

# THE SEAHORSE



The newsletter of The Ian Potter Foundation & The Ian Potter Cultural Trust

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Janet Hirst

It is with some sadness that I have announced that I will leave the Foundation at the end of this year. By then I will have been in my role for ten years, and I remain passionate about the Foundation and what we do and the team I work with, however I am a firm believer that for senior management roles, this is the right time for a change. I have a very busy six months ahead as I want to see more of the concepts I have put forward to Board bedded down before I leave.

Last year we celebrated the Foundation's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and took the opportunity to reflect not only on the impact of the Foundation's grant making since 1964, but on the vision of Sir Ian Potter. It was a wonderful opportunity to look forward and consider how the Foundation might need to embrace change and consider new concepts, whilst remaining true to the funding principles which have guided our funding for so long. I have no doubt that the 'new' trends of today, such as impact investing, investment in social impact bonds, venture philanthropy, increased transparency and the increasing role of communications will become mainstream over the next ten years.

One of the great strengths of the Foundation is the skilled and dedicated management team. I am very proud to have changed the staffing structure of the Foundation, which I believe has improved our grant making and profile. Our program managers now have a structure which provides opportunity for advancement, and they are supported by an efficient administration team.

In 2008, we appointed a communications manager, which has helped the Foundation communicate to share knowledge, to engage, build relationships and importantly, to enhance our grant-making. Our Senior Communications Manager, Avalee Weir, is now supported by Sara Hearn, our new Digital Communications Co-ordinator who will be working with Avalee to develop our new websites, which will be launched later this year. The new websites will be cutting edge, very accessible and fully mobile responsive to improve the experience of users, especially grant-seekers.

This expansion of staff roles continued with the recent appointment of Dr Squirrel Main to the new position of Research and Evaluation Officer. Her work will enable the Foundation to make more reflective, data-driven decisions about grants and will enhance our program managers' knowledge of effective grants so they can share this knowledge with applicants and grantees.

Other exciting plans are underway, including the roll out of our new updated logo for the Foundation and the Cultural Trust.

[ROUND UP](#)  
[FEATURE STORIES](#)  
[NEWS AND EVENTS](#)

### FEEDBACK

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the seahorse. We welcome your comments and suggestions, please send them to the Editor at [seahorse@ianpotter.org.au](mailto:seahorse@ianpotter.org.au)

If there is someone else in your organisation this newsletter should go to, please forward to a friend. If you do not wish to receive it in future, simply [unsubscribe](#) (but we hope you don't!).

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Over my years in this role, I have had the opportunity to meet and learn from other leaders in the sector. This has been invaluable, leading to the introduction of a number of initiatives here. We are currently working with the US-based Centre for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), to produce a grantee perception report and a declined applicant report. These comprehensive surveys will provide the Foundation with comparative data to inform us about questions such as the impact we are having, how grantees experience their relationship with us, suggestions for improvements, what grantees find helpful and frustrating about our application and reporting processes and whether we are communicating the Foundation's goals and strategies effectively.

I look forward to our next newsletter to update you on further initiatives being undertaken this year.

## ROUND UP

### OVER \$7.5M IN NEW GRANTS APPROVED



The Foundation's Governors approved 75 new grants at the recent board meeting amounting to \$7.5 million across six of our program areas, to support a range of exciting innovations, development projects and boost social change initiatives across Australia. A further six grants, including two major Arts grants, were approved subject to conditions, and will be announced at a later date.

In Community Wellbeing, seven organisations received new grants totalling more than \$600,000. This includes \$150,000 over three years to [Ganbina](#), which offers a highly successful transition-through-school program for Indigenous youth, to help the organisation duplicate and expand their successful model around Australia. [Kids Under Cover](#) (KUC) received \$75,000 to support a volunteer-based monitoring system to improve their Studio Program, which provides specially designed demountable studios in families' backyards to alleviate overcrowding and preventing youth homelessness. This will ensure KUC maintains a viable stock of 'properties' so that more young people can be housed.

In Health & Disability, 19 grants totalling \$1,654,500 were approved. The [National Stroke Foundation](#) was granted \$450,000 over three years to introduce an adaptive technology web platform to support stroke survivors and their families during their recovery, and [The Lyndon Community](#) received \$175,000 for a new program to support individuals with cognitive impairments through their recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

\$1.3 million was granted in our Medical Research program area, the largest single grant being \$450,000 to the [Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Centre](#) to support the purchase of multi-colour quantitative tissue imaging equipment for the onco-immunology and experimental pathology unit.

