

PHILANTHROPY
AUSTRALIA

Inspiring stories of giving

Philanthropy for a generous
and inclusive Australia





Front cover
Children's Ground,
Mparntwe, Northern Territory
See story page 32

Inspiring stories of giving: volume 1 is the first of a series of publications about the positive impact of Australian philanthropy. This volume provides a snapshot and highlights giving from Victoria and New South Wales. Our next volume will focus on stories from the other states and territories. The series will ultimately become a showcase of the best of philanthropy across Australia.

Inside front and back cover

A community farmer group in Kenya is standing in a demonstration plot showcasing on-farm integrated technologies and practices as part of the Drylands Development Program. The group is trained in technologies such as rainwater harvesting, zaipits, agroforestry, micro dosing, small-scale irrigation, on-farm Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, soil conservation, contour bunds, and fertility enhancement. These demonstration plots show how the various technologies integrate and overlap, serving as a learning hub and encouraging community members to adopt these technologies through farmer-to-farmer training and extension. The programs are supported by donors to World Vision Australia. See story page 76.



Above
Jack Heath, CEO,
Philanthropy Australia

Stories express what it means to be human. And with philanthropy meaning ‘the love of humanity’, what better way to share the messages about the joy of giving than through storytelling?

We teach and we learn from one another through story. A good story can take us on a journey and surprise us.

Strong stories stay with us. We remember captivating stories. We are moved by them – and sometimes stories change the course of our lives.

At Philanthropy Australia our vision is for a generous and inclusive Australia and our purpose is to inspire more and better philanthropy. This publication delivers on a key pillar of our 2022–25 Strategic Plan to “inspire a new wave of giving through stories and campaigns”. It is the first in a series and features examples of giving predominantly from Victoria and New South Wales.

Our next volume will be published to coincide with 2024 National Conference which is taking place in Adelaide – the first time we have held conference outside Sydney and Melbourne. Volume 2 will spotlight stories of giving across South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory. It will also profile the philanthropy of family foundations across the nation.

We are always on the lookout for inspiring stories of philanthropy to feature on our website, Philanthropy Weekly ebulletin, publications, short videos and social media channels. If you have a wonderful story of philanthropic impact you’d like us to know about, please send us a 100-word pitch to marketing@philanthropy.org.au. Perhaps it could be part of our next publication!

Philanthropy Australia acknowledges and pays our respects to the past and present traditional Custodians and Elders of the country on which we work. We also accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Right
Children's Ground,
Mparntwe, Northern Territory
See story page 32



Contents

1	Introduction	6–7	How Beyond Blue's 'The Way Back' program went national
2	Welcome from the CEO	8–9	From Brave to SEED 'Our country needs healthy families'
3	Acknowledgement of Country	10–11	Melbourne Recital Centre Where young composers' dreams come to life
82	Acknowledgements	12–15	Changing the face of politics
		16–17	Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Remarkable change by self-determination
		18–19	Philanthropy, government and the battle against future pandemics
		20–21	A New Approach How philanthropy and creativity are working together to turn Australia into a cultural powerhouse
		22–23	'We wanted to be involved in an organisation that is kicking goals'
		24–27	Lessons from Black Saturday recovery funding
		28	'Some women want an extra \$50 a week, some want to take over the world'
		29–31	Grattan Institute The philanthropy behind powerful systems change advocacy
		32–35	Staying the course for generational change with Children's Ground
		36–37	How one family's experience of autism led to a PhD scholarship

38–40
The importance of
the first 1000 days of life

41
The Stella Prize
Advancing literature by women

42–44
How the cervical cancer vaccine was
built on the philanthropy of promise

45
A complete circle
The Melbourne Women's Fund
gift that 'keeps on giving'

46–47
Hotel Etico, where workers living
with disabilities are 'front and centre'

48–49
The baristas of Brunswick Street
(but not who you think)

50–51
How a modest grant led to
millions of dollars in government
homelessness programs

52–53
Social enterprises are
the key to success for people
facing job challenges

54–55
The book on miscarriage
the Victorian Women's Trust
knew had to be written

56–57
The children's playgroup
that led to government backing

58–59
Philanthropy backs AAP
Indigenous Affairs desk

60–61
An important initiative for the driest
inhabited continent in the world

62–63
The long campaign to
ban nuclear weapons

64–65
The Impact of YES
A philanthropic collaboration
that changed Australia

66–67
How big data and philanthropy
are taking on child exploitation

68–71
Amplifying what government
can achieve in higher education

72–73
The arts and the
power of philanthropy

74–75
Warddeken Daluk
(Women's) Ranger Program
New ways with old knowledge

76–79
Business, governments and everyday
donors get behind World Vision's bid
to regreen 1 billion hectares

80–81
How philanthropy supported
a 'moment of great opportunity'
behind the Net Zero Authority



How Beyond Blue's 'The Way Back' program went national



Above
Georgie Harman, CEO,
Beyond Blue

The CEO of Beyond Blue, Georgie Harman, uses the example of a car crash. A person badly injured in an automobile accident will be sent home from hospital with all kinds of support: nurses, home help, wound care, psychological services.

But as an equally life-threatening event, a suicide attempt was not offered the same level of after-care. Often, people would be patched up and sent home to the exact same situation and hopelessness.

"They might have a piece of paper saying, here's your psychology appointment in a week's time," Georgie said.

"Nobody would follow up. We know the highest risk of suicide is somebody with a history of attempts, and in the first three months after an attempt, yet people would be discharged into ... nothing. It was a massive gap."

Beyond Blue, along with an entire ecosystem of philanthropic support, advisers, community members, government departments, primary health networks and other interested parties, decided to take on the issue in 2014, armed with a \$100,000 philanthropic donation from the Northern Territory, to address suicide prevention in that part of Australia. Beyond Blue researched, sought advice, created a plan and developed what would become known as The Way Back Support Service, partnering the Royal Darwin Hospital and local provider Anglicare. From the start, the service was evaluated, pulled apart, tweaked, and proven to be effective to scale.

"With that evidence behind us, we got a real fire in our belly and got seed funding from the Movember Foundation, which we also added to through other donations," Georgie said.

"We set up a small number of pilot sites and kept evaluating."

By 2018, the evidence of effective support in The Way Back Service was building and the Federal Government committed \$37.6 million over four years to grow it, on the condition all states and territories matched that funding.

"Even then, Beyond Blue put \$5 million of our own fundraising revenue into the project, so we still had skin in the game," Georgie said.

"We wanted to be free to take risks that government couldn't, or to push into certain areas that weren't funded to be pushed."

The Paul Ramsay Foundation and NSW car rally fundraisers Trish and Peter Fehon were other philanthropists to become involved and the support service thrived, eventually helping 20,000 at-risk Australians.

A simultaneously proud, happy and sad day for Beyond Blue was 30 June 2023, when the organisation handed the entire program over to federal and state governments to manage, now embedded under a new national agreement for mental health and suicide prevention, along with more than \$150 million in federal and state and territory funding, titled Universal Aftercare.

"It gives me goosebumps, every time I think about what the team has done, because that was our ultimate goal, along with everybody who worked with us," Georgie reflected.

"We've achieved system change. We achieved our advocacy goals."

Beyond Blue is working on other long-term streams of work to attempt end-to-end system change but this was the organisation's first success of creating such a system, and always with the realisation that evaluations might have judged it didn't work and should be shelved. It was a risk, and one only philanthropy could take.

"Part of Beyond Blue's strength is that we can attract the resourcing and apply our influence and brand to be able to try different things and to take risks that perhaps others can't take, and to stand up and incubate new models of care and to attract non-government funding to try new things," she said.

"That's a really big part of our DNA, and I think The Way Back is a really great example of how we've been able to do that."

"The Way Back also shows what can be achieved when governments, philanthropy, service providers, researchers bring their unique strengths to the table, put politics and self-interest aside, think outside of current structures, with humanity and really listen to the community and evidence."

If you experience emotional distress as a result of reading this story, please contact someone you trust and/or call Beyond Blue's support service on 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14 at any time.

If life is in danger, please call 000.

From Brave to SEED

‘Our country needs healthy families’



Above
Bernadette Black AM,
Social Economic
Ambassador, SEED
and Founding Director,
Brave Foundation

As origin stories go, Bernadette Black’s is highly compelling. Her drive to establish Brave Foundation as its first CEO – an organisation supporting young parents into education or work – was grounded in her own experience as a pregnant 16-year-old trying to navigate Centrelink. She found the experience profoundly unwelcoming and unhelpful, and it created a deep determination in her to one day change the system.

Thirty years on, she is doing that. Bernadette is heading up a new entity under the auspices of Brave, and building on its work, called the Social Economic Empowerment Department (SEED). In SEED, Bernadette has devised a four-stage, 10-year roadmap to completely overhaul the social service support system for young mothers and fathers as a place to flourish rather than flounder.

Bernadette handed over the reins of Brave to a new CEO and in 2022, SEED was launched with the support of Reverend Tim Costello AO. SEED consists of an Advisory Council called the Social Economic Empowerment Advisory Council (SEEAC), with 18 subject matter experts from around Australia. It has significant government support in the shape of the SEED Policy Round Table, which meets regularly and is made up of senior government officials across federal and state departments, through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

SEED is born from lived experience, and the emerging SEED Lived Experience Advisory Group is key. This lived experience group will continue to inform SEED’s work with firsthand insights on how we can overcome the systemic obstacles young parents face.

SEED’s mission is to simplify the Centrelink experience for young families. SEED proposes a ‘one door’ access point for all families across 1,000 days, from conception to two years, through which all services are linked. The current system, says Bernadette, is not fit for purpose and only creates hurdles to accessing services for young people most at risk, which creates further intergenerational dependence.

“We will make sure every parent in Australia is met with one door connecting them to support, payments, wellbeing and safety, but most importantly their dreams and aspirations. We will frame language in policy to build and unify, not confuse or provide obstacles,” says Bernadette.

Her first experience of Centrelink left her feeling miserable:

“My auntie took me to get some forms and I knew immediately that I didn’t want to come back.

“My mum took me again when my son was six weeks old. We waited for hours, ready with all my forms. I tried smiling at people. It didn’t work. Why didn’t they smile back? As I waited for more than three hours juggling my baby, no one looked happy, and there was the same sense of agitation and desperation in the air that I recalled from the last time.

“What is the opposite of flourish? It’s to wither and die. My first two experiences with Centrelink exposed a new reality for parents, and this environment was accelerating the withering process.”

But Bernadette was determined and eventually finished Year 12, then further education to become a nurse. She wrote a book called *Brave Little Bear* in her 20s to share her experiences of teen parenthood. At the same time, she began a ‘directory of services’ on her desk, which was a list of programs for young families. In the following 15 years, the directory grew to almost 1,000 organisations helping young parents. She later licensed it to the federal government.

Enquiries about *Brave Little Bear* continued from all over Australia, and although Bernadette was busy working as a nurse and raising her son, she knew more work with young parents was calling. She established Brave Foundation in 2009 and in 2014 with the support of a bequest of \$500,000 from the late Anne Tomlinson-Walsh, launched Brave nationally and was appointed as inaugural CEO.

At Brave, Bernadette and her team developed the Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT) initiative, which is a personalised program matching a pregnant or parenting young person with a mentor working from a local hub site, community organisation or via outreach. Virtual mentors are also available for rural and remote participants and those experiencing isolation due to mental health or other complexities.

Mentors walk alongside their participants to support them with educational and workforce participation, goalsetting, career path guidance, health and wellbeing, financial or housing assistance programs, everyday infant care, transport or other requirements.

Between 2009 and 2022, Brave grew to more than 22 staff. Throughout this time, Bernadette was named Tasmanian Australian of the Year 2019, Bernardos Australian Mother of the Year and was made Member of the Order of Australia in 2021.

Funding cliffs

Despite the accolades and evidence to show that Brave’s program was successful, Brave faced three different funding cliffs. After the third, Bernadette launched a ‘No Stone Unturned’ financial strategy and the Paul Ramsay Foundation stepped in with a ‘lifeline’ of six months’ funding in 2021.

“In what felt like turning the Titanic around, we then secured \$13.5 million in funding in just nine months,” says Bernadette.

“It was made up of federal, state, philanthropic and private funding.”

In Bernadette’s final three years as CEO of Brave, the organisation supported more than 1,000 young parents – mostly mothers – and more than 1,600 children.

Included in that tranche of funding was the means to establish SEED, reporting to Brave’s board.

“There is a lot of work to do in the next decade. I am now ‘Nana Bebe’ to toddler Juliette and when I see my 30-year-old son and his family, I return to my ambitious dream from so many years ago – that all families know what it’s like to flourish, to be nurtured and to nurture,” says Bernadette.

Bernadette Black says:

“
Our country needs healthy families. We are depending on it. We need to help families quickly, early and at the right time – through one door.

Melbourne Recital Centre

Where young composers' dreams come to life



Above
Sandra Willis, CEO,
Melbourne Recital Centre

Alicia McFarlane lived by the Murray River, seven hours from Melbourne and was doing Year 12 at a state school that did not have an established music program. This wouldn't be a problem unless, like Alicia, you happen to dream of being a musical composer, creating works worthy of the world-renowned stage at Melbourne Recital Centre.

This is why it was a dream for Alicia to be able to tune in live, virtually, to a workshop between young composers and pre-eminent Melbourne string ensemble, the Flinders Quartet. It enabled her to hear how the ensemble took advice from the composers, how they included specific direction in the score for each instrument's performance, and how the cello and violin explored their interplay during rehearsals.

This is Melbourne Recital Centre's Making Waves program, offering workshops for young composers and established professional musicians – to the benefit of all.

"Making Waves was born out of a need in the education system," says the Centre's Learning and Access Manager Belinda Ashe.

"Virtual School Victoria, which is Distance Education rebranded, came to us with a gap in what they believed they could deliver for their students. So, we took on the role of presenting the world premieres for student compositions, showcasing these works, but also allowing the students to workshop their pieces with professional musicians to improve that final VCE assessment task. It's priceless for the student."

Performances of the pieces used to happen in the Virtual School Victoria staff room. Now they happen in Melbourne Recital Centre's Primrose Potter Salon. Things have stepped up.

"What's extraordinary is that these students' Year 12 compositions are being brought to life by professional musicians on the same stage that has played host to so many of the world's great artists. To me, that's instantly creating career pathways," says Melbourne Recital Centre CEO Sandra Willis.

Up on the Victoria-NSW border, having watched and learned, Alicia wrote a composition for her VCE that was good enough to be selected for the second phase of Making Waves. This is where pieces are honed, ready for performance by the Flinders Quartet in front of an audience. Her piece then went on to March for Women, a showcase of female composers, inspiring her to the extent that she decided to double the BA (Science) she began at the University of Melbourne with a concurrent Music Diploma because now, as she told Belinda, she had dared to dream she could compose for a living.

For Belinda, this was a moment of pure joy, to hear a tangible validation of the work Melbourne Recital Centre has been undertaking since its opening 15 years ago, but even more so in the last seven years. The Centre is not only about hosting the most amazing and diverse musicians possible, but also about encouraging, training and inspiring future composers.

The reality is that none of the above would be possible without philanthropic support. The Centre's extensive Learning and Access program is funded by a diverse community of donors, philanthropic foundations and government funding initiatives. These include the Victorian Department of Education's Strategic Partnerships Program and the Hugh D T Williamson Foundation, who provide direct support to the Making Waves program.

"We are funded by the state government to keep the lights on and open the doors, but so much of what brings this building to life requires significant additional support from the private sector, whether that's from box office sales or philanthropic contributions," Sandra says.

Right
Inventi Ensemble
are part of the
Making Waves program at
Melbourne Recital Centre

The Centre's Head of Development, Alistaire Bowler, explains that the impact of philanthropy runs even wider in allowing the Centre to nimbly explore musical and learning opportunities for Victorians of all ages and from all walks of life. This is enabled by an ambitious consortium of philanthropic foundations and individual donors who have come together, pooling their resources to amplify their impact and helping the Centre achieve deeper and longer-term outcomes. The goal is to make the Centre's learning and access programs accessible and available to all music lovers, either free of charge or at the lowest possible price, requiring funders who understand that it's not about one-off experiences as much as developing deep and ongoing connections between Victorians and the Centre.

It has taken many years of robust evaluation and relationship-building to develop the level of trust and co-operation that means that the Centre's Learning and Access team can operate intuitively. The team uses the consortium's funding to pilot programs, work with specific communities to explore the best options for inclusion and to fine-tune existing programs. Even Belinda's job was only possible because of an early philanthropic grant from the William Buckland Foundation.

"They offered catalytic funding for us to explore the concept and pilot the role, which we are delighted to say has now been fully embedded in our organisation," Alistaire says.

"Melbourne Recital Centre is a connector of dots, a matchmaker of different communities," he says.

"We're a meeting point for lots of small, independent professional arts groups, of schools, funders, the private sector and of government. We're able to put all the pieces of the puzzle together to add value and create impact."

