

Tax Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Reform Opportunities Discussion Paper

Submission: Grant Mills

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Thank you for taking the time to review and consider this submission.

I would like to register my opposition to many of bulk of the considerations in the Discussion Paper, particularly those directly relating to changes to tax-deductibility accreditation for Environmental Charities.

I will primarily focus on the aspect of selectively mandating additional requirements for environmental charities, over and above the reporting requirements already in place.

Tax-deductibility covers a broad range of NGOs, public interest groups, and charities. That environmental charities, in particular, would be singled out as requiring additional oversight and legislation is grossly at odds with modern political opinion in the belief in the free-market.

Donors do not require the protections that many in support of 'activity quotas' seek to hide behind. Donors are generally a highly engaged and informed group; no one parts with their money easily.

And given the diversity of charities and causes that potential donors have to choose from, the same market mechanisms that underpin successful businesses also underpin NGOs. Those that are not supported by their donors will cease to exist through natural market selection.

Therefore the mandating of activities by the government smacks of the nanny state that they perpetually rail against.

To create differentiation in the reporting and activity requirements of various sectors is inherently political. If tax-deductibility is in need of review then similar stipulations should be required of the Institute of Public Affairs, who also engage in advocacy.

It should be up to the Australian tax payer and the market to decide whether NGOs are devoting enough time to on-ground environmental causes, not the government. Such an obvious, and selective, diversion from the government's general free-market stance, should – and will be – considered with the utmost suspicion.

Environmental NGOs are not subject to special tax treatments, no more so than the IPA or other charitable advocacy groups. A level playing field for public interest organisations should be an underpinning element of democracy, and with many of the proposals in this Discussion Paper, the government is seeking to hobble that democratic process for blatant political reason.

Therefore, I protest as strongly as possible against these provisions.

Thank you for your time.

Grant Mills