

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submission to Queensland State Inquiry
Submission by: Ethan Barr
Submission Overview: I appreciate the opportunity to provide this submission to the Queensland State Inquiry. As an active volunteer and leader in the Queensland State Emergency Service (QSES), my recommendations focus on enhancing volunteer retention, operational readiness, and overall effectiveness in providing emergency response services.

1. Monetary Compensation for Volunteer Attendance
I propose the introduction of state and federal monetary compensation for SES volunteers who meet a set attendance rate.

- Rationale: Volunteers dedicate substantial time to training, activations, and community engagement while balancing personal and professional commitments. Financial compensation acknowledges their sacrifices, incentivises consistent attendance, and addresses potential financial barriers for those considering joining.
- Implementation Suggestion: A compensation framework tied to attendance thresholds, activation hours, or availability during critical periods could be developed, ensuring fairness while maintaining the voluntary spirit of the service.

2. Standardised Emergency Driving Legislation and Training
I recommend aligning Queensland's legislation to enable SES volunteers to receive emergency services driving training, similar to what is provided to other emergency service agencies.

- Rationale: During severe weather events or large-scale emergencies, timely response is critical. Allowing volunteers to safely and legally proceed to priority incidents under emergency driving conditions ensures faster response times and better outcomes for affected communities.
- Implementation Suggestion: A standardised training programme, tailored for SES volunteers, should focus on emergency vehicle operations and road safety, ensuring compliance with road laws and minimising risks to volunteers and the public.

These measures would not only enhance operational efficiency but also demonstrate recognition and support for the vital contributions SES volunteers provide to their communities. I am available to discuss these proposals further and provide insights based on my experiences in the QSES. Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely, Ethan Barr
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