

# PA Hospital Volunteer Impact Report

## 2025-2026 Financial Year



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*Robert with Tim Nicholls MP*

## Introduction

Volunteers began contributing to the comfort of patients at the PAH as early as 1961, serving under the banner of the Hospital Auxiliary. In 1969 a Tea Bar was opened in the Outpatients Department of the old Acute Block. Funds raised from trading in the Tea Bar led to many items of equipment being donated to the hospital until re-development of the hospital led to closure of the service in 2001.

As planning for the redevelopment of the hospital site continued it was recognised that coordination and expansion of volunteer services within the hospital would be of benefit to patients, visitors, and staff. The Volunteer Service was established in 1998, along with a paid manager. At about this time volunteers became known as the Busy Bees. The Volunteer service continues to be a dynamic department, constantly evolving to meet changing circumstances.

In 2010 the service dropped the Busy Bee emblem and re-styled with a new image and motto 'be all you can'. In 2019 the service, in collaboration with the PA Research Foundation, rebranded with new teal uniforms and adopted the Metro South Health motto 'we care about you'. In 2022 the service moved its governance to report to the Division of Nursing to better align volunteering with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers Standard.

In July 2024, the PA Research Foundation took over day-to-day management of the Volunteer Service. Under this new management, the Volunteer Service has been able to develop new understandings of their impact around the hospital, as well as build new relationships within multiple areas and wards. Due to Foundation resources and relationships around the hospital, Volunteer Services is positioned well to expand and fulfill the increasing needs of one of the busiest hospitals in Queensland.



## Breakdown of volunteer roles

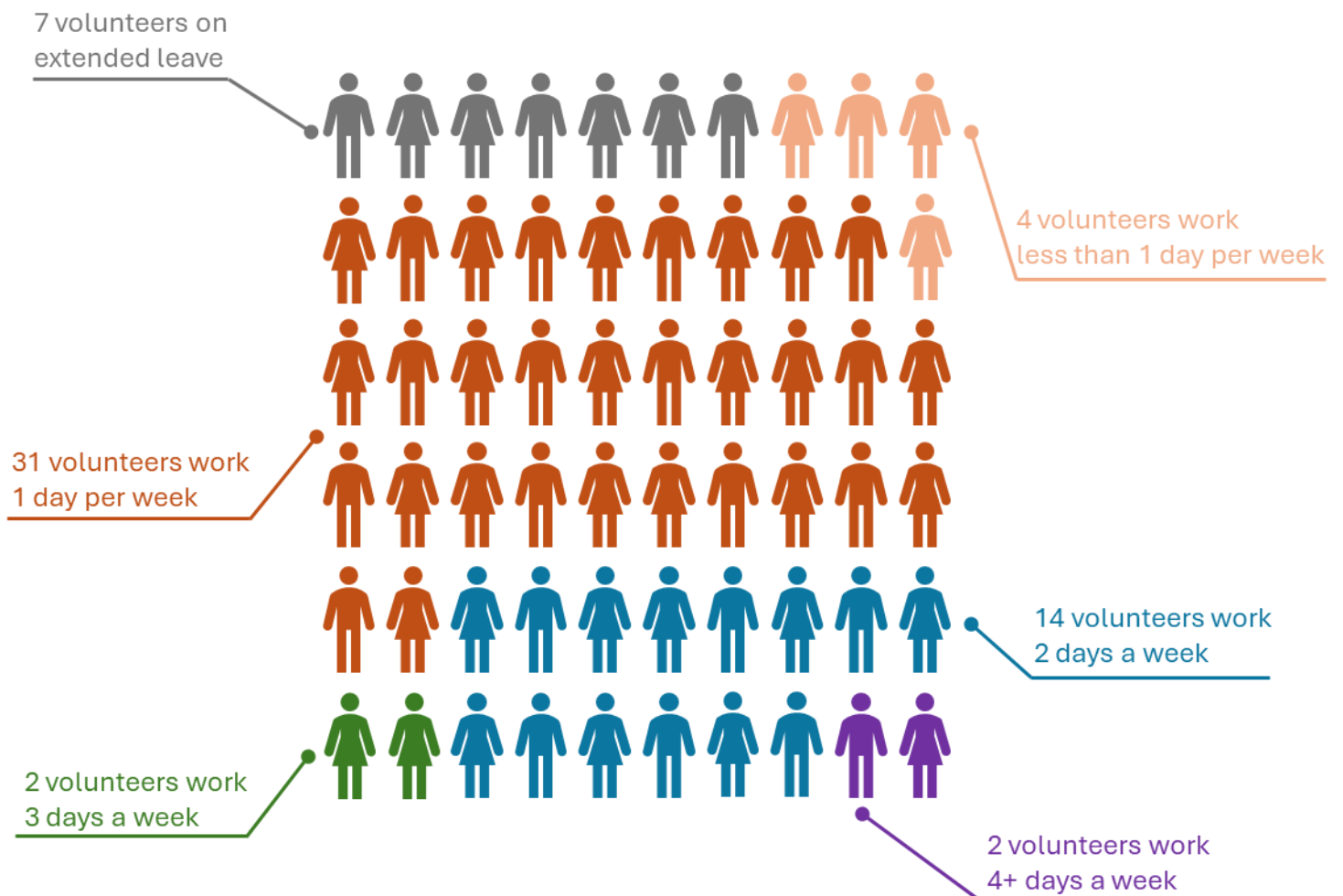
The PA Hospital Volunteers create impact in many ways, most of which fall under one of two streams: Consumer Support and Administrative Support. The Consumer Support stream creates impact by volunteers directly interacting with consumers as they come into the PA Hospital, through inpatient visits, giving directions, providing a complementary cup of tea or coffee for those people in waiting areas, etc. The Administration Support stream creates impact by removing time consuming tasks from clinical and administration staff, enabling them to spend more time with consumers or completing other more specialized tasks. A non-exhaustive list detailing the tasks in each stream can be seen below:

