

**REPORT TO
THE PRIME MINISTER'S
COMMUNITY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP**

***THE PROTOCOL:
Managing Relations with
NGOs***

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1. Executive Summary

This study examines how the maintenance of relationships between Australian Government Departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) is a growing responsibility of government. This phenomenon is part of a world-wide trend, and there are a number of reasons for it occurring, including the desire for greater community and stakeholder participation in the decision-making processes of government.

However, although extensive efforts have been made by Departments to engage with NGOs, there is little transparency about the nature of Department/NGO relationships. Transparency is important for a number of reasons. In many of their relationships with Departments, NGOs are granted privileges that are not available to members of the public. These privileges are primarily through the receipt of funding and the gaining of access. The benefits that NGOs receive in this way should be publicly disclosed, in the same way and for the same reasons as are commercial contracts between Departments and external bodies. Public disclosure of Department/NGO relationships will improve the quality of the consultation process and will encourage a review of the effectiveness of such relationships, which is something that rarely occurs.

This study demonstrates that currently little information about Department/NGO relationships is publicly disclosed. Although in a number of cases useful information is provided by Departments, for the most part what is revealed is done on a basis which is haphazard and not consistent. There is, it seems, no government-wide awareness of the need for transparency, and consequently a lack of commitment to transparency in the relationship.

This study recommends that a system of public disclosure and reporting—that is, a protocol—about Department/NGO relationships be implemented.

2. Introduction

In April 2003, the Prime Minister's Business Community Partnership (the Partnership) considered a proposal from the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to undertake a study (the study) of the relationship between Australian Government Departments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and develop a 'trial protocol' for public disclosure of NGO standing with Government.

At the recommendation of the Partnership, the Department of Family and Community Services contracted the IPA to undertake the study.

The objectives of a protocol would be to make information about NGOs that have significant relationships with Government publicly accessible and to increase Government and public awareness of the relationships between NGOs and Government.

The outcomes of the study will assist the Australian Government in managing its relationships with NGOs.

3. Methodology

In May 2003, the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services wrote to the Secretaries of selected Australian Government Departments seeking the co-operation of their Department in the study. The selected Departments were chosen on the basis that they undertook a representative range of activities with NGOs. Seven Departments and one agency agreed to participate in the study. These were:

- Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
- Department of the Environment and Heritage
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- AusAID

Participation in the project required Departments to provide details about their relationships with NGOs.

In addition, information about the management of the taxation status of charities was provided by the Australian Taxation Office. This discussion was designed to inform the project of the management of data on the ATO website. In addition, notice was taken of the data held by the Department of Finance on grants made to NGOs.

3.1 Interviews with participating departments

Interviews were conducted during July 2003 by Dr Johns and Mr Roskam with officers from each of the participating Departments. Interviews with Department officers were structured around the following questions:

- What information are NGOs required to provide to your Department before they are contracted and/or consulted?
- Does the amount or type of information required change when the amount or type of involvement from NGOs changes?
- In what form do NGOs provide information to your Department?
- Where and how is this information stored?
- What level of information is available to the public and how does the public receive and access this?
- How is credibility gained by NGOs within your Department?
- What are the processes or protocols followed before engaging with a NGO?
- What evidence is required that a NGO is meeting its contractual agreements, or that a NGO-funded service is meeting its requirements and remains funded?

3.2 Research of publicly-disclosed data

In addition to the conduct of interviews, research was carried out on the publicly-disclosed data about Department/NGO relationships.

The following materials were analysed for this study and were the main sources of publicly disclosed material about Department/NGO relationships:

- the Annual Report of participating Departments for 2001–02 and 2002–03
- material produced by participating Departments regarding their community consultation procedures
- the Internet website of every participating Department
- the Internet websites of the major NGOs that maintain relationships with participating Departments.

In addition to the above sources of information about Department/NGO relationships, there are a variety of other means of public disclosure about such relationships, including through answers to ministerial and Department correspondence, Freedom of Information requests, parliamentary processes such

as Questions on Notice and Senate Estimates hearings, and material provided through other Department publications. Information from such sources, however, may be difficult to access, may not be timely, and further some such sources (for example, Questions on Notice) may not be able to be accessed by members of the public.

A survey was also conducted of the ‘Portfolio Bodies’ of each Department in the study as listed in the Australian Government Directory. These Bodies are listed in Appendix 1.

The Australian Government Directory is published on the Internet, and includes both statutory and non-statutory bodies. As a list of Department consultative mechanisms, the Directory is limited because it does not purport to be a comprehensive list. For example, it includes a number of bodies (such as ministerial councils) on which NGOs would not be represented. The quality of the information about each Portfolio Body listed in the Directory varies because it is not based on specific criteria. For some Bodies a comprehensive listing of members is provided (but not their affiliations) together with a link to the website of the Body, while for others little more than its name is provided.

To indicate the wide range of NGOs that have relationships with Departments, Appendix 2 provides a sample of NGO involvement in one committee or consultative mechanism of each of the Departments in the study. The committees listed from the Departments of Environment and Heritage, Health and Ageing, and Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are included in the Australian Government Directory, while those for the Departments of Family and Community Services, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs are not.

4. Definitions

Departments

For the purposes of this study, the use of the word ‘Department’ refers to any one of the seven Departments participating in the study. For ease of terminology, agencies such as AusAID, statutory authorities, and Australian companies associated with the Departments in the study are treated within the scope of the relevant Department.

Non-government organisations

NGOs are defined as non-government ‘non-profit groups that combine resource mobilization, information provision, and activism to advocate for changes in certain areas’.¹ No distinction is drawn between different sorts of NGOs, whether incorporated or not, or whether an entirely domestic or a local affiliate of an international NGO. This study includes as NGOs business, industry, and professional associations, trade unions, ‘think-tanks’ as well as citizen and community organisations. Academic and research organisations are not regarded as NGOs because their primary purposes are not those of ‘resource mobilization, information provision, and activism’. Departments’ dealings with international organisations such as The United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Bank are not included in this study as they are considered to be comprised of, or representing, sovereign governments.

Relationships

The study considers the ‘relationships’ between Departments and NGOs. It is important to identify what aspects of Department/NGO relationships are included within the scope of the study. Not all Department/NGO relationships are examined because not every relationship gives a NGO a privileged status. Some of the varieties of Department/NGO relationships are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Department/NGO relationships

Types of relationship	Within scope of study?	Reason why/why not included
1. Correspondence to Department by NGO	No	No special status
2. Lobbying Department by NGO	No	No special status
3. Submission to Departmental Inquiry by NGO	No	No special status
4. Provision of privileged information by Department to NGO	Yes	Special status
5. NGO Membership of Department Advisory Committee	Yes	Special status
6. NGO Membership of Department delegation	Yes	Special status
7. Department funding for NGO research	Yes	Special status
8. Department funding for NGO’s administrative expenses	Yes	Special status
9. Department funding for program delivery by NGO	No	Special status but already subject to high level of disclosure

Table derived from Johns, G. 2001. *Protocols with NGOs: The Need to Know*, IPA Backgrounder.

Each of the first three relationships can be undertaken by any member of the public. While the success or otherwise of any representations might depend on a variety of factors, such as the standing of a particular member of the public, no privileged status is gained from such a relationship.

Relationships 4 to 8 are the outcomes of a Department granting a NGO a status that is not accorded to a member of the public. Presumably, a NGO has fulfilled some *qualification* to gain that status (and it could be argued that, in theory, a member of the public that met the same qualifications as a NGO possessing a special status could also gain that status). Relationship 8 for example, would encompass reimbursement for expenses a NGO representative incurred to attend a conference, through to funding a national secretariat of a NGO peak body.

Relevant questions about *the process* of how NGOs gain that status are:

- was there public advertisement of the opportunity to gain such status?
- what were the qualifications required to gain such status?
- what was the basis of selection of those NGOs that did gain such status?

Relevant questions about *the benefits* provided to NGOs by such status are:

- what are the benefits gained by NGOs?
- what is required of NGOs in return for the benefits?
- are the benefits disclosed?

Relevant questions about *the NGOs themselves* that have such status are:

- what information about the NGOs is disclosed (to the Department and/or the public)?
- how do the NGOs account for their benefits?

Funding for program delivery brings about a relationship between the Department and a NGO which provides the NGO with a privileged status. However, subject to some limited exceptions, most relationships between Departments and NGOs under which NGOs are contracted to provide a specified good or service are not examined in this study. Whether such a relationship is examined in this study is determined by the level of disclosure about the relationship. The higher the level of disclosure, the less likely it is to be included. Commercial contracts, for example, are governed by a range of requirements including the contract itself, government purchasing and tender regulations, and probity considerations. Such contracts are entered into,

and publicly reported in a reasonably transparent manner (although the actual terms of the contract may be commercial-in-confidence).

