



**Leading Learning
in Education and
Philanthropy**

2011 Survey Report Executive Summary

(Schools, not-for-profits, philanthropic foundations and trusts in Australia)

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(This report is best printed in colour to aid the readability of graphs)

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GLOSSARY

This glossary is not intended to be exhaustive. It is simply designed to provide some understanding of what we mean when we speak of the three sectors in this report: philanthropic, schools and not-for-profits.

A more comprehensive glossary will be developed as part of the LLEAP *Dialogue Series Guide* (discussed throughout the full 2011 LLEAP Survey report).

Philanthropy	<p><i>The planned and structured giving of money, time, information, goods and services, voice and influence to improve the wellbeing of humanity and the community.</i> (Philanthropy Australia)</p> <p>Philanthropy is about finding, <i>opportunities to fund work which is innovative and imaginative, and where the grant has a good chance of making a difference.</i> (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, UK)</p>
Not for Profit	<p>Almost all philanthropic trusts and foundations will require that a grant recipient organisation is run not-for-profit.</p> <p>‘Not-for-profit’ means that an organisation is not run for the profit of its directors, members or shareholders. Not for profit organisations aim to either provide services to members (for example, a professional association or club) or to address an environmental, social, health, educational or other community issue or need. They do not distribute any net surplus to directors, members or shareholders and instead reinvest these funds in their organisation to achieve their objects. (Catherine Brown, <i>Great Foundations</i>, 2010)</p> <p>For the purposes of the LLEAP project, we identified not-for-profits that have an education focus and have worked with or for the benefit of schools.</p>
Schools	<p>The LLEAP project has involved schools across all sectors (Catholic, Independent and Government); across every state and territory; and across all learning/year levels.</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*There is a need to break down barriers of grant seeking and grant making –
They are very different worlds and worlds that don't collide naturally.
(Foundation CEO)*

Background

Philanthropy in Australian education has a long history. It has often 'flown under the radar' and unlike countries such as the United States, there has been limited research literature on its extent, nature and impact. Missing is a collective knowledge base around such issues as, What makes philanthropic support in education successful? How do we ensure it is relevant and effective? Learning to improve the way things are done in education and philanthropy depends on building this knowledge.

The Leading Learning in Education and Philanthropy (LLEAP) study is a three-year research *and* development project focussed on addressing this knowledge gap.

LLEAP was launched in 2011 by Professor Geoffrey Blainey (AC) and the project is an initiative of Tender Bridge in partnership and with funding in 2011 from The Ian Potter Foundation. Tender Bridge is a research and development service of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). It seeks to direct funds into schools to support educational projects.

The LLEAP project investigates the impact of philanthropy in education. It aims to build knowledge and improve outcomes for schools, not-for-profits and philanthropic supporters with a focus on education.

LLEAP looks to engage those in education and philanthropy around three key research questions:

1. What are the current perceptions and practices of philanthropic engagement in education?
2. How is successful philanthropic engagement in school education defined and configured in practice? and;
3. Who benefits from philanthropic engagement, in what conditions and to what effect?

Each year the findings from the LLEAP study will be used to inform the development of a *LLEAP Dialogue Series Guide* - An evidence-based guide to grow your ideas in education for maximum impact. The Guide will be targeted at new or novice grant seekers and grant makers in education, but with a view that those more experienced could also find it of interest and use in their work.

The LLEAP project investigates the impact of philanthropy in education.

In 2011, the focus is on collecting baseline data from school, not-for-profit and philanthropic perspectives.

A key product each year:

LLEAP Dialogue Series Guide
– An evidence-based guide to grow your ideas in education for maximum impact

Method

The premise behind doing LLEAP was that you cannot celebrate, improve or change something that you are not aware of in the first place. So, to inform the LLEAP Guide, year one of the LLEAP project seeks to gather and analyse baseline data from education (schools and not-for-profits) and philanthropic grant making foundations and trusts. It has been doing this through three key phases: a literature review and 40 interviews with individuals from philanthropy and education (schools and not-for-profits); surveying the views of school, not-for-profit and philanthropic leaders; and the development of up to eight cases of effective engagement of philanthropy in education.

