

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitted by:	National Council of Women of Queensland Inc.
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**Inquiry into volunteering in
Queensland**

Dear Sandy Smith
President National Council of Women of Queensland

Thank you for the opportunity to join with NCWQ submission to the Local Government, Small Business & Customer Service Inquiry into and report on Volunteering in Queensland.

We have kept within the aims of the Inquiry to increase awareness and understanding of volunteering and its central importance to all Queensland communities.

From the nine Terms of Reference [ToR] we have chosen ToR No 2 which collates the views of volunteers on the barriers to volunteering and restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers

We also have chosen Terms of Reference No 3, which captures the experiences and recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience.

Forum Communicators Report Structure

Our Full Name is Forum Communicators Association Inc [FC]

Email is forummarketing@beconfident.org.au and phone number is [REDACTED]

Forum Communicators approves the attached submission

Headings have been used. Framework used 4 headings types.

- Address barriers
- Impact can be
- Benefits can be
- Evidence

Each of the pages has been numbered

Full web addresses have been used where applicable

Yours in raising awareness

Irene Henley
State President Forum Communicators Association Inc
Phone: [REDACTED]

VOLUNTEER SUBMISSION TO NCWQ

ToR Topic No 2.

The views of volunteers, prospective volunteers, and the volunteering sector on the current barriers to volunteering, including excessive legislative and regulatory burdens and other restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers.

Volunteering is a core activity in Forum Communicators [FC].

Barriers

1. A significant barrier to volunteering is that all volunteers should be covered by insurance. Current insurances do not include people over the age of 80. Government policy needs to be reviewed because people are still volunteering after they turn age 80. The decisions by Insurance companies have an impact on people's health and wellbeing and there is a significant loss of corporate knowledge when senior volunteers leave.

Impact can be:

Not feeling valued, impacts on social interactions, learning, having fun, being happy, feeling healthy, belonged, being worthwhile, motivated to help FC accomplish its vision, strengthening our community.

Benefits can be:

- Better physical and mental health by increasing self-confidence, combating depression, and helping the volunteer to stay physically healthy (lessen symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease).
- Making new friends and contacts by committing to a shared activity
- Gaining work experience and learning new skills

Evidence

In a study of 3,740 people aged State Pension Age and over from ELSA, the researchers found the beneficial effects of volunteering appeared to stop when respondents stopped volunteering. Also, those who participated in higher numbers of activities and who felt appreciated for their work received the best outcomes, regardless of whether the activities were classed as formal or informal, *Matthews, K and J Nazroo (2020) The impact of Volunteering and Its Characteristics on Wellbeing After State Pension Age: Longitudinal Evidence From the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci, 2021, Vol. 76, No. 3, 632–641 doi:10.1093/geronb/gbaa146*

Barrier

2. Another barrier is the lack of research into why many clubs and community groups have diminished volunteers. What led them to merge with other clubs or close down.

Impact

- History of Forum Communicators. From 1940's to 2025 FC has closed 76 clubs. Forum completed market research in 2022-2023 which generated many options to grow FC and solutions to retain volunteers. Unfortunately there are not enough volunteers to implement both options and solutions, hence only 5 out of 23 recommendations are slowly being implemented.
- Many people want to volunteer but cannot, as the cost of living requires both parents to work. This impacts on grandparents who want to volunteer, but are tasked to pick children up from school, take them to music lessons or swimming and many more childcare responsibilities.
- In today's economy a 2-income family are struggling to build the capital needed to put a deposit on a home because housing costs are beyond many people's reaches.
 - There is a higher demand on families and friends. Many households have grandparents who want to volunteer with FC yet are not able to due to helping the family. This affects the number of volunteers available.
 - In other households grandparents are looking after grandchildren because childcare costs are so high, and this limits grandparents ability to volunteer.
- Many of the volunteers are women who want to volunteer but are caught up in family responsibilities, raising children, work, and lifestyle activities.
- There are FC members who are decreasing volunteer hours as they are not only getting older, but greater demands are also being put on women to be unpaid carers and supporters to family members or friends.

