



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 10 May

\$12 million Budget cuts to threaten the livelihood of volunteering in the Northern Territory

Organisations that use and support local volunteers are under threat after last week's announcement by the Federal Government to cut funding to the volunteering sector.

The Federal Budget flagged that funding for the Department of Social Services Strengthening Communities program will be slashed from \$40.5 million to \$28.4 million over the next four years.

Volunteering SA&NT CEO Evelyn O'Loughlin says it's alarming news for many organisations during National Volunteer Week (9-15 May).

"At a time when we should be celebrating the incredible work of our volunteers, these cuts could ultimately affect the livelihood of volunteer involving organisations, like Volunteering SA&NT."

As the peak body for volunteering in South Australia and the Northern Territory, Volunteering SA&NT strives to advance volunteering by providing an extensive range of services, support and resources for around 600,000 volunteers and more than 2,000 organisations.

"We've already been compromised by recent funding cuts with the Volunteer Grants program being reduced from \$20 million to \$10 million next financial year, so this is just another blow to the sector.

"The cuts put at risk a range of programs including the Volunteer Management grants program and the Volunteer Innovation and Collaboration grants.

"Many grassroots organisations rely on this bucket of money to not only support volunteers and volunteering broadly, but for their very survival.

"In the Northern Territory, the rate of decline in formal volunteering is a staggering 13.1% between 2010 and 2014, so these cuts are extremely concerning for the health of volunteering in the Top End," Ms O'Loughlin said.

Volunteering plays a critical role in our society and economy with more than 6 million Australians donating their time and energy and the value of volunteering estimated at \$290 billion.

Media Contact **Helen Kish** **P: 0402 912 412** **E: helen.kish@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au**