

## Volunteering Tasmania to lobby against Federal Budget cuts to volunteering support services

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Volunteering Tasmania, the Peak body for volunteering in Tasmania, will be joining forces with volunteering organisations across Australia to lobby the Turnbull Government for increased recognition of the value of organisations that facilitate volunteering.

Volunteering Tasmania chief executive Alison Lai says that the Turnbull Government's decision to cease funding for organisations that deliver services which connect volunteers with community organisations will have a wide-reaching impact on volunteering across the nation, including Tasmania.

"Volunteering peak bodies were informed last week that the funding given to organisations to deliver volunteer support services will no longer be available," Lai said.

"Federal funding is currently given to a range of organisations, including Volunteering Tasmania, through the *Strengthening Communities* program and this funding helps us to connect volunteers with organisations that require volunteers.

"The Turnbull Government has redesigned this program and decided that these services will no longer be eligible for funding, a decision that has been made without consultation with the volunteering sector."

Flying to Canberra this weekend, Lai will join other representatives from volunteer peak bodies across the nation to discuss their concerns ahead of a parliamentary function on Tuesday.

Lai said that this decision was extremely disappointing and showed a lack of understanding of the volunteering sector.

"Everyone has the right to experience the benefits of volunteering and it's wrong to assume that everyone knows how to find opportunities in their community," she said.

[www.volunteeringtas.org.au](http://www.volunteeringtas.org.au)

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“There will always be people in our community who easily enter volunteering. But equally a large number of people need support finding suitable volunteering opportunities matched to their skill set. Volunteering programs, which by nature are not flush with funding, also need good volunteer matches so they can provide consistent, sustainable volunteering programs. The demand on Volunteering Tasmania’s services to effectively connect individuals with volunteering opportunities continues to grow.”

With the funding due to expire at the end of this year, Lai confirmed the changes had the potential to impact services in Tasmania.

“Volunteering Tasmania receives funding through *Strengthening Communities* to support the delivery of our online and face-to-face volunteer referral services,” she said.

“We don’t charge for these services, which are critical for many Tasmanian community organisations, particularly a large number of not-for-profit organisations that rely on it to recruit their volunteers.

“If the service was diminished it would put pressure back on an already stretched community sector to invest more of their funds into volunteer recruitment.

“We are very lucky that in Tasmania we have a State Government that is a very strong supporter of volunteering but any reduction in Federal funding would require Volunteering Tasmania to reassess how we provide this assistance.”

(437 words)

**FOR INTERVIEWS:**

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**ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TASMANIA:**

Volunteering Tasmania is the peak body for volunteering in the state, working closely with Volunteer Involving Organisations to promote and support volunteers; and advocating for the volunteering industry to funders and government.

Volunteering Tasmania is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to represent the interests of all Tasmanians involved in volunteering through research, consultation, policy development and community relationships.