

# JPs in the Community Program

## Volunteer information pack

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## Version history

The following table outlines the high-level changes that have been made to each version of this document.

Version:

1. December 2014
2. January 2015
3. February 2015
4. May 2015
5. November 2015
6. January 2016
7. November 2016
8. March 2017
9. July 2018
10. December 2018
11. January 2019

References:

1. [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#)
2. [Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland](#)
3. [Benestar](#)
4. [Employee assistance programs](#)
5. [Civil Liability Act 2003](#)
6. [Code of Conduct for JPs and Cdecs](#)
7. [Principles of operation for volunteer program](#)
8. [JP and Cdec handbooks](#)
9. [JPs and Cdec logbook](#)
10. [JP Bulletins and Technical Bulletins](#)
11. [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991](#)
12. [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Regulation 2017](#)
13. [Report an incident](#)
14. [Privacy Act 1988](#)
15. [Queensland Courts](#)
16. [Queensland Government Insurance Fund](#)
17. [Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct](#)
18. [Supporting and managing our participants policy](#)
19. [Program Site Co-ordinator Responsibilities](#)
20. [DJAG Feedback page including lodging a complaint](#)
21. [Volunteering Australia](#)
22. [Work Cover Queensland](#)
23. [The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#)

## 1.0 JPs in the Community Program

The Queensland Government, Department of Justices and Attorney-General (DJAG), Justices of the Peace Branch (JP Branch), is responsible for administering the [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991](#) and the [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Regulation 2017](#).

To support the needs of the community and improve best practice for Justices of the Peace (JPs) and Commissioners for Declarations (Cdecs) across Queensland, the JP Branch formally established the [JPs in the Community Program](#) (the Program) in Queensland in 2003. The Program currently supports a network of over 2,500 JPs and Cdecs in many community sites including shopping centres, courthouses, hospitals, libraries and other JP Branch approved locations.

### 1.1 Vision

To provide consistent and reliable witnessing services across Queensland and to provide Program volunteers with a safe, supported and accessible environment to provide their services.

### 1.2 Goals

- increase the number of volunteers operating within the guidelines of the Program
- develop and expand the Program to sites where demand for services is identified
- be open and responsive to volunteers' needs and to provide support and mentoring where required, and
- ensure consistent volunteer witnessing practices.

### 1.3 Objectives

- provide timely and accurate, non-judgmental witnessing services to the community
- liaise with other information agencies, both government and non-government, to provide professional development opportunities for all JPs and Cdecs
- coordinate the collection of information to better understand the training needs and resources required at Program sites
- recognise and acknowledge the diversity of the roles of JPs and Cdecs
- promote a culture of respect and camaraderie among the volunteers
- foster a supportive team of volunteers with like-minded goals and values
- maintain and strengthen existing stakeholder relationships, while exploring new opportunities with a variety of stakeholders.

## 2.0 Justices of the Peace Branch

JP Branch provides a range of services to support and assist Program volunteers including:

- support and advice
- access to [professional development](#), including workshops and mentorship
- access to [online publications](#)
- access to a [mentoring program](#)
- [sales](#) of relevant merchandise and publications.

**General enquiries** 1300 301 147

**After hours** 0436 679 257 or 0436 680 883 for enquiries about your role during your rostered time at a Program site that operates after 5.00pm on weekdays or Saturdays

**Email** [jpsinthecommunity@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:jpsinthecommunity@justice.qld.gov.au)

**Street address** Level 6, 154 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane Qld 4101

**Postal address** PO Box 5894, West End Qld 4101

**Website** [www.qld.gov.au/jps](http://www.qld.gov.au/jps)

### 3.0 JPs in the community – role description

Volunteers in the Program are responsible to the JP Branch. **Please contact the Branch if you require assistance or information.**

#### 3.1 Qualifications

To perform the role of a JP or Cdec volunteer in the Program, you must have been appointed in accordance with the [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991](#).

#### 3.2 Program requirements

In order to become a volunteer in the Program you will need to:

- read this *Volunteer information pack* and any relevant policies or documentation referred to in this document
- attend a volunteer information session that may be offered if a new Program site is being established, and
- complete and submit the volunteer registration form (available from JP Branch or [online](#)).

