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Guy Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

Celebrating the power of volunteering

Tasmania's 130,000 volunteers make a valuable contribution to our communities, and when that's quantified its economic value is comparable to one of the state's largest industries.

It is timely during the annual National Volunteer Week, which runs from May 12 to 18, to release details from The Economic Value of Volunteering in Tasmania Report.

Our volunteers are widely appreciated for their tremendous contribution across a wide range of areas including emergency services, sport and recreation, arts and culture and the environment.

Those donated hours contribute more than \$638 million dollars to the Tasmanian economy and represents 2.2 per cent of Gross State Product - - that's 5.9 per cent of the total employee wages.

Tasmanian volunteers are a cut above the national average; Australia-wide volunteers contributed 1.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product and 4.3 per cent of the total labour bill.

If volunteering was an industry, it would be Tasmania's eighth largest, employing more people than the hospitality, arts and recreational sectors put together, as well as being bigger than all the agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining industries combined.

The State Government report found that on average one in three Tasmanian adults volunteers nearly three and a half working weeks of their time. If these people didn't so kindly donate their time Tasmanians would have to pay \$1,710 per year in taxes to enjoy the same benefits provided by the volunteers.

While the report examined the economic benefits of volunteers, it is their contribution to the community that really makes a difference. I sincerely thank all volunteers.

A real insight into Tasmania's volunteers can be found in a mini-series produced by COTA Tasmania, which explores the contribution older Tasmanians make. A 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census found the rate of volunteering of Tasmanians aged 65 and over was 22 per cent, higher than the national level of 20 per cent. Footage: www.dpac.tas.gov.au/olderpersons & www.cotatas.org.au

The Economic Value of Volunteering in Tasmania Report: www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu

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