



MP wants tax review

Christensen says donations to conservation group should not be deductible

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MACKAY Conservation Group's tax deductibility status should be reviewed, according to Member for Dawson George Christensen.

"This group has nothing to do with conservation and everything to do with destroying the coal industry," he said.

Mr Christensen called on the Australian Tax Office to conduct a full review of organisations on the Deductible Gifts Register.

"In my electorate there are people working in the coal mines and many supporting industries who do the hard slog at work, take their pay and pay their tax dollars," he said.

"They will then have some of those tax dollars subsidise tax deductibility for donations to groups who would seek to take their very livelihood away from them."

Mr Christensen said that in a ruling at the end of last year, anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd was refused Deductible Gifts Register

status by the ATO because it found the group's main activity was campaigning against whalers, not "providing any direct care to animals".

"This is a very telling finding, and I believe the ATO will also find that groups like Mackay Conservation Group are in exactly the same boat," he said.

"If they were saving turtles with Mackay Turtle Watch, or planting trees with Conservation Volunteers, or improving soils with Canegrowers and Reef Catchments, it would be a different story."

Mackay Conservation Group co-ordinator Ellen Roberts said the federal MP

did not fully understand the work the group did.

"A survey done last year showed that 62% of voters in Dawson, regardless of how they vote politically, share our concerns about the dumping of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area," she said.

"Mr Christensen should make sure that he is listening to his constituents before he makes comments about local community groups."

She said their work was more important than ever.



Member for Dawson George Christensen.