

Mazda Foundation

Mazda
Foundation

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2000





Malcolm Gough
Chairperson
Managing Director
Mazda Australia

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Once again I am delighted and proud to present a report on the deliberations of the Mazda Foundation board in making grants to deserving causes in the community.

As always, with our limited resources, it is impossible to provide funds to all of the hundreds of applications we receive each year. I am extremely grateful, therefore, to the Foundation's board members and Mazda staff who contribute many hours of time and expertise in evaluating and researching the merits of every application.

In the years since it was formed, the Mazda Foundation has disbursed over \$2 million to a wide range of projects and programs throughout Australia.

Importantly, each of these have met the Foundation's criteria by — developing education and employment skills; assisting in the advancement of education and achievement of excellence; developing technology to improve Australia's competitiveness; or, maintaining and improving the natural environment.

In all of these areas the Foundation's emphasis is on young people.

The 2000 report again shows the diversity of projects the Foundation supports and our congratulations go to all those who contribute so much to the Australian community.

I would like to thank all of the individuals and organisations that have supported the work of the Mazda Foundation since its inception. Without your help our task would be made much more difficult.

We trust your support will continue and that together we can provide further assistance to deserving causes in the years ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The work of the Mazda Foundation began in 1990 when it was formed to provide assistance to a broad cross section of individuals and important causes throughout Australia.

It was seen as an ideal way for Mazda Australia, one of the country's major motor vehicle importers, to develop an equitable and broad community involvement apart from its commercial operations.

The Foundation was established through generous donations from Mazda Motor Corporation in Japan and Mazda Australia.

Since then it has been supported by contributions from Mazda Australia through the sale of Mazda vehicles, Mazda dealers, public donations and the proceeds of special fund raising functions held in various states.

Since inception the Foundation has provided more than \$2 million to various projects and activities throughout Australia.

The pages that follow outline the broad and diverse spread of community support provided by the Foundation during 2000.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Mazda Foundation has funded a three-year research project exploring the development of speech understanding in children who use the Bionic Ear. Front cover: Researcher Vanessa Surowiecki with Jesse Cattach. (Photography by Brent Parker-Jones)

THE BIONIC EAR INSTITUTE

National \$20,000

This was the final year of a research project funded by the Mazda Foundation and undertaken by PhD scholar Vanessa Surowiecki (nee Raulings) at The Bionic Ear Institute.

The research project explored the development of speech understanding in children who use the Bionic Ear.

Initially, Vanessa investigated the speech sounds children could distinguish during their first 12 months with a Bionic Ear implant.

Results of this study showed that while most children were

able to correctly distinguish the majority of speech sounds six months after receiving a Bionic Ear, there was some variation in performance levels. By 12 months this variation had decreased and most children showed improvements in their discrimination skills.

The second area of Vanessa's research examined speech understanding in relation to developing the attention, memory and thinking skills of children with a Bionic Ear implant. This study examined 51 hearing-impaired children who used either the Bionic Ear or hearing aids.

Results of the study suggest that a relationship does exist between the cognitive abilities of both groups of children and their developing language, vocabulary and speech perception skills.

In general, children who performed well on the attention, memory and thinking tests tended to perform well on the language, vocabulary and speech perception tests. Further analysis of the data will examine whether any cognitive differences exist between children with a Bionic Ear and those using hearing aids alone.

Results from Vanessa's PhD research have provided specific information for specialists and teachers who are able to use the data to improve rehabilitation and education programs to ensure children with a Bionic Ear implant get the best outcomes. The results will also have important implications for children who receive a Bionic Ear in the future.

TYPO STATION

Victoria \$18,800

Typo Station is an independent not-for-profit organisation that is committed to helping disadvantaged young people realise their true potential.

Located on an historic bush property near Wangaratta in north east Victoria, Typo Station stages unique residential life skills and vocational training programs of some nine weeks duration.

Participants are traditionally 15-17 year-old males who are at risk of being or have been expelled from school, unemployed, those experiencing family difficulties and first time offenders. The program is for young people willing to make positive changes to their lives.

