



PHILANTHROPY
Australia

Australian Philanthropy

Spring 2008, Issue 70

**Supporting Education:
the Vital Ingredient**



Supporting Education: the Vital Ingredient

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From the President

Bruce Bonyhady, President

In an increasingly secular Australian society, and as philanthropists seek more and more to tackle the causes rather than the symptoms of poverty, education has moved to the forefront of charitable purpose. It is synonymous with opportunity because, along with good health and freedom, it is one of the wellsprings from which people can direct their own lives and make informed choices.

Education leads both to the transfer of existing knowledge and to new horizons through research and the development of new understandings and technologies. It is at the centre of the knowledge economy and so is essential for both good economic and social outcomes. Education also includes moral training and so also plays a key role in the development of a civic society.

The contributors to this edition of *Australian Philanthropy* highlight the many ways in which the philanthropic sector is contributing to education across the Australian community, and in doing so a number of key themes emerge. First, the right to a good education is universal and so the education system must be sufficiently diverse and individually focused to allow all students to reach their potential. Second, while education is often seen as the key to breaking cycles of disadvantage and especially dysfunction, it needs to be imbedded in whole of family support, if indeed these cycles are to be broken. Third, education is life-long.

Neil and Audrey McLeod, the founders of The Spastic Centre of NSW, recognised that by offering the first specialist school for children with cerebral palsy in NSW "nothing is impossible". Their vision is a vision for all and philanthropy has a vital role to play in advancing education.

Lord Macnaghten essentially defined charitable purpose in 1891 when he set out what continues to be recognised throughout the English law based world as the 'heads' of charity:

"Charity in its legal sense comprises four principal divisions, trusts for the relief of poverty, trusts for the advancement of education, trusts for the advancement of religion, and trusts for other purposes beneficial to the community, not falling under any of the preceding heads."



From my Perspective

Gina Anderson, CEO

Education Outcomes for Indigenous Students provides insights into the role that can be played by the philanthropic sector to help improve the education outcomes of Indigenous young people in Australia. At a high level this report advises that philanthropic investment in education can sensibly be targeted in three main areas:

- services that build on or complement the core school and program funding provided by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments;
- services that help students and their families to access the education facilities and programs provided by public and independent schools and not-for-profit organisations that are already supported by government funding; and
- research, policy development and advocacy aimed at improving Indigenous schooling and learning support services.

Noel Pearson's Cape York Institute, Macquarie University and Boston Consulting Group are working on plans to introduce 'Teach for Australia' based on the US and UK programs. Their aim is to revive the idea of public service among young people by encouraging the brightest Australian graduates to spend two years teaching disadvantaged students in urban and remote areas.

The Victorian Government recently announced it will be asking major companies and philanthropists to play a greater role in public education, through financial assistance, student mentoring programs and donation of equipment. This is opening a new field for government, business and philanthropic partnering and collaboration to help schools in disadvantaged areas and districts with skills shortages.

The development of knowledge and skills through formal education, particularly the public education system, is the subject of this journal. To date there has been a restricted capacity for philanthropic involvement in the public school system, however a number of new initiatives are providing opportunities for greater involvement of philanthropy in public education.

A report published by the AMP Foundation, Effective Philanthropy and Social Ventures Australia entitled *Our Children Our Future – Achieving improved Primary and Secondary*

Classroom coalition: philanthropy and school education

By Rosalyn Black, Senior Research Manager with the Education Foundation. In her current role, she is responsible for the development of research projects that propose and drive new solutions for Australian school education. Her book, 'Beyond the Classroom: Building New School Networks' will be published by ACER Press and launched in November 2008



"It is clear that schools cannot do this work alone. It is also clear that without a shared responsibility and collective action, strategies to improve learning and life opportunities for children and young people will not succeed."

The equity challenge

The challenge to provide a quality school education for all young Australians is on the rise. In particular, research shows that young people who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and who live in specific geographic regions are missing out on educational opportunities. Ellen Kosland, founder of the Education Foundation, describes the situation in this way:

"Students come to school from backgrounds which impact dramatically on their motivation to learn and succeed at school. This can show itself in:

- **Identification with success.** Some students hear regularly about success, while others never think about it as a realistic option for themselves. They rarely see or talk to successful figures from their school or their families.
- **Exposure.** Some students rarely travel beyond five kilometres of their home or school. Consequently, they lack access to the range of stimulating environments, experiences and settings that can give young people confidence in exploring the unknown.
- **Educational capital.** Some students come from homes where there is little first hand evidence of the value of reading or education in general while other students experience reading as a regular activity from early on and are encouraged to learn at every point (in Black, 2008)."

Like other kinds of disadvantage, educational inequity has complex causes and effects that have proven intractable to responses from government alone. There is now a strong sense that the time has come to take up this challenge collectively.

It is clear that schools cannot do this work alone. It is also clear that without a shared responsibility and collective action, strategies to improve learning and life opportunities for children and young people will not succeed. As Ben Levin, a leading Canadian educationalist, has argued:

"If our goal is to reduce gaps in outcomes among students due to the accidents of their birth, we need a broader frame than one that starts and ends with the idea that schools are the key point of leverage" (2006).

Collaborative philanthropy

I recently conducted interviews with executives of leading Australian trusts and foundations who believe that when philanthropy works at its best it can identify the barriers to change, be a spearhead for innovation and provide a space in which creative alliances can form to generate new solutions. It can also address needs that government cannot, although government must be involved from the start.

Perhaps the greatest potential lies in trusts and foundations working with one another and with other sectors

towards large scale policy change for school education. A previous edition of *Australian Philanthropy* (Issue 63, Summer 2006) set out a vision for a collaborative philanthropy that builds capacity on the ground and generates creative solutions to entrenched social issues. To date, this approach has not been widely applied to school education in Australia, yet it may be the only strategy that can drive real change.

This kind of philanthropy is exemplified in the work of The R E Ross Trust, which is working in collaboration with the Education Foundation to demonstrate ways of creating more equitable access to educational opportunity for all young Australians.

The Equity and Quality in Public Education collaboration recognises that this goal will not be achieved without changes to the deep structures of Australian schooling, including the division of responsibility for schooling between State and Territory governments and the Commonwealth government and the separation of government and non-government schooling. The strategy includes a series of proposals and forums that will put forward fresh ideas about how Australia can reduce the number of young people who slip between the cracks of our schooling system each year.

The City Centre

It is also reflected in the extensive philanthropic support received by the Education Foundation's programs such as the City Centre. Created to address the problem of disengagement from school in the middle years, the City Centre brings over 4,000 Victorian students into the Melbourne Central Business District each year for

- principals need training in shared leadership and partnership building;
- teachers need professional learning about how to work cooperatively both within and between their schools; and
- school, early childhood and community sector staff need training in how to work together to meet the needs of children and young people.

as "disorderly and little studied" (Hess, 2005). If philanthropy is to improve outcomes for the neediest children and young people in particular, it must operate in a way that improves the knowledge and ability of their teachers and the capacity of their schools.

At time of writing, the Education Foundation has announced an

"There are too many organisations providing money for projects. This encourages many schools to adopt any number of short term programs just to get their hands on some money."

an inspiring week of research and independent learning. The program turns the city into a giant learning community by creating a network of philanthropic and other organisations to provide vibrant learning experiences for young people, some of who have never been to the city before.

The City Centre has its origins in research findings that show that real improvement in educational outcomes for disadvantaged students will not take place without excellent teaching practice at the school level. Even with the very best intentions, teachers often grapple to meet the needs of students in disadvantaged communities (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998).

Teachers in these schools can face greater challenges because of the lower capacity, preparedness and motivation of some of their students (Black, 2007). For this reason, a key aspect of the City Centre is in the development and delivery of professional learning for teachers. This includes professional development in engaging the community in young people's learning.

This is one of the most important competencies for schools: the ability to work together, with their local communities and with the other sectors and organisations that seek to support their work. For schools already under stress and drawing on already scarce resources, this capability will not be developed without fresh support, which philanthropy is ideally placed to provide:

Beyond the pilot

In another previous edition of *Australian Philanthropy* (Issue 67, Summer 2007), Michael Liffman noted philanthropy's continued preference for driving innovation and pump-priming through demonstration and pilot projects. The Foundation's research shows that schools trying to meet the needs of disadvantaged students do not always benefit from the pilot project model.

Schools operating in challenging circumstances tend to seize any new opportunity without the ability to integrate it into their existing commitments or to sustain it. This can have more negative than positive effects. It may also mean that the strategy being funded is not the one that will make the biggest or most lasting difference for the greatest number of children or young people. As one school principal has observed:

"There are too many organisations providing money for projects. This encourages many schools to adopt any number of short term programs just to get their hands on some money. Consolidation of funds into long term projects that support effective teacher

development through access to excellent pedagogy and mentoring would have more long term benefits for teachers and therefore for students" (Black, 2007).

More philanthropic funding for school education is not in itself a guaranteed solution: in 2002, private philanthropies in the United States gave up to US\$1.5 billion to school education, but this funding has been described

alliance with The Foundation for Young Australians, consolidating an impressive scope of expertise and knowledge of the youth and education sectors. The Education Foundation's proven track record in the development and delivery of education programs, community engagement and research has been brought together with the strengths of The Foundation for Young Australians in grantmaking, Indigenous programs, capacity building, scholarships and successful models of youth participation.

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Beyond the classroom

By Sandy Shaw, CEO, Newsboys Foundation

The Newsboys Foundation provides grants to community organisations working with young people and children in Victoria who have experienced some form of disadvantage such as financial, social, emotional, physical or intellectual.



The Newsboys Foundation has an interesting and impressive history – beginning life as a Melbourne-based club for the boys selling newspapers on street corners – from 1893 until 1973 when the Foundation was established.

Education is a key area of focus for the Newsboys Foundation. We take a broad view of education: education is not just the teaching of knowledge but the engagement of children and young people to become life long learners who have a hunger for knowledge, imagination and ideas. As such, we consider a range of positive experiences in which young people can engage in learning, and these often occur beyond the classroom.

Many young people we support have, for a myriad of reasons, stepped out of the formal education system and become disengaged with learning. Difficult life circumstances have resulted in many having a limited sense of connection – to themselves, their family, friends and community. As such, many have very little or no hope for the future. No wonder that, in this frame of mind, learning is very difficult!

The programs that we look to support build a sense of connection, belonging and hope for the future. Often the student groups are small, enabling close trusting relationships to be developed with students, teachers and facilitators. Only once this trust and rapport is established can the young people become engaged and it's wonderful to see their enthusiasm for learning being ignited again.

A great example of education funding by Newsboys Foundation was a grant of \$25,000 made to the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES), a community environment project set on four-hectares beside the Merri Creek in Brunswick East, Melbourne, to support the Organic Farm Training Program.



"Stoked! I wasn't expecting to go to camp with CERES. It feels like we are going out on a job and getting more hands-on experience."

This program involves students at risk and those with intellectual or physical disabilities, in all aspects of the CERES organic farm and market. Students work on projects such as landscaping, propagation, planting, harvesting and caring for animals, and are assessed in units from the Certificate II in Horticulture or Hospitality.

Students manage all aspects of projects, from planning to implementation. With the support and guidance of CERES trainers, they develop a stronger sense of self, improve their social and communication skills, develop project management and leadership skills, and learn to work effectively with other students, trainers and community members.

The 2007 Program culminated in a joint camp at Camp Bambara for students from Kensington Community High School and the Victorian College for the Deaf. The horticulture students attended to the maintenance needs of the camp, while the hospitality students catered for the entire camp, further consolidating their skills.

The camp was a great success! As one 16 year old participant put it: "Stoked! I wasn't expecting to go to camp with CERES. It feels like we are going out on a job and getting more hands-on experience."

Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company is another inspiring example. Over the past seven years the Company has worked intensively with marginalised young people in Wodonga, most of whom have histories of abuse and homelessness. This experience gave birth to the company's first official offspring, HighWater Theatre. The Newsboys Foundation helped HighWater Theatre to present their production of 'Catch a Star Falling', a play which weaves together the lives of young people in a theatre group with the lives of young people from rural areas who have been unable to take part in the formal school system. The production was seen by students, teachers and health workers from Balmoral, Casterton, Geelong, Hamilton, Lorne, Myrtleford, Portland, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga, and the response was very positive.

The process of creating and performing the work had an extremely constructive impact on the lives of the participants. The play spoke the language of young people and allowed participants to raise and address difficult issues surrounding drug use, abuse and homelessness. It also provided an opportunity for the audience of students, families, teachers and health workers to discuss such issues – truly a life long learning experience for all involved.

Education is an important foundation for all young people. By becoming life long learners, young people can continue to grow, develop and reach their full potential. This was the ethos of the Melbourne Newsboys Club 100 years ago and continues to be a primary focus of the Newsboys Foundation in 2008.

Feature interview: Ellen Koshland

Ellen Koshland is the Founder and President of the Education Foundation, which she started as a small non profit called Small Change in 1989 and grew into a thriving and dynamic organisation with 25 staff and a \$3 million turnover.* She spoke with Louise Arkles about her passion for public education.



Why did you establish the Education Foundation?

I felt, coming from the United States, that public education in Australia was under-valued and under-supported, and I knew there was huge potential for the community to play a bigger role.

The genesis of the Foundation was to provide a vehicle for support of public education in public schools. In America there are thousands of foundations dedicated to supporting public education since education is seen as the responsibility of the community.

In Australia there is a deep, society-wide assumption that government schools – or public schools as I prefer to call them – are the government's business alone. I think that's totally wrong.

What would a truly excellent public education system look like?

Quality education for all Australians; that is, regardless of a child's socioeconomic status or geographic location the education system provides him or her with a rigorous, engaging education that gives them power over their lives and confidence in their futures.

We're way off this, and we should be worried. Our levels of school completion

are low compared to other countries in the OECD. Comparatively Australia has a wide gap between high and low performing students. Our scores place us in the middle ranking of nations but are declining relatively.

What will it take for us to achieve quality education for all?

What we need is a major national mind-shift; a 'whole of community' commitment, where we care not just about our child but about all children.

First of all, we need to face the hidden realities. Education within Australia is a very fraught area, full of confused and unexpressed agendas, territorial battles, and a lack of understanding of alternate solutions. We are shackled by three different school sectors – public, catholic and independent – and this has resulted in ineffective use of resources and unequal input from stakeholders. We need to foster a strong common framework and an alliance between schools and sectors.

Secondly, we need a significant increase in resources. I think the Rudd government is engaged, but we need to increase education funding by 1 per cent of GDP. But more corporate investment and more investment from the community is required as well.

The lack of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status at public schools remains one of the most glaring needs. Religious schools have DGR but public schools can only give tax deductions for gifts to libraries and building funds – you can't fund programs or scholarships.

Finally, we need to create major new forms of support. Some excellent examples from overseas should be considered. In Finland, 35 per cent of students are tutored in primary school, with no stigma attached. They

know and accept that kids learn at different rates and have different learning styles, and the key thing is that no child is ever left behind. They have a tiny gap between schools' achievement. In Australia the difference is far more dramatic.

There are also excellent overseas examples of additional resources through public private partnerships. For example in Scotland where a corporation supported a massive infrastructure upgrade of public schools – buildings and IT systems – the outcome was a win-win situation: a superb renovated public education system, resulting from private investment in the physical structure, which allowed the government to spend more on programs.

What's stopping that happening here?

It has started to happen here. Governments have opened up in their awareness to partnering with business and the community sector. There is more general awareness that companies can make a great contribution to education without interfering in educational content and expertise of the school.

It takes putting the students ahead of 'arrangements' England made a great leap forward, by getting many more external people coming into the classroom, to achieve a more personalised learning. The unions were threatened at first because teachers, understandably, felt sceptical – was this going to be unpaid labour?

But they came to realize that additional help in the classroom was in the interests of the young people themselves. No one can be an expert on everything. It's a bonus to have others come in to do administrative work, or visitors come in to inspire the kids with their personal

“What we need is a major national mind-shift; a ‘whole of community’ commitment, where we care not just about our child but about all children... We need to foster a strong common framework and an alliance between schools and sectors.”

stories, or mentors work one-on-one with disadvantaged kids.

In Australia we have a certification culture, not a learning culture which we sorely need. Education is not just about the utilitarian side of getting a qualification and finding a job – it’s about the joy of learning and curiosity being valued.

How do we change this?

We need to have change at every level:

- at the individual level – personalising learning to advance every student;
- at the school level – ensuring each school is a site of wonderful opportunities, not just advantaged schools;
- at the level of a local area – we need diverse kinds of schools in each region: quality arts programs, schools offering much more freedom, academic schools, schools serving as community hubs; and
- at the big picture level – we need to have community excitement and determination to create a truly well educated Australia.

The Education Foundation’s dream is to have a major campaign around ‘what is success?’ employing various media – television, email alerts, mobile phones, etc. – to try to generate different attitudes to education. We need broader measures of success in schools, to recognize more than just a tertiary entry score. Academic skills are not the only skills people need to develop for a global world.

I believe in a carefully staged approach. First, research, then a trial, then a deeper look at the problems remaining and further work on those, and finally a scaling up for a sustainable solution.

How can philanthropy help?

While there is certainly a place for projects, it would be very valuable for foundations to also consider



also funding research. It is true that everybody wants to have independent research but nobody will pay for it.

What’s missing in Australia is longitudinal research. This was brought home by a famous case in America called Headstart, which aimed to prepare kids for school who came from homes with no ‘educational capital’, where they didn’t know how to use scissors or how to sit still. After a while, the program was dropped, but 10 years later statistics showed that the kids who’d been through Headstart were the ones going on to college, the ones keeping out of prison. Headstart was brought back in with federal funding, but this evidence took 10 years to emerge. Longitudinal research of this kind is what we need. The funding and dissemination of research is a great example of what philanthropy could do to work towards that bigger mindshift.

What has being active in philanthropy meant to you on a personal level?

A most extraordinary rewarding experience! I’ve learnt about democracy and what hinders it, about the forces that enable it to flourish, I’ve met the most amazing unsung heroes and seen the most profound difference made in people’s lives. It is a thrill every single time I see a kid ‘catch on’, take charge of their learning and their life.



What advice would you give aspiring philanthropists who want to work in education?

- Be very clear about the change you want to bring about.
- Consider the longer, bigger impact.
- Investigate the work others are doing and link to it.
- Do it! Work in education – nothing is more rewarding!

* Read more about the recent alliance between the Education Foundation and the Foundation for Young Australians on page 4.

Telstra Foundation: spotlight on cyber safety

By Georgia Symmons, National Manager, Telstra Foundation



Improving the lives of children and young people has always been the focus for the Telstra Foundation. We have also evolved to be more than just a grantmaking body. We utilise the expertise and talents of Telstra, and contribute to social change by involving ourselves in areas that we know something about – particularly information and communications technology.

We have also moved from funding hundreds of small projects across a broad range of issues through the Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund, to placing a spotlight on one specific issue – the prevention of child abuse and neglect. And as a philanthropic foundation of Australia's leading telecommunications company, it made sense that the Telstra Foundation focus its efforts on child wellbeing through cyber safety.

We knew that there were a number of good community initiatives across Australia that were addressing the issue of cyber safety, as well as other initiatives that deal with law enforcement, legislation, and internet safety software. But, in our minds, there wasn't enough.

Children and young people are using the internet, internet services, mobile phones, mobile multi-media, and computers more than ever before.

- 93 per cent of teenagers use the internet;
- 84 per cent use chat rooms daily;

- 59 per cent of children use a mobile phone; and
- 33 per cent of children aged eight or nine started to use the internet at the age of five or six.

Cyber technology is an integral part of children's every day life. But as more and more children use the internet and mobile phones at an increasingly young age, unfortunately some are becoming victims of bullying and harassment, and even crime.

We want to reverse this growing trend, and support programs and research that help keep kids safe while they make the most of the exciting opportunities the internet and mobile phones offer.

The Telstra Foundation has announced the support of six key projects, with more on the way, to the total value of \$3 million over three years. The first is SuperClubsPLUS Australia. This protected online learning community for six to 12 year olds is being rolled out in partnership with Intuitive Media and La Trobe University across Australia.

SuperClubsPLUS originated in the UK. It provides a fully protected and mediated community for primary school children to communicate and collaborate safely with other children that are part of the network. The community is 'live' from breakfast to bedtime during the week, and longer on weekends, and is mediated constantly by professionals, all carefully vetted and with educational backgrounds, who monitor activity on the site.

The awarding of five Telstra Foundation cyber safety grants is the second element of our program. The grant recipients were selected following a nationwide search of exciting and supportive community-based programs. They will arm young people with the skills to be 'cyber smart' and help educate parents, teachers and communities.

The five organisations and programs selected are:

- Centacare Sandhurst's Loddon Mallee Cyber Safety program to

engage young people, parents, employers, teachers, agency workers, police and local government leaders in cyber safety issues to generate solutions with a rural focus;

- Child Health Promotion Research Centre's Parent Education program from Western Australia will provide parents with much needed support and advice on how to deal with cyber safety;
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's (NAPCAN) Smart Online Safe Offline program will help teach children aged nine to 14 years about the dangers of giving out too much personal information when using online social networking websites and how to counteract online 'grooming';
- Student Youth Network Media's 'youth led public debate on cyber safety' program in Victoria will give young people a voice to drive public debate on cyber safety issues; and
- The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's CyberSmart campaign will create cultural change in cyber space and accredit primary and secondary schools in cyber safety.

All of these programs offer tangible solutions and opportunities for children, parents, schools and the community when dealing with cyber safety.

We have an opportunity to help enrich children's lives through their use of technology every day. But to do so, children, parents, schools and communities need to feel that they can use technology in a fun yet safe way.

In addition to the Telstra Foundation's spotlight on cyber safety, Telstra's commitment to cyber safety includes parent programs and tips to help parents encourage their children to be less vulnerable to cyber bullying, BigPond's ongoing commitment to provide internet security education and solutions for Australian families, and ongoing work with police authorities to eliminate anti-social behaviour.

More information can be found at www.telstrafoundation.com

Supporting education: the vital ingredient

By Wendy Mason, Program Manager, Commonwealth Bank Foundation

A long tradition sits behind the Commonwealth Bank Foundation – 96 years of commitment to supporting education in Australia. One of our oldest school initiatives, the Student Banking program, was introduced in 1931 to teach young people the basic skills of money management and to encourage them to save, and this program is still thriving today.

The Commonwealth Bank Foundation focuses on developing the financial literacy skills of young Australians, with its objectives to create awareness, skill and understanding of the benefits of a more financially literate community. Several sound principles underpin this focus:

- money management is an essential life skill;
- investment in education is vital to ensure a community that thrives;
- through investing in the education of our young people, building confidence and skills, we are also ensuring the sustainability of our own business. It makes good business commonsense; and
- the impact that financial literacy education can have on the individual and the economy is significant and substantial.

Research commissioned by the Commonwealth Bank Foundation in 2004¹, showed that if efforts are focused on improving the financial literacy of the 10 per cent of the population with the lowest understanding in this area, Australia's economy could be boosted by \$6 billion per year with the creation of 16,000 new jobs. In addition, of course, there would be significant benefits for these individuals. This research found that those with the least financial literacy were aged 16-20. It highlights the need to educate young people to build money management skills while they are still at school.

