In Her Gift

Activism and Altruism in Australian Women’s Philanthropy 1880-2005

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Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of Australian women philanthropists who donated money to social causes and public institutions in the decades from the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twenty-first century. In a colonial society where wealth generation and its disposal was essentially the province of men, a small but significant number of women who were wives and daughters of men of substance found themselves in a position to use family resources for their own chosen philanthropic ends. They did so in a context of colonial women's activism through women's associations, and derived motivation from their religious faith. Australian women's philanthropy drew upon British and American traditions. The remarkable wealth generation of the industrialising United States underwrote philanthropic women's very considerable donations, deployed with a moral authority that was fostered by evangelical Protestantism. Likewise, in Britain, evangelical work was supplemented by funding from elite wealthy women who could access familial fortunes. Australian women's philanthropy was distinctive because, despite the country's comparatively modest prosperity, the energetic and pragmatic association of women around philanthropic causes, often with a religious imperative, emboldened women of independent means to become exceptional givers. In the first half of the twentieth century, possibilities for women's active involvement in philanthropy expanded. Women in Australia gained political citizenship for federal elections in 1902, and by 1908, had been awarded political rights in each state. The 'new woman citizen' was able to assume a stronger profile in the workforce, in the professions and in business; social change that was mirrored in the activism of women philanthropists. Rapid economic growth after World War Two, and a developing national consciousness of the importance of philanthropic endeavours saw the backgrounds of women philanthropists diversify, just as a new women's movement arose to challenge and reshape women's public roles. There are undeniable continuities in women's philanthropy from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: in direct giving and fundraising, in commitment to women's causes, and in the influence of religion. Nevertheless, by 2005, women were sustaining an unprecedented and outstanding presence, not only as individual philanthropists, but in the highest levels of decision-making in an arena increasingly referred to as the 'third sector' of the economy. They have assumed a central role in the growing number of
Australian philanthropic foundations and in the shaping of policies on funding for social change. Moreover there are clear signs that the influence of women in philanthropy, as in other public spheres including mainstream politics, will amplify in future. In investigating the development of women's philanthropy in Australia, with a focus on those who had money within their gift, this thesis profiles over fifty women with specific reference to Mrs Anne Bon, Janet Lady Clarke, Mrs Ivy Brookes, Dr Una Porter, Ms Barbara Blackman, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, and Ms Jill Reichstein.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD

ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used

iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices

Barbara Lemon.

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Introduction

Giving and voluntarism have traditionally provided and continue to provide the means through which women have grasped, wielded, and maintained public power... As such, philanthropy lies at the heart of women's history.


In the autumn of 1880, 48 ladies convened to organise a Fancy Fair in the Melbourne Town Hall. Among the principal organisers were Janet Lady Clarke; her aunt, Mrs Charles Ryan; and her cousin, artist Ellis Rowan. Beginning on March 31st, the Fair would last four days with all proceeds going to the Trinity College Council, then in financial crisis. Newspapers mocked the ladies for having the temerity to think they could make a dent in College debts of over £6,000 with their shooting galleries, ornate stalls and fashionable frocks. Members of the College Council appeared almost embarrassed by the idea and Trinity's Warden, Dr Alexander Leeper, refused to be involved. In the event, the Fancy Fair attracted visitors in their thousands. The £2,500 in profit was received by the Council with 'ill grace: Dr Leeper positively resented it'.

The sum reduced College debt by £2,000 and paid for a weatherboard dining room which stood for the next 45 years, but the women would not go to the trouble again. Exactly 120 years later in that very same College, scholar of philanthropy Diana Leat presented a paper: 'Philanthropy', she said, 'is a means not an end. The end is to create a “good” society in which we respect each other and the environment; a society which is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable because it is fundamentally just and maximises the potential of all its resources.'

The philanthropy of the Fancy Fair organisers in 1880 and the philanthropy to which Leat referred in the first year of the new millennium appear worlds apart. Leat represents a new era in which philanthropic funds are distributed primarily through the administrative machinery of foundations and trust funds; in which women working in philanthropy often presiding over the distribution of very considerable sums of money outnumber men; in which women donate more often than do men, though in smaller

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amounts; in which Australia’s most likely donor is female and middle-aged, from the higher income and higher education brackets; in which wealthy donors prefer to attach their names to ‘innovative’ projects and ‘make their personal stamp’; and in which many philanthropists are using their money and influence to substantially reshape aspects of the society in which they live. By contrast, the women behind the Fancy Fair had little access to or control over money and relied upon fundraising for philanthropic activities that were not likely to challenge the status quo. Their contribution was practical and they were often passionate for the cause, but engagement in some form of philanthropic service was expected of privileged women, and if they sought a public presence they had little other choice. Even so, their activities were not always appreciated when they encroached upon the male domain. Historian Elizabeth Windschuttle noted that ‘some [women] found antipathy to their efforts when they went beyond what was considered the proper role for women and involved themselves in general management’.

Certainly Dr Leeper and his all-male Council felt in some way exposed by Lady Clarke and her associates. Like schoolboys, we might say, they did not wish to be rescued by the girls. It is difficult to imagine any institution today shunning any person, male or female, who offered to cut its debts by a third. The assessment of women’s contribution to public life has changed, and with it, women’s standing in the world of philanthropy.

Philanthropy, meaning literally ‘love of mankind’, is still a term seldom used and little understood in Australia. When the former Director of Philanthropy Australia, Elizabeth Cham, began contacting the press in the 1990s in an attempt to raise the profile of philanthropy in this country, she was asked to choose another, more familiar word. Historically speaking, philanthropy might have included all aspects of charity and service for others: voluntarism, not-for-profit organisations, leagues and unions. Today it is its own entity, complicated by a growing array of special categories: venture philanthropy, progressive philanthropy, corporate philanthropy, corporate citizenship, social investment, social change philanthropy and grant-making. In his book Giving It Away: In Praise of Philanthropy (2003), Denis Tracey is careful to distinguish between charity and philanthropy, defining the former as ‘a gift made with no expectation beyond the immediate alleviation of need’, the latter implying ‘a more thoughtful or

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strategic approach’. Historian of voluntarism, Melanie Oppenheimer, finds that ‘charity has had a specific religious component, as opposed to philanthropy, which is based on broader humanitarian principles’. Barbara Blackman offers a succinct definition: ‘charity is spent on human welfare, and philanthropy is spent on human endeavour’. This distinction has come to be widely accepted. In some circles, charity has taken on rather negative connotations as the quick fix, ‘band-aid’ approach versus philanthropy’s more preventive and ameliorative one. The Changemakers Australia group, established by an all-female team including prominent leaders Jill Reichstein and Trudy Wyse, has for its slogan ‘Community Philanthropy: Partnerships for Change’, and supports organisations working for sustainability of the environment, social justice and equality. Similarly the Lance Reichstein Foundation, of which Jill Reichstein is Chair, advocates ‘Change Not Charity’. In a combined Fund and Foundation annual report for 2004, The Myer Family Commitment is declared as follows: ‘To promote creativity, innovation, tolerance, and the fulfilment of potential for all in society’. Even the long-established Lord Mayor’s Charitable Fund markets itself as ‘Building for Tomorrow’.

How, then, do we merge old and new to define philanthropy? What is a philanthropist? For the purposes of this thesis, an all-encompassing definition covering all charitable organisations and their members is unworkable. Mark Lyons of Sydney’s University of Technology writes that while ‘philanthropy originally meant acting from a love of humanity… we have now adapted it to refer to the giving of money or goods to nonprofit (or public) organisations. We omit from the definition of philanthropy the giving of time, that is volunteering or participating’. Likewise, a paper from the Queensland University of Technology’s Margaret Steinberg and Lara Cain defines philanthropic women as ‘givers of their own wealth’. Even these definitions are problematic, though, applicable only since the emergence of the so-called ‘third sector’ as an important component of the national economy. This history of philanthropy must necessarily take a flexible approach that matches the position of women over a lengthy

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6 Denis Tracey, Giving It Away: In Praise of Philanthropy (Scribe Publications, Melbourne 2003), 4.
8 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
opportunities for women in the United States: 'social work, settlement work, and the medical profession were all opened to women in large measure because of the power of feminine philanthropy'.

As a fundamental principle, feminist theorists have argued from the nineteenth century that women require economic independence to be equal and liberated citizens. In the interwar years of the twentieth century women’s right to work became, at the very least, a possibility, and this had particular ramifications for women’s philanthropy. While Australia’s women donors continued, almost without exception, to be backed by an inheritance or a wealthy husband, the way was open for them to take on employment and distribute their own earnings. With time, the backgrounds of Australia’s women philanthropists diversified along with the range of philanthropic causes that they chose to support. Post-war migration added to the effect by dramatically shifting the composition of Australia’s population and introducing new philanthropic ideas from non-Anglo cultures: Jewish philanthropic influences became particularly important. By the 1970s, as the women’s movement was revived, and particularly as American-style philanthropic foundations were adopted in Australia with increasing rapidity, women came to be heavily involved in the machinations of the Australian philanthropic world. Foundations called for extensive administrative work, and women were often sought for the role of Executive Secretary or Research Officer, finding themselves, subtly, with as much or more influence over the philanthropic direction of the foundation than its own trustees. By 2002, at least 15% of the 338 philanthropic trusts listed in the Australian Directory of Philanthropy were funded by individual women; 70 trusts were established by families or groups that included women; and the vast majority employed women as administrators.

This thesis traces the development of Australian women’s philanthropy using a number of biographical studies. These have been arranged chronologically in order to reflect parallel changes in women’s social status resulting from the activism of the women’s movement in a fast changing economy, with a view to tracking the possible influence of that movement. The primary concern of the thesis is to unearth the stories of Australian women – some well known, others less so – who have emerged as exceptional givers, able to give what were sometimes substantial sums of money to

philanthropic causes in this country; to determine how they were able to access money and why they chose to give it away; and to establish, as far as is practicable, their impact upon the social and political fabric of Australia.

Research on philanthropy within Australia is limited, and, where it exists, has tended to favour restricted statistical rather than historical analysis to draw conclusions about the growth or decline of philanthropy, with less interest in its social role. Only recently has the study of philanthropy been acknowledged as a viable academic discipline. In 2002, New Zealand historian Margaret Tennant observed a shift in welfare historiography away from statistical and demographic analysis and back toward cultural approaches that 'tease out the meanings of charity for all concerned' and introduce 'the concept of theatres of charity, whereby those involved, donors and recipients, act out roles expected.'

Tennant also notes a 'more cyclical view of welfare provision' in recent studies; one that acknowledges the continued integration of voluntary work, family, the market and the state:

One consequence of this is that the voluntary sector is presented in a more positive light. From earlier analyses that saw voluntary charity as class ridden, largely to be interpreted in terms of social control and 'do-gooding' ladies, a more complex view has emerged. Drawing partly upon Foucauldian notions of the dispersed nature of power, it complicates the charitable encounter by considering the poor as using charities in what are often quite strategic ways. There has been a greater acknowledgement of the recipients of charity, and a tendency to see them as actors in the welfare exchange.

Major academic centres for the contemporary study of philanthropy in Australia include the Sydney University of Technology’s Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management, established in 1990; Queensland University of Technology’s Centre of Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies, established in 2001; Deakin University’s Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights; and Swinburne University’s Asia Pacific Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment. Both the UTS and QUT centres are stationed within their respective Faculties of Business, and academically, philanthropy continues to straddle economic and social studies. In 2004,
the UTS and QUT centres contributed to the *Giving Australia* report commissioned by the Australian Government’s Department of Family and Community Services. The findings of this study were announced by Phillip Donoghue, Mark Lyons and Myles McGregor-Lowndes in Melbourne at Philanthropy Australia’s October 2005 international conference. With a declared focus on ‘building philanthropy, corporate citizenship and community capacity’, and continued emphasis on the role of philanthropy in a democracy, the conference – the third held since Philanthropy Australia’s revitalisation in the late 1990s – welcomed over 350 attendees from all states of Australia (except Tasmania) and New Zealand, with presentations from Dutch, Canadian, American and French guest speakers. Such a well-attended event would imply that there is strong interest in Australian philanthropy, yet as late as 2001, Lyons could describe his book *Third Sector: The Contribution of Nonprofit and Cooperative Enterprises in Australia* as ‘the first publication to describe Australia’s third sector… the first attempt to understand [its] dynamics and to raise some important questions about its future’. With philanthropic foundations and trusts now run like businesses, philanthropy has become part of the poorly researched third sector to which Lyons refers. Tracey could still claim in 2003 that ‘philanthropy in Australia remains largely unexplored territory. A few researchers are doing useful work in quantifying the amounts given and to whom, but little or no study has been made of what motivates Australia’s private and family donors’. His own anthology of interviews points to generational differences in philanthropic style, the new professionalism of grant-seekers and the still contentious notion of corporate philanthropy, or social investment. The *Giving Australia* report has since partially redressed the gap in research, but relies upon statistical material and deals with philanthropy in the here and now. In a plenary address at the Philanthropy Australia conference in 2005, academic and philanthropic administrator Professor Dorothy Scott remarked: ‘There is actually little written about philanthropy in Australian history, which is interesting in itself, as philanthropy was a powerful social force in so many aspects of Australian society in the nineteenth century… philanthropy was there before the State’. In 2006, Kym Madden published ‘Giving and Identity: Why Affluent Australians Give – or Don’t – to Community Causes’ in the *Australian*

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23 Tracey, *Giving It Away*, viii.
Journal of Social Studies, registering surprise that ‘academic investigation of the topic [philanthropy] is relatively underdeveloped, given the financial challenges facing the nonprofit sector, the high levels of professionalism demonstrated by the philanthropic sector in various countries and calls for more research about philanthropy’.25

A broad review of secondary literature within the fields of state welfare, charity, and private philanthropy in Australia and even internationally reveals that the bulk of it is recent (published within the last ten or fifteen years) with contemporary subject matter, while a smaller number of publications look to the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. A still smaller number investigate women in philanthropy specifically. Shurlee Swain’s chapter, ‘Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia’, in Kathleen McCarthy’s edited collection Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society, published in the United States, is one of only a handful of academic works that deal explicitly with women and philanthropy in historical terms from an Australian perspective.26 Others include Judith Godden’s 1983 thesis, ‘Philanthropy and the Woman’s Sphere, Sydney, 1870 circa 1900’27 and B.J. Gleeson’s published research on women and charity in colonial Melbourne in the September 1995 edition of Area.28 More recently, Margaret Steinberg of Queensland University of Technology conducted a number of interviews with prominent women philanthropists and produced a series of working papers. Steinberg’s work is focused in the present, including an inquiry into the correlation between ageing and philanthropy, though her 2003 paper co-authored with Lara Cain attempts briefly to construct a general history of women’s philanthropy to pin-point and compare the ‘drivers for giving’ among colonial and contemporary women. The authors observe that ‘no single examination of the history of women’s philanthropy... or of its contemporary incarnation currently exists’.29

Building such a history throws up many challenges, and my approach has been shaped by the work of a number of scholars. To begin with, the study had to be framed within a broader history of Australian women; particularly wealthy Australian women.

29 Steinberg and Cain, ‘Putting Paid to Prescribed Roles’, 5.
Penny Russell’s *A Wish of Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity* (1994) is valuable for its examination of the intricate social performance of elite mid-nineteenth-century Victorian women. Russell reminds us of the exclusivity of a group that, by 1880, was challenged by the changing composition of the bourgeoisie, encompassing as it did increasing numbers of commercially successful people who lacked claims to an aristocratic background but possessed vast wealth and sought entrance to the ranks of gentility. Despite this, power in the elite circles maintained its connection with ‘conscious moral, social and cultural superiority’, and women’s charitable work was part of the process. For the purposes of this thesis, Russell offers two particularly pertinent insights. The first is her conclusion that ‘feminism involved too direct an assertion of individual rights’ to appeal to ladies of the gentry, but that genteel femininity could nonetheless ‘throw down a challenge to patriarchy’. The second is her description of the paradox of genteel femininity that was ‘ideally removed from worldly issues of power and competition, yet was intrinsically connected with both’. In other words, elite women were expected to perform good works in public at the same time as they were domestically focused and in some senses invisible. This paradox was articulated by Leonore Davidoff in *The Best Circles* (1973), an examination of British society in the same period. Victorian and Edwardian upper- and middle-class women, writes Davidoff, were expected to provide a ‘haven of stability’ and to maintain the fabric of society specifically by virtue of not playing a part in public life. Charitable activity, however, was an inherent part of the structure of high society, providing the opportunity to mix with women of elevated social status. Some avoided the problem, for ‘actual charitable work with the poor was often considered too arduous, contaminating and degrading for young girls to undertake’, in which case they were ‘thrown back on a very private form of individual help and alms giving, reinforcing the limitations of their social experience’. In Australia, by contrast, a willingness to get one’s hands dirty might have been praiseworthy. Certainly *Table Talk* was full of admiration for Janet Lady Clarke in 1885 as she negotiated the ‘foetid alleys and festering lanes’ of Melbourne with the District Nursing Society.

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33 Davidoff, *The Best Circles*, 16, 57.
34 ‘Australian Lady Bountiful’, *Table Talk*, 24 December 1885.
Wealthy women were not the only women involved in the administration of philanthropic activity, and they were certainly not the only women whose lives were affected by it. In an edited compilation of essays, *Women, Class and History* (1980), Patricia Grimshaw, writing on women and the family, drew attention to ‘Australia’s greater egalitarianism’ and very particular class formation, wherein numbers of educated middle-class women could not always rely upon poorer women to take on childcare and domestic responsibilities, and had therefore to balance public (and philanthropic) activity with their own domestic work. Feminist studies including Marilyn Lake’s *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (1999) and Chilla Bulbeck’s aforementioned *Living Feminism* offer some insight into the self-image of Australian women, their central concerns, and the interaction of gender and class with the possession of money. Importantly for this thesis, they also consider the role of women’s organisations in shaping and supporting the public stance of individual women. Anne O’Brien contributes to the discussion in *God’s Willing Workers: Women and Religion in Australia* (2005), with a detailed examination of the specific influence of women’s religious organisations in charity, education and society. Women within the church were frequently called upon for their labour, she writes, but not expected to take on more prominent roles. Some women, however, used the church (as they did philanthropy) as a vehicle to push a social or political agenda, or to wield moral authority.

There is a plethora of publications on the history of welfare in Australia. In his study of the Charity Organisation Society in colonial Melbourne, Richard Kennedy wrote that Australian welfare history ‘tells the story of unfolding melioration achieved by means of “changing attitudes” and “reform” within “the community”. Class conflict is never mentioned’. Class conflict has become more central to analysis since Kennedy’s publication. Brian Dickey’s *No Charity There: A Short History of Welfare in Australia* (1987) is particularly useful for its division of Australian welfare history into four parts: the convict era, offering institutionalised welfare (1788-1850); free trade and laissez-faire

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capitalism, favouring charity and combining state funding with voluntary societies (1835-1890); the adoption of the doctrine of universal rights, promoting state welfare programs (1890-1949); and a period of compromise, wherein the notion of universal rights was supported but applied with limitations by the state (1949-1986). Mark Lyons' *Third Sector* offers a comprehensive history of the development of non-profit organisations in Australia, specifically their relationship with government. Official government reports such as the Industry Commission's *Charitable Organisations in Australia* (1995), *Giving Australia* (2005); and the *Inquiry into the Definition of Charities and Related Organisations* report, published in 2001 by the Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership roundtable, provide specific information around tax policy; the breadth and influence of non-profit organisations in Australia; and the propensity of Australians to give. The recommendation of the latter report to modernise the legal definition of charity, which still derives from the English statute of 1601, was rejected by Treasurer Peter Costello in the year of its publication.

Australian philanthropy is a product of English (and, where it differs from English practice, American) women's philanthropy, and in order to place it in context the researcher must cast the net a little wider. David Owen's *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (1964) and Frank Prochaska's *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (1980) have been the basis of comparisons between Australia and the United Kingdom in this thesis. Like Davidoff and Russell, Prochaska comments on the conflicting demands for women wanting to be outside, doing charitable work, and inside, personifying hearth and home. Prochaska notes the function of charity as both a reflection of personal virtue (socially or religiously motivated) and an escape from boredom, but notes too that charity as a profession 'did more than any other to enlarge the horizon of women in nineteenth-century England'. Women, he claims, exploited the social power offered to them by their charitable work. What is more, Prochaska finds an explicit link between philanthropy and the women's movement, specifically the campaign for female suffrage. Philanthropic work gave women self-confidence but also highlighted the limitations of their practical experience, and consequently of their

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potential charitable influence. Enfranchisement would give women a political voice which could only help to further their philanthropic cause. Of course there were many benevolent women who opposed female suffrage, but Prochaska finds that women who had trained in charitable societies were prominent among those who petitioned the House of Commons for enfranchisement in 1866.

Similar ideas are taken up by Kathleen McCarthy in *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929* (1982), and more particularly by writers in her aforementioned edited works, *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power* (1990) and *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (2001). McCarthy refers to women’s philanthropy as a ‘parallel power structure’, claiming that women, who were denied the career choices of their menfolk, joined non-profit organisations as a way of wielding some influence in public life. She notes that ‘the enduring caricature of Lady Bountiful has served to stigmatise women’s philanthropy’ but that ‘the legacy of the women who participated in charitable and philanthropic movements is impressive, ranging from the creation of new institutions and professions to Constitutional reform’. McCarthy concedes that more research is required into the impact of feminism on women’s philanthropy, the differences between men and women as donors, and the causes that attract female benevolence, but she does identify several ‘common denominators’ that can ‘typify feminine largesse’ in the United States, namely ‘an abiding interest in helping women and children; a tendency to move into gaps overlooked by government and male donors and volunteers; and a desire to exercise power’. Such ideas will be revisited in an Australian context in this thesis. McCarthy’s work on noblesse oblige in Chicago illustrates the effective combination of clerical injunctions and strong public opinion in pushing the city’s wealthier men and women to offer their money and time. She also emphasises the importance of religion in women’s philanthropy, noting that prior to the introduction of the Married Women’s Property Act there, women came to the voluntary arena solely through the church, while men might have been drawn to it by way of business or political contacts. The importance of religion receives further endorsement in *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society*, a collection of articles by international scholars of philanthropy. Every author acknowledges the role of religion in the philanthropy of his or her country. McCarthy notes that ‘Catholicism, Islam,

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46 McCarthy, Introduction to *Lady Bountiful Revisited*, x.
Hinduism, and Judaism all emphasise giving as a social and religious good... Protestantism and English common law encouraged women to volunteer their time as well as donate funds.48

Most research on women and philanthropy originates from, or is prompted by, academic centres within the United States. The prevalence of American research is not surprising given the sheer size of American philanthropy—assisted by tax incentives and an enormous wealth base—and its strong public profile. The American Ford Foundation listed its disbursement for 2002/2003 as $450 million, versus the $8 million over 2004/2005 for the Myer Foundation, one of Australia's largest. In *The Power of Good Deeds: Privileged Women and the Social Reproduction of the Upper Class*, Diana Kendall writes of the importance of philanthropy to elite American women who derive their social power not only from their wealth, but from their affiliation with particular charitable institutions or fundraising organisations.49 In May 2004, the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine quoted United States-born Penne Peacock, following her marriage to former Australian politician and ambassador Andrew Peacock. Of her meeting with Andrew, Penne told the magazine, 'I knew absolutely nothing about him. Everyone said there was a new Australian ambassador, and he was a bachelor. I thought, "It's easier to work with these embassies when the wives do charitable work." And that was it.50

Perhaps the most prolific organisation in terms of published material on the subject of women and philanthropy is City University New York's Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, of which Kathleen McCarthy is Director. The Center houses a library for working papers, journals and books on philanthropy. One report by American researcher Mary Ellen Capek, 'Women and Philanthropy: Old Stereotypes, New Challenges' (1998), discusses the concept of a 'woman donor', rejecting the idea of such a standardised entity. Capek regrets that 'much existing research [on women as donors] is based on stereotypes about gender that generate the wrong questions and hence the wrong answers.'51 Ann Kaplan and Joanne Hayes concur in 'What We Know About Women as Donors' (*New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, Vol 2, 1993), lamenting the 'dearth of clear, empirical data about why women contribute to charity',

51 Mary Ellen Capek, 'Women and Philanthropy: Old Stereotypes, New Challenges', 8. This report was produced for the Global Fund for Women; Michigan Women's Foundation; Resourceful Women; Women & Philanthropy; and Women's Funding Network in 1998.
adding that 'the assumption that some universal quality exists in the female donor may be based upon isolated examples rather than empirical data.' In London, Rita Kottasz takes a mathematical approach, interviewing 217 investment bankers, accountants and lawyers aged in their 20s to 40s and earning over £50,000 annually. Her aim is to ascertain the difference between the generosity of male and female contributions to charity, and the effect of age on the choice of charity. Kottasz finds that young people are more suspicious of institutions and less likely to give; those who do are likely to give to children's causes, homelessness, Third World agencies and environmental charities. Donations to charities for the elderly increase with the donor's own age. Her research suggests that women are more likely to give than are men, and that 'young affluent men are more inclined to be motivated by egoism rather than altruism when donating to charity'. Men were more interested in donating to the arts sector in return for social rewards, while women had a predilection for so-called 'people' charities and sought personal recognition from the charities themselves. In Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy (1995), Sondra Shaw and Martha Taylor are happy to make a distinction between men and women as philanthropists. The book notes a surge in female representation and lists ten predictions for women's philanthropy over the five years following publication. Most predictions pertain to a stronger presence for women as decision-makers both in business and personal finance. Shaw and Taylor's research investigates why 'women may not have been taken seriously as philanthropists' despite the significance of their contributions. It surmises that the nature of a woman's philanthropy can be determined to some extent by the generation she belongs to. New Older Women, for example, born between 1928 and 1945, are likely to give to charities assisting women in their careers or focusing on education, the environment, or the elderly. They are the first generation of women to give large amounts of money that they have earned and the first to fill board positions previously held by men. The next generation, post-war Baby Boomers, are acutely aware of society's problems; generous to non-profit organisations; well educated; and likely to give locally (wanting to see the results of their philanthropy) in the areas of environment, health care, homelessness,

52 Ann Kaplan and Joanne Hayes, 'What We Know About Women as Donors', in New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising, (Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services Foundation, Vol 2, Winter, 1993, 5-19), 16.
equality, child care and human needs. This concept of generational giving patterns— or rather, the idea that particular causes or philanthropic 'styles' might be in favour during particular eras—forms an important part of this thesis.

Back on Australian soil such helpful analysis is difficult to find, though the work of international scholars has opened avenues of analysis. For the most part, this is due to a scarcity of sources, but it can also be attributed to a continuing reticence on the subject of personal wealth and its distribution in Australia. It was Kym Madden who found that 'even major donors... were reluctant to describe themselves as "philanthropists", saying the term belonged to large U.S. donors'. Undoubtedly America has its share of anonymous philanthropists, but groups like 'Women & Philanthropy' in Washington DC publicly support women who wish to distribute their wealth, and promote philanthropic programs that support women in general. By contrast, the Women in Philanthropy (WIP) group and Woman Donor network set up in Melbourne in the 1990s (since disbanded) are shrouded in secrecy. Both groups were established with the aim of offering counsel and group support for women uncomfortable with their financial status or unsure of how and where to direct philanthropic money. Today, member lists are restricted, past members are reluctant to discuss the content of their meetings, and one box of WIP archives housed by the State Library of Victoria has mysteriously disappeared.

Though the formation of Melbourne's new Women Donors Network in 2007 signals a shift in attitude, the preference for anonymity might be explained in part by the Australian 'tall poppy syndrome', a negative take on wealth and power; or by a tendency to view philanthropy as a tax dodge for the rich, and displays of benevolence as condescending self-aggrandisement. Ellen Koshland, a member of the American Levi Strauss family, arrived in Australia in 1973 with ideas for a philanthropic project, but was confronted by a strong anti-American sentiment and was reluctant to be public about her wealth. Though her grandfather, Daniel E. Koshland, had established the San Francisco Foundation and was a great advocate for collaborative philanthropy, it took a push from Jill Reichstein in the mid-1980s for Koshland to bring her project to fruition. Today Koshland runs the Education Foundation in Melbourne, offering support to public primary and secondary schools. Her personal annual donations of between $100,000 and $200,000 are matched four times over through fundraising by

55 Shaw and Taylor, Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy, 10-11.
Foundation staff, but Koshland remains behind the scenes and still shies from public appearances. One can understand why. At a recent dinner event, this researcher encountered an educated, middle-aged man expressing disdain for people (in this case, women) who, in his view, took the credit for philanthropic activities that were funded by the wealth of their fathers or forebears. Yet Jill Reichstein, particularly, has been at pains to point out in interview that ‘I’m not the philanthropist, it’s my father who was the philanthropist, I’m just running his foundation’. Twenty years ago she was fighting the same pejorative attitude when a radio interview with Neil Mitchell, ostensibly about her philanthropy, turned into an interrogation about the model of car she was driving.

It is unsurprising that several of the women approached for interview in this study were cautious about being involved, for the critical take on the philanthropy of the wealthy finds a place not only in dinner-table conversation and the media, but in a substantial body of academic literature. Some choose to focus on the origins of great wealth; others on the perceived self-interest of those who give it away. Patricia O’Toole, for example, writes in *Money and Morals in America* of the extraordinary philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie, who gave away $350 million in his lifetime, but notes that he and his fellow industrialists also ‘lobbied for legislation to further their interests and regularly entered into pooling agreements designed to ruin competitors and inflate prices’. In Australia, Elizabeth Windschuttle has made reference to a ‘formidable group of elite women’ from the early nineteenth century onward who ‘were intent on moulding the morals and manners of society to their own design’, and used philanthropy to do so. Richard Kennedy has described late nineteenth century social work as ‘an instrument to slay the rising “threat” from the organising working class’. The Charity Organisation Society, he claims, offered ‘the enjoyment of gaining status by joining a “crusade” for a thoroughly respectable, ostensibly “humanitarian” and “scientific” cause that safely reinforced the existing social order’. Kennedy takes his cue from Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: ‘A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society. To this

57 Interview with Ellen Koshland (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2006.
58 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 21 November 2007.
60 Windschuttle, ‘Feeding the Poor and Sapping Their Strength’, 54.
section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of
the working class, organisers of charity.62

Other scholars of the United States have reinforced this Marxist analysis. In
2002, Diana Kendall was writing that ‘the philanthropy of the wealthy typically serves
to sustain upper-class interests’.63 Kendall is herself a member of several elite women’s
by-invitation-only volunteer or philanthropic groups in America: ‘we should not
assume’, she writes, ‘that [such groups] advocate, or in the future might advocate,
changes in social policies in order to benefit people in other economic classes’. Involvement with particular charitable organisations can bring social prestige and social
power, says Kendall, but members often ‘make belonging to the group appear to be an
act of benevolence rather than one of self-interest’.64 In Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture
of Elite Philanthropy, Francie Ostrower defends those elite philanthropists accused of
giving to their preferred cultural and educational institutions, and of neglecting the
poor. In fact, she writes, a comparatively small amount of philanthropy from all sectors
of society goes to the poor. Instead, people of all socio-economic backgrounds are
inclined to support organisations with which they have a personal involvement.
Ostrower notes that ‘particularly among those critical of elite philanthropy, there has
been a tendency to analyse philanthropy as if it were, in principle, charity. One
consequence is that “noncharitable” donations are treated as deviations from, and
abuses of, the intended purposes of philanthropy’.65 Ostrower’s study of elite
philanthropy in New York does, however, lead her to two more contentious conclusions.
The first is that the philanthropy of the wealthy is ‘an extension of, not a departure
from, their general existence as elites’, and that in non-profit organisations as in business
and society, the wealthy hold positions ‘at the top’.66 The second is that wealthy donors
tend to be detached from the direct recipients of their beneficence, serving on a hospital
board, for example, but not working with patients.

The women interviewed in this study were well aware of the mixed public
perception of philanthropists, with the exception perhaps of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch,
who was surprised to hear that philanthropists might be looked upon negatively and
remembered that, as a young woman involved in charitable activity, ‘I was very

65 Francie Ostrower, Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture of Elite Philanthropy (New Jersey: Princeton University
66 Ostrower, Why the Wealthy Give, 135.
confident, I don’t think I thought about myself much’. The reflection is worthy of consideration. It is easy for the historian to saddle his or her subjects with self-serving motives or to accuse them of perpetuating the social domination of their class but, more often than not, an individual gives away money for what are essentially idiosyncratic reasons. English historian Lawrence Stone wrote in 1972 that ‘the elite theorist and the elite historian tend to be disappointed egalitarians, whose misanthropy springs directly from outraged moral sentiment’. This thesis seeks not necessarily to allocate praise or blame, but to examine the circumstances within which some women – members for so many years of the second sex – were able to acquire disposable funds and were motivated to deploy them for philanthropic purposes that may not have served their own class. At the same time, it attempts to capture something of the self-perception of these exceptional givers. Responsibility towards the women who provided interviews for the study is an ethical challenge, but its aim has been in part to explore uncomfortable questions around motivation, self-interest, guilt, social status and the origins of wealth.

In principle, this thesis uses as a methodology the investigative techniques of prosopography. Lawrence Stone was an early proponent of prosopography, publishing an article on the subject in New York’s Historical Studies Today in 1972. Essentially, the word refers to a collective study of lives. A number of people are selected and common background characteristics examined by way of a uniform set of questions about ‘birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of personal wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office, and so on’. This information is compiled, contrasted and tested for any obvious patterns. Prosopography is based upon the idea that the actions of any institution or organisation can be understood by examining the experiences of the individual people within it. It is designed to analyse ‘the role in society, and especially the changes in that role over time, of specific (usually elite) status groups, holders of titles, members of professional associations, officeholders, occupational groups, or economic classes’. Stone remarks that ‘the individual is moved by a convergence of constantly shifting forces, a cluster of influences such as kinship, friendship, economic

67 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 10 November 2007.
interest, class prejudice, political principle, religious conviction',\textsuperscript{72} and notes the importance of building passions, ideals and prejudices into any historical account. Certainly this thesis attempts to do so.

One of the greatest challenges in putting together a study of Australian women philanthropists has been simply to find them. Steinberg and Cain have suggested that stories and collections on women’s philanthropy will come to light as more and more material on the lives of early Australian women becomes available, but relevant primary sources are still scarce. Australia’s peak body for philanthropic organisations, Philanthropy Australia, holds a growing collection of monographs and reports as well as producing the annual \textit{Australian Directory of Philanthropy} and the \textit{Australian Philanthropy} magazine, but most publications date back no further than the 1980s.\textsuperscript{73} There are no great archival collections on women philanthropists; no detailed records of personal gifts; no diaries or letters reflecting upon the experience of giving away money when few other women are able to. Extensive personal papers do exist for Janet Lady Clarke (held by the family), Ivy Brookes (National Library of Australia), Ola Cohn (State Library of Victoria) and Dr Una Porter (University of Melbourne Archives), but rarely do these women discuss their philanthropic endeavours, especially not in monetary terms. Instead, the story of Australian women’s philanthropy has had to be pieced together using snippets of information scavenged from memoirs, directories, anthologies, newspapers, wills and probate documents. The State Library of Victoria holds miscellaneous letters relating to Janet Biddlecombe, Ivy Brookes, Mabel Brooks, Eliza Hall, Ada Knox, Elisabeth Murdoch, Georgina Sweet and Janet Clarke, with a far more extensive file on the Stegley Foundation. The Mitchell Library of NSW holds similarly limited material on Eadith Walker, Mary Fairfax and Georgina Sweet, with more extensive family papers for Lucy Gullett and Mary Windeyer. In most instances the papers are obscure or relate to the subject’s husband or father. Documents pertaining to women of earlier generations are often stored with family or spouse records – the occasional letter, a sporadic reference here and there, little of much substance. Many women were either fearful of embarrassment or did not consider their records worth keeping and their diaries, letters and financial records were discarded by their descendants. Equally, some women considered their personal documents too sensitive

\textsuperscript{72} Stone, ‘Prosopography’, 126.
\textsuperscript{73} Philanthropy Australia was established in 1975 by the Potter and Myer Foundations as the Australian Association of Philanthropy.
for public consumption – too revealing, too raw – and for similar reasons, contemporary philanthropists are not always as candid as the researcher, at least, would like.

The collection of documents underpinning this study has been supplemented by 35 original interviews. These were conducted with a range of people including women philanthropists, their descendants, the trustees and administrators of their charitable funds, their biographers, their colleagues and their friends. The selection of women in this study was not based upon merit, nor by any controlled system, but purely by chance and largely by word of mouth. The papers of one woman led to another; one interview opened the way to two more. Interviews were conducted by the author with Anna Lottkowitz of the Rural Women’s Network; Mary Crooks of the Victorian Women’s Trust; Mark Lyons of the Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management at UTS; Susan Feldman of Victoria University’s Alma Unit for Women and Ageing; Nicole Cozier of Washington DC’s ‘Women & Philanthropy’ group; Barbara Leopold of City University New York’s Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society; Sandra Whitty of the William Buckland Foundation; Elizabeth Cham of Philanthropy Australia; Lady Marigold Southey and Christine Edwards of the Myer Foundation; Jill Reichstein of the Reichstein Foundation; Jane Sandilands, formerly of the Australian Association of Philanthropy; Helen Bruinier, niece of Ola Cohn; Marion Webster of the Melbourne Community Foundation; Ellen Koshland of the Education Foundation; Michael Lillman of Swinburne University and formerly of The Myer Foundation; Liz Gillies and Darvell Hutchinson of the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust; Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, former Federal Liberal politician and Director of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation; Heather Matthew, biographer of Anne Bon; Eve Mahlab of the Women Donors Network; and independent philanthropists Barbara Blackman, Trisha Broadbridge, Deborah Halpern, Toni Joel, Ann Miller, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and Fleur Spitzer.

The recent surge of interest in Australian philanthropy has meant that the small number of women philanthropists who are publicly known are frequently called upon to tell their stories and dispense advice. The consequence is an oft-repeated tale that becomes gospel truth: daughters commemorating fathers; wives commemorating husbands; and occasionally, women rebelling against the conservative tenets of their predecessors: for in almost all cases an inheritance is involved. It is difficult within the space of the personal interview to move beyond the rehearsed, and into the more sensitive terrain of what it means to be a woman working in philanthropy; what
prejudices and privileges are specific to women; how supportive other philanthropic women are; or to what extent modern day philanthropy harks back to the traditional. In her original interview, one independent philanthropist frequently requested that audio-taping be stopped whilst she discussed the details of her inheritance, her husband’s response to her philanthropy, the prejudice she encountered as a non-academic funding academic research, and the support groups she attended as a woman philanthropist. She later requested a second interview, having revised a transcript of the first and considered it too negative. Extensive interview material was provided by Elizabeth Cham, yet, while she was very much open to discussion around the subject of philanthropy, philanthropists, tax law, family foundations, accountability, Australian attitudes and the responsibility of wealth, she was naturally restricted in what she was able to place on the record in relation to specific people or to government policy.

If the study seems disproportionately reliant upon material from the state of Victoria, this is no accident. In 1995, the Industry Commission reported that Victoria was home to up to 80% of Australian foundations.74 Elizabeth Cham attributes the imbalance to Victoria’s old money, good ‘values system’, and tax law. The wealth, she suggests, derives from the nineteenth century, from gold, and from western pastoralism, while the values system is a kind of ‘Presbyterian’ belief in giving back: ‘I don’t think that nineteenth century view changed much before 1964’.75 Meanwhile, until 1980, Victoria was offering a unique tax incentive to give: death duties could be avoided by establishing a charitable foundation. In 1980, Jo Bjelke-Peterson abolished death duties in Queensland in an attempt to entice retirees to the Sunshine State; it worked so well that all other states of Australia followed suit and Victoria’s tax incentive was rendered obsolete.

This thesis is set out chronologically, in three sections, though the time span represented by each is not rigid and there is a certain amount of cross-over from one to the next. Shorter biographical chapters, or vignettes, have been interspersed, profiling women who in some way personify – or rather, point to – a style of philanthropy outlined in the relevant section. Like Patricia O’Toole’s history of money and morals in the United States, the thesis adopts different narrative approaches for its chapters depending on the material available for each. Where O’Toole found interviewees

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75 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
particularly engaging, for example, she ‘set up the story in ways that let the subjects talk’, and the same applies here.76

Section One follows Australia’s Victorian era philanthropists: predominantly women of means who were dedicated to the church and to voluntary service. Chapter One investigates the derivations of Australian women’s philanthropy; its class-based and prescriptive nature; its implicit connection with religion; and its relationship with the women’s movement, specifically the degree to which it might have empowered women in both a social and a legal sense. The findings of this section are personified in Chapter Two with a study of Janet Lady Clarke, wife of the immensely wealthy pastoralist, Sir William John Clarke, who displayed aspects of the ‘Lady Bountiful’ though these were modified by her distinctively Australian life experiences.

Section Two moves into the twentieth century and through to the Second World War, as an increasing number of single middle-class women entered the workforce, and as the introduction of political rights saw more women take up the opportunity to act on the public stage. Philanthropy became part of the third sector of the economy as state welfare programs expanded. Chapter Three investigates the philanthropy of Australia’s leisured women in this period: those who had no need to work for a living, but were more often than not politically engaged, and who used philanthropy to answer a need for occupation and intellectual stimulation. Chapter Four examines the life and work of Christian psychiatrist Dr. Una Porter, whose philanthropic activity was driven by her family background, her profession, her commitment to women’s associations and her strong Methodist faith. Chapter Five profiles a number of women philanthropists who not only joined the workforce, but excelled in their professions. It explores the possibility that the female philanthropic tradition was overlapped (but not superseded) by new directions in the first half of the twentieth century as women earned their own money and governed its distribution.

The second half of the twentieth century comes under examination in Section Three, with a close look at the advent of the formalised philanthropic foundation (and the place of women within it) and ideas of social change philanthropy. Chapter Six charts the evolution of the new approach to philanthropy and the formal philanthropic foundation, and considers the influence of various social movements originating in the 1960s and 1970s: the reinvigorated women’s movement, most notably, accompanied by student activism, anti-war rallies, the community development movement, and post-war

76 O'Toole, Money and Morals in America, xx.
migration. Chapter Seven profiles two exceptional (but very different) women, Barbara Blackman and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, as philanthropists with a public presence who operate very much as individuals despite the prevalence of organised philanthropy in recent decades. Chapter Eight concludes the section with a discussion around current directions in Australian women's philanthropy, noting the prominence of women in the third sector but acknowledging that most women philanthropists are still working from a base of inherited or marital wealth.

This thesis makes its original contribution to knowledge primarily by assembling, examining and interpreting original archival and interview material about the lives of Australian women philanthropists from the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It emphasises the idiosyncratic personal circumstances under which most philanthropic women have chosen to donate money, but argues that women's giving is explicitly linked to their voluntarism in charitable and political organisations. The thesis seeks to answer a number of pertinent questions about what makes women's philanthropy distinctive; what it can reveal about the nature of women's public and private roles; how it has engaged with public policy; and in what ways it has been affected by the women's movement. By investigating the motivation for giving, public persona, source of wealth, background and favoured organisations of its subjects, and by identifying consistent trends and erratic changes, this study not only contributes to the broader social and political history of Australian women, but brings vital information to a discussion about women and philanthropy in Australia that has only just begun.
SECTION I

Colonial Philanthropy
1880-1910
Chapter One

Into the Streets and Lanes

Australian philanthropy has a mixed heritage. Today it might be described as a conglomeration of philanthropic practices derived from all over the world, but its roots are distinctly British, with significant American influences. Of course Australian and American philanthropy were born from British philanthropy both, but, like two siblings, the American version no longer resembles its parent, while the Australian—the younger of the two—has not diverged nearly so much. Historian Shurlee Swain writes that ‘British philanthropy was at its peak when the Australian colonies were being formed...Its emergence in New South Wales was celebrated as evidence of the truly British nature of the settlement’.  

Certainly Australian philanthropists in the nineteenth century were doing their best to mirror their British counterparts, albeit with less money at hand. According to David Owen, historian of English philanthropy, The Times reported in 1885 that the income of London charities exceeded the national budgets of Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden, and doubled that of the Swiss Confederation. By the end of that century, London could boast nearly 1,000 charitable institutions with a combined income of well over £6 million. Philanthropic women in Australia, such as those under discussion in this chapter, found role models in the likes of Angela Burdett-Coutts ‘in aggregate contributions to charity, the premier Victorian [era] philanthropist’ who inherited in 1837 the £2 million fortune of her banker grandfather Thomas Coutts, becoming Britain’s wealthiest woman at the age of 23. In fact, Burdett-Coutts’ fortune was bequeathed to her by her grandfather’s second wife, Harriot Mellon. Aged eighty, three years after the death of his first wife, Thomas Coutts had married the then 38-year-old actress. His three daughters treated the new bride with hostility, and Angela was the only family member who enjoyed her company. Thomas bequeathed his entire fortune to Harriet and she, in turn, bequeathed it to Angela, who gave away more than £1 million (probably closer to £3 million) in her

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80 Owen, English Philanthropy, 413.
lifetime. Her projects ranged from the installation of drinking fountains for dogs to the implementation of housing schemes for the working class and the provision of aid to refugees of the 1877 Russo-Turkish War. According to David Owen, Burdett-Coutts' philanthropic activities were originally grounded in the church, but a friendship with Charles Dickens extended her field of interest and the two worked closely together for many years. Owen speaks of her 'addiction to philanthropy' and her sound business sense: 'What distinguished Angela Burdett-Coutts from monied young women of charitable inclinations was not only the volume of her benefactions but the fact that, to a considerable degree, she made philanthropy her profession.'81 Burdett-Coutts' commitment to the welfare of emigrants and indigenous communities in states where Britain had trading interests brought her into contact with Caroline Chisholm by a curious set of connections. Chisholm had worked in the 1850s with Samuel Hemming of Bristol, who designed churches, shops and hotels for Australian colonists using the new wonder-product, corrugated iron. It was Chisholm who introduced Hemming to Burdett-Coutts, who in turn commissioned the designer to send prefabricated corrugated iron churches to British Columbia and Australia.82

This seemingly extraneous connection between Burdett-Coutts and Chisholm serves to articulate a paradox that sits at the heart of this thesis. That is, the discrepancies inherent in the term 'philanthropist' as discussed in the introduction; the rationale behind distinguishing a philanthropist as one who serves others (Chisholm) from a philanthropist who serves others using money (Burdett-Coutts). In fact, the two are constantly intersecting, sometimes in the one person. True, Australia's women philanthropists took their cue from British women, but for every Burdett-Coutts there were dozens of evangelical philanthropists waging a war on poverty in the model of Hannah More. It was More who had pushed middle-class women to take up philanthropy as a vocation in late eighteenth-century England, believing in their superior moral virtue. For More, philanthropy meant intervention in the lives of the poor, the 'inculcation of new values' and the promotion of self-help. Her *Cheap Repository Tracts* consisted of tales set in rural England containing obvious moral lessons, and she considered her writing a form of charity for its ability to 'politically mediate, through the

82 Personal correspondence with Adam Mornement, scholar of corrugated iron, 12 December 2006.
practice of reading, the contentious oppositions arising in the society at large.\(^{83}\) Certainly the religiously motivated Lady Bountiful type - not expected to give as generously of her purse as she was of her time, her counsel and her religious instruction - found a following in Australia from the early nineteenth century, and paved the way for those few moneyed women philanthropists of later years.

This chapter explores the connection between women as givers and women as volunteers or members of charitable organisations in colonial society. It begins with a case study - the life and work of Elizabeth Ward - to launch an investigation into the influence of evangelism, and more broadly, of Protestant Christian organisations, in Australian women's philanthropy, and considers the ways in which philanthropy may have been used to wield moral authority in colonial society. The chapter goes on to profile Lady Mary Windeyer, a member of the suffrage movement and advocate for women and children, noting the particular intersection between her political activism and her philanthropy. The energetic Emily Dobson comes under review in a similar vein. A significant proportion of the chapter is devoted to Anne Bon, who sought to protect the Aboriginal people near her home in regional Victoria using her wealth and her influence in the Presbyterian church, and the chapter concludes with a profile of Elizabeth Austin, Australia's first major female benefactor.

**Elizabeth Jane Ward (1842-1908) and the Evangelical Heritage**

The 'good Mrs. Ward' published her autobiography, *Out of Weakness Made Strong*, in 1903 'at the earnest request of many friends'.\(^{84}\) From somewhat inauspicious beginnings, Elizabeth Ward came to spend much of her time doing 'good works' and campaigning for womanhood suffrage. Ward's father, William Garland, was a farrier on George Street, Sydney. Her mother took Elizabeth and her three siblings to the Church of England three times on Sundays. By the age of fifteen, however, Ward was an orphan. In successive years, her father died, then her mother, then her younger brother, who drowned in a waterhole aged nine. Ward married in 1863 and bore seven sons, but in 1882 one son, Arthur, was run down by the steamer *Fairlight* and killed with the paddle-wheel, and ten years later a second son, Frank, fell to the bottom of a lift-well.


and died. Remembering these events in 1903, Ward assured her readers that 'God who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted and upheld his servant, and after a while I resumed my usual Christian work'. That Christian work included district visits while her husband taught at the local Sunday School:

The district to which I was appointed was Castlereagh-street, from Bathurst-street to Goulburn-street, both sides of the road. There were many lanes and alleys off Castlereagh-street, and to the houses in these I went, sometimes with fear and trembling.... There were many fallen women living in these lanes, and I longed to reach them. Sometimes these girls were very friendly, and accepted tracts, and perhaps the next time I called they were abusive. 85

Ward was a member of multiple committees. She was involved in the Sydney Woman’s Prayer Union from 1883, petitioning Parliament with a request that theatres and concert halls be closed on Sundays (agreed), and that parliamentary sittings be opened with prayer (declined). 86 She joined the Y.W.C.A. in Sydney ‘almost from its first inception’ and inaugurated the Surry Hills branch in 1890, where she ran bible-reading, prayers, and ‘lectures on such subjects as “Sick Nursing”, “Hygiene,” and “Missionary Work.” Prizes were given for Cooking and Darning’. 87 Ward served on the committees of the Queen’s Jubilee Fund and the third Australasian Conference on Charity, as well as the Sydney Ladies’ United Evangelistic Association, the Women’s Federal League, and the City Mission. She worked with the City Mission’s Rescue Committee ‘to reach the fallen women of the city’ by holding midnight meetings. ‘Wandering women on the street are invited to supper’, she noted, ‘and there are always some of the ladies there to welcome the poor erring one’. 88

Ward was not a wealthy woman. She established her own millinery business in King Street, later moving it to Oxford Street, Sydney, and advocated giving away a tenth of one’s income – moreover, giving it away cheerfully. By 1903, she was living in the Blue Mountains and had retained her posts as vice-president and spokeswoman for the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of New South Wales. She knew how to use

85 Ward, Out of Weakness Made Strong, 14.
86 Ward, Out of Weakness Made Strong, 18.
87 Ward, Out of Weakness Made Strong, 27.
the media to her advantage, and was well known for her letters to the newspaper in support of the federation of the colonies. Of Ward, the Reverend Canon Boyce wrote:

She will chiefly be remembered for her efforts on behalf of Womanhood Suffrage...Now, about 300,000 women in this State have the right to vote, and as years pass the number will be wonderfully multiplied...Mrs Ward can recall the days when the mention of a woman having a vote only called forth derisive laughter...I know that in the conflict Mrs. Ward has borne a leading part. She has ably worked to educate public opinion on the question without which it is next to impossible for statesmen to legislate.\(^8^9\)

Elizabeth Ward, as a woman who was actively charitable but not a wealthy donor, sits outside the defined focus of this study, but her story serves to highlight the importance of religion in philanthropy (even in its more financial manifestations), and the importance of women’s voluntary organisations in nineteenth-century Australia, particularly where they were politically active.

Referring to the Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Association, the Women’s Auxiliary for Foreign Missions (Methodist Church), and the Anglican Mothers’ Union in New South Wales in the 1890s, Anne O’Brien notes that, unlike Ward, ‘the leaders of these organisations were all well-to-do “ladies”’ and that ‘most of these women were politically conservative... They were serious women, members of an economic elite, but not “society” women’.\(^9^0\) The distinction between wealthy women and society women (who were also wealthy) is an important one, but one should not assume that serious women and society women were mutually exclusive entities. Of the rest of the women philanthropists included in this chapter, all were by definition members of the ‘economic elite’, having either married into money or been born into it. Many were society women, and most took their religious practice and their philanthropy seriously. All were associated with voluntary organisations and many were involved in the hands-on aspects of their work, but not all would fit comfortably in the group that British historian Kitson Clark has called ‘the philanthropic elite, the people... Anglican, Quaker and very frequently Unitarian... who took a lead in social work’.\(^9^1\) For many women of means in the nineteenth century (and much of the twentieth for that matter), charity was simply what one did. The Colony of Victoria had refused the introduction of a Poor Law

— a system of taxing the wealthy to provide relief for the poor — meaning that welfare for the indigent relied heavily upon private philanthropy, albeit with some limited government sponsorship provided to most established charitable organisations. For many years, groups such as the Melbourne Ladies’ Benevolent Society (established in 1845) administered this philanthropy in the manner of Elizabeth Ward, with regular home visits. This work was largely the domain of middle-class women for, B.J. Gleeson notes, ‘membership also threatened a pecuniary burden, as the Society was frequently forced to cover its perennial overdraft through funds loaned by the ladies themselves’.

Ladies’ Benevolent Societies came under threat later in the century from the male-dominated Charity Organisation Society of Melbourne. Established in 1887, the Charity Organisation Society gathered together representatives from the dozens of charitable organisations operating in Melbourne in an attempt to encourage consultation and collaboration. Moulded upon British and American prototypes, the Society advocated scientific philanthropy — or a more rigorous, systematic approach to home visits — and self-help. Meticulous notes were to be kept and help refused where a recipient was undeserving. Women were considered too weak to enforce this rigid discipline; too easily persuaded to overlook lapses in character. The Charity Organisation Society, writes Gleeson, was ‘determined to break the power of the Melbourne Ladies’ Benevolent Society’ and force all such societies to amalgamate, forming an army of ‘friendly visitors’ who would be sent to monitor families but were not empowered to dispense money to them. All would operate under the command of a centrally-administered charity board. The Benevolent Society put up a strong fight, and the Charity Organisation Society was unsuccessful in its bid. Both the home visiting system of the women and the scientific philanthropy of the Charity Organisation Society might be considered outdated by observers today, but many of the same principles can be detected in Australia’s welfare system in the twenty-first century. Welfare is largely dependent on a central organisation (now administered by government), supplemented by a network of not-for-profit groups; it is distributed in the event that a person is either incapacitated or shown to be deserving (by caring for others or seeking employment); and withheld in the event that a person has failed to follow set rules and is, essentially,

thought to be undeserving. At any rate, John D. Rockefeller's idea that 'the best philanthropy is constantly in search of finalities and attempting to cure evils at their source' was only just being circulated in 1909 by the Charity Organisation Society, no less, in one of its annual reports and would not be taken up in earnest for fifty years. The Society attempted preventive charitable work by focusing on the health and wellbeing of poor children before they fell into bad habits or undesirable company, but was not inclined to tackle the systemic problems of society at large: the society that included its own members. A century later, Rockefeller's ideas would gain currency as 'progressive philanthropy' or 'social change philanthropy' but for the time being charity and philanthropy were interchangeable terms, and few philanthropists were setting out to change the world.

The Australian woman philanthropist as a phenomenon took some years to emerge, though perhaps she found her prototype in 1826. Eliza Darling, using her status as wife of the Governor, managed to find enough 'wealthy women' in New South Wales to establish the Sydney Female School of Industry, of which she became patroness. Darling founded the Female Friendly Society the same year, and regularly attended meetings of the Benevolent Society. Most vice-regal women were involved in charitable work, but with an emphasis on patronage and in-kind support more often than financial benefaction. Money was relatively scarce in these early years. Even sixty years later, the eminent persons who put together *Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present* in 1888 claimed (presumably for the edification of readers in Britain) that: 'The colony is yet too young to possess the members or the "leisured class" such as forms the characteristic portion of the upper stratum of English society. No appreciable portion of the population, therefore, is engaged otherwise than in the struggle for material prosperity.' Meanwhile, according to Shurlee Swain, nineteenth-century philanthropy

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96 Anita Selzer, *Governor's Wives in Colonial Australia* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002), 89. See also Marguerite Hancock, *Colonial Consorts: The Wives of Victoria's Governors 1839-1900* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001). In a letter home, Lady Loch wrote that it 'does good to patronize many worthy efforts', but particularly 'if one don't [sic] give large contributions'; of Lady Brassey, Beatrice Webb wrote that 'though her sympathies are with philanthropic institutions she is not allowed to subscribe liberally so that she is always in the somewhat false position of encouraging benevolence which she cannot practise' (Hancock, 179-180).

required ‘bourgeois women sufficiently free of domestic and child care responsibilities’. If it took years to build the number of older married women with the time and inclination to carry out philanthropic work, it took even longer to build the number of such women who had access to significant amounts of money and were prepared to make direct and substantial donations. The Married Women’s Property Act was introduced in New South Wales in 1879 (1883 in Victoria and South Australia). While the acts did not allow a married woman unbridled freedom to control or dispose of her own property, they ensured that her property would not necessarily pass to her husband upon marriage. Prior to their introduction, a husband was entitled by law to all income from his wife’s property. A wife was not permitted to make a will leaving real estate to anyone, and if she died, her husband could claim her entire estate. By contrast, if her husband died, she could claim only one third of his estate. All personal property, including money and furniture belonging to a woman before marriage, would be transferred to her husband immediately afterward. Only after the acts could married women such as Agnes Harper, principal of the Presbyterian Ladies’ College in Melbourne, make out a will to directly control the distribution of their money. Harper directed in 1885 that her £3,406 estate be invested in government debentures, with income to go to her husband during his life and, upon his death, with the capital to go to her children.

