan Ironmonger

Households Research Unit, Department of Economics,
The University of Melbourne

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Key results	4
The value of different types of volunteering	4
How were the figures calculated?	5
Volunteering	6
What is volunteering?	6
Why put a dollar value on volunteering?	6
Various methods of calculating the dollar value of volunteering	7
Volunteering in Victoria	10
Total hours of volunteering in Victoria	10
Total value of volunteering in Victoria	14
Other Volunteer Inputs	17
Volunteering in Victoria through Organisations	21
Value of volunteering through organisations worth \$1.6 billion in 1992 and \$4.9 billion in 2006	21
Cost estimates of replacing volunteers in service delivery environments	24
Census data on volunteering in Victoria in 2011	26
The Future of Volunteering In Victoria	36
Are we all volunteers?	36
The future of Victorian volunteering	36
Acknowledgements	42
Methodology	43
Glossary	44
References	46
Appendix	48
What exactly is "Volunteering"?	48

Executive Summary

Key results

Volunteers provided a volume of work equivalent to 260,500 jobs in 1992 rising to 359,100 in 2006. This is equivalent to an additional 13.4 per cent of the paid number of people employed in Victoria 1992 and 14.2 per cent in 2006.

This is 58 per cent more than the total employed in the health care and social assistance industry in Victoria of 164,500 in 1992 and 31 per cent more than the 273,200 in 2006. The health and social assistance industry comprises around 10 per cent of total paid employment in Victoria.

By adding the value of organised, unorganised and travel together, volunteering was worth about \$7.1 billion to the Victorian economy in 1992, growing to \$16.4 billion in 2006.

The surveys indicate a 16 per cent rise in the average total hours per adult of volunteering in Victoria over the 15 years 1992 to 2006. In dollar terms in the 15 years 1992 to 2006 Victorian adults, on average, increased their donation of volunteering time and associated costs by 95 per cent from \$2,133 to \$4,152 per annum.

In macro-economic terms the total volume of volunteering time in Victoria increased by 38 per cent in the 15 years 1992 to 2006.

The value of different types of volunteering

In their work on measuring and valuing volunteering, Dr Ironmonger and the Households Research Unit have distinguished between 'organised' and 'unorganised' volunteering.

Organised volunteering (Formal volunteering)

Organised volunteering is defined as unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is indirect as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

In 2006, excluding the cost of volunteer travel, organised voluntary work in Victoria was worth \$4.9 billion. However, the time use surveys show

that organised volunteering is less than 40 per cent of total volunteering time. The average hours per adult of volunteering through organisations shows a rise of 50 per cent over the 15 years.

Women in Victoria contributed an estimated \$2.64 billion dollars of time and other inputs to volunteer organisations in 2006. In comparison, Victorian men's donation was 15 per cent less, about \$2.25 billion. There is a higher volunteering rate of women – 36 per cent compared to 30 per cent for men – but on average men volunteers give more organised volunteering time per year than women, 142 hours compared with 134 hours.

Regional Victorians contributed approximately \$2,012 million dollars to their communities in terms of organised volunteering. Volunteering through organisations of those living in Melbourne was estimated at \$2,884 million.

Unorganised volunteering (Informal volunteering)

Unorganised volunteering is defined as the informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is direct as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

Excluding the cost of volunteer travel, unorganised volunteering was estimated at \$4.0 billion in 1992 and \$9.0 billion in 2006. This represents 55 per cent of the total value of volunteering in Victoria in the later year. The remaining 20 to 15 per cent contribution by volunteers was through their travel – \$1.4 billion in 1992 and \$2.5 billion in 2006.

The average hours per adult of unorganised volunteering shows a rise of 12 per cent from 1992 to 2006. There appears to have been a large rise in the average amount of unorganised/informal volunteering in support of children and only a small rise in informal support for adults.

It should be noted that in spite of these increases in both types of volunteering from 1992 to 2006, there was a decline between 1997 and 2006 in adult support.

How were the figures calculated?

The starting points for the estimates are the surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on Time Use in 1992, 1997 and 2006 and on Voluntary Work in 1995, 2000 and 2006¹. Data on volunteering from the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing also have been incorporated in this report.

The ABS Time Use Surveys collect detailed diaries covering all uses of time over two consecutive days. These surveys give daily participation rates and times spent in all types of activities. Hence the participation and times spent on both types of volunteering, organised and unorganised, are obtained in the Time Use Surveys.

On the other hand, the ABS Voluntary Work Surveys cover only volunteering through organisations. These are not obtained through detailed diaries but from asking respondents to recall their participation in this type of volunteering over the last twelve months. They also ask the amount of time spent on organised volunteering over this period.

Despite the different methodologies of the surveys, together they provide the basis for making estimates of the average time spent in volunteer activities by the adult population of Victoria.

The estimates prepared for this report of the value of volunteer time are based on the gross opportunity cost wage rates for volunteer and community work published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their report on *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS 2000). These were **\$14.34 per hour in 1992** and **\$17.47 per hour in 1997**.

In the absence of any further ABS published estimates of volunteer wage rates, the changes in the published ABS national accounts estimates for “average compensation per employee” between 1992 and 2006 were used to make estimates for volunteer wage rates for the intervening year 1995 and the subsequent years 2000 and 2006.

The series of wage rates per hour are:

1992	1995	1997	2000	2006
\$14.34	\$16.00	\$17.47	\$19.26	\$24.09

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Victoria.

¹ Although the ABS collected a survey of organised voluntary work in 2010, unlike the earlier surveys, the 2010 survey did not collect information on the hours of organised voluntary work. Since data on hours are necessary for calculation of the economic value of volunteering, the 2010 ABS voluntary work survey has not been used in this report.

Volunteering

What is volunteering?

Many volunteers may be unaware that their activities are considered to be volunteering. For instance, a family member who provides care to an elderly person or someone who is a member of a sports club committee may not consider themselves “volunteers”. Volunteering itself can mean different things to different people.

In reality there is a wide range of interpretations of what constitutes voluntary work. In 2001 the United Nations (UN) adopted specific criteria to distinguish volunteering from other forms of behaviour that may superficially resemble it. According to the UN, volunteering:

- › is not to be undertaken primarily for financial gain
- › is undertaken of one’s own free will; and
- › brings benefit to a third party as well as to the people who volunteer.

In its work on measuring and valuing volunteering, the Households Research Unit has distinguished between “organised” and “unorganised” volunteering.

Organised volunteering is defined as unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is *indirect* as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

Unorganised volunteering is defined as the informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is *direct* as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people’s children or helping an elderly neighbour.

A more detailed discussion of the definitions of organised (formal) and unorganised (informal) volunteering can be found in Chapter 3 of the

report *Giving Time: The economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002) and is included as an Appendix to this report.

Why put a dollar value on volunteering?

Valuing volunteer time is of enduring interest in volunteering research (Foster, 1997; Gaskin, 1999). Converting the currency of volunteering time into monetary terms can be a useful device for measuring the contribution that volunteers make to society (Knapp, 1990). It is crucial that we as a community acknowledge that volunteer time is a real donation that is as valuable as money. This is especially important when time is the only resource many individuals have to offer. By exploring ways of putting a value on volunteer work we help to make this sort of work more visible.

The calculation of the economic value of volunteering in Victoria is important because it can:

- › emphasise to government and policy makers that voluntary work makes a significant contribution to the Victorian community
- › encourage Victorian people to become volunteers by demonstrating the economic benefits of volunteering; and
- › inform the media and the community about the value of volunteer time to the Victorian economy.

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that the economic contribution of volunteering is great, there are limited reliable figures on the exact monetary value. While we have various official statistics about participation rates, there are no readily available official statistics to show the important contribution volunteering makes to the Victorian economy.

The purpose of this report is to address all of the issues highlighted above.

Various methods of calculating the dollar value of volunteering

Each quarter the national accounts published by the ABS make visible only part of the valuable economic activities of Australia – the productive activities that we pay for through the market economy. Unpaid non-market activities that are about as valuable are omitted from the quarterly national accounts, thus unpaid household and volunteer work are invisible and consequently tend to be ignored from our national objectives and from indicators of our national performance.

To rectify this narrow focus, it is necessary to put a value on the unpaid production through household and volunteer work. Satellite national accounts of household productive activities are being developed to complete the picture of economic activity – to allow us to see the full range of economically productive activity (Ironmonger, 2000; Ironmonger & Soupourmas, 2002).

There are two benefits that flow from most human activities – **output benefits** and **process benefits**. The distinction between these two kinds of benefits is best illustrated by an example. Consider the activity of meal preparation. The positive *output benefits* are the meals themselves, the “transferable” outputs of the meal preparation which accrue to the persons eating the meals. The *process benefits* of meal preparation, which may be positive or negative, are the pleasure or displeasure the chef obtains from the time spent in meal preparation and cooking. These process benefits are non-transferable to another person. With voluntary work the transferable *output benefits* are the services provided to others by the volunteers. The non-transferable *process benefits* are the pleasures obtained by the volunteers from the time spent in volunteering.

Unfortunately, the statistical methods so far devised for valuation have not come up with an objective method of valuing process benefits. The best that can be done is a subjective method of asking individuals to evaluate the pleasure/displeasure obtained from an activity on a scale of, say, one to five, as : (1) Very unpleasant, (2) Unpleasant, (3) Neither pleasant or unpleasant, (4) Pleasant, and (5) Very pleasant.

This scaling process does not lead to a monetary valuation of an activity but does allow comparisons between different activities, so that minding the grandchildren would be mainly pleasant or very pleasant and cleaning the toilet would be unpleasant or very unpleasant.



Several methods have been devised to put a monetary value of the output benefits from the time spent in voluntary work.

1. A method developed in the United Kingdom, called the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA), puts a value on the resources used to support volunteers (management staff costs, training, recruitment, insurance and administration) in relation to the value of volunteer time. This approach quantifies the economic investment that organisations make in their volunteers. As many organisers of volunteers would contend, contrary to popular opinion, volunteers are not free of cost. The VIVA ratio, which states that for every dollar invested in volunteers there is a return of X dollars in the value of the volunteers' work, is calculated by dividing the value of volunteer time by organisational investments. This method is very useful in producing audit data for individual organisations. Gaskin (1999) has found that money spent on volunteers is more than doubled in value and may increase up to eightfold.
2. Undoubtedly, the most satisfactory valuation method involves counting the specific outputs and pricing these outputs at market prices of comparable goods or services produced and sold in the market. For example, the meals provided at home can be counted and valued at market prices for comparable restaurant or take-away meals. The "value added" by the unpaid household labour is then obtained by deducting the costs of the purchased intermediate inputs of food, energy and other materials and the cost of the household capital used in the meal preparation. This method gives a more accurate reflection of the labour productivity of the technology of the household.

3. An alternative method, which is less satisfactory from the point of view of reflecting the productivity or efficiency of household technology, involves valuing the time spent in an unpaid activity at a "comparable" market wage. The wage chosen is either
 - (a) the "opportunity cost" of the time the persons involved in unpaid work could have obtained if they had spent the time in paid work;
 - (b) the "specialist wage" that would be needed to pay a specialist from the market to do the activity (say, a cook to do cooking or a baby-sitter to do baby sitting); or
 - (c) the "generalist wage" that a general housekeeper would be paid to do the unpaid work. The "net" opportunity cost values unpaid work at the after tax wage rate less work-related expenses plus income by way of employer cost of superannuation and fringe benefits.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics used these comparable market wage methods to produce estimates for 1992 and 1997 of the value of unpaid household work and the value of volunteer and community work. In the ABS estimates, volunteer and community work excluded time spent in civic responsibilities, other community participation and in church and religious activities but included the time spent in travel for volunteer and community work.