On receipt of your registration form, JP Branch will record your details, send you a confirmation email and forward your information to a site coordinator to make contact with you. If you are not contacted by a site coordinator within 14 days, contact JP Branch to follow up your request.

To ensure you are covered under the [Queensland Government Insurance Fund](#) (QGIF), you must receive confirmation of registration from JP Branch before you commence volunteering in the Program.

#### 3.3 Program expectations

You are expected to fulfil your obligations as a Program volunteer in accordance with the:

- [Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct](#)
- [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991](#)
- [Principles of operation for volunteer program](#)
- [Supporting and managing our participants policy](#)
- [JP and Cdec handbooks](#)
- [JP Bulletins and Technical Bulletins](#), and
- Any policies, procedures, instructions or documentation released by JP Branch from time to time

### 4.0 Rights and responsibilities

#### 4.1 Volunteers

Volunteering is an activity provided through not-for-profit organisations or projects that is:

- given of one's own free will without coercion
- for no financial gain
- to benefit the community and the volunteer
- in designated volunteer positions only.

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are volunteering
- be given access to a copies any policy/procedures that affect your role
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- have a role description and agreed hours of contribution

- be provided with orientation to the program and the role
- have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- be provided with appropriate training and support to carry out your role.

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- be prompt and reliable
- respect confidentiality
- display respect and courtesy towards all clients, paid and voluntary staff
- adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#)
- carry out the specified position description according to the position description
- be accountable for your actions
- be committed to the JP Branch which governs the program
- undertake professional development as required by the program
- ask for support when you need it
- give reasonable notice before you withdraw as a volunteer
- value and support other team members.

## 4.2 JP Branch

JP Branch has the right to:

- make decisions about the establishment of program sites and the placement of volunteers
- review volunteer performance according to departmental policies and procedures
- expect volunteers to perform the given tasks to the best of their ability, be prompt and reliable
- expect volunteers to display respect and courtesy towards all clients, paid and voluntary staff
- set the parameters of the volunteer role description
- release a volunteer who is not appropriate for the volunteer work in accordance with the guidelines of the JPB [Supporting and Managing our participants Policy](#)

JP Branch has the responsibility to:

- provide a clear outline of duties
- provide orientation and necessary [professional development](#)
- recognise volunteers for their hours and years of service
- set clear lines of communication about complaints and conflict resolution procedures
- ensure safe and healthy working conditions in association with site hosts
- include volunteers in relevant decision making processes
- provide supervision and support
- facilitate the orientation of the emergency procedures for the program site
- provide required documentation relating to the volunteer work to be undertaken.

## 5.0 Volunteer expectations

### 5.1 Attendance

Attendance sign-in sheets and rosters are necessary to maintain an accurate legal record of your activity and maintain your [QGIF insurance](#) coverage. You are required to maintain your attendance sheet and observe your roster obligations.

JP Branch is interested to know how about your volunteer experiences. We acknowledge that your situation and capacity to volunteer may change from time to time due to any number of reasons. If your situation or capacity to volunteer changes and you cannot continue to volunteer, or would like to take a break from volunteering, please advise your site coordinator or JP Branch as soon as possible.

## 5.2 Confidential information

Program volunteers have an obligation to observe confidentiality and respect the privacy of their customers and colleagues while performing their rostered duties. Further information about confidentiality can be found in your handbooks at [Section 2.4](#).

## 5.3 Dress code

All Program volunteers are required to wear neat and professional attire while on duty. You have the option to order a free Program polo shirt to wear when volunteering at your Program site.

## 5.4 Photo ID Cards

All registered Program volunteers are entitled to request a photo ID card from the JP Branch to be worn while on rostered duty. The cards are free, remain current for five years and identify the wearer as a volunteer JP or Cdec in the Program. For more information or to request a card, email the JP Branch at [jpsinthecommunity@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:jpsinthecommunity@justice.qld.gov.au).

## 5.5 Equal opportunity

JP Branch is committed to equal opportunity and its effective implementation in accordance with the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#).

## 5.6 Harassment

JP Branch is committed to providing a safe working environment for volunteers that is free from intimidation, hostility or other offences in accordance with the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#).

Any harassment claims should be referred to JP Branch as soon as possible. All claims will be treated as confidential.