Sandra enthuses that the Centre's offering to the community continues to evolve and that sustained support from the philanthropic community has played a major role in enabling the organisation to embrace change.

"The breadth of the Centre's program has grown significantly from when it first opened in 2009 with a wide range of musical styles and genres now represented on our stages. This is coupled with an extensive suite of learning access and outreach programs that enable us to bring the joy of music into the lives of more Victorians. These impactful programs have only been able to blossom thanks to the generous and ongoing philanthropic support that we receive from our community," she says.



Changing the face of politics

Right

Left to right: Mariam Riza,
Cr Bernadette Hogan
(Buloke Shire Council),
Cr Angelica Panopoulos
(Mayor of Merri-bek),
Akuch Anyieth,
Binda Gopal,
Nicola Foxworthy,
Nathalie Farrah

The Pathways to Politics Program for Women is a national, proudly non-partisan initiative that is changing the face of politics by equipping diverse women with the skills, knowledge, confidence and networks they need to run for elected office and thrive as political leaders. It brings together significant expertise and experience from across Australia's political spectrum to provide participants with networking opportunities and practical training that emphasises good governance, ethics and leadership.

The program supports women and non-binary people to make the journey to public office by connecting them with a network of women from diverse political, professional and cultural backgrounds. Participants also complete modules on topics including political vision, campaign planning, media training, speech-writing and leadership skills.

Pathways to Politics has made a significant impact in advancing female political participation since it launched in 2016, with over a third of alum going through pre-selection or running for office, and 31 electoral successes achieved nationally across the political spectrum at local, state and federal levels of government.

Pathways to Politics is the first Australian non-partisan initiative aimed at political gender parity and was initiated through the vision of Carol Schwartz AQ, who fundamentally believes in the value of more female leaders. For Carol this is about optimising outcomes for our country by ensuring that men and women together share power, leadership and decision making.

Modelled on the highly successful Harvard University program 'Harvard Square to the Oval Office', this ground-breaking program is a collaborative initiative of the Trawalla Foundation, Women's Leadership Institute Australia and the University of Melbourne, and is led by National Co-Convenors Sarah Buckley and Dr Meredith Martin.

Sarah Buckley said women from all walks of life are encouraged to take part in the program, and she is proud of the program's ability to attract diverse women – professionally, politically and culturally.

"Often it takes a little encouragement or a prompt from a trusted source for women to apply," she said.

"We have a wonderfully engaged national Pathways community that includes alum and current and former politicians, and they are our greatest champions."

The national rollout of the program has correlated with an increase in women's participation in politics. Earlier in 2023 the World Economic Forum released its Global Gender Gap report. On the Political Empowerment index, Australia's ranking increased from 50th place in 2022 to 29th. In 2016, when the program began, Australia ranked 61st on the same index.

While the data shows that more women are finally entering politics around the country, the increase is not evenly distributed and is yet to be sustained. As of July 2023, 44% of federal parliamentarians and 48% of state and territory parliamentarians are women, but it varies significantly state by state. Women account for 52% of elected representatives in the ACT, 50% in Tasmania and 48% in Victoria and the Northern Territory. However, in Queensland, only 31% of state parliamentarians are women.

The program continues to grow in demand, with a 2023 intake of nearly 150 women nationally and an unprecedented number of applications. The program is delivered by state and territory based university partners the University of Melbourne, QUT, UNSW, Charles Darwin University, the University of Adelaide and University of Canberra, and in 2024 will be fully national. The program is just the start of support provided, with alum able to access one-to-one mentoring, skills sessions and even pro bono legal advice as they run for office.



Right

Left to right: Dr Samantha Ratnam MP (Leader of the Victorian Greens), Julianna Addison MP (Labor member for Wendouree and an alum of the Pathways to Politics program) and Cathrine Burnett-Wake (former Liberal member of the Victorian Legislative Council for Eastern Victoria and an alum of the program)





Maranguka Justice Reinvestment

Remarkable change by self-determination

The local Indigenous leaders in Bourke, north-western NSW, set about creating a remarkable change in their community in 2013 to tackle rising crime rates and social disadvantage with support from the philanthropic community. The leaders formed Maranguka (meaning 'caring for others' in Ngemba language) and partnered with Just Reinvest NSW as the first steps in shifting their future.

The philanthropic support came from the Dusseldorp Forum and the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, who committed multi-year seed funding to the core costs of what became the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment team – the first justice reinvestment initiative in Australia.

Bourke had been a town that was isolated, not just because of where it was in the dry and hot NSW hinterland but also because of its reputation. Shutters were on main street windows. There were high rates of crime and imprisonment. Stories appeared in the media that compared Bourke's crime rate with United Nations' data and concluded Bourke was the "most dangerous place in the world". The transformation in the years following Maranguka was striking though, and the initiative was recognised with Philanthropy Australia's 2019 Large Grant award, sponsored by Deakin University.

Local leader Alister Ferguson, who had been working as a state public servant in the town, knew things had to change.

"It didn't seem overly ambitious to be a safe city," Alister says.

"It comes down to expectations and lifting our standards, especially for our young people, to show them there was life beyond the levy banks of Bourke."

Maranguka is a First Nations model for self-governance that enables the community to determine its priorities and agenda for government and non-government services. By joining up with Just Reinvest NSW, it meant the Bourke community was also committing to a place-based and data-driven approach to reduce crime and address its underlying causes.

Alister left his job to become the Founder and Executive Director of the Maranguka Community Hub, but he was unemployed for eight months until it was financially up and running.

In the interim, Alister kept talking to the local community about the changes that were needed: young locals had to stay out of jail, family violence had to stop and police needed to look more at the causes of crime.

The concepts are not new: they date back to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody more than 20 years ago. But this time, it was different.

“What we’ve managed to do is involve the community and encourage the community that there’s a better way,” Alister says.

“Indigenous communities are often expected to align to other people’s versions of self-determination.”

The results were remarkable: within a few years, there was a 42% decline in the number of days adults spent in custody; a 39% decline in domestic violence incidents reported to police and an 84% increase in the VET course completion rate. An impact assessment found that the new approach had saved \$3.1 million in 2017, driven by savings in the justice system but also social services and healthcare costs.

The practical aspects of the initiative were often simple and produced results: a learner driver program was implemented, which led to fewer driving offences; police would visit known family violence offenders and talk to them about how to reduce the risks. Collaboration, communication and community became the watchwords between locals and the police.

One of the other important innovations has been the establishment of a unique governance structure that is embodied in the Bourke Tribal Council that represents the breadth of local Indigenous family and language groups. Alister believes the philanthropic support has effectively provided the means for the Tribal Council to apply cultural authority to the processes involved in the program.

Dusseldorp Forum Executive Director Teya Dusseldorp says that the changes will only be sustainable if the community lead.

“When you hear as a Foundation that the community is committed to lead the change required, you really want to get behind them,” she says.

“You can’t underestimate the courage required to do this. It can often come at a great personal cost.”

Alister says:

“I have a high level of optimism about the future,” he says. “Justice for Aboriginal people comes in all shapes and forms. And our Bourke community is engaged and participating like never before.”

Since receiving Philanthropy Australia’s 2019 Large Grant award there have been significant milestones achieved by the initiative.

The Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments committed to ten years of funding to support the ongoing implementation of Maranguka’s community-led plan as part of the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative.

The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group was established as a key site of interaction and direct engagement between local Aboriginal community leadership and government and non-government organisations.

Collaboration Agreements were established formalising the process of collaborative partnerships in Bourke across services and agencies to deliver on the community’s Safe, Smart and Strong strategy aimed at ensuring thriving young people and families.

Maranguka established the Palimaa data platform and has become Australia’s lighthouse initiative for community and data-led place-based change. Central to the work is data access, sharing and storytelling, guided by the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and the leadership of Maranguka and the Bourke Tribal Council.

In a critical step toward self-determination Maranguka became its own entity ‘Maranguka Ltd’ establishing a board, constitution, rule book and successfully registering as an Australian charity.

On the back of Maranguka’s success the interest in justice reinvestment has expanded across the Country. In 2022 the Albanese government committed \$81.5 million to establish 30 community-led justice reinvestment initiatives, like Bourke, across Australia and are establishing an independent national justice reinvestment unit.

Philanthropy, government and the battle against future pandemics

The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly be seen as a key event of the 21st century. The response by governments in Australia, both state and federal, has been well documented. Less so, is the role of philanthropy as a catalyst for co-investment in medical research about infectious diseases and future pandemics.

The most high-profile example is the August 2022 launch of the Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic Therapeutics at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity. The Doherty Institute is a joint venture between the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Therapeutics is the branch of medicine concerned with the treatment of disease as compared to prevention.

The creation of the Centre was made possible by a transformational \$250 million donation to the University of Melbourne by international businessman and philanthropist, Mr Geoffrey Cumming, a Canadian and New Zealand citizen who lives in Melbourne.

The Victorian Government committed an initial \$75 million to the Centre, in recognition of the need to advance the science behind therapeutics.

The mission of the Centre is to enable rapid design and development of therapeutics for future pandemics. It will form a key part of the Australian Institute for Infectious Disease, an initiative of the Doherty Institute, the University of Melbourne, Burnet Institute and the Victorian Government to prepare for and respond to current and future pandemics.

Director of the Doherty Institute Professor Sharon Lewin AO said at the launch event:

“The Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic Therapeutics will focus on research in emerging, high potential molecular platforms and computational techniques to develop new therapeutics with unprecedented speed. It will provide long-term support for both junior and senior researchers to tackle big and bold ideas.”

Professor Duncan Maskell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne acknowledged the unprecedented support of Mr Geoff Cumming and the Victorian Government.

“The University of Melbourne thanks Mr Geoff Cumming for his incredibly generous donation and the Victorian Government for its contribution to pandemic therapeutics research. Private and public funding is critical to establishing a research centre of this global size, scale and significance,” Professor Maskell said.

“The Centre is expected to deliver huge benefits for Australia, attracting global talent focused on breakthrough research in the development of treatments that aim to reduce the progression of diseases and ultimately save lives.”

Right

Left to right: Geoff and Anna Cumming, Professor Duncan Maskell (Vice-Chancellor, The University of Melbourne), Professor Sharon Lewin AO (Director of the Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity) and Professor James McCluskey AO (then Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), The University of Melbourne)



Middle right

Geoff and Anna Cumming during a laboratory tour of the Doherty Institute

Bottom right

High containment laboratory at the Doherty Institute

In June 2023, the Centre announced a \$5 million seed grant from The Ian Potter Foundation. Chairman of The Ian Potter Foundation, Mr Charles Goode AC, said the success of the Cumming Global Centre would require a global effort.

“Geoff Cumming’s gift seeks 5:1 leverage from other funders, and matched funding from visionary partners will be essential to the success of the new Centre,” Mr Goode said.

“The Ian Potter Foundation is proud to support and endorse the Centre in achieving its mission and demonstrates our commitment to investing in high-quality, transformational science.”

The Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic Therapeutics will improve humanity’s medical resiliency, save lives and bring broad benefits for coming generations. In addition, anecdotal feedback reports that Mr Cumming’s exceptional commitment has already raised the sights of Australian philanthropists who are now giving more substantial donations to causes they support.



A New Approach

How philanthropy and creativity are working together to turn Australia into a cultural powerhouse



Above
Kate Fielding, CEO,
A New Approach

Australia can become a cultural powerhouse where arts and culture are a part of the day-to-day lives of Australians. A consortium of like-minded philanthropic bodies are working together to achieve exactly that.

The organisation driving this effort is Australia's leading arts and culture think tank, A New Approach (ANA). This not-for-profit organisation grew from a program founded in 2018 by an initial three-year investment from The Myer Foundation, The Tim Fairfax Family Foundation and the Keir Foundation. There are now 11 philanthropic partners. Today ANA's work is used in policy development processes for arts and culture across all levels of government around the country.

ANA was born when those three philanthropic organisations combined to help change the way governments understood the contemporary role that arts and culture play in Australia.

"I was told, 'We want to improve public policy settings for arts and culture through evidence – work out how to do that,'" says Kate Fielding, ANA's CEO.

"What really struck me about this initiative was that there was an appetite for new solutions, for jumping into the unknown and a willingness to back the outcome we're playing for – and being brave in working out how to get there. For my perspective, that's a hallmark of the philanthropists who have backed ANA."

ANA's purpose, Kate says, is to "foster evidence-led conversations about public policy settings and achieve a better environment for arts, culture and creativity in Australia".

That conversation became louder in January 2023 when the Federal Government released a new national cultural policy, a five-year plan to renew and revive Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector.

"The policy document includes our vision for Australia, which is for Australia to become a cultural powerhouse by 2035," says Kate.

"We're delighted our research is also featured in the document."

Becoming a cultural powerhouse was the theme of ANA's submission to the National Cultural Policy consultation in 2022. It posited that Australia had not yet reached that status but by 2035 should be 'a cultural powerhouse whose compelling creativity is locally loved, nationally valued and globally influential'. By that date Australia could be 'home to a \$200 billion industry that produces compelling experiences and employs one million people'.

Kate says that if this is achieved, Australia will become a great place for audiences and creators.

"We already have high rates of cultural participation and attendance in Australia and the aim is for that to become a celebrated part of what it means to be Australian, along with securing the policy and investment settings that unlock the power of arts and culture as social, cultural and economic contributors."

The impact ANA has achieved through its work includes greater clarity on the role of arts and culture.

"Our work has been changing the understanding of how people think and feel about arts and culture and what everyday Australians see as the role of arts and culture in their day-to-day lives," says Kate.

"We've used those insights, as well as up-to-date international and Australian evidence of the benefits of cultural participation, to help inform government policy on all three levels of government."

Right
Members of
A New Approach's Board,
Reference Group and staff,
and representatives of
ANA's Philanthropic
Partner organisations

ANA has shown through its independent research that many Australians already participate in and benefit from the arts and culture. A report it produced found that Australians are significant contributors to 'financial inflows' to arts, culture and creativity, with more than \$45.6 billion in annual household expenditure being spent in the entertainment and recreation industry. Leonard Vary, CEO of The Myer Foundation, says the creation of ANA had, at its heart, a desire on the part of philanthropy to create a body that would independently provide evidence to support the case for the importance of funding of arts and culture.

"In Australia, there are many voices around issues connected to the arts," Leonard says.

"Most of them have vested interests and, until the work of A New Approach, there was a lack of objective data as to the state of the arts, the way in which the arts and culture in this country are seen and valued. Who pays for them? At what level? Who are the consumers? What does 'middle Australia' think about arts and culture? That was missing, and when one takes the view that one wants to champion arts and culture in that noisy ecosystem, facts are enormously helpful."

Leonard says from The Myer Foundation's perspective, ANA is delivering on all of the foundation's key objectives.

"We understand that when one creates an organisation from scratch, and that is the case with A New Approach, it takes time," he says.

"Remember, it was an idea, and then the idea was brought to life by way of the creation of a board, and the organisation was initially incubated in the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and it is now independent, having built its own reputation and developed its critical infrastructure."

Kate Fielding says:

“

ANA's journey, from idea into action and then impact truly embodies the power of creativity and philanthropy working together.



‘We wanted to be involved in an organisation that is kicking goals’



Above
Rob McLean AM

Philanthropist Rob McLean AM is excited as he talks about kelp. He's explaining the potential for 'blue carbon' and recent exploration of the concept of mangroves, sea grasses and regrown kelp forests becoming options for carbon storage. The program is an initiative of The Nature Conservancy, a global organisation that Rob helped bring to Australia and for whom he has chaired the Australian Advisory Board since 2005. It is looking to regrow one hectare of the decimated Tasmanian kelp forests, with plans to expand to 10 hectares – and maybe 100 hectares – if the experiment proves a success.

This is one of many of the organisation's projects that Rob is across, as a major donor and advisor, and he is deeply passionate about the work.

“When I first heard about The Nature Conservancy, somebody had described them as ‘the problem solvers for the environment,’” he says.

“In my life at McKinsey and beyond, that had been what I did: problem solving, so it appealed to me.”

The McLean Foundation, along with another leading philanthropist, David Thomas, was instrumental in funding feasibility studies and then the early work of The Nature Conservancy Australia, which has since participated in projects everywhere from Albany to Cape York to Borneo.

The organisation has been able to make strides because of the quality of its scientists, but also because it has the freedom to explore ideas and to trial potential environmental solutions, thanks to unrestricted funding from Rob and other donors, including a significant capacity-building donation of \$1 million by the McLean Foundation in 2014. It's a huge part of his giving ethos, not to tie funding to a particular program, potentially handcuffing those you are trusting to make the largest possible impact with the donated funds.

“We want to be involved in an organisation that is kicking goals and doing great work, so capacity-building funding is what tickles our fancy,” Rob says.

“Many donors want to invest in projects, not overheads, and there is a place for that, but we think there's greater impact that comes from funding for capacity. The easiest money to get is project money but the most valuable and most effective is helping an organisation grow and scale. What continues to excite me about The Nature Conservancy is that it continues to innovate and come up with new ideas and ways of protecting nature and people.”