Programs

The Foundation offers a suite of programs. Our biggest commitment to financial literacy education is the direct-delivery StartSmart program. Over 75,000 students and their teachers have been involved in StartSmart since 2007, through forums, teacher development workshops and schools-based programs.

A second major focus is the development of teaching and learning resources, including:

- National Curriculum Resource – developed by a national steering committee of education representatives for Year 7-10 and mapped to the curriculum. Designed to be used by teachers in the classroom to assist them teach financial literacy;
- Australian Financial Literacy Assessment (AFLA) – designed to give Year 9 and 10 students and their teachers information about money management strengths and weaknesses. With over 50,000 students participating in 2006, AFLA has allowed the Commonwealth Bank Foundation to identify key issues for young people and to develop programs that build money management skills that address gaps;
- Financial Literacy Grants – 100 grants of \$3,500 each, awarded each year to secondary schools to create and implement a tailored financial literacy learning program; and
- Dollars and Sense website – teaching tool with online calculators, games and activities for secondary school students.

The professional development of teachers is another core strand of the Foundation's work, with the development of 'My Money Know How', an online tool designed to assist teachers to manage their personal finances. By increasing their confidence in managing their own finances, teachers will be better equipped to teach financial literacy to their students.

Lessons

A number of key lessons have emerged from our experience and analysis, that can translate across all aspects of philanthropic funding of education:

- Involving the education sector during the development and delivery of programs. Earning trust and credibility in the space while linking in with the already established curriculum has been key to ensuring program success (supporting Educators to do their job). The National Curriculum Resource was developed by a Steering Committee of Education representatives from across Australia. The Foundation



has also strongly advocated for the inclusion of financial literacy in the curriculum across Australia.

- Meaningful content – from the National Curriculum Resource we have further developed content that is meaningful for Year 9-11 students. The StartSmart Schools program includes SmartEarning, SmartSpending, SmartSaving and SmartInvesting modules. These modules include material about getting your first job, paying tax and applying for a TFN, budgeting tips, different saving accounts, setting goals, comparative shopping, consumer awareness tips and investment strategies.
- Method of delivery – the StartSmart programs are designed to be fun, interactive and engaging. A team of young, enthusiastic StartSmart facilitators were selected and trained to ensure that content is being delivered in a way that is relevant and interesting for secondary school students. Theatre, comedy and audience participation are all used to ensure that young people enjoy themselves while learning.

Working in partnership with the education sector has ensured that the Commonwealth Bank Foundation programs are linked to the curriculum across Australia. Building credibility with teachers, and establishing what the needs of our young people are through practice and research have been key to our programs' success.

1. Improving Financial Literacy in Australia: Benefits for the Individual and the Nation, Monash University and Eureka Strategic Research, 2004. The full report is available for download from our website: <http://www.commbank.com.au/foundation/>

Celebrating philanthropy's contribution to the education of children with disabilities

By Bruce Bonyhady, Chairman of Yooralla, President of Philanthropy Australia and Chairman of ANZ Trustees Limited

The role of philanthropy in furthering the education of people, and especially children, with disabilities in Australia is a rich story of our community creating opportunities and providing support for a group with special needs. These contributions should be celebrated, along with a recognition that some challenges remain.



People Helping People Achieve

The creation of new educational organisations for children with disabilities, the purchase of new special purpose school buildings and equipment, and the development and evaluation of new education programs, are intrinsically linked with the history of philanthropy in all its guises – tin rattling and fundraising, grants from trusts and foundations, in kind support and volunteering.

This is a pattern that has been repeated many times and in many places across Australia, but is told here through the history of Yooralla, which today in Victoria is the largest provider of disability services, touching the lives of about 30,000 Victorians each year and employing about 1,300 staff.

The child in a chicken coop

Yooralla was founded in 1917 as the Yooralla Free Kindergarten for Crippled Children, when a Methodist Mission Sister, Sister Faith, found a child who was partially paralysed in a chicken coop in Fitzroy (inner Melbourne) because her parents had no choice but to leave her there when they went to work. Sister Faith wondered how many other children were like that, and what could be done for them. She began to raise awareness and raise money, and thus started the process of providing those children with care, with therapy and with access to education.

Philanthropy played a huge part in the Yooralla story in those early years as it was an organisation built around

fundraising and volunteerism. In the 1920s Yooralla purchased two properties in Carlton, with the Felton Bequest contributing to the costs of these purchases. The number of children being educated increased and the name of the organisation was changed to the Yooralla Hospital School for Crippled Children.

In 1966 when Yooralla opened a new kindergarten in Blackburn, Sir Edgar and Lady Coles provided most of the funds. In the 1970s when Yooralla opened the Glenroy Training Centre and Special School, public fund raising again made an enormous contribution to both the building and equipment costs.

Indeed, a strong tradition of fund raising, especially women raising money for children with disabilities, lay at the heart of Yooralla until the 1970s. In 1972 the Board of Yooralla was comprised entirely of women, all of whom were directly involved in fundraising. In 1977, Yooralla had 23 women's auxiliaries located throughout Victoria.

Integrating therapy and education

In the 1980s a number of Australian families were taking their children with cerebral palsy to Budapest, Hungary, where a specialist program was offered which held great promise. The Peto Institute offered a live-in program using 'conductive education' which placed a heavy emphasis on physical development in order to maximize independence and participation in all aspects of daily life. In Hungary, at that time, physical



Sister Faith.

independence was essential because only children who could walk were permitted to attend school.

For the Australian families taking their children to Hungary for several months the direct and opportunity costs were enormous, as was the disruption to normal family life. As a result some families decided to bring specialists in this program to Melbourne. Within a short time two specialist 'conductors', who had been trained at the Peto Institute, were employed by Yooralla with philanthropic support from the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, which also provided the funds to evaluate the program.

The conductive education program was adapted to the Australian environment which was family-based, with children attending early intervention centres rather than living away from home in an institution. The research found

“Yooralla was founded in 1917... when a Methodist Mission Sister, Sister Faith, found a child who was partially paralysed in a chicken coop in Fitzroy.”

only a marginal improvement compared to a control group, however the whole philosophy of integrating the physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy with education, a holistic approach encouraging self-help and independence, achieved great traction and became absorbed into systemic practice. This represented a profound change in the education for children with physical disabilities, which would not have taken place without philanthropic support.

Schooling for children with disabilities

Today, however, most children with disabilities have access to good schools, both within specialist settings and, increasingly, in mainstream settings. According to a recent report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Disability in Australia: trends in prevalence, education, employment and community living* (August 2008¹), the proportion of 5-20 year olds with disabilities attending school rose from 72 per cent in 1981 to 80 per cent in 2003. For 5-20 year olds with severe or profound disabilities the school attendance figures rose from 81 per cent in 1981 to 89 per cent in 2003.

Over the same period the proportion of children with severe or profound disabilities attending ordinary, rather than special, schools increased from 65 per cent in 1981 to 78 per cent in 2003, as governments encouraged integration of children with disabilities and more and more ordinary schools opened themselves to these children. However, this overall increase masks a decrease in the percentage attending ordinary schools in the past 10 years, perhaps because of the increasing number of children being born with very complex conditions.

Therefore in terms of schooling for children with disabilities, philanthropy has done an outstanding job in helping to create equal access to education for children with disabilities both through

special schools and inclusion in ordinary schools; we have come along way since Sister Faith and others were shocked into action.

Essential aids and equipment

When considering the needs of a person with a disability we can build circles of care around that individual – family, neighbourhood, broader community. Far too much weight is taken in the centre of that sphere, rather than on the periphery. The families of people with disabilities take so much of the burden of care, compounded by a chronic shortage of support services; equipment, transportation, additional therapy or respite, that ultimately many of those families break down.

Rotary, Lions, Apex and Variety Clubs have been and continue to be extremely active in raising funds, especially for specialist equipment, including essential wheelchairs and communication devices for individual students and buses for schools to facilitate community access.

The continuing importance of these gifts should never be underestimated in the face of a disgraceful shortfall in government-funded aids and equipment programs.

For families where one parent cannot work because they are looking after their disabled child, the costs of these items – plus the many other additional costs that they may face, including a larger car to transport the child in their wheelchair, car modifications and lifting equipment – is beyond their limited budgets. Expenditures on these items must often also be balanced against the needs of other children. Therefore the provision of an urgently needed wheelchair, because the current wheelchair is too small and causing pain and deformity, or a communication device that will allow a child to express themselves more easily while minimising their frustration from being misunderstood, can be an enormous source of relief of parental anguish.

Looking ahead

So where should the education of children and young people with disabilities be improved?

First, the provision of early intervention services to young children with disabilities is less than optimal in many cases. This is very short-sighted and represents a gap between what is known to be best practice and what is done. It will only close when governments start to take a longer term view and so is an area where philanthropy can contribute its voice and influence.

A second aspect is that the prevalence of particular disabilities is changing, with autism emerging as a major disability. According to AIHW data there were 24,800 people with severe autism in 2003, compared with 12,400 in 1998. Amongst children the incidence of autism is now running at one per 150. In part the increased reporting of autism represents better diagnosis, but incidence rates also appear to be rising. For families whose children are being diagnosed with autism, there is great anxiety and vulnerability and some are choosing very expensive and unproven treatments to improve educational outcomes. This is therefore an area where philanthropy could play a very important role, just as it did with conductive education nearly 20 years ago.

Finally, the education of children with disabilities needs to be viewed as an investment so that they can reach their potential. The achievements and progress that children with disabilities are displaying at school is not being translated into employment opportunities. In 2003 labour force participation rates for males and females with disabilities were 59.3 per cent and 47.0 per cent respectively, compared with 89.0 per cent and 72.3 per cent for males and females without disabilities, respectively. Moreover, over the last 15 years, the gap between labour force participation rates for people with disabilities and with no disability has not narrowed.

Philanthropy has been crucial in dismantling barriers to the education of children with disabilities. Barriers to employment still stand.

1. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10495> free to download or \$10 for a hard copy from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website.

Feature interview: Peter Hunt

Peter Hunt is Chairman of the AMP Foundation, and Chairman of the Australian String Quartet, as well as sitting on the Advisory Council's of the Centre for Social Impact and Mission Australia, on the Board of the St Vincent's Clinic Foundation. He also has an active giving program through his PPF and spoke with Philanthropy Australia's Louise Arkles about his involvement in supporting education.



Where did your interest in philanthropy spring from?

I was really interested in this area when I was a child. I was brought up in a family that believed that service to the community was important and as children we were expected to make a contribution. But after I lost my father when I was 13 my mother and I migrated from England to Australia on one of those large migrant ships to start a new life. The shock of my father's death and the loss of the community that I had grown up in caused me to start focusing very seriously on getting educated. I surprised myself by going to university and ending up in the commercial world.

Over a period of about 20 years I was on a career treadmill, just focusing on work and family, those daily concerns, and then I woke up one day and realised how important to me my community was and how extraordinarily lucky I'd been in life. I did a sort of boomerang. I was interested in philanthropy in my early life, then got absorbed in career and family without really being aware of what was going on around me in a community context. I then got back involved in the community as I got older and started to appreciate my luck.

Where do you see the role for philanthropy to get involved in education?

Philanthropy's role should be about seeking to correct the deficiencies of our education system, trying to overcome the problems which arise when the education system doesn't work for an individual – whether that's caused by experiencing a traumatic event, or not having supportive parents, or living in an area where there's no encouragement to succeed in education, or going to a school where there's massive teacher turnover. Whatever the reason people do fall through the cracks, and philanthropy can help those dealing with the fallout from these deficiencies.

