

Philanthropy submission

Key report recommendations and my submission

1. DGR system – make fairer and more consistent

Agree with the reports proposals to broaden and standardize eligibility – the examples given re Animal advocacy, injury prevention and poverty prevention made sense to me.

Removal of DGR status for school building funds / such types of educational, religious and commercial service provision organizations also made sense to me. Such schools are not providing charity – but commercial provision of an education in a “not for profit” type environment. The benefits of the new buildings accrue to those using them – they are not fundamentally for a charitable purpose. I appreciate that very small schools could see an impact from removing their DGR status so a transitional government support for low fee paying schools (i.e the lowest quartile of fees) would be in order.

Read also in the media that agricultural trusts could be DGR listed – I don’t understand that at all if that is the case. Again, they are more akin to commercial co-operatives – not actually charities.

2. Body to facilitate ATSI philanthropy

Agree with the recommendations.

3. ACNC regulatory upgrades and cross jurisdiction forum

Agree with the recommendations.

Additional comment: Incentives should be put in place for harmonization. I know getting people to agree on regulations can seem like an impossible turf war. How about the federal government commits to \$xxx investment into the data/IT regulatory platforms mation wide for each area where a harmonized approach across all states and territories is signed off on and legislated and enacted?

4. Data collection and utilization

Agree with the recommendations.

Other points in the report

Agreed that the treatment of super bequests should stay as is – as per this report. Special tax treatment of bequests is potentially risky as older people could be unscrupulously targetted with advertising related to that. As there are commercial providers who farm donations for certain charities and are paid commissions accordingly – there is potential for adverse behaviours here.

Need to improve public disclosure of complaints and/or enforcement obligations - agree with the report.

Additional comment: Perhaps the ACNC could do with some volunteers? There are many charities spread about the country. I appreciate the need to have paid professionals at the ACNC and a well resourced set up there. But given the size of Australia and the many charities, small and large, there could be a role for trained volunteers perhaps with volunteering experience and a background in finance, IT, numerical disciplines to do compliance audits. Of course they would need designated training, accreditation and carefully defined boundaries – but this would help to build trust in the sector. Every time there is a media expose of a charity giving misleading claims – it hurts the whole sector.

Conflicts of interest

I am a volunteer at Lifeline in the book depot where we sell used books to raise money for Lifeline call centre costs. I am a monthly donor to Smith Family and World Vision. I have adopted animals from the Animal Welfare League. I am not in any management or paid position in any charity.