Evidence

- Forum Communicators [FC] awards a NCWQ bursary for communication each year. The winners who gain the FC bursary are young women who are involved in significant volunteering activities in the community during their final years at school. They are outstanding representatives within the community, leading, guiding, mentoring younger women in their school, university, suburbs and council. As role models one of the FC bursary winners won a number of speaking awards and recently gained an international role that requires high communication skills. From winning awards a young Australian woman will be working internationally, hence the work that NCWQ FC bursary does to support young women is vital to Australia's future.

Barrier

3 Another barrier is the changes in workplace landscape i.e. many employers are task orientated and employees must accomplish sets tasks, these tasks have to be finished before the worker can go home. The skills learned at Forum Communicators are very relevant to today's workforce, but it is hard for them to commit to regular meeting times. Government needs to review working hour provisions. In some workplaces these extra hours are recorded as TOIL, this is not universal.

4. Forum Communicators members, community guests and university students have access to FC public speaking modules and workshops. FC Instructors are specialist and deliver important training that the public / students seek e.g. public speaking and meeting procedures. FC is preparing standards through the development of credential frameworks for coaching, mentoring, and specialist instructors.

It is important that community organisations like FC have a government policy that give value to the standards for delivering specialist topics within the modules of the Registered Training Organisation [RTO] qualifications.

Benefits can be

The high-quality vocational education and training [VET] are vital to Australia's future and so are the Volunteer Organisations like FC who deliver training. The Policy guides the delivery of training in TAFE & University as per government policies and Australia Skills Quality Authority [ASQA] but it does not include the volunteer NFP organisations like FC. It also does not give recognition to FC volunteer specialist Instructors. FC is considering the opportunity of developing a Certificate II in Training and Assessment. Government & ASQA need to allocate free fees, so students have access to specialist volunteers training.

Tutors and Educators in TAFE are paid employees who complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as they tutor/lecture in qualification training.

5. Intergenerational programs have been successful.

Teresa Martins, Luís Midão, Silvia Martínez Veiga, Lisa Dequech, Grazyna Busse, Mariola Bertram, Alix McDonald, Gemma Gilliland, Carmen Orte, Marga Vives & Elísio Costa (2019) Intergenerational Programs Review: Study Design and Characteristics of Intervention, Outcomes, and Effectiveness, Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 17:1, 93-109, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2018.1500333>

In a Life Story Encounter Program study which brought together secondary school students and nursing home residents to share ideas about existential questions of life e.g., about one's core experiences, future plans, and personal values, Kranz et al found participants of both generations showed more favourable cross-generational age stereotyping not only immediately after, but also three months after the program ended than a control group with no Life Story Encounter Program participation.

Kranz D, Thomas NM and Hofer J (2021) Changes in Age Stereotypes in Adolescent and Older Participants of an Intergenerational Encounter Program. Front. Psychol. 12:658797. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.658797

Benefit of Intergenerational

Forum Communicators provides an on-line program called E-Forum with capacity for links with members and guests who live overseas, interstate and within Queensland. The socio-spatial of the generations is deepening as ages range from youth to adulthood to seniors.

Benefits

Forum Communicators is exploring the viability of establishing seven more E-Forums, enriching the intergenerational lives. The diversity in the program includes studies, shared knowledge, speaking skills, chairing meetings, social skills to mention a few. E-Forum types could be, Public Speaking for Non-English Speakers: Home School Programs: Digital Library and Community Gardeners who seek to access FC training that has been developed for their business scope. The skill set to prepare such program is within the Forum membership, however policy support, access to grants and funding enables the specialist instructors to prepare and enrich a program that aligns with their aims.

Benefits

In Cultural Groups, a key barrier is gaining grants and funds for the Specialist Instructors to work with the cultural group in preparing training programs that reflect the cultural communication style. e.g. alignment of Forum Communicators program with cultural communication style. Providing on-line is beneficial as the student learns from within the home or library.

Barrier

Access to free fees training. Workshops and training in Public Speaking needs to be free fees for school-age and older persons who are volunteer applicants from FC community groups. The barrier is that community groups like FC should be able to procure payment from Government each time they deliver Public Speaking training and workshops. FC specialist instructors credentialing program requires government funding or community grants to establish and implement.