Using this definition, the ABS published estimates of the value of volunteer and community work in Australia in 1992 and 1997 in their report *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS 2000).

Table 1 shows the ABS estimates for three comparable market wage rates – specialist wage, gross opportunity cost and net opportunity cost – for 1992 and 1997.

Table 1: Value of volunteer and community work, Australia

	1992		1997	
	Wage rate \$/hour	\$billion/year	Wage rate \$/hour	\$billion/year
Specialist wage	12.17	18	13.96	25
Opportunity cost – gross	14.34	21	17.47	31
Opportunity cost – net	10.87	16	13.47	24

The estimates prepared for this report of the value of volunteer time are based on the ABS estimates of the *gross opportunity cost wage rates*.

Although the gross opportunity cost wage is the highest of the three wage rates used by the ABS, the gross wage has been used in this report (and in the reports by the Households Research Unit on volunteering in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia) because, if the services provided by volunteers were provided instead by paid employees, the costs incurred by organisations and households would need to cover gross wages including income taxes and other charges such as contributions to superannuation schemes.

In the absence of any further ABS published estimates of volunteer wage rates, the changes in the published ABS national accounts estimates for “average compensation per employee” between 1992 and 2006 were used to make estimates for volunteer wage rates for the intervening year 1995 and the subsequent years 2000 and 2006.

The series of wage rates per hour are:

1992	1995	1997	2000	2006
\$14.34	\$16.00	\$17.47	\$19.26	\$24.09

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Victoria.

Volunteering in Victoria

Total hours of volunteering in Victoria

The starting point for the estimates prepared for this report were the surveys of Time Use and Voluntary Work conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1992, 1997 and 2006 (Time Use) and 1995, 2000 and 2006 (Voluntary Work). Data on volunteering from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing also have been incorporated in this report.

The ABS Time Use Surveys collect detailed diaries covering all uses of time over two consecutive days. These surveys give daily participation rates and times spent in all types of activities. Hence the participation and times spent on both types of volunteering, organised and unorganised, are obtained in the Time Use Surveys.

On the other hand, the ABS Voluntary Work Surveys cover only volunteering through organisations. These are not obtained through detailed diaries but from asking respondents to recall their participation in this type of volunteering over the last twelve months. They also ask the amount of time spent on organised volunteering over the last year.

Despite the different methodologies of the surveys, together they provide the basis for making estimates of the average time spent in volunteer activities by the adult population of Victoria.

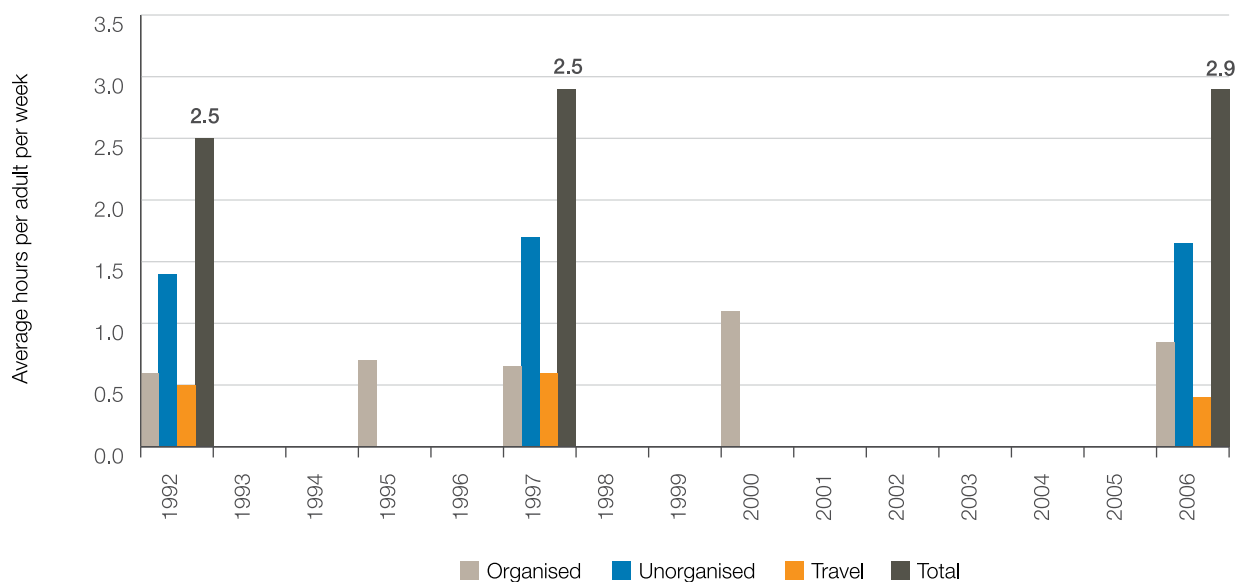


Table 2: Hours of volunteer work, Victoria

Annual hours per adult (Averaged over all adult population aged 18+)								
Volunteering		1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent Change 1992–2006	Annual Per cent Change 1992–2006
Organised		31	37	35	55	46	50%	2.9%
Unorganised		75		88		84	12%	0.8%
	Adult Support	53		66		55	4%	0.3%
	Child Support	22		22		29	30%	1.9%
Travel		26		30		23	-12%	- 0.9%
TOTAL		132		153		153	16%	1.1%

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and Voluntary Work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

Chart 1: Average Hours of Volunteer Work, Victoria, 1992–2006
Hours per adult per week



Source: Data from Table 2 of this report converted from average hours per year to average hours per week.

The surveys indicate a 16 per cent rise in the average total hours per adult of volunteering in Victoria over the 15 years 1992 to 2006. It is noteworthy that after rising by 19 hours from an average of 132 hours per year in 1992 to 153 hours in 1997, the total average hours of volunteer work in Victoria was again 153 in 2006.

Volunteering through organisations shows a rise of 50 per cent per adult over the 15 year period and unorganised volunteering a much lower rise of 12 per cent. Within the unorganised there

appears to have been a large rise in the average amount of informal volunteering in support of children and only a small rise in informal support for adults. Total travel time in support of volunteering, both organised and unorganised, appears to have declined over the 15 years.

In macro-economic terms the total volume of volunteering time in Victoria increased by 38 per cent in the fourteen-year period from 1992 to 2006. These estimates are shown in Table 3.

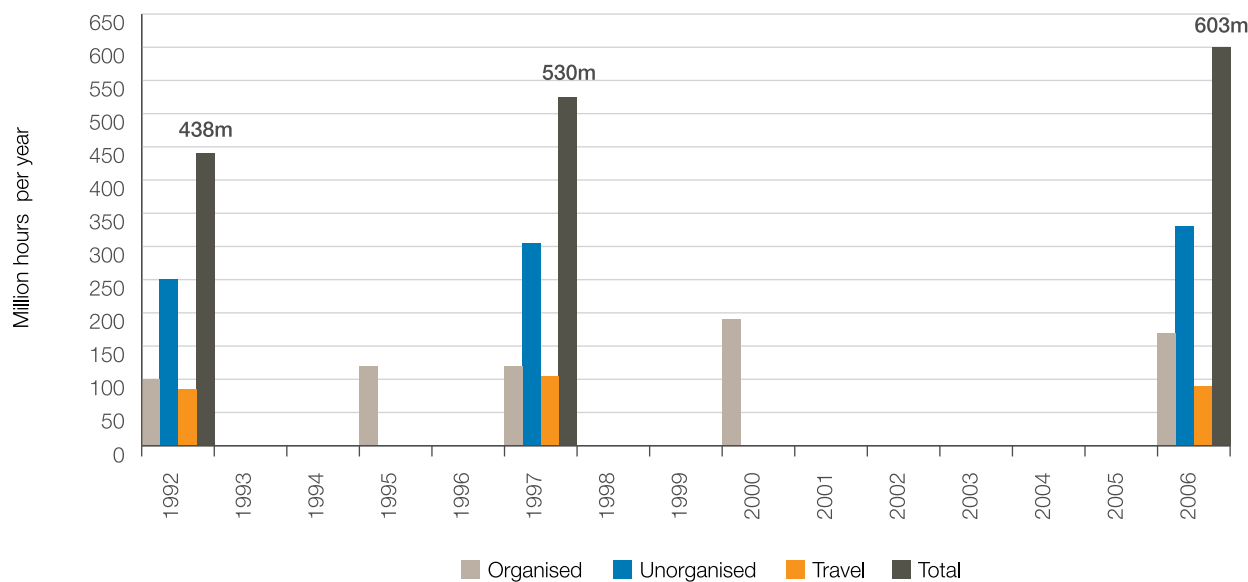
Table 3: Volume of volunteer work, Victoria

Million hours per year								
Volunteering		1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent Change 1992–2006	Annual Per cent Change 1992–2006
Organised		101.3	125.1	121.6	196.9	180.2	78%	4.2%
Unorganised		248.9		303.3		331.2	33%	2.1%
	Adult Support	174.3		227.5		216.0	24%	1.5%
	Child Support	74.6		75.8		115.2	54%	3.1%
Travel		87.3		105.3		91.9	5%	10.4%
TOTAL		437.6		530.3		603.4	38%	2.3%

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and Voluntary Work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

Table 4 (on next page) presents estimates of the number of equivalent jobs that volunteers do in Victoria using 1,680 hours per year (equivalent to an average job requiring 35 hours per week for 48 weeks).

Chart 2: Total Hours of Volunteer Work, Victoria, 1992–2006
Million hours per year



Source: Data from Table 3 of this report.

Table 4: Volume of volunteer work, Victoria

Equivalent jobs (000)							
Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent Change 1992–2006	Annual Per cent Change 1992–2006
Organised	60.3	74.5	72.4	117.2	107.3	78%	4.2%
Unorganised	148.2		180.6		197.1	33%	2.1%
Travel	52.0		62.7		54.7	5%	0.4%
TOTAL	260.5		315.6		359.1	38%	2.3%
Additional per cent of total employed persons (15+)	13.4%		15.0%		14.2%		

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and Voluntary Work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

Volunteers provided a volume of work equivalent to 260,500 jobs in 1992 rising to 359,100 in 2006. This is equivalent to an additional 13.4 per cent of the paid number employed in Victoria in 1992 and 14.2 per cent in 2006. It is noteworthy that this additional per cent employed volume peaked in 1997 (15.0%).

Total value of volunteering in Victoria

The estimates prepared for this report are based on a gross opportunity cost wage rates of \$14.34 per hour in 1992 and \$17.47 per hour used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their 1997 report on unpaid work.

Although the gross opportunity cost wage is the highest of the three wage rates used by the ABS, the gross wage has been used in this report (and in the reports by the Households Research Unit on volunteering in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia) because, if the services provided by volunteers were provided instead by paid employees, the costs incurred by organisations and households would need to cover gross wages including income taxes and other charges such as contributions to superannuation schemes.