Workplace harassment is not just one type of behaviour and can involve abuse, violence, ridicule and unreasonable demands as well as less obvious behaviours aimed at isolating a person from colleagues, peers or friends. In addition to face to face encounters, harassment can also occur through other mediums such as social media sites, email and texting.

## 5.7 Logbook

All volunteers should make a [logbook](#) record, either in the site logbook or in their own personal logbook, of each document and procedure witnessed whilst the client is with you. If recording in your own logbook, your monthly site witnessing statistics are to be provided to the site coordinator at the end of each month. Detailed information about record keeping and [logbooks](#) can be found in the JP and Cdec handbooks at [Section 2.4](#).

Volunteers have the option to record their activity in either the Program site [logbook](#) or their own personal logbook. For Program development, your site witnessing activity statistics must be provided to the site coordinator at the end of each month.

## 5.8 Personal details

Notify your site coordinator and JP Branch immediately of any [change in your personal details](#), including your address, telephone number, email address, emergency contact, and other relevant information. This provides the site coordinator with up-to-date information should they need to contact you, seek a replacement or notify your emergency contact.

## 5.9 Photocopying

The provision of photocopying services are not a function of the Program, unless available. In most instances it will be necessary to refer clients who need to copy items to a local business or provider.



### 5.10 Representing the Program

Volunteers must consult with JP Branch before engaging with external parties in relation to any actions or statements that might affect or obligate the DJAG or the JP Branch. This may include, but are not limited to, statements or comments to the media and/or written or verbal advice to organisations or individuals or establishing a new site or lease with a host entity such as a shopping centre.

### 5.11 Requests for legal advice

Under no circumstances should you give specific legal advice. Please refer to [Section 2.2](#), of your handbooks for further information.

It is not the role of JPs or Cdecs, to comment on, recommend or provide documents to clients. The responsibility lies with the client to seek independent advice or advice from the receiving agency as to the correct document that they need witnessed.

Statutory declaration and affidavit forms can meet a range of needs for clients and can be accessed from [www.courts.qld.gov.au](http://www.courts.qld.gov.au). You may provide these forms to a client if they request them.

### 5.12 Site kit

JP Branch provides each Program site with a kit of relevant resources and stamps to carry out witnessing duties.

To replenish items, notify your site coordinator.

### 5.13 Soliciting

You must not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, charity, political agenda or religious beliefs while volunteering with the Program. Refer to the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Principles of operation for volunteer Program](#) for further clarification.

### 5.14 Site Co-ordinators responsibilities

Site co-ordinators are an important link between the volunteers, the Program site hosts and JP Branch. The Site co-ordinators responsibilities can be viewed [here](#).

## 6.0 Volunteer health and safety

JP Branch has a duty of care in the general safety and wellbeing of volunteers and ensuring that all volunteers experience a healthy home, life and volunteering balance and enjoy their volunteering experience.

### 6.1 Volunteering Hours of work

A volunteer can determine when and how often they participate in the Program. JP Branch recommends that volunteers do not engage in more than five hours of volunteering without taking at least a 30 minute break. Rostered shifts should not exceed five hours per day in duration in any one continuous shift or for any one volunteer.

Volunteers should not commit to more than an aggregate of 12 volunteering hours per calendar week (Monday to Saturday). Occasionally volunteers may exceed the recommended 12 hours a week to fill short term roster vacancies, however if this is an ongoing occurrence, discuss with JP Branch how your Program site and its volunteers can be best supported.

Contact your site coordinator as soon as possible if you are unable to attend duty or require a change to your rostered duty times. If you are unable to contact your site co-ordinator, contact the JP Branch or the site management.



If your volunteering experience becomes overwhelming or you feel that you no longer have the same time to contribute, let your site coordinator and /or JP Branch know. If you have had time away from your volunteering duties due to illness, accident or surgery, it is important to let your site coordinator or JP Branch know prior to returning to duty. Any personal information provided will be treated confidentially.

## 6.2 Site emergency plans

At your Program site induction, ensure that the site coordinator provides you with information about local safety and security procedures. You need to familiarise yourself with your Program site's emergency evacuation plan, including emergency exits and assembly points.