Consumer support	Administration support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inpatient visits</li><li>• Tea &amp; coffee trolley</li><li>• Directions &amp; wayfinding</li><li>• Library trolley</li><li>• ICU family &amp; friends area concierge</li><li>• GARU yoga</li><li>• Music performances</li><li>• Clothing for kindness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sending appointment letters</li><li>• Stamping envelopes</li><li>• Cutting adhesive strips</li><li>• Pre-labeling collection tubes</li><li>• Cutting &amp; folding underpads</li><li>• Distributing posters</li><li>• Folding pamphlets</li><li>• Preparing information folders</li></ul>



## Volunteer attendance & hours

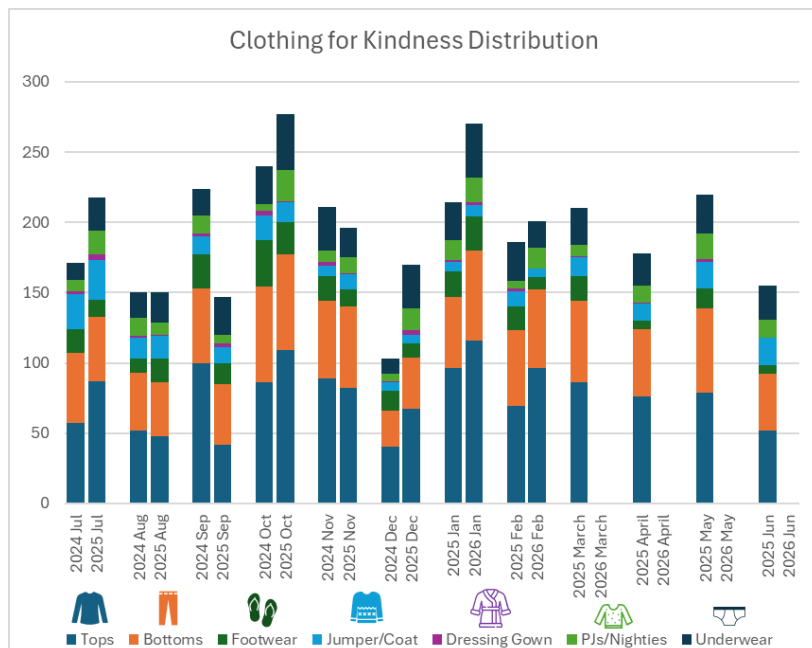
- 60 volunteers are currently registered
- 7 volunteers are currently on extended leave
- 4 volunteers only attend sporadically
- 31 volunteers work 1 day per week
- 14 volunteers work 2 days a week
- 2 volunteers work 3 days a week
- 2 volunteers work 4+ days a week
- Volunteers work in 4-hour shifts
- On average this equates to 288 volunteer hours per week
- This means in a standard business year of 48 weeks, their time equates to 13,824 volunteer hours per year
- Volunteer hours add up to the equivalent of 7.57 full-time rosters.



