

Annual Report
2019

Contents

What we do	3
Message from the Chair and CEO	4
Our granting approach for 2018-19	6
Featured grants	7
Grants paid in 2018-19	19
Governance	23
Investments and financial report	25
Financial reporting	26
Hillview Quarries	30

Roy Everard Ross – a man of foresight



Surveying the scene – Roy Everard Ross (right) with colleagues.

Production

Design by Jenny Bullock from The Designery.

Writing and editing by Writeside Communication.

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 Ross Trust was established in Victoria in 1970 by the will of Roy Everard Ross who was born in regional Victoria in 1899 and was always a keen bushman.

Mr Ross was an astute investor and entrepreneur, who came from the land and was at various times a surveyor, local government engineer, naval officer and quarry owner. 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.

The philanthropic approach he desired – with all net profits from his quarry and investments to go to charitable purposes – was and is unique to this day.

You will see the strong influence of Mr Ross and his will in all the work of the Trust and in the development of the granting strategy.

Since its inception, \$118.5 million has been distributed from the Trust. Combined with the contribution Hillview Quarries has made directly to the communities of the Mornington Peninsula, in the form of sponsorships, donations and product donations, the total distribution is \$133 million.

The Ross Trust is grateful for the foresight and philanthropy of our benefactor, the late Roy Everard Ross.

We are also grateful for the contribution of our grantees who continue to give life to his wishes.

The Ross Trust

Ground Level, Suite 2, 43 Agnes Street
East Melbourne Vic 3002
Telephone (03) 9690 6255
www.rosstrust.org.au
information@rosstrust.org.au

What we do

OUR VISION:

The Ross Trust is a perpetual charitable trust with a vision to create positive social and environmental change so Victorians can thrive.

OUR MISSION:

We address disadvantage, inequity and facilitate change by:

- delivering educational opportunities for vulnerable young Victorians
- enhancing biodiversity for the sustainability of Victoria's native flora, fauna and ecosystems
- maintaining the flexibility to respond to Victorians in crisis and work collaboratively to build the capacity of the philanthropic and social sector.

HOW WE WORK:

The Ross Trust is a compassionate and responsive philanthropic leader. We act with integrity and work transparently to foster ideas and innovation, achieve long-term impact and systemic change.

Looking back to move forward

Over the past financial year, the Trustees and staff of the Ross Trust – with valuable input from stakeholders and peers across the for-purpose sector – have worked to develop a five-year strategy with a more targeted granting approach.

This report outlines the new strategic approach, guided by the new vision and mission. It is also the final report covering grants awarded under the previous granting strategy and its four impact areas.

There is a sense of continuity. The history of the Trust and the intentions of its benefactor – Roy Everard Ross – have been kept at the forefront of decision making when making this shift.

You will see this continuity with grants that create the link between the former impact area, protecting flora and fauna, and the focus on biodiversity conservation.

Protecting vulnerable Victorians has always been at the core of the Trust's purpose and there has been a refinement: making sure young people in Victoria – particularly those from particularly susceptible cohorts – have equitable access to educational opportunities so they complete secondary school, regardless of their circumstances.

OUR VALUES:

Ethical

Sustainable

Innovative

Adaptive

Compassionate



Message from the Chair and CEO

Mapping a new path

Sometimes you are afforded the chance to stand back and think about what could change to help your work move forward with a clearer purpose.

This was the opportunity we gave ourselves over the last financial year as the Ross Trust undertook a significant review of its granting strategy and settled on a more focused, streamlined approach to its philanthropic activity.

Utilising contemporary learnings from the sector, the United Nations sustainable development goals and our own expertise gathered over many years of granting, the Trustees and team took a systematic approach to map the way forward, always mindful of Roy Everard Ross' original intent.

We developed a new vision and mission and, building on our youth homelessness theory of change work, devised an approach to grant making focussed on two new areas central to our revised strategy.

From 1 July 2019 we will focus on:

- **Educational Equity** – enabling young people in Victoria equitable access to educational opportunities so they complete secondary schooling
- **Biodiversity Conservation** – conserving and protecting Victoria's biodiversity so it is valued by all as part of a healthy and resilient environment.

In keeping with our history of grant making, the Ross Trust will also fund selected areas of need. This includes responding to Victorians in crisis and building a strong and robust for-purpose sector.

The theories of change describe possible pathways to an ambitious desired outcome and assist with decision making about funding priorities. They give us a structure and method for both determining where the Trust's funds are directed and for evaluating the outcomes.

They also provide an explanation of how the Ross Trust's work and relationships aim to contribute to complex, long-term social change.

As we comment in our recently released *The Ross Trust Five-Year Strategy*, philanthropy is a vital part of the community with the privilege and freedom to operate with independence. Reducing the number of funding areas and enabling impact to be examined and measured was a focus of the Ross Trust's strategic discussions over the last financial year.

While we worked on determining the best way forward with a full review of our strategy and operations, we continued to distribute funds to support incredible work being undertaken across Victoria.

This annual report documents the grants awarded under our previous granting strategy and you will start to see a transition towards the new.

In the financial year 2018-19 the Trustees approved 57 new grants. In total, the Ross Trust paid new and existing multi-year approved grants to the value of \$4.9 million during the year.

In 2018-19, the Trust also put funds towards the advocacy campaign, *Raise the Rate*. Supporting advocacy initiatives is an area of continued interest.

Throughout the year the staff and Trustees continued to support and work with two of our impact investment partnerships; Women's Property Initiatives and Wildlife Wonders. We thank them for their tireless efforts and commitment as they continue to build their initiatives.

From July 2018 we were also fortunate to gain the expertise and wisdom of two new Trustees, Prue Digby and Jon Webster AM. We thank all our Trustees for their commitment, governance skills, and insightful guidance and decision making.

We also welcomed Senior Program Manager, Meghan Weekes, who along with other staff, has been instrumental in driving our new approach to grantmaking and our new website.



To the staff at the Ross Trust, we extend our grateful thanks for the increased load they took on this year in making the changes that enable the new strategy to hit the ground. Along with new ways of working, we also launched a new website and a refreshed brand. The team has worked hard to reach the deadlines we set, and we'd like to acknowledge their efforts publicly.

To our stakeholders who have worked with us throughout this change – some of whom had to receive challenging news – your support, advice and gracious understanding are just some of the things that remind us how fortunate we are to work in the world of philanthropy.

Thank you to those of our long-term partners whose work will no longer align within our new focus areas. Though we will not be working with you in the near future we will maintain a keen interest in what you achieve next.

So now we turn our focus to the recipients and beneficiaries of our 2018-2019 grants and collaborations, and recognise their work in this Annual Report. As is always our intent, through our grantees we have a strong commitment to making a tangible, positive difference to the lives of Victorians.



Jenny Stephens

Chair – 2018-19



Sarah Hardy

CEO



Our granting approach for 2018-19

In the financial year 2018-19 the Trustees approved 57 new grants. In total, the Ross Trust paid new and existing multi-year approved grants to the value of \$4.9 million during the year.

This takes the total funding from the Ross Trust to charitable causes in Victoria to \$118.5 million.

The full list of grants paid for 2018-19 can be found on pages 19-22.

These grants were awarded under the Trust's previous strategy and, as such, were allocated under four impact areas:

- **Vulnerable Victorians** – improved outcomes for the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised Victorians
- **Children at Risk** – improvement of outcomes for children and young people at risk (0-18)
- **Education, Arts and Culture** – improvement of access to and achievement of equity and excellence in public education
- **Australian Flora and Fauna** – protection and preservation of Australian flora and fauna.