Based on the increases in the ABS national accounts estimate for “average compensation per employee” the wage rates for 1995, 2000 and 2006 are estimated at \$16.00, \$19.26 and \$24.09 per hour respectively.

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Victoria. The wage rate estimates are Australia-wide averages to maintain comparability with the previous estimates by the Households Research Unit of the value of volunteering in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.



Table 5: Total value of volunteering, Victoria

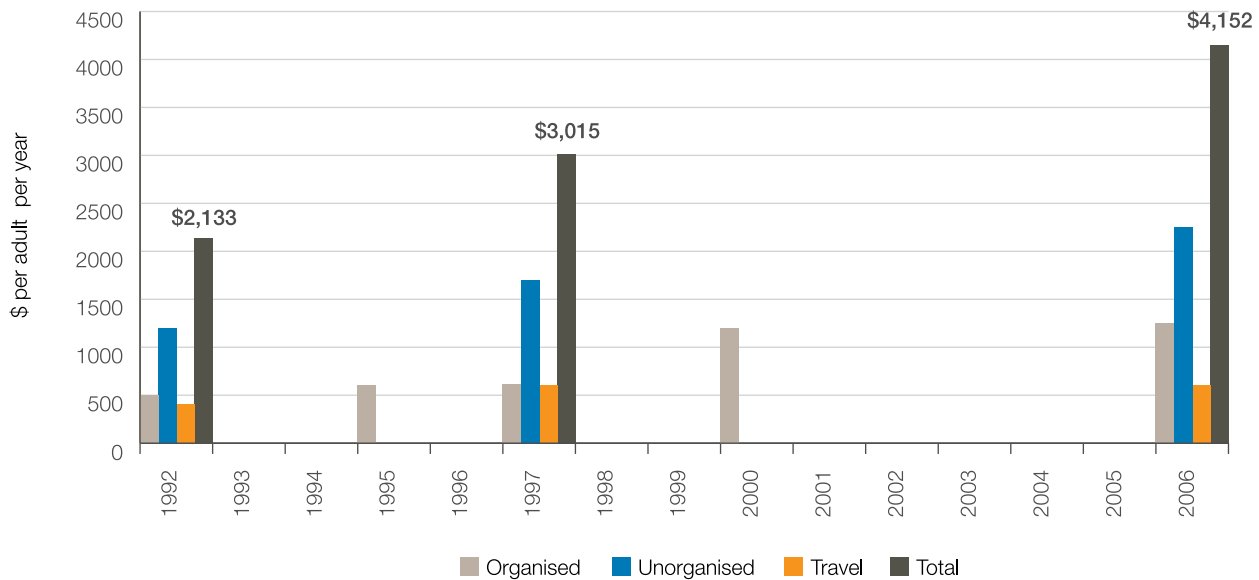
\$ million							
Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent Change 1992–2006	Annual Per cent Change 1992–2006
A. Volunteer Time Inputs							
Organised	1,453	2,002	2,124	3,792	4,342	199%	8.1%
Unorganised	3,569		5,299		7,978	124%	5.9%
Adult Support	2,499		3,974		5,203	108%	5.4%
Child Support	1,070		1,325		2,775	159%	7.0%
Travel	1,253		1,840		2,214	77%	4.2%
TOTAL VALUE OF TIME	6,275		9,263		14,535	132%	6.2%
B. Other Volunteer Inputs (vehicle, telephone, etc)							
Organised	185	254	270	482	552	199%	8.1%
Unorganised	453		673		1,013	124%	5.9%
Travel	159		234		281	77%	4.2%
Total	797		1,177		1,846	132%	6.2%
C. Total Volunteer Inputs							
Organised	1,637	2,256	2,364	4,274	4,894	199%	78.1%
Unorganised	4,023		5,972		8,992	124%	5.9%
Travel	1,412		2,074		2,495	77%	4.2%
TOTAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING	7,072		10,440		16,381	132%	6.2%

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and Voluntary Work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

Table 5 shows that by adding the value of organised, unorganised and travel together, volunteering was worth about \$7.1 billion to the Victorian economy in 1992, growing to \$16.4 billion in 2006.

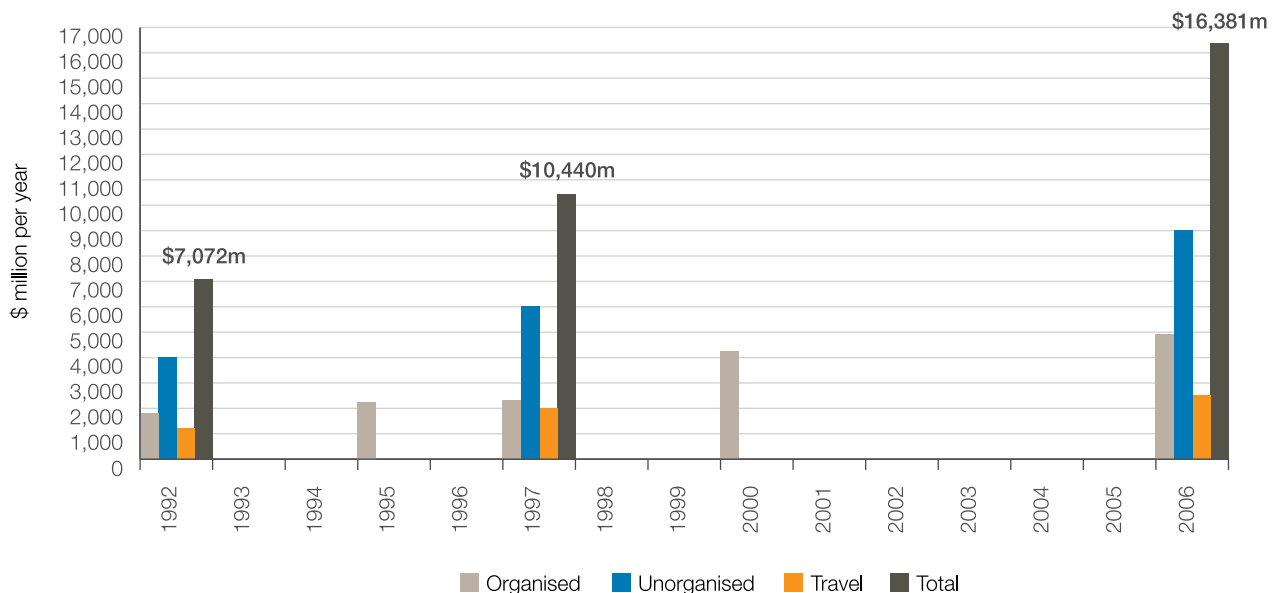
These estimates show that in dollar terms in the 14 years from 1992 to 2006 Victorian adults, on average, increased their donation of volunteering time and associated costs by almost 95 per cent from \$2,133 to \$4,152 per annum.

Chart 3: Average Value of Volunteer Work, Victoria, 1992–2006
\$ per adult per year



Source: Data from Table 5 of this report converted to \$ per adult.

Chart 4: Total Value of Volunteer Work, Victoria, 1992–2006
\$ million per year



Source: Data from Table 5 of this report.

And as the Victorian adult population grew by 19 per cent in this period, the total value of organised and unorganised volunteering time, including travel time, increased by 132 per cent from \$7.1 billion in 1992 to \$16.4 billion in 2006.

Other Volunteer Inputs

Volunteers often also contribute the use of their capital equipment, particularly the use of their own vehicles, to volunteering activities. Recent estimates of these inputs prepared for all sectors of the household economy show these inputs involve a 12.7 per cent additional cost to the value of labour time in volunteering. An additional 4.05 per cent for capital equipment, mainly vehicles, and 8.65 per cent for other inputs, mainly vehicle running costs (Ironmonger and Soupourmas, 1999).

Including the use of capital equipment and the donation of the running costs, fuel and other materials, the gross value of volunteering activity in Victoria is estimated to be \$7.1 billion in 1992 and \$16.4 billion in 2006. Table 5 shows full details of these values for all years 1992, 1997 and 2006 and the value of organised volunteering for the intervening years 1995 and 2000.

In 2006, organised voluntary work in Victoria was worth \$6.3 billion. However, the time use surveys show that organised volunteering is less than 40 per cent of all volunteering.

Excluding the cost of volunteer travel, unorganised volunteering was estimated at \$4.0 billion in 1992 and \$9.0 billion in 2006. This represents 55 per cent of the total value of volunteering in Victoria in the later year. The remaining 15 to 20 per cent contribution by volunteers was through their travel, \$1.4 billion in 1992 and \$2.5 billion in 2006.

These figures can be compared with supplementary data in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Supplementary data, Victoria

Supplementary Data	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent Change 1992–2006	Annual Per cent Change 1992–2006
Wage Rate (\$/hour)	14.34	16.00	17.47	19.26	24.09	68%	3.8%
Adult Population 18+ ('000)	3,316	3,386	3,483	3,593	3,945	19%	1.2%
Employed Persons 15+ ('000) (June)	1,947	2,069	2,105	2,239	2,521	30%	1.9%
Gross State Product (\$ million)	104,973	122,231	136,482	165,144	237,321	126%	6.0%
Compensation of Employees (\$ million)	51,261	58,151	66,211	78,653	116,818	128%	6.1%

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Population, National Accounts and Employment estimates.

The 1992 estimate of the value of volunteering of \$7.1 billion can be compared with Victoria's Gross State Product (GSP) in 1992 of \$105.0 billion, as shown in Table 6. Similarly, the \$16.4 billion value of volunteering to the 2006 economy can be compared with the 2006 GSP figure for Victoria of \$237.3 billion.

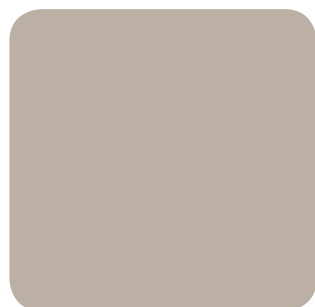
Table 7 shows that Victorian volunteers donated to other households, both directly or through volunteer organisations and groups, an additional 6.7 per cent of GSP in 1992 and 6.9 per cent of GSP in 2006. These donations of time and services are additional to actual donations of money made directly to other households or through charitable organisations

Total value of volunteer time was equivalent to an additional 12.2 per cent of the compensation² paid to Victorian employees in 1992 and 12.4 per cent in 2006. Table 7 shows these estimates in comparison with earlier estimates for Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

Although the latest Victorian estimates for 2006 are higher in current dollars than in earlier years, they have declined as proportions of either Gross State Product or of Compensation of Employees from the higher proportions observed in 1997.

Thus, on these macro-economic measures, volunteering was relatively more important in the Victorian economy in 1997 than in either 1992 or 2006. The Victorian ratios of the value of volunteering to Gross State Product are lower than in Queensland and South Australia but are higher than in Western Australia. However Victoria has the lowest ratios of the value of volunteering time to employee compensation than all the other three States.

In comparison with the Australian ratios, Victoria was lower on both counts in 1992 and 1997 but higher in 2006.



² See Glossary for definition of "compensation of employees".

