



ANNUAL REPORT

2017-18



THE
RE ROSS
TRUST

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Production

Design by Jenny Bullock from The Designery.

Writing and editing by Writeside Communication.

Photographs by Casamento Photography.

Printing by Printgraphics Printgreen on 100 per cent recycled stock.

Our thanks to all the organisations and individuals who have contributed photos and stories to this report.

The Trust's logo was designed to convey the essence of a charitable trust – growth, warmth, energy and an outward reach.



THE
R E ROSS
TRUST

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Building for the future

The legacy of Roy Everard Ross

Roy Everard Ross was always thinking ahead and planning for the future. The astute investor, who came from the land and started his career as a surveyor and engineer, left his significant fortune in the hands of five trustees with clear instructions to support charitable purposes.

His career might have focused on the physical infrastructure – as a surveyor, engineer and then quarry owner, designing and building roads, streets and bridges and even swimming pools – but when it came to his forward-thinking philanthropy it seems he wanted to make sure he was helping build the social infrastructure of the state too.

He was ambitious and hard working. He had a knack for ventures which would help bring life and business to smaller towns; not always without controversy. These included markets, hotels, theatres, rental properties and seven farms, along with his quarry ventures.

Mr Ross also had a strong understanding of regional Victoria having lived and worked in Mansfield, Warragul, Dromana, Garfield and the Naracan and Buln Buln Shires. He studied and lived his later life in Melbourne.

Much of his fortune was amassed on the back of investments in mining and the media.

By virtue of his Will, the model he developed was unique at the time; the only trust in Australia which derives its income from the earnings of a quarry.

Mr Ross knew the financial and infrastructure benefits of developing a quarry in Victoria – both to himself and others. He reconciled his love of plants and trees and passion for conservation with his quarry business. This is the same balance the Trust strives to achieve today and you will see this reflected in its priorities.

Since its inception in 1970, distributions of over \$113 million have been allocated to supporting vulnerable Victorians, environmental protection and preservation, and education of foreign students.

The *R E Ross Trust Annual Report 2017-18* demonstrates the depth and breadth of investment in projects and organisations across the state, which continue to give effect to the wishes of its benefactor.

You will read stories of impact and also see a variety of ways the Trust works, seeking to build capacity and show leadership in its philanthropic approach.

By many accounts, Roy Everard Ross was careful and measured with an entrepreneurial spirit, working hard behind the scenes this may well be the spirit and drive we aim to bring to the R E Ross Trust as the Trustees and staff seek to deliver on his final wishes.

We thank our partners and grantees who work so hard to ensure the funds provided by the R E Ross Trust deliver the kinds of outcomes and impacts envisaged by Mr Ross when he left his final instructions nearly 50 years ago.



ROY EVERARD ROSS

Trustees' Report



Left to right: Ian Renard AM, Geoff Nicholson, Jenny Stephens, Eda Ritchie AM, Jeremy Kirkwood

As Chair for the year, I am pleased to present the Trustees' Report on an eventful year in 2017-18. In January we farewelled our CEO of seven years, Sylvia Admans, with thanks and acclamation. There was a comprehensive search for her replacement and Sarah Hardy was selected from a top-quality field of candidates. Sarah has held leadership and management positions in the philanthropic and not-for-profit sectors for 28 years and we are delighted to welcome her and look forward to her leadership.

In August we welcomed Jeremy Kirkwood as a new Trustee. His business and financial experience make an important contribution to our work and he chairs the Trust's Investment Committee which oversees the management of our portfolio and determines our investment strategy. This includes a commitment to impact investing, and this year we were pleased to invest \$500,000 in the Conservation Ecology Centre's Wildlife Wonders project, which you can read about on page 33.

In place of our usual annual strategy day, the Trust began work to develop a Theory of Change focussing on the complex area of homelessness to try and ensure our funding will achieve real impact. Progress has been made and work will continue with homelessness and other areas of endeavour using this management tool.

This year \$4,282,455 went to our grantees through collaborations, open grants and programs and we were glad to develop new relationships in the field of conservation. Reports on the outcomes of grants

continue to remind us how much is achieved by the wonderful organisations and people we support.

The Trust continues a strong involvement in the sector. We have a very solid relationship with Philanthropy Australia and are pleased to note their increasing influence and support.

Trustees have been diligent in their work as Board members of Hillview Quarries under the chairmanship of Geoff Nicholson. We acknowledge and thank the Hillview CEO, Paul Nitas, for his successful management of the business which is of critical importance to the Trust, providing the majority of its income.

Trustees recognise and appreciate the commitment, hard work and wonderful spirit of our staff and we thank them sincerely for the achievements of this year.

Ian Renard and I retire this year after more than 20 years as Trustees and the Trust has appointed Prue Digby and Jon Webster to replace us. They bring to the Trust, and to Hillview Quarries, important skill sets and a passion for philanthropic work. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to have had such a long involvement with this outstanding organisation.

Eda Ritchie AM

Chair of Trustees 2017-18

CEO's Report



It is my privilege to showcase just some of the incredible work done by organisations across Victoria who have been recipients of over \$4 million in grants, distributed by the R E Ross Trust in 2017-18.

I write my first Chief Executive Officer's Report during a unique period of change in the history of the Trust.

The R E Ross Trust will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2020 and during the year we started conversations about this important milestone. In preparation, preliminary work has started on developing a refreshed organisation and granting strategy. We completed a 12-month process to develop a Theory of Change Framework for how we could support work addressing homelessness, which will feature more heavily in our work from here on in. We continued to build our knowledge of family violence responses in Victoria and the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Important philanthropic, government and not for profit partnerships have been formed, to grow our potential support for this issue.

The Trust continued to explore contemporary philanthropic practices. We were pleased to take on our third impact investment initiative by providing a \$500,000 loan for the Wildlife Wonders initiative at Apollo Bay, which you can read about on page 33. Along with previous loans to the Women's Property Initiative (\$200,000) and an investment in the Murray Darling Basin Water Fund (\$200,000), we are proud of this new investment for the acquisition and conservation of land on Victoria's coastline.

These initiatives are part of the wonderful legacy of previous CEO, Sylvia Admans. I would like to acknowledge Sylvia's work. It has been an honour to follow in her footsteps since late January 2018.

With fresh eyes I stepped into an efficient organisation, governed by experienced and supportive Trustees. I was fortunate to work with Eda Ritchie AM, who was the R E Ross Trust Chair for the 2017-18 year. Eda retired as a Trustee on 30 June 2018 after 21 years of exemplary service to the Trust. Eda's wisdom and knowledge are profound. Her patience, integrity and grace demonstrated an experienced leader with a steady approach to decision making.

We also farewelled Ian Renard AM after 20 years as a Trustee of the R E Ross Trust. Ian's good humour, legal expertise, wise reflections and commitment to the work of the Trust and those it serves, will be missed.

You can read more about the legacy left by Ian and Eda on page 6 and we would like to thank them for the positive impact they had on all who worked with them.

Along with leadership changes we also had some staff changes. We welcomed back Dina Vlanes and farewelled Venetia Taylor.

As the new CEO, I have been particularly impressed with the staff capabilities and capacity to administer a seamless, thoughtful and responsive approach to grantmaking. This year we approved 75 new grants and distributed \$4,282,455 across Victoria. Thank you to the team, who welcomed my arrival with professionalism, support and inclusiveness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Hardy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'S' being particularly large and stylized.

Sarah Hardy
Chief Executive Officer

Taking risks to benefit the most vulnerable



After 20 years working together as Trustees of the R E Ross Trust, Eda Ritchie AM and Ian Renard AM have called time on their extensive careers in philanthropy with a quiet satisfaction that the future is in the right hands.

With so much experience under their belts, there are two clear themes that emerge about the great joys and benefits of working as a trustee; that philanthropy is about being able to take risks and create benefit for the most vulnerable in our society and that, so often, it takes collaboration with inspirational people to make big things happen.

Coming to the Trust with very different backgrounds and perspectives, the duo has been behind the scenes of some very progressive decisions, particularly in support of vulnerable Victorians and protection of the state's land and wildlife.

Eda came to the position in 1997 with a strong community conservation bent and experience in natural resource management for government, which aligned well with the R E Ross Trust's commitment to protecting and preserving Australia's flora and fauna. She also had experience in the health services and a love of the arts.

After a distinguished career as a commercial law partner and having a stint as Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Ian chose to turn his hand to directorship as his full-time career.

“I have a unique connection (with the Trust) having worked for the firm of solicitors which put together the original Roy Ross Will; the document which sets out the terms under which the Trustees operate,” Ian said.

“We were blessed with a trust deed that was very broad, which means we can provide support and assistance to a range of organisations. We try to ensure the need is well articulated and that the grants can make a difference.”

Eda adds that the real benefit of a broad remit, is the ability to adapt to a modern context. “It is a wonderful will to work with because it enabled us to move with the times and address the issues of today – things like our work with asylum seekers which couldn’t have been contemplated at the time.”

In fact, so many of the projects highlighted by Ian and Eda would not have been contemplated nearly 50 years ago when Roy Everard Ross left his fortune to charity; things like the digitisation of important parts of Victoria’s history and culture, the development of a theory of change to address homelessness, or funding decisions to reduce the impact of deep-seated problems like family violence.

With a significant focus of the Ross Will on the protection of Australian flora and fauna, Ian and Eda were particularly delighted by the \$1 million gift provided by the R E Ross Trust to allow the Trust for Nature to acquire unique river front land at Ned’s Corner in 2002.

“River frontage onto the Murray with Aboriginal heritage significance, unique flora and fauna, which has allowed us to stop grazing and the habitat is now regenerating and flourishing for some small endangered species; that’s a really significant thing we’ve done for the environment,” Ian said.

In a similar vein, Eda says her highlights include a raft of other philanthropic approaches to conservation, which have long term benefit for Victorians, in particular the gifting by Hillview Quarries of 60 hectares of high-quality conservation, covenanted land to the community of the Shire of Cardinia.

One of the great benefits of their roles as Trustees has been their increased understanding of the challenges faced by people in communities around Victoria.

“Involvement with the Trust has given me a much deeper understanding of people who face challenges in society. I have a comfortable life. I would not otherwise have had the same insights I do today. I’ve also gained enormous insight into the heroic efforts of those doing something about it... they are an inspiration,” Ian said.

Eda feels the same: “It is a huge privilege and a very serious job to give it (money) away well.”

She also recognises that one of the strengths of a philanthropic trust is the ability to take risks and back good people; “It’s much harder for government to do that. Sometimes people just need you to give them a start and get them going.”

Eda and Ian are very clear about the legacy they envisage for the Trust.

“I’d like the Trust to be known for supporting and backing projects that may be unpopular or controversial,” Ian said.

“There have been brave decisions we’ve taken that have come off well, in areas that perhaps others wouldn’t fund.

“We provided a grant to Marie Stopes International Australia (from 2004-08) for a condom social marketing project called ‘Making Deadly Sex Safe’ which was about encouraging young members of Indigenous communities to engage in safe sex practices to reduce teenage pregnancies and the spread of STIs.

“I’m also really proud of the funding we provided to Project Respect from 2005, helping the organisation increase its capacity to continue providing support for vulnerable and marginalised women who work in Victoria’s brothels and may experience violence and exploitation,” he said.

Thinking back on what the R E Ross Trust has supported, Eda says there are some clear, common threads – supporting the vulnerable, increasing community connectedness and breaking down the barriers of racism.

“We’ve also had an underlying thread of supporting Indigenous Australians, which I think is really important.”

Of course, all of this work would not be possible without the funds generated by Hillview Quarries, one of the main sources of the Trust’s income and both Eda and Ian have taken their responsibilities as directors of Hillview very seriously.

Both trustees walk away very comfortable with those stepping into their shoes. Eda sums up by saying “I want the Ross Trust to continue to build on its wonderful reputation and integrity – how they do it is up to the terrific new trustees who are already bringing a lot of energy.”

Our granting approach for 2017-18

With grants of \$4,282,455 and an impact investment of \$500,000 in 2017-18 the R E Ross Trust has taken the total of its gifts to over \$113 million since its establishment in 1970.

