

National Volunteer Advocacy Campaign to ramp up

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Following the Federal Government's decision to cut funding allocated to programs and services that support volunteering, the national advocacy campaign to protect this funding is about to ramp up.

Volunteering Tasmania chief executive Alison Lai recently met with representatives of the Department of Social Services in Canberra to discuss their new *Strong and Resilient Communities* funding program, raising concerns regarding the abolition of the funding stream for volunteer management.

"The Department has assured me that whilst the dedicated stream of funding that previously supported volunteer management programs and services has been removed, the organisations that provide these services will remain eligible to compete for funding under the new program," Alison said.

"Whilst this news seems positive, the reality remains that there will no longer be any direct investment from the Federal Government into supporting organisations that depend on volunteers.

"Organisations that were previously funded to provide volunteer management programs and services will now have to compete against other worthwhile community groups from a pool of funds that make no mention of the importance of volunteers in our communities.

"It is very concerning that the volunteer management stream was considered appropriate to abolish in the first place.

"As a result, I have grave concerns about the ability of organisations across the nation, like Volunteering Tasmania, to secure funding to support volunteering in our communities."

Alison said that Volunteering Tasmania will continue to advocate alongside its national counterparts, led by Volunteering Australia, to ensure that the value of investing in volunteering is not overlooked by the Federal Government.

“It remains imperative that we advocate on behalf of the importance of the programs and services that support volunteering in our State,” Alison continued.

“Volunteering in Tasmania is a multi-billion dollar industry, with the volunteer contribution estimated at \$4.9 billion each year.

“With national volunteering rates declining, the Federal Government cannot overlook the importance of investing in establishing sustainable, best practice volunteer management services.

“Even a small decline in volunteering rates in Tasmania would have a significant impact, not only on the delivery of community services, but on all aspects of community life.”

The next meeting of state and territory volunteering peak bodies will be in Melbourne on Monday, 20 March.

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.