

## Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

**Submission No:** 174  
**Submitted by:** Lyndal Hansen  
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### Submitter Comments:

I have worked in the not for profit sector for over 35 years, working with Federal and State Governments to provide support and education to the not for profit/volunteer lead grass roots sector. I have also had a consultancy company delivering services in this sector for 20 years. From my experience, the not for profits are struggling more than ever now, it is harder to attract volunteers and members, harder to source income as memberships decline but more than ever there appears to be much more conflict within volunteer lead organisations, all of which impacts on attracting new volunteers. Volunteer recruitment can't just be about getting volunteers to go into an organisation, it must be about ensuring that organisation is ready to take on new volunteers. I have made these mistakes of finding volunteers and putting them into a dysfunctional organisation just to have the new volunteer scared by their experience, and this is the worse outcome as the new volunteer will not be keen to try again. The experience needs to be a fulfilling one.

Volunteers are needed badly within small grass roots not for profits (the fabric of our society) to administer and support these organisations. Most of Governments attention previously have been on the Charity registered organisation which only makes up 10% of the not for profit sector, what about the other 90% that connects people within regional, rural and remote communities. There is literally no support for these organisations. As a legacy to the region where I live, I established a not for profit company limited by Guarantee in 2019 to provide support to that 90% of smaller community volunteer lead organisations. While being impacted for the first two years by Covid, the not for profit company called NFP Hub Ltd trading as NFP House has developed systems to measure not for profit organisational improvement and offer one on one support to these organisations. To date NFP House has help over 200 + organisations many of which may have folded without our support. The online products and services available to not for profits is endless, however that alone will not improve the sector. These organisations need inspiring, hand holding, ongoing access and support to motivate change. The Gladstone Region as an industrial centre, has had approximately a \$400M investment into the community over the last decade which has been extraordinary however from working with not for profit organisations intimately, this investment has not improved the sustainability, growth or the compliance of the not for profit organisations. We need to spend this money more wisely to teach these organisations 'how to fish, not continue to provide fish for them' resulting in a welfare mentality. There are so many opportunities to bridge the gap between a potential volunteer and a ready organisation. We know there are many people out there that want to volunteer, however there is fear and trepidation about joining an organisation or volunteering as 'I might get roped in' or 'don't have the time' and younger generations wanting more social justice issues to volunteer for. NFP House has piloted a number of programs for volunteer recruitment with success, unfortunately without funding we cannot roll out these programs across the State. NFP House has a process of educating organisations on task-based activities (which is a mind shift for many organisations), this provides opportunities for volunteers to assist in meaningful and smaller ways. Many organisations don't have the big events or opportunities to access corporate volunteering, so that doesn't work for a high percentage of smaller organisations. By sourcing volunteers to do tasks, it takes the pressure off the existing volunteers to better manage and administer their organisation, thus putting the organisation in a better position to attract more volunteers. After 35 years working within the volunteer sector, I have proven that NFP House is enormously valuable in improving and growing the sector ultimately impacting on the economy as well. I would urge this new State Government (and congratulations on

this initiative) to review the work that NFP House has done as a starting point, it might not have all the answers, but it has proven to be a successful next step.