



19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

[environment.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:environment.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Submission to House of Representative Standing Committee on the Environment  
Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations May 2015**

Cancer Council NSW is a not-for-profit organisation that is 97% community funded. We work across every aspect of cancer including research, prevention, information and support and advocacy. Our advocacy role aims to ensure that 'there is increased funding for care and treatment; that new legislation is introduced that protects people from known cancer risks; and that services are provided that ease the burden for cancer patients and their carers'.<sup>1</sup> Over the last decade Cancer Council NSW's advocacy has resulted in many positive policy changes such as: smoke-free legislation; better funding for patient transport; banning solariums; upgrading sun protection policies for schools and an end to chemotherapy co-payments. Our advocacy community is now greater than 13,500 people in NSW who know that community advocacy plays an important role in influencing government policy. Cancer Council NSW's role in supporting the community to advocate for cancer control is critical to achieve our goal of reducing deaths from cancer by 50% over the next 20 years.

As a charitable organisation Cancer Council NSW accesses tax-deductible donations from the community. We are transparent in reporting on what we have done with the community's money for the year so that those who have given a donation know we are using it for the purpose intended. An easily accessible summary is included on Cancer Council NSW's website and a link to more detailed information in our Annual Report and Financial report is also provided.<sup>2</sup>

Cancer Council NSW understands the importance of advocating for the environment in relation to cancer control. The International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC), a

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<sup>1</sup> Cancer Council NSW Strategic Intent 2014-2018. Available at <http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Strategic-Intent-2014-2018-A5-brochure.pdf>

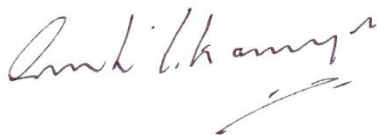
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/annualreport2014/>

cancer agency of the World Health Organisation (WHO), has classified air pollution and other environmental factors as carcinogens and causes of cancer deaths. As a member of the Social Determinants of Health Alliance, Cancer Council NSW recognises that the health of the environment is critical in determining the population's cancer risks and outcomes. In March 2013 the Senate Community Affairs Committee responded to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. The content of the Committee's report clearly indicated that the Australian Government also understands this link. To have the best chance to achieve Cancer Council NSW's goal of reducing deaths from cancer by 50% over the next 20 years, advocacy for the environment must continue.

The purpose of advocacy is recognised in the Charities Act 2013 (Cth) (Section 12(l)). This Act indicates that an advocacy organisation can be defined as having a charitable purpose if their advocacy relates to a recognised charitable purpose, one of which may be advancing the environment. The High Court of Australia has also identified the public benefit of advocacy and its contribution to public discussion. It is important that opportunities for public discussion are supported as it is a vital component of the system of a representative government that is mandated in the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. In short it contributes to maintaining a healthy democracy in Australia. Like all non-government organisations (NGOs) that advocate for their outcomes, the contribution made by environmental organisations enriches public debate in Australia and contributes to good policy-making.

Cancer Council NSW asks that the Committee give careful consideration before making any recommendation that would have the effect of curtailing the lawful activities of environmental groups (by, for example, imposing conditions on Deductible Gift Recipient status that limits advocacy). This right of all NGOs to advocate without fear for their charitable or taxation endorsements should be preserved.

Yours sincerely



Jim L'Estrange  
Chief Executive Officer