

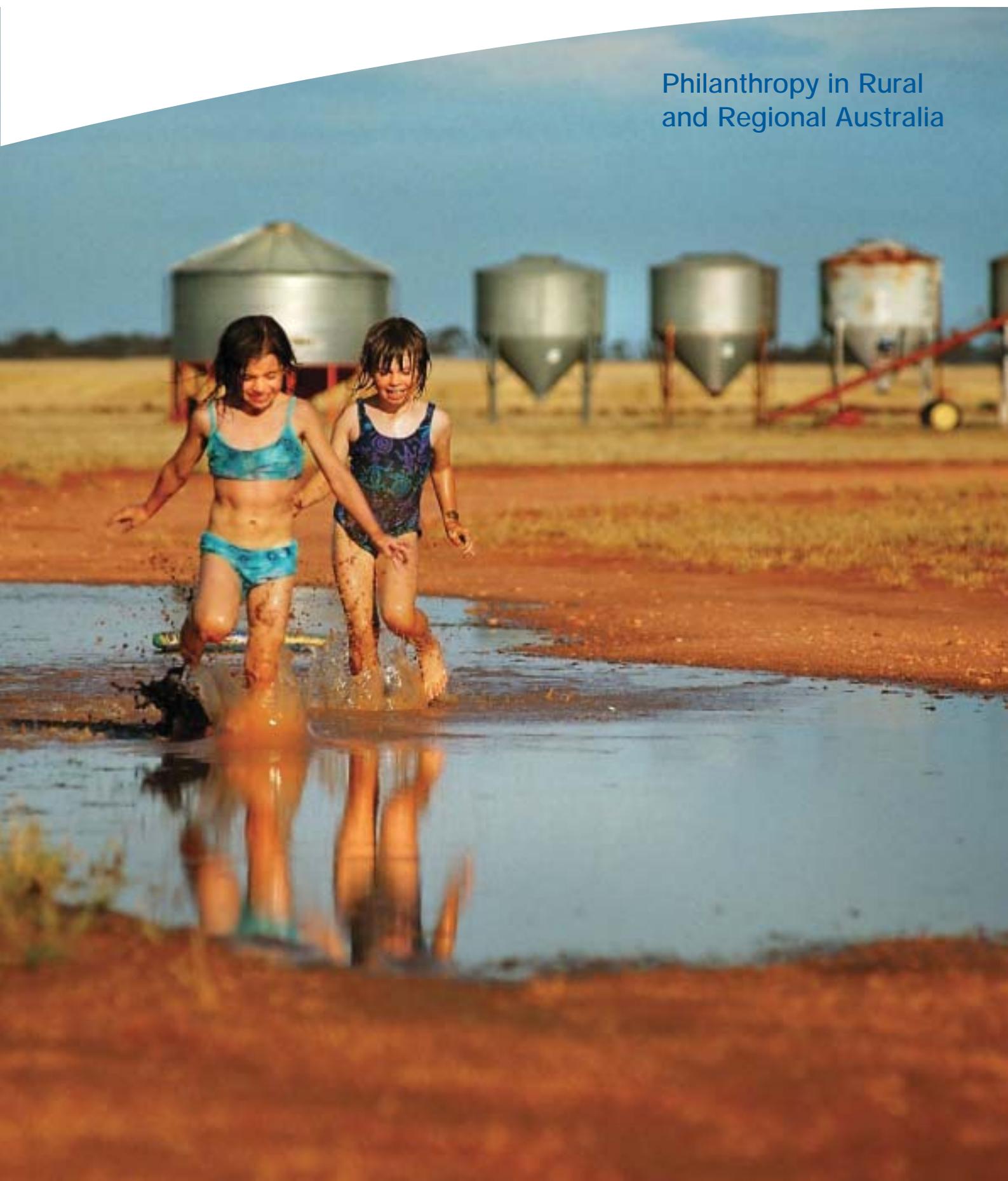


PHILANTHROPY  
*Australia*

# Australian Philanthropy

Spring 2006, Issue 62

Philanthropy in Rural  
and Regional Australia





# Philanthropy in Rural and Regional Australia

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"We need to find ways to work with the communities themselves, along with government and other partners, building upon existing community strengths to grow social capital and create economic prosperity."

## From the President

*Lady Southey AC, President*

It has been said that technology, modern communications and globalisation have closed the gap between urban and rural Australians. We also know that much of our nation's wealth has been built from primary industry, conducted in regional Australia, and yet some of the greatest poverty and hardship is experienced in remote and non-urban areas.

The challenge for us in the philanthropy sector is to understand these and other issues facing rural communities, which might not always be obvious to the urban population. We need to find ways to work with the communities themselves, along with government and other partners, building upon existing community strengths to grow social capital and create economic prosperity.

As an organisation, Philanthropy Australia reflects the diversity of giving throughout our nation, geographically as well as in many other ways. We are delighted to count amongst our membership many giving communities that live and operate in different states, and in different types of settings. We are also pleased to have helped bring together people and organisations across cities, towns and smaller communities.

Philanthropy in its various forms, has also contributed to bringing many urban and non-urban communities together in mutually beneficial partnerships. It has provided much needed financial support for small communities to use their amazing, if often hidden, resources to bring people together and make a difference for the future.

Our report on the series of Philanthropy Australia Grantseeker Workshops, funded by the Office for Women, indicates how much further we can still go in taking information about philanthropic support and funding sources out to diverse locations.

The articles in this edition of *Australian Philanthropy* together offer a snapshot of ways we can contribute to supporting rural communities. "Innovation in rural Queensland" (page 7) identifies six principles to aid the growth of social capital, including: support newcomers, who are most willing to participate in the social fabric of a community; promote diversity, for it leads to innovation and creativity; and invest in capacity building, for thriving communities have dynamic coalitions of 'do-ers'.

"Social capital and rural renewal" (page 6) presents the seven dimensions of social capital, and explains that while rural

communities often have higher levels of community participation, trust, and neighbourhood connections, they often lack the agency or support to translate this asset into action.

We also highlight several success stories – regional art galleries, indigenous employment, financial literacy, and environmental projects, to name a few. The community foundation movement has helped to mobilise the impressive reservoir of social capital in regional Australia, and here we profile just two of these remarkable organisations.

We couldn't cover this issue, of course, without a word from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) who work with communities from all over the country, and have given a helping hand to so many organisations and community foundations in their establishment phases.

I wish to particularly acknowledge FRRR's 'unofficial' photographer, Italo Vadaro for generously allowing us to use his wonderful image on the front cover of this journal.

We hope you enjoy this edition, regardless of where in Australia you happen to be reading it!



**"The community cohesion, resilience and mental health benefits which accrue from sporting clubs extend way beyond physical fitness or sporting skills."**

## From my Perspective

*Gina Anderson, CEO*

In my world, growing up in rural New South Wales in the 1960s and 1970s, crank-handle party-line telephones, irregular mail services, black soil and gravel roads, hot hot days and nights in summer and freezing cold nights in winter were the norm. Today with air-conditioning, well designed cars, tar roads, access to satellite technology and internet (albeit slow) access, living in many parts of rural and regional Australia has changed substantially. And yet, somehow, despite the 'mod cons', rural and regional Australia seems more remote than ever from the metropolitan cities on the coast – the gap has widened as our urban mindset has taken hold.

Forty years ago, most people had a connection to the land: a friend or relative living in the country. With movement of people to the coast and increased immigration with migrants choosing to live in the big coastal cities, there is little connection to the country. Indeed the picture of a country Australian as the stockman, so wonderfully described by Banjo Patterson and Henry Lawson, exists more in the urban mind than in reality.

Today Australia still relies very heavily on its primary industries, mining and agriculture, and their support products and services including tourism, for the success of our economy. These industries are high-tech, innovative and highly developed. To support these industries we need skilled people and we need vibrant, sophisticated, interesting communities for people to live and work in.

While infrastructure, such as telecommunications, transport, law and order is critical, it does not 'make communities'. Communities are about people, common interests, interaction and social fabric. They are about strong local leadership, civic participation and the commitment of volunteers from all walks of life who give time and effort to build, create and believe in their local community.

Sports and arts/culture are two key components in community building and engagement. Mostly run by volunteers, sports and the arts not only bring individuals within a community together but also build links between communities. In smaller communities these activities tend to engage a wider cross-section of the community, developing cohesion and therefore greater resilience.

Sporting clubs are very often key meeting and activity spaces for young people in rural communities, and may very well be the only venues for such social interaction in some rural areas. The community cohesion, resilience and mental health benefits which accrue from sporting clubs extend way beyond physical fitness or sporting skills. And without arts and cultural activities that city people seek it becomes increasingly difficult to attract the skilled professionals that communities need such as doctors.

Sports and the arts provide another incredibly important role. They can act as a bridge for people in the cities. They can be a point of access, a reason to

visit, a reason to engage. We also know that the arts are important in fostering creative, inclusive and welcoming communities, which attract skilled and talented people to live and work in them.

Another great area of interest to both city and country people alike is our love of our native flora and fauna. And, hand in hand with our attraction to 'nature', is an increasing concern for the state of the land. Whether through bush walking or engaging with landcare groups, or working with our mining and farming communities, empathy with our natural environment is critical to us all. Indeed for many city people it is the pre-eminence of the physical environment – the space, the sky, the weather – which is the most tangible element of rural Australia.

