



# Changemakers Australia

# NEWS

Spring 2009 Edition



**You are invited to the  
Changemakers Australia  
AGM on Monday 16<sup>th</sup>  
November at 5:15pm**

We are very pleased to announce that Associate Professor Cheryl Kernot (Director of Social Enterprise, Centre for Social Impact) has agreed to address the audience on: "The Quiet Revolution in the Social Economy: social enterprise, social impact, social innovation."

Please arrive at 5:15pm to hear Ms Kernot's address from 5:30pm.

The address will be preceded by the formal AGM activities from 4:30pm.

Where: Upstairs foyer of 201 Spring Street,  
Melbourne

When: 5:15pm, Monday 16th November 2009

Please RSVP to [info@changemakers.org.au](mailto:info@changemakers.org.au) by 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009

## Report from the Charity Law Reform Committee

The Charity Law Reform Committee has pressed on with our work researching the needs for Charity Law reform in Australia. We have voiced our stance in submissions to both Australia's Future Tax System Review (The Henry Review) and the Productivity Commission's Study on the Contribution of the Not for Profit Sector. Our submission to the Henry Review has been noted by Probono Australia who have commented that 'Many organisations have also used their submissions to question the effectiveness of previous Government studies into the sector, citing a lack of new legislation despite extensive contributions from the sector to previous Government reviews'.

In further refining our position, we have met with a number of groups who are also keen to see the modernisation of current charity law to enable them to pursue their charitable goals. We will continue working with these groups, consulting with other organisations, and researching international examples as we determine what we believe to be the best course of action for developing a unified call for law reform and the strategies to bring this about.



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

Please let me know if you would prefer to receive our newsletter via email only:

[info@changemakers.org.au](mailto:info@changemakers.org.au)

**Nina Collins**

*We are here to strengthen the hand of  
those that do.*

**Julia Unwin**

CEO, Joseph Rowntree Foundation



## A Roundtable with Julia Unwin

Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and former Charity Commissioner addressed a roundtable co-hosted by VCOS and CMA in August. She spoke on the role and value of the UK Charity Commission and invited discussion on the proposed changes in

Australian charity law and how the UK experience may inform this process.

Julia said that far from shy away for advocacy, 'JRT exists to influence and make change' and that Joseph Rowntree himself established the foundation to 'change the face of England'. The purpose of the JRF is 'to search, demonstrate and influence, providing evidence, solutions and ideas to help overcome the causes of poverty, disadvantage and social evil'. As Julia put it, 'we're in the game of influence'. JRT is the biggest independent funder of social policy research, and this research is published and made available to the public. 'If you know something', she said, 'you have a legal basis to tell it. To self-censor is walking away from your mission'. Julia contested that too much focus is on whether you can legitimately engage in advocacy without jeopardising your charitable mission, and she questioned, 'can you adhere to your mission without advocacy?'

***'The best use of philanthropic funds can be the establishment of a network/space to coalesce around an issue; creating space for public engagement, giving MPs the mandate for change.'***

Julia spoke of the UK's Charity Commission and commented that pleasingly its mandate is in law, not government. The independence of the charity sector is fundamental, and the Charity Commission must not be influenced by government, she contended. The ability to have neutrality is essential and the Charity Commission is influenced by neither government *nor* the sector. The Charity Commission now meets in public, reports to parliament (not government), and Commissioners are appointed by the Queen for five year terms.

"Advocacy is not a choice or an add-on; it's part of running services. The people you are engaging are the best ambassadors for change. If you give money you have a responsibility to do something with the lessons [you learn from supporting a project]. We are here to strengthen the hand of those that do."

## Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities Impacts of Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement in North Carolina

by Lisa Ranghelli and Julia Craig  
Published: May 2009

This report, published by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy in Washington DC, looks at 2003-2007 data from 13 North Carolina nonprofits, which shows high return on investments and non-monetary gains on a range of issues including poverty, worker rights, education, health care, housing, environment and civil rights.

- For every dollar invested in their advocacy and organizing work (\$20.4 million total), the groups garnered \$89 in benefits for North Carolina communities.
- Foundations provided critical support to these successes, contributing \$17.5 million or 86 percent of all funding for advocacy and organizing among the nonprofit sample.

These numbers and equally important non-quantifiable impacts translated into concrete improvements in people's lives. For example, homeowners avoided losing their homes to foreclosure. Senior citizens gained access to affordable medications. Low-wage workers earned more income and the unemployed received temporary compensation until they could find new jobs. Students benefited from supplemental education services and renovated schools. Youth had training and summer job opportunities. Farm workers and other residents had decreased exposure to toxic chemicals and pollutants.

Rural communities made progress in building sustainable local economies. Same-sex partners secured the right to visit their companions in the hospital. Communities became more socially cohesive, building bridges across race, class and other divides.

For the full article, please see [www.ncrp.org/publications](http://www.ncrp.org/publications)



## Changing Disadvantaged Women's Lives for the Better - one woman at a time.

Looking back on a casual chat Marion Webster and I had walking down a street in chilly New York in late 2004, never in our wildest dreams would we have thought this would lead to a national organisation dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged women.

It's amazing what a small group of women with vision, energy and determination can achieve. In July 2005 Fitted for Work opened its doors in Melbourne and began offering top-to-toe outfits, presentation and interview skills, and ongoing support, to long term unemployed and disadvantaged women.