The Trust directs its resources to projects which address disadvantage and inequity, encourage and promote social inclusiveness, community connectedness and wellbeing. As our contribution to the wider environment, we also fund and partner with other organisations to acquire, preserve and maintain national or public parks, and in a complementary approach, protect and preserve Australian flora and fauna in keeping with the wishes of Roy Everard Ross.

The Trust works with organisations which have the best capacity to make a difference in their area of expertise and will particularly favour those who take a prevention or early intervention approach, seek to break cycles of disadvantage and build the capacity of the not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors.

The R E Ross Trust has several approaches to its granting.

Open grant applications are received throughout the year for programs and projects which fall within the Trust's granting guidelines (available at www.rosstrust.org.au).

Through **collaborations**, the Trust works with organisations to effect change on selected issues of importance. Collaborations were developed with the view that working with organisations in a more intensive and supported way over the medium to longer term will assist organisations to have a greater impact.

The R E Ross Trust works in partnership with a number of organisations who have a particular expertise and can deliver a **program** on the Trust's behalf.

These three funding approaches are represented in the stories throughout this report.



VULNERABLE
VICTORIANS

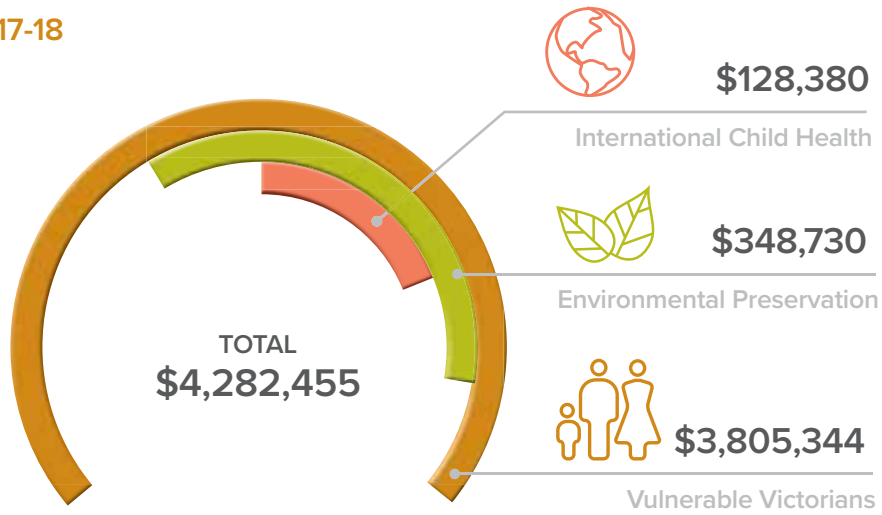


ENVIRONMENTAL
PRESERVATION

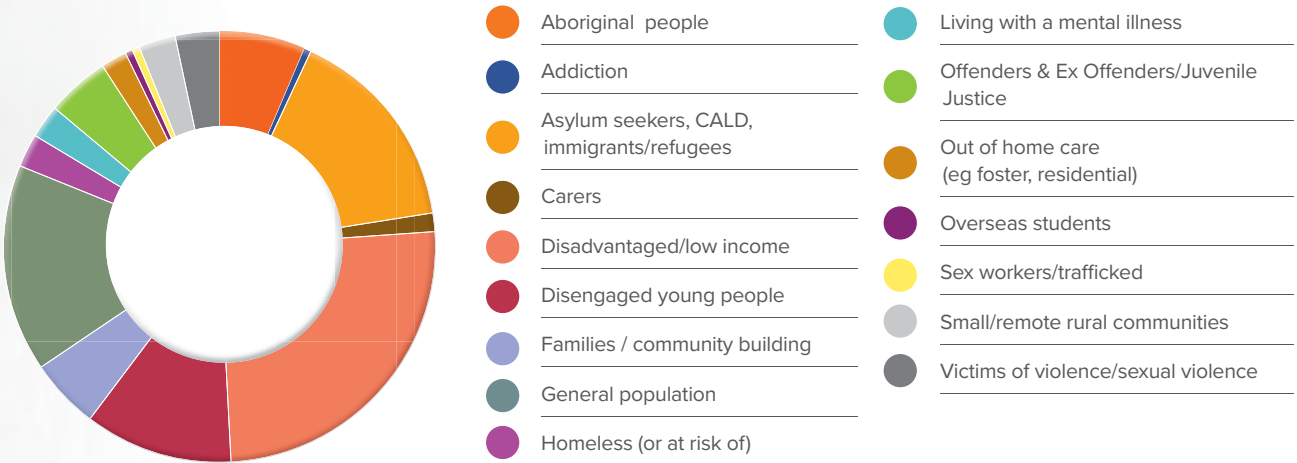


INTERNATIONAL
CHILD HEALTH

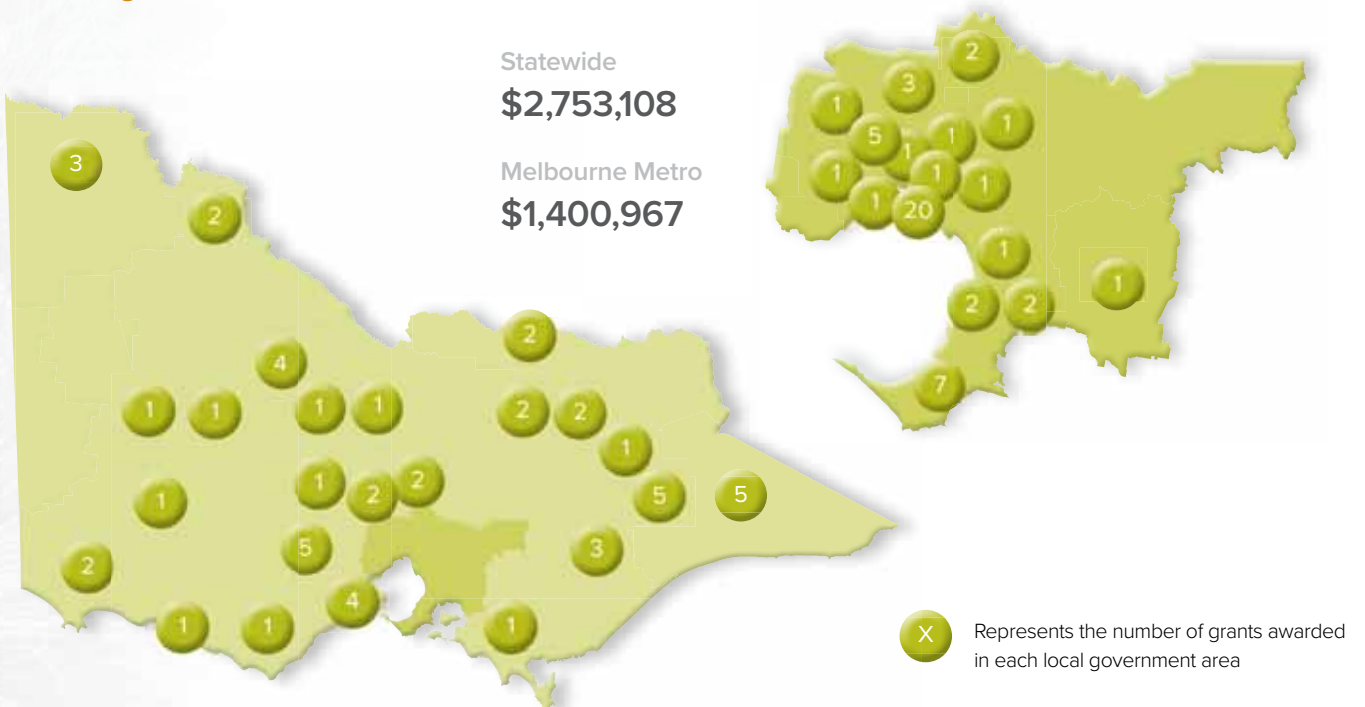
Grant funding 2017-18



Population served



Funding locations in Victoria





Vulnerable Victorians

Delivering funds to enable charitable and not-for-profit organisations to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable Victorians, is a key driver and major granting area for the R E Ross Trust. Granting decisions are made based on high need and the greatest potential impact to:

- address disadvantage and inequality for marginalised Victorians
- improve outcomes for children and young people at risk, and
- enhance access to education, the arts and culture.

Over **\$3.8 million** was directed to vulnerable Victorians in 2017-18. The following grants were paid in 2017-18:



Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

Western Victoria Aboriginal Youth Literacy Program

\$10,000

Alannah and Madeline Foundation

A sustainable partnership model - Children Ahead and the Victim Assistance Program

\$30,000

Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare

Marketing and fundraising coordinator to help grow and develop a sustainable business

\$30,000

Anchor Inc

The Brighter Futures transformation pilot: Learning for Life through Community Connections

\$50,000

Ardoch Youth Foundation

Pathways Beyond School Expansion Program

\$30,000

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Building capacity, sustainability and accountability; implementing a new monitoring and evaluation framework

\$50,000

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA)

ACCA GO Program; providing disadvantaged students with guided opportunities for new connections through art for positive lifelong impact

\$15,000

Australian Communities Foundation

Homework Club Partnership Fund

\$10,000

Australian Schools Plus

Fair Education Victorian trial (Gippsland)

\$126,400

Australian Schools Plus

Supporting disadvantaged schools in regional Victoria

\$55,000

Banksia Gardens Community Services

Project REAL - Re-Engagement in Education and Learning for students who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect

\$30,000

Baptcare

Expanding Hope – supporting families seeking asylum

\$30,000

Barrier Breakers Inc

Extend advocacy services

\$25,000

Barwon Child, Youth & Family

Strengthening Family Connections Plus – reducing family conflict

\$30,000

Bendigo Baptist Community Care Inc

Towards empowering Karen refugees in small business

\$10,000

Bendigo Science & Technology Museum

Training preservice primary teachers to teach more and better science in the country classroom

\$25,000

CareWorks SunRanges Inc

Serving Our Clients Better

\$18,000

Centre for Participation Horsham

Hospitality workforce pathways

\$13,000

Child Wise Ltd

Child Wise website upgrade

\$30,000

Children's Book Council of Australia Victorian Branch

Author In Schools Program

\$4400

Children's Protection Society

Mothers in Mind

\$30,000

Cinespace Incorporated

Cinespace Incorporated community editing tools for creative production

\$8609

Clontarf Foundation

Engaging Indigenous students in education and employment

\$25,000

commUnity Plus Services Ltd

Best Start - a new beginning for offenders and their families

\$30,000

Community Four Ltd

Kurdish youth community leadership project

\$30,000

Community Hub

Towards Colac Otway L2P learner driver mentor program

\$2000

Crepes for Change

home.one

\$23,000

Dandenong Primary School - Community Hub

Stepping Stones to Kinder

\$7131

Deakin University

The role of peer mentors in breaking the cycle of crime and imprisonment in Geelong

\$30,000

Domestic Violence Victoria

Family Violence Philanthropy Collaboration Project

\$30,000

Doveton College

Contributing to better learning, development and wellbeing outcomes for children and families facing disadvantage

\$10,000

Emerge

Enabling independence for women and children experiencing domestic violence

\$25,000

FareShare

FareShare Feeds Gippsland

\$15,000

Fitzroy Learning Network

Care-2-Work

\$24,000

Footscape Inc

Children's orthotic project

\$20,000

Foster Secondary College

Art therapy

\$12,500

Ganbina

Website upgrade

\$20,000

Geelong Performing Arts Centre

Parrwang: Aboriginal youth arts project

\$30,000

Getting Ahead Working Group

Getting Ahead; a program for women with perinatal depression and anxiety

\$12,000

Gippsland East Local Learning Employment Network

Lakes Entrance Schools & Community Hub: Moving On

\$52,092

Gippsland East Local Learning Employment Network

Growing the HUB

\$30,000

Good Cycles

Towards Keeping the wheels in motion – capacity building

\$10,000

Good360 Australia Limited

Brand new (surplus) goods to help disadvantaged children and youth in Victoria; a charitable inventory solution

