




Speech By
Martin Hunt

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (3.43 pm): Dr Seuss tells us, ‘Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.’ Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities, yet they are time poor, they fear the AGM that comes and they are conscious of the fact that when it comes time to pay those annual fees for their membership and for the insurance they need the hand of government to step in and help make some change. We know our volunteers are few and far between and that the nature of volunteering is changing. Just last night I was reminded of a dear friend, ‘Mr Livingstone’—Brian Dorey OAM. Brian was a member of the Yeppoon Lions Club for over 60 years. At one point in time he served on 25 committees in our community—from the Cooe Bay progress association to the Advancement League for Keppel Sands. Of those 25 committees, he was chair of 19 and his beloved wife, Olive, was either secretary or treasurer on about 10 of those committees at the time. It is one way to have date night! Brian taught of the value of lifelong volunteering, but they do not make them like Brian anymore. As I said, volunteers are time poor and we are working harder than we ever have before to earn a dollar for our family, and that means that there is a need for reform in this space.

Psychologist Andrew Fuller says that when we surround our young people with opportunities to serve and to give then in life they become young people who serve and give to our community. When I reflect on the work of the Capricorn Conservation Council and the work of the Capricorn Coast landcare group, both of which give young people in our schools during school time, weekends and after school the chance to serve in the environmental space in our community, they make such a difference. When we look to our young people for volunteering it is important that we do not mind the gap—that is, we do not forget that so many of the volunteers that we need for today and for tomorrow are not going to be the 18-year-olds of today who are going to head off to university or have the heaviest period of their time when their obligations in the workforce and when their obligations to young families start to grow; it is going to be those of us who get to an age of maturity and of retirement and have the capacity to make choices as to how we invest and spend our time.

I reflect on my own Yeppoon Lions Club and my friends at the Caves and District Lions Club, along with the Emu Park Lions Club and Mount Archer in Rockhampton. Each and every day these clubs bring together groups of people for a common cause, but because members of volunteer organisations are time poor they rely on people like Glen Alexander—a great member of the Lions Club and Citizen of the Year in Livingstone—who step up and give above and beyond.

Volunteering is never wasted, yet this report clearly states that there are fewer volunteers than there were a decade ago and fewer volunteers than there were 20 years before. We need to be conscious of the fact that our SES and others are seeing a downturn in their memberships. The Crisafulli

government is committed to not only giving them the resources but also working with them to ensure that we are giving them the qualifications that they can take out into the real world while also giving them an experience that does not seem overly bureaucratic and that does not leave them thinking, 'Why AM I giving up my time?' As the member for Chatsworth said, if these people give up their time to attend training and if they give up their time to attend disasters, we need to ensure that the experience for them is a positive one. We have to remember that, even though we have seen such a downturn in the number of SES and rural volunteers in our community, those skills remain in our community forever. In my own community I know that there are over 200 people who have previously been members of the SES. They might not be going to training on a Monday night, yet they still can help tarp a roof. When a disaster hits the ground, they will be there for sure.

Volunteers pay for the privilege and this report very clearly states the costs that volunteers are facing, and I think of Keppel Coast Arts, with Leanne Smith, with over 800 activations a year. They have been serving our community for 25 years and they do it for the love of our town. None of the Crocs, the Seagulls, the Swans, the Emus or the Bluebirds sign up because they want to pay or they want to attend the AGM; they do it for our kids and for our community. Each month when I look at Capricorn Coast Food Relief, Meals on Wheels and ICare, they are giving dignity and service to our communities in such an important way. The committee heard from Queenslanders across the state and from volunteers and I ask that this parliament takes careful consideration of the words of our volunteers and makes a difference for their future.