Unsurprisingly, then, the financial contribution of Australian women to charitable causes before the 1880s is significantly less than that of Australian men. In her analysis of annual reports of Victorian charitable organisations between 1840 and 1880, Swain claims that ‘the most striking findings are in the area of gender’, noting that ‘overwhelmingly the donors identified were men most of whom supported male-controlled charities. Where husband and wife were both substantial donors the wife donated smaller sums generally to female-controlled charities.’ Swain labels those men and women who gave well over the annual subscription rate of their chosen charities, ‘exceptional givers’. Between 1865 and 1880 she identified 85 exceptional

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100 Table Talk, 2 October 1885.
male givers with average annual donations of £51, and just 17 exceptional female givers with average annual donations of £15. Swain’s findings, she says, support the thesis ‘that while men’s philanthropy is predominantly financial, women’s is service based, offering in time a gift which they were unable to offer in money’. Similarly, in his thesis on the history of voluntary community service in South Australia, Martin Woods claims that even today ‘it is evident that women’s involvement in voluntary welfare, community, education and youth work continues to far outstrip that of men’. Women in Australia have been involved in service-based philanthropy since the country’s oldest third sector organisation, the ever-present Benevolent Society, was founded in New South Wales in 1813. Not even the wealthiest woman philanthropist dispensed money from on high while her minions did the grassroots work, but all were careful to be seen to be involved, even if their practical duties were minimal. A woman of wealth combined her financial aid with, at the very least, membership of the organisations she supported. Again these ideas derived from England, where, according to Frank Prochaska, virtually all women, evangelical or atheist, rich or poor, were under pressure to contribute:

It was unrelenting. It came from the pulpit and the platform, the reports and pamphlets of the charitable societies, the numerous family and women’s magazines, and from millions of penny tracts pumped out by the religious publishing houses.

When in 1878 W.B. Campbell offered a prize for the best essay on the charitable institutions of Sydney, he wrote: ‘Few persons have even a remote idea of the number of charitable Institutions wholly or partly depending upon our voluntary contributions’. The prize-winner was the Reverend S.W. Brooks, whose classification of Sydney charities was based upon a system used in London. Charitable institutions could, he argued, be divided into two sections: the first ‘embracing in general, agencies which aim at the diminution of vice and crime’, and the second ‘embracing in general, agencies which aim at the alleviation of want and suffering’. Brooks’ further division of the first section into ‘curative, preventive, and reformatory’ agencies offers an insight into the language and approach of the period:

a) Curative or Radical agencies, based on the assumption that the vice and crime which exists, owes its origin to the original native badness or obliquity of man's nature; and aim at the diminution or extinction of the evil, by the entire and absolute change of man's will, the renovation of his nature.

b) Preventive, or those which aim at the removal of peculiar forms of temptation or the abridgement of the power of special producing causes of vice, whatever in fact is efficacious in removing hindrances to the development of virtue, and in fostering principles of morality; agencies which conduce to the social and moral improvement of the community, either by offering a barrier to the progress of crime, or by employing counteracting agencies.

c) Reformative agencies, which are employed to effect an external change of character, rendering those who are vicious and depraved, honest and respectable members of society.\(^{105}\)

In her book *God's Willing Workers*, Anne O'Brien has titled a chapter on women's voluntary organisations 'Seeking Community, Seeking Impact', and claims that most women - religious or otherwise - joined such organisations for altruistic reasons. A sense of obligation, or alternatively, a desire to escape what Gleeson refers to as the 'sentence of domesticity',\(^{106}\) were equally likely motivations. It was Catherine Macauley Graham who wrote in 1790 that if practised genuinely, benevolence could 'entirely subdue the daemons Ennui'.\(^{107}\) In her study of lady philanthropists and London housewives before the First World War, Ellen Ross finds that 'colonial metaphors abound' in nineteenth-century discussion around the British poor and the philanthropists who lived and worked among them: 'Dark, exotic, possibly dangerous; yet intriguing and childlike, the "natives" provided, among other things, an arena for middle-class female adventure and self-discovery'.\(^{108}\) Of course, Australian women philanthropists were responding to a set of circumstances different from those of their British role models, whose enthusiasm shifted throughout the nineteenth century from anti-slavery to prison visiting, to workhouse visiting, and finally to moral and legal reform, according to Prochaska. But

\(^{105}\) Rev. S.W. Brooks, *Charity and Philanthropy: A prize essay (historical, statistical, and general) on the institutions in Sydney which aim at the diminution of vice, or the alleviation of misery and are supported wholly, or in part, by the gifts of the charitable*, (Sydney: F. Cunninghame and Co., 1878, published gratis by W.B. Campbell), 4-5.

\(^{106}\) B.J. Gleeson, 'A Public Space for Women: The Case of Charity in Colonial Melbourne', 194.


the idea in Australian colonies was the same: a desire for occupation. Richard Twopeny, who published his *Town Life in Australia* in the early 1880s, wrote that 'the life of a wealthy woman in Australia is ennuyeux to a degree' but that 'wealthy ladies "to the manner born" are not so numerous in Australia that I need dwell long on the drawbacks of their position'. He noted with an almost perceptible sneer that 'when you tremble before your butler, and have to learn how to behave at table from your housekeeper, wealth cannot be unalloyed pleasure':

> Even leaving aside the discomforts which are always allied to pretentiousness, the poor rich woman has a hard time of it. What can she do with herself all day long? She has not gone through that long education up to doing nothing which enables English ladies to pass their time without positive boredom. She has no tastes except those which she does not dare gratify, and becomes a slave to the very wealth whose badge she loves to flaunt.\(^\text{109}\)

In fairness, many women joined voluntary organisations not merely to alleviate boredom or fulfil obligations, but to exercise some influence over the society in which they lived; seeking impact, as O'Brien tells us. Brian Dickey writes of 'the prosperous 1870s' in which 'several hospitals saw the explicit involvement of upper-middle-class women in their foundation'. According to Dickey:

> The children's hospitals in particular had women promoters, executive committees, and administrators. It was an opportunity for able, self-confident, otherwise under-employed upper-middle-class women to use their talents in ways which reinforced their leadership role and fulfilled genuine humanitarian concern.\(^\text{110}\)

There was, however, a persistent reluctance to entrust women with the running of an organisation. Of the fifteen major charities in Melbourne in 1887, writes Swain, eight excluded women from their management committees, though many had an auxiliary ladies’ committee to look after ‘housekeeping tasks’. Likewise, of the seven charities founded or run by women (including two hospitals), several employed a gentlemen’s committee to oversee financial operations.\(^\text{111}\) Gleeson argues that this set-up

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\(^{111}\) Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', 157.
was in fact advantageous for women, allowing for a kind of role reversal in which men were concerned with internal affairs while women could take their own work out of doors, creating 'a public space for themselves that was distinctly feminine' and, in the process, escaping the humdrum domestic routine.\footnote{112} This is the basis of the thesis of which Kathleen McCarthy is a leading proponent in \textit{Lady Bountiful Revisited}: that philanthropy gave women public influence and allowed them to operate within a parallel power structure. One thinks of Elizabeth Ward confronting derisive laughter when raising the subject of womanhood suffrage but persisting in her campaign. Or the Scottish-born Catherine Helen Spence, who migrated to Adelaide, where she worked as a teacher and wrote eight novels before focusing her attentions on public campaigns for social and political reform. She worked with the Boarding-Out Society, established by Emily Clarke, as well as the State Children's Council and the government Destitute Board.\footnote{113} For Spence, this work was synonymous with philanthropy, and it was tough. She wrote to journalist and politician Charles Pearson in October 1885 of 'my regret in giving up literary work for philanthropic work... I feel more satisfied that I can do the former than the latter and it fatigues me far less. This last year I have felt as often over tired with the public work and a day at home writing has been like a rest to me.'\footnote{114}

Spence and Ward were not rich women, and yet, through their philanthropic endeavours, both exercised social influence. It seems logical to assume that women with a political agenda who were also equipped with wealth, could hope to have an even greater impact. Certainly there were women in this position. The difficulty is in ascertaining exactly how much money they gave. Ada Mary a’Beckett (1872-1949), in her role as secretary of the Free Kindergarten Union, is said to have ‘played a key role in the purchase of ‘Mooroolbeek’, the home of the late Sir Frank Madden in Kew’,\footnote{115} so that the Union would have larger premises for training. What does a ‘key role’ entail? One often hears that such-and-such ‘helped establish’ an organisation, or ‘contributed’ to a fundraising campaign, but even primary sources rarely illuminate the detail.

\footnote{112} Gleeson, \textit{Area}, 194.
\footnote{114} Letter from C.H. Spence to Charles Pearson, 31 October 1885, Charles Pearson Papers, MS 7107, Item 440/7, State Library of Victoria.
Mary Windeyer (1836-1912): Philanthropy and Politics

Mary Windeyer’s philanthropy took the form of fundraising and advocacy more than direct financial assistance, but she was a woman of means. At her death, her estate was valued for probate at £11,408. English-born, the daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England, Mary arrived in Sydney with her family in 1839. She married William Charles Windeyer who rose from Solicitor-General to Attorney-General to Judge and bore nine children. She became Lady Mary Windeyer when William was knighted in 1891. Like her daughter Margaret, who inherited a strong social conscience from both her parents, Lady Windeyer was a strong proponent for women’s rights. She was a member of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, renowned for its involvement in the women’s movement, and was president of the Womanhood Suffrage League, of which Margaret was also a member. Both mother and daughter supported the establishment of the Women’s College at the University of Sydney. A letter from Louisa Macdonald, first principal of the Women’s College, to her friend Eleanor Grove in 1894 reads:

Margaret is the cleverest [of the Windeyer sisters]; with a good deal of eccentricity, possibly because of that, but as good and unselfish and with all her occasional oddness as sensible a young woman as you would find. She has been for more than a year in America, and will be a year in England before returning home; and if England and America affect her, as they ought to affect anyone of her capacity, and the wear and tear of travelling and mixing with other people rub off some of the roughness of manner, she ought to become a remarkable and distinguished woman."

Macdonald’s reflections are interesting if only for their projection of England and America as places of refinement as against a young, rough-edged Australia. In fact, Margaret was already part of a family of cultured women. Her aunt Ann Mary’s Windeyer’s sister had travelled to New Zealand to attend Canterbury University College before women were admitted to the University of Sydney. She obtained a

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116 William was the grandson of Charles Windeyer, a London journalist, who arrived in Sydney with his wife and nine of his ten children in 1828. He took with him £800 in goods and money, some of it borrowed from an uncle, and in Sydney became a Police Magistrate. For more on the Windeyer family, see Victor Windeyer, *The Windeyres: Chapters of Family History* (Glebe, NSW: W.J.V. Windeyer, 1992).


Bachelor of Arts in 1880: the first Australian woman to graduate. Lady Windeyer herself was a person of influence and reputation in Sydney. As well as women's rights, she was an advocate for the welfare of orphans, pushing for better care of orphanages and favouring foster care with loving families. Like Spence, she was friendly with Emily Clarke, and was a supporter of the boarding-out system. It was Windeyer, by invitation from Henry Parkes, who drafted legislation under which a State Children's Relief Board in New South Wales became responsible for fostering children from state orphanages. Windeyer served on the Board herself, and in 1874 she helped to establish (again, that ambiguous phrase) what later became the Ashfield Infants' Home – a foundling hospital, open to mothers with illegitimate children – as well as opening her own cottage home for orphans.

In the 1880s, as her husband began promoting legal reforms allowing for desertion as a case for divorce, Windeyer began to push for increased employment opportunities for women. With Lucy Osburn she organised an Exhibition of Women's Industries, promoted nursing as a profession, and raised enough money to set up a Temporary Aid Society to help women in financial difficulties by providing them with small loans. Windeyer's philanthropy had by this time, according to Heather Radi, 'broadened into a programme of moderate feminist reforms'. She sponsored a silk-growing cooperative, a shorthand writers' and typists' society, and hospital training for nurses. She organised the women's industries section of New South Wales' exhibit in the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, USA. In 1893, her proposal for a women's hospital led to the opening of a district service that became the Women's Hospital in Crown Street, Sydney.

Windeyer experimented with spiritualism, but ultimately became actively involved in her local Anglican church at Raymond Terrace, New South Wales, where she was buried after her death in 1912. In many ways, she was the ideal public figure driven by a social conscience. The strength of her support for women's rights was apparent, and deeply connected to her philanthropy. Historian Heather Radi claims that 'Windeyer died... having impacted public attitudes toward women and children; as she declared in many speeches, there is “no sex in religion, in intellect, in common

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119 Radi in Radi (ed.), 200 Australian Women, 33.
120 Radi, 'Windeyer, Mary Elizabeth (1837 - 1912)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 12, (Melbourne: MUP, 1990), 537-539.
121 Radi, 'Windeyer, Mary Elizabeth (1837 - 1912)', 539.
sense”.122 These were insightful – and brave – words for a woman born in 1836. The power of those words was probably a greater legacy than any of her financial gifts, and yet, one suspects it was wealth that gave Windeyer sufficient power and public influence to leave such a legacy at all.

Emily Dobson (1842-1934): Philanthropy and Practical Social Conscience

Emily Dobson was Tasmania's bespectacled and formidable grand old lady by the time she died in 1934 in her early nineties. Born in Port Arthur in 1842 in what was then Van Diemen's Land, she was influenced by the social conscience of her father, artist and public servant Thomas Lempriere, who died when she was nine years old. In 1868 she married Tasmania's future premier, Henry Dobson, who shared her ideas on philanthropy and temperance, linked as they were to the cause of women.

Emily Dobson became involved with almost every charitable organisation in the State of Tasmania. She was founding president of the ladies' committee of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution; founding president of the Ministering Children's League; and president of the committee of management of the Victoria Convalescent Home at Lindisfarne. She co-established the New Town Consumptives' Sanatorium in 1905, and in 1918 become first vice-president of the Child Welfare Association. She was vice-president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Tasmania and life patroness of the Tasmanian Bush Nursing Association. With her husband, she established the Free Kindergarten Association in Tasmania in 1911. That same year she established the Girl Guides' Association of Tasmania, appointing herself State Commissioner. She founded the Tasmanian branch of the Alliance Française, and the Tasmanian Lyceum Club.

As a middle-aged woman, Dobson became secretary of the Women's Sanitary Association, which formed in 1891 specifically to counter an outbreak of typhoid and which ran candidates in the municipal election of 1892. In Hobart, her Relief Restaurant Committee operated a soup kitchen and set up the Association for Improvement of Dwellings of the Working Classes. Dobson was widely praised among her peers, but more often than not, the efforts of the Sanitary Association were belittled by local newspapers. Gleeson is right to suggest that charitable work offered women a distinctly feminine public space, but such a space was not always welcomed or even accepted. The experiences of Janet Lady Clarke and the ungracious Dr Leeper are

122 Radi, 'Windeyer, Mary Elizabeth (1837 - 1912)', 539.
illustrative of the potential for uneasy relationships between philanthropic women and the communities in which they operated, but Dobson inspired particular resentment. According to historian Ruth Barton, it was ‘the anomaly of charitable women undertaking work which at home they paid servants to do’ which attracted unfavourable press attention, and certainly the Dobson family wealth meant that Emily had no need to carry out domestic chores in her own home. The animosity of the newspapers might also be explained by the fact that even while Emily Dobson was dishing out bowls of soup, her husband, as Premier, was closing public works, retrenching labour and cutting wages in an emergency response to the 1890s’ depression.123

Like so many other charitably-inclined women of her time, Dobson had a particular concern for child welfare, and like most women in this study, had the advantage of a prominent position within society to give leverage to her philanthropic activities and political agenda. Working alongside the Society for the Protection of Children, for example, she was a key figure in securing the passage of an Infant Life Protection Act in 1907. The act authorised members of the Society to enter homes without notice where infants were being minded for payment. Taken at face value, the act was a robust attempt to put an end to the practice of baby farming, but Caroline Evans and Naomi Parry suggest it involved an attempt to control the poorer sections of society in the mode of Hannah More. Evans and Parry claim that the real aim of Chief Health Officer J.S.C. Elkington, who supported the passage of the 1907 Act as well as the Public Health Act of 1903, was not simply pragmatic but also ‘to provide advice to all working-class mothers’.124 The authors note the development of a progressive influence in the voluntary sector in Tasmania, attributing a decline in the influence of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union after 1900 to the ‘forceful personality and social prestige of Mrs Emily Dobson, [who] was not a progressive, eschewing theory of any sort, but was willing to use ideas if it seemed they would work’.125

Dobson was as dominant in politics as she was in health and welfare. She was a member of the Women’s Non-Party League of Hobart. She held office in the Tasmanian branch of the League of Nations’ Union and the Victoria League of Tasmania; the National Council of Women (State and Federal bodies); and the

123 Ruth Barton in Radi (ed.), 200 Australian Women, 44.
International Council of Women. In 1907 she represented the Tasmanian government at the Women's Work Exhibition in Melbourne. She was honoured by the National Council of Women (Tasmania) in 1919, with the establishment of the Emily Dobson Philanthropic Prize Competition for welfare organisations.\textsuperscript{126}

Both Emily Dobson and Mary Windeyer married into wealth and used their position in society - and probably their money - to push for social and political reform, as well as taking an active part in the charitable activities of their respective cities. What motivated them? Prochaska claims that female biblical figures were often the role models for British philanthropic women, citing as an example the Dorcas Society, an organisation that made clothes for the poor and was named for the biblical Dorcas of Joppa.\textsuperscript{127} Swain has found that nineteenth-century giving was linked to social status or the concept of \textit{noblesse oblige} rather more than to religious belief,\textsuperscript{128} but notes elsewhere that 'by couching their activity in religious terms, women extended the boundaries of their accepted sphere without ever publicly challenging their accepted and subordinate role'.\textsuperscript{129} Appearances suggest, however, that Windeyer and Dobson were motivated by a very specific political agenda more than either a desire for social status or overt religious compulsion. Windeyer was a devout Anglican, but Dobson, though she married in the Church of England, was not strongly connected to it in her philanthropic activities. Neither woman had a particular need to prove her social status, being already at the pinnacle of the colonial establishment. One oral source referred to Dobson as a domineering woman who insisted on her involvement with every committee, but perhaps a domineering manner was what enabled her to achieve all that she did.

Both Windeyer and Dobson were in the fortunate position of being married to, and supported by, prominent politicians. They were both members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and were aligned with the women's movement. They used their influence and directed their charitable activities to improve the circumstances of other women and to advocate on their behalf. Herein lies the connection between women's philanthropy and the women's movement. In theory, politically connected women philanthropists could help both to improve the living conditions of women and to secure their economic emancipation, thus giving more women more resources to

\textsuperscript{126} A. A. Reynolds, 'Dobson, Emily (1842 - 1934)', \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography}, Volume 8, (Melbourne: MUP, 1981), 310-311.


\textsuperscript{128} Swain, 'Exceptional Givers: A Preliminary Study of the Foundations of Benevolence in Colonial Victoria', 33.

\textsuperscript{129} Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', 157.
continue helping one another. Windeyer and Dobson may have represented a generation beyond colonial philanthropy, ahead of a time when 'for women, the primary attraction of philanthropy was that it confirmed their gentility'. Their philanthropy was three tiered: it was service, money and political involvement, focused specifically on women and designed to bring about social reform. The question remains as to whether some of those women — mothers affected by the Infant Life Protection Act, for example — found the interference did more damage than good. At any rate, change was slow. Of the upper-middle-class women running charitable organisations in the 1870s, Brian Dickey writes:

> The family and friendship links these ladies developed meant that the radical reformer among them was strictly limited in her capacity to go beyond conventional bounds. These ladies were active, but they were not about to overthrow the fundamental structures of wealth and power in their society.131

Not every female philanthropist with a yearning for social reform had her sights set on the status of women. In 1858 a young Scottish woman migrated to Australia, settling with her newly wealthy husband among the 'banks and braes'132 of Bonnie Doon. Her strongest focus quickly became the protection of the Aboriginal people near her home.

**Anne Fraser Bon (1838-1936): Philanthropy, Religion and the Politics of Race**

Reclusive but forthright and determined, Anne Bon worked the land and lobbied on behalf of the local Aboriginal population at Mansfield and Bonnie Doon. Bon, who continued her philanthropic and advocacy activities well after the death of her husband in 1868, is remembered locally as 'The Widow of Wappan'.133 In a faded and yellowing memoir of the Mansfield district, *The Devil's River Country*, George Morris describes Bon as 'a pioneer and one of Victoria's most remarkable women... In later years her attire,

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130 Swain, 'Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia', 161.
131 Dickey, *No Charity There*, 54.
132 Sylva (pseudonym of Anne Bon), 'Adieu to Bonnie Doon' from a book of gospel hymns, c.1934.
133 Bon is referred to as the Widow of Wappan by her biographer, Heather Matthew, in *The Widow of Wappan: The Story*, (Melbourne: Stegley Foundation, 2003), as well as by George Morris in *The Devil's River Country: Selections from the History of the Mansfield District by George Morris*, State Library of Victoria, MS 10606, Box 1488/5 (undated); and Joan Gillison in *Colonial Doctor and His Town* (Melbourne: Cypress Books, 1974).
her pictures, her ornaments, the old Bible on the table, all breathed of the age of Queen Victoria'.

The Presbyterian Anne Bon was born Ann Fraser Dougall in Perthshire, Scotland, the daughter of David Dougall (a physician) and his wife Jane (née Fraser). In January 1858 she married John Bon. He was 33 years her senior. She later changed the spelling of her name to ‘Anne’, though both spellings are still used. John Bon was originally the suitor of Anne’s own mother, Jane, who had chosen Dr. Dougall as a more suitable match. Finding himself in financial crisis, Bon had travelled to Australia in 1840 and worked as an overseer, becoming manager of what was later Wappan Station. The property, a massive 30,000 acres holding 400 cattle and 8,000 sheep, was a favourite spot for dispossessed members of the Taungurung tribe, whose young men were ‘put to work as station hands’ but whose tribal life was allowed to continue ‘in a circumscribed manner’ until the 1860s. When wool prices fell and Bon’s employers sold some of their holdings, he took up squatters’ rights for 30,000 acres. He set off for Scotland to redeem his debts and to find the widow Jane, but returned instead with two of her daughters, his new wife Anne and her sister, called Jane after her mother. The journey to Wappan from the docks took weeks by bullock cart. In her monograph, *The Widow of Wappan*, Heather Matthew writes that the ‘exclusivity of the newlyweds’ meant that ‘Jane quickly found herself relegated to the status of servant and found more kinship with the young servants she came out with in the boat than with her autocratic sister’.

Between 1860 and 1868 John and Anne Bon had three sons and two daughters. Four children survived infancy, though just two lived beyond their thirties. Anne’s first child, a girl, lived just one day. According to Matthew, this tragedy may have been the genesis of Anne’s lifelong friendship and ‘heart connection’ with William Barak, the last

136 This according to Matthew, *The Widow of Wappan*, 5. Matthew has obtained her information from local and family sources, including Anne’s granddaughter Frances Bon. This is substantiated by the wills of John and Anne Bon. In the former (drawn up February 1866), John notes his wife’s name as Ann Frazer Bon. In her own will (drawn up November 1929), spelling is Anne Fraser Bon (PROV: VPRS 7591/P/1, Unit 31, Item 7/251 and VPRS 28/P/3, Unit 2848, Item 280/853).
139 Matthew, *The Widow of Wappan*, 6. The story of Jane is presented in detail by Matthew, and backed up by shipping records, but contradicts Joan Gillison’s version in *Colonial Doctor and His Town*. Gillison refers to Anne’s sister as Mary and claims she came out to Wappan upon the death of Anne’s mother: she describes the two sisters as ‘close’.
ngurungaeta (head man) of the Wurundjeri or Yarra Yarra tribe. Barak’s wife lost a child at the same time, and ‘perhaps they were united in grief’.140

A BABE IN HEAVEN

I knew a lovely infant girl,
Who only lived one day,
Angelic beauty she possessed,
But here she could not stay.

The mother loved that darling babe,
She was her first-born child,
And hard it was to part with her,
So pure and undefiled.141

Of her other children, Anne’s eldest son, John, died at the age of 35, and a second daughter, Wilhemina, died at 22. Two sons, David and William, survived, but Anne cut all communication with David following his marriage to a young Lutheran woman.

When John Bon passed away in 1868, Anne had continued to run Wappan with the aid of her farm workers, and later, her sons. She had been taught to ride and used to accompany her husband as he checked fences and livestock. According to Matthew, ‘she would certainly have been influenced by his benevolent attitude to the Aborigines’.142

John Bon had given sanctuary to the head man of the Yeerunillum (Broken River) people, Baalwick, and his family, following violence in the region, and Baalwick was devoted to Mr Bon. When the Taungurung tribe (the Wurundjeri people together with the Yeerunillum people) was resettled at Coranderrk, some members returned to Wappan – where they were paid wages – to help with the annual shearing season, and reported the poor conditions of the settlement and their maltreatment at the hands of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Bon took up their cause, spurred by the death of Barak’s son David to put pressure on the Berry government to instigate an inquiry into conditions at Coranderrk in 1881. To this end she used her influence with prominent Presbyterian clergymen and politicians and was ultimately successful, securing herself an appointment on the Board of Inquiry (the only female member) and protesting at the inadequacy of its final recommendations. In 1882, she wrote to Mr Wilson in the Chief Secretary’s Department:

140 Interview with Heather Matthew (Barbara Lemon), 26 November 2007. Matthew came up with this interpretation in consultation with one of Barak’s great-nieces.
142 Matthew, The Widow of Wappan, 6-7.
I am sure you will not regard it as presumption on my part to make a few suggestions regarding the future management of the Aborigines of Coranderrk. We have robbed them of their beautiful colony, deprived them of their hunting fields and fishing grounds, and given them in return our vices and diseases which are rapidly doing their work... Are they to be driven from place to place like a herd of cattle to make room for the white usurper? They are capable of feeling joy and sorrow as well as we, and I believe their attachments are much stronger than ours... They are neither paupers, lunatics nor criminals, then why treat them as such? In their primitive state their temporal wants were well supplied. They possess far more intellect than they get credit for, and the greatest crime of which they have been guilty is having been the original owners of the soil. The present management is demoralising, the Board has proved a perfect failure and the only remedy is its abolition...

Bon was already known for visiting Aboriginal hospital patients, maintaining a 'voluminous correspondence'\textsuperscript{144} with Aboriginal people across Victoria, and providing jobs and clothing for them where possible - her activities were put down as interference. She attended christenings at Coranderrk and presented Barak with an wedding cake for his third marriage. In 1904, Bon was elected to the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA) once again the only female member and as an insider, says Matthew, hoped for a better chance of influencing policy. Bon became a 'copious letter writer and... a severe thorn in the side of the BPA', and found herself reprimanded three times for disloyalty and objection to its decisions. Though she was a member of the Board for over thirty years, her death in 1936 was not mentioned in its reports.\textsuperscript{145}

While Anne Bon was passionate in her fight for the proper treatment and housing of Aboriginal people, her philanthropic activities were broader in scope. From her husband, she had inherited an estate valued at £15,210 in the late 1860s, and as Executrix of his will she received lump sum legacies totalling nearly £2,000 in addition to a £500 annuity for the duration of her life. John stipulated that Anne should have the use of his home and 100 acres of land at Wappan so long as she remained his widow. In the event that she remarried which she did not Anne was to be paid an annuity of £100 'for her separate and absolute use and benefit. The remainder of John's estate

\textsuperscript{143} Letter from Anne Bon to the Under-Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department, 29 May 1882.
\textsuperscript{144} Gillison, 'Bon, Ann Fraser (1838 - 1936)', 338.
\textsuperscript{145} Matthew, The Widow of Wappan, 9, 11. A playwright, Matthew initiated 'Project Wappan', inspired by Bon's story. Launched in 1999 and funded by the Stegley Foundation, it aimed to 'forge links between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities'.
was to go to his children, but Anne had been well provided for, and she knew how to work the land: "She had an imperious flash in her eyes and an imperious tone in her voice", wrote Morris, and 'was accustomed to being obeyed. It is no wonder, then, that under her, "Wappan" prospered'. Mrs Bon used her money to convert her second home at Kew, Melbourne, into a refuge for the sick and needy. Being 'associated with Mrs. Thomas Austin of Winchelsea', she was reportedly a generous benefactor of the Austin Hospital and was a member of its first ladies' committee, making the trip from Wappan Station to attend meetings every month. She was also a member of the first committee of the Charity Organisation Society, and a supporter of the Salvation Army throughout her life. She set up a school in Melbourne for Chinese children. She made generous donations to Presbyterian churches in Mansfield and Bonnie Doon. St Andrew's in Mansfield had been endowed by her husband, and land for a church in Bonnie Doon donated by her son, William. Anne Bon paid for the building of the church at Bonnie Doon, and in 1901 asked that it be dedicated to the memory of Queen Victoria. Meanwhile, Bon had taken an interest in mental sickness, and brought patients from state mental institutions to stay at Wappan where they could enjoy 'the comforts and advantages of her own home life' in the hope that others would follow her example. The idea was not taken up, however, and her plans collapsed. During WWI she donated an ambulance to the Belgian Army, for which she was decorated by King Leopold in 1921, and gave £20 to every blinded soldier in Victoria at Christmas time each year. Despite her generosity, however, Anne Bon never became - and probably never sought to become - a popular figure:

By all accounts, the locals didn’t particularly like her. She was very authoritarian, she was very autocratic... She got on the wrong side of people because she didn’t have any social skills in terms of what women were supposed to be doing, you know, flouncing around in frilly petticoats and parasols and things. She staunchly walked... if she wanted the garden dug she would send a spade in the mail to the person who was to dig it, and that was his signal that it was time for him to come to Mrs Bon's house and dig

146 Will and Codicil of John Bon, PROV, VPRS 28/P/1, Unit 18, Item 7/251 and Unit 31, Item 7/251.
149 Gillison, Colonial Doctor and His Town, 102.
150 Gillison, Colonial Doctor and His Town, 103.
the garden. So she just didn’t have any of that kind of niceties, cucumber sandwich kind of stuff... Mrs Bon was out there doing her job in a man’s world."18

Mrs. Bon retired to the Windsor Hotel, Melbourne, when it became evident that proposals for the Sugar Loaf Weir and Lake Eildon would see much of Wappan under water, including the graves of her husband and baby daughter. The tombstone they shared was donated by Anne to the Australian Natives’ Association, to be resurfaced and dedicated as a memorial to William Barak.153 At the Windsor she lived almost as a recluse apart from daily visits from her son William, and died at the age of 98. She was buried in Kew cemetery. At her death, Bon owned no real estate but her personal property was valued for probate at £36,932. She owned no jewellery or trinkets with the exception of two plain gold rings. Most of her money was held in debentures or bonds in Australian Consolidated Stock, with some shares in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and Metropolitan Gas Company. Her will, signed with the shaky penmanship of an elderly woman, stipulated that her property be held upon trust for her son, William Andrew Bon, as long as he lived. There was no mention of David. Upon William’s death, the money was to be divided equally between the Austin Hospital, the Eye and Ear Hospital (East Melbourne), and the St. Andrews Presbyterian Hospital. Bon had originally included bequests to the Melbourne Hospital, the Royal Victorian Blind Institute and the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum but revoked these by codicil in 1935, a year before her death.154 She did not state the reason.

Anne Bon’s philanthropy was driven by her religious faith. She did not seek elevated social status, prestige, accolades. She made regular visits to committees in Melbourne, but living for the most part in isolation, was not privy to the particular pressures associated with women active in organised charity. She operated for the most part independently, and with scant regard for the judgement passed upon her. Her advocacy and charitable activity throw up a challenge to the notion that moneyed women used philanthropy purely for their own gain. Richard Kennedy, as we have seen, refers to late nineteenth-century social work as ‘an instrument to help slay the rising “threat” from the organising working class’,155 while, among others, Elizabeth

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152 Interview with Heather Matthew (Barbara Lemon), 26 November 2007.
154 Will, codicil and probate documents for Anne Bon, PROV, VPRS 29/P/3, Unit 2848, Item 280/833 and VPRS 7591/P/2, Unit 986, Item 280/833.
Windschuttle pointed to the formidable group of early nineteenth-century elite women in Australia who used philanthropy for the purpose of ‘moulding the morals and manners of society to their own design’. Bon was concerned with religion, but never with her own social promotion, nor with the interests of her own class. She had servants to work for her, but she could hardly have run a large property without them, and one has the impression that, despite her large holding, the notion of class was not consciously relevant to her. Certainly she was not afraid to jeopardise her place within it by contesting authority or appearing unwomanly. According to Matthew, Bon ‘considered that Christianity was a very, very strong thing that should be spread amongst Aboriginal people, and amongst Chinese people, she was a great and devout Christian, but I don't think she ever thought that they were less…They were there as common humanity, she believed in that’.

Anne Bon’s objectives were clear. Perhaps she concurred with the journalist for the Australasian who wrote in May 1897 that ‘there are some things which can be done better by a private citizen than by the state, and there are many things which, if not done by private liberality, will not be done at all’. Swain has rightly observed that ‘the donors of charity have recorded their actions and attitudes, yet their motivations and sometimes even the theories on which they were basing their actions remain unclear’, but this is less the case where donors have aligned themselves with particular political agendas as did Bon, Dobson and Windeyer. Where a philanthropist is giving solely on behalf of him or herself, motivation is less obvious. From the 1880s, following the passage of the colonial Married Women’s Property Acts, more women found themselves in a position to make such personal donations. One of the most significant was that old acquaintance of Anne Bon, Mrs. Thomas Austin.

Elizabeth Phillips Austin (1821-1910): Benefactor

Perhaps Australia’s first widely known woman philanthropist, in terms of the direct giving of money, was Mrs. Elizabeth Austin (née Harding), described as ‘a pioneer of

157 Interview with Heather Matthew (Barbara Lemon), 26 November 2007.
158 Australian, 22 May 1897.
159 Shurlie Swain, ‘The Victorian Charity Network in the 1890’s’, 5.
female benefaction in Victoria'. Born in Somerset, England, to a yeoman farmer and his wife, she sailed to Port Phillip in 1841 and settled in the Western District, where she married her neighbour, Thomas Austin. The Austins, who had eleven children (three of whom died young), lived at Barwon Park in Winchelsea. There, Elizabeth Austin was called upon to host the Duke of Edinburgh in 1867. Reputedly ashamed of her home, she began planning a new one soon after the visit based upon her brother's property at Glastonbury, of which she was deeply envious. She ensured, it was said, that her own new mansion was just one foot larger. Austin was a competitive, even high-handed character, and Swain notes that 'in their pretensions to gentility the Austin family had been quick to adopt the practice of philanthropy'. Thomas Austin made financial contributions to the building of the Church of England at Winchelsea and the Geelong and District Protestant Orphanage. He died in 1871. In the last thirty years of her life, Elizabeth Austin gave over £19,500 to philanthropic causes. Her first donation of £6,000 to establish a hospital for incurables was made anonymously in 1880 with the Vicar of Winchelsea acting as her intermediary. Austin revealed her identity when it was suggested that this might inspire others to follow her example (this dilemma – the choice for anonymity, or going public for the sake of encouraging others – is still current well over a century later). To her original donation, Austin added £1,000 to the hospital's public appeal; £1,000 to provide a chaplain; £2,000 as a permanent endowment; and later, £2,000 for a children's ward. Swain concedes that 'she did not seek to use her gift to buy influence and although she did have a continuing involvement in what she came to describe as “my hospital” it was always via service rather than management'. This counters any suggestion of self-aggrandisement. Austin also supported the Servants' Training Institute and St Thomas's Church at Winchelsea. In 1886, she gave her second major benefaction with £7,000 for the Geelong and Western District Ladies' Benevolent Society to build a group of cottages for elderly women. The Homes were built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The following year Austin added £500 to her original donation to mark the occasion, challenging the people of Geelong to match her gift.

161 J.M. Butler, Convict By Choice as cited in Shurlec Swain, 'Perhaps to Spite her Children: The Philanthropy of Elizabeth Austin', Australian Philanthropy, Edition 30, Summer 1996. Paul de Serville notes in the ADB that Austin was 'consumed with jealousy by the sight of her sister-in-law queening it at the Abbey House, Glastonbury'.
162 Swain, ‘Perhaps to Spite Her Children’.
163 Swain, ‘Perhaps to Spite Her Children’.
The emphasis on the Queen’s Jubilee makes for interesting reflection. Queen Victoria, who was Austin’s contemporary – the two were born just two years apart, and Austin lived nine years longer – spent forty years in the public eye as a widow. After the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861, Queen Victoria entered a long period of self-imposed isolation. Labelled the ‘Widow of Windsor’, her popularity waned. By the time she was celebrating her Golden Jubilee in 1887, the Queen was once again a popular monarch. As a young woman she had survived numerous assassination attempts; as an old woman she was loved and revered. Queen Victoria was no advocate for women’s rights, but she was the ultimate example of what was possible for a woman. She was the most public of female public figures. According to Swain, the death of Thomas Austin put an end to his wife’s career as a society hostess: ‘In Victorian society a widow, literally the relict of her husband, was expected to live a shadowy life while waiting for death... never venturing into public life’. Yet here was the very emblem of Victorian society, Victoria herself, Queen of the United Kingdom and Empress of India, carrying out her very public role as a widow, albeit perpetually dressed in mourning clothes. As the ‘first media monarch’, she was visible, too. Her royal tours were broadcast through the new illustrated press; reproductions of her royal carte-de-viste were circulated after the first royal photographs were published in the 1860s; her Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was one of the first major public events to be filmed. Could Austin have been prompted to re-enter public life and to sustain her legacy by the example of her respected Queen? Certainly there were other women philanthropists who honoured the monarch, including Bon, as we have seen. Sydney-siders Mary Fairfax and Dame Eadith Walker, both wealthy spinsters and philanthropists, were members of the Queen’s Jubilee Fund. Janet Lady Clarke was presented to Queen Victoria. She offered £50 to the Queen’s Fund as part of the Jubilee celebrations, and carried out some of her most important philanthropic work as a widow.

As ever, one can only speculate on the motivations behind philanthropy. It was Twopeny who wrote in 1883 that ‘the wealth of Australia has not yet passed beyond the first generation. The majority of the wealthy have themselves made their fortunes, and

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164 Swain, ‘Perhaps to Spite Her Children’.
165 John Plunkett, Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10, 239.
166 Joan Gillison makes an overt, if somewhat far-fetched, connection between Anne Bon and Queen Victoria: ‘they each ruled over a dominion, one an Empire, the other a corner of the bush. They could have met as equals; both had a sense of vocation; both were imperious and accustomed to obedience. Both were widowed young.’ (From Gillison, Colonial Doctor and His Town, 99).
are not inclined to let them be squandered by their sons'.\textsuperscript{167} Austin was notoriously overbearing – known as ‘Aunt Tom’ by certain family members – and her husband, though he received financial backing from his elders, was essentially a self-made man. Swain considers the possibility that Austin spent her inheritance ‘to spite her children’, but the notion that she was motivated by her religious beliefs and used her wealth to give meaning to her life is probably closer to the mark.\textsuperscript{168} Her 40 years as a widow was a long time to be living as the relict of one’s husband, and her character ensured that no matter the size of her fortune, she would not be the relict of anyone.

With the women profiled in this chapter displaying such variation in style, what hope is there of encapsulating in words the nineteenth century Australian woman philanthropist? Most abided by the social conventions of the era by joining committees and displaying a social conscience. Nearly all were inspired by religious faith, specifically Protestant Christianity. Some wished to bring about social reform, some wished to alleviate suffering, and some wished to bring glory upon the family name or the city in which they lived. Some were influenced by upbringing, others by their spouse or peers. Some were pushed to their actions by a sense of social obligation. Some were born into money and others married into it. Some managed their own money, but few created it, though certainly Bon built upon hers. Some came into vast wealth, but many were the ‘poor rich women’ to which Twopeny so callously referred.\textsuperscript{169} Some may have spent their money because there was little else to do. In Australia unlike in England, wrote the Age in May 1897, ‘a rich man in a small community is rather puzzled as to how he is to amuse himself. He can only eat one dinner a day, and in the absence of a generous disposition he has a difficulty in disposing of his income.’ The paper went on to complain that ‘nowadays the possessors of hereditary wealth spend it on themselves and their personal friends’.\textsuperscript{170} Five days later, by contrast, the Australasian wrote ‘it cannot be said that in these colonies there has been that extravagant display which has been rampant among the nouvelle riches of the United States’.\textsuperscript{171} By then, of course, the devastation of the 1890s’ depression had left its mark.

Despite the protestations of publications such as Victoria and its Metropolis that the colony in the 1880s could not yet boast significant material wealth, the economic boom

\textsuperscript{167}R.E.N. Twopeny in Manning Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 682-685.
\textsuperscript{168}Swain, ‘Perhaps to Spite Her Children’.
\textsuperscript{169}Victoria and its Metropolis, 443, 445, 449.
\textsuperscript{170}Age, 17 May 1897.
\textsuperscript{171}Australasian, 22 May 1897.
of that decade meant that there were sufficient wealthy families for the concept of *noblesse oblige* to have taken hold. *Table Talk* was careful to remind its readers in 1885 that ‘wealth has its obligations as well as nobility, and in ignoring these the wealthy lay themselves open to a well-founded charge of meanness’.\(^{172}\) Even before the gold rushes of the 1850s where fortunes were made (and many lost), wealthy families had been practising philanthropy in the colony. In her Masters thesis, ‘The Private Face of Patronage’, Caroline Clemente examines the lives of Dr. Godfrey Howitt and his wife Phebe, who emigrated from England in 1840. The Howitts are described as ‘artistic and intellectual philanthropists’ who belonged to ‘a distinctive culture of social rationalism and energetic philanthropic activity’ favoured by some Quakers, Unitarians and other Dissenting groups. Interestingly, Clemente claims that the Howitts’ involvement in contemporary philanthropic debates ‘inevitably drew them... into the politics of social reform’ – the same link seen in the lives of Ward, Windeyer, Dobson and Bon but not, perhaps, of Austin. While Dr Howitt’s philanthropy incorporated *pro bono* medical services for those who could not afford to pay, he and his wife practised philanthropy in keeping with their social status by contributing to exhibitions of the Victorian Horticultural Society and acting as patrons of artists Edward La Trobe Bateman, Thomas Woolner and Georgiana McCrae. Their patronage, however, was ‘exercised in unusual ways and degrees since it often involved social interaction with personal friends’ and Bateman boarded with the Howitts for some time.\(^{173}\)

We have seen in this chapter that Australian women in the nineteenth century took their cue from Britain and America in terms of the voluntary charitable organisations that they established and supported, and that their giving was strongly connected with membership of those organisations. Those women who were able to access and distribute significant sums of money were absolutely the exception to the rule. They could do so only as widows, or with the implicit support of a wealthy husband or father. Almost all were working from first generation wealth, and their philanthropy was shaped by the very particular social and economic circumstances of the colonies. Giving might have served many purposes: to secure social status; to provide meaningful occupation; to act upon genuine humanitarian concern; to fulfil an obligation; to further a political agenda. Regardless, all of the women profiled in this

\(^{172}\) *Table Talk*, December 1885.

chapter must have seen the opportunity to help shape – or rather, *improve* – the growing societies in which they lived by exercising moral authority. Elizabeth Ward, who was far from wealthy, distributed tracts to the fallen women of Castlereagh Street with a firm conviction that she was doing the right thing. Lady Mary Windeyer used her influence to campaign for divorce reform and to create employment opportunities for women. Emily Dobson was very visible to the public in her efforts to clean up Hobart with the Women’s Sanitary Association by operating a soup kitchen, running a candidate in the 1892 municipal election, and setting up an Association for Improvement of Dwellings of the Working Classes. Anne Bon fought a hard fight for the protection and recognition of the Aboriginal people in her local area, spurred by religious conviction. Elizabeth Austin set a precedent for others with a large, public gift to establish a much-needed medical centre. Whatever the motivation behind their individual gifts, each of these women sought to make a point, if only by her example, and even for a reclusive type such as Bon, wealth spelt influence. The ultimate role model in this brand of nineteenth-century women’s philanthropy, society’s moral guardian, is the subject of the next chapter. Janet Lady Clarke was the Australian Lady Bountiful.
Chapter Two

Australian Lady Bountiful
Janet Lady Clarke (1851-1909)

Away in the back slums of this great city, through foetid alleys and festering lanes, the noble sisterhood of the Melbourne District Nursing Society pursue their errands of mercy, and among that band of ministering angels Lady Clarke is one of the most devoted. What spectacles of squalid misery, what shapes of horrid disease, what fathomless abysses of degradation these delicately nurtured ladies have to encounter in their self-imposed mission cannot be described in these pages...  

The pages belonged to the December 1885 edition of Table Talk, Melbourne's gossip magazine. The article was entitled 'Australian Lady Bountiful', an explicit reference to Lady Clarke who had that month been presented with an address and a bible by hundreds of 'grateful working people'. Its author observed that 'poor people are more sensitive than we are apt to give them credit for, and this little present was made to Lady Clarke, not because her purse was ready to supply their needs, but because her heart was open to sympathise with their troubles'. Just who the grateful workers were is unclear but their petition to Lady Clarke was transcribed by her grandson, Michael Clarke, decades later. He noted that it was written on rough paper and contained 400 signatures. Its cover letter was signed by William Dyson and others ('apparently not the Melbourne District Nursing Society') and had been presented to Lady Clarke prior to her departure for England and Europe. It read:

We the undersigned cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing our sincere thanks to you for your kindness and benevolence shown towards our sick and poor: with deep feelings of regret do we mention your departure, but we shall look forward to your return with very great welcome. We shall ever remember your kind visits, such sympathy and love cannot be forgotten. We all unite in offering you this small token of affection and wishing you and Sir W.J. Clarke a happy and joyous passage. Yours sincerely [etc].  

174 'Australian Lady Bountiful', Table Talk, 24 December 1885.
175 Notes from Michael Clarke, Clarke family papers (privately held). Petition dated 11 December 1885.
By 1885 Lady Clarke had become a central figure in Melbourne's charitable circles. Among her sparse collection of papers remain letters to and from the Women's Hospital, the University of Melbourne, and the City Newsboys' Society. A member of the Women's Hospital Committee and the Charity Organization Society, Janet served as president of the City Newsboys' Society, the Melbourne District Nursing Society and the Hospital for Sick Children. She saved household leftovers for the newsboys, fed hundreds of Richmond and Collingwood residents during the depression years, and was, apparently, tip-toeing down fetid alleyways with the Nursing Society. A well-rounded society lady, she held concerts to nurture the careers of lesser-known musicians and was vice-president of the Austral Salon, and president of the Dante Society, the Alliance Francaise, and later, the National Council of Women and the Women's National League. On her death, the Leader pronounced that Lady Clarke 'stood at the head and front of almost every philanthropic movement', and Punch described her as 'a power in literary circles, in politics, and, greatest of all, in charity', claiming that 'most of the big charitable works which had been carried through to a successful issue in Melbourne in the last decade had their origins in Janet Lady Clarke's ballroom'.

Yet, Table Talk had reminded its readers in 1885, 'in subscribing generously out of their ample means to the public charities... Sir William and Lady Clarke are merely discharging a duty appertaining to their exalted position'. This idea of noblesse oblige was a distinctly British inheritance and, to some, Lady Clarke was the embodiment of British respectability in the colony. She was, said Punch magazine in 1908, 'the only woman with an Australian standing, if we exclude the Governor-General's wife, who owes her prominence entirely to his official position', and enjoyed 'a distinct place even amongst London's crowd of notabilities'. In the years 1874, 1881, 1886 and 1891, the Clarkes embarked en famille on a grand tour of Europe and England. Janet and her step-daughter Blanche were presented to Queen Victoria on the second voyage. By the third, she and Sir William were lunching with the Queen and presenting William's second daughter, Ethel. Janet wrote to her son Russell from the Hotel Continental in Paris in April 1886: 'We shall go to the Drawingroom on May 5th I think. I wish it was over and we had all safely made our bows. Ethel is the only one who will have to kiss the Queen's

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176 Leader, 1 May 1909 in Alan Mayne, Reluctant Italians? One Hundred Years of the Dante Alighieri Society in Melbourne, (Melbourne: Roy Morgan Research, 1997), 33.
177 'Ladies' Letter', Punch, 18 June 1908.
178 Table Talk, December 1885.
179 Punch, 2 July 1908.
hand, as Blanche and I did it last time'. She wrote again in July and reported on the lunch, which she ‘enjoyed... so very much. The Queen was so kind and nice and let us see all her rooms and treasures’. Though Janet was allegedly proud of being a native-born Australian, she always practised and professed strong loyalty to the monarchy and could boast respectable British ancestry. Her grandfather, Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass, was a Peninsular War hero who had stormed the fortress of San Sebastian in northern Spain and was well known as a Commander of the Bath. A large landholder in Australia, he was Acting Governor of NSW following the departure of Governor Bourke in 1838. He was also a Member of the Executive and Legislative Councils and a Member of the United Counties of Gloucester, Macquarie and Stanley from 1848-1851. In 1888 Janet proposed a public gift to commemorate the silver wedding anniversary of the Prince and Princess of Wales. She and William each contributed £50, and public subscriptions brought the sum to £523.

The public Janet Clarke was to some the epitome of all things British, but Table Talk had labelled her ‘Australian Lady Bountiful’ for a reason. She was a variation of the original. This was the same Janet, after all, who was born and raised in the new colony and whose tanned, freckled complexion dismayed her mentor Lady Bowen. The same girl who began life at Doogalook Station on the Upper Goulburn River, mustering and forsaking the elegant side saddle position to chase cattle down steep slopes and over rivers. This was the daughter of Peter Snodgrass, described as ‘a fearless horseman’ but also as ‘a neglectful manager and an unfortunate politician [who] left his widow and nine children destitute’. The Bulletin claimed that he was ‘famous, back in 1840 for fighting the first duel in the colony, a somewhat absurd affair, during which he became so excited he shot himself in the foot’. Upon her father’s death the young Janet lived with Arbella Winter Cooke, a ‘redoubtable Irish lady’ well versed in the hardships of rural living. Here she had the use of an extensive library and benefited from Mrs Winter Cooke’s instruction in French and Italian as well as in domestic skills. Nonetheless Janet’s grandson would later describe her education as ‘sketchy’ prior to employment with William’s first family, as a mother’s help. He noted that his grandmother was

180 Letters from Janet Clarke to Russell Clarke, 14 April 1886 and 5 July 1886, Clarke family papers (privately held).
182 Notes from Michael Clarke, Clarke family papers (privately held).
183 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 49.
‘conscious of her deficiencies. She covered her ignorance by being a good listener. She concealed her lack of social know-how by being a thoughtful hostess and a cautious guest. She was deferential to her elders and betters, kind to nervous young ladies and considerate to servants’.  

Janet Marian Snodgrass married William John Clarke on 21 January 1873, two years after the death of his first wife Mary, who miscarried following a driving carriage accident. Bishop Charles Perry presided over the service at St Peter’s Church in Melbourne. The eldest son of W.J.T ‘Big’ Clarke, William was born in Van Diemen’s Land and his occupation was noted as sheep-owner. He was then 41 years of age; Janet was 21. Though the vast wealth of the Clarkes compared favourably with the Snodgrass family’s distinct lack of financial security, Janet’s pedigree meant that William was in no way marrying beneath himself. His new wife bore eight children over the first fourteen years of their marriage: Clive Snodgrass (1873), Mary Janet (1874), William Lionel Russell (1876), Agnes Petrea Josephine (1877), Francis Grenville (1879), Reginald Hastings (1880), Lily Vera Montagu Douglas (1883), and Ivy Victoria (1887). Agnes (or ‘Josie’ as Janet referred to her 187) died in infancy. William had four children from his first marriage and theirs was a full house. As early as August 1874 the foundation stone was laid for the building of Rupertswood, the family home in Sunbury, with initial costs estimated at £20,000. In January of that year William Clarke’s father had passed away, leaving his son a hefty inheritance of £1,500,000 over $100 million today.

William Clarke was a wealthy man even before he received his inheritance, and his philanthropic activity pre-dates it 185 in 1872 he donated £1,000 to Trinity College but the sudden increase in wealth enabled him to set his sights much higher. In 1874 he gave £12,000 for the building of the Ballarat Academy of Music (now Her Majesty’s Theatre). Two years later, hearing that his eldest son Rupert and Rupert’s cousins were miserable at Wesley College,188 William and his brother Joe bought Hawthorn Grammar School, recruiting Wesley’s Professor Martin Irving to run it. In 1877 he gave £2,000 to the Indian Famine Relief Fund. He gave a further £1,000 to Trinity College in 1878, and again in 1879, this time for the purpose of establishing the Rupertswood

185 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 64.
186 Marriage Schedule, reproduced 27 July 1908 by the Office of the Government Statist, no. 1911. Clarke family papers (privately held).
187 Letter to Canon Ford from Janet Clarke, 24 January 1898. Clarke family papers (privately held).
188 Though the Clarkes were Anglican, they sent their sons to the Methodist Wesley College so as the boys could benefit from the teaching of Professor Irving, recruited to Wesley from the University of Melbourne.
Theological Scholarship. The College continued to benefit from its association with the Clarkes, not least from the efforts of Janet as principal organiser of the Fancy Fair in 1880 — despite Dr Leeper's reluctance.

William Clarke's appointment as president of Melbourne's International Exhibition in 1881 raised the public profile of the Clarkes, if indeed it needed raising. The appointment also led to his knighthood. The following year, 1882, the Clarkes hosted the English amateur cricket team at Rupertswood and Janet made history by presenting (reputedly as a joke) the pottery urn that now represents The Ashes tournament to the captain of the English team, Ivo Bligh. In 1884, Sir William Clarke was installed as District Grand Master of both the English and Scottish Constitutions of Freemasons. By this time the Clarkes’ tradition of giving was well established. Michael Clarke notes that 'numerous institutions could rely upon Sir William to send them an annual cheque for £100, so that he became a Life Governor of almost every hospital in Melbourne', claiming equally that Sir William's 'contributions to charity were not confined to the writing of cheques. Both he and Janet put a great deal of hard work into raising money for public objectives'.

Certainly Janet took her social responsibilities very seriously. In 1885 she helped to organise 'Ye Olde English Xmas and Shakespearian Fayre' at the Town Hall to raise money to build an institution for Prior Butler and his order, who carried out charitable work in the poorer areas of Melbourne. She teamed up on a number of committees with the Governor's wife, Lady Loch, the two ladies serving as president and patron respectively. Lady Clarke was, according to historian Marguerite Hancock, Lady Loch's 'best friend in Victoria', but charitable duties were not always a pleasure for the Governor's wife. Occasionally Lady Loch offered her own handiwork to sell for fundraising events, but her presence was preferred. She wrote to her family in England: 'It is horrid here how one has to submit to these bazaars for everything because they are the only things for getting money'. Interestingly — given that Janet was 'specially interested in the advancement of her own sex' — the Clarkes gave only 'a token £50' to Lady Loch's Queen's Fund to help women in necessitous circumstances, but according to its written history, 'Janet Clarke remained aloof because the male

189 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 269.
190 'The Shakespearean Fair', The Leader, 14 February 1885, 7.
192 'Janet Lady Clarke: Her Death Announced', Argus, 29 April 1909.
domination of the Fund did not appeal to her'. Lady Loch was involved, however, in the first major philanthropic gift to be made in Janet Clarke's own name. Once again, the beneficiary was Trinity College. The efforts of Lady Loch and 'the possibility - or threat! - of a non-denominational college', produced an offer of £5,000 from Janet Lady Clarke toward the building of a house of residence for women at the College. Perhaps old resentments did come to the fore as the relationship between Lady Clarke and Dr Leeper was reputedly one of 'sustained conflict'. Appointed president of the Ladies' Committee for the College, she became frustrated with the constant disregard for this body and for her own stipulation that the principal of the new residence be appointed from either Girton or Newnham College in the United Kingdom. She also argued that the residence should be open to women of all denominations, and that these women would not have to be affiliated with Trinity itself. Such ideas were in all likelihood inherited from her father who, as a member of parliament, emphasised the importance of education and advocated equal access to resources for members of all Christian denominations. By 1891 Janet, disillusioned with the situation at Trinity, was pleased to join her family on their fourth tour of Europe. According to the history of the residence, which later became Janet Clarke Hall, she came to its rescue once again in 1897, funding the nucleus of a hostel library and paying all repair bills for the building. Today her portrait hangs in the College and her descendants are welcomed there as guests of honour.

The 1890s perhaps represent the height of Janet Clarke's social and philanthropic career, though as early as 1884 the Bulletin could devote over four columns of broadsheet text to a list of the guests at her Fancy Dress Ball, claiming that 'since the inauguration of the Town Hall no festivity has ever been presented on so grand a scale of magnificence and luxury... The walls were one sheen of mirrors, reflecting the elegant plush furniture'. Hostess Lady Clarke was dressed as Marie Antoinette and wore 'a pink brocaded Wattau costume, with train, pale blue silk petticoat, profusely studded with diamonds, powdered head-dress, diamond ornaments'. Such extravagance was encouraged when in 1886 Sir William commissioned an East Melbourne mansion, to be named 'Cliveden' after their first son. Here Janet was able to hold committee meetings and fundraising events. Visitors books

193 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 253.

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from Cliveden, still held by the family, are replete with names. An afternoon meeting in
the ballroom to introduce Miss Tegetmier of the Plain-Sewing Movement brought over
three hundred ladies to Cliveden. By 1890 the Clarkes were holding an annual Race
Week Ball. On any ordinary day, people could visit the house and view its rooms for five
shillings — always for charity. During the depression years, the regular Town Hall
concerts were replaced by ‘afternoon At Homes at Cliveden’ in the large Dining Room.
In June 1893, Janet held a ‘girls’ impromptu party’ at Cliveden with just two days
notice, providing light refreshments but no supper. She welcomed 150 people, and
dancing continued until 1:30am. In August the same year paintings were put on show in
the Cliveden ballroom to raise money for a new organ for the Holy Trinity Church,
East Melbourne. By 1895, Janet had offered a room at Cliveden to house the Austral
Salon and another for committee meetings of the Alliance Française. Of the latter group
she was Présidente d’honneur and sponsored the £5 prize for the lauréate of the annual
examinations in December. She and Sir William also offered substantial support to the
Dante Society. Earlier, in 1892, Janet was appointed president of the Associates (Ladies)
of The Melbourne Golf Club. A keen supporter of rowing and always a great
horsewoman, she maintained a love of sport. Of course, by 1891 Janet Clarke was a
mature woman of forty years ‘noted for her dignified and gracious carriage... In spite of
her confinements she had kept her good figure... Many people thought that she looked
at her best when wearing a tiara perched on top of the high pile of her dark brown
hair’.