You can approach the failings of our education system and support infrastructure on two levels. The macro level (getting the vision, settings and infrastructure right) which really should be mainly the province of government on behalf of all of us, and the micro or situational level. For a foundation – personal or corporate – the thing you come up against time and time again is limited resources. What you're looking at is trying to create maximum leverage. It's frankly much easier to deal with a specific situation than move into the macro level with all of its competing vested interest groups.

We rarely step back as a society and ask about the role that education should play within our society; we just assume education is a good thing in its own right. I think that we need to be more ambitious. I believe that as a society we should be aiming to achieve three things through education:

- **Productivity** – the capacity of an individual to provide for the economic needs of that individual (and his

or her family) throughout life and to contribute to the overall economic growth of this country and all that that entails;

- **Inclusiveness** – holding society together by generating an environment where all people (irrespective of race, religion or social background) feel that society is fundamentally fair, and where people can feel proud of their communities and respect one another's differences; and
- **Fulfillment** – education should play a major role in helping people to lead fulfilling lives.

Each of these is very important, but we tend to prioritise the first one too much (viewing people in an economic rather than social context) to the detriment of the last two.

The debate between government schools and private schools is a tired one and frankly we should move on – quality and effectiveness should be the issue. The discrepancy between schools is alarming – a child's surroundings, and the degree of encouragement and support from the people around the child, and the expectations of the students in that child's school – there is a direct correlation between all of these factors and what a child believes he or she can do in life.

What philanthropy should be about is making sure that if education fails, or the home life fails, there is a support system that gives kids a chance to thrive. There are a lot of charities that provide fantastic support to children in need, which run very efficiently on extraordinarily limited resources and which are many times more efficient in dealing with these issues than government will ever be. Yet government

“Creating the most effective interplay between government, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector is the debate that we urgently need in Australia. We need to move beyond measuring everything by process and economic return.”

has failed to properly resource and support these organisations in the way that it should to create the maximum support leverage in our society. Creating the most effective interplay between government, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector is the debate that we urgently need in Australia. We need to move beyond measuring everything by process and economic return.

Does this illustrate a need to re-define the government – not-for-profit relationship?

Definitely, I think there's hope that this will happen with the new Labor government in Canberra because they seem to be looking at everything afresh. They're attuned to the fact that they may not have all the answers and they seem to be focusing on getting the support structures right by getting the best out of all sectors: government, private and not-for-profit.

We have to stop thinking there's just one way of doing something and that process is the ultimate determinant of success. You have to adjust the methodology to the particulars of the environment, and recognise a not-for-profit's particular strengths and weaknesses. For example, some organisations aren't good with finances, budgeting or sourcing funds – but their competitive strengths are in the social interface that has made them what they are. Going into partnership with them means respecting and maximizing their strength in the social arena.

One issue that not-for-profits in general aren't very good at is transparency, which is partly driven by their difficulty in securing funding. Understandably, they want to portray themselves in the best possible light to attract funding – but the problem this opaqueness can lead

to is that people lose confidence in what's being presented to them – thus the push by some donors for 100 per cent of donations to go to the cause, rather than part to the infrastructure. There's no question in my mind that the transparency of outcomes in the not-for-profit sector is not what it should be. We have to develop standards, introduce a regulatory framework and bring in consequences for breaches of transparency regulations.

How important is the non-monetary component of philanthropy?

Volunteering your time and skills is enormously important. Increasingly employers are looking for people who are well balanced from a social consciousness perspective, and volunteer work actually allows the benefits to flow both ways. Mentoring is a classic example, and the internet is an extraordinary tool in terms of allowing people to get together, offering a very powerful source of real-time support.

Within the AMP Foundation there's a very strong focus on the Foundation being not just a source of funds, but also being a conduit for volunteering within the broader AMP organisation. AMP has one of the largest financial planner networks in Australia, and many of the AMP financial planners help organise fund-raising events in their local communities – raising awareness, building social capital and bringing in money to support worthy causes. Last year the AMP financial planner network raised more money for not-for-profit organisations than the AMP Foundation gave away in its own right. In 2007 the Foundation gave away \$6 million dollars and the AMP Financial Planner network raised over \$6.7 million for community investment.

What are the major challenges you face in your philanthropic work?

The greatest challenge is time. Social issues can be enormously complex. I'd say the second challenge is the complexity resulting from the extent of vested interests in this area. When you talk about social inequality it's a very complex area, with entrenched problems. Because most public debate is done in soundbites for the media, you don't often see high quality debate around social issues. Rather you see a significant number of vested interest groups pushing their own particular barrows. It's a lack of high quality debate that makes searching for solutions unencumbered by the weight of vested interest groups very challenging. The Centre for Social Impact is a very exciting development, and hopefully what we'll see emerging from it is the intellectually rigorous debate that we need to have.

A third challenge is the difficulty of assessing the extent to which the social return you are aiming for is actually achieved. Projects are often evaluated in-house rather than by external assessors, and there's a tendency to sell the good news but not to be upfront with donors about the things that don't go so well. The AMP Foundation tries to deal with this by establishing long term partnerships with not-for-profit organisations and building in KPIs, but ultimately you're dependent on a very trusting relationship to get good information back about the success of projects.

There's a great tendency in this country, across all sectors, to spin things, and as we're all time poor we often have trouble looking beyond the surface to discover the reality. One of the great roles that Philanthropy Australia must play is engendering intellectually rigorous debate on social issues, which focuses on the substance rather than the spin.

Finally we need a much stronger transparency framework for not-for-profit organisations than we have at the moment, with clearer standards and expectations, but not requiring massive compliance costs. The not-for-profit sector is crying out for a new holistic view to be taken of its role in creating a better society to take our thinking (and particularly government thinking) to the next level.

Neil Balnaves: the educational core of the arts and medicine

The Balnaves Foundation is a PPF, established by Neil Balnaves in 2006, which distributes over \$2 million per annum, usually in 3-6 year grants of over \$100,000. While the Balnaves Foundation does not ostensibly work in education, having a commitment to supporting medicine and the arts, it is intriguing to discover the extent to which many of their programs have education at their core. As their secondary focus is on developing young Australians to improve the scene for future generations, education is a key strategy. Neil Balnaves spoke to *Australian Philanthropy*'s editor Louise Arkles about five arts and medical grants that are education-based.



Sydney Opera House

Last year the Balnaves Foundation and Sydney Opera House together created the Balnaves Foundation Open House program, the first ever access program at Sydney Opera House targeting disadvantaged communities. Since then over 4,000 individuals from over 30 different community groups have been given the opportunity to attend some of the Opera House performances, many for the first time, at a cost of \$5 per ticket.

This project is intrinsically an education project, aiming to increase the reach and community involvement of the Opera House, and to open up a new world to this first-time audience. By demolishing the cost equation – the barrier of the ticket price – we have been able to educate people through the experience of attending a performance, from shows as diverse as Edward Scissorhands (dance), a children's pantomime Christmas show,

a comedy or magic show, or a classical concert. It's really opening up the Opera House into the 'people's palace' rather than an arts precinct.

The impact of this grant is best demonstrated by the demand. Early on we were scrambling to fill the events, but now, eight events down the track, we're having to weed out those applicants that have been before, or those that don't have a clear 'social need'. The pressure has changed from trying to achieve 100 per cent capacity to trying to manage 200 per cent demand. We're thinking about changing from several smaller events to running fewer larger events to cater for the numbers who apply.

The impact on an individual level for those who attended performances can be profound. Interacting with art improves people's lives, gives them an extra dimension. The audience profile is dramatically different from other performances, and just watching people with down syndrome absolutely transfixed by the events on the stage was thrilling.

Balnaves Foundation Multimedia Learning Centre

I retired from the Council at Bond University at the completion of my term and wanted to do something for the University, something that would be enduring and that in some small way reflected my own circumstances (having left school at 15 and never been eligible to go to University).

My background is in the media industry and so a Multimedia Centre felt right for me, and the design of this Centre was so impressive and inspiring! We donated \$1.5 million towards the cost of this new state-of-the-art Multimedia Learning Centre.

The Centre provides a technologically rich space where students can study in groups or individually on their research projects, communicate with their lecturers and other students, use iLearn, wireless internet, print assignments, watch DVDs in groups or individually, create multi-media presentations and attend seminars and workshops. It incorporates a laptop bar, study booths, digital art displays and includes a Collaborative Learning Room with state-of-the-art equipment including a Smartboard, HD projector, video conferencing technology and game consoles.

The design of the Centre is really crucial to its success, being quite wild and innovative, with coloured lights that change the appearance of the furniture, and background music and rear projections on the walls. This emphasis on design has created a stimulating atmosphere which is very conducive to study; and that's made it so popular with the students that they've needed to ration time in the Centre now, as it gets so busy. So no matter what kind of educational activities the users are undertaking – lectures, podcasts, interactive tutorials, face-to-face discussions – the environment in the Multimedia Centre is conducive to learning.



Teenagers enjoying a generationnext event at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Musuem of Contemporary Art – generationnext

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) was an interesting grant – we were very encouraging of the MCA's goals, but we didn't want to provide grants for building extensions or buying more art. Our aim was to influence the community to encourage a more favourable view of modern art. This was partially influenced by my childhood where I had little exposure to or appreciation of contemporary art. As I didn't get a good grasp of it as a young person I was keen to support this project to offer this to others.

generationnext is a series of after-hours social events for teenagers, run by a council of students who set the agenda and coordinate the events with whatever is on exhibition at the gallery. The program provides volunteer guides, a disco, live school rock bands, DJs, performance artists, food and soft drinks and most importantly – there are no teachers and no parents allowed, just the MCA learning staff! Even I'm not allowed to go there!

Again this is about creating the right environment to engage young people in learning. We estimated we'd get a 100 kids at four events a year, but we now hold up to six events a year, with over 400 people at each! It's again bringing up another generation of young Australians with a better view of contemporary art. There are opportunities for the kids to participate, discussing the works with exhibiting artists, attending workshops, and entering art-based competitions which are linked to the exhibitions and offer prizes.



The Multimedia Learning Centre at Bond University.

Inspire – the Beanbag Centre

We had initially supported Inspire with general grants to support their youth suicide prevention programs; then as we got to know them better they came up with very creative ideas to communicate to young kids with troubles. Video is one of the most successful ways to do this, being educational but in an entertaining way.

Inspire's Beanbag program provides film production training to engage disadvantaged young people to increase their skills, confidence, and social connectedness – factors that have been found to have a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Over the next three years the Balnaves Foundation contribution will train 300 young people in how to use a digital video recorder and film editing software, with the aim of producing their own digital short film for entry in annual KickArse festival screened at Beanbag

Centres and short film festivals around. It will also train 60 youth workers to enable them to support and train the young people they work with throughout the year. These youth workers are able to on-train more young people, thereby multiplying the benefits of the program.

Children's cancer research grants

Medical research funding is usually oriented towards age and seniority – so the more experienced you are the more likely you are to accessing a research grant. For young researchers in their 30s there were no grants for them to apply for. The Balnaves Foundation offers two grants a year aimed at giving young researchers a chance – some 10 years before they'd normally have the opportunity through a government scheme – to conduct research into childhood cancers. We're trying for 'lightening in a bottle', allowing young researchers to follow leads, be creative and explore way-out ideas, because you never know which lead will come up with the gold.

