

CONTRIBUTION OF THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

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Comments

The Disabled Motorists Association (DMA) supports the recommendation of a 'one-stop shop' to consolidate Commonwealth regulatory oversight of the not-for-profit sector.

Streamlined, consistent support on a national basis as proposed in the recommendations is urgently needed by the not-for-profit sector.

Providing a consistent, national regulatory facility is an important step forward. Too often the efforts of not-for-profit groups are hampered by the maze of fragmented sources of funding, varying eligibility criteria, taxation and regulatory and governance requirements. The emerging area of opportunity offered by social enterprise activities is especially in need of support and should be encouraged as more traditional forms of support such as grants and bequests become less accessible. Improved clarity of financial reporting and taxation will be critical to the success and viability of these activities.

The not-for-profit sector deserves recognition and support for its unique capacity to nurture innovative activities and enterprises to address needs in the community and in particular, to be motivated by a commitment to meeting the need.

The needs-based motivation of not-for-profit organizations gives them a depth and strength to their commitment to keep going despite the difficulties, so different from many for-profit enterprises for which the overriding consideration is the capacity to make a profit within a pre-determined timeframe. The 'need, not greed' philosophy of 'nfps' gives them a commitment to long-term effort, which needs to be recognized and factored in to the regulatory and funding framework.

It is evident that the not-for-profit organisation managing and administering an organisation solely by volunteers - and often by a Board of Directors and Company Secretary as a Company Limited by Guarantee - is seriously disadvantaged in accessing the regulatory funding rounds. Where paid staff are providing the service the nfp can provide reliable evidence to the staff and submissions can be made with access and equity. In many instances the nfp is a working unit of volunteers (Directors, management and administration personnel) with physical disabilities and mobility issues, which place extra difficulty on the organisation in working to tight timelines and gaining rapid access to information to meet submission deadlines.

The DMA is an example of this commitment to need, springing from the self-help efforts of motorists with disabilities over many years and in changing motoring environments to source information, support, equipment and equality of opportunity with non-disabled motorists, in order to achieve the mobility, access to the community and improved quality of life that driving and access to personal transport provides. For people with disabilities

motoring goes well beyond a personal lifestyle choice to being an important lifeline and key to independence.

The Disabled Motorists Association works on a national level to assist motorists with disabilities to achieve independence through motoring. The Association sees so often the inconsistencies in access to support for motorists with disabilities arising from the various state and local government regulatory environments that affect such matters as driving conditions, equipment, vehicle modification requirements and subsidies, and attempts to deal with the challenges of providing advocacy and support in such a varying environment.

National consistency in the motoring environment is a key goal for the Disabled Motorists Association; a national regulatory structure with provision for the special nature of the not for-profit sector, will be a key support in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations such as the Disabled Motorists Association.