

Message from the CEO



Janet Hirst (right) and Christine Edwards on tour in Cape York

In June, I participated in an Executive Leadership visit to Cape York, organised by Jawun - Indigenous Corporate Partnerships. Travelling with Christine Edwards, CEO of The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund, we eventually escaped the volcanic ash cloud which was enveloping Melbourne and flew to Cairns before starting our journey into the Cape. Once at the Cape we covered approximately 2,500 kilometres visiting the communities of Aurukun and Hope Vale.

We were able to spend time with Noel Pearson, and to see first-hand the impact of his advocacy for welfare reform and for tackling addiction. We spent time at the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy in Aurukun where the teaching method is Direct Instruction; an evidence based explicit instruction method. The Academy is achieving excellent results using this method, with most of the students learning at an accelerated rate. We had the opportunity to meet the student case management team, a Cape York welfare reform initiative aimed at establishing a community-wide expectation of 100 percent school attendance. On a daily basis the student case managers visit parents who have not notified the school of their child's absence or whose children are not school-ready. We spoke to parents at the Community Hub in Aurukun who had invested in the Student Education Trusts (SETs) – a Cape York welfare reform initiative to enable parents to financially support their child's education and development from 'birth to graduation'.

This was an amazing trip, an opportunity to see first-hand the issues being faced by the communities, to spend time with Jawun and some of the corporate secondees who work with a range of indigenous organisations whilst in the Cape. I returned with new knowledge and respect for the work being done on the ground, and a greater understanding of Noel Pearson's approach to welfare reform.



Janet Hirst

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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.

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!).

Round up

Highlights from the recent funding round

Just under \$2 million in grants was approved at our recent August Board Meeting, distributed nationally across 65 organisations. It was a

particularly competitive funding round so congratulations to all the successful grantees.

The largest grant this round was awarded in our Education program area. The **Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)** received \$600,000 over four years towards *Child Readiness to Learn: nurturing the abilities of children living with financial disadvantage*.

The Foundation is happy to join several other philanthropic funders to support this program which will utilise an intensive home visiting practice model to support and guide disadvantaged families through a child's early years and work to reduce the effects that poverty can have on a child's school readiness and ability to learn. The grant will support development of clinical guidelines and training materials, tests of these materials, training for nursing staff and support development of the methodology, its implementation, evaluation and presentation to government. [Find out more.](#)

In Community Wellbeing 10 grants were made, including an International Travel Grant of \$13,500 to **Social Firms Australia**. This will support a study tour of Europe to visit established Social Firms organisations and learn more about the strategies and programs they have developed to integrate and support employees with mental illness. The applicant will then use this knowledge to advise emerging social firms in Australia.

A further four grants totalling \$145,000 were made in the Arts, five in Environment & Conservation valued at \$95,000 and four in Science totalling \$275,000. There were also 23 grants approved in Travel and six in Conference with a total value of \$100,000.

Image: ARACY

[Please see our website for the complete list.](#)



Cultural Trust Grants

Forty emerging artists received grants from The Ian Potter Cultural Trust this round, totalling over \$240,000 - the largest number of grants in a single round since the Trust was established in 1993. The recipients will travel to the corners of the globe to undertake study, mentorships, workshops and hands-on art practice across a wide range of artistic disciplines.

One of the recipients is actor Celeste Dodwell who was awarded \$7,000 to undertake a two year intensive course with John Bashford (Head of Acting), London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), UK, September 2011 - June 2013. Her excitement on hearing the news of the grant was not only for her own success, "I was delighted to see that a few of my friends, including Lachlan Anthony a visual artist in Melbourne, director Christopher Hurrell, and also Kimberley Cowley the ballerina, were also given grants this time round. It's great to know that our creative outlets can be pursued with help from trusts like this!" she said.

Image: Celeste Dodwell, film production still

<http://www.ianpotterculturaltrust.org.au/recent-grants>



Project News

LLEAP Learnings

In February we announced the launch of an IPF-partnership project led by ACER's Tender Bridge, known as *Leading Learning in Education and Philanthropy* (LLEAP). We are pleased to report that the research is progressing well. LLEAP seeks to engage the education and philanthropy sectors in examining the current perceptions, approaches and successful practices in engagement in schools. □

The interview stage of the research was completed in June and the LLEAP team would like to thank all the philanthropic organisations, schools and non-profits who took part. Those interviews helped to form the basis of the surveys that were sent out more widely to the sectors in July and August. We have been delighted with response to the survey, with 138 schools, 80 not-for-profit and 84 philanthropic responses received. That's over 300 respondents in the first year of this work.

