



The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Economics
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

15th April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (Repeal) (No. 1) Bill 2014

The Shepherd Centre is a small charity that provides services to children with hearing loss in NSW and the ACT to enable them to achieve a listening and spoken language future. We operate 5 clinical sites and coordinate our activities with a broad range of organisations both within our operating areas and across Australia.

We do not support the abolition of the ACNC for charities for two principal reasons:

1. **Transparency** – the charitable sector relies on the goodwill of the community for its operation (for instance, government grants provide only 1/3rd of the operating income that The Shepherd Centre relies on for its work). The community has the expectation that they should be able to easily verify the credentials of a charity on the web; however many have a healthy scepticism towards the self-managed websites of organisations. Government websites are critical sources of credible information, however the multitude of current sources available – generated by the diverse regulatory agencies we deal with, without any clear peak reference body – makes this very difficult.
 - **The website maintained by the ACNC is the best way to provide a single source of information on charities to the community**

2. **Regulatory burden** – the charitable sector has recently undertaken a large amount of work to transfer its information across to the ACNC. The systems to support providing ongoing information to the ACNC have been put in place and additional work would be required to undo that. In future, State regulation will hopefully be handed over to the ACNC – and as most charities operate for many decades, for those charities that operate over multiple jurisdictions (such as TSC and all of the charities we work most closely with) there is a significant future saving in administrative load which would be lost if the ACNC is repealed.
 - **Repealing the ACNC would increase the current workload on charities and forego the opportunity for future savings in workload**

Given the above points, The Shepherd Centre strongly supports the **retention** of the ACNC for the charitable sector. We are not in a position to comment whether the scope of the ACNC should be increased as planned to cover the rest of the NFP sector.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Hungerford
CEO