

Volunteer

Impact Report

2023





Acknowledgement of Country

UnitingCare respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live.

We acknowledge Elders both past and present, whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will leave a lasting legacy for future leaders and reconciliation within Australia.

This report was produced and recognises the impact of our volunteers and services on the ancestral lands of the First Peoples of Australia.

UnitingCare follows the Australian National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 (from Volunteering Australia) and acknowledges and recognises the following statement:

The National Strategy for Volunteering recognises that community giving has been taking place in First Nations communities for tens of thousands of years. It is committed to recognising the contribution of First Nations Peoples and celebrating the power of volunteering and community giving to promote reconciliation.

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Message from *Craig Barke*



Welcome to UnitingCare's first-ever Volunteer Impact Report.

The Volunteer Experience Team produced this report highlighting the incredible contribution of Volunteers to our organisation. We also want to focus not just on the numbers of volunteers or the hours they contribute but to bring to light the stories behind the numbers and the impact that volunteering has on staff, the people we serve, and volunteers themselves as they help people live 'Life in all its fullness'.

Volunteering has a long history at UnitingCare. From the earliest days providing community services and outreach to the people of Brisbane, volunteers now contribute their time and skill in Queensland and the Northern Territory from the Tweed River to the Torres Strait and west to Darwin.

The impact of volunteers is felt daily throughout these services. Serving customers in a Lifeline Retail Shop and answering phones on the Lifeline Crisis Support line; visiting residents in our Aged Care Facilities and Hospitals and supporting our community through Family and Disability Services. This is before we even contemplate the army of volunteers who descend on Lifeline Bookfest biannually. The sheer variety of roles that are filled by our volunteers reflects the breadth of our work in our community.

The last few years have been a challenging time for volunteering in Australia and the rest of the world, with average numbers and hours of volunteering decreasing. Fortunately, at

UnitingCare, we have been able to buck this trend with the Volunteer Experience Team implementing three 2030 projects to assist in this. A new volunteer records database to keep track of volunteers across the State, growing the footprint of our volunteers to ensure that we are always actively recruiting and engaging new volunteers and executing a volunteer engagement framework to ensure our staff who work with volunteers are utilising best practice.

Please enjoy this report and feel free to download your copy at



Craig Barke
CEO UnitingCare

Message from *DJ Cronin*



It is with great pleasure that we present the very first UnitingCare Volunteer Impact Report.

It is with great pleasure that we present the very first UnitingCare Volunteer Impact Report. With 7,456 volunteers we are an organisation greatly enriched and supported by volunteer effort. I don't say it lightly when I say that volunteering is at the heart of UnitingCare. Nearly every service is supported by members of our community donating their time and skills. Through volunteering we invite our community to participate in our mission, values and goals.

As volunteering nationally has declined, we have grown. It is vital that we share the volunteering story through the lens of volunteers themselves as well as the staff we support and the clients that we help. Volunteer Impact is not just about volunteer numbers and hours. Volunteer Impact is about changing lives, yours included.

After working 26 years in the volunteering sector, I believe that demonstrating the true impact of volunteers on our organisation and communities is vital. It is vital because volunteers today want to know what impact their volunteering is having. It is vital because the volunteering story must be told and proudly so. It is vital as it is another important tool in the recognition of volunteers. It is vital because it must be seen – volunteering must never be invisible. Finally, it is vital because there is a good news story called volunteering that does not make the headlines in a world of conflict and darkness. Volunteering shines a light on our humanity, innate goodness and capacity to bring compassion and love to those who need these the most.

This is the story about the impact of the thousands

of UnitingCare volunteers. While it is our first Volunteer Impact report, it will now be an annual report. Because Volunteers matter.

I would like to thank Victoria Bansey and her project team for working diligently on this report. I would like to thank the Volunteer Experience Team and everyone who leads volunteers at UnitingCare. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this report. Finally, I thank the volunteers of UnitingCare. I dedicate this report to you in gratitude. Thank you for your kindness and humanity. We see you, appreciate you and thank you!

DJ Cronin
Volunteer Experience Manager
UnitingCare

UnitingCare Overall Stats



7,456

Number of
volunteers



12.3%

Increase in number
of volunteers in
2022-2023
Financial Year



862,477

Hours
contributed by
UnitingCare
volunteers

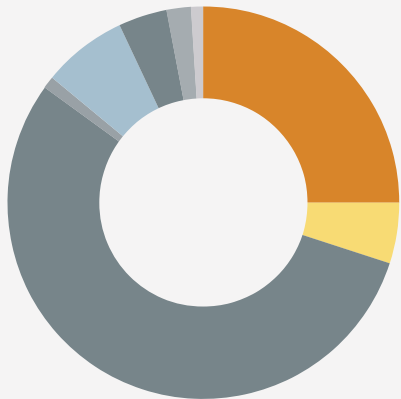


\$40m+

\$ Value of
volunteer
contributions
in 2022-2023
Financial Year*

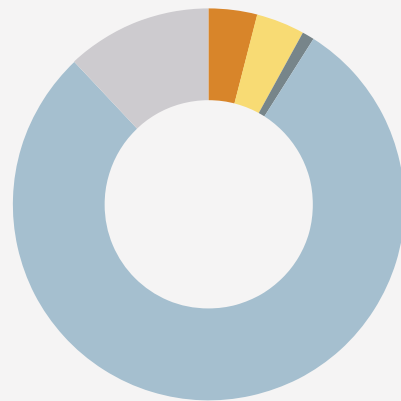
Breakdown of volunteers by service

Service	Number of volunteers	% Increase of volunteers
Lifeline Retail	1851	9.53%
Lifeline Crisis Support	390	22.64%
Lifeline Bookfest	4134	18.62%
Family and Disability Services	21	27.59%
Aged Care and Community Services	557	15.56%
Hospitals	303	1.34%
Mission	185	40.15%
UnitingCare Corporate	18	157.14%



Volunteer activity hours representing UnitingCare values

Compassion	4.4%
Justice	4.18%
Leading Through Learning	.23%
Respect	79.05%
Working Together	12.15%



• All Statistics are for FY2022-23

* Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics figures valuing volunteer contributions

Victoria Bansey

Volunteer Impact Report Project Manager
and Better Impact Experience Lead.



I have been fortunate to lead the team behind this Volunteer Impact Report. Over the last year, we have had many meetings and emails planning, coordinating and sharing the stories contained within this report.

Throughout, the project team recognised the importance of both sides of impact - the quantitative (all about the numbers and what is measurable, how

many?) and the qualitative (the words, experiences and opinions, the why?). The quantitative numbers were collected through Surveys sent to both Supervisors and Volunteers and our Volunteer management system, Better Impact. The qualitative information took more time through interviews conducted by the project team. I think that time has been well spent as this information gives you

the heart of the report and the stories that capture what volunteering at UnitingCare is all about.

My special thanks go to the members of our Project Team - Sharon Batstone, Nancy Duran and Bron Muddle. Your commitment, connections and good humour made this report a real team effort that worked very effectively together.

"Throughout, the project team recognised the importance of both sides of impact - the quantitative and the qualitative."

Shane Harris

Volunteer Engagement Lead.
Changing Lives. Volunteers Included.



At UnitingCare, we believe that volunteering should be viewed as a space for personal growth and development, as well as a chance to contribute to the goals of UnitingCare. That's why we don't just have volunteer activities - we have volunteer opportunities!

We understand that volunteers have their own goals and motivations for giving their time, and we strive to align those goals with the needs of our services. We hope to make volunteering with UnitingCare a rewarding and fulfilling experience for all by providing opportunities for volunteers to:

- Enjoy social interaction with others
- Gain invaluable workplace experience
- Contribute their corporate volunteering hours
- Do something new and different
- Meet mutual obligations, student placement hours or other requirements
- Build, maintain and contribute specialised skills
- Improve mental health and personal well being
- Experience the joy of making a meaningful difference

We recognise that volunteering is a two-way street. Yes, we have activities that help us achieve our mission, but we also help volunteers achieve their goals. Whether volunteers are looking for an experience in retail, companionship and counselling, arts and craft or administration; we are committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to meet their goals while making a meaningful impact.