Four years later this volunteer-driven service has worked with more than 2500 women, has an actively engaged volunteer base of 140 women and a donor and support base of 1600. It has truly become a community of women supporting other women and a wonderful example of what can be achieved when a vision is shared, and women work together.

From a group of friends running a fledgling service, Fitted for Work Ltd has burgeoned to become recognised as a valued niche service available to disadvantaged women in Melbourne, on the Mornington Peninsula and now nationally.

This year, as I watch more and more women losing the hard-won jobs and financial security they've spent so many years struggling for, I remember that I've been there too.

My working life began as a secondary school teacher – a career path I chose partly because it paid my way through university but also because I felt I could make a difference to young people's future. And for many years I loved the work. After 10 years I felt that I was losing my spark and that it would be good for me to move out before I

became the kind of teacher who just went through the motions. So I started applying for jobs, looking at retraining - doing all those things you are supposed to do.

I did a course in freelance journalism and spent a year getting my pieces sent back. I tried to get into an editing program and was rejected. I applied for all kinds of jobs – public service, community education, project work - and although I often got second interviews, I was completely unsuccessful.

You don't need me to tell you how I was feeling by this time. Friends started offering suggestions as to what I was doing wrong – now that of course made me feel even worse. Was I "too aggressive", didn't I know how to sell myself....

I was having trouble getting myself out from under the doona to face another day. There's nothing like rejection to bring you down.

Who knows what would have happened if a friend hadn't employed me. He had a job and thought I could do it. And so I started on my new career in community education, multiculturalism and ethnic affairs.

Most people are not so fortunate, and especially not Fitted for Work clients who are unlikely to know anyone who can give them a job.

Our clients are not job-shy, they are afraid - of being rejected again, of not coping with work on top of their other responsibilities, of a leap into the unknown. I wish I could have gone to Fitted for Work for support and skills in taking that leap.

For more information and to become involved visit:

[www.fittedforwork.org](http://www.fittedforwork.org)

**Renata Singer, Co-Founder, Fitted For Work**

## True Leader – Jill Reichstein

CmA Management Committee member Jill Reichstein has been featured in the 'True Leaders 2009' feature in the Financial Review's Boss magazine. Jill is attributed for saying 'long-term, meaningful and effective social change takes time and resources... A lot of our work is incremental and takes time...that's why donors have to have faith in the process'. Boss paid tribute to Jill's long-term commitment to social change through her ongoing work as an activist and philanthropist. CmA is very pleased to see Jill recognised in this prestigious publication and to see social change philanthropy properly acknowledged.

## Social Justice Philanthropy on the Rise

In the US social justice philanthropy is seeing a resurgence - a response to the changed political climate or the current economic climate?

After a number of years of declining faith in the efficacy of social justice philanthropy, grantmakers and practitioners alike are showing renewed optimism, according to *Social Justice Grantmaking II*, a benchmarking study released by the Foundation Center that provides an in-depth look at current attitudes and giving patterns of social justice philanthropists.

Researchers cite a changed political environment, the success of community organising in the recent Obama election, and new ideas and energy in the field among a number of factors reinvigorating a commitment to social justice philanthropy.

Among other recommendations, the research points to a move away from funding large, often contentious and unwieldy coalitions to instead support smaller, nimble collaboratives that more effectively advance issues of race, class, background, region, and generation.

Bradford Smith, president of the Foundation Center says social justice is experiencing a resurgence, fueled by philanthropists whose passion won't let them stand by when there is injustice and whose pragmatism demands results.

Signs of this resurgence began to appear even before the recent change in the national political climate.

The report finds that between 2002 and 2006, social justice-related giving rose nearly 31 percent to \$2.3 billion, surpassing the 20 percent increase in foundation giving overall during that time. In 2006, social justice funding accounted for 12 percent of foundation grant dollars, up from 11 percent four years earlier.

It says the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation accounted for over half of the growth in social justice grant dollars during this period, as it ramped up funding for economic and community development — primarily to establish a new “Green Revolution” in Africa in partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation — and for health care access and affordability. Even without Gates, though, social justice giving still rose faster than overall foundation funding during this period.

Social justice giving fared even better in 2007 — reaching \$3 billion, or 13.7 percent of overall grant dollars — and estimates suggest that it held steady in 2008. The outlook for the current year and beyond is less positive, however, not just for social justice grantmaking but for all areas of foundation activity.

Steven Lawrence, senior director of research at the Foundation Center and editor of the new report says social justice philanthropy is not immune to the current economic crisis.

He says while grant dollars will certainly be down, they do not expect that social justice-related grantmaking will be disproportionately affected by the downturn.

Highlights of the report can be download at no charge at [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)

**Source:** Pro Bono Australia, 3rd June 2009

## Join Us

If you are passionate about achieving a more just and equitable society, there are several ways you can join us in determining how social change philanthropy can make a difference:

### Become an affiliate member

There is currently no cost to become an affiliate. You will receive our quarterly bulletin, advance details of events and other planned activities, and you can nominate to participate on relevant sub-committees or working groups. Most importantly, you will be showing your support for the principles CmA stands for.

To become an affiliate please visit our website to download the application form.

### Co-fund a project

There are educational/research projects CmA is involved in at present, and more planned for the future. These will provide ideas and tools to assist in exploring social change philanthropy in action. If you would like more information about financially supporting a project connected to CmA, you can contact any member of the Management Committee.