



Kirra Harrison and Minjarra Atkinson at Ganbina 2008 awards. Photo courtesy and copyright of Ganbina.

COLLABORATIONS

The Ross Trust has developed Collaborations with a number of organisations around specific areas of priority to the Trust, with the view that working in a more intensive way over the medium to longer term will assist organisations to have greater impact against the Trust's objectives.

Collaborating organisations are chosen by the Trust based on their track record in achieving successful outcomes in areas of interest to the Trust.

The Trust works in partnership with its collaborating organisations to design and develop projects. As the Collaborations progress the Trust remains actively engaged in their direction.

During 2007-2008 the Ross Trust continued or began developing the following Collaborations:

- Centre for Community Child Health:
improved outcomes for children in their Early Years
- Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise Inc (EASE):
Solving the Jigsaw – changing the culture of violence
- Ganbina KEETA:
improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians
- Education Foundation Australia:
improved outcomes in Public Education
- Somebody's Daughter Theatre:
improved outcomes for offenders, ex-offenders and some at risk of offending
- Asylum Seekers Resource Centre:
improved outcomes for asylum seekers
- Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders:
children of offenders support program

Centre for Community Child Health

www.rch.org.au/cch

Improved outcomes for children in their early years

\$852,450 approved since 2005 and paid over three years

The Early Years Phases One and Two (2001 – 2005): Refocusing community based services for young children and their families

From 2001 to 2005, the Ross Trust worked with the Centre for Community Child Health and Good Beginnings Australia to develop an early intervention project to improve the life chances of young children. The Ross Trust provided approximately \$1 million over four years (2001 -2005) towards the Ross Trust Early Years project.

The Project demonstrated successfully that philanthropy, Local, State and Commonwealth Governments and health and community service organisations can work together to achieve significant positive outcomes for the community. Further information about Phases One and Two of the Early Years Project can be found at the Centre for Community Child Health's website (www.rch.org.au/ccch) under Research/Projects – Policy and Service Development.

The Early Years Phase 3: Linking schools and Early Years services

One of the key findings in Phase Two of The Early Years Project was that strong links were needed between schools and early years services to both better prepare children and their families for school and better prepare schools for their new students. According to research in Australia, a significant proportion of children, especially those from disadvantaged communities, arrive at school developmentally vulnerable.

According to the research evidence, links and partnerships between schools and early years services are important for the following reasons:

- Barriers to learning need to be addressed before a child starts school. These barriers can be overcome by promoting children's participation in formal early years programs, ensuring parents understand the importance of school regardless of their own experiences, and through the early identification of developmental problems.
- Engaging parents as active partners requires schools to provide opportunities for them to become familiar and comfortable with the school before their children start attending.
- There is a need for a more holistic approach to supporting families to create the best possible environment for children to develop.

- Current thinking about the importance of adopting an approach to child development and education that focuses on the whole life course highlights the need to close the gap between the early years and school.
- Schools will benefit from having greater access to information about the implications of current research on the early years.

The aim of the Linking Schools and Early Years Project is to ensure that all children enter the formal education system ready to engage and be successful in school. The project also aims to ensure that schools are prepared for children of all abilities and backgrounds when they first attend, and that families, services and communities are ready to support the development of children.

This six year project, now in its second year, works with schools, early years services and the community to develop new models of working collaboratively to address barriers to children's learning and development. Following a year of project planning, the five year implementation phase of the Linking Schools and Early Years Project commenced in 2008.

The project operates in three sites in Victoria: Corio/Norlane in the Greater Geelong City Council, Footscray in the City of Maribyrnong and Hastings in the Mornington Peninsula Shire. In each project site a community partnership group comprised of school staff, early years service providers, representatives of community agencies and parents has been established to guide the project locally. In partnership with the project team, each community partnership group will conceptualise, develop and implement a set of local strategies and activities based on the stated project goals.



The three specific goals of the project are:

- Children and families transition smoothly between early years services and schools
- Early years services and schools actively connect with families
- Schools are responsive to the individual learning needs of all children.