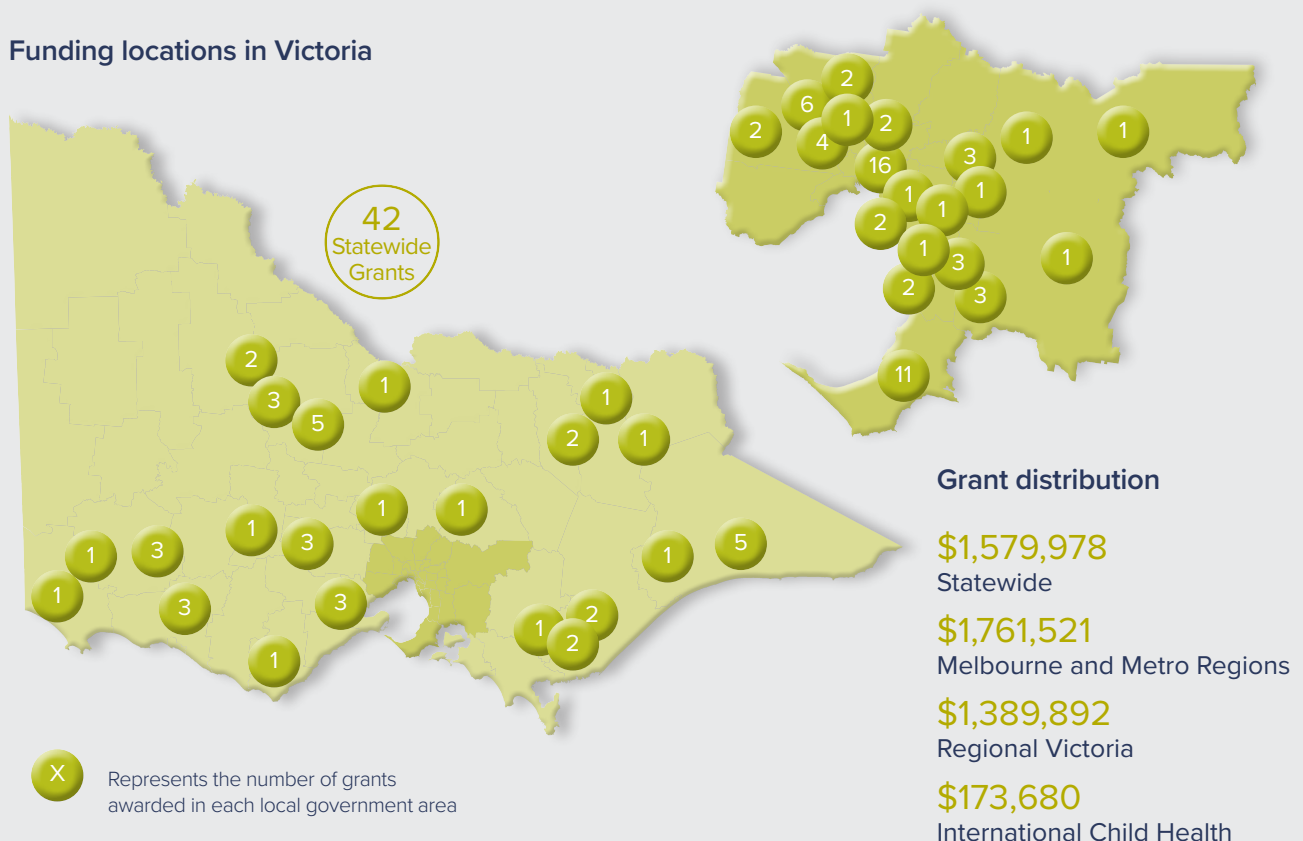
It is easy to see the evolution of the Trust's granting strategy from these four impact areas to the two new funding priorities – educational equity and biodiversity conservation – whilst always allowing for a response to Victorians in crisis and building capacity in the philanthropic and social sectors.

For a number of collaborations and programs under the Trust's previous granting strategy, final payments were made during the financial year.

The map below illustrates the distribution of our funding across the state. The international component represents the final payments towards a 15-year partnership with the Centre for International Child Health at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital, which continues to build the capacity of health organisations and professionals in the Pacific Region to improve child health outcomes.

Over the following pages the stories illustrate the kinds of organisations we fund to deliver meaningful outcomes for Victorians. You will see the shift towards a greater emphasis on educational equity and biodiversity conservation.

Funding locations in Victoria



Featured grants

Organisations across Victoria are working hard to help us achieve our vision. The following stories provide just a taste of their work.



Creating a better home for vulnerable gliders

Squirrel, Sugar and Greater Gliders – along with other vulnerable species – are expected to return to a stretch of Victoria between the Grampians and Victorian Alps thanks to a biolinks project ‘Glideways in the Melbourne Ark’.

Crucial to the success of this project is its scientific underpinnings, harnessing the passion and will of local communities and philanthropic support.

With the involvement of Landcare groups, the community, and the backing of several philanthropic organisations, the Biolinks Alliance is restoring and reconnecting bushland to improve the habitat and our understanding of native gliders.

Led by Dr Sophie Bickford – conservation ecologist and former Research Scientist of the CSIRO’s Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research and Chief Scientist at Carbon Planet – the Biolinks Alliance has 18 member Landcare and environment networks representing over 2000 landowners.

The Biolinks Alliance has the goal of restoring and reconnecting bushland across central Victorian landscapes in a coordinated effort. This means re-connecting isolated areas of native vegetation to increase habitat and provide opportunities for migration, propagation, refuge and maintaining genetic diversity for native flora and fauna.

Loss of habitat and fragmentation are amongst the greatest causes of species extinctions worldwide.

Victoria’s landscape has been heavily cleared leaving isolated fragments of habitat which prevent species from adapting to climate change. Biolinks’ work recognises this challenge and sets out to rectify this at a landscape scale.

The Glideways project is inspired by one in NSW called the Squirrel Glider LAP (Local Area Plan) and Executive Director of the Biolinks Alliance, Sophie Bickford, would like to see us borrowing a little from our NSW cousins. “We don’t have a lot of this kind of thing in Victoria. I would like to see more of this kind of local area planning, based around ecological targets for viable and resilient populations of native animals.

“Our gliders are on a downward trend and we need to see a boost in habitat health, area and connectivity to get to establish viable populations. We need to see roughly 1000 individuals in a local area so the population is resilient to change and shock.

“We need about 10 hectares to support a family of gliders – so if we know there are two, 4 hectare blocks not far from each other, can we reconnect them with trees to readily increase suitable habitat.

“Science tells us the distance the gliders can move, the types of trees they like – we need a corridor here and there to enable the expansion of that habitat,” Sophie says.

One of the key outcomes of this project will be a Regional Glider Conservation Action Plan. The plan will be developed with the involvement of the local Landcare groups, which will build their capacity and increase their access to scientific knowledge to prioritise and coordinate their efforts for more effective nature conservation.

“The Biolinks Alliance project team is training the local community to do its own monitoring, showing them how to build nest boxes, test them and collect data and record it centrally.

“People are doing great work already; we are just providing some practical tools to help. We run workshops with field ecologists. It’s a shared learning approach as we very much value the knowledge of the local area. We value the different perspectives too.

“If you want a practical plan that can be implemented in the real world, then we need to match current practice and ecological findings to come up with practical solutions.

“We are elevating local knowledge, but we have quite a definite approach to trying to embed shared learning. We need to harness the passion and the will of local communities.”