Find a great volunteer opportunity on the UnitingCare Volunteering Portal myuniting.care/volportal

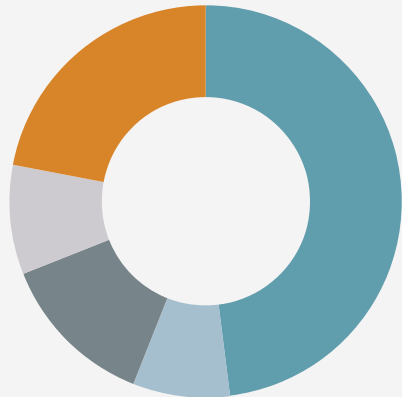


Impact Survey Results - Supervisor



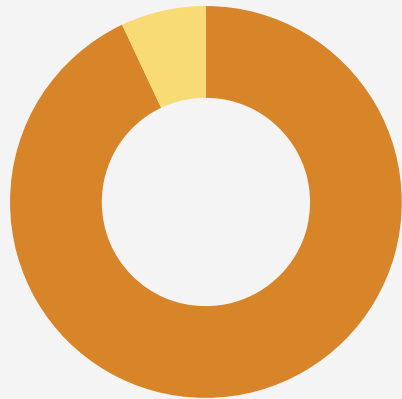
Which UnitingCare service are you from?

BlueCare	48%
Corporate	7%
FaDS	13%
Hospitals	9%
Lifeline	22%



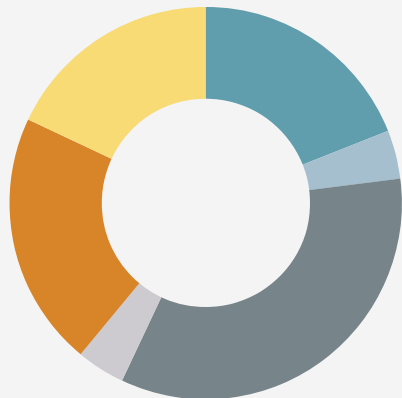
Has working with volunteers made a positive change to your working experience?

YES	93%
NO	7%



How has working with volunteers made a positive change to your working experience?

Bring new ideas and points of view to improve the service/program	18%
Develop new friendships	4%
Improve the client/customer experience	34%
Increase team/service diversity	4%
Inspire the staff/clients	21%
Increase team productivity	18%



“Working with volunteers has benefits such as diversification, which brings new ideas and perspectives that energize teams and improve client experiences, including support outcomes.”

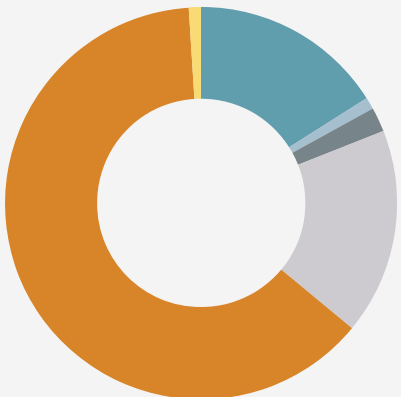
Kerry Braddick
(Blue Care - Community Palliative Care Program)

Impact Survey Results - Volunteers



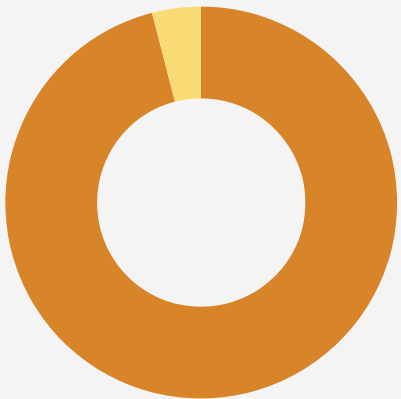
Which UnitingCare service do you volunteer for?

BlueCare	16%
Corporate	1%
FaDS	2%
Hospitals	17%
Lifeline	64%
Compassionate Companion - End of Life	1%



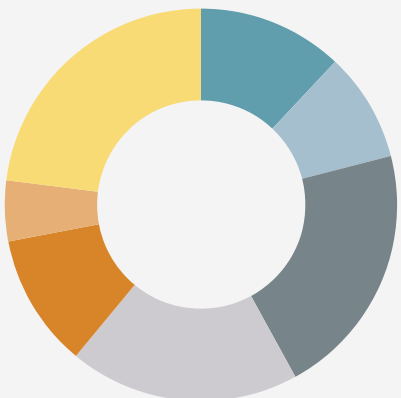
Has volunteering made a positive change in your life experience?

YES	96%
NO	4%



How has volunteering made a positive change to your life experience?

Feel Valued and Contributing to a cause	12%
Acquire a Sense of Purpose	9%
Help the community	21%
Increase personal wellbeing	19%
Learn new skills	11%
Develop new friendships	5%
Improve Social interaction	23%



“Volunteering has helped me to gain more confidence. My outlook on life has improved. I have learned to be more open minded.”

Jacqueline Woodnutt (Lifeline Retail Shop Innisfail - Volunteer)

UnitingCare Corporate Volunteering Impact

Anne Pham

Volunteer Experience Team / Christmas Gift Wrapping / Bookfest

Anne began volunteering in 2021 at our Lifeline Shops in Ipswich. She decided to Volunteer with UnitingCare because she feels aligned with the organisation's Mission and Values.

Anne's passion is for helping people and giving back to the community. Anne enjoyed her experience in the retail space, but she decided to explore other volunteer opportunities in the organisation. She applied for a role at the Corporate Office in 2022. Anne then decided to join the Volunteer Experience Team as an Administration Assistant Volunteer. Tasks included data entry, assisting with mail, phone calls, and event support.

"It is a pleasure to work alongside Anne; she is always willing to help with a smile. A quick and curious learner and Anne's efficiency is outstanding. Her friendly demeanour has made her a great addition to our team," said supervisor Nancy Duran.

Anne has also volunteered at Lifeline Bookfest and the Christmas Wrapping Event. Anne believes that volunteering has impacted her life positively in many aspects. She has practised her social and communication skills and developed friendships. Anne feels proud of being part of UnitingCare because she knows excellent work is being delivered to the community, and she is especially fond of the work done by the Crisis Line service.

Later on, Anne joined UnitingCare as a staff member in November 2022 and is now part of the people advisory team at the corporate offices. Nonetheless, Anne is still volunteering in her free time and is a loyal Bookfest volunteer. "I love volunteering with UnitingCare because they have been very supportive and make me feel like an essential team member. I am proud of being a volunteer, and I will recommend the experience to everyone."

To volunteer with the Volunteer Experience Team -



"It is a pleasure to work alongside Anne; she is always willing to help with a smile. A quick and curious learner and Anne's efficiency is outstanding. Her friendly demeanour has made her a great addition to our team."

Nancy Duran
Volunteer Experience Team



UnitingCare Corporate Volunteering

Shyanne Marshall

Fundraising Team

Shyanne began volunteering in February 2021. At the time, she sought opportunities to build her social skills, self-confidence and expand her network. Then her mother suggested volunteering with UnitingCare could allow her to gain new skills and give back to the community. Shyanne was familiar with UnitingCare through her mother, who was a former employee in the corporate offices.

Shyanne decided to apply for a volunteer position with the Fundraising team. Initially, she was unsure if volunteering at UnitingCare was suitable for her, but her supervisor explained the organisation's mission and values, and Shyanne immediately felt comfortable.