The Mazda Foundation provided funds for the cost of building two large concrete water storage tanks as well as a pump and related materials for the organisation's 'Hot House' project.

Through the 'Hot House' project, participants in the Typo Station program learn useful skills in horticulture. These include growing vegetables as well as the collection of seeds and propagation of native plants.



Guides Australia's 'Life Skills Action Pack' provides young women with a greater understanding of the health risks facing Australian youth.

GUIDES AUSTRALIA

National \$30,500

The Guides movement is the largest organisation in the world for girls and women with over 10 million members in 140 countries.

Its purpose is to help young women grow into confident, self-respecting community members. It does this by developing skills that are usable in everyday life and may also form a basis for future employment.

In Australia there are over 50,000 Guides.

Guide leaders give their time voluntarily to create meaningful and fun filled programs for participants. They also encourage girls to be involved in the wide range of outdoor activities that form a large part of the Guides program.

In 2000, the Mazda Foundation allocated funds to support the production of Guides Australia's 'Life Skills Action Pack'.

The hands-on kit covers various subjects that are relevant to the needs and interests of girls today. It is used to encourage learning, provoke discussion and most of all, result in positive action.

One of the main aims of the 'Life Skills Action Pack' is to provide a greater understanding of health risks, particularly those facing the younger generation. By providing interesting and thought provoking activities it helps develop greater knowledge of issues such as drug and alcohol abuse and youth suicide.

Through education, it is hoped that Guides will not only have the ability to make wise decisions, but may also be able to encourage their friends to do the same.

THE SMITH FAMILY

Victoria \$9,150

Over the past three years, the Mazda Foundation has provided a grant of \$27,450 to support the Smith Family's 'Living for Life' program.

This program provides confidential scholarships and counselling to junior secondary school students who are deemed to be at risk of dropping out of the education system.

Through the 'Living for Life' program, the Smith Family can ensure that children at risk of leaving school as a result of family poverty can complete their education and be better equipped to gain employment.

The Foundation has supported 15 underprivileged students each year through this grant.

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

National \$25,000

In 1993, the Australian Academy of Science initiated the 'Video Histories of Australian Scientists' program.

The program records interviews with outstanding scientists for the benefit of this and future generations.

A Mazda Foundation grant was allocated for the production of five video interviews with 'outstanding older women scientists'. The funds allowed for video production as well as transcribing the interviews and making them available on the Internet.

Teachers' notes were also developed to accompany the interviews. With the aid of these notes, teachers can relate the interviews to specific aspects of the curriculum.

The interviews are available to schools and other organisations through the National Library of Australia's Cinemedia lending service.

The Australian Academy of Science is recording interviews with outstanding scientists as part of its 'Video Histories of Australian Scientists' program. Pictured is geologist Professor Beryl Nasher.





The audio-visual system at Irabina has proven a valuable aid to the organisation's work with autistic children.

IRABINA EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Victoria \$14,954

The Irabina Early Intervention Program grew out of a network established by parents of children with autism in the mid-sixties.

Today, Irabina provides structured intensive educational programs for autistic children and works to promote autism awareness in the community. It also provides training for child-care professionals who are in contact with an autistic child.

Support is provided to young autistic children and their families in eastern metropolitan Melbourne, however the organisation's research and development program provides valuable material for all professionals working in this field.

Autism is a developmental disability that affects the child's ability to communicate with and understand the world around them. Children with autism have major difficulties in social relationships, language development and the ability to learn.

It is a lifelong condition that responds to an appropriate management program. The earlier such programs begin the better the outcomes for the child.

Identification of children with autism is usually made between two and four years of age. The emphasis at Irabina is on intensive early intervention involving educational and therapy programs, and integration as soon as possible into other generic children's services.

Mazda Foundation funding was provided for the installation of an audio-visual system at Irabina for observation, training and research in the field of 'Early Childhood Intervention and Autism Spectrum Disorder'.

The audio-visual system has two major uses:

- parent support and training — in the past, skills and techniques were demonstrated to parents while they were

in the room with their child. However, the presence of a parent often changes the responses of the child. Now staff can work with a child while parents and therapists watch progress on the audio-visual system.