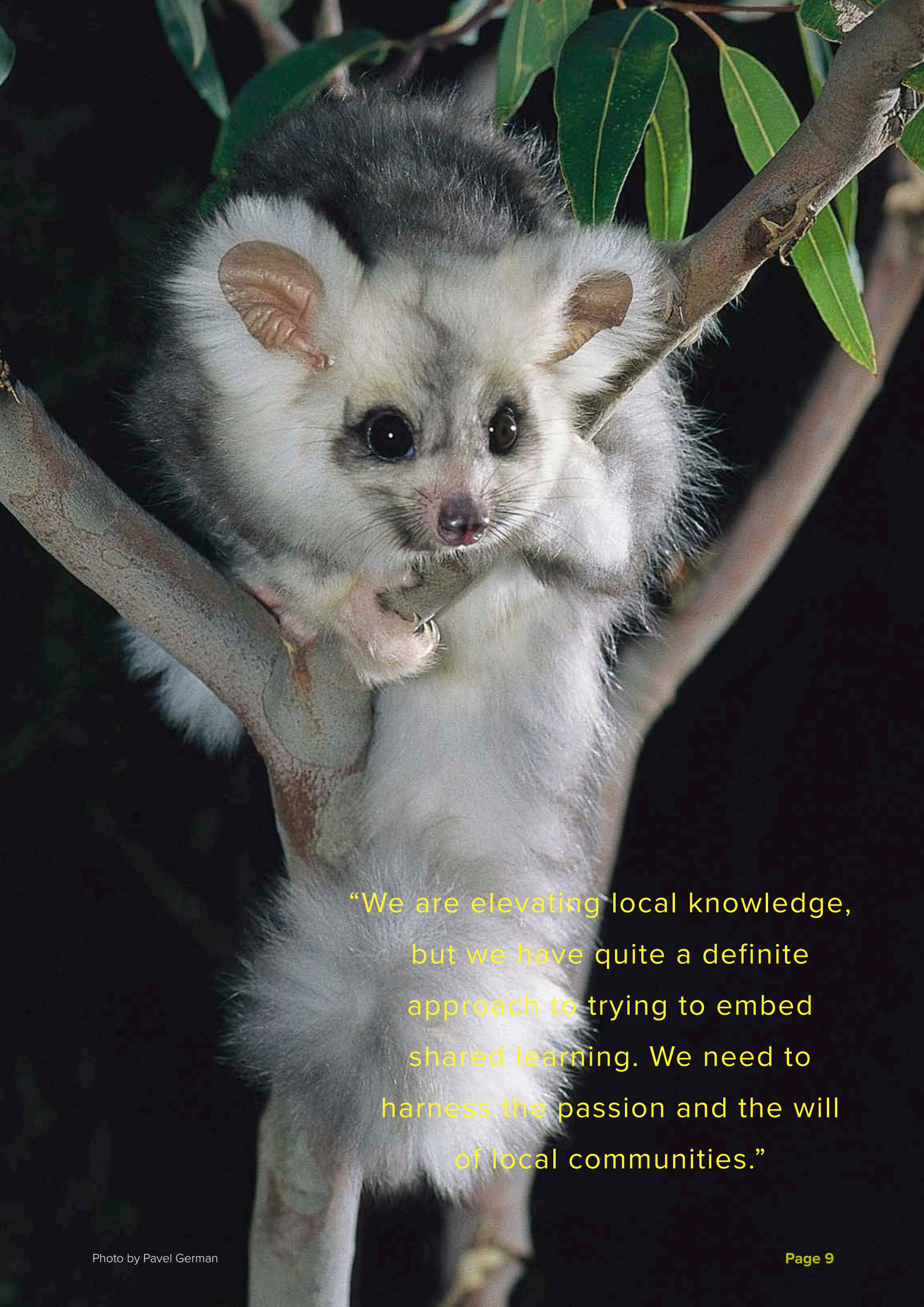
To Sophie, this project is a clear case of philanthropy stepping in when government won’t.

“Philanthropy is absolutely vital to this project. Government is not investing in things for the long term or things that aren’t immediately glamorous.

“For the Biolinks Alliance this will give us some good prospectus material for future funding.”

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story: rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories

The Ross Trust has contributed a grant of \$80,000 over two years to Glideways in the Melbourne Ark.



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approach to trying to embed
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No limits to learning on the Mornington Peninsula

The Ross Trust has granted \$120,000 over three years to a program which uses speech pathology to improve oral language of children, so they are ready to learn when they start school.

The No Limits program, funded in partnership with the Mornington Peninsula Foundation, brings together five primary schools and their feeder kinders from the most disadvantaged areas of the Mornington Peninsula. The schools have identified poor oral language as the most pressing barrier to successful engagement of children in learning.

In an area which has significant disadvantage, with one in four households earning less than \$26,000 per annum and one in seven children living below the poverty line, many children arrive at school with severe oral language delay. They don't have the capacity to pick up the literacy and numeracy skills to help them out of this cycle of disadvantage.

Principal of Crib Point Primary School, Tina Coumbe, says No Limits is helping her students build crucial oral language skills and is the most exciting project she's ever been involved with.

"Imagine what it would be like as an adult if you lost your voice for an extended period? Imagine not being able to communicate your needs to people? Unfortunately, some of our students face this daily and this project is without a doubt, the best solution to help them overcome these barriers.

"Oral language capacity is the fundamental skill students need to have their own 'voice', be able to communicate with others and communicate their needs and wishes. The earlier we support this learning, the better," Tina says.

Over three years, No Limits will provide high quality speech therapy to all children in prep and kinder at Tyabb Rail, Crib Point, Eastbourne, Wallaroo and Mornington Park Primary Schools.

Approximately 250 students – boys and girls aged 4 and 5 years old – will go through the assessment in the first year with a further 125 students from Years 2 and 3 taking part.



Teacher and student from Tyabb Railway Station Primary School's No Limits program. Photo by Tanya Fry.

Along with the assessment and individual intervention plans developed by the speech therapist, the funding will help cover the cost of a teacher's aide in each school.

"To know that so many students are getting access to this incredible opportunity is simply amazing. If you can imagine oral language as the house foundation, everything else (reading, writing) is built on top of this. If we get this right in the beginning, it makes the house much easier to build. Also, early identification of any concerns gives us a much longer time frame to be able to put interventions into place," Tina says.

"It is exciting to know that there are so many wonderful people committed to this project and giving our students the best start in their education."

This grant is part of an ongoing commitment from the Ross Trust to addressing inequity on the Mornington Peninsula.

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories

Improving family violence data collection and analysis

In a Victorian first, a partnership of family violence services is working together on a method to analyse data that will give them an accurate picture of the impact of family violence and the use of services in their region.

The Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC), which includes Women's Health Grampians, will use a \$40,000 grant from the Ross Trust to progress its Data Press project to develop a regional family violence spatial data portal.

In line with recommendation 203 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, Data Press will improve the way the local government areas of Ararat, Ballarat, Hepburn, Golden Plains, Pyrenees and Moorabool, collect, share and analyse family violence data.

CHIFVC is a cross-section of organisations in the Central Highlands region, working together to help keep women and children safe. Membership includes primary prevention through to response, treatment and recovery: specialist support services, health services, legal, education and justice.

Pennie Mathieson, Principal Strategic Advisor for CHIFVC says this approach to data collection, analysis and sharing has been used in other sectors, but this will be the first time that this approach has been adopted and used in the Victorian Family Violence Sector. The project is focused on data challenges which are systemic across Victoria, and therefore could prove to be scalable and transferable to other regions.

"The CHIFVC is showing leadership by developing a pro-data culture in the region and ensuring that strategic and operational decisions are grounded in data and evidence," Pennie said.



"The data will help us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the people accessing services. This will assist us to ensure appropriate and effective service provision, particularly for marginalised groups. We also expect to gain a clearer understanding of service sector demand and the impact of family violence on our community."

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories



Changing the rules on protection and restoration of waterways

Environmental Justice Australia (EJA) wants to shift the focus of waterway management from maintenance and managing decline, towards long-term restoration and protection, leading to improved outcomes for our rivers and wetlands.

Building on their successes with the passing of *The Yarra River (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Protection Act 2017*, EJA is continuing to expand its River Laws Program – including Indigenous perspectives and urban perspectives central to the discussions – with philanthropic support.

The Ross Trust has provided a \$100,000 grant towards the River Laws Program, to advance law and policy reform for the protection and restoration of urban waterways and for Indigenous water rights in the southern Murray Darling Basin.

EJA Lawyer, Dr Bruce Lindsay, says the intention is to translate Indigenous knowledge, practices and priorities for the waterways into legal and policy outcomes. It's a model which could be applied elsewhere, if successful.

"The River Laws Program really has two parts; protecting urban and modified waterways and – through work with the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) – enabling Indigenous water rights.

"The Murray Darling Basin Plan includes requirements for Indigenous consultation, and we give the MLDRIN advice on Basin Plan issues when they need it."

The EJA is also looking to work with Traditional Owner groups about how they can achieve greater control over water, river and wetlands management through applying cultural flows models and concepts.

"We have advised on Indigenous consultation on water resource planning in the Wimmera and Northern Victoria. This occurs under the Basin Plan," Bruce said.

