

## **A perfect storm creates an opportunity for the Federal Government to re-connect with the community sector**

**Friday 18 September 2015 – For immediate release**

This week, Malcolm Turnbull's appointment as Prime Minister aligned with the release of the outcomes of a Senate Inquiry into funding by the Department of Social Services.

In their report, the Committee found the Federal Government had undertaken a destructive tendering process; reducing funding to the sector by \$270 million, resulting in significant loss of services.

In Tasmania this has had serious consequences, including the removal of a significant portion of Peak body Volunteering Tasmania's funding, and reattribution of those funds to a Gold Coast provider who has never previously operated in Tasmania.

David Crosbie, CEO of the Community Council of Australia issued a statement today, highlighting the need for the Federal Government to value the role of the community sector/not for profit sector.

Volunteering is a key component of this industry, with most organisations unable to deliver services to the community without volunteers.

Both the Committee Report and Crosbie's statement highlight the need to seriously reconsider the way we invest in volunteering and our community services.

"Volunteering Tasmania is strongly supporting calls for a dedicated Minister for the sector, and the implementation of findings from the recent Senate Inquiry," said Volunteering Tasmania CEO, Adrienne Picone.

"We echo David Crosbie's sentiments. At this time of vigorous national debate and change, the Prime Minister and the Government have the perfect opportunity to include the community sector in the conversation about Australia's economic future," she said.

"A strong, socially inclusive Australia is required to support economic growth. In Tasmania alone, we know volunteering contributes \$5 billion dollars to the State's economy – making it our largest industry," she said.

"Nationwide, the Federal Government chose to invest just \$6.36 million dollars into the volunteering industry, without which our communities would crumble," said Ms Picone.

The Community Council for Australia estimates that the NFP sector contributes \$107 billion to the national economy, employing over 1 million Australians.

"The economic benefits and the opportunities for social, cultural and economic growth should justify a dedicated Minister, and a serious investment in this sector," she said.

-ENDS-

Words: 364

## Background

- Senate Inquiry into Department of Social Services (DSS) funding released on Wed 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- The Committee has made 12 recommendations [which are listed here](#).
- For Volunteering grants, \$120.7 million was requested with 715 applications received.
- Just 56 of these applications were successful, totalling \$6.36 million in funding.
- [Media Release](#) – Volunteering Tasmania – CEO Speaks at Senate Inquiry 22 April 2015
- [Media Release](#) – Volunteering Tasmania – Organisations tied up in DSS Grants process and facing an uncertain future
- The Community Council for Australia’s CEO Statement:  
<http://www.communitycouncil.com.au/content/not-profits-%E2%80%93-critical-national-economic-and-social-policy-discussions-%E2%80%93-need-dedicated>
- The Community Council for Australia also highlighted the need for Federal Government to consider [the recommendations from the 2010 Productivity Commission inquiry](#) into the sector.