



Giving Australia 2016

INDIVIDUALS

Religion, giving and volunteering

How important is religion to the charitable sector in Australia?

Around one-third of all charities in Australia are religious charities, with advancing religion as their primary purpose and ‘religious activities’ as their main activities.¹ Many more charities have a religious philosophy or history.

What role does religion play in Australian giving and volunteering?

Substantial money and time are given to religious charities. The *Individual giving and volunteering* survey estimated that 23.5% of givers each donated \$932.50 on average to religious charities in the 12 months prior to interview, and 18.3% of volunteers gave 119 hours in the year on average to religious organisations.

This equates to \$3.2 billion being donated to religious organisations in a year, or 28% of all donations. Seventeen per cent of all volunteer hours went to religious organisations, an estimated 161 million hours over a 12 month period.

Some 681,574 people volunteered for religious organisations, with 47 volunteers per organisation on average. This is the largest total of any sector, and more than 100,000 more volunteers than the next largest sector, social services.¹

I've always had a regime of donations, part to the church, part to the community...and one of the reasons I support the church is just so it can do that, fulfil that role of community support.
- Interview, *Everyday giver*, QLD

How does identification with religion affect giving behaviours?

People identifying with a religion were more likely to give, even to non-religious causes. There was no difference in the amount donated to non-religious organisations for those that identified with a religion compared to those that did not.

Table 1: Average annual donation to religious and non-religious organisations

	Religious organisations	Non-religious organisations	All organisations
Identified with a religion	\$1,006.36	\$599.31	\$1,000.81
Not identified with a religion	\$185.90 ^{**}	\$545.97	\$551.47
All donors	\$932.50	\$566.96	\$764.08

^{**} The number of respondents is too small to achieve an acceptable confidence level, so caution is needed with this figure.

On top of the amount donated to non-religious causes, those who identified with a religion also gave significant amounts to religious organisations. This boosted their total average donations to a much higher level.

The average annual amount donated to religious, non-religious and all organisations increased as attendance at religious services increased.

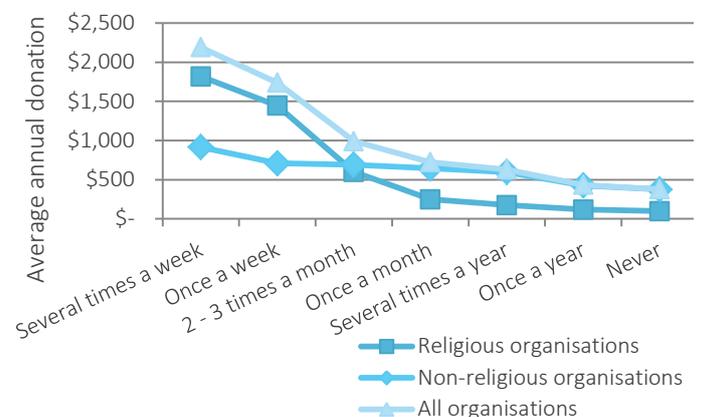


Figure 1: Average annual donation to religious, non-religious and all organisations by religious attendance



How does identification with religion affect volunteering behaviours?

Forty-eight per cent of people surveyed who identified with a religion volunteered, compared to 40.7% of those who did not identify with a religion.

Table 2: Average annual volunteering hours per volunteer to religious and non-religious organisations

	Religious organisations	Non-religious organisations	All organisations
Identified with a religion	121	127	145
Not identified with a religion	50 ^{††}	123	123
All volunteers	119	125	134

^{††} The number of respondents is too small to achieve an acceptable confidence level, so caution is needed with this figure.

Identification with a religion did not impact whether or not someone will volunteer for a non-religious organisation or the average number of hours volunteered for non-religious organisations.

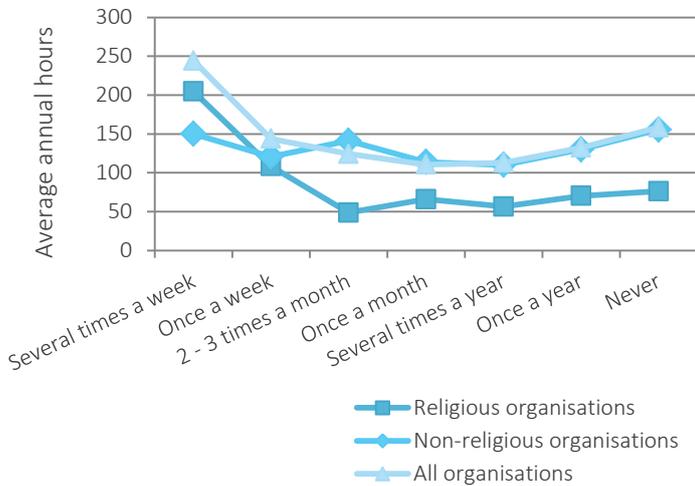


Figure 2: Average annual volunteering hours to religious, non-religious and all organisations by religious attendance

Those who attended religious services several times a week volunteered the highest number of hours to religious organisations. Those who identified with a religion but never attended services volunteered the greatest number of average annual hours to non-religious causes.

I've always believed that giving is important in my life particularly from a Christian faith background, giving both financially and volunteering with skills and abilities.

- Interview, Everyday giver, QLD

¹ Cortis, Young, Powell, Reeve, Simnett, Ho and Ramia, 2016. Australian Charities Report 2015: Centre for Social Impact and Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia. http://www.csi.edu.au/media/Australian_Charity_Report_2015_Web_ND8D_U2P.pdf.

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