



Morgan Stanley

The Future of Giving

How Australia's Next Generation is Redefining Philanthropy

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Foreword



Rebecca Hill
Head of Morgan Stanley
Wealth Management Australia

As Head of Morgan Stanley Wealth Management Australia, I am proud to introduce the *Future of Giving* report, which explores how a new generation is shaping the future of giving in Australia.

At Morgan Stanley, our purpose is to help clients grow and protect their wealth for the long term, often across multiple generations. That intergenerational lens is especially relevant today, as a new cohort of wealth custodians begins to take on greater responsibility for family wealth and the decisions that come with it, including how families give back.

In this report, we explore how Australia's emerging wealth custodians are reshaping giving as they assume greater influence over family wealth. As the largest intergenerational wealth transfer in our nation's history accelerates, the next generation is bringing new expectations to philanthropy, looking for greater transparency, measurable outcomes and deeper engagement. Giving is increasingly becoming a more intentional expression of personal values and identity, supported by more structured approaches such as Private and Public Ancillary Funds (soon to be known as Giving Funds).

The insights from this research highlight how important trusted advice has become. Helping families engage the next generation early, and integrating philanthropy alongside wealth transfer, succession planning, investment strategy and family governance, is increasingly key to achieving impact that endures.

At Morgan Stanley, we are committed to supporting our clients with thoughtful, tailored advice that reflects their values and long-term aspirations, including their philanthropic goals. This research reflects our commitment to understanding emerging trends and partnering with families and individuals to create lasting community impact. Our role is to provide the insight, structure and support needed to turn intent into meaningful outcomes, and to ensure generosity, like wealth, can be sustained over time.

I invite you to connect with your Morgan Stanley Financial Adviser or the Morgan Stanley Philanthropy and Not-for-Profit team to continue the conversation and discover ways to engage in meaningful giving.

Foreword



Clementine Lucas
Head of Not-for-Profit and
Philanthropic Services,
Morgan Stanley Australia

I have the privilege of working with clients at moments of transition, when wealth is created, transferred or re-examined, and questions of purpose and legacy come to the fore.

Over the past decade, I have seen a clear shift in how the next generation approaches philanthropy. Many are deeply motivated to give, but they want to do so in ways that are informed, values aligned and participatory. They are seeking to understand the issues, engage directly with organisations, measure impact and involve their families in meaningful ways.

Today, Morgan Stanley supports purpose driven families, individuals and organisations across Australia, advising on significant philanthropic capital. Our clients partner with us because they are seeking more than technical expertise, they want a trusted adviser who can help them navigate complexity, foster intergenerational alignment and build strategies that endure.

This report reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting our not-for-profit and philanthropic clients. As wealth transfers across generations, there is a powerful opportunity for philanthropy to drive real change to unlock innovation, respond to unmet needs, and strengthen communities.

What is most encouraging, is the compelling intent of the next generation of givers. With the right structures, advice and education, philanthropy becomes not only a source of impact, but a powerful way to carry values forward.

I hope this report sparks meaningful conversations and inspires thoughtful action.

Executive Summary

Australia is undergoing the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth in its history. An estimated \$5.4 trillion is expected to transfer over the coming decades, with approximately \$2.3 trillion in assets moving into the control or influence of Australians under the age of 50 by 2040. Part of this transfer includes a significant philanthropic opportunity, with over \$108 billion expected to flow into charitable giving. This represents not only a redistribution of capital, but a fundamental shift in how wealth is understood, governed, and deployed for social good.

This research explores how the next generation of high-net-worth Australians (“Next-Gen”) are reshaping philanthropy as they inherit wealth, step into family governance roles, or build significant wealth of their own. Drawing on survey data from over 140 high-net-worth individuals and in-depth interviews with active philanthropists, the findings reveal a cohort that is values-led, digitally fluent, and increasingly motivated to align their wealth with purpose, impact, and personal meaning. In particular, this paper focuses on how the next generation of givers behaves.

As wealth structures grow more complex, Next-Gens are being brought into decision-making earlier, often through trustee roles, boards, or informal stewardship responsibilities. While partly driven by practical succession planning, this shift is also shaped by changing expectations around transparency, governance, and purpose. They are more likely to question how wealth is managed, why decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved. These expectations are influencing family wealth management and extend naturally into philanthropy.

Both inherited and self-created wealth frequently trigger deeper questions of responsibility and impact. Compared with older cohorts, Next-Gens are more likely to personally feel an obligation to use their wealth to foster social good, and to seek clear evidence of impact from their giving. They tend to be more cause-driven than institution-led, favouring organisations that demonstrate authentic outcomes, transparency, and alignment with their values.

Their approach to giving is also broader and more participatory. Traditional donations are increasingly complemented by skills-based support, collaboration, and investment-aligned approaches. Structured giving vehicles such as Private and Public Ancillary Funds (soon to be known as Giving Funds) are emerging as a backbone of next-generation philanthropy, providing the governance, continuity, and professional support needed to move from ad hoc donations to long-term, strategic engagement. Those with formal structures are significantly more likely to give at scale and sustain their giving over time.

Australia’s cultural context continues to shape how philanthropy is expressed. Traditionally, tall poppy attitudes have encouraged many donors to give privately, limiting visibility and shared momentum. However, there are signs of change, with many Next-Gen givers believing that greater openness about giving can help normalise philanthropy and inspire broader participation.

For families, advisers, and not-for-profits, the implications are clear. Engaging the next generation requires more than donation appeals; it calls for participation pathways, credible impact reporting, digital-first engagement, and opportunities for genuine connection. As control of wealth shifts, Australia has a rare opportunity to shape a more intentional, engaged, and values-driven philanthropic landscape that turns wealth into enduring social impact.

Key Statistics



Of the \$5.4 trillion wave of wealth transfer expected in Australia, the Next-Gen of under 50s are expected to take control of an estimated \$2.3 trillion by 2040. This includes stewardship or having greater influence over the family trust and other grouped assets.



Approximately \$108 billion of the wealth transfer is expected to be directed into charitable giving. This amount is expected to continue to increase as Next-Gen wealth holders feel increased responsibility to help foster social good, as well as seeing the value of philanthropy in helping to establish and drive family values.



4 in 5 across all age groups feel that wealth comes with the responsibility to help foster social good (82%), and the under 50 cohort are much more likely to personally feel an expectation to have a positive social impact with their wealth (79%, vs 55% of those over 50).



58% say that clear visibility of the impact of their donations will encourage them to increase their giving.



Poverty and inequality is the top cause personally supported (57%), however mental health and wellbeing (36%) and environmental causes (17%) see the largest increases as compared to those supported by previous generations.



The next generation recognise the importance of structured giving, turning to professionals to create the foundations for their philanthropy. 39% state that dedicated philanthropic advice or guidance of finance professionals will be a key driver of increased giving.

About this Research

This research examines the attitudes towards charitable giving amongst high-net-worth Australians. It explores their current behaviours, and drivers and barriers towards engaging with both structured and unstructured philanthropy. In particular, the research focuses on the attitudes of Next-Gen givers, defined as those under the age of 50, and how this differs from the older generations.

It also covers how wealth is perceived in Australia, and the impact this has on their own giving, as well as their expectations of how this will change in the future.

