




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2023

ADJOURNMENT

National Volunteer Week

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (7.20 pm): We are getting closer to National Volunteer Week—Australia’s largest annual celebration of volunteering. It is happening between 15 and 21 May, and I want to get in early and pay tribute to just some of the hardworking and inspirational volunteers working in the Bancroft electorate.

I want to specifically pay tribute to Vince and Miriam Gerhardy, who for years now have been making breakfast for the students at the YMCA Vocational School at The Space at North Lakes run by the YMCA. They do that every Tuesday morning, putting food into the stomachs of young students.

There is Lindsey Harrison, Shane Sparks, Darren Moore and Evonne Fish from North Lakes United Football Club. Lindsey was recognised by Football Queensland as one of the volunteers of the month a couple of months ago. Evonne is the secretary, Shane is the junior football director, and Darren is the senior football director. The North Lakes United Football Club has a great story. They are a new club and an amalgamation of two existing clubs in North Lakes. They already have 1,400 players on the roll.

At the Lighthouse Centre at Deception Bay is one of Queensland’s leading community-based food bank operations. There is Allana McMahon, who I know well. She works from her wheelchair but has been helping out homeless people through the church for more than 10 years. There is Genia Kobierska, who has also worked for more than 10 years handing out food at the food barn and doing it in a loving and caring way. We will not forget Carly Helander, who runs a youth group at the Lighthouse Centre, giving direction and hope to the lives of many young people in our area.

I also want to mention those volunteers at the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre—Bettina Nissen, Jan McNicol and Mary Otto. Bettina Nissen has done tremendous work in building the literacy of young people in Deception Bay and has been a real champion for our wetlands and our shore birds. Mary Otto has worked for decades with youth organisations such as Girl Guides and the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to Mark Cleaver—one of our special volunteers in the Bancroft electorate—who spent more than 10 years on the board of the local PCYC and Younity, the community youth organisation. Mark led Younity through years of COVID and huge organisational change. He recently headed off to Atlanta for a new career change.

Mark and all the volunteers in my electorate are the true community heroes. I hope that we can recognise all our volunteers in National Volunteer Week and say thank you. The late Arthur Hayes OAM said to me—it was one of the last things he did before he passed away—‘Chris, with your time in the world you give your time to your family, you give your time to work and the time you have left over you give to the community.’ Arthur was a great inspiration, and those words have always stayed with me.