\$10,000

Hands on Learning Australia

Core capacity support

\$100,000

Harrow Bush Nursing Centre

Bay Riders Community Centre school holiday program

\$9959

Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association

Taking the Healesville Belonging Place to the next level phase 2

\$30,000

HoMie Street Store (by Conscious Creative Limited)

HoMie - The Street Store That Gives – a social enterprise clothing store creating pathways out of homelessness

\$30,000

Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC)

Staffing costs for HRLC's Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander rights staff

\$50,000

Human Rights Law Centre

Marriage equality campaign

\$15,000

Inner Melbourne Community Legal

Health Justice Partnerships at the Royal Women's Hospital

\$30,000

International Social Service Australia

Building capacity

\$20,000

Jesuit Social Services

Youth justice campaign

\$30,000

Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary

General operational costs of Jirrahlinga Koala & Wildlife Sanctuary

\$15,000

Kilfinan Australia

Ensuring sustainability and growth

\$30,000

Laverton P-12 College

Crashendol! expansion project

\$20,000

Law and Advocacy Centre for Women Ltd

Pathways out of the justice system

\$30,000

Lifeline Gippsland

Gippsland crisis care call service

\$15,000

Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services

Learn to drive program

\$10,640

Lord Somers Camp and Power House

Information technology

\$30,000

MacKillop Family Services

In Safe Hands, Cara at MacKillop – young mums parenting program

\$12,500

Mental Health Legal Centre Inc

Towards effective advanced statements for improved recovery journeys

\$25,000

Mirabel Foundation Inc

Building Hope youth engagement program

\$28,320

Mission Australia

The Synergy automotive repairs program

\$10,000

Monash University

The Indigenous Club of Learning at Port Phillip Prison

\$29,956

Mornington Peninsula Foundation

Westernport Educational Support - breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage

\$25,000

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

Social outcomes focused learning and development project

\$30,000

Operation Newstart Victoria

Contribution towards the cost of two specialist youth workers

\$15,000

Philanthropy Australia

Not-for-profit leaders conference attendance

\$4,000

Philanthropy Australia

Philanthropy Champions, building the capacity of the philanthropic community

\$25,000

Polyglot Theatre Ltd

5678: Polyglot Theatre middle-years transition model project

\$25,000

Project Respect Inc

Achieving and maintaining accreditation against DHHS Human Services Standards

\$30,000

PSMyFamilyMatters

Coordinating the Care

\$60,000

Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Asylum seeker health rights project

\$30,000

Realise Enterprises Inc

Tasty Plate social enterprise in Warrnambool

\$10,000

Refugee Legal

Breaking the cycle of injustice

\$50,000

Refugee Legal

Towards volunteer coordinator and assisting the TPV process.

Two grants awarded:

\$30,000 and \$20,000

RISE (Refugee Survivors & Ex-detainees)

RISE driving program - free educational driving program for refugees

\$24,000

Robinvale College

ATSI Girls Academy

\$46,400

Robinvale District Health Services

Playgroups. Two grants awarded:

\$20,000 each

Rosebud Secondary College

Wellness program

\$15,195

Save the Children Australia Trust

Children's wellbeing initiative, East Gippsland. Two grants awarded:

\$50,000 and \$40,000

Self Help Addiction Resource Centre Inc

Family Gambling Help: Phase 2 – ensuring access to community support for families impacted by problem gambling

\$30,000

ShareGift Australia

Leveraging Australia's burgeoning online share trading for public good

\$30,000

The Song Room

Enhancing education and wellbeing outcomes for migrant and refugee children through arts-based learning
\$29,900

Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre Inc

SPCSIC family case management project
\$25,000

St Albans Heights Primary School Community Hub

Community Hub playgroup
\$3300

St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre

Asylum seeker pilot pathways project
\$30,000

State Library Victoria

Cataloguing and preservation of the Riley political ephemera and posters collection
\$75,000

TaskForce Community Agency Inc

FADS: Family Alcohol and Drug Support
\$9992

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital

Increased health literacy for all patients with a special focus on multicultural and Indigenous Victorians
\$9800

The Salvation Army

Youth participation worker
\$25,000

The Salvation Army

Tools For The Trade
\$23,000

The Social Studio

The Social Studio Transition
\$30,000

The Youth Junction Incorporated

Cut and Shine Barbering job ready program
\$25,000

Therapeutic Engagement Support Services Association Incorporated

Sustainable student-to-student support for primary school students at risk
\$26,000

Tomorrow Today Education Foundation

Communication strategy development
\$50,000

Tomorrow Today Education Foundation

Education Benalla program
\$110,000

United Way Australia

Improving school readiness for children living in out of home care
\$30,000

Uniting Care Ballarat

Towards BreezeWay meals for homeless and marginalised people
\$15,000

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania

Keeping women and children safe by responding to male perpetrators of family violence
\$25,000

University of Melbourne

Cataloguing, digitisation and online access to the Fritz Loewe papers
\$30,000

VICSEG New Futures

Refugee family mentoring – Empowering Parents Empowering Children
\$18,000

Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals

Ourschool – helping state secondary schools build thriving alumni communities to benefit current students
\$30,000

Warrnambool East Primary School

Nurturing room for vulnerable students who have been exposed to trauma, abuse and/or neglect
\$10,000

The Way Community

Towards employment of worker to staff the residential service for older men who are homeless
\$15,000

Western English Language School

Fly Girls - after school activities to address immediate settlement issues
\$11,000

WEstjustice

Expanded school lawyer project
\$30,000

Westside Circus

Pages Fly
\$30,000

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association

Gathering Place coordinator
\$30,000

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation

Indigenous family therapy project
\$18,111

Women and Mentoring – WAM Limited

Women and Mentoring – Yarra and the West
\$10,000

YMCA Whittlesea Community Services

Invigor8ing Education – for disengaged young people from year 8
\$23,600

Youth Live4Life Inc

Live4Life Benalla and Glenelg: youth mental health and suicide prevention initiative
\$30,000

Zoe Support Australia

Securing sustainability – a project for young mothers who study
\$30,000



2017-18 Total Grants

\$3,805,344

GRANT /
Eastbourne Primary School
\$60,000 over two years

Ready to learn



It takes a village to raise a child and this saying is being put into practice very effectively for the children and families of Rosebud West on the Mornington Peninsula, using an evidence-based approach to early childhood learning.

As part of a community renewal project in Rosebud West – now Capel Sound – a commissioned report found the area was within the band of highest disadvantage across the state with some of the factors being single parent families, low educational attainment and a lack of infrastructure and employment opportunities.

Eastbourne Primary School Principal, Stephen Wilkinson, and his colleagues at Seawinds Childcare Centre and Rosebud Kindergarten were also experiencing the outcomes of some of these issues; children arriving at preschool and school without the skills to successfully learn.

Educational research identifies the fundamental importance of learning in children's first years of life, and that children who start school (and kindergarten) with developmental delays are at significant risk of underachievement in school.

"There is some correlation for kids in low socio-economic households who don't experience books being read to them; their oral language doesn't develop as well before school, so they are not coming to school with the basic preparation. They have a lower number of words," Stephen said.

"We had noticed for many years we had no influence over the children who were arriving at school under prepared for their prep year."

Armed with this knowledge, Stephen was determined to see if his community could take action in an attempt to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The aim of the Rosebud West Children's Early Years Literacy Project was to improve the long-term educational outcomes and wellbeing of children living in the area. It was developed as a collaboration between Eastbourne Primary School, Seawinds Community Hub, Rosebud Literacy Village and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Using the evidence-based Abecedarian approach to learning, the focus was on building the capacity of educators, parents, carers, volunteers and service providers to understand the developmental needs of young children and to provide an appropriate learning environment for children to gain the skills they need for future learning; to arrive at school ready to learn.

To see the Seawinds Kindergarten and Early Learning Centre in action is to gain a small insight into how the program works. It's about a more structured approach to the everyday – reading, caregiving, play, language, asking children to describe what they are seeing and doing and focusing on the interactions between children and the people around them.

Stephen says “the preschool staff had to realign their teaching practices but after seeing the results in a short time, realised how great the program was for their children. They were also assessing children which was something they'd never done on such a consistent scale.

“School teachers did the course with the preschool staff but were doing many of the requirements within the program already; conversational reading and language games. The school also had a parent engagement officer and a wellbeing program to assist parents. We also changed some teaching strategies to accommodate the program.

“Teachers, parents, carers, volunteers and other service providers are all working together to create this environment,” Stephen said.

“Influencing parents in an early intervention sense is paramount to making this program even more successful.

“Evaluation using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire has enabled teachers to see each child's development along elements such as gross motor, fine motor, communication, problem solving and personal/social development.

“The high number of volunteers allowing one-on-one support and interactions with each child is the most important activity in the 'school readiness' of children,” Stephen said.

With over 300 children aged between six months and five years engaging with the project over the past three years, the work has also been externally recognised, with the Seawinds Kindergarten and Early Learning Centre named State Winner for 2017 for Early Childhood Service of the Year.

The R E Ross Trust supported the initial training of 34 community groups including teachers, preschool staff, and child and maternal health personnel, as well as providing resourcing to employ a coordinator for the program and play group leaders.

“The resourcing we've been able to bring together from a range of funders and different parts of the community has made an enormous difference.

“It makes me smile when we get data that shows our vulnerabilities decreasing and that kids are coming ready for school – they have greater maturity, emotional and social readiness and ability to cope with big changes.

“When we started this, naturally there were some doubts and doubters but now everyone has embraced it. It's about the whole community not just the school. We see it as an education precinct.

“Knowing the program is research based and has had unbelievable results in the United States, it is great to see other communities embracing it now too.”



GRANT /
Centre for Multicultural Youth
\$30,000 over two years



Success for hands-on approach to job placement

A grant to fund evaluation of the Pathways to Opportunity program run by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, has helped refine their approach to finding job placements for young people and at the same time fill genuine skill shortages. It's a result that moves beyond a charity model to one which is a win/win for employers and employees and could now be taken to scale.

Remember your first job interview? How nerve wracking was it to go in, be confident and sell yourself to a potential employer?

Now imagine doing it in another country, culture and without English as your first language.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is working with 120 young people in the north and western suburbs of Melbourne, from diverse backgrounds, to link them with employers who have a genuine need for workers.

While the focus of the program (funded by the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation, The William Buckland Foundation and others) is overcoming the systemic barriers which prevent young people from CALD backgrounds from obtaining jobs, it has evolved over time as the CMY team identified the real sticking points to success.

Following an evaluation of their pilot, funded by the R E Ross Trust, the focus shifted from apprenticeships and traineeships to securing direct employment opportunities for young people.

Program Leader, Jane Marx, says it's some of the things we take for granted that her clients need most help with.

"It's easy for us to say, 'ok now you need to put your best foot forward'. If you're born here, you understand the expectations and the fact that you may need to do it over and again – a job is not guaranteed."

Once they get that, she says, it's great to see that one of the benefits of repeat interviews is the growing confidence of job seekers.

One of the key elements of the program is the intensive support from CMY and the mentors with weekly and fortnightly check-in points.

"Some of the things our mentors talk about are basic things such as showing up on time, understanding pay slips, banking and leave processes, through to overcoming the initial cultural differences like the concept of 'selling yourself'.

"The other thing we changed after the first phase of the project was to ensure mentors had 3-5 years'

work experience in Australia. We are seeing a lot of refugees and migrants who are coming back to us to volunteer in this way and it feeds into the concept of 'you can't be what you can't see'.

"It's really beautiful when our young people understand the mentor is making sacrifices and giving their precious time to them. It's a different relationship; its proven to be really effective and gives them a sense of direction that's really needed."

Over 80 per cent of participants in the Pathways program reported high levels of increased self-confidence and improved knowledge of employment pathways as a result of their participation in job-ready workshops and mentor support.

If the results are good for employees, they are even better for employers, particularly those who have a shortage of skills and labor for jobs mainly in hospitality, retail and warehousing.