Table 7: Volunteering in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia and Australia

State	1992	1997	2006
Value of Volunteering (\$ billion)			
Victoria (a)	7.1	10.4	16.4
Queensland (b)	5.3	8.1	13.4
Western Australia (c)	2.7	4.3	6.6
South Australia (d)	2.4	3.9	4.9
Australia	29.4	46.0	65.8
Value of Volunteering per Adult (\$ per year)			
Victoria (a)	2,133	3,015	4,152
Queensland (b)	2,396	3,234	4,352
Western Australia (c)	2,244	3,255	4,252
South Australia (d)	2,152	3,450	4,020
Australia	2,280	3,327	4,166
Gross State Product (\$ billion)			
Victoria (a)	105.0	136.5	237.3
Queensland (b)	64.7	88.9	178.6
Western Australia (c)	41.5	57.3	118.2
South Australia (d)	30.3	37.9	64.0
Australia GDP	442.9	555.8	994.3
Compensation of Employees (\$ billion)			
Victoria (a)	51.3	66.2	116.8
Queensland (b)	30.5	44.1	83.2
Western Australia (c)	18.2	24.5	45.6
South Australia (d)	14.8	18.4	31.9
Australia	209.2	276.6	481.8
Value of Volunteering as Per Cent of Gross State Product			
Victoria (a)	6.7	7.6	6.9
Queensland (b)	8.3	9.2	7.5
Western Australia (c)	6.5	7.5	5.6
South Australia (d)	7.8	10.2	7.7
Australia	7.0	8.3	6.6
Value of Volunteering Time as Per Cent of Compensation of Employees			
Victoria (a)	12.2	14.0	12.4
Queensland (b)	15.4	16.3	14.3
Western Australia (c)	13.1	15.5	12.9
South Australia (d)	14.1	18.7	13.6
Australia	12.5	14.8	12.1

Sources: (a) This report (Ironmonger, 2012). (b) Ironmonger (2008). (c) Ironmonger (2009) (d) Ironmonger (2011).



Volunteering in Victoria through Organisations

Value of volunteering through organisations worth \$1.6 billion in 1992 and \$4.9 billion in 2006

Volunteering through organisations was worth \$1.6 billion to Victoria in 1992 and \$2.3 billion in 1995. This value increased by 89 per cent to \$4.3 billion in the five years from 1995 to 2000 between Voluntary Work Surveys and a further 14 per cent in the next six years. In 2006, this indirect or formal volunteering through organisations was worth about \$4.9 billion to the Victorian economy.

Table 8 shows more detailed estimates of the structure of the total value of volunteering through organisations in Victoria in 2006.

To be consistent with the estimates throughout this report the estimates in this section have used the definition of volunteering that is consistent with the definition used in the 1995 and 2000 ABS Voluntary work Surveys. The volunteer rates are thus slightly higher than the rates published in the main tables of the ABS 2006 survey. The estimates have also been adjusted to the latest ABS estimate of the resident population (ERP) for Victoria at 30 June 2006.

In Victoria, the organised/formal volunteer rate was 33.3 per cent in 2006. That is, of all adults aged 18+ in the state, 33.3 per cent of them identified themselves as volunteers for at least one organisation or group over the previous 12 months. That amounted to 1,313,700 volunteers.

Women in Victoria contributed an estimated \$2.64 billion dollars of time and other inputs to volunteer organisations in 2006. In comparison, Victorian men's donation was worth a lesser amount, \$2.25 billion.

On average, a volunteer man gave more volunteering time per year than a woman volunteer, 142 hours compared with 134 hours. However, the greater number of women (51 per cent of the adult population) and the higher organised volunteering rate of women – 36 per cent compared to 30 per cent for men – more than offset the higher volunteering hours per volunteer for men.

The total of 180.2 million hours of organised volunteering in Victoria in 2006 is an average of 137 hours for each of the 1,313,700 volunteers. Over the whole adult population of 3,945,100, including those who did not volunteer, this is only 46 hours per person. Table 8 shows average hours for the whole adult population not per volunteer.

The highest organised volunteering rate was for those aged 35–44 years – 44.8 per cent (50% for women and 40% for men). The lowest rate was for the oldest age group of 65 years or more – 26.5 per cent (25% for women and 28% for men).

Out of the \$4.9 billion given through organised volunteering in Victoria in 2006, the 35–44 years age group gave \$1,282 million at an average value of \$1,669 per adult. This is 34 per cent higher than the average value over all ages of \$1,241. For women in this age group the average value was \$1,809 – 38 per cent higher than women's average of \$1,310. For men aged 35–44 years the average value of organised volunteering in 2006 was \$1,526 over 30 per cent higher than the average for all men of \$1,168.

Table 8: Value of volunteering through organisations by age and gender, Victoria 2006

Victorian Population Group	Population (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Total Volunteer Hours million	Annual Value of Volunteering	
					Value Per Adult (a) \$	Total Value \$ million
All Adults 18+	3,945.1	33.3	1,314.3	180.3	1,241	4,896
Gender						
Women	2,016.3	36.2	729.9	97.3	1,310	2,640
Men	1,928.8	30.3	584.4	83.0	1,168	2,254
Age group (years)						
Women						
18–24	250.5	31.8	79.7	10.6	1,151	288
25–34	366.3	36.2	132.4	17.7	1,308	479
35–44	388.5	50.0	194.3	25.9	1,809	703
45–54	353.3	38.3	135.4	18.0	1,386	490
55–64	278.0	33.4	92.8	12.4	1,207	336
65+	379.7	25.1	95.3	12.7	908	345
Men						
18–24	259.2	31.3	81.2	11.5	1,207	313
25–34	366.0	21.1	77.4	11.0	815	298
35–44	379.9	39.6	150.3	21.4	1,526	580
45–54	345.9	34.9	120.9	17.2	1,347	466
55–64	271.9	24.9	67.6	9.6	959	261
65+	305.8	28.5	87.1	12.4	1,099	336
Adults						
18–24	509.7	31.6	160.9	22.1	1,180	601
25–34	732.3	28.7	209.8	28.6	1,062	777
35–44	768.4	44.8	344.6	47.2	1,669	1,282
45–54	699.2	36.6	256.3	35.2	1,367	956
55–64	549.9	29.2	160.4	22.0	1,084	596
65+	685.5	26.5	182.5	25.1	993	681

(a) Average value per person in population group. Estimates are based on average per volunteer of \$3,617 for women and \$3,856 for men; \$3,724 for all adults 18+.

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on analysis of the ABS Voluntary Work Survey 2006. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Victoria at 30 June 2006.

Table 9 shows estimates of the organised volunteering rates, volunteers and value of organised volunteering for gender and location in Victoria from the ABS Voluntary Work Survey.

Regional Victorians contributed approximately \$2,012 million dollars to their communities in terms of organised volunteering. Those living in Melbourne contributed an estimated \$2,884 million through organised volunteering.

The volunteer rate across regional Victoria (42 per cent) was higher than in Melbourne

(30 per cent) and on average Victorian regional volunteers gave 36 per cent more hours per year, 166 compared with 122. Thus Melbourne adults on average gave \$1,001 per year of organised volunteering, 47 per cent less than the average for adults outside Melbourne, \$1,890.

Per adult in each population group, women outside Melbourne gave \$2,044 worth of volunteering, the highest annual value of organised volunteering; an average 97 per cent higher than women in Melbourne and 18 per cent higher than men outside Melbourne.

Table 9: Value of volunteering through organisations by location and gender, Victoria, 2006

Victorian Population Group	Population (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Total Volunteer Hours million	Annual Value of Volunteering	
					Value Per Adult \$	Total Value \$ million
All Adults 18+	3,945.1	33.3	1,314.3	180.3	1,241	4,896
Gender						
Women	2,016.3	36.2	729.9	97.3	1,310	2,640
Men	1,928.8	30.3	584.4	83.0	1,168	2,254
Location						
Melbourne	2,880.1	30.2	868.8	106.2	1,001	2,884
Women	1,473.5	32.8	483.3	56.4	1,039	1,532
Men	1,406.6	27.4	385.5	49.8	961	1,352
Outside Melbourne	1,065.0	41.9	445.5	74.1	1,890	2,012
Women	542.8	45.4	246.6	40.9	2,044	1,109
Men	522.2	38.1	198.9	33.2	1,728	902

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Voluntary Work, Australia (2007) Cat No 4441.0 and estimates of the Households Research Unit. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Victoria at 30 June 2006.

Cost estimates of replacing volunteers in service delivery environments

Volunteers provide their time and other inputs through a variety of organisations. Some such as the State Emergency Services and government schools are essentially publicly oriented and funded and others such as religious organisations and sporting clubs are essentially privately oriented and funded.

The voluntary work surveys do not categorise the organisations for which volunteers work as either private or public but do give an indication of the type of organisation. These service providing organisations can be divided approximately into those that are likely to have a large element of public funding and those that are not, as shown in Table 10. It has been noted in footnote (a) that many volunteers undertake more than one volunteering job.

Table 10: Value of volunteering through organisations by type of organisation, Victoria, 2006

Type of Organisation	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Volunteer Hours million	Annual Value of Volunteering \$ million
Publicly oriented				
Education/Training	9.8	386.6	39.5	1,037
Community/Welfare	6.6	260.4	26.6	723
Health	2.6	102.6	10.5	285
Parenting/children/youth	1.8	71.0	7.3	197
Emergency services	1.0	39.5	4.0	110
Environment/animal welfare	0.9	35.5	3.6	99
Total publicly oriented	22.7	895.5	91.6	2,486
Privately oriented				
Sport/physical recreation	11.7	461.6	47.2	1,281
Religious	5.9	232.8	23.8	646
Other recreation/interest	1.4	55.2	5.6	153
Arts/heritage	1.4	55.2	5.6	153
Other	1.6	63.1	6.5	175
Total privately oriented	22.0	867.9	88.8	2,409
Total	44.7 a	1,763.4 a		
Total	33.3 b	1,314.3 b	180.3	4,895

(a) Counting multiple volunteering for more than one type of organisation. (b) Counting each volunteer once only.

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based analysis of the ABS Voluntary Work Survey 2006. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Victoria at 30 June 2006.

Just over half (51 per cent) of the annual value of volunteering through organisations in Victoria in 2006 was contributed to those with a public orientation. Education and training organisations benefited to the tune of \$1,037 million, community and welfare organisations by \$723 million and health by another \$285 million. The cost of replacing volunteering across all the publicly oriented service providers in 2006 is estimated at \$2.49 billion.

The largest type of volunteer organisation providing privately oriented services was sports and physical recreation organisations with \$1,281 million worth of volunteering in 2006. About \$646 million dollars of volunteering was undertaken for religious groups.



Census data on volunteering in Victoria in 2011

In 2006 and 2011, for the first time, the Australian Census of Population and Housing included questions on voluntary work. They were applicable to people aged 15 years and over, and were separate from the paid labour force questions.

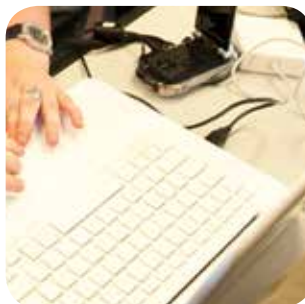
These Census questions covered the participation in both unorganised and organised volunteering. Participation in unorganised volunteering which included adult support and child support was obtained through questions relating to “caring for a person who has a disability, long-term illness or problems related to old age” (Question 49) and “caring for a child/children (including own child or other child)” (Question 50). The question on “voluntary work through/or for an organisation or group” (Question 51) investigated the level of participation in organised volunteering.

