



Strategic Philanthropy - Leadership Insights



In August 2015, Christopher G. Oechsli, President & CEO of *The Atlantic Philanthropies* visited Australia to discuss the foundation's work. Atlantic, a limited-life foundation that will make its final grants by the end of 2016 and will close its doors by 2020, has so far distributed A\$10 billion, including A\$590 million in Australia. Atlantic's visit also allowed Chris Oechsli to discuss founding chairman Chuck Feeney's philosophy and practice of *Giving While Living* with a significant number of prominent Australians.

The collective insights of the philanthropic, academic, non-profit and business leaders Koda and Atlantic brought together were extraordinarily valuable. This paper distils and disseminates the philanthropic wisdom those present shared at a series of private events, for the benefit of a wider audience.

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Introduction

Encouraging Australians to give more, give better and give with greater satisfaction is one of Koda's goals. This aspiration led to a natural partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, an organisation also looking to encourage greater, effective giving in our lifetimes.

Sharing insights via this paper is one way that Koda can leverage the value of Atlantic's work. Our hope is that doing so will add to the philanthropic knowledge base in Australia and provide philanthropically-minded Australians with inspiration and guidance.

For the uninitiated, Atlantic is one of the world's most significant charitable foundations, and, by a long way, the largest to plan its own end. Atlantic was founded and funded by Chuck Feeney, an American of Irish heritage. Chuck is a remarkable man who has spent more than thirty years of his life doing remarkable things with the wealth he accumulated.

Chuck Feeney's philosophy is known as *Giving While Living*. He has practiced this philosophy by giving, through Atlantic, A\$10 billion since 1982. A\$590 million has been invested in Australia alone. Consistent with Chuck's philosophy, Atlantic is planning to complete grant-making in 2016 and wind-up its operations before 2020. While the Atlantic numbers are hard to match, the foundation's philanthropic journey reflects that of most donors, which essentially involves a cycle of learning and evolving.

For Australians, two of Chuck Feeney's achievements stand out as particularly notable. Firstly, he is, in dollar terms (and quite possibly in other terms) Australia's most significant living philanthropic donor. Secondly, despite this, he has intentionally managed to remain almost completely unknown in Australia outside of a small group of beneficiaries and admirers. Indeed, the title of Chuck's biography is *The Billionaire Who Wasn't: How Chuck Feeney Made and Gave Away a Fortune Without Anyone Knowing*.

As Atlantic completes its funding program, the foundation's focus shifts to sharing its experience, learning what other funders and grantees want to take from that experience and explaining Chuck Feeney's philosophy. This shift in focus led to Koda's partnership with Atlantic. In August 2015 the two organisations co-hosted a total of eleven events, in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. These 'conversations' attracted a wonderful mix of people who personally and professionally contribute significantly to Australia's civil society. Naturally, much of the conversation centred on philanthropy and the topic of giving in a broader sense.

Koda's Philanthropy & Social Capital team helped to organise - and participated in - all eleven events. Inter alia, this was a privilege because many of Australia's most accomplished civil society leaders openly shared their experience and their insights into the subject of effective philanthropy.

We now share this experience and insight with you.

Insights & Observations

This paper has been written to allow others to learn what some of Australia's brightest and most experienced philanthropic minds have to say on issues like why and how wealthy people give, the need for bravery in philanthropy, and what charities can do to attract more support. It is also an opportunity to hear from Christopher G. Oechsli, Atlantic's President & CEO, as he reflects on his time in Australia and looks forward to the final phase of Atlantic's life.

And so to the insights and observations gathered by Koda during Atlantic's visit:

Giving can be hugely satisfying

Time and again, conversations about philanthropy turned to just how satisfying it can be. As one person commented, you can get joy from giving that is immeasurable and you can experience far more enjoyment giving money than you ever got making it in the first place. Others spoke of how satisfaction comes mainly from 'seeing and doing' and encouraged philanthropists to get up close and personal when it comes to the people and organisations they support. Giving by remote control, or 'drone philanthropy' does not seem to be nearly as rewarding. Interestingly, there was a contrasting view expressed about this self-enlightened approach to philanthropy, which was that at its purest giving does not involve an expectation of receiving anything in return. Perhaps though, it is quite acceptable for people to get something positive from doing something positive, especially if this encourages more people to give.