"We are tapping into genuine markets and the employers are saying to us, send us young people willing to work and learn."

"That fills one need for them, but then we are getting feedback from employers saying they didn't realise how much existing staff would get out of the opportunity to mentor young people from diverse backgrounds."

"People speak about diversity and inclusion, but these people are seeing it in action and it has an impact beyond the immediate. You have a young person from Eritrea or South Sudan who is starry eyed and willing to work and grateful for the opportunity; that's a nice energy to be around in the workplace. Large numbers of our employers are coming back."

In fact, the evaluation showed over 90 per cent of the employers reported positive experiences with the young people they employed.

"I think we've moved beyond a model where employers are feeling like they are doing something good, to genuinely providing benefit for them, which means we can move to the next step and achieve scale," Jane said.

Pictured: Afraa Sagor is one of the successful participants in the CMY Pathways to Opportunity program and just completed and graduated from a paid hospitality traineeship with Scarf. She is also casually employed front-of-house, by catering and events social enterprise Merchant Road.

Photo with thanks to Stina from Gold and Grit Photography (@goldandgrit).

GRANT /

Emerge

\$50,000 over two years

Financial independence after family violence

A pilot program enabling a financial counsellor to spend one day a week with women who have experienced family violence is generating positive results.

Emerge Women's and Children's Support Network provides housing and support services to women and children fleeing violence and one of the major issues identified for clients is economic hardship and financial issues associated with family violence.

Around 99 per cent of female victims of family violence experience financial abuse, according to the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. Despite the scale of the problem, there are few services available to victims of financial abuse and it can be extremely difficult to navigate the system to clear debts incurred due to financial abuse.

Financial issues may range from being prevented from accessing bank accounts to debts and fines in their name, taken out by a partner.

Emerge also found that women using their services had either low or little understanding of budgeting, their financial rights, or how to recover from the economic consequences of family violence.


With a grant from the R E Ross Trust, Emmerge engaged a financial counsellor one day a week to work with women who are in their crisis accommodation, transitional housing or receiving ongoing therapeutic services.

In group and one-on-one sessions, the program assisted 68 clients in the first 10 months, with a clear and growing need for more services of this kind.

In evaluating the pilot, Emmerge found understanding of basic financial rights and basic budgeting to set achievable financial goals was an important first step for clients.

Financial institutions became more receptive when overtures were made by the counsellor on behalf of clients in relation to loans made under duress or other abuse.

With the help of financial counselling, clients had increased hope and confidence and improved housing stability.



GRANT /
Willum Warrain
\$60,000 over two years

Keeping culture strong

Creating a healing space and keeping culture strong for the Mornington Peninsula's growing Aboriginal population, was the driving force behind employing a gathering place coordinator for the Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association.

Willum Warrain is the only Aboriginal organisation servicing Indigenous community members on the Mornington Peninsula and has just turned four years old.

The Victorian Government's Indigenous Health Strategy, 'Koolin Balit', identified the Southern Metro Region of the state as having the second fastest growing Aboriginal population in Victoria.

Considering the well-documented health and wellbeing gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the evidence that community engagement through a place-based approach can improve the social determinants of health, Willum Warrain's Aboriginal board has worked hard to put in place a 'one stop shop' for access to services, activities and programs in a culturally appropriate setting. The aim: Willum Warrain is a place where people can come and feel safe and comfortable, right from their first visit.

With the help of a \$60,000 grant over two years from the R E Ross Trust, the board employed Gathering Place Coordinator, Karsten Poll, who has built Willum Warrain into a thriving hub for the local Indigenous population.

Responsible for the running of Willum Warrain and its programs, he now oversees an organisation where people gather as a supportive community to undertake activities such as the community kitchen for healthy and affordable eating, men's and women's groups, a bush playgroup, traditional tool-making workshops, the "us mob" program for disengaged youth, support and linkages for members of the Stolen Generations, not to mention running well-attended Reconciliation, NAIDOC and Christmas events.

These programs are requested by the Aboriginal community, for the Aboriginal community.

There are approximately 1200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on the Peninsula, with over 1500 in Frankston and 2500 in the Cranbourne area, who are all potential visitors to the gathering place and its programs.

Attendance at the gathering place, membership (up by 66 per cent) and participation at events, demonstrate the value the local community is placing on this safe community gathering place.

From a wider community perspective, cultural awareness and educational activities with local schools, groups and organisations across the Mornington Peninsula are also promoting community cohesion, understanding and reconciliation within the broader population.

GRANT /
Mental Health Legal Centre
\$75,000 over three years

Strengthening the voice of mental health clients

With the help of funds from the R E Ross Trust and the Helen McPherson Smith Trust, the Mental Health Legal Centre is training teams of social workers and other practitioners across Victoria, to ensure pre-prepared advance statements give mental health clients a voice even in moments of acute illness.

At the peak of a mental health episode it can be almost impossible to clearly convey your wishes to your treating practitioner.

In a system which is overwhelmed, under resourced with a high staff turnover – in 2015-16 there were 66,000 people in the mental health system in Victoria; 12,000 under treatment orders – anything which shortens timeframes and leads to better outcomes is invaluable.

The Mental Health Legal Centre (MHLC) has been working with its clients to put in place a document to help in these acute moments of stress and there have been some surprising results.

General Manager of the MHLC, Charlotte Jones, says advanced statements are the result of almost 20 years of campaigning and lobbying to ensure the voices of consumers with mental health issues are heard.

An advance statement sets out what you want to happen in the event you become unwell and you are not able to make decisions about your treatment and care in a hospital setting. They must now be considered by decision makers under the *Mental Health Act 2014*, to be taken under advisement. If they aren't followed, a consultant psychiatrist must explain why not.

It's one thing to prepare the advance statement with the client, and it's another to have the treating team understand and use them appropriately. An R E Ross Trust grant of \$75,000 over three years has helped the MHLC put in place a rolling program of training with mental health practitioners to help increase the likelihood they are. Now over 600 medical staff and clinicians have been trained and nearly 200 lawyers have been trained to give advice and assist in the development of advance statements.

“One of the results was the practitioner identifying that the document had the power to change the conversation with a patient,” Charlotte said.

“The statements, when used well, allow for better engagement with the treating team. They give treating practitioners the ability to understand their patient's interests and quickly breakdown barriers to build rapport. Given the likelihood that mental health patients move around, have insecure housing and may need to be treated by those they don't know, this is highly valuable.

“The key benefit to the clients has been somewhat of an unexpected one – the advance statement gives you a sense of the person and a really clear voice.

“We spend from four to six hours with someone putting the advanced statement together and, in the circumstance that a client has lost all sense of self, the first thing they get to say is ‘this is who I am, and this is what I want to be called’. We take the time to create something of value.

“It provides the ability to say what does and doesn't work for them. Things like ‘Please don't give me x medication because it makes me worse’,” Charlotte said.

One of the other key changes and realisations was for the mental health patients themselves.

“The thing we've reflected on is that our clients have started to understand their own triggers better. We hadn't anticipated this. Clients were saying to us ‘we've now got a way to understand how we ended up so unwell’. One of the results is greater empowerment and validation.”

With over 73 training sessions complete, collaboration across the sector to design information and training, and evaluation findings which have led to a recommendation of government funding, Charlotte says this project has taken a long time to build momentum. Now it has traction with both the medical profession and the Mental Health Tribunal convinced of the value of the service.

The MHLC provides a free and confidential legal service to anyone who has experienced mental illness in Victoria where their legal problem relates to their mental illness.



GRANT /
Polyglot Theatre Company
\$75,000 over three years

Full marks for 5678

A \$75,000 grant over three years has funded a project giving a new voice to marginalised and disengaged students in Collingwood and Fitzroy, through the medium of film.

A program to keep inner-city students from diverse backgrounds engaged in education through the arts has provided powerful benefits, according to 5678 Film Club Project Director, Priya Namana.

For three years, Polyglot Theatre has been working with students aged 10 to 14 running an after-school film club called 5,6,7,8, which is giving participants new ways to express themselves and at the same time getting them more involved with their studies.

“A lot of these students (many of whom are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and live locally in the public housing and around the school in Collingwood) have been identified as at risk of disengaging with education. Engaging them in drama, narrative, storytelling and script writing is giving them a breadth of expression they may not have had before,” Priya said.

Photo by Theresa Harrison

“The benefit of taking the project and creating an after-school film club means that you’re away from the classroom model of teaching which can be didactic.

“The after-school club is more about problem solving and collaboration; it’s not an adult telling them what to do, so the expression is freer and not framed by school parameters. It’s more like a ‘club’ so it also creates a sense of belonging.

“What is great is kids finding such powerful ways of expressing themselves,” Priya said.

“We had one extremely shy student who wouldn’t say anything when he first arrived; the change has been remarkable. He’s now confident, expressive, engaged, open and confidently expressing his ideas and opinions because of the technical and socio-emotional skills he is developing. Essentially he’s engaging differently because he’s getting used to his own voice.”

The benefits of Polyglot’s approach clearly flow to the classroom with teachers commenting on the greater interaction, confidence in expression and commitment to an activity that students look forward to and enjoy.

“We had another group of students demonstrating some behavioural issues and we paired them with a young, male film maker. The change in them just really highlighted the need for a positive male influence in their lives. It’s so important to give students access to a diverse array of people; adults who are prepared to give them their time. These boys developed a great film about overcoming bullying and managing the powerplays in school between student and teacher,” Priya said.

“The opportunity to screen their films and speak about their work, also gives them a sense of pride.”

And the final word goes to one of the participants: “Before Film Club I did different stuff, I couldn’t really manage myself but now I can manage myself a lot. I am very attentive and I listen more and I think before I say more and I am not the irrational self that thinks violence or being aggressive is the way to fix it. Now I know how to express myself constructively.” – quote from a student at St Joseph’s School in Collingwood as part of a Victoria University evaluation.

Having built a library of films, a festival is now very much on the radar.

GRANT /
Clontarf Foundation
\$90,000 over three years



Relationships supporting school retention

A diverse and engaging program for students has resulted in an increase in Year 12 completion rates, consistently higher school attendance, and a clear preference for teenage Indigenous boys voluntarily joining the Clontarf Academy program at Robinvale ahead of other school options.

It is the relationships with strong male mentors, which is the key to the success of the Clontarf Academy program across Australia, according to Victorian Regional Manager, Charlie Shannon.

The program targets at-risk teenage Aboriginal male students who may otherwise have very low school attendance and provides them with an education and life skills program designed to ensure they complete Year 12 and obtain meaningful employment.

Having spent over 13 years with Clontarf in WA, the Northern Territory and now Victoria, Charlie says “we work hard to identify strong male mentors. These people are involved in the boys’ lives for long periods – we do everything to keep the boys on track from

school pick-ups, breakfast, sports training, after school programs, camps... so it’s important that we get the right people.”

In Robinvale, the program involves two full-time, locally-based Clontarf staff mentors – Leon Johnson and Travis Bussell – who counsel the school’s 29 Aboriginal students on a range of behavioural, lifestyle and academic issues through a relationship-based program designed to engage and retain them in the education system.

When you read about the program, it’s enough to make you want to go back to school. Community participation is a strong component with Meals on Wheels, Clean Up Australia Day, the schools gardening program and the highly anticipated parents and community football game. High on the list of priorities are the health activities, which include cooking classes, mental health checks and Indigenous conflict resolution training, as well as camps, sport, employment – site visits to local employers – and work experience in the local community and further afield.

The family-like support both during and after school is crucial to the Academy's success and one man knows this better than most from both sides of the fence.

Using his own experience as the only Indigenous male to complete Year 12 at Robinvale College in a decade, Clontarf Academy Director, Leon Johnson, has a unique perspective with which to guide his young charges.

Leon was the first in his family to finish Year 12. He set a trend with his sisters and brothers and now he is passing it on to his students.

"It is so positive to see the boys doing the same thing and making that (finishing Year 12) their goal too.

"I can relate to them; we're living in the same town, dealing with the same issues whether that's to do with family or school.