- production of videos for professional development — Irabina recently conducted a conference on Autism Spectrum Disorder for 130 early childhood professionals. The presentations were enhanced by frequent reference to videos to reinforce strategies and techniques. The audio-visual system will continue to play an important role in professional education and program planning.

CORAL REEF RESEARCH INSTITUTE

National \$20,000

In 2000, the Mazda Foundation made the final installment of a \$60,000 grant to the University of Sydney's Coral Reef Research Institute.

Established to enhance the conservation and management of coral reefs through education and research, the Institute's work plays a prominent role in expanding worldwide knowledge of our natural resources.

The Foundation grant comprised four \$5,000 post-graduate scholarships for young scientists working at the University of Sydney's tropical marine research station on One Tree Island.

Located at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef, One Tree Island and the surrounding waters form a scientific zone within the Capricornia section of the Reef Marine Park.

The four scholarship recipients studied the causes of coral dying; coral reef fish populations and their effects on the environment; genetic markers of coral species; and, the role of some fish species in maintaining the viability of coral.

Studies undertaken by the Coral Reef Research Institute are designed to enhance the conservation and management of the world's coral reefs.





Imogen Manins has received the annual Mazda Foundation prize for her work with the cello in each of her three years at the Monash University School of Music - Conservatorium.

MONASH UNIVERSITY

Victoria \$2,000

The annual Mazda Foundation prize was once again awarded to students at the Monash University School of Music - Conservatorium.

The grant provides \$500 scholarships for the achievement of excellence in each of the four years of the University's Bachelor of Music degree.

First presented in 1993, the scholarships encourage application, enthusiasm and performance as well as ability.

In 2000 the first year prize went to Karen Heath who is studying the clarinet. The second year winner was Melinda Elsworth (flute), while Gregory Peterson (flute) and Imogen Manins (cello) shared the third year prize. Jonathan Bradley collected the final year prize for his work on the piano.

Many former scholarship recipients have forged notable musical careers as soloists and members of orchestras in Australia and overseas.

QUEENSLAND MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Queensland \$6,800

In 1978 a group of concerned citizens formed the Muscular Dystrophy Support Group in Queensland. Under difficult circumstances this group began the process of community education and fundraising.

Today, the Queensland Muscular Dystrophy Association (QMDA) is an incorporated body that uses modern business practices to build on the hard work of the early volunteers.

The Association improves the quality of life of people with muscular dystrophy — a disease that causes progressive degeneration of the muscles.

In 2000, funds were allocated by the Mazda Foundation for the purchase of an 'Emerson In-Exsufflator Cough Machine'.

This machine assists patients — particularly children — with neuromuscular diseases when they are suffering chest infections and, due to the weakness of the respiratory muscles, are unable to cough.

Through the QMDA, the machine will be available for loan to young people who have muscular dystrophy and are suffering from chest infections.

ADELAIDE CENTRAL MISSION

South Australia \$6,200

Founded in 1901, the Adelaide Central Mission provides social welfare and advocacy services throughout South Australia. The organisation has 550 employees and over 600 dedicated volunteers involved in more than 40 separate community programs.

These programs cover areas such as education for employment, health care, youth homelessness, adolescent services, aged care, counselling, family services, respite care, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, housing and cross-cultural welfare.

One of the Mission's services is the innovative and successful education and training program called 'Lifestyles Explorers Groups'.

Through this program, groups of young people with severe intellectual and physical disabilities receive training in life skills that enable them to enter the workforce.

Mazda Foundation funding was granted for the purchase of computer equipment and software that are central to the 'Lifestyles Explorers Groups' activities.



Computer resources at the Vermont South Special School have been enhanced through Mazda Foundation funding.

VERMONT SOUTH SPECIAL SCHOOL

Victoria \$2,000

Vermont South Special School caters for children aged from five to 13 with intellectual disabilities and physical impairments.

The school provides a caring supportive atmosphere in which children with difficulties are encouraged to cope with the 'mysteries' of mathematics, reading and writing, as well as develop their own special skills.

Sound educational planning is undertaken to satisfy the particular needs of each student and the school is renowned for its excellent speech and language programs.