While people were overwhelmingly positive about 'giving', they were less enthusiastic about the concept of 'giving back'. More than one person suggested 'giving back' infers you have taken something, an idea most people rejected. Notwithstanding this, it was acknowledged that wealth may bring with it an obligation to help others less fortunate. Chuck Feeney himself was influenced by American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie's seminal essay, *Wealth*, which goes as far as arguing that the person who dies rich dies disgraced. It was also acknowledged that there is often an inverse relationship between happiness and wealth and that great wealth can be both a bounty and a burden.

On a more positive note, the satisfaction that comes from helping others less fortunate was described eloquently by one participant as the feeling that comes from 'opening the door to opportunity'.

Giving inspires giving

When asked what inspired Chuck Feeney to give, Chris Oechsli told a story about Chuck's mother. When Chuck was a child his mother would regularly give a lift to her disabled neighbour when driving his way. Except that she wasn't actually going his way; in truth, Chuck's mother pretended she was going his way in order to help him out. Chuck Feeney saw and understood this behavior and the fact this story is still being told says something about its effect on his life. It also shows just how powerful stories can be and how much we need examples of giving in all its forms if we are to grow philanthropy in Australia.

At another event, the Chair of a leading local charity also challenged the belief that a big donation to a charity kills the ‘philanthropic’ appetite of other supporters. The charity in question found that receiving a major gift actually had the opposite effect. As the Chair said “success follows success”, a theory that was later echoed by one of the sector’s most respected academic researchers, who said “giving begets giving.” This was described as “the echo effect” by one Atlantic grantee, who happily confirmed that “Chuck’s giving inspired giving”, a comment that led to an interesting discussion on the responsibility of recipient charities to inspire further giving. In the opinion of one leading university administrator, recipients should step up and show respect for major donors by giving themselves and by establishing ‘alumni’ giving programs.

During conversations about Australia’s philanthropic community it was sometimes noted that Chuck Feeneys are in short supply. Some saw this as an insurmountable problem, while others suggested that it is simply a question of encouraging a generation of less wealthy (but still wealthy) donors to ‘ignite’ giving in Australia. If we want to build a strong culture of philanthropy in this country, perhaps our focus should be on researching and understanding what motivates people to give, so efforts to grow giving and increase participation rates can be better targeted.

There is no ‘right’ way to give

This was a very strong theme of Atlantic’s visit and a message that might encourage people new to philanthropy. While there are many ways to organise giving, the consensus view from those with experience is that it is not how, but why, that matters. With giving, it seems to be a case of one philosophy, many approaches. As one philanthropist said, there is room for and a need for different approaches, and in the end it becomes a very personal decision. It is worth noting the giver’s decision may also change over time. This was certainly true for Chuck Feeney and Atlantic. Chuck himself went on a journey from anonymous giving to public giving and eventually to promoting his philosophy of *Giving While Living* to other wealthy people around the world. For Atlantic, the concept of limited life giving, for which it is known, was also an evolution.

To underline the point that the best approach to giving is adaptive, Atlantic emphasised the importance of place. Each country, community and context is different and, according to Chris Oechsli, successful grant-making depends on finding the best people, who know the local landscape but who also grasp the big picture. Summarising Chuck Feeney’s essential approach to grant-making, Chris said it came down to a three-step process:

1. Conducting lots of upfront due diligence
2. Betting on people and capability
3. Letting them get on with it.

Many participants were observed to be thinking about their philanthropy in investment terms. Local philanthropist Allan English shared how he assesses his likely return on investment using a grant-making approach he terms ‘Depth and Span’. When considering a grant, Allan looks for Depth – the difference a grant can have on a recipient, and Span – the extent to which the grant can be scaled, replicated or leveraged. Reinforcing this way of thinking, Chris Oechsli said of Chuck Feeney, “He didn’t give it away, he just began investing it differently.” Chris also had some sage advice for people looking to give intelligently: “Be a student. Listen and observe before you act.”