Since then, Shyanne has been helping the Fundraising Team with various tasks, but she enjoys sending birthday cards to donors the most. Her supervisor, Joanne

Frampton, shares, "The birthday cards are the major role Shy undertakes that is direct contact with our great supporters. Birthday cards are a small but thoughtful way to thank our supporters and let them know how important they are to the organisation. We are so grateful for Shy's monthly assistance in getting these out the door for us."

In addition, Shyanne assists with recording return-to-sender mail activity, writing lovely messages on receipts and thank you cards to acknowledge donations made. "During our busy periods, the team can not have the capacity to add these extra layers of appreciation to our receipts, which is an opportunity missed to express how grateful we are for the support received. Shy steps in to ensure we do not miss the chance to show some additional gratitude," explained her supervisor, Joanne.



Shyanne has received cards from supporters thanking her for her lovely birthday messages. She believes the donors are amazing people and is grateful for the opportunity to impact their lives through her positive birthday messages. "Knowing that someone takes the time to reply and tell you your words have made a difference in their life is inspiring and immensely rewarding," explained Shyanne.

Shyanne believes the volunteering experience with UnitingCare has positively impacted her life too. She has gained work experience, reduced anxiety and stress, improved her communication skills, and developed new friendships. Shyanne hopes to continue volunteering in the future as the experience has been rewarding and fulfilling.

"Dear Shyanne, Thank you for remembering my Birthday. Your lovely card arrived today. A surprise!. You are very kind and thoughtful. May God bless your gentle and loving heart. You truly have made a difference in the world of miseries, illnesses and despair."

Nhi-Thuy Ju
Donor

Hospital Impact

Message from Michael Krieg

The world seems to be returning to normal since the COVID-19 pandemic commenced in 2019. In healthcare, the effects have lingered, workforce shortages across the world have been felt and our volunteer base declined too.

During the pandemic, volunteers within our hospitals were unable to support our patients and staff and we were never more aware of their absence, and the difference they make at our sites. From wayfinding, to greeting patients at the entrance, to supporting patients at end of life, their work uplifts our hospitals.

For many of our volunteers during COVID, their average age fell within the high-risk community category, so being within our hospitals

during the pandemic was difficult and many have not returned. However, some of our volunteers became virtual – keeping their days busy with crafting and creating in the safety of their own home, making a special contribution to keep our fundraising opportunities alive.

Volunteers give their time willingly, to make things better in their community and their contribution is highly valued. Often their positive experience at a hospital drives them to give back. Some may have been patients, or we cared for a loved one. Each of their journeys to us is different and their life experience adds to the fabric of our site.

Our staff highly appreciate volunteer support – as volunteers often have the luxury of taking the extra time



to sit with a patient or visitor and provide a gentle word of encouragement or simple companionship, freeing up staff to concentrate on their clinical needs.

Society has been enriched by those volunteers who freely give their time to improve their community. I am grateful to those who support our hospitals and make them all the better for it.

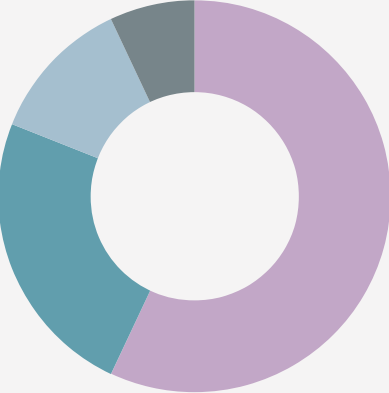
To Volunteer at a UnitingCare Hospital -



Michael Krieg
Group Executive, Hospitals

Hospital volunteers

The Wesley Hospital	173
St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital	72
St Stephen's Hospital	37
Buderim Private Hospital	21



Simon Spencer

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital



St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital Volunteer, Simon Spencer, served in the Australian Army for 23 years and later on worked delivering safety programs to schools. From his experience of interacting directly with parents and kids, he realised how community services can positively impact the lives of everyone involved. After receiving treatment at St Andrew's Hospital, he decided to volunteer his time and energy giving back two days a week at the hospital starting in 2019.

Simon believes volunteering with St Andrews Hospital has created a balance in his life. After serving for many years in the army, volunteering in the hospital gave him a new perspective in how to be of service to people. "The social

interaction opportunities and the rewards of helping people and making their lives a little easier are endless" said Simon.

Simon shines when he greets the visitors and employees with his fashionable vests. These outfits are certainly a talking point around the hospital. Simon also 3-D prints fidget cubes for younger or nervous patients waiting to be admitted. He also plays a key role in training and welcoming new volunteers to the team.

He shares, "Volunteering always has a positive impact in the lives of those involved. Clients, Staff, and all volunteers themselves will benefit in many ways. It will improve communication skills and facilitate social interaction. Chatting with other volunteers, staff

members and customers will boost people's social life and prevent isolation and loneliness. You will not be invisible to society because you will have a community to support you, and you will develop a sense of purpose."

Simon is planning to volunteer for many years to come. He believes volunteering helps you feel connected to the hospital's mission, key values and it will help to improve wellbeing.

Scan here to watch Simon's video from the 2022 Full Circle Awards - <https://youtu.be/vZABBTvOXIQ>



"I just wanted to let you know about a fabulous staff member - the lovely gentleman who is very well dressed and looks after the main entrance. On both occasions I have dropped off my husband he has been professional, friendly and very helpful. He always has a smile and is an asset to your hospital. Well done!"

Lisa Wilson

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

SUPERVISOR SPOTLIGHT

Simone James



Simone started working at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital during an exciting and pivotal time 2 years ago. One of her first challenges was rebuilding the volunteer program after the effects of COVID. We went from a robust team of 90 to 33. Volunteers have increased and now 50% of volunteers are doing 1-2 shifts per week.

As the volunteer numbers have increased, Simone has been able to reinstate old roles as well as introduce new ones such as BINGO with rehab patients, tea/coffee and chats in Endoscopy and Day Rehab. Simone says that they "all help to enhance the patient experience."

As Simone said "It has been very rewarding for me to introduce a new team of volunteers to SAWMH over the past 2 years and watch them mix with some of the 'original' team."

Simone has loved her 10 years of working with volunteers. "It is a very rewarding role, as I can leave at the end of the day knowing that I have helped a patient, provided a volunteer with a positive experience, or assisted a staff member."

Simone has also been inspired to introduce a Virtual Volunteering Program. These volunteers contribute their time and energy from the comfort of their home, or

through craft groups. They help bring Simone's patient resource ideas to life including Breast Care Packs, Cardiac Heart Pillows, puzzle and colouring book packs as well as toys for our paediatric patients.

The friendships that develop through volunteering are a highlight for Simone. She also is grateful for the recognition that the volunteers receive as a valued and integral part of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital from the General Manager, Hospital Exec Team and clinical staff.

"Volunteering lets me help others, feel useful and spend part of my time being part of a community with common goals. At the same time, as an immigrant, I feel integrated into part of the productive society."

Karla Quilodran
(St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital - Volunteer)

"After my husband died I needed a goal in life and since I love crafting and sewing I offered to make toys and other stuff for the hospital. When I volunteer I feel useful and appreciated."

Liz Deckers
(St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital - Volunteer)

The Wesley Hospital

Carolyn Young

Bravehearts



Carolyn Young is one of the fantastic specialised volunteers at The Wesley Hospital who services a specific ward or clinical area using her own lived experiences to help others.

After retiring from the health sector in 2019, Carolyn began volunteering at the Wesley Hospital helping the discharge planning nurses' team with administrative tasks and office support. She really enjoys helping the nurses as they are always very busy.

Carolyn had triple bypass surgery at The Wesley in 2021 and said she was motivated to come back and volunteer thanks to the outstanding care she received. "When I returned I saw they were looking for Braveheart Volunteers so I decided to apply for the role."

Bravehearts volunteer with cardiology, coronary care and cardiac patients in the hospital. "Coming into hospital can be a daunting and stressful experience for anyone. They speak with so many clinicians, sometimes it's reassuring to speak with someone who has been through a similar experience."

