THE SIDNEY MYER CENTENARY CELEBRATION
1899–1999
In 1899, Sidney Myer arrived in Melbourne as a young, penniless immigrant from Belarus. Throughout his lifetime as an Australian he built up a successful retailing business and became a leading citizen, philanthropist and patron of the arts. Upon his death he left part of his estate to be distributed to the “community in which I made my fortune”.

(Signature)
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In 1899, Sidney Myer migrated from Belarus to Australia, where he established a family, the Myer retail business and a leading philanthropic legacy.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of his arrival, in 1997 the Sidney Myer Fund, The Myer Foundation and the descendants of Sidney Myer proposed a four-year program of grants and activities called the Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899-1999. The concept was launched in April 1999.

The Centenary Celebration came at an important point in the history of Sidney Myer’s family and philanthropic legacy. My term as Chairman of Trustees was ending after nine years in the position and 43 years as a Trustee. Following a review, The Myer Foundation and the Sidney Myer Fund had adopted a new integrated organisational structure. Also, the fourth generation of the Myer family had emerged as a philanthropic force.

At a muster of the extended family in 1998, the younger generation demonstrated an awakening interest in philanthropy, following in the footsteps of Sidney Myer’s children and grandchildren. It was the first time the fourth generation had met to discuss their concerns about social and environmental issues.

In proposing the Centenary Celebration, third-generation member Rupert Myer was mindful of the value of engaging the whole family in the program and addressing some of their concerns and responding to community need.

In his 1997 proposal paper, Rupert suggested that the grants would:

- be visionary and have a lasting impact and benefit for the community and nation;
- be well justified and relevant to contemporary Australian society;
- be fresh initiatives that would seek effective solutions to current social issues; and
- broadly reflect the tradition of Myer family philanthropy.

With these characteristics in mind, between 1999 and 2003 a total of $16.9 million was distributed in Centenary Grants to 21 organisations. The source of the Centenary Grants was the Sidney Myer Fund, The Myer Foundation, the Myer Family Company Pty Ltd and individual family members.

The grants were divided into four main groups: arts infrastructure, innovative initiatives to address social concerns, responses to identified social need, and environmental innovation. The wisdom of adopting this type of program will be guided by a full evaluation of the Centenary Celebration. Meanwhile, anecdotal evidence suggests that all the objectives have been met across the projects.

In our quest to address areas of need such as poverty, disadvantage and environmental degradation, there has also been substantial impact through establishing major arts infrastructure in Victoria and the application of new ideas. We estimate that the program has already benefited Australia in the order of tens of millions of dollars.

Several celebratory activities beyond the grants program were held, including the building of a Habitat for Humanity house in Bendigo and the opening of the Spirit Country collection of Aboriginal art by the Fine Art Museum of San Francisco. The Sidney Myer Fund joined the Australian Multicultural Foundation to hold a Celebrating Immigration Ball at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, initiating a staff giving program and conducting a Back to Bendigo weekend where the Mayor of Krichev, in Belarus, joined the Mayor of Bendigo to acknowledge the contribution of one of Australia’s great immigrants.

The grants program could not have been achieved without the enthusiasm of the Sidney Myer Fund Trustees and Directors and Members of The Myer Foundation, and the staff, particularly Helen Morris. It was a major activity that was added to our regular grants program, so everyone chipped in. There was a sense of common purpose and a valuable chance for members to be involved more closely than usual with the community.

Most importantly, we thank the people and organisations that were able to use Sidney Myer’s legacy to such good effect. Without excellent organisations to come up with the good ideas, his legacy would have little impact.

The following report is a celebration of those organisations and their vision.

Baillieu Myer AC
Background
Founded in 1897, the Bendigo Art Gallery is today one of the most respected regional galleries in Australia and attracts visitors from all around the country. Its collections comprise Australian art from the 1850s to the present, including works from the Bendigo goldfields, and 19th-century European works. These treasures are housed within splendid Victorian interiors and exciting contemporary spaces.

In 1997, the gallery proposed the addition of a new wing to house more exhibition space, increased storage areas and a cafe. The project was seen as a fitting celebration of Sidney Myer’s life and work in Bendigo.

The gallery’s Australian collection comprises many works on paper. In the past, a lack of space in which to display these historic works meant that they had languished in storage for decades.

The Project
The Victorian Premier opened The Sidney Myer Work on Paper Gallery and Gallery Cafe in August 2001. Built from fine materials to elegant proportions, the gallery provides a dedicated display space for work on paper from the permanent collection of historic and contemporary works, and for touring exhibitions. With its excellent lighting and environmental controls, it can host quality exhibitions of local and national significance.

The Gallery Cafe added the final touch. Since it opened, The Sidney Myer Work on Paper Gallery has hosted 16 exhibitions, including the inaugural exhibition of 20th-century American prints, an exhibition by local photographers, an Aboriginal art exhibition and a display of Japanese woodblocks and Indian miniatures.

Additional storage space and the reconstruction of the loading bay have increased the capacity to store valuable works of art and also improved handling.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant of $1 million ensured a contribution of $644,187 from the City of Greater Bendigo. The Bendigo Art Gallery paid the balance. As a result of the project, gallery visitors in the financial year 2001-02 numbered 87,548 a 20 per cent rise over the previous year. The increase has translated into extra income not only from the cafe rental, but also from increased shop sales and donations through the entrance.

Impact
The new wing has firmly established the Bendigo Art Gallery as a venue of national significance. For the first time in its long history, the gallery has been able to create a dedicated display space for work on paper from the permanent collection. Staff can now invite the public to view this valued part of the collection.

One of the long-term benefits of the new exhibition space has been a work-on-paper conservation program to conserve, re-mount and re-frame work specifically for exhibitions. In the cafe, the high standard of food and service has attracted a new clientele to the gallery.

Confirmation of Bendigo’s pride in its new art space came in December 2002, when the gallery won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Regional Prize for Architecture.

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Brotherhood of St Laurence
Sidney Myer House

Background
The Brotherhood of St Laurence was established in 1930 by Father Tucker, a priest working in the poverty-stricken streets and lanes of Fitzroy, an inner Melbourne suburb. Today the organisation helps disadvantaged people by providing goods, services and shelter, speaking up on their behalf and working toward preventing poverty.

Recent years have seen the rental housing market disappear around Fitzroy, with very few affordable rooming houses for locals. Through its aged-housing program, the Brotherhood provides secure low-rent housing of a standard that otherwise would not be available to local people.

In 1999 the Brotherhood launched the “Building Better Lives Appeal” to strengthen its mission to improve the well-being of those on low incomes at a time of profound economic and social change. The appeal contained several projects, including upgrading and renovating two residential facilities, a hostel and a rooming house for aged citizens.

The Project
The Centenary Grant helped redevelop the two residences, one of which was named in honour of Sidney Myer (the other is known as Sumner House). The project began in October 1999 and the first residents moved into Sidney Myer House in February 2001.

Sidney Myer House is a high-quality residence for aged members of the local community. The initiative means that old people are no longer forced to move out of the area in which they have spent most of their lives.

