

the fact-finding trip James visited giving circle chapters such as those linked to SVP and Impact 100 and a donor circle that raised funds for a specific non-profit. He was also inspired by Retired Academics, a small giving circle of 12 women in Portland who pooled their US\$500 donations to provide one annual scholarship to help one local woman 'rise out of poverty through education'. It was a formative experience for James, who felt that any of the models he witnessed could be effectively introduced to Australia. He felt that the simple proposition of Impact 100 — 100 people donating \$1,000 each — was particularly powerful, and the donation, if could be made with tax deductibility, 'was at a level that was accessible and would catch people's attention.'

Returning to Australia, James shared his experiences and pitched the concept of Impact 100 to Sophie Chamberlain and Simon Bedbrook, who went on to found Impact 100 Western Australia (WA) in late 2011. Sophie's family charitable trust and Simon's work as an investment manager gave them a good feel for the potential benefits of people coming together in a giving circle to support organisations in their local community. By end of 2013, Impact 100 WA had around 106 donors, with most of them donating AU\$1,000 (US\$900) annually and 10 percent giving more. The circle is embarking on its third grant cycle in 2014. The chapter sets a guiding theme — disadvantaged youth and children — and seeks application from non-profits in Western Australia with projects in a number of areas:

- Education & opportunity
- Health & well-being
- Arts & culture
- Strengthening families

In 2013 the circle reviewed 27 applications that met their basic programme and organisational criteria; eight were shortlisted out of which four finalists made their presentations at a members' evening. Non-profits must have three years' operational experience and charity taxation status. The group selected adventures, a local charity that runs programmes in

Impact 100 Western Australia

Around the dinner table one evening, James Boyd and guests chatted about the changing face of philanthropy in Australia. James' wife wondered if a small group of committed individuals could achieve more in philanthropy by working together. James, a professional fundraiser in Australian arts and culture, was intrigued with the idea and followed up with Internet research. James recalls that he found 'an enormous depth of giving circles in the U.S. and I quickly realised this was something that wasn't happening in Australia; it wasn't even being talked about.' He was determined to change that, and in 2011, through a scholarship took a research visit to the U.S. West Coast, meeting giving circles from San Francisco to Seattle.

During his interviews with 15 founders of giving circles, James was struck by the impression that 'every single group was different, each had a unique make-up.' During

leadership and personal development for young people, whom they would give a grant of AUS\$100,000 (US\$88,000) to. The circle's first grant, in 2012, was given to Manna Inc., whose Winter School Uniform Program leads to improvement in school attendance and student behaviour. Manna's CEO, Lynnette Synder, was struck by the grant application process, which she found quite distinctive compared to other grantmakers or individual donors: 'Impact 100 members visited us and the other shortlisted candidates; they came to some of our meetings and encouraged us in the bid. We and the three other finalists were assigned one member as a coach to help with our pitch to the whole group.' After Manna was successful in winning the 2012 grant, members of Impact 100 have volunteered in practical ways, like helping put together the school uniform packs, or working in the charity's kitchens that provide 2,000 meals a week to children from low income families. Lynnette says that Impact 100's members have remained helpful and involved, 'staying in touch, offering help, and connecting us with potential donors.'

Impact 100 believes the "1000 x 100" formula works well for both the circle and the non-profits that are awarded the primary grant. AUS\$1,000 (US\$900) is an affordable entry fee for individuals and families that are attracted to the circle, and the costs of administrating 100 donors are reasonable (more so than 1,000 donors each giving \$100). Impact 100 also believes that non-profits receive a relatively large grant with little administrative burden. The giving circle is committed to all of a member's donation going directly to the selected non-profit, with grant administration costs being met by committee members or through special donations (as happens with Impact 100 chapters in the U.S.) The administrative costs are estimated at around 3 percent, a figure that is kept low by volunteer labour and in kind gifts.

Impact 100 WA launched without any formal licence from the U.S. chapters — with what James calls 'extraordinary international goodwill.' Aware that other giving circle networks operate a more formalised relationship, James feels that Impact 100 is about 'cause-driven donors who are interested in community building' and that at this stage of expansion, a franchise formula does not seem necessary. From its start up,

Impact 100 WA worked in partnership with the Australian Communities Foundation, a Melbourne-based non-profit philanthropy intermediary that provided the giving circle members with regulatory tax deductibility and associated back office support²². James and the founders saw such an arrangement as perfect for a giving circle that relies on voluntary labour, rather than executive staff, while making the most of tax relief.

Impact 100 WA has already encouraged the formation of two additional chapters — in Fremantle and Melbourne. Impact 100 Melbourne was initiated in 2012 and made its first round of grants in 2013 under the theme 'Making it to Melbourne: Supporting Melbourne's Migrants'. The pipeline started with 17 applications, leading to seven shortlisted candidates and four finalists. The River Nile Learning Centre, which educates young African refugees in Melbourne, was awarded the primary grant of AU\$100,000 (US\$88,000) with the three other finalists receiving small cash grants, a fundraising resources package and a short film produced pro bono about their work. Like Impact 100 WA, the Melbourne chapter partners with the Australian Communities Foundation for tax deductibility administration, under a 2.5 percent fee arrangement. The giving circle limits its grantmaking to the Melbourne areas, although it has members from New South Wales and Western Australia. It offers opportunities for members to engage beyond cheque writing by serving on the group's steering committee or participating in grant application evaluations, but such engagement is not mandatory. Impact 100 Melbourne uses Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn social media as well as e-newsletters to keep members engaged and informed.

A third chapter, in Fremantle (within the same state as Impact 100 WA), was launched in May 2013 as a fund with the Fremantle Foundation, a community foundation with a very localised mandate. The circle already completed its first funding round in 2013 distributing a total of AU\$115,000 (US\$100,000) to "dismantle", a community bicycle workshop, and three runners-up. Notably, individuals closely associated with the community foundation initiated Impact 100 Fremantle, after recognising the success

²² The Australian Communities Foundation originated in 1997 as the Melbourne Community Foundation, but rebranded in 2011 with a wider geographical mandate (see page 78, John, Tan & Ito, 2013).

of Impact 100 WA. Fremantle Foundation's CEO Dylan Smith explains that launching a giving circle within the foundation 'would be a great way to make significant contributions to the community, increase public awareness of local issues and organisations, and inspire philanthropic giving in Fremantle through an exciting new format.' The community foundation would benefit from building relationships with 100 or so donors and from 'an enhanced profile and credibility.' The Fremantle chapter gained informal support, through sharing of resources, from Impact 100 WA, whom they share some donors with. In the absence of formal licensing arrangements with Impact 100 in the U.S., the Fremantle initiative 'gave assurances to Cincinnati they would stick to core elements of the Impact 100 model,' says Dylan.

James Boyd estimates that up to 70 percent of Impact 100 members in Australia are women (the membership in the U.S. is entirely female). The membership is comprised of 'successful professionals with a certain level of disposable income, typically aged between 30 to 45,' he says, 'with some 10 percent of Impact 100 members also operating a personal family trust.' James believes that such members, while already engaged in formal philanthropy, 'are attracted to the learning opportunities that a giving circle offers'. This observation fits well with the donor education objective of giving circles in general. James says he would not be disappointed if individuals remain members of Impact 100 for only 'a year or two, if it helps them find the focus for their philanthropic interests' beyond the giving circle. It's still early days for Impact 100 in Australia, adapting a U.S. core model to local philanthropy culture and expanding to other cities. James is clear that in the coming years the Impact 100 chapters 'will need to further develop member engagement with the charities that apply, enrich the members' experience of giving together, expand our donor base and measure the impact of what we are achieving.'