

NATIONAL STUDENT VOLUNTEERING WEEK

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Volunteering) [1.33 pm]: I am delighted to inform the house that this week is National Student Volunteer Week. Running from 7 to 13 August 2023, the week acknowledges and celebrates student volunteers, and promotes volunteering to students and young people across the nation. This year's theme is "Give. Grow. Belong." The week brings together like-minded people and provides them with the opportunity to give to others, grow their skills and find a place where they belong. Values-based motivation is consistently the leading motivation for people to get involved in volunteering. Although the motivation to volunteer may be consistent, the informal way in which young people volunteer reflects the continual change in their routine at high school, tertiary education and eventual workforce participation.

Australian students today are more socially conscious and more committed than ever to getting involved with causes they believe contribute to positive change. The worth of this civic service should not be underestimated. Students continue to volunteer more formally in educational leadership positions, sport and recreation clubs, and religious and community organisations. The worth of this civic service cannot be underestimated. The sector's peak organisation, Volunteering WA, has been funded to deliver training and resources to volunteer organisations in order to expand volunteer opportunities that are targeted at the needs of young people. A state government grant of \$440 000 over four years aims to increase student and young people's engagement via the Volunteering as a Pathway to Job Readiness program launched in 2022. More information can be found at www.yvolunteer.org.au.

Research shows that volunteering is associated with better life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, social interaction and perceived mental health. Employers believe that volunteering is a credible way of gaining real-world experience, that it is as important as paid employment and can give a person the edge in a job interview. It is now more important than ever that we, as Western Australians, and a nation, consciously broaden our perception of volunteering and reinforce the value of all types of volunteer contributions within our communities. The benefits of increasing student volunteer engagement and increasing the acknowledgement and value of volunteering in every form has never been so significant.

People can find resources and stories for National Student Volunteer Week at nationalstudentvolunteerweek.org.au.