

WORKPLACE GIVING AUSTRALIA
Making giving part of everyday life

GIVING RESEARCH & INSIGHTS 2024

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS



“The purpose of business is to solve the problems of people and planet profitably, and not profit from causing problems.” *Principles for Purposeful Business Report, The British Academy, 2019*

Introduction

Research into workplace giving allows us to gain a more holistic understanding of emerging workforce trends and community expectations and an appreciation of the corporation's role in philanthropy. Our studies explore why individuals give at work and insights that can inform corporations' and charitable organisations' approaches to engaging donors in the workplace.

Australians are generous, with over 80% of people having given financially to charities¹. However, only a small percentage at 1.5%, are giving through the workplace².

Who is Workplace Giving Australia?

Workplace Giving Australia is the leading organisation advocating to Drive Change and Enable Giving through successful workplace giving programs, with the purpose to make giving part of everyday life in Australia. We advocate for workplace giving as the most effective way for working Australians to support charity. We work with organisations to make a positive impact on the charity sector in Australia and provide reliable and sustainable funding for charities.

Workplace Giving Australia is a charity that invests in research, educational events, and campaigns such as Workplace Giving Month and The Australian Workplace Giving Awards.

About The Study

To check the pulse of employees, we asked 23 questions to 2,007 Australians surveyed from a panel provided by Insights Portal across city, regional, and rural Australia, which asked them to provide their thoughts and attitudes to giving, which has allowed us to highlight and understand recent trends. All respondents were representative of the population, with a broad age distribution, size of business they worked in, various states and territories around the country, and of working age (i.e. over 18) and employed (full-time, part-time or casual) at the time of the survey. The survey was completed in January 2024.

Workplace Giving Australia conducts regular research. The 2023 results and insights are available to be viewed and bookmarked [here](#).

Executive Summary

Individual and corporate philanthropy continues to be central to the Australian community. However, combining employees and workplaces to create amplified giving opportunities still needs greater focus. This research shows how workplace giving can benefit the individual, the employer, charities, and the

¹ McCrindle “Key Influencers Shaping the NFP Landscape” report 2024 et al.

² FY21/22 ATO report



wider community. The following findings show the vast opportunity and untapped potential for giving at work.

In the [2023 Workplace Giving Australia Donor Insight Report](#), five key insights were observed, and this year's work sees an evolution that builds on these, which remain as valid today as they were a year ago. It's no secret that demands on corporate Australia are evolving, and the pressure on boards and executives is increasing.

The focus on corporate foundations, the push for legitimacy through public pledges and badging, the debates on the role of the corporation in the community, and the rise in awareness of the workforce participants are all real. It is with that context that Workplace Giving Australia has identified five critical insights for 2024, namely:

Insight #1: Failing to Involve the Workforce Is a Failing Strategy

Insight #2: Workplace Giving Brings Company DNA Back to Life

Insight #3: Use The KISS Principle - Offer Simplicity in Giving

Insight #4: ESG? It's Time to Focus on the S

Insight #5: Volunteering: Dollar Match, Not Matchmaking



FIVE KEY INSIGHTS

Insight #1 – Failing To Involve the Workforce Is a Failing Strategy

Corporate involvement with their workforce in giving increases engagement in the workforce³, reduces attrition and increases productivity and innovation. Furthermore, corporate participation in the community enhances the reputation and company brand, leading to higher sales at better prices⁴.

In this context, it is unsurprising that there has been a general increase in corporations seeking to align themselves with doing good or charitable causes. This has seen more participation by companies in charitable pledging, in the creation of corporate foundations, and in ‘simulated certifications’ acclaiming their desired position⁵.

However, there is a corresponding increase in the scepticism of those employed and the general public on the genuine selflessness of these activities, compounded by the often-obvious corporate motive to virtue signalling. The spectre of a repeat of the recent greenwashing fiasco that hit companies globally as incidents of charity washing emerge is relevant and significant.

Hence, while done well and correctly, corporate engagement in its community must be genuine and viewed positively. It must also increase internal engagement and encourage consumer preference for its products and services. The evidence shows that top-down, ESG strategically selective, and isolated efforts are not only ineffective but can also exert a negative influence on reputation and standing.

What Is the Current State of Play for Workplace Giving?

In FY22 there were a total of 13.8m workers employed in Australia. We know from the most recent release of ATO data that 204,458 people gave through their pay at work that year totalling just over \$50m (not including company matching) with the average donation size across all market segments being \$245. Despite the incredibly low uptake in workplace giving, there were 6,323 employers with a total of 4.7m employees having access to a workplace giving program.

