

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No: 570

Submitted by: Queensland Gives by Queensland Community Foundation

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Submitter Comments:

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Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By email: lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

Submission to Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland

Thank you to Minister Leahy for inviting Queensland Gives by Queensland Community Foundation to make a submission to the Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland at a meeting with Chief Executive Officer Tara Castle, on 12th June 2025.

Please accept this submission detailing our two overall recommendations to the Inquiry:

1. **To develop and invest in the structural capability and capacity of Queensland non-profits through fostering collaboration between all three tiers of government; the Queensland corporate and broader public; and Queensland Gives' and Queensland Community Foundation's marketing, fundraising and grant-making.**
2. **Under a new structure, conduct a feasibility study to establish the *Queensland Gives Now Disaster Fund**, for the purpose of a rapid response public fundraising and distribution of funds in a disaster or emergency.**

About Queensland Gives

Queensland Community Foundation was founded in 1997 by former Queensland Premier, the Honourable Mike Ahern AO, with just \$300,000. Today this trust has an incredible \$152M funds under management, distributing almost \$6M to approximately 300 Queensland charities each year, with the entire fund capably invested with Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC).

Queensland Community Foundation, under the trusteeship of the Queensland Public Trustee, is a leading State and National public charitable trust and community foundation providing a perpetual and enduring income stream to Queensland charities. It has been built by Queenslanders for the benefit of Queenslanders, comprising of a General Fund and currently 264 sub-funds. Monies are contributed by charities, corporations, deceased estates and individuals. All donations are tax deductible. It is the second largest community foundation in Australia and has already distributed \$49.7M across Queensland communities, charities and causes since inception. It will continue to support Queensland charities forever.

Alongside the trust, QCF Management Co. Ltd (Queensland Gives) provides extensive administrative, marketing and grant-making services to Queensland Community Foundation,

including hosting Australia's only celebration of philanthropy, the iconic annual *Queensland Philanthropy Week*- a campaign to foster and promote higher levels of giving. The week culminates in the annual Queensland Philanthropy Awards Lunch, Brisbane City Hall's largest annual event. Thanks to its long, valued and close collaboration with Queensland Community Foundation, *Queensland Gives* proudly presents the predominant public face of Queensland Community Foundation.

Given the Federal Government's interest in possible not-for-profit sector reforms focused on legislative change, advocacy protections, and philanthropy targets, Queensland Gives is undergoing the following significant organisational and structural change aimed at further increasing philanthropy and its impact in Queensland communities:

- Apply for ACNC registration and DGR1 Special Listing, which will increase funding, improve sustainability and allow for more flexible philanthropy, for example, through-funding in addition to the existing model of legacy funding;
- Establish the ***Queensland Now Disaster Fund**** to further support Queensland in a time of emergency or natural disaster;
- Leverage opportunities and legacy funds from Bris32 Olympics with a focus on increased funds for regional Queensland;
- Leverage new federal *community charity* legislation to foster regional Queensland place-based giving to ultimately encourage and increase philanthropy and impact across Queensland.

Relevance to the Inquiry

Both entities, Queensland Community Foundation and Queensland Gives welcomes the Inquiry into volunteering. In addition to the matters set out above, it has been a steadfast supporter of Volunteering Queensland since 2013, having provided \$290,000 in seven grants, including most recently a 2025 General Fund capacity building grant of \$30,000 to assist with best utilising AI.

Every year Queensland Gives through Queensland Community Foundation has funded multiple charities to advance and improve volunteering projects for Queensland charities, to upskill, train and recruit volunteers and management systems. Recent examples include:

2025 – The Romero Centre (\$22,500), Ladybird Care Foundation (\$27,795).

2024 – Australian Street Aid (\$20,125), 4 Voices Global Limited (\$22,500), So Brave (\$30,000), The Pyjama Foundation (\$15,000)

2023 – Drought Angels (\$14,674), Hands On Projects (\$25,000), Sunshine Butterflies (\$9,280)

In **2015** Orange Sky Laundry received a grant to develop a highly successful Volunteer Management System that was shared with other Queensland charities for improved communication, tracking volunteer hours, impact measurement and engagement.

Response to the Inquiry

Volunteering is a critical part of most Queensland non-profits. Many organisations heavily rely on their volunteer workforce to deliver critical services to vulnerable Queenslanders.

Both organisations, Queensland Community Foundation and Queensland Gives are committed to growing volunteering in Queensland by building a stronger charitable sector

and by improving social infrastructure. A stronger and more robust charitable sector will in turn foster the growth of volunteerism in Queensland.

