

Submission to the Productivity Commission on the Contribution of the Not for Profit Sector.

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From my experience working in the sector the most urgent need is the provision of information technology and communications support.

The software and hardware necessary to improve productivity per volunteer continues to be contributed by providers as donations or at cost. We need that to continue. Volunteer organisations also need direct financial support from government if donations are inadequate.

For example, GPS equipped mobile phones in all delivery vehicles for Meals on Wheels should be standard. The donation or funding should also cover the ongoing cost of usage.

Over the years a number of legacy systems for scheduling and administration have built up. Continuing education in the form of a decentralised help desk and on the job training is necessary.

More research on maintaining and improving social networks for those in danger of depression at home or in aged care facilities is needed. For volunteer carers, being able to set up and maintain Facebook profiles, blogs, email accounts and photo sharing for their clients provides a useful activity that also helps prevent depression. The carers need technical support and training to continue.

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