



Media Release
6/3/20

Charities welcome government response to ACNC review – but not all government members got the memo

The Community Council for Australia has welcomed the government response to the review of the charity regulator – the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. CCA Chair Tim Costello said, ***‘We are pleased to see the government acknowledge the vital role played by charities in Australia, reaffirm its commitment to appropriate regulation, and accept most of the recommendations of the independent review panel. We are concerned that a number of critical recommendations have not been accepted, particularly in relation to fundraising regulations.’***

Reverend Costello also raised concerns about inconsistency in the government’s public statements relating to charities; ***‘The Charities Minister Zed Seselja has been very supportive of the charities sector and the role it plays, but a small minority of government members have been openly critical in recent times. It seems to us some in government are engaged in a deliberate campaign to undermine public trust and confidence in charities. This is not acceptable at a time when charities are our best hope in addressing many of the pressing issues across our communities.’***

In presenting the government’s response to the recommendations, Assistant Minister Zed Seselja said; ***A vibrant charities sector is important to all Australians, and as evident in this response, the Government will continue to strongly support it.***

Twenty-one of the thirty recommendations of the independent review panel have been accepted and several recommendations will be further considered. The government agreed to support the wider use of the charities passport (reduces duplication), lessen the compliance burden on smaller charities (less financial reporting obligations and higher reporting thresholds), increase transparency with regards to related party transactions and executive remuneration, and allow greater public disclosures in relation to the investigations being carried out by the ACNC.

David Crosbie, CEO of CCA, said; ***‘We welcome the public support for the charities sector offered by Assistant Minister Seselja, and most of the government responses to the review are positive. It is disappointing that one of the biggest areas of pointless red tape – the dogs breakfast of charitable fundraising regulations around Australia – has not been streamlined as recommended.’***

Australian charities employ over 1.3 million people, turn over \$150 billion each year, and involve more than 4 million volunteers. They are critical to our economy and our communities.

Mr Crosbie has recently argued the government should be actively considering a stimulus package for charities, ***‘Following the bushfires and the emerging corona virus pandemic, CCA believes governments could provide more stimulus to the economy, increase employment and strengthen communities by investing more the capacity of charities to better serve their communities. Stimulus should not just be about small business.’***

Media Contact: David Crosbie 0419 624 420