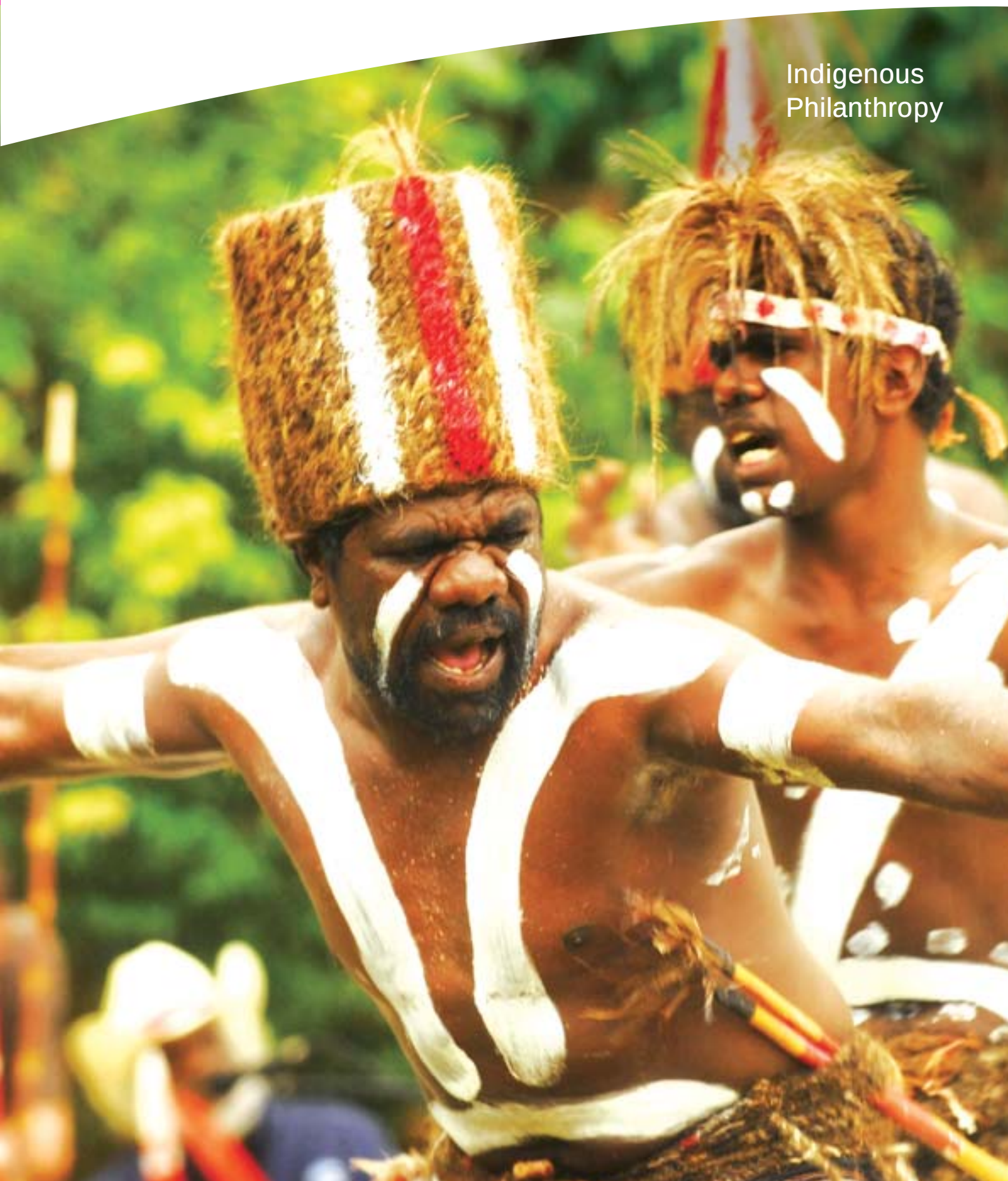
PHILANTHROPY
Australia

Australian Philanthropy

Autumn 2007, Issue 64

Indigenous Philanthropy



Philanthropy Australia is the national peak body for philanthropy and is a non-profit membership organisation. Our members are trusts and foundations, families and individuals who want to make a difference through their own philanthropy and to encourage others to become philanthropists.

Front cover: Our beautiful cover photograph is of the Mornington Island Dancers performing at The Dreaming – Australia's International Indigenous Festival in 2006. Rhoda Roberts, the Dreaming Festival Director, explains in her article on page 8 that "For Indigenous Australians a festival is about continuation of cultural practice, rather than simply a celebration of the visual and performing arts… Australia's Aboriginal law, people, and culture are actually one and the same thing – they are not distinguishable."

Front cover photograph courtesy of Sonja de Sterke, The Dreaming 2006.

Australian Philanthropy, journal of Philanthropy Australia Inc.
Email: info@philanthropy.org.au
Website: www.philanthropy.org.au

ISSN: 1449-390X

Editor: Louise Arkles
Assistant Editor: Carole Fabian

Design and production: MDM Design Associates
25 William Street, Richmond Victoria 3121
Telephone: (03) 9429 1177 Email: mdm@mdmdesign.com.au

Registered by Australia Post as a Print Post Publication – 581/827/0058

Printed on environmentally friendly paper.

Indigenous Philanthropy

Contents

From the President

Bruce Bonyhady, President

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Commonwealth referendum which acknowledged Indigenous Australians as full citizens of this nation. Forty years later, however, many Indigenous people and communities still lack the most vital of health services, proper housing, education, and access to employment and economic independence.

The stark contrast between the living standards of the First Australians and non-Indigenous Australians is a national failure and to bridge the gap will take many years with both present and new efforts.

This year marks another lesser known anniversary. It is 30 years since Philanthropy Australia, in its original guise, was formed. A small group of private foundations came together in Melbourne in 1977, and set up the Australian Association of Philanthropy. Their aim was to share information, resources, ideas and advocate on behalf of a small, largely anonymous sector. In 2007, Philanthropy Australia celebrates its evolution into a much larger, truly national membership organisation, with authority to speak to governments, business and the nation about the importance of philanthropy. You can read all about our history in the 'Celebrating 30 Years' feature on our website.

Apart from the coincidence in anniversary years, philanthropy and Indigenous Australians have many connections. Numerous partnerships between Indigenous and giving communities have developed to explore innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Our Indigenous Affinity Group brings together different organisations with shared goals, and enables a dialogue with a number of Indigenous organisations. As a group, they are exploring the possibility of a jointly funded project that will enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities to work with trusts, foundations and community giving programs for greater effectiveness, which you can read about on page 28.

With our combined seventy years of hard work, and now our collaborative efforts at problem solving and creative thinking, Indigenous Australia and Members of Philanthropy Australia have the potential to forge some very positive roads ahead. Certainly some of the stories in this edition give us cause for optimism that the long walk to full citizenship for Indigenous Australians will ultimately succeed.

From The Hon. Mal Brough MP

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

As the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister, I am pleased to welcome you to this special edition of '*Australian Philanthropy*'. Please take time to read through all the stories, discuss some of the ideas raised with your colleagues and most importantly become involved.

Australia is a strong and proud nation, with an enviable quality of life. But many of its Indigenous citizens do not share the opportunities and choices enjoyed by other Australians. Our national aspiration has always been 'a fair go for all', but we still have a lot of work to do before this applies to all Indigenous people.

This year will mark the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which gave the Commonwealth power to make laws for Aboriginal people.

With other members of the Australian Government's Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs, I have been working to set a new direction, a 'Blueprint for Action', outlined on page 18.

I invite the philanthropic and business communities to work in partnership with their fellow Indigenous citizens and government in what we believe is a social coalition that can achieve deep and lasting results. It is up to you to make the first step. To contact Indigenous organisations in your area, speak to your nearest Indigenous Coordination Centre (http://www.indigenous.gov.au/icc/) or access the lists held by the Office of the Registrar for Aboriginal Corporations (www.orac.gov.au).

Corporate Australia is also encouraged to become involved. There is no reason why business growth and achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous Australians cannot go hand-in-hand. Such examples will be recognised this year in the inaugural Special Award for Contribution to an Indigenous Community, as part of the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships. For more information on this award go to www.partnerships.gov.au

The question we asked our contributors was “How can we open up the lines of communication between Indigenous communities and philanthropic funders, and what approaches have been tried and tested that really make a difference?”

From my Perspective

Gina Anderson, CEO

It seems to me that a great shame of our nation is the disintegration of our Indigenous communities, particularly the most remote communities. That we have people living, in this very wealthy country, with a life expectancy akin to that of the poorest third world country, is a disgrace. And yet in so many ways I feel helpless.

Looking back at the policies and actions of the early settlers and pioneers of Australia through the prism of a 21st century lens, it is easy to be very judgmental, to blame so many of the ills of our Indigenous peoples on those first white Australians. However, as Noel Pearson has often pointed out, the major destruction and disintegration of Indigenous communities has happened during the past 40 years.

Despite the brutality of the 1800s and 1900s, the policies of assimilation, White Australia Policy and the Stolen Generation and all that went before my generation, it seems that the plight of Indigenous Australia has deteriorated significantly in my lifetime. I grew up with the image of the Aboriginal stockman, revered for his horsemanship and ability to handle stock. At my small rural primary school in the1960s the Aboriginal kids were the fastest, the funniest, the most popular. What happened?

The struggle then becomes how to help. There are many, myself included, who feel frustrated that so much money and well-intentioned effort has been put into Indigenous issues, with seemingly no improvement in the situation. Why is it that in a country that has managed to build a successful, confident and wealthy nation in just over 200 years, primarily through the talents of migrants from all over the world, that we seem unable to help our Aboriginal community? While there are pockets of improvement, and some momentum has been achieved, is this enough and is it sustainable?

The media now regularly report Indigenous issues and Noel Pearson’s column in *The Australian* newspaper gives readers an insight and an Indigenous person’s perspective on the events of the day. The support for Indigenous Australians by the wider community, as demonstrated a few years ago by the reconciliation marches, shows a willingness by the wider community to learn and support. But how can the philanthropy sector aid progress and add value? What could and should we do next?

It behoves all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to work together to find ways. We think the first steps are to listen and engage.

For this edition of *Australian Philanthropy* we have approached a number of Indigenous Australians with experience in the nonprofit sector for their opinions and advice. We also asked several of our Members who fund Indigenous communities and projects for their understandings and experience.

The question we asked our contributors was “How can we open up the lines of communication between Indigenous communities and philanthropic funders, and what approaches have been tried and tested that really make a difference?”

The responses we received make fascinating reading – the consensus and clarity of the message coming through is quite inspirational… it’s essential to work face-to-face to build relationships and trust, and only from that base can good things follow.

Over half the contributors to this issue of *Australian Philanthropy* are Indigenous, and we hope that their voices will help to open up debate and encourage far greater dialogue between the philanthropic sector and Indigenous Australians.

Really, this issue is not about Indigenous Australians, it’s about all Australians.

Reconciliation – what role can philanthropy play?

By Barbara Livesey, Chief Executive of Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation with a focus on closing the 17-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

Reconciliation Australia works by forming partnerships for success with corporations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations, government and community groups, as well as individuals.

The theme of this edition of *Australian Philanthropy* is all about highlighting the special role of philanthropy in building healthier Indigenous communities.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Australia's most successful referendum where more than 90 per cent of voters said "Yes", that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be acknowledged as Australian citizens, and that the Australian Government should be able to make laws on their behalf.

The Referendum came about because Indigenous and non-Indigenous people worked together for more than 10 years to explain why the Australian Constitution needed to change. And in communities across Australia people listened and agreed that Indigenous Australians deserve a fair go and every chance to participate equally in all aspects of Australian life.

As we all know, the Referendum didn't achieve the great promise of equality that was the vision of campaigners. A snapshot of social and economic indicators shows the level of inequality that remains 40 years after the Referendum:

- only half as many Indigenous students complete year 12 compared with non-Indigenous students;[1]
- the unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians is more than twice the rate for non-Indigenous Australians;[2]
- Indigenous people are half as likely to be buying their own home as non-Indigenous people;[3] and
- the child mortality rate for Indigenous Australians is twice the rate for non-Indigenous children.[4]

The Referendum anniversary is an ideal time to reflect on how, working hand in hand as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, we are able to move our nation forward.

Reconciliation Action Plans

Reconciliation Australia is finding that organisations across all sectors want to commemorate the Referendum anniversary in a meaningful way. This energy for action has spawned the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program.

RAPs are a means by which organisations all over Australia are part of the reconciliation process and will contribute to closing the 17 year gap in life expectancy between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous child. We all have a role to play in making these changes and many philanthropic organisations are already involved.

RAPs are a great tool for turning good intentions into actions. Reconciliation Australia staff are playing a role in advising organisations on how to make sure that their RAPs reflect their core business and vision for reconciliation.

The first Reconciliation Action Plans were announced by the Prime Minister in 2006. Among numerous organisations developing RAPs are BHP Billiton, ANZ, Australian Government Departments, QANTAS, Melbourne City Council, the Australian Medical Association, Oxfam, World Vision and Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation.

As Reconciliation Australia Director Mick Dodson said at last year's program launch, "Reconciliation Action Plans demonstrate the maturing of the reconciliation process over the last 10 years. Organisations across different sectors understand now the mix of changes in practices and relationships necessary to get better outcomes and they are prepared to make these changes."

We understand that Philanthropy Australia is already working on its RAP and we hope that others will follow within the philanthropic sector. We're sure that in developing your plans, like others you will discover the importance of building upon respectful relationships.

Respectful relationships

Many of you will know that building partnerships for success with Indigenous people means having personal contact, learning and listening. In developing your Reconciliation Action Plans you may find yourselves re-thinking how you do business with Indigenous organisations and what are the best models for funding applications. We know that the Reichstein Foundation, for example, has been talking with other philanthropic organisations and Indigenous community leaders on new ways to ensure that Indigenous organisations are able to more easily access philanthropic funding and break through existing barriers (see page 23).

So what can philanthropists offer in the reconciliation process? Beyond funding, philanthropic trusts and foundations have the opportunity to be creative, flexible and responsive in developing innovative partnerships where success is measured at many levels – quantifiable improvements in well-being as well as less tangible improvements in relationships and understanding. You have the capacity to take on projects that governments and corporates are too risk averse to consider.

Prime Minister John Howard and Reconciliation Australia Director Mick Dodson at the launch of the Reconciliation Action Plan program. Photograph: Newspix/Michael Potter.

Our focus involves:

Building relationships through project work focused on finding and analysing what works in achieving lasting results for Indigenous Australians and for the whole community.

Educating, involving and encouraging the community to take responsibility for reconciliation by highlighting examples of success.

Influencing the policies of government, industry and other sectors on the basis of Indigenous aspiration and evidence of what works.

Change makers

Philanthropists have a strong tradition of being change makers. You have often been involved in programs where social change is nurtured and paradigms are shifted. These programs go way beyond service delivery and are more challenging to define and measure. But the outcomes can be significant. If an Aboriginal person is made to feel like an outsider when they walk into a health service or bank or workplace, their experience is dramatically diminished. Encouraging, even provoking attitudinal shifts throughout the Australian community has a very real impact on the life chances of Aboriginal people.

