



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ACTION PLAN 2026-2029

The Rugby AU National Volunteer Action Plan has been developed by Rugby Australia in consultation with Member Unions and community Rugby clubs.





NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ACTION PLAN

RUGBY AUSTRALIA RECOGNISES THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR GAME AND ESSENTIAL TO DELIVERING MEANINGFUL RUGBY EXPERIENCES IN EVERY COMMUNITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THEIR CONTRIBUTION UNDERPINS PARTICIPATION, PATHWAYS, AND PERFORMANCE – FROM GRASSROOTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE.

In alignment with Rugby Australia's Green to Gold Strategy, and the Australian Sports Commission's Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan, Rugby Australia commits to developing and implementing a National Volunteer Action Plan in collaboration with Member Unions.

This plan will:

- Support and Empower Volunteers – Ensure every volunteer is valued, recognised, and supported through clear education, training, and reward programs tailored to their roles.
- Unify and Align Efforts – Embed volunteer development and recognition within Member Unions' strategic plans, creating nationally consistent yet locally relevant initiatives.
- Promote Volunteering in Rugby – Actively champion the critical role of volunteers, highlighting their impact in community rugby, major events, and the journey to Rugby World Cup 2027 and 2029.
- Strengthen Systems and Sustainability – Provide tools, resources, and policies that improve volunteer recruitment, retention, and wellbeing, ensuring a sustainable volunteer base for the future of the game.

By working collectively across the Rugby ecosystem, Rugby Australia and Member Unions will continue to position volunteering as a valued and celebrated pathway within rugby, aligned to whole-of-sport objectives and the national approach outlined in the ASC Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan.

This commitment reflects our belief that empowering volunteers is central to achieving our vision: Strengthen a Thriving Rugby Community.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ACTION FRAMEWORK

VISION

Strengthen a Thriving Rugby Community

OBJECTIVE

To increase support for Clubs, Schools, Coaches and Match Officials to enable growth in participation and strengthen the Rugby Community

RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Strengthen Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

Develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies to increase participation in key volunteer roles including coaching, match officials, club administration, and game day support.

Enhance Volunteer Visibility & Promotion

Improve digital platforms (websites, social media) and deliver coordinated national campaigns that highlight the positive impact of volunteers and the crucial role they play in Rugby across the country.

Leverage Major Events

Leverage Major Events to support recruitment, retention and mobilisation of capable volunteers to build long-term capacity for the game of Rugby in Australia.

Increased number of registered volunteers

RIGHT TRAINING

Build Volunteer Capability & Increase Support

Increase volunteer capability and capacity with progression in the Club Impact Program, providing comprehensive learning resources, structured induction programs, mentoring, and succession planning for club committees, leadership and volunteers.

Provide Education & Development Pathways

Enhance the National Learning Management System with courses, education, webinars, and other resources to upskill and support volunteers.

Strengthen Governance & Alignment

Support Clubs and Associations' progression through the Australian Sports Commission Game Plan tool, establish a National Volunteer Advisory Committee, and maintain regular communication with key stakeholders.

Increased number of volunteers undergoing training and accreditation

RIGHT SUPPORT

Coordinate National Recognition & Reward Programs

Develop a coordinated nationwide volunteer recognition and reward framework.

Celebrate Volunteers Through Campaigns & Events

Promote and highlight the impact of volunteers during National Volunteer Week, integrated communication planning and Major Events such as Test Matches, Perth SVNS and Rugby World Cup 2027 & 2029.

Measure & Improve the Volunteer Experience

Implement national surveys and feedback mechanisms to track engagement, satisfaction and progress.

An improved volunteer experience

RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

RECRUIT FOR THE CHANGING VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

DELIVERABLE

1. Strengthen Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

Develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies to increase participation in key volunteer roles including coaching, match officials, club administration, and game day support.

2. Enhance Volunteer Visibility & Promotion

Improve digital platforms (websites, social media) and deliver coordinated national campaigns that highlight the positive impact of volunteers and the crucial role they play in Rugby across the country.

3. Leverage Major Events for Engagement

Leverage Major Events to support recruitment, retention and mobilisation of capable volunteers to build long-term capacity for the game of Rugby in Australia.