"Each shift I will meet with the Nurse Manager on the floor who tells me which patients may benefit from a visit. I will then spend time with them and their loved ones, answering questions and giving non-clinical advice."

"I think it's a great initiative, some of the patients here are from regional and remote areas so they don't have many visitors. They do really appreciate the company."

At present, Carolyn is mentoring new volunteers who will be joining Bravehearts. "We need more volunteers to support as many cardiac patients at the Hospital as possible."

"Volunteering with the Wesley Hospital is very rewarding. Being a Braveheart volunteer has allowed me to help people and give back to the community. The hospital is a wonderful place to be; it's so friendly and inviting. We have lovely supportive management, and you can make friends and social connections. I would highly recommend volunteering to anyone."

Carolyn wants to continue volunteering in the future. "As long as I am able, I will volunteer."

"Carolyn Young is always kind, reassuring and compassionate. The feedback I've received from patients is that they feel more reassured after speaking with Carolyn and chatting with someone who has been right where they are."

Cameron East
Clinical Nurse Manager

BlueCare Impact



Message from *Cathy Thomas*



Volunteers have been part of BlueCare since the very beginning 70 years ago and have been making outstanding contributions ever since. Our volunteers play an integral role in living out our values and mission. Every day they dedicate their time to support our residents and clients' social and emotional well-being and enable them to live life in all its fullness

Over the years, our volunteers helped create the BlueCare we know today, raising the money to hire nurses, buy the buildings, buy equipment, pay for petrol and generally create a service the community desperately needed. Without volunteers, we would be a very different organisation today. The people who need us would not get anywhere near the care and service we can offer without volunteers.

We know that every day, each volunteer does amazing things for the people we support. Volunteers gift their time to help others enjoy the things they love to do, would like to try or enjoy the simple pleasure of social connection. Volunteers are so versatile; they could be helping someone learn how to use a

smart device, call the bingo numbers, read a book, play the piano, share a cuppa, sing, dance, help in the office, tend the gardens, cook together, drive clients and residents to medical appointments, chat in a first language, or lead a walking group. Volunteers make all the difference to the quality of life of those who need us.

I also want to acknowledge our staff who coordinate and supervise our volunteers throughout the State. These people make sure our volunteers have a fantastic experience and can contribute so much to the people we serve. How you balance all of your priorities and create the best, most welcoming and most caring environment for our volunteers cannot be overstated; your work is appreciated and valued.

The shared passion, dedication, commitment and compassion of staff and volunteers working together to bring happiness and joy to each person's day, to bring their day to life, is undoubtedly living 'life in all its fullness'. What an amazing Volunteer Impact!



47

**Residential Aged
Care Centres**



40

**Community
Centres**

**To Volunteer for Aged Care
and Community Services -**



Cathy Thomas

Group Executive Aged Care
and Community Services

BlueCare Residential Aged Care

Wirunya Team



BlueCare Wirunya Aged Care Facility

Stan Bevan, Peta Curtis, Alison Day, John Day, Shirley Dunkley, Laurie Jones, Lindsay Pengelly, Jennifer Schauer, Gwenda Taylor, Ruby Van Der Veen.

Our team of Volunteers at Wirunya Aged Care Facility make the centre what it is; with their warmth, care, compassion, kindness, dedication, understanding and willingness to make a difference throughout all of the changing situations in the last two years of COVID. Our Volunteers help with the Lifestyle program, companionship visits, and gardening and maintenance. They are a varied team with unique talents that they share with the Residents and Staff at our Facility.

- Wirunya volunteers offer a huge range of activities from:
- Bingo
 - Life Stories
 - Community outings
 - Armchair Travel
 - Christmas Lights tours
 - musical activities
 - And love mentoring young volunteers

In memory of Stan Bevan, our much loved volunteer who went home to be with the Lord in July 2023.

To see the Wirunya Team's Full Circle Award Nomination Video scan here -



“Seeing my in-laws and Mum go through Wirunya and the great care they received motivated me to volunteer. It takes time and effort to prepare for each Tuesday morning but gives such satisfaction seeing the pleasure on residents’ faces. I know then it is all worthwhile.”

John Day
BlueCare Wirunya Aged Care Facility Volunteer

BlueCare Community Services

Cheryl Nott



BlueCare Logan River Valley Hub Beenleigh Community Care

Former Nurse Volunteer Cheryl Nott, 74, from Springwood in Brisbane, began volunteering with Blue Care as a teenager. Cheryl was friends through Church with Bert and Olive Crombie, the first Blue Nurse. At the time, Bert was the coordinator of the Blue Nurse Doorknock appeal and got Cheryl interested in helping. Cheryl was only 12 then and had to be accompanied by adults as she went house to house around the Mt Gravatt area collecting money for the appeal. Cheryl continued doing doorknock appeals every year into the 1990s throughout her nursing career. Cheryl was part of the nursing team at St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital and one of the first groups of Nurses trained in Cardiac surgery. Cheryl says her passion for volunteering came from her

Dad, who was orphaned aged three. To try to return the help people had given him, he became determined to give back to others and instilled that passion for helping others into Cheryl, which he considered a crucial element of living a good life. Cheryl also joined the Friends of the Blue Nurses at Springwood to help raise funds for service delivery, organising various creative and successful fundraising activities. Around 26 years ago, Cheryl also took on a Volunteer Admin Assistant role at BlueCare Springwood. Going into the office every Friday, Cheryl spends up to eight hours doing everything from filing and compiling medical charts to making up patient folders, training packs, and whatever is necessary and helpful.

Cheryl is very much part of the BlueCare Springwood team, and the Staff immediately know Friday is here when Cheryl walks in the door! Cheryl volunteers in many different parts of the community and says “Volunteering brings me so much joy. It’s a vital part of my life - as is attending ballroom dancing meetups and being a member of various historic car clubs. There’s never a dull moment!”

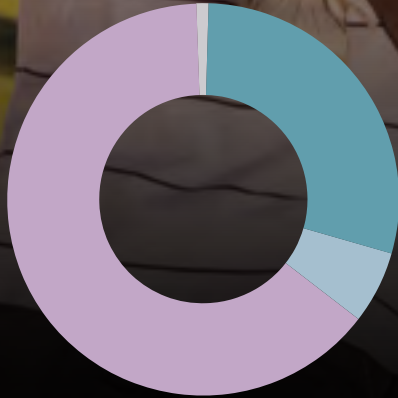
"Volunteering brings me so much joy... There's never a dull moment!"

Family and Disability Services



Family and Disability Services Volunteers

Family and Disability Services	21
Lifeline Retail	1851
Lifeline Crisis Support	390
Lifeline Bookfest	4134



Message from Donna Shkalla



At the heart of volunteering is impact, the contribution of time people make selflessly and willingly to engage in activities that benefit others, improve society, and enrich our lives.

We thank you for your time and commitment. It is valuable and is valued.

I want to take this moment to personally express my appreciation for all the hard work and dedication that you have put into the work of Family and Disability Services. Your commitment is truly inspiring.

Our Volunteers' willingness to donate their time and talent makes our teams thrive. We could not achieve the outcomes we aim for in UnitingCare Family and Disability Services without the contribution of time, passion and energy volunteers bring each day. We thank you for making a difference, walking alongside our clients and participants, responding to someone in crisis, working in our shops, being a welcoming face, supporting our events or just being there for a team or person in need. Through

kindness and generosity, you have touched the lives of so many individuals.

The work you do as volunteers is essential for building a strong and vibrant community. It creates a sense of social responsibility, empathy, and compassion towards others. Most importantly, it plays a significant role in shaping the society we live in. As a volunteer, you contribute to bridging the gap between people of different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities, promoting social integration and creating more cohesive communities.