It is easy to be taken in by accounts of this fervent activity and splendid
extravagance, and to imagine Janet Clarke as a kind of society queen; a demigoddess; a
diamond-studded fairy godmother; the ultimate Cinderella, perhaps. It is far more
difficult to gain an understanding of her character away from the glamour and the
forced politeness of her social circles. We do know that Janet was devoted to her faith.
Her little black leather-bound diary, inscribed with the words ‘The Soul’s Inquiries
Answered’, contains a biblical extract for each day, its pages filled with pressed flowers
and leaves from her garden together with newspaper clippings and poems. Her notes
are sparse and the diary intimates a reserved persona, diligently noting the births, deaths
and marriages of everyone she knew, and the demise of loved ones: ‘Our most beloved
eldest son 8th Hussars Clive Snodgrass Clarke died today in London... from relapse

196 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 279.
after inflammation of the lungs aged 20 years. He bore the record of a blameless life, never once failing in what he felt to be his duty, deeply loved by all. J.M.C' (February 3, 1894) and three years later, 'My darling husband died suddenly today' (May 15, 1897). Alongside these notations, Lady Clarke has marked the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo (July 18, 1815); the China Inland Mission by Charlie Studd, Stanley Smith et al (February 5, 1885); and the death of General Gordon, as if these were the sorts of events a real lady should know of. In her son Russell's ‘Confessions Album’ (likely in the mid-1880s), she recorded that ‘her favourite qualities in a man were Honesty, Moral Courage and Perseverance. In a woman they were Sympathy, Sincerity and Helpfulness. Her greatest happiness was Being with the Children and her greatest misery was Idleness’. Her favourite motto was ‘whatsoever thy hand puttest to do, do it with all thy might’, and she recorded her other favourites as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amusement</th>
<th>Riding and Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>England and Sunbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Thackeray, Charles Kingsley and Ruskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poets</td>
<td>Tennyson, Longfellow and W. Carleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes in real life</td>
<td>Gordon, Bishop Selwyn and Saint Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroines</td>
<td>Sisters of Mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Horses and fowls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Janet was described as ‘handsome rather than pretty’. Her grandson writes:

'The first quality that people noted was that she had a fine face made lively by the brilliance of her eyes. They also noted her slim waist, firm bust and narrow hips. She moved smoothly, without hurry, she was composed, and she had very polite and agreeable manners. Most strangers liked her on sight, nearly all found her to be sympathetic and interesting. She did not put herself forward, yet she was neither shy nor retiring.'

By all accounts, Janet behaved with dignity and charm both inside of the home and out. Letters to her son Russell during her trip abroad in 1886 offer a rare and refreshing glimpse of a more relaxed, more human Lady Clarke. From the S.S. Carthage just out of Colombo in January 1886 she describes the antics of her younger sons: ‘Reggie has no mate on board as Frank spends all his time with Charlie Price and nice tricks they play. There is a poor little man called Catford and they amused

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197 Clarke family papers (privately held).
199 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 64.
themselves yesterday by darting out of a corner and pulling his hair as hard as they could. I made them beg his pardon. On the S.S. *Valetta* in March that year she recounted a strong hurricane two days off Malta. At Malta, passengers came ashore where it was ‘rough and cold. The Carnival is not a quarter as good as Nice... We did not stay very long ashore as everyone was tearing about hitting each other like Carnival people do’. She wrote of the animals being shipped to England from Australia – ‘the poor kangaroos and white opossums feel the cold and rough weather very much indeed and the Tasmanian Tigers seem to like it’ – and noted that ‘we have the same little doctor who was on board the *Peshawar* with very little feet, do you remember him?’ She would, she said, send Russell a copy of *Jackanapes* ‘which made me quite cry, but it is not really sad, for I know you don’t like sad books’. Written by Juliana Ewing in 1879 and illustrated by Randolph Caldecott, this was a novel about a boy whose father was killed at the Battle of Waterloo, and who grew up only to die himself while saving the life of a friend on a battlefield. Once in England, writing from London’s Alexandra Hotel, Janet shared her anxiety as Frank recovered from a serious leg operation and spoke of her many social duties, noting that she was rarely in bed before 2am. She recounted her visit to a large ruin, 2,000 years old and built by the Romans: ‘Frank and I had a great fright there with a cow, and as it stared at my red necktie and would not go away I had to take it off... Father chased it away’. Such trivial observations become poignant and valuable insights into the woman that was Janet Clarke. She dines with the Captain on board ship, and lunches with the Queen in England, but writes to her ten-year-old son of these and other adventures with a remarkable lack of affectation. Her admission before attending the royal drawing room that ‘I wish it was over and we had all safely made our bows’ is the only sign of nervousness or self-doubt. Her love and concern for her children is constantly reiterated and she recounts with obvious pleasure the amusing things that Vera – then a child of three – says and does, assuring Russell that his little sister remembers him.

In May 1897, Sir William Clarke passed away, suffering a sudden heart attack on his way to work. Out of respect for Lady Clarke, the Austral Salon rescheduled for June its forthcoming debate: ‘Is woman’s character improving under her new

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200 Letter to Russell Clarke from Janet Clarke, January 1886. Clarke family papers (privately held).
201 Letter to Russell Clarke from Janet Clarke, 10 March 1886. Clarke family papers (privately held).
202 Letter to Russell Clarke from Janet Clarke, 21 April 1886. Clarke family papers (privately held).
The news of Clarke's death reached the farthest corners of the country, reported in 35 newspapers from the *Argus* to the *Hamilton Spectator* and the *Omeo Standard*, and to the *Freemason* in London.204 Perth's *Western Mail* wrote that 'few more painful occurrences have happened in the public life of Victoria than the fearfully sudden death on Saturday morning, of Sir William John Clarke, Bart., who had for so many years been honoured and esteemed as one of the most generous of citizens'.205 Newspapers used the death to spread a message about generosity and the need for philanthropy. The *Argus* wrote:

> We have a proof in him that accumulated riches excite no envy and no ill-feeling in a democracy when they are wisely, generously and kindly used... Sir William J. Clarke rendered Australia a great service by showing how a large fortune may be so utilised as to disarm criticism and secure a widespread affection and a general respect.206

Equally, the paper noted 'that he was an Australian, and that he did not accumulate wealth here to spend abroad—a proceeding which, however natural in British-born people, is never likely to find favour in Australia itself.' According to the *Australasian*, Sir William and Lady Clarke would travel in the Richmond tram-car rather than have a driver pick them up. Sir William 'had the liking of all classes, particularly the classes who easily contract a dislike to the very rich. The secret of the respect universally entertained for him... was his innate simplicity'. The writer contrasted Clarke with those 'philanthropists we have had among us who somehow were never much admired for their philanthropy. They seemed to make an art of it. The smirk of self-approval was ever evident; or the end they were playing for was too obvious.' It was noted that 'in his philanthropic gifts, as in his hospitality, he was happy in being aided by Lady Clarke'.207 Years later Mr. Thomas Skene, Chairman of the Colonial Bank, recalled:

> Upon his death his widow, as one of the trustees of his vast estate, was called upon to undertake duties of such a magnitude as seldom devolve upon a woman, and I feel sure I am within the mark in saying that in the exercise of those duties she showed an

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203 *Age*, 20 May 1897, 5.
204 Newspaper extracts contained within *In Memoriam. Sir W.J. Clarke, Bart. A Tribute of Affection from an Old Servant* (Queen St, Melbourne: Modern Printing Company, 1897), a leather-bound book given to Lady Clarke.
205 *Western Mail*, Perth, 21 May 1897.
206 *Argus*, 17 May 1897.
207 *Australasian*, 22 May 1897.
acumen and ability which earned for her the highest respect in business circles. Her position in Victoria was unique.208

Sir William’s last Will and Testament was 17 pages long. His real estate was valued at £333,009 and his personal estate at £343,516. Janet was appointed as Executrix, along with several male trustees. To his eldest son Rupert, he left enormous parcels of land and personal property, while Ernest and William received equal shares in land comprising the Dowling Forest Estate. Frank, Reginald, Blanche, Ethel, Mary, Lily and Ivy each received £30,000. Sons were to receive half of their allocated bequest at the age of 21, and the remaining half at 25. Daughters’ shares were to be invested, and they were to receive the income for the remainder of their lives — William was careful to stipulate that this money be used for their ‘sole and separate use free from the debts, control, interference and engagements of any husband’. Upon her death, the share of each daughter was to pass to her children. To Janet, William left Cliveden for her use until her death, along with £500 per annum to cover residential costs and £2,000 for furniture and other household incidentals. She received an immediate cash bequest of £1,000, in addition to paintings, two horses and a carriage worth £1,550. William stipulated that an annuity of £3,000 be paid to his wife, and that she hold an equal share in his residual estate with their children. A further £2,000 was set aside ‘to be expended... between such of the Charitable Institutions and Charities in the Colony of Victoria as my said Wife may in her sole and absolute discretion nominate and direct’.209

Somewhat unluckily for Lady Clarke, income tax had been introduced to Victoria just two years before her husband’s death, with incomes over £2,200 per annum subject to a tax of 8 pence to the pound (or 3.3%) for personal exertion, and 16 pence in the pound (or 6.6%) for ‘unearned’ income such as rents and dividends. Probate duty on estates above £100,000 was 10%, with a half-duty reduction for widows, children and grand-children cutting out at £50,000.210 Over £54,000 in probate duty was paid on Sir William’s estate.211 It could hardly be said, however, that Lady Clarke was left badly off. Despite her widowed status, she continued to practise

209 Will and probate documents for Sir William John Clarke, VPRS 28/P/0002, Unit 471, Item 66/038; VPRS 28/P/0000, Unit 843, Item 66/038; VPRS 7591/P/0002, Unit 269, Item 66/038, Public Record Office Victoria.
210 Clarke, Clarke of Rupertswood, 317.
211 VPRS 28/P/0002, Unit 471, Item 66/038, Public Record Office Victoria.
philanthropy and to wield her influence in society at large. As well as supporting the high-profile charitable organisations with which she had long been involved, she kept up a series of more personal charitable relationships. Particularly personal was her role as trustee of the Clive Snodgrass Clarke Endowment Fund in memory of her first-born son. William had left £1,000 in his will to establish a memorial for Clive, and it was Janet’s decision to set up the Fund within St. Mary’s Church, Sunbury, and to serve as a trustee alongside William Howat Esq, her second son William Russell, and the clergyman of the Parish. William Clarke had made a significant contribution to the building of the church, which was named in memory of his first wife, and it was here that Janet’s infant daughter Josie was buried.212

Janet’s private philanthropy, though, extended beyond the family circle. The regular Ladies’ Letter in Punch wrote of her in June 1908: ‘Her public benevolence has always been large and generous, but it has been as nothing to her private benevolence. Scores of families have benefited from her charity, and been enabled to last many a bitter winter through her.’213 The same publication reminded its readers a month later that ‘there is a long and weary road between the humble and unobtrusive role of governess and the leader of society acknowledged throughout a Continent’.214 If one were prone to clichéd rhetoric, one might suggest that Janet Lady Clarke had not forgotten her humble origins. Indeed she provided the Governesses’ Institute in Melbourne with an annual donation of £25 (having offered £50 toward its building fund in 1879),215 and supported her own one-time governess, Miss Jane Franklin, with a small pension in her old age. She continued to patronise the cause of the city newsboys, and was honoured by what the Age described in somewhat disturbing phraseology as an ‘effervescent, highly strung mass of small manhood’ early in 1907 when a special New Year’s concert was held to welcome her home from her latest trip abroad:

A shy looking street runner presented her with a shower bouquet of roses, which had been obtained by means of a spontaneous penny subscription among the lads. Janet Lady Clarke said she had received many gifts of flowers during her recent travels, but she prized the newsboys’ gift more than any of them, and would keep a few of the blooms as long as she lived. The boys... shouted their applause.216

212 Letter from Janet Clarke to Canon Ford, 24 January 1898. Clarke family papers (privately held).
214 Punch, 2 July 1908.
216 Age, 22 February 1907.
In August 1908, Janet wrote to the *Age* in patriotic spirit. Her letter was addressed to the editor from 'J.M.C.' and published:

Sir, - I am proud to belong to a country which produces a race whose character is exemplified in the splendid spirit of the lads at Ballarat, who, being unable to proceed by rail to Melbourne, are now walking to the metropolis that they may join with others in welcoming the American fleet on their arrival in the city. I have forwarded a cheque for £10 to be used in whatever way may be thought best to add to the pleasure of their visit.217

In these first few years of the twentieth century, Janet's public activities took on a far more political tone. Universal suffrage for women – excluding in effect Aboriginal women – was granted in Australia in 1901. Though it was not introduced for State elections in Victoria until 1908, Janet, a self-described Anti-Socialist, was quick to take a lead in the political education of Victorian women. Research by Dr. Ralph Biddington suggests that she was influenced by the liberal views of W.J.T. Clarke's illegitimate son (born to Jane, sister of Clarke's wife Eliza), Dr. William Maloney, who supported female suffrage. Yet Janet herself professed to be opposed to it. She drafted the following letter to women of her acquaintance in September 1903:

Dear ..............,

Willing or unwilling the women of Australia have had the Franchise conferred on them by the Federal Parliament, and as we out-number the male voters, the importance of recognising the responsibility thrown upon us cannot be overestimated. Personally I have not sought or even desired it, as I have felt that a woman's side in life is quite as strenuous as that of a man, in his own work. Now all is changed, having a voice in the affairs of our Country it would be selfish, and wanting in patriotism indeed, if we did not do our very best to inform ourselves as to the work which lies before us.

It would be the aim of every woman to act wisely, and well, when she feels that her intelligence may help to make, or mar, Australia, and preserve it a free unfettered Country. She would I feel sure leave no stone unturned to use her vote with judgment and knowledge.

217 *Age*, 29 August 1908.
For this end I would ask you to come to a meeting at Cliveden at ... when some of those gentlemen who understand the wants of our Country, will give us the benefit of their counsel, and advice in forming ourselves into an Australian Women's League.218

Thus the Australian Women's National League was formed and, springing from it, the more exclusive Australian Women's National Club. By 1905 the League could boast 10,000 members, and the Club 440.219 In April of that year, Mrs. George Reid (née Flora Ann Brumby), wife of the Prime Minister, was welcomed to a meeting of the Club by Janet Clarke, who announced that:

The many thousands of women who were now members of the Women's National League had no wish for the franchise; but, having been given the right to vote, it became a necessity that they should exercise it. (Applause)... They wanted to educate the children, so that as they grew up they would be inspired with those great sentiments of loyalty and love to the throne, love of homes and of country.220

An account of the meeting published in The Argus noted that:

The League is far from being a “woman’s rights” organisation... It came into existence with the fullest recognition that politics is not woman's proper sphere, but with the conviction that, in the face of a national danger, it was the duty of those women whose sensitive natures shrank from the strife and publicity of politics to band together, and bear their share in the fight for what is best in our country.221

This may have come as some consolation to politicians like the Honorable A. O. Sachse who had professed his belief in 1900 that, although ‘an educated woman can exercise the franchise just as intelligently as the average man’, her political involvement would necessitate her attendance at public meetings that were ‘certainly not sentimental or connected with any of the finer feelings in life’, nor were they connected with ‘the greatest matter with which women can associate themselves, namely, charity’.222

Several meetings of the Australian Women’s National Club were held at Cliveden, and esteemed gentlemen were invited to speak. During his address in December 1905, Mr. Bruce Smith, M.H.R. congratulated Victorian women on forming

218 Draft letter from Janet Clarke, 1 September 1903. Clarke family papers (privately held).

219 'Australian Women's National Club', Argus, 20 December 1905.

220 'Women in Politics: Speech by the Prime Minister', Argus, 12 April 1905.

221 'Women in Politics: Speech by the Prime Minister', Argus, 12 April 1905.

a league and gaining strength from their union, noting that: 'In endurance in intellectual work woman was not man’s equal, but to-day’s political work rested not on intellectual endurance, but on intellectual refinement and skill, and there was nothing to support the proposition that in this regards woman was not equal to man.'

He was applauded for his comments. Cliveden became the hub of Janet’s Anti-Socialist campaigns and hosted up to 1,000 women in the first Commonwealth conference of Women’s Anti-Socialist Organisations. The meeting, chaired by Janet, heard from a representative of the Queensland Women’s Electoral League whose paper on immigration criticised ‘the strange spectacle of a vast empty continent practically railed off as a reserve for the white Australian. Who was the “White Australian?” What title deeds had he got to Australia other than those signed in scarlet with the title “Might is right?”’

A motion for the introduction of a ‘reasonable system of immigration’ was seconded and carried ‘with acclamation.’ A representative from the Women’s Liberal League, Sydney, felt that ‘while a white Australia was extremely desirable from a race-mixture point of view, it would not be advisable from an industrial aspect’, adding that ‘there was no reason why women should not be able to solve the problem which men had failed to solve’. Just a few years after the introduction of the White Australia Policy, these were lively – even radical – debates, and in retrospect do little to uphold Janet’s idea that women were unwilling, if cooperative, participants in the political process. Janet’s sister, Eva Hughes, was particularly concerned with the place of women in politics and displayed a political drive that was ‘undoubtedly more single-minded and sophisticated’ than her own. Though Hughes’ ‘social intercourse... was not to be compared with the whirl of which Janet, Lady Clarke, was centre’, she succeeded her sister as president of the League and worked solidly in that role from 1909 until 1922. Hughes was no advocate of the women’s movement, and ‘particularly reviled’ the members of the Women’s Peace Army that was organised by Vida Goldstein and Adela Pankhurst, but she believed that women could make a separate and important contribution to politics, specifically to the anti-socialist cause.

By the middle of 1908, Janet was stepping back from the social and political scene. During her last trip abroad she had contracted Maltese Fever and the effects were

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223 'Australian Women’s National Club’, Argus, 20 December 1905.  
224 'Women’s League: Anti-Socialist Campaign: Commonwealth Conference’. Paper unidentified and undated, Clarke family papers (privately held).  
ongoing.226 *Punch* magazine’s Ladies’ Letter announced in June 1908 that Lady Clarke was suffering from neuritis – ‘a new-fangled disease’. Its author had ‘a strong suspicion that it is merely a term used by the doctors to mean that the patient has some disease that they do not understand’.227 In fact, according to her death certificate, Janet was suffering from an agonising combination of ‘enteritis, pleurisy, chronic peritonitis, terminal Ascites Maloma, stomatitis and necrosis of the jaw’.228 Family legend has it that on the morning of April 28, 1909, Ivy Clarke was sleeping on a couch at the foot of her mother’s bed. Janet awoke as the dawn light streamed through her open window, exclaimed ‘Oh! What an angelic day!’, and promptly expired.229 She was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery on 29 April 1909. Thousands of people lined the streets to watch the funeral procession.

The estate of Janet Lady Clarke was valued at £109,587. She held 730 shares in the Metropolitan Gas Company, 157 in Colonial Bank, 750 in the Herald and Weekly Times, and smaller numbers in Broken Hill Pty Ltd, Mt. Morgan, Mutual Store Ltd., Mungana Chillagoe, Mount Lyell Blocks, Magnet Silver, and the Bank of Victoria. Her liabilities were numerous but inconsequential, with small amounts owing to butchers, chemists, fruiters, drapers and other tradespersons. After settlement, the estate sat at £108,444, with £10,756 for duty. Particular paintings, jewellery and trinkets were left to various of her children. Ivy received the diamond tiara. All remaining furniture and works of art at Cliveden were to go to her children. All real estate was to be sold and the proceeds used to pay probate duty, the cost of her funeral, and the cost of a monument which she specified should not exceed £1,000, a generous sum which would ensure prominence in death, as in life. Her memorial pavilion still stands in Melbourne’s Alexandra Gardens today. In the event, Cliveden was bought by the Baillieu family’s Cliveden Property Company Ltd. for £22,000 in 1909, at which time it was proposed to turn the mansion into residential flats.230 Not until April 1968 were its contents auctioned off by Leonard Joel Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 2,596 items in total.231 The mansion was sold that year to Dillingham Constructions Pty Ltd, and the conversion

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226 Now known as Brucellosis, Maltese Fever is a bacterial disease contracted through contaminated milk or skin contact with infected animals, and persists for life. Symptoms include undulating fevers, sweating, headaches and muscular pain.
229 Notes from Michael Clarke. As recounted to him by Rosemary Knox, daughter of Ivy Knox (née Clarke). Clarke family papers (privately held).
231 ‘The Cliveden Auction’ (catalogue), Leonard Joel Pty Ltd, Melbourne, April 1968.
went ahead, but two years later the building was demolished to make way for the Hilton Hotel. The Hotel did retain a Cliveden Room incorporating original dining fittings and stained glass windows.

In her will, Janet directed that £20,000 go into trust to pay annuities to her sister Eliza Snodgrass (£204); her brother Sebastian Douglas Snodgrass (£50); her sister-in-law Lena Snodgrass (£125); her brother Francis Campbell Snodgrass (£120); and her brother Charles William Snodgrass (£150). Of the remaining money, lump sums were to be paid as follows:

- M.J. Lindsay (daughter) £8,000
- L.V.M.D. Clarke (daughter) £8,000
- I. V. Clarke (daughter) £8,000
- W.L.R. Clarke (son) £8,000
- F.G. Clarke (son) £5,000
- R.H. Clarke (son) £5,000
- Agnes Eva Hughes (sister) £1,000
- Gertrude McVean (sister) £1,000
- Rev. Frederic Evelyn Sturt Snodgrass (brother) £1,000

What was left was to be invested in either the British Consols; Stocks or Debentures of the Commonwealth of Australia; Debentures of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works; Debentures of the Commissioners of Savings Banks of Victoria; or freehold property within Australia, and was to be divided among the children in the proportions outlined above. One could speculate endlessly on this distribution and what it might imply about Janet’s various relationships with her children and siblings, but most notable for our purposes is the fact that, after a lifetime of philanthropic service, she did not bequeath to charity. On her death, the numerous accolades for Janet Lady Clarke were as effusive and eulogistic as they had been for William: ‘As a rich woman, she recognised her responsibilities, and she never shirked them. Her daily engagements would have severely tried most public men.’ And, ‘she did good, if not exactly by stealth, at all events without any of that glare of publicity which so many alleged philanthropists seem unable to dispense with.’

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it is not surprising and represents no break with tradition that Janet omitted charitable institutions from her will, but it does mean that one can take quite literally the words of *Punch* in April 1909 when it wrote of 'the poorer classes, who, up to the day of her death, benefited by the unostentatious generosity of their lady bountiful'.

Janet Lady Clarke occupied a unique position in Victoria and few women could have hoped to replicate her success, but many did wish to emulate her, and her influence extended well into the twentieth century. At no time did she contravene her role as a wealthy woman in colonial society she did her rounds with the District Nursing Society, hosted fundraising fairs and 'At Homes', sat on committees, bore eight children, and visited the Queen but she sanctioned by her example a woman's right to control the distribution of philanthropic funds and to have a political voice. This was an important precedent for Australia's twentieth century women philanthropists.

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234 *Punch*, 29 April 1909.
SECTION II

Work and Leisure
1910-1965
Chapter Three

‘A Modified Aristocracy’

There is a great deal of truth in the old saying that it takes three generations to make a gentleman—and there is no doubt but that the second is infinitely the worst of the three... but I see no reason why we should not pass through the social as we are passing through the political crisis, and obtain a modified aristocracy in the third generation, which in the fourth should become as profitable to the country as an aristocracy well can be.

R.E.N. Twopeny, _Town Life in Australia_ (London, 1883)²³⁵

‘Wanted A New Charity Ideal’, pleaded the Australian Women’s Weekly in August 1933. Something other than tired old fêtes, dances, card parties, exhibitions, jumble sales, tea parties, motor picnics, open gardens, and factory visits. Cabarets, in particular, were ‘rather revolting... even gigolos baulked at them’: they brought to mind ‘the smell of moth balls and petrol exuded from resurrected furs and newly cleaned gloves. On the dance floor fat women would grasp frantically at their partners, dance the two-step, the Black Bottom, and the shimmy shake’. Some more inventive time-killing attraction was needed, wrote the author, to capture the attention of the public and ‘lure it into parting with money... “Anything or everything”, cries the multitude, “except direct giving, of which we most decidedly disapprove”.’²³⁶

It is surprising to find such a delightfully satirical piece of prose in a magazine that no doubt counted among its readers thousands of women who engaged in exactly these sorts of charitable activities. The suggestion of an Australian reluctance to part with money without something in exchange, no matter how trivial or tedious, is particularly pertinent: charity was still linked to social status; it did not always imply generosity. A 1934 publication of Who’s Who in the World of Women for the state of Victoria, its subtitle promising ‘a representation of every sphere showing activities and interests: social, philanthropic, historic, scholastic, sport and travel’, proves the point.²³⁷

²³⁵ Quoted in Manning Clark, _Select Documents in Australian History_ (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1955), 682.
Glossy pages boast glamorous portraits of Victoria’s well-to-do in bright lipstick, feathers and fur. For each woman are listed categories: family, hobbies, and of course, charities. Overwhelmingly, the women profiled are living in Toorak, Kew, Brighton, St Kilda, South Yarra, Armadale, Kooyong or Malvern, with a handful in country Victoria. Many are members of the Alexandra or Lyceum Clubs. Popular hobbies are gardening, golf, painting, pottery, horseracing, travelling, music and reading – the pursuits of women of leisure. Typical charities or favoured institutions include the Lady Northcote Free Kindergarten, the Alfred Hospital, the Women’s Hospital, the Austin Hospital, the Red Cross, the National Council of Women, the League of Nations, Benevolent Societies and District Nursing Societies, as well as groups supporting servicemen.

By all appearances, the Who’s Who women are no different from their nineteenth-century counterparts, but in fact, the first decades of the twentieth century were a time of change as well as continuity in women’s philanthropy. The normative link to charitable organisations remained, but while many wealthy Australian women adopted the fundraising techniques of their forebears (to the chagrin of our Women’s Weekly correspondent) and endorsed the traditional philanthropy practised by the Ladies’ Benevolent Societies and the Charity Organisation Society, a new philanthropic style was beginning to emerge. Well into the twentieth century, the Charity Organisation Society was still focusing on medical inspections and juvenile offenders, and administering to (or perhaps admonishing) the poor, while the Benevolent Societies continued to address individuals with their very individual needs. The great change came with the development of the formal trust fund, later philanthropic foundation,238 which offered far broader philanthropic scope and embodied the kind of direct giving to which Australians hitherto had appeared so resistant. In Australia, the development was pioneered by Alfred Felton – though he was probably influenced by the benefactions of Argus proprietor Edward Wilson, and South Australian art enthusiast Sir Thomas Elder239 – when he bequeathed over £383,000 to form the Felton Bequest in 1904. Income from the trust fund, administered by a committee of five, was to be divided in


two, with half for the relief of women and children, and half to be spent on works of art for the National Gallery in Melbourne.

As similarly formal philanthropic funds were established - most famously the Sidney Myer Fund in 1934 - and as primitive forms of state welfare were introduced, there was less obvious need for traditional charitable organisations, and Shurlee Swain has noted the ability of state welfare to marginalise women philanthropists.240 Mark Lyons has found, however, that the growth of state welfare 'led to a flourishing of nonprofit associations'.241 Perhaps it was a case of out with the old, and in with the new. The women in the Who's Who publication adhered to the social traditions of their mothers and grandmothers, but they were living in a different world. They had seen the introduction of political citizenship for women. Theirs was a federated Australia: one that had felt the impact and witnessed the atrocities of a world war, leaving some disillusioned by Britain and feeding a surge of nationalism.

This chapter draws on a number of biographical sketches to investigate the philanthropy of Australia's leisureed women - leisureed in the sense that they had no need to work for a living, but not in the sense that they were idle - in the first half of the twentieth century. It begins with a detailed profile of Mrs Ivy Brookes, daughter of Alfred Deakin, whose philanthropy was inseparable from her politics and whose story flags some of the major changes for women in this period. The chapter goes on to explore the phenomenon of the philanthropic spinster, with particular attention to Dame Eadith Walker and Mary Fairfax, and the sisters Nesta and Gwendolen Griffiths; Alice, Annette and Edith Collier; and Barbara and Catherine Collie. Finally the chapter considers the philanthropy of married women and widows including Eliza Hall, Alice Baker, Dame Hilda Stevenson, Dame Mabel Brookes (sister-in-law of Ivy), Louise Hanson-Dyer and Helen Macpherson Schutt.

Ivy Brookes (1883-1970)

Back home after a visit to the United States in 1931, the 'clever, attractive, Titian-headed' Mrs Ivy Brookes, auburn hair swept across her forehead and a posy pinned to her lapel, was profiled by the Dominion newspaper. The strong features and somewhat

sombre expression belied a ‘fluent speaker’ who was ‘brimming with a keen sense of fun’, and the author couldn’t help but note ‘what a great help she must be to her clever husband, a woman with brains, charm, and filled with the desire to help everything in need – nothing could be more suited for the wife of a trade diplomat’.  

Ivy Brookes is the personification of early twentieth-century Australian women’s philanthropy. Daughter of none other than Alfred Deakin, the second Prime Minister of Australia, she married businessman and public official Herbert Brookes in 1905, at 22 years of age. Herbert Brookes was secretary of Austral Otis and held shares with his father in William Brookes & Co. A strong Liberal supporter, he became the Chairman of the Chamber of Manufactures; served on the Commonwealth Board of Trade; and was appointed Commissioner-General for Australia in the United States from 1923 to 1930. He also served as Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Ivy’s husband was ‘the reverse of self-centred’, according to historian Alison Patrick, ‘his public responsibilities grew from morally based concern’; and he was devoted to his family. He shared with Deakin a passion for politics and an interest in the Australian Church, though as a young man Deakin was also a spiritualist. Deakin’s wife Pattie, herself the daughter of a prominent spiritualist, was involved in charitable work for Australian servicemen and for child welfare, taking part in the kindergarten and playgrounds movements. The combined influences of Ivy’s parents, her aunt Katie, who tutored her, and her husband, fifteen years her senior, are evident in her work and character. Certainly she shared her father’s nationalism. In A Family Romance: The Deakins at Home, John Rickard recounts a letter from Ivy to Herbert during their courtship in which she mentions a debate to take place at sister Stella’s school ‘as to whether you would like to live in England or Australia best’ an interesting reflection of the times in its own right – adding, ‘I know what I shall say’.  

A talented musician, Ivy studied at Melbourne’s Conservatorium of Music where she played the violin with Professor G.W.L. Marshall Hall’s orchestra. In 1904 she won the Ormond Scholarship for singing at the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Music. She relinquished the scholarship upon her marriage to Brookes one year later.

but continued to support both institutions and served as a council member for the Faculty of Music from 1926 to 1969. With Herbert she financed a new wing of the Conservatorium in 1935, dedicating it to 'Marshall Hall and his genius':

My husband and I count it a very special privilege to be permitted to memorialize by this Wing to the Conservatorium a great artist and a good man, Professor Marshall Hall, who did so much for Art and Music in this city and State. I myself was enrolled amongst the number of his earlier students and I shall never forget the inspiration it was to come under his dynamic and stimulating influence. To me accordingly this ceremony comes with a profound joy, and as a sacred experience.\textsuperscript{246}

Nowhere is the precise value of this gift recorded, and again we face the near impossibility of quantifying philanthropy. Papers in the Herbert and Ivy Brookes collection would indicate that Dame Nellie Melba contributed £1,000 toward the building of the hall named in her honour, and presented the Marshall Hall Orchestra with a set of instruments\textsuperscript{247}, but these gifts have gone formally unrecorded also. There is no doubt that the Brookes' association with and contribution to the University at large was significant. As well as her work for the Faculty of Music, Ivy was a member of the Board of Studies in Physical Education until 1968, and was involved with the women's auxiliary for International House, a residential college. Herbert was a representative of donors to Trinity College. In 1922 his donation of £500 to the University in response to a public appeal went toward an Exhibition in Strength and Elasticity of Materials. A note from W. Baldwin Spencer around the same time thanks Herbert for his cheque toward a portrait of Sir Thomas Lyle to hang in Wilson Hall, while a receipt from Queen's College dated 12 October 1928 shows that he donated £64 to the College's R.M. Oakley Memorial—a handwritten note on the receipt, 'in all £514', might indicate even greater generosity.\textsuperscript{248} Both Herbert and Ivy were members of the

\textsuperscript{246} MS 1924/27/78 (National Library of Australia): Ivy's speech notes on the opening of the new Wing, March 1935. See also Farley Kelly, Degrees of Liberation: A Short History of Women in the University of Melbourne (Parkville, Vic: Women Graduates Centenary Committee, University of Melbourne, 1985), 42: 'The atheist Prof. Marshall Hall was in fact the sworn enemy of Dr Leeper, who led a narrowly successful campaign in the press and the girls' schools to prevent the renewal of Marshall Hall's contract at the University in 1900, following the publication of a collection of his poems in 1898 that were declared to be 'libidinous and anti-clerical'. Marshall-Hall set up the Conservatorium in direct competition with the University's Faculty of Music and the vast majority of his students and staff followed him.

\textsuperscript{247} MS 1924/27/97: Memo, and MS 1924/27/98 (NLA).

\textsuperscript{248} MS 1924/27/16: Letter to Herbert Brookes from Mr. Bainbridge, Registrar at the University, 14 March 1922; MS 1924/27/21: Note from Baldwin Spencer (undated); MS 1924/27/1448: Receipt from Queen's College, 12 October 1928.
Orchestra Advisory Committee convened in 1933 along with Sidney Myer (Chair, Norman Brookes (Herbert's brother) and Keith Murdoch. The Committee was set up to handle the proposed amalgamation of the Marshall Hall Orchestra (or University Symphony Orchestra) with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. At its first meeting on 4 January 1933 at the Myer Emporium, the committee heard the Chair's proposal that a fund be established to provide support for regular popular concerts held in Melbourne: £50,000 was the objective. The appeal would be launched at a public meeting on January 17, and Murdoch was asked to provide publicity in the Herald and the Sun.249 Interestingly, University records note a donation of £10,000 from Sidney Myer toward the orchestra the previous year, 1932.250

For Ivy, music was a lifelong passion. She was a member of the Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust Fund and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra ladies' committee. Together, she and Herbert established the T.E. Brown Society (after poet Thomas Edward Brown), hosting musical and literary activities at their South Yarra home, Winwick. Brown, who died in 1897, was once ‘Mannin’s national poet’. He was educated at Oxford and later ordained deacon, but returned to the Isle of Man to teach. An article in the Manchester Guardian, published posthumously, noted his wide acquaintance with the classics and his love of ‘quaint books’. He also studied music. Brown’s poetry was patriotic and emotive. He was ‘an ironical, but not unkindly spectator, but deeper than this ironic mood... lay the tenderest outgoings to humanity at large’.251 Why he was so greatly esteemed by Herbert and Ivy is not immediately clear particularly as both had English or Welsh antecedents, but Rickard tells us that Brown had long been one of Ivy’s favourite authors. As a young woman she had once written the profile of her ideal man (though she knew already who he was) and ‘included a list of books, ranging from the poems of Matthew Arnold and T.E. Brown to the sermons of Phillips Brooks, which it was necessary for them to share an attachment to’.252 Social and cultural events were not held at Winwick exclusively in honour of Brown. Dr Leeper described the South Yarra home as ‘the chief intellectual power house in Melbourne’ and the Argus regularly reported on the comings and goings. Flowers, hats and frock...
were described in infinite detail, and personalities of interest spotted in the crowd were duly noted. An ‘At Home’ to farewell the Faculty of Music’s Professor Bernard Heinze—who referred to Ivy as the ‘fairy godmother’ of the Conservatorium—was held in September 1924. Here Sir James Barrett, Chancellor of the University, spoke of ‘the debt of gratitude that all music lovers owe to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Brookes’, noting that ‘it is owing largely to Mrs. Herbert Brookes that the board of management of the Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust Fund now has £10,000, instead of £4,000, to its credit—a situation that has changed the future of orchestra development in Melbourne’.  

An article in the Australian alluded to more direct financial contributions, claiming that: ‘Mr. and Mrs. Brookes have shown their practical sympathy with musicians who are finding it not an easy matter to get their feet on the ladder of fame, just as their collection of the works of Australian artists is testimony to their practical patronage of another field of art.’

Aside from her musical activities, Ivy took an interest in politics after her marriage, joining the League of Nations Union and the National and International Councils of Women. She was a founder of the International Club of Victoria. She was also a member of the Playgrounds’ and Housewives’ Associations of Victoria, and served on the board of the Women’s Hospital for a monumental fifty years. Her records from these associations tell a very interesting story, particularly as she was a ‘born leader’ and, reported one contemporary magazine, ‘usually attains the chairmanships of those movements in which she shows interest’. A program for the 11th Annual Congress of the National Council of Women in 1913 reveals Mr. Herbert Brookes among the speakers, with a presentation on ‘Women’s Work in the Industrial World’.

By this time Ivy was a member of the executive committee of the Council’s Victorian branch, and Herbert’s support for her work there is implicit in his involvement. Papers from these early years reveal the Council’s preoccupation with the welfare of female prisoners (with particular insistence upon their separation from male prisoners) and the provision of playground space for children. Ivy’s resignation from the committee in 1914 coincided with the birth of her second child. She was asked to join again in 1927.

256 MS 1924/38/1: ‘Mrs. Herbert Brookes: Victoria’s First Housewife Chief’, magazine article undated and publication unspecified.
257 MS 1924/39: Program, NCW 11th Annual Congress, Melbourne, November 12-14, 1913.
During wartime, Ivy assisted her mother in the 'soldiers' bouffet'. She also served as the first president of the Victorian Housewives' Association, for which post she was unanimously chosen. According to historian Judith Smart, the Housewives' Association was established by liberal and progressive women in Melbourne to speak for housewives as a homogenous group, and specifically to encourage cooperative buying and selling of market produce direct from producers to consumers. For leaders of the organisation, 'altruism in the form of a secularized Christian charity and moral duty was the dominant imperative, although ambition and the desire for political influence also played a part', and increasingly the Association did lobby for women in parliament. Its primary aim, though, particularly as prices soared during the war, was to cut out the middleman and reduce the cost of living. Ivy's own interest in the project had been stimulated by an address on cooperatives to delegates of the National Council of Women in 1913, and in December of that year, one H.M. Elvery of Lockwood in Belgrave wrote to her proposing the establishment of the Australian Women's Co-operative Rural Association. The idea was to raise £20,000 by offering any woman who purchased or sold market produce to become a shareholder. Shares would be priced at £1 each and 'the wealthy women of Victoria are particularly asked to support the movement to help those less comfortably situated than themselves'. Ms. Elvery suggested that a property be purchased with this money for orcharding and farming. The produce from the property would be distributed directly to those housewives holding shares.

In the event, the Association did set up a co-op in the Block Arcade, Melbourne, but by 1916, Ivy was drafting a letter to Madam Chairwoman informing her that, as president of the Co-operative Association, she recommended its dissolution, the implication being that the project was not financially viable. Ivy suggested that all members pay what was owing on their £1 shares to settle debts, with any remainder to be divided between shareholders, and promptly tendered her resignation. Members elected to continue the co-op for another month, and a financial statement for 1916

258 MS 1924/38/1 (as above).
260 MS 1924/38/7: Letter from H.M. Elvery to Mrs. Brookes, 13 December 1913.
261 MS 1924/38/15: Draft of letter to Madame Chairwoman from Ivy Brookes, 5 April 1916.
shows total assets after wages, rent and loans of over £60. Smart tells us that the Association movement was reinvigorated by politically conservative women in the 1920s, but Ivy had nothing further to do with it until 1928 when its president, Eleanor Glencross, asked her to be a Patroness and Honorary Life Member. The offer was accepted, but five years later correspondence took a different tone. Ivy wrote to the secretary of the Association in May 1933:

To my surprise I see by the Argus of Wednesday last (3rd May) that your Association has still kept my name on their list of patronesses in spite of the fact that I requested them to take it off two years ago on my return from USA stating my reason. Will you please see therefore that my name is removed as being one of your patronesses without further delay and also that it be deleted from the heading on your notepaper, otherwise I shall have to write to the press informing them of your failure to carry out my wishes. Will you kindly advise me immediately as to what action has been taken in the matter.

The reason for this curt request is most likely connected with the controversial appointment of Delia Russell as president of the Association in 1930. Russell came into conflict with her executive that year, ostensibly over the question of temperance, but Smart notes that the more important issues were 'non-consultative decision-making and Russell's self-promotion', which led the executive to drop prohibition from the agenda of the Association altogether. Ivy sent a letter in February 1931 to inform the Association that 'if my position as patroness is dependent upon me taking sides then I must ask you to remove my name'. A rather affronted Mrs. McNab, acting president, replied swiftly to assure Mrs. Brookes that her request would be complied with. Twelve years later, as if the entire incident were forgotten, Ivy received a letter from the then president, Mrs. Downing, asking if she would be Life Vice President of the Federated Association of Australian Housewives.

Over time, the Housewives' Association became a politicised body and was affiliated with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the League of Nations Union and the Australian Women's National League. It took on a series of mottos: in wartime, 'To Reduce the High Cost of Living'; in the 1920s, 'For the Good That We Can Do'; and later a more assertive, 'Housewives! Your Strength Lies in Unity!' In its first decade of operation, motions were carried in favour of liquor reform; women being

263 MS 1924/38/26: Financial Statement, Registered Co-operative Societies, Return for the Year 1916.
265 MS 1924/38/30: Note.
eligible for parliament; increased pensions for war widows; legislation against profiteering; and legislation against divorces being recognised in Australia which had been granted in America. In later years the Association protested against the introduction of the totalisator and the Railway Commissioner's request for a liquor licence at the Mt. Buffalo Chalet. It held a campaign for pure milk for babies; for the safety of children; and for duty to be taken off gloves and hosiery. It also advocated heavier sentences for 'men guilty of criminal offences, against little girls especially'. This motley collection of concerns must have rung true with numbers of Australian women, for the Association had a paying membership of 20,000 by 1925.  

Despite her differences with the Association, Ivy maintained an interest in women's organisations and the cause of women generally. This was signalled by a much publicised visit from Miss Royden of England, who was hosted for afternoon tea at Winwick in June 1928. Miss Royden was 'the world-famous woman preacher' who edited The Common Cause, the official organ of British women suffragists. A profile of Ivy in the Australian that year, under the heading 'Our Public Women', recounted her involvement with the Commonwealth Liberal Party. She served as honorary secretary of the women's section until the National Federation formed to incorporate all sections: 'considering that the new organisation did not give fair representation to women of the Liberal party, Mrs. Brookes dropped out altogether'. By the 1930s she had re-joined the National Council of Women in earnest, becoming vice-president in 1935. Returning in January 1931 from fifteen months in the United States, where Herbert was serving as Commissioner-General, Ivy was asked to speak to the Council and the Children's Welfare Association to report on her findings. She spoke of the Progressive Education System in which babies from six months to four years of age were sent to spend each morning with trained nurses 'who study the child and tell the mothers what to do and when to do it'. She had been impressed with the way women's clubs were run in New York and wished to affiliate some of Australia's clubs with those in America. The Dominion reported: 'Speaking of American women, Mrs. Brookes said that they impressed her as being great seekers after further education on all subjects at night.'

266 MS 1924/38/52: 'A Brief Chronological Review of the Activities of The Housewives' Association of Victoria' (undated, c.1928).

267 'Reception for Miss Royden: Mr & Mrs Herbert Brookes Entertain', Dominion: Woman's World, 20 June 1928. Table Talk featured a photograph of Miss Royden on its front page, 28 June 1928, with a detailed article on page 51.

268 'Our Public Women', Australian, 12 May 1928.

269 Dominion, 13 January 1931.
Women [who are] well off work because they want to learn and gain knowledge, also they want to earn money. Philanthropic work does not appeal to them very much. 270

This is a particularly interesting comment in light of America’s reputation for philanthropy, and again brings us to the divide between philanthropy as work and philanthropy as money. During a separate address, Ivy mentioned the many ‘British’ philanthropic institutions established in the United States and mentioned innovations in art education including free exhibition spaces for men and women of talent attempting to launch a career. 271 At a reception hosted by Mrs. Fanny Cato at the Young Women’s Christian Association, she spoke of her ‘distinct pride in what the Y.W.C.A. in Australia had done and was accomplishing when the enormous sums of money made available for Y.W.C.A. work in U.S.A. [sic] and the comparatively small amount available here were considered’. 272 This discrepancy between philanthropic funding in the two countries has been the subject of continued discussion in Australia to the current day.

In September of 1936 the National Council of Women of Australia held its fourth annual meeting in Adelaide. A list of resolutions put forward from each state branch illustrates a quite disparate set of concerns. New South Wales advocated social insurance for the unemployed; more women on hospital boards; segregation of the mentally deficient; medical examinations (including blood tests) for all couples before marriage; and availability of the maternity bonus to ‘all Aboriginal and three-quarter caste women who are living under ordinary civilised conditions’. Victoria was displeased with proposed State Factory Acts on questions of overtime and holidays. Queensland pushed for the migration of ‘suitable people’; the prevention of cancer; and advertisement of contraceptives. Tasmania urged a continued campaign in the pursuit of world peace, one of the Council’s major concerns; while Western Australia was anxious to see postal rates reduced. 273 Where Ivy’s opinions lay on the scale of postal rates to world peace one can only guess, but she joined the Press, Arts and Letters Committee established within the Council that same year to encourage the appreciation of music, literature, arts and craft. Indeed, the Council expanded to include committees for Finance; Peace and Arbitration (League of Nations); Law (with an emphasis on the

270 Dominion, 13 January 1931.
legal position of women; Suffrage and Rights of Citizenship; Equal Moral Standards and Traffic in Women; Public Health; Education; Emigration and Immigration; Trades and Professionals; Child Welfare; Parliament; and Temperance. Ivy was a member of the Australian delegation attending the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva in 1937, by which time, reported Sydney’s *Sun* newspaper, she was a member of 23 committees.

Two years later the National Council was shifting focus in line with the outbreak of the Second World War. Frances ‘Gertie’ Kumm was one of two National Council women who represented Australian women at the Prime Minister’s Anti-Inflation Conference in 1939, recommending that women buy fewer luxury products, and that a full 40 hour working week be implemented, with workers nearing retirement to be retained for a further few years. Workers could be encouraged by incentive payments, said their report, and should ‘do an honest day’s work to help their country’. Nationalism was rife again. As president of the National Council of Women’s Victorian branch in 1940, Ivy wrote to one Mrs. Sawrey that ‘we have had to add the patriotic work to our usual activities’, noting that the Council was affiliated with 113 women’s organisations. Later that year she wrote to Charlotte Dobbin, president of the Press, Arts and Letters Committee, recommending against the production of a book as a fundraiser:

> With regard to the Press, Arts and Letters doing something concrete for the War Funds, you have to realise that we have sixteen Standing Committees and if they all wished to do the same separately I think it would be a mistake. The National Council of Women have formed a Red Cross and an Australian Comforts Fund Branch and are having entertainments and various other things to support as well as knitting for them. I feel that the National Council members that wish to help are already doing so and I only wish that the remainder who do not belong to either of these Branches would link up and strengthen our patriotic work in that way.

In 1940 the Council’s Victorian branch organised a nationwide day of prayer for Australia’s ‘allies and our leaders’, with designated times for prayer publicised and all denominations called upon to participate. Ivy received a letter from W.H. Edgar of the

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274 ‘Delegate to League of Nations: Woman from Melbourne’, *Sun* (Sydney), 22 April 1937.
276 MS 1924/39/327: Letter to Mrs. Sawrey from Ivy Brookes, 1 April 1940.
277 MS 1924/39/345: Letter to Mrs. Dobbin from Ivy Brookes, 12 June 1940.
Melbourne Citizens' Intercessory War Services, thanking her for the day. Unsurprisingly, post-war correspondence from the National Council shows a distinct shift in priorities. By 1956 the Victorian branch was holding a one-day conference to discuss moral, ethical and general standards in the community; standards of consumer goods; and the new ‘Aunts and Uncles Scheme’, in which children in institutions with no close relatives would be linked with members of the community who could provide outings and remember their birthdays. Ten years later the agenda included discussion of the new $5 bill; the demerit point system; endorsement of women as candidates for parliament; and bread baking hours. The South Gippsland Branch of the Council passed a resolution in 1965 ‘that we would like the voice of the N.C.W. to be heard in a much louder way. That is, much more publicity of what is being achieved’.

If the voice of the Council was still faint, that of Ivy Brookes was making itself heard. In 1955 a spirited exchange took place between Mrs. Brookes and F.S. Clarey, Registrar of the Honorary Justices’ Association of Victoria. Ivy was a member of the Association’s ladies’ group, as well as the Women Justices’ Association of Victoria. Her connection with the latter dated back to 1939 when it had a total membership of 38. It was a ‘non-political and non-sectarian’ association, designed to bring together Women Justices and Special Magistrates of the Children’s Courts in Victoria ‘in a bond of mutual help’; to advocate for increased appointments for women; and to affiliate with the H.J.A. The Association was not entirely successful in its last objective. In response to Clarey’s request that she renew her subscription to the Honorary Justices’ Association, Ivy wrote: ‘it is useless to still remain a member of the H.J.A. or to vote for men who evidently do not wish to collaborate with women except as auxiliary group members without executive power’. This was prompted by the decision of the Honorary Justices’ Association to charge the Women Justices’ Association for use of their boardroom after years of free use and by Ivy’s feeling that women had ‘no voice in the affairs of the Association’. A defensive reply from Clarey claimed that the H.J.A. had derived no benefit from its association with the Women Justices’ group in terms of increased membership, and that the women’s association included ‘persons who were not Justices of the Peace’. In addition, he added chidingly, ‘the room was asked, prepared for the meetings, its members came and went without even a “thank you” and

usurped the address of the Honorary Justices Association of Victoria giving all the impression that it was part of that body'. Ivy made her feelings on the validity of these complaints quite clear and maintained her decision not to renew her subscription, adding that women in the H.J.A. in other States had better representation than those in Victoria. A final, terse reply from Clarey claimed that she had been 'seriously misinformed' but acquiesced with her decision.281

This level of assertion may have been uncharacteristic for a woman of her time, but Ivy was equally capable of adhering to the stereotype. She was a member of the Air Force Officers' Wives and Mothers' Association and her work with the Women's Hospital – a 'sufficiently colossal task for a woman's whole time'282 continued. A letter from Margery Murray of Gaynor Court, Malvern, on 27 July 1968 thanked Ivy for her practical help the previous Wednesday, and for bringing chicken and shortcake for herself and her unwell sister: 'thank you for thinking of me... in the midst of your very busy life'.283 As indeed it was. Profiling her under the heading 'Victoria's First Housewife Chief', one magazine eulogised Mrs. Brookes:

Mrs. Brookes' busy life is crowded with a keen, direct intellect, and a gift of oratory only worthy of the daughter of Australia's great and eloquent Prime Minister. A commanding personality, this tall, graceful and exceptional woman has a brain second to none, and the influences that keep such as her out of the Parliaments of Australia, be they lack of inclination to come forward, or prejudice on the part of the controllers of the Party machines to induce her candidature, are responsible for a great loss and wastage to the State, in the interests of economics, Art, and child welfare. In the meantime the community is enriched by the immense amount of voluntary effort given by Mrs. Brookes and women like her who do not spare their energy, time, money, nor even health, in order to give what they can with both hands in their endeavour to make the world the better of their passing through it.284

Given the nature of the sources available to the historian on the subject of Ivy Brookes, it is difficult to avoid hagiography. Her correspondence with the Housewives Association and the Honorary Justices' Association reveals a certain obstinacy, but this is hardly a personality flaw, and even Clarey signed off 'with every personal good will'

281 MS 1924/46/37, MS 1924/46/38, MS 1924/46/42, MS 1924/46/44: Correspondence between Ivy Brookes and F.S. Clarey, March to May 1955.
282 MS 1924/38/1 (as above).
283 MS 1924/27/1657: Note from Margery Murray to Ivy Brookes, 27 July 1968.
284 MS 1924/38/1 (as above).
Rickard hit upon something when he wrote: ‘Everyone liked Ivy. There was no artifice about her, no guile; her warmth and naturalness made people feel at ease’. The most severe assessment of her, he added, came from none other than Professor Marshall-Hall, who ‘conceded her musical talent and industry, but remarked that “her outer self (thinking element) is far more developed than the inner self (feeling). This peculiarly English superficiality she must overcome.”’ Peculiarly English superficialities were not unique to Ivy Brookes, and for many years they continued to be a distinguishing feature of the Australian woman philanthropist.

Ivy Brookes was involved with just about every voluntary organisation open to her. An overview of her activities paints a valuable portrait of the times. It is illustrative, in particular, of a leaning toward American influences (Ivy’s field research on the progressive education system in the United States), a shift in philanthropic priorities, and a strengthening independence in women’s philanthropy, though Ivy engaged in direct giving with the full support of her husband. Women like Ivy who were charitably-inclined were still concerned with helping other women and children, as their forebears had been, but the nature of their concern was changing in line with new schools of thought around early childhood development and the status of women, and the nature of their assistance was changing as their increasing political and economic influence was brought to bear. Meanwhile, their philanthropic interests were increasing in scope. The objectives of women’s voluntary organisations were becoming more political; more bold. Even the Housewives’ Association, which was hardly throwing down a challenge to patriarchy, had a strong fiscal element unheard of in women’s organisations of the previous century. New funding areas were becoming popular with women of means: music, tertiary education for women, soldiers and national defence, health and medical research. The change was not radical, but it was real. Plenty of moneyed women continued to conduct their philanthropy according to the interests of their husbands or fathers, and approached their wealth with caution, but some began funding their own projects and controlling the distribution of their own separate wealth. A scattered few were more wealthy even than their husbands. Many, post-war, never married in the first place.

285 Rickard, A Family Romance, 120.
The Spinster Phenomenon

It was David Owen who wrote that childlessness was 'the starting-point of a good many careers in philanthropy'. A survey published in the Daily Telegraph in London in September 1899 claimed that women and spinsters without family obligations were more likely to bequeath money to charity. Commenting on the survey, The Times found that: 'only occasionally did the English leave funds to charity if they had families to provide for, and that for the most part such bequests came from persons who had been philanthropic in life'. The Daily Telegraph noted that while more men than women bequeathed money to charity, those women who did gave a significantly larger proportion of their estates. Of 466 wills, 150 belonged to women who bequeathed on average 25.8% of their estates to charity, while the 316 men bequeathed on average 11.3% of theirs. In her history of the Auckland Ladies' Benevolent Society in New Zealand, Margaret Tennant concedes that 'spinsters provided a vital element in British charity', but finds that members of the Auckland Society were 'overwhelmingly married women, a reflection of the high proportion of colonial women who married'. A similar pattern could be observed in Australia in the early years of the colony, when men far outnumbered women, but the depression of the 1890s turned things upside down. Historian Janet McCalman has described the generation of women who reached child-bearing age in the 1890s as the 'least married and the least fertile in our history'. She notes, though, that this 'army of middle-class spinsters, as in England, nurtured not a few feminists and brought education, church and community life a fresh and cultivated feminine energy'.

In the first half of the twentieth century, as the First World War savagely depleted the number of eligible bachelors, the spinster pattern continued. The spinster, like the widowed and childless woman, became a prominent figure in Australian women's philanthropy in this era; a character like Josephine Bedford, though she was in her forties at the turn of the century, who accompanied her friend, Dr Lilian Cooper, to Australia, arriving in Brisbane in 1891. Of independent means, Bedford focused her

286 Owen, English Philanthropy, 397.
288 Margaret Tennant, "Woman's Peculiar Mission": Ladies' Benevolence in the New Zealand Setting in Barbara Brookes and Dorothy Page (eds.), Communities of Women: Historical Perspectives (Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago Press, 2002), 75.
attention on welfare work for underprivileged children. She joined the ladies' management committee of the Hospital for Sick Children in Brisbane, and the Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (to children and animals). She was a founding member of the National Council of Women in Queensland in 1905, and a co-founder of the Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland. Bedford possessed 'inbuilt organisational skills, sharp intelligence, self-confidence born of her upper middle-class background, a charming manner and deep religious beliefs'. She was a member of the Scottish Women's Hospitals during the First World War and was awarded the Serbian Medal of St Sava, 5th class. With Cooper, Bedford purchased in 1928 an historic home and land at Kangaroo Point. She bequeathed the property to the Sisters of Charity.

A wealthy woman with no children of her own had less obligation to bequeath her money to relatives, and more freedom to distribute her wealth as she pleased. Helen Rutledge, a descendant of Sydney's prominent Knox family, touched on the spinster phenomenon when she wrote in *My Grandfather's House* on the importance of aunts:

The best aunts were generally unmarried; if widowed and childless, they could rank equally. All aunts were not automatically fond of children; some preferred animals, but on the whole even the bossiest ones were kind and helped their nephews and nieces in many and various ways. The married aunts were often selfishly engrossed with their own brood. They were also more likely to be influenced by the opinions and prejudices of their husbands and children.

Rutledge has personal memories of Dame Eadith Walker and of the sisters Glynde Nesta and Gwendolen Griffiths, known 'affectionately and disrespectfully as the Griffis'. Daughters of London-born merchant Frederick Close Griffiths and Annette Agnes, they were born three years apart: Gwendolen in 1886, and Nesta in 1889. The girls were raised at Point Piper, near Sydney, and Nesta later wrote a short history of the houses and people there in *Point Piper: Past and Present*. Neither married, and they lived together at Bellevue Hill from 1929 until their deaths, just five months apart, in 1968. They were members of the Royal Sydney Golf Club and were passionate about family history, heritage and the work of bodies like the National Trust. A member of the Royal

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Australian Historical Society, Nesta had an insatiable interest in other people and spent many hours searching through old papers in the Mitchell Library, eventually publishing in 1949 *Some Houses and People of New South Wales*. Books on southern and northern homes of the state followed. These were sometimes self-published and not well edited, but their value lies in the author's personal acquaintance with her subjects. An entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* notes that 'Gwendolen was the kinder; Nesta, who asked impertinent questions and indulged in malicious gossip about those of whom she disapproved, could look almost vixenish'. Perhaps a more important distinction here is that Nesta is categorised by the *Australia Dictionary of Biography* as an author and philanthropist, while Gwendolen is listed as an investor and socialite. The women had received little inheritance and it was Gwendolen who had invested shrewdly on the stock market until they were very comfortably off. Both had 'contributed handsomely' to Sir Lorimer Dods' Children's Medical Research Foundation in their lifetimes, and while Gwendolen's will provided for Dods' grandchildren, Nesta bequeathed the residue of her estate - worth $300,000 - to the Foundation itself. The story brings us back to that murky territory of definitions. Gwendolen created the wealth that Nesta bequeathed, and possibly contributed to it by leaving some of her estate to her sister. Both women had an interest in the same cause, but only Nesta's contribution leaves her with the title of philanthropist.

