

From: [Colin Hocking](#)
To: [DGR Inbox](#)
Subject: Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Reform Opportunities Discussion Paper
Date: Thursday, 3 August 2017 5:34:58 PM

Senior Adviser

Individuals and Indirect Tax Division

Herewith is my individually composed submission regarding the consultation paper outlining potential reforms to Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) tax arrangements.

Why is this review process so obviously directed towards environment groups? This is patently not a dispassionate review of tax deductible status for all not for profits, but is instead clearly an ideologically motivated attempt to erode the community oriented good works of independent environmental NGOs. There is no reason why these hard-working environmental organisations should be singled out in framing this review. If you have a good reason, I would like to know!

This is the type of partisan action by the current Federal government that continues the dislike by everyday Australians for self-interested, partisan politicians.

Why should DGR listed green groups be forced to allocate 'up to' 50% of their funds to "environmental remediation" ?– is this the narrow, ill informed view of our current government of the environment, and what is needed to protect it, as expressed in the terms of reference of the review. It is little wonder that the Federal government didn't even put forward an environmental policy at the last election – without any clear, coherent environmental policy to refer to, how can the Federal government come up with any informed terms of reference for this review?

As is the view of many other Australians, I believe that it is essential we have organisations that can engage in community education, campaigns and advocacy to protect the environment – and to keep governments honest and accountable. It would appear that the current Federal government is fearful of such community voices, and is blatantly attempting to close down freedom of speech as regards our environment.

There is also a dangerous recommendation that environmental groups should face administrative 'sanctions' for being in any way connected to 'unlawful' activity. How ludicrous that anyone would expect community organisations be held responsible for the activity of people 'without formal connections to the organisation' who might be involved in 'illegal' activity? How ill informed on matters of law are those who have framed this section of the review, both in legal ethical principle, and in its enforcement.

Informed and active citizens and peaceful protest are cornerstones of our democracy. Being engaged in peaceful protests does not imply that an NGO is involved in 'illegal' activity.

I ask that you to put aside the recommendations in the paper related to community environment groups that are clearly politically motivated and legally dubious, at best, and contrary to the principles and practices of freedom of speech.

A legitimate and non political review of the governance arrangements for not for profits will be broadly welcomed, both by the community and the Not For Profit sector, if they remove unnecessary duplication, inconsistencies in how different charities are managed, and reduce reporting burdens while ensuring transparency and rigor in the reporting

process.

The current review, as set up, is not such a dispassionate review, and can only lead to a deeper stain on politicians for acting in self-interested, partisan and highly ideological ways.

Any attempt to limit or sanction environmental groups for working to protect the natural environment needs to be strenuously resisted, and if such action results from your review, I intend to be part of that resistance.

I would appreciate an individual response to the issues I have raised in this correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Hocking

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