

Volunteers in Queensland: a snapshot

This information sheet focuses on volunteering in Queensland based on the *Voluntary Work Survey* conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1995, 2000 and 2006.

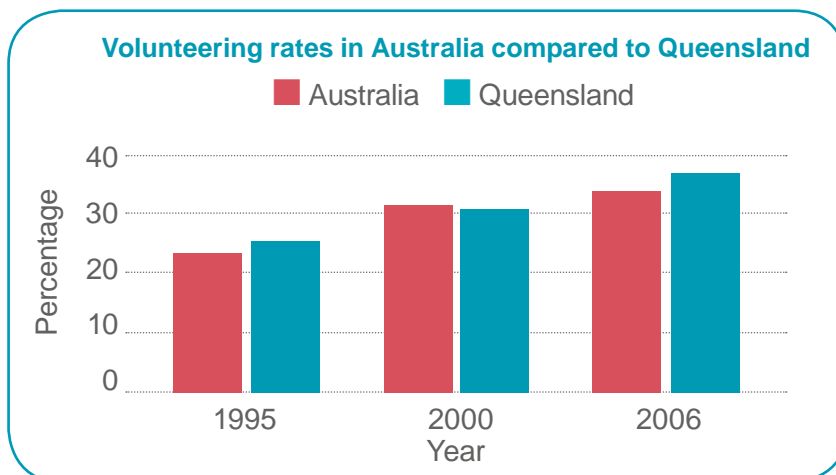
Volunteering in Queensland has a long history with Queenslanders participating voluntarily in activities such as church-based services, local sporting and youth clubs, military service and informal help to neighbours and local communities. Volunteering underpins strong and vibrant communities.

In 2006, volunteering was worth about \$13.4 billion to the Queensland economy.

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

Volunteering rates across Australia are climbing. In 2006, 5.2 million people or 34 per cent of the Australian population aged 18 years and over participated in voluntary work. They contributed 713 million hours to the community doing many different activities and in organisations and groups with a diverse range of interests.

In Queensland, from 1995 to 2006, the volunteering rate moved from 26 per cent to 38 per cent. Between 2000 and 2006, increases in volunteer rates occurred for both sexes and most age groups.



Definition of a volunteer

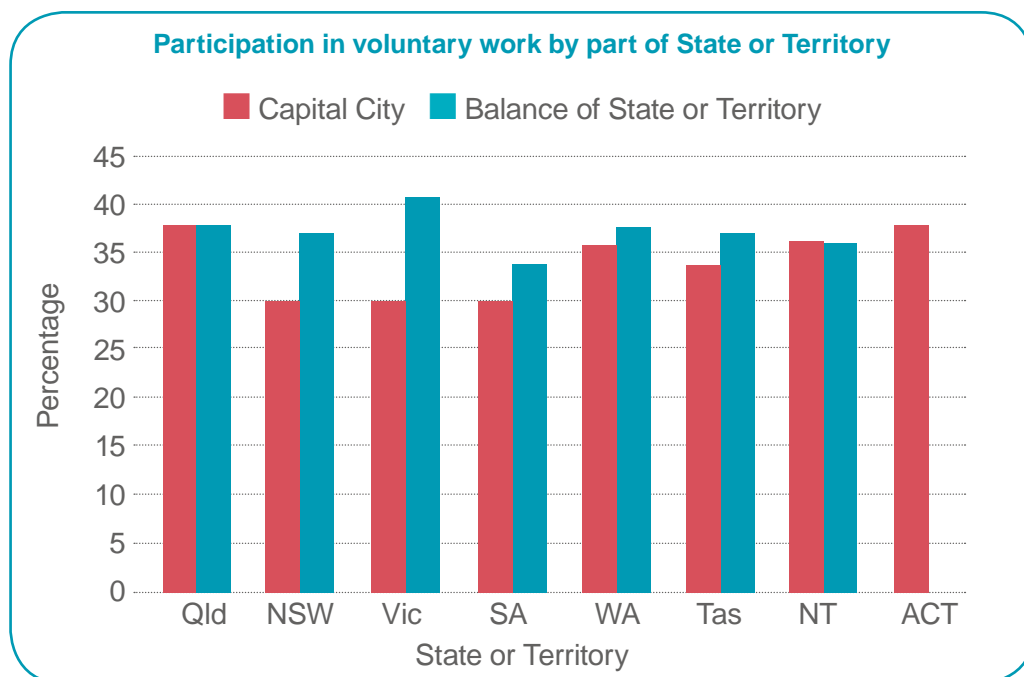
In the *Voluntary Work Survey 2006*, a volunteer was defined as someone who, in the previous 12 months, willingly gave unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group. In *Valuing Volunteers: the Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007–2010*, volunteering is defined as an activity for the benefit of the community and the volunteer, where the volunteer freely chooses their involvement without expectation of payment.



