



National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations Limited

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What we do and
how we do it.
National Roundtable
of Nonprofit
Organisations
Limited

Together for the common good



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A Message From Our Chairs

David Thompson AM, Chair of the Board

The National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations is the first attempt in Australia to bring together the broad nonprofit sector in all its diversity and richness. Similar bodies exist in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom and, increasingly, are being formed in Asia and Africa.

The National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations is a critical piece of infrastructure for the nonprofit sector. It provides an opportunity to bring together the broadest representation of this sector, sharing insights and knowledge about the remarkable work that the sector does. Every day, Australians come in touch with a nonprofit organisation, whether it is through sport or recreation, educational, health or children's programs, cultural or spiritual activity or a benevolent or professional association.

Our nonprofit organisations are equal to the best in the world, with practices that are rigorous, transparent, accountable, successful and innovative. Yet the general public, the business community and some parts of government often are unaware of the substantial contribution that nonprofit organisations make to the Australian community and its economy. The Roundtable aims to change this perception, encouraging and facilitating public debate about the sector, its accountability, regulation, economic contribution and effectiveness.

Elizabeth Cham, Chair of the Advisory Council

In establishing the National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations in Australia we examined similar bodies in other countries about what worked best in their models and then sought to apply it here. We learned the importance of being independent of government and the need to engage with the broadest possible spectrum of nonprofit organisations.

As a result, the Advisory Council to the Roundtable was created to seek the views of the sector and provide advice to the Board on matters of common interest and concern to nonprofit organisations.

The establishment of our Roundtable, together with its Advisory Council, is timely as the sector is called upon to take its place in multilateral forums, to contribute to parliamentary discussions and to work with government and business on state, national and international policy agendas. Never before has the nonprofit sector so needed to demand that our knowledge and work be acknowledged and respected.

The Roundtable will assist all nonprofit organisations – whether small community based ones or large conglomerates – to take their rightful place beside business in dealings with government as an equal partner in maintaining our vibrant civil society.





Our Mission

The mission of the National Roundtable for Nonprofit Organisations is to lead by being an effective voice on common and shared issues affecting the contribution, performance and viability of nonprofit organisations in Australia



What We Do

The Roundtable is an independent, non-political organisation dedicated to enhancing the extraordinary work and effort undertaken by nonprofit organisations in Australia. Conceived in 2004 and formally constituted in 2006, the Roundtable is the first attempt in Australia by the nonprofit sector in all its diversity to come together as one body.

The Roundtable was established for the following purposes beneficial to the community:

- To enhance the recognition of, and promote support for, the work of nonprofit organisations and the Sector by the Australian community and its governments;
- To encourage charitable, voluntary, philanthropic, and community endeavours through nonprofit organisations and to promote the public benefit and contribution of these endeavours;
- To provide a national forum for the exchange of information, research and knowledge

in relation to issues affecting nonprofit organisations and undertake collaborative work on issues of common interest;

- To initiate, undertake or co-ordinate research which contributes to the improved management, accountability and effectiveness of nonprofit organisations, and improve public policies and legislation which affect such organisations and the Sector;
- To develop policies, advice and information to help inform decision makers in respect of issues affecting nonprofit organisations and the Sector;
- To develop policies and initiate programs to identify and meet the infrastructure and other needs of nonprofit organisations and the Sector;
- To enhance co-operation and engagement between business, government and other sectors of society with nonprofit organisations and the Sector.

Snap shot of the nonprofit sector

There are an estimated 700,000 nonprofit organisations in Australia:

- About half are incorporated and about 35,000 employ staff.
- Approximately 20,000 have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

In 1999/2000, nonprofit organisations that employed staff:

- Employed 604,000 people, 6.8% of Australians in employment.
- Had an income of \$33.5 billion*.
- Contributed \$21 billion, or 3.3% to Gross Domestic Product.

(*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2002a)).





What We Value

We undertake our work with the following intent:

- Striving to be recognised as representing the model of nonprofit sector best practice.
- Being responsive to the needs of members and stakeholders and embrace open, honest and effective communication.
- Acknowledging and being receptive to the changing needs of the nonprofit sector
- Priding ourselves on developing and delivering quality products and services.
- Striving for integrity, transparency and accountability in our actions.
- Acknowledging the essential contributions of staff and volunteers.
- Being fiscally responsible and pursuing excellence in all of our decision-making.



Our Priorities



Our immediate focus is a four pronged strategy

1. Education of the Australian public about the nonprofit sector

To present the sector to the broad Australian community, and the government and business sectors, so that they come to understand its diverse roles and how critical it is to the workings of a vibrant democracy and cohesive communities. It is essential that the Australian people understand, appreciate and support the sector

2. Policy and regulatory reform

To modernise the law so that it is relevant to today's needs and demands.

It is important to have one national legal regulatory framework which simplifies national and state laws affecting this sector. This would create a sense of trust and certainty as well as saving millions of dollars. Particular attention will be paid to accounting standards, fundraising legislation and taxation regimes.

