

Australian and U.S. government co-chaired program launches Australia-first not-for-profit Fulbright leadership scholarship

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The economic and social significance of the Australian not-for-profit sector* – it employs 900,000 people, engages 4.6 million volunteers and contributes \$41 billion to the Australian GDP – will today be recognised by the launch of the first Australian Fulbright Scholarship created specifically for the sector, [the Fulbright Professional Scholarship in Non-Profit Leadership](#), by the U.S. Ambassador and Fulbright Commission Honorary Co-Chair, Mr Jeffrey Bleich.

The scholarship is a joint initiative of the Australian-American Fulbright Commission, [the Australian Scholarships Foundation](#) and [Origin Foundation](#).

“The recognition provided by a Fulbright Scholarship is extremely important in lifting the profile of the NFP sector,” says Chief Executive of the Australian Scholarships Foundation (ASF), Ms Amy Lyden. “It emphasises the need to invest in the sector’s leadership capability.”

Dr Tangerine Holt, Fulbright Commission Executive Director, says that, “The Commission is delighted to partner with ASF and is thrilled with the investment made by the Origin Foundation to the NFP sector.

“It will provide an amazing opportunity for not-for-profit managers who are at the forefront of leadership to further develop their distinctive capabilities through the innovative exchange of knowledge and cultural engagement.”

The prestigious Fulbright Program is the largest educational scholarship of its kind in the world. The Prime Minister of Australia and the U.S. Ambassador are Honorary Co-Chairs of the Australian-American Fulbright Commission.

Ms Lyden says the new scholarship will enable managers and directors of NFP charitable organisations to enhance and improve their skills. The new knowledge they bring back to Australia will help to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector.

“The Australian not-for-profit sector touches virtually every Australian, yet few comprehend the scale or significance of the sector,” Ms Lyden says. “This means that improving the sector’s effectiveness in delivering its services represents big gains for the Australian community.”

The Origin Foundation’s focus, chosen by the people of Origin, is to support education, training and development programs that have the power to transform lives and improve communities.

“The Foundation’s decision to become involved in the NFP sector was driven by findings from a 2010 Productivity Commission report into the Australian NFP sector,” says Origin Foundation Head, Mr Sean Barrett. “We concluded that the sector’s efficiency and effectiveness can be significantly improved through better education, training and development.

“We made the decision, therefore, last year to fund Origin Foundation Scholarships delivered through the Australian Scholarships Foundation, which are available to all NFP full-time employees. This collaboration led to the funding of the Fulbright scholarships.”

About the Fulbright Professional Scholarship in Non-Profit Leadership

The scholarship entails \$40,000 per year to fund a three to four month education opportunity with a U.S. university or charitable organisation. One scholarship will be awarded each year from 2013 to 2017.

This scholarship will enable emerging leaders in the Australian NFP sector to undertake a program of research and professional development which would otherwise not be available to them. Recipients will have the opportunity to improve their academic skills and knowledge, exchange information with peers and join the prestigious alumni of Fulbright Scholars worldwide.

The first applications for the scholarship will be received in 2012.

The Fulbright Alumni is an exclusive and prestigious group – membership of this group will further assist in raising the profile of the NFP sector in Australia. Former Australian recipients of Fulbright scholarships include: Professor Allan H M Fels; the Rt Hon. Sir Zelman Cowen AK, GCMG, GCVO, QC; Dr Jill Ker Conway; Mr Frank T Moorhouse; Mr Nick Greiner AC; and Professor Nancy F Millis AC.

*About the NFP sector in Australia

- 600,000 NFP entities
- Nearly 10% or 59,000 NFPs are large employers
- Employs 900,000 people (8% of Australian workforce)
- Engages 4.6 million volunteers – wages equivalent \$15 B
- Has over \$138 billion in assets
- Contributes \$41 billion to GDP (2006-07) or 4.1% of total Australian GDP
- Equivalent to the contribution of government administration and defence and almost double that of the agriculture industry
- Annual growth rate of 7.7% (1999-2007)

NB. Figures are sourced from The Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector report by the Productivity Commission, released in 2010.

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