

## **SILENCING AUSTRALIANS: THE RESULT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED DONATIONS BAN**

Australian charities are united in opposing the Federal Government's attempt to undermine the benefits many Australians receive from philanthropy and to silence their voices.

Among a range of worrying impacts, the proposed legislation would limit funding for life-saving medical research; access to education; the voice and rights of Indigenous Australians; and the ability to sustain and protect our shared natural environment.

Unless common sense prevails, legislation targeting foreign donations to political parties will ban charities that receive international philanthropy from being able to advocate for Australians; for those in need in our region; and on global issues which Australians care about.

There is a categorical difference between donations to political parties and philanthropy for charitable purposes and it would damage the functioning of our democracy if there is failure to recognise this.

### **The public is behind charities**

The Federal Government's proposed ban on charities receiving overseas donations is out of step with public opinion.

Australians overwhelmingly (76%) support charities having a public voice on issues they were established to address and a majority (55%) believe that imposing restrictions on the ability of charities to advocate would result in a silencing of Australians and undermining our democratic principles.

### **International philanthropy supports Australian giving**

International philanthropy to Australia boosts the impact of domestic giving in alleviating hardship, gives voice to those who may otherwise be ignored, and contributes to a brighter future for many Australians.

This is a time in which we should be working together to maximise international philanthropy in Australia, not restrict or ban it.

### **Advocacy is vital for addressing the causes of social and environmental challenges**

Advocacy by charities is often the only way people can be heard and hold politicians to account for decisions that impact their lives.

It is a legitimate and legal activity, crucial in tackling the causes of social and environmental challenges, rather than just their symptoms. Advocacy has made Australia a better and fairer place to live.

Together, Australian charities call on the parliament to exempt registered charities from this legislation; to preserve international philanthropy for Australia, and; to protect charities' ability to stand up for the interests of communities and the issues they care about.

### **ENDS**

### **Media Contact**

For further information, contact Tim Watkin at [media@acfid.asn.au](mailto:media@acfid.asn.au) or on 0401 721 064.

AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES RELEASE JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT  
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\*Signatories to the statement

### About Essential Polling Results

Polling, conducted by Essential Research, was conducted online from 17-20 November 2017, with a sample size of 1,025 nationally.

Question / Statement	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Don't Know
Charities should have a public voice on the issues they have been established to address.	76%	10%	14%
Restricting advocacy by charities risks silencing the voice of Australian communities, and hindering the operation of our democracy.	55%	20%	25%

### Further Information

[Charities and International Philanthropy](#) – Sector position paper developed by Philanthropy Australia, the Community Council for Australia and the Australian Council for International Development.