

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Rotary EClub Australia Nomads
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## **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering in QLD**

Authors: Vicki and Robert Dorgelo on behalf of the Rotary Eclub Australia Nomads Inc.

The Rotary Eclub Australia Nomads Inc (Rotary Nomads) is a geographically diverse service club which spans Australia and operates throughout QLD. The club has 40 members and can call on up to 30 additional volunteers for specific events and causes. Our members volunteer time of about 2000 hours per annum to projects and events. When combined with planning and administration activities about 4000 hours per annum is put into these projects.

The following are our responses to the inquiry Terms of Reference compiled from responses canvassed from our membership.

### **The current state of volunteering in Queensland and the value it contributes, including benefits to volunteers, organisations, communities and the state**

- Rotary Nomads have a mission statement of “Helping Hands Across the Land”. We support events in regional and rural communities where local resources are insufficient to put on key local events. This adds value by enabling these community-building events to occur, and for the local communities to come together and develop a strong identity. This is an intangible value.

Examples: Assistance to the Mount Isa Rodeo; Bedourie camel races 2024; Kilcoy Show 2025;

- Direct volunteering hours to the community of 2000 per annum (approximately) value approximately \$60,000
- Forging links between urban and regional populations in this demographically diverse state.
- Community-building as members of small towns gather and socialise at events
- Considerable satisfaction and well-being ‘uplifts’ for volunteers who observe their efforts adding to the causes they support
- The value of organisations such as Rotary is the provision of a well-developed network of connected professional and business people to facilitate development of complex solutions for causes, including insurances for volunteers and logistics to ensure an event works.

**The views of volunteers, prospective volunteers and the volunteering sector on the current barriers to volunteering, including excessive legislative and regulatory burdens and other restrictions adversely limiting active volunteers**

- Bureaucracy generally; we find that volunteers are motivated by the causes they support and when the organisation gets top heavy and rules-bound many volunteers lose interest and drop off in support.

Such 'red tape' includes issues such as:

- Repetitive training demands (such as in SES) – excessive time demands
- Blue card requirement for roles that do not involve minors
- Where volunteers move between states, requirement for working with children clearance in every jurisdiction means an individual chooses to limit their support to only one or two jurisdictions.
- Cost of equipment/uniforms
- Transport
- We observe a trend that younger volunteers are motivated by **causes** to support more than by membership of service organisations.
- The cost of the logistical support and insurance of the volunteering response is borne by a small number of members.
- Retention of volunteers between causes; where recognition of volunteers' efforts is lip service or non-existent, retention is difficult. In the cases where tangible value is offered to volunteers (For example, Gympie Muster provides access to music events for volunteers) attraction and retention of volunteers is simple.

**The current experiences, motivations and challenges for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and their recommendations for addressing challenges and improving the volunteering experience**

- Some members report they have been assigned mundane tasks for which they are overqualified; have not been appreciated by permanent staff/members of the organisation
- Ageism – some who are willing to volunteer have been advised they are too old for useful service
- Time to devote to competing priorities– eg family, church, sporting associations

**Suggestions to address the above:**

- A major motivator is personal satisfaction at having a meaningful service to offer
- Assign a mentor to investigate where a potential volunteer may be of use and support them (e.g. with training, suggesting suitable contact people) to direct their efforts
- Provide a list of ways that a new member may choose to contribute
- Provide new members with meaningful tasks
- The pay-it-forward concept – that assisting now may be of personal benefit in future
- Pointing out how skills may be transferable to different situations/employment
- Some ‘ability assessment’ to determine an individual volunteer’s ability to do the task at hand

**The unique challenges experienced by people from diverse backgrounds, genders, age groups, abilities and locations, and opportunities to improve volunteering participation, accessibility and experience for these groups**

Our comments as Rotary Nomads are limited to the diversity of our membership, geography and age-related issues.

Rotary Nomads are spread across Australia and our members' residential locations affect where and how we can volunteer to support causes and communities. Our ability to respond to communities seeking support is limited by knowledge of causes/events that require support. A coordinated listing of events across Queensland and other rural parts of Australia will be a big assistance in making our responses more effective. We see that the curation of such a master list of causes and events needing support across the state is an activity that a government agency could undertake to assist the volunteering community.

Age limitations. Some events and organisations apply arbitrary limits on the age of volunteers which is galling to active volunteers who have been giving to the communities of Queensland for decades. These events and organisations should develop processes that identify abilities of volunteers rather than arbitrary exclusion.

We have many experienced volunteers spread across Queensland and the rest of Australia, who can add considerable value to many events. However, transport and accommodation are a barrier to their involvement. For events of international significance, some of these barriers could be lowered with monetary assistance. We are sure that you recognise that half the state's population and therefore potential volunteer resource, reside outside SE Qld.

Submitted by :

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