

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Australian Red Cross Bundaberg Branch Submission

Bundaberg Branch of Australian Red Cross has approximately 19 active volunteers with the Mobility Equipment Hire Service, which provides short term hire of mobility equipment to clients, to assist them at home after injury or illness.

Bundaberg Branch has no paid staff and approx. 55 unpaid volunteers who run the various services in Bundaberg.

The Meet and Greet Service at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, has approx. 8 active volunteers who assist over 1000 patients and visitors monthly, to the hospital, navigate their way around the hospital.

Emergency Services in the Bundaberg region has 14 active volunteers, who provide assistance before, during and after disasters with Preparedness Training, including checking equipment & the Pillowcase Program with schools; 24/7 Staffing of Evacuation Centres; Staffing of Recovery Centres, Community Outreach (Door to Door/Welfare checks).

The Trauma Teddy program provides Trauma Teddys to patients young and elderly suffering during times of stress and uncertainty, i.e. while getting blood taken, and persons affected/displaced during disasters. This program also helps community members and persons with disability with community engagement, where they come together for craft mornings, sewing and stuffing knitted Trauma Teddys.

Volunteers are highly valued and appreciated, and are awarded throughout their years of service with various awards and certificates for different years/levels of service.

There has been a general decrease over the years in volunteering across the board in the number of new volunteers, with some older volunteers retiring due to age and physical inability to continue, while some others have passed on.

Unfortunately, some younger people do not have time to volunteer due to work commitments, others do not wish to do unpaid work.

If volunteers decrease, the eventual consequence could be the cessation of some services, as has been seen in Bundaberg and other areas with the closure of retail shops etc. There is always going to be a need for volunteers, as not-for-profit organisations operate to provide assistance wherever it is needed for as long as required.

Many of our volunteers have been with us for 20, 30 and 40 years and more, holding the positions of President, Vice President, Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer, as well as volunteering in the Mobility Equipment Hire, Meet & Greet, Emergency Services and many volunteers with the Trauma Teddy program.

Volunteers have reported positive experiences while volunteering, such as being given a feeling of great satisfaction in being able to help someone going through traumatic times. One example is, a child of about three, who was with her mother and grandmother who were hiring equipment for a family member, fell over and bumped her head, she started crying and I asked another volunteer to get her a Trauma Teddy, as soon as she was given the Teddy she instantly stopped crying and hugged her new Teddy.

28 February 2025