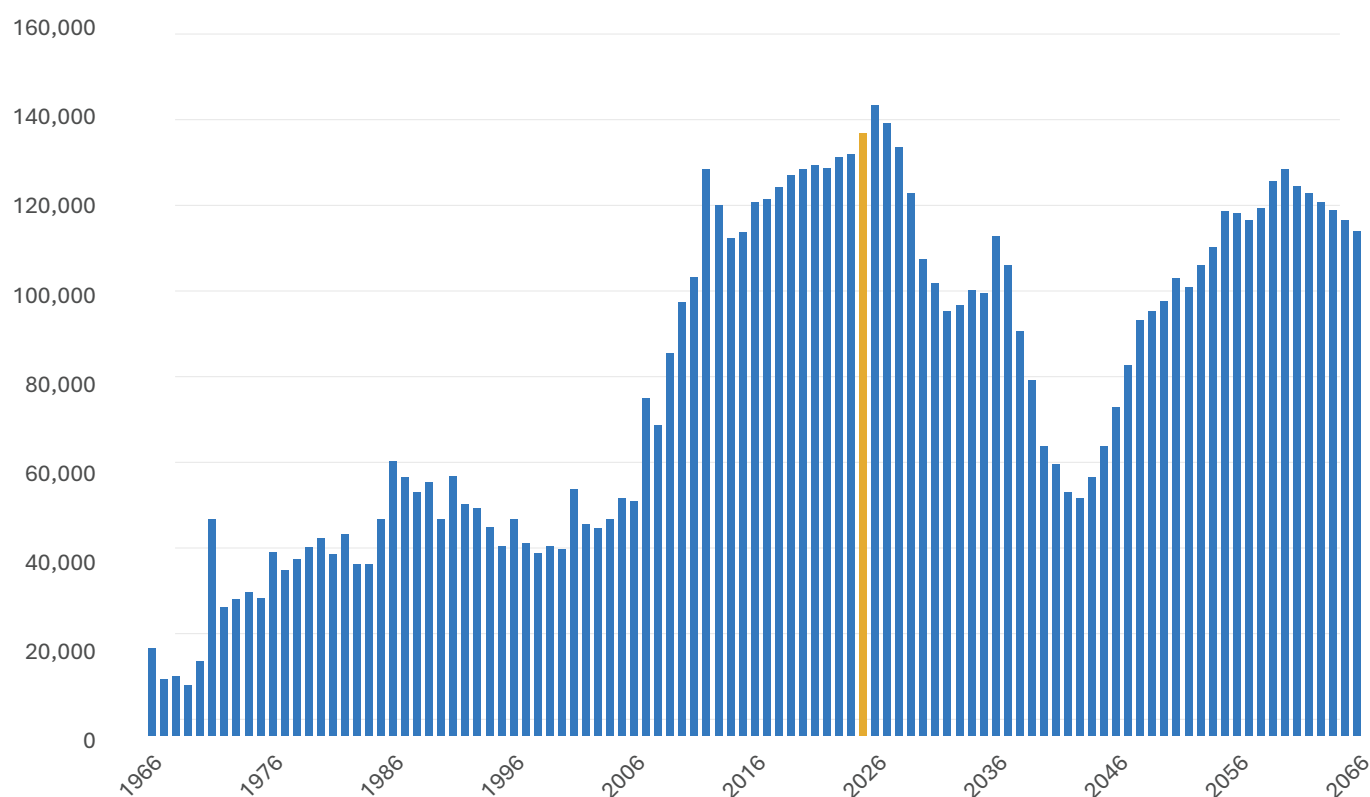
Data was collected via an online survey, including 142 responses from high-net-worth Australians over the age of 30 (defined as having at least \$1m in their investment portfolios). The majority of these respondents had made a financial donation or contribution in the past 12 months (86%), of which a fifth have done so via a private ancillary fund or donor-advised fund (22%).

In addition, eight interviews with philanthropists were conducted to deep dive into their attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of the philanthropic space in Australia. This included their motivations for giving, what they took out of it, and their view on what was needed to encourage greater participation by other high-net-worth Australians.

THE FUTURE OF GIVING

The Great Australian Wealth Transfer: A Catalyst for Change

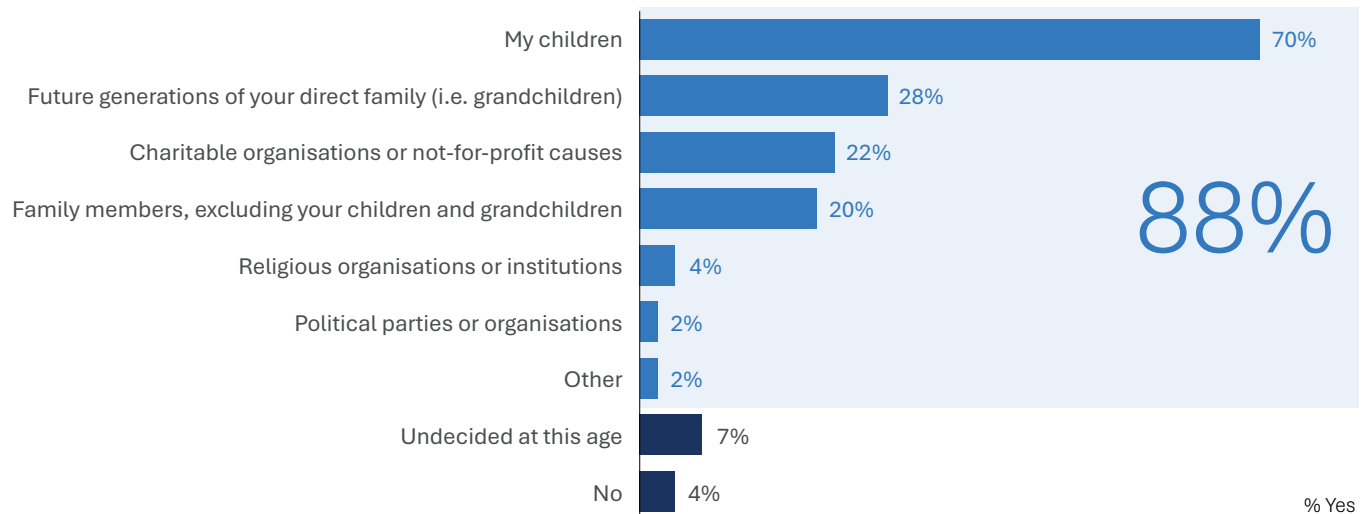
Australia is in the midst of the greatest wealth transfer in its history. The convergence of decades of compulsory superannuation, sustained property value growth, economic resilience, and an aging population has set in motion an estimated \$5.4 trillion transfer between generations¹. Control of this wealth has already begun moving from the Baby Boomer generation to their children and grandchildren, and this is set to continue over the next two decades.



Number of Australians turning 65 each year. Data from ABS, modelled by CoreData

¹ Data modelled by CoreData using a combination of publicly available information and proprietary data.

Intention to transfer wealth



Source: CoreData Intergenerational Wealth Transfer research

The primary beneficiaries of this wealth transfer are perhaps unsurprisingly Gen Xers as the older children of Baby Boomers, and Millennials as the younger ones*. Over a quarter also signal intent to transfer wealth to their grandchildren. Overall, a meaningful sum of approximately \$2.3 trillion is expected to be transferred directly to Australians under the age of 50.