The involvement by NGOs in the policy development process is one of the most significant Department/NGO relationships. While it is a longstanding practice for Departments (and Ministers) to purchase policy advice under a consultancy contract, the provision of policy advice by NGOs to Departments, not under consultancy, but through consultative mechanisms is a rapidly developing phenomenon in public administration. There is no reason why non-contractual relationships between Government and external bodies should not be scrutinised in the same way that contractual relationships are. Under both contractual arrangements and non-contractual arrangements, the Government confers a benefit on a private citizen or organisation. Under contractual arrangements, that benefit is usually a commercial one, and the decision to confer that benefit must be able to be publicly justified (often, but not always done so in terms of ‘value-for-money’). Under non-contractual arrangements, a benefit is also conferred upon a private citizen or organisation, (although it might be more difficult to identify precisely what that benefit is).

The benefits accorded to NGOs through privileged participation on advisory committees can accrue into the future, and relationships can become self-perpetuating.

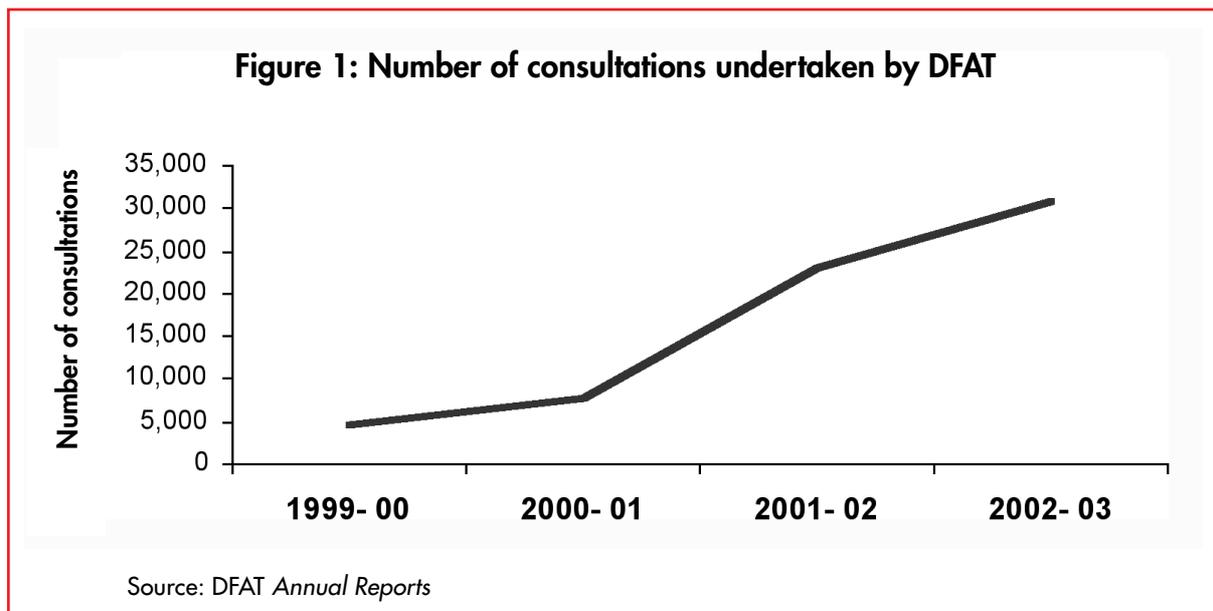
Over time, advisory committees can develop into policy communities—regular meetings of the key interests in the policy field, with an opportunity to broker agreements. Governments see their role as providing a forum for discussions, ensuring the participants are representative of the broader community’s interests, and proposing policy ideas that can be debated, modified and adopted with some measure of common support.²

5. Department/NGO relationships

5.1 The extent of department/NGO relationships

The extent of Department/NGO relationships is growing—but by how much is difficult to determine for at least three reasons. First, as discussed above, the nature of the relationships vary significantly. Second, there is no agreed standard for reporting relationships, and third, most Departments collect little information about those relationships. Accepting these limitations, nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn using the data that are available.

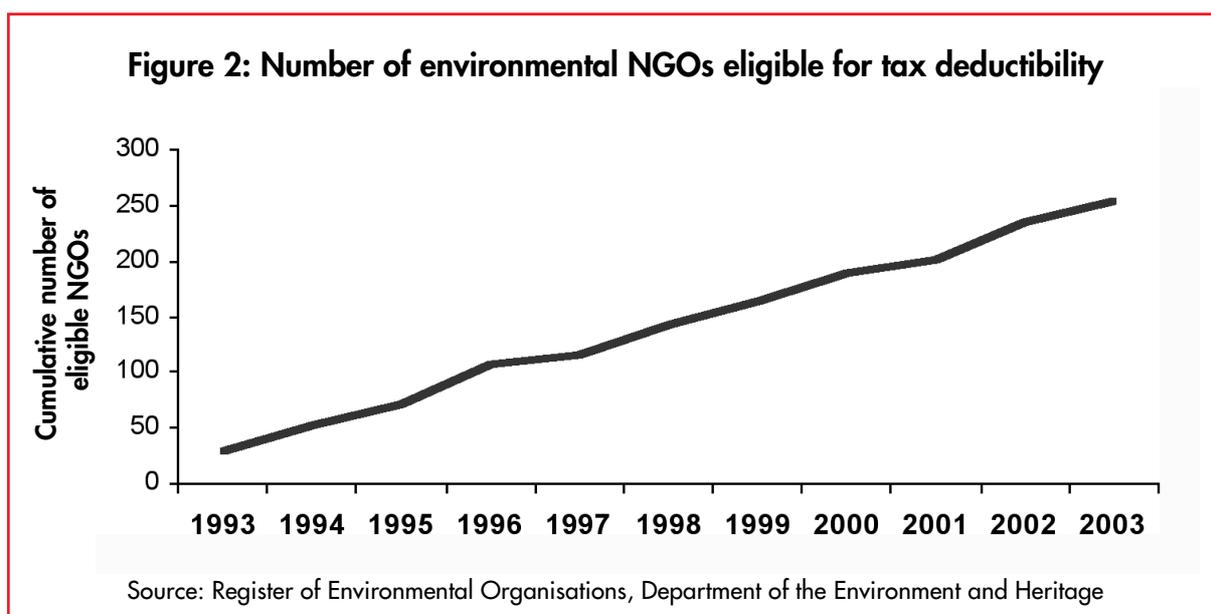
According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, it undertook consultation with approximately 4,800 community groups



and individuals and government and non-government agencies during the year 2001–02.³ What constitutes a ‘consultation’ is unclear, but nonetheless the scale of the activity between the Department and the outside community is clear.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade collects information about its consultations as part of its Program Reporting processes. External consultations are undertaken with a range of bodies, including other agencies, State and Territory governments, businesses, and NGOs. Figure 1 indicates the number of consultations undertaken by the Department as disclosed in the Department’s Annual Reports. The increase in the number of consultations reported is partly the result of changes in the definition of consultation used by the Department, and it should be stressed that consultations include interactions with a range of bodies external to the Department, not only NGOs. Nonetheless, regardless of the exact definition of consultation and regardless of with whom the Department is consulting, the conclusion can be drawn that undertaking consultation with external bodies is a growing responsibility of the Department. The number of consultations conducted by the Department ‘with other Commonwealth agencies, state and territory governments, business and non-government organisations in the context of the [D]epartment’s development of foreign and trade policy advice’ and the number of meetings organised of the Foreign Affairs Council and Trade Policy Advisory Council are specifically listed as ‘Quantity Indicators’ by the Department.⁴

The increasing trend whereby NGOs seek benefits from government can be seen in the environment portfolio. Figure 2 shows the total number of environmental organisations eligible to receive tax-deductible donations under the *Income Tax*



Assessment Act 1997. The Department of Environment and Heritage maintains information about the organisations listed in the Register of Environmental Organisations. The Department's Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Program provided funding to approximately 60 community organisations for the 2003–04 year, according to specified criteria, which included details about the administrative structure of the organisation.⁵

Little information about Department/NGO relationships is publicly reported compared with what is disclosed about other aspects of Departments' operations. There is no consistency of reporting across Departments, and it appears that within Departments there is limited knowledge about the nature of NGO relationships. No Department appears to have a comprehensive listing of, for example the committees which operate within the Department or of the interests and NGOs that are represented on those committees. Where information is provided about advisory committees on, for example, the Department's website or in its Annual Report, the amount of disclosure about committees is not necessarily related to its size or importance. Participation on advisory committees is only one type of Department/NGO relationship. NGOs may participate in Department delegations to international conferences, an extraordinarily important function for a NGO to perform—indeed, one bordering on usurping the government's representative role. NGOs may participate in a variety of ways including as observers, non-voting participants, voting participants, non-negotiating participants, negotiating participants, and so on. NGOs may also be required to provide certain undertakings as a condition of their membership of a delegation. While in many cases information about participants in international conferences can be publicly obtained, in practice

it can be difficult to access, and is unlikely to provide details about the conditions on which NGOs have participated. When NGOs do participate in delegations, information about which NGOs took part, why, and on what basis should be publicly disclosed.