Dame Eadith was a generation older than the Griffiths and had a quite different background. Born in Sydney in 1861, the only child of merchant Thomas Walker, her mother (recorded as 'Jane' in the ADB, but 'Ann' in Griffiths' *People and Houses*) died when Eadith was not yet ten years old. She was raised by her aunt Joanna, who 'reputedly had instilled in her a fear of fortune-hunters' but who did not wish her to be lonely. She adopted a little friend, Anne Masefield and the two girls were raised together at home *Yaralla* at Concord where Eadith remained for the rest of her life. Eadith was taught to take her wealth seriously from an early age, and these lessons came to the fore when she inherited her father's fortune of just under £1 million in 1886 at the age of 25. In line with the times, Eadith did not control her own inheritance. Her cousin, James Thomas Walker, was appointed executor and trustee of the Thomas

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Walker fortune but given the extent of Eadith's philanthropic activity one can assume that she was more than adequately provided for.

Thomas Walker's wealth had come from his interests as a merchant, pastoralist and shipowner. He was born at Leith, Scotland, in 1804 and emigrated to Australia in 1822 to work with his uncle, later taking charge of the business. Nesta Griffiths wrote of Walker's expedition to Port Phillip in the mid-1830s where 'his great gifts of observation and practical knowledge of the land guided his purchases':

By 1881, Mr. Walker was known as one of the leading pastoralists, and a merchant prince, trading all over Australia and Great Britain, and also with many foreign countries... He kept an agent to advise him of cases of distress, which he helped with his never-failing kindness. Before he went abroad in 1882 he placed £10,000 in the care of his friends, Mr. Thomas Buckland and Mr. Shepherd Smith, to be distributed among various benevolent institutions.

This was Eadith's heritage and it showed. She had a wide range of interests and a sincere love of sport and animals. She was an executive member of what is now the RSPCA, vice-president of the Sydney Rowing Club and patron of the Yaralla cricket club. She was involved with the Queen's Jubilee Fund, the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and the Royal Hospital for Women, where she served as vice-president of the auxiliary in 1922. Dame Eadith was a member of the council of the new Women's College at the University of Sydney for two years from 1893. Between 1895 and 1930, she offered an annual scholarship of £50 known as the Yaralla Scholarship to go to a high achieving student wishing to reside at the College, but requiring financial assistance to do so. To the original building fund she subscribed £1,000, to be paid over only when the fund had reached £1,000 by public subscription.

Dame Eadith travelled widely, adding to valuable collections of antique furniture, glassware, paintings and books. Prior to the war she hosted fêtes and other fundraising events for charity, welcoming visiting royalty among her guests. Griffiths

297 Jeanette Beaumont and W. Vere Hole, Letters From Louisa: A Woman's View of the 1890s, Based on the Letters of Louisa Macdonald, First Principal of the Women's College, University of Sydney (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 37.
298 Griffiths, Some Houses and People, 80.
299 Beaumont and Hole, Letters from Louisa, 36. Also W. Vere Hole and Anne H. Trewceke, The History of the Women's College within the University of Sydney (Sydney: 1953), 196.
remembered 'one party when the walls were lined with flowers, so that the guests danced literally in a bower of daffodils'. Helen Rutledge recalls:

Miss Walker... gave an annual children's party at Yaralla, with a different surprise treat each year. Once it was a tall man dressed as a blue bird who, after getting out of a cage, led us round the garden to a little Norwegian cottage where we were given costly presents; I got a little umbrella with a parrot's head for a handle.

'Miss Walker' was apparently a woman of some energy. A letter from Edith Knox to her daughter Barbara around 1908, when Eadith Walker was in her late forties, mentions her in the context of the popular sport of skating. She was allegedly discouraged from participating in the sport by her cousins, the Messrs Walker, because 'at her age bones took so long to set'. Helen Rutledge recounts a motor accident in which Dame Eadith's car, driven by her chauffeur, was overturned next to a 200 foot precipice, but she escaped with a little bruising.

During wartime, through to 1920, Eadith set up a camp at Yaralla where she accommodated and cared for soldiers suffering from tuberculosis, 32 at a time. She donated a second home, 'Leura', for use by consumptive soldiers, and established a library at the Prince of Wales Hospital. Eadith was heavily involved with the Australian Red Cross Society, as a member of its executive committee, and the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia. It was said of her that 'no Australian could have been more patriotic'. She continued to support the Thomas Walker Convalescent Hospital, founded with a £100,000 gift from her father, as well as various religious and educational institutions including her local church.

Eadith Walker was awarded the C.B.E. in 1918 and the D.B.E. in 1928. She died at Yaralla in 1937, leaving her £265,345 estate to the Walker Trusts. Some indication of the extent of her financial contribution to charitable causes comes with an order of service published in September 1941, two days after what would have been her eightieth birthday, when a memorial fence, gates and floodlights were erected at her local church. The service was presided over by The Most Reverend Howard Kilvington Mowll, Archbishop of Sydney, and the memorial unveiled by Lady Sulman. The gifts were dedicated 'to the glory of God and in memory of His servant, Eadith

300 Griffiths, Some Houses and People, 87.
301 Rutledge, My Grandfather's House, 124.
302 Rutledge, My Grandfather's House, 72.
303 Griffiths, People and Houses, 80.
Charlotte Walker, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The service concluded with a prayer for the donors of the memorial — and a less than subtle message for potential benefactors — blessing 'them, their families and their substance'.

Mary Fairfax was born in Sydney in 1858, a contemporary of Dame Eadith’s. In actual fact she was a near contemporary of Janet Lady Clarke, but Mary lived a much longer life, well into the twentieth century. She was raised at Ginahgulla on Bellevue Hill (near the Griffiths) where she remained until she died. With six brothers, she was the only girl in the family, and never married. Mary was the daughter of newspaper proprietor (Sir) James Reading Fairfax and Lucy (née Armstrong). She travelled abroad with her parents and was educated at home. On her mother’s death in 1925, Mary inherited two family properties Woodside in Moss Vale and Ginahgulla as well as 2,196 of her father’s shares in John Fairfax & Sons Ltd.

Like Dame Eadith, she was involved with the Women’s College at the University of Sydney, and she too was renowned in later life for her hospitality, entertaining all-comers ‘from leading figures in literature, art and music to allied servicemen’. Caroline Simpson has described her as ‘the quintessential maiden aunt’ and a women’s leader, noting that ‘given her spontaneous generosity, the full measure of her philanthropy will never be calculated’.

Her list of associated organisations is exhaustive: the Queen’s Jubilee Fund (founding member in 1887); Girl Guides’ Association; the RSPCA; the YWCA; the Kindergarten Union; the District Nursing Association; the Australian Comforts Fund; the Red Cross Society; the Victoria League; the Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW; the Sydney Symphony Orchestral Ladies’ Committee, and of course, the Women’s College.

In fact, the Fairfax family had an extensive involvement with the Women’s College. Mary’s father, Sir James Fairfax, offered a yearly prize of £30 for those residents most successful in their examinations. Lady Lucy Fairfax, Mary’s mother, was a member of its ladies’ committee, as was Mary, who also served as a member of the College council from 1893 until her death. In 1926, Mary established the Lucy Fairfax Memorial in honour of her mother, with half of the money to go to the purchase of books for the College library, and half to a College student for distinguished work in

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304 'Order of Service for the Dedication of the Dame Eadith Walker, D.B.E., Memorial Fence, Gates and Floodlights by The Most Reverend Howard West Kilvington Mowll, D.D., Archbishop of Sydney on Saturday, 20th September, 1941 at 2.45pm', held by the National Library of Australia.


306 Simpson, 'Fairfax, Mary Elizabeth (1858 - 1945)', 127-128.
English. Her £1,000 bequest to the College in 1945 was augmented by bequests totalling £3,000 from her brothers, Hubert and Wilfred Fairfax, in her memory. With this money, the Mary Fairfax Library was opened at the College in 1952.307

Simpson notes that Mary Fairfax's ideas of public service were inherited 'from an earlier century' and that 'she was among the last of the great Victorians'.308 According to Griffiths, her father Sir James, like his own father John, was associated with many philanthropic endeavours in and around Sydney. A 'deeply religious' man, he gave financial support to the Woollahra Congregational Church. Of Mary, Griffiths writes:

Her charming personality, joie de vivre, and love of music and all worthwhile interests made her universally beloved. Her beautiful white hair and distinctive dressing caused her to stand out in any assembly as a grande dame. Her work as President of the Victoria League in the recent war was only one of the many ways in which she gave not only her money and patronage, but personal help.309

Mary Fairfax died in 1945. An article in the Daily Telegraph on August 28 that year shouted 'Spinster's Estate Worth £428,278', claiming that 'numerous bequests were made to charities and employees' but that the bulk of her estate was left to members of the Fairfax family - half of her shares in John Fairfax and Sons Pty Ltd went to her nephew, Vincent Charles Fairfax, and the other half to one niece and two nephews - Margaret Chauvel, John Fitzgerald Fairfax and Hubert Desmond Fairfax.310

The Griffiths sisters, Dame Eadith and Mary Fairfax were all connected by family ties and came from the same part of New South Wales, but the spinster pattern was in evidence across the country. Back in Victoria, the Collier sisters - Alice, Annette and Edith - came to notice in 1954 when they created a trust worth £1.25 million to go to charities, hospitals and educational institutions. Their father, Jenkin Collier, had arrived in Melbourne from Wales in 1852, aged 23. He died at the age of 91, leaving his estate to his family. Collier had worked in the building trade, constructing railway lines from Melbourne to Echuca and Deniliquin to Moama, and becoming involved in the pastoral development of Queensland. His work was profitable, and he lived in comfort with his family on four acres at Werndee, a mansion on Toorak Road. His three

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307 Hole and Treweeke, History of the Women’s College, 55, 183-184, 197.
308 Simpson, ‘Fairfax, Mary Elizabeth (1858 - 1945)’, 127-128.
309 Griffiths, People and House, 155.
daughters were educated at Melbourne’s Presbyterian Ladies’ College, and his son Herbert at Melbourne Grammar School. The sisters were ‘devoted to each other’ and never married: ‘They travelled extensively, but they lived very unpretentiously, attended church at St. John’s regularly and spent only a fraction of the 50,000 pounds income they received annually from their father’s estate’. The sisters were very competent businesswomen who made their own decisions about investment. They gave generously to charities during their lifetimes, ‘always insisting on anonymity’. The wills of Annette, Alice and Edith – who died in 1947, 1950 and 1954 respectively – held that two-fourteenths of the Collier Charitable Fund’s annual income be given to the Lord Mayor’s Fund. By 2006, the Lord Mayor’s Fund alone had distributed over $30 million to various hospitals and charities using its share of the Collier money.311

The Collier sisters should not be confused with their contemporaries, the Collie sisters – most notably Barbara Collie, who established the Collie Print Trust in 1967. Barbara and Catherine Collie were daughters of Robert Collie, founder of the Collie printing ink company. Robert was of Scottish descent but born in Ireland. In 1857, at the age of four, he travelled with his family to Melbourne where his father took work as a farmer. Robert married Catherine Mary Atkins in 1881 and the pair had five children – three boys and two girls. Catherine Mary died in 1909 at the age of 47 when Barbara was just 13 years old and Catherine was 22. Looked after by his daughters, Robert lived to be ‘an old and highly respected resident’ of Essendon.312 He died in 1934 at the age of 82. According to a history of the Trust, Barbara and Catherine put aside opportunities for marriage in order to carry out their family duty. They ‘led a quiet and gently refined life… they lived sparsely, dressed conservatively and wore simple jewellery’.313 They did everything together; shopping, visiting their cousins and playing golf at Kew.

Barbara Collie was philanthropic during her lifetime, donating the sculpture outside the Royal Women’s Hospital in Carlton, Melbourne, to honour the work of the women’s auxiliaries there. In 1967 she sought advice on how she might perpetuate the memory of her father and brothers and their contribution to the Collie print company, and in October of that year established the Collie Trust as part of the Barbara Collie

313 Sandilands, The Collie Print Trust, 6.
Settlement with 100,000 ordinary 50 cent shares in the business. Control of the trust was handed directly to the Trustees and Executors Agency Company which acted on Barbara's behalf. Her preference was that the money be invested in the industry that had created the family wealth. The bequest deed was to fund technical education in graphic design, equal to that available for printing students at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Funds were distributed to the Melbourne School of Printing and Graphic Arts there, later the International Centre of Graphic Technology. Barbara left a second portion of her estate as a general charitable fund, with money to be dispersed to charitable organisations at the discretion of trustees. By 1980, The Collie Trust was disbursing $20,000 per annum, while a further $26,000 was disbursed to charitable organisations from Barbara's estate. Her sister Catherine also left her estate to charity, with $14,000 disbursed annually by 1980.314 Today the Collie Trust offers a number of fellowships and scholarships and supports AGIdeas, an annual conference for graphic design students.315

The idea of a woman funding study in the graphic arts may not have been conceived of in the nineteenth century, and these twentieth-century spinsters did enjoy a certain autonomy in their philanthropy. The Griffiths sisters were free to make money on the stock exchange; Dame Eadith could take relief from more sober causes and indulge her whims by funding sports groups or throwing children's parties; Mary Fairfax could focus her energies on providing tertiary education for women. On the whole, these women were not moved by any radical agenda. They funded very much within their immediate spheres, always with reference to siblings, parents or friends. They funded safely. More importantly, though, they funded independently. Increasingly in this era, the same could be said of certain married women who had more wealth at their disposal than had Ivy Brookes.

Married Money

Twopeny had suggested in 1883 that Australia might produce a 'modified aristocracy' based upon new wealth. It is true that almost every Australian woman philanthropist profiled in this study, right up to the current day, has drawn upon wealth that was accumulated either in her own generation, most often by her husband, or in the

generation immediately before her, by her own father or her husband’s father. ‘Old money’ in Australia refers on the whole to money generated during the gold rushes of the 1850s. Walter Hall – of the now famous Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne – made his fortune through the goldmines, as well as the Cobb & Co. transport company. On his death in 1911, Hall’s estate was valued at over £2,900,000. The majority was left to his wife, Eliza Rowden Hall, 16 years his junior. Eliza set aside £1 million to commemorate her late husband and to benefit the community. She established the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust in 1912 (initially unwilling to add her own name, but convinced otherwise), stipulating that the income be distributed between New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland according to the percentage of Walter’s wealth accrued in each state. Half went to New South Wales, and a quarter to both Victoria and Queensland. The trust was to be used for:

The relief of poverty, the advancement of education, the advancement of religion in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England, and for the general benefit of the community not falling under the preceding heads. As far as was practicable, one third of the income in each State was to be used for the benefit of women and children.316

Eliza Hall died in 1916, leaving an estate valued at £1,180,059.317 Her contemporary, Alice Baker, also drew upon very new wealth in her philanthropic endeavours. Born in New South Wales, the daughter of a postmaster, Alice married pharmaceutical chemist Thomas Baker in 1877. Baker’s fortune came not from the goldmines but, later in life, from munitions production during the First World War, as well as from the hugely successful Kodak company, of which he became managing director. Early in her marriage, Alice assisted her husband in his business by developing photographs and taking orders, but by 1922 the couple were able to donate £20,500 toward a biochemistry department at the Alfred Hospital – later named the Baker Institute. That same year, Alice Baker joined the Frankston branch of the Alfred Hospital Auxiliaries, and went on to found the Mornington branch. She was involved with the Red Cross, the Big Brotherhood, Toc H, the Limbless Soldiers, the Women’s Hospital and the Talbot Colony. Thomas died in 1928, but Alice and her sister Eleanor Shaw continued to support the Baker Institute during the Depression. Eleanor gave a

317 Figures obtained from Hazel King, ‘Hall, Walter Russell (1831-1911)...and Eliza Rowden (1847-1916)’, 169.
personal gift of £1,000 to the Institute in 1932318, and the wills of Thomas, Alice (who died in 1935, aged 80) and Eleanor allowed for the establishment of a trust as ongoing funding for the Institute's work. By 1974, the trust amounted to nearly $4 million. Alice was 'prominent' in the National Council of Women, one of four Victorian delegates to represent Australia at the International Council of Women Quinquennial convention in Toronto in 1909. She became president of the Council in 1918, and was awarded the gold badge for long and distinguished service on the occasion of her golden wedding anniversary.319 Baker was appointed C.B.E. in 1933.320

Health and hospitals remained at the centre of women's philanthropy right through the middle of the twentieth century and into the 1960s and 70s. In 1958, Dame Hilda Stevenson gave £100,000 to fund a Chair in Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne. She was commended in The Sun in 1973, when she was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws by the University for having supported the institution for over thirty years. She had, said the paper, 'made many gifts to special university projects, including the Florey Laboratories and International House'.321 These are difficult to quantify. Dame Hilda also had a strong interest in the Royal Children's Hospital and children's health in general, which she shared with the daughter of Frederick and Fanny Cato, Dr. Una Porter. She served on the Royal Children's Hospital Committee of Management from 1938 until the 1970s. Dame Hilda was awarded the O.B.E. in 1960, followed by the G.B.E. in 1963, and in 1968 was created a Dame Commander of the British Empire.

Hilda Stevenson was born at Ballarat and educated there at Clarendon College, then in Melbourne at the Presbyterian Ladies' College. After her first husband passed away she married G.I. Stevenson and had one daughter. Her father, Hugh Victor McKay, had invented the Sunshine harvester and despite near bankruptcy in the 1890s left an estate valued at £1,448,146 on his death in 1926. By bequest, he established the H.V. McKay Charitable Trust, and in the mid-1950s, his three children established The Sunshine Foundation. Still running, the Foundation has supported projects in rural areas, as well as in Sunshine and other Western suburbs of Melbourne.322 Hilda Stevenson was a member of the Alexandra and Peninsula Golf Clubs and the Lawn

318 Australian Philanthropy, Ed. 30, Summer 1996, 18
319 Ada Norris, Champions of the Impossible, 39, 58, 66.
320 Paul H. de Serville, 'Baker, Thomas (1854-1928), ADB, vol. 7
321 'Another honour for Dame Hilda', Sun, Melbourne, 26 March 1973, 11.
Tennis Association of Victoria. In 1979, *Woman's Day* magazine published an article entitled ‘Dame Hilda’s a Starter in a Race for Equality (but she doesn’t want to be first across the line)’. Stevenson was featured as the only woman member of the Victoria Racing Club to have full voting rights, but never acted upon her entitlement to use the customarily men-only bars and seating areas at the club, citing her view that ‘the men deserve their domain’. ‘Equality is not one of her strong beliefs’, claimed *Woman’s Day*: “‘Men are just born different,’ she says”.

A contemporary of Stevenson was another Dame, Mabel Brookes. Unlike Dame Hilda she never gave a significant sum of money to a particular cause, but she was an expert fundraiser and served on the board of the Queen Victoria Hospital for many years. She hosted a party on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, making a net profit of £1,000 for the Hospital with similar sums over the next three years. Mabel Brookes is mentioned here for her connection with Victoria’s wealthy families and for the observations of society articulated in her *Memoirs* in 1974. The only child of Alice Mabel Maude and Harry Emmerton, she was born at South Yarra and presented at Court by her mother in 1907 before King Edward and Queen Alexandra. Phyllis Power, Rupert Clarke’s daughter, was her lifelong friend. She once glimpsed Lady Northcote when visiting the home of Sir John Madden, and described her later as ‘bred in protocol... gracious if patronizing’.

Mabel married the world-renowned tennis player Norman Brookes the ‘naturally taciturn’ but ‘outspokenly blunt, stubborn and uncompromising’ brother of Herbert Brookes, husband of Ivy and travelled widely with him. Dame Mabel’s maternal grandfather had been a magistrate, philanthropist and active committee man who had helped to establish a local school and the St Peter’s Anglican Church near his property at Mornington. This was Alexander Balcombe, whose own father William had worked for the East India Company on the island of St.

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323 ‘Dame Hilda’s a Starter in a Race for Equality (but she doesn’t want to be first across the line)’, *Woman’s Day*, 3 September 1979, 32. In fact, Dame Hilda had been what was called a ‘non-effective member’ of the VRC since 1924 (a category reserved for ladies as well as visiting military officers, etc). In 1976 she was awarded full life membership to mark over 50 years of continuing membership. She was not the first woman to hold full membership: some female members had been admitted to the VRC from 1893.

324 Swinburne, Gwendolen H., *The Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital: A History, the First Fifty Years* (Melbourne: Queen Victoria Hospital, 1951), 50.


Helena and hosted Napoleon in his guest pavilion for two and a half months in 1815. Dame Mabel had always been fascinated by the story and built upon the family collection of Napoleonic memorabilia throughout her life, bequeathing the collection—over 380 items—to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1975. This was a gift of significant value, but Brookes was best known for her committee work. Her mother had served on the committee of the Children’s Hospital in the 1890s despite the fact that she ‘did not like hospital work. The sight of illness upset her and she became unduly affected, but it was a case of conscience or disinclination and conscience won for a time’. A revealing remark. It was at a fair organised by the Children’s Hospital committee that the young Mabel had once visited a fortune teller—an ‘elderly, rather stale old lady’—only to be told: ‘You will always be surrounded by money... but will never actually own it. It will be there, but not yours’.

The words of Dame Mabel’s fortune teller were surprisingly pertinent. Leisured women of this era had more control over money than had their predecessors—legally, the money existed under their own names—but they lacked a sense of ownership. In most cases, with the exception here of the Griffiths sisters, their money had been generated by somebody else. This goes a long way to explaining the tendency to fund projects in line with the interests of husbands and fathers. These women were relatively independent, but they were still constrained. Of course, there were a select few who defied convention, and for whom independence was a sticking point. Louise Hanson-Dyer and Helen Macpherson Schutt deserve special mention.

Born Louise Berta Mosson Smith, Hanson-Dyer was the daughter of Louis Lawrence Smith, son of Edward Tyrrell Smith and Magdeleine Nanette Gengoult. I.L. Smith came to Australia to search for gold, but his medical studies led him instead to produce books, medical almanacs and a variety of less than bona fide medical products. By 1880 he was earning £10,000 per year, and the Bulletin was referring to him as L.L. Smith. The story of Hanson-Dyer’s parentage is curiously reminiscent of the story of Sir William and Janet Lady Clarke. In brief, I.L. Smith was an amateur rider and fan of the racecourse, who became a member of parliament, representing South Bourke. His assets included racing stables, a champagne factory, and a number of farms where he raised pigs, sheep and bloodhounds. In 1883, after the death of his first wife, Sarah Ann.

328 Krautschneider compiled the first complete catalogue of the collection in 2004 (see footnote above).
329 Brookes, Memoirs, 12.
330 Brookes, Memoirs, 12.
the 53-year-old Smith married Marion Jane 'Polly' Higgins, then 29 years old, the daughter of an engineer for the Hobson's Bay Railway Company. According to Smith's biographer, Jim Davidson, Higgins was not well educated. She was religious, unpretentious and kind, and she very much loved her husband.

The couple's first baby was Louise, born in 1884. Shortly after her birth the family visited Paris and London, where they witnessed the opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen and where Polly chatted with the Marchioness of Lorne. Lawrence 'busied himself at the Exhibition, staking his claim to be considered Victoria's expert in such matters, all the while noting how satisfactorily his wife was performing'.

The Smiths went on to have three more children — Louis, Harold and Gladys — and lived in Collins Street, Melbourne, opposite the Melbourne Club: 'the house itself was rather like a small Italian palazzo, as near a palace as an Australian child could have hoped for'. Here the Smiths, as the Clarkes had in East Melbourne, entertained lavishly and 'moved in a broad ambience', hosting the likes of Lord Hopetoun, the Governor. Davidson notes that 'as many as a hundred would come to Mrs Smith's, where amid the heavy floral decorations there would be music, and a mix of artists as well as politicians'. While I.L. Smith did not have the enormous wealth of William Clarke, and Polly Smith was not the society leader that Janet Clarke was, the parallels between the two couples are worth noting. A significant difference — though the Smith family was 'unostentatiously infused with Christian precept' — was in their respective commitments to charitable organisations.

Louise became the only girl in the family after a horrific accident saw her sister Gladys crushed by a boulder on a family outing. Educated at the Presbyterian Ladies College, she was later president of its Old Girls' Association, but, like her parents, she was not involved with charity in any notable (or recorded) way as so many of her contemporaries were. Louise attended the Alliance Française and took private piano lessons at Toorak. She became an accomplished player, enrolling at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music in 1905 and later winning the gold medal of the Royal College of Music, London. In 1911 Louise married 54-year-old Jimmy Dyer.

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335 Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 27.
336 Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising*, 27.
‘linoleum king’. Through her work with the British Music Society of Victoria she supported performers and composers, encouraging the publication of literary and musical works. In 1927 the Dyers donated £10,000 for the establishment of a permanent orchestra before moving to Paris. Here Louise set up the musical publishing company Editions de l’Oiseau-Lyre, with the intention of publishing the works of Couperin le Grand. The first twelve-volume edition was immensely popular and the company grew quickly, later expanding business to include long-play recordings.

James Dyer died in 1938 and the following year Louise married 30-year-old Joseph Birch Hanson, 24 years her junior. The pair left Paris to live in Monaco, where the publishing business continued. Davidson claims that ‘Louise Dyer’s attachment to Australia, while attenuated, was unassailable’ and when she died in 1962 she left the majority of her £241,380 estate to the University of Melbourne.337 University papers record a bequest of $464,430 in 1988; by 1994 the value of the bequest had risen to over $3 million. This figure encompasses the original bequest of Louise Hanson-Dyer together with that of her husband Joseph Hanson on his death nine years later. The bequest was to go toward the publication of a music series.338

Though Hanson-Dyer obtained her fortune from her parents and wealthy first husband, she saw to its distribution with entrepreneurial ambition. Endowing a permanent orchestra; reviving the ‘serious performance’ of Baroque music;339 setting up a publishing company in a foreign country; marrying a man 24 years younger than herself; these were bold acts for a woman of her time. Perhaps Baroness Burdett-Coutts, whose compassion and business sense allowed her to achieve some remarkable philanthropic feats, and who also married a man thirty years her junior, had been equipped with the same drive. Hanson-Dyer left specific instructions to accompany her bequest to the University of Melbourne, unlike so many other women who were happy to entrust University administrators with their (usually smaller) gifts. Had Hanson-Dyer borne children, her significant bequest may have been far less, but as it stands her legacy is enormous. The same can be said of Helen Macpherson Schutt.

Reclusive during, and even before, her marriage, Helen Schutt did not live the life of a married society woman, nor of a spinster. She did not throw lavish parties, nor

339 Davidson, ‘Dyer, Louise Berta Mosson Hanson (1884 - 1962)’, 393.
did she often appear in the social pages of even the most vigilant and inquisitive newspapers. She did not drive to visit relatives. She did not surround herself with other people. She did not have children. For most of her life she did not live with her husband. An exceedingly wealthy woman on her death, she was buried in a pauper's grave at Marseilles, France, her name spelt incorrectly in the local register.

Helen Macpherson Smith was born in 1874, the only child of Scottish-born timber merchant Robert Smith and his wife, Australian-born Jane Priscilla (née Macpherson). Priscilla's father, John Macpherson, was also Scottish-born and had large landholdings in the Western District of Victoria. Both of Helen's parents were wealthy and came from large families: Robert had thirteen siblings and Priscilla ten. The pair moved to Melbourne in the year of Helen's birth, and lived in Fitzroy for seven years before travelling in Australia, Britain and Europe. Helen received part of her education at boarding schools in Scotland and Germany. On her return to Melbourne in 1889 she attended the Presbyterian Ladies' College for one year. In 1901 she married William John Schutt, a barrister who played football for Essendon, at Toorak Presbyterian Church. Their home, a villa in Toorak, was a present from Helen's parents. In 1919 William became a Supreme Court judge. Helen was by this time a supporter of the Missions to Seamen; the Royal District Nursing Service; and the RSPCA.340 Records of the Victorian Missions to Seamen (later Mission to Seafarers) show that Mrs. Schutt was an Honorary Member of the Ladies' Harbour Lights Guild. She paid £1/1/10 to the organisation in 1911 and was still doing so in 1927.341 A pamphlet for the Ladies' Guild published in 1912 explained that it was founded in 1906 with the help of Lady Talbot: 'the heroism of the crew of the “Titanic”... is on everyone's lips', it said, and 'shipping disasters are only too frequent'. Under the title of 'The Sailor's Life' was something of a mission statement:

A sailor's life is a lonely and a dangerous one, and when he lands in a port where he has no home or friends the allurements of "sailor town" must seem strangely attractive. Can we do anything to help him? Can we give him any sympathy? Can we give him healthy pleasures? Can we help him to worship his God? Yes! We can do all these things by means of "The Missions to Seamen" and the Ladies' Harbour Lights Guild.342

341 Records from the Harbour Lights Guild including financial statements from 1911 and 1927 provided to D. Hutchinson by Janet Dale, State Manager, Mission to Seafarers Vic Inc., 9 August 2002.
342 'What is the Ladies' Harbour Lights Guild?', pamphlet, 1912.
Honorary members like Mrs. Schutt paid £1 1s. per year, while ‘a Working Member subscribes 2s. 6d. a year to the “Social Fund,” and promises to do something personally to help’. This might be ‘knitting woollies, making book-bags or ditty bags’, collecting books and magazines, organising a concert or simply having a chat with a sailor (this last was a popular contribution – some members allegedly learnt Norwegian for the purpose). Social evenings were held with singing around the piano and games of ‘“Pit” or Animal Grab – “le jeu des animaux,” as the French sailors call it’. After the festivities would be a short Chapel service.

In 1923 the Schutts left Melbourne to sail for London. Helen due apparently to a fear of seasickness – never returned to Australia. William returned to visit her regularly for ten years until he fell on board a ship leaving England and died from a brain injury in 1933. He was given a ship’s burial in the Red Sea. His estate was valued at £53,000, and his will prescribed a legacy of £10,000 to his ‘dear wife’ Helen, with greater sums to his brother and two sisters. This was not miserliness on William’s part for he knew full well that his wife’s fortune far exceeded his own. Indeed, Helen had been living off regular remittances sent to her by her accountants at Wilson Bishop & Henderson in Melbourne. All of her investments were held in Australia bound up to a large extent by shares in public companies and when she died in 1951 her estate was valued at more than £401,000.341

After William’s death, Helen stayed in touch with people at home with the occasional postcard, and paid the school fees of some younger family members. She drew up her will in 1936 and made almost no changes to it over the next fifteen years. She spent her later years at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes, France, and died of pneumonia at the age of 77. Many years later her body was exhumed from its unmarked grave and her remains cremated. Of her substantial fortune, £275,000 was bequeathed for the establishment of a charitable trust for the benefit of Victorians. Named the Helen M. Schutt Trust, it became the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust in 2001 to better reflect the origins of the wealth behind it. Her trustees were given wide discretionary powers for investment and distribution of the income of the trust, but Helen stipulated that they consider some of her favoured organisations. Consequently, since 1975 when full records were kept, the Royal District Nursing Service has received $1,746,288; Vision Australia $276,400; the RSPCA $34,520; the Mission to Seafarers

341 Information from Darvell Hutchinson, February 2007.
Though Helen had not stipulated funding for servicemen, the trust came into line with this general trend when it offered a number of Schutt Scholarships at the University of Melbourne in the early 1970s, providing financial assistance to children of servicemen and servicewomen who had been killed or incapacitated while serving in the British Forces.345 At the turn of the twenty-first century, the trust could boast a capital of $78 million.

One can only speculate on the motivation behind the establishment of the trust. Helen's father had been benevolent in character, donating to public appeals for the New Scots Church in Collins Street and the Fitzroy Free Public Library among others. Helen had remained loyal to her favoured charitable organisations at home despite living in Europe, becoming a Life Member of the RSPCA and the Lost Dogs' Home (both she and William donated to it periodically), and maintaining her connection with the District Nursing Service from 1919 to 1947. Was it homesickness that led her to hand over more than a quarter of a million pounds to charity? Darvell Hutchinson, who worked for Wilson Bishop & Henderson before becoming a full-time trustee for the fund, suggests that Helen may not have known the full value of her bequest, having set up her will so long before her death. It is likely she was advised by the accounting firm to set up a trust to minimise death duties, he says, but more simply, she was a widow with no children. Hutchinson believes that if Helen had had children, the trust may never have evolved.346

Waves of Change

The tendency to establish a fund or trust in the manner of Helen Schutt became more and more marked in the years after World War Two. This kind of philanthropy signalled a departure from the nineteenth-century style, namely gifts from individuals to individuals or established organisations very much in the circle of one's personal acquaintance. The trust fund was a democratic entity: administered by two or more professionals for the benefit of persons or organisations possibly unknown to the original donor. It would be some time before John D. Rockefeller's idea that benevolent trusts

344 Records held by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, accessed February 2007, and information from Darvell Hutchinson. See also Sandilands, Helen Macpherson Schutt.
345 'U.M. Schutt Scholarship 1970-71', accession no. 78/132, University of Melbourne Archives.
346 Information from Darvell Hutchinson, February 2007.
should work collaboratively and be ‘managed by able men in the most business-like and scientific way’\textsuperscript{347} (the potential for able women was yet to come) – was fully recognised, but the movement was underway. At the same time, the post-war period heralded a ‘transition from somewhat exclusive or elite organization to mass involvement’ in philanthropic activity.\textsuperscript{348} Melanie Oppenheimer notes the rapid increase in voluntary activity in Australia during both world wars (particularly after the establishment of the Australian Red Cross Society in 1914), and the sustained influence of charitable organisations even as welfare became more reliant upon the state post-1945.\textsuperscript{349} In his thesis on women’s voluntary work in South Australia, Martin Woods too finds that ‘the patriotic objectives of wartime service bodies, including the Cheer-up Society, Red Cross and the League of Loyal Women, which drew support at an unprecedented rate, provide a useful connection from earlier charitable effort to the “mass” ruralist, civic, child-centred and maternal objectives in the postwar years’.\textsuperscript{350} These were not the maternal objectives that Anne O’Brien referred to when she wrote of women’s work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘steeped in the paradox whereby the “agents” in these organisations – the upper-class women who ran them – preached a message of domesticity to their “objects” while pursuing non-domestic work themselves’.\textsuperscript{351} As more and more women went to work post-war, philanthropy (in its financial manifestation) was no longer exclusively the province of the leisured. Women continued with traditional fundraising activities for charity but direct giving took precedence over the course of the century and, as women earned their own money, that elusive sense of ownership came within reach, making their gifts more focused and more personal. This transition comes under review in the following two chapters, beginning with a vignette of the extraordinary Dr Una Porter, whose philanthropy was shaped by her childhood experience, her medical expertise and her strong Christian faith.

\textsuperscript{350} Martin Woods, ‘Towards a Civil Society, 71.
\textsuperscript{351} Anne O’Brien, \textit{God’s Willing Workers} (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), 41.
Chapter Four

Responsible Love
Dr. Una Beatrice Porter (1900-1996)

*Man is called to exercise responsible love, and this love has also to be manifested in the sphere of the material.*

Dr Una B. Porter, speech for YWCA, late 1960s

On the second day of April in her seventy-second year, Una Porter penned her daily diary entry. Generally these consisted of passages transcribed from the Bible but on this day diligence gave way to despair. Exasperated she wrote: 'Why, Lord Jesus, dost thou love men? What wonder is this, that thou shouldst so esteem them as to die for them? Show me the reasons of thy love, that I may love them too... That I may as deeply pity others’ misery, and as ardently thirst for their happiness, as 'Thou dost.' It was a surprising outburst from one who was writing thirteen years earlier of her 'abiding concern and love for individual people, and for all peoples, knowing that the problems of the countries of the world are the problems of the people who inhabit them.' Porter was by all accounts an impossibly devout, generous and sympathetic woman: a lover of humankind, a philanthropist in the true sense, though she may not have described herself this way. In a questionnaire for the *Who's Who of Australian Women*, undated but post-1977, she labelled herself 'Retired Christian Psychiatrist.' By this time she was an accomplished woman. Awarded the C.B.E in 1968 for her services to the community, and named 'Woman of the Year' by Melbourne’s Quota Club five years earlier, she served as World President of the YWCA from 1963-67. By the 1970s she had an intimidating list of memberships to her name: Life member of the Wyverna Club (Queen’s College, University of Melbourne); Cato College, Elsternwick; National Trust, Victoria; National Gallery of Victoria; Sir Colin Mackenzie Sanctuary; British and Foreign Bible Society; World Mutual Service Committee; Chairman of the Consultants for Refugee Work; Life Governor of the Old Colonists Homes; Royal Children’s

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352 Una B. Porter, Papers, University of Melbourne Special Collection, Accession No. 97/2, Box 6, Series 3/1 (diary, 1972).
353 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (biographical notes).
354 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (biographical notes).
Hospital; Prince Henry’s Hospital; Austin Hospital; Saint Vincent’s Hospital; Alfred Hospital; Queen Victoria Hospital; and Royal Women’s Hospital. Porter’s allegiance to Melbourne hospitals was not coincidental. She had been a senior psychiatrist at the Queen Victoria Hospital for the fifteen years between 1949-1964, and helped to establish the psychiatric wing at that institution. She also made significant financial contributions to the Epworth Hospital. Indeed, by 1972, Porter had given away at least $400,000, probably much more, primarily to the University of Melbourne, the YWCA, and other institutions, but also to friends. By the time of her death, in her 96th year, this figure was said to be closer to $1,000,000. Yet Porter’s Who’s Who questionnaire gives no hint of her propensity to give, and her ‘special interests’ are described simply as ‘fishing, philately, photography and writing.’

Porter was born Una Beatrice Cato in October of 1900, youngest daughter of Frances Bethune and business tycoon Frederick Cato, proprietor of the highly successful Moran & Cato grocery chain. An otherwise happy childhood was marred by the deaths of three of her seven siblings: Fred, Jack and Lois. In 1904, Lois, the sister closest to her in age, drowned in a pond as she and Una were playing in a paddock far from the family home. According to Porter’s only attempted autobiography, transcribed by her devoted friend Sister Desda Brown (former matron of Clunes Hospital) and never completed, the four-year-old Una screamed for help and ran back to the house to fetch her terrified mother, who raced to her daughter’s aid too late. No further reference to the tragedy can be found within the extensive papers that Porter left behind, but she was deeply affected by it. The Catos’ youngest son, known as Jackie, died within months of Lois, leaving a seven year age gap between Una and her next oldest sibling, Dora. There were fourteen years between Una and her eldest sister, Gertie. Though somewhat neglected immediately after the deaths of Jack and Lois, Una came to be favoured by her father Frederick and maintained a deep affection for him throughout her long life.

356 In an accompanying note to the Porter papers, Sister Desda Brown writes: ‘I have not listed the pecuniary benefits that Dr. Porter has made available but can truthfully say the amount since 1925 as being very close to $1,000,000 [sic]’. Given that Porter had given away well over $100,000 by the time of her death, this figure should presumably read $1,000,000.
357 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7.
359 According to Porter’s niece, Dr Sally Cockburn, anecdotal evidence would suggest that Porter was severely traumatised by her sister’s death but never given the opportunity to talk about it, even as a child. Cockburn attributes Porter’s enduring interest in child health and psychiatry to this tragedy.
Fred Cato, according to his daughter, was born in a tent on the Victorian goldfields near Stawell, while her mother Fanny was born in ‘a wattle and daub hut at Myross Bush, about three miles from Invercargill’\textsuperscript{360}, New Zealand. It was in Invercargill that the two met as teachers. On 30 May 1881, Fred wrote to his cousin in Melbourne, Thomas Edwin Moran, asking ‘if there is any chance of getting in with you at the grocery business… I have not got much money but could perhaps scrape together £70 or thereabouts. I am heartily sick of teaching and find that my health is failing under it.’\textsuperscript{361} Thus Moran & Cato was born. Fred proposed to Fanny shortly before departing for Melbourne and the pair maintained a voluminous correspondence from 1881 to 1883, when she joined him there.

One hundred years later, in 1981, Porter launched a self-funded, limited edition and leather-bound publication of her parents’ letters (at a personal cost of over $53,000) entitled \textit{Growing Together}. Theirs were not particularly illustrious beginnings, and Porter was not the beneficiary of ‘old money’ in later life. Fred Cato was a self-made man, a good Methodist with a strong work ethic, who built his grocery empire from scratch. John Kumm, Porter’s nephew, wrote to her in 1987 with recollections of his grandfather: ‘He became a business tycoon in an era of the city’s development, but at no stage did he forget his own humble beginnings, nor his Christian upbringing and his fierce determination for honesty in his trading practices.’\textsuperscript{362} The Moran & Cato company motto was ‘We Keep Troth’. Later Porter confessed in a letter that ‘I was born, baptised and brought up as a Methodist, but have always had a strong leaning towards the Anglican Church’, notwithstanding the fact that her father was ‘one of the leading Methodist laymen of this country’ and was responsible for establishing the Cato Lecture, held triennially at the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australia. Despite her misgivings, Porter went on to become a member of the Methodist Ecumenical Affairs Committee and the Executive Committee of the Victorian Council of Churches, assuring her correspondent in this instance that ‘I commune with God until I sleep, and waken to praise him. I have a deep consciousness of His Abiding Presence, and of His Guidance in the affairs of life.’\textsuperscript{363}

\textsuperscript{360} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 3, Series 2/3 (speech at the launch of \textit{Growing Together}, 1981).
\textsuperscript{361} Letter from Fred J. Cato to Thomas Edwin Moran, The Rectory, Invercargill, 30 May 1881 (privately held).
\textsuperscript{362} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 3, Series 2/3 (letter from John Kumm to Una Porter, 12 August 1987).
\textsuperscript{363} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (letter from Una Porter to Mr Martin Conway, WSCF, Geneva, 4 June 1962).
Both Fred and Fanny were committed to their religious beliefs, and passed this devotion to their children. Their letters to one another, and Fanny's letters to her children in later life, are full of references to 'God's blessing', 'God's help', and 'our Heavenly Father'. For Christmas in 1883 Fred sent his loyal fiancée a Bible, confessing that it had 'no intrinsic value except in regard to the truths therein contained'.

Once settled in Melbourne, both parents were involved in church and community groups, and their Hawthorn home was 'a vice-regal residence of Victorian Methodism and the scene of countless receptions, festivals and fund-raising fairs' (these days it is better known to a certain generation of Melburnians as the former site of Stephanie's Restaurant). A letter from Fanny in 1924 recounts a journey to 'our Livingstone Home' where the foundation stone was laid by Auntie Lizzie for a new cottage. She went on: 'It is to be quarters for the sisters. We have got in over £2,000 for it, so it will be opened free of debt. It was a very nice little ceremony. We only invited the subscribers.'

The Livingstone Home - a welfare organisation run by women, offering temporary care for abused or neglected children before they could be sent to board in country homes - had been established as Livingstone House in Carlton in the late 1880s. It operated under the management of the Central Dorcas Association Help and Rescue Society, a committee appointed by the Home Mission Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and was relocated to Cheltenham in 1891 where it opened as Livingstone Home.

Fanny Cato was also involved with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) at this time, and served as president of its Melbourne branch for a period. She wrote to Una and her sister Gertie: 'Things are very difficult in the YWCA - both National and local. We are altogether behind in spite of cuts in salaries, retrenchment in staff etc. On Friday we opened our Opportunity Shop in Collins St.' Years later Porter wrote that she felt she was 'involved into joining the organisation as a result of her mother's involvement with it. Aged not more than eighteen, she found herself seated next to a YWCA secretary on the train between Melbourne and Albury, and before

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364 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 3, Series 2/8 (letter from Fred Cato to Fanny Bethune, December 1883).
368 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 3, Series 2/4 (letter from Fanny Cato to Una and Gertie, undated, likely 1924).
long was selling pies and sandwiches in Flinders Lane to raise funds, and working at the Russell Street headquarters answering queries. A much older Una Porter would speak before a YWCA audience decades on, and recall her days as ‘a very young, and totally inexperienced member’ of the group, sent out with a list of businesses and instructions to solicit funds to help build the Canberra branch. By nature, she was disinclined to ask for money, and an encounter with a ‘Dickens like character [who] chased me out with a straw broom’ thoroughly discouraged her. Nonetheless, Porter told her audience, she gained confidence and went back to try again: ‘I learned to be less sensitive, more brutal’.

This less sensitive, more brutal Una was a formidable character. Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, former Federal Liberal politician and treasurer of the YWCA during Porter’s presidency, remembers:

She was not a vivacious personality... but when she did come into a room there was a presence there that was recognised and I think it was more a respectful relationship she had with everybody she met, rather than one that became personal... While there might have been discipline or reserve or whatever in her personality, there was always warmth in the way that she spoke, either publicly or personally to everybody and there was that generosity of spirit that I think we all valued.

By twenty-five, Porter was a foundation member of the National Executive of the YWCA, and member of the World Fellowship Committee. She was also co-Trustee, with her father, of the F.J. Cato Charitable Fund, and assisted him in financing hospitals and missions in Arnhem Land, Fiji, and India. The seeds of her philanthropic activity were sewn early. Porter travelled frequently and extensively. It was clear that the family was not short of money and her letters home to various parts of the United States and United Kingdom demonstrate notable self-sufficiency, and generosity toward her hosts. In 1926 she flew to India, and her vivid descriptions of the smells and sounds of Bombay bring her pages alive. Two years later she attended a convention in Sacramento, and subsequently returned to visit some of her ‘Negro friends’ for which act she was ‘ostracised by many people when I returned to San Diego, but this did not worry me at

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370 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/19 (speech to YWGA, undated).
371 Interview with Dame Margaret Guilfoyle (Barbara Lemon), 2 November 2007.
all... This was an experience I have always treasured, for what it taught me about human dignity, wisdom, poetry and religion.  

Perhaps Porter's most courageous decision was that of returning to school. As a teenager she had spent one year at Farringtons, a boarding school near Tonbridge in south-east England, and went on to receive both the Dux and Head Master's Scholarship prizes at Melbourne's Methodist Ladies' College. Her aspirations to pursue tertiary studies were quashed by an attack of appendicitis and ongoing complications at the age of fifteen, forcing her to leave school before completing Matriculation. At thirty, she went back, and spent fifteen months studying for her Matriculation before applying for enrolment — 'the cheekiest thing I had yet done in my life' — at the University of Melbourne as a medical student. Her niece Lucy, Gertie's daughter, suffered from diabetes, and Porter's drive to study medicine came partially from a desire to find a treatment for the disease. An enthusiastic Una wrote a circular to her friends in 1933, describing the laboratory she had set up in the back of the garden at the family home, Kauwara. There she could complete her 'experimental and practical work... One needs a remote centre to deal with frogs, chemical explosions, and microscopes'.  

In June that same year she purchased her own home, Lazy Acres at Olinda, twenty-five miles from Melbourne: 'just a tiny cottage in the hills, with a very glorious view across the Warburton Valley, with the Strezlecki Ranges and the Great Dividing Range beyond.' The nine and a half acres boasted 'strawberries, gooseberry bushes laden, three walnut trees in full bearing, apples and peaches, as well as an unlooked for potato crop'. Here Porter would return in the evenings, driving her second-hand coupe. Meanwhile, her mother Fanny had 'been able to take up a little committee work again this year', while her sister Gertrude was 'in constant public demand for speeches, and help in all sorts of ways, and is on more committees than she knows how to cope with'. Any anxiety in keeping up with her medical studies seemed obliterated by good cheer, but Una wrote to friends later that year:

I think perhaps my age made me over-earnest during the first couple of terms. I envied the younger "Freshers" their casual and carefree attitude, which takes everything in its stride.
stride, and achieves the same results, with very much less strain, and wear and tear on the system. But I was one in bond and sympathy with three or four older students, men who had served in the war, then became chemists, and have now decided to do Medicine. We have cast sympathetic glances upon each other during the year, and for the past two weeks have openly grinned with a sickly grin, gritted our teeth, and done our darnedest.379

This kind of sympathy from male colleagues was rare, and Porter would later comment that 'the male students didn't have much time for women in Medicine, anyway, particularly those of an older vintage.380 The prejudice of male lecturers was more obstructive still. While Porter recalled the kindness and support of Professor Wood-Jones, she remembered a bitter antagonism in Professor Osborne who, when Porter enquired after her second-year results, informed her that 'he felt there was no place in Medicine for women – the sooner I got out the better'. To this she replied that she had done the exams to date and simply required her results: 'at last very grudgingly he said - By hair on your knees and the skin of your teeth you managed to pass.381

It was not the undermining mumblings of academics like Osborne, however, that posed any real threat to Porter in her studies. It was a series of far more real, far more personal setbacks. To begin with, July 1934 saw her in hospital with both antra infected, awaiting a major operation. A holiday to California for rest and recuperation was recommended. The return journey began pleasantly enough with 'Mrs. Byrd – wife of the Admiral [whose] chair is just by mine, and we have become very friendly... The Chinese General, Sheng Shih 'Tsai, who defended Shanghai against the Japanese three years ago, sits on the other side of us on deck'. But before long came news of Lucy's death from septic pneumonia, aged just fourteen years.382 The following year came the most severe blow of all with the death of Porter's beloved father, Frederick. She failed her exams.

Though it was some time before she returned to study Medicine, Porter did enrol in social work studies from 1937-39 with the Victorian Council on Social Training (responsibility for the course was handed to the University of Melbourne from 1941) according to brief biographical notes written after her death and attributed only to a

379 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (circular from Una Cato to friends, December 1933).
382 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (circular from Una Cato to friends, February 1935).
Professor at La Trobe University. As part of her studies she carried out a survey of all major social work resources in Melbourne including the Crippled Children’s Society.\(^{383}\) By 1940 Porter was back in the faculty of Medicine and writing to friends with news of ‘an exceedingly nice group of women doing third year... two of them are practically contemporary with me\(^ {384}\), but by that time she had done some serious soul-searching. A poem written in the Easter of 1940, possibly during or after a holiday to Central Australia, and not long after the outbreak of war, sheds some light on Porter’s state of mind. The two stanzas are entitled ‘Death’ and ‘Life’ respectively, and she appears to be tossing up between the two\(^ {385}\).

DEATH

The soft, soft whisper of death comes: “Come, let us fly away,
There is too much pain, and too much hurt. I know a better way,
The earth is hard and the skies are soft, and soft you may lay your head,
Come, come away, with me today, you were much, much happier dead.
The earth seems fair and beautiful, but beauty is hard to attain,
And you are tired and weary with over much struggle and pain.
Come while the day is yet dawning, before you are called to your task.
Come with me this morning. That is not much to ask.
Life is unbearably lonely, life is pitifully sad,
Come in this morning’s glory to a land that is always glad.
Far we will fly from the tumult, the turmoil, the struggle in vain,
Come with the blue-eyed morning true life and peace to gain.
Come in the angry billows, or come from your silent bed,
Come from the weeping willows to a land that is bright instead.
Instead of a mortal combat that lasts from day to night
The peace beyond all understanding will be in your heart tonight.

LIFE

Life said: “Do not leave me. I have work for you to do,
I have love and life to offer, there is so much for you to do,
So many people to cherish, such lonely hearts to cheer,
Wait, till you've done this service, then you may go, my dear.
You needs must be lonely, you needs must struggle hard,
Else how can you cheer the lonely, or lift the load of the tired?
I cannot promise you softness, but I can offer you strength
Of purpose and will and courage, that will be of value at length.
You must be content with hardness, disappointment, and strife,
But I will give you a guerdon to carry right through your life.
‘Tis noble to struggle and conquer, to carry the victory on
To a higher sphere than you dream of, to summits yet unwon.
Why should you make obeisance to the soft whisper of death

\(^{383}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (extract from a history by ‘a Professor at La Trobe University’, provided by Sister Desda Brown, no further information included).

\(^{384}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (circular from Una Cato to friends, September 1940).

\(^{385}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/15.
When the whole world is yours to win? Struggle is life's breath
'Tis fairer far than skies of blue, stagnation, peace or quiet,
Stay in life's glorious warfare, deep in the fray's red riot.
There is a sword and sceptre, a crown and a Holy Grail
To be won at the end of the struggle. Go forth with your guerdon nor fail.

Two years after Frederick's death, Porter constructed a private chapel in his memory:

It was situated on a hillside, facing the East, and a large 12 foot plate glass window opened upon small hills which folded in upon each other, then a wide and open valley, and 60 to 80 miles away against the horizon stood the Alps, unchangeable and as unchanging as God's mercy.\(^{386}\)

Some years later the chapel was burnt down in forest fires, but by then Porter was healing and a distinctly philanthropic spirit - adopted with the kind of zeal that comes from surviving the death of a loved one - was emerging. In memory of Frederick, Porter made annual donations to the Lord Mayor's Fund. For twenty years from 1936, she sent £10 per month to Agatha Harrison, 'who was such a wonderful liaison person between the British Government and Gandhi, and Nehru... as the part I could play towards the peaceful solution for the problem of India'.\(^{387}\) In a Christmas circular for 1938, Porter was able to write:

My most recent thrill has been the purchase of a small four roomed cottage at Olinda for the use of the unemployed or sick families I come across in the Charitable Fund work I do.... My gardener can go occasionally and tend the garden there... I hope to put my first family in over Christmas.\(^{388}\)

One wonders where Porter's inspiration for this project came from. Was she working in concert with other locals? Was she receiving support from friends and associates? Ada Knox, Porter's contemporary, was awarded the C.B.E. in 1961 for social welfare services in the Ferntree Gully area: Porter's domain. Ada was the wife of Sir George Knox - soldier, politician, and brother of Sir Robert Knox, who married Janet Lady Clarke's youngest daughter Ivy - and her philanthropic activities were relatively conventional. She was associated with the Australian Red Cross Society for

\(^{386}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (letter from Una Porter to Mr Martin Conway, 4 June 1962).

\(^{387}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (biographical notes, 1959).

\(^{388}\) Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (Christmas circular from Una Cato to friends, November 1938).
over forty years; life governor of the St John Ambulance Association; and a member of the Royal Institute for the Blind, the Good Neighbour Council, and the Girl Guides Association. Like Porter, she held an interest in mental hospitals and mental health. The link is tenuous but worthy of speculation.

The following year, 1939, ushered in a world war, putting a swift end to the cottage for the unemployed and to extravagance in general. It also ushered in Dr Anita Mühl from the United States. Mühl, an expert in criminology, made a favourable impression upon Porter during one of her many sojourns in America and the two had become firm friends. Her influence will be examined further in this chapter. Both Porter and Mühl were among the 84 women elected for membership of the Lyceum Club in 1939. Porter's nomination was proposed by Constance Duncan and Roberta Donaldson, and her qualification for membership listed as 'distinguished social service including much administrative work'. Her partially-completed MBBS was not mentioned, though the 1939 cohort included fifteen medical doctors and one PhD (Cambridge). This compared with five medical doctors in the much larger 1925 cohort, nearly fifteen years before. Porter's address was listed as 192 Tooronga Rd, Hawthorn – her parents' home.

It is worth noting at this point the importance of connections made through organisations such as the Lyceum Club and the YWCA for Porter's philanthropy in particular, and women's philanthropy in general. The YWCA headquarters themselves had been built using philanthropic money from the Connibere children in memory of their father, George – not only from Charles, Ernest, and Frederick, all recognised philanthropists with a bent for hospitals and religion, but also from their spinster sister Emma Eliza. It seems highly likely that members of the Lyceum Club greatly influenced one another in their charitable endeavours, particularly given the number of women nominated on the grounds of their social service. Mrs Rhoda S. Doery of Sassafras applied for membership in 1925 based in part on her Red Cross work in Camberwell and her work among women in Richmond for five years, but more tangibly on her gift of the property ‘Highton’ in Balwyn as a soldiers’ rest home for the

389 Lyceum Club Archives, State Library of Victoria, MS 11270, Box 10.
390 Lyceum Club Archives, SLV, MS 11270, Box 43A.
term of the first world war, and on the £1,000 endowment for 'girls in need' that she
gave to the YWCA (again, this interconnection appears). Miss Hilda Grice of
Hawkesburn applied the same year, mentioning her 'philanthropic work (Free
Kindergarten Union of Victoria)', as did Mrs Kathleen McEacharn on the same
grounds, while Mrs Leslie (Adeline) Moran described her work with the Free
Kindergarten less ostentatiously as 'social service'.

Porter certainly had a friendship with Georgina Sweet, the University of
Melbourne's first female Associate Professor, and member of both the Lyceum Club and
the YWCA as well as more career-focused organisations including the Royal
Society of Victoria and the Australian Association for Advancement of Science. Like
Porter, she inherited significant wealth from her father, and like Porter, she also
inherited his place on the Wyverna Club committee for ex-Queen's College residents.
The two women had not dissimilar backgrounds. Sweet's father had been a tradesman
and ran the Brunswick Brick, Tile and Pottery Company. Two kilometres away, at 191
Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, the young Fred Cato had composed his affectionate letters to
Fanny in the early 1880s. Like Porter, Sweet was highly intelligent and ambitious
enough to use her talents. She won the University of Melbourne's MacBain scholarship
and completed a Bachelor of Science and a Masters degree before becoming, in 1904,
the first woman to take the degree of Doctor of Science at Melbourne. She was later
Associate Professor in Zoology, and the first woman to serve on the University
Council. Sweet was awarded an O.B.E in 1935 for services to women, and this is
perhaps where the two differed. Sweet had pushed for the admission of women to the
University Senate and worked to establish the University Women's College. She had
been Australian president of the YWCA, 1927-1934; vice-president of the world YWCA
from 1934; foundation member of the Victorian Women Graduates' Association; and
first president of the Pan-Pacific Women's Association (1930). Whilst Porter would go
on to be world president of the YWCA from 1963, she gave a speech to that very
organisation just months before her seventieth birthday in which she claimed that:

395 Lyceum Club Archives, SLV, MS 11270, Box 43A.
394 Lyceum Club Archives, SLV, MS 11270, Box 43B.
395 Kelly Farley, Degrees of Liberation: A Short History of Women in the University of Melbourne (Parkville, Vic: Women Graduates Centenary Committee, University of Melbourne, 1985), 43.
The only struggle I met that I refused to be involved in is the one between women and men for power. I feel so strongly that we are both part of God's creation, and have our own roles defined by our nature and our physiology, that I believe the "Woman Struggle" to be a misplaced goal for the expenditure of energies.