We hope that in addition to the benefits volunteers bring to our services and communities, the time spent volunteering provides you with a sense of fulfilment, purpose and supports you to develop new skills, develop existing ones, gain work experience, network and develop friendships and helps to discover new passions and talents. At the end of every shift with us, I hope you walk away knowing you have made a positive impact.

As a call for action, I urge all to consider volunteering to show our care and concern and give back to our communities. By doing so, we can make a significant difference in the lives of others while also learning and benefiting from the experience ourselves.

In closing, I want to express my sincerest gratitude for all you do as volunteers. You are the backbone of our organisation, and we could not do the work without you. Your tireless efforts, selflessness and dedication inspire us all. On behalf of UnitingCare Family and Disability Services, I would like to say thank you again.

To volunteer with Family and Disability Services -



Donna Shkalla
Group Executive
Family and Disability Services

Disability Services - Beyond Borders

SUPERVISOR SPOTLIGHT

Nickola Zeeuwen

Beyond Borders

“I could think of nothing better than combining my passion for travel and support work. It equals the perfect job.”

Amanda, our newest volunteer, has one holiday under her belt and is ready for more! Amanda’s enthusiasm for travel is contagious, and she enjoys seeing the people we support to have fun, creating memories and experiences that will last a lifetime. Amanda comes from a health professional background with 30 years of experience as a nurse, which meant she was able to provide

essential wound care with compassion, and was willing to help anywhere. “I cannot believe how much fun we all have.”

Beyond Borders Travel provides supported small group adventures that have our participants coming back repeatedly. With the international borders open and travel returning to normal, we have already travelled to New Zealand, Tamworth, Sunshine Coast and K’gari this year! And let’s not forget about cruising - the ultimate in luxury

and pampering!! Much to the delight of our intrepid travellers, we will continue to add exciting and new destinations which allow our participants to kick their goals and have a blast along the way.

We are always in need of more volunteers, please scan here for more information:



Family Services - Homelessness Services

Maureen Ryan

Homelessness Services

Maureen is described by her supervisor as “a person who will be the first person to step in where help is needed.” Maureen was the worthy recipient of the 2022 Full Circle Award for Volunteering: Behind the Scenes.

After moving from Melbourne, Maureen was not ready to retire and felt she had so much more to give. Maureen is an outstanding Volunteer for Gold Coast Homelessness Service ensuring that those experiencing homelessness receive nutritional meals through the Hub. Knowing that this may be their only meal for the day, she never compromises and gives them the best on offer.

Maureen genuinely cares for the welfare of the people coming through the doors; she aims to be the friendly and consistent face where they feel “at home” coming in to sit at the dining table for lunch. You can often hear a laugh and a joke from clients who feel comfortable because of Maureen’s warm approach. At times when the hub has been short-staffed, Maureen has jumped in to assist, always going above and beyond.

To see Maureen’s video as winner of the Behind The Scenes award at the 2022 Full Circle Awards scan here:



“I could think of nothing better than combining my passion for travel and support work. It equals the perfect job.”

Mission Impact

Message from Peter Armstrong

“I am here. I will help” are some of the most beautiful phrases we can speak to one another.

Volunteering is a matter of the heart, the mind, the will and the body. The word volunteer comes from the Latin word *voluntarius*, meaning willing or of one's choice. This Latin verb originated from the Latin noun *voluntas*, meaning will or desire.

Volunteering in UnitingCare Queensland is where compassion meets action, and volunteers make a transformative impact on the lives of vulnerable individuals during their times of greatest need. As an organisation deeply rooted in the principles of empathy and community, we believe that every person deserves a helping hand and a supportive heart during challenging circumstances.

Volunteering is a way to serve others and a powerful

catalyst for personal growth and fulfilment. Volunteers are given opportunities to develop new skills, expand their perspectives, and find a deeper sense of purpose by being part of an organisation that embodies the principles of social justice and compassion.

Our dedicated team of volunteers stands at the forefront of this mission, extending hope, care, and tangible assistance to those experiencing vulnerability or facing adversity in Queensland and beyond. Whether it's providing a warm meal to someone experiencing homelessness, offering a listening ear to those battling mental health challenges, extending a lifeline during natural disasters, or as you are about to read, being present even as life passes, our volunteers are there, making a difference when it matters most.

“I am here, I will help” is about the power of human connection. By serving as a bridge between those with the capacity to help and those facing hardships, we create a network of support that uplifts communities across Queensland.

A big thank you to our volunteers, because together, we can create a world where empathy, solidarity, and volunteerism unite to bring light to even the darkest corners of our society to bring life in all its fullness.

To volunteer with Mission -



Peter Armstrong
Director of Mission



Compassionate Companion

SUPERVISOR SPOTLIGHT

Leanne Duncan

Compassionate Companion -
End of Life and Vulnerable In-Patients



A friendly face and a chat can make all the difference in a person's day. That's especially true during a hospital stay.

“Routines in hospitals are focused on providing high-quality clinical care, but this environment can be disruptive and stressful,” said Wesley Hospital Chaplain Leanne Duncan.

That's why Leanne has created the Vulnerable In-Patient (VIP) service, an extension of her award-winning End-of-Life Compassionate Care service.

“We identify our vulnerable patients as those who may be in hospital for a long time, those who come from regional/remote areas, those with no family or friends close by and those with mobility or cognitive impairments,” Leanne explained, “and then we place our trained volunteers, who are supported to engage with these patients on their wards.”

“This can vary from conversation over a coffee, sharing a meal together, jigsaw puzzles or board games, short walks in the gardens or any other suitable forms of social engagement as approved by the patient's care manager,” Leanne said.

The service has been trialled on Nurse Unit Manager Kerrie Blocksidge's ward, composed mainly of older patients.

“You can't measure happiness, but we certainly notice a change in our patients after they have had a visit from a volunteer. It's a wonderful initiative,” Kerrie said.

VIP Service Volunteer Pauline said she jumped at the opportunity to impact the patients meaningfully.

“This feeds my heart; I enjoy spending time with these people,” Pauline said, “I love seeing them at the end of my visit far more animated than when I first walked in. I feel like I made a difference.”

DIRECT IMPACTS

- Patients have commented how great it is to have the Compassionate Companions visit
- Fewer call buttons for nurses to respond to
- Fewer falls
- Now part of the conversation on current strategic falls to further mitigate falls risks
- Relationship being built with Medical staff - including short training sessions offered by Specialist Doctors
- Doctors have commented to the CNM (Chief Nurse Manager) they have begun to notice a marked improvement in patient well-being and recovery on the ward.

To see Leanne's video from the 2022 Full Circle awards scan here:



Lifeline Crisis Support - OurMob

Lisa Roff

OurMob

OurMob was initially conceived in collaboration with Krystal Beazley (ATSI Partnership and Engagement Coordinator at UnitingCare) and Luke Lindsay (General Manager Lifeline and Wellbeing Service) after they noticed very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporters.

Lisa, from the Wiradjuri Tubba-Gah People, was working on another program where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shared their mental health struggles and life experiences with her. She found herself looking to increase her skillset regarding suicide awareness. When Lisa enquired with Lifeline, she discovered OurMob was starting the following week.

At the first session, Lisa met the other participants from all over Queensland and the facilitators, Aunty Bev Muckan (13YARN Centre Supervisor) and Marg Knight (Lifeline Crisis Support Trainer). Lisa said that the training was different in that it was collaborative. Marg developed the training to align with First Nations people, with

Lisa explaining that including ochre colouring and videos of Aboriginal people made her feel “culturally safe.”

“There is no word in any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island language that means “suicide.” If we talk about it, we use different language like “Go to Dreamtime” or “Go Walkabout,”” Lisa explained.

After Lisa completed her training, she then completed her student placement and worked to become an Accredited Crisis Supporter. During this period, Lisa applied and was successful for the role of Team Leader for 13Yarn QLD. OurMob is now the feeder program to recruit for 13Yarn in Queensland.

