



Media Release
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Local charities enjoy joint grants from Bennelong and Dubai Duty Free Foundations

The Bennelong Foundation, the Bennelong Group's philanthropic arm, has joined with the Dubai Duty Free Foundation to make joint grants to Australian charities. The *Ponting Foundation*, *Family Life* and *Victorian Arabic Social Services* have all received grants this month through the joint initiative. This is the first time the foundations have joined together to provide much needed resources to worthwhile charities in Australia.

The Ponting Foundation

The joint grant to the Ponting Foundation will support the charity's work with children affected by cancer, and their families. Specifically, the grant will fund the establishment of an *Exceptional Needs Assistance (ENA) program*, with monies being used to provide financial assistance to families facing exceptional levels of need during the active treatment, palliative care or early bereavement phase of their cancer experience.

The Ponting Foundation's Honorary Chief Executive, James Henderson, said "a cancer diagnosis brings significant financial impacts to all families, both in terms of lost income and increased expenses. Rianna and Ricky are absolutely delighted to be partnering with the Bennelong Foundation and Dubai Duty Free to create a new assistance program to support those families that need extra support due to certain pre and post diagnosis variables. We are most appreciative of this partnership and look forward to seeing some very tangible results of our work together in the years ahead."

The Ponting Foundation was established in 2008 by Rianna and Ricky Ponting to raise money for children with cancer and their families. The Foundation is dedicated to doing everything possible to improve the lives of children with cancer, providing funding for a wide range of essential services that comfort and nurture the child, while providing emotional support and financial assistance to their family.

Family Life

Family Life's Community Relations Manager, Judith Latta, said the joint grant to *Family Life* will directly assist the charity to replicate an innovative and proven social business in another high-need suburb.

Called *YouthWorx*, the social business provides at-risk young people with structured work experience in a thriving up-market Opportunity Shop (Thrift Store), formalised retail training, personal support and a pathway to employment and community participation.

"This joint grant, which is critical to *Family Life* being able replicate its highly successful *YouthWorx* social business, will be used to underwrite unfunded operational costs until the social business trades through to sustainability (projected 2012). Thanks to this significant investment, we expect to assist at least 20 at-risk young people per year, for many years to come, to become active and participating members of the community. This not only benefits the young people but also the 40 adult volunteers who mentor the young people and the community in general," Judith said.

Family Life also provides counselling and community services to high-need neighbourhoods and public housing areas with diverse cultural groups, including refugees from war zones in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

Victorian Arabic Social Services

The Anti Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B) Program from the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) is the other recipient of the jointly-funded grant from the Bennelong and Dubai Duty Free Foundations. VASS, a peak organisation that represents and addresses issues and concerns of Arabic-speaking background communities in Victoria, has received the grant for A.R.A.B, its unique, high energy, youth performing arts program based in Melbourne's northern region.

Recognising that racism and gang culture amongst disadvantaged youth is also fuelled by low self esteem and lack of creative outlets, the VASS A.R.A.B Program is open to youth from any culture. It currently works with 200 young people from 50 cultural backgrounds aged between 12-25.

VASS's Anti Racism Action Band Artistic Co Director Kate Gillick said "the program taps into the vast energy, talent and hunger for artistic and self expression that exists amongst young people who would otherwise have limited creative outlets. We challenge low self-esteem and limited notions of 'self' that lead to narrow and destructive social behaviours and relationships, whilst imparting performance, event management, life skills and crucial employment pathways. The three-year grant will allow A.R.A.B to employ much needed community development staff to work with high numbers of culturally diverse young people with complex social problems."

Jeff Chapman, Chairman of the Bennelong Foundation, said they were thrilled about the opportunity to join with the Dubai Duty Free Foundation to support Australian charities, particularly at a time when demand for such support is increasing.

"Given the Bennelong Group's commercial links with Dubai, it was a great opportunity to increase the impact of our grants and join with the Dubai Duty Free Foundation," said Jeff.

Colm McLoughlin, Managing Director of Dubai Duty Free, said "the Dubai Duty Free Foundation was established several years ago with the aim of supporting needy causes, particularly those relating to children. We are happy to team up with the Bennelong Foundation in order to support these three charities in Australia and congratulate Jeff Chapman on this initiative".

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About the Bennelong Foundation

The Bennelong Foundation was founded in 2002 by the Bennelong Group. The Melbourne-based charitable foundation was established with the intent to allow its founders to provide funds and resources to charities and worthy causes in selected areas of interest, and to provide opportunities for people within the Bennelong Group to participate on an individual or group basis.

Visit www.bennngroup.com for more information.

About Dubai Duty Free Foundation

The Dubai Duty Free Foundation was founded in 2004 as a non-profit charity made up of volunteer employees and friends of Dubai Duty Free, with the aim of supporting charitable organisations within the UAE and abroad.

Funding for the Foundation is provided primarily by Dubai Duty Free who donate a percentage of annual turnover directly to the Foundation. Additional funds are raised through collection boxes located throughout Dubai Duty Free premises and from joint-initiatives with business partners.