

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Miss Laura Nuttall MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE (QTON)
Public Hearing - Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation in the ACT
Tuesday, 21 May 2024

Asked by Ms Nicole Lawder MLA on 21 May 2024: Jennifer Kirkaldy, General Manager Policy and Advocacy, Salvation Army, took on notice the following question(s):

Ref: *Hansard - Uncorrected Proof Transcript (UPT)*, 21 May 2024 [p32]

In relation to:
volunteerism

MS LAWDER: Anything you want to add about that, about volunteerism, and--

Ms Kirkaldy: We would absolutely back-up that volunteers are the absolute backbone of what we do. It is not just that they add huge value, they can offer something that employees cannot. There is an intrinsic value in knowing that someone is spending time with you because they want to, not because they have to, or they are getting a benefit. They are there because they want to.

We would not be in a position to give you the ACT—I think our initial reflection is that we still have lots of volunteers, and they are fantastic. But I can take on notice if there has been any change in either the age profile or numbers of volunteers.

MS LAWDER: Yes. Thank you.

Jennifer Kirkaldy, General Manager Policy and Advocacy (Salvation Army): The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

The number of people volunteering for the Salvation Army has gradually declined over the past three years. Please see the below graph of the number of Salvation Army volunteers from December 2020 - February 2024.

In a recent survey of those volunteering for The Salvation Army the most common factor influencing their length of volunteering was cited for volunteering was 'A sense of belonging and connection', closely followed by 'A sense of purpose.'

We are unable to provide data about whether the age profile of our volunteers has changed over time. We do know anecdotally that the age of current volunteers is skewed heavily towards ages 55-74. The majority of our volunteers polled were retired.

