

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Contact: Kate McLeod

Email: [REDACTED]

Your reference:

Our reference: A108598885

CITY OF
GOLDCOAST

Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via online submission

Dear Committee,

CITY OF GOLD COAST SUBMISSION – VOLUNTEERING IN QUEENSLAND

The City of Gold Coast (City) welcomes the opportunity to support the Queensland Government's Inquiry into Volunteering. As a city committed to fostering a safe, active, and healthy community, we recognise the essential role of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) in delivering vital services across Queensland.

Volunteering is vital to our community, with nearly 400,000 volunteers supporting 7,225 charities across the State¹. For every \$1 invested in volunteering, \$4.70 is returned². Despite its importance, volunteering rates have declined nationally, from 1 in 3 adults in 2010 to 1 in 4 in 2022. Additionally, 83% of VIOs need more volunteers³. Addressing this decline is crucial to sustaining the sector.

Gold Coast context

The Gold Coast, home to 666,087 residents⁴ and expected to reach nearly 1 million by 2041⁵, is Queensland's second most diverse city and a leading tourism destination. Volunteer participation in our city is 11.4%, below the State and national averages of 14%⁶. Our 40-44 year olds volunteer the most, while involvement is lower for 25-34 year olds and those 85+. As a local government, many areas of our organisation rely heavily on VIOs and volunteers, increasing in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.

City-led Programs and Initiatives

In 2024, the City joined the Coalition of Support for the National Strategy for Volunteering in Australia. We work closely with peak bodies and community organisations to deliver essential services, including:

- **Community programs:** Following the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the City has committed to an ongoing Volunteering program to build the capacity of local VIOs and encourage residents to volunteer. Key activities include the bi-annual Volunteering Collective forum, free community workshops on topics like Grants Writing and Volunteer Management, an annual Thank You event, regular volunteering promotional campaigns, and the establishment of the Gold Coast Volunteering Action-group to drive collective actions.

¹ [QCOSS State of Sector report 2024](#)

² [State of Volunteering in Queensland 2024 report](#)

³ [National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033](#)

⁴ [ABS Estimated Resident Population 2023 from Profile 1d](#)

⁵ [Queensland Government Population Projections 2023 edition](#)

⁶ [ABS 2021 Census](#)

- **Environment:** The City supports several environment-focused volunteer programs such as Land for Wildlife, Naturally GC Landcare, Citizen Science programs, and tree planting activities. The NaturallyGC Program engages around 4,000 volunteers annually and supports other environmental volunteer programs with in-kind support.
- **Sport and Recreation:** The Gold Coast Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-2032 aims to increase physical activity and support community sport through volunteer involvement. The City manages over 300 community leaseholders who rely on volunteers to deliver sport and physical activity programs. Initiatives identified to upskills these groups include sustainability opportunities, facility maintenance, grant writing, and disability awareness programs.
- **Heritage:** Since 2006, the City has supported local volunteer heritage groups through partnerships and initiatives aimed at upskilling volunteers, managing collections, and improving public visibility. This includes collaboration with the Queensland Museum's Museum Development Officer program and Council-led projects like public exhibitions and the biennial Heritage Expo.
- **Community Safety:** The City partners with Gold Coast Neighbourhood Watch and recognises contributions through the Safer Suburbs Awards Program, celebrating the efforts of volunteers who enhance community safety.
- **Disaster Response:** The City has developed a coordinated approach to manage Community Disaster Volunteers (CDVs) effectively, engaging organisations like Volunteering Gold Coast, Disaster Relief Australia, and Surf Life Saving Queensland. This model ensures a flexible response to disaster scenarios and supports the broader volunteer ecosystem.
- **Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games:** The City's 2032 Games Coordination Branch is working with volunteer organisations and key stakeholders to leverage the Games for long-term volunteer engagement opportunities and improved outcomes for the sector. Learning from the 2018 Commonwealth Games, ensuring legal rights to contact the 50,000 expected volunteers is crucial.

Recommendations

To strengthen the volunteer sector, the City recommends that the Queensland Government:

- Increases resources for peak bodies and local volunteer centres, removing fees for grassroots organisations.
- Provides funding for VIOs to recruit paid volunteer managers.
- Invests in localised research and data collection (at Statistical Area Level 2) to better understand barriers and opportunities in volunteering.
- Establishes clear roles and responsibilities between peak bodies and stakeholders to improve coordination and avoid duplication of services.
- Develops a national volunteer passport to streamline administration, improve volunteer experience and recognise volunteer contributions.
- Leverages Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics Games to showcase and promote volunteering, creating lasting legacy benefits for the sector.

Conclusion

Volunteers are vital to our city. The City of Gold Coast remains committed to working collaboratively to support volunteering and build a stronger, more engaged community. Our approach aligns with national and State volunteering strategies and is embedded in key policy frameworks, including the [Council Plan 2022-2027](#), the [City's Volunteering Program of Work](#), the [Our Natural City Strategy 2032](#), the [Gold Coast Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-2032](#), and the [Gold Coast 2032 Legacy Framework](#).

We look forward to ongoing discussions on this important topic and partnering with the Queensland Government to co-host the upcoming public hearing session in the Gold Coast on March 2025.

Yours faithfully



Kim Baker
Chief Executive Officer
Council of the City of Gold Coast