Lisa also still does shifts on the phone, answering both 13Yarn and Lifeline Crisis Support calls. “There are clear differences in the calls. On 13Yarn, you can get intense emotive calls where the caller is almost always experiencing a crisis. As an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, every interaction can be something that relates to you.” The team is supported with guidance from Aunty

Bev to do lots of one-to-ones and debriefs to manage these challenging interactions and ensure their spiritual safety remains safe.

In the future, Lisa’s ambition is clear. “I would love OurMob to be a standalone program, and I would love to be part of that, to create a culturally safe Crisis Support program with a network of First Nations Crisis Supporters. I would also love for many of the OurMob Crisis Supporters to be trained as mentors as part of the in-shift support to Crisis Supporters on the phone.”

Lisa recommends other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People apply to OurMob.

To Volunteer with OurMob scan here -





Lifeline Crisis Support

Joanne Adrelius



Lifeline Crisis Support

Volunteering for UnitingCare as a Crisis Supporter, answering Lifeline's 13 11 14 Crisis Line, is an opportunity to make a difference. They are trained and equipped with the skills and knowledge to provide one-off support to people in crisis when they contact Lifeline.

The Crisis Support Workplace Training required is extensive, and it takes up to 12 months for students to complete all three stages and meet Accreditation requirements. To maintain accreditation, Crisis Supporters must keep regular hours on the phones with continuing professional development. Accredited Crisis Supporters are also encouraged to mentor Crisis Support students coming through the training. Our Crisis Supporters answer calls at their local centre or may work remotely from home.

Our Crisis Supporters work increases the safety of people in our communities by

supporting those struggling to cope with everyday life and may be having thoughts of suicide. From May 2022 to April 2023 Crisis Supporters answered 125,759 calls across 10 Queensland centres.

Due to the nature of the work that our volunteers do, although rewarding, it can be emotionally draining. Our team, Service Leaders, Team Leaders, Center Supervisors, In-shift Supervisors and Trainers, provide regular support for Crisis Supporters through supervision, professional development, and debriefing after every shift.

We look to grow our team of Crisis Supporters, increasing centre capacity and establishing a solid remote working base. Our focus will be recruitment and retention. We are creating a well-supported training team with all the resources needed to ensure we have confident and competent Crisis Supporters

answering Lifeline's 13 11 14 service.

A caller seeking support left the following feedback: *"I phone Lifeline regularly during tough times, and it helps me through. Whatever it is that I need to talk about I am always able to gather my thoughts and feelings and I feel settled after a chat. I can take a few deep breaths and do something nice for me, even just a glass of water and a shower! Sometimes I don't feel like a person anymore, and Lifeline reminds me I am. They remind me of my life. I feel validated and stronger. I often keep thinking how special they are- wise, thoughtful, incredibly compassionate, beautiful people. Thank you."*

To volunteer with Lifeline Crisis Support -



"I feel very fortunate to have met these outstanding individuals - it takes a special person to be on the phones to help people in crisis. They also come from all walks of life, so you never have a clique of people as we all appreciate our unique self and beliefs."

Anonymous - Lifeline Crisis Support Supervisor

Lifeline Crisis Support

Neil Warburton

Lifeline Crisis Support - Cairns

Neil became a volunteer for Lifeline’s suicide prevention phone service in 1981. In 2021, Neil reached the significant milestone of 40 years of continued service to those in crisis who reached out to Lifeline.

He began with the service when it served the local community from Cardwell to the tip of Cape York and west to the border of the Northern Territory, operating from an old leased house in McLeod Street. Neil has seen great changes in Lifeline’s Crisis Support Service from its early days in Far North Queensland with one phone, two incoming lines, a desk, a chair and a bed (for overnight shifts). Neil continuously did overnight shifts from 10pm to 8am over a period of 10 years.

Neil has embraced change and transitioned with the service to what it is today. Neil is quiet and humble and is always ready to be a student mentor when training is on. He is well respected by his peers and the students.

In the first semester of 2021, Lifeline Cairns was short on student mentors, and Neil stepped up and mentored every face to face session of the CSWT (Crisis Support Worker Training) for 10 weeks running. He then followed that up by mentoring for two months during Student Placement. The impact of this gets more people on the phones and therefore more calls can be answered from this centre. This was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, which affected

many communities and placed more lives into crisis, pushing up the need for Lifeline’s 13 11 14 service.

Neil’s life has been impacted by Lifeline being part of his life for 40 years while also maintaining paid work. A retired teacher, he has a passion for passing on knowledge. Neil loves mentoring students and seeing them use the knowledge they have acquired to produce good outcomes for those who have reached out for help on the phones.

Scan here to watch Neil’s video from the 2021 Full Circle Awards -



Lifeline Crisis Support

Elizabeth Gough

Lifeline Crisis Support

When Elizabeth commenced with Lifeline to volunteer as a telephone crisis supporter, her manager at the time recalled her saying, “I have no particular strengths or dominant interests.”

Yet 37 years later, Elizabeth is still volunteering on the phones, supporting people in crisis, taking a person from some of their darkest moments to a place of light and hope, making a significant contribution to the service, the community and most importantly to those in need.

During this time, as well as taking calls on the Crisis Line, Elizabeth has given her time and energy, quietly supporting staff and volunteers in whatever way

she can. She has taken part in various roles, providing guidance and support; being an in-shift support supervisor - supporting other volunteers while on the phones, debriefing and arranging interventions with emergency services where needed; supporting students during their training - facilitating small groups and mentoring student volunteers one-on-one, mentoring and sitting with students during their initial time on the phones.

Recently Elizabeth has been supporting Our Mob/First Nations students as they train to take calls on the Crisis Line.

Not only has Elizabeth been a catalyst for change in the lives of other volunteers and those

calling on the Crisis Line over these many years, but she has also found change and growth within her own life.

We were honoured to celebrate Elizabeth’s 90th birthday with her. Elizabeth continues to take calls on the Crisis Line and provides support to other volunteers and students however and whenever needed.

Scan here to watch Elizabeth’s video from the 2022 Full Circle Awards -



Lifeline Retail



124

Number of stores



11

Number of warehouses



\$61.3m

Total Operating Revenue FY 22-23
(including Bookfest)



4.5m

Number of transactions

Message from *Jamie Mackay*



It was 1964 when Ivan and Iris Alcorn, co-founders, established the first Lifeline store in Brisbane. That one store has grown to operate in Queensland (excluding Darling Downs), 124 stores, 11 warehouses and one online shop to become a multi-million dollar business. Together with our bricks and mortar shops, we have many iconic events that heavily depend on volunteers. Our Bookfest events are one and without volunteers, we would not be able to conduct these Bookfest events throughout the state every year.

The business employs 550 team members and we provide volunteering experiences for over approximately 1,850 volunteer team members. Lifeline Retail Queensland also imports and exports products to assist alongside our store network in the raising of funds that support our Queensland Lifeline Crisis 24/7 Support Line that works towards making Australia suicide free.

Volunteering with Lifeline Queensland is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience that can bring purpose to one's life. With countless opportunities inside Lifeline Retail, from

but not limited to; warehouse (logistics, truck driving, sorting, forklift operations, manufacturing by hand of unique items and lots more), administration, visual merchandise, horticulture, customer service, shop online service, business analyst, inventory, procurement, in-store photography and videoing and managerial.

As well as this vast assortment of experiences, volunteering provides an opportunity to become part of a team that is working towards achieving goals that ultimately helps their broader community by having a positive impact.

Many life-long friendships have been forged throughout Lifeline Retail when volunteering in our business. Volunteering allows individuals to share their lifelong skill set and develop new skills that create a sense of reward and enjoyment.

Without the tremendous work and dedication of our volunteer team, our business would not operate; it would cease to exist. If this were the case, we would not be able to support our Queensland Lifeline Crisis 24/7 Support Line.

