

<b>Project Name</b>	Volunteer Project
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Inala Elders
<b>Project Report Period</b>	February to December 2023
<b>Project Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Budget</b>	\$223,895.00

## Project Overview

Inala Elders Volunteer Project aims to provide a better picture and understanding of volunteering in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their successes, and challenges. This will include practical tips such as the language of volunteering, using cultural acknowledgements and other practices to build cultural safety for First Nations volunteers in the community.

## Main impacts and highlights

- ✓ The Volunteer Project is running a series of events to raise awareness of and encourage volunteering and engage with First Nations people. During this three-month period, 42 events were held with hundreds of people being involved or attending the events as participants.
- ✓ NIADOC WEEK gave the organisation the opportunity to showcase their work and promote the volunteers helping at the events.
- ✓ Development of a tips sheet, Flyer - Tips for "Working in Place" with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and shared with Volunteering Queensland for broad dissemination, also shared at interagency meetings.
- ✓ The project is ongoing into 2024.
- ✓ There is a greater understanding for the project by the Inala Elders Board members and other staff about working with volunteers and what is required.
- ✓ The Project Manager has utilised social media and QR codes to contact and engage with potential volunteers, and encourage people to sign up as volunteers, boosting the numbers through these methods.
- ✓ Project Reference Group involvement, an interagency group that has formed to give feedback on how this project is developing. Feedback from the Project Manager - "It has been a pleasure to join this reference group with a mixture of new agencies or staff and long-standing agencies and staff in the Inala community. Building the relationships between agencies takes time and finding a common ground to learn together is priceless. To move forward in a meaningful and purposeful way as a reference group we have established a meeting process of consecutively onsite to online monthly gatherings. During our meetings we get a chance to identify common barriers that are occurring in the community. This also includes insightful reflections from long standing agencies on what has worked in the past and promotes conversations on how to move forward."

- ✓ Blue Card Meeting for the Project Reference Group: Two representatives from Blue Card Queensland attending the reference group. This was an opportunity to hear about current legislation and processes on how Indigenous people can apply for a Blue Card and this presented opportunities to talk about barriers within the different agencies and how to support the community with understanding changes and how to navigate the system and seek support on receiving a Blue Card for working with children. Further discussions identified potential ways to make the processes easier and reduce the stigma and issues often experienced by some applicants.

## Challenges

- Most potential First Nations volunteers don't have financial capacity to attend volunteering unless they can have help with transport, childcare, family care, etc.
- Many First Nations people are already helping out family and this is their priority over any outside volunteering.
- There are too many forms and processes required and this puts people off joining many organisations.

## Lessons learned

- From the Project Manager, the following points have been raised:
  - Transport to access volunteering opportunities is important.
  - Processes or requirements to volunteer can be overwhelming and people give up.
  - People need time and money to volunteer, family commitments come first
  - Childcare or opportunities that allow to be accompanied by children would be appreciated.
  - There is a strong lack of cultural understanding for non-Indigenous VIOs – training such as with Your Mob is very beneficial for both volunteer and VIOs
- Taking time to build relationships, have open communication and effective engagement with all people are key.