

STATE BUDGET

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MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES MICHELLE LENSINK MLC MEDIA RELEASE

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State Government delivers key election commitments in Human Services

The Marshall Liberal Government is delivering on key election commitments in the Human Services portfolio, including abolishing all volunteer screening check fees for South Australians thanks to an ongoing funding allocation in the 2018-19 State Budget.

In addition to the abolition of all volunteer screening fees, the State Government has committed \$11.9 million over the next four years on a suite of measures to address the scourge of domestic violence, as well as multiple funding commitments to the non-for-profit sector, in a boost for the community.

The State Government will provide \$677,000 in 2018-19 and \$1.4 million per year (indexed) from 2019-20 to abolish all volunteer screening fees in recognition of the huge importance of volunteers and the work they conduct across the state.

Currently, people who want to volunteer with people with disability are required to complete compulsory background screening by the Department of Human Services. People who want to volunteer with vulnerable people including children and older people, may be required to have a DHS screening, or get a police record check from SA Police, depending on the requirements of their volunteer organisation. South Australia has the highest application fees in the nation of \$59.40 per check.

The 2018-19 State Budget allocation will allow volunteers to undergo the screening process for free, with work already begun on how this process can be fast-tracked to offer all volunteers free screening by early 2019.

The free screening checks will apply to volunteers working in the following areas:

- Child-related employment
- Aged Care Sector employment
- Disabilities services sector employment
- Vulnerable person related
- General employment probity

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Minister for Human Services Michelle Lensink said abolishing the fees was welcome news for South Australians wishing to volunteer at organisations including sporting clubs and charities, as well as emergency services.

“The Liberal Government values the incredible dedication and hard work of volunteers and the selfless work they do helping the community - and this is why we are abolishing all screening check fees for volunteers,” said Minister Lensink.

“Abolishing volunteer screening fees removes barriers to people wanting to volunteer and I hope it encourages the next generation of volunteers to get involved.

“Volunteers provide much needed care and support in our communities and many volunteer organisations are the life-blood of regional South Australia and this is wonderful news for them.”

In metropolitan Adelaide, about 37 per cent of the population do volunteer work and in our regions the rate is even higher at 58 per cent. South Australians contribute about 1.7 million volunteer hours every week.

The State Government screens volunteers through the Department of Human Services to ensure there is a minimal risk to any particular group or groups of people who volunteers engage with. The background testing involves obtaining a record of any criminal history to determine whether a volunteer may pose a risk.

2018-19 State Budget funding commitments in the Human Services portfolio include:

- \$30,000 per year to the MarionLife Community Centre, a non-for-profit organisation that provides care and support to individuals and families in need. This delivers on an election commitment.
- \$120,000 per year (indexed) over three years to 2020-21 to support the work of Grandparents for Grandchildren SA.
- \$200,000 in 2018-19 to assist in implementing recommended system enhancements from a review of ConcessionsSA to streamline administration and service delivery processes and achieve efficiencies.
- \$45,000 in 2017-18 to Whalers Peninsula Community Association to support its role in the provision of community services, delivering a Liberal Government election commitment. The non-for-profit organisation provides Adult Community Education courses, social connection programs and coordinates emergency relief efforts.
- \$3 million in 2017-18 to support the administration and implementation of the Energy Discount Offer for concession holders.
- \$2.6 million in 2018-19 for an across government response to continue to support the transition of state disability services to the non-government sector as a result of reforms under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, delivering on the Liberal Government’s election promise.

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- \$325,000 in 2018-19 and smaller operating expenditure across the forward estimates for the state's contribution to the costs of the development and continued operation of the National Clearance Database under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally Consistent Worker Screening for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The State Government is committed to ensuring all South Australians with disability have every opportunity to live fulfilling lives as equal members of our community.

“Not only did the government meet its commitment to introduce the Disability Inclusive Bill 2018 in our first 100 days in office, but it became our first piece of legislation to be passed by parliament,” said Minister Lensink.

“While the NDIS gives people with disability more choice and control over the services and supports they need, the new Act is important to ensure mainstream services are accessible to more South Australians with disability.”

In order to meet the \$715 million savings task by 2021-22 left by the former Labor government and to deliver the new State Government's priorities, the 2018-19 State Budget includes the following savings measures in the Human Services portfolio:

- A \$685,000 per year saving (indexed) due to the closure of Northern and Southern Connections business units, delivering the government's election commitment to abolish these offices. The units provided support to existing grant programs in the northern and southern suburbs and the key functions of the units will continue to be provided by the Department of Human Services.
- A \$232,000 saving in 2018-19 and \$472,000 per year thereafter indexed for the restructure of the Marni Wodli Youth Accommodation Services. The service provides youth accommodation services for at risk Aboriginal young people aged 15-to-18 years. The restructure will involve working with the non-government sector and the youth homelessness system.
- A \$3 million saving in 2018-19 and \$6 million saving (indexed) from 2019-20 from efficiencies and consolidation across the department, including reductions in workforce levels.