

Project Name	Volunteer Ready
Partner Organisation	NFP House Gladstone
Project Period	February – December 2023
Project Status	Completed. A second phase was granted.
Project Budget	\$71,410.00

Project Overview

This project attempted to break down barriers to volunteer by working closely with the individual in a case-by-case process, identifying their interests and matching them to an organisation that is ready to take them on as a volunteer. The project also involved supporting Volunteer Involving Organisations to prepare them to be ready to embrace the participant as a volunteer by addressing many of the barriers identified.

The project supported people from the three priority groups: people with a disability, First Nations people and people newly arrived at the area (both internationally and domestically), to volunteer in their community. It also supported Volunteer Involving Organisations to review their status in regards the required policies, processes, and structures to engage and retain volunteers.

Main impacts

- ✓ The Volunteer Ready project formally engaged up to 22 participants from the focus areas from six cohorts: First Nations people, newly arrived migrants, people with a disability, and additional focus areas of vulnerable women, youth and unemployed. They were recruited through the NFP House Volunteer portal, the partner organisations that referred their clients and by walk ins.
- ✓ 43 organisations were assessed with the organisational capability assessment. They received their report card and improvement plan, and some have sought funding to take steps to develop a marketing or strategic plan etc. Most of the organisations have registered as an organisation on the Volunteer portal seeking volunteers.
- ✓ Development of the Volunteer portal to link volunteers and VIOs within the region. This added to the one-on-one support to those interested in volunteering plus the assessment and improvement plan provided to VIOs helped to improve accessibility and engagement between volunteers and opportunities.
- ✓ NFP House is still in an ongoing relationship with the volunteers and the organisations. A record of the volunteer is kept and updated each week.

Highlights

- Establishment of an organisational capability assessment for VIOs to identify the gaps they had to successfully manage and maintain volunteers from the targeted cohorts, within their workforce. NFP also supported the VIOs in developing an improvement plan to tackle the gaps found with the assessment. The benchmarks the organisations are assessed on to receive a report card are:

- Governance /Leadership
 - Planning and Policy – this is where we touch on Diversity and Inclusion policies.
 - Volunteers/Staff
 - Communication
 - Financial management
 - Facility/ Equipment
 - Membership/ participants
 - Event planning/management
- The process has created a confidence boost in organisations in terms of operation. It ensures foundational compliance and sustainability. It serves as an important step in ensuring the volunteers we work with find somewhere that has credibility.
- Establishment of a framework to support volunteers finding volunteer opportunities and establishing the relationship with the VIO. Each participant received one-on-one support from NFP House, in creating their profile on the online portal, identifying the right opportunities for them according to their interests, and establishing the relationship with the VIO.
- Partnerships. For NFP House it was fundamental to establish partnerships with organisations in the area that give the possibility to reach out to the people in the target cohorts of the project. Each partner provided access to their clients ranging from migrants, young people, people with disability, First Nations, vulnerable women and those who are unemployed.
- Assisting the participants in creating a volunteer profile on the NFP House Volunteer portal and directing the participant to potential organisations and to existing skill development opportunities.
- Use of local media to connect with VIOs and Volunteers. Every fortnight NFP House produced an article that reflected on volunteering and all aspects associated with it. (See samples of Local Newspapers reports at the end of this document).
- Celebration of Volunteers and collective organisations' morning tea. A strategy to boost the engagement with volunteers and VIOs was to create an opportunity for them to both be recognised and link them with opportunities to promote their experience to their peers.



Photo 1. Celebration of volunteer and collective organisation morning tea at NFP house

Challenges

- VIOs work with limited financial resources. Many don't have financial capacity to implement all the activities required in the improvement. Some VIOs needed to search for grants to be able to get financial resources to do the improvements required to be Volunteer ready.

Lessons learned

- Barriers to volunteering come from both sides, volunteers and VIOs. From the volunteer's perspective, the two focus groups carried out yielded the following results:
 - Lack of knowledge about where to find up to date information regarding volunteering opportunities.
 - Transport to access the location where the opportunity is.
 - Process or requirements to volunteer seen as unreasonable.
 - Time and money
 - Childcare or opportunities that allow to be accompanied by children.
 - The need of a support worker
 - Challenges to communicate with VIOs (for some people with disabilities)
 - The organisation doesn't know how to support a volunteer with disability in his/her experience.
 - Lack of cultural understanding
- Communication and effective engagement with the participants are key. Although the portal was a good tool to provide a link between people interested in volunteering and VIOs requiring volunteers, the support to individuals to be volunteer ready and to the VIOs to be volunteer ready is very important to make that link really happen.

