



Response to DSS Options Paper – Supporting submission from Community Council of Australia.

Submitted by:

State: SA

Contact email:

Introduction

The Sammy D Foundation is a Charitable Institution, operating as a Public Benevolent Institution, which provides leadership for the South Australian community to empower youth with skills to make safe and informed choices, as well as developing a youth culture in SA where young people have the skills, positive attitudes and role-models to support them to reach their maximum life potential.

The Sammy D Foundation attended two consultation sessions which were held prior to the establishment of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) in 2012. The sessions were very well attended, with in excess of 100 people attending each session – highlighting the support for the ACNC.

The recent SA consultation session was not well attended (about 10 people). Quite the contrast to the sessions held pre the establishment which demonstrated real and valuable consultation. This is concerning from our point of view.

Consultation

The Sammy D Foundation does not support the very limited consultation process that has been undertaken by the Federal Government in relation to the Options Paper – Australia’s Charities and Not-for-profits.

This stance is in line with the submission made by the Community Council for Australia (CCA).

“...strongly believe that authentic consultation, constructive advocacy and genuine collaboration between the sector and government will lead to better policies, programs and services for our communities.

“Unfortunately, the options proposed through this limited consultation are, at best, dismissive of the sector’s views and impose a predetermined agenda with very little meaningful capacity to offer input or change policy.”

We do not believe that this change and the proposed options are in the sector or the community's interests because:

- There was clear sector support for this peak monitoring model with over 2000 submissions, numerous hearings and consultations on the establishment of an independent regulator for the charities sector since it was first proposed by a Howard Government review of the definition of charity in 2001.
- The establishment of the ACNC has been supported by the majority of the not-for-profit sector, professional stakeholders and independent reviews, including the Productivity Commission, the Henry Review and Senate Inquiries, well over 1000 submissions, presentations at public hearings and findings from consultations.

Concerns with the options provided

The Sammy D Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation characterised by high output, high outcome and value for money service provision that relies heavily on professional volunteers to wade through and make sense of applications, submissions and reporting processes.

With the introduction of the ACNC, we felt there was light at the end of the tunnel. But again, we are faced with another submission, another big change and the prospect of having to change our procedures. More valuable volunteer hours will be used to implement, what we believe is unnecessary change, taking resources away from the important work we are doing in the community.

We endorse all of the concerns listed within the CCA submission, in particular:

1. No public register of charities, currently a place where the public can access a listing of charities.
2. No mandatory reporting leaves open the opportunity for organisations not doing the right thing to avoid any measure of accountability. Self-report systems suit those seeking to hide from accountability, not those seeking to build trust with their community.
3. No attempt to address the risks or confusions for charities and the community that will be created by a proposed return to the ATO and ASIC as regulators.
4. No way of addressing increased impost of red tape, duplication and compliance across the charities sector (one of the reasons the ACNC was established).

Conclusion

The Sammy D Foundation does not support the very limited consultation process that has been undertaken on the proposed options as outlined in the Options Paper and does not support any of the proposed options suggested as a replacement for the ACNC.

We ask that the ACNC be retained at this stage based on a lack of evidence secondary to limited consultation.

The Foundation would be happy to attend and participate in further consultation.