



REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2007-08

THE
R.E.ROSS
TRUST

The R E Ross Trust

The R E Ross Trust is a perpetual charitable trust established in Victoria in 1970 by the will of the late Roy Everard Ross. Since its inception, the Ross Trust has distributed over 70 million dollars in grants for charitable purpose in Victoria.

Roy Everard Ross

Roy Everard Ross was born in July 1899 at Mansfield, Victoria and died in Melbourne in November 1970. He trained as a land surveyor and engineer and went on to become a property owner, businessman, investor and successful local government engineer.

In 1968 Mr Ross founded Hillview Quarries, a granite for road building quarry, at Dromana. Hillview Quarries is wholly owned by the Ross Trust and its operations generate income for the Trust to distribute as grants.

Mr Ross was a keen bushman with a strong interest in and extensive knowledge of native plants, trees and birds. His interest was reflected in his wish for the Trustees to take into consideration the 'protection and preservation of flora and fauna' while distributing the Trust's income.

The biography and history of Mr Ross - Roy Everard Ross - Engineer Investor Quarryman Philanthropist - was published in July 2003. Copies of the publication can be obtained from the office of the Ross Trust.



Trustees

Ian A Renard
Eda N Ritchie
Alix Bradfield
John L C McInnes
Ian M Vaughan (from August 2007)

Staff members

Sylvia J Geddes - Chief Executive Officer
Margarita Sagris - Grants and Administration Manager
Rebekah Lautman - Programs Manager
Dina Vlanes - Grants Administration and Executive Assistant
Paul Read - Finance Officer
Lara Hook - Grants and Programs Officer (from 24 April 2008)

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Disclaimer: The views in this report are not necessarily those of The R E Ross Trust.

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



THE
R.E. ROSS
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Logo

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

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Trustees' report

The 2007-2008 year - the last of eight years for which Sylvia Geddes was The Trust's Chief Executive Officer - was a successful and memorable year for the RE Ross Trust. We believe the Trust's achievements are best measured against our ability to effect meaningful change. By this yardstick, much has been achieved. Many organisations whom we have supported have carried out programs that meet the needs of our community in new and innovative ways.

A most rewarding outcome for us is when an organisation to whom we have provided early funding secures ongoing support from outside sources. During the year we were delighted by the news that Marie Stopes International Australia received a grant of \$800,000 from the Federal Government to extend nationwide the 'Making Deadly Sex Safe' Snake condom social marketing initiative.

While we wish there was room in this year's report to feature all the tremendous work being done by the organisations we support, unfortunately there is only space to highlight a handful. We hope that you enjoy reading these stories and share in our admiration for their achievements as much as we have enjoyed working with these exceptional organisations.

During the year the Trust invited two organisations, the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre and the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, to form collaborations with the Trust which began in the 2008-2009 financial year. These new collaborations pose important opportunities for the Trust to work in an intensive way to effect change and bring about benefit to two groups in Victoria who suffer serious disadvantage: asylum seekers and children of offenders.

For every organisation we are able to support, unfortunately there are many other worthy causes and organisations, which due to limited funds, the Trust is unable to support. The Prospectus Framework was developed to build the capacity of many of these organisations to reach an expanded range of potential investors for their important work. The Trust is further supporting organisations in this endeavour with the launch of a Small Grants Program for this purpose.

In an effort to ensure we understand and keep up with international philanthropic thinking and practice, the Trust co-sponsored and participated in an International Philanthropy Collaboration Meeting in November 2007. The outcomes of the Collaboration meeting were captured in the "Conversations about Possibilities" report. The meeting provided a unique opportunity for us as Trustees to reflect on the achievements of the Trust and possibilities for the future while exchanging ideas and experiences with Trustees and senior executives from around the world.

During the year there were eleven scheduled meetings of the Trust and seven meetings of the Investment Committee or its sub-committee. We met 12 times as Directors of Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd.

