



Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**


**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2026

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

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (3.38 pm): I feel for our incredible volunteers. They give the limited time they have to make an important contribution to our communities and this LNP government rewards them through the establishment of what can only be described as a meh inquiry. How embarrassing to initiate an inquiry into volunteering a mere two months after the release of the comprehensive Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032.

Volunteering Queensland, community organisations and the volunteer sector played a pivotal role in the development of the strategy, which acknowledged the important role that volunteers play in Queensland. It also set an ambitious but actionable road map to respond to the significant challenges and opportunities that the sector had already described to government. Indeed, in 2024 Volunteering Queensland released the second state of volunteering in Queensland report. Data for this report was collected from the biggest survey of volunteers and volunteer managers in Queensland. The data already identified the key barriers to volunteering but, no, we better ask them again because the government needed something to do in its first year, and it was not like it had a lot of policies to implement!

I certainly recognised that volunteers in my electorate were busy and would not have time to put a submission in to another volunteering inquiry, so I devised a quick and simple qualitative survey to help them. Here is what they told me. Lack of time was raised consistently by many respondents as a barrier to volunteering, with family and work commitments making volunteering less attractive or not achievable. There is also a general perception that volunteering will also mean a lot more work, which is making people reluctant to volunteer in the first place. As one respondent commented, the 'many hands make light work' has been lost. A number of respondents raised cost-of-living impacts, indicating it can be expensive to give back when you are struggling financially or times are tough. The cost of transport and fuel was highlighted by a number of volunteers as an additional burden for volunteering opportunities at this time.

A number of respondents indicated that the workload now required in some volunteering roles—for example, in executive positions—is very high or holds too much responsibility. An increase in the requirements with rules and regulations is, as they noted, making it feel like a full-time job. A number of respondents also raised concerns that there is not enough information or advertising of volunteering opportunities, especially in local areas. This is particularly difficult for older Queenslanders who may not have access to online websites or social media platforms. As one respondent indicated, the opportunity to volunteer is not reaching the people who are interested.

Targeted outreach was also suggested to actively engage under-represented groups in volunteering opportunities through outreach programs in schools, community centres and culturally diverse organisations. As one person recommended, offering bilingual materials or culturally relevant

opportunities can also help. Many culturally and linguistically diverse communities will actively volunteer their time for cultural events and community festivals, yet they are not supported or encouraged to use those honed skills for further volunteering opportunities and especially in natural disaster situations, where language and cultural understanding could be better utilised and considered an asset. Volunteer training was raised consistently by respondents, with a recognition that more structured support, including better training and clearer role definitions, could help to encourage volunteers and retain them.

I am deeply grateful to the many local volunteers in my electorate, the Jordan electorate, who provided their views and ideas to me and which I diligently provided to the parliamentary inquiry into volunteering in Queensland. I really thought that we would see meaningful support for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations, but really all we have seen is the same concerns raised in 2024 rearticulated. It is disappointing to see that almost every recommendation delivered by the inquiry was qualified by this government, accepting all of the recommendations in principle and/or subject to further investigation. Enough already!

The government has wasted time, energy and taxpayers' money on a lacklustre response that brings us no closer to resolving the issues already identified by our communities in 2024. This inquiry could have made meaningful progress on the recommendations that were already called for in Labor's 2024-2032 volunteering strategy, but it did not. I am sorry to the volunteers in my electorate who gave me their feedback because I thought this government may have actually done something with it, but it did not. I recognise that my electorate is enhanced deeply by the incredible volunteers who each and every day give their time freely to make our communities better and I wish to thank each and every individual for their contribution. As one respondent so eloquently and simply observed—

Everybody that sticks their hand up to volunteer does so because they want to give back to the community, offering professional skills and life experience that couldn't be bought.

If only the Crisafulli LNP government had actually recognised this.