

Volunteering Tasmania CEO speaks at Senate enquiry – questions why funds have been redirected to a Queensland consortium instead of Tasmania’s Peak body

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Yesterday, Volunteering Tasmania CEO Adrienne Picone spoke at the Senate enquiry into the DSS Grants process.

Volunteering Tasmania has been vocal in its criticisms of the process, which has resulted in the vast majority of Tasmania being served not by Volunteering Tasmania; but instead by an external provider that has never been based in the State, and is without community connections.

The DSS funding guidelines emphasised the importance of place-based initiatives. Despite these guidelines, Volunteering Tasmania has only been funded to support two pockets of communities in the North West and South of Tasmania.

The DSS have provided Volunteering Tasmania with no rationale for this decision, despite many enquiries.

These actions are at odds with the DSS’ stated objective of providing “a foundation for integrated, community-led program delivery that understands and meets local needs.”

“Volunteering Tasmania has a long and strong history of service to Tasmanians. We possess in-depth, localised knowledge, based on solid research and anecdotal industry feedback,” said Adrienne Picone, CEO of Volunteering Tasmania.

“We have a highly skilled and experienced team of local people, who work with great systems that support our services, and in turn, volunteering,” she said.

“We have a history of strong performance in the provision of services that support volunteering in a myriad of ways,” she said.

The DSS tendering process has left Volunteering Tasmania with no opportunity for strategic planning due to the very short grant timeframes, and serious challenges to continuing delivery of a statewide service.

“We think the DSS decision to redirect funds from Volunteering Tasmania to an operation with very similar service offerings to ours, but without our valuable local knowledge, networks, nor service history in the Tasmanian Not-For-Profit and Volunteer sector, is nothing short of baffling,” she said.

Ms Picone echoed other speakers at today’s enquiry, which included representatives from other Volunteering Peak bodies around Australia; saying that current funding arrangements are inadequate and unsustainable – only driving more uncertainty in the volunteering sector.