

International Women's Day – 8 March 2017

Sisters are doing it for themselves: Women in philanthropy

International Women's Day 2017 is the time to think of women philanthropists past and present who have dared to be [bold for change](#).

"Increasing numbers of women are taking a leading role empowering change through philanthropy - contributing their money, expertise and leadership to charities and social enterprises," said Natalie Elliott, Grant Development Manager at Equity Trustees, and Manager of the William Buckland Foundation.

"We know anecdotally they are – because we work every day to assist women to establish themselves in philanthropy – sometimes individually and sometimes in groups or in workplaces," she said.

Ms Elliott pointed to a range of foundations and bequests entrusted to Equity Trustees by women, or for the benefit of empowering change for equality and diversity.

"The Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust was established in 2010 when Phyllis died, aged 99. She was an incredibly astute investor who supported many charitable organisations and causes dear to her heart during her life. Her legacy through the Trust is to continue to do so – including providing a scholarship each year to a grade 5 student at Melbourne Girls Grammar to cover her education until the end of year 12 at the school," said Ms Elliott.

"The Ivy H. Thomas and Arthur A. Thomas Trust provide prize money for the women authors who are selected for the shortlist of the Stella Prize each year.

"The Felton Bequest, famous for supporting the National Gallery of Victoria, is also directed through the legacy to support initiatives that create opportunities to empower women and children – the latest is support of a new social enterprise SheWorks to connect women with sustainable employment opportunities.

"Another social enterprise, *Money for Jam*, is supported by The A. & M. Osborn Charitable Trust and the J. R. Hartley Charitable Trust. This program helps older Australian women at risk of income poverty – the story behind it was that of a pensioner doing paid gardening work enabling her to afford jam on her toast.

"The Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation is committed to encouraging gender equality in the fields of medical and scientific research and awards fellowships to mid career women researchers each year.

"As one of the leading distributors of philanthropic grants in the country, distributing more than \$70 million each year, we see the impact of women who made a decision to leave a legacy that would go on supporting causes they care about once they were not longer around to do it.

"In addition, there is the impact of foundations and trusts that were established with the purpose of supporting gender equality," Ms Elliott said.

She said it was a myth that 'only rich people' can be involved in philanthropy.

"For as little as \$20,000 a fund can be established so that its earnings can go on donating to the causes the founders want it to. It's a structure that enables long term giving. People can join together as a family or a friendship circle or as a community to establish a vehicle for empowering change."

Media Release



Equity Trustees is one of the largest distributors of philanthropic funds in Australia, managing over 500 charitable trusts and foundations.

“On International Women’s Day we encourage everyone to think of the changes that have been created thanks to the foresight of philanthropists – and to consider what could be in the future,” she concluded.

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Equity Trustees was established in 1888 for the purpose of providing independent and impartial Trustee and Executor services to help families throughout Australia protect their wealth. As one of Australia’s largest and oldest listed independent trustees, we offer a diverse range of services to individuals, families and corporate clients including asset management, estate planning, philanthropic services and Responsible Entity (RE) services for external Fund Managers.

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