

2024 SA State Budget Analysis

How do volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations fare?

The 2024/25 State Budget will provide welcome relief for low-income households through a range of cost-of-living measures and concessions, while also providing relief for NGOs, small business and NFPs to address rising administrative costs. Volunteers giving their time in the emergency services will benefit from a range of commitments and initiatives and an expansion to the sports voucher program will see an increase in children and young people undertaking community sport and recreation.

We welcome these budget measures but also advocate for a greater commitment to acknowledging the role of volunteers in our communities, reducing the barriers to volunteering and funding the full cost of volunteer management.

Emergency services

Volunteers undertake a critical role in disaster response and recovery in South Australia, and are integral to enhancing the state's disaster resilience, spanning prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. We are pleased to see the new commitments to invest in emergency services but would like to see a coordinated investment to build the capacity, capability and preparedness of volunteering involving organisations involved in disaster responses outside of emergency situations.

The detail:

- \$2.8 million over three years to support the relocation of the Prospect SES unit to a new facility in Angle Park.
- \$817 000 over two years to undertake an audit of CFS facilities.
- \$218 000 over two years for the state's Volunteer Marine Rescue associations to maintain their rescue capability.

Cost of living relief

Cost has been identified as a major barrier to volunteering in our communities and with cost-of-living pressures such as housing, food and energy rising rapidly, we welcome the commitment in this budget to cost-of-living relief.

The detail:

- \$51.5 million for a one-off additional Cost of Living Concession payment of \$243.90 for each person who received the cost-of-living concession payment in 2023-24.
- \$36.6 million over four years to double the Cost of Living Concession for tenants and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders. Providing an additional \$371.70 to eligible individuals.
- \$14.1 million over four years to expand access to a range of concessions to around 21,000 people.



Support for the community sector

We welcome initiatives such as the additional funding for NGOs to support the growing costs of wages and inflation, and the additional funding for NFP and small business to co-invest in energy efficient technology to drive down energy costs. However, we would like to see a long-term commitment by government to grant funding that funds the full cost of delivering services including the management of volunteers.

The detail:

- \$18.4 million over four years to support non-government organisations that provide community services to meet the rising cost of wages and inflation pressures.
- \$20 million for in 2024-25 for Round 2 of the Economic Recovery Fund, to support 8000 eligible small businesses and not-for-profits become more energy efficient and reduce energy costs.

Support for community sport

Volunteers are the lifeblood of sporting clubs with most clubs run entirely by volunteers. VSA&NT welcomes the expansion of the sports vouchers program but advocates for greater recognition of the role of volunteers in community sports and a greater commitment by government to support and grow volunteering in sports.

The detail:

- \$54.6 million over four years to expand the sports vouchers program, providing discounts of \$100 each calendar year on sport, dance, swimming lessons, scouts and music lessons for children and young people between reception and Year 9.

The cost of transport set to rise

The inaugural State of Volunteering Report highlighted that cost is a significant barrier to volunteering in our communities. When we look at a breakdown of the cost of volunteering, 20.9% is related to transport, travel and motor vehicle expenses. VSA&NT is disappointed to see increases in both public transport costs and registration costs that will impact on the willingness of people - particularly young people – to volunteer in our communities. We advocate for an expansion of transport concessions to encourage increases in volunteering.

The detail

- Public transport costs are set to rise with Metroticket single trip tickets increasing by 10 cents to \$6.40, a Metrocard single fare to rise by 15 cents to \$4.40 and a regular 28 day pass to rise by \$3.40 to \$115.50.
- Motor vehicle registration fees will also rise by \$4.00, \$9.00 and \$13.00 for 4, 5-6, and 7+ cylinder cars respectively.
- Driver's licence renewals will rise by \$10 for five years and \$20 for 10 years.

Volunteering Strategy for South Australia

VSA&NT has been working closely with DHS and other stakeholders in the volunteering ecosystem on the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia re-refresh process. We are pleased to see a commitment by government to develop and launch the refreshed Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2021-2027 and three-year action plan in 2024-25.