

MEDIA RELEASE**Report calls for end to financial hardship for disadvantaged Tasmanians
subject to financial administration orders****Monday 13th October 2014**

A report to be released during Anti-Poverty Week highlights that persons with a decision-making impairment whose funds are administered by the Public Trustee of Tasmania are charged almost \$1500.00 per annum for a service that the overwhelming majority of other states or territories provide either free of charge or for a nominal fee.

The report's authors are hopeful that the report will lead to reform of the Public Trustee's fee structure so that the service is provided in a manner that does not create hardship.

According to Benedict Bartl, Community Legal Centres spokesperson:

We are very concerned that the Public Trustee is charging almost \$1500 per year for a service that the overwhelming majority of Australian jurisdictions provide either free of charge or for a nominal fee. We call on this Government to recognize the hardship caused by fixing the anomaly and ensuring financial peace of mind to some of Tasmania's most financially disadvantaged.

The report entitled *The Public Trustee and a Fair and Proportionate Fee Structure for Represented Persons* finds that disability support pensioners subject to Guardianship and Administration Orders are charged 7.4% or \$1476.45 of their pension in Public Trustee fees and charges. As a result some are required to forego essential items such as food, electricity and safe housing. Life on a pension is difficult enough. People should not have to pay for a function that the rest of us take for granted, i.e. the management of our funds on a day-to day basis. Where people with limited means need help with this it should be provided free.

According to Ken Hardaker, CEO of Advocacy Tasmania Inc:

The significant hardship caused by the Public Trustee's fee structure has been a recurring theme for many of our clients for over a decade. As the owner of the Public Trustee, the government can reduce the hardship encountered by our clients by directing that the Public Trustee provide a free service to persons subject to financial administrative orders.

For media comment please contact:

Ken Hardaker on 0419 363 542

Benedict Bartl on 0417 032 832