Engage, but don't interfere

Another strong theme of Atlantic's visit was that modesty and humility are essential traits for the successful philanthropist. The mature philanthropist is flexible, adapting to grantee needs and changing environments. Challenging charities and offering an opinion can be helpful, but imposing pre-conceived ideas and/or too many conditions may be counter-productive. Ironically, donors who have enjoyed successful business careers are most likely to overstep the mark - by assuming their business experience (in many cases limited to one business or industry) translates to and is needed by the charities they support.

Whether to give now or invest for the future is always a key consideration

Longer-term institutional funding *can* be more effective than project or program funding – something that is under-appreciated in a philanthropic community that favours exciting programs and shiny new projects. Just as easily though, immediate funding for disaster relief or to find a cure can be more important than building long term organisational capacity. Who is to say what the right approach at any point in time is? Not that you can't have the best of both worlds. As Professor Peter Hoj, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, pointed out, the two approaches often complement each other - it helps to have limited life foundations for capital investment needs and perpetual foundations for ongoing income needs.

The question of whether to give now or invest money through some kind of endowment is a fascinating one. As Chris Oechsli puts it, "Atlantic is not actually a 'spend down' foundation, it is an 'accelerated impact' foundation". That puts an entirely different slant on the concept of a limited-life foundation (being a foundation that plans to expend its corpus in a defined period).

Back people and ideas first and support their institutions

Finding the fertile ground is the name of the game. As Chuck Feeney and Atlantic have learned over many years, you cannot do it all and there is a practical need to rely on other people and organisations. Many funders shy away from investing in infrastructure, either because they prefer to focus on supporting people more 'directly' or because they feel they will be obliged to also fund ongoing operation and maintenance costs if they fund something like a new building or an operating theatre. Even committed infrastructure investors like Atlantic know that in the end, the buildings will depreciate and decay. Ultimately, it is about the people in them. So, for the philanthropist, even when investing capital in infrastructure, a focus on human capital is crucial. While this may sound pragmatic, it also reflects what many philanthropists revealed in conversation – that in any event, people want to give to people.

When selecting people to invest in, Atlantic has placed great importance on values and vision. According to Chris Oechsli, while you should expect people to have had some success, there is a lot to be said for backing emerging leaders who demonstrate an ability to be creative and influential.

Look to invest in ‘undervalued’ initiatives with potential

It is no surprise Warren Buffett and Chuck Feeney are kindred spirits in business and philanthropy. Chuck’s approach to picking grantees is based on the same philosophy Warren Buffett uses to pick stocks. Chuck Feeney and Atlantic have always based their big bets on underappreciated opportunities they actively sought out and found to have great investment potential – opportunities often deemed to be ‘un-sexy’ by other funders.

The challenge is to back people and ideas in the hope of creating value that others have not seen or supported. At an organisational level, this boils down to looking for organisations ‘capable of elevation’.

Focus is important when deciding what to fund

According to one participant, focus is the secret to success and saying no is critical. This belief was echoed by a prominent philanthropist who talked about the need to resist what he called ‘Sprinkle Philanthropy’. The idea of spreading money around might have merit, but the consensus view was that more can be achieved (and learnt) by concentrating resources and remaining committed, even at the expense of other worthy causes.

It is important to look for evidence of impact

On the topic of impact measurement, Chris Oechsli put forward the view that it is important to be strategic and informed, but equally important to avoid becoming too rigid. At a time when Australian charities are under increasing pressure to quantify their impact, it is refreshing to hear that Chuck Feeney measures impact by looking for “visible improvements in the human condition”. This quote probably says something else about measuring impact – that the best way to find out whether your money is making a difference is to engage directly with those you are trying to help. This approach would certainly resonate with the philanthropist who told us that “personal internal transformation is as important, but less obvious than, other measureable impacts.”