ACTIONS

- 1.1. Enhance the Rugby Xplorer volunteer registration process to enable streamlined reporting and clearer visibility of volunteer roles, engagement and workforce capacity across Member Unions, Associations and Rugby Clubs.
 - 1.2. Expand and promote non-playing opportunities for women, Pasifika peoples, First Nations peoples, people with disability and LGBTQ+ communities.
 - 1.3. Develop an online volunteering directory to assist rugby organisations in recruiting and matching volunteers to specific roles.
 - 1.4. Identify and support micro-volunteering positions within clubs and provide roles and responsibilities for formal & informal volunteering positions.
- 2.1. Improve National and Member Union volunteer web pages and their promotion of volunteering across social media channels.
 - 2.2. Raise awareness of informal “helper” volunteers and their key contribution to the game of Rugby.
 - 2.3. Embed club volunteering in National and Member Union communication plans, marketing plans and recruitment & retention initiatives.
 - 2.4. Promote awareness of the importance of gender equity in governance roles at Clubs and Associations (40:40:20) in alignment with the Australian Sports Commission’s Inclusion Strategy.
 - 2.5. Publish an annual “State of Volunteering in Rugby” infographic highlighting volunteer contributions across hours delivered, roles filled and total economic & social value of volunteering to highlight the impact of Volunteering in Rugby.
- 3.1. Partner with the Rugby World Cup Local Organising Committee (2027 & 2029) to deliver a coordinated volunteer program focused on attracting new volunteers while enhancing recognition and retention of current volunteers.
 - 3.2. Celebrate a series of volunteers in the lead up to and during Major Events (Perth SVNS & RWC 2027 & 2029) to demonstrate the benefits and impact volunteering has in rugby.
 - 3.3. Develop a Rugby World Cup volunteer transition program to assist in retaining the Rugby World Cup volunteers into regular Rugby Club & Association volunteers.



RIGHT TRAINING

INCREASING CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY TO HELP REDUCE VOLUNTEER BURDEN

DELIVERABLE

4. Build Volunteer Capability & Increase Support

Increase volunteer capability and capacity with progression in the Club Impact Program, providing comprehensive learning resources, structured induction programs, mentoring, and succession planning for club committees, leadership and volunteers.

5. Provide Education & Development Pathways

Enhance the National Learning Management System with courses, education, webinars, and other resources to upskill and support volunteers.

6. Strengthen Governance & Alignment

Support Clubs and Associations progression through the Australian Sports Commission Game Plan tool, establish a National Volunteer Advisory Committee, and maintain regular communication with key stakeholders.

ACTIONS

- 4.1. Support Rugby Clubs and Associations within the Club Impact Program by providing a comprehensive Volunteer Toolkit with best practice resources, templates and education materials.
- 4.2. Formalise and implement Volunteer Developer and mentoring programs across Coaching, Match Officials & Club Administration.
- 4.3. Develop comprehensive Induction, Onboarding and Succession Planning resources to support the transition for incoming volunteers in key club roles.

- 5.1. Continued investment and improvement in the Rugby Australia Learning Management System (LMS)
- 5.2 Continued development in providing tailored education, accreditation and resources to support volunteers.

- 6.1. Regularly collaborate with Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and State Governments to align our broader volunteer objectives, policies, and resources, whilst building on volunteer experience initiatives.
- 6.2. Establish a National Volunteer Advisory Committee with Member Union and Affiliate engagement to review and provide feedback on national volunteer strategies, policies, and initiatives and the continued evolution and evaluation of the Volunteer Action Plan.



RIGHT SUPPORT

CELEBRATE VOLUNTEERS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE GAME

DELIVERABLE

7. Coordinate National Recognition & Reward Programs

Develop a coordinated nationwide volunteer recognition and reward framework.

8. Celebrate Volunteers Through National Campaigns & Events

Promote and highlight the impact of volunteers during National Volunteer Week, integrated communication planning and Major Events such as Test Matches, Perth SVNS Sevens and Rugby World Cup 2027 & 2029.

9. Measure & Improve the Volunteer Experience

Implement national surveys and feedback mechanisms to track engagement, satisfaction and progress.

ACTIONS

- 7.1. Map existing volunteer reward and recognition initiatives across Rugby Australia and Member Unions, and share best practice examples of volunteer reward and recognition.
- 7.2. Develop a nationally coordinated reward and recognition scheme that highlights National & State Volunteer of the Year recipients as well as local club heroes.

- 8.1. Establish a nationally coordinated set of activities to promote volunteering in Rugby as part of National Volunteer Week.
- 8.2. Create unique experiences for key volunteers identified through the national reward and recognition program.

- 9.1. Design and implement a consistent volunteer survey distributed across all Member Unions, Associations and Clubs each year to collect data on volunteer satisfaction, motivations, challenges, and drivers of retention.
- 9.2. Establish a centralised reporting dashboard for Rugby Australia and Member Unions to track key volunteer metrics.





RUGBY AU

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Rugby AU's National Volunteer Action Plan forms part of Rugby Australia's Rugby World Cup Legacy program, delivered under World Rugby's Impact Beyond initiative, with support from the Australian Government through the Australian Sports Commission.



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