

Queenslanders now in the direct path of a perfect storm

For immediate release: Brisbane, Queensland

Last week's launch of the [Make Queensland Fair](#) campaign by QCOSS illustrates the dire cost-of-living situation for Queenslanders and the resulting increase in demand for front-line services. [Volunteering Queensland](#) highlights that a direct consequence of the cost-of-living crisis is the worrying decline in volunteers who report that volunteering has become unaffordable. Given that close to [half of all charities rely solely on volunteers to operate](#), it is essential the Queensland Government does all it can to enable volunteers to help those experiencing vulnerability and need in our community.

Volunteers are the very people relied upon to deliver essential frontline services by caregiving organisations in Queensland. [QCOSS reiterates](#) that registered Queensland charities employ over twice the number of volunteers (370,000) than paid staff (175,000). Any decline in volunteering could easily see a collapse in the continued viability of these charities and the critical services they provide.

"The government is yet to adequately acknowledge that the charity sector is operated for the main part by volunteer staff. Ensuring that Queensland's volunteer workforce, which is the same size if not larger than our private sector, is well funded, managed and trained to provide services has been largely ignored" says Mara Basanovic, CEO of Volunteering Queensland.

According to [Uniting Care Queensland](#), a respected volunteer involving organisation amongst the 9240 registered charities in the state, "Volunteering is at the heart of Uniting Care, with 7456 people offering their time and expertise in the 2022-23 financial year to change lives across our organisation".

Queenslanders want to volunteer. According to Volunteering Queensland data, around 30% of residents, regardless of whether they already volunteer or

not, would like to volunteer more. So with the demand for volunteers increasing and the number of citizens wanting to volunteer on the rise, why then are we seeing front-line organisations crying out for additional help?

The increasing cost of living is undoubtedly a significant contributing factor in reducing the number of people who have the time or capacity to volunteer, as they instead require more employment to make up for an income deficit or simply don't have the disposable income to support their volunteering.

The draft State of Volunteering Report in Queensland 2024 shows that on average, volunteers fork out over \$330 per month from their own pockets to volunteer, up from \$133 in 2021. Volunteering Queensland would like to see a fund dedicated to subsidising these expenses to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers while providing a fundamental acknowledgement of the volunteer workforce's contribution to enhancing the impact and effectiveness of social service organisations.

Ann Leahy MP, Shadow Minister for Volunteering said the impact of the Queensland Cost of Living Crisis was far-reaching and devastating for charities and community organisations.

"Volunteering is the lifeblood of our communities but when Queenslanders are forced to take on second jobs simply to make ends meet, community organisations are left to pay a high price," Ms Leahy said.

Volunteering Queensland is a founding partner of the Make Queensland Fair campaign launched on 29 January 2024 and is proud to be part of a joint initiative to recognise the wide-reaching impact of the cost-of-living emergency. If social service agencies, dependent on volunteers, are not adequately funded we will certainly see a direct hit from this perfect storm.

Aimee McVeigh, QCOSS CEO says "Government must develop a community services industry strategy that addresses the financial sustainability of the sector, and gives our state's volunteers the support they need to help those in

need. It's only fair that we have a properly resourced social service sector so all Queenslanders are assured that they will be supported through life's challenges".

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About Volunteering Queensland:

Volunteering Queensland the lead voice for volunteering in Queensland supporting this essential industry to thrive. As the state peak body we are solely dedicated to advancing and promoting volunteering. Our work is vital to ensuring volunteer-involving organisations can engage, manage and retain the strong, effective volunteer workforce necessary to advance their mission and cause.