"Indigenous voices in waterway management is fundamentally important because even where there is native title or rights in land, Aboriginal influence and control over water presently remains negligible and that is unacceptable.

"Rivers and wetlands are central to identity and country, so separation of land and water is a fundamental issue. Access to water is problematic from a legal and political perspective as there are competing priorities, especially when irrigation is involved.

"State and federal policy and law makers have come a fair way. There is more influence of Aboriginal communities over waterways and better ways to apply and implement the law, but we are still keen to change the rules of the game."

Bruce says there have been some big shifts around the world in how we are managing the environment coinciding with governance models that promote the 'legal rights of nature' including where a place or a river has status as a legal person. There is usually a strong Indigenous involvement in these models where they have been used or approximated, such as for the Whanganui River in New Zealand and on the Yarra in Melbourne.

When they look at the issues around our waterways, EJA is considering not only how to protect the assets for environmental, social and economic reasons but where they can assist the promotion of Aboriginal leadership in waterway management.

Aboriginal leadership is crucial to protection and restoration of rivers and waterways. This is true of rivers in crisis, such as on the Darling River where Barkindji have led resistance to poor management, as well as in strong restorative outcomes such as Gunditjmarra leadership on the UNESCO World Heritage listing of Budj Bim in south-west Victoria.



Communities in the north west of Melbourne – in the Barwon and Moorabool catchments – are also looking to establish special purpose laws for their waterways.

A raft of urban waterways in Victoria's west and the users of those waterways are also set to benefit from EJA's work and focus on restoration.

"The Birrarung (Yarra) model is one which is now influencing nationally and internationally," Bruce says.

"One of the things that emerged from the Yarra River Act is that the communities in the north west of Melbourne – in the Barwon and Moorabool catchments – are also looking to establish special purpose laws for their waterways. We're working with community groups and urban communities to see what improvements can be made to the law."

As an independent voice, EJA not only uses its legal skills to help communities and environmental NGOs protect vital environmental assets but it also advocates strongly on behalf of its clients, conducting research and engaging in community education to build the strength of its cases and projects.

"If done the right way, this kind of work aims to help the whole community as well as our particular clients."

Consistent with both former and current Ross Trust granting strategies, EJA's work is addressing the poor state of Victoria's rivers and inland waterways. The most recent Victorian State of the Environment Report indicated freshwater biodiversity is in decline.

Other funders, including the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, are contributing to this important work which can set a clear way forward for the use of one of, if not the, most precious resource we have — water.

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories



Youthrive Victoria
Youth Mental Health First Aid

\$40,000 per year for three years

Boosting mental health support in rural Victoria

Young people living outside of cities in Australia have less access to specialised mental health services, potentially resulting in poorer outcomes.

A three-year grant from the Ross Trust has provided a funding boost to a rural leadership program that focuses on developing leadership skills and knowledge about wellbeing, community and the environment.

The Youthrive Victoria Young Rural Leaders program is about to enhance its wellbeing component to create a specific focus on the issue of mental health, helping young people to better understand and manage their own mental health and that of their close networks.

The Ross Trust grant will allow Youthrive Victoria (formerly the Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation), to train up to 90 young leaders and facilitators in Youth Mental Health First Aid over three years, with a larger group – up to 160 young rural people – learning about mental health and becoming better equipped to care for their own wellbeing and support others.

CEO of Youthrive Victoria, Dr Maryann Brown, said “We know mental health issues are a major concern for young rural people and we are delighted that this grant provides the opportunity to train our coaches and facilitators in Youth Mental Health First Aid and incorporate key elements in the wellbeing component of our Young Rural Leaders program.

“Our goal is to have more young rural people supported and informed about Youth Mental Health First Aid and they in turn will share knowledge within their communities. It might be a small thing, but it has a ripple effect. I love that we are continuing to enhance the wellbeing part of our leadership program and that we are building the skills base of rural communities. We are confident that the training this grant provides will be a game changer for many young rural people.”

After the first course was rolled out to the Young Rural Leaders program coaches, Maryann could already see small differences.



“Our focus is ‘for young rural people by young rural people’. The coaches have all come from rural backgrounds and are familiar with many of the issues and challenges – distance to study and train, lack of job opportunities, reduced medical and mental health support etc. They also share the joys of rural life – the beauty of open spaces and pride in their towns.

“Some of our program participants have family members with severe mental illness, and to be able to talk about their experiences can be important. Part of our Young Rural Leaders Program involves the alumni discussing their purpose and their goals and part of that can be confronting fears. Sometimes there are disclosures of tough issues. I can see now that our coaches are using these new Youth Mental Health First Aid skills and know how to have better conversations.”

This grant and the training add an important new piece to the mosaic of solutions needed to support rural people experiencing mental health challenges.

“We are working with young people at a critical point in their lives – they come from all over the state with a variety of backgrounds and experiences and they’re aged 18-22. I want our alumni to be as resilient as possible and to build their support networks. Our message is, ‘wherever you are, look after yourself and the people around you,’ Maryann said.

“I’m really thrilled that we are enhancing our leadership program in a very powerful way and helping rural communities by empowering rural young people through Youth Mental Health First Aid training.”

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories

Kids Under Cover Partners in preventing youth homelessness

\$80,000 per year for three years

FEATURE
GRANT

Addressing the risk of homelessness

The Ross Trust has joined with other philanthropic partners to address the risk of homelessness and financial disadvantage for young people in Victoria attempting to continue their education.

The Trust has provided a grant of \$240,000 over three years to Kids Under Cover to be a 'partner in youth homelessness'.

Kids Under Cover works to prevent homelessness by providing stable and secure accommodation. They also seek to keep families together, while reducing overcrowding in the home. They do this by building additional studio space adjoining the family home, where it's possible to do so. The extra room relieves overcrowding, eases tension and provides at-risk young people with a secure and stable environment, giving them the room to recover and develop independence and responsibility.

The philanthropic funds will provide stable and secure accommodation for 12 young people at risk of homelessness. They will also go towards funding some of the basic needs of education or training for 60 disadvantaged young Victorians.

For each year of the three-year project, the Ross Trust grant will be used to co-fund two, new or relocated two-bedroom studios. With each two-bedroom studio accommodating two young people formerly at risk, four young people per year will be diverted from potential homelessness.

Making the case

Imagine living in a modest three-bedroom home with nine other people, including a baby, and trying to study at night with no quiet or private space? Would you want to stay?

This is a situation facing many blended families in Melbourne and other cities and regions of Australia, including a family in a south-eastern suburb of Melbourne; a couple with eight children under their care.

The family includes teenagers – 17, 16 and 15 – an infant son, and three nieces under the age of 10, who have been placed in their aunt and uncle's



care because their parents were unable to care for them. The youngest niece has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

To cater for 10 people in a three-bedroom home, the couple shared the master bedroom with the two youngest children. The three nieces shared the second bedroom, the teenage daughters shared a queen-size bed in the third bedroom, and the 17-year-old son slept in the lounge room.

The household was chaotic. The lack of space impacted on the older children's ability to prepare and study for school.

A two-bedroom studio was seen as an ideal solution to the crowding challenges, and a strong preventative measure against the risk of the teenagers leaving home prematurely.

The Ross Trust is proud to provide funding for this program, in partnership with other philanthropic partners, in line with our mission to deliver educational opportunities for vulnerable young Victorians.

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories

Odonata
Eastern Bettong Safe Haven

\$100,000 per year for two years

Creating a safe home for the Eastern Bettong

The Eastern Bettong is set for a return to Victoria.

The Bettong is listed as one of the 20 mammals targeted for recovery by 2020 under Australia's National Threatened Species Strategy and the only population left in Australia is in Mulligan's Flat in the ACT.

A grant of \$200,000 over two years will help Odonata 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, on the Loddon River.

The habitat restoration at Orana will take in 211 hectares of pristine plain grasslands and woodlands forest, establishing extensive biodiversity corridors across the farm and along the 33km of river frontage.