"Year 9 and 10 are the high-risk ages. My friends left at Year 10 – there were a range of reasons from family, dropping out or wanting to get a job early – but I made it a goal to finish Year 12.

"These days there is a lot more support. There are more extracurricular activities, more help with health and employment.

"When I was at school there were Koori Education Support officers. They definitely helped me but I had to depend on building my own teacher and pupil relationships."

R E Ross Trust funding over three years to the Clontarf program at Robinvale P-12 College is generating results that speak for themselves.

Since the Robinvale Clontarf Academy commenced in February 2010:

- student enrolments have grown from 17 students to 28 students
- average school attendance has been 79 per cent (and likely to rise with the help of a new targeted program)
- 14 Clontarf students have completed their Year 12 schooling (inclusive of 2017).

The welcoming and supportive program is also about creating confident young men who can look you in the eye and shake your hand, ready to take on the world.

Behind Clontarf's mission sits the compelling story for Indigenous students in terms of the lifetime impact of successful school completion. The benefits to individuals, families and the broader Australian community of young Indigenous males completing school cannot be overstated.

An independent study has demonstrated that the work of the Clontarf Foundation does reduce the impacts on Australian society in terms of the health and justice systems, where unfortunately Indigenous men are over represented.

The report, from ACIL Allen Consulting shows on average, between the ages of 18 and 64, Clontarf males are 13 per cent more likely to be employed than non-Clontarf males.

Over his working lifetime, a male who has been to a school with a Clontarf Academy, will receive less in welfare payments, have less impact on the health and justice systems and pay more in income tax.

Charlie says "It is quite remarkable how school completion changes the outcomes on almost every measure... if an Indigenous young man completes year 12 and gets a job. If we can do something to help with that journey, it will be incredibly worthwhile."

Another hallmark of the program seems to be the long-term relationships. "We have a strong alumni, we work hard to stay in touch and we always encourage the boys to come back. Our employment team seeks to support the boys wherever they need it. If you're a Clontarf alumnus you can come back at any time and ask for help.

"You learn to be patient and compassionate (in this role) because change doesn't happen overnight. You need to be pretty resilient; difficult, awful things can happen, and you know these boys pretty well, but that also means when things go well you get to celebrate the successes," Charlie said.

GRANT /
Barwon Community Legal Service
\$60,000 over two years

Supporting asylum seekers on their way to the starting line



One of the major challenges for an asylum seeker attempting to gain access to Australia is the paperwork and proof needed to apply for a temporary protection visa. That challenge became even greater when the Australian Government set a new deadline to apply for those who had arrived by boat between 13 August 2012 and 1 January 2014.

With the help of an R E Ross Trust grant of \$60,000 over two years, Barwon Community Legal Service along with Bellarine for Refugees (who initially pitched the idea to Barwon), developed the Seeking Refuge Project. This involved working with Refugee Legal to marshal an army of volunteers, create its own streamlined process and tackle the job of getting 76 local asylum seeker applications completed before the government's deadline of October 2017.

Once it became clear they needed extra funds for interpreters, the team also worked with Deakin University in Geelong to run a Pozible campaign to raise the money.

"Every client who contacted us got help," says Marijana Hawkins, the Seeking Refuge project worker and lawyer who coordinated the process; now a blueprint for others.

Before her team could start providing help, they needed to train 70 volunteers, put them through police checks and skill them up on the art of the extensive application form. People from all walks of life wanted to help – law, social work and psychology students, retirees, doctors, celebrities and more. Lawyers with practicing certificates registered as Migration Agents and were trained. Others were trained to provide administrative support to the clients and migration agents, completing the paperwork, not to mention managing the ongoing relationships with the asylum seekers, providing support and updates.

"There is a huge amount of work in one application. There are 101 questions, all in English and all the conversations happen through interpreters," Marijana said.

"As part of the application you need to give a detailed history of the past 30 years of employment, addresses, travel and movements, details of all family members – for someone who has moved around a lot, it's very challenging to remember and you don't have these records, particularly if you have been in detention.

"Listening to their stories, most of them are just horrific. It's hard to believe what they've been through and that they are still so resilient. So many are quite positive because they are safe for now," Marijana said.

Not only are they safe, but many are working and being productive "some have set up their own businesses and are doing well. They are clever, with degrees and experience in their own countries.

"It helps with the long wait when they are working and feel like they are contributing."

Marijana says many of the clients have been the most grateful she's experienced in her time as a lawyer; someone has taken time to get to know them, keep them informed and built genuine rapport and trust.

A refugee to Australia herself, Marijana says if she could give asylum seekers one thing it would be clarity. "There will always be a process to enter the country but just give people clarity and a realistic timeframe for each stage of the process. It would allow people to plan and remove the suspense of not knowing."

Even though some of the clients have been waiting up to five years to progress to the visa interview stage, the care and intensive work from the project team has put 76 individuals and families closer to the starting line.

GRANT /
Bendigo Science and Technology
Museum
\$75,000 over three years

Discovering a love of science

Teacher and students at the Discovery Science and Technology Centre

Australia's economy is set to benefit significantly if we can boost the number of students pursuing further study in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The Discovery Science and Technology Centre in Bendigo (Discovery), in partnership with La Trobe University, has been doing its bit to improve science teaching and learning along with the career prospects of regional young people in Victoria.

Their program, supported by a grant from the R E Ross Trust, trains second year preservice primary school teachers to teach more and better science in country classrooms. The program is linked to the Victorian curriculum and based on the award-winning Primary Connections resources.

In a participant survey after the first year of the program:

- 76 per cent reported an increase in confidence in teaching STEM
- 82 per cent reported an increase in competence in teaching STEM
- 88 per cent said they'd use elements of the program in their teaching practice, and
- 93 per cent said they'd like to bring their classes to Discovery in the future.

In 2017, preservice teachers studying at La Trobe's Bendigo campus had the benefit of access to trained science communicators from the ANU and Questacon in Canberra, teaching them experiments

and techniques to inspire pupils in the classroom. The soon-to-be teachers were also provided with resources to take into their new schools when they graduated.

In 2018, preservice primary school teachers from both Bendigo and Mildura campuses were involved in the program with Bendigo Discovery, which hosted workshops in the University environment and on site at Discovery with local Bendigo-based primary schools. The Bendigo Discovery activity afforded preservice teachers an authentic experience of a science-based excursion from the perspective of the teacher, tied to the Primary Connections resources and lessons.

The expectation is that on completion of the program, graduates will come into schools with real life experience and confidence while existing teachers will be encouraged to be open, learn and increase their comfort in teaching STEM also.

When you think that each graduate student will teach nearly 1000 pupils over their career, this is one intervention set to create a ripple effect. It will build on Discovery's mission of inspiring and nourishing scientific curiosity and their number one priority of helping teachers inspire primary students to love science and study STEM.

The not-for-profit, hands-on science centre at Bendigo Discovery was Australia's first science and technology centre outside of a major metropolitan area and hosts 30,000 visitors annually.

PROGRAM /
Foundation for Rural & Regional
Renewal
\$125,000

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) harnesses the power of collective investment between government, business and philanthropy to improve the lives of those living in rural, regional and remote Australia.

Since 2002, the R E Ross Trust has provided funding to FRRR's Small Grants for Rural Communities Program, which in turn provides small not-for-profit community groups access to grants of up to \$5000.

Projects funded through FRRR's longest-running program are about building community resilience, developing organisational resilience and capacity, enhancing environmental sustainability, fostering cultural vibrancy, lifelong education and training, backing projects which create employment and greater economic strength, and improving community health and social wellbeing. In other words, helping small communities of under 10,000 people in regional and remote Australia become stronger and more sustainable.

In the 2017-18 financial year, the R E Ross Trust provided grant funding of \$125,000 to the Small Grants for Rural Communities Program as part of a two-year commitment totaling \$250,000.

Small grants for small rural communities

PROGRAM /
Emergency Relief and Material Aid
 \$513,540

The R E Ross Trust's Emergency Relief and Material Aid Program provides three-year funding to agencies who deal directly with people affected by poverty and adverse circumstances.

Last year's review of the program identified 20 agencies to be awarded funding, covering geographic areas and population groups where the funds will have the greatest impact.

The R E Ross Trust paid \$513,540 to the 20 agencies in 2017-18.

Anglicare Victoria	\$33,000
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre	\$20,000
Brotherhood of St Laurence	\$27,000
Casey North Community Information & Support Service	\$27,000
Centre for Non-Violence Inc	\$40,000
Community Support Frankston Inc	\$20,540
Council of Single Mothers and their Children	\$30,000
Cranbourne Information & Support Service	\$25,000
Dandenong Ranges Emergency Relief Service	\$15,000
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal	\$40,000
Goulburn Valley Community Care & Emergency Relief Inc	\$20,000
Launch Housing	\$40,000
MacKillop Family Services	\$25,000
Mornington Community Information and Support Centre Inc	\$25,000
Morwell Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre	\$20,000
Orbost Neighbourhood House	\$15,000
Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre Inc	\$25,000
St Mark's Community Centre	\$13,000
The Queen's Fund	\$28,000
Western Port Community Support	\$25,000
TOTAL	\$513 540



**Morwell Neighbourhood House
& Learning Centre**
\$20,000

In so many Victorian communities the ability to call on small grant funding for emergency relief from a local organisation is extremely valuable.

Morwell Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre is one of the 20 organisations across the state, administering the Emergency Relief and Material Aid (ERMA) program funds on behalf of the R E Ross Trust and taking the help to where it is needed most.

Morwell Neighbourhood House has also been tracking the value of its work, with Deloitte Access Economics conducting a recent social impact analysis.

The report showed that in 2017 Morwell Neighbourhood House provided in excess of \$600,000 worth of value to the community, with the actual value likely to be far greater.

The report identified that programs like Morwell Neighbourhood House’s Food Bank, “provided significant community benefit in both a financial and resilience way”.

Throughout the week, Morwell provides a food bank, including groceries for those needing emergency food relief. The food bank opened in 2017 to make food available to people while they waited for government benefits to kick in. The neighbourhood house undertakes this kind of work to “advance the social and public welfare of the more vulnerable members of our community. We provide a range of supports and programs for people experiencing hardship and disadvantage.”

This kind of grass roots community support is delivered in different ways across the state by all 20 of the organisations receiving ERMA funding.

Pictured: Graham Bengel, a volunteer at the Morwell Neighbourhood House Food Bank.



International Child Health

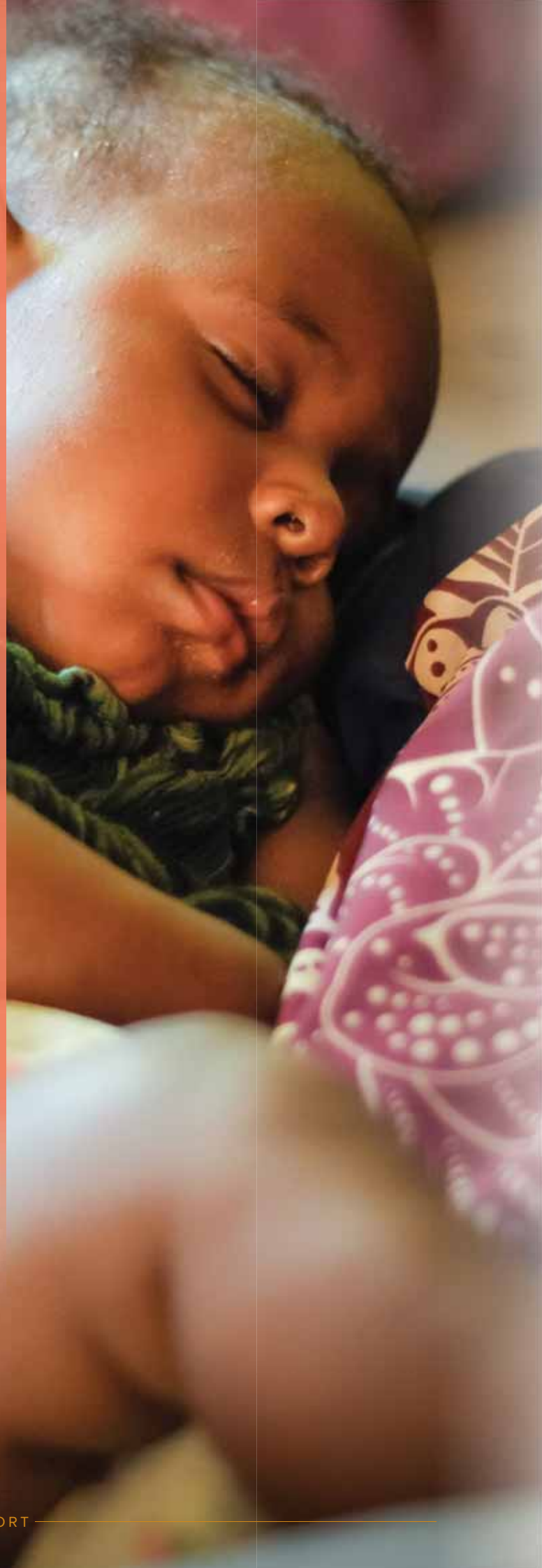
Child Health in the Pacific Region

Utilising the expertise of the Centre for International Child Health at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital, the R E Ross Trust has partnered with the Centre since 2005 to run a fellowship program for doctors and nurses working in child health from the Pacific Islands, particularly in Papua New Guinea, but also the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The program has had many outputs in 2017-18: a clinical training course for nurses and doctors working in remote areas, research projects completed by paediatric trainees, publications, and leadership opportunities, all supported by the R E Ross Trust.