While Atlantic is a firm believer in impact measurement, it is experienced enough to know that no one solution or metric works for all programs and to acknowledge that designing bespoke metrics and measurement frameworks requires considerable commitment on the part of recipients and funders alike.

Something else for funders to bear in mind when considering their own impact (as opposed to the impact of the charity they have funded), is Chris Oechsli’s assertion that “it’s about contribution, not attribution”.

Philanthropic funding can be used to encourage collaboration

Using dollars in a ‘carrot and stick’ manner to encourage charities to work together is not a new idea, but it is a good idea, if done intelligently and with respect. That said, as the saying goes, ‘what’s good for the goose is good for the gander’ - at one event it was pointed out that philanthropic funders need to collaborate just as much as charities do.

According to Atlantic, investing in collaborative leadership - the kind of leadership that is attuned to the whole eco-system - is the best way to effect lasting change. Asked why philanthropic funders should encourage collaboration, Chris Oechsli put forward two reasons – efficiency and synergy. Incidentally, Chris Oechsli pointed out that Chuck Feeney has always been collaborative in his philanthropy, going as far to say “Chuck was a great fundraiser; he gave a third and raised two-thirds”, in reference to his preferred model of leveraging his dollar by inviting governments and other philanthropists to match his funding. In Australia there is no better example of this than Atlantic’s support for Queensland’s *Smart State* economic strategy, which is charted in Atlantic’s new book, *Laying Foundations for Change: Capital Investments of The Atlantic Philanthropies*.

Be bold

Chris Oechsli describes Chuck Feeney brilliantly as “a venture philanthropist, not an adventure philanthropist”. Chuck and Atlantic take risks when it makes sense, not for the sake of it, or for the want of a proper risk assessment. Atlantic has a history of making big bets and big bets are bold steps. There are many other ways to be bold – for example, funding unpopular causes or ‘challenging’ issues. On another tack, a young social entrepreneur expressed a view that “sometimes, in order to create a social impact, governance and process have to take a back seat” – a view that many charitable leaders would find bold.

Boldness might also mean being prepared to share your own philanthropic mistakes after the fact. A willingness to share the lessons of failure can be a powerful thing. Imagine how much we would learn in Australia if some of our biggest, most experienced and most experimental foundation grant-makers realised the value of their experience and were prepared to share what has not worked, as well as what has.

Chris Oechsli used legendary baseball player Babe Ruth to put failure in perspective. Babe Ruth is famous for the number of home runs he hit. Chris Oechsli pointed out that he also struck out more times than any other player. The message here is that philanthropists need to live with the fact that they will make mistakes. Failure is inevitable if you’re going to have a swing, but fear of failure should not put you off.

Local philanthropist Allan English contributed a useful insight when he said that it is not enough to accept failure if you want to be successful in the future; rather, you have to *understand* failure and why you have failed. This implicitly tells us we need to take the time to examine how and why some things fail, and that we need to consider what can be learnt from this examination.

Lisa Gay, Koda board member and Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, closed one event with a message that we must fight to normalise giving in Australia. The idea of fighting to establish a culture of giving is both novel and bold.

Philanthropic funding can build the capacity of social advocates

One of the advantages of a philanthropic mindset is that unlike governments and public companies, philanthropic organisations are not bound by short term stakeholder expectations. They can invest in ideas that may take years to realise, but which may be very important in the long term.

Advocacy can be a sensitive area for philanthropic funders. For many, advocacy is neither desirable nor necessary. For others it represents an important way to effect change. Atlantic sits in the latter category and is among those who believe philanthropy's ability to influence policy can sometimes be worth more than its dollar.

Chris Oechsli believes that “shining a light on the evidence” is a key role of a philanthropic funder. Rather than conducting direct advocacy, Atlantic's funding has been about supporting the people who advocate for change. As Chris put it when talking about Atlantic's work in Ireland around marriage equality: “Atlantic did not invest in the referendum, but in the infrastructure that enabled the voices of change to flourish”. This seems to be less about advocacy, per se, and more about helping to create ‘equality of voice’ in public debate. To the funder, this is philanthropy as an expression of, and accelerator for, community opinion.