The house currently has 15 elderly residents, most of whom are frail. Many also have psychiatric problems and alcohol and prescribed drug addictions. There is a long waiting list, with referrals coming from other aged-care agencies.

Each resident of Sidney Myer House has his or her own well-appointed room and private bathroom. They share dining and lounge facilities and use the on-site Coolibah Day Centre, where they can enjoy therapeutic recreation. Counsellors provide support on health, community and housing issues.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant of $1 million was core funding for the $7.2 million residential renovation and redevelopment. The Centenary Grant reinforced public attitude toward the Brotherhood and provided leadership for other philanthropists. Without doubt, it encouraged other trusts, foundations and governments to support the project and inspired individual donors and companies to make personal gifts.

The appeal was held during a period of enormous demand on public giving, the result of several major appeals being held simultaneously.

Impact
Sidney Myer House and Sumner House will have several long-term benefits. They will continue to provide housing for aged people on low incomes living in the Fitzroy area, reduce the long-term waiting period (up to ten years) for Ministry of Housing accommodation and improve the standard of rooming house accommodation.

The impact of Sidney Myer House on disadvantaged elderly people living in and around Fitzroy will unfold with time. For many residents, most of whom have led troubled lives, it is the first safe, warm and quality home they have experienced. The benefits of spending their final years in such a community are immeasurable.

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Background
While planning the Centenary Celebration in 1997, Myer Foundation members proposed the concept of a magical place where children could play and enjoy a hands-on arts experience. A proposal was put to the City of Melbourne to jointly devise and fund the enterprise in the central business district. In early 1999, Council found room for a unique child-oriented art space in an old railway building in the new Birrarung Marr parkland, on the Yarra River. The Myer Foundation and a Myer family representative joined early planning meetings and the design concept consultation phase. Meanwhile, Council staff travelled overseas to study similar spaces.

In August 2002, Council endorsed the concept of ArtPlay. They approved the work and agreed that ArtPlay would operate as a subsidised City of Melbourne owner-operated resource.

The Project
ArtPlay was conceived as a place of wonder and imagination where children and their families could experience artistic and cultural projects.

Based on the concept of *The Ark*, a children’s cultural centre in Dublin, ArtPlay will incorporate a special play space within the building, a garden filled with works of art and environmental features, and an open events area on the Yarra River, next to Melbourne’s Federation Square.

The original 1916 brick building was refurbished to provide a mezzanine workshop space, gallery and open performance installation space. A new amenities wing was added to house toilets, an office, kiosk and lift. Construction will be completed by the end of 2003.

In March 2003, a creative producer was employed to design workshops at which children can make individual artworks alongside professional artists. Programs will begin in February 2004.

Partnership
At the centre of ArtPlay lies the concept of partnership. Through an innovative partnership with the City of Melbourne, a process of collaboration with other cultural and community organisations and governments was initiated.

Long-term strategic partnerships, as well as one-off project grants and joint ventures, are being sought and offered. Organisations and festivals that form the backbone of cultural activity in Melbourne are being approached to consider working through the ArtPlay program with the youth of Victoria, 21 per cent of whom are aged under 14.

ArtPlay also offers opportunities for sponsorship of aspects of the centre’s arts activities and for the endowment of art works from private patrons. Its potential to enrich the aesthetic and cultural life of our children, and to ensure that such experience is not confined to those of privileged families, will ensure the project’s appeal to private and public donors.

Impact
The City of Melbourne conducted extensive research to document evidence of the long-term social benefits of arts initiatives.

*Champions of Change: The impact of the arts on learning*, a 1999 US report on seven major studies, provided new evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when children experience the arts first-hand. The report found that learning through the arts particularly helps youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also found that the arts were a key contributor to overall improved academic learning, and a medium for personal pleasure and growth of self-esteem in people of all ages.

ArtPlay is the new artistic ‘investment bank’ for children in Melbourne. The project will be a beacon for promoting high-quality arts experiences and fun for children from Melbourne and those visiting the city.

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Ecosystem services are the processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that comprise them, sustain and fulfil human life. Concern has been growing worldwide that because ecosystems are not recognised in traditional economic markets, their benefits to society are being overlooked.

In 1999, after discussions with The Myer Foundation, scientists at CSIRO, Australia’s leading scientific research organisation, proposed an innovative project that for the first time could put a value on how much a bit of Australia was worth in terms of the ecosystem services it provides. Thus for the first time it would be possible to measure the full range of benefits from nature when measuring the consequences of decisions about natural resource use.

This approach was considered risky for two reasons: the lack of knowledge about many ecosystem processes, and the involvement of scientists working with communities in non-traditional ways.

CSIRO rarely has the opportunity to undertake such adventurous projects without a funding partner, and at the time the project was outside the focus of traditional industry and government partners. The Centenary Grant gave CSIRO the chance to conduct rigorous research into how we relate to the ecosystems upon which we depend.

The Project

The project aimed to study the nature and value of ecosystem services provided by a selection of key Australian ecosystems, and to assess their consumption and economic value.
Research, communication and stakeholder networks were established, case studies set up, conceptual ecological models designed and a framework developed for interaction between ecologists, economists and community. The project partners developed an inventory of ecosystem services in the Goulburn Broken catchment in Victoria, and investigated relationships between ecosystem services and the resilience of social-ecological systems. Ecological and sociological models were tested and a broad communication program was undertaken to inform Australians about ecosystem services.

As a result, the project established a network of research links among research, land management and community organisations around Australia and overseas. Papers and workshops have been delivered on every continent and a book about ecosystem services in Australasia, drawing on the research network, is under way.

Components of the project have addressed diverse issues such as:

• the benefits of ecosystem services from a single-farm enterprise to the entire catchment economy in the Goulburn Broken catchment;
• interactions between grazing and ecosystem services of the mulga rangelands of NSW; and
• the role of rainforest insects in pollination, pest control and other services (and disservices) to agriculture on the Atherton Tableland in Queensland.

The project network has directly affected at least eight major additional studies of ecosystem services around Australia. The ideas generated have contributed to policy discussions at all levels of government across Australia.

**Partnership**

The Centenary Grant attracted support from CSIRO, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Land & Water Australia.

Through these partnerships, a much larger investment was made in broadening views of the environment. They also helped attract leading thinkers in natural and social science (The Myer Foundation name was a key factor in Land & Water Australia’s provision of funds).

The original project contributed greatly to dialogue around Australia, leading to a major focus by several governments on developing market-based instruments for managing ecosystem services.

Wide communication funded by the original project also attracted support for a follow-on markets project. It is estimated that the long-term financial effect of the Centenary initiative could be more than $20 million.

**Impact**

The project was responsible for a major and permanent change in the approach to the environment in Australia. Although our wellbeing depends on ecosystems, we also degrade them. The ecosystem services concept confronts this paradox. It has entered the vocabulary of agencies, land managers, catchment management authorities and politicians.

Key policymakers confirm that CSIRO raised their awareness of the concept. The project was, for example, directly responsible for ecosystem services becoming central to the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy.

