



Speech By  
**Nikki Boyd**

**MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

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## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SMALL BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.37 pm): The minister set up a committee inquiry charged with terms of reference that were overly broad. It made for a process that was cumbersome, general and vague. For over a year, this has been the only thing that the minister claims she has been doing for the volunteer sector. The minister's own department depends deeply on the peak body, needing to crosscheck the accuracy and legitimacy of positions, but there is not a reasonable uplift of funding for them through this process. No siree. It is far more opaque than that.

Through this inquiry process, the minister has intentionally, repeatedly and shamefully issued ministerial media statements falsely claiming that this was a government inquiry. Time and again the minister has used this inquiry as her political plaything—bereft of integrity. She was caught out early stating that the inquiry would deliver, in short, not much. Whistleblowers recounted the minister's words that the inquiry would deliver three to four recommendations with no cost to government. Public pressure saw more than three to four recommendations, but what are the dollars and cents that are delivered to implement the recommendations? Opposition members' questions through estimates revealed that there was no funding allocated for the 2025-26 budget. We call on the minister to state how much will be allocated in funding, to what and when, and table that today. It is past time that this minister stopped politicking and actually started delivering.

The Queensland Labor opposition want to see meaningful support for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations developed as a result of this inquiry. The government must do more than just consider. They must commit with determination and investigate, as they state they will. It is time to move past lip-service. The inquiry should have built on the former Labor government's Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032. Instead, the Crisafulli LNP government duplicated large amounts of work already undertaken, asking many of the same organisations many of the same questions at a cost to this parliament and at a cost to time-poor volunteers.

This inquiry was promised as part of the LNP's 100-day plan. The inquiry report was tabled 321 days into the minister's term. It has taken us 412 days to get a response to an inquiry that they are publicly claiming was in fact their own. Today we are on day 468 and we are left to wonder: what tangible benefit has the minister delivered for something she keeps claiming ownership of?

There is a laundry list of noncommittal recommendations. The games got but a passing mention. The report whitewashes our First Nations people. 'One-off funding boosts for regional volunteer hubs' is what the media release to the government response reads. That was not what the inquiry called for. It called for funding for a network of volunteer hubs in addition to providing funding for other government volunteer organisations. Let us break that down. How much are they funded? The recommendation

does not call for partial funding for anything or state that hubs will be funded in conjunction with the private sector. Rightly, there is a concern around what the minister is specifically putting on the table for this and when it will happen. It must be fully funded.

The establishment of the talkfest ministerial advisory panels and a whole-of-government working group will surely be a roaring success under this minister's carriage because the minister has form for squibbing forums. What confidence can emergency volunteers have that the minister will genuinely engage with them on culture and enhancing the volunteer experience when she went over 13 months without holding EVAF—a forum that meets every three months? Emergency volunteers were shunned by this government until they were embarrassed and shamed into acting. When it comes to our SES, MRQ and rural fireies, these brave men and women represent the best in us—volunteers who put themselves in harm's way to protect, enhance and rebuild our communities. They deserve better.

Our state's decline in volunteering is consistent with a longer term decrease in the rate of volunteering across the nation. Of course, we must all strive to do better—on that we agree. The committee heard many creative and worthy suggestions on how to address an uptick in volunteering—support for students and financial discounts. The committee learned that in the last year not one improvement had been made to the blue card system under this LNP government. Only Labor initiatives have been rolled out.

There have been so many opportunities presented but so few that have been acted upon in this process. It is disappointing that so much of my time has been spent highlighting the lacklustre support for volunteering. It has taken away from my opportunity to recognise the incredible volunteer-involving organisations in my community. Volunteers who are the beating heart of the community are held together by equally hardworking and giving networks of charities and not-for-profits that enrich lives every day.

To each and every one of those volunteers we say a heartfelt thankyou. We appreciate those Queenslanders and organisations that took the time to thoughtfully contribute to the committee's inquiry—the people who selflessly give so much of themselves to lift each other up and to drive progress and potential and are committed to something bigger than themselves. With heart and dedication they make Queensland a better place, and for that we are thankful.