

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

<b>Submission No:</b>	337
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Carole Hourston
<b>Publication:</b>	Making the submission and your name public
<b>Attachments:</b>	See attachment
<b>Submitter Comments:</b>	

## **Volunteering Inquiry Submission**

I have been volunteering for over 10 years; most of it with Volunteering North Queensland (VNQ). Volunteering North Queensland is a Volunteer Resource Centre in Townsville that connects volunteers with not-for-profit organisations and provides free training and events for the community. Volunteers are recognised and celebrated through the annual VNQ Volunteer of the Year Awards Civic Reception event as well as a morning tea at which certificates are presented and volunteers are entertained by inspirational guest speakers and with many opportunities to win prizes donated by sponsors. Both events are very popular and are open to all volunteers in the Townsville region. VNQ recognises its own volunteers in many ways and ensures we feel valued and appreciated for the work we do.

Unfortunately, VNQ is at imminent risk of closing due to a lack of operational funding. When funding was provided direct to the Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs) through the Department of Social Services, VNQ at times had around 20 volunteers including the volunteer management committee and 2 or 3 paid staff. This number of volunteers enabled VNQ to be very active in the community promoting volunteering and recruiting volunteers as well as providing training and resources and supporting other community organisations.

Without the certainty of operational funding, VNQ has struggled to recruit and retain Managers and has been forced to move to a small office that restricts the number of volunteers and staff that can be accommodated and the services that can be provided.

Funding projects distributed through the peak body has, at least initially, not worked with untimely and unclear parameters around the project's outcomes and expectations. Even if this improves, it is not sustainable for VRCs to operate without operational funding.

Volunteering has so many proven benefits for the volunteer, for the community and for the country, so it is heartening that this is being recognised with a Minister for Volunteering and with this inquiry. Thank you.