Ian Plowman, in his research into what makes some towns thrive while others languish, says that what makes a difference is not necessarily size, prevailing industry, or scenic attractiveness; instead it is mobility of people (read Ian's article on page 7). Just as rural communities need people who have travelled afar and experienced other ways of life and brought with them new skills, ideas and attitudes, urban Australians can also contribute to rural communities when they visit, partner with or invest in country towns or rural regions. We can all have a part to play.

# Championing rural, regional and remote Australia – FRRR

By *Sylvia Adams, CEO FRRR*



## Beginnings

FRRR's origins are living proof of the ability of philanthropy to address unmet needs. Our origins lie in the leadership of the Sidney Myer Fund and members of the Myer Family, in encouraging the Australian Government to initiate a national philanthropic foundation for the lasting benefit of rural, regional and remote Australia. This occurred at a time when rural Australia had largely been forgotten by many.

The result was the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, now known as FRRR, which began its life with its launch at the Regional Australia Summit in October 1999 and began operations in 2000. In six years FRRR has firmly established itself as a credible and legitimate player in the Australian philanthropic landscape with the support of the Australian Government, many philanthropic trusts and foundations, private individuals, national businesses and local rural communities.

## Why is FRRR different from other philanthropic entities?

FRRR is a Tax Concession Charity, established to provide a viable social and economic future for Australia's rural and regional communities through seed funding for social, cultural, environmental and economic projects beneficial to these communities. The FRRR is specifically listed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) under item 13.2.2, section 30-105 of the Income Tax Assessment Act, so donations to FRRR are tax deductible.

FRRR has wide grant making powers and can distribute DGR funds to non-DGR organisations; an activity not permitted under any general DGR category and strictly reserved under the specific listing provisions. There are two

other government initiated foundations specifically listed to provide grants to non DGRs. They are the Australian Sports Foundation and the Australian Business Arts Foundation.

This provision has been critical to FRRR fulfilling its mission in rural, regional and remote Australia; as will an enhancement to FRRR's capabilities to allow from 1 July 2007 the receipt of tax deductible donations from regional community foundations and to use those funds exclusively for projects in those regions.

## What we do

FRRR's mission is to champion the economic and social strength of Australia's regional, rural and remote communities through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and governments.

Around 1,400 grants, totalling \$9.2 million, have been made by FRRR, mostly in partnership with others, and usually to small rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less. From surveying FRRR grant recipients we know that for every \$1 given in a grant another \$9 is attracted in cash or in kind to the project.

FRRR prides itself on its 'style' of delivering philanthropy to rural Australia. Our offices are in the regional centre of Bendigo in Victoria and have been since 2001. Our five staff are friendly, accessible and approachable. Through the provision of a 1800 number enquiries can be made from anywhere in Australia for free.

The web is extremely important in providing accessible information but we must always remember that not everyone has internet access to the same extent or quality. This was brought home to me when a grant seeker requesting a faxed application said "Can you wait 10 minutes while I turn on the generator". Having grown up myself with a generator I knew what she was talking about!

## It's about more than grantmaking

If FRRR is unable to help we endeavour to refer enquiries to other likely places. Philanthropy is not generally well known in rural Australia, though this varies from state to state, so having the ability to link people into relevant sources of support is always greatly appreciated.

FRRR has evaluated a number of its grants programs for itself and its partners. The messages that keep coming through loud and strong are that people in rural Australia value: the fact that someone cares about them; that FRRR can fund broadly e.g. economic and community development projects can be supported; that FRRR can fund non DGR organisations; and that FRRR processes are simple and effective.

In addition we deliver to our partners the ability to give comprehensively into rural, regional and remote Australia, and provide independence in decision making. FRRR works closely with its partners considering their wishes and always acknowledges its supporters to the grant recipients.

Through our Rural Education Program we have initiated much needed research into the impacts of drought on secondary education. Charles Sturt University undertook qualitative research into several drought affected communities and the report is being used to guide the program in its granting and also to initiate change with government.

In designing granting programs FRRR must look at all aspects of the problem the program is trying to solve. A recent example of this is the Back to School Program, initiated by the Sidney Myer Fund, which provides gift vouchers to families in need and is delivered through rural and regional community foundations. As a result of this program FRRR has now established a Stay at School Program for students in years 11 and 12 who are living independently, as

this group was noticeably showing up as recipients of the Back to School Program. The Stay at School Program will make \$500 gifts to independent living students in years 11 and 12. FRRR was able to gain an exemption from the Australian Government so this gift will not be means tested, as income, which is often the case.

FRRR is increasingly asked to represent rural interests on a range of issues and always takes the opportunity to make sure the issues affecting rural and regional Australia are considered properly. Our ability to do this stems from our close contact with rural communities, the trends we identify from funding requests, and because of the 'honest broker' role that philanthropy can play.

We know that if you look at the statistics alone the future of rural Australia may seem bleak. However, the nature of philanthropy is such that you work with groups on the ground seeking solutions to local problems and therefore FRRR's view of rural Australia remains very positive.

#### Who cares about rural Australia?

As a young philanthropic foundation FRRR is proud of its partners, many who have been with FRRR for several years and in the case of the Sidney Myer Fund and The Pratt Foundation from the very beginning. An early business partner, ANZ, continues to work with FRRR through the Seeds of Renewal Program. ANZ has been joined by other businesses – Dairy Farmers, Australia Post, Bendigo Bank and the AFL. With the support of the broader philanthropic sector, which has a strong desire to benefit rural and regional Australia and were looking for a partner to assist, FRRR is able to demonstrate that philanthropy does care.

Partners such as ANZ Trustees, The William Buckland Foundation, The Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation, and JR & JO Wicking Trust, The Myer Foundation; The RE Ross Trust, JS Love Charitable Trust, Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation, The Foundation for Young Australians, Community Enterprise Foundation, DOXA Youth Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation and a number of PPFs have all generously given to rural Australia through FRRR.



Coober Pedy, Outback Open Air Cinema Project. \$6,000 grant through FRRR/ANZ Seeds of Renewal Program.

Many private individuals have supported us also and notably it was a group of private individuals who initiated the Rural Education Program. When Sarah & Baillieu Myer, John and Janet Calvert-Jones and Tim & Gina Fairfax became aware of the incredible need to assist rural students with their education, they worked with FRRR to create a solution. FRRR also operates a number of donation accounts on behalf of community projects receiving tax deductible donations and reinvesting these in rural Australia. We also have many pro bono supporters and would like to especially acknowledge Freehills.

that meets local communities needs and progresses the interests of rural Australia and therefore Australia as a whole.

*If you would like to learn more about FRRR please contact Sylvia Admans CEO on (03) 5443 7300/1022 or visit our website at [www.frrr.org.au](http://www.frrr.org.au). Grant seekers can call on 1800 170 020. Copies of our regular newsletter and latest Community Report are available by contacting us at [info@frrr.org.au](mailto:info@frrr.org.au)*

#### Where to from here?

FRRR wishes to keep championing the cause and need in rural and regional Australia and what philanthropy can do to answer some needs. By continuing to work closely with our partners FRRR will put more back into rural, regional and remote communities in a manner

# Social capital and rural renewal: Is there a role for philanthropy?

By Professor Jenny Onyx, Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management (CACOM),  
University of Technology, Sydney



Professor Jenny Onyx

Evidence is mounting that social capital makes a difference. Communities with high social capital are more likely to show better economic performance. Their citizens are healthier and happier, they have less crime and better education outcomes. Such evidence is coming in from all over the world, using a variety of methods<sup>1</sup>.

So what is social capital? Why does social capital make such a big difference? How does this impact on rural Australia, and the Australian non-profit sector? And what role, if any, can be played by philanthropy?

First, what is social capital? It is people power: the potential capacity of social networks to solve collective problems. As Robert Putnam put it, it's "those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions"<sup>2</sup>. A major Australian study<sup>3</sup> found that there were seven different dimensions of social capital:

- Participation in the local community – e.g. "are you an active member of a local organisation or club?" This is the strongest factor.
- Social agency – agency refers to the capacity of the individual or group to

plan and initiate action. e.g "if you need information to make a life decision, do you know where to find that information?"

- Feelings of trust and safety.
- Neighbourhood connections – concerns the more informal interaction within the local area.
- Family and friends connections.
- Tolerance of diversity – e.g. "do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?"
- Value of life – e.g. "do you feel valued by society?"

Generally speaking, rural communities show stronger social capital than urban ones. They have higher levels of community participation, trust, and neighbourhood connections. They are especially high on what is called 'bonding social capital', rather than on 'bridging' or 'linking social capital'. These are distinctions made by the World Bank: Bonding is about 'getting by', making do, surviving under difficult times, personal support. Bridging and linking are about reaching out beyond the community to access resources needed to 'get ahead'. Bonding is about horizontal networking outside the immediate group or community. Bridging is about making vertical connections to those with power and money. Both are important for rural renewal.

How does social capital work? We are still trying to pin this down. But it seems that networks of people are able to provide the necessary social support and material support when times are tough. We know that both physical and mental health is much better when people are in supportive communities. We also know that social capital reduces transaction costs in doing business, because there is a better flow of information, agreements are easily made without expensive legal contracts, and contracts are honoured. In those networks and communities with high social capital, people take the initiative, working together they are prepared to take a risk to try something new.

