

From: [Ann Hobson](#)
To: [DGR Inbox](#)
Subject: Tax status enquiry re DGR status of environmental Groups
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Senior Adviser
Individuals and Indirect Tax Division
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I understand that one of the things the ATO is asking in this enquiry is whether environmental organisations should have to spend 25 to 50 per cent of donations on work to remediate environmental damage caused by others in order to keep DGR status.

As a member of a branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, we spend very little money on either remedial work or lobbying. Everything is done by volunteers. Some of it is done by consulting with resource companies with whom we seek to cooperate in order to prevent thoughtless damage to the environment **before it happens**, and we find that this is far more likely to preserve natural values than any hands on remedial work.

I believe that the effort to confine DGR status to remedial work is driven by those who want resource companies and agribusiness to have an open licence to damage the environment as they have had for the best part of the last two centuries.

I also believe that past action to curb this damage and protect vulnerable ecosystems has been achieved mainly by protest and legal action along with lobbying to alter policies at the government level.

It costs to take such legal action. It takes time - sometimes more than one life-time. It is not easy to achieve quick or secure outcomes as generation after generation of environmentalists have to resist new arguments for projects previously found to be not in the national environmental interest.

Developers have access to deep pockets, and seldom have the long term view, as evidenced by the numbers of abandoned mines with toxic legacy issues that taxpayers are being asked to manage in the long term. It would take the investment of all the wealth dug out of the Mt Morgan mine to stop its mullock heaps and voids from contaminating the land and water downstream in the Fitzroy Basin for centuries to come.

Environmental groups, on the other hand, can save future tax dollars by using their influence and paying to present their legal arguments for a future with clean soil, clean water and clean air providing the basis for food production and healthy communities into the centuries ahead.

Keeping the DGR status of environmental groups shows economic and environmental foresight not evidenced in the push to restrict these volunteers and their tiny staffs to attempting the David v Goliath tasks of fixing damage that their foresight and agitation could help to prevent in the first place.

Yours Faithfully,
Elizabeth Hobson

