

VOLUNTEERING — STATE OF VOLUNTEERING REPORT

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Volunteering) [12.14 pm]: I am very pleased to inform the house of the release of the *Western Australia state of volunteering report 2023*. It is no secret that Western Australians are generous and kind-hearted, and this report gives us the data to back it up. The volunteering workforce is the largest industry by employment in the state, and its collective efforts contribute approximately 400 million hours a year. That equates to over \$63 billion a year of value for the Western Australian community.

I am proud to tell members today that 65 per cent of Western Australians volunteer, and 54 per cent do so in their local community, including in the most remote parts of our state. The research also states that 78 per cent of people aged under 25 years are engaging in volunteering, too. This amazing and selfless contribution has far-reaching impacts in the community and for the individual volunteer, who receives personal rewards that span a range of health, wellbeing and social benefits. I acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed to this report, led by Volunteering WA, including the Australian Institute of Project Management, the Department of Communities, the Centre for Volunteering New South Wales, Volunteering Australia, and all the volunteers and volunteer-involved organisations who shared their own experiences, expertise and insights. With this 2023 report, we now have an up-to-date benchmark for national comparisons to help inform future decision-making that will be embedded in rich statistical data and insights.

The Cook government is supporting and strengthening the volunteering sector with more than \$6 million allocated to the Volunteering Development Services program. This includes a recent \$2.1 million boost for regional volunteering that was announced last December.

As Minister for Volunteering, I am proud to see so many Western Australians generously volunteering their time across the state. The future of volunteering in Western Australia is bright, and the Cook government is committed to supporting the sector in the years to come.