# Volunteer role statistics

## Clothing for kindness

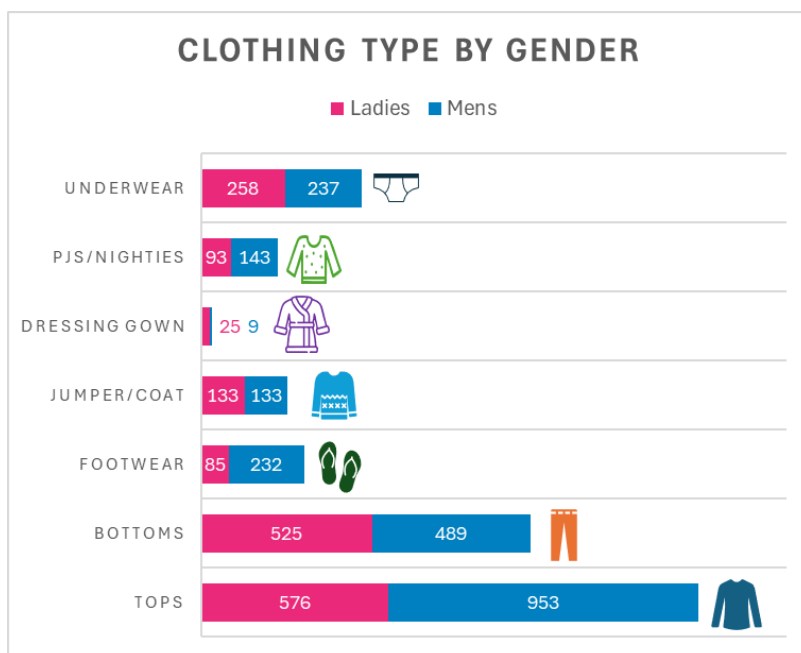
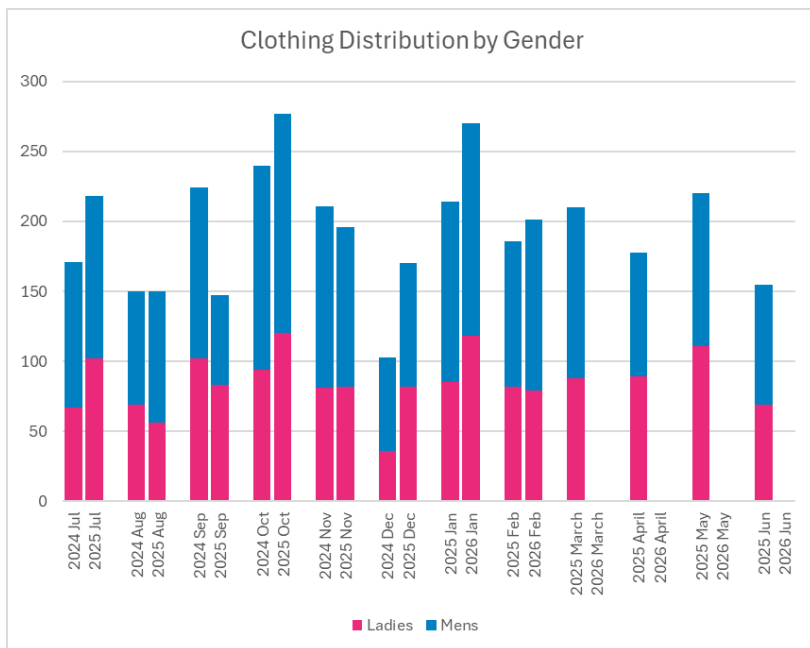
The Clothing for Kindness program aims to provide clothing to consumers who come into the hospital. The program provides all types of clothing, including footwear, generic tops/bottoms, pajamas, underwear, dressing gowns. Over the last two financial years, there has been an upwards trend in the number of clothing distributed to consumers who access the PA Hospital Health service. Based on the averages comparing the 24/25 & 25/26 financial years, there is a projected increase in the amount of clothes supplied by 14.9%, from 2,107 to 2,423 24/25 to 25/26 comparatively.