Indeed, Porter's own O.B.E (and C.B.E.) came in recognition of her services to the community more generally rather than women specifically, notwithstanding her strong connection with the YWCA: 'Despite being the head of an all-women's organisation, Dr. Porter is no advocate of Women's Lib', wrote the Age in June 1971.

It would be wrong, though, to paint Porter as distinctly anti-feminist, for whilst she objected to radical feminism she was certainly pro-woman, arguing that 'women's work in the world should be recognised and there should be a mutual respect and a carrying of responsibility both in the home and at work'. She reiterated the aim of the YWCA to promote 'women's status' and to unite women around the world, and spoke to YWCA members of 'our capacity to take a hand in our own development - to mould ourselves', reminding her audience that 'today the single woman has, in principle her independence. She is autonomous, free to make her own destiny'. In August 1972, Porter spoke up on behalf of the YWCA against the proposed tax on contraceptives, claiming it 'would be laughable if it wasn't so serious. To tax them as amusement or a luxury is an insult to the intelligence... the government seems to think that bringing children into the world is a form of amusement'. The Herald wrote:

Dr Porter is no tub-thumping leader of Women's Lib. She is national president of the Young Women's Christian Association. And she has just written to the Prime Minister, each State Premier, and each capital city Lord Mayor in Australia in the start of a lobbying campaign against restrictions on family planning and the contraception tax.

If Porter's strong stance on the issue seemed at odds with her public profile, it was because she felt the YWCA has got the wrong image. It's a do-gooder image. The image I would like to see is that of an organisation concerned with the community's problems. Porter was a Methodist after all, and Methodists were at the forefront of a

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397 Pat Dreverman, 'Dr. Una will lead the V', Age, 16 June 1971, 20.
398 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 1, Series 1/5 and 16 (speeches for YWCA).
399 John Hamilton, 'The YWCA and the subject of great concern to women: The boss speaks up for her girls', Herald, Melbourne, 24 August 1972, 2.
400 John Hamilton, 'The YWCA and the subject of great concern to women', Herald, 24 August 1972, 2.
number of controversial campaigns around divorce legislation, female ministers and contraception among others. Dame Margaret Guilfoyle remembers:

The YWCA was very active in looking at the opportunities that could be given to women. A lot of those were in training for leadership in organisations or in sporting bodies, there was a lot of Y work done for women to give them the confidence to look for a more involved role in the whole community. So she was active in that, but not in the sense of giving leadership. She was not the person who was saying that women must have equal opportunity... but she always recognised the essence of a good community life was probably the voluntary work that women did.\textsuperscript{401}

Philanthropically speaking, Georgina Sweet and Una Porter had much in common. On her death in 1946, Georgina Sweet left an estate valued at £98,263. The bulk of this went to the University of Melbourne and the Methodist Church, with the remaining money going to other charities. Porter lived fifty years longer than her friend, but showed a similar partiality to the University and the Church. She perhaps gave more money away during her lifetime than had Sweet, with more direction and ambition. The funding of Anita Mühl's work illustrates this well. Mühl's aim in visiting Australia was to take a tour of Victorian gaols. Meanwhile she delivered lectures at the University of Melbourne to audiences between six hundred and one thousand strong according to letters near bursting with pride from Porter to friends. She also spoke to audiences within the Education Department and the Kindergarten Union, and lectured to nurses at Infant Welfare and Baby Health Centres. Porter wrote of 'discussion groups for parents, post-graduate medical women, New Education Fellowship, policewomen, magistrates, medical students, and many more'. For Porter, this suddenly enhanced interest in infant welfare was all part of establishing peace in the world. She hoped that children would 'not learn to hate for that is surely the most destructive and chaotic force there is'.\textsuperscript{402} She was sure that 'such a method of aggression as Hitler's could not last' and wrote:

\[ \text{Mühl] had come at the vital moment for Melbourne, at a time when public thought was swinging in the direction of preventive work, and the desire to build for the future} \]

\textsuperscript{401} Interview with Dame Margaret Guilfoyle (Barbara Lemon), 2 November 2007.

\textsuperscript{402} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 3, Series 2/20 (circular from Una Cato to friends, November 1939).
on constructive lines in the care and training of little children, at home, in nursery school, and kindergarten, and so on through school life.\textsuperscript{403}

Inspired, Porter became founder and co-director of the Association for the Understanding of Human Adjustments, which ran between 1939-41. In this role, she surveyed over fifty people in the fields of Medicine, Education, Social Work and Law (Criminology) to determine the need for preventive research across the board. Mühl was appointed to conduct this research, the result of which was, according to Porter, an increased interest in preventive psychiatry being applied to ‘Penal Institutions, Schools, Kindergartens, amongst problem children and delinquents etc’\textsuperscript{404}. By 1944 Porter had graduated from the University of Melbourne with a degree in Medicine and was ready to start practising this kind of preventive psychiatry herself. According to our anonymous La Trobe Professor, ‘rejecting a proffered career in surgery, she chose psychiatry on the grounds that Melbourne lacked Christian psychiatrists. The decision was a courageous one, inviting ridicule from colleagues who were neither Christian nor female’\textsuperscript{405}. Porter is not remembered as a proselytiser by those who knew her\textsuperscript{406}, but this emphasis on the importance of Christianity in her profession was recurrent. In a letter to Martin Conway of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in Geneva in 1962, reflecting on the early days of her career, Porter claimed she ‘felt it would be helpful to have the blessing of the Methodist Church upon what I was trying to do for my patients’. She approached both the President-General and the Secretary of the Australian Methodist Conference, asking whether there was ‘any form of service which the Church could hold which would give me the authority to carry out my work in the Name of Christ’. A form of service was prepared, but the Professor of Theology (unnamed) was quick to intervene, assuring Porter that her position with the ‘priesthood of all believers’ was sufficient to legitimise her work. Porter’s disappointment ‘for I felt rather diffident about my authority as a Christian witness’ was allayed one year later, when a visit from the Reverend Dr. Leslie Weatherhead of England to Porter’s own private chapel, and his endorsement of her work, put her anxieties to rest.\textsuperscript{407} Minister of the City Temple in London, Weatherhead was a popular speaker, renowned for his

\textsuperscript{403} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (circular from Una Cato to friends, November 1939).
\textsuperscript{404} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (biographical notes, 1959).
\textsuperscript{405} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7.
\textsuperscript{406} Interview with Ann Annand, niece of Una Porter (Barbara Lemon), 2 October 2007; also Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, 2 November 2007.
\textsuperscript{407} Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (letter from Una Porter to Mr Martin Conway, 4 June 1962).
...sense of humour, who believed that 'Christianity is primarily a relationship with Christ, and not a set of beliefs about Him'.\textsuperscript{408} He had a particular interest in the inter-relations of medicine, psychology and religion, and published \textit{Psychology in Service of the Soul} in 1929.

Before she could practise, however, Porter had to complete her internships. By March 1945, she had this reference in hand from the Honorary Aural Surgeon at Prince Henry’s Hospital, where she was one of the two first women resident staff:

\begin{quote}
During Dr Cato’s term as Resident Medical Officer at Prince Henry’s Hospital in 1944-45, I have had the privilege of her acting as my Resident Surgeon. Her duties have included 1/ administration of anaesthetics 2/ operative work both as assistant and working alone, and 3/ full attention to after care of all in-patients in my clinic as well as some of the out-patients. In all parts of the work, she has shown great skill, wide knowledge, attention to detail, and the ability to handle patients with tact and sympathy. I regard her as one of the best Resident Surgeons in my experience of public hospital work. I can recommend her very highly for any post requiring the above qualities and I wish her every success.\textsuperscript{409}
\end{quote}

Porter was appointed Clinical Assistant to the Honorary Psychiatrist at the Children’s Hospital for one day a week, and was set to go to the Royal Park Mental Hospital for six months experience in clinical psychiatry. From Royal Park, the new doctor went to Ballarat Mental Hospital where she was given charge of 512 women patients, and 390 male patients on evenings and weekends. An outbreak of typhoid fever was an unwelcome challenge. Porter was the Hospital’s first female medical employee, and stayed for five months. In September 1946 she wrote:

\begin{quote}
The job was interesting and very worthwhile in many ways, and also gave me the satisfaction and knowledge that I could stand on my feet and keep a home together and a job going should the need arise. Having proved that point, I swung in the opposite direction, and decided it was time someone looked after me instead.\textsuperscript{410}
\end{quote}

On 12 April 1946, at forty-five years of age, Una Beatrice Cato was married to James Roland Porter, an ex-RAAF squadron leader and lifelong friend. She wore an

\textsuperscript{408} Raynor Johnson, \textit{The Light and the Gate} (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 242, 245.
\textsuperscript{409} Una B. Porter, \textit{Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20} (Reference from W.J. Deuehy [?], 23 March 1945. This was one among many references praising Dr Cato’s work).
\textsuperscript{410} Una B. Porter, \textit{Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20} (Circular from Una Porter to friends, September 1946).
Indian sari of primrose georgette, embroidered in gold and silver thread and sequins, bought years earlier ‘in reserve for just such an occasion’. This was not a wedding typical of her generation, and Una Porter continued to defy convention by practising psychiatry after her marriage. In that same letter of September 1946, the newly-wed was telling friends that ‘at present I am not very clear about the future as far as medicine is concerned. James is not very keen on my practising, but would not stand in my light if I badly wanted to.’ One can only assume that she did.

Porter was appointed Honorary Senior Psychiatrist at the Queen Victoria Hospital in 1949. Officially she retired in 1960, but stayed on as Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist until 1964, working in her retirement as a Counsellor for nurses. By 1964, she was serving as World President of the YWCA, following eight years as World Vice President from 1955. That same year she was awarded the title of ‘Woman of the Year’, and Dame Mabel Brookes wrote to congratulate her. Porter was making more frequent and more public philanthropic gestures. In a speech delivered at her alma mater, the Methodist Ladies’ College, in 1963, she gave thanks for having been asked to act as Chairman of an appeal to raise money for the new Harold Wood Wing. A letter from Ellen Khadder at the YWCA’s Jerusalem branch thanked Porter for her personal donation toward a new building. Probably her largest gift at this time paid in several stages, beginning in 1960 went to the University of Melbourne for the establishment of the Cato Chair of Psychiatry. Porter contributed £60,000, while her brother Alec put in a further £40,000 to make the total £100,000 recommended as an appropriate capital sum. Sister Desda Brown claimed that the endowment owed much to the work of Dr Anita Mühl. A letter from John F. Williams of Collins Street, in relation to the potential occupant of the Chair, advised Porter on the cost of its establishment and noted ‘I do not think that you would find anyone to dispute the desirability of a background of religious faith’.

In 1966, after twenty years of a reportedly happy marriage, James Porter passed away. His wife continued to give generously, and the James and Una Porter Trust Fund was established with an endowment of $100,000. The decision to set up a trust fund was not a pioneering one, particularly given Porter’s involvement with her father’s fund, but the concept of a foundation or trust fund for the benefit of the wider community was still

411 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/20 (Circular from Una Porter to friends, September 1946).
413 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/19 (Accompanying note from Sister Desda Brown).
414 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/19 (Letter from John F. Williams to Una Porter, undated).
relatively new. In July of 1969, Porter received a letter from Mabel Brooks, then president of the Queen Victoria Hospital, thanking her for ‘a most generous [but unspecified] donation to the Appeal Committee Funds... The University Professor in charge of the Children’s Ward is very anxious to build a Children’s Psychiatric Unit, and to that end, I feel sure, your money will be spent’. Documentation prepared by an accountant shows Una Porter’s distribution prior to 1973 as follows:

**World YWCA - Endowment of James and Una Porter Trust**

- Salary Endowment Fund

**Melbourne University (Chair of Psychiatry)**

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The document concluded: ‘If Tax should be $350,000.00 that would on present figures leave about $650,000.00. Pecuniary legacies amount to about $44,500.00. So about $600,000.00 in Estate. If divided into 20 equal parts then $30,000.00 could be regarded as one part’. In other words, Una Porter was worth $1,000,000 by 1973. She was also preparing for the possibility of death, though she would live for another 23 years. Between 1976 and 1984, according to a list scrawled on the back of a letter, Porter gave as follows:


Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/19.
The table represents a total of $89,000 over the eight year period. A large proportion, $45,000, went to Dr Ruth Wertheim at Monash University, whose project was entitled 'Study of the Initial Stages of Social Bond Formation in Humans'. Wertheim was examining the 'social, marital, and personal changes experienced by young couples about to become parents for the first time, as related to early parent-infant exchanges and the infant's social progress'. Her research traced four female infants beginning with each mother's pregnancy, through labour and delivery to the development of the child at one year of age. A least one major donation in this period is omitted from the table above. A letter from R.J. A. Harper, Chairman of the St Hilda's College Council, thanks Porter for a $60,000 donation to found the Una B. Porter Scholarship in 1983. Six years later George Scott, Master of the affiliated Queen's College, wrote to explain that 'the scholarship will be awarded to a person of good character who is able to demonstrate financial need. Other criteria of importance are scholastic achievement, involvement in sport, music or the arts and active membership of a Christian church'. Presumably Porter stipulated some or all of these criteria herself. A brief biographical article published in the Methodist Ladies' College Old Collegian claims that Porter also funded the building of the St Hilda's chapel.

Una Porter was one of the few women in the official list of 200 Great Australians issued as part of Australia's bicentenary celebrations in 1988, and it is somewhat surprising (or perhaps it is not) that she has no entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, but rather appears in entries for her father, Frederick Cato, and her sister, Frances Gertrude Kumm. From these one can gather that Porter was Fred Cato's youngest daughter; that she established the psychiatric clinic at the Queen Victoria Hospital; that she was world president of the YWCA; and that the YWCA building in Canberra is named in her honour (the Canberra Headquarters were named for her by

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418 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 5, Series 2/19 (Letter from A. Lindsay Clark to Mr M. Howell Davies, Solicitor, 24 November 1980).
420 Blainey, ‘Obituaries: Una Porter, CBE, OBE’. 

128
Princess Anne during the 1970 Royal 'Tour). One would not surmise from such brief representation the true extent of Porter's philanthropy. This is not a criticism of one publication so much as it is an observation about Australian women philanthropists in general. Despite Porter's generosity to the University of Melbourne, none of her gifts are listed in that institution's donor database, and her name lives on in a fairly small circle. This may be in part because she bore no children, but perhaps she would not have minded. For it was Porter, reflecting on her life and good works, who wrote in 1959: 'All I have ever hoped for was that at the end of my life there might be "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord".'

421 Una B. Porter, Papers: Box 9, Series 4/7 (Biographical notes, 1959).
Even while the Brookes family, the Griffiths, the Colliers and others continued to practise philanthropy with a nod to colonial times, a concurrent movement was underway. In Australian philanthropy, no one mode of giving has obliterated another, and the *modus operandi* of the nineteenth century benevolent society is still in evidence in certain charitable institutions today. Rather, new ideas have drifted in and out, overlapping one another. Chapter three examined the philanthropy of Australian women amidst the changes of Federation, world war, and female suffrage. Ivy Brookes and others like her were propelled by the women’s movement to push for political change via organisations such as the National Council for Women, and their philanthropy took on a distinctly patriotic flavour (with reference to Australia as opposed to the British Empire), yet they were constrained by expected behaviours. As Swain has observed, ‘philanthropy gave women power but only in areas men saw as an extension of their domestic role’. More significant change in women’s philanthropy might be attributed, then, to those middle-class women in the early twentieth century who defied traditional expectations and joined the waged workforce. Of course, women had always worked, but the women’s movement that emerged in Australia in the 1880s, characterised according to Susan Magarey by ‘an immense and visionary optimism coupled with profound anxieties about change’, together with an expanding economy, led some working-class women to shift from domestic service to factories and workshops, while middle-class women could gain access to secondary and tertiary education. They too were ‘deserting the domestic sphere, and joining a labour market in which labour relations were contractual and their labour was a commodity’, taking positions as doctors, teachers, lecturers, and inspectors; sometimes working for government departments. Prochaska and Gleeson have argued that the experience of philanthropic work in fact bolstered the efforts of middle-class women to take on this professional employment. Susan Magarey has found that ‘where mothers had been

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active in voluntary, unpaid charitable work, they were, gradually, losing these
occupations to daughters who were becoming members of a new class of professionals... daughters who were earning livelihoods by their work'.

It was Ivy Brookes' pertinent observation that American women were becoming 'great seekers after further education', and that wealthy women were working to 'learn and gain knowledge, also they want to earn money'.

By 1945, a Warragul woman, herself born in 1866 and the mother of eight children, was writing this letter to congratulate her daughter on the birth of a fourth child – her third girl:

Dear Little Girl o' Mine,

Congratulations re the lovely babe and do not even think you are disappointed because she is not a boy. Boys are going to have a hard row to hoe during the coming years but the girls have the great harvests to reap which the patience and unselfish love of all the past and passing generations have sown and the girls have been and will be training themselves for the reaping. The world is in the hands of the girls being born now and in their early youth if only trained aright for the great job. Look how women young and old have taken hold of and achieved success or nearly all that men could do in other years and what a wallowing in the muck men have made and are still making of a glorious world. You rest now and grow strong... don't worry about anything at all dear.

This chapter looks at a number of working Australian women philanthropists, most of whom were born in the later nineteenth century, but whose influence extended well into the twentieth. Their lives were worlds apart from their mothers' lives. Most came from comfortable if not wealthy backgrounds, but there are a couple of notable exceptions. The chapter begins with biographical studies of Matilda Thompson, saleswoman, and Mary Raine, barmaid and entrepreneur. It follows with an examination of the work and philanthropy of stud owner Janet Biddlecombe, sculptor Ola Cohn, doctor and champion of Australian medical women Lucy Gullett, and academic Kathleen Fitzpatrick.

425 Magarcy, Passions of the First Wave Feminists, 126.
427 Letter from Amy Matchett of 'Leith', Craig Street, Warragul, to her daughter Roma Cordingley on the birth of Roma's fourth child and third daughter, Judith, 18 November 1945 (private archive of J. Cordingley).
Matilda Thompson (1871-1959) and Mary Raine (1877-1960)

Matilda 'Tilly' Thompson was the fifth child of an English-born engine driver, John Clennell, and his Scottish-born wife Matilda McIntosh. Born in 1871 and raised in Ballarat, she attended the Wendouree School until the age of thirteen. From 1905 she was working for the women's clothing company E. Lucas & Co., becoming Australia's first female commercial traveller. After a trip abroad as a buyer for the company, she took charge of its 500 female staff. Not until 1914 did Thompson come into serious wealth, when she married mining speculator William Daniel Thompson, a widower with six children. Between 1917 and 1919, Thompson and the 'Lucas Girls' raised money for Ballarat's Avenue of Honour (3912 trees along a 14 mile avenue) and subsequently for its Arch of Victory, at a total cost of £10,600. Both during and after the war she arranged welcome home ceremonies for returned soldiers and eventually opened her home Sunways, on the shores of Lake Wendouree, as a refuge house for struggling ex-servicemen. On her retirement after 45 years in business, Thompson spent five years travelling through 20 countries, and developed an interest in naturopathy and the Bagot Stack exercise program. This was a system of exercise devised by Englishwoman Mollie Bagot Stack, who managed to combine remedial exercises with yoga, Greek dance and 'the grace of Indian women in the Himalayas'. Back home, Thompson taught women's health and exercise classes and travelled throughout Victoria to speak to women's groups, using the profits to erect a roll of honour at Ballarat that recorded the names of servicemen honoured in the Avenue. She retained a close association with the local Jubilee Methodist Church and donated a tennis court to it.

Thompson's patriotic efforts were recognised in 1939 when she received the gold medal of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia; and again in 1941 when she was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.). Widowed in 1927, Thompson died 32 years later in 1959 and was buried at Ballarat. The Ballarat Courier lamented, 'it will be a long time before another personality of her ability and generosity appears on the Ballarat scene, and the special place which

428 'Mrs W.D. Thompson's Life of Service Ends', Ballarat Courier, 8 April 1959.
429 Ballarat Courier, 8 April 1959.
she made for herself in the community is unlikely again to be filled.31 Sunways became an aged care facility under the patronage of Uniting Care, for the Uniting Church of Australia.

Matilda Thompson’s case is fairly clear-cut. Here was a capable, driven woman who, while not equipped with a full secondary school education, was able to manage several hundred employees and collaborate with them to raise funds for a local cause. Clearly she was influenced by her travels abroad as far as her efforts for women’s health were concerned; her intense patriotism and devotion to her church are unremarkable for her era. As to the derivation of her wealth, her husband is the obvious source. It is true that Thompson did not marry until she was 43 years old, and prior to this was earning her keep, yet her fame as a fundraiser and benefactor came subsequently, almost as if the marriage legitimised her activities.

An interesting counter-case is that of Mary Raine: a capable, driven businesswoman who did not conform to expectations, did not serve on committees, worked alone and was the sole creator of her own significant wealth. In September 1960, seven months after her death, the Sunday Mirror was reporting with incredulity that ‘the singing barmaid of a dilapidated outback NSW pub became the woman who left most of her £439,626 estate to the University of W.A. Medical School. The bequest will bring her total gifts to the University to nearly £750,000’.32 In fact the figure was closer to £1 million, then ‘one of the largest private bequests ever made to an Australian University’.33

In 1900, a 23-year-old Mary Raine had sailed to Australia from England with her sister Daisy. Born Mary Bertha Carter in 1877, Raine was the eldest of thirteen children of Putney storekeeper Charles Carter and his wife Mary Bertha (née Appleyard). Her mother’s family were comfortably off, but her father was not a wealthy man and her parents had married for love. With the passing years, continued financial pressures and the large number of children in the Carter family strained the marriage. Friend and biographer of Raine, Meg Sangster, emphasises the impact of this constant struggle with money: ‘The wealth [Mary’s mother] had turned her back on became a Holy Grail for her eldest daughter, and the Mary Bertha of the next generation became

431 Ballarat Courier, 8 April 1959.
consumed by her determination that one day she would be "as rich as the Appleyards".434

As the eldest child, Mary was put to work at the age of nine assisting her father in his fruit and vegetable stall under Waterloo Bridge. She left school at fourteen to undertake teacher training, earning a modest 2/6 per week.435 A reference from J.C. Green, Head Teacher at the Galley Wall Road Board School in Bermondsey in 1893 describes her as ‘willing, punctual and industrious. Her discipline is very good for so young a teacher and I am of the opinion that she will be very successful’.436 These were prophetic words, and ‘industrious’ was right, but like any other young woman Mary had more romantic dreams of what her life could be. She was, in fact, a talented singer, and was awarded a three year contract under Sir Augustus Harris to perform in opera and pantomime for the salary of £2 per week. Her daily schedule, says Sangster, involved working on the accounts in her father’s new tobacco shop in the morning; performing in a matinee show; returning for a shift at the tobacco shop; and back to the theatre for the evening show. The routine took its toll. An attack of typhoid fever left Mary unable to perform, and she took on work as an invoice clerk.

Mary enjoyed a close relationship with her mother, but her personal life was far from tranquil. Already she had seen two romances fail – both men were Catholic, and the Anglican Mary was not prepared to convert – and she began to think about a move to the colonies. With £100 in savings, she and Daisy sailed on the Jumna in 1900, setting up house in Brisbane, then Sydney, where they worked as barmaids. In 1902 Mary was offered a job managing the Nyngan Hotel in outback New South Wales. Her success in adverse conditions resulted in an offer to take over the pub but licensing laws barred single women as licensees in that state. The two sisters decided to sail for home but were forced to disembark at Fremantle due to the severity of Daisy’s seasickness. Here they took on work as barmaids once again. Living frugally, Mary saved most of her £1 10/- wage, and managed to keep her original £100 intact. This she used as a deposit on a £450 house in Subiaco, which she leased at £1 5/- per week.437 Once she began to turn a profit, the pattern of gathering a deposit and taking out a loan (in ever increasing amounts) was repeated to buy more property. Such business acumen in a woman of the

434 Sangster, The Mary Raine Story, 2, 4.
435 Figure from Sunday Mirror, 25 September 1960.
436 Letter from J.C. Green, Head Teacher, Galley Wall Road Board School, Bermondsey, 17 May 1893, as cited in Sangster, The Mary Raine Story, 10.
early twentieth century was remarkable not for want of capacity, but for want of encouragement and opportunity. Melbourne’s *Table Talk* had reported in August 1885 the resignation of newspaper proprietor Helen T. Capel, of Kansas, U.S.A., despite years as a successful manager. Capel insisted that ‘my work, to be done successfully, must be done as men do it’, the result being that ‘I am made the subject of such a continual fusillade of malicious gossip that I choose to abandon a profitable business rather than to bear it any longer.’ Any person might be maligned for what were perceived as encroachments upon the terrain of the opposite sex. Just as Sir Henry Parkes’ was frequently depicted in a dress by *Bulletin* cartoonists, ridiculed for his support for female suffrage, women who entered the male domain of business could expect to be derided and ostracised.

Mary made some concession to convention, albeit with serious misgivings, when in 1907 she married William Morris Thomas. The couple began farming south of Perth but crops were unsuccessful and the marriage was brief and unhappy. Thomas was a habitual drinker. The couple separated and Mary returned to Perth where she set up the Bon Ton café in William Street, selling pies for 3d., pasties for 2d., and a meal of fish, tea, bread and butter for 9d. William died not long after, in 1918. His wife ‘found it ironic that he was thrown from his horse and killed on one of the rare occasions when he was sober’.

In 1912, she returned to visit England and, while there, persuaded eight of her siblings to come to Western Australia. She paid their passage and offered them shares in her business.

By 1922, Mary known locally as ‘Ma Thomas’ had purchased the Café Anglais, licensed to sell wine and beer, for £40,000. This time her deposit of £5,000 had been acquired by cashing soldiers’ gratuities at the end of the war. The gratuities would not be redeemed by the government for three years from the date of distribution, and for ‘a small consideration’ Ma Thomas offered to buy them on the spot, cashing her collection later. The hotel was renamed the Wentworth, and opened in 1928 when Mary secured a general publican’s licence. Taking advantage of the property boom in the 1920s, she continued to purchase properties each funded by the sale of another, or by a substantial loan – including the Old Bohemia Hotel, a rival of the Wentworth (£40,000); the State Implement Works building (£13,500); the Union Hotel (£31,000);
the United Service Hotel (£50,000); and the Windsor Hotel (£25,000). She set up Metropolitan Properties Ltd. ‘to handle her many assets’. The Old Bohemia was later sold to be used as a theatre. During World War Two, the Wentworth gained notoriety when American submarine crews were billeted in its rooms. The Hotel developed ‘a certain reputation’, recalled the *West Australian* decades later. Mary told the *Daily News* in 1957, ‘after they left (in 1945) I found out there were several things those boys did that they shouldn’t have’. The Americans were popular with the local girls, but thoroughly unpopular with the men. Tensions increased when military authorities placed a ban on the Wentworth for Australian troops in 1943. Mary wrote directly to Prime Minister John Curtin in protest, and the ban was lifted within a week. The *Daily News* later recalled that ‘when Australian cigarettes were hard to get, Ma Thomas kept most of her stocks for her boys – Australian servicemen. Often an AIF man returned from overseas would call on “Ma” for a loan. And often she never saw the colour of that money again’.

In 1943, at the age of 66, Mary Thomas married Arnold ‘Joe’ Yeldham Raine, aged 53, a friend and regular patron of the Wentworth. This ‘big, jovial man’ was the love of her life, their fourteen years of marriage reputedly her happiest years. Born in Victoria, Joe was educated in Western Australia and worked in advertising for the *Daily News* before becoming a master pearler and farmer. Upon their marriage, he became a partner in Mary’s business at the Wentworth and a number of shares in the United Service Hotel were transferred to his name. Several of Mary’s relatives, as shareholders in her business with a concern for the contents of their own pockets, became nervous. Mary’s own brother, Sidney Carter; her nephew, Frederick Ernest Carter; and her niece, Millicent Ainsworth, attended a shareholders meeting on 12 June 1945 during which they supported the motion proposed by Sidney himself that Mary be removed from her position as secretary of the company, and that a new director be appointed George Carter, Mary’s only loyal brother, noted that ‘morally the United Service belongs to Mrs Raine... I have worked for her for many years and have always been paid for my services.’ It was ‘outrageous’ to remove her, he said: ‘Apparently the fly in the ointment appears to be that she got married again. Had she remained single F.E. Carter would have been as thick as ever’. Solicitor John Durack, as a proxy for Joe, reminded the meeting ‘what Mrs Raine might be able to do to the Company tomorrow’.

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morning’ if they proceeded, adding: ‘I understand that Mrs Raine has advanced to the Company very large sums of money... If you are going to throw the Company straight into litigation by passing this resolution, I think you would be well advised to stop and think.’ The warning fell on deaf ears, but in the final event Mary was the victor. Her solicitors issued a writ to Irene Marsh (sister of Millicent and Frederick) and Sidney Carter declaring that they were not properly elected as directors of the Hotel, and that any resolution carried at any meeting at which either was present was void.444

Mary’s bickering relatives need not have worried, for she outlived her husband. In 1956, Joe collapsed and was taken to hospital semi-paralysed. He died in February 1957. To preserve his memory and help find a cure for arteriosclerosis, the disease that had caused his death, Mary founded the Raine Medical Research Foundation at the University of Western Australia in August that year. Joe had named Mary the sole beneficiary of his estate, valued at £153,906445, and a report from the Foundation later noted: ‘It is an indication of the simpler and more innocent times in which this was achieved that a personal approach to the then State Premier, Bert Hawke... and another to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, released the estate from death duties and probate, providing significantly more money for research.’ Mary Raine endowed the Foundation with assets of £500,000, directing that ‘the net income from properties be applied towards seeking, diagnosing and investigating the nature, origin and causes of diseases in human beings, with the initial emphasis on arteriosclerosis and allied diseases, and the prevention, care, alleviation and combating of such diseases’. On her own death, in 1960, she bequeathed the remainder of her estate to the foundation. By 1991 it had distributed over $7 million in grants to projects and research undertaken by Research Fellows and Post-doctoral Fellows; as well as travelling scholarships, exchange students, and visiting professors to the University of Western Australia.446

In her book, Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia’s Female Publicans, historian Clare Wright finds that women publicans like Raine held positions of great authority and respect in their local communities: ‘They ordered public space. They ordered men around’. They tended to have supporters in politics and in business, and as an ‘occupational genus... achieved an unusual level of financial self-reliance, cultural

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446 Raine Medical Research Foundation, Three Decades of Service, 3.
agency... self-respect and social visibility. For such a public figure, Mary Raine jealously guarded her privacy; she ‘abhorred ostentation and discouraged any form of public recognition of her generosity’. She requested that no buildings be raised as monuments either to herself or her husband. In this her directions were ignored, as evidenced by the development of Raine Square, now one of Perth’s most popular shopping precincts, in addition to the Raine Medical Statistics Unit; the Raine Centre for the study of epidemiology, aetiology and community control of hypertensive and atherosclerotic vascular disease; and the Raine Centre for the study of perinatal and developmental biology.

What distinguishes Raine from the vast majority of women of her time was that she was the archetypal self-made person. Beginning from nothing, she created her own vast fortune while living a disciplined and abstemious life. Such thrift can well be explained, as Sangster suggests, by a childhood of deprivation, but contrasts markedly with the lavish generosity displayed at the end of her life. Of course, it would be wrong to imply that Raine was not philanthropic in her lifetime. We know that she offered financial assistance to family members and provided loans to soldiers. This, coupled with her loathing for public recognition, hints at the kind of quiet philanthropy favoured by so many women before and after her. According to Wright, many female publicans became local philanthropists, sponsoring sporting teams, charities and building funds. While this may have served in part to deflect accusations of social irresponsibility, says Wright, many daily acts of kindness were ‘performed without fanfare’.

John McIlwraith claims that Raine’s philanthropy was inspired by her husband. Perhaps it was inspired equally by the greed of her relatives. At any rate, it was with Joe that she made an official gift of £100 toward a medical school at the University before his death precipitated her far more generous endowment.

Mary Raine and Matilda Thompson might be considered working-class working women philanthropists if that were not such a ridiculous label. Besides, what differentiates them from middle-class working women philanthropists? Class is less relevant here than upbringing, character, financial independence, and the particular relationship between working and giving. Raine could offer a loan to a soldier that she

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448 Sangster, *The Mary Raine Story*, iii, viii.
449 Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge*, 131, 133.
450 McIlwraith, ‘Raine, Mary Bertha (1877-1960)’, 48-49.
barely knew, fully aware that it might never be repaid, or turn a blind eye when the hotel chef smuggled out a heavy bag of food each night for her large family. Thompson could obtain the cooperation of hundreds of working girls to raise funds. It is true that Dame Eadith Walker, like Thompson, gave up a house for use as a respite home for soldiers, but it is difficult to imagine Dame Eadith running Bagot Stack exercise programs for women so that she could install a roll of honour. Thompson was a woman of faith, but neither she nor Raine insisted on ramming lessons in morality and religious instruction down the throats of their less wealthy and less influential peers. To be fair, Janet Lady Clarke had distributed packets of money informally to those she felt needed it, including governesses and retired cab drivers, and Anne Bon before her was an advocate for unpopular and desperately under-represented causes including the land rights of her local Indigenous population and the education of Chinese children in Melbourne. It might be rather trite to suggest that this willingness to help the proverbial man on the street, with some genuine sense of empathy, stemmed from the modest or at any rate, un-moneyed backgrounds of Raine, Thompson, Clarke and Bon, but the theory almost stands up to scrutiny. Of course Clarke never experienced anything even remotely approaching the poverty of the women she visited with the District Nursing Society, but she knew what it was, as a young woman, to feel the shame and anxiety of family bankruptcy. Though each of these women bowed to formal, organised charity (Clarke most obviously) they did not revere it to the exclusion of less formal, more personal charitable methods. Organised charity, by way of the institution or official organisation, was safe charity. It allowed the donor a certain detachment from the recipient, and many people women included preferred it this way. Janet Biddlecombe is a case in point.

Janet Biddlecombe (1866-1954)

For almost forty years from 1906, Biddlecombe was the canny and resourceful manager of a Hereford stud at Golf Hill in Shelford, Victoria, successfully manoeuvring it through two world wars and a depression with minimal damage. Born Janet Russell in 1866, she was the youngest of eight children of Scottish-born pastoralist George Russell and his wife Euphemia Carstairs, who died in Janet’s infancy. Golf Hill was George’s property and Janet lived with him there as a close companion until his death in 1888, taking a keen interest in the estate. Upon George’s death responsibility for Golf Hill was
handed to his only son Philip but, dissatisfied with Philip's management, Janet persuaded her brother to let her oversee the property. In July 1900 she married English-born naval officer John Biddlecombe who, following his retirement from the Commonwealth Naval Forces, took over management of Golf Hill with his wife. By 1906 they had registered their Hereford stud, buying pedigree cows and bulls descended from females of elite Hereford stock in the United Kingdom. When Charles Reynolds sold his Tocal Stud (comprised of similar stock) in 1926, Janet instructed her buyer, Mr AJ. Tanner, to purchase the pick of the catalogue. She continued to run the stud successfully after John's death in 1929, though a manpower shortage during the Second World War forced her to sell half her cattle. She organised exhibitions and sales, bringing home a myriad of awards. In 1947 her cattle won every group prize in the Hereford section at the Sydney Royal Show. In 1950 she sold her surplus females—eleven heifers and thirteen cows—at the Royal Melbourne Show, fetching up to £1,000 for each. A further sale in 1953 saw her world-famous cattle bring in proceeds of £125,000, all of which reportedly went to charity.

Janet Biddlecombe had an appetite for hard work and her business acumen was undeniable. Devoted to the stud until the end, she kept photographs of her prize cattle and detailed notes of their pedigrees. In 1953, the year before her death, she produced *The History of Golf Hill Herefords*, dedicated to the Hereford Breed in Australia. A section on 'Families now on Golf Hill' referred to cattle rather than people. Like Una Porter, Biddlecombe was devoted to her father and funded the publication of his memoirs, *The Narrative of George Russell of Golf Hill with Russellania and Selected Papers* (London, OUP), in 1935. Unlike Porter, she had little to do with the institutions and organisations she supported. Instead, she maintained a tradition of 'secret philanthropy' that began before her husband's death. Significant amounts of money went to building projects at the Geelong Church of England Grammar School (now standing at 50 Biddlecombe Avenue, Corio), as well as to the Shelford Presbyterian Church; the Australian Red Cross Society (Geelong branch); and the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. Golf Hill was acquisitioned and subdivided for soldier settlement around 1950. It was only upon Biddlecombe's death in 1954, according to biographer Diane Langmore, that many charitable associations discovered the identity of their anonymous

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benefactor. She bequeathed her £554,585 estate to the Bethany Babies' Home (Geelong); the Victorian Association of Braille Writers; and the Victorian Society for Crippled Children, among other groups.

Biddlecombe's preference for anonymity in philanthropy was more likely a product of personality than of her isolated geographical location. Langmore describes her as 'shrewd but self-effacing', noting that 'she encouraged sound management by her knowledge and lack of interference'. One wonders how she chose the particular organisations that she supported. George Russell's *Narrative* makes scant reference to charitable endeavours. It was Russell who collected subscriptions to build the local church – the Leigh Church at Buninyong – but this was fairly standard fare for a pastoralist settling on new land. Janet grew up without a mother, so her generosity cannot be attributed to any maternal influence. She did not, however, have any children and one can hear the echo of London's *Daily Telegraph* in 1899 holding forth on the likelihood that a childless woman might bequeath to charity. Certainly the notion is upheld by other women under examination in this chapter.

**Ola Cohn (1892-1964)**

Ola Cohn, remembered affectionately by Barbara Blackman as 'a big flour bag of a woman, healthy as bread, strong as a millstone', was something of an anomaly as a philanthropist and as a woman of her time. Her mother, Sarah Helen, was the daughter of Joshua Snowball, once a Member of Parliament. Her father, Julius Cohn, was of Danish descent and both parents were social by nature. Sarah Helen raised money for the Comforts Fund during the war; hosted fancy dress balls and trained up to 200 children at a time to perform at the Capitol Theatre in 'Children's Cantatas' to raise funds, 'probably for the hospital'. Guests at her evening soirees included Baron von Mueller and the son of Garibaldi. Ola's niece, Helen Bruinier, describes Sarah Helen as 'a great party giver... she'd have a party where everyone had to come in fancy dress made out of a sheet for instance, and then all the sheets were sent to the hospital'. Meanwhile, 'the Cohn men, they were all on everything, every benevolent committee... they'd be on the hospital and the Benevolent Society and the Board of Education,'

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453 Langmore, 'Biddlecombe, Janet (1866 - 1954)', 179.
455 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
president of the Agriculture Show, president of the Art Gallery, you know, the whole family were in everything’. Ola was raised within this tradition of benevolence, but money could not be taken for granted until much later in life. Bruinier recalls:

My grandfather Julius received nothing from the will of his father, who was a brewer and a busy man with all sorts of interests in Bendigo, and my father [Ola’s brother] received nothing from his parents, because my grandmother inherited from Julius – Sarah Helen inherited from Julius – and she left most things to Ola, which included all the family treasures that had come out of the original home.546

Born Carola Cohn in 1892 in Bendigo, Victoria, Ola was one of six siblings, two of whom predeceased their mother. That Sarah Helen left her entire inheritance to Ola can best be explained by her daughter’s role as her full time carer in the last years of her life, but Ola’s spinster status – in contrast to her married siblings – was likely a contributing factor. Ola did eventually marry, becoming Carola Green on 6 May 1953 when she was 61 years of age, but newspapers still referred to ‘Ola Cohn, as she’ll probably always be known’.547 Her husband Herbert John Green, government printer and widower, died just four years after the marriage.

Ola Cohn was never a society lady in the manner of her mother, but she was widely known and respected for her prodigious artistic talent and certainly kept up a commitment to a variety of charitable organisations. Her largest philanthropic gift was made by way of her last will and testament. Cohn kept everything and with an eye to posterity she wrote a 54,000 word (unpublished) autobiography, ‘Me in the Making’, before she died. In a box of largely un-attributed newspaper clippings sits one biographical piece, noting: ‘When still a child she saw that most people were content to live, die and be forgotten. Her determination to become a sculptor, and that in this profession her work and memory would endure, commenced at the age of seven when she first modelled figures in wet sand’.548 Cohn went on to study at the Bendigo School of Mines, followed by Swinburne Technical College and finally, the Royal College of Art in London. She was the first Australian sculptor to carve large commissions free-hand in stone and gave exhibitions of her work all over Australia as well as in London,

456 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.  
457 MS 8506 (SLV), Papers of Ola Cohn, Box 1030/3, p. 43 (newspaper clippings: articles not attributed to any paper, dates not noted).  
458 MS 8506 (SLV), Box 1030/3, p. 31.
Paris and Glasgow. In 1930 she received a request from the office of H.R.H The Prince of Wales to be part of an exhibition given in aid of the British Legion. Over the course of her career she completed numerous commissions in Australia including sandstone figures for the Royal Hobart Hospital, a lime-stone figure for Adelaide’s Garden of Remembrance and the two bronzes entitled ‘Comedy’. In 1952 she received the Crouch Prize in Ballarat – the ‘first and only sculptor to be so honoured’ – and was also awarded the Dr Mannix Centenary Prize for the best piece of religious sculpture; Her Majesty’s Coronation Medal; and the Olympic Medal. Most famously, Cohn spent the three years between 1931 and 1934 carving the popular and celebrated Fairies’ Tree as a gift to the children of Melbourne. Inspired by the Elfin Oak in London, she obtained permission from the gardens’ division of Melbourne’s City Council to carve detailed figures of fairies, little animals and hobgoblins into the gnarly surface of a gum tree in the Fitzroy Gardens. Cohn was not paid for the work (‘she wasn’t even thanked’) but the tree brought joy to thousands of children, and was later restored thanks largely to the benefaction of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch who became known, consequently, as the Fairy Godmother.

The Fairies’ Tree also brought joy to Cohn. Later, in her self-published *Mostly Cats* (1964), she wrote of ‘the peace and tranquillity associated with my belief in fairies, who have been my constant companions since childhood’.

The book is an account of Cohn’s interactions with her various pets which were, of course, mostly cats. She wrote: ‘I was born with a love for creatures and throughout my life that love has never died. The older I become the more sensitive I am to their strange little ways and habits. Being akin, I sometimes wonder whether I am all human and if there is not in my soul the simplicity of their nature’. Cohn’s love for cats was, in Una Porter’s words, manifested in the sphere of the material. She became president of the Cat Protection Society of Victoria, and bequeathed £500 to its Greensborough headquarters when she died. A further £500 was to go toward feeding and caring for any pets living with her at the date of her death. Bruinier recalls visiting her aunt on a long weekend and traipsing around with ‘a whole heap of stale bread and some milk in a bottle’:

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459 MS 8506 (SLV), Box 1024, Item 1(d), Curriculum Vitae.
460 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
We walked into Richmond and went to the back gate of factories and all the cats would come and she'd feed them. She'd pour some milk on the bread and put it down beside the corrugated iron gate and their little paws would be scooping at it. She said... the men feed the cats from their lunch and there's no one there on a long weekend, they need feeding.\textsuperscript{463}

Cohn’s compassion was not reserved for the animal kingdom alone. She gave to appeals for the Children’s Hospital, Save the Children’s Fund, Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Heart Foundation, Cultural Centre Melbourne, and various churches. During the Second World War she raised £400 in aid of the Red Cross, the Comforts Fund and Food for Britain by opening her studio for ‘garden parties, they used to call them, where you’d have craft work for sale and afternoon tea and cakes’.\textsuperscript{464} At the American Red Cross Centre Cohn held art classes for soldiers recovering from injury and delighted in the development of these young men who found in the clay some mode of expression and, importantly, alleviation from boredom. Cohn was a long-serving member of the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors (MSWPS), and hosted life drawing classes every Friday night. Says Bruinier, ‘no one was allowed to just watch, you always had to do something, so if you came you’d be given pencil and paper if it was a life drawing class... everyone put in two shillings... and the same all weekend, there were processions of people there, but you weren’t allowed to not work’. Cohn’s work ethic was most rigorously applied to herself. She had renovated her East Melbourne home, once a livery stable, building two flats upstairs. In one of these she lived; in the other she had a tenant to help cover expenses. Her studio was downstairs, and here she worked daily from nine in the morning to half past five in the afternoon, with a half hour break for lunch: ‘She might do little bits because the stone carving which she did is very heavy work and hurts your hands but she might do stone work in the morning then clay in the afternoon, or finishing with a bronze patina which is a fiddly job’.\textsuperscript{465} Despite the constant procession of artists, models and onlookers, Cohn’s work was solitary by nature. She fulfilled social expectations by joining the Lyceum Club and the Arts, Press and Letters Committee for the National Council of Women, but was careful to maintain her independence. According to Bruinier, Cohn had a

\textsuperscript{463} Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.  
\textsuperscript{464} Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006, and MS 8506 (SLV), Box 1024.  
\textsuperscript{465} Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
boyfriend who was killed in the First World War, but she always told her niece that ‘if you want to get married and have children you can never be a great artist’.466

Unlike so many philanthropic women in Australia, Cohn did not shy away from publicity. She ‘got friendly with a lady from 3AW and a lady from one of the women’s magazines… and if they were a bit short of news they’d ring her’467, though in fairness the publicity she sought was associated with her artwork rather than any particular charitable endeavours. As it happened, her philanthropy entered the public domain quite by accident. Ola Cohn passed away in December 1964. Her will began in unexceptional fashion with pecuniary legacies between £200 and £1,000 for friends (as well as £500 for the Victorian Animal Aid Trust and the same, as we have seen, to the Cat Protection Society), and various household items bequeathed to family members. Her most extraordinary gift in the form of her home, its contents, all of her work and manuscripts ~ was valued at just under £1 million, and went to the Council of Adult Education (CAE), Melbourne. Cohn directed that her home be used as a ‘studio and/or lecture theatre and/or offices and/or library and/or gallery of art in connection with the work of the Council in the promotion of education in and the practice of the graphic and sculptural and allied arts’. She requested the establishment of a committee consisting of the Director of Education; the Director of Adult Education; the Director of the National Gallery; the Secretary of the Society of Women Painters and Sculptors; and a nominee of the Council of Adult Education. According to Bruinier, Cohn wanted to leave her home to the MSWPS for use as a women’s art centre, but knowing the Society wouldn’t have sufficient money for upkeep, left it to the CAE. The Council was lax, to say the least, in carrying out Cohn’s directives, deciding eventually to contest her will and sell the property. It was Bruinier who intervened, and fought the Council in the Supreme Court:

I hired a barrister who was absolutely wonderful... we had petitions, we had people writing private letters to the Attorney General because it came through his department, we visited the state’s leading solicitor... Eventually they said they wouldn’t proceed with the sale and they’d give some money to restore it... The next action was to make sure it was listed for heritage purposes.468

466 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
467 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
468 Interview with Helen Bruinier (Barbara Lemon), 27 August 2006.
Bruinier and her family were successful. Cohn's property is now protected and used for art classes as she had intended it to be.

Ola Cohn was contemporaneous with the Griffiths, Collier and Collie sisters (spinsters all, as was Cohn for most of her life) but a generation younger than Dame Eadith Walker and Mary Fairfax. Panning across the lives of these women – their acquaintances, their daily habits, their attitudes to money – the change is gradual, but to jump from Walker to Cohn is quite a leap. Cohn came from a respectable family and benefited by her inheritance yet she worked, physically, every day of her life, and made a living from that work. Did this affect her philanthropy? In some ways it did not. Fundraising for the Red Cross or the Children’s Hospital were important activities, but not exceptional ones. Dame Eadith held garden fêtes for similar causes and she, too, derived great joy from the happiness of children. Perhaps where Cohn differed from all of these women was in making a bequest specifically designed to perpetuate something of herself. Her very home and all the artefacts within it went toward the teaching of an art form that defined her. Barbara Collie had set up the Collie Print Trust with similar intent for education in print-making, but her gift perpetuated the memory of her father and brothers. The nature of Cohn’s gift was integral to the person that she was. Moreover, it was a recognition by Cohn of her own importance, both in Melbourne and in the art world. This was the breakthrough. Women philanthropists before Cohn had conceded, most often after some persuasion, the attachment of their names to their gifts, but few left such intensely personal legacies. Dr Lucy Gullett, a generation before her, might be an exception.

Lucy Gullett (1876-1949)

The National Library of Australia holds a fragile, undated postcard (probably circa 1970) advertising Ergodryl, a treatment for headache and nausea. Headed ‘Milestones in Australian Medicine’, it depicts a mature Lucy Gullett – ‘one of Australia’s best-known and well-loved women doctors’ – in black jacket, her blouse fastened with a brooch, a string of pearls upon her bosom, her white hair pinned back. She stands before a committee of concerned men and women, holding a newspaper: ‘Last Channel Port Fall’, reads the headline. These men and women were the governors of Sydney’s Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children. In June 1940 they met to accept a tender for the building of a new hospital in Pitt Street, Redfern. It was suggested that
discussion of the tender be postponed due to the war. Gullett intervened: ‘If the British Empire falls it won’t matter on what we have spent our money. If it doesn’t, well – we will have our hospital’. She was sufficiently persuasive.

Lucy Gullett had co-founded the Rachel Forster Hospital – then the New Hospital for Women and Children – in 1922. Her partner in the enterprise was Dr Harriet Biffin, the first woman to successfully establish a suburban medical practice. According to the Hospital historian, Lysbeth Cohen, Biffin ‘used to drive to see her patients in a dog-cart with a uniformed groom in attendance, herself wearing tailored suits and a straw boater hat on her short hair’. She was a Classical scholar with a passion for music and a ‘flair for Greek’. Inspired by the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne, and frustrated by the constraints upon women doctors, both Gullett and Biffin gave impressive amounts of time and money to establish and run their hospital in Sydney. Cohen notes that, though Sydney University admitted women students to its Medical School almost from its inception, it was impossible for young women graduates to find work. The same attitude toward women doctors that had dogged Una Porter in the 1930s was all the more prevalent in these earlier years. For the first time, the Rachel Forster Hospital was offering training for young female medical students as Junior Residents. Moreover, it was open at night for working women and ‘home-tied mothers’. Assisting Gullett and Biffin were Dr Margaret Harper (paediatrics, infant hygiene), a foundation fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians; Dr (later Dame) Constance D’Arcy (obstetrics and gynaecology), a foundation fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the first woman elected to the Senate of Sydney University, becoming Deputy Chancellor in 1943; Dr Susie O’Reilly (administration); Dr Emma Buckley (VD clinic); and Dr Mary Burfitt. Together the women subscribed £1,000 to purchase the original Surry Hills property. The Hospital was later re-named for Lady Forster, wife of the Governor-General, who chaired its first annual meeting. Lady Forster had commenced medical studies in England, but never finished. She was a friend of suffrage campaigner Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, and worked with underprivileged women in London. The Hospital shifted several times and relied upon volunteers as clerks, canteen workers and seamstresses (for baby clothes).

469 Postcard: ‘Milestones in Australian Medicine: Dr. Lucy Edith Gullett’ (Sydney: Parke, Davis, 1971), National Library of Australia, Record ID 2987587.
471 Postcard: ‘Milestones in Australian Medicine’.
472 Cohen, Rachel Forster Hospital, 17.
crockery, groceries and flowers were all provided by donation, while biscuits and tea were served to out-patients by The Girls’ Secondary Schools Club.\textsuperscript{473}

Lucy Gullett was the third daughter of journalist and politician Henry Gullett and his journalist wife, Lady Lucy Gullett (née Willie). She never married and she lived with her sister Minnie, also unmarried, for the latter half of her life. Minnie, a ‘Shakespeare buff’, generously supported the Lunacy Reform League of Australia as well as ‘stray animals, drunks and ex-patients from lunatic asylums to whom she devoted most of her inheritance’.\textsuperscript{474} Lucy shared her sister’s interest in mental health and studied medicine at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1900. She worked as a medical officer at the Crown Street Women’s Hospital, and resident surgeon at Brisbane’s Hospital for Sick Children before setting up a general practice of her own in Bathurst, New South Wales; the capital was provided by her father. She went on to work for the Renwick Hospital for Infants (established by the Benevolent Society of New South Wales) and the Council of the Sydney District Nursing Association. She travelled to Europe to serve with the French Red Cross and was medical officer at the City Road Emergency Hospital in Sydney during the influenza epidemic of 1919. Presumably Gullett obtained some financial independence after the establishment of her private practice, but apparently she had little need for anxiety on the subject of money. Gullett worked out of passion perhaps more than necessity. She and her sisters funded the construction of a Shakespeare memorial (originally proposed by their father) at a cost of £10,000.

Perhaps as a result of her work with the Hospital, including ongoing struggles for funding and government recognition, Gullett became more politically vocal. In 1932 she stood (unsuccessfully) as an Independent Women’s Candidate for the Legislative Assembly in the seat of North Sydney. She was elected to the executive committee of the United Associations of Women in 1935 (nominated by Jessie Street), serving as vice-president from 1936 to 1938 and again in 1943. Gullett may have missed her chance in parliament, but she held sway in her own circles. On her retirement in 1942, medical staff from the Rachel Forster Hospital presented her with a cheque to go toward the establishment of The Lucy Gullett Convalescent Home (later Lucy Gullett Hospital). Over fifty years later, hearing of the proposed closure of the Rachel Forster Hospital,

\textsuperscript{473} Cohen, Rachel Forster Hospital, 17.
\textsuperscript{474} Ann M. Mitchell, ‘Gullett, Lucy Edith (1876 - 1949)’, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 9, (Melbourne: MUP, 1983),139-140.
the Honourable Patricia Forsythe reprimanded her colleagues in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. Powerful men of Sydney were prepared to lobby for St Vincent’s Hospital, she said, but not for the Rachel Forster purely because ‘it has principally been a hospital for women. It was built for women, for the advancement of women, and to serve women doctors’. Forsythe gave a thorough account of the Hospital’s provision of services and its importance in the treatment of rheumatism, venereal diseases, diabetes, breast cancer, arthritis, and bone and joint disease. ‘If great and famous men of Sydney are willing to fight for St Vincent’s’, she said, ‘the women of Sydney are willing to fight for Rachel Forster’.

Gullett’s legacy was lasting — she was a heroine for many women and made deep inroads into a male profession but Forsythe’s comments point to a continued reluctance to accept the female contribution. It would be helpful to know how directly Gullett aligned herself with the women’s movement. Did she make a conscious decision from the outset to work for women and provide opportunity for women doctors? Did she yearn for partnership? For marriage? If so, did she choose to remain unmarried in line with Ola Cohn’s philosophy, where ‘artist’ was substituted by ‘doctor’. Certainly other women found the combination of career and marriage an impossible one, and opted out of marriage. The philanthropy of such women — if they were philanthropically-minded — was more often than not carefully directed in line with their professional interests. By remaining single and childless, these women had full claims on any inherited wealth in addition to money they earned themselves and many left substantial legacies as a result, occasionally to the chagrin of other family members. Academic and historian Kathleen Fitzpatrick is one example.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick (1905-1990)

Fitzpatrick was raised in a Catholic family and ‘strongly influenced by my father’s attachment to liberal principles... My mother was in a state of permanent revolt against women’s lot in life and this influenced me too’. Where Gullett’s identification with the women’s movement is implicit in her establishment ‘as a result of the frustration of women doctors’ — of a women’s hospital and her attempt to stand for parliament, Fitzpatrick’s is explicit. Of her mother, she writes: ‘Observation confirmed her view that

476 Fitzpatrick in Grimshaw and Strahan, The Half-Open Door, 121.
men had a better time than women and that the reason for this was their financial independence. The idea of being like a man presented itself to me in a favourable light while I was still a child, although not until much later as a fixed resolve. Fitzpatrick completed her undergraduate studies in History at the University of Melbourne, under the tutelage of the inspirational Ernest Scott. She remembered the Department of History as a warm, friendly place, in contrast to the unwelcoming, sexist environment of Oxford where she undertook further studies. Working first at the University of Sydney, then returning to Melbourne, she had to give up employment in 1932 when she married journalist and historian Brian Fitzpatrick. The marriage dissolved just three years later, in 1935. Kathleen wrote that she 'had suffered both from insecurity and a loss of independence and the regaining of both now became my goal in life'. Advised by the University Appointments Board that the only demand for female employees was for good secretaries, she enrolled at the Melbourne Technical School (now RMIT) to learn typewriting and shorthand, and became a teacher there. In 1938 she was offered a position within Melbourne's Department of History, where she remained for the rest of her life, becoming lecturer, senior lecturer, and finally Associate Professor of History – an unusually senior post for a woman. Fitzpatrick retired in 1962, just as feminism's second wave was beginning to rumble underground, and was criticised by some female colleagues for letting down the movement by declining to apply for the Chair of History. Though she did 'seriously consider' applying for the post, she was firm in her belief that 'no one should be appointed to the highest academic rank unless he or she is either a profound and original thinker or a truly erudite person'.

Fitzpatrick's philanthropy became financial in nature only upon her death, toward the end of the twentieth century, but was a product of her life's work. In earlier years, she gave her energy to advocacy and administrative roles, and for this reason she is profiled alongside her contemporaries. Fitzpatrick was the first woman council member of the National Library of Australia; a foundation member of the Australian Humanities Research Council; and president of the Council for Women in War (during the Second World War), in which capacity she negotiated on behalf of female students from the University of Melbourne working at Shepparton under Manpower

477 Fitzpatrick in Grimshaw and Strahan, *The Half-Open Door*, 121.
regulations. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to education (particularly history) in January 1989. On her death in 1990 she bequeathed to the University of Melbourne the sum of $1,933,971 in memory of her father, civil servant Henry Pitt. The Henry Arthur Pitt Memorial Bequest, she directed, was to be used for the acquisition of history books for the University’s Baillieu Library. By 1994 it was worth $2.5 million.

Fitzpatrick is one of a large number of female alumni that have donated to Australian universities. Not all went on to join the workforce – many were married before they finished their studies – but all were preparing for the possibility. Many, like Fitzpatrick, donated in memory of a loved one; others for nostalgia, self-promotion or sheer love of the institution. An examination of endowments (excluding prizes, exhibitions and scholarships) made to the University of Melbourne between 1887 and 2002 leads to a number of basic conclusions. Over the course of its history, more men (45%) than women (33%) have made endowments to the University (remaining endowments came from groups or companies). A greater proportion of women made endowments in memory of somebody else than did men. The majority of donors made endowments by bequest, with nearly half leaving a portion or the whole of their residuary estate. More endowments were made to the field of Medicine than to any other area of inquiry. Nearly one fifth of donors lived in Toorak, South Yarra or Malvern, while others lived as far afield as Narrabeen (NSW), Claremont (WA), or indeed New Jersey (USA).

