



# VOLUNTEER CONNECT EXPO 2025 REPORT

**Project Period:** November 2024  
– March 2025

**Project Funding:** \$10,000  
(\$3,000 VMA Funded)

## Event activities:

- Information stalls hosted by local and regional volunteer organisations
- Live-streamed presentations with guest speakers for the 2025 Queensland Volunteering Conference
- Structured networking sessions
- Volunteer recognition via the Capricornia Volunteer Awards. Recipients of the awards nominated for the Queensland Volunteering Awards

## Event Overview

The Rockhampton Volunteering Connect Expo was a regionally focused initiative delivered in 2025 to strengthen community engagement by connecting individuals with volunteer-involving organisations operating across the Rockhampton Region.

In response to a state-wide decline in volunteer participation, the Expo was developed to address the growing challenges faced by community organisations reliant on volunteer support. By enhancing the visibility of volunteering opportunities and fostering stronger community connections, the project promoted sustainable volunteer engagement.

## Program Highlights

- The Rockhampton Volunteering Expo received valuable media coverage from 7News Central Queensland
- As part of the Rockhampton Volunteering Expo, the Capricornia Volunteer Awards were held to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions of local volunteers



# Engagement

## Attendance

**159** Community members

**25** Organisations

**50** Organisation Representatives



## Government and Civic Support

The presence of dignitaries demonstrated strong institutional support and raised the public profile of the event:

- Hon Michelle Landry MP
- Nigel Hutton MP (Member for Keppel)
- Donna Kirkland MP (Member for Rockhampton)
- Deputy Mayor Drew Wickerson
- Councillor Edward Oram
- Councillor Marika Taylor

## Award nominations

**11** Nominations for Volunteer of the Year

**5** Nominations for Lifetime Contribution Award

## SPONSORS



Queensland Fire  
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# Feedback

"Networking with other groups was great."

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"Seeing all the groups come together on the day was great."

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"Events like this can be difficult to organise, so thank you to those who pulled this together."

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"This event was an excellent showcase of how amazing volunteers in our community are. Anything we can do to promote, encourage, and support new and experienced volunteers is incredibly valuable!"



## Insights

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### **Networking and Collaboration**

Attendees appreciated the opportunity to engage with a broad range of organisations and peers in the volunteering sector.

### **Event Quality and Organisation**

The Expo was widely praised for its smooth delivery and professional coordination.

### **Panel Discussion and Guest Speakers**

The panel discussion was well received, with keynote speaker, Ashley Fell, Social Researcher identified as a standout contributor.

### **Recognition and Celebration of Volunteers**

Exhibitors valued the platform provided to celebrate the contributions of volunteers and promote available opportunities





# LESSONS LEARNED



- **Venue Size and Layout Matter:** While the Expo was well attended, several participants noted that the venue felt too small and cramped, particularly during peak periods. Future events should consider larger venues with improved space for stall layout, accessibility, and attendee movement.
- **Timing Can Impact Attendance:** Feedback suggested that holding the Expo on a weekday may have limited attendance for some working individuals. Hosting the event on a weekend could increase accessibility for a broader audience and support greater community involvement.
- **Storytelling and Multimedia Enhances Engagement:** Attendees expressed interest in real-life volunteer stories presented through video or other multimedia. Including authentic, relatable stories can create stronger emotional connections and demonstrate the everyday impact of volunteering in a more engaging way.
- **Panel Discussions Add Value:** This format provided insights into trends in volunteering and helped stimulate meaningful conversations. Future events should continue and expand this element.
- **Recognition Is Meaningful:** The Volunteer Awards Ceremony was well received and provided a valuable opportunity to recognise and celebrate local contributions. Maintaining this element in future events will help promote the value of volunteering and strengthen community spirit.
- **Early Planning and Strong Coordination Are Key:** Positive feedback about the event's organisation reinforced the importance of early planning, clear communication, and a dedicated coordination team. These factors contributed significantly to the day running smoothly.

