



an enduring trust

ROY EVERARD ROSS ENGINEER, INVESTOR, QUARRYMAN, PHILANTHROPIST



ROY ROSS WAS NOT ONLY VERY GENEROUS IN ENDOWING A CHARITABLE TRUST WITH SUCH A LARGE BENEFACTION IN PERPETUITY BUT HE WAS ALSO VERY FARSIGHTED IN THE TOOLS AND FLEXIBILITY HE GAVE HIS TRUSTEES TO ADMINISTER THE TRUST.

One thing Mr Ross did not do was to name his Trust. At their first meeting, the five named Trustees resolved to call the Trust, The R E Ross Trust.

The will provided these original Trustees with the power to appoint replacements for any Trustees who resigned or died in office.

As to their investment responsibilities, Roy Ross' will gave his Trustees absolute discretion in investing the money of the Estate. They could do this either in their own names or in the name of any custodian Trustee and they could form a company for the purposes of custodianship and pay the costs of any such company from the income of the Estate.

In recognising the administration involved in a Charitable Trust, the will provided for Trust income to be used "*in the employment by the Trustees of such secretarial clerical accounting and other services as may benecessary or desirable..*".

Roy Ross also presented his first Trustees with a number of challenges. There was of course the primary challenge of deciding which "*charities or charitable purposes*" should receive income from the Trust. The other main challenges were what to do with the Trust's assets, particularly Hillview Quarries, and what administrative arrangements to make.

The First Trustees took their lead from Roy Ross's life and will. At the first meeting of Trustees on 5 November 1970, it was agreed desirable to form a company to act as a custodian of the assets of the Estate. After consideration, R E Ross Nominees Pty Ltd

was established in June 1971, with each of the five Trustees owning two half shares. Also at that first November meeting the Trustees decided to retain Hillview Quarries and to make it into an asset earning a significant amount of income for the Trust.

No income was distributed as grants in the year ending June 1971 as the Trustees were engaged in executing the Estate and establishing the Trust. In June 1971 it was decided to appoint a Trust Administrator and in September 1971, following an Australia-wide press advertisement, the first Administrator was appointed.

TRUST ADMINISTRATION

Meetings were held more frequently in the early years as effort was devoted by the Trustees to establishing the Trust on a firm footing. After 1975 a pattern emerged, which was later adopted as policy, of meeting every month except January. The Trust has never imposed closing dates for its general applications for grants and has taken pride in dealing quickly with applications after their receipt.

The Trust continued to be administered from Roy Ross' former office until a move to other premises in St Kilda Road and then in 1980 to the Trust's present offices in Albert Road South Melbourne. The Trust's office continues to be the registered office of the Trust's companies.

As well as appointing an Administrator, the Trust began by paying Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd to provide it with secretarial support. The Trust continued to purchase some of its administration services from Hillview Quarries until 2001.

Sadly, the Trust's first Administrator died in July 1974. The Trustees said of John Hobbes in their 1974 Annual Report that "*the Trust was fortunate to have the services of a man who not only had the ability to enter into and understand an extremely complex field, but also had a genuine belief in the good which could result from his efforts.*" Following his death, Trustee Bill Ramsay was appointed Administrator and he and the other Trustees were supported by administrative services provided by Hillview Quarries. When Mr Ramsay resigned his Administrator position a new Administrator from outside the Trust was appointed in 1987.

In 1977, in recognition of their work as both Trustees and Directors of Hillview Quarries, the Victorian Supreme Court ordered that Trustees be able to be paid commission each year for their "*pains and troubles*". Commission was to be no more than a percentage of income distributions as specified by the Court. Before payment could be made, the Trust's audited annual Accounts had to be cleared by a Master of the Court, who could specify a lower rate if considered appropriate to the year's circumstances, and an opportunity given to the Attorney-General of Victoria to see the Accounts and comment on the rate of commission.

The Accounts of the Trust are independently audited each year, along with those of the Trust's companies. Following the adoption of the Accounts, the Trust submits a "*pains and troubles*" report to the Victorian Government Solicitor. After their consideration, the Solicitor informs the Trust whether the Attorney-General is satisfied with the Accounts.

