



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Improving mental health through volunteering National Volunteer Week**

National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contribution of our nation's volunteers.

From 8–14 May, 2017 thousands of events across the country will be held to say thank you to the 6 million Australians who volunteer including breakfasts, morning/afternoon teas, and luncheons as well as open days, award ceremonies, picnics, forums and training sessions.

This year Volunteering Victoria will be celebrating National Volunteer Week by hosting the forum “Valuing Self, Valuing Others” - an event which will bring together a panel of experts to discuss the importance of self-care for leaders and managers of volunteers. For more information about the event, please visit <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/event/national-volunteer-week-forum-valuing-self-valuing-others-exploring-leadership-wellness/>

### **Volunteering is good for your mental health**

This year's theme is “Give Happy, Live Happy”. Volunteering has proven health and wellbeing benefits and is a great way for Australians to feel better in mind and body.

Associate Professor Dr. Thomas Nielsen's (University of Canberra) [research shows](#) that giving and service to others increases wellbeing and academic outcomes in students — something much needed in a western world with high youth depression and suicide rates.

Dr. Nielsen said, “Sustainable wellbeing comes not from money or consumerism, but from having meaningful happiness in our lives. There is one shared denominator for what people across cultures and religions report as giving them meaningful happiness in their lives: being something for others.”

“We now know that volunteering is not just good for our physical health, but for our psychological and emotional health too. Giving is one of the strongest predictors of increasing our health and happiness,” said Dr. Nielsen.



## Get involved

In Victoria, 32.3% of people aged over 15 participate in formal volunteering, with slightly more women than men volunteering. For the full facts and stats about volunteering in Victoria visit <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/factsstats/key-facts-statistics-volunteering-victoria/>

For anyone wanting to experience the health and well-being benefits of volunteering, CEO Sue Noble encourages them to contact their local volunteering support service.

“Volunteering Support Services help people who want to volunteer but aren’t sure where to start. They seek to understand how people would like to contribute and connect volunteers with appropriate roles and organisations in the area.”

To find a Volunteering Support Service in your area, visit <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/volunteering-support-in-my-area/>

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## About Volunteering Victoria

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering. Our vision is for resilient communities and empowered and active citizens through volunteering.

Though our dynamic and transformative leadership, we work to promote and build a vibrant, prosperous and strong volunteering community that is inclusive, respected and sustainable. Volunteering Victoria is a member-based organisation, supported by a dedicated and highly professional team of staff and volunteers. From broad sectors, such as social services, health, sport, culture, emergency services and local government, our membership reflects the diversity of people and organisations that work with and support volunteers in our community.