

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No: 144
Submitted by: Coral Carmichael
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I have been a volunteer for most of my life. These are my reasons for not particularly wanting to volunteer any more.

1. Federal Government DiscriminationThe first and most important reason is that the federal government discriminates in favour of people who work in a paid job beyond the retirement age when applying the Income Test. I am being treated like a second class citizen because I care to help other people.
2. Low IncomeSecondly, Centrelink payments do not keep pace with inflation and the costs associated with volunteering are prohibitive. it costs money to be a volunteer (fuel, materials, public transport, wear and tear on vehicles).
3. Hatred Emanating from the UnemployedOn a number of occasions, I have been treated badly because I volunteer my time and resources. There are lots of older people who cannot find good paid work and they see volunteers as a reason for their lack of employment opportunities. I believe this is a valid concern.
4. Discrimination by the General PublicBelieve it or not, there are people around who say really horrible things to volunteers because it makes them feel bad about their personal selfishness. They do nothing for anyone and may create problems for their neighbours. Comments include: "You're not a real person." "You're just a [REDACTED]." 5. Failure of Government to Support the PoorToday's cost of living is not met by wages received by low income families. Centrelink payments never keep pace with the true rate of inflation, which is why there are so many people forced to live in the streets. I also do not believe that women parenting alone are given a fair go by the Family Court or Child Support Agency.
6. The Top 20% of the Society Thrive While the Poor are Forced to Support One AnotherWe should not be seeing tax breaks for high income earners while the number of poor increases. Some high income households think they should be entitled to a Centrelink Age Pension in addition to a pension derived from excellent government superannuation. Greed is a huge issue and I believe private seniors' organisations encourage government to give out more taxpayers' money to people who definitely don't need it e.g. threshold (almost \$100,000) for Commonwealth Senior Concession Cards is way too high for a single. A Universal Pension has also been suggested. These ideas put more money into the hands of global bankers while sending government and service providers broke. They also affect rates of pensions paid to ordinary Australians.Over the years there has been growing reliance on food banks and charities which supply clothing, food, toiletries etc to the poor. At the same time, there has been a shortage of affordable housing, health system going backwards, failure to lift Medicare Rebates to a viable level. Government should get its priorities straight.