



AUSTRALIAN  
COMMUNITIES  
FOUNDATION

# 25

YEARS OF GIVING 1997 - 2022

**Annual Report**  
**2021/22**



A person is shown from the side, looking out over a vast field of tall, dry, golden-brown grass. The person is wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt with a circular patch on the sleeve that features a bird in flight and the words 'WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT'. The background is a soft-focus landscape of similar grass under a bright sky.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Australian Communities Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and emerging.

↓ The Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) supports Indigenous Ranger Programs across Arnhem Land to care for Country, culture and community. Josephine Austral (pictured) is a key member of the Mimal women's ranger team. KKT supports programs that provide equal opportunity for all to work on Country. Credit: Renae Saxby.







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# Welcome



# Australian Communities Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports structured giving.

We are a community of givers, powered by a courageous ambition: a fairer and more sustainable Australia.

With 25 years of experience in catalysing positive social and environmental change, we make philanthropy easy and accessible for people from all walks of life, all over Australia. We are Australia's only nationally focused community foundation.

## Our Vision

To activate a nation of givers to create a fairer and more sustainable Australia – one where social, environmental and cultural justice is the norm.

## Our Role

As a broker of change, we enable, support and amplify giving. We connect those who can give with those making positive change.

## Our Promise

We are an organisation built on strong values, using capital as a means of achieving impact.

## Our Values

As we work towards a fairer and more sustainable Australia, we are guided by four underlying values: inclusion, agency, courage and fairness.

## Our Community

We're a community of giving made up of 460+ funds and foundations created by individuals, families, couples, young professionals, business people, retirees, and everyone in between. What unites us is our desire to make a difference.

## Our Focus Areas

**Tackling Inequality**

**Strengthening Democracy**

**Supporting Indigenous Communities**

**Safeguarding the Environment**

**Building a Culturally Vibrant Society**

☞ Forever Wild uses a Future Fund at Australian Communities Foundation to support its ambitions to protect Earth's last wilderness areas. Forever Wild's 'Western Deserts Shared Earth Landscape' project protects remarkable cultural heritage and biodiversity, and create jobs in this remote area. Credit: Tobias Baumgaertner.



# From the Chair



## **Welcome to Australian Communities Foundation's Annual Report for 2021/22.**

With this being the Foundation's 25th year, I would like to begin by recognising the contributions of our co-founders and Patrons, Marion Webster OAM and Hayden Raysmith AM.

The Foundation was established in 1997 as the Melbourne Community Foundation and ran out of Marion's spare bedroom in its early years. It is difficult to imagine that Marion and Hayden could predict at the time just how far the Foundation would come in 25 years. As one of the largest charitable foundations in Australia today, we are indebted to their ongoing guidance and support.

In 2021/22, we achieved new giving records with 38 per cent more funding out the door than last year. Thank you to our giving community for stepping up in these uncertain times.

While this time of crises has resulted in volatile financial markets, the Foundation's dedication to supporting communities is clear: this year we distributed 16.2 per cent of the corpus (up from 12 per cent last year).

In a difficult year for investors, we remained committed to 100 per cent responsible investing and were named a leader in this space by the Responsible Investment Association Australasia.

Other milestones include our ongoing Covid relief funding, the expansion of our impact investments into social housing, and the publication of our first report on the Impact Fund's achievements to celebrate its fifth anniversary.

As Chair, I would like to thank my fellow Directors for another year of inspirational work. This year the Board farewelled long-standing members Michael Gilmore and Sarah Hosking, and welcomed Rueben Berg, Chris Croker and David Ritter, who each bring extensive experience from the for-purpose sector.

My final thanks go to Maree Sidey and the ACF team. Their hard work provides the crucial infrastructure that supports our growing and vibrant giving community.

**Eric Beecher**  
Chair



# From the CEO



**In this year of challenges, Australian Communities Foundation has again stepped up alongside our partners, demonstrating the crucial role that community philanthropy plays in this country.**

In 2021/22, our giving community distributed more than ever before – \$18.5 million (up from \$13.4 million last year) via 1,240 grants to 716 organisations and individuals. This figure is all the more remarkable when you take into account the challenging economic conditions of the last 12 months.

Throughout the year, the Foundation responded to the needs of communities most affected by Covid, the floods in eastern Australia, and the crisis in Ukraine, giving a total of \$3.2 million in crisis response funding.

We also saw a rise in collective giving this year with more contributions to our flagship funds, the Impact Fund and the National Crisis Response Fund. In its fifth year, the Impact Fund increased its distribution times nine, mobilising \$1.6 million for partners at the forefront of progressive change in Australia.

The Fund continues to back partners doing important work to progress the Uluru Statement, develop meaningful climate change policy, and promote integrity in politics. Celebrating the Impact Fund's fifth anniversary at the Victorian Pride Centre was one of the year's highlights.

Across the year, we welcomed over 100 new givers to our community through 74 new funds and foundations. The stories in this Annual Report showcase the unwavering generosity of our community during difficult times.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Australian Communities Foundation this year, particularly our Patrons, our Chair and Board, our fundholders and donors, the fabulous ACF team, our sector partners, and the changemakers and organisations we're supporting on our shared journey towards a fairer and more sustainable Australia.

**Maree Sidey**  
Chief Executive Officer



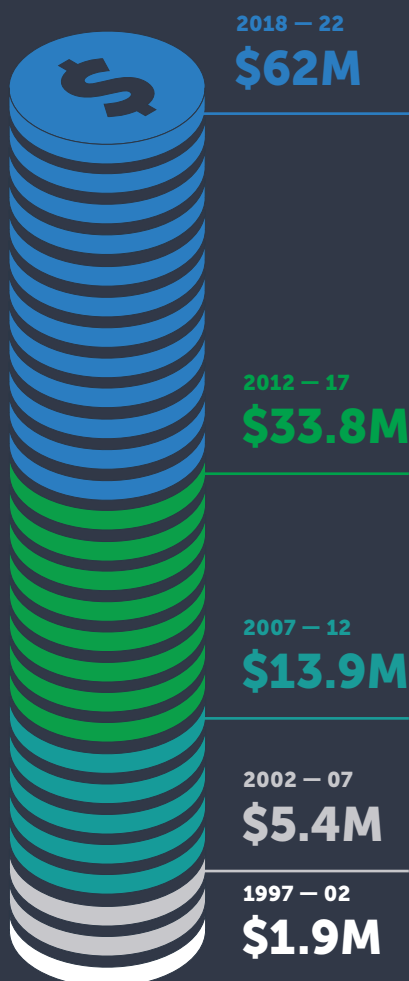
# 25 Years of Giving



**We have come a long way since 1997.  
Take a look at our growing support for  
communities over 25 years...**

## **Grant Distribution**

**Total \$117M**



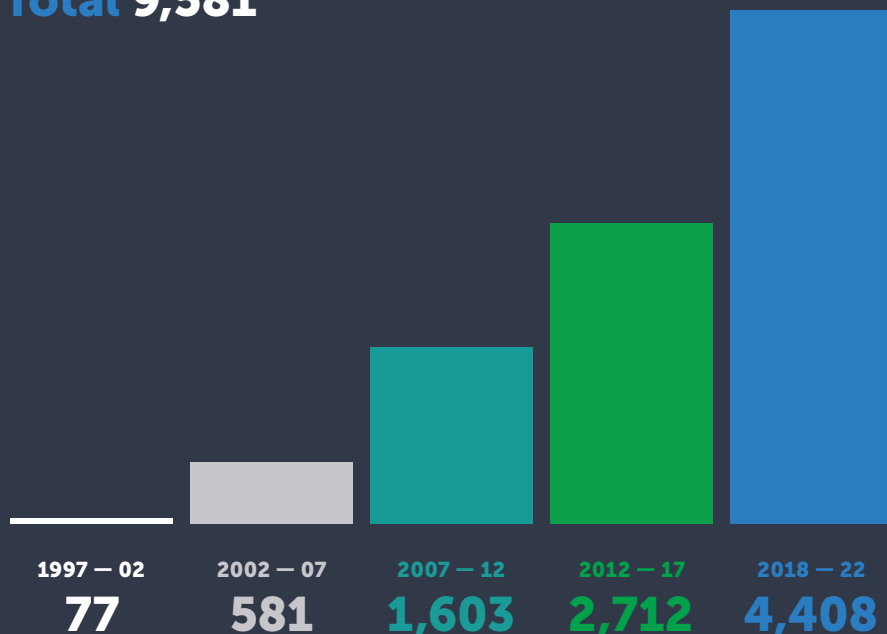
⌕ Australian Communities Foundation co-founders and Patrons Marion Webster OAM and Hayden Raysmith AM meet with members of our giving community.