That is where rural renewal comes in. I found many small, isolated villages in Sweden's north that were feeling the same effects as many Australian outback communities. These communities refused to die, but instead formed small co-operatives to rejuvenate services abandoned by government, or to establish new businesses. Those co-operatives were based on social capital: they created jobs and a little industry, and they gave the community a sense of hope, of purpose. They operated partly on a business model, partly on external funding, and partly on the citizens' voluntary labour. They were similar to our emerging model of the social enterprise.

Many small Australian rural communities are suffering from serious decline, but not all. It is hard to know what makes the difference. Some communities are just better placed in terms of geography and natural resources. Most have reasonably high stocks of bonding social capital, but some lack agency. Even with good potential some lack the bridging and linking social capital to identify information, support and financial capital from outside the community.

That is where community foundations, philanthropic trusts and business partnerships come in. It is very likely that many small communities can break out of their current despair and downward economic spiral with a little help from their urban friends. Taking a leaf from the Swedish example, consider adopting a rural community project, to provide support, information, skills training, or start-up capital to develop a new industry or service to help revitalise our rural communities.

1. Halpern, D. Social Capital Polity Press, 2005.
2. Putman, R., R. Leonardi and R. Nanetti. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton University Press, 1993.
3. Onyx, J. and P. Bullen. Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities. In Journal of Applied Behavioural Science 2000, 36(1): 23-42.

# Innovation in rural Queensland: Why some towns thrive while others languish

By Ian Plowman



Ian Plowman

All people have mobility choices – to move to a community that is attractive; to stay in a community that is attractive relative to the cost of moving elsewhere; or to move away from a community that is unattractive. The critical question is: Who moves; who doesn't; and why? Surprisingly, patterns of mobility are not random. Those who move tend to be younger, to have higher levels of education, and to have travelled overseas more frequently and for longer duration.

Research examining the antecedents of innovation in eight Queensland towns found that what made a difference was not necessarily size, prevailing industry, or scenic attractiveness; instead it is mobility of people. Those towns with net inflows tend to have a vitality and energy that other towns lack. Conversely, those with net outflows tend to lose their innovative talent, leaving behind an increasingly conservative monoculture.

It is axiomatic that no community has a 'right' to survive. Almost no Australian town existed 200 years ago. Each town sprang up to address an emerging social or economic need. Towns on railway lines often grew out of the camps of fettler gangs. In wheat growing areas, it was storage or transport nodes, depending on the technology of the day.

that determined town location. For most towns, their original purpose has now altered. Unless a community is able to reinvent itself in a contemporary world, it will join the ranks of ghost towns that already litter rural Australia.

The research distributed 300 surveys to randomly selected residents in each town. People were asked to indicate whether others would regard them as (a) a community leader, (b) somebody with knowledge and expertise that could be called upon if required, or (c) a support person. Surprisingly, the least innovative towns reported the highest number of leaders and support people; the most innovative town reported almost no leaders but had the highest proportion in the second group. Interview evidence seems to suggest that 'leaders', particularly incumbent leaders, are conservative stalwarts whose grip on power chases away the very creative talent that the town says it needs to attract and retain.

Leadership is a two-edged sword. It is an act of civic responsibility. It is also an act of denying someone the opportunity to gain civic experience. The more that leadership responsibility can be experienced and shared, the more innovative is the town.

So where might philanthropic bodies best invest to foster the social capital of rural Australia? The recommendations arising from the research provide some suggestions.

First, mobility should be supported. Mobility alone results in the most able people going to those communities that are more likely to be receptive to the inflow of talent. It also serves to help more capable people move out of environments that are barren.

Second, newcomers should be supported. Newcomers need to establish a sense of place, purpose and social acceptance. It is newcomers who are

most willing to invest in the social and economic fabric of a community. The more they are made to feel welcome, the more willing they are to invest.

Third, young people should be supported. Young people need to invest in relationships and in career. Unlike their parents, their array of options is vast and they are increasingly citizens of a global village. So communities need to consider how accommodating or otherwise they are of young people, their interests and their careers.

Fourth, invest in diversity. Innovation and creativity are commonly the fortuitous byproduct of the blending of diverse ideas and experience. Diversity has a prerequisite – tolerance. Communities that are intolerant of diversity are destined to die.

Fifth, invest in capacity building. Communities that are dying have incumbent leaders and passive supporters. Communities that are thriving have a constantly evolving dynamic of creative coalitions made of people who roll their sleeves up without being asked and who seek no credit for doing so. Any support given to the willing will provide a handsome return.

Finally, invest in celebration. Communities that celebrate are offering their citizens a sense of unity and identity, characteristics that are essential to underpin the previous five investments.

*Ian Plowman, PhD, is a psychologist, social researcher and community facilitator whose practice is centred on building social capacity. His research report into innovation in country towns can be found on:*

*<http://www2.dpi.qld.gov.au/business/14778.html>*

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ian@plowman.com.au*

# Crossing the 'sandstone curtain' with philanthropy

By Michael Sutherland and Dr Chris Williams



*Family Planting Day.*

Most Australians, including recently arrived immigrants, choose to live within 100km of the coast, based largely in the capital cities of the states and territories. This means that most of Australia's 'environment' lies outside of where the population lives. Beyond the coastal strip, smaller communities serviced by larger regional centres dominate the rural landscape. Rural communities are changing as the number of farmers decrease and farms increase in size to maintain economies of scale. As a result, there are simply fewer people now available to manage "the inland environment" than there were several decades ago.

Those of us who live inland enjoy the benefits of an uncrowded environment and plenty of space. On the other hand we are also probably resigned to the fact the country will never quite give us all the diverse benefits and economic opportunities offered by capital cities, nor the decent critical mass of country-connected philanthropists who might become the champions of the inland.

Despite this reality of a sparsely populated inland, Australia's highly urbanised and mostly coastal population does not completely ignore the 'empty' interior beyond the 'Sandstone Curtain' of the Great Dividing Range. This is especially in regard to the environmental issues facing Australia's agricultural landscapes. For example, the wider urban community

**"With all of the above in mind, the question of how to garner philanthropic support for the rural environment depends on what you imagine the 'environment' to be or what you think it should become."**

has become more aware of the impacts of irrigation and land clearing on the long term health of rivers and ecosystems in rural areas. There has been widespread support for legislation to end broadscale clearing of native vegetation and for water reforms for irrigation and 'environmental flows'.

While awareness is growing, urban communities perhaps only know vague details of the complexities surrounding these issues and perhaps less about the economics of mining and agriculture that underpins 'the inland' and indeed their own quality of life. In addition, farming and pastoral regions supply large areas of recreational 'nature' for city people in the form of national parks and wilderness areas. They also supply lands for the 'tree change' phenomenon, the drift of some urbanites to the hinterland to grow grape-vines and olive trees, for example, on small landholdings.

With all of the above in mind, the question of how to garner philanthropic support for the rural environment depends on what you imagine the 'environment' to be or what you think it should become. Competing visions for rural landscapes include seeing 'the bush' as a vast food basket, a degraded 'pre-European' wilderness in need of repair or as place for new lifestyle settlers. None of these pictures of rural Australia are necessarily incorrect or even mutually exclusive. However, the reality of land and water degradation and the destruction or slow decline in the number of plant and animal species makes funding for environmental restoration an on-going and urgent need.

There is a real and enduring tradition of grass roots community philanthropy in country areas that takes in the activities of Rotary, Apex, Lions and a plethora of community fund raising groups like



*The unveiling.*

Guide Dogs, Can Assist and Royal Flying Doctor Service. Despite this strong community capacity for self-help, the scale of environmental problems requires strong policy and program support from government and participation from urban based philanthropic organisations and from the corporate sector.

When all these elements combine important changes can be made. Twenty years ago The Ian Potter Foundation established a farm and environment improvement program in the Western District of Victoria. The Potter Farmland project greatly influenced the subsequent design of the Landcare program which has helped thousands of farmers access funds to improve their local environment for well over a decade.

The Landcare program continues to give rural communities a platform for cooperative repair of the environment. In recent years investment from government to help repair rural environments has moved from a devolved 'grass roots' system such as Landcare to a more strategic approach, largely based on Commonwealth funds from the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Across Australia, regional bodies have been established using a catchment management framework. For example in 2003, 13 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) were established in New South Wales. CMAs recognise the importance of people and communities in restoring catchments and landscapes, even if it remains a challenge to create real 'grass roots' ownership of prioritising actions. Consequently, the CMAs have skills-based boards of regionally-based members and staff of 30-40 people. The CMAs are focusing on environmental

issues through Catchment Action Plans, which have natural resource targets across several themes such as native vegetation, biodiversity, soils, salinity, water, cultural heritage, and people and community.

Within the new catchment regions there are also many other not-for-profit organisations working hard to help protect and restore rural landscapes. Groups such as Trust for Nature (Victoria) and the newly established Nature Conservation Trust of New South Wales specialise in working with landholders to protect native vegetation through statutory conservation covenants and management advice programs. Increasingly, covenanting bodies such as these work closely with CMAs to make better management of natural resources and biodiversity less onerous to landholders than appears to be the case through regulation. Along with national organisations such as Greening Australia, they are able to focus on delivering incentives to farmers and other landholders to protect native vegetation.

