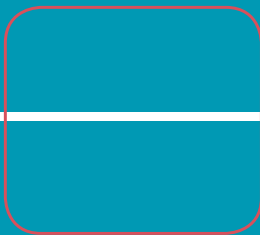
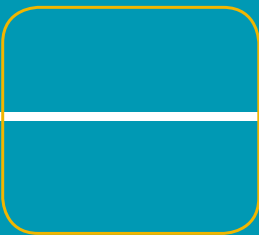


Valuing Volunteers:

The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010



A message from the Premier



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010 sets out contemporary approaches to supporting and sustaining volunteer activity and represents my government's ongoing commitment to Queensland's volunteers.

The rapidly developing Queensland economy, demographic and workforce changes, rural population declines, technology and 'pace of life' demands are all affecting the social and economic structure of our state and the context in which volunteering is set. These are challenges that will be shared by government, business and the community as we work together to ensure that volunteering continues to play a strong and vital role in Queensland.

The beneficial effects of volunteering are well known – both for the broader community and volunteers themselves. In Queensland, the total value of volunteering was more than \$16 billion in 2004. If measured, this would represent an additional 11.2 per cent of Queensland's Gross State Product and equate to volunteers providing a volume of work equivalent to an additional 387,000 jobs in 2004. As well as improved social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes, volunteering has been associated with improved health outcomes and better quality of life for those who participate.

Volunteering has a long history in Queensland. The volunteering sector is critical for building stronger and healthier communities and ensuring a sustainable future for all Queenslanders.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Beattie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Beattie MP
Premier and Minister for Trade

Ministers' foreword

Volunteers have always made a generous contribution to the wellbeing and prosperity of Queensland. Across society, volunteers connect people and provide critical services. Everyone benefits when people volunteer – those who are helped and the volunteers themselves who gain satisfaction, enjoyment and a sense of belonging.

Supporting volunteers is the responsibility of the community, the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and the various levels of government. By working together, we can ensure the long-term sustainability of Queensland's volunteer workforce, which includes volunteers who provide services on behalf of government and those who work through non-government organisations, informal activities, social action and advocacy.

This policy, *Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010*, positions us to proactively respond to key demographic and social changes that will affect volunteering during the next three years. The policy is designed to support flexible approaches to volunteering in Queensland. This flexibility will allow us to meet the challenges created by rapid change through processes that encourage better coordination, relationship development, and reporting and promoting innovative models for service delivery involving volunteers.

The ways in which people volunteer are changing. Trends in demographics in the labour market and in technology are likely to affect volunteering in urban, regional, rural and remote Queensland. These trends will challenge us to rethink our strategies for recruiting, training, retaining and recognising volunteers.

Many Queensland Government agencies rely on the dedication of tens of thousands of volunteers. The Department of Emergency Services is one department – along with the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Education, Training and the Arts, the Environmental Protection Agency and Queensland Health – that depends on volunteers to deliver services throughout Queensland.

It is timely to re-affirm our commitment to all volunteers. *Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010* places Queensland in a better position to make the most of the contribution of volunteers and to recognise and support their efforts.



Warren Pitt MP
**Minister for Communities,
Disability Services, Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships,
Seniors and Youth**



Neil Roberts MP
Minister for Emergency Services



Warren Pitt MP



Neil Roberts MP

Context

The first Queensland Government policy on volunteering, *Engaging Queensland* was released in 2003, continuing the momentum achieved during the International Year of Volunteers 2001. The policy strengthened alliances between Queensland Government agencies and the volunteer sector and provided a foundation on which to build an evidence base of research specific to volunteering practices in this state. A review undertaken in 2006 has informed the development of the new policy, the establishment of an Office for Volunteering in the Department of Communities and initiatives under the Strengthening Volunteering project to ensure the issues, concerns and priorities of Queensland's volunteer sector are met.

Rapid developments in volunteering programs and the increasing complexity of contemporary society have changed the way people volunteer. Large numbers of volunteers are available only to undertake flexible, short-term or project-based activities or episodic volunteering. While Australia is currently experiencing a record high proportion of the population that volunteers (41 per cent of adults), the average number of hours contributed annually by each volunteer is actually decreasing (160 hours in 2000 to 132 hours in the year to 2005)¹. This indicates that the growing trend towards episodic volunteering is the predominant factor influencing the rise in volunteer participation in Australia.²

This trend will challenge departments who depend on career or long-term volunteers to deliver services on behalf of government, especially those services requiring in-depth and ongoing training and competencies.

