

The Don Chipp Foundation

Newsletter, January 2009

The Don Chipp Foundation is an independent research body affiliated with the Australian Democrats. Don Chipp, as the founder of the Australian Democrats, vowed to 'keep the bastards honest'. The Foundation aims to retain that basic premise through the promotion of fiercely independent research and public debate.



Welcome From the Chair

Dear reader/supporter

The year 2008 was one of outstanding achievement for the Don Chipp Foundation in terms of its program.

However one aspect of great concern is the removal of our funding by the Federal Government so that the Foundation must now seek donations in order to continue its work – but more of that later.

During 2008 we organised a number of important events, held a very successful grants review forum and provided funding for five small grants.

Our **Janine Haines Memorial lecture** was highly successful with standing room only at the University of Melbourne to hear distinguished academic and philosopher **Prof. Peter Singer**.

The **forum** to review progress of previous year's grants illustrated to all of us on the Board the important work the Foundation does - each presentation was of the highest quality and the projects worthy of greater funding than we could afford.

The last event of the year was the forum **on Women and Human Rights** attended by over 70 women from universities and from the community sector.

The recommendations from this forum will be sent to members of parliament and to key stakeholders such as the Australian Human Rights Commission.

As I have noted, the future of the Foundation is in doubt if we do not secure funding from outside sources to continue our work.

I would just like to reaffirm the vision that Don Chipp had in forming the Australian Democrats that is now embodied in the Don Chipp Foundation.

In the latter years of his life Don Chipp commented on the community's need to keep governments accountable on any number of important societal issues.

Maintaining Don Chipp's vision of an Australia that promotes the values of honesty, tolerance and compassion is what the Foundation strives to achieve.

We hope that we can continue our work in 2009 and beyond. We welcome your ideas and assistance in maintaining the work of the Foundation.

Please read further to see how you may be able to help us keep Don's legacy vibrant. You can e-mail your ideas through on nina.burridge@uts.edu.au

Best regards,

Dr Nina Burridge

Chairperson

Don Chipp Foundation

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The Don Chipp Foundation gratefully acknowledges funding received from the Department of Finance and Administration.

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In 2008 the Don Chipp Foundation's grants program attracted around 40 funding applications. As in previous years, the calibre of applications was extremely high, making the selection process very difficult for the Board. Below are summaries of two projects and a list of the 2008 grant recipients.

'Settlement Experiences of African migrants in regional Australia: A case study of Armidale and Tamworth Regional Centres'

By Dr. Charles Kivunja, Dr. Bawa Kuyini and Assoc. Professor Tom Maxwell,
School of Education, University of New England

Following the benevolence of the Don Chipp Foundation, researchers in the School of Education, Faculty of the Professions at the University of New England, were awarded a \$5000 grant to conduct research as part of the University's contribution to the DCF vision of promoting values of a civil society and social and economic justice within the Australian community.

This research will investigate the policy, institutional and infrastructural gaps and their impact on migrant families. It will examine the experiences of African migrants in light of the socio-cultural issues that promote values of a civil society as well as social and economic justice in the Armidale–Tamworth area.

This research is important because it will contribute to an understanding of the incongruity, if any, between African migrants' expectations in regard to education, employment and well-being and their realised experiences.

Such an understanding could inform policy debates and alert policy makers and service providers as to how to reduce the apparent gaps and contribute to harmony in the community.

This study expects to:

- identify areas and ways in which educational institutions such as the University of New England, as well as Secondary and Primary Schools and settlement agencies in regional areas could help to alleviate incongruities and gaps;
- enhance public policy debates on issues which impact on the Australian community in regional areas;
- make recommendations on government policies and local practices which will help to promote social and economic justice within the Australian community;
- disseminate research findings to local migrant services agencies, state and federal parliamentarians and on UNE website and through journals and audience-specific short publications.

◀ END

Recipient	Institution	Project title	Amount
Iwona Miliszewska	Victoria University	<i>Investigation of strategies aimed at encouraging girls from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds to consider a career in ICT</i>	\$5,000
Ann Ingamells	Griffith University	<i>Aboriginal and non Aboriginal relationships – a unique achievement in a remote community</i>	\$5,000
Lauren Caulfield	Global Trade Watch: Corporate Watch Australia Project	<i>"Ethical" investment watch: Uranium mining research project</i>	\$5,000
Ellen Gallagher	University of New England	<i>Lessons from international development for Aboriginal poverty reduction in Australia</i>	\$5,000
Tom Maxwell	University of New England	<i>Settlement experiences of African migrants in regional Australia: A case study of Armidale and Tamworth regional centres</i>	\$5,000

Relationships between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal People in a small Desert Town

Dr Ann Ingamells, Griffith University and
Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre

Whilst many Aboriginal People across remote Australia suffer great hardship, and governments struggle to respond to them, there is a very different situation in one corner of remote Queensland.

Two small desert towns, Birdsville and Bedourie, in the Shire of Diamantina (95,000 sq kms and population of 304), where 1/3 of the population are Aboriginal, have overcome the challenges which beset so many rural towns and Aboriginal communities. In these two towns everyone has a home, everyone has a job, the children go to school, everyone accesses healthcare, there is very low crime, and no significant illegal drug problem.

Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre and Griffith University have been researching sustainability in these two towns over the past two years and have established collaborative relationships with Diamantina Shire Council, and members of the Aboriginal and settler community. On the basis of these relationships, the authors of the proposed Don Chipp essay are well positioned to assist local People to tell their story.

The proposed essay will tell the story from the diverse perspectives of various individuals and groups. It will identify how one community has provided health, education, housing and livelihood to wider Australian standards. Such a standard of living, means the problems, such as welfare dependence and substance abuse which confront some communities are non-existent here. From this common ground, new aspirations are articulated, local government being integral to the ways in which the aspirations of various groups are expressed in the public realm, acknowledged and responded to. It is here, in the present moment of participation in the civic process, that relationships get tested and the future is shaped.

Beginning with the present moment, the essay will track backwards and forwards, exploring the dynamics as various individuals and groups see them.

Whilst the intention is to acknowledge the significant achievement and provide some opportunities to discuss the future in this particular community, there are undoubtedly lessons here for the wider Australian community, and particularly for local government and Aboriginal communities in remote areas.

The history of this area is similar to that of much of rural and remote Australia. Diamantina is the country where Burke and Wills perished.

To the Europeans who went there in the early nineteenth century, it was harsh terrain. There were struggles, some evidence of massacres, and Aboriginal people were removed from their land, placed in a mission and their lives were managed in ways which made it difficult to maintain their culture.

They worked alongside the early pioneers to establish cattle stations, receiving little or no wages. Yet, uniquely in this area of Australia, Aboriginal people have moved out of poverty and oppression and have taken their place in the community alongside settlers, many of whose families date back to those early days.

Their culture and country remain important to them. They say there is still some distance to go to have their culture as fully acknowledged as they would like.

Yet, this is a matter for civic engagement and effort, not a matter for recrimination and despair.

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Relationships between Aboriginal & non Aboriginal People cont'd

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people in Diamantina Shire to explore together what has brought them to this current crossroad of both unique achievement and contemporary challenge in their civic, social and economic relations.

Objectives:

- To explore and articulate the contributions that various people, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal, and institutions, particularly local government, have made to this achievement.
- To provide an account which celebrates that achievement.
- To give voice to current tensions and challenges and provide opportunity for discussion about the civic processes through which these are being addressed.

Outcomes: Every community is different. This essay will provide an account of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal People, and their local government, working together to untangle the problems inherited from the past and build a future together. The most immediate outcome will be consolidation within the shire of gains which have been made. This will be via increased awareness within Diamantina Shire of the nature and significance of the relationships which have developed over time, and greater appreciation of the contribution different groups have made to those achievements. This will inform future planning and collaboration. The account is not transferable, but within it will be certain learnings, requirements and strategies which will have relevance to other communities and to local government elsewhere. It will contribute to public debate and policy in this important area. ◀ **END**

Janine Haines Lecture 2008: Peter Singer

The **2008 Janine Haines Memorial Lecture** was held in Melbourne. The keynote speaker was **Prof. Peter Singer**.



Prof. Singer spoke on the topic ***Animal Welfare and Environmental Ethics: Parallels and Divergences***.

Prof. Singer was joined by a panel of expert speakers: **Glenys Oogjes**, Executive Director of Animals Australia; **Tim Low**, Environmentalist and author of *The New Nature*; **Andrew Bartlett**, Queensland Senator for 12 years; and environmental campaigner **Corey Watts**.



The lecture drew a capacity crowd.

◀ **END**

Fundraising

In 2008 the Don Chipp Foundation was saddened and disappointed to learn that it would no longer receive Government funding. The Don Chipp Foundation Board has recently spoken with the Australian Government in the hope of reversing that decision. Meanwhile, the Foundation is also seeking donations to support its work. All donations are tax deductible. Please send your donation via cheque, payable to the Don Chipp Foundation, to PO Box 407, Gladesville NSW 2111.

Fundraising

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