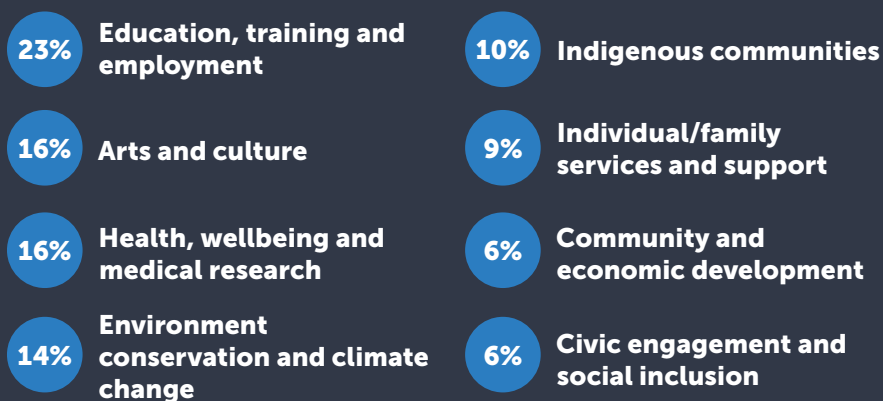


## Number of Grants

**Total 9,581**

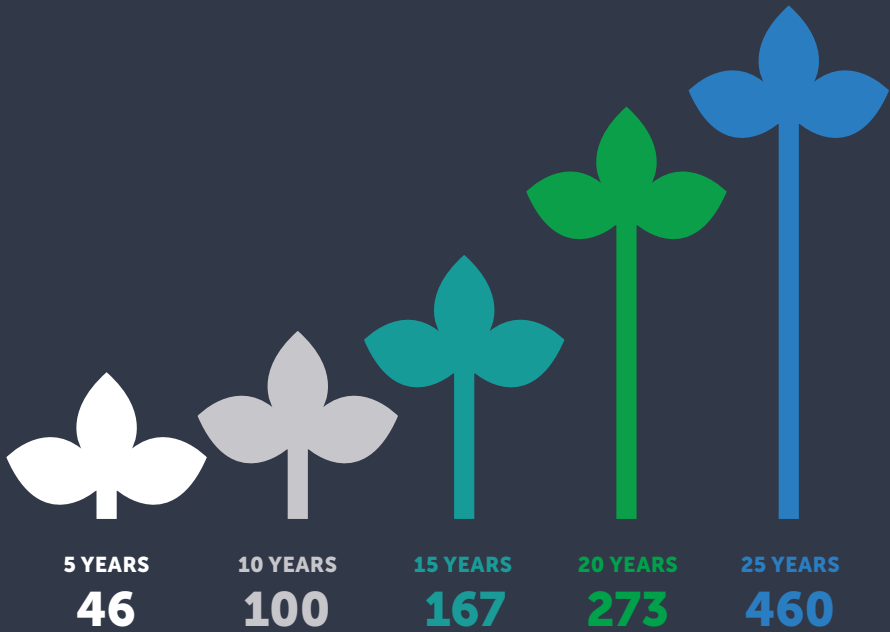


## Funding by cause area 1997–2022

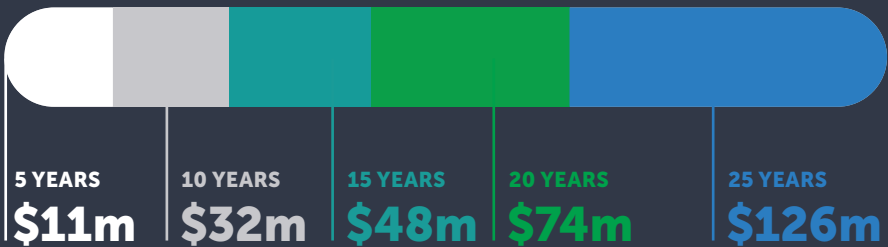




## Number of Funds & Foundations



## Corpus





## 25 Years of Giving

# The Early Years

### 1997

#### First independent community foundation in Australia

Melbourne Community Foundation is established by Marion Webster OAM and Hayden Raysmith AM.



Marion Webster OAM

### 1998

#### First major initiative launched

Inclusive Communities Project

### 2000

#### Leaving home

The Foundation moves out of Marion's spare bedroom and into its first professional office space in Flinders Lane, courtesy of the Reichstein Foundation.

#### Themed funds

The first themed funds are created to bring even more donors into the collective giving model.

### 2001

#### Milestone: \$1 million in grants given to the community

### 2004

#### Sharpening our focus

The Foundation sharpens its focus on strategic initiatives with the help of US community foundation expert, Dorothy Reynolds.

### 2005

#### Milestone: 30 new funds and over \$1 million in grants distributed in a year

### 2006

#### Raising our profile

Peter Hero, then CEO of the highly successful Silicon Valley Community Foundation in the US, helps raise the profile of Melbourne Community Foundation in the community, later joining the Board.

#### MacroMelbourne

Phase 1 of MacroMelbourne launched to bring sectors together to develop strategic responses to disadvantage, with the model laying the foundations for the later development of the Impact Fund.



# Becoming a National Community

## 2007

**Milestone: 100+ funds**

### Scholarship Fund

Scholarship Fund is launched to support scholarship providers.

### Developing our sector

The Foundation supports the emergence of the peak body for community foundations.



➤ Peter Hero, Hayden Raysmith AM, Peter Singer at our 10th-anniversary celebration.

## 2008

### Gumnut Accounts

Gumnut Accounts are launched to help new givers build their own Named Funds.

## 2009

### Indigenous Donor Circle

The first formal Learning Circle is established to bring together donors interested in supporting Indigenous communities.

## 2011

### Taking the national stage

Melbourne Community Foundation becomes Australian Communities Foundation, reflecting its national presence and scope.

## 2013

**Milestone: Over \$5 million in grants distributed in a year and our community reaches 200 funds**

### Top 50 Philanthropic Gifts

Marion Webster OAM and Hayden Raysmith AM honoured in Australia's Top 50 Philanthropic Gifts for establishing the community foundation structure in Australia.

## 2014

**Milestone: \$50 million in funds under management**

## 2015

### ESG investing

The Foundation transitions to an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment approach, seeking the best outcomes for the corpus, people and the planet.



## 25 Years of Giving

# Creating a Fairer Australia

## 2016

### Best Small Grant Award

The Foundation's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Donor Circle wins Best Small Grant at the Australian Philanthropy Awards.

### Launch of the Impact Fund

The Foundation hones its focus on impact to target the key areas of social, cultural and environmental justice, and launches flagship fund for collective giving, the Impact Fund.

## 2017

### First Impact Fund grants

\$600,000 awarded to seven projects in the inaugural Impact Fund Large Grants round.

## 2018

### Indigenous Philanthropy Award

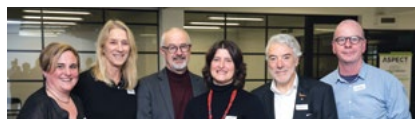
Woor-Dungin, ACF, the BB and A Miller Fund and the Williams Fund are recognised at the Australian Philanthropy Awards for the Criminal Record Discrimination Project.

### DivestInvest announcement

The Foundation commits to divesting its \$90 million corpus investment portfolio from fossil fuels and focusing on investments with positive environmental outcomes.

## Community of Giving Hub

The Foundation establishes the Community of Giving as Australia's first formal philanthropic hub with the support of our giving community, the Reichstein Foundation and others.



➤ Launching the Community of Giving: Maree Sidey, Jill Reichstein OAM, David Murray, Amanda Martin OAM, Hayden Raysmith AM, John Spierings.

## Victoria's first Indigenous-led philanthropic fund

Members of Towards A Just Society, an ACF fund, hand over the fund to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders to establish Koondee Woonga-gat Toor-rong.



➤ Koondee Woonga-gat Toor-rong handover ceremony.

## 2019

### Environmental Philanthropy Award

Seven ACF funds recognised at the Australian Philanthropy Awards for their collective support of the Community Organising Fellowship.

## 2020

### First impact investments

The Foundation announces its first impact investments, which are in the environmental and First Nations sectors.

## 2021

### Responsible Investment Leader

The Foundation becomes the first philanthropic foundation in Australia to sign on to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, and is named Responsible Investment Leader by the Responsible Investment Association Australasia.

### 100% responsible investing

The Foundation meets its target of 100 per cent of its portfolio being responsibly invested.

### Best Grant Program

The Rapid Advocacy Fund, a collaboration between Australian Progress, ACOSS and Australian Communities Foundation, wins Best Grant Program at the 2021 Australian Philanthropy Awards.

**Milestone: Over \$100m in grants given to the community**

## 2022

### Five years of the Impact Fund

Our community celebrates five years of the Impact Fund – over \$5m granted to changemakers tackling the biggest issues facing Australia.



↑ Celebrating five years of the Impact Fund at the Victorian Pride Centre.





## 25 Years of Giving

# Reflections on 25 years from our co-founders

**Co-founders and Patrons of Australian Communities Foundation (ACF), Marion Webster OAM and Hayden Raysmith AM pioneered the community foundation model in Australia.**

After a modest start in 1997, when the fledgling ACF operated out of Marion's spare bedroom "with pen and paper and a MYOB program", the Foundation is now home to 460+ funds and foundations which have collectively distributed more than \$100 million across Australia and overseas.

**How does it feel to see the organisation you established all those years ago achieve such significant milestones?**

**MW:** I'm just filled with such enormous pride – I can't believe that the organisation has come this far, it really is amazing. I also have a sense that there's still enormous generosity in Australia and if we can promote the sort of philanthropy ACF does well, that there is so much room for even more growth and success.

**HR:** To be honest, one of the first things I felt was a sense of relief! It's almost like watching your kids grow up, and you're never quite sure how they're travelling – you continue to worry about how it might ultimately turn out even though the model's been quite secure, and the funding's been terrific for some time.

It was also confirmation that the community foundation model that we brought to Australia all those years ago has stood the test of time and was doing so well. The way in which ACF has evolved over time has been one of its greatest strengths.

**Are there any personal highlights from this journey that stand out for you?**

**MW:** Something that stands out for me is that, despite us starting out as a tiny little dot on the horizon, we were embraced by the other progressive foundations and were able to work with them right from the start.

The other moment that really stands out was our 10th anniversary party at Abbotsford Convent. We didn't know what sort of response we'd get from our donors and supporters but we ended up with 100 people and a waiting list! It was, in a sense, a coming of age – we had a critical mass of support and a strong sense of wellbeing.

**"The building of trust has enabled our donors, in many cases, to be our best advocates."**

**What do you think is special about ACF and its community of givers? Has there been a ‘secret’ to its success?**

**MW:** Put simply, for me it’s about building trusting relationships and how those relationships have enabled donors to come on the journey with us. The building of trust has enabled our donors, in many cases, to be our best advocates.

Something else that’s special is the Community of Giving office itself. I think that has been a terrific innovation to have that energy, collaboration and creativity all concentrated in one space with people sharing ideas constantly.

**What are your thoughts on the current state of philanthropy, and community foundations in particular?**

**HR:** I think it’s still very under-developed in Australia and it doesn’t seem to me that the idea of giving back to the community has taken hold.

I think there’s room for really creative thinking where not just philanthropy but also businesses will be driven by their social purpose.

**MW:** I agree that philanthropy is under-developed, but I feel that will change as the generations change. There are so many innovative younger people who are doing things under the radar who are going to move philanthropy in a much more creative direction with things like social investment. ACF, the Reichstein Foundation and other progressive funds are providing really good role models for that change.

**What message would you like to leave with the ACF donor community?**

**HR:** Three points: Every contribution matters. Collaboration is good. Continue to explore the best ways to make your contribution matter.



**Marion Webster OAM**  
Co-Founder and Patron



**Hayden Raysmith AM**  
Co-Founder and Patron



## 25 Years of Giving

# Impact Highlights Award-Winning Philanthropy



### Best Small Grant 2016 Refugee and Asylum Seeker Donor Circle

The Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) was one of Australian Communities Foundation's early partners on the national stage with the release of \$5,000 to send the first lawyer to Manus Island, HRLC Director Daniel Webb. Support from the Foundation's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Donor Circle helped establish the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Rights Unit.

"Australian Communities Foundation's support for my first trip to Manus was hugely formative, both for me personally and for our work at HRLC. The grant helped establish our work in this space and build the impact that we continue to have."

Daniel Webb, Legal Director, Human Rights Law Centre

Image: Social justice advocate Shen Narayanasamy presents to our Refugee and Asylum Seeker Donor Circle in 2015.



### Indigenous Philanthropy Award 2018 Criminal Record Discrimination Project

The Criminal Record Discrimination Project was a collaboration between academics, lawyers, politicians, Aboriginal groups and philanthropy including ACF. Woor-Dungin, an organisation that connects Aboriginal community-led organisations in Victoria and philanthropy, brought them all together and saw the project through.