Odonata assists and partners with individuals and organisations delivering biodiversity-enhancing projects. With a unique business model, they have a focus on finding, securing investment for and supporting management of productive biodiversity-focused farms across Victoria. They have proven that biodiversity and regenerative-focused farming benefits all parties.

In this case, the Tiverton Rothwell Agriculture Fund has purchased the land and will cover the ongoing management of the sanctuary and threatened species reintroduction, eliminating the need for ongoing financial support from external sources.

Already the work on the safe haven is well underway, with the installation of the feral proof fence – protecting the landscape from introduced species such as foxes, rabbits, cats and hares – nearly complete. Remote sensing cameras, funded by the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species, will soon be installed to track and help with the removal of introduced pests from the site.

The Odonata team is getting ready to move some of the Eastern Bettongs from Mulligans Flat to the research reserve at Mt Rothwell and expect to have a self-sustaining population in Victoria within three years. The safe haven is a vital step in reversing species decline.



In addition to the re-establishment of the Eastern Bettong, the safe haven will eventually support a number of endemic flora and fauna species of significance, such as the brush-tailed phascogale, yellow-footed and agile antechinus, fat-tailed dunnart, legless lizard, swift parrot and a large variety of wildflowers and orchids.

The work on Orana Farm Safe Haven has set a number of other activities in motion.

Odonata Managing Director, Nigel Sharp, said "this cornerstone sanctuary has given us the confidence to start planning for a sister sanctuary next to Mt Korong.

"Discussions are underway with the Traditional Owners of the land, the Dja Dja Wurrung, to support their involvement in the sanctuary and threatened species management.

"One of the most important things we can demonstrate is that protecting bushland doesn't come at a cost to farm productivity.

"We want locals to visit and be inspired by what is possible for native species in their community." Nigel said.

The team is also planning a Gunbower to Grampians landscape restoration plan with their long-time partner Cassinia Environmental.

Odonata will use Orana as a case study for future projects and will be seeking additional ways to leverage philanthropy for greater outcomes.

"The local regional community will benefit as Orana Farm will serve as an exemplar of biodiversity-sensitive farming. We believe the sanctuary is the jewel in the crown and through the sanctuary we will inspire many locals and many across the country to think differently about their farm operations."

One of the strengths of Odonata's work is its innovative approaches, based on scientific research and, in this instance, working with university partners, the biodiversity benefits will be independently assessed.

Volunteers continue the good fight for asylum

With a volunteer retention rate of 80 per cent, Refugee Legal Volunteer Coordinator, Bianca DeToma, is justifiably proud of the work that she and Refugee Legal are doing to deepen and strengthen their volunteer program, leading to stronger outcomes for clients and volunteers alike.

“It is so rewarding to see someone remain with us because they feel well cared for and because they believe in your cause.

“We focus on retention, investment and upskilling of our volunteers because we couldn’t do what we do without them.

“Seeing people progress through the roles is one of my favourite parts of the job. Someone comes to us as a Juris Doctor or a first-year law student, then they graduate as a lawyer, perhaps register as a migration agent, and quite a few have ended up employed with us or in the sector.

“When we have Year 10 work experience students coming in and they decide to come back and give their time during school holidays, it really demonstrates how well things are working,” Bianca said.

The Ross Trust has supported Refugee Legal’s volunteer program since 2015 and this additional grant provides funds for the employment of their volunteer coordinator.

Based in Collingwood in inner-city Melbourne, Refugee Legal is an independent, non-profit community legal centre specialising in refugees and immigration law – in fact they are Australia’s largest provider of free legal assistance to people seeking asylum, refugees and disadvantaged migrants – something they have been leading for 30 years.

Responding to an increased demand and the government’s cessation of legal assistance for those seeking asylum, over the last five years the Refugee Legal volunteer workforce has increased from 120 to 550 volunteers, allowing for the continued provision of free legal services to those most in need.

In light of such significant growth, the volunteer coordinator role is increasingly important, with a strong focus on recruitment, retention and recognition of the volunteers.

Bianca says 550 volunteers results in stability in terms of Refugee Legal’s output and work with clients.

“I think there is a correlation between retention and outcomes. When people are able to build on their skills through training and support, then that can only lead to better client appointments and better information we’re able to provide the Department.”

Bianca says recognition for Refugee Legal can come in the form of traditional events for volunteers, but mainly it’s about being responsive to their requests, whether in the form of additional training and increasing skills in their areas of interest, or being flexible around the other aspects of their life.

“Recently I applied for a small grant after identifying gaps in training – they wanted more information about trauma-informed practice. We were able to bring Foundation House in to train us in the best approaches to work with those who have been impacted by trauma. We also use our in-house resources to do training in interview skills or new areas of law.”

Bianca’s role also involves building relationships with pro bono corporate law firms and university law faculties and ensures volunteers are being utilised across the business.

The 2019 grant to Refugee Legal builds on a grant of \$90,000 over three years to support the ongoing employment of the same role since 2015.

Further funds were provided in 2018 for Refugee Legal’s ‘Breaking the cycle of injustice’ program, to allow free legal advice and assistance for those seeking temporary protection visas (TPV), particularly in response to the Federal Government’s Fast Track Assessment Process.

Finding the hook to keep students engaged

Gippsland students will be the first in Victoria to benefit from a program designed to make a significant impact on learning outcomes for vulnerable students, by ensuring they make successful transition from primary to secondary school.

Australian Schools Plus has taken the opportunity to bring the concept tried in NSW to Victoria with the assistance of philanthropic support from the Ross Trust.

Schools Plus has been running the NSW model since 2015 with significant investment from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. The program is also growing in Queensland.

Fair Education Victoria will develop the capacity of school leaders in disadvantaged schools and aim to influence one of the real keys to success; stronger engagement of families and the whole community in student learning.

Fair Education Victoria has at its core two key research findings:

- disadvantage has the greatest impact on a child's educational opportunity and achievements
- students do better when families are engaged with their learning and the school community, which is much less likely when they come from a position of disadvantage.

Location, low socio-economic background, disability and being from an Indigenous or non-English speaking background can influence a student's level of disadvantage and this applies to students in more than 900 schools across Victoria.

The Lakes Entrance region has been selected for Victoria's trial to improve the transition of vulnerable students from primary school to secondary school with a focus on engagement, attendance and learning.

Leadership capacity will be developed in participating schools, to bring about transformational change in their cultures and practices.

Fair Education Director, Maura Manning says "It's very early in the planning stage for the East Gippsland schools

"One of the first things the schools in East Gippsland are doing is understanding who are the children and families they have in common. Why are the kids not attending regularly?

"What we've learnt is that it's never the same reason in every family, so we need to look at family in an individual way. You need to build trust.

"If we can build mutual trust – between the school and the community, between teachers in leadership and the students, between the parents and the teachers – taking careful consideration of everyone's perspective – then that allows progress and change because people can move forward and take steps together. It takes time to build that trust.

"One of the ways trust has been built, particularly in areas such as East Gippsland with large Indigenous populations – who have had poor experiences of institutions, or where there has been intergenerational unemployment and education is not valued highly – is to work hard on understanding the parents' perspectives.

"It can be challenging to improve attendance if parents' experience of school was negative.

"Opening up opportunities for conversations that are not threatening or patronising and seek to understand where they are coming from, is so important," Maura said.

Maura says one of the best findings so far, from implementing this program in other States, is that the best projects keep the focus on learning.

"Keeping the focus on learning encourages parents to get involved – we need to make space for them.

"It's fairly universal that parents want their children to do well but they don't always know how to enter into a conversation about it."

The other key element is student agency – students becoming the directors of their own learning.

In an interview published on the Schools Plus website, Ross Trust CEO, Sarah Hardy, explained some of the decisions behind the grant and what impact the Trust was hoping to see.

"What attracted us ... was their connection to schools facing disadvantage and their unique knowledge of the school's needs and the challenges they face.

"We are proud to be part of the first pilot of Fair Education program in Victoria."