In 2017-18, the R E Ross Trust provided **\$128,380** for the Regional Fellowship Program.

The following stories expand on the activities and benefits of the program.



Sharing knowledge improves care for children

Many health workers in the Pacific have no opportunities for continuing professional development or updating of their knowledge, but the dynamic nature of health and the need to improve quality calls for the continued updating of skills.

With support from the R E Ross Trust, the ninth Papua New Guinea (PNG) Hospital Care for Children course was held in Kundiawa earlier this year, with 40 participants from remote health centres and district hospitals from seven PNG provinces. The course included nurses, health extension officers, community health workers, doctors and biomedical technicians.

One of the course facilitators was Professor Trevor Duke, Director of the Centre for International Child Health (CICH) and Adjunct Professor of Child Health at the School of Medicine in PNG, who said one of the most valuable aspects of the course was participants sharing their own experiences in managing seriously ill children in their health facilities.

“The course highlights the value of broad-based training that adds to health workers’ overall skills and knowledge, which is more efficient than narrow training on one topic. This course is a form of continuing medical education, as it builds on what health workers already know. It challenges



Participants at the Hospital Care for Children course

participants with new information and reinforces existing knowledge and practical skills,” Trevor said.

The four-and-a-half-day course, developed in PNG and the Solomon Islands and used in many other countries in Asia and the Pacific, is based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on Hospital Care for Children, which staff at CICH contributed to.

Practical, hands on and evidence-based, the course teaches health workers how to use guidelines in everyday clinical practice and is continually updated in response to current priorities and disease burdens.

Trainees report research progress at paediatric symposium

Ten research projects completed by students in the University of PNG paediatric training program were presented at the annual Paediatric Symposium in Madang in August 2017. These were supported by supervision and training in epidemiology, and many received small grants; all part of the R E Ross Trust Fellowship.

The topics of the research projects were diverse and included:

- Paediatric cancer: outcomes and perception of parents on care
- Waiting times in the children’s emergency department in Port Moresby
- A trial of inhaled nebulised saline in infants with bronchiolitis

- Care seeking of parents whose children have pneumonia or diarrhoea in Mendi
- Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in Port Moresby
- Anaemia in children in Kimbe
- Prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV in Port Moresby
- Outcomes for low birthweight babies in the first year of life
- The experience of having Rheumatic Heart Disease among children and adolescents in Port Moresby and Rabaul, and
- Children with epilepsy in Port Moresby.

The CICH works with trainees on project design, research methods and analysis which helps with learning in epidemiology, critical thinking and public health. Publication in peer-reviewed journals for several previous projects is starting to demonstrate the value of this kind of capacity building.

Responding to the mortality and morbidity report

Also released at the annual paediatric symposium was the 2017 Annual Child Mortality and Morbidity Report for PNG, the eighth report of its kind.

Participants in the R E Ross Trust Regional Fellowship Program have been significant contributors to this report, putting their newfound knowledge to work, particularly Edilson Yano (pictured right), paediatric surveillance officer.

Some of the outcomes make for sober reading from the perspective of a rich country like Australia and demonstrate the importance of this kind of tracking report, funded by the Trust. More important are initiatives based on this data.

Each year the reporting becomes more meaningful and detailed, with diagnoses of infant mortality categories such as rheumatic and congenital heart disease, cancer, anaemia and child protection recent additions.

In 15 participating hospitals in PNG the overall child mortality rate for 2017 was 7.3 per cent, down just slightly on the 2015 figure of 7.7 per cent. Neonatal deaths accounted for just over one third of the child deaths, with birth asphyxia, neonatal infections and very low birth weight the leading causes of death in neonates. Pneumonia was the leading cause of admission for children, and severe malnutrition was present in 13.5 per cent of children admitted to hospitals.

Many deaths can be avoided with preventative strategies in communities, vaccination, better nutrition, healthier environments and sanitation. Prevention of other causes of death requires improvements in health worker skills, knowledge and numbers, and better systems so trained health workers can improve the quality of care.

The value of this kind of reporting, which has now been in place since 2008, is that trends and outcomes are being tracked and demonstrated consistently and the result is a clear set of recommendations aimed at reducing the deaths and improving outcomes in all categories.

The government has responded in many ways, including developing the PNG National Child Health Plan, which outlines a way forward for improving child health in PNG. The development of this plan was supported by the R E Ross Trust.

REGIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



Paediatric disease surveillance to improve outcomes

Edilson Yano

“It is only by understanding disease burdens and examining patient outcomes that we can improve the services we deliver and the health of our communities.”

It is with this sentiment in mind that Paediatric Surveillance Officer, Edilson Yano, carries out his research into the country’s yearly child morbidity and mortality data.

Edilson is a Health Extension Officer by training, and completed a Diploma of Public Health in 2015, and a Masters in Public Health in 2017, both supported by the R E Ross Trust Fellowship.

Now the coordinator of Papua New Guinea Paediatric Hospital Reporting (PHR) program, Edilson’s work involves recording, monitoring, and analysing data on children’s hospital admissions and deaths.

The program he works on focuses on common diseases of childhood and quality of care. Its findings go on to inform recommendations that the program publishes through its annual report on child mortality and morbidity. Having quality data from around the country, means recommendations are tailored to the PNG context. The report provides local paediatricians and nurses with evidence-based advice for treating and preventing common causes of childhood illnesses and death.

The PHR program and its associated yearly report have been running since 2008, when it was developed by the paediatricians in PNG, and Prof Trevor Duke and Adrian Hutchinson of the CICH. The program's coverage has grown to 17 participating hospitals, and in the last eight years has reported data on over 150,000 admissions and their outcomes.



Paediatrician learns from the best to help the second busiest hospital in PNG

Dr Rosemary Kipalan

Paediatrician Dr Rosemary Kipalan will next year take on the role as a senior paediatrician at the second busiest hospital in her country; the Angau Hospital in Lae, Papua New Guinea where she completed her initial training.

In preparation, for the past year Rosemary has been taking an intensive training program at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) in Melbourne, so that she can bring the same high standard of care to her young patients back home.

"Treating children in a developing country setting presents unique challenges; a lack of resources means wanting to help, but at the same time feeling very limited in being able to provide help.

"In PNG, medical, allied health support, imaging, laboratory resources etc. are very limited. I am spending a year at the RCH to gain exposure and experience by working in a world-class tertiary hospital that is well resourced. The RCH provides such a high standard of care to patients. I hope I can learn from this experience and improve on some aspects of health care in Lae, especially learning how to apply similar care with the resources that I have available," Rosemary said.

"I love children, and I love working in general paediatrics. One of the challenges of paediatrics I have found is having a child be totally dependent on you but unable to communicate. For example, an adult patient can speak when something is wrong, but a child who hasn't learnt to speak, can only cry. My challenge has been to really take time, to listen and observe, and use the best of my abilities to help treat a sick child.

"My family members have been my biggest supporters; my husband and my children, but also my parents and siblings. In fact, I became a doctor because my father encouraged me to, but paediatrics is such a rewarding and supportive branch of medicine to work in, so I have always loved my work.

"I am a mother as well as a doctor, and I feel that my maternal instincts can help me empathise with children and families. For me, personally, it helps push me a little further and understand a little better."

Dr Kipalan's visit is supported by the RCH and the R E Ross Trust Regional Fellowship Program, which is administered through the CICH.

To enable other Pacific Island paediatricians to benefit from the world-class training provided at the RCH, the hospital has set-aside a one-year registrar training position for a paediatric trainee or junior paediatrician from PNG or other Pacific Island state.



2017-18 Total Grants

\$128,380



Environmental Preservation

The Trustees granted **\$348,730** to organisations across Victoria for the acquisition, preservation and maintenance of national or public parks. In line with the Roy Ross Will, the Trust maintains a focus on the protection and preservation of native flora and fauna in its granting approach.

In addition to the grants, the Trustees made an impact investment of **\$500,000** to the Conservation Ecology Centre to assist with the purchase of land for Wildlife Wonders.



Helmeted Honeyeater

The following grants were paid in 2017-18:

Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network

Establishing a sustaining fund for environmental philanthropy. Two grants awarded:

\$50,000 and \$5000

Biolinks Alliance

Glideways in the Melbourne Ark: connecting science and practice to reconnect landscapes (with a focus on the habitat of Gliding Possums)

\$40,000

Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc

Habitat security for Victoria's critically endangered state emblems

\$15,200

Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group

Combining citizen science and academic science (partnering with Federation University) to run a three-year monitoring and conservation program for threatened bats of the upper Moorabool River catchment region.

\$8530

Odonata

To establish a safe haven for the reintroduction to Victoria of the Eastern Bettong and other priority endemic endangered species within the new Orana Farm Safe Haven. This will include installation of a 5.5km feral proof fence around 211 hectares of pristine plains grasslands and plains Woodlands forests habitat on the Loddon River.

\$100,000

Regent Honeyeater Project Inc

General project support, employment of a coordinator and field officer

\$30,000

Trust for Nature

Restoring the landscape at Ned's Corner

\$20,000

Trust for Nature

Conservation finance and partnerships project for new conservation approaches

\$25,000

Wettenhall Environmental Trust

Small Environmental Grant Scheme

\$55,000



Wildlife Wonders Creative Director, Brian Massey, with Co-Founder of the Conservation Ecology Centre, Shayne Neal.

Photo by Doug Gimesy.

Impact investment to boost Wildlife Wonders

IMPACT INVESTMENT / Conservation Ecology Centre
\$500,000 over two years

A \$500,000 impact investment loan has started the ball rolling for an important social enterprise and conservation project on the Great Ocean Road near Apollo Bay.

The loan from the R E Ross Trust to the Conservation Ecology Centre in the Otways, went towards the purchase of the 20-hectare property running from the road to the sea, five minutes west of Apollo Bay. The site will be the home of Wildlife Wonders, an eco-tourism attraction which will both engage

visitors and generate ongoing funding for conservation in the region.

Lizzie Corke, CEO of the Conservation Ecology Centre, says Wildlife Wonders is critical from a number of perspectives – social, economic and environmental.

“The Great Ocean Road is the most visited nature-based destination in Australia and currently there are very few facilitated or curated experiences in nature.”

Planning permits have been awarded and work has started on planting and the creation of natural

pathways, which will enable visitors to experience the beauty of the natural surrounds, learning about conservation as they go.