The Dafydd Lewis Trust: 65 years strong

By Tanya Costello, Secretary of The Dafydd Lewis Trust, ANZ Trustees



Beginnings

Though he left school at the age of 12, Welsh-born Dafydd Lewis gave – and continues to give – the opportunity of an academic education to hundreds of Victorian boys from families of limited means. When he died in 1941, Dafydd Lewis left the bulk of his estate “to establish scholarships at the University of Melbourne”. His bequest made history at the time, being the largest ever made by an individual philanthropist to benefit students at the University of Melbourne.

Dafydd Lewis made his fortune as a draper in Victoria through good business decisions and an accurate eye for the market. Grateful to his adopted country, he was determined to repay what he saw as his debt to Australia. After considered exploration of the ways this might be done Dafydd decided, in consultation with his friend and confidant Dr William Denehy, to endow a scholarship scheme to enable boys from financially disadvantaged backgrounds to attend university.

The Dafydd Lewis Trust

The Dafydd Lewis Trust was established in 1942. Dr Denehy, an original Trustee, believed that because Dafydd Lewis had no chance of education as a child, the idea of an educational trust appealed to him. Dafydd was also impressed with the thought that he could help many boys in similar circumstances to his own, and at the same time give Victorians many more valuable citizens. He felt strongly that if the Trust could bring to light a genius even once in 10 to 20 years it would have been worthwhile. And even if it

did not produce many geniuses, it would greatly increase the community assets that the educated Scholars could become.

Dafydd Lewis specified that an advisory body, now known as the Dafydd Lewis Trust Scholarship Trustees, be established to select those whom Dafydd Lewis would have called the “deserving lads”. Andrew Denehy, Dr William Denehy's grandson, serves as a Scholarship Trustee today – keeping a link with the Trust's founder. ANZ Trustees is Trustee of the Dafydd Lewis Trust and is responsible for the financial investment of the corpus and paying the scholars.

Growth and change: today's Dafydd Lewis Trust

Dafydd Lewis' bequest has grown over the years, through careful stewardship and wise investment by ANZ Trustees, to many millions of dollars. One thousand young men have won Dafydd Lewis' scholarships since 1943 and been given the opportunity to study at University. The Trust's basic shape has remained unaltered, but over the years some adaptations have been made to its detail as a result of applications by the Trustee to the courts and as a result of changes in the presenting applicants themselves.

Applicants for the scholarship must comply with a means test based on family income. ANZ Trustees is currently preparing a further application to the courts to alter the terms of the Trust to be consistent with various changes in Australian society while retaining the integrity of the aspirations of Dafydd Lewis. The societal changes include later school starting age with subsequent older applicants, and an allowance for deserving older boys who have arrived in Australia as immigrants on humanitarian grounds.

As Chairman, Bruce Anderson says, “The Trust has kept the original vision of Dafydd Lewis alive by attracting scholars who are representative of Australia's changing demographics. What was once an 'all Anglo' scholar group has changed over the years with additions from each new wave

of migrants. During the Second World War we saw European refugees. Today, we see more Asian, Islamic, Eastern European and African Scholars – alongside the ever present core of longer term Victorian country or city lads”.

Dafydd Lewis suggested in his Will that when the boys were older they might “pay back” their scholarship to enable future generations of boys to go to university. Many Alumni have heeded Dafydd Lewis' wish and made donations to the Trust which gave them a “leg up” when they were younger. These donations in turn will form scholarships for future Dafydd Lewis scholars.

While the Dafydd Lewis Trust stipulated supporting boys only, The Mary Jane Lewis Scholarship Foundation, named in honour of Lewis' second wife, was created in 2004 by a group of passionate philanthropists to reflect the educational environment of today, and can fund both boys and girls. [Editor's note: You can read about The Mary Jane Lewis Scholarship Foundation in the next issue of *Australian Philanthropy*.]

1943 – 2008: the 65th Anniversary Dinner

For many years now, current Dafydd Lewis scholars have met for an annual dinner to deepen friendships and discuss their ongoing life experiences. In 2008, Dafydd Lewis Alumni have been invited to join the current scholars at an anniversary dinner to acknowledge and celebrate 65 years of Dafydd Lewis' contribution to educational philanthropy. They will gather to remember Dafydd Lewis and his history making bequest from the 1940s, which continues to help young men of limited means fulfil their academic ambitions.

To find out more about the Dafydd Lewis Trust, visit the website at www.lewisscholarships.org.au or contact ANZ Trustees on 1800 011 047.

The writer is grateful for information contained in 'Dafydd Edward Lewis, A Short History of Dafydd Edward Lewis and The Dafydd Lewis Trust' by Jane Sandilands. Copies of this short history are available from ANZ Trustees.

Communities improving education

By Jocellin Jansson, Executive Director, Country Education Foundation of Australia



For young Australians living in rural and remote areas, the substantially greater costs of further education and vocation opportunities, as compared to their metropolitan counterparts, is often prohibitive. Fuelled by the impact of drought on rural communities, it has never been harder for young people in rural Australia to achieve their post high school goals.

Founded in 1993 by a group of concerned citizens in the NSW town of Boorowa, the Country Education Foundation of Australia is now a national not-for-profit. Founding Chairman, Nick Burton Taylor was one of the concerned Boorowa residents who felt compelled to work together as a community to provide local youth with a helping hand with the transition from high school. Nick says, "we could see the increasing struggle more and more local youth had in trying to pursue their post high school education and training goals. We knew that unless we did something as a community, we would have many disenfranchised local youth that were at a loose end and not reaching their full potential".

So successful was the Boorowa Education Foundation model that it quickly caught on in neighbouring communities, and in 2002 the Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEFA) was officially formed and the communities that had been working together informally were brought under the CEFA banner. Today CEFA has 34 member communities across the country and has provided 807 rural youth with non-cash grants totally just over \$800,000.

It's because of our very grass roots nature that CEFA has been so successful in positively impacting young rural people's lives and futures. No one understands the unique individual needs of young rural people better than their local community.

Students apply to their local education foundation for assistance who in turn assess their application based on three key criteria; that the applicant has a realistic goal, that they have previously demonstrated commitment to achieving their goals and thirdly, financial need.

The vast majority of the young people that CEFA communities support would not have been able to achieve their goals due to financial constraints. For the rest, it helps relieve some of the financial pressure on themselves and their families. Grants typically range from \$500 to \$2,500. To ensure accountability and good governance, students don't receive cash grants, rather their local foundation pays the goods and service providers for things directly linked to the student achieving their goal. Things such as accommodation costs, a laptop, a fuel card, text books and tools of the trade.

Apart from providing practical assistance and encouragement for young people to achieve, through the provision of these grass roots grants, rural communities are not just investing in their own futures, they are investing in our nation's future. It's absolutely vital that as a nation we nurture and develop the best possible talent for our future, whatever area it may be in. Future leaders in commerce, politics or the arts are just as likely to be growing up in Coober Pedy, Catherine or Cootamundra as they could be in Sydney or Melbourne.

Also of great value is the message a community is giving a young person and that is "we believe in you and are backing you to help you succeed".

CEFA's grants are not academically based, rather they support a broad range of post high school pursuits from apprenticeships and traineeships to TAFE and university, as well as supporting students directly into their chosen vocation.

Over time, as many grant recipients filter back into rural communities, the investment their community made in them assists in building future skills capacity and long term sustainability in rural communities.

In response to the challenge of fundraising that some local education foundation communities experience due to drought, CEFA decided to approach universities, TAFE and private colleges to establish Education Partnerships. This has been an enormously successful initiative and to date we have 16 education partners who provide an additional grant to CEFA students attending their institution. In some cases it's a \$500 text book voucher and with others it's a dollar for dollar grant match. This means for example that a \$2,000 grant from say the Narrabri Education Foundation become \$4,000 when the student studies at the University of NSW.

Research conducted by Charles Sturt University last year showed that the average transition cost for rural youth in moving away from home to further their education or training is between \$5,000 and \$7,000, with annual living costs being between \$15,000 and \$20,000. So you can see that a \$4,000 helping hand to get started makes quite an impact.

With the need for many more local education foundations across rural Australia, CEFA has worked hard to create the internal capacity that has allowed for the doubling of communities in the last 14 months. This growth has enabled the CEFA family to assist dramatically more rural youth, momentum we are keen to maintain. Through increased communication of the CEFA program and outcomes, it has drawn many new communities to us. Our challenge now is to secure the funding that will allow the growth to be sustained to keep up the momentum to ensure more rural youth are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Beyond the mainstream – schools for those who ‘don’t fit’ the traditional mould

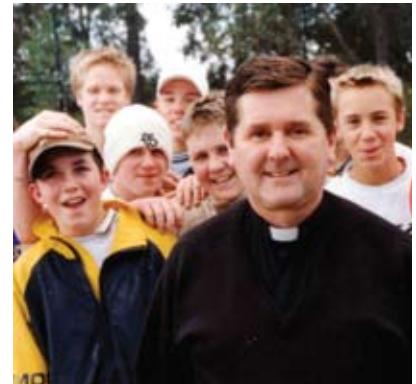
By Mary Borsellino, Assistant Editor, Australian Philanthropy



Staff and ex-students enjoy a baby shower.



Buddies at the Service Learning Camp with children with disabilities.



Father Chris Riley.

The modern trend for framing debates and discussions is to reduce the subjects to a pair of defined points, which are then positioned as polar opposites. When it comes to schools in Australia, this simplification is typically a setting of ‘State’ versus ‘private’. While the comparison and contrast of private and public education is an issue deserving discussion, it is incorrect to assume that there are only two types of schooling on offer to students, or that everyone can be provided for by the mainstream options.

The division into ‘State’ and ‘private’ is not even legally correct; in Australia there are three recognised categories of mainstream school: public, independent, and Catholic. Public schools are usually referred to as State schools reflecting their funding source, and possibly in order to avoid confusion with the British use of ‘public school’ to mean an independent institution. The category of independent schools is surprisingly broad and includes schools based on specific religious or educational philosophies.

This article is about ‘non-mainstream’ schools, as opposed to those which – private or public – follow the model the majority of the population considers to be ‘normal’ for a school: physical classrooms, grades arranged according to students’ age, and a regular weekday schedule of lessons. Here presented are four case studies of alternate

education providers, all of which engage with philanthropic supporters – community, corporate, and foundations – and which together illustrate the complexity of education issues facing some communities.

The reasons for participation in a non-mainstream school environment are manifold: physical distance; economic, social, or cultural disenfranchisement; especial needs on the part of the student; or a dissatisfaction with the teaching systems offered by more traditional schooling methods. Whatever the motivation or necessity behind enrolment in a non-mainstream school, such schools’ continued existence is vital to the quality of life of many students, and indeed the health of our society.

1. Dusseldorf Skills Forum <http://www.dsforum.org.au/index.php>

Run by the Dusseldorf Skills Forum (DSF), the Learning Choices Network connects programs and people actively involved in engaging young people whose learning needs are not being met in a mainstream curriculum with a variety of learning opportunities.

The DSF website is a source of information on non-mainstream schooling initiatives: the ‘Practice and Programs’ section of the Learning Choices page links to more than 170 programs from across Australia and the ‘Policy and Research’ section

houses a comprehensive selection of papers and keynote speeches on non-mainstream learning opportunities; and Plan-It Youth is a mentoring project offering young people who are at risk of leaving formal education early.

The DSF is a non-partisan, independent, not-for-profit body that works with communities, industry, government and non-government organisations, and was begun by businessman GJ Dusseldorf upon his retirement. GJ Dusseldorf’s own offbeat education during his teen years motivated him to establish a foundation which would provide young people with alternative options to simply attending a school where they didn’t fit, followed by a job which didn’t fulfill them.