The Sphere of the Material

These figures from one Australian university can tell us much about Australian philanthropy generally. Most striking, perhaps, is the degree to which women emerge as donors with some intellectual engagement, who have not only a large amount of money to give, but a strong sense of what should be done with it. True, they are tertiary-educated women and not representative of the entire female population. If, however, Patricia Grimshaw’s argument that ‘it was from the upper middle classes that the female

483 Calculations were made by Barbara Lemon and based upon 237 endowments listed under Regulation 7 of the University of Melbourne’s Statutes and Regulations, http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/r7.html [accessed 2006].
politicians, philanthropists, writers and academics of the northern hemisphere appeared can be applied to the southern hemisphere, they were representative of the portion of the female population with which this thesis is chiefly concerned. In 1925 alone, 142 women were elected to Melbourne's Lyceum Club, entry to which was prescribed by the level of one's tertiary education. Perhaps more importantly, one gathers from the university figures a strengthening sense of ownership associated with money. The words of Mabel Brookes' fortune-teller 'you will always be surrounded by money... but will never actually own it' — begin to sound archaic. There is a sense in this period of breaking away. Francie Ostrower's finding that wealthy donors are detached from the direct recipients of their beneficence is challenged by Porter and Gullett particularly, who not only assisted in the administration and financing of hospitals, but worked within them every day. Why be limited to fundraising, or writing a cheque, when one had the ability to treat a patient directly? Of course, all of the women in this chapter had the benefit of time and the need for occupation — all of them were childless, and this must be more than mere coincidence. Most had no need to work for a living. With the notable exception of Mary Raine, none were entirely self-made women. Gullett, Porter, Biddlecombe and Fitzpatrick all demonstrated in their lives the significant influence — financially, morally, or both — of their respective fathers, Cohn inherited from her mother and Thompson from her husband. Nonetheless, each of them craved the intellectual stimulation of work and approached it with energy and dedication; each earned a regular income; each was in some way a pioneer — in her occupation, in her lifestyle, in her stance on the status of women; and each conducted herself very much in her own right.

484 Grimshaw and Strahan, The Half-Open Door, 3.
485 MS 11270 (SLV), Lyceum Club archives, Box 10.
SECTION III

Modern Movements
1965-2005
Chapter Six

Beyond ‘Blankets and Helicopters’: Social Change Philanthropy

There is no such thing as society any more. The young won’t give parties. They simply won’t put in the effort.

Kathleen Clarke, wife Sir Rupert Clarke, 1979

By all accounts, the shift was sudden. Australia’s post-war baby boom in combination with new immigration programs meant a surge in the population by the 1960s, and dramatic changes to its composition. Moving away from ‘the comfortable, anglocentric, middle-class, faintly puritan, faintly callous arrogance projected by Prime Minister Menzies’, a new generation of Australians came to the foreground. They were, wrote author Brian Matthews, better educated than their parents, more engaged with the problems of the world, and ‘naturally sceptical’ with ‘less tolerance for humbug and distortion’. Matthews recalled ‘the peculiar mix of idealism, brutality, liberationism, experimentalism, collectivism and individualism that became the confused 1960s momentum’. Controversial historian Manning Clark classified the years from 1969 to 1986 as an Age of Ruins: ‘the decline of faith begat nihilism, and nihilism begat hedonism’. Certainly by 1969 thousands of Australians had begun to challenge authority and to resist the traditional with protests and campaigns that ‘owed everything to French and American models’, but Clark’s histrionics somewhat miss the point. Accompanying the ‘black sick envisagments of the Atomic End’ that so disturbed Judith Wright in the poetry of her students, were calls for peace, equality, and community. These ideas took time to reach Australia ‘what we describe as the 60s in England and America is really the early 70s’ but, once here, triggered an avalanche of change. Heather O’Connor, founder of the Mumbulla Foundation in NSW, reached adulthood in the early 1960s. She noted hers as ‘the last generation of young women

486 Kathleen Clarke, quoted in ‘The Clarkes: Grandpa Owned a Regiment’, Bulletin, 20 February 1979, 64.
489 Interview with Heather O’Connor (Barbara Lemon), 29 November 2006.

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(and men) who had such unquestioning faith in authority... our generation had more in common with the nineteenth century than we did with women five years after us'.

The 1970s witnessed a remarkable resurgence of the women’s movement in Australia, as elsewhere, that stimulated the capacity of women to exercise public influence. Women’s Liberation groups challenged the notion of gender as a handicap for women’s autonomy and agency, while the Women’s Electoral Lobby fought for the rights of individual women to pursue education, employment, and positions of power and influence on an equal footing with men. While there were numbers of women reluctant to identify themselves with feminism, particularly in its more radical manifestations, there were few who were not affected by it in some way. Despite economic growth and a strengthening of the welfare state after the Second World War, there was a clear role for philanthropy in Australia, and women of means were now socially empowered to exercise their influence in the manner and direction of philanthropic spending. With time, fathers, husbands and sons adopted the changing perception of women’s capacities and placed greater trust in their financial judgement.

The effects of this shift in society were keenly felt in the third sector. Mark Lyons notes that governments were influenced by the combined effects of second wave feminism, the community development movement and various social rights movements, and actively encouraged the establishment of new non-profit community organisations. Meanwhile, patterns of migration post World War Two meant that by the 1970s a wave of new families—many from Jewish, Italian or British backgrounds—had established themselves in Australia. Some were able to build up significant wealth, and the Jewish community in particular was noted for its strong engagement in philanthropic giving. In the 1960s alone, the number of people living in Melbourne who were born outside Europe or Australia doubled to over 80,000. From this decade, Australian philanthropy swung away from individual giving and toward big public appeals, family trusts, philanthropic foundations, and community funds.

This chapter charts developments in philanthropy from the 1960s to the 1990s, and examines the role of women within formalised philanthropic organisations. In particular, it profiles the Myer family; Jill Reichstein and the Reichstein Foundation;

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490 Heather O’Connor, Pamela Denoon Lecture 1996.
491 The third sector refers to non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations and community organisations: everything outside of business and government.
493 O’Hanlon and Luckins (eds.), Go! Melbourne, xiii.
Sarah Stegley and the Stegley Foundation; Marion Webster, in her work with ANZ Trustees and the Melbourne Community Foundation; the Victorian Women’s Trust; and independent philanthropist Fleur Spitzer.

**Myer, Potter and the Philanthropic Trust**

The philanthropic trust was not an invention of the 1960s. Una Porter, as we have seen, joined her father’s charitable trust in 1925. Alfred Felton established his own trust by bequest in the early years of the century; likewise Sidney Myer in 1934 and Helen Macpherson Schutt in 1951. The model of philanthropy by bequest to a trust remained popular. One of Australia’s largest was the William Buckland Foundation, created in the mid-1960s on the back of a £4 million bequest from pastoralist and businessman William Lionel Buckland. Buckland’s children and second wife, to whom he left disproportionately little, successfully contested his will, but the capital of the Foundation was barely dented. In 1970, Vera Ramaciotti ‘the quiet millionairess’ established the Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundation with $6 million to support medical research and education programs. The money came from the sale of the Theatre Royal in Sydney, once owned by her father, the Italian-born Gustavo Ramaciotti. Vera Ramaciotti was a spinster whose ‘girlhood was spent in rather upper-British-class, genteel fashion’. Her first trip abroad was for the coronation of King George V in 1911. She enjoyed embroidery, singing around the piano, going to the theatre and having friends call, but she was intensely private. In establishing the foundation in the name of herself and her bachelor brother, Clive she ‘unleashed a blaze of publicity which came close to burning her’. Ramaciotti did not establish her foundation by bequest, but did so toward the end of her life, and handed responsibility for it directly to Perpetual Trustees: ‘I’ll take a very keen interest in the Foundation’, she said, ‘but I’ll have nothing at all to do with its administration’.  

1968 saw the publication of Australia’s first anthology of Philanthropic Trusts in Australia, a listing of 226 trusts whose founders ‘aimed to promote the well-being of the community’ with a combined distribution of over $24 million; most of these had been

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established by bequest.496 The majority, 'as would be expected', were located in Victoria or New South Wales. By 1980, 292 trusts were listed in the Australian anthology with a combined distribution of over $75 million per annum; three years later, distribution was estimated at over $115 million. Trusts were categorised according to their focus on education; environmental resources; humanities; medicine and health; religion; sciences and applied sciences; social sciences; and welfare.497

What was relatively new in the 1960s was the concept of a trust that would be administered by its founder during his or her lifetime. Myer's sons, Baillieu and Kenneth, were pioneers in establishing the Myer Foundation (as an adjunct to the Sidney Myer Fund) in 1959. The Directors of the Foundation noted in 1961 that 'they could look to no previous experience in Australia, but must draw on the United States and the United Kingdom' for inspiration498. The Ian Potter Foundation was established by businessman Sir Ian Potter in 1964, following his successful bid to introduce tax deductibility for philanthropic foundations. Upon his death, exactly thirty years later, he bequeathed shares to the value of $50 million to the Foundation. Potter made his wealth in stock broking, and the manufacturing and mining industries. He and the Myer brothers often worked together; their collaboration enabled the establishment of the Howard Florey Institute in Melbourne and played very active roles in the administration of their respective foundations. So too did their wives, but in quite different ways. Lady Primrose Potter became a Governor of the Potter Foundation (the sole female Governor in its history) only upon the death of her husband in 1994. Her role in the activities of the Foundation prior to this, outwardly at least, was purely social. Baillieu Myer's wife Sarah became a member of the Myer Foundation, as did Ken Myer's first wife Prue. It was a visit to China with Prue in 1958 that sparked Ken's interest in strengthening the ties between Australia and Asia, along with the work of his friend Leonard Cox, who collected Chinese antiquities, and Sidney Myer's own interest in Oriental artwork.499 The Foundation funded university exchange programs, and later, the building of the Sidney Myer Asia Centre at the University of Melbourne.

496 By contrast, the American *Foundation Directory* of 1967 could list 18,000 active American foundations.
Of course Sidney Myer’s own wife, Merlyn, had an enormous influence upon the activities of both the Fund and Foundation as one of the trustees (the only female) of Myer’s estate. On her death in September 1982 she owned 590,000 shares in The Myer Investment Pty Ltd. Her total estate was valued for probate at just under $7.5 million. The bulk of this came from her personal estate, the remainder from real estate, with ‘sundry jewellery and furs’ alone totalling $33,000. Her properties – ‘Cranlana’ in Toorak and ‘Kennagh’ in Sorrento – were left to her four children, Neilma, Baillieu, Kenneth and Marigold. Merlyn left cash bequests of several thousand dollars to her daughters-in-law, Sarah and Prue; the Queen Victoria Hospital; the Royal Melbourne Hospital ‘with which I have been closely associated for many years’; the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute; the Australian Red Cross Society (Victorian Division); the Church of England Trusts Corporation (to be divided between kindergartens, babies’ homes, boys’ homes, and community houses); Geelong Church of England Grammar School; and Anglican churches in Toorak, Sorrento, Avenel and Queenscliff (where she was baptised). Of her 590,000 shares in the Myer Investment, her daughters received 150,000 each; her sons, 100,000. The remaining 90,000 were to be shared equally between them and any grandchildren over the age of 30 who had been ‘actively engaged’ in the Myer Emporium, ‘it being my wish to encourage the participation by as many of my grandchildren as have the necessary ability and willingness to participate in… the continued growth and wellbeing of one of the largest groups of companies in the southern hemisphere’.

On 30 July 1992, Merlyn’s son Ken and his second wife, Japanese artist Yasuko Hiraoka, were killed on a fishing trip in Alaska when their light plane crashed. Ken had drawn up his will just one month earlier. Both Ken and Yasuko, somewhat eerily, had taken the precaution of stipulating in their wills that in the event of their simultaneous deaths, their bodies be placed in the same c o f f i n . T h e y h a d t h e i r w i s h . T h e t r a g e d y w a s to have an enormous impact upon the family, and upon Ken’s cherished foundation. A solid share of Ken’s $17 million estate went to the Myer Foundation. He left a number of pecuniary legacies to former employees including the head gardener and manager of properties at Toorak and Avenel. His extensive tapestry, print and oriental art collections were bequeathed to National Galleries in Victoria and New South Wales. He released from debt his private secretary, who had borrowed money to buy a house.

Will and probate documents for Margery Merlyn Baillieu Myer, VPRS 7591/P/0008, Unit 55, Item 911/573 and VPRS 28/P/12, Unit 271, Item 911/373, Public Record Office Victoria.
Shares in Genentech Ltd went to the Howard Florey Institute. Ken’s interest in his father’s estate was divided into five equal portions for his children Joanna Margaret, Michael Sidney, Philip Sidney, Martyn Kenneth and Andrew Vellejo. Though his death was premature, Ken had already established a solid reputation for his philanthropic activities, and he was able to leave pecuniary legacies to perpetuate gifts made in his own name: The Kenneth Myer Artist in Residence at the Victorian Arts Centre; the Kenneth Myer Annual Oration at the National Library of Australia; the Kenneth Myer Information and Technology Centre at the Howard Florey Institute; the Kenneth Myer Fellowship at the Australian Film Television and Radio School; and the Ken and Yasuko Myer Molecular Evolutionary Biology Unit at the National Museum of Australia. He expressly asked that no flowers be offered at his funeral: instead, live trees could be purchased for plantation in a location to be decided by his trustees.501

For her part, Yasuko Myer divided her $660,000 estate into fifty equal portions to be held upon trust. Ten went to support the Kenneth Myer Artist in Residence; ten to the Howard Florey Institute; ten to the Japanese Print Collection at the Art Gallery of NSW; and ten to the Power House Museum for its Contemporary Jewellery Collection. Of the remaining ten, two went to the RSPCA; two to the Lost Dogs’ Home, North Melbourne; two to the Animal Welfare League of Victoria; two to the Animal Welfare League of NSW; and two to the Guide Dogs’ Association of NSW. Remarkably, Yasuko’s will was wholly philanthropic. She did not leave any pecuniary legacies to family members or friends.502

The wives of the Myer and Potter families (Lady Primrose was Sir Ian’s third wife) played out the roles expected of them. They were socially adept, they supported their husbands, and, behind the scenes, influenced their decisions. Questions of investment were left to the men and essentially the foundation was a men’s club. The youngest Myer daughter, Lady Marigold Southey, recalls having an interest in the Myer Fund, but never being asked to join it. She eventually asked herself onto the board of the Foundation. Lady Southey was in her seventies when she was elected president of the Myer Foundation. Her rather conservative approach and her willingness to accept unsolicited requests for funding from acquaintances was sometimes controversial, but she had a strong background in fundraising. With her first husband, Ross Shelmerdine,

501 Probate Jurisdiction and Will of Kenneth Baillieu Myer, VPRS 28/P/23, Unit 10, Item 1064/303, PROV.
502 Probate Jurisdiction and Will of Yasuko Hiraoka Myer, VPRS 28/P/23, Unit 10, Item 1064/304, PROV.
Marigold raised something in the order of $3 million for research into cancer and heart disease. She also raised $1 million for the Winston Churchill Fellowships, offering travel grants to students in Commonwealth countries. The fund was established by Robert Menzies in response to a request from Churchill for a lasting memorial – something more than a ‘bust in a park somewhere’. In later years, Marigold’s two daughters and two nieces recognised the contribution of Myer women by establishing the Merlyn Myer Fund. This relatively small pool of money enables ten gifts of $500 per year for underprivileged children in Australian schools. Most children who apply for and win the awards are female.\(^{503}\)

For all that they appeared to be male-dominated, the Myer and Potter Foundations were both operating under very strong female influences quite apart from the wives, sisters and daughters of their founders. In 1961, Meriel Wilmot was appointed Executive Secretary (later Officer) for the Myer Foundation. Patricia Feilman was appointed to the same position for the Potter Foundation from its inception in 1964. These women had humble titles and no say in the investment of money, but their decisions as to the distribution of that money carried enormous weight. Both retained their positions for over twenty years.

Pat Feilman was a country girl, raised in Western Australia. Having trained as an accountant, she came to Victoria to work, and there she made the acquaintance of Sir Ian Potter. In later years, Feilman was a member of the Zoological Board of Victoria, the Victorian Conservation Trust, the State Film Centre Council and The Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board. She took a strong interest in environmental causes and set up the Potter Farmland Project in the early 1980s. She remembered ‘it was... a new direction and I guess Sir Ian was the hardest one to convince because it was way outside his realm of interests’. Feilman’s success in getting the program through is testament to her influence as Executive Officer. She emphasised the importance of networking (‘to use the current parlance’) and felt that most Australian foundations ‘tend to be reactive rather than pro-active’. Foundations, she felt, should be seeking out problems and projects rather than merely responding to requests for funding.\(^{504}\)

Meriel Wilmot, later Lady Wright, was the wife of former Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Sir Douglas ‘Pansy’ Wright. She visited England in the 1950s and began working with the Nuffield Foundation (specifically the Nuffield

\(^{503}\) Interview with Lady Marigold Southey (Barbara Lemon), 4 November 2005.
Provincial Hospitals Trust) where she saw the potential for philanthropic funding. She found that "in England there's a very much greater knowledge about philanthropy among the general public – it's certainly much more of an open book. In America it gets greater publicity... Rockefeller, Carnegie and Ford -- they're everyday words in American life". She accounted for the different attitudes toward philanthropy of people in Australia and America by their respective attitudes toward government. The United States, she said, was founded by people who wished to escape from government and resisted its re-formation. Australia, by contrast, existed because of government decisions: "To my mind this is the reason Australians say "What's the government going to do about it?".\(^{505}\) Wilmot believed in harnessing the power of philanthropy to bring about social change, but she was less a champion of empowerment and community than she was of applying academic thought to social problems. Michael Liffman, historian of Myer family philanthropy, suggests that Wilmot was something of a Trojan horse: she dressed and spoke conservatively and worked within the Establishment world, but harboured what might have been considered radical ideas.\(^{506}\) In 1962, Wilmot launched the Aborigines in Australian Society project: a major study of the effect of government policy on the Indigenous population.\(^{507}\) With Feilman, she helped to set up the Australian Association for Philanthropy in 1975, encouraging collaboration between philanthropic trusts. Wilmot became a great mentor for women new to philanthropy. One such was Jill Reichstein.

Reichstein, Stegley and Social Change Philanthropy

In the early 1970s, a young Jill Reichstein who would go on to become one of Australia's most influential female philanthropic administrators was working in Kew in the first community-based half way house for women. The half way house was a step away from more 'value-laden' Church-based organisations, and encouraged victims of domestic violence 'to stay away from their husbands, not to go back with them'. In addition, the refuge openly encouraged its residents to join its board and be involved in its management. This democratic arrangement was echoed in Reichstein's subsequent work with community-based childcare in Brunswick, with the Brunswick City Council, and with the Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups

\(^{505}\) Sandilands, 'The Godmothers', 11-12.
\(^{506}\) Personal correspondence with Michael Liffman (Barbara Lemon), 5 December 2006.
\(^{507}\) Liffman, A Tradition of Giving, 68.
She refers now to ‘that whole learning process of working with people who perhaps didn’t have skills at a community level but given the opportunity to participate were really very keen to be managing their own services and to get involved’.  

Jill Reichstein was the only child of industrialist Lance Reichstein, and grew up ‘rich but uneasy’: ‘she rattled around the family’s big house in Toorak wishing she lived at a humbler address’. Reichstein describes hers as the privileged private school upbringing, and remembers her mother’s involvement with charitable organisations including the Spastic Society. Her father was involved in committees but his philanthropy was not visible in the way of the Myer family. Reichstein began to distance herself from this conventional structure at an early age: ‘I suppose all the way through school I was fairly committed to some political agendas… I was anti-apartheid, anti-Vietnam War, and that drove my parents mad because they were quite conservative. I don’t know where I got my left-wing leanings, I had always had a strong sense of social justice.’

On leaving school Reichstein visited the United Kingdom for twelve months, where she attended a Liberal Arts college ‘it looked like my father was going to be Lord Mayor and I didn’t want to hang around’ and took part in demonstrations against the Vietnam War. She was staying with students in Paris during the famous manifestation of May 1968. Back in Melbourne (her father had not become Lord Mayor), Reichstein took on studies in Sociology and Anthropology at Monash University where she ‘hung out with a lot of the Monash Labor Club people… I think that my questioning about social justice issues came from being involved in studying the sociology of change and community development processes’. This thinking represented a radical departure from the philosophies of her own father, who distrusted the political groups with which his daughter was involved. Rather than leave his fortune to her directly, he made specifications in his will for the establishment of a charitable foundation and appointed a board to oversee its investment and distribution. In this way, Jill Reichstein found herself at the age of 25 on the board of the multi-million dollar Lance Reichstein Foundation alongside ‘the usual suspects’: an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant, an accountant.
lawyer, a stockbroker and a businessman (all male).\footnote{512 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 13 November 2006, and ‘The Next Generations’, a session held at the 3rd Philanthropy Australia Conference, Sofitel Melbourne, 10 October 2005.} Reichstein found her fellow board members conservative and patronising. She was frustrated by their preoccupation with investment, and disregard for the distribution of funds. The trust deed for the foundation was fairly broad, stipulating welfare and educational endeavours as funding areas.\footnote{513 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 13 November 2006.} Informed by her work with the Brunswick City Council, Reichstein felt the foundation had the capacity to do greater things:

I started to get a taste of working for a local government that was actually seeking funds from philanthropy to help develop services for the aged and for young people, and meanwhile trying to work with the older members, the more conservative board members of Reichstein who were wanting to fund blankets and helicopters and things like that. So I really had to try and position them to have a better understanding of how you could give philanthropy a far more strategic vision.\footnote{514 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 13 November 2006.}

By her mid-thirties, Reichstein was chair of the foundation and took steps to overturn her board, replacing retired trustees with women who had experience in the community sector. She sought advice from Meriel Wilmot, who encouraged her to read Chuck Collins’ \textit{Robin Hood Was Right},\footnote{515 Chuck Collins, \textit{Robin Hood Was Right} (New York: Norton, 2000, original publication 1977).} an American publication which ‘was just fantastic because all of a sudden there were a whole lot of foundations who were doing what instinctively I thought we should be doing’. It was about ‘addressing social change, and [using] philanthropy to be the power engine in enabling community organisations to think through their processes and to actually engage and try and do things differently’. Reichstein soon made contact with American heiress Tracy Gary, who became ‘a very strong mentor for me’, and visited the United States to gather ideas. Gary had inherited a share portfolio at the age of 21, and realising that many of the companies she held investments in were involved in military funding, sold them and took on a number of ethical investments.\footnote{516 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 13 November 2006.} She found that women in the United States who had inherited wealth often felt burdened and depressed by it. They were excluded from financial discussions, disempowered and patronised, particularly when they made
enquiries about investing ethically.\textsuperscript{517} Reichstein had found an ally, and would later bring Gary to Melbourne to talk to other women philanthropists.

In the meantime, finding women - or men - who shared Reichstein's outlook was a challenge. On entering the philanthropic sector, she remembers:

It was quite an intimidating experience. There was Meriel Wilmot and Pat Fellman, so Potter and Myer had that kind of engagement, but most of it was run by very conservative men, men in suits... it was that old boy's network, they would give to cancer and the hospital... it wasn't until the 70s that a lot of the foundations really started to develop good research-based giving programs.\textsuperscript{518}

As late as 1989, Reichstein's friend and colleague Marion Webster could say that 'organised philanthropy was pretty much in the male province'. Like Reichstein, Webster came from a social work background, and the two women studied together at Monash University. Webster specialised in child and family welfare, and migrant and refugee welfare, but 'didn't want to stay in the community sector anymore, I was exhausted by it'. Philanthropy, she thought, was 'an opportunity to make real change'.\textsuperscript{519} Webster was appointed Executive Officer of the Australian Association of Philanthropy, but was surprised by what she found:

Firstly, I was really overwhelmed by the conservatism and the lack of accountability and the lack of transparency and the amounts of money that were just sort of floating around, and I thought it was quite scandalous really... The challenge in a membership organisation is that you're driven by the wealthiest who are often the most conservative.\textsuperscript{520}

Three years later, Webster took a position at ANZ Trustees. Excited by the opportunity to 'be involved in the actual mechanics of grant-making', she was also fearful of the conservative nature of trustees whose philanthropic style was deeply ingrained and who were '90% male'. In addition, Webster was replacing the publicly disgraced Father Vince Kiss, who was jailed in 1992 for embezzling $1.8 million from four charitable trusts under his care at ANZ Trustees.\textsuperscript{521} The affair had drawn

\textsuperscript{517} 'The Next Generations', 10 October 2005.
\textsuperscript{518} Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 13 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{519} Interview with Marion Webster (Barbara Lemon), 15 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{520} Interview with Marion Webster (Barbara Lemon), 15 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{521} 'Father Kiss pleads guilty to sex charges', \textit{Age}, 8 August 2002.
unfavourable attention to the company and raised questions about its policies on due diligence and transparency. In some ways this created an opportune moment for review. Webster was pleasantly surprised by the willingness of trustees to be more vigilant, to take on a review of charitable trust deeds, and to adopt the practice of research-based giving. She came into contact with few women at ANZ. A handful were serving as trustees but 'they certainly weren’t the dominating forces, and many of them were there because they were the wives of the Melbourne establishment people'.

Reichstein, Webster, and other women who shared their philosophies, had to band together to be heard. In the 1970s, Reichstein drew on the support of the Myer Foundation and the Stegley Foundation, the latter being one of the wealthiest trusts advocating social change. For Reichstein, they were 'soldiers in arms with me'. The Stegley Foundation was established in 1973 by Brian and Shelagh Stegley. Both were from working-class backgrounds and had limited formal education. Brian, who was born Brian John Vincent Steglich and changed his name by deed poll in 1942, had a Danish father and an Australian mother of Irish heritage, and grew up in Mordialloc. Shelagh grew up in Brighton, daughter of a former Victorian Railways worker from Bendigo. While Brian served in New Guinea during the Second World War, Shelagh set up a hairdressing salon, earning enough for the establishment of a small cabinet-making business on Brian's return. The business would eventually become the very lucrative Stegbar Windows. In 1972, the Stegleys sold their business and established the Stegley Foundation with a sunset clause: all funds were to be distributed within thirty years.

According to the Foundation's historian, Carole Fabian, the Stegleys were practising Catholics. Shelagh was a fundraiser for organisations for the sight and hearing impaired, while Brian had a special concern for the disabled. Their son, Brian Jnr, remembered 'his parents' abiding interest in the well being of people with disability, of older persons, and of Aboriginal people'. The Stegleys died relatively young, Shelagh passing away just a couple of years after Brian in the mid-1970s, but they left a foundation worth $2 million and some fairly innovative ideas. These were expanded upon by two of their six children, Sarah and Brian Jnr, who were appointed trustees along with the family accountant, Ken Harrison. Like Reichstein, Sarah Stegley was in

522 Interview with Marion Webster (Barbara Lemon), 15 November 2006.
523 Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 21 November 2007.
525 Fabian, Limited Life – Lasting Change, 10.
her twenties when she very suddenly found herself heading the Foundation, and like Reichstein, she came to it with a number of clear objectives. She was ‘declaring from very early on that she would not agree to donate to medical research, because that was a government responsibility’, according to Harrison: ‘What she really wanted to fund were groups dedicated to education and self-help, rather than traditional charities’.526

Sarah and Brain Jnr employed a Research Officer, John Pullicino, and settled on a number of funding priorities: disadvantaged youth; the aged; the disabled; and Aboriginal communities.527

In terms of innovative funding, the Stegley and Reichstein Foundations were ahead of most others. A number of philanthropic foundations were established in the 1970s, but most ran on conservative lines and many were headed by husband and wife teams. Marc and Eva Besen created the Besen Family Foundation in 1975 to formalise their philanthropic giving which had, until then, been based upon individual requests for funding made directly to them. It would be some years before the Foundation became ‘a living, vibrant, sustainable organisation’.528 The Rumanian-born Besen had migrated to Australia in 1947 and joined the clothing business of his father-in-law, Sam Gandel.529 The business turned into the lucrative Sussan fashion chain, of which Besen became owner along with the Highpoint shopping centre and a property empire worth over $1 billion by the early twenty-first century. In later years the Besen’s four children became trustees of the foundation, with daughter Debbie Dadon serving as Chief Executive Director. Carol Schwartz, the second-oldest child, launched a successful career in business and served on the Industry Superannuation Property Trust, the Our Community group, and the Victorian Urban Art Panel Advisory Committee.530 Despite its self-professed ‘increased knowledge of the issues and needs of the broader community’, the Foundation was still categorising its funding in 2007 into the three areas of arts and culture; health, welfare and education; and Jewish interests.531 Perhaps this is misleading. It makes no allowance, for example, for funding offered to the Bush Heritage Foundation in 2004 in an attempt to repair damage done to Australian bushland. Notwithstanding, the Besen Family Foundation in the 1970s was

526 Fabian, Limited Life – Lasting Change, 11.
527 Fabian, Limited Life – Lasting Change, 11.
531 Debbie Dadon, ‘The Besen Family Foundation’.
conservative, as was still the norm. Besen's brother-in-law, John Gandel, was the owner of Chadstone, Melbourne's first shopping complex. He and his wife Pauline began raising funds through the Top Opp Shop at Chadstone specifically for Vision Australia and the Jewish Museum of Australia before establishing the Gandel Charitable Trust, offering funding broadly in the areas of education, health and welfare.

A third philanthropic fund of this era was the Pratt Foundation, founded in 1978 by Richard and Jeanne Pratt. It became one of Australia's largest. Richard Pratt (born Przetitzki) migrated to Australia in 1938 with his Polish-Jewish parents. He built up the family company, Visy Board, into the immensely successful Visy Industries with branches across Australia, the United States, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. From its inception, the Pratt Foundation funded in the areas of medical research, education, the arts (Jeanne's great love - particularly musical theatre), religion and the relief of poverty. By the twenty-first century, it had added Aboriginal health, conservation, youth and family welfare, international causes, Israel, Jewish life, mental health, rural life, and the promotion of philanthropy to its list of funding priorities. In 2005 the Foundation's Chairman, Heloise Waislitz, daughter of the Pratts and friend of Carol Schwartz, described the Foundation as a 'work in progress', noting a recent decision 'to focus much more of our giving on youth and family welfare, indigenous health, community tolerance and the environment, while still funding many of the Foundation's traditional philanthropic areas in the arts, education and medical research'.

This broadening of funding areas was taken up by a number of foundations in the latter part of the twentieth century. The William Buckland Foundation evolved from a traditional organisation supporting the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the University of Melbourne (one of Buckland's trustees, George Paton, was Vice Chancellor of the University) to an innovative philanthropic foundation with fully paid research officers, funding projects like Australia's first African language newspaper, and the Restorative Justice program for juvenile offenders.

By 1982, the Myer Foundation appointed Rhonda Calbally as Meriel Wilmot's successor. Galbally was an economics graduate, but unlike Wilmot, not at all inclined to work in academia. She was a passionate believer in the power of community activism to generate social change: 'whereas Wilmot sought to enhance the wisdom of those creating policy and delivering services, Galbally believed, with equal conviction, that

533 Interview with Sandra Whitty, Research Officer (Barbara Lemon), 11 August 2005.
much of the wisdom required was already possessed by those on whose behalf policy was being made and services delivered. Galbally's influence was all the stronger after she became the first Executive Officer of both the Myer Foundation and the Myer Fund, and she pushed for the support of self-managed projects.

With this new philanthropic style came a whole new language. In her history of the Stegley Foundation, Carole Fabian reflected:

Advocacy, community development, social justice, reconciliation - Brian Snr and Shelagh Stegley would probably not have used any of these terms if they'd had the chance to articulate the goals of their foundation... language, ideas and issues changed rapidly in the years between 1974 and 2001. On their behalf, the appointed trustees tried to translate the values and commitments of their parents into a contemporary form of philanthropy.

Much of this language and many of these ideas had American origins. Certainly the concept of the foundation as Reichstein and others saw it in the 1970s was essentially an American one. Joseph Kiger has claimed the foundation as 'largely a creation of twentieth-century United States' despite its 'many and variegated historical antecedents'. Michael Liffman notes that the American influence lies in the shift away from charity and immediate relief, toward preventive work and the notion of a social problem that is bigger than poverty itself. In addition, Liffman acknowledges the influence of pilot programs funded privately as prototypes for government to adopt, and finds that 'along with Keynesianism, the example of the New Deal was itself a powerful influence on the political and bureaucratic architects of post-war Australia, notably Chifley and Coombs'. The Charity Organisation Society, as we have seen, was citing Rockefeller as early as 1909, but American ideas came to dominate in the decades following the Second World War. Australians were, wrote Manning Clark, 'more and more the receivers of and participants in American cultural imperialism'. Even before the war, Ivy Brookes and Una Porter reported to eager audiences upon their travels to America. In 1988, Heather O'Connor was granted an international fellowship to John

534 Liffman, A Tradition of Giving, 84-86.
537 Liffman, A Tradition of Giving, 154, 156.
538 Clark, A Short History of Australia, 303.
The Victorian Women’s Trust (VWT) and ‘Women in Philanthropy’ (WIP)

The establishment of the Victorian Women’s Trust in 1985 represents a new era in Australian women’s philanthropy. In many ways the Trust adhered to American ideas and followed the social change model: it was the only Australian foundation to be proffered in Anheier and Leat’s book, *Creative Philanthropy*, in 2006 as an example of an innovative philanthropic organisation. Yet the Trust represented a departure from American philanthropy in an important way: it was government-funded, and none of the women involved in its establishment were wealthy. The American women that spoke to O’Connor were agog at this level of government support. In actual fact, the story was more complicated. Research by former Trust employee Cora Trevarthen shows that the process of setting up a million dollar Trust run by women for women was fraught with tension. As part of Victoria’s 150th anniversary celebrations in 1985, $1 million was allocated to Victorian women in recognition of their contribution to the State. The Hon. John Cain, then Victorian Premier, announced that the money would be used for a women’s centre in the city of Melbourne. It soon became apparent that one million dollars would not stretch to cover the purchase of a city building in addition to the ongoing costs of building maintenance and staff, but Cain refused more money and plans were abandoned in favour of a women’s trust fund. The Women’s Trust Implementation Committee was formed, and pushed for a democratically-elected board of management for the Trust. Cain refused. He also asked that at least one man be on the board, because ‘a million dollars is a lot of money’. Speaking to Trevarthen, former Premier’s Department official Ann Morrow recalled: ‘I actually laughed. I couldn’t believe it. I said, “All over this country, all over the world, we’ve got men giving money

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539 Interview with Heather O’Connor (Barbara Lemon), 29 November 2006.
541 Interview with Heather O’Connor (Barbara Lemon), 29 November 2006.
542 Trevarthen’s research essay, ‘Steps Along the Way: The Origins of the Victorian Women’s Trust’, was submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma in Arts (Public History and Heritage) at the University of Melbourne, for which she was awarded first class honours in 2006. Trevarthen’s research included original interviews with the Hon. John Cain (former Premier of Victoria), the Hon. Joan Kirner (former Premier of Victoria), Ann Morrow, Patricia Caswell, and Dorothy Reading. Interview transcripts have been lodged with the La Trobe Library at the State Library of Victoria.
to men”. Defeated, she returned to the Implementation Committee: ‘Can you imagine Trish Caswell and Heather O’Connor? They were fit to be tied’.543 In the final event, Cain allowed for an all-female board but insisted on the government’s right to appoint its Convenor.

The original trustees of the VWT were the Hon. Mrs. Justice Peg Lusink, Family Court Judge (appointed by Cain); Heather O’Connor, tutor in women’s studies and activist on women’s policy; Joan Baird, trade union activist; Jenny Florence, community worker; Fran Kelly, active in women’s health and recreation (and later, broadcaster for ABC Radio National); Jenny McGuirk, active in women’s domestic issues; Loula Roudopoulos, social worker and specialist in migrant women’s issues; and Jean Tom, committee member of the Country Women’s Association and representative of older and country women. Lusink was not well equipped for the role of Convenor and resigned early, to be replaced by Florence. The objective of the Trust upon its establishment was broadly defined: to support projects that would expand opportunities for women.544 Early projects focused particularly on assisting Victorian women to attain economic independence. From its very first year the Trust was also funding radical projects like the Women’s Garage at Ceres, teaching women mechanical skills, and Oozzing Juices, a women’s drama group that took its performances to metropolitan housing estates and regional community venues.

Denying nostalgia, Heather O’Connor recalls a ‘real unity’ among women in the mid-1980s. Three years after the establishment of the Victorian Women’s Trust, the National Foundation for Australian Women was founded with a $50,000 bequest from Pamela Denoon, former national coordinator of the Women’s Electoral Lobby. Denoon, who died from leukaemia at the age of 46, stipulated that the money be used for a feminist organisation that would be controlled by feminists and would promote the equality of women by funding research and policy work. Denoon’s friends inaugurated an annual lecture in her memory, marking International Women’s Day. The Foundation continues its work in 2008 as a non-party, not-for-profit organisation, but relies upon government grants and philanthropic funding.

If the Victorian Women’s Trust, as a government initiative, seemed to come out of the blue, it was in fact one of several new projects for Victorian women supported in large part by the Hon. Joan Kirner and other female Labor caucus members. When the

Trust was floundering, publisher Joyce Nicholson and an anonymous woman donor saved it, but government was not let off the hook and O'Connor would personally ensure that any proposals warranting government funding were drawn to the attention of the relevant departments. The Trust facilitated the kind of networking so conducive to women's philanthropy in Australia: it mediated between women's groups and philanthropic organisations, inviting new members, new projects, and new ideas. In this way, the VWT in collaboration with the Stegley Foundation and Jill Reichstein, founded a Women’s Donor Network in Melbourne. The group met in private homes to discuss the encumbrance of wealth, and the possibilities for philanthropic giving. It functioned as a 'personal development group or personal exploration group amongst trusted colleagues'\textsuperscript{545}, a 'women's movement type of thing... all very confidential'\textsuperscript{546}. This was an ideal group for women who had recently inherited money and were struggling with the change in status; women who had, by Reichstein's own admission, cut out the \textit{Good Weekend} articles in which she was profiled that rarest of things, a young female philanthropist in the public eye and kept them until they could summon the courage to call her and launch themselves into her world.

By the mid-1990s, the Women’s Donor Network had become the far more public and more inclusive Women in Philanthropy group (WIP), with Sarah Stegley at the helm. Inspired by the work of an American organisation, the awkwardly-titled Women and Foundations/Corporate Philanthropy, WIP evolved as an advocacy and discussion group with the aim of directing philanthropic funds toward women and girls specifically.\textsuperscript{547} Meetings were held in formal venues such as the Westpac-owned Collins Wales House (there was some incentive for the bank to host large groups of very wealthy women free of charge) and were well-attended. By September 1998, 110 people were listed on the WIP mailing list. Seven were men, though several of these belonged to banking companies.\textsuperscript{548} The list reads like an honour roll of Australian philanthropy: representatives of the Myer, Besen and Pratt families; Fiona Brockhoff; Liz Cham, Pat Feilman; Sylvia Geddes; Janet Holmes à Court; Julie, Eve and Kate Kantor (granddaughters of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch); Ellen Koshland; Michael Liffman; Eve Mahlab; Fleur Spitzer; Marion Webster; Eva Wynn. There were representatives from

\textsuperscript{545} Interview with Marion Webster (Barbara Lemon), 15 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{546} Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 13 October 2005.
\textsuperscript{547} Minutes and cuttings from \textit{Philanthropy} 1993, Stegley Foundation archives, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 13370, Series 76/5 and 76/6.
\textsuperscript{548} Stegley Foundation archives, SLV, MS 13370, Box 76 (WIP mailing list, September 1998).
the Helen M. Schutt Trust (as it then was), the Trust for Young Australians, ANZ Trustees, the Newman’s Own Foundation, Greenhills Foundation and others, including a range of ethical investment companies hoping to take advantage of the captive market.

When Sarah Stegley opened the first official WIP meeting, in March 1995, she described the group as ‘a loose association of women who come together because they are concerned about socially responsible and progressive philanthropy’:

The dilemma, Sarah explained, for people with wealth is that it is difficult to find people to talk to because often your family and associates with money had [sic] different politics and people with the same progressive politics tend to have no money. Women in Philanthropy grew out of the need to have a supportive and educative environment for progressive philanthropists. In Victoria, the experience with Women in Philanthropy has been that we are very good with giving money but not so good with investing it which is why, in recent times, considerable attention has been paid to the issue of socially responsible investing.549

The guest speaker that day was none other than Tracy Cary, Reichstein’s mentor, who was flown in from the United States. She applauded the VWT for offering courses in financial education for women. As a founding member of the San Francisco Women’s Foundation and Executive Director for another oddly-titled group, Resourceful Women (Managing Inherited Wealth), Gary was involved in training women in the development sector to achieve ‘financial literacy and empowerment’, and to go about their fundraising work with more confidence. At the end of her first year with Resourceful Women (in the mid-1980s) Cary had noted that ‘two thirds of the new families [with which she had worked] had made their money in the last twenty years... This is the generation of new wealth, and this is the majority of wealth’. Of particular resonance were Gary’s comments on the pressures of being a woman philanthropist:

When we worked with women donors, we found enormous shame, embarrassment, guilt, and the kind of added pressure that society expects women who have ‘everything’ money, prestige, power, influence... they’re not supposed to have any faults either. The difficulty for many women with wealth is that there is this added expectation that they’re supposed to know how to do everything, that of course they will lend everyone in their lives money, and of course they won’t mind being just seen as a woman donor,

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549 Stegley Foundation archives, SLV, MS 13370, Series 76/1 (Minutes of WIP meeting, March 1995).
just having identity as a cheque book, rather than a human being...often...we're treated very differently in our families.\textsuperscript{550}

For the group, these were reassuring words, and a lengthy discussion took place after Gary's presentation on the subject of effectively 'coming out' to family and friends about one's wealth and philanthropy. Many women in the group expressed embarrassment about their philanthropy; they had a need to talk about it with friends and colleagues, but felt unable to do so. Marion Webster remembers 'an enormous openness and a high level of trust' in the earlier Women's Donor Network meetings, but notes 'I wouldn't have a clue how much money those women were giving'. Gary encouraged the conversation, asking all those present at the meeting to write down their wealth on a piece of paper. The figures revealed that 'within this room there's $100,000,000', but according to Webster 'that was as close as it ever came to there being any real open discussion about it'.\textsuperscript{551}

Subsequent meetings through to 1998 covered the subjects of women and homelessness; the social impacts of gambling; community audits conducted by the VWT on transport, employment and democracy; unleashing the resources of women in philanthropy; public education; philanthropy-friendly tax reform; reconciliation and native title; constitutional reform; health policy; revitalisation of rural communities; and strategic philanthropy. Guest speakers were invited to most sessions. The group diversified over time, but a questionnaire in 1997 showed that most were concerned about family and community issues, with health and education next on the priority list. Family was, said one, 'the social unit where the majority of people are expected to find social, emotional, physical and psychological nurturing to allow them to fully function in society'.\textsuperscript{552} This idea was perfectly in sync with the work of Una Porter and Anita Mühl decades earlier. Some women expressed dissatisfaction with the continuing economic and educational restrictions on women, and others were concerned about a general lack of government responsibility, the privatisation of community services, the user-pays mentality, and the widening gap between rich and poor.

On the whole, the group appeared to support the idea of philanthropy by women for women, but some were wary of an all-female set-up. Was this too political? Too feminist? WIP released a statement of purpose in 1996 and asked its members for

\textsuperscript{550} Stegley Foundation archives, SLV, MS 13370, Series 76/1 (Minutes of WIP meeting, March 1995).
\textsuperscript{551} Interview with Marion Webster (Barbara Lemon), 15 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{552} Stegley Foundation archives, SLV, MS 13370, Series 76/10&11.
feedback. Essentially, the group purported to ensure that philanthropic projects advanced the cause of women in a ‘relevant and progressive’ way; to campaign for female representation on boards of trustees; to encourage other philanthropic organisations to look at women’s issues; and to help other women join the philanthropic community as ‘informed givers’. This was fairly innocuous material, but it provoked a number of surprising reactions. Some were uncomfortable with the emphasis on helping women specifically: ‘I thought we happened to be women working in the philanthropic sector – I hadn’t read the Statement until the last meeting’, said one, and a second, ‘I am put off by the exclusion of men in the equation of a healthy society and believe WIP should not be politically feminist’. Another wrote anxiously, ‘Let us be politically neutral or we are too easy to dismiss’, and a fourth was more frank: ‘Add some men – I am not keen on women’s only groups [sic]’.

When the Stegley Foundation closed in 2001, WIP evolved to become Horizons, open to both men and women, with a continued focus on social change philanthropy. In recent years the group has morphed again to become Changemakers Australia working for social and economic justice, environmental sustainability and equality of opportunity for all with Jill Reichstein and Sarah Stegley as Patrons. In 2007, philanthropist Eve Mahlab returned to ideas behind the original WIP group by forming a new Women Donors Network.

Fleur Spitzer

One WIP member not frightened of the feminist label was Fleur Spitzer, an independent philanthropist who had been actively involved with the women’s movement for 25 years before joining the group. For Spitzer, WIP provided ‘a feeling of sisterhood’ and gave her ‘the courage to do something that was different’. As with so many other women, her involvement in philanthropy began with volunteer work. In the 1980s, as a middle-aged woman, she took on a volunteer position with Court Network Victoria, an organisation offering personal support and information for people going to the County Court, Magistrate’s Court, Supreme Court, Coroner’s Court or Family Court. Spitzer undertook a ten week training program, and was asked to join the Network’s committee of management. She became president, and turned the committee

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553 Stegley Foundation archives, SLV, MS 13370, Series 76/6 and 76/10&11.
555 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 13 October 2005.
into a board, inviting representatives from the Australian Institute of Management to train board members. The management experience proved useful.

In 1990, Fleur Spitzer’s mother died, leaving her daughter a pecuniary legacy of $500,000 from the combined estates of herself and her late husband. Spitzer’s own husband was an entrepreneur who had made his fortune by setting up private hospitals. The pair were supported by the income arising from the sale of his business, and Spitzer was free to use her half a million dollars in whichever way she saw fit.

In the late 1980s, Spitzer had developed an interest in the stereotypes around women and ageing. She ‘became aware of the denigration of older people, particularly of women... I didn’t see my mother or her friends fitting into this pattern of being a drain on society’.556 Armed with her inheritance, she investigated the possibility of setting up an academic unit to research prevailing attitudes toward women over 65. Though ‘nobody would give me the time of day because I wasn’t an academic’557, she had some success in establishing the Alma Unit for Women and Ageing (named for her mother) at the University of Melbourne under the auspices of its Key Centre for Women’s Health. Rather than sinking her inheritance all at once, Spitzer paid quarterly amounts to cover the salary of the Unit’s director, Susan Feldman. Spitzer and Feldman enjoyed a good working relationship, but the University of Melbourne experience was underwhelming. Spitzer was barely recognised for her financial contribution. Rather, she was criticised for taking an active role in the running of the Unit by University employees who would have preferred that she ‘put half a million dollars in and keep her nose out’.558 After six years, the Unit was moved to Victoria University and Spitzer loosened the reins:

I’m very into not controlling something. You create something, it’s like having a child as far as I’m concerned. You create something, you give birth to it, and you’ve got to allow it to grow up. And that doesn’t mean I mean there are qualifications to that that doesn’t mean people can go off and do wild things. The goal has to be there.559

Though the Alma Unit folded in its twelfth year, Spitzer is optimistic about its influence. She notes that Monash University’s new healthy ageing unit operates on similar

556 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 13 October 2005.
557 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 13 October 2005.
558 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
559 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
principles, and that the National Ageing Research Institute is supporting research into psychological aspects of ageing.

In recent years, as she approaches eighty years of age, Spitzer has looked to the Reichstein Foundation for funding ideas. Once vice president of the Australian Association of Philanthropy, she no longer sits on philanthropic boards: ‘I’m a bit beyond it now. I do not have the contacts nor do I have the memory anymore.’\footnote{Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.} Like so many other women, Spitzer found a mentor in Jill Reichstein, and speaks of her with affection and respect. She refers to the ‘cliquey group of foundations who give away a lot of money, who used to consider themselves superior, but Jill’s been such a guiding force they had [to take notice] and I think they all communicate with her’.\footnote{Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.} Three times a year, the Foundation sends through information on new projects that might fit with Spitzer’s funding areas: indigenous affairs, refugees and asylum seekers, and women. Recently she funded a project at the Royal Women’s Hospital investigating what birthing means for women. In 2003, she put forward $10,000 in seed funding for a pilot project, Access to Justice in the Modern Campaspe Region, to set up a community legal centre. In 2004, the Buckland Foundation and Ian Potter Foundation contributed to the project, and by 2005, the State government had offered ongoing funding for the centre. Spitzer was justly proud. This was a shining example of social change philanthropy at its most effective: a risky pilot project launched with philanthropic funds and taken up by government within two years.

Born to a Polish father and Australian-born mother of English descent, Fleur Spitzer came into a fortune that was made in her own lifetime. The direction of her philanthropic giving has been guided to an enormous extent by her life experience. Spitzer’s maternal grandparents migrated to Australia in 1889. Life was difficult, and Spitzer tells the story of her grandmother who went regularly to Station Pier to meet incoming ships, offering a few weeks free board for those who had nowhere to go. Her father emigrated from Poland as a nineteen-year-old in 1922: ‘he had no great ambitions... he had a room in a boarding house, and his aim was always to improve his room, so he got to the stage where he got the best room in the boarding house, and then he’d move on’. Spitzer’s husband Vic and his parents arrived in Australia in 1939 just as war was reaching Hungary. Despite his university education, Vic’s father had great trouble finding employment, and Vic began work at fifteen to help support the family.
Relatives of Spitzer’s father joined her family in Australia in the 1930s and 1940s. They brought stories of war: stories of concentration camps and the injustice of discrimination. Spitzer became aware of the discrimination at play in her own backyard:

I remember what it was like in the 40s. I can remember these distant relatives coming to visit us who’d arrived here before the war, and being embarrassed about these funny people coming through our gate. And Vic's stories of being told “don’t speak in your own language on the tram, speak in English”. So there’s all that stuff that I’ve learnt over the years and I mean my female experience comes into that too, the discrimination as a female.562

The stories of her family, says Spitzer, ‘feed into my understanding of what it’s like to… move geographically, to go from one lifestyle to another lifestyle’, and consequently she feels empathetic toward the thousands of refugees seeking asylum in Australia each year. Still, Spitzer is more inclined to offer financial assistance quietly than to make a public appearance or to invite refugees into her home. She has the same reticence about money, the same embarrassment, the same fear of ostentation exhibited by so many women philanthropists. Speaking from her home in a peaceful inner suburb of Melbourne, she admits: ‘I would be uncomfortable with taking an asylum seeker into a house like this. I’d rather pay.’ This reluctance to take philanthropy to the public arena is an almost learned and socially reinforced behaviour:

I found amongst, particularly amongst philanthropic women, but amongst philanthropists generally, a feeling of sisterhood or fellowship I think is the term, the broader term to encompass both sexes. But I also got a lot of flack when I started. I tried to promote philanthropy and what you could do, [the idea that] instead of giving $10,000 to the kid’s hospital... if you used it to change a situation for people, which I call philanthropy, your money was more beneficial. And I got a lot of flack from people, to the extent that within my social circles I stopped talking about it.563

Spitzer is still very careful about attaching her name to philanthropic gifts. She and her husband make combined gifts anonymously unless they feel the gift will be ‘encouraging

562 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
563 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
to other people... oh, the Spitzers have done it, I can do it too'. They will not, she says, have anything named after them, 'so maybe that's a bit old fashioned'.

Fleur Spitzer is in the interesting position, as a philanthropist, of effectively straddling two generations. According to Shaw and Taylor's classifications in Reinventing Fundraising, as we have seen, women born between 1928 and 1945 are dubbed New Older Women, and likely to give to charities assisting women in their careers or focusing on education, the environment, or the elderly. The next generation, as post-war Baby Boomers, give preference to environment, health care, homelessness, equality, child care and human needs. If Spitzer is a New Older Woman, as indiscernible as the title is, she is also a Baby Boomer not by birth, but because she is strongly tied to the doctrines of Reichstein's generation. It was Spitzer who gave an initial $10,000 to set up Changemakers Australia. Unlike most of her female peers, she also matriculated and began a university degree, though she pulled out part way through. Several of her friends completed degrees but did not launch professional careers. They were, like Spitzer, 'educated to be educated wives of the captains of industry'. Today Spitzer is bewildered by those of her highly capable and intelligent friends who are frightened by financial management. Most of them rely upon their husbands to handle money; her own mother, she remembers, wrote her first cheque at the age of 78. Equally, Spitzer is bewildered by acquaintances with excessive wealth who wish to leave their entire fortunes to their children, with no concession for philanthropic endeavours: 'I can't see if you've got ten million dollars and I know some people who I suspect have a lot more and a couple of kids, that you need to leave the whole lot for them, but that's just my idea, could be a crazy idea'.

Dismantling Tradition

Spitzer's comments points to a reality. Australia's wealthiest have been slow to take up ideas around social change and philanthropy; reluctant to risk money in projects that may not succeed, and hesitant to take on the kind of research required to fund such projects sensibly. Social change philanthropy was spear-headed by one group of women in Australia, as shown in this chapter, but traditional philanthropy continued to find

564 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
566 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
567 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006.
favour with another – and just as well, for without it many of Australia’s galleries, hospitals, research centres and theatres would have collapsed. In 1986, the late Mrs Barbara Hope Williams established the Garnett Passe and Rodney Williams Memorial Foundation in memory of both of her husbands, to fund education and research in the field of otorhinolaryngology. Her bequest was the largest ever made to Australian medicine at that time. \(^{568}\) The concept of the sizeable philanthropic trust established by bequest was still very much alive. By 1997, though, Marion Webster and others were setting up Australia’s first independent community foundation, the Melbourne Community Foundation, allowing donors to operate personalised sub-funds with relatively small amounts of money, and to exercise complete control over the distribution of money. The democratisation of philanthropy, if it might be described that way, was greatly enhanced by the development of the community foundation in this country. Even minimal sums could be invested and put to good use, particularly if donors were prepared to work collaboratively. The idea proved particularly appealing to women.

Of course, not every woman is subject to the same impulses and this thesis makes a point of emphasising the idiosyncratic nature of women’s philanthropy. The following chapter profiles two Australian women whose only common characteristic is their independence as philanthropists. Barbara Blackman and Elisabeth Murdoch both reached adulthood in the first half of the twentieth century, but had vastly different socio-economic backgrounds and responded to the social upheaval of the twentieth century in profoundly different ways.

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Chapter Seven

Exceptional Givers: Barbara Blackman and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch

The body can run and dollars can run with it, but beyond that where love is, is the spiritual side. That's where music and the arts and these things are, and that's what I was saying: encouragement is one of the greatest forms that love can take. So I'm in it for love.

Barbara Blackman, 2006.

The previous chapter explored the evolution of social change philanthropy in Australia, and the particular role of women within that evolution. As they had done for well over a century, philanthropic women were still working in groups by the 1980s and 1990s, but an increasing number had money to offer alongside gifts of service and time. Community foundations as well as the Women in Philanthropy group, the Victorian Women's Trust and the National Foundation for Australian Women still relied upon voluntary work to differing degrees, but could draw from a pool of funds controlled by women. A number of philanthropic women, however, were not inclined to join support networks or centralised organisations, and preferred to be autonomous in their giving.

This chapter draws heavily on original interview material to profile two Australian public personalities who hold fast to their individuality and are living proof of the futility of seeking a rigid definition for the woman philanthropist: Barbara Blackman, whose gifts have been directed by a distaste for excess wealth, a deep appreciation for music, and a highly developed sense of empathy and capacity for love; and the 99-year-old Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, who is 'not very much a club person',569 but has devoted her life to philanthropy and gives time, energy and plenty of funding to over one hundred carefully selected philanthropic causes every year.

569 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
**Barbara Blackman (1928 - )**

*God knows what this silly old life we all live is all about. It is so hard to live it, to give out what little essences we have to give out and then have Money like a great preying monster there to dislocate, devour and distort whatever one does. Heaven will be different.*

Letter from Barbara Blackman to Judith Wright, 14 October 1965

The year of Barbara Blackman's birth was 1928. Mary Raine had just secured her general publican’s licence and opened the Wentworth Hotel; Una Porter, yet to commence her medical studies, attended a convention in Sacramento; Ivy Brookes entertained the famous Miss Royden at Winnieck; Anne Bon was poised to pen her last will and testament. Barbara was destined to lead a life unlike theirs in every conceivable way, not least because she would come into adulthood after the Second World War, 'high on the prospects of the new world being made'\^570. True, she was privy as a child to such long-held traditions as the P.S.A., or Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, at which 'someone who could play the piano a bit did it, and the So-and-so sisters, if asked, would perform a duet'.\^571 Yet, in her time, the P.S.A. performances were as likely to be held at the Brisbane Business Girls’ Club, of which her mother Gertrude Patterson was a long-term member, as they were in the parlour of an elderly relative. Blackman would not go on to become a society lady, nor a businesswoman. Instead, and despite suffering from increasing blindness through optic atrophy, she worked as a writer, essayist and artist's life class model. None of her philanthropic predecessors could have imagined themselves posing nude for painters, raising three children without the benefit of sight, or leaving a Protestant church to adopt the teachings of Sufism\^572. Few would have shared her intrinsic distrust of money, and fewer still would have been prepared to discuss the subject publicly.

