

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submission to the Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland Challenges Affecting CFQ's Ability to Attract Volunteers Cystic Fibrosis Queensland (CFQ) plays a crucial role in supporting individuals and families affected by cystic fibrosis across the state. However, like many other not-for-profits, CFQ faces increasing challenges in attracting and retaining volunteers. The key factors impacting volunteer engagement at this time include:

Post-Pandemic Shifts in Volunteering Trends The COVID-19 pandemic altered volunteering patterns, with many individuals reconsidering their availability and willingness to engage in in-person volunteering roles. Health concerns remain a factor, particularly for older volunteers or those in close contact with vulnerable populations, such as individuals with cystic fibrosis who are at high risk of infection.

Cost-of-Living Pressures Rising living costs have led to a decline in available free time for many potential volunteers, as individuals take on additional paid work to meet financial obligations. The cost of transport and other out-of-pocket expenses associated with volunteering can be a barrier, particularly for those in regional and rural areas.

Increased Competition for Volunteers With a growing number of charities and community organisations seeking volunteers, CFQ faces significant competition from larger organisations with greater resources for recruitment and engagement.

Time Constraints and Changing Workforce Demands Many working-age individuals face increasing work pressures, limiting their ability to commit to regular volunteering. Younger volunteers, particularly university students and early-career professionals, may struggle to balance volunteering with study and work commitments.

Digital Engagement vs. Traditional Volunteering While there is a growing interest in digital and remote volunteering opportunities, CFQ's need for hands-on support at fundraising events, community programs, and office administration remains high. Encouraging skilled volunteers to contribute remotely requires further investment in digital infrastructure and training.

Lack of Awareness and Targeted Recruitment Strategies Many potential volunteers may not be aware of CFQ's mission and the variety of roles available. A more targeted approach to volunteer recruitment, leveraging social media, corporate partnerships, and community networks, is needed to attract a diverse volunteer base.

Potential Solutions and Support Needed - To address these challenges, CFQ recommends:

- Government support for volunteer recruitment campaigns to raise awareness of opportunities and encourage participation.
- Financial assistance or subsidies for volunteer-related costs, such as travel reimbursement or small grants for not-for-profits to enhance volunteer training and engagement.
- Flexible and skills-based volunteering pathways to attract professionals and students seeking meaningful contributions that align with their expertise.
- Corporate and university partnerships to encourage employer-supported volunteering and student placement programs.

By addressing these barriers and implementing supportive measures, CFQ can continue to engage volunteers who are essential to delivering services and support to the cystic fibrosis community in Queensland.