



# Volunteering Queensland

## Research Framework

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Reviewed and approved by the Volunteering Queensland Research  
Advisory Committee

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## 1. Purpose of the Research Framework

This Research Framework provides a structured, multi-stream evidence model for Volunteering Queensland (VQ) to measure, monitor, and strengthen volunteering in Queensland. It outlines the key data sources, methodologies, governance processes, and reporting cycles required to deliver high-quality insights for strategic decision making, advocacy, and sector capacity building.

## 2. Strategic Alignment

The framework directly supports VQ's mission to make volunteering more accessible by:

- Inspiring more people to volunteer more often.
- Advocating for conditions that allow volunteering to thrive.
- Building the capacity of the volunteering ecosystem.
- Ensuring volunteering is effective, impactful, and valued.
- Empowering people to find purpose and connection.
- Creating resilient communities, particularly during disasters.

## 3. Research Questions

### 3.1 Research Question Hierarchy

The below diagram illustrates the hierarchical structure of the research questions that guide the framework. The overarching research question sets the strategic direction, which is then explored through five sub questions that reflect the core domains of volunteering in Queensland. Each sub question is supported by a series of secondary research questions that operationalise the inquiry and guide data collection across the various research streams. This structure ensures a comprehensive and coherent approach that avoids overlap whilst capturing all essential dimensions of the volunteering ecosystem.

## VQ Strategy



### VQ Research Framework

Level 1

#### Overarching Research Question

Level 2

Sub-  
question  
1

Level 3

Supporting  
questions

Supporting  
questions

Supporting  
questions

Supporting  
questions

Supporting  
questions

### 3.2 Key Research Questions

<b>Problem Statement</b>	Grow volunteering to meet the need of Queensland.				
<b>Research Questions (RQ)</b>	RQ1. What are the current patterns, drivers and disparities in volunteer participation across Queensland?	RQ2. How do supply and demand dynamics shape volunteering opportunities and recruitment challenges across regions and sectors?	RQ3. How do volunteers experience their roles, and what factors influence satisfaction, inclusion, retention and barriers to involvement?	RQ4. What motivates Queenslanders to volunteer, and what personal, social and community impacts result from volunteering?	RQ5. How effectively are volunteer involving organisations performing, and what systemic or policy conditions enable or constrain their capacity to support volunteers?
<b>Sub Questions (SQ)</b>	<p><b>(Volunteer Participation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ1.1 What are the current participation levels across Queensland, and how do they vary by region, demographics and sector?</li> <li>• SQ1.2 How many hours are volunteers contributing, and what trends are emerging over time?</li> <li>• SQ1.3 Which demographic groups are under-represented, and what factors influence their participation?</li> <li>• SQ1.4 What foundational conditions may influence the future of volunteering?</li> </ul>	<p><b>(Volunteer Supply &amp; Demand)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ2.1 Where are the greatest shortages of volunteers, and which roles are hardest to fill?</li> <li>• SQ2.2 How long does it take VIOs to recruit for different volunteer roles?</li> <li>• SQ2.3 What are the characteristics of supply–demand mismatches in each LGA?</li> </ul>	<p><b>(Volunteer Experience)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ3.1 How satisfied are volunteers with their roles, support and organisational culture?</li> <li>• SQ3.2 What factors drive positive or negative volunteer experience?</li> <li>• SQ3.3 How likely are volunteers to stay, and what predicts retention or turnover?</li> </ul> <p><b>(Inclusion &amp; Accessibility)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ3.4 What barriers prevent people from starting or continuing volunteering?</li> <li>• SQ3.5 Do volunteer demographics reflect local community diversity?</li> <li>• SQ3.6 How accessible are volunteering pathways, training and onboarding?</li> </ul>	<p><b>(Motivations &amp; Impact)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ4.1 What motivates Queenslanders to volunteer, and how motivations differ across groups?</li> <li>• SQ4.2 What personal, social and community impacts do volunteers report?</li> <li>• SQ4.3 How does volunteering strengthen resilience during disasters?</li> </ul>	<p><b>(Sector Capacity &amp; Performance)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ5.1 How effectively are VIOs managing recruitment, onboarding, communication and support?</li> <li>• SQ5.2 What training and development needs are most critical across the sector?</li> <li>• SQ5.3 How well are organisations using data to improve volunteer management?</li> </ul> <p><b>(Policy &amp; Advocacy Insights)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQ5.4 What systemic conditions (funding, regulation, coordination) influence volunteering?</li> <li>• SQ5.5 Which policy levers would most improve volunteer participation and retention?</li> <li>• SQ5.6 What emerging risks or opportunities should government be aware of?</li> </ul>

