

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No:	87
Submitted by:	Clifton Benchrest Shooting Club Inc
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

Clifton Benchrest Shooting Club Inc General Position on Volunteering in Queensland

Outline of our Club

Our Clifton Benchrest Shooting Club has been functioning since 2007 and currently has approx. 450 members, including about 50 junior (between 11 and 17 years inclusive) members. The Club relies totally on volunteers who constitute the small Management Committee and 30 or so members who give their time as Range Officers (ROs).

Each Club member must undertake a Firearms Safety Course before being able to apply for a Firearms Licence. AB licences are granted for rifle and shotgun; H licences are granted for handguns. Safety Courses must be undertaken and cost money, along with the actual licences. AB licences can be renewed every 10 years; H licences are renewed every 5 years. This area of our sport is tightly regulated and if a member misses out by one day on renewing, he or she must start the whole process of applying over again with the resultant payment of money. More volunteering time again.

When working bees are scheduled, there can be more general members turn up to empty lead from bullet catchers, to remove waste metal, and to take cans and bottles for recycling, etc. Our Club is situated in a very rural area without access to a reticulated water supply or rubbish removal service and is reliant on solar power, so all our waste must be removed by Club members.

Our website address is <https://www.cliftonbenchrest.org.au/>

General position on volunteer work within our Club

Our Club cannot function without the input of ROs and other volunteers. We are legally bound by Queensland Weapons Licensing (QWL) to adhere to the legislation, rules and regulations that govern our sport of target shooting. This includes, but is not restricted to, setting up, maintaining and updating, when necessary, the RO Manual, which contains the current documents which ROs consult regularly. Many volunteer hours are spent ensuring this updating is undertaken in a timely manner.

Apart from QWL rules and regulations, the Club also needs to consider the myriad health and safety considerations that are an integral part of running the Club, including volunteering to undertake First Aid training.

The important role of volunteers in our Club

Our Constitution requires our Club to hold at least four (4) Management Committee meetings per year, plus the Annual General Meeting. In reality, there are more meetings held than this bare minimum.

There is continual recruitment for ROs because people's circumstances change unexpectedly, and some are then unable to continue volunteering. ROs are legally required by QWL to be available before any shooting day can take place.

Rifle and shotgun days require at least two (2) ROs on their days (except for competition days, see later) and pistol days require at least three (3) ROs.

Safety is the most important aspect of operating a Club such as ours and these ROs have each undergone three (3) hours induction initially and then two or three days 'shadowing' the experienced ROs to gain the required competence and familiarity with the role. ROs are also required to attend planned refresher courses, and they are expected to perform RO duties four (4) times per year to maintain their qualification.

Some ROs, of course, saddle up for more than that; their welcome contributions are never ignored.

Our Club is tightly governed by QWL paperwork, which the ROs must have each member or visitor complete, according to whether the member or visitor holds a Firearm Licence or is unlicensed. ROs must sight the Licence and hold it in the safe if the shooter is hiring one of the Club's firearms, for example. So, our Club must maintain a QWL Licensed Register, a QWL Unlicensed Register and a Visitor Register. We must store these completed documents in the locked container on site, so they are not available to those not entitled to have access to them.

The volunteer Secretary is responsible for ensuring spare unused documents for these purposes is available on the Club's shooting days and other days allocated to school shooting and police training.

Our shooting Range is utilized regularly during the year by Police officers from Warwick and Toowoomba for their specialized training, and ROs remain in close contact with this aspect of the Club's activities.

Necessity to maintain Range Officers

The benefit of our Club's 100% volunteer contributions to the future of the Club is immeasurable. When members are asked to consider putting their hands up, there are not too many knock backs. Members can see how their input takes the pressure off those few already volunteering and gives each of them a more personal involvement rather than just turning up, shooting and leaving.

Such manual involvement in the actual nitty gritty of Club management engenders positive role model engagement to encourage further members to join the team and make a difference as ROs.

There was a time, not so long ago, when one (1) Club member took on the whole burden of ROing, no one else had stepped up. (Since then, measures have been taken to rectify this oversight.) This was not beneficial to his health; he has since had tumors removed from his brain. Fortunately, he turned up on 2 February 2025 and shot, which is a great outcome.

Having to hold a Blue Card (Working with Children) qualification is another paper-based requirement that puts more pressure on a volunteer who would much prefer a simpler entry into volunteering at our Club. Our RO volunteers are happy to apply for a Blue Card, but a simpler process would not go astray. We have about 50 junior members who need to be catered for in the matter of ROs holding current Blue Cards.

One RO is required to sight the shooter's licences and to sign shooters in, inside the Club house, in addition to the 2/3 ROs needed on the firing line.

Another volunteer contribution in our Club is a RO who takes on the responsibility of coordinating a member's new application for a Weapon Licence, helping the applicant through the range of processes that seem to increase month by month. This means many more unnecessary volunteer hours. There are many complaints about applying for a licence.

Travel and time required by volunteers on a regular basis

All this volunteer work is undertaken mainly on weekends – rifle and shotgun on Sundays and pistol on Saturdays. Not to mention time taken up with meetings and working bees to maintain the grounds and buildings in good shape. Working bees are held on Saturdays, two or three times a year, on those days not taken up with shooting.

The third Sunday of the month is benchrest rifle competition day when five (5) or six (6) ROs are required to run the day successfully, considering the extra bench rotations, scoring, etc. that need to be undertaken. Pistol competition is held on two (2) Saturdays per month and shotgun competition is held on the second Sunday of every month.

Each member/volunteer RO/Committee member must travel in their own vehicle, up to 120 km or more each round trip. The Club is not able to reimburse them from funds that are required for normal outlays, e.g. insurances, rents, rates etc. This volunteer dedication demonstrates commitment to the Club and fellow members.

Grant applications already made

Several grant applications have been made for reimbursement of personal fuel costs relating to these substantial volunteer commitments, but these so far have been unsuccessful. We keep trying. The Club has lost more than one RO because of these costs.

Local school students and those from further away

In Terms 3, 4 and 5, school students from Clifton State High School (CSHS) utilize our Range for shooting practice on Friday afternoons with a CSHS teacher overseeing with two (2) of our Club ROs in attendance.

During the year, two (2) very popular and successful Interschool shoots are held on spare Saturdays at our Range to accommodate the friendly rivalry between CSHS students and other students from across SE Queensland.

Wish List

A 'wish' list to further help look after the health and welfare of our volunteers includes lining the tin Club house and installing air conditioning. This would lessen the impact of noise from the firing line which is 25 m or less away. Grants are sought for this project as well.

admin@cliftonbenchrest.org.au