

# Give it up for pride in Sydney

**Paul Nicolaou**



**T**here was a time when love of home town and country came as naturally as breathing.

I still feel that way and it pains me to hear people unfairly bag our city or criticise our Australian story.

How do we get back to less complicated times when the Australian flag filled us with pride? Some might consider rallying around the flag old fashioned patriotism. But there are many cities around the world where it is just regarded as normal civic symbolism.

New York, London and Singapore have no inhibitions when it comes to displaying their flags. It is not seen as patriotism in an aggressive sense, just an expression of civic confidence.

Sydney should feel comfortable about doing the

same. Look around the CBD and you'll find many older buildings topped with unused flag poles or have them extending from windows.

Unfortunately, while there are plenty of flagpoles there are far too few flags flying from them.

It certainly wouldn't hurt for new buildings to be topped out with a flagpole or two.

We've become shy about flying the flag because people worry it might be misunderstood as being overtly political.

How could we have reached a stage where flying the flag is regarded as a political statement?

Volunteering to make our city even better might have become the new way of quiet patriotism for many. Volunteers in NSW contribute 1.5 billion hours of their time annually valued at \$127bn.

As volunteers, they also benefit from expanding their social networks, gaining experience and developing new skills.

There is no shortage of opportunities for volunteering with charities and community organisations always in need of help. The Rev. Bill Crews welcomes the support of volunteers for his outreach to the poor and homeless. Foodbank is one of a number of food rescue services that value the time and contribution of volunteers.

In so many ways, volunteering is an expression of pride in our city and of innate patriotism. Let's have more of it.

**Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney.**