Notably, the years leading up to the age of 50 tends to be where individuals traditionally start to make meaningful strides in increasing their income, while simultaneously taking on greater financial burdens such as mortgages and the cost of raising children. Receiving an inheritance at this critical juncture lifts these burdens, allowing them to focus on enjoying their fortunate position.

In addition to taking direct control of wealth, the role of under-50s in managing the family’s portfolio and wealth is growing. As financial structures become increasingly complex, including discretionary trusts, SMSFs, companies, and multi-asset portfolios, families are bringing the next generation into decision-making earlier. This typically starts with informal involvement at first, however can quickly evolve into formal roles such as trustees, directors, appointors, or board responsibilities.

This shift in responsibility for the family wealth is partly practical preparation for succession and continuity, but also strongly influenced by how the next generation views wealth. The next generation increasingly expects greater transparency, robust governance, and a clearly articulated sense of purpose in how family wealth is stewarded. These expectations can materially reshape the management of wealth and assets, affecting approaches to investment risk, reporting, and decision-making authority.

Importantly, this mindset also extends to philanthropy and giving. As the next generation assumes control of wealth, they often bring both a heightened awareness of social and environmental challenges and a stronger inclination to address them through purposeful capital deployment. Having grown up in an era of increased access to information, global connectivity, and social accountability, they are more likely to seek measurable impact, alignment with personal values, and active involvement rather than passive grant-making. This creates a significant opportunity for families to embed philanthropy more deeply into their wealth structures, using it as a platform for engagement, education, leadership development, and a tangible reflection of family values.

* Baby Boomers defined as those born between 1946 and 1964. Gen X defined as those born between 1965 and 1980, who will be turning 46 to 61 in 2026. Millennials defined as those born between 1981 and 1997, who will be turning 30 to 45 in 2026.

Triggering questions of meaning and responsibility

Alongside inheritances, a growing proportion of the next generation are naturally coming into significant wealth through the success of their own careers, particularly in the fields of technology, finance, and professional services. In Australia, income tends to peak in the mid-40s, driving an increasing number of wealthier households. The collective wealth of the 100 richest young self-made Australians rose to \$45 billion in 2025, a 7.9% increase over the year before (and a 1600% increase over the past 2 decades)¹.

This self-created wealth can further strengthen an individual's sense of agency and responsibility, as it is often closely tied to personal values, identity, and experience, but also an awareness of the role luck played in self-made success. Almost all interviewees acknowledged that while they certainly worked hard, an element of fortune was present and important in their achievements, which in turn drove their sense of wanting to give back to society.

Both self-created and inherited wealth can trigger deeper questions about meaning and responsibility of individuals and families, particularly amongst the next generation of under 50s. Notably, next-gens are not only more likely to feel that wealth comes with the responsibility to foster social good (82% vs 68% of over 50s), but more personally feel the expectation to do good with their wealth (79%, vs 55% of over 50s).

As the next generation comes into control of wealth, both earned and inherited, particularly as it meaningfully changes their life options, many often reflect on what they can do with the opportunity presented to them. For many, this is the opportunity to act on their desire to have a positive social impact, to give back to the community, and drive change. It is therefore important that they understand the options available to them via both ad hoc and structured giving at the critical period of wealth transition, turning them from the next generation of inheritors to the next generation of philanthropic givers.



We could easily sit back and say we worked really hard and deserve every cent of what we have, and we did work very hard. But it could so easily have not worked out this way... so many [entrepreneurs] give it their all and get nothing out of it. Right time, right place, lots of work and a bit of luck right?

– Jackie



I think the biggest opportunity we have in Australia is the younger generation. They are much more socially conscious and aware.

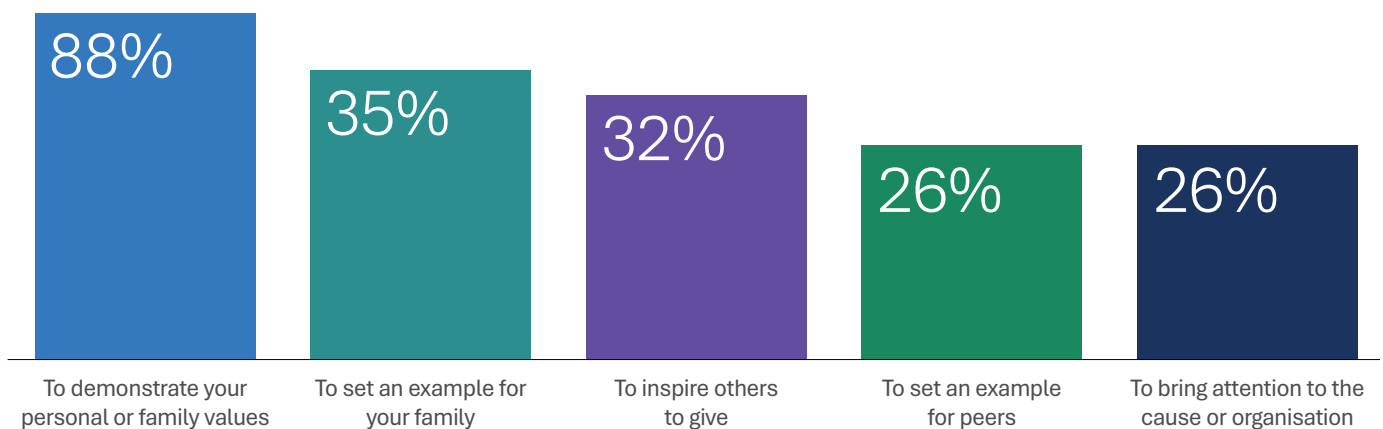
– Lauren

¹ <https://www.afr.com/young-rich/australia-s-richest-people-40-and-under-set-wealth-record-20251003-p5mzyv>

What Drives Next-Gen Givers?

Rather than engaging with giving as purely a charitable act, the next generation of givers will engage with philanthropy as an extension of their personal and family identities, values, and personal experiences. Giving as a reflection of their personal and family values is one of the main reasons why many of those under 50 would be more willing to be associated with their donations, alongside setting an example for their own family and peers.

