

# Deb Foskey MLA

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## Cons Council Funding vital

ACT Greens MLA Deb Foskey will move a motion in the Assembly today condemning the Federal Government for its decision to cut funding to conservation councils around Australia; and restating support for public funding of community based peak policy and advocacy groups.

“Good government is guided by the people out there doing the work. For the environment, that includes all the many nature and conservation groups throughout our community. For social services, that includes the countless organisations working in health, housing, welfare and participation” Dr Foskey said today.

“Peak bodies such as the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra play an invaluable role in advocating for the groups they represent, in bringing the range of needs and ideas together to develop and promote good policy.”

“There is no doubt that the advocacy and policy advice from peak organisations can be very annoying to government. It is however the kind of annoyance that is vital to its work.”

“Organised industry has money and the Government’s ear. The commercial media is concentrated and compliant. In this context, public funding of the peak advocacy groups, the non government organisations who are closest to the ground, who are often the only voice for the most marginalised people, and for our natural systems, is essential.”

“The Federal Government’s latest attack on the Non Government sector is no surprise. It began in 1998 when the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition was abolished. Now it has complete control of the national political process, we can expect this attack to be stepped up. The environment and conservation area might just be the first cab off the rank.”

“Civil Society is the only forum we have left for dialogue and dissent – and the peak organisations such as CCSERAC must be in a position to contribute to and contest the analysis and policy decisions of government” Dr Foskey said.

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