3. Financial sustainability of the sector

To examine alternative ways of financing the sector. This will be achieved by building on principles of fiscal responsibility and ethical practices, while at the same time ensuring diversity and sustainability of all community based organisations, especially small ones. It would also stimulate the creation of social enterprise, investment and new forms of financing and capital raising.

4. Education of the nonprofit sector about itself

To promote debate within the sector itself about its place, its identity and its future, including its relationship with business, government and the general public.





Our Structure

The National Roundtable for Nonprofit Organisations is governed by a Board of Directors and supported by an Advisory Council, drawn from membership

The founding Convenor, Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM, now is Patron of the Roundtable, together with Lady Southey AO.

Board

The Board is responsible for the overall governance of the Roundtable.

The current Board members are:

Chair: Mr David Thompson AM

CEO, Jobs Australia Ltd

Dr Sue Anne Wallace –

CEO, Fundraising Institute Australia

Mr Michael Fogarty

General Manager, Australian Conservation Foundation

Ms Sha Cordingley

Former CEO, Volunteering Australia

Mr Andrew Johnson

Executive Director, Australian Council of Social Service

Mr John Teres

National Executive Officer, AuSEA (Australian Society of Association Executives)

Ms Elizabeth Cham

Philanthropy Fellow, University of Melbourne



Advisory Council

The Advisory Council engages with the broad sector and provides advice to the Board. It is chaired by Elizabeth Cham and current members are from the following nonprofit organisations:

Volunteering Australia

Refugee Council of Australia

Philanthropy Australia

National Disability Services

Independent Schools Council of Australia

Australian Conservation Foundation

Australian Council of Social Service

Aged & Community Services Australia

Australian Council for International
Development

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of
Australia

National Council of Churches in Australia

Australian Society of Association Executives
(AuSEA)

Jobs Australia Ltd.

Fundraising Institute Australia

National Association for the Visual Arts

ArtsPeak

Sports Federation of Australia



Our Achievements



Key achievements so far

- For the first time in Australia, the disparate parts of the nonprofit sector have come together as a cohesive group to build the Roundtable and set its priorities & directions.
- With voluntary effort by members, the Roundtable is constituted and positioned to take the lead in its own affairs and to deal with externally imposed imperatives.
- After looking at similar international bodies, the Roundtable has determined our policy priorities as public education, regulatory reform and financial sustainability.
- Our work in establishing the Roundtable has furnished a body of knowledge about the broad sector that is invaluable to nonprofit organisations, their decision makers and staff alike.
- The Roundtable is now recognised by public policy makers as a body that can be contacted to represent the sector.

Current activities include:

- Representing the sector and providing information to the Australian Bureau of Statistics on their expanded capacity to collect statistics on nonprofit organisations. The ABS will produce a new Nonprofit Institutions Satellite Account for 2006 - 07 and then every three years after.
- As part of the COAG reform agenda, the Roundtable coordinated consultations in Victoria on improving nonprofit law and regulation. Subsequently, we responded to the Victorian government's options paper,

Improving Not-for-profit Law and Regulation and its initiative, Reducing the Regulatory Burden and continue to provide assistance and advice to the Government.

- Discussing the viability and scope of an independent inquiry into the sector to assist in defining the future for the sector and increasing public recognition of its work.
- Providing input into the Australian Accounting Standards Board on the accountability requirements for nonprofits.
- In partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney, convening a "think tank" to discuss and progress issues arising from UTS research on the sector's access to financial capital.
- Establishing international relationships with sister bodies such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in the UK and the Independent Sector in the USA.
- Continuing addresses to Board and Council meetings on current policy. Recent speakers include the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Victoria's Deputy Premier, Professor Mark Lyons (UTS) and Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes (QUT).
- Ongoing research and engagement with cross sections of the sector on matters such as new approaches to capital funding, regulatory reform, accountability and transparency, negotiating with government and business on these matters.



Membership

Who can join

Nonprofit, incorporated organisations are encouraged to join the Roundtable to work together for the common good and to strengthen the sector and its work.

Associate membership is open to all incorporated organisations working in the nonprofit sector.

National nonprofit peak bodies may become full members, with opportunities to become Board and/or Advisory Committee members.

Benefits of joining the Roundtable

The benefits of membership include:

- Invitations to participate in forums, think tanks and other Roundtable events and to engage with other members.
- Regular news alert on sector matters and other information streams – these can add value to each member's own information, publications and membership.
- Access to a Roundtable Members Policy Portal for information on issues, such as advice on accounting standards, fundraising regulations, industrial relations, taxation, capital financing and so on.
- Opportunities to participate in policy committees and working groups, as required, on the Roundtable's strategic priorities.
- Regular, updated policy advice and information on Roundtable priorities in regulatory reform financial sustainability and the non-profit sector.
- Invitations to Annual General Meetings and, for full members only, voting and director's nominating rights.

Applications

Member information, with application forms, can be found on

www.nonprofitroundtable.org.au

