

**From:** [Joan Selby Smith](#)  
**To:** [DGR Inbox](#)  
**Subject:** Restrictions on how environmental groups may spend their income.  
**Date:** Thursday, 3 August 2017 11:41:41 AM

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To the panel:

I am writing this submission in response to a treasury discussion paper which proposes guidelines for how environmental charities such as ACF and Environment Victoria (EV) must spend their income if they are to continue to receive privileged tax-free status.

I am appalled that it is proposed that these charities must spend half their income on remediation works, thus grossly reducing the amount able to be devoted to advocating on behalf of the environment and the world's people. Although the environment does have its own voice, via droughts, flood, bushfires and temperature ranges, this voice is not enough for many of our policy setters to hear without the added advocacy on behalf of the environment and the world's peoples.

The planet's environment is the only reason life exists here at all. Without a stable atmosphere, favourable temperature range, and reliable climate, life as it exists today cannot continue. Indeed it is only in the last few thousand years when the climate has been relatively stable that society has progressed to its current organised state. Thus I see its preservation as the most important task facing the world today.

While sporting associations such as elite AFL clubs can receive tax-free donations (via the Australian Sports Foundation Ltd), and the exclusively political entity the Institute for Public Affairs has tax free status for donations, I find it amazing that the current federal government should even consider telling environmental organisations how they should spend their money.

My husband and I are both retired, and we donate to various charities including EV I want to see that money being spent wisely. Weeding and tree-planting are important, but primarily I want to see EV educating the public and our politicians about the need to safeguard our environment for us and future generations. Such advocacy as EV promotes improves the environment that we all enjoy, and often saves on remediation measures that might otherwise have been required.

Furthermore, our politicians, unlike corporate heads of companies do not have a duty of care to the citizens they represent; nor to future generations. In this situation, I believe it is absolutely paramount that environmental organisations continue to be able to spend their income as they see fit, without governments telling them they must be involved in physical work to improve the environment.

Yours sincerely,  
Joan Selby Smith