Year 1 of LLEAP:

- 40 interviews
- 3 national surveys
- 3 formal feedback sessions
- 8 cases of good practice
- 1 LLEAP website and 'friends of LLEAP' list
- 1 LLEAP Advisory Group
- 1 practical LLEAP Guide

This report presents the results and findings from the 2011 survey phase of the LLEAP project. Broadly, the survey questions sought feedback on:

- Demographics and characteristics of the respondents and their organisations;
- Approach to grant making and grant seeking;
- Impact;
- Lessons learnt.

The content for the surveys was informed by the previous phases of the project and from members of the LLEAP Advisory Group (See Appendix 1); as well as the project team's own knowledge from working in education and / or philanthropy.

The sample

Both the philanthropic and not-for-profit surveys were convenience samples. This means the people who received the survey were identified by the project team or LLEAP Advisory Group members, or received the survey through a referral from someone else they knew in the sectors.

Based on the relevant education authority ethics approval, the sample for the school component of the study was drawn. The school survey was a random sample. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) maintains an up-to-date data set of all Australian schools by state and territory and sector, with enrolment numbers by year level, as well as location and contact details. A sample size of 350 primary and 350 secondary schools was drawn. This size allowed for reliable estimates at the national level and for distinctions, such as urban and rural, to be made.

Respondents

Over 300 responses to the surveys were received: 138 schools; 84 philanthropic foundations and trusts; and 80 not-for-profit organisations.

302 survey respondents –

Schools:

- 138 schools (Government, Catholic, Independent)
- About half from rural or remote locations

Philanthropic:

- 84 foundations and trusts (community, family, private, corporate, trustee company funds)
- Wide reach across Australia to support education-focused initiatives

Not-for-profits

- 80 Not-for-profits (invited to participate because they have an education focus and have worked with or for the benefit of schools)
- Mostly can offer support in Government sector

Schools

Ninety percent of the school questionnaires were completed by the Principal or Deputy Principal of the school. Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors were represented and the number of responses from each sector was proportionate to the sector split within the general population. Nine percent of the schools in the survey were Special Schools.

Philanthropic foundations or trusts

Chief Executive Officers were the main respondents to the philanthropic survey (37 percent). Beyond that role, the philanthropic questionnaires were filled out by a range of people across a variety of roles within the foundation or trust. These roles included: Program Manager, Executive Officer, Advisor, Board Chair and member roles. A fairly even spread of Community Foundations, Family Foundations, Private Foundations, Corporate Foundations and Funds within a Trustee Company responded.

Not-for-profit

The not-for-profit survey results also showed a range of people responding. But for the most part, it was the Chief Executive Officer or Fundraising or Grants Manager who responded (54 percent).

Location and reach

Nearly half of the school respondents indicated they were from rural or remote locations in Australia. Ten percent of the not-for-profits who responded reported that they provide programs or support for schools largely in these locations. Not-for-profits indicated they can offer support across all three sectors, but more indicated they do so in the Government sector than Independent or Catholic sectors.

For the most part, the philanthropic foundations and trusts surveyed appear to have the scope to fund educational initiatives from anywhere in Australia.

Experience and expertise

Not-for-profits in education are far more experienced and successful than their school colleagues at seeking and applying for grants from foundations or trusts. 44 percent of those not-for-profit respondents who had been successful in securing a grant indicated that they had success three or more times in the last 12 months. In contrast, 92 percent of the school respondents identified themselves as new or novices in this area and over half indicated they had never been successful in securing a grant from philanthropy.

Annual philanthropic education budget

Just over 25 percent of philanthropic foundations or trusts reported they had an approximate education-related budget in the last financial year of between \$501,000 and \$1million. Slightly fewer than 25 percent indicated a budget for the same period of under \$50,000. The mix of

Grant seeking success –

Not-for-profits:

- Far more experienced than schools
- Apply for philanthropic grants more often than schools
- 44% in the last year had success three or more times

Schools:

- 92% new or novice
- Last year most applied only once or twice
- 53% in the last year had not been successful

Philanthropic budgets in the last financial year vary significantly:

- About 25% - \$501,000 and \$1 million
- About 25% - under \$50,000

respondents is one explanation for this result (i.e. from small community foundations to larger foundations). The spread of larger and smaller budgets is also testament to the diversity of philanthropic foundations and trusts within the sector.