Paula McLean speaks passionately of the joy that comes for philanthropists in becoming deeply involved with organisations: to learn their world, make true connections and know how and where you can help.

This is certainly true of the work she, Rob and eldest daughter Heather, also a trustee, have done with The Nature Conservancy. The family foundation does everything from in-kind and cash donations to enabling workshops. Paula has created The Nature Conservancy Australia's Nature Writing Prize to be awarded by Tim Winton in November 2023, supports international bird flyways and has their son-in-law help put together a partner organisation's website.

Rob is proud of what they've achieved, such as the innovative Murray–Darling Basin Balanced Water Fund, which delivers investor returns while also giving 20% or more of the water back to wetlands every year.

"Before we could create that fund, we needed to put a model together for investors and demonstrate the returns were there, and that all came from philanthropy," Rob says.

Likewise with the kelp forest regeneration, which may be an early step towards one day producing green bonds.

"Before you can get to that, you have to do this proof-of-concept work, that you can actually grow the kelp forests and it survives and doesn't get eaten by sea urchins, and that's where philanthropy carries the front-end load and has to do the work to get the results," Rob says.

"I love the phrase, that philanthropy is risk capital," he says.

Rob McLean says:

**“
Philanthropists understand not everything is going to work and sometimes you're going to put your money in and you're going to blow your dough, but on the other hand, that's the way we prove things out and take steps forward.”**

Lessons from Black Saturday recovery funding

Following the 2009 Victorian bushfires, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) distributed more than \$14 million, from 2009 to 2023, to support the medium to long-term recovery of the 76 communities that were directly affected. This funding has created a lasting legacy, but it also serves as a great example of the core principles that underpin effective giving, especially in the context of disaster recovery.

The need for collaboration

The funds FRRR distributed came from a mix of direct donations to FRRR from its philanthropic and corporate partners and later, funds from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF), run by the Victorian Government.

When the fires occurred, FRRR joined a roundtable of donor partners and, given the impact was largely regional, FRRR was well positioned to act as a lead coordinator. Donors came together, pooled resources and worked together to avoid duplication and overlap. FRRR also engaged with government and community groups, involving these groups and emergency management experts in program design and assessment, and engaging regularly over the subsequent 14 years since the bushfires.

The need for simplicity

Disasters are a time of crisis, with communities – especially the volunteers who so often step in and take the lead at a local level – needing to put all their focus on supporting those around them. A key consideration for FRRR was keeping application processes simple and having consistent channels through which community groups could access funding and support.

The need to back grassroots groups

In many cases, programs overlapped because recovery moved at different rates in different communities. The underpinning principle of each program was to support place-based organisations, on the basis that as they are in and of their community, they are best placed to know what is needed and what response is going to work. FRRR believes that trusting and supporting these local groups, which already have the networks and connections, is critical to recovery over the long-term.

This approach has certainly resonated with community groups and feedback has been positive – no matter whether funding was for: community infrastructure, reflecting on the impacts of what had passed, helping children deal with their feelings or helping volunteers learn ways to care for themselves so they can go on supporting others. Above all, the feedback is that people appreciated the ability to take the time they needed to consider what projects were needed and then to be able to access funding over the medium to long-term.

The need for flexibility and ongoing support

As communities moved from the immediate aftermath into medium to long-term recovery, needs inevitably changed, and so granting and support programs needed to evolve as well. In total, FRRR ran nine streams of support:

When	Program / Needs	Funding
September 2009 – November 2010	Repair–Restore–Renew Grants for things like repairing or enhancing community infrastructure (e.g., tanks and generators); enhancing communication (e.g., UHF radios), so people felt better prepared, and creating reflective spaces, such as the Healesville Labyrinth and memorials, to help people process their grief and remember those lost.	\$2.1 million via 123 grants
2009 – 2011	Donation Accounts Receiving tax deductible donations from people who wished to support organisations delivering particular recovery projects. These partnerships put communities more in control of how funds were directed and enabled them to complete projects they otherwise might not have been able to, such as Narbethong Community Hall.	\$3.8 million toward 32 projects
September 2011 – June 2014	Skills, Training, Engagement and Practical Support (STEPS) Building leadership capability and improving the ability of local not-for-profit groups to develop and implement community projects and ensure community groups avoided the impacts of volunteer fatigue.	\$700,000 via 52 grants
2012 – 2022	Grants for Resilience and Wellness (GR&W) Community-strengthening and resilience-building projects identified and implemented by impacted communities.	\$4.1 million via 283 grants
2015 – 2020	School and Beyond Removing financial and psychological barriers to participation and completion of study; supporting pathways to vocational training and employment; and assisting with the cost of education and training costs.	\$495,000 via 43 grants
2016 – 2017	Social Change 101 Help local changemakers learn from leading business and social enterprise experts to gain the skills, knowledge and networks to bring their social enterprise ideas to life.	\$280,000 via 2 grants
2015 – 2021	Community Group Futures Support and resources for not-for-profits to consider their viability, sustainability and future roles in their communities, and to strengthen their capabilities to achieve their aspirations.	\$900,000 via 75 grants
2015 – 2021	Stronger Community Foundations Capacity building resources and funding to assist them to navigate the complexities of grant-making; enhance connections; learn best practices and enhance local positioning.	\$200,000 via 26 grants
2013 – 2023	GR&W Kinglake Grants to enhance the resilience and wellbeing of Kinglake Ranges communities.	\$1.6 million via 47 grants

In the course of recovery, many groups received more than one grant from FRRR, as their priorities changed. Having this ongoing support, which morphed to adapt to their needs, was critical.

Story continues →

Flowerdale Community House
– facilitated playgroup feedback:

“

The most successful outcome has been providing support and opportunity to strengthen the fabric of our families. Over the three years playgroup has run, [the facilitator] has supported and impacted the lives of so many families in so many ways and the chance for ongoing support through the house and its resources. It has built community with friends and neighbours now catching up during the week, supporting each other and also walking to playgroup together.

FRRR is grateful to the many partners and supporters who were part of this collaboratively funded program, especially VBAF, for recognising the importance of supporting grassroots groups over the medium to long-term.



Social Impact 101 was a program that helped local changemakers explore what was involved in setting up a social enterprise, which several groups explored as a way to either address service gaps or bring much-needed economic activity back to their communities.



In the early years following the fires, groups were keen to come together to share their experiences but, in many cases, to simply forget and think about something else for a while. FRRR funds lots of events and gatherings, including a community choir, as a way to help these communities reconnect.



One of the biggest challenges in many communities was working out where to start and what needed to be tackled first. Planning workshops were supported but so too was training designed to build the capacity of local community groups to get clear on their role and how they could best support their community in the longer-term.



Young people felt the effects of the bushfires enormously. One of the earliest projects FRRR funded was bringing Circus Oz into the communities, working with local skills to give the children access to some fun experiences and take their, and their parents' minds, off the impacts of the fires.



The CFA in Arthur's Creek worked closely with the teachers and students at Strathewen Primary School to find creative ways to address their feelings when they saw fire trucks passing and fire warnings escalated. This award-winning partnership evolved over the years, building knowledge and tools that allayed fears and built understanding.

‘Some women want an extra \$50 a week, some want to take over the world’



Above
Mandy Richards,
Founder and CEO,
Global Sisters

Global Sisters has supported more than 5,500 Australian women on their journeys to increased financial independence and seen more than 1,000 businesses launched.

The not-for-profit (NFP) provides women with access to a start-to-finish business support including coaching, microfinance, a community of support and access to an online marketplace. The programs are built around flexibility to suit the many demands that women – often single mums on parenting payments – are juggling.

In 2022, Global Sisters started seeing real impacts – a couple of women it supported were making enough money to come off benefits and another had grown a business with a six-figure turnover.

In 2023, Global Sisters won a special \$1 million award that the AMP Foundation, a long-time supporter, offered to mark its 30th anniversary.

Now the NFP is focusing on systems change and the AMP Foundation grant will help fund their Single Mothers Demonstration Project, designed to prove their model at scale.

Breaking down barriers into work for women

The grant will provide wrap-around support for 300 single mothers who are welfare-dependent and gather data over three years. The end objective is to provide data that persuades the federal government to make significant changes to the welfare system that enable flexible pathways to employment and self-employment for women.

Mandy Richards, founder and CEO of Global Sisters, says:

“The issue with the welfare system is that it was designed decades ago as a short-term safety net for men, never with single mums in mind. Previous governments have taken a punitive approach too, which has been harsh on single mums who are raising the next generation, and it leaves those families particularly vulnerable.

“There are many barriers into work that the system expects single mums to overcome, so women become stuck on social security. It’s quicksand for them. This is entrenching generational poverty, which is the opposite of what was intended with the benefit system.

“If 300 single mums came off welfare payments, that would conservatively save the government \$5 million a year, so it’s a no-brainer in that sense, let alone the economic and social benefits as they participate in the economy and wider community.”

Mandy says that flexibility is key because women are dealing with all sorts of challenging situations, such as recovering from domestic violence, marriage breakdown or being a carer. Their confidence is often at rock-bottom after years out of the workforce. Global Sisters is also advocating for more accessible financial products for women with varying incomes.

“Some women may want an extra \$50 a week, or they may want to take over the world. The work they do with us could be an interim step towards getting a ‘normal’ job, it may be a supplement to part-time or casual work, or it may be their entire income. But what is most important is that they can earn an income from home despite other circumstances,” says Mandy.

Grattan Institute

The philanthropy behind powerful systems change advocacy



Above
Danielle Wood, CEO,
Grattan Institute

In the eyes of many, Grattan Institute has been Australia's most influential public policy institute since it opened its doors in 2009. The institute operates with only limited resources – about 30 staff – but has been able to influence governments to make significant reforms right across portfolios, making a large contribution to the wellbeing of the Australian people.

A key to Grattan's influence has been its independence – it does not accept ongoing funds from government, nor does it do consultancy work. This means it is free to undertake analysis and recommend the bold and challenging reforms Australia needs, working in the public interest and free from vested interests.

The financing of this work has been a classic case of government and philanthropy working in partnership to achieve much more than government could achieve on its own. An initial endowment of \$35 million was provided by the Federal and Victorian governments, BHP and National Australia Bank. Since then, philanthropy has amplified what Grattan can achieve in a range of ways.

Grattan's CEO Danielle Wood says:

“

Grattan Institute, with relatively limited investment, has been able to influence governments to make important reforms that deliver substantial shifts in some of society's big systems – such as our schools, childcare, migration and tax systems.

It's a great illustration of how investing in independent advocacy can be one of the most powerful and cost-effective ways for philanthropy to achieve systems change.

Philanthropic support for Grattan

Philanthropy has been critical to what Grattan has achieved. Support from philanthropic funders such as the Susan McKinnon Foundation, the Third Link Growth Fund, and the Trawalla Foundation, among others, helps support around 30% of Grattan's operating costs.

Another 7% comes from individual donations. Grattan's corporate affiliate program accounts for another 4%. These sources of funds allow Grattan to continue to fund its core research and policy analysis work.

Grattan works in a range of ways:

- Grattan influences reform through programs of work in key areas of public policy, such as health and aged care; education; economic policy; transport and cities; energy and climate change; budgets and government; migration and the labour market.
- It typically produces around 15–18 major research reports each year, making the case for reforms in key areas of public policy.
- Grattan routinely holds more than 1,000 meetings with stakeholders a year, notably with government ministers, advisers, and officials, to discuss and promote policy reform.
- It works to influence public opinion, particularly through engagement in the media, where it publishes about 150 opinion articles and attracts more than 30,000 media mentions each year.

Grattan has been a key influence in a suite of reforms. For example:

- The Federal Government's 2022 \$5.4 billion cheaper childcare package was heavily influenced by Grattan's 2020 report, 'Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation'. The report showed the payoff would be an \$11 billion-a-year increase in GDP from the boost to workforce participation – and \$150,000 in higher lifetime earnings for the typical Australian mother.
- The Federal Government is making paid parental leave more gender-equal and expanding it to 26 weeks by 2026, including a use-it-or-lose-it component for each parent, in line with recommendations in Grattan's 2021 report 'Dad days: How more gender-equal parental leave would improve the lives of Australians families'. The report found the reform would deliver greater parental satisfaction, improvements in child development, higher rates of workforce participation and greater economic security for women.

**Philanthropic support for specific projects:
School tutoring for children at risk**

The Origin Foundation provided Grattan with \$100,000 to examine whether remote schooling during the pandemic was likely to have a disproportionate impact on students from low-income families. It provided a further \$85,000 to research how best to embed small-group tuition in all schools. Grattan's recommendations in its two reports - 'COVID Catch-up: Helping disadvantaged students close the equity gap' (2020) and 'Tackling under-achievement: Why Australia should embed high-quality small-group tuition in schools' (2023) have since been highly influential. The NSW and Victorian Governments have so far allocated around \$1.7 billion to small-group tutoring during 2021-to-2023 to help school students who are struggling with reading and maths.

Danielle Wood said:

“

Given the importance of the NDIS, and the need for greater policy leadership in the disability space, now is a great time for Grattan to bringing its rigorous and practical approach to support better policy.

I am so grateful to the Summer Foundation, an organisation with a deep experience in disability research and policy, for supporting Grattan to launch this new program.

Philanthropic support for whole programs of work: Higher education, migration, and people with a disability

Philanthropy has made possible whole programs of work, such as the support of The Myer Foundation for the highly successful higher education program, and the Scanlon Foundation for Grattan's migration work program, which has helped shape the agenda on reforming skilled migration.

In May 2023, Grattan announced that, through the support of the Summer Foundation, it would be launching a Disability Program. This work has the potential to help millions of Australians: 4.4 million people live with a disability and 1.4 million with a profound disability. It is a critical area of policy as government considers way to make the NDIS effective and sustainable.



Staying the course for generational change with Children's Ground

Left

Children's Ground,
Mparntwe, Northern Territory

"This is about long-term outcomes. It's not about outputs, and it's not about how many people come through the door on a given day or week – these are markers that are often given to or requested by funders, but they don't tell the story of change or impact, often they're just window dressing. We must create deep and enduring change with accountability to the people and share this in a meaningful way with our partners," says Children's Ground CEO, Jane Vadiveloo.

Children's Ground is designed to change the status quo – led by First Nations people and the oldest knowledge systems in the world to achieve radical reform for First Nations children over a 25-year period.

Children's Ground CEO Jane Vadiveloo says:

“

Children's Ground is designed to defy injustice. We have an approach that is based on deep experience and evidence, and we are seeing the results. First Nations children deserve to have the very best opportunities where they live – in education, health and wellbeing, safety and economic life – while celebrating and retaining their rights to their culture, knowledge systems and languages.

Children's Ground uses an evidence-based approach. Working predominantly with communities in the Northern Territory, Children's Ground focuses on prevention through the key platforms of learning, family health and wellbeing, economic development and wellbeing, community development and wellbeing, and creative and cultural development and wellbeing.

This strengths-based approach harnesses the talent and leadership each community has within it and a vision to achieve excellence and equity.

Jane Vadiveloo says:

“

First Nations leaders have been seeking this for generations and it is their leadership that will create change. The solution is found in the communities that lead the work. It is their voice, their vision that we back. And through this we build the social, cultural and economic capital for future generations and long-term change,

“It must be led by local people who are the experts and have 65,000 years of practice and knowledge,” Jane says.

English Family Foundation (EFF) director, Tessa English, was first introduced to Jane and the work of Children’s Ground in 2011. She was immediately impressed and has maintained a deep belief that the organisation provides the best possible pathway for restoring equity and justice for First Nations children.

“Ten years on, there are kids who are thriving, going to school every day, crossing cultures, and there’s concrete proof that it’s working,” Tessa says.

EFF has a long history of supporting social changemakers to transform ecosystems for impact, yet Children’s Ground required a new type of long-term commitment. Being effective meant staying the course through the natural rollercoaster of not-for-profit growth and development.

“It’s a generational project,” says Allan English.

“With Children’s Ground, especially in the early stages, there were lots of resources going in and it was very hard to see the impact, until over time, you get the lasting benefits.”

For Children’s Ground, the value of EFF’s enduring support, despite many challenges and setbacks, has been priceless.

“I get teary when I think of EFF because we wouldn’t be here without their support,” Jane says.

“EFF backed the vision of our communities and believed in their ability to lead change.

“It was instrumental in the early stages of the organisation and in terms of us growing and building from nothing to where we are today. It’s about the money, it’s about the belief, it’s about knowing people have got your back no matter how hard it gets. And you don’t know how hard it’s going to get. Now we are seeing the impact of this early stage long term investment come to life,” Jane says.

Belinda Morrissey, EFF’s CEO, says:

“This approach is based on a lot of really clear, evidence-driven models out of the US. Children’s Ground has really done its homework around what type of generational change works, and where the levers are that can be pulled to make sure this is going to be the best possible support mechanism for these communities.”

From the strength of its philanthropic funding, Children’s Ground was able to swiftly grow its operations in Central Australia. An evaluation of the Ampe-kenhe-ahle (Central Australian) operations has confirmed the impressive outcomes delivered in early childhood, local First Nations workforce, community governance, health access, cultural and language revival and strengthening, also seen from the organisation’s earlier work in West Arnhem.