Much of the work of Reconciliation Australia is focused in this 'social change space' which can make the job of attracting government and corporate support more difficult as they are looking for quantifiable deliverables. The philanthropic sector has been a good supporter of our work and we hope this will continue with new partnerships being developed.

The challenge now for the philanthropic sector is to forge broader relationships with Indigenous communities and organisations. We know it's not always easy to know what steps to take, so we offer the following suggestions based on what we hear from Indigenous people and from what we see working on the ground:

Suggestions

- Be brave in considering more strategic and more cooperative approaches in determining priorities for funding – brave like The Foundation for Young Australians which is planning to bring together a number of trusts and foundations to build a long term approach to funding Indigenous education programs (see page 21). The Foundation will be listening to the views of Indigenous experts in education on what's most important before considering any programs for funding. This approach will mean that funding priorities reflect the needs of communities rather than pre-determined program boundaries.
- Re-engineer your paper-based application processes to minimise the burden on small community-based organisations with limited resources. Some foundations are already working on the idea of a common application form which would deliver appropriate accountability to funders while providing a streamlined process for grantees.
- And most importantly, there needs to be more listening, more talking, more building of long term meaningful relationships between Indigenous people and philanthropic organisations. Visiting communities, inviting Indigenous organisations to present their views and looking for opportunities for Indigenous people to work within trusts and foundations will help build the respectful relationships that underpin reconciliation.

Philanthropic organisations can sign up to multi-generational, ongoing relationships. This is what is necessary in reconciliation, given the intractability of some of the issues we need to resolve together.

We know your sector has a genuine wish to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We believe that you are better placed than anyone else in the Australian community to bust open traditional ways of tackling Indigenous disadvantage, ignorance and disharmony. And in so doing, you may well find yourselves setting an example for others in how to make a lasting difference.

For more information on the 1967 referendum and on the Reconciliation Action Plan program go to www.reconciliation.org.au

1. In 2002, 18 per cent of Indigenous people over 18 years of age had completed year 12, compared to 43 per cent of non-Indigenous people. (Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2005).
2. 2001 Census reports that nationally 46 per cent of all Indigenous people aged 15-64 years were not in the labour force, compared to 27 per cent of non-Indigenous people aged 15-64. Of those who participate in the labour market, 20 per cent of Indigenous people were unemployed, compared to 7 per cent of non-Indigenous people, making Indigenous people 2.8 times more likely to be unemployed.
3. In 2002 the proportion of Indigenous people aged 18 years or over, and who live in a home that is owned or being purchased by someone in the household was 27 per cent compared to 74 per cent of non-Indigenous people who live in a home that is owned or being purchased by someone in the household. (Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2005).
4. In the period 1999-2003, the death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 1-14 years in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory was 2.4 times that of non-Indigenous children. (AIHW, National Mortality Database, 1999-2003).

Challenges in Indigenous philanthropy: the Australian grantmakers' perspective

By Dr Wendy Scaife, Senior Research Fellow, Queensland University of Technology, Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies

Browse social justice resources across the globe and a gap emerges – foundations seldom fund Indigenous needs. This neglected area occurs despite Indigenous needs being so deep as to be almost 'cavernous': conservation, health, youth, education, employment, sustainable development and social justice, are all critical funding needs (Environmental Grantmakers Association EGA 2006). Yet, in 2003, US nonprofit foundations gave less than one 20th of 1 per cent of total funding to Indigenous development (EGA). No Australian figures are available.

Positive local momentum to redress these deficits is evident in the work of the Indigenous Affinity Group of Philanthropy Australia. As part of the Giving Australia study, members of this group and other expert interviewees contributed their thoughts on grantmaking issues, key funding needs and ideas to overcome perceived barriers by grant sources. This article summarizes these views.* Some key suggestions covered include the value of seed grants, supporting new grantmakers, collaborative funding and dispelling myths about investing in Indigenous areas.

Why is Indigenous funding important?

The world's 350 million Indigenous people across 90 countries represent a large proportion of the world's cultural diversity, 80 per cent of remaining global biodiversity is found within their lands (International Funders for Indigenous Peoples 2006). Indigenous groups face the added challenge of understanding the grant process, and across the world often report being funded in ways that have no regard to their traditional culture and values.

Themes and key recommendations emerging from Giving Australia respondents included the following:

- cultural sensitivity is paramount to Indigenous grantmaking;

  grantmakers need to ask Indigenous counsel to guide funding options, plan realistic outcomes, to agree what is acceptable and has best chance of working;
- government approaches were seen as often bureaucratic, fragmented and silo-like, risk averse and off-putting to those who needed the help most;
- judging potential grantees by traditional foundation or conventional 'businesslike' means are inappropriate: reference checks may not translate across cultures; track records are seldom available; and translation of programs may not work – 'one size does not fit all';
- flexibility is the core in making grants and in evaluating their success;
- different time frames apply to Indigenous issues – grantmakers need to understand the long term nature of change in Indigenous issues which often require substantial lead time to get projects underway;
- infrastructure funding is required but funders' guidelines often preclude it;
- funding across a wide spectrum is needed particularly Indigenous health; and
- funding Indigenous causes is perceived by some as unpalatable and this is reinforced by media and the wider community. Grantmakers reported negative feedback about giving to this area along with other more politically charged issues such as refugees. Yet grantmakers reported very positive outcomes from their funding.

Four priority areas were identified for foundation funding:

- developing Indigenous leaders, especially among young people was regarded as vital to ongoing improvement across the range of Indigenous difficulties;
- the role of Indigenous women as change agents was also recognised by participants as a core funding area that would achieve multiplier effects;
- thirdly, developing employment skills as giving a life purpose and strategy to avert other social problems was discussed as critical for achieving outcomes in Indigenous matters; and
- supporting Indigenous education was viewed as the type of long term perspective funding that through the decades would foster change in Indigenous issues.

Grantmakers sought certain qualities to provide productive impact:

- project leadership with organisational/ operational skills;
- experience within the Indigenous community to signal funding has a good chance of achieving desired outcomes;
- thought-out applications with contingency plans were looked on as a further reassurance of likely success;
- Indigenous support for and involvement in decision-making was considered essential.

Opportunities to champion and expand the range of Indigenous philanthropy were seen through promoting awareness of the *Australian Indigenous Guide to Philanthropy* (published by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, VACCHO with assistance from Philanthropy Australia), as well as highlighting the range of significant outcomes achieved from the variety of small grants in the $5-$10,000 range. Assisting potential grantmakers to link to, and work with, established foundations that have resources to know the needs of Indigenous communities and vet projects was also seen as useful. The intractable Indigenous problem in Australia and its complexities was seen as well suited to the innovation, independent thinking, unfettered by policy dollars, and other resources that could be mustered by philanthropic foundations.

* A link to the full report is available at http://www.philanthropy.org.au/services/journal.htm

Acknowledgements
The author wishes to acknowledge members of the Philanthropy Australia Indigenous Affinity Group and also the interviewees who openly shared their views, and the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership as funder of the Giving Australia research. This article is a truncated version of an article in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues Special Giving Australia* edition. (41, 4 2006)

Minimizing red tape

By Joy Love, Executive Officer – Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund

Professionals in philanthropy generally acknowledge the importance of partnerships, capacity building and support for innovative ideas. These three aspects are particularly important in Indigenous philanthropy.

But Indigenous organisations also appreciate a straightforward approach from funding bodies, based on understanding and trust. Too much red tape can cause frustration and discourage potential applicants, in the first instance. Additionally it can reduce the effective dollar value of the grant.

Red tape can come in two forms: that associated with the grantmaking process; and as unnecessary exclusions and stipulations placed on the use of funds.

Jigalong children get the 'healthy tucker' message thanks to the Diabetes Management and Care Program Unity First People of Australia (UFPA).

The overriding focus of the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund* (RTAF) is to build capacity in Indigenous communities and people. RTAF does not require that Indigenous communities and organisations already have the capacity to deal with administrative detail. We found that what Indigenous community organisations really want is to convey their passion to get the job done – the job which they have identified as important in their community. They want to engage in conversation. They hope that understanding and trust is returned.

Frustration results when they do not have the opportunity to communicate directly with a funding body, or where there are long delays between initial contact and the transfer of funds, or requirements to fill out lots of paper work and provide lots of documentation.

Applicants may feel that the application process is a test of their ability to deal with red tape rather than of the worth of their project. The applicants with the least amount of resources, who could potentially benefit most from receiving support, may be competing against applications prepared by professional submission writers.

The RTAF was set up specifically for the benefit of Indigenous people and communities, and is not bound by a trust deed. It is therefore able to simplify the application process to complement its approach of engaging directly with applicants.

The RTAF's board meets quarterly to consider submissions (the Chairman can approve smaller grants directly).

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their initiative with the executive officer who offers support to prepare a submission. Submissions are accepted in any format, but guidelines are provided and most applicants prefer to work to a structure. Submissions can be lodged through any medium, but electronic submissions are preferred.

If the Fund receives submissions that don't meet the funding guidelines the applicants are notified straight away. All submissions that meet the guidelines go up for the board's consideration exactly as received. Once the funding round closes, funds can be approved and transferred in about three weeks.

The board members consider the submission on the merit of the proposed project, not the quality of the written submission. They are interested in the essential value of the project and the integrity of the people undertaking it. Reading the original submission helps them to do this. At least 50 per cent of the board members (excluding the Chairman) are Indigenous leaders in their field. Their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous and cultural issues gives insights that an application process alone could not.

Of course, the process isn't perfect. For example, we could have more creative ways of receiving submissions. But like other trusts, foundations and funds, RTAF seeks to minimize costs in order to maximize funding. Making grants as straight forward and simple as possible also helps the Fund reduce its own overheads.

As indicated earlier, it isn't just the application process that can suffer from red tape. Trying to stipulate precisely how funds should be spent, or specifying what can and can't be funded in the scheme of an important initiative, can also lead to confusion and bitterness.

Certainly funding bodies, RTAF included, have limits on how funds are spent. Limits help a funding body reach its objective. Like many funding bodies we have a preference for supporting programs that lead to sustainable positive outcomes. We recognise the value of flexible funding especially to support a developmental phase. Unfortunately Indigenous organisations often have difficulty getting support for salaries and other core operating costs. These don't have the same donor appeal as a health or an education program – but they are essential.

You know you've hit your mark when you get the following feedback from a Indigenous grantee organisation that's achieved fantastic outcomes for Indigenous people:

"RTAF support made a massive difference. Most (funding bodies) want to fund a flashy project, but it is essential for the business to be running. This support has meant the difference between Indij Readers being here and not being here."

Tracey Hannon
Indij Readers Ltd

* The Rio Tinto Aboriginal Foundation has recently changed its name to the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund; nothing has altered in terms of how the entity operates.

Funding Indigenous arts and culture

By Rhoda Roberts, Festival Director, The Dreaming

For Indigenous Australians a festival is about continuation of cultural practice rather than simply a celebration of the visual and performing arts. Australia's Aboriginal law, people, and culture are the same – they are not distinguishable.

The Indigenous relationship with nature is based on a system of eco-kinship, a practice of caring, where totems representing particular species are acknowledged and maintained through the performance of ceremonies. For many Indigenous people living in built up environments, experiencing and participating in ancient ceremony is now rare.

A little over a decade ago I was appointed by the Sydney Olympic Committee Organising Group (SOCOG) as the Artistic Director of the Festival of the Dreaming. It was during the process of producing an international arts festival that I became aware of the willingness of the world of corporate philanthropy, to assist especially when faced with the incentive of the five Olympic rings, a marketing strategy and international media exposure.

However 10 years on, and as Festival Director of the Dreaming, Australia's International Indigenous Art Festival staged at the Woodford Folk Festival site, developing partnerships has been a much more difficult process.

The Dreaming Festival has helped to provide a voice and the opportunity for Indigenous peoples across generations to reclaim and maintain their ancestral songs, language and stories through ceremony and the handing down of cultural knowledge. It empowers individuals and communities, particularly artists with some economic independence and positive outcomes. Nevertheless very few artists are aware of the opportunities within the corporate and philanthropic worlds.

With recent publications such as *The Australian Indigenous Guide to Philanthropy* and the international publication *Indigenous Peoples Funding and Resource Guide*, philanthropy offers new possibilities to the Indigenous arts and cultural industry. As well as seeing just a source of funds, however, we need to look very closely at the nature of partnerships – they must never be a one way street. Philanthropy is not, and never should be, a substitute funding source. There also needs to be a system to address a best practice model that outlines effective implementation of risk management and legal compliance in nonprofit organisations. There needs to be better communication, education and staff training for nonprofit and foundation staff. With many languages groups across the nation, each is complex and diverse, and while there are some similar issues affecting our peoples, each group or community often has different needs and visions.

The Kwaio Sango Dancers perform at the Closing Ceremony of The Dreaming Festival 2006. Photograph: Sonja de Sterke, The Dreaming 2006.

What can the private sector do that Government cannot?

As we all know there has been a long history of government policies that have at times contributed to the cultural, social, spiritual, and economic disadvantage and upheaval of Indigenous communities, individuals and families. Often these were short term band-aid solutions to long term problems. Many funding opportunities came with agendas or were simply developed as pilot schemes without much consideration for lasting approaches to capacity building and empowerment.

Philanthropy is in the privileged position of being able to take the lead in funding more long term solutions, and to question current practices.

The 1997 Festival of the Dreaming and the relationships we developed with a number of businesses was about an exchange. For example some of our writers involved in the literature program were given opportunities for their work to appear in mainstream press writing from an Indigenous perspective looking at political milestones and the history of our peoples. Other exchanges included members of the team, performers and myself delivering keynote addresses at various business functions and conducting cultural awareness programs during the orientation days of large corporations involved.

One of the first initiatives with our partners was the development of acknowledging country through our welcome to country program. Known as the Gamarada program, custodians and elders were given media and PR training, administration assistance and a place within the festival organisation.

Acknowledging country and the appropriate protocols is one simple step forward. Many mainstream arts companies, foundations and indeed individuals have benefited from this approach, with increased inclusiveness of WTC at openings and launches over the last decade.

Exchange has operated since time immemorial and Indigenous artists are willing to provide something in return, not just rely on philanthropy as just another welfare handout. On a personal level I have always admired the generosity of The Gamarada elders. After a number of workshops their confidence increased.

Yolngu Women Weavers Workshop at The Dreaming Festival 2006. Photograph: Sonja de Sterke, The Dreaming 2006.

> "I passionately believe that through the arts and the telling of our personal stories – the good, the bad and the ugly as well as the humorous – we create a platform… to discuss real issues, begin a lasting and overdue healing process, and achieve sustainable and positive change."

With our partners' recognition of their place in community and the importance of protocol and country their dignity shone.

The Dreaming team also provided a cultural awareness program for partners and supporters.