Lifeline Retail volunteers are the core of our business. We need their drive, input, experience and ability to interact with all of our customers. Volunteering is the start of a new career, not the end, and many of our volunteers have enjoyed longevity in our business. Many volunteers come into our business with so much knowledge that we ask for their support in other areas. We are one team, no matter who you are in the business. Our volunteers are treated no different; they too, wear the corporate Lifeline Retail shirt and are provided with all the same rewards.

I personally would take this opportunity to encourage anyone considering volunteering to be part of Lifeline Retail's exciting journey into the future.

To volunteer with Lifeline Retail -



Jamie Mackay
General Manager
Lifeline Retail

Lifeline Retail Supervisor

Robert Wondrock

Lifeline Retail - Bundaberg

Robert first came to Lifeline as a “Work for the Future” participant. He had applied for many positions where he didn’t have the right skills, or he often did not hear back from the employers. Due to their previous support of his family, Robert decided Lifeline would be the best option for him.

From his first day at Lifeline Princess Street, Robert liked his assigned work. Robert started sorting before quickly learning new skills on the shop cash register. Robert enjoys learning new skills and developing his customer service skills by talking with customers, helping them with their shopping, and answering any questions they may ask. He realised his new routine of getting up each day and going to work was good for his mental and physical health.

He also liked that he was learning new skills and found these skills would help him gain employment in the future. Robert realised he loved retail.

After Robert’s initial commitment was finalised, he decided to stay with Lifeline as a regular volunteer store person. From here, he gained skills in accepting donations into the store, deliveries, and stock take. Robert enjoyed the role and even offered to help if team members were on leave or someone could not come to the shop on weekends.

When a paid position as Shop supervisor became available at the Bundaberg West Shop, Robert felt he had the required skills and applied for the position. The Business Manager for the area had noticed Robert’s work ethic, natural people skills and how hard he had worked to gain

skills and help other team members. Robert was successful with the role.

Within his first three weeks in the shop, Robert was meeting budget and had previous volunteers returning to work with him!

Robert says that volunteering has made a significant impact on his life. “Honestly, going to work gave me motivation. I felt like I had a normal job, I had a routine. Because I had been given this opportunity, I wanted to put in the hard work. It shows you what can happen; Lifeline has done so much for me.”

He also recommends volunteering at Lifeline Shops, “150%, I recommend volunteering to everyone. It makes you feel good to know you are helping others, you can learn new skills, and if you are looking for work, it can lead to that too. It has made a huge difference to my life, and I have seen how volunteering has impacted the lives of volunteers in the Lifeline shops, and this is good for Lifeline.”



Lifeline Retail Supervisor

Vanessa Bazeley

Lifeline Retail - Brisbane City

During the COVID-19 pandemic, job searching was challenging and uncertain. Vanessa decided to use her free time to engage in a community volunteering activity, which helped her to stay active, give back to the community, and get work experience in retail and customer service. She began to volunteer with the Lifeline shops in 2020 as a shop assistant. The first thing she noticed was the healthy work culture. She enjoyed the friendly team interactions and the support from the supervisor and other volunteers.

After volunteering for a year, a shop supervisor position at the Lifeline Adelaide Street Shop popped up. Initially, Vanessa was unsure if she was a good fit for the job, but her fellow volunteers and other

staff members talked her into applying for the role. She accepted the challenge and got the job!

Since then, she has been supervising the volunteers at the popular Lifeline shop located in Brisbane City. Vanessa finds the job challenging and rewarding at the same time. She wants to give the volunteers a positive experience of receiving support, inclusion, and respect.

“Seeing my team happy is important to me. I want to give the volunteers the same support and respect I received when I started volunteering with Lifeline. My supervisor was always supportive, friendly, and respectful. I think that it is important to build a strong and healthy team culture.”

Vanessa is always looking for new ways to interact and bond with her volunteer team and makes sure the experience is always fun but sometimes challenging at the same time. She feels proud when the volunteers achieve their goals.

Vanessa shares, “I enjoy when my volunteers improve their skills and gain confidence performing their role, especially the young people or the volunteers with culturally diverse backgrounds. Volunteering is a great opportunity for practising social and communication skills, creating friendships and getting job experience. There will be something positive you can get from being a volunteer.”



“Thank you very much for allowing me to volunteer at Lifeline Adelaide Street Shop so that I could complete my community service requirements for school. I really enjoyed gaining retail experience and interacting with people. I liked working with all the staff and customers, and this has inspired me to give back to the community or volunteer my time more often.”

Anna Vujovic - Brisbane Girls Grammar School

“...I recommend volunteering to everyone, it makes you feel good to know you are helping others...”

Lifeline Retail Volunteer

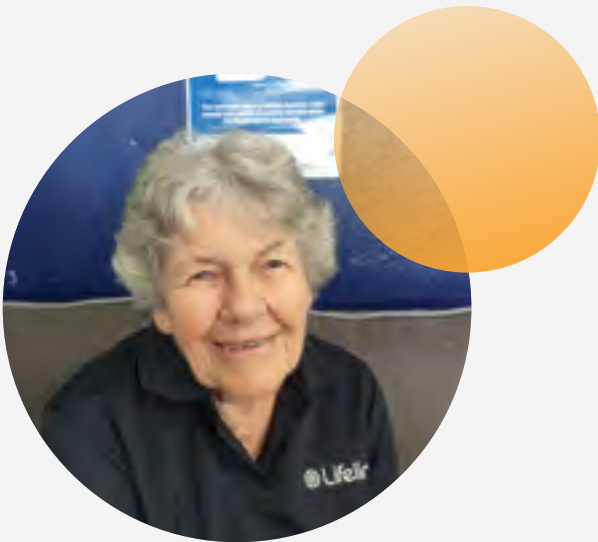
Joyce March

Lifeline Retail - Rockhampton

40 years... How quickly they have passed. I first became involved with Lifeline as a youngish mother with three children at school. I wanted to do something to help in the community, as my darling mother was a faithful volunteer for many years. Lifeline had commenced operations in the little Hough Street Uniting Church, which is close to our home. I was made very welcome.

Over the years, I have worked in sorting and as a shop assistant. One day we wanted to put a particular dress on display, and as it was very crushed, I ironed it and it looked fantastic on the model. Then I started ironing any clothes that needed attention. I volunteered to do the ironing, as I don't mind ironing, and have the company of the wireless and the girls in the shop check on me regularly.

During my time at Lifeline, I have enjoyed the company of the other volunteers, both men and women, old and young. Our supervisor has been excellent, and I have many happy memories. God willing, I can spend many more years doing what I do.



“During my time at Lifeline, I have enjoyed the company of the other volunteers both men and women, old and young.”

Lifeline Bookfest

Hazel Hillier

Lifeline Bookfest

Hazel Hillier has experienced an amazing life with much of her time devoted to volunteering and keeping busy to help change the life of others.

Before becoming a Lifeline Brisbane Bookfest volunteer Hazel had led a busy and full life. Hazel felt volunteering for the Lifeline Brisbane Bookfest would be helping a very good cause, with the addition of her love of books and reading, she decided to sign up. On her first day, Hazel had two roles, packer and then pricer, later in the day. Hazel found she preferred the pricing role because she loves a challenge, and adding the prices together in her head would test her knowledge and skill in mathematics. Hazel also managed to buy a few more books; her husband was an exceptionally good cook and loved to collect recipe books.

Hazel loves the event's camaraderie and said, “you get to see a lot of the same people at each event, so you develop friendships. You see whole families coming through the event and it's wonderful to see the love of books, and reading passed down to the next generation.”

Furthermore, Hazel particularly likes that she is part of a larger team raising funds for the Lifeline 13 11 14 call line. Hazel added, “the Volunteers who work on the call lines are so important to the community and do such great work.” Hazel knows the funds being raised make a difference to the lives of so many in crisis. Hazel says that her volunteering with the Lifeline Brisbane Bookfest has had its impact on her family. Although they do not all volunteer at Bookfest, they have become very good

customers, and so all have become much more aware of the Lifeline 13 11 14 call line, and Hazel is incredibly pleased about this.