Barrier

The digital landscape such as on-line workshops and training has significant impact on many women volunteers. FC and other NFP are constantly seeking access to free fees training, coaching, and mentoring as many people want to be skilled and knowable in the use of digital technology. The barrier is the tensions between wanting to do on-line training versus tremendous fees & equipment costs, not able to access training which reinforces a person's lack of competency in digital technology.

6. Volunteer recruitment is successful in bringing people into FC. However, it is time consuming and only sustainable for a few months per year. The barrier is that many people attend FC, they do not want to join a FC club with fortnightly or monthly meetings. They want to access specialist instructors to accomplish training that they are seeking e.g. being confident in public speaking. Hence government needs to look at how they can provide support to people who are specialist instructors, how to provide access to funds so that specialist instructors can maintain contemporary practices to deliver Public Speaking training and workshops in various ways that meet the needs of people in the community.

ToR Topic

NO.3. The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience.

1. Improve Volunteer experience so members do not have to pay for training.

FC like other NFP organisation is reliant on grants to cover costs of members training as they do not have the capital to financially support Volunteers. FC specialist instructors have skills, knowledge, and attributes to deliver specialist training in Public Speaking that many people are seeking. Government needs to improve the volunteer experience by reviewing the system of awarding grants as the barrier is that access to grants is not reliable.

Impact can be

Government needs to review volunteer access to professional development allowance. Professional people in the workforce are required to be contemporary, competent and receive a professional development allowance. Barrier is that Volunteer Specialist Instructors bear all the costs until they are no longer able to lay out the funds to do so.

2. Barrier FC does not fund raise.

Forum Communicators relies on membership fees, donations, members contributions, successfully gaining grants when available. FC delivers specialist training, coaching, and mentoring in public speaking and the challenge for FC is to raise sufficient funds to meet its objectives in providing the community access to training and public speaking and access to non-judgmental environments.

Barrier

Grants are important so that Forum Communicators can buy the equipment it requires to provide access to training develop confidence in public speaking. The Government needs to review the system of awarding grants to set up platforms where single grants and ongoing grants are considered, as they are often hard to get, in the current system, because it is highly competitive and this prevents others from gaining. In summary current grants do not have sustainability in the current system. Volunteers experience would improve if there was access to funds.



3. People are now astute on choosing where and for whom they will volunteer, and FC is developing an infrastructure to be responsive to what people are seeking. The challenge that would improve volunteers experience is to be able to get a grant or have access to government funding to improve FC out of date website. FC vision is to develop and provide access to a digital library that specializes in public speaking and chairing meetings. FC is aware that it needs to change the whole of the website, so that it is responsive to what people are seeking today.



Motto

"Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you."

NCWQ Mission Statement

National Council of Women of Queensland (NCWQ) is a non-party-political, non-sectarian, not-for-profit, umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives. It seeks to raise the awareness of members as to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encourages their participation in all aspects of community life.

NCWQ Goals

- ▶ **Unite** associates and societies of women, and of men and women, into an organisation for mutual counsel and cooperation.
- ▶ **Work** for the empowerment of women and families and to promote equal status for women in law and fact.
- ▶ **Develop** policies and responses on behalf of women on a state-wide basis.
- ▶ **Act** as a voice on issues and concerns of women at state and regional levels.
- ▶ **Link** with the women of Australia and the International Council of Women through the National Council of Women of Australia and contribute to the implementation of their plans of action and policies.

The National Council of Women of Queensland acknowledges the elders and traditional custodians, past and present, of the land on which we meet. We recognise, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' role in and contribution to Australian life and culture.

About NCWQ

The National Council of Women of Queensland (NCWQ) is a not-for-profit Organisation that has relied on Volunteers to achieve its mission of advocating for women for 120 years. It is an umbrella organisation currently affiliated with over thirty organisations who share the same or similar goals including Zonta, Quota Club of Brisbane, Soroptimist, National Council of Jewish Women Queensland, Anglican Mother's Union, Forum Communicators, Girl Guides, Country Women's Association, OWN Queensland, Girl's Brigade and the Women's Network. For a full list please see our website at www.ncwq.org.au.