## 4. Research Objectives

1. Provide robust, timely insights into volunteer participation, experience, supply, and demand across Queensland.
2. Inform the sector on trends and key information on the State of Volunteering in Queensland.
3. Monitor real time conditions and supply and demand in the volunteering sector down to a local LGA level using the VIO Register.-time conditions
4. Capture and analyse and report on volunteer experience through the Voice of the Volunteer survey tool.
5. Support evidence based advocacy and policy recommendations.-based advocacy and policy recommendations.
6. Inform capacity building initiatives and targeted support for VIOs.-building initiatives and targeted support for VIOs.

## 5. Data Streams

### 5.1 External Data Sources

- Comprehensive analyses of participation, workforce trends, inclusion, satisfaction, retention, barriers, and regional differences.
- Integrates volunteer survey data, ABS information and qualitative insights.

### 5.2 VIO Register (Supply & Demand Analytics)

- Tracks supply and demand.
- Regular pulse surveys to ensure currency of data.
- Produces real time dashboards for internal VQ decision making and to inform councils etc.-time dashboards for internal VQ decision-making

### 5.3 Voice of the Volunteer Survey Tool

- Standardised survey instrument used across Queensland.
- Captures motivations, experience, support, inclusion, satisfaction, and retention intent.
- Provides de-identified datasets for statewide reporting and individual VIO scorecards.

## 5.4 Complementary Data Sources

- Training participation, induction records, role matching performance, event attendance.
- Metrics collected for government reporting and ongoing reports.
- Qualitative research including focus groups and case studies.

## 5.5 Qualitative Data Sources

- Following analysis of quantitative data, identify areas that need deeper exploration and undertake a qualitative review

## 6. Methods & Instruments

- **Quantitative:** surveys (volunteers & VIOs), register analytics, ongoing intake datasets.
- **Qualitative:** focus groups, interviews, case studies.
- **Sampling:** stratified by region and sector; continuous volunteer intake with quarterly analysis.
- **Data Quality:** validation rules, deduplication processes, consistent survey templates.

## 7. Reporting Products

- **Triennial SOV Reports** – comprehensive analyses of participation, workforce trends, inclusion, satisfaction, retention, barriers for volunteers. Also information from volunteer managers.
- **Quarterly Dashboards** – KPIs, regional variations, hotspots.
- **VIO Scorecards** – tailored insights for individual organisations.
- **Annual Sector Insights Summary** – high level trends for public dissemination.-level trends for public dissemination.

## 8. Governance & Ethics

- **Data Governance Group:** Research Advisory Committee.
- **Privacy Compliance:** Australian Privacy Principles, de-identification, consent transparency.
- **Ethics:** voluntary participation, skip options on sensitive data, secure data storage.

## 9. Technology & Infrastructure

- Centralised data warehouse and analytics pipeline.
- Dashboards through BI tools with role based access.-based access.
- APIs for VIO data transfer where relevant.