To give some sense of the visual splendor planned, the Conservation Ecology Centre has engaged Brian Massey – the Greensmaster for The Lord of the Rings films and Art Director of the Hobbit films – as Creative Director for Wildlife Wonders. He will build on his reputation as the landscape designer for New Zealand’s successful Hobbiton, to develop a guided walk through spectacular bushland, to see wildlife living naturally. Conservationist guides will lead the walks, with an educational focus on the conservation programs and species people can see around them. Invisible to the visitors, but very effective, will be a predator-proof fence to keep out foxes and cats, enabling small native mammals to thrive.

“Wildlife Wonders will play a key role in slowing down the normal Great Ocean Road trip helping visitors to connect with the area, extending their stay and spend,” Lizzie said.

As visitors come to Wildlife Wonders, all surplus funds will be paid as a conservation distribution to the Conservation Ecology Centre, funding further conservation and research right across the Otways.

“Generating reliable and sustainable funding allows us to invest in conservation in a way we’ve never been able to before, increasing the breadth and depth of scientific research and improving the viability and resilience of threatened species populations,” Lizzie said.

“The flow-on benefits of secure employment – estimated at 35 full time jobs – strengthens the community and increases the economic benefit.

“Often there are challenges in finding funding for long term or innovative conservation projects or salaries in conservation. The sustainability of a business-based approach means we can plan effective long-term programs.”

A subsequent commitment of \$2 million from the Commonwealth Government and \$1.5 million from the Victorian State Government will build on some of the important first steps towards this project taken when funders like the R E Ross Trust took the initial leap of faith.

All going to plan, Wildlife Wonders will open to the public in late 2019.

GRANT /
Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
\$30,000 over two years

Restoring habitat for our State emblem

The Helmeted Honeyeater is the Victorian State avian emblem and was also critically endangered before a strategic habitat restoration project started to net significant results.

“It’s a bit like the canary down the coal mine,” says acting president of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Alan Clayton, “the health and numbers of the honeyeater are an indication of the state of the overall habitat.”

Working on Sheepstation Creek in Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve (YNCR), a narrow sedge-rich swamp gum habitat with a wide range of rare flora and fauna in the Yarra Valley, the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater have been taking a whole of ecology approach and, with the help of a \$30,000 grant from the R E Ross Trust, restoring the habitat of this beautiful yellow and grey bird.

The restoration of a good habitat is based on a combination of science and experience with the help of almost 200 volunteers. Half a million tree shrubs have been planted in the reserve, one of the largest supplementary feeding programs in the country has been implemented, and changing the release time of birds bred in captivity in Healesville, from spring to autumn, is netting great results.

Where the honeyeater was all but gone, now over 200 are living in the area.

A fencing project was a crucial component of the plan, with deer and kangaroo populations providing a significant impediment to the honeyeater maintaining access to enough food and shelter.

Alan says the fact that the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater group have been able to start scaling back the supplementary feeding program is a great sign of success.

This work is the first step in creating a corridor of protection, which will allow species to move and stay safe, even in times of disease, fire or drought, all of which have had significant impacts in the past.

GRANT /
Foundation for Australia's Most
Endangered Species (FAME)
\$10,000

Humane approach to feral cat threat

In 2017, the R E Ross Trust provided a \$10,000 grant to the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species to allow it to optimise and test a new humane trap called the Felixer; an automated feral cat control device.

Feral cats represent a key threat to many vertebrates in Australia but have proven difficult to control due to their reluctance to take baits or enter traps when food is abundant. Through a decade of applied research collaborations, a tool has been developed that takes advantage of feral cats' unique behaviour and morphology.

Grooming traps are humane, targeted and effective, automatically applying a measured dose of toxin to a cat's fur, which is ingested when they groom.

The project enables engineering optimisation to enhance the performance of the grooming traps, as well as field testing of the Felixer prior to commercialisation.

PROGRAM /
Wettenhall Environment Trust
\$55,000



Small grants for innovative community environment projects

The Wettenhall Environment Trust supports projects that enhance or maintain the vitality and diversity of Australia's natural living environment.

A partnership between Wettenhall and the R E Ross Trust ensures there is a focus within the program on flora and fauna conservation in Victoria. 2017-18 was the 10th year of the partnership, seeing Wettenhall Environment Trust receive, research and approve

small grants of under \$10,000. Its priority is backing innovative, community, environmental projects which result in long-term improvement to the natural environment.

The Wettenhall Environment Trust distributed \$55,000 on behalf of the R E Ross Trust in 2017-18 and the following stories illustrate selected highlights*.

Martin's toadlet, photo by A O'Grady, courtesy of Museums Victoria

*The Wettenhall Environment Trust awards grants through the calendar year so the full \$55,000 is not represented here.

Turtles Australia

Turtles in The Classroom and Conservation Dogs and Turtles

\$6300

Two small projects were funded with Turtles Australia, giving the group some much needed support and capacity.

Once common, Eastern Long-necked Turtles have declined by up to 91 per cent in the wild and are becoming locally extinct due to road kills, disease, predation and harvest. The Turtles in the Classroom project allowed school students to raise fresh water turtles for release into the wild.

Turtles Australia has been working with another Wettenhall-funded project at Latrobe University to protect native animals. As part of the second project, dogs are being taught to detect turtle eggs in the environment at Gunbower. Once eggs are detected, volunteers cover them to protect them from fox predation.

Hindmarsh Landcare Network

Bird monitoring to measure revegetation success

\$7200

Each year, millions of dollars are spent on revegetation projects around Australia yet relatively little is known about whether these projects are creating new habitats for wildlife, or just planting trees. Monitoring birds is a way to collect data to assess the success of habitat restoration. As part of a two-year project, volunteers have been undertaking seasonal surveys on a range of sites and adding this information to their existing long-term data. Analysis of this data will paint a picture about what habitat is working for biodiversity and under what conditions, helping to improve future restoration activities.

Museums Victoria

Conservation, species diversity and ecological requirements of Uperoleia 'toadlets' in Gippsland

\$9462

Little is known about the secretive Uperoleia frogs in Gippsland, and this project started a comprehensive survey and ecological assessment, including genetic analysis, to provide critical information for long term conservation. The expert research team, led by the Museum's Jane Melville, worked with community groups and park rangers to determine how both male and female frogs survive in relation to their water source and habitat fragmentation. They also gathered important information about frog behaviour. The project will result in a revision of distribution maps, and assessment of species' conservation status.



Students from Lilydale High School, Jayde Cliff and Emily Matthews, along with teacher Marcus Whitby and Turtles Australia President, Graham Stockfeld.

Environmental, Sustainability and Conservation Committee

Rainbow Bee Eater

\$5250

Damian Kelly

Bird Walks of Castlemaine

\$3250

Falls Creek Environmental Interest Group

Falls Creek Environmental Education

Signage

\$4000

Violet Town Action Group

BirdLove book production and community education

\$5000



2017-18 Total Grants

\$348,730

Impact Investment

\$500,000



Hillview Quarries

Giving to the Mornington Peninsula

As a wholly owned subsidiary of the R E Ross Trust, 100 per cent of the profits of Hillview Quarries are distributed to community organisations through the Trust's granting strategy. Hillview Quarries also provides financial assistance and quarry product donations to local organisations on the Mornington Peninsula throughout the year.

Hillview Quarries

Hillview Quarries is located in Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula. For almost 50 years, it has supplied superior brown and grey granite products to local, state and federal government authorities, private contractors, retail garden supply outlets and the general public.

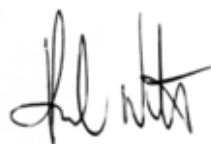
Hillview Quarries is proud to have a long history of being sensitive to the environmental needs of its sites and the community by carefully managing the flora and fauna and waterways within its surroundings. Hillview Quarries has won awards and been praised for its quarry rehabilitation and environmental focus. The quarry operates with a full-time horticulturist and revegetation is undertaken with trees propagated in its own nursery. To date, over 80,000 trees have been planted.

In the 2017-18 year, Hillview Quarries made cash donations and sponsorships of \$82,100 and product donations of \$19,817 (listed over) to local organisations, bringing the amount gifted by the R E Ross Trust and Hillview Quarries to the Mornington Peninsula community to more than \$14.8 million.

In 2017-18, Hillview Quarries commenced work on gaining a new approval to re-establish quarry operations and access additional adjoining resources at the former Pioneer quarry site in Boundary Road. This proposal was referred to the Minister for Planning to determine whether an Environment Effect Statement (EES) was required for the project under *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

On 28 May 2018, the Minister for Planning, The Hon. Richard Wynne MP, determined that Hillview Quarries is required to prepare an EES.

The preparation of an EES is likely to take two to three years and will involve expert independent scientific studies and regulatory reviews. Community engagement is pivotal throughout the entire process. An independent panel will then hear evidence (studies), including public submissions, and will provide a report to the Planning Minister with recommendations. The Planning Minister will then assess the panel report, release an assessment and conditions and, if successful, then the statutory decision makers will issue approvals.



Paul Nitas

Chief Executive Officer, Hillview Quarries

In the 2017-18 year, Hillview Quarries donated product with an estimated value of close to \$20,000 to the following organisations:

Advance Community College
Boneo Fire Brigade
Dromana Community Garden
Dromana Men's Shed
Flinders Fire Brigade
Hands on Learning
Inghams Growers Association

Lord Somers Camp and Power House
Mornington Peninsula Bowmen
Mount Erin Secondary College
Red Hill and District Memorial Preschool
Red Hill Opportunity Shop
Rosebud Community Garden
Rotary Club of Dromana

RSPCA
Somers Primary School
Somers School Camp
Somerville Rise Primary School
St Johns Flinders with St Marks
Balnarring Anglican Churches
Wallaroo Primary School

In the 2017-18 year, Hillview Quarries provided donations or sponsorships to the following organisations:

Australian Volunteer Coast Guard

Donation towards refurbishment of vessel
\$20,000

Crib Point Football Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$750

Dromana Australia Day Inc

Sponsorship of 2018 Dromana Australia Day event
\$5000

Dromana College

Sponsorship of the 2018 Scholarship Program
\$4500

Dromana Football Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2018 season
\$15,000

Dromana Junior Football & Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$1200

Friends of Jacksons Way Reserve (Mornington Peninsula Shire)

Jacksons Way Bushland Reserve (3-year project)
\$13,420

International Cool Climate Wine Show

Sponsorship of the 18th International Cool Climate Wine Show
\$1500

Main Ridge Bowls and Petanque Club

Donation for a new shelter at the bowls club
\$2000

Main Ridge Men's Shed

Trophy plaque
\$45

Mornington Baseball Club

Donation towards 2018 junior development
\$250

Mornington Football Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$800

Mornington Peninsula Schools Environment Week Committee

Sponsorship of Schools Environment Week 2018
\$2000

Mornington Peninsula Shire and Naturelinks

Jacksons Way Bushland Reserve (3-year project)
\$6205

Mount Martha Bowls Club

Product voucher for fundraising event
\$400

Mount Martha Bowls Club

Sponsorship for 2017-18 season
\$100

Pearcedale CFA

Sponsorship of 2018 calendar
\$220

Pearcedale Rural Fire Brigade

Sponsor a hole at the 15th Community Golf Day
\$200

Red Hill Consolidated School

Product to repair driveway and car park
\$5500

Red Hill Riders

Sponsorship of Gravity Event
\$1500

Red Hill Show

Sponsorship of 90th Red Hill Show
\$6000

Rosebud Beach Community Bowls Club

Sponsorship of 2017-18 season
\$300

Rosebud Football Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$1000

Rosebud Heart Soccer Club

Year 2 of 3-year sponsorship deal
\$3000

Rosebud Secondary College

Donation towards 2018 STEM program
\$2350

Rosebud Soccer Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$500

Rye Community House

Support for the operation of the centre
\$5000

Rye Sports and Social Club

Sponsorship of 2018 Rye Gift
\$1500

Sorrento Football Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2018 season
\$880

Southern Peninsula Cancer Support Group

Donation towards general operating costs
\$500

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Donation of product to reinstate running track
\$1815

The Southern Peninsula Food For All Inc

Donation towards emergency food parcels
\$1000

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association

Donation towards 2018 Reconciliation Walk
\$500



**SPONSORSHIP /
90th year of the Red Hill Show
\$6000**

Every year thousands of people attend the Red Hill Show to enjoy a great family day and be part of a wonderful community celebration.