Visit the Ross Trust website for the full story:
rosstrust.org.au/knowledge-centre/grant-stories

Grants paid in 2018-19

Alannah and Madeline Foundation

A sustainable partnership model - Children Ahead and the Victim Assistance Program
\$20,000

Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare

Marketing and fundraising coordinator
\$30,000

Anchor Inc

The Brighter Futures Transformation Pilot: Learning for Life through Community Connections
\$25,000

Anglicare Victoria

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$33,000

Anglicare Victoria

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$33,000

Ardoch Youth Foundation

Ardoch's Pathways Beyond School – Building educational and career aspirations for vulnerable young people in disadvantaged communities
\$40,000

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Lived experience evaluation project
\$50,000

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Building capacity, sustainability and accountability through monitoring and evaluation
\$50,000

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Australian Council of Social Service

Raise the Rate campaign
\$15,000

Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network

Sustaining support for the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network
\$5,000

Australian Schools Plus

Fair Education Victoria trial
\$101,400

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

Our Kitchen – Pathways to employment through hospitality
\$25,673

Banksia Gardens Community Services

Project REAL / Northern Centre for Excellence in Trauma Informed Education
\$40,000

Baptcare

Expanding Hope – supporting families seeking asylum
\$30,000

Barwon Child, Youth & Family

Strengthening Family Connections Plus (SFC Plus)
\$30,000

Bendigo Family & Financial Services Inc

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Bendigo Family & Financial Services Inc

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Bendigo Science & Technology Museum

Training preservice primary teachers to teach more and better science in the country classroom
\$25,000

Berry Street Victoria

Mums and Bubs: recover & reconnect after family violence
\$20,000

Beyond the Bell Great South Coast

The Beyond the Bell Literacy Challenge – promoting literacy as an essential life skill in the Southern Grampians region
\$40,000

Biolinks Alliance

Glideways in the Melbourne Ark; connecting science and practice to reconnect landscapes
\$40,000

BirdLife Australia Pty Ltd

Birds on Farms
\$29,062

Brotherhood of St Laurence

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$27,000

Brotherhood of St Laurence

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$27,000

Campaspe Cohuna LLEN

Campaspe Youth Partnerships
\$30,000

Casey North Community Information & Support Service

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$27,000

Casey North Community Information & Support Service

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$27,000

Centre for International Child Health

Child Health in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands
\$123,680

Centre for International Child Health

The R E Ross Trust Regional Fellowship program evaluation
\$15,000

Centre for International Child Health

The R E Ross Trust Regional Fellowship program evaluation
\$10,000

Centre for International Child Health

The R E Ross Trust Regional Fellowship program evaluation
\$25,000

Centre for Non-Violence Inc (formerly EASE) (LOMA)

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Centre for Non-Violence Inc (formerly EASE) (LOMA)

Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Children's Book Council of Australia Victorian Branch

Author In Schools Program
\$4,400

Clontarf Foundation (Robinvale Collaboration)

Engaging Indigenous Students in Education and Employment - Robinvale
\$20,000

Grants paid in 2018-19 continued

Community Four Ltd
Kurdish Youth Community Leadership Project
\$30,000

Community Four Ltd
Hazara Women's Community Strengthening Project
\$39,000

Community Information Victoria Inc (CIVic)
Branching Out; a new way of building capacity of local support services
\$30,000

Community Support Frankston Inc
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,540

Community Support Frankston Inc
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,540

Cottage By The Sea Queenscliff
Social return on investment analysis
\$40,000

Council of Single Mothers and their Children
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$30,000

Council of Single Mothers and their Children
Expanding capacity to support low income single mother families
\$40,000

Council of Single Mothers and their Children
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$30,000

Country Education Project Inc
School to Next
\$38,500

Cranbourne Information & Support Service
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Cranbourne Information & Support Service
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Culture is Life Limited
The Boonwurrung Cross Sector Schools Project - bringing Boonwurrung culture to life in Bayside schools
\$30,000

Dandenong Ranges Emergency Relief Service
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$15,000

Dandenong Ranges Emergency Relief Service
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$15,000

Deakin University
Straight Talking - The role of peer mentors in breaking the cycle of crime and imprisonment in Geelong
\$40,000

Domestic Violence Victoria
Towards the continuation of the family violence collaboration project
\$10,000

Domestic Violence Victoria
The family violence philanthropy collaboration project
\$55,000

Environmental Justice Australia
River Laws Program
\$50,000

Eureka Mums
Safe Start program
\$30,000

FareShare
FareShare Feeds Gippsland
\$15,000

Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Confident CALD Communities
\$30,000

First Step
First Step and mental health in Victoria
\$40,000

Fitzroy Legal Service
Fitzroy Legal Service & Darebin Community Legal Centre amalgamation project - integration and upgrade of technology and systems
\$40,000

Foster Secondary College
Art therapy
\$12,500

Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Friends of Refugees Incorporated
Pilot Program - Child care support to boost the learning outcomes, job prospects and community integration of asylum seekers with young children (0-5 years)
\$33,000

Geelong Gallery
Viewing Ned Kelly through the eyes of Sidney Nolan - a children's experience
\$10,000

Geelong Performing Arts Centre
Parrwang: Aboriginal youth arts project
\$30,000

Gippsland East Local Learning Employment Network
Growing the HUB
\$25,000

Gippsland East Local Learning Employment Network
Lakes Entrance Schools & Community Hub: Moving On
\$71,456

Green Collect
Support to cover gap in operating expenses while building trading capacity
\$20,000

Harrow Bush Nursing Centre
Bay riders community centre school holiday program
\$10,277

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
\$25,900

Ilbjerri Theatre Company
ILBIJERRI Youth Ensemble
\$40,000

Inner Melbourne Community Legal
Health Justice Partnerships at Royal Women's Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital and Royal Melbourne Hospital
\$30,000

International Social Service Australia
ISS Australia - building vital capacity in 2019
\$40,000

Jewish Museum of Australia
Multicultural Museums Victoria
\$66,300

Kids First (formerly Children's Protection Society)
Mothers in Mind
\$26,000

Kids Under Cover
Partner in preventing youth homelessness
\$80,000

Launch Housing
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Launch Housing
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$40,000

Launch Housing
Education Pathways Program
\$30,000

Lord Somers Camp and Power House
Information technology CRM and data storage and phone upgrade
\$30,000

MacKillop Family Services
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

MacKillop Family Services
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Monash University
Leading for social cohesion
\$40,000

Monash University
The Indigenous Club of Learning at Port Phillip Prison
\$29,956

Mornington Community Information and Support Centre Inc.
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Mornington Community Information and Support Centre Inc.
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Mornington Peninsula Foundation
NO LIMITS to learning for children on the Mornington Peninsula
\$40,000

Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network
Dunns Creek Biolink
\$30,000

Morwell Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Morwell Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$20,000

Mountain District Learning Centre
Maroondah Cottage Program - Croydon.
An alternative education pathway for young people with social anxiety
\$34,000

Museums Australia Inc - Victorian Office
Practical online resources for regional community museums
\$50,000

Museums Australia Inc - Victorian Office
Practical online resources for regional community museums
\$50,000

North Melbourne Language and Learning
Connected Cultures - Empowered Communities
\$30,000

Nowa Nowa Primary School
5 Cs program: Connecting Children with Country, Community and Culture
\$29,376

Odonata
Eastern Bettong Safe Haven on the Loddon River, Victoria
\$100,000

Orbost Neighbourhood House
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$15,000

Orbost Neighbourhood House
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$15,000

PartnerSPEAK
Peer support hub & PartnerSPEAK office
\$23,000

Philanthropy Australia
Philanthropy Champions
\$25,000

Project Respect Inc
Towards Sustainable State Government
Funding by achieving and maintaining accreditation against DHHS Human Services Standards
\$30,000

PSMyFamilyMatters
Co-ordinating the care
\$30,000

Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Asylum Seeker Health Rights Project
\$30,000

Public Records Office Victoria
Documenting the history of Victoria: social, agricultural, environmental and scientific images
\$50,000

Refugee Legal
Refugee Legal Volunteer Program
\$40,000

Refugee Migrant Children Centre
Sidekicks Senior - Empowering resettled refugee, migrant and asylum seeker youth to create their own opportunities through education and beyond
\$30,000