The R.E. Ross Trust has funded the Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, to conduct the project. A project advisory group made up of experts in education and early childhood development has been established to oversee the project.

The Social Policy and Research Centre, University of New South Wales will conduct an evaluation of the project. The evaluation findings will play an important role in increasing the body of knowledge and research evidence about linking schools and early years services to improve outcomes for children in an Australian setting.

The Ross Trust has committed all the funding (around \$600,000) for the first two calendar years of the project (2007 and 2008) and has made a tentative allocation to meet around half of the balance required to take the project to completion at the end of 2012.

The Early Years – The R E Ross Trust Seminar Series

The Ross Trust Early Years seminar series "The Early Years: From Research to Policy to Practice", which started in Phase One, is continuing in Phase Three.

Now in its fifth year, The Ross Trust Early Years Seminar Series has been instrumental in linking those working with children and families with relevant and up-to-date information and research as well as strategies in developing changes to early years services. The Centre for Community Child Health utilised local, national and international experts to speak on diverse topics related to the Early Years at four seminars annually. The Seminar Series has been so successful that the Trust has continued to support the Series until 2010 – 2011.

For more information on the Ross Trust Early Years project contact:

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CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH (Murdoch Children's Research Institute):
improved outcomes for children in their early years

Seminar Series (Over three years) \$150,000

Linking Schools and Early Years since 2005 (Over three years) \$702,450

TOTAL: CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH \$852,450



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Collaborations

Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise Inc (EASE): Solving the Jigsaw

www.solvingthejigsaw.org.au

Changing the culture of violence

\$262,250 approved in 2006, and paid over three years

Solving the Jigsaw (www.solvingthejigsaw.org.au) is a school-based program that seeks to change the 'culture of violence' and build a 'culture of wellbeing'. EASE forms long-term partnerships with schools to integrate early intervention and prevention programs which are targeted at improving resilience, belonging and connectedness for students through group and individual work; professional development and training of staff; and school policy development. Since its inception in 1997, 'Solving the Jigsaw' has continued to grow and develop its core work in the classroom, enhance its partnerships with schools, teachers and young people, and develop its training programs.

Between June 2001 and June 2005, the Ross Trust provided over \$395,000 towards the Program's continued expansion in schools, quality improvement and the development of a comprehensive training program. In 2006, the Trust and EASE reviewed the achievements and capacity of the Solving the Jigsaw Program and the Trust renewed its commitment to the strategic directions of the Program by approving a grant of \$262,250 to be paid over three years until 2008.

During this time, Solving the Jigsaw has continued to deliver its school-based programs, extend its research and evaluation work and increase the reach of its work in schools through increasing its training focus. The Solving the Jigsaw training team now provides a nationally accredited competency-based facilitator training course, training workshops and professional development modules. This expansion of training programs for teachers, welfare professionals, tertiary students, children's workers, agencies and organisations is allowing more schools to utilise the extensive training materials developed by the Program over the last 11 years.

In 2007-2008 the Solving the Jigsaw Professional Development programs were delivered in Bendigo, Echuca, Swan Hill, Warragul and Footscray. Ninety-eight schools participated and most of the schools sent two to four staff members to the six day training series. In 2005 and 2007 the nationally accredited facilitator training program was provided to 34 trainees. In 2008 these trainees are delivering 117 Jigsaw programs in 27 schools reaching 2, 925 children and young people in rural and metropolitan schools.

In 2007-2008 Solving the Jigsaw directly employed four facilitators who delivered 47 separate classroom programs in 12 schools in the Loddon Mallee Region of Victoria. In addition, the team delivered 29 Professional Development Training days in 2008.

The Ross Trust and Solving the Jigsaw are currently reviewing its Collaboration which is due for completion in June 2009.

For more information on the Solving the Jigsaw project contact:

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Ganbina Koori Economic Employment and Training Agency

ganbina@ganbina.com.au

Improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians

\$555,820 approved in 2007, and to be paid over three years

GANBINA Koori Economic Employment & Training Agency Inc. (www.ganbina.com.au) acts in the capacity of peak Indigenous representative body in Victoria's Goulburn Valley for economic employment and training issues. GANBINA performs this role either as a consultation organisation for the local Indigenous community or as a direct service provision agency.