NCWQ's Patron is Her Excellency the Honorable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland. NCWQ is affiliated with the National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) and the International Council of Women (ICW). Members and Affiliate Organisations were invited to contribute to this submission. The papers submitted are attached to this report and referenced in Appendix A

Response to Terms of Reference

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Volunteering in Queensland Inquiry. Our response to the terms of reference are outlined in this document

1. The current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State

Benefits of volunteering for volunteers include:

- Developing friendships (sometimes lifelong- some of the members in our affiliate organisations have been members for over sixty years.
- Having fun
- Learning new skills
- Networking and meeting new people which for some assists them in their business
- Working together for a common cause promoting a feeling of connectedness
- Feeling healthier and improving mental wellbeing
- Opportunities for Leadership
- Improving employability
- Promotes the feeling of 'doing' and 'working' for the common good and
- Assists in achieving a work life balance which supports mental health

Benefits of volunteering to Communities

- Builds a sense of connectedness within the community
- Support is offered (i.e., to disadvantaged women and their families over and above that of paid services)

Benefits of volunteering for the Organisation

- Raise awareness about the organisation
- Bring a range of skills and experiences to benefit the organisation
- Bringing a range of perspectives
- Help achieve the mission of the organisation

Benefits of volunteering for the State

- Less drain on finances
- Building a sense of pride

The advertising feature article by Bolton Clarke published recently in the Australian Magazine captures the benefits of volunteering in the context of 'aging well'. Judy Lowthian head of Bolton Clarke research, reported based on a survey of 2000, "It's no longer necessarily a linear pathway from work to retirement." "One of the great benefits

of that is that working and volunteering are a strong source of social connection, meaning and purpose.”

2. The views of volunteers, prospective volunteers and the volunteering sector on the current barriers to volunteering, including excessive legislative and regulatory burdens and other restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers;

Views of volunteers regarding current barriers to volunteering

- An aging population is taking its toll on the numbers of volunteers in the community. Member death or leaving due to ill health are often the reasons given for a drop in membership numbers and closure.
- More established organisations such as Forum Communicators Assoc and Search Light report struggling to interest younger members and maintain membership numbers. Clubs which originally had 30+ members have fewer members and are struggling to attract new younger members.

When consulted in the Quota International ‘Listening Tour’ younger potential members reported they enjoy connecting with people their own age and were interested in volunteering for one off or short term projects. This was evident in the Mud Army after the 2011 floods.

- Competing priorities are often barriers to volunteering for example while raising a family or caring for elderly parents.
 - Currently NCWQ has a younger member who left to start a family and another member who was busy caring for their elderly mother.
 - A university student serving on the NCWQ Management committee reported many young people are unable to make long term commitments often due to study and work commitments.
 - Another young member of the NCWQ Management Committee noted their generation placed increasing importance on being ‘socially aligned’ to the groups they volunteer with - where values, principles and positions are not clear or stated this may deter younger members.
- Having to pay a membership fee can be a deterrent, and high insurance costs and challenges fundraising often mean members are out of pocket.
- Not-for-profit organisations are often not eligible for grants as they do not meet the ‘Charity’ requirement so the donor gets a tax benefit. The challenges in getting a ‘Charity’ Status mean many organisations are not eligible for some of the grants on offer.

3. The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience;

Current experiences

Motivations

- Being open to change the way NCWQ does things for example opening membership up to individuals as well as organisations
- Being flexible has seen a pleasing increase in younger members for example meeting after work hours instead of during the day.
- Functions are held on the weekends to accommodate those who work during the week.
- Making a difference and working towards a common purpose is part of the attraction to all ages for example by coordinating the Bursary Program to empower women and involving all interested members in the Advocacy Hub.