Australians are becoming increasingly intrigued by the ancient stories, songlines and traditional customs from our Indigenous peoples. Mainstream audiences, however, have had limited opportunities to express their respect and enthusiasm for such activities.

Festivals now provide audiences with access to traditional Indigenous culture in a contemporary context.

It is our current loss of culture through the natural death of our elders – people who hold the keys to our ancestry, our ceremony and song lines – that now should be our focus. Their knowledge needs to be told, passed on to new generations of both black and white youth so that all who live in this wonderful country can know of its origins and the secrets it holds.

Too often, however, the arts are overlooked and not considered as valid an area to support, as say health, housing or education.

Like other Indigenous groups and festivals we still are finding it difficult to develop partnerships to support our event. We often still need to have the dialogue about the relevance and necessity of cultural maintenance.

I passionately believe that through the arts and the telling of our personal stories – the good, the bad and the ugly as well as the humorous – we create a platform from an Indigenous perspective to discuss real issues, begin a lasting and overdue healing process, and achieve sustainable and positive change.

On a positive note support from international foundations such as the USA-based Christiansen Fund has seen positive outcomes and increased touring opportunities for the individual artists, the communities and the arts sectors they have supported. They understand the need for cultural events such as festivals and have supported both the Garma festival and the Dreaming. The experience of other Indigenous peoples, in Canada for example, tells us that the more control people have over their lives and their affairs, the more functional they become.

Audiences have remarked on what they have learnt at the Dreaming, having been enriched with knowledge and history. For some it has been a life changing experience. This strengthens my conviction in the importance and relevance of maintaining one of the most unique oldest living adapting cultures. After all a partnership is a shared journey together.

Forewarned, forearmed: learning how to work with Indigenous communities

By Wesley Aird, member of the National Indigenous Council, the Gold Coast Native Title Group and the Bennelong Society board

There can be little doubt the task to overcome Indigenous disadvantage is a tough one. However, there are some less obvious aspects of working with Indigenous communities that can potentially have a profound affect on the outcomes of a project.

To improve the chances of success for a project, philanthropic funders need to get to know the recipient community's people and their power-plays. There should also be a clear understanding as to how each project contributes to the bigger picture – overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

Complex community politics have been a characteristic of the recent era of administration in Indigenous affairs. When communities are not engaged in the real economy there can be fierce competition for any dollars that may flow into a community. The stakes can be very high even though the dollar amount may seem relatively low. Community entrepreneurs may seek to take advantage of the situation. Sadly, excuses and tall stories along cultural lines can be invoked in the hope that the outsider won't dig or delve either for fear of giving offence or out of naivety. It is the equivalent to pulling the cultural wool over one's eyes and the result can be anything from just plain unhelpful to intentionally damaging.

A way to counter this is to put aside appearances and not make any assumptions about who's who in a community. Instead, work out who's actually doing the work and who's just driving the big car. Sometimes this can be done as simply as drinking cups of tea with a range of people and listening to a variety of perspectives. Often it will be the unassuming ones that have the most to offer.

> "…work out who's actually doing the work and who's just driving the big car."

Armed with an accurate picture of the community, a funder can make far better decisions as to how best to support a community. The good news is that genuine community consultation is easy to achieve when done properly and technical advice or expertise is readily available.

Another unfortunate legacy of the recent past has been the practice of 'casting the net' widely for funding in a manner somewhat akin to fishing. One rather insidious outcome of this is that some community projects will be run, not because the project is a necessary component building towards the community's higher order goals, but simply because a funding application 'got up'. Without structure and purpose, the benefit of such an approach is a moot point and unlikely to break the welfare cycle. However, as long as governments run programs in isolation from each other it is understandable that communities will continue to apply for funding in a similarly uncoordinated manner. The risk for philanthropic funders is that they become just another prospect on a shopping list. When a community fails to plan, potential funders need to be very wary of putting good money after bad.

With such intense focus on money, it is easy for communities to lose sight of value. In my opinion, philanthropic funders have the capacity to provide value greater than the dollar amount. This can be done without handing over the big bucks that a community may be looking for. Even better, at least depending on your viewpoint, is when a philanthropic project imparts intangibles such as technical expertise, organisational skills, work ethic or even hope for a better future. The community must be empowered to be a genuine part of the solution.

When donor organisations are working closely with key community people, and there is a genuine spirit of cooperation, the skills, networks and experience that philanthropic organisations can contribute have the potential to greatly improve the chances for Indigenous communities to overcome disadvantage.

If we were to treat Indigenous communities as a sort of business, then before any investment we would study the social and political environment and properly plan the actions to get the community up and running. Naturally, communities need to get the right partner for the right job. Neither governments nor industry have a great track record for planning and implementing community development projects. This leaves a great role for the skills and experience of philanthropic organisations.

When working with Indigenous communities there are potentially pit-falls in terms of having the cultural wool pulled over the eyes and there is also the risk that philanthropic grants will be seen as just another source of funds. Being on the lookout for these dynamics is, as the literary character Don Quixote said some four hundred years ago, 'Forewarned forearmed'.

Supporting the environment: stretching the impact

By Justin McCaul, Community Outreach Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation

Land has a special significance for Indigenous people. Across northern Australia traditional knowledge and skills remain strong and 'caring for country'[1] is a daily responsibility for Indigenous people. With much of Australia's remaining high conservation value lands found in remote areas that are home to Indigenous communities, who are often dealing with significant social challenges, conservation initiatives that involve Indigenous communities can be an exciting field for philanthropic donors seeking to make a positive contribution to either or both of these issues.

White sand dunes at Shelburne Bay (Wuthathi Traditional Lands). Photograph: Kerry Trapnell.

Earlier this year the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) released a review of its Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program[2]. Amongst some of its findings was that 95 per cent of IPA communities reported economic participation and development benefits from their involvement with the IPA program; and that 74 per cent of communities reported that their IPA management activities make a positive contribution to the reduction of substance abuse. It lists many other benefits including social and cultural benefits.

Such results are inspiring conservation groups to work with Indigenous communities to protect high conservation value lands and to pressure governments to create jobs for Indigenous people in land management and tourism.

Ray Wallis is a Wuthathi Traditional Owner who has some experience in working with philanthropic foundations. His traditional country is the spectacularly beautiful Shelburne Bay region on Cape York Peninsula. The Wuthathi have fought hard over many years to stop sand mining and even the building of a 'space base' in the 1980s on their country. Currently they are seeking to secure land tenure over their mainland estates via a Native Title claim. They have tenure over some of their sea country estates.

To protect their country once and for all, the Wuthathi people want the area's high conservation values protected by establishing a nature reserve similar to a national park. They also want to jointly manage the area with the government. They are working with the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) to attain this goal.

"Governments are too conservative. Many of their programs fall short of what is really needed. We see a real opportunity for the philanthropic sector to help Indigenous people realise our goal of protecting a beautiful part of Australia for now and future generations. We want to develop management programs, establish tourism facilities and create jobs on our lands that show government and the public we are serious about protecting the environment" says Ray.

Ray believes Aboriginal groups also need help networking with people who have knowledge and advice. "I think the philanthropic sector can play a vital role in linking Aboriginal people to those with the skills to help us. Money is important, sure, but so are skills and knowledge; that can be just as important".

A low level of awareness keeps Aboriginal people from engaging with philanthropic organisations. Ray met with members of the Australian Environment Grantmakers Network during their visit to Cape York Peninsula last year and feel events like this are the way to go in terms of raising levels of awareness. "It's the best way – learning and sharing face to face".

Another issue that concerns Aboriginal people is what donors might want in return for their financial support. "Most agencies or organisations if they provide funding usually want something in return. What philanthropic donors might want is unclear to many Aboriginal people. Many worry that rights and control over intellectual property and copyright may be lost in certain types of projects. Traditional knowledge and the like may be accessible to a bigger audience who don't have the traditional or cultural authority to access it. This is a big concern for Aboriginal people".

The ACF believes that donors wanting to be involved in Indigenous conservation must commit for the 'long haul' as more often than not projects may take many years to deliver lasting results. But these results stretch way beyond land management, to positive social, economic and cultural impact.

Justin McCaul is a descendent of Barburum people whose traditional lands are within the Wet Tropics bioregion of far north Queensland.

Key issues

- Low levels of awareness amongst Indigenous communities about philanthropic organisations.
- Low 'visibility' of many philanthropic organisations/donors.
- Lack of clarity on what 'returns' donors may be seeking from Aboriginal communities.
- Complicated funding application and acquittal procedures.
- 'Burn-out factor' in many Indigenous communities people are dealing simultaneously with social problems such as alcohol abuse and managing existing government programs e.g. health and education.
- Face to face communication is the best means to establish trust and understanding between donors and Indigenous groups.
- Donors must be willing to commit for the 'long haul'.

1. Caring for country is a term used by Indigenous people to denote protecting natural and cultural heritage values such as sacred sites. It can also mean fire management and eradicating feral weeds and animals.
2. For the full report – *The Indigenous Protected Areas Programme – 2006 Evaluation* by Brian Gilligan visit www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/ipa-evaluation.html

Connecting kids and communities: Telstra Foundation

By Georgia Symmons, National Manager, Telstra Foundation and Nancie-Lee Robinson, National Coordinator Community Development Fund, Telstra Foundation

Supporting initiatives that improve the health and well-being of Indigenous children and young people has become a mantra within the Telstra Foundation.

The Telstra Foundation has a clear mission to make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of Australian children and young people. Our support for Indigenous communities is aligned with this mission. But how do we know that we are making a difference? The focus on supporting Indigenous communities has intensified since the Telstra Foundation's inception in 2002. Since that time, the Telstra Foundation has supported over 80 Indigenous community-based projects to the value of over $6.3 million.

Our early learnings

In 2005, the Australian Institute of Family Studies conducted an evaluation of 14 of the Indigenous Community Development projects funded by the Telstra Foundation. The research report – *Early Learnings Research Report Volume 2* – showed that while a focus on the Indigenous population is warranted and valued, an understanding of how to best work with Indigenous communities to deliver optimal outcomes is required.

A number of themes emerged from the research that should be considered when granting funding, providing support and evaluating the outcomes for Indigenous community development projects. Developing and retaining trust was the first key. Many Indigenous communities are accustomed to outsider 'experts' passing through. But it takes time to develop relationships and to build trust. This means having good relationships with Elders, taking the time to communicate and accepting that communities not only best understand their problems, but also are the ones who can be empowered to identify and implement solutions. In selecting Indigenous community development projects to fund, the Telstra Foundation gives priority to those which come directly from Indigenous controlled organisations or programs.

Students from Queensland's Cherbourg State School developing their camera skills.

The importance of flexibility is another key theme to emerge from the research. Philanthropic funding organisations have a unique ability to demonstrate flexibility which can greatly support Indigenous community development projects. The boundaries between many community development activities in which local organisations engage are often blurred. At times, it can be hard to delineate between which parts of projects fall within specific funding arrangements, and this has implications for reporting.

As the research report highlights, the funding organisation needs to ensure that flexibility is built into its objectives and deliverables, and understand that integration between services and programs naturally occurs when working in the community and responding to its needs. What is important is that the overall objectives of the funding scheme have been met and there have been tangible outcomes for the community.

Identifying opportunities for leverage is the third key theme. Philanthropic organisations provide a great benefit when they consider how to use funds to leverage further investment in the community. Telstra Foundation funding has supported projects to expand capacity or build a sustainable base for ongoing change in communities, as well to receive support from other funding bodies. Taking an active role and working with funded-organisations to leverage further investment not only helps to build the relationship, but can achieve enhanced outcomes for the wider community.

Community development activities need to build Indigenous leadership in the next generation – this was the final key learning identified by the Early Learnings research report. While it is important to identify and use community leaders to bring about change, sometimes too many demands are placed on key individuals, often leading to burnout. Expanding the leadership base within the community, and encouraging intergenerational communication and skill transfer is crucial for sharing the load and ensuring sustainability.

While leadership can be demonstrated at the community level, it needs to also be fostered within individuals. Supporting projects that focus on youth engagement and participation can help to build the capacity of individuals to show initiative and take charge of their own lives as well as to build cultural pride, self-esteem and self-determination.

Connecting kids to communities

With these learnings in mind, the Telstra Foundation has refined the focus of its Community Development Fund for the next three years. The Fund has just one purpose in mind – to connect children and young people to their communities. Indigenous Community Development is now one of three new program areas dedicated to achieving this.

With this new direction, the Telstra Foundation has four funding priorities:

- Social innovation – supporting great ideas and timely solutions that engage individuals and the community to identify and implement solutions to challenges facing Australian kids.
- Capacity building – building the ability of organisations and communities to provide children and young people with opportunities to develop skills, self esteem and resilience.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – creatively using ICT to stimulate connection between children and young people with community networks.
- Measuring impact – the short and long term impact of grants will be measured more closely through sound research, planning and evaluation.

Connecting kids through festivals

With a focus on these priority areas, connecting Indigenous children and young people to their communities will be at the heart of the two key projects that the Telstra Foundation will support over the coming years – Indigenous festivals and the Stronger Smarter Indigenous Kids program.

Through the Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund, three Indigenous festivals will be supported over the coming years. Evidence indicates that community festivals bring new talents to a community and develop those within, promote awareness of community issues, reduce the isolation of individuals and groups within communities, and promote economic and social development. They also provide an opportunity for children and young people to understand and celebrate their culture.

The Telstra Foundation will be supporting the youth components of the Croc Festival, The Dreaming and Garma festivals. Each of these unique programs will creatively use information and communication technologies to facilitate the connection of Indigenous children and young people with each other, with community Elders and with other kids across rural and regional Australia. Importantly, they will also provide the opportunity for the development of skills that can then be used within local communities and as a step towards gaining future employment and training.

Connecting kids through education, the Stronger Smarter Indigenous Kids program, lead by Dr Chris Sarra and the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute at the Queensland University of Technology, is the second key project to be supported in the new Indigenous Community Development program.

The ‘stronger and smarter’ philosophy instils Indigenous children with the belief and willpower to be something great. This philosophy, if shared with those who are educating Indigenous children, could have a profound impact on their future. This program will arm educators of Indigenous children with the belief, skills and capacity to make profound changes to the learning outcomes of Indigenous children.

Specifically, the Telstra Foundation will support a Principals’ Leadership Program where 240 primary and secondary school principals from schools across the country with high numbers of Indigenous kids will be engaged to help stimulate positive change and improved learning outcomes within their own schools.

In Chris Sarra’s own words, “We are arming principals with the skills and leadership to change their educational outcomes. This program will help principals think outside the square to keep kids at school whether it is rewarding regular school attendance or getting parents involved in one-on-one tutoring for reading.”

The ‘stronger and smarter’ philosophy will also be promoted through the Teacher Leadership and Community Leadership programs that will be delivered in the 240 schools and communities to enhance this positive change process and ensure improvements in educational outcomes. These programs will be supported by the Sidney Myer Fund.

Making a positive and lasting difference

With a mission to make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of Australian children and young people, the Telstra Foundation has invested in Indigenous community development activities since 2002. Armed with evaluation research, and with a renewed commitment to work in this area, we are planning to learn from our experiences.

