

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No: 119
Submitted by: Lockyer Cricket Association
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

This submission is made with respect to cricket, but it would be broadly applicable. Lockyer cricket is in regional/rural qld. Recently, a cricket test match game at the MCG in the series; Australia V India smashed the all time attendance record. Massive crowds. The "big bash" final in Hobart sold out. In fact, it did so twice. Big crowds are the norm at Big Bash. The better cricketers get paid millions to play in limited over franchises all around the world. These cricketers didn't just magically appear. They came from somewhere. In whatever State you look, you'll find that National and State representatives from the country, far exceed those from capital cities. (Bradman from cootamundra; Taylor from Leeton; Walters from Dungog; Lee from Wollongong; etc). The City metropolitan cricket clubs have many paid staff; coaches and administrators. In the bush, we have none of that. Our dads or retired players are the coaches; the wives or girlfriends run the canteens; a local farmer mows the playing field. It is all by volunteers. Committee positions are extremely hard to fill. People are not much interested in that stuff. They don't have the time, skills, nor inclination. They just want to turn up for a game on Saturday and have a few beers afterwards. And Committee work is very unrewarding and undervalued. If there is feedback, it is more likely a complaint or dispute. And here's where State and Federal Governments have massively warped priorities in respect of funding. Art galleries, opera, ballet and the like receive millions in grants and subsidies from State and Federal governments. But, their constituency would not be one tenth, or one hundredth of the sporting community. Here, in regional QLD where we are trying to sustain cricket and to maintain proper levels of governance and compliance etc, don't get a cent. Qld cricket has an infrastructure support fund, but it requires applicants to find 50%. What a joke. If we want \$40,000 to upgrade nets, we have to provide \$20,000. So, it is an illusion. It is unavailable. Regularly, various programs are brought to our attention, which may offer funds, but they are directed to fashionable "political" themes like diversity, or inclusion, or strategic planning. It is b/s. There has never been a person who has been turned away, or not made welcome, or experienced any sort of isolation, or felt "in danger" because of ethnicity, age, gender, social status, disability, or anything else. We make it work for everyone. We don't need any guidelines, or KPI's or training. We've just done it for 100 years without issues. Think back to the Bradman era. Were cricket programs conducted seamlessly? Of course. I've read mountains of stuff about volunteering having its own rewards; of some "feel good" benefits. Perhaps, at the margin. But, for most, it is thankless, time consuming and onerous. The big controlling bodies, like (for cricket), Cricket Australia and QLD Cricket need to recognise they need to do much more to support and sustain volunteers. In a MATERIAL way. Not thank you cards which don't exist anyway. They should consider/implement more in the way of event tickets, gift cards, shop discounts, branded merchandise and maybe (Regional) volunteer dinners. Apart from Capital cities, which are not primary nurseries for the player resource they rely upon, they do little to support the massive machinery which keeps the business running. We fend for ourselves. Governments need to think of sport with the same allegiance they extend to the arts; i.e funding support. Controlling bodies need to grasp that despite all their beautiful sounding strategic plans, like "growth" and "sustainability", as well as diversity and inclusivity etc etc are unrealizable without investment. Since programs are delivered by volunteers, then more investment is required. Footnote. "Volunteering" for rural fire brigades and emergency services, for which citizens gladly give their time, and which gives them personal satisfaction, is monumentally different to sustaining sports. To make sense of an Inquiry, such as this, it is not a case of "one size fits all". The various streams of volunteering are totally different, necessitating very different considerations.

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Addendum. I have previously submitted a submission from the Lockyer Cricket Association. The point I wish to amplify is that "volunteering" is not a generic concept; it is not shared by a wide group in a similar way. It is not shared in any coherent fashion. It has no consistency nor similarity. Take for example cricketers in the Lockyer Valley, If asked to volunteer in the volunteer fire brigade, or search and rescue team, many would step up. Asked to volunteer on a cricket committee then probably no-one would. So, there is no issue of being pro or anti volunteering; it is task specific. Many parents would not volunteer for their school P & C, but would happily bake a cake and serve on the school cake table on election day. The topic is too broad in its scope. Life savers are volunteers because they enjoy it. Ditto wild life carers. Ditto puppy trainers for guide dogs. etc etc. But getting people to serve on Committees to do the necessary work, like Secretary, Treasurer etc is an entirely different scenario. There is really no need to inquire into volunteering where there are no major issues; why waste time on a non-issue. There should be an "Inquiry" into situations where sufficient volunteers cannot be found or is a serious problem. You could expend time unnecessarily.