Key findings

There is a wide variation in the knowledge, skills and understanding of philanthropy and education engagement. This makes it difficult to develop a robust evidence base about what success means and how to maximise impact. Much more attention needs to be paid to knowledge building, sharing and exchange within and between the philanthropic, school and not-for-profit sectors.

**Overall –
Much more attention needs to be paid to knowledge building, sharing and exchange within and between the philanthropic, school and not-for-profit sectors.**

Collaboration

Collaboration is one way through which to build, share and exchange knowledge. This statement should not be taken as a wholesale endorsement of collaboration as *the* solution for more effective engagement of philanthropy in education. But it is clear from analysing the survey results that collaborative thinking, actions and ways of relating to one another present an unexploited opportunity and challenge for education and philanthropy.

For each group surveyed:

Collaboration is limited in scope and nature and is serendipitous and informal.

Collaboration is perceived as a vehicle for learning but major road blocks in the form of lack of time and knowledge stand in the way.

***It would be good if it were easier to collaborate with other foundations and to discuss possible distributions prior to grant making rounds.
(Philanthropic respondent)***

Those surveyed were asked to identify what they felt were critical ‘ingredients’ for effective engagement of philanthropy with education. Thematic analysis of these ‘ingredients’, in conjunction with the survey results about needs and major barriers, produced ten factors for effective engagement. Seven of the ten factors make explicit reference to collaboration in some form and context (e.g. success factor: ‘reciprocity’, indicator example: highly effective engagement of philanthropy in education will have evidence of the partners bringing their strengths to the relationship).

At present, collaboration within and between the sectors is limited in scope and nature and is serendipitous and informal. Collaboration is perceived as a vehicle for learning but major road blocks in the form of lack of time and knowledge stand in the way.

Knowledge

Overall, it appears that Australian schools know little about philanthropic foundations or trusts. Respondents to the school survey were far more likely than not-for-profits (five or more times) to seek funding from *community fundraising*. The reverse was true when seeking additional funds for educational purposes from *philanthropic grants*.

**Schools –
Level of knowledge about philanthropic foundations or trusts in Australia is limited.**

On the other side of the coin, philanthropic foundations and trusts indicated a need to improve their knowledge of educational issues, the contexts in which they are granting and how to collaborate for maximum impact. There is scope to improve the knowledge of who funds what within the philanthropic sector.

Philanthropic foundations and trusts indicated a need to improve their knowledge:

- Of educational issues
- Of the contexts in which they grant
- In how to collaborate for maximum impact

The LLEAP philanthropic survey provided respondents with the option of identifying their foundation or trust by name. Twenty-five philanthropic foundations or trusts took this option, including their target audiences and key priorities for grant making in education. This kind of baseline information could be used as a catalyst for the creation of potentially new networks of mutual interest and support.

There is scope to improve the knowledge of who funds what within the philanthropic sector: 25 foundations and trusts identified themselves. 14 of these can fund schools directly.

Barriers

Access issues dominate the story of the 2011 results for schools. This manifested itself in terms of what school respondents perceived as their general lack of knowledge about who and how to find potential philanthropic supporters (directly or in partnership with an eligible organisation). It also emerged in their need to improve their technical knowledge of how to write a good grant application and in their need to better understand the philanthropic sector.

Major barriers

Schools:

- Access issues

Not-for-profits:

- Sustainability issues

Philanthropy:

- Knowledge issues

In-keeping with their self-reported high levels of experience and expertise, not-for-profit organisations have greater knowledge about seeking philanthropic grants than their school colleagues: 86 percent reported they had been successful in applying for a philanthropic grant once or more in the last 12 months. It is sustainability issues that dominate the 2011 results for not-for-profits in education. These manifested in terms of tensions around short-term versus long-term funding of grants, with the former creating knock-on consequences for appointing staff to deliver ongoing programs in education.

How philanthropic foundations and trusts build, share and exchange knowledge was a prominent theme in their results. While there was no *single* stand out barrier to grant making for foundations or trusts, a cluster of four key barriers was apparent. This cluster included 'how best to collaborate and with whom'; 'how to identify who to fund'; 'lack of knowledge and expertise in a particular topic'; and 'lack of time to develop relationships'.

