

Dear Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers

We write to thank you for your support of charities and not-for-profit organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures you have put in place have ensured thousands of charities across Australia have remained viable, thousands more charity workers have been able to keep their jobs, and critical services have been able to respond to existing and emerging community needs.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our proposals and responding in a way that has been supportive of the charities and not-for-profit sector through these unprecedented times.

We know charities will face a much tougher time over the next year and beyond. Fundraising revenue alone is set to drop over 20% (based on post Global Financial Crisis patterns of giving). The increased need will stretch far beyond the end of COVID-19, with a new cohort of vulnerable and at-risk people joining those already challenged amongst us. Some charities will struggle to survive even with the support that has been provided to date, many more will have to close programs and services, and consider winding up.

There are several measures that need to be addressed across Federal and State jurisdictions to ensure charities can continue to serve their communities and provide much needed services. The measures we are proposing will promote giving, reduce red tape, enable access to new capital and support increased productivity. These measures will enable charities - employing 1.3 million people and engaging over 3.5 million volunteers - to be much better positioned to support their communities, especially those most in need in the post COVID-19 recovery. Key measures include:

- providing a ramp rather than a cliff as JobKeeper ends
- encouraging giving by providing 150% tax deductibility for donations to charities
- making it possible for charities to establish fundraising initiatives more quickly by removing dysfunctional red tape fundraising regulations and creating a one stop registration process
- subject to strong performance, ensuring greater certainty in government contracts by locking in existing payments and prolonging contracts
- allowing charities and not-for-profits to roll over unspent funds where the underspend is related to reduced activity during the COVID-19 pandemic
- making it possible for volunteers to be registered more quickly by reducing red tape and creating a one stop registration process
- supporting initiatives to unlock new sources of capital for charities including underwriting medium-term loans schemes and impact investment options
- providing transformational funding in critical areas such as information technology, energy efficiency, collaboration, measurement of impact, and other productivity focused areas
- supporting more research into the issues impacting on the charities sector.

We know and appreciate that you are already considering a number of these measures.

Finally, as a group of charity leaders, we strongly suggest that one clear principle be kept in mind in relation to questions about eligibility and where we draw the line for both government and community support. Those with the highest need should be given priority in accessing services.



Open letter to Australian Governments 15th of June 2020

This needs-based approach applies in critical areas such as health, housing, welfare, etc. As a principle it minimises the impact of bias or discrimination ensuring those who most need support receive it.

For charities, whether someone is an international student on a temporary Visa, a student from regional Australia, an Indigenous person, young carer, or older disabled person, we seek to serve based on need.

One of the pleasing features of Australia's response has been a sense that we are all in this crisis together. However, this sense is undermined when the lines of eligibility for support programs seem to discriminate against certain groups in our communities. We know that good programs - government and non-government - frame eligibility based on need and allow for variations within communities. This approach will ensure fewer people are left behind as we begin the recovery process.

Our sector knows we have a lot of work to do. We are constantly aware of the need to look to our own practices and seek to maximise our impact, especially as we enter the post COVID-19 period.

Charities large and small are a critical part of Australia's economic and social infrastructure. You have recognised this role in some of the measures put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the next 12 months and beyond, charities and not-for-profits want to be part of the solution, part of rebuilding our communities and boosting our economy.

As you frame policies in critical areas like employment and productivity, charities are keen and ready to be included in policy discussions and to contribute to the development and design of new initiatives. As a major Australian employer group, we are interested in supporting workplace flexibility. Similarly, in other major policy areas including information technology reforms, energy and other infrastructure, charities are eager to be part of discussions about improving productivity.

We are available at any time to discuss any of the issues or measures raised in this letter – please contact the Charities Crisis Cabinet secretary David Crosbie on 0419624420.

We hope you will continue to acknowledge our role and support us in our work to strengthen Australian communities through this important post COVID-19 recovery.

Yours sincerely

(Signed)

Rev Tim Costello AO
Co- Chair, Charities Crisis Cabinet
15th of June 2020

(Signed)

Ms Susan Pascoe
Co- Chair, Charities Crisis Cabinet
15th of June 2020

Charities Crisis Cabinet – Membership

Name	Organisation	Role / knowledge area
Rev Tim Costello	Chair, Community Council for Australia	Co-Chair
Susan Pascoe	Chair, Community Directors Council	Co-Chair
David Crosbie	CEO, Community Council for Australia	Secretary
Marc Purcell	CEO, Australian Council for International Development	International development
Bethwyn Serow	Executive Director, Australian Major Performing Arts Groups	The arts
Conny Lenneberg	Executive Director, Brotherhood of St Laurence	Social policy/youth
Dr Ursula Stephens	CEO, Catholic Social Services Aust.	Social services
Prof Kristy Muir	CEO, Centre for Social Impact	Research / impact / training
Jon Bisset	CEO, Community Broadcasting Association Australia	Community radio
David Spriggs	Group CEO, Infoxchange and Connecting Up	On-line and digital economy
Sue Woodward	Director Not for Profit Law, Justice Connect	Legal and governance
Claire Robbs	CEO, Life Without Barriers	Disability
Denis Moriarty	Group Managing Director, Our Community	Smaller charities
Ronni Kahn	CEO, OzHarvest	Emergency services
Sarah Davies	CEO, Philanthropy Australia	Philanthropy
Karen Mahlab	Founder and CEO, Pro Bono Australia	Media and communications
Paul Ronalds	CEO, Save the Children	Children
Violet Roumeliotis	CEO, Settlement Services International	Migrants and refugees
Lisa O'Brien	CEO, Smith Family	Education
Mark Pearce	A/CEO, Volunteering Australia	Volunteers
Dermot O'Gorman	CEO, WWF	Environment