

From: [Des Griffin](#)
To: [DGR Inbox](#)
Subject: PROPOSALS TO RESTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY AND TAX DEDUCTABILITY.
Date: Tuesday, 8 August 2017 9:52:32 AM

I refer to the Treasury Discussion Paper on Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Reform Opportunities.

I object strenuously to the proposal to restrict the activities of community environmental groups.

In a democracy protection of the right to express dissenting views is critical: to do otherwise is to trend toward autocracy.

Better decisions means taking account of a variety of views: minimising dissent leads to no more than adherence to a prevailing, often self-interested view.

The natural environment is a critical component of the world in which we live, to give it less than maximum attention is to trend toward destruction of our own species. Indeed there are those who consider the costs of environmental destruction are greater than those resulting from climate change.

In the real world, decisions are not made solely on the basis of analysis of facts and rational argument. Consideration of who benefits and who pays are critical components. Gaining support for views is essentially a political activity. Environmental advocacy is in the public interest. It enhances accountability and drives policy reform.

The proposal to restrict taxpayer donations in the manner suggested is an attack on democracy, poses a danger to the future of the natural environment and is naïve. Not the least dangerous aspect is that the political activities of commercial business including mining and forestry companies face no such restriction.

The vast majority of the Australian public support continued advocacy by environmental groups. These proposals do not represent the views of the taxpayers and voters. The Parliament and the Government therefore have no mandate for imposition of such a restriction. Environmental groups are principally supported financially by members! Tax deductibility, and the consequent foregoing of revenue by government, is appropriate precisely because of the community benefits.

The national interest is served most effectively by encouragement of advocacy of all in the community whose interests broadly defined are affected by the activities of others, including government and commercial business.

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