While the ecosystem services concept is useful in understanding and managing the natural environment, it is only one approach among many. It remains to be seen how well it will work in a catchment where there is no agreement about issues and little willingness to test new concepts. With the success of the project, there is now an expectation that the new awareness about ecosystem services will lead to greater sustainability. But reversing ecosystem degradation will be a politico-economic process requiring changes in the distributions of benefits and costs across generations. CSIRO expects the ecosystem services concept to play an informing role in this process.

The concept is influencing the way we perceive the relationship between nature and development, and is encouraging investment in natural capital, markets for ecosystem services and related research. Public reluctance to bear the cost of maintaining natural capital, however, shows the need for frequent restatement of the concept before real
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
$3.4 million

CENTENARY GRANT  
$100,000

PARTNERSHIP  
Victorian Government
Trusts and Foundations

African Dambai (Sudanese dancers), Africa Day Music Hive at Footscray Community Arts Centre. Photo by Andrew Green

Footscray Community Arts Centre
New Performance Space

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Background

Footscray is an industrial area in Melbourne’s west and the home of people from many lands who have brought a rich cultural legacy.

Owing to lower income levels in the past, the region has had few arts organisations and little infrastructure. Since 1972, Footscray Community Arts Centre has been transforming a derelict scrap yard into a thriving arts complex. But the pressure of numbers and use highlighted the need for a larger, more sophisticated venue to expand the program and attract new audiences.

The new performance space project came from well-established principles of community participation – this was not a process of dropping a building into a void and hoping it would connect with the community. The centre already had a 29-year history of fostering people’s enthusiasm for creative expression.

The Project

A sum of $3.4 million has been secured to build a 250-seat performance space as part of the Footscray Community Arts Centre complex on the Maribyrnong River. The technically well-equipped theatre will connect through a large foyer to heritage Henderson House and open onto a grassed area overlooking the river.

After delays due to planning issues, the centre received a permit for the performance space in August 2003. Work will begin in 2004 following
a major clean-up of the site.

**Partnership**

Philanthropic grants were critical to the success of the campaign. Despite the enormous community benefit delivered, the corporate sector has not been prepared to make the same contribution.

Contributions have come from the Victorian Government, the City of Maribyrnong, philanthropy, unions and fundraising by local business and the community.

**Impact**

The new performance space will allow the community-owned arts sector to consolidate and expand, sending out the message that community building through the arts is valued.

The centre’s social benefits include greater community identity, cooperation and tolerance. Among the personal and economic benefits are skills development, employment and improved amenities.

With more openings for involvement in the arts, young people will become major beneficiaries. In the long term, the centre should begin to have a positive effect on some of the region’s high numbers of unemployed and socially excluded.

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**Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal**

New National Foundation

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**TOTAL PROJECT COST**
$1.6 million (development phase 2002-03)

**CENTENARY GRANT**
$1 million

**PARTNERSHIP**
Commonwealth Government
ANZ Bank
The Pratt Foundation
Background

Australians have a special love of rural communities and those at the country’s economic and cultural heart.

In the latter half of the 1990s, however, there was national concern about the economic and social decline in many rural areas. In deciding on the most effective way to address the crisis, the Sidney Myer Fund Trustees envisaged a project that would strengthen the capacity of rural and regional communities to survive and prosper. Through Sidney Myer’s historical link with rural Australia in Bendigo, it was considered important that the Centenary Celebration would act on the needs of country people.

A proposal was adopted to establish a new organisation that would enable rural people to initiate their own change. It was the beginning of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR).

A national planning workshop, convened in 1999 and supported by the Deputy Prime Minister, concluded there was a need for an independent foundation for rural communities.

At the Regional Australia Summit in 1999, the Commonwealth Government accepted the challenge. The summit communiqué recognised the ‘opportunity for philanthropy to take a strategic role in enhancing the natural and human assets of regional Australia for community and economic development’.

During the summit, the Prime Minister announced his government’s decision to support FRRR through a $10.7 million grant in 2000 and a further $3.8 million as an incentive to raise further capital up until 2009.

The Project

In 1999, FRRR was incorporated and awarded charitable status.

The organisation today boasts an eminent Board of Directors and a growing reputation for excellence and innovative funding programs. FRRR created a permanent home in Bendigo in 2001 and now has an established grants program and active partnerships in local communities, both at the grassroots level and within the philanthropic, business and government sectors.

Since its inception, FRRR has supported 234 rural projects, allocating $3.5 million in rural grants and launching a community report detailing its work.

FRRR has instigated a new movement in Australia that brings philanthropy to rural development through a program of fostering rural community foundations. In 2000, it helped establish the first rural community foundation in Australia. In the following three years, it gave set up grants to some 25 new foundations, many of which have already accumulated capital funds and have grants programs under way.

Partnership

As the initial grant was not tied to any particular purpose other than the general
intent of establishing the Foundation, the project had necessary flexibility. Also invaluable was the direct support of the broader Myer family organisation, especially its financial management, governance, accommodation and advice.

The Centenary Grant provided direct financial leverage of $14.3 million from the Commonwealth Government, $1 million from ANZ Trustees, $1 million from The Pratt Foundation and a number of smaller grants.

FRRR works in partnership with other organisations, complementing initiatives and avoiding duplication. The partnership approach has proved successful in working with communities, other philanthropic bodies and governments. FRRR’s stature as a credible funding source to rural and regional Australia has been well established. Its expertise in offering specialist services on behalf of others has been demonstrated in programs such as Small Grants for Small Rural Communities, a model that distributes rural funds on behalf of other foundations.

Impact
Encouraging balanced development across Australia and not just in the major cities is an important national challenge. Although the current drought has seriously hurt many individuals and communities, FRRR has promoted the development of programs that will benefit rural, remote and regional communities across the country for the long term.

With growing recognition and innovative fundraising, FRRR will have the capacity to ride economic troughs and help country communities survive the hard times. In the future, the growth of community foundations will be felt not only in the growth of the organisation’s capital fund but also in the rise of rural philanthropy.

A significant effect of the FRRR project was the acceptance of a rural development program as a tax-deductible cause, offering long-term opportunities for philanthropy to grow as a force for rural revitalisation and hope.

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Background

The Breakthrough Youth Employment Initiative is a national employment program that aims to create jobs for young people excluded from the job market. It was initiated in partnership with The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA).

Breakthrough supports projects that create important jobs for young people, particularly rural youth experiencing long-term unemployment. A primary aim is to encourage youth enterprise so that young people in areas of low employment can develop the capacity to create their own work.

The program also helps young people deal with challenges such as homelessness, involvement in the juvenile justice system, violence, substance abuse, mental illness, early school leaving and disability.

In 1999 a national advertising campaign called for proposals. Six were selected and each was given $250,000 to transform their proposal into an operating business. Each progressed at their own pace, but all met annually to reflect on Breakthrough’s aims as a national initiative.

The Project

Following are the five projects selected (one withdrew due to its inability to fulfil its objectives):

**On the Rails**

*Port Pirie Regional Council*

Two skills training centres were established to become profitable businesses and help participants create and manage personal, business, work and community opportunities.

