



SUBMISSION - WOMEN & WORK

A COLLABORATION

Between

The Australian Federal Government

& Community Foundations

Proposal

- (1) We invite the Australian Federal Government to work in partnership with Sydney Community Foundation (SCF), Melbourne's Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (LMCF) and Hands Across Canberra (HAC) to assist women in employment with a **\$5.5 million grant**;
- (2) That the collective of these charitable organisation's work as the distribution hub to worthy local not for profit organisations providing the program services;
- (3) That these funds be distributed as follows: **\$2m** for Sydney, **\$2m** for Melbourne, **\$1m** for Canberra and **\$500k** for overarching operations; and
- (4) Meet with us to hear further on our proposal and how this program will be delivered.

Introduction

This paper has been prepared by three of the nation's prominent independent community foundations – Melbourne's Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (LMCF), Sydney Community Foundation (SCF) and Hands Across Canberra (HAC).

It invites a collaboration with the Australian Government to use the expertise, community knowledge and deep connections of community foundations to develop and identify innovative, local programs in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, to enable women to enter and re-enter the workforce in accelerated numbers.

The programs will support women from a range of groups into supported employment and work in social enterprises. We will initially focus on unemployed young women, migrants and refugees, vulnerable women who have experienced family violence and women who have lost casual employment in the pandemic. We would also be open to including other vulnerable groups.



Situation

Coming into 2020, women in Australia already faced considerable economic disadvantage over their lifetime and were at greater risk of poverty and hardship through lack of economic independence.

The economic impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic has more severely impacted women in our society.

With a need for job creation and economic recovery, and women's unemployment increasing, government planning needs to include a focus on the women in Australia— especially as we know that when women have economic independence all of society and the economy benefits.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women is highlighted by:

- The fact that in Victoria four times as many women as men have been made redundant because of the casual nature of their work (The Age August 2020);
- Sydney Women's Fund 2018 Portrait Research told us 34% Women in Greater Sydney earned \$34,000 or less when widespread casual work was possible—demonstrating female vulnerability to the COVID-19 recession; and
- Wide reporting of the "Pink Recession." Pru Goward, former NSW Minister for Women and Family and Community Services wrote - *"With governments focused on infrastructure investment to stave off mass unemployment and lift productivity, there should also be serious thought given to using this investment to broaden the skilled worker opportunities for neglected sources of labour: women, Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities."* Goward, Melbourne Age August 2020

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented national health and economic emergency and we are now in great need of meaningful action to stimulate the Australian economy into recovery.

Women make up around half the Australian population yet are greatly underrepresented in our workforce. It is time to invest in women so they may be part of the solution for Australia's economic recovery and so they may have greater equality, and security in our society.

The Approach

Using our existing philanthropic infrastructure, we will work with the Federal Government to invite innovative proposals from a wide network of charities to increase the participation of women in employment.

A grant from the Federal Government of \$5.5 million would be dispersed via our collective of three organisations and be delivered in a nimble and impactful way to the not for profit and charitable organisations delivering services 'on the ground.'



The grant funds will be distributed as follows: \$2m for Melbourne, \$2m for Sydney, \$1m for Canberra and \$500k for overarching operations.

This initial funding will provide leverage for further philanthropic support from our networks in the philanthropic community.

With experience running Innovation Grants programs we will ensure that grants are distributed efficiently and where they will make the greatest impact.

The successful delivery of programs locally

Grants will be given to local programs that support women from a range of groups into supported employment and work in social enterprises. We will initially focus on unemployed young women, migrants and refugees, vulnerable women who have experienced family violence and women who have lost casual employment in the pandemic. We are open to including other vulnerable groups.

We believe this collaboration between government and our collective will be successful as:

- Together our three organisations have the right experience to deliver based on a range of existing programs developed and funded by each of us which have proven results in working at a community grassroots level.
- Our programs already support job readiness, job creation and accessing mainstream employment. We co-design programs in community that provide mentoring, life skills, how to manage money and belong in Australian life where women gain confidence and skills to enter and stay in the work force. Providing opportunities for women to create enterprises or reskilling to access employment is also critical to economic wellbeing.
- We have the ability to work at a local level which works best in providing the connection between employment for women and their ability to contribute best to their own security. We also understand the flow on effects for their families when we engage at that local level.
- At a time when immigration is likely to remain on hold, training and providing employment skills for women who have not worked, or are out of the workforce, will save on welfare and benefit the economy.
- Very simply it is also the right thing to do and will affect positive societal change.

Conclusion

We would be grateful to meet with you to co-design the detail of our proposal to ensure a program that meets the needs of Government and our local communities, and one that would be scaleable to other states and territories in future years.

We also have the networks to establish additional funding from the philanthropic community for this program to assist women to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.



Yours Sincerely,

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Attachment

Our Track Record – our quick response to COVID–19 and community need

- **Sydney Community Foundation (SCF)** surveyed 30 charity partners across Greater Sydney to uncover immediate relief needs during COVID-19 and funded \$365K in quick response grants. In addition, launched a Be Kind Sydney COVID-19 Appeal to raise \$1M from the community and philanthropic foundations, plus a further \$300K in program funding. Raised \$1.8M in the 2019-2020 year to fund and deliver grassroots programs.
- **Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund (LMCF)** grants from capital of \$242M and has granted \$1.7M to grassroots programs related to the impact of the pandemic including to COVID–19 medical research programs since May 2020. LMCF is maintaining granting levels in 2020/21 and has already attracted additional COVID-19 resilience funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation and other local donors through our end of financial year appeal.
- **Hands Across Canberra (HAC)**, the national capital's community foundation has a funding partnership with the ACT Government and is being called on for more funds to meet community need. During COVID-19, HAC surveyed 250 charities in Canberra region several times to assess and respond to the impact of COVID-19 and committed \$570k to 63 charities together with The Snow Foundation and John James Foundation.

An overview of community foundations and their purpose

- There is a network of 38 community foundations across Australia.
- Our purpose is to build stronger communities, to be there to provide relief funds in tough times and to inspire community to give to their own neighbourhoods and people. Our role is especially critical at times of disaster or emergency and other major social challenges.
- Internationally, community foundations work closely with national governments to distribute funds for shared purpose to alleviate poverty. The UK and Canada are close to their national governments as values social infrastructure.
- Community Foundations can provide unique oversight and due diligence. We are established with strong governance and deep knowledge of the charitable sector and local community needs. We have been able to respond with agility to COVID-19 to date and are working to support resilience and recovery with the infrastructure in place to scale this up.
- We are committed to inspiring community giving to meet relevant community need.
- Community Foundations are in a unique position between community, the major foundations, private philanthropists and Government with existing relationships to charities and not for profits.
- We can be effective in delivering funds to meet the national Government's agenda of more women in work, especially in skilled areas where there is a labour shortage.