³ For example, see “The Relationship between perceptions of corporate citizenship and organisational commitment” by Dane K Peterson, Southwest Missouri State University, Business & Society, Vol. 43 No. 3, September 2004 296-319 DOI: 10.1177/0007650304268065

⁴ Reference also impact on ROA for example: “The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Financial Performance” G Giannarakakis, G Konteoa, E Zafeiriou and X Partalidou Investment Management and Financial Innovations, Volume 13, Issue 3, 2016

⁵ In 2020 there were 2,893 US Corporate Foundations. In 2023 there were 160 corporate foundations in the UK and 39 in Australia per Shane Genziuk & Michael Polonsky (21 Mar 2024): Motivations for Establishing a Corporate Foundation in Australia, Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, DOI: 10.1080/10495142.2024.2330616



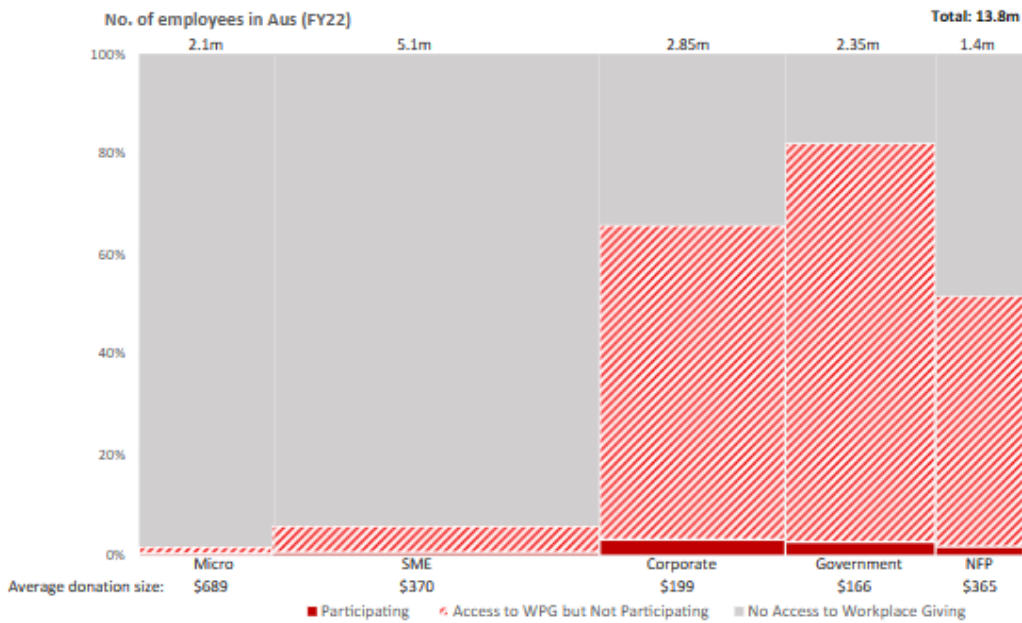


Image source: Chart supplied by [Bain & Company](#) and Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Employee with Workplace Giving donations 2021–22 income years.

Current Giving Amounts

Our recent research shows that 23% of respondents did not currently give financially at all, and 28% gave under \$50 annually, with 49% giving more than \$50 annually. This amount is much lower than the annual average for donations through workplace giving, which suggests that the small consistent amounts given regularly through payroll giving is a much better outcome for charities.

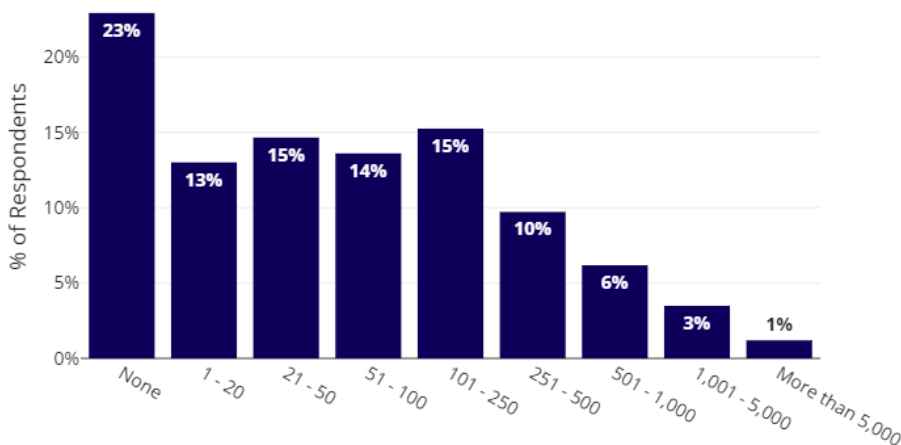


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)

Corporate and Individual Giving

Survey data from a 2021 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report (citing various sources including ABS & 2016 Giving Australia study) estimated that in 2015–16: Australian businesses gave \$17.5 billion: \$6.2 billion in donations; \$7.7 billion in community partnerships; \$3.6 billion in non-



commercial sponsorships. The report went on to find that in 2015–16, Australians reported donating \$557 on average per household, equating to around \$5 billion as cash gifts and donations (ABS 2017). This compares with \$2.9 billion claimed as a tax-deductible donation by taxpayers in the same year.

Current Giving Frequency

When asked 'which of the following best describes your giving?' 67% of respondents gave on an ad hoc basis. This means there is an opportunity to promote giving in the workplace to provide routine or regular giving opportunities to the workforce and provide much-needed regular income to charities. Furthermore, when appeals (disaster, festive giving) arise, there may be an easy take-up of the workplace giving program and increasing overall participation.