Undercover due diligence can help you get to the truth

For many years Chuck Feeney was an anonymous donor and many of his grants were conditional on the grantee maintaining his and Atlantic's secrecy. While this was to change, it is interesting to note that anonymity made research and due diligence easier and more effective. One of the benefits of going incognito (cited by Chris Oechsli) was avoiding the need for ‘artificial presentations’. There is obviously real value in assessing what people have to say when they do not realise you may be a source of significant funding. As Professor Frank Gannon, Director & CEO of QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, suggested, this was rather like stepping into an episode of *Undercover Boss*.

As Atlantic and some of its beneficiaries found out, anonymity can also be leveraged. For example, by making an anonymous contribution to a new building, Atlantic enabled the beneficiary institution to offer sought-after naming rights to other prospective donors. In Chris Oechsli's words, “Atlantic left a lot on the table by not being public.”

Anonymity certainly has its place and even for high profile individuals it can be achievable, particularly with the help of trusted employees and representatives who will not be recognised either by face or name. That said, there is also a need to acknowledge that privacy is important too and, in some cases, there may be other considerations to take into account, particularly when family is involved.

Donors need an exit plan and so do beneficiaries

An important question for funders and recipients alike is: “How do you finish?” This is a critical question when major funding is involved, yet, it seems, one that is rarely asked. Atlantic, like many grant-making organisations, has learnt the value of this question through experience. A premature exit can harm a recipient or the sector it works in, while staying too long can create dependency issues.

Dependency is generally considered undesirable, though not uncommon. As a funder, being clear from the start how you want to be perceived may be the way to avoid problems at the finish. As one foundation executive put it, “we are not a petrol station.”

According to Professor Peter Coaldrake, Vice-Chancellor of Queensland University of Technology, it is incumbent upon organisations that receive funding from a major donor to have a post-funder strategy. Clearly, not all do. Funders can prompt recipients to think about this issue from the outset by asking a simple yet direct question: ‘what will you do once our cheques stop coming?’

Charities need to be more professional in the way they present themselves

In Australia, a lot of Atlantic’s investment went into funding medical research institutes. A thought-provoking question was posed during a discussion about how Australian universities and research institutes can replicate this success by attracting further funding from wealthy local philanthropists. The question was whether any Australian institutions invest in training their researchers to be effective ‘marketers’. This question is stimulating because any institution that can develop scientists and researchers who understand the value of their work *and* can sell its value to non-scientific people will surely have a competitive advantage, the like of which we have rarely seen in Australia’s research and education sector.

Training academics and researchers is one way of adopting a more professional approach to fundraising. There are many opportunities for charitable organisations to ‘professionalise’; what is clear is that major funders are looking to engage with highly professional people who can articulate a story and engender the kind of confidence sought by sophisticated investors. That said, it was important to be reminded that not all major funders are sophisticated funders. A comment that stood out because it added important balance to the issue was: “There is a need for greater professionalism on both the side of the receiver *and* on the side of the giver.”

Charities need to present a very clear value proposition

A number of participants commented on the competitive state of Australia’s charity sector. One person made the point that donors have 55,000 charities to choose from and don’t have to choose any of them. Continuing on from the point made above, a view expressed numerous times was that most Australian charities have yet to develop a compelling case for funding. Many continue to rely on the importance of the cause they are pursuing rather than their ability to address it. The message from funders was that when they are asked to make a contribution they want to see a clear, compelling argument why they should invest in one organisation over another. This reflects a broad shift in donor decision-making, from the heart to the head. The heart will still engage, but the head will commit. The message from prospective donors is clear – show us why we should fund *you*.

A whole-of-society approach is the best way to grow giving in Australia

A range of views were expressed in relation to the potential for different groups in Australia to make a greater contribution. Overall, this created the impression that there is a lot of opportunity to grow giving, through the adoption of an inclusive, progressive approach to developing civil society.

Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, spoke about the potential of involving older Australians in society and in particular the compelling business case for engaging older people in the workforce. The notion of an ‘encore career’ is an interesting one that might become quite familiar in the next decade or so as Australia’s population ages and people retire in good health and with extended life expectancy.

Several participants felt that we are experiencing a sea-change in the way young people live their lives – the suggestion being that young people are more interested in social responsibility than ever before. Local philanthropist Allan English spoke about his belief in younger Australians and their ‘compassion muscle’, which he said just needs to be exercised. David Morse, Atlantic’s Chief Communications Officer, noted that ‘Millennials’ are probably more generous with their time than previous generations and more likely to engage directly with causes that move them. On a more cautious note, David cited unprecedented levels of student debt as a looming impediment to young people in America giving more in the future. Can the same be said in Australia?

Another view expressed was that there should be more of a focus on encouraging women to give. The case put forward was that women are inclined to be engaged with social issues, are increasing their incomes, are more likely to outlive their male partners and are therefore more likely to control wealth as they age. It was also posited that while women may not yet control an equal share of wealth, they are the most influential voice when it comes to philanthropic funding decisions. It may be that charities need to recognize and acknowledge the significant and growing role females have in committing wealth to philanthropy and deciding how that wealth is distributed.

Ethnic minorities were also mentioned in the context of being overlooked. An argument was made that people in minority communities want to get involved, but that it is up to larger, more established groups to ‘make the first move’.

Philanthropic foundations can generate impact from within their own ranks

Atlantic offers two great examples of how a foundation can increase its impact by directing resources to employees. The first is Atlantic’s ‘designated gifts program’ – its history of supplementing employee salaries with a philanthropic allowance of their own, so that individual employees can, in Chuck Feeney’s words “know what it feels like”. The second is Atlantic’s willingness to pay for what it calls ‘transition fellowships’. Under the terms of a transition fellowship Atlantic may choose to fund the cost of a departing employee’s first year salary, provided they take a position with a non-profit organisation with which Atlantic has had a relationship. It is an effective way to deploy experienced employees into the community. Presumably the program is also an effective employee satisfaction strategy. Of course, not every foundation employs staff, nor are all that do in a position to match this level of commitment, but many might like to follow the spirit of this example - according to their means.

Leadership is critical if we are to grow philanthropy

We are starting to see people talk openly about their philanthropic donations here in Australia. In conversation, the clear message whenever this topic came up was that public leadership is critically important if a culture of philanthropy is to take root.

Here are a few comments made by people who are themselves leaders in their field:

“It starts at the top and that also sets the expectation.”

“It gives others confidence and encourages people to commit.”

“We need to show other rich people it is okay to give”

“They are there; we just need to coax them out.”

Coaxing them out is of course one of the challenges. The feeling around the table was that this task is a peer-to-peer one. Interestingly, fear was cited as the number one issue to overcome. There are several common fears, most of which are obvious, but the most interesting one involves dealing with the ‘Philanthropic Hypochondriac’ - that is, the wealthy person who is held back from giving more by an irrational fear that they might run out of money.

A peer-to-peer conversation might be helpful in persuading a Philanthropic Hypochondriac to part with money, but there is also a role for a trusted adviser who can put things in perspective, with the help of some financial data. It is worth noting that trusted advisers (particularly accountants, lawyers and wealth managers) have been playing this role behind the scenes with many of Australia’s emerging philanthropists, particularly since the advent of Private Ancillary Funds, which have encouraged many wealthy Australians to give significant sums during their lifetimes.

A more rational fear, expressed by several people in different cities, is the fear of falling victim to ‘Tall Poppy Syndrome’, the Australian habit of cutting down successful people as they rise up in public view.

