

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No:	284
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES

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I am making this submission because I feel that the Australian Taxation Office makes it very difficult for volunteers who are trying to do the right thing.

I am a grandparent who stepped into the position of Treasurer of our Little Athletics Centre on 20th April 2024, to help them out.

On 1st July 2024 the Government brought in new rules for Not-for-profit Incorporated Associations. The ATO now requires a self-review tax exemption return to be lodged each year. Their expectation is that a volunteer from the Executive Committee must set themselves up with myID, then link the organisation to their myID and then do the self-review tax exemption return online. I spent many frustrating hours just setting up myID and trying to understand the whole process of Relationship Authorisation Manager. I could not link our Little Athletics Centre to myself because I am not a contact person for them on the Australian Business Register. There was an option to phone the ATO, which I did. I spoke to a woman who I had trouble understanding because of her accent. She got very irate and yelled at me - "you organisations, you need to keep your details up to date, I am not going to talk to you because you are not a contact person for the organisation. There are a lot of names registered, but you are not one of them!" She told me to go to the ATO website and find the "Change of Registration Details Form" and gave me strict instructions on how to fill in out, without any mistakes, and to post by registered post because it would have all my sensitive details on it. She also said it may take up to 3 months for the ATO to process the changes.

On studying the form, it stated that it must be signed by the "contact person". I spent many stressful days studying every item I could find on the ATO website about what I could do. Eventually I saw in small letters that if you cannot find the contact person, you can send the form in with the AGM minutes attached (showing Executive Committee members).

Unfortunately, nobody attended the AGM in 2024 and our committee just stepped into positions to get the season up and running for the children. The committee from 2022 and 2023 left without leaving any records of any kind and were uncontactable, which made my job as Treasurer even more difficult. They didn't even lodge the Annual Returns and Auditors Reports with the Office of Fair Trading. This also needs to be up to date before the ATO self-review tax exemption return can be lodged. It took a long time for me to locate two separate auditors and I was then able to lodge the Returns.

I asked many, many people who were once involved with the club if they knew who the contact person could be, but without luck. If I do find someone, I doubt they will want to get involved with the myID red tape. When you read the ATO website, they say how easy it is to change details online, but it must be done as I described above.

The ATO Return must be done by 31st March 2025. The Centre held their AGM on 15th February 2025 and I am yet to lodge the latest Annual Return with the Office of Fair Trading because nobody stepped up to take on the Secretary's position.

The crazy part is that I recently resigned from my Treasurer position that I held with the Historical Society for 26 years and I CAN'T remove my name from the Australian Business Register online. I had an hour's wait on the phone to ask someone at the ATO how I can remove my name and was told the only way to do it is with the "Change of Registration Details" form.