

6 December 2024

Dear Senator

## **National Blueprint for the Australian Not-for-Profit Sector**

We write to you as the Not-for-Profit Members of the [Blueprint Expert Reference Group \(BERG\)](#), to seek your support for the National Blueprint for the Australian Not-for-Profit Sector in Australia.

The Federal Government tasked the BERG, an independent reference group, with developing the Blueprint. After a two-year developmental process, including wide public consultations and engagement, [the Blueprint is now publicly available here](#). It was officially handed to the Federal Government for its consideration and response on Wednesday 27 November 2024.

We are incredibly proud of what the Blueprint represents for our sector. While requested by the Federal Government, the Blueprint itself belongs to the NFP Sector, having been developed with, for and by NFP organisations across the sector. It sets out an independent, non-partisan roadmap for reform.

The Blueprint recognises that the Not-for-Profit Sector is a major national contributor to Australia's cohesion, prosperity and wellbeing. Charities are frontline responders when we experience crises and disasters, like the catastrophic bushfires in 2019/20 and the Covid-19 pandemic. In everyday life, we help people in communities stay connected to each other, including those experiencing isolation, loneliness or trauma. We are a trusted and genuine voice in national debates to improve public policy, faithfully representing millions of people across the country. Given Australia's current levels of hardship, and people's uncertainty about their future, this sector is more important than at any time in recent memory.

Charities alone made a conservatively estimated economic contribution of \$156 billion in 2023, being approximately 4.8% of the gross value added in the Australian economy. One in ten working age people living in Australia are employed by a charity (a total of 1.47 million people), which equates to the mining, manufacturing and agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors combined. The sector is supported by 3.2 million volunteers, contributing 320 million unpaid hours, valued at \$13.8 billion.

The Blueprint sets out a 10-year vision to ensure Australia has a strong and thriving sector that continues to support people, communities and the environment. It contains 18 major initiatives for reform, organised across three strategic pillars:

**Pillar One:** An enabling operational and regulatory environment for the NFP sector to thrive;

**Pillar Two:** A people-led and purpose driven NFP Sector; and

**Pillar Three:** An adaptive and dynamic forward-focused NFP Sector.

Within the 18 initiatives, immediate and pressing sector priorities comprise the following:

- Broadening and simplifying the deductible gift recipient (DGR) system (Initiative 2);
- Supporting NFP advocacy and the work of peak bodies (Initiative 3);
- Improving the financial sustainability of the NFP Sector, including appropriate indexation and promoting the benefits of full cost funding (Initiative 4);
- Actively supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and community control (Initiative 8); and
- Enabling the NFP sector to contribute to and benefit from digital transformation, including investment in the sector's digital capability (Initiative 13).

Further detail on the Blueprint and its implementation can be found in the attached synopsis. On Tuesday 10 December, ACOSS is also [hosting a public webinar with Professor Jo Barraket AM](#), one of the Expert Advisors to the BERG, which you or your staff are welcome to attend.

The BERG want to see swift action on the Blueprint, as well as wide parliamentary support for its recommendations. Therefore, we are calling on the Federal Government to issue a detailed, written, official response to the Blueprint and each of its initiatives, by 31 March 2025. We expect this response to include a proposed timeframe for implementation, including funding for ongoing activities.

Further, as part of its more fulsome response, the government must start implementing process key initiatives in Pillar 1, as a way to practically demonstrate its good faith and support of the Blueprint. As outlined above, the Blueprint is clear that the government must invest more significantly and sustainably in the NFP Sector.

The Federal Government has previously committed to work in partnership with the community services sector. BERG expects the government to extend this level of commitment to the NFP more broadly in implementation.

We are also calling on all sitting members in the Federal Parliament to review and support the Blueprint, commit to its goals, and assist in its implementation where possible.

We would greatly welcome your support of the Blueprint. Members of the BERG are willing to meet with you and your office and provide a briefing on how the Blueprint will benefit communities across the country.

Please send any requests to meet with the BERG to Robert Sturrock, Program Director Community Services, at the Australian Council of Social Service, [robert@acoss.org.au](mailto:robert@acoss.org.au).

Yours faithfully



**Matt Gardiner**, CEO, 54 reasons



**Dr Cassandra Goldie AO**, CEO,  
Australian Council of Social Service



**Kasy Chambers**, Executive Director,  
Anglicare Australia



**Catherine Liddle**, CEO, SNAICC –  
National Voice for our Children



**Toby oConnor**, CEO, St Vincent de Paul  
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**Mary Ann Baquero Geronimo**, CEO,  
Federation of Ethnic Communities'  
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**Ian Hamm**, Chair of the Board of  
Directors, First Nations Foundation



**Jeff Smith**, CEO, Disability Advocacy  
Network Australia

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**Mark Pearce**, CEO, Volunteering  
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