5.2 The purpose of department/NGO relationships

The purpose of a Department's relationship with a NGO depends on the nature of the NGO and the requirements of the Department.

The World Bank lists five functions that NGOs perform. These are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Representation | to aggregate citizen voice (unions, churches, NGO peak groups) |
| 2. Technical Expertise | to advise and lobby (advocacy NGOs, think-tanks, professional associations) |
| 3. Capacity-building | to support other NGOs (foundations, training organisations) |
| 4. Service-delivery | to implement projects or provide services (service NGOs, mutual aid societies) |
| 5. Social functions | to foster collective recreational activities (sport and cultural clubs). ⁶ |

These functions also indicate some of the different varieties of NGOs (and a NGO might perform more than one function). The *function* of a NGO is related to the *purpose* for which a Department enters into a relationship with a NGO.

In the context of growing demands worldwide for 'transparency, accountability and participation', the OECD lists the reasons why the levels of public participation in the work of governments are increasing:

Improve the quality of policy, by allowing governments to tap wider sources of information, perspectives, and potential solutions in order to meet the challenges of policy-making under conditions of increasing complexity, policy interdependence and time pressures.

Meet the challenges of the emerging information society, to prepare for greater and faster interactions with citizens and ensure better knowledge management.

Integrate public input into the policy-making process, in order to meet citizens' expectations that their voices be heard, and their views be considered, in decision-making by government.

Respond to calls for greater government transparency and accountability, as public and media scrutiny of government actions increases and standards in public life are codified and raised.

Strengthen public trust in government, and reverse the steady erosion of voter turnout in elections, falling membership in political parties and surveys showing declining confidence in key public institutions.⁷

Table 2: Information, consultation and active participation throughout the policy cycle

Stage of Policy Cycle	Information	Consultation	Active Participation
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White Papers, policy documents - Legislative programmes - Draft laws and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large-scale opinion surveys - Use of discussion groups or citizens panels - Invitation of comments on draft legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submission of alternative draft laws or policy proposals - Public dialogue on policy issues and options
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New policy or regulations and their provisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of focus groups to develop secondary legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership with CSOs to disseminate information on compliance with new laws
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public notice of evaluation exercises and opportunities to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of stakeholders in reviews of government evaluation programs and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent evaluation conducted by CSOs

Source: OECD, 2001: *Citizens as Partners*, page 22

In relation to policy development by Government, the OECD categorises the various forms of consultation through the policy cycle as shown in Table 2 (CSOs are civil society organisations which are analogous to NGOs).

While many of these innovations have not yet been implemented in Australia, some have been, particularly in the first part of the Policy Cycle—the ‘Design’ stage. At the ‘Implementation’ stage, many Departments engage with NGOs to disseminate information about new laws and regulations. What has not yet happened in this country to any large extent is the involvement of NGOs with Departments in the evaluation of policy. In most cases, Departments’ evaluations of policy are either carried out by the Department itself or by a commercial organisation under contract. When NGOs evaluate policy, it is often undertaken outside of any formal government process. This is not to argue the case that NGOs should be formally involved in the evaluation of government programs, however, as the scope of NGO involvement is evolving it begs a more explicit scrutiny of relations.

In Australia, NGO participation on advisory committees has traditionally occurred in one of two ways:

- where an officer of a NGO is appointed to a committee *ex officio* because it is deemed necessary to have that NGO represented on the committee ('representative' capacity)
- where an officer of a NGO is appointed to a committee because of either that officer's personal knowledge or skills or because of the knowledge and skills possessed by the NGO ('expert' capacity).

Seldom is an explanation publicly provided as to why a committee is either representative or expert. Further, it is not usual for Departments to provide details of the selection criteria for NGOs to participate on advisory committees. During the course of the study, when Department officers were interviewed about the basis for decisions about which NGOs were included on committees and which were not, it became evident that a large element of discretion was exercised.

The following are the public explanations for the participation of NGOs on committees taken from the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

A representative committee:

NetAlert is an independent body established as part of the Commonwealth Government's commitment to educating communities about managing access to online content. The inaugural 11 member NetAlert Board is made up of industry, legal, community and educational organisation representatives from around the country.⁸

An expert committee:

The Australian Information Economy Advisory Council will provide high level industry and community input to Government decision making on information industries and information economy issues. It is important to stress that members of the Council have been chosen for their individual expertise and demonstrated experience, rather than as representatives of particular companies or interests.⁹

A committee that is both representative and expert:

The National Electronic Authentication Council will provide high level industry and community input to Government decision making on electronic authentication and e-commerce issues. Council members have been chosen for the communities they represent and for their experience and expertise.¹⁰

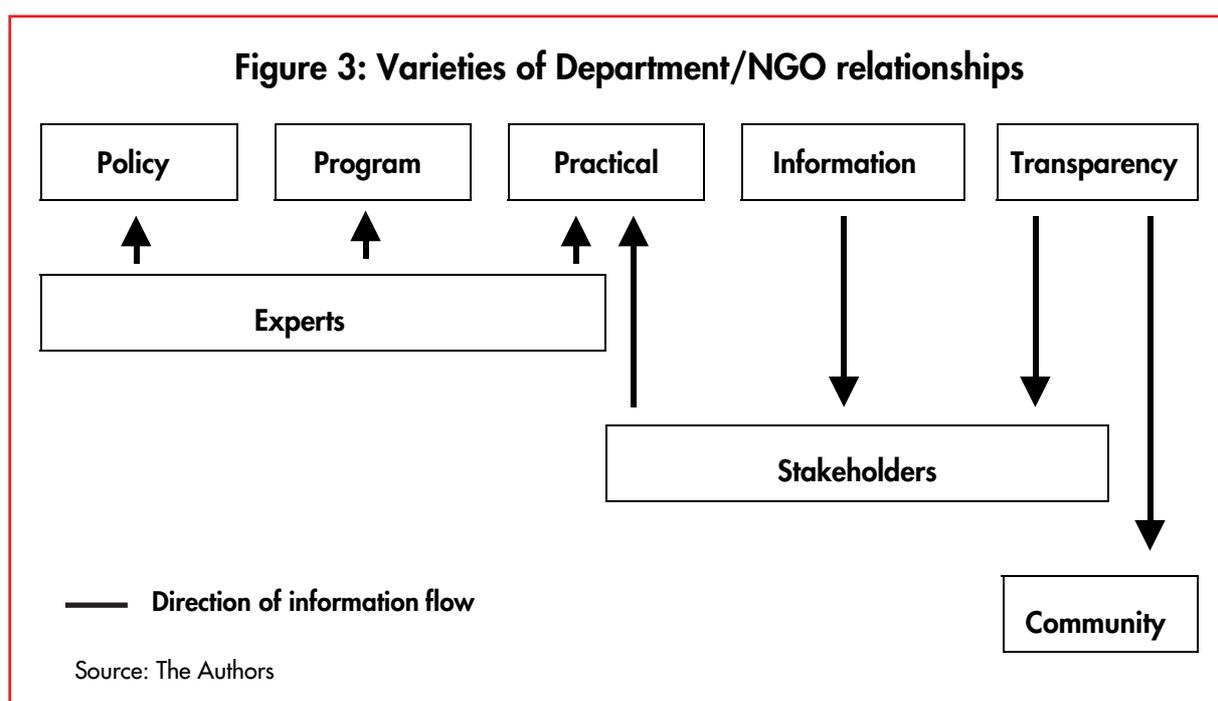
A relatively recent development are committees to review the work of Departments. An example of such a committee is the Immigration Detention Advisory Group in the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs whose members are chosen on the basis of their ‘commitment to, and understanding of, immigration issues’ and their ‘personal experience and expertise’.¹¹

From an analysis of the Departments in this study, there are five reasons why Departments have relationships with NGOs. These are to:

- provide policy expertise
- deliver programs
- provide practical expertise
- allow for information dissemination
- allow for transparency.

Broadly speaking, NGOs act in three capacities in their relationships with Departments. NGOs operate in the capacity of:

- experts
- stakeholders
- the community.