## High Level Research Questions, Measurement and Reporting Structure

Research Question	Sub Question	Unit of Analysis	Indicator/ Measurement	Data Source	Frequency of Assessment	How is it reported?	How often is it reported?
RQ1. What are the current patterns, drivers and disparities in volunteer participation across Queensland?	SQL1.1 What are the current participation levels across Queensland, and how do they vary by region, demographics and sector?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overall participation rate</li> <li>- time contribution</li> <li>- demographic variation</li> <li>- geographic or service-area variation</li> </ul>	Population survey VIO register  Note: can't get region or sector with current population approach	3 years  Real time	SoV Summary Report  Data trends and highlights	Every 3 years  Annual
	SQL1.2 How many hours are volunteers contributing, and what trends are emerging over time?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- average hours contributed</li> <li>- total hours contributed</li> <li>- change over time</li> </ul>	Population survey	3 years	SoV Summary Report	Every 3 years
	SQL1.3 Which demographic groups are under-represented, and what factors influence their participation?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- degree of under-representation</li> <li>- variation in participation within groups</li> <li>- perceived barriers</li> <li>- perceived facilitators</li> </ul>	Population survey	3 years	SoV Summary Report	Every 3 years
	SQL1.4 What foundational conditions may influence the future of volunteering?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likelihood of future volunteering</li> <li>- perceived life-context constraints</li> <li>- availability of flexible options</li> </ul>	ABS data  Desktop reviews of other information plus our data and interpretation	Ongoing	Advocacy plan	Annual
RQ2. How do supply and demand dynamics shape volunteering opportunities and recruitment challenges across regions and sectors?	SQ2.1 Where are the greatest shortages of volunteers, and which roles are hardest to fill?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prevalence of shortages (e.g. systemic, localised or niche)</li> <li>- severity of shortages</li> <li>- role types affected</li> <li>- distribution by region or service area</li> </ul>	<span style="color: red;">New data source required</span>  [construct created through Julia's PhD work]	TBA	TBA	TBA
	SQ2.2 How long does it take VIOs to recruit for different volunteer roles?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- typical time to fill roles</li> <li>- variation by role type</li> <li>- proportion of roles remaining unfilled beyond a threshold</li> </ul>	Vol manager survey	3 years	SoV summary report	Every 3 years
	SQ2.3 What are the characteristics of supply-demand mismatches in each LGA?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- proportion of organisations with unmet demand</li> <li>- overall supply-demand balance</li> <li>- severity of mismatch</li> <li>- dominant drivers</li> </ul>	VIO Register	Real time	Data trends and highlights	Annual
RQ3. How do volunteers experience their roles, and what factors influence satisfaction, inclusion, retention and barriers to involvement?	SQ3.1 How satisfied are volunteers with their roles, support and organisational culture?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overall satisfaction</li> <li>- satisfaction with role design</li> <li>- organisational support</li> <li>- sense of belonging</li> </ul>	VoV Survey	Real time	VoV Report	Annual
	SQ3.2 What factors drive positive or negative volunteer experience?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key experience drivers</li> <li>- expectation-experience alignment</li> </ul>	VoV Survey	Real time	VoV Report	Annual
	SQ3.3 How likely are volunteers to stay, and	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- intention to continue</li> <li>- intention to reduce or cease</li> <li>- key influencing factor</li> </ul>	<span style="color: red;">New data source required</span>  Survey	TBA	TBA	TBA

