



Citipointe is a church in Brisbane, Queensland set on nearly 100 acres of land with a membership of approximately 5000 people. We employ approximately 160 staff members (including part-time staff) and have, as a significant part of our ministry, a Prep to Year 12 school (Christian Outreach College Brisbane) with a student body of approximately 1650 (including our International College students) and employing about 240 staff.

Apart from the obvious provision of worship services (10 every weekend), Citipointe also provides services in areas defined by the Productivity Commission as:

Culture and Recreation: Mansfield Eagles Soccer Club

Health: counselling services

Social Services: playgroups, youth groups (including a skate bowl complex visited by professional skaters and hosting skate competitions for local youth), seniors group (visiting nursing homes, organising field trips, social gatherings and training for senior aged people), budgeting and marriage seminars, an opportunity (2nd hand) shop, and integration assistance for new arrivals to Australia, especially South Africans and Chinese. This includes conversational English speaking classes.

Internationally we have started an after-care facility in Cambodia for young girls involved in or at risk of trafficking. We also partner with other agencies in providing educational facilities (classrooms, teachers, equipment), micro-loans and sanitation for poverty stricken villages in Vanuatu; welfare and education for abandoned children in China; and feeding programs for children in poverty in Nepal.

We also receive some government assistance for some of our social services such as:

- Emergency Relief – food vouchers, and financial assistance for the relief of those in distress
- Red Frogs Australia Chaplaincy Network
 - training over 30 000 year 11 and 12 students in safe partying options

- vital support for approximately 70 000 end of year “schoolies” celebrating in 17 locations around Australia by over 1300 volunteers assisting schoolies with a myriad of issues from anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse to alleged sexual assault and suicide ideation. These calls for assistance usually come through our 24 hour 1300 hotline that received 5900 calls over the 2008 schoolies week celebrations.
- Serving over 40 000 students in O-Week university parties by providing party support (hydration stations, chill out zones, free food, water etc), alternatives to alcoholic abusive activities, student leadership training and weekly social events.

The entities we currently manage that have government approved financial arrangements are:

Citipointe Foundation (DGR)
 School Building Fund (DGR)
 Brisbane South Community Care (PBI)

(Issues Paper p. 26)

Our organisation is very volunteer intensive. Within our staff we have those who

- a) Are self supported and volunteer full-time or part-time
- b) Take part-time jobs and volunteer part-time
- c) Work part-time for us and also have external part-time jobs (at significantly higher rates than what we are able to pay)
- d) Work full-time for us and have left jobs of significantly higher salary because they believe in the cause we represent.

Suggestions for how the Government could help NFPs like ours attract and retain skilled and competent workers could be:

1. Expand the PBI rules to other NFP organisations to allow those on lesser wages to receive fringe benefits
2. Allow tax exemption on all income generated by the NFP organisation where it is retained and applied within the NFP framework

(Issues Paper p.23)

Suggestions for how the Government could improve measurement of impact of NFPs

1. Record volunteer hours. A reporting system could be set up (annually would be sufficient, perhaps as part of the lodgement of the financials for audit) for organisations to give feedback on time people have volunteered to the organisation. The report could suggest areas / categories to look at and ask for a simple tabulated response.
2. Report in parliament annually a “figure” that estimates the dollar value that volunteerism contributes to the economy of our nation or state. This would be calculated from a report of the nature suggested above.

(Issues Paper pp.27,31)

Suggestions on how institutional arrangements and regulations can be improved with respect to financing options.

1. Have an option for a DGR to be built around the social impact functions of an organisation and not always the other way around. That is, where currently a NFP has to search for an “appropriate” DGR that covers as much of their social function as possible, instead have an office in government that a NFP can approach and “design” a DGR for them based upon pre-established criteria by the government.
2. Remove GST on fundraising income and make them exempt like donations.
3. Remove specific grant accountability where a NFP organisation is audited as a whole on an annual basis. Accept the audited accounts as proof of expenditure along the lines with a declaration by the directors and signed off by auditors. This would replace specific acquittals as currently required.

(Issues Paper p.32)

Suggestions on representation of smaller NFP organisations (in order to avoid potential ‘leader organisation’ bias)

If the Government provides the administration, but allows smaller NFPs to form co-operatives or associations, this may help the Government deliver information, training and support to NFPs and perhaps enable the Government to obtain more statistical data on service outcomes and effectiveness.

(Issues Paper p.41)

Significant trends and developments that have impacted upon NFP sector.

1. It is obvious that the current economic climate is a factor in NFP organisations continuing to provide services. Often, the first financial cutback in many businesses, whose primary responsibility is to their shareholder, is their charitable giving. Also, individuals will reduce their “non-essential” spending. For many, this represents donations and support of NFP organisations.

With this in mind, the Government can't afford to have a similar mentality. The social flow-on effect would be enormous if NFP organisations were to pull back their efforts because of significantly reduced income streams.

2. Immigration has also had a significant impact on the services we deliver and the way in which we deliver them. Our focus on South African and Chinese immigrants particularly have required us to extend the range of services we provide (e.g. a Mandarin speaking worship service) and changed the points of celebration in our community. This year alone we will have conducted two Braais (South African for 'gathering'), an Asian, Pacific Islands and European gathering in an effort to assist new arrivals from each of these regions in feeling connected to locals.
3. The current mindset of younger people entering the workforce has also encouraged us to provide more flexible working arrangements as they volunteer or work for us. They are looking for options such as telecommuting and working hours that demonstrate a commitment to relate to the social group they are connecting with rather than to an institutional 8am – 5pm arrangement. They are more motivated by the cause than by any real need for job security or organisational loyalty. This presents us a challenge in both accommodating these workers, but also being prepared for change in their focus.
4. The labour market has also contributed to the above, especially with hiring. With the recent historic low unemployment it has been increasingly difficult to find and attract the skill set we require. And those we do hire are able to make significant demands upon us financially and organisationally as we seek to accommodate their requests to the best of our ability in order to retain them.