

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Dear committee,

I would like to thank the new government for asking the question?
Why won't people work for free!

Very few Australians get to make decisions and these committees give us lowly humans a chance to record our opinion and have it on the record and I hope my view will be read and taken on board.

Nobody should be asked to do risky unpaid work! Not in 2025 in a very high cost, highly privatised country.

If people are dropping off doing unpaid work, maybe they can't afford to do unpaid work due to costs as well as working in other paid jobs to cover living costs and just pay their bills.

We don't ask unskilled politicians to work for free, so why should we as a society expect anyone to risk their life for free.

In all of the terms of reference the usage of word volunteering appears a lot.
Volunteering is unpaid work. The word volunteer is used by the political class so the unpaid worker feels valued.

I don't do volunteering. I do probably, as I work for free producing food on a horticulture farm.

Many years ago I was a victim of crime and felt let down by the very well paid Queensland police force and unskilled very well paid politician at the time.

So we had Ian Davies visit Gympie and help set up victims of crime to supply an unpaid service for victims of crime.

There was a need for that job, but who wants to answer a phone of victim of crime or deal with other people's trauma for free. There was no where to turn as a victim to deal with the crime and after being victim blamed by the Queensland police force, local MP and society generally. Those were the days when it was not a political advantage to have victims. I had

to feel shame and guilt that I was a victim. I did not do all I could to not be a victim.

Things have changed now and the political class are blaming the youth for having a society full of victims of crime.

I believe that the political class have failed when a charity has to be set up and unpaid workers are needed to supply an essential service or any service.

If I may use a recent event to explain that when a service is provided by private business, that service asks for very large remuneration.

There is such a thing as aged care specialist. This service requires \$4500 for 6 months to do paperwork for a government body (services Australia) because the federal government have made aged care very convoluted. This aged care specialist also liaises with heavily subsidised government industry(aged care centres). \$4500 to deal with government. This service is not done by unpaid workers that provide a service because government has failed and apparently there was a need for people to get help with services Australia . We pay federal politicians a lot of money and we have to pay \$4500 to navigate services Australia.

So this service was invented due to a need. A charity wasn't set up. The government created a business model for the poor to feel overwhelmed by a government body.

Unpaid workers do not get paid while they risk their life or help others. Which means that all these unpaid workers are not paid Keating/Costello compulsory superannuation.

We pay politicians a wage with a very large superannuation, but we undervalue unpaid work, that there is no legislation to force any government to pay compulsory superannuation so that the unpaid workers don't retire in poverty.

If I may also use an image of a Gympie charity who poor shamed me as I don't hold a Keating private pension.

This charity used unpaid workers who were not paid a wage, which meant Keating / Costello compulsory superannuation was not put into a private age pension account. So the poor unpaid workers may end up needing an age pension due to doing so much unpaid work. This charity set up by a local financial planner has recently decided to close it down. Maybe this "charity" was struggling to find unpaid workers to work for free. Because this charity had another business she gets paid and invests in shares and she does that so she is not a "drain" on the next generation.



This type of thinking is very widely held in Australia and by many Australians. Australia is a seasoned poor shaming country and poor shaming is worse in safe national party seats. The view is people do not deserve an age pension as they have blown all their wages. If only we all stopped wasting money in the economy. Just put all our wages into Keating's private pension? But unpaid workers can't put any money in their private pension.

The problem with charities is they don't pay a wage and therefore the unpaid worker is not paid 12% Keating / Costello compulsory superannuation. No charity is compelled to pay Keating/ Costello superannuation as the unpaid worker is not paid a wage for their very skilled role providing an essential service.

If there is a job/skill that human is providing or doing, our fellow human needs to be paid. The unpaid worker has all sorts of costs when providing a service to the community, but not much or not any of the costs are paid back to unpaid worker.

An unskilled overpaid politician is not only paid a very large publicly funded wage, they are also given all sorts of publicly funded allowances. We don't expect a politician to turn up for a photo op at a charity for free or for politician to pay for fuel or food if they venture out of office.

We would not need all sorts of unpaid workers if politicians didn't fail in their role in making sure if there is an important life saving service needed, that government makes sure they pay these essential workers a high wage in line with a politician.

A business needs to follow all sorts of rules to make sure workers get to go home. No essential worker should be expected to be out of pocket, or risk their life for free. That is such a dated model that has been created and promoted over many decades.

It seems the most bizarre business model that successive governments at all 3 levels have created an industry in this space. 3 tiers of Governments have failed to supply an essential service and outsource to unpaid workers.

We remunerate 3 tiers of government and all of the staff needed to manage 3 tiers of government, but for some reason the warm empathetic unlucky people have to step up and work for free in an essential service.

If there is need for any kind of service, the government should pay a wage to the human that is supplying that service.

At a federal level, the current government is not going to pay all unpaid workers to supply a service. The current government opted to give 4 million!

Yep!

4 million to get a strategy to keep people working for free. Unpaid work is illegal in a business, but the unskilled overpaid political class have a business model to keep people supplying a service for free. How come government can ask their fellow humans to work for free, when a private business can not ask their fellow humans to work for free?