## Clothing for Kindness (cont.)

The statistics also show that tops are the main article of clothing requested, followed by bottoms, then underwear, then footwear, pajamas, jumpers and dressing gowns. The statistics also show that men’s tops were the most requested item, with an upwards trend suggesting that men’s clothing requests are increasing in demand. This has also been echoed by the Clothing for Kindness volunteers who indicated a higher demand for men’s clothing.

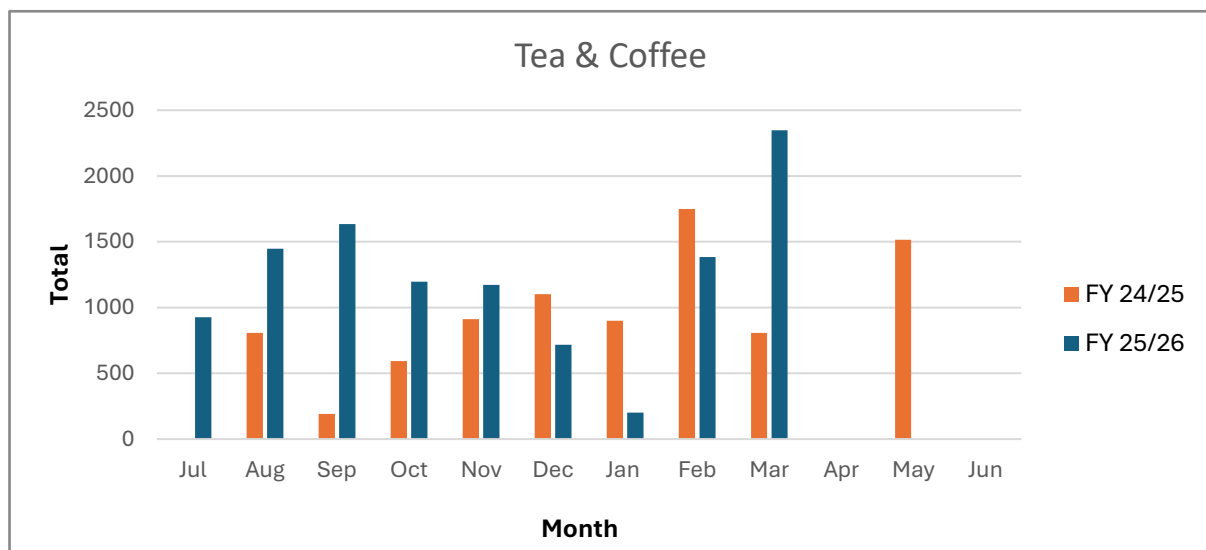
*Please note, references to gender in this paragraph are indicative of the style and cut of the clothing item requested by social workers, not the gender of the consumer who will receive the clothes.*



