

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No: 65
Submitted by: Matthew Gartrell
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Addressing the pressing issue affecting our communities in Queensland—the notable decline in volunteer participation, evidenced by a concerning 10 percent drop in recent statistics. This decline can be attributed to several interrelated factors. Firstly, we must acknowledge the economic pressures faced by our citizens. With living expenses soaring to unprecedented levels, many individuals are compelled to work longer hours simply to provide for their families. This reality leaves little room for volunteering, as families require support and attention in these challenging times. Moreover, we are witnessing a demographic shift within our volunteer base. Volunteer organisations have traditionally relied on the enthusiasm and commitment of younger generations. However, many young individuals today exhibit a reluctance to engage in community service unless motivated by personal experiences of hardship, such as those encountered during natural disasters. It is crucial to recognize that the perceived benefits of volunteering may not resonate with them in the same way as they do with previous generations. In our fast-paced society, where rapid change is the norm, the patience required for meaningful volunteer work often seems out of reach. Today's culture increasingly prioritises instant gratification, which can undermine the long-term commitment necessary for impactful community service. We must address this mindset if we are to inspire a renewed interest in volunteering. Finally, it is important to consider the demographics of current volunteers. Many are from blue-collar backgrounds, shaped by values instilled by family and mentors who emphasised the importance of giving back. Unfortunately, this spirit of community and collaboration has lacked, particularly as individuals have been compelled to focus more on personal and family needs, a trend exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, I hope this insight into the challenges facing volunteerism in Queensland will inform our discussions and prompt us to develop strategies that encourage community engagement. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.