Following the success of their ambitious and successful research and monitoring program - including the publication of two articles in prestigious science journal *Nature* and a Eureka Prize - Tasmania-based [Reef Life Survey Foundation](#) has been awarded a grant of \$278,000 over two years through our Environment & Conservation program area. This capacity-building grant is to bring in expertise to develop a business plan, and employ their first paid staff member to establish a suite of ongoing surveys at long-term monitoring sites, ensure rapid dissemination of data, and communication of findings and data-rich conservation products.

In the Arts, two grants were approved totalling \$2,765,000. The larger grant was \$2.5 million over three years to [The University of Melbourne, Ian Potter Museum of Art](#) to develop an Education and Programs Centre. The second grant was \$265,000 over two years to the [National Gallery of Victoria](#) to establish a Conservation Fellowship to enable two post graduate conservation students to work in the NGV conservation department. This is an investment in the next generation of talented conservators which will benefit not only the collections of the NGV, state and regional institutions, but also seed the profession with skilled young practitioners who will be tasked with the care of Australia's distributed cultural collections whether they are in public or private ownership.

Within each funding round a number of Executive Grants (under \$20,000) are recommended by the CEO. This round 24 grants were made, including \$20,000 to [Assistance Dogs Australia](#) (pictured above) for their PAWS - Parents Autism Workshop Support - program and \$20,000 to [La Trobe University](#) for the Auslan Signbank project to update and expand the Australian Sign Language dictionary.

Congratulations to all the new grant recipients. The full list of all our recent grants is available on our website. Executive grants are listed within the relevant program areas.

## ROUND UP

### 26 NEW CULTURAL TRUST GRANTEES SET SAIL



Over \$155,000 will be shared between 25 new Cultural Trust grant recipients, who are off to hone their skills and talents on the world stage.

One of these is Dr Leah Barclay from Cooroy in Queensland who has a PhD in Music Composition. Leah has been granted \$7,000 to help undertake an artist residency exploring acoustic ecology in National Parks with Ear to the Earth in New York City and Arizona State University, USA, 25 July - 5 November 2015. Leah explains: "As a composer and musician, I have always been fascinated by creative responses to climate change and the role of sound in generating environmental awareness and engagement. My work examines and disseminates changing soundscapes of protected environments to explore how sound, creativity and digital technology can be used to cultivate environmental awareness and community agency... My residency and mentorships will explore the acoustic ecologies of pristine natural environments in National Parks and explore the value of remote embodied experiences of natural environments through original immersive sound compositions, virtual reality installations and participatory digital platforms to generate environmental awareness and engagement."

Sydney-based ceramic artist Ramesh Nithiyendran received \$4,586 to undertake a mentorship with Australian ceramic artist Vipoo Srivilasa and residency as part of the Beyond Limitations, Clay Mentoring Program in association with the Gimhae Clayarch Museum, Korea from 20 July to 20 August 2015.

As an artist working in ceramics Ramesh Nithiyendran, who graduated with a Masters from COFA in 2013, has a quirky, playful and amusing approach to manipulating clay. His ceramics and installations draw on his personal background and reveal an interest in aspects of both Christianity and Hinduism. Our reviewers noted that the organisers of the Busan residency have reserved a place for him as a special invited guest - a recognition that pays tribute to the quality of his work and his commitment as an artist.

Congratulations to all the new Cultural Trust grantees, as always we look forward to hearing about your experiences. [See website for full list of new grantees.](#)

*Image: Portrait of Ramesh Nithiyendran by Nikki Short for Australian Art Collector Magazine*

## FEATURE STORIES

### NEW LOOK LOGO

Introducing our new look logo! To see The Ian Potter Foundation into its second half-century and meet the demands of digital design applications, we have refreshed and updated our beloved seahorse motif.

The seahorse is a symbol from the Potter family crest and 'seahorse' was Sir Ian's cable address, so it's an important part of the Foundation's history and identity. The logo has been through three previous design iterations over the past 50 years.

Maintaining a classic blue/green colour palette, the varied sizes and shades of the dots in this interpretation represent the variety of sectors and organisations we support, the sizes of our grants, the different ways we contribute, and how all of it comes together to be much more than the sum of its parts.

Applied to the Cultural Trust in warm red and pink tones, the dots represent the wide variety of artists we support, the breadth of their experiences and the combined impact of their individual achievements and experiences.

Many thanks to our graphic design company, Magnetic Design, for all their work on this project. The new logo will be rolled out to replace the previous iteration by the end of 2015.