In contrast to the Australian Census of Population and Housing in 2006 and 2011, the Voluntary Work Surveys in 1995, 2000 and 2006 (which have been the source of much of the preceding material in this report) were interview surveys designed to present an account only of volunteers and their volunteering activities through organisations.

Differences in organised volunteering rates between the Voluntary Work Survey and the Census may be due to the fact that the Census data were collected via a single question on a self completion Census form rather than by a series of questions asked by trained interviewers. Self reporting is considered to be less reliable than an interviewer asking questions about voluntary work, often with examples, as many respondents may not consider or classify their unpaid work as volunteering. Thus, self-reporting tends to give much lower volunteering rates than interview surveys.

Despite this limitation, Census data are highly valuable in examining relative volunteering rates at the small area level, such as statistical divisions and local government areas within states. The small sample sizes of most surveys, such as the Voluntary Work Survey, do not provide estimates for such regional and local areas.

The Census also has provided data on informal (unorganised) volunteering for these small area levels not available from any other source.



The Census questions on informal (unorganised) volunteering

Participation in unorganised voluntary work such as adult support and child support was examined through Questions 49 and 50 in the 2006 and 2011 Census.

Question 49 asked “*In the last two weeks did the person spend time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to family members or others because of a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age?*”

Question 50 asked “*In the last two weeks did the person spend time looking after a child (aged less than 15 years old) without pay?*”

In contrast to the Census Question 51 which was related to voluntary work through an organisation (and asked respondents about their organised volunteering over the last **twelve month** period), the Census Questions 49 and 50, relating to unorganised volunteering, elicited information about adult and child support over the last **two weeks**.

As a result the numbers of unorganised volunteers and participation rates are lower than that which would be obtained from questions which asked about volunteering for a longer period such as a month or a year.

For the Census question 49 on unorganised adult support volunteering the wording was:

In the last two weeks did the person spend time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to family members or others because of a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age?

- ▶ *Recipients of Carer Allowance or Carer Recipient should state that they provided unpaid care*
- ▶ *Ad hoc help or assistance such as shopping, should only be included if the person needed this support or assistance because of his/her condition*
- ▶ *Do not include work done through a voluntary organization or group*

*Response: No did not provide unpaid care, help or assistance
Yes, did provide unpaid care, help or assistance*

For the Census question 50 on unorganised child support volunteering the wording was:

In the last two weeks did the person spend time looking after a child without pay?

- ▶ *Only include children less than 15 years of age*
- ▶ *Mark all applicable responses*

*Response: No
Yes, looked after my own child
Yes, looked after a child other than my own*

The response rates in Victoria in 2011 for both these Census questions were around the 92 per cent mark. For question 49 (adult support volunteering) the non-response rate was 8.2 per cent and for question 50 (child support volunteering) the non-response rate was 7.0 per cent.

Table 11 shows the Victorian data on unorganised volunteering from the 2011 Census. The child support data are for the population who reported they were looking after “a child other than my own” and “looking after my own child and a child other than my own”. They exclude those who only “looked after my own child”.

For child support the volunteer rate over the last two weeks was 29.5 per cent and for adult support 12.3 per cent. Rates were significantly higher for women than for men. Child support rates were significantly higher for the 35–64 years age group (39.8%) and lower for those older than 64 years (13.2%). Adult support rates were significantly lower for the 15–34 years age group (6.6%).

In comparison with child support volunteer rates across Australia, the Victorian rate of 29.5 per cent was not only below the Australian average (30.2%) but below the averages for every other State or Territory. The Northern Territory (35.1%), Queensland (31.0%) and Western Australia (30.9%) had the highest rates.

For adult support volunteer rates from the Census, the Victorian rate of 12.3 per cent was above the Australian average (11.9%). South Australia had the highest adult support rate of 12.7 per cent.

Table 11: Census of Population and Housing, Unorganised Volunteering in Victoria, 2011
Volunteering over last two weeks

Population Group	Adult Support				Child Support		
	Population (000)	Population who answered question (000)	Volunteer Rate %	Number of Volunteers (000)	Population who answered question (000)	Volunteer Rate %	Number of Volunteers (000)
All Adults 15+	4,355.2	3,999.0	12.3	490.1	4,031.7	29.5	1,187.4
Women	2,235.4	2,060.3	14.6	300.8	2,079.1	33.4	693.4
Men	2,119.8	1,938.7	9.8	189.3	1,952.7	25.3	494.0
15–34 years old	1,481.3	1,362.2	6.6	89.6	1,370.2	22.2	304.2
35–64 years old	2,112.3	1,983.6	16.0	317.7	1,997.4	39.8	795.7
65+ years old	761.6	653.2	12.7	82.8	664.1	13.2	87.6
Location							
Melbourne	3,260.8	2,998.8	11.8	355.2	3,023.1	29.2	881.5
Outside Melbourne	1,087.1	994.6	13.5	134.3	1,002.9	30.4	304.7
Ballarat	118.5	108.5	13.6	14.8	109.4	30.7	33.5
Bendigo	113.9	104.2	14.0	14.6	105.0	31.0	32.6
Geelong	203.1	187.4	13.1	24.6	188.9	31.4	59.3
Hume	129.0	118.9	13.5	16.1	119.8	29.5	35.4
Latrobe-Gippsland	207.8	189.2	13.6	25.8	190.9	29.7	56.6
North West	118.6	107.4	13.7	14.8	108.4	29.5	32.0
Shepparton	99.3	89.9	13.3	12.0	90.8	30.3	27.5
Warrnambool & South West	97.0	89.0	13.2	11.8	89.7	31.0	27.8
Location Unidentified	7.3	5.6	10.1	0.6	5.7	21.8	1.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, Catalogue 2001.0

Child and adult support rates did not vary greatly across the various statistical areas of Victoria. This is in contrast to the fairly wide variation in rates for organised volunteering (see next Section, Tables 12 and 13.)

The Census question on organised volunteering

Respondents in the Census were asked in question 51 whether “in the *last twelve months*” they had spent “any time doing voluntary work through an organisation or group?” Excluded was any voluntary work undertaken as part of paid employment or undertaken to qualify for a Government benefit or unpaid work done in a family business.

The wording was:

In the last twelve months did the person spend any time doing voluntary work through an organization or group?

- › Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment or to qualify for a Government benefit.
- › Exclude working in family business

Response: No, did not do voluntary work
Yes, did voluntary work

For question 51 the non-response rate in Victoria in 2011 was 7.9 per cent.

Table 12 shows detailed data from the 2011 Census on organised volunteering in Victoria

Unlike the unorganised volunteering rate, there is notable variation in the rate of organised volunteering across Victoria. The annual rate for organised volunteering was higher for women (21.1%) than for men (17.3%) and was higher for the regional areas outside Melbourne especially for statistical areas in the western part of the State. Here, the North West and the Warrnambool & South West statistical areas had the highest rates of 30 per cent.

In comparison with organised volunteering rates across Australia reported by the 2011 Census, the Victorian rate of 19.3 per cent was just below the Australian average of 19.4 per cent. The Australian Capital Territory (23.9%), South Australia (21.2%) and Tasmania (21.0%) had the highest rates.

The accompanying Census maps show the distribution of organised volunteering rates across the statistical areas of Victoria (Figure 1) and across the statistical areas within Melbourne (Figure 2).



Table 12: Census of Population and Housing, Organised Volunteering in Victoria, 2011
Volunteering over last twelve months

Population Group	Population (000)	Population who answered Volunteering Question (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)
All Adults 15+	4,355.2	4,011.4	19.3	772.4
Women	2,235.4	2,069.0	21.1	436.1
Men	2,119.8	1,942.5	17.3	336.4
15–34 years old	1,481.3	1,362.4	16.0	217.9
35–64 years old	2,112.3	1,985.2	21.3	422.6
65+ years old	761.6	663.9	19.9	132.0
Melbourne	3,260.8	3,007.1	17.2	516.5
Women	1,673.8	1,550.2	19.0	295.0
Men	1,587.0	1,456.9	15.2	221.5
Outside Melbourne	1,087.1	998.8	25.5	254.9
Women	558.5	516.2	27.2	140.5
Men	528.7	482.6	23.7	114.4
Ballarat	118.5	108.8	24.1	26.2
Bendigo	113.9	104.7	25.7	26.9
Geelong	203.1	188.1	21.2	39.9
Hume	129.0	119.4	27.7	33.1
Latrobe-Gippsland	207.8	190.4	24.9	47.4
North West	118.6	107.8	30.2	32.5
Shepparton	99.2	90.3	24.5	22.1
Warrnambool & South West	97.0	89.3	29.9	26.7
Location Unidentified	7.3	5.6	17.7	1.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, Catalogue 2001.0

Figure 1 identifies the Statistical Areas with highest rates of volunteering within organisations. These data show that the organised volunteering rates were highest in rural communities in the most western part of the state.

Figure 1 – People who undertook Unpaid Voluntary Work through an Organisation
Victoria by Statistical Area

As a percentage of people aged 15 years and over.
Based on Place of Usual Residence, Census 2011

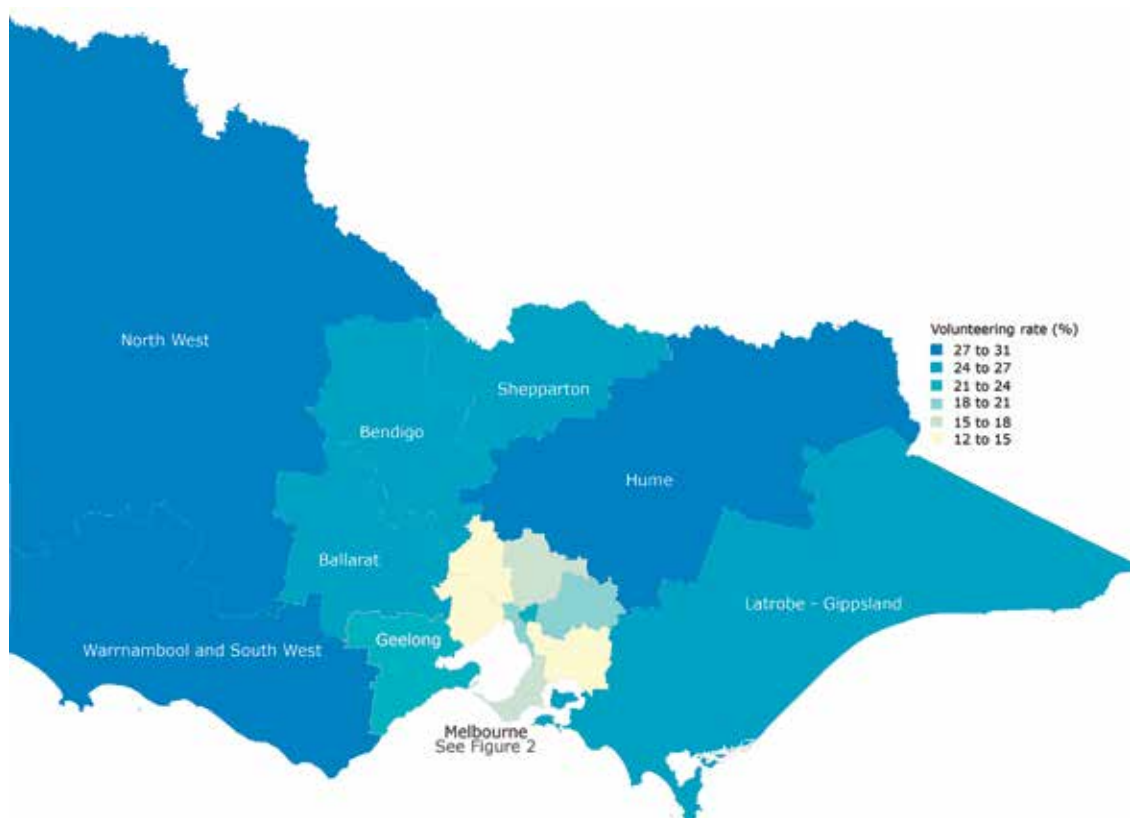


Table 13: Census of Population and Housing, Organised Volunteering in Melbourne, 2011

