

**volunteer.
do what you love.**



2 September 2016

Senator the Hon. George Brandis
Attorney General
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
senator.brandis@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator

Funding of Community Legal Centres

Volunteering Tasmania (VT) is the State's peak body for volunteering. Our mission is to create an environment which promotes and sustains effective volunteerism. To achieve this we support volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs). We provide research, advice and advocacy on volunteering to government, businesses and the wider community.

Volunteering Tasmania echoes calls made by the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) to restore funding to this vital service. Nationally, \$12.1 million in funding has been removed from Community Legal Centres. Despite a number of submissions by the NACLC, these vital community resources remain inadequately funded to meet the demand for their service in the community.

We know that the volunteer contribution is substantive, with 91.9% of Community Legal Centres drawing on the skills and expertise of volunteers to deliver services. Volunteers are vital to the continuation of this community service. The National Census of Community Legal Centres 2015 reported extensive training and support for volunteers, including:

- centre policies and procedures training;
- on boarding, training and induction;
- client confidentiality training;
- conflict of interest training;

Community Legal Centres also spend over 96, 000 hours per year supporting and supervising volunteers. The role of Volunteer Management does not come without a cost. The time of volunteers may be free, but they are not a free and unlimited resource. Continued support is essential if we are to see a continued high quality of service in the community.

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

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Reducing financial support in this sector is both socially and economically unsound. Volunteering returns a range of economic, social and cultural benefits to the community. Our State of Volunteering Report 2014 showed that for every dollar invested in volunteering, over \$4 in benefits are returned to the community.

With over 575, 000 hours donated in this sector alone, our “Value of Volunteering” calculator conservative estimates the voluntary contribute alone generates over \$26 million in benefits to the community each year. Reducing funding does not make sense.

Locally delivered volunteer support is vital. We are concerned that reducing funding will place additional pressure on the demands of volunteers in the Community Legal Centres – whom may not have the financial means to provide the support and management they require. It is critical this quality community service is not lost.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss further please do not hesitate to contact me on (03) 6231 5550 or at adriennep@volunteeringtas.org.au

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne Picone'.

Adrienne Picone
CEO, Volunteering Tasmania

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