

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Preserving Australia's Aviation Heritage since 1974

26 February 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

The Queensland Air Museum (QAM) was established in 1974. We are an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organisation and today boast Australia's largest and most diverse aircraft collection. Since 1987, we have been on 2Ha adjacent to the Caloundra Aerodrome on the Sunshine Coast.

In late 2023, we developed a new Strategic Plan 2024-2030 (see attached) following extensive consultation with our membership and community stakeholders. Four key areas of challenge were identified, one of which is 'volunteers'.

At the time, QAM was being served by 132 active volunteers, drawn from a membership base of some 400. At February 2025, we now have 185 active volunteers from over 500 members. We have seen a very pleasing response from the community, with more than 60 new volunteers coming onboard during 2024/25 of which 50 or so are still volunteering with us. Our volunteer average age is 70 years. Our hardworking volunteers contributed over 38,000 hours of labour in 2024.

In our strategic plan, we identified volunteering as one of our key strengths, but also one of our key areas of risk. With volunteering generally in decline and attitudes to volunteering shifting with new generations, QAM realised the critical importance of developing a strategic approach.

The entire 'volunteer life cycle' is taken into account in our strategy - from identifying areas of need, to recruiting, inducting and orienting, then deploying, training, encouraging and resourcing our volunteers, right through to an exit strategy when volunteers leave which helps us to better serve our volunteers. Volunteer recognition and reward are also high priorities.

Volunteers fulfil a wide range of roles from customer service and tour guiding to complex aircraft restoration and conservation, managing and curating our collection, marketing, events management and hosting school groups. We are open every day of the year, except Christmas Day and Easter Friday and we welcomed some 25,000 visitors in 2024. Our prime source of income is via visitor entry fees and the occasional small local government grant and some donations.

We hear from other organisations that we are 'bucking the trend' somewhat with so many new and enthusiastic volunteers starting with us and continuing to be involved. However, we realise that there are no guarantees into the future, so we welcome this Qld government enquiry and are happy to assist further with the enquiry if we can.

Best regards,



Garry Hills

