



7 April 2014

Chairperson

The Senate Standing Committees on Economics

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

By Email: economics.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Chairperson

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (Repeal) (No 1) Bill 2014 ("Bill")

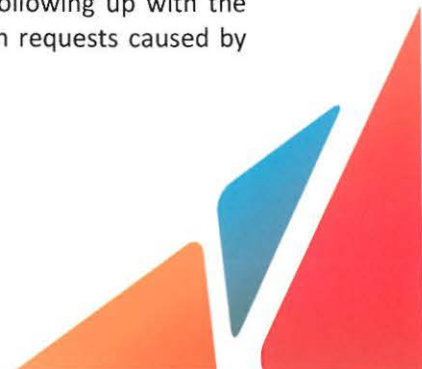
We thank you for the opportunity to provide our submission in respect to the above Bill. Riverview Church Inc is a non-denominational church based in WA with about 4,000 to 5,000 people attending our average weekend services. We have 6 weekend services. We provide community services to our local community through Riverview Community Services Inc. We operate our television production studio which airs on both secular and Christian networks across Australia and UK through Riverview Media Inc. We also operate a public ancillary fund which is our Riverview Trust. Our Riverview Children's Foundation Inc partners with NGO organizations supporting projects for children and women in overseas countries such as Rwanda, Cambodia, East Timor, Thailand and India.

Our submission is to comment on the positive outcomes that have since resulted from the operation of the ACNC towards the charity sector, mainly in the areas of regulation, education and the public register system.

1. Regulation

The charity sector in Australia has traditionally been subjected to multiple regulators, including the ATO, ASIC and the various state government departments. This inadvertently caused charities to shift their resources away from pursuing their charitable purposes to focusing on the duplications in reporting requirements of the multiple regulators within the charity sector. The establishment and the subsequent operations of the ACNC as a one-stop shop national regulator were welcomed by most in the charity sector. The ACNC has been proactively working with the existing multiple federal and state regulators to streamline reporting obligations for charities, cutting red-tape, duplications and complexities in reporting.

The ACNC's role as national regulator has also led to timely processing of tax review applications and other information provided by the charity sector to the ACNC. This has been a tremendous step forward as charities can focus on providing charitable services, instead of continuously following up with the relevant government agencies on the status of their applications and information requests caused by administration backlogs.



The charity sector is committed to upholding high standards of compliance and governance to instill public confidence in the sector. The ACNC's compliance and enforcement role ensures that charities that breach laws are appropriately investigated and proper sanctions are enacted. This is imperative as most charities do not condone mismanagement, poor governance, criminal behavior or a misuse of the charity itself. The ACNC's role as national regulator would instill public confidence in the charity sector.

2. Educational to the Charity Sector

The ACNC has proven to be a government agency that actively promotes education to the charity sector. The ACNC provides timely responses to the information requests put forward by the charity sector. The ACNC provides various methods of communication with the charity sector, including email, post, telephone, social media, mail, fax and the ACNC Charity Portal. The timeliness of responses and the various methods of communication show an initiative on the part of the ACNC to assist charities in complying with all of their obligations. The ACNC's public website provides us with various useful and in-depth publications, including factsheets, quick tips, FAQs, guides and reports, with the aim of educating charities in areas such as governance, financial reporting, tax concessions, ongoing obligations, registration details, state regulations and other general issues impacting the charity sector.

3. Public Register System

The ACNC Register provides the public with a mechanism to obtain information about the various charities registered in Australia. The ACNC Register provides information on a charity, including information on their beneficiaries, finance and governance. This encourages transparency and accountability within the charity sector which inevitably leads to public confidence. The charity sector welcomes the ACNC Register as a means of being transparent and accountable for the donations and grants received to pursue its purposes.

There has been substantial work done by the previous government in collaboration with the charity sector, various professional bodies and consultants in respect to the ACNC and its role within the charity sector. Many hours have been spent on research, discussions, public hearings and submissions previously made to Treasury regarding charity reform legislations. Each person working within the charity sector has been involved in numerous educational sessions, both as participator and organisor, with the sole intention of increasing compliance and governance levels of the charity sector. Repealing the Bill would be counter-productive as it would be unraveling the years of work that went into establishing and operating the ACNC.

We recommend that the ACNC continues to be the national charity regulator, assisting charities to do what they do best in, while ensuring that proper governance, accountability and transparency are in place to instill public confidence in the charity sector in Australia.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Dorcas White

General Manager