	what predicts retention or turnover?						
	SQ3.4 What barriers prevent people from starting or continuing volunteering?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- life-related constraints</li> <li>- organisational or structural barriers</li> <li>- primary self-reported barrier</li> </ul>	Population survey VoV Survey VIO Register	3 years  Real time Real time	SoV Summary  Data trends and highlights	Every 3 years  Annual
	SQ3.5 Do volunteer demographics reflect local community diversity?	VIO + Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- volunteer demographic profile</li> <li>- comparison to community profile</li> <li>- presence of under-represented groups</li> </ul>	Population survey VIO register ABS stats	3 years  Real time Ongoing	SoV Summary  Data trends and highlights	Every 3 years  Annual
	SQ3.6 How accessible are volunteering pathways, training and onboarding?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ease of finding opportunities</li> <li>- clarity of information</li> <li>- timeliness of onboarding</li> <li>- accessibility of training</li> </ul>	VoV survey	Real time	Data trends and highlights	Annual
RQ4. What motivates Queenslanders to volunteer, and what personal, social and community impacts result from volunteering?	SQ4.1 What motivates Queenslanders to volunteer, and how do motivations differ across groups?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dominant motivation types</li> <li>- relative importance of motivations</li> <li>- variation across groups or service areas</li> </ul>	Population survey VoV survey VIO register	3 years  Real time Real time	SoV Summary  Data trends and highlights	Every 3 years  Annual
	SQ4.2 What personal, social and community impacts do volunteers report?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- personal impacts</li> <li>- social impacts</li> <li>- community impacts</li> </ul>	VoV survey	Real time	Data trends and highlights	Annual
	SQ4.3 How does volunteering strengthen resilience during disasters?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation in disaster-related volunteering</li> <li>- capacity to mobilise</li> <li>- perceived contribution to recovery</li> </ul>	New data source required	TBA	TBA	TBA
RQ5. How effectively are volunteer involving organisations performing, and what systemic or policy conditions enable or constrain their capacity to support volunteers?	SQ5.1 How effectively are VIOs managing recruitment, onboarding, communication and support?	Individual volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recruitment and onboarding effectiveness</li> <li>- communication quality</li> <li>- adequacy of support</li> </ul>	VoV survey Vol managers survey	Real time 3 years	SoV Summary  Data trends and highlights	Every 3 years  Annual
	SQ5.2 What training and development needs are most critical across the sector?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- availability of training</li> <li>- adequacy of provision</li> <li>- priority capability gaps</li> </ul>	Vol managers survey	3 years	SoV summary report	Every 3 years
	SQ5.3 How well are organisations using data to improve volunteer management?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- extent of data use</li> <li>- availability of systems</li> <li>- barriers to effective use</li> </ul>	Vol managers survey	3 years	SoV summary report	Every 3 years
	SQ5.4 What systemic conditions (funding, regulation, coordination) influence volunteering?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- funding adequacy</li> <li>- regulatory burden</li> <li>- available support networks</li> </ul>	mixed method TBD (qualitative & quantitative)	TBA Annual	TBA Advocacy Plan	TBA Annual
	SQ5.5 Which policy levers would most improve volunteer participation and retention?	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- perceived effectiveness of individual policy levers</li> <li>- prioritised policy levers</li> <li>- variation by organisation type or service area</li> </ul>	mixed method TBD	TBA Annual	TBA Advocacy Plan	TBA Annual
	SQ5.6 What emerging risks or opportunities	VIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emerging risks</li> <li>- emerging opportunities</li> </ul>	mixed method TBD	TBA	TBA	TBA

	should government be aware of?				Annual	Advocacy Plan	Annual
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### Data Collection Strategies:

Survey Type	Ethical Governance Level	Timing	Collection / Distribution method	Other Requirements
Population survey	Ethics approved by university committee	Every 3 years	3 <sup>rd</sup> party data collection	Nil
Volunteer Managers	Ethics approved by university committee	Every 3 years	Distributed by VQ	Nil
VIO Register	Research advisory committee approves questions	Real time	Collection upon registration and updated biannually	Nil
VoV Survey Tool (Voice of the Volunteer)	Research advisory committee approves questions with optional third party consultancy such as IPSOS	Real time	VIOs distribute to their volunteers	Nil
Qualitative research approaches	Research advisory committee approves approach	As needed	As needed	Consent and participation information sheet

### Publication Calendar

#### Annual:

- Advocacy plan
- Voice of the Volunteer Report
- Data trends and highlights (VIO register data trends) such as supply and demand snapshot
- Budget submission
- Annual report

#### Triennial:

- SoV summary report
- Strategic Plan