




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.49 pm): I, too, would like to speak to this report. I want to talk about a couple of issues before I pay tribute to my volunteer groups. One of those issues was covered by the member for Greenslopes. He pointed out that the conclusions contained in this strategy and the action plan were the same conclusions that had been made under the previous government. That means that, obviously, this government has handed in someone else's homework. The work has already been done. The stakeholders were asked to repeat themselves and go back and do the same work again. That has basically meant the same result but with 18 months delay before the good work to help out the process of volunteering could commence.

The other issue I want to briefly talk about is what we are seeing in my area—community organisations faced with cuts to their already successful programs. I believe they are cuts to fund some of the newer or favoured priorities from the government. Community organisations are being asked: can you keep running this program with volunteers? Volunteers are great, but you cannot really ask them to replace paid professional workers who are doing quite complicated and intense work. They are working with the complicated cases and complicated lives or residents. To ask them to fill the gap left after the withdrawal of funding, working with vulnerable people, is not okay. It is professional work. Community organisations need to be supported and funded to keep on doing that work.

I pay tribute to some of the community organisations that run outstanding programs—they do rely on volunteers but they supplement the professional work that is already being done in these organisations—working with kids who are disengaged, kids at risk in education services and kids at risk of homelessness. These are organisations in my area such as the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre, Unity and Raise. The YMCA also deals with many different kids and their cases.

I also pay tribute to the Deception Bay SES group, which has won awards for being the most highly organised and best group in the state; the Lions Club of Deception Bay; the North Lakes Lions Club; the Mango Hill Progress Association, with Laurence, Mark, Guy and Dave Norman—he also does Bushcare—a very intense and very focused community organisation that runs outstanding programs in the Mango Hill area; and, obviously, Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels is amazing. Every day volunteers go out providing not only meals but also essential daily contact for so many of our residents. I mention Des, Michelle, Colin, Lyn and many others. I pay tribute to the work they do every day.

We have also heard about the P&Cs and sporting groups. P&Cs and sporting groups can be the first experience of volunteering for many parents. They are the first places we recruit volunteers. I pay tribute to some of our sports clubs: North Lakes United Football Club; the Lakes Knights—they are an outstanding cricket club; Little Athletics; Moreton Bay Raiders; Moreton Bay Raptors; the fishing and boating club; and Deception Bay football. I also mention the Redcliffe Hockey Club because I myself

am a volunteer there—manager, fundraiser and vice-president. In that position I see the intense amount of time that can be taken up by the needs of these young people. I pay tribute to our president, Paul; our treasurer, Lynne; and our secretary, Anthony. There are so many more people. I see firsthand the enormous amount of time that is needed by organisations to run these sports and to run these assets as well.

I want to finish by thanking the Soroptimists of North Moreton, the Business and Professional Women Moreton Bay club and the North Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Not only those who volunteer for sports groups and P&Cs but also those who provide support services for our small business community are absolutely crucial. I hope that we can recognise through our Bancroft Business Awards many of those small businesses that go above and beyond. The North Lakes Chamber of Commerce will be helping me out with that. There are so many more volunteer groups I could mention, but, as I said, the amount of time and effort that is put in by volunteers is absolutely outstanding, and it is absolutely crucial for our communities to survive.