



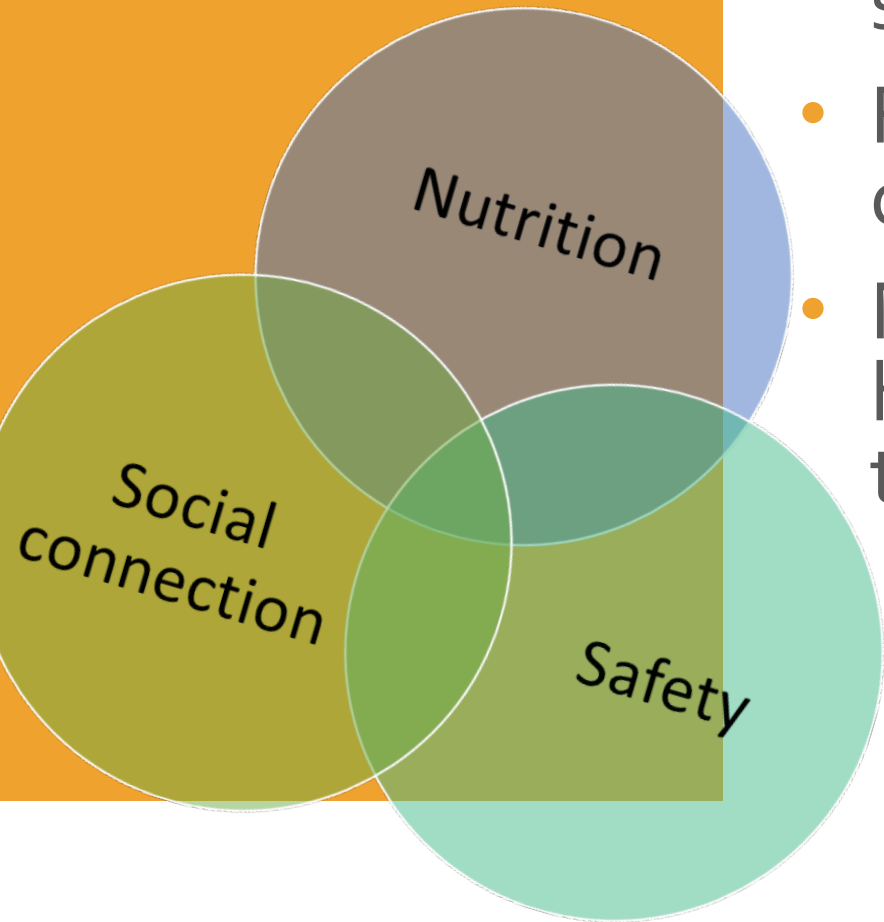
South  
Australia

# Minutes that make a difference

The customer-volunteer connection

Australian Association of Gerontology National Conference – Adelaide November 2022

# Meals on Wheels Service Model



- Delivering nutritional and healthy food to sustain health and wellness
- Facilitating reliable and trusted social contact
- Monitoring and responding to a client's holistic wellbeing needs as part of a 'more than just a meal' service model



