

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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28 February 2025

Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland

As the Mayor of the Gladstone Region, I am incredibly proud of our Council and community's strong commitment to investing in the volunteer-reliant not-for-profit (NFP) sector.

Gladstone Regional Council has developed a Gladstone Regional Council Volunteer Action Plan 2025. This plan focuses on the delivery of four main outcomes, including: -

1. **Volunteer recognition:** Our volunteers are recognised and celebrated for the contributions they make in our community;
2. **Volunteer attraction and retention:** Our volunteers are attracted and retained so our region continues to prosper and grow;
3. **Volunteer support:** Volunteers are equipped with the tools and skills to succeed in their volunteer capacity;
4. **Community connection:** Our communities are connected, strong and vibrant and volunteerism plays a key role in the sustainability, liveability, health and wellbeing of the community.

I have attached this Action Plan to this submission for your reference.

In addition, Council recognises NFP House as the leading body locally in volunteering, and the crucial role they play in bridging the gaps in support for these volunteer organisations, ensuring they have the resources and infrastructure needed to thrive.

NFP House provides practical, sustainable solutions to the volunteer crisis by:

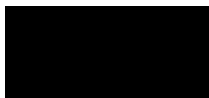
1. **Serving as a Central Support Hub** – A dedicated space where NFPs and volunteers can access ongoing resources, guidance, and assistance.
2. **Strengthening Foundations for Volunteer-Reliant NFPs** – Helping organisations establish governance, systems support, and strategic planning. By investing in policies, processes, and structured frameworks, NFP House makes these organisations more sustainable while reducing the workload on volunteers. This, in turn, facilitates a shift toward **task-based volunteering**.
3. **Making Volunteering More Accessible** – NFP House works with organisations to break down volunteer roles into smaller, clearly defined tasks, making it easier for people to contribute without feeling overwhelmed by long-term commitments.
4. **Encouraging Workplace Volunteering** – By partnering with businesses, NFP House helps introduce more people to volunteering in a **safe, supportive, and tailored** way. This approach fosters long-term volunteer engagement while providing flexibility to meet individual needs.

5. **Providing NFPs with Assessments & Improvement Plans** – Through structured benchmarking and evaluation, NFP House helps organisations identify their **real** funding needs. Many have successfully accessed Gladstone Regional Council’s Community Investment Funding to address these priorities. I look forward to seeing the **impact of this investment** through future reassessments and regional report cards.
6. **Connecting Organisations with Volunteers & Resources** – Following assessments, organisations receive tailored improvement plans, are linked with volunteers, and gain access to funding opportunities and mentorship. Volunteer tasks are listed on the **NFP House volunteer portal**, making it easier to match skills with community needs.

NFP House’s proven model is a **scalable, evidence-based solution** to Australia’s volunteer crisis. By strengthening NFP infrastructure, empowering volunteers, and fostering workplace engagement, we are building a more **sustainable, thriving volunteer sector** for the future.

Both Council and NFP House will continue to focus on the importance volunteers bring to our communities, through continued support, recognition and attraction, and acknowledge the value they bring to our communities.

Yours faithfully



CR MATT BURNETT
MAYOR OF GLADSTONE REGION



PLAN ON A PAGE

Gladstone Regional Council Volunteer Action Plan 2025

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Volunteers are recognised and celebrated for the contributions they make in our community.

Volunteers are attracted and retained so our region continues to prosper and grow.

Volunteers are equipped with the tools and skills to succeed in their volunteer capacity.

Our communities are connected, strong and vibrant and volunteerism plays a key role in the sustainability, liveability, health and wellbeing of the community.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER – KEY ACTIONS

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Continue to celebrate the contribution of volunteers to the fabric of our community through annual recognition events:

- Host annual event to celebrate and recognise council's volunteers (Events, Tondoon Botanic Gardens, Library, Art Gallery and Museum)
- Introduce Volunteer Micro Grants to replace council-run Volunteer Week celebrations
- Ensure Councilors remain involved in any volunteer recognition events held by community organisations
- Continue to acknowledge and celebrate volunteers through the Australia Day Awards

VOLUNTEER SHOWCASE

Share stories of volunteering in the region to promote volunteerism and attract new volunteers:

- Develop a Communication Strategy to celebrate and share stories of local volunteers that targets multiple audiences (employers, students, retirees, etc), utilizing a variety of mediums (billboard, social media, newsletters, etc) to communicate the different types of volunteering opportunities available

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Participation in Micro Grants initiative equal or greater than previous recognition event participation.

Positive sentiment following the Micro Grants initiative determined via formal survey and anecdotal comments.

Attendance at development workshops.

Attendance at Attraction Initiative and participation rate in volunteering at +6 months post initiative.

Increase in the number of Volunteer Position Descriptions/Tasks on the NFP House portal.

Increased number of registered potential volunteers on the NFP House portal.

Online social engagement with Council posts promoting volunteers and volunteer opportunities.

Increased interest and signup in Council volunteer programs.

VOLUNTEER ATTRACTION

Recognize Not For Profit House (NFP House) as the leading body locally in volunteering and provide support towards the volunteering services and opportunities they provide to the community:

- Provide a financial contribution to NFP House for the continued development and enhancement of the 'Volunteer Portal'
- Extend an invitation to NFP House to participate in relevant events hosted by Council's Community Partnership Team, such as 'Welcome Morning Teas'

Host a Volunteering Attraction Initiative:

- Work with relevant stakeholders to develop an initiative that encourages individuals who do not currently volunteer, to participate in volunteering opportunities. Initiative to identify target audiences (ie. Transition to retirement, CALD community, etc) and customize initiative appropriately to those audiences.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Provide development opportunities to existing volunteers to help ensure they have the skills to fulfill their volunteer roles:

- Utilise multiple data sources and engagement to determine the key need areas for the provision of NFP training
- Partner with relevant stakeholders to deliver training in the identified areas

Explore the opportunity of providing micro-credentials to volunteers:

- Work with key stakeholders to determine if micro-credentials exist or could be developed specifically for NFP Sector and provided free of charge to local volunteer organisations (ie. Communication, access and inclusion, volunteer management, conflict resolution)
- If determined feasible, prepare grant applications and future budget submissions

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

Explore opportunities to introduce Corporate Volunteering at GRC:

- Work with GRC Teams to consider the inclusion of corporate volunteering opportunities (ie. Two days paid volunteering per year) as part of council's People Strategy