

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No:	454
Submitted by:	QSport
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	



Submission To	The Queensland Parliamentary Committee for Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service
Subject	Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland
Submission By	QSport
Contact	Tim Klar Chief Executive Officer [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Submission Date	February 28, 2025

QSport Submission to the Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland

1. Overview

QSport thanks the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the 'Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland'.

QSport's submission focuses on the following three priorities within the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

1. The current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State (**Term 1**)
2. The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience (**Term 3**)
3. 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 (**Term 6**).

In addition, QSport's submission:

- references a number of additional, relevant reports that will support the Committee's work in this Inquiry, and
- recommends actions the State Government should take to unlock additional engagement with and benefits through volunteering in sport.

2. About QSport

- QSport's Vision is that "every Queenslander can find connection, be active and contribute to their community through sport", a central commitment that is in absolute lockstep with the intent of this Inquiry, and which reflects the mission-critical importance and impact of volunteering within the sport ecosystem.
- As the state's peak body for the sport industry, QSport represents 70 State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and other industry providers, agencies and adjacent peak bodies, and works with all three levels of Government on initiatives that improve the leadership, governance, sustainability, delivery and impact of sport in communities across Queensland.
- This membership comprises diverse businesses with diverse needs, all of which share a love of sport and a belief in its positive impacts. We are united by a common ambition to see Queenslanders connect with and benefit from their experiences with it across the lifespan.
- QSport's Members lead, deliver and enable sport across all corners of Queensland through their own programs and via a network of thousands of affiliated associations, clubs and centres. These organisations engage and support Queenslanders every day at all levels — from park to pathway to podium — and across diverse roles including as participants, coaches, officials and volunteers.

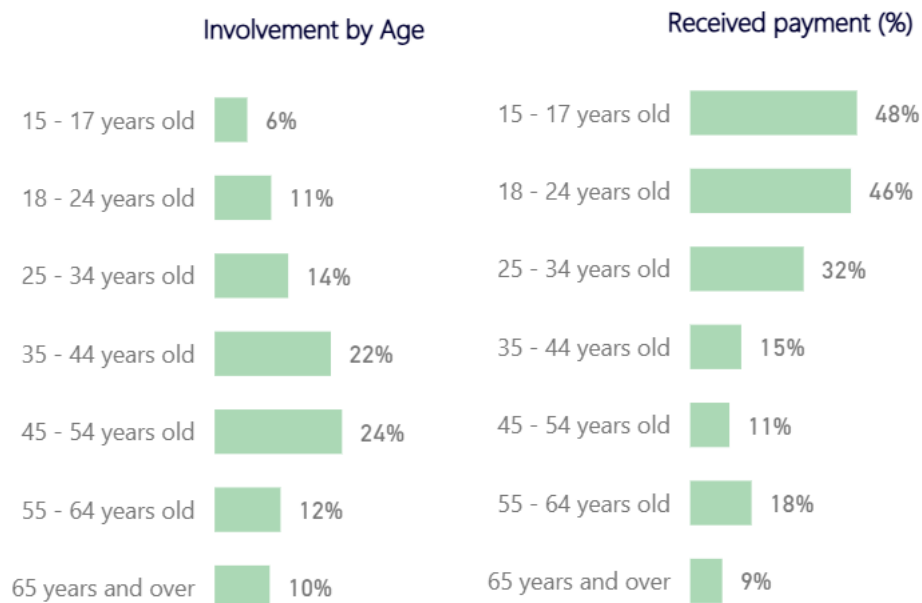
3. Context for this Submission

- Sport is widely acknowledged as a critical driver of economic, health and social benefits and volunteering is the lifeblood of sport and its positive impacts.
- Sport is much more than a platform for people's pastimes — it is a significant contributor to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and the prosperity of their communities, and catalyses a suite of crucial benefits including:
 - positive engagement with and contributions to local communities by people from diverse cohorts
 - job creation and workforce (including volunteer) recruitment, retention and rewards
 - improved social connection and cohesion and attendant reductions in loneliness and anti-social engagement/behaviour
 - positive economic impacts along supply chains in multiple sectors, and
 - civic pride and community inspiration.
- Sport is a critical enabler of and conduit for volunteering contributions — opportunities to volunteer in sport are available in every Queensland community through grassroots clubs, associations and centres.
- Sport offers these volunteering opportunities to Queenslanders across the lifespan. The diverse opportunities for volunteering in sport encompass a range of roles that enable people of multiple generations to volunteer alongside each other in service of their communities.