Ian Renard became Chairman of the Trust on 1 July 2007, in accord with the Trust's tradition of rotating the Chairmanship on an annual basis. Eda Ritchie took over the Chairmanship for the 2008-2009 year.

George Limb retired as a Trustee in August 2007, following 14 years of service. George made a remarkable contribution to the Trust, particularly in the way in which, as Chairman of our subsidiary Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd, he helped to expand Hillview's activities and profitability, thus generating larger surpluses for the Trust to distribute. Ian Vaughan has replaced George Limb as Trustee and John McInnes has replaced George Limb as Chairman of Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd.

In October 2007 Sylvia Geddes announced her retirement as Chief Executive Officer following eight years of service to the Trust. Her last day as CEO was 30 July 2008. Under Sylvia's management the Ross Trust has moved from a relatively straightforward organisation responding to direct funding requests to an innovative and influential organisation that is transparent, accountable and clear about the impact it is trying to achieve through the grants that it makes. Sylvia is greatly missed by all the Trustees and staff and we wish to acknowledge and applaud her inspirational leadership and years of commitment to the Trust and to all those organisations whom we support.

This has been a year of change and much achievement and we would like to extend our gratitude to the Ross Trust staff whose commitment to the Trust was integral to making this year a success. A special thanks also to Catherine Brown for stepping in as acting CEO immediately following Sylvia's retirement from the Trust.

We welcome Austin Paterson who commenced as CEO of the Trust on 22 September 2008 and we are looking forward to expanding the role and effectiveness of the Trust under Austin's management.

Ian Renard, Chairman 2007-2008

Alix Bradfield

John McInnes

Eda Ritchie

Ian Vaughan

Chief Executive Officer's report

This year under report has been my last as Chief Executive Officer of the Ross Trust. It has been an immense privilege to work with Trustees and staff past and present over that past eight years and I take this opportunity to thank them all. It has also been a privilege and very humbling to work with the huge range of dedicated community organisations which provide such a diversity of services, including to those who are most disadvantaged. I owe them all a debt of gratitude.

The past year has also been memorable due to the International Philanthropy Collaboration convened in Melbourne with the chief executives of The Myer Foundation, Sidney Myer Fund and the Ian Potter Foundation. The rich conversations held over four days with Ross Trustees and board members and chief executives of charitable foundations from Canada, England, Europe and New Zealand were invaluable. We were pleased to be able to share them with others through "Conversations about Possibilities", written for the Collaboration by Rosemary Addis and Catherine Brown, which is available on the Ross Trust web site.

The Collaboration confirmed the Ross Trust view that dispersing the income of the Trust to have a positive impact on people's lives entails the Trust communicating its priorities clearly to those organisations which work to achieve such impacts. In the 2007-2008 year the Trust made a number of changes to improve its communications; for example, after discussion and careful consideration, the Trustees, for the first time, specified the groups of people who they felt were the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Victoria. These are now shown in the Ross Trust Guidelines for prospective applicants.

The Trust also introduced a requirement for all prospective grant applicants to speak to a Ross Trust staff member prior to submitting a formal proposal. This change was made not as a barrier for organisations but as an opportunity for applicants to discuss their proposal in detail, ask questions to check its eligibility and receive suggestions from Ross Trust staff for change or alternative possible funding. This change has led to applications better addressing the Trust's priorities and granting criteria and to providing Ross Trustees with improved information on which to make their decisions.

During the year, the Trust also increased its efforts to listen to the views, concerns, needs and challenges of community organisations. As part of this effort, the Trust asked for feedback from grant recipient organisations on their experiences of dealing with the Trust. The report on the results of that survey is available on the Ross Trust website. It was gratifying to learn that grant recipients considered their dealings with the Ross Trust to be overwhelmingly positive; 99% of organisations indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their dealings with the Trust. Recipient organisations listed: clarity and flexibility of the Trust's granting guidelines; professionalism, understanding and responsiveness of the Trust's staff; and generosity of the Trustees as reasons for their satisfaction with the Trust. The Trust intends to conduct a follow up survey of both recipient and applicant organisations in 2009.