The first initiative was a restaurant, The Junction Express. Located in a train at Port Pirie station, the restaurant has employed and trained 20 young people and involved 50 volunteers. The business is doing well and has attracted good local support. Income surpasses expenditure and capital spending is now complete.

The second initiative was Horticentre, a horticulture business at Peterborough that has involved 36 young people as
Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships
New Economic Support Organisation for Indigenous People

Background
Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships (IEP) was established in 1999 after several years of planning. Underpinning its creation was the aim of helping indigenous communities break from welfare dependency and to participate directly in what founding director Noel Pearson calls the “real economy”. The Centenary Grant supported this aim.

Cape York was selected as a pilot region, but the program’s partnership principles have broader application. IEP now comprises several core partners, including The Body Shop, Westpac, The Boston Consulting Group, Colonial Foundation, Gilbert & Tobin, Designworks, plus many small and medium businesses, industry experts and philanthropists.

IEP has established an innovative and effective platform for engaging with Aboriginal communities. It delivers experts, networks and personnel directly into projects and programs developed and implemented by Aboriginal organisations and leaders, ensuring Aboriginal control, leadership and responsibility for all activity. Key Aboriginal partner organisations include Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and Cape York Partnerships Office.

The Project
The Centenary Grant helped IEP become operational at a critical period in its life. An office with a chief executive officer and assistant was established in Cairns within the offices of Balkanu, thereby ensuring that resources are matched to demand and that the partnership works effectively for all.

IEP does not require a large staff. Its role is that of catalyst and network, with participating Aboriginal organisations performing its operational work. IEP prides itself as being one of the most cost-efficient organisations in the country.

The partnership of IEP and Cape York Aboriginal organisations involves a long-term commitment by community organisations, businesses and philanthropy. Rather than deliver programs independently, they form a structured relationship with indigenous organisations led by indigenous people.

The partnership involves a range of practices that use a holistic and coordinated approach to current issues in the Cape. Various collaborative mechanisms have been explored, such as secondments of business participants to Cape York organisations and, in reverse, fellowship programs, project management, pro bono advice, mentoring and coaching for senior managers and business aspirants.

The production and sale of Cape York products, the introduction of short-term specialised skills injection and provision of logistical support have also been trialled. Resources are delivered into cornerstone projects such as the Balkanu Business Hubs, The Family Income Management program, Boys from the Bush (a crime-prevention program) and The Cape York Youth Network. Each year several hundred people are placed in the projects and programs or help in their running.
Partnership
IEP believes that the Centenary Grant was crucial to the development of a significant corporate and philanthropic enterprise.

Major areas of opportunity still need attention, such as the building industry, information technology and access to capital. Meanwhile, IEP’s partnership with government continues to strengthen and grow. The current contribution from the various partners is estimated to be worth more than $10 million a year on a commercial basis.

The tripartite arrangement with philanthropy, corporations and community has been crucial to the success enjoyed to date. The coalition represents one of the largest and most cohesive ever attempted in Australia.

IEP brings skills, expertise and networks previously unavailable to most Aboriginal people – resources that are helping to confront Australia’s most pressing social issue: poverty and welfare dependency and the resulting grog epidemic gripping Aboriginal Australia.

As a result of the funding, IEP has been influential in securing millions of dollars of government and philanthropic funding for Aboriginal initiatives.

Impact
In helping IEP become operational, the Centenary Grant has enabled IEP to influence:

- **government** policy by directly embracing a partnership approach to action in indigenous policy throughout the Cape;
- **Cape York indigenous communities** through direct injection of advice and resources into projects run by indigenous people;
- **community** participants by allowing Balkanu and other Aboriginal organisations to increase their activities and improve staff skills and performance in support of economic development; and
- **business participants** through a boost to staff morale, performance and commitment as a result of their company’s community contribution.

IEP has demonstrated that enterprise is a viable alternative to welfare dependency, and that it builds the credibility of community participants with government and philanthropists by increasing their support.

The capacity of Aboriginal organisations to manage IEP resources efficiently and effectively is paramount to its operations. The Centenary Grant, along with other philanthropic and corporate support, has given IEP the chance to lead the way.

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Casper and the Boys from the Bush, Cape York
Background
In the late 1920s, the Animal Welfare League of Victoria established a clinic to provide veterinary care to animals owned by people unable to pay full fees, and improve the welfare of many stray and neglected animals.

In 1935, the league set up the Lort Smith Animal Hospital in North Melbourne. The hospital today provides free and reduced-fee veterinary care, particularly to those animals belonging to people on low incomes. It also rescues sick or injured stray animals and provides rescue-and-treatment services for wildlife. Homeless dogs and cats are sold after they have been de-sexed and vaccinated.

The hospital has always managed without any support from governments, instead relying on volunteers and private and corporate donations.

An appeal was launched in 1999 to build a new hospital that would deal with the urgent need for additional space and upgraded facilities to bring it into line with contemporary veterinary practices.

The Project
The Centenary Grant went towards the cost of building and fitting out the foyer in the new hospital.

The Sidney Myer Foyer is a spacious central area where owners receive assistance and wait for their animals to be given veterinary attention. It boasts a warm and accessible atmosphere and serves as a source of information for pet owners by offering brochures and video displays on animal welfare.

Opened in November 2000, the new three-storey hospital comprises consulting suites, operating theatres, treatment areas, intensive care and isolation wards, quarantine, pharmacy, wildlife shelter and administration areas.

Partnership
As animal welfare is not regarded as ‘charitable’ in Australian tax law, the Lort Smith Animal Hospital has great difficulty in attracting donations from many foundations. Significantly, the Centenary Grant was one of the few grants it received from philanthropic foundations, indicating support for the concept that animal welfare is linked to our wellbeing.

Impact
The Centenary Grant will have a long-term impact, not only on the welfare of animals in Victoria, but also on the understanding of the importance of the relationship between animals and people.

In providing low-cost or free care to the animals of pensioners and people on low incomes, the hospital is supporting the benefits of pet ownership for all. Ample research demonstrates the importance of animals to those who are aged, disabled or isolated.

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Melbourne Affordable Housing
Youth Transitions Model Housing Project

Background
One of the major barriers facing homeless young people living in Melbourne’s central business district (CBD) has been the lack of a collaborative, coordinated approach to the provision of services.

In 1999, discussions were held with the City of Melbourne, Melbourne Affordable Housing, Collins Street Baptist Church and the Salvation Army, the Youth Transitions model was born and a project team formed.

Its purpose was to research and design a new program that would create an integrated support, housing and training network to help young people out of homelessness. As a starting point for the concept, a team member visited Europe to study the Foyer model of youth housing.

In 2000, the team developed and documented the concept. One component of the model was the construction of a new housing and training centre at 116 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, which became a key part of the Melbourne CBD network of services available to the program.

The Project
Youth Transitions is a new way of thinking about services offering young people in the Melbourne CBD a genuine way out of homelessness. It involves all relevant agencies working with those young people.

