

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members I have been for 40 years an Auxiliary Firefighter and also a RFS volunteer firefighter. From my experience can I offer the following suggestions: 1) Increase the tangible support to the employers of volunteers. This can be in the form of public recognition, training vouchers, relief from appropriate Govt charges (i.e. fire levy discount capped at \$ amount per volunteer). The employers, particularly small business in regional town wear the financial burden as much as the volunteers. Make it so the employer does not end up resenting the absence of their staff but rather encourage it. 2) Qld Govt could lead the way by rewarding regional employees who actively volunteer (or become auxiliary firefighters/ honorary QAS staff etc.) in regional and remote areas. This could be in the form of additional transfer credits for western service, additional leave entitlements etc. These staff can then continue with their skills as they transfer around the state. (Minimum hours/ contribution levels would apply) 3) Start early in High Schools with notion of contribution and serving. Actively promote things such as Emergency Services Cadets, surf lifesaving, Rural Fire service, QAS, and charity work in schools so there is a pathway to lifelong volunteering and service. Create Emergency Services Cadet units in State High Schools. 4) Provide a Govt volunteering portal where organisations and potential volunteers can be linked. Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.