

Cutting through the red tape strangling our charities!

Rev Tim Costello, Chair of the Community Council for Australia has today commended the Federal government for committing to fix Australia's antiquated fundraising regulations. ***'We are delighted that both the Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and the Assistant Minister for Charities Zed Seselja have today agreed to prioritise cutting red tape for charities. Once implemented, the one stop registration changes to charitable fundraising regulations will mean increased transparency and less red tape for thousands of charities across Australia. Charities will be able to spend millions of dollars more serving their communities rather than completing duplicated sets of paperwork.'***

According to David Crosbie, CEO of the CCA, ***'Now more than ever, many charities need to pivot to online fundraising, but multiple levels of government bureaucracy have been strangling charities by making them satisfy seven different sets of regulations requiring at least six weeks of pointless compliance work.'***

All registered Australian charities engaged in online fundraising are legally required to satisfy every government in Australia. State and Territory government regulations demand completely different documentation. Examples of the compliance activity required for charities to fundraise online include advertising any intended fundraising campaign in a QLD newspaper, stipulating the amount to be raised in WA, providing auditor and bank account details, providing the names and addresses of all Board Directors and their signatures, providing a police check for some staff and Board Directors, certified proof of ID for staff and Board Directors, detailing how and when money raised will be spent, etc. etc.

For over a decade many reports and inquiries have highlighted the problems with fundraising regulations and the negative impact they have on the productivity of Australia's 57,000 charities employing over 1.3 million staff and contributing over 8% of GDP. Most recently the Bushfire Royal Commission recommended establishing a one stop registration process for charitable fundraising and fundraising regulatory reform has been identified as a priority issue by Emergency Management Ministers.

Mr Crosbie said; ***'The current fundraising regulations are a classic example of feral bureaucracy costing millions of dollars each year and thousands of hours of charitable staff time in wasted compliance activity. There is an easy fix if all governments agreed to work with the information already collected by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission rather than duplicating and collecting their own.'***

It is important to note that all registered charities in Australia are overseen by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) that has significant powers to investigate any complaint by anyone against any registered charity. The consumer watchdog, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission also has the power to investigate and act against any charity engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct.

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