

Question on Notice

Number. 492

Asked on Thursday, 30 March 2006

MRS ATTWOOD MP asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**) -

Will he outline the advantages of ministerial regional community forums in regard to their processes of consultation with people from all ten regions in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Held quarterly throughout the ten (10) regions of the state, Ministerial Regional Community Forums enable meaningful community engagement with the Queensland Government.

Forums provide an opportunity for Forum members who are leaders in their communities to raise issues of regional significance with Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

One of the strengths of Forums as a means of consultation is that Forum members are able to access their considerable community networks to identify emerging issues and solutions within their regions to take to government.

Community consultation opportunities are also built-in to the Forum process, with all ten (10) regions organising pre-Forum workshops and consultation opportunities. Community members are then able to talk with Forum members allowing community views to be taken into account when the Forum members develop regional proposals.

Once issues of regional significance are identified key stakeholders including Forum members and their communities, Ministerial and departmental staff, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Regional Queensland Council members engage collaboratively to develop workable strategies that address issues raised.

The Government has responded to issues raised at forums in a number of ways. These include funding a new service, changing the way existing services are provided and changing a policy or program. Solutions often involve the Queensland Government working with other parties such as local government, Commonwealth agencies and community organisations.

An added benefit of Forums is that, as an existing and ongoing community consultation initiative, they have enabled government to consult directly and extensively with communities on significant government projects including the Blueprint for the Bush.

Currently Forum members throughout the state are busy preparing and planning for the next round of Ministerial Regional Community Forums to be held on 19 June 2006.