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To: [DGR Inbox](#)
Subject: Treasury discussion paper- environment charities
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To whom it may concern,

I have recently had a look at the Treasury discussion paper on environment charities. I was concerned by a number of recommendations and the implication that these charities would have restrictions placed on them such as: on what kind of perfectly legal activities they can take part in and how they spend the money they raise.

I believe that environmental charities should be free to set their own priorities and to make an informed assessment of the best way to achieve those environmental outcomes, whether this is through advocacy or on-ground remediation. Any new restriction should be strongly opposed. I was particularly concerned by the proposal to force all environmental charities to spend up to 50% of their money on 'remediation work'. While no one would argue that remediation work is important and necessary, surely advocacy work to improve environmental policy and prevent damage from happening in the first place is just as important, if not more important, rather than cleaning up the mess or fixing the damage after the fact. Advocacy for better policy can be the most efficient expenditure compared to the cost of repairing future environmental damage. As the saying goes 'prevention is better than the cure'.

I believe that the community expects environmental groups to be strong advocates for environmental outcomes. These groups have the staff, expertise and time to do the advocacy work. Some major environmental problems, like climate change, can't be stopped just through on-ground remediation. Better government policy and implementation is what is needed which is often brought about through the advocacy work of environmental charities. The inquiry and discussion paper create a false dichotomy between remediation and advocacy. On-ground work often needs supporting policies or funding from government, which may only arise as a result of advocacy.

I strongly object to any move to dictate to environmental charities on policy areas and how and on what they are to spend their money. It appears to be an attempt to silence charities that are holding governments and corporations to account for destroying nature or polluting our air and water.

Vern O'Hara

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