Regent Honeyeater Project Inc
Regent honeyeater project
\$30,000

Robinvale College
ATSI Girls Academy
\$34,210

Rosebud Secondary College
Wellness Program
\$25,919

SANE Australia
Sane Australia Help Centre 2020
\$30,000

Self Help Addiction Resource Centre Inc (SHARC)
Family Gambling Help: Phase 2 - ensuring access to community support for families impacted by problem gambling
\$25,000

Sharing Stories Foundation
Celebrating Koorie Culture across Victoria through vibrant multi-touch books and displays
\$30,000

Grants paid in 2018-19 continued

SNAICC - National Voice for our Children
Towards preventing and responding to family violence training and support program - pilot
\$30,000

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
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre Inc
SPCSIC Family Case Management Project
\$20,000

St Albans Heights Primary School Community Hub
The Family Hut
\$8,850

St Mark's Community Centre
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$13,000

St Mark's Community Centre
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$13,000

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
\$9,992

Teach for Australia
Confronting educational inequity across Victoria
\$100,000

The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne
Home Away From Homework Club
\$24,580

The Holland Foundation
Holland Foundation Open Pathways to Employment (HOPE)
\$30,000

The Queen's Fund
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$28,000

The Queen's Fund
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$28,000

The Youth Junction Incorporated
Cut and Shine (C.A.S) Barber program
\$35,000

Thrive Refugee Enterprise
Victorian small business development manager
\$90,000

Tomorrow Today Foundation
Education Benalla Program
\$110,000

Trust for Nature
Conservation finance and partnerships
\$50,000

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania
Keeping women and children safe by responding to male perpetrators of family violence
\$20,000

Walleroo Primary School
Canteen renovation
\$10,000

Weenthunga Health Network
Bendigo Girls Resilience Program
\$20,000

Wellsprings for Women
Building Wellsprings For Women's capacity to manage family violence disclosures
\$30,000

West Welcome Wagon Inc
West Welcome Wagon Open Doors
\$35,000

Western English Language School
Fly Girls
\$11,000

Western Port Community Support
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Western Port Community Support
Towards Emergency Relief and Material Aid
\$25,000

Westside Circus
Pages Fly
\$30,000

Wettenhall Environment Trust
Small Environmental Grant Scheme
\$55,000

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association
Employment of executive officer
\$40,000

Women's Health Grampians Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee
Central Highlands Family Violence Data Press Project
\$40,000

Woor-Dungin
Aboriginal Partnership Program
\$30,000

Yarram Secondary College
Yarram Practical Program
\$40,000

Youth Live4Life Inc.
Live4Life Benalla and Glenelg
\$30,000

Youthlaw
Creating Safer Futures
\$40,000

Youthrive Victoria (Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation Limited)
Building leadership capacity and mental health awareness In young rural Victorians
\$40,000

150 payments
\$4,905,011

Governance

The will of Roy Everard Ross named the five original Trustees of the Trust. The will also provided for existing trustees to choose new trustees upon retirement or death.

The Trustees are drawn from diverse backgrounds and experience including business, community service, company directorship, academia, environment, education, law, government and as board members of various other entities; both for profit and not-for-profit companies and organisations.

The Trust has established a protocol for the Chair's role to rotate annually among each of the Trustees.

The Trustees are supported by Trust staff and external advisers who provide professional accounting, investment and legal services. The Trust's accounts are audited externally each year. A copy of the audited accounts is provided to the Attorney-General of Victoria, together with a report by the Trustees on their work during the year.

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.

The Trust's Chief Executive Officer is selected by the Trustees.

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 that 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, and
- 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.

Income and its distribution as grants

Mr Ross provided for the Trust to distribute its income to charities and for charitable purposes. While he expressed a number of wishes as to these purposes, he gave his Trustees absolute discretion when making these decisions.

Mr Ross' wishes were that his Trustees, "having regard to the circumstances prevailing from time to time give consideration to the desirability of the provision of funds for the education and maintenance of foreign students in Australia and for the acquisition, preservation and maintenance of national or public parks, particularly the protection and preservation of flora and fauna".

The Trustees have granting strategies and support projects which have regard to Mr Ross' wishes. Strategies and projects are varied from time to time to respond to changing community needs and circumstances, and to enable the Trust's income to contribute effectively to public benefit mainly in Victoria.

Gifts and bequests

The Trust has the capacity to manage new funds contributed by gifts or bequests. Prospective donors or their advisers can contact the Trust's CEO for further information.

Taxation status

The Trust is a Tax Concession Charity (TCC).

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 three meetings of the Investment Committee. Eleven meetings of the Directors of Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd were held as well as one meeting for the Directors of R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd.



The Trustees of the Ross Trust - Jon Webster AM, Geoff Nicholson, Prue Digby, Jeremy Kirkwood and Jenny Stephens.

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 information provided by the Trust. 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.

All Trustees are also Directors of Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd.

Trustee disclosures

Prue Digby, Trustee

Former Chief Executive Officer and senior executive in the State and Local Government sectors
Member, Birrarung Council
Board Member, Chisholm Institute (TAFE)
Board Member, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) WorkCare
Municipal Monitor, Frankston City Council

Jeremy Kirkwood, Trustee

Chairman, Talisman Mining Limited
Chairman, Kin Mining NL
Chair, Geelong Grammar School
Director, Independent Schools Victoria
Director, Nurturecare Pty Ltd

Geoff Nicholson, Trustee

Former public company finance and strategy executive
Deputy Chair, Launch Housing Ltd
Director, HomeGround Real Estate Pty Ltd
Director, United Energy Distribution Holdings Ltd
Advisor, Endeavour Energy
Director, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Ltd
Advisor, Bourne Digital
Director, Athletics Australia Ltd

Jenny Stephens, Trustee

Former social researcher, academic and higher education executive
Council Member, Philanthropy Australia
Director, Tanjable Pty Ltd

Jon Webster AM, Trustee

Former partner of a corporate law firm
Consultant, Allens Linklaters
Director, AMCIL Limited
Director, Human Rights Law Centre
Member, Advisory Board of the Centre for Corporate Law and Securities Regulation

Staff

Ms Sarah Hardy, Chief Executive Officer
Ms Rebecca Chew, Program Manager
Ms Pam Mitchell, Senior Finance Manager
Ms Margarita Sagris, Operations Manager and Executive Assistant to the CEO
Ms Dina Vlanes, Administration Officer
Ms Meghan Weekes, Senior Program Manager

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 2018-19 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 following sectors/industries are not approved for direct investment in companies whose principal purpose is to invest in:

- 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. The market value of the investments was \$50.4 million at 30 June 2019.

Investment performance

A gross return of 8.79 per cent was achieved for the 2018-19 year.

Financial information and reporting

For the year ended 30 June 2019, 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 2018 to 30 June 2019.

Payment of income as grants

Income paid and payable as grants during the year totalled \$4.23 million (2018 total: \$4.62 million).

Actual payments of \$4.9 million include some grants which were approved in prior years.

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.