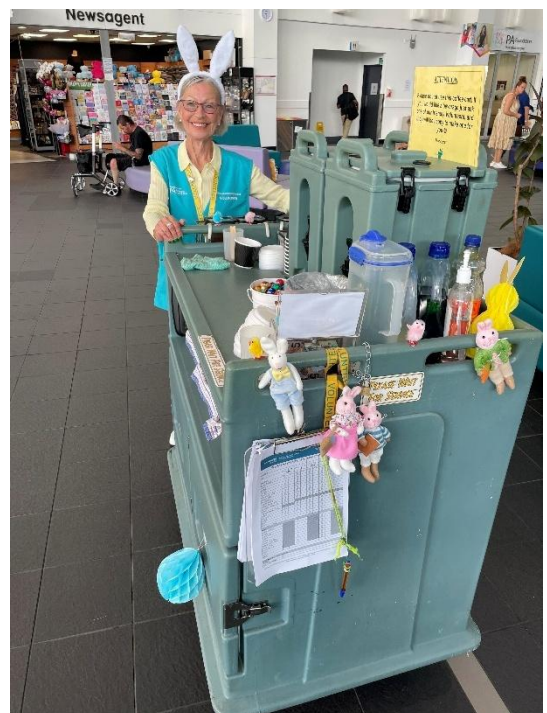
## Tea and Coffee trolley

The tea and coffee trolley (TACT for short) is one of the most popular volunteer services around the PAH. Servicing roughly 20 outpatient areas per shift, the TACT offers a complementary cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit to consumers. This service provides a very positive touchpoint for both consumers and volunteers and breaks up the monotony of long waits in the outpatient areas. Over the last two financial years, there have been over 20,000 cups of tea and coffee provided to consumers at the PA Hospital.

In the 24/25 Financial year, there were a minimum of 8,572 cups given by the TACT. In the 25/26 financial year, there were 11,346 cups provided to date 16/04/26, with an estimated 12,542+ projected by the end of the financial year. This indicates a 46.31% increase in the cups given around the PA Hospital. However, due to issues with record keeping (which will be discussed in depth later in the SWOC analysis in this report), these indicate a minimum number provided and may not indicate an accurate increase and comparison, see July, April, June.



*Fun fact, if you were to line up all the coffee cups that have been given in the 25/26 financial year edge to edge, it would circle the entire PA Hospital!*



## Miscellaneous jobs

- Patient visiting

The volunteers have a visiting program which occurs every Tuesday and Thursday. The list is routinely updated by Social Work, and the volunteers visit an average of 18 consumers per visit, equating to roughly 1,728 visits per year.

- Volunteer fundraising

Through a variety of activities, including the volunteer raffle and a variety of collection tins, in 24/25 the volunteers raised \$51,716.49 for the 25/26 year to date, volunteers have raised \$34,719.26. We had several of our higher raising volunteers on extended leave for medical reasons at the start of the financial year, hence the difference in years. However, our volunteers are incredibly proud of raising over \$85,000 for the PA Hospital.

- Library trolley

The library trolley supports consumers by providing entertainment for those who must stay in hospital both overnight and long-stay. In 24/25 there were 5,513, and in 25/26 there have been 2,371. This is a decrease of 56.99% in books dispensed around the hospital. This is largely due to changes in volunteer roles, and extended leave that has been taken. We have recently trained another volunteer to cover this role, and it is now running two days a week.

- Envelope stamping and letter folding

One key administrative task the volunteers undertake is stamping hospital department envelopes with delivery point numbers and folding and sending letters to alert consumers to upcoming appointments. In 24/25 there were 170,000 envelopes stamped, and in 25/26 to date there have been 170,500 envelopes stamped, with the projected total for the entire financial year being 226,500, which is a projected increase of 33.24%.

