



Ms M White
Deputy Ombudsman
PO Box 25386
St Georges Terrace WA 6831

22 June 2020

Dear Ms White

REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the establishment of a reportable conduct scheme further to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We understand the imperative for the scheme and the need to ensure that the health and safety of children is paramount.

We note the responsibility for the establishment of the scheme is with your office and that the scope of the scheme includes volunteers. We have contacted Mr Kyle Heritage from your office who kindly provided more information on the proposed scheme which we understand is in the early stages of development and will require legislation to enact.

As the peak body for volunteering in Western Australia, our role is to lead, advance and celebrate volunteering. Volunteer involving organisations and volunteers deliver many services to our community that otherwise would not be provided and volunteers also benefit personally in terms of social connection, participation and mental health.

The work volunteers undertake is, by definition, not compensated. They are increasingly subject to legislative and regulatory obligations without the usual workforce protections of unfair dismissal, workers compensation or representation. Our experience suggests that volunteer access to workplace communications, grievance and Employee Assistance Programs is inconsistent. Many volunteers are children themselves – 27% of WA youth aged between 15-17 years old formally volunteer (ABS General Social Survey of 2014).

The final scope of the proposed scheme will help us to understand the impact on volunteer involving organisations and what assistance they may require to implement and comply with the scheme. Some of these organisations may be small in size with few, or possibly any, paid staff.

Volunteering WA can support implementation through communications with affected members and volunteer organisations.

We understand that schemes of this nature have been enacted in a number of states. It would be helpful to understand the experience to date with volunteer involving organisations.

Volunteering WA welcomes your offer to be consulted on the development of the scheme and would appreciate being notified of formal stages in consultation. Please contact myself or Meredith Blais, Policy Officer on 0400 564 054 if we can be of further assistance in any way.

Tina Williams

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Williams', written in a cursive style.

CEO
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