Melbourne City Mission was appointed lead agency. A project coordinator manages the program and undertakes community development activities to ensure coordination between participating agencies. These activities include education and training, work preparation, personal development and recreational activities.

Two case managers will soon be employed to provide participants with goal-based support. A house mentor, who will also begin work before the first intake of residents, will be responsible for managing the house and providing pastoral care.

The system includes protocols to ensure active participation of networked agencies and a formal agreement for the three major agencies: Melbourne Affordable Housing (property manager), Melbourne City Mission and Urban Seed (co-tenant, pastoral care and house management).

The housing and training centre in Little Bourke Street comprises four floors of accommodation for young people and the house mentor. The ground floor is used as an urban classroom.

Partnership
The advantage achieved by the Centenary Grant has been in the form of capital funds and, importantly, in practical support. Of the $1 million committed, $328,000 was earmarked for the refurbishment of 116 Little Bourke Street.

The money helped obtain $870,199 from the Department of Human Services (Office of Housing) and $250,000 from the Lions Club (Melbourne host), and provided the catalyst for the trustees of 116 Little Bourke Street, Gospel Hall Inc., to donate the building to the project.

Melbourne City Council also agreed to contribute $50,000.

Without the Centenary Grant the project would not have been established.

In anticipation of Myer funding for the support component, the project committee approached the Department of Human Services for matching funds.

The department has now committed

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<th>TOTAL PROJECT COST</th>
<th>CENTENARY GRANT</th>
<th>PARTNERSHIP</th>
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<tr>
<td>$2.69 million</td>
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<td>City of Melbourne</td>
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<td>Melbourne Affordable Housing</td>
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<td>Youth Transitions Model Housing Project</td>
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View from 116 Little Bourke Street
Background
For decades, the elephant enclosure at the Melbourne Zoo was inadequate for such large and socially complex animals. Contemporary understanding of elephants’ needs demanded a total revision of their habitat.

Built in 2002, the exhibit provided room for the elephants to wander and group as they would in the wild. It includes interpretive and conservation elements conveyed through signs, plants, structures and multimedia.

Trail of the Elephants was launched in March 2003.

The Project
The Centenary Grant was for the educational program of Trail of the Elephants.

The Melbourne Zoo’s general educational program spans the entire project, but specific elephant elements were developed for three locations on the Trail:
• The Research Hut, where visitors can play interactive games.
• The Make a Difference Hut, where a touch screen allows people to learn about the Melbourne Zoo’s conservation projects, especially Sumatran elephant conservation.
• The Community Hall, where a screen allows visitors to select information on elephant conservation, news flashes and a schools program.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant enabled the Melbourne Zoo to demonstrate to potential supporters the benefits of philanthropy. Other organisations followed by supporting educational and community programs, based largely on what they have seen at Trail of the Elephants. With several key projects and exhibits soon to be implemented across its three properties, the Melbourne Zoo will use Trail of the Elephants as an example of what can be achieved.

Impact
Foundation funds allowed the Melbourne Zoo to implement projects that otherwise would not be possible, such as tailored technology-based interactive learning. The project’s interactive elephant games have been so successful they are now sold through retail outlets.

Trail of the Elephants is the first exhibit completed in line with a vision for zoos of the 21st century. Already the Melbourne Zoo has received valuable feedback, which will be used in planning for future projects. The new standard of experience will not only enhance understanding of the value of wildlife and the environment, but also encourage action.

The Melbourne Zoo’s vision is to create enduring relationships between people and wildlife. The Trail is the first step toward that goal.

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Museum of Contemporary Art
Director’s Visionaries Project

Background
The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney is a vibrant centre for the promotion of contemporary art and visual culture. It engages audiences with new ideas in art through imaginative exhibitions, screenings, public forums, debates, educational projects, events and the inventive use of new technology.

In 2000, the Director’s Visionaries project was launched. It was a catalyst in negotiations with the New South Wales Government and the City of Sydney for a new funding model.

Partnership
Using the Centenary Grant in 1999 to demonstrate to the NSW Government that philanthropy had confidence in its future, in 2000 the MCA was able to acquire $400,000 in additional donations. The grant came at a time when most sponsorship was committed to the Olympic Games. In early 2000, the Premier of New South Wales gave a commitment to securing a new partnership that would ensure a sustainable future for the MCA.

The new funding model was realised in July 2001, when the Government announced that it would provide recurrent and capital funding. The commitment established a long-term future for the institution.

In December 2001, the MCA announced a collaboration between the NSW Ministry for the Arts, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and the University of Sydney for long-term funding. The MCA also became an independent charitable organisation, allowing it to attract private donations.

Impact
The impact of the Centenary Grant has been significant. The financial stability provided by the new funding model is now beginning to pay dividends, with the MCA planning major projects well into the future and attracting new donors.

A key aim was to develop new and broader audiences for contemporary art. Following support from leading sponsor Telstra, the first step was taken in 2000 with the removal of the admission charge. Since then, attendances have risen by 153 per cent and continue to rise.

As well as attracting more visitors to Circular Quay, the MCA has initiated a new regional touring program. In 2002, 116,000 people attended MCA touring exhibitions.

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Museum Victoria
The Sidney Myer Amphitheatre

Background
Museum Victoria is responsible for the care of the state’s collections, research and public education. It operates three public campuses and one of Australia’s major educational and research-based websites.

In 2001 the Melbourne Museum moved to a large new building in the Carlton Gardens, on the central business district’s northern fringe. The site includes a Children’s Museum consisting of four spaces: an exhibition gallery called Big Box, Children’s Gallery, the Sidney Myer Amphitheatre and the Tattersall’s Children’s Garden.

The Centenary Grant was used to build the amphitheatre. Work was completed in October 2001.

The Project
The project was to design and build an amphitheatre for outdoor performance in a courtyard next to the Children’s Museum. The work involved the installation of a tensile roof canopy, a universal access viewing platform overlooking the amphitheatre, seats, an enclosed sound- and-light control facility, and a stage.

The intimate space can seat 200 people and opens out onto Carlton Gardens for larger events. Since its completion, the Sidney Myer Amphitheatre has been used regularly for education and visitor programs, concerts and other performances.

Impact
Without the Centenary Grant the Amphitheatre would be an open space without a canopy, sound system, safety rails and viewing area.

Transformed from a bare concreted area, the attractive and fully equipped amphitheatre is now an important element of the Melbourne Museum. Outside organisations can also hire the space, bringing the Museum much-needed revenue. The Museum aims to keep entrance charges low and, ultimately, to eliminate fees altogether.

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National Gallery Victoria

The Myer Family Gallery

Background
In 1996, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) completed a master plan for the redevelopment of its building on St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

Part of the plan addressed the NGV’s highly regarded Asian collection and, given Australia’s position within the region, the role it should play in the development of Asian art.

As a result, four gallery spaces around one of the courtyards in the new-look NGV International site were built to display the Asian collection. The remainder of the collections will be presented in a chronological fashion from ground floor to level three.

Construction began in early 1998 and the first display will be installed in time for the gallery’s re-opening in December 2003.