By fostering longer term relationships with fewer projects, building flexibility into our objectives, identifying leverage opportunities and supporting projects which build the skills of the Indigenous leaders of the future, the Telstra Foundation is aiming to help deliver a greater positive impact for Indigenous communities and on the health and well-being of Indigenous children and young people.

Early learnings of Indigenous community development projects

1. It takes time to build relationships and trust – listening to and respecting the vision of local Indigenous communities will help build trust.
2. You need flexibility with your funding deliverables as the lines may blur between different community development activities, yet the benefits can still be realised.
3. Use funds to leverage for projects to continue the good work commenced through your initial funding or attract additional funds.
4. Take the time to identify the current and future Indigenous leaders and work with them to realise favourable outcomes.

Telstra Foundation Indigenous projects (2007 to 2010)

1. Indigenous festivals: Croc Festival, The Dreaming, Garma.
2. Stronger Smarter Indigenous Kids: Principal’s Leadership Program.
3. A further 21 ongoing Indigenous Community Development projects are receiving second and third year funding.

Copies of Early Learnings be obtained by contacting the Telstra Foundation on 1800 208 378.

Feature interview with Jackie Huggins

Jackie Huggins AM, a woman of the Bidjara/Birri-Gubba Juru peoples, is an historian and published author. She is Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia and Deputy Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland. Jackie is also Chair of the National Steering Committee of the Dare to Lead program for school principals and a Director on the Telstra Foundation and the AFL Foundation, and a member of Oxfam's Indigenous Advisory Committee. We're delighted that Jackie made the time to speak to *Australian Philanthropy's* Louise Arkles about Indigenous Philanthropy.

What is it going to take to reduce the level of disadvantage and increase life opportunities for Indigenous people?

As you know, the latest figures are that the life expectancy gap for Aboriginal people is 17 years less than for non-Indigenous people, so we're starting off on a very low base. We're talking about multiple complex factors, but the one most fundamental element we have identified as crucial to closing this gap, is developing the right kind of relationships. These are relationships that support Indigenous people in identifying our own problems and coming up with appropriate solutions. It's about building respectful partnerships that are really clearly driven by Indigenous aspirations.

Around the world there's clear evidence that turning around Indigenous disadvantage can only happen where a 'top down' model of imposed solutions is replaced by a model that puts control into the hands of the people themselves.

Haven't we seen attempts to do this in Australia before?

Yes, we've had the notion of 'self-determination' but the term is very misunderstood. For me it's about people managing and controlling their own affairs with dignity. Some people like to suggest that self-determination has failed, but actually I think self-determination has never really been tried here, because there hasn't been an equal partnership – the power imbalance between the partners has been so extreme that it never had the opportunity to succeed.

What can we do to break down the barriers – communication; cultural; historical; racial – between philanthropic foundations, corporate and individual donors and Indigenous people and communities?

Personal contact in building very respectful relationships is the key. This applies to all organisations that want to support Indigenous people, be they corporates, Indigenous Australians, NGOs, government or philanthropics. We've all got to be brave enough to try new approaches, to step outside the box, in order to build these relationships.

It would be extremely helpful if philanthropic organisations could do away with paper-based application processes and complex auditing requirements. Obviously we need acquittal procedures – Indigenous organisations must be accountable – but there are other creative ways to determine whether money has been used to good effect. I'd love to see philanthropic organisations actually go to Indigenous communities to talk face-to-face. I was on a Community Benefit Scheme panel where we distributed revenue from gaming in Queensland, and we travelled around to meet Indigenous communities all around the State and consult with them, which worked really well. Philanthropic organisations can be as guilty as government of being faceless. I know resourcing such a strategy may be difficult, but we know this approach is very successful.

The breaking down of barriers has a lot to do with being prepared to learn about Indigenous Australians, being prepared to re-educate ourselves rather than swallowing the stereotypes that we've become accustomed to.

How can those of us who may not know any Indigenous people, go about forming relationships? Those funders that choose not to call for applications may not know which communities or individuals to approach to get started.

Sadly it's very high proportion of non-Indigenous Australians who've never met an Indigenous person. There's a range of resources, everyday media such ABC or SBS radio or television, plus Indigenous media, which we can all access. Many people have seen an article I've written and rung me saying they want do that some work in this area. There are also courses, books, and films, and there are always Aboriginal medical or legal services in cities and towns that would welcome expressions of interest.

It's a matter of not being intimidated, of taking a step and making contact with Indigenous groups to start the learning process. And from there it's about networking.

How can philanthropy be a force for change in a way that doesn't perpetuate the power imbalance?

The advantage that philanthropy has is that you're not tied up in knots, like governments or corporates, by electoral cycles or responsibilities to shareholders. Although the Telstra Foundation is of course beholden to its shareholders, my experience gives me the sense that philanthropic organisations have this fluidity that you're able to creatively play with, enabling longer term commitments and the opportunity to determine the length and the cost of a project.

Philanthropic organisations are therefore able to fund more complex projects that other funders might shy away from, for example social change or community education around racism. In other words you have the capacity to undertake more visionary projects.

What kind of training or education is required, both of Indigenous people within communities looking for support, and of foundation staff and trustees, to improve communication and understanding?

There's a lot of scope for two-way learning in the philanthropy sector. There's a need for capacity building on both sides, and excellent opportunities exist for a mentoring process. I see this happening in a few organisations I've worked with: in Reconciliation Australia's governance work analysing and promoting high achieving Indigenous organisations, for example. Reconciliation Australia is developing e-learning material for anyone wishing to learn more about Indigenous Australians. This material isn't intended as intensive cultural competency training, but is a great tool to introduce people, especially in a professional setting, to Indigenous cultures and practices, to demystify our people and break down those barriers we spoke of before.

What lessons can we learn from past experience of funding Indigenous projects?

Feedback from Indigenous communities all over Australia has overwhelmingly indicated that projects can't operate without sufficient core funding. I now believe that we need to aim for a bigger bang for the bucks. What I mean is that it's more efficient to fund a few projects really thoroughly, to support them properly, than have a more equitable spread. There's a need for longer term partnerships, based on personal relationships, to get the full benefit from funding.

> "The breaking down of barriers has a lot to do with being prepared to learn about Indigenous Australians, being prepared to re-educate ourselves rather than swallowing the stereotypes that we've become accustomed to."

If you could dispel three common myths or misconceptions about Indigenous people, what would they be?

1. Imposing your own values on us won't work!
2. It's not all gloom and doom out there – there are glimmering hopes, visions of opportunity. Success needs to be our guiding light, if it is to be replicated. There are plenty of examples of success, – for a start have a look at the Indigenous Governance Awards.
3. Urban Indigenous people are equally in need of support, but are often viewed as not being the 'real' Aboriginal people – harking back to the stereotypes. The problems that exist in rural and regional communities exist in an urban context too.

Who are your role models?

People who inspire me, who are positive about life, who've come from very disadvantaged circumstances but go on to do something very positive for their communities are my role models. To name a few: Evelyn Scott, the former-chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation; a younger woman called Kerrie Tim, who runs the leadership programs within the Federal Government is inspirational; my greatest role model in my life was my dear departed mother, and of course my family.

Are there any particularly successful Indigenous projects which you would like to see replicated?

The recent funding of the Indigenous Educational Leadership program by Telstra Foundation (http://www.strongersmarter.eq.edu.au/). We tracked this program for a few years to watch it's success. Dr Chris Sarra has been an amazing agent of social change, and we felt at Telstra that we wanted to give him the greatest opportunity for success in reducing absenteeism, improving Aboriginal literacy and numeracy, and instilling a sense of cultural pride. We want to see this replicated across the country. Chris' work can actually do this.

Is there a role for philanthropic organisations in the reconciliation process? Can funding really be divorced from reconciliation or are the two inextricably linked?

We've been working with the Harvard project on American Indian Economic Development (http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/hpaied/) over a five year period now, and this has inspired Reconciliation Australia's governance development work. The Harvard project has had 20 years experience around what works and what doesn't in overcoming disadvantage. When you hear stories about communities that are free of violence, that have every viable member of the community in employment, where health indicators have risen – that's the kind of world we want to live in as well. We've been very supportive in working with this overseas model to bring together a better governance environment in Australia.

If you were to ask me what are the three main priorities for our people: the first thing is leadership; good governance is the second, and third is healing, which brings in all the other reconciliation aspects as well.

So to answer your question, the two are absolutely linked. Reconciliation is about building respectful relationships to ensure that we all have an equal chance in life. The focus on reducing disadvantage and closing the life expectancy gap is really what reconciliation is all about.

Seeds of change: new pathways for Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley

By Ralph Addis, Chief Executive Officer, Wunan Foundation

Life can be pretty tough if you're an Aboriginal kid in the East Kimberley. But the future doesn't lie in despair. It can only lie in looking forward with a focus on what people can achieve in their lives with the right opportunities, encouragement, and a real sense that they can take control of their own futures.

In the East Kimberly, one of Australia's richest landscapes in physical and cultural terms, the seeds of positive change have been well and truly sown.

Landmark native title agreements, such as Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond Mine Participation Agreement and the Miriuwung and Gajerrong people's settlement with the WA government around Kununurra, have given Aboriginal people both recognition of enduring relationships with 'Country' and also some real resources and influence to take control and greater responsibility for their own future.

Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people are trying to break free of 'sit down' money by making the move with real skills into real jobs. People are awakening from the haze of several generations of learned dependence, starting to think and talk about the need for change and looking to the future.

One organisation in the East Kimberley that has had its shoulder to the wheel of change is the Wunan Foundation. Established in the late 1990s, Wunan has a long term vision to improve life opportunities for Aboriginal people in the region. Mr Ian Trust, a Kija man and the founding Chairman, says that the Board created a phased strategy in order to build a strong organisation with an independent capital base. In Phase One there was only a modest focus on contributing to immediate social change.

"That's made it tough, because people have an expectation of short term results, and we often don't think deeply enough about the need to build real capacity as the key to long term change", he said.

Phase Two, which commenced in mid-2005, focussed on three key areas:

- education, real skills and real jobs (the Job Pathways initiative);
- better housing as a key 'stepping stone' for individuals and families (Wunan Construction & Maintenance); and
- helping other Aboriginal organisations to build effectiveness through strategic, governance and management support (Wunan Business Services).

Kalumburu Community Store – in 2005, Wunan Business Services joined forces with the community, Westpac Bank and Indigenous Business Australia to re-establish the essential community store after nine months without fresh fruit foods being available in the community. Pictured are Clarrie Djanghara (Deputy Chair, Kalumburu), Peter Grundy (Store Management) and the Hon. Carol Martin MP.

Since 1999, over three hundred Aboriginal people have participated in mainstream traineeships and apprenticeships through an association with Kimberley Group Training. In nine months, the new Job Pathways initiative has placed over 40 unemployed young people into unsubsidised mainstream jobs.

Wunan's hostel provides supportive accommodation for on average 10 young Aboriginal people who are starting the 'real job' journey, and the Construction & Maintenance team are completing their second project, a three unit development that will provide further 'stepping stone' accommodation for young people and their families trying to establish a working life.

Much of the progress in Phase Two has been made possible through Wunan's strategy to engage with the many philanthropic organisations that are seeking ways to contribute effectively in Indigenous communities. Ian Trust explains, "We had the sense that there was great interest amongst philanthropists, but that it can sometimes be too hard to find an effective local partner that could be trusted to deliver on the ground."

So Wunan enlisted the expertise of Dr Daniel McDiarmid of Global Philanthropic, to help build relationships with a focus on bringing new philanthropic partners and resources into the East Kimberley. With seed funding from LotteryWest and the WA Department of Indigenous Affairs, the Wunan Board invested significant resources to make the strategy a success. With contributions from people including Danks Trust, Telstra Foundation, Westpac Foundation, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and Macquarie Bank Foundation, Wunan has been able add a more innovative and entrepreneurial approach to its social change agenda.

By building and extending from traditional government program resources, Wunan has been able to push into new areas. Encouragingly, State and Commonwealth governments have responded with proactive support where effective new models have been demonstrated.

As Ian Trust says, "For us philanthropy is all about getting real results, so whether we're working with our own resources, or those from government or philanthropy, we're very focussed on getting a real social return for our people here."

The Poola Foundation

By Amanda Martin, Executive Director

The Poola Foundation is funded from the ethical investments of both Eve Kantor and the late Tom Kantor, one of Eve's brothers. Tom Kantor lived and worked in the remote Indigenous community of Yuendumu in Central Australia and Eve and her husband, Mark Wootton, decided to honour Tom's passion and respect for Indigenous Australia, by granting around issues of Indigenous disadvantage. This will be through the Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund), of which I am Executive Director.

The Poola Foundation's approach to grantmaking is to understand the root causes of an issue and then consider the catalysing solutions. In 2005 we began to explore possibilities for funding in the area of Indigenous disadvantage. We consulted many people, some who have spent their lives devoted to working on Indigenous issues. We spoke with a range of organisations who have expertise in different sectors of Indigenous rights and disadvantage. We also used several pivotal reports such as the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and their Families* and the Council of Reconciliation's *Roadmap to Reconciliation* to help guide our analysis and learning.

We were particularly keen to avoid duplicating work, rather, looking for gaps where strategic funding could leverage wide and lasting change. Our basic analysis showed that while there was some excellent work undertaken by some foundations, especially in building innovative showcase programs, very little philanthropic funding was going into this sector, and any that was appeared to be small amounts spread across a range of largely service delivery programs.

Eventually, we decided that the areas where the Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund) could best contribute were:

- Advocacy – Promoting Indigenous Rights and Solutions and Informing Broader Australia: Any social justice movement requires strong, independent voices that can speak out fearlessly, backed up by good research and policy, powerful outreach tools, wise leadership, grounded in community reality and with a clear mandate. Yet, Australia has very few Indigenous institutions that can play this role.
- Economic Independence – Access to Livelihoods: Healthy communities and self determination require sustainable livelihoods. Barriers to the employment of Indigenous people must also be broken down. Given that economic opportunities and the aspirations of Indigenous communities differ across Australia, different models for economic independence must be available for different parts of the country.
- Leading the Way – Supporting Local, Regional and National Leaders: Indigenous leaders face considerable pressures and require exceptional skills and personal qualities, and good support systems. Programs that further develop Indigenous leaders and encourage intergenerational leadership transfer are essential.
- Maintaining Connection with Communities and Regions: Keeping in touch with local issues is essential to informing a national approach and often local approaches act as incubators for national solutions. Working at a local level informs good policy development and good grantmaking.

Lessons learnt

The Poola Foundation's work has only just begun and we are yet to make final decisions on our Indigenous funding. However, from our work so far, some basic ideas for trusts and foundations that are considering funding in this area include:

- building respectful relationships with Indigenous organisations and individuals is crucial to successful Indigenous funding;
- do cross cultural training with your staff and board members to build understanding and skills;
- consider collaborative funding as a good way to pool philanthropic skills, expertise and financial resources to tackle major issues; and
- adopt processes which involve Indigenous peoples directly in informing decision making on grant processes.

