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Tasmanian Taskforce Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ALP's Tasmanian Taskforce. Please find attached Volunteering Tasmania's submission. Volunteering Tasmania (VT) recommends that any long term plan for the State prioritises volunteering. Our research shows that volunteering delivers wide ranging social, cultural and economic benefits to Tasmania.

Beyond the specific altruistic purpose intrinsic to each act of volunteering, the sector as a whole operates as a vibrant source of knowledge, cultural and recreation exchange. It enriches the lives of countless Tasmanians. Indeed, the Tasmanian community is reliant on the work of volunteers. Without their contribution we would not be able to continue the same standard of services, events and quality of life we have come to expect. Investment to continue this level of participation is vital if we are to maintain a vibrant, thriving and liveable Tasmania in years to come.

Volunteering is not simply a way for citizens to 'give back' in their community. It is a vital industry for Tasmania's economy, one that has been proven to deliver a significant return on investment. VT sees numerous opportunities for the volunteering sector to work collaboratively with government, to develop new ways to support strategic and innovative volunteering actions. These actions will ultimately help to grow the socio-economic product of Tasmania.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the recommendations further please do not hesitate to contact me on 6231 5550 or at adriennep@volunteeringtas.org.au

Yours faithfully

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

Adrienne Picone
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Tasmanian Taskforce Submission

1. Economic development – supporting Tasmania to transition to growing industries, including but not limited to renewable energy, boutique food production, aquaculture and eco and cultural tourism

The volunteering sector has long been a driver of equitable growth in Tasmania, and has made a significant contribution to the welfare of the whole community. Evidence shows that the impact of volunteering goes beyond the selfless donations of time made by Tasmanians each year. Volunteering is a critical contributor to Tasmania's economic wealth. The social, cultural and economic value of volunteering to Tasmania in 2014 has been conservatively estimated at \$4.9 billion.¹ If considered an industry in its own right, volunteering would be Tasmania's largest industry by employment.

Perhaps more significantly than the economic benefits volunteering delivers, is the return on investment. We know that for every dollar invested in volunteering, at least \$4 in benefits are returned to the community.²

VT sees significant opportunities to increase participation in volunteering, thereby growing the social, cultural and economic product in Tasmania. If we increased volunteering rates by 1 per cent each year, Tasmania's economy would grow by \$70.6 million per annum. We recommend capitalising on volunteering the way that we contribute to other key Tasmanian industries such as tourism, forestry, and retail. This would offer a sound economic investment and a sound social investment that is fitting to Labor's values of fairness, justice and inclusion.³

2. Employment – growing employment through the state, including high-skill jobs of the future with particular focus on working with business and the community to improve opportunities in areas of high youth unemployment.

Unemployment remains challenging for Tasmania, with current unemployment rates at 6.7 per cent, - the second highest in Australia. Tasmania faces challenges around youth unemployment, underemployment - particularly in rural and regional Tasmania.⁴

¹ Volunteering Tasmania, *The State of volunteering Report 2014: The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering 2014* (Volunteering Tasmania: Hobart, 2014) at www.volunteeringtas.org.au

² Ibid

³ Australian Labor Party, "Australian Labor's National Platform & Constitution", *ALP Values* at http://www.alp.org.au/national_platform (accessed 20 August 2015)

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force August 2015 (ABS Cat No 6202.0)

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We know that volunteering offers opportunities to increase employability and develop work like skills. However, there has been little investment to date in the opportunities to help individuals utilise volunteering activities to connect into paid employment. We recommend that investment in volunteering opportunities be considered as part of any strategy to grow work skills in individuals.

Investing in volunteering is not only a mechanism for increasing work like skills and experiences for individuals. When we invest in volunteering, we also drive employment and economic growth. In 2014, the expenditure associated with volunteering in Tasmania has driven nearly 5, 400 jobs to the value of \$205.6 million. This in turn generates significant taxation revenue, estimated at \$82.2 million.⁵

3. Education – expanding the skills base and increasing attainment rates to ensure the next generation have the skills to drive the new economy as well as to provide retraining and upskilling opportunities for experienced workers seeking to make the transition; and

VT recommends that volunteering be considered part of education opportunities considered under the ALP's Tasmanian Taskforce. Historically, VT has received funding to engage with local schools. Schools programs provide an opportunity to engage young people in volunteering. The opportunities presented provides a range of skills and experiences that gear young individuals for working life. Importantly, it simultaneously gives young Tasmanians a sense of belonging and connections in their communities. This to increase community participation and decrease social inclusion. It also actively challenges negative perceptions of young people in the community.

4. Growing Tasmania – building upon the clean, green, safe and premium reputation of Tasmanian goods and services.

Tasmania is currently positioning itself as a State of niche, premium tourist destination. VT sees potential for investment in the growing "voluntourism" space to see Tasmania become a 'go to' destination for tourists wanting a unique holiday experience – one that allows them to actively contributing to the

⁵ Volunteering Tasmania, 'The State of volunteering Report 2014: The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering 2014 '

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community they are visiting.

VT sees an opportunity to capitalise on the global interest in Tasmania. Volunteer tourism or 'voluntourism' is one of the fastest growing areas of the tourism industry. Voluntourism is a growing popular travel choice for tourists wanting a meaningful and authentic travel experience. Indeed, international research has previously estimated that there are 1.6 million people volunteering overseas contributing \$2.6 billion dollars to the global economy.⁶

Volunteering has the potential to grow Tasmania's reputation as a thriving tourist destination. In 2014 alone, over 4,000 individuals visited Tasmania solely for the purpose of volunteering. Tasmania is in a unique position to develop a voluntourism strategy to capitalise on this growing tourism industry. Visitors who come to Tasmania come to the State to undertake volunteer opportunities. These visitors spend more money and spend longer in Tasmania on average than other tourists.⁷ There is a significant opportunity for economic growth and a way for visitors to enjoy Tasmania.

⁶ Tourism Research and Marketing Group, *Volunteer Tourism: A Global Analysis*, (Tourism Research and Marketing Group, 2008)

⁷ Ibid

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