- The corollary of this state-wide footprint and broad opportunity base is that sport requires a large volunteer workforce, and the diversity of roles means it is not merely a question of enough volunteers, but in some cases a need for sufficient volunteers holding the appropriate skills and competencies for several roles across the governance, administration and physical delivery of sport.
- QSport draws the Committee's attention to the substantial work on sport volunteering already completed by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), which has consulted with stakeholders across the national sport and recreation ecosystem to develop:
 - a multi-year *Sport Volunteering Action Plan 2022-26* which is supported publicly by national, state and local sporting organisations, state and local governments and stakeholders across the education, corporate and community services sectors: https://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1068570/36994_Sport-Volunteer-Coalition-Action-Plan-update.pdf
 - guided by a national Volunteer Coalition group (which includes representation from the Sport and Recreation Department within State Government): <https://www.ausport.gov.au/volunteering/sport-volunteer-coalition>
 - and a sport volunteering resource hub: <https://www.ausport.gov.au/volunteering/volunteer-resource-hub>.
- The ASC's work and investment in sport volunteering is underpinned by detailed research which includes development of a sport volunteering segmentation that contemplates both demographic and psychographic factors and provides recommendations for engagement and retention: https://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1017443/Sport-Australia-The-Future-of-Sport-Volunteering-Insights-Report-2021.pdf
- The ASC also provides relevant data from its AusPlay survey, a nationally-representative, general population survey of Australians' engagement with and contributions to sport, to highlight key volunteering insights: ¹
 - approximately 3 million Australians aged 15 years and over identify as a volunteer in sport — this is roughly one in every seven Australians aged 15 years and older
 - 68% of sport volunteers are in metropolitan areas, 29% in regional communities and 3% in remote communities
 - The traditional interpretation of volunteering as a service/contribution provided without remuneration or compensation is evolving — one in four people that identify as a sport volunteer received monetary payment and/or goods and services in exchange for a contribution but still consider themselves a volunteer.

¹
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiMDUzMmY2NjYtM2I4Ni00MDhjLTg1ZDktYWEzMmUxOTYwM2ExliwidCI6ljhkMmUwZjRjLTU1ZjltNGNiMS04ZWU3LWRhNWRkM2ZmMzYwMCI9>

- It is also relevant to consider the distribution of volunteering by age segment against the percentage of volunteers in each segment that report receiving payment for their contribution:



- The shape of volunteering by age cohort shown above is well-understood, but that nearly half of volunteering by those aged 15 to 24 years includes a payment (likely in most cases to be a very small amount and in exchange for coaching and/or officiating performed at community club/association level), raises the possibility that the mix of motivations for volunteering may continue to evolve in future.
- Sport volunteering has traditionally been cast as a contribution of time and energy that attracts no remuneration (and often requires the volunteer to contribute their own funds, too) but this expectation may change as:
 - younger volunteers that are the future of the volunteer workforce and that currently receive a small sum for their contribution are faced with changes in their life stage and circumstances (e.g. moving into full-time employment, beginning a family etc.), and reconsider how they will prioritise sport volunteering in the context of life's various demands, and
 - these same volunteers that have received remuneration for their volunteering move into leadership positions within volunteer involving organisations and seek to extend this same benefit as a feature of the volunteering value proposition to the next generation that follows them.

4. The Current State of Volunteering in Queensland Sport

- Sport boasts but relies heavily on one of the most diverse and representative workforces of any industry. From club rooms to Boardrooms across the state, Queenslanders contribute millions of hours every year to supporting the safe, efficient and enjoyable delivery of sport.
- Looking again to the ASC's AusPlay data, pertinent insights regarding sport volunteering in Queensland include: ²
 - 571,000 Queenslanders aged over 15 years identify as a sport volunteer
 - This represents roughly 20% of Queensland's total volunteering workforce of 2.8 million ³, underscoring the significant role the sport industry plays in the state's volunteer ecosystem and economy.
 - The tables below highlight differences in sport volunteering data at national and state level by broad demographic factors:

Age range (years)	National Percentage	Queensland Percentage
15-17	6%	6%
18-24	9%	10%
25-34	13%	13%
35-44	23%	25%
45-54	25%	24%
55-64	13%	13%
65+	11%	10%

	First Nations	LOTE *	CALD ^	Disability
National %	2.4%	9.4%	17.7%	10.3%
Queensland %	3.2%	8.0%	17.6%	10.9%

* Speak a language other than English at home

^ Culturally and linguistically diverse

- **More than half of QSport member SSOs responding to recent surveys identified volunteering as one of their top 3 challenges.**
- This challenge is reflected across sports of fewer than 1,000 members all the way through to the largest sports with more than 60,000 members.

