

# **Volunteering WA and Lotterywest**

## **International Volunteer Day Garden Party**

### **Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia**

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the beautiful gardens of Government House, my home. As the Governor and Patron of Volunteering WA, I am delighted to join you this afternoon as we celebrate International Volunteer Day.

International Volunteer Day, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985, is an opportunity “for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, government authorities and the private sector.”

International Volunteer Day also serves as an occasion for communities to acknowledge, celebrate and express their appreciation for the invaluable work of volunteers.

This is the second time I have had the pleasure of attending this event. As Governor of Western Australia, it brings me great joy to participate in the celebration of the enormous contribution of over 600,000 volunteers, who are central to the well-being of the State and the communities we live in.

One of my priorities for my term in office is to acknowledge and celebrate the volunteers and community members who contribute so much to all aspects of community life. Within my community role as Governor, I am privileged to serve as Patron of Volunteering WA and many volunteer involving organisations who work in a variety of sectors, including but not limited to; community, conservation and environment, health and medical research, sporting, and young people.

Through my regular engagement with such organisations and individuals, I often bear witness to the positive power of volunteerism, strengthening, sustaining and providing purpose and joy to volunteers and the broader community.

It is wonderful to have so many of you here today. My sincere thanks to you all. Each of you so generously and selflessly give your time to improve the lives of others, our community, and our environment. Our State is the better for your invaluable time and energy.

The theme of International Volunteer Day 2019, ‘volunteer for an inclusive future’ touches upon the universal and accessible nature of volunteerism. Volunteerism can encourage and enhance civic engagement, social inclusion, solidarity and empowerment.

Volunteers directly contribute to a bright, inclusive future and are integral to the pursuit and achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The positive effects of volunteerism are felt more acutely in the rural communities of Western Australia where volunteering is viewed as 'essential to both the survival and success of rural communities.' Within these communities, many essential services are delivered by volunteers.

I have been inspired by countless men and women I've met on my Regional Visit Program, across all corners of our vast State, who give so selflessly of their time and talent to volunteer in emergency services, schools, community groups, and more.

Amidst changing demographic shifts and other challenges in both rural and metropolitan communities, it is important that we continue to celebrate, champion and encourage the importance and value of volunteerism today and every day.

I understand that nominations for the 2020 WA Volunteer of the Year Awards will open from early February next year and I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to celebrate and recognise the work of a volunteer you know by nominating them for an award.

I encourage you to also consider nominating worthy volunteers for recognition within the Order of Australia. Information on how to nominate someone in the Australian Honours and Awards can be found on the Government House website.

I am also pleased to know that the National Volunteering Conference in 2020 will be hosted in Western Australia early next year. I am advised that this will be the first time in 25 years that the Conference is held in our State.

Finally, my congratulations to Volunteering WA and Lotterywest for putting on such a successful event today, highlighting the extraordinary contribution of all attendees.

I thank and commend you all for helping shape our vibrant communities. Thank you and enjoy the festivities.