

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

Submission No:	495
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

Submission

Volunteering in Queensland.

I have been actively volunteering my entire adult life. Once the day of work or study was over, I would spend time at meetings, sharing ideas or organising events.

Currently I volunteer in eight different organisations as listed:

- Biggenden PCYC Emergency Services Cadets - weekly
- Biggenden Show Society - monthly
- Local Ambulance Committee - bimonthly
- Biggenden Chamber of Commerce - monthly
- Biggenden Historical Society - monthly
- St Peter's Catholic Church - fortnightly
- Bundaberg Bushwalking club - monthly and bimonthly leading bush walks.
- Providing news articles to our local newspaper - fortnightly

I would like to focus my submission on the PCYC Emergency Services Cadet program for which I have been Coordinator for 13 years. This is an unpaid position.

<https://www.pcy.org.au/youth-and-community/personal-and-leadership-development/emergency-services-cadets/>

The cadet program began about 40 years ago under the QLD State Emergency Service, and then, in 2014 was taken on by Qld PCYC.

Over the past 13 years our cadet unit has seen hundreds of young people aged 12 to 17 join up and experience 1 to 4 years of weekly training, regular volunteering and annual excursions. At present we have 14 cadets and 5 adult leaders in the unit, as well as close connections with our local police, local Fire and Rural Fire as well as the ambulance.

Biggenden's demographics of population 1000 people, include about 150 young people, with approximately 50 teenagers. The Cadet program is accessible to those who are experiencing economic hardship as all the uniforms and PCYC membership are paid for by State Govt funding. Excursions are covered by recycling cash for containers. This has proved to be very successful. So our program takes in 25% of young people. A smaller number of young people choose swimming, netball, football and pony club, all of which involve high membership fees.

The beauty of the Cadet program is that not only does it provide training in emergency preparedness, it also encourages volunteering at community events. Some cadets have done up to 200 hours a year. This includes canteen work at local Shows, setting up and

taking down for events, recycling, painting a Show ground fence or assisting on a bush walk, as well as providing a catafalque party on ANZAC day for at least 2 ceremonies.

The above mentioned alternative sports, such as swimming, netball etc do not have a volunteering component.

Volunteering by cadets has had amazing results. It is not uncommon for them to do 4 to 6 hours and not want to go home. With supervision by adults, they are unstoppable, cheerful and so happy to help out and be included.

Our cadet unit has been recognised over the years with numerous local government awards, Australia Day awards and recognition at their schools.

By having a close association with police, fire, ambulance, rural fire and SES, cadets are exposed to expert emergency services personnel. This interaction builds respect and trust.

Our program also offers cadet Leadership programs, and immersive experiences in Brisbane, which again is a highlight for them. Opportunities where they are flown to Brisbane and accommodated and fed, would not be attainable if it were not for the PCYC Emergency Services Cadets.

Apart from our weekly training of 2 hours, our cadets have gone on excursions involving canoeing, abseiling and rock climbing, caving, overnight hikes, fishing, casualty handling, fire management, water safety, surf life saving, activities with Volunteer Marine Rescue and Lifeflight.

Young people, when mentored by enthusiastic and creative adults, thrive and grow, enabling them to discover the value of learning and helping others.