

## **Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland**

**Submission No:** 568  
**Submitted by:** Gympie District Show Society Inc  
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**Submitter Comments:**



Mr James Lister MP  
Chair  
Local Government, Small Business and  
Customer Service Committee  
Via [lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:lgsbcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Lister

**Re: Inquiry into Volunteering in QLD – Gympie District Show Society Inc**

On behalf of the Gympie District Show Society I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comment as part of the current *Inquiry into Volunteering in QLD*.

Volunteers are the backbone of our region's agricultural show, the Gympie Show, and we truly appreciate the role this Inquiry will play in highlighting the invaluable contributions of Queensland's volunteers.

Please accept the following as our formal submission to the *Inquiry into Volunteering in QLD*.

**1. The Value of Volunteering**

Volunteering with the Gympie District Show Society is more than just lending a hand - it's an opportunity for personal growth, skill development, and community connection. Our volunteers gain valuable experience in event management, agriculture, and leadership, which benefits them both personally and professionally.

Beyond skill-building, volunteers form strong networks and lifelong friendships, creating a sense of belonging within a close-knit community. Their contributions not only ensure the success of the show but also strengthen community spirit and pride. Most importantly, we are committed to making sure our volunteers feel valued, heard, and appreciated. We recognise the importance of acknowledging their efforts and continuously improving the ways we support and engage with them.

**2. Challenges to Volunteer Engagement**

Despite the many benefits of volunteering, there are growing challenges that impact our ability to recruit and retain volunteers.

- **Changing Expectations** – The new generation of volunteers is looking for meaningful engagement that aligns with their personal values and interests. They want to contribute to causes they are passionate about rather than just filling roles out of obligation. This shift means we need to ensure our volunteer opportunities are fulfilling, inclusive, and reflective of their motivations. At times, traditional committee structures can be slow to embrace change, making it difficult for new volunteers to introduce fresh ideas and perspectives.
- **Succession Gaps** – Many of our long-standing volunteers have dedicated 20, 30, or even 40+ years to supporting the Gympie Show. Their wealth of knowledge and experience is invaluable, yet we face a challenge in ensuring that this expertise is passed down to the next generation. Without strong mentoring and succession planning, we risk losing critical skills and leadership within our volunteer base. Encouraging experienced volunteers to actively mentor and support newcomers is essential to maintaining continuity.
- **Time & Costs** – The rising cost of living and increasing workplace pressures mean many people have less time and capacity to commit to volunteering. Balancing work, family, and other responsibilities can make it difficult for individuals to engage in unpaid community work, even when they have the passion to do so. To counter this, we need to explore ways to make volunteering more flexible and accessible.
- **Cultural Readiness** – Attracting volunteers is only part of the solution; we must also ensure our organisation is welcoming, inclusive, and adaptable. Creating a culture where volunteers feel supported, receive proper training, and see a clear purpose in their roles is vital to long-term engagement. Investing in volunteer development and ensuring they have a positive experience will help foster loyalty and ongoing participation.
- **Government Support** – While we appreciate the support we receive from The Gympie Regional Council and our elected representatives, The Hon. Tony Perrett MP and Llew O'Brien MP, bureaucratic and financial barriers can sometimes limit volunteer opportunities. Simplifying processes, reducing red tape, and providing funding for volunteer training and retention initiatives would go a long way in helping organisations like ours attract and sustain a strong volunteer workforce.

### 3. Encouraging the Next Generation

To ensure the future of agricultural shows like ours, we actively support youth engagement and leadership programs. Initiatives such as Showgirl, Rural Ambassador, and Young Judges & Paraders competitions provide an entry point for young people to get involved, develop

leadership skills, and gain hands-on experience. These programs not only build confidence and capability but also create a pathway for young volunteers to become future leaders within our organisation.

By fostering mentorship opportunities and encouraging younger generations to take an active role, we hope to inspire long-term commitment and ensure the sustainability of our volunteer base. Keeping young people engaged is essential for the continued success of the Gympie Show and agricultural events across the region.

#### **4. Working Together for the Future**

Volunteers are the heart of the Gympie Show, and their efforts are what allow us to deliver such a valued community event each year. However, we cannot take this for granted - we must continue to adapt, support, and invest in our volunteer base to ensure its long-term success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any opportunity to discuss the role our volunteers play in the success of our Show, and any further ways we can collaborate with the QLD Government to support our volunteers further.

Warm regards,

Mikaela Sima  
Gympie District Show Society

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