Statistical Areas	Population (000)	Population who answered Volunteering Question (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)
Melbourne Statistical Areas	3,260.8	3,007.1	17.2	516.5
Inner	441.2	398.9	20.4	81.2
Brunswick – Coburg	67.4	61.9	18.6	11.4
Darebin – South	40.6	37.7	20.9	7.9
Essendon	50.5	46.2	18.7	8.6
Melbourne City	87.0	76.1	21.2	16.1
Port Philip	81.3	73.3	20.2	14.8
Stonnington – West	48.5	43.8	20.4	8.9
Yarra	65.9	59.9	22.4	13.4
Inner East	283.0	265.5	22.3	59.2
Boroondara	131.4	123.7	25.1	31.0
Manningham – West	72.5	68.3	17.4	11.9
Whitehorse – West	79.0	73.4	22.2	16.3
Inner South	308.6	287.4	20.3	58.3
Bayside	73.8	68.8	22.9	15.7
Glen Ira	113.2	105.5	19.9	20.9
Kingston	89.2	82.8	17.5	14.5
Stonnington – East	32.5	30.4	23.6	7.2
North East	353.1	326.7	15.5	50.5
Banyule	97.2	91.2	19.3	17.6
Darebin – North	73.7	66.2	12.7	8.4
Nillumbik – Kinglake	50.5	48.1	23.1	11.1
Whittlesea – Wallan	131.7	121.3	11.0	13.4
North West	252.7	231.2	13.1	30.3
Keilor	45.6	42.3	14.2	6.0
Macedon Ranges	20.7	19.5	25.1	4.9
Moreland – North	55.4	49.9	12.1	6.1
Sunbury	29.1	27.1	16.7	4.5
Tullamarine – Broadmeadows	101.9	92.3	9.6	8.9

(Table continued on next page)

Statistical Areas	Population (000)	Population who answered Volunteering Question (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)
Outer East	388.1	365.8	20.2	73.8
Knox	121.7	115.1	17.8	20.5
Manningham – East	20.6	19.5	22.9	4.5
Maroondah	84.0	79.2	20.3	16.1
Whitehorse – East	46.7	44.2	21.8	9.6
Yarra Ranges	115.1	107.7	21.4	23.1
South East	527.0	487.9	14.6	71.4
Cardinia	57.0	53.1	18.9	10.0
Casey – North	97.1	90.3	14.2	12.8
Casey – South	96.7	89.8	12.4	11.1
Dandenong	139.1	126.3	11.1	14.1
Monash	137.2	128.5	18.2	23.4
West	486.8	441.7	12.6	55.8
Brimbank	141.0	126.1	9.8	12.3
Hobsons Bay	65.0	59.5	15.9	9.4
Maribyrnong	59.8	53.3	15.0	8.0
Melton – Bacchus Marsh	94.2	86.2	12.6	10.8
Wyndham	126.9	116.5	13.1	15.2
Mornington Peninsula	220.2	202.0	17.8	36.0
Frankston	102.1	93.8	15.0	14.0
Mornington Peninsula	118.1	108.2	20.3	21.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, Catalogue 2001.0

Table 13 shows that the Melbourne Inner East statistical area has the highest organised annual volunteer rate – 22.3 per cent – and within that area Boroondara (25.1%) is the highest. Melbourne Inner (20.4%), Inner South (20.3%) and Outer East (20.2%) have the next highest organised volunteer rates. The lowest rates are Melbourne West (12.6%) and North West (13.1%). Within Melbourne North West, the Macedon Ranges (25.1%) equalled the Boroondara rate.

Within the Melbourne Statistical Area, other areas with high organised volunteer rates are:

Stonnington East	23.6%
Nillumbik–Kinglake	23.1%
Manningham East	22.9%
Bayside	22.9%
Yarra	22.4%
Whitehorse West	22.2%
Whitehorse East	21.8%
Yarra Ranges	21.4%
Melbourne City	21.2% and
Darebin South	20.9%

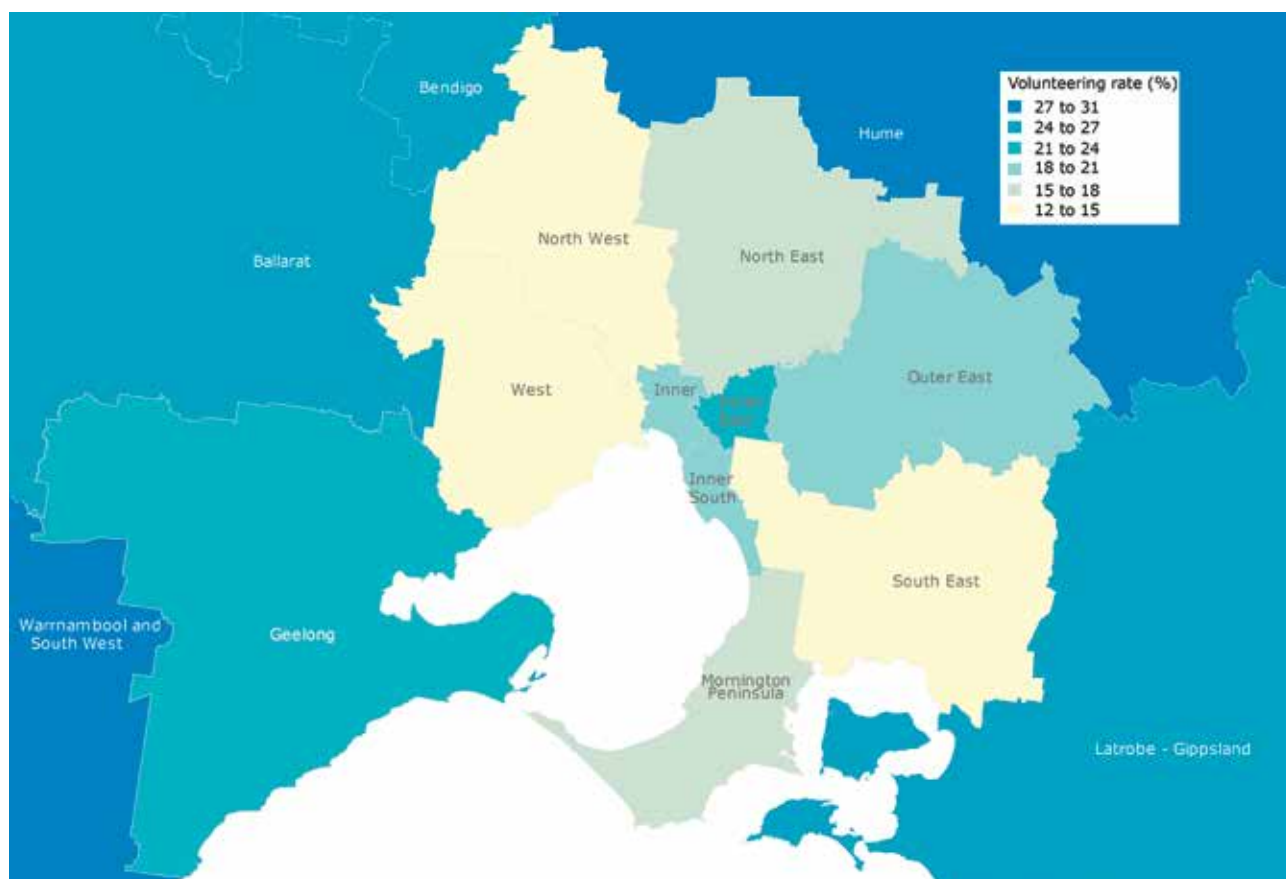
However, within the North West and West statistical areas there are two areas which have volunteer rates below 10 per cent. These are:

Tullamarine–Broadmeadows	9.6% and
Brimbank	9.8%



Figure 2 – People who undertook Unpaid Voluntary Work through an Organisation
Melbourne by Statistical Areas

As a percentage of people aged 15 years and over
Based on Place of Usual Residence, Census 2011



The Future of Volunteering In Victoria

Are we all volunteers?

One third of Victorian adults volunteered through an organisation in 2006. This is the same proportion as in 2000, a rise from around 25 per cent in 1995.

Unfortunately the rate of participation in unorganised volunteering over the course of a year is unknown. Time use surveys provide information only about the daily volunteering rate, not the annual rate. Unorganised volunteering, directly to friends and neighbours, involves more hours per year than organised volunteering and involves both those who do unorganised volunteering and those who do not. Thus the annual “total” volunteering rate is greater than either the organised rate or the unorganised rate but less than the sum of the two rates.

Recent overseas surveys show unorganised volunteering rates over the last 12 months of more than 70 per cent in the United Kingdom and more than 80 per cent in Canada. If 60 per cent of Victorian adults undertook unorganised volunteering in 2006, but no organised volunteering, then the total Victorian volunteering rate would be almost 100 per cent.

Thus it could be the case that nearly all adults in Victoria undertook some form of organised or unorganised volunteering in 2006. As volunteering survey methodologies improve to recognise both organised and unorganised volunteering a more accurate and reliable portrait of volunteering will be drawn. If it could be comprehensively measured, perhaps the outcome would be that nearly everyone is a volunteer. The total volunteering rate could be 100 per cent!

The future of Victorian volunteering

The future is always uncertain and hence difficult to forecast. For some things such as population it is possible to make “projections”, which are not forecasts, based on assumptions about the main factors involved. For example many national and international organisations make projections of the population of countries and indeed the world based on sets of assumptions about the main factors that determine population growth or decline – fertility, mortality and immigration.

For example the latest projections of the population of Australia and its States and Territories by the ABS states:

“The projections are not predictions or forecasts, but are simply illustrations of the growth and change in population which would occur if certain assumptions about future levels of fertility, mortality, internal migration and overseas migration were to prevail over the projection period. The assumptions incorporate recent trends which indicate increasing levels of fertility and net overseas migration for Australia.” (ABS, 2008b)

These ABS projections are made in three main series, A, B and C which the ABS states:

“have been selected from a possible 72 individual combinations of the various assumptions. Series B largely reflects current trends in fertility, life expectancy at birth, net overseas migration and net interstate migration, whereas Series A and Series C are based on high and low assumptions for each of these variables respectively.” (ABS, 2008b)

For population projections many years of research and continuous data collection has shown how the fertility, mortality and migration factors can be combined to make population projections. But the economic and social factors which cause changes in these components are less well known and are not brought into the ABS projections. All that is done is to assume a continuation of current trends (Series B) with some higher (Series A) or lower (Series C) assumptions added.

