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Submission to Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Reform Opportunities Discussion Paper

The McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth welcomes the opportunity to contribute to discussion on potential reforms to the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) tax arrangements.

The McCusker Centre is located within Curtin University and is committed to reducing harms from alcohol among young people. The Centre has funding connections to the McCusker Charitable Foundation and the Curtin University of Technology Foundation which are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and have DGR status. The work of the McCusker Centre is directed toward raising awareness of the magnitude of alcohol-related harms among young people, evidence-based approaches we know can work to reduce harm, other options and the need to act without delay.

The McCusker Centre supports the submission made by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. While we recognise the need for reform and support sensible measures to consolidate the DGR processes and remove complexities, we have significant concerns about proposals outlined in the discussion paper that appear to target advocacy activities by charities. We will, therefore, focus our brief comment to Treasury on advocacy activities by charities.

Advocacy conducted by charities is a legitimate, important and valued element of parliamentary democracy. Advocacy contributes to improving social causes and taking action on issues of concern to the community. It is vital that charities are able to contribute to public debate on social issues, particularly in fields where there is strong opposition to regulation from large, multinational corporate organisations, who tend to be far better resourced.

The proposal outlined in the discussion paper that the ACNC require additional information from all registered charities about their advocacy activities is, therefore, of significant concern to the McCusker Centre. This proposal would cause a new and unnecessary burden on charities and significantly limit their advocacy efforts.

Given the importance of advocacy activities to charities' efforts to progress action on social issues and improve community outcomes, we strongly urge the Treasury against the advocacy proposals outlined in the discussion paper.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Stafford

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