Ganbina and the Ross Trust began their major collaboration in May 2004. The Trust committed funding totalling \$576,000 to be paid over three years to support the organisation's first paid Executive and Administration staff and to meet associated infrastructure costs for three years. In 2007-2008, the Trust renewed its commitment to Ganbina for another three years with grants totalling over \$555,000. This support has enabled Ganbina to achieve a more diverse funding base as well maintain and develop new programs, regardless of government grants, which meet the needs of the community.

Ganbina in the absence of government funding, is delivering programs that have a preventative focus. The core philosophy of Ganbina's "Jobs 4 U 2" and the "Ladders to Success" programs is to support Indigenous youth to realise their full career potential and make a positive contribution to local business and industry.

The "Jobs 4 U 2" program is a partnership between Ganbina, local business and local secondary schools. The program is unique in that it provides a seamless transition for Indigenous youth from education to training to employment. Its primary activities address:

- Low retention rates of Indigenous students
- Low participation rates of Indigenous students in school-industry based programs.
- Lack of access to localised employment by Indigenous youth.

The program engages youth from Year 7 through to Year 12 to develop and achieve career goals. Students are exposed to jobs and employers, have the opportunity to visit and learn about different industries and are introduced to casual, part-time and full-time employment through work experience placements and after-work school work. These experiences provide greater connectedness of education and employment for both students and their parents, and greater opportunities for transferral into employment through industry links.

The "Jobs 4 U 2" program simultaneously focuses on the development of individual life skills, a concept that is about preparing youth to sustain and maintain employment opportunities. This varies from assisting individuals to establish a bank account to conducting career guidance, employment readiness assessment, links to potential employers and assistance with targeted pre-employment expenses.

In addition to the "Jobs 4 U 2" program, Ganbina also delivers a range of other programs including:

- The Koori Youth Achievement Awards
- The Koori Youth Driver Program
- The Koori Youth Leadership Program
- Scholarship Clearinghouse

In 2007-2008 Ganbina experienced unprecedented demand for its programs with 270 individuals involved in 338 program related activities during this time. Even more outstanding is that 100% of the participants remained engaged in Ganbina programs as of June 2008. This is a significant achievement particularly as most of the programs are conducted outside of education, training or employment hours.

Ganbina's success was rewarded when it received the 2008 VicHealth award for excellence in health promotion for the "Jobs 4 U 2" program. The awards are presented in recognition of outstanding achievements and innovative contributions to health promotion through VicHealth-funded projects.

For more information on Ganbina contact:

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Left to right: Rianne Hood and Ashleigh Atkinson – two of the 2008 Ganbina Youth Leadership Program.

Collaborations

Education Foundation Australia/Foundation for Young Australians

www.educationfoundation.org.au

Equity and quality in public education

\$621,000 approved in 2006, and paid over three years

Public education became a major focus for the Ross Trust in 2005. The Ross Trust defines public education as that which is delivered by schools which have a public curriculum, provide reasonable access for all students, and are accountable for duty of care and quality of delivery (after *equity, excellence and effectiveness*, Education Foundation Australia, 2005).

A quality school education is essential if young people are to have access to the greatest possible economic and social opportunities in life, unfortunately quality education is not a universal experience in Australia. Research has shown that one of the strongest contributors to educational disadvantage is a growing geographic concentration of socio-economic disadvantage. Poorer students tend to be clustered in smaller, under-resourced schools with poor educational outcomes which are located in communities with low levels of social and cultural capital needed to support educational achievement.

The Ross Trust has supported a number of projects with the Education Foundation over several years aimed at supporting improved outcomes for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In April 2007, the Ross Trust approved a grant of \$207,000 each year for three years to the Education Foundation, now in alliance with The Foundation for Young Australians (www.fya.org.au), for a Collaboration to contribute to improved "equity and quality in public education".

