

Volunteering With The Brisbane Dialogues

*He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that.
John Stuart Mill*

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About The Brisbane Dialogues: Better Discussions



- ❑ Formed early in 2020 as a citizens' response to polarisation and toxic discourse, The Brisbane Dialogues (TBD) is a wholly independent, neutral, intergenerational, not-for-profit project to stimulate better discussions about big ideas and issues. We are determinedly non-political and non-partisan and aspire to being non-parochial, non-elitist and inclusive.
- ❑ We are proud to be Australia's first dedicated civil discourse organisation and an established, growing corner of the public square in Queensland. We are not a think tank, more of a "do tank", though we do like to think as well as do!
- ❑ *Our ultimate mission is to support many organisations to conduct better discussions, by helping them to turn one-way talks or one-sided panels into genuine, respectful dialogues between people of different perspectives.*

What We Do



Conduct public events on issues of national or global importance or interest, in the Big Dialogue format, as well as bespoke private events, to demonstrate what better discussions look like, and

Support other organisations to conduct better discussions, with a wide range of services and activities which range from full co-production of a major event to specific help with curation, event management, promotion, technology, etc.

As of mid-2021, this means:

- ❑ Producing 2 or 3 [Big Dialogues](#) each year (moderated panel discussion in larger public setting)
- ❑ Running the First Tuesday Club (monthly private discussion group around single guest speakers)
- ❑ Developing Dialogues @ School, (multi-school simultaneous dialogue event scheduled for October annually)
- ❑ Planning or exploring co-productions with numerous organisations such as Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences, Brisbane Writers Festival, Australian Institute of International Affairs Qld, the main local universities and many others
- ❑ Developing [Queensland Talks](#), an aggregated online calendar to promote ideas-based discussion events in SE Queensland, building a partnership ecosystem and extending our reach
- ❑ Keeping our focus on live, in-person events - a key differentiator established and maintained in challenging circumstances

Working with The Brisbane Dialogues



The Brisbane Dialogues is entirely volunteer-run and aims to provide a welcoming, productive and enjoyable environment for anyone who wants to get involved - whether every day, once a year, or anything in between.

Most of our interaction is online, but we get together at the First Tuesday Club every month for an informal discussion with interesting guest speakers, social time before and after, drinks and light food provided. All are welcome to pitch topics and speakers for this or any other event. Suggestions accompanied by offers to make it happen carry a lot more weight!

Benefits for Younger People

- ❑ Excellent work experience in substantive operational areas such as event development and management, marketing, content creation, ICT and not-for-profit management
- ❑ Volunteering with an increasingly high-profile public forum and community organisation like TBD is a plus for many employers
- ❑ Approved by universities for course credit
- ❑ Unlimited opportunity to take responsibility, leadership and initiative in an expanding, ambitious organisation
- ❑ Hone your skills and build experience in digital marketing, event production, using collaboration tools, IT platform development and administration, writing, business development, web development and maintenance, not-for-profit compliance and administration, sponsorship and partnership negotiations

Benefits for Older People

- ❑ Imparting and utilising your professional and life experience to promote positive discourse and learning
- ❑ Energisation and satisfaction from working with outstanding group of younger people in a common cause
- ❑ Engaging with a community of like-minded people
- ❑ Making use of and refreshing skills and experience
- ❑ Getting out and about
- ❑ Challenging fixed opinions which tend to come with age!

Volunteer Testimonials



Harry - International Relations Student

I became a part of The Brisbane Dialogues team in August 2020, when I heard that they were interested in doing a topic on Australia's relationship with China. As a student of this area this piqued my interest, and so I was eager to join the content team in developing the dialogue further. My contribution to this team was threefold. Firstly, I helped develop an exciting and engaging topic - one that would fit in with the values of The Brisbane Dialogues. Secondly, I researched appropriate speakers who would be able to provide enough expertise and flair to the discussion. Finally, I wrote a brief on the security issues in the Australia-China relationship for the Dialogue. This last part was my favourite task, as it allowed me to apply what I had studied at university in ways that I had never done before. I am yet to find any other volunteer organisation that gives university students an opportunity to apply their studies for the betterment of civil discourse. I think that's why The Brisbane Dialogues is so special.

Louis - Graduate Policy Adviser

Volunteering for The Brisbane Dialogues has been a great way for me to contribute to an important social cause in a way that fits around my busy schedule. By volunteering for The Brisbane Dialogues I've been able to gain professional event management experience and have learned a lot by seeing such a young organisation in its early phases. I'd particularly recommend volunteering for The Brisbane Dialogues to anyone pursuing a career in IT, event management, marketing, business/entrepreneurship, politics, public policy, and journalism.

