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Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC  
Attorney General  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Hobart TAS 7000

Dear Dr Goodwin,

### **Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013**

In November 2013, Volunteering Tasmania (VT) provided a submission to the State Government on the draft Working with Vulnerable People (Background Check) Bill.

VT is the peak body for volunteerism in the State and represents the interests of the Tasmanian volunteer sector, including current and non-current volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Our mission is to promote and sustain effective volunteering in the State.

In the short consultation period available for the draft Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Bill 2013, I provided comment on the impact to both volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. VT's submission highlighted the prohibitive cost of a background check for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

As the Registration for Working with Vulnerable People is implemented, I would again like to draw your attention to the high cost for volunteers. Information from the Department of Justice website suggests that the full cost recovery has been calculated at approximately \$75.00. Further evidence indicates that there may be opportunities to subsidise this so that the cost to a volunteer (or their organisation) is approximately \$15.00.

VT's position is that the cost for registration would have significant impact on volunteer involving organisations. Without subsidisation for Registration for Working with Vulnerable People, the cost would be a barrier to many people

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considering volunteering. It is particularly likely to exclude people on low incomes from volunteering.

The high cost of registration may also result in significant recruitment issues for volunteer-involving organisations and threaten their ability to continue to function and deliver services to the community. Sectors that work with vulnerable people rely on volunteers to support them. These organisations could potentially lose valuable volunteers from their organisation due to the cost of a background check. This is particularly true for the many small, primarily volunteer involving organisations that receive little funding. Without the funds to pay for registration costs, these organisations may need to rely on volunteers paying for their own background checks.

As the peak body for volunteering in Tasmania, VT is concerned that the high cost of registration will result in declining volunteering rates and detrimental flow on effects on recruitment and retention for volunteering involved organisations. This sentiment has been echoed by other peak bodies in the not – for- profit sector in Tasmania.

VT would like to see the Tasmanian Government reconsider the cost of registration for volunteers. A free registration for a background check or a significant reduction in fees would ensure that volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in Tasmania are not burdened with this additional financial cost.

I would welcome the opportunity to provide further input or discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

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

Adrienne Picone  
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