

Project Name	Volunteer Ready- Stage II
Partner Organisation	NFP House Gladstone
Project Period	January - June 2024
Project Status	Completed.
Project Budget	\$21,684.96

Project Overview

NFP House will continue to partner with local community organisations in this project to support people from the priority areas- people with a disability, First Nations people, young people, vulnerable women, unemployed and people newly arrived in the area (both internationally and domestically), to volunteer in their community.

NFP House supported individuals and volunteers involving organisations (VIOs) to break down the barriers to volunteer in two ways. On one side, working with individuals in a case-by-case process to seek out their interests and match them to an organisation that is ready to take them on as a volunteer. On the other hand, worked with VIOs to make them ready to embrace volunteers addressing many of the barriers identified in the earlier part of the project.

Main impacts

- ✓ 22 of the participant VIOs took part on NFP House qualitative interviews to review their progress in relation with the Activity plan developed in stage I. They reported that the support provided by the project in identifying their volunteer necessities and matching them with individuals with the required skills and interests helped both the organisation and the volunteer. They also reported that having a defined volunteer induction process was helping volunteers and VIOs to reach the expected outcomes of their relationship.
- ✓ 25 organisations were assessed in this stage of the project (43 assessed during State I). All of them defined an action plan that was part of the agreement signed with NFP House to be part of this initiative. Follow up has been done through phone about the implementation of the action plan. The follow up involves a discussion about how they have reduced the barriers to volunteer.
- ✓ 13 more volunteers were supported and matched with 6 different VIOs in the area. They are sharing their experience and promoting volunteering within the community.
- ✓ 17 volunteers have continued their relationship with their matched VIOs after their participation on the I Stage of the project. Others have moved on to other opportunities.
- ✓ 29 VIOs have been able to onboard volunteers through the portal.
- ✓ Promotion and marketing of volunteering around the LGA. This was done through participation in 10 different events promoting the volunteer portal.



Photo 1 NFP House promoting volunteering at Eco fest.

Highlights



Photo 2 Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) Aquaculture Centre, inducted a group of 8 volunteers recruited through NFP Volunteer Ready project.

- All VIOs involved in the assessment were required to present evidence of policies on diversity and inclusion.
- NFP support the organisations that go through the assessment to identify their volunteer necessities and opportunities they can create within their organisation.
- Use of community events to promote volunteering and ask directly to people to volunteer. NFP House staff helped individuals to find volunteer roles and set up their profile.
- A partnership was established with *National Job Link- NJL* to find ways for their young clients to volunteer more. NFP house worked closely with NJL staff to identify volunteering opportunities available on NFP portal that were attractive for this cohort. NJL staff was trained in how to use the portal, so then they help their group of clients to register there to volunteer.
- The partnership between NFP House and Magenta Community Services has helped to promote volunteering among people living with disability marketing the concept of volunteering within the disability sector. Magenta Community Services staff has also received training in the use of the NFP portal and they are now encouraging clients to register to volunteer, making it part of their NDIS plan.
- Engaging with Men's Shed to support them in attracting young volunteers for their sheds. This support is being provided to all groups around the Gladstone Region.



Photo 3 NFP House Staff and Men's Shed Volunteers promoting their volunteer program.

- We have received positive feedback from most of the matched volunteers and those we were able to interview. Some volunteers have continued in their original roles, while others

have moved to different positions within the organization or joined other organizations. Overall, the experience has been meaningful and beneficial, significantly enhancing their connection to the community. A sample of the feedback received is below:

*“The **people were very friendly and flexible** with me volunteering with them.”
(Female, Age 67)*

*“I changed what I was doing after the first day as **I wanted to do more** – its great fun” (Female, Age 30)*

*“I was not able to complete the time I had at my placement as I would have liked but when I was there, **I learned a lot** and didn’t realise how much work is done behind the scenes.” (Female, Age 57)*

*“I am very happy having done the tours as **I feel confident in speaking in front of people**” (Male, Age 60)*

“I liked spending time with the old people. They had good stories” (Male, Age 16)

Challenges

- Find the resources we require to continue the upgrading of the portal, so it keeps offering a good service to our community.

Lessons learned

- Provide simple access to opportunities and reach out community through events. NFP House held a stall at the Regional Council run events, Eco fest and Welcoming Morning tea. The events offered the opportunity to get in contact with the community and help attendees to explore the different opportunities around the region. NFP house staff encouraged them to volunteers and walk alongside them to identify volunteering options.
- Engagement with Youth volunteers require an initial review of policies and operations for VIOs to adapt their volunteer opportunities to Volunteers younger than 18 years. Our first step was to encourage parent/care/support workier to sign up with the young volunteer.
- Although the NFP portal is a great tool to centralize the linkage between volunteer candidates and volunteer opportunities at VIOs, it is necessary to promote its usage within communities and VIOs. The use of community events to market the concept of volunteering, draw attention to the portal and promote its use, and partnering with Organisations that work with the targeted cohorts continue to be necessary to link volunteers with VIOs.

- The project has been a wonderful opportunity to continue the process of attracting volunteers, matching on the portal and get people involved in the community, especially with people from migrant, youth, unemployed and vulnerable women sector. The process is constant and has been successful. We have had many enquiries regarding the portal, places to volunteer from the community in general and other organisation. We are becoming known as the go-to for volunteering.
- The process of assessing organizations and registering volunteers for appropriate matches has been effective. While the portal often works autonomously, we can facilitate connections for specific requests using our insider knowledge, identifying matches that may not be immediately apparent.
- From the outset, we recognized that barriers to volunteering were consistent across the sector, primarily stemming from limited access and awareness of volunteer opportunities, which hindered people from expressing and pursuing their interests.
- Young people are attracted to volunteer in groups (friends, classmates, neighbours), they feel more comfortable than going by themselves.
- VIOs learned that having a good volunteer induction process kept good volunteers and assisted in reaching outcomes for both organisation and individuals.