We look forward to sharing more at the upcoming feedback sessions.



Meet Our Team: Sarah MacNeill

As the face and voice that visitors and callers first encounter when they contact the Foundation, our receptionist and PA to the Chief Executive Officer, Sarah MacNeill, always leaves a good impression. The charming and obliging Sarah, who spends much of her time fielding phone enquiries, managing Jan's diary, preparing papers and coordinating meetings, travel and events, is our office angel who quietly goes about her work, making sure that things run seamlessly even at the busiest times.

Sarah came to the Foundation in from the marketing department of a large recruitment firm in 2009. She says the philanthropic sector is a very different environment and she loves working in a place where the business is helping and giving. One of her favourite moments was the opportunity to call ten organisations that were to receive special \$10,000 winter donations. "It was just such a nice position to be in," she says, "They were so happy and it was wonderful to be able to tell them the news."

"Everyday I speak to such a range of people from so many different organisations – all doing such amazing things in the community. And I have a great boss too, so I feel very fortunate to work in philanthropy," says Sarah.

However, it may not be Sarah's organisational and interpersonal skills that have made the biggest impression in the office. Her love of cooking, baking and home-making (she has just bought and renovated her first apartment) has earned her the office nickname of "Martha" (after Martha Stewart). She regularly whips up a batch of cupcakes or muffins for the office, organises us all to cater for staff drinks and to participate in a multicultural Harmony Day feast - then collates the dishes into recipe books. So it is little surprise that I have gained a few kilos lately... temptations like this passionfruit sponge are impossible to resist (*image right!*) Thanks "Martha"!



In Other News

Fond farewell to Therese

After seven years at the Foundation, our Finance and Human Resources Manager, Therese Reidy has decided it is time to put family first and to leave the Foundation to work for her brother.

Therese has been responsible for the day-to-day financial management of the Foundation's operations. She will be missed by everyone at the Foundation's office and by our Board of Governors for her outstanding work and for the person she is.

We are sad to farewell Therese, but we wish her well in her new career. For me, the daily dash to our favourite coffee shop just won't be the same without her. Thank you Therese for your wonderful contribution to the work of the Foundation and we all look forward to keeping in touch.

- Jan Hirst

Image: Therese (left) and Jan enjoy their regular caffeine hit!



New Treasures Gallery impresses

In March 2007, the Foundation awarded The National Library of Australia a grant of \$1million towards development of a Treasures Gallery: an area in the Library which could display the many extraordinary items held for the nation in its collection. In making significant cultural materials more accessible to the community on a permanent basis, the gallery aims to enhance visitors' understanding of the scope of the national collection and to extend knowledge of Australia's history and cultural heritage. The Treasures Gallery will be officially opened on 6 October 2011. Last week our Arts program manager, Claire Rimmer and CEO, Jan Hirst were treated to a sneak preview of the gallery prior to installation. First impressions are that this is a wonderful space that will provide a very worthy home for these precious artefacts.



Image: James Cook (1728-1779) Endeavour journal 1768-1771 Manuscripts Collection, NLA.

Indigenous eye health looking better

Early in July two Governors of The Ian Potter Foundation, Dr Thomas Hurley and Sir Daryl Dawson together with program manager Dr Alberto Furlan, took part in a field trip to the Northern Territory with philanthropist Harold Mitchell, Melbourne University's Professor Hugh Taylor, and other

private donors.

The Foundation is a key funder and supporter of the Indigenous Eye Health Program; a five-year program addressing the gross disparities in eye health between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the population. Based at the University of Melbourne and under the leadership of Professor Hugh Taylor AC, Harold Mitchell Chair of Indigenous Eye Health, the program takes an Australia-wide approach to assessing and treating the eye health of all Indigenous Australians. Australia is the only developed country with an Indigenous population suffering from endemic trachoma.



Professor Taylor and his team have set the ambitious task of eliminating this preventable condition and, judging from the results of the first year, they are on the right track. Across the Northern Territory the trachoma prevention program has been extremely successful with a 50 percent reduction of incidence of the disease in the first year of operation.

Alberto reports that the field trip was an extraordinary opportunity to witness the efficacy of meaningful community engagement and the promising initial results of one of our grants. [Click to read complete article.](#)

Image: Dr Hurley with Yamba the Yerrampe (honey ant), the star of the popular TV show "Playtime with Yamba". Yamba helps promote the Indigenous Eye Health Program.

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