

SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT CHARITIES BILL 2003

Organisation: Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW

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Consultation on the Definition of Charity
The Board of Taxation
C/- The Treasury
Langton Crescent
Parkes ACT

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The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW is a peak organisation of immigrant and refugee women. Our main purpose is to advocate and respond to the needs and issues of immigrant and refugee women. We undertake the following services: policy research, advocacy, resourcing immigrant and refugee women's organisations, service delivery provision for women in domestic violence, support for women in search of employment, general family support activities and skills training.

We have participated in the consultations on the Draft Charities Bill 2003 organised by the NSW Council on Social Services and the Refugee Council of Australia. In those consultations we have made verbal contributions, which were included in the proceedings noted by the representatives of the Board of Taxation. Below outlines the major concern of our organisation on -

The Core Definition of Charity

Comment:

- The draft definition is very narrow to the effect that it excludes the fundamental aspect of eliminating poverty and dependence of service recipients on hand-down type of services. This will reinforce an incorrect notion of service delivery that makes service recipients welfare dependent instead of self-reliant.
- The social research being undertaken by peak body non-government organisations like ACOSS (Australian Council of Social Services) and the

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW is similar to research such as that into cancer and other illnesses. Cancer research is being funded by many organisations with charitable status, especially trust and foundations connected to the corporate business sector. Results of research activities are being used for lobbying government agencies to put in place policies and programs for the prevention of cancer and to provide support for people with cancer. The social ills of the Australian society such as poverty are in fact social cancers and are fundamental issues that need to be studied. These affect the well-being of our nation and our people.

It is therefore imperative that social research and advocacy be included in the definition of charity that will be formulated in the Charities Bill 2003.

Recommendation: The core definition of charity must include the work being done by those organisations that address the long-term solution to the root causes and consequences of poverty. In this framework, the legislative definition of charity in the Charities Bill 2003 must include organisations that undertake social policy research and advocacy on the questions of roots and impacts of poverty, isolation and marginalisation in Australia.

It is our position that social policy research and advocacy are twin tasks that are essential elements in any social development undertaking. The Charities Bill 2003 has to integrate this in its definition of charity.

The Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW also endorses the submission of the Australian Council for Social Services on the Draft Charities Bill 2003.

Signed:
Jane Brock
A/G Executive Officer