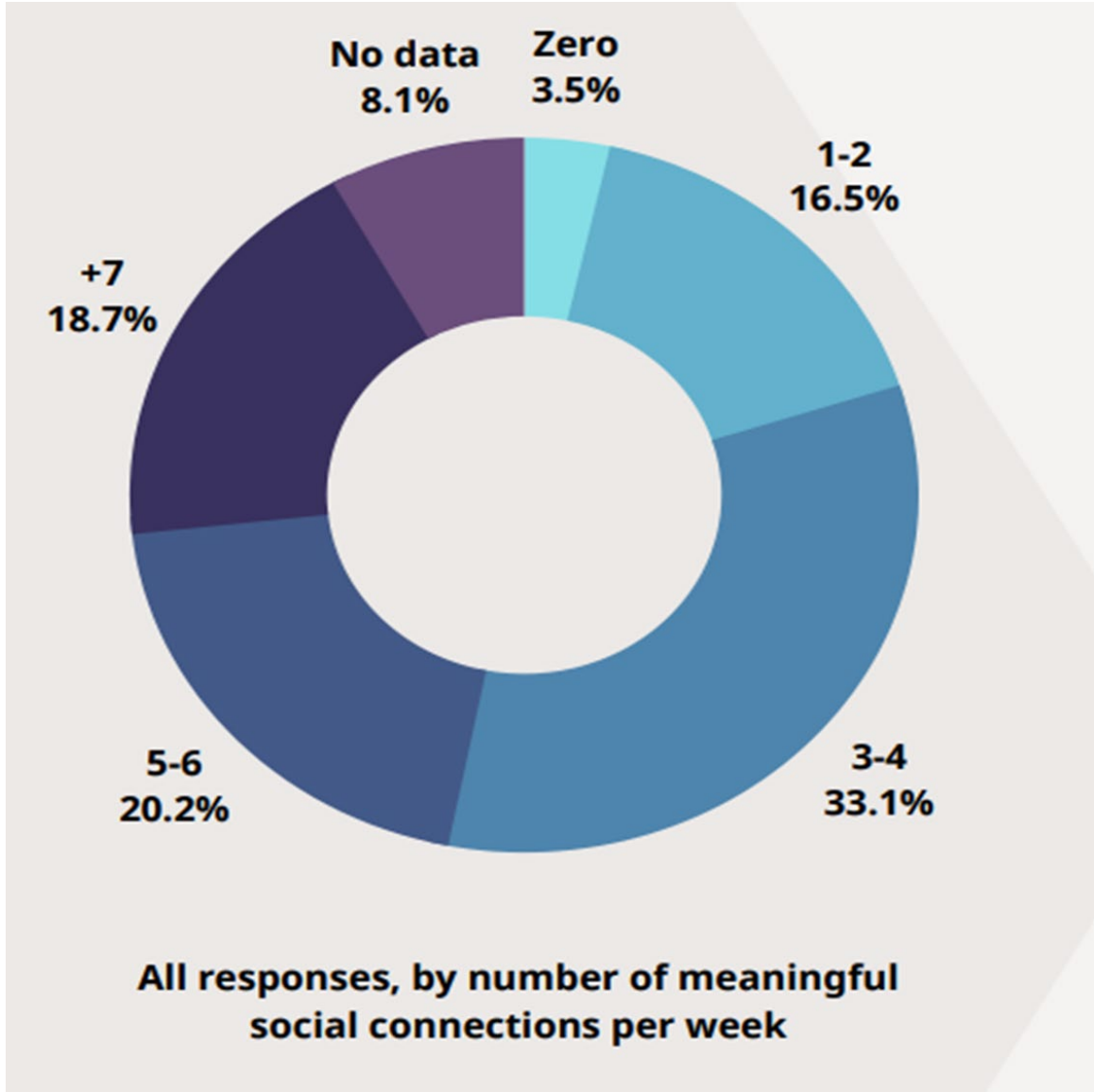
**South  
Australia**



- Impact Thesis
- Co-designed measurement approach
- Self report surveys re wellbeing and service experience
- Randomised sample of customer population - 744 responses
- All volunteers - 792 responses

