

24 October 2016

Australian Ethical members help choose recipients for \$260K in community grants

18 not-for-profit projects to receive funding from ethical wealth manager

Helping Indigenous Australians start their own business, saving marine life from plastic bag pollution, and protecting young women from sex trafficking are just some of the causes that will benefit from \$260,000 in community grants awarded by Australian Ethical this year.

Now in its 16th year and having distributed more than \$2 million, the community grants program was established to support local and international projects. In the coming weeks, the 18 selected organisations will receive funding of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 per project.

Australian Ethical's managing director, Phil Vernon, said, "The people who invest with us are supportive of our fundamental belief that investing can generate returns and do good, in ways that go beyond traditional financial measures. All of our investments and operations are governed by our ethical charter, and that's what drove us to establish the Community Grants program."

This is the first year that shareholders, employees, managed fund investors and super fund members were invited to vote on the recipients, with almost 2,300 votes cast.

"The community grants have always been a great way to engage our members and stakeholders, but now they have an even greater sense of involvement. It's also an effective way to get the stories behind these fantastic organisations out in front of a broader audience," Mr Vernon said.

Grants are awarded to a range of initiatives that benefit people, the planet and animals (see list below). One of the organisations is Enterprise Learning Projects (ELP) - a social enterprise that supports remote Aboriginal people to explore, develop and grow their business ideas. It received \$20,000 each for two separate initiatives – one to establish an op shop run by the Tramalla Women's Group, and another to set up Speargrass Bike Tours, co-created by Indigenous youth in the Katherine region.

Founder and CEO of ELP, Laura Egan, said; "We're thrilled to have the Ethical Super community join us in fostering grassroots enterprise in remote Australia! The Aboriginal communities we partner with are bursting to share their stories and their culture with wider Australia and the world. These grants will enable us to support them to do this through the creation of sustainable ventures."

Taronga's Wildlife Hospital will receive funding to run a campaign about the plight of marine turtles, discovering more about their distribution and the impact of plastic ingestion. The \$20,000 grant will help Taronga become a 'plastic bag free' community, inspiring over 750,000 annual visitors to take action in their personal lives and commit to ending their use of plastic bags.

Taronga CEO, Cameron Kerr, said; "Taronga is thrilled to be awarded an Australian Ethical Community Grant to support our Plastic Free Oceans campaign. Australians use more than 10 million plastic bags every day and an alarming number of these end up in our oceans where they can be ingested by turtles and other marine life. Here at Taronga's Wildlife Hospital we've treated over 350 marine turtles since 1984, many with plastic related injuries. This grant will go a long way towards encouraging the community to choose re-usable shopping bags and helping to keep our oceans plastic free."

Two organisations will receive three-year funding, thanks to the impact they had made since receiving last year’s grant, and one of these is Free To Shine, an Australian charity committed to breaking the cycle of sex trafficking in rural Cambodia.

CEO of Free To Shine, Nicky Mih, said; “We visit rural villages to meet with their leaders and officials and assess which families are most at risk of being targeted by traffickers. We then enrol these girls into a scholarship program where they receive uniforms, school resources and a dedicated Education Outreach Officer to visit them every month.”

Mr Vernon said “The variety of causes being funded by Australian Ethical’s Community Grants is testament to the innovative work being done in the not-for-profit sector.”.

“There are so many passionate people dedicating their vision, creative thinking and hard work to solving some of the toughest issues facing the planet and its people. Australian Ethical is proud to support these organisations through the Community Grants program.”

Go to <https://www.australianethical.com.au/community-grants-voting-2016/> for more details about the recipients listed below:

Australian Rainforest Foundation
Black Cockatoo
Centre for Compassionate Conservation
Days for Girls Australia
Enterprise Learning Projects
Green Connect
Motivation Australia
OzGreen
RSPCA QLD
Taronga Conservation Society
The Humanitarian Group
The Orangutan Foundation
Where Pigs Fly
Wildlife Asia
The Orangutan Project (three-year consecutive funding recipient)
Free to Shine (three-year consecutive funding recipient)

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About Australian Ethical

Australian Ethical is Australia's leading ethical wealth manager. Since 1986, Australian Ethical has provided investors with wealth management products that align with their values and without compromising returns. Investments are guided by the Australian Ethical Charter which both shapes its ethical approach, and underpins the Company's culture and vision.

Australian Ethical has approximately \$1.5 billion in funds under management, across superannuation and managed funds.

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