On 23 July 2006, Hugh Mackay pondered in his *Sydney Sunday Herald* column, ‘Philanthropy Can Hide Many Sins’, the moral implications of ‘receiving largesse from someone who acquired their money by dubious means’. Should corporate philanthropy be condoned, he asked, if the companies involved have grown wealthy by exploiting or

\^571 Barbara Blackman, launching speech for the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival, 7 March 2006. The PSA were a feature of Methodist Central Missions dating back to the 1890s.
\^572 In recent years, Barbara has adopted the practice of Sufism, a mystic tradition within Islam. The Sufi doctrine centres on purity of heart and soul; loving God (who has no particular form or quality) and one's fellow man (irrespective of race, religion or nationality), without consideration for any possible reward.
manipulating others? Do philanthropists act to appease a guilty conscience and to gain social status? Mackay offered Andrew Carnegie, Bill Gates and George Soros as examples of ruthless businessmen who have given with one hand and taken with the other. Many businesses claim to be ‘putting something back’, he noted, but ‘perhaps that’s a revealing turn of phrase. You don’t have to put something back unless you’ve taken something out’. Mackay asked his readers: ‘is this money clean or dirty?’

Barbara Blackman, then the recently-announced Winner of the Australia Contemporary Music 2006 Award for Patronage, sent in her response:

Money has become such an emotive subject in our society that there is always much muddled thinking about it. Money itself is a neutral entity. Its acquisition and use involves human purposes and prejudices, especially in Australia where the cult of the underdog so often prevails. When a patron or philanthropist, live or dead, donates money, his motives cease to matter. The money returns to neutral. When this money is put to use, only the motives of the user matter. It is, in parlance of the day, a way of laundering the money from dirty to clean.

She continued: ‘In society, as in any individual, there are always the forces of good and evil... Our moral duty is to seek to have the wisdom to know the difference between the two and act accordingly.’ Blackman referred to an address given by Brian Kennedy, then Director of the National Gallery in Canberra, for the Salvation Army’s Red Shield Appeal:

His theme was that we need both, the multi-million dollar ‘Blue Poles’ publicly exhibited painting and the thousands of meals, refuges and other compassionate care the Army gives to publicly needy people. When large sums of money are given to the Arts, by Government or patronage, the cry always goes up, ‘Why isn’t it going to hospitals?’ We need to get out of the ‘either/or’ mentality into the ‘both’. When I hear clichéd mention of ‘the tax payer’s dollar’, I get flashes of those bars where drunks are ordering more drinks, rows of slot machine punchers in their netherworld Clubs. If that is the best they can do with their money, so be it. Yes, I am my brother’s keeper, but no, I am not his judge.

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574 From Barbara’s copy of her letter, which was sent to the paper in August 2006 but not published.
575 Letter to Hugh Mackay from Barbara Blackman: excerpts read during interview with the author, 29 July 2006.
In 2005, Barbara pledged $1 million to support contemporary chamber music in Canberra. It was the culmination of 25 years of anonymous donations to various (personally chosen) beneficiaries and the provision of countless interest-free loans. This major gift, which she had originally intended to make by bequest, brought her swiftly into the public eye. Dubbed the Patron Saint of Audiences by chamber music group Pro Musica, she was asked to tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and address audiences to encourage further donations. Her compliance was 'not a willingness... I would rather not have to do it. But it is a commitment. And if I've given the money, I have to give my back-up as well.'576 She addressed audiences in 2006:

In my seventy-seven years of happy life I have been a writer, loved theatre, moved much in the art world. But it is music that has been my heart's blood, borne me through difficult transits, sustained me constantly... Music is not a possession. Music is an experience. An experience is what is owned within, most precious. We must invest in this - the pleasure of the individual, the responsibility of the citizen... Applause by donation will commission new work, pay more musicians, reach further audiences on into our country towns.577

In the end, Barbara reasoned, 'the gift is not only the money, it is the public acknowledgement of why I've given the money'.578 Over 120 years earlier, Elizabeth Austin had reached the same conclusion.

Barbara Blackman made her largest single gift in the twenty-first century, but the influences behind it date back to her childhood. She was born Barbara Patterson on 22 December 1928 in Brisbane, Queensland. Her father Harry Patterson, Lands Department surveyor, died when she was three years old. Her mother Gertrude (née Olson), as she had done after the death of her first fiancé at Gallipoli, went back to work as an accountant, putting her age back ten years. When Barbara was ten, mother and daughter moved into a southside Private Hotel close to schools and to the legal office where Gertrude was employed as Trust Accountant:

We were a partnership, I did not grow up in a family. No washing up, no tidying room. We ate when the bell rang in a communal dining room, about twenty-five of us, ate well because we shared our wartime food coupons. I was an independent person, running

576 Quotations from interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
578 Quotations from interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
my own life with mother always as guide. We were always good friends. She read to me, took me to plays, concerts, lectures, which were for me the normal way of life. When I left school and began University we shared a northside inner city flatette.579

Gertrude’s last and longest-serving job was with lawyers Stephens and Tozer in Queen Street. Barbara recounts the story of her mother’s interview for the job:

She was in her fifties and told her age as forties, with which Old Man Tozer jiggled his little Dickensian spectacles and, winking, said he was only about seventy himself. On ascertaining her financial situation, with a daughter being educated, he said he would pay out her mortgage the day she came to work for him and thereafter she would never again pay interest, just have deducted from her salary what she could afford… Recognizing what a boon this was to my mother, what a difference it made to her life, I have, in my later years and as I was able, made such interest-free loans to friends to pay for their cars, school fees, dental costs, travels and so forth. I give the deposit book and never check up. A few years later they will phone me up, delighted to say that they have made their last payment.580

Tozer’s generosity exemplified the idea that money should be used, not coveted. From the outset, Barbara’s attitude to money was practical. Gertrude was the treasurer of a trust accountant, and it often fell to her to collect and count large sums of money: ‘you could get a house for $2,000 or something’ and people ‘didn’t trust banks’; often houses were paid for in cash:

My mother would put [the money] in her good old suitcase and walk home with a string bag with the night’s vegetables overarm… we’d sit down on the floor and count it; your count, my count, your count, until it was right in three, or we might go on to five, then we’d put rubber bands around all the bundles, lock the box and have our dinner. So money never interested me. I always had a respect for it. Money had a purpose, but no interest.581

Years later, this irreverence for money is still intact:

It’s the least sacred thing in the world, is money! You know, and we treat it like idolatry… It certainly doesn’t make you happy… I think there’s so much, what the Sufi

579 Personal correspondence and notes from Barbara Blackman, 6 November 2007.
580 Personal correspondence and notes from Barbara Blackman, 6 November 2007.
581 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
calls ‘wahoum’, so much emotional attachment and conjecture and memory adhesion, and that all makes up ‘wahoum’, about money... Sufi has a doctrine of ‘enough’, and it applies always to have enough, to see what you have as enough... If you don’t see what you have as enough, you never will... you can have the great house, the million dollar everything, and it will never be enough... that was a great thing my mother taught me too'.

Being one half of a partnership with her mother meant that Barbara was attending Dickens Fellowship meetings, lectures, plays and concerts from an early age. She developed a lasting passion for music. As a very young child ‘in my [grandfather’s] house, there was always the old wind-up gramophone and boxes of wax cylinders, the piano was always stood open with piles of sheet music and there was singing in the house’. At Brisbane State High School, Barbara became acquainted with fellow students and musicians Donald Munro, Roger Covell, and Charles Osborne. Osborne went on to become music critic for the *New York Times*, Chairman of the Music Board of the Arts Council of Great Britain, and an expert on nineteenth-century romantic composers:

When we were just kids, about sixteen, one evening in an empty room... I suspect we were squatting, it was a room with nothing in it, white newly-painted walls, it had a power point in it... we had a little gramophone, we’d sit around the middle of the floor... and Charles played music, he played some Shostakovich. It took my breath away... We played it over and over and I walked home, it was nearly midnight. And my mother was out on the verandah, we didn’t have telephones, this is 1946 I think, and my mother said ‘Where on earth have you been?’, and I said to her, ‘Shostakovich is wonderful’. She said, ‘I don’t know who this Shosta is, some migrant, but he shouldn’t keep you out this late!’

Barbara and her friends, even then, ‘didn’t see concerts as formidable. They were every day’. Gertrude bought a double pass season ticket for youth concerts for her daughter: ‘I had another friend whose mother bought her a double, and of course we tried to take a different boyfriend to every concert... I jumped score by taking a sailor in uniform’. In later years she found a way to enjoy music even when money was scarce: ‘We used to go in us lot, us bohemian lot – after the first item. The doorman got to know us and let us in to a better seat’. Some ‘would walk up to five miles to get into a concert’. A

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582 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
583 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
gramophone club at the University of Queensland meant that one could ‘grab a room and... get an interested group and then say, “Have you heard Mahler’s second? I’ll bring it along next Tuesday”, and listen attentively to that music. So we didn’t have to have money and we didn’t really need to have teachers.’ After leaving school, Barbara took night classes in Economics, Psychology and Music Appreciation to further her education. She recalls the ‘dark, cold Melbourne Sunday night streets’ of 1951 when, armed with cushion and blankets, she walked to the building behind Christ Church on the corner of Punt and Toorak Roads where ‘two men who worked for the ABC, Kevin McBeath and Alex Berry, used to import discs from America. Hindemith, Honegger, Darius Milhaud, people like that... It was a very clandestine activity, contemporary music’.581

If music had a tremendous impact upon Barbara at an impressionable age, so too did literature and philosophy. As a schoolgirl she joined the Barjai group, ‘a group of I suppose avant-garde people who were writing poetry, prose. We thought about education, we wrote about changes in education, we wrote about population and politics in the widest form, and about music. We put on exhibitions at a very sophisticated level’. Meetings were held every second Sunday afternoon at Brisbane’s Lyceum Club, and a magazine published bi-monthly. Members were all under 21 years of age. Barjai ‘put out spokes to a wheel that ground away at the turgid cultural scene of Forties Brisbane’585, and it was here that Barbara developed a lifelong friendship with poet Judith Wright and her partner, philosopher Jack McKinney, who were both guest speakers and then twice Barbara’s age. She remembers: ‘We always had the premise that you change society from within. You don’t go howling at the ramparts and throwing bricks, you change society from within. And I think that’s something that I’ve always held to.’586

Even as the young Barbara was settling into a Lyceum Club armchair at a Sunday Barjai meeting in wedge-soled shoes and hair rolled high, her sight was waning. In 1950 she was diagnosed with optic atrophy and provided with certification of Industrial Blindness.587 Here was Barbara’s first formal introduction to the world of welfare: as the recipient of a blind pension. The following year she married Charles Blackman, then an aspiring artist. It would be five years before Charles began selling

584 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
585 Blackman, Glass After Glass, 111.
586 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
587 Blackman, Glass After Glass, 109, 16.
paintings, and nine before he won the Helena Rubinstein Travelling Scholarship that helped to launch his career. In the meantime Charles worked as an assistant chef, and took odd jobs gardening. Barbara worked as an artist’s model, but their primary source of income was Barbara’s pension. They set up home in an old coach house:

Not only was I the breadwinner with my pension, but we had to pay for the monster who lived with us – the studio. It was an insatiable appetite for paints and brushes and canvases and all of that, and monster got fed first. But I was a very good cook, a frugal cook. We used to go to the market right at the end of the Saturday trading when vegetables were going cheap, we were pretty much fruit and vegetable eaters, dinted cans you could get cheap, fish – we ate a lot of fish. We ate what was cheap: brains, lambs fry, and we liked them... We’d both been brought up on very sensible Aussie cooking.588

In 1957 Barbara gave birth to a son, Auguste, and in 1959 to a daughter, Christabel. Income was still minimal, but, by the birth of Barnaby in 1963 in London, their finances had decidedly improved. Barbara revisits her first few years of marriage with nostalgia ‘I think that things were wonderful in the fifties when we had little money, learnt to be frugal, did things together’ though she concedes that ‘we got nailed down by charity’. In 1958, the Blackmans sought help from the Society for the Prevention of Hardship for Indigent Persons of Talent or Scholarship:

We had some doctors’ and dentists’ bills and we needed a pram, and this woman came and interviewed me. Charles...was upstairs in the studio with his car to a crack in the floor, and so I answered her questions. She gave me with the greatest of gestures £40, and I took her to the door, the stable door, and she said, ‘And am I to presume that you are pregnant again?’, as though it had been a terrible accident, and I said, ‘Yes, isn’t it wonderful?!’589

In 1960 the Blackmans suddenly found themselves over £2,000 wealthier. The Helena Rubinstein Scholarship amounted to £1,000. A Gallery purchase, the subsidiary Dyerson grant, and an inheritance from Barbara’s spinster aunts on the Patterson side, allowed the family to travel to London, where Charles exhibited his work. The idea of disposable income took some getting used to. Barbara bought her first overcoat in

588 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
589 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
England for £25 – ‘I felt so guilty, not guilty I suppose, embarrassed’ and ‘life changed’. Charles, too, felt ‘extremely guilty’ for having won the Scholarship over his painter friends: ‘He felt great joy that he’d got it and got some money, but a great guilt... I think Arthur Boyd felt the same’. On the other hand, ‘one could then go out and buy a brush that cost £4, and buy enough canvas to paint twenty pictures, not just two or three. I think that was the first impact of having money’. There were negative impacts too. Later, Barbara referred to ‘a very dangerous time in my first marriage when we got too much money too soon’. Apart from anything else, this new-found wealth enabled the purchase of booze, and marked the beginning of Charles’ long life of drinking.

The Blackmans spent six years in England, during which time Barbara maintained a lively correspondence with her friend Judith Wright. Their letters, from 1950 to 2000, were published in Portrait of a Friendship by the Miegunyah Press in 2007, edited by Bryony Cosgrove. The correspondence between Barbara and Judith is fascinating in its own right. Here are the letters of two intelligent women, writers both, literary and philosophical by nature, documenting the everyday with a miraculous sense of the beautiful and the absurd. Money, as something given or received, was not the subject of regular discussion but its mention was always accompanied with an apology or a disclaimer; a kind of guilt. This was not the guilt of Barbara Falk, born into privilege, but the guilt of coming into money when one has been unaccustomed to it; the urge to confess; the desire to expunge. This was an era in which ‘speaking about money was somehow indecent’. Judith wrote to Barbara in February 1962: ‘My poor Dad has not been well... and has been giving away money with both hands, so this year I find myself oddly wealthy and even thinking of getting a new refrigerator and giving £50 to the Aboriginal Hostel to placate the gods’. Barbara wrote to Judith in November 1964 with self-conscious reference to a recent move – ‘from Snob Hill Highgate we have come to Poshville by the Park’ – and congratulated her friend on receiving the £5,000 Encyclopaedia Britannica Literary Prize. The sum was equivalent to the average annual income. ‘What a pity it hadn’t been spread out over the last ten years’, she wrote, ‘what will you do with such a lovely lump of money?’ In 1966, Judith was noting that she and Jack McKinney, who was then very ill, together with their daughter Meredith ‘live on what I earn from here out. This is just about the male

590 Personal correspondence and notes from Barbara Blackman, 6 November 2007.
592 Letter from Barbara to Judith, 4 November 1964, Portrait of a Friendship, 146.
basic wage when I'm lucky'. By contrast, the Blackmans were comfortably off. Barbara wrote to Judith in June 1969 asking if they could pay for the posthumous publication of Jack's last book, since 'we now have lots of silly useless money sitting around with nothing to do'. Five years later the tables had turned, and she wrote poignantly: 'Perhaps when we don't make a lot of money we may go back to having friends again. Certainly we have resumed old habits - Saturdays at the markets and not eating out'.

In 1997, three years before her death, Judith had reason to raise the subject again, telling Barbara that 'I used a little bit of my money (to take up the tale of money, which otherwise I don't go for) to fund a Forum on Native Title in Canberra a week or two ago'. The Forum was 'very informative to farmers, who have all been told their land is threatened with takeover but now know they have been conned into opposition to Aboriginal interests. Judith's comments are of interest not only because they reveal a continuing reticence on the subject of money (she was then over eighty years of age), but because they draw attention to her ongoing support for Indigenous affairs. Judith was a conservationist and an advocate for Indigenous rights for the latter half of her life. For many years she enjoyed a close friendship with Aboriginal poet and activist Kath Walker, and her decision to 'placate the gods' with a donation to the Aboriginal Hostel in 1962 was no token arrangement. That same year Meriel Wilmot, as the newly-appointed Executive Officer of the Myer Foundation, had commissioned the 'Aborigines in Australian Society' project: the first instance of major philanthropic funding being used publicly and officially to support Aboriginal affairs. It would be some years before environmental concerns found their way onto the priority lists of the larger trusts and foundations. The Potter Foundation's ambitious but influential Farmland Project, teaching farmers to manage their properties 'in harmony with the ecology of the land', was, as we have seen, conceived by Pat Feilman in 1983. Back in 1962, Judith Wright was already co-founding the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. She became a member of the National Parks Association of New South Wales and the South Coast Conservation Council, and patron of the Campaign Against

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595 Letter from Barbara to Judith, 6 November 1974, Portrait of a Friendship, 304.
Nuclear Power; the Townsville Women’s Shelter; Amnesty International; and the National Forests Action Council.

Judith’s strong interest in environmental and Aboriginal affairs from the 1960s came as part of that major shift in Australian society referred to in the previous chapter. Teaching at the University of Queensland in 1969, she was struck by the macabre flavour of her students’ poetry: ‘How the poor young have changed! No birds, no bees, but many long free-verse black sick envisagements of the Atomic End. This is more than depressing’. In January 1970 she sent ‘my love, our love, to you and may the Sinister Seventies be kind to you all’. The distance between this world and that of Elizabeth Austin or Janet Lady Clarke, who lived in obeisance to God, to social etiquette and to the Queen, is almost unfathomable. Barbara did in fact come into contact with Buckingham Palace, but in the most unlikely way. Having been included in the Tate exhibition of Australian painting, Charles, with Barbara and a number of other painters and their wives, were invited to visit the Queen. Barbara wrote to Judith from London in February 1963:

Like Pussy Cat Pussy Cat I should have gone out of curiosity but Charles said flatly he didn’t have the time to spare on irrelevances and so I rang up the Palace in person and said we all had measles and wouldn’t I feel awful if it was announced in the papers that the Royal party had arrived in Australia in spots... and this they took seriously and were most kind. Everyone else turned up.

The church, like the monarchy, had become something of a irrelevance for the Blackmans, and they were not alone in this. Barbara’s own religious background was mixed. Her great-grandfather on the Patterson side was a Presbyterian minister ‘of sternest kind’, entrusted to carry on his person the documents of separation of Queensland from New South Wales on his voyage from Ireland in 1859. Her grandfather was a Mason. Her great-uncle was an early member of the Theosophical Society, and his daughter, Olive Sutton, a scholarly astrologer and mentor to Barbara. Her own father, Harry Patterson, was a Rosicrucian; and Barbara, after years of searching, inclines toward Sufism: ‘So that idea of being in service, in the service of love, has come right down through my family, I think’. Barbara left the church at the age of

599 Letter from Judith to Barbara, 5 June 1969, Portrait of a Friendship, 236.
600 Letter from Judith to Barbara, 2 January 1970, Portrait of a Friendship, 236.
21 - 'I gave up the struggle with it, trying to make God work from that point of view'—but was not entirely unaffected by it:

I decided there were two concepts I was not leaving: one is that God answers prayer; and the other one was that one should tithe. So if not tithing I have always donated—pretty much right through the Salvation Army and the Smith Family—and Charles and I were embarrassed very often at the amount of money we got from selling paintings, especially cash money, that we donated quite a lot... I think I'd feel very bad if I weren't donating to someone, I feel it's one's civil duty.602

Looking for spiritual guidance in 1965, Barbara wrote to Judith: 'I think in the absence of God I shall really go and see the nice Horoscope lady who lives in Kentish Town... It must have been nice when God was and he could be blamed and trusted and loaded withal'.603 Barbara made frequent visits to her elderly cousin Olive to learn astrology, and in 1969, in failing health, underwent a course of painful treatment with bee stings and honey from a Hungarian practitioner of gypsy folk medicine. Her engagement with Sufism began years later, marking the beginning of a new phase of her life.

The Blackmans separated in 1978.604 Decades earlier, Harry Patterson, knowing he had not long to live, had taken his wife and daughter to camp with a mob of Aboriginal people on the Bribie Passage at Caloundra. The family 'slept on stretchers in our tent, cooked over a camp oven, lived by sunrise and sunset, went out in the boat fishing, sang and told stories round the campfire at night, and were happy'. In 1979, Barbara felt driven to return to that country. In her Range Rover, she travelled 'out into the unknown' with friends, sometimes camping with Aboriginal mobs, 'patient people and perhaps the funniest people I've met. I loved the minimal life with all its improvisation and awareness of natural beauties and pleasures. That Bush experience healed and re-shaped me'. In 1982, Barbara flew to India for the International conference on Modern Science and Ancient Wisdom; and the following year, undertook six months of study at Diane Cilento's School of Continuing Learning. There she met her second husband, Frenchman and scholar Marcel Veldhoven. Together, the pair built and ran 'Indooroopilly', a mud brick house and studios, where they regularly

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602 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
603 Letter from Barbara to Judith, 18 November 1965, Portrait of a Friendship, 165.
604 Letter from Barbara to Judith, 5 June 1979, Portrait of a Friendship, 391-393.
hosted study weekends for up to a dozen people, discussing the work of poets, composers and philosophers.  

From the 1980s, Barbara was making regular and substantial philanthropic gifts. By her own account, she came into money quite serendipitously:

I have made my money a lot of it out of, well, I bought into property at the right time... My mother died and left me her house; my marriage settlement, I gained a property through that; and then I came out of property and into shares at the right time, which I didn't know. I don't like thinking about money, I'm not good at thinking about money, so I found a share broker... he put me into his mother's portfolio so that it was as high gain as he could with low risk, and I made a lot of money through him.

For a quarter century, her gifts were made quietly. She allowed herself 'the very private pleasure of having an honour prize'. This consisted of $1,000 annually to a recipient of her choice: someone who was 'doing something and not getting recompensed for it... someone whose house burnt down. Someone who is giving very fine concerts and getting only half a dozen people, or someone who is running an innovative school and paying himself almost nothing'. The prize was given on the strict condition of Barbara's anonymity as donor. In addition, she began to give 'Sufi loans of considerable amounts of money', meaning loans to be repaid 'when and as you can, no interest. And I've never had anyone default.'

In 1988, Barbara travelled to Devon for a Temenos conference on Art in the Service of the Sacred. The Temenos Review was founded in England in 1980 by poet Kathleen Raine, and in 1990, the Temenos Academy was established under the patronage of H.R.H. Prince Charles. It aimed to bring together a company of scholars whose call was 'to bring the wisdom of the ancients into modern focus, and to see in the arts of the imagination the proper vehicle for human communication of the experience of the divine'. Barbara still receives every taped Temenos lecture, as does the Prince of Wales. Prince Charles continues to offer his public support for the Academy on its official web site, congratulating its followers for being 'prepared to challenge the deadening effects of the “industrialisation” of life itself', and noting the 'intensely practical relevance [of spiritual traditions] to the creation of real beauty in the arts, to an

605 Personal correspondence and notes from Barbara Blackman, 6 November 2007.
606 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
607 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
608 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
architecture which brings harmony and inspiration to people's lives and to the development within the individual of a sense of balance...the hallmark of a civilised person'. In 1997, Barbara decided to lend her financial support to the organisation in a more significant and lasting way by endowing an annual lecture in Australia. She established the Temenos Foundation, to be administered by the Art Gallery of NSW, with the sum of $100,000 'which I then had surplus'. The sale of a Joy Hester drawing to the Gallery brought in a further $20,000. The interest of the whole sum, around 5%, would pay for a Temenos scholar to tour Australia, giving lectures in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Barbara wrote to Judith in 1997:

I have just listened to a talk given by Laurens van der Post in his last year, on what he sees as the greatest story. I liked its end. Odysseus, after his long return journey to Penelope, was told by Tiresias [the blind seer] that he must make one more short journey before he could settle down. He had to take an oar over his shoulder as though for boat and voyage, but go instead inland and plant it into the ground that it might grow into a tree and so outlive him. I feel my B.B. [Barbara Blackman] Temenos Foundation is my planting of tree.

Some years after establishing the Foundation, Barbara drew up her will. She stipulated a $1 million gift to music, to be distributed by Executor Adrian Keenan. Keenan had lived with the Blackmans as a student of composition in the 1970s, going on to teach music at Canberra Grammar School, and shared with Barbara 'a great rapport about music as well as any mother and son could have'. Reading through a draft of the will, Barbara remembers 'it took him about ten minutes and he said, “Why wait? Let's do it now and have fun!”...we're very spontaneous, impulsive people when we get an idea'.

Barbara's original bequest was conditional upon serving the 'three C's: Canberra, contemporary, chamber'. Keenan found Pro Musica, a chamber music body in Canberra with humble beginnings as a group of 'lady music-lovers in their parlour'. The Pro Musica Canberra Chamber Music Festival had built up over ten years to become a reasonably well-attended event. Chairman of the Board was Professor Don Aitken, AO: political scientist, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra from 1991
to 2002, and former newspaper columnist and broadcaster. Aitken and Nicole Canham, a musician and co-curator of the festival, met with Barbara and presented her with Pro Musica's mission statement for the next ten years. Essentially, this involved expansion in the area of contemporary music: 'Adrian and I said to each other, you know, we couldn't have written it better ourselves!'

In the final event, Barbara's $1 million was distributed among various recipients. The endowment was labelled by herself and Keenan as ECMA – Endowment to Encourage, Enlighten, Educate, Expand, Explore (etc) Contemporary Music Audience – and included a gift of $250,000 to the Australian Chamber Orchestra to kick start its fundraising drive. Barbara became Lead Donor in the ACO's Capital Challenge, which aimed to raise $3 million in total to fund the commission of new works by Australian composers. In this role she toured with the Orchestra, delivering a short speech to audiences on no fewer than twelve occasions throughout 2006. Of the remaining money, Pro Musica was allocated $640,000 to be spent over the next four years, culminating in an expanded 2008 'Double Strand' Festival with forefront contemporary groups from America and Europe to be curated by the acclaimed Canberra-born pianist, Lisa Moore: 'So the million dollars went in that way. And then full stop. That is it. I do not want to perpetuate and go on... My stipulation is by '08 the money must all be spent.' Of course, the gift will be perpetuated even when the money has gone. Many of Barbara's smaller donations to musical groups led to the receipt of larger government or philanthropic grants. She notes that:

Last year [2005] already because of this participation and publicity from what I've donated to Pro Musica attendances went up from 4,000 to 7,500. Again, on the last night, [we had] a Japanese cellist and local pianist, and that attracted 3,000 people and a great rush of young people. We had children's concerts, Mozart for Kids at the National Library where this year they had Mozart's Toy Symphony and the kids all brought toy instruments sometimes instruments, sometimes things they had made. This is from bubs upwards. So it's putting music, making music available to people who might never otherwise come to it. And that's really my aim, to build up audiences.612

Barbara's philanthropy is heavily embedded in her philosophy: the great Sufi saying is 'Not that I do it, but that it be done through me'. Of course, it has been predicated upon good fortune, good financial management and a healthy respect for

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612 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
money: 'Charles said in our marriage the contract was I put his life in order and he gave my life wings, which was very good, because he'd come from a sort of working class full of gamblers and dodgy stuff'. In her long life, Barbara has been in debt just once, when she took out a mortgage of $100,000 in order to buy back Charles' 1955 painting of the McKinney family for $95,000 and present it to the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra a month before Judith's death in 2000. She repaid the debt by sale of other Blackman paintings within months. She notes with incredulity that 'debt was shameful. Now it's obligatory... Gambling used to be a sin. Now it's an industry and a university subject called Risk Taking. People are all very conscious of dollars, every experience, every acquisition seems to be measured in dollars before anything else'. Philanthropy, she says, is 'noblesse oblige, which has always existed', but it should be about encouragement, and needn't involve vast sums of money. She gives the example of the International Piano Competition ('a blight on the music community I might say, nevertheless'), offering prize money of $1600 every four years: 'Now if you think, $1600 over four years, for God's sakes that's about $4 or $5 a week! And I think anyone can commit - even the ubiquitous pensioner can commit to an amount like that, and that is encouragement'. She recalls the $20,000 gift of her late friend Dorothy Cameron, to endow a perpetual prize of $500 annually within the ANU's Prehistory Department: 'It's a token amount, but that too is significant philanthropy':

Because encouragement gives courage. It's very hard to get up on stage or up on a platform and talk, or go into the grottiest places in our cities and talk to people who've come to the end of their tether in the gutter, that takes courage. But by courage they give courage to the person in the gutter, or the performer going out on stage... [It] kicks off a whole reciprocal cycle of giving and receiving courage... So philanthropy might be name and prestige or it might be sums of money, quite large sums of money, but I think where a person is involved then it's the love and passion of that person that goes forth immediately and touches the point.

Barbara Blackman's philosophy of philanthropy is well-rounded. To traditional notions of noblesse oblige, she adds the compulsion to encourage one's fellow man, to share one's good fortune ('I think happiness, a sense of wellbeing, a sense of good proportion, comes from sharing what you have'), and to support human endeavour:

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613 $1600 was once the prize money for fifth and sixth place in the competition, now valued at $2,500. First place winner has received prize money of $25,000 since the competition's inauguration in 1977.  
614 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
I think we need philanthropists, and they're people who want to make the important activities of the world go on, which are generally those in scholarship, research and the arts... charity, with people contributing to the world disasters, is very important too, or people supporting one child in India or Indonesia. I think the idea that philanthropy means rich, old people donating is going by the board. I think it's becoming, just in the last decade, in Britain and here in Australia, much more something that young people, when they start to earn in their twenties and thirties, take up. And I really think that we must think about it as a common responsibility, not just leave it to the old and rich.615

The most gratifying philanthropy is about passion: 'Of course, what excites you and thrills you, you want to share. I mean, football doesn't excite or stir me at all. But this music, sometimes it's so thrilling you can hardly bear to hold it just within yourself.'616

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<th>Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (1909 - )</th>
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<td>Not of ourselves are we free,</td>
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<td>Not of ourselves are we strong;</td>
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<td>The fruit is never the tree,</td>
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<td>Nor the singer the song.</td>
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<td>Out of temptation old, so old</td>
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<td>The story hides in the Dark Untold,</td>
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<td>In some far, dim, ancestral hour</td>
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<td>There is our root of power.617</td>
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Dame Elisabeth Murdoch has been left until last for a reason: her philanthropic career is a very useful prism through which to examine Australian women’s philanthropy right across the twentieth century. By the 1970s, she had served on the Royal Children’s Hospital committee for 33 years, including eleven as President; been appointed the first female trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria; and been named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. In 1975 she was briefly considered by Malcolm Fraser and his Ministers for the position of Governor-General –

615 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
616 Interview with Barbara Blackman (Barbara Lemon), 29 July 2006.
though she deems the story ‘arrant nonsense’ as a diplomatic replacement for Sir John Kerr after the Whitlam controversy. She was then a sprightly 66 years old; already widowed for 23 years. From that decade, Dame Elisabeth devoted herself to a multitude of charitable organisations with a particular focus on artwork, gardens, heritage and child health. By the age of 96, she was offering financial support to 110 organisations per year.\(^{619}\)

It was August 1972 when Dame Elisabeth Murdoch faithfully transcribed the verses above in preparation for an address celebrating the 50\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Auxiliary of the Royal Children’s Hospital. On the day, she ‘just hadn’t the nerve to quote Dame Mary Gilmore’s poem because I feared I might sound pompous’ but confided to a friend the following week that ‘I deeply regret my diffidence’,\(^{620}\) for her address had been very well received and the poem carefully chosen, designed to emphasise the importance of heritage – the degree to which we build upon the efforts of our forebears – and to acknowledge the work of the women volunteers who ran the hospital for the first century of its operation. In particular, Dame Elisabeth wished to honour Miss Mary Guthrie, inaugural president of the Auxiliary, a spinster and ‘staunch Churchwoman’ who ‘hated ostentation’. As a shrewd businesswoman and dedicated volunteer, Guthrie had established the Time and Talents Society sewing circle for the Hospital; conceived the idea of Wattle Day as a fundraiser; and launched the Save the Babies campaign in 1919.\(^{621}\)

The choice of poem was pertinent, not only as a tribute to Guthrie, but because Dame Elisabeth had in many ways taken up the mantle of women philanthropists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combining a Guthrie-esque commitment to hard work and service with the moneyed philanthropy of a popular figure like Baroness Burdett-Coutts. It was David Owen who wrote of that archetypal British philanthropist that her name was ‘almost synonymous with large-scale charity’; that she spent three quarters of a century practising philanthropy; that she approached her philanthropy as a profession; and that she earned a peerage in her own right. Exactly the same can be said of Dame Elisabeth (substituting peerage for the rank of knight in the Order of Australia).

\(^{618}\) Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 10 October 2007.
\(^{619}\) Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
\(^{620}\) Letter to ‘Joan’, 27 August 1972, in Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Papers, MS 9325, State Library of Victoria.
\(^{621}\) Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, 50\(^{th}\) anniversary address, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Papers, MS 9325, SLV.
As did the Baroness, she receives 'hundreds of begging letters each month'. A more striking similarity, though, is that between Dame Elisabeth and the great nineteenth century Australian Lady Bountiful, Janet Lady Clarke. Both women were born into respected, but not wealthy, families. Both were married young to men twice their age; men who would go on to make terrific fortunes. Both were thrown into Melbourne’s elite social circle, novices to the combined role of wife and society hostess, and taken under the wing of more experienced women: Janet by Lady Bowen and Lady Loch; Elisabeth by Lady Latham and Lady Gullett and both adapted extraordinarily quickly to the demands placed upon them. Both became the confidantes of their successful husbands, whom they worshipped and adored. Both combined committee work with major philanthropic gifts, and lived out their widowhoods as deeply loved and revered members of their communities in their own right. It is a curious coincidence that Dame Elisabeth Murdoch was born in 1909, the same year that Janet Lady Clarke passed away.

Former journalist John Monks published Dame Elisabeth’s official biography, *Elisabeth Murdoch: Two Lives*, in 1994. The title is apt, for her life can be neatly divided: the first part comprising her childhood, marriage to Sir Keith Murdoch, committee work and family life; and the second comprising over half a century of widowhood and active philanthropic work as a mature, financially independent woman. Even as the young Elisabeth Greene she was philanthropically-minded, but only as a widow has Dame Elisabeth Murdoch come to be truly revered as the ‘queen of Australia’s philanthropic community’ profiled countless times by a fascinated Australian media struggling to come to terms with the possibility of a dignified, spirited woman who is fiercely loyal to family members; who cannot be provoked; who has no public enemies; whose charitable efforts as an elderly woman would exhaust most 20-year-olds; and who with that old-fashioned concept of courtesy brings a little of the nineteenth century into the twenty-first. The division is unsurprising. Only as a widow did Dame Elisabeth have access to significant wealth that was held in her own name, and distributed in her own name (as opposed to jointly with her husband). Only as a widow might she have felt sufficiently free of domestic responsibilities to embark upon a full-time philanthropic career. In an interview with John Farquharson for the National Library of Australia in

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1995, Dame Elisabeth confessed to being ‘a bit old-fashioned’ on the subject of women combining work and family life:

I think that there are very gifted women, academic women, and I think it’s marvellous what they contribute, and that’s fine. But I think to combine that with domestic life and a family life is very difficult and I don’t think many women are capable of doing it successfully. So I wouldn’t be popular amongst my own sex in this respect.  

The youngest of three daughters of Rupert Greene and his wife Bairnie (née Marie de Lancey Forth), Elisabeth was raised as part of a Melbourne establishment family. Rupert Greene was a wool expert for the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, and, more famously, a starter for the Victoria Racing Club. He held the honour, by the end of his life, of having started over thirty consecutive Melbourne Cups. Rupert doted on his youngest girl. He was a sports fan and his fondness for placing a bet at the track was a point of contention with his wife. Bairnie served as president of the Alexandra Club and of the Victoria League, ‘and that was very much my mother’s milieu. She really was so very much attached to the English part of her heritage... that was the climate I was brought up in’. Elisabeth, with her sisters Sylvia and Marie, was educated at St Catherine’s girls’ school in Toorak and at Clyde School in Woodend (it later amalgamated with Geelong Grammar School), where she boarded for several years.

It was at Clyde that Elisabeth first came into contact with the Royal Children’s Hospital; not as a patient, but as the winner of a fundraising competition the girl who knitted the most woollen singlets for babies would be given a tour of the Hospital. What she saw at the Hospital, though, made her ‘too upset to go back to Clyde the next day’. Elisabeth’s family were not excessively wealthy they had no car, the girls wore hand-me-down clothes and ‘there was always an anxiety about money’ but the Greene girls were sheltered. Upon leaving school, she remembers, there was no question of finding a job. This would have reflected badly upon her father. Rather, Elisabeth began volunteering in a much less affluent part of Melbourne at the Lady Northcote

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624 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995, NLA Oral History Collection.
625 Dame Elisabeth quoted in John Monks, Elisabeth Murdoch: Two Lives (Sydney: Macmillan, 1994), 45.
626 Monks, Two Lives, 56.
627 Dame Elisabeth quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 45.
Kindergarten: 'one friend who accompanied [her] was shocked to find that the poor children, many suffering from impetigo, actually "smelt".' 628

Elisabeth Greene was 'brought out' in 1927 at Stonnington, the former Government House, in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of York. Shortly thereafter she met her future husband, newspaper editor and war correspondent Keith Murdoch, at the home of the Austin family (built by Elizabeth Austin's nephew, Albert Austin) during a function held in aid of the Red Cross. Then editor of The Herald, Murdoch had spotted a photograph of the debutante Elisabeth in the Herald-owned Table Talk, and made a point of being introduced to her. Their courtship was brief and controversial, for Keith was over twenty years older than his bride-to-be. Elisabeth was married in June 1928 at the tender age of nineteen: her husband was forty-two. The outstanding success of the Murdoch marriage, despite the forebodings of conservative social commentators at the time, is well documented, and Dame Elisabeth continually reiterates her belief that 'all the wonderful life I've had stemmed...from my marriage', claiming 'I never would have made much of a mark at all... unless I'd married Keith and had the opportunities which he gave me'. 629 From 1933, as Mrs Murdoch, Elisabeth undertook something like a philanthropic apprenticeship as a member of the Committee of Management at the Royal Children's Hospital, under the leadership of its president Lady Latham, and as a committee member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. That same year, Keith was awarded his knighthood for services to journalism, and was appointed a member of the joint board of trustees for the Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria. Elisabeth, who 'didn't even then kid myself', 630 felt that her function on the Hospital committee was largely as a conduit to her husband, and more particularly, to the publicity power of the Herald and the Sun. She would soon prove her worth as a committee member, becoming Lady Latham's successor as president in 1954. The appointment to the RSPCC was by invitation from Lady Gullett (wife of Dr. Lucy Gullett's cousin, Henry), who, as a friend of Keith, had supported his marriage from the outset and become Elisabeth's close ally. Elisabeth was 'very moved' by the offer and 'worked very hard for two or three years'. 631

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628 Monks, Two Lives, 62. Impetigo is a contagious skin infection characterised by blisters and sores on the face and hands.
629 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
630 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 111.
631 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
For several decades, the philanthropic activity of Lady Murdoch (as she then was) was largely confined to the Hospital, and she spent a great deal of time on committee work. By 1936 she had the first three of her four children; Helen, Rupert, Anne and Janet. That year, with Anne just a few months old, the family sailed to England. Elisabeth was shocked by the level of gossip on the subject of King Edward and his divorced American lover, Mrs Simpson: 'I didn't think that it was really polite conversation to talk about that sort of thing... generations of being British and loyal to the Crown was a great thing in our family'.

Back home, and with the outbreak of war in 1939, Keith's workload at the Herald was increasing exponentially. So was his income, though his fortunes fluctuated. Elisabeth never enquired on the subject - to do so would have been 'vulgar'. At any rate, the Murdochs owned their home, Heathfield, in Toorak as well as the spacious Cruden Farm in Frankston (now Langwarrin), and another property, Booroomba. During the war, they offered Heathfield to house American officers sent to Melbourne to set up a base for General MacArthur. The Murdochs leased a small flat in town, where Elisabeth - though she 'never had much experience of cooking' - was 'thrilled' to look after Keith and 'try and ease his burdens'.

In 1942 she launched the Hospital's Good Friday Appeal, using Keith's Sporting Globe newspaper and 3DB radio station.

In 1952, at the age of 67, Keith Murdoch died in his bed at Cruden Farm. By his will and three codicils, he bequeathed 70,000 shares in Cruden Investments Pty Ltd to his son Rupert, advising trustees of his wish that Rupert 'should have the great opportunity of spending a useful altruistic and full life in newspaper and broadcasting activities and of ultimately occupying a position of high responsibility in that field with the support of my trustees if they consider him worthy of that support'. He could never have imagined what heights of responsibility Rupert was destined to reach. To Elisabeth, Keith left Cruden Farm, along with all motor cars and personal property at Heathfield, and one third of the income of his residual estate. If she remarried, this share would drop to one sixth, but Keith was careful to note that 'it is no wish of mine that my wife should not remarry'. Elisabeth never did remarry; her devotion to her husband has endured over half a century. The remainder of Keith's residual estate was divided between his three daughters, who were entitled - at the discretion of the trustees - to

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632 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 133.
633 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 137.
634 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 152.
claim their share of the residual estate as a lump sum, rather than receiving an annuity. He provided each with a house, or equivalent funds. He left for his sister an annuity of £150 for life, and pecuniary legacies to each of his brothers (£500); his nephew Keith George Murdoch (£500); his niece and Godchild, Anabel (£250); all other nephews and nieces (£200); his mother-in-law, Mrs Rupert Greene (£500); and the children's much-loved nanny, Joan Kimpton (£500), among others.635

As executors and trustees, Keith had appointed his son Rupert, his friends Harry Giddy and Maurice Baillieu, and his wife, Elisabeth. By the time of his death, he had significant holdings in a number of Australian newspapers including shares in Queensland Newspapers worth half a million pounds. Liabilities on his estate, however, left a deficiency of £125,000 after probate calculations according to John Monk, and Keith had a bank overdraft of £40,000.636 Elisabeth insisted on paying all debts on the estate at once. The Queensland shares were sold, leaving the Murdoch family fortune reliant upon one Adelaide paper, the News, and the entrepreneurial talents of Keith’s only son, then aged 21 and studying at Oxford.

Elisabeth was floored by Keith’s death but managed to keep a business head and, after a time, to continue her work at the Hospital. In 1954 she was appointed president of the Committee of Management, and held the position until 1965. She remembers ‘it was a much simpler life... I think in the thirties, forties and fifties there was much more emphasis on the idea that presidents and vice-presidents should be really hands-on in the day-to-day running of the hospital’. This was a ‘golden time for volunteers and fundraisers, because if you really believed in something and knew it was needed, you could really get people in’.637 Elisabeth’s official association with the Hospital had begun, after all, just three years after Miss Guthrie’s term as president of the Auxiliary came to an end. Guthrie was contemporaneous with Dr. Lucy Gullett and the Griffiths sisters, and she was very much of their mould. As president of the Committee, Elisabeth had to move with the times – she was known for her democratic style (versus Lady Latham’s more hierarchical one) and was able to use television for fundraising from 1956 – but she did not break with tradition in any dramatic way. She relied upon ‘several very able and supportive men’ for advice on financial matters, and continued to launch fundraising schemes like Mrs Vi Greenhal’s Victorian Girl of the

635 Will and codicils of Sir Keith Arthur Murdoch, VPRS 7591/P/0002, Unit 1583, Item 455/344, Public Record Office Victoria.
636 Monks, Two Lives, 179, 193.
637 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 205, 208.
By the time she resigned as president of the Committee in 1965, a monumental shift in Australian society was underway. She recalls that doctors and nurses were becoming more ‘militant...there was a great industrial relations stir on and the trade unions were becoming very difficult’. In subsequent years, bureaucracy, over-regulation and the ensuing decline in voluntary committees saddened the former president, who ‘still believe[s] that it is the human touch which is so frightfully important’.

As president, Elisabeth Murdoch had headed the Hospital’s Interim Planning Committee, charged with the task of building a new 400-bed hospital complex. Plans required a £6 million contribution from the State government, to be offset by public subscription. In addition, the Hospital’s dream site on the State-owned Royal Park had to be negotiated. It was Lady Murdoch who fronted up to the office of Premier Henry Bolte and made the case for Royal Park. When he suggested she find an alternative site, she suggested he find someone else to do the job, and Bolte capitulated. Meanwhile, Elisabeth was sending out personalised letters to individuals and corporations appealing for a financial contribution. To every person who responded, she sent a handwritten note of thanks—it was ‘a very homemade effort on my part’—and this not infrequently resulted in a second donation. In this way, Lady Murdoch and her Committee raised at least half a million pounds. The new Royal Children’s Hospital was opened on 25 February 1963 by Queen Elizabeth II, then visiting with Prince Phillip, and the 54-year-old Elisabeth Murdoch was named Dame Commander of the British Empire that same day.

Following her resignation as president of the Hospital Committee, the philanthropic career of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch took flight. She was widowed but financially increasingly better off as the family fortune reached unprecedented heights, and equipped with a drive that has lasted through to her nineties. In a speech delivered on her eightieth birthday in 1989, her son Rupert remarked:

She maintains an impossible pace—sleeping only four or five hours a night, gardening rabidly, occasionally revealing her gambling instincts at fairly excited sessions of bridge

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638 Monks, Two Lives, 204.
639 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 205.
640 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 127.
641 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 211.
and tending to the whole family in good times and bad – between all this her constant work for others goes on as she practises her true noblesse oblige.642

Dame Elisabeth was elected president of the Alexandra Club in 1968; possibly she took the position as a tribute to her mother. Throughout the 1970s, her real passion lay with garden work and Gallery work. The death of two women – Annie McClelland and Maud Gibson – in the 1970s led to the establishment of two major trusts with which Dame Elisabeth became involved. Annie McClelland was a neighbour, who bequeathed her 40-acre property to the local community to be used for an art gallery and craft workshops, in memory of her brother Harry. Annie had been ‘sort of on the fringe of intelligentsia’ and Harry ‘a very good amateur artist’: the pair used to host ‘rather bohemian weekends’ and had a studio at the back of their property.643 Artist Daryl Lindsay was heading the McClelland committee and asked that Dame Elisabeth be involved. She became a trustee of the gallery, when it was built, and Chairman of trustees from 1980 to 1991. The Elisabeth Murdoch Sculpture Foundation was established later as an adjunct to the McClelland Trust, co-funded by Dame Elisabeth’s family. Maud Gibson was the daughter of William Gibson, partner in the Foy & Gibson retail store and knitting mill company. She made a number of substantial philanthropic gifts in her lifetime, including funding to establish a Chair of Otolaryngology at the Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne, and £10,000 to Melbourne’s National Herbarium to save it from financial disaster. She established a trust using 20,000 shares in the family company, with funds to go toward the Botanic Gardens. Upon her death, the Maud Gibson Garden Committee was formed, and Dame Elisabeth served upon it for a monumental 27 years. The Committee sought land on which to establish a large public garden displaying native Australian plants, and settled on a site in Cranbourne. They approached Bolte, who secured State government assistance for the purchase of the land: ‘He paid £30,000 for it, and then he paid £5,000 and he said “don’t come near me for five years”; and we slogged away and we raised money and lent money and gradually acquired nearly 1,000 acres over there’.644

In 1968, Dame Elisabeth had come into contact with Bolte again, when he invited her onto the board of the National Gallery of Victoria as its first female member. She was reluctant, worried that this was a political move – ‘time to heed the rising

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642 Rupert Murdoch quoted in Monks, Two Lives, 282.
643 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
644 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
feeling in the community that women should take more prominent places — and insisted upon Bolte seeking the permission of other board members before taking up the post. She served on the board for eight years, before heading up the Friends of the Gallery Library for another ten. Keith had been a great lover of the Arts, and Elisabeth shared his passion. In 1939, the pair had organised the Herald Exhibition of Contemporary French and British Art (‘one of the most influential exhibitions in the history of Melbourne’), and Dame Elisabeth became the founding benefactor of the NGV Art Foundation. Over the years she purchased several major works for the Gallery including Rembrandt’s *The Women with the Arrow*, and funded the Timothy Potts Travelling Endowment for Gallery staff to pursue research abroad. In 1989, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch was awarded the Companion of the Order of Australia for her work as a Patron of the Arts. She told reporters: ‘I’m not a feminist, but it’s nice to show that women can be useful’.

Though she was principally occupied with the McClelland Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Maud Gibson Gardens Trust in the 1970s, Dame Elisabeth began to broaden her philanthropic scope in that decade. After her grandson James Calvert-Jones was born with a hearing impairment caused by Rubella, she joined the Advisory Council for Children with Impaired Hearing, becoming vice-president. With her daughter Janet Calvert-Jones, she supported the establishment of Taralye, an early intervention kindergarten for children with hearing difficulties. She later established a scholarship fund for educational and health professionals in Victoria undertaking postgraduate studies in the field of deafness. In 1975, she became involved with the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, an initiative of Lady Delacombe, as a member of its Interim Committee. The Workshop was officially established in 1976 and Dame Elisabeth served as Chairman from 1986 to 1988. The 1970s also saw her become a founding trustee of the Noah’s Ark Toy Library, supplying durable toys for the use of disabled children. She served on the Animal Ethics Committee of the Howard Florey Institute at the University of Melbourne, and in 1979, began fundraising for a Chair of Landscape Architecture at that institution. Her family contributed funds to reach the required sum, and the Chair was named in her honour. Dame Elisabeth became an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture. In 1982 she was

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645 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, *Two Lives*, 229.
646 Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director of the NGV in *Australian Philanthropy*, Ed. 51, Autumn 2003, 6.
647 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, *Two Lives*, 284.
awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Melbourne, and delivered the major address at her graduation ceremony.

In the three decades since the 1970s, the philanthropy of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch has grown exponentially. Today she employs a part-time secretary to keep up with her mail, but still answers her own telephone and lives in the enormous Murdoch residence at Cruden Farm. She is inundated with requests for funding:

And of course it's a big responsibility. I think, you know, one has to be quite sure that those who are asking for help would use it properly, that they deserve it... I mean, the funds are not unending, and I think it's very important to understand and be wise in your choice and also to follow it up and be involved in it, make sure that it's worthwhile. It's alright to hand out money if you've got it, but you've got to do much more than that.\textsuperscript{648}

In 2003, Philanthropy Australia devoted an entire edition of its journal, \textit{Australian Philanthropy}, to Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, including testimonials from 44 organisations receiving her support, particularly in medical research, conservation, education and the Arts.\textsuperscript{649} Every single organisation made a point of thanking Dame Elisabeth, not only for her financial contribution, but for her personal involvement. This is a sticking point for the Dame, who notes that 'people who want to help must realise that they have an absolute commitment and it is dishonourable not to turn up unless you are ill or bereaved'.\textsuperscript{650} 'I'm constantly being asked for patronage, and I say no, I can't be unless I can be closely associated and involved... They say, "Oh we just want your name". Well that's not good enough in my mind.'\textsuperscript{651}

Dame Elisabeth was congratulated for providing ongoing funding to the Baker Heart Research Institute, The Bionic Ear Institute, Taralye, The Epilepsy Foundation (as 'our largest benefactor'), The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, The MS Society, The Mental Health Research Institute of Victoria and the Howard Florey Institute. She funded a feasibility study for The Centre for Harm Reduction (working with drug-users at high risk of HIV) operated by The Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health. She funded the production of videos

\textsuperscript{648} Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
\textsuperscript{649} 'Honouring the Philanthropy of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE', \textit{Australian Philanthropy}, Ed. 51, Autumn 2003.
\textsuperscript{650} Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, \textit{Two Lives}, 111.
\textsuperscript{651} Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
and books for SANE Australia, an organisation providing education, research and advocacy for people with mental illness. Her support for the Royal Children’s Hospital was then clocked at 70 years, and she was commended for setting up the first research institute at the Hospital. The Murdoch Children’s Research Institute had been established with a $5 million gift from Dame Elisabeth’s family in 1984, growing out of the Hospital’s Research Committee (formed in 1947 and chaired by Elisabeth), developing research into child ailments. The Committee had become a Research Foundation under Dame Elisabeth’s guidance before the major donation from her family, together with $1 million from the Brockhoff Foundation, allowed for the establishment of a research institute. Support for children continued with funding for the Children First Foundation, assisting children in war-torn or poverty-stricken areas; a children’s playroom at Hanover, a welfare organisation for the homeless; and Cottage By the Sea, a rest home for children recovering from illness. Dame Elisabeth paid for new facilities at the Lord Somers Camp and Power House (youth camping programs) including the Murdoch Room, a media centre. She was recognised as Patron and financial supporter of Braemar College, Woodleigh School (particularly for support of students with special needs); and SPELD (The Specific Learning Difficulties Association of Victoria). Merriang Special Development School acknowledged funding for a hydrotherapy pool and wheelchair accessible bus.

The Australian Philanthropy list included several environmental and heritage groups. Dame Elisabeth was praised for supporting the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) since the 1950s, in particular for providing funding to save the Como property in South Yarra, and the Rippon Lea Estate. She made a substantial contribution to Birds Australia for the publication of HANZAB (Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds), and to the Australian Bush Heritage Fund for the purchase of Carnarvon Station in Queensland to protect rare species and vegetation systems. She is a Patron of the Royal Botanic Gardens:

It’s the very first Patron so it was a big honour. It’s been so much part of my life since I was a child. Because when I was young, there was no entertainment, the only entertainment provided for us was to be taken to the gardens to feed the ducks, and from then right up through my life I have been involved in the Botanic Garden, so I feel that in a way it’s justified for me to be the Patron.652

652 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 10 October 2007.
Dame Elisabeth was acknowledged for decades of support to traditional charitable organisations such as the Red Cross and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and for a large number of Arts-based organisations. She has given substantial financial support to the Australian Ballet, endowing a ballet studio at the Australian Ballet School in honour of Dame Margaret Scott. She is a Patron of The Victorian College of the Arts, having endowed the biennial Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Travelling Scholarships in art, music and drama, and purchased a Bosendorfer concert grand piano for the College. The major administrative building of the College is named the Elisabeth Murdoch Building. She has funded The Bell Shakespeare Company’s school program, Actors at Work; offering students the chance to work with professional actors on scenes from Shakespeare’s plays. A lover of opera, she supports Opera Australia—the company named its main rehearsal studio in her honour—enabling it in recent years to present two seasons of opera; to establish the Melbourne Opera Centre; and to continue with OzOpera’s community and schools programs, taking opera to non-traditional audiences around the State, performing in school and community halls. It was Dame Elisabeth who gave funding in the mid-1990s to establish Somebody’s Daughter Theatre, a drama, art and music group for women in prison, under the direction of Maud Clark.

‘There is no question that Dame Elisabeth Murdoch is an extraordinary philanthropist. What drives her? Is it the possession of enormous wealth? If so, would there not be a dozen others like her? In 1995, she told John Farquharson that she felt obliged to carry out her philanthropic work ‘as a sort of thanksgiving’ for her blessings in life. Asked why some people are philanthropically inclined where others are not, she told this researcher in good humour that ‘I think they’re just unimaginative’, but noted that ‘there is a lot of wonderfully good will and good intentions in our community... not only generosity, I think generosity of spirit’. Some have suggested that the philanthropy of Dame Elisabeth is atonement for the more controversial aspects of Rupert Murdoch’s media empire. More simply, she credits her husband, noting that ‘although my parents and generations before have always had a great responsibility, I think my husband probably inspired me to really stretch myself philanthropically...”

653 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
654 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 10 October 2007.
because of his example. But he did most of his philanthropy quite anonymously.655 As did she for quite some time:

Well I think originally I myself preferred to be anonymous and a lot of people did. But I came to the conclusion that sometimes it’s better that this philanthropy be seen as an example, I think it inspires. And I’ve encouraged other friends who are philanthropists who wish to be anonymous, I’ve encouraged them to let it be known... I think there’s quite a change in that direction now.656

The life and work of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch spans a century. Though she has maintained her interest in hospitals, galleries and gardens, she has broadened her scope to encompass quite radical projects in welfare and the performing arts, and in fact prefers now to support smaller, unknown organisations than big appeals. She resists the current jargon around philanthropy (progressive, venture, corporate and the rest). She is also reluctant to comment upon any differences between male and female philanthropists, noting that ‘generally speaking, Australians are very, very generous’,657 but conceding that ‘sometimes women are really more understanding. We’ve got wonderful male philanthropists and they’re very understanding and discriminating, but I think generally speaking, women are better informed, you know, about the various things, and one needs to be fully informed, and that takes a lot of time’.658 Dame Elisabeth has been a member of multiple committees; president; chair; patron. She has been a wife and mother; a widow and an independent woman with considerable financial responsibilities. Her influence extends to the level of government: now possibly more than ever, as her son Rupert is Chairman and CEO of a global news, sports and entertainment company. She is an art lover and, essentially, an artist—her expertise in landscapes and gardens is renowned. She supports every possible endeavour in music, the Arts, environment, literature, education, health and welfare. In a sense, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch is the embodiment of twentieth century Australian women’s philanthropy. She reflected in October 2007:

It’s richly rewarding when you are able to be philanthropic because, you know, it’s so warmly appreciated and you really feel that you are doing good, making a difference to

655 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
656 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
657 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch by John Farquharson, 20 February 1995.
658 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
other people's lives and that's very satisfying... But aren't I lucky to have had the opportunity?! You see, I think it's wonderful that at 98 and a half, I'm still able to be involved in interesting activities, I mean it's remarkable.659

Barbara Blackman and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch could not be more different: in background, in vocation, in faith, in manner, in daily routine. In philanthropy, though, aside from a love of music, they share a strong capacity for empathy, a willingness to respond to need, a desire for autonomy, and a determination (if only later in life) to be public about their gifts in order to set an example for others. Both operate as single entities, but have their own interactions with formal philanthropy. Dame Elisabeth donates to and through established charitable organisations, but she also responds personally to hundreds of individual requests for funding. Barbara Blackman set up her Temenos Foundation as a philanthropic trust, but her one-off $1 million gift to music was distributed quite spontaneously, and her annual $1,000 gifts are made at her discretion. The stories of both women serve as an important reminder that the philanthropy of any woman is subject to her own impulses. Not every philanthropic woman wishes to join a network, or to use her money to make a political point. Some are driven simply to help, or to enrich the lives of others, but the desire to improve society – culturally, structurally or morally – remains. Today, there are few Barbara Blackmans or Dame Elisabeth Murdochs in evidence. The following chapter investigates the role of women in the third sector of Australia's economy at the turn of a new century, when philanthropy means business, reviewing an era in which the large bequest, the autonomous foundation and the small, shrewd investment are working side by side.

