
MEDIA RELEASE

COMMUNITY MUST HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE IN RUDD GOVERNMENT'S REFORM AGENDA

Today's unprecedented meeting of the non profit sector in Canberra saw over 50 leaders call for a more active role in public debate as it sought to redefine its relationship with Government.

Speaking at the conclusion of today's meeting, David Crosbie, co convenor of the forum said the Rudd Government's reform agenda will impact significantly on the sector and on the Australian community.

Specifically, the group called for a seat at the table on significant issues such as the global financial crisis, measures to address climate change, tax and regulatory reform, the national compact, workforce issues and other major issues affecting the Australian community.

"The diverse organisations and bodies that make up the non profit sector have an intimate knowledge of grass roots Australia and should be present when significant decisions affecting the community are made," Mr Crosbie said.

"We want to be at the table to help the Government make the best decisions. Policy won't work without us.

"For ten years we've been locked out of the big agenda.

"We welcome the Government's support at today's forum and look forward to details of their corresponding initiative," Mr Crosbie said.

The forum agreed to convene a 14-member steering group to guide the formation of a stronger voice for the sector. The next step is a much larger forum to be held in Canberra in February next year.

At today's meeting the non profit sector committed to identify common ground to foster stronger leadership and coordination within the sector.

"We look forward to taking our place at the table as the Government considers major policy issues in the months ahead," Mr Crosbie said.

The forum was addressed and convened by David Crosbie, Co Chair of the Government's National Compact Expert Panel and board member of Not for Profit Australia; and David Thompson, Chair of the National Roundtable of Non Profit Organisations. Elaine Henry, Chair of Nonprofit Australia also addressed the forum.

Senator Ursula Stephens, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion addressed the delegates and participated in the day's deliberations.

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Contact: Judith Tokley 0408 824 306 / 02 6285 1366