

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Volunteering Inquiry Submission – Tina Smith

Volunteering and what this means

Time spent: >30 hours a week, all year round.

Duties performed: Helpline calls - 8 hours a week

Support emails – 5-6 hours a week

Treasurer – 5-6 hours a week

Subscriptions– 5-6 hours a week

Insurance applications –2-3 hours a week

Memberships – 3-4 hours a week

Newsletter creation and sending –2-3 hours a week

Advertising resources – 2–3 hours a week

Website and IT management – 2-3 hours a week

1. Volunteering in Queensland

- contributing value of volunteers is immense;
- as a volunteer I gain personal satisfaction;
 - I value every person I assist and find it most beneficial to hear, on the other side of the phone call, that someone has found peace in the direction they will take and do not feel lost.
- Email support takes time to resolve but that also brings great joy of accomplishment;
- many organisations have volunteers and sometimes people just don't realise that they are dealing with volunteers, which can be sometimes quite challenging; and
- volunteers can sometimes be the reason that an organisation or community exists or even survives.

2. Prospective Volunteer Views

- volunteers don't realise what it means to become a volunteer;
- prospective volunteers need to know what they must do to fit inside the organisations model;
- regulations and Terms of Reference documents are important to protect individuals and the organisation.
- Ignorance leads to these documents becoming a stumbling block to completing the process.

- They are legal agreements that cover the role and allows volunteers to be under our banner of insurance.
- legal requirements are important to protect everyone.

3. Current Experiences

- communication with the public which leads to great outcomes;
- some very poor communication with disgruntled people who believe you are the reason for their problem;
 - This is not a good reason to volunteer. Very challenging and I have had to have counselling to recover.
- Some poor communication due to stress and not coping with the workload which has caused some grief to other people;
- volunteers are not always treated fairly or with respect;
- We are often very hard on ourselves for being out of line or not being able to do enough;
- Some volunteers work very long hours, just to keep things moving along;
 - This is not sustainable.
- volunteering comes from the heart;
 - The reward is self-satisfying and certainly has no financial reward or even credit anywhere.
- giving back to others to continue the work that others have done for you;
- Engaging new volunteers is difficult;
- time is important to many people and giving of their time is something that many people struggle with.
- there is always someone you can help;
 - It takes initiative and commitment to volunteer anywhere effectively.
- learning new skills and being confident using them.

4. Unique Challenges – Diversity of People

- I'd be happy to have anyone volunteer who would like to give to the Home Educating community their experience or support.
- We all can support each other.
- Respect and solidarity for something is more important than our separation and grievances that people project upon others.
 - It's how we go about it that counts, not what we look like or believe.
 - Which is something I must process regularly. The hurt is real and not what anyone volunteering should have to deal with.

5. Government Support

Is there any for all volunteer organisations or just certain kinds? Equity for all might be good.

6. Opportunities

I would be certain that there would be a great interest in the homeschooling sector to be included as volunteers through hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

7. Community Recovery Opportunities

I have numerous calls about people in financial distress and needing help. I can only ask them to apply for assistance so that our organisation can discuss whether they can assist with educational resources, as education support is what we are here for.

8. First Nations peoples volunteering

No one should be excluded from volunteering, unless they don't agree to the Terms of Reference.

9. Any other relevant matters, including academic and other diverse sources, and any relevant reports and reviews at the national level and across other states and territories.

I'm too busy to look for them!