Challenges along with how we addressed the challenges and improved the volunteering experience;

- **TIME CHALLENGE** - The NCWQ Management Committee hold a Bimonthly meeting. We meet less often and by zoom rather than meeting in person and having to factor in travel time. The alternate month we utilise our time to focus on our key activities.
- **RECORD KEEPING CHALLENGE** - NCWQ streamlined meetings using a template on the online MinuteMe platform and use the google suite to reduce duplication of documents and trying to locate the latest version.
- **CHANGING NEEDS CHALLENGE** - NCWQ reviewed the Mission and were open to change direction based on identified needs for example introducing a Bursary Program to empower women to complete their studies and promote economic independence. This program has now grown to 35 Bursaries offered in 2024. We also changed the way we operate introducing an Advocacy Hub which was open to all members while valuing our Advisors and consulting outside of the organisation. NCWQ also conducted a survey which informed about member priorities which were considered when planning.
- **ATTRACTING AND KEEPING NEW MEMBERS CHALLENGE** - NCWQ introduced a complimentary membership pin, free entry to one event and members often pay less than nonmembers to attend NCWQ events. Bursary recipients are offered honorary membership for one year after which they may apply for membership at a student rate if they still wish to join and they are still studying. Bursary recipients are also encouraged to be actively involved in the Bursary Presentations and Bursary Team. As outlined in the Bolton Clarke article social clubs are more popular than volunteering. As reported by the Quota Club of Brisbane they enjoy the fellowship and fun while they support the community. This is what keeps them engaged. The Quota Club of Beenleigh has three very successful youth support programs through their Junior Quota Clubs, which are coordinated by Heather Christensen. Heather reported, "It is just really a mixture of passionate students keeping them involved and encouraging others to join". She said it really helps if the teachers allow access

to the students, it is better to start early in year 7 or 8 so they are involved longer.

- PERCEPTIONS CHALLENGE - NCWQ rebranded, changing the logo, website and banners
- COST OF INSURANCE CHALLENGE - ongoing
- COST OF OVERHEADS CHALLENGE - NCWQ increased membership costs, held a number of events to raise funds and are seeking Sponsors to help cover the costs.
- LIMITED INSURANCE COVERAGE- As outlined in the Forum Communicator report insurance policies do not cover over the age of eighty. They point out that volunteering does not stop at eighty years of age. Other policies only cover the volunteer if they are unable to participate in paid work. Many of the volunteers in our affiliate organisations are a mixture of retired and working volunteers.

NCWQ Recommendations for addressing challenges and Improving the volunteering experience

- Be responsive to the 'Hot Buttons' of your members and/or potential members. Identify what they are looking for and work to meet that need. These can be identified by surveying members
- Be open to change as suggested in the Forum Communicator report looking at recognition of training offered by Not-For-Profit organisations
- Actively involve members
- Make time to celebrate and keep having 'fun'

4. The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, genders, age groups, abilities and locations, and opportunities to improve volunteering participation, accessibility and experience for these groups;

Opportunities to improve participation, accessibility experiences of this group.

- NCWQ has traditionally been women supporting women however we are open to including men in the conversation about equality for all.
- NCWQ has traditionally been an umbrella organisation for Women's Organisations. Membership has been expanded to include interested individuals, many of whom are young professional women.

4. The extent, effectiveness and efficiency of current government support at all levels for the volunteering sector in Queensland and sustainable opportunities for improvement; Current Government Support available.

NCWQ enjoys positive connections with all levels of government who have supported the Bursary Program. Other Bursaries are funded by individuals and affiliate organisations. There have been challenges however accessing funding to cover the running costs eg venue hire, catering costs, printing programs and certificates. More

recently we have produced an E Yearbook that captures the Sponsor's Details, Bursary and Bursary Recipient's Story. Funding was unable to be obtained. As a Statewide organisation it has been difficult to source funding for example some local council grants are for projects in their local council catchment only.

5. Opportunities for the Queensland Government to leverage all portfolios to support growth in volunteering across Queensland, including through hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games;

(no comment)

6. Opportunities to increase emergency response volunteering in Queensland, including how to optimise the engagement, support and integration of volunteers assisting with natural disasters and community recovery;

(no comment)

7. First Nations peoples volunteering, including in remote and discrete communities, and the role of First Nations volunteering in Closing the Gap; and

(no comment)

8. Any other relevant matters, including academic and other diverse sources, and any relevant reports and reviews at the national level and across other states and territories.

