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To the editor,

In response to Senator Abetz' Talking Point on March 2 2015 "Jobless Must Have a Go at Finding Work".

Volunteering Tasmania is aware of the skills individuals can gain through mutual obligation programs like "Work for the Dole". Volunteering through such schemes has the potential to offer individual's opportunities to learn new skills, grow social networks - all whilst doing activities that support our community.

However, Senator Abetz has only touched on the potential benefits to individuals under "Work for the Dole". There's another aspect to it: the role of the organisation.

When unpacking the changes in the 2014-15 Federal Budget, TasCOSS estimated that there are potentially 717 sites in Tasmania for "Work for the Dole" placements, and that each organisation may then need to host up to 16 "Work for the Dole" participants.

These placements will occur within volunteering involving organisations, the majority of whom are in the not for profit sector. No consideration has been given to the burden on the volunteer sector under these arrangements.

Whilst the volunteer sector is highly skilled and experienced in accessing, placing and hosting Job Seekers, it cannot undertake these tasks without resources and support. Current funding arrangements for Volunteer Management Programs and Federal Government funding for Volunteering Tasmania is inadequate in light of the significant impact of these changes.

Senator Abetz and his colleagues have particularly underestimated the cost this will bear on small volunteer involving organisations, many of whom have a budget of <\$100,000 per annum

I welcome further discussion with Senator Abetz and his colleagues as they progress "Work for the Dole".

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