

The Felton Bequest

Granting Policy for the Second Century

The Felton Bequest was established in the Will of Alfred Felton in 1904. The Will directs that the income be divided equally between:

- the purchase of works of art for the purpose of donation to the National Gallery of Victoria; and
- charitable purposes in Victoria, with favourable consideration being given to:
 - 'charities for children, for example children's hospitals and orphanages';
 - 'charities for women such as women's hospitals';
 - 'institutions or societies such as general hospital societies for the relief of the educated poor and other charitable institutions of a general character'.

The Bequests' Committee was appointed in Alfred Felton's Will and is responsible for grant making. Hence, the Committee directs the Trustee (ANZ Executors & Trustee Company Limited) as to the distribution of funds. The Committee comprises one representative of the trustee company, one representative of the National Gallery of Victoria, and three individuals.

Vision

The Felton Bequest provides charitable grants to benefit the vulnerable and disadvantaged in Victoria. In accordance with the wishes in the Will, these grants provide particular benefit to women and children. Grants made by the Bequest provide charitable organisations with opportunities to explore how they can make a better contribution to their area of work and to society in general.

The Felton Bequests' Committee seeks out organisations with visionary leadership, which conduct projects that can have a catalytic effect, and projects that significantly improve practice and influence policy beyond the boundaries of the funded work. The Committee seeks to encourage organisations that contribute to solutions to complex contemporary problems.

In order to achieve its goals, the Felton Bequests' Committee works in partnership with not-for-profit organisations, governments, business and other charitable foundations. The development and preservation of these close relationships is considered crucial to effective work.

Charitable giving

As a means of enhancing the impact of grant making, the Committee has concentrated on funding flagship projects which respond to a needy group in society and an organisation committed to making improvements in outcomes for them. Flagship projects are

aimed at exploring new solutions to existing problems and hence more broadly, to contributing to social change and reform.

Flagship and other projects funded by the Bequest may be in the form of:

- a pilot that can supply evidence to government and other funders that there is merit - both in monetary and social terms - in a proven approach that has been trialled; or
- a new venture that could in the future tap into an available funding source but needs seed funding to gain momentum; or
- an undertaking that has the potential to become self-funding, but needs establishment funds in order to achieve critical mass. While flagship projects are a focused approach, the Committee strives for a balance with other projects that respond to immediate special need.

Sourcing projects

The Committee is open to applications for funding requests. The benefits of advertising for applications are:

- the Committee remains accessible to organisations that are responding to needs they have identified in the community;
- there is a formal and equitable channel through which new approaches can be brought to the attention of the Committee;
- the Committee can gain awareness about a range of different projects being conducted in the community;
- there is an opportunity to identify organisations working in spheres of interest; and
- there is an opportunity to assess projects against a broader context of need in the community.

The Committee remains available to approaches through its secretariat from applicants who believe they are conducting work that could bear the Felton stamp, and wish to involve the Bequest at the development stage of their proposal. Partnerships of this nature often come to fruition after a relationship with the organisation has already been developed through a smaller scale funded project.

Evaluation of charitable giving

The Felton Bequests' Committee periodically reflects on the results of its grant making strategy by allocating significant time in its calendar to:

- conduct conversations with prominent community members, charitable organisations, grant seekers;
- review and analyse reports on project outcomes; and

• analyse other feedback from grant recipients. In evaluating its results, the Felton Bequests' Committee considers the following:

- ability to leverage the grant to achieve outcomes beyond the direct funding;
- ability to generate momentum around a particular issue or cause;
- knowledge creation and acquisition;
- impact on the gap between existing knowledge and service delivery; and
- leadership and achievement of best practice in the charitable sector.

The Committee is always mindful of the small picture as well as the big picture, a balance between achievements in both arenas will factor into any evaluation.

Challenges for the second century

As the Bequest commences making gifts in its second century, some challenges remain and some new ones emerge:

- **Benefiting women and children**

To re-visit and re-examine the wishes of Alfred Felton with respect to benefiting women and children, with a particular focus on child welfare.

- **Balancing the needs of big and small**

Increased focus on the discretionary charitable half of the Bequest may result in the desire to tackle 'big picture' issues. It is important to preserve a balance between the issues that are at the forefront of social conscience and those that are often forgotten, sidelined, or too small to warrant significant attention.

- **The role of the charitable foundation**

There is a new dialogue surrounding what activities and purposes constitute charity. This creates a challenge as the Felton Bequest considers its engagement with, and contribution to, the evolving definitions of charity and philanthropy. The charitable work of the Bequest, in the context of a changing landscape of funding partnerships and relationships will need to be considered and addressed in order that charitable grants continue to have true leverage and longevity. As a participant in the ever-changing charitable landscape, The Felton Bequest recognises its role in defining and shaping the identity and character of philanthropy, and will from time to time add its voice to particular community issues. The Felton Bequest's willingness to embrace this role and to strive for best practice can only see the Bequest's contribution grow in its second Century of operation.