In April 2008, I was privileged to be invited to and attended, as a participant in the Indigenous stream, the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit held in Canberra. This Summit offered an opportunity for many diverse and often unheard people to exchange views and ideas about matters of importance in the Australian community. I was impressed by the discipline of the discussions undertaken and by the diversity of participants in the Indigenous stream, which comprised people who ranged in ages, expertise, areas of interest, views, experience and geographic locations in Australia.

The Trust's Collaborations and Programs provide the Trust with an opportunity to work in an intensive way over the medium and longer term with a small number of selected organisations. As you read, later in this report, about the work undertaken by the organisations involved with the Trust, you will understand why Trustees and staff are immensely proud of this work and the impact it is having.

During the year, the Trust made commitments to extend and in some cases expand Programs and to start two new Programs. The Prospectus Development Small Grants Program began in February 2008 to assist organisations to develop a prospectus using the framework set out in "Inviting Investment in Social Enterprises", co-authored by myself and Rosemary Addis. The Small Environmental Grants Program, administered by The Norman Wettenhall Foundation, began in August 2008.

continued next page

Chief Executive Officer's report continued

In the 2007-2008 year, the Trust received 150 applications making requests for charitable grants. Of the 150 received, the Trustees approved 116 requests totalling \$6,584,529 to be paid either in this year or over three years. This represented a 77% success rate for applicants. The Trust paid grants totalling \$3,714,042 during the 2007-2008 year to organisations for charitable purposes. These grants had been approved either during this year or in previous years. The Trustees approved 88 grants received by the Trust as unsolicited applications totalling \$4,245,334. The average grant approved by the Trustees during 2007-2008 was \$ 56,763.18. Grants were considered at nine scheduled meetings of the Trustees held throughout the year.

There are many to thank this year: my colleagues, Lara Hook, who joined the Ross Trust in April 2008, Rebekah Lautman, Paul Read, Margarita Sagris and Dina Vlanes; Mary Pearce who provided the Trust with valuable part time assistance in granting research; Rosemary Addis and Catherine Brown for their valuable publications; all of the Trust's professional advisors; and of course the Trustees who gave me such tremendous encouragement and support. I know that my successor, Austin Paterson, will enjoy working with such a strong team and I wish him and the Ross Trust every success in the future.

Sylvia Geddes



The Trustees and staff of the Ross Trust at Sylvia's farewell at the State Library of Victoria on 22 July 2008.

From the left: Lara Hook, Dina Vlanes, Rebekah Lautman, Ian Vaughan, Sylvia Geddes, John McInnes, Alix Bradfield, Ian Renard, Eda Ritchie and Margarita Sagris.

Photos courtesy and copyright of Martin Wurt/workingphotos.com.au.

International Philanthropy Collaboration

The International Philanthropy Collaboration was born out of a desire by Ross Trust Chief Executive Officer, Sylvia Geddes, to delve further into the ideas and practices that had inspired her during an international study tour she had undertaken in 2006 of philanthropic trusts and foundations in the United Kingdom and Europe.

The Collaboration, an initiative of The RE Ross Trust in collaboration with The Myer Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation was jointly funded by all three organisations and supported by their executives and Trustees as an opportunity for deeper conversation about philanthropy and the possibilities for increasing philanthropy's impact.

The four day meeting of senior executives and trustees, representing ten trusts and foundations from Canada, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Australia and New Zealand met at the State Library of Victoria from 19 - 22 November 2007. The meeting was framed specifically as a conversation and not a conference to ensure the emphasis was on participation, openness, sharing and questioning. It was an opportunity to examine the role of philanthropy, question accepted practice and to debate new ideas and possibilities.