Critically, conservation organisations also buy rural properties to manage as reserves or on-sell them with covenants to new owners interested in conservation management. Trust for Nature has received generous support from philanthropic foundations since its establishment in 1972, most notably from The R E Ross Trust for the purchase of high value conservation properties.

Largely independent of the catchment management framework, two national organisations are buying properties across Australia to secure habitat for endangered plants and animals. These are the Australian Bush Heritage Fund (ABHF) and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). Both ABHF and

AWC have galvanised high levels of philanthropic support with their vision of privately-held wildlife sanctuaries across the continent. AWC, for example, focuses on endangered mammals by buying habitat with endangered mammal populations while it also reintroduces threatened and iconic marsupials such as bilbies back to their former range. In the late 1990s, AWC provided endangered brush-tailed bettongs from its Karakamia Sanctuary near Perth for release into farm bushland for a Landcare group near Dubbo.

This was a project which the authors of this article were involved in. As a result of this positive experience of assistance, we believe that philanthropic endeavour in and for rural Australia can embrace both the creative and technical elements of repairing rural landscapes. The huge effort being made to improve natural resource management through government-sponsored 'regional bodies' is increasingly sophisticated. The work of not-for-profit environmental organisations is driven by practical but nonetheless idealistic values to 'save' fauna and flora. Both the CMAs and the not-for-profit sector provide many opportunities for visionary philanthropy.

It is no easy thing to 'restore' rural environments by re-introducing 'lost' species, or to help landholders better manage their native vegetation, or to allow for adequate water to flow down our rivers. Even so, the frameworks are now in place through which restoration can take place. To the extent that 'city people' ultimately call the shots in Australia, politically and economically, philanthropic expression of this wealth should embrace opportunities to invest in the future of lands beyond the 'Sandstone Curtain'.

*Michael Sutherland currently works for Alkane Exploration as Environment Manager and is a Deputy Chairman of the Central West Catchment Management Authority. Michael is a former Director of Landcare Australia and owned and operated a sheep/wheat property in Central Western New South Wales from 1984-2001.*

*Dr Chris Williams is Conservation Manager at Trust for Nature (Victoria). Chris completed his PhD at the University of Melbourne investigating nature conservation within a New South Wales rural community. He is the author of 'Old Land, New Landscapes' published by Melbourne University Press in 2004.*

# Conserving Victoria's declining indigenous flora and fauna

By Sylvia J Geddes, Executive Officer, The R E Ross Trust

Victoria has lost two-thirds of its original vegetation cover. Of the remaining third, 70 per cent is not in a natural condition but is modified to some degree, and vegetation clearance rates are in the order of 3,000 hectares per year. Only 5 per cent of the state – 1.1 million hectares – remains on private (freehold) land.

Against this background, The R E Ross Trust is pleased to be carrying out the wish of its benefactor, Roy Everard Ross: *"my Trustees shall... give consideration to the desirability of the provision of funds... for the acquisition preservation and maintenance of national or public parks and particularly the protection of flora and fauna."*

Between its establishment in 1970 and 2006, The R E Ross Trust had paid grants for conservation purposes totalling \$7.21 million dollars (\$12.78 million in present day value), comprising 11.22 per cent of all grants. Of these grants, \$4.92 million (\$9 million present day) was granted for the purchase of land.

The R E Ross Trust is not able to use its income to acquire land purely for the purposes of conservation in its natural state. It is also not able to purchase land for conservation from its capital as land acquired in this way would be regarded as an asset and would have to provide a return on investment consistent with trustee prudent investing obligations. Consequently it makes grants to other organisations for the purposes of land purchase.

By working with organisations such as Trust for Nature and the Australian Bush Heritage Fund, The R E Ross Trust has been able to ensure the integrity of the conservation values of the properties for which it provides grants to enable their purchase.

The Trust's granting guidelines state that the Trust gives grants to deal with environmental needs and problems: *"Environmental needs include loss and degradation of habitat for at-risk and endangered indigenous species of*



*A red gum on the Murray River at Ned's Corner Station.*

*fauna and of land supporting at-risk and endangered indigenous species of flora. Applications must show the biological and/or botanical arguments and evidence as to why and how the proposed project will contribute to the conservation of nominated flora and/or... In respect of the proposed purchase of land, conservation values must be high and the application must show how the land will be managed in the future to protect these values. It should demonstrate how it will contribute to a broader landscape scale approach, for example, how it will engage with private land holders and users, government bodies, non-government bodies and the local and regional communities."*

The R E Ross Trust made its first land acquisition grants in 1974 for the purchase of approximately 19 acres of land at Mallacoota Inlet for inclusion in the Mallacoota Inlet National Park and for the purchase of two blocks of land for inclusion in the Brisbane Ranges National Park.

Land purchased with grants from The R E Ross Trust has added to the Arthur's Seat State Park, Kinglake National Park, Long Forest Reserve (Mallee), Mornington Peninsula National Park, Melba Gully State Park (Otways),

Kalimna Park Box Iron Bark Forest (Castlemaine), Linton Flora Park, Otway National Park, and Sun Moth Reserve (Nhill).

In 2002, a Ross Trust grant of \$1 million enabled Trust for Nature to purchase Ned's Corner Station in Northwest Victoria, at almost 30,000 hectares believed to be the largest Victorian property then remaining in private ownership. The property, including 14 kilometres of Murray River frontage, is of immense significance to conservation in Victoria. The most recent grant for land purchase was made in 2005 to Australian Bush Heritage Fund for the acquisition of a 245 hectare woodland property in Wychitella. Added to the neighbouring property already owned by the Fund, the two properties, now known as Nardoo Hills Reserves, are being managed as a single unit.

The R E Ross Trust also makes grants for other conservation purposes, including to Trust for Nature for costs of managing its land under conservation covenants. Six figure grants have been made towards the establishment of an information and education centre at Wilson's Promontory National Park; to the Zoo for the Healesville Sanctuary; the Botanic Gardens for the Family Discovery Centre and Education Zone (part of the new Australian Garden at Cranbourne); for the development of Victoria's component of Australia's Virtual Herbarium and towards the Abbotsford Convent to develop and implement a Conservation Management Plan.

Contact: [www.rosstrust.org.au](http://www.rosstrust.org.au)

# Growing grain and supporting communities: GrainCorp Foundation

By Victoria Robinson, Marketing Advisor, GrainCorp Foundation

Formed in 2000 as an initiative of the GrainCorp Board, the GrainCorp Foundation underlines the Company's social responsibilities and commitment to rural and regional communities.



The Foundation seeks to create and support opportunities that build on the initiative and potential of rural people in developing and growing the communities in which GrainCorp staff, shareholders and customers live and work.

During the past six years, the Foundation has supported a range of projects – most notably in areas where traditional service clubs and community organisations are few and far between.

More than 350 projects across eastern Australia have received financial support in the important fields of education, health, youth development and community improvements.

The GrainCorp Foundation Committee, which consists of community representatives from across the Company's operating areas in eastern Australia, reviews funding submissions each June, with grants provided through either direct or partnership grants.

The partnership grant is designed to encourage community involvement and participation. For any money the community raises toward a project, the Foundation will match to a specified maximum amount.

In the 2006 round of funding, 66 organisations received grants for a variety of projects ranging from outdoor learning area shade sails for a playgroup in Queensland to a local community hall upgrade in New South Wales and a community leadership program in Victoria. A significant aspect of the GrainCorp Foundation is that funding applicants must demonstrate the active involvement of a full-time or part-time GrainCorp employee. We actively encourage our employees to get involved in projects proposed by their local communities as this strengthens and builds relationships

In recent years many rural areas have been seriously affected by drought, making it increasingly difficult to fund projects usually run by local community groups. Our employees have seen many organisations in their areas that desperately need support benefit from the GrainCorp Foundation grants at a particularly hard time. Many receive positive feedback as well as gratitude from the community, strengthening both new and existing relationships.

Further showing their willingness to support their community, many of our

**"More than 350 projects across eastern Australia have received financial support in the important fields of education, health, youth development and community improvements."**

among communities and our customers. As an agri-food business with a predominantly rural base, GrainCorp operates in an intensely personal business environment. Importantly, our employees live in the communities where they work, and serve as ambassadors for the Company in ways that may not be familiar to so-called 'urban dwellers'.

employees help with fund-raising efforts or volunteer their time for community projects, such as working bees.

Going forward, we plan to build on our network, working with other foundations to enable us to suggest funding alternatives to applicants, as different projects are more likely to receive funding from different foundations.

# Improving the financial outlook of low income and Indigenous communities: ANZ

By Gerard Brown, Group General Manager, Corporate Affairs and Investor Relations, ANZ

ANZ outlines three programs aimed at improving the financial literacy and inclusion of Australians in remote and rural communities.

Financial exclusion can restrict people from buying things most of us take for granted, like a fridge or washing machine. It can result in people turning to 'loan sharks' for money at very high interest rates. It can also lead people to be exploited through scams or fraud, or make decisions for which the personal and financial costs are high.

In 2004 ANZ commissioned research into financial exclusion which showed a significant number – around 6 per cent of Australians were fully or partially excluded from appropriate, low cost, fair and safe financial products and services. The research pointed to a number of contributing factors, such as unemployment, poverty and low education levels. It also showed that long term financial exclusion was closely linked with financial illiteracy.

This and other financial literacy research conducted between 2003 and 2005 identified two groups that were particularly affected by the issue: people on lower incomes and Indigenous people – with Indigenous Australians being the most financially excluded group overall.

