

# NEWS RELEASE



**The Hon. Graham West MP**  
Minister for Juvenile Justice  
Minister for Youth  
Minister for Volunteering  
Member for Campbelltown

**Thursday 2 October 2008**

## **Minister launches book about Australian volunteers**

Minister for Volunteering, Graham West, today launched Associate Professor Melanie Oppenheimer's new book *Volunteering: Why We Can't Survive Without It* – at Gleebooks.

Mr West congratulated Dr Oppenheimer on her book, which looks at the history of volunteering in Australia and its importance to our society.

“Through documenting her own family history of volunteering, Dr Oppenheimer has made the many selfless volunteers in our community more visible,” Mr West said.

“Dr Oppenheimer comes from a long line of NSW volunteers. Her great-grandmother was the founding President of the NSW Country Women's Association, her grandmother formed the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment in Walcha in WWII, and her mother was recognised for her volunteer work with an Order of Australia.

“Volunteering is vital the well being of the broader NSW community, from the individual who volunteers at their local community centre to members of our State Emergency Services.

Dr Oppenheimer said there were more than 5.4 million adult volunteers in Australia.

“A lot of people volunteer on an everyday basis without realising the value or importance of the work they are doing - so the number of volunteers in Australia is actually much higher than we realise,” she said.

“Most people simply fall into volunteering, often by way of having children and helping out at schools or through sporting organisations.

“I would like to see a greater awareness of volunteering in Australia. This could happen by way of a major public relations campaign that encourages even more Australians to get involved in their communities,” Dr Oppenheimer said.

Mr West said he would encourage all residents of NSW to get involved in volunteering.

“Even a small contribution can make a big difference to NSW,” Mr West said.

“*Volunteering: Why We Can't Survive Without It*” is published by UNSW Press.

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