In July 1978, the Trust joined Philanthropy Australia (then the Australian Association of Philanthropic Trusts) at an annual fee of \$75. In 1989 it gave a grant of \$10,000 towards the establishment of a Resource Centre and Library for the Association.

INVESTMENTS

Roy Ross left a portfolio of assets for the Trust comprising shares, real property and Hillview Quarries. Over the years the composition of the portfolio has changed, including by the addition of units in property trusts and with Hillview Quarries comprising a greater proportion of the value of the assets and a generating a much greater proportion of investment income. In 1984, Hillview Leasing Pty Ltd, a company wholly owned by Hillview Quarries Pty Ltd, was established for the purpose of owning plant, equipment and vehicles for leasing to Hillview Quarries.

Since 1984, the Trust has used the services of professional funds managers and in addition seeks and takes frequent advice from other professional advisers.

In June 1991, following consideration of an application made by the Trust, the Australian Taxation Office gave approval for the Trust to retain up to 20% of income each year. This income has been invested along with the original corpus to increase future income distributions.



GRANTS

TO JUNE 2002, THE TRUST HAD APPROVED OVER 3,000 GRANTS
TOTALLING MORE THAN \$50 MILLION.

When it came to making grants, the First Trustees decided to concentrate the Trust's activities in three fields and to *"give priority to particular projects rather than merely making donations to established agencies and institutions"*. The three fields were: *"Social Welfare, with particular regard to assistance to the disadvantaged in breaking the circles in which they are caught and which result in poverty ..."*; *"Nature Conservation, with particular regard to the purchase of land for the protection and preservation of flora and fauna"*; and *"Education of Foreign Students, with particular regard to students from Melanesia."*

SOCIAL WELFARE

The Trustees made a noteworthy start with their first project grants in 1972. These multi-year grants included:

- contributing to the establishment of a Chair of Social Studies (social work) at the University of Melbourne;
- paying at the request of the Children's Protection Society for research to be undertaken on improving the care and protection system for children; and
- providing funds for the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research to carry out a study for the Victorian Council of Social Service of the use of volunteers by social welfare agencies.

The first grants also exhibited some other themes – partnerships with other donors, tackling drug abuse, and early intervention - which have recurred throughout the life of the Trust so far:

- a partnership with the Leith Trust, the Myer Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation to support a three year Brotherhood of St Laurence project on the feasibility of family day care for children of working mothers;
- support for the Buoyancy Foundation over two years to establish a residential therapeutic community for rehabilitation of drug users; and
- funding for two years for the salary of a teacher for the Advisory Council for Children with Impaired Hearing's pre-school program for deaf children.

Expanding on its income distribution policy in its 1973 Report, the Trust's Chairman noted *"Some causes have more public, and therefore Government, appeal than others equally worthy. A trust such as this should help to redress this imbalance."* *"Should the Trustees of a charitable trust undertake a risky experimental project in good faith and the project prove a complete failure the only sanction they face is the ridicule of their peers."* *"A trust's task is to encourage imaginative proposals and agencies and in some cases to assist organisations which provide an alternative to Government services or departmental research."*

Over the years the Trust has continued a policy of each year mixing smaller grants for many organisations with larger grants, often multi-year and in partnership with other donors, for a smaller number of particular projects. The focus has always been on those who are most disadvantaged and the main areas have been:

Children and families – through a range of community services such as child care, counselling, peer education and support, child protection, help-lines.

Drug and alcohol abuse – supporting drug education and rehabilitation services, providing funds for the ground-breaking research of the Drug Policy Expert (Pennington) Committee into the risk factors for addiction in young people, funding pioneering work into the needs of the children of drug addicted parents.

Education – through scholarships, funding for disadvantaged schools and pre-schools, innovative programs managed by educational institutions and the Education Foundation, conservation of materials for the State Library of Victoria, support for Victoria's museums.

New arrivals and people from other cultures – funding for the provision of support services and culturally relevant community services.