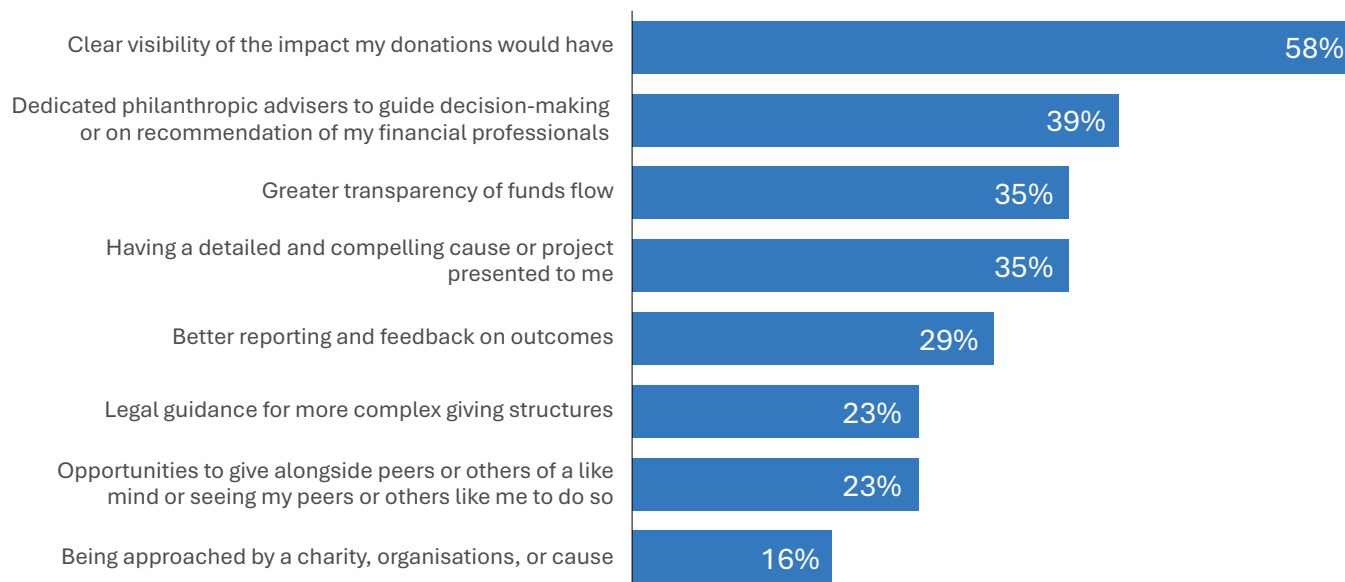
Reasons to make giving public (Next-gen Givers [Under 50s])



In line with this, Next-Gen givers are more likely to be cause-driven rather than institution-led, directing their giving towards issues that they personally feel a connection to. Many will seek a clearer line of sight between funding and outcomes, favouring organisations that can demonstrate credible impact, have transparency around funds flow, and communicate progress with authenticity. Unlike previous generations, the next generation of givers is less likely to have a default, long-standing charity or institution that automatically receives their support.

Rather than inheriting philanthropic loyalties in the same way as wealth itself, Next-Gen givers tend to question where funds are directed, why particular organisations are supported, and what outcomes are being achieved. This cohort is more inclined to explore a broader ecosystem of causes, social enterprises, and grassroots initiatives, often prioritising relevance, impact, and alignment with personal values over tradition or familiarity. As a result, giving decisions are increasingly dynamic and intentional, with Next-Gen donors seeking evidence of effectiveness, opportunities for engagement, and the flexibility to adapt their philanthropy as their interests and understanding evolve.

What would encourage you to increase your philanthropic giving? (Next-gen Givers [Under 50s])



Next-Gen Givers will also leverage a broader toolkit than the previous generation, mixing traditional donations with collective giving, advocacy, skills sharing, and investment-aligned approaches. For many wealth holders, inheriting assets or stepping into family governance structures, giving vehicles like Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs) and "donor advised funds" are increasingly acting as a platform for deeper engagement. Many of the philanthropists engaged in this research cite having a philanthropic vehicle not only enables more structured, long-term grant making, but also allows them the flexibility to collaborate with peers, back innovation early, and importantly provides the foundations to carry these early-phase activities through to fruition.

For many, the advantage of structure also comes with the benefit of knowing that the financial side of giving is well managed via access to professionals. This opens up their capacity to go beyond transactional giving into finding and building up causes that reflect their values. Next-Gen givers want to go beyond simply funding organisations and causes into taking action.



It's not [just] about the money. It's how are we setting up these structures where you could actually have a long term impact on Australian society and communities? And that's the important piece.

– Lauren

Many next-gen philanthropists choose to support causes closely connected to their local communities and are often motivated to contribute not only financially, but through hands-on involvement. Giving time, skills and lived experience alongside funding fosters a tangible connection to the work being done, reinforcing a sense of purpose and enabling donors to see the real-world impact on the lives of beneficiaries.

This move away from large, institutional charities toward smaller, grassroots organisations reflects a desire for not only tangible outcomes and connection to the causes being funded, but also a deeper sense of trust through personally cultivated relationships.



We like small, we like grassroots, we like scalable and we look for things where we can get involved beyond the cheque book.

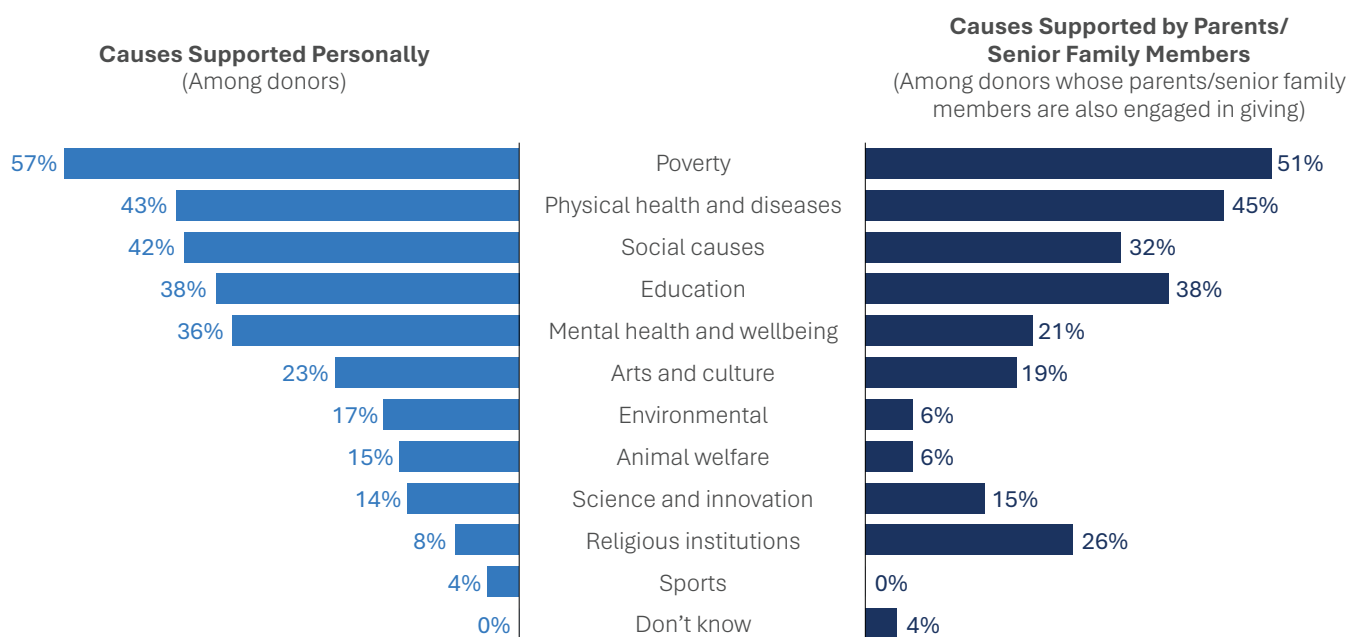
– Maria

Where Will Capital be Deployed?