# Key Findings

1. Majority of MoWSA clients report less than one meaningful social connection a day



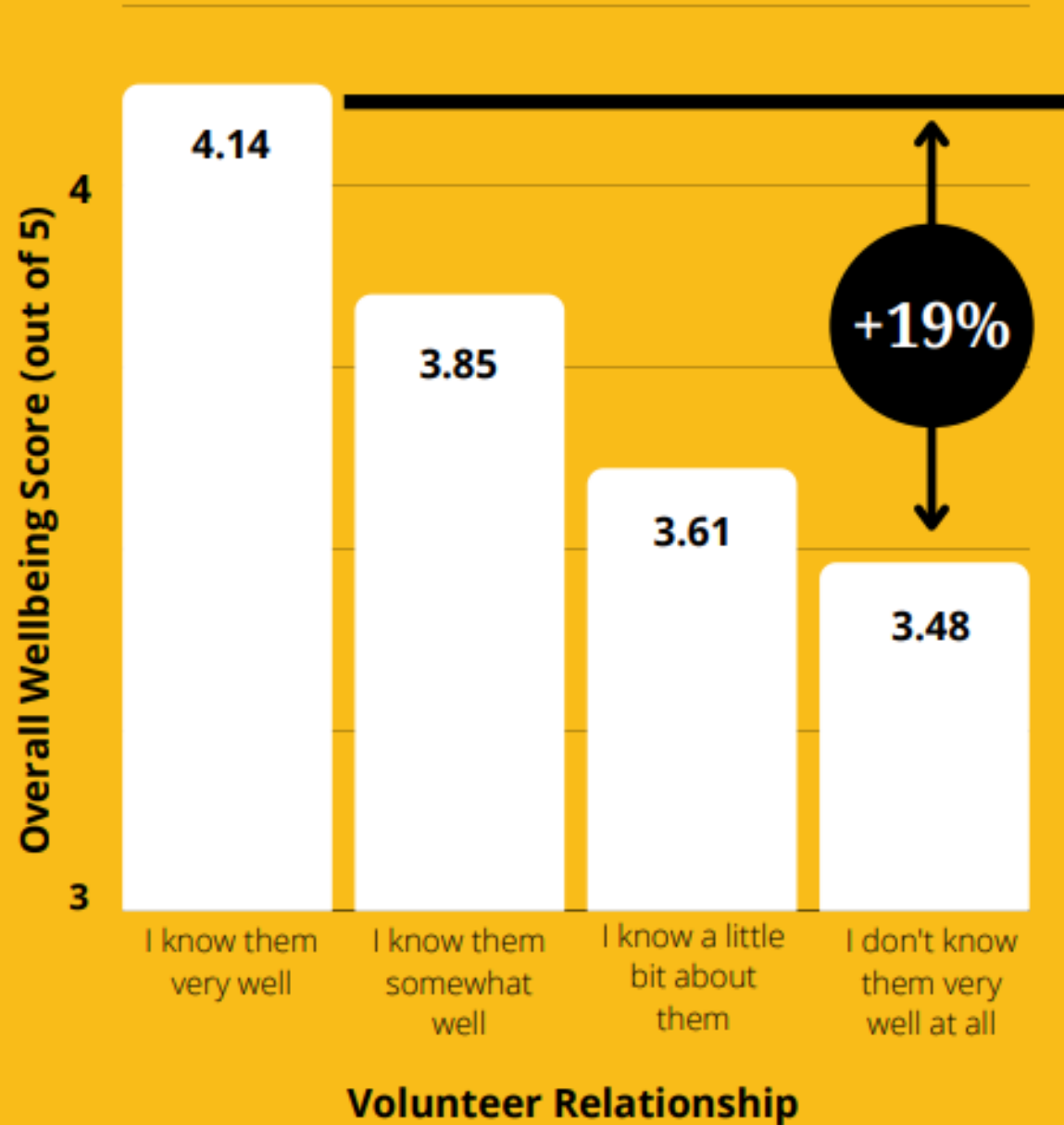
## Client stories

I do not ever get any visitors. I am one of those people that people do not like. I have not had a visitor for over 2 years, my friend and carer died in 2019 and I have not ever had a visitor. Thanks to Meals on Wheels for visiting for a minute.