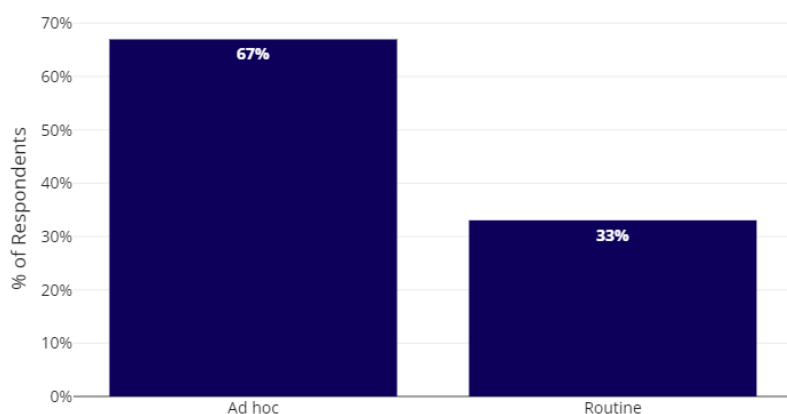


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*

Key Actions for Insight #1 'Failing to Involve the Workforce Is a Failing Strategy'

60% of workplaces have workplace giving programs, 80% of people are already giving directly to charities and 1.5% of workers are giving through their workplace. The missed opportunity to increase the dollar amount through regular giving and adding corporate matching is significant.

The key actions for workplace giving stakeholders are:

1. Corporates to ensure an engaging program is in place and tell your employees about it
2. Charities to communicate with their general donor base about the opportunity to have their existing donation doubled through regular workplace giving
3. Employees to ask for workplace giving and matching from their employer.

Further Reading on the Current State of Play:

- [McCrindle The Not For Profit Landscape March 2024](#)
- [JBWere NAB Charitable Giving Index August 2023](#)
- [CAF Charitable World Giving Index 2023](#)
- [JBWere Corporate Support Report February 2022](#)



Insight #2 - Workplace Giving Brings Company DNA Back to Life

It's All in The Genes

Data provided by the Australian Taxation Office ([ATO](#)) indicates that over 60% of large organisations in Australia have a giving program. Despite this, these programs' participation rate of uptake is below 5% overall. We also know that strategic programs regularly have participation rates of over 50%, and some programs achieve 75% and above. Given the benefits to the community, employees, and the corporation, it is surprising that many firms invest in the infrastructure rather than outcomes.

Workplace Giving Australia has worked with many of these organisations over the years with [case studies](#) featuring success stories that include several common features:

- Senior leadership endorsement and regular communication to employees
- The workplace giving program is at the core of the human capital agenda (most often through People and Culture, even if also contributed to by ESG)
- Employee-driven and consultation of cause areas and/or charities
- Evident impact stories with a strong connection to program beneficiaries
- Sufficiently resourced and funded.

From The Top Down

The 2024 research sought to understand more of what it meant to have a program that could create the engagement and participation that stood out in the market. The results confirmed that the successful programs could all point to workplace giving being a core element of the firm's cultural DNA as a deliberate decision from the executive. Conversely, those floundering had often invested in a technology solution without embedding the process nor allocating the ongoing resources and support.

Does Giving at Work Play a Role in Engagement & Talent Retention?

Put simply, yes. This research outlines that giving at work plays a critical role in talent acquisition, engagement, and retention. Furthermore, with a diverse and ever-changing workforce that demands more from employers than ever before, it's important to meet and exceed these expectations.

Although just over a third of people responded unsure, the good news is that this research highlighted that another 34% of workers are more likely to remain with their employer where they see active support for their community from that employer.



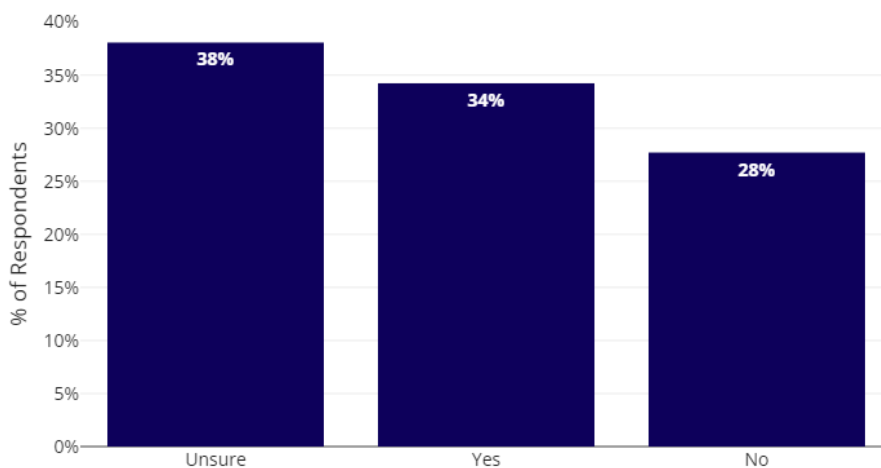


Image source: Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024

What Makes a Standout Program?

The keys to success are relatively simple. Communicate with staff regularly and with commitment. Make it simple and easy to engage and convey that workplace giving is part of what the corporate community does. Engage the workforce in the decisions that influence where the money goes and which areas the firm supports. Finally, recognise that matching remains an important component in the program, with a lack of commitment from the employer being seen as a negative for engagement⁶.

For matching, it is noted that the average worker donation for large enterprise employees is c.\$200⁷. Hence, for a firm of, say, 10,000 workers, the total cost of matching, if uncapped and assuming participation at 50%, would be in the order of \$1 million. While not insignificant, the relativity of this amount compared to the estimated \$1.22 billion the top 50 Australian companies alone contributed to the community in the same period but without the employee benefit is small (c.4% of the average total).

