



Australia's Charities and Not-for-profits

Written Submission

The Options Paper, Australia's Charities and Not-for-profits sets out proposed replacement arrangements for charities in Australia. The paper outlines policy directions proposed by the Government to introduce effective replacement arrangements that reduce the burden of regulation on the civil society sector.

The paper is being released to seek feedback from charities and interested parties on the proposed replacement options. Comments and feedback will inform development of the replacement arrangements. A summary of written submissions will be provided on the Department's website in September 2014.

Please use this submission template to provide your feedback on the proposed replacement arrangements for charities in Australia.

Completed submissions are to be sent by 20 August 2014 to:

consultationwithcharities@dss.gov.au (preferred method) OR

Civil Society and Programme Delivery Policy Branch

Department of Social Services PO BOX 7576

Canberra Business Centre, ACT 2610

Submissions received after 20 August may not be considered.

Unless otherwise stated, the information and feedback you provide may be used for publishing purposes. Please state if you do not wish for your comments to be published.

Instructions for completing the Submission Template

- Download and save a copy of the template to your computer.
- Refer to the *Options Paper, Australia's Charities and Not-for-profits* for context and discussion questions.
- You do not need to respond to all of the questions.
- Please keep your answers relevant to the topic being addressed, we ask that submissions be limited to two pages.

Name (first and surname): Timothy Calnin

If submitting on behalf of a company or organisation

Name of organisation: Australian Chamber Orchestra Pty Ltd

Stakeholder category (e.g. service provider, client, peak body, academic): Cultural organisation

State/Territory: NSW

Contact email address: timothy.calnin@aco.com.au

Response to Options Paper:

About the Australian Chamber Orchestra

Founded in 1975, the Australian Chamber Orchestra is recognised as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. It is renowned for the integrity and excellence of its programming, and the loyalty and enthusiasm of its audiences and other supporters. A dedicated troupe of diverse musicians, the ACO performs all over the world, from red-dust regional centres of Australia to New York night clubs, from Australian capital cities to the world's most prestigious concert halls, including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, London's Wigmore Hall and Vienna's Musikverein. The ACO's dedication and musicianship has created warm relationships with such celebrated soloists as Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Imogen Cooper, Christian Lindberg, Joseph Tawadros and Pieter Wispelwey. The ACO is renowned for collaborating with artists from diverse genres, including singers Tim Freedman, Neil Finn, Katie Noonan, Paul Casis, Danny Spooner and Barry Humphries and visual artists Michael Leunig, Bill Henson, Shaun Tan and Jon Frank. The ACO has recorded for the world's top labels. Recent recordings have won three consecutive ARIA Awards and documentaries featuring the ACO have been shown on television worldwide and won awards at film festivals on four continents.

The ACO currently presents more than 85 concerts a year in venues all over Australia and attracts very high audience numbers year on year. National audience reach since 2009 has grown from 93,000 to 118,000 per year. The ACO has 10,000 subscribers who purchase year-long season tickets every year and attracts many tens of thousands of single ticket buyers to its events. The ACO has collaborated successfully with such companies as the Sydney Dance Company, the Sydney Festival and the Sydney Opera House and has embraced new technologies, especially through the creation of ACO VIRTUAL – an immersive, interactive digital installation of the ACO which has toured to regional and metropolitan centres all over Australia. The ACO's Education Program reaches students in primary and secondary schools, tertiary music students and young professionals seeking experience to enter the profession. An adult education series of pre-concert talks attracts thousands of members of the public keen to gain insight into the music played by the ACO.

The ACO has an annual budget of \$15M. It receives base funding from the Federal and NSW Governments (total \$2M), earns ticket and concert revenue of \$7.5M, sponsorship, donation and fundraising income of \$5M and interest on its reserves of \$0.5M. Following a series of financially successful years since 2003, the ACO has built up a solid reserve base to provide stability and certainty in its planning and commitments.

Response to Options Paper

We are aware of the response to the Options Paper that has been made by our peak body, the Australian Major Performing Arts Group, and are fully supportive of their submission.

In particular and in addition we would like to make the following points regarding some of our major issues with the Options Paper:

- If the proposal to replace the ACNC proceeds as outlined in the Options Paper, the regulation of the sector will once again be fragmented across a number of agencies so that we will be answerable to and reporting to ASIC, ATO, the Australia Council, Arts NSW, Register of Cultural Organisations and state based charities' offices, with resulting duplication in reporting and increased workload;
- We have grave concerns about the regulatory functions being transferred to the ATO which is, after all, the government's principal revenue raising authority;
- The proposed self-reporting framework using our website is a departure from the nature and purpose of the web and will require additional controls and assurance processes around the website. Whilst not a major burden for us administratively it will require a change in thinking about how our website is managed;
- There is not enough detail in the Options Paper about the proposed reporting content to be able to comment fully, but we do not think there will be much additional workload; what is lost though is the value of having a central database/register of charities which the public can access to search for charities and directors; director information across charities will no longer be available;
- Also lost will be the ability to produce research or statistical analysis across the sector; there is some suggestion that this role might be taken up by the proposed National Centre for Excellence, but where will they get their information from and will we also be reporting to them?

Our strong preference would be to retain an independent agency such as the ACNC as a single regulatory body to oversight the charities sector and to reduce the compliance burden on charities by progressively move all other government charity functions to within this agency.