



## Media Release

20 February 2017

### ***Volunteering Sunshine Coast attends event at Parliament House***

On 14 February 2017, Cheryl Harris and Bruce Langley from Volunteering Sunshine Coast participated in the “Share the Love” event in Canberra. The event, hosted by Volunteering Australia and their state and territory peak partners, aimed to raise concerns about funding cuts in the redesigned “Strong and Resilient Communities” grants program, and to emphasise the value of volunteering support services.

The event, attended by Minister for Social Services Christian Porter and Shadow Assistant Minister for Families Louise Pratt, provided a platform for representatives of volunteer support services from around Australia to meet decision-makers and discuss the value of the work they do in helping the government build strong and resilient communities.

“It is critical that the Federal Government appreciates the importance of volunteering support services,” says Volunteering Sunshine Coast CEO, Cheryl Harris. “Volunteering doesn’t just happen. Volunteering support services provide effective workforce management to assist a variety of organisations and services in recruiting and retaining volunteers. These volunteer services are crucial to building strong and resilient local communities.

“The volunteer sector provides approximately \$245 million to the Sunshine Coast economy alone. Volunteering Sunshine Coast placed over 1,700 volunteers last year and we are set to exceed that number this year. Cutting this funding will severely compromise the ability of organisations like ours from operating so effectively.”

The proposed changes to funding, due to take effect from 1 January 2018, will rip the heart out of essential volunteer support services which support local communities and foster economic participation and social inclusion.

**ENDS**

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