

Wellness Matters at QUT

Wellness Challenge

October 2008



Volunteering

On any given day in Australia, millions of individuals give their time, skills and enthusiasm to help others and create productive, caring communities. Whether it is volunteering for the local sporting club, delivering a meal to the homeless, or working productively to clean up our creeks and waterways, the contribution that many Australians make is vital.

Australia has a rich volunteering history, with its foundations in benevolent societies, and church based organisations who gave support to the less fortunate. Nonprofits such as the Surf-Lifesavers and

Scouts have been around for 100 years, whilst Royal Flying Doctors has an 80 year history. All these organisations have relied heavily on the kindness and work of volunteers over the generations.

However, as society changes rapidly, and our work, family and leisure time responds in relation to many paradoxical factors, our volunteering is changing as well. Volunteering is currently undergoing a period of subtle, but certain change, as individuals engage with communities and give their time in different and innovative ways.

Australia currently has 5.2 million people or approx 35% of its population over 18 years volunteering. This has increased steadily since the first ABS Voluntary Work Survey in 1995 which had a rate of 24%, and 32% in 2000 (ABS Voluntary Work Survey).

There have been increases in the volunteering rate (1995-2006), across all age groups with the 35-44 year age group having the highest rate of volunteering. (ABS 2006 4441.0 Voluntary Work, Australia p 74)

Source : <http://www.volqld.org.au/>

Your challenge this month:

- Discuss with your family or friends a common interest or skill you may share amongst you that you would like to offer to the community. It may be planting trees, being a 'grey mate' to the elderly, providing IT support to an organisation, or providing some entertainment at a Old Age Nursing home.
- Decide on the role you may like to have
- Decide on the time you can allocate each week/month or year to this cause or program
- Contact the organisation or use the [Volunteer Queensland Website](#) to find what you are looking.
- Enjoy providing support and the possibility of making a difference and changing a community