The Project
NGV has named Asian Gallery Two in honour of the Myer family. The gallery occupies 463 square metres and has been designed specifically to hold temporary exhibitions of Asian domestic ware.

The new space will return Asian collections to the heart of NGV displays. It will be an ideal setting for small and intimate objects, such as Chinese stoneware and porcelains dating from the third century to the 18th century. The first section will exhibit stoneware and from the third century to the 14th century, and the second will display porcelains produced in the 14th and 18th centuries.

At the centre of the gallery will be a small area displaying furniture. For the opening of NGV International, a Chinese scholar’s study will be recreated with furniture from the Ming Dynasty. The space will also display recent acquisitions of Asian art and present public programs and demonstrations.

The gallery will contain many important objects donated by Kenneth Myer and Baillieu Myer, thus reinforcing the family association with the space.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant was an important contribution to the cost of the building. The sources of the Grant included the Sarah and Baillieu Myer Family Foundation and Rupert and Annabel Myer.

The Centenary Grant formed part of the initial commitments to The Gallery Campaign, launched by the NGV in October 2000. The Victorian Government contributed $96.3 million, the Commonwealth Government $25 million and The Ian Potter Foundation $15 million.

The early involvement of the Sidney Myer Fund sent a strong message to the community and was undoubtedly influential in encouraging other individuals and trusts in their support.

Impact
The redesign and expansion of the NGV’s infrastructure, content, programs and technology will make it one of the great galleries of the world.

Asian art is a significant part of the NGV’s collections and gives an important balance to the whole of its international galleries. The new Asian galleries will allow comprehensive and exciting exhibits of the permanent collection to be displayed.

The finest lighting and atmospheric controls will enable fragile material to come into public view for the first time, and the increase in depth and attraction of the collection will create greater public interest in Asian art. With the growing importance of Australia within the region, the language of art and culture expressed through the Myer Family Gallery will be a valuable medium of communication and understanding between Australia and Asia.

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Ming dynasty, Wanli period 1573-1620
Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province
Felton Bequest 1946

TOTAL PROJECT COST | CENTENARY GRANT | PARTNERSHIP
$200 million | $1 million | Commonwealth Government
Victoria Government
The Ian Potter Foundation
Corporations, Trusts and Foundations
Public Donations
Background

A National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) was a long-held dream of circus artists and arts patrons in Australia. It was well known that the circus in countries such as Canada, Russia and France had not only enriched cultural life, but also influenced the local economy and provided skilled employment for many people. Australia had a growing tradition of excellence in circus arts, but had little support for training and promotion of circus arts infrastructure. The Sidney Myer Fund has been a long-time supporter of the circus as an accessible art form.

The Centenary Grant acted as a catalyst, contributing to the initiation and establishment of the new national circus-training organisation, specifically a new training centre to house the national circus school, subsequently named the Sidney Myer Circus Studio.

The Project

The Sidney Myer Circus Studio was built on the Prahran campus of Swinburne University of Technology.

The purpose-built training centre, which houses both NICA and Gymnastics Victoria, allows students to learn a wide range of circus skills, including tumbling, adagio and juggling. Its 14m ceiling also allows training in trapeze, tissue and cloud swing.

The building’s bold and powerful shape, with its deep columns and cross-bracing, contrasting with continuous horizontal bands of louvre windows, creates a taut, athletic form, perfect for its purpose as a training ground for young performers.

Partnership

The total cost of the shared facility was $6 million: the Victorian Government contributed $3 million, Swinburne University $1.9 million and the Centenary Grant $500,000. Corporate and private donations made up the balance.

The Centenary Grant was pivotal to the establishment of NICA. While the donation was tagged to support the
establishment of a training facility, it demonstrated to governments that training for contemporary circus arts was a worthwhile activity.

In profiling such a significant grant, NICA was able to attract recurrent operational funds from the Commonwealth Government and partnership with Gymnastics Victoria.

Support from other foundations and private donors followed. In May 2000, the Commonwealth Government announced that Australia was to have a new funded training centre for world-competitive circus artists. A vocational degree was accredited by Swinburne University and talented young people were auditioned and enrolled. Staff were recruited around the world and in 2001 the first Bachelor of Circus Arts students began study.

**Impact**

The National Institute of Circus Arts is Australia’s first centre of teaching excellence for professional training in contemporary circus arts and physical theatre.

In the three years since it was established, it has also developed community programs for children and teenagers, outreach programs for indigenous Australians and training programs for industry.

The Sidney Myer Circus Studio is a studio of innovation that nurtures and extends young talent. It has the capacity to make a difference to the Australian artistic landscape and further enhance our reputation in the physical arts, both in Australia and abroad.

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Playbox Malthouse (Ngargee)
Sidney Myer Courtyard

Background
In 1985, Melbourne’s Playbox Theatre Company began negotiating with Carlton and United Breweries for the donation of its abandoned malthouse in Sturt Street, Southbank. At the same time, plans were put in place for the building’s renovation and conversion to the theatre company’s new home.

With the launch of the new theatre, the Malthouse, Playbox adopted a 100 per cent Australian content policy, an aim it achieved during its inaugural season in 1990. The company also decided that hirers of the theatre should be encouraged to program only new works in drama, dance, music and opera.

So, for the first time, Melbourne had a major performing arts building that focused on the presentation of a contemporary program.

In 1996, Playbox Theatre, Chunky Move and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) made an unusual and inspired agreement to build a shared venue for performance and exhibition.

The Project
The stunning Ngargee development is a multi-function arts complex next door to the Playbox Theatre.

It comprises galleries for ACCA, a new set construction workshop for Playbox and rehearsal rooms and home base for the Chunky Move dance company. The striking exterior of the building is clad in special steel that develops its own protective rust coating after exposure to the elements.

The Sidney Myer Courtyard is an outdoor space alongside the building, with an amphitheatre that has proved popular for performances and exhibitions. Ngargee is a Bunnerong word that describes Aboriginal people gathering to celebrate with story, song and dance. The name honours the history of place and reflects the new centre’s purpose.

With the opening of the building in September 2002, Melbourne now celebrates an excellent multidisciplinary arts precinct catering to contemporary visual arts, theatre and dance.
Partnership
The project was an initiative of the Victorian Government. The Centenary Grant demonstrated community and philanthropic interest in creating this vital contemporary arts precinct, and came at a critical time in the process of fundraising and attracting further government support.

Impact
Ngargee is the first arts precinct to bring together three key contemporary arts organisations in theatre, dance and the visual arts.

It completes the southern end of the arts precinct that embraces several of Victoria’s major arts institutions. It has also become a tourist destination and a community gathering space for neighbouring residences.

The new premises have already given the three companies a financial advantage through affordable public-access programs and rental of rehearsal rooms and function spaces. Increases in the home-based season could also generate further revenue. Ngargee also provides support services for others. The Sidney Myer Courtyard is leased regularly as an ambient space for exhibits and performances. ACCA is now able to host exhibitions from a range of leading visual arts organisations from Australia and overseas.

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Queensland Art Gallery
The Kenneth and Yasuko Myer Collection of Contemporary Asian Art

Background
Queensland Art Gallery is home to one of the world’s most significant public collections of contemporary Asian art.