For more on the importance of matching see insight #5 below.

What Are the Barriers to Giving at Work?

51% of respondents stated that the most significant barrier to participating in workplace giving was 'lack of communication and understanding around the program'. This outcome is consistent with Workplace Giving Australia's experience in the market and with academic studies in the area.

Having invested in the base, organisations have a real opportunity to educate their employees about their workplace giving program and leverage this as a social engagement and talent retention opportunity.

⁶ Workplace Giving Australia found that 65% of its clients use matching. All of these match dollar for dollar with their employees.

⁷ Per ATO data for 2021-22 tax year



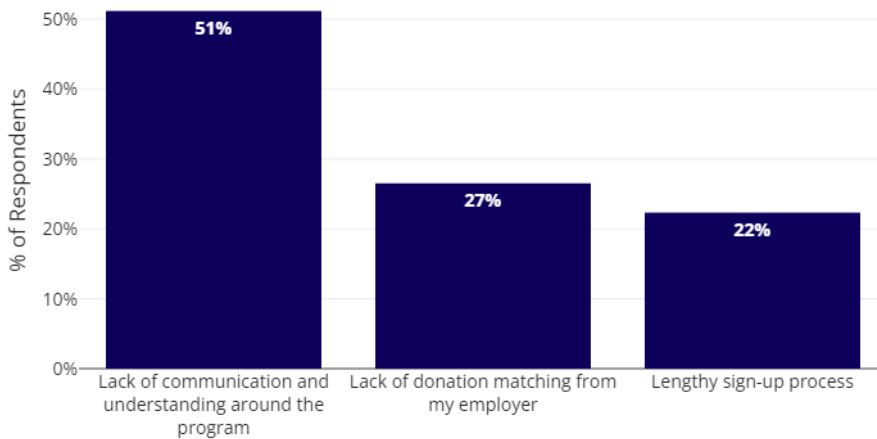


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*

What Do People Care About?

51% of respondents would like to be involved in cause area selection. This means that just over half of the workforce is interested in the cause and has a genuine social concern. This creates a huge opportunity for employers to engage with staff and commence meaningful conversations. Furthermore, there may be an opportunity to do the same with brand consumers (although consumers did not directly form part of this study).

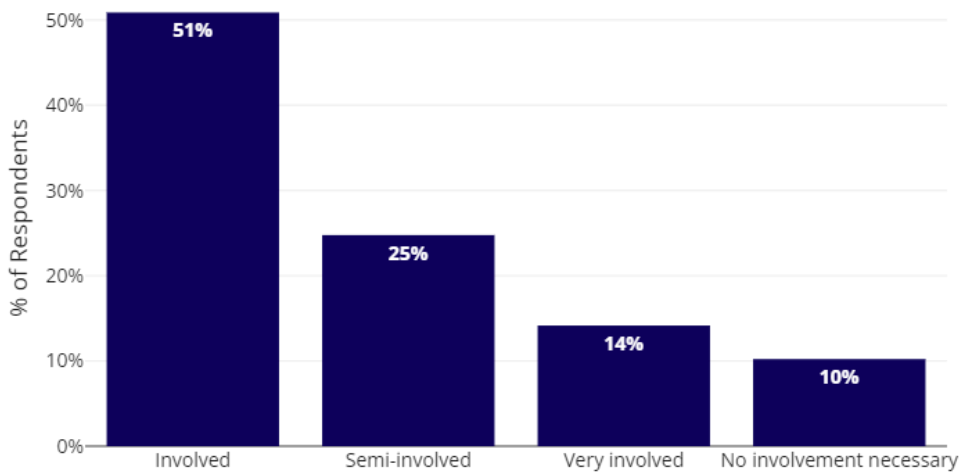


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*



Key Actions for Insight #2 ‘Workplace Giving Brings Company DNA Back to Life’

Given the top reason for low uptake in workplace giving programs is lack of awareness, Workplace Giving Australia recommended a point of choice approach to ensure all employees are aware and understand the benefits so they can make a collective difference to causes they care about. Key actions to set up ‘point of choice’ in a workplace giving program:

1. During employee onboarding include a mandatory question that must be answered before moving on to complete the induction process
2. Use your existing HR/People and Culture platforms to facilitate the point of choice
3. Reinforce this with a people element and include in an early conversation that can help answer any questions about the program and increase trust.

Further Reading on Talent & Engagement:

- [2023 Workplace Giving Australia Donor Insight Report](#)
- [Workplace Giving Australia The Network: SEEK & ANZ Bank Explore Workplace Giving To Increase Talent Engagement 2023](#)
- [LinkedIn Data Insights: Boomers, Not Zoomers, Are the Most Purpose-Driven Generation March 2024](#)
- [Workplace Giving Australia & Social Impact Hub 2018 JB Hi-Fi Business Benefits Research: Staff Giving Stay Longer 2018](#)
- [Strive Philanthropy Submission to Productivity Commission May 2023](#) showing:
 - Engaged employees = 26% higher revenue per employee and 13% higher return to shareholders
 - Companies with giving programs = 2.3 times the employee retention rate

Further Reading on What People Care About:

- [JBWere Corporate Support Report February 2022](#) showing growth in sustainable investment: 6% of all professionally managed funds now using some sustainability strategy in asset selection process (up from 28% in 2016)
- [McCrindle The Rise of Conscious Consumers August 2020](#) showing:
 - 61% see the authenticity of the brand as important
 - 41% want to buy from a brand that aligns with their personal values.



