



28th February 2025

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

Email: lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland

We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland.

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sector in Queensland. We represent outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, covering the five broad pillars of outdoor activities:

- outdoor recreation,
- outdoor education,
- outdoor health,
- nature-based tourism, and
- associated support services.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is to ensure that all people have opportunities to create connections with Queensland's outdoors. Our vision is to create a world where the outdoors is a vital part of every healthy life - a healthy world comes from a balanced life, incorporating outdoor activities for all people.

Outdoors Queensland serves as the industry peak body for the outdoor sector, with a focus on building capacity and capability of outdoor people and outdoor organisations to help all people make connections with Queensland's outdoors.

Volunteers are the main workforce across Queensland's outdoors, representing 59% of all identified workers in the Queensland Outdoor Census 2023¹. Many outdoor organisations, including the youth-based community organisations, rely on hundreds of volunteers each month to deliver their services.

Outdoor organisations regularly report that they have difficulties recruiting and retaining suitably qualified volunteers to deliver services.

Volunteers work in a wide range of roles in the outdoors, including front-line delivery of services, fund-raising, communications, management, and providing governance and direction as directors and committee members. Volunteers also contribute to maintenance of infrastructure, including maintenance of government-owned infrastructure such as mountain bike trails in national parks.



As noted in the Queensland Outdoor Census report, the level of involvement of volunteers in the outdoor sector is an indicator of the strength of the outdoors – people are willing to work in the outdoors without being paid – and a challenge – the unpaid workforce may be taken for granted if the value and importance of volunteers is not fully appreciated.

We acknowledge the important work that Volunteering Australia has done with support from state organisations including Volunteering Queensland, in developing the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 and the initial Action Plan 2024-2027.

Outdoors Queensland and the Outdoor Council of Australia, along with other outdoor industry organisations, have joined the Coalition of Support for the National Strategy for Volunteering.ⁱⁱ

The National Strategy for Volunteering Action Plan 2024-2027ⁱⁱⁱ sets out 22 actions, which include:

- New volunteering data collection, including a survey to measure the volunteer experience
- Greater consistency and alignment of volunteering funding, policies and strategic initiatives
- Establishing forums and communities of practice to share knowledge
- Campaigns to raise awareness of volunteering and share volunteering stories
- Sharing research insights and identifying future topics to explore
- Development and sharing of resources to support volunteer management

We believe that the National Strategy for Volunteering is a robust strategy that can make real improvements. By contributing to the proper implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering the Queensland Government has the opportunity to set up Queensland's volunteering ecosystem for the future.

We note that the current Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032 focuses on supported and sustainable volunteering, vibrant and inclusive volunteering, and recognised and celebrated volunteering.

The Queensland Volunteering Strategy Action Plan 2024-2026 identifies the key target areas of attraction/retention of volunteers, support for volunteer involving organisations, barriers to volunteering, legislation and regulation, diversifying volunteering, and modelling and strengthening best practice volunteering.

Outdoors Queensland supports the actions set out in the Queensland Volunteering Strategy Action Plan 2024-2026, and wishes to comment on some actions in particular:

1. We note that the first action in the Queensland Volunteering Strategy Action Plan 2024-2026 is:
“Deliver over \$2.4 million in funding over five years to support the sector’s peak body, Volunteering Queensland, to:
 - build the capacity and capability of volunteer involving organisations to better recruit and retain volunteers, including through improved utilization of technology, social media and digital marketing strategies
 - lead the way in demonstrating best practice in volunteer management
 - promote volunteering opportunities across Queensland, including through corporate volunteering programs.”

Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations should be supported in the modern model of volunteering, through capacity-building initiatives that are tailored for 21st century volunteers and 21st century organisations.



As a respected Queensland institution, Volunteering Queensland is ideally positioned to lead the delivery of this capacity-building, however significant resourcing is required to deliver the required outcomes. This action should be supported and expanded to achieve positive results for volunteering across the state.

2. Outdoors Queensland supports the actions regarding blue card support and training for State Emergency Services and Marine Rescue Queensland volunteers, especially with climate change leads to more frequent and severe natural disasters triggering increased reliance on volunteers across the State.
3. Outdoors Queensland supports the action regarding delivery of the ClubIQ initiative to strengthen Queensland Sport and Recreation clubs and empower volunteers, and the action regarding delivery of the Active Clubs program.
4. Outdoors Queensland supports the actions regarding undertaking scoping activities for a potential volunteer reimbursement fund, especially when so many people are experiencing severe cost of living pressures.
5. Outdoors Queensland supports actions targeting vibrant and inclusive volunteering as a way of making it easier for all organisations to be more reflective of the communities that they are seeking to serve.

There are many different arrangements in place across Queensland for how volunteer organisations obtain permission to operate on government managed land. To make a practical difference, we suggest that the Queensland Government could develop and approve agreement templates for how government departments, agencies, and authorities engage volunteers and volunteer organisations. This could streamline processes and reduce red tape in every situation where a club or other volunteer organisations wants to carry out works on government land, from weed removal and tree planting through to trail maintenance works.

We believe that all Queensland government portfolios should embrace their responsibility for delivering the government's volunteering strategy, as a way of contributing to a better Queensland.

We understand that this submission may be published as part of the consultation process.

If you have any queries, please contact Executive Officer, Dom Courtney, on 0419 976 800 or eo@outdoorsqueensland.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer / Company Secretary

ⁱ Report available at outdoorsqueensland.com.au/queensland-outdoor-census-2023/

ⁱⁱ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/actionplan/>