- Hypafix adhesive cutting

In 25/26 there have been 308 boxes of adhesive strips cut, with a projected 365 boxes by the end of the financial year. There are ten metres per box, and they are cut into three-centimetre strips. This gives us roughly 333 adhesive strips per box, equating to 121,545 strips prepared for ARTS for the financial year.

- 'Bluey' underpad cutting & sorting

We receive boxes of underpads for ARTS, and our admin volunteers cut them into smaller, more manageable and useful pieces. In 25/26, the volunteers have processed 27.5 boxes of blueys, with a projected total for the financial year being 33.5. There are roughly 160 blueys per box once they have been processed, equating to 5,360 underpads for use of ARTS.

- Collection tube labeling for ICU

The volunteers have labeled 24 boxes of collection tubes to date this financial year. There are 1,000 tubes per box, equating to 24,000 tubes processed for the use of the ICU.

These are just a sample from our ‘frequent fliers’, departments that routinely use the volunteer service for administration and patient support and do not indicate all the jobs the volunteers assist PA Departments with. The volunteers also collate information packs, make badges, hang posters, make up toothpaste cups, laminate sheets, cut printed forms, as well as many other ad-hoc duties that are requested.



# Administration Support by the numbers\*



**13,250** Letters folded for outpatient appointments



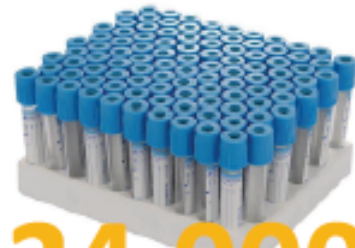
**341**

Boxes of envelopes stamped with anonymized delivery point numbers (500 envelopes per box)



**8**

Boxes of sample cups filled with toothpaste for patients in ICU



**24,000**

Blood collection tubes labelled



**308** Boxes of Hyperfix adhesives

**&**

**28**

Boxes of 'Bluey' underpads cut for Hemodialysis treatments



# S.W.O.C. Analysis

## Strengths

- Dedicated group with good morale

While the group is not as large as other hospital volunteer units in MSH, we have a dedicated work force of 50+ volunteers who come in each week to donate their time to getting things done around the PAH. They are extremely reliable, with the majority volunteering because they have previous personal connection with the PA Hospital, and this is their way of giving back. For many of the volunteers, this is their way of socializing, and they are all very passionate about their roles.

- Position of volunteer office in the hospital

Now that the volunteers run out of the PA Foundation office in building one, we are more visible due to the more centralized positioning at the PAH campus, meaning more consumers and hospital staff can see and interact with the volunteers.

- General upwards trend in requests and services provided

Using the Clothing for Kindness program and the TACT as an example, there is an upwards trend around the PAH for volunteer requests and services. With general increases across the board in how many jobs are being done and based on conversations with the volunteers and hospital staff, the volunteers (and the assistance they provide) seem to be more visible than ever in the PAH, meaning to increased interaction with consumers and staff.

- Wide variety of jobs being done

The volunteers under both Consumer Support and Administration support streams complete a wide variety of unique jobs every day. While there are more routine requests, such as TACT, Clothing for Kindness, folding letters, stamping envelopes, patient visits, etc., the volunteers also do small, odd jobs such as refilling fruit in cancer services, walking patients to a variety of areas in the hospital, walking patients from the TB clinic to pathology, playing music, and others that naturally occur by interacting with consumers and hospital staff.

## Weaknesses

- Space and resources

While they are an incredibly versatile group, one main weakness is the lack of physical space and resources that the volunteers can utilize. The administration support volunteers are usually crowded in the PA Foundation office, using any desk space that they can find to complete jobs. Similarly, the Clothing for Kindness program is effectively run out of a lower ground floor storage area, and a long table in the hallway near the volunteer office on the ground floor of building fifteen.