Volunteering has a crucial part to play in building an inclusive and cohesive community for all Queenslanders. Volunteering increases the connectedness between people. For an individual, volunteering can help establish good social networks that may provide links to employment, result in a helping hand from a neighbour, or provide access to cultural and community activities. In turn, the broader community also benefits from higher rates of volunteering. Volunteering provides people with strong social and community networks that build the capacity and resilience of the community to respond to issues such as natural disasters.

In Queensland, the total value of volunteering continues to grow, from almost \$10 billion in 2000 to more than \$16 billion in 2004. This represents an additional 11.2 per cent of Queensland's Gross State Product and equates to volunteers providing a volume of work equivalent to an additional 387,000 jobs in 2004.³ These figures highlight the important contribution that volunteers make to Queensland's society and to building strong and sustainable communities.

Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007 – 2010 will help inform a coordinated and sustainable support framework for volunteer activity in Queensland. Ongoing research and review of volunteering issues is essential so that the government continues to invest in and acknowledge the significant economic and social contributions of this important sector.



Vision for volunteering

The Queensland volunteer sector will:

- be recognised by both government and community for its significant contribution to our quality of life and the strength and cohesion of our communities
- have the capacity to sustain and build its significant social and economic contribution to the Queensland community in the future.

Principles that guide the government's commitment to volunteering

The Queensland Government will recognise, value and support volunteering through:

- recognising and promoting the contribution volunteers make to our quality of life and the strength and cohesion of our communities, including rural communities
- providing leadership on volunteering issues through the Office for Volunteering recognising the legislative responsibilities and policy priorities of various departments
- encouraging innovation in volunteer programs, recruitment and management strategies
- incorporating good practice in volunteer programs directly managed by the government
- supporting partnerships with the private, community and government sectors in volunteering initiatives
- working with the government and non-government sectors to ensure that volunteers are appropriately protected by law
- recognising the contributions that Indigenous Queenslanders make to their communities
- working with Volunteering Queensland as the peak non-government organisation for volunteering in Queensland.

Defining volunteering



The Queensland Government defines volunteering as an activity for the benefit of the community and the volunteer, where the volunteer freely chooses their involvement without expectation of payment.

The characteristics of volunteering include:

- free will and reciprocal benefits for the volunteer and the community
- no personal financial gain (except for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses as appropriate)
- formal activities undertaken through public, private, non-government and community organisations, as well as informal community activities undertaken outside of an organisation.

Indigenous Australians' sense of reciprocity and attachment to extended family means that volunteering is viewed not as a separate, unique or complementary activity to their professional or personal lives, but rather as a way of life and is an intrinsic part of Aboriginality.

Valuing Volunteers goals



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010 has three strategic goals developed to respond to challenges facing volunteering in the 21st century.

Goal 1: Supporting volunteers and volunteering

Contemporary volunteering trends – including an ageing population, changing generational preferences and the increasing professionalisation of volunteering – have created a need for more flexible volunteering practices. Contemporary volunteers tend to prefer short-term or specific projects (episodic volunteering) and have increased expectations in terms of achievement, opportunities to do purposeful work and acquisition or utilisation of their skills.

The increasing preference for episodic volunteering may create difficulty for organisations with systems designed for traditional patterns of volunteering. It may also prove challenging if an organisation is required to invest in significant training before an individual can commence volunteering – for example, in hospitals and emergency services.

Research has also highlighted out-of-pocket expenses as an issue for volunteers and one which potentially forms a significant barrier to people becoming involved or continuing their involvement as a volunteer.

Strategies under this goal will improve the ability of government and non-government organisations to understand and tap into contemporary volunteering patterns and explore new partnerships to strengthen volunteering, philanthropy and social enterprise. The Queensland Government will also work with the Commonwealth, state and local governments and peak organisations to support leadership and innovation on volunteering activities.

Actions include:

- establishing an Office for Volunteering within the Department of Communities as a central point to provide leadership on identified volunteering issues
- coordinating research on future volunteering patterns and developing flexible volunteering models to assist organisations to adapt to emerging trends
- developing action plans to ensure a coordinated response to the policy by Queensland Government agencies
- working with the Commonwealth and other States to explore tax incentives to meet the costs associated with volunteering.

Key outcomes include:

- improved responsiveness to changing volunteer patterns
- effective partnerships to support volunteering and alignment of volunteering policy at a national level

- barriers to volunteering from out-of-pocket expenses are considered
- access to good practice information, tools and resources to support volunteering
- improved coordination of the government's own volunteer base.

