

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

<b>Submission No:</b>	532
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Department of Education
<b>Publication:</b>	Making the submission and your name public
<b>Attachments:</b>	See attachment
<b>Submitter Comments:</b>	



Office of the  
**Director-General**

Department of  
**Education**

**28 FEB 2025**

Mr James Lister MP  
Chair  
Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee  
Parliament of Queensland  
Email: [lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Lister

I refer to the *Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland* (the Inquiry), agreed to by the Legislative Assembly on 11 December 2024, and note that the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee (the Committee) is now seeking submissions from interested parties.

Recognising the significant contribution of volunteers across diverse areas of the arts and education sectors, the Department of Education has prepared the enclosed submission in response to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

If you require additional information or would like to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact Ms Catherine Howe, Director & CLLO, Ministerial and Executive Services Unit, on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry. I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**SHARON SCHIMMING**  
**Acting Director-General**

Ref: 25/CLLO; ACT25335

Enc

## Department of Education submission

Local Government, Small Business and Customer  
Service Parliamentary Committee

*Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland*



## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Information to support the submission .....	3
Response to the Terms of Reference.....	3
TOR 1: Current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State.....	3
TOR 2: 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 .....	5
ToR 3: Current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience .....	5
TOR 4: The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, and opportunities to improve volunteering for these groups.....	6
TOR 5: The extent, effectiveness and efficiency of current government support for the volunteering sector in Queensland and sustainable opportunities for improvement .....	7
TOR 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.....	7
TOR 8: First Nations peoples' volunteering, including in remote and discrete communities, and the role of First Nations volunteering in Closing the Gap .....	7
TOR 9: Any other relevant matters .....	8

## Introduction

The Department of Education (the department) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into volunteering.

This submission has been developed in response to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Inquiry with consideration given to TOR 1–6, 8 and 9.

### Information to support the submission

The department is committed to delivering a comprehensive strategy to strengthen Queensland's education system, support educators, and improve outcomes for students across the State. As part of the department, Arts Queensland is committed to fostering a vibrant arts scene across Queensland.

This submission is informed by divisions within Education, Arts Queensland and the arts portfolio including Queensland's Arts Statutory Bodies (Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Museum, Queensland Performing Arts Trust and State Library of Queensland). Additionally, insights reflect the experiences of arts sector organisations, grants recipients and major events and festivals, which demonstrate the significant contributions of volunteers in supporting their operations and programming.

The department funds and/or regulates early childhood education and care (ECEC) services throughout Queensland. The department does not operate ECEC services, with the exception of State Delivered Kindergarten, which is offered in remote communities or where there are barriers to accessing a kindergarten service.

The ECEC sector provides opportunities for parents or carers to undertake volunteer roles through Parent Volunteer Management Committees or Parent and Citizen (P&C) auspiced Outside School Hours Care services. Many ECEC services rely on Parent Volunteer Management Committees to act as the management body for the service and be responsible for making decisions for the delivery of the service. Outside School Hours Care is offered at many state schools and may be managed by volunteers through the school's P&C association.

These volunteers are engaged directly by the service and not the department. Given this, the ECEC sector (which includes Early Learning and Care Council of Australia, Crèche and Kindergarten Association Limited and Lady Gowrie Qld) is best placed to provide commentary on matters relating to volunteering as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering (see contact details section).

## Response to the Terms of Reference

### TOR 1: Current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State

#### **Education**

Queensland schools benefit from the contribution of voluntary members of school councils and P&C associations. These groups support school principals to align the strategic work of the school to community expectations.

Under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, a P&C association consisting of volunteer members may be formed for a state school to promote the interests of the school, facilitate its

development and further improvement, and to achieve the best possible outcomes for students at the school. P&C volunteers support the delivery of services (i.e., uniform and tuckshops, outside school hours care services), fundraise (e.g., fun runs, fetes, trivia nights) and make donations to state schools.

P&Cs Qld is the peak body supporting more than 900,000 state school parents and wider communities, representing a network of 1,266 affiliated P&C associations, and engaging more than 58,000 volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

## **Arts and culture**

Volunteers in the arts sector support the delivery of a wide range of services through skills-based volunteering, board memberships, fundraising and general volunteering. Activities include front of house services, artist support, program delivery, guided tours, marketing, fundraising, audience engagement, hospitality and administration assistance.

