



**volunteer.
do what you love.**



15 July 2015

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts

Volunteering Tasmania (VT) is the Peak body for volunteerism in Tasmania. We make a positive impact on volunteering, and as a result, we help to improve and sustain our wonderful community and the people within it. We believe that all members of our community equally deserve the right to experience the benefits of volunteering, regardless of their background.

We welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Senate Inquiry into the Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts. VT's organisational focus and mission is to create an environment that promotes and sustains effective volunteerism. We would like to take this opportunity, therefore to submit a perspective of these funding decisions from the volunteering sector.

Volunteering and the Arts are intrinsically linked. Many of our artistic institutions rely on the involvement of volunteers. In Australia 18.5 million hours are donated with 219, 000 Australian's (3.8 per cent of volunteers) donating their time in the Arts and Heritage sector (ABS, General Social Survey 2015).

In Tasmania, we know that volunteers are heavily involved in our Arts organisations. As the Peak body for volunteering, we see volunteers involved in local Repertory Theatre; working in our museums; or giving time in our local festivals and events. Volunteers are vital to this industry. Without their contribution, Tasmanian's would not be able to enjoy many of our much loved community events.

VT is concerned about the impact that Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts will have on our community. Feedback from Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) suggests that many of our Arts organisations are facing an uncertain future. Tasmania's small to medium sized Arts organisations are often reliant on volunteers donating their time and energy to assist them in their service delivery.

www.volunteeringtas.org.au

SOUTH (03) 6231 5550 | 95-97 Campbell Street Hobart TAS 7000 | admin@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH (03) 6331 1567 72 | Tamar Street Launceston TAS 7250 | launceston@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH WEST (03) 6432 4335 | 36 Strahan Street Burnie TAS 7325 | burnie@volunteeringtas.org.au



volunteer.
do what you love.



VIOs across *all* sectors gain 87.8% of their income through Government funding. 69.2% of VIOs also felt they were dependent on the contribution of volunteers to deliver their services (State of Volunteering Report 2014). We are concerned that with reduced funding, VIOs in the Arts sector will be unable to continue to manage and support their volunteers.

Volunteers are not a free and unlimited resource. The sum of the costs to manage volunteers in Tasmania was reported to be \$138.8 million (State of Volunteering Report 2014). This figure highlights the costs to maintain and manage current volunteer levels. To deliver services, VIOs need to invest in volunteering to recruit and retain suitable volunteers. This requires supervision, training and equipment. It is crucial that VIOs are resourced appropriately to achieve this. We are concerned that small and medium sized organisations will face numerous challenges to do this under current funding arrangements.

As the Peak body for volunteering, VT knows the benefits that volunteering across all sectors brings to the community. Volunteering in the Arts brings about both tangible (skills, workplace experience, economic benefits) and intangible (social inclusion, sense of community) rewards for individuals and for our community. The value of this cannot be underestimated.

The value of volunteering is not simply about generating warm and fuzzy feelings - although these are indeed valuable in themselves. Its value is also in generating opportunities, delivering key services, and contributing to prosperity. In Tasmania alone, our research has shown that for every dollar invested in volunteering, \$4 in benefits are returned for the community (State of Volunteering Report 2014).

Volunteering is therefore not just essential to the welfare and wellbeing of Tasmanians. It is also a key driver of economic growth. Our research places volunteering front and centre as Tasmania's largest industry - contributing nearly 5 billion dollars in benefits to the Tasmanian community (State of Volunteering Report 2014). Whilst this number is immense, it is just the tip of the iceberg. Volunteering influences economic activity across a range of sectors.

We are concerned that reducing funding will not only limit VIOs ability to continue to support and retain volunteering at its present rate. This will not only have an immediate impact on the community benefits the Arts brings to Tasmania. It will also have a keenly felt economic impact.

www.volunteeringtas.org.au

SOUTH (03) 6231 5550 | 95-97 Campbell Street Hobart TAS 7000 | admin@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH (03) 6331 1567 72 | Tamar Street Launceston TAS 7250 | launceston@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH WEST (03) 6432 4335 | 36 Strahan Street Burnie TAS 7325 | burnie@volunteeringtas.org.au

**volunteer.
do what you love.**



I encourage the Commonwealth Government to consider the impact of reduced funding on organisations in this sector. VT believes this will have an impact on the community benefits in Tasmania, as well as the ability for VIOs in this sector to continue to provide support to volunteers.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further at any time. I am available at adriennep@volunteeringtas.org.au or on 6231 5550 at any time.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adrienne Picone'.

Adrienne Picone
CEO, Volunteering Tasmania

www.volunteeringtas.org.au

SOUTH (03) 6231 5550 | 95-97 Campbell Street Hobart TAS 7000 | admin@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH (03) 6331 1567 72 | Tamar Street Launceston TAS 7250 | launceston@volunteeringtas.org.au
NORTH WEST (03) 6432 4335 | 36 Strahan Street Burnie TAS 7325 | burnie@volunteeringtas.org.au