

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland - call for submissions

1. The current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State;

- **As a Volunteer for more than 25 years, in a number of Organisations and now with Damini Women's Association of Qld Inc, I personally and as a leader feel that volunteering in Qld has got a lot of potential values and benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the State as a whole. These values and benefits include from my own experiences.**

- **Learn new skills**
- **Improve Mental Health**
- **Increase physical activity**
- **Meet new people**
- **Improves self-esteem**
- **Confidence – e.g.**

I have experienced Volunteering in general has given me a sense of self-worth and pride in my everyday life. Doing good work for good people and helping vulnerable women and children to learn new skills, sit with older people to improve their mental health and just listening to them give me a lot of satisfaction as a volunteer. On the personal note, I have to be empowered to empower others this I achieve by my regular exercise and meditation. Some support from Government would benefit both parties.

2. The views of volunteers, prospective volunteers and the volunteering sector on the current barriers to volunteering, including excessive legislative and regulatory burdens and other restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers.

From a volunteer's point of view, volunteering can be very time consuming when you have commitments, family, and personal hobbies and above all it can be very expensive plus many other restrictions such as:

- **Study commitments**
- **We have not been asked to volunteer**
- **Fitting in with other people**
- **Fear of not been treated equally/fairly**
- **Bullying and shunning e.g:**

I have encountered introducing new ideas or initiatives can face pushback, both from within the organisation and the community at large. This becomes a fear of not talking about your initiative or program. Volunteering is like a party, where everyone is invited and it is very wild, unpredictable journey where you end up discovering more about the world and yourself than you ever imagined, it is good for your personal growth, but it can be emotionally drained out, frustrations, time and money and confrontation with other people's reality. This reality can be messy,

emotional and sometimes very uncomfortable that you never want to be there again. This is all part and parcel of the real world's volunteering.

Volunteering can be expensive, while volunteers give so much of their energy without remuneration, in return, it brings them together with like-minded people in their community to build connections, make new friendships, gain invaluable skills and educate themselves in a field they love for a project program or project.

This is where the project fails when you don't have money to start or organise a program or project.

Sometimes the volunteers are asked to visit homes, prepare a report without been compensated for their time, sometimes this can be 1 full day, home visits, preparing reports etc.

I personally feel a lot of pressure on this and hardly find time to do the real work that I should be doing as a volunteer, then what happens I lose interest and totally ignore.

3. The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience.

My current experience, motivations and challenges as a volunteer both personally and from the organisations point of view is that I have:

- **Learnt time management and aligning with the right opportunities**
- **Faced hurdles that made my experience less fulfilling.**
- **Understanding these challenges and knowing how to navigate them have enhanced my volunteer journey, made it more impactful for both me and the organisation that I founded, Damini Women's Association of Qld Inc.**

This gives me the opportunity to:

- **To help others less fortunate than us**
- **To bring joy to others through our programs and events**
- **To see the world from a fresh perspective through the eyes of the people you are helping**
- **To learn and practice generosity**
- **To provide a sense of being, a reason for existence**
- **To create a mindset of abundance**

4. The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, genders, age groups, abilities and locations, and opportunities to improve volunteering participation, accessibility and experience for these groups.

- **Language barriers**
- **Difference communication styles or preferences**
- **People with hearing loss**
- **Prejudice**
- **Discrimination**
- **Cultural conflicts**
- **Stereotyping**

It is imperative to address these challenges before they become an issue/problematic.

Some of these challenges are easily avoided if people support the diversification of culture and involve them in their community with open arms. Secondly it is important to be aware of cultural differences and respecting different values and beliefs. Finally, building relationship based on trust and mutual respect.

5. The extent, effectiveness and efficiency of current government support at all levels for the volunteering sector in Queensland and sustainable opportunities for improvement.

This is the first time that I have been invited to Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland for a submission. I thank Mr Peter Russo, MP, Member for Toohey for giving me this opportunity to be part of this process.

- **So far Damini Women's Association of Qld Inc has been supported by three levels of Government. State Government has been very little for our projects, however we received few fundings from Gambling funding for our equipment some time ago when Steve Kilburn was the MP, Member for Chatsworth, we received a lot of support to one of the other organisations that I was involved and obtained Road Access in Mt Cotton Road with Mr Kilburn's support as a volunteer.**
 - **Federal Government has been supporting us to organise Australia Day**
 - **Brisbane City Council support us in our International Women's Day and Connecting with Lights and Colours. State Government's funding has been knocked down each time my application was lodged.**

It means that we had to reduce our program, and the projects associated with that program. Sometimes we went out of pocket even we did sell tickets. Mr Peter Russo, MP, Member for Toohey and Federal Member for Moreton has been our pillar of support for these programs and plus the support of our local councillor for Chandler Ward and Member for Chatsworth, Hon Steve Minnikin for Raffle prizes.

6. Opportunities to increase emergency response volunteering in Queensland, including how to optimise the engagement, support and integration of volunteers assisting with natural disasters and community recovery.

We are a Women's organisation and most of them are seniors. So, I have very little to contribute to this

7. Opportunities for the Queensland Government to leverage all portfolios to support growth in volunteering across Queensland, including through hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games;

Wonderful opportunity to all volunteering organisations and other volunteers.

8. First Nations peoples volunteering, including in remote and discrete communities, and the role of First Nations volunteering in Closing the Gap; and

As a Volunteer both personally and from organisations point of view and as a professional worker in government. I have learnt that First Nations people are very sensitive, and they have their own set of rules and regulations before you can enter their boundary. This is because of the fear that they have encountered and now the government is trying to be volunteering in Closing the Gap.

- **It is important to understand them and their culture**
- **Create a culturally safe workplace for first Nations People, so that they are not scared and wipe out the fear.**
- **Involving the First Nations People in your programs and activities not just the one to do the acknowledgement to the country.**
- **Provide opportunity to First Nations people to take leading role in organising an event or program where we all can go and support them**
- **Learn the First Nations culture and a few common words**

Through my experience working in diverse communities, I have built relationship and maintain them. I also invite the First Nations people in each of my programs and events. Some of them do good community work for their own communities and collect items from other communities.

9. Any other relevant matters, including academic and other diverse sources, and any relevant reports and reviews at the national level and across other states and territories.

My only concern is that when you go to university in the hope that you will find a job that you have studied while working and studied under their SARAS system. Once you are graduated, and you are not recognised given the opportunity even as a volunteer to fulfil one the roles. If you place the right people with right qualifications in the right jobs, it will solve half the problem of government in recruiting the right candidate and working as a volunteers.

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