

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Queensland Parliament, RE: Submission on Volunteering Challenges in Queensland am writing to highlight the ongoing struggles faced by volunteer organisations in Queensland, particularly concerning the essential training, support, and marketing required for volunteers. As volunteering continues to play a vital role in our community, the current challenges we face—especially around securing adequate funding, community support, and outreach—threaten the sustainability of volunteer programs and the well-being of the volunteers who dedicate their time and effort. One of the key obstacles we face is the difficulty in securing sponsorship or funding from local businesses or community members to support volunteer training. Despite our best efforts to engage with the community and seek partnerships, including reaching out for financial assistance or even discounts on essential training courses (such as first aid or mental health first aid), we have struggled to secure meaningful support. This lack of sponsorship is particularly concerning, as training in these areas is vital to ensuring that our volunteers feel safe, competent, and supported in their roles. As the manager of a Learner Driver Mentor Program, I see firsthand how critical it is to provide volunteers with the training and resources they need. Volunteers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to handle challenging situations and to care for their own well-being, as well as the well-being of those they serve. However, without financial backing to fund training courses such as first aid and mental health first aid, we risk putting our volunteers in situations where they feel unprepared or unsupported. The lack of adequate training not only jeopardises their safety but also undermines their confidence, which in turn diminishes the effectiveness of the programs we are trying to run. Unfortunately, this issue is compounded by the lack of recognition from some local businesses, who are either unable or unwilling to provide the necessary support for these initiatives. While corporate sponsorship may sometimes be directed towards programs that can enhance a company's marketing presence, volunteer organisations like ours often do not receive the same level of attention or investment. This imbalance only further exacerbates the challenges we face in keeping programs running smoothly and ensuring that our volunteers are equipped to succeed. Another major challenge is the lack of funding to market and promote our volunteer programs within the community. At this stage, we rely solely on word of mouth to attract new volunteers. This method, while valuable, is not sustainable in the long term and does not provide the necessary reach to engage a larger or more diverse pool of potential volunteers. We need proper funding to enable targeted marketing campaigns that will raise awareness about the importance of volunteering and encourage more individuals to get involved. Without these resources, we struggle to reach the wider community, which ultimately impacts the recruitment and retention of volunteers for our programs. With statistics showing a decline in volunteers, this funding is more crucial than ever. At the core of this issue is the need for sustained, flexible funding that acknowledges the full scope of volunteer needs, including the provision of crucial training, resources, and community outreach. Volunteers are the backbone of many vital community programs, and it is essential that we invest in their well-being, safety, development, and visibility. It is not enough to simply treat volunteers as "free" resources; they deserve the same level of care, support, and investment as any other critical community worker. We urgently need funding that supports not just the operations of volunteer organisations, but also the safety, training, and community engagement efforts that help us attract and retain volunteers. Offering meaningful training opportunities, such as first aid and mental health first aid, is not just a luxury but a necessity for the sustainability of volunteer programs in Queensland. Additionally, funding for marketing and outreach efforts is essential to ensure that we

can engage a wider audience, sustain our programs, and grow the impact of volunteering in the community. In conclusion, I urge that greater attention be given to providing both financial and community support for volunteer programs, including the training of volunteers and outreach to the wider community. Without this investment, we risk losing the invaluable contributions of volunteers, and the programs they sustain, which ultimately impacts the broader community. Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. I look forward to any steps that can be taken to secure the future of volunteering in Queensland. Sincerely,

