

Philanthropy Inquiry.

I've worked 20 years in the Not-For-Profit sector both here and in the USA. I've partnered and worked with over 50 charities both locally and abroad.

Australia already has some of the most stringent policies as they related to DGR status comparatively to the USA.

I find pages 7 and 8 of your presentation most frustrating, perhaps indicative of people who are lawyers and board members rather than first hand operators in the field. Our small church runs a charitable program that gives food to anyone in need, we partner with OzHarvest and supply meals to ANYONE who is need. Often times we will bump them on to legal support agencies or other charities to ensure that they don't just get food but also the help they require. Last year we supplied 2500 boxes of food to people.

To be clear because we are a religious institution the food we receive and deliver does not afford us any DGR status. In the USA this would not be a problem and we would easily have that privilege. In an effort to somehow improve this you would "strengthen our regulatory system"?! There are already so many hoops and regulations required! You are so desperate to drive a wedge between religion and charity yet fail to understand its often the very underpinning of the desire to help communities.

The 4th Goal for the UN Sustainable Development Goals is investment in quality education. Yet you want to DEFUND school funds and remove there DGR status!? How about EXPANDING the DGR status to marginalised communities to ensure world class education isn't just offered within 100kms of a coastline in Australia. Promote investment in world class hospitals and education institutions in areas of Australia that need it most.

You get a sense from this report there is just zero awareness of many of the small churches who do much of this work. Yes we are a religious institution proclaiming Christ but it doesn't stop us from treating people like humans. We work with DV victims, rehabilitating addicts and helping people who are struggling with depression and anxiety yet because we have a cross on the front of the building we continue to be a pariah for any kind of DGR status.

Our food boxes are second class because of Jesus....so we'll forfeit DGR.
Our DV support is second class because of Jesus....so we'll forfeit DGR.
Our education is second class because of Jesus....so we'll forfeit DGR.

Oh and BTW our church does this... *"Each day, people across Australia seek to improve the wellbeing and resilience of the community by contributing to causes they care about, whether it be supporting people experiencing disadvantage, advancing medical research, promoting arts and culture, or caring for the environment. People do this in many ways – donating money to support causes, such as assisting people affected by natural disasters, or volunteering their time and skills to benefit others, such as being on the board of a local art gallery."*

Yet because our facility has a cross on the front we cant get DGR status, so we'll just take the hit and continue to make our facility available for music, art and culture in the local community at a discount...yet a again just a second class citizen for Jesus....

Because you are so desperate to drive a fork between religion on charity. Most religious leaders these days are pretty keen to make their local communities awesome. There is no separation we do both.

Arizona bought in a policy for tax-deductibility to allow people to choose where to donate funds to, whether that be private or public schooling. Did you ever consider perhaps just expanding DGR giving to allow people to proportionally give to ANY school to help enhance education.

Why doesn't Australia ever attempt to be world leaders in this area, creating a system where there is the ability to engage DGR status for ANY charitable institution and expand this already archaic and rigid system. As a leader of a charitable institution we are already independently audited and

make our financials available publicly. I'm more than happy to work with a regulatory body who actually cares that we are attempting to impact the lives of people and improve the community. Your report desires all this improvement but you want to defund the very people most motivated to do that work religious institutions and school. Why don't you throw hospitals in there as well.

AFR published a report on Australia's fifty biggest givers which probably highlights the issue, the big benefactors back private foundations set up by the individuals who are wealthy. Most of these foundations will struggle to charitably give away the interest on their sizeable wealth portfolios. All the while grass roots organisations jump through more hoops to actually do the messy work at the coal-face under ever increasing scrutiny.

Remove the Top-50 givers from the report, so we can actually get a fair assessment of charitable contributions in Australia. My suggestion is that your delightful increase in giving is probably primarily into those benevolent institutions set up by those large scale givers.

Ok lets get nitty-gritty...

“Small charities in Australia are heavily reliant on donations (as opposed to grants or selling goods and services) and volunteers – charities with revenue under \$250,000 receive 40% of their total revenue from donations on average. However, donations are concentrated in a small number of large charities. In 2016, the largest 10% of charities (by annual revenue) received 94% of all donations and the 25 largest charities received almost 20% of total donations. More than half of all charities operate without paid staff.”

Yup thats most churches, all trying to improve our communities, you going to give DGR status to churches, mosques and temples?

Why don't you actually make some bold decisions.

