

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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I am a highly experienced volunteer and have volunteered with many organisations over decades I have had both extremely good and valuable experiences that have left me feeling holy rewarded by the experience and have had some that have made me withdraw from the organizations the best organizations I have volunteered for have been Rhema Family Church Lifeline bookfest and would fit festival I also volunteer as a health consumer on Queensland Health committees and I find those very good we volunteered for Community Radio and for many many other groups to try to give an example of some of the things that really worked well were very well defined jobs for volunteers they can be very demanding very difficult to standards expected a very high very good team leadership and important roles that require you to do much needed essential work for the organization or the event we willingly and gladly worked very hard often very long hours doing demanding important work this is part of what makes volunteering really worthwhile I think volunteers need few other Rewards that a particular reward that I would point to a cup of tea and biscuits and they are quite a good indicator of whether or not an organization respects its volunteers or not so a good example would be Lifeline but fist now lifelong bookfest is a great organisation it does a lot of very very good stuff for volunteers including ensuring that they can park underneath the convention Center when they come into volunteer at the book fest and they haven't annual dinner for all their volunteers which they give out certificates for all of life's lands volunteers for people who have worked for many decades for lifelong they all celebrated and it knowledge and it is a wonderful event but at the book faced when I first started volunteering for it they had the best biscuits you could ever imagine and then some one started cost cutting on the biscuits I think that cost cutting on the biscuits to give far more easily biscuits was a bad move because of the message it sent back to the volunteers that they were aware that they could I saw the same thing happened when we volunteered at the Maritime Museum so at the Maritime Museum the volunteers got cream biscuits at morning tea and that was the big one and only main big reward for volunteering quite long hours at the Maritime Museum and then they got a new manager who cut out the cream biscuits and we've got just very basic biscuits I think that is a very bad message I volunteered for the Science Festival and found that a very poor experience and wouldn't do that again ever they did they had big meetings to give instructions on how the whole thing was going to work and this was at five o'clock at the end of the day and they went on for several hours and provided no refreshments at all like there wasn't a cup of tea there wasn't any refreshment this is for people at the end of the day there was no provision of any consideration about transport into the central place and the actual festival employed young events trained events staff as a volunteer we would treated as the absolute bottom of the heat and virtually level slaves it was degrading and I must experience I wouldn't repay the Brisbane Writers Festival was another bad experience in that sense they were very discriminating in the way they chose the prettiest young volunteers to be the ones who got to interact it the cocktail party type events and who to put behind the scenes and I found that the Writers Festival was a bad news place to be basically the radio so we're announces on Community Radio for about 10 years and that was a wonderful experience and then the radio station got taken over by a paid manager so the previously been completely volunteer around and we were all doing a very good job and then this paid manager hired a whole Palace staff who took over all the facilities that had been used by the volunteers and the volunteers were virtually just pushed push down the program notes and all that stuff that we use to do a radio programs were thrown into bin literally that is through less stuff in the bin without any consultation and they had previously been employed a young woman who was did an

outstanding job at looking after the volunteers and making us all welcome and making sure we had what we did she was dismissed she was her position was not renewed and it was very demoralizing one of the big issues that is a constant problem for volunteering in our local community is the requirement for having 20 million dollars in public liability insurance and this main step the first and almost primary job that any community group has to do is sit about trying to raise the funds to pay for the insurance cover before you can actually do any volunteering around what it is you wanting to do the other major problem that we face in our local community is lack of any public meeting places and those that are diffused the very few that I are available are very hard to get to higher for meetings they tend to be fully filled up with things like dance groups and things like that have the more on a regular basis but if you can get a slot once again you have to be able to demonstrate that you've got 20 million dollars public liability insurance before you can hold any sort of community group meeting to do anything in the local community we have been absolutely not supported by our local councillors who seem to regard a local volunteers is coming in on their too we set out to start Community Gardens in our community and were systematically blocked by one council and other council did actually allow us to start a garden in their suburb and that has thrived my experience with volunteering through health consumers Queensland has been terrific I think they do a great job and the whole way the consumer volunteers is handled through that is very very well done except it's not really volunteering because it does get a payment associated with it I think volunteering is extremely important and brings great joy my husband has done a massive amount of volunteering doing websites for community organisations and being treasure for community organizations we volunteer at all levels from public speaking down to collecting rubbish it festivals right across the board which just done so many different roles and found wonderful ways to make a contribution and it brings great joy in our lives what we normally do is we have our portfolio of volunteer organizations if one of them goes wrong we drop that one off and find another organization to volunteer with so we are continuously volunteering for quite a lot of roles and regard that as one of the very best ways to grow old. So I'm now 76 my husband's 81 and we thrive as volunteers doing this. I'm sorry about the format of this. I've only just met the deadline and recording this verbally in a great rush so I hope you're forgive that.