Clearly, we need wealthy people to emerge as leaders if we are to overcome this fear and establish a culture of public philanthropy. It is encouraging to be able to quote Malcolm Turnbull, Australia’s new Prime Minister, as saying, just days into his leadership, “If you do well, you’ve got to give something back. That’s why I encourage people to be generous. That’s why I encourage and practice philanthropy.”

The nexus is everything

There is a lot to be said for giving with or alongside other people. In Brisbane, one of Chuck Feeney's friends, talking about Chuck's approach to philanthropy, commented that 'the nexus is everything'. This phrase encapsulated Koda's approach to organizing Atlantic's visit, which was based on the idea of connecting a diverse cross-section of people with a common interest in giving. Invitations were issued in the hope of creating a 'melting pot' for people and ideas - a catalytic coming together of Australians with the desire and the power to effect positive change.

The concept of people and ideas coming together to create a powerful nexus is evident in Australia's burgeoning 'collective giving' movement. There are many reasons why the increasing popularity of this style of giving is exciting. Collective giving may result in people donating more than they otherwise would, but it also offers participants a variety of social and educational opportunities. Moreover, it is seen as a 'fun' way to give and it creates a forum for people to contribute alongside others who share similar values.

An interesting theory about collective giving put forward at one event was that, like other forms of group or matched giving, it represents an effective 'market test' for a charity seeking funding and a useful way for donors to establish whether others see value in an idea. If so, this is another example of a nexus working effectively.

The focus of giving in Australia seems to be shifting from the institutional to the collective, particularly wherever young people are involved. Youth-focused charities like YGAP (Y-Generation Against Poverty) claim not to ask for money, but for engagement. As Elliot Costello, YGAP's founding CEO explained, YGAP's focus is not on creating or reinforcing institutions, but on bringing together and activating an army of social entrepreneurs.

The idea of bringing like-minded people together to tackle social issues is not exactly new. What is new, and what is revolutionising the way people give, is the ability for like-minded people to find, connect and work with each other, thanks to the barrier-busting power of technology.

The Atlantic Perspective

Christopher G. Oechsli, President and CEO of The Atlantic Philanthropies, reflects on his time in Australia and considers what the conversations he had while here might mean for philanthropy in Australia and for Atlantic as it enters the final phase of its life:

*In August, I returned to Australia, where I had served as The Atlantic Philanthropies' country director for several years, to share a new photo-documentary book, *Laying Foundations for Change: Capital Investments of The Atlantic Philanthropies* with the organisations and the people who have benefitted from Atlantic's AU\$590 million investments in 27 capital facilities. The book describes and depicts the potential and the reality of what philanthropic investments in the built environment can do to transform institutions, communities and even economies in the seven regions, including Australia, in which Atlantic has concentrated its grant making. At their core, these investments are what our Founding Chairman Chuck Feeney calls "big bets" on dynamic leaders of institutions and the students, researchers, patients and entire populations who benefit from the resulting work. In Australia, as in several other places where Atlantic has been active, our investments in facilities have typically been in partnership with and leveraged additional support from government and other funders.*

These visits to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth were about much more than a beautiful and informative book, however. I came to listen and learn more about how Atlantic's investments have affected Australia, to learn what Australians, particularly those engaged in philanthropy, want to know about Atlantic's philanthropic journey, and to explore what the future of philanthropy in Australia, post-Atlantic, might be.

Atlantic is often described as a "limited life" foundation. Back in 2002, Chuck Feeney and Atlantic's Board of Directors determined that we would complete our grant making during the lifetime of the donor, in keeping with his philosophy of Giving While Living, by 2016. By the time we commit to our final grants next year and close our doors, we will be the largest philanthropic organisation to intentionally conclude our work, and we will have contributed more than AU\$10 billion globally, concentrated in seven regions and in several fields—higher education, research, children and youth, ageing, population health, human rights and reconciliation. We are on track to do that, and we have wound up our grant-making operations in Australia, Bermuda, Viet Nam, South Africa and Northern Ireland in anticipation of making our last grants by the end of next year.