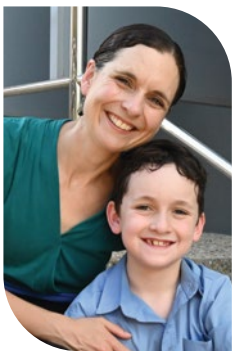
Philanthropic support is acutely important to the long-term success of Children’s Ground. While government can play a vital role in supporting the organisation’s work, Jane says the history of government relations in Aboriginal communities, political change and short-term funding cycles make this challenging.

“Because people in government come from a history of power and control, it’s really hard for them to acknowledge that there are a lot of Aboriginal people in this country who are incredibly brilliant, with solutions and that Aboriginal children are incredibly smart but require the right environments to excel. We don’t need to apply a deficit focus – we just need to back this brilliance,” Jane says.

Top and bottom right
Children's Ground,
Mparntwe, Northern Territory



How one family's experience of autism led to a PhD scholarship



Above and right

Louise White, inaugural recipient of the Michael Nathaniel Dyer PhD Scholarship at Griffith University, and her son Edward

The Dyer Family spent decades trying to get their son the autism diagnosis and support he needed. It wasn't until he was an adult that it finally happened – and only after his mother identified it using a magazine article. As a result, the family was determined to impact the next generation of autism research with an important gift.

The difficulty that one family experienced in getting a diagnosis for their son was the genesis for them to donate funds to create a scholarship committed to training the next generation of autism researchers.

The Dyer family's lived experience with autism has led to the establishment of the Michael Nathaniel Dyer PhD Scholarship Program at Griffith University to help advance knowledge and support for individuals with autism.

As young parents in the 1970s, Elga and David Dyer noticed that their baby son was very clingy to his mother. Whereas other children would happily play with toys, Michael stayed firmly in Elga's lap.

Despite both his parents suspecting there were differences in Michael's development, medical professionals at the time missed all the signs for autism, saying that everything was fine.

Even worse, further hospital visits led to Michael being put on high doses of drugs that made him like a 'zombie' without diagnosing him with anything.

"It still haunts me," Elga says.

"But our search for a diagnosis continued and we never gave up."

Finally, when Michael was an adult, Elga read a magazine article about autism that listed symptoms she felt exactly matched his behaviours. "Me, a mum, diagnosed my son, when all the medical experts we'd seen couldn't. I showed the article to David and Michael, and they both agreed."

The Dyer family wanted to make an impact via the next generation of autism researchers, so they got in touch with Griffith University's Autism Centre of Excellence (ACE) to create the scholarship.

"The purpose of this scholarship is that hopefully research will advance so that parents don't have to feel as helpless and frustrated as David and I did," Elga says.

Louise White was the inaugural scholarship recipient in 2022. Louise is a teacher and says she first realised she needed to learn more about autism when her own son, Edward, was diagnosed. Louise took up further studies in the Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies through Griffith's Autism Centre.

Louise's research focuses on the challenges many autistic people face transitioning from school.

"The move from school into work or further study represents a key time that we need to be supporting autistic young people, but I also knew that researchers weren't able to tell parents or teachers how best to do it," says Louise.

"I could not believe that, through the generosity of a family I had never met, I was being given the opportunity to complete research that will improve how schools and families support autistic young adults to make one of the biggest changes in their lives."

This important research comes at a time when the federal government is developing a National Autism Strategy. Government data shows that for many autistic people life outcomes in education, vocation, health and family functioning are worse than they should be. Autistic people are around seven times more likely to be unemployed than people without a disability, and at a higher risk of homelessness.

“Each time I had the chance to focus an assignment on a specific topic, I chose to focus on transitions, especially big life-stage transitions. However, I was constantly frustrated when I had to finish every assignment saying that we needed more research to tell us more in this area.

“This scholarship means that not only is research advancing in this much-needed area but unbelievably, I am part of making that happen. This is an opportunity to make a real impact. I consider this to be such an important undertaking that, without the scholarship, would just not be possible.”

Louise and her research team have been able to meet with the Dyers to share their experiences of autism.

“I have been able to thank them for their generosity, and for trusting me to realise their vision for this scholarship and the research that it will enable,” Louise says.

“Every time the research gets hard, and sometimes it really does, I think of how important it is, and how it will benefit our children, and the children in so many other families. Because of the Dyers and the generosity of their gift, we can truly work to make a powerful and positive change.”



The importance of the first 1000 days of life



Above

Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor Katrina Harris

An innovative, philanthropically funded program at Monash Children's Hospital is having a significant impact on the lives of babies and children affected in utero by alcohol, and their families.

Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor Katrina Harris leads the Jacana First 1000 Days Service for children 0–3 years old exposed to alcohol in utero, and at risk of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD refers to a range of developmental and physical conditions caused by exposure to alcohol before birth. These can include problems with thinking, learning, behaviour and motor skills.

Katrina explains that babies with FASD are more likely to be born preterm, be jittery and/or unsettled, have delays in their development, and have growth and feeding issues. Some have specific facial features.

"FASD is completely preventable and common, although often not recognised. Rigorous international studies tell us that 1% of babies born world-wide have FASD and the prevalence is likely the same in Australia," Katrina says.

"We see FASD more often in children from more vulnerable families, including those in out-of-home care and those with parents with dependencies on alcohol and other drugs.

"FASD can bring lifelong disability and implications for the child, due to impairments on their judgment, learning capacity, attention, and interactions with others" she says.

"However, if the child has a stable parenting environment and FASD is diagnosed when the child is under six, we see a two to four-fold decrease in adverse life events, and improvements in outcome. Children with a diagnosis are also eligible for support under the NDIS.

"The earlier the intervention the better, as children and their carers can be assisted with targeted therapies, educational supports and carer assistance. This can mean the person with FASD maximises their independence and achievements."

The added benefit of seeing young children, between birth and three years old, is that clinicians are more likely to be working with the child's biological parents, supporting them to keep the family together and assist with plans for a healthy next pregnancy.

"We have a window of opportunity to enable changes that may help direct the child's trajectory to one where their needs are recognised, and they can develop to their potential."

In Victoria, the Australian government provides grants for Monash Children's Hospital to run the VicFAS service for children aged 3–10 who have been affected by alcohol in utero. Prior to Jacana a dedicated program for birth to three-year-olds did not exist. That is where philanthropy came in.

Katrina approached a philanthropic foundation and explained the problem and the gap. The Cybec Foundation recognised the potential of the Jacana service, and provided funding to develop the model of care, establish the program, recruit the team and run the clinics. The initial three-year donation has the potential to be extended.

Today, the Jacana team includes Katrina, who is a specialist developmental paediatrician, plus an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, social worker and nurse.

"The Jacana First 1000 Days program simply would not exist without the philanthropic funding. I am very grateful to the Cybec Foundation for their faith in our model. We already have wonderful feedback from families and clinicians involved with our service," Katrina says.

Story continues →



Achievements in Jacana's first year of operation include:

- Holding more than 220 appointments (each child has 2–4 appointments, seeing the different team members).
- Assessing 60 children with their parents and/or foster carers.
- Educating 290 clinicians, including Monash Health staff and Mercy Hospital neonatologists and obstetricians.
- Working with the Monash Health obstetrics team and midwives. (More than 10,000 babies are born each year at Monash Health hospitals.)
- Hosting the Royal Women's Hospital drug and alcohol service for an observation visit. They are now interested in developing their own clinic, similar to the Jacana model of care.

Case study

(names all altered for privacy)

Kasey is 28 years old and the mother of two young children assessed in the Jacana clinic. Kasey attended the clinic with her partner, Joel and their children, Isabella 2 years, 8 months, and Preston aged 14 months. She hoped to understand her children's developmental needs and how to support them in the future.

Kasey confirmed to the Jacana paediatrician that she drank heavily during both of her pregnancies. She had a number of previous mental health issues, and substance issues which made her addiction to alcohol harder to manage. She also described a history of personal trauma with complex social circumstances. Kasey had been a client of child protection, living in residential out-of-home care during her teenage years. Her own mother and her father had a history of alcohol use, and Kasey reported that both she and her brother had been exposed to alcohol when their mother was pregnant.

Child protection was involved following Preston's birth, at the time that Kasey sought assistance for her alcohol use. The Jacana social worker linked in with Kasey and her worker.

Isabella and Preston were assessed in the Jacana program and were diagnosed as 'At Risk of FASD', meaning that they were at increased risk of developmental delays in the future, and at present did not meet criteria for a full diagnosis. Recommendations for specific monitoring and pathways for early intervention if problems arose were outlined.

Kasey and Joel had expressed a desire to have more children. With the Jacana paediatrician they explored the supports available to assist them in healthy future pregnancy planning. As a result of this discussion, and better understanding the effects of alcohol on babies, Kasey and Joel decided to delay growing their family until they had abstained from alcohol for a year.

Katrina Harris has a goal for the Jacana program:

“

My aim is that we create a ripple effect. Through seeing vulnerable young children with their parents in Jacana, we spread the word about alcohol and its effect on babies. We encourage health workers to recognise what's going on and think about FASD. GPs and paediatricians and nurses and social workers can engage with families, and prevention of FASD will grow from there.

The Stella Prize

Advancing literature by women

It must have been a Zoom call for the ages. Philanthropist Paula McLean had left the board of the Stella Prize, Australia's groundbreaking literary award for female writers, at the start of 2021. Later that year, the board members informed her that they were planning to use the organisation's 10-year anniversary celebrations to try to secure the remaining \$2 million needed to endow the prize money in perpetuity. They were embarking on a bold and ambitious target and only had 10 months to achieve it.

In 2016, Paula had worked with another major donor to kickstart the endowment idea, and during the next three years, the Stella Forever fund reached \$1 million. As a board member and Deputy Chair of Stella, Paula said she had developed a deep understanding of the organisation's work, financials, strategic plan and its community of donors. She also understood that when the COVID crisis hit, the organisation had to prioritise operational fundraising rather than the endowment.

And so, she asked to be updated at a Zoom call, still in COVID-distance meeting mode, to hear where they were at. The Stella Chair and head of fundraising outlined their fundraising campaign plan at that Zoom meeting and their commitment to raising two more million dollars before prize night 2022.

Paula told them she would pledge the first million dollars as a match.

"I suppose it gave them a bit of a shock," she says.

"I thought it would make it so much easier for them to raise the remaining one million if they could begin with half of the total. It was a wonderful experience. I was very actively involved in the campaign, and on the 10th anniversary Prize Night at the State Library of Victoria, the Stella team was able to announce they had reached their goal and the prize was secured in perpetuity."

A driver for Paula was hearing that the entire board and executive had donated to the fund, even if they could only afford a small amount. On Prize Night, there were backlit boards with every single endowment donor's name listed, alphabetically, without the amount they had donated. Paula loved that.

"It was a great example of female-led philanthropy. We had an attitude of if not us, who?" she says.

As a self-confessed bookworm, and someone who had worked as an editor and in publishing, literature is close to Paula's heart while, as a feminist, she could not ignore the Stella Prize's ideals when it was created.

"When the Stella Award announced what it was doing, I saw this as an incursion into the prize and publishing industry," she says.

"It has gone on to see its authors more equitably represented in the review pages of our newspapers, Stella authors being taught at schools, an increase in sales for the long and shortlisted writers, as well as the winners of the prize. But it has also changed the prize industry. The Miles Franklin Award had only given a very small number of prizes to women in its then 57-year history and, of course, Miles Franklin was a woman. From the moment Stella was announced in 2012, that changed."

Women have won 10 of the 11 Miles Franklin awards since and including 2012.

Paula is passionate about philanthropists deep diving into causes, not just providing funding.

"There is wonderful joy in watching your support translate into social change or to bring about change for how something operates or to help find solutions to very difficult problems in society," she says.

"Also, for me, there was joy in getting deeply involved in the Stella organisation. You learn not just the financial involvement but their history, their difficulties and what drives them.

"Philanthropy becomes a much richer experience if you are able to get deeply involved in the organisation," she says.

"It becomes both a learning opportunity for the donor and a whole new world of friendships and involvement in whichever community you want to support."

How the cervical cancer vaccine was built on the philanthropy of promise

At a conservative estimate, the human papilloma virus (HPV) cervical cancer vaccine has prevented the deaths of at least 100,000 women around the world since it began being rolled out to young girls in 2007. It's saved hundreds of thousands more women from the trauma of chemotherapy and surgery, and the knock-on effects on their work, family lives and the economy. In short, its impact has been remarkable so far and there are many more lives to be saved in the World Health Organisation's bid to eradicate the disease and get 90% of girls (globally) vaccinated by 2030.

The WHO predicts that a combination of screening, vaccinations and treatment could save 5 million lives by 2050. The vaccine – named Gardasil – was developed by Professor Ian Frazer AC with his late colleague Dr Jian Zhou. Professor Frazer formally retired in 2022 from the post he held at the University of Queensland (UQ) for nearly four decades. But as Emeritus Professor now, he is still a familiar face at UQ's Translational Research Institute.

The breakthrough for Ian and Jian came when new molecular biology technologies in the early 1990s allowed them to grow the virus in the lab.

"When we first saw the virus-like particles, the shell of the virus and the pictures from the electron micrograph, we were pretty excited," says Ian.

After taking out a patent, it then took a further 15 years for the commercialisation of the vaccine with Merck through CSL plus clinical trials before it was ready to be rolled out. To date it has been dispensed 250 million times and will one day mean the disease – that is still the fourth most prevalent cancer in women – will be virtually non-existent.

Ian says philanthropy has always supported his research. An early grant from the Lions Club that funded his initial post at UQ and vital equipment for his lab was crucial, he says, along with later funding from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation. Prior to that, the postdoctoral position he had been invited to Australia from Scotland to take up at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne was also funded by charitable donations. Other grants came from UQ's donation scheme, the National Health and Medical Research Council, and from a number of charities and organisations such as the Cancer Council Queensland, TRI Foundation the Hospital Research Foundation Group.

"It would be fair to say that almost all of the work we did in the first 15 years I was here was funded philanthropically," says Ian.

"Competitive funding is built on what you have already achieved. But philanthropic funding generally takes the promise of what you think you might achieve and tries to help you get there.

"That's a very important distinction because it encourages people to take much more risk.

"It's important to recognise that without philanthropy, it's very difficult to start solving a new problem. It's not research if you know the outcome," he says.

Right
Emeritus Professor
Ian Frazer AC



Philanthropy is also playing a major role in distributing the vaccine equitably around the world, for which Ian has campaigned. The disease is generally lethal in low-middle income countries because surgery and chemotherapy are not widely available. The Gates Foundation has recognised that the biggest long-term impact will come from vaccinating entire populations and has provided significant funding to help distribute the vaccine in low-middle income countries. Boys are also vaccinated to stop them passing the virus to girls. The companies that make the vaccine have also contributed by providing the vaccine at cost-price for these programs.

Professor Sailesh Kumar, Mayne Professor and Head, Mayne Academy of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at UQ, says he remembers when he first heard that a vaccine was being developed.

“I was amazed because I knew what an absolute game-changer the vaccine would prove to be,” he says.

Currently, 600,000 women are still diagnosed with cervical cancer around the world and about 360,000 women die every year. While vaccination rates in low-middle income countries are at around 30% compared to 85% in high-income countries, looking ahead to an effective vaccination program eventually being rolled out, the impact will be dramatic.

“If we get to the point of having more than 90% coverage around the world, it will likely save more than 300,000 lives every year,” says Sailesh.

“The saving to the health system from reducing the number of women affected by cervical cancer in is in the order of tens of millions of dollars.”

Sailesh Kumar says:

“**Cervical cancer is devastating diagnosis, particularly in its advanced stages. It robs women of their fertility and of a productive life for a time, or in the worst cases, their lives. Ian Frazer's research has resulted in such a major transformation of so many women's lives across the world that the impact cannot be overstated.**”

Story continues →

Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) CEO Kerry Strydom says:

“ACRF is delighted to have backed Professor Ian Frazer AC’s pioneering research which led to development of the cervical cancer vaccine. True to our model, ACRF provided seed funding of \$1 million in 1999 to establish the Centre for Immunology and Cancer Research at Diamantina Institute, University of Queensland. What a phenomenal success story this is.

“

Philanthropic donations are crucial to enable ground-breaking research for other cancers. At ACRF, we know that only brilliant ideas can tackle something as big as cancer. That is why we give scientists the technology, equipment and infrastructure they need for pioneering research. We direct philanthropic donations to research that seeks to progress and transform the way we prevent, detect and treat ALL cancers. In this was we are committed to our vision of one day reaching a world without cancer.

Ian’s relationship with philanthropy has now come full circle. He is a driving force for university fundraising campaigns and runs his own family foundation. In recent years, Ian and his wife Caroline spearheaded the campaign ‘Not If, When’ for UQ to raise more than \$600 million for biomedical research.