Legal and tax status

The legal and tax status laws in Australia make it more difficult for philanthropic foundations and trusts to engage in education, especially directly with schools and, more particularly, especially with Government schools. It is the "elephant in the room" and is perceived by philanthropic foundation and trust respondents, as a key need to be addressed.

Philanthropics:

The legal and tax status laws in Australia make it more difficult for foundations and trusts to engage in education, especially directly to government schools. It is the *elephant in the room*.

The complexity of Australia's legal and tax laws

heightens the importance of knowing this information in order to maximise the potential to grant or to seek a grant. The fact that a number of respondents from all three surveyed groups skipped these questions and that 20 percent of schools were unsure of both their legal and tax status, highlights the potential for improvement in this area.

Target audiences and priority areas

There are clear commonalities and differences in the target audiences and priorities between the school, not-for-profit and philanthropic respondents. Overall, schools and not-for-profits were more likely than philanthropic foundations or trusts to have a specific target audience in mind. From a list of 17 target audiences identified from the interview phase of the LLEAP project, 'secondary school age' held a similarly high level of interest across the three groups of respondents.

In terms of the top five ranked target audiences for each sector, 'teachers' and 'parents/families' featured strongly in school results. But these same groups fell outside the top five target audiences for philanthropic and not-for-profit respondents. Conversely, ranked within the top five audiences for not-for-profits and philanthropics were 'disadvantaged', 'Indigenous' and 'rural/remote communities'. But school respondents had these audiences only within their top ten.

Also identified from the interview phase of the LLEAP project were twenty-six priority areas (e.g. 'music', 'creative and performing arts', 'post-school transitions' etc.). The greatest synergy across the three respondent groups was the priority areas of 'literacy and numeracy' and 'student engagement'. Beyond these priority areas, distinct differences were found.

The priority area of 'teacher quality', ranked third by schools, was ranked 16th by not-for-profits and 12th by philanthropic foundations or trusts. Historical boundary issues between government and philanthropy may provide an explanation for this result. But the same cannot be said for the difference in rankings for the priority area 'digital/online learning'. School respondents ranked this priority area fourth. In contrast, not-for-profits ranked it 12th and it was ranked 10th by philanthropic respondents.

Decision making

A challenge for those seeking or making philanthropic grants is clarifying who to target and what to set as a priority. With this in mind, a number of the survey questions explored the approach taken by grant seekers and grant makers.

Top five target audiences –

Schools:

1. Primary school age
2. Teachers
3. Secondary school age
4. Parents / families
5. Females

Not-for-profits:

1. Secondary school age
2. Disadvantaged
2. (=) Females
3. Males
4. Indigenous
5. Rural/remote communities

Philanthropics:

1. Secondary school age
1. (=) Disadvantaged
2. Primary school age
2. (=) Rural/remote communities
3. Pre-school
3. (=) Indigenous
4. Females
5. Males

Top five priority areas –

Schools:

1. Literacy and numeracy
2. Student engagement
3. Quality teaching
4. Digital / online learning
4. (=) Ongoing professional learning
5. Student leadership development

Not-for-profits:

1. Community education
2. Community partnerships
2. (=) Student engagement
3. Literacy and numeracy
3. (=) Mentoring
4. Educational play
5. Student leadership development
5. (=) Student retention

Philanthropics:

1. Literacy and numeracy
2. Student engagement
3. Student retention
4. No specific area of focus
5. Mental health services and/or education

Philanthropic foundations or trusts use reference to their organisation's purposes as a guiding force in their decision making about education priority areas. Those from the not-for-profit sector also appear highly attuned to the significance of this information. The results suggest that they pay particular attention to reading a foundation's or trust's annual report and website when deciding whether to consider applying for a grant or not.

Informing decisions –

- Philanthropy (reference to their guiding purposes)
- Not-for-profits (read philanthropic's annual report and website)
- Schools (use informal social sources)

In contrast, school respondents indicated they use very few sources to inform their decision making. They rarely have a dedicated person within the school and nearly 90 percent reported that they do not read the annual reports of foundations or trusts. Instead, their responses showed a pattern of utilising social sources, such as informal discussions with experienced grant seekers or colleagues or personal networks to inform their decision making. This finding is consistent with school respondent's self-reported general lack of experience and expertise in grant seeking.