Over the past year, poverty and inequality attracted the greatest share of philanthropic support amongst surveyed donors (57%), followed by physical health and diseases, and social causes (both 42%). In terms of funding allocation, physical health and disease emerges the leading area of concern, with one-quarter of respondents indicating that this category receives the largest share of their charitable contributions. In terms of impact, most donors seek to bring about a mix of long-term change while also addressing specific urgent needs.

Compared with previous generations, today’s donors demonstrate a clear shift in philanthropic priorities toward social causes, mental health and wellbeing, environmental initiatives, and animal welfare. This evolution reflects broader societal changes, including a heightened awareness of systemic social issues, increased visibility of mental health challenges, and growing

concern about climate and sustainability. Half of Next-Gen givers said they applied a gender lens to their giving, considering the different needs and circumstances of all genders in their decision making (52% did so, as compared to 23% of those 50+ years old). In contrast, giving to religious institutions has declined markedly, mirroring wider patterns of secularisation.



The power of personal connection and its potential for shared legacy

Discussions with philanthropists themselves reveal that they rarely think about the causes they donate to as broad abstract categories such as “health”. Instead, funding is often deeply personal, shaped by lived experience and the direct, real-world connections they have to the issues they seek to address.

Interviewees spoke of the challenges that members of their family and broader community had faced, including experiences of being a refugee, or growing up in contexts of poverty. Others had experienced life altering events like disease or injury or witnessed tragedy in their local community.

It was these personal links, whether stemming from identity, family history or simply geographical proximity, which motivated them to donate and provided the emotional legitimacy to sustain giving over time.

Philanthropic engagement offers donors a chance to translate personal values, identity and experience into action. While giving decisions are often formally made by an individual or couple, philanthropy is rarely an isolated or purely individual act. Donors frequently described drawing inspiration from those around them, including friends and family members such as children, grandchildren, and extended relatives. These influences often shape not only the causes supported, but also how donors think about legacy, intergenerational impact, and long-term social outcomes.

“[My wife] is from South America. Ecuador is the third poorest country in South America, so very much a developing country. The poverty that’s there is very much in your face every day. You encounter it. With that context, we really wanted to make an impact and do something.”

– **Chris & Isabel**

“My grandparents came out here as refugees. And if not for the help of organisations in the philanthropic sector, I’m not quite sure what would have happened to them, so that’s always been a strong theme in the family”

– **Maria**

“Simply, some of the charities I support personally are [run by] organisations I feel in some way connected to. I know the founder of one of them and I back her, and I’m on the board of one of the social enterprises in Newtown so I support that”

– **Elina**



The causes I donate to are [causes] in my life, and I don't have kids, but things my nieces and nephews care about [...] so certainly a lot of the environmental stuff, a lot of those types of things that have come up from the next generation [...] We talk about world affairs and concerns and those sorts of things and then that will lead to well, what are you doing.

– Monique

As Monique's quote reflects, philanthropy holds the potential to extend beyond individual value expression, providing a pathway for connection and dialogue. Through recognising the issues that matter to others, especially younger family members, donors can engage in shared decision-making to shape philanthropic impact as a family and create a collective sense of purpose.



Half agree philanthropic giving can be an important tool in strengthening family ties



6 in 10 agree that philanthropic giving can be a way to foster relationships and social bonds

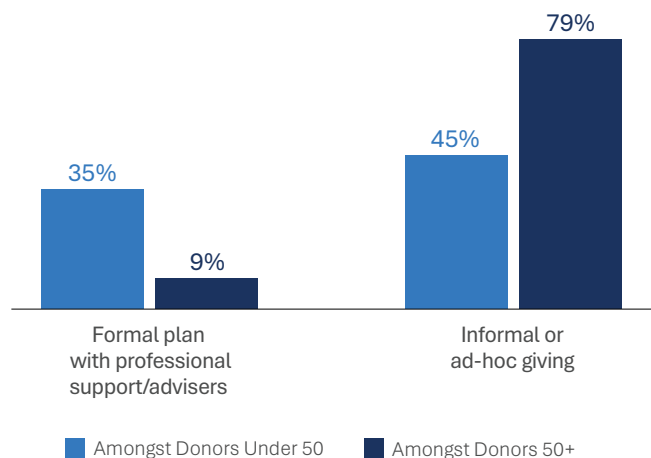


7 in 10 agree collaboration among philanthropists drives better outcomes than individual efforts

In acknowledging that giving alone does not guarantee effective outcomes, Next-Gen donors are demonstrating a growing maturity and critical reflection in their approach to philanthropy. Just over half of Next-Gen givers say they have formal plans in their giving strategy, as compared to less than a fifth of those over 50 years old (55%, vs 21%). In the context of structured philanthropy, these motivations and concerns point to a need to accommodate more engaged and values-aligned approaches to giving, while still supporting donors with the governance and long-term vision needed to make a sustained impact.

For the not-for-profit sector, this means building an offering that delivers value through strong administration and guidance, helping unlock donors' ability to spend their time and energy on the things that matter to them personally and help them feel connected to outcomes. In interviews, philanthropists cited a lack of trust between funders and grantees as a driver for preferencing smaller, known organisations and direct service providers, where closer relationships provide greater confidence in the use of funds. However, it is important to note that these relationships can still be fostered by larger organisations, through building communities, one-on-one conversations, and providing streamlined tracking of outcomes.

Strategy of giving



Shifting From Donations to Participation

Not-for-profits (“NFPs”) can engage Next-Gen givers by shifting from “donation asks” to creating participation pathways. This generation is more likely to give when they feel connected to the mission and can see clear outcomes, so the first step is making impact easy to understand and share. This is achievable through short, visual reporting, concrete milestones, and honest storytelling that includes challenges as well as wins. Just as important is creating multiple entry points beyond providing financial support, including volunteering opportunities that use professional skills, events with a purpose (not just fundraising dinners), and digital-first experiences that let supporters join, learn, and contribute in smaller, recurring ways.

NFPs can also deepen engagement by treating these Next-Gen donors as long-term partners, not one-time transactions. Next-Gen givers often want to understand the “how” behind the work, including what the strategy is, what success looks like, and how decisions are made, with this transparency helping to build trust. Offering behind-the-scenes briefings, site visits, webinars with program leaders, and clear grant proposals helps them move from passive support to active commitment. When an organisation can show evidence, relevance, and momentum, it becomes much easier for donors to bring friends, colleagues, and family into the giving journey.

Finally, NFPs should recognise that many Next-Gen givers are navigating family wealth dynamics and may be influencing giving decisions even if they’re not the primary donor yet. Creating Next-Gen giving circles, advisory groups, and family-friendly philanthropy experiences gives emerging philanthropists a place to build confidence and capability. Simple structures such as “starter” partnership tiers and multi-year funding options can help donors step up over time. When an NFP makes it easy for Next-Gens to learn, lead, and belong, it doesn’t just unlock new funding; it builds the next wave of advocates and ambassadors for the cause.



We try to pick two to three organisations that we’ll support for a couple of years [with ongoing funding], and those are ones we’ve got wonderful relationships with, and we love the work they do.

And what does success look like?