“Having a big war chest of funding helps research the opportunities, like the cervical cancer vaccine, or unexpected challenges, such as COVID-19,” says Ian.

His own foundation is built on the proceeds of the vaccine patent.

“When I started benefiting personally from the royalties, I realised I had a challenge. We didn’t need the money and I wanted to make sure that it was used well. One of the first donations we gave from the Frazer Family Foundation was to the University of Queensland. It was a sort of ‘thank you’ for having looked after me very well,” he says.

The foundation, which he runs with Caroline, targets its funding to students of medicine and the arts, and has distributed millions of dollars in funding.

“We focus our funding on helping young people develop their talents, whether it is in research, medicine, or being a ballet dancer or an artist,” says Ian.

“The funding is about providing a benefit for young people to give them an opportunity they wouldn’t otherwise have. We can see that the money can be usefully put to work – and will produce something beneficial not for us, but for the community.”

A complete circle

The Melbourne Women's Fund gift that 'keeps on giving'



Above
Mary Latham,
Operations Manager,
Women and Mentoring
(WAM)

This is a story of a giving circle and the impact of its gift that grew beyond anyone's wildest imagination. The initial \$60,000 grant came from a group of like-minded women in Melbourne to help an inner-city community organisation provide early intervention support for female offenders in the criminal justice system. A few years on, it has led to outstanding results and millions of dollars in government backing to expand the program across the city.

The Women and Mentoring (WAM) program was established in 2009 in Collingwood as a pilot project of concerned citizens who saw that women were being unnecessarily criminalised, primarily through disadvantage and family violence. WAM provides early intervention support for female offenders by matching them with trained mentors who work alongside other services to prevent re-offending and support rebuilding their lives.

By 2014, WAM had become an independent charity and received the transformative \$60,000 grant from the Melbourne Women's Fund (MWF), a giving circle that launched the same year to support disadvantaged women and families in greater metropolitan Melbourne. The money had come from 60 of the giving circle's donors, who each contributed \$1,000.

Giving circles are the antithesis of any notion that philanthropy is the reserve of only those most well off. A giving circle brings together people with shared values, concerns or backgrounds to support causes that matter to them. The members donate a set amount of money periodically to a funding pool, then collaboratively decide which not-for-profit and good causes will receive their collective gift or grant.

This distinctly community-led style of giving is steadily growing in Australia, modelled on American examples, where the growth of giving circles has tripled in just a decade to more than 1,600 active groups. Members can also volunteer their leadership and in-kind expertise to grant recipients – or their 'time, talent, ties and testimony'. Giving circles create the opportunity for members to learn more about issues underpinning a cause too, and many provide an educational element through in-person or online events.

When WAM received the support from MWF, it was operating its mentorship program in the City of Yarra with \$74,000 annual revenue. The new grant enabled WAM to replicate its mentorship program to benefit disadvantaged women through the Sunshine Magistrate's Court in Melbourne's growing west. The grant also raised WAM's profile and credibility to obtain an additional \$764,000 of funding within just one year.

WAM has since expanded into five courts, increasing its beneficiaries by 800% with 80% not re-offending and 95% avoiding a custodial sentence.

The program's success has attracted attention and stunningly in 2023, the Victorian Government granted WAM \$3.2 million over three years to expand its program across Melbourne and into specified areas. It's an incredible story of growth and reach in less than 10 years.

MWF members have also introduced WAM to beneficial relationships and additional network contacts that have opened doors to more funding and in-kind support, including website and IT, speaking opportunities for their CEO to share their stories and even leadership assistance from a MWF board member.

Mary Latham, WAM Operations Manager, said:

"It wasn't just the grant funds from MWF that put us on a path to success. Their money was multiplied almost 13 times that first year and gave us access to more funding, making us more credible.

"Plus the donated website. Plus one of their donors hosting a lunch for us at the Western Bulldogs to introduce us to more donors. Plus a skilled board member. Plus more. MWF has been 'the gift that keeps on giving,'" she said.

The generosity hasn't stopped there. Mary gave back to MWF by providing annual pitch training for the giving circle's grants finalists for five years to improve their presentation skills and increase their chances of securing funding.

It's a complete circle of giving – from the donors to the recipients and back again – with new ties and friendships formed and all to benefit the community. Some even call it 'giving circle magic'.

Hotel Etico, where workers living with disabilities are ‘front and centre’



Above
Andrea Comastri,
CEO and director,
Hotel Etico Australia

Australia’s first social enterprise hotel is a successful model for training people living with a disability for not just a job in hospitality, but a career. The trainees challenge the public’s assumptions about what disability and work looks like – and so far, they’ve all found jobs with major luxury hotel chains, so Hotel Etico is hoping to expand.

Hotel Etico in the Blue Mountains, which opened in 2020, provides a luxury hospitality experience alongside running the training program.

The 15-room venue is set in the historic Mount Victoria Manor and gardens, first built by the Fairfax family in 1876. Based on an Italian model, Hotel Etico Australia was established in 2017 by Alex Toselli, Andrea Comastri and Tracylee Arestides, with founding financial and mentoring support from Paul and Sandra Salteri, and co-seed funding from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, among others later, including The Funding Network.

Andrea, now CEO and director, of Hotel Etico Australia, says:

“When I first heard about the model, I just loved the idea. For too many years, there has been an assumption that people with a disability just need to be placed in a job to do something that keeps them busy. What we do differently is give them the skills, tools and confidence in their own skin to be able to aspire to and achieve a career in hospitality.”

The latest intake now numbers 15 trainees. In the hotel’s two-year program, called the Academy of Independence, trainees aged between 18 and 35 with an intellectual, neurodevelopmental or physical disability, work and live onsite for a minimum of 12 months. They learn on-the-job hospitality skills, alongside independent living skills, with a ratio of 1:3 disability support workers. Hotel Etico is a registered NDIS provider and has developed its own curriculum, partly mapped to certificate training but also adapted to a person-centred style.

Once the trainees graduate, Hotel Etico helps secure ongoing positions with sector partners and supports them and the employer for at least another year. So far, all trainees have graduated and all have found ongoing jobs with groups such as Fairmont Resorts, Sofitel, Fullerton, Song, Scenic World, Mercure and a range of other small and medium enterprises in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Graduate Luci says:

“My life now is fun and exciting because I love working at Etico and being on the floor. I am always excited to go to work.” Before Luci started her training, she says her life had been “a little boring”.

Andrea says that they push trainees out of their comfort zone.

“It’s a supported push, and sometimes it’s two steps forward, one step back, but you can see the journey of a trainee and it’s remarkable. Usually by the six-month mark, they have transformed in confidence and just own the place,” Andrea says.

“The majority of our trainees have not been employed before and we place them in full, open employment on award wages from day one. That was a big priority. Properly paid work is one of the fundamental keys to independence, to a fulfilled and dignified life.”

Bookings are strong and feedback from trainees, their families, employers and customers is overwhelmingly positive.

“We don’t want people to come to us because we’re a charity. We want people to stay with us because we’re a good hotel, with nice atmosphere and service,” says Andrea.

“The social change happens on the restaurant floor. When the public interacts with our trainees, who are front and centre of the business on the restaurant floor, in housekeeping, at reception, it immediately changes their perception about work and disabilities,” says Andrea.

Multi-award winning Hotel Etico, which won, amongst other awards, the Community section at the Human Rights Awards in 2022, is also involved in advocacy and systems change. Andrea and his team addressed the Federal Government’s Jobs and Skills Summit, and he says developing more inclusive workplaces isn’t just the right thing to do but makes good business sense too.

Right

Luci and Reggie on the day they graduated from the Hotel Etico program

“We want to open people’s minds to the idea that there is value and productivity in a commercial sense to employing someone who is living with a disability, especially when the hospitality industry, particularly, is crying out for staff. But the motivation for change needs to come from top leadership.”

The only challenges Andrea mentions are those related to making any hospitality venue successful in today’s market.

“Running the disability trainee scheme is the least of our challenges. We’re able to cover 70% of our expenses with commercial and NDIS revenue, which is remarkable for a social enterprise that’s been in business just over two years. We aim to get to at least 85–90%.”

The team’s vision is to expand to every state. Leaders in the NDIS employment sector have urged governments to boost job participation levels – the unemployment rate of people living with a disability is around twice that as the wider population.

“We think we provide a great social return on investment value,” Andrea says.

Andrea Comastri says:

“

There’s an opportunity for philanthropy and government to support an innovative model that we know is making a difference.



The baristas of Brunswick Street (but not who you think)



Above
Caroline Doherty,
Acting Executive Officer,
Inner North Community
Foundation

Not all philanthropy happens at an epic, nation-shaping level. In fact, suburban communities can work together to address very local problems, through community foundations.

The Inner North Community Foundation, established in 2007, operates across the Melbourne council areas of Merri-bek, Darebin and Yarra. With \$10.2 million in funds under management, invested to ensure the ability for perpetual assistance, the foundation has so far awarded 360 grants to local entities and programs, at a value of \$5.7 million. It is one of more than 40 community foundations operating across Australia, often in regional areas.

Run by locals, and working with locals to decide where grants are most needed, community foundations can see gaps in care and need that others may not. For example, while you might not think the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne were short on people who can make a good coffee, the Inner North Community Foundation recently donated \$20,000 to St Mary's House of Welcome, so that the big-hearted open access centre on Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, could purchase a reconditioned café-ready coffee machine, and training hours.

The deeper meaning behind the coffee machine project was mutually understood as soon as the grant to develop hospitality skills was mooted, thanks to long-term dialogue between the Foundation and St Mary's House of Welcome, which has served the local homeless community for more than 65 years.

"We were thrilled when they applied and were really happy to support the initiative," said Inner North Community Foundation Acting Executive Officer Caroline Doherty.

"We've seen programs like this work so well before."

It's about so much more than a coffee machine. Normally, St Mary's House of Welcome is seeking funding to be able to provide more showers, meals, fresh underwear and the other practical support it provides for its group of service users, who might be battling homelessness, food insecurity, mental health issues, substance abuse and/or social isolation. But this professional barista training was something different and with a long-term view. Completing the training promised a deep satisfaction of achievement, along with a proficiency certificate, as well as a realistic window to potential employment, if St Mary's follow-up advocacy to local businesses needing baristas could bear fruit.



Above
Robina Bradley, CEO,
St Mary's House of Welcome

"We are working to increase the employability of the people that we help, after some of them have experienced years of trauma," said St Mary's House of Welcome CEO Robina Bradley.

"Beyond trying to get them housing, this can help them look good and feel good about themselves. It's about increasing their sense of self-worth, make them more robust and offer a chance at developing financial security. This is literally what we at St Mary's are always trying to do."

The Inner North Community Foundation works with many such organisations across all areas of need, as perceived by the local population.

"One of the things I find particularly inspiring is that, at the community foundation, we've transitioned to local community members making grant recommendations via Community Advisory Panels," Caroline said.

Caroline said the COVID-19 lockdowns created an appreciation among people for why local communities matter.

"That appreciation of how essential community is on every level, and an understanding that government can't meet every need," she said.

"Community requires people who care either contributing time or contributing resources in the form of connections or networks. For others, they may have the capacity or drive to either directly or collectively fund interventions, and that's part of the joy of the community foundation approach – those that donate come from all life stages and all perspectives in terms of the scale of their contributions."

Caroline Doherty said:

“

The Community Advisory Panels are empowered with best-practice grant assessment tools, and are collaborating with experienced grant assessors, to make informed recommendations about projects that will deliver impact for their community. It's people with lived experience within the community being supported to help decide where funds land. That's incredibly powerful.

How a modest grant led to millions of dollars in government homelessness programs



Above
Debra Zanella (right), CEO of Ruah Community Services, pictured with Mike Rowe (left), Director General of the Department of Communities (WA) in 2022

The 50 Lives 50 Homes project was conceived to help alleviate homelessness. Its name suggested its initial ambition, but support grew to include a collective of 30 community service agencies and the Western Australian Government. It wasn't long before it outstripped its aim of helping 50 people into homes.

It's now 427 and growing.

The project came to life with the vision and generosity of the Sisters of St John of God, a religious congregation in Perth who since 1895 have been helping marginalised and vulnerable groups, first in Western Australia and then across the country.

Ruah Community Services contacted the Sisters to support a new approach to solving homelessness. When the Sisters offered to assist by funding a modest grant over three years, 50 Lives 50 Homes was born. A few years later, the successful outcomes led to millions of dollars of state government funding investment for homelessness services based on the model.

The project was a different model from conventional housing responses, based on an idea conceived initially in the US and Canada. The aim was to provide appropriate housing first, then address other issues that had been impacting on a person's ability to maintain a tenancy, known as a 'Housing First' approach. The model addresses issues such as chronic health, alcohol and other drug use, and financial debt, which often 'deteriorated' tenancies. The research showed that addressing the need for shelter and 'wrap-around' supports meant that tenants can focus on recovery and wellness.

Ruah, with the collaborative community services sector agencies, piloted the program in Perth in 2017 after the successful 500 Lives/500 Homes in Brisbane. The program, led by Ruah for five years and taken over by the Zero Project and the WA Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH) in 2022, showed that tenancy retention rates rose from around 40% before the program to 75–80%. It meant the tenants remained connected and support was never far away, including after hours.

Debra Zanella, CEO of Ruah Community Services, says it's a model of philanthropy that allows agencies to 'test and try' to see what works and what doesn't.

"The Sisters understood the complex nature of how best to achieve impact in this space," says Debra.

"It was, 'Let us give you the freedom to test and try – even if it doesn't succeed, we'll at least have known'. And using that for galvanising greater impact and change rather than an expectation that, 'We're only investing in something that is going to have impact.'"



Above
Anthea, a client of the
50 Lives 50 Homes project

Anthea is an artist who now volunteers at Kamarang Women's Refuge (owned by Ruah), teaching art classes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women escaping domestic violence or other life crises.

Anthea had been dealing with housing issues then also faced a health crisis.

"I hit rock bottom when I got a melanoma on my foot and had to undergo a below-the-knee amputation," she says.

"It was during this dark moment of my life that I came into contact with the 50 Lives 50 Homes program."

The 50 Lives 50 Homes team helped Anthea secure long-term housing and supported her to access medical treatment. It was initially a challenging adjustment.

"When I first moved into my home, I felt like an alien. I didn't know how to live in a house. But now I can feel safe. I have four walls around me and I can be warm in winter and cook myself a meal," Anthea says.

"It's very hard being homeless – there are struggles and it's very depressing. Ruah has programs to help support people so they don't feel so much alone."

That impact is clear to Western Australian Minister for Planning, Lands, Housing and Homelessness the Hon John Carey MLA:

"The 50 Lives 50 Homes project was a successful pilot program and formed the basis of the Cook Labor Government's Housing First Homelessness Initiative (HFHI), which is transforming the lives of vulnerable Western Australians," Minister Carey says.

"The HFHI is a State Government-led initiative providing accommodation and wrap-around support to people sleeping rough or experiencing homelessness in the Perth Metropolitan Area, Rockingham/Mandurah, Bunbury and Geraldton."

The WA Government is investing \$2.6 billion in housing and homelessness measures, including the delivery of 4,000 social homes and maintenance and refurbishments to many thousands more.

Minister Carey says:

"Following the success of the pilot 50 Lives 50 Homes project, our Government significantly scaled up the HFHI with a \$34.5 million investment across a number of communities – including the Perth metropolitan area, Geraldton and Bunbury. The HFHI is currently supporting nearly 170 people across Western Australia."

The 'housing first' approach has become a mainstream response to homelessness support.

"We know we will never eradicate homelessness altogether, but it's certainly a solvable problem," says Debra. "It should be rare, and it should be resolved immediately."

From the support of the Sisters, an initial financial contribution and a team that grew, 50 Lives 50 Homes has had significant impact. It is an inspiring example of advocacy funding leading to major investment.

"The Sisters are really delighted," says Mark Murphy, Regional General Manager at SSJG Ministries of the project's success.

"It's made a great difference to the people who've been helped by the 50 Lives 50 Homes project. It turned out to be far more than 50 people. The incorporation of the 'housing first' model into the State Government strategy is a positive for strengthening the response to homelessness in WA."

Social enterprises are the key to success for people facing job challenges



Above
Luke Terry, CEO,
White Box Enterprises

Getting a job in Australia can be tough. If you're living with a disability or mental health challenges, a First Nations person, seeking asylum or recently migrated to Australia, or you're an ex-offender, it's much tougher.

Despite the Federal Government's best efforts, our employment system continues to fall short when it comes to providing meaningful work and career pathways for many of these individuals.

According to White Box Enterprises founder Luke Terry, social enterprise is what we should be focusing on.

"Our country will spend about \$3 billion a year helping people get back to work and the success rates for people who haven't had a job for nine out of the last 12 months is less than 30%," he says. "We know social enterprises have 80%-plus success rates, are financially resilient and can be focused on every dollar going back into creating employment for those at most need."

Luke spent five years in the UK building social enterprises in collaboration with local government. When he returned to Australia in 2009, he was determined to create a similar jobs market on home soil for overlooked Australians.