"When we were talking to Aboriginal communities about the things they needed most to improve their lives, it was clear that ancient and often trivial 'criminal convictions' were a challenge to finding employment. This work led to old and irrelevant criminal records being removed from public record, including those given to Aboriginal peoples taken under the Children's Welfare Act."

Peter Flanagan, Secretary, Woor-Dungin

Over the past 25 years, our giving community has been recognised for some incredible achievements on our journey towards a fairer Australia. Here's a snapshot of some of our biggest highlights.



### **Environmental Philanthropy Award 2019 Community Organising Fellowship**

The Community Organising Fellowship is a six-month program that up-skills community leaders and changemakers, boosting their capacity to influence decision makers. Twenty-five community leaders take part in the Fellowship each year.

“Every year these leaders go out and train many others, so it’s very strategic capacity building that supports community development and campaigns. The Award was not just for us – there have been many funders supporting the Fellowship since 2014 so that’s a long-term group who are building the capacity of campaigning for environmental justice.”

Ann McGregor, Melliodora Fund,  
Australian Communities Foundation



### **Best Grant Program Award 2021 Rapid Advocacy Fund**

Established at the outset of Covid-19, the Rapid Advocacy Fund quickly raised over \$150,000 for 25 community-led grassroots organisations advocating for change within windows of opportunity that opened during the crisis. The Fund is a partnership between Australian Communities Foundation, Australian Progress and the Australian Council of Social Service.

“Because the partnership behind the Fund consists of three organisations with a good knowledge of the landscape, one of the key factors contributing to its success has been the partner organisations’ shared knowledge of the landscape, allowing us to ‘fund at the speed of trust’.”

Georgia Mathews, Director of  
Philanthropic Services, Australian  
Communities Foundation





# Our Impact

2021/22

**This year, our  
giving community  
distributed 1,240  
grants to 716  
organisations and  
individuals.**

**Together, we granted  
\$18.5 million.**



**Key insight: Providing flexible support  
in challenging times**

As community organisations continued to face higher demand for services this year alongside reduced financial support in uncertain times, our giving community stepped up to provide flexible support with nearly half of all grants providing untied funding. Moreover, our community committed more multi-year grants than ever before, supporting our grant partners to build their sustainability and better plan ahead.

- ✎ Australian Communities Foundation's Impact Fund community is backing the Our Islands Our Home campaign to build a powerful Torres Strait Islander-led climate justice movement. The United Nations Human Rights Committee recently found that the Australian Government is violating its human rights obligations to Torres Strait Islanders by failing to act on climate change. Credit: 350.org Australia.

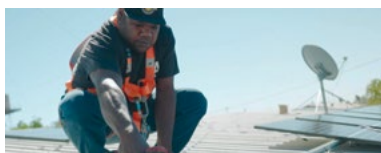


# Supporting the causes Australians care about

2021/22



Education, training  
and employment  
**\$3.8 million**



Environment conservation  
and climate change  
**\$2.9 million**



Individual/family  
services and support  
**\$2.7 million**



Indigenous communities  
**\$2.6 million**



International aid  
and development  
**\$1.5 million**

↑ Smiling Mind, Original Power, Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare, Australian Climate Case (Grata Fund), ActionAid Australia.

At Australian Communities Foundation, we help you give effectively to the causes you care about. In 2021/22, **we distributed \$18.5 million on behalf of our giving community** to the following sectors.



**Arts and culture**  
**\$1.3 million**



**Health/wellbeing and medical research**  
**\$1.2 million**



**Community and economic development**  
**\$1.2 million**



**Housing and homelessness**  
**\$704,000**



**Civic engagement and social inclusion**  
**\$603,000**

↑ Stella Prize, Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Community Care Kitchen Sydney, Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Brisbane, Many Coloured Sky.





# Funding by Focus Area

2021/22

By supporting our giving community to give to the causes they care about, we're making progress across five focus areas on our journey towards a fairer and more sustainable Australia.



## TACKLING INEQUALITY

**\$10.2 million**

We support projects and organisations working to combat the unequal distribution of opportunities across the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres.



## SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

**\$2.9 million**

We support projects and organisations that are led or owned by Indigenous peoples, who we believe are best placed to improve outcomes for their communities.



## SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

**\$2.6 million**

We support projects and organisations that are led or owned by Indigenous peoples, who we believe are best placed to improve outcomes for their communities.



## STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

**\$1.5 million**

We support projects and organisations working to strengthen the foundations of Australia's democracy.



## BUILDING A CULTURALLY VIBRANT SOCIETY

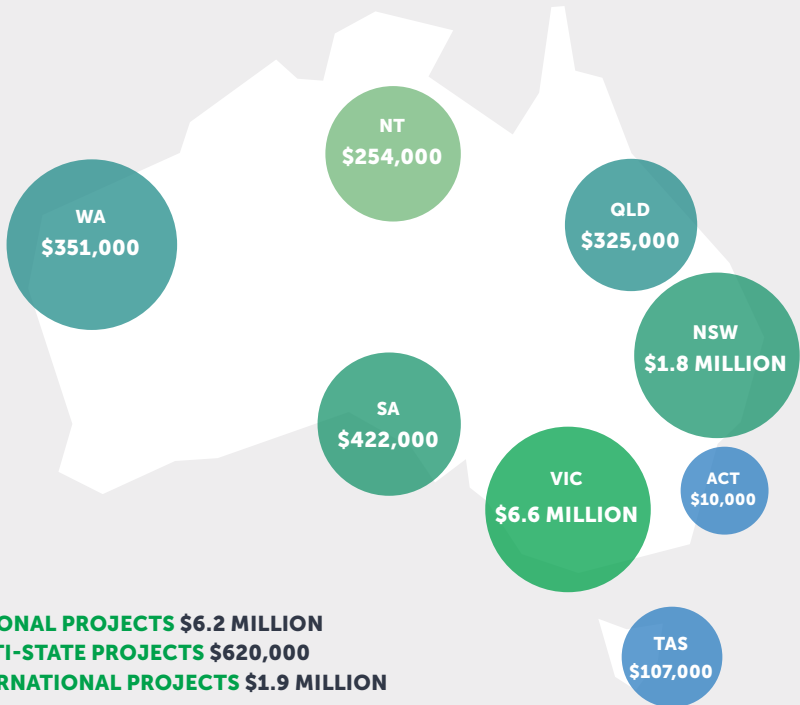
**\$1.3 million**

We support projects and organisations that facilitate creative expression. We see the arts as integral to healthy public debate, a robust civil society, social cohesion and the celebration of our differences.



# More giving **across Australia**

2021/22



## Key insight: More giving to rural and regional communities

In the past year, Australia has seen an uptick in funding for rural and regional communities in response to issues like extreme weather events and the need for greater digital inclusion. Consistent with this rise in support, our community gave more to rural and regional communities than ever before with 20 per cent of all funding directed to these parts of Australia.



# Supporting people in times of crisis: **National Crisis Response Fund**

Established at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Crisis Response Fund (NCRF) is a collective fund that provides support to grassroots organisations in times of crisis.

“The NCRF is an example of what funders can achieve when they come together in difficult times,” says Georgia Mathews, Director of Philanthropic Services.

“The Fund has enabled our giving community to pool our resources and respond effectively to communities most affected by Covid-19 and the recent flood events in New South Wales and Queensland.”

Over the course of two years, the NCRF has raised over \$1.5 million and provided over 100 grants to respond rapidly to the needs of organisations helping communities in crisis.

Collaboration and an agile approach to grantmaking have been the key ingredients to the Fund’s success, says Georgia.

“Australian Communities Foundation’s national reach has meant we have been able to collaborate with an extensive network of organisations across the country to identify community need and funding gaps.”

**Stepping up to the challenges of the day, we gave \$3.2 million in crisis response for communities affected by Covid, floods and the crisis in Ukraine.**

“Our fortnightly granting cycle has enabled us to quickly distribute the dollars raised through the Fund to fill those gaps.”

Recognising the merit of this approach, the Paul Ramsay Foundation contributed \$500,000 in 2020 and has been partnering with the NCRF ever since. The partnership has included dedicated Covid response funding for First Nations-led organisations, as well as general support to complement the ongoing contributions from the Fund’s many individual donors.

Throughout 2021, the NCRF continued to focus on supporting communities most affected by Covid-19, then came the Eastern Australia floods in 2022.

“We saw a huge outpouring of support from our giving community in response to the floods, enabling us to quickly channel resources to where they were needed most,” says Georgia.



↑ Community members helping with flood recovery in the Northern Rivers region.  
Credit: Mark Kriedermann / Northern Rivers Community Foundation.

Grants distributed during this period include:

- \$20,000 to repair and replace water-damaged furniture and personal items for young women and children in Brisbane
- \$10,000 to deliver free meals to Indigenous communities facing food insecurity around the Lismore region
- \$10,000 for an accommodation hub and free counselling in Mullumbimby
- \$5,000 to support Queer Family Northern Rivers' crisis response

Given the Fund's focus on filling gaps and the unprecedented extent of the flooding's impact, Australian Communities Foundation chose to partner with a local community foundation to distribute some of the funds raised.

"We wanted to ensure we were reaching communities missing out on existing support," explains Georgia. "To complement our team's efforts to reach these communities, we partnered with the team at Northern Rivers Community Foundation, whose connections in the region meant they were well-placed to quickly fill gaps."

Northern Rivers Community Foundation Director Allison Henry says the Foundation's knowledge of the local area and an understanding that "the devastation of the floods extended far beyond Lismore, which rightly attracted so much attention" meant support was provided all over the Northern Rivers region.

"Our experienced team distributed almost \$1 million in rapid response grants to 106 organisations across the region in six weeks, with most grantees receiving funds within 10 days of application," says Allison.





# Making change together: Impact Fund

The Impact Fund is a movement of funders and changemakers working for a fairer and more sustainable Australia. Together, we support the boldest solutions to the biggest issues facing people across our country today.

