

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitted by: Nat Sullivan
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Volunteering is such a valuable part of the Community. I can't stress that enough! However, volunteering is something most people can only do when they have enough time and money to spare. And given the current economic climate and the drastic social changes that have happened over the last 5 years, this has reduced most people's capability or motivation. I have personally reduced my volunteering activities for 3 main reasons: 1: I was persecuted and ostracised throughout the Covid period and in the subsequent years due to my location (working outside the "bubble" area) and the extreme mandates (vaccination, masking requirements, etc). Most volunteers in my local area are retired or elderly and the fear that was generated during the Covid reaction has significantly reduced their confidence when working closely with lots of other people.

2: My financial circumstances now require me to work longer hours, reducing my available time and energy to spend on unpaid work. Despite me getting more joy out of my volunteering activities compared to my work activities, I cannot afford to work for free given how much my expenses have grown due to the huge changes in the economy. 3: The red tape continued to get more and more with each volunteer group, especially the Council-based programs. The ridiculous rules we were required to agree to and follow were over-the-top and sucked the joy out of the activities. Jumping through all the hoops and having to make sure every "i" was dotted and every "t" was crossed meant that we were spending our time filling out forms and completing administrative activities more than we could actually just get on with the volunteer activities. Please let me reiterate how important I believe volunteering is in the Community. If I could afford it and participate in purposeful activities with friendly people, I would do it all the time!