



Lachlan MILLAR MP

Member for **Gregory**



20 October 2020

Mara Basanovic
Chief Executive Officer
Volunteering Queensland

By email: mara.basanovic@volunteeringqld.org.au
CC ; vanessa.codling@volunteeringqld.org.au

Dear Ms Basanovic,

Re: 2020 Queensland State Election Platform

Thank you for your well thought out and considered 2020 Queensland State Election Platform outlining Volunteering Queensland's aspirations and issues going into the 2020 Queensland State Election.

As you would be aware, the Liberal National Party (LNP) is a strong supporter of the work and assistance our volunteers do throughout Queensland. We appreciate and acknowledge the important and essential role Volunteering Queensland plays in representing and supporting the state's volunteers. The reputation and respect that our volunteers have in the broader Queensland community is testament to your organisation's outstanding work in representing and supporting them.

Whilst the outcome of this election will determine who will lead Queensland through its first fixed four-year Parliamentary term, it is far more important than that. It is about Queensland's future and who is best placed to guide us through the biggest economic crisis in almost a century.

LNP's economic plan

The LNP has a bold vision to make Queensland the economic powerhouse of Australia once again. An LNP government will implement our economic plan for a decade of secure jobs, to get Queenslanders working again and lead Queensland out of the recession by stimulating the economy.

Unlike the Palaszczuk Labor Government, the LNP has a plan to boost Queensland's economy. While it is true that economic uncertainty has never been so widespread in Queensland, it should not be forgotten that Queensland had the nation's highest unemployment, most bankruptcies and lowest business confidence prior to COVID-19. As such, the decision made by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk to cancel this year's budget was reckless, and with Queensland the only Australian jurisdiction to not have a budget, it means Labor is flying blind through the biggest economic crisis in almost a century.

Our vision is to make Queensland the economic powerhouse of Australia once again, the best place to get a job, get ahead and raise a family.

The LNP's plan will get Queensland working again.

Our plan for a stronger economy and secure jobs is based on four foundations:

- investing for growth
- unleashing Queensland industry
- supercharging the regions
- securing our children's future

The LNP is the only party that has a plan to create a stronger economy and more secure jobs.

LNP plan to support Queensland's volunteers

Queensland's once proud cohort of Queensland volunteers is haemorrhaging volunteers and facing systemic decline under the Palaszczuk Labor Government.

An example of volunteer decline in the past five years under the Palaszczuk Labor Government is that nearly 1000 volunteers have walked away from the SES. This is a 15 per cent slump in SES membership under Labor's watch.

To make matters worse, more than 20 SES branches have closed throughout the state in the last 5 years.

It's clear that the volunteers have been neglected and unfortunately volunteers are choosing to walk away in droves. We have heard firsthand about cultural issues within government and how it manages and supports the varied groups of essential and hard-working volunteers.

With Queensland's tendency for natural disasters, we would expect the state to be ready to deal with the upcoming bushfire, storm, flood and cyclones. Labor's inaction is simply not good enough.

The LNP thank Volunteering Queensland for articulating proposals which identify how our volunteers can continue to provide valuable services to their communities, and to expand and improve their role in supporting Queenslanders.

In relation to the specific spending commitments requested, as you would appreciate that is quite challenging given Labor has cancelled the state budget.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has refused to be transparent and hand down a budget. This reckless decision has therefore denied Queenslanders access to transparent information on the state of Queensland's finances.

In stark contrast to the Palaszczuk Labor Government, the LNP has committed to handing down a budget within the first 100 days if elected on 31 October 2020. As such, we would encourage Volunteering Queensland to engage with the LNP during this process.

The LNP acknowledges that Volunteering Queensland wants to see formal recognition of volunteers across the sectors they are engaged in within Queensland.

As such, the LNP principally supports having volunteers considered by governments and departments, and in legislation when decisions are made that affect them.

That is why an LNP Government will commit to investigating ways to ensure volunteers are provided with the legal rights and protections they require as they go about their duties.

The LNP has also outlined a comprehensive 10-point bushfire mitigation strategy that includes significant emphasis on respecting volunteers, restoring local control to rural fire brigades, establishing a rural fire board and establishing metropolitan based rural fire brigades.

The LNP has also committed to investigate establishing a set of agreed support conditions for Rural Fire Brigade volunteers that could be in the form of the Charter that was signed between the Auxiliary firefighters and the LNP Government in 2014.

To support the state's marine rescue volunteers the LNP have made a significant commitment to support the ongoing work of the state's marine rescue services with a \$25 million plan to replace the ageing marine rescue fleet of both VMR and Coastguard with new Queensland-built boats.

This measure was announced as part of the LNP's new procurement mandate. The procurement mandate would make Queensland businesses the only ones in line for government contracts for food, manufacturing and medical supplies.

An elected LNP Government will consider formally recognising Volunteering Queensland's role as a key provider of Queensland's frontline volunteer workforce to essential service providers.

If elected, we would be happy to work with you to deliver appropriate support for our hard-working volunteers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lachlan Millar', with a long, sweeping underline.

LACHLAN MILLAR MP
Shadow Minister for Fire and Emergency Services
Member for Gregory