Impact

Those seeking and making grants have to ask themselves hard questions if the impact of philanthropy in education is to be identified and maximised.

Such questions include: What is the relationship between philanthropy and education? What is known about the role of philanthropy in education? What outcomes might reasonably be expected from the partial or sole funding of a project or program in education? How will you know? What types of evidence and ways of gathering evidence could be used to demonstrate that outcomes have or are on the way to being achieved?

Other questions focus on the relationship between leadership practices and improvements in grant seeking and grant making. The conditions viewed as critical for the effective engagement of philanthropy in education lie at the core of these questions. The LLEAP surveys explored each of these issues.

Role of philanthropy in education

The way people viewed philanthropy's role in education connected strongly to what they saw as being the key barriers to more effective engagement of philanthropy in education. So for school respondents, philanthropy's most important role was seen as a blend of opening new frontiers through 'supporting and encouraging innovation' and 'encouraging and facilitating partners'.

Role of philanthropy in education –

- Schools (open new frontiers)
- Not-for-profits (create the space for longer-term support)
- Philanthropy (change the status quo)

Not-for-profit respondents saw philanthropy's role as 'creating the space for longer-term approaches to grant making'. Those from the philanthropic sector saw their number one role as 'being a catalyst for change'. This role was closely followed by a view that philanthropy plays 'a prevention and early intervention role' and to 'fill an immediate need' role in education. A characteristic of philanthropy's role in education that can be surmised from these views is to change the status quo in education. This raises the question - what is philanthropy's engagement in education trying to change? And how do we know if the change being sought has been achieved or is on the way to being achieved?

Outcomes

A number of content outcomes (e.g. learning/academic), process outcomes (e.g. further funding has been secured) and reach outcomes (e.g. new or expanded networks) were listed as items in the surveys. Common to all respondents was an expectation that the sole or partial funding of philanthropy in education would lead to keeping learners engaged in their learning. 'Student engagement' outcomes topped the list of expected outcomes for all three groups surveyed.

Commonality –

- Student engagement outcome: funding from philanthropy can lead to keeping learners engaged in their learning

The ripple or flow-on effect, as an area of expected outcome from philanthropy funding is more obvious in the results from the not-for-profit and philanthropic respondents than it is from the school respondents. The school respondents expected that a possible outcome from philanthropic funding might be the 'applied learning into another project or program' but they were less likely than the other two groups surveyed to consider 'new or refined models' or 'new or expanded networks' as outcomes. Coupled with the other school results about barriers (e.g. finding partners, how to collaborate, time demands), what this may suggest is that outcomes are still largely school-bound.

Point of difference –

- Philanthropics and not-for-profits (more so than schools) expect the impact of the funding to flow-on (e.g. new or expanded networks).

Evaluation

School and not-for-profit respondents had a higher expectation than philanthropic foundation and trust respondents that evaluation would be included in a proposal for a grant.

Point of difference –

- Schools and not-for-profits have a higher expectation than philanthropics that evaluation will be part of the grant proposal.

Types of data and ways of gathering it

A mantra over recent years is for schools to be data driven and data rich. Consistent with this policy climate, a significantly higher percentage of school respondents expected to use satisfaction and performance data to indicate that an outcome had been achieved than their not-for-profit and philanthropic colleagues. About 60 percent of school respondents reported that they might use satisfaction data and over 50 percent that they might use performance data. These percentages were almost double what the not-for-profit and philanthropic respondents reported.

Point of difference –

- Schools were almost twice as likely to draw on satisfaction and performance data to indicate that an outcome has been achieved than philanthropic and not-for-profits.

How data might be gathered was the third question in a trilogy of survey questions about outcomes. A general conclusion from the results is that all eleven ways of gathering data (e.g. through observation, through some form of pre- and post-test etc) were viable options for the groups surveyed for developing a case about the impact of a grant. Two distinct differences were also evident. School respondents were about three times as likely as not-for-profits and five times more likely than philanthropic respondents to consider gathering

Commonality –

- All three groups surveyed thought the 11 ways of gathering data were viable options

Point of difference –

- Schools are more likely than philanthropics and not-for-profits to consider 'portfolios of student work' and 'digital / online' ways of gathering data.

evidence of impact from ‘portfolios of student learning’. They were also about twice as likely as the other respondent groups to consider the use of ‘digital journals’ or some other form of ‘online medium (blogs, email trails)’.