The varieties of Department/NGO relationships are shown in Figure 3, which also demonstrates the capacity in which NGOs act.

These categories can overlap and they depend on the nature of the NGO. For example, policy expertise might be provided by an advocacy or research-focused NGO, while practical expertise would come from a NGO that represented the interests of an industry. NGOs have the ability to advocate for particular positions in each of their capacities, but particularly where they provide policy expertise.

The information flow is not exclusively from NGOs to Departments. Departments use NGOs to distribute information to stakeholder groups and to the broader community. A recent development is the desire of Departments to be transparent in their operations, and providing information to NGOs stands as a proxy for the sharing of information between Departments and the broader public. For example, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regards one of its roles to be the promotion of ‘public understanding of Australia’s foreign and trade policy’ and to support this function it engages with NGOs. The Department states that it ‘consults with the business community, State and Territory Governments and community groups’.¹² Likewise, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has the statement that ‘The Department is open to the views of outside organisations and provides opportunities for members of the community and industry to contribute to developing aspects of Australia’s communications, information technology, arts and sports sectors’ and what follows is a list of a selected number of consultative bodies. That list, however, is not comprehensive and no information is provided as to how members of the public might involve themselves in the work of those bodies.¹³

A related phenomenon is the requirement as part of Departments’ ‘Outcome Measures’ that stakeholders be specifically included in the policy development process. For example the following Outcome Measures are included in those of the Department of Health and Ageing:

- A high level of stakeholder satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of Departmental/Portfolio inputs to national policy, planning and strategy development and implementation
- Timely production of evidence-based policy research to inform and engage stakeholders in meaningful policy and program discussions
- A high level of stakeholder satisfaction with the relevance, quality and timeliness of information and education services

- Opportunity for national industry and consumer peak organisations to participate in the development and implementation of national policy through the National Aged Care Accreditation and Compliance Forum and the Aged Care Working Group.¹⁴

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has considered consultation with its stakeholders and associated NGOs in the following terms:

The main reason for consulting is to get feedback from our [the Department's] clients about our [the Department's] policies, programs and services. The benefits of consultation usually far outweigh the effort involved. Consultation builds trust between the Department and its clients and ensures a better policy or program fit.

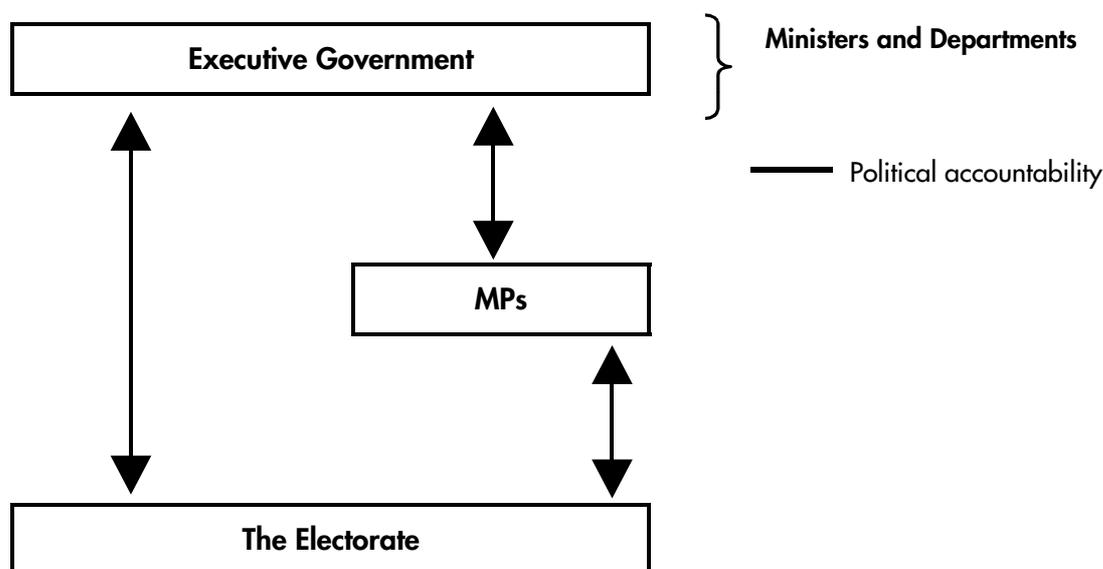
Effective program and policy development should show a clear understanding of the client's needs and how they will be affected. The diversity of our [the Department's] client groups means we need to be flexible and innovative in consulting them. We [the Department] need to ensure that we include all client groups, not just 'traditional' groups or peak industry bodies. Wider consultation broadens feedback and helps ensure our [the Department's] policies and programs are appropriate.¹⁵

The ability of NGOs to participate in the policy process is not only provided for in Departments' Outcome Measures, but in a number of cases it is enshrined in legislation. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* requires the Minister to take into account comments from 'any person' in specific circumstances. NGOs also have a specific right contained in the legislation to challenge a decision under the Act. The *Product Stewardship (Oil) Act 2000* requires that the membership of the Oil Stewardship Advisory Council include members representing 'a national organisation representing oil producers', 'a national organisation representing oil recyclers', 'a national consumer 'organisation', and 'a national non-governmental organisation that has a substantial interest in sustainable industry'. The formal representation of NGOs in this way through legislation takes the standing of NGOs to a new level and, as such, requires public disclosure of NGOs' roles in the process.

5.3 Government decision-making and NGOs

It has only been in the last few decades that attention has been devoted to the question of Department/NGO relationships. Traditional models of governance in a representative democracy assumed a direct relationship between the electorate and their representatives. Theories of executive government and responsible government made no distinction between ministers and their departments, with an emphasis on the role of Parliament. Such a model is encapsulated in Figure 4.

Under such a model, attention was focussed on *formal* relationships. Such formal

Figure 4: Model of traditional political accountability

Source: derived from GS Reid, 1966. 'Parliament and the Executive: The Suppression of Politics' in *Australian Politics, A Reader* edited by H Mayer, Cheshire, Melbourne.

relationships were usually through the parliamentary process or were under contract when they were between Government and third parties. While the forms of commercial arrangements between Departments and external organisations have been the subject of debate for many years, other sorts relationships have not been scrutinised in the same way.

The representative formal model has been criticised on the basis that 'citizens have little further input once votes are cast'¹⁶ and it was clear, even by the 1960s, that such a 'traditional' model was becoming outdated. At the time it was noted that 'pressure groups' were beginning to have a key influence on the political process and were changing their techniques of engagement.

What used often to be mainly negative attitudes to government, expressed in public protest, have tended to be replaced by a more positive desire to 'co-operate' with the bureaucracy and to influence its actions from within. A group such as the Associated Chambers of Manufactures is quite likely to employ ex-public servants to help in its negotiations. Public servants interested in forwarding a particular policy find it useful to remain in a regular consultative relationship with outside interests, and may even encourage them to form a group for the purposes of mutual information and bargaining.¹⁷

The maintenance of 'regular consultative relationships' is now an essential element of the work of government and indeed has been enshrined in the Performance

Targets and Strategic Plans in many departments. While the ‘consensual/consultative/corporatist’ model of policy-making is more often associated with continental European countries than with those in the English and American traditions, it has been suggested that there are factors in Australia that encourage the involvement of NGOs in policy.

... in Australia—mainly because of our liberal-democratic political traditions—most policy arenas are characterised by ‘pressure-pluralist’ policy networks. The institutional factors that typically underpin such a pattern of interaction include:

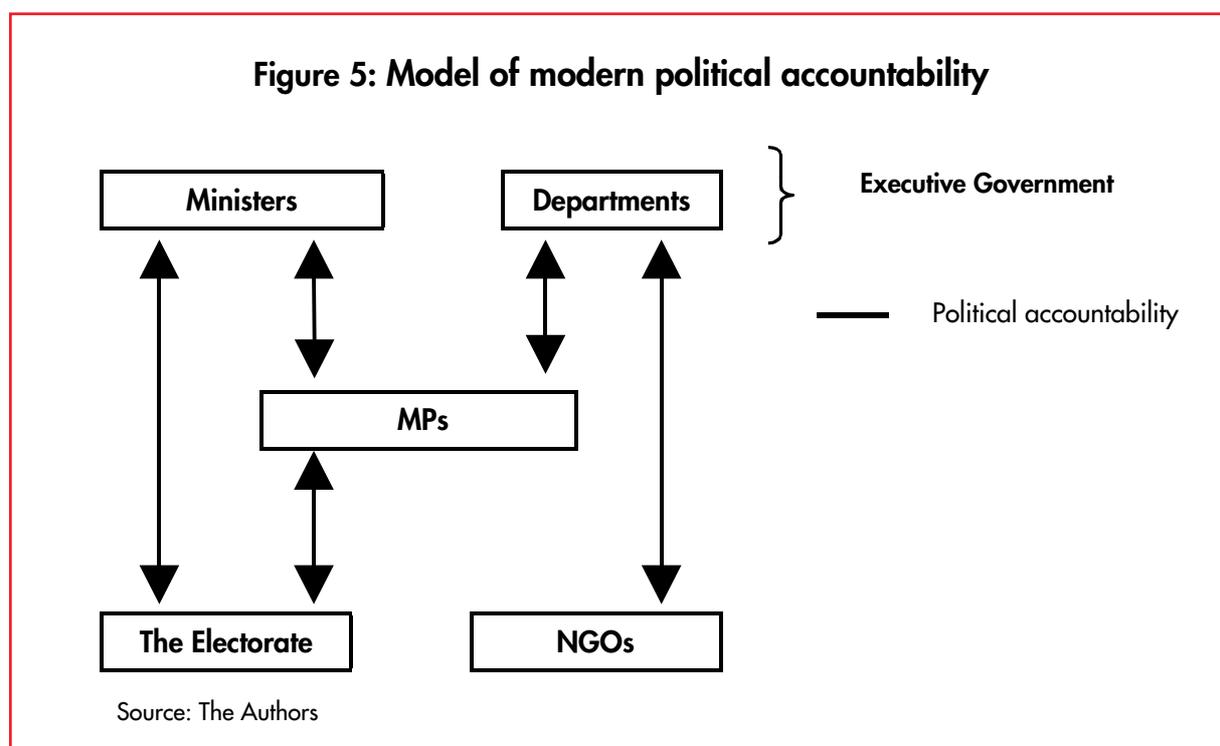
- a state which is fragmented, which is open and porous to external demands and pressures (i.e. strongly liberal democratic), and which has only a limited capacity for centralised coordination; and
- a non-state sector, which is fragmented with multiple groups and associations displaying relatively weak internal leadership and organisational capacities.

In such a network, policy is typically made through a struggle of competing interests, with little capacity for leadership or strategic direction. The type of policy making that typically emerges from such a network tends to be ad hoc and reactive.¹⁸

An alternative to the model of traditional political accountability takes account of the developing role of NGOs in the political process. Some of the most significant changes from the traditional to the modern model are the separation of functions between Ministers and their departments, and the position of NGOs outside of the electorate. These changes can be seen most clearly in the context of Departments which, in order to fulfil requirements for community consultation, engage in narrowly-defined processes with NGOs as proxies for the community. Increasingly civil society organisations are acting as intermediaries for the electorate as a whole. The challenges to the model of traditional political accountability have been appreciated by the OECD, ‘[t]he emergence of new relations between executive governments and citizens in policy-making are not intended to reduce or replace traditional representative government nor the central role of parliaments’.¹⁹

The NGO phenomenon, if taken too far, constitutes a challenge to representative systems and traditional political accountability. The collection of all possible NGOs, for example, does not constitute public opinion. NGOs represent only some public opinion. To some extent, politics is a contest between organised and unorganised public opinion, between particular interests and the public interest. More recently, many NGOs purport to represent universal interests, which they argue, represent the public interest, for example, human rights and the environment. NGOs give voice to the public, which in liberal democracies in an age of extraordinary ease of public communication is not a difficult task. The hard task is to decide what is in the public interest. When laws are to be framed and public funds allocated, only

elected officials should make such judgements. Moreover, officials need to make these decisions in a way that does not expand the universe of government by buying off of all interests with taxpayer largesse.



While the role of NGOs as a voice of the public is developing apace, the ability of the representative system to manage and decipher these voices is under considerable pressure. Political accountability must therefore incorporate not just access for groups, but a record of the access that, in effect, is used by government to demonstrate that while access cannot be equal it can be managed in a rational and equitable way, the proof of which is to keep the unorganised interests informed of the government's relations with the organised interests.

In Australia, the participation of NGOs and of the community generally in the public policy process is now accepted. According to two leading authorities in the area:

Whereas secrecy was once the hallmark of the political and policy domains alike, community expectations have shifted. Groups outside government expect involvement in decision making. The legitimacy of much public policy now rests on an exchange between citizens and their government.

Public servants and politicians must find ways to discuss with relevant communities of interest and draw them into the policy process, while avoiding unreasonable delays, simple vetoing by unrepresentative groups and abrogation of responsibility to vested interests.²⁰

What is noteworthy is that notwithstanding the emphasis on the process of consultation, there appears to be little or no discussion about ensuring that the process of consultation itself is open and transparent. If it is the case that the legitimacy of public policy depends on the consultation that led to the policy, it is incumbent upon policy makers to disclose as much as possible about the consultation process.

5.4 Balancing policy perspectives

The OECD has recognised the challenge for Department officers working in an environment in which particular individuals or organisations seek to represent positions on behalf of others.

Striking a balance between the role and relative weight of organisations representing sections of civil society with respect to views voiced by individual citizens and coping with the increasing fragmentation of public interest are issues which will require greater attention.²¹

The comments contained in an OECD report about consultation on health policy in Canada are applicable to consultation on other policy areas in Australia.

There are a number of key challenges to effectively involving the public in policy development. They include:

- Balancing the viewpoints of experts—for example, physicians and policy analysts—with those of citizens and patients. This is especially challenging given the centrality of medical expertise to health policy development and the complexity of the subject matter.
- Differentiating between concentrated interest (those who have a direct stake in how well the health care operates, including patients, physicians, etc) and diffuse interests (citizenry at large whose consideration involve competing public priorities, including tax cuts and economic growth)
- Ensuring that citizen and consumer groups are accountable to their constituencies and membership and ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to ensure their accountability.
- Capturing the diversity in Canada's size, demographics, economic activities and ethnicity—particularly challenging in a national consultation.
- Making space for citizens to be involved in consultations as civic-minded individuals rather than only as members of an organisation or stakeholder group.²²

In the United Kingdom, a study of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) which were designed to co-ordinate social services to local government areas by bringing

together a range of organisations reveals the limits of consultation. ‘The emergence of LSPs...tends to enhance the prominence of a small, elite group of local actors...’²³

In the Australian context a similar point has been made:

While consultation is valued by government for addressing legitimacy problems over contentious decisions, consultation has its own legitimacy issues...Who can claim a voice in consultation? If government alone decides, it risks imposing its preferences and so undermining the benefits of consultation. If self-appointed spokespersons for the public interest dominate the process, the results may not accurately reflect community feeling.

There are also problems of how to weight differing voices. Access to the consultation process and capacity to state a case are seldom distributed evenly. It is always easier to deal with interest groups who can speak authoritatively for their membership. However, there is a risk such groups will eclipse other, representative but less organised interests, or fail their members and not be representative at all.²⁴

Notwithstanding that many Government departments encourage community and NGO consultation, it is not clear that consideration has been given to the need to balance policy perspectives in the ways discussed above.

5.5 Disclosure

One of the explanations for the development of Department/NGO relationships is a desire to increase the transparency of the work of government.

Calls for greater government transparency and accountability have grown, as public and media scrutiny of government actions increases and standards in public life are codified and raised. Governments in all OECD countries are under pressure to integrate public input into the policy-making process, and respond to citizens’ expectations that their voices be heard and their views considered in policy-making.²⁵

Where Department/NGO relationships do exist, there is little transparency about those relationships. As the OECD has noted ‘Measures to ensure that the policy-making process is open, transparent and amenable to external scrutiny and review are crucial to increasing government accountability overall’.²⁶

In recent years, a focus of both government and academic research has been on how to involve communities and stakeholders in public policy development. A great deal of effort has been devoted to the *process* of consultation, but there has been almost no attention given to the *public disclosure* of that process of consultation. In 2001, the OECD released a major work on the engagement of

citizens in policy formulation. In the same year, the Australasian Political Studies Association (APSA) held a symposium on 'Community Consultation'.²⁷ In both the OECD's work and in the outcomes of the APSA symposium, there was little discussion about disclosure of consultation processes, which was in marked contrast to the many statements about the importance of consultation.

The components of participation have recently been defined as:

- a measure of citizen involvement in decisions that might otherwise be the sole prerogative of executive government
- a commitment to seeking the views of those affected by a decision
- some transfer of authority from government to citizens
- a transparent process which ensures citizens are informed about policy processes.²⁸

While community and stakeholder participation is now regarded by Departments as important, an essential element of that participation, transparency, is almost entirely absent in Australia. As yet there is no transparent process which ensures citizens are informed about policy processes.