The value of an agricultural show to the community and surrounding areas is not lost on Hillview Quarries, which was one of the major sponsors of the 90th Red Hill Show in 2018.

The sponsorship valued at \$6000 is just one of many sponsorships and donations the quarry makes to community life on the Mornington Peninsula.

Shows of this type have been held on the Mornington Peninsula for over 150 years and some of the funds donated went towards the historical display at the show.

**DONATION /
Supporting safety on the coast line
\$20,000**

A second permanent vessel to assist the Safety Beach Coast Guard with training and rescue on the peninsula, has recently been refurbished and returned to the flotilla, thanks to a \$20,000 donation from Hillview Quarries in 2017-18.

As part of Hillview's commitment to local community projects on the Mornington Peninsula, the refurbishment included upgrades to navigational and radar equipment and steering, trailer modifications, repair of water leaks and repainting, all to ensure continued safety to the community.

The funding from Hillview was supplemented by Federal Government funding to match local fundraising activities.

The Safety Beach Coast Guard, based at Dromana, was recently awarded Victorian State Flotilla of the Year.

Photos courtesy of the Red Hill Show and photographer, Yanni.

Governance

The R E Ross Trust is a perpetual charitable trust established in Victoria in 1970 by the will of the late Roy Everard Ross. The will named the five original Trustees and provided for Trustees to choose new Trustees upon the retirement or death of serving Trustees.

Each of the five Trustees holds two half shares in a nominee company, R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd. All five Trustees are Directors of that company which is the nominal owner of the assets of the R E Ross Trust. All issued shares are held in the name of R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd on trust for the R E Ross Trust.

The company employs the staff of the R E Ross Trust, including the Trust's Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the management of the Trust.

Trustees retire no later than June 30 in the financial year in which they turn 75 years or complete a term of 12 years, whichever comes first.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

Statutory responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Trustees are set out in the provisions of the will and the *Trustee Act 1958* (Vic).

Responsibilities include:

- Administration of the Trust, including the employment of staff and other services Trustees deem "necessary or desirable in carrying out the trusts of [the] will", the expenses of which may be met from the income of the Trust.
- Investment of the funds of the Trust, including holding these investments in the name of a custodian trustee for which purpose the Trustees may form a company, R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd, the expenses of which may be met from the income of the Trust.
- Payment and application of the income of the Trust to charities or for charitable purposes. In their capacities as Trustees of the R E Ross Trust and as Directors of R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd and Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd, the Trustees also have responsibilities under a number of Victorian and Commonwealth laws, including corporations, industrial, environmental and taxation laws.

Other responsibilities

The present Trustees consider their responsibilities also include:

- pay and apply the Trust's income to achieve positive impacts for public benefit (will and Trustees' decisions),
- treat applicants and recipients of Trust grants fairly and consistently,
- make information publicly available on the basis of Trustees' granting decisions (guidelines), audited annual accounts and grants made each year.

Trustee decisions and meetings

Decisions

The will provides for decisions to be made by a majority of Trustees. Except in circumstances approved by Trustees, all significant decisions are made at meetings of Trustees. The Trust maintains a Financial Authorities Register which sets out who may exercise authority under certain circumstances which have financial implications.

Meetings

During the year there were 11 meetings of the Trust and four meetings of the Investment Committee. Eleven meetings of the Directors of Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd were held as well as three meetings for the Directors of R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd.

Remuneration

Payment of Trustees

By special orders of the Supreme Court of Victoria, the Trustees are paid commission if the Attorney-General of Victoria is satisfied with the Trust's annual accounts. The Trust submits a copy of the annual accounts to the Attorney-General each year, in the form of the annual report, together with a report of the activities of the Trust.

Auditors

The auditor for the R E Ross Trust and R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries is Pitcher Partners.

Trustee disclosures

Jeremy Kirkwood, Trustee

Chairman, Talisman Mining Limited
Chairman, Kin Mining NL
Director, Zenitas Healthcare Limited
(resigned March 18)
Chair, Geelong Grammar School
Director, Independent Schools Victoria
Director, Nurturecare Pty Ltd

Geoff Nicholson, Trustee

Deputy Chair, Launch Housing Ltd
Director, Homeground Real Estate Pty Ltd
Director, United Energy Distribution Holdings Ltd
Director, Marchmont Hill Consulting Pty Ltd
(resigned February 2018)
Director, Telecommunications Industry
Ombudsman Ltd
Director, Athletics Australia Ltd

Ian Renard, AM, Trustee

Eda Ritchie, AM, Trustee

Board Member, Melbourne Recital Centre
Chair, Victorian College of the Arts Foundation

Jenny Stephens, Trustee

Council Member, Philanthropy Australia
Director, Tanjable Pty Ltd

Staff

Ms Sarah Hardy
Chief Executive Officer

Ms Margarita Sagris
Office Manager and Executive Assistant

Ms Pam Mitchell
Finance Manager

Ms Rebecca Chew
Program Manager

Ms Venetia Taylor (absent from photo)
Program Manager

Ms Dina Vlanes
Administration Officer

Left to right: Pam Mitchell, Rebecca Chew,
Margarita Sagris, Sarah Hardy, Dina Vlanes



Investments and Financial Report

Framework

The will of Roy Everard Ross provides the Trustees hold on trust the balance of the “real and personal estate” of Mr Ross remaining after payment of debts, expenses and duties following his death, in order “to pay or apply the income there from in perpetuity...”. The will authorises the Trustees to invest the Trust’s monies as they “think fit” and “to vary, alter, transpose and reinvest” monies.

The Trust is a tax concession charity, is registered for GST but is not a deductible gift recipient.

Investments

Investment objectives

The investment parameters set out the Trust’s investment objectives which are to:

- a. generate a total return of CPI +4% p.a. over a rolling five-year period
- b. generate an appropriate balance between income and growth returns, bearing in mind that income generation is a key objective of the R E Ross Trust and imputation credits are refunded from the Australian Taxation Office. Income is to be distributed from the portfolio on a quarterly basis
- c. at least maintain the real value of the funds under management as measured by the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) over a five-year rolling period
- d. tolerance for a negative return is one in every six years.

Investment policy

The Trust’s Investment Manager for the 2017-18 was Evans & Partners. The Investment Manager is authorised to direct the investment and reinvestment of such monies as are allocated by the R E Ross Trust in an actively managed diversified portfolio.

The portfolio is to consist of the asset classes and investment ranges listed below. The Investment Manager has discretion to manage the portfolio within these ranges subject to any overriding directive which may from time to time be given by the R E Ross Trust. Such directive shall be in writing to the Investment Manager.

The asset allocation profile is as follows:

- cash 0% to 15%
- hybrids and fixed interest 0% to 35%
- Australian equities (inclusive of listed property) 30% to 55%
- international equities 15% to 55%
- alternative investments 0% to 10%.

All securities other than cash and short-term securities must be listed on a recognised stock exchange, or have a reasonable prospect of being listed within six months of subscription, or be units in an unlisted trust or fund which has been agreed in writing by the R E Ross Trust as an authorised investment, or otherwise approved in writing by the Trust. No more than 20 per cent of fixed interest and hybrids can be invested in securities which are unrated or rated less than BBB. All cash and short-term deposits are to be placed with financial institutions which are rated no less than AA.

The portfolio may not include any excluded securities which at 30 June 2018 were:

- armaments
- alcohol
- gambling
- tobacco
- coal seam gas.

Investment reporting

The Investment Manager provides written reports on a quarterly basis and for the financial year as a whole.

Investment performance

Gross income for the year totalled \$7,321,363 a decrease of 12 per cent on the previous year.

At 30 June 2018, the book value of the net assets of the Trust was \$55,691,495 represented by:

- \$38,298,075 residuary (corpus) funds (an increase of \$548,830 on the prior year)
- \$14,542,645 reserves of accumulated income (up to 20 per cent withheld from distribution)
- \$2,850,775 accumulated surplus (an increase of \$63,710 from the prior year).

The total estimated market value of the investments was \$47.1 million, compared with the previous year's end value of \$42.3 million.

Financial Information and Reporting

For the year ended 30 June 2018, the Trustees prepared a special purpose financial report on the R E Ross Trust and its controlled entity, Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd.

The information contained in this financial report is drawn from the audited accounts of the R E Ross Trust for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

Payment of income as grants

Income paid and payable as grants during the year totalled \$4,620,035 (2017 \$4,124,386).

Expenses

Expenses comprise the three categories listed below:

- investment of the funds of the trust, including activities of Trustees, staff and payments to third parties
- activities of Trustees, staff and third parties directly related to the application of the income of the Trust to charities and for charitable purposes
- administration of the Trust, including all activities of Trustees, staff and third parties not directly related to investing activities or to application of the income of the Trust to charities and for charitable purposes.

Financial Reporting

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2018

Revenue and other income	Note	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
Revenue from continuing operations	3	7,321,363	8,353,742
Less: expenses			
Employee benefits expense		(630,684)	(621,793)
Depreciation expenses		(16,863)	(34,521)
Other Expenses		(819,135)	(714,705)
		(1,466,682)	(1,371,019)
Operating surplus prior to granting		5,854,681	6,982,723
Grants paid during the year*		(4,620,035)*	(4,124,386)
Net profit/loss from continuing operations		1,234,646	2,858,337
HVQ dividend		2,760,125	3,300,000

*this amount includes grants paid and payable this financial year

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2018

Current assets	Note	2018(\$)	2017(\$)
Cash and cash equivalents	4	1,911,667	2,119,998
Receivables	5	4,080,318	5,105,078
Investments	6	42,867,885	39,819,055
Other assets			
Total current assets		48,859,870	47,044,131
Non-current assets			
Receivables		5,432,592	5,432,592
Other financial assets	6	164,008	164,008
Property, plant and equipment		2,532,046	2,544,557
Total non-current assets		8,128,646	8,141,157
Total assets		56,988,516	55,185,288
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	1,256,093	1,200,744
Provisions		40,928	76,525
Total current liabilities		1,297,021	1,277,269
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		-	-
Total non-current liabilities		-	-
Total liabilities		1,297,021	1,277,269
Net assets		55,691,495	53,908,019
Trust funds			
Residuary estate funds		38,298,075	37,749,245
Other reserves		14,542,645	13,371,709
Accumulated surplus		2,850,775	2,787,065
Total trust funds		55,691,495	53,908,019
Investments per balance sheet		42,867,885	39,819,055
Market value of investments		47,138,860	42,263,627

Notes

Note 3: Revenue	2018(\$)	2017(\$)
Royalties and fees from Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd	1,218,64	1,147,035
Other Revenue		
Dividend income	4,082,963	4,794,321
Interest income	616,212	657,693
Imputation credits refunded	1,403,547	1,754,693
Total Revenue	7,321,363	8,353,742

Note 4: Cash and cash equivalents

Cash on hand	156	114
Cash at bank	619,035	624,252
Cash on deposit	1,292,476	1,495,632
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,911,667	2,119,998

Note 5: Receivables

Current

Trade debtors	104,780	93,490
Other receivable	3,975,538	5,011,588
Total receivables	4,080,318	5,105,078

Note 6: Investments

Current

Investment portfolio	42,867,885	39,819,055
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Interests in listed and unlisted securities are brought to account at cost and are measured at the lower of cost and market value at each reporting date. The market value of investments at reporting date is \$47,138,860 (2017: \$42,263,627).

Non-current

Private company shares	164,008	164,008
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Note 7: Payables

Current

Unsecured liabilities

Trade creditors	297,235	599,858
Sundry creditors and accruals	958,858	600,886
Total payables	1,256,093	1,200,744

Arfaa Sagor working as part of the Centre for Multicultural Youth's Pathways to Opportunity program. Photo by Stina from Gold and Grit Photography.





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Photo by Doug Gimesy, courtesy of Wildlife Wonders. Team members of the Conservation Ecology Centre walk amid the fern plantings.