

Subject: I'm against changes to DGR tax arrangements that restrict conservation advocacy

I am writing to express my position in regards to the proposals outlined in the 'Tax deductible gift recipient reform opportunities' discussion paper.

That the government takes such a narrow view of environmental protection is disappointing. Worse is the attempts to dictate and restrict the activity of conservation organisations, funded by members who support environmental advocacy.

Remediation is important, but I don't agree that all environmental agencies should have to commit no less than 25% of their annual expenditure to environmental remediation.

The benefits of education, advocacy and other community services provided by not-for-profit (NFP) organisations are currently recognised and valued by the public and government. To ensure we remain a democratic society, it should stay that way.

Environmental advocacy is in the public interest. It enhances environmental decision making and accountability and drives policy reform. The Australia Institute conducted national polling and found that almost 70% of Australians support environmental advocacy.

It's clear the motivations of those behind the discussion paper aim to silence NFPs, which would significantly reduce their impact and damage civil society as a whole. Charities should have the freedom to choose how they spend their earned funds, so long as it's in line with their mission and what donors understand they're supporting.

Prevention through advocacy is better than remediation through resource heavy mitigation efforts.

Australian politicians and people deserve to hear from more than just big business. Scientists and individuals from all generations need to have a voice. Decision makers should not be solely influenced by industry expert lobby teams.

Please ensure DGR status isn't used as a political tactic to control, restrict or silence advocacy groups.