Increased Queensland philanthropy and more charitable trust money invested in Queensland can only enhance and benefit volunteering numbers and the quality of volunteering within Queensland. Queensland Gives' proposed new organisational structure will better position it to optimally support Queensland communities, with a focus on regional Queensland.

Our response and the recommendations we make are informed by anecdotal feedback from the annual grants' programs in collaboration with Queensland, including almost one thousand applications, acquittals and the funding of more than 300 Queensland charities each year.

One area where we often receive feedback is the need for small charities and community groups to access grant funding for disaster preparedness. Our inquiries have shown that there is limited dedicated, Queensland-wide funding stream that gives small charities, volunteer-led associations, and community organisations to readily access resources for disaster preparedness activities *before* an event occurs. As a result, many local organisations lack the means to invest in critical measures such as volunteer training and equipping volunteers, developing community-based disaster plans, purchasing essential equipment, and building networks of support for vulnerable community members.

We recognise the beneficial work the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) does in providing vital support in this area, and Queensland Gives seeks to complement this. At a state and commonwealth level, funding arrangements for disaster resilience and recovery are primarily designed for large-scale infrastructure and systemic resilience planning either through loans or funding contributions. This is outside the reach of community organisations.

Establishing a targeted preparedness fund for Queensland community organisations would address this gap by delivering proportionate, flexible grants to strengthen the capacity of grassroots organisations to plan, prepare, and respond effectively to potential disasters.

Queensland Gives is the administrative company, separate to the trust conducting the marketing and grant making function of Queensland Community Foundation. To position itself for greater impact in Queensland, it has recently undergone significant structural and organisation change, and needs to now register itself with ACNC and DGR1 Special Listing, in addition to the credentials of the trust.

One of the benefits of these new registrations, is to be able to deliver a fund with flow through funding, which has many applications for the growth of philanthropy in Queensland, including the development of a disaster fund for Queensland.

The following recommendations will strengthen the overall Queensland non-profit sector, including volunteerism, with direct and long-lasting community benefit.

Recommendations

Our submission principally responds to number 7 of the Inquiry Terms of Reference: *Opportunities to increase emergency response volunteering in Queensland, including how to optimise the engagement, support and integration of volunteers assisting with natural*

disasters and community recovery.

We consider that collaboration is needed between all three tiers of government in Queensland, the Queensland corporate and broader community, Queensland Gives and Queensland Community Foundation to provide and raise donations for a permanent disaster fund able for timely distribution of monies where and when most needed
Queensland Gives has two recommendations:

- 1. To develop and invest in the structural capability and capacity of Queensland non-profits through fostering collaboration between all three tiers of government; the Queensland corporate and broader public; and Queensland Gives' and Queensland Community Foundation's fundraising and grant-making.**

This can be achieved by the Inquiry, the committee and the Minister supporting Queensland Gives' application for ACNC registration and DGR1 Special Listing. This will provide Queensland Gives with more flexible philanthropic options, fundraising, and regional charity development through increased regional place-based community foundations. This will result in increased overall funding to Queensland charities and will generally lift the capability of the entire sector.

- 2. Under a new structure, conduct a feasibility study to establish the *Queensland Gives Now Disaster Fund**, for the purpose of a rapid response public fundraising and distribution of funds in a disaster or emergency.**

Queensland Gives under a new flow-through fund structure, proposes a new and dedicated fund, independent of Government, with the sole purpose of supporting Queenslanders through future emergency disaster preparation and relief.

This could be achieved through a new structure of Queensland Gives, with its existing grant expertise, governance, capability and processes, to deliver urgent critical support to communities and individuals in crisis. Unused funds could be soundly invested outside crisis periods with QIC.

During non-crisis periods, work with Queensland non profits to fund disaster and emergency preparedness and resilience.

We thank you for considering these recommendations to further the Queensland Government's commendable goal of increasing volunteering in Queensland.

Our CEO, Tara Castle, would be happy to provide further details of how this proposal could be optimally developed to best work in practice: [REDACTED]

Active supporters of Queensland Gives receiving ACNC and DGR1 Special listing:

The Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC, Chair of the Queensland Gives Board of Governors

Professor Sandra Harding AO – Queensland Gives Board of Governors

Professor Peter Coaldrake AO – Queensland Gives Board of Governors

Linda Lavarch former Attorney General (Queensland Legislative Parliament) and current Chair Volunteering Queensland

Samay Zhouand CEO and the Public Trustee of Queensland

Maree Sidey, CEO Philanthropy Australia

Ian Bird, CEO Community Foundations Australia

Ryan Ginard CFRE Effective Philanthropy – Minderoo Foundation

Nicholas Marchesi OAM, co-founder of Orange Sky Australia and 2016 Young Australia of the Year