Although surveys and censuses can measure, fairly imprecisely, changes in volunteering through time, the factors which drive these changes are relatively un-researched. Thus, although this report has used the available volunteering data to produce some estimates of the value of volunteering in Victoria over the years 1992 to 2006, it has not revealed much about the factors behind the observed changes.

There are basically three components to the total estimate of the value of volunteering in this report. The first is the average hours of volunteering per adult per year. The second is

the number of adults in Victoria and the third is the average volunteer comparable gross market wage. We can call these components “volunteering hours”, “adult population” and “volunteer wage”.

The Department of Planning and Community Development has requested the report to provide a projection of the likely directions in volunteering in Victoria to 2021.

To make a projection of the total value of volunteering over the next five, ten or fifteen years, projections would need to be made for each of these three components.

Population projections

The latest ABS Series B projections for the adult population aged 18 years and over of Victoria show the following data for the years 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021.

Population projections, ABS Series B Adults aged 18+ years at 30 June (‘000)						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006–2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006–2021
Victoria	3,945.6	4,289.7	4,620.9	4,936.7	25.1%	1.5%

Source: ABS Time Series Workbook, 3222.0 Population Projections, Australia, Table B.2 Population projections, By age and sex, Victoria – Series B

Volunteer wage rate projections

The ABS does not provide projections of wage rates for future years. However, a starting point is the estimate of \$24.09 per hour used in this report for the average opportunity cost volunteer wage rate in 2006. The report found that over the period 1992 – 2006 this rate grew at an annual rate of 3.8 per cent a year.

In the absence of any other guidelines, it could be plausibly assumed that this rate could continue to grow over the next 15 years at the same annual rate. Using this projection assumption, the volunteer wage rates per hour would be as shown in the following table.

Wage rate projections (\$/hour)						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006–2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006–2021
Gross opportunity cost wage rate	24.09	28.99	34.89	42.00	74%	3.8%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumed continuation of the same annual rate of change over the projection years as measured for the years 1992 to 2006.



Projections of volunteering hours

This is the vital component of the three. The data on volunteering hours per adult observed over the years 1992 to 2006 have shown a number of changes.

There are data for 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000 and 2006 for volunteering through organisations in Victoria. These show a rise in the organised volunteer hours per adult per year from 31 in 1992 to 55 in 2000 but a decline to a lower average of 46 hours in 2006.

For unorganised volunteering there are data only for the years 1992, 1997 and 2006. The annual hours per adult rose from 75 in 1992 to 88 in 1997 and then fell to 84 in 2006. For the total hours of volunteering – organised, unorganised and travel, the annual hours per adult grew from 132 in 1992 to 153 in 1997 and 2006.

For projections over the next 15 years what assumptions should be made about these changes? Will high rates be retained? Can higher average volunteer hours be achieved in the future? Or will average hours perhaps decline? Will women continue to volunteer informally at a higher rate than men? As Victoria continues to become richer, will the relative value of volunteering decline? Can levels and trends in volunteering in other countries provide a guide to trends in Australia?

Trends in volunteering rates and volunteering time vary from country to country and are difficult to measure because of changes in survey methodologies, generally infrequent measurement and sometimes small sample size.

In the United States where surveys were conducted using the same methodology over the six years from 2002 to 2007 participation rates in organised volunteering were relatively constant at around 28 per cent: 27 per cent in 2002, 29 per cent in 2003, 2004 and 2005, 27 per cent in 2006 and 26 per cent in 2007 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008).

In Canada participation rates in organised (formal) volunteering grew from 27 per cent in 1987 to 31 per cent in 1997 but then were back to 27 per cent in 2000. However, a new survey in Canada in 2004 using improved methodology from the earlier surveys shows 45 per cent of Canadians 15 years and older volunteered through an organisation in the previous 12 months (Hall, Lasby, Gumulka and Tryon 2006). This survey also found that 83 per cent of Canadians had engaged in unorganised (informal) volunteering by helping others directly, without involving an organisation, at least once over the previous year.

In the United Kingdom volunteering surveys showed organised (formal) volunteering rates were 44 per cent in 1981, 51 per cent in 1991 and 48 per cent in 1997. The same surveys showed unorganised (informal) volunteering rates of 62 per cent in 1981, 76 per cent in 1991 and 74 per cent in 1997 (Institute for Volunteering Research 2008). The UK surveys related to those aged 18 years and older. However the sample sizes were much smaller than in most other surveys – 1,800 in 1981 and just under 1,500 in 1991 and 1997. Consequently, although the UK participation rates are indicative of higher volunteering rates than in Australia and the United States they do not give a reliable indication of trends up or down over time.

In summary, the international evidence indicates that the recent higher levels of organised volunteering in Australia and in Victoria are within the range of volunteering in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In Australia, the ageing of the population is likely to have effects on volunteering, largely on the demand for support for adults rather than for children. This is likely to be met principally by the supply of unorganised volunteering directly from one household to another.

The change in the total average hours of volunteering per adult observed in Victoria over the years 1992 – 2006 was 1.1% a year. A number of possible projections can be made using this rate of change. For this report three projections have been made. Series A assumes that this rate of change continues over the projection period to 2021. Series B assumes

that the 2006 average hours are unchanged and Series C assumes that the average hours decline by 1.1% a year.

On these assumptions for the three series of projections of the annual hours of volunteering per adult in Western Australia would be those shown in the next Table.

Annual hours of volunteer work projections, Victoria						
Annual hours per adult						
(Averaged over all adult population aged 18+)						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006–2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006–2021
Series A	153.0	161.6	170.7	180.3	+18%	+1.1%
Series B	153.0	153.0	153.0	153.0	+0%	+0.0%
Series C	153.0	144.8	137.0	129.6	-15%	-1.1%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

Combining these projections with the ABS Series B population projections for Victoria gives three series of total volunteer hours for the projection period.

Total annual hours of volunteer work projections						
Victoria						
Millions of hours per year						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006–2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006–2021
Series A	603.4	693.2	788.7	890.0	+48%	+2.6%
Series B	603.4	656.3	707.0	755.3	+25%	+1.5%
Series C	603.4	621.0	633.0	639.8	+6%	+0.4%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

Then combing these projections with the average volunteer wage and including the extra 12.7 per cent for other volunteer inputs, the three series of the total value of volunteering in Victoria are as shown in the following table.

Total value of volunteering projections Victoria \$ billion per year						
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006–2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006–2021
Series A	16.4	22.7	31.0	42.1	+157%	+6.5%
Series B	16.4	21.4	27.8	35.7	+118%	+5.3%
Series C	16.4	20.3	24.9	30.3	+85%	+4.2%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

On the supply side, volunteering by both women and men is very widespread across all ages, employment status and income levels. Given these factors, it seems probable that volunteering in Victoria, both indirectly through organisations and directly from one household to another will be maintained at something like current levels.

However, the attitudes of Victorians, the social relationships between households and the ways in which the thousands of volunteer organisations in Victoria grow, develop and operate, will determine what happens to volunteering in Victoria. The future of Victorian volunteering lies in the hands of its population and institutions.



Acknowledgements

For guidance and critical comments on the preparation of the report, the author wishes to thank the staff of the Department for Planning and Community Development of the Victorian Government.

The author has also had invaluable assistance from Faye Soupourmas, Research Fellow in the Households Research Unit.



Methodology

This report draws on and extends the methodology used to estimate the value of volunteering in Victoria in the report for the Victorian government *Giving Time: the economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002).



Glossary

Adult support (*Unorganised volunteering*)

The informal help and care given directly to the support of other adults including the elderly, sick or disabled.

Child support (*Unorganised volunteering*)

The informal help and care given directly to the support of other people's children.

Compensation of employees

The total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable by an enterprise to an employee in return for work done by the employee during the accounting period. It is further classified into two sub-components: wages and salaries; and employers' social contributions. Compensation of employees is not payable in respect of unpaid work undertaken voluntarily, including work done by members of a household within an unincorporated enterprise owned by the same household. Compensation of employees excludes any taxes payable by the employer on the wage and salary bill (e.g. payroll tax).

Economically productive activities

Activities that result in the production of goods or the delivery of services, including goods and services that are not sold, and goods and services that are self-provided; includes preparation of meals, care of children and adults, volunteer activities and time spent in educational activities.

Gross State Product

The value added by all the economic units operating within the borders of a State. For a whole country this is known as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This value excludes the value added by the household economy. (See **Household Economy**).

Household Economy

The productive activities conducted by households using household capital and the unpaid labour of their own members to process goods and provide services for the use of their own or other households without payment.

Households

A person living alone or two or more persons living together as a single domestic unit who make common provision for food and other essentials for living and occupy the whole or part of one dwelling unit.

Households Research Unit

A research unit of the Department of Economics, University of Melbourne under the direction of Dr Duncan Ironmonger.

National accounts

The set of statistics of the economic activities of countries prepared and published by national statistical organisations. The system for presenting these statistics is determined from time to time by the United Nations and published as the System of National Accounts (SNA). The most recent revision of this system (1993) recommended that statistics of the productive activities of households (the household economy) should be prepared by national statistical offices as a set of 'satellite' accounts. (See **Satellite national accounts of household productive activities**).

Organised volunteering (*Indirect volunteering*)

Unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is *indirect* as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

Queensland Household Survey

This sample survey collects statistics from over 6,500 households throughout Queensland, including the Greater Brisbane area and nine non-metropolitan regions. The survey commenced in November 2000 and is conducted every May and November by the Office of the Queensland Government Statistician, located in the Office of Economic and Statistical Research of the Queensland Treasury. The May 2004 survey collected data on volunteering through organisations at the request of the Department of Communities.

Satellite national accounts of household productive activities

A set of statistical accounts of the productive activities of households that are separate from, but consistent with, the main accounts of economic activity included within the System of National Accounts. (See **National accounts**).

Time use surveys

Sample surveys of the uses of time recorded in 24-hour diaries by individuals in households. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted diary-based time use surveys in Sydney in 1987 and nation-wide in 1992, 1997 and 2006.

Unorganised volunteering (*Direct volunteering*)

The informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is *direct* as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

Voluntary work surveys

Sample surveys of the rates of participation in voluntary work through organisations, the characteristics of people who volunteer, the types of organisations they work for and the activities they undertake. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted voluntary work surveys in 1995, 2000, 2006 and 2010.

Volunteering

Volunteering consists of unpaid help and care in the form of time, service and skills willingly given by an individual either

- › formally and indirectly through an organisation or group (Organised Volunteering) or
- › informally and directly within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances (Unorganised Volunteering).

Travelling in connection with both organised and unorganised volunteering is part of volunteering. (See **Organised volunteering, Unorganised volunteering, and Volunteering travel**).

Volunteering travel

Time spent in travelling in connection with both organised and unorganised volunteering.