Australian Environment Grantmakers Network Update (AEGN)

In July 2006, a group of 12 people attended the AEGN's first field trip to Cape York, as reported in the previous issue of *Australian Philanthropy* (issue 63 Summer 2006, page 17). The trip aimed to highlight environmental issues in Cape York, the pivotal role Indigenous people play in managing the environment, and philanthropically funded projects that work on these issues.

Recently, the group has agreed to collaborate on a project that will help an Indigenous community who have recently had their land handed back, to write a management plan that describes how they will protect their land and sea in the future. Without this opportunity to visit Cape York and its people, none of these funders would have had opportunity to fund such an exciting project.

Australian Conservation Foundation's Northern Australia Program

The Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund) has funded the ACF's Northern Australia Program since 2004. The goals of this program are:

- the protection of natural and cultural heritage values;
- greater recognition of Indigenous traditional knowledge in environmental management; and
- environmentally, socially and culturally appropriate economic development for the region.

So far, the program has been highly successful because it has taken a respectful approach to working with Indigenous people, used the strengths of ACF to further Indigenous people's aspirations, and brought a new understanding of Indigenous Australia in the north to people outside of this region.

For further information:
Contact: Amanda Martin
Email: amanda@poolafoundation.org.au
Phone: (03) 9348-2122

Making a difference: Australian Government 'Blueprint for Action' in Indigenous affairs

By the Hon Mal Brough, MP – Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Australia must have the same standards, same opportunities and same expectations for all its citizens. We can achieve this through the social coalition of government, business, charitable and welfare organisations, and the community – with each partner contributing their own particular expertise and resources, in order to tackle more effectively the social problems that directly or indirectly affect all members of our society in one way or another.

Blueprint for Action in Indigenous affairs

The Australian Government is setting in place reforms, which represent a bold vision for the future. There are four key principles framing the Australian Government's reform agenda in Indigenous Affairs, of which partnerships form an important part.

1. Respecting culture

Culture is not something that governments can mandate, it is a matter for Indigenous people themselves. Indigenous culture is unique, rich, diverse, and has helped shape this nation.

The vibrancy and innovation of Indigenous culture is at odds with the disadvantage and despair, which characterises life for some Indigenous people. Culture should never be seen as an explanation or excuse for these things.

2. Standards and expectations

In the past, governments have been complicit in accepting lower standards for Indigenous Australians across a range of areas. Governments must have high expectations for and of Indigenous people.

For example, only around 20 per cent of Indigenous children in remote areas achieve years three and five reading benchmarks as compared to around 90 per cent for non-Indigenous students overall.[1]

Similarly, law and order has come to mean different things in some Indigenous communities than it means in the rest of Australia. Following from the Intergovernmental Summit on Violence and Child Abuse in Indigenous Communities, the Australian Government committed $40 million over four years to increase the police presence in remote Australia. Although policing is a State and Territory responsibility the Australian Government's leadership is to demonstrate that the same standards of safety and access to justice must apply for all Australians. For example, the 2,200 strong community of Galiwinku has no permanent police presence.

Housing is yet another area with a history of different standards and expectations for Indigenous people. In 2001, 31 per cent of dwellings in discrete Indigenous communities were in need of major repairs or replacement.[2], A quarter of all faults were due to poor construction. Clearly, the same construction and quality assurance standards have not applied.[3]

The Australian Government is investing in improved housing infrastructure and allowing Indigenous people the same opportunities as other Australians. For instance, five new display houses have been designed and constructed in partnership with Indigenous people from Wadeye in the Northern Territory. The ultimate aim is that tenants will have the opportunity to purchase the houses when individual ownership of assets located on inalienable Aboriginal land is possible. It is intended that families will rent for a period and those with a good record of rent payment will be offered the opportunity to purchase.

3. Needs-based access to services and opportunities

The needs of all Indigenous communities are not the same. It is indisputable that access and opportunities are greater in urban areas than in remote areas. However, service delivery for Indigenous Australians in urban areas still needs to improve.

Thirty per cent of Indigenous Australians live in cities, where good services, education and employment are available.[4] Too often, Indigenous Australians do not access these services and feel unable to take advantage of employment and other opportunities. The reforms to CDEP are a tangible example of the Government's commitment to ensuring that Indigenous Australians have real jobs.

Governments have historically supported parallel services in these places, often with lower standards and expectations. This has not produced the desired results. Indeed, sometimes these parallel services have alienated people from the broader Australian community and associated opportunities.

Now the approach will be to facilitate access to all services, rather than establish alternatives. Mainstream providers will be required to meet their responsibilities to Indigenous Australians in the same way that they have for other Australians.

In Alice Springs, there are 19 town camps with between 906 and 1,341 residents.[5] Previously, they sat physically and conceptually outside urban services. The Australian Government, in conjunction with the Northern Territory

Mal Brough talking with local residents in Alice Springs in 2006. Photograph: courtesy the Office of Mal Brough MP.

and local governments, is bringing these town camps up to normal suburban standards and is providing purpose built accommodation for visitors to town. This approach recognises the need for a certain degree of targeted Australian Government investment and normalisation of services offered by territory and local governments to people living in these camps.

However, in remote Australia the situation is quite different. In these places, where many basic services do not exist at all and there is not a real mainstream economy, long term effort is required from all governments. State and local governments should be providing services in remote areas in the same way they do in other places. However, the sheer level of need in some remote communities demands an entirely different kind of Australian Government investment, and therefore the focus is on these places.

The Australian Government is working through Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) to develop and provide customised responses to local needs, and continuing to identify 'priority communities' for coordinated intensive intervention strategies with state and territory governments.

4. Partnership

Separateness and isolation have not served Indigenous Australians well. The term 'partnership' signals the beginning of a redefinition of relationships. A top-down approach will not work. Indigenous people need to be more than just passive and silent recipients. They need to be empowered to take control of their lives. The Australian Government's shared responsibility approach based on mutual obligation is the beginning of a new relationship at all levels of government, especially the local level. As an example, the Australian Government is working with the Cape York Institute and the Queensland Government to jointly facilitate a $3 million Welfare Reform Project to build incentives to participate in the economy and reduce passivity.

There are many excellent examples of partnerships operating between business, government, and the community, and the Family Income Management (FIM) system is just one of them. FIM is a money management system specially designed to meet the particular needs of Indigenous families seeking to manage their incomes to achieve their goals, and is a partnership between the Cape York Institute, The Federal Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Westpac Banking Corporation.

Operating in Aurukun, Coen, Mossman Gorge, Hopevale, Cooktown and Weipa, a key feature of FIM is the development of household budgets leading to the commencement of direct deductions for household bills, food buying accounts and, personal and group savings accounts.

In the last 12 months, the community of Aurukun celebrated its first wedding in 10 years using funds saved by the family thanks to the FIM program. A FIM senior consultant, Roberta Henning, has also led by example by learning how to manage her money she has bought a brand new four bedroom house in Mossman Gorge.

Other participants have saved and bought scores of beds, mattresses, fridges, freezers and washing machines. Other successes of the FIM system include the establishment of nutrition and pharmacy accounts (including negotiating cashless payment systems with local retailers and pharmacist) which are contributing to better physical health.

For the first time this year, the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships will recognise on the national stage successful groups working together through the *Special Award – Contribution to Indigenous Communities*. More details are available at www.partnerships.gov.au

Conclusion

The Blueprint is about building an economically sustainable future for Indigenous Australians. It is based on principles that acknowledge cultural difference, focus on maximising access to existing services and aim to ensure high standards for all Australians. It is also based on partnership with other governments, local Indigenous people, the private sector and others.

Indigenous communities have benefited greatly to date from the great Australian spirit of philanthropy and partnership. Ian Thorpe's *Fountain for Youth*, the Indigenous Community Volunteers, and the National Seniors Association volunteering program in Indigenous communities are just some examples of how Australians are taking on the challenge of true reconciliation.

The objective must be independent and successful lives for Indigenous Australians. Second rate standards and second rate services can no longer be accepted for our first Australians.

1. Storry, K. 2006. '*Tackling literacy in remote Aboriginal communities*'. Issue Analysis, 73, 31 August 2006: 3.
2. ABS 2002. *Housing and Infrastructure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Australia* 2001. ABS Cat No 4710.0. Canberra: ABS. p45; ATSIC 1992. 1992 *National Housing and Community Infrastructure Needs Survey*. Final Report Stage 1. Australian Construction Services.
3. Pholeros, P. 2002 '*Fixing houses for better health*', Architecture Australia, July/August 2003.
4. ABS, 2001, *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, 30/10/2003 catalogue No. 4713.0.
5. Foster, D, Mitchell, J, Ulrik, J, and R Williams. 2005. *Population and Mobility in the Town Camps of Alice Springs*: A report prepared by Tangentyere Council Research Unit, Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs: page 14 and page 20.

Ninti – understanding leads to success, with opal fuel

By Blair McFarland, CAYLUS, Tangentyere Council, Alice Springs

Data from QUT's Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies suggests that "business and private philanthropists… do not venture into this funding (of Indigenous issues) because they believe they lack the expertise and knowledge to grant well to this complex sector and some labour under misconceptions about working with Indigenous causes." (Wendy Scaife 2006 *Challenges in Indigenous philanthropy: reporting Australian grantmakers' perspectives*).

I work for CAYLUS, the Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service, which is part of the Tangentyere Council, an Indigenous NGO in the Northern Territory. From my perspective, I can understand the reserve that philanthropists feel when approaching this complex sector. The history of intervention into the Aboriginal domain has been fraught with well-intentioned projects that have devastating effects, such as the large-scale removal of Indigenous children from their families.

There is a word in the Pinutbi/Luritja language, which is a sister language to Pitjatjantjara, that offers a potential solution to this problem. The word is *ninti* and it is translated as 'understanding; knowledge; experience'. To see, hear or have heard knowledge about an event is insufficient to be described as *ninti*. (Pintubi/Luritja dictionary, KC and LE Hansen, 1974, Institute for Aboriginal Development Press).

Many solutions for Indigenous issues are devised by well-meaning people who have no actual hands-on experience in dealing in the Indigenous domain. Although they may have read widely and spoken to many people about the situations unfolding in the Indigenous domain, they are not *ninti*, and as such, their solutions may be fatally flawed.

CAYLUS is a living example of operating in a *ninti* way. It was established in late 2002 to prevent petrol sniffing in the Northern Territory part of Central Australia. At that stage, the problem seemed entrenched, with a history 30 years of inhalant abuse in some communities and an annual incremental spread of the practice across the Centre. A cost/benefit analysis of the cost to the taxpayer of petrol sniffing found an annual cost of $79 million, made up of vandalism, court time, prison costs, health costs, care for people who had disabled themselves through prolonged petrol abuse and other costs borne by the state. (Access Economics 2006, *Opal Cost Benefit Analysis*, available on their website www.accesseconomics.com.au).

"CAYLUS is a living example of operating in a *ninti* way. It was established... prevent petrol sniffing in... Central Australia."

A combination of supply reduction strategies, such as un-sniffable Opal fuel, new Northern Territory legislation, and demand reduction strategies such as youth programs and rehabilitation outstations have seem the problem of petrol-sniffing vastly reduce. Current estimates are that sniffing has been reduced by 95 per cent, with a saving to the taxpayer of $35 million annually, even after deducting the Opal subsidy and funding for improved youth services. This is arguably the most dramatic success in the improvement of Indigenous health in Central Australia. The war is not fully won yet, with an ongoing need to provide alternative activities for the young people in remote communities to replace petrol sniffing. However this success provides clear case for asking why it worked, and to see if it can be replicated in other areas.

The Access Economics report mentioned above was one of the key tactics in this program. It was commissioned by the Opal Alliance, a partnership between two Indigenous NGOs (CAYLUS and the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation – known as NPY Women's Council) and property investor, The GPT Group (GPT), who own Ayers Rock Resort as well as major real estate in Australia and internationally. GPT funded the report as well as taking a major role arranging national media coverage and advocacy in Canberra with the relevant public servants and politicians.

The Opal Alliance made a major contribution to saving a generation of Indigenous kids in Central Australia. This dramatic success was possible because of a partnership between the corporate sector who had resources and good will, and local agencies who were *ninti* about the history of the region, previous strategies and the realities of the situation on the ground.

So how can we open up the lines of communication between Indigenous community agencies and philanthropic funders to replicate the success of the Opal Alliance? Look for the *ninti* organisations. For example, in Central Australia, CAYLUS and NPY Women's Council are well placed to connect potential philanthropists with projects that will make a difference, and can refer enquiries to other *ninti* organisations that may be more appropriate. We know of communities that only need funding for a part-time art development worker to start generating income from their art. We know of recreation programs that could provide a better service to the youth of remote communities if they had specific resources: some need a vehicle to take kids swimming and on excursions with elders for the transmission of cultural knowledge; some need computers to assist young people developing the potential to engage with the education system; some need support to host volunteers who can help in the schools, clinics and youth programs. Philanthropic funders have the capacity to make a huge difference to Indigenous communities, and in working in partnership with *ninti* organisations is a key to success.

Blair McFarland can be contacted on (08) 89514236, or email caylus@tangentyere.org.au www.tangentyere.org.au follow the links to CAYLUS.

Changing from the inside out

By Trish Burrows, Chief Executive Officer, The Foundation for Young Australians

Tolstoy once wrote "everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself". I wonder how many of us in the philanthropic sector have learnt this the hard way?

Over the last five years, The Foundation for Young Australians in its philanthropic work with Indigenous young people and communities, has made some key changes in order to improve its work.

Some of the changes have been consciously undertaken and others have evolved to become part of standard operating procedure. The organisation has borrowed from others, and been led by a board prepared to take well-informed risks to seek out improved ways to work.

One of the fundamental changes involved 'representation'. At the entry to the 21st century, the Foundation, while committed to distributing grant funds with Indigenous young people, had only one Indigenous person involved in its governance. We changed this via a process of consultation with an Indigenous Strategy Committee, which led to the devolution of decision making about how the Foundation might undertake granting programs with Indigenous young people.

In that same year, the Foundation conducted its second Indigenous Leadership Forum, followed by an Indigenous Leadership Intensive in 2003. Perhaps it is the development of these forums that illustrate the genesis of 'representation' change within the Foundation. The organising Committee for the 2002 Forum consisted of 14 members of whom seven are Indigenous; for the 2003 Intensive the Committee was four people, three of whom are Indigenous.

In 2003, the Foundation established its first on-going Grant Selection Committee solely consisting of Indigenous people. This Committee was charged with selecting major grant partners and benefited greatly by a joint funding relationship with BHP Billiton who provided an Indigenous employee (who still remains a member of the committee) as well as input and advice. This Committee is now in its fourth year and has been replenished by a public call in 2006.

The Foundation now has two on-going grantmaking committees comprising solely of Indigenous people. Across The Foundation's Volunteer Network 20 Indigenous people are involved in the work of The Foundation. This includes The Foundation's 13-member Board which currently has two Indigenous people as Directors.

