

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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RURAL FIRE SERVICE QLD. We provide a Volunteer emergency service to the people of QLD and elsewhere within Australia. We go without paid work, we use our annual leave, we miss out on spending time with our families, give up our weekends, do hot, heavy and at times unhealthy work to serve our communities. We are treated like 2nd class citizens by many (not all, but many) paid RFSQ staff, QFD staff, QLD Parks and Wildlife and our Government. We are supplied with substandard PPE, work conditions, and Fire Appliances that are minimalistic in the areas we need them and excessive in areas we don't. The lack of input or voice we have as Volunteers to improve our own organisation and make valid improvements at State, Area and Brigade level is, and should be seen as embarrassing. Times have changed from 40 years ago. Many families can't afford the lost income or lost time from their households. Many families are dual income families just to make ends meet and this means both parents are time poor as well as suffering financial pressures. The current model is not sustainable and is well and truly beginning to fail. We have an ageing demographic of Volunteers as these people are often not in the financial hardship of the younger Volunteers and most no longer have the family time constraints of our younger Volunteers. With increasing fire and storm seasons on the horizon and more frequent long fire calls already in swing, we as

Queenslanders are staring down the barrel of a failure of our Rural Fire Service..... Then what??? We pay additional QFD and Parks firefighters to fill the void??? I'm happy with that, I don't need to give up my time and take a financial hit if we have other paid Firefighters to take up the fight. I only Volunteer because I feel that if we don't, it is the Queensland people that will suffer. And because I'm a good fellow human, I don't want to see that, so myself and thousands of other Volunteers keep on keeping on. But, maybe our Government and the paid RFSQ and QFD staff should respect that and help us out??? Isn't that what you all get paid to do in one way or another??? Support the Queensland people??? We are Queensland people too, and at the moment we seem to be the only one's donating our income and time to this cause. Perhaps a bit of a rethink is in order. There's many ways we could attract new recruits to RFSQ, through incentives, QLD Government could pay our rates and or pay our household insurance etc. As we are massively reducing insurance pay outs and claims through the work we do, not to mention the reduction in damage to infrastructure that comes at a massive cost to local and state governments. You guys have been reaping the rewards of Volunteer sacrifice for years!!! Maybe start helping out those that help you!!! But you also need to listen to the people actually doing the work and listen to people outside of the South East. Central QLD / Capricorn region, where I live is already seeing fire behaviour normally seen in NSW and Victoria. We don't like asking for anything, but we need help and we need it now. We are resourceful people and we have many ideas to help support the RFDQ to support Queenslanders. Regards, Volunteer Firefighter.