We have been given access to a new storage area on the lower ground floor of building fifteen, which we are extremely grateful for, however it feels like a side-effect of the hospital needing our current storage area repurposed and turned into a comms room. While we know the volunteers are appreciated by the PA Hospital, more consideration for volunteer needs by the hospital directors could lead to more productive workflow.

- Ageing volunteer group

While the PAH volunteers are a hardworking and dedicated group, they are also an ageing group which includes people with ongoing medical conditions or who have increasing mobility difficulties. Several of our volunteers who have gone on extended leave or have resigned have done so due to these factors. Most of our volunteers are retirees, with the average age of the group being 72. Some volunteers have also expressed that once they get to a certain time served, they plan on resigning. This culmination of factors means that onboarding new volunteers will be essential to the long-term functionality of the volunteer unit.

- Volunteers generally active in the mornings

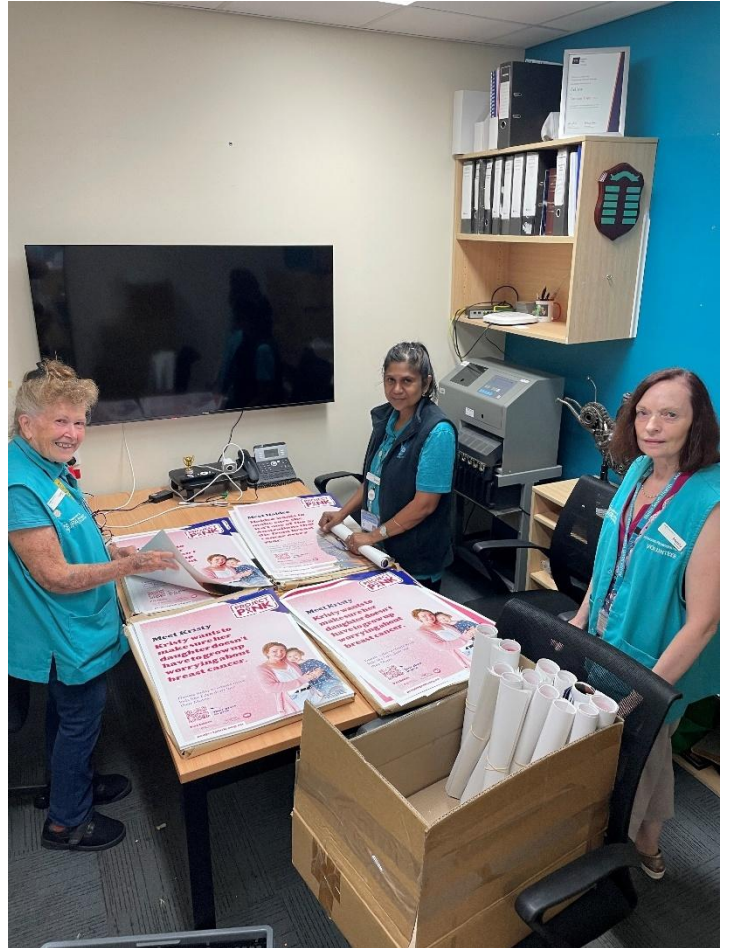
While the hospital tends to be busiest in the mornings, most volunteers leave by 1pm. While this is not the case for all volunteers, it tends to be the case for the majority.

- Way of recording volunteer statistics

This issue has two major elements. First is the way that volunteers record statistics. For many things, such as Clothing for Kindness, TACT, library trolley and volunteer interactions, these numbers are all recorded with pen and paper. While reasonably effective, this is very easy to either miss or lose forms. This is also true for when we receive clothing/support requests in our office, which normally means a PARF team member takes the details then gives the form to a volunteer to action.

The second issue is the way we then scan and record these numbers. With the high volume of papers and with the wide variety of requests that are made, it has been difficult to keep an accurate tally of the true number of jobs the volunteers do, by scanning the forms and saving them in our drives, then updating a spreadsheet.