Volunteer board membership and panels are highly prevalent in the arts sector, particularly those organisations in the not-for-profit sector, which rely on public grants and donations to operate. Volunteer board members help bridge financial and resource gaps by offering expertise, oversight, advocacy and access to influential networks without adding to operational costs.

Arts organisations, events and festivals rely on and provide volunteers with opportunities to gain on-the-job work experience and develop valuable industry contacts. In 2023, 82% (37) of Queensland's small to medium arts organisations<sup>2</sup> engaged volunteers to support their programming and operations.

Queensland's Arts Statutory Bodies collectively depend on volunteers to support the delivery of a range of activities including public programs, exhibition guidance, research and digital programs. For example:

- *Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA)*: Volunteers play an important role as ambassadors for QAGOMA and assist across diverse initiatives including volunteer guides, research programs, public engagement, health and education programs and curatorial work. QAGOMA advertises volunteer opportunities on its website, social media platforms, publications, representation at conferences, and through word of mouth.
- *Queensland Museum (QM)*: QM engages volunteers across its networks and programs from visitor services to research. Volunteers enhance QM programs beyond the skills and resources of staff and are greatly valued. QM encourages community engagement through its volunteer program and is committed to maintaining a comprehensive volunteer base.
- *Queensland Performing Arts Trust (QPAT)*: QPAT engages volunteers to support programs such as the Out of the Box Festival for children, Clancestry and NAIDOC celebrations. These volunteers support artists to deliver workshops and free activities, manage information booths, and stalls.
- *State Library of Queensland (SLQ)*: SLQ engages volunteers across its programs including building tours, schools engagement, children's holiday programs, original materials transcription and indexing.

---

<sup>1</sup> P&Cs Qld (2025) [About P&Cs Qld](#)

<sup>2</sup>Receiving multi-year funding through Arts Queensland's Organisation Fund 2022–25

## TOR 2: 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

### **Education**

The department notes that volunteer rates and availability in the schooling sector are often impacted by:

- cost-of-living constraints demanding more paid employment;
- availability for the timing and duration of school volunteer activities;
- obtaining necessary skills required for executive roles;
- interpreting and implementing legislative and regulatory requirements; and
- applying for licensing or certification.

### **Arts and culture**

Volunteer levels within arts and cultural settings are impacted by a range of factors including cost-of-living constraints, requiring reimbursement for volunteers' costs, which smaller organisations, such as Indigenous Art Centres, do not have resources to cover. Indicative costs of volunteering include transport, catering, parking, childcare and training.

In addition, young adults are increasingly underrepresented in volunteer cohorts and the traditionally larger volunteer cohort of older retirees is declining, frequently linked to other life commitments.

Volunteers experiencing disability can be further impacted by misunderstanding or negative attitudes about their capability and capacity to volunteer as well as requiring informed consideration of their access and inclusion needs.

## ToR 3: Current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience

### **Education**

The department has identified structures (such as P&C associations, school councils and in-classroom support) for members of the community to volunteer and be active members in their local school community.

To ensure numbers are maintained and volunteers are supported to fulfil their appointed roles, the following provisions are employed by the department:

- succession planning for departing volunteers;
- strategies to attract and maintain volunteer engagement;
- electronic signatories and utilisation of technology and online platforms;
- measures to address conflicts and resolution among volunteers such as codes of conduct; and
- special recognition certificates presented to volunteers.

## **Arts and culture**

A recent review of cultural festivals has highlighted challenges for traditional volunteer programs and staffing models, including reduced volunteer numbers. It found that organisations have had to expand paid positions dramatically to offset this, increasing operational expenses and challenging traditional event management frameworks.

Along with larger festivals and events, regional communities have reported an increase in event cancellations due to a lack of volunteers. With populations managing rising cost-of-living pressures, individuals are finding less time to participate in the community groups and clubs that often lead the coordination of local events.<sup>3</sup>

When developing programs organisations need to recognise the difference between recruiting voluntary labour compared to what should be paid work and should seek to appropriately recognise and remunerate arts and cultural workers/experts. Furthermore, industry alliance groups, such as the Indigenous Art Code, advocate for the ethical engagement of artists, including appropriately recognising their Intellectual Property/Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property even when voluntarily shared.<sup>4</sup>

It is also acknowledged that the appropriate management of volunteer programs requires adequate resourcing.

## **TOR 4: The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, and opportunities to improve volunteering for these groups**

### **Education**

Members of First Nations communities and people of diverse backgrounds are encouraged to participate and volunteer to support their local schools through school councils and P&C associations.