An implication of the importance of transparency in the policy process is in relation to the establishment of the standing granted to individual NGOs. As has been noted, 'in order for consultation to occur, governments needed bona fide and representative organisations with which to consult'.²⁹ No mechanism exists in the Government whereby citizens are informed as to how conclusions are reached about the bona fides and representativeness of NGOs granted standing. Without such a mechanism, it is possible that, in terms of point three above—that is, transfer of authority from government to citizens—there is nothing more than the transfer of authority from government to NGOs.

NGOs are often consulted by Departments in order to give advice to Government. If a consultant were to provide advice on commercial terms, Departments would be required to undertake a transparent process to engage that consultant. The principle at stake in commercial contracts is that consultants receive a benefit from the government in the form of a monetary payment and therefore that there should be public disclosure of this benefit. In the case of a NGO providing advice to a Department, the NGO receives a benefit. The benefit may be a direct monetary payment (for example through sitting fees) or it may be a benefit in some other form (for example through access to a Minister) that confers legitimacy on the NGO. A NGO gaining access to a Minister or government official can have a

commercial value. In the context of the reporting of donations to political parties, the Australian Electoral Commission has recognised that access to a Minister might have a commercial value to those third parties that seek such access.³⁰

Providing disclosure about the policy advice received by government is an important element of guidelines issued by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) regarding policy development. There is no reason why the guidelines issued by the ANAO should not apply to policy advice and consultations involving NGOs. The ANAO states that Departments should:

- Conduct an initial assessment of information needs to set priorities and develop a strategy for acquiring it, but retain sufficient flexibility to respond to new information requirements that may be gathered during the policy process.
- Where consultants are engaged, determine the selection criteria and document the evaluation to ensure that the chosen consultants are of appropriate quality and that the process is transparent.
- Report the impact of limitations on information to ensure that decision-makers can accurately assess the risks associated with making a decision on the level of information provided.
- Where it is material to the advice, identify the source of information in briefs and cabinet submissions to:
 - allow ministers to take into account the sources of information
 - enable others to contest the information and its use, and
 - establish a basis for future policy development.³¹

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study is to consider the nature of Department/NGO relationships and to examine what is publicly disclosed about them. It is not the purpose of the study to suggest that the range of NGOs with whom Departments have relationships should be limited in a particular way, for an important element in a representative democracy is that the community's elected representatives are free to gather information and advice from as wide a range of sources as possible. But given that during this process of information-gathering and gaining advice some individuals and organisations in the community gain privileges not available to all, it is therefore appropriate that there is some public disclosure of those processes.

In principle, reasons why Department/NGO relationships should be disclosed are no different to the reasons that Departments' financial relationships should be disclosed. The existence of a Department/NGO relationship places NGOs in

privileged positions which are not accorded to other members of the community. From their relationships with Departments, NGOs have the capacity to gain information not available to the public at large, and they have the ability to influence government administration directly. Other than the right to elect their representatives, members of the general public do not have that capacity. It is entirely legitimate, therefore, that information is made public about both the relationship itself, and about the NGO with which the Department has a relationship.

Departments' financial relationships are disclosed because Departments are allocating and distributing the financial resources of Government. The process by which this is done should be transparent, and in most cases it is. Departments are required to provide details of contracts entered that are greater than a certain value, and to list consultancy arrangements. This has been regarded as normal practice for many years. The formation of a Department/NGO relationship also involves the allocation and distribution of resources—although the resources are not of a financial kind. Instead, those resources are resources of access and information

6.1 Transparency

An important conclusion from this study is that, across the Australian Government, Department/NGO relationships are insufficiently transparent. At the level of individual Departments what is revealed about Department/NGO relationships varies between different parts of the same Department. The concept that Department/NGO relationships should be transparent is an underdeveloped aspect of the growth in community and stakeholder consultation.

It might be argued that the reason why transparency is provided for financial relationships but not for other sorts of relationships, is that (for example) in the case of a NGO providing advice to a Department, the Department should be accountable for its decisions, not for the way it arrived at that decision. Such an argument is flawed because it ignores the fact that the quality of the *process* by which a decision is made is just as important as the merits of the decision itself. This is a fundamental principle of judicial review of government action. When a Department awards contracts for goods or services, it is essential that a process be adhered to. When a NGO provides advice to a Department, it is irrelevant to the issue of disclosure whether or not that advice has been followed. What is significant for the purposes of this study is the process by which the NGO provided that advice. Given that there is a growing tendency for Departments to claim that their decisions are a direct result of consultation with NGOs, the need for some transparency is becoming imperative. The position of the Department of Immigration and

Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, for example, is not unique in this regard. In relation to the Humanitarian Program of immigration the Department stated that ‘The priority areas for the program were Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and South-West Asia, reflecting UNHCR’s international resettlement priorities *as well as the views of community groups in Australia* [emphasis added]’.³² Australia’s Humanitarian Program is set annually by the Government after a public consultation process which includes soliciting input from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, individuals and community groups, through a call for public submissions advertised in major weekend newspapers and ethnic media. Those consultations also included in 2003 and 2004 a meeting by the responsible Minister with peak NGO bodies from the Refugee and Humanitarian sector.³³

6.2 Accountability

Accountability and transparency are related in that if individuals’ or organisations’ activities are not known about, it is almost impossible for them to be held accountable for those activities. A useful description of accountability as it applies to public administration is:

From a narrow efficiency perspective, accountability is a tiresome overhead, because it adds appreciably to the costs of making decisions. On the other hand, accountability of public officials is the cornerstone of an effective democracy. Accountability is not a ‘thing’ in itself, but a set of relationships through which political and bureaucratic actors must account for their integrity and their performance. There is a framework, partly conventional and partly statutory, which sets out these relationships and which has changed and evolved as problems have occurred and new opportunities have arisen.³⁴

This description stresses the integrity of what is done, and the idea that, over time, the framework of accountability changes. It is clear that in relation to Department/NGO relationships a new framework of accountability is required. One of the reasons a new framework is needed is because, increasingly, legislation obliges Departments to actively engage with NGOs and stakeholders, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is an example of this trend. Currently, there are no means for ensuring the integrity of Department/NGO relationships.

6.3 Evaluation

There is little evidence that Departments routinely evaluate their relationships with NGOs. The Australian experience whereby Department/NGO relationships are not evaluated is replicated in many other OECD countries.

There is a striking imbalance between the amount of time, money and energy which OECD Member countries invest in strengthening government-citizen connections and their efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures and their impact on public policy-making. No OECD Member country currently conducts a systematic evaluation of their efforts to enhance access to information, citizen feedback, consultation and active participation—although all those participating in the surveys expressed an interest in improving their capacity for evaluation.³⁵

None of the Departments in this study maintains a process for the systematic evaluation of Department/NGO relationships, although from time to time there have been reviews, for example, of funding national representative bodies of NGOs.

Again the comments of the OECD are relevant:

One explanation for the lack of well-developed evaluation frameworks may lie in the absence of clear goals on the part of government units when undertaking information, consultation and active participation.³⁶

7. Recommendations

Given the conclusions of this study it is recommended that the Commonwealth Government initiate the public reporting of its relationships with NGOs.

The stages of this process are:

- identifying the data to be reported
- collecting the data
- reporting the data.

7.1 Identifying the data to be reported

The data to be reported comprises two main elements: information about the Department/NGO relationship, and information about the NGOs with which Departments have relationships.

The suggested categories of information to be collected are set out in Table 3. It must be stressed that the detail should be determined by the nature of the relationship—that is, the standing awarded. Governments will need to decide what is sufficient information for its purposes and to be shared with the public. With these views in mind, Table 3 suggests a full menu of disclosure, of which only some might be chosen.

Table 3: Information protocol for NGOs**Evidence of the following:****Governance***Legal Status*

Constitution, or Articles of Association

Operating Status

The organisation is voluntary

The organisation is non-profit making

The organisation is independent from government

Capacity Accountability*Nature of expertise (for expert NGOs)*

Research undertaken

Experience in the field

Qualifications of those engaged

Membership (for representative NGOs)

Status of members

Elections

System of election for organisation governing body

Process for policy/decision-making by organisation

Institutional Leadership

Qualifications of those with leadership position in organisation

International Affiliations

Off-shore affiliates (if any)

Off-shore funding (if any)

Degree of non-resident involvement in organisation activities

Reporting to stakeholders/community

Method and frequency of reporting about organisation's activities

Financial Accountability*Financial Position*

Financial position of the organisation

Use of funds

That monies raised are used in the manner specified when donors are sought

Proportion of raised funds applied to programs and to fund raising

Fund-raising disclosure

Solicitation materials are accurate, truthful, and not misleading

Solicitation materials contain a description of activities for which funds are sought

Relationship Accountability*Relationship Conditions*

The conditions under which the Department/NGO have entered the relationship

Relationship Evaluation

The manner in which the relationship will be evaluated

Source: Adapted by the authors from various sources.