In order to affect this representation change there were three key parts:

- deciding to do it and prioritising the implementation;
- pro-actively 'marketing' the role of volunteering at the Foundation to Indigenous young people using internal and external networks; and
- succession planning.

Implementing change in the governance of the organisation is crucially important; equally so is creating a voice from within by actively recruiting Indigenous staff. When the Foundation's Board decided to recruit one Indigenous staff member, I received the following sage advice from the then sole Indigenous Board member: "This will mean the organisation needs to change; don't isolate the Indigenous programme work into this person's portfolio; and ensure that the role has a whole of organisation responsibility."

The Foundation's first 'toe in the water' in the area of recruitment was to ensure that the interview panels included an Indigenous person for roles that were going to work with Indigenous programs.

The Foundation for Young Australians' Indigenous Small Grants Committee, July 2006.

The Foundation has been extremely fortunate to currently have three staff members who are Indigenous, but this number needs to grow. In order to do this and ensure sustainability, the organisation must develop and implement both a succession and growth plan for employees who are Indigenous. The Indigenous staff members are extremely important to the work and the dynamic of the organisation. They provide for a previously unavailable collaborative approach, and have a unique set of skills.

The Foundation is becoming a 'learning organisation'; a place for its people (staff and volunteers) to learn (by doing, by debate, by research, by informed trial), share knowledge and thereby grow the overall capacity and flexibility of the organisation. This approach is crucial in the organisation's work with Indigenous young people and communities. It says "let's acknowledge that we don't 'know' how best to do this work" as well as "we have strengths and knowledge upon which to develop and improve".

You may be surprised that I have talked very little about the projects which the Foundation funds, projects that aim to change the world… remember, this article is about changing yourself first.

The Christensen Fund's 'bottom-up' approach to grantmaking in northern Australia

By Henrietta Marrie, Program Officer for North Australia and Melanesia. Henrietta is a member of the Gimuy Walubara clan of the Yidindji people of the tropical rainforests of northeast Queensland.

The Christensen Fund (TCF) is a California-based foundation with a long history in Australia, mainly supporting the visual arts from the 1960s to 1990s. We began grantmaking again in Northern Australia and Melanesia in late 2003 after my appointment as Program Officer for the region. Since 2003, The Christensen Fund has provided about US$4 million in grants in Australia and a further US$1 million in grants to Melanesia. TCF works in four regions of the world particularly noted for their cultural and biological diversity: northern Australia and Melanesia; Turkey and Central Asia; the Rift Valley in the southern Ethiopian highlands and northern Kenya; and Southwest United States and North Western Mexico.

The strategy for grantmaking is based on an Indigenous community-generated, owned and managed process – a 'bottom-up' approach. Our aim is to build on the foundations of community knowledge through community-anchored partnerships with mainstream institutions. Embedded in this approach is the need to:

- provide support for efforts of Indigenous people to re-locate onto and care for their country;
- build local leadership capacity with an emphasis on youth;
- encourage a more pro-active outlook for the future which promotes pride in traditional knowledge and its application and which sees Indigenous communities controlling their own country;
- break the debilitating and morale-sapping cycle of welfare dependency and encourage community and personal self-reliance;
- transform Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations by changing the attitudes and policies of the key mainstream institutions, and the people and governments that drive them, to attitudes based on respect, support and co-operation; and
- change the current culture of philanthropy in Australia to make it more open, sympathetic and generous to the needs and aspirations of Indigenous Australians.

TCF's strategy is based on three themes: Caring for Country; Cultural Expression and Land; and Leadership, Education and Networking.

The Caring for Country theme embodies a balanced focus on the biological and cultural diversity of Indigenous homelands, whereby traditional ecological knowledge is once again called on to manage the extensive tracts of the Indigenous estate across Northern Australia and the Torres Strait. The focus of TCF grantmaking is on initiatives launched by Traditional Owners which frequently bring them into new alliances with mainstream ecologists, conservation groups, government and the private sector.

The Cultural Expressions and Land program supports initiatives that maintain and strengthen Indigenous cultural connections to land. This means supporting the Indigenous arts and culture movement in which artistic expression, typically focused on relationships to country, supports both a new sense of local vitality, and pride of place in Australia and the world, and underwrites a new economy that enables people to live in their communities on their land.

One exciting flagship project, under our Leadership, Education and Networking program, takes an international approach to valuing and supporting the local. This is our plan to establish an institute for Traditional Knowledge in Australia, in partnership with the United Nations University. The project aims to see the UNU International Institute for Traditional Knowledge established under a dual campus arrangement with Charles Darwin and James Cook universities as hosts, by the end of 2007. An interim office for the Institute has already been established in Melbourne, and projects that link the experiences and adaptive approaches of Indigenous concerning climate change, water management and local community empowerment and capacity building will begin in March.

TCF has also assisted a wide range of projects including: The Dreaming festival at Woodford, the Garma Festival in northeast Arnhem Land, and the Queensland Music Festival's Cooktown Corroboree. TCF support has also been extended to language maintenance and accreditation programs, drama and theatre productions, and Indigenous art exhibitions, and support for Indigenous performers. While support is provided across all areas of cultural expression, particular attention is given to the neglected arena of performing arts, particularly forms that creatively combine 'traditional' and 'contemporary' elements and themes.

In many cases, an initial commitment by TCF has enabled grantees to attract significant funds from other sources. This has been a particularly empowering experience for Indigenous communities and organisations.

In summary, TCF's strategy has been based very much on an on-the-ground approach with an active involvement of both the Executive Director and the Board. We seek to ensure that local Indigenous groups initiate and control their projects and that other parties (e.g. academic and research institutions, NGOs, Indigenous land councils, government agencies) understand and respect this approach. With the demise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and the mainstreaming of its program responsibilities to other federal government departments and agencies, TCF feels that a 'bottom-up' approach to Indigenous philanthropy is needed now more than ever.

Indigenous philanthropy and community partnership – a work in progress

By Carole Fabian

Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Affinity Group is meeting with a group of Victorian Indigenous community representatives to explore practical ways of working together.

The 'Indigenous philanthropy and community partnership' is a project that has grown out of a capacity building program put together in 2005 by the Reichstein Foundation and RMIT, with input from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, The RE Ross Trust, the Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation, and Arnold Bloch Leibler law firm.

A group of Indigenous people from various communities and organisations around Victoria came together during that program to learn and share information about how to access philanthropic and pro bono support, how to network, write submissions, and maximise resources. (See report on the Indigenous Capacity Building program in Edition 63 of *Australian Philanthropy*.)

At one session of the program, participants met in Melbourne with members of the Indigenous Affinity Group – a number of Philanthropy Australia members with an interest in funding and working with Indigenous communities. The session was an open discussion, with Indigenous activists presenting ideas about how trusts and foundations could best assist them and their communities. The foundations offered advice about how to pitch a submission, what information was important, and what wasn't.

"It was a good discussion, because it was on our terms. It gave some people more confidence to speak to people in philanthropy. Meeting face to face made us all realise that we can talk to each other as equals," one participant said at the evaluation session.

"We felt really listened to. We were advised that we could talk through our submissions, if we had trouble getting our ideas down on paper. It was reassuring to know that some foundations were prepared to offer help and encouragement in the process of applying for funds," another participant said.

The graduates of the Indigenous Capacity Building course put together a proposal for a joint project with the Indigenous Affinity Group, which could see the establishment of an ongoing capacity building program in Victoria.

They found the training and networking experiences they had gained from the course so valuable, that they wanted to see them available to a wider range of Indigenous groups on a longer term basis.

Some of the suggested components of the proposed three year project include:

- develop and deliver training packages, short, one-day and accredited;
- establish a project development resource clinic, to help people with project development and submission writing;
- a website listing philanthropic foundations which prioritise funding of Indigenous projects, including 'chat room' facility;
- register of Capacity Building Program graduates, to provide advice and mentoring to others;
- Indigenous 'Good Practice' guide to showcase funded projects; and
- annual get together between program participants and Indigenous Affinity Group members, to aid relationship building and useful feedback.

Towards the end of 2006, a Working Group was set up to turn the idea into a specific proposal.

The Indigenous members of the Working Group are Aunty Frances Bond, Vicki Walker, Aunty Glenys Merry, Doseena Fergie, Denice Kickett, and Anne Jenkins. The Indigenous Affinity Group nominees are Christa Momot from the Reichstein Foundation, Amanda Martin from the Poola Foundation, and Liz Gillies from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

"The process of us working together as equals makes the future of the project a more positive one," said Aunty Glenys Merry.

The Koorie Heritage Trust has been nominated by various Indigenous community groups as the preferred host for the project. The Trust, based in central Melbourne, already has a strong working relationship with a range of philanthropic trusts and foundations, and is governed by a majority Indigenous Board.

The combined working group for the Partnership Project held its inaugural meeting at the end of March at the Koorie Heritage Trust (as this article was going to press). Stay tuned for further updates!

An invitation will be forthcoming to a presentation on the project in May 2007 – keep an eye on Philanthropy Review and the Philanthropy Australia website for details.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the proposal, please contact Christa Momot at the Reichstein Foundation on cmomot@reichstein.org.au

Innovations in Indigenous education

By Carole Fabian

"Before going to Joey's I had never read a book and I couldn't write. I had no idea of the rewards that come from learning – wisdom, knowledge and an opportunity to serve my people… In the future I'd like to work in Aboriginal education. My personal experience taught me that education is the best way to help my people."

This is an extract from a speech by Craig Ashby, 2005 HSC Graduate of St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, and second year student at Sydney University. An abridged version of the speech follows this article and the full version can be found at www.philanthropy.org.au\services\journal.htm

Education is widely regarded as the key to breaking the cycle of poverty, disadvantage and marginalisation. Give kids a chance to learn to read and write, believe in themselves, and gain meaningful employment, and you give them a lifeline for the future. Give a significant number of kids the resources and encouragement to become leaders and role models, and you can make a difference to entire communities.

A number of innovative programs have been developed as partnerships between communities, schools, philanthropic supporters and sometimes governments, to help more young Indigenous people develop their full potential through education. Here, very briefly, are some of them.

St Joseph's graduation.

The Clontarf Academy

Many boys love footy, but school – they can take it or leave it. The Clontarf Academy, based in Western Australia, uses Australian football as a motivational tool to keep Indigenous boys at school. Set up just over six years ago by inaugural Fremantle AFL coach Gerard Neesham, the Academy has links with schools in Perth, and regional areas through Western Australia, including Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Albany and Broome. This year, the program is expanding to take in Kununurra and Alice Springs.

Clontarf has already produced footy greats such as Hawthorn star Mark Williams, Richmond's Andrew Krakouer, and former Docker Dion Woods from an initial intake of 20 in 2000. More importantly, it has helped a number of Indigenous boys stay at school and improve their future life prospects.

Any boy who is enrolled at one of the eight associated high schools can apply to be part of the program. Selection is based on attendance and attitude. To maintain their position in the Football Academy, participants need to show commitment towards training and the education program. Participants receive specialist coaching and mentoring from AFL and WAFL experienced coaches and players.

"The most at-risk individual group in Australia by a mile are Aboriginal men. Their life expectancy when they grow up is seriously less than a non-Indigenous bloke", said Gerard Neesham.

"If we can use football to get them to finish school, their life changes increase in a positive manner.

The Western Australian Government has committed $4.7 million over the next four years to help the Clontarf Academy expand.

The Goldman Sachs JBWere Foundation is also a strong supporter, having committed to three-year funding. According to Executive Officer, Barb Hurley, the Clontarf Foundation fit well within the foundation's focus on disadvantaged youth.

"Our knowledge of Clontarf's work and the people that drive it, makes us feel very comfortable to introduce Clontarf to other potential funders," Ms Hurley said.

A number of senior staff have visited Clontarf academies in regional Western Australia and Perth. In July 2006 a group of boys from Broome visited Melbourne

which included lunch with staff and a tour of the Goldman Sachs JBWere Foundation office. Staff can also donate directly to Clontarf through the Workplace Giving program.

Gerard Neesham is proud of Clontarf boys who've been selected for AFL teams, but no more so than of any other graduates who have found employment. "That's what we're all about," he said.

www.clontarffootball.com
http://www.gsjbw.com/?p=GSJBW Foundation

Worawa College and The Towards a Just Society Fund

The Towards a Just Society Fund (TJSF) is a sub-fund of the Melbourne Community Foundation, which distributes around $200,000 annually. Approximately 85 per cent of disbursements are directed towards Indigenous education.

The Chairman of the Fund is Sid Spindler, a former Australian Democrats Senator who was involved in negotiating the Native Title legislation with the Keating Labor Government, co-founder of 'Defenders of Native Title' (now ANTaR) and the Victorian Watch Committee on Deaths in Custody.

Sid, his wife Julia, and other members of and contributors to the TJSF saw access to mainstream education as vital, however they were also concerned about young Indigenous Australians being separated from their traditional culture.

Advice provided by community elders Joy Wandin Murphy and Marjorie Thorpe led the TJSF to Worawa Aboriginal College, an Independent Aboriginal community-controlled school, located on part of the former Coranderrk Aboriginal Station near Healesville, north-east of Melbourne. Worawa became the fund's first major project.

Worawa was founded in 1983 by Aboriginal visionary, Hyllus Maris. It is a residential co-educational college catering for more than 50 secondary students from across Australia in years 7 to 12. Its aim is to provide a 'total education' for Aboriginal students – excellence in mainstream education as well as an awareness of Aboriginal culture, leading to a sense of identity, confidence and self esteem.

Most of Worawa's students have experienced difficulties in mainstream schools and many may be classified as 'at risk'. All students are from families with sufficiently low incomes to qualify for Abstudy, and do not pay fees. Despite this, Worawa has been classified by governments as an independent school, and receives limited funding.

TJSF grants to Worawa have helped cover the costs of residential 'cottage parents', student counselling, heating, and sporting equipment. While the needs were great, the grants were relatively small. TJSF was able to leverage its funding, through matching grants from The Myer Foundation, and other foundations.

After consultation with the Worawa Committee of Management, members of TJSF established 'Friends of Worawa' to tackle urgent repairs, and to raise additional funds. With 80 people now on the contact list, 'Friends' has been successful in raising several hundred thousand dollars in donations and in facilitating grants from other foundations including the Telstra and The Ian Potter Foundations. 'Friends of Worawa' have also helped to obtain government grants for some larger projects.

"TJSF and Friends have taken care to respect self management principles," Mr Spindler explained. "Action has only been undertaken as requested by the Aboriginal leadership of the school. Over time this has led to a positive, collaborative and productive relationship based on mutual trust and respect."

TJSF also provide bursaries at tertiary level and welcomes partnerships with corporate or individual donors.

For further information see www.mcf.org.au

To contact Towards a Just Society Fund, spindler@hotkey.net.au

www.worawacollege.com.au

St Joseph's College Indigenous Fund

The Indigenous Education Program at St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, Sydney, is now in its 10th year. This year there are 41 indigenous boys boarding at St Joseph's College from more than 25 communities.

St Joseph's students swimming.

St Joseph's College is one of Australia's most prestigious high performing schools and has been operating for more than 125 years. Indigenous students make up about 5 per cent of its boarding population.