NCWQ is affiliated with Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women (QRRRW) who recently surveyed women across Queensland starting December 2024. Over three hundred responses have been received from across all areas of the State to date with the majority 43.61% being women between the ages of 31 to 50 years and 37.70% were women from 51-70 years which represented just over 80% of responders. It was reported that 28.07% were involved in volunteer work and a further 23.86% were involved in paid and voluntary work. This represents just over half of the women who are involved in voluntary (unpaid) work.

The Rural, Regional and Remote Queensland Womens survey| A survey of conditions, wants and needs is still underway and results have not been officially published as yet. There are many forms of voluntary work for example childcare and care of elderly parents. These are areas not officially recognised until recently in the Working for Women A Strategy for Gender Equality 2024 Report. The report acknowledges women still provide the vast majority of unpaid work often in a caring role. A strategy suggested is to encourage men and women in non traditional roles. It needs to go further and acknowledge the contribution made by volunteers particularly to the care economy.

Volunteering needs to be acknowledged, recognised, valued as important contributors to the community and economy.

Reference List

1. Advertising Feature Article, "The Generation that's reshaping retirement' Bolton Clarke, Australian Magazine 15th February 2025
2. Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women (QRRRW) Survey December 2024- February 2025 unpublished shared with permission from President Emma Clarke
3. Forum Communicators Association Inc. Submission 2025 submitted by President Irene Henley State President
4. Quota Club of Brisbane Report February 2025 submitted by President Caroline Cox
5. Conversation with Elizabeth Mackenzie on behalf of Search Light Inc. 2025
6. Email from Past Regional 13 Director Quota International Robyn Russ 2025
7. Message from Past President Quota Club of Beenleigh Heather Christensen who is the Coordinator/Mentor of their three Junior Quota Clubs
8. Message from Past International President (PIP) Karen Murphy
9. Quota International Listening Tour Report Quota International 2014 unpublished but shared with permission from PIP Karen Murphy
10. Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality @commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2024



Response to the Volunteering in Queensland Inquiry.

The Quota Club of Brisbane Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation who is affiliated with the National Council of Women of Queensland Inc. (NCWQ). Until 2020 the club was known as the Quota International of Brisbane City Inc. which came under the umbrella of Quota International. Unfortunately Quota International dissolved in 2020 after celebrating 100 years of service in 2019. It dissolved due to financial pressures created during COVID and declining membership. As a volunteer organisation we became an autonomous group and focused on support of the local community in Australia. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry. We are a small organisation who appreciates the new legislation which came into effect in July 2024 which no longer requires us to have a formal audit. This represents a significant saving for us. Our current President Caroline Cox works with an executive committee consisting of Vanessa Thurlow as Treasurer and Marilyn McGinn as Secretary who can be contacted on quotabrisbane@gmail.com. We have eleven members who connect via a National Newsletter to other Quota Clubs across Australia. All those involved in the Quota Club of Brisbane Inc. are volunteers. Some of the members are retired most of whom have been members for decades. Others are still working or seeking work. Our mission “Quota Brisbane is a Not for Profit Organisation that through care, service and leadership, provides support, inspiration and empowerment to its members and volunteers and supports those in need in our local community.”

1. The current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State;
Response: Members of Quota Brisbane value the fellowship within our small club preferring to meet face to face when possible. At times though we have used zoom and phone calls to connect. We were thrilled to have a new member join our team in 2024. We are a small club that contributes to the

welfare of others by raising money for example to support students through our Listening to Learn Program. The challenge of raising money to support the community becomes more difficult as we are an aging community service group. Loss of members over the years has been due to the sad passing of members who enjoyed decades of membership, others have left due to ill health, relocating and at times a difference of opinion. Our mission unites us and gives us a common purpose. We enjoy helping others in the community and pride ourselves and the difference we make in the lives of those less fortunate. As volunteers we benefit as do the people in the community we support such as students in special schools through our Achiever Awards, a student of Ophthalmology through our partnership with National Council of Women of Queensland to offer an annual Bursary, and Club Bursaries in the fields of creative arts. The Listening to Learn Program, a legacy of Quota International, focuses on supporting students who are hard of hearing. We raise money to cover or work in partnership with schools to provide Soundfield Amplification Systems and Voice Amplifiers. We have also provided Regional devices for deployment by the Advisory Visiting Teachers where they are needed.

