

Response to the 2023-24 Tasmanian State Budget

This year's State Budget falls short of addressing the pressing challenges faced by Tasmania's volunteer workforce and industry.

While we acknowledge the funding for election commitments aimed at supporting members and Volunteer Involving Organisations through the development of a Tasmanian Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan, and a modest two-year boost to peak body funding, the overall approach to industry funding is fragmented.

In our 2024-25 State Budget advocacy, we called for urgent and strategic investment in volunteer-enabling infrastructure to address the complex challenges confronting the industry. We specifically sought funding to strengthen leadership, promote sustainability, support workforce growth, and to encourage place-based volunteering. We are disappointed that the Budget passed up these targeted and strategic opportunities to address critical needs, such as developing career pathways and accredited training for volunteer managers, removing the costs of Registration to Work with Vulnerable People checks for volunteers, and providing broader support for individuals experiencing exclusion from and seeking to access volunteering opportunities.

Additionally, we regret to announce that the government's decision not to re-fund the Youth Volunteer Army will result in the program's closure. While we will continue to support the schools and Regional Jobs Hubs already involved in the program until the end of 2024, this marks the end of a crucial initiative that provided young Tasmanians with opportunities to develop new skills, enhance their employment prospects, increase civic participation and gain recognition for the unique contributions they make to their communities through volunteering. The loss of this program is a significant setback for young Tasmanians across the state.

The short-term, piecemeal approach to industry funding threatens to perpetuate the decline of the formal volunteer workforce across communities, sectors, and agencies. Despite this, we remain committed to advocating for evidence-based, industry informed and long-term strategic investments that reflect the true cost of volunteering, that reduce barriers for volunteers, and that invest in the future of community wellbeing and participation in Tasmania.