Chuck Feeney has a special affinity for Australia, and particularly for the state of Queensland and Brisbane. He came to Australia in the early 1990s to explore business opportunities and found it an opportune place for Atlantic's strategic philanthropy. He was taken with leaders with a big dream of creating a knowledge economy that they called a Smart State, but lacked the funding to make it a reality. Initially anonymous in Atlantic's giving, he has never wanted to toot his horn. No building bears the Feeney or Atlantic name, although a few beneficiaries have slipped in an unauthorised plaque here or there. But he has also wanted to encourage others of means to embrace the philosophy and practice of Giving While Living. He has often said "It's a lot more satisfying giving while you're living than when you're dead," plus you can learn from and adjust your mistakes.

Even though we have concluded Atlantic's work in Australia and elsewhere, it's our obligation to be transparent, continue to learn and to understand what others want to know about our experience. We hope that our experience will prove useful in some way to Australia's philanthropic sector and beyond. We want to share what's worked, what hasn't worked so well, and to explore how our experience may have value to new and emerging philanthropists who are thinking about how to give. We want to help foster and enhance Giving While Living, which I call "accelerated impact" philanthropy - as we leave the stage. So we joined with the leadership of Koda Capital, particularly Paul Heath, Andrew Rothery, David Knowles and Chris Wilson to organise a series of meetings with philanthropy and NGO sector leaders over eight days in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane.

Through these thoughtful, intimate conversations and larger panel discussions, we learned much about the current state of and future prospects for growing philanthropy in Australia. We are grateful to Koda and the people we met with for helping to expand our appreciation of what philanthropy has done and can achieve in Australia. Our meetings also lifted our hopes and expectations of what is possible in this growing sector even as we depart. I am especially indebted to David Knowles for preparing and sharing widely his excellent summary of our visit.

Christopher G. Oechsli

President & CEO, The Atlantic Philanthropies

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- Invite Koda to speak at an event, conference or function.

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David heads Koda's specialist Philanthropic & Social Capital team. His primary responsibility is providing strategic advice to charitable, non-profit, and philanthropic investors. In a 25-year private wealth management career David worked for Coutts and Merrill Lynch in the UK and held senior advisory and leadership positions at Perpetual, and JBWere, where he was a Managing Director and Head of Philanthropic Services. David is a member of the Centre for Social Impact's advisory council, Impact Investing Australia's market building working group, and a Director of the charity BoardConnect. David also sits on the editorial advisory board of Generosity magazine. In 2012 David established a Public Ancillary Fund account to encourage philanthropy within his own family. In 2013 David attended Harvard Business School, where he completed the Governing for Non-Profit Excellence executive education course.

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About Koda Capital

At Koda Capital we are taking an innovative approach to wealth management - an approach that puts a client's needs first. We are proud to be pioneers, offering professional services unencumbered by pre-existing ownership structures and practices. Our sole focus is giving our clients tailored financial solutions that are well-informed, independent, and transparent.

We act as an investment adviser to philanthropic, charitable and non-profit organisations. We go beyond the provision of tailored investment services, to provide expert advice on best practice, governance, regulation, investment strategy and relevant trends in the sector.

Koda's Commitment to Clients

- We will always be independent and free from conflicts of interest that affect our advice.
- We will always put our clients' best interests first – across the full range of investment, execution and advice services we provide.
- We will agree, in writing, the services we will provide and deliver those services to the standards we promise. Our clients will have access to the best solutions available - not just a list of products restricted by commercial interests.
- We will only earn fees which are paid directly and transparently by our clients, and if we were to receive any commissions they will be fully rebated to our clients for their benefit. We will detail the basis on which the fees are charged and will discuss them with clients at any time. Clients have – and will always have – full discretion to choose the type of fee structure that works best for them: be that on a fee for service basis, transaction basis, or asset basis. We believe that as advisers we should be rewarded according to the quality of advice and services we provide, not by our ability to promote specific products.

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared without consideration of any client's investment objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on any advice in this document, Koda Capital Pty Ltd recommends that you consider whether this is appropriate for your circumstances.

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