

From: [Sime Validzic](#)  
To: [DGR Inbox](#)  
Subject: I oppose changes to DGR tax arrangements that restrict environmental advocacy  
Date: Friday, 4 August 2017 11:35:44 AM

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**AUSTRALIA**

To whom it may concern:

**I am writing to express my opposition to the proposals outlined in the 'Tax deductible gift recipient reform opportunities' discussion paper.**

That the Government of Australia takes such a narrow view of environmental protection is disappointing. Worse is the attempts to dictate and restrict the activity of conservation organisations, funded by members who support environmental advocacy.

Remediation is important, but I do not agree that all environmental organizations should have to commit no less than 25% of their annual expenditure to environmental remediation.

The benefits of education, advocacy and other community services provided by not-for-profit (NFP) organisations are currently recognised and valued by the public and government. To ensure that the interests of the broader community and the environment are protected, it should stay that way.

Environmental advocacy is in the public interest. It enhances environmental decision making and accountability and drives policy reform. The *Australia Institute* conducted national polling and found that almost 70% of the people of Australia support environmental advocacy.

In addition to being in the interest of the public, the environment, trees and other plants, native animals and indigenous peoples have an intrinsic value and those who advocate for them should not be restricted.

It is clear the motivations of those behind the discussion paper aim to silence NFPs, which would significantly reduce their impact and damage civil society as a whole. Organizations should have the freedom to choose how they spend their earned funds, so long as it is in line with their mission and what donors understand they are supporting.

Prevention through advocacy is better than remediation through resource-heavy mitigation efforts.

Politicians and people in Australia deserve to hear from more than just big business. Scientists and individuals from all generations need to have a voice. Decision makers should not be solely influenced by industry expert lobby teams.

*I lived in Australia from 1970 to 1992 but returned to my country of origin in order to reduce my impact on indigenous peoples, native animals, forests and the environment. The per-capita ecological impact of a person living in Europe is about 50% below that of a person living in Australia.*

*Only donations within Croatia are tax-deductible for me and only up to 2% of gross income but that does not stop me from donating about 2,000 AUD (Australian Dollars) to organizations in Australia each year. The national, county and local governments of Croatia actually offer help with funding for ecological and animal rights organizations.*

Please ensure DGR status is not used as a political tactic to control, restrict or silence advocacy organizations.

Best regards,

Simon Validzic

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