The gallery’s commitment to collecting the finest Asian contemporary art was confirmed in 1993, when it established the Kenneth and Yasuko Myer Collection of Contemporary Asian Art (The Myer Collection).

The catalyst was the gallery’s first Asia-Pacific Triennial, held in the same year. Thirty-three works from Asia and the Pacific were acquired from the inaugural triennial, including several Asian works bought with funds from The Myer Foundation and Michael Baevski and Ann Gamble Myer. The purchase inaugurated the collection in memory of the late Kenneth Myer, and his wife, Yasuko.

The Project
The Centenary Grant of $2 million was used to acquire works for the Kenneth and Yasuko Myer Collection of Contemporary Asian Art: $1 million came from The Myer Foundation and $1 million was pledged by Michael Baevski.

Two gallery spaces were named The Kenneth and Yasuko Myer Galleries and were dedicated to the display of contemporary Asian art. During the four years of the Centenary Grant, the galleries acquired an extraordinary collection that will provide a lasting legacy of the Myer commitment to broadening Australian knowledge of Asian art.

The spaces have housed key displays such as the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art and rotations of contemporary Asian art. The remainder of the grant will be used to develop the collection.

The Myer Collection will be a highlight at the opening in 2005 of a major extension to the gallery, the new Queensland Gallery of Modern Art.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant was one of the most important benefactions ever received by the Queensland Art Gallery.

The Myer Collection acquired key works that showcase the remarkable wealth of ideas and innovation among artists throughout Asia. Of the $1 million, $962,812 was spent on 14 major acquisitions, including the spectacular work by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, *Soul Under the Moon* (2002).

While the triennials have given the gallery a framework for exhibiting the region’s dynamic contemporary art, the Myer Collection has allowed the gallery to build on its already substantial collection of prints, drawings...
and photographs from Japan, East Asia and Southeast Asia. The Myer Collection now numbers 43 works, which form the core of the contemporary Asian collection.

**Impact**

The grant has enabled Queensland Art Gallery to acquire works that would otherwise have been unattainable. The works augment the collection, which lies at the heart of the gallery’s contemporary Asian collection. The collection is now internationally significant, ensuring a profile of unique value to the cultural life of Australians. It has also been pivotal in establishing the gallery’s status as a world leader for the collection and display of contemporary Asian art and has attracted significant gifts from artists and collectors.

It is anticipated that the impetus will continue in the future. The collection now holds seminal works such as *A Book from the Sky*, by the Chinese-American artist Xu Bing; *Woods III*, by Japanese artist Shigeo Toya; *Lotus Sound*, by Thailand’s Montien Boonma; and *In Search of Faraway Places*, by Malaysian artist Wong Hoy Cheong. The Centenary Grant has paid for several significant Myer acquisitions.

*Woman with Lotus Flower* (1998), by Indian artist Ravinder Reddy, celebrates the rich sculptural tradition of India. Korean born Nam June Paik has 11 works in the collection. Paik is a significant 20th century artist whose substantial presence in the gallery ensures that it is the leading institution holding work of this calibre and depth.

In 1998 the gallery acquired a large painting by acclaimed Japanese-Korean artist Lee U-fan, and in 2002 purchased his sculpture *Relatum*, prompting the artist to present two works to the collection, making it the sole national institution to represent his work.

The gallery also holds four important works by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, two of which were acquired using the Centenary Grant.

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ROYAL MELBOURNE HOSPITAL
EDUCATION CENTRE AND SIDNEY MYER LOUNGE

Background
Through a dedicated workforce skilled in patient care, teaching, research, community health, education and resource management, the Royal Melbourne Hospital provides health services to all those seeking care.

For many years, the hospital lacked a multi-purpose space that could accommodate the increasing need for staff and community activities. The development of a centre of learning was included in a 1999 plan to upgrade facilities on the ground floor of the hospital building.

Traditionally, the hospital has had close links with the Myer family, particularly through Dame Merlyn Myer’s years of service on the hospital board and as a donor.

The Project
The Education Centre area funded by the Centenary Grant houses a large conference space that can be divided into smaller rooms and four additional breakout rooms. It has a lounge area that can be used for functions and events and allows direct access to the existing Latrobe Theatre.

Partnership
The Education Centre is a functional and professional area that hosts events, seminars and exhibitions. The Sidney Myer Lounge was named in recognition of the significant role that Sidney Myer and the Myer family have played in the hospital’s history.

The Centenary Grant enabled the project to proceed, with the hospital contributing the balance of the funds.

Impact
The functional and attractive new centre offers increased opportunities for participation and learning. It has not only enhanced community activities at the hospital but also improved morale.

The Sidney Myer Lounge was officially opened in June 2001. At the same time, a dedication ceremony was held at the Merlyn Myer Historical Room to acknowledge Dame Merlyn Myer’s decades of support for the hospital.

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The Smith Family
New Headquarters

Background
By focusing on prevention rather than band-aid cures, The Smith Family makes a positive difference to the lives of Australians living in poverty.

Unprecedented demand for emergency relief, family support and educational services in the late 1990s forced the charitable organisation from rented premises to a larger centre.

The 2500-square-metre building in Collingwood is double the size of the previous premises.

The Project
Work on refurbishing the new premises began in mid-1998 and they were opened in September 1999. The new building contains the programs Learning for Life, Educational Support Service, the Case Management Department (where families receive long-term support), Material Aid (where they choose free clothing and household goods) and Emergency Relief (where they receive financial help, counselling and budget advice).

Partnership
The total cost of the building purchase and refurbishment was $2.65 million. The major donors were The Ian Potter Foundation ($500,000) and the Victorian Government ($450,000).

The Myer Foundation was a major contributor to a fundraising campaign launched early in 1998. Its name encouraged other donors to come forward at a crucial time and gave the project a much needed lift.

Impact
The project will allow The Smith Family to meet an ever-increasing call on its services: in 1999, 36,000 Victorians sought help its help – today it is assisting more than 100,000 people each year.

Ownership of the building has resulted in annual savings of $200,000, allowing more money to be spent directly on services rather than rent.

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The University of Melbourne
Sidney Myer Asia Centre

Background
The Sidney Myer Asia Centre was a long-held dream of Asialink, an organisation established by The Myer Foundation in 1990 and whose first chairman was Kenneth Myer.

Initially, Asialink was an independent university centre based in a terrace house. It soon evolved into a leading non-government link between Australia and the countries of Asia, promoting understanding and opportunities within the region through education, public affairs and culture.

As a result of its success, pressure grew on the organisation’s physical resources. While The Myer Foundation provided continuing recurrent support for Asialink, the Centenary Celebration offered a timely opportunity to work with the university on a permanent home. Construction of the new centre was completed in June 2001.

The Project
The Sidney Myer Asia Centre is a landmark building on Melbourne’s Swanston Street, and incorporates in its facade the last work of eminent Japanese sculptor Akio Makigawa. Together with Asialink, the centre houses the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages, the university’s centre of research and teaching in Asian studies.

