

Annual report in brief 2012/13

Twelve grants totalling \$1.97m were made to 10 organisations by The Thomas Foundation in 2012/13.

The Fight For The Reef (FFTR) campaign was the biggest investment, with grants of \$870,000 to the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF), \$129,000 to the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) and \$105,000 to the Environmental Defenders' Office Queensland (EDO).

Initiated by the Foundation, a coalition of the WWF and AMCS, with legal support from the EDO, guided development and implementation of community awareness and political advocacy campaigns focussed on emerging concerns for the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). This coalition encouraged other environmental NGOs to adopt common political objectives, rather than differing or competing objectives. Some observers see this as an example of how future major environmental campaigns should be run.

Momentum was brought to the campaign in March by marine environmentalist and author Professor Callum Roberts, from York University in the UK. Professor Roberts, the 4th David Thomas Conservation Orator, is author of *The Unnatural History of the Sea* and *The Ocean of Life*. Professor Roberts brought attention not only to the looming GBR crisis, but also raised awareness to the worsening plight of the world's oceans.

Other grants were:

- Hammond Care \$250,000
- University of NSW Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing \$200,000
- Environmental Defenders' Office Queensland \$105,000
- National Gallery of Australia \$100,000
- The Nature Conservancy (Australia) Barbara Thomas Fellowships \$100,000
- The Nature Conservancy conference on coastal and marine restoration \$60,000
- University of Queensland student conference of Conservation Research \$50,000
- Australian Environmental Grantmakers' Network \$33,334
- National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) fly-fishing museum \$15,000

Barbara Thomas Fellowships were granted to four people:

- Eloise Kendy, Director TNC's Environmental Flows Program: research, priorities and recommend on TNC Australia's freshwater program
- Anne Zuparko, Marketing Specialist; The Nature Conservancy, Austin, Texas who undertook a Digital Marketing Fellowship involving 2 field trips to Australia. The aim of the Fellowship was to develop Environmental Crowd sourced Movement aimed at helping Australian businesses become more socially responsible using digital marketing

and new media technology.

- Jeff Benz and Anna Simmonds of TNC's Worldwide Office who are developing a policy paper, based on US experience, that identifies taxation and other impediments inhibiting the broadening of Australia's philanthropic sector.

While more than two-thirds of the grants in 2012/13 were to environmental activities, including the marine environment, the Foundation continues to support projects in other areas, including the health sector.

Beginning this year, the Foundation has made a \$2.5m commitment over five years to Hammond Care's participation in the National Health and Medical Research Council's project – 'Dealing with Cognitive and Related Functional Decline in the Elderly'. The mid-point of a \$1m five-year commitment to the University of NSW's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing is approaching.

Grants distributed in 2012/13 accounted for 14 per cent of the Foundation's net assets, matching the annual average distribution over the past decade.

Corporate and administrative costs were again held to a low 3 per cent of total expenses, while operating costs (research, development and travel) were held to 4 per cent of expenses. This tight containment of costs continues to be a hallmark of the Foundation's activities.