



## IS THERE AN AGE LIMIT FOR VOLUNTEERS? JANUARY 2010

There is no universally determined age limit that dictates the ages of volunteers. However, organisations should consider a number of issues when developing volunteer roles, to help them in deciding whether it is appropriate to include age limits for specific volunteer roles.

Areas for consideration include:

**Risk** – some volunteer roles will have certain levels of risk attached to them, which may make them inappropriate for very young volunteers.

**Insurance** – there may be an age limit specified in the organisations volunteer insurance policies.

**Supervision** – it may be considered that there would not be adequate supervision and support available for the position to be appropriate for youth volunteers.

**Government funding** - if an organisation receives funding from government, the funding contract may specify that volunteers are within a certain age bracket.

Alternatively, many organisations will encourage young adolescents to volunteer because they wish to involve all age groups in their programs and ensure they have an inclusive volunteer program. Similarly, they might encourage families to volunteer and so benefit from the involvement from cross-generational skills and energy.

Australia has an ageing population and we know that older people post retirement, as well as people over the age of 80 are still choosing to volunteer. This demographic of volunteers offer organisations skills and experience and an undiminished desire to contribute to society and their communities.

In line with the principles of equity, Volunteering Australia recommends that recruitment of volunteers be in accord with the **Age Discrimination Act 2004**. For more information visit the Australian Human Rights Commission website: [www.humanrights.gov.au/age/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/age/index.html)