

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

**Submission No:** 89  
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**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### **Submitter Comments:**

Firstly, a guiding principle; A volunteer should not expect to be paid, but also should not be out of pocket because they volunteer. Volunteer training needs to be highly relevant, not onerous, able to be delivered by flexible delivery methods and recognise individual current expertise. Protocols and procedures need to be developed that are streamlined and do not place unrealistic expectations on volunteers especially in terms of record keeping. Communication needs to be effective and prompt. Acknowledging the receipt of emails and texts within a short period of time is essential. My experience has seen frequent lags of up to many weeks before a response has been forthcoming. Deployment of volunteers during an emergency should see those volunteers paid their "normal" income by their employer who would receive prompt reimbursement from government. (I am retired and so would not receive any payment, but I have seen younger members lose days of pay during recent large scale fire emergencies. This should not be allowed to occur.). The increase in responsibility for funding Rural Fire Brigades by government has been very welcome. This has allowed volunteer members to focus on training, hazard reduction activities and community engagement and education. Volunteers must be recognised as being professional and capable responders and not be treated as inferior to paid members of government emergency responders. Incentives such as reduced travel costs (eg. Travel-train) or other benefits could also encourage the recruitment and retention of volunteers.