

## MEDIA RELEASE:

Thursday, 23 April 2015

### Volunteering peaks call for urgent review on Federal DSS funding decisions

Volunteering SA&NT along with Volunteering peak bodies Volunteering Australia, Volunteering Victoria and Volunteering Tasmania this week spoke out on the far reaching inequity, inadequacy and impact of the recent DSS funding process to a Senate Committee Inquiry on Tuesday 21 April.

Volunteering Australia CEO Brett Williamson said, “some of the individual funding decisions in the volunteering sector were flawed and must be reviewed urgently. These decisions demonstrate a lack of understanding of the volunteering sector and the needs of disadvantaged communities for place-based services. We believe these problems were caused by a lack of robust analysis of the consequences of the grant and process changes, the time frames, and proper consultation which have resulted in significant service delivery gaps for disadvantaged communities.”

Volunteering Victoria CEO Sue Noble said, “consultation about the next funding round must begin with the sector immediately given that this funding round to the sector expires in June 2016.

“The volunteering sector needs to be treated with respect. There was no consultation, collaboration or negotiation with the sector. There was no transparency during the process and there is still a lack of disclosure of results even now. There was no acknowledgement of the peak bodies who can represent the interests of volunteering organisations and advise on impacts of the process. The peak bodies are core to linkages and collaborative partnerships across the sector,” Ms Noble said.

She also told the Committee that with the full impact now becoming clear, it was time for the Government to fix it.

Volunteering Tasmania CEO Adrienne Picone put forward that the current funding model does nothing to support or provide opportunities for growth...that it is inadequate, unsustainable and driving more uncertainty across the volunteering sector.

According to Evelyn O’Loughlin, CEO Volunteering SA&NT, the truly disappointing outcome of this process is that some of our most vulnerable Australians will suffer, Australians who rely on the multitude of volunteer involving services designed to support them. This deeply flawed funding process will have a major impact on our ability to develop and foster a resilient, strong connected community and our strong volunteering culture.

Lack of Government investment in the sector will result in Australians doing less volunteering, less efficiently and less effectively. Can we really afford that?

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Volunteering SA&NT Chief Executive Officer, Evelyn O’Loughlin, is available for comment after 4.00pm CST.