

Not-for-profits Unit
Treasury
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By email: charitiesconsultation@treasury.gov.au

3 December, 2024

Submission on Community Charities Guidelines 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the draft guidelines for the Community Charity DGR reform.

Foundation Murrindindi (formerly known as Marysville and Triangle Community Foundation) is a grassroots community foundation focused on creating thriving, vibrant and connected communities within the Shire of Murrindindi. Our purpose has shifted from recovery from the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires to a new strategic direction to inspire a community-led future. Foundation Murrindindi is located in North East Victoria, servicing a population of 15,197 across an area of nearly 3900 square kilometres. We are a small community foundation, governed by a volunteer board of directors and FTE of 1.2 staff. Foundation Murrindindi has provided \$900,000 support to community grants, sponsorships and programs since 2014. In response to the rising issue of food insecurity, Foundation Murrindindi has also recently established our Murrindindi Community Food Share program, distributing over 4,000kg of food since May to those in need in our local community.

Foundation Murrindindi structure

Foundation Murrindindi is a company limited by guarantee acting as trustee for Foundation Murrindindi Trust. Foundation Murrindindi Limited is a registered charity. Neither organisation has DGR status.

We are fortunate to partner with the Foundation for Rural and regional Renewal (FRRR) to receive donated funds for charitable projects that require tax deductibility. Our hope with the Community Charity DGR would be that we could manage that process ourselves, and develop better relationships directly with our donors without the need for a third party. We have valued the support of FRRR, however the process requires additional administration on our behalf and simplification of process for a small team is a key goal.



Supporting rural communities

Foundation Murrindindi's grant program supports small rural community groups to deliver projects and programs that build and strengthen social capital. We see our role as enabling and empowering communities to lead on issues that matter most to them. Most small community groups do not have DGR status. A restriction on our support from 'charitable' to 'DGR category activities' would have a significant impact on our ability to support community-led initiatives. The need to potentially grant via FRRR for non DGR activities reduces the value of our grants by 2.5% and increases the administrative and governance workload for our team.

The unique value of community foundations is that we have broad remit to support our communities, and do not typically operate in areas not usually aligned to one or two purposes or activities.

Further guidance around the DGR activities and consideration of the opportunity to broaden the scope to fit with community foundation activities would be appreciated.

Collaboration

Foundation Murrindindi is working collaboratively with other community foundations in North East Victoria. Indi Philanthropy is a collaboration between Border Trust, Into Our Hands, Tomorrow Today and Foundation Murrindindi. Whilst each Community Foundation and community has its own character and focus, we intend to tackle shared needs through collaboration, sharing of knowledge and leveraging our resources for collective impact. There is the potential for financial resource transfers between Community Foundations and we would be concerned about restrictions in our ability to do this with the proposed DGR reforms.

Our aim is to continue to support communities of Murrindindi Shire with a minimum overhead, and complication. The role of community foundations in rural areas is emphasised where there is a lack of funded services. As a charitable entity, we manage our funds responsibly and aim to deliver the greatest impacts for our community. Your support to help us achieve these goals is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Hill
Executive Officer