Indigenous students at St Joseph's are selected on the basis of leadership potential and financial need. The program targets Indigenous students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a school like St Joseph's due to economic circumstances. As a non-selective school, there are no entrance exams, but history of school attendance and application is looked at closely.

St Joseph's employs full time Indigenous staff to provide culturally appropriate pastoral care for the Indigenous students and liaison with the families and communities of the Indigenous students.

The school has 20 Indigenous students that have been awarded Commonwealth Government scholarships under the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme.

In the last four years, 10 Indigenous students have completed their Higher School Certificate at St Joseph's College. This year, there are seven Indigenous students in year 12 who will be sitting their HSC and in year 11 there are 12 Indigenous students who will be following them next year.

Many of the Indigenous students have excelled in the classrooms, the artrooms, the music and drama theatres, and the sports fields. In fact, they have excelled in every aspect of a competitive boarding school life.

The St Joseph's College Indigenous Fund was established in 2005 as a charitable foundation. It has been endorsed as a DGR and TCC by the ATO and is run by a Board and a group of Ambassadors, the vast majority of whom have no connection with St Joseph's College of any kind. The fund has been run for the last three years by its Chairman, Andrew Penfold on a full-time pro bono basis, with the support of a volunteer Executive Committee. The Fund has no administrative, overhead or salary expenses of any kind, meaning that 100 cents in the dollar goes directly towards the educational costs of the Indigenous student beneficiaries.

"If a school has put its own resources into starting up an Indigenous program, employed Indigenous staff and built up a critical mass of Indigenous students over many years, there is a high probability that the Indigenous students will achieve successful outcomes, because they are at a school that specifically caters for them in an inclusive environment where they belong," Mr Penfold said.

"If you contribute to the success of this lighthouse program, schools all around Australia will see this as a template and be willing to try the same thing."

For further information, call Andrew Penfold on 0412 667 793 or email apenfold@joeys.org

Opening the Doors Foundation

Victoria's Opening the Doors Foundation was launched on National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day in 2001.

The Foundation arose from within the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry for Victoria, to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who chose to send their children to Catholic schools, but required financial assistance to do so.

There are two funding rounds per year, the first targeted at providing assistance for buying uniforms and books prior to the start of the school year. Round two generally provides help with camp levies, excursion fees, or the cost of extra curricula activities such as music and sport.

St Joseph's bike riding group.

Applications are considered on a needs basis. In 2006, 308 students throughout Victoria were assisted with educational grants, with over $137,000 distributed. Development Officer, Kathy Johnston, said that research showed that a major impediment to achievement for Aboriginal students is low self esteem. "Many parents comment on the importance of the Foundation in providing access to correct uniform requirements and subject aids, in maths and science in particular," she said.

"We also support the pursuit of musical, artistic or other creative forms of expression knowing they can be life altering options for some students. Without the help of the Foundation, many families have stated that they simply couldn't afford them," said Ms Johnston.

The Foundation has also provided support to talented Aboriginal students to attend international conferences and leadership events.

As well as receiving support, students contribute together with their school communities by fundraising for the foundation. Last year, Avila College, Mt Waverly, developed a Statement of Commitment towards Reconciliation and support for the Foundation, Sacred Heart College in Geelong made and sold 'Opening the Door' wristbands and donated the proceeds, while students at Padua College in Mornington wore Aboriginal colours for the day during Reconciliation Week and collected gold coin donations for the Foundation.

Opening the Doors Foundation relies on the support of donors, partners and grants from other trusts and foundations. Some of its partner and donor organisations include the St Vincent de Paul Society, Portland House Foundation, the Catholic Bishops of Victoria, Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund, Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund, and the Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund.

The latter funded 'Connections' a pilot mentoring program for rural Indigenous students in secondary school, which has been extended into 2007.

Nancy Bono, who sadly passed away in 2006, was Koorie Educator in Echuca. She acknowledged the difference Foundation support had made to students in her region.

"Three students completed their year 12, which without the support from Opening the Doors Foundation families would have found it difficult to manage and they may have left.

"Two students completed their VCE exams and both applied to do nursing at University.

"Since Opening the Doors Foundation has been operating, retention rates of students in years 10 and 11 have improved dramatically, and if students have left during the school year, every one of them has gone on to alternate education – TAFE or adult education or traineeships".

Due to the wonderful work of people such as Nancy and other Koorie Educators working in schools, and the support available from the Foundation, increasing numbers of Koorie students are attempting and succeeding at higher levels of education. There will be 23 students undertaking VCE in 2007 at the college where Nancy worked, a fitting tribute to an outstanding educator.

Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible, and critical to its work. For further information, go to www.openingthedorrs.org.au, email openingthedoors@optusnet.com.au or call (03) 9443 9070.

There are other such educational programs helping to make a real difference. The results will hopefully be felt through the joy of individual achievement, as well as in the success of the next generation of Indigenous leaders as they make their marks in a wide range of professions and walks of life.

From illiteracy to university in four years

By Craig Ashby

This is an abridged version of a speech given at to the Lane Cove Residents for Reconciliation, March 2007. The full version of this speech is available at www.philanthropy.org.au\services\journal.htm

Craig Ashby enjoying a conversation with Sir William Deane.

I was born out of the black dust of Walgett Country which is in far-north-western New South Wales. I am part of the Walgett Dreaming: the Kamilaroi Nation, a part of the Gamilaroi People.

At the age of two my mum passed away. My dad was off shearing and my nan took care of me and my brother and sister. She was paid $70 a fortnight to look after us.

As kids we were very happy and lived with many members of the extended family, I followed nan everywhere. It was with the old people that I heard the stories of my land, country and nation.

I started school about the age of six. I began at the local Catholic school. I found school to be a fun and social place. I was a smart little kid. Then in year 3, I moved to the government primary school because nan had a falling out with some of the teachers at the Catholic school. The move was really rough on me. I was moved away from all the kids I had grown up with and the Government school seemed to have nothing compared with the Catholic school.

At primary school I didn't just try to learn, but to survive to the next day. Fighting the white kids was a way of life at primary school; it was a rite of passage. Each day at lunchtime a crowd of black kids and white kids would gather and proceed to belt the hell out of one another. But we weren't bad kids, all that fighting was just the way we entertained ourselves in those days.

I did years 7 and 8 at the local high school. This was a combined class which was split into the 'top class' and the 'bottom class'. I ended up in the top smart class, even though I couldn't read or write, I think because I was a town kid and didn't get into too much trouble.

The usual day at high school involved my cousins and I taking some golf clubs to school and hiding them in the bushes early in the morning. We would then go and sign the attendance book in the office and disappear to the golf course for the day. At about three o'clock, we would go back to school and sign-out the attendance book. There wasn't much learning going on.

During these years nan was worried that I was starting to hang around with the wrong crowd. She thought sending me to a stricter school in Dubbo would be the solution. When I was in year 9 I went to live in an Aboriginal hostel in Dubbo.

I lived with about 20-30 Aboriginal kids with supervision from two 'house parents'. They couldn't really keep us under control. It was like living in a gang. I learnt a lot that year in Dubbo. I learnt to drink and I learnt the correct way to smoke pot.

At school they were trying to teach us but it didn't really work. When I was in class, because I didn't know anything I would just sit up the back and listen to music or sleep or something.

Through a cousin I learned about St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill. With the help of my Parish Priest in Walgett, I was enrolled there and sponsored. Some might think that after a few years in high school being able to do whatever you like whenever you like, that it would suddenly be like being in gaol at Joey's. But I wanted to be there and I loved it.

From the moment I woke to the time I returned to bed, I was kept busy. There is a daily routine with study periods, and every night I would go into a private study room with a tutor who would teach me to read and write and help me do my homework.

I made a huge improvement after the Headmaster told me to go and get my eyes checked. The eye doctor told me that not everyone saw the world blurry and contorted with watery eyes, which was news to me!

With my private tutoring, I could see change almost immediately and it was a real buzz. My literacy skills improved rapidly and by the end of year 9 at Joey's I could read and write.

In 2005 I graduated from St Joseph's with my Higher School Certificate and in 2006 I enrolled at Sydney University, studying to become a school teacher. In the future I'd like to work in Aboriginal education. My personal experience taught me that this is the best way to help my people.

We should all be outraged that any child should grow up in this country without being able to read and write. It isn't acceptable to allow children to continue to grow up in the cycle of poverty and unemployment. Something in the cycle needs to beak. Education is the circuit breaker.

The Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation

By Jacqui Katona, Chief Executive Officer

The Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation is Australia's first Indigenous controlled national philanthropic foundation. The Foundation is pioneering an innovative model of community development to create sustainable positive change in Indigenous Australia.

One demand that characterises debate in Australia about Indigenous issues is that of leadership. In some cases, leadership is only evident in public. Yet I have met many Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, who have demonstrated leadership values outside the spotlight of public debate. These people have taken a risk to attempt to collaborate outside their comfort zone. They help one another, listen, understand and act. They are committed to philanthropy in the truest sense.

What motivates them to take up strategies of support for Indigenous peoples? Many realise that their leadership; the investment of their skills, their time and their money contributes to the whole of Australian society, not just to an isolated segment. The appeal from of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has been stated clearly:

"If you have come to help me, then you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine – then let us work together."

Lilla Watson, Queensland

There is no doubt that philanthropic funding has the potential for flexibility in creating and testing ideas. Philanthropic funding has also, in the past, supported phenomenal social change because it has been dedicated to amplify marginalised voices, such as those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. The campaign of the Mirrar to protect their land at Jabiluka is one example; the establishment of Worowa College and Koori Kollij in Victoria; and Tranby Aboriginal College in New South Wales. They are all examples of Indigenous-led institutions established with the assistance of donations to bring about intergenerational change in the Indigenous communities of Australia.

These projects have offered Indigenous peoples an alternative to the imposed solutions of public policy. Indigenous-led projects can provide for the accommodation of an Indigenous knowledge-base. The validation of Indigenous knowledge is a pathway to sustainable positive change.

There is no question that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities remain marginalised in many aspects. There is no question of a need for support of programs devised by Indigenous peoples to create sustainable solutions. There should also be no question of the reliability of Indigenous-led projects.

Unfortunately there is a growing trend of providing funding for discrete projects only, and an expectation that organisational support will be available elsewhere. In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities organisational infrastructure is limited and undertaking coordination of projects without adequate operational funding can distort project outcomes. These are factors which influence the perceived success of Indigenous-led projects.

The interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will continue to shape, and even determine, the future of certain sectors and individual enterprises. Indigenous people are important contributors to local and regional economies even in impoverished and under-serviced circumstances. Indigenous communities are looking beyond government for our continuing economic development.

If we all wait for someone else to show leadership in collaboration between grantmakers and Indigenous grantseekers critical opportunities may be lost.

It's not easy to point to one answer which will open a path for communication. In fact, it may be, that inspiration can only come after the challenge of successful grantmaking rather than being the first step to leadership in philanthropy.

Jacqui Katona with Ken Wilson from the Christensen Fund.

Lumbu has long been interested in assisting grantmaking organisations to consider frameworks for better granting to Indigenous projects. These frameworks are specifically collaborative and require relationship building between potential grantmakers and grantees. Internal Lumbu research in 2002 (National Indigenous Philanthropic Initiative) highlighted similar concerns of grantmakers to the recent QUT findings (see Wendy Scaife's article on page 6).

A strategic collaborative approach between Indigenous organisations and philanthropic organisations is required, and Lumbu is currently seeking resources to develop our existing informal frameworks, which guide Lumbu staff in liaison with philanthropic organisations, into a template which can then be replicated.

At a time when Australia is experiencing unprecedented wealth, and many beneficiaries of that wealth are exploring philanthropy, it would be shameful if we fail to make available resources to Indigenous-led projects to ensure that we achieve the greatest positive impact in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

I would like to invite grantmakers in all categories to contact Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation to indicate their interest in attending an Indigenous philanthropy roundtable to begin to discuss issues which can address misconceptions about funding Indigenous projects.

Email: jkatona@lumbu.org
Phone: (07) 3844 9995

Reducing Indigenous disadvantage: understanding the role for philanthropy

By Prof. Larissa Behrendt and Adjunct Prof. Geoff Scott

We often hear Australia referred to as 'the lucky country' but Indigenous people do not share in this bounty, history and fact give testament to the lack of opportunity afforded to the many 'other' Australians. Pictures of poverty in Aboriginal communities are often in the media but the images more often highlighting social dysfunction or anti-social behaviour rather than on the positive steps taken in many parts of Australia to work on the underlying causes of disadvantage in Aboriginal communities.

While it is well documented that in some parts of Australia Aboriginal people live in third world conditions, concern is often expressed that it is harder to get Australians interested in donating to improve the conditions of Aboriginal people than it is to get them to donate to people in the third world. There are a few explanations as to why this is so:

- There is a disproportionate fixation with problems in the remote and northern parts of Australia, perhaps because of the common perception that this is where the 'real' Aborigines live. The largest Aboriginal population lives in Mt Druitt in the outer-west of Sydney. Aboriginal people there face the same socio-economic barriers as Aboriginal people in other parts of the country but these days, with so much of the federal dollar being shifted from urban to remote areas, they have fewer programs to deal with those issues. There is much work that can be done in a community like Mt Druitt, and it is easier to find solutions to these problems in urban areas than always trying to solve the hardest problems first.
- Many philanthropic or non-government bodies often express concern that, although they would like to do something, they are not quite sure what that might be. They have no mechanism by which to consult with Aboriginal people and no network to build a relationship with Aboriginal communities. It is often a good idea to partner with an Aboriginal organisation or use an Indigenous consultant with a good reputation who can give this advice, this support, this expertise and an entrée into the Indigenous community – and give a heads up on what the community politics are.

"There is a disproportionate fixation with problems in the remote and northern parts of Australia, perhaps because of the common perception that this is where the 'real' Aborigines live. The largest Aboriginal population lives in Mt Druitt in the outer-west of Sydney."

- There is too little evaluation of what works and what doesn't in relation to effective Aboriginal programs and policies so it is important to have a process to facilitate a research-based approach to an issue. Having said that, we have learnt as much from our failures as we have from our successes.

The problems facing Indigenous communities are so vast and complicated that there is certainly room for a strong and varied presence from the philanthropic sector. Sustained support from philanthropic or corporate sectors can avoid the problem of policy and program changes with every change of government. That is, a sustained commitment for the long term to ensure the fostering and success of community projects is easier to achieve from non-government funding. Philanthropy is in the unique position of being able to respond to the initiative of others because it is not burdened with the expectations and responsibilities that governments are, so does not need to respond to, and be governed by, public opinion polls.

Philanthropic and corporate organisations can foster success in reducing disadvantage, but the relationship between the donors and the beneficiaries has to be one where those seeking to put money into the community have trust that Indigenous people can decide the priorities and solutions. To avoid benevolent paternalism, it is important that a relationship be developed either with Indigenous communities and leaders and/or Indigenous philanthropic organisations. These relationships need to be guided by Indigenous aspirations, with the essential oil being trust.

