

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

<b>Submission No:</b>	559
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Gailes Community House
<b>Publication:</b>	Making the submission and your name public
<b>Attachments:</b>	See attachment
<b>Submitter Comments:</b>	



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SMALL BUSINESS  
AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
GEORGE STREET  
BRISBANE QLD 4000**

**AUSPICED BY GAILES RESIDENTS COMMITTEE  
ABN: 99423107701 (IA29824)**

14 March 2025

Dear Committee Members,

### **Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this important inquiry.

#### **About Gales Community House**

Gales Community House (GCH) is a neighbourhood centre located on the Brisbane border of the Ipswich Local Government Area. It is governed by Gales Residents Committee Inc. and has been serving the residents of Gales, Camira, and surrounding suburbs for 23 years. We facilitate various programs and initiatives to foster community strength, connection, and resilience.

We operate with a small team of dedicated paid staff and a strong network of volunteers. GCH receives ongoing funding under the Queensland Government's Neighbourhood Centre Program and is contracted by Mission Australia to deliver the Family Link program as part of the Communities for Children Inala to Ipswich initiative.

- Number of volunteers: 41
- Number of paid staff: 5 (part-time)

#### **The Role and Value of Volunteers at Gales Community House**

Volunteers are the backbone of Gales Community House, playing a vital role in our service delivery and community engagement. Volunteering not only supports our programs but also enhances social, civic, and economic participation, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

Our volunteers undertake various responsibilities, including:

- Operating the Budget Grub Hub food relief program, including ordering and collecting stock, receiving rescued food, packing hampers, and distributing them to local families.
- Managing reception duties, assisting with room setup, data collection, and supporting our weekly Social Cooking Group.
- Providing specialist services, such as No Interest Loan support, digital literacy training, and English conversation classes.
- Assisting with community events, both at the House and in local parks.

## **Volunteer Engagement at Gales Community House**

The reasons community members volunteer with us are varied:

### **Community Members Giving Back**

- Many Budget Grub Hub volunteers were initially recipients of the food program.
- Members of our Community Early Response Team (CERT) joined after witnessing the hardships following the 2022 floods.
- Retired or semi-retired individuals contribute their time to support local initiatives.

### **Social Connection**

- Volunteers often develop strong and enduring friendships.
- Some have been referred to us by doctors or counsellors, finding personal transformation through volunteering.
- We support individuals recovering from anxiety or PTSD in rebuilding confidence and social skills.

### **Skill Development**

- We offer placements for students in social work, human services, and community services diploma and certificate programs.
- Many volunteers gain experience before pursuing further training or employment.
- CERT members undergo extensive training to fulfill their community roles effectively.

## **Barriers to Volunteer Recruitment, Retention, and Management**

### **Recruitment Challenges**

- Economic pressures limiting availability.
- Time constraints for potential volunteers.
- Transport difficulties.
- Limited time and resources for training and support.

### **Retention Challenges**

- Rising cost-of-living pressures.
- Lack of funding for a full-time volunteer coordinator.
- Availability and scheduling conflicts.
- Personal life changes affecting volunteer commitment.
- Short-term training placements leading to high turnover.

## **Challenges in Managing Volunteers at Gales Community House**

Following an increase in Neighbourhood Centre funding in 2022, we established a Volunteers and Events Officer position. However, this role is only part-time (25 hours per week) due to funding constraints. Despite her dedication, the limited hours make it challenging to effectively oversee volunteer recruitment, induction, retention strategies, training, supervision, and event management.

We recently applied for funding through Volunteering Queensland to expand training and streamline procedures but were unsuccessful. Our ability to maintain and develop a robust volunteer program is severely constrained by limited resources, staff time, training, and expertise.

Additionally, we are committed to reimbursing volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses, but funding limitations often force us to decline offers of volunteer support or restrict activities that require financial backing. This has impacted our ability to secure food and material donations requiring transportation.

### **Challenges for Our Voluntary Management Committee**

- Composed of dedicated local community members.
- Increasing concerns over legal and financial responsibilities of governance.
- Growing regulatory and administrative requirements necessitate higher skill levels.

### **Recommendations**

Gailes Community House fully supports the recommendations submitted by Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ). We urge the committee to consider additional funding and resources for volunteer coordination, training, and operational support to ensure that community organisations like ours can continue to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Manager

  
Tel: 07 3879 3004

*Thank you for  
supporting our  
community*

