



## **New Funding Offers a reprieve – not a solution ...**

Hunter Volunteer Centre welcomes Minister Rishworth's announcement to support the continuation of locally place-based face-to-face volunteer support services across Australia.

Anthony Ross, CEO of Hunter Volunteer Centre said the allocation of \$50,000 is a welcome relief for the remainder of this financial year and provides a reprieve from the fears of being forced to stop assisting the region's community organisations and its people who wish to make their community a better place by volunteering.

The funding offers a reprieve - not a lifeline, but it does offer Hunter Volunteer Centre the time to realise possible successes from other submissions, and investigate other sources of income, while at the same time continuing to liaise with the Minister and her Department of Social Services to retain place-based face to face volunteer resource centres and not completely focus on online systems to volunteer involving organisations only.

If we wish to increase the volunteer participation rates in Australia, we need to include the volunteer in any strategy. Hunter Volunteer Centre acknowledges that strategies that achieve greater social cohesion are a good thing and we look forward to working with the Minister and her Department to achieve those improvements. Happy to acknowledge that online services can be part of the solution but not the complete answer.

In the lead-up to the very difficult decision of ceasing our volunteer referral service, we were hearted with the outpouring of support from our region's community organisations and volunteers who began their volunteering with Hunter Volunteer Centre's support.

Additionally, the support from our local members both Federal and NSW State reinforced what Hunter Volunteer Centre is doing and hopefully will continue to build a stronger, more resilient and welcoming Hunter region.

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