For example, the statistics that were used for the TACT represent a minimum amount, rather than an accurate total. We have moved to paperless sign-in to help manage a part of this issue, but with certain volunteer roles, and given some resistance from volunteers moving to digital systems, paper will remain the imperfect and most practical and functional option.



## Opportunities

- Good flow of applications and interest

We have a steady stream of people either asking about or actively applying to join the volunteer group. The vast majority of people seeking to become volunteers are either consumers themselves, or have a family member or friend who has been treated at the PA. Even when we are not actively recruiting, we have numerous enquiries and applications that come through in person, over the phone, and via email. This has allowed us to onboard several new volunteers quickly, to cover positions that were left vacant when a volunteer resigned.

- Growing relationships around the hospital

Since the Foundation has taken on the administration of the volunteers, we have noticed an increase in hospital staff that know of, or interact with, their services. This has culminated in a combined, hospital wide clothing drive with the Division of Surgery, as well as productive interactions with the National Standards Two committee, Social Work, RADONC, Cancer Services in 2F and others. We have also had communications with the heads of HR and Accounting which culminated in a new storage area being purpose-built for the volunteers.

- Growing relationships with the greater volunteering community in Queensland

The PA Foundation has a positive and close working relationship with the QE2 volunteer unit, including sharing some volunteers across both services. Through this relationship we have been put in contact with the QLD volunteer network, which has led to some limited sharing of ideas, such as role descriptions, information about programs, and situational advice. This is an avenue to increasing the PA Hospital volunteer's standing in the greater QLD community.



## Challenges

- Volunteer retention & non-starters

While we typically ask prospective volunteers for a six-month commitment to volunteering at the PA Hospital, unfortunately due to the role being unpaid, there have been some instances of a volunteer starting with us and then resigning only a short while into their time at the PA. This happens for a variety of reasons, such as getting a paid position elsewhere, schedule and availability clashes, no vacancies for the particular volunteer role they want to fill, etc.

Another challenge we have encountered has been volunteer non-starters. These are individuals who have submitted all the relevant paperwork, have had an interview with the team and appear enthusiastic, but then we either never hear from them again, or they now have a reason why they can't volunteer. This represents roughly one in four applicants, however in conversations with other volunteer services, (notably QE2), this seems to be standard in their experience as well.

- Volunteers leaving service before passing along knowledge

As the volunteers needed to be largely self-sufficient for extended periods of time before the Foundation took over administration of the VSU, many volunteers have adopted very specific ways of completing tasks and day-to-day duties. While there are multiple ways to complete certain jobs, if a volunteer goes on unexpected leave or resigns, there is a possibility of losing some of the nuances of a particular role or losing knowledge of the role entirely. This notably happened when there were only essential personnel in the hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic, several volunteer roles ceased and have not returned. There has been a distinct effort to document the different roles, and training multiple volunteers in how to perform certain consumer support duties such as facilitating the ICU waiting room.



## Reflections and findings

The PA Hospital Volunteers demonstrate strong overall performance, driven by a highly committed and reliable volunteer base that delivers a wide range of consumer support and administrative services across the hospital. Volunteer morale is high, visibility has increased around the hospital, and demand for services such as the Tea and Coffee Trolley and Clothing for Kindness continue to trend upward. The breadth and flexibility of volunteer roles enable meaningful impact for consumers and staff, reinforcing the program's value and alignment with hospital priorities.

The service does face sustainability risks linked to a lack of space and resources, an ageing volunteer cohort, uneven coverage across the day, and challenges in data collection and reporting processes. However, there are clear opportunities arising from strong community interest in volunteering, improved integration and interaction with hospital departments, and growing engagement with the broader Queensland volunteering network. Key challenges, including workspace, volunteer retention, recruitment attrition, and loss of role-specific knowledge, highlight the need for continued focus on onboarding, documentation, and succession planning to ensure long-term resilience and capacity for growth.

The PA Foundation is dedicated to continuing our work with the PA Hospital's volunteers and growing and expanding the team alongside the hospital's own expansion.