- 1) Allow people to give tax-deductible contributions to any Education institution both Private and Public schools.
- 2) Actually do a charitable sector report that includes religious charitable institutions and consult them. They aren't the enemy, many churches, temples and mosques are wholeheartedly trying to benefit the community. Faith isn't the enemy, people taking advantage of the system is the problem.

In the USA the most generous charitable giving sector is the Evangelical church. *“Some cultural or religious communities also have philanthropic traditions or practices of giving embedded in their belief systems or ways of life.”* Is it hard for you to say Christians are actually really generous? Or is that too bold for this report?

You even highlight this in your motivations for giving graphic “Faith” but will make no attempt to address any DGR status for a faith community, despite them being some of the most generous people in the country.

Religious organisations play an important role in many people's lives and communities across Australia. However, the Commission does not see a case for additional government support for the practice of religion through the DGR system, based on the first principle above.

This is a complete farce and is indicative of your hostility towards the works of religious institutions that LITERALLY do what your report says the benefits of philanthropy are. Look at the USA and the DGR status in church and the significant different it makes. You should word this to say “Whilst religious organisations play an important role, we will endeavour to do nothing to help them in any way shape or form, despite there being significant evidence in North America to the practice of religion through the DGR system.”

School building funds for primary and secondary schools and religious education would be the main entities that would no longer be eligible for DGR status under the Commission's proposals. There are currently about 5,000 DGR endorsements for school building funds. Of these, three-quarters are charities and the remaining quarter are government entities, such as public schools. Transitional arrangements so that schools can adjust would be required and are described below.

Unbelievable! No.4 on the UN sustainability goals and we'll defund it.....this might just be the silliest thing I've ever seen in a commissioned report. Expand giving, education is essential and allowing people to give to education institutions is critical. Sweet mercy you are asking for transparency and people are willing to be transparent. Incentivise it for areas of Australia that need it most! Did you consult your ACYP representatives for this?

DO NOT do this, and actually add some people to the board who WORK in charitable institutions that are improving their communities. So you can actually get a sense of how hard it is to help people turn a corner and how messy this stuff can be!

For example, charities (such as religious organisations) that undertake excluded activities (advancing religion) would still be eligible for DGR status for any non-excluded charitable activities they undertake (for example, advancing social and public welfare services) using gift fund arrangements.

This highlights the issue, probably something you guys need an explanation. A religious institution motivation will always include faith, and yet every other part of that cog plays into the decision for why a person of faith is generous, stop trying to separate them, and just acknowledge that a faith institution can do BOTH and be ELIGIBLE for DGR status. The first 4 sustainable goals for the UN literally sit at the heartbeat of most churches, but you wing our ability to do this, because we mention Jesus or Buddha or Yahweh.

The Commission is not proposing to extend DGR status to activities which are not regarded as charitable in Australia, such as community sport.

At least we can point to this report to say the reason we can continue to have crap facilities for local sports because the ATO wants to tax them. Good job by you and zero foresight that local sporting teams foster all the values you speak to.

This will remain the case under the proposed reforms – where sporting activities further another charitable purpose, such as advancing health, they may be eligible for support through the DGR system, as is currently the case.

Like literally any local sport anywhere....why do you make this so hard. Just give DGR status to local sporting clubs. WHAT ARE YOU LOSING!!!!!!

The majority of basic religious charities are small and like other small charities would be required to provide basic annual financial information to the ACNC without having it independently audited or reviewed. It would also mean if basic religious charities breach governance standards, the ACNC would be able to act.

Imagine then if you allowed them to gain DGR status and helped them to be transparent by making the system simple for accountability. Gosh how helpful that would be, and it sounds like you're already aware because they are small the ATO probably wouldn't miss out on much cash. The issue isn't an institution its TRANSPARENCY in an institution.

Guys how hard is this, your goal should be to increase philanthropic giving and not empower our richest people to set up foundations to park their wealth. Yet the biggest losers in the report is the hard working religious institutions and schools that are doing the very thing that you are wanting

generosity, volunteering and serving a community to do? Why would you wing the very organisations that DO THE VERY THING YOU WANT AUSTRALIANS to do!

Do you not see how strange it is that the ATO is connected to the ACNC in this country? That the very institution in charge of tax is involved in benevolent giving? You would have a problem if a school was partnered with Pepsi, but no issue that our giving is connected to the wishes of the ATO.