Older people – contributions to equipment and premises for aged care accommodation.

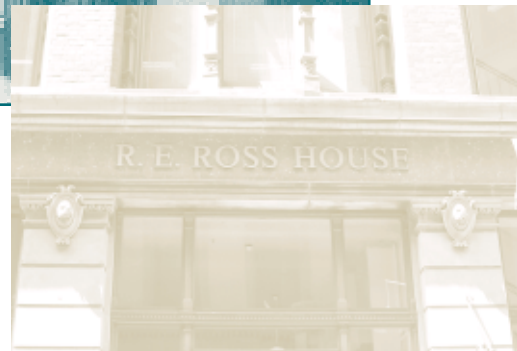
People with disabilities – funding for a multiplicity of programs, services and self-help groups for people with all types of disabilities, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric.

People living in Poverty – funding of special programs of emergency relief and material aid, support for homelessness and housing services

Young people – through special youth programs, youth clubs, camps and outdoor activities, special services for young people at risk and young offenders, accommodation.



> ROSS HOUSE IN MELBOURNE
Photographs taken by Erin McGowan



ROSS HOUSE

In 1981 the Trust decided to go ahead with the idea it had been considering of providing a building in which small charitable organisations could be located. The aim was to reduce the overhead costs of small organisations through shared administrative support and facilities. The idea had come from a similar initiative undertaken in London by the Joseph Rowntree Trust. Coincidentally, the Victorian Council of Social Service and the Committee of Self Help Groups had identified a need for a "*shared physical resource*" [Jo Higginson *Building for a Community: the story of Ross House, June 1998*] to house self-help and small community groups.

After extensive consultation among the various interested parties, some disagreements and misunderstandings, a lot of goodwill, searching, and compromising, Ross House was established in 1987. Named Royston House when purchased, the historic five story building in Flinders Lane in Melbourne's Central Building District had been erected originally as a warehouse in 1898. It was renamed Ross House in recognition of its major donor. The R E Ross Trust provided most of the funds for the purchase and refurbishment

of Ross House through grants to the Victorian Community Foundation, the building's owner. These grants were made in 1984, 1986 and 1989 and totalled \$2.28 million (nearly \$3.95 million in June 2002 value).

The establishment of Ross House "was one of the largest community development projects within the non-government sector in Melbourne in the 1980s. ...Since 1987, over 160 groups have used Ross House as their base. ...The groups include self-help groups, advocacy organisations, environment and conservation groups, ethnic associations, social change oriented groups, independent media and publishing groups and internet network providers." [Jo Higginson *Building for a Community: the story of Ross House*, June 1998]

Ross House continues to provide an important resource to community groups in Victoria. At the time of writing this account, the Ross House Association and ANZ Trustees, the Trustee of the Victorian Community Foundation were engaged in developing a management and building plan to take Ross House confidently into the future.

NATURE CONSERVATION

In 1973 the Trust reported that the establishment by the Victorian Government of the Victoria Conservation Trust (now named Trust for Nature) had cleared the way for the first grants to be made for the acquisition of private land for the preservation of flora and fauna. The Trust made its first land acquisition grants in 1974 for the purchase of approximately 19 acres of land at Mallacoota Inlet for inclusion in the Mallacoota Inlet National Park and for the purchase of two blocks of land for inclusion in the Brisbane Ranges National Park. In today's dollars (June 2002), these two grants totalling \$46,000 would be worth \$274,000.



^ RIVER RED GUM - NED'S CORNER STATION

Photograph taken by Michael Looker

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The Trust reported in 1975 that it had purchased Parkdale Estates Pty Ltd, which among other land, held title to 150 hectares of land on the north face of the Arthur's Seat Escarpment at Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula. The Trust foreshadowed its intention for this land to become the basis of a recreational park. This became a reality in 1988 when around 126 hectares joined the Nepean State Park to become the Arthur's Seat State Park.

