

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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About UsWe are a local community organisation based in the Gladstone Region, dedicated to supporting and strengthening access to art / cultural experiences in our community. However, we face several challenges, including: Compliance issuesHaving access to resources that can support us to not only understand the necessary compliances but also access to the resources which allow us to undertake the compliances and review them as required. We have been very fortunate in the last 12 months to have the assistance of Not for Profit House in Gladstone to support and guide us through the structural and reporting changes needed to meet our compliance responsibilities. Prior to this time we did not know of the work that Not for Profit House does to support community volunteer organisations. Sustainability concernsThe 1770 Art Show required a grant to afford to engage the services of Not for Profit House and continues to need to seek grant support together with sponsorship contributions to enable the continued viability and possibility of growth. One of the great joys of volunteering is being able to afford to pursue ideas that will help grow the charter of the organisation while knowing that the established undertakings are financially secure. - Expanding membership - Succession planning - Volunteer retentionIn general, it is very difficult in regional areas to attract volunteers and particularly volunteers who seek to share in the responsibilities of leadership. Succession planning then becomes a problem which is deferred year upon year until hopefully volunteer replacements are discovered. Sadly, many community organisations can falter at this hurdle and years of individual and collective effort that are integral to community cohesion are lost. Volunteer-related challenges - Recruiting new volunteers - Preventing burnout among existing volunteersMany volunteers in committee leadership positions have fallen into these roles. Honourable behaviour abounds amongst volunteers such as keeping on for the sake of the committee, cause, charity and community that is most dear to them. Let's honour this vast network of honourable behaviour by supporting volunteers with leadership and committee membership training, part remuneration for the many hours of effort, financial and tax incentives to cover the personal costs incurred in the course of volunteering and the financial provision to pay a support person to undertake the duties of Secretary and / or Treasurer. Promoting volunteering as a pathway to building a set of comprehensive skills which provides attractive opportunities for citizens across all demographic and cultural groups. These are the very skills that Not for Profit House modeled to us in their support of us as outlined below. Governance and operational difficulties - Constitutional conflicts - Financial management - Securing fundingNFP House has been instrumental in helping us overcome these challenges by providing us with a comprehensive understanding as to the health of our committee. Following our organisational 'health check' we were then equipped with the essential skills and resources which were targeted to providing solutions to problems where they were identified. Their support is invaluable and should be available in every community because they offer: Ongoing, long-term assistance beyond short-term workshops One-on-one guidance tailored to our needs Local, accessible expertise A wide range of solutions specific to our sector Highly skilled professionals with relevant experience Immediate access to expert advice and problem-solving support A collaborative approach to addressing challenges An objective, external perspective A trusted resource for reliable advice and solutions A generous and free service.The following programs have been particularly beneficial to our organisation: Walk-in, phone, and email support for organisational assistance Health Checks Access to advertise to seek volunteers via their Portal on the website Constitution support Workshops for planning services, volunteer management, stakeholder surveys, Grant writing support. Understanding the qualitative and quantitative

benefits and drawbacks of volunteering is needed. Is there a difference in volunteer experiences between uraban and regional / rural centres? Volunteering is much like the vast underground root systems of plants. By and large, it is a vast network of individual and collective effort powered by hope and goodwill which does much to sustain the vibrancy of our communities. Thank you for this opportunity Kind regards Prue Brown President 1770 Art Show Inc.