# Key Findings

2. Connection is key to overall wellbeing

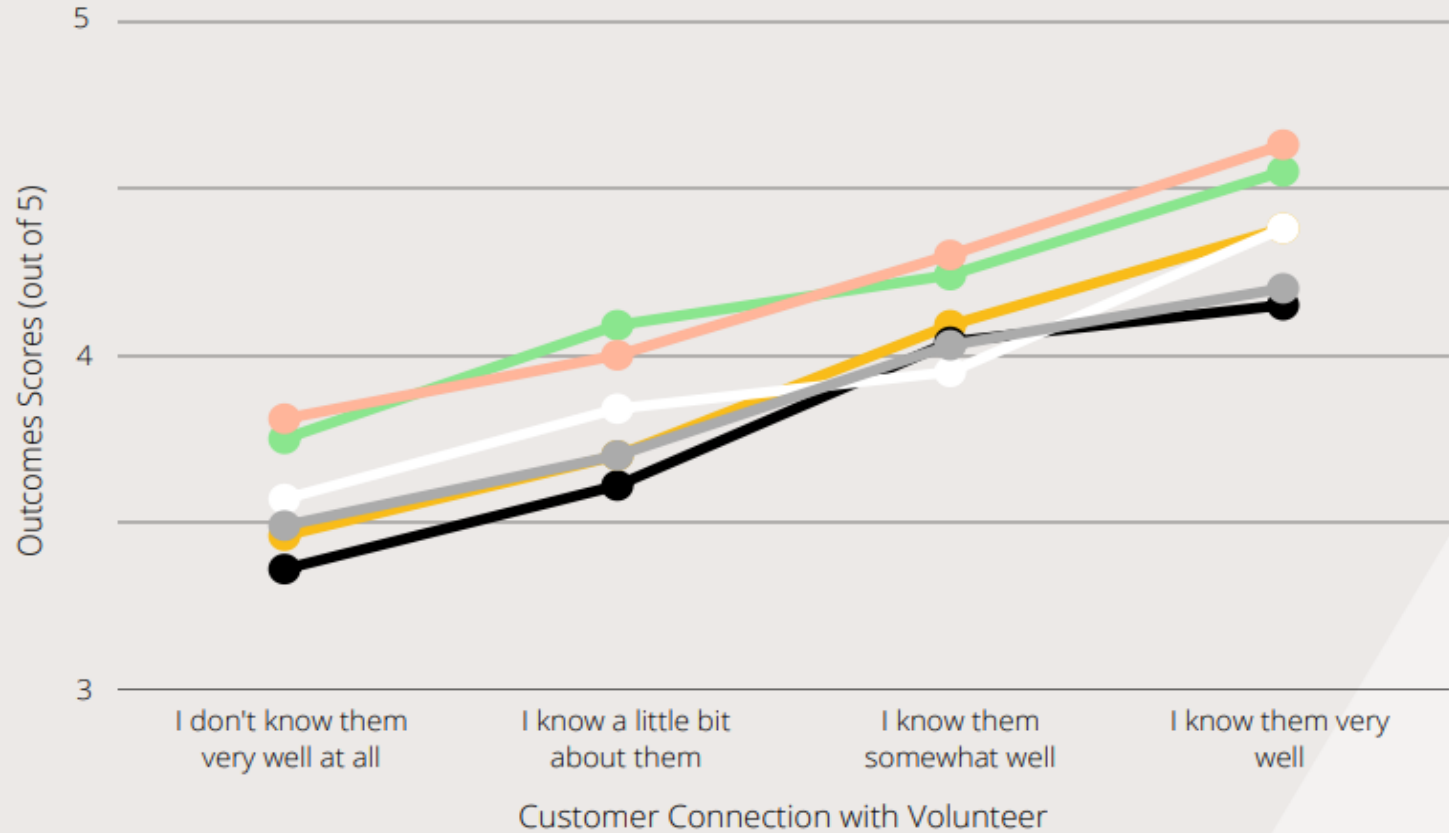
### Customer overall wellbeing, by volunteer relationship