ANZ has acted on these issues by developing financial literacy and inclusion programs that today are being delivered in communities across six states and territories. Three of these programs are MoneyBusiness, Saver Plus, and MoneyMinded.

## MoneyBusiness

MoneyBusiness is an adult financial education program developed to help Indigenous people build their financial skills and knowledge.



*Nguiu MoneyBusiness workers Boniface, Maggie, Rachel and Maureen between Mal Brough, Minister for Indigenous Affairs and ANZ Chief Executive Officer, John McFarlane.*

Trained Indigenous staff work in their local community, providing families and individuals with coaching in financial literacy. Budgeting, bill paying and developing savings plans are all included in the program.

MoneyBusiness is starting to have a noticeable effect for Indigenous people. I recently chatted to some of the staff who are implementing MoneyBusiness at Nguui in the Northern Territory and was struck by their enthusiasm for the program and the effect they reported it was starting to have – people were beginning to ask themselves questions about how they use their money.

By providing on-the-ground interaction between ANZ and local communities MoneyBusiness is also giving us the opportunity to improve our understanding of the particular money management challenges confronting remote Indigenous families and individuals.

ANZ launched MoneyBusiness in July 2005 and is piloting the program in six regional sites in the Northern Territory and Western Australia over three years. It's a joint venture that brings together ANZ's experience in financial literacy, the remote service delivery expertise of the Department for Families, and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), and the involvement of local community partners, such as the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board in Nguui and the Galiwinku Council in Arnhemland.

## Saver Plus

Saver Plus is a financial literacy and matched savings program that encourages people to establish a savings habit and in doing so, demonstrates the tangible benefits of saving. Participants attend workshops where they learn how to manage money and throughout the program they are encouraged to save, with ANZ matching every \$1 saved with an additional \$1 (up to \$1,000).

Participants use these savings to pay for educational expenses like a computer, uniforms, books and school camps and other extra curricular subjects.

While a simple idea, Saver Plus is having a powerful effect. It's building confidence, self esteem and is giving participants a sense of control over their lives. Participants report reduced stress thanks to a lessening of the financial burden of costs. It helps them build a small financial buffer for difficult times. It also gives them a sense of achievement. One participant recently told us that now when her kids need something she can say, "I'm capable of saving for that". She said she's never felt so proud of anything in all her life.

Saver Plus was developed in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence in 2003. Since then three more community partners have signed up – Berry Street Victoria, The Smith Family and The Benevolent Society. The Victorian Government has also recently come on board as a partner, committing \$1.35 million to extend the program in Victoria over three years.

The community partners have been an essential element in the program's success. ANZ has provided the skills in financial services, guidance on program design and funds for program delivery, while the partners have used their experience working with low income communities to deliver the program effectively.

A recent evaluation by RMIT showed that 71 per cent of Saver Plus participants continue to save the same amount or more 12 months after completing the program. These are among the best results of any program of this type in the world.

Over the past two and a half years Saver Plus has helped 668 families save \$617,000 and receive more than \$1.1 million in matched savings for educational purposes.

ANZ recently committed another \$3 million to the program and will provide it to another 5,000 families across 18 locations over the next three years, including regional areas in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

**"These three financial programs... are helping to break the cycle of disadvantage among families on lower incomes and indigenous communities, by teaching people the skills to help themselves."**

### MoneyMinded

MoneyMinded is an adult financial education program, developed to help people build their financial skills and knowledge. Like Saver Plus, MoneyMinded improves people's capacity to successfully manage day-to-day and long term financial matters and in doing so builds their confidence, self esteem and sense of control over their lives.

The program consists of workshops delivered face-to-face by financial counsellors and community educators across regional and metropolitan areas in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. It is also available online at [www.moneyminded.com.au](http://www.moneyminded.com.au)

Participants are telling us that the program gives them a better understanding of financial concepts and the products available to them. They are more conscious of saving money and are more likely to avoid situations – such as post-Christmas sales – where they might buy things they don't need. They are thinking twice before purchasing on credit cards, and have learned to distinguish between needs and wants to better manage their finances.

ANZ first trialled MoneyMinded in 2004 and again, partnerships with community organisations have been crucial to its success, with a number of community sector partners managing delivery through their grassroots networks.

Importantly, MoneyMinded meets the standards set by the Australian Financial Literacy Foundation – an organisation recently set up by the Federal Government to improve financial literacy.

Evaluating research has shown the program is highly effective at assisting those with lower levels of financial literacy make better judgements and decisions about their money. Three months after attending the program 75 per cent of participants felt they were managing their finances 'great' or 'fine' and 89 per cent felt they had managed to stick to their personal money plan 'very well' or 'quite well'.

To date 7,230 Australians have participated in MoneyMinded and we are aiming to have 15,000 people participate in MoneyMinded workshops this year.

### Conclusion

These three financial programs are benefiting everyone involved, from the individuals and communities receiving them, the community organisations delivering them, ANZ volunteers and ANZ as an organisation.

They are helping to break the cycle of disadvantage among families on lower incomes and Indigenous communities, by teaching people the skills to help themselves.

They have also expanded the capacity of community organisations to help Australians most in need.

ANZ is responding to issues directly relevant to our business, by working with the community groups closest to Australians who are fully or partially excluded from mainstream financial services.

# Regional art galleries

Today, building a strong base of philanthropic support is considered crucial for most public art museums around the world. But what does this mean for regional art galleries without the obvious 'oomph' factor of a capital city? *Australian Philanthropy*'s Sally Edwards had a chat to two regional Australian art leaders to find out.

## Philanthropic past seeking philanthropic future

Philanthropy is a big deal for the New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM), in NSW. Their entire existence is a result of extraordinary philanthropic acts dating back to early last century. But now their future depends largely on finding more support.

Curator and Director of Public Programs, Andrea Gledhill, finds herself with the proverbial 'embarrassment of riches': riches in the sense that she has responsibility for a collection that is truly remarkable in terms of both size and significance; embarrassment in the sense of being so chronically short of operating funds that the collection itself is, as Andrea says, at severe risk.

The collection first grew through the extraordinary philanthropy of Howard Hinton (see far right column). Then, in the 1970s, Sydney art identity Chandler Coventry, who came from an old New England grazing family, offered his collection of more than 300 works to Armidale on the understanding that a facility would be built specifically to house both his, and Hinton's donations. The New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM) opened in 1983 with a collection of major national importance.

But now NERAM is struggling with the enormous task of funding the ongoing running of a gallery and maintaining a valuable collection – in a regional area. As Andrea says, "NERAM was born from the gifts of two fairy godfathers, a generation apart. Now we need more fairy godparents to make sure their gifts can be enjoyed by other generations, too. QantasLink have been wonderful in supporting us with air travel and the New England Credit Union have been very loyal in their commitment but we do need other supporters to join them."

Andrea is quick to cite the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) as being 'very philanthropic' in their support of NERAM. "Both the Director, Edmund Capon, and the head curator of Australian Art, Barry Pearce, have been wonderfully supportive," she says. "They have continually been looking for ways they can help us build our profile, to stay viable and strong as a regional gallery." A proposal has been made that AGNSW purchase a half-share in Tom

time is as important as giving money." So says Brigette Leece, Manager of the Western Plains Cultural Centre, which opens in central New South Wales soon after this edition of *Australian Philanthropy* goes to press.

The former Dubbo Regional Gallery was very much driven and established by grass roots community philanthropy. This 'people power', as Brigette describes it, has continued through

"Can part or all of any donated work be sold? Do the circumstances matter? Who must decide? For NERAM there is much goodwill on all sides of this decision but it highlights a reality common to many galleries, especially regional ones: building a collection is only half the challenge."

Roberts' Mosman's Bay in exchange for this piece spending half of its time on show at AGNSW. It is an arrangement that would vastly improve NERAM's financial situation and many see this as a win-win prospect. But there is controversy about whether it is legal. Can part or all of any donated work be sold? Do the circumstances matter? Who must decide? For NERAM there is much goodwill on all sides of this decision but it highlights a reality common to many galleries, especially regional ones: building a collection is only half the challenge.

## On being big and small (at the same time)

"As small as Dubbo is, and as big as Dubbo is, I firmly believe that just offering

the two years the collection has been in storage, patiently waiting for its new home. Broad based, long term support has been received from Country Energy and QantasLink. Country Energy, for example, has not only contributed funds for the purchase of artwork, it has also fast tracked the installation of underground power along the street to the Cultural Centre site by several years and its senior executive staff make the effort to attend events. "I can't overstate how important that is," says Brigette. "Their presence sends a clear message to other potential sponsors and it's good for their company profile and community good will. They are busy but they still stop to think about how else they can help and they consistently come along to show their support. That helps when



Brigette Leece, Manager of the Western Plains Regional Cultural Centre NSW (left) and Gina Anderson, CEO of Philanthropy Australia, on a site tour of the new centre under construction in May 2006.

we are trying to engage other decision makers with what we are doing."

As with the New England Regional Arts Museum, QantasLink's support in Dubbo is an example of how in-kind donations can often punch above their weight. By providing airfares to and from Sydney, the gallery is able to lift their profile and access experts from outside of the region. "It really helps us to effectively connect with rest of the art world," says Brigette. But QantasLink, like Country Energy, has also helped build the 'people power' factor in other, more subtle, ways. "They have been wonderfully committed to helping us, especially while we have been closed and needed to keep our profile up. They are out and about in our community, actively communicating their support. This creates a ripple effect through everyone they do business with, reinforcing QantasLink's commitment to the community, and encouraging other businesses to support us, too."

