

Australian charities join forces in bequest initiative

Ad campaign aims to change Australians' attitudes to giving

More than 100 of Australia's leading charities have joined forces in a new campaign, urging Australians to leave a charitable bequest in their wills.

The 'Include a charity, help the work live on' campaign, which launched today (21/3) with a TV advertisement, aims to change people's behaviour and educate the public into leaving a gift in their will. The campaign is supported by a consortium of Australia's most loved charities.

Research shows that while 70% of the Australian population support charities, only 7.5% of Australians over 60 leave a charitable gift in their will. If this figure increased to 14%, it would create an additional \$440 million for charities in Australia every year.

Include a Charity Founding Director Marcus Blease said, "Charities play an important role in filling the gaps in services where government or society can't. Without this income, the vital support services and research projects that charities deliver simply would not happen."

Most charities rely on bequests or gifts in wills as a vital source of income and without money from bequests, many charities would not exist. Fortunately the research is encouraging, with 29% of people surveyed saying that they would be happy to leave a gift in their will once family and friends had been provided for.

"Leaving a percentage of your estate, a sum of money or other assets in your will can make a huge difference to the lives of so many Australians, including our own children, families and friends." Mr Blease said.

The income that charities receive from the public is under increasing pressure due to rises in the cost of living and donations to other important causes such as natural disaster appeals. The "Include a Charity" campaign is calling on the generosity of everyday Australians to leave a gift in their will, however small.

Australians can get involved by visiting the Include a Charity website (www.includeacharity.com.au) which contains practical tips about preparing a will; how to leave a gift in your will, and finding a suitable charity to donate to.

The new campaign also challenges the misconception that only wealthy people leave bequests.

Include a Charity Director Jo-Anne Reeves said, "Gifts left to charities in wills are made from people in all walks of life, not just the wealthy. Even a modest gift can be life changing for someone in need. And when you choose to leave a gift in your will, it benefits the whole community."

The TV advertising campaign runs through March. For the full list of charities involved see page two.

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Member charities include:

ActionAid
 Alzheimer's Australia NSW
 Amnesty International Australia
 Anglicare Canberra & Goulburn
 Animals Australia
 Arthritis Australia
 Australian Children's Music Foundation
 Australian Diabetes Council
 Australian Heart Foundation
 Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT)
 Autism Victoria
 Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute
 Bapcare
 Baptist Community Services
 Benetas
 Benevolent Society
 Bowel Cancer Australia
 Breast Cancer Institute of Australia
 Brotherhood of St. Laurence
 Burnet Institute
 Bush Heritage Australia
 Cancer Council Australia
 CARA
 CARE Australia
 CBM Australia
 Centenary Institute
 Cerebral Palsy Alliance
 Charitable Works Fund of the Catholic
 Archdiocese of Sydney
 ChildFund Australia
 Children's Cancer Institute of Australia
 Children's Hospital Westmead
 Children's Medical Research Institute
 Cure Cancer Australia
 Cystic Fibrosis Australia
 Diabetes Australia – QLD
 Diabetes Australia - VIC
 Disability, Sport and Recreation
 Down Syndrome NSW
 Down Syndrome Society of SA
 Earthwatch Institute Australia
 Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria
 Fred Hollows Foundation
 Garvan Research Foundation
 Glaucoma Australia
 Greenpeace Australia
 Guide Dogs NSW/ACT
 Guide Dogs SA
 Guide Dogs VIC
 Heart Research Centre
 House With No Steps
 Independence Australia
 Interplast Australia & New Zealand
 Leukaemia Foundation QLD
 Lort Smith Animal Hospital
 Lung Institute of Western Australia
 Mater
 Melbourne City Mission
 Mental Health Research Institute
 Mission Australia
 Motor Neurone Disease Australia
 MS Australia
 Murdoch Children's Research Institute
 National Breast Cancer Foundation
 Nature Foundation SA
 Neuroscience Research Australias
 Odyssey House Victoria
 Opportunity International Australia
 OzChild
 Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation
 Priests' Retirement Foundation
 Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia
 Red Cross
 Rotary Foundation
 Royal Children's Hospital Foundation
 Royal District Nursing Service
 Royal Flying Doctor Service
 Royal Institute for Deaf & Blind Children
 RSL Care
 RSPCA
 Sacred Heart Mission
 Salvation Army
 SANE Australia
 Save the Children
 SIDS and Kids
 Smith Family
 Southern Cross Care (Vic)
 St. Mary's Cathedral
 St. Vincent's Brisbane
 St. Vincent's Hospital Foundation
 Starlight Children's Charity
 Stroke Foundation
 Surf Life Saving Foundation
 Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation
 Taronga Conservation Society Australia
 The Pyjama Foundation
 The Royal Society for the Blind
 The Shepherd Centre
 University of Technology Sydney
 Variety
 VicRelief Foodbank
 Villa Maria
 Vision Australia
 Westpac Helicopter Rescue
 World Society for the Protection of Animals
 Yooralla
 Young Care