

Pacific Heads of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting

Réunion des directeurs des soins infirmiers et obstétricaux du Pacifique

Australian
Volunteers

Australian
Aid 

Productive Partnerships – Australian Volunteers Program

The Australian Volunteers Program (AVP) matches a broad range of skilled Australians with partner organisations in the Indo-Pacific region to support them in achieving their development goals. Australian volunteers contribute unique experiences, networks and ideas to their volunteer assignments and the communities in which they live and work.

This presentation for the 13th Directors of Clinical Services on the 30th of August, and Pacific Heads of Nursing and Midwifery (PHONM) on the 1st of September 2022, will cover information on how to partner with the Australian Volunteers Program, the various partnering models, and an example of a medical partnership in the Pacific.

1. BACKGROUND

The Australian Government has supported thousands of Australians to volunteer overseas as part of Australia's aid program for 70 years. The AVP is the next chapter in this long and rich history. It seeks to connect Australians to people and experiences in the Indo-Pacific region, fostering a safer, more secure and inclusive global community.

The Australian Government's Foreign Policy White Paper recognises the importance of Australian volunteers in creating links between communities and people in the region and contributing to sustainable development outcomes. By supporting sustainable development, the AVP contributes to continued economic growth and improved stability and security.

The AVP aims to:

- Support partners to achieve their own development goals
- Encourage professional and personal growth in Australian volunteers
- Increase the appreciation of the value of volunteering in Australia and overseas.

Partners both in-country and in Australia are an essential component of the Program.

Partner organisations

The AVP partners with organisations in 26 countries across the Indo-Pacific region. Partner organisations include non-government organisations, other civil society organisations, government agencies, educational institutions, private sector and social enterprises, and humanitarian organisations.

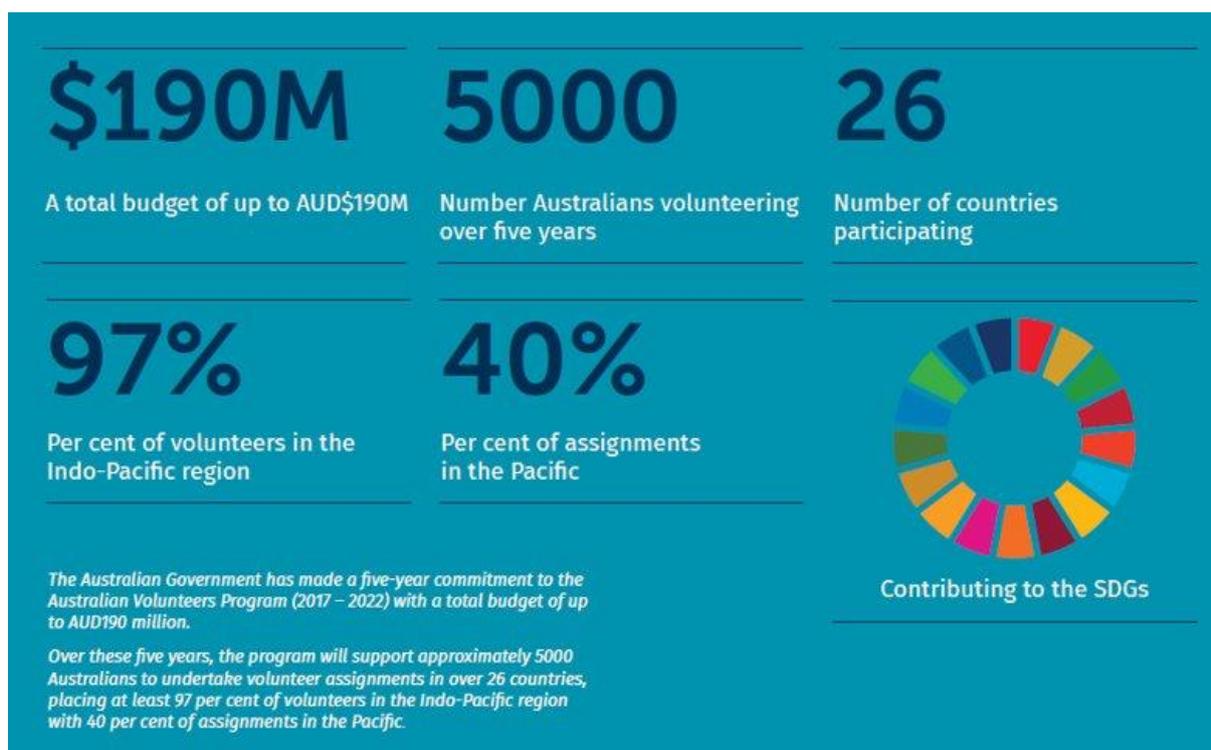
Australian organisations

Australian organisations can also contribute to sustainable development in our region by partnering with the AVP. Australian partner organisations can maintain and develop relationships with organisations in our region and promote the Program with their networks in Australia.

The presentation from the AVP will cover:

- Where we work
- The context in which we operate – locally-led development
- Types of roles
- COVID-19 is a driver of different models of volunteer engagement
- Process of engaging a volunteer/s
- Assignment support
- A case study from the Pacific

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



3. CHALLENGES

- Ensuring volunteer is a strong fit for the assignment
- COVID-19 and the impact on the 26 countries we operate.
- The safe repatriation of 464 volunteers and their dependants over 17 days in response to COVID.
- Filling medical and specialist roles from Australia during difficult times and staff shortages

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Key management actions to be taken forward in 2022-23 include Supporting partner organisations to respond to and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, strengthening their capacity to deliver positive change. This includes maintaining our remote volunteering initiative by actioning recommendations from relevant reviews and optimising the remote volunteering journey to ensure it is fit for purpose and efficient and contributes to the end of program outcomes.

We will invest in our partnerships with Australian organisations, and explore new ones, to support the organisational strengthening objectives of our partners. We are expanding our innovation capability to develop additional volunteer modalities and support program resilience. This includes testing new ways

to support volunteering at the local level. Collaborative innovation will be a significant focus of this work that will consist of supporting local volunteers, improving volunteering infrastructure and advocating for the value of volunteering. This work will inform how we reimagine and redefine how we support volunteers and volunteerism. In addition, we will elevate our work on gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and Indigenous inclusion, further sharpening our mandate and impact under a refreshed Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion - GEDSI strategy.