Success, to us, is alleviating pressure on the organisation we’re supporting, so they can feel they can move forward that year with some form of confidence... And a smile. A kid’s smile is success. We’re making a difference in these children’s lives. And it could be a phone call from a mother or father or just someone saying “thank you”. That’s as simple as it is.

– Lauren

The rise of digital channels

Perhaps unsurprisingly, digital engagement is a major driver of giving amongst the next generation. Digital tools and platforms help to raise awareness, build connections, reduce inertia and friction in acting, and increases confidence. Next-Gen givers can discover causes through social platforms, podcasts, newsletters, and peer networks, then validate credibility quickly through reviews, impact reports, and third-party endorsements. Donation journeys are now immediate, including tap-to-give, subscription-style monthly giving, QR codes at events, and workplace giving. This makes ad-hoc support feel as easy and habitual as any other digital purchase. Just as importantly, digital tools let donors see the “before and after” with real-time updates, short-form impact stories, and transparent progress against goals help next-gens feel that their contribution is not only meaningful, but measurable.

At the same time, digital empowerment has shifted expectations around participation and influence. Next-gens increasingly want to engage with organisations rather than simply fund them, and digital channels make that collaboration possible through online communities, crowdfunding campaigns, interactive events, and feedback loops that allow donors to shape priorities.

Technology also amplifies social proof: when friends share causes and milestones, giving becomes a visible, identity-aligned behaviour rather than a private transaction. For NFPs, the implication is clear that digital isn't just a marketing layer; it's a trust-building and engagement engine that can convert interest into recurring support, grow advocacy at scale, and bring a new generation into deeper, long-term philanthropy.



Case Study:

Chris Wilson and Isabel Toasa

When Chris and Isabel sold their clean energy businesses, they found themselves in the enviable position of financial security at a relatively young age. This gave them the financial freedom to ask a deeper, more philosophical question of meaning.

For them, the answer was not abstract. It was personal, and it was geographical. Isabel is originally from Ecuador, where the couple are currently spending time with their one-year-old son and extended family. While many Australians associate Ecuador with the Galápagos Islands, it is also one of the poorest countries in South America. Poverty there is not hidden. As Chris describes, it is “in your face every day.”

That personal understanding of the challenges many Ecuadorians face on a daily basis reshaped how they thought about giving. Rather than approaching philanthropy as a strategy or tax structure, they began with a simple intention: “We want to make an impact and do something meaningful.”

Returning to roots

Isabel’s background is in environmental engineering, and before moving to Australia she worked extensively in Ecuador across water, pollution and environmental issues. In a developing country context, she describes engineering as rarely being textbook or theoretical. It requires being physically present in communities and working alongside them to solve practical problems.

That experience led Isabel and Chris to a farming region in the Ecuadorian highlands, where a severe drought had intensified tensions between families over access to water. Ecuador relies heavily on hydropower, and when drought strikes, both electricity and water systems are strained.

Rather than solely donating funds from afar, Chris and Isabel built on that by travelling to the communities themselves. They met with local leaders, sat in community meetings, and walked through farms. They saw how water scarcity rippled through daily life. Without water, crops were failing and without crops, the guinea pig farms which are a staple source of protein and income for families suffered. Entire micro-economies were being disrupted. Chris and Isabel focused their efforts into both the funding of irrigation systems and supplying the technical knowledge of

putting them in place. To great success, those irrigation systems have now been procured and are ready to be installed, supporting more than 1,100 farming families.

For them, impact is not measured purely in litres of water delivered. It is measured in restored cooperation and shared responsibility. Community meetings are open, direct and collective. Decisions are discussed face-to-face. Success is when everybody is aligned and owns the solution together. Their approach is hands-on. They help translate, assist with documentation, and they show up repeatedly, because trust is built through presence, not paperwork.

Supporting emotion with structure

Although deeply personal, their philanthropy is not unstructured.

New to the philanthropic space, Chris and Isabel sought professional guidance from a Wealth Management philanthropic specialist at Morgan Stanley in Australia. They were introduced to a structured model that supports due diligence, compliance, reporting, and governance. Chris and Isabel also joined the Morgan Stanley NextGen Cohort, a structured education and engagement program based in New York, designed to equip next generation philanthropists with the skills, insights, and peer connections to confidently lead their family's giving and long term philanthropic strategy.

“We had limited knowledge of the philanthropic space. We didn't come from that space. So we sought expertise.”

This structure proved essential, particularly given the cultural gap between Western accountability systems and grassroots community realities. In Australia, audited financials and formal reporting are standard. In rural Ecuador, decisions are often made collectively in community gatherings. Bridging those worlds required patience and expertise.



It's very different to Australia. Everything is face to face, and you have to go deep in the community to understand, truly understand how you can help them.

– Isabel

Chris reflects on how different philanthropic risk feels compared to business risk. In business, if a venture fails, shareholders absorb the loss. In the work they are doing, the consequences affect real lives. Add to that navigating legal systems and higher corruption risk, and the responsibility feels heavier.

One piece of advice they received early on stayed with them: “Don't be dismayed if things don't work out. Try again.” That mindset, described by the couple as “resilience with humility”, has shaped how they move forward.



Navigating culture, visibility, and family values

In Australia, the report finds that wealth is often downplayed and conversations about money can be uncomfortable. In Ecuador, the dynamic is different. Visible wealth can carry an expectation to share. And for many, poverty exists not just within broader communities, but within their own familial networks as well. Philanthropy therefore requires discretion and cultural sensitivity.

Positively, Chris' background in clean energy, a sector often motivated by environmental good, perhaps makes open discussion of impact more natural. Still, the couple remain thoughtful about how and when they speak about their giving. They are clear about their motivations not being recognition, but rather an alignment between their values and their actions. Importantly it is about setting an example for their son.

Half Australian and half Ecuadorian, Chris and Isabel's son will grow up exposed to two very different economic realities. As parents, they want him to understand both privilege and scarcity. To see not only how wealth is created, but how it can be stewarded.

Their philanthropic vehicle was initially designed to endure across generations. Whether they ultimately prioritise perpetual giving or accelerated impact, their goal remains constant: to model values their child can inherit.

Philanthropy as participation

Perhaps the clearest insight from Chris and Isabel's journey is that money alone is not the impact. For them, meaningful philanthropy involves:

- Showing up in person
- Listening before acting
- Bridging cultural systems
- Accepting uncertainty
- Trying again if things fail

They describe themselves as new to philanthropy. Yet their approach reflects something enduring, in that when giving is rooted in lived experience and emotional connection, it can transform from financial distribution into active participation and the contribution of skills and knowledge. For them, this shifts their philanthropy from imposed obligation to purpose.



Structured Giving Funds as the Backbone of Next-Gen Giving

Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs) and Public Ancillary Funds (PuAFs) are increasingly becoming the backbone of the next generation of giving in Australia because they turn philanthropy into a long-term strategy rather than a series of one-off donations. Soon to be known as Giving Funds, these are dedicated charitable structures that can be funded by individuals, families, or businesses, invested over time, and used to distribute grants to eligible charities.

These structures create continuity: instead of philanthropy rising and falling with a person's attention or life stage, an ancillary fund becomes an enduring platform for consistent support and a clear expression of a family's purpose across decades.