Auditors

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

Financial reporting

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2019

(extract from 2018-19 audited accounts)

		2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue and other income	Note		
Revenue from continuing operations	5	7,445,000	7,321,363
Less: expenses			
Employee benefits expense		(695,563)	(630,684)
Depreciation expenses		(15,918)	(16,863)
Other Expenses		(807,504)	(819,135)
		(1,518,985)	(1,466,682)
Operating surplus prior to granting		5,926,015	5,854,681
Grants paid during the year		(4,233,773)	(4,620,035)
Net profit/loss from continuing operations		1,692,242	1,234,646

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

(extract from 2018-19 audited accounts)

		2019 \$	2018 \$
Current assets	Note		
Cash and cash equivalents	8	1,361,245	1,911,667
Receivables	9	4,015,078	4,080,318
Investments	11	49,189,780	42,167,885
Total current assets		54,566,103	48,859,870
Non-current assets			
Receivables		5,432,592	5,432,592
Other financial assets	11	1,010,531	864,008
Property, plant and equipment		2,578,086	2,532,046
Total non-current assets		9,021,209	8,128,646
Total assets		63,587,312	56,988,516
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	16	510,185	1,256,093
Provisions		54,972	40,928
Total current liabilities		565,157	1,297,021
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		-	-
Total non-current liabilities		-	-
Total liabilities		565,157	1,297,021
Net assets		63,022,155	55,691,495
Trust funds			
Residuary estate funds		43,936,493	38,298,075
Other reserves		15,725,264	14,542,645
Accumulated surplus		3,360,398	2,850,775
Total trust funds		63,022,155	55,691,495

Notes

(extract from 2018-19 audited accounts)

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Note 5: Revenue		
Royalties and fees from Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd	1,155,418	1,218,641
Other Revenue		
Dividend income and imputation credits refunded		
- Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd	3,635,351	3,807,068
- Investment portfolio	2,016,310	1,679,442
Interest income	637,921	616,212
Total Revenue	7,445,000	7,321,363
Note 8: Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank and on hand	520,855	619,191
Cash on deposit	840,390	1,292,476
	1,361,245	1,911,667
Note 9: Receivables		
Current		
Trade debtors	1,474,510	1,522,922
Other receivable	2,540,568	2,557,396
	4,015,078	4,080,318
Note 11: Investments		
Current		
Investment portfolio	49,189,780	42,167,885
Non Current		
Private company shares	164,008	164,008
Investment portfolio	846,523	700,000
	1,010,531	864,008
Note 16: Payables		
Current		
Unsecured liabilities		
Trade creditors	258,998	297,235
Sundry creditors and accruals	251,187	958,858
	510,185	1,256,093

Hillview Quarries

A member of the local community for 50 years



As a wholly owned
subsidiary of the Ross Trust,
Hillview Quarries provides
70 per cent of the Trust's income.

Hillview Quarries

In addition to the Trust granting funds, Hillview Quarries also provides financial assistance and quarry product donations and sponsorships to various local organisations on the Mornington Peninsula throughout the year.

Since 1969, Hillview Quarries has been an extractive industry operator in Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula. For 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, fauna and waterways in its surrounds.

To the east of the operating quarry site, Hillview Quarries held a Planning Permit & Work Authority over the formerly owned Pioneer quarry and the resources surrounding this land. The quarry is located on Boundary Road in Dromana, known as the Boundary Road Quarry.

As the approved resources at the Hillview Quarry site are nearing exhaustion, Hillview Quarries is looking to re-establish quarrying operations at Boundary Road and access adjoining new resources at the Boundary Road Quarry site, which contains an extensive quarry resource. This site is just over 800 metres from the existing Hillview Quarry site.

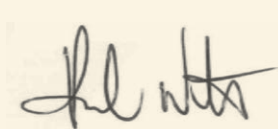
In 2018-19, Hillview Quarries commenced the process to gain a new approval to re-establish quarry operations at the site in Boundary Road. This proposal was referred to the Minister for Planning who advised an Environment Effect Statement (EES) was required for the project under the Environment Effects Act 1978. The scope of work required to complete the EES was advertised for public comment and subsequently approved by the Minister for Planning in April, 2019.

A large range of scientific and social studies are being conducted to assess the existing conditions of the flora and fauna, traffic and noise, to name a few. This process will provide a scientifically factual basis for assessment of the Boundary Road site and its surrounds. From this, further assessments will be made of the likely impacts and mitigation of these impacts, should the re-established quarry go ahead. The preparation of an EES is likely to take more than two years and will involve expert independent scientific studies and regulatory reviews.

Community engagement is pivotal throughout the entire process. An independent panel will 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.

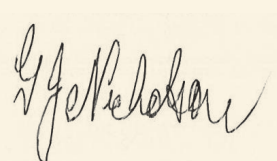
The Boundary Road Quarry site will enable the long-term viability of the Ross Trust through the supply of high-quality hard rock construction materials to the Mornington Peninsula as well as Melbourne's rapidly expanding south-eastern growth corridor.

In the 2018-19 year, Hillview Quarries made cash donations and sponsorships of \$140,805 and product donations of \$20,000 (listed) to local organisations, bringing the amount gifted by the Ross Trust and Hillview Quarries to the Mornington Peninsula community to more than \$18.6 million.



Paul Nitas

Chief Executive Officer
Hillview Quarries



Geoff Nicholson

Chair
Hillview Quarries

In the 2018-19 year, Hillview Quarries donated product with an estimated value of close to \$20,000 to the following organisations:

Beleura Junior Football Club
Boneo Primary School
Dromana Community Garden
Dromana Men's Shed
Dromana Tennis Club
Elisabeth Murdoch College
Flinders Preschool
Presentation Family Centre

Martha Cove Garden
McCrae Lions Club
Mornington Botanical Rose Gardens
Mornington Men's Shed
Mornington Pirates Baseball Club
New Peninsula Men's Shed
Pearcedale Primary School

Red Hill Football Club
Rosebud & District Men's Shed
Somerville Rise Primary School
Sorrento Primary School
St James the Less (Mt Eliza Primary School)
Westernport Secondary College
Inghams Growers Association

In the 2018-19 year, Hillview Quarries provided donations or sponsorships totalling \$140,805 to the following organisations:

Association for Building Community in Dromana

Purchase of a new projector
\$3,990

Boneo Cricket Club

Repairs to existing practice wickets
\$1,500

Capel Sound Tootgarook Community Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$250

Caroline Chisholm Education Foundation

Student scholarship program
\$5,500

Community Lifestyle Accommodation

Building specialist disability accommodation
\$5,000

Crib Point Football Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2019 season
\$700

Crib Point Junior Football Club

Upgrade of canteen facilities
\$1,250

Dromana Australia Day Inc

Sponsorship of 2019 Australia Day event
\$5,000

Dromana Bowls Club

Sponsorship for 2018/19 season
\$950

Dromana Football & Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019
\$15,000

Dromana Junior Football & Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$1,500

Dromana Primary School

Donation towards new learning maker space (including signage for door)
\$3,040

Dromana Primary School

Sponsorship of 2019 school fete
\$2,000

Dromana Secondary College

Sponsorship of 2019 scholarship program
\$4,500

Friends of Jacksons Way Reserve (Mornington Peninsula Shire)

Jacksons Way
Bushland Reserve three-year project
\$13,749

Hillview Community

Reserve and Habitat Restoration Fund
Three-year agreement for management of Hillview Community Reserve
\$12,000

Main Ridge Bowls and Petanque Club

Donation towards new shelter
\$3,000

Main Ridge Bowls and Petanque Club

Sponsorship for 2018/19 season
\$500

Main Ridge Cricket Club

Facilities upgrade
\$5,000

Main Ridge Tennis Club

Sponsorship of 2019 season
\$500

Mornington Football Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$1,000

Mornington Peninsula Schools

Donation towards the MPS Environment Week
\$2,000

Mt Martha Bowls & Social Club

Supply new Hillview branded scorecards
\$525

Mt Martha Bowls & Social Club

Sponsorship for 2019/20 plus club diary ad and scorecards
\$200

Pearcedale CFA

Sponsorship of 16th annual golf day
\$200

Red Hill Football Netball Club

Signage for new Hillview sponsored pavilion
\$1,500

Pearcedale CFA

Sponsorship of 2019 annual calendar
\$200

Red Hill Football Netball Club

Three-year sponsorship 2019-21
\$20,000

Red Hill Show

Sponsorship of 2018 agricultural show
\$5,455

Rosebud Secondary College

Donation towards 2018 STEM program
\$2,026

Rosebud Soccer Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$1,000

Rotary Club of Dromana

Purchase of a BBQ trailer
\$15,400

Rye Football Netball Club

Ground sign
\$700

Rye Football Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$700

Rye Sports & Social Club

Sponsorship of 2018 Rye gift
\$1,500

Sorrento Bowls Club

Sponsorship of 2018/19 season plus new ground sign
\$670

Sorrento Football & Netball Club

Sponsorship for 2019 season
\$800

Tootgarook Netball Club

New training equipment and rent fees
\$1,000

Tootgarook Netball Club

Sponsorship of 2019 season
\$1,000