²

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoimDUzMmY2NjYtM2I4Ni00MDhjLTg1ZDktYWEzMmUxOTYwM2ExliwidCI6IjlkMmUwZjRjLTU1ZjltNGNiMS04ZWU3LWRhNWRkM2ZmMzYwMCJ9.>

³ <https://www.tatsipca.qld.gov.au/media/documents/our-work/community-support/communities-2032/queensland-volunteering-strategy/volunteering-strategy-2024-2032.pdf>

- The challenge is evident in sports regardless of attributes like format and facility type, meaning that it affects:
 - individual and team sports
 - sports from aquatic, field, court etc domains, and
 - both indoor and outdoor sports.
- To enable the sustainable and safe leadership and delivery of sport, the industry requires a sport volunteer workforce:
 - of the right size in each Queensland community, and which ideally reflects the demographic composition of that community
 - the membership of which leverages the competencies, certifications and experience required to meet existing and anticipated future local area needs, and
 - which can scale up to keep pace with participation growth and event delivery requirements that stem from successful efforts to extend existing participation and activate latent interest in engaging with sport.
- Meeting these requirements for the day-to-day needs of the industry will also build the structures, systems, processes and behaviours that will ensure the industry can capitalise on the additional opportunities that will arise over the next seven years to Brisbane 2032.

5. The Current Experiences, Motivations and Challenges for Volunteer-Involving Organisations in Queensland Sport

- Recruiting, retaining and celebrating sport volunteers is an increasingly difficult task, especially in regional and remote communities. Competition for people's discretionary time and the expanding expectations of and compliance obligations imposed upon sport volunteers are examples of the challenges with which sport is grappling.

- Expanding on the challenges in terms of sport volunteering that QSport member SSOs have shared through recent consultation, the following table highlights the percentage of SSOs that have nominated each challenge as either a ‘critical’ or ‘major concern’, with responses provided both for their own organisation and for their grassroots affiliates:

Challenge	Percentage of SSOs that identify this as a Critical or Major Concern <i>for their own business</i>	Percentage of SSOs that identify this as a Critical or Major Concern <i>across their network of affiliates</i>
Number of volunteers available	69%	94%
Volunteer recruitment	69%	81%
Volunteer retention	50%	63%
Volunteer skills/capabilities	31%	50%
Supporting volunteer upskilling/learning	44%	56%

- In addition, 43% of SSOs flagged volunteer workforce availability in regional and remote areas as a ‘critical’ or ‘major concern’.
- Recurring challenges with which these SSOs and their grassroots clubs and associations are grappling align strongly with those described by volunteer involving organisations in the *Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-32*:⁴
 - decreasing availability of time for volunteering
 - training requirements
 - meeting regulatory requirements spanning different levels of government
 - disparate administrative systems, and
 - limited resources.
- QSport member SSOs point to specific capability challenges that constrain the number and efficacy of community volunteers:
 - clearly-documented and understood roles and responsibilities
 - governance and compliance knowledge and experience
 - mitigation and successful mediation/resolution of member protection matters
 - succession planning

⁴ <https://www.tatsipca.qld.gov.au/media/documents/our-work/community-support/communities-2032/queensland-volunteering-strategy/volunteering-strategy-2024-2032.pdf>

- appetite for additional learning/upskilling to underpin success in club and committee leadership roles, and
- technology and digital literacy.
- It is critical that support for volunteering across Queensland's sport industry is designed with a degree of flexibility to ensure support for each SSO is 'right sized' and offered in ways that will address the specific challenges it is facing.
 - For example, there are core volunteering challenges each SSO has in common, but there is a broad spectrum of organisational capabilities and capacity that will shape how much an individual organisation can do, and how quickly it can do it.
- The State Government can source the insight it requires to build this flexible framework to support Queensland sport by working with QSport to design and implement a program of consultation and engagement that acknowledges sport's significant role in the state's volunteering ecosystem and its significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and the cohesion, safety and prosperity of its communities.

6. Opportunities for the Queensland Government to Support Growth in Volunteering Across Queensland, Including Through the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

- Queensland's sport industry, its leaders at all levels and state-wide facility and workforce footprints will be a critical enabler of the 2032 Games' success, particularly in terms of event preparation and staging/delivery.
- The *Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032* proposes greater collaboration across government and the volunteering sector⁵ and QSport is calling for more regular and meaningful inclusion of sport in the Government's decision making and investment designed to boost and sustain volunteering in communities, especially through sport.
- Among the benefits that will flow from improving the level, frequency and effectiveness of investment in sport volunteering in Queensland will be the compound gains that can be realised by:
 - working in lockstep with the appropriate elements of the ASC's ongoing investment and activities to augment the awareness, adoption and impact of this existing work, and
 - signalling the strategic importance of sport volunteering to Australia's sports technology ecosystem, which can harness its existing connections and service provision to sport to boost technology-enabled innovation that solves problems at scale.
- QSport highlights the importance of the *Volunteering Strategy's* recognition that acting now to prepare for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will ensure the state develops the systems and networks required to promote and sustain volunteering and its attendant social and economic benefits long after 2032.⁶

⁵ <https://www.tatsipca.qld.gov.au/media/documents/our-work/community-support/communities-2032/queensland-volunteering-strategy/volunteering-strategy-2024-2032.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.