The Trust went on to make many more grants for the purchase of land and the support of other conservation projects throughout Victoria. At June 2002 grants of around \$6.4 million had been made for this purpose. The purchased land has added to the Kinglake National Park, Long Forest Reserve (Mallee), Mornington Peninsula National Park, Melba Gully State Park (Otways), Otway National Park, Linton Flora Park, Kalimna Park Box Iron bark Forest (Castlemaine), Sun Moth Reserve (Nhill). The Trust continues to assist Trust for Nature with the funding required to manage its own land under conservation covenants.

The crowning achievement of the Trust in 2002 was to enable Trust for Nature to purchase Ned's Corner Station in Northwest Victoria. Believed to be the largest Victorian property in private ownership and comprising 25,000 hectares including 14 kilometres of Murray River frontage, the purchase is of immense significance to conservation in Victoria.

EDUCATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

The First Trustees undertook research into this area before making their first grant, in partnership with the Nuffield Foundation and a number of others, to Monash University in 1973. That University, in partnership with the Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology, developed mathematics teaching programs suitable for Papua New Guineans.

Grants in this area to June 2002 have totalled nearly \$3.25 million, of which almost \$2.64 million has gone towards the Trade Education Project or as it has become known, The R E Ross Trust Fellowship Program. This Program has been providing for specialised, short term enhancement of trade skills and instruction techniques of adults from small South Pacific Island countries since 1987 and from East Timor since 2000. Approximately five months training is provided in Victoria and on completion, the Fellows return to provide education and training in their own countries.

In this area the main grant recipients in the years 1973 to 1986 were:

- Monash University – Mathematics Development Project (jointly with PNG Institute of Technology) 1973, 74, 75 and 76
- La Trobe University – Education of PNG graduates as tertiary institution staff 1974
- La Trobe University – Research Centre for South West Pacific Studies 1976, 77 and 82
- Overseas Students Assistance Fund – General Support 1979
- University of Melbourne – International House 1979, 80, 81, 82 and 86
- LaTrobe University – establishment of a formal scholarship scheme for English language students from New Caledonia and Vanuatu 1984 and 85
- LaTrobe University – Research Centre for South West Pacific Studies - six scholarship to be offered each year for two years as continuation of the Melanesian Students Language Programme 1984 and 86

The Trade Education Project started in 1987 but the following also continued until 1990:


- LaTrobe University – Intensive English Language Course for 16 Kanak High School Students
- LaTrobe University – Language Centre – places for nine Kanak High School Students 10 week Course in English
- University of Melbourne – International House – scholarships and bursaries scheme
- LaTrobe University – towards Melanesian Students Language Programme

Starting in 1988, Melbourne Church of England Grammar School was given grants towards the boarding fees for one or two Papuan student for seven years.

Two grants have been made to the Royal Australian College of Physicians towards scholarships for research/study at Victorian hospitals and/or institutions for students from Pacific Islands. The 1st grant in 1993 and 2nd in 1999.

THE TRUST INTO THE FUTURE

More than 30 years since its establishment, the current Trustees remain committed to the Trust achieving positive outcomes for the community against the background of contemporary social, environmental and economic circumstances. To this end they review periodically the Trust's granting aims and priorities. The most recent review has confirmed that the main aim of the Trust is to assist communities of people who are helping



themselves and others in ways that can be sustained into the future. Some implications of this is that the Trust prefers projects which involve volunteers and where there are expectations and plans for the positive impact of the project to be sustained beyond the grant period.

To reach as broad a cross-section of the Victorian community as possible, the Trust accepts all eligible unsolicited applications but it gives priority to projects which are designed to develop, test and implement creative solutions to persistent, difficult *social* and *environmental* needs and problems and to requests for small grants to enable smaller community organisations to begin or continue to make a positive difference in their communities.

Social disadvantage, needs and problems include but are not limited to abuse, complex needs of high-risk groups, disability, family breakdown, homelessness, mental health, poverty, and substance abuse. Projects may seek solutions in many ways, for example, through arts, cultural, recreational and sporting activities; community and personal services; development of capacity in organisations; education and training; publication and dissemination of knowledge and information. The settings in which projects might be undertaken include schools, other educational organisations, employment and training services, prisons, juvenile justice services, specialised youth community services agencies, home-based settings, workplaces, and sports, recreation and social clubs.

