

## Remove gag clauses legislation welcomed!

Today the Finance Minister Penny Wong will introduce into the Senate a motion banning gag clauses in all Federal government contracts with the not-for-profit sector.

According to Rev Tim Costello, Chair of the Community Council for Australia (CCA) and CEO of World Vision, *'this is a welcome move that acknowledges the important role of charities and not-for-profit organisations in our communities. Civil society is at its best when the voice of the not-for-profit sector can be heard loud and clear. The removal of gag clauses is a critical part of the reform process, and one charities and not-for-profits will strongly welcome.'*

Rev Costello was joined in his support for the measure by leaders across the not-for-profit sector.

According to David Crosbie, CEO of CCA, *'it is indefensible to impose conditions on not-for-profit organisations that limit their capacity to pursue their work. Not-for-profits must be able to advocate for improvements in our lives and our communities. The removal of gag clauses from all Commonwealth contracts is one good measure of the relationship between governments and the not-for-profit sector. It is a measure we would expect all governments and all political parties to endorse. It is a measure of respect.'*

Others to offer support included Toby Hall, CEO of Mission Australia; Dr Lisa O'Brien, CEO of the Smith Family; Jayne Meyer-Tucker, CEO of Good Beginnings; and Dr Stephen Judd, CEO of Hammond Care. All these leaders emphasized the importance of an independent not-for-profit sector.

The not-for-profit sector currently employs around one million Australians and turns over almost \$100 billion annually making it one of the most economically significant sectors in Australia.

The new legislation banning gag clauses reinforces core statements within the National Compact agreement signed by the Federal government and leading not-for-profit organisations. It also highlights concerns about the introduction of gag clauses in Queensland.

Mr Crosbie said, **'CCA will always strongly reject politically motivated government contractual control over the independent operations of charities and not-for-profit organisations.'**

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