

## **Submission on the Inquiry into the REO sector and subsequent Treasury Discussion Paper on DGR status for the REO Not-for-Profit sector.**

The Environmental movement is a Not-for-Profit sector that allows people a voice to stop the destruction of essential areas of the Earth in order for the natural world to survive. Now more than ever people require Environmental Groups to have the right to challenge unnecessary industrialisation and steer Australia towards a more sustainable energy future which is desperately needed to face the threat of extreme Global Warming.

This attempt to strip Environmental Groups of their tax deductible status enjoyed by the entire Not-for-Profit sector smacks of a Dictatorship, which is not allowed in Australia. This is entirely political and not in Australia's best interests. Politicians from the far right are trying to silence a large section of the Australian people. If this is allowed to happen we are no longer living in a democracy.

To demand that Environmental Groups should spend a certain amount of their funding on remedial projects is an absolute joke. These groups already do a lot of remedial work using volunteer labour. How about saying to the Churches that they should spend a certain amount of their money holding independent enquiries into why so many of their employees have committed sexual abuse, or covered it up, and figure out ways to stop it if they want to continue benefiting from paying no tax at all? Or say to the Welfare Groups you have to spend a certain amount of your money on fixing the problems of unemployment, domestic violence, homelessness and youth suicide. Do they fix the problems, no I think they sustain people as best they can and lobby to have the problems fixed. This is what Environmental Groups do, they lobby to have problems fixed and then it is up to the Australian people who they vote in or out of Government.

Advocacy is a fundamental purpose of Not-for-Profit organisations. They advocate on behalf of people who cannot do it for themselves just as the Environmental sector does so for the environment which cannot advocate for itself, as well they advocate for their members and contributors. Advocacy has been recognised by the High Court of Australia as essential in the work of NFP's to ensure "representative and responsible government", surely a cornerstone of democracy. Advocacy has been included in the Charities Act 2013 after the High Court decision in 2010 (*AidWatch Inc v Commissioner of Taxation*).

If the Government thinks it can silence Environmental Groups from standing up to rampant greed and the wanton destruction of Australia's natural resources by this cynical exercise, whose purpose is to damage the Environment movement economically and practically with additional administrative requirements as well as directing their activities, then maybe they should think again! This move will outrage a large section of the community due to its obvious **discrimination** and attempts to destroy Environmental activism. This could be seen as vested interests lobbying Government and Government itself having a vested interest in supporting their demands. Society does not move forward without activists to lead the way.

The Government's actions are very transparent; they are listening to the advocacy of vested interests who donate large amounts of money to Liberal\LNP coffers. Who is running this country, the Government or the big Miners? How much do they receive in subsidies and tax offsets? How many jobs is the Adani mine really going to generate, and I mean sustainable jobs?

The price of renewable technology is decreasing rapidly to the point where it is now cheaper than producing coal. The demand for coal is falling. Other countries, China, India to name two are transitioning quickly to renewable energy. Scotland can power herself with renewables. France is moving in that direction and the list goes on. The Australia Government however is being corrupted by vested interests and refuses to take seriously the threat of annihilation from Global Heating and continues to support the mining lobby at the expense of our Great Barrier Reef, 70,000 tourism jobs that rely on the health of the reef, sustainable water for farming communities that rely on the Great Artesian Basin, not to mention the health and well being of Australia's population and the wider world population. This is criminal beyond belief.

Regards

Ms Yoona Welling