The Ian Potter  
Foundation

#### FEATURE STORIES

### NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM AREA OBJECTIVES

Following a recent review of our Education program area we have revised and re-focused our funding objectives for the program. These will come into effect for the next Education funding round which opens on Monday 9 November, 2015.

#### Premise:

The Foundation is committed to improving outcomes in education for disadvantaged Australian children from pre-school to secondary school, through support of school leadership, and parental and wider community engagement.

Australia's education system has a large level of inequity. There is a significant gap between its highest and lowest performing students; far greater than in many OECD countries. 'Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are consistently achieving educational outcomes lower than their peers' (Gonski, 2011). Closing this gap in education across Australia is essential to delivering equitable education for all.

The Foundation recognises that schools alone are not responsible for ensuring every child meets their educational potential. Effective school leadership, and parental and community engagement in children's education, are essential in order to strengthen students achievements and lifelong opportunities and outcomes. When parents, teachers and the wider community work together and are engaged and involved in children's learning, students have improved academic achievement, wellbeing and productivity.

#### Objectives:

- To support innovative programs delivered in early childhood centres and in primary and secondary schools that foster *parental engagement* in their children's learning.
- To support innovative programs delivered in early childhood centres and schools that increase *wider community involvement* in student learning and educational facilities.
- To support *school leadership* to increase parental and community participation in school life.

Applicants will be required to speak with a program manager if applying for more than \$50,000.

Please note that for the current round the existing objectives apply.

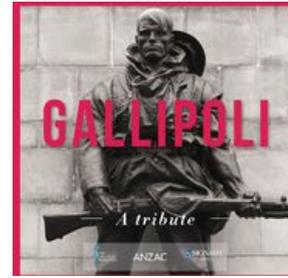
*Image: Story time at Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP), part of Tomorrow: Today Foundation's Education Benalla program.*



#### FEATURE STORIES

### GALLIPOLI - A TRIBUTE

To commemorate the ANZAC legacy and the centenary of the Gallipoli landings in 1915, Lady Potter and Fra Professor Richard Divall created a special CD *Gallipoli – A Tribute*, dedicated to the RSL Australia, RSA New Zealand and Legacy. The CD features a beautiful, moving new composition by Ross Edwards, *Gallipoli for String Quartet* performed by the Australian String Quartet, commissioned for the occasion by The Ian Potter Cultural Trust. In the weeks leading up to ANZAC Day, 15,000 copies of the CD were distributed through various channels including the Shrines of Remembrance, RSL, Legacy and 3MBS radio, plus 1,500 downloads via Bandcamp.



The CD features poetry and prose readings by actors Sam Neill DCNZM OBE and John Bell AO, as well as a collection of instrumental works and songs performed by leading musicians: Paul Grabowsky AO, Hoang Pham, Caroline Almonte, Christopher Latham, Dimity Shepherd, Stefan Cassomenos, and Merlyn Quaife, as well as the Choir of Newman College (The University of Melbourne), the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Lance Corporal David Wood ADF, who plays *The Last Post*. Each work was carefully chosen to remind us of the sacrifice and courage of those who fought at Gallipoli. As a collection, the recording evokes the hardship and tragedy of this campaign, but also mateship, compassion, and the legacy of respect and honour that endures and strengthens with the passing years.

Every piece and performance on the album was donated by the artists and authors: testament to both their personal generosity and the great significance of this occasion for the people of Australia and New Zealand.

Although the centenary celebrations are complete, you can still [download the CD](#) for reflection and remembrance.

## NEWS AND EVENTS BOARD MOVES

In April, the Board of Governors of the Foundation welcomed a new member, former High Court and Federal Court Judge, The Honourable Susan Crennan AC. Mrs Crennan brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in constitutional law and civil rights.

Mrs Crennan has degrees in arts and law and a postgraduate diploma in history. Her interest in the Constitution goes back a long way. As an undergraduate in law she conducted a research project and wrote a thesis on the civil rights of the mentally ill. Later, as a postgraduate student of history, she was awarded first class honours for a thesis on some aspects of Australia's constitutional history.

Before appointment as a judge, Mrs Crennan was a barrister for 24 years, 14 of them as a Queen's Counsel, and appeared in a number of constitutional cases. After being appointed as Queen's Counsel, she became Chair (now President) of the Victorian Bar Council, President of the Australian Bar Association and served as a Commonwealth Commissioner for Human Rights.

Earlier this year, Dr P John Rose AO (*pictured*) retired from the Board after 15 years of outstanding service to The Ian Potter Foundation, The Ian Potter Cultural Trust and The George Alexander Foundation. Appointed to the Board in October 2000, Dr Rose played a key role in the Foundation's successful financial management.