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## THE POWER OF GIVING TOGETHER FIVE-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

**\$5+**

million raised

**100+**

funders giving  
together

**15+**

changes in policy  
and regulation

**10+**

social infrastructure  
groups established

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**From helping win the marriage equality campaign, to overturning laws that discriminate against Indigenous peoples; from showing that farmers care about climate, to standing up for our gun safety laws against a powerful gun lobby – Impact Funders are behind some of the most powerful changemakers in the country.**

Here's a snapshot of some of the biggest wins our Impact Fund community has contributed to over the last five years:

- Marriage equality achieved for all Australians
- Abortion decriminalised in QLD and NSW, and safe access zone laws defended in VIC and TAS
- Australia's first coalition for gun safety established
- 191 refugees and people seeking asylum brought to Australia from offshore detention to access urgent medical care
- Over \$800 million in government funding secured to support 80 Indigenous ranger groups
- Public drunkenness laws that discriminate against Indigenous people decriminalised in Victoria
- Divisive Religious Discrimination Bill that would have wound back antidiscrimination laws shelved indefinitely
- Green star rating of new housing builds increased from six to seven stars under the National Construction Code

**In 2021/22, we celebrated the Impact Fund's fifth anniversary and raised another **\$1.6 million** for our cohort of **40+ Impact Partners**.**

## 2022 Large Grants

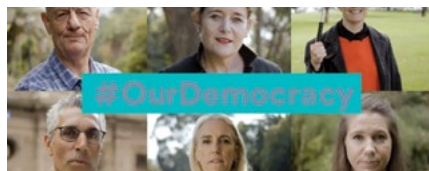


### MAKE LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNT

**Inequality | \$100,000**

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE  
AND ECONOMIC MEDIA CENTRE

Our support is paying people working with great heart and skill to shift the media and policy narrative in this country in favour of equality.

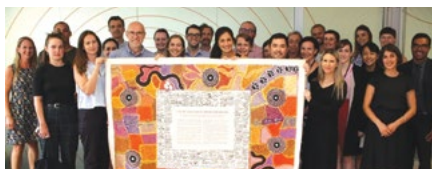


### REDUCE UNDUE CORPORATE INFLUENCE

**Democracy | \$100,000**

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY NETWORK AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS LAW CENTRE

Our support is paying experts to devote their time to making sure government works for the many, not the few.



### PROGRESS THE ULURU STATEMENT

**Indigenous | \$100,000**

INDIGENOUS LAW CENTRE UNSW AND PUBLIC  
INTEREST ADVOCACY CENTRE

Our support is funding a website to map laws and policies that have impacted Indigenous people since 1788.



### CHANGE AUSTRALIA'S STORY ON GAS

**Environment | \$100,000**

350 AUSTRALIA AND CLIMATE MEDIA CENTRE

Our support is paying people whose urgent task right now is to tell the truth about gas and make the right people listen.

An additional \$450,000 was raised through the Impact Fund's agile granting, including support for both new and existing Impact Partners.



# Protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ people: **Equality Australia**

**When the Federal Government's divisive Religious Discrimination Bill was shelved in early 2022, LGBTIQ+ advocate Anna Brown breathed a sigh of relief.**

"Our community should take heart from this incredible result," says Anna, Founding CEO of Equality Australia (EA) – a national organisation working to create a fair and inclusive Australia for LGBTIQ+ people and their families.

Intended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity, the proposed Bill would have wound back hard-fought protections for LGBTIQ+ people, women, minority faith communities and people with disabilities.

"Our community's efforts have stopped the Bill from becoming law and that's certainly a win," says Anna. "But this has been a really difficult time for our communities. LGBTIQ+ people, particularly trans young people and queer people of faith, have once again been the subject of intense scrutiny and political debate."

Reflecting on EA's collaboration with others concerned about the draft Bill, Anna says there has been an unintended upside of the past few months too.

"We have built stronger connections with faith communities, multicultural communities, people with disabilities, women and other affected communities.

"We now have this incredible network through which we're building consensus about the importance of laws that protect us all equally."

**"It is really wonderful to have funders like the Impact Fund community. It means we can go out there and create a movement to build a more inclusive society."**

Australian Communities Foundation and the Impact Fund community are long-term supporters of EA's work. In 2017, the Impact Fund supported the marriage equality campaign, out of which the organisation was established.

"The ongoing and flexible nature of Australian Communities Foundation's support has helped us respond swiftly to changes in the political landscape," says Anna.

"When the threat of the Religious Discrimination Bill first emerged in 2019, the Impact Fund's flexible support helped us quickly shift gears. The more recent support earlier this year enabled us to increase our campaigning work as the debate around religious freedom gathered momentum."



### **Key insight: Championing rainbow giving**

A report published this year by LGBTIQ+ community-led funders Aurora and GiveOUT found that LGBTIQ+ communities are amongst the least funded cohorts in Australia. LGBTIQ+ organisations receive just 5 cents out of every \$100 donated to Australian charities. Our giving community has always been a strong supporter of LGBTIQ+ communities and this year gave 16 times as much by this measure.

↑ Equality Australia and activists from Minus 18 delivering a petition to Parliament House in Canberra.  
Credit: Equality Australia





# Protecting the voices of a diverse sector: **Hands Off Our Charities**

**In 2021 the Federal Government introduced new regulations that would have given the charities regulator sweeping powers to deregister charities for speaking out on behalf of the communities they serve.**

This was despite unanimous opposition from the charity sector and confirmation from the head regulator that the problem the regulations were supposed to solve doesn't exist.

After the regulations were tabled in Parliament, the 100+ charities that make up the Hands Off Our Charities (HOOC) Alliance moved quickly to prevent the regulations from coming into effect.

Saffron Zomer, Executive Director at the Australian Democracy Network – one of

HOOC's founding organisations – says the proposed regulations, if ever instated, would have a chilling effect on the sector and result in more red tape and compliance costs for charities.

"These regulations are drafted so broadly that it would actually be possible for the Commissioner to move to deregister a charity for something as simple as blocking a footpath at a vigil or failing to have paperwork in order," says Saffron.

"It's inevitable that, in the face of the huge potential risk, charities will choose not to do perfectly legitimate activities. That's not the kind of regulatory environment we want for civil society in a democratic country."



## **Key insight: Lending our voice in support of our partners**

At Australian Communities Foundation, we understand the vital role that the community sector plays in supporting and maintain a democracy that works for everyone. In addition to our community's financial support, we backed our partners this year by lending our voice and signing on to letters from the Hands Off Our Charities Alliance, writing a submission in support of the Raise the Rate campaign and more.



↑ Hands Off Our Charities members outside Parliament House in Canberra. Credit: HOOC.

**“As a proud supporter of advocacy work in the sector, our giving community understands the critical role that civil society advocacy plays in a democracy.”**

Australian Communities Foundation CEO Maree Sidey said the potential impact on the hundreds of charities the Foundation supports each year was concerning.

“As a proud supporter of advocacy work in the sector, our giving community understands the critical role that civil society advocacy plays in a democracy. As an organisation with a shared vision of a fairer Australia, we are concerned about the risk regulations like these

pose to our capacity to support our charity partners to advocate in pursuit of this vision.”

With support from Australian Communities Foundation, HOOC coordinated a multifaceted response that put a spotlight on the issue in the media and galvanised charities and their supporters to call on federal politicians on all sides to oppose the regulations.

After a concerted campaign from the sector and in a huge win for democracy, the Senate voted in favour of a disallowance motion in late 2021, meaning the regulations would never come into effect and ensuring the long tradition of charitable advocacy continues.



# Progressing the Uluru Statement: Update from Professor Megan Davis

**National Sorry Day 2022 marked five years since the Uluru Statement from the Heart was delivered to the Australian people as an invitation to walk with First Nations for a better future.**

The newly elected Federal Government is committed to now putting the Uluru Statement into action, but for advocates like Professor Megan Davis, this moment has been a long time in the making.

“It’s been a big five years. We’ve done a lot of work to get ready for this moment,” says Megan, proud Cobble Cobble woman from the Barrungam nation in south west Queensland and Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous UNSW and Professor of Law, UNSW Law.

Through her work at the Indigenous Law Centre UNSW, Megan has become one of the key figures behind the Uluru Statement, working to build support for the Statement’s reforms: a referendum to enshrine an Indigenous Voice to Parliament in the Constitution, a Makarrata Commission to oversee treaty agreement-making and a national truth-telling process.

The giving community at Australian Communities Foundation continues to be a strong supporter of this work through our flagship fund for collective

giving, the Impact Fund, and Megan says this support is crucial.

“As we walk together as a nation towards a referendum, the work of the Uluru Dialogue is more important than ever,” says Megan. “The Impact Fund community has had a tremendous impact on our ability to do that work.”

“The funding has enabled me to realise outcomes that I wanted to achieve to set up the pathway to a referendum, particularly the public education work on the ground. It can be a lonely road being a constitutional lawyer. In the early days when I tried to raise money, people struggled to understand the connection between constitutional empowerment and health and wellbeing.

“After the Uluru Statement was issued in 2017, people started to get it and that made it easier to have conversations. I am pleased now that funders are more open to talking about the kind of change that is required to actually ‘close the gap’, because Closing the Gap and all those policies are never going to achieve what they seek to without the kind of public infrastructure required to empower First Nations peoples. That’s what the Uluru Statement can change, and once its reforms are implemented, the landscape will look very different.”



### **Key insight: Supporting the reforms in the Uluru Statement and beyond**

Complementing our community's support for the reforms set out in the Uluru Statement, our community also provided \$300,000 in seed funding for the Dhadjowa Foundation – an Indigenous-led foundation supporting families with loved ones who have died in custody to advocate for the reform of the criminal justice system.

↑ Professor Megan Davis, Aunty Pat Anderson AO and Noel Pearson with members who participated in the Uluru Dialogues receiving the 2021-22 Sydney Peace Prize. Credit: Indigenous Law Centre.



# 7-star win for environmental giving: **Climate Resilient Homes**

**In a win for climate and environmental philanthropy, governments across the country have agreed to a historic increase to energy standards in Australian homes.**

From October 2023, all new homes will need to meet the National Construction Code's (NCC) 7-Star energy standards, reducing both emissions and energy bills, ultimately easing cost-of-living pressures.

"This decision has been years in the making," says Dr Fiona Gray, CEO of national sustainability organisation Renew. Indeed, the decision marks the first increase to standards in over a decade.

Supported by the Australian Communities Foundation Impact Fund and seven other ACF Named Funds since 2018, Renew has been leading calls on governments to lift standards through its Climate Resilient Homes campaign.

"This campaign just wouldn't have been possible without philanthropic support," says Fiona. "The investment in strategic advocacy by the ACF Impact Fund and our other key partners allowed us to build the campaign and deliver a big win.

"The boosted energy efficiency standards are expected to cut emissions by up to 78 million tonnes and lower the

cost of grid upgrades by up to \$12.6 billion by 2050.

**"What this shows is the power of funding sustained advocacy and not giving up when things take time."**

"Lifting energy efficiency not only reduces emissions and makes homes more comfortable," says Fiona, "it saves households money at the same time."

With that in mind, Renew expects the updated NCC to reduce poverty and inequality by ensuring higher standards in social housing and private rentals.

Australian Communities Foundation CEO Maree Sidey says the win demonstrates the value of working with partners who are undertaking sustained advocacy.

"Our community got behind the campaign in its early stages because we saw the potential. This was a way some really targeted funds could make a difference to climate change, and now they have.