With key support from philanthropy, in particular The Ian Potter Foundation, and the Queensland State Government, Luke launched a social enterprise commercial laundry in Toowoomba, known as Vanguard Laundry.

The aim was simple – to create a viable business that meets an unmet need while creating jobs for people with a lived experience of mental illness. The laundry is one of the great success stories of social enterprise in the country, made possible through philanthropy.

It was here Luke discovered both the challenges and opportunities of a jobs-focused social enterprise, and realised he wanted to do more. Together with Lisa Siganto, he launched White Box Enterprises in 2019 to systematically address the constraints he faced with Vanguard and other social enterprises including access to affordable space, catalytic capital and partnerships. The aim was to help mainstream jobs-focused social enterprise in Australia.

The Ian Potter Foundation was one of the first supporters, providing White Box with a \$2.5 million capacity-building grant over five years, as well as ongoing mentoring from one of the Foundation's most senior program managers, Dr Alberto Furlan.

"The Foundation first supported White Box Enterprises through a multi-year \$450,000 grant in 2020 to help the organisation develop its social enterprise pipeline. This work progressed very well," says Alberto.

"However, it was clear that White Box Enterprises was at a critical point and needed consistent medium-term capacity-building funding to grow and diversify its business income streams. To support that growth and in recognition of White Box Enterprises' proven success at incubating new social enterprises, the Foundation extended its support with a \$2.5 million capacity-building grant over five years in 2021," says Alberto.

"White Box wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for The Ian Potter Foundation. The team not only sees the impact social enterprises can create, they understand the cost constraints and the need for innovation in this space," says Luke.

Right
Anthony from
Australian Spatial Analytics
(ASA)



Luke Terry says:

“

To create an entirely new social enterprise requires time, resourcing and some trial and error. You have all the usual start-up business expenses, wages and challenges. On top of this, you also have the cost of wrap-around supports that are critical to a social enterprise. Building these businesses relies heavily on philanthropic support, but we are working to change this.

One of White Box's three strategic priorities is innovation and systems change. White Box is running Australia's first payment by outcomes trial for jobs-focused social enterprises in partnership with the Department of Social Services, where social enterprises are receiving direct payments from the government for the job outcomes they create.

Early findings show people living with a disability are twice as likely to stay in their job and earn 28% more when employed by a jobs-focused social enterprise, compared to a job placement through Disability Employment Services (DES).

“Based on this data and the anticipated outcomes of the payment by outcomes trial, we're asking government to look more closely at social enterprise and the role it can play in the national employment services system,” says Luke.

“We're not suggesting social enterprise replace DES or Workforce Australia. We see social enterprise sitting alongside these, as an alternative for people who need that extra level of support that open employment doesn't provide.”

Alongside government advocacy, building social enterprises from the ground up is another key priority for White Box made possible through philanthropy. The organisation has launched four social enterprises, including Australian Spatial Analytics. Arguably the fastest growing jobs-focused social enterprise in Australia, this technology service provider employs more than 100 individuals, 80% of whom are neurodiverse.

“We're really proud of what we have achieved over the last four years, and none of this would have been possible without The Ian Potter Foundation and many other foundations. Core funding is hard to find, but it's this that allows us to try new things and break new ground,” says Luke.

The book on miscarriage the Victorian Women's Trust knew had to be written



Above
Isabelle Oderberg,
Author,
Hard to Bear

Around 285 pregnancies result in miscarriage each day in Australia – or one every five minutes. It’s an extraordinary figure and yet the most common complication associated with childbirth is shrouded in silence, and unfortunately shame, for many of the thousands of families affected.

Author Isabelle Oderberg has set out to change some of the perceptions around this all-too-common experience in her book *Hard to Bear: Investigating the science and silence of miscarriage*, the writing of which was supported by philanthropy.

After experiencing seven miscarriages along the path to her two live births, Isy knew that she wanted to write about the subject that affects 150,000 Australians a year. A journalist, she first envisioned it would be a feature article or a series of articles – writing a book was not on her to-do list amid her busy life.

“But the more I started digging, the more I realised that this is so much bigger,” she says.

After writing a few chapters, she took them to publishers, where she received a mixed reaction.

“The majority was positive but there were some really unsupportive comments made. Understanding the fear around this subject was an important part of the journey,” she says.

Then it went to a bidding auction where several publishers wanted the rights, which were taken up by Ultimo Press.

In the meantime, Isy had started applying for grants to fund her living expenses, including childcare, so she could focus on writing the book. She was put in contact with the Victorian Women’s Trust and Executive Director Mary Crooks AO.

“We had one meeting and Mary was so enthusiastic that the book had to be written. She believed that it was a such good project and vitally important. She took the case to her trustees and they decided to make a Targeted Impact Grant to the Jean Hailes Foundation in order to support me writing the book,” says Isy.

“The book would have taken me 10 years to write otherwise, while working in a job four or five days a week. I conducted hundreds of interviews and spent hours and hours in libraries. It’s a very time-consuming process.

“It wasn’t just money though. The Victorian Women’s Trust offered me office space and gave me introductions within the sector. It was just magnificent. Writing can be an isolating experience, especially when you’re reliving your own trauma, but also taking on the trauma of the people that you are interviewing. So, knowing that they were there to support me was really precious beyond the money,” she says.

Mary says:

“The Women’s Trust has a long track record in funding research and advocacy which deals with tough and oftentimes unglamorous issues. We were very proud to find a way to support this groundbreaking work of Isy’s.”

The book is about sharing experiences and diminishing the taboo about miscarriage, but Isy also had clear sights set on promoting systems change in the medical profession and IVF sector. The first issue to focus on was the silence – where had it come from?

“It was a really complicated but fascinating answer that led me right back into the history of the medical profession and a holotype, because it wasn’t always like this. There was actually a time when miscarriage was seen as a natural part of the reproductive and contraceptive cycle,” Isy says.

“Unfortunately, miscarriage sits at the intersection between two things that we are really bad at talking about as a society – women’s health and grief.”

Isy also found that data on miscarriage is not collected in Australia.

“We can’t build a qualified public health response if you don’t know what’s going on. We know that across the world there are various environmental factors affecting fertility in different communities, so it was frightening to me that we didn’t have any oversight of that here as a society.

“It’s really hard to make an argument for resourcing or systems changes policies without data,” she says.

Another key area of focus was equitable access to health care. Isy’s research found that First Nations women and others from marginalised groups faced a raft of barriers when trying to access culturally sensitive maternity care.

Isy has now co-founded a group, called the Early Pregnancy Loss Coalition, of people who want to see change in this area, including organisations like Red Nose and Pink Elephants.

“The book,” she says, “forms a sort of roadmap to what we want to see change. Firstly, it’s that miscarriage data is collected, secondly that the language around miscarriage shifts and finally, we want more money to go into research and support services for all.

“It sounds like a big shopping list, but there’s a lot of work to be done.”

The children's playgroup that led to government backing

It all started with a playgroup in Broken Hill. Maari Ma, an Aboriginal community controlled regional health organisation that is implementing sector-leading strategies to improve health across the age spectrum and improving child development and wellbeing in far-west NSW, decided to establish a playgroup for Aboriginal children as part of a strategic framework approach to Aboriginal child development and well-being.

At that stage, Maari Ma had no government funding, but planned that the playgroup would be led by an early-childhood-trained teacher and supported by clinic-based staff. And that's where the CAGES Foundation came in and supported the program that would end up receiving Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Philanthropy Award, sponsored by Ninti, in 2021.

For more than 10 years, CAGES had been part of Maari Ma's progress, although that first playgroup is something that gave the CEO at the time, Bob Davis, a big sense of achievement.

"Very soon we had a weekly playgroup attended by large numbers of families who saw the playgroup as a sanctuary and a safe space, which eventually culminated in a float in the Broken Hill Christmas pageant. It was glorious to see," Bob said.

Gemma Salteri, CAGES Foundation Executive Director, said:

"CAGES has learned more from this relationship with Maari Ma than they have from us. The key lesson is to trust community vision and community capability. It's challenging as a funder, and as a human in anything, to leave your own worldview at the front door ... you have to constantly check in and remind yourself that your vision of success might be completely different to another community, another culture's vision of success.

"We try to create space for organisations to do two things – to build out a strategy that makes sense to their community and is driven by their community, but also to have the ability to respond to community needs as they arise," she said.

For Bob, it was CAGES' preparedness to be engaged with what Maari Ma was doing that was significant.

"CAGES was the first philanthropic organisation to approach Maari Ma. Straight away that made the relationship different. We hadn't gone looking for funding with our hat in our hand, CAGES had asked around and gone looking for something specific that would achieve their own objectives," he said.

"That was a community-led organisation focused on Aboriginal maternal and child health and wellbeing."

Right
Playgroup participants at
their graduation ceremony



One of the consequences of CAGES funding the playgroup was that it opened up Maari Ma to government funding.

"If CAGES had not funded the playgroup, we wouldn't have had the data and rich stories of the impact the playgroup had on the lives of the children and their parents. Seeing children learn through play, seeing their parents understanding their child's development, learning through role-modelling, taking that important position as their child's first teacher, building connections for people, supporting people to access the other services Maari Ma offers ... this all came about through that first playgroup," Bob said.

"Government could not deny the importance of it after that and that was all thanks to CAGES."

Once the playgroup was up and running, CAGES shifted its focus to help in other areas at Maari Ma.

"CAGES supported the training of two Aboriginal allied health assistants to work with our new allied health team. Then they provided funding for our maternal and child health program, and later funded the expansion of a school readiness program in Broken Hill to Wilcannia and Menindee," Bob said.

Gemma said that CAGES has grown with Maari Ma, and the funding arrangement had changed to reflect Maari Ma's priorities.

"Government funding is done on such a macro level that it doesn't have flexibility or space for communities to use that funding to deliver unique community needs and every community is different," she said.

CAGES and Maari Ma share an equal footing and shared vision.

"A long time ago, Maari Ma had discussions with government about the need for longer term funding than just two, three or five years as is the norm," said Bob.

"In order to make a real difference in Aboriginal health and families, you need to invest for at least 10 years. This is what CAGES has done. We are very grateful that CAGES shared our vision for supporting Aboriginal families.

"Support over a longer term makes a big difference to an NGO or community-based organisation and the 'data' you get back will not just be numbers but richer outcomes in children and families' lives," he said.

Gemma said she sees philanthropy as having a vital role in demonstrating and building evidence that autonomy with funding provides the most effective outcomes.

"Our experience with Maari Ma and across many other Aboriginal-controlled organisations that we fund, is that if you give autonomy and agency with funding, organisations deliver superior outcomes every time," she said.

Richard Weston became CEO of Maari Ma in early 2023 following Bob's retirement.

Philanthropy backs AAP Indigenous Affairs desk

Australian Associated Press (AAP) appointed two recruits to its new Indigenous Affairs desk in early 2023, an initiative supported by The Snow Foundation.

Lisa Davies, CEO of AAP, said at the time that the partnership was an important step for the not-for-profit organisation, Australia's only independent national newswire.

"We are delighted The Snow Foundation is supporting AAP's Indigenous Affairs desk, which we see becoming a crucial part of our newsroom. The desk will explore issues affecting First Nations people, highlight challenges, exalt successes and recount cultural stories to inspire and engage," she said.

"We want to build a pipeline of well-trained, objective First Nations print journalists from which the whole media industry can benefit."

Georgina Byron AM, CEO of The Snow Foundation said:

"The Snow Foundation has had a long-term commitment to supporting First Nations people, specifically in the areas of scabies and rheumatic heart disease.

"This year is significant for our country with a forthcoming referendum on constitutional recognition of First Nations people," Georgina said.

"It's really important for the country to hear more from Indigenous voices all across Australia.

"We are thrilled to support this desk and AAP knowing their commitment to fair, factual and unbiased reporting, as well as their strong reach to regional and remote communities."

Former Koori Mail Editor, Rudi Maxwell took on the Senior Reporter role, while Eelemarni Close-Brown was appointed alongside her as a Junior Reporter. Eelemarni said she was very excited by the opportunity to work at AAP while she completes a journalism degree at Notre Dame University in Sydney.

At the time of her appointment, she said she was "looking forward to working with Rudi, telling stories that amplify the voices and communities of Indigenous Australia".

"For me, this opportunity represents having a seat at the table that not many young Indigenous people have in the Australian media landscape. I hope that the work we do encourages more young and motivated Indigenous writers to pursue a career with the AAP and journalism in general," Eelemarni said.

Rudi echoed Eelemarni's sentiment.

"I'm so excited about working with Eelemarni to craft stories for the Indigenous Affairs desk," she said.

Rudi Maxwell said:

“

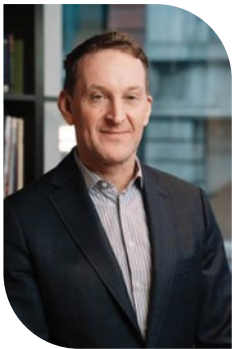
We're aiming to create a broad range of interesting and original stories that reflect the diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait community. While the referendum on the Voice to Parliament is clearly a once-in-a-generation event that will be a focal point, we're also aiming to tell stories that go beyond what the politicians say and provide an opportunity for community members to give their opinion.

AAP has been providing Australia with factual, unbiased news for close to 90 years. When it faced closure in 2020, it was saved by philanthropic supporters and is now an independent, not-for-profit organisation with DGR status.

Right
AAP Indigenous Affairs desk
journalists Rudi Maxwell
(Senior Reporter) (left)
and Eelemarni Close-Brown
(Junior Reporter) (right)



An important initiative for the driest inhabited continent in the world



Above
Leonard Vary, CEO,
The Myer Foundation
and Sidney Myer Fund

In 2017, The Myer Foundation's CEO, Leonard Vary, and his then-equivalent at The Ian Potter Foundation, Craig Connelly, got talking about Australian water.

"We started to think deeply about the security and sustainability of our water and catchments," Leonard said.

"Whether there was a role for philanthropy in that space, and if there was, what form that philanthropic intervention ought to take."

The result is Watertrust Australia Ltd, an independent not-for-profit of rapidly growing significance that seeks to build trust and find common ground on water and catchment policy among users, First Nations groups, environmentalists, river communities and others. Funded by the pooled resources of a coalition of 16 philanthropic partners, for an initial 10-year period, CEO Nick Austin says Watertrust was already able to bring parties with very different agendas into the same room and to offer data synthesis that was not agenda-driven or selective.

"It's not an attempt to say, OK, we've got the smartest people in the room, so we've got the answer," Nick said.

"It's using the process of bringing that knowledge together to bring the different stakeholders' views together as well. So, it's a co-design process.

"In my first year, we had more than 300 individual stakeholder meetings and what was really clear was that the concept resonated across the different interests, and we were welcomed into conversations," Nick said.

"We were pushing on open doors."

In deciding to join the politically charged and complex world of water policy, Leonard and Craig asked themselves if philanthropy had 'a competitive advantage' to all the other interested parties already involved. They hired a team of experienced consultants, led by Rod Marsh – now Watertrust's Director, Strategy and Programs – and supported by some of Australia's most knowledgeable water experts. The team recommended a model for which there was no precedent, told them it would take several times the amount of money they had originally budgeted, and that they would need to invest for a decade, minimum.

"There are no quick wins in water policy," Nick said.

"Often, we're seeking to understand the values and priorities of each of the stakeholders and where they intersect. We'll never find a magic bullet in water policy. It sounds pretty uninspiring, but in some ways it's the least-worst option. We are looking for the option where stakeholders can accept that they don't get everything they want, but it's valid and they can live with that. Then we start to get something that approaches an enduring water policy outcome."

Leonard said the founding philanthropic partners understood that Watertrust was a risk-capital venture but also that the concept could never work unless it was transparently independent, something only philanthropic funding could provide. "In my judgment, the competitive advantage of philanthropy is its capacity to engage in public policy discourse, without a dog in the fight," he said.

Leonard Vary said:

“

I will keep coming back to this, the independent role of philanthropy. There are times, of course, when philanthropy doesn't act independently and comes down on one side, such as the Yes vote, or marriage equality, but there are instances in which philanthropy takes a deliberately disinterested approach to an important public policy issue by establishing the independent funding and governance structures needed to create an organisation such as Watertrust.



Above
Nick Austin, CEO,
Watertrust Australia Ltd

It seems daring, stepping so strongly into a policy space that federal and state governments should logically inhabit, and Nick Austin agreed it was crucial that Watertrust never lost sight of its role. “The worst thing we can do is substitute for what governments should do. But if we can enable government by reducing bottlenecks and deadlocks, then that’s the role, and it’s a fine line between the two, becoming a substitute – versus assisting entities to deliver on their mandate.

“We constantly hear frustrations from stakeholders about the way governments consult. And governments see risk in consulting stakeholders. We absorb some of that risk by demonstrating different ways to engage stakeholders that deepen trust and legitimacy. However, we need to be really conscious that governments must also be actively supportive of and participating in that process.”

Leonard said The Myer Foundation remained committed for the long haul.