Brigette feels that it will be much easier to generate support once the centre is open but her strategies are working well already. Five significant artworks have been donated just in the last few months. This augurs well for the future of the collection. "One thing I have learnt since moving from Sydney to take on this role is that in a regional community financial resources go much further. We can achieve more with half the resources it would take in a big metropolitan city."

### In a nutshell

Our conversations with both Brigette and Andrea highlighted a few key points of interest for the philanthropy sector:

- Public funds can be harder to access in the regions. Local government agencies tend to be wary of underwriting gallery operation – especially over the long term.
- Although there is usually plenty of 'connectivity' in regional communities, their galleries suffer from a lack of profile and miss out on the exposure to potential funders that capital city galleries enjoy.
- While it is often easier to raise long term financial support in the city, it tends to be easier to garner spontaneous support, especially in-kind donations, within regional communities.
- Gifts of valuables can be an enormously important form of philanthropy but consideration should be given to how the recipient organisation will be able to care for, and exhibit the artworks. When planning their donation, it helps if donors firstly consider how the collection will be maintained and made available and secondly specify clearly in trust deeds how decisions should be made in the future.

### Howard Hinton – An unlikely hero

The unassuming and unusual life of Howard Hinton is a wonderful reminder that sometimes the most important philanthropic acts come from the most unexpected of places.

Hinton arrived in Australia from England as a young man at the turn of the century. Acutely short-sighted, Hinton had tried to enlist twice and was rejected on both occasions on the basis of his severe eyesight problems. He never married nor had any children and for the last half-century of his life home was a single, small room in a men's boarding house in Sydney's Cremorne.

Although chronically shy, he obviously had a strong sense of adventure and took to travel with enthusiasm. With the shipping firm for whom he worked until retirement, he journeyed to New Zealand, Rarotonga and Tahiti before embarking on a two-year adventure in Japan after the outbreak of war in 1904.

Hinton had a passion for art which dated back to visits to galleries as a young boy. When he first arrived in Australia he lived for a time among the artists' camps near modern-day Paddington and here he met fledgling artists like Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton and began to buy their work. He went on to buy a variety of Australian artworks up throughout the rest of his life.

Hinton was never one for amassing personal wealth. Despite having risen through the ranks of his firm to become a director, he continued to live alone in his boarding house room. He donated generously, usually anonymously, to charitable projects from the time of World War I onwards. He started donating art work to public collections in 1914 and after his retirement in 1928 he decided to create a major regional collection which he hoped would enable students to access important Australian art.

Nearly all his donations, a staggering 1,000 plus artworks, many of which are significant pieces, along with a collection of over 700 art books, were made to the Armidale Teacher's College. This later became part of the University of New England and the collection is now the centrepiece of the New England Regional Art Museum.

# Reach for the road: the Regional Education and Careers in Highways Foundation

*Sally Edwards reports*

**Western Australia's REACH Foundation is a new approach to the skill shortage issue; a true cross-sector philanthropic alliance – with a particular focus on regional communities.**

All over Australia, we hear a lot about skills shortages. Road construction is no exception. Put this in a regional context and you have an even bigger challenge on your hands, especially for a state the size of Western Australia. The state's road authority, Main Roads Western Australia, realised a couple of years ago that something needed to be done to sustain the roads workforce in the future.

Road construction people have traditionally worked for a state government department, a local council or a civil engineering company. But now all these sectors are facing a rapidly ageing workforce and ongoing difficulty in finding suitably trained people in regional communities, which, ironically, depend heavily on roads. Understanding this as a cross-sector problem clearly suggested a cross-sector response. But the trickier part is knowing what could, and should, be done, and how. They came up with a novel approach: establishing an independent foundation, modelled on the community foundation concept, to run an ongoing employment-based regional training program in road construction. They decided to call it the Regional Education and Careers in Highways Foundation, or the REACH Foundation.

As Acting Chair, Mike Wallwork, explains, "The plan is to have an initial intake of 20 new trainees per year for a two year course leading to Certificate III in Civil Construction, a nationally recognised qualification. Each trainee is employed within the sector throughout this time with government training subsidies available for each. A successful pilot program has been conducted in the Kimberley region with five young people. Although one opted not to continue, the other four graduated successfully

**"They came up with a novel approach; establishing an independent foundation, modelled on the community foundation concept, to run an ongoing employment-based regional training program in road construction."**

and have all gone onto be employed in road construction in regional Western Australia." With this pilot scheme under their belt, Main Roads itself has committed one third of the necessary funds and the local government sector (Western Australia has 144 local councils) has recently voted overwhelmingly in favour of providing another third.

Now it is over to the business sector and Mike is confident they will respond well. He believes the challenges are too great, and the benefits the REACH program offers are too important, to ignore. Directly, this project offers better outcomes for the young people themselves and increased availability of skilled staff in regional areas. But it also offers indirect benefits including improvements in regional economic conditions, youth employment, more balanced age profile for the communities, less need for 'fly-in fly-out' employment and, overall, increased social cohesion. Not to mention enhanced public awareness of road construction as a career choice and, of course, better, safer roads.

The REACH Foundation will launch later this year. We wish them a good journey.

The internal culture of Main Roads WA has played a large part in shaping its response to the regional skill shortage.

Eighty years old, Main Roads WA is, amazingly, one of the few government entities to resist any major reshuffle of responsibilities and it has a long track record of taking a collaborative view of how to fulfil its role in the community. For example, long before it became fashionable, Main Roads built a tradition of creating alliances across groups of businesses and other government agencies to enable a more productive way of managing major road construction projects.

Other relevant traditions include that of long term loyalty from employees, and of extensive regional experience being highly valued for executive roles. As Mike says "Of my 45 years in regional road construction I spent 16 years living in regions across Western Australia with my family, as have most of our other senior executives. This means we really understand how regional communities work, why and how roads matter and what people really need in terms of training and employment."

# Breaking down barriers in regional New South Wales: The story of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy

By Phil Lockyer, Communications Manager, Aboriginal Employment Strategy

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy began in Moree in 1997 in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report, which stated, "The stimulation of increased Aboriginal employment in the private sector is particularly difficult, but must be pursued more actively".

The manager of the Moree Commonwealth Employment Service invited prominent cotton farmer Dick Estens to sit on the newly established Moree Aboriginal Employment Promotion Committee. The committee was set up as a direct response to employment recommendations identified in the Royal Commission.

After several meetings, Estens felt it was clear something more needed to be done. There were no major industries in Moree except for agriculture, primarily the cotton industry. Estens and another cotton grower Alice Scott were asked to establish an Aboriginal employment strategy in the cotton industry. Discussions were held with key local Aboriginal people in 1992. An application was submitted to the Department of Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) for funds to establish the strategy within the cotton industry.

There were delays in the approval of the funding due to constant staff changes within the relevant Commonwealth departments. DEETYA found it difficult to categorise the strategy, as the department had never before funded such an association. But, eventually the government funded the Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association with a \$110,000 contract to establish the Moree Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES). The cotton industry contributed \$10,000 to the establishment of the AES and the contract was finally signed in November 1996. The funding was never long term; the AES managed to keep getting funding but there was never certainty.

Dick Estens was fully aware of the attitudes, racism and barriers between black and white. Due to racial conflicts that occurred in the town during

Charlie Perkins' famous Freedom Ride in 1965, Moree was well known as a 'racist town'. However, the work of the AES was changing this; Dick saw the positive effects the AES was having on Moree. The changes were obvious; Aboriginal people and local businesses were working together.

Aboriginal people working in businesses in the main street of Moree had an impact. People on both sides were beginning to talk and break down the barriers. The AES was breaking down the culture of welfare which had been entrenched in the Aboriginal community for generations; role models for young Aboriginal people were being created.

The AES also showed the white community that Aboriginal people want to work, want to get on with making something out of their lives. As a result, more businesses came on board with the AES.

There has always been a racial divide in rural communities in New South Wales between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal. Aboriginal people have mostly lived on the fringes, in the missions. This was certainly true of Moree. Despite the town having a healthy agriculture industry and local businesses, Aboriginal people were not part of the commerce of the town, not part of the local economy. Due to this divide generations of Aboriginal people had not worked, had survived on welfare, had no direct involvement with the local workforce. This has been one of the largest problems facing the AES in Moree and in the other towns in which we operate. It is also a significant barrier to Aboriginal employment generally; breaking the generational cycle of welfare dependence and instilling a work ethic in Aboriginal communities. Our experience has shown that Aboriginal people do



Joe Tighe who works for the Moree Panelworks.

want to work but lack the skills required, particularly in areas such as literacy and numeracy. The AES is working with Aboriginal communities to address these skills requirements.

There are now seven AES offices located in New South Wales with an expansion interstate likely in the next 12 months. In the last financial year the AES placed over 500 Aboriginal people into jobs, and we're looking at over 750 in 2006-2007. A testament to the success of the AES is the companies who now work closely with us, some of the country's biggest companies, such as Rio Tinto, Coles, IAG Insurance, Australia Post and the ANZ, Commonwealth and Westpac banks. In February 2007 the Moree AES will celebrate 10 years.