Dr Rose's business acumen and financial judgement have been central to our stability and growth, and in turn, our wherewithal to make a substantial and meaningful contribution to the Australian community. We thank him for his dedicated service and the significant contribution he has made to the growth and success of the Foundation.



## NEWS AND EVENTS WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Times they are a changin'... In recent months we have appointed four new staff members to the Foundation team.

In February, experienced philanthropy practitioner Louise Arkles joined us as program manager for The Arts, Environment & Conservation and The Ian Potter Cultural Trust, taking the reins from Claire Rimmer who became mum to baby Matilda last month.

In the new position of Research and Evaluation Officer, we are delighted to welcome Dr Squirrel Main. In addition to a PhD in Education and a Masters in Evaluation, Squirrel has years of experience in research and evaluation in universities, schools and non-profits and is charged with implementing our new Grants Evaluation Framework.

Following the forthcoming closure of our current digital provider, we are faced with the major task of redeveloping all our digital properties this year, and to help us we are very pleased to welcome Sara Hearn in the part-time role of Digital Communications Coordinator. Sara started with us in mid-May, working with our Senior Manager - Communications, Avalee Weir.

Last but definitely not least, we are delighted to have Helen Atkinson on board as our new receptionist/PA to the CEO.

It's been wonderful to have the fresh perspectives and ideas of our new colleagues and we look forward to a busy and productive time for the whole team.

*Image, clockwise from front: Helen Atkinson, Louise Arkles, Sara Hearn and Squirrel Main.*



## NEWS AND EVENTS

### GRANT APPLICANT SURVEY

To inform our strategic management plan and gain independent insight into our processes; how we are perceived, and what we can do more effectively, the Foundation is participating in a large international benchmarking study of philanthropic trusts and foundations.

The Centre for Effective Philanthropy produces a Grantee Perception Report (GPR) which provides funders with comparative, actionable feedback based on responses to an online grantee survey. Through a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, the GPR addresses important questions such as:

- How much impact do grantees believe we are having in the areas and communities in which we work? How can we have more?
- How do grantees experience their relationships with us and what suggestions do they have for improvement?
- What do grantees find most helpful and frustrating about our application and reporting processes?
- Are we communicating foundation goals and strategies effectively?

The GPR is the most widely used grantee survey and the only one that provides comparative data: nearly three hundred funders in the US, UK and other countries have commissioned the GPR, and 50,000 grantees have provided their perspectives. We are the first Australian foundation to participate. In tandem with the GPR we are also participating in the Applicant Perception Report which surveys declined applicants.

Many thanks to all the recent grantees and applicants who have completed the survey, we appreciate you spending the time to give us your feedback. Responses to the survey close on Friday 19 June.

*Image: We're curious to know what you think...  
Photo courtesy Museum Victoria, grant recipient 2014.*



## NEWS AND EVENTS

### MOVING IMAGE COMMISSION UPDATE

## Phantom Ride explores the link between tracks and time

"Trains, cinema and our concepts of time have been interwoven from the very beginning. The concept of a 'standard time' for establishing simultaneity across great distances was developed directly as a result of rail travel. The very linearity of the train tracks with their segmenting sleepers echoes our notion of time as discretely packaged into units like frames of film rattling through a projector."

This is how Daniel Crooks explained the inspiration behind his proposed work, *Phantom Ride*, in his successful application for the second Ian Potter Moving Image Commission.

During this year of development, Daniel is exploring this connection as well as developing a computer controlled camera dolly, that allows moving images to be captured at a 'perfectly recurring speed [so] it becomes possible to seamlessly mesh non-contiguous filmed space into an apparently cohesive whole'.

Daniel reports that pre-production on his project is progressing well. To date, principle activities have been location scouting, development of the motion control dolly and general research.

We look forward to further updates on his progress and the exhibition of the work at ACMI in February 2016.

*Image, Daniel Crooks, pre-production still, Phantom Ride, 2015*



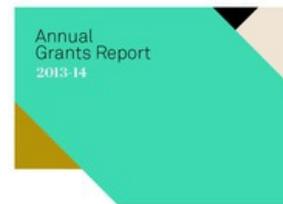
### NEWS AND EVENTS

## GOOD NEWS STORIES

In case you missed our Annual Grants Reports amid the pre-Christmas chaos at the end of last year, here are the links once again:

[The Ian Potter Foundation Annual Grants Report 2013-14](#)

[The Ian Potter Cultural Trust Annual Grants Report 2013-14.](#)



Looking Back,  
Reaching Forward