Goal 2: Building a stronger base for volunteering

The Queensland community is diverse in many ways – ethnic, geographic, socio-economic, age, gender, physical and mental abilities. As an inclusive activity, volunteering should reflect the diversity of the different backgrounds, values and aspirations within our community.

Voluntary organisations are under pressure to understand the new breed of volunteers emerging from this environment. Volunteering Australia, the peak national organisation for volunteering, contends that there is no shortage of prospective volunteers but a current paucity of roles to suit the needs of the volunteer population.⁴ Increased cultural diversity and changing generational preferences will place pressure on some departments to reshape and widen the range of activities they offer volunteers while, at the same time, meeting legislative obligations to communities in Queensland.

National and international evidence recognises that volunteering is central to the development of social capital, social connectedness and community strengthening. Volunteering strengthens the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities. Measuring the economic value of volunteering is important for acknowledging the monetary contribution that volunteers make to society.⁵ Strategies under this goal have been developed to encourage more Queenslanders to volunteer and give recognition to the contribution volunteers make to our quality of life.

Actions include:

- promoting the economic and social importance of volunteering to Queensland
- celebrating the achievements of volunteers through awards and events
- developing innovative programs that respond to the challenge of attracting new volunteers from a range of demographic groups.

Key outcomes include:

- recognition of the significant economic and social contribution of volunteering
- stronger representation of volunteers from a range of backgrounds and age groups, including groups currently under – represented in volunteer activity.

Valuing Volunteers goals (cont'd)

Goal 3: Strengthening rural and regional volunteering

The changes and challenges affecting volunteering are exacerbated in rural and regional areas where there are generally smaller populations and therefore fewer people from which to draw. Volunteers in rural and regional areas also face other barriers to volunteering including higher transport costs and limited access to training and management support. This issue was highlighted in the Queensland Government's 2006 strategy, *Blueprint for the Bush*.⁶

Volunteering is important to the sustainability of rural and regional communities and the issues affecting rural and regional volunteers are often exacerbated by distance and isolation. In responding to the needs of rural and regional volunteers actions under this goal include:

- exploring options for online training for volunteers
- facilitating access to information and resources to support volunteering
- providing an annual focus for volunteering issues through the Ministerial Regional Community Forums
- exploring using the tax system to compensate volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses through the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management.



Key outcomes include:

- increased access to information, training and management support for rural and regional volunteers and community organisations
- greater understanding of the issues facing volunteering in rural and regional settings
- access to online matching of volunteers.

Implementation and monitoring

In April 2007 the Queensland Government established an Office for Volunteering in the Department of Communities to lead and facilitate whole-of-government implementation of the *Valuing Volunteers* policy. The Department of Emergency Services is a senior partner and will co-lead a number of strategies with the Department of Communities.

The Office for Volunteering will coordinate reporting on the action plan on pages 14 to 21 which supports this policy. The plan will be updated annually to reflect revised and new initiatives.



¹ Giving Australia: Research on Philanthropy in Australia, Australian Government, October 2005

² Volunteering: Contemporary Issues and Trends in Queensland, Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, Queensland University of Technology, January 2007

³ Ironmonger, D, 2006, The economic value of volunteering in Queensland, Department of Economics, University of Melbourne (commissioned by the Department of Communities)

⁴ Supporting Volunteers in Australia, 2004, Volunteering Australia

⁵ Ironmonger, D, 2006, The economic value of volunteering in Queensland, Department of Economics, University of Melbourne (commissioned by the Department of Communities)

⁶ Blueprint for the Bush, Department of Communities, 2006.

Valuing Volunteers



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 1: Supporting volunteers and volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends	Establish an Office for Volunteering as a central point to support implementation of the volunteering policy and programs to sustain current volunteering levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office for Volunteering is established and coordinating key initiatives and supporting governance structure 	Department of Communities	April 2007
	Develop implementation plans for all relevant Queensland Government agencies to ensure a coordinated response to the volunteer policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation plans developed 	All relevant agencies	2008
	Coordinate expert advice on relevant volunteering opportunities and implications within policy and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved responsiveness to volunteering 	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	ongoing

Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 1: Supporting volunteers and volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends	Continue to work with the commonwealth, state and local governments and peak representative organisations, to support leadership and innovation on volunteering activities through forums such as the national working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective partnerships improve alignment of volunteering policy at commonwealth and state level 	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	ongoing
	Monitor national, international and non-government legislative and regulatory issues relevant to volunteering in Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide advice to Government on relevant issues 	Department of Communities Participating: All agencies	ongoing
	Strengthen the capacity and capability of volunteers in non-government organisations, including the governance capacity of management committees, through the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management committee skills developed under the Governance Pilot e-learning resources developed resources on Community Door website to support volunteering and management committees 	Department of Communities	2007–08

