




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2026

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

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerster—ALP) (3.37 pm): From local sporting clubs to SES units, from pride networks to neighbourhood centres, from disaster recovery to daily acts of quiet service, volunteering is woven into the social and economic fabric of Queensland. It is how communities endure hardship, how they celebrate success and how they care for one another when government services alone cannot meet every need. I want to place on record my deep gratitude to the literally millions of Queenslanders who volunteer. Together they contribute millions of hours of service to our state. In monetary value, the overall value of volunteering to Queensland is estimated at almost \$120 billion. Those figures represent real meals delivered, real flood sandbags filled, real children coached and real lives supported. My own electorate has so many incredible organisations and incredible volunteers. I refer to organisations such as belong in Acacia Ridge; Volunteer Connect; all of the P&Cs in the schools; the Algerster and Greenbank RSL Men's Shed; many sporting groups like Calamvale Leopards, which we share, Mr Deputy Speaker Martin; Souths juniors rugby league; Defenders for Hope; Helping Hand, and the list goes on and on.

That is why this inquiry into volunteering should have been an opportunity to strengthen the sector. You should have built on the strongest evidence base ever collected in the state. Instead what we have seen from the Crisafulli LNP government is duplication, delay and political pointscore—sadly. Only eight weeks before this inquiry was announced I was very proud to release the former Labor government's *Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032* and its first action plan. That strategy was not written on the back of an envelope; it was developed through consultation with more than 110 sector representatives and over 20 co-design meetings. It embedded the largest volunteering dataset Queensland has ever seen. It identified declining participation post COVID, administrative burden, barriers for First Nations volunteers, challenges for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the enormous opportunity presented by Brisbane 2032. In other words, it answered the very questions this inquiry was tasked to investigate yet, instead of building on that foundation, the LNP chose to sideline it. Stakeholders who had just contributed their time and expertise to shaping a whole-of-government strategy were hauled back again to repeat the same evidence. Volunteers who already struggle with burnout and red tape were asked to give even more unpaid hours to a process that retraced ground already covered. What have we received at the end of it? Recommendations that ask the government to commit its determination, to investigate the creation, to consider conducting a review—suggestions to consider considering.

At estimates the minister refused to rule out wanting only three to four recommendations with no cost to government. That mindset explains the outcome, because if you start with the premise that nothing can cost money you guarantee that nothing meaningful will change. Under Labor we recognised that volunteering is not free. Volunteers give their time freely, but systems, training, infrastructure and coordination require investment. That is why the action plan scoped a volunteer reimbursement fund. It

provided support to help organisations navigate blue card compliance; funded Volunteering Queensland to strengthen recruitment and management capability; and continued funding uplifts for neighbourhood centres—the largest uplift in quite a long time, let me tell you—food rescue organisations and Meals on Wheels, recognising their reliance on volunteers to deliver frontline services. We recognised the unique barriers faced by First Nations communities and committed to streamlining blue card processes; we invested in micro-credentials to build volunteer capability; we supported young and older Queenslanders to engage in volunteering and recognised culturally diverse leadership. This was practical reform grounded in evidence.

Throughout this inquiry, witnesses told us what had already been determined. They spoke of COVID's impact on participation. They spoke of administrative duplication. They spoke of blue card barriers for First Nations volunteers. They spoke of the need to reduce red tape. Every one of those themes is reflected in the Labor strategy. Even in relation to Brisbane 2032, the former Labor government had already aligned volunteering growth with the Elevate 2042 legacy strategy. The LNP could have taken that blueprint and accelerated it. Instead they pressed pause, launched an inquiry and largely rediscovered what was already known. This is the difference between governments that do the work and governments that do the slogans. Labor delivered a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy for the next decade and we stand by it.