## 6.3 Incident reporting

JP Branch is committed to providing a safe and positive working environment for all volunteers and asks that volunteers accept their responsibility to work safely with common sense and foresight.

The [incident report form](#) provides a formal process for volunteers to report relevant incidents while performing their roles. A detailed explanation of incident reporting can be found in [JP Technical Bulletin 10/09](#)

## 6.4 Employee assistance Program

Program volunteers and their immediate family members can access free, professional, confidential counselling, and crisis response services following potentially traumatic events related to your volunteer work through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP).

These services are provided by [Benestar](#) through DJAG.

You can access the EAP for a broad range of concerns such as issues related to your role as a JP or Cdec, stress and coping, relationship issues, or depression/anxiety. It is capped at four appointment sessions per contract year. If you require longer term support, you may be referred to another provider, at your own expense.

Where a potentially traumatic event occurs at work, Benestar staff will support managers to deliver the most appropriate response, contact JP Branch in this instance.

The EAP can be accessed by telephone/face-to-face/video counselling/online counselling or via the toll free number for appointments, 1300 360 364.

When visiting the [Benestar website](#) for the first time, click the 'Register Here' icon and enter the case sensitive logins below:

Company ID: DJAG

Company Token: DJAG01

If you are unable to attend a scheduled Benestar appointment, please provide at least 24 hours' notice of the cancellation. A range of additional online services are available through the [Benestar website](#) using the access code JAG when prompted.

Should you have any questions about Benestar's services, or wish to provide feedback, email [whscoordinator@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:whscoordinator@justice.qld.gov.au) for assistance.

## 7.0 Liability and insurance

### 7.1 Civil liability

Under section 39 of the [Civil Liability Act 2003](#), a volunteer does not incur any personal civil liability in relation to any act or omission done or made by the volunteer in good faith when doing community work—

- (a) organised by a community organisation; or
- (b) as an office holder of a community organisation.

With respect to section 39(a) JP Branch is the community organisation that governs the Program.

Section 36 of the [Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991](#) provides protection for JPs and Cdecs against actions to recover damages or loss. There is, however, a clear exception to this protection— where a JP or Cdec has committed an act knowing that the act is not authorised by law, or that the act was done within the law but maliciously, and without reasonable cause. Individuals acting in these ways will not be protected by DJAG insurance.

### 7.2 Insurance cover

As a Program volunteer you are covered by public liability and professional indemnity insurance through the [Queensland Government Insurance Fund \(QGIF\)](#), via the DJAG policy, where you act in accordance with your official duties.

#### 7.2.1 Professional indemnity cover

Professional indemnity insurance provides protection for an insured party against sums for which the insured party might become legally liable to pay as compensation to a third party arising out of a breach or alleged breach of their professional duty of care. A breach could arise as a result of you providing incorrect advice or information.

#### 7.2.2 Personal injury

Program volunteers injured during their official duties, or during direct travel to and from, the location of the official duties, should immediately report the incident to JP Branch, including injury details and medical expenses incurred. On receipt of the incident report, JP Branch will notify [QGIF](#), which will then liaise directly with the volunteer regarding the claim and the reimbursement of your medical and treatment expenses.

If an incident occurs during your site team meeting to specifically discuss the Program, volunteers will be covered by the [QGIF](#). However, this cover is not extended to association meetings where the meeting agenda purely discusses the association's functions.

This cover is subject to the terms and conditions of the [QGIF](#) policy. There is no age limit in relation to the age of a volunteer. This cover will provide benefits similar to those provided to volunteers by [Work Cover Queensland](#) in the event of personal injury sustained after other entitlements (such as Medicare) have been claimed.

#### 7.2.3 Terrorism Act

If whilst volunteering at any Program signing site and as a volunteer you were injured as a result of a terrorist act, volunteers would be covered by the [QGIF](#) personal Accident & Illness cover as outlined above.

In addition, if in the event that the volunteer is killed, in line with [QGIF](#) insurance cover family members would have access to benefits including funeral expenses under the Personal Accident cover. Benefits would vary depending on the situation. There is no limit to the cover and will depend on each situation.

