

## Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

**Submission No:** 172  
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### Submitter Comments:

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering Dear Committee Members, I am writing to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering, highlighting the significant challenges faced by volunteers due to increased administrative and compliance burdens. While volunteering remains a vital part of our communities, the growing complexity of government regulations, policies, and reporting requirements has made it increasingly difficult for individuals to participate effectively. I personally have volunteered in different sporting, cultural and church based groups for over 15 years and have noticed more and more compliance regulations creep in year after year. It makes it so difficult to retain volunteers.

**The Impact of Increased Red Tape** Many volunteers dedicate their time and expertise to supporting essential community services, yet they often find themselves overwhelmed by the administrative burdens associated with compliance requirements. This includes navigating complex child protection policies, adhering to legal and HR regulations, and completing an increasing number of government-mandated forms and reports. Instead of focusing on delivering services to the community, volunteers and volunteer-run organisations are forced to spend excessive time on paperwork and compliance-related tasks. A classic example of this was when I was president of our local soccer club through the Covid years and I ended up in tears - literally due to the forms and plans we had to provide. We lost so many volunteers during that time and it has been difficult to get them back. For many small volunteer-run organisations, the lack of specialised knowledge in legal, HR, and governance matters means they struggle to meet these obligations efficiently. This can lead to unintended non-compliance, additional stress on volunteers, and even the discouragement of new volunteers from participating due to the daunting nature of regulatory requirements. I add here that the cost of engaging specialist help - for example auditors, solicitors etc to help with compliance is also very costly to a no for profit club. Not all clubs - especially small ones have these kind of professions in their volunteers or wider club participants.

**Potential Solutions** To reduce the burden on volunteers while maintaining appropriate levels of governance and safety, I propose the following solutions:

- Reduction in Red Tape** A review of current compliance requirements to identify areas where reporting can be streamlined or simplified.
- The introduction of proportional compliance measures**, ensuring that smaller volunteer-run organisations are not subjected to the same level of regulatory complexity as large organisations with dedicated staff.
- Reducing duplication** by allowing volunteers to complete a single police check or working with children check that is transferable across different volunteer organisations rather than requiring multiple checks for different roles. I know that we have started this with the streamlining of the Blue Card services, but I personally have had to do child safe training for all 4 organisations I work and volunteer with. Surely some recognition of prior learning could be implemented here?
- Simplifying annual reporting requirements** by introducing a short-form compliance report for small volunteer groups instead of lengthy documentation.
- Allowing digital submission of forms** and reducing the need for in-person paperwork, making compliance more efficient and accessible.
- Access to Templates and Services** The development of government-endorsed templates for essential policies such as HR management, child protection, and legal compliance.
- Pre-approved policy frameworks** that organisations can adopt with minimal modification, reducing the time and expertise required to develop policies from scratch.
- A Centralised Volunteer Support Hub** The establishment of an easily accessible online hub where volunteers and organisations can access standardised resources, legal guidance, and HR support.
- A government-funded helpline or advisory service** that can provide expert assistance on compliance-related matters.
- Training modules or webinars** to

educate volunteers on best practices in governance, risk management, and legal obligations without requiring them to seek costly external advice.

**Conclusion**Volunteers play a critical role in the social fabric of our communities, yet the increasing burden of government-mandated compliance threatens the sustainability of volunteer-run services. By implementing measures such as reducing red tape, providing accessible templates, and establishing a centralised volunteer support hub, we can ensure that volunteering remains viable, rewarding, and accessible to all. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion and hope that the Committee will consider these recommendations to support and sustain volunteerism in our great state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely, Taryn Powell