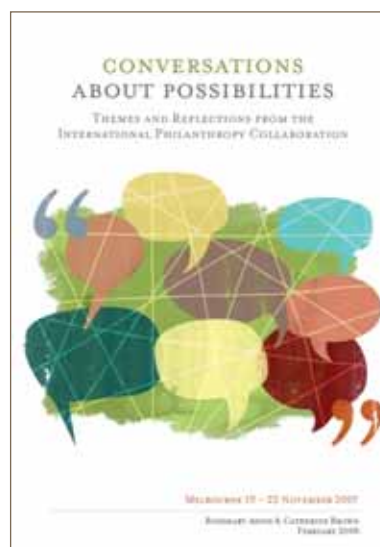
The Collaboration was a series of conversations about the role of philanthropy within society and the possibilities available to trusts and foundations to make a difference in a fast changing world. The conversation was centred on the fundamental question of *what is the role of philanthropy in a civil society?*

Discussion topics were chosen to inspire reflection and debate and several participants prepared papers to provide a springboard for discussion. Participants took turns in facilitating conversation topics including clarity, relationships, governance and inclusion and the possibilities available to trusts and foundations in addition to their grant making efforts. The Collaboration shed light on the broader tools available to a trust or foundation to have impact for charitable purpose.

In conclusion, the participants of the Collaboration agreed that the following questions, would provide an excellent framework for a trust or foundation in the pursuit of affecting change.

- What do we want to achieve?
- Which items in the philanthropy toolbox should we use?
- Can we add value by collaborating with others?
- How will we know our efforts have made an impact?
- How can we ensure the knowledge we have gained reaches a wider audience?

The collaboration's learning's and reflections were captured in, *Conversations about Possibilities: Themes and Reflections from the International Philanthropy Collaboration*, published by The Ross Trust and authored by Catherine Brown and Rosemary Addis. The report, collaboration papers and case studies prepared as background are available on the Ross Trust website.



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The Ross Trust's approach to granting

The Ross Trust's approach to granting is reviewed on an annual basis as part of its strategic planning process. The Trust's strategic objectives, which inform the areas and purposes for which the Trust makes grants, take into account the wishes of the Trust's benefactor, Roy Everard Ross and are influenced by the changing needs of the community and the Trust's ability to have impact for the benefit of the public in these areas.

The **strategic objectives** of the Ross Trust during 2007-2008 were:

- To assist charitable organisations to meet the immediate and basic needs of those most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Victoria.
- To fund programs that contribute to the improvement of social and economic outcomes for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Victoria.
- To fund programs that improve outcomes for children in their early years.
- To use the Trust's resources to improve access to and achievement of equity and excellence in public education.
- To support initiatives that protect and preserve Australian indigenous flora and fauna.
- To provide education and training opportunities for students from countries outside of Australia.
- To fund arts initiatives that support public education or that facilitate the improvement of social outcomes.

- To support the building and strengthening of the institutional capacity of organisations working to achieve the Trust's objectives.
- To work in collaboration with organisations, schools, business and government to influence positive change.
- To take a leadership role in the promotion of knowledge and practice that can positively impact the Trust's goals.

The Trust approaches its objectives in three main ways;

- Developing Collaborations – more intensive medium to longer term relationships with organisations who have demonstrated effectiveness in areas in which the Trust has an interest.
- Supporting Programs - commissioning a specific organisation or inviting a number of organisations with specialist expertise to undertake work in areas that meet the Trust's objectives.
- Accepting unsolicited grants – organisations are able to submit proposals to the Trust throughout the year for grants seeking to make an impact in any of the four areas identified as priorities for the Trust.

Granting limitations

The Ross Trust can only provide grants to organisations either operating in **Victoria** or who will **ONLY** use the grant funds for benefit of people in **Victoria**. The Ross Trust does not accept applications made by individuals either for their own personal benefit or for the benefit of other nominated individuals.



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