# Key Findings

3. Stronger relationships associated with better outcomes

### Key Program Outcomes Scores, by Customer's Connection with Volunteer

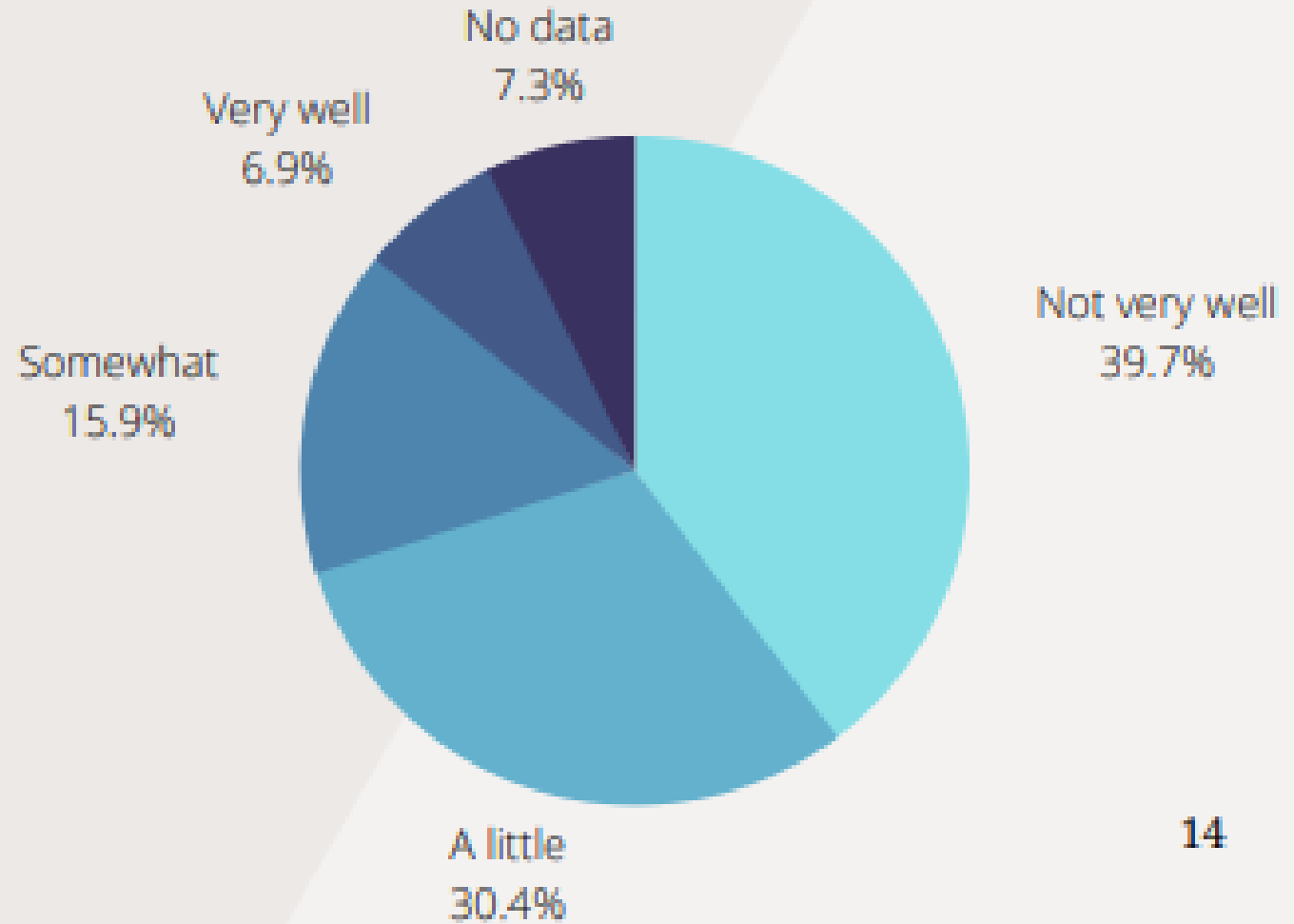


### Key Outcomes Improvements

- +26%** Feeling part of a community\*
- +24%** Finding it easy to share one's thoughts and feelings with other people\*
- +23%** Having a sense of purpose in life\*
- +21%** Feeling accepted by one's community\*
- +21%** Belief that community service providers can help with one's current situation
- +20%** Enjoying life and having fun\*

# Strength of current relationships

## All responses, by knowledge of volunteer





# Key Findings

4. Length of visits matters; number of visits does not

Visit time > 2 mins (n = 285) compared to < 2 mins (n = 403)



