

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

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## Volunteering

- In our local community, volunteer organisations have long played an important role in developing community improvements, sporting organisations, social and cultural activities, preservation of community history and traditions. Organisations seem to have flourished during the 1950s – 1960s with some still having foundation members, but many have folded up due to changing societal conditions and lack of new members. (Some of the contributing factors include: prevalence of shift work, both family members working full time, likelihood of transfers, reluctance to accept positions that may lead to legal proceedings. (Blue Card compliance is seen as a stumbling block.)
- Benefits of volunteering include the social interaction with like minded people of all age groups, the learning of new skills, the opportunity to pass on skills to new members.
- What might help with encouraging new members?  
Organisation/administration needs to be a paid position – probably under local council. It is always difficult to fill positions of Secretary & Treasurer. People prefer to follow their interest, not get stuck in administration.
- Fundraising: This is always an ongoing issue. Insurance (property and 3<sup>rd</sup> party) is always necessary and generally means at least \$1000 pa. then there are rates and electricity for most organisations so that a great deal of time and effort is given to raising funds. For groups who own a building the upkeep can prove to be very expensive and involve seeking funding from various grants.
- What can be done? Many Museums/Historical Societies are incorporated into a local council run information centre or museum. Admission charges usually apply but given that the funds raised are no where near enough to cover operating costs I wonder why they are retained. Volunteers can operate under the umbrella of the council – perhaps as "Friends of the" Museum/Library/Theatre or Station as the case may be. This would relieve volunteers of the administrative tasks and fundraising so they can concentrate on their area of expertise.
- The big question is **How much does the community value the contribution of the volunteer organisation?**

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