

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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The Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Parliamentary Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland. Volunteering is a vital component of the Burnett Inland region's community fabric, providing numerous benefits to both individuals and organisations. Volunteers have been instrumental in supporting the Burnett Inland region during and after droughts and natural disasters. Their efforts have significantly contributed to the resilience and recovery of the Burnett Inland community through support for primary producers and businesses impacted by drought and natural disasters, management of resources such as drought relief packages and community events, and disaster relief and recovery efforts. As a not for profit, BIEDO benefits significantly from volunteer support throughout the region, including 1. Community Engagement: Volunteers help BIEDO engage with the community, ensuring that the organisation's initiatives are well-received and supported. 2. Event Support: Volunteers assist in organising and running events, which are crucial for promoting economic development and community cohesion. 3. Resource Management: Volunteers help manage resources, such as data collection and administrative tasks, allowing BIEDO to operate more efficiently. 4. Skill Sharing: Volunteers bring diverse skills and knowledge, which can be leveraged to support various projects and initiatives within BIEDO. The State of Volunteering in Queensland 2024 report provides a comprehensive overview of the current landscape, highlighting key impacts, challenges, and potential solutions. This submission aims to address the top five issues impacting volunteering in the Burnett Inland region and propose actionable solutions to enhance the volunteering experience and outcomes.

- 1. Legislative and Regulatory Burdens**
Impact: Excessive regulations and legislative requirements can discourage people from volunteering, creating unnecessary barriers.
Solution: Streamline processes and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy to make it easier for people to volunteer. This can be achieved by reviewing and amending existing legislation to remove redundant requirements and simplify compliance procedures.
- 2. Lack of Awareness and Engagement**
Impact: Many people are unaware of volunteering opportunities or how to get involved, leading to lower participation rates.
Solution: Increase public awareness through targeted campaigns and provide easy access to information about volunteering opportunities. This can include partnerships with media outlets, social media campaigns, and the development of a centralised online platform for volunteer opportunities.
- 3. Diverse Backgrounds and Accessibility**
Impact: People from diverse backgrounds, including different age groups, abilities, and locations, face unique challenges in volunteering.
Solution: Create inclusive volunteering programs that cater to the needs of diverse groups and ensure accessibility for all. This can involve offering flexible volunteering options, providing necessary support and accommodations, and actively promoting diversity and inclusion within volunteer organisations.
- 4. Government Support and Funding**
Impact: Insufficient government support and funding can limit the capacity of volunteer organizations to operate effectively.
Solution: Enhance government support and provide sustainable funding to strengthen the volunteering sector. This can include increasing grants and subsidies for volunteer organisations, offering tax incentives for businesses that support volunteering, and establishing a dedicated fund for volunteer initiatives.
- 5. Emergency Response Volunteering**
Impact: There is a need to optimize the engagement and support of volunteers in emergency response situations.
Solution: Develop strategies to better integrate and support volunteers during natural disasters and community recovery efforts. This can involve creating specialized training programs for emergency volunteers, establishing clear communication channels, and ensuring that volunteers have the necessary resources and support to perform their roles.

effectively. Conclusion Volunteering is an invaluable asset to Queensland, providing immense social, economic, and civic benefits. By addressing the key issues and implementing the proposed solutions, we can create a more supportive and inclusive environment for volunteers, ultimately enhancing the impact of volunteering on our communities. We urge the committee to consider these recommendations and take action to strengthen the volunteering sector in Queensland.