“Volunteering has been incredible rewarding, but it comes with its share of tough moments. Most of us have full time jobs, children, and this volunteering job...[it] can be overwhelming and can make communication and cooperation difficult”. (Maria Rodriguez, a volunteer at a local sporting club. CQ Today, Locals Helping Locals section, Dec 6/2023)

Navigating the many challenges of volunteering



Volunteering is a noble endeavour; however, behind the scenes, it can have its challenges.

Volunteering may involve working in difficult situations and/or with difficult people from time to time, including individuals struggling with mental health issues, those facing socio-economic hardships, or even those harbouring personal conflicts.

Maria Rodriguez, a volunteer at a local sporting club, shares her experiences, "Volunteering has been incredibly rewarding, but it comes with its share of tough moments.



NFP House speaking with representatives from CQ Motorsports.

Most of us have full time jobs, children and this volunteering job, which can be overwhelming and can make communication

and cooperation difficult."

Rather than shying away from these challenging moments, we encourage you to see

them as opportunities for personal growth and community development. It's crucial to approach each situation with an open heart and a willingness to understand the unique perspectives of all parties.

If you are having challenges in your organisation, Not For Profit House can help by taking the emotions out of the situation and working with your organisation to come together to form a common goal. We support organisations to analyse and understand the situation they are in and how to navigate a way forward.

If you're volunteering for a not for profit and could use some help, contact Not For Profit House or check out our Volunteer Portal at nfp-house.org.au.

Happy volunteering!!

You can contact NFP House anytime, to make a difference to your life and our community!

Wednesday, 6 December, 2017 CQ TODAY 29

Photo 2. One of the fortnight light articles in CQ Today. Photo of Bernadette Ariens completing a NFP House an Assessment with CQ Motorsports Benaraby - not for profit organisation who are keen to take on volunteers and find it a challenge.

Connections through volunteering



Are you curious to meet new people?

Embrace a world of opportunities and forge meaningful connections through volunteering.

Volunteering is a remarkable avenue to give back to society, learn new skills and most importantly, connect with new people, who share your passions!

- Unleash the power of human connections and engage with people from all walks of life.
- Expand your social circle through this shared purpose which is fertile ground for friendships to flourish.
- friendships can become a vital part of your support systems and a source of personal growth.

18 GLADSTONE TODAY Thursday, 28 September, 2023



Glen at the library.

Picture: SUPPLIED

- Learn from different perspectives, challenging your preconceived notions, enhance your empathy and make you a more understanding person.
- Develop life skills

Where to begin? If you're eager to start your

volunteering journey but don't know where to begin, consider these steps:

1. Identify your skills and interests
What skills do you have and/or what cause would you like to contribute to?
2. Start small
Volunteering can be a one-off task, it doesn't have to be a big commitment
3. Register on the Volunteer Portal at nfp-house.org.au.
You will be linked with volunteering opportunities custom to your unique profile
4. Enjoy the journey

Volunteering isn't just about giving; it's about receiving in abundance.

So, take that first step and embrace the connections and rewards. It's an adventure waiting to happen!

If you'd like help to find the right volunteering opportunity for you, contact Not For Profit House.

Happy volunteering!

Lois from NFP House, where you can contact us anytime, to make a difference to your life and our community!

Building strong foundation is crucial in NFP ventures

LOCALS HELPING LOCALS

WITH LOIS LODDING

NFP House 



Are you involved with a not for profit organisation?

Do you know your legal obligations?

Have you read the constitution?

Do you know where it is saved?

Many organisations run on 'the way we've always done it' rather than as per the compliance requirements of the constitution.

If you are involved in a not for profit it's important to understand your responsibilities, so if you haven't, source and read your constitution today!

If you can't find it – the Office of Fair Trading can re-issue it to you.

A well structured constitution is the bed-rock upon which all operational and governance decisions are built.

Prioritising your constitution is essential to ensure transparency, accountability and overall success.

Here are some quick tips to build a robust constitution.

Use the model rules template on the office of fair trading website and use policies and bylaws to build in your organisational specifics such as:

1. Clarifying what your organisation wants to achieve, the issues it addresses and the community it serves, as well as the mission, vision and values of the organisation.
2. Ensuring your management committee



Partner meeting NJL and NFP House for VMA.
Picture: SUPPLIED

have the skills needed to run your organisation.

3. The structure of your organisation, the roles and responsibilities, how decisions are made, meetings conducted and leadership positions filled.
4. If your organisation has members, outline the criteria for membership, rights and responsibilities, fees, voting procedures and the process for admitting and expelling members.
5. How funds will be managed, audited and reported.
6. How conflict of interests will be dealt with
7. Defining the process for editing and amending the constitution and updating it regularly to ensure your organisation is operating in the most streamlined, best practice way.

If you're volunteering for a not for profit and could use some help with your constitution, contact NFP House.

Happy volunteering!

Lois from NFP House, where you can contact us anytime, to make a difference to your life and our community!