



Media Release - October 29, 2008

Church takes seat at Senate Roundtable on charity and not-for-profit regulation

Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Fr Brian Lucas, this week participated in the Senate Standing Committee on Economics' roundtable discussion on the Inquiry into Disclosure Regimes for Charities and Not-For-Profit Organisations.

Accepting the Committee's invitation, Fr Lucas represented Catholic organisations at the table.

The inquiry is part of the broader Henry review of Australia's tax system.

The Charities inquiry seeks to examine the relevance of current disclosure regimes; models of regulation; and other measures to assist the sector to improve governance, standards, accountability and transparency in its use of public and government funds.

Commenting after the Roundtable, Fr Lucas said the charity and not for profit sector is highly complex and generally poorly understood by regulatory authorities.

"The unusual invitation of a Senate committee conducting a round table provided a good opportunity to bring together expertise to inform the Senate Committee's deliberations," Fr Lucas said.

"I hope the outcome of the enormous effort which the Senate Committee is putting into this committee will be a simplified and flexible regime of regulation that reflects the regulatory burden in proportion to risk.

"But more important than regulation would be government support to enhance self regulation and good governance across the whole of the not for profit sector.

"Many not for profit organisations are so small, and risk is so insignificant, that they don't need to be in any regulatory framework."

Ten participants represented a range of charitable and not for profit organisations at the roundtable, which formed part of the public hearings held in Canberra over the past two days.

A total of 175 submissions were received. The Committee is due to report by 4 December this year.

A copy of the following significant submissions are available.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Submission:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/economics_ctte/charities_08/submissions/sub74.pdf

Catholic Social Services Australia' Submission:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/economics_ctte/charities_08/submissions/sub167.pdf

St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia's Submission:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/economics_ctte/charities_08/submissions/sub90.pdf