

820N-14/16



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015
Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy-Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA



ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
QON - 24

Mr STEVE DOSZPOT, MLA: To ask the Minister for Ageing

[Ref: Community Services - Ageing, Budget paper 3, page number #14, output class: 3.1]

In relation to: ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing 2012 – 2014
Strategic Priority 7 – Work and Retirement
Objective 18 – Promote volunteering for older Canberrans and increase volunteering opportunities

1. Annually, what number of hits were received on the Seniors Information Online website relating to Volunteering ACT and the ON-LINE TOOL "GO Volunteer"?
2. How does this compare with last year?
3. How many Government services have volunteer programs that target seniors?
4. How many older Canberrans volunteer their time through these services?

MINISTER RATTENBURY : (in capacity as Minister for Ageing from 7 July 2014) The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The volunteering page on Seniors Information Online received 989 unique page views from 1 July 2013 to 26 June 2014.
It is not possible to measure hits on specific links within this page.
2. In 2012-13, it received 826 unique page views, a large increase from 277 in 2011-12.
3. and 4. The Government has not yet undertaken a comprehensive audit of how many of its services have volunteer programs. However, we can report that volunteer seniors are used extensively by the ACT Government, as outlined below.

Chief Minister and Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

The Centenary of Canberra actively promoted volunteering opportunities for older people. The Centenary of Canberra team hosted seven community information sessions at locations across Canberra which resulted in 352 Centenary of Canberra volunteers, many of whom were seniors.

The Canberra and Region Visitors Centre uses many counter volunteers to assist visitors. The current number of volunteers (seniors) at the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre is 54. Volunteering is also promoted to all age groups for such events as Floriade (where there were approximately 160 senior volunteers in 2013) and the Canberra Nara Candle Festival (12 senior volunteers in 2013), Enlighten and Canberra Day Festivals (5 senior volunteers in 2013).

artsACT support several key arts organisations through the ACT Arts Fund who provide volunteer programs. In 2013 there have been over 780 volunteers who have assisted across the 13 arts facilities and 22 key arts organisations. Volunteer programs are available to all age groups.

Community Services Directorate

The Office for Multicultural Affairs encourages volunteers at the National Multicultural Festival, and at the 2014 festival, of the 120 volunteers it is estimated that 25% were seniors.

Education and Training Directorate

The School Volunteer Program of the ACT is a registered voluntary organisation which places volunteers in ACT public schools as mentors, confidants and communicators. Over 2012-13 up to 115 volunteers, *the vast majority who have retired from the workforce*, mentored students in 28 primary schools and three secondary schools. Over this period, the Program contributed over 6,000 voluntary hours in support of students.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Emergency Services

As at 19 June 2013, there were 50 Community Fire Units with more than 1,000 volunteers who provide property defence against bush and grass fire in higher risk areas of the urban rural interface around the ACT. Community Fire Unit Administrative Support Unit and Fire Brigade Historical Society volunteers also fulfil a valuable community education role. As at 19 June 2013, the ACT Rural Fire Service included 550 brigade volunteers. There were also 243 SES volunteers and 83 volunteers who assisted with the Emergency Services Agency Mapping and Planning Support service.

Justice and Community Services also have volunteer Justices of the Peace and volunteers who assist the Public Advocate as community guardians for the elderly and as Interview Friends to help young people. Building on the positive experiences of volunteers during the year, JACS will continue to encourage other Canberrans to volunteer during the year ahead.

ACT Policing

Volunteers in Policing, many of whom are senior citizens, are living proof of how important seniors are to the community and are great examples of the benefits that can be gained from positive ageing opportunities. In 2012-13, there were 45 volunteers (23 women and 22 men). The combined life experiences and wisdom of our volunteers provides an invaluable service to our frontline members and to the public. The program has a variety of approved active role descriptions, which include role playing in police training exercises; ceremonial support; bus driving; Justice of the Peace duties at police stations; and catering support at ACT Policing corporate, social and training events.

The Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD)

The EPD ACT Landcare Facilitator, Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Facilitator and Aboriginal NRM Facilitator work with the community, including older persons to protect, care and enhance the environment. The EPD encourages volunteering through community groups, such as catchment groups (Ginninderra, Molonglo and Southern ACT Catchments), Greening Australia, Frogwatch, Waterwatch, Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (1300 members) and Canberra Ornithologists Group. The contribution by older persons to nature conservation is highly valued.

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Over 200 volunteers help with a range of tasks in our Public Libraries, including sorting ephemera and photos at the ACT Heritage Library, delivering Home Library Service material to residents who

are physically unable to visit the library and are often socially isolated, and assisting with story time and other children's activities.

The 35 ACT ParkCare and Landcare Groups currently have over regular 350 senior volunteers, and over 20,000 volunteer hours were provided by them over 2012-13.

The ACT Domestic Animal Services have 32 senior volunteer dog walkers. The Friends of the Arboretum have 67 senior volunteers. The Canberra Carousel has five senior volunteers.

Health Directorate

In the Health Directorate a Volunteer Program was successfully introduced into the Intensive Care Unit waiting room in 2012-13 to improve communication, support for families and orientation to the environment.

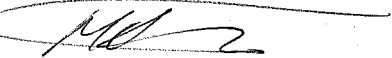
Volunteering has been part of the Canberra Hospital culture for over 40 years. In 2011, a fulltime Volunteer Manager was bought on board to develop appropriate policies and governance around volunteering within ACT Health. A Volunteer Framework has been developed to ensure a continuity of program development and management for Volunteers across ACT Health. Volunteering in a health setting has its own 'specific' issues when thinking about developing programs and a Volunteer Policy was reviewed and endorsed in April 2012.

As at 1 July 2014, ACT Health has a total of 411 volunteers. Following a review of the dates of birth of the volunteers, there are approximately 75% over the age of 50 across all programs. ACT Health's programs are targeted to all ages and, as a result, there is a good mix amongst the programs which has been supportive for the younger volunteers who are using the older volunteers as mentors.

ACT Health advertises for new volunteers via the ACT Health website, with a dedicated page outlining the programs and roles. ACT Health also utilises and works closely with Volunteering ACT when advertising new programs. ACT Health has also attended external Expos including Seniors Week Expo, Defence Community Organisation Expo and the 2013 Volunteering ACT Expo.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015

Signature:



Date: 28/7/14

By the Minister for Ageing, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA