

The Good Giving Guide by Lyn Amy & Mary Pearce

By Paul Reis

With more than 35,000 registered charities in Australia, the business of giving represents many 'alms to the poor'. For the 87 per cent of Australians who donate to charity, decisions about where to give, how to give and to whom to give, can create a confusion of choice.

Through *The Good Giving Guide – The Where, Why and How of Donating to Charity in Australia*, Lyn Amy and Mary Pearce host an educated tour into the culture of Australian philanthropy.

This book not only outlines the science of giving in an educational format, but also embraces the art of giving, with personal stories and quotes such as the opening quotation by Winston Churchill: 'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.'

Giving is a staggering multibillion dollar industry. Statistics for 2005 (2005 *Giving Australia* report) indicate that 13.4 million Australians donated \$5.7 billion to charities, and another \$2 billion through fundraising events and lotteries. Not only is Australia a generous nation in monetary terms, but we are also generous with our time. From January 2004 to January 2005, 41 per cent of all adult Australians volunteered, giving an estimated 836 million hours. Not-for-profit organisations represent many sectors of the community, including healthcare, welfare, animal welfare, food co-operatives, community support groups, and cause-related groups.

The book also provides a useful insight into running not-for-profit organisations, giving the reader an understanding of the staffing and operational challenges, volunteering dynamics, the CEO mindset and wages comparison with for-profit organisations.

A wealth of personal stories reinforces the admirable attitude of those who work in this sector – the desire and motivation 'to make a difference'. Of particular interest is the authors' analysis of the difference in giving patterns across different Australian generations – older

generations tend to give on the basis of loyalty, for example, whereas younger people are more emotive in their giving. Understanding and harnessing these philanthropic shifts are vital to the health of not-for-profit organisations.

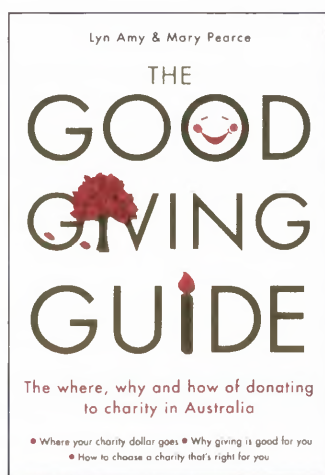
But as Hugh Wirth (RSPCA president) states, 'No charity will survive unless the public perception of it is good' – but whereas for-profit organisations spend vast amounts on marketing their image, charities rarely have adequate marketing dollars at their disposal.

Philanthropy is not just about the organisation, it is about the individual giver. This book outlines individual opportunities for charity support, from donating money in a planned giving capacity (workplace giving, monthly donations or bequests), volunteering from a skills base or a charity need, donating wanted goods, to co-op produce-purchasing.

Not only does the book challenge individuals to participate in philanthropy, it also challenges corporate organisations to take up the responsibility of community governance.

There is information about setting up your own charity and the advantages and disadvantages of initiating prescribed private funds (PPFs), private charitable trusts, trustee companies, ancillary funds and establishing your own foundation.

The second part of the book lists 100 charities, outlining their tax deductibility status, their mission statements and their financial and fundraising operational costs. The purpose of the list is to provide a greater community understanding of the Australian charitable sector and to advise those who wish to support and help those in need. ■



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