

# The economic value of volunteering in Queensland

## Executive summary

Updated report — May 2008

### Key results

Volunteers provided a volume of work equivalent to 195 000 jobs in 1992 rising to 299 000 in 2006. This is equivalent to an additional 14.6 per cent of the paid number employed in Queensland in 1992 and 14.7 per cent in 2006.

By adding the value of organised, unorganised and travel together, volunteering was worth about \$5.3 billion to the Queensland economy in 1992, growing to \$13.4 billion in 2006.

The surveys indicate a 10 per cent rise in the average total hours per adult of volunteering in Queensland over the 14 years from 1992 to 2006. In dollar terms in the 14 years from 1992 to 2006 Queensland adults, on average, increased their donation of volunteering time and associated costs by more than 80 per cent from \$2396 to \$4352 per annum.

In macro-economic terms the total volume of volunteering time in Queensland increased by 54 per cent in the 14-year period from 1992 to 2006.

### The value of different types of volunteering

In its work on measuring and valuing volunteering, Dr Ironmonger and the Households Research Unit has distinguished between 'organised' and 'unorganised' volunteering.

#### Organised volunteering

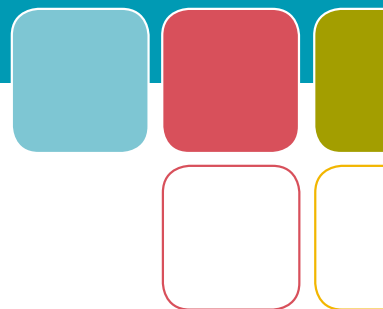
Organised volunteering is defined as unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is indirect as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

In 2006, organised voluntary work in Queensland was worth \$4.5 billion. However, the time use surveys show that organised volunteering is less than 40 per cent of the total value of volunteering. The average hours per adult of volunteering through organisations shows a rise of 13 per cent over the 14-year period.

Women in Queensland contributed an estimated \$2.3 billion of time and other inputs to volunteer organisations in 2006. In contrast, Queensland men's donation was worth about \$1.8 billion. The higher value for women is partly due to the higher volunteering rate of women — 40 per cent compared to 36 per cent for men — but also to a woman volunteer giving more volunteering time per year than a man volunteer, 145 hours compared with 129 hours.

Regional Queenslanders contributed approximately \$2.2 billion to their communities in terms of organised volunteering. Volunteering through organisations of those living in Brisbane was estimated at \$1.98 billion.





## Unorganised volunteering

Unorganised volunteering is defined as the informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal, or unorganised, volunteering is direct as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

Excluding the cost of volunteer travel, unorganised volunteering was estimated at \$2.7 billion in 1992 and \$7.0 billion in 2006. This represents 52 per cent of the total value of volunteering in Queensland in the later year. The remaining 18 to 15 per cent contribution by volunteers was through their travel — \$0.9 billion in 1992 and \$1.9 billion in 2006.

The average hours per adult of unorganised volunteering shows a rise of 12 per cent from 1992 to 2006. Within unorganised volunteering there appears to have been a large rise in the average amount of informal volunteering in support of children and only a small rise in informal support for adults.

## How were the figures calculated?

The starting-point for the estimates prepared for this report were the surveys of Time Use and Voluntary Work conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1992 and 1997 (Time Use) and 1995 and 2000 (Voluntary Work) and the Queensland Household Survey conducted by the Queensland Office of Economic and Statistical Research (May 2004). Later data from the ABS Voluntary Work and Time Use Surveys conducted in 2006 and the 2006 Census of Population and Housing have been incorporated in updated estimates for this report.

The ABS Time Use Surveys collect detailed diaries covering all uses of time over two consecutive days. These surveys give daily participation rates and times spent in all types of activities. Hence the participation and times spent on both types of volunteering, organised and unorganised, are obtained in the Time Use Surveys.

On the other hand, the ABS Voluntary Work Surveys and the May 2004 Queensland Household Survey cover only volunteering through organisations. These are not obtained through detailed diaries but from asking respondents to recall their participation in this type of volunteering over the last 12 months. They also ask the amount of time spent on organised volunteering over the last week, month or year.

Despite the different methodologies of the surveys, together they provide the basis for making estimates of the average time spent in volunteer activities by the adult population of Queensland.

The estimates prepared for this report are based on the gross opportunity cost wage rates of \$14.34 per hour in 1992 and \$17.47 per hour in 1997 used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their reports on *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS 1994b & 2000).

Based on the increases in the ABS national accounts estimate for 'average compensation per employee' the wage rates for 1995, 2000, 2004 and 2006 are estimated at \$16.00, \$19.26, \$22.08 and \$24.09 per hour respectively. These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Queensland.

## Further information

Contact the Office for Volunteering on 13 13 04 or [volunteering@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:volunteering@communities.qld.gov.au)