



Hospice Volunteers South Tas  
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13 June 2016

Todd Buttsworth  
Secretary  
House of Assembly Standing Committee on Community Development  
House of Assembly  
Parliament House  
Hobart TAS, 7000

#### **Inquiry into Palliative Care in Tasmania**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the House of Assembly Standing Committee on Community Development in relation to Hospice Volunteers South Tas.

Our comments are attached. As far as is relevant, we have addressed terms of reference (i) and (iv).

Should the Committee require further information, please contact our Manager, Anna Mackey; contact details are above.

Yours sincerely

Annette Starik  
PRESIDENT

**Hospice Volunteers South Tas (HVST) [Terms of Reference (iv)]**

is an organisation of volunteers. Primarily, these volunteers work with clients to provide support to people in Southern Tasmania, who are affected by life-limiting illness.

**Our inspiration:**

Compassionate end of life care for all.

**Our role:**

To work in partnership with others to:

- provide a free, reliable volunteer service;
- support the needs of those living with and affected by life-limiting illness; and
- raise community awareness of hospice and palliative care

**Ethical Position on Dying:**

- HVST does not presume to represent the views of its individual members in the matter of voluntary euthanasia (physician assisted suicide).
- Discussion about end-of-life care is important in promoting community conversations about death and dying, and thereby equipping people to feel empowered to make end-of-life decisions that are right for them.
- We believe that everyone should have access to the highest quality palliative care services and hospice support.
- While not advocating a particular position, volunteers and staff of the organisation are open to discussing any issues in relation to end-of-life care, and supporting clients to seek information and fully understand their options.

**Volunteer Sites:**

- **RHH**  
Hospice volunteers staff the Cancer Support Centre (CSC) and also support Palliative Care patients throughout the hospital
- **JW Whittle Unit**  
Hospice Volunteers provide support to the patients and assistance to professional staff.
- **Community**  
Volunteers support the needs of terminally clients in their own homes.
- **Walking through Grief**  
Fortnightly walks are held for bereaved people, in a variety of locations around Hobart.

## Statistics:

Clients	
Assessment and follow up per annum	70 – 100
Contact hours at the end of 2015	5314 (This figure does not reflect the estimated 10,000 hours of voluntary effort contributed directly to palliative care.)

Volunteers	
Current number	79
Volunteers actively engaged at any given time	Up to 90%
Volunteer demographic	Diverse

## Advance Care Directives [Terms of Reference (i)]

- Hospice Volunteers South Tas supports the use of Advance Care Directives (ACD).
- Preparation of an advanced care plan promotes discussion about end-of-life decision making within families and in the wider community.
- Advance care planning is particularly important for those clients for whom the progression of their illness may, at some point, prevent them from communicating their wishes.
- **From our experience with clients**, the number of people using advance care directives is increasing, but in a number of cases:
  - Clients may be:
    - unaware of ACDs;
    - reluctant to get involved with advance care planning; and/or
    - confused about the process.
  - We have noted that clients:
    - find discussions about advance care planning very difficult;
    - are often not sure whether they have an ACD or Goals of Care form or both; and/or
    - think they have done an ACD but don't have a copy at home.

**Annette Starik**

**13/6/16**