A 1999 Mazda Foundation grant helped provide computer equipment for use by children functionally unable to speak.

Further funding was granted in 2000 for the purchase of six touch screens and eight 'turbo mice' so that each classroom has adaptations that allow physically disabled students to access the resources.

McGREGOR HOUSE

Victoria \$4,250

Based in the central Victorian town of Ararat, McGregor House is a non-profit 'adult training support service' providing day programs for people with a disability.

It provides an essential service to approximately 70 intellectually disabled adults and helps them pursue their goals in relation to work, education, training, recreation and leisure.

A Mazda Foundation grant has allowed McGregor House to purchase a new 'hydraulic lifter'.

The lifter is used to transport ageing and immobile clients between chairs, from chairs to toilets, between programs, as well as in and out of vehicles.

RIVERLAND YOUTH THEATRE

South Australia \$6,493

Riverland Youth Theatre is an independent production house for youth arts operating in the Riverland region of South Australia.

Established in 1985, the Theatre is an expressive and artistic outlet that concentrates on developing productions using the experiences and imagination of young people.

Through various Riverland Youth Theatre projects, young people are given opportunities to develop their skills in a variety of arts related endeavours including acting, dance, scriptwriting, design, production, management, lighting, sound, video, film, arts administration and tutoring.

In 1999, the Mazda Foundation supported the Theatre's tutor training workshops as well as the development of a 'performance piece'. The performance piece was designed to provide a goal-oriented process for new local tutors to work with primary school children.

The work of the Riverland Youth Theatre proved so successful that further funding was granted in 2000.

During the year, the Theatre conducted numerous workshops in dance, circus skills, cultural activities and performance skills for both primary and secondary school children throughout the Riverland region.

It also staged performances at several schools as well as major district festivals including the Berri Fluviafest and Loxton Show. There is now strong demand throughout the region and state for performances by artists from the Riverland Youth Theatre.

The Riverland Youth Theatre provides young people with opportunities to develop their skills in a variety of arts related endeavours.





Melbourne Citymission provides support services to more than 400 children and families through its Hartnett House facility.

MELBOURNE CITY MISSION

Victoria \$6,000

Under the patronage of the then governor of Victoria, Sir James Gobbo, Melbourne Citymission officially launched its Hartnett House Family and Children's Centre in June 1998.

The consolidation of various Melbourne Citymission services into one centre, occurred in response to the urgent need for quality facilities to help care for children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the inner-northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Located in Brunswick, Hartnett House Family and Children's Centre provides outstanding service to more than 400 children and families representing 26 different nationalities.

Skilled and committed staff endeavour to improve each child's quality of life, by respecting their dignity, recognising their gifts, and catering as much as possible to their individual needs.

Funds from the Mazda Foundation were used to purchase two air-conditioners for the Hartnett House Family and Children's Centre.

SPEECH HEARING CENTRE

Western Australia \$11,235

The Perth based Speech and Hearing Centre is an independent charitable organisation that assists children aged from six months to five years who have communication disabilities.

The Centre looks after the problems of children with congenital or acquired sensori neural deafness (ie nerve deafness).

A Mazda Foundation grant has allowed the organisation to purchase a specialised ear microscope for children. The microscope allows the Centre to test hearing impairment, particularly that caused by 'glue ear'.

Speech and hearing impairment in children can be reduced substantially by early intervention through the use of an ear microscope.

MAZDA FOUNDATION

Established in 1990 as a public benefit trust, the Mazda Foundation is administered through an independent body and provides endowments as appropriate each year. The aims and objectives of the Foundation include:

- assistance to young people through education and employment skills development.
- assistance in the advancement of education and achievement of excellence at all levels in the community.
- assistance in the development of technology to help improve Australia's international competitiveness.
- assistance towards the maintenance and improvement of the natural environment.

Contributions to the Mazda Foundation are tax deductible and are sought from individuals and organisations sharing the philosophy of the Mazda Foundation. Further information about the work of the Mazda Foundation and grant application guidelines can be obtained from the Foundation's web site. Communications and donations should be directed to:

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