GoodCompany Awards 2026 – Winners Announced

18 NOVEMBER 2026 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Optus named Australia's #1 Best Workplace to Give Back as volunteering budgets and uncapped matching reach new highs

GoodCompany, Australia's leading workplace giving, volunteering, fundraising and charity gift card platform, today announced the 2026 GoodCompany Award winners. **Optus** takes the top spot, followed by **Origin**, **Zurich Australia**, **Accenture** and **First Sentier Group**

Now in its ninth year, the awards show a clear long-term shift in how Australian employers back their people to give. Since the first Top 40 in 2018, the share of winners with a dedicated team volunteering budget has climbed from 61% to 88%, paid volunteer leave has gone from 88% to 98%, and uncapped donation matching has grown from fewer than one in five companies to more than four in ten.

This year's Top 40 spans boutique firms with fewer than 20 people through to national employers with more than 10,000, across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

The complete list of winners is at GoodCompany Awards.

1. Optus
2. Origin Energy / Origin Foundation
3. Zurich Australia
4. Accenture
5. First Sentier Group
6. Jemena
7. Westpac
8. QBE Insurance Group
9. Salesforce
10. BankVic
11. Sodexo Australia
12. Australian Gas Infrastructure Group
13. Clayton Utz
14. Australian Unity
15. Moose Toys
16. Bupa Australia
17. Pitcher Partners Sydney
18. Europcar
19. Teachers Mutual Bank Limited
20. DUAL
21. AECOM Australia Pty Ltd
22. ANZ

23. Baxter Healthcare
24. Light Warrior Group
25. Prime Financial Group
26. Burch&Co
27. Colin Biggers & Paisley
28. Equity Trustees
29. Solutions2you Pty Ltd
30. PEXA
31. Fleet Plant Hire Solutions
32. Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd
33. Intopia
34. Aussie Broadband
35. Bridgestone Australia
36. AIA Australia
37. Luminary
38. Ansvar Insurance
39. Knight Frank Australia
40. Vitality Brands

Optus rises from the inaugural Top 5 to #1

Optus has been part of the GoodCompany story from the start. It ranked #5 in the inaugural 2018 list and again in 2019, placed #4 in 2025, and this year takes out the top spot.

“I’m incredibly proud to see Optus recognised as the #1 Best Workplace to Give Back. This recognition belongs to our people, who continue to give their time, skills and energy to make a difference in our communities. We want to enable even more of our people to get involved, and with up to five days of paid volunteer leave each year, we’re backing them with the time and opportunity to support causes that matter to them,” says Kate Aitken, Chief People Officer, Optus.

Optus sets the benchmark for empowering employees to give back. Its people receive 5 to 10 days of paid volunteer leave, an uncapped team volunteering budget, and uncapped matching of their donations. Payroll giving lets staff support any charity of their choice, and charity options are built into the company’s reward and recognition program.

Optus’ social impact commitments include a Reconciliation Action Plan, Social Procurement Policy, Shared Value Strategy, pro bono targets, recycling targets, and a public commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a signatory to the UN Global Compact. Signature programs such as Digital Thumbprint, Donate Your Data and Future Now, alongside mentoring partnerships with ABCN, the KARI Foundation and The Smith Family, put its technology and people to work for the community. Digital Thumbprint’s 10-year milestone also earned Optus the “Telco to Ace ESG” title at the Twimbit Telecom Awards.

Applications were assessed using GoodCompany’s evidence-based evaluation framework, which ranks organisations on the CSR programs that empower employees to give back. Criteria included workplace and payroll giving, volunteer leave and budgets, donation matching, charity gift cards and rewards,

community partnerships, diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, and governance and social impact initiatives.

The long view: how giving back has changed since 2018

The biggest shift since the awards began is in how much employers are willing to fund, not just permit. Paid volunteer leave is now close to universal, so the leaders are differentiating on budgets and uncapped matching.