For Next-Gen donors and inheritors, ancillary funds are particularly powerful because they blend values with governance. Younger generations often want transparency, measurable impact, and involvement, which philanthropic structures can provide through a formal framework for decision-making, reporting, and grant making. They also offer a practical way to engage children, siblings and other family members in shared stewardship, building capability in evaluating charities, managing risk, and setting priorities. In families where wealth is held through trusts, companies, or investment portfolios, philanthropic funds can sit alongside these structures as the "values anchor," helping to align financial success with community contribution.

Those with formal plans and structures are significantly more likely to have donated over \$100k in the last 12 months (33% vs 3% of informal and adhoc giving).

Just as importantly, philanthropic structures help to direct how wealth is managed and how it is used for good. Instead of philanthropy being an afterthought, it becomes part of the family's broader wealth plan, with an investment pool, an annual giving rhythm, and a deliberate approach to partnerships with the not-for-profit sector. Over time, this can support deeper relationships with charities, multi-year commitments, and a shift from transactional giving to outcomes-focused, patient capital. For the next generation, ancillary funds offer a way to build a legacy that's not just about money being passed down, but values being carried forward.



Our PAF is really the launchpad, the springboard that helps us to give back in a structured way, helps us to build longer term partnerships.

– Jackie

Embedding Giving in the Family

For Next-Gen Australians who are set to inherit wealth, philanthropy can be a practical way to turn "family values" from words into action. Giving creates a shared sense of purpose beyond investment performance, helping the next generation clarify what their wealth is for, and the role it can play in creating lasting, positive change beyond the family itself.

Philanthropy can act as a bridge between generations: it honours the work and intent behind the wealth creation, while letting younger family members express those same principles in a way that fits today's social priorities and expectations. It also provides a structured forum for building healthy family governance. Instead of wealth conversations being limited to assets, tax, or succession, a philanthropy plan invites discussion about what matters most, how decisions are made, and how different family members can contribute. Having a shared purpose across the family can bring everyone closer together, forging generational bonds.

"[Speaking to their children] Hopefully we instil these values in you so that you go and do the same."

Having multi-generational involvement in philanthropy can instil values that opens eyes to the privilege conferred by wealth, and the responsibility of being able to help the less fortunate. Over time, family involvement in structured philanthropy becomes a "values education" in practice, teaching stewardship, accountability, and empathy while strengthening trust and communication across the family. For families with greater scale, formal philanthropic structures can create a lasting legacy and a platform for the next generation to lead with purpose, consistency, and measurable impact.



Kindness, generosity, and humility, those would be our three [family values] that ground us. My husband and I, we grew up [with] humble beginnings, and you never forget where you came from. And that's a big strong component of who we all are as a family.

– Lauren



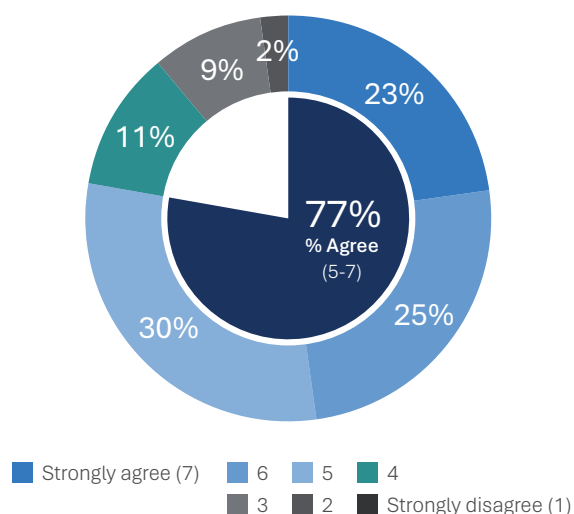
Tall Poppy Syndrome: The Cultural Paradox Shaping Australian Philanthropy

In Australia, wealth is widely aspired to, yet those who possess it are often viewed negatively. Less than a quarter of Next-Gens believe that the wealthy are perceived positively, but rather often associated with undeserved privilege and systemic advantage. This tension, between striving for wealth and resenting its holders, is the paradox that underpins Australia's tall poppy syndrome. It can manifest itself in the cultural tendency to criticise or resent those who stand out through success or wealth, a reflection of Australians' strong preference for egalitarianism and modesty.

Findings from the research show that there is strong consensus across all age brackets that tall poppy syndrome attitudes remain common in Australia. Many describe downplaying or hiding their wealth in social and professional situations, with personal wealth remaining a significant taboo, discussed openly with among just a third of social circles of the respondents surveyed.

Perceptions of wealth

Tall-poppy attitudes, where high achievers are cut down, are still commonplace in Australian society



With so few wealthy Australians comfortable with revealing their financial situation, it is not a surprise that philanthropy is often done in private. Unfortunately, this societal pressure can have the effect of limiting donors' abilities to inspire others. This reduces opportunities to spark conversations about giving back and dampens broader philanthropic momentum.

As research participants described, this is not the case everywhere. Multiple interviewees described the different attitude towards philanthropy that is found in the United States.



[In the US] it's far less taboo. My understanding is here it's often more common to be a little bit more private about your giving. I think there it's done much more publicly and that is normal. It's seen as a good thing, whereas here I think it's sometimes looked at as being showy and people aren't comfortable with it.

– Maria

Similarly, another research participant, herself raised in the US described this contrast:



I grew up in a small country town, community was everything, we were raising money from an early age. At five [years old] we were fundraising, and so I think fundraising, charity, giving back, that was instilled in you from a very early age.

– Lauren

Such cultural attitudes have real-dollar effects. Just over half (55%) of Australians earning over AUD\$1million per year make tax deductible donations². Meanwhile, in America 90% of people in this income bracket make tax deductible donations.

The hidden cost of humility

When giving is hidden, the ecosystem loses.

The lack of visible philanthropy contributes to lower engagement in charitable giving across Australian society. Evidence points to not only a lack of engagement, but a lack of awareness. According to the Australian Taxation Office, a significant number of Australians do not report any donations on their annual tax report.

Only 5% of income earners who reported donations as part of their tax return gave more than 1% of their total income, and just 2% of Australia's top 1% of income earners gave a higher percentage of their income to people in less wealthy income groups¹.

Despite relatively low levels of giving, a sense of moral responsibility persists among high-net-worth Australians. Seven in ten respondents believe that the power and privilege associated with wealth carries an obligation to contribute to social good. This paradox leaves many feeling compelled to give, yet hesitant to do so visibly, concerned about public scrutiny or perceptions of performative or self-serving behaviour.



6 in 10 feel that discussing wealth in Australia is taboo



6 in 10 feel the wealthy are perceived negatively in Australia



7 in 10 agree that wealth comes with responsibility to help foster social good



7 in 10 think others being aware of their giving can encourage similar behaviour



1 in 4 say close friends are aware of their giving and just 5% of broader circles

^{1 2} Flatau, P., Lester, L., Brown, J.T., Kyron, M., Callis, Z., & Muir, K. (2022). *High Net Wealth Giving in Australia: A Review of the Evidence*, Centre for Social Impact: UNSW and UWA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25916/ranq-n886>



I have been inspired by others who have been generous and you think ‘I could do that’, but here [in Australia] people don’t want to be seen to be publicly generous, to be seen as show-offs.

