



THE HON DR ANDREW LEIGH MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR COMPETITION, CHARITIES AND TREASURY
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

Ref: MC24-011541

Ms Jenny Macaffer
Chief Executive Officer
Adult Learning Australia
45 Moreland Street
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

Dear Ms Macaffer 

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 July 2024, concerning the Charities Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

The Government greatly appreciates the important contribution made to our community by not-for-profit organisations such as Adult Learning Australia, and we understand that advocacy is an important way that charities work to change Australia for the better.

Under the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison Governments, Labor joined the charity sector to oppose a series of challenges to charities' right to advocate for their purpose. That period saw a rolling war on charities, which led to the formation of the "Hands Off Our Charities" alliance.

After the 2022 election, one of my first priorities in taking responsibility for charities in government was to reassure the sector that gag clauses would no longer be allowed in government contracts, and to welcome the role of charities in advocating for better policies. We continue to celebrate the important role of non-government voices in policy development and public discourse.

A mark of the Australian Government's changed relationship with the sector was when "Hands Off Our Charities" was renamed the "Stronger Charities Alliance".

But the charities sector tells us there's more to do and we are listening. Recently, I joined the Stronger Charities Alliance, with representatives from Oxfam, Baptist Care, ACFID, St Vincent de Paul Society and ACOSS, at an event to launch a proposed bill the Stronger Charities Alliance has developed to strengthen the standing of Australian charity advocacy.

In accepting a copy of the proposed bill, I made a promise to consider what part it could play in the government's work to double giving and boost capacity in the charity sector.


I understand the proposed amendment seeks to enhance protections for charitable advocacy and broaden transparency within the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.

I will always listen closely to the views of charitable organisations in informing any reforms to the *Charities Act 2013* and acknowledge your support of the Stronger Charities Alliance's proposed legislative amendments.

The government's response to the Productivity Commission's *Future Foundations of Giving* report and to the Not-for-Profit Sector Led Blueprint will provide an opportunity to consider how best to support the vital role of charitable advocacy.

Thank you again for your letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Leigh', is written over a printed name.

Andrew Leigh