COUNTRY GUIDE



OCEANIA

Australia.

Australian law is made mostly by states and territories. The Northern Territory Criminal Code makes it an offense to callously fail to rescue a person urgently in need, and civil liability laws in several jurisdictions protect people who help in emergencies. The federal tax law allows deductions for gifts to listed recipients, and the federal government funded a National Strategy for Volunteering.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Varies by region

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
Varies by region

GIVING AND SERVICE
4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

VARIES BY REGION

Section 155 of the Northern Territory Criminal Code Act 1983 makes it an offense for a person able to provide rescue, resuscitation, medical treatment, first aid or succour to a person urgently in need, whose life may be endangered if it is not provided, to callously fail to do so, with a maximum of 7 years imprisonment. The sources checked did not verify a comparable offense in other jurisdictions.

Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT), as in force at October 12, 2026 (Northern Territory Legislation)

Are people who help protected?

VARIES BY REGION

A 2007 Queensland Parliamentary Library brief describes Good Samaritan civil liability laws in all jurisdictions except Tasmania, including Part 8 of the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW), section 31B of the Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) and section 8 of the Personal Injuries (Liabilities and Damages) Act (NT); current texts should be checked. In Queensland, section 16 of the Law Reform Act 1995 protects medical practitioners, nurses and prescribed persons giving emergency care in good faith without gross negligence and without fee, and the Civil Liability Act 2003 protects prescribed public safety entities and their workers under ss. 26 and 27.

Civil Liability (Good Samaritan) Amendment Bill 2007 (Qld), Research Brief (Queensland Parliamentary Library) · Law Reform Act 1995 (Qld), as in force August 31, 2017 (Queensland Legislation) · Civil Liability Act 2003 (Qld) (Queensland Legislation)

How the government promotes giving and service

Tax deductions for gifts (Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, Division 30)

Division 30 sets out gifts or contributions that can be deducted, with tables of deductible gift recipients across areas such as health, education, research and welfare.

FEDERAL REGISTER OF LEGISLATION

National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033

Led by Volunteering Australia and, per its published page, funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services; an Action Plan 2024-2027 follows.

VOLUNTEERING AUSTRALIA

Protection of those who help in the Northern Territory (Criminal Code s 155A)

It is a crime to unlawfully assault, obstruct or hinder a person who is providing rescue, resuscitation, medical treatment, first aid or succour to a third person.

NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATION

Queensland protection for food donors and volunteers (Civil Liability Act 2003, ss 38A and 39)

A food donor does not incur civil liability for harm from donated food that was safe when it left their possession, and volunteers doing community work in good faith are protected from personal civil liability, subject to the Act's conditions.

QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION

Ways to give and volunteer

Australia has a national regulator and a public register of charities, so you can check almost any charity in a minute. Many community services are run by religious bodies, which this list does not recommend.

Check a charity before you give

The free national register run by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, where you can search a charity by name or ABN and see what it does.

ACNC Charity Register

Give your time

Volunteering Australia

The national peak body for volunteering, with links to state volunteering centers.

GoVolunteer
A national volunteer search site run by Volunteering Australia where nonprofits list local roles.

Australian Red Cross
The national Red Cross society, which recruits volunteers for emergency services, community programs and blood collection support.

Give money, blood or a donation

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood
The national blood, plasma and platelet donation service, where you can book a donation.

DonateLife
The national organ and tissue donation program, with the Australian Organ Donor Register for people aged 16 and over.

Foodbank Australia
The country's largest food relief network, which collects food and funds and supplies charities and schools.

Philanthropy Australia
The national body for giving, with guidance on community foundations and giving funds.

In an emergency or a crisis

Triple Zero (000)
The official page for Australia's emergency number for police, fire and ambulance.

Lifeline
A national 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention service reached on 13 11 14.

Before you act

- After bushfires and floods, scam appeals and fake charity collectors appear, so check the charity on the ACNC register and give directly on its own website.
- Door-to-door and street collectors should carry identification and a permit, and you can ask them for their charity name and verify it before giving.
- Volunteering on a working holiday or tourist visa has limits on unpaid work, so confirm with the organization and the Department of Home Affairs before you start.

This list does not cover state-level volunteer programs, local sporting and school groups, or giving from Australia to charities overseas. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

The Northern Territory is the one jurisdiction found here with a criminal offense for callously failing to rescue, paired with a separate offense for obstructing those who give aid.

What this does not mean

Rules differ by state and territory, and the Good Samaritan summary relies partly on a 2007 parliamentary brief and a Queensland statute version from 2017, so current law may differ. The official federal honours pages could not be retrieved, so no honours are described. Nothing here is legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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