It is also a relationship that needs to be realistic, understanding that because many of these initiatives will be new and innovative, there may be failures. And as disappointing as that may be for those who have invested time and money, this has to be acknowledged as a natural part of finding the best and most workable solutions to issues where government policy has failed.

In light of this, it becomes all the more important to keep pushing the successes and applying the same principles that guide commercial decisions. It means not expecting rewards for short term investments and understanding that to achieve results there needs to be a continual and trusting and committed relationship that understands that listening, flexibility and innovation as a basis for programs and support will only bring solutions in the long term.

Larissa Behrendt is Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Geoff Scott is CEO of New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and an Adjunct Professor of Public Policy at UTS.

Partnership for better health – more than just a vision

By Brian Doolan, CEO, The Fred Hollows Foundation

I caught up recently with Irene Fisher, the CEO of Sunrise Aboriginal Health Service. Located in Katherine, Sunrise covers a huge stretch of The Northern Territory east of that famous Australian town.

Irene, like many Indigenous leaders, is a passionate advocate of the need for partnerships between Indigenous organisations such as Sunrise and non-Indigenous Australians committed to improving the health of her people.

But she also knows that sometimes the strategies and ideas developed by philanthropic organisations are unlikely to work because they don't sufficiently take into account the views and experience of Indigenous people.

Established in 1999 Sunrise is a primary health care service which assists both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the Jawoyn and Roper River regions of the Northern Territory. It has grown to employ more than 100 staff – of whom 40 per cent are Indigenous.

The challenges Irene and Sunrise face are enormous. By any standards there is a crisis in Australian Indigenous health: median life expectancy is 26 years less than for non–Indigenous people; infant mortality is three times as high; ear infections in some remote communities range from 8 per cent to over 80 per cent.

In 2001 The Fred Hollows Foundation established a partnership with Sunrise aimed at working together to help improve the health of Indigenous people living in these communities. Established in 1993 The Foundation carries on the work of our founder, the late Professor Fred Hollows. Fred made his name as a much loved champion for improved eye health care for disadvantaged people – both Indigenous Australians and those living in the developing world. Our primary focus was then, and remains now, the eradication of avoidable blindness. We train eye doctors and nurses, subsidize cataract surgery, provide equipment and help build local health systems. Since we were established The Foundation has been responsible

CEO of Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation, Irene Fisher and Sue Evans preparing meals at Barunga Women's Resource Centre, east of Katherine in the Northern Territory. Photo courtesy of Wayne Quilliam.

for restoring sight to over one million people in the developing world. But when it came to working with Sunrise, we needed to re think our priorities for that area because our key area of expertise, eye health, wasn't seen by Sunrise communities as their greatest need. Sure, there were eye health problems, but they were often related to wider health and social issues such as inadequate nutrition and neo-natal care.

Working with and through partner organisations is one of the all important aspects of the work of the Foundation. Indigenous community members regularly complain about being 'consulted out' by not for profit organisations delivering their own agenda. Irene says "We realised great potential for developing Sunrise and getting a holistic approach to health. We're not just looking at the immediate care of illness but the broader sustainable and preventative programs."

The Fred Hollows Foundation works with communities through the existing structures, both formal and informal, Western style and Indigenous style to ensure our work is targeted to community need and wishes. This style of collaboration is dependent on a long term, development focus – it takes communities and philanthropics a long time to build mutual trust.

The Foundation has been able to assist the Sunrise communities to expand programs they believe are important to improving the health of Indigenous people. Some examples include the development of an aural health screening program, a schools nutrition program and the management of community stores. None of them directly relating to eye health but all directly addressing the social determinants of health.

As part of this partnership The Fred Hollows Foundation has been able to bring Sunrise together with a number of philanthropic organisations, such as The Honda Foundation, the O'Neil Foundation, Govita and The Telstra Foundation to achieve results that meet the needs of all parties. And it's having results: the aural health program has been able to identify almost 100 children needing treatment for previously undiagnosed hearing problems, and we've been able to lift school attendance rates and the health of children, by working with Indigenous women in the town of Wugularr to assist in the provision of school breakfasts and lunches for at risk kids.

This is hard work. It takes time to talk to people, to develop trust and to put in place the infrastructure needed to make sure programs are sustainable. It means accepting that in a community where sometimes literacy rates are as low as seven percent and where leaders are dying early there will often be set backs, failures and unexpected delays.

"One of the main challenges for Sunrise is in raising awareness that Indigenous people can control their own health and that mainstream concepts of health need to encompass Indigenous concepts," says Irene. None of this means that The Foundation has ignored our focus on eye health – it still makes up the overwhelming bulk of our work in the developing world and we are soon to announce a major eye health initiative in Central Australia.

But by listening, talking and working in partnership with people like Irene Fisher we can together help build a better and sustainable future for Indigenous Australians.

To find out more about The Foundation's work go to www.hollows.org or telephone Brian on (02) 8741 1900.

Members of Philanthropy Australia

New Members

Philanthropy Australia would like to warmly welcome the following new members:

Full Members

A. & J. Small
SMILE Foundation

Associate Members

Caroline Chisholm Education Foundation
Jimmy Little Foundation
Greenstone Group

Philanthropy Australia would like to acknowledge the support of :

Freehills

Council Members

President

Mr Bruce Bonyhady (The William Buckland Foundation)

Vice President, Victoria

Ms Dur-e Dara OAM (Victorian Women's Trust)

Vice President, New South Wales

Ms Sam Meers (Nelson Meers Foundation)

Treasurer

Mr David Ward (ANZ Executors & Trustees)

Council Members

Mr Chris Arnold (Melbourne Community Foundation)

Ms Jan Cochrane-Harry (Margaret Lawrence Bequest)

Mr Terry Macdonald (Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund)

Dr Noel Purcell (Westpac Foundation)

Mr Christopher Thorn (Goldman Sachs JBWere Foundation)

CEO

Ms Gina Anderson

Leading Members

ANZ

Colonial Foundation Trust

Goldman Sachs JBWere

THE IAN POTTER FOUNDATION

THE MYER FOUNDATION

The WILLIAM BUCKLAND FOUNDATION WBF

Life Members

Ben Bodna AM
Patricia Feilman AM
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE
Jill Reichstein OAM
The Stegley Foundation
Meriel Wilmot

Patrons

Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE
Lady Southey AC

Full Members

ABD Foundation
The A. L. Lane Foundation
AMP Foundation
The Alfred Felton Bequest
Alfred Thomas Belford Charitable Trust
A. & S. Angelatos
The Andrews Foundation
Andyinc Foundation
Annamila Pty Ltd
ANZ Executors & Trustee Company
ANZ Staff Foundation
Australia Business Arts Foundation
Australia Council
Australia Post
The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Australian Stock Exchange
AXA Australia
BB Hutchings Bequest
BHP Billiton Community Trust
The Ballarat Foundation
D. & S. Bardas
Bass Coast Community Foundation
Bennelong Foundation
Besen Family Foundation
Bill & Jean Henson Trust
The Body Shop
Boeing Australia Holdings
Bokhara Foundation
Bruce & Joy Reid Foundation
Buderim Foundation
CAF Australia
The CASS Foundation
The Caledonia Foundation
Calvert-Jones Foundation
Capital Region Community Foundation
The Charles Bateman Charitable Trust
The Christensen Fund
Clayton Utz
Coles Myer Ltd
Collier Charitable Fund
Colonial Foundation Trust
Commonwealth Bank Foundation
Community Enterprise Foundation
Community Foundation for Albury Wodonga Region
Community Foundation for Bendigo & Central Victoria
Community Foundation for Tumut Region
Credit Union Australia
The Cubit Family Foundation
The Dafydd Lewis Trust
The Danks Trust
Davis Langdon
The Deloitte Foundation
Diana Elizabeth Browne Trust
DOXA Youth Foundation
Education Foundation
Equity Trustees
ERM Foundation Australia
The Ern Hartley Foundation
Ethel Herman Charitable Trust
The Feilman Foundation
The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
The Fogarty Foundation
Foster's Group

Foundation Boroondara
Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
The Foundation for Young Australians
M. & M. Freake
Freehills
The GM & EJ Jones Foundation
Gandel Charitable Trust
Geelong Community Foundation
Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation
George Alexander Foundation
Goldman Sachs JBWere Foundation
Gonski Foundation
GrainCorp Foundation
The Greatorex Foundation
The Grosvenor Settlement
The Gualtiero Vaccari Foundation
H V McKay Charitable Trust
G. Handbury
M. & C. Handbury
Harold Mitchell Foundation
HBOS Australia Foundation
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Hewlett Packard Australia
The Horizon Foundation
The Hugh Williamson Foundation
The Hunt Foundation
Hunter Hall International
The Ian Potter Foundation
Ilhan Food Allergy Foundation
The Invergowrie Foundation
IOOF Foundation
The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Jobs Australia Foundation
John T. Reid Charitable Trusts
John William Fleming Trust
KPMG
The Keir Foundation
Kingston Sedgefield (Australia) Charitable Trust
The Kirk Foundation
LEW Carty Charitable Fund
Law & Justice Foundation of NSW
Lawrence George & Jean Elsie Brown Charitable Trust Fund
Ledger Charitable Trust
Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund
Lotterywest
Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation
The Mackay Foundation
Macquarie Bank Foundation
Mallesons Stephen Jacques
Maple-Brown Family Charitable Trust
Margaret Augusta Farrell Trust
Margaret Lawrence Bequest
Mary MacKillop Foundation
The Mary Potter Trust Foundation
masoniCare
Matana Foundation for Young People
mecu
Melbourne Community Foundation
Melbourne Newsboys Club Foundation
Mercy Foundation
Michael Craft Memorial Fund
Microsoft Pty Ltd
The Miller Foundation
Minter Ellison Lawyers
The Moore Family Philanthropy Foundation
Morawetz Social Justice Fund
a sub fund of the Melbourne Community Foundation
The Mullum Trust
Mumbulla Foundation
The Myer Foundation
Myer Community Fund
National Australia Bank
National Foundation for Australian Women
Nelson Meers Foundation
Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation
The Norman Wettenhall Foundation
Northern Rivers Community Foundation
Paul Edward Dehnert Trust
The Percy Baxter Charitable Trust
Perpetual
The Perpetual Foundation
Pethard Tarax Charitable Trust
Petre Foundation
Pfizer Australia
Pierce Armstrong Foundation
Poola Foundation
Portland House Foundation
PricewaterhouseCoopers Foundation
Queensland Community Foundation
RACV Foundation
The R. E. Ross Trust
RMIT Foundation
Ray & Joyce Uebergang Foundation
R. Redpath
Reichstein Foundation
G. & G. Reid
Rio Tinto Aboriginal Foundation
Robert Christie Foundation
The Robert Salzer Foundation
Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Rothwell Wildlife Charitable Trust
Sabemo Trust
The Sarah & Baillieu Myer Family Foundation
Scanlon Foundation
The Shell Company of Australia
Sherman Foundation
Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation
Sisters of Charity Foundation
SoundHouse Music Alliance
Sparke Helmore Lawyers
F. Spitzer
The Stan Perron Charitable Trust
Stand Like Stone Foundation
State Trustees Australia Foundation
Sunshine Foundation
Sydney Community Foundation
The Tallis Foundation
Tasmanian Community Foundation
Tasmanian Community Fund
Tattersall's George Adams Foundation
Telematics Trust
Telstra Foundation
The Thomas Foundation
Tibetan & Hindu Dharma Trust
Tomorrow: Today Foundation
The Tony and Lisette Lewis Foundation
The Towards a Just Society Fund
a sub fund of the Melbourne Community Foundation
Toyota Australia
Trust for Nature Foundation
UBS Wealth Management
Victoria Law Foundation
Victorian Medical Benevolent Association
Victorian Women's Trust
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
The Vizard Foundation
Voiceless, The Fund For Animals
W & A Johnson Family Foundation
The Walter Mangold Trust Fund
Western Australian Community Foundation
Westpac Foundation
The William Buckland Foundation
Wingecarribee Community Foundation
The Wyatt Benevolent Institution
Wyndham Community Foundation

Associate Members

ACON
The Alfred Foundation
Austin Health
Australia ZooWildlife Warriors Worldwide Inc
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Rotary Health Research Fund
Australian Sports Foundation
Bell Shakespeare
The Benevolent Society
Berry Street Victoria
Bluearth Institute
The Brotherhood of St Laurence
Burnet Institute
The Cancer Council Victoria
Carnbrea & Co
Catherine Brown & Associates
Centennial Parklands Foundation
ChildFund Australia
Children's Cancer Institute Australia
City of Port Phillip
Clem Jones Group
Deakin University
Deutsche Bank Private Wealth Management
Dymocks Literacy Foundation
Earthwatch Institute
ExxonMobil
Fernwood Foundation
Foundation for Development Cooperation
The Fred Hollows Foundation
Freemasons Hospital
Greening Australia Vic
Grow Employment Council
The Hammond Care Group
Heart Research Centre
IDP Education Australia
Inspire Foundation
The Institute of Chartered Accountants
MDM Design Associates
Mission Australia
Monash Institute of Medical Research
Monash University
Murdoch University
National Aids Fundraising
National Heart Foundation of Australia
National Museum of Australia
New Philanthropy
NIDA
Northcott
Opening the Doors Foundation
Osteoporosis Australia
Parramatta City Council
Peninsula Health
Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation
Philanthropy Squared
Powerhouse Museum
Queensland Art Gallery Foundation
Queensland Library Foundation
Reconciliation Australia
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Rural Health Education Foundation
The S. R. Stoneman Foundation
Save the Children Australia
Scope (Vic)
The Smith Family
South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre
The Spastic Centre
St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital
St.George Foundation
St Vincent de Paul Society of Victoria
St Vincent's Hospital Foundation
The State Library of NSW
The State Library of Victoria Foundation
Surf Life Saving Foundation
Sydney Opera House
Tabcorp Holdings
Tamar Region Natural Resource Management Strategy Reference Group – Public Committee of Management
The Travellers Aid Society of Victoria
United Way Australia
The University of Melbourne – Alumni Office
University of New South Wales
University of South Australia Foundation
University of Tasmania Foundation
The University of Western Australia
VicHealth
Victoria University
Victorian College of the Arts
Vision Australia
Volunteering Australia
Wesley Mission, Sydney
Wise Community Investment
World Vision Australia
Zoological Parks Board of NSW

Affiliate Members

Asia-Pacific Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment
Australian Multicultural Foundation
Dusseldorp Skills Forum
Fantastic Furniture
Global Philanthropic
Investec Bank (Australia)
MCG Wealth Management
Merrill Lynch Private Wealth Services
Monash University Medical Foundation
Social Ventures Australia
Stewart Partners

Philanthropy Australia Inc

Assn. No. A0014980 T
ABN 79 578 875 531

Head Office

Level 10, 530 Collins St
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Australia

Tel (61 3) 9620 0200
Fax (61 3) 9620 0199

info@philanthropy.org.au
www.philanthropy.org.au

Sydney Office

Tel (61 2) 9981 5599