# Top five predictors of wellbeing for clients



## **Holistic Wellness - Enjoyment**

Enjoy life and having fun



## **Holistic Wellness - Purpose**

Feeling one's life has purpose



## **Holistic Wellness - Self-Acceptance**

Liking oneself



## **Access to Relationships - Personal Community**

Having a strong community of friends and family around oneself ^

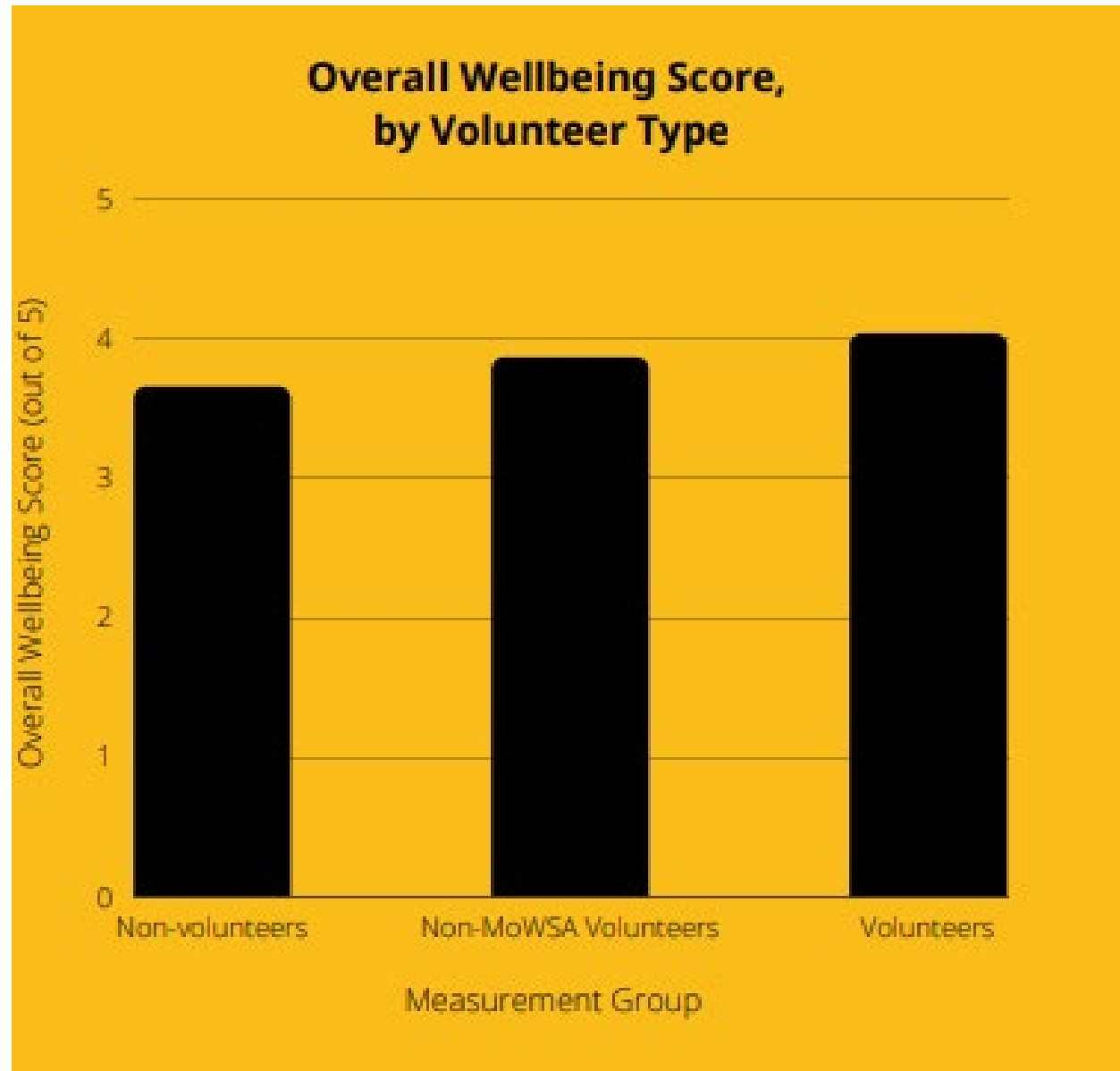


## **Sense of Connection - Community Belonging**

Feeling part of a community

## Key Findings

5. MoWSA volunteers have higher wellbeing than other Australians



# Key Findings

6. Volunteering with MoWSA builds a sense of belonging



**Community Connection**

**+14%**

Feeling part of a community



**Acceptance**

**+11%**

Feeling accepted by your community\*



**Words of Affirmation**

**+11%**

Having someone that encourages and praises you\*



**Personal Community**

**+11%**

Having a strong community of family and friends\*



**Loneliness**

**+9%**

Feeling less lonely or isolated\*

## Summary

A few minutes of meaningful social connection makes a significant wellbeing difference for both clients and volunteers.

## So what?

- Strong evidence for funders and policy makers for benefits of the MoWSA service model.
- Opportunity to target, strengthen and increase effectiveness of social connection in our service delivery process
- Great evidence to support volunteer recruitment

[mealsonwheelssa.org.au](http://mealsonwheelssa.org.au)

Thankyou

