

Contribution to the Not for Profit Sector
Productivity Commission

Emailed to nfp@pc.gov.au

The Older Women's Network NSW commends the Federal Government's initiative to review the contribution of the Not-for-Profit-Sector with the objective of ensuring the economic and social participation of all Australians.

The Older Women's Network is a Not-for-Profit and Non Government Organisation committed to promoting the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women. The objectives of the organisation include:

- recognising and utilising the skills of older women and assist them to develop specific skills and recognition of their work and contribution to society
- advancing the interests of older women through research, advocacy, lobbying and networking
- opposing ageism, sexism and racism and address issues of discrimination against older women
- promoting the participation of older women in the workforce.

Our focus on older women recognises that the experience of ageing by women is different to that of men. The different forms of discrimination experienced by younger women contributes to varying degrees of disadvantage and social exclusion in the lives of older women.

The Older Women's Network has national representation and a membership of approximately three thousand nationally with many other women participating in programs organised by OWN at State level. Our membership is representative of a wide age range of women from their mid forties.

The focus of the organisation means that the Older Women's Network is unique but no less important than it was more than twenty years ago when it began. It's relevance continues and, indeed, increases with the ageing of Australia's population and while researchers and policy developers continue to homogenise society so that it appears to be both ageless and sexless.

Opportunities for carrying out much needed research in these circumstances would be enhanced if the Older Women's Network, which may be identified as having a 'community-purpose' (Productivity Commission Draft Report 2009: xvii) qualified for philanthropic contributions.

Legal advice obtained by the Older Women's Network NSW indicates that even substantial changes to the constitution may not result in the successful registration of the organisation as a Charity.

We note Draft Recommendation 6.3