[List of core volunteers.](#)

Organisation

Management Committee: In charge of higher decision-making, oversight and compliance

Events Team: Development, final curation and production of events and event-related content

Content Team: Initial development and curation of events, creates or contributes to original content e.g. TBD Briefs (additional future function)

Marketing Team: Markets events and builds TBD's brand and profile between events

Organisation Team: Responsible for training, recruitment, ICT and organisation-building

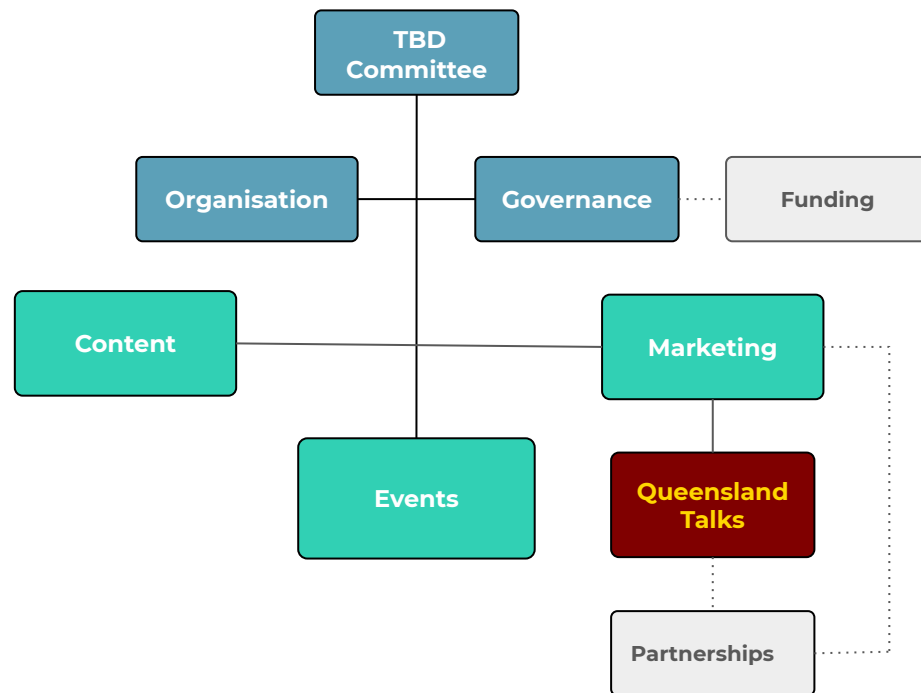
Governance Team: Supports the Management Committee and all other teams in nitty gritty legal, finance and administration tasks

Queensland Talks: Calendarising and promoting dialogue events outside of The Brisbane Dialogues

To be added:

Funding Team: sponsorship, donations

Partnerships Team: developing and maintaining partnerships



Find your fit - Content Team

Roles: The Content Team is where we nut out what topics and event formats we are going to take on, often in extensive discussions. It is the collective guardian of the spirit and ethos of TBD and the main quality control mechanism.

The Content Team:

- ❑ Generates the content of events with topics, formats and speaker suggestions, before handing over to the Events Team to develop and produce
- ❑ Considers and approves new event proposals from within TBD and from external parties, and
- ❑ In future, will produce original written material to support events and marketing and build relevant content on the website, mainly civil discourse resources

Volunteer profile: All volunteers contributing consistently in another Team are welcome to join the Content Team, which most people want to! Writer/researchers are particularly welcome as we add written content creation to the Team's roles.

Need for volunteers: Medium - researchers and writers

Find your fit - Events Team

Roles: Whereas the Content Team frames and generates the outline of an event, the Events Team develops it and makes it happen. If the Content Team is the spirit and brains of what we do, the Events Team is the heart and guts of it! All volunteers are expected to be involved in producing events in one way or another, even if only on the day.

The Events Team is really a collection of individual Event Teams, activated on a cyclical basis around events. Many team members, but not all, are also in other teams. The main functions are:

- ❑ Finalising the topic and speakers, planning the discussion, run sheet
- ❑ Working with the Marketing Team to promote the event
- ❑ Ticketing
- ❑ Liaising with the venue on all logistical details (time/date, promo, catering, tech, layout, checkin & ushering)
- ❑ On-the-day activities (tech production, recording, greeting, checkin, ushering, hosting guests)
- ❑ Post-event: marketing, feedback and review, content production and accounting

Volunteer profile: Anyone can join this team! No prior experience required, though previous event management experience is valued. This team is also the most flexible of all teams in terms of commitment, as the required times for various roles range from months to a single evening (on-the-day). Around events, the Events Team is the largest in TBD, and is the ideal fit for new volunteers.

