

Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Charity Fundraising in the 21st Century — ratepayer.

Terms of Reference

The current framework of fundraising regulation for charities and options for reform, with particular reference to:

- a. whether the current framework of fundraising regulation creates unnecessary problems for charities and organisations who rely on donations from Australian supporters;
- b. whether current fundraising laws meet the objectives that guided the decision to regulate donations;
- c. whether current fundraising compliance regimes allow charities to cultivate donor activity and make optimal use of resources donors provide;
- d. the loss in productivity for the thousands of charities who try to meet the requirements of the seven different fundraising regimes;
- e. whether the current frameworks for investigation and enforcement are the best model for the contemporary fundraising environment;
- f. how Federal, State and Territory Governments could work together to provide charities with a nationally-consistent, contemporary and fit-for-purpose fundraising regime;
- g. the appropriate donor-focused expectations and requirements that should govern fundraising regulation in the 21st century;
- h. how the Australian consumer law should apply to not-for-profit fundraising activities;
- i. what are the best mechanisms to regulate third party fundraisers and to ensure the culture of third party fundraisers matches community perceptions of the clients they work with;
- j. whether a harmonised, contemporary fundraising regime could help in addressing concerns about the potential influence of foreign money on civil society and political debate in Australia;
- k. the cost to the charity and not-for-profit sector, and the communities they serve, of postponing fundraising reform; and
- l. any other related matters.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this serious matter.

I will address a couple of the items on the terms of reference;

- (a) how Federal, State and Territory Governments could work together to provide charities with a nationally-consistent, contemporary and fit-for-purpose fundraising regime;
- (h), how the Australian consumer law should apply to not-for-profit fundraising activities; and
- (i) any other related matters – lack of clarity between the terminology ‘charity’ and not for profit organisations.

Whilst Charities have a long history of usefulness in our society having often historically originated from a religious stand point, the word CHARITY does not mean what it used to a few years ago. So often the status is used in association with NOT FOR PROFIT but it is difficult to determine why such contradictory concepts would be linked together. Not for profit is seen applied to nursing homes, education, sports clubs but of course they all need to make a profit. Are any in fact really operating as a charity?

The community does not need more ‘not for profit organisations which are organising their tax affairs to suit themselves’.

Everyone of working age should pay the correct burden of taxes and rates in the community regardless of whether a church, sporting club or aged care associations. If in the age range of receiving entitlements to a pension rates and taxes should still be paid but graduated according to actual income.

I call for a complete review of all of the strategies that organisations and businesses such as churches which also run training organisations (probably with government funding too) who use the current situation to avoid paying their way in our society. One church has uploaded their financial statements on line and in 2004 actually collected \$43,000 in one church session in tithes or offerings on one day. Where I live we have 12 of these ‘not for profit charitable organisations’ and they are not always registered in Australia under their proper names. Break off/splinter organisations can reregister but they still remain attached to the parent company/organisation. The RTO registered training organisation attached to the churches is clearly there to make a profit as they charge the same rates as universities to students wishing to study theology. Who checks to see if these churches are actually obtaining government funding too? Does the money raised remain in this country or is it transferred back to home country of South Africa and Germany?

4. What we need is for all Australian governments **to take action to fix the problem. They must make it a priority.** They must take action now. They must work together to provide us, other charities and other not-for-profits and the donating public with a national fundraising regulatory regime. The Federal Government can take a lead under the Australian Consumer Law. It is simply not good enough to do nothing. It's time to *#fixfundraising*.

I have selected your words as suggested however I wish to add that I do not support any fund raising from the doorstep at home, or people phoning to beg for money. It is actually harassment. This must cease.

A positive way to achieve funds if there is valid reason is the GoFund Me website. This is the modern way to manage getting funds as records can be kept and governments can monitor what is not being declared.

The community may be saying that charity begins at home. Lets look after each other.

Thanks

A ratepayer.