



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Volunteers

SPEECH

Wednesday, 24 November 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Wednesday, 24 November 2010</p> <p>Page 93</p> <p>Questioner</p> <p>Speaker Rishworth, Amanda, MP</p>	<p>Source House</p> <p>Proof Yes</p> <p>Responder</p> <p>Question No.</p>
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Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (7.16 pm)—I am very pleased to speak tonight about the volunteers award ceremony that I hosted in my electorate on 8 November to recognise the great work that many of our dedicated volunteers do in my electorate of Kingston. Over 19,000 people volunteer their services to benefit residents in the southern suburbs of Adelaide every year. Volunteers save governments and organisations a significant amount of money every year and form the backbone of our local communities. I received an overwhelming response when I invited a range of different organisations to nominate a local volunteer who they believed had offered voluntary service which was above and beyond what is generally expected. Over 40 volunteers received nominations from a variety of community groups including sports clubs, environmental groups, schools and community service providers in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. Some were nominated for the length of time they had shown dedication. In some cases they had offered their time and effort for upwards of 30 years. For others, it was for the enthusiasm and energy that they had brought to a relatively new role.

Over the afternoon we heard stories about all these local volunteers, and it was quite incredible that so many people in our local community spend their weekends helping out with general maintenance at local schools or chatting to elderly people in aged-care facilities. One thing that came out was the fact that a lot of people were recognised for looking after the books of their local organisation or club, and certainly accountants and people with bookkeeping services are sorely needed in our local community groups. It is certainly welcomed when people give up their time and energy for that. Hearing these different stories was really wonderful, and I think it was lovely to have both those who were nominated and those that nominated them sharing in the day.

It was a fantastic day. The day was started by a group of students from Hackham East Primary School led by Mr Jarrod Lamshed. They opened the ceremony singing the national anthem. We also had well-known Australian children's author Mem Fox, who gave a delightful and very entertaining keynote speech about the rich experience she has had in being a volunteer. Mem Fox spoke about the question that you often hear from volunteers, and that is: who benefits most—the

volunteer or the people receiving the service? She said she is yet to find answer, but one thing I think we can all say in this place is that government and organisations are the real beneficiaries of volunteers. We also had the pleasure of having the Hon. Julie Collins from this place, the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services, come and recognise the importance of these volunteers to our local communities and to the Australian community. Ms Evelyn O'Loughlin, CEO of Volunteering SA, attended as well to offer congratulations to each of the successful nominees.

The ceremony was followed by an afternoon tea, which allowed the volunteers from the different organisations to network. One thing that came through as we were mingling was that a lot of these volunteers who were recognised for their work in a specific organisation indeed volunteered in a number of others. That was not often acknowledged because they were a little shy about talking about themselves, which is often what we find with volunteers, but in fact many of these people had not only done exemplary work in one particular organisation but volunteered in many.

One award recipient, Ms Cora James from Anglicare SA, works in the local community offering support to people who are most in need so that they can get back on their feet. Cora commented that, while it can be quite difficult, you never forget the people you speak to and you find it very rewarding to be able to give something back to the community through this work.

Those who nominated a volunteer within their organisation said they were very grateful for the opportunity to nominate these volunteers because of the effort that the volunteers put in, whether it is in our local schools, our local sporting clubs or our environmental groups. They just could not do their jobs without these volunteers. I would like to congratulate everyone who was nominated as part of the southern suburbs volunteers ceremony for the great work they do in our community.