

Compulsory Civil Service Youth Bill 2009

Explanatory Notes

Purpose and objectives of the Youth Bill

As youth corps, volunteering organisations and the like are on the increase on the international stage, the world is indiscriminately and passionately reaching out to those in need. In Australia, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has taken the first step to emphasise the undeniable benefits of a volunteering nation, proposing a volunteering scheme in exchange for student debt alleviation. There are lasting benefits in investing in youth to develop a culture of compassion and civil care. There is also a need to have a society that answers the call of civil duty and service, the result of which is entirely financially viable and economically quantifiable with the drive of a socially responsible Queensland. There is great need for a shift in thinking as to what it means to be an Australian citizen. By all youth engaging in a compulsory civil service program, respect for citizenship increases and acts of discrimination can be reduced through interaction with, and service to, Australia's diverse communities. Racial hostility, disability support, gender prejudice and other forms of discrimination can all be addressed when a generation of enthusiasm and creativity is focused on, and engaging with, the failings of society. Compulsory civil service is not just enforced volunteering, it is cultivating a habit for a philanthropic future.

The *Compulsory Civil Service Youth Bill 2009* aims to develop a culture of service by implementing a compulsory civil service program for all youth aged 16 to 21. By setting an annual requirement of 100 hours, citizens volunteer approximately 2 hours per week. By beginning the program the year of their 16th birthday, it provides a positive example for younger generations and minimises the strain on the existing framework in regards to age and licensing provisions. This program is entirely flexible and allows the individual to pursue and utilise their fields of interest as well as allowing the community to employ the skills of the youth while aiding the integration of multicultural and other minority or disadvantaged communities. By ensuring this program is entirely devoid of academic merit, it accentuates the value of societal responsibility and promotes that societal value via penalties as a citizen. In doing such, it equates civil

responsibility with the idea of entitlement to citizenship based benefits. It is expected that by initiating this program, Queensland youth will develop an ideal of civic responsibility and civic duty, the insurmountable benefits of which will vastly impact the welfare of its citizens and the future.

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