



# The Value of Volunteering

## *Discussion paper encourages corporate and young volunteers*

Better recognition of volunteers, a broader definition of volunteering and greater encouragement of young volunteers are among key issues raised in a discussion paper presented to federal parliament today by the House of Representatives Family and Community Committee.

The paper encourages a dynamic, innovative and sustainable voluntary sector, and recognises the potential for growth in corporate volunteering. The ideas in the paper draw on discussions the committee conducted at a forum in Sydney earlier in the year.

Releasing the discussion paper, Committee Chair, Ms Annette Ellis MP, said: 'Volunteering has long been a tradition in Australia, and its importance to building strong and inclusive communities is as great today as it always has been. There are indications, however, that the rates and patterns of volunteering are changing. Many organisations, including community based organisations that rely heavily on their volunteers to deliver social services, are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain volunteers'

To address this challenge, the Committee supports the need for community based organisations to be increasingly proactive and innovative in their interactions with groups of potential volunteers, including younger people and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

According to the Committee, the growth of corporate volunteering presents the voluntary and private sectors with a host of new opportunities which have yet to be fully realised.

'To fully harness this potential, the Committee strongly encourages continued dialogue and engagement between businesses and not-for-profit organisations' Ms Ellis said.

The discussion paper also examines some of the challenges facing community based organisations and their volunteers as they seek to comply with increasingly complex administrative and legislative requirements.

'The Committee is aware of the potential drain on limited resources associated with legal and regulatory compliance – resources that might otherwise be used for delivery of services. To alleviate the burden of compliance, the Committee advocates for the simplification and standardisation of requirements where possible,' Ms Ellis said.

Copies of the paper can be obtained from the Committee's webpage at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/reports.htm> or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4566.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Annette Ellis, on (02) 6277 4372 (Parliament House) or (02) 6293 1344 (electorate office).

**For all other inquiries**, please contact the Inquiry Secretary by phone on (02) 6277 4566, or visit the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/fchy](http://www.aph.gov.au/fchy)