Insight #3 – Use The KISS Principle - Offer Simplicity in Giving

Successful workplace giving programs deliver significant benefits. Getting the details right for an organisation requires a unique solution that reflects the desires and passions of the workforce, the aims of the corporation, and consideration for the communities in which they operate.

The balance between critical elements such as payroll giving enablement, fundraising activities, communications, charitable impact, and volunteering is critical. However, the evidence provides all programs with guidance on what matters to deliver success.

What Were the Reasons to Give Within the Workplace?

In this ever-complex world, people crave an easy solution. The research highlights this, with giving simplicity and organisational culture and community top the list of why someone would give within the workplace.

The top responses were in order:

- ‘giving simplicity’ 29%
- ‘organisational culture and community’ 24%
- ‘donation matching’ 17%
- ‘sense of personal purpose’ 15%
- ‘automated donation scheme’ 8%
- ‘increased impact’ 7%.

There is a dual opportunity for workplaces to not only assist to simplify employees lives in an ever-changing world, but at the same time, build organisational culture and tap into communities that surround the business.

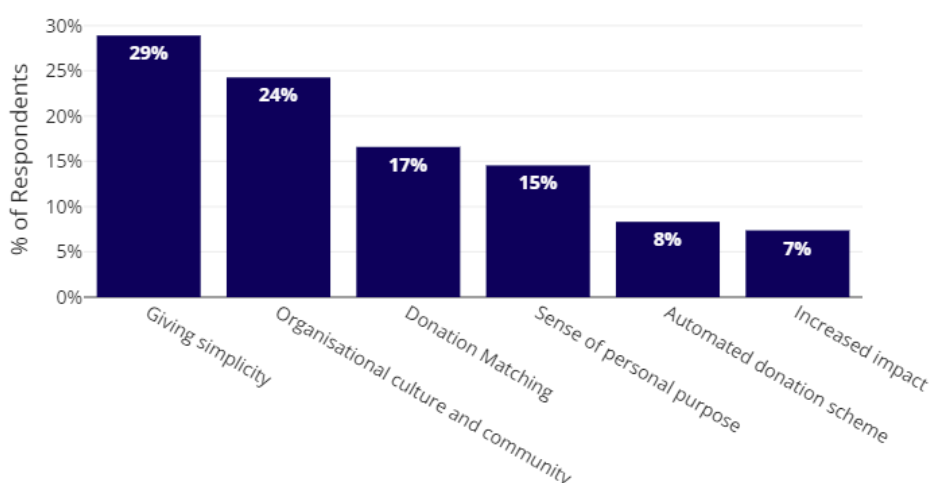


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)



Charitable Giving Attitudes: Provide Impact Stories Over Asks

When asked the question, ‘to what extent do you agree with the following statements when it comes to charitable giving?’ the number one result at 55% was ‘when making a donation, this is not a licence to take my details and use it to ask for more’, followed by ‘charity communications should focus on stories of impact and the difference my donation has made to the community’ at 21%. Further down was ‘I like working with my colleagues to raise funds and make an impact (e.g. events, volunteering together)’, then ‘I chose to work for organisations that have a strong connection to community, including through charitable works’, and lastly, ‘Working with my colleagues concentrates the impact by focusing funds on fewer, more impactful charities’.

The key takeaway reminds all stakeholders that interacting with donors, focusing on stories of impact is where the value lies. Charities have a fundamentally different relationship with donors through the workplace than their usual fundraising routes – they need to understand that the employer/company becomes the central contact point to reach donors through engaging impact stories.

Opportunities for in-person connections, such as charity market days, employee benefit/rewards events, lunch and learns and so on, can provide a chance to build direct relationships with employees. Volunteering is often thought of as a ‘go to’ connection point, however for some charities volunteering placement can prove difficult due to the type of cause and red tape involved. Direct connections such as these can provide alternatives.

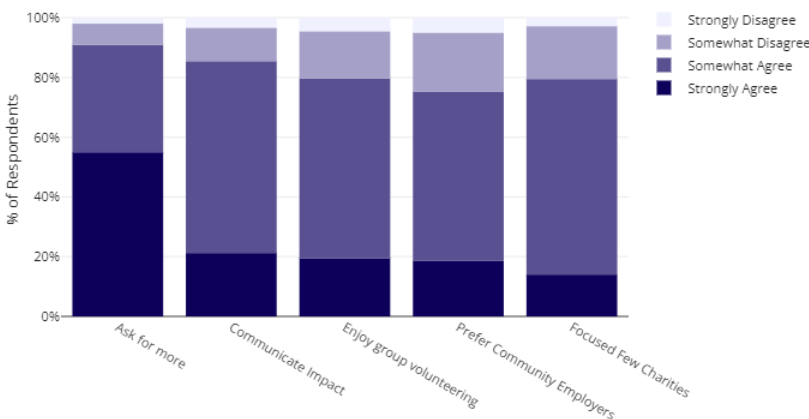


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)



Communications Preferences – Drop Me A Line... If You Want

When prompted ‘how interested are you in having direct contact with the charity or charities, you support?’ 45% responded it was welcomed but not necessary.