659 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 10 October 2007.
Chapter Eight

Into the Twenty-First Century

When I was a kid there were people called 'Philanthropists' and they were quite wonderful and we looked up to them... There is no such thing as a 'Philanthropist' today because the community tends to look down on them.  

Dick Smith, Australian Philanthropy, Ed. 16, Autumn 1995

What I'm afraid of is that foundations increasingly will look and sound and function like government and business.

Elizabeth Cham, National Director Philanthropy Australia 1996-2005

Australia, 2001. International Year of Volunteering. While Prime Minister John Howard is navigating his way around the Tampa incident and a federal election, his Community Business Partnership roundtable has successfully pushed for tax changes that promise to bring $1 billion to Australian philanthropy within the decade. The Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies is established at Queensland University of Technology, and the Asia Pacific Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment at Swinburne University. Mark Lyons of UTS completes ‘the first publication to describe Australia’s third sector’. An independent inquiry into the definition of charitable, religious and community service not-for-profit organisations for tax purposes, chaired by the Hon. Ian Sheppard AO QC, hands down its findings, recommending a move away from outdated legislation based upon charity law established under Queen Elizabeth I in 1601. The inquiry is taken up by the Aga Khan Foundation for use in Pakistan, but its recommendations are rejected in Australia by Treasurer Peter Costello. Philanthropy is on the rise and in the news.

There are several possible reasons for this surge of interest in philanthropy. One is the vast increase in wealth in Australia over the course of the 1980s and 1990s. A second is the media’s growing interest in philanthropy and philanthropists as an offshoot of its continuing obsession with the rich. A third, perhaps equally powerful, reason is the funding of a permanent secretariat at Philanthropy Australia in 1996, and the appointment of Elizabeth Cham as National Director.

660 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
662 Philanthropy, Summer 2000, Edition 44, 14; and Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
Cham was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany on Christmas Day, 1948, daughter of Polish prisoners of war. Her parents, Jozef and Aniela, were shipped to Germany following the 1939 invasion of Poland. While working on a German farm, her father was sent to the infamous Buchenwald as punishment for listening to BBC radio. In September 1950, the family was able to migrate to Australia. Initially dispatched to Bonegilla in Victoria's north-eastern region, they moved to Ballarat where Jozef was posted at the White Swan Reservoir for two years, as a condition of entry to Australia. Eventually the family built a home at Ballarat where Jozef took on work at the paper mills. Elizabeth was educated at Loreto College. Later, a temporary position in administration at the University of Melbourne's History and Philosophy of Science Department encouraged her to consider taking on academic studies herself. She enrolled in a political science degree and went on to complete several tertiary qualifications over the course of her working life. On graduation from her first degree, she found work as personal assistant to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's principal private secretary, and worked for Whitlam until 1977. Imbued with an understanding of the machinations of government, she took on her next post as research assistant to Professor Manning Clark of the Australian National University. In 1987 Cham was a speechwriter for John Cain. She began studying for a Masters degree in the late 1980s, supporting herself in part with paid work for the Felton Bequest and the Buckland Foundation. This introduction to the world of philanthropy was augmented by six years as a researcher for ANZ Trustees from 1990-1996.

Philanthropy Australia, the national membership body for grantmaking trusts and foundations, was founded in Melbourne in 1975 as the Australian Association of Philanthropy by the Myer and Potter Foundations, driven, as noted in Chapter Six, by Meriel Wilmot and Pat Feilman. For the first twenty years of its existence it ran on very little money with a part-time secretariat, and consequently had very little impact, according to Cham. At the time of her appointment in 1996 it 'was basically falling down'663. By then, however, Victoria was promoting itself as 'on the move' in line with the rest of Australia and other parts of the world, not least the United States. Cham suggests that an estimated '60% of all American foundations with a capital base of over $1 million were formed in the 90s'664. In 1984, Business Review Weekly (BRW) magazine had published its first Rich List, comprising 200 people with $7.3 billion in combined

663 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
664 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
wealth. By 2006, that figure was $125.4 billion. James Packer alone could account for $7.1 billion. Speaking on ABC Radio National’s *Australia Talks Back* program in October 2006, Rich List editor James Thomson attributed the growth to Australia’s strong economy, citing the property and equity markets particularly.665 Between 1986 and 1998, the wealth of Australians aged 65-74 increased by 115%, ‘underwritten by a doubling of house prices’.666 In 2004, the *Age* proclaimed that Australia would ‘experience the largest ever intergenerational transfer of wealth’ within a decade, and that ‘the inheritance pie could be worth up to $60 billion in Australia and $10 trillion in the US. By nurturing values of giving and a passion for community’, it added hopefully, ‘many of those dollars could make their way to charities’.667 Research by Margaret Steinberg and Lara Cain of the Queensland University of Technology picked up on this accumulation of wealth, tying it in with broader changes ‘contextually, demographically’ around the world in the shift from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, and suggesting what impact this might have on ‘roles, responsibilities and opportunities’ for women, with a particular eye to women’s philanthropy. Citing smaller families, availability of education (and therefore of employment and income), greater financial independence, mobility, and longevity, the authors suggested that Australian women were enjoying ‘opportunities for involvement beyond home and local community’ that were previously unavailable to them. Women were a relatively untapped financial resource, they said, and fundraisers should ‘tailor campaigns to appeal to women in the light of changing values’.668

Cham recalls: ‘What I discovered was that there were no incentives for giving in Australia... There was no way I could do the job I’d been asked to do, which was to grow philanthropy, without changing the tax act.’ That meant going straight to the top:

Once the Prime Minister [John Howard] had indicated that he was interested in this, that gives a huge signal like a foghorn to the public servants, to senior public servants. In this [not for profit] sector most people don’t know how Canberra works... What I knew, if I was going to change the tax act, you need a political vehicle, and if you can have a

665 *‘Australia Talks Back’*, ABC Radio National, 2 October 2006, with Kate Evans.
political vehicle that the Prime Minister chairs, then you’re about 50% of the way there.669

Cham’s push for the Philanthropy Roundtable, now known as the Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership, finally came to fruition in 1998. While it was ‘heavily criticised’ by the not-for-profit sector which ‘saw the Prime Minister, especially the government, as using this as an excuse to withdraw funding’, Cham ‘saw it as an opportunity to change the tax law because I was seeing there was fantastic wealth and rich people need tax incentive to give.670 The roundtable, composed of business and community leaders, campaigned for changes to tax law and the introduction of Private Prescribed Funds (PPFs). Despite opposition from the Treasurer, PPFs were introduced in 2001, allowing individuals or families to receive tax deductions by setting up foundations that contribute to tax deductible bodies. The suggested minimum capital base for a PPF, built up over several years, is $10 million. Between 2001 and 2005, in an ‘historically unprecedented growth in philanthropy’,671 320 new foundations were established. The figure was closer to 800 by 2008. This relatively new legislation may serve in future to spread philanthropy more evenly across the country. To date, Victoria and Melbourne in particular has dominated Australian philanthropy, but Victoria’s unique tax incentive to give (under which death duties could be avoided by establishing a charitable foundation) ended with Jo Bjelke-Peterson’s abolition of death duties in Queensland in 1980. The new PPFs, by offering tax deductibility, have reinstated this incentive nation-wide for those with sufficient wealth.

Cham also used her role to lobby on behalf of philanthropic organisations, and to raise the public profile of philanthropy. When the tax office issued a draft ruling in May 2005 on non-government organisations (NGOs), proposing that deductible grant recipient (DGR) status be awarded only when the sole purpose – as opposed to the dominant purpose – of an organisation was charitable, Philanthropy Australia submitted an official protest. The proposed changes meant that any charitable organisation spending part of its time in lobbying, advocacy or even fundraising activities might be stripped of its tax deductibility status. On behalf of Philanthropy Australia, Cham took her concerns to the media. Of course philanthropy had been in the news before, as we have seen. The Australian Women’s Weekly delighted in a gossipy feature on Vera

669 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
670 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
671 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
Ramaciotti in 1970 after her multi-million dollar endowment to the Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundation. The Good Weekend published a feature on ‘Big Hearted Australians’ in 1993, discussing the work of philanthropists including Jill Reichstein, who was profiled by Liz Porter in the same magazine in 1989. From the late 1990s to the early years of the new century, though, philanthropy was becoming a regular feature. In 1998, Business Review Weekly published a list of Australia’s biggest charitable trusts and ‘Australia’s Most Generous’ people. By 2005 it was congratulating itself on having compiled a list of Australia’s top 200 charities according to revenue (gathering the figures was no mean feat). Elizabeth Cham spoke with Sandy McCutcheon on Radio National’s ‘Perspective’ in August 2003. Michael Liffman – former Director of the Myer Foundation, and now at Swinburne University – spoke with the ABC’s Peter Mares and others in the Melbourne Town Hall in February 2005, discussing the generosity, or lack thereof, exhibited by ordinary Australians and responding to Mares’ suggestion that ‘we’ve turned into a nation of self-centred, hard-hearted shopaholics’. Liffman has been identified as a philanthropy expert, discussing Swinburne’s tertiary courses in philanthropy on radio, and submitting online opinion pieces such as ‘Giving for a New Millennium’, espousing the benefits of corporate philanthropy and discussing the level of untapped Australian wealth, predicting a ‘philanthropic renaissance’. In June 2006, the year after her resignation, Cham was profiled in a one-page spread ‘Giving as Good as She Nets’ in the Sunday Age. The article was effusive: ‘Elizabeth Cham has managed to sell philanthropy to the Melbourne establishment while never compromising her principles’. One month later, the Age was discussing the work of community foundations, profiling young philanthropists including Alistair Webster (son of Marion Webster, co-founder of the Melbourne Community Foundation), and singing the praises of ‘the new breed of philanthropists’ who ‘do much more than just signing cheques’. Indulging in philosophical debate, the Reverend Tim Costello wrote on concepts of charity and love; Rupert Myer pondered ‘enlightened self-interest’; and Kate Evans discussed the rich on Radio National’s ‘Australia Talks Back’. Evans wondered: are there as many think tanks out there on the rich as there are on the poor?

Should we be paying more attention to the rich and what they do? Humphrey McQueen rang in to add his comments about the usefulness of scrutinising the rich, calling for an historical approach: a timely plea. More pragmatic media interest in philanthropy came in the form of Business Review Weekly's list of Australia's top fifty benefactors for the year 2005.677

While this newspaper and radio coverage has not been aimed at women any more than Cham's lobbying activities have, the effect seems curiously gender-specific. Lady Southey maintains there is 'no question' that more women are involved in philanthropy now than ever before.678 This might be explained in part by a growth in the number of community foundations over the last ten years – there were 23 by 2005. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the community foundation's mode of operation appeals to many women because it offers support and relative anonymity, and does not require the donor to be in possession of vast wealth. New investors receive help in deciding where money should go and have a ready pool of collaborators should they wish to fund alongside others. Their money is invested for them and they need only make decisions about how it should be distributed each year. Ann Miller, who signed up with the Melbourne Community Foundation (MCF) in 2006, chose it over the Lord Mayor's Fund primarily because MCF did not publish the dollar value of each separate fund in its annual report.679 This was as much about not wanting to be swamped by requests for funding as it was about privacy.

While an attraction to community foundations fits with the now fairly apparent tendency for women to work in groups, it nonetheless reflects a departure from more traditional ways of 'doing' philanthropy. Steinberg and Cain suggest that 'religious values which formerly drove much of women's philanthropic work, together with a search for freedom/power or class activism, may be being reinterpreted or transformed as personal fulfilment and "making a difference"/"giving back to the community".680 This is not out of line with Mark Lyons' observation that 'traditional membership associations such as the Christian churches, trade unions, scouts and guides, service clubs and so on' are weakening. This he attributes to a 'decline of manufacturing employment and the growth of a service economy, increasing numbers of women in the workforce and longer hours worked by those in full-time employment, changes in leisure

678 Interview with Lady Marigold Southey (Barbara Lemon), 4 November 2005.
behaviour and the increasing percentage of the population from non-English speaking countries.\textsuperscript{681} While the Industry Commission could report in 1995 that the not-for-profit sector was employing roughly 100,000 people, many of them women working part-time,\textsuperscript{682} Lyons maintains that there has been a decline in the proportion of the adult population that volunteer for charity. Jenny Onyx and Rosemary Leonard concur in their research on women, volunteering and social capital, attributing the decline in rates of voluntarism to the urban sprawl (taking women further away from community centres); generational differences; the rise of the two-career family (implying less available time for women); and, interestingly, the popularity of television as way of spending free time.\textsuperscript{683} Dame Margaret Guilfoyle has observed that, since the 1970s when she served as Minister for Social Security, 'there is now a change in as much that there is not the time that women had'. Instead, they are increasingly likely to give money: 'that, to me, is still very much a charitable kind of spirit'.\textsuperscript{684} Cham notes:

What’s been very interesting... is the number of women, often daughters, who have become engaged in philanthropy because either they’ve taken over the business from their father, or because with their husbands they’re running some business and they’ve decided that they want to spend time with their children and work on the foundation.\textsuperscript{685}

Heloise Waislitz, daughter of Richard and Jeanne Pratt, is Chair of Australia’s most generous independent foundation, the Pratt Foundation. Samantha Meers heads her father Nelson Meers’ Sydney-based foundation for the visual, literary and performing arts. Lucy and Tom Larkin, children of Jill Reichstein, have joined the board of the Reichstein Foundation, though Lucy joined years before her brother and is more involved with the Foundation’s activities. Anna Spraggett (née Shelmerdine) spoke with her grandmother Lady Southey at Philanthropy Australia’s conference in 2005 about the Myer Foundation’s new G4 (generation four) Fund, administered by a number of Sidney Myer’s great-grandchildren, with a focus on environment, education and youth health. The trend extends to women working in managerial positions without a connection to the family. Lady Southey noted that, of 16 finalists chosen from 250

\textsuperscript{681} Lyons, \textit{Third Sector}, 104.
\textsuperscript{682} The Industry Commission, \textit{‘Charitable Organisations in Australia’}, 1995.
\textsuperscript{684} Interview with Dame Margaret Guilfoyle (Barbara Lemon), 2 November 2007.
\textsuperscript{685} Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
applicants for the position of CEO of the Myer Foundation in 2005, just one was male. Similarly, 95% of applicants in 1996 for the role of National Director of Philanthropy Australia were women. Fleur Spitzer concurs: ‘I think the big change is [in] who are the executive officers, and I think they’re women’. The age-old pattern of women working behind the scenes continues in the wealthier philanthropic foundations today, but according to Elizabeth Cham, their influence ‘can’t be underestimated’. Women, she says, are ‘totally dominant in providing advice, and therefore direction’ even if the majority of foundation trustees are male: ‘If you said to me tomorrow, Liz I want you to choose, I want to give you a job as a CEO of a foundation or be a trustee of a foundation, I wouldn’t hesitate... I’d say I want to be CEO. You’d get more done. More influence.

Despite this, the women profiled by Business Review Weekly magazine in 2006 are neither trustees nor chief executive officers. The magazine lists foundations as entities in themselves, or, where relevant, individuals or married couples who have given money in their own names. Indeed it could be (and has been) argued that those who distribute somebody else’s money, or work on behalf of a foundation, are not, technically speaking, philanthropists. The person to whom the money belongs (or belonged), being the same person who made the decision to give that money away, is the true philanthropist. Certainly Cham adheres to this view, while Michael Liffman refers to those who administer philanthropic funds as ‘philanthrocrats’. At any rate, whilst the BRW shares with this thesis the shortcomings of a criterion of selection based upon finance alone, it does offer something concrete from which to draw conclusions about the philanthropy of women with wealth today versus fifty or one hundred years ago.

One of the top-ranking benefactors on the list is the late Marjory Edwards, whose $37 million estate made the biggest bequest in Australian history. A trained nurse, Edwards was not born into wealth (she was orphaned at the age of five in Adelaide), but married wealthy pastoralist, Roy Edwards. With her husband, she moved to the Northern Territory in 1962 where she ‘helped sick Aboriginal employees, sent local students to city colleges, and funded medical research’. Edwards’ bequest went to the Guide Dogs of South Australia; the Crippled Children’s Association of South Australia; the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (NT); Legacy; and other

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686 Interview with Lady Marigold Southey (Barbara Lemon), 4 November 2005.
687 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 13 October 2005.
688 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
charities in South Australia and the Northern Territory. In some ways, Edwards is a case study in one stream of Australian women’s philanthropy: those who are either born into or marry into wealth (the latter in this case); have hands-on involvement with local causes; show loyalty to the places in which they have lived; support established charities; outlive their husbands (a necessary condition of inheritance) and, if they have no children, offer a large bequest to charitable organisations in their wills. Margaret Doyle, the next woman on the list of major givers, follows a similar pattern. She and her husband George Henderson were both pastoralists, their outback station described as a ‘cultural oasis’. They had no children. Margaret lived eleven years longer than George, who had helped to establish the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Far West Children’s Health Scheme and supported a number of charities while he lived. Both were lovers of music. Margaret bequeathed $16 million to the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney.

The BRW list includes Helen Macpherson Smith, Barbara Williams, Vera Ramaciotti and the Collier sisters, each of whom has been mentioned in a previous chapter. All other women featuring in the BRW list are alive, and with the exception of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch are listed alongside their husbands or in the context of a family foundation. Jeanne Pratt is listed with Richard Pratt, ‘Australia’s third richest man’, the Pratt Foundation having distributed $12 million in the previous year. Eve Kantor, granddaughter of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, is listed with husband Mark Wootton and the family’s Poola Charitable Foundation which put $10 million toward education on the subject of global warming. Sylvia Viertel, through the Charles and Sylvia Viertel Foundation established by Charles Viertel before his death in 1992, distributed $7.5 million to ‘projects helping the homeless, vision impaired and those with cancer’, as well as senior medical researchers at Australian universities. Ros Packer is not listed in her own right, but rather within an entry for her late husband Kerry, once Australia’s richest man. According to BRW, she has a long involvement with the not-for-profit sector, serving on the board of trustees for St Vincent’s Clinic Foundation, as a council member for the National Gallery of Australia, and as patron of the Ladies Committee at St Vincent’s Private Hospital, Sydney. Similarly, Loti Smorgon appears within an entry for Victor Smorgon as a ‘passionate supporter of the arts’, though she is credited with having personally donated between $2-5 million to the National Gallery of Victoria. Eleanor and Jack Bendat donated $5 million through the Bendat Family Foundation to a cancer research centre in Perth. The Bendats are described as supporters of ‘youth-focused charities’, donating $2 million in 2004 to the St John of
God Foundation Lighthouse project in Western Australia to provide long-term accommodation for homeless children. Allan Myers and his wife Maria are noted for their support in the arts, education and medical research; Maria's own interests in Indigenous community initiatives and the environment are listed separately. As noted, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch has her own entry, though her fortune comes from her late husband Keith and son Rupert through Cruden Investments Pty Ltd and NewsCorp. Pauline and John Gandel, through the Gandel Charitable Trust, are noted for their support of health and education in Australia and Israel. The Besen Family - Marc and Eva Besen particularly - are also described as having an interest in Jewish causes, as well as arts and culture, and health and welfare. Diana Grollo and property developer husband Rino are described as 'keen philanthropists', supporting educational causes, particularly in the Italian-Australian community. Joan and Peter Clemenger - through the Clemenger Foundation - support the arts, as does the Nelson Meers Foundation, with Samantha as manager. Finally, Nicola Forrest appears alongside husband and iron ore-investor Andrew Forrest for donations to the Australian Children’s Trust and the Women’s and Infants’ Research Foundation.

What does this tell us? Perhaps that, despite new catch-phrases like 'venture philanthropy', 'progressive philanthropy' and 'social change philanthropy', philanthropy in Australia retains a very strong traditional element. When Dame Elisabeth Murdoch was asked whether she saw her own philanthropy in traditional or progressive terms, she laughed, 'I guess it's philanthropy'.689 Continuing support for the generalist categories of health, welfare and the arts is notable, despite a handful of specific 'innovative' projects. The only unmarried women in this list are Vera Ramaciotti, deceased 1982, and the Collier sisters, the last of whom passed away in 1954. All women on the list either inherited or married into wealth. Women may be more financially independent than ever before, but the results are slow to manifest at the level of extreme wealth.

Such observations would indicate that the work of groups like Changemakers Australia, pushing for social change, is far from over. In Creative Philanthropy: Toward a New Philanthropy for the Twenty-First Century, published in 2006, Diana Leat and Helmut Anheier refer to a 'low-key malaise affecting the foundation sector' associated with 'a lack of awareness of what could be possible'.690 Elizabeth Cham warns of a downside

689 Interview with Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (Barbara Lemon), 25 November 2005.
associated with the swathe of new philanthropic foundations post-2001. Speaking of founders and fund managers, she says some ‘don’t actually understand what they would call the marketplace... They wouldn’t dream of putting out a new product without doing the research, finding out who’s best to do it... They come into this area and they... leave their business rigorous hat at the door’. Philanthropists who do not work through the structure of a foundation are not necessarily any better. According to Cham, who notes the particular exception of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, some ‘do what governments do. They sit up somewhere and they go, I know what needs to be done. I’m not accepting any applications. And they call that being proactive as opposed to reactive – there’s nothing reactive about taking applications, you’re being responsive.’

Despite the best efforts of Philanthropy Australia and a number of notable examples to the contrary, there has been a general resistance in this country to the concept of collaborative work between foundations (as opposed to within them, as through the community foundations) and group support. Melbourne’s Women in Philanthropy group dissolved in the late 1990s, as did by all appearances the more reticent Women Donors’ Network. This contrasts markedly with the United States where support groups such as Washington’s ‘Women & Philanthropy’ actively bring female grant-makers together to fund projects and publish the results, maintaining a public profile and taking care to foster an atmosphere of warmth and inclusion. On contacting the office during a research trip in the United States, this researcher was urged to visit and was given a complete run-down of the organisation’s current activities.

The United States approach has, nonetheless, made its mark here in Australia. In the 1980s, potter and budding sculptor Deborah Halpern attended the ‘Forum’ – a course in self-motivation run by an archetypically American organisation now known as the Landmark Forum. Halpern was commissioned in 1987 to make a sculpture for the moat of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne with a $25,000 grant. It was the Forum, she says, that gave her the confidence not only to complete the project, but to find the additional funding necessary to make it truly exceptional. Her three-legged ‘Angel’ became a Melbourne icon, taking pride of place in the Gallery moat for over a decade before being moved to the Birrarung Marr thoroughfare. The Forum also instilled in Halpern a belief that even she, as an artist without great wealth, could find a way to generate money to help others. Halpern had been raised in a community of

691 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
692 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
artists as the daughter of Sylvia and Artur Halpern, founders of Potters' Cottage in Warrandyte. Her mother, she remembers, would speak of the 'brotherhood of man', and from an early age Halpern saw the planet as her wider family. As a teenager she was struck by the paradoxes and injustices of the world. Her $10 weekly donations to Green Peace and Amnesty International left her unsatisfied. In her mid-twenties, again through the Forum, she met a group of people running the Hunger Project, a global movement with the enormous mission of ending world hunger by funding 'bottom-up, gender-focused strategies' in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Halpern committed to raising $100,000 for the Hunger Project by taking on as many commissions as she possibly could in one year. Ignoring late bills and other expenses, she kept her word. Today, hailed as one of Melbourne's most successful artists, Halpern sells her work for $45,000 per piece, and gives away between $5,000 and $25,000 annually to charitable causes. She is still devoted to the Landmark Forum.

Certainly the influence of the United States reached the Victorian Women's Trust, as seen in Chapter Six. With a focus on 'discrimination and disadvantage faced by women', the Trust was praised in Leat and Anheier's Creative Philanthropy as a good example of an innovative organization 'combining grantmaking, community engagement, research, communications and advocacy'. Though the Trust might be considered one of Australia's smaller philanthropic organisations, distributing around $100,000 each year, it works collaboratively with groups and individuals, making the money stretch, and makes a point of engaging with the community groups it funds. This fits with Leat and Anheier's suggestion that creative philanthropy works by 'encouraging constructive conversations about new approaches to old and new issues', and has the capacity to 'reinvigorate civic engagement and democracy'.

In August 1998, the VWT launched its Purple Sage Project. The Project was co-funded by the Stegley Foundation and two women philanthropists, one of whom was Joanna Baevski, daughter of Kenneth Myer. The other donor wished to remain anonymous. Its aim was to gather community groups for discussion around the politics

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693 Interview with Deborah Halpern (Barbara Lemon), 30 September 2005.
697 Anheier and Leat, Creative Philanthropy, 5.
698 Anheier and Leat, Creative Philanthropy.
of the day. The 1980s and 1990s was ‘a period of profound economic restructuring’ that saw the free market philosophy come to dominate. Social expenditure was scaled back and companies ‘downsized’. In this ‘mood of despair and confusion’, the Purple Sage Project offered ‘a rare and sorely needed opportunity for many people to claim a voice’ by recruiting 600 Group Leaders to set up discussions in their local areas. According to the project report, ‘thousands of men and women came on board. Over a third of the dialogue sessions [were] held in regional Victoria. Of the Group Leaders 76 percent [were] women’. By March 1999, Purple Sage members were able to take some of the concerns raised by community groups to the biennial conference of the Victorian Council of Social Service, entering into debate with the then Premier, Jeff Kennett. Unsurprisingly, the comments were met with derision by Kennett, but the issues raised – ‘particularly those dealing with democratic reforms, service delivery, public education and gambling’ – were taken up a short time later by various political parties in the lead-up to the September 1999 election. Members of Purple Sage were gratified to see a new government elected. In 2003, the VWT offered eight grants of between $5,000 and $26,000, and sponsored a number of major projects. Grant recipients included the Women’s Circus Workshops, for women in the Geelong region with histories of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, mental illness, relationship issues and substance abuse; the Purple Room Support Service, offering mentoring and employment programs for young people who have completed custodial sentences; and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, sponsoring a Women’s Human Rights Worker to undertake legal casework for asylum seeker women. One of the ongoing projects that year was Watermark coming out of concerns raised by community groups as part of the Purple Sage Project. The Trust used a similar ‘grass roots’ community discussion technique to raise awareness about Australia’s dangerous water shortage.

The VWT and similar organisations approach charitable endeavours democratically with what might be considered an evolved philosophy, but nonetheless their heritage is obvious. The use of small groups to create big change is nothing new. Leat and Anheier propose three consecutive approaches that have defined the philanthropic world over the last two centuries. Beginning with the original model of Charity, which suited the social and political climate of the nineteenth century with its

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focus on poverty and health care, they use the term Scientific Philanthropy to cover the early to mid-twentieth century. Scientific Philanthropy differed from charity in its emphasis on addressing the underlying causes of problems rather than their symptoms. This is in line with the philosophy of the Charity Organisation Society, which reminded subscribers in 1912 that 'modern philanthropy' was characterised by 'a determination to seek out, and to strike effectively at, those organised forces of evil, those particular causes of dependence and intolerable living conditions, which are beyond the control of the individuals whom they injure, and whom they too often destroy'.703 The third period in Leat and Anheier's analysis is rather unimaginatively named New Scientific Philanthropy, encompassing all the meaning (or non-meaning) of venture philanthropy, social investment and the rest. The authors go on to herald the arrival of Creative Philanthropy, claiming, like Liffman, that 'philanthropic foundations are enjoying a renaissance'.704 But are they? There is little evidence in our BRW list of the creative foundations described by Leat and Anheier. Of course, the BRW list is not the definitive list. It does not include, for example, the Reichstein Foundation which distributes multiple millions of dollars annually to social change programs, nor does it include community foundations. What it might tell us is that, if we are entering a new phase of women's philanthropy – call it what you will – the change is not so much in its direction but in the way it is administered and the way it is measured. The constructive conversations may be happening in the background. In the meantime, philanthropy has become big business.

When Philanthropy Australia held its third international conference, 'A Wealth of Experience', in October 2005, it used the slogan: 'building philanthropy, corporate citizenship, and community capacity'. Among the generalist 'meet the grant-maker' sessions and discussions around the role of philanthropy in a modern democracy were panels of financial advisors debating investment strategies for family foundations and corporations with sessions entitled: 'Employee giving and corporate volunteering programs', 'How should corporations give?', and 'What financial advisors and philanthropists need to understand about each other'. Speakers included Christopher Thorn, Principal of Goldman Sachs JBWere Philanthropic Services; Bruce Parncutt, Principal of Lion Capital; David Gibbs, Partner in McInnes Graham & Gibbs Chartered Accountants; and the widely-respected John Emerson, Partner in Freehills.

704 Anheier and Leat, Creative Philanthropy, 2-4.
Flyers were distributed to delegates advertising IPP Technologies’ new ‘grant making software for a changing world!’ It is not surprising that such a wealthy sector has caught the attention of the corporate community, which is as willing to profit from goodwill and social capital as it is from more tangible products and services. In Australia, international finance firm Ernst & Young maintains a partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria, claiming ‘our ambition is to make a positive social and economic contribution to society. A critical part of this is our continued commitment to the arts’. Each year, the firm publishes a Community Review and in 2005-2006 contributed $3.3 million and 4,000 hours work to charitable causes in Australia through staff giving schemes. The value of this kind of philanthropy is clear, but it is also quite obviously calculated to bring profits to the organisation by capturing the attention of potential clients and by spreading goodwill.

The merging of philanthropy with business has had the effect broadly, and not surprisingly, of making philanthropy itself more businesslike. In July 2006, Cameron Schuster of Leeming, Western Australia, wrote to BRW magazine: ‘I support totally your call for an Australian Prudential Regulation Authority-type overseeing commission to ensure the not-for-profits have decent governance systems, are audited correctly and generally do not operate like an exclusive club.’ It should be compulsory, Schuster wrote, for not-for-profits ‘to lodge public annual reports of financial and activity performance on websites or similar’. This notion of accountability and transparency is one advocated by Elizabeth Cham, who says that ‘what hasn’t happened well enough is evaluation, and dissemination. [Foundations are] still very, very critical and not evolved enough’. For Cham, compulsory production of annual reports is not about catching out unscrupulous trustees as much as measuring the effectiveness of different philanthropic programs and comparing notes with other organisations. In fact, she reiterates her fear that foundations are coming dangerously close to business and government, citing the bureaucracy surrounding applications for funding. Philanthropy can learn from business, but care should be taken to differentiate the two. Philanthropic money, she says, has ‘the most privileged position, doesn’t have shareholders, doesn’t have voters, the money is invested...[in] 100 years’ time it’s still going to be there’.

707 Cameron Schuster of Leeming, WA, letter to the editor, BRW, 20 July 2006, 10.
708 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 3 August 2005.
While fund managers should keep wearing that 'business rigorous hat', they also 'have the privilege of being able to take a long term view… especially at a time of such short term-ism in business and government. They have the privilege of risk-taking and they should take risks'.

Elizabeth Cham retired as National Director in November 2005, succeeded by Gina Anderson. In keeping with philanthropy's new businesslike image, Anderson brought to the role significant experience in 'general management, human resources, corporate community and communications roles'. What will Australian philanthropy look like in ten, twenty, fifty years' time? Will Australia's women philanthropists shift their approach to giving money away? Will Australia move closer toward the American model of philanthropy? What tax or legislative changes might be instigated by Anderson and others? Approaching retirement in late 2005, Elizabeth Cham reflected upon her ten years as Director:

It's about the evolution of the practice. So the key things are that we've grown it, we've changed the culture in government, we've changed the culture within the public service, we've certainly influenced opinion-makers in the media who know about it...Universities are beginning to think about it...and then there are people like you who are starting to think about even theses of this sort. So that's another bit of very critical infrastructure that's slowly being developed, and we haven't had any of that before.

In a sense, the die is cast. Women can and do continue to carry out grassroots voluntary and advocacy work, but those equipped with large amounts of money to give away have little choice but to join the formalised, legalised philanthropic community – unless of course, like Barbara Blackman, they have sufficiently broad personal networks within which to operate. This does not mean, though, that women of wealth cannot pursue their own, very personalised programs of philanthropy. In 2007, businesswoman, feminist and lawyer Eve Mahlab established the Women Donors Network, 'basically to change a culture'. She brought together a board of professional women with a view to channelling more philanthropic funds to projects empowering women and girls. Mahlab speaks of the greater relative need of women and girls in most acknowledged areas of disadvantage, including disabilities, homelessness, indigenous affairs, ageing, and issues

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709 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 1 August 2005.
711 Interview with Elizabeth Cham (Barbara Lemon), 5 August 2005.
surrounding refugees, 'partly because women live longer, they’re more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and they have the dependency of children and elders'.

Among the Network’s board members, all of whom have significant experience in business or philanthropy, are Jill Reichstein and Fleur Spitzer, Trisha Broadbridge and Toni Joel. Joel is the owner of a gift business in Melbourne and regularly donates products for fundraising hampers. Her philanthropy is less about finance and more about using networks and modern technology. In 2004, she and several colleagues set up a project called Off Your Back, collecting coats for the homeless:

Basically the story is that we encourage people to take the coats out of their cupboards - or off their back - and give them to people that need them... It originally started four years ago when I was walking down the street in Fitzroy Street [St Kilda] and I saw a gentleman on a park bench a little worse for wear, it was a freezng cold night, and I had a coat and he didn't, and the first thought I had was I wanted to take it off my back and give it to him. Considering it was pink lined and had beautiful flowers over it and it wasn’t the warmest of coats I didn’t think it was 100% appropriate. But it did actually plant a seed for me to think that if anyone went home and opened up their cupboards there’d have to be at least one and maybe many more coats that we may not wear again and someone else could benefit from it.

Using the technique of spiral email – sending an email to friends and family, who send it on to their own friends, those friends send it to more friends, and on it goes – and using their own business locations as drop-off points, Joel and her colleagues accumulated 27,950 coats over four winters. Coats are dry-cleaned free of charge by Spotless, and distributed to the homeless through the St Kilda Crisis Centre. Off Your Back Day is now held on June 1st each year, with special promotions in schools. Children have enthusiastically adopted the idea, bringing their old coats to be collected. According to Joel, donated coats are generally of high quality: ‘we get sheep-skin lined and leather coats, we even got a mink coat, but generally... ski parkas... a lot of children’s coats’. The monetary value of the collection runs to well over $1 million.

Joel comes from a charitable family. Her mother was involved with Yooralla, and Joel remembers shaking fundraising tins as a small child. Her grandfather was Sol Green – ‘the Kerry Packer of his day’ – who made his money in horse racing as a

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712 Interview with Eve Mahlab (Barbara Lemon), 21 November 2007.
713 Interview with Toni Joel (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.
714 Interview with Toni Joel (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.
bookie. Green was not only extremely wealthy but ‘exceptionally philanthropic’, according to Joel, and set up what is now the Herald Sun Blanket Appeal exactly sixty years before Joel had the idea for Off Your Back. To the chagrin of many family members, Green bequeathed his vast wealth to charity. Joel applauds his decision, but notes that she hasn’t ‘been exposed to concepts of family trusts... I just come from a different vein’:

It’s not about ego... it’s just simply about ‘if you can, you do’ and if you can inspire others, that’s even more valuable... We’ve given away whatever we’ve personally given away, but it’s not about that, it’s about the fact that we’ve been able to inspire, you know, thousands and thousands of other people, tens of thousands now, of other people to take the coats out of their cupboards as well and I think that is truly exciting about what we’ve done. The butterfly effect. So you can have a little idea, and you can make it everyone else’s idea as well.715

Trisha Broadbridge, the youngest member of the Women Donors Network, has a different story. Now working as a Manager within Philanthropy Partners at ANZ Trustees, the concept of the family trust is entirely familiar to her: she oversees distribution for nearly fifty of them. Broadbridge began her association with philanthropy as a youth worker, running youth programs for Melbourne’s Reach Foundation for eight years. She later worked in community development with Australian Football League clubs, and married Melbourne player Troy Broadbridge. In 2004, Trisha survived the Asian Tsunami, but lost her husband. Under the auspices of Reach, she set up the Reach Broadbridge Fund in his memory.

I decided I wanted to build a school in Thailand... At the time I was grieving the loss of my husband and people sort of thought, ‘How can this person build a school? Yes, she’s a youth worker, yes, she’s worked in the sector, but is she going to be able to pull it off?’ It was actually a family who have a foundation who gave me the first $25,000, and they backed me when no one else would. No corporates wanted to touch the idea because they thought that I wouldn’t pull it off... I think it’s something that’s so important about this work is that it really does give people a lot of seed funding.716

715 Interview with Toni Joel (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.
716 Interview with Trisha Broadbridge (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.
Trisha set up the school successfully on Thailand’s Phi Phi Island in September 2005, and continues to fund and manage it. In 2006, she became Young Australian of the Year. She was appointed by the federal government to the National Youth Mental Health Board, and sits on the board for the International Women’s Development Agency. At just 26 years of age, she has an extensive knowledge of the machinations of the philanthropic sector. Her observations on gender are based on experience: ‘generally women will know what it is they want to fund and exactly where they want the money to go, whereas men… maybe don’t have those same connections’. Despite this, she notes an ongoing hesitance in women to become involved in philanthropy:

I give away money individually and have my own foundation, but I don’t know a lot of women who are in that younger age bracket who are starting foundations, and I don’t know whether it’s got a lot to do with the fact that women have never really been in the financial position to do it, but there might be a bit of fear around it… it is very dominated by wealthy men within this industry… There are a lot of women that I do work with who are helping to give away their partner’s or father’s money… Women have always volunteered and done a lot in the community but they haven’t been able to maybe fund in the community… I think over the next decade we’ll see a very big change in that.\footnote{717 Interview with Trisha Broadbridge (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.}

Broadbridge and other board members of the Women Donors Network are at the forefront of the social change model of Australian women’s philanthropy. Between them they make some pertinent observations about its future direction. Eve Mahlab explains that ‘when I was younger I was an advocate for the equality of men and women, and as I’ve got older and perhaps had more resources myself, particularly financial resources, and yet perhaps a little less energy for the daily effort of being involved in organisations myself I’ve turned my attention more to funding activities’. She notes that ‘women have always been great at being involved and giving their labour and time in a philanthropic way, but I’ve became convinced that it now has to be followed by the increasing amount of money that women have control of’.\footnote{718 Interview with Eve Mahlab (Barbara Lemon), 21 November 2007.} Jill Reichstein believes that ‘women increasingly are playing a bigger role in philanthropy. I know that many of the community foundations are seeing a lot of women setting up funds and sub-funds, and women who are earning and creating their own wealth base...
are now starting to be very proactive in the philanthropic sector.\textsuperscript{719} For Trisha Broadbridge, ‘there are some changes that need to be made, and I think that women can be very powerful when it comes to that because women are always in groups’:

Being a part of any sort of group that is focused on women is something that is really important to me because we’re all scared to say that we’re feminists... but I want to be able to empower women... We are in a society where I think we’re nearly getting to the point where we can be equal, but this is the start of a new generation and, women who are a lot older than me, I don’t understand their experiences because I think I’ve been lucky in how I’ve grown up as a woman in our society and I actually think that it’s time for women to step into this [philanthropic] arena and to step into many arenas and not be scared to make social change. And I think it’s women that are going to do it.\textsuperscript{720}

\textsuperscript{719} Interview with Jill Reichstein (Barbara Lemon), 21 November 2007.
\textsuperscript{720} Interview with Trisha Broadbridge (Barbara Lemon), 23 November 2007.
Conclusion

'Stories of individuals... give flesh and blood to an abstraction', writes Patricia O'Toole in her history of money and morals in America, 'and few stories reveal character as fully as stories of money of how one gets it and what one does with it'.

This thesis set out to piece together the stories of Australian women philanthropists, but it has had the equally important aim of finding meaning within them. The thesis argues that, in a colonial society where wealth generation and its disposal was essentially the province of men, a small but significant number of women who were wives and daughters of men of substance, found themselves in a position to deploy resources for their own chosen philanthropic ends. They did so in a context of colonial women's activism through women's associations, and derived motivation from their religious faith. In the first half of the twentieth century, possibilities for women's active involvement in philanthropy expanded. Women in Australia gained political citizenship for federal elections in 1902, and by 1908, had been awarded political rights in each state. The 'new woman citizen' was able to assume a stronger profile in the workforce, in the professions and in business; social change that was mirrored in the activism of women philanthropists.

Rapid economic growth after World War Two, and a developing national consciousness of the importance of philanthropic endeavours saw the backgrounds of women philanthropists diversify, just as a new women's movement arose to challenge and reshape women's public roles. By 2005, women sustained an outstanding presence, not only as individual philanthropists, but in the highest levels of decision-making in an arena increasingly referred to as the 'third sector' of the economy. They have assumed a central role in the growing number of Australian philanthropic foundations and in the shaping of policies on funding for social change. There are clear signs, moreover, that the influence of women in philanthropy, as in other spheres of public activity including mainstream politics, will continue to amplify.

Behind this abstraction, which tells a tale of progression, is that old adage, worn thin by over-use: the more things change, the more they stay the same. In 1885, Janet Lady Clarke was held up by Table Talk as a charitable role model for her wealthy sisters, and readers were urged to demonstrate the same philanthropic spirit by joining the

crusade of the District Nursing Society. In 2008, Australian women’s magazine *Madison* praised the charitable work of actor Nicole Kidman as Goodwill Ambassador for UNIFEM, the United Nations agency for women. The article – ‘Sweet Charity: Philanthropic Topics to Get You Thinking and Doing’ – encouraged readers to give time and money to the Smith Family, the Salvation Army, the Wesley Mission and a number of other charitable organisations deemed worthy of support.\(^{722}\) In 1933, the *Australian Women’s Weekly* was satirising the ever-present fundraising bazaar, dance, tea party, or open garden. Today, a group of well-connected young people still organise the popular Daffodil Ball in Victoria to raise money for the Cancer Council each year, and the vast gardens of Cruden Farm, home of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, are opened regularly to thousands of visitors for a small fee, with proceeds going to charity. Australian women continue to give in the time-honoured tradition of their forebears.

The great change amidst this continuity is in the relationship between women and money. It is in the expansion of tradition; in the machinery of philanthropy; in the far greater number of independently wealthy women in Australia; and in the sense of ownership they attach to their wealth. Dame Margaret Guilfoyle has noted that women have less time for voluntary work today than they did in the 1970s, when she was Minister for Social Security, but are inclined to give generous financial support instead. Philanthropy Australia’s Gina Anderson claims that the generation of Australian women in their 40s and 50s who have made money in their own right are willing to use it to ‘give back’ to society.\(^{723}\) Most wealthy women philanthropists are still working from an inheritance or are reliant upon a wealthy husband, but the number of self-made women amassing great fortunes – businesswoman Sarina Russo, or photographer Anne Geddes, for example – is rising. In some instances, the level of wealth is less relevant than the way in which it is distributed. Community foundations have enabled women with small amounts of money to set up philanthropic funds with relatively little capital. In 2003, a group of young women in Victoria established the Anna Wearne Trust in memory of their mutual friend, who died in a car accident aged 23, with several hundred dollars gathered by taking up a collection at her funeral. The trust seeks to help disadvantaged youth. As the backgrounds, ages, concerns and political persuasions of Australian women philanthropists diversify, so too do the causes they choose to support. Women


continue to help other women, as Eliza Darling aimed to do when she founded the Female School of Industry in the 1820s, but in far more adventurous ways, supporting the Reichstein program for truckies’ wives; Maud Clark’s Somebody’s Daughter theatre group for women in prison; the Women’s Circus; women refugees; a Young Mothers’ hospital clinic; a sole parent project; and even a campaign for women who kill in self-defence. The new Women Donors Network, established in 2007, promises to take up the work of the Women in Philanthropy group, and promote funding by women for women into the future.

Underlying this thesis has been an implicit question around women as an entity and what, if anything, separates them as givers from their male counterparts. In 1759, Adam Smith wrote in his book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*:

> Humanity is the virtue of a woman, generosity of a man... That women rarely make considerable donations, is an observation of the civil law. Humanity consists merely in the exquisite fellow-feeling which the spectator entertains with the sentiments of the persons principally concerned, so as to grieve for their sufferings, to resent their injuries, and to rejoice at their good fortune... But it is otherwise with generosity. We never are generous except when in some respect we prefer some other person to ourselves, and sacrifice some great and important interest of our own to an equal interest of a friend or of a superior.  

The implication here is that women are intuitive and empathetic, where men are rational and noble. Smith’s observations on humanity and generosity will appear antiquated to a modern mind that baulks at blatant separatism – ‘humanity is the virtue of a woman, generosity of a man’ – but the notion of man and woman as two very distinct entities has long been upheld. When Janet Lady Clarke wrote to her female acquaintances in 1903 with an invitation to form an Australian Women’s League, she noted that ‘women’s side in life is quite as strenuous as that of a man’, but she did not mean that the two sides should intersect. She had ‘not sought or even desired’ the vote. Thus the *Argus* could reassure readers that her Women’s League had ‘come into existence with the fullest recognition that politics is not woman’s proper sphere’. Decades later, in 1970, Una Porter was telling the YWCA girls that men and women ‘are both part of God’s creation, and have our own roles defined by our nature and our

725 ‘Women in Politics: Speech by the Prime Minister’, *The Argus*, 12 April 1905.
physiology’. In today’s philanthropic community, women sit alongside male trustees and share in decision-making but many women philanthropists still concede that there are differences between them and their male colleagues. It was Elizabeth Cham’s observation that male philanthropists, more than female, seek to turn ‘successful lives into significant ones’. Mary Crooks and others confirmed the preference of women for working in groups. Jill Reichstein noted that the philanthropists who work with her in funding projects for social change are overwhelmingly female. Even Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, despite her (rightful) insistence on her individuality as a philanthropist, found herself remarking that ‘women [philanthropists] are really more understanding... I think generally speaking, women are better informed’.

By contrast, a number of participants in this project had an adverse reaction to the notion of separating male from female philanthropists. One of the interviewees shrugged her shoulders: ‘That’s a bit silly’, she said. After all, why should the women be thought different or more worthy of attention than the men? A young businesswoman and philanthropist confessed that she was alienated by the feminism of some of her older colleagues and had never felt disadvantaged, or even differentiated, by her gender. This is cause for reflection. By focusing on women philanthropists, and not men, is this study simply feeding into simplistic notions of masculine and feminine roles? Is the distinction relevant? I have had to conclude that it is. Referring to older women, Trisha Broadbridge acknowledged that ‘I don’t understand their experiences because I think I’ve been lucky in how I’ve grown up as a woman in our society’, but conceded that ‘within the philanthropic sector women are very different than men’; also that ‘women have never really been in the financial position to do [philanthropic giving], ...there might be a bit of fear around it as well, and it is very dominated by wealthy men’. It is surely a triumph for feminism that some women today feel unimpeded by their gender, but this sense of independence is only available to women of independent means. In the twenty-first century, a woman can (and often does) give away money in exactly the same way as does her male colleague, but there are many without the means to donate who still carry out philanthropic work by giving service and time. Certainly throughout the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth, Australian women were constrained by social roles and few had access to, or control over, large sums of money. They had to do philanthropy differently.

The influence of the women’s movement goes some way to explaining the shifts in Australian women’s philanthropy over time. Certainly it had a vital role in helping
women to access employment and to earn their own money. In some instances, the movement, and more specifically the women’s organisations underpinning it, helped to raise the public profile and buttress the confidence of women philanthropists – Ivy Brookes is a case in point. In earlier years, Mary Fairfax proudly supported tertiary education for women; Lucy Gullett established a women’s hospital so that female medical graduates could be employed; Ola Cohn bequeathed her worldly goods for the benefit of women painters and sculptors. Several of the women profiled in the last chapters of this thesis were directly involved in the second wave feminism of the 1970s and freely acknowledge its influence: Fleur Spitzer chose to keep her money separate from the marital bank account, and to fund research into women and ageing; Jill Reichstein overturned the Reichstein Foundation board, appointing all women; members of the Victorian Women’s Trust supported each other to push for an all-female board. Other women in this study displayed a far more complex interaction with the women’s movement. Janet Lady Clarke did not campaign for female suffrage, but her Australian Women’s National League became a highly powerful political engine, peaking at a membership of possibly 50,000 women in the 1920s. By 1944, Menzies was doing his best to gain its allegiance for his new Liberal Party. Una Porter dismissed the ‘woman struggle’ as a waste of energy, but through the YWCA she trained dozens of women for leadership roles, and the scholarship she endowed still funds college residency at the University of Melbourne for female students from rural Victoria. As late as the 1990s, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, mentor to many young women philanthropists and supporter of several women’s causes, was telling reporters that ‘I'm not a feminist, but it’s nice to show that women can be useful’.726

Those women who did have an explicit connection with the women’s movement, or who pushed for political change of any sort, did so more often as members of ‘interest or industrial groups’,727 as Swain has found, than as members of philanthropic organisations, or even as recognised individual philanthropists, though wealth generally spelt influence. Ivy Brookes made a stand for women in her various roles with the National Council of Women, the Women Justices’ Association of Victoria, and the Housewives’ Association. For better or worse, Emily Dobson successfully campaigned for the 1907 Infant Life Protection Act as a member of the Society for the

726 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch quoted in Monks, Elisabeth Murdoch: Two Lives (Sydney: Macmillan, 1994), 294.
Protection of Children. Lady Windyey drafted legislation to establish the State Children's Relief Board, and subsequently exercised her influence as a member of that board, as well as being a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and president of the Womanhood Suffrage League. Una Porter lobbied against the introduction of a tax on contraceptives in her role as world president of the Young Women's Christian Association. Dame Elisabeth Murdoch wielded her influence over Premier Bolte as the president of the Royal Children's Hospital.

The link, then, between the women's movement and women's philanthropy in Australia is marked, but inconsistent. The movement affected every single woman in this study, if only by osmosis in some cases, but it did not directly affect the philanthropy of every single woman in this study. Some of the developments must be explained by broader social trends: the effects of two world wars, for example; the social movements of the 1970s; or the business boom of the 1980s and 1990s. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, philanthropy in Australia was as much about fulfilling a social role as it was about funding a worthy cause, and it operated within a very tightly knit circle. The list of connections defies belief: Janet Lady Clarke's granddaughter Valerie was the first wife of Sir Robert Southey, who later married Sidney Myer's daughter, Marigold; Janet Lady Clarke's grandson Tony married Jessie Brookes, daughter of Ivy; Ivy Brookes was a guest of honour at an 'At Home' hosted by Mrs Fanny Cato, mother of Una Porter, in 1931; Phyllis Power, daughter of Rupert Clarke, was a lifelong friend of Mabel Brookes; when Mabel was presented in court before King Edward and Queen Alexandra in 1907, Lady Rupert Clarke (née Amy Cumming) was there too; Mabel Brookes' mother had served on the Committee of the Children's Hospital in the 1890s when it was housed in a villa belonging to Dr. Snowball, one of Ola Cohn's antecedents; Ola Cohn was a member of the Lyceum Club at the same time as Una Porter; members of the Clarke family attended a dance on board the RMS Ormonde on 22 December 1923, two days before it sailed for London with Helen Macpherson Schutt among its passengers; as a young man, Keith Murdoch lived in an apartment at Cliveden; Hugh McKay, father of Dame Hilda Stevenson, spent his later years living at Rupertswood; Elisabeth Murdoch was a school friend of Phil Windyey of the Sydney Windyey family; Elisabeth met Keith Murdoch at the home of the Austin family, built by Elizabeth Austin's nephew Albert; on their first day out together, Keith took Elisabeth to a party at the home of Norman and Mabel Brookes; the Murdochs were close friends of Mr and Mrs Henry Gullett, cousins of Lucy; Keith shared a strong
friendship with the Baillieu family, and bought *Heathfield*, the old Baillieu family home. Fleur Spitzer remembers:

> We had a neighbour in our previous house, [they] were an old establishment family, and Norma was on the Women’s Hospital board... and what she tried to do is if she thought you were acceptable, was bring you onto that board just as a fundraising force. Now that’s where it seems to me, rather than people being philanthropists, that’s where this doing good works came in.728

Philanthropy has long been a part of keeping up appearances, but today it is big business, too. The emphasis is on generating goodwill, demonstrating initiative, taking funding risks, collaborating. Dame Elisabeth Murdoch still receives hundreds of pleading letters just as the Baroness Burdett-Coutts did in nineteenth-century England, but most women who control large amounts of philanthropic money do so from within the almost corporate structure of the formal foundation, and stipulate what they will fund. There is an element of protection here, and of privacy. It is true that Elizabeth Austin had to be convinced to release her name in connection with her gift to the Austin Hospital in 1880, but on the whole, the nineteenth-century philanthropist was a public figure. Newspapers regularly published lists of subscribers to charitable organisations. By the twentieth century this was less the case. Una Porter kept her philanthropy very quiet not even her friend and colleague, Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, had any idea of the extent of it. Janet Biddlecombe always donated anonymously. Vera Ramaciotti, after establishing a $6 million foundation, only wanted the press to leave her alone.

Springing from these observations about the machinations of philanthropy is a question about its value. Whose philanthropic method is, to use a corporate term, ‘best practice’? This thesis has traced the development of women’s philanthropy in Australia by dividing it into three sections: the colonial period, in which women’s philanthropy centred on voluntary work and was occasionally supplemented by large monetary gifts from women of means; the first half of the twentieth century, taking into account the effects of war, of women’s capacity to earn and of women’s political involvement; and the later twentieth century, in which women gained increasing control over money and in some cases, influenced by social movements, sought to root out systemic problems and implement social change – half of all non-profit organisations in existence at the

728 Interview with Fleur Spitzer (Barbara Lemon), 21 March 2006
turn of the twenty-first century were established after 1970. Beneath this rather neat lineage is the open acknowledgement that many nineteenth-century philanthropic ideas still hold currency for women today, but the overall trend is one of progression. Where caution must be exercised is in the assumption that progress always means improvement, or implies superiority. We need qualitative evidence to prove the value and ongoing influence of projects in social change philanthropy. With some exceptions, foundations are only just beginning to embrace the concept of transparency and accountability, and are sometimes reluctant to publicise failed philanthropic endeavours. How can we be sure that this new model of philanthropy is working? How do we measure social change? By the same token, one should not dismiss those nineteenth-century Lady Bountifuls, with their ‘Bibles, tracts, lozenges, soup and good advice’, as interfering, self-interested social engineers of a far distant era. In her plenary address to the 2005 Philanthropy Australia conference, Professor Dorothy Scott pointed out that nineteenth-century philanthropy had served to create ‘institutions of hope’, and that ‘much of this [work] was done by women with exceptionally good minds, warm hearts and honest souls who overcame the social restrictions placed on them’. Of course, compared to contemporary projects that target international environmental crises or systemic problems around racial conflict and discrimination, the philanthropic endeavours of Australian women before the 1970s look rather meek. It must be remembered that these women were operating in a very small circle of reference, with an eye to very local concerns. A number of them were actually quite courageous: Lucy Gullett standing before her hospital board in 1940, insisting that plans go ahead despite the war; Emily Dobson running Sanitary Association candidates in Hobart’s municipal election of 1892; Una Porter taking on medical studies in 1930, despite blatant prejudice from male students and lecturers; Mary Raine supporting herself and her sister, managing an outback pub on her own, and throwing herself into debt time and again to turn a profit; Anne Bon facing local contempt in her fight for the protection of the Aboriginal people near her home.

Australian women today are the beneficiaries of a strong philanthropic heritage, even if few are aware of it. The remarkable wealth generation of the industrialising United States underwrote philanthropic women's very considerable donations, deployed with a moral authority that was fostered by evangelical Protestantism. Likewise, in Britain, evangelical work was supplemented by funding from elite wealthy women who could access familial fortunes. Australian women's philanthropy drew on both traditions but it was distinctive because, despite the country's comparatively modest prosperity, the energetic and pragmatic association of women around philanthropic causes, often with a religious imperative, emboldened women of independent means to become exceptional givers. Smith was no doubt right to observe in 1759 that 'women rarely make considerable donations'. Surely, though, as women have gained confidence around and control over philanthropic funds, the distinction between his concepts of generosity and humanity as male and female traits has blurred. The future of Australian women's philanthropy looks promising if it can continue to exemplify the energy and goodwill of past women:

Not of ourselves are we free,
Not of ourselves are we strong;
The fruit is never the tree,
Nor the singer the song.
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Name of participant: **FLEUR SPITZER**

Name of investigator(s): Barbara Lemon, Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which - including details of interviews and/or questionnaires - have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorise the researcher to use the interview/questionnaire material referred to under (1) above, completed by me.

3. I acknowledge that:

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   (b) The project is for the purpose of research

   (c) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

4. I consent to interviews being audio-taped (for those providing an interview) and acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to me for verification, and any section of the final thesis pertaining to me will be sent to me for approval prior to publication.

5. I am aware that the small number of participants in this study may have implications for anonymity and that I may request a pseudonym or the withholding of my name in publication.

   Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name

Signature: **Fleur Spitzer**

Date: **17/10/05**

(Participant)
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Signature (Participant) Date 16.12.06
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Signature

Date Nov. 25, 2005

(Participant)
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   Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name

Signature

Date 6.12.05

(Participant)
Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: AUSTRALIAN WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS, 1880-2000

Name of participant:

Name of investigator(s): Barbara Lemon, Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which - including details of interviews and/or questionnaires - have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorise the researcher to use the interview/questionnaire material referred to under (1) above, completed by me.

3. I acknowledge that:

   (a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;

   (b) The project is for the purpose of research

   (c) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

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   Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name.

Signature [Signature]

(Participant) Date 3.8.2005
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY:

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: AUSTRALIAN WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS, 1880-2000

Name of participant:

Name of investigator(s): Barbara Lemon, Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain

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   Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name

Signature [Signature] Date 27/8/2006
(Participant)
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY:

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: AUSTRALIAN WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS, 1880-2000

Name of participant: BARBARA BLACKMAN

Name of investigator(s): Barbara Lemon, Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which - including details of interviews and/or questionnaires - have been explained to me. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

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   (a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;
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5. I am aware that the small number of participants in this study may have implications for anonymity and that I may request a pseudonym or the withholding of my name in publication.

Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name

Signature: [Signature] Date: 30.1.2007

(Participant)
Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: AUSTRALIAN WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS, 1880-2000

Name of participant: 

Name of investigator(s): Barbara Lemon, Patricia Grimshaw, Shurlee Swain

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Please tick here to request a pseudonym/withholding of your name

Signature ____________________________ Date 27/11/06

(Participant)
Author/s:
Lemon, Barbara

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