



Level 2, 140 King Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

PO Box 13285  
Law Courts VIC 8010

Tel: +61 3 8621 8600  
Fax: +61 3 9614 4308

Email: [infonet@netball.asn.au](mailto:infonet@netball.asn.au)  
[www.netball.asn.au](http://www.netball.asn.au)

Office for the NFP Sector & NFP Sector Reform Council

By email: [nationalcompact@pmc.gov.au](mailto:nationalcompact@pmc.gov.au)

To Whom It May Concern

### **Best Practice Code for Engagement with Not-for-Profits, released 18 March 2013**

Netball welcomes the release of the draft Code of Best Practice for Engagement with the not-for-profit sector and the Gillard Government's commitment to make sure that the voice of the sector is heard.

Netball Australia also welcomes the Government's commitment to reform Australia's not-for-profit sector to deliver smarter regulation, reduce red tape and improve the transparency and accountability of the sector.

Netball Australia is a National Compact Partner and as such is committed to the National Compact's shared vision, purpose and principles:

*"The Australian Government and the not-for-profit sector will work together to improve social, cultural, civic, economic and environmental outcomes, building on the strengths of individuals and communities. This collaboration will contribute to improved community wellbeing and a more inclusive Australian society with better quality of life for all."*

In 2011, Netball in Australia (Netball Australia and the State/Territory Netball Associations) reviewed its strategic positioning. A new vision was endorsed "Netball is more than a game – we lead social change, strengthen and build capacity in communities and empower women and girls". The vision shifts the perception of netball as a sporting organisation to an agent for social change.

An important strategic aspiration centres on social responsibility and in particular netball's impact on the social, political, economic, education and health status of women and girls and vibrant relationships with community partners. Netball's repositioning maximises the social good and enhances netball's altruistic activities.

As Australia's leading female sport, netball strives to deliver fair, safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive environments for all Australians. We believe that netball offers the enjoyment of participation, a sense of belonging and life-long involvement – no matter whether that's as a player, coach, official, administrator, volunteer or fan.

Netball is ranked as the leading women's participation team sport and the top team based sport in Australia for 15 to 24 year olds. Over 1.2 million participants enjoy the game nationally and Australia has been dominant on the international stage since 1963. Netball Australia has more than 340,000 registered members; 5,000 clubs nationally; 570 associations; and eight member organisations.

Netball is the largest female community based sporting organisation in the world, with more than 70 nations playing and over 21 million participants world-wide. Netball can make a real difference in the lives of women and girls.



Over the last 2 years, netball has provided more than 20 responses to various government consultations, covering topics such as not-for-profit reform, gambling reform, broadcasting, human rights, anti-racism, and community wellbeing. Materials have included Amendment Bills, consultation papers, Exposure Drafts, draft action plans, draft policy and regulatory frameworks, strategy discussion papers, and House of Representative and or Senate Inquiries.

In most instances, netball noted that we have had limited expertise in many of the areas raised in the consultation process and accordingly our influence and impact on the scope of the consultation was narrow. This was often intensified by the complexity of the material provided, and the numerous consultation questions included.

The Best Practice Code for Engagement with Not-for-Profits (released 18 March 2013) includes some salient points. Most notably acknowledging:

- That there is a need to indicate early on whether engagement is for information, consultation or collaboration. The diagram (page 10) that outlines the spectrum of forms of engagement adds clarity.
- That many organisations rely on volunteers and or have limited time and expertise. The Productivity Commission noted that sports and physical recreation activities include sports teams, health and fitness centres, and horse and dog racing. In 2005-06, there were an estimated 9,256 organisations providing sports and physical recreation services, of which 3,649 were not-for-profits. Sporting teams and recreation clubs represented around half of these not-for-profits. Almost 182,000 volunteers were involved in sports and physical recreation activities.
- The need to provide material in simple language, clearly laid out, and concise. For example, Treasury's Fact Sheets and frequently asked questions that are released with consultation documents are valuable tools that outline limitations and assumptions, and assist to simplify complex matters.

Notwithstanding, it is also important to consider application of language, the audience and the sector given there are more than 600,000 not-for-profits.

For example, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission at both public consultations and in written material used the terms "charity" and "not-for-profit". At times the terms were used interchangeably, whilst at other times there was implied differentiation. This resulted in confusion and misperception that Netball Australia, as a body eligible for income tax exempt status under existing law and thus a not-for-profit under the Australian Taxation Office's framework, would be required to comply by the initial date of 1 July 2013. This was not the case. It is critical that there is nomenclature clarity across the entire not-for-profit sector.

- That there has been consultation fatigue on the sector and duplication. Netball would like to note that there were also a number of processes that had December and January time-frames for feedback, with resultant limitations.
- There is a need to improve the way government publicises consultations, shares information, and encourages sector engagement.

Sport is a central part of Australian Society. The Australian Sports Commission in Australia's Winning Edge outlines that sport is not only good for our sense of national pride, it also contributes to other important Government objectives in areas such as participation, economic development,

health, wellbeing and education. The Australian Sports Commission has enhanced its focus on governance, leadership, commercialisation and sustainability.

As such where issues relate to the diverse business of the sport sector, the principal government department/agency should look to engage with the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport to ascertain if there are likely to be any impacts and challenges for the broader sport industry.

For example, the Government intends that the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission will also regulate other types of not-for-profit organisations in the future. The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission has governance standards and the Australian Sports Commission has sports governance principles. Both of these documents are principle-based rather than prescriptive (although there are mandatory provisions), are aimed at meeting community levels of expectations as to how these types of organisations should be managed, include reporting obligations, and are designed to promote transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

- The range of methods for consultations, including use face-to-face, online and written submissions. For example, the opportunity to participate in round tables with a diversity of participants, and the opportunity to attend and or present evidence at public hearings, has enabled netball to extend its networks and understand linkages.

Netball appreciates the opportunity to provide its Submission and looks forward to ongoing involvement.

If you require further information, please contact me on phone (03) 8621 8600, or email [infonet@netball.asn.au](mailto:infonet@netball.asn.au).

Yours sincerely

*By email*

Nadine Cohen  
Head of Strategy & Government Liaison

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