Philanthropy’s broader impact in education

Philanthropy’s impact in education goes beyond the provision of grants. The results indicated that those in philanthropy are also sources of, for example, ‘general professional expertise and guidance’ and the ‘brokers or facilitators of introductions’. Both of these forms of assistance signal the important and perhaps unrecognised social tool that philanthropy can offer in education.

Philanthropy’s impact in education goes beyond the provision of grants:

- Sources of professional expertise and guidance
- Brokers or facilitators of introductions

Effective engagement of philanthropy in education

The final question of each survey was open ended. Those surveyed were invited to identify what they perceived to be the critical conditions for effective engagement of philanthropy in education. Respondents were free to identify any aspect of grant seeking or grant making (e.g. identification of a need, matching, delivery of a program or project, acquittal or dissemination issues). They were also free to do so from any perspective (i.e. school, not-for-profit or philanthropy). Over 250 critical ingredients were identified and then thematically analysed. This analysis resulted in the identification of 10 success factors that respondents thought would reflect highly effective engagement of philanthropy in education, albeit from their respective vantage points and situations.

Respondents thought effective engagement would show evidence of:

- building capacity;
- making informed decisions;
- knowledge in education and philanthropy contexts;
- a ‘good fit’;
- commitment of appropriate resourcing;
- effective communications;
- role clarity;
- relationships based on the foundations of trust;
- reciprocity;
- being impact focused.

How these factors might be reflected in practice varied in terms of the context and the lens through which the success factor was being described (i.e. philanthropy, education or not-for-profit). Both the school and not-for-profit respondents indicated that a key need for improved engagement of philanthropy in education was for foundations and trusts to work with them to identify needs and ways to fund these needs. The not-for-profits, possibly because of their greater experience in seeking support from philanthropy, also highlighted that foundations and trusts may need to broaden what they will support. What these initial illustrators of success and effectiveness provide is a starting point for further debate and discussion.

Concluding comments

The 2008 “Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for the Young Australians”¹ presents visionary statements of expectation. The first Goal is to promote ‘equity and excellence’; and the second is ‘for all Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens’ (p. 7).

The idea, however, that improving outcomes for learners is the domain of education alone, to the exclusion of others in the community, has long gone. Teaching and learning cannot succeed without countering disadvantage in its broadest sense. Within the declaration is the expectation that relationships be formed to help forge connections between young people and the communities in which they learn, live and work.

The 2011 LLEAP survey responses suggest that to improve the impact of philanthropy in education much more attention needs to be paid to:

- knowledge building
- knowledge sharing
- knowledge exchange
- overcoming access issues (e.g. finding potential partners and grants; constraints on grant making in education)
- addressing sustainability issues (e.g. tensions around short-term versus long-term grant making)

Pressure points:

- for schools – these coalesce around the ‘starting gate’ issues of access
- for not-for-profit - it is issues associated with sustainability (e.g. planning for life beyond the philanthropic grant) that present as their key challenge
- for the philanthropics - it is three domains of knowledge (building, sharing and exchanging) that surface

Research from Australia and overseas affirms that a raft of relationships and resources are needed to counter disadvantage. The term ‘resourcing’ includes grants, in-kind and volunteer support, sponsorship, awards, bursaries or scholarships, prizes or donations, and more broadly relationship building within the community. The LLEAP study focuses on the relationship of philanthropy in education through grant making and other areas of support.

At the launch of the LLEAP project Professor Geoffrey Blainey (AC) spoke of the long-standing history and role that philanthropy has played in education, but there may be better ways of doing things and we should be searching for those ways. The findings from the LLEAP surveys are part of this search. They are conversation starters, and as with all good conversations, will sometimes be provoking, in-depth, philosophical, or practical in their focus and outcome.

¹ MCEETYA. (December, 2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Melbourne, Victoria: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.