

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland Volunteers Need Urgent Support: Brisbane Archdiocese Calls for Major Reform

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has urged Queensland's Parliament to swiftly implement reforms to rejuvenate volunteering, amidst warnings that vital community services could be at risk without immediate action.

In its submission to the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee's inquiry into volunteering, The Archdiocese of Brisbane has urged Queensland's Parliament to swiftly implement reforms to rejuvenate volunteering, amidst warnings that vital community services could be at risk without immediate action.

With over 15,000 volunteers engaged in pastoral care, hospital and prison ministries, refugee support, homelessness services, and school-based programs, the Archdiocese remains one of Queensland's largest volunteer-involving organisations. However, like many in the sector, it has witnessed a steady decline in volunteer numbers in recent years due to increasing economic pressures, complex regulatory requirements, and changing social dynamics.

In its submission, the Archdiocese emphasises volunteering as the backbone of thriving, compassionate communities and outlines practical solutions including:

- The introduction of a state-issued Volunteer Card, simplifying safeguarding and screening requirements across multiple roles and organisations.
- Establishment of a centralised volunteer reimbursement fund to ensure volunteers are not financially disadvantaged by their generosity.
- Discounts on essential services to alleviate economic pressures on volunteers.
- Enhanced collaboration with educational institutions to inspire and attract younger volunteers.

The submission states "Volunteering is core to our mission, reflecting our enduring commitment to serving the community with compassion, integrity, and a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is vital we support our volunteers by reducing unnecessary administrative burdens and recognising their valuable contributions."

A spokesperson for the Archdiocese said, "Volunteers are the heartbeat of Queensland's communities, yet they're suffocating under financial strain and bureaucratic hurdles. It's time we cut through this red tape and energised volunteer participation by recognising their indispensable role and supporting their incredible generosity."

“The barriers volunteers face, from financial pressures to bureaucratic red tape, must be addressed if we are to sustain and grow a thriving volunteer culture in our state.” The spokesperson added.

The Archdiocese also urges greater coordination between government and community organisations to prepare for large-scale volunteer engagement opportunities, including the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

“With major sporting events, including the Olympics and Rugby World Cups fast approaching, strengthening our volunteer sector isn’t just timely, it’s essential,” the spokesman added.

“By implementing reforms now, Queensland has the chance to ensure a well-supported, mobilised, and resilient volunteer sector in the years ahead.”

The Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane looks forward to actively partnering with the Queensland Government, community organisations, and volunteers themselves to implement these meaningful reforms, securing a vibrant and sustainable volunteer culture for future generations.