It is worth wondering how different the world of non-mainstream schooling Australia might look if empowerment through education was framed as neither right nor privilege, but as a fundamental necessity for wellbeing. It is a part of community development and general social health. Just as the rising profile of climate change has taught the philanthropic sector that environmental considerations impact on all areas of funding, so too should trusts and foundations learn to see education as an underpinning for all program areas, rather than being confined to a narrow spectrum of directly related interests.

2. Youth Off The Streets

www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/

Youth Off The Streets' mission is to help disconnected young people to discover greatness within, by engaging, supporting and providing opportunities to encourage and facilitate positive life choices.

Youth Off The Streets prioritizes schooling as a key factor in rehabilitating homeless, drug dependent or disadvantaged young people, stating that "more than a decade of experience has taught us that education is the most effective way to break the cycles of abuse that can trap young people."

The organisation runs many residential rehabilitation programs, where the education offered encompasses not only schooling but also counseling, life skills and vocational training, and is then followed up by semi-independent living, mentorship and the opportunity for further schooling or monitored employment. For young people, often those where family support is missing or impaired, this level of broad support, beyond the 9am-3.30pm curriculum focus of mainstream schools, is essential.

Lou Single, the Principal – Education Services Manager for Youth Off The Streets, offered the following theories as to why students in the Youth Off The Streets program failed to thrive in mainstream schooling.

"They don't have as much access to counselling in an ordinary school environment. In our four small schools, we have the opportunity to get to know them and their families to a degree which time constraints prevent in mainstream. Our passionate staff are able to network with other services the kids need. In a mainstream school these students' academic needs might be met, but not their mental health needs, or their psychological needs. There are specific problems students might have acquired through abuse or neglect.

"Any student who's in year 10 with us when November comes sits School Certificate. Last year the results ranged from 49 per cent to 91 per cent. These are kids who may not have attended school for nine months prior to that, or who spent up to 63 per cent of the year absent."

The outlay involved in maintaining an organisation such as Youth Off The Streets is immense, in terms of time commitment, necessary skills, and running costs.

"Our largest cost is staff wages," Ms Single explained. "Because we're an independent school, we attract only a small percentage of government funding, and students cannot afford to pay fees. A teacher costs \$75,000 a year. And I would dearly love to have full-time psychologist on each site; we currently outsource our counselling and that can be \$300 an hour. Our teachers do all their own admin, which is something else I wish we could have as a designated position on each site."

"Another \$20,000 a year is spent on food, because we provide breakfast for kids when they arrive in the mornings. The kids prepare a cooked lunch too. We can give that kind of on-site assistance to help them with their learning, but often they need assistance with their mental health.

In this way, when health issues are viewed as integral to education, opportunities to engage are opened up."

3. Alice Springs School of the Air

<http://www.assoa.nt.edu.au/>

Also known as Schools of Distance Education, Schools of the Air seek to reduce isolation by drawing scattered individuals into a school unit. This benefits the students both academically and socially.

The 120 primary-school aged children who live in the million square kilometres made up by the southern Northern Territory, the north of South Australia and the south-east of Western Australia are students of the 'largest classroom in the world', the Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOA). Begun in 1944, the School runs a Visitor's Centre a few kilometres away from the Alice Springs Post Office to raise funds as much of the equipment required to run a successful, productive distance education facility is expensive. Income also allows the students to experience class excursions, just as they would if they attended a school with a centralized physical campus.

Since 2003 the School has been using two way satellite equipment to establish a shared broadband Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) communication infrastructure for families, to enhance the quality of the learning experience. The basic technical concept of the project was to have a studio based at ASSOA transmitting to remote sites equipped with a satellite, computer and relevant software. Any number of students can 'logon' to any session being transmitted.

The technology itself is not new, but the challenge for the school is to use it effectively to instill a love of learning. Each student site has a satellite dish and associated computer equipment that allows the reception of data, audio and visual feeds from the ASSOA studio and the transmission of audio and data back to the studio. This allows the students to see and hear their teachers in real time as well as being able to speak and be heard by other students in the class. Students are able to re-size their video image of the teacher, allowing them to work simultaneously on their computer, sharing learning materials and demonstrations.

Success of the IDL strategy can be measured by how well it enables curriculum outcomes to be met, by the teaching opportunities it presents, and above all, by the level of motivation and opportunity it provides for the students, teachers and families.

4. Australasian Corrections Education Association

<http://www.acea.org.au/index.htm>

The prison schooling system is another case in point, catering for disempowered students, through which inmates can gain skills ranging from rudimentary numeric and literacy skills through to PhDs. Since 1986 it has been a statute of Victorian law that "all prisoners have the right to pursue further education".

ACEA is a network of academics, practitioners and policy makers committed to leadership and influence in the development and implementation of best practice education and training programs for those people under supervision within adult and juvenile justice systems. It brings together a network of educators to conduct research projects and develop programs for prison education, post-release employment, and community-living issues.

Education in this setting is about providing opportunities for prisoners to take responsibility for their decisions in preparation for responsible citizenship in the wider community. In this way educational aims in the correctional system are no different from those in the mainstream schooling system, that is, equal access to participation in the economic, intellectual, political, cultural and social life of the community. For offenders education is central to rehabilitation, and can provide a pathway to health, civic participation and wellbeing, with lifelong and inter-generational benefits.

Unlocking improved outcomes for disadvantaged students

By Louise Doyle and Regina Hill, Effective Philanthropy

This article is based on the Report 'Our Children, Our Future – Achieving Improved Primary and Secondary Education Outcomes for Indigenous Students – An Overview of Investment Opportunities and Approaches' by Effective Philanthropy Directors Louise Doyle and Regina Hill. The 'Our Children Our Future' report was published in May 2008 and was co-funded by the AMP Foundation, Effective Philanthropy and Social Ventures Australia. Its purpose is to assist philanthropists making grants in this area. The full report can be downloaded free of charge from www.effectivephilanthropy.com.au

Current educational outcomes for Indigenous students

"Today, Australians are more highly educated than ever before. However, despite increases in the levels of educational attainment, some groups in society still experience difficulty in gaining education beyond compulsory schooling."¹

Education provides a foundation for individual and community wellbeing. It plays a key role in individual development and provides the platform for entry into the labour force and employment. Many young people today struggle to engage with education and so either drop out of school early or do not develop the skills and knowledge base that they require to transition into post-school education or employment effectively.

The situation of Indigenous students is a vivid example of this. Although there have been improvements in Indigenous education outcomes over the last decade, progress has been slow and significant disparities continue to exist between the education outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.²

Indigenous students demonstrate lower school attendance, retention and achievement than non-Indigenous students across all age groups in all states and territories.³ Post-school qualification, labour force participation and employment rates are also lower.⁴ Indigenous employees are more likely to be employed in lower skilled occupations than non-Indigenous employees, Indigenous employees' incomes are likely to be lower⁵, their health is generally poorer, their life expectancy is lower and they are more likely to

live in communities that are subject to social dysfunction.⁶ Indigenous children in remote areas tend to have even lower rates of school attendance, retention and achievement, and lower post-school outcomes than those in non-remote areas.⁷

The situation described above is also faced by a number of other students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups – as well as from students that do not come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds but, for various reasons, struggle to engage with school.

What outcomes do we seek through education?

Education outcomes can be considered at multiple levels. At the most basic level, education engages students and encourages participation in learning, which is reflected in school attendance and retention. At the next level it promotes the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge, which is reflected in student achievement and performance. This in turn influences the capacity of students to access post-school qualifications. These qualifications, combined with school performance, influence labour force participation and employment, which in turn influence socio-economic status and individual health and wellbeing.

The achievement of higher order outcomes is dependent on the achievement of the lower order outcomes on which they are built.

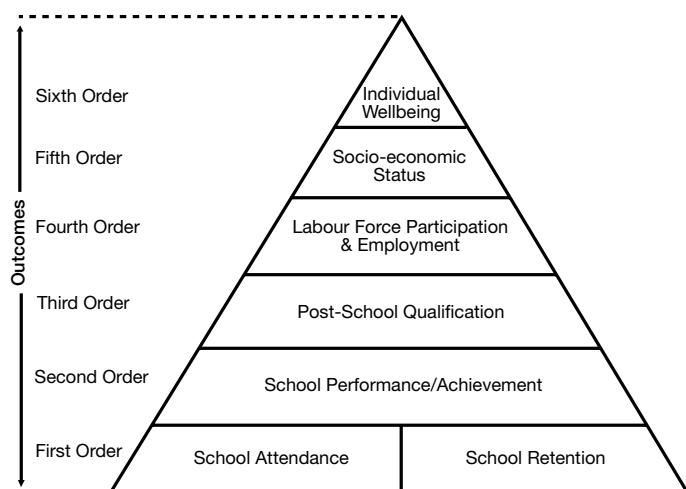
What factors affect those outcomes?

A number of factors affect students' ability to engage in education and the outcomes that they take away from their school experience. These factors can be grouped into four areas:

1. **Social or Community Context** – factors linked to socio-economic status such as family income, health, nutrition and housing.
2. **Home Context** – factors linked to the home environment in which the student lives, such as parental status and life experience, parenting, early childhood development and parental and family capacity to support student learning.
3. **School Context** – factors linked to the education system and the way in which education is delivered.
4. **Student Context** – factors linked to the individual student's life experience, skill base, emotional status, behaviour, life goals and aspirations, experience of and attitude towards school and school performance.

Many students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds will be affected by factors across all four contexts. Where students are affected by factors across multiple contexts, then each of those contexts needs to be addressed in order to support learning and development.

Education outcomes – a conceptual framework



Contributing factors influencing student learning and development

Social or Community Context	Home Context	School Context	Student Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income/financial stability • Access to mainstream services • Health and nutrition • Housing/physical learning environment • Community environment/safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family stability/function • Family mobility • Parenting • Early childhood development (including physical, cognitive, cultural and spiritual development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to school (including availability of local educational institution/transport) • School/learning environment • Curriculum • Teaching approach • Parental/family/community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic material and personal support needs • Engagement with school and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school experience - foundation skills (including communication and language skills, social interaction) - personal and cultural identity - behaviour • Learning support needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school performance - literacy and numeracy • Vocational development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - life experience - life and vocational goals and aspirations

What can be done to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve better outcomes?

Research has shown that it is necessary to take an holistic approach addressing factors across all of the above contexts simultaneously in order to improve education outcomes for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This is done by going beyond providing the standard educational curriculum and providing values and behavioural education, incentives to engage in school (e.g. through sport and arts-based programs), personal support (e.g. counselling) and basic needs assistance (e.g. transport, uniforms and school equipment, meals etc.). These supports are ideally provided through students' home and social environments, but in situations of disadvantage often they are not fully provided; nevertheless, they must be in place for students to succeed at school and reach their potential.

Schools adopting an holistic schooling approach will usually work with staff

and outside agencies to improve education outcomes by:

- increasing student access to school/school facilities;
- making the school/learning environment welcoming and culturally appropriate;
- supporting the development and adoption of an appropriately tailored curriculum;
- providing good practice in teaching approaches through:
 - facilitating teacher training and development;
 - supporting the adoption of more strongly student-focused teaching styles;
- providing opportunities for parental, family and community engagement with school and involvement in the teaching process;
- providing for basic student (material and personal) support needs;
- strengthening student engagement with school and learning;
- providing intensive learning support to address student learning support needs; and

- strengthening student-based vocational development and training support, including exposure to vocational and alternative life options and support in the development and realisation of vocational education, training and employment goals.

It should be noted that the term 'appropriate curriculum' does not mean 'dumbed-down', it means a curriculum that is designed to be culturally and contextually relevant and capability appropriate – so that it resonates with students and relates students' learning to their life experience.

The delivery of an holistic schooling approach is obviously more expensive than a standard schooling model – with support elements (basic needs, personal support, engagement in school and values and behaviour) often costing almost as much again as standard curriculum components (academic and vocational learning).

