

**Question on Notice  
No. 594  
Asked on 20 May 2004**

**MR G FENLON** asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**)-

QUESTION:

With reference to his recent launch of the *Get Involved* in volunteering brochure –

Will he detail which areas the Queensland Government is encouraging people to volunteer in and what benefit it would bring to individuals and communities?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government supports volunteering as a civic activity undertaken by individuals in community settings. While individual agencies within government support volunteering at a regional and community level, through its Volunteering Policy, the government is supporting a number of broad level strategies and initiatives within key identified areas for action. The *Get Involved* in Volunteering brochure is designed to encourage people across the state, including youth, the growing numbers of retirees, seniors, groups or companies, to get involved in volunteering.

Various popular volunteering opportunities are suggested in the brochure, including sporting teams and associations, theatre groups, scouts, guides, military cadets, service clubs and animal shelters. The brochure encourages readers to consider their favourite pursuits and interests as areas in which they may like to volunteer. It also encourages people to seek out information from a number of identified sources including for example, Volunteering Queensland, the peak organisation for volunteers in Queensland. The brochure also reminds readers that volunteering work involving children requires a blue card and provides contact details for information regarding the Working with Children Check.

A broad range of government departments engage the services of volunteers and also work with community organisations that in turn, engage volunteers. Examples of opportunities for volunteering associated with a number of these departments are presented in the brochure. Queenslanders have a strong tradition of volunteering. More than 783,800 Queenslanders were identified as volunteers in an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey in 2000. Of these, more than 425,100 volunteers were in regional Queensland.

There is a growing body of research internationally that demonstrates volunteering is the basis on which stronger and healthier communities are built and the way in which people become involved and active participants in their communities. Building safer and more supportive communities is the goal of many community organisations, as well as government and many volunteers work toward this goal every day. Being involved in voluntary organisations is an excellent way of connecting with people, feeling involved and having an influence in the development of local communities. Volunteers enrich this state. Individuals benefit from learning new skills and sharing their talents with others, meeting new people and gaining a sense of accomplishment and knowing that their contribution does make a difference in the community.