2. The views of volunteers, prospective volunteers and the volunteering sector on the current barriers to volunteering, including excessive legislative and regulatory burdens and other restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers; **Response:** High Insurance costs impact on our ability to put 100% of money raised to work in the community. As a small club we struggle to cover the \$750 or so it costs to take out Public Liability Insurance. We are not currently covered for volunteers who may be injured while undertaking community service. We charge membership fees in order to cover some of the insurance costs. This cost is a deterrent for some. Our insurance premium is high due to the members taking on fundraising such as Bunnings BBQs. As a not-for-Profit organisation we are not eligible for Charity Status and as such we find it difficult to secure grants. We report to the Office of Fair Trading annually. We adhere to Robert's Rules for record keeping and meeting procedures which are not always well received by younger, potential members. In 2010 Quota International conducted a Listening Tour interviewing young potential volunteers. The report attached was never formally released but captures the opinions at the time which did not favour formal meetings and long term commitments. The youth consulted were looking for immediate gratification via social media rather than quietly achieving as many of our members have done for decades. I share this report with the permission of Past International President Karen Murphy. Our current President Caroline reported she does not feel the situation has changed.
3. The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience; **Response:** Currently

we enjoy the security of knowing we have money bequeathed to us from past members which can earn interest and be put to good use in the community. The amount we earn depends on the current interest rates so fluctuates and can not be relied upon. As we age we are looking to raise money in ways that are less physically demanding. Our car park fundraiser allows us to connect and raise money for community projects without being too physically demanding. This is due to the willingness of a local business who allow us to use their car park during the caravan and camping show. It is negotiated annually and there are no guarantees we will be able to do this each year. We are struggling to attract new members to continue the work. We currently have eleven members. We would welcome new members. This has been an ongoing challenge for decades.

4. The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, genders, age groups, abilities and locations, and opportunities to improve volunteering participation, accessibility and experience for these groups;
Response: Distance to travel to meetings has presented the club with challenges. Members sometimes travel for an hour and a half to attend meetings. We struggle to find a location to meet that does not cost anything. We currently meet in the centre of Brisbane City at the library which presents challenges such as parking and accessibility. We are aware there are people who would join us if we had a place to meet where there was easy access, parking available and somewhere that did not involve a lot of expense for the members. We currently do not have a home. In a survey conducted by NCWQ last year we expressed interest in a shared venue we could call 'home'. It would be ideal if through NCWQ we were able to hold meetings and host events at a venue shared by other NCWQ affiliate members that provided easy access, parking and a place to share or prepare a meal which was not in the centre of the City.
5. The extent, effectiveness and efficiency of current government support at all levels for the volunteering sector in Queensland and sustainable opportunities for improvement; **Response:** We find dealing with the Office of Fair Trade (OFT) very frustrating. We have attempted to change the timing for annual reporting many times. We have tried going in to the office in the city, phone calls and emails and yet the problem is still ongoing. Setting up the MyGov and security settings with MyID was also an exercise in frustration that took hours to navigate to do annual returns online. We submitted a Statement by the Executive for the first time last year as part of our Annual Return to the OFT. It would be helpful if we could have a confirmation of receipt and perhaps feedback so we know we are on the right track. We try to do the right thing but find the process challenging. We change officers annually. The process of changing details at the bank is equally time consuming and frustrating.



The generation that's reshaping retirement

MORE AND MORE AUSTRALIANS ARE CHANGING THEIR APPROACH TO RETIREMENT BY EMBRACING PART-TIME WORK, VOLUNTEERING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Research tells us the majority of Australians feel most content between the ages of 65 and 79.

Their children are grown up, there's more financial stability and, as the baby boomers enter their mid-70s, they're breaking the stereotypes about what it means to grow older.

With healthy life expectancy rising steadily – meaning people are living longer in better health – and the rise of flexible work

opportunities, ideas about retirement and what it looks like are changing.

FINDING A NEW BALANCE

Bolton Clarke's Broadwater Gardens – a community made up of modern two- and three-bedroom homes, nestled in a quiet riverside location in Port Macquarie on the NSW coast – might seem like the quintessential retirement location – and it is.