Volunteer organisations

A diverse range of social, economic, political, environmental, recreational and cultural organisations and groups, not limited to the not-for-profit welfare and community sectors. Volunteers operate through schools, hospitals, sports clubs, museums, professional associations, business groups, community legal support services and Neighbourhood Watch associations. The ABS Voluntary Work Surveys defined an organisation or group as any body with a formal structure. It may be as large as a national charity or as small as a local book club. Purely ad hoc, informal and temporary gatherings of people did not constitute an organisation for the ABS Voluntary Work Surveys.

Volunteer rate

For any group, the volunteer rate is the number of volunteers in that group expressed as a percentage of the total population in that group.

Volunteer time inputs

The time spent by volunteers in carrying out volunteer activities, including the time taken to travel to, from and during these activities.

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (1994a) *How Australians Use their Time*, 1992 Cat 4153.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (1994b) *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy*, 1992 Cat 4240.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998) *How Australians Use their Time*, 1997 Cat 4153.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy*, 1997 Cat 4240.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) *Voluntary Work Survey, Australia*, 2000 Cat 4441.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) *Voluntary Work Survey, Australia*, 2006 Cat 4441.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008a) *How Australians Use their Time*, 2006 Cat 4153.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008b) *Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101* Cat 3222.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) *Volunteering in the United States*, 2007 Washington DC: (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>).
- Foster, V (1997) "What value should be placed on volunteering?" In C. Pharaoh (ed.) *Dimensions of the Voluntary Sector* London: Charities Aid Foundation
- Gaskin, K (1999) "Valuing volunteers in Europe: a comparative study of the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit" *The Journal of the Institute for Volunteering Research* 2(1):1-18
- Hall, M, Lasby, D, Gumulka, G & Tryon, C (2006) *Caring Canadians, Involving Canadians: Highlights from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, Ottawa: Statistics Canada
- Institute for Volunteering Research (2008) 1997 *National Survey of Volunteering in the UK* (<http://www.ivr.org.uk/researchbulletins/bulletins/1997-national-survey-of-volunteering-in-the-uk.htm>)
- Ironmonger, D (2000) "Measuring Volunteering in Economic Terms" Chapter 5 (p. 56-72) in J. Warburton and M. Oppenheimer (eds.) *Volunteers and Volunteering* Sydney: Federation Press
- Ironmonger, D (2002) *Valuing Volunteering: The Economic Value of Volunteering in South Australia*, A Report by Dr Duncan Ironmonger Government of South Australia, Office for Volunteers (http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au/pdfs/Econ_ValVolReport2011.pdf)
- Ironmonger, D (2006) *The economic value of volunteering in Queensland; A report commissioned by the Department of Communities*, Queensland Government, Department of Communities: Brisbane
- Ironmonger, D (2008) *The economic value of volunteering in Queensland, Updated report – May 2008*, Queensland Government, Department of Communities: Brisbane

Ironmonger, D (2009) *The economic value of volunteering in Western Australia*, Department for Communities, Government of Western Australia: West Perth

Ironmonger, D (2011) *The economic value of volunteering in South Australia*, Office for Volunteers, Government of South Australia: Adelaide

Ironmonger, D and Soupourmas, F (1999) "Life Stages of the Household Economy: How do spending time and money change through life?" Paper presented to the International Association of Time Use Research Conference, University of Essex, Colchester

Ironmonger, D and Soupourmas, F (2002) *Calculating Australia's Gross Household Product: Measuring the Economic Value of the Household Economy 1970-2000* Research Paper Number 833, Department of Economics, The University of Melbourne

Knapp, M (1990) *Time is money: the costs of volunteering in Britain today*, Volunteer Centre UK, Berkhamsted.

Queensland Government (2003) *Engaging Queensland: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering*, Queensland Government, Brisbane

Queensland Government, Office of Economic and Statistical Research (2004) May 2004 *Queensland Household Survey: Summary Report Prepared for Department of Communities*, Office of the Government Statistician, Brisbane

Queensland Government, Office of Economic and Statistical Research (2004) May 2004 *Queensland Household Survey No.2: Technical Report Prepared for All Clients*, Office of the Government Statistician, Brisbane

Soupourmas, F and Ironmonger, D (2002) *Giving Time: The economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* Melbourne: Department of Human Services, Victoria ISBN 0 7311 6145 9 Copy available in pdf format at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/pdpd/>

United Nations (2001) *Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit, A Joint Project Of Independent Sector and United Nations Volunteers* UN: Germany

Appendix

Extract from Chapter 3 of *Giving Time: The economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002)

What exactly is "Volunteering"?

Definitions of Volunteering

Although volunteers contribute to every area of society, there are differing opinions of what exactly constitutes "volunteering". In practice, definitions of volunteering are rather mutable and elusive. Many volunteers may be unaware that their activities are considered to be volunteering. For instance, a family member who provides care to an elderly person or someone who is a member of a sports club committee may not consider themselves "volunteers". Volunteering itself can mean different things to different people. In addition, perceptions of volunteering may be changing in contemporary society as a result of Government initiatives such as the Mutual Obligation Scheme³ and Voluntary Work⁴ Initiative. It has been argued that the compulsory nature of some aspects of the Mutual Obligation Scheme has demeaned the notion of volunteer work.

In reality, there are a wide range of interpretations of what constitutes voluntary work. Recently, the United Nations (UN) has adopted a specific criteria to distinguish volunteering from other forms of behaviour that may superficially resemble it. According to the UN, volunteering:

- › is not to be undertaken primarily for financial gain
- › is undertaken of one's own free will; and
- › brings benefit to a third party as well as to the people who volunteer.

According to this-three point criteria, there can be four basic types of volunteering activity – mutual aid and self help; philanthropy or service to others; campaigning and advocacy; and finally participation and self governance. These four broad areas encompass a wide range of volunteering activities.

3 People in receipt of the Youth Allowance or Newstart may also choose volunteer work as a means of participating in the Mutual Obligation Scheme. The Mutual Obligation Scheme applies to Centrelink customers, in receipt of Newstart, between the ages of 18-34.

4 The Voluntary Work Initiative (VWI) is a program whereby a person on the Newstart benefit undertakes 32 hours a fortnight of volunteer work in a 'not-for-profit' organisation as part of Newstart's activity requirements. This type of arrangement is available to people over the age of 50 and people between the ages of 18-49 who have been in receipt of Newstart for twelve months or more and often has an element of compulsion. Referrals to volunteer work are often made by Centrelink.

Formal (Organised) Volunteering

Critical to many of definitions of volunteering, including the UN definition, is the notion of "free choice" or "free will". The idea of "free choice" implies that individuals act of their own accord and are exempt from external authority, interference or coercion. As a result, volunteering is often described as a freely chosen "gift of time". For the purposes of their 1995 and 2000 Voluntary Work Surveys, the Australian Bureau of Statistics defined a "volunteer" as:

Someone who willingly gave unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group.

Fundamental to the ABS interpretation of a volunteer is the notion of "free will". This definition also reinforces the notion that volunteering is undertaken without financial gain. Although a volunteer may not seek financial gain, there are situations where the acceptance of money is allowed under this definition. The ABS sought to explain what was understood by the term "unpaid help" by pointing out that the reimbursement of expenses or small gifts was not regarded as payment of salary. However, people who received payment in-kind for the work they did were not defined as volunteers.

The ABS also restricted voluntary work to activities managed through organisations. Formal or organised volunteering is indirect as it is mediated through an organisation. More direct forms of volunteering that are not managed through an organisation were not included in the ABS surveys. The ABS limited the scope of volunteering to unpaid activities that were formally managed by an organisation.

Volunteering Australia has distinguished 'formal' or 'organised' volunteering from 'informal' or 'unorganised' volunteering. Formal volunteering is identified as an activity which occurs in not-for-profit organisations and is:

- › of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- › undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- › for no financial payment; and
- › in volunteer designated positions only.

While this approach shares a number of the characteristics of ABS definition, it extends beyond these definitions by distinguishing and specifying that formal/organised volunteering can only take place in a not-for-profit organisation or project and that volunteers can only work in designated volunteer positions. It also focuses on the fact that volunteering is fundamentally intertwined with our basic responsibilities in society and must be for the benefit of the community and the volunteer.

In the same vein the International Association for Volunteer Effort adopted a definition of volunteering that takes the idea of active citizenship and community involvement even further. It specifies volunteering:

- › is based on personal motivation and choices, freely undertaken
- › is a way of furthering active citizenship and community involvement
- › takes the form of individual or group activities generally carried out within the framework of an organisation
- › enhances human potential and the quality of life, building up human solidarity
- › provides answers for the great challenges of our time, striving for a better and more peaceful world; and
- › contributes to the vitality of economic life, even creating jobs and new professions.

While this definition reinforces a number of the characteristics identified in the previous definitions, it places more emphasis on the social objectives or outcomes of volunteering.

Many people examining these definitions will find some overlap with their own beliefs about what volunteering is all about. Although there are some who will like a more specific and narrow definition of volunteering, there will be others who would welcome a broader and more encompassing definition that defines volunteering in terms of our basic obligations to our communities.

Informal (Unorganised) Volunteering

The broader definitions of volunteering recognise donations of time outside formal organisations. Volunteering is often understood in reference to everyday social obligations, not some "special" activity that occurs through organisations.

For example, Volunteer Canada refers to volunteering as:

The most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbour, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. By caring and contributing for change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self esteem, and change in their lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbours and, in return, enhance their own.

The National Centre for Volunteering in the United Kingdom identifies volunteering as:

An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

Broader definitions highlight that volunteering is undertaken by people in their communities and social networks on both a formal and informal basis. Many voluntary work activities and tasks – such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or an elderly neighbour – are crucial to community life and the building of social capital. However, many narrow definitions of volunteering ignore these activities.

The ABS definition of volunteering excludes the informal help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances.

Informal or unorganised volunteering is the spontaneous and sporadic helping that takes place between friends and neighbours – for example, child care or running errands for an elderly neighbour. It is the primary form of volunteering in many communities. It is misleading to insist that volunteering can only be undertaken through some kind of organisation because such a definition excludes the vast amount of mutual aid and help that goes on directly between friends and neighbours.

Expanding the ABS's narrow definition of volunteering, we need to recognise that volunteering is also undertaken outside organisations on an informal basis within personal networks.

Therefore, volunteering research is complicated by the fact that there are two main types of volunteering:

- › Formal or Organised; and
- › Informal or Unorganised.

The profile of volunteers may change depending on what definition of volunteering you use. Furthermore, the profiles of volunteers in the formal and informal sectors may be quite different. State data from the national Voluntary Work Surveys (1995 and 2000) and Time Use Surveys (1992 and 1997) can be used to compose a portrait of formal and informal volunteers in Victoria.

Contact Us

Department of Planning and Community Development

Email: community_sector@dpcd.vic.gov.au

Published by Community Participation Programs
(Community Development), Department of Planning and Community Development

1 Spring Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Telephone (03) 9208 3543

December 2012

© Copyright State of Victoria 2012

This publication is copyright. No part of it may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with provision of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

ISBN 978-1-921940-73-6

Designed by the Design Studio,
Corporate Public Affairs
Department of Transport,
Level 10, 121 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000

Printed managed by Finsbury Green

Printed on Monza Satin 55% recycled paper

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please telephone the Office for the Community Sector on 03 9208 3543, or email community_sector@dpcd.vic.gov.au

This publication is also published in PDF and Word formats on www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/publications-and-research