Valuing Volunteers (cont'd)



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 1: Supporting volunteers and volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends	Lead research and predictive methodologies on the future of volunteering	• findings disseminated	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	2007–08
	Produce information packages for non-government organisations to support their volunteering activities	• comprehensive information packages produced and distributed	Department of Communities	2008
	Provide leadership in the development of models that respond to contemporary trends in volunteering, including flexible models	• innovative models developed and tested	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	2008
	Conduct an annual symposium on volunteering	• symposium evaluated as successful by participants	Department of Communities	2007
	Explore partnerships that strengthen volunteering in the areas of philanthropy, social enterprise and corporate volunteer programs	• effective partnerships developed	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services Participating: Department of State Development	2008

Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 1: Supporting volunteers and volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends	Explore options using the tax system to compensate emergency services volunteers for their out of pocket expenses	• volunteer expenses are eligible for tax deductions	Department of Emergency Services	2007
	Facilitate the improvement of data collection regarding the number of volunteers that contribute to government services	• more accurate profile of volunteering activities	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	2008–2009
Improved coordination of government's own volunteer base	Develop whole-of-government guidelines that support integrated volunteering practice	• number and range of guidelines distributed	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	2007
	Strengthen the Queensland Police Volunteer (QPS) base through the QPS Volunteers Engagement Project	• incorporate findings into QPS volunteer programs	Queensland Police Service	2007

Valuing Volunteers (cont'd)



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 2: Building a stronger base for volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Promote the significant economic and social contribution of volunteering	Support ongoing research on volunteering	• findings disseminated	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services	ongoing
	Promote and celebrate the achievements of Queensland's volunteers, including annual National Volunteer Week in May and United Nations' International Volunteer Day (5 December)	• support events to celebrate National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day	Department of Communities Participating: All agencies	ongoing
Promote diversity in volunteer participation	Support and promote innovative practices that increase the levels and diversity of people volunteering in Queensland	• incorporate findings into government programs	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services Participating: Multicultural Affairs Queensland	2008
	Support and promote innovative practices across the government and non-government sectors that target under represented groups	• adoption of practice	Department of Communities Participating: All agencies	2008

Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 2: Building a stronger base for volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Encourage young Queenslanders to volunteer	Promote volunteering opportunities within the education system, including secondary and tertiary institutions, to encourage more young people to volunteer	• adoption of practice	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services Participating: Department of Education, Training and the Arts	2008
	Develop a youth engagement strategy to assist government and non-government organisations to attract, recruit and retain young people as volunteers	• resources produced and distributed	Department of Communities	2008
	Continue to conduct the Queensland Young Volunteer Awards	• awards held annually	Department of Communities	ongoing
	Support communities wanting to learn how to work with new technologies to create local programs and tell local stories.	• implement demonstration project that engages young cultural volunteers	Arts Queensland	2008

Valuing Volunteers (cont'd)



Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 3 : Strengthening rural and regional volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Facilitate access to information, training and management support	Identify opportunities to support the exchange of information and resources for organisations and volunteers in rural and remote areas of Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased access to volunteering information and resources 	Department of Communities Participating: All Queensland Government agencies Local Government Association of Queensland Volunteering Queensland	2007
	Explore options for online training for volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased access to training and skills development in rural and remote areas 	Department of Communities and Department of Emergency Services Participating: Department of Education, Training and the Arts	2008
	Explore the use of ICT strategies to expand access to new audiences through online matching of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT strategies developed and tested 	Department of Communities Participating: Volunteering Queensland	2007
	Provide an annual focus for volunteering issues and trends in rural, regional and remote areas through the Ministerial Regional Community Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteering issues discussed at Ministerial Regional Community Forums 	Department of Communities	2007

Valuing Volunteers: The Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010				
Goal 3 : Strengthening rural and regional volunteering				
Volunteering policy strategy	Actions	Progress indicators	Lead agency	Timeline
Facilitate access to information, training and management support	Provision of information and delivery of training courses to new and existing Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations to regional and remote areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased applications and feedback from applicants 	Department of Justice and Attorney-General	2007
	Deliver regional training annually to volunteer Regional Arts Development Fund Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased access to training and skills development in rural and remote areas 	Arts Queensland	ongoing
	Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Local Government Association of Queensland to identify shared interests and responsibilities in the planning and delivery of human services providing a platform for better coordinated volunteering initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU developed 	Department of Communities and the Local Government Association of Queensland	2007

Notes

