



**Government  
of South Australia**

**Minister for Human Services**

Level 12 South  
1 King William Street  
Adelaide SA 5000  
GPO Box 2832  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 115  
Tel 08 8463 6560  
Fax 08 8463 4480

**Our ref:** 18MCOR/0102  
**Your ref:** 7133965

Ms Nat Cook  
Member for Hurtle Vale  
PO Box 158  
WOODCROFT SA 5162

Sent by email: [Tristan.rust@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:Tristan.rust@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Dear Ms Cook

### **Freedom of information application**

I refer to your application under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (the Act), received by the Office of the Minister for Human Services on 17 October 2018 seeking access to:

*Copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS or Ministerial Paper 18TDHS/857.*

Unfortunately, a determination was unable to be made within the 30 days, therefore it is considered to be a 'deemed refusal' under section 19(2)(b) of the Act. However, our office has continued to process your application outside of this timeframe. Section 19(2)(a) of the Act provides that an agency can release documents outside of the thirty-day timeframe, and this is still taken to be a determination under the Act.

One document has been identified as falling within the scope of your application and I have determined to release one document in part and two documents in full.

Document one contains the mobile phone number of a departmental employee and I consider that the release of this information would be an unreasonable disclosure of information related to the employees' personal affairs, and have determined it to be exempt pursuant to clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 of the Act.

Please find enclosed a copy of the document, and a document schedule containing a brief description of the document.

If you are dissatisfied with my determination, you can seek an internal review by writing to the Minister for Human Services as the Principal Officer of the agency. Your request should be sent within 30 days of your receipt of this letter.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, may/will be published on the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter, please contact Amanda Hockings, Office Manager, on telephone 8463 3388 or by email at [amanda.hockings2@sa.gov.au](mailto:amanda.hockings2@sa.gov.au). If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your FOI application, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman SA. Please contact the Ombudsman directly on (08) 8226 8699.

Yours sincerely



**Amanda Hockings**  
ACCREDITED FOI OFFICER

28 / 3 / 2019

### SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – MCOR/0102

Freedom of information application from the Ms Nat Cook seeking access to Copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS or Ministerial Paper 18TDHS/857.

No	Author	Addressee	Date	Description of document	Determination	Reason
1.	Department of Human Services	Minister for Human Services	27/7/2018	Minister Signed Briefing RE: Wind Down of DHS Coordinated Volunteer Services	Released in Part	Exempt – Clause 691) – personal affairs

18TDHS 857



Government of South Australia  
Department of Human Services

TO MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

RE: WIND DOWN OF DHS COORDINATED VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....  
Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
Note the strategies that have been implemented to wind down Disability SA volunteer services.	Approved / Not Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noted

<p>Comments:</p> <p>Please keep me updated</p>	<p><i>Michelle Lensink</i></p> <p>Hon Michelle Lensink MLC 27/7/2018</p>
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**KEY POINTS**

- For many years, Disability SA (DSA) coordinated volunteers to provide support to clients through Strathmont Centre, Victor Harbour, Mount Gambier and Highgate Park.
- The volunteer units sat within the DSA organisational structure and provided services to clients across Disability Services group homes, Northgate Aged Care and Disability Community Services.
- As clients transition to the NDIS and DSA winds down, volunteer functions cease being provided by the department.
  - Highgate Park, Strathmont Centre and Mt Gambier volunteer services ceased as at 30 June 2018
  - Victor Harbor volunteer service will cease as soon as clients have transitioned to the NDIS.
- A number of strategies have been implemented to ensure that clients are not disadvantaged by the closing of these services.

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## BACKGROUND

The Department of Human Services (the Department) through DSA previously coordinated volunteers to provide supports through three separate units: Strathmont Centre Volunteers, Victor Harbor Volunteer Activity Program and Mount Gambier Volunteer Activity Centre. There were approximately 160 active volunteers (who attended at least once in the last six months) across these units, which were centrally managed through the Strathmont Centre Volunteers unit supporting approximately 110 clients. Since 2006, the Strathmont Centre Volunteer service has been strongly supported by the Strathmont Centre Parents and Friends Association. This group consists of parents whose children have a disability, ex-employees of the former Intellectual Disability Services Council and current staff.

There was a volunteer unit within Highgate Park, managed as part of the Highgate reform project. There were 11 active volunteers supporting approximately 60 clients. This also ceased operation in June 2018 with remaining volunteers reporting to ward staff or chaplains if they are providing support to attend church services.

## DISCUSSION

In November 2017, a proposal for the Department to exit the provision of volunteer coordination through winding down these services was approved by the Peak Services Reform Group.

The proposal identified strategies to enable wind down and closure of the Volunteer Coordination Service and considered the impact on clients, volunteers and employees. In relation to clients, volunteer supports have ceased where the impact to clients is minimal. For other clients, where the impact is more evident, alternative supports are being implemented as part of the transition to NDIS process where funding is identified to meet the client's needs.

Identified below are the strategies adopted for each volunteer and service area.

