

Symposium Spotlights Volunteer Safety

21 July 2017 – for immediate release

Mental anguish, physical harm or negative social implications are not usually the first things that spring to mind when you think about the altruistic act of volunteering.

For many that donate their time to worthy causes, volunteering is a hugely rewarding endeavour. However, in helping make someone, or something's life better, it's essential that the quality of the volunteer's health is not adversely impacted.

Volunteering Tasmania, our island's peak body for volunteering, will delve into this topic next week at the 2017 Volunteering Symposium.

Alison Lai, chief executive officer of Volunteering Tasmania says the Symposium will give volunteers, and the people that work alongside them, the opportunity to discuss these issues.

"Tasmanian's are incredibly generous with the amount of time they give to our community, and their willingness to go above and beyond is unquestionable," Alison said.

"Communities all across our island depend on volunteers and it's hard to imagine a world without them. So it's imperative that we keep volunteers safe.

"Volunteer safety comes in different forms, ranging from keeping them safe from physical dangers such as rough seas or bushfires, to helping them maintain safe and healthy relationships with those they might befriend, or provide companionship to.

"It's also imperative that volunteers are provided with robust and reliable support systems to help them recover from experiences that may be traumatic, whether that be seeing people at their most vulnerable, or any other type of crisis event.

"We hope that attendees will leave the Symposium feeling informed and armed with new insights into how other organisations are addressing volunteer safety."

With a stellar line up of expert panel members , the Symposium will feature presentations from Lois Berry of North West Hospice Care, Ian Fullagar of Surf Life Saving Australia and Michael Bruhn of Sea Shepherd Tasmania.

The Symposium will also feature a light-hearted yet thought provoking debate around the statement '*Young people don't like volunteering*'.

Alison said that she was looking forward to some of Tasmania's well-known community members debating this current hot topic in volunteering.

"For the affirmative we will have ABC radio presenter Chris Wisbey, Peter West from the RSPCA and Anneliese Smith who is known for her work with the Migrant Resource Centre," she said.

"They've got their work cut out for them, up against Emily Briffa of the successful Hamlet Social Enterprise, Kate Cashman from The Breath Between and Alex McKenzie from Mobart Mo Bros (Movember Foundation).

"It's going to be wonderful community event, delivered by our community."

The Symposium will be held on Thursday 27 July from 1-4pm, at the Stanley Burbury Theatre, University of Tasmania's Hobart campus.

More information can be found on Eventbrite or on Volunteering Tasmania's website: www.volunteeringtas.org.au.

[Word count : 448]

PHOTO CAPTIONS: Emily Briffa from Hamlet Social Enterprise, and Peter West, RSPCA, will be battling it out at Tasmania's 2017 Volunteering Symposium.

DROPBOX PHOTOS: [Armwrestle Serious or Armwrestle Silly](#)

FOR INTERVIEWS:

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ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TASMANIA:

Volunteering Tasmania is Tasmania's peak body for volunteering, working closely with Volunteer Involving Organisations to represent the interests of all Tasmanians involved in volunteering through community engagement programs, advocacy, research and policy development.