“One of the challenges around long-term planning in relation to Australia’s water and catchments is the devotion of substantial resources to infrastructure, over the long-term. Changes in government, different vested groups having the ear of government, encouraging government to act inconsistently and differently over time, makes planning here very complicated and vexed,” Leonard said.

“We know that Australia is the driest inhabited continent on Earth. We know that fresh water is often scarce and is always a precious resource. We know that the planet is getting hotter. We know that our population is increasing. All of those factors coalesce in a way that requires us to maximise the prospects of creating enduring, best-available policy in this sector. There is enough capacity within the philanthropic sector to see the criticality of taking a risk here, given the prospective benefit associated with materially improved policy outcomes,” he said.

The long campaign to ban nuclear weapons

There is a long history across the globe of protesting for nuclear disarmament that has often brought together disparate groups. Yet there have been few organisations like the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which is now a global coalition of 650 partner groups in 110 countries. Its origins stretch back to Melbourne in 2005 and it has been crucially sustained by Australian philanthropic support.

The genesis of ICAN was both the frustration that nuclear disarmament was stuck, and the inspiration provided by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Malaysian obstetrician Ron McCoy proposed 'an International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons'. The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) embraced this idea and adopted it on behalf of its international federation, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The goal was simple in intent but global in its reach: a campaign coalition for a treaty process to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Eve Kantor AO and Mark Wootton AO set up the Poola Foundation in 1994 with a strong ethical focus. In 2006, it donated \$500,000 to the project that would become ICAN. These initial funds were from the estate of Eve's late brother Tom – who was passionately opposed to land mines. Like Tom, Eve and Mark were also inspired by the activism of Sister Patricia Pak Poy, who had campaigned so effectively in Australia (and internationally) for a ban on anti-personnel landmines. In subsequent years the broader Kantor Family's Dara Foundation donated significant funds, along with Mark and Eve. This funding has been integral to ICAN's on going financial stability.

"We saw how backing the right people who could work in nimble ways had an impact. It became a model of how to go about these things at an international level," Mark says.

Supported by Dr Tilman Ruff, who became the founding Australian and international ICAN chair, and the late Dr Bill Williams, Dimity Hawkins, Dr Sue Wareham, Dave Sweeney, first staffer Felicity Ruby and others, the program started to get some traction.

Dr Ruff recalled the initial discussion with Mark and Eve, in Carlton, in inner-city Melbourne:

"At the first meeting with the Poola Foundation, they could see merit in an idea that seemed wildly optimistic to many, and their confidence in us was empowering."

Mark remembers that ICAN didn't have too many people to do its lobbying.

"They were a small organisation then, and they're still a small organisation," Mark says.

"But they are smart, nimble and flexible and we've always been attracted to that. But ICAN's work is multiplied by its role assisting and co-ordinating many diverse partner organisations."

The appeal of such small and dynamic organisations is that they are highly accountable, Mark explains.

"These small organisations attract passionate people. It's a case of identifying big elephants being tackled by small, nimble and strategic organisations," Mark says.

Armed conflict continues to grow in a climate-stressed world, and cyberwarfare adds new dangers. ICAN had never taken its eyes off its main goal and in 2017 the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That year, ICAN's critical role as the main civil society partner for governments in negotiating the UN treaty was recognised with the Nobel Peace Prize, the first to an Australia-born entity.

Tilman Ruff says:

“

The treaty entered into legal force in January 2021 and has now been signed by 92 nations, 68 of which have completed their ratification procedures. These numbers continue to grow. At a critical time when the Doomsday Clock in 2023 stands closer to midnight than it has ever previously been, the treaty is helping to de-legitimise and stigmatise nuclear weapons possession and threats, mobilise support for survivors of nuclear use and testing, and drive growing divestment of financial institutions in companies profiting from building the worst weapons of mass destruction.

Top right

The United Nation's Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination

Bottom right

The long and ongoing campaign to ban nuclear weapons: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) protest outside the Australian Mission in Geneva, 13 May 2016

“We took a risk,” Mark says of the initial investment.

“Our assessment is that the risk has paid handsome dividends. A Nobel Peace Prize seems to be a fair acknowledgement of successful funding. And ICAN still doesn't have a lot of money ... some people think nukes are too hard, but surely the threat of nuclear weapons and devastation is too important to ignore.”



The impact of YES

A philanthropic collaboration that changed Australia



Above

Tom Snow (left) and Anna Brown (right) at the 15 November 2017 YES Day celebrations, after 62% of Australians voted for marriage equality

In 2015 LGBTIQ+ Australians were facing a daunting task. The government had called a national vote on marriage equality, which risked setting back the cause decades.

Apart from the HIV and health sectors, advocacy by the LGBTIQ+ community had primarily been undertaken by hardworking volunteers. Community leaders found themselves on the national stage tasked with rolling out an Australian-wide campaign to win a national vote. They were under funded, ill equipped and facing an uphill battle, acutely aware that only eight of the 46 referendums and plebiscites in Australian history had resulted in a vote for change.

What happened next changed the course of history for LGBTIQ+ communities. Tom Snow contributed substantial seed funding, which culminated in a record gift of \$2.25 million, and launched the 'Equality Campaign'. The Equality Campaign was a partnership with Australian Marriage Equality and brought together a unique coalition of philanthropy with over 2,000 civil society organisations, companies, unions and grassroots community organisations from across Australia.

Philanthropy played a key role in supporting the rapid scaling up of the campaign, ultimately contributed \$10 million in donations, which was matched by in kind support. Two years later the Equality Campaign had grown to over 80 full-time staff supported by 15,600 volunteers.

Australians came together and made more than 1 million phone calls, knocked on more than 102,620 doors, and ensured that marriage equality was discussed across countless kitchen benches across the nation. By the time of the postal vote in November 2017, Australians overwhelmingly voted in favour of change with an overwhelming 62% YES vote.

In addition to the nation-changing YES result, Co-Chairs Anna Brown and Tom Snow worked to ensure there was a long-term legacy from the marriage equality campaign – a national voice for LGBTIQ+ people.

With the support of philanthropy and Brown's former employer the Human Rights Law Centre, the Equality Campaign was rebadged and launched as Equality Australia in 2018 to advance LGBTIQ+ human rights, and ensure representation for LGBTIQ+ Australians in the halls of parliaments around the country.

"The campaign had demonstrated the need for a professional organisation to guide governments around LGBTIQ+ policy issues," said Equality Australia Chair Tom Snow.

"This would not have been possible without philanthropy.

"It was the first time many philanthropic organisations had been involved in advocacy and it demonstrated the value of investing in social change. The campaign also set a new precedent for collaboration between philanthropy, business, civil society and the broader community."

Since then, Equality Australia has worked to ban conversion practices, protect LGBTIQ+ students and staff in religious schools, defend the transgender community from attacks, advocate for the rights of the intersex community and ensure all LGBTIQ+ people are counted in the national census.

"We have been able to build up a capable and sustainable team to respond to the ongoing attacks on our community and progressively remove the legal barriers that the LGBTIQ+ community face. This would not be possible with the ongoing support of philanthropy, which has been spearheaded and sustained through Tom's leadership in this sector," said Anna Brown, CEO of Equality Australia.

"Our work continues because everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter who they are or those they love, and to live safe from discrimination and harm," added Anna.

Top right

Left to right: Ian Thorpe AM, Tom Snow and Senator Penny Wong (now Senator the Hon Penny Wong) celebrating passing of the marriage equality legislation through the Australian Parliament, 7 December 2017



Bottom right

Left to right: Alex Greenwich MP (Member for Sydney, NSW Legislative Assembly), Tiernan Brady (then Executive Director, The Equality Campaign) Tom Snow embracing Senator Penny Wong, Anna Brown and Lee Carnie (then Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre) celebrating as the marriage equality bill is debated through the Senate, 8 December 2017



How big data and philanthropy are taking on child exploitation



Above
Tiphonie Au

Social impact drives many philanthropic endeavours, but perhaps the most profoundly challenging of all to tackle is the prevention of childhood sexual abuse. The International Centre For Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) Australia has announced that the first recipient of its Child Protection Fund (CPF) is a leading UK firm specialising in data-led disruption of financial transactions associated with this heinous and rapidly growing crime.

Tiphonie Au, who heads up the incubator-style fund, says:

“All social problems are hard, but when children are involved, it pulls on the heart. Children are so vulnerable and trauma from childhood abuse has terribly devastating and long-lasting impacts on people’s lives.”

The Australian RedFlag Accelerator CSE Portal is the pilot put forward by RedCompass Labs. It’s an online platform in which localised big data analysis and cutting-edge typologies are provided to Australian financial institutions. The intent is to enhance bank processes to better detect and report on transactions in relation to these crimes.

RedCompass Labs is collaborating with several of Australia’s major banks, including NAB, along with one other institution, to optimise the portal’s usability in the system here. The idea is to make it scalable across all financial institutions in the country and the ultimate vision is to roll it out across the Asia-Pacific region.

“Australia could be at the forefront of helping to move forward in a meaningful way to reduce child sexual exploitation facilitated online,” says Tiphonie.

Financial institutions currently have a range of analytic tools in place, but payments of this type can be notoriously difficult to detect because offenders take multiple steps to hide their actions. There is much more to be done.

“The statistics are horrendous. The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than 21 million reports of child sexual abuse material in 2020 alone. While that centre is based in the US, 93% of the reports to the Cybertip line are from outside the US, so this is a shared global issue,” says Tiphonie.

Tiphanie Au says:

“

Child exploitation is very confronting and until I began working in the field, I was not aware of the scale of the problem. Now it's what gets me up in the morning and makes me go above and beyond every day in this role.

The scale across multiple territories presents a raft of challenges, including silos in data but also operations, which leads to limitations between banks working together. This space is exactly where ICMEC Australia, a relatively new and neutral not-for-profit (NFP), becomes the vital connecting glue. "We provide catalytic funding to de-risk a pilot that showcases to banks that this project or product is needed and valuable. But it has to fit within existing bank systems so that we're not creating another silo.

"We then combine it with non-financial support, in terms of the promotion of collaboration and product adaptation so it really is impactful. Instead of waiting for each individual bank to purchase and implement these innovative products on its own, this will be more scalable. This is work that no single bank would do on its own, so that's the value-add that ICMEC Australia brings – filling the gaps in the ecosystem," says Tiphanie.

"These issues can't be solved by a single player. We've got to work collaboratively and cohesively to drive change. It's not just a legal issue, for example – we can't arrest our way out of this. It needs to be a multi-pronged approach from crime detection to prevention."

Tiphanie sits on Philanthropy Australia's New Gen Committee and is recognised internationally for her outcomes-focused approach. She has been appointed one of 15 Government Outcomes Lab Visiting Fellows of Practice at Oxford University for 2023, a leading group of practitioners from the public, voluntary and private sectors whose insights help the lab to develop the latest best practices in process and engagement.

Another value-add of the NFP is its ability to draw together a rich cross-section of industry experts, academics and data specialists to apply due diligence and rigour to applications. ICMEC Australia's funding strategies include grants, impact investing and, the approach with RedCompass Labs, venture philanthropy.

"Unfortunately, the past has happened, but we stand by survivors and acknowledge their bravery, then focus everything we've got on disrupting these crimes," Tiphanie says.

"I feel very passionate about going beyond the individual projects to tackle this dreadful issue from a system-level perspective. Incremental changes add up."

Amplifying what government can achieve in higher education

Philanthropy has long played a crucial role in supporting universities, funding research to help solve the world's leading challenges, building world-class facilities and providing scholarships to expand access among talented Australians from low-income communities.

In the 19th century, philanthropy played a critical role in the establishment of a number of Australia's sandstone universities that have gone on to be among the best in the world, creating opportunity for millions of Australians to lead a better life and fulfil their potential. William Charles Wentworth founded the University of Sydney to give 'the opportunity for the child of every class to become great and useful in the destinies of this country'.

Fast forward to 2021 and philanthropy was providing \$860 million per year to Australia's 39 higher education institutions. With the Australian Government working to develop a strategy to double giving to charity by 2030, it is feasible to envisage an Australia where universities receive north of \$2 billion a year in philanthropy to amplify their work in building a more equitable, highly skilled, innovative and productive Australia.

Philanthropy in higher education has gathered tremendous momentum in recent times. Two universities – the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney – have both undertaken philanthropic campaigns that have raised more than \$1 billion, helping to transform what they can achieve.

Case study

The University of Melbourne's Believe campaign

Commencing in 2008 and concluding at the end of 2021, the Believe campaign raised a remarkable \$1.165 billion, from 29,155 donors in 69 countries.

Of the total, \$610 million was given for research and discovery, allowing the University to attract some of the world's best researchers to work to address the world's most critical social and environmental challenges. Donors supported the establishment of 34 new academic chairs (professorships), with 25 being long-term endowed chairs.

Nick Blinco, Vice-President (Advancement, Communications and Marketing) explains:

“

Thanks to incredibly generous people and organisations, we have professorships across most disciplines, including classics, history, cancer research, psychology, paediatrics, neural engineering, human rights, physics, economic history and medical biology. The funding security is important for the university and the senior researchers and teachers; it releases their creativity, allows a focus on real-life impact, and supports younger postgraduate and post-doctoral researchers. We would not be able to achieve so much without this extraordinary generosity. We are very grateful to our supporters.

Philanthropy also supported the creation of 27 new early career fellowships (11 long-term) to help more of the brightest minds of the next generation to get established and make a long-term contribution to Australia's research and innovation ecosystem.

Importantly, donor generosity has real-world impact: research is already delivering major breakthroughs across a range of fields, including identifying treatments for ovarian cancer patients, halting species extinction, and enhancing technologies that improve brain function for those with epilepsy and Parkinson's disease.

More than \$187 million was donated for student support, much of which enabled Australians from low-income backgrounds to gain life-changing access to the university. 473 new scholarship and award funds were created, supporting thousands of students to access the university, many of whom were the first in their family to attend higher education. This includes the Hansen Scholarship program, supported by Jane Hansen AO and Paul Little AO. The program supports students from around Australia who have demonstrated outstanding academic success, a resilience to adversity, and a commitment to helping and leading others. Through financial support, tailored mentoring and extracurricular activities, the university equips Hansen Scholars with the skills and knowledge to make an impact at Melbourne and beyond.

\$104 million supported 17 infrastructure projects. Close to \$50 million was raised to integrate the Victorian College of the Arts and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music into the Southbank Arts precinct, building a unique, comprehensive and world class set of teaching, practice and performance facilities within one of the world's most dynamic arts precincts.

Philanthropy has also supported truly global initiatives that inspire social change. The largest gift of the campaign – \$65 million from the Atlantic Philanthropies – created the Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity program – a 20-year investment providing 500 life-changing fellowships for Indigenous-led social change in Australia, Aotearoa and the Pacific region.

The program includes:

- A foundation year in which students complete a Masters of Social Change Leadership; and
- Upon completion of the foundation year, Fellows become Global Atlantic Fellows and attend their first convening with other change-makers from across the seven hubs around the world. This global, lifelong network is coordinated and led by the Atlantic Institute, located in Oxford, UK. As of 2023, 683 Fellows have been drawn from more than 70 countries.

More than 100,000 alumni participated in events during the Believe campaign, with close to 20,000 donating and 15,000 participating in volunteering programs, including more than 8,000 who supported 18,000 students through mentoring programs.

Jane Hansen AO, a long-time supporter and now the Chancellor of the University, said the campaign built philanthropy and engagement into the fabric of the institution.

“I'm proud to be part of a community that is working to enrich the lives of so many. From students who now have opportunities to help them realise their full potential to researchers who can drive real change, this campaign has forever changed the face of Melbourne,” Ms Hansen said.

Right
Students collaborating at the
University of Melbourne





The arts and the power of philanthropy

If you ever want to see an example of the enduring power of philanthropy, head down to Melbourne’s Southbank Arts Precinct. The Ian Potter Foundation has been a long-standing philanthropic benefactor helping to create a world-class arts precinct, having been involved with the location for close to seven decades.

In fact, it all started even before there was a Foundation. Sir Ian Potter was an important supporter of the proposed new National Gallery and Culture Centre in Melbourne in the late 1950s, joining the building committee tasked with raising funds and overseeing the planning and building of what was to become the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and the Arts Centre. When Sir Ian created his own foundation in 1964, the arts were at the centre of his vision for a vibrant, fair and healthy Australia.

In 2001, the Foundation awarded its largest grant to date to the NGV to assist in the construction of its Federation Square complex that would become the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Australia’s first major public gallery dedicated to Australian art.

Almost 20 years later, the Foundation again offered a foundational gift to the NGV of \$20 million toward the construction of NGV Contemporary. This donation, announced in December 2020, is the largest grant ever awarded by the Foundation.

With the Victorian Government’s commitment to invest \$1.4 billion in the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, the Governors of the Foundation saw this grant as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to contribute to enhancing the cultural landscape of Melbourne. Specifically, this foundational gift was intended to bolster NGV’s fundraising efforts to raise substantial additional philanthropic donations needed to complete the project. In March 2022, the Fox family confirmed its commitment of \$100 million towards what is now known as The Fox: NGV Contemporary.

