

Australian Government Productivity Commission

Submission for Enquiry into Philanthropy Submission prepared by Kerry Baker

I make the following comments regarding the DGR;

I have been involved for many years in animal advocacy and welfare. I have also been active regarding the environment and how climate change is increasing risks to Australian wildlife and animals in animal agriculture. We now have a situation where we have one side of an issue given benefits of DGR status, while the other side is denied it and fully reliant on the financial capacity of concerned citizens to support their concerns with no benefit.

My specific suggestions include:

1. Currently charities get around 50% funding from Government, yet charities focussed on animal welfare get nothing. For example, disaster management for animals. This needs to be amended to give equitable treatment. People donate because they are genuinely concerned about animals, and merit the DGR benefit.

2. DGR for preventing existential risks would help fundraising and increase impact. It would also enable the Government to better direct funding as needed.

3. DGR for public interest journalism would greatly help democracy, accountability and transparency. The plight of animals in Australia is often only known through public interest journalism. Politicians and Government Agencies should be making informed decisions, they can't do so if they are only hearing one side of an argument.

4. DGR for catastrophic risks should include direct action, not be limited to advocacy.

5. DGR should be extended to policy development to ensure that we have a rigorous process that gets policy right.

6. At present vested interests are likely to argue against the above suggestions. These arguments are not for the benefit of all Australians, they are intended only to protect commercial interests and as such should be recognised as trying to stop rather than support improvements.

I am happy to be contacted to discuss any of these points further. Fundamentally I consider that extending DGR status will make Australia a fairer country and improve policy development in Government at all levels.

Kerry Baker