"What this shows is the power of funding sustained advocacy and not giving up when things take time. When Renew's campaign timelines were blown out due to Covid, our community responded with additional support. It's so important we stick with partners through the unexpected."





### **Key insight: More giving for climate policy and strategic climate litigation**

More than ever before, our giving community rallied behind environmental organisations that are standing up for our climate in court. Our community supported landmark climate cases including Defending the Unburnt (Environmental Defenders Office), The Australian Climate Case (Grata Fund), and Environmental Justice Australia's Climate Litigation and Advocacy Program with more than \$300,000 in funding.



# Supporting First Nations artists: **Adam Briggs Foundation**

**On its mission to ‘nurture First Nations excellence’ within the music industry, the Adam Briggs Foundation recently announced the recipients of its Barpirdhila grant round.**

Led by proud Yorta Yorta man and one of Australia’s best-known hip-hop artists, Briggs, the Foundation has awarded over \$65,000 to 12 emerging First Nations artists with support from Australian Communities Foundation.

“Barpirdhila is a Yorta Yorta word for Morning Star,” explains Briggs. “More than fitting for what we as a not-for-profit are here to nurture: the next step.”

Briggs spoke with us about how his Foundation is tackling the barriers he encountered as an emerging artist himself, plus his thoughts on the role of arts funding and some advice for donors when it comes to supporting First Nations communities.

**What’s the story behind the Adam Briggs Foundation? Why did you start your own Foundation?**

At its heart, the Foundation is about creating a bridge between that beginning stage of an artist’s career and what comes next.

In all my early years of music, I got absolutely nothing in grants – [funders] couldn’t see the positivity in what I was doing because my music was so angry. They didn’t see the positivity – the fact I was an Indigenous kid out of country Victoria making my way in the music scene. That’s a big part of why I started the Foundation – I remember what it was like starting out and getting nothing.

**“Art is everything. It has a huge role to play in tackling inequality.”**



## **Key insight: Revitalising Australia’s arts sector after lockdowns**

Despite the complete shutdown of the arts sector during Covid lockdowns, our community continued to support artists with \$1.5 million going towards arts-based projects in 2021/22. With giving to culture and recreation dropping by 60 per cent in Australia during lockdowns, much of our community’s recent funding in this area has focused on supporting the return of arts festivals and events to revitalise the sector.



↑ Proud Yorta Yorta man and Indigenous rapper Briggs has established the Adam Briggs Foundation to support emerging First Nations artists. Credit: Bad Apples Music.

**Congratulations on the Barpirdhila grant round. You mentioned in the announcement that you sought to remove barriers for applicants. Can you share more about that?**

What we were looking for was artists with new and good ideas with well thought-out approaches – really, it's about having a vision. So we wanted to let artists know that punctuation and grammar and spelling and whatnot don't matter. Talking the language of academia is not a prerequisite for securing your grant. That's why we invited artists to just submit a video and talk about what they want to do.

**We've seen a drop in arts funding in Australia over the past few years with more resources directed to tackling rising inequality. What is the role of arts funding in this context?**

Art is everything. It has a huge role to play in tackling inequality. As just

one example – if you're passionate about youth justice and addressing rates of recidivism, you need to support things that help keep kids out of the system. I was reading the other day about people complaining about [graffiti] taggers in Melbourne. What I say to that is: the people who make the art this city is renowned for, they started out doing this. It just shows the value of looking at the small things and seeing good ideas and artistry, and supporting them from the start.

**What advice do you have for donors when it comes to supporting First Nations communities?**

My advice would be look in your backyard first and support what's around you. I think a lot of people's minds go further afield and they miss the opportunity to fund things that are happening right in their city. Give where you live and you can see the difference.



# Our Community



# A vibrant community of givers

**In 2021/22, we welcomed  
over 100 new givers into  
our community.**

**We're now home to more than  
460 funds and foundations,  
each with their own vision for  
positive change but united in  
their commitment to  
advancing social, cultural and  
environmental justice.**

✎ ACF Friends and members of our giving community meet to celebrate the Impact Fund's fifth anniversary at the Victorian Pride Centre in St Kilda, Melbourne.





# Supporting community organising for climate:

## Running Waters Fund

Having spent the first 20 years of their working lives in environmental organisations, Melbourne couple Linda and John understand what it takes to make change.

“It’s all about collaboration,” says Linda. “It’s about the community coming together to organise,” echoes John.

For the last decade, the couple has also found themselves “fortunate enough” to be able to give, adding a new dimension to their support for the environment.

“We’d always made donations where we could, but opening the Running Waters Fund with Australian Communities Foundation gave us the possibility to do much more.”

With a focus on urban ecological sustainability and social justice, the Fund has supported a range of causes over the years: the Community Organising Fellowship; the campaign to Stop Adani; the market-related work on coal and fossil fuels led by Market Forces; and the Reclaim Kosci campaign to get feral horses out of Kosciuszko National Park.

**“When you feel connected to the organisations you’re giving to and become a part of their family, that’s magic – and the Foundation plays a key role in facilitating that connection.”**

For Linda and John, the greatest joy of being part of Australian Communities Foundation has been the opportunity to connect with and learn alongside other donors.

“The Foundation plays a crucial role in educating and connecting donors with what’s happening on the ground and helping people understand how they can be part of making things happen,” says Linda.

“When you feel connected to the organisations you’re giving to and become a part of their family, that’s magic – and the Foundation plays a key role in facilitating that connection.

“We’ve really enjoyed going to Learning Circles and meeting other donors and changemakers.”



## Named Funds

John and Linda support environmental organisations through their Named Fund at Australian Communities Foundation. Establishing a Named Fund is an easy, tax-effective and strategic way to support the causes you care about. All funds are responsibly invested and can be distributed at any time to the charitable organisations of your choosing.

↑ John and Linda's Running Waters Fund is named after a tributary of the Snowy River in Kosciuszko National Park. "It's where we've spent almost every summer since we've known each other – nearly 40 years," says Linda.



# Creating a lasting legacy: Dennis Altman on leaving a bequest

**Leaving a gift or bequest in your Will is a big decision to make. What will future generations need? What will progress look like years from now?**

Writer and academic Dennis Altman recently chose to leave a bequest to his fund at Australian Communities Foundation – a decision he made for two reasons.

“First, knowing that it will be invested and grown into an ongoing source of funding for my focus areas makes it a more attractive option than simply leaving a one-off gift to charity.”

“As a gay man, I am very conscious that relatively little philanthropy supports queer causes. I am particularly passionate about supporting people seeking asylum because of their sexuality or gender identity, of whom there will sadly be more in coming years.”

“Secondly, one of the things I’ve learnt about good philanthropy is that it should actually aim to have itself replaced,” says Dennis. “If you’re funding a program and it’s really good, then I think the state should start funding it. But you often need those pilot projects that have a new vision for change. There’s been a number I’ve seen that have been successful in this sense. So perhaps the projects I’m funding today won’t need funding tomorrow.”

“Knowing that the Foundation will be there to identify new projects aligned with my interests reassures me that I can contribute to progress for future generations.”

Dennis says he sees his giving as a tool for promoting change, and encourages others to approach their giving in this way too.



**“Knowing that the Foundation will be there to identify new projects aligned with my interests reassures me that I can contribute to progress for future generations.”**

**Dennis Altman**  
Assia Altman Fund





↑ Dennis has left a bequest to continue supporting programs that promote the rights of queer people and asylum seekers, such as Many Coloured Sky's Queer Refugee and Asylum Seeker Peers group (pictured), which he currently supports through his Assia Altman Fund.

"I think it's important that one gives money to promote social change, and that you don't just give money to support the status quo. Of course, there are humanitarian crises where you give money. Probably most people who give money have done so at various points knowing that they will have no lasting impact, but that they are helping people in desperate need.

"There's certainly value in that kind of giving, but I think beyond that, one needs to recognise that money is an important tool for change. I think that is the whole point of a place like a community foundation. It encourages people to think of giving money as a pathway to lasting change."



## Leaving A Legacy

When you leave a bequest through Australian Communities Foundation, you create a lasting legacy – your gift is invested and grown into an ongoing source of funding for communities. Contact our team to have a conversation about how we can help make your gift last forever. Call us on 03 9412 0412 or email [info@communityfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@communityfoundation.org.au)



# Enabling positive social change for Queenslanders: Shepherd Family Foundation

**A veteran of Queensland's boat building industry, Bruce Shepherd was always driven throughout his career to give back to the community.**

"Bruce was always conscious of the fact that he had more than many others," says Bruce's wife Sue, "and so he gave generously throughout his lifetime."

When Bruce passed away in 2019, Sue and the Shepherd family wanted a way to extend Bruce's legacy of giving back.

Today, the Shepherd Family Foundation supports Queensland organisations that "enable positive social change and make a real difference in people's lives," explains Sue. "Our aim is to support Queensland communities to thrive."

When the family decided they would establish their own foundation in Bruce's honour, they weren't exactly sure how to get started.

"The prospect of establishing our own foundation by ourselves was overwhelming," says Sue. "We started to learn about the structure that sits behind family foundations – what's called a private ancillary fund or PAF."

"There just seemed to be so much work involved, and that's not even mentioning the ongoing administration and compliance."

Then a friend introduced Sue to Australian Communities Foundation.

"Australian Communities Foundation has supported us throughout our giving journey," explains Sue, "from establishment of our PAF, to helping us articulate and narrow down our giving framework, supporting our granting and ensuring we meet all legal requirements."

The Shepherd Family Foundation distributed its first grants in early 2022 and has since given over \$300,000 across four key focus areas: homelessness, the arts, women and girls, and food insecurity. Working with the Australian Communities Foundation team, the family takes a holistic approach to supporting positive change in these areas, funding both service delivery and advocacy.

**"To anyone interested in starting their own foundation, work with a knowledgeable partner – that support makes all the difference."**

Another key principle of the family's grantmaking approach is to provide untied funding where possible, allowing organisations to decide how to best allocate the funds themselves.





Complementing the Foundation's granting to Queensland-based organisations is its support for a range of national organisations that also benefit Queenslanders, including the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, OzHarvest and Lifeline Australia.

Sue says this is just the beginning of carrying on Bruce's legacy.

"We look forward to continuing Bruce's legacy as we learn along the way and maximise our impact," says Sue. "To anyone interested in starting their own foundation, the only advice we have at this stage is to work with a knowledgeable partner like Australian Communities Foundation – that support makes all the difference."



## Private Foundations

Sue Shepherd, pictured here with her late husband Bruce, established the Shepherd Family Foundation through Australian Communities Foundation. Private Foundations are an attractive option for those comfortable with the additional compliance obligations required, including maintaining greater control over investment management. We can help establish your foundation and provide ongoing granting and compliance support through our Foundation Support Services.



