



## **Response to the Draft Productivity Commission Report into Philanthropy**

### **South West Community Foundation**

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To whom it may concern,

In reading the draft report by the Productivity Commission into philanthropy, it became clear that the origins, features and role of Community Foundations may have been under-estimated or poorly understood.

#### **Established by Community, for Community**

The South West Community Foundation has a corpus of around \$2 million that has been raised directly from our community, through individual donations, public asset sales and government matched funding programs.

The foundation invests to achieve an annual return above \$100,000 per annum. This income supports **126,779 people and partnerships across 26,318sqkm** with a part time Executive Officer. Despite this huge task, the Foundation has been able, with our partners, to support community organisations and projects with over \$1 million in grants since inception.

These activities range from community halls and houses, social infrastructure and cohesion projects, indigenous activity support, environmental projects and addressing extreme social disadvantage.

It is incredibly important that Community Foundations are supported to be seen by the communities they serve, to deliver on their promise, where communities take ownership of their own issues and move to solve them on the ground.

Community Foundations exist in perpetuity, and play a vital role in the democratization of philanthropy. Communities raise money, manage their funds and make grants to support a community's changing needs. Anyone in the community can donate to support local causes and charities in a meaningful and impactful way.

#### **Access to Funding**

A fundamental feature of Community Foundations is broad access. Any small community group can engage with us and apply for vital funding to pursue their vision. For most, philanthropic funding is unobtainable from private funders. Many groups would not know how to apply and is therefore, a closed network to many.



The community foundation model is the only structure that provides deep local links into community and is able to unlock philanthropic funding. Some private philanthropics already partner with us to provide this function, as they want to access areas of greater need in the communities they serve. More organisations are in touch with us to do so.

Partnership work such as this, is both very important but also time consuming with limited resources. Support to facilitate this economically beneficial function could have significant impact, to both increase giving and strengthen communities.

### Economic Impact

There are a number of scenarios that we have directly been involved where the economic impact cannot be under-estimated, where our involvement has directly led to organisations or businesses being able to recover and thrive.

### Disaster Recovery

In the wake of the St Patrick's Day Fires in our region, the South West Community Foundation was the first organization to get money into the affected zone. The simple process of partnering with the local IGA and Co-op, so that affected residents could procure whatever they needed in the immediate aftermath of the fire, meant these family agri-businesses could get to the work of restoring their business much more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

### Collaborative Support Enables Greater Impact

In just one example, The South West Community Foundation supported the Glenelg Nature Trust to rebuild a fence line between a plantation timber forest and the Nature Reserve in St Helen's. By the time the project had completed, other local businesses had donated supplies and materials, a workplace learning group was giving young people valuable hands on experience and the project was so successful, The Glenelg Nature Trust now had more resources and partners available to conduct more important work.

In the years since, the work of the Glenelg Nature Trust has expanded, young people from that program have gone from young people, disengaged from their schooling to businesses owners and workers, volunteers in their own local groups and supporting businesses have continued to donate into their communities where they can.

The Economic Flow on effect from small, collaborative grant projects cannot be under-estimated.



In closing, the unique features of Community Foundations enable significant Access and Economic Impact improvements across our region and I urge recommendations in the final report that support that mission.

**David McIntyre**  
**Treasurer**  
**South West Community Foundation**

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## Case Study – Fletcher Jones Family Foundations & South West Community Foundation, and the impact of partnering with a community foundation.

Sir Fletcher Jones was an Australian clothing manufacturer and retailer, and considered a pioneer in workforce participation. He was synonymous with Warrnambool (SW Victoria) and played a crucial role in building the social and economic fabric of the region as it is today.

The community of Warrnambool revered Sir Fletcher Jones for his generosity, kindness and egalitarian practices, and in 2015 the third-generation family members made an active decision to merge the granting activity of the three family foundations, (established at different times and by different family members,) to focus entirely on supporting place-based giving in the Warrnambool and Port Fairy region.

Despite the extraordinary generosity and commitment to supporting socially conscious philanthropy, the trustees of the family funds had limited direct connections with the communities of Warrnambool and Port Fairy, and in 2016 commenced a granting partnership with the South West Community Foundation through their small grants program.

The partnership allowed the FJFF to establish genuine and meaningful connections with grassroots organisations in the community with the ideas and initiatives that solve a social problem on the ground, and for the benefit of the community. Many of the introductory connections established through the community foundation nexus have yielded lasting partnerships that have had profound impact for the region.

As the philanthropic practices of the FJFF have matured to the point of employing their own Executive Officer, the relationship with the community foundation has endured and is growing. Both organisations share synergies in our values and vision, and we see exciting opportunities to collaborate and amplify our impact for the community.