




Speech By
Hon. Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Volunteering

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (2.32 pm): This week is an opportunity for all Queenslanders to pause and recognise the strength, compassion and commitment of our volunteers right across this great state. It is National Volunteer Week; it is the perfect opportunity to recognise the invaluable work of Queensland's volunteers.

The Crisafulli government proudly celebrates the everyday Queenslanders who step forward not for reward or recognition, but because they care. Volunteers bring in an estimated \$117 billion for the Queensland economy each year, but the fact is the real value of volunteering can never be measured in dollars. From the SES—and I note today is WOW Day—and our rural firefighters to the school tuckshop and the local footy club volunteers, each volunteer's work is immeasurable and they are the heartbeat of communities across Queensland. We saw this firsthand in the three successive record-breaking natural disasters rocking Queensland this year: our volunteers are often the first to step up and the last to leave. They offer strength, support and hope when Queenslanders need it most.

To the Red Cross volunteers I met with the member for Thuringowa during the North Queensland floods, I say thank you. To the Lifeline volunteers I met on the Gold Coast with the member for Whitsunday who had flown from Ingham to be there to support those impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, I say thank you. To the chopper pilots I met with the members for Gympie and Gregory scouring the Channel Country when river gauges had been swept away and slinging fodder for starving cattle, I say thank you.

The Crisafulli government backs our volunteers. We understand that when we support our volunteers, we strengthen the very fabric of our communities. After years of Labor neglect, the Crisafulli government is shining a new light on volunteers. We do not take the work of our volunteers for granted; we are determined to make it easier for Queenslanders to give back.

Our parliamentary inquiry into volunteering is making solid progress. With over 600 written submissions and public hearings across the state, volunteers' voices are being heard. To every Queenslanders pitching in, I say your selfless dedication, compassion and community spirit make our state stronger and kinder and more resilient every day and we say thank you.