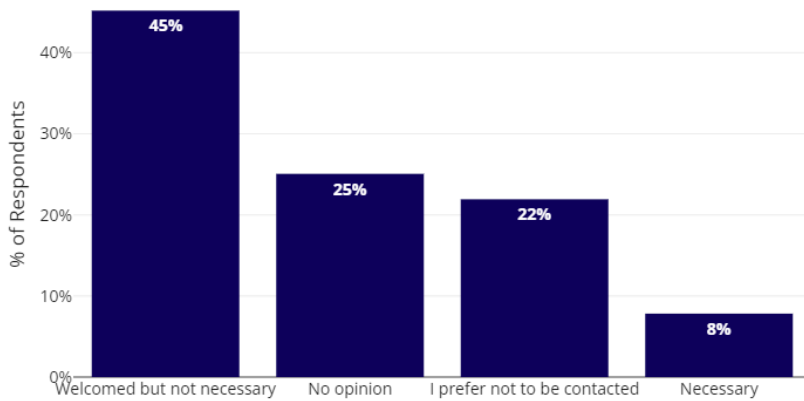


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*

And when asked about the channel (‘how would you prefer updates on progress made by the charities supported by you to be delivered?’), this was almost an even split, with 51% ‘nominated contact directly to me’ over ‘via my employer’.

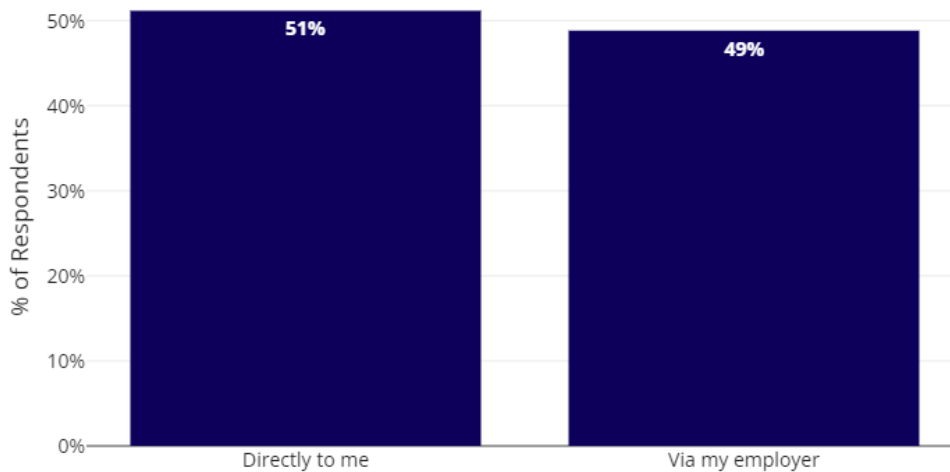


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*



Key Actions for Insight #3 - 'Use the KISS Principle – Offer Simplicity in Giving'

Both corporates and charities need to understand that there is a unique relationship that charities have with donors in workplace giving programs and it is not necessarily the traditional route of communication.

There is a perceived 'barrier' with the employer becoming the main point of contact with the beneficiaries of the program, and donors need ways to interact and connect with their charities to attract and retain the engagement within the program.

Key actions to offer simplicity in giving:

1. Simple and straightforward sign-up process
2. Create an engagement and impact communication plan within corporate and charity partnerships for your workplace giving program
3. Set up a 'marketplace' or day where charities can come in and meet your people to connect and share their impact stories.

Further Reading on Why People Give:

- [More Growth \(More Strategic\) submission to Productivity Commission](#) showing:
- 50% expression of good fortune so in a position to help others
- 35% provides purpose and meaning
- 34% gratitude for the commitment and efforts of others to create change
- 28% expression of self-identity (caring, compassionate, supportive, hopeful, and helpful).



Insight #4 – ESG? It's Time to Focus on the S

The study shows that the workforce reports concern over their employers getting it wrong. From the emphasis on the environment in ESG to overestimating the impact of expected actions, it is time to reassess our actions. Similarly, commentary in the media, more broadly, targets corporations making statements and taking positions that are seen as overreaching or boastful. This warns corporate Australia to tread with confidence but care when dealing with their philanthropic and community connections.

It is worth repeating that experience indicates that workplace giving and corporate involvement in community causes are more strongly aligned with Human Performance than with ESG. Regardless, your people expect you to be more focused on the social elements of ESG than is currently the case. This is more important, as many want to see at least an equal focus.

ESG Priorities: The Employee Perspective

When asked 'how should companies prioritise their environmental and social efforts?', 39% of respondents said there should be an equal focus in prioritising environmental and social issues, but only just, with 37% nominating social issues over environmental as the most important priority.

This means that within the ESG space, social issues are just as important to employees, if not more so, than environmental. Focusing on people seems to be the expectation, with environment possibly seen as being taken care of with existing business requirements and targets.

