



Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**


**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2026

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

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.03 pm): It is a true pleasure to rise to talk about the inquiry into volunteering in Queensland, a benchmark of what the Crisafulli government wants to achieve with our volunteering sector throughout our state. Just to show how important volunteering is and how dear it is to the hearts of Queenslanders, there were over 500 submissions to the inquiry and 15 public hearings. These public hearings were conducted across the length and breadth of Queensland including in Dalby, Toowoomba, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Roma, Cairns, Cooktown, Townsville, the beautiful Gold Coast, Emerald and Rockhampton.

We heard a diverse set of opinions and ideas about how to improve volunteering. It is very important to understand that we need to appreciate our volunteers. One of the issues we found during the inquiry was a concern from rural fire brigades. They felt they were not appreciated in the way they thought appropriate. For example, the rural fire brigade has seen quite a large decrease in the number of volunteers, from 35,000 in 2015 to 27,000 to June 2024. That is a huge drop in the number of volunteers.

Last year we introduced an omnibus bill into this chamber. Rural fire brigade volunteers were concerned about the legislation, which created confusion and stopped them from going out to serve their communities. The Crisafulli government listened to those brigades and enacted legislation to make it a lot clearer. This was when Cyclone Alfred came through the Brisbane region and dumped a lot of rain. Unfortunately, these brigades had to stay in their sheds because they were not allowed to leave.

Contrary to the submission of the previous speaker, the member for Lytton, that just shows how important it is that government listens. The Crisafulli government listened to those concerns and said, 'Here is a piece of legislation that needs to be fixed so power is given back to first responders so they can go out and serve their communities.' We all have wonderful individuals and volunteers who do fantastic work for our communities. We all have our Lions clubs and Rotary clubs, and the list goes on and on.

I give a big shout-out to Patrick Wells, a former school captain at Helensvale State High School. This young gentleman took it upon himself to fundraise to help people in need over Christmas. These are the types of people we need volunteering. We need more of these people involved. Patrick went out there and volunteered for his local community to fundraise. He organised walks around the park and he organised barbecues—he did a fantastic job. That shows what we can achieve if we can get young people enthusiastic. When it comes to mental health issues, volunteering and socialising with people go a long way to making our mental health a lot better.

It was so important that this inquiry proceeded, and I thank the Minister for Local Government for highlighting how important volunteering is to our state and our communities. The Crisafulli government is putting volunteers first. We care about our volunteers and we want our volunteers to have a better volunteering experience. That is what the Crisafulli government is about. This is proactive government making a real difference to each and every Queensland volunteer.