Part of the Collaboration was developed to strengthen the Foundation's research capability. A portion of the Ross Trust grant will support the Research Manager's position as well as other administration costs to further enhance its ability to contribute to real change in the way that public education is understood, thought about and enacted. With the support of the Trust, the Foundation has formed new research partnerships with significant Victorian, national and international partners

and initiated new research projects that will deliver needed understandings of how to support better educational outcomes for young Australians, especially those facing disadvantage.

In addition, the Collaboration is supporting the Foundation to conduct a new three year project entitled *Outside the Square: New Models of Educational Excellence*. This research will build on the previous work of the Education Foundation's *Case for Change and Crossing the Bridge* which identified barriers and possible models to help overcome entrenched educational disadvantage. *Outside the Square* will contribute to improvements in equity and excellence in public education, through the creation of significant work around the following four themes:

Theme 1

Next practice curriculum and pedagogy that:

- Caters for the full diversity of students' learning needs and styles, backgrounds and aspirations.
- Supports independent learning linked to students' lives and their community.
- Gives young people a leadership role in the school and community.

Theme 2

Next practice measurements that defines educational success.

Theme 3

Next practice partnerships that:

- Engage government, business, philanthropy and the community in providing young people with powerful learning resources.
- Enable schools to work cooperatively for better student outcomes at the local and regional level.
- Meet the learning and non-learning needs of students in disadvantaged communities.

Theme 4

Next practice school design that opens the school to the community and uses technology to enhance learning.

The first paper in the *Outside the Square* project will be released in early 2009.

For more information on the Ross Trust Public Education Collaboration with Education Foundation/Foundation for Young Australians contact:

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Somebody's Daughter Theatre

www.somebodysdaughtertheatre.com

Improved outcomes for offenders, ex-offenders and some at risk of offending
\$300,000 approved in 2007, and to be paid over three years

Somebody's Daughter Theatre Inc. is a unique company, with a 27 year history, that works in art, music and drama with:

- women in prison and after they have been released;
- HighWater Theatre for marginalised youth in Wodonga in partnership with Upper Hume Community Health Service & the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development;
- disadvantaged young people (particularly in regional and rural areas); and
- communities interested in establishing creative partnerships to enhance the health and well-being of marginalised groups.

With more than 25 years of productions developed and presented by these women and young people inside prisons, in schools, community settings and mainstream theatres, Somebody's Daughter Theatre has established itself as a significant contributor to offender rehabilitation and prevention. It is also one of the truly contemporary voices in Australian theatre, a remarkable twin achievement.

Over many years since the company's establishment, the Ross Trust has provided grants to Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company to support its work. In 2004 the Trustees approved grants totalling \$300,000 over three years towards assisting the theatre company to become more sustainable into the future and less dependent on ad hoc, time and energy consuming fund raising. This commitment was reaffirmed in 2006 and in March 2007 the Trustees approving a second triennium grant of \$300,000 to be paid over three years until 2010.



In 2007, Somebody's Daughter Theatre continued to deliver high quality programs and workshops across Victoria to a range of participants and communities. In twelve months, Somebody's Daughter Theatre, including the young participants from HighWater Theatre in Albury/Wodonga have achieved the following outstanding results:

- Held 26 performances of several new and original plays to audiences of more than 5,700 people.
- Ran 118 workshops with 1680 participants across Victoria.
- Held three art exhibitions with original artwork created by participants.
- Created two new publications featuring the work of participants.

For more information on Somebody's Daughter Theatre please contact:

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Collaborations

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

www.asrc.org.au

Improved outcomes for asylum seekers

\$440,000 approved since 2006, and to be paid over four years

Building the ASRC's capacity to meet asylum seekers' needs

Many asylum seekers released from detention in Australia to live in the community or those whose immigration status changed to 'Bridging Visa E' while awaiting the outcome of their applications, are still precluded from receiving Commonwealth income, health and welfare benefits, are not permitted to work and are not eligible for free English language tuition. They thus contend with poverty, homelessness, untreated health problems and the isolation that comes from an inability to communicate effectively. At the same time, they are moving through a complex legal process dealing with their applications to stay in Australia.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) is a non-government, independent, incorporated organisation which is now Australia's leading provider of aid and advocacy on behalf of asylum seekers. The ASRC opened its doors in 2001 in response to the desperate plight of asylum seekers predominately in the western suburbs of Melbourne and has grown incredibly since that time.

