

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am making this submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland on behalf of 4ZZZ FM radio where I am employed as the Volunteer Coordinator for 12.5 hours a week. I started in this role as a volunteer and was volunteer coordinator, which I did for about 2 years. It was only through a grant from Volunteering Queensland that I was able to move to a paid permanent part time role, this grant was for increasing representation of volunteers living with a disability. It was a very successful program, it highlighted barriers that people living with disability face when it comes to volunteering. I am now paid under a grant from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA).

At 4ZZZ there are 10 paid roles, only one of those fulltime. We have close to 900 volunteers. Every program you hear on 102.1FM and Zed Digital is put together and hosted by volunteers.

We are Queensland's oldest FM and community radio station. Our mission is to connect and broadcast the voices of our community. Our physical footprint is at 264 Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley.

Volunteers at 4ZZZ fulfil many roles. Everytime you tune into 102.1FM or Zed Digital you are listening to a volunteer! If there is a job you can think of that needs to be done in an office/radio station, it is extremely likely that a volunteer will be doing it!

Our volunteer roles are (but not limited to)

- Reception- 2 shifts Monday to Friday 09:45-13:00 and 13:00-16:15 and Saturdays 10:00 - 14:00.
- Run Merch stalls - we are often invited to have merch stalls at community events, these are staffed completely by volunteers.
- Run volunteering inductions- depending on demand we will run these twice a month.
- Process music submissions into a shared database so that it can be utilised by all announcers.
- Host our daily news (week day mornings 08:00-11:00 – hourly bulletins). These are researched and written by (generally) journalism students.
- Help maintain the building: several volunteers dedicate hours every week to bettering and fixing our ageing building.

- Produce all of our sponsorship spots every advertising spot, community service announcement (CSA) is made in house by our production volunteers.

I even used to be the volunteer Volunteer Coordinator!

This is just the tip of the iceberg!

We are very lucky at 4ZZZ, we have on average 4 people apply to volunteer a week, however not all of those people will commit to volunteering. For some people it won't be the right fit which is absolutely crucial for the mutual benefit of the volunteer and organisation.

4ZZZ is a very open and inclusive volunteering community, people from all walks of life volunteer at 4ZZZ and that is probably one of the reasons we have so many people apply to volunteer. Sometimes it will be the first time a volunteer has seen someone else who they can identify as part of their community.

Volunteers need to feel supported and appreciated in order to have a successful volunteer experience, whether they have just started volunteering or are a longstanding volunteer. I think there needs to be more funding available from peak bodies to attract volunteers from marginal communities. Volunteering is not something everyone is privileged enough to partake in. There is extensive planning you have to do in order to attract people from vulnerable communities. This is something I learnt during our program, "Accessible Zeds"- with this program we were able to focus on attracting more volunteers living with disability.

One of the things we are working on at 4ZZZ is the horizontal integration of volunteers, just because you start volunteering in a certain area doesn't mean you are forever relegated to that role! One of the massive benefits of volunteering which I don't think is spoken about enough, is the ability volunteering gives you to try new roles. If you're thinking about shifting careers, try volunteering in a similar role!

The media industry is very small and the ability for volunteers to get their start in the industry by volunteering is a massive opportunity. For 50 years ZZZ has been a place where many broadcasters, journalists, producers, art workers have volunteered, learned and practiced their craft and then transitioned into paid employment in the industry. Our role as an incubator and trainer for the media industry is something that should be massively celebrated and the fact that it all comes from volunteering should be highlighted.

Without volunteers the airwaves from 102.1FM and Zed digital would fall silent. We would cease to exist. Sometimes it is hard to find enough people to help with things other than being on the air.

Personally I have volunteered for as long as I can remember. From helping my parents deliver meals on wheels, I was a volunteer at the Bega Environmental Network Centre, Homework Club in Wollongong and Melbourne among many others. I think volunteering has shaped who I am. It helps you see the world from different viewpoints.

I think one of the big things preventing people from volunteering at the moment is the cost of living, people are working more hours to make ends meet.

As well as accessibility, not just physical access but also access in regards to being an open and inclusive environment for folks with neurodiversity, mental health and "hidden disabilities" also plays a role as many spaces are not accessible for people living with disability. Which is frustrating because people living with disability are really keen to volunteer!

At 4ZZZ want to make sure we are creating pathways for everyone to get involved in the station and have a meaningful volunteering experience. We have and will continue to refine processes to ensure we can provide as many opportunities for an individual to learn, create and help with operating the station. We also need to ensure that in all of our processes we are actively Paying The Rent to our First Nations people. Creating a supportive environment in which our First Nations community can direct their volunteering experience and broadcast to the community is of utmost importance to the organisation. Increased support for volunteer organisations to focus on First Nations involvement and funding for First Nations organisations to grow should also be a focus of the Government.

Sincerely,

Salty (Sarah) Otton

Volunteer Coordinator at 4ZZZ