### 7.2.4 Victim Assist Queensland

In addition, volunteers, can also [apply](#) to Victim Assist Queensland (VAQ) which provides a range of services to victims of crime throughout the State. VAQ can be contacted on 1300 546 587.

### 7.2.5 Private property

The [QGIF](#) policy only provides cover for State Government assets. Volunteers should insure their personal assets (e.g. wallet, handbag, and car) under their own insurance policies (e.g. home contents, motor vehicle).

### 7.2.6 Attending meetings

If an incident occurs during a Program team meeting to specifically the Program, cover by [QGIF](#) will be provided. This does not apply to the functions of an Association.

### 7.2.7 Submitting a claim

Volunteers injured during the course of official duties should immediately report the incident to the JP Branch including details of the injury and any medical expenses incurred. On receipt of the incident report, the JP Branch will notify the insurer, [QGIF](#), who will then contact the volunteer.

## 8.0 Making a complaint

As a program volunteer, a member of the public may approach you to make a complaint. It is important to remain calm, courteous and to deal with the complainant in a professional manner. All complaints are to be referred to JP Branch for recording and the appropriate resolution process. It is not your obligation to deal with or administer the complaint.

A complaint may be lodged in writing or online through the DJAG website. For more information about the feedback process please visit our [website](#).

Immediately contact JP Branch if you require assistance.

## 9.0 Dispute resolution

JP Branch values the diversity of all program volunteers and aims to resolve any disagreements, large or small, through discussion with concerned parties in a timely manner.

### 9.1 Conflict resolution

Conflict occurs in teams from time to time. To ensure the wellbeing of volunteers is maintained and the operation of the site is not compromised, the following procedure should be used:

- Attempt to resolve the conflict between the parties concerned.
- If the parties cannot resolve the conflict, immediately contact the JP Branch for assistance

If the issue is related to the competency of another volunteer to perform their duties, this issue must be brought to the attention of JP Branch with supporting evidence.

It is good practice for you to make a note of any conversation or situation which may include: What is the issue at hand? How did the issue come to your attention and what action was taken to discuss this with the other party? Record dates, times and content of discussion each time with the other party.

If the conflict cannot be resolved, the JP Branch will arrange for the parties to attend DJAG sanctioned mediation. The parties in conflict must attend the mediation

In the event of perceived or alleged misconduct (on duty or off duty), it is the responsibility of all volunteers to refer the matter to JP Branch for action.

## 10.0 Misconduct, suspension and dismissal

Program volunteers are expected to carry out their duties in accordance with the [Principles of operation for volunteer Program](#).

To provide certainty and confidence for Program volunteers and to manage instances of misconduct, volunteers should read the [Supporting and managing our participants policy](#).

All Program volunteers should be aware of their responsibility to notify JP Branch in the event of perceived or alleged misconduct (on or off duty).

Examples of misconduct include:

- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst volunteering
- Verbal or physical harassment of other volunteers or any other person in respect of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation
- Disclosure of confidential information obtained in performing the role as a volunteer
- Failure to comply with the [Code of Conduct](#)
- Failure to uphold the key '[Principles of operation for volunteer program](#)' following feedback by either the site co-ordinator or JP Branch.

Volunteers are to refer all matters of misconduct or unsatisfactory behaviour to the site coordinator for referral the JP Branch.

### 10.1 Volunteer Grievance

A grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule or practice which a volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness while volunteering. Further, a grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by a co-worker or volunteer.

If a person feels that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by JP Branch is unjust they may contact the JP Branch and request the issue be raised with the Registrar and then advise the volunteer within 10 working days.

The JP Branch will ensure any decision aligns with the relevant State and federal legislation and the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) which governs volunteer activity and underpins this document.

As per natural justice principles, if volunteers consider that they have been unfairly discriminated against they may refer the issue to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland. The commission can be contacted on 1300 130 670. For more information, visit their website at [www.adcq.qld.gov.au](http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au).

## 11.0 Conclusion

Witnessing services provided by JPs and Cdecs provide an important and vital link in the provision of justice services in Queensland.

The contribution by Program volunteers to provide witnessing services to the community is highly valued and the JP Branch are committed to providing ongoing support to Program volunteers.

Program volunteers are encouraged to contact JP Branch to discuss any issues that may impact on their continued involvement in the Program.