In August 2003, with over 250 active volunteers and more than 100 potential volunteers on a waiting list for induction and training, the ASRC received its first grant from the Ross Trust to employ a Volunteer and Operations Co-ordinator. This position was later split into two distinct positions, each employed for three days a week. The creation of the two positions, greatly

increased the ASRC's ability to plan and implement a range of programs while continuing to develop its financial management capacity.

The ASRC now provides services to over 3,000 asylum seekers from more than 60 countries each year through more than 20 different services. The ASRC is the only organisation to offer such a broad range of services which effectively cater for all asylum seeker needs, including: material aid, legal advice, health, employment, counselling, casework, advocacy, recreation, community and detention outreach, English language tuition and financial aid.

More than 700 volunteers donate approximately 215,000 hours per annum to assist the ASRC, equating to over \$14 million in assistance each year.

Recipient of the 2003 HREOC Human Rights Award and the 2005 National Australia Bank State and National Volunteers Awards, the ASRC has become Australia's largest asylum seeker aid, advocacy and health organisation.

In the past year alone the ASRC has:

- Won permanent protection for 215 asylum seekers.
- Provided 2000 medical consultations to asylum seekers without Medicare.
- Provided 12,000 Metcards to destitute asylum seekers.
- Provided food parcels to hundreds of families monthly who would otherwise go hungry.
- Provided legal advice to more than 2000 asylum seekers.
- Provided vital counselling, casework, English as a Second Language, employment and social and recreation programs.

In June 2008, the ASRC was invited to become a Ross Trust Collaboration with a further grant to continue the employment of its Volunteer Coordinator and Financial Administration Coordinator as well as supporting the part-time positions of a Food Bank Coordinator and a Community Health Worker. These new positions will commence in the 2008-2009 financial year.

For more information on the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre please contact:

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Chief Executive Officer

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www.asrc.org.au



The ASRC kitchen program provides a nutritious midday meal to approximately 60 people on all weekdays the centre is open. The meals are prepared and served by volunteer staff and members and uses food donated to the ASRC foodbank. The daily meal helps to ensure members receive at least one hot meal a day, but also helps to provide a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere for members at the Centre. Photos copyright and courtesy of the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre.

Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO)

www.vacro.org.au

Children of offenders support program

\$600,000 approved in 2008, and to be paid over three years

Supporting the hidden victims of crime

Children and families of offenders are often the hidden, secondary victims of crime, experiencing marginalisation, stigmatisation and poverty. This is frequently an unintended consequence of the incarceration of a family member. Further complicating this issue is that children and families of prisoners are not the core business of any government department and are often overlooked in the development and implementation of new social policy or in changes to existing social policy and programs. As a result, services targeting children and families of offenders are underdeveloped or non-existent.

Victorian Association for the Care & Resettlement of Offenders (www.vacro.org.au) provides support to offenders and their families with a focus on rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. It is Victoria's second oldest charitable organisation and has been operating for 135 years. Over many years, the Ross Trust has made numerous grants to VACRO to provide a range of programs for offenders and their families. Because of its success and proven track record in the development and delivery of high quality programs, the Ross Trust invited VACRO to develop a proposal for a three year Collaboration project in an area of high need.

In August 2008, the Trustees approved a three year grant to VACRO of \$600,000 towards the Children of Offenders Support Program (COSP). VACRO will work with SHINE for Kids to deliver two key areas of support to children and families of offenders – mentoring and counselling / support. The COSP model will offer an integrated service specifically designed to link children to a range of practical supports according to their individual needs and family situations. The modular nature of the design means that children may access services through a range of different pathways. At the same time, COSP seeks to achieve interdepartmental and across sector support for the unique and complex needs of children and families of offenders. The Program will commence in early 2009.

For more information on VACRO's programs to support children of offenders please contact:

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