### Strathmont Centre:

- From 29 June 2018, staff in Accommodation services are supporting clients to attend their various activities.
- On 16 June 2018 letters were sent to all volunteers advising them of the closure of the service and thanking them for their contribution over the years. The letter advised that, if the volunteer would like to continue to volunteering, they should contact the volunteer coordinator before 29 June, who would direct them to opportunities in their local area.
- Historically, Northgate Aged Care has accessed volunteers via the Strathmont Centre Volunteer service due to the connection between agencies. However, as per legislative requirements for Aged Care Services, an activity program (and coordinator) is in place. As such, a small number of volunteers will transfer to that service. The letter sent to volunteers asked them to complete a form to register their interest in continuing to support the Aged Care service.
- The Strathmont Centre Parents and Friends supported a volunteer thank-you event for the volunteers on Friday, 29 June 2018
- The Director, Accommodation Services Operations met with the Chairperson of the Strathmont Centre Parents and Friends advising him of the closure of the service. The Executive Director will meet with the Strathmont Centre Parents and Friends on Thursday, 5 July. This will be followed up with a letter.

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**Highgate Park:**

As part of the Highgate Reform Project, a review of the Volunteer Program, activities, potential impacts for clients and possible solutions was completed in early 2017. Implementation of the identified solutions is underway.

This includes:

- acknowledging and thanking former volunteers
- re-aligning volunteers specifically supporting clients to attend local churches (approximately 22)
- aligning the remaining volunteers (11) with specific clients and changing sign-in / sign-out processes. This interim measure enables existing volunteers to continue to provide support for clients until they transition to the community and / or the NDIS where these supports can be considered as part of their NDIS package and the transition process.
- Highgate Park management is encouraging existing volunteers to register with non-government organisations, Volunteers SA/NT and their local councils from 30 June 2018 should they wish to continue to volunteer.

**Mt Gambier:**

- A small number of State clients have been allocated to case managers who are investigating alternative options and will submit a request for State funding (Permission to Incur Cost - PTIC) if required. The case manager will assist in the transition to NDIA services and will encourage the provision of recreational and/or social options and/or day options to be included in the person's NDIA plan.
- The remainder of DSA clients have NDIA plans and funded support for recreation and social activities and are linked to service providers.
- Two women over 65 are eligible to attend an aged care day centre.
- Local DSA staff are available to refer clients and their service providers to existing community venues which offer mainstream daily activities. There is a range of mainstream options in the city that have disability access.
- DSA staff are supporting workers to develop recreational and social programs and plans for the clients if needed. The clients may wish to meet in each other's homes or local cafes to maintain friendships and regular contact and this can be facilitated by NGO support workers.
- Clients who reside in Disability Services accommodation sites are being supported to attend other activities in the region.
- Letters were sent to clients, volunteers and guardians advising of the closing of the service and invited them to attend a thank-you event held on Friday, 29 June 2018.
- Volunteers have been encouraged to continue volunteering and have been provided with information about opportunities in their local area.
- The Strathmont Centre Parents and Friends supported a volunteer thank-you event for the volunteers on Saturday, 23 June.

**RISKS**

Potential risks associated with the closure of the services include:

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Risk	Approach
Clients and volunteers may have a close association and there may be feelings of loss with the announcement of the changes.	Long-term friendships are valued and may continue as a private arrangement. As advised, volunteers have been encouraged to register with other volunteering organisations to explore opportunities.
Changes in the service may be distressing for clients/families, volunteers and the community.	Well-considered communication has been provided to ensure information is available as required. Support will be offered when needed.
Families may rely on volunteer support for 'respite' and DHS may be required to provide support in the interim.	Connect clients to alternative options.  Recreation/day options may be included in NDIS plans
Possible negative opinion about the NDIS in the community as this change may be interpreted as a direct consequence of NDIS implementation if not managed appropriately.	Comprehensive communication has and will be provided to ensure information is available as required.  Minister will be briefed regularly

The affected employees (part of Customer and Business Support within DSA - total six full-time equivalent positions) were informed they were materially affected in November 2017, along with Disability Community Services employees, and are being managed in line with the department's *Materially Affected Principles* with their work ceasing between 30 June and 20 July 2018.

#### SUMMARY

As clients transition to the NDIS and DSA winds down, volunteer functions will cease being provided by the department.

- Highgate Park, Strathmont Centre and Mt Gambier volunteer services ceased as at 30 June 2018
- Victor Harbor volunteer service will cease as soon as clients have transitioned to the NDIS.

Employees (part of Customer and Business Support within DSA) were informed they are materially affected in November 2017 along with Disability Community Services employees, and managed in line with the department's *Materially Affected Principles*.

#### BUDGET

Are there financial implications No

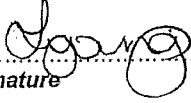
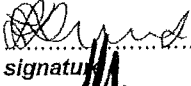
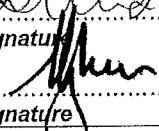
Is there a budget impact No

**MEDIA/SENSITIVE:** Yes

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There is the potential for media coverage as the volunteer services close.

<b>Disability SA</b>	Customer and Business Support		
<b>Executive Director</b>	Lynn Young	 signature	3/7/18
<b>A/Deputy Chief Executive</b>	Kim-Sherie Summers	 signature	6/7/18
<b>Chief Executive</b>	Tony Harrison	 signature	6/7/18 date

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Deb Guscott, Manager Customer and Business Support [REDACTED] deb.guscott@sa.gov.au]
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