Environmental needs include loss and degradation of habitat for at-risk and endangered indigenous species of fauna and of land supporting at-risk and endangered indigenous species of flora. The Trust supports the purchase of high conservation value land.

Grants up to \$5,000 are made to smaller community organisations for a range of purposes including collaboration or partnerships with others; equipment; funding to meet a gap between other sources of funds; marketing; premises; planning and review of operations; training; and volunteers.

Positive results are clearly the major objective of the Trust and in making their decisions, the Trustees' overarching focus is on the outcomes to be achieved by the grants. To find out what results have been achieved all grant recipients are required, as a condition of the grant, to submit a final report to the Trust. These reports are used to disseminate results more widely.

Each year the Trust considers making grants for some major projects which meet high priority needs. These grants are not open to general unsolicited application but are decided by the Trust through special grant processes.

Major projects may be selected by commissioning a special project from an individual organisation with special expertise, by inviting a limited number of organisations with expertise and interest to apply to undertake a special project or by inviting applications through public advertisement to undertake a special project defined by specified outcomes.

The current areas in which the Trust is supporting major projects are *Emergency Relief and Material aid for poverty alleviation and Early Intervention* - intervention both in the early years of childhood and early in the life course of an area of high social need.

To ensure that the Ross Trust Fellowship Program continues to meet the current and future needs of Pacific island nations, the Trustees commissioned a review of the Program in 2002. The independent reviewers claimed that The RE Ross Trust Fellowship Program was "*one of the Pacific's best kept secrets*" which has strengthened vocational education and training and made a significant contribution to individual development and nation building. The review highlighted the inherent value of the Program and identified opportunities for future growth and development. In 2003 the Trust will seek to develop the opportunities identified by the review and will continue striving to increase the benefits of the Program for countries of the Pacific Islands and East Timor.

Partnerships are important to the Trust which welcomes projects which involve or promote collaboration and partnerships between organisations. The Trust is willing to join with other donors and sponsors to support projects. An example of this is the Small Grants for Small Rural Communities Program where the Trust is collaborating with Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Perpetual Trustees and The Myer Foundation. This collaborative approach is designed to make better, targeted use of funds, improve access for rural and regional communities, provide a simpler application process and enhance efficiency and effectiveness for philanthropic trusts and foundations who wish to support small communities.

The Program makes small grants up to \$5,000 for projects and activities that offer clear public benefit for communities living in rural and remote locations in Australia with populations of 10,000 or less. The grants are aimed at contributing to their development in social and community welfare, economic, environmental, health, education or cultural areas.

PAST AND PRESENT TRUSTEES

Robert Paton Dalziel – <i>1st Chairman</i>	November 1970 to February 1978 (died)
John Dougan Brookes	November 1970 to January 1975 (resigned) and August 1988 to June 1997 (retired)
Gerald Hedley Fewster	November 1970 to November 1988 (retired)
John William Ramsay	November 1970 to July 1988 (died)
Herbert John Wagg	November 1970 to December 1995 (retired)
Alan William Hamer	October 1975 to September 1993 (retired)
Colin James Harper	April 1978 to date
James Kenneth Aitken	December 1988 to December 1997 (retired)
George Edwin Limb	October 1993 to date
Frank Harwood Osborn	June 1996 to date
Eda Natalie Ritchie	July 1997 to date
Ian Andrew Renard	January 1998 to date

PAST AND PRESENT EXECUTIVE STAFF

John S Hobbes, <i>Administrator</i>	September 1971 to July 1974 (died)
John William Ramsay	July 1974 to November 1987 (resigned)
Eric Walter Nevil Jackson, <i>Administrator</i>	December 1987 to January 1998 (retired)
David John Morris, <i>Administrator</i>	February 1998 to September 2000 (resigned)
Sylvia Joan Geddes, <i>Executive Officer</i>	October 2000 to date