In a rich, highly privatised, high cost country like Australia, Having lots of charities supplying a service because 3 tiers of government have failed is cheap vote winner.

Cheap for governments as well. Governments don't need to supply a well paid work force to supply a service, they ask and force their fellow humans to work for free.

If working for free is so rewarding, why aren't we asking politicians to work for free? Maybe we would get better humans in politics if they were not paid.

See below how sitting politicians get brownie points when they get promote a crumb that a charity has had to beg for.

Charities that supply a service can have a crack at a begging bowl called stronger communities program. So many picture opportunities for unskilled over paid politicians to get when an organisation has begged for a crumb. And we paid for the politician to visit the lucky recipient who got a morsel. 

We apparently have an international volunteer day. This day is celebrated by unskilled overpaid politicians and they can share happy pictures celebrating the unpaid workers stepping up. The politicians don't offer to pay these important people a wage like theirs. The very well paid political class are offering a begging bowl. Look! More happy snaps of

beggars getting a certificate.



Sitting state National party politician did a Facebook post.

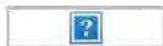
“Volunteers back Queenslanders and we back them”

Tony backs them so much that he doesn't pay them a high wage and instead gives them a Facebook post on international volunteers day.

Tony then goes on to say

“Today we acknowledge and thank every volunteer who gives up their time to assist their community and keep us safe”

Tony acknowledges our fellow humans do unpaid work to keep us safe. We pay politicians a very large wage who have created an unpaid industry to keep us safe. Maybe we need to sack unskilled overpaid politicians as they have created a country that has made it unsafe and we need unpaid slaves to keep us safe.



It is now law that you can disconnect from your boss as championed by the sitting prime minister.

If you are not paid for 24 hours, you should not be on call 24 hours a day, Anthony says. Many unpaid skilled workers are on call 24 hr a day, 7 days a week and they get paid zero.



It is a political vote winner to have so many charities and unpaid workers are very cheap. Instead of politicians advocating to pay a high wage to every essential worker, they opt to create an unpaid worker industry to get lots of photo ops.

As a society we have normalised unpaid essential work. I find it bizarre.

During Covid many unpaid workers dropped off as they were forced by unskilled overpaid politicians to get a vaccine. Why would unpaid workers get a vax that may kill them or harm them and work for free?

We have a very large cohort of very rich babyboomers that have retired or about to retire. Some of retired folk are pulling 90000 per annum , pay zero tax and we young tax payers help these millionaires with a lot of terrific tax payer handouts. Perhaps unskilled over paid politicians should ask the retired millionaires to step up and give back to society.

The young ones should not be forced to work for free when they struggle to keep a roof over their head. The young ones are forced to work for a charity due to federal government rules. It is not us young ones that are a burden.

Aged care is massive cost to the federal and state budgets after 3 decades of private age pensions and the money will be printed even after billions every year going to tax concessions for private pensions.



My kids and I are giving terrific handouts to people who are pulling more money from their private pension than us young ones earn. Non retired folk are paying slave tax from 18200 and expected to work for free as essential services have been outsourced by 3 tiers of government.

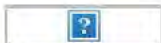
A target audience to step up and do unpaid work, should be those with wealth and time on their hands. The Australian economy is cooked for young ones who have housing insecurity, job insecurity , zero wealth and access to zero publicly funded handouts. If society wants to feel safe, we should pay the people who keep us safe.



The only people who should be working for free are those who have wealth and time on their hands. Until the Australian economy turns from an unproductive house flipping economy, the unpaid worker industry will continue to suffer, as it should. If poor people don't do essential unpaid work, the governments will force them through different legislation.

Many spruik Superannuation a private age pension and a man made publicly backed thing to make sure the retired folk don't live in poverty.

1 in 6 kids are living in poverty according to a charity called The Smith Family . But there is not a 4 trillion publicly backed private fund so that no child in Australia experiences poverty. Ava will miss out at school thanks to poverty and a rich country needs a charity to make sure a child gets a good start to education?



Every time a charity rings for donations, I tell them that government has failed if you are ringing to pull at my heart strings and I will not be donating as I am a poor horticulture farmer that works for crumbs.

Rural fire service is always ringing for donations. A charity that relies on unpaid, highly skilled life savers and a charity that has to keep me safe in case of a fire is begging me for donations has to beg for money to keep us safe.

We pay politicians a very large publicly funded wage and who have failed so many of us, should be the people asked to work for free. Charities chock full in unpaid workers that have to supply a life saving service should be paid a politicians wage.

If this government wants our fellow humans to keep us safe, pay them!

I look forward to reading submissions and this committee response to our fellow humans dropping off unpaid work.

If there is a job in Australia, it deserves remuneration. Pay our wonderful unpaid workers. Instead of a happy snap and a certificate and a Facebook post, remunerate our essential workers. Unproductive, divisive Politicians get paid to do photo ops and are lauded by the masses. But our unpaid life savers step up for free.

Very few people get to be job lucky in public office and very few of us get to have an opinion and have it documented.

I would appreciate my opinion to be accepted and published so that Australia weans itself of the business model of asking our fellow humans to risk their life for free.

Madonna