7.2 Collecting the data

To satisfy the requirement to be transparent it is not necessary that Departments themselves collect all of the above information. In relation to data about the status of the NGO, it is sufficient that the Department satisfies itself that what is reported by the NGO is accurate.

7.3 Reporting the data

Table 4 sets out the categories of information relevant to four types of Department/NGO relationships. There are some categories of information which should be held by Departments, but which would be inappropriate to disclose publicly. For example, where a NGO receives funding to conduct research, it is not necessary to report on the status of its members. Where a NGO participates on an advisory committee because it is representative of stakeholders, however, it is relevant to know about its membership composition.

Table 1 identified six relationships which established a special status for NGOs, and in Table 4 four are listed. This is because one of those relationships ‘Provision of privileged information by Department to NGO’ will almost invariably arise because of the existence of one of the other sorts of relationships, and the other relationship not listed—‘Department funding for program delivery by NGO’—already requires a degree of disclosure.

A convenient method of public reporting of Department/NGO relationships is through the Internet, and it is a method already utilised effectively by some Departments. For example, the Department of Health and Ageing operates the Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council (APAC) as ‘a consultative forum to advise the Commonwealth Government on a wide range of pharmaceutical policy issues.’ APAC comprises 29 organisations, the majority of which are NGOs. The member organisations are listed on the Council’s website together with descriptions of each organisation, and in most cases there are direct links to the websites of the organisations.³⁷ The Department of Family and Community Services uses the Internet effectively in relation to a number of its consultative bodies, for example the National Family Carers Voice which is ‘an advisory body made up of family carers from across Australia who provide the Government with advice on how it can better address family carer issues.’ National Family Carers Voice has a dedicated website which provides details about its work, its members, and how it can be contacted by members of the public.³⁸

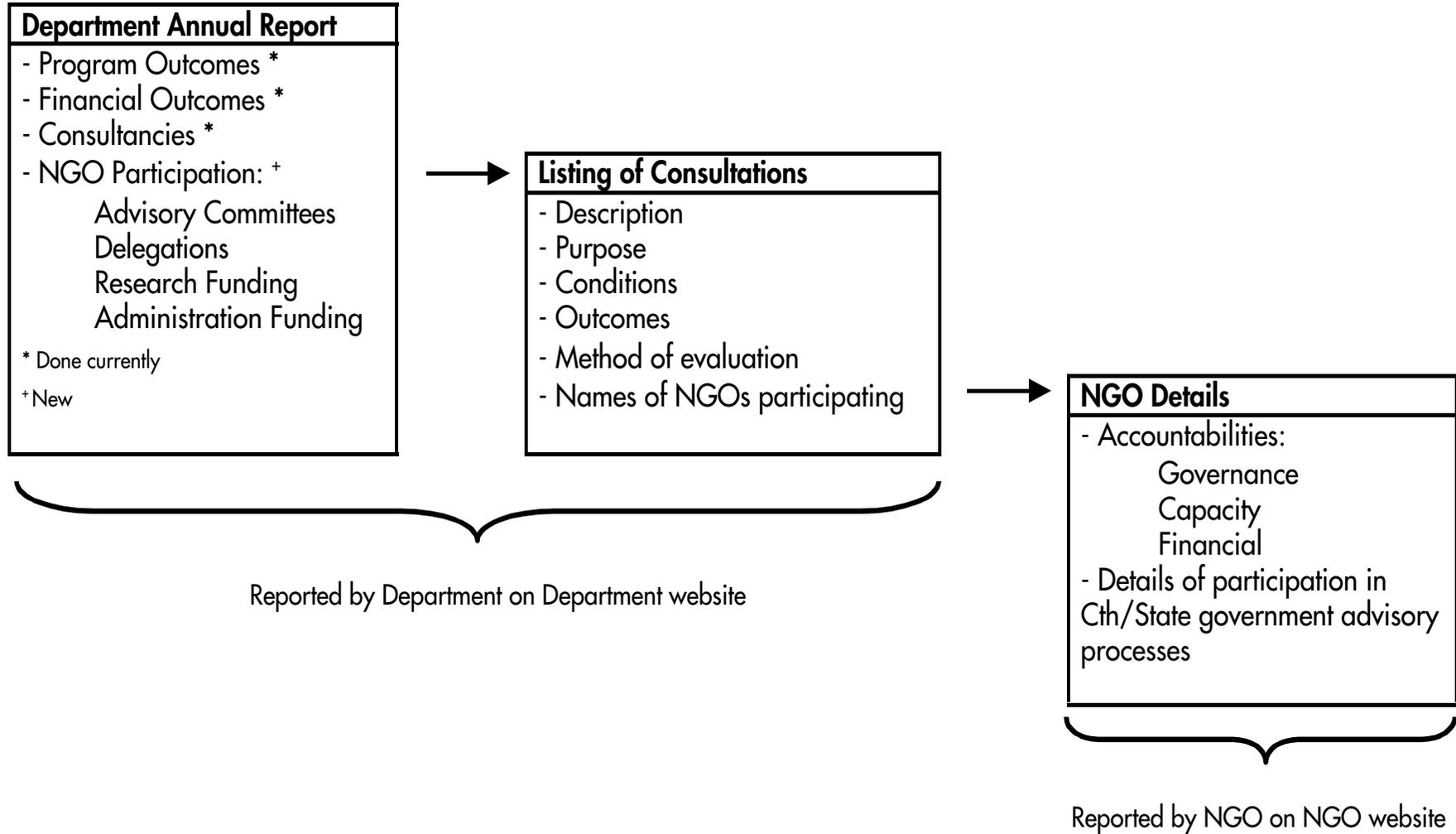
Table 4: Department/NGO disclosure

Categories of Information	Membership of Advisory Committee		Membership of Delegation		Funding for Research		Funding for Administrative Expenses	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Governance								
Legal Status	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Operating Status	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Capacity Accountability								
<i>Expert</i>								
Nature of expertise	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Stakeholder/Community</i>								
Membership	+		+				+	
Elections	+		+				+	
Institutional Leadership	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
International Affiliations	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Reporting to stakeholders/community	+	-	+	-			+	-
Financial Accountability								
Financial position	+		+		+	-	+	-
Use of funds	+		+		+	-	+	-
Fund-raising disclosure	+		+		+	-	+	-
Relationship Accountability								
Relationship conditions	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Relationship evaluation	+		+		+		+	
+	Information collected by Department							
-	Information publicly disclosed							

Source: The authors

The data publicly available over the Internet is outlined in Table 5 (on page 30). Contained in the Department's Annual Report, would be the details of the four listed categories of Department/NGO relationship (all Department Annual Reports are available on the Internet). Reported either also in the Annual Report, or on a separate section of the Department's website would be a Listing of Consultations that sets out the information outlined in Table 3. Information specific to individual NGOs would be reported on the website of each NGO. Prior to Departments entering into a relationship with a NGO, the NGO would be required to agree to reporting of such information about itself.

Table 5: Public reporting of department/NGO relationships



7.4 A model website

The next element of the Protocol is to create and maintain a single Australian Government website. The website, for the sake of illustration, called 'Australian NGO Link' would be an interactive site that would enable any person to make an assessment of the myriad relations between government and NGOs. It would enable the individual to assess in any year, or for a number of years, the standing of each NGO, and sources of government funding of any NGO with significant relations with a government department or authority. It would also enable the assessment of the government's use of NGOs across the whole range of departments and programs.

In Figure 6, which contains three illustrations of a model website, a citizen is able, with access to the Internet, to investigate the relationship between the Australian Government and NGOs with whom it has a significant relationship.

Figure 6: A model website



Australian NGO Link Home Page

Address: <http://www.ngolink.gov.au>

Live Home Page Apple Apple Store .Mac Mac OS X Microsoft MacTopia Office for Macintosh MSN



Australian NGO Link

Welcome to the Australian Government's NGO Link and resources Website. From this site you can obtain information about Non-Government Organizations that have substantial business with the Australian Government by way of advice, programmes or the receipt of funds.

To access information, please first select a year and then choose either an NGO or a Government Department/Authority and click Submit.