[www.aboriginalemploymentstrategy.com.au](http://www.aboriginalemploymentstrategy.com.au)

# Country Education Foundation of Australia

By Nik Fominas, Chief Executive, The Country Education Foundation of Australia

The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEFA) was established to assist rural towns throughout Australia encourage young school leavers within their communities to widen their horizons, and to support them in taking their education and career further.

The CEFA does this by helping each community to establish their own Education Foundation and assists with funding over the first three years as well as providing ongoing support in various ways.

The community based Education Foundations are each tailored to their particular needs and aim primarily to assist young members of their community who would otherwise not be able to pursue their tertiary or apprenticeship goals due to financial or geographic restrictions. Under the program, these young people are assisted through the provision of modest financial support to help them get started with some form of further skills based training or tertiary study. From \$250 to \$2,500 may be provided to the selected candidates to help them cover the costs involved in their chosen educational or skills based pursuit.

The CEFA is supported entirely by philanthropic individuals and organisations and is independent of any government funding. It aims to match local funds raised by each community's Education Foundation on a sliding scale over the first three years of operation. Ultimately, the program is community based and each year relies on the generosity of local people through their continued membership of their Education Foundation, to provide funds for assistance.

The Country Education Foundation of Australia has the Honourable Mr Tim Fischer AC as its patron and Mr Nick Burton Taylor AM as its chairman. Its board is made up of men and women with a clear empathy for rural Australia, especially the issues facing its youth.

The CEFA has evolved steadily over the past twelve years based on the concept of previously successful Education Foundation models and undergone three phases of carefully managed development. It is a public company limited by guarantee and is a Deductible Gift Recipient.

Presently it has some 17 regional foundations under its umbrella with several new foundations under development. Geographically, there are fourteen foundations spread across New South Wales, one in Victoria, one in South Australia and one in Queensland. To date, through the CEFA's existing regional foundations, it has assisted over four hundred young Australians to further their education and personal development.

The CEFA has now embarked on the fourth phase of its development with the appointment of a full time Chief Executive and a strategic plan to broaden the operation and take the vision and proven program benefits to regional communities across Australia. Under the new structure, phase four will see continued growth in all Australian states and territories, achieved by promotion, careful community engagement, dissemination of quality information and motivation.

The CEFA's growth plan provides for the establishment of some ten new regional foundations by 2007, with the growth rate increasing annually resulting in the CEFA having established one hundred operating regional foundations by 2011. Based on the average growth in the number of young people assisted each year through the existing



*Jessica Weekes from Yass NSW is in her third year of medical studies at James Cook University. Jessica is an outstanding student and one of many young people receiving assistance under the CEFA program. She will practice in rural medicine upon graduation.*

foundations, the projections related to the establishment of new regional foundations indicate that some 3,500 young Australians will have been assisted through the program by 2011.

The program's inexorable success is largely due to the vision and valuable financial assistance provided by philanthropists having a wish to contribute to the betterment of rural and regional Australia. Continued philanthropic support will ensure that the CEFA achieves its national objectives.

Website: <http://www.cef.org.au>

# Philanthropy Australia regional workshops

By Vanessa Meachen, Research and Training Manager, Philanthropy Australia

In May and June, I conducted some Philanthropy Australia grantseeker workshops for people seeking philanthropic funding in regional areas, funded by the Commonwealth Government's Office for Women. This was the third successive year of running the program, and this year the Office for Women were keen to include some groups which had been under-represented in previous years, particularly women from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

I asked our members for suggestions – most especially our Indigenous Affinity Group. Many members suggested groups they knew, or from whom they had received applications, and whom they felt would benefit from this training.

We held nine workshops in eight regional centres and the response was immense, most particularly in Alice Springs, where we chose to run a second workshop to accommodate all those who could not be fitted into the first. In Cairns and Bundaberg we had to turn people away. In some cases people told me they had driven for seven hours just to attend the workshop – making me hope it would live up to the effort they had made to get there!

Altogether, 191 people attended the workshops, many of whom had never heard about philanthropic grants before; reactions such as "I didn't know these grants existed" were common. I feel the most valuable aspect of the program, for most groups, was the 'myth-busting'; most groups indicated that they had felt foundations were inaccessible, or only interested in funding large organisations and city-based projects.

I was very inspired by the people and projects I learned about, and enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to assist them with some information they do not normally have access to – many of the participants expressed their gratitude for having access to the workshops in comments such as "Great to have access in a remote rural regional centre. So often such courses are only available in the city and we miss out."

One young woman in Bundaberg told me after the workshop that she felt the knowledge she had gained from the workshop may have saved her small disability organisation from closing down; in Katherine, another woman who volunteers for three local organisations

expressed an interest and either attended the workshop or requested more information about philanthropy, and am exploring options to keep them connected and informed.

These workshops were a wonderful

**"The response was immense, most particularly in Alice Springs, where we chose to run a second workshop to accommodate all those who could not be fitted into the first. In Cairns and Bundaberg we had to turn people away."**

– Aboriginal, environmental and community safety groups – described the workshop as "a brighter opportunity in a world where it's so difficult to act on your passion".

I spoke with several organisations including representatives from local councils who approached me about establishing further funding sources for their local communities, including the potential for establishing a community foundation in their area. In several cases there was a feeling that there were some wealthy landholders in the region who would be very willing to contribute, providing they could be sure the funds would be used for their local area. I was also pleasantly surprised by the number of government representatives who

opportunity for me to learn about the particular challenges and needs in the areas I was visiting, and to remind myself that things are very different in different parts of Australia. The welcome I received from attendees, and the eagerness to hear what I had to tell them, made conducting the workshops a pleasure.

We will shortly be creating an email list to keep those who attended, and those who were unable to attend but expressed an interest, updated with relevant information. I hope that many of these regional organisations take advantage of the information and are able to access funding for some of their worthwhile programs.

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# Stand Like Stone Foundation, Limestone Coast, South Australia

By Sally Klose, Executive Officer, Stand Like Stone Foundation

*"Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
two things stand like stone,  
KINDNESS in another's trouble,  
COURAGE in your own."*

Adam Lindsay Gordon

The Stand Like Stone Foundation was established in the Limestone Coast (south east of South Australia) in October 2004 by a dedicated group of volunteers to create a culture of giving that will change people's lives.

The Limestone Coast lies between Adelaide and Melbourne, covers an area of 21,376 square kilometres and seven local governments, and has a population of 60,260 (4.19 per cent of South Australia's population). The region has a history of plentiful agricultural production including broad-acre farming, horticulture, forestry, dairying, viticulture, wine production, fishing and aquaculture.

Since, the Stand Like Stone Foundation was the first community foundation to be established in South Australia the key challenge has been to educate the community and state and local government about community foundations in general and our foundation in particular. Other challenges include overcoming parochialism of small communities and the tyranny of distance of a region that is 240 kilometres long and 120 kilometres wide.

A number of strategies have been put in place to ensure the success of the Foundation starting with the recruitment of the Board of Directors. The Board aims to have a director representing each council area as well as providing a broad base of skills, knowledge and experience. The Foundation has also received funding from the Government of South Australia's Office for Youth to support two young people to be directors, which has provided the Foundation with a good youth voice.

A grant from FRRR helped launch the Foundation, and a grant from the Government of South Australia enabled the employment of a community fundraiser. There has been a united effort by the directors, executive officer and community fundraiser to speak to

every major business, all professional advisors, service and community groups, local government, schools and anyone else prepared to listen.

To overcome parochialism the Foundation is committed to spreading the benefits and projects around the region. In early 2006 the Foundation was fortunate to receive funding from FRRR through the Back to School program. This enabled the Foundation to distribute over 250, \$50 vouchers (equivalent to \$18,950) between 38 schools to help parents with the cost of returning children to school. This program was extremely well received by schools and the local media and was significant in raising the profile of the Foundation.

The Foundation is currently running a Youth in Philanthropy program as a result of funding from the FRRR Youth in Philanthropy – Incentive Fund Project. This project has been launched at Naracoorte High School and to overcome the distance between towns a number of Youth in Philanthropy committees will be formed.

The Foundation has facilitated two arts grants, one for a promising young artist and the other for the community arts project Celebrations in Stone. Celebrations in Stone involved groups from different cultural backgrounds in Mount Gambier identifying their strongest cultural elements and representing them through limestone carving. As well as creating eight fantastic sculptures and developing sculpting skills the participants gained a greater understanding of different cultures and have become more united.

In partnership with the South East Regional Community Health Service and Gambier City Pharmacies the Foundation will officially announce its first independent grant making round in August focusing on Health and Community Services.



Some of the SLSF Directors, left to right:  
Bill Hender, Brian Page, Ruth Schubert,  
Graham Carter, Sue Charlton, Rob Ellerman  
and Annette Balnaves.

In September the Foundation will host its inaugural annual fundraising event, the Adam Lindsay Gordon Dinner. As well as raising funds the event aims to raise the profile of the Foundation. The invitation-only event will feature a five course dinner using regional produce and wine.

The Foundation has now gained respect and recognition from the community. We have secured a large number of sponsors for the Adam Lindsay Gordon Dinner as well as five year agreements of financial support from Patron, Allan Scott OA and Founding Donor, Brian and Sue Page. The Foundation has recently established a three year sponsorship agreement with Timbercorp and been given 1,000 promotional pointers a month by Radio 5SE.