Volunteering rates in Queensland

Queensland was the state with the highest proportion of volunteers in 2006, with 1.1 million people or 38 per cent of the Queensland population volunteering.

The volunteer rate of 38 per cent was the same for those living in the capital city as for those living outside of the capital. This was in contrast to most other states and territories where volunteering was more common for those living outside of the capital city.



Who volunteers?

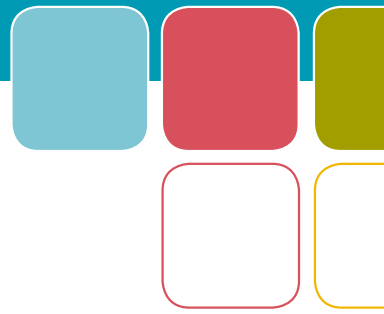
Volunteering patterns vary with age, life stage and gender. Queenslanders of all ages are active in volunteering work however people aged 35–44 years were in the age group most likely to volunteer (47 per cent). This reflects the tendency of people in this age group to be married with children and the associated family commitments this entails.

Gender

Queensland women (40 per cent) tend to volunteer at a slightly higher rate than Queensland men (36 per cent). Among men in Queensland, the highest volunteering rate was in the group aged from 45–54 years. Among women, the volunteering rate was highest among those aged from 35–44 years.

Younger people

The volunteer rate for younger people (18–24 years) in Queensland in 2006 was 31 per cent. For young people living outside the capital city, the volunteering rate rises to 34 per cent as opposed to the rate for those living in Brisbane of 28 per cent.



Older people

The volunteer rates for people in the 55–64 years age group and the 65 and over age group were 36 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. Seventy-eight per cent of the volunteers in the 65 and over age group first began volunteering more than 10 years earlier.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) volunteers

The rate of volunteering amongst people born outside Australia was 17 per cent in 1995 and rose to 25 per cent in 2000. In 2006, the CALD volunteering rate rose slightly to 26 per cent. These volunteers participate within their own ethnic group and the broader community, and are most commonly involved with health, schools and sporting organisations.

How many hours do people contribute?

Although the number of volunteers in Queensland is increasing, the amount of hours spent volunteering is actually decreasing. The median annual hours of voluntary work in Queensland was 52 hours or one hour per week of voluntary work. The median hours of volunteer work steadily increase with age, which may be attributable to the increased amount of time available to retirees.

Why do people volunteer?

Volunteers give many reasons for volunteering. Some of the main reasons identified include:

- helping others or the community
- personal satisfaction
- to do something worthwhile
- social contact
- to be active
- to use skills or experience.

The top three reasons for volunteering given by younger people (18–24) and older people (55–64 and over 65) were the same: ‘to help others or the community’ followed by ‘personal satisfaction’ and ‘to do something worthwhile’.

What type of volunteering?

Sport/recreation, education/training, community/welfare and religious groups were consistently the most common types of organisations for which people volunteered across all states and territories. Together, these account for 74 per cent of all volunteering involvement.

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) *Voluntary Work Survey, Australia, 2006* Cat 4441.0 Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) *How Australians Use their Time, 2006* Cat 4153.0 Canberra.
- Ironmonger, D (2008) *The Economic Value of Volunteering in Queensland: A Report commissioned by the Department of Communities*
- Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2008) *Volunteering in Australia; Changing patterns in voluntary work 1995–2006.*

Further information

Contact the Office for Volunteering on 13 13 04 or volunteering@communities.qld.gov.au