

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

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## **Submission**

### **Issue: Declining Rates for Volunteering in Queensland**

Buderim Firebirds Netball Club is a not-for-profit community sporting club based in Buderim on the Sunshine Coast. Our committee is made up of 5 executive members (president, vice president, treasurer, registrar and secretary) and 5 non-executive (communications, equipment, uniforms, grading and umpire convenor) and 1-2 general members. Our entire committee is made up of volunteers. We have a membership base of approximately 250 school aged netball players ranging in age from 7-18.

Overall, the volunteers within our club are treated respectfully and the feedback from the majority of our members is positive. We are regularly informed the committee is friendly, approachable, professional and highly organised.

The number of committee members has remained stable over the past 5 years; however, we do have some additional non-executive roles we would like to create/fill which is proving difficult. The new roles would aim to take some of the workload from existing members. Our current committee members have been part of our committee from 2 years to over 10 years with the majority over 5 years. If our committee had fewer volunteers than it currently does, I believe the workload would become unsustainable and the quality of our service would decline. Currently, members of our committee are giving up to or over 10 hours of their time per week in addition to working full or part time jobs and managing busy families. Many of our committee members also volunteer at other organisations. The time required to provide a service at a high standard is, I believe, one of the hardest hurdles to overcome and one of the most significant reasons volunteers are difficult to recruit.

The club also has approximately 50 volunteer coaches and managers, mostly comprised of parents. The club would not function without these volunteers. Many of these coaches and managers will return year after year

while their children are playing netball. However, it can be very difficult to fill all vacancies. Over the past several years we have started to recruit past players, current older players and university students to take on these roles. Several of our committee members also take on these roles, sometimes coaching multiple teams.

Our club has one BBQ fundraising event each season that requires parents/caregivers/players to volunteer 1 hour of their time on a game day. While the roster is usually filled it does take some persistence and existing committee members are still required to assist.

Another issue which has become more prevalent over the past few years is the increasing need for conflict resolution. At certain times of the season, it is a greater issue however, it does seem to be a constant. An example is team placement for players and parents/caregivers not agreeing with club decisions. In some instances, this behaviour can be extremely aggressive and abusive. Our club prides itself on the time, effort and experience that goes into this process. The process and criteria are published and communicated to all members; however, it remains a problem to the point committee members have considered resignation. Other clubs in our local area are reporting the same issues. Our club is in the process of developing procedures to handle these situations as it has become increasingly difficult to accept, especially as volunteers. We have also approached our governing association for guidance.

On a positive note, volunteering for our club brings many rewards which greatly outweigh the negatives. It gives a sense of community and contribution to society. It allows for greater social connection. Our volunteers feel immense pride in providing a service that keeps children, particularly girls, involved and supported in sport. We aim to provide an environment with positive role models that focus on teambuilding, friendships and healthy, active lifestyles for all abilities.