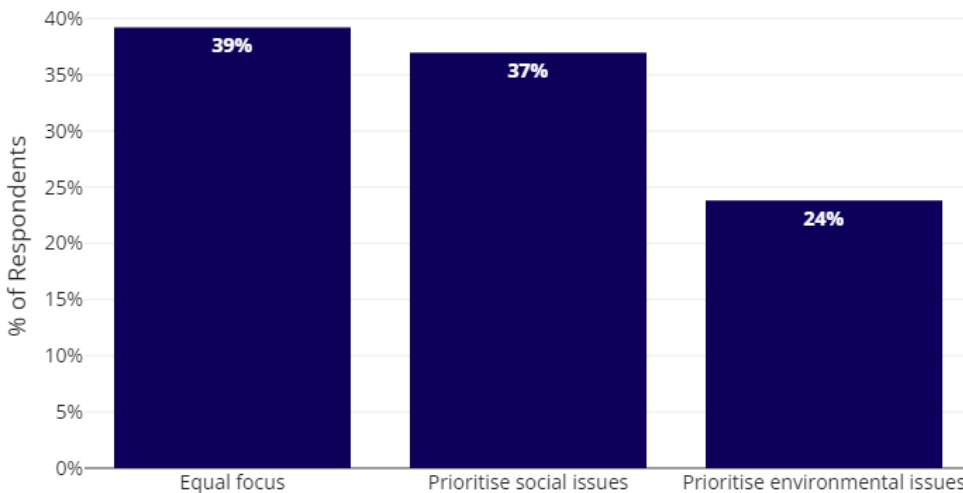


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)

Giving % Of Profits?

Wanting to explore the pledging of corporate profits, when asked 'organisations giving 1% of company profit to charitable causes is?', 54% of respondents said it was 'a good start and good to see'. With over half of people like organisations pledging company profit as a 'good start'. There are further opportunities here for organisations to build good goodwill and align with brand, whilst also doing good.



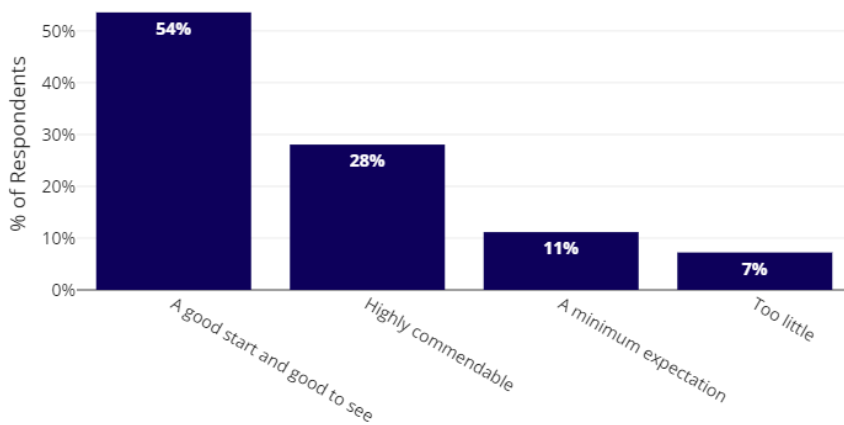


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)

Key Actions for Insight #4- 'ESG? It's Time to Focus on the S'

1. Review current ESG strategies and understand where the emphasis is sitting
2. Create a stakeholder group that involves 'S' departments – People & Culture, Marketing, Branding etc, to ensure that people become the centre of decision making
3. Present findings to Boards or decision-making committees and bring all parties along this critical journey.

Further Reading On 1% Pledge:

- [Atlassian Foundation & 1% Pledge submission to Productivity Commission March 2023](#)



Insight #5 – Volunteering: Dollar Matching, Not Matchmaking

Matching is regularly evidenced as a primary driver for engagement in workplace giving by the workforce and was a key finding in the [2023 Workplace Giving Donor Insights Research](#) as a key driver to participate and give at work. While the ability to create social connections is significant, matching continues to be a critical element in successful programs.

Drivers When Giving At Work

When asked the question, 'How can your employer enable and enhance your charitable activities?', donation matching and team fundraising were ranked highest at 24%, then ability to make pre-tax donations from pay (22%), then my employer helps me make it easy to know which charity to give to, and lastly my employer matches my volunteer hours with dollar matching.

With donation matching and team volunteering still the leading factors when donating, enabling and promoting company matching is key.

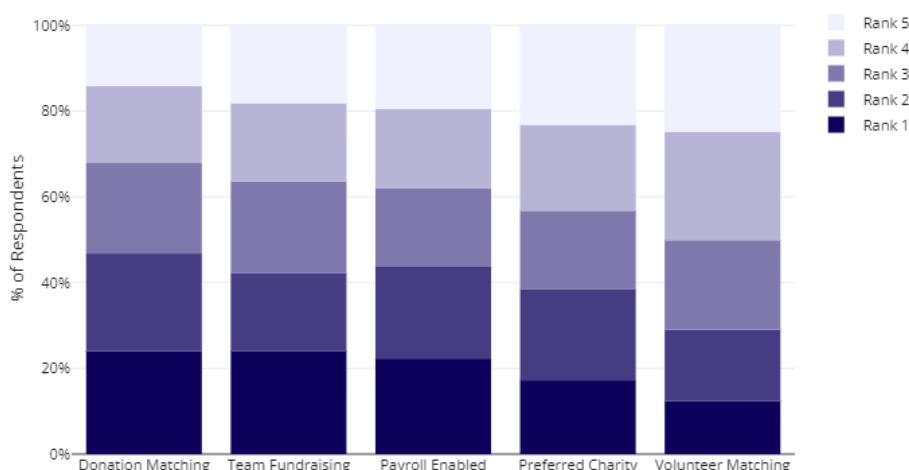


Image source: [Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024](#)

Volunteering & The Workplace

When asked 'how would you prefer your employer to partner with you in volunteering?', volunteering outside of work hours with employer matching hours for dollars was ranked highest, with second being volunteering opportunities through the staff portal at work with the employer also offering volunteering matching (dollars for hours). The results show that matching volunteering hours for dollars is most important regardless of how the volunteering is booked.



