

## Voters want government to remove interstate roadblocks on charitable fundraising

A pre-election survey of over 3,400 voters across the 20 most marginal electorates in Australia conducted for the Community Council for Australia by Piazza Research found that: ***Across all surveyed electorates, high proportions (74% to 92%) of electors wanted to see their local MP make greater efforts to get the Australian Government to improve fundraising rules to make it easier for charities to raise money.***

This finding is one of many that support the idea that charities should spend their limited resources serving communities, not filling in duplicate fundraising forms for government officials. There has been over a decade of high-level inquiries and reports including Royal Commissions, Productivity Commission and Parliamentary Inquiries, thousands of submissions, and an endless stream of recommendations. All of them have highlighted the waste of charity resources because of the current outdated regulations. Every single inquiry and report has called for change. But little real change has come.

According to David Crosbie, CEO of the CCA, ***'what has been delivered in response to all these reports and recommendations are numerous hollow commitments followed by recurring government committees who have wasted countless hours playing word salad footsies as they endlessly debate in-principle agreements and regulations. Meanwhile, charities continue to face an ongoing dog's breakfast of outdated dysfunctional regulation that is strangling charitable fundraising in Australia.'***

Rev Tim Costello AO, Chair of CCA said; ***'If any government in Australia is concerned about getting increased value from the donations and funding charities receive, and supporting the 1.3 million workers employed in charities, they could greatly improve productivity by removing the interstate road blocks on fundraising. We should encourage charities to do what they do best, serve their communities.'***

Under current fundraising regulations, a small local church charity that puts a 'donate here' button on their website is officially required to go through the complex process of registering as a fundraising organisation in most States and Territories. At the same time, thousands of individuals and groups in Australia and internationally run online fundraising through various websites where they do not have to satisfy any requirements other than those imposed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct. Charities not only have to meet all ACCC requirements, but additional separate registration and administration requirements from most States.

CCA is calling on all political parties to commit to reforming fundraising regulations as a priority in their first year of government. The current regulations are unenforceable, unfair and broken.

**NB.** CCA will release the full results of the marginal seat survey next week prior to a pre-election charities forum on 12/5 at the Melbourne Convention Centre where all the major parties have been invited to present their vision for the charities sector. So far the ALP and Greens have indicated they will present at the forum and over 200 charities have registered for the event as part of the Connecting Up conference.

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