Volunteers make a **significant and valued contribution to the Australian community**. While volunteering is widespread in Australia, the formal volunteering rate has declined.

## The Commission heard why people are not volunteering and several ways governments could better recognise and support the contribution of volunteers:

* Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys **rarely contain detailed questions on volunteering**, which could inhibit policy makers recognising and understanding the contribution volunteers make. Data on volunteering can help people design policies to encourage giving.
* Regulations (such as volunteer checks that unnecessarily duplicate other checks) may be a **disincentive for people to volunteer**.
* **Work or family commitments** and **financial constraints** (such as cost of living pressures) on volunteers are common reasons for people not volunteering.

## The Commission’s draft report:

* Recommends **ways to maintain and improve the usefulness of public information sources on volunteering**, such as by adding questions to the Census on informal volunteering (draft recommendation 9.5) and collecting data on corporate volunteering (draft recommendation 9.3).
* Recommends **governments at all levels consider the effects on volunteers** when designing policies and programs, including adopting measures that may mitigate any adverse effects on volunteer participation (draft recommendation 7.5).
* Recommends changes to the deductible gift recipient (DGR) system so that around **6,000 additional volunteer-run charities** would have easier access to DGR status (draft recommendation 6.1).

