

ACPA - Putting the Issues Forward...

THE CORE BUSINESS OF SERVICE PROVISION

Just as the business sector has voiced its concern about the Business Activity Statement (BAS) as a 'distraction', the Disability Sector has been hit hard with a range of legislative and administrative requirements, the net effect of which is that time and energy is often diverted from what we are here to provide – that is, services to people with disabilities and their carers. Examples include:

- GST requirements;
- Fringe Benefits Tax;
- How donations are administered;
- Competitive bidding for Government contracts; and
- Pressure by Government to secure Business Partnerships as a substitute for (inadequate) Government funding.

Government funding tends to focus on immediate service delivery. Overhead costs are often disregarded as underestimated. Nevertheless, service providers require those very administrative supports to be in a position to respond to the requirements as noted above. This is particularly difficult for smaller agencies who, in turn, are often less likely to be able to negotiate significant partnerships with the commercial sector.

If the Government believes that the strength of Non-Government Organisations in providing services is that they are generally better 'connected' to individuals, families and volunteers, then those strengths must not be inadvertently sidelined by an over-emphasis on legislative and administrative requirements.

Can the Commonwealth work with the State and Territory Governments to establish arrangements which balance the need for Non-Government Organisation's accountability with the time and resources required to simply 'stay afloat'? ¹

¹ Box, Greg and Knowles, John, (2001), "Putting the issues forward", *ACtion PAcked*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 6-7