Share of the Top 40 offering…	2018	2024	2025	2026
Paid volunteer leave	88%	98%	95%	98%
A team volunteering budget	61%	79%	78%	88%
Donation matching (any level)	81%	75%	78%	75%
Uncapped matching (share of matchers)	18%	30%	45%	43%
Payroll giving	64%	77%	65%	70%

- **Volunteering budgets are the standout growth story.** They rose from 61% in 2018 to 69% in 2023, 79% in 2024 and 88% in 2026. Four in ten of those budgets are now uncapped, up from 35% last year.
- **Uncapped matching has more than doubled.** Fewer than one in five matching programs were uncapped in 2018; by 2021 it was 29%, and in the last two years it has held above 40%.
- **Paid volunteer leave is now table stakes.** It has climbed from 88% in 2018 to 98% in 2026, with Origin and ANZ offering unlimited leave.
- **Payroll giving has plateaued at around two-thirds to three-quarters.** It peaked at 77% in 2024, dipped to 65% in 2025 and recovered to 70% this year, while more programs now let staff choose any charity.

Key trends from the 2026 GoodCompany Awards

Volunteering: 98% of the Top 40 provide paid volunteer leave, up from 95% in 2025, averaging 2 days per employee, with Origin and ANZ offering unlimited leave. 88% now maintain dedicated team volunteering budgets, up from 78%, and 40% of those budgets are uncapped, up from 35%.

Payroll Giving: 70% of companies offer payroll giving, up from 65% in 2025, making it easier for employees to give regularly to causes they care about.

Charity Choice: 68% of companies with workplace giving offer an Open Choice model, up from 62% in 2025, while 32% use a Closed Choice approach. Employers are increasingly trusting their people to choose the causes they support.

Matched Giving: 75% of companies match staff donations. Where a cap applies, the average is now around $3,800 per employee per year, up from about $2,900 in 2025. 43% of matching programs are uncapped, led by Optus, Zurich Australia, Jemena and BankVic.

Rewards with Purpose: Half of the Top 40 include charity options, such as charity gift cards or points to charity, in their reward and recognition programs, up from 48% in 2025.

Social impact and sustainability commitments

Diversity programs and environmental targets grew this year, while equal pay, social procurement and pro bono held steady at last year's levels.

Commitment	2025	2026
Equal pay for equal work	85%	85%
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs	80%	85%
Green Energy or Recycling targets	70%	75%
Social Procurement Policy	63%	63%
Reconciliation Action Plan	65%	55%
Public commitment to the UN SDGs	48%	45%
Pro bono targets	40%	40%
B Corp status	20%	18%

Impact highlights from the Top 40

This year's winners are driving change across Education & Youth Development, Health & Wellbeing, Food Relief, First Nations Reconciliation, Environment & Sustainability, and Disaster & Emergency Relief.

- **Origin Foundation** has contributed more than $48.9 million to the community since 2010, with record volunteering participation from 28% of Origin's workforce.
- **Accenture** saw 50% of its people volunteer more than 38,000 hours, plus more than 7,000 hours of pro bono work for not-for-profits.
- **Zurich Australia** extends its dollar matching and volunteering programs to brokers, advisers and customers.
- **Westpac** has placed 1,000 secondees with Jawun since 2001, spending more than 6,000 weeks in community.
- **Clayton Utz** provided 55,950 pro bono hours in FY26, averaging 63 hours per lawyer.
- **Australian Unity** donates 1% of profit to the Australian Unity Foundation, on top of matching workplace giving.

"When we started these awards in 2018, giving people a day off to volunteer was a point of difference. Today it's almost universal, and the best employers have moved on to funding it properly: nearly nine in ten of our Top 40 now have a dedicated volunteering budget, and more than four in ten match their

people's donations without a cap. Congratulations to Optus and all of our Top 40 winners for showing that when you empower your people to give back, everyone wins." – Ash Rosshandler, CEO, GoodCompany.

About GoodCompany

For more than 25 years, GoodCompany has helped organisations create meaningful social impact through workplace giving, volunteering, fundraising, charity gift cards and employee engagement. As Australia and Aotearoa's leading unified workplace giving and volunteering platform, GoodCompany partners with organisations to strengthen workplace culture while supporting thousands of charities. With comprehensive tracking and reporting, GoodCompany also supports the social and governance aspects of ESG initiatives.

For more information go to www.goodcompany.org.

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