1. ABS 4102.0 – Australian Social Trends, 2008.

2. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs AESOC Senior Officials Working Party on Indigenous Education. Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008 MCEETYA, 2006, p.11.

3. Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision. Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007. Canberra: Productivity Commission SCRGSP, 2007, pp.13-14. (SCRGSP 2007).

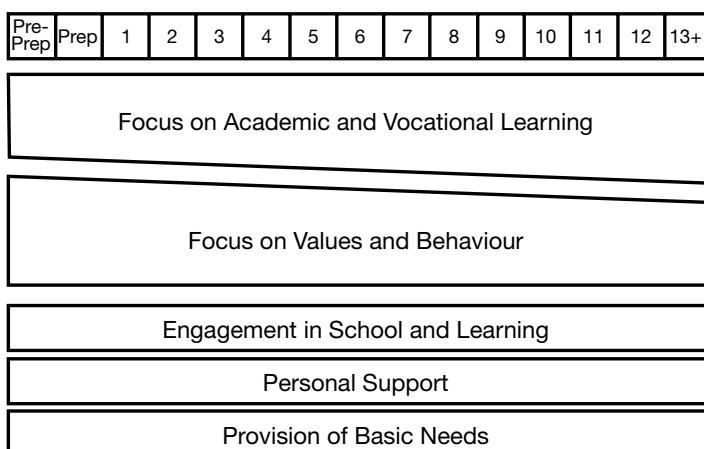
4. Ibid., pp.14-16, 13.2, 13.11.

5. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force Characteristics of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Cat. no. 6287.0. Canberra: ABS, 2006. (ABS 6287.0).

6. SCRGSP Overview, pp.12, 18-23; ABS 4704.0.

7. SCRGSP 2007, p.6.9.

Holistic student learning and support model



Transforming Indigenous education via school and community leadership

By Dr Chris Sarra, Executive Director, Indigenous Education Leadership Institute



About us

At our Institute we are working with leaders from schools and the Indigenous communities they serve to develop an educational network of transformed learning communities across the country. With the funding support over the past three years of a coalition of partners – philanthropic, university and government – we have embarked on an ambitious agenda to transform the quality of the outcomes from schooling attained by our Indigenous young people. Our Stronger Smarter Realities project embraces three interlocking leadership development programs – ones for school principals, teachers and Indigenous community members.

This work builds on the successful foundation of the Strong and Smart approach to Indigenous education I pioneered at Cherbourg in south-east Queensland. Some core funding for our Institute is provided by the Queensland University of Technology, Education Queensland and the State Office of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Two philanthropic organisations have also provided significant and targeted funding to support our work: Telstra Foundation and The Sidney Myer Fund. Other bodies have more recently linked up with us, in ways I will describe later.

Where we are headed

In a speech at the National Press Club in Canberra on 26 May 2008 titled The Way Forward: Indigenous Children of the Education Revolution I outlined five fundamental strategies central to ensuring positive change in Indigenous education:

1. Acknowledging, embracing and developing a positive sense of Aboriginal identity in schools;
2. Acknowledging and embracing Aboriginal leadership in schools and school communities;

3. 'High expectations' leadership to ensure 'high expectations' classrooms, with 'high expectations' teacher/student relationships;
4. Innovative and dynamic school models in complex social and cultural contexts; and
5. Innovative and dynamic school staffing models, especially for community schools.

To date, we have focused our work on the first three strategies related to identity, leadership and high expectations. Our training and development of school community leaders emphasises many of the priorities in the holistic school approach to Indigenous education recommended by Louise Doyle and Regina Hill (see page 20-21) especially:

- ensuring a welcoming and culturally appropriate school learning environment;
- providing an appropriately tailored curriculum and good teaching practice; and
- strengthening student engagement with school and learning.

In the course of this work we have linked up with other organisations – such as the Music Outback Foundation – that provide innovative services to some of the most remote communities and our most disadvantaged young people.

Challenges and responses

I have come to understand quite clearly that any policy or program devised for Indigenous people must – without question – be designed to collude with a stronger smarter sense of Indigenous identity. It must signal a belief that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are decent proud people. From here we can embark on an honourable journey in which we do things 'with' Indigenous people, rather than 'to' them.

In many ways the Northern Territory intervention is the most despicable example of this not occurring. While some will argue the intention may have been honourable, the assumption was that Aboriginal communities are so hopeless we needed to send the army in to fix them. Senior bureaucrats were also sent in to identify the evil ones and punish them. The same resources could have been sent in with a 'strength-based' approach, to identify what was good, what needed more support, what needed reinforcing through positive incentives, and then contemplate who and what needed challenging.

I see several key possibilities for further philanthropic partnerships of support for our strategic agenda. Some may wish to leverage their priority support upon successful initiatives currently being conducted by our Institute. This is what two new partners have recently committed to:

- Hewlett Packard is enhancing ICT infrastructure and networking support for school leaders; and
- Jobs Australia is subsidising attendance at our training programs by some Indigenous community leaders, thereby building capabilities in remote communities.

The benefits of collaboration and exchange among funding sources have been cited in recent research into Indigenous philanthropy conducted by Wendy Scaife from QUT (see Issue 64, page 6). More support for Indigenous community leaders in strengthening the identity development of young people in joint educational projects would be particularly welcomed.

While governments are providing some new funds for regional boarding school facilities to better serve the complex needs of remote Indigenous communities, philanthropic partnerships are also urgently needed to support these innovations. The connection with identity development is clear: the most successful boarding programs consistently provide positive role models and mentors for Indigenous young people in their transition to adulthood,

as well as improved connectivity with their families and communities.

But schools and authorities are struggling to sustain quality staffing of schools and boarding facilities. The data says that these schools clearly need the best quality teachers. Let's contemplate ways to give them the best.

Some of the 2020 Summit ideas will potentially have great traction in remote community schools, if we think creatively about staffing arrangements. For example, why not have recent graduates being able to pay off their HECS debt through community service in Indigenous communities and schools. And we need late-career Golden Gurus to address the vacuum about to be created by impending retirements of baby boomers – many of whom are school leaders or senior teachers in our schools.

Providing short and medium term opportunities to 'give back' to our profession will appeal to many of our 'retiring' colleagues – mentoring young teachers and providing much needed expertise. We could build on these ideas and others that are currently working – such as teacher and principal exchange programs, peer mentoring, artists in schools, visiting 'experts' and professionals.

It is often the case that new teachers are sent to remote communities to learn their craft. Let's acknowledge this, but create opportunities for accomplished teachers and school leaders to embrace the challenge and privilege of teaching in remote Indigenous communities. Philanthropic support could greatly assist in linking interested and skilled people with Indigenous school communities most in need of expertise.

We also face another challenge. The resources boom is attracting many of our Indigenous Education Assistants and Teacher Aides away from working in our remote schools. These are the very staff that are often described as the most valuable asset in schools. They field the hurt, confusion, anger and frustration of children from communities trying to cope with day to day life, and then trying to learn. These are people who work tirelessly in schools, getting paid very little and not even knowing if they have a job after Christmas if the Commonwealth money runs out. Let's invest seriously in them so they can get on with their jobs supporting and inspiring children – without having to worry about whether

"It crucial that the roles and potential of Indigenous Education Workers is valued in Australian society and it is time we considered a more serious commitment to their roles, paralleled by quality credentialing and career paths."

the dollars are in the school so they can keep working. It crucial that the roles and potential of Indigenous Education Workers is valued in Australian society and it is time we considered a more serious commitment to their roles, paralleled by quality credentialing and career paths.

Having worked with many schools throughout Australia I can say to you with certainty, that in school communities where school leadership meaningfully acknowledges and embraces Indigenous leadership, transformation occurs. When school principals and other school leaders work respectfully together in the interests of stronger smarter futures for their children, it just happens. It can't NOT happen. Let's realise that there are many solid Aboriginal people who are deeply concerned about the dysfunction they are forced to tolerate. These are people worth acknowledging in and investing in.

What's most important about our philanthropic partnerships

For me, as an educator and an Aboriginal man wanting to make a difference to the lives of our children, it has been essential that our philanthropic partnerships have been based on

mutual respect and a proactive collusion with a positive sense of identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I will not demonise my own people to seduce the 'big end of town'. At the Institute, and using a strength-based approach, we have been able to focus on what generates positive life chances for our young people via transformation of their school communities. I look forward to others joining with us in this journey – one that is so crucial for the future of this country. This is something we can all do together!

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Dr Chris Sarra, Executive Director of the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, engaging students at Mt Margaret Remote Community School in Western Australia.

The value of scholarships

By Caitriona Fay, The Ian Potter Foundation

George Alexander's life story is an extraordinary tale of achievement in the face of great odds and it exemplifies the ethos that has helped build Australia. An understanding of the power of education provided George with the key that unlocked his considerable potential. George remained dedicated to the simple principal of 'unlocking educational potential' right up to his death in February of this year.



George Alexander was born in London in 1910, and after a childhood of great hardship in England, he came to Australia in 1926 under the Big Brother Movement to make a better life for himself.

He was sent to work on soldier settlement farms in western Victoria, and faced the adversity of the depression years with resilience and resourcefulness. He had a natural aptitude for mechanics, teaching himself the basics before formally qualifying and moving to Geelong. He enrolled in evening classes in mechanics and management at the Gordon Institute. Such was his commitment to learning, that on completing his Certificate he was immediately invited to teach aspiring motor mechanics in evening classes at Gordon. During the Second World War he worked as a production engineer in munitions factories in Geelong and Melbourne. He studied Industrial Management and Executive Training at RMIT, as well as teaching engineering subjects.

After the war, he set up a factory to manufacture his inventions, a system of brass hose fittings. He called his host fitting business 'Neta'. The business flourished and became well known in the 1960s with its 'happy pappy' advertising campaign.

Following the sale of the business in the early 1970s he spent the last third of his life 'giving back' to the community. George Alexander always had the



George Alexander Foundation 2007 scholars at ACU, left to right: Lauren da Graca Costa, Amy McCann and Christie Hoy with Janet Hirst.

attitude to money and possessions that you do not really own them, "you're just minding them". He felt that his belief "frees up your thinking about how you deal with money", and was central to the development of his philanthropy. Accordingly, The George Alexander Foundation was established in 1972.

In recognition of George's commitment to 'unlocking potential' in 2002 The George Alexander Foundation set about establishing a scholarship program. The Foundation recognised that increasing financial burdens facing students have become a real barrier to further education. This burden is particularly high for non-metropolitan students who must move away from home in order to pursue their educational goals.

The Victorian Government's On Track student survey (2007) indicates that 47.6 per cent of students from rural and

regional areas of Victoria did not pursue further study due to the costs associated with supporting themselves while studying. The cost of living impacts significantly on students once they take up their offers. A 2003 study into the state of higher education in Australia suggests "that financial pressures are having an increasing impact on students' behaviours and study experiences. More students are now working part-time to cover expenses, and the average hours worked has increased. Longer working hours are strongly linked to increased drop out rates¹. Scholarships can play an important role in negating the factors most likely to cause both deferral of entry and dropout after commencement.

A 2006 report released by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) found "that the significant impact of (scholarships) enables students to focus on their study and assists them in staying at university"². An overwhelming 86 per cent of students interviewed by

QUT as part of their research suggested that their scholarship had helped them stay at university, while 47 per cent said that their scholarship was in some way responsible for their decision to accept their placement.

The first George Alexander Foundation scholarships were awarded at Griffith and RMIT universities in early 2002.