2003 AND **NGO** OR Department/Authority Submit

Note: for further information on the abbreviations used in this Website, please click

- Australian Association of Consumers
- Australian Association of Dental Surgeons
- Australians Abroad Inc.
- Australians for a Just Society
- Australians for Common Sense**
- Australians for Good Works Inc.
- Australians for Reconciling Differences
- Australians Working Abroad
- Australian Tree Society
- Australian War Memorials Society

Local machine zone

Australian NGO Link Search Results

Address: <http://www.ngolink.gov.au/?Search%Year=2003%Australians+Common+Sense%id=22378>



Australian NGO Link

Search Results

Year: 2003
NGO: Australians for Common Sense (click [here](#) for contact and other details*)

Department/ Authority	Funds	Date	Programme/Purpose	Committee	Standing
Arts/Communications	\$25000	2003	Research access to the arts	NA	Expertise
Immigration	\$12000	2001-4	New settlers programme	Immigration orientation	Expertise
Education	\$2500	2001-3	Arts education	New curriculum	Represent profession

[* **Note:** Clicking on this link would provide the sort of information contained in Table 4, page 28 of this document]

Appendix One

Department Portfolio Bodies as listed in Australian Government Directory. It should be noted that the listing of 'Portfolio Bodies' includes a range of bodies including ministerial councils on which NGOs are not represented, and government agencies, as well as advisory and consultative bodies on which NGOs are represented. The Directory is based on information that Departments have chosen to provide rather than meeting specific criteria. This Appendix demonstrates the wide variety of mechanisms for policy development.

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Australian Landcare Council
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
- Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation
- Cotton Research and Development Corporation
- Dairy Adjustment Authority
- Dairy Australia
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation
- Grains Research and Development Corporation
- Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation
- Land & Water Australia
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Murray—Darling Basin Commission
- Murray—Darling Basin Ministerial Council
- National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare
- National Land and Water Resources Audit
- National Rural Advisory Council
- Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council
- Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority
- Plant Breeder's Rights Office
- Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council
- Primary Industries Ministerial Council
- Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- Statutory Fishing Rights Allocation Review Panel
- Sugar Research and Development Corporation

- Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority
- Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority
- Wheat Export Authority

Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts

- Australia Business Arts Foundation Ltd
- Australia Council
- Australian Broadcasting Authority
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Australian Communications Authority
- Australian Film Commission
- Australian Film, Television and Radio School
- Australian National Maritime Museum
- Australian Postal Corporation
- Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Sports Drug Agency
- Bundanon Trust
- Cultural Ministers Council
- Film Australia Limited
- Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd
- Information Management Strategy Committee
- National Archives of Australia
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- National Museum of Australia
- National Office for the Information Economy
- NetAlert Ltd
- Networking the Nation
- Online Council
- Playing Australia, Festival Australia and Contemporary Music Touring Program
- Special Broadcasting Service Corporation
- Taxation Incentives for the Arts Committee
- Telstra Corporation Limited

Department of the Environment and Heritage

- Antarctic Animal Ethics Committee
- Antarctic Ethics Committee (Human Experimentation)
- Antarctic Science Advisory Committee

- Australia—Netherlands Committee on Old Dutch Shipwrecks
- Australian Antarctic Names and Medal Committee
- Australian Greenhouse Office
- Australian Heritage Commission
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Environment Protection and Heritage Council
- Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council
- National Cultural Heritage Committee
- National Environment Protection Council
- National Oceans Office
- New South Wales World Heritage Properties Ministerial Council
- Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator
- Research Assessment Committees
- Science Program Management Committee
- Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
- Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Ministerial Council
- Wet Tropics Ministerial Council

Department of Family and Community Services

- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Centrelink
- Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness
- Community Services Minister's Advisory Council
- Community Services Minister's Conference
- Emergency Relief State Advisory Committees
- National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.
- National Disability Advisory Council
- National Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Coordination and Development Committee Representatives

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

- Australia—China Council
- Australia—France Foundation
- Australia—Indonesia Institute
- Australia—Japan Foundation
- Australia—Korea Foundation

- Australia-India Council
- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- Australian National Commission for UNESCO
- Australian Trade Commission
- Editorial Advisory Board
- Australian Secret Intelligence Service
- Export Finance and Insurance Corporation
- Foreign Affairs Council
- Trade Policy Advisory Council

Department of Health and Ageing

- Acute Care Advisory Committee
- Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees
- Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd
- Australian Community Pharmacy Authority
- Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee Working Party on Highly Specialised Drugs
- Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
- Australian Health Ministers' Conference
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Australian Hearing
- Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis C and Related Diseases
- Australian National Council on Drugs
- Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council
- Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
- Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation
- Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand
- CRS Australia
- enHealth Council
- Health and Community Services Ministerial Council
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- HIC (Health Insurance Commission)
- Health Services Australia
- Hearing Services Advisory Committee
- Intergovernmental Committee on AIDS, Hepatitis C and Related Diseases
- Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs

- Measles Elimination Advisory Committee
- Medical Services Advisory Committee
- Methadone and Other Treatment Subcommittee
- Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy
- Monitoring and Evaluation Coordination Committee
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council
- National Advisory Committee to BreastScreen Australia
- National Advisory Committee to the National Cervical Screening Program
- National Advisory Council on Suicide Prevention
- National Breast Cancer Foundation
- National Disaster Relief (Health) Committee
- National Drug Research Strategy Committee
- National Drug Strategy Reference Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol
- National Expert Advisory Committee on Illicit Drugs
- National Expert Advisory Committee on School Drug Education
- National Expert Advisory Committee on Tobacco
- National Expert Advisory Group on Safety and Quality in Australian Health Care
- National Health and Medical Research Council
- National Immunisation Committee
- National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council
- National Public Health Partnership
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Pricing Authority
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal
- Pharmaceutical Health and Rational Use of Medicines Committee
- Private Health Insurance Administration Council
- Private Health Insurance Ombudsman
- Professional Services Review
- Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council
- Rural Health Support, Education and Training Program Committee
- Taskforce on Diabetes

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
- Aboriginal Hostels Limited

- Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Northern Territory
- Aboriginal Legal Service, Victoria
- Aboriginals Benefit Account
- Anindilyakwa Land Council
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Central Land Council
- Council for Multicultural Australia
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- Migration Agents Registration Authority
- Migration Review Tribunal
- National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
- Northern Land Council
- Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
- Refugee Review Tribunal
- Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations
- Tiwi Land Council
- Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board
- Torres Strait Regional Authority

Appendix Two

A sample of NGOs represented on, and associated with Commonwealth Government Advisory committees. NGOs listed are defined as ‘represented’ or ‘associated with’ on the basis either of their nomination onto the committee or because of individual members’ associations with the NGO.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia

National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare

- National Farmers’ Federation
- Australian Veterinary Association
- RSPCA Australia
- Animals Australia

Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts

NetAlert

- Australian Secondary Principals’ Association
- Internet Industry Association
- Australian Council for Children’s Films and Television
- Australian Council of State School Organisations
- Australian Parents Council

Department of the Environment and Heritage

National Environment Consultative Forum (included the following NGOs)

- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Climate Action Network Australia
- Conservation Council of Western Australia
- Conservation Council of South Australia
- Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra
- Environment Centre of the Northern Territory
- Environment Victoria
- Friends of the Earth
- Greenpeace Australia Pacific
- National Toxics Network
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- Queensland Conservation Council
- The Wilderness Society
- WWF Australia

Department of Family and Community ServicesNational Family Carers Voice

- ACT Young Carers Network
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- National Disability Advisory Council
- Australian Parents Advocacy
- Association for Children with a Disability
- Council on the Ageing
- Carers Australia
- Mental Health Council of Australia

Department of Foreign Affairs and TradeWTO Advisory Group

- National Farmers Federation
- Australian Information Industry Association
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Minerals Council of Australia
- National Tertiary Education Union
- International chamber of Commerce of Australia
- Australian Industry Group
- Australian Council for Overseas Aid
- Environment Business Australia
- Australian Food and Grocery Council

Department of Health and AgeingAustralian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council

- Australian Council of Social Service
- Australian Medical Association
- Australian Medical Writers Association
- Australian Nursing Federation
- Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Federation
- Australian Self Medication Industry
- Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists
- Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia
- Consumers' Health Forum of Australia

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- Council on the Ageing, Australia
 - Doctors' Reform Society
 - Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
 - Generic Medicines Industry Association
 - Medicines Australia
 - National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
 - National Pharmaceutical Services Association
 - National Prescribing Service
 - Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
 - Pharmacy Guild of Australia
 - Returned and Services League
 - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
 - Royal Australasian College of Physicians
 - Royal College of Nursing Australia
 - Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs:
DIMIA/NGO Humanitarian Issues Dialogue

- Australian Refugee Association
- Amnesty International
- Austcare
- Australian Catholic Migration and Refugee Office
- Australian Council for Overseas Aid
- Australian Red Cross Society
- International Commission of Jurists
- National Council of Churches in Australia
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Salvation Army
- Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma

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