The Foundation has worked hard to build relationships and is grateful for the support and belief demonstrated by FRRR, the Limestone Coast Area Consultative Committee and Brian and Sue Page.

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# Tomorrow: Today Foundation, Benalla District, north-east Victoria

By Liz Chapman, Director, Tomorrow: Today Foundation

Tomorrow: Today Foundation launched in 2002 after a few years of discussion and development. What could a rural community foundation achieve in Benalla that wasn't already being achieved by the many active community organisations?

The population of the town and surrounding district is 15,000. In a recent index of disadvantage, Benalla rated 5th worst out of the 48 rural areas in Victoria. Our population is made up of many sub-groups and most are doing it tough. This is in contrast to the many families who have called Benalla home for all or most of their lives, who are moderately wealthy, and who give generously in times of crisis.

As a rural community we are a very practical people. We always prefer to discuss real events rather than conceptual problems. So, Tomorrow: Today runs an annual small grants program, where groups of residents are encouraged to shape up their 'good idea' into a project that will help to strengthen the Benalla district community. A number of terrific projects have been resourced with cash and skills and networking over the past few years, including:

- Benalla District Community Choir
- Young Mums Social Support Group
- Pulse Youth Newspaper
- Benalla Botanica Conference – Community Places and Private Spaces
- Historic Benalla Photographic Exhibition

We do more than attract and spend money. Money is just a means to an end, and often, but not always, crucial. But we see ourselves as working much wider than that. Through our Board's diverse local networks, and through the on-the-ground knowledge of our Executive Officer, we harness a range of resources to help make things happen.

Benalla, like other rural and regional areas, has a declining 18-35 year old demographic. This is crazy in a place like Benalla – we have the lifestyle and the amenities; and a strong

small-business ethic that is well suited to the energy of young adults. Yet it is a fact that many young professionals coming to Benalla on annual contracts (allied health sector, legal sector etc.) leave once their term is up – because they have not developed the relationships that help to encourage them to stay another term.

Tomorrow: Today provided advice and encouragement to a few keen young professionals to start a network; and helped resource its activities and gradual expansion. This has grown to the stage where there are around 45 active members; a social calendar – and a change of name. Shy of the term 'young professionals' the group has renamed itself the 'Benalla Social Network' – aiming at any person in the district who wants to enjoy company (same time, same pub) and/or social activities (ski trips and the like).

Tomorrow: Today Foundation is able to gain the attention of different audiences. It ensures that the views and insights of experienced local people are heard, and mixed with the ideas and knowledge from outsiders to help create new ways forward.

With assistance from the Lance Reichstein Trust, we have been able to introduce a conversation in Benalla that will result in an Aboriginal garden developed by indigenous elders, in partnership with local government. The aim of the Aboriginal community garden, as espoused by our aboriginal advisors, is "an indigenous garden done by the community with the approval of indigenous elders for the benefit of all".

This is an extraordinary achievement for Benalla. Gardens are not extraordinary – Benalla is a gardener's paradise. But



*Many young professionals coming to Benalla on short term contracts were leaving once their term was up. Those currently situated in Benalla had no doubt it was due to lack of social networks. Tomorrow: Today Foundation has developed and resourced the 'Benalla Social Network' seen here in action during a recent Trivia Night.*

this garden is special because it has been undertaken as a partnership across traditional owners, traditional community groups, and local government. Thus far the conversation has taken three years. Through a respectful partnership, it is now at the stage where plans have been developed and the garden area is marked out.

The Directors and Executive Officer of Tomorrow: Today bring many years of professional and community experience to bear on delivering the Foundation's mission which is to help create a stronger, more resilient and prosperous rural community. Additionally, all Directors have the local knowledge and love of our culture and place to see through these early years of building from 'scratch'.

*This article is an updated version of a presentation to Philanthropy Australia's 2005 conference.*

# National Youth Survey 2005: Rural and regional responses

By Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research & Social Policy, Mission Australia

Mission Australia has been conducting an annual survey of Australia's young people aged 11 to 24 years for the past four years. In 2005, 11,300 young people responded, almost half of whom were from rural and regional communities across the country.

The survey is interested in what young people value, what concerns them, where they turn for advice and support and how involved they are in their communities. This information is important for anyone concerned about the wellbeing of young people.

## What do young people value?

Table 1 shows that what young people value is very similar, regardless of where they live, with the top three items of family relationships, friendships and being independent being identical. The first two items are very 'people centred', an image at odds with the perspective on young people that is sometimes presented in the media. The similarity in the top items, regardless of location, is an important finding of the research.

The major difference by location, was in the proportion of young people who placed a high value on getting a job. It was important for a much higher proportion of the two younger age groups living outside a capital city compared to their capital city counterparts. This could reflect the fact that youth and adult unemployment tends to be higher in rural and regional areas than in the capital cities.

- 23.0 per cent of 11-14 year olds and 19.8 per cent of 15-19 year olds living outside a capital city ranked getting a job as one of the top three items they valued, compared with just over 13 per cent of respondents in both age groups who lived in a capital city.

## What issues are important/of concern to young people?

The survey asked young people to rank their top issues of importance/concern. Table 2 compares their responses by age and location and highlights that the major differences tended to be among 20-24 year old age groups.

- Depression and coping with stress were a significant concern for a high proportion of both groups of 20-24 year olds. However, this was particularly the case for those living in a capital city (51.2 per cent compared to 40.2 per cent).
- Physical/sexual abuse concerned a higher proportion of 20-24 year olds living outside a capital city (40.5 per cent compared with 34.7 per cent).

The issue of alcohol and other drugs was more of a concern for all age groups living in non-metropolitan areas. Alcohol and other drugs was a major issue of concern for 36.6 per cent of all respondents from non-metropolitan areas compared with 30.8 per cent of those from capital cities. The higher level of concern about alcohol among young respondents in non-metropolitan areas is supported by Australian research which shows that, whilst the death rate of 14-24 year olds attributed to alcohol has been trending down over the past decade, the non-metropolitan rate remains 1.7 times higher than for metropolitan areas (Chikritzhs et al 2004).

## How involved are young people in community activities?

Sports and clubs/youth groups were among the top activities young people were involved in, regardless of where they lived, although involvement declined as age increased. Arts/cultural activities were also very popular, however the rate of involvement for young people living outside capital cities was noticeably lower than their contemporaries. A possible explanation may be that access to arts activities is more limited in non-metropolitan areas.

The survey information is useful for those working with or concerned about the wellbeing of young people as it provides insights on the issues of concern to them and highlights the importance of local and regional strategies which meet their needs. The data has also been broken down by state and more detailed information plus copies of the publication are available from [hampshire@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:hampshire@missionaustralia.com.au)

## References

Chikritzhs T & Pascal R, 2004 *Trends in Youth Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms in Australian Jurisdictions*, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, Western Australia.

Mission Australia, 2005, *National Youth Survey 2005: Key and Emerging Issues*, Mission Australia, Sydney.

**Table 1: What young people value by location and age**

	Outside Capital City %			Capital City %		
	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years
Family relationships	75.3	71.0	67.5	75.8	74.1	63.2
Friendships/relationships	66.6	67.3	54.8	70.1	71.6	60.2
Being independent	34.2	39.8	40.4	31.0	36.4	37.3
Feeling needed and valued	26.4	30.2	35.5	30.6	33.2	36.5
School or study satisfaction	24.6	19.6	7.2	25.8	22.8	10.7
Getting a job	23.0	19.8	24.1	13.4	13.1	22.2
Financial security	12.2	19.4	33.1	11.0	16.3	30.2
Spirituality/faith	13.9	14.5	19.9	17.5	14.7	21.9
Peer acceptance	14.6	10.6	8.4	16.4	11.1	6.7
Environmental issues	9.9	8.2	9.0	9.2	7.1	11.2

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

**Table 2: Issues of importance/concern by location and age**

	Outside Capital City %			Capital City %		
	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years
Alcohol and other drug issues	42.3	32.0	34.5	38.5	26.5	23.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	33.8	31.7	33.1	33.6	28.1	23.3
Coping with stress	25.9	34.6	36.6	27.6	34.2	48.0
Depression	26.4	35.9	40.2	27.9	37.5	51.5
Discrimination	15.6	19.2	27.6	17.7	22.9	25.9
Family conflict	35.6	34.5	28.8	37.2	34.4	30.2
Physical/sexual abuse	38.9	36.1	40.5	38.3	38.5	34.7
School or study problems	25.7	24.2	13.5	25.8	26.2	17.6
Sexuality	14.4	11.8	12.9	10.2	10.7	16.0
Suicide/self harm	42.4	41.4	33.7	44.2	41.7	30.7

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

**Table 3: Involvement in community activities**

	Outside Capital City %			Capital City %		
	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years	11-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-24 Years
Sports	71.5	61.4	36.7	78.4	61.0	33.7
Arts/cultural e.g. drama, music, dance	43.1	34.1	25.5	53.6	40.1	32.4
Clubs/youth groups	31.8	32.5	36.2	30.9	28.8	39.5
Volunteer	17.4	22.8	36.2	15.9	24.3	38.2
Religious	21.8	17.5	15.6	25.5	21.3	18.3
Student Representative Council	10.9	12.8	6.0	9.1	12.8	6.7
Environmental	8.1	6.2	9.5	5.4	5.9	10.1

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