And for 73-year-old resident Paul Laurent, it's also his workplace.

Paul and his wife, Alison, recently made the decision to downsize from their family home in Newcastle and move to Broadwater Gardens. He now balances a slower-paced lifestyle with paid work.

"I'm not retired, I just think I am," Paul jokes.

His first attempt at retirement following successful careers in metallurgy and human resources management didn't stick, so

Paul decided to take a job at a vocational training organisation as an HR manager and the a part-time teacher.

"Then my son set up his electrical business and I started doing admin for him," he says.

"Now I teach and do administrative payroll for two small businesses as well as handling HR queries and bookkeeping."

Working remotely has allowed Paul to explore a new lifestyle.

"We were visiting with friends up here and they asked what



"WE KNOW THAT ACROSS OUR RETIREMENT VILLAGES 55 PER CENT OF RESIDENTS ARE INVOLVED IN SOCIAL CLUBS, ABOUT ONE IN FIVE RESIDENTS ARE VOLUNTEERING, AND AROUND 3 PER CENT STILL DOING PAID WORK"

next chapter looked like for us. That got us thinking. We'd looked at downsizing in Newcastle, but we found this place and fell in love."

Now Paul balances work with catching up with friends, participating in village activities, riding his electric bike, swimming, and exploring new places.

"It's about keeping active, which is important – whether it's working, doing a hobby or playing sport. I think being involved with people probably gives you a good mental attitude as well," he says.

A few doors down, Paul's neighbour Trevor Racklyeft has turned his interest in woodwork into a thriving volunteer enterprise.

"We moved here 15 years ago from an acreage south of Sydney, and I had to really think about what I was going to do without the acreage to manage," he said.

"Somebody gave me some scrap timber, and so I started making wooden toys and giving them away to St Vincent de Paul and the local women's refuge."

Trevor's toys have put smiles on the faces of hundreds of children, and he and wife Marg also help man the village coffee shop.

THE POWER OF PURPOSE

Research shows Paul and Trevor are not alone, with more and more Australians changing how they think about retirement, work and what it takes to age positively.

Bolton Clarke's latest Ageing Well Report, based on a survey of more than 2000 Australians, reveals that having a greater choice about work and more time to focus on health and wellbeing are what respondents were most looking forward to in later life.

Respondents also said having the space to both work and

entertain was a top priority when choosing retirement living options.

"It's no longer necessarily a linear pathway from work to retirement," Bolton Clarke head of research Judy Lowthian says.

"One of the great benefits of that is that working and volunteering are a strong source of social connection, meaning and purpose. Having that purpose and those connections are among the most important factors in ensuring people flourish in older age."

"We know that across our retirement villages 55 per cent of residents are involved in social clubs, about one in five residents are volunteering, and around 3 per cent are still doing paid work."

"That contributes to wellbeing, with 90 per cent of village residents saying they feel positive about life and around three-quarters rating their health as good to excellent," she says.

"The great news is that along with the nature of work changing with online capabilities, retirement living options are being designed to help people age positively so that, along with gyms, restaurants and community spaces, homes and apartments have space to work from home."

Bolton Clarke is Australia's largest independent not-for-profit provider of aged care and retirement living options.



Clockwise from top left: Trevor Racklyeft (right) in his workshop; social connection is a key ingredient for positive ageing; staying active is also important



Discover how lifelong learning can contribute to positive ageing at boltonclarke.com.au

6. Opportunities for the Queensland Government to leverage all portfolios to support growth in volunteering across Queensland, including through hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; **Response:** As our members are aging, it is unlikely any of us will volunteer for the long hours rostered on for events such as Olympics and Games. If the roster was shorter and the volunteers could work in areas closer to their homes we would love to be involved.
7. Opportunities to increase emergency response volunteering in Queensland, including how to optimise the engagement, support and integration of volunteers assisting with natural disasters and community recovery; **No Response**
8. First Nations peoples volunteering, including in remote and discrete communities, and the role of First Nations volunteering in Closing the Gap; and **No Response**
9. Any other relevant matters, including academic and other diverse sources, and any relevant reports and reviews at the national level and across other states and territories.-**Response:** see Listening Tour Report from Quota International