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MAISHA

N & G Wetzig (Maisha) Pty Ltd - ACN 156 537 816
as Trustee for
Wetzig Maisha Fund – ABN 86 688 745 528

SUBMISSION TO TREASURY

Regarding External Conduct Standards for charities registered with
Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission

I write regarding the review of External Conduct Standards for charities registered with Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission.

This Submission is a response from two registered charities:

- 1) 'Wetzig Maisha Fund' (ABN 86 688 745 528) - a Private Ancillary Fund
- 2) **AusHEAL**, an Australian not-for-profit charity (ABN 150 512 315) that supports developmental medical work in low-and middle-income countries, particularly in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. (Maisha also supports this work and other DGR-1 charities.)

Both AusHEAL and Maisha applaud Treasury for this initiative, however I would like to submit my thoughts on behalf of these charities.

We share the overall desire to ensure that funds raised and sent overseas for development and relief aid are dealt with professionally, are well accounted for and that the reputation of 'Australian Aid' is enhanced.

BACKGROUND:

AusHEAL has a 5-member Board that deals with statutory requirements, governance and policies & procedures. AusHEAL raises funds in Australia for the 'AusHEAL Congo Project', most of which are sent to Global Development Group Item 1 OAGDS who manages the AusHEAL Congo Project according to OAGDS guidelines. The AusHEAL Congo Project partners with HEAL Africa Hospital, Goma, DRC, to provide sustainable teaching and training of medical, nursing and related staff. The mission statement of this project is *'to inspire hope in eastern Congo by empowering HEAL Africa to provide the best possible holistic healthcare'*.

AusHEAL does this by:

- a) sending annual volunteer multi-disciplinary medical and nursing teams to teach and train staff at HEAL Africa Hospital in Goma and in North Kivu Province of DRC;
- b) providing scholarships for Congolese doctors to train as specialists in other African countries;

- c) providing Short-Term Development Grants for Congolese staff to travel to another African health facility for upskilling;
- d) providing specific training in Basic Essential and Emergency Surgery in conjunction with the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa to meet the huge unmet surgical need in DRC and deal with current poor surgical outcomes that result from surgery conducted in rural DRC;
- e) providing, when required, logistical support through the sourcing and, when appropriate, provision of medical and IT equipment for the HEAL Africa Hospital.

In Australia **AusHEAL** raises funds and resources from Queensland Doctors and Nurses, Business supporters and Medical organizations and meets all Australian requirements. The majority of AusHEAL funds to be used overseas are channeled via Global Development Group. The project control for these funds and resources overseas is with Global Development Group. AusHEAL volunteer staff in the Congo assist with the preparation of reports.

It is only on occasions, for logistical reasons, that some incidental non-tax-deductible funds are sent overseas to HEAL Africa directly by our charity. Even then we aim to adhere to strict accountability standards.

Wetzig Maisha Fund is a Private Ancillary Fund established by Dr Neil Wetzig (Emeritus Senior Brisbane Surgeon) and his wife, Mrs. Gwen Wetzig. N & G Wetzig (Maisha) Pty Ltd (ACN – 156 537 816) acts as trustee for the 'Wetzig Maisha Fund'. Funds from Maisha support some of the work in DR Congo through the AusHEAL Congo Project, but also other medical training and medical advocacy activities for low-and middle-income countries via Global Development Group - as well as other Australian DGR1 status charities. We comply with all appropriate regulations regarding PAFs.

SUBMISSION:

We agree with the four External Conduct Standards without any change to the general principles.

1. A standard on the activities and control of resources (including funds);
 2. A standard on the annual review of overseas activities and record keeping;
 3. A standard on anti-fraud and anti-corruption; and
 4. A standard on the protection of vulnerable individuals.
- A. In Australia, AusHEAL raises funds and resources and meets all Australian requirements. The project control for funds and resources overseas is mainly with Global Development Group. As outlined above, it is only on occasions and for logistical reasons that some non-tax-deductible funds are sent overseas to Congo directly by our charity. Even then we adhere to strict accountability standards. Funds for use overseas from Maisha are sent via Global Development Group.

- B. AusHEAL and Maisha keep strict records. AusHEAL volunteer staff in Congo already report to Global Development Group on a six-monthly basis and to AusHEAL members and supporters annually. Annual reporting, therefore, to the ACNC will we hope not be too onerous. As all AusHEAL board members and those involved in the AusHEAL Congo Project are volunteers, we request that the ACNC have reporting mechanisms such as annual reviews and record keeping requirements that are not onerous or repetitive, so that time and effort is not diverted from essential operational and developmental activities. The same applies to Maisha.
- C. We agree with anti-fraud and anti-corruption principles. For the AusHEAL Congo Project, this is a Global Development Group activity and stringent controls are applied to sending funds to DRC.
- D. All Global Development Group comprehensive policies and procedures are adhered to with regards to protection of vulnerable individuals and AusHEAL has its own policies and procedures that are adhered to by key volunteers and short-term team members. Training in such policies and procedures is conducted for our annual multi-disciplinary teams. We particularly conform with both AusHEAL's own Child Protection Policy and that of Global Development Group. Again, as all those involved in the AusHEAL Congo Project are volunteers, and while such volunteers recognize the extreme importance of this principle of protection of vulnerable individuals, we request that the ACNC have reporting mechanisms that are not onerous or repetitive so that time and effort is not diverted from essential operational and developmental activities, many of which involve vulnerable individuals seeking medical care.

Summary Response

We agree with the four External Conduct Standards without any change to the general principles and request that reporting mechanisms be concise.

Kind regards,

Dr Neil Wetzig

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Director, AusHEAL
Executive Director, AusHEAL Congo Project
Director, Wetzig Maisha Fund

Mrs. Gwen Wetzig

Administrator, AusHEAL Congo Project
Director, Wetzig Maisha Fund