The five-storey building comprises a 500-seat public lecture theatre, the Yasuko Hiraoka Myer exhibition space, 17 classrooms, Asialink’s boardroom, administration spaces and executive areas. It also includes a beautiful courtyard and water feature.

State-of-the-art technology allows optimum communications and the design takes advantage of plentiful natural light. Akio Makigawa completed documentation for the magnificent sculpture on the eastern and northern faces before his death in 2001. He considered it his most important public work.

Opened by the Australian Foreign Minister in July 2002, the centre is now the major venue in Melbourne for events with an Asian focus, including public lectures, forums, cultural activities and Asian community events. Since it was completed, it has hosted more than 100 major events. The Centenary Grant enabled Asialink to move into premium accommodation on the top floor, along with an entrance on Swanston Street and priority use of...
the public spaces.

**Partnership**

The partnership with the University of Melbourne to build the Sidney Myer Asia Centre has given Australia a significant Asian education and cultural centre and major public facility. The co-location of Asialink and the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies has created the largest Asian centre in Australia.

The Centenary Grant and the work of the building committee ensured that the result, enhanced by Akio Makigawa’s sculpture, was outstanding. The building has won several architectural and building awards and, according to one citation, is noted for its ‘most successful marriage of art and architecture’.

The Myer family commitment to the centre has supported Asialink’s corporate sponsorship strategy, stimulated the creation of the Asialink 500 Fund and encouraged additional university funding to support public events.

**Impact**

The long-term impact is the creation of a major Asia-focused centre for the Melbourne community. The Centre’s location has positioned Asialink as Australia’s leading Asia-Australia institute and allowed its programs to reach a wider audience, both within and beyond the Sidney Myer Asia Centre.

The spirit of the building, together with its central location on a campus numbering 43,000 people, ensures that it will continue to be both popular and prominent. It offers increased capacity for large-scale events and for hosting international dignitaries.

The Centre’s impact on the promotion of Australia within the region is of critical importance to the country’s future. In the current climate of change and uncertainty, Asialink’s vital role is brought into even sharper focus.

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Victorian Arts Centre Trust
The Sidney Myer Music Bowl

Background
Renowned as a world-standard outdoor performance venue, The Sidney Myer Music Bowl is a much-loved and vital part of Melbourne’s entertainment scene. The Bowl holds a special place in the hearts of Victorians. Long before newcomers like Melbourne Park made their impact on the city’s entertainment scene – even before the Victorian Arts Centre began rising from the edge of the Yarra River – there was The Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

The Sidney Myer Fund officially presented the Bowl to Melbourne in February 1959, when it was opened by Sir Robert Menzies. At first it was operated by a special trust comprising representatives of local and state government, and members of the arts community and the Myer family. It was then handed over to the Victorian Arts Centre in 1980 by the late Kenneth Myer. Nestled in the greenery of Kings Domain, its unique canopy rising from the ground and sheltering the nearby lawn, the Bowl has been an important entertainment venue for all Melburnians. In February 1998, the Victorian Premier announced that his government would accept the Centenary Grant of $3 million to refurbish the Bowl and would itself contribute $17 million to the task.

Work on the new Bowl began in April 1999 and was completed in October 2001.

The Project
The $21 million renovation brought the venue up to international standard. Architect Gregory Burgess oversaw the massive refurbishment, which included the addition of a green room and sponsors area, a larger stage with an upgraded sound and lighting system, a cafe, a new canopy and improved seating. The new function room is called the Merlyn Myer Room, named for Dame Merlyn Myer who did so much to ensure that the Bowl was built.

An inaugural program of events began with the opening of the Melbourne International Festival for the Arts in October 2001. The Bowl has since enjoyed high attendances and offered a diverse and comprehensive program of free and low-cost events.

Partnership
The Centenary Grant (which included $1 million from the Myer Family...
Company Pty Ltd) was in partnership with the Victorian Government and the Community Support Fund. The redevelopment returned Australia’s premier outdoor performance venue to the people of Victoria. Without the Centenary Grant, it is unlikely that the complete refurbishment would have been undertaken. In addition to the grant, Baillieu Myer and other family members provided considerable support and valued advice throughout the life of the project.

**Impact**

The reopening of The Sidney Myer Music Bowl marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Victorian Arts Centre and its outdoor performing arts venue, and places it at the forefront of the Centre’s programming plans.

Improved technical and back-of-house facilities have seen a rise in hire of the Bowl, thereby increasing revenue and financial viability. Improved audience amenities have increased attendances and allowed a broader range of activities. While the refurbishment has increased its income potential, The Sidney Myer Music Bowl remains committed to offering present and future generations of Victorians free access to concerts, just as Sidney Myer would have wished.

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www.vicartscentre.com.au
When the Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899-1999 was announced we were still absorbed in student life and not active in the Myer family’s philanthropic activities.

In the previous year, some of the fourth generation had attended their first meeting at a family muster, where we, as young people, were asked to identify the social issues that concerned us most. Many ideas were discussed, including the degradation of the environment, human rights and war. But the two current problems that emerged as our main concerns were youth homelessness and youth unemployment.

While we had had little personal exposure to such hardships, we were conscious of our own privileged position and found it amazing that our community was unable to provide for all of its young people.

The Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899-1999 Committee adopted our suggestion that there be more support for young people at risk. The Committee also sought our advice and involvement in the development of the projects. Following a strategic review of The Myer Foundation in 2000, the fourth generation established its own grants program.

For our generation, which subsequently formed the G4 Fund, the concept that philanthropy can help the community heal social ills was awakened through the Centenary Celebration. The Youth Transitions project and the Breakthrough program were each developed from the ground up and already are creating positive change in the lives of young participants.

As the great-grandchildren of Sidney Myer, we cousins have all grown up knowing the stories of his philanthropy and patronage of the arts. We have seen our grandparents and our parents involved in the giving of time and money to important causes. We have seen them speak out and take community action – one of my aunts and a great-aunt rode horses up Collins Street to protest about the state of the Snowy River!

So, it will be hard to avoid a love of philanthropy but we are not protesting. Sidney Myer has given us a gift that will be a life interest of real consequence to all of us. The Centenary Celebration raised the family’s interest in growing philanthropy so that others may experience the satisfaction and impact of giving through partnerships with community organisations.

Through the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and The Foundation for Young Australians, a number of youth philanthropy programs are being established that broadcast the message that anyone can be a philanthropist, not just those who have wealth.

Who knows where our family philanthropy will be in the next 100 years? We know that there is something very special about family philanthropy that allows for flexibility, quick response to social need and the capacity to rally enthusiasm and commitment through the fire that burns in all our veins.

The community we serve, as Sidney Myer asked us to, is our life force and partner. So, if we stick together we can face all the challenges that will surely be coming our way.

The Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899-1999 has been an interesting journey into the past, a learning experience for the present and an inspirational vision of the future.

**Patrick Myer and Anna Shelmerdine**  
Co-Convenors,  
G4 Fund 2002-03
The Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899–1999
wishes to thank the following people whose service in office
included the period 1999–2003

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