– Lauren

Addressing this tension requires approaches to philanthropy that move beyond superficial models of giving, preferencing relationship-based and community-informed approaches, where donors listen, learn and engage alongside those they seek to support, to provide a more robust foundation for giving, offering both social legitimacy and deeper impact than purely financial or symbolic contributions.

Positively, not only do three-quarters of Next-Gen givers believe that publicity about giving can have a positive impact in encouraging others to act, but half also believe that tall poppy attitudes are becoming less common overall. These factors mark an exciting time in Australia’s philanthropy landscape, where openness to public giving can encourage more widespread behaviour.

Next-Gen givers:

1. Find themselves downplaying or hiding their wealth in social situations (68%)
2. Believe that tall poppy attitudes are becoming less common (50%)
3. Believe that publicity about giving can encourage others to act (74%)



Alberts is led by fifth-generation family members (L–R): Emily Albert, Executive Director – Impact and Music Education; Right from the Start; David Albert, Group CEO; Ingrid Albert, Executive Director – Marketing and Philanthropy; and Kirsty Albert, Executive Director – Legal, Governance and People.

Case Study: The Tony Foundation

The Tony Foundation: from legacy giving to strategic impact.

Alberts is a 140-year-old Australian family business with deep roots in music, media, and entertainment. Over the generations, the business has helped shape Australia’s cultural landscape, backing and in many cases co-founding radio stations, television, and creating and nurturing an Australian sound from the late 1960s onwards with some of the country’s most iconic bands including AC/DC and The Easybeats. Today Alberts is run by fifth generation member David Albert with fellow family members holding key executive roles.

Philanthropy has been part of Alberts throughout its history, with individuals supporting causes they personally valued, particularly within the arts, though this giving happened in an unstructured, informal way.

In recognition of the need for an overarching structure to formalise and consolidate their giving, the fifth generation came together in 2012 to create The Tony Foundation, named in honour of fourth generation member Tony Albert. The fifth generation, which consists of seven members (siblings and cousins), became more involved in the Foundation’s activities and formed a grants committee, with some members stepping into leadership roles across Alberts more broadly. In 2016, the Foundation, led by Ingrid Albert, Executive Director – Marketing and Philanthropy, was strengthened through the development of both a vision and mission, ensuring alignment on purpose and impact.

Through facilitated workshops, the family agreed on a unifying purpose: to enable positive outcomes for young people through music, with a focus on those experiencing disadvantage, mental health challenges, and First Nations communities.

Part of this shift included reframing music as a proven effective means of educational engagement, healing, wellbeing, opportunity and more positive life outcomes.

Building structure around trust

For The Tony Foundation, formalisation of the Foundation did not mean abandoning the relational approach that has always shaped the family and business's values. Instead, structure was layered around a trust-based model. Key features of the Foundation's approach to giving include:

1. Building partnerships, often with three-year funding cycles (and three-year extensions)
2. Unrestricted, untied funding
3. Minimal administrative burden
4. A belief in backing leaders and organisations rather than prescribing programs

The Foundation deliberately partners with organisations whose core mission and values align with its own, prioritising those with a shared purpose. Decisions are made via a grants committee consisting of six family members that hold delegated authority, then approved by a board. This matured governance structure brought clarity, discipline, and accountability while preserving the agility of a small foundation.



We back pioneers and pioneering ideas - people with bold ideas who are tackling the world's most complex challenges. When their vision aligns with The Tony Foundation's vision and values, we seek ways to support and amplify their impact.

– Ingrid Albert

Recognising the limits of grant making

With a view to addressing systemic change, the Foundation established 'Music Education: Right from the Start', a collaborative national initiative aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality music education for all Australian primary school children. This systems change project is led by 5th generation member Emily Albert.



Whilst we felt we were providing support through our grant partners to a cluster of schools that did not have access to music education, we weren't fixing the systemic issue of a lack of quality, sequential music education for every child in Australia.

– Ingrid Albert

Beyond strategic change in the way the Foundation funds causes, advocacy has also become part of the Foundation's work. The decision to be more public was not taken lightly in the context of Australia's tall poppy culture, though the fifth generation recognised how advocacy could extend the impact the Foundation had on the issues it addresses and the importance of standing up publicly for what you believe in.

Embedding impact investing

Like many foundations, the financial model was straightforward in distributing a portion of the corpus and investing the remainder to underpin longevity. However, in 2019 The Tony Foundation introduced a new lens, considering a ‘whole of capital’ approach. By taking this broader view, we realised the opportunity to drive deeper impact. The Foundation adopted a total impact portfolio approach, considering impact alongside risk and return in every investment decision. Consequently, all investments have been shifted away from what we consider ‘harmful’ and we use the ABCH spectrum to categorise the impact of our investments – avoid harm, benefit, contribute and catalyse.



There was 5% of the corpus delivering impact through granting, and 95% of the corpus invested without consideration of impact and potentially causing harm. This revealed the opportunity to deepen impact, and even recycle capital (through catalytic investing) through the investment process before funds are then donated.

– Ingrid Albert

Intergenerational continuity

As the Foundation approaches its next decade, it is again under strategic review. Evolution has been incremental, with new funding streams, advocacy initiatives, and impact investments, but the family recognises the need for renewed clarity. Notably, the sixth generation (aged 4 to 23) has already been brought into structured workshops to learn about and contribute ideas for the future of the Foundation, reinforcing its longevity and continuity of the family’s values.

A modern foundation

As the fifth generation of the family has assumed greater responsibility within the Foundation, the approach to philanthropy itself has undergone significant transformation. The shift from ad hoc giving to a structured, mission driven and well governed foundation has brought greater clarity, focus, and defined measures of success. It has also reshaped the Foundation’s philosophy regarding the causes and organisations it supports and, importantly, transformed how the Foundation invests its corpus, with an increased emphasis on responsible and impact investing. With a new strategy being finalised this year, the Foundation will be entering into its next chapter with renewed ambition, progressive new strategies, a sharper focus and shared passion to drive deeper impact.

Conclusion

Australia's Next-Gen givers are reshaping philanthropy with a stronger demand for purpose, participation, and proof of impact. They are digitally fluent, values-led, and eager to engage earlier, often alongside the responsibilities and opportunities that come with inheriting and managing family wealth. For families and advisers, this marks a shift from philanthropy as a discretionary afterthought to philanthropy as a deliberate expression of identity, legacy and an integral part of a wealth management strategy. The most effective approaches will be those that invite younger donors into decision-making, build their confidence as stewards, and connect giving to real outcomes that matter to them and their communities.

Giving vehicles such as Private and Public Ancillary Funds are emerging as a cornerstone of this shift, providing the structure, continuity, and governance that enables long-term, intergenerational giving. But encouraging greater giving behaviours will rely just as much on how organisations engage, predominantly through transparency, accessible impact reporting, and meaningful pathways to contribute time, networks, and expertise as well as capital. As NFPs, families, and professional partners adapt to these expectations, the opportunity is to unlock a new era of philanthropy that is not only larger in scale, but deeper in relationships, more strategic in intent, and more enduring in the values it carries forward.

Contact Us

For more information, contact Clementine Lucas, Head of Not-for-Profit and Philanthropic Services at clementine.lucas@morganstanley.com

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