Hazel has been volunteering for Lifeline Bookfest since 2008. Hazel will continue volunteering as much as she can with all the charities she is involved with, including Lifeline Bookfest. Hazels says she is already looking forward to next year's event and has highlighted the days in her calendar.

To volunteer at the next Lifeline Bookfest:



4km

Of tables at Brisbane Bookfest



1m+

Books delivered to BCEC



200,000

Transactions for January & June Bookfests

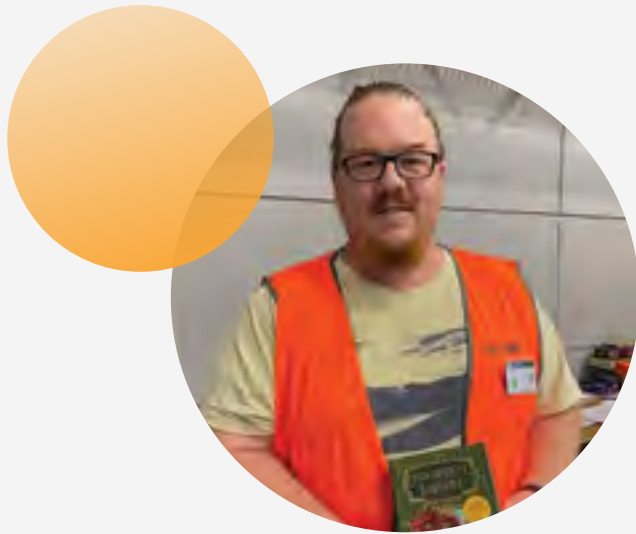


\$2m+

Bookfest sales



Lifeline Bookfest



Daniel Dale

Daniel was chosen to represent the Lifeline Bookfest volunteers at the 2021 Full Circle Awards. He, and his family, have been volunteering at the Lifeline Bookfest since 2014. Daniel continues to volunteer at Lifeline Bookfest, including the most recent one in June 2023.

During the pandemic and with a three day lockdown in the middle of the event, Lifeline Bookfest volunteers were nominated for their community endurance to support Lifeline under the difficult circumstances of the time at Lifeline Bookfest in June 2021.

Without their help and resilience, the Bookfest would not have gone ahead. The Bookfest raised over 1.5 million dollars thanks to the efforts of the Bookfest Volunteers. The work of the Bookfest Volunteer Team of 2021 had a huge positive

impact on our clients and customers. Funding raised from the Bookfest ensures we can answer more calls from our community who need support from a Crisis Support Line.

The impact was also felt by the public on Facebook and other social media providing positive feedback on the help provided by the volunteers this year. Comments included:

“The volunteers were all so helpful, positive, kind and supportive. Sometimes it’s challenging juggling books, games, puzzles, and children, but the volunteers were always kind. Thank you.” – Esther

“Thank you Volunteers! You are all awesome and make Lifeline Bookfest the great success that it is.” – Donna

“Legends!! Thank you so much for dedicating your time and helping raise funds for Lifeline!” - Stasy

The outpouring of appreciation from our customers to our volunteers was genuine with thousands of people pausing each day at noon to applaud the amazing efforts of volunteers.

With thousands of people attending the Lifeline Bookfest, volunteers were the public face of our organisation. Their dedication, friendliness and professionalism was simply outstanding.

To watch Daniel representing the Bookfest Volunteers video from the 2021 Full Circle Awards:



Lifeline Bookfest - Staff Volunteering

Jessice Milne

Finance Manager, UnitingCare

I can't remember much of a time before volunteering. My first experience volunteering was (funnily enough) in an aged care home in grade 8. I made friends with a number of the residents and told anyone that would listen the funny and heart-warming stories I'd learnt that day.

Now, I work as the Finance Manager of UnitingCare Health in the Finance and Reporting team within Business Finance & Strategy. I've volunteered at homeless shelters and participated in many corporate volunteering days at previous companies, but have enjoyed volunteering for the company I work for since joining UCQ. I am lucky enough to have a Manager and General Manager who both really "walk the talk" when it comes to

appreciating the importance of volunteers, and have supported me to organise corporate volunteering days at Bookfest for our team each year. All of these volunteering experiences continue to remind me of that same excited feeling I had in high school, and I've loved having the opportunity to share that with my team here at UCQ.

Volunteering makes me feel purposeful, warm, re-energised and "full" – it is the definition of a win-win situation and unlike any other feeling I've experienced. I volunteer because it helps me just as much as it helps anyone else, and based on my experiences volunteering, both personally as well as part of corporate volunteering events, I know I'm not the only person that feels this way.

I've had the pleasure of watching first-hand how volunteering has impacted my team here at UCQ. It's not only brought us closer as a team; it has helped us to better understand and appreciate the workforce we support and has given real-life context to the numbers we're looking at day in, day out. As accountants, it can be easy to lose yourself in the figures and forget about the real human impact that those numbers have on our community every day. Volunteering within UCQ has helped me and my team re-connect to our company mission, and I believe this has a real and obvious impact on the quality of the work we produce as a result.

Holly Breen

Senior Administration Officer, UnitingCare

I am the Senior Admin Officer for the Business Finance & Strategy team

I have been volunteering on and off for the past six years – I started at an aged care home in Algester on festive days. I never thought playing Bingo could be so much fun! I have also volunteered at my local op shop. I volunteer because I am passionate about supporting organisations that support the vulnerable. It's so much more than 'just working in an op shop' or 'serving in a kitchen' – you're literally changing someone's life! And to me, that is invaluable.

Volunteering helps our teams come together and really witness the impact UnitingCare makes. I was lucky enough to join the Finance & Reporting team at the recent Bookfest. We all had a good laugh, heard some great stories from donors and the public and even found a few cool puzzles and books of our own.

Holly says I would absolutely absolutely volunteer into the future. I have recently signed up to take part at The Wesley Hospital as a Compassionate Companion. I am really looking forward to helping

out at Bookfest again too and getting into my local Lifeline stores. I shop there often, so why not help out while I am there.



Volunteering makes me feel purposeful, warm, re-energised and "full" – it is the definition of a win-win situation and unlike any other feeling I've experienced.



Lifeline Bookfest - Staff Volunteering

Michelle Templin

Manager Strategic Workforce Partnerships, UnitingCare



Michelle has memories from her childhood, her father spent many hours volunteering on the school committee and at the tennis club. She feels volunteering is in her blood.

She then took on a volunteer role with Rosies, a community group that works in homelessness. Every Sunday, volunteers made themselves available to have coffee and a chat with people who lived rough. "Seeing how other people lived, and seeing the huge difference that taking the time to listen to and share conversation made to these people, had a huge impact on me. All just needed someone to talk to."

"Be the Change you would like to see in the world."

When the opportunity arose for UnitingCare staff to volunteer to be part of the January 2023 Bookfest, Michelle spoke with her team. The team also had volunteered previously at a BlueCare site. All were very keen to join in.

Michelle says "Volunteering together was a great team-building experience; everyone had a great time. The team had the chance to meet people from all walks of life, all cultures, all ages, all interacting and making a difference. Of particular joy were the customer stories, why they were there, how long they had been coming along, what they had purchased, the books they were looking for, and why. One lady had been

coming along for over ten years and had been searching for a particular book all that time. Finally she had found it and on that day my team and I assisted her with her purchases. The customer's joy was contagious, and it was a great moment. Also, the grandparents with their grandchildren, teaching the little ones the love of books and reading, watching the joy on their little faces as they worked out their hard-saved money to pay for their purchases."

The community spirit was fantastic. Michelle definitely recommends volunteering to everyone and will be volunteering again with her team.

**Volunteer and
change lives.
yours included.**



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