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19 September 2016

Senate Standing Committees on Economics
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senate Inquiry into the preparation, administration and management of the 2016 Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

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.

VT welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Inquiry into the preparation, administration and management of the 2016 Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 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 from the volunteering sector. Our submission particularly refers to the adequacy of funding and resources to the ABS, and its impact on the 2016 Census and other statistical collection.

VT is concerned about the impact of the 2016 Census on the data captured around volunteering. VT is concerned that this adds to an already existing reduction in the level of data captured around volunteering. As a result of significant funding reductions in the ABS, data collected on volunteering has already been diminished. This is compounded by removal of the National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, who collect information on sports and the arts- sectors that are significantly dependent on volunteer workforces.

The ABS has long been a source for consistent, longitudinal data for the volunteering industry. Investment in the ABS is important as it helps ensure both policy expertise and advice to managers and coordinators of volunteers is based on evidence.

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Understanding community needs, trends and activities is vital for the work of VT and our state and territory counterparts. As the outcomes of the 2016 Census is discussed and debated, VT would urge that consideration is given to the wider loss of accurate, reliable and continuous data provided by the ABS.

Yours faithfully

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

Adrienne Picone
CEO, Volunteering Tasmania

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