Volunteering for school organisations can take many forms. However, to ensure the skills and strengths of volunteers are maximised, accessibility and inclusion measures are essential.

Some key challenges for volunteer participation include:

- language barriers for non-English speaking or English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D); and
- activities restricted to adult volunteers.

### **Arts and Culture**

Greater inclusivity and accessibility measures are required to support diverse volunteerism within the arts and cultural sector, as is experienced more broadly.

Awareness raising and education is required to grow opportunities for volunteers with disability and/or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to fully and meaningfully contribute their time and skills.

---

<sup>3</sup> ABC News (2024) [Community events collapse as volunteer numbers struggle around the country](#)

<sup>4</sup> University of Canberra and Iman Consulting Pty Ltd (2023) [Barriers to volunteering for marginalised groups: First Nations peoples, newly arrived migrants and people with disability](#).

## TOR 5: The extent, effectiveness and efficiency of current government support for the volunteering sector in Queensland and sustainable opportunities for improvement

### **Education**

The department has an agreement with P&Cs Qld, which includes: grant funding; staffing costs for a P&C Service Manager; and Voluntary Workers Personal Accident insurance premiums for volunteers in Queensland state schools.

The department provides a \$4,000 grant to assist with establishment costs of a P&C association and volunteer engagement. Additionally, there is a dedicated Education Queensland webpage with key documents (i.e., Model constitution, Accounting Manual), guidelines and tip sheets to support volunteer involvement and legislative compliance.

### **Arts and Culture**

Arts, cultural and community organisations can access funding, including through Arts Queensland's contestable grants, to help support the cost of volunteers in arts and cultural public programs and events.

## TOR 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

### **Education**

Noting the diversity and reach of Queensland's school communities, opportunities could be explored to engage volunteer groups and school communities through the established peak body, P&Cs Qld, and local school councils.

### **Arts and culture**

Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will significantly increase demand for volunteers in the arts and cultural sector. It will be important to consider how skilled volunteers can be supported to contribute their expertise for rewarding and satisfying personal and community outcomes.

Consideration should also be given to ensuring how volunteers might reflect the diversity of Queensland's population including the one in five people who live with disability. It will also be important to ensure that skilled and/or professional artists and artworkers receive fair remuneration for work (see response in TOR 9).

## TOR 8: First Nations peoples' volunteering, including in remote and discrete communities, and the role of First Nations volunteering in Closing the Gap

### **Education**

See comments in ToR 4.

## **Arts and culture**

Government funded Indigenous Art Centres and First Nations arts and cultural festivals are supported by the voluntary work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These contributions are essential to empowering communities and driving progress towards equity, reconciliation and advancing the targets outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.<sup>5</sup>

## **TOR 9: Any other relevant matters**

### **Arts and culture**

The distinction between unpaid work and volunteering in the State's arts sector raises ethical, legal and sustainability concerns. While volunteering can provide meaningful career development opportunities, it is important to be mindful of, and not devalue, activities that would typically be undertaken by paid professionals<sup>6</sup>.

Many individuals in the arts engage in unpaid roles, such as internships, or contribute creative work with the expectation of gaining experience or exposure in lieu of remuneration. However, care needs to be taken to ensure these opportunities can benefit emerging artists and not devalue their time and talent. Unpaid roles often exclude those who cannot afford to work without compensation.<sup>7</sup>

### **Contact details**

#### **Early Learning and Care Council of Australia**

Website: <https://elacca.org.au/>

Email: [admin@elacca.org.au](mailto:admin@elacca.org.au)

Phone: 1800 940 400

#### **Crèche and Kindergarten Association Limited**

Website: <https://www.candk.asn.au/>

Email: [info@candk.asn.au](mailto:info@candk.asn.au)

Phone: 1800 177 092

#### **Lady Gowrie Qld**

Website: <https://gowrieqld.com.au/>

Email: [info@ladygowrie.com.au](mailto:info@ladygowrie.com.au)

Phone: 07 3252 2667

#### **P&Cs Qld**

Website: <https://www.pandcsqld.com.au/>

Email: [enquiries@pandcsqld.com.au](mailto:enquiries@pandcsqld.com.au)

Phone: 1800 218 228

---

<sup>5</sup> The Parties to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) [The National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)

<sup>6</sup> Sophie Cai, Art Guide Australia (2022) [When should you work for free?](#)

<sup>7</sup> Dr Diana Carroll, Arts Hub (2018) [Is the sector over-reliant on volunteers?](#)