It’s all part of a \$1.4 billion investment in the first stages of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation, in partnership with the Victorian Government, philanthropists and commercial partners. “The location of The Fox: NGV Contemporary within the Southbank cultural triangle will add a globally significant contemporary art gallery to the established and significant institutions within it – the National Gallery of Victoria, Arts Centre Melbourne, The Australian Ballet, Malthouse Theatre, the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, the Melbourne Recital Centre, Buxton Contemporary and the Victorian College for the Arts – cementing Melbourne’s arts precinct as a globally significant centre of artistic and cultural excellence,” said Charles Goode AC, Chair of The Ian Potter Foundation.

The Foundation has also made significant contributions to individual arts organisations within the precinct. For example, The Ian Potter Foundation contributed \$8 million to the Australian Ballet; half to refurbish the company’s Southbank headquarters, the Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre, and to expand its education program. The second \$4 million was given to support the company’s operations, development and a new facility for storing sets and costumes.

Such donations have power over and above their own generosity. Often, it is an early or major financial commitment by The Ian Potter Foundation that leverages more donations from philanthropy or private donors creating momentum in projects.

“The promotional power of The Ian Potter Foundation’s grants ... saw an escalation in gifts to the Ballet of 91%,” Australian Ballet’s director of philanthropy, Kenneth Watkins, explained at the time of the \$8 million gift.

Right

Daytime render of the winning concept design for The Fox NGV Contemporary by Angelo Candalepas and Associates, and public green space, facing south. Render by Darcstudio



Likewise, Professor Barry Conyngham AM, brought in by the University of Melbourne to help merge the Victorian College of the Arts and the university's Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, said he found Charles Goode AC, along with Martyn Myer AO, from The Myer Foundation, to be crucial allies in raising funds for Barry's ambitious plans to bring his students to Southbank.

The Ian Potter Foundation awarded \$5 million to the University of Melbourne in 2013 for the redevelopment of VCA's Southbank campus. A few years later, two further grants totalling \$9 million were made for the construction of new premises for the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM) at the Southbank campus. The MCM building, named The Ian Potter Southbank Centre, has increased the capacity of the conservatorium and created a world-class teaching and performance venue for students in the heart of Melbourne's arts precinct. While The Ian Potter Southbank Centre's primary purpose is to provide the teaching facilities necessary to educate and inspire Australia's future artists, it also houses a 400-seat auditorium for public performances.

"In a way, the right people and philanthropy made the whole thing possible because of leverage," Barry said.

"You can walk into a room and say, this foundation has just given us \$10 million, or we have individual donors who are giving a million each, so would you like to talk about what you might be able to give to help fulfil this dream? People do like to be on winners."

Barry said he and the University of Melbourne's then-Vice Chancellor, Professor Glyn Davis AC, had a goal to create a spectacular university arts faculty in the middle of a brilliant arts precinct in the middle of a city that prides itself on being a great arts city. Creating such a strong university arts presence among the already established arts giants of Southbank gave Australia a world-leading creative destination.

"I used to say that my students could quickly walk to up to 15 or 20 different arts organisations," Barry said.

"We weren't competing for box office with those arts companies, we were able to say we're supporting what you do and training the people you'll need, whether cinematographers or dancers or oboe players."

But that couldn't have happened without the prior and then continuing support of The Ian Potter Foundation and other generous philanthropic donors. Even once Fine Arts and Music students graduate, their chance of work within the sector relies on philanthropic funding underpinning the work of theatre, dance, music and cultural companies in the precinct, as well as the actual galleries and performance spaces.

"In such an uncertain world, art matters," NGV Director Tony Ellwood AM said. "The role of the art museums and arts institutions more generally has never been more important, and philanthropy plays an integral role in ensuring these institutions endure through challenging times. Philanthropic organisations such as The Ian Potter Foundation understand that our nation's vital arts and culture sector needs to remain diverse and visionary to maintain its place on the world's stage."

Warddeken Daluk (Women's) Ranger Program

New ways with old knowledge

The country of West and Central Arnhem land is diverse and challenging, ancient and culturally rich, dating back 50,000 years. In 2010, the traditional owners of the Warddeken and Djelk Indigenous Protected Areas combined to create a Trust that has connected philanthropy to programs that have shaped women's employment, cultural heritage management, education on Country, conservation and environmental outcomes.

Top and bottom right
Warddeken rangers
creating fire breaks around
Anbinik patches

Photos courtesy
of Warddeken Land
Management Ltd

One of the outcomes of that work has been the Warddeken Daluk (Women's) Ranger program, supported by the Klein Family Foundation, that saw ranger hours worked by women more than double in the first two years of the project. The Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) – a reference to the Kuwarddewardde or Arnhem Land Plateau – was the recipient of Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Philanthropy award in 2019, in conjunction with Ninti One.

The daluk rangers' work is about protecting nature and cultural heritage. It is known as the stone country, where conditions are harsh and feral animals, wildfires and invasive weeds are just some of the issues. In addition, the rangers work on maintaining cultural sites. But the transformative power of the program has been to recognise, and then tap in to, the cultural knowledge that is often gender-specific and only held by female elders. Traditional owners knew that unless there was a way of passing on that knowledge, there was a risk it would be lost for ever.

The ranger program started in 2016 and with the Klein Family Foundation's support, a Daluk Ranger Co-ordinator was appointed. KKT CEO, Stacey Irving, says the philanthropic approach was a response to previous insufficient and short-term funding. The new program meant there was some predictability and consistency to the funding.

The program was so successful that it met its target two years ahead of schedule. Ranger women's hours increased from 18% to 40%, and over three years, more than 60 Indigenous women have been employed on a casual basis.



Daluk ranger Lorraine Namanryilk says:

“

Women together is a good way to work ... we have a lot of fun – we talk about culture, our family, the country we work in and our relationship to it.

“This is the best job that I’ve had, and I want to keep learning more and getting more work done.”

There are now up to 150 women rangers on duty across the region, accounting for 45% of the ranger workforce. The age range is from late teens to elders. A critical part of the program is the role women rangers play in the Warddeken Mayh Species recovery project.

The project is an attempt to redress the absence of traditional land management techniques that disappeared after traditional owners were dispossessed of parts of West Arnhem Land during the last century. The consequence has been a proliferation of wildfires, feral animals and invasive weeds that have had a significant impact on the native small mammal population.

Many of the daluk rangers work with an ecologist on setting up survey sites and inputting information from photographs into a bilingual database that enables reports and findings to be circulated in Kunwinjku (local language) to the traditional owners.

The database is extensive. There were more than 800,000 photographs taken in 2018, which has enabled detection of 28 of the 31 threatened species in the area. Now there is evidence that the endangered Northern Quoll (djabbo), the White-throated Grass-wren (yirlinkirrkirr) and the Northern Brown Bandicoot (yok) are still in the area. The data analysis has also provided an opportunity for the first time to document Indigenous names for each of the species, to help build linguistic capacity.

One of the initiatives supporting the daluk program is the bi-cultural, community owned school, the Nawarddeken Academy. The Academy runs across three remote community ranger bases. Many rangers have young families who can’t always provide schooling for their children when they work in the bush. Or they had to leave their ranger careers to move their families closer to schools, where work might not have been available.

The Academy has a tent roof, a core group of students, qualified teachers and teaching assistants who are traditional owners.

“The nearest full-time government school is a five-hour drive away and the road is inaccessible in the wet,” Stacey says.

“It means many of the mums – and dads – can go to work and still have their kids in school.”

The three-year daluk ranger pilot program has ended, but the program is growing throughout the region. The Klein Family Foundation continues to support the vital work of Indigenous rangers in West Arnhem Land.

Business, governments and everyday donors get behind World Vision's bid to regreen 1 billion hectares

Right

Tony Rinaudo, who developed Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, demonstrates pruning techniques to program participants in Ethiopia

A remarkable new way of regenerating billions of hectares across the world without planting a single tree has been developed – and is set to be extended to 100 countries with the support of World Vision and philanthropy. The method not only revives barren landscapes and soaks up tonnes of carbon, but also alleviates poverty and puts more food on people's tables. And to top it off, the technique is up to 36 times cheaper than planting trees from scratch.

It's called Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and was brainchild of Tony Rinaudo, a humble Melbourne agronomist, who devised it while working on the ground in Africa. It is essentially a practice that prunes, nurtures and protects existing root stock, giving it the space and nutrition it needs to grow into a fully fledged tree.

The increased concentration of growth means trees flourish, soil improves, crops grow more efficiently, trees produce more timber for fuel, environments cool and communities grow more resilient to future climate shocks, such as flood or drought. Not only that, but by breaking the cycle of poverty, it restores hope and confidence in communities. It's simple, incredibly low-cost and can be rolled out quickly by local communities.

World Vision aims, directly and through partners around the world, to regenerate 1 billion hectares of land, which it says will remove up to 25% of carbon from the atmosphere, prevent species loss and end extreme poverty for millions of people. Having seen what it has achieved in 27 countries already, the organisation has launched a campaign to grow that footprint to 100 countries by 2030.

Daniel Wordsworth, CEO of World Vision Australia, says:

"During the past 25 years, I have worked in some of the toughest corners of the globe, in places ravaged by conflict and climate, where destitution is a way of life. Among the various methods we use to combat poverty, this technique is without doubt the most effective tool for poverty eradication I have ever seen."

From small beginnings, FMNR has already regreened more than 25 million hectares and changed lives and livelihoods.

World Vision is building a movement of businesses, governments, institutions, farmers and everyday donors to unleash FMNR on a scale not seen before. World Vision Australia is aiming to raise \$25 million during the next few years to rapidly scale FMNR in four 'catalytic countries' – countries with social, political and landscape environments that make them ripe and ready for exponential growth. And it is already well on its way to achieving that first major goal.

The potential impact is almost limitless. There are around 3 billion hectares of degraded land ripe for this kind of restoration, across Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Previously, it was generally understood that 'regreening' means planting trees. Tree-planting has potential, but it is expensive and unreliable. Evidence shows that only 20% of trees planted in degraded landscapes survive. By using instead what already exists – what World Vision calls 'invisible' or 'underground forests' – the chances of success are greatly increased.

Tony's passion for FMNR is based on his experiences working in Niger in the 1980s, planting thousands of trees only to see them perish after failing to establish themselves in the harsh landscape of the Sahel. But now with FMNR, Tony and the many farmers he has trained over the years, have managed to regreen more than five million hectares of a country in one of the most challenging ecological environments on the planet.

As Australia extends its ambitions for carbon-emissions reductions and sets net-zero targets, World Vision believes the role of nature-based solutions has enormous potential in the fight against climate change.



Right

A community group in Kenya has benefited through various training activities and events as part of the Drylands Development Program. This community group member has been trained as a "Trainer of Trainers" with the aim to increase the capacity of other community members in practicing innovative and new agricultural technologies such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), zaipits, seedling management and water management. The program is supported by donors to World Vision Australia.





How philanthropy supported a ‘moment of great opportunity’ behind the Net Zero Authority



Above
Anna Skarbek, CEO,
Climateworks Centre

The federal government announced in early 2023 that it planned to establish a Net Zero Authority, which was a significant and essential development to ensure crucial targets are met on time and workers are supported to change from fossil fuel industry jobs to new opportunities. There have long been calls from industry, unions, green groups, academics and others for an overarching body to help co-ordinate the net-zero shift, and philanthropy has played a key role bringing it to fruition.

Anna Skarbek, CEO of Climateworks Centre, said:

“The importance of the announcement cannot be underestimated. Without such a body, Australia risked making the net-zero transition too slowly, or not at all.”

The authority has three main jobs. It will support workers in emissions-intensive sectors to transition to new jobs and learn skills, co-ordinate programs and policies across government to help regions and communities attract and take advantage of clean energy industries, and it will help investors and companies take up opportunities in the net-zero transformation.

In 2019, members of the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network co-funded a feasibility study into the creation of a national net zero authority, or “Australian carbon transitions commission” as they called it at the time. Sue Mathews, of the Mullum Trust, led the initiative in partnership with John Spierings, then of the Reichstein Foundation. Together they worked to secure additional funding from the PMF Foundation, Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation and later on, The Myer Foundation. With sufficient funds secured, they commissioned the Centre for Policy Development, an existing grantee of the Mullum Trust, to complete the study.

Climateworks Centre at Monash University worked with industry, CSIRO and international research experts to examine what was needed for Australia’s energy transition to succeed. The collaboration, known as the Australian Industry Energy Transitions Initiative (ETI), delivered its final report in February 2023, identifying net zero pathways for five supply chains in Australia’s mining and resources sectors that contribute more than \$200 billion in GDP each year and over 25% of national emissions. This work was majority funded by philanthropy, with contributions from participants and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

Findings from this report stressed the importance of co-ordinated action from finance, industry, community and government departments at all levels; the value of a co-investment approach as a way for governments to combine multiple, smaller funding sources to achieve scale and efficiency; and ideas such as “renewable energy industrial precincts” – clusters of industrial businesses in one place, powered by 100% renewable energy. The Net Zero Authority has the mandate to drive these missing pieces forward.

The ETI program also provided evidence of the scale of new jobs that could be created and the scale of investment attraction to deliver the transition. Philanthropy has supported years of local-level engagement with and among communities affected by the energy transition, and the Net Zero Authority’s mandate shows they’ve been heard, with its clear priority to support workers to change from fossil fuel industry jobs to new opportunities.

Anna Skarbek said:

“

It is thanks to sustained philanthropic support and the climate movement’s strategic collaboration that this authority could be created within the first year of a new government, which has allocated a budget of more than \$80 million.

Policymakers inside government also worked hard in the last year to bring it to life through a new cross-government collaboration – the Net Zero Economy Taskforce – in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

“Climateworks’ research is now mapping net zero emissions pathways in buildings, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, energy and finance. In all these areas, action is needed in policy and community engagement and investment. There is momentum, with many examples of successful collaboration behind major climate action announcements in the 2023 Federal Government budget including \$2 billion support for renewable hydrogen and more than \$1 billion support for home energy performance upgrades. All of these drew on research and engagement from philanthropy-funded groups,” said Anna.

“Philanthropy is the reason Climateworks Centre exists and succeeds. Established in 2009 by a \$4.6 million grant from The Myer Foundation in partnership with Monash University, more than a decade later, Climateworks Centre remains more than 80% funded by philanthropy, ensuring our independence, and proving essential to our impact.

“The transformation to a decarbonised economy offers a moment of great opportunity that must take place at a dizzying scale. Again, we must call on the real heroes – the philanthropists who recognise this small and urgent window of opportunity and the real impact we can deliver – to help ensure that together, we get there.”

Leonard Vary, CEO of The Myer Foundation, said that there was a lot of due diligence done when setting up Climateworks. The Foundation engaged a consultancy firm to help identify what form philanthropic intervention in the space ought to take.

“I think Climateworks is an incredibly powerful example of the capacity of philanthropy to engage in a public policy matter that is independent, in a way which can’t be said to have attached to it any motivations, other than the improvement of society in some way,” he said.

“It is about thinking deeply on the way in which lofty ambitions around acting, in relation to climate change, can be rendered practical and effective. That’s what Climateworks does at its heart, but it is now a significant force in the climate field.”

Thank you

Thank you to each person who participated and supported the collation of *Inspring stories of giving* for this publication.

Philanthropy Australia would like to extend special thanks to the following organisations for their participation.

Editorial team

Philanthropy Australia: Dee Rudebeck,
Sophie Marcard, Diana Hodgetts, Sam Rosevear,
Pat Burke OAM, Vicki Norton

Noisy Boy Media: Nick Place

Peter Wilmoth

Design: Multiple Studio

Philanthropy Australia, October 2023

A New Approach
Australian Associated Press (AAP)
Beyond Blue
Brave Foundation
CAGES Foundation
Children's Ground
Climateworks Centre at Monash University
Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic
Therapeutics at the Peter Doherty Institute
for Infection and Immunity
Dusseldorp Forum
English Family Foundation
Equality Australia
Global Sisters
Grattan Institute
Griffith University
Guerilla Media
Hotel Etico
Inner North Community Foundation
Karrkad Kanjdji Trust
Klein Family Foundation
Maari Ma
Maranguka
McLean Foundation
Melbourne Recital Centre
Melbourne Women's Fund
Monash Children's Hospital
Monash Health Foundation
Pathways to Politics Program for Women
Paul Ramsay Foundation
Ruah Community Services
Sisters of St John of God Ministries
St Mary's House of Welcome
The Foundation for Rural
and Regional Renewal (FRRR)
The Ian Potter Foundation
The International Campaign to
Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
The International Centre For
Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) Australia
The Myer Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
The Snow Foundation
The Stella Prize
The University of Melbourne
The University of Queensland and
its Translational Research Institute
Trawalla Foundation
Victorian Women's Trust
Watertrust Australia Ltd
White Box Enterprises
Women and Mentoring (WAM)
World Vision Australia