Both programs supported commencing students who were living away from home in order to study. Today the Foundation has 11 programs in every state on mainland Australia. To date over 350 students have benefitted from a GAF Scholarship or Bursary. The rates of retention among students holding a scholarship are well above state and national averages and anecdotal evidence from students suggests many would not have been able to afford to take up their offer had they not had the financial support of a scholarship.

George Alexander was of the view that the needs of society will change over the years and remarked "we cannot change the direction of the wind but we can manage how we trim the sails". Accordingly, George was always keen to ensure that the Foundation took a flexible approach to its giving. Since the establishment of its first scholarship program, the Foundation has been keen to examine the areas of increased student financial and social need. One area of recent interest relates to the particular financial pressures facing students undertaking teaching and nursing placements.

Nursing students are required to undertake up to 1,000 hours of clinical practice. In many instances these placements are far from home and can require a sustained absence from work and loved ones. The financial implications of placements can be significant and the burden nearly always sits with the student alone³. Apart from the need to subsidise their income, many students are hit with the additional costs involved in purchasing uniforms, medical equipment, food, petrol and accommodation.

Similarly student teachers find themselves having to undergo long periods in the classroom in order to complete their degrees. This is particularly an issue for students undertaking placements in rural and remote communities. Research is increasingly demonstrating that students who undertake placements

"The Foundation recognised that increasing financial burdens facing students have become a real barrier to further education."

in remote schools are more likely to consider teaching opportunities in those settings on completion of their degree. Unfortunately students regularly have to turn down remote placement opportunities due to the high costs involved in undertaking them. Given the importance of good quality teachers in remote and rural communities it is imperative that these students be provided with greater support.

The Foundation is currently supporting teaching and nursing students at two institutes in regional Victoria and is exploring opportunities to better support students in similar positions elsewhere in Australia. Students undertaking teaching and nursing courses should have every opportunity to succeed in fulfilling their educational and employment goals.

The provision of scholarships is a rewarding means of giving. Regularly the Foundation receives letters from scholars outlining their progress and what the scholarship has meant to them. After six years of program development with higher education institutes across Australia there are several tips the Foundation is happy to provide to those wishing to start a program of their own:

- Establish need. Donors should work closely with scholarship office staff at universities and TAFE institutes to establish what the student need is. Lack of appropriate research can lead to a large number of scholarships being offered and some highly deserving students being overlooked.
- Be sure that the scholarship does not create an additional financial burden for the student. Ensure students are made aware of the impact of any scholarship to their student support payments (Youth Allowance etc). Most university equity scholarship programs utilise government support eligibility criteria to assess a student's individual need. It is therefore imperative that the value of the scholarship is decided after careful consideration of these issues.

- Consider additional academic and social support. Most institutes are happy to provide some extra support for scholars, but the provision of additional funding can assist the institute in providing a more structured mentoring and support program for scholars. These programs can prove very effective and beneficial for students.
- What are your expectations? Despite the fact that scholarship recipients are less likely to drop out there will be instances where this will occur. Discuss with the university or TAFE, your options for dealing with these situations before they occur.

George Alexander always said that he liked the idea of "planting seeds and hoping they grow into pretty big trees". The concept has shaped many of the grants made by the Foundation and has inspired the direction of The George Alexander Foundation Scholarship program. George always felt his greatest legacy would be the achievements of those students he played a small part in supporting. On George's death, Allen Boston, a 2007 GAF scholar at Griffith University sent the Foundation a letter and commented "Even though I did not know George Alexander personally, his life story is a great inspiration to me. Through his generosity with his Foundation he has given me and many other people a helping hand and a greater chance of achieving more during our lifetime. He is the type of person who will be greatly missed and the world needs more of."

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When kids do the giving: philanthropy in schools

By Mary Borsellino, Assistant Editor, Australian Philanthropy



When we're preparing them for a life in the world, one of the first and most important lessons we teach children is how to share. The benefits of an early education in more formalised giving, philanthropic practice and social engagement are increasingly being recognised by schools, community groups and families.

Philanthropy Australia's website links to a range of initiatives taking place internationally which aim to include young people in the not for profit sector <http://www.philanthropy.org.au/youth/>

Philanthropy UK, one of the organisations listed, explains the importance of engaging young people in these terms: "today's youth are tomorrow's philanthropists". But many other groups – those designed for young individuals with access to wealth, and those created to help young people with an interest in fundraising – begin with the central idea that today's youth can, in fact, be today's philanthropists.

Allowing children and teenagers to experience the practice and rewards of structured wealth disbursement and social investment encourages them to integrate a culture of giving and community engagement into their lives.

ruMAD?

<http://www.rumad.org.au/>

Are you Making a Difference? (ruMAD?) is an initiative of the Education Foundation. The ruMAD? program is entirely student-led and directed when implemented in a school; it promotes community engagement, builds social capital, and encourages young people to become agents for social change.

The ruMAD? program has three elements: MAD Day, MAD Projects and Student Foundations.

MAD Day is a 'day of action' that helps students to see that they have the ability to make a difference. MAD Projects are large scale social change projects which make a significant



difference in the school or community, typically developed and implemented over a whole year or on an ongoing basis. Student Foundations are formal, philanthropic structures through which students raise funds and grant monies to worthy community organisations in their local communities.

An independent evaluation by the Centre for Program Evaluation at The University of Melbourne concluded that ruMAD? programs make a significant difference to students, schools and local communities. Students report that they have acquired organisational and leadership skills as well as developing more self-confidence. Teachers note that students take greater responsibility for their own learning and acquire a better understanding of the value of giving. Schools become more community-minded and develop strong partnerships with the local community.

School Aid

<http://www.schoolaid.org.au/>

School Aid is a student led philanthropy program that empowers kids to help other kids in need. It provides an opportunity for Australian school students to rapidly respond to urgent humanitarian situations affecting their peers around the world. A driving factor in School Aid's mission of student-led giving is 'connectivity' with a network of over 10,000 schools Australia-wide. Students are encouraged to take action in Emergency and Pro-active Appeals, and through education, empathy and empowerment are enabled to help other kids in real need – particularly where learning and education has been impacted. In addition to monetary and aid packages, the children are encouraged to send messages of hope and condolence to children in areas affected by crises such as the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia or this year's earthquake in China.

Australian students benefit by fostering and nurturing a sense of compassion and empathy with their peers, increasing

their awareness of challenges facing kids around the world, particularly in receiving a proper education, and developing and practising the skills necessary to take action. The children who are the beneficiaries of School Aid's projects not only receive tangible benefits, such as a new school or much needed supplies, but they also know that they are supported and cared for by students around the world.

School Aid has also worked to improve literacy among Indigenous youth in the Northern Territory in conjunction with the Fred Hollows Foundation, helped to resource schools following Cyclone Larry in Innisfail, and sent messages of support to Beslan in the wake of the school seige and funds to reconstruct and revitalise the town's central 'Friendship Park'.

Started by a school principal concerned by the impact of disasters and tragedies in the news on our young people, and fuelled by our common desire to help other in times of desperate need, School Aid offers a practical and meaningful introduction to philanthropy.

Youth in Philanthropy

http://www.lmcf.org.au/index.php?fold_id=2&page_id=78

Developed by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (LMCF) in 2001, the annual Youth in Philanthropy program allocates \$20,000 each to 10 schools across Melbourne, for distribution to community health and welfare programs.

Each school is assigned a mentor from the LMCF, and forms a committee of six students from years 10 and 11 which visits three allocated charities. The challenge for the student committees is to decide how to allocate and distribute their budget of \$20,000. The students learn about the organisations applying for funds and how the not-for-profit sector fits together and operates. In addition they gain an awareness about the need for philanthropy, community care, and community leadership.

The \$20,000 funding pool comes from the Foundation's grants budget. The program has been so successful that the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is looking to expand it.

Doxa Youth Foundation on education

By Noelene Gration, Communications Manager, Doxa Youth Foundation

When Doxa Youth Foundation was founded in 1972, it was to build a holiday camp for disadvantaged young people living in inner Melbourne Public Housing Estates.

"An incredibly passionate and dedicated group of community members led by Fr. Joe Giacobbe worked together to raise the funds and then practically built the Malmsbury Camp themselves." Julie Rolfe, CEO of Doxa Youth Foundation explained. "This was the first step in a long journey toward investing in education related programs aimed at making a significant difference to life outcomes for disadvantaged young people."

There is no doubt that the school camps provide new opportunities that help to develop young people and broaden their life experiences, but in 1992 looking to provide an even bigger impact, the Doxa Cadetship program was developed.

Cadetship program

The Doxa Cadetship program has provided opportunities for hundreds of disadvantaged young people who, although eligible for a university place, find it difficult to take up their university offer. Cadets are sponsored by corporate organisations where they undertake eight weeks work experience per annum for the duration of their degree course. Sponsor companies also provide \$6,000 per cadet per annum to assist with living expenses, and a mentor who oversees and facilitates the cadet's development within the company. Cadets graduate with their degree, and with improved self esteem, communication and negotiation skills and a great network of supporters and peers.

Doxa School

Doxa's focus on education continued in a new direction when it funded the Doxa School West Melbourne in 2000 and Doxa School Bendigo in 2007. These schools provide an alternative program for students in years 5-9 who are at risk of becoming disengaged from mainstream education.

At risk students are referred to a Doxa school from their mainstream school where they are assessed to ensure that the Doxa model is the right alternative for them. Students receive intensive

academic support in the morning and a more 'hands on' life and social skills development program in the afternoon. After six months, students return to school where they receive ongoing support both by a mentor within the school and a fortnightly visit by a Doxa youth worker for the next 12 months. Youth workers also provide support to the mentor. Students then graduate from the program after 18 months of intensive support.

Advocacy

Historically, Doxa has invested a significant amount of its funds in education. "However, recognising that our two schools and other programs cannot meet the need of all at risk students, the Board wholeheartedly approved a plan for Doxa to move into education advocacy," Julie said. "Advocating for policy and structural change in education is the most effective way to assist disadvantaged young people lift themselves out of the poverty cycle."

In late 2007, Doxa developed its 10 point plan outlining advocacy priorities, the first three points of which are elaborated here.

Teacher training

The first priority is to enhance teacher training and professional development. If mainstream schools are to work effectively with at risk students they must have excellent teacher/student relationships. One Doxa initiative already in place is Making Adjustments, a professional development course for teachers. The course aims to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills and help teachers develop a deeper understanding of behaviours and learning needs for specific students along with developing effective classroom management strategies. Doxa also plans to develop a major project with teacher training institutions. Many student teachers have little formal training on supporting at risk students and feel ill-prepared to teach and support these students. "We will advocate that subjects on this topic are made mandatory during teacher training, rather than an optional extra."

Alternative education

Our second priority is to promote models of alternative education that have been shown to work.



A student from Doxa School West Melbourne proudly plays the drums at his graduation.

Alternative programs can provide crucial interventions before a student becomes disengaged. Alternative schools should be seen as a 'fresh start' for students, who in many cases, return to the mainstream school after an intensive short term intervention program.

Victoria lacks a state-wide policy and strategic framework for the operation of alternative settings and programs. As a result, there is not a well planned approach to the provision of alternative settings, nor do they form part of an on-going, well resourced and appropriately recognised service. Doxa intends to partner with other alternative setting providers and work with government to promote the value of alternative settings in supporting students to stay connected to education.

Promoting education

The third of our 10 priority areas is to conduct a campaign on Promoting the Value of Education. Finishing high school and participating in post secondary study greatly improves a young person's employment prospects. Those who finish high school are more likely to earn higher incomes. An individual's education can also affect their health, and the health of their children, as well as their ability to make informed life decisions.

Doxa is planning a media campaign to highlight some of the benefits attached to prolonging education as far as possible.

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