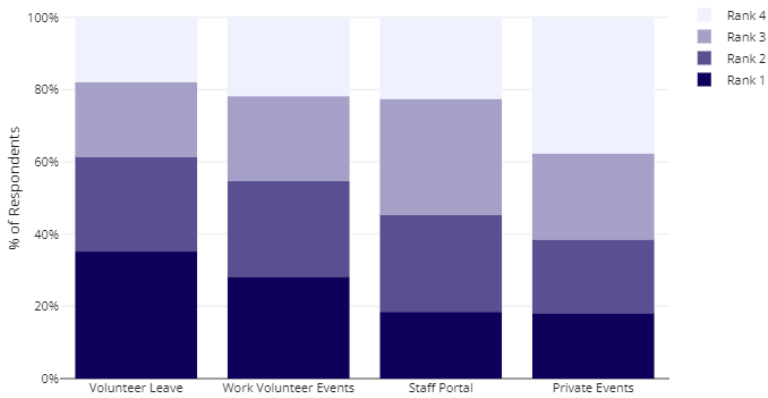


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*

Preferred Volunteering Type

When prompted ‘what is your preferred type of volunteering?’, 42% had no preference for skilled or unskilled volunteering.

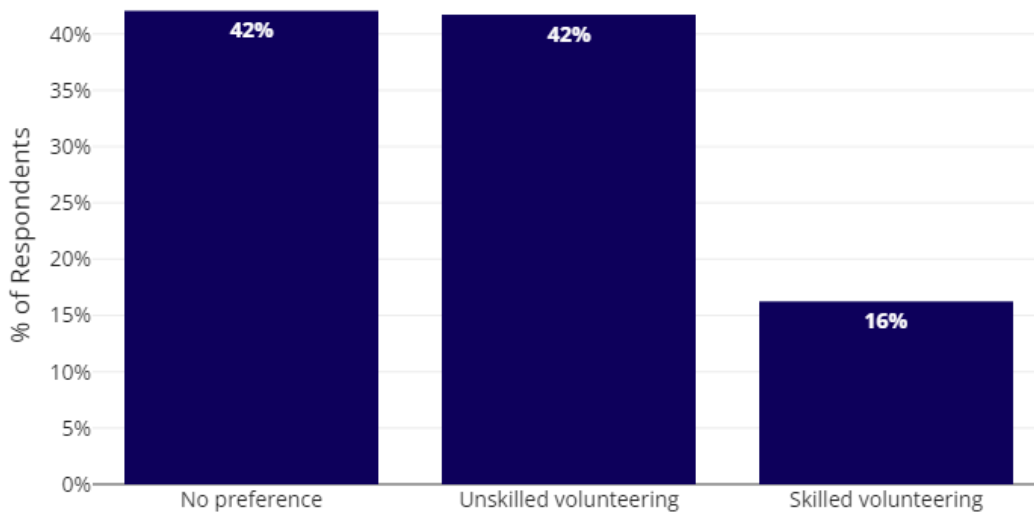


Image source: *Workplace Giving Australia, Giving Research & Insights 2024*



Key Actions for Insight #5 - 'Volunteering: Dollar Matching, Not Matchmaking'

Volunteering requirements for corporates and volunteering needs for charities are not always aligned. It is important to understand the motivation or outcome and the initial impulse to seek volunteering opportunities.

Key actions to ensure your volunteering activity provides better outcomes for all stakeholders:

1. Consider what volunteering means to your organisation and what the motivations are
2. Are there alternative ways to provide engagement with charitable causes or beneficiaries of your program to encourage uptake in giving?
3. Enable a matching program for individuals' efforts in eligible volunteering activities.

Comment from the CEO

"As this most recent data shows, workplace giving should be an essential part of corporate DNA. To have a program in place is just the bare minimum, and we know that employees and the wider community expect so much more. We encourage all stakeholders to dive into these critical findings, reflect, and adjust their approach to keep up with these new giving trends. We look forward to working with all Australian corporates to leverage their talent, communities, and goodwill to make giving part of everyday life."

David Mann, CEO, Workplace Giving Australia

With Thanks

Workplace Giving Australia gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the [Workplace Giving Network](#) members and our [corporate partners](#). Without their support, our advocacy activities would not be possible.

Where To Next?

To learn how to [create and improve a workplace giving program](#), join a [network of charities and corporates driving change](#), enable [online giving](#) in your workplace, provide [Grants Services](#) to your community or explore [Foundation Account Services](#), contact a workplace giving expert [here](#).

Contact Workplace Giving Australia

workplacegiving.org.au

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