- By working with Queensland’s sport industry on Games-focused volunteering solutions, the Government and Games Organising Committee can shorten the time and effort required to convene a Games-ready volunteer workforce by harnessing the industry’s existing volunteer workforce.
- These volunteers are already ‘in the tent’ and are driven by a passion for and affinity with sport, and can ensure the Games experience for athletes, guests, fans and visitors is imbued with this same energy and sense of service.
- Estimates of the volunteer workforce required for Brisbane 2032 range up to 80,000⁷ individuals, and the more than 570,000 existing sport volunteers in Queensland can provide a significant head start on building this vital Games workforce.
- Sport is the beating heart of the mission of the *Elevate 2042* Legacy strategy — “making our region better, sooner, together through sport” recognises the crucial and even-more-important role sport will continue to play over the next twenty years in unlocking positive social, economic and health benefits at individual, community, state and region levels.⁸
- For the sport delivery network to play its part in realising the ambitions of the ‘Sport, Health and Inclusion’ theme of *Elevate 2042*, and principally that “sport and physical activity are part of life for everyone”, there must be proportionate investment in sport volunteering as the bedrock of this dimension of Games legacy.
- **QSport calls the Committee’s attention to the multi-leverage opportunity that can be pursued in this domain by bringing the relevant departments/branches of the Government together to align strategies, ensure shared visibility and understanding of key insights, and supercharge the impact of investment in sport volunteering.**
- At the very least, QSport sees an opportunity to better integrate the efforts of the departments of Sport and Recreation and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Communities, Education and Trade, Employment and Training in this domain.

7. What Do We Recommend Happens Immediately?

1. **Establish a permanent consultation structure and method with Queensland’s sport industry** to ensure critical volunteering insights and requirements (from both volunteer and organisation perspectives), can be more efficiently and effectively incorporated into strategic planning, decision-making, investment and evaluation.

QSport has proposed a similar engagement model to the Minister for Sport, Racing and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and this same mechanism can enable insight and benefit delivery across multiple portfolios.

- QSport proposes leaders from relevant functions of the State Government consult at least quarterly with the state sport’s industry to surface relevant sport volunteering insights and evaluate the efficacy of current initiatives and opportunities for refinement.

⁷ <https://volunteeringqld.org.au/brisbane-announced-as-the-2032-olympic-games-host/>

⁸ https://cdn.q2032.au/documents/ELEVATE%202042%20Legacy%20Strategy_FULL%20LENGTH.pdf

- QSport can act as primary touchpoint and conduit for consultation with the sport industry and ensure the State Government can connect with and source vital intel from a representative cross-section of sport industry stakeholders (including state and local-level subject matter experts, and incorporating regional/remote voices, insights and requirements).

This regular consultation will provide multiple areas of Government with the relevant examples of the best practice engagement and support for volunteer journeys in sport, which can then inform efforts to scale this best practice both within sport and other adjacent sectors.

2. To activate a key domain of pre-Games legacy, **it is critical that the State Government moves swiftly to invest in a suite of initiatives** that:
 - **promote the opportunities for and benefits of sport volunteering**, and
 - **boost the capacity of state and community-level sporting organisations** to activate this call to action through complementary investment in innovative recruitment, retention and recognition initiatives that:
 - reflect the motivations and preferences of volunteer segments, and
 - harness emerging digital solutions to augment positive volunteering experiences and reduce administrative burden for organisations.

QSport is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry and stands ready to contribute in appropriate and meaningful ways to the next horizons of work that will follow the Committee's analysis and reporting.

There is perhaps no better example in Queensland's sport industry of a challenge:

- **which is so widespread**
- **which stakeholders at all levels are ready to contribute to finding and implementing the right solutions for, and**
- **which will have such profound and enduring positive impacts at scale.**

The Committee is most welcome to request additional information and QSport welcomes an opportunity for further discussion — please contact me at your convenience via the information provided at the top of this submission.

Yours sincerely



Tim Klar

CEO, QSport