

Question on Notice

No. 686

Asked on Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MS STONE MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth (**MR PITT**)–

What is the State Government doing to assist volunteers and organisations that depend on volunteers?

ANSWER:

Volunteers and volunteer organisations make vital contributions to society and community life in Queensland. To ensure that volunteering continues to play a strong and vital role in Queensland, the Queensland Government has launched a new policy *Valuing Volunteers: the Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering 2007-2010*.

A significant initiative of this policy is the establishment of the Office for Volunteering in the Department of Communities as a centre of excellence to implement the new policy on volunteering and to coordinate departmental activities around volunteering.

Policy actions include:

- coordinating research on future volunteering patterns and developing flexible volunteering models to assist organisations to adapt to emerging trends;
- developing a youth engagement strategy to attract and retain young people as volunteers; and
- working with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to explore tax incentives to meet the costs associated with volunteering, both for volunteers and for organisations dependent upon volunteers.

This will support the already significant commitment of the government to volunteering, including:

- triennial funding of \$226 000 to Volunteering Queensland, the peak body for volunteering in Queensland;
- one-off funding of \$245 000 to Volunteering Queensland to enhance Volbase, their volunteer referral and skills database;
- Queensland Young Volunteer Awards – eight awards of \$2 000;
- the Premiers' Awards for Queensland Seniors – recognising the significant contribution of older Queenslanders; and
- the Premiers' Queensland Multicultural Awards - rewarding those who assist new migrants, address racism and support multiculturalism in the community.

The government also made significant election commitments to volunteers in 2006:

- \$2.3 million over four years to pilot a volunteer seniors and grandparents reading to children program in 15 locations across the state;
- \$52 million funding package over five years to boost equipment and training for emergency services volunteers; and
- \$10 million over four years for a beach and marine safety program involving marine volunteers.

The Reading to Children program covers the Springwood electorate in the areas to be targeted by the program.