Need for volunteers: High - event producers and managers, copywriters, digital marketers, ticketing and AV tech operators, greeters, ushers and VIP hosts/chaperones

Find your fit - Marketing Team

Roles: The Marketing Team is responsible for event marketing and ongoing or “master marketing”, including:

- ❑ Developing a consistent and appealing brand aesthetic
- ❑ Providing creative and brand input and assistance to other teams
- ❑ Running event-based campaigns to sell tickets and raise our profile and impact
- ❑ Managing social media between event campaigns
- ❑ Extracting value from high-quality recordings of events, creating and using highlight reels and short clips on social media and building the website archive
- ❑ Establishing and building relationships with mainstream media

Volunteer profile: Basic or advanced skills in digital marketing, copywriting, design, website management, audiovisual production or editing. Also PRs and ambassadors to spread the word.

Need for volunteers: High - for all of the above

Find your fit - Organisation Team

Roles: The Organisation Team is like the Human Resources team of any other organisation, but with a little bit more responsibility in other areas. In addition to managing the recruitment, induction and training of volunteers, the organisation team also:

- ❑ Oversees information and communication sharing throughout TBD, such as managing the Google Drive and creating WhatsApp Groups
- ❑ Matching new and existing volunteers with teams and tasks
- ❑ Documenting processes and structures to help the organisation grow, e.g. Volunteer Induction Pack, operating manual for running events and other key functions
- ❑ Researching and implementing IT platforms and services to increase productivity and capability

Volunteer profile: While no particular skills are essential, an aptitude for building simple human-friendly systems and a willingness to roll your sleeves up are. Having leadership or management experience in other organisations, particularly volunteer organisations, is desirable. This team is multidisciplinary, so you don't have to be an aspiring, current or former HR rep to contribute!

Need for additional volunteers: Medium - mainly people to write organisational documents and research and implement IT systems (CRM, CMS)

Find your fit - Governance Team

Roles: The Governance Team undertakes all the compliance, legal, accounting and most administration functions for TBD, including:

- ❑ Government registrations and reporting (Dept of Justice, ATO, ABR, ACNC)
- ❑ Accounting and reporting to the Management Committee
- ❑ Acting as secretariat for the Management Committee
- ❑ Arranging insurance
- ❑ Advising and dealing with any legal matters

Volunteer profile: As this team deals with more specialised tasks, skills and experience in accounting and law are favoured over others. This does not mean, though, that volunteers without those skills cannot contribute to this team.

Need for additional volunteers: Low (lean, small team is adequate at this stage)

Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right. Jane Goodall

Find your fit - Queensland Talks

Roles: [Queensland Talks](#) is a seminal project outside TBD's own event production activities - a unique, aggregated online calendar to promote ideas-based discussion events in SE Queensland (including our own, but mostly others). This is expected to have multiple benefits for TBD, participating organisations and the community generally. Try finding or submitting an intelligent discussion event on one of the existing online calendars!

The first version isn't much to look at but it will be populated, developed and promoted actively and will build into quite a thing over the rest of the year and beyond. It will be spun out with its own website sooner rather than later (still owned and maintained by The Brisbane Dialogues).

Activities:

- Populating the calendar manually with relevant events
- Working with other event producers to set up a process for adding entries on Queensland Talks as part of their standard event promotion
- Developing the technical and web platform
- Promoting it on social media and via EDM and PR

Volunteer profile: digital natives who can do one or more of the above - data administrators, business development and account management types to work with event producers, web developers, digital marketers. Work can be parcelled out in small, non-urgent amounts to fit with busy lives.

Need for additional volunteers: High - for all of the above

Communications in The Brisbane Dialogues



Online Communications

Virtual meetings of all teams are held weekly or fortnightly in the early evenings, Mon or Wed. By becoming a volunteer, you will need to become familiar with four main services.

- Google Drive - where all documents and some media are stored and collaborated on
- Google Calendar - used to schedule meetings and as the back end of Queensland Talks
 - Google Meet - used for most team meetings
- WhatsApp - the primary method of collaboration between team meetings, preferred to email

Offline Communications

- We occasionally have larger team meetings in congenial places like the Sync Room at The Paddo, or the Cellar at C'est Bon in the Mater precinct
- Our private discussion group, First Tuesday Club, is a monthly opportunity for volunteers and supporter to meet up informally before and after the main discussion

Further Info and Offers to Volunteer



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The aim of an argument or discussion should not be victory, but progress.

Joseph Joubert