

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Sir/Madam, I am writing to you regarding the inquiry re volunteering with the [REDACTED]. I joined the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] several years ago and stopped volunteering last year. There were several reasons I quit the [REDACTED] as explained below. The [REDACTED] Branch is run by a group of longtime members who gave me the feeling of not being very interested in new recruits. An example of this is when a large rescue does come up it is always the same faces that do the job even though the vessels were large enough to place a few newer recruits that have completed basic training even if they went along on an observer status. Another example is having crewed and completed a rescue and having been on the vessel for 8 hours the captain (one of the longtime members) had to ask my name to put on the sign off sheet, I had been in the [REDACTED] over 2 years at this stage. Upon joining I had to purchase my uniform \$90 as well as paying a yearly members fee of \$70 to become a member of [REDACTED] they do not distinguish between a volunteer and a member of the public who wants to avail rescue services. Being a volunteer there was constant training and part of this training is to read and understand quite a large amount of Safety Data Sheets and sign to say you have read, remembered and understood their content. The ramifications of this incident was later revealed when an abandoned dinghy was found with no person onboard. It was established the dinghy had broken from a mooring on a nearby island so there was no cause for a loss of life situation. Whilst towing the dinghy to the base the dinghy flipped over, it was refloated and eventually towed ashore. The captain of the [REDACTED] vessel involved in this was then instructed to go and tell all members he had done the wrong thing and if the dinghy was damaged or sunk the insurance company could hold him personally responsible for the loss and damage. I am a pensioner and cannot risk being sued or held criminally liable for an act that I had inadvertently committed that was not the correct thing to do as outlined in the SDS which I had legally signed. So, I am expected to pay \$70 a year to give up my time to volunteer with the risk of maybe losing my house if something went terribly wrong whilst trying to help someone in distress, and this is the reason I resigned. The lack of interest by the entrenched old boys was quite evident when no one even contacted me to ask was there any specific reason for my leaving. Hoping that these abovementioned points will help for the future survival of the [REDACTED]