# Turning pain into a positive: Lana Wilson Memorial Fund

**When Lana Wilson passed away, her eldest child, Melanie Gandevia, knew she wanted to honour her mother's memory.**

Lana's passing inspired Melanie to begin her giving journey in her mother's name, donating to the causes she knew her mum was passionate about: children, animals, and people in regional communities.

"She didn't have a lot of money, but she was always very generous and willing to help absolutely anyone who needed it," Melanie says.

"After Mum passed away, I made a donation to Taronga Zoo in her name to help build the Lemur Forest Adventure space.

Melanie continued giving, switching gears from charitable donations to structured giving and opening a Gumnut Account at Australian Communities Foundation to start building a fund in her mother's honour.

"I definitely preferred the idea of smaller, ongoing donations than a large upfront sum," Melanie explains. "More practically, it's a way for me to do something without having a huge amount of money upfront to create a fund."

**"It's such a beautiful way to honour someone and turn the pain of losing them into something positive."**

"It was reassuring to work with Australian Communities Foundation and know that the correct structures and governance arrangements are in place.

"Partnering with an organisation with vast experience and networks was very appealing, I wouldn't have known where to start."

Once the Lana Wilson Memorial Fund matures into a Named Fund, Melanie plans to use her fund to benefit "the kinds of people my mum helped when she was alive," she says.

"I think she'd be amazed and so proud," Melanie smiles. "I don't think she could ever have imagined there would one day be a charitable fund in her name.

"It's such a beautiful way to honour someone and turn the pain of losing them into something positive."



## Gumnut Accounts

Melanie Gandevia opened a Gumnut Account to honour her mother's memory. A Gumnut is an easy way to start your journey towards structured giving. Simply open an account and make regular, tax-deductible donations to build a giving fund over time.

↑ Melanie Gandevia (second from right) with her mother Lana and family.



# Building a better future: FG Advisory Charitable Fund

**FG Advisory is all about creating a zero emissions future, one building at a time.**

Established in 2013, the Australian engineering and sustainability consulting firm helps clients create high-performing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

The firm has since grown to a team of 33, working with sectors spanning health, government, commercial and higher education.

“As we’ve grown, we’ve really embedded that purpose of building a better future into our culture,” says Kathy.

One of the key ways the firm has achieved this has been through the FG Advisory Charitable Fund.

Established through Australian Communities Foundation, the Fund supports the FG Advisory team’s giving program focused on community development, education, environment and international aid.

“The causes we fund are really close to our employees’ hearts,” says Kathy, “and ACF is always there to help us find organisations doing great work for those causes. It’s a really collaborative process.”

Over their first year of granting, the FG Advisory team has supported a range of organisations including Wildlife Victoria, Bush Heritage Australia, WomenCAN,

Human Rights Law Centre, Ardoch, batyr, and ActionAid.

**“The causes we fund are really close to our employees’ hearts and ACF is always there to help us find organisations doing great work for those causes.”**

“These are some really leading-edge not-for-profits that corporates don’t often first think to support,” says ACF’s Director of Philanthropic Services, Georgia Mathews. “FG Advisory already has a sustainability focus, so it’s great to see the team get behind some leading environmental groups, but for the organisation to broaden the Fund’s remit to also have a community focus is fantastic.”

With corporate philanthropy on the rise, Georgia says more and more businesses are understanding they have a broader role to play in society.

“It’s not just about employee retention and satisfaction – although all the evidence shows that workplace giving is good for both. It’s also this idea that you’re supporting values-based conversations to be had among teams that may not otherwise happen.”





“Opening a Corporate Fund is a really smart way to go about engaging your team in workplace giving,” says Georgia.

“When you open a fund for your workplace, your money works for you three times: (1) employees get a tax deduction when they make the donation; (2) the money is invested ethically while it’s sitting there; and (3) you get to give it out when you’re ready to amazing organisations on the ground.”

For Kathy and the FG Advisory team, this is only the beginning of their giving journey.

“The Fund has already enabled us to get so many of our people involved – to make decisions about what to support and be part of a shared journey,” says Kathy. “We look forward to continuing to grow the fund and making a difference to community.”



## Corporate and Workplace Funds

The team at FG Advisory joined Australian Communities Foundation to extend their workplace giving program. Establish a Corporate and Workplace Fund for your organisation to engage staff, increase customer satisfaction and deliver stronger brand alignment with your CSR commitment.





# Breaking down barriers to university: Jude Fox Bursary Fund

**Founding Principal of Flagstone State Community College, Jude Fox, was known for her passion for helping students build bright futures.**

She was dedicated to providing quality education for all her students, says former business lecturer at Griffith University and Jude's husband of 42 years, Michael Fox.

When Jude passed away in 2018, Michael decided to honour her memory by establishing a Scholarship Fund with support from Australian Communities Foundation.

"Jude believed in the strength and potential of Flagstone students... and the bursary fund is to build on the work she's done with the school, students, and community," says Michael.

The Jude Fox Bursary Fund grants \$3,000 scholarships to Flagstone State Community College students facing barriers to attending university. Whether it's due to the cost of travelling to campus, lack of support, or financial constraints.

Successful participants are awarded \$2,000 for enrolling at a Queensland-based university and gifted a further \$1,000 upon completion of their first year.

"The idea is to basically say to the student and their family, 'we believe in you and we'd like you to have the opportunity to see if you like university'.

"I want to empower the students to say 'look, I want to give this a go – the school believes in me to the extent that they've given me this money,'" says Michael.

Looking forward, Michael plans to continue working with the Australian Communities Foundation grants team to distribute multiple scholarships each year and may expand the program to include a neighbouring high school.

**"The idea is to basically say to the student and their family, 'we believe in you and we'd like you to have the opportunity to see if you like university'."**



## Scholarship Funds

Jude Fox's husband Michael opened a Scholarship Fund at Australian Communities Foundation to honour Jude's legacy and provide scholarships at Flagstone State Community College, Queensland. When you open a Scholarship Fund, you have the choice of providing educational payments, prizes and bursaries to scholarship-providing charities or directly to students across Australia.



# 'We are stronger together': **IMPACT100 Sydney North**

**The growth of collective giving and the democratising effect of groups such as IMPACT100 has helped shake up many of the lingering stereotypes of philanthropy.**

Together, the 65 IMPACT100 groups across the US, UK, New Zealand and Australia, have granted more than \$80 million to local charities over the last 20 years.

Launched in 2017, IMPACT100 Sydney North uses a Named Fund at Australian Communities Foundation to support its simple model consistent with all IMPACT100 collective giving groups: 100+ members contribute a tax-deductible amount of \$1,000 each year with members voting on where the funds should be distributed.

"Our grants go to smaller, grassroots for-purpose organisations dedicated to helping children, young people and families at risk in the Greater Sydney region," explains IMPACT100 Sydney North co-founder, Tina Jackson.

"Our members are of all ages and backgrounds. They hear about IMPACT100 Sydney North through friends, family, schools, clubs and local social and environmental groups and

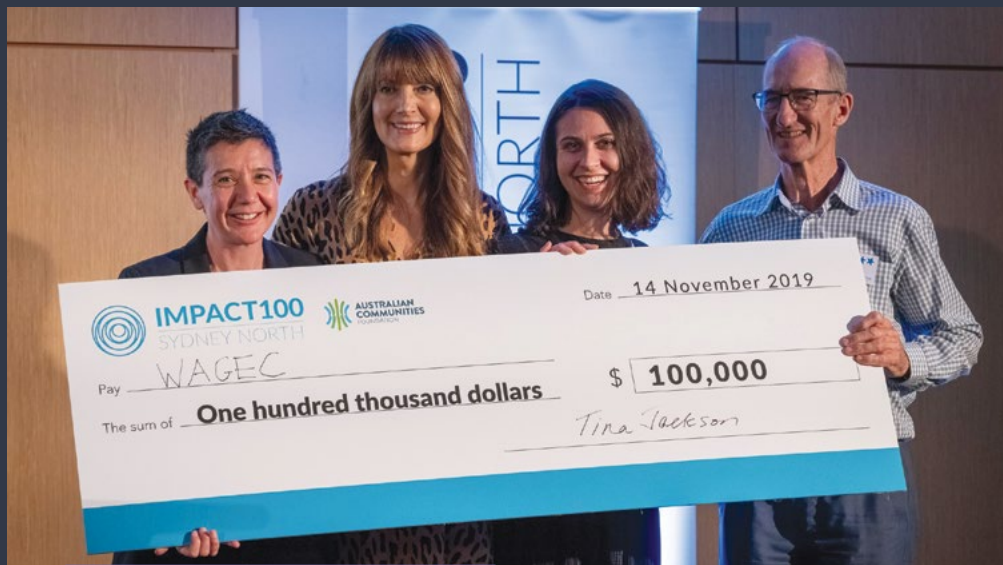
causes," Tina continues. "They are like-minded people, united by shared values, generosity and compassion, who want to make a difference in the world and in their community.

"It's extremely gratifying that so many local people share the vision of collective giving and knowing that we are stronger together.

"Collective giving has enormous potential in Australia because it's such a powerful idea. By pooling intellectual and financial resources we can make a difference beyond what we could alone.

"While the multiplier effect of collaborative giving is the most obvious, there are many more benefits: giving that is intentional and strategic and knowing how your money is being spent, creating a measurable impact, hands-on learning about philanthropy and local communities and causes, being part of a community of like-minded people and sharing the joy of giving."

**"By pooling intellectual and financial resources we can make a difference beyond what we could alone."**



## Collective Giving Funds

IMPACT100 Sydney North is a collective of people seeking to transform lives in Sydney by awarding high-impact grants. The group established a Collective Giving Fund at Australian Communities Foundation in 2016. A Collective Giving Fund provides a quick and easy solution for your group to pool donations and make grants with impact.



## Finding strength in community: Dragons Abreast Australia

**Early in the morning, Pearl Lee ventures down to Sydney's inner harbour to don pink clothes and paddle a dragon boat. She finds a spot in the 12-metre vessel, sits beside people of all ages and backgrounds, and begins to row.**

Pearl and her fellow paddlers are part of Dragons Abreast, a not-for-profit breast cancer charity focused on empowering survivors and educating them on the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Pearl, who joined just weeks after her year-long breast cancer treatment finished, is now Chair of the organisation.

"Joining Dragons Abreast was like a phoenix coming out of the fire," says Pearl. "I like to tell people, 'The doctor saved my life, and dragon boating saved my soul'."

"I found the local group through my GP, and went down and watched what they were doing. I pretty much started straight after I had finished my radiation," Pearl laughs.

Dragons Abreast currently has 27 member groups and continue to welcome and support survivors and their loved ones on their recovery journey.

With the group supporting a growing number of survivors and their families,

Pearl and the Board began to explore ways to ensure the longevity of the organisation.

"We worked out 'this is what we need every year for funding' and the rest of it can actually be invested, rather than sitting down not earning anything. The aim is to carry the organisation so it will always run. We've got big plans."

The group decided to invest their funds through a Future Fund at Australian Communities Foundation (ACF).

Pearl notes a few things that attracted Dragons Abreast to ACF: "the number of existing Funds, historical investment performance (and the responsible approach to investing), and the flexibility to access our funds when we need to".

"It was also important that the organisation understood the not-for-profit model and our needs," Pearl adds. "Our finance advisory panel grilled ACF and felt this was the best fit!"

**"We worked out 'this is what we need every year for funding' and the rest of it can actually be invested, rather than sitting down not earning anything."**





## Future Funds

Dragons Abreast use a Future Fund at Australian Communities Foundation to develop their long-term sustainability. With a low-cost fee structure, a Future Fund is an easy, tax-effective and strategic way to build an endowment for a not-for-profit organisation. You gain access to our fundraising and donation infrastructure, and can enjoy greater returns than a bank account through our pooled ethical investments.



# Partnering to deepen community connection: Paul Ramsay Foundation

**One of Australia's largest foundations, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, again partnered with Australian Communities Foundation in 2021 to deliver \$3 million worth of funding support to vulnerable communities as part of its Covid Response Surge Funding.**

"There is no question that philanthropic peers working in partnership creates optimal results," says Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF) Partnerships Manager, Genevieve Timmons.

Renowned for her vast contribution to Australia's philanthropic sector, Genevieve speaks from decades of first-hand experience. And as the world was reshaped by the upheavals, restrictions and increased need for support wrought by Covid throughout the year, collaboration and partnerships proved more critical than ever for achieving impact.

Support delivered through the partnership falls into five areas: social enterprises, family violence, First Nations funding to individuals (in partnership with Australian Communities Foundation funds, Koondie Woonga-gat Toor-rong and Fellowship for Indigenous

Leadership), First Nations-led organisations and general Covid funding.

"The key priority was to ensure PRF funds would reach the organisations and communities most severely impacted by the pandemic in a respectful, timely and cost-effective way," explains Genevieve.

"Through the partnership, Australian Communities Foundation opened up access to a broad sweep of funding relationships they already have in place, and knowledge of the landscape where we were hoping to provide benefit. They also quickly took on research to build new funding opportunities to match our priorities.

"An important feature of the partnership has been relying on the specialist operational skills and technology framework that needs to be in place for any effective contemporary grantmaking program, but especially emergency response funding," Genevieve says.

For Australian Communities Foundation CEO, Maree Sidey, the partnership demonstrates the value and deep knowledge a community foundation can bring to the funding equation.



↑ Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare received Covid relief funding through the partnership between Paul Ramsay Foundation and Australian Communities Foundation.

**“Through the partnership, Australian Communities Foundation opened up access to a broad sweep of funding relationships they already have in place, and knowledge of the landscape where we were hoping to provide benefit.”**

“As part of this partnership with PRF we’re really pleased to be able to offer the expertise of our fundholders such as Koondee Woonga-gat Toor-rong and the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership to inform the grantmaking to specific communities,” Maree says.

“Our flexibility and agility, our infrastructure and our connections into these communities have all helped get this funding out the door effectively and efficiently.”



### Foundation Support Services

This partnership with Paul Ramsay Foundation was made possible through our Foundation Support Services. Building on our connections to communities and our infrastructure, we can support both new and established trusts and foundations with grant rounds and other grantmaking services, plus all administration and compliance.



# Our Strategy



# Creating a **fairer and more sustainable** Australia

## Our Strategic Pillars

- 1** **Activating a nation of givers**
- 2** **Advancing social, cultural and environmental justice**
- 3** **Investing for impact**
- 4** **Supporting, enabling and amplifying impact**
- 5** **Building our culture, capability and sustainability**





# Progress on **our strategy**

## **1** Activating a nation of givers

**One of our key roles at Australian Communities Foundation is to introduce individuals, families and groups to the joys of giving and to help them support the causes they care about most.**

Over the past 12 months, we welcomed 100+ givers to our community through

the establishment of 74 new funds and foundations.

We're continuing to help grow giving in Australia by making philanthropy easy and accessible.

See **Our Community** to learn more about the people who give through Australian Communities Foundation.

## **2** Advancing social, environmental and cultural justice

**Together with our giving community, partners and the broader philanthropic sector, we play a key role in helping to create a fairer and more sustainable Australia.**

In 2021/22, we continued to contribute to progress in Australia across our five key focus areas. We saw significant growth for our largest focus area with \$10.2 million going towards Tackling Inequality (up from \$6.1 million in 2020/21).

Our support for the environment, Indigenous communities, democracy, and arts and culture were all up from last year as well.

Across the year, over 350 people attended our calendar of events and Learning Circles to hear from organisations leading work across our focus areas.

With 2022 being the fifth anniversary of the Impact Fund, we published our first report on the achievements of the Fund and raised another \$1.6 million for changemakers working on the biggest issues facing Australians.

See **Our Impact** to learn more about our giving in 2021/22.



### 3 Investing for impact

**After successfully transitioning 100 per cent of our portfolio to responsible investments in 2021, we have continued to demonstrate the value of taking a whole-of-organisation view around impact.**

Furthering our commitment to investing for impact, the Foundation announced its third impact investment this year in

social and affordable housing for Victorians through the Conscious Social Housing Fund.

In recognition of our work in this space, we were the only public charitable foundation named a Responsible Investment Leader 2021 by the Responsible Investment Association Australasia.

### 4 Supporting, enabling and amplifying impact

**As one of Australia's largest charitable foundations, we continued to leverage our infrastructure this year through our Foundation Support Services.**

Following our partnership with The Wyatt Trust to design and establish Foundation SA, the new community foundation has exceeded all

expectations in its first 12 months with Australian Communities Foundation providing backend support for its 20+ sub-funds.

Another key highlight this year has been our support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation's Covid Response Surge Funding program (see pg. 58).

### 5 Building our culture, capability and sustainability

**This year saw our Melbourne-based team return to the office after nearly two years of working remotely through the pandemic.**

Like many organisations, we have adjusted to more flexible working arrangements and our team enjoys a strong culture of trust and connectedness. In the past year, our team has developed this culture through team activities

including a staff inservice in the Yarra Ranges and a cultural education session at the Koorie Heritage Trust.

Following the launch of a new integrated system from Foundant Technologies in 2021, we continued to develop and embed the system this year, building the organisation's capability and sustainability into the future.



# Financials



# Structure

Australian Communities Foundation operates three charitable trust funds, providing flexibility to suit individual giving preferences and areas of interest. We also offer fee-for-service support to private ancillary funds and charitable trusts through our Foundation Support Services.





# 2021/22 performance

## Financial summary

### REVENUE

Donations	25,709,395
Investment	(10,700,874)
Other revenue	592,935
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,601,456</b>

### OUTGOINGS

Grants paid	17,667,214
Grants approved to be paid	793,146
Portability transfers	1,215,419
Operating costs	3,566,899
Other disbursements	340,748
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,583,426</b>

### BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING COSTS

Salary & staff related costs	2,193,474
Administration & professional costs	1,373,425
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,566,899</b>

### CORPUS

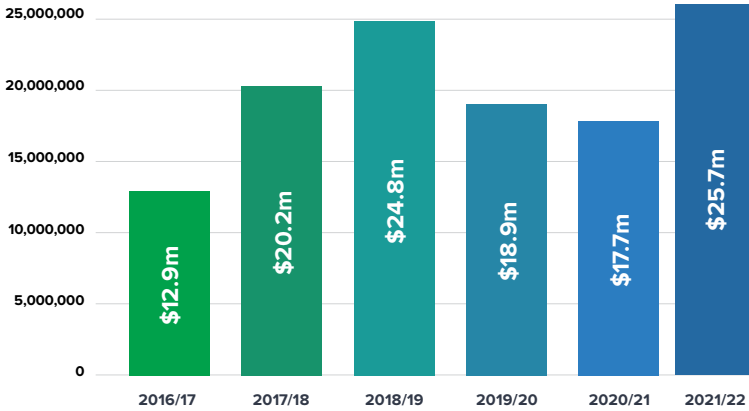
	2022	2021
ACF Ltd	1,123,970	1,266,500
Main Fund	90,543,003	98,154,542
Extension	33,530,214	33,857,783
Scholarship	388,082	354,923
COVID	66,586	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>125,651,855</b>	<b>133,633,825</b>





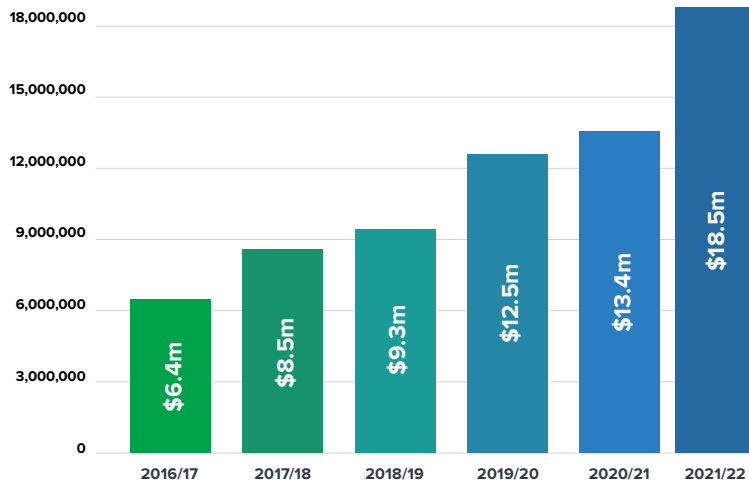
## Donations

Donations received into funds totaled **\$25.7 million** – up from \$17.7 million last year.



## Grants

Our community granted a record \$17.7 million across the year and committed a further \$800k to be paid in future years, **totaling \$18.5 million – approximately 16% of the corpus** (up from 12% last year).





## Investments

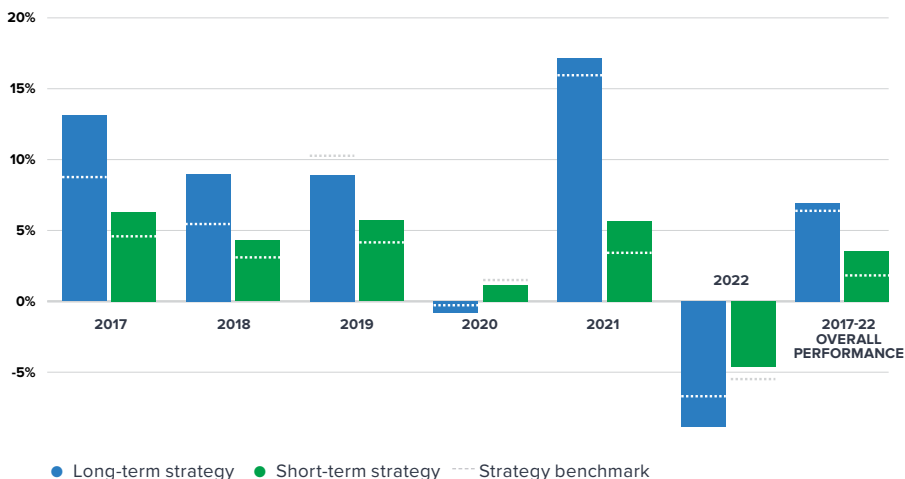
**At Australian Communities Foundation, we put our values at the centre of everything we do, including how we invest pooled philanthropic assets. That's why 100 per cent of our investment portfolio is responsibly invested.**

This approach has many benefits, including: (1) contributing to a stronger, fairer and more sustainable world; (2) providing both financial and social/environmental return on investment; and (3) achieving greater strategic alignment across investments and grants. With the support of our investment advisers Brightlight, we actively seek out investments with a strong financial return and a positive social or environmental impact.

As the first Australian philanthropic foundation to become a signatory to the UNPRI: Principles for Responsible Investment, we're proud to augment the

impact of your giving by ensuring your philanthropic assets are 100 per cent responsibly invested.

2022 has seen significant volatility in investment markets with a number of macro events negatively impacting portfolios globally, including Australian Communities Foundation. While negative returns are never the preference, they are a natural part of long-term investing and should be seen in the context of very strong performance from the portfolio over a number of years.



Charts denote performance of the long-term and short-term strategies in the Main Fund. Extension and Scholarship Funds also invest in accordance with the same long-term strategy, although performance may differ slightly between the entities.

## Impact Investing

As part of our ethical approach to investing, the Foundation actively contributes to positive social and environmental outcomes through impact investments aligned with our Impact Areas.

### SIDE BY SIDE SOCIAL IMPACT BOND

#### Impact: Inequality / Indigenous

Investing in educational programs to improve the engagement and learning outcomes of young students.

### INFRADEBT ETHICAL FUND

#### Impact: Environment

Investing in new solar and wind energy infrastructure.

### CONSCIOUS SOCIAL HOUSING FUND

#### Impact: Inequality

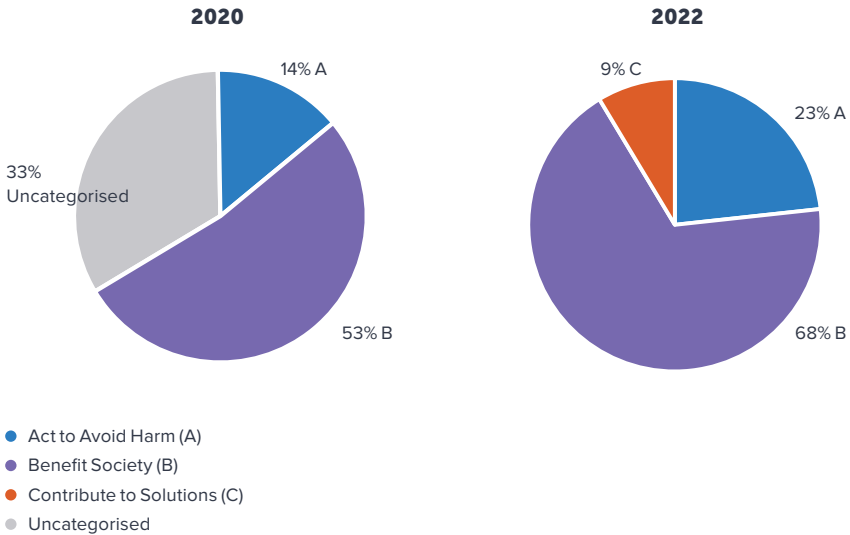
Investing in social and affordable housing for Victorians in need.

### INVESTIBLE CLIMATE TECH-FUND

#### Impact: Environment

Investing in climate technology for a low-carbon future. FY23 investment.

We measure the impact of our portfolio by assessing whether our investments Act to Avoid Harm (A), Benefit Society (B) or Contribute to Solutions (C). Take a look at how our portfolio has transitioned since 2020 to deliver greater impact.





# Our People

# Governance

Australian Communities Foundation is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. Operations are overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors made up of leaders representing a broad cross-section of the community.

The ACF Board consists of four committees, which meet quarterly: the Finance, Risk, Audit & IT Committee; the Investment Committee; the Philanthropy & Impact Committee; and the Nominations Committee.

In the past year, the Board farewelled Michael Gilmore and Sarah Hosking, and welcomed three new members: Rueben Berg, Chris Croker and David Ritter.

ACF co-founders Hayden Raysmith AM and Marion Webster OAM continue to provide guidance as Patrons of the organisation. The ACF Board and team appreciate their ongoing support and dedication to community philanthropy.

We thank our Board, committee members and Patrons for their generous contribution of time and talent to the organisation.

**“Australian Communities Foundation is a structurally important institution, crucial to the mission of building a more deeply democratic and compassionate Australia – a nation with the best interests of people and nature at the heart of decision-making... the strength of the ACF community – it is a precious thing.”**



**David Ritter**

Greenpeace Australia Pacific CEO  
and Australian Communities Foundation Director

✎ The Australian Communities Foundation team at a staff inservice in the Yarra Valley.





# Our Board 2021/22



**Eric Beecher**  
Chair



**Reuben Berg**  
Joined July 2021



**Penny Burke**



**Chris Croker**  
Joined July 2021



**Sue Dahn**



**Michael Gilmore**  
Retired June 2022



**Sarah Hosking**  
Retired June 2022



**Adam Milgrom**



**Glen Noonan**



**David Ritter**  
Joined April 2022



**Cath Smith**



**Malinda Wink**



**Sue Woodward AM**

For information on our Directors, visit [communityfoundation.org.au/about/our-board](https://communityfoundation.org.au/about/our-board).



# Our Committees

## 2021/22

### **Finance, Risk, Audit & IT Committee**

Glen Noonan (Chair)  
Chris Croker  
Sue Dahn  
Sarah Hosking  
David Ritter  
Steve Bradby (Adviser)  
George Krithis (Adviser)

### **Philanthropy & Impact Committee**

Cath Smith (Chair)  
Penny Burke  
Adam Milgrom  
Malinda Wink  
Sue Woodward AM

### **Investment Committee**

Michael Gilmore (Chair)  
Chris Croker  
Sue Dahn  
Adam Milgrom  
Cath Smith  
Malinda Wink

### **Nominations Committee**

Penny Burke (Chair)  
Sarah Hosking (Chair)  
Eric Beecher  
Rueben Berg  
David Ritter  
Sue Woodward AM

**“The organisation’s values are what attracted me initially to the role. It was clear those values are reflected in the work the Foundation does and I could see there was capacity for me to bring my skills to a broader scope of work at a national level and beyond.”**

#### **Rueben Berg**

Proud Gunditjmara man and  
Australian Communities Foundation Director



# Our Team

## 2021/22



**Maree Sidey**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Philanthropic Services



**Georgia Mathews**  
Director of Philanthropic  
Services



**Anna Demant**  
Head of Impact



**Gabby Lam**  
Grants Manager



**Charlene Yum**  
Grants Manager



**Thomas Lopez**  
Relationship Manager



**Raz Babic**  
Senior Donor Services  
Coordinator



**Madhulika Rajawat**  
Grants Support Officer

## Engagement



**Olivia Clark-Moffatt**  
Director of Engagement  
& Innovation



**Nicole Richards**  
Head of  
Communications  
& Marketing



**Dom O'Donnell**  
Communications  
Manager



**Bronte Chaperon**  
Communications  
Coordinator



## Finance, Operations and Administration



**Daniel Brugaletta**  
Chief Financial &  
Operating Officer



**Jennifer Liu**  
Finance & Operations  
Lead



**Ignacio Falcon**  
Data & Business  
Insights Manager



**Madeleine Shea**  
Executive Assistant &  
Office Manager



**Laura Barallon**  
Management  
Accountant



**Jacob Babic**  
Administration Support  
Officer

**"I work with hands-down the best team in philanthropy. We have great leadership across the organisation and a group of passionate, enthusiastic professionals who come from many different walks of life but are united around the belief that we can support people and inspire great giving."**

**Maree Sidey**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Our Supporters 2021/22

### Patrons

Hayden Raysmith AM  
Marion Webster OAM

### Bequests

Donald and Joan Brogden  
John Henry Byrne  
Anwyn Martin  
Melpomeni Petsinis

### In-kind supporters

Hall and Wilcox  
Herbert Smith Freehills

### Event partners

Asia Pacific Network of Refugees  
Australian Council of Social Service  
Australian Democracy Network  
Australian Environmental Grantmakers  
Network  
Grata Fund  
Hands Off Our Charities Alliance  
HOST International  
Mannifera  
NEXUS Australia  
Per Capita  
Philanthropy Australia  
Public Interest Advocacy Centre  
Refugee Advice and Case Service  
The Centre for Public Integrity  
The Funding Network  
V&F Housing Enterprise Foundation  
Victorian Pride Centre





↑ Australian Communities Foundation Director and proud Gunditjmara man Rueben Berg at a special celebration for our 25th year with ACF Friends.

## A Special Thank You

Australian Communities Foundation is especially grateful for the support of our **ACF Friends** – a special group of supporters of the work we do towards a fairer and more sustainable Australia.

The ongoing support of this group has enabled us to build our capacity and invest in new strategic projects, such as the launch of Australia's first formal philanthropic hub, the Community of Giving, in 2018.

As a token of our appreciation for our Friends, we offer unique opportunities for this group to get together and engage with community partners, including exclusive invitations from arts and culture organisations.

Friends are also the first to hear about new developments at ACF.

There are a number of ways you can become an ACF Friend – whether that's committing to leaving a bequest to ACF, donating money for our strategic work, referring people to ACF, volunteering on the ACF Board or a committee, or providing other in-kind support.

To learn more about ACF Friends, contact our team on  
03 9412 0412 or email [info@communityfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@communityfoundation.org.au)



**Australian Communities Foundation**

Level 6, 126 Wellington Parade  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

03 9412 0412

[info@communityfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@communityfoundation.org.au)

[communityfoundation.org.au](http://communityfoundation.org.au)

Cover image: Billabong at Mamadawerre, West Arnhem